THE MOSLEM PROBLEM IN CHINA

By REGINALD FARRER

At a meeting of the Society on April 17, 1918, with Colonel Sir Henry Trotter in the chair, Mr. Reginald Farrer gave a lecture on "The Mahomedan Problem in China." He said:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—The first part of my address must take the form, to a certain extent, of apologies, because, perhaps, I have chosen almost too ambitious a title for my lecture; and what I propose to tell you about to-day is really more the record of my own personal observations and experiences among the various ethnological problems presented on the western borders of China. These matters, the Mohammedan Rebellion and so forth, you will find dealt with in extenso in other and more learned works. All I have to give you to-day is, as I say, the record of the troubles and the remarks that a traveller has occasion to make and to meet with in the course of exploration on the rather devious and difficult frontiers that separate China from Tibet—the frontiers of Kansu.

I journeyed from Peking in the very early spring of 1914, and worked my way through the southern borders of Kansu, up to Lanchow, and thus in 1915 up through the Alps by the Koko Nor, and then towards the end of the year down through Lanchow once more to Chung K'ing, on the Yangtse Chiang, and then back to what is called civilization.

Though the province of Kansu is all bravely marked China on the map, you have to remember that all the western side may be described as more Tibetan than Chinese. The map makes hard-and-fast lines, but the populations do not. If I wanted to describe the country to you roughly, I should say that where the mountains begin China leaves off, and that the Chinese, an eminently practical people, abandon the whole country, the worthless Alps, to the Tibetan population, who alone can make use of it.

As you know, the great Tibetan highland breaks down into China in a succession of enormous mountain ranges running, roughly, parallel to each other. (And I would like to say here in parenthesis that the map, like all the maps of Central China, is very largely erroneous.) The mountain ranges break down above the Blackwater River and above the Whitewater River, and then again in successive chains northward,
after which there are no more until you get the further descending range of the K'un-lun up north. All this country is Tibetan. Lower down you get a belt which runs through Yunnan and Szechwan, of the Mohammedan populations on which I am addressing you to-day.

As I told you, I do not propose to give you the history—which nobody knows—of the Mohammedan populations in Kansu, Yunnan, and Szechwan. I have no experience of Yunnan or Szechwan; but the legend goes that in the ninth century one of the Emperors of the T'ang Dynasty imported a body of Turkish mercenaries to fight for him, and that they gave, as mercenaries frequently do, trouble to the Central Government; that, after a great deal of difficulty and diplomacy, that band of Turkish mercenaries was settled on the remote borders of the Tibetan-Chinese frontier, where they have increased and multiplied for several centuries at such a rate as now to constitute a very serious menace to the Chinese Central Authority; for the Tibetans and the Chinese themselves are already on the worst possible terms. And when you add to this a very large population, amounting in Kansu, Yunnan, and Szechwan alone to more than thirty million of people, roughly speaking, who are on the very worst possible terms, not only with the Tibetans, but with the Chinese Authorities themselves, you will then gather that there is material for a very important and very serious cleavage to be made in the Government of the Chinese Empire. Europeans, perhaps, know too little, for the thing was far away and out of our time, of the history of the great Mohammedan Rebellion that filled the reigns of the Emperors Tao Kuang and Hsien Feng, and which was only extinguished, with great difficulty and after incalculable loss of life, during the first reign of the Empress-Dowager. What people do not realize is that all down the western border of Kansu and right down through Yunnan and Szechwan there exists this gigantic Mohammedan population, assimilated in many ways to the Chinese, but always at enmity with them, and always preparing, day by day, month by month, for a new outbreak which will repeat, equal and very likely surpass the appalling horrors of the Great Rebellion which only ended in 1877. Of that Rebellion the echoes still linger, and all up the country above Lanchow you will find the towns and villages, even to this day, still laid waste; and though the flood of the Chinese population is perpetually creeping back, yet it will take many years before the harm done by the Mohammedan Rebellion is wiped out, and before that happy date there is every reason to suppose that a new Mohammedan outbreak may take place. Which reminds me to give you another caution with regard to anything I may have to say to you. My own experiences are confined to the years 1914 and 1915, and though we say that the East and Asia never change, yet in those two years so much water has run under so many bridges, and so much of that which is thicker than water has run also, that who knows but the conditions on the Chinese-Tibetan frontier may be changed by now in a way that
I have not in my power to tell you, because from that very remote part of the world no news ever penetrates, and it remains a matter of doubt whether even the Central Authorities can be as fully aware as they should of the ever-changing conditions attending the problem of the Central Asiatic populations. This I will say before I come to the tale of my own adventures: that when you go up on to the remote borders where China and Tibet meet on the northern frontier, and you come in conflict also with the Mohammedan populations, you then realize that there are, so to speak, three dominant personalities with whom—I am speaking now for 1914-1915—you have to reckon. One of them is old and ailing; the second is remote geographically; the third is now remote, not only in geography, but in history. And each one of them corresponds to one of the three races involved in this vague and troubled corner of the world.

