

OLD-TIME ORIENTAL TRADE.

THE "Orient" of the ancients comprised but a very small portion of the great continent of Asia now commonly included under that name. The Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, and even the Persians, though themselves so much farther east than the three first-mentioned peoples, knew almost nothing of the vast and populous regions east of the Oxus and Indus. It is true, they had vague notions of a Cathay beyond the tremendous mountain-chains of Central Asia, and a map by Ptolemy the geographer, in the first century of our era, even gives some few outlines of the coasts to the east of the Bay of Bengal. But the fact that from this map the whole of the southern half of India is omitted, and the great peninsula appears to be cut off at an east-and-west line running from the Gulf of Cutch to the mouths of the Ganges, shows that even these outlines of "India extra Gangem" were drawn mainly upon conjecture. The successive waves of Tartar invasion which had poured through the mountain passes from Central Asia to overflow Iran and Assyria, and finally to sweep around southward and eastward again into India, had brought nothing with them but terror and devastation. Even the conquering hordes themselves seemed transformed by their advent into the new countries, and, forgetting those from whence they came, seemed impressed with the feeling that they had been forced by some mysterious influence, crowded out by the ever-increasing swarms of humanity generated in that "cradle of the human race." Imagination invested the remote regions beyond the Indus, and particularly beyond the mountains of Tartary, with monstrosities and supernatural dangers. Even the soldiers of the Macedonian conqueror were appalled and became mutinous at the proposal to proceed to the Ganges. None of the conquerors known to history ever even proposed to penetrate eastward from Turkistan into

Central Asia until the attempts made by Ghengis Khan in the beginning, and by Timour at the close, of the thirteenth century. The dim legend of a great expedition into India by the Egyptian king, Sesostris, fifteen hundred years before the Christian era, lacks even circumstantial evidence. By some of the ancient writers, notably Strabo, it is pronounced a myth, and as far as history is concerned, Alexander was the discoverer of India.

The countries known to the Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans as the Orient extended only from the Levant and the Red Sea to the Himalayas, and from the Arabian Sea to the southern shores of the Black and the Caspian; a tolerably well-defined region, between three and four hundred miles broad from south to north, but nearly three thousand miles long from the *Ægean* Sea to the Indus. The expedition of Alexander resulted in adding the northwestern quarter of India to the territory of the known Orient.

From its topography and position relative to the adjoining continents, this small part of the habitable world (about equal in area to the States of the American Union lying east of the Mississippi) seemed destined by nature to be the theatre of the most important events in the history of mankind. Separated from the rest of Asia by great mountain-walls through which there were only a few lofty and dangerous passes, from Europe and Africa by the chain of seas that surround it on three sides, and from even the greater portion of Arabia by impassable deserts, communication between all these continents was confined to a few distinct gateways: the tremendous gorges which lead up to the table-land of Pamir, and over the "roof of the world" into Central Asia; the isthmus of the Caucasus, furnishing a mountain pathway into northern Europe; the Dardanelles, which afforded a short ferriage into South-

ern Europe; and the Isthmus of Suez, a sandy dike between the seas, leading to Africa. Through these gateways the tides of conquest have ebbed and flowed ever since the records of human events began. In the same mountain defiles and along the same sea-shore passes have been heard the trampings and the trumpet-calls of hundreds of conquering armies. During the historic era—which, however, only runs back in an unbroken chain of definite dates about twenty-five hundred years—Cyrus, Darius, Xerxes, Alexander, Mithridates, the captains of the Mahometan caliphs, the Ottoman sultans, Ghengis Khan, Timour, and Nadir Shah, each successively overran this Orient with their hosts, and consolidated the greater portion of it into as many successive empires. But these are only a few of the greatest; history gives misty outlines of a dozen more, not only intermediate of these, but long prior to the era of definite chronology, that have arisen and disappeared. From the recently resurrected Ilium to Nicæa and Bucephala, built by Alexander on the Hydaspes, the land is strewn with the ruins of cities, some of which were almost equal in magnitude to Babylon and Persepolis, and yet have vanished like dreams, having not even a place in history. Kings, caliphs, khans, and sultans have fought over its plains until the soil seems made of the dust of their slaughtered armies. Prophets of Israel and Islam uttered their grandest vaticinations there, and over all that part of the world there hovers an atmosphere of mingled mystery and historic interest beside which the more explicit histories of Greece and Rome seem literal and tame.

