

## IV. NOTES AND NEWS.

*Harsha Carita*.—Mr. Thomas, of Trinity College, Cambridge, is preparing, in collaboration with Prof. Cowell, a translation of this work, which will be published, when completed, by the Royal Asiatic Society's Oriental Translation Fund.

*Mr. W. W. Rockhill*, one of the results of whose last journey to Tibet was the excellent series of articles in our "Journal" of last year, has again started on a tour of exploration in that country, beginning with the Kokonor district.

*Chinese Caricatures*.—Dr. Griffith John's researches into the causes at the bottom of the recent anti-Foreign riots in the valley of the Yangtze have resulted, writes the *Mercury*, in the publication of one of the most remarkable books ever printed in China. We refer to the volume just issued at Hankow, entitled "The cause of the Riots in the Yangtze Valley: a complete Picture Gallery," which has been sent to us for review. The book is printed upon Chinese paper and bound in native style; it consists of thirty-two coloured facsimiles of the most revolting pictorial products of the anti-Foreign party in Hunan. No attempt is made by the printers to gloss over the shocking grossness of these abominable cartoons, either in the illustrations themselves or in the letterpress which explains the Chinese text around the border of each. A more abominable collection it has never been the lot of any printer to publish; but, undoubtedly, Dr. John and his colleagues have done well to bring before the foreign world a knowledge, such as these pictures inculcate, of the foul weapons which the reactionary party in China, headed by the gentry and literati of Hunan, use to stir up the evil passions of the ignorant masses to stem back the tide from the West which threatens to sweep them away. This class of literature, as Dr. John has already demonstrated, is chiefly produced in Hunan, and nowhere in such variety or quantity as Changsha, the capital of the province.

*The New Asoka Inscription.*—Mr. Lewis Rice, M.R.A.S., Director of Archaeology in Mysore, who recently undertook a survey of the Chitaldroog District, reports a most important discovery of edicts of Asoka inscribed on immense boulders in the same ancient characters, and the same Pali language, as have been already met with in the case of similar records discovered in Northern India. None of these edicts have hitherto been found south of Guzerat and Ganjam, and hence the importance of the present discovery. It is known that after the third Buddhist Council held in the eighteenth year of Asoka's reign, missionaries were sent to Banavasi and Mahisa-maṇḍala, which latter, from its connexion and name, may be identified with Mysore. The principal inscription now found consists of thirteen lines, covering a space of  $15\frac{1}{2}$  feet by  $11\frac{1}{2}$  feet. The words *devānam* and *piye* can be read at the end of the first and eighth lines, and *Jambu-dīpa* towards the end of the third line. No further particulars have yet been received.

*Java.*—The Batavia Society of Arts and Sciences has brought out an elaborate work on the antiquities of Java by Mr. Yzerman, chief engineer, with an atlas of plates. The Society has done good work in the past in preserving these antiquities from European business enterprise and from native love of destruction.

*The Straits Settlements.*—General Sir Charles Warren, K.C.B., has been elected president of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society.

*The Van District.*—About eighteen months ago two French gentlemen, Messrs. G. Pisson and A. Develay, made a journey "en Asie Antérieure" on behalf of the Ministries of Education, Commerce, and Agriculture of the Republican Government. An account of this journey has recently appeared in French, of which the following is a short abstract.

From the Black Sea coast they followed the usual high road between Trebizond and Erzeroum, along which passes so much merchandize, camel-borne, for Tabreez and Teheran, and even farther East; a detailed description of this stage