The first is Ma-an-liang, the old leader of the Mohammedan populations; he who signed the truce between the Chinese and the Mohammedans which is supposed only to last for his lifetime. He, though I never met him, is reported to be, as I say, old, and also, I regret to say, stupid; but he is the acknowledged leader of the Mohammedan populations in Western Kansu, and on his life hangs the peace between China and Mohammedanism. Not only that, but so definitely does that peace depend upon his life, that even now, during his declining days, or when I was there, the young bloods of the Mohammedan population were daily sharpening their swords in anticipation of the moment when his death should set them free to fly once again at the throat of the Chinese Empire.

The second personality on that northern border is, of course, his holiness the Dalai Lama. And the third, and, even to this day, you might say the most vital and the most dominant of all, is the Grand Dowager-Empress of China. One has to reach the remote extremities of the Empire to realize what a strong seal that tremendous personality has put upon the future of her race. We read "Lives" of the Empress-Dowager which give the different aspects of her character and diplomacy, but it is only when you get into the hinterlands of her dominion that you begin to understand what power she wielded, and still wields even to this day, though dead and buried nearly ten years since.

The Grand Dowager—to give her the title with which she died—as people do not sufficiently realize, had two distinct and different reigns. During the minorities of the Emperors T'ung Chih and Kuang-Hsu she reigned as Empress-Regent, but in 1898, in self-defence and in defence of the Empire, she executed the coup d'état which made her for the last ten years of her reign not only Empress-Regent, but virtually Empress-Regnant. And it is by the record of her last ten years of sovereignty that the Grand Dowager must be judged; and behind all
the petty tittle-tattle, behind the dust and the scandal and personal
gossip and the various passions engendered by the currents of her
diplomacy, you get the impression, overwhelmingly stronger as you
advance in the wilds of the country, of the great and dominant
character.

It was under the first reign of the Empress-Dowager that the
Mohammedan Rebellion was brought to a conclusion, and it was by the
energy of the Grand Dowager in her second reign that peace was
restored upon the border and the various troubled populations were
brought at last to heel. The years from 1898 to 1908 were marked all up
the western borders of China by a great Imperialist outburst, effected by
the Grand Dowager. The Viceroy of Szechwan, Jao-erh Fêng, was
directed to produce law and order throughout the lawless monasteries
and throughout the Mohammedan populations stretching up Western
Szechwan and Western Kansu. And even to this day (I am speaking,
as I remind you, of 1914-1915, for now that China has once more been
thrown into the cauldron, who knows what the lot of the traveller might
be?) the result of the firm policy of the last years of the Grand Dowager's
rule has been that law and order, perhaps for the first time in history,
reign supreme up the borders of Kansu, and that the foreign traveller,
amazed with a passport from the Central Authorities, is safer and better
looked after under the name of the Grand Dowager-Empress than he
would be in any European country—certainly now, and I would say
even before the days of the war.

