

from Herat. The road from Herat to Bala Murghab crosses its upper waters. At some point near the confluence of the Murgh-áb and the Kushk the Afghans constructed a small fort called Ak Tepe. The Merv oasis, from just above Yulatan, stretches along the Murgh-áb for nearly sixty miles. Its width is not far from forty miles, and it may be said to be only 240 miles from Herat. A detailed and interesting description of the oasis, together with a clear plan, is given in the second volume of O'Donovan's 'Merv Oasis.' It is only necessary to say here that Merv is the converging point of the caravan routes from Persia by Mash-had, to Khiva, at the northern end of the Turkoman Steppe, and to Bokhara and the countries beyond the Oxus.

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#### THE RACES OF CENTRAL ASIA.

AFGHANISTAN is inhabited by many different tribes and races, of whom the Afghans are undoubtedly the dominant race; but the extent of their dominion at any one time depends more upon the skill and energy of the Afghan chief or amir for the time being, than it does upon any prescriptive right or tradition. Indeed, there are living at the present moment, in the mountainous districts, non-Afghan tribes which have never been subdued. And the Hazara dwelling on the great central plateau are only tributary to the ruler of Kabul when that potentate is sufficiently strong at home to spare soldiers to collect the tribute or taxes. There is no settled government in the country. The amir's authority is respected only when he possesses means of compelling respect. Each tribe and clan manages its own immediate affairs through a council of the elders, and in accordance with the immemorial customs of the tribe. The amir is merely a dictator for life; and every attempt, in recent times, to introduce a settled form of government or to establish a dynasty, has been an immediate and complete failure. It is this want of cohesion among the Afghans themselves that has brought about the interference of the English in their domestic and foreign relations. The true Afghan tribes live in the valleys between Kabul and Peshawar, and Kabul and Kandahar. They are a sturdy, daring people, and are described as possessing a strong Jewish cast of countenance. This latter peculiarity has induced some learned and enthusiastic ethnologists to declare that they, like all other races whose origin is unknown, are the descendants

of the ten lost tribes of Israel. However this may be, they at one time extended their rule to the south of Peshawar, and have been a constant thorn in the flesh of the viceroy of India from the beginning of the century to the present day.

To show the fluctuating nature of the Afghan dominion, let us briefly trace the history of the country from 1842 to the present year. In 1842 the English abandoned the attempt to force a ruler on the Afghans, and again recognized Dost Muhammad as amir of Kabul. Eight years later, that chieftain reconquered Balkh, then the most important town north of the Hindu Kush; and between 1850 and 1860 he extended his rule over the whole of Afghan Turkestan, and reduced Badakshan to the condition of a tributary province. In 1855 he took Kandahar, and thus established his authority in the south. But it was not until 1863 that he captured Herat. Then, for the first time since the days of Timur, there was one supreme ruler in the country. Two weeks later he died. His son, Shir Ali, succeeded him. But there were many rivals in the field, among them Abdurrahman Khan, the present amir; and Shir Ali cannot be said to have been the undisputed ruler of Afghanistan before 1868. His attention was then directed to persuading the English, in return for valuable concessions, to guarantee the amirship to himself and his descendants, and also to supply him with funds with which to raise and maintain an army in the face of the unpopularity his reforms were arousing in Afghanistan. In this he was only partially successful; and in 1878 he turned to the Russians. Gen. Stoliétoff was received at Kabul as ambassador, and Gen. Grodekoff was escorted through Afghan Turkestan to Herat, while the English envoy was not even allowed to cross the frontier. War followed; and in a few months Shir Ali died a fugitive at Mazar-i-Sharif. His second son, Yakub Khan, was recognized by the English as amir; and, upon his signing the treaty of Gandamak in 1879, the English evacuated the country. By this treaty the foreign relations of Afghanistan were placed under the control of the English, who were to be allowed to send a 'resident' to Kabul. Shortly after his arrival, Major Cavagnari, the 'resident,' was murdered. The English again invaded the country, deposed Yakub Khan, and recognized his cousin, Abdurrahman Khan, for many years an exile in Bokhara and Samarkand, as amir. Kabul was evacuated in 1880, and Kandahar in 1881. In 1883 the new amir drove Ayub Khan, another son of Shir Ali,

out of Herat, and became sole ruler of Afghanistan.

