

the greatest part of his territory, and permitted the fatuous prince the enjoyment of the rest simply as the suffragan of the Russian Emperor.*

Bokhara was, once upon a time, one of the most powerful of the Central Asiatic Khanates. Politically it was not equal to Afghanistan, but it was the Mecca of the Asiatic Mohammedans. The shrines of Moslem saints scattered over its holy soil, and the schools and colleges of its capital, gave it, in the eyes of a people with whom religion and rule are inseparably mixed up, a distinction over kingdoms more powerful in men and arms. Yet it is nearly four times the size of modern Khiva, and has a population almost three times as numerous. The banks of the Oxus, and the region fertilised by the water drawn from it by the Zarafshan River Canal, is about the only part of the country cultivated. Outside these oases the land is desert, sandy steppe, in which a well is a highly-valued possession. In the watered region, cotton, silk, grains, and fruits are grown, and in these products, and in the broad-tailed sheep and cattle reared, a considerable trade is done with the camel-caravans passing to the shores of the Caspian, *vid* Khiva, and northward to Siberia, and westward to China.†

"Bokhara the noble," as the capital was once styled, little merits nowadays its pompous designation. Vambéry describes it as one of the dirtiest and most unhealthy places in all Asia, and later travellers have given a scarcely more flattering account of this once famous city, which the inhabitants claim to have been founded by Alexander the Great, among the reeds and fens of the Zarafshan River oasis. Its population, consisting of Uzbeqs, Afghans, Arabs, Jews, Nogais (Russian Tatars), Kirghiz, Tadjiks, Hindoos, and Turkomans, do not number much over 30,000, though Wolff has estimated them as high as 180,000. The place, however, still boasts of many colleges or "medresses," and the spiritual wants of the people are catered to by a multitude of mollahs, whose mosques still retain something of their ancient splendour. The city is surrounded by a wall four miles in circuit, and pierced by eleven crumbling gates. The bazaars, frequented by almost every Asiatic people, presents a busy sight; while at Karshee, south-east of the capital, and also a great trading place, excellent swords, knives, and other articles of cutlery are forged. The Khan is an unqualified despot, but his power is on the wane, since part of his ancient territory has passed into the hands of Russia. Fifty years ago this Central Asiatic monarch was courted by the English and the Russians, much after the same fashion as the Shah of Persia is, or was, or as the Amir of Afghanistan used to be. But Nasrullah Bahader treated the one with arrogance and the other with contempt, the consequence of which was that his successor, Mozaffar-eddin, found an army of the Czar in his territory, and by 1868 a Russian garrison firmly stationed in Samarcand. The result is that Bokhara has become though nominally independent, in reality a dependency of Russia, which cannot fail before long to absorb it entirely. These Central Asiatic Khanates have a fatalism for running their heads against the pricks, and the Manghit dynasty, which succeeded in

* Burnaby: "A Ride to Khiva" (1877); MacGahan: "Campaigning on the Oxus" (1874); Rawlinson: "England and Russia in the East" (1874); Baker: "Clouds in the East" (1876); Clarke: "Statistics and Geography of Russian Turkestan" (1879); and Schuyler's and Vambéry's works *passim*.

† Vambéry: "Skizzenbilder auf den Morgenlande" (1874); "Sketches of Central Asia" (1875).