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From the EDITOR.—Revue Scientifique, No. 20.

From the EDITOR.—Matériaux pour l'histoire de l'homme, Tom. X, 7^e liv.

From Colonel HENRY CLINTON.—International Pronunciation Table on Card. Tableau Synoptique de Prononciation Internationale. On Spelling Reform. By A. V. W. Bickers.

From the SOCIETY.—Proceedings of the Philosophical Society of Glasgow. Vol. XI, Part 2.

The Rev. DUNBAR HEATH exhibited some squeezes of “Hamath Inscriptions.” An illustrated description of these will appear in the next number.

A. L. LEWIS, Esq., read a paper on “Ancient Arithmetical Progress, exemplified by Roman Numerals.”

M. DE LA COMPERIE exhibited specimens of Mosso (Chinese) writing.

In the absence of the Author, the Director read the following paper.

The TURCOMANS between the CASPIAN and MERV.

By ARMINIUS VAMBÉRY, Professor Oriental Languages, University, Buda-Pesth.

WHILST men are every year becoming better acquainted with the orographic and hydrographic conditions of many hitherto entirely sealed portions of Central Asia, our knowledge of the inhabitants, of their languages, history, manners, and customs is still very deficient.

This remark especially applies to that fraction of the Turkish race known under the name of *Turcoman*, a word the etymological meaning of which has been so variously explained; but which nevertheless has the simple *signification* of the Turks *par excellence*. This people deservedly bears the title because, of all the multifarious divisions of the far-spread Turkish race, there are few that can bear comparison with them in purity of race

and language. I allude to the *Turcoman* tribes who have inhabited, from time immemorial, the western portion of the great Turanian desert. Notwithstanding that they are split up into several subdivisions, and that fierce enmity rages amongst themselves, they have never lost the purity of their race, like the *Kirghises*, *Karakalpaks*, and *Uzbeks* upon whom the great wars, and particularly the irruption of the *Mongols*, has wrought a wonderful change in blood, as well as in manners.

Whilst the *Uzbeks*, originally a political and not an ethnical name, chiefly consist of *Turks*, *Kirghises*, *Mongols*, and *Tartars*, who partly came from the Golden Horde, and partly had been long previously settled in the Khanates of Central Asia, the *Turcomans* are known as having remained comparatively pure and free from intermixture. Even those who took part in the wars of Timour and Nadir have generally returned to their clans in the desert.

It is owing to this circumstance that the physical features of the *Turcomans*, in spite of intermarriages with Persian female slaves, which are, however, not so frequent as is generally supposed, have retained a purer type of the genuine Turkish race than the rest of their brethren.

As a general rule the *Turcomans* are of middle height, like the *Kirghises*, and unlike *Uzbeks*, *Karakalpaks*, and *Osmanlis*, among whom tall men are of frequent occurrence. The forehead is less broad and flat, and the eyes less almond-shaped than is the case with those *Turks* who live in the north-east of Central Asia, and form the transition from the Mongol race to the Turkish. There is, however, with regard to the typical expression, considerable variation amongst the *Turcomans* themselves.

The *Goklans*, a fraction of the *Yomuts*, and the *Eresoris* may be taken as the most degenerate, whilst the *Tekkes*, and particularly the *Tchaudars* and *Imrarlis*, bear the purest type of their nationality.

With regard to their early history, we find the *Salars* or *Saroks* first mentioned by the historians of the Arab invasion. This is a tribe now living to the south-east of Merv. Somewhat later the *Guz* or *Gozz* are mentioned as living in the environs of the present *Andkhoi*, where they caused much trouble to the *Samenides*, and became so powerful as to capture the Selajukian Prince Sanjar, whom they kept in prison for several years. Disregarding the erroneous transcription of Turkish words by Arab and Persian chroniclers, who from Tabari down to the latest writer have deformed almost every Turkish name, I cannot agree with those who discover in the aforesaid *Guz* or *Gozz*, the old Turkish mythical name of *Oghuz*. Such an absorption is contrary to the spirit of the Turkish languages. Only admitting

Guz to be the designation of clan, we may look upon it as the most eastern outpost of their nation, whose ancient home was that portion of the desert which stretches from the south-western shore of the Aral, along the east coast of the Caspian, down to the Grgen and Atrek.

