

Theology on the *Web*.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbadshaw>

A table of contents for *The Churchman* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_churchman_os.php

THE
CHURCHMAN

A Monthly Magazine

*CONDUCTED BY CLERGYMEN AND LAYMEN
OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND*

—
VOL. XII.
—

LONDON
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW
1885

common prayer beside the tomb of one of the earliest and saintliest of English scholars.

ALFRED PLUMMER.



ART. VII.—DR. LANSDELL'S TRAVELS IN CENTRAL ASIA.

Russian Central Asia, including Kuldja, Bokhara, Khiva, and Merv.

By HENRY LANSDELL, D.D., M.R.A.S., F.R.G.S. Author of
"Through Siberia." With frontispiece, maps, and illustrations.
2 vols. Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1885.

BY "Russian Central Asia," as read in the title of Dr. Lansdell's work,¹ is meant the Tsar's dominions lying between the Oxus and the Irtish and between Omsk and Samarkand. This territory measures from west to east 1,250 miles, or the distance from London to Petersburg, and from north to south 1,100 miles, or the distance from Petersburg to the Crimea. It has a population of nearly four millions, which is at the rate of only five to the square mile. It is divided into two general governments or vice-royalties, the western portion being Turkistan and the eastern the Steppe.

In his third chapter Dr. Lansdell relates his journey from the Urals to Omsk ; and in the fourth chapter we have a description of the vice-royalty of the Steppe. The Steppe is divided into the governments or provinces of Akmolinsk, Semipolatinsk, and Semirechia. Akmolinsk, it seems, is as large as France. On arriving at Omsk, says our author, "I noticed from the deck of the steamer² an officer on the landing-stage whose face seemed to be familiar to me. He turned out to be the police-master, who, three years before, had shown me the prisons of Tomsk. He recognised me, and kindly sent men to look after the baggage, by whose help ere long we were safely housed at the Hotel Moskva." In the evening, the travellers³ took a droshky to make some calls, having introductions to some members of the Omsk branch of the Imperial Geographical Society. One of these gentlemen, Mr. Balkashin, who had met Mr. Mackenzie Wallace and Mr. Ralston at Yaroslaf, earnestly advised Dr. Lansdell not to try to spread the Scriptures among the Kirghese. In friendly warmth he said,

¹ The author's previous work, "Through Siberia," was warmly recommended in THE CHURCHMAN of February, 1882.

² In 1879 our author followed the post-road from Tiumen to Tobolsk. But in the present journey he made his way up the Irtish to Omsk, a voyage that occupied five days.

Mr. Sevier, M.B., a physician who had just finished his studies at Edinburgh, Paris, and Vienna, accompanied Dr. Lansdell as interpreter.

“*Dieu vous préserve, Monsieur, ne faites pas cela.* The Kirghese are such bigoted Muhammadans that they start back at the very sight of a cross. . . . You will very likely be injured, and get yourself into a row, and the Russians too.” Mr. Balkashin, an Imperial Consul, naturally looked at the matter through official spectacles. Another agreeable acquaintance was a son of the Governor of Odessa, who spoke English well. He accompanied our author next morning with the police-master, to see the prison. In the evening, dining with the acting Governor-General, Dr. Lansdell met the Government architect, who had been to London for some days, and spoke English like a native.

Leaving Omsk, our author purchased an ordinary podorojna, for which to Semipolatinsk he paid £1 9s. 3d.; but in addition he obtained, through the Governor, a letter from the postmaster to the station-keepers which helped him famously. In the course of a drive of nearly 500 miles to Semipolatinsk they changed horses 32 times—that is, at each station. One stage of twelve miles was done in less than an hour. The Cossack station-masters and *yemstchiks*, or postilions, were amiable, and did their best with little persuasion. The distance to Pavlodar—260 miles—was accomplished in 44 hours. When 120 miles from Omsk,

