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CAUSES

OF

THE AFGHAN WAR

BEING A

SELECTION OF THE PAPERS LAID

BEFORE PARLIAMENT

WITH

A CONNECTING NARRATIVE AND COMMENT

London

CHATTO & WINDUS, PICCADILLY

1879

NOTE.

At a Meeting of the Afghan Committee, held at the Westminster Palace Hotel on Wednesday, November 27, 1878—Lord LAWRENCE *in the Chair;* Mr. FAWCETT, M.P., *Vice-Chairman, being also present—the following resolution was unanimously adopted:—*

> *'That a Sub-Committee be appointed to prepare an abstract of the Papers on the Afghan and Central Asian Questions which are about to be presented to Parliament.'*

The following work is the result of the labours of the Sub-Committee, most of whom it may be stated are gentlemen of extensive Indian experience, official and otherwise.

PREFACE.

THE object of this publication is to help our countrymen to understand by what steps they have been involved in war with the Afghan nation, and what grounds are assigned for that war by its authors. Under ordinary circumstances such a Work would hardly be necessary after debates in Parliament upon the official papers. But the circumstances are not ordinary. The war was sprung upon us with great suddenness. Not only was there no consultation of Parliament by our Government, no communication to that body of any change of policy tending to involve us in a quarrel, but, when questions were asked on the subject, the answers given were calculated to mislead, and did mislead, the most skilled officials and experts, and, through them, the whole nation. In August 1878 Parliament was prorogued with no suspicion that war was impending. Some papers respecting Central Asian affairs had been promised, to be ready in a few days; but the important dealings with Afghanistan had been so effectually concealed, that no motion had been made for papers on that subject. In the midst of the autumn recess we heard that we were on the brink of war; not by official

notification, not by any proposal to summon Parliament, but through newspaper correspondents. For some weeks the only official utterances which reached the nation were veiled, though hardly veiled, under the guise of telegrams from the Indian Correspondent of the *Times*, breathing an ardent spirit for war; though whether these telegrams represented only the views of the Viceroy of India, or those of the Home Government also, was not then known. To the same Ministerial paper there was also communicated an official Memorandum by Sir Bartle Frere, by whom and Sir Henry Rawlinson the new policy has apparently been suggested; and this led to some further publications of the same kind. But of official notification by the Government to the public, there was for a long while none; even the promised Central Asian papers were withheld; we knew that we were about to be dragged into war, but for what cause, whether to avenge an insult, or to repel aggressions of the Russians, or to enlarge our boundaries, we were left in ignorance.

The earliest utterance on the subject which openly bore any official character was a speech by the Prime Minister at the Guildhall, on November 9, which treated the subject very briefly and lightly, and spoke only of the improvement of our frontier as being the purpose of the war. Under these grave circumstances the Afghan Committee was formed and supported, entirely irrespective of party politics, and by persons belonging to different parties or unconnected with party. They addressed the Government on November 18, for two objects; one being the production of papers, and the other the assemblage of the representatives of the nation at a time when they might exercise a substantial, and not a

merely nominal, control over the funds they are bound to administer. Both the information and the meeting of Parliament came after the die was cast. On November 21 there was published in the newspapers a despatch, dated the 18th, from Lord Cranbrook, the Secretary of State for India, to the Government of India, which purported to contain our case for going to war. This despatch said nothing about alteration of frontier, but assigned as the cause of war the refusal of the Ameer of Afghanistan to receive a British Envoy; and, as the objects of the war, first an apology by the Ameer; secondly, an agreement by him to receive a permanent British Mission within his territories; and, thirdly, some temporary arrangements respecting certain border tribes. This despatch, however, was very unsatisfactory. On the very face of it, it was at variance with the statement of the Prime Minister; and was composed as much with an eye to the party politics of the time, as with the view of giving to the nation a frank and full explanation of the mode in which their affairs were being conducted; while to those who had personal knowledge of the events dealt with, it seemed not only imperfect but essentially one-sided and misleading. It was however published without the documents by which it could be tested; and by the great mass of the British public, who did not then know how they had been put off the right scent by Ministers in Parliament, it was naturally taken as containing a complete statement of our case against the Afghans.

Parliament was convened for December 5. The papers were published by instalments—the first and largest on November 28, the second and next largest soon afterwards, and other smaller ones subsequently.

They consist of more than 500 folio pages well filled with print; and the amount of time for studying them before the debates in Parliament was therefore extremely scanty. The result is that the mass of matter has hitherto been very insufficiently elucidated; and indeed the debates in Parliament turned to an undue extent on the party issues raised by Lord Cranbrook's despatch. A great deal yet remains to be said before the people at large can understand what has been done and is being done. This must be the work of many pamphlets, articles, and speeches. And the Committee conceive that an arrangement of the material parts of the papers in order, coupled with such statements as will suffice to connect and elucidate them, with comments on the salient points, and with proper references to the originals as published, will be the best way of lightening the labours of those who wish either to expound the subject to others or to understand it themselves. We have also given from a separate Blue-book an account of the occupation of Quetta, which is connected with the consideration of Afghan affairs.

It may be asked, as the *Times* and other Ministerial papers are constantly asking, What is the use of going back to the origin of the troubles now that we are actually at war? To this we answer, first, by asking other questions: Are we or are we not a self-governed nation in the affairs of foreign policy and of our dependencies? If we are, when and how are we to discuss such affairs? If we have been prevented from guiding them, is it not important to pass judgment on them? Secondly, we say, that though the war has begun it has not ended, and the sober part of the nation may yet be able to save us from embarking on the rash and

ruinous course, indicated by the Prime Minister, of forcible annexations of territory in search of that unattainable thing, an impregnable frontier. We believe that this war is unjust; and injustice is certain, sooner or later, to bring disaster in its train. We believe that, even if just, it is inexpedient; that the policy which brought it about is unwise, and will imperil our rule in India. We assert that the policy is a new one, begun, in the year 1875, with suddenness and secrecy, and without proper advice. We think that the more these papers are intelligently studied, the more clearly will the above conclusions be brought out. And we conceive it to be the duty of every lover of his country to do what in him lies to save it from the consequences of injustice and rashness, and to insist upon it that we shall not follow the foolish example of ruinous territorial aggrandisement which the Russians have set us.

NOTE.—In the First Part of this book the following abbreviations are used:—

A. means the principal Blue-book on Afghanistan.
F.A ,, subsequent ,, ,,
C.A. ,, principal Blue-book on Central Asia (No. 1. 1878).

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CAUSES OF THE AFGHAN WAR.

PART I.

AFGHANISTAN FROM THE SIDE OF INDIA

CHAPTER I.

THE POLICY FROM 1855 TO 1865

THE present history may be taken up at the time when the first treaty was made between the East India Company and the Ameer Dost Mahomed, then called Walee of Cabul. He was the Ruler whom we had overthrown and captured in the year 1839, when we invaded Afghanistan under the impression that our Indian dominions were threatened by Russian machinations from that quarter, and that we could improve matters by forcible intervention. Though our military success, and apparently our political success, was complete for a time, the result was, as everyone knows, most disastrous in every point of view, and no one of any authority is now found to defend either the justice or the wisdom of our measures. After this failure we released Dost Mahomed, who re-established himself on the throne at Cabul. For some years he was hostile to us, but afterwards desired to enter into alliance. Hence the treaty, which was concluded on the British side by Lord Lawrence, the Chief Commissioner of the Punjab, under the authority of Lord Dalhousie, then Governor-General of India, and which bears date May 1, 1855. We subjoin the entire document (*vide* A., p. 1):—

Article 1. Between the Honourable East India Company and his Highness Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, Walee of Cabul and of those countries now in his possession, and the heirs of the said Ameer, there shall be perpetual peace and friendship.

Article 2. The Honourable East India Company engages to respect those territories of Afghanistan now in his Highness' possession, and never to interfere therein.

Article 3. His Highness Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, Walee of Cabul and of those countries of Afghanistan now in his possession, engages, on his own part and on the part of his heirs, to respect the territories of the Honourable East India Company, and never to interfere therein, and to be the friend of the friends and enemy of the enemies of the Honourable East India Company.

A further treaty was made by the Company with the same potentate on January 26, 1857. We were then at war with Persia, and the greater part of the treaty has reference to the exigencies of that war. Amongst other things it provided that a lakh of rupees (10,000*l.*) per month should be paid by the Company to Dost Mahomed for military purposes, and that British officers should reside in Afghanistan to see that the subsidy was properly applied, and to keep the Government of India informed of all affairs, but not to advise or interfere with the Cabul Government. The 6th and 7th Articles are as follows (*vide* A., p. 2) :—

6. The subsidy of one lakh per mensem shall cease from the date on which peace is made between the British and Persian Governments, or at any previous time at the will and pleasure of the Governor-General of India.

7. Whenever the subsidy shall cease the British officers shall be withdrawn from the Ameer's country; but at the pleasure of the British Government a Vakeel, not a European officer, shall remain at Cabul on the part of the Government, and one at Peshawur on the part of the Government of Cabul.

These articles became important when it was determined to press the present Ameer, Shere Ali, to

receive European British officers to reside in his dominions. He appealed to the treaty. The words of his Prime Minister are (*vide* A., p. 212):—

With special reference to the Treaty of 1857 which the late Ameer made with Lord Lawrence: Inasmuch as the condition of Afghanistan was thoroughly well known to Lord Lawrence, he bound himself, in the 7th article of that Treaty, that the British Government might maintain an Agent at Cabul on the part of the English Government, but he was not to be an Englishman. The Government of Afghanistan will never in any manner consent to acknowledge the abrogation of this article.

Lord Lytton, on the other hand, argued as follows (*vide* A., p. 216):—

The only obligations ever contracted on behalf of each other by the British Government and the Barakzai Rulers of Afghanistan are embodied in two Treaties, of which the first was signed in 1855 and the second in 1857. The second of these two Treaties was contracted for a special and limited purpose, and with exclusive reference to an occasion which has long since passed away. This second Treaty, therefore, belongs to the class of Treaties known as transitory Treaties; and on both sides the obligations contracted by it have lapsed, as a matter of course, with the lapse of time.

