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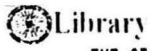
Proceedings of the Central  
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AN ARTIST'S IMPRESSIONS  
OF  
WESTERN TIBET  
AND THE TURKESTANS

BY  
MISS E. G. KEMP

*READ MAY 7, 1913*



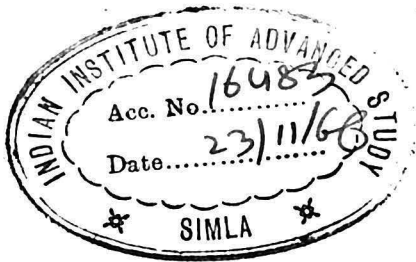
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## An Artist's Impressions of Western Tibet and the Turkestans

COLONEL SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND presided, and said they were to hear from Miss Kemp some details of a most adventurous journey such as no lady had ever before undertaken. A little more than a year ago he was consulted as to the journey from Kashmir into Chinese Turkestan and Tibet. He pointed out to Miss Kemp that even for a man the route would be extremely difficult and full of hardship, while for a lady it was a very dangerous undertaking. She would have to cross passes varying from 11,000 feet in height to 17,000 feet, and one of no less than 19,000 feet. Miss Kemp told him that she was perfectly confident of being able to accomplish the journey. But he must confess he was very much relieved when, a few weeks ago, he learned that she had arrived in England in good health.

The beauties of Kashmir require no singing: they are so familiar to everyone that I shall only show one or two slides and *say* nothing about that part of our journey. We were detained rather long at Srinigar waiting for our stores, etc., and for necessary permits which I had been trying to collect for the last six months. Our party consisted of my friend Miss MacDougall; the Pathan interpreter Robert, who had accompanied Sven Hedin through Tibet, and two excellent Ladakis—Lobzang and Habib—sent down by our kind missionary friends at Leh with three ponies they had purchased for us. We had been warned that in Kashmir “every prospect pleases, and only man is vile”—very vile even according to his best friends. The Resident kindly offered to telegraph to Kashgar to know if things were quiet enough for us to go there, hesitating to give the requisite permission to cross the Indo-Chinese frontier, while at the same time he urged our going, as no artist had yet undertaken the journey.

With a thrill of delight we left at last the joys of civilization and the hospitalities of Srinigar for the austere beauty of the wild, and

the intimate camaraderie of the road. One never gets to the true knowledge of a land, nor to the heart of its people, till one humbly walks upon it, or, even better, falls prone upon it, and falls to rise. From Srinigar to Leh, a fortnight's easy journey, is too jejune a story to bear repetition. My sketches will speak for themselves, and evoke pleasant memories, or the reverse, in those present who know the road. The Sind Valley entices one onward by its exquisite beauty, the frequent villages supply the traveller with all the requisites of life, and he is gently trained for the stiffer road that comes later. In the end of June the Zoji-la presents no dangers, my only experience of interest being to find how swiftly one could make the pass from the pony's back to the snowfield, into which his head and forelegs had suddenly dropped. The face of the country changes from that point with startling abruptness. Granite rocks and frequently narrow gorges force the path to unpleasant heights, and my otherwise excellent pony evinced a curious delight in shying on the edge of precipices. Having little skill as a rider, especially in that, to me, *new* art of astride riding, I found this disconcerting, and got into closer touch by means of it with my most admirable of syces, Habib. From that time he watched and guarded over my steps with ever-increasing solicitude and perfect apprehension of my unexpressed wishes. A small wiry Mahometan, shrewd and full of a droll humour, speaking three languages, loving all beasts, keen to give a helping hand to all, nimble as a goat, he would run and bring me a handful of twittering young partridges to caress, and then dash back with them to the rocks where the anxious mother was screaming, distracted over the loss of her babes. Habib was tireless day and night in our service, and even the other men marvelled at his energy. Often I would look out of the tent in the middle of the night and see him busy over some little job, and I found he was well aware of my nocturnal habits, for the high altitudes do not conduce to sleep, and, indeed, over 15,000 feet I rarely slept at all, and at much lower altitudes only intermittently. Part of the joy of such travel was the "white nights" and the sense of supreme solitude with a quickened intellectual consciousness. What pictures I painted! What books I wrote! What glowing eloquence flowed from my lips! All, alas! vanished like Calverley's joke:

" No ! mine was a joke for the ages :  
 Full of intricate meaning and pith ;  
 A feast for your scholars and sages—  
 How it would have rejoiced Sydney Smith !