Viewed in the light of comparative philology, the *Turcomans* stand nearest to the *Seljukians* of olden times, and consequently to the *Osmanlis* of to-day. This affinity is very striking, both as regards the grammar and the vocabulary. I will quote an example. The Ottoman writers of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries used a dialect similar to the writings of Makhdumkuli, a Turcoman poet of the last century. An Anatolian peasant can converse with greater ease with a *Yomut* or *Goklan Turcoman* than with an *Azarbaijani Turk*, who is his near neighbour. Even common traditions affirm this relationship, for during my travels as an incognito Osmanli in the Turcoman steppe, the saying—" *Bir kardashimiz Ruma kitmish dir*"—"A brother of ours has gone to the west"—was constantly repeated to me. The philological argument, together with the scanty historical data, admit of the supposition that the *Seljukian Turks* who overthrew the *Samanides*, and who, after conquering Persia and Syria, founded the first Turkish principalities in Asia Minor, were in all probability a brother tribe to the *Turcomans* who remained in their ancient seat, only gradually encroaching partly in a south-eastern, partly in a south-western and southern direction into the country which they occupy to-day.

Thus we learn from historical records that the *Yomuts* already inhabited the banks of Grgen and Atrek in the fifteenth century, while a large fraction of them still remains in the south-western part of the Khanat of Khiva. The *Adaks*, *Tchoudars*, and *Imrailis* still occupy their old home between the Caspian Sea and Urgenj, as do the *Okuz* and *Khidr*, who are mentioned by Abulgazi, and by the historiographer of Shaibani. The *Ersaris*, quoted by the former as inhabitants of Khiva, are found to-day between Kerki and Charjui on the left bank of the Oxus.

The general characteristic of these nomads is their intense love for a wandering life, in which they surpass all their brethren of the steppes. While political revolutions and the influence of Buddhistic and Islamite culture have produced a change in the mode of living among the *Kazaks*, *Kara-Kirghis*, *Kipchaks*, and other Turkish tribes, we are unable to discover a like change among the *Turcomans*, excepting, perhaps in the isolated cases of the *Ersaris* on the left bank of the Oxus, and of a few *Yomut* clans to the south of Khiva.

As signs of this strictly conservative spirit among the *Turco-*

mans may be mentioned their laxity in the observations of the tenets of Mohammedanism, for although their conversion dates back as far as that of the settled inhabitants of the Khanates, religion has made but very little progress in the interior of the desert. The more we learn of their manners, customs, and daily life, the more are we astonished to discover so many remnants of the Shaman faith. There we find the adoration of the much dreaded spirits called *Oi-karasi*, the wailing ceremonies, and the sacrifices offered to souls of the departed.

At first sight, and to those unacquainted with their language and manners, the *Turcoman* will seem decidedly more savage than his nomadic brethren in the north and in the north-east. But this is a mistake, for under the rough exterior there are hidden many of the fine qualities of unsophisticated primitive life of the Turkish race.

A couplet or verse from the poems of the national bard, Makhdumkuli, or a favourite melody, can change the wildest fury into mildness, and the appeal "*Balang bashi uchun!*" ("For the head of thy child!") has saved more than one Persian prisoner from cruelty and death. Greediness for booty and ferocity are certainly not of rare occurrence, but considering that these tribes have led a camp-life for several centuries, we may easily find an explanation for these traits of character.

Our information respecting the past history of the *Turcomans* is vague and uncertain, but still thicker is the cloud which hinders us from obtaining anything like accurate statistical *data* respecting their total number. From Galkin down to Captain Napier this question has been frequently touched upon. In default of better information, I still adhere to the numbers given in my "*Travels in Central Asia*," which are adopted by Venyukoff and Rittich. Though I cannot vouch for the round number of one million of souls, I believe that later statistical information may *increase*, but will not diminish that number. Single tribes were formerly more numerous and powerful than they are now.

The *Salor* and *Sariks* must have been at the time of the Arab conquest much more numerous than at present. The same may be said of the *Karas* and *Alielis*, who enlisted in great numbers in the army of Chengiz. But at the present time the *Tekkes*, of whom there is, excepting Abulgay's account, scarcely any mention in history, are the most numerous. Next to them come the combined *Yomuts* of Khiva and on the Görgen.