And he repeats the argument in a despatch to the Home Government (*vide* A., p. 160). But 'the occasion which has long since passed away' is the Persian War, and Article 7 of the Treaty was clearly designed to begin operating when the war was ended, and to be undefined in point of duration. In fact, in the year 1867, the Government of India insisted on the obligatory character of this part of the Treaty, which was acknowledged by Shere Ali, as entitling them to send a 'Mahomedan gentleman of rank and character to reside at his Court, and there to represent the British Government' (*vide* A., p. 14):—

On June 9, 1863, when Lord Elgin was Governor-General of India, Dost Mahomed died. The successor

indicated by him was Shere Ali, one of his sons. Other sons, however, disputed the legality of this proceeding, and took arms to support their claims. Under these circumstances Lord Elgin determined not to interfere with the internal politics of Afghanistan, but to recognise any ruler actually established. His policy is set forth in a despatch to Lord Halifax, then Sir Charles Wood and Secretary of State for India (*vide* A., p. 3). He mentions a letter received from Shere Ali to announce his father's death, and continues thus:—

4. If it be true that Mahomed Ufzal Khan is raising an army it will not be long before the contest for power begins. Meanwhile, the acknowledgment by the Vakeel of the receipt of the letter, and that a reply will be sent, as also the presence of the Vakeel with Shere Ali Khan, will be regarded as indications that the British Government are not indisposed to accept Dost Mahomed's election of his successor, provided the latter is in a position to uphold the authority thus conferred upon him.

In the month of November, 1863, Lord Elgin died, and Sir W. Denison held the office of Governor-General till the month of January, when Lord Lawrence assumed office.

The struggle for power in Afghanistan lasted several years, during which time the policy of allowing the Afghans to settle for themselves who should rule over them was strictly observed. The good wishes of the British Government were conveyed to Shere Ali by Sir W. Denison on the 23rd of December, 1863 (*vide* A., p. 5). In April, 1866, our Vakeel at Cabul was rebuked by Lord Lawrence for making overtures of alliance with one of Shere Ali's brothers and rivals who appeared at that time to have got the upper hand. The Government of India wrote to Lord Ripon, then Lord De Grey and Secretary of State (*vide* A., p. 9), that—

We intend maintaining an attitude of strict neutrality, leaving the Afghans to choose their own Rulers, and pre-

pared to accept with amity whatever chief may finally establish his power in the country.

On February 28, 1867, the Government of India reported to Lord Salisbury, then Lord Cranborne and Secretary of State, as follows (*vide* A., p. 12) :—

2. Your Lordship will perceive that we have at last recognised Sirdar Mahomed Ufzul Khan as Ameer of Cabul and Candahar, and have invited him in that capacity to tender his adhesion to the Treaty engagements which were concluded by his father, Dost Mahomed Khan, with the British Government.

3. Ameer Shere Ali has fled to Herat, and so long as he retains possession of that province and desires to be on good terms with the British Government, we shall continue to recognise him as Ameer of Herat and to reciprocate his friendship.

The recognition of Mahomed Ufzul will be found in a letter written to him by Lord Lawrence, in which he is most careful to state the entire neutrality of the British Government, its determination to recognise only actual Rulers, its friendship for Shere Ali, and its recognition of his rule where it existed.

On June 20, 1867, the same policy was reported to Sir Stafford Northcote, who had then become Secretary of State, as follows (*vide* A., p. 17) :—

Whatever happens, we contemplate no divergence from our settled policy of neutrality; unless indeed Shere Ali or any other party should throw themselves into the hands of Persia, and obtain assistance from the Shah; and even in this event nothing would be done without previous reference to Her Majesty's Government. You are aware that even in the same document in which we recognised Ufzul Khan's possession of Cabul and Candahar, we expressed sorrow for the fall of our original ally, Shere Ali, and announced our determination still to recognise him as Ameer of any portion of Afghanistan which might continue in his power. Thus, whether the brothers Ufzul Khan and Azum Khan maintain their hold on the Bala Hissar, or whether Shere Ali, with Fyz Mahomed's aid, regain the throne of his inheritance, our relations with

Afghanistan remain on their first footing of friendship towards the actual Rulers, combined with rigid abstention from interference in domestic feuds.

It will be observed that in this despatch the policy of non-intervention in Afghan politics was spoken of as contingent on the abstinence of other Powers. On September 3, 1867, the Government of India wrote to Sir Stafford Northcote more fully to the same effect (*vide* A., pp. 18–21). They refer to rumours that Shere Ali is calling in the Persians, and say that, if such be the case, it may be expedient to side with the party in power at Cabul. Then they proceed :—

It is also a probable contingency that the party now in power at Cabul, even if aided and countenanced by us, should, under the present shifting phase of Afghan affairs, in its turn pass away, and be succeeded either by Shere Ali or by some other combination of the Sirdars. We are of opinion that any such change need in no degree affect the British line of policy. Our relations should always be with the *de facto* Ruler of the day, and so long as the *de facto* Ruler is not unfriendly to us, we should always be prepared to renew with him the same terms and favourable conditions as obtained under his predecessor.

In this way we shall be enabled to maintain our influence in Afghanistan far more effectually than by any advance of our troops—a contingency which could only be contemplated in the last resort, which would unite as one man the Afghan tribes against us, and which would paralyse our finances.

Such are our views on the present state of affairs, and we are anxious to have a very early expression of the sentiments of Her Majesty's Government in reference to the action we propose adopting, should the contingencies we have adverted to take any definite shape.

The intelligence now communicated suggests the discussion of another subject, which has latterly from time to time forced itself on our attention. We allude to the present position of Russia in Central Asia. From circumstances which Russia alleges to have been to a great degree beyond her control, and to have forced upon her an aggressive policy, her advances have been rapid. And by the late victory she is reported to have achieved over Bokhara, her influence will

no doubt soon, if it has not already, become paramount at Samarcand and Bokhara, as it has for some time past been in Kokand. However, some of her own statesmen assert that the true interests of Russia do not consist in the expansion of her posts and frontier among the bigoted and uncivilised population south of the Oxus, and they aver that the late advances have been prosecuted, not in fulfilment of any predetermined line of aggressive progress, but by the hostile attitude and schemes of Bokhara, and in opposition to her normal policy. If these representations be a correct exposition of the views of Russia, then it is as much in harmony with her interests as it is with those of British India, that up to a certain border the relations of the respective Governments should be openly acknowledged and admitted as bringing them into necessary contact and treaty with the tribes and nations on the several sides of such a line. If an understanding, and even an engagement, of this nature were come to, we, on the one hand, could look on without anxiety or apprehension at the proceedings of Russia on her southern frontier, and welcome the civilising effect of her border government on the wild tribes of the Steppe, and on the bigoted and exclusive Governments of Bokhara and Kokand. While Russia, on the other hand, assured of our loyal feeling in this matter, would have no jealousy in respect of our alliance with the Afghan and neighbouring tribes.

If such be the line of policy advantageous to the interests of both Empires, the time would now appear to have come when the subject might with great advantage be brought under discussion in Her Majesty's Cabinet. And, should you coincide with us in these views, we would respectfully suggest that a communication might be made in the sense of what we have now written to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Sir Stafford Northcote answered on December 26 to the following effect (*vide* A., pp. 24–26):—

5. There has, therefore, been no breach of faith in the decision adopted by your Excellency to recognise the late Sirdar Mahomed Afzul Khan as *de facto* Ruler of Cabul, when the course of events in Afghanistan placed him in that position; nor can there be any impropriety in your equally acknowledging his son and successor Abdul Rahman Khan, if it appear that he is the chief preferred by the nation.

6. It is the desire of Her Majesty's Government not to interfere in the internal conflicts of the Afghans, so long as they do not jeopardise the peace of the frontier, or lead to the formation of engagements with other Powers dangerous to the independence of Afghanistan, which it long has been and still is the main object of our policy in that part of the world to maintain. If however your Excellency should see reason to believe that either party in the State is endeavouring to strengthen itself against the national feeling by invoking foreign aid, and especially if you should observe any disposition to make territorial sacrifices, or otherwise to compromise the integrity of Afghanistan for the sake of obtaining such aid, it is quite right that you should warn those who may evince such an inclination that by such a course they may compel the British Government to give material support to their rivals.

. . . . . .

11. I now proceed to the second question to which your Excellency refers, namely, whether it is desirable to make any communication to the Government of Russia, in order to obviate any possible inconvenience that might be apprehended from the progress of that Power in Central Asia.

12. Upon this point Her Majesty's Government see no reason for any uneasiness or for any jealousy. The conquests which Russia has made, and apparently is still making in Central Asia, appear to them to be the natural result of the circumstances in which she finds herself placed, and to afford no ground whatever for representations indicative of suspicion or alarm on the part of this country. Friendly communications have at various times passed between the two Governments on the subject, and should an opportunity offer, Her Majesty's Government will avail themselves of it for the purpose of obviating any possible danger of misunderstanding either with respect to the proceedings of Russia, or those of England. This is all that it appears necessary or desirable to do.

In the course of the year 1868 Shere Ali established his supremacy over his rivals at Cabul, and he spoke to the British Agent there in somewhat bitter terms of the refusal of the British Government to interfere in his behalf. At the same time he stated (*vide* A., p. 42) that he would go to Calcutta, or send envoys there, for—

the purpose of a meeting, and to show my sincerity and firm attachment to the British Government, and make known my real wants. At present writing letters on my part is of little avail in every way until I first receive congratulatory letters from the British Government.

On October 2, 1868, Lord Lawrence sent to Shere Ali a letter of congratulation, as follows (*vide* A., p. 43):—

I have received your letter, informing me of your safe return to Cabul, and the recovery of your kingdom. I congratulate your Highness on your success, which is alone due to your own courage, ability, and firmness. I sincerely hope that your Highness will now be able to re-establish and consolidate your authority. I trust that you will deal leniently with those who have fought against you, particularly when there may be reason to believe that they were carried away by the difficulties of their position and the course of events, when they can give you assurance of future fidelity. By kindness and generosity in this respect, your Highness will take the best mode of establishing your rule throughout your dominions. It has always been to me a cause of sorrow that the family of your great father, the late Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, should have broken up into contending factions, who have resorted to civil war, causing the ruin of many brave chiefs, and the general weakening of Afghan power. I trust that your Highness will be able, by the exercise of those excellent virtues, kindness, foresight, and good management, to restore peace and prosperity to your country. I am prepared not only to maintain the bonds of amity and goodwill, which were established between Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan and myself, acting on the part of the British Government, but so far as may be practicable to strengthen those bonds. In all cases of this kind it is essential that both parties should act with sincerity and truth, so that real confidence may exist between them.