'Tis such thoughts that ennoble a mortal,  
 And singling him out from the herd,  
 Flung wide immortality's portal—  
 But what was the word?"

As we approached Baltistan we saw a greater variety of types and entirely different characteristics among the natives. The outstanding feature of the landscape was the curious rock formation, so rectangular that it required little imagination to see in the cliffs across the river great rock temples like those to be found in the heart of Egypt. The colour was not unlike—a sort of dull dust hue—and the long lines of pillars were most impressive. Almost all vegetation, except that produced by cultivation, had ceased, and it was therefore the greater delight to meet from time to time great flaming bushes of red roses, scenting the air and attracting tailless swallowtails, which Habib could never refrain from chasing, though with far less success than the partridges. Our halting-places were lovely little shady oases, enclosed spots of verdure of which the traveller has the right of entry by making a gap in the stone wall at pleasure, and Habib was a genius for selecting the best spot in which to pitch our tent. All the men showed perfect tact and discretion in keeping our leisure hours undisturbed and free from observation—an incalculable boon—to which I owe much of the success of my artistic work. This afternoon you will see some seventy coloured reproductions of the sketches, less than half the work produced in five months, and if anyone should have the curiosity to see how closely the lantern slides approximate to the originals, they may do so in the Alpine Club Exhibition now open, where, by the courtesy of the Club, some of my work is now to be seen.

Another feature of the road to Leh, due to the nature of the rocks as above described, is the long horizontal lines followed by the path, sometimes for hours together, along terraces in the valley with no apparent break; but suddenly the traveller finds himself on the edge of a ravine, or secluded little valley, filled with exquisite green, lush meadows and willows and poplars, amid which streams reflecting the sky make a pleasant murmur, and flocks and herds are grazing. A greater contrast to the arid, stony wilderness around it would be impossible to conceive.

From time to time the landscape is dominated by frowning lamaseries, superbly placed on high, inaccessible rocks and guarded by fierce watch-dogs and monks as forbidding-looking. We had

the good fortune to meet an incarnate Buddha encamped at Karbu Chamba. As soon as our tents had been pitched in a neighbouring camping-ground we made our way to see the great man, taking Habib to act as master of the ceremonies, a post for which he not unjustly considered himself well qualified, not only because he had originally been a Buddhist, but was also a man of the world, acquainted with all its ways and customs. The little side valley opened up into a sort of V shape—a peculiarity of this country noted by Dr. Filippi in his book—the lower end of the valley narrowing to a point. To our incredulous surprise we found quite a number of people in their best attire grouped in a large narrow semicircular line round the saint's tent, performing a kind of slow religious dance—advancing, retreating, prostrating themselves. We sent Habib to inquire if we might pay our respects to the lama, and we were invited into his tent, where he sat enthroned on cushions, with a sort of altar in front of him and two arrows stuck in the ground. By his side was another saint—resembling an Indian zogi—with filthy matted hair piled on the top of his head. We sat awhile and were offered tea in a perfunctory way, which invited refusal; then we roused a gleam of enthusiasm in the saint's beadlike eyes by giving him the latest news from Tibet about the Dalai and Tashi lamas. That paved the way to my request to be allowed to make a sketch of his holiness, which was only granted on condition that he received a duplicate. It was already growing dusk, and I had to sit close beside him, so that it was working under considerable difficulties; but I have seen a popular artist doing sketches of a lovely lady sitting on the same bench with her in preference to being at the ordinary distance, so there may be compensations in sitting close to sanctity! I leave you to judge by the result. The lama received my promised sketch the same evening by dint of hard work at lightning speed, and also the rapacious fellow had demanded two paint-brushes and paper, in exchange for all of which he gave us a letter recommending us to the good offices of the Abbot at Lamayuru, where I sketched the interior of the temple under difficulties, not only of lighting, but also of the activities of the lesser inhabitants, whom we called for politeness' sake Lamayuru pets. I am happily unattractive, and therefore immune; but my friend is the reverse, and we gladly made our escape from the stifling stuffiness of the shrine. The gorge leading down the valley from Lamayuru is one of the finest parts of the journey to Leh.