It may be assumed, as a general rule, that those *Turcomans* who by their position in the south-east part of the Hyrcanian desert come most in contact with the political movement on the highway from Turan to Iran, were the first to lose their

numerical strength. This was, in ancient times, the case with the *Salors*, *Sariks*, *Karas*, and *Okuz*, and this will also happen to the *Tekkes* who, unmolested hitherto under the shelter of Persian anarchy, will now have to undergo the hard trial of Russian supremacy, and will probably lose in the contest one fourth if not one third of their number.

In spite of their comparatively small numbers, the *Turcomans* have hitherto enjoyed the reputation of being fierce soldiers and dauntless adventurers. These qualities are partly to be attributed to the barren character of the steppes, and partly to the political condition of the neighbouring countries, which forced them into continual warfare to preserve their independence, which all nomads love, and for which the *Turcoman* is ever ready to sacrifice his life.

The sterility and nakedness of the Turcoman steppe are proverbial. We can hardly find any part of Central Asia which is more terrible, more void of the means of existence than the Kara-kum (black sand) desert, extending to Charjui, or than the Ust-yurt (upper home) stretching from the Kinderly Bay to Igdi. The Khalata sands on the right bank of the Oxus, the Batkak and Kizil-kum (swampy and red sands) are certainly not inferior as regards dreariness and horror. But they serve only as temporary places of abode to the *Kazaks*, whilst the *Turcomans*, constantly harassed by their neighbours, were more than once compelled to seek a refuge amidst a region cursed by nature, under a scorching sun, without a drop of drinkable water, and without a blade of grass for their cattle.

It may be said that the banks of the G6rgeren and Atrek, of the Chandir and Sumbar,* as well as of the Murgab and Tejen, are suitable for agriculture, and had nevertheless failed to attract the *Turcomans* to a peaceful life. In reply to such a remark, we would allude to the *Yomuts* in the south of Khiva, who, being less molested by inexorable tax-gatherers, have really adopted for some time past a half settled life. They till the soil, and bestow great care on their irrigation canals. They would become much more peaceful if the Khans of Khiva, moved by their empty exchequer, did not continually impose exactions on them. Similar and weightier reasons have compelled the *Yomuts*, the *Goklans*, and the *Tekkes* to rise in continual rebellion against the rulers of Tehran who, in their impotence to subdue these hardy nomads, have made devastating inroads which the haughty Persians are pleased to call "wars." These are repaid by Turcoman marauding parties, frequently in a more cruel and inhuman way.

* Sumbar is a contraction of Su-ambar *i.e.* "water reservoir."

I allude to the foraging and plundering parties, called *Alaman*, when men, women, and children are robbed and kidnapped, and whole districts of northern and eastern Khorasan are sometimes laid waste. This horrible and most detestable traffic in human flesh, of which I was an unhappy witness for months and months, makes me shudder even now, and will certainly not prompt me to exculpate the *Turcoman* robbers, as recent travellers have attempted to do, moved by political motives.

No! the *Turcomans*, who delight in the *Alamans*, are a most frightful set of men, and quite unworthy of our sympathy. But justice compels me to remark that the Persians would be less charitable and less humane if our European Legations in Tehran remained as indifferent spectators, and enabled the towns of Iran to offer such slave markets as Central Asian towns are, even now, in spite of the much vaunted Russian philanthropy.

Nomads of all times and all regions have been a plague to peaceable settlers in their vicinity; and this greediness, originating from the poverty of their own land, can only be restrained by power and good will: qualities in which the Central Asian and Iranian kings are sadly wanting.

But the moral and social conditions of men are always in strict conformity with natural and political exigencies. If, therefore, the *Kazaks*, who were man-stealers and robbers during the last century, now permit small caravans to pass unmolested over their deserts, and even single *tarantas*, I do not see why the *Turcomans* should not also be brought to a peaceful life. But their neighbours, and particularly Persia, must meet them honestly, and not with continual attacks upon their property and independence.

We must never forget that the *Turcoman* nomads, with all their reputation as cruel and ruthless plunderers, have many fine qualities in which they excel the neighbouring nomadic tribes, and especially the *Kazaks*, with whom they are frequently compared. Whilst the mental quickness of the latter commonly degenerates into cunning and fraud, the *Turcomans* are known, even among their enemies, for their truthfulness and the rigid observance of a plighted word—a virtue which is used to the disadvantage of the nomads by the deceitful Persians.