The policy of this period may fairly be summed up thus. We had repented of our former violence and injustice towards the Afghans, and were desirous of respecting their independence. For that purpose we refused to interfere in their internal politics; but this

refusal was to be reconsidered if other Powers interfered. In the meantime the Treaty of 1857 was faithfully observed by our maintaining a Vakeel or native agent at Cabul without asking to place European officers in any part of Afghanistan. Shere Ali was much vexed that we did not take his part against his brothers: probably his brothers were equally vexed that we did not take theirs. They did not understand strict neutrality, at least when it operated to their own disadvantage. But whatever secret vexation they may have had, nothing resembling hostility was shown, or, so far as we can tell, existed. That policy was followed without break by six Governors-General, from Lord Dalhousie to Lord Northbrook, and by five Secretaries of State, from Lord Halifax to the Duke of Argyll.

CHAPTER II.

THE 'FORWARD POLICY.'

WE have now to explain the views which prevailed among Indian authorities respecting the expediency of occupying, either directly or under the guise of a Protectorate, a larger extent of territory, when the proposal to do so was brought forward. After the year 1842, when we abandoned Afghanistan, first Sind and afterwards the territories of the Sikhs were added to the British dominions, with the effect of greatly advancing the whole of our North-West frontier. No further advance was proposed, at least in any official form, till the year 1865, when Sir S. Northcote forwarded to the Government of India a Memorandum,[1] written by Sir Henry Rawlinson (*vide* A., pp. 31–41), in which he enlarged on the great dangers to which we were exposed from Russia, and, though he did not recommend any military advance, strongly advised an attempt to extend our authority. His conclusions were as follows:—

In conclusion, the remedial measures recommended for adoption in the present state of the Central Asian question may be briefly recapitulated. They are few, but not unimportant. Shere Ali Khan should be subsidised and strengthened at Cabul, our position at that capital being rendered as secure and paramount as would have been Burnes's position at the Court of Dost Mahomed Khan in 1837, if he had been supported by the full weight of Lord Auckland's authority and resources. The next step should be to recover our lost ground in Persia, so as to prevent the possibility of Russia making use of that country as an instrument to facilitate her own advances towards India. Locally also our communica-

[1] See this Memorandum discussed from its Quetta side (*inf*, pp. 205–9).

tions with the Afghan frontier, considered especially as military lines, should be completed and improved. It is a crying reproach to us that up to the present day no progress should have been made in laying down a railway from Lahore to Peshawur, and that we should still be dependent on the dilatory and uncertain Indus navigation for our communications between Mooltan and the sea.

The only other point refers to the proposed establishment of a fortified outwork at Quetta, above the Bolan Pass, a measure which has been strongly advocated in some quarters, and as strongly opposed in others. No one will be inclined to question the military advantage of such a work. As a *place d'armes* it would cover the frontier, and being held in too great strength to admit of being masked, would, in the event of invasion, delay an enemy sufficiently to enable us to mass our full forces in the rear. Perhaps also, under present circumstances, the erection of such a fortress would have a salutary effect upon the native mind in India. Our friends are now said to be dispirited at our inactivity, while our enemies acquire fresh confidence and power. Breaking ground at Quetta would cheer the one class and would check the other. It would show that our repose had been the repose of strength, that we were fully alive to the gravity of the situation, and prepared to move immediately that the occasion arose. But, on the other hand, it is doubtful how such a proceeding would be regarded at Candahar and Cabul. If our position were already secured with Shere Ali Khan, and he could thus be led to look upon the Quetta post as a support to his own power, then we should hardly be deterred from undertaking the work by mere considerations of expense; but if, as is more probable, the tribes in general regarded this erection of a fortress—above the passes, although not on Afghan soil—as a menace, or as a preliminary to a further hostile advance, then we should not be justified, for so small an object, in risking the rupture of our friendly intercourse.

The opinions elicited from Indian officers by this Memorandum will be found in A. pp. 43–81. They were on the whole strongly adverse to the policy recommended. Most of them are long, and run much into detail; and, though very valuable to study, cannot be extracted here. We give here the principal passages which relate to general considerations from the minute

of Lord Sandhurst, the then Commander-in-Chief (*vide* A., p. 75); and also the whole minute of Mr., now Sir R. H. Davies (*vide* A., p. 78), an officer of great experience in the Punjab, and afterwards Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. We select this minute for a specimen, as being one of the shortest and of the most strictly confined to general considerations.

Minute by Mr. R. H. Davies on Sir H. Rawlinson's Paper on Russian Progress in Central Asia, dated December 27, 1868.

A perusal of Sir H. Rawlinson's paper leads me to the conclusion that he has failed to make out any sufficient case for the measures which he proposes. It is not indeed altogether consistent with itself, for while he professes to regard an invasion of India by Russia as a contingency not requiring to be guarded against, he nevertheless draws an alarming picture of the descent of 50,000 Persian Surbaz, supported by a Russian column, and hints that it might be successful, owing to the prevalent disaffection of the Mahomedan population of India.

His immediate object however is to bring some kind of increased diplomatic pressure to bear on the Rulers of Cabul and Persia.

One argument for interfering at Cabul is founded on the general advantages of keeping good order in a country adjoining our frontier; but a second plainly points to the creation by our agents of a confederacy of the Mahomedan States in antagonism to Russia. The various composition of such a league, and the utter bad faith of the parties to be consulted, would, I think, render such a scheme impracticable, as well as dangerous. The Russians would regard it as threatening their position in Bokhara, and as justifying any reprisals. Nothing but overt aggression on their part would, in any degree, recommend such a project.

The argument for interfering in Persia is that Russia may otherwise seize Herat. Various modes of intervention are suggested, all more or less involving expenditure on our part.

Now, does past experience warrant our augmenting our diplomatic interference in the affairs of those countries? Can we forget our former failure in Afghanistan, and its fatal consequences? Can we forget that, when Persia went to war in

1832 with Turkey, in 1826 with Russia, in 1832, 1836, and 1837 against Herat, she, in each instance, did so contrary to the remonstrances of the British Minister; and, in the case of Mahomed Shah, commenced hostilities immediately after we had aided his accession to the throne, with troops drilled by our officers? Is there any hope of our efforts and expenditure now being more effectual? Shall we find less slippery materials to work with,—instruments more reliable,—than Dost Mahomed Khan and the Candahar brothers, or the vain-glorious Shahs bygone? Neither Oriental character nor the circumstances of these Mahomedan Governments have changed. Under the unplastic law of the Koran, every vacancy in the Musnud is liable to be contested with the sword. To side with one candidate is to make the other, and perhaps a strong party with him, an enemy; to side with neither is to pretermit the purpose of the negotiator; and, while thus all the old elements of failure await him, is there any fresh cause of alarm? Does the position of Russia in Khokand, Bokhara, or Mongolia, in any way lessen the stupendous physical difficulties of the route to Cabul by Bamian, or to Kashmir by the Karakoram? Russia has been any time during the past thirty years as well able as she is now to aid Persia in the seizure of Herat. She has refrained from doing so. She refrained even at the time of the Sepoy mutiny. Is it to be imagined that she will attempt the precipitous and sterile passes of the Hindoo Khoosh and Karakoram, so long as she has the Candahar route as an alternative? And yet her approach to these, our natural and impregnable ramparts, is the pretext for advocating the transfer of our scanty surplus from public works and defensive preparations to the fallacious projects of an unavailing, if not mischievous diplomacy.

Much of the superstructure of Sir H. Rawlinson's conjurations rests on Sir R. Temple's report of the disaffection of the Mahomedans in India. I do not deny that there is truth in it, more especially as regards the cities of Hyderabad and of Delhi before the mutiny, which were immediately referred to. It is also in a less degree applicable to the Pathans of Rohilkund, who still constitute a dominant colony, and are capable of combination. But it is much exaggerated if the general Mahomedan persuasion be in contemplation. The well-to-do majority are not likely to respond to the electric shock of Russian sympathy.

The space which the subject fills in the thoughts and aspirations of the population of India is also, in my humble opinion,

greatly exaggerated. Much of what appears in the Native newspapers is the normal echo of the industrious knot of English alarmists. Much consists of the lucubrations of one or two well-known speculative Moonshees. For several years together the talk of the Punjab bazaars was reported to me in Native news-letters, and though every wild political rumour found its place in the record, the spectre of Russian invasion was far from having the whole ground to itself. If any one will take the trouble to refer to the old Blue-books about Herat, or to such distant publications as 'Shore's Notes on India,' he will see that both the facilities for the invasion of India by the Candahar route, and also the welcome ready for the Russians on the part of the population of India, were then duly announced, and have always formed keynotes in the cry of alarm.

It is not as if we had money to throw away. If our military preparations were complete, it would be another thing. But the Indus at Attock is actually neither bridged nor tunnelled. Kohat is *en l'air*, for want of a bridge at Khoshulgurh. The army at the Khyber, if worsted, has no *point d'appui* to fall back upon. The communication with Kurrachee must be reckoned as perilously defective until the railway is unbroken between that place and Peshawur. Surely any funds we have to spare might better be devoted to the tardy reparation of these deficiencies than engulfed in the profitless abyss of Afghan revolutions. Surely, if we really desire to prove to Russia, Persia, and India the stability of our power, —for this is the only way to check encroachment, and give confidence to our subjects,—we should perfect our armaments before subsidising powerless allies, in terror of a phantom enemy. Exactly in proportion as we are in a state of preparation, will the Russians hesitate to begin the adventurous march over the 1,100 ill-watered miles between the Caspian and the Indus. Exactly in proportion as we are ready to land a force on the shores of Persia, will that unenterprising Power avert its eyes from the coveted fortress. But it is to play the game of these secret confederates, to divert to chimerical objects the resources which might be made to prove to them the hopelessness of their combinations.