We were met at our last halting-place before reaching Leh by a

party of the missionaries, to whose kind help and hospitality we were greatly indebted during our long delay for the permit, and as we reached the base of the imposing monastery of Spittuk, we looked across the stony waste which seemed to extend for about a mile between us and our destination, thinking we had practically arrived. In reality it was five miles of the stoniest, dustiest, gustiest rising plain, and we learnt the lesson—often repeated later—of the wonderfully misleading effect of the atmosphere in Central Asia. It is not only the atmosphere which is so misguiding, but the people also who assure the weary wayfarer that the halting-ground is just round the next corner, when it is quite probably three hours distant. Happy beings! neither time nor space exists for them—they are akin to genius!

The entrance to Leh is a great surprise: it suggests going into an inn-yard with its raised threshold and big doors, above which is a sort of prophet's chamber, from which the official can survey all that enters the bazaar from the west. One emerges from the gateway into what is surely the most picturesque little capital in the world. A long poplar-shaded bazaar is closed at the farther end by a crag, on which stands the old stern-looking palace, brooding above the crowded alleys half underground, which form the bulk of the town. Rising still higher on a peak above the palace stands an ancient monastery in inviolate seclusion.

I know no pleasanter spot than Leh in which to halt and gather up the impressions of an entirely different land from any yet seen. The only drawback we experienced was the number of other people who also availed themselves of the comfortable dak bungalow (built by Captain Oliver), and whose noisy retinues were frequently a trial, being such a contrast to our own. We beguiled the time of waiting for our permit by a fortnight's trip to the shores of Lake Pangong, noted for its marvellous colour, and on the road to which we passed through particularly fine and desolate scenery, "where clouds and cloudy shadows wander free, that never spoke over the idle ground." At last we had reached the true cradle of our race, and were challenged by all the ghosts of the dead ages in that vast solitude: "There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone." Not only is it the cradle of the human race, but also, according to Mitchell, of most of our domestic animals—wild asses, sheep, goats, yaks, camels, and numbers of smaller animals are to be found there.

The moonlight nights on Changla and the wonderful flower-decked heights are among the choicest memories of the journey.



The wild-looking inhabitants of the land were driving their flocks of sheep, laden with salt, to the market at Leh, and we enjoyed to the full our scanty intercourse with them. Our admirable sportsman-cook, Lobzang, was revealed to us in a new light as administrator of justice in a land where justices of the peace are unknown. Being a known man of weight he was asked to arbitrate in the following case: A woman who had been deserted by her husband was unable to pay a debt of some five shillings, despite the fact that she had a certain amount of cattle; the creditor therefore seized a yak, worth about five times as much, not to mention the fact that it promptly presented him with a calf. Robert asked permission for a halt, in order that the case might be dealt with, and it was arranged that it should be on our return journey from the lake, by which time the man might be fetched from the outlying district where he lived. It was a picturesque business, and peace was restored by the payment of the small debt and the restoration of the property. The people seem honest and straightforward, and there was no attempt to deny responsibility. They are frightfully poor, without any form of amusement or relaxation, always living on the verge of destitution, but cheerful, kindly, peaceable folk. We had no fear of being robbed, keeping our tent wide open at night, even when the thermometer showed 20 degrees of frost.

On our way back across the Changla, which rises to a height of 18,000 feet, we were met by a postman bringing us news that we might proceed to Kashgar: the Resident's telegram had taken thirty-three days to go from Srinigar, and the answer twenty-four days. It took very short time to arrange with a caravan for the necessary animals—six for stores, tents, and luggage, two for riding, and two extra ones to replace ours in case of need. We started from Leh, August 15, lavishly provided with good things from our friends' gardens and larders, and indeed the Commissioner's servant would have had us take a perfect farmyard from his master's lavish bounty.