may be found in Mrs. Bishop's most recent book of travel. At Erzeroum they branched southwards, and, after crossing the steep and lofty Palandoken mountain, passed into the regions inhabited by Armenians and Kurds; the former are mostly agricultural, and live in the open plain, whilst the villages of their neighbours generally skirt the surrounding mountains, which afford rich pasturage for their numerous flocks and herds. After calling in at Khanous, a little Mussulman town picturesquely situated in the bosom of a deep sheer basalt cutting, the bed of a mountain brook, they visited the world-old Armenian Monastery, Sourp Garabed (St. John's), or Changeli-Kilisseh (Church of Chimes), built in the days of St. Gregory the Illuminator. M. Pisson, having sustained an injury on the road near here, had to remain several weeks in the Monastery, whilst his friend, anxious to make the best use of his time, rounded the north coast of Lake Van, and, having visited the chief place of the district, crossed into Persia to Tabreez, passing the border in two places in mid-winter by little-known mountain bridle-paths. Having rejoined his companion at Bitlis, they then proceeded by the track presenting fewest obstacles among the mountain valleys, viz. through Sert and Jezireh to Mosul. During a few days' sojourn in what was probably once an environ of Nineveh, they viewed the Koyunjik mound and the remains of Assyria's capital; their road now led through Arbela, scene of Alexander's victory over Darius; here all the villages are built on artificial mounds, testifying to the ancient populousness of the country, and two broad rivers have to be crossed by the kellek, or inflated sheepskin raft. The Lesser Zab was also crossed a little later at Altun Keupri (Golden-Bridge), a small borough on an islet of conglomerate in mid-river; and next the not inconsiderable town of Kerkuk pleased our travellers by its bright and well-to-do aspect and wide gardens of tropical produce.

Here the road forward was certainly considered unsafe, as an escort of thirty gendarmes was furnished for safe conduct to Suleïmanieh; and fanaticism is the order of the

day in this region. A sheikh of the Hamavend Arab tribe, however, gave the protection of his company for a space, and Suleïmanieh, the last considerable town in Turkey, was duly reached; it contains 5000 houses, all of one storey only, and there are but twenty families of Christians.

Just before the Persian frontier, the French party passed the village Tavileh, and hereafter serious difficulties of more kinds than one had to be overcome; a horse perished, the tracks were very bad and difficult to follow, and the Kurds proved overreaching and untrustworthy.

The Avroman Mountain here is of quite a different character from the mountains of Armenia, where large plateaux occur frequently. The hills are much rockier and wilder, and an ascent of 4500 feet has to be made in one place. Thus, with much scrambling up and down, Hajish, a village shut in by peaked mountains and huge masses of grey rock, was reached. And after ascending the valley of the Gaveh-Rud some way, and passing the villages Ruar and Tefen, and having had to put up with short rations, Sihna, or Senneh, a Kurdish town of 35,000 inhabitants, afforded a short rest to the exhausted Frenchmen.

There is little to chronicle respecting Sihna, except that it has grown from the condition of a big village to its present dimensions within the last fifteen years. The horses are reckoned fine animals, and the best quality of Kurdish rugs are woven here. There are also two mosques which contain "chambers of refuge" for criminals flying from justice.

Upon leaving Sihna, a visit was made to the districts of Guerrous and Karaghan, following or touching the bed of some tributaries of the Rivers Kizil-Uzun (lower the Sefid Rud) and Abhar-Chi, which empties into the salt marsh to the south of Teheran. M. Develay also "rode Chappar" from Sihna to Teheran in seven days by the highway through Hamadan.

After some months in the Persian metropolis, the homeward route of the "Mission Scientifique" lay through Resht and Baku and across the Caucasus.

*Religions in India.*—The various religions of the population of India have been returned in the last census as follows (so far as ascertainable) :—

Hindoos, Brahmos, etc. . . . .	207,654,437
Mussulmans . . . . .	57,365,214
Christians . . . . .	2,284,191
Jains . . . . .	1,416,109
Sikhs . . . . .	1,907,836
Buddhists . . . . .	7,131,057
Jews . . . . .	17,180
Parsees . . . . .	89,887
Forest tribes . . . . .	9,302,083
Minor forms of Belief — Theists, Agnostics, Atheists, etc. . . . .	289
Not returned . . . . .	38,763
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Total . . . . .	287,207,046

Brahmos 3401, of whom 3338 are in Bengal, Aryas (*sic*) 39,948, chiefly in N.W.P. and Punjab.