I use the name of the Grand Dowager advisedly, because to this
moment, up and down the border, it is her name that carries away.
You must not do this, you must not do that, to this moment, because it
would be displeasing to the great Dowager-Empress. Wherever you
go you meet the name; in every little village and in every little town
that authority still holds sway; you cannot escape from it. And
though people are well aware that she is dead and gone—for even up
there there are changes and chances in the various cross-currents of
modern Chinese government—yet it is still the shadow of the old Im-
perial authority that rules, and it is the memory of those last ten years
of the firm and efficient personal government directed by the Grand
Dowager that still guarantees the security and peace of the traveller
and the native all up and down the Tibetan March and throughout
the Mohammedan populations of Western Kansu. Even on the very
edge of the border, in the little town of Siku, which is within some
three miles of what is called the Tibetan frontier, to this moment, so
far as I know, the half-dozen vagabonds, clothed in rags, who represent
the Chinese garrison are still clothed and armed in the shabbiest and
weirdest panoply of the old Imperial house. Though the population
may do homage to the new authorities, yet it is always with the thought
at the back of their minds of the old Imperial tradition. I need hardly
remind members of the Society that it was in Northern China that the new Imperialist movement had its strength, and that it was on North China's support that the late President, Yuan Shih k'ai, attempted to rear his perilous and precarious throne.

I talked to you of law and order, but in point of fact the year in which I first adventured up upon the borders of Kansu and Tibet was not a year favourable to law and order at all, for, as if for a forecast of coming events, the beginning of 1914 was marked by storms sweeping across China which, though they were relegated in the papers to small paragraphs of tiny print at the bottom of the main columns, yet, I can assure you, when you were in the country and travelling between storm-blaze and storm-blaze, were a very serious consideration not only to one's comfort, but to one's life. I am talking now of the White Wolf Rebellion which started towards the close of 1913, and in 1914 devastated the internal provinces of China in a way which perhaps the British public to this moment has no fair idea of. At least, I know for my own part that when I was in London, and even when I was in Peking, the White Wolf Rebellion sounded a curious, rather interesting, rather remote thing that one need never have any personal concern with. But as soon as I reached the centre of China, and all through the six months of the summer, I found that the White Wolf Rebellion was a very serious thing to reckon with. The Rebellion of the Bei Lang started down in Honan. There are many legends as to the personality of the White Wolf himself. There seem to have been, so far as I could collect, like Cerberus, "several gentlemen of the same name," but the main legend attaches to a certain official who was disappointed of the Viceroyalty of Honan, and accordingly started out on a rather aimless rebellion of his own. In course of time that rebellion developed into very large proportions, and it devastated the provinces of Honan and Hupeh and threatened the province of Shensi. When I arrived in Sian-Fu the Rebellion of the White Wolf was sweeping up the course of the Han River to the capital of Shensi, the Viceroy not knowing what to do, the troops half of them disaffected and the remainder not to be trusted from the point of view of courage or adequate ammunition. I succeeded, by dint of mere diplomacy, in leaving the town and escaping westwards towards the Tibetan border, and I was the last foreigner who was allowed out of the gates of Sian-Fu. After my departure the White Wolf Rebellion surged up into Shensi and occupied the whole southern province, with the sole exception of the capital itself, which, like a great walled island, stood intact and isolated in the midst of the surging waves of rebellion.

Meanwhile, I had gone westwards over the Tibetan border into the mountains of the Tibetan highland, secure in the confidence that the White Wolf and his minions would never by any possibility succeed in invading Kansu; that he neither wished to nor had the power. I need
hardly tell you after that that the first thing he did was to do so. Towards the end of April the White Wolf Rebellion swept up round the western corner of the Tsinling Range, passed out of Szechwan into Kansu, and within the first three weeks it laid waste and destroyed twenty-three walled cities in the southern half of the province, and was advancing upon the capital, Lanchow. I meanwhile was safe, or more or less safe, across the Tibetan frontier, where, to give you an idea of how careful the Chinese Government—as I say, by the tradition of the last ten years of the Grand Dowager—is of the welfare and comfort of foreigners, though the Viceroy and all the officials had their hands filled to overflowing with the perils and problems of the White Wolf Rebellion, yet all the time they found occasion to harry the wretched local Governors yet further out of their wits by perpetual inquiries as to two foreigners who had escaped out of the storm over into the borders of Tibet (where yet further storms were raging with which I will not trouble you to-day).