We were now [says the traveller] well on to the Steppe, whose straight, unbroken horizon so frequently reminds one of the ocean. The soil is yielding, stoneless, and sandy, thus making the smoothest of roads, on which our horses dashed along. The country is nearly treeless, and the ground almost without vegetation, so that one had only to picture the surface covered with snow to see the necessity for the roadside wickerwork erections to mark the route in winter. We were crossing in the month of August this steppe, parched by the summer sun; but Dr. Finsch, who in 1876 travelled over the same route in spring, speaks with more appreciation of its appearance. The Steppe is not, indeed, a grass-covered flat, for the verdure is found only in patches, and then forms no turf, but grows, like the bunch or buffalo-grass of the prairie, in separate clumps, although the steppe-grass is longer. For great distances the steppe is covered with thickets of the *Spiraea* or *Meadow-sweet*.

At Pavlodar, and afterwards, there was no difficulty in selling Kirghese New Testaments, and none of the Muhammadans—not even the mullahs—displayed that fanaticism which the Englishman had been warned against. At one of the stations beyond Pavlodar Dr. Lansdell met the Governor-General, and obtained from his Excellency a most serviceable recommendation to postal and other authorities in the Steppe.

Semipolatinsk, the capital of the province of that name, is surrounded by a desert of sand. In the bazaars of Semipolatinsk Russian and Tatar merchants sell tea, sugar, and other

groceries ; cotton stuffs, Chinese silks, porcelain, furs, wax, and honey. The principal trade is carried on in winter, when the Cossacks and peasants come in from the neighbouring districts, bringing skins, ropes, and other produce. The Kirghese also—some on horseback and others in camel carts—bring cattle and camel's hair.

A Crown podorojna, now kindly granted them, was a source of great comfort to the travellers ; and in their journey onwards there was less of difficulty and distress than might have been expected. On one stage the road lay sometimes on rocky hillocks and sometimes over sand, in which the wheels occasionally stuck. Some distance beyond Sergiopol they arrived at a very desolate place, the most miserable station they had seen—a tumbledown house in the desert.

Here we breakfasted [writes Dr. Lansdell] and took our morning wash, but both under difficulties. One of the inconveniences of post-travelling in Asiatic Russia is the absence of good lavatory accommodation. The common method among the peasants of washing the hands, is to place them beneath a bowl of water fixed at a height, out of which a stream trickles. One accustomed, therefore, to the orthodox "tub" wherein to splash about, finds himself inconveniently restricted in his toilet. Moreover, as these washing contrivances in Asia are frequently placed out of doors in the yard, it will be understood what a comfort it was to have brought with me an indiarubber basin. Some travellers had arrived before us—an officer, I think, and his wife—who consequently occupied the guest-chamber ; and, there being no room for us in the inn, the post-mistress brought the samovar outside the stable and spread for us a table in the wilderness. All around was a barren steppe, without a blade of vegetation the horses could eat. It was truly pitiable to see them crawling around us almost starved. It appeared that their usual supply of corn had not been brought, and the poor creatures were trying to pick up the handfuls of chaff lying about.

To travel from Omsk to Kuldja, a distance of 1,800 miles, was a fortnight's labour. The travellers had taken their clothes off to sleep only the two nights at Semipolatinsk. They arrived at Kuldja late in the evening, too late to present letters of introduction, and, as there was no hotel, they had to sleep on the bench in the dirty post-house. Next day they were invited to stay at the Consulate. The charms of this house have been praised by Dr. Schuyler, and by Mr. Ujfalvy the Hungarian traveller. On the Sunday, in the morning, Dr. Lansdell went to the Russian church, and in the evening conducted a religious service for a few Chinese Roman Catholics.¹ The following day, at the Buddhist pagoda,

¹ "I had heard and read of a small colony of Roman Catholics at Kuldja, amongst whom Christianity was introduced by French Missionaries who came from Peking, some say a hundred years ago, in ac-

the only one in Kuldja, he disposed of some Mongol and Chinese Scriptures ; and in the bazaars he sold several copies. The Mussulmans seemed quite as eager as the others to buy the holy books ; and several copies were judiciously distributed, so that three cases were emptied in Kuldja.