*An Indian Fakir's Horrible Performances.*—An account of the performances of the Indian fakir Soliman ben Aissa is given by the Vienna correspondent of the *Lancet*. The exhibition has very properly been forbidden in public places in Vienna, but a series of private entertainments has been arranged. An aristocratic audience was present at the first of these. The Fakir commenced his performances by inhaling the fumes of burnt powder prepared from extracts of snake and scorpion poisons, and by certain quick movements of the head he produced a foaming at the mouth. After these preliminaries needles and other sharp instruments were thrust through various parts of his body, including a stiletto a foot long and half an inch broad, which was thrust through his tongue. Another feat which is said to have caused great sensation consisted in pulling forward the eyeball and presenting it outside the orbit to the view of the audience between two fingers. He was “invulnerable” also to the heat produced by a

flaming torch held for a minute and a half against the under surface of his forearm. Chewing glass and playing with poisonous snakes were among his other tricks. The *Lancet* recalls the experiments of the celebrated "Fire King," who many years ago created a sensation in London by advertising his power to drink prussic acid without injury to himself. The history of his exposure, sudden downfall, and subsequent malignant challenge to Mr. Wakley to fight a duel, form one of the most interesting and humorous chapters in the older volumes of the *Lancet*. The *Lancet* deprecates medical men lending their countenance in any degree to such dismal spectacles. Medical science has nobler purposes to fulfil and higher motives to guide it than the gratification, under the seeming sanction of science, of the morbid curiosity of certain classes.

*Rulers of India.*—We would venture to call the special attention of our Indian readers to the very excellent series of manuals on the great rulers of India, both native and English, now being brought out at Oxford under the editorship of Sir W. W. Hunter. Written in a very interesting manner, and having the charm of the personal interest attaching to the treatment of history from the 'great man' point of view, they throw many sidelights on the history of the development of institutions and of thought in that great continent, and they cannot fail to promote that mutual knowledge on which a genuine sympathy between residents of all classes in India must depend, and which all true scholarship does so much to promote.

*Buddhist Paintings.*—A most interesting collection of Chinese pictures has been given by M. Rubens Duval to the Museum of Religions at Paris, better known as the Musée Guimet, from the name of its founder, who has now given it to the French nation. This collection was made by the great traveller Klaproth, who has written short explanatory notices on the back of each piece. It includes a set of miniatures, probably of the last century, painted with exquisite delicacy on leaves of the sacred fig-tree, in

the shadow of which the Buddha is related to have passed the great mental struggle which ended in his Buddhahood. They represent the twenty lo-hans, that is, Arhats, or masters of the true doctrine: such miniatures, painted on leaves of the Bo-tree, are not infrequent in China, but good specimens are rare in Europe, and there are none in our Library.

*Karakorum Inscription.*—Dr. George Huth, *privat-docent* at the Berlin University, has published a short monograph on this interesting inscription. He proves quite clearly that it must be the record of a language that contained suffixes, prefixes, and changes in the middle of roots. He draws the conclusion that the language cannot be Uraltaic, and is most probably the ancestor of the various Yenissei languages treated of by Klaproth and Castrén. As, however, the Chinese inscription on the same stone dates from about 732 A.D., and we have no specimens of these languages till many centuries after that time, this is only a first step towards decipherment, and the author does not in fact propose as yet a translation of any word, or an identification of any letter.

*Epigraphia Indica.*—We have just received, in February, 1892, the new part of this valuable serial. It has printed on the title page "Issued October, 1891," so the mode of transmission must be singularly slow. It contains some short Jain inscriptions by Prof. Bühler, two short papers by Dr. Hultzsch, and an elaborate and important article by Professor Jacobi on the computation of dates in Hindu inscriptions, with supplementary astronomical tables.