Averse to the grant of any annual subsidy to Shere Ali Khan, I see no objection to giving him arms, or to rewarding any services he may render, liberally or even lavishly. But I fear that troubles may arise from imposing on him any general responsibility for the conduct of the tribes, or for the sur-

render of criminals. The bond between Cabul and the tribes is slender and brittle. The Muhsood Wazeerees, for instance, never acknowledged any kind of allegiance until, when blockaded by us, they applied in vain to Dost Mahomed Khan for assistance. Yet, if it were formally understood that the Ameer was bound to restrain them, his inabilty to do so might then appear an inadmissible excuse. Each case should, I think, be dealt with separately. There are probably reasons with which I am not acquainted for the delay in coming to an understanding with Russia about the independence of Herat, for the advantages of this are obvious. In the absence of any such arrangement however I confess that I am not of the general opinion that, at whatever cost to ourselves, any attempt on this fortress should necessarily become a *casus belli*. It is true that Herat is a strong position, near a fertile plain, and has a great name in Asia. But it is 400 miles from Candahar, and a force invading India would, if we are true to ourselves, soon learn that the days of Nadir Shah and the Abdali have passed away. If the Afghans were constantly defeated by Ranjit Singh, what have we to fear from hordes of Persians or Turkomans, even if they ever do come, which I regard as in the last degree improbable?

Similarly, I am against in any way binding ourselves to preserve Balkh and Koondooz in the Ameer's possession. These are comparatively open countries on this side the Oxus, and might easily he occupied by a force from beyond it. We could not prevent this.

To conclude, I regret that I cannot regard Sir H. Rawlinson's proposals otherwise than as an untimely revival of the policy of 1838, which nearly ruined the empire, and the effects of which we have still to get over. They would again plunge us into the ever-shifting sands of Central Asian intrigue, at a cost which we cannot afford; again prematurely withdraw our troops from their own ground to isolated positions; and again unite against us, as suspected invaders, all the wild passions of an irritated population, which, unaroused against ourselves, may, at the proper time, be turned, as our best defence, against the common enemy. And though the result might not involve the same military disasters, it could not fail to embrace a similar retardation of all internal improvement, and a similar waste of the sinews of war.

(Signed) R. H. DAVIES.

December 27, 1868.

Minute by the Commander-in-Chief in India, suggested by Sir H. Rawlinson's Memorandum on the questions connected with Central Asia, dated December 24, 1868.

In the various papers submitted by me in the Foreign and Public Works Departments, on matters connected with the Central Asian question, Afghanistan, and the defence of India on the North-West Frontier, during the last two years, I have given my opinion on many of the questions suggested by Sir Henry Rawlinson in his Memorandum.

Thus, I think the argument is complete against a British occupation of Quetta, or an advance on Afghanistan, unless a real *casus belli* should arise in our relations with that country.

I hold, very strongly, that those relations should not be left to chance, or to be determined according to a distrustful or hostile attitude on our part, but that we should encourage diplomatic intercourse with the Court of Cabul, and, while testifying something like a genial sympathy towards the Government *de facto*, we should by political pressure and the practical testimony of our own good offices, bring about a reciprocity of good feeling towards ourselves.

I have thoroughly concurred with his Excellency the Viceroy in the policy pursued during the last four years.

Afghanistan being in a state of civil war, and it being really impossible to say from day to day what party might be in the ascendant, it has appeared to me to be clearly necessary to let the opposing parties fight their quarrel out; neutrality on our side being absolutely observed.

But I think it is obvious that such a policy of passiveness should be limited by the pressing necessity of actual civil war, and that so soon as we are able to assign something like firmness and stability to the *de facto* Government, we should not only speak to it with civility, but we should give it moral and even material support.

This is required not only on the grounds of a large policy which we should direct as the great Indian power, a power resting on an European as well as an Asiatic basis, but also with regard to the considerations of trade with Cabul and the countries lying beyond.

Our relations with the Court of Cabul should then be put on a footing of liberality on such grounds, care being taken to exclude the notion that we are led to this by any fear or mistrust of Russian proceedings.

To make an alliance offensive and defensive with Cabul would indicate this fear of Russia, and therefore on that ground alone, it is an inadmissible measure.

But it is certainly right so to influence the Ruler of Cabul, as to cause him to look to us as his best friend and support, and one to whom he may come for counsel and assistance, provided that, in important matters, he is disposed to adopt reasonable advice, and a policy in conformity with justice to his own subjects and respect to foreign obligations.

It will have been seen in my previous papers that I entirely decline to follow in the wake of those who are constantly striving to excite the military spirit in England and India against Russia.

But while I regret to see the efforts made in this sense, it does appear to me to be necessary to keep a vigilant watch over the proceedings of that country in Asia, just as we see a like precaution pursued by the Foreign Office with reference to the assumed ambition of Russia in her relations with the Danubian Provinces and the Porte.

Such diplomatic vigilance is required by general considerations. But it may be said with truth that the alarm testified with regard to Russia, as affecting British interests in India, is more unreasonable than it is possible to describe. As a military and vast political power, we have literally nothing to fear from Russia, whether she stop at her present limits, or spread her power even to our own borders. A great mischief is done by those who, from whatever cause, occupy themselves in preaching the falsehood of our weakness in India. We are simply invincible in that country against all the Powers in the world, provided only we are true to ourselves. If we choose to commit ourselves to a policy of aggression, we can go and establish ourselves where we like. If, on the other hand, being guided by a true and sound policy, we restrict our ambition and fortify ourselves by a continuance of good government and careful attention to the efficiency of our military establishments, without extravagance on the one hand, or unwise cheapness on the other, we not only do that which is best for the great empire committed to our charge, but we comply with the conditions requisite for security and freedom from political anxiety.

We subjoin the whole of the despatch in which the Government of India delivered their joint opinion on this subject. There was no dissent recorded.

To His Grace the Duke of Argyll, K.T., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

Fort William: January 4, 1869.

My Lord Duke,—We have the honour to transmit a series of Minutes, with annexures, as per accompanying Abstract of Contents, bearing on the important political question raised in the confidential Memorandum of Sir H. C. Rawlinson, which was forwarded, under Sir Stafford Northcote's instructions, in Mr. Kaye's letter of August 21 last. The Honourable Mr. Maine wishes it to be understood that he concurs entirely in the Minute of the Viceroy.

2. The various proposals brought forward in that Memorandum, in order to counteract, in some measure, the advances of Russia in Central Asia, and to strengthen the influence and power of England in Afghanistan and Persia, have received from us that careful consideration which is due to the well-known career and abilities of the writer, and to the magnitude of the events and interests of which he has treated.

3. A careful perusal of the Memorandum forwarded to us, and a further discussion of the subject in all its bearings, has not led us to recommend any substantial alteration in the course of policy to be adopted on the frontier, or beyond it. On the contrary, the closer and more constant the attention which the subject receives at our hands, the more settled is our conviction that any serious departure from the principles which we have already enunciated, would be the cause of grave political and financial embarrassments, and would probably involve us in doubtful undertakings, the issue or duration of which no statesman could venture to predict.

4. We solicit a full consideration of our subjoined Minutes. They have been penned with reference to every available source of information, after careful observation of the protracted struggle for supreme authority in Afghanistan, which is not yet terminated, and under a deep sense of our responsibility for the welfare of all classes in India, and for the permanence of the British power. In these Minutes the consequences of any deviation from our established policy have been viewed by us under various aspects, and your Grace will observe that due regard has been paid to the division and conflict of parties in Afghanistan, and to the peculiar national characteristics of the people; to the difficulties of establishing, supporting, and supplying troops in isolated positions, and at

a distance from our own territories; to the financial outlay which any strategic advance beyond our own border, or even the formation of a Native Contingent, would certainly entail; and to the probable effects of such measures on the feelings and wishes of those classes of Her Majesty's subjects in India itself whom it is our object to attach to us by just and kind treatment, or, if necessary, to control by salutary awe. These considerations deserve fully as much attention as the gradual advance of Russia in Central Asia, and her military occupation of the cities and territories of Samarcand and Bokhara, on which many writers have been led too exclusively to dwell.

5. We venture to sum up the policy which is recommended or supported in various language and by various arguments in our Minutes, somewhat as follows:—We object to any active interference in the affairs of Afghanistan by the deputation of a high British officer with or without a contingent, or by the forcible or amicable occupation of any post or tract in that country beyond our own frontier, inasmuch as we think such a measure would, under present circumstances, engender irritation, defiance, and hatred in the minds of the Afghans, without in the least strengthening our power either for attack or defence. We think it impolitic and unwise to decrease any of the difficulties which would be entailed on Russia, if that Power seriously thought of invading India, as we should certainly decrease them if we left our own frontier, and met her half way in a difficult country, and possibly in the midst of a hostile or exasperated population. We foresee no limits to the expenditure which such a move might require, and we protest against the necessity of having to impose additional taxation on the people of India, who are unwilling, as it is, to bear such pressure for measures which they can both understand and appreciate. And we think that the objects which we have at heart, in common with all interested in India, may be attained by an attitude of readiness and firmness on our frontier, and by giving all our care and expending all our resources for the attainment of practical and sound ends over which we can exercise an effective and immediate control.

6. Should a foreign Power, such as Russia, ever seriously think of invading India from without, or, what is more probable, of stirring up the elements of disaffection or anarchy within it, our true policy, our strongest security, would then,

we conceive, be found to lie in previous abstinence from entanglements at either Cabul, Candahar, or any similar outpost; in full reliance on a compact, highly-equipped, and disciplined army stationed within our own territories, or on our own border; in the contentment, if not in the attachment, of the masses; in the sense of security of title and possession, with which our whole policy is gradually imbuing the minds of the principal Chiefs and the Native aristocracy; in the construction of material works within British India, which enhance the comfort of the people, while they add to our political and military strength; in husbanding our finances and consolidating and multiplying our resources; in quiet preparation for all contingencies, which no Indian statesman should disregard; and in a trust in the rectitude and honesty of our intentions, coupled with the avoidance of all sources of complaint which either invite foreign aggression or stir up restless spirits to domestic revolt.

7. We think it necessary to dwell strongly on this part of the policy of the Government of India, because the subject has lately been revived in the public prints, and because some writers possibly imagine that a change in the Head of the administration may be a fit occasion for a change in our foreign or domestic policy.

