On the Dara Nur, or Dara Nuh, in Afghanistan

Author(s): William Simpson

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were Christians, nor did any of them speak a European language excepting an occasional English word or a greeting in Russian. Lieutenant Nordqvist studied their language with so much zeal and success that after a few weeks he could make himself understood. He will bring back to Europe a complete vocabulary of this little-known language, as also an outline of its grammatical structure.

(To be continued in the January number.)

Obituary.

Dr. Arthur Leared, M.D. Oxon., F.R.C.P.—This eminent physician, whose death occurred on the 17th of October, was an enthusiastic traveller, and had accomplished many considerable journeys in the intervals of his professional life. He was born at Wexford in the year 1822, of an old Wexford family. Before settling down in England to the career he had chosen, he went, in 1851, to India, but made only a short stay there, the climate not suiting him. In 1852 he established himself as physician in London. The first journey made after this was to the East, in 1855, when, availing himself of the opportunity afforded him of being one of the physicians to the British Civil Hospital at Smyrna, he visited that place in the early spring of the above-named year, afterwards extending his tour to the Holy Land. In 1862 he made a voyage to Iceland, the first of four visits he made to that island, the last being in 1874, when the King of Denmark was there. He travelled over the island in all directions, and became well acquainted with its physical phenomena and its people. In the autumn of 1870 he visited America. His next journey was to Morocco, in 1872, a country which he revisited on two other occasions, in 1877 (as physician to the Portuguese embassy), and in the early part of the present year. He was able on these occasions to visit the city of Morocco, as also the two other capitals, so difficult for a European to enter, Fez and Mequinez; indeed, he enjoyed the unique privilege of a special free pass or edict, given him by the Sultan. He profited by these occasions to explore unfrequented parts of the country, and amongst other minor discoveries succeeded in identifying the site of the Roman station *Volubilis*. The results of his first two journeys were made known by him in his two works, viz. 'Morocco and the Moors,' published in 1876, and 'Visit to the Court of Morocco,' 1879. His second journey was also the subject of a paper read by him at the Geographical Section of the British Association, Dublin, in 1878.

CORRESPONDENCE.

On the Dara Nur, or Dara Nuh, in Afghanistan.

64, LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS, November 3rd, 1879.

IN Major Tanner's most interesting letter about Kafiristan and the Kafirs, as given in the last number of the 'Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society,' he mentions the "Dara Nur," "which runs into the Kund Mountains." He translates the name as the "Valley of Light," adding thereto a note of interrogation. In March last I visited the spot, with Major Stewart of the Queen's Own Corps of Guides, who is not only an experienced topographical surveyor, but a master of the languages on the frontier as well. On that occasion I made a sketch of the valley from Islamabad, and on the authority of Arbab Mir Ahmad Khan, of Shewa, whom I take to be the same person mentioned in Major Tanner's letter, I have described my sketch as the

“Durreh Nuh,”—which I suppose in the modern system of spelling Indian names would be Dara Nuh,—or the Valley of Noah. The tradition is that the Ark rested on the Ram Kund, and that Nuh or Noah, with his family and all the living things, descended by this valley to the plains below, and hence the name. The words *Nuh* and *Nur* are so closely allied that it is quite possible they may have become mixed. There is also a relationship of ideas connected here, such, that whoever is familiar with the depths of Oriental symbolism may understand the possibility of the one word being given for the other. Still, as a mere matter of terms, it is a geographical point of importance. The name of the valley, as translated to me by Major Stewart, it will be seen agrees with the tradition connected with the mountain above it. This mountain I understood is a place of pilgrimage to both Hindus and Mahomedans in the present day, and it is believed that the Ark is still to be seen near the summit. According to Mir Ahmad Khan, who seemed rather loose in his faith on the subject, the Ark can only be seen on Fridays—the Mahomedan Sunday. It ought to be noticed that the words Ram Kund, or Koond, the Fountain of Ram, or God, are of Hindu origin, and that the name is derived from a small lake or tarn near its summit. Kund, or Koond, means a fountain, and the mountain is also known as *Umrit Kund*, or “Fountain of Immortality,”—this is also of Hindu origin. Here we have an illustration of an important point, that the old Hindu names, which go back to a very ancient date, are in many cases still retained in connection with prominent geographical features in this region,—of which the Hindu Kush may be given as a good example. The Mahomedans have, I am told, a similar tradition that the Ark rested after the Flood on the Takht-i-Suliman, of the Suliman range, on the right bank of the Indus. I may add that there are some Buddhist remains at Islampur, in the Kunar Valley; and at Kona-dey, or the “Old Village,” a couple of miles or so lower down, there is an old tope and some of the walls of an old Buddhist vihara still to be seen, and the village seems to have been built out of the remains of an older town of some importance. Mir Ahmad Khan pointed out to us the line of an old canal, or irrigation channel, along the base of the hills, which led the water from the Durreh Nuh, or Noah’s Valley, to the Dusht-i-Gumbeer, that is the Desert of Gumbeer, the desert now separating Kunar from Lughman, and which although in the present day a stony desert, was no doubt in former times a cultivated region. To this other instances could be added to show that in the Buddhist period large extents of ground were productive in the Jalalabad region which are now in a bare and desert condition. The ground between the present Jalalabad and Hada, as well as the plains between Pesh-Bolak and Chardeh, may be given as examples. These illustrations are important as showing that the country has retrograded during later times in its agricultural condition.

WILLIAM SIMPSON.

Avalanche of Peat in the Falkland Islands.

H.M.S. ‘ST. VINCENT,’ November 17th, 1879.

During the night of the 30th November, 1878, there occurred a phenomenon of a most unusual type in the Falkland Islands,—an avalanche of peat, which nearly overwhelmed the chief settlement. The peat bogs on the heights above Stanley, the chief town, gave way, and the black oozy mud rolled down the hill with a momentum which neither the iron stanchions around the reservoir nor the barriers by the sea could withstand. It broke through the backs of wooden houses, inundated the rooms, and obliged the inhabitants, rudely awakened from sleep, to flee for safety; a few pigs and calves were swallowed up in the irresistible stream, but fortunately no human lives were lost.

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