Meanwhile, I pursued my course in and out between the rebellious populations of the border, and the White Wolf Rebellion swept up into Kansu. We now come once more to the Mohammedan population. I have told you that all up the western borders of Yunnan, Szechwan, and Kansu there stretches this vast body of Mohammedans, hating the Chinese, hating the Tibetans, but willing to make common cause with the Tibetans against the Chinese, and sometimes with the Chinese against the Tibetans. It became there a question of practical politics which side the Mohammedan population would take during the course of the White Wolf Rebellion. I may tell you that all the soldiers of the army in Kansu, a very large proportion even of the bodyguard of the Viceroy of Lanchow, are composed of Mohammedans; and for a long time it remained doubtful, while the White Wolves were laying waste the walled cities in the southern province, what course the official troops in the employment of the Chinese Government would take. Kansu is a province really divided into two halves. Immediately south of Lanchow run the last few mountain ranges, the feeble outliers of the great Tibetan highland in which the Hoang-ho and the Yangtse Chiang are born, and thus the northernmost ranges of those mountains are the last defences of the northern half of the province. The White Wolf swept up from the south, ravishing, burning, and destroying; he came into conflict with both elements of the population; he even threatened the great Buddhist monastery of Jo-ni, which, after Labrang and Urga, is perhaps the most important point of Lamaism in North Central Asia. The White Wolf armies, amounting to some twenty or thirty thousand men, poured up through the various passes and openings from Szechwan towards Lanchow and Taochow, Old and New, both of them strongholds of the Mohammedan populations. Yet a little higher up we come to Hocho, which is of all the cities in
Kansu the essentially Mohammedan city, so intensely and essentially Mohammedan, indeed, that no Chinese dare trust himself in Hochoy unprotected. Beyond that, again, there are the Tibetans, with the abbeys of Gumbum, Jo-ni, and Labrang. Labrang, though not sufficiently realized, is the important storm-centre of North Central Asia; it is the largest Lamaist monastery outside Lhasa. It contains at a minimum some 12,000 monks; it has eight living Buddhas; it has a corresponding complement of high ecclesiastical officials, and ever since its foundation, rather less than a hundred years ago, Labrang, with its population and its temperament, has been the most turbulent element with which the Chinese have had to deal all up the northern border. Over Urga and over Lhasa the Chinese Government has asserted a dim authority, more definitely recognized than definitely exercised. But Labrang, hidden as it is in the folds of the enormous Alps, is a point of which the Chinese themselves openly own they are afraid. Foreigners have been there, and in the annals of the Royal Geographical Society accounts can be found of the abbey itself. But it is not a point to which the Chinese will allow a foreigner to go, because they know that their power of protection fails as soon as they enter the atmosphere and environment of Labrang. In 1914-1915, in their hostility to the Chinese Government, the Tibetan monastery and the Mohammedan soldiers were making common cause, so that even more than ever Labrang was considered by the Governors a great centre of peril.

In case you wish to understand the Government, I will point out that the Viceroyalty of Kansu has its centre at Lanchow; the Viceroyalty of the Koko Nor, which is an advance post of Northern Tibet, has its official seat out beyond Dangar, in a lonely little crumbling mud-walled town, within sight of the lonely desolations of the great Salt Sea, which is called the Koko Nor. But very long ago the Chinese Governors discovered that living there was very uncomfortable and very dangerous. Therefore Si-ning Fu, which is the centre of the Governorship of the border, also became the centre of the Viceroyalty of Koko Nor; that is, the Governors of the Koko Nor live now, or in my time, securely and comfortably within the walls of Si-ning Fu. You were not supposed to know it; the Chinese Government was not supposed to know it; nobody was supposed to know. There they lived in the full state of the Chinese Viceroyalty. They have to deal with the Mongolian tribes up north and with the Tibetan tribes all round Koko Nor. The Governor of Kansu has to deal with the Mohammedan problem down the province and with the insurgent Tibetans up the western border.