The first pass we had to encounter rises directly behind Leh, and we arranged to do it on yaks (to spare our ponies) whose clumsy looks certainly belie their nimbleness. The Kardong Pass has a precipitous glacier on its northern shoulder, and from the top there was a fine stormy view of driving sleet, hiding, then disclosing, emerald-green pools in the depths below. Long caravans were toiling up the steep, not only bearing merchandise, but hadjis also bound for Mecca. The ponies were so surefooted that we saw but few accidents throughout the whole journey, yet the road is

strewn with carcasses of the beasts that have fallen by the way, and too often the camping-grounds resembled shambles. Not infrequently it is the strongest beasts which drop, and this is due not merely to overloading, but to the effect of the high altitudes. Dr. Filippo de Filippi, who was a member of the Duke of Abruzzi's recent expedition to the Baltoro Glacier, is about to start on another scientific journey to the Karakoram Range, and has promised to try the effect of certain drugs on the animals, especially with a view to ascertaining whether chlorate of potash, which we found so efficacious for our men, will be equally good for ponies.

We found that our men got almost instantaneous relief in taking it when they were suffering from acute headache, and were profoundly thankful for that and lip-salve, as they also suffered a good deal from sore lips. The journey up the Nubra Valley is full of variety and charm: often the road is shaded by low-growing tamarisks, which require the rider to lie on his pony's neck to avoid their thorny caress. The lanes of wild roses and clematis followed the course of the streams in the depths of the valleys, and little patches of cultivation showed diligent care. In the not infrequent villages we were always treated with civility, and the women especially gazed with open-eyed astonishment at the first European women they had ever seen. In fact we were moved to invite them to celebrate the event at a tea-party, at Panamik, where we halted two nights to procure grain at the Government depot. All caravans have the right to purchase a certain quantity, according to the number of their animals and at a fixed rate.

We were interested to find in these outposts of Empire notices still posted up proclaiming the King's coronation. We were further told that it had been celebrated by the sending-off of crackers. There is a strong feeling of loyalty there to the British Empire.

On leaving the Nubra Valley there is an arduous zigzag climb of at least three hours up the face of a steep cliff. The road is blasted in the rock, and at times juts out on a sort of platform over giddy depths, and the caravan made its way very slowly after us into the valley at the foot of the Sasser Pass. Next day we only made about half the ascent, and encamped in a hollow at a height of about 16,000 to 17,000 feet, surrounded on all sides by glaciers. The moonlight night spent there was never to be forgotten: it would have been a calamity to waste in sleep those shining hours. Happily a minimum of sleep as well as of food is requisite at those high altitudes, and we were thoroughly fit in the morning for four hours' journey on foot across the stiffest part of the pass and the

glacier. This lies like a saddle on the top of the Sasser, with other glaciers running down into it from the side valleys, and is a perfect death-trap to the poor ponies. Heavily gorged vultures and ravens were hardly able to flap their wings sufficiently to leave their prey at our approach; though, indeed, we went but slowly. There was no path, but we scrambled along among slippery boulders, our steps powerfully upheld by faithful Habib. Miss MacDougall found her long coat tails very much in the way, so Numghiel thoughtfully plucked a thread from his coat, and by means of the needle in his bonnet (which appears to be a universal part of the coolie's equipment) promptly sewed the corners of the coat tails together behind her! Our way was beautified by many flowers, growing at a height of 18,300 feet—blue aconites, flame-coloured poppies, dwarf sunflowers, pink daisies, particularis and many another flower, whose name I do not know.

Below the snout of a glacier we had rather a narrow shave from a falling boulder, which ricocheted from side to side and finally hurtled down between us. At other times we had occasional scares of falling stones, but nothing serious.