8. It is not difficult for public writers, who are often wanting in detailed and accurate information, and who may write without a full sense of political or financial responsibility, to advocate or suggest measures which for a moment may delude or influence the public.

9. The following are the only fresh measures which we could bring ourselves to recommend:—We think that endeavours might be made to come to some clear understanding with the Court of St. Petersburg as to its projects and designs in Central Asia, and that it might be given to understand, in firm but courteous language, that it cannot be permitted to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan, or in those of any State which lies contiguous to our frontier. We are aware that this subject was pressed on Sir Stafford Northcote in the despatches from us, which were all reviewed by him in his letter of December 26, 1867, No. 15, but without any result. The subject however is of such paramount importance, that we think ourselves justified in again pressing it on Her Majesty's Government. The truth appears to us to be, that the advances of Russia, coupled with the constant

allusions made in the newspapers to her progress as compared with what is called the inaction of the British Government, have produced, in the minds of Europeans and Natives, what we believe to be an exaggerated opinion of her resources and power. A mutual good understanding between the two Powers, though difficult of attainment, would enable us to take means to counteract unfounded rumours and to prevent unnecessary alarms.

10. Then, we think that our relations with the Court of Teheran should be placed entirely under the Secretary of State for India; and that we should be empowered to give to any *de facto* Ruler of Cabul some arms and ammunition and substantial pecuniary assistance, as well as moral support, as occasion may offer, but without any formal offensive or defensive alliance. We have already authorised the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab to give Shere Ali six lakhs of rupees, and we shall further be prepared to supply him with some thousand stand of arms. We should be glad therefore, if a discretion were given us at once to act on any emergency on the above principles, without any special reference to Her Majesty's Government at home.

11. In the event of Ameer Shere Ali proving successful in the struggle now going on between him and his nephew, Sirdar Abdul Rahman, should his Highness desire to meet the Governor-General, we think it would be politic that his request should be complied with. If any such arrangement were inconvenient for the Governor-General, his place could be supplied by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. The meeting might with most advantage take place at Peshawur, which is easier of access than more remote parts of the border, and where there is a large force to represent British power and influence. On this occasion the Ameer could explain fully his views, his hopes, and his desires, and thus place us in possession of a great deal of valuable information which it is difficult, if not impossible, to obtain in any other way. If, however, as is now very unlikely, Abdul Rahman Khan or any other chief prove victorious, we must wait and see whether he can consolidate his possession of the supreme power in the country.

12. With these remarks we would suggest further that opportunity be taken by Her Majesty's Government to lay down a course of action which will avoid the perpetual recurrence to these exciting topics, and which will strengthen the hands of

those who have to conduct the affairs of India on the spot, by, as we hope, endorsing views which in the best interests of all parties we have carefully considered, and to which we respectfully and firmly adhere.

We have, &c.,

(Signed) JOHN LAWRENCE.
W. R. MANSFIELD.
H. S. MAINE.
J. STRACHEY.
R. TEMPLE.

The weight of the names signed to this despatch is very great. It will be remembered that the Punjab is the province which borders on Afghanistan, and that its officers are responsible for the safety of that frontier. Lord Lawrence and Sir Richard Temple were veteran Punjab officers of the highest rank, and thoroughly knew Afghan politics. Sir William Mansfield, afterwards Lord Sandhurst, had, as Commander-in-Chief, the responsibility for the military defence of India, and besides that, was a soldier and statesman of the highest ability and accomplishments.

We have intimated above that the new policy of our Government was adopted without proper advice; and it will perhaps be well, while on the subject of opinions, to step out of the order of events for the purpose of showing how heavily the balance of opinion among skilled men, and men speaking under the responsibility of office in the localities affected, inclines against the policy of extending our Asiatic dominions to the westward.

Sir Henry Rawlinson served at Candahar, and marched through Afghanistan, during our first war, and doubtless acquired much knowledge of the country. He has since served in other parts of Asia, but when he wrote his Memorandum in the year 1868 he must have left India for a quarter of a century. Sir Bartle Frere, whose Memorandum is not in the Blue-book, but has been mentioned above, never had any connection with Afghanistan. Both these gentlemen became

members of the Secretary of State's Council, and Sir Bartle Frere was for about two years in Calcutta as a member of the Government of India. There is one other opinion given in the Blue-book—viz., that of Lord Napier of Magdala (*vide* A., p. 225). He is indeed a weighty authority on such a subject, not only on account of his great personal qualities and vast experience in Asiatic politics and warfare, but because during periods amounting to about sixteen years he held offices involving direct responsibility for the safety of India. He was Military Member of the Viceroy's Council, then Commander-in-Chief of Bombay, then Commander-in-Chief of India, with a seat in the Viceroy's Council. If during that time he had urged an advance, either political or military, direct or indirect, on the North-West Frontier, it would have been a very important circumstance. But this he did not do, because his opinion was then against an advance of any kind. On May 30, 1878, two years after quitting India, and in the crisis of our recent political struggle with the Russians, he wrote the opinion which is now very much relied upon by the advocates of the Forward Policy. And this opinion is favourable only to that advance to Quetta which was effected in the autumn of 1876, and which is the subject of a separate narrative in this volume. That, he says, is a thing which we were entitled by treaty to do; there was, he now thinks, sufficient reason for it; and, having done it, we ought not to recede from it. But of Afghanistan he says (*vide* A., p. 225):—'I am not in any way an advocate for advancing into Afghanistan contrary to the wish of the Ameer Shere Ali, but we have a right by treaty to go to Quetta,' &c. And again (p. 226):—'Afghanistan is closed to us, but the one post of Quetta that we can hold by right of treaty should be made secure.' In both passages he justly draws the broadest distinction between what we have a right to do and what we have no right to do, and does not even discuss the expediency of the latter.

Such are the opinions quoted in favour of some form or other of a Forward Policy; and (setting aside the advance to Quetta), they amount only to advice that we should attempt to extend our influence by legitimate means. Even these opinions do not advise that we should quarrel with the Ameer of Cabul unless he will consent to alter the Treaty of 1857 by admitting European Residents, nor that we should take his territory.

With respect to the acquisition of fresh territory, General Sir Henry Norman has, in his recent article in the 'Fortnightly Review,' pointed out that there is great weight of opinion against it. His own is as weighty as any. He refers to Lord Sandhurst, Sir Henry Durand, and Sir Herbert Edwardes, as being both soldiers and statesmen of the highest ability and distinction, and intimately acquainted with the people and the countries in question; to Sir John Adye, a soldier of distinction, who had served on the North-West Frontier, and to the silence of other responsible persons. We take the liberty of quoting his words on this point:—

Accompanying Sir Walter Gilbert's force in 1849 in its pursuit of the Sikhs and Afghans after the battle of Goojerat, until the former had surrendered and the latter had fled before us, first from the fortress of Attock and then through the Khyber Pass, I remained for several years on the frontier, and ever since have taken the deepest interest in it, while I have been acquainted with the views of many of the most eminent persons who served on, or who visited, the frontier. I never, until long after I had quitted that frontier, heard a question raised as to the line taken up in 1843 as respects Sind and in 1849 as respects the Punjab, being not sufficiently advanced and readily defensible. While many opinions have been given as to the folly of advancing our frontier, it seems an undoubted fact that no opposite opinion ever was expressed by any of the able Governors-General who have held sway in India up to the arrival of Lord Lytton, by any Commander-in-Chief in India, by any Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab—the officer through whom, until 1876, all

Cabul affairs used to be transacted, or by any member of the Supreme Council, before which all important questions affecting the Indian Empire come. Many officers in these positions have left on record the strongest possible objections to a forward movement, except as an operation of war. I might, I believe, add that no commander of the Punjab frontier force, and no Commissioner of Peshawur (the functionary who has been charged especially with the duty of watching Cabul affairs), has urged any rectification of frontier.

In fact it may be said that until Lord Lytton reached India armed with instructions to press European Residents on the Ameer, no officer serving in India, and responsible for the safety or good government of the North-West frontier, or of the Indian dominions at large, has advised any extension of our frontier, or, except by peaceable and gentle means, any extension of our political influence.

CHAPTER III.

COMMUNICATIONS WITH SHERE ALI, AND THE UMBALLA CONFERENCE.

It will have been observed that the 9th, 10th, and 11th paragraphs of the last-quoted despatch of the Government of India indicate, not any change of policy, but an opinion that some further steps, quite consistent with the policy of the previous fourteen years, might, under changed circumstances, be usefully taken. Keep a firm, an open, tone with the Russians, they say, and tell them they cannot be permitted to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan. As for Shere Ali, he has now established himself with reasonable certainty, and there is now a Government in Afghanistan stable enough to be dealt with. Let us therefore assist him with some money and munitions of war, and let us encourage personal intercourse with him. These views led to the Umballa Conference (*vide* A., pp. 84–88).

In 1868, Shere Ali asked for some further assistance on the ground that his rivals had, when in power, anticipated the revenues of the country; and this was conceded to him, the total gifts amounting to 120,000*l.*, and some thousands of stands of arms.

On January 9, 1869, Lord Lawrence wrote to Shere Ali a farewell letter, in which he again states his policy.

From the Viceroy and Governor-General of India to His Highness the Ameer Shere Ali Khan of Cabul.

I have received and carefully perused your Highness's letter, dated Shaban 12, 1285, and addressed to me.

I have also read your letter to his Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab of the same date.

From an attentive perusal of these papers, as well as from a constant and careful observation of all the various events which have taken place in Afghanistan during the past few years, I am well acquainted with your Highness's present position and future prospects, and feel satisfied that your Highness desires that the friendship which has hitherto subsisted between you and the British Government should be maintained.

It is the earnest desire of the Government of India, as I have already intimated, to see your Highness's authority established on a basis of solidity and permanency, and to cement the bonds of friendship and alliance which ought to exist between the British power and your Highness as an independent Ruler.

You have been already apprised by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab that a sum of six lakhs of rupees has been placed at your unreserved disposal. For this, the British Government looks for no other return than abiding confidence, sincerity, and goodwill.

I regret that obstacles of an insuperable nature should have prevented my meeting your Highness at some suitable place on the frontier of both kingdoms.