Meanwhile, the White Wolf Rebellion advanced, sacking and burning and devastating the whole southern province, until they arrived at Minchow. They then moved up north, still unattacked, towards Taochow the Old and the New. There was a legend that Old Taochow
had never been captured in the four hundred years and more of its history, and therefore, to the Chinese mind, that was quite sufficient reason for supposing that Taochow would never be captured. Accordingly, the whole population, Mohammedan and Chinese, for many miles round took refuge within the walls of Taochow on the approach of the White Wolf. The White Wolf army advanced to the gates, met a feeble defence, which gradually became more bitter and more fierce, but was in any case ineffectual; and at the end of April, 1914, the White Wolf troops swept Taochow from end to end to such effect that only one house was left standing in the city from wall to wall, and even that only by accident. The White Wolves destroyed every living thing they could find, down to the dogs and cats in the streets. And the streets were stacked so high with carrion that for many weeks nobody could approach the place. And meanwhile the Mohammedan troops still sat securely upon the mountains to the immediate north, barring advance on the capital, but doing no more. Nobody knows exactly why the city was sacked with so unparalleled a ferocity. The White Wolf Rebellion had destroyed in horrible circumstances many another city, but the destruction of Taochow ranks as the very darkest of his achievements in the way of horror. There remains a legend that many years since some ancestor of the White Wolf, or one of the many gentlemen of that name, was murdered by a Mohammedan in Taochow, and lies to this day buried in the graveyard of the Prince of Jo-ni farther down the river. That and that alone was held by the Chinese to account for the extraordinary ferocity with which the city was destroyed. In any case, the whole town was wiped out; and still the Mohammedan troops on the mountains made no move. However, the destruction of Taochow, which, as I have told you, was a Mohammedan town, was too much for the troops on guard in the province, and at last they descended from their mountain heights; they occupied the ruined city, and within twenty-four hours the White Wolf army broke and scattered as a cloud scatters before the wind, breaking backwards in utter disaster down towards the southern province, where the whole rebellion faded out in complete rout and vanished. The Mohammedans had moved, indeed, too late to save their own people, and it will give you an idea of the temper of that warlike population when I tell you that when all was lost and the city in the hands of the White Wolves the Mohammedans in the town gathered themselves together in their mosque and set fire to it, and there they all perished together, men, women, and children, rather than fall into the hands of the Chinese invaders.

So much for the destruction of Taochow. When I followed on the track of the White Wolf some two months later he had done his worst, and broken away to the south again and disappeared. The whole
movement—and this seems hard for us to understand—appears to have been, so far as one can gather, entirely without motive, entirely without serious purpose. At one moment it was thought that the leading White Wolf might have a serious dynastic purpose, and might meditate establishing a northern throne in China. Hardly had he fallen than there appeared upon the scene in Kansu a candidate of the old dynasty of the Sung Emperors, who, when I arrived in Lanchow in the winter of 1914, had duly been captured and was there imprisoned in a cage preparatory to being sent up to Peking as a present from the Viceroy of Kansu to his cousin, Yuan Shih k'ai.

The first year of my travels, as you may well imagine, was a year of storm, from which, even among the murderous proclivities of the Tibetan monks across the border, one was comparatively safe from the troubles and storms of the Mohammedan and Chinese struggles. But the second year was entirely different in character, and I was able to see more of the Mohammedan populations themselves, and of pacified China in the district north of the Koko Nor.