The vagueness of the information, in ancient and even in comparatively modern times, about the countries east of Persia may be estimated from the fact that Strabo, the great geographic authority of the first century, believed the Caspian Sea to be only a bay of a "great northern ocean." This impression was prevalent even in the sixth century, and indeed was not completely dispelled until an Englishman, Anthony Jenkinson,

traveled far enough around it in 1558 to determine its actual dimensions.

The general belief in the existence of monstrosities and wonders of all kinds to the eastward of the Indus and the Oxus is shown in the account of India given by Megasthenes,—sent thither as ambassador by Seleucus, King of Syria,—who tells of giants, dwarfs, men without noses, ants as large as foxes, and men with ears so large that they could wrap themselves up in them. In fact, Megasthenes' stories were so prodigious that if they were not matched by those of other travelers in the Orient, it would almost seem that the shrewd Hindoos had been indulging in an American style of humor in stuffing his own extensive ears with their inventions. Arrian, the Greek historian of the second century, in his Circumnavigation of the Red Sea, gives an account of the Island of the Rising Sun, near the mouths of the Ganges, which he says was the last region toward the east that was inhabited, being peopled with cannibals and beings monstrous in form. Nor did these beliefs disappear after a thousand years. William de Rubruquis, a monk sent by Pope Innocent IV., in 1247, as ambassador to the Great Khan of Mongolia, had no sooner entered the dominions of the Tartars than he imagined he had fallen among a race of demons. The strange aspect of the country and the savage countenances of the people made him feel as though, to use his own forcible expression, he had "passed through the gates of hell." Marco Polo also, at the close of the thirteenth century, though in all respects the most trustworthy narrator of adventure in the Middle Ages, tells of demons that decoy and mislead the traveler in the Desert of Lop, of the city of Kinsai, a hundred miles in circumference, and of the roof of the prince's palace in Zipangri (Japan) being made of solid gold.

Ibn-Battuta, a celebrated Mahometan traveler, tells of a mysterious marine monster in the shape of a ship filled with candles and torches, which he saw (1325) off the Maldivé Islands—a sort of Oriental Flying Dutchman, which ap-

peared in that locality every year, and would not depart until one of the most beautiful virgins of the islands was sent out to him to be devoured; of the sacred cypress-tree in Ceylon, of which if a person finds and eats one of the fallen leaves, his youth will be restored; and of seeing off the coast of Sumatra the famous Roc of the Arabian Nights' tales. But even more skeptical travelers, who saw none of these supernatural marvels, clothed their descriptions in words of Oriental extravagance: Masoudi, a Mahometan historian who published an account of his travels in India in the tenth century, which exhibits an extensive knowledge of the population, industries, and wealth of the country, gives his book the fanciful title of *Meadows of Gold and Mines of Jewels*. Thus in all ages, even until very recent times, imagination still invested the farther Orient with a matchless dower of gold, gems, spices, and all beautiful and valuable things, but at the same time with all conceivable dangers and monstrosities.

Yet even in the remotest antiquity of which history gives any information, however vague, there seems to have been considerable trade between what were then the eastern and western "worlds:" that is, Asia Minor, Persia, and India on the one hand, and the Mediterranean coasts of Europe and Africa on the other. This traffic was carried on mainly by caravans on the land, and by boats and rafts that floated down the rivers.

But there must have been a time when the art of navigating the seas had a beginning, or at least there was an era when it experienced such a development as to deserve the title of a new art. Notwithstanding the uncertainty of historic outlines in this respect, there is reason to believe that this era embraced the Greeks who besieged Troy and the Phœnicians who founded Sidon and Tyre; and concurrent with this development in the art of navigation, there must have been a similar development of commerce. Where history begins, it finds commerce almost exclusively in the hands of the Phœnicians, a peculiar,

thrifty, calculating people, — disposed to grow rich by trading rather than by conquest of arms, having scarcely even a definite territory of their own, but at home on the coasts of all the known seas, untrammelled by the daily religious duties that prevented the Persians and Hindoos from embarking in maritime trade, and superior to all other nations in their knowledge of navigation, — who had established commercial relations not only with all the Mediterranean coasts but also with those of Persia and India. They seem to have had the same fear of interiors that other nations had of the seas. The Tyrian traders who sailed down the Red Sea and along the coasts of Iran to the mouths of the Indus long before Alexander sent Nearchus back on his notable voyage from the Indus to Ormuz, probably helped to exaggerate the wonders and mysterious dangers of the land routes to the countries with which they held communication. There may even have been the shrewd purpose, in these exaggerations, of deterring other nations from becoming competitors for the trade. As the Tyrians kept secret their arts of dyeing purple and of the manufacture of gems and glass, they would be likely also to conceal or misrepresent their knowledge of the mysterious East, from which they drew such large profits of trade that the merchants of Tyre, a city almost without a territory, were "princes, and her traffickers the honorable of the earth."