From Kuldja our travellers made their way westward to Vierny, the capital of Semirechia, where they made some pleasant acquaintances and had a refreshing rest. In this town are two churches and a mosque ; the bulk of the people are of the orthodox faith, and the foundations are laid for a cathedral. A visit was paid to the Archbishop (Archbishop of Turkistan and Tashkend), who had served as chaplain at Rome, had a good library, and spoke Italian fluently. The Vice-Governor, M. Aristoff, had read of Dr. Lansdell's visits to the prisons of Siberia, and of his distribution of the Scriptures, of which he heartily approved. Accordingly, for the five hospitals and five prisons of the province 80 Scriptures and 100 religious publications were placed with the police-master.

The general government of Turkistan includes the four provinces of Syr-daria and Amu-daria, Ferghana, and Zarafshan. Of these provinces, their natural productions, peoples, rivers, mountains, and so forth, the work before us contains an interesting and very precise account. The metropolis, Tashkend, in size and extent, covers as much ground as Paris. It is one of the largest towns of the whole of Central Asia, and the number of its population is equalled only by Bokhara. It is, moreover, a very ancient town. It is situated on a high plateau, and is surrounded of course by a high castellated wall. European or Russian Tashkend, divided from Asiatic Tashkend by a canal, has developed rapidly during the twenty years of its existence. The streets are wide and regular, lined with narrow canals and stately poplars. The viceregal palace is a fine building, and the Governor-General has a summer villa in the outskirts of the town. His Excellency readily undertook (Sep. 15th) that copies of the Scriptures should be distributed as Dr. Lansdell desired ; and as General Ivanoff, the Governor of the Zarafshan province, then staying in Tashkend, happened to pay a visit to the Governor-General at the same moment as the Englishman, an arrangement was made on the spot for nearly all the prisons and hospitals of Turkistan. As to the journey homewards,¹ it

cordance with which Mr. Ujifalvy states that he found among them Latin and French books of the last century and beginning of the present. Mr. Ashton Dilke, in 1873, stated that before the insurrection these Christians were nearly 400 in number, but that 300 of them, including their priest, Father Thomas, were then massacred."—P. 225.

¹ On Dec. 21st, in London, he ended his journey of 12,000 miles, during which he was absent from England 179 days, having slept in his clothes half the nights.

was arranged that the travellers should go, as they desired, to Samarkand and Bokhara, and to Petro-Alexandrovsk, floating 300 miles down the Oxus, and so to Khiva, whence they might cross the great desert to the Caspian Sea. The Governor-General promised all possible aid, including letters to the Emir of Bokhara and the authorities of Khokand. All this kindness was capped by General Ivanoff, who invited Dr. Lansdell during his sojourn at Samarkand to stay at the palace. Our author drove back to the hotel with a mind considerably relieved. Not only had he now virtually accomplished the major part of his desire respecting the distribution of the Scriptures, but he began to see the feasibility of entering Khokand and Bokhara, upon which no Englishman living had set eyes, and on the realization of which by himself his friends had been very sceptical. The afternoon was spent in a visit to the Central Asian Jews. He had received from the Lord Mayor (Sir W. Ellis) a commendatory letter, which had been translated by Dr. Herman Adler, the delegate chief rabbi in London, into rabbinic Hebrew, and, in addition, the document had been translated into Russian, Persian, Arabic, and Turki. At the new synagogue, in the Russian quarter, great interest was manifested in this letter; of these European Jews most had come to Turkistan as soldiers. Afterwards, Dr. Lansdell paid a visit to the old synagogue.

