

XII

CONDITIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA

COL. G. WINGATE, C. I. E., LONDON

WHEN we were children, in spite of childish griefs for which we regarded Virgil as wholly responsible, there was no more captivating story to us than the siege of Troy. How we delighted in the Greek stratagem of the wooden horse which brought the long siege to an end, and trembled with fears for the accomplishment of the manœuvre when we read of the wise old priest Laocoön who "feared the Greeks even bringing gifts," and begged his fellow Trojans, triumphantly dragging into their city the innocent-looking horse, to leave it outside their walls. We rejoiced when Ulysses' clever scheme was crowned with success, and wished we had been the Lesser Ajax or some other of the hundred heroes who climbed down out of the horse by night and opened the gates of the city to the waiting Greeks outside.

But we have lived to have more sympathy with the suspicions of the sagacious old priest, and there is a curious similarity to the ancient legend, which we would fain shut our eyes to, in this question of Christian missions to non-Christian countries. The West again confronts the East, and "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*" seems borne to our ears, this time from the mouths of non-Christian rulers and very specially of the priests and mullas of those rulers who are apt to regard Christian missionary enterprise as a modern Wooden Horse which, however innocent it looks, will introduce foreign ele-