As a further proof of the desire of the British Government, which fears no aggression and which wishes for no conquest, to see a strong, a just, and a merciful government established by your Highness at Cabul and throughout Afghanistan, I have to inform you that, in the course of the next three months, three sums of two lakhs of rupees each, or in all of six lakhs more, will be placed at your entire control, to be applied by your Highness in the manner which you may think most conducive to the furtherance of your interests and to the consolidation of your authority.

For this again the Government of India will expect no return save one of the kind just indicated in the preceding part of this letter.

I am leaving the country almost immediately, and am handing over the high office of Viceroy and Governor-General to my successor.

But the policy which I have advisedly pursued with regard to the affairs of Afghanistan, is one which I have entered on with anxious deliberation, and which has commanded the

assent and approval of Her Majesty the Queen of England; and as long as you continue by your actions to evince a real desire for the alliance of the British Government, you have nothing to apprehend in the way of a change of policy, or of our interference in the internal affairs and administration of your kingdom.

It will remain for the head of the Administration to consider in each succeeding year, what further proofs may be given of our desire to see your power consolidated, and what amount of practical assistance, in the shape of money or materials of war, may periodically be made over to your Highness as a testimony of our good will, and to the furtherance of your legitimate authority and influence.

But be assured that you will never err in shaping your course with a view to British alliance, and in considering Her Majesty the Queen of England and her Viceroy in India as your best and truest friends.

On January 12, 1869, Lord Mayo succeeded Lord Lawrence as Governor-General.

The Conference at Umballa between Lord Mayo and Shere Ali commenced on March 27, 1869. On the 31st Lord Mayo wrote to Shere Ali as follows (*vide* A., pp. 90, 91) :—

From His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India to His Highness Ameer Shere Ali Khan, Walee of Cabul and its Dependencies.

Dated, Camp, Umballa: March 31, 1869.

As your Highness did me the honour to intimate that some further expression of the sentiments of the British Government in regard to your present visit and to the affairs of Afghanistan would be acceptable, it is with much pleasure and satisfaction that I accede to your Highness's wishes in the following communication.

I am most desirous of expressing to you the sincere gratification which the visit of your Highness has afforded to me and to all the members of my Government.

I regard this visit as a mark of the confidence reposed by your Highness in the Government of the Queen, which will ever be remembered. I earnestly trust that on your Highness's return to your own country you may be enabled speedily to establish your legitimate rule over your entire kingdom;

to consolidate your power; to create a firm and a merciful administration in every province of Afghanistan; to promote the interests of commerce; and to secure peace and tranquillity within all your borders.

Although, as already intimated to you, the British Government does not desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, yet, considering that the bonds of friendship between that Government and your Highness have lately been more closely drawn than heretofore, it will view with severe displeasure any attempts on the part of your rivals to disturb your position as Ruler of Cabul and rekindle civil war, and it will further endeavour from time to time by such means as circumstances may require, to strengthen the Government of your Highness, to enable you to exercise with equity and with justice your rightful rule, and to transmit to your descendants all the dignities and honours of which you are the lawful possessor.

It is my wish therefore that your Highness should communicate frequently and freely with the Government of India and its officers on all subjects of public interest, and I can assure your Highness that any representation which you may make will always be treated with consideration and respect.

By these means, and by the exercise of mutual confidence, I entertain well-grounded hopes that the most friendly relations between the British Government and that of your Highness may ever be maintained to the advantage of the subjects both of Her Majesty the Queen and of your Highness.

That your Highness may long enjoy health and strength sufficient to enable you to perform the arduous duties of your exalted station is the sincere wish of your friend.

(Signed) MAYO.

On April 3, 1869, the Government of India sent to the Duke of Argyll, then Secretary of State, a brief narrative of the Conference. The despatch contained the following paragraphs (*vide* A., pp. 88, 89) :—

4. On the afternoon of Monday, March 29, the return visit having taken place that morning, the Viceroy accorded a private interview to his Highness, who was attended by his most confidential and trusted adviser, Syud Noor Mahomed Shah. There were present also at this interview, his Honour

the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, the Foreign Secretary, and Captain Grey, who acted as interpreter. After free and unreserved discussion between his Excellency the Viceroy and his Highness the Ameer on important matters relating to the affairs of Afghanistan and to the visit of his Highness, it was arranged that a letter should be addressed to his Highness expressive of the sentiments of the Government of India in respect to the matters under discussion. At a meeting of his Excellency's Council, which was held on the next day, Tuesday March 30, the whole subject was very fully discussed in Council, and the form and contents of the letter, a copy of which is enclosed, was agreed to.

5. The letter was very carefully translated into the Persian language, and was presented to the Ameer by our Foreign Secretary, who was deputed to his Highness for that purpose.

6. A reply to the same has been received from the Ameer expressive of the satisfaction and thanks of his Highness at the kindness and friendship evinced by the British Government. A translation of this reply is also appended.

7. Two interviews have taken place between the confidential adviser of his Highness Syud Noor Mahomed Shah and our Foreign Secretary. At these interviews various matters of importance were fully discussed, and the means whereby trade with Afghanistan could be encouraged, and additional measures for securing the peace of the frontier could be promoted, were carefully considered. An opportunity was also taken, at the same time, to inform the Minister, in the clearest and most explicit terms, that the British Government would always abstain from any direct interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and that under no circumstances could British troops or British officers be employed across the frontier in quelling civil contentions or domestic strife.

8. We have every reason to hope that the visit of his Highness and the communications which have taken place will be productive of the happiest results. It has assured his Highness that the policy which was adopted by his Lordship's predecessor, on the Ameer's regaining the throne of Cabul in August last, will be continued. It will show to the world that we have in the Ruler of Afghanistan a faithful ally, and that while the British Government has no desire of aggrandisement and extension of territory, it will still use all its influence to support neighbouring Princes and Rulers who are

earnestly endeavouring to create by their own exertions a strong, independent, and friendly government.

On May 14, 1869, the Duke of Argyll wrote to Lord Mayo. After stating the policy approved by Her Majesty's Government, he spoke as follows (*vide* A., pp. 91, 92) :—

5. Her Majesty's Government agree with the late Viceroy of India, Lord Lawrence, that it is for the interest of our Indian Empire that there should be a strong and settled Government in Afghanistan, such as may promote commerce with us and protect the people of that country from the evils of civil war. For the purpose of promoting the establishment of such a Government it may be wise from time to time to assist with money or with arms any existing Ruler of Afghanistan whose character and position appear to afford the best hope of establishing a prosperous and peaceful rule. But Her Majesty's Government desire that the discretion of the Indian Government, under direction from the Government at home, should be kept absolutely free as to the occasions on which, and as to all the circumstances under which, such assistance should be given or withheld. It ought to depend not only upon the conduct of the Ruler of Afghanistan in his relations with the Government of India, but to some extent also upon his conduct in his relations with his own people. Her Majesty's Government indeed do not desire to exercise any interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, nor can they pretend to pass judgment on the ordinary conduct of its affairs. But there are possible conditions under which it would not be for the credit of the British Government to support the Ameer either by money or by arms. If he succeeds in establishing a Government which is strong, but notoriously cruel and oppressive, Her Majesty's Government ought to be free to withhold all assistance from him.

And feeling some doubts whether the Conference might have the effect of involving us too deeply in the politics of Afghanistan, he asked some explanations.

To this request the Government of India replied on July 1, 1869, in a very full despatch, from which we take the following extracts (*vide* A., pp. 93–98) :—

4. We entirely agree with the principles laid down in your Grace's despatch, *i.e.*, 'that it is for the interest of our Indian Empire that there should be a strong and settled government in Afghanistan, such as may promote commerce with us and protect the people of the country from the evils of civil war; that the discretion of the Indian Government should be kept absolutely free as to the occasions on which such assistance should be given or withheld;' that further, we should abstain from exercising 'any interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan,' and give no pledge which would lead the Ameer to believe that we should ever countenance or support a notoriously cruel and oppressive government.

5. All this we shall show was fully considered and agreed to by us, as soon as the meeting was determined on, was steadily kept in view, and strictly adhered to in everything that took place at Umballa.

6. That it was laid down beforehand is shown by the demi-official communications addressed to your Grace by the Viceroy early in March before he left Calcutta.

7. The Viceroy informed your Grace that no one could be more impressed than he was with the necessity for abstinence, on the part of the Government of India, from interference in Asian politics; that whether it be in the central portions of the continent or elsewhere, our policy should be to keep on friendly terms with all our neighbours, to encourage them in any efforts they might make for the development and security of trade, but to let them know that if they chose to quarrel (which they are always ready to do) they must fight it out without any assistance from us, that the impolicy of having anything to do directly with these people was shown by the manner in which the existence of the lines of our telegraph along the coast of Beloochistan and Mekran had brought us into immediate connection with the disputes between Persia and the tribes in that district; that with regard to the approaching interview with the Ameer, the Viceroy's intention was to avoid any engagement of a permanent character, opposed as he was to treaties and subsidies; that it was impossible to discuss the matter until we knew what the Ameer was going to say; that his Highness's visit would, he believed, do much good, showing him that we had no other wish than to see a strong government in Afghanistan; that we had no thought of interfering with him in any way; that we wanted no Resident at Cabul, or political influence in his kingdom;

while at the same time it would impress the people of India generally with the idea that we had a faithful ally in Afghanistan.

8. The object of the Viceroy therefore in agreeing to Shere Ali's request for a meeting was to show to him and to the world that we desired to establish with him a friendly and faithful alliance; to encourage him in his efforts to create a thoroughly independent kingdom and a just and merciful government; to acknowledge him as the rightful ruler of Cabul, not only as having inherited his throne by his father's will, made public in the lifetime of Dost Mahomed, but as the *de facto* sovereign of the country.

9. But the objects of the Ameer in coming to Umballa went far beyond this. It was evident from his communications with the Viceroy, the conversations of the Foreign Secretary with his Minister, and the paragraphs which he suggested for insertion in the letter to be addressed to him [1] that he desired a treaty supplementary to that made with his father in 1857 (which he termed one-sided), and which would declare that we should be 'the friend of his friends' and 'the enemy of his enemies.' He further desired that we should publicly declare that we should never acknowledge 'any friend in the whole of Afghanistan save the Ameer and his descendants,' and he evidently expected a promise of a fixed subsidy.