The growth and prosperity of Tyre, more than any other feature of ancient history, indicates the progress of mankind, the enlargement of ideas, the increase of wants, the desire to be acquainted with each other, and to live on amicable terms for mutual benefit. The little colony of fugitives from Sidon, — which had been captured by the Assyrians, — who about 1690 B. C. established themselves on the rocky coast forty or fifty leagues farther south, founded the most remarkable city of antiquity.

But it was not until nearly two hundred and fifty years afterwards that Tyre attained her greatest prosperity.

Then the Tyrians had formed an alliance with the Hebrews under Solomon, whose assistance enabled them to secure the ports of Elath and Ezion-Geber, at the northeast extremity of the Red Sea, and to seize Rhinoculura, the port nearest to these on the Mediterranean. With these advantages the Tyrians made a revolution in the transportation question of that day. Instead of bringing the spices, gems, ivory, and other products of Persia and India up the Euphrates Valley and thence through Tadmor in the Desert to the Mediterranean coast by caravans, and sending the gold, tin, silver, and wines of Italy and Spain back to the Orient by the same route, they now turned the great bulk of their commerce through the Red Sea, making a short transportation by caravan, between Elath and Rhinoculura. During this era, it is believed, the Tyrian ships traded along the entire coast from Ormuz, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, to the mouths of the Indus. So complete was the commercial supremacy of Tyre and so exclusive her knowledge of the remote Orient, that when by the death of Solomon she lost her Red Sea ports and abandoned her navigation of the Arabian Sea, there was none to take advantage of her loss. She simply diverted the trade with Persia and India to the old caravan routes, and the knowledge of the Arabian Sea seems to have been in a great measure lost, for when Nearchus made his long voyage to Ormuz, it was over an unknown sea; yet such might well be the case, for eleven hundred years had elapsed from the time that Tyre lost her Red Sea ports until Nearchus set out to rediscover the route by sea.

The commerce of Tyre probably culminated about 650 to 500 B. C. At that time the Tyrian traders were the factors of the whole known world. Carthage had been founded nearly three hundred years, and was carrying on an extensive trade between Europe and Egypt, but Tyre was still the great emporium. Her commercial supremacy in the world extends over a period of about thirteen hundred years. So long did it take in

those slow-moving ages to build up and break down.

The reduction of Tyre cost Alexander more time, more labor, and the lives of more soldiers, than the subjugation of all the rest of Asia Minor, and her unexampled opulence and power inspired him and his successors with the idea of acquiring her secrets by bold exploration and force. Having at last nearly destroyed her, he went into Egypt to found the great city that perpetuates his name, and from thence made his expedition into India, which, notwithstanding his premature death, did result in giving Alexandria the commercial supremacy of the world for a longer period than any other city that has ever existed, except Tyre.

The objective point of all the great conquerors who ravaged Asia Minor and Persia for more than two thousand years was, with one exception, India. Genghis Khan alone delayed the invasion of India until he should conquer China. It is also a remarkable fact that all the invasions of India, whether by Tartar hordes from the north, or by Persian Mussulmans or Greeks from the west, have been made at one point, namely, that where stands the town of Attock, on the Indus, at the extreme northwestern corner of the Punjab. Here, where the width of the river is much contracted, every conqueror since Alexander has made his entrance into India. Mahmood, the Tartar prince, who erected a new empire in the East on the ruins of the Caliphate of Bagdad, invaded India at this point twelve times in the first twenty-four years of the eleventh century. After him came Timour, in 1395; Babur, in 1518, in 1523, and again in 1525; Nadir Shah, in 1737; and Ahmed Abdalli, six times between 1747 and 1760. The great incentive which drew all these into India was its wealth; and this also has been the magnet which in all ages seems to have drawn to the Indus the traders of the far western cities on the Mediterranean.