North of the Hindu Kush, and between that range, the Oxus River, and the Turkoman Steppe, are situated Badakshan and Afghan Turkestan, as the provinces of Kunduz, Khulm, Balkh, Sir-i-pul, Shibirkhan, Andkhui, and Maimana are conveniently called nowadays. The great mass of the population belongs to the Usbeg race, who are of the same Turki stock as the Usbeg inhabitants of Russian Turkestan. The best account of this part of the world, in recent times, is 'Gen. Grodekoff's ride from Samarkand to Herat,' translated from the Russian by the indefatigable Charles Marvin.

Before 1872, Balkh, near the ruins of the ancient Bactra, was the capital of Afghan Turkestan. But in that year the cholera raged there with such virulence that the seat of government was removed to Mazar-i-Sharif, a few miles to the east, where is situated, according to the Usbegs, the tomb of Ali. Balkh is now an insignificant village. Gen. Grodekoff spent a couple of weeks of enforced idleness at Mazar-i-Sharif in 1878; and to his Russian eyes the Usbegs seemed ready to fall into the arms of the czar, the advance of whose armies, however menacing to Afghanistan and India, has certainly brought order and law to central Asia, and especially to the Usbeg countries of Bokhara and Khiva. Almost nothing is known of the condition of the country at the present time; but the Usbegs assisted Abdurrahman Khan in his struggle against the sons of Shir Ali. That they are more trusted by the Kabulites now than in 1878, is shown by the fact, that, while they were then disarmed, an Usbeg corps formed part of the amir's escort to the recent conference at Rawal Pindi.

The origin of the Turkomans is veiled in obscurity; but it may be stated as certain, that in 1830 the Tekke Turkomans occupied the Akhal oasis, the Sarik Turkomans lived amidst the ruins of Merv, and the Salor Turkomans resided in and around Sarakhs. They were all robbers and slave-stealers, but the Tekkes seem to have been by far the most savage and energetic. They flourished, and outgrew the capabilities of the Akhal oasis. A portion split off, and, advancing to the east, settled down on the Tajand. The Persians, in 1833, fell upon the Salors at Sarakhs, and all that escaped took refuge among the Sariks at Merv. The Tekkes then moved on to Sarakhs, and, as they gradually acquired strength, extended their forays to Khiva, Bokhara, and to every part of Persian Khorassan. This

brought upon them the vengeance of the Persians, who, in 1857, drove them from Sarakhs to Merv. As there was not room on that oasis for such a large population, the Tekkes compelled the Sariks to move farther up the Murgháb. They established themselves at Yulatan and Panj Deh, driving out the Salors, and according to the Russian general, Petrusevitch, some Afghan nomads who fed their flocks near the latter place. The Tekkes, now masters of Merv, built an enormous dam at Benti, and by means of lateral canals greatly increased the cultivable area of the oasis, until it became capable of supporting a population of not less than a quarter-million souls. From this secure retreat, the Merv Tekkes raided the frontier provinces of Persia and Afghanistan, until whole districts became desolate. In 1861 a Persian army thirty thousand strong, accompanied by artillery, was sent against them; but instead of defeating the Merv Tekkes, the Persians were overthrown, and fully one-half captured and sold into slavery by the Mervli. After the Russians had brought Khiva and Bokhara under their dominion in 1873, they abolished slavery in those places, and, by closing their great slave-markets, took away from the Tekkes the incentive to the capture of slaves.

The ground put forward by Russia to justify her occupation of Panj Deh and Sarakhs is now clear; that is, if we allow that the Sariks were tributary to the Merv Tekkes. Those of Yulatan undoubtedly were; they could not very well help it, living as they did on the oasis. But the case is not so clear as to the Panj Deh Sariks, who, according to the English and Afghans, pay tribute to Herat. The Russians reply that no tribute is paid except at the point of the bayonet, and therefore, on ethnological grounds, Panj Deh should go with Merv. That compulsion is necessary, is certainly true. It is admitted by the Afghans. But the soldier is the tax-gatherer not only of Panj Deh, but of central Asia. In conclusion, it will not be amiss to again point out that all of Afghanistan north of the Hindu Kush and its outlying spurs belongs, both geographically and ethnographically, to Russian Asia, rather than to Afghanistan.

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#### THE LEGAL LANGUAGE OF INDIA.<sup>1</sup>

IN the higher courts of justice and in government administration in Calcutta, Madras, and Bombay, the English language is coming into general use. In

<sup>1</sup> Translated from the *Oesterreichische monatschrift für den orient.*