10. But this was not all.

11. He desired and asked that the British Government should not be the sole judge of when and how future assistance was to be given, but earnestly pressed that the words in the Viceroy's letter 'as circumstances may require,' [2] should be altered to 'as his (the Ameer's) welfare might require.'

[1] 1st Suggested Paragraph. 'That, as now the Queen was the friend of the Ameer and his descendants and the enemy of his enemies and theirs, and would always be so, therefore, from time to time such measures as his welfare might require should be adopted for the objects conveyed in the Governor-General's letter.

2nd. 'That the bonds of friendship between the Ameer and his descendants and the British being now drawn much closer than heretofore, and as for the future the Government neither does nor will acknowledge any friend in the whole of Afghanistan save the Ameer and his descendants, therefore from time to time,' &c.

[2] We subjoin the Persian words in the Roman character, and give their literal translation:—

'Wa riez gah-ba gāh az rui chuwan tadbir keh ba mukhtazai muslahat-i-wakt zarurat aftad, koshish-o-masai barai hamin barni kar khwohad avard,' *i.e.*, 'and also from time to time, by means of such expedients as

12. Compliance with these desires was impossible, but it was necessary, by a straightforward and unmistakable expression of opinion, to furnish the Ameer with some declaration which (without encouraging hopes that could not be fulfilled) would be of present use, truly describe our feelings and intentions towards him, and satisfy him that his journey and (to him) somewhat perilous absence from his kingdom, had not been made in vain.

13. This object was accomplished, but not without difficulty.

14. A comparison of the principles laid down in your Grace's letter of May 14 with the action taken, and the opinions expressed at Umballa, will show how completely in accord those principles and those actions are. And although no instructions were received from the Home Government beyond a short general expression of desire contained in your Grace's private letter to the Viceroy that he should 'maintain that policy of reserve and of abstinence from interference which had been pursued by your predecessor,' yet it can be shown not only that the communications made to the Ameer at the conference did not exceed former promises or extend in any way our liabilities, but that in effect they thoroughly defined and clearly explained the position we had determined to assume towards Afghanistan, and rather limited any engagement or liability it might be supposed that we had previously lain under as regards his Highness.

15. The first words which the Viceroy addressed to the Ameer at the conference of March 27 were to express the firm desire of the British Government to see established at Cabul, a just, strong, and independent Government; that we had no intention to deviate from the course which we had adopted since he had last regained his throne; that we wished to see him firmly established as Ruler of Cabul, and that he should be able specially to establish tranquillity and good government in his territories.

16. The policy that we had endeavoured to establish may be termed an intermediate one, that is to say, that while we distinctly intimated to the Ameer that, under no circumstances, should a British soldier ever cross his frontier to assist him in coercing his rebellious subjects; that no European officers would be placed as Residents in his cities; that

fall in with the necessities of the counsels of the time, it (the British Government) will make endeavours and efforts towards this direction,' &c., &c.

no fixed subsidy or money allowance would be given for any named period; that no promise of assistance in other ways would be made; that no treaty would be entered into, obliging us under *every* circumstance to recognise him and his descendants Rulers of Afghanistan, yet that we were prepared by the most open and absolute present recognition, and by every public evidence of friendly disposition, of respect for his character and interest in his fortunes, to give all the moral support in our power, and that, in addition, we were willing to assist him with money, arms, ammunition, native artificers, and in other ways, whenever we deemed it possible or desirable to do so.

17. In paragraph 8 of the official letter of April 3, we wrote as follows:—

'We have every reason to hope that the visit of his Highness, and the communications which have taken place, will be productive of the happiest results. It has assured his Highness that the policy which was adopted by his Lordship's predecessor, on the Ameer's regaining the Throne of Cabul in August last, will be continued. It will show to the world that we have, in the Ruler of Afghanistan, a faithful ally, and that while the British Government has no desire of aggrandisement or extension of territory, it will still use all its influence to support neighbouring Princes and Rulers who are earnestly endeavouring to create by their own exertions a strong, independent, and friendly government.'

18. These references clearly show that not only was it our wish and policy, in the interest of our Indian Empire, 'that there should be a strong and settled government in Afghanistan,' but that it should be such an one 'as may promote commerce with us, and protect the people of the country from the evils of civil war.'

19. They also show how completely free the Viceroy kept the hands of the Government of India 'as to the occasions on which, and as to all the circumstances under which assistance (to the Ameer) should be given or withheld.' For, besides what has been already said, the Viceroy informed your Grace that if at any future time we thought it to be our duty to assist his Highness, we should do it in any way which would neither entangle us in any engagements which might prove embarrassing nor weaken his independence.

20. The Ameer of Cabul fully understood that the British Government would assist him with money, now or hereafter;

solely for the purpose of establishing a just and merciful, as well as a strong Government in Afghanistan, and that the continuance of our support must always depend upon the pleasure of the government of India, which principle is set forth, as far as it could be in a public document, in our letter to the Ameer, in which, as already quoted, we say:

'It (the British Government) will further endeavour from time to time, by such means as circumstances may require,[1] to strengthen the government of your Highness, to enable you to exercise with equity and with justice your rightful rule,' &c., &c.

21. How thoroughly the Ameer understood this is shown in a Memorandum,[2] marginally quoted, by Captain Grey, the Persian interpreter at the conferences, whose communications with the Ameer and his Minister were of a most confidential character.

22. The position of affairs at the close of the conferences may, in the Viceroy's words, confidentially addressed to your Grace, be summed up as follows:

1stly. What the Ameer is not to have—

No treaty, no fixed subsidy, no European troops, officers, or Residents, no dynastic pledges.

2ndly. What he is to have—

Warm countenance and support, discouragement of his rivals, such material assistance as we may consider absolutely

[1] Or more literally, 'as fall in with the necessities of the counsels of the time.'

[2] 'I am quite satisfied that both the Ameer and his Minister are deeply impressed with the importance to their Government of securing the favourable opinion of our Government and the British public in respect of the justice and liberality of their administration by exerting themselves to the utmost for the material improvement of the country and increase of trade, and amelioration of the condition and conciliation of the people.

'As an abstract point the Ameer could fully understand, without demonstration, that in the present exhausted condition of the country and decline of trade, his interest lay in removing, as far as his necessities permitted, all burdens which would retard their recovery, and by a merciful and conciliating demeanour reconciling friend and foe to his administration and to compliance with such demands as the maintenance and consolidation of his administration rendered indispensable. Indeed, the Ameer used the above as a strong argument in pointing out how much it was our interest, by moderate assistance for a year or two—after which he could stand alone—to enable him to allow the country breathing-time, and thus expedite its recovery of prosperity and attach all parties to his rule.

'These considerations, however, might not in themselves have sufficed to influence a man who, like most of his nation, is more likely to be

necessary for his immediate wants, constant and friendly communication through our Commissioner at Peshawur, and our native agents in Afghanistan; he, on his part, undertaking to do all he can to maintain peace on our frontier, and to comply with all our wishes on matters connected with trade.

. . . . . .

45. One of the most urgent and prominent demands made by the Ameer at Umballa was that we should recognise and acknowledge not only himself but his lineal descendants against all comers and under all circumstances.

46. On every occasion that he brought the subject forward, the Viceroy declined to entertain it.

47. At the further conference that took place between his Excellency and the Ameer, he (the Ameer) declared that it was his earnest wish that the Government of India should recognise and acknowledge not only himself but his lineal descendants, or successors in blood; and this phrase he repeated several times with great earnestness and emphasis. He explained again, and at some length, that merely to acknowledge the Ruler *pro tem.* and *de facto* was to invite competition for a Throne, and excite the hopes of all sorts of candidates; that if the British Government would recognise him and his dynasty, there was nothing he would not do in order to evince his gratitude, and to comply with the wishes of the Indian Government in any particular, and support them with his means and his life, it being understood that the slightest failure on his part or his descendants should vitiate all engagements on ours.

48. The Viceroy, in reply, remarked that it was impossible to prophesy or to anticipate events; that we must deal with the present, and that his Highness could not expect him to enter into engagements as to a state of circumstances which might never occur.

On May 27, 1869, the Duke of Argyll expressed his entire satisfaction with the explanations (*vide* A., p. 100).

As controversy has been raised on the question whether Shere Ali made a point of stipulating that

governed by immediate expediency than to act on a far-sighted policy; but I am confident that his conviction of the necessity of securing our approbation and support by good and merciful government is so strong as to lead him to display generosity even towards political enemies, which is utterly opposed to Afghan ideas, and, as early as his financial difficulties will permit, to remove most restrictions and duties upon commerce, which is contrary to all traditions of Mussulman policy.'

European officers should not be sent to reside in his dominions, we may here usefully insert some passages from private letters which were quoted during the debates in Parliament.

On April 5, 1869, Mr. Seton Karr, the Foreign Secretary of the Indian Government, who assisted at the conference, wrote to Lord Lawrence thus:—

> He [Shere Ali] is told that we don't want British officers as Residents at Cabul or anywhere else, and he says they would do him harm in the eyes of the people.

On June 3, 1869, Lord Mayo wrote thus to the Duke of Argyll:—

> The only pledges given were that we would not interfere in his affairs; that we would support his independence; that we would not force European officers upon him.

Thus ended the episode of the now celebrated Umballa conference. The main result was that though Shere Ali received very much less than he asked for, and perhaps had hoped, he was placed in a position of substantial alliance with the British Government. Some of the advantages he derived from that alliance are stated in the above-quoted despatch of July 1, 1869, pars. 68–73.

It has been much disputed how far Shere Ali remained content with the position thus assigned to him. The promoters of the new policy have strained every point to show that their predecessors, and not themselves, created the irritation which preceded the war. Accordingly in the Peshawur conference Sir Lewis Pelly tried, but tried in vain, to get from Shere Ali's Minister a confession that he was dissatisfied with his position, and wished to have it altered. This will be further noticed when we come to relate the Peshawur conference. At present it is enough to say that though Shere Ali desired more assistance in money and arms, and an unconditional promise of support against foreign and domestic enemies, he by no means desired to change his relations with the British Government, except for those purposes.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM THE UMBALLA CONFERENCE TO THE SIMLA CONFERENCE.