When we reached the valley of the Shayok we came to a serai, where large numbers of camels were encamped. Having brought their loads so far they would have them transferred to ponies, whose loads they would take in exchange, for it is impossible for camels to travel across the Sasser. This has been up to the present time the farthest point to which they are able to come from Turkestan. The long caravans of camels are the most picturesque living feature of the road. As they come swinging in stately procession down the narrow path, with deep-toned bells sounding, and led by a patriarchal figure, whose walk is yet more stately than their own, they lend the crowning touch to the perfection of the picture. The clappers of the big bells are not seldom the bones of their defunct relatives.

We had to cross the river early next day, and were thankful for the services of two of the leanest specimens of humanity whom it has been my lot to meet. They are placed here by Government to aid the traveller—and not without reason. We watched a luckless donkey the evening before, who lost his footing and was whirled over and over by the torrent, and only rescued by the agility and strength of one of these men. The melting snows make the water icy cold, and blocks of ice are apt to upset the unwary traveller on the slippery, treacherous river bed. After safely crossing it our road led up a narrow valley and crossed and recrossed a torrent at

least twenty times. It is very fatiguing for the beasts, and many days we had the same experience. How they climbed up some of the banks was a perfect marvel!

We halted at Mourghi, where by next autumn a new road is to join the present one. For three years Captain Oliver made careful investigation both from north and south as to the possibility of making a road up the Shayok Valley, which would avoid the two difficult passes and glaciers—Kardong and Sasser. Last year he was able to start work on it, but the weather was unfavourable. In the south it leads via Changla to Shayok village, from which point it follows the river up its eastern bank the whole way northward to Murghi, the larger tributaries falling into the Shayok being crossed by bridges. There are no villages up this valley, but unlike the present route there is grazing-ground the whole way, so that there is every reason to suppose that camels would be able to go the whole distance from Turkestan to Leh. It is expected that the road will be completed for use next September, and it will be available for seven or eight months of the year, instead of four to five as the present road is open. It is superfluous for me to point out how valuable the new road will be from a trade point of view, as thousands of ponies come down every year from China to India carrying mainly bhang—to our shame be it spoken—silk, and felts; nor to dilate on the energy and enterprise requisite to carry through successfully so arduous and difficult an undertaking; nor to emphasize the skill necessary to persuade the Indian Government to meet the cost, small as that comparatively is. I was anxious to see the beginnings of the new road, but it was not considered feasible; if in future other women decide to cross the Karakoram they will no doubt enjoy its advantages, and we shall remain the sole women travellers on the old road.

The most desolate part of the journey extends across the Dipsang Plain and onward. Owing, I suppose, to some peculiar atmospheric conditions, travellers always suffer there from great depression. We started in a driving snowstorm and bitter cold, climbing first for long up a steep, narrow gorge till we emerged on a wide tableland, surrounded by snowy peaks, whose height was dwarfed by the high flat expanse, for we were already some 17,000 to 18,000 feet above sea-level. We plodded along wearily till one of the ponies suddenly collapsed, leaving scarcely time to slip over its head. The men were convinced it was going to die; however, a stiff dose of brandy and other treatment proved successful; it lived not only to tell the tale and practise the happy art of getting rid of its

rider in a similar way, but also to return in safety across the plain to Leh.

We found the scenery crossing the Karakoram Pass decidedly disappointing, there being little snow even at a height of 18,650 feet, and the outline of the mountains not nearly so fine as those farther westward. The weather also was dull, inclining to wind and sleet. The crossing of the border into Turkestan was impressive, and there is an air of romance about the quaint little fort at Shah-i-Dulah, now transformed into a caravan serai. There we ascertained that a party of three Russians had passed about a fortnight earlier and had been mistaken for us—three men for two ladies! Thenceforward they had received the presents of fat-tailed sheep, fuel, fodder, fruit, milk, eggs, etc., destined for our use, till they reached a place where they were met by an astute old Indian gentleman, who at once detected the *mistake*. We were none the less lavishly provided by British subjects the whole way through Turkestan. Such hospitality I have never before experienced and it adds more than words can express to the charm of life on the road. Everyone shares with his fellow: there is no distinction of rank or sex in the kindly courtesy extended *by* all *to* all. One hot, dusty day we were tramping on foot beside our weary steeds when three men came riding: instantly one of them sprang from his horse, drew from the ample folds of his cloak a huge melon and placed it with a graceful gesture in my hands. Before leaving the Shah-i-Dulah Fort our names and the description of our whole party were entered in Persian on the register kept there. An old man of ninety told us that for twenty-four years this place has been under the Chinese Government (previously it was under that of the Aborigines), and he had never seen a European woman.