We drove [he writes] to the native town, to seek the meeting-place of the Asiatic Jews, and after going as far as the isvostchik, or cabman, could take us, by reason of the narrowness and miserable paving of the streets, we took to our feet, and passing through narrow lanes and alleys, came into a small yard, on one side of which was a miserable shed with a lean-to roof of poles, wretchedly covered, whilst under and all around sat a crowd of people assembled for prayer and reading. On the Friday evening the Jews assemble in the synagogue, which is compared to a bridegroom, to welcome the coming in of the Sabbath, that is beautifully personified in one of their prayers as a bride, whilst on Saturday evening they gather to bid the Sabbath farewell. Whether, on the present occasion, it was this stated Sabbath evening service, or something of a less formal character, I am not sure; but so surprised did they appear at our sudden visit, and above all so curious to get a peep at my letter, that, the service being speedily concluded, all crowded around. From hence we were led to an adjacent part of the bazaar to another assembly, where, within still narrower limits, under a straw roof, a number of grave and reverend elders were sitting on the ground and praying, or reading and intoning. This struck me as a remarkable sight, by reason of the magnificent faces of some of the old men. With their huge turbans of spotless white, and Oriental flowing robes, they reminded me of the typical Israelites, depicted by Holman Hunt in his picture of "Finding Christ in the Temple," and other works. The miserable accommodation of the Tashkend Jews, even for divine worship, brought vividly to one's mind to

how low a condition this people are sunk in some parts of their dispersion. They read my letter, and received my visit evidently with pleasure, and both showed me their copy of the Law, ornamented with silver and precious stones, and also permitted me to look into the cupboard containing their books; these last did not appear very plentiful, and as I had brought some Hebrew Old Testaments with me, I offered to sell them at reasonable prices, if they would come to the hotel. Their *Torah*, or manuscript of the Law, had been written and mounted in Bokhara, but was not remarkable. Their having no synagogue, together with the poverty and ill-furnished condition of their hired place of prayer, was explained to a large extent by the fact that almost all the Jews in Tashkend are traders and sojourners only, as also by the oppression to which, before the Russian occupation, they were subject under the Khans of Khokand.

The journey from Tashkend by Khojend to Khokand is well described, and is full of interest. On arriving at Khojend it was pleasant to find that the travellers were expected; and dinner was quickly made ready. "Whilst waiting," says our author, "I felt unusually tired and sleepy, though I know not why, for we had been travelling only forty hours, which was nothing in comparison with the nights upon nights spent in the tarantass north of Tashkend; but I suppose my training had been somewhat demoralized by sleeping in a bed, and the comparative comforts we had enjoyed at the capital." Beyond Khojend the road was far from good, in some places "atrocious." The country was interspersed by desert patches of shifting sand, which encroaches like a flood, destroying houses and cultivated fields, and so driving away the population. Some of the great sand-heaps are 100 feet high. Fortunately when the English travellers passed the air was calm and the sand at rest.

M. Ushakoff, their host at Khokand, a judicial functionary, had promised to send to the gate a djiguitt, or policeman, to await their coming; and when they arrived the man was there in flowing robes and white turban, ready to mount his horse and precede them. They had to make their way through by-streets with just room enough for their vehicle, until at last they entered grounds surrounding a house of native build, very pretty, which had belonged to the Khan's eldest son. M. Ushakoff had command of a number of djiguitts, and some of them always accompanied him in the streets. As one native after another rose from his squatting position and respectfully stood erect, or stroked his beard, or as another dismounted from horse or camel, Dr. Lansdell was invited to consider what his cicerone called Asiatic politeness. "But it had struck me," he writes, "in another way. The subservience of the Khokandians excelled all I met in Central Asia; and

when I remembered that Khokand had come but recently under the sway of the Russians, and that only after two or three sound thrashings, it occurred to me that this alleged politeness might be in reality fear. Dr. Schuyler, at all events, experienced no such politeness from the Khokandians when they were independent, nor did we from the natives in the town of Bokhara."