In ancient times there were three great routes for this traffic: one from the Punjab, the cities of Cabul and Chanda-

har, to the river Oxus, thence downstream by its ancient but now forsaken channel into the Caspian, across this and up the river Kur, which still recalls the name of Cyrus, and thence by a short portage into the Black Sea, along its southern shores and through the Bosphorus into the *Ægean*. It is presumed that this was the route used by the earliest Greeks, even before the historic era, in their traffic with the Orient. Long afterwards, when the rise of the Mahometan and Ottoman empires debarred the Greeks from any communication with India and Iran by way of the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf, this became again the route of a large trade between those countries and the Greek empire; and still later, also, when in the fourteenth century the city of Genoa attached itself to the Greek Church as a means of competing with Venice, which was an ally of the Pope.

Of the two other routes, one was followed by the Tyrian and Egyptian caravans to Palmyra in the desert, and thence down the Euphrates Valley to the Persian Gulf; the other by the ships of the same people, down the Red Sea and along the coasts of Arabia and Persia to the mouths of the Indus. All these routes, though between three and four thousand miles long, and from five hundred to two thousand miles apart, brought the Mediterranean traders to the same countries, and indeed to many of the same Oriental cities. Pearls from the fisheries of Fars; gold from the ancient mines of Sejestan; ivory, diamonds, dyes, and textile fabrics of India; the silks of China, which came through India—though the luxurious Romans who used them so extensively did not know where silk was produced or what it was made of, but only that it came from that prolific India which seemed the treasure-place of the world; the gums, spices, and gems, particularly the turquoises, of Iran, were important articles of trade in all the ancient cities near the Indus. Chandahar was, and is to some extent yet, a centre of trade between India and Iran; as Cabul was the emporium of that between India and

Tartary. Even down to the beginning of the present century, the annual fairs at the latter city were so largely attended by traders from India and the coasts of Iran that the average sale of horses on these occasions was estimated at about sixty thousand head.

For nearly eighteen hundred years after the reduction of Tyre by Alexander, the trade with the East was still small enough to be monopolized by first one and then another of the Mediterranean cities. Alexandria held it without a rival of any considerable importance for about six hundred years, until A. D. 330, when Byzantium became the capital of the new Eastern Empire, and the policy of the Greek emperors to foster trade with the Orient by way of the Black and Caspian seas and the river Oxus diverted a large share of the traffic to that route. Under the Ptolemies and the Romans, Alexandria was the great commercial mart of the known world. Its population was estimated at three hundred thousand, it was full of magnificent buildings, and the fire of its Pharos lighted all the merchant ships of the Mediterranean into its port. Its trade with Iran and India was by ships, on the Red Sea from the ports of Myos-Hormos and Berenice, coasting along the shores of Arabia until they struck the route discovered by Nearchus at the Gulf of Ormuz, and thence still along the coast to the mouths of the Indus. This was the only route of ships to India for more than a hundred years, until Hippalus, an Egyptian trader, with boldness equal to that of Columbus fifteen hundred years later, ventured to sail with the western monsoon directly out into the Indian Ocean, and thus discovered a new route to India and gave his name to the periodic wind that carried him thither. From the Red Sea ports the goods of India were carried by caravans to Coptos, — the modern Kench, — on the Nile, and thence by boats down the river to a landing-place at the modern Cairo. This trade lasted in some degree until the ascendancy of the Saracens diverted part of it through Bassorah and Bagdad to Aleppo. The subsequent oppressions of the Turks grad-

ually destroyed the trade of Alexandria. In the early part of the eighteenth century its population had dwindled to a hundred thousand, and it became merely a prison for slaves and a port for Cairo.

The Abbasside caliphs, under whom the Mussulman empire attained its greatest glory, built Bassorah solely as an *entrepôt* for the East India trade. This indeed was the chief consideration in establishing their capital at Bagdad, the splendors of which under Haroun Al Raschid rivaled those of Constantinople. But the long struggle, from the early part of the fourteenth century to the close of the fifteenth, between the Turks — whose empire began to rise on the ruins of that of the Abbasside caliphs — and the decaying power of the Greek emperors, turned the attention of both Greeks and Turks temporarily away from the Oriental trade, and furnished the opportunity which was taken advantage of by the Venetians to make their city another Tyre. In many of the most important particulars, the parallelism between Tyre and Venice is remarkable. Both were built upon islands which they completely covered, and therefore both appeared to be rising out of the waves. The people of both possessed a greater degree of intelligence than the surrounding nations; the same enterprising mercantile spirit, the same secret, shrewd policy, and pliable, accommodative religious sentiment belonged to both. As the Tyrians excelled in making glass and artificial gems, and were famous for their purple dye, so Venice excelled all the rest of the world in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries in the manufacture of glass, cloth of gold, leather, and silks. As Tyre kept secret the arts of manufacturing glass and gems, and of dyeing purple, so Venice forbade by law any workman to carry his art to any foreign country, on pain of the imprisonment of all his relatives left in Venice; and if he had none of these, an emissary of the republic was sent after him to secretly kill him in whatever foreign land he might have found shelter. As the Greeks and many other ancient peoples were indebted to Tyre for the art of letters, so the Venetians carried