The day after crossing the frontier we came to a river that was *blue* instead of dust-coloured like those we had seen for so many weeks, and our eyes were gladdened by the sight of patches of cultivation and human beings once more. The Kiliang Pass, though not so lofty as some others, was extraordinarily fine. Dazzling sunlight lit up all the surrounding heights as we reached the summit, and I sat down to try and do a "blot" while the animals were being persuaded to attempt the perpendicular descent, for which we had succeeded in getting two extra men. The easy descent to Avernus is evidently not on this road, and what made it worse was that in a few moments the clouds had completely obliterated everything, so that we had to go blindly down, and soon lost ourselves among a welter of rocks, where no path was visible.

Later on we found it again, and after some hours saw an attractive halting-ground; but our caravan was toiling away in the distance, evidently with no intention of stopping. It was astonishing to see how far the men could make their voices carry, for Habib at once shouted to them to come back, knowing it was the best halting-ground for some distance, and that we were dreadfully tired. It was beginning to rain also, and once wet through there was no means of getting dry. It was useless to gather firewood in the pouring rain, and we were reduced to our spirit-lamp for cooking. One of the trials of the high altitudes—we had come down to 13,000 feet—is that it is impossible to make a decent cup of tea or coffee, or to boil rice or potatoes; but the shelter of a good tent is most welcome. From day to day we now experienced the kindly thought and hospitality of the inhabitants, who always sent word ahead, so that we found a succession of picnics arranged for us all along the road. After the abstemious habits of our journey, it was difficult to do justice to all the good things prepared for us. Everywhere felts and rugs were laid down and quarters prepared—sometimes in a garden, sometimes in a house with lavish provisions for men and beasts. Hangings of cotton, plush, or kincob adorned the walls, or were draped from tree to tree, and gaily caparisoned cavaliers came to meet us and touch our hands with gold or silver, then escorted us a stage or two on the road. The picturesqueness of this part of the journey would take far too long to describe. The atmosphere of intense loyalty displayed struck us forcibly, and the large numbers of British subjects, some of whom had never been on British soil. They were extremely gratified to think of sending a message to that effect to the King, and I promised to send portraits of His Majesty to the leading men. I find this is easier said than done, as the parcel post via Gilgil shows wonderful skill in reducing everything to a uniform powder.

The constant contrasts of the journey add great charm to it. Skirting along the border of the great Takla Maklan Desert you see endless wastes of sand, and the curious spirals of dust which dance across its surface like the evil spirits, which they are supposed to be, and the strange mirages, must strike the dullest imagination. On the other hand, there are the most exquisite orchards and fruit-gardens, poplars and willows, while the people themselves are thoroughly picturesque. Then, too, the name of Yarkand is one to conjure with, and all the wild and terrible history of the Middle Ages rises before the mind's eye as one confronts the wonderful tile-decked monuments, whose ruins lie scattered over Central

Asia. What surprised us most was the absence of any Chinese population, except in the cities and in the neighbourhood of Kashgar, also the scanty evidences of their authority. At the same time we were greatly indebted to the Chinese officials, as well as to the British aksakals, for their guardianship and hospitality all along the road. Of this I may quote one illustration—a whole roast sheep was served for breakfast at Yengi Hissar at 7.30 a.m. At Yarkand we had several men always in attendance day and night, and villages we passed through were decorated with scarlet for our coming.