All these mountain ranges belong to China, though inhabited by Tibetans and by aboriginal tribes; and lying as they do between the great Chinese high roads, one of which goes up from Lanchow to Hami, Urumtsi, and Kashgar, the other from Si-ning down to Lhasa, are so close to Chinese authority that neither Mohammedans or Tibetans are in any humour to rebel against it. We are accustomed, perhaps, to think too lightly of the weight and majesty of the Chinese Empire. In many ways the Chinese Government offers food for ridicule; but we have to remember, and more than ever nowadays, that the Chinese Empire is the oldest civilised force in the world (and if you were to tell me it was the only civilized force I should not quarrel with you). Anyhow, it has four thousand years of definite existence to its credit, and, what is more, there is every sign of its continuing for another four, or forty, thousand years. As somebody has said of the Church of England, it moves with a foot of lead in a velvet shoe; it moves slowly, but it moves exceeding surely. And though Mohammedans and Tibetans may raise their bloody rebellions and lay waste whole provinces of the Empire, and though brigands of the Empire may do the same, yet sooner or later, slowly and inexorably, China flows back again and is never conquered; always returns, wipes out the invader, swamps him in the enormous weight of her population and her organization, and that magnificent machinery which, however corrupt in personnel, is still the greatest machinery of government, that a human race has ever organized. This country is a peaceful land, therefore, by comparison with the mountain countries all up the border, where, as I have forgotten to tell you, you have not only the Chinese and the Mohammedans, but you also have the various little local Tibetan principalities, ranging up and down the border, each
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one of them quasi-independent, each one of them nominally owning allegiance to China, each one of them doing as best what pleases itself. People think of Tibet rather too much as they might think of the Papal States; they think of the Dalai Lama as a sovereign ruler over a whole unified country, with a definite hard-and-fast power. In point of fact, the Dalai Lama is no such thing. He is the spiritual head of all who follow the Lamaist or the northern school of Buddhism. But he is very far from being the undisputed temporal autocrat that people imagine when they talk of Tibet as being under his sway. I have found that to my cost, for these monasteries and the principalities up the border, many weeks' journey removed from Lhasa, may be under the authority of the Dalai Lama in matters spiritual, but in matters temporal a letter from the Dalai Lama would be as little use to you in travelling up there as a letter from the Archbishop of Canterbury or the Pope of Rome. They run, in the words of the player, their own show, and they care as little for the Dalai Lama on the one hand as they do for the Emperor of China on the other—or, at least, as they did, until the old Grand Dowager-Empress at last demurred, put her foot down, called the Dalai Lama to heel, and reduced the Tibetan Marches into a real semblance of order for almost the first time in the history of the Manchu Dynasty. The Dalai Lama has, of course, his weight in Chinese politics; he is recognized as the head of that large web of Buddhism which runs through the Chinese nation, and, of course, is dominant all up the border. Of himself personally I have little to say. I never had the privilege of seeing him, but I have travelled in his tracks; I have seen the impression that he made upon the population of China, and I have seen the traces of his passage on the roads. For it is known that the Dalai Lama is a Pontiff of such supreme sanctity that he may never pass under a gateway. All the way up from Lanchow to Si-ning Fu you will find the little red gateways decapitated in order that the Dalai Lama might go through without suffering a speck upon his sacrosanctity. When he reached the city of Si-ning Fu, where the walls are vastly solid and the expense of demolishing them would have been too great, he had to be lifted over them in a basket. When he reached Peking the problem became even more urgent. However, he realized that the immediate neighbourhood of the Great Dowager-Empress was no very comfortable place for the indulgence of ecclesiastical airs and graces, and accordingly the supreme Pontiff of Northern Buddhism solved the problem by entering the Imperial city in a train.

Si-ning Fu is situated almost on the very borders of Tibet. There, again, you meet the results of the Mohammedan Rebellion, and you see all through that country the devastation which was brought about by that Rebellion. Of half a dozen little towns you will find five still uninhabited, desolate, and ruined, the remaining sixth gradually creeping back to life under the returning influx of the
Chinese population. You cannot look from the walls of Si-ning itself without seeing in every direction the signs of the destruction wrought in that fearful Rebellion, and all the time I was there, from 1914-1915, we had the sensation of a new rebellion perpetually brooding.