*Etruscan.*—With reference to the announcement in our last number, p. 167, we have now to add that Prof. Krall has now communicated to the Academy of Vienna the results of his examination of the inscribed band on the mummy of a woman in the museum of Agram, which was brought from Egypt by Michael Baric in 1849. H. Brugsch in the winter of 1868-9 had already found on the mummy the end of a band (which afterwards proved to be 14 metres long) almost entirely covered with characters

to him completely unintelligible. The director of the museum having apprised Prof. Krall of the event, the band was brought to Vienna, and at length, after eleven months study, discovered by him to be the longest Etruscan inscription known to us, the longest hitherto known to exist being the Perugian cippus containing 125 words. The Etruscan mummy band contains 1200 words divided into some 200 lines, distributed in at least 12 columns after the fashion of writing on papyri. The material is undoubtedly of ancient Egyptian manufacture, and the ink shows the same colour as that of the ordinary writing on mummies. According to the Etruscan scholars Bücheler, Deecke, and Pauli, there can be no doubt whatever about the authenticity of the text, so if this real relic of antiquity comes to be read, our knowledge of Etruscan will be assured. So far, Prof. Krall has presented to the academy an unpublished tentative reading, restoring the text and adding a list of all the words occurring in it with additions and explanations by W. Deecke. Messrs. Edler have succeeded with great difficulty in making photographs of the text.

*The Present State of the Nestorian Tablet at Sigan.*—This tablet, as is well known, stands outside the west gate of Si-gan, Shen-si, and enunciates the leading doctrines of Christianity. It was erected A.D. 780–781, and is the only relic hitherto discovered in China of the Nestorian Christian Church. The stone is white, is of an ordinary grey colour and sonorous, responding with a bell-like sound on being struck sharply. It is supported on the back of a half-buried tortoise. The dimensions are: total height, 103 in.; breadth, 37 in.; thickness,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  in. It stands facing an old, half-ruined Buddhist temple on the south of the road, a mile and a half from the west gate, and half a mile from the suburb. Its surroundings are not interesting; the country is flat, well cultivated, and very fertile. The remains of a mud wall enclose it and hide it from the road, though, even were it visible, there is nothing by which a passer-by could distinguish it from the hundreds of other stones that are to be found in this district.



*Buddhist Folk Lore.*—Professor Fausböll (Hon. Member R.A.S.) has completed the fifth volume of his great *editio princeps* of the Jātakas, bringing it down to No. 537 (out of the total of 550). The volume is dedicated to Professor Rhys Davids and Dr. Morris. The remaining 13 stories, the longest in the collection, will probably occupy three more volumes. One of them is the Bhūridatta, translated in our last issue by Mr. St. John.

*New Oriental Department, British Museum.*—On the retirement, in January last, of Dr. Rieu, the well-known Persian scholar, from the Keepership of Oriental MSS. at the British Museum, it was decided by the Trustees to create a new Oriental Department to consist of Oriental printed books and MSS., in both of which collections the Museum is very rich. This has now been done, and Professor Douglas (one of the members of our Council) has been appointed Keeper of the new department.

*Sanskrit name for Australia.*—Mr. E. Delmar Morgan, M.R.A.S., has published in brochure form a very interesting paper he read at the Geographical Congress of Berne on the 'Early Discovery of Australia.' He there proves that the coast line of Australia appears with full details on several early maps, much older than any literary record of the actual discovery having taken place. The first authenticated voyage to Australia is that of the yacht *Duyffhen* or *Dove* in 1606. But already in a map of the year 1521 (by La Salle) the 'Terra Australis' is given under the curious name of *Patalie regio*, derived, according to the Vicomte de Santareus, from the Sanskrit (or Pāli) Pātāla, meaning 'the nether regions.' This is the oldest and least perfect of these early maps of Australia, several of which Mr. Morgan gives in facsimile. Perhaps the name has some connection with *Pātali-putta*, the old name for Ceylon. Where did these old map-makers get their information from?