the art of printing to a higher degree of perfection than any other contemporary people of the world. As Tyre possessed the islands of Cyprus and Rhodes, the ports of Rhinoculura, Elath, and Ezion-Geber, and the colonized parts of Carthage and Gades (Cadiz), so Venice possessed Cyprus, Crete, the greater part of the Morea, and the most of the isles of the Ægean Sea, and had a chain of coast forts from the Morea to Dalmatia. Both were cities of the sea, and they encroached upon the land only far enough to make a landing place for their ships, and room for trading with the inhabitants of the interiors.

The prosperity of the Venetians was at its maximum about the beginning of the fifteenth century. At that time the value of goods exported from Venice, exclusive of those sent to the adjacent Lombardian provinces, was ten million ducats annually. The Venetian merchant fleet comprised three thousand vessels, of from one hundred to two hundred tons burden each, employing seventeen thousand sailors, besides forty-five war galleys, on which were eleven thousand men. The maritime commerce of Venice was equal to that of all the rest of Christendom; the Venetian ships visited every port of Europe, and as late as 1518 an argosy of five Venetian ships arrived at Antwerp laden with spices, drugs, silks, gems, leather, etc., for the great annual fair held in that city.

The loss of Candia, captured from the Venetians by the Turks in 1670, was the beginning of the decline of Venetian power. The ensuing war, which lasted twenty-five years, cost the Turks two hundred thousand men, but it also left Venice prostrate. In 1797 she submitted to the Austrians, and since that time, like a worn-out, rotting ship anchored in some deserted harbor, has been slowly sinking into the waves from which she so proudly arose.

In the height of her commercial supremacy, Venice had but one competitor of any importance — Genoa, which had allied herself with the Greek emperors, and the Greek Church against the Pope, as already explained. The Genoese were

granted every possible facility by the emperors, the suburb of Pera at Constantinople was devoted exclusively to the Genoese merchants as a centre for their trade, and even yet the commercial usages of the Genoese are remembered by the people of the shores of the Caspian. The fall of the Greek empire, however, in 1453, completely destroyed the Oriental trade of Genoa, and left Venice mistress of the field until the Portuguese began to divert it by their newly-discovered route around the Cape of Good Hope to Lisbon.

The struggle between the Mediterranean cities to monopolize the Oriental trade turned the world upside down for more than a thousand years. It leagued Venice with the Turks in their purpose of overthrowing the Greek empire, and, strangely enough, at the same time with the Pope in his purpose of crushing the schismatic Greek Church. When the Mamelukes got possession of Egypt they gave the monopoly of the European trade in Oriental commodities to Venice, and barred the way to India against all other Mediterranean cities. But the Portuguese, ambitious of a share in the traffic with India, sent Vasco Da Gama in 1498 to discover a new route by way of that "ultimate dim Thule" the Cape of Good Hope. The Pope now became the *deus ex machina* of Oriental trade, and by a bull gave to the Portuguese not only the monopoly of Oriental trade as far as he could control it, but also the right to enter and take possession of all countries not Christian, on the route between Portugal and the Indies. The Soldan of Egypt, seeing his monopoly about to slip away, warned Pope Julius and King Emmanuel of Portugal that he would put to death all the Christians in Egypt, Palestine, and Syria, would burn their churches, and destroy the Holy Sepulchre itself, if the Portuguese did not cease their encroachments upon his exclusive right to control the trade with India. The dispute was ended by a war between the Turks and the Portuguese, in which the latter were victorious. But in the mean time, Spain also was stirred with hopes of participating in the wealth

