

ever may have been the case in the past, it will not have to contend against that love for 'the thing which has been' which in all periods of history has afforded a distinguishing characteristic of the average official intelligence. In a nation of sailors and yachtsmen a suggestion for the improvement of lighthouses and for the greater safety of shipping ought to be certain of speedy and complete consideration upon its merits alone."

THE TURKOMANS

AT the meeting of the Anthropological Institute on November 23, there was read a short but suggestive paper on these wayward children of the desert, contributed by Prof. Arminius Vambéry. The learned writer, who has perhaps as great a personal knowledge of Eastern nations as any man living, regarded the Turkomans as on the whole the purest and most representative branch of the widespread Túrki family and described their outward features as quite distinct from the Mongolian. His account was somewhat vague, but the inference evidently was that they belonged in his opinion ethnically to the Caucasian rather than to the Mongolian group. Nor did he attribute this to the gradual absorption of Iranian elements, but, on the contrary, stated that intermarriages with Persian women were much less frequent than is usually supposed, and that the Turkomans are now what they always have been, men of medium stature, like the Kirghizes and unlike the Usbegs and Osmanlis, amongst whom tall individuals are far from rare, with straight or but very slightly oblique ("almond-shaped") eyes, handsome regular features and fair complexion. He further stated that the Turkoman language was also one of the very purest Túrki tongues still spoken, so much so, that an ordinary Seljukian Turk of Asia Minor would have less difficulty in conversing with a Tekke or Yomut Turkoman than with his nearer neighbours the Turki nomads of Azarbijan and other parts of Persia. In fact, such is the purity of their speech, that the Rev. James Bassett, of the American Mission at Tehrán, is now putting through the press in London his translation of St. Matthew's Gospel in the Jagatai Túrki for the special use of the Tekke Turkomans. Jagatai, it need scarcely be remarked, is one of the most cultivated of all the Tartar tongues and is still current in Bokhara, Khiva, Ferghana, and parts of Kashgaria. In it are written the Emperor Baber's memoirs, and being less affected by Arabic and Persian elements than the Osmanli of Constantinople, it may be taken as, on the whole, the most representative of Túrki idioms. On the other hand, the Túrki belongs undoubtedly to the same great linguistic connection as the Mongolian, both being recognised by modern philologists as collateral, though independent, members of the so-called Finno-Tataric or Ural-Altai family of languages. Hence Vambéry's description of the physical characteristics of the Turkoman race places them in a sufficiently anomalous position from the anthropological point of view, in so far as they would seem to belong ethnically to the Caucasian, but linguistically to the Mongol stock. Such anomalies are, no doubt, common enough, and instances abound of peoples having changed their language and adopted that of the races by whom they may have been subdued or otherwise influenced. But in the present case the difficulty cannot be got over in this way, nor is it pretended that the Turkomans have adopted a Mongolian form of speech, or indeed that they ever spoke any other language than Túrki. But Túrki and Mongolian being offshoots of the same organic tongue, it follows that both races must have had a common origin, and that the Turkomans have since become differentiated from the ethnical, while retaining the linguistic connection. Now this is entirely at variance with the commonly-accepted doctrine that physical traits are always more persistent than speech, in other words

that, assuming absolute isolation, the process of linguistic will always be more rapid than that of racial evolution.

In the abstract this is no doubt true enough, but practically there is no such thing as absolute isolation in the present stage of the world's history. Least of all can it be predicated of the Turkomans, who are intruders from the east or north-east in their present habitat, who must have absorbed far more Iranian blood than Vambéry is inclined to admit, and who, instead of being the purest representatives of the Turki race, seem really to be a mongrel people, the outcome of fusion of Mongolian and Caucasian elements in Hyrcania, Bactriana, and the Lower Oxus basin. It must be remembered that the whole of this region, as far north at least as the 40th parallel, formed an integral part of the ancient Persian Empire, and the presence of numerous Iranian communities still speaking Persian dialects both in the lowlands and highlands of Turkestan (Tajiks and Gaichas) sufficiently proves that this region was fairly occupied by peoples of Iranian stock, if, indeed, it was not their primitive home, before the arrival of the Turki race driven still westwards by the Mongolians of the Gobi. When the Persian power was finally broken by the Arabs, Turki hordes easily took permanent possession of the Atrek and Murghab Valleys, as well as of the Lower Oxus; but in so doing they gradually absorbed as much Iranian blood as to have in course of time become largely assimilated to the Caucasian type. The same fate overtook their Seljukian brethren in Asia Minor and the Balkan peninsula, all of whom have everywhere become largely Aryanised, and have thus collectively contributed to produce the impression, shared by Vambéry with many ethnologists, that the Túrki and Mongol types were originally distinct. They themselves have always rightly looked on each other as brethren, and although no importance can be attached to the tradition of a legendary Túrki, son of Japhet, whence both sprang through the twin brothers Tatar and Mongol, it nevertheless points, like so many other national myths, at a fundamental truth.

Nor are the Mongolian traits so far effaced from the Turkoman race as Vambéry would have us suppose. In "Clouds in the East" Valentine Baker, an equally careful observer, describes them as "muscular, heavy-limbed men, with large hands, rather flat, broad faces, and small eyes, thus showing much of the Tatar type" (p. 212). He even expresses his surprise that it should still be so distinctly marked, "as they constantly capture Persian girls, who become their wives, and so must bring a strong infusion of Persian blood into the race" (*ib.*).

The genuine Túrki type, however, is still best exhibited in the Kazaks, or, as they are more frequently called, the Kirghizes and Kara-Kirghizes of the West Siberian steppes and Pamir table-land. These Kirghizes speak a pure Túrki dialect, and because of their distinctly Mongolian features—square, flat face, high cheek bones, oblique eyes, large mouth, &c.—they are supposed to be Mongolised Tatars by those who hold the two types to be originally distinct. But the supposition is entirely gratuitous, and although they may have been to some extent affected by Mongolian elements during the incessant migrations of the Central and Eastern Asiatic nations, there is nothing in their appearance to imply any profound modification of their outward features, while their Túrki speech militates against the assumption. They resemble the Mongolians because both were originally one, and because in their present homes between Kulja and the Ural Mountains they came in contact with no foreign elements by which the race could be seriously affected. In the Kirghizes we therefore recognise a living proof of the primordial identity of Turk and Mongol.

The transition between the Kirghizes and Turkomans is formed by the Kipchaks of Khokand and other parts of Eastern Turkestan, who, though often classed with the