Dr. Lansdell's letter of recommendation obtained for him a speedy welcome from the Jews in Khokand. On arriving at the small square whitewashed room that served them for a synagogue, he found they had no ancient manuscripts, their quite modern copy of the Law having been written in Bokhara at a cost of £15. A Jew from Bokhara, in reply to a question about Dr. Wolff, remarked that his father saved the life of "*Yusuf Voolff*." Until the advent of the Russians, it seems, few Jews were content to reside in Khokand, inasmuch as they were harshly treated, and subject to many annoyances, as their brethren in Bokhara now are.

At the bazaar of Khokand, which Schuyler and Ujifalvy agree in praising as the best in Central Asia, one meets with silk and velvet from Bokhara; silk, stuffs, and camlets from Marghilan; hand-worked copper goods; Dungan hats from Western China; *Khalats*, or robes of startling colours, in satin and silk; Samarcand knives, jewellery, and objects cut in jade and onyx. For the manufacture of brass ewers Khokand is famous, and Dr. Lansdell secured a handsome one for the British Museum. From the surrounding mountains are brought into Khokand various kinds of furs, the prices of which vary from 2s. for a black cat or a black sheepskin to 40s. for a black lambskin, or 50s. for that of a tiger. Dark brown fox furs range from 16s. to 24s.

Of Samarcand, the one town of antiquities that Russia possesses in the whole of her dominions, our author's description is very readable. In the work on Bokhara by Professor Vámbéry, published twelve years ago, appears an interesting historical sketch of Samarcand.¹ "If we take into consideration," says the Professor, "all that this city has gone through in the two thousand years from the conquest by Alexander, during the struggles of so many different dynasties, at the hands of Greeks, Arabs, Turks, Mongolians, and Uzbegs, it would be difficult to find another spot in Asia with so chequered a

¹ In "1868, the Russian Christians," says the Professor, "took possession of Samarcand, the once splendid capital of Timour, the birth-place and the grave of so many men distinguished in the annals of Islam The first conqueror of the country, so far as we know, was Alexander (the Macedonian), and another Alexander (II. of Russia) has been the last."—"History of Bokhara," p. 411.

history of sunny and stormy days to compare with it." Our author's historical summary is as good as his description. He saw, of course, Tamerlane's tomb, and all the "lions" of the city, ancient and modern. He also visited the prison; and some of the most interesting chapters in the work follow his account of this visit. They answer the question, "Do we know the truth about Russian prisons?" For ourselves, we are inclined to think that Dr. Lansdell has proved his case. This at least will be admitted on all sides, that as regards both prisons and hospitals, his inquiries and investigations have been of real service.

In the second volume Dr. Lansdell relates his journeyings through Bokhara, Khiva, and Turkmenia. The chapter on the city of Bokhara¹ is especially attractive, while it is rich in information; and the description of his "camel cradle" experiences across the Aralo-Caspian desert is very enjoyable, with many tempting bits of adventure. But we must content ourselves with referring our readers to the volume.

To this notice of a most interesting work it should be added that the information with which both volumes are richly charged seems thoroughly accurate. The references to Old Testament expressions are welcome and informing. Several appendices are of value, in many respects indeed unique. The volumes are admirably printed in large, clear type, and the maps are excellent. As to the esteemed author's tact, good temper, courage, and devotion to duty, we make no remark; but at least in tendering our hearty thanks to him we may express our pleasure and satisfaction with the work as that of a faithful Minister of the Church of England.



Reviews.

The Congo, and the Founding of its Free State. A story of work and exploration. By HENRY M. STANLEY, author of "Through the Dark Continent," "How I found Livingstone," etc. Two vols., with 122 full-page and smaller illustrations, two large maps and several smaller ones. Low and Co.

THIS work has been eagerly looked forward to, and will be read with interest and enjoyment. It is dedicated to the King of the Belgians, Léopold II, "the generous Monarch who so nobly conceived, ably

¹ "I have a dim recollection, as a child, of hearing Dr. Wolff lecture on his travels. . . . How little I then dreamed that I should be the next of the Queen's subjects to enter Bokhara! yet on October 11th, 1882, I found myself approaching the very gate by which I presume Burnes had entered fifty years before."—Vol. ii., p. 78.