I told you that the truce between the Chinese and Mohammedans depends upon the life of Ma-an-liang, and it may have ended now; but in any case the whole air was dark with the brooding of a coming storm, and one knew that it was merely a matter of, it may be, months or years before once more the forces of the Mohammedans were let loose against the Chinese Empire, with the usual result, no doubt, of appalling massacres, unheeded over here in the story of yet more massacres nearer home; but to be followed in time, no doubt, with the everlasting reflux of the Chinese Empire. You will see at once, without my telling you, what a chance the existence of this population gives to anybody who may wish to breed trouble in Europe at second or third hand by stirring up the Mohammedan population against the Chinese. In other words, you will ask me, probably, what signs I saw of any anti-British or anti-Allied feeling, or of any German propaganda or German feeling, among the Mohammedan population. I tried during 1915, when I had grown aware of the conditions in Europe, to find out what the point of view was that the Mohammedan population took in Western Kansu, and I must honestly say that I found there nothing but a strong Allied sympathy. There was no trace of German propaganda there then; what there may be now I cannot tell you, but I should believe that the country and the people offered little ground for such. The Military Governor of Si-ning, the Military Governor of Lanchow, and the Governors of all these towns, were Mohammedan, and every one showed a very un-Chinese interest in weapons, war pictures, and all the stories one could tell them of our prowess and the general conduct of the war. But of any pro-Turkish, of any distinctive Moslem feeling, of any fanaticism about the holy places, about the German alliance with Turkey, I could find no trace. And therefore I still maintain the hope and the belief that those populations, trouble-breeders though they might easily be, have no particular trouble to breed for us in the present or near future; at least, so long as measures are taken, as I believe they are being taken, to keep them informed of what we are doing and what we are fighting for. Their interest is different from that of the Chinese, whose share in the war—at least, up in those remote parts, as you can well imagine—is but academic and pictorial. The Mohammedans, on the other hand, are as keen as mustard to learn all they can about guns, aeroplanes, machinery, and so forth, and our task is to keep ourselves perpetually in their mind's eye with a definite sense of what we are doing and achieving. In case anybody here should feel, as one very often does about remote corners of the world one does not know, any sort of instinct that we are perhaps
letting those populations slide, I would say, of my own knowledge, that on the contrary very much is being done, and has steadily been done for the last two years, to keep all these peoples thoroughly well aware of what it is that we are doing and what it is that we are achieving.

However, for a final note, I must add that there is no propaganda that will appeal to those people so much as that ultimate victory to which, out of the present darkness, we look forward with more confidence than ever, as towards the ending of our long night.

The Chairman said they were very much indebted to Mr. Farrer for his most interesting and instructive account of a part of the world which most of them knew very little about. We had heard much this afternoon of the White Wolf Rebellion, and only the previous evening he had been reading of a former rebellion in Kan-su in a book entitled "Islam in China," published by the Inland China Mission. This rebellion took place in 1895, and was so severely repressed that it might have been supposed that there would be but few Mahomedans left. Colonel Mark Bell wrote that in some districts nine out of every ten Chinese and two out of every three Mussulmans were killed. He gathered that the lecturer considered that there were some 30,000,000 Moslems in Northern and Western China. The estimates of population in the Empire varied enormously. A native of Kujuu, Abdul Aziz, a learned man who had been in Egypt and Constantinople, and had travelled all about Northern China in some undefined capacity, possibly as a Turkish diplomatic agent, also put the Moslem population at about 30,000,000, but he included the inland Moslems right up to Tashkend and Kashghar, which would increase the total by at least a couple of million. The book "Islam in China," by Mr. Broomhall, to which he had referred, contained figures carefully compiled from data supplied by more than two hundred correspondents, some of whom had devoted careful study to the subject, and it showed varying estimates of the total Mahomedan population in China from 5,000,000 to a maximum of 10,000,000. The writer was himself inclined to accept the maximum; but even this varied very greatly from the figure of 30,000,000 mentioned that afternoon. The only point on which all writers appeared to be unanimous was that the Moslem population of Kan-su was far larger than that of any other province of China. It was to be regretted that definite data were not available, for the question of numbers made a very great deal of difference in estimating the political importance of the Mahomedan population. The native writer, Abdul Aziz, classed the Moslems in Salar, a district in Kan-su, as Turks, and said they were very superior to all the other Moslem races in China, the great bulk of whom were known as Tungans, so called, he believed, as being Chinese converts to Islam. The name was derived from the Turkish word "tunmek," to turn, and
meant those who turned to another religion. If so, it corresponded with the Chinese words "Hui," or "convert," which was the name applied to the Mahomedans by the Chinese.