that seemed to flow from exhaustless fountains in the East, and Columbus, sent in 1492 to find a new way to India that would not come in conflict with the monopoly granted to the Portuguese by the Pope, discovered America. England, too, seeking an independent route to the same land of golden dreams, but avoiding the route *via* the Cape of Good Hope for fear of offending the Pope, began her search for the northwest passage, and sent out a long succession of exploring expeditions, beginning with that of Sebastian Cabot in 1498, and continued by those of Davis, Baffin, and Sir John Franklin, until the problem of the passage, together with that of the mysterious fate of Franklin, invested Arctic discovery with a fascination which is even yet drawing venturesome navigators from America to those realms of silence and death. Spain, not content even with the vast empire opened to her by the discovery of America, seeking still the strange golden Orient that now loomed up in the imaginations of all the European powers in more magnificent proportions than ever, sent Magellan in 1519 in search of the westward route thither, only to discover the southern extremity of the New World at the straits which bear his name. The English war with Spain and Portugal, and the sea fights of Drake, Cavendish, and Sir John Burroughs with the Spanish and Portuguese ships, from 1582 to 1588; the war between England and France, ending in 1765; the invasion of Egypt and Syria by Napoleon I., in 1798; the fear which made England tremble, in 1808, lest Russia should join Napoleon, and the combined armies, marching in the ancient footsteps of Alexander, should conquer England on the banks of the Ganges; the Crimean war, in which England was at last allied with the mediæval monopolists of Oriental trade, the Turks — these are only a few of the prominent events in the history of the last thousand years, directly resulting from the struggle for the monopoly of the trade with the Orient. To tell what have been the secondary consequences of the contest, and their effects upon the progress of man-

kind, would require a history as comprehensive as that of civilization itself.

Commerce with the East has experienced two great eras of development. The first of which we have any account began with Alexander's invasion of India, and embraced the whole period of the supremacy of the Seleucidae in Syria and of the Ptolemies in Egypt. During this time a steadily increasing knowledge of the "far East" spread as far as the Bosphorus and the Nile, but to all the people west of these the Orient was still a region of mystery for more than a thousand years after the time of Alexander. The second era of development began in the fifteenth century. The discovery of the route to India via the Cape of Good Hope was the beginning of a succession of events which extended the knowledge of the globe on which we live more rapidly than ever before or since. In the fifty-four years after Bartholomew Diaz first turned the Cape of Good Hope in 1487, Da Gama had found the new route to India, Columbus had found the western limit of the Atlantic, Cabot had visited Labrador and Brazil, Magellan had seen the southern extremity of South America, De Soto had penetrated nearly to the centre of North America, and Balboa had looked upon the Pacific, which still interposed its vast expanse between these explorers and the primal object of their search, the fleeting, golden Orient, which first seemed to be in India and then in Cathay.

But, as during the first half of the Christian era direct commercial intercourse with the East did not extend farther west than the cities of the Levant, so the westward search for means of commerce with the East by circumnavigation of the globe paused on the western shores of America. The Pacific was an obstacle too vast — both its shores being so remote from the progressive nations of Eastern and Western Europe — to be overcome by the explorers of the fifteenth century; and for two hundred years after its discovery no

European ship had yet crossed it. The world had become acquainted with Persia and India, but China and Japan were still sealed books, and though the Portuguese, extending their voyages along the coasts from India, had begun to trade in some of the Japanese ports as early as 1540, the seclusion of these countries has only been penetrated within the memory of the present generation. Another era of development in intercourse with the East began to dawn with the completion of the American transcontinental railway and the opening of the Suez Canal. The commercial world is stirred, as it was in the fifteenth century, with projects for more intimate commercial relations with the East.

Russia has a design for a railway through Central Asia to India, and another through Siberia to China. England has a scheme for a railway traversing the entire length of Asia Minor, from the Bosphorus to the Indus, and for another from near the site of ancient Tyre, across the desert and down the Valley of the Euphrates, to the Gulf of Ormuz. Some months ago, a project was started in London for a railway from Rangoon, in Burmah, to Momien, in Western China. The Russian government has within the past two years authorized surveys for a canal four hundred miles long, to connect the Manitch, a tributary of the Don, with the Kooma, and thus make a channel for steamers from the Black Sea into the Caspian. English enterprise recently brought the Shah of Persia out of the seclusion of the East, to give prestige to Baron De Reuter's scheme of anglicizing Persia, and thus protecting British trade with India. Even the government of the United States has felt the general stir among commercial nations for closer relations with the Orient, and Congress is asked to subsidize steamship lines to China and Japan, and to lend its authority to American traders in those countries by chartering one or more Asiatic commercial companies.

W. L. Fawcette.