I had been told that from an artist's point of view Kashgar was wholly uninteresting, but found it teeming with attractive subjects, and the kind hospitality of the Consul-General and his wife made our three weeks' stay there seem all too short. We were their first lady visitors, and we soon learned to understand the universal affection and reverence which he enjoys throughout the country. Although to-day I speak merely as an artist, it would be impossible to ignore the one significant political fact which was impressed upon us at every place we visited. The cumulative effect of what we heard from all the British subjects finally was confirmed by the unmistakable evidence of what took place during our stay at Kashgar. I refer to the fact that during the whole crisis of the Chinese Revolution last year the peace of Chinese Turkestan was maintained by the inflexible determination of *one* man, backed by the power of twenty-four years' unremitting service in this loneliest of exiles. This one man is Sir George Macartney, a member of this society of whom it may well be proud. On his rare visits to Yarkand a thousand people will turn out to give him welcome, and his word is law to the Chinese official. No wonder that we were charged by the Indian British subjects to tell those in authority, who have left him utterly unsupported (while Russian troops poured in to guard the few Russians) that it was entirely due to Sir George's influence that war had been averted during the troublous months of last summer. Time and again, they declared, war would have broken out had it not been for his resolute will and prompt action. It was interesting to contrast the pomp and ceremony of the Russian officials, with their hundreds of Cossacks, with the cool self-possession of the one quiet little Englishman who ruled the situation. A new consulate is now in course of erection, the present one being ludicrously inadequate. We were encamped in the garden, according to the inevitable custom in case of visitors, till we were invaded one night by thieves, after which



we were accommodated in the Munshi's office, entered through the stable!

The journey from Kashgar across the Alai Mountains is so familiar to many members of this society that I shall not do more than make a few remarks on it. The brilliant autumn colouring was in full perfection, and at times the snowy range of the Pamirs—in reality a two days' journey distant—looked as distinct as if they were only a mile away. The highest point has been supposed by some travellers to be the Mustagh Ata, but strange as it may appear, the vexed question has been decided in London at the Geographical Society. It is not visible from Kashgar. We had parted from our faithful Ladaki servants at Yarkand, so that they might regain their home before the route was closed for winter: we had also parted with our tents, as henceforth we were supposed to be free from the need of them. Every hour we longed for our men, and every night groaned over the accommodation, as Robert was incapable of procuring us what we thought we had a right to expect. The Russian rest-houses provide only one room for Europeans and one for natives, and having declined the escort of a young Russian officer who desired to economize, he said, by travelling with us, we were fortunate enough to secure always a room to ourselves, but a tent would have been infinitely preferable. Some of the passes are very fine, especially the Terek Dawan, but we had to learn to walk alone down its slippery side, where we saw a pony roll over and over till it was stopped by a group of rocks. One would have supposed some legs at least would have been broken, but a couple of men clambered down after it, took off its loads, and it picked itself up apparently quite unhurt. There was far more traffic on this road than we had seen south of Yarkand, as it leads to the railway-line at Andijan, but it is extraordinarily bad in many places, and made one marvel at the fact that the Russian troops had brought military wagons and guns over to Kashgar. Just as we were entering Andijan we met a noted Russian officer and his suite setting out on a special mission from the Czar, and heard that on arrival he paid a State call, with an escort of about a hundred men, on our Consul-General. Under Russian rule Turkestan is becoming a wealthy country, and the bazaars are crowded with prosperous-looking multitudes; but whether it is making any progress in more vital matters seems to be a doubtful question in the minds of those who are capable of forming a correct judgment. The wonderful ruins of Tamerlane are daily crumbling away, and Samarkand and Bokhara are be-



coming a mere background to fashionable toilettes from Paris and Vienna.

The Chairman, in offering the hearty thanks of the meeting to the lecturer, congratulated her on the extraordinarily vivid description she had given of the country she had traversed, and on the beautiful illustrations from her own sketches which had delighted her audience.

He was interested in the good description she gave of the people, and particularly in what she said of the loyalty of the Indians in Turkestan to the British rule. He had noticed that trait himself when many years ago he was there on his way from Peking, but it was accentuated now by the welcome these English ladies had received.

One thing he was very glad to hear Miss Kemp lay stress on, and that was the wonderful success and influence of Sir George Macartney. He had had uphill work for over fifteen years, but it spoke well for his splendid work and resolution that, without escort or help of any kind, his influence with the people had averted hostilities last year. It was a pleasure to know that his services had been recognized by Government, and that he had been rewarded by a well-earned knighthood.