What struck me most during my sojourn among the *Turcomans* was their love and tenderness for their family and the respect they show to females. I found that women were not only quite on an equality with men as regards family rights, but that old matrons inherit the command over the clan, and enjoy the obedience of the rudest warriors. Their love of hospitality deserves equal praise. Their courage, and particu-

larly their ineradicable love of independence, will be a hard trial for the future conqueror. These qualities will tax the strength of Russia in subduing the roaming inhabitants of the Hyrcanian desert, in a manner which the northern Colossus has not experienced hitherto.

Apart from the great difficulties of the roads leading from the Caspian to Merv, of which Sir Henry Rawlinson has given us a good description in his learned paper—"The Road to Merv"—in the March number of the "Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society," I would hazard the opinion that the *Turcomans* will not be so easy to deal with as the *Kazaks* and *Karakalpaks*, although even these required more than one century to be brought under the present rule, and were only amenable to Russian supremacy after prolonged and gradual advances into the desert, the erection of detached forts, and the free use of bribery.

The Russians had a tolerably good example of the power of resistance and the staunchness of the *Turcomans* in 1873, during their campaign against the *Yomuts*; and it must be borne in mind that these *Yomuts* are but semi-nomads, and not half as courageous and warlike as their brethren in the south. The *Tekkes*, whose country is the present goal of Russian desire, are not only the most numerous, but also the most valiant of all the *Turcomans*.

Putting, therefore, all political controversies aside, we may assume that the ultimate result of a costly and fatiguing march across the desert from the Atrek to Merv will not compensate the Russians for their losses and sacrifices. The *Tekkes*, knowing the fate that awaits them, will resist to the last. Driven from one point, they will emerge at another, harassing the invading enemy with all the means at their disposal.

Unless Russia has made up her mind to wage a war of extermination against the well-mounted horsemen who are the actual possessors of Merv, the expenses of the present and of any future campaign will be entirely thrown away.

Under such circumstances, the idea suggests itself whether it would not be better for both parties to make choice rather of a peaceful solution. The friendship and goodwill of the nomads might be secured by an agreement which would guarantee their independence of the powerful neighbour in the east and north, and secure them from the encroachments of the Persians. It is certainly a mistake to believe that the *Tekkes* or the *Yomuts* have no other means of subsistence than robbery and man-stealing. We must remark that this detestable occupation, though it suits the adventurous and rapacious character of the horsemen of the steppes, is far from being a common practice,

and its cessation will by no means make the continuous existence of the nomads in their native deserts impossible. The testimony of history supports our argument. If the *Turcomans* have been kept from inroads across the Persian frontier so often even in the present century, by the firm hands of a few capable governors of Khorasan, and if these inroads were of rare occurrence in several periods of history, they cannot be held to be necessary for the existence of the *Turcomans* at the present day.

Let the more civilised Powers try justice and humanity instead of conquests and wars of extermination, and the nomads will become more tractable and less apprehensive for their independence.

DISCUSSION.

Mr. KEANE said that the description given in the paper of the physical features of the *Turcomans* raised, without solving, a very important question. Professor Vambéry evidently regarded the Mongolian type as different from the *Turks*; yet both belonged undoubtedly to the same great Finno-Tataric linguistic family. It was not pretended that one race had borrowed its speech from the other, and there had certainly been no change of that sort within the historic period. Both had from time immemorial spoken the same or nearly allied tongues; yet they presented ethnically distinct types. Here therefore we seemed to have a very remarkable instance of the persistence of language with a profound modification of the physical characteristics. For if both started originally with one common mother tongue, it was obvious that they must have also originally belonged to one ethnical stock, and have subsequently become differentiated, while retaining the common speech. This was at variance with the generally accepted doctrine that physical traits were more persistent than language. He had not seen any theory offering an explanation of the difficulty, and regretted that the learned author was not present to throw some light on the subject.

Mr. HYDE CLARKE remarked that the paper was written before the defeat of the Russians by the Tekke *Turcomans*, and was therefore prophetic as well as exact. Those in the room conversant with the population would be disposed to support Professor Vambéry's proposition as to the connection between the *Seljuks* of Asia Minor and the *Osmanli*. It was curious to note the resemblance to the Professor's description of the *Yuruks* and so-called *Turcomans* of Asia Minor who were commonly termed *Kizillash* by the orthodox. They were credited with the same superstitions. So far as he had observed, the women exercised much influence, and possessed great independence, although nominally subservient to the men.