Mrs. Archibald Little said that her enjoyment of the lecture did not entitle her to go away without a critical reference to Mr. Farrer's account of the influence still said to be exerted by the Dowager-Empress a decade after her death. Having lived for a great many years in the vast province of Szechuen, she could say that she never recollected anyone discussing the subject and expressing respect for the Dowager-Empress. The people who talked of the Dowager-Empress to Mr. Little and herself recognized that the Dowager-Empress used her great power for her own advantage and her own selfish pleasure. They spoke with respect of the young Emperor, and praised him, but said that his influence was not great, because all the real authority was wielded by the Dowager-Empress. It almost seemed ungracious, after seeing such beautiful slides and hearing so extremely interesting a lecture, to raise this question. But she felt she ought to express an opinion about the Dowager-Empress and the feelings entertained toward her in China, because there were two tendencies in connection with people of distinction of dubious record who had passed away. One was to hound them down, and one was to exalt anyone who had had a bad name in the world. In the case of the Dowager-Empress, there was a certain party who seemed anxious to cover over her evil deeds.

Colonel A. C. Yate said it had been his privilege to listen to Mr. Farrer in quite a different capacity at the Royal Geographical Society on March 11, when he appeared in the light at once of a botanist and traveller. Mr. Farrer had told them that it was believed that in the ninth century of the Christian era the Chinese had invited Turkish mercenaries to enter their country, and thus introduced the thin edge of the wedge of Islam. The only authority of which he (Colonel Yate) could think as likely to give the requisite data for a conclusion on this point was Yule's "Marco Polo." In occasional dippings into that book he had noticed the frequent mention by Marco Polo of the Christian and Mahomedan communities across which he had come in various parts of China. Of living authorities on such a topic he imagined one of the best to be Sir Henry Howorth, whom he had the pleasure of meeting occasionally at the Royal Historical Society, and whose "History of the Mongols" was a magnum opus upon which historians and booksellers alike set a high value. Another authority was Sir Percy Sykes, now commanding the South Persia Rifles at Shiraz, and doubtless looking forward keenly just now rather to doing something to checkmate German ambitions to penetrate into Persia than to elucidate Marco Polo's mediæval wanderings.

The only occasion, Colonel Yate added, on which he himself came
into contact with the Moslems of Western China was when he accompanied, thirty years ago, as Intelligence Officer, the "Northern Shan Column," which, setting out from Mandalay in December, 1887, marched by devious and—in some parts to Europeans—unknown paths to the Salwun River at the Kunlon Ferry. On the way that column met occasional droves of Panthay mule transport. The Panthays are the Moslems of Yunnan, and their mule transport the best trained that he had ever seen. When it was a case of loading, the method was this: Two (or possibly more) men held the prepared load well aloft, gave a signal to the mule, which obeyed the signal by walking of itself in under the load, which was then lowered on to its back and adjusted. On the march each mule moved independently and separately. Thus, if any mishap befell any one mule, one mule only suffered; whereas the Indian transport system of linking three mules together frequently sacrificed the trio to the fault or failure of one.

Mr. Farrer has made it very plain that a Moslem insurrection in Western China is a certainty of the future. The question is, Will this associate itself in any way with the Pan-Turanian project? To this question Mr. Arnold Toynbee may possibly offer some solution on May 22.

Mr. Farrer, in reply, said he thought Mrs. Archibald Little had spoken from the point of view of the Southern Chinese rather than of Northern China in respect to the Dowager-Empress. As the storms of discussion respecting that autocratic lady had died down, she appeared more and more definitely as a really great sovereign. Her errors were great and admitted, though he was somewhat sceptical about the evil deeds with which she had been charged. If she made her mistakes, she recovered from them with a magnificent courage and resource which only really great rulers of the world had exhibited. In Northern China, at least, which supported her great adventure in 1900, her influence went on increasing, as history left behind that outstanding figure, and advanced more and more into the quicksands into which China appeared to be sunk at the present moment. So far as Northern China was concerned, she had left behind a name that would live, and, he thought, deserved to live, and influence all ranks of the people. She would figure in history amongst the great personalities of the Manchu dynasties, which had previously given before her time two of the greatest rulers who had ever directed the affairs of a large section of the human race.

The proceedings terminated with a cordial vote of thanks to the lecturer.