

than are the dreary plateaux of Tibet.

These things being so, the historical relations of Central Asia must obviously be rather with the east than with the west, but more with both east and west than with the north and the south. Such has been the case. Central Asia has come comparatively little into the history of the world. When she has done so by sending out swarms of invaders, as in the days of Attila, or again in those of Zinghis Khan and Timour, these invading tribes have seldom maintained their connection with the centre. Sometimes they have shrunk back, their empires being broken up after one or two generations. Sometimes they have become absorbed in the population of the conquered country, and lost their hold on their old home. This has been the case with the Ottoman Turks, who are to a comparatively small extent of pure Tartar or Turcoman blood. A Central Asiatic race may form an empire—a vast one like that of Zinghis, or a small one like that of the Ephthalites; but such an empire either swiftly dissolves, owing to its wanting a nucleus of settled and civilized population, or else the race which creates it becomes practically merged in the inhabitants of the conquered districts. It is thus that the Turkish Empire lives on now after two centuries of steady decay. The Mogul Empire in India lasted to our own day, for it was not absolutely put an end to till the Queen of Great Britain assumed the direct sovereignty of British territories in that country after the Mutiny of 1857, although it had practically ceased to exist a good while before. Here you have the fact that wherever the Central Asiatic races come down to the west or south, they get severed from the original stock. Whether they found empires or are absorbed and so disappear, in neither case is the connection a lasting one. But in the east they have more than once conquered

China, and their connection with China is maintained because there is no such marked barrier between the great central plateau of Asia and the valleys of China, as is constituted by the deserts of the west, or the mountains in the south. To this day China rules as far west as the Thian Shan, her own present dynasty being sprung from the sons of the desert. The tie between Central Asia and China has thus been maintained, whereas that between Central Asia and the rich southern and south-western countries of Asia was soon broken.

One may apply what has been said about Asia to Asia Minor. The inner part is a high, dry, bare plateau, not so inhospitable as the great central plateau of Asia, but presenting, in miniature, similar features; and you will find here, also, that civilization has sprung up round the coast, but has attained less high development in the interior, that the influence and importance of the interior has therefore been comparatively slight, and that some of its mountainous regions have been but little affected by the great changes which passed upon Asia Minor as a whole. It was the nature of his territories that enabled Mithridates to give so much trouble to the Romans. Later on, we observe that the Isaurians were but little affected by the Roman Empire down to the seventh or eighth century; as similarly the people of the hill country Cilicia remained scarcely touched by the tides of invasion and conquest which swept past them. Thus a body of Armenian Christians has in its mountain fastnesses north of the Gulf of Scanderoon maintained a freedom almost amounting to legal independence from the fourteenth century down to our own days. This was due to the fact that there was little in these countries to attract invaders, and that they were difficult of access owing to the mountain structure.