THERE is here an interval of three years and a-half in the Afghan Blue-book, during which some important events happened. In February 1872, Lord Mayo was assassinated, and Lord Northbrook was appointed to be Viceroy. Before Lord Mayo's death, the Persians and the Afghans, who had long been quarrelling over the border country of Seistan, agreed to refer their quarrel to the British Government, and in the autumn of 1872 an award was made by General Goldsmid. He awarded to each party a portion of the disputed territory. Both were dissatisfied. Shere Ali clearly appears to have considered that, as the British Government were his allies, they were bound to decide wholly in his favour, and there was for some time considerable doubt whether he would obey the award. As late as May 5, 1873, he declared that he would not (*vide* A., p. 111).

Another dangerous controversy affecting the boundaries of Afghanistan was settled during this period. The Russians had been extending their power, direct and indirect, over the Turkoman people to the north of Afghanistan, including Khokand and the Khanate of Bokhara. The districts of Wakhan and Badakshan lie to the north of Cabul, and border on the tribes subject to Russian influence. There was substantial doubt and dispute as to the sovereignty over these and adjacent districts. Shere Ali claimed them as part of the Afghan dominions, but his claim was disputed. The Russian officers took a view adverse to Shere Ali, who was thus

brought into closer political contact with Russia. Indeed, he was very much disturbed by a letter received from General Kaufmann, the Russian Governor of Turkestan, in the month of July 1872 (*vide* C., pp. 197, 198).

This dispute was the subject of much negotiation between the British and the Russian Governments, and in the month of January, 1873, the former induced the latter to recognise Shere Ali's title over the whole of this disputed territory.[1] It seemed to Lord Northbrook advisable that upon these points some communication, more detailed than by letter, should take place between the British and Cabul Governments, and accordingly, in the month of March, 1873, he proposed an interview between the Ameer and the Commissioner of Peshawur. This plan was altered at Shere Ali's wish, and it was agreed that he should depute his Prime Minister, Noor Mahomed, to wait upon the Viceroy at Simla.

A singularly erroneous account of the origin of the Simla conference has been given both by the Government of India (*see* A., pp. 162, 163), and by Lord Cranbrook (*see* A., p. 262), who have both stated that it was Shere Ali who took the initiative, being actuated by fears of Russian invasion, and being desirous of obtaining assistance against it. The same statement was, expressly or by implication, made by Sir L. Pelly to Noor Mahomed at the Peshawur conference, and was denied by that Minister (*see* A., pp. 201, 203, 204). These errors will be observed on in their places. The account here given will be found in exact accord with the papers given in F. A., pp. 3–9. Lord Northbrook's proposals and objects are distinct. On the Ameer's side, our Vakeel, Atta Mahomed Khan, reported a great deal of talk, showing extreme irritation at the Seistan award, which the Ameer chose to represent as a conscious injustice done to him in order to avoid disputes (F. A., p. 6). In connection with that he said, apparently by way of menace or taunt to us, that the Russians would advance and

[1] See *inf.* pp. 231–233.

demand more territory, which for the sake of peace we should agree to their taking. But with all this ebullition, he only proposed to send his Minister to confer on the two points mentioned, and 'other border affairs' which he did not specify. His answer (F. A., pp. 7, 8), sent through our Vakeel, is as follows:—

As the interests of this Government, which God has given me, and those of the British Government, are virtually in all conditions identical, the meeting of a British officer deputed by his Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India with me will afford me much gratification. As regards the Seistan question, full information about the confirmation of the award of Major-General Sir F. Goldsmid has reached me, and I have gleaned information about the ancient boundary of Northern Afghanistan from the murrasillas of his Excellency the Viceroy, dated June 24, 1870, May 1, 1872, and September 9, 1872, and the murrasilla of Von Kaufmann, Russian Governor-General at Tashkend. As for the recently defined boundary of Northern Afghanistan, whatever views the British Government may have entertained about it, great anxiety weighs on me day and night, and I am not in any moment relieved from it, that the juxtaposition of boundaries with Russia will involve difficulty in making provision for the security of the borders in the interests of both Governments. Under these circumstances, I consider it advisable that one of my Agents should first wait on his Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India to ascertain the real views of the British Government in both of these two matters, and other major or minor border affairs, satisfactorily, and to represent my views about the interests of both Governments carefully and in detail, in order that, on receipt of full information about the views of the British Government, these matters may be satisfactorily settled after deep consideration, and the most careful deliberation on their probable consequences. However, if the British Government prefer to depute an English officer to me, notwithstanding their cognisance of my views on the considerations above mentioned, and my anxious precautionary reflections, or consider it desirable to do so after granting a meeting to my Agent, hearing the representations he will make on my part, and acquainting him with the views of the British Government, I have no objections to either course. Information should be kindly sent to me as to which of these views has

been approved of by the British Government in order that I may make arrangements accordingly.

This letter has been submitted after perusal by the Ameer.

In a subsequent letter, dated May 5, 1873 (A., pp. 110, 111), our Vakeel puts together several detached remarks made by Shere Ali, the effect of which is that, owing to the Seistan award and the conduct of the Russians, the security of Afghanistan will be imperilled unless the British Government quickly shows its 'cordiality, or is kind enough to sympathise,' upon which the Vakeel makes the following significant remarks (A., p. 111):—

As I have no authority to give any answer to the Ameer in such most important matters, I could not but remain silent. His Highness, in concurrence with the opinion of the Cabul authorities, desires that the British Government should commence forthwith to organise the Afghan troops, to send from time to time large amounts of money with great number of guns and magazine stores in order that his Highness may steadily be able in a few years to satisfactorily strengthen the Afghan kingdom.

The Simla conference took place in July, 1873. The notes of it will be found in A., pp. 111-115. The subject of alarm at Russian progress was mooted on July 12 by Lord Northbrook, and it was discussed in further detail on July 30. In the mean time the following telegrams passed between India and England (A., p. 108):—

Telegram from Viceroy to Secretary of State.

Simla, dated July 24, 1873.

Ameer of Cabul alarmed at Russian progress, dissatisfied with general assurance, and anxious to know definitely how far he may rely on our help if invaded. I propose assuring him that if he unreservedly accepts and acts on our advice in all external relations we will help him with money, arms, and troops, if necessary, to expel unprovoked invasion. We to be the judge of the necessity. Answer by telegraph quickly.

Telegram from Secretary of State to the Viceroy.

India Office: dated July 26, 1873.

Cabinet thinks you should inform Ameer that we do not at all share his alarm, and consider there is no cause for it; but you may assure him we shall maintain our settled policy in favour of Afghanistan, if he abides by our advice in external affairs.

The Viceroy understood the Secretary of State's telegram to authorise all the assurances which he thought it desirable to give to Shere Ali, and which were in effect our settled policy, and a repetition of the assurances given by Lord Mayo, only more pointed at disturbances from the quarter of Russia. On July 30, after some preliminary points had been disposed of, the discussion turned on the possibility of aggression by Russia. The ultimate assurance given to Noor Mahomed is set forth in the following passage of the notes (A., p. 114):—

His Excellency the Viceroy replied that the British Government did not share the Ameer's apprehensions, but that, as already mentioned in the previous conversation, it would be the duty of the Ameer, in case of any actual or threatened aggression, to refer the question to the British Government, who would endeavour by negotiation and by every means in their power to settle the matter and avert hostilities. It was not intended, by insisting on such previous reference to the British Government, to restrict or interfere with the power of the Ameer as an independent ruler to take such steps as might be necessary to repel any aggression on his territories; but such reference was a preliminary and essential condition of the British Government assisting him. In such event should these endeavours of the British Government to bring about an amicable settlement prove fruitless, the British Government are prepared to assure the Ameer that they will afford him assistance in the shape of arms and money, and will also in case of necessity aid him with troops. The British Government holds itself perfectly free to decide as to the occasion when such assistance should be rendered, and also as to its nature and extent; moreover, the assistance will be conditional upon the Ameer himself

abstaining from aggression, and on his unreserved acceptance of the advice of the British Government in regard to his external relations.

On September 6, 1873, Lord Northbrook wrote the following letter (A., p. 116) to Shere Ali:—

From His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India to His Highness Ameer Shere Ali Khan, Walee of Cabul and its Dependencies.

The object which I had in view in recently proposing to depute a British officer to Cabul was to explain to your Highness the result of certain correspondence that had taken place between the British and Russian Governments with regard to the frontiers of Afghanistan, and also the details of the settlement of the Seistan boundary. I have now discussed both subjects at length with Syed Noor Mahomed Shah, the Envoy and Plenipotentiary deputed to me by your Highness, who has fulfilled his duties with zeal and intelligence.

In the letters noted,[1] the assurances of the Russian Government were conveyed to your Highness that they had no intention of extending the Russian boundary further south, and that they recognised as belonging to Afghanistan all the territories then in your Highness' possession. Prince Gortschakoff has further intimated to Her Britannic Majesty's Principal Secretary of State, that the Emperor of Russia 'looks upon Afghanistan as completely outside the sphere within which Russia may be called upon to exercise her influence,' and that 'no intervention or interference whatsoever opposed to the independence of Afghanistan enters into his intention.' These assurances, however, left the territories then in your Highness' possession undetermined, and so long as the boundaries of Afghanistan remained undefined, there existed the possibility of difference as to the precise extent of territory to which the assurances applied. The object of the latter part of the correspondence between the British and Russian Governments was to remove the possibility of doubt or misunderstanding by declaring definitely what territories are recognised as belonging to Afghanistan, and it is now my pleasing task to inform your Highness that the Government of Russia has finally accepted the views of the British Govern-

[1] Dated June 24, 1870; May 1, 1872; September 7, 1872.

ment, and has engaged to recognise the limits of your Highness' territories as they are described in Lord Granville's letter of October 17, 1872, a translation of which, as well as a translated extract from the Russian reply, is herewith enclosed for your Highness' information.

It has been a source of much satisfaction to Her Majesty's Government that your Highness has more than once expressed your determination, in accordance with the advice given by the late Earl of Mayo, to abstain from all interference in the affairs of States and Tribes beyond the borders of Afghanistan. Her Majesty's Government have therefore felt no hesitation in undertaking to use their influence to impress upon your Highness the importance of maintaining this peaceful attitude, and of allowing no considerations whatever to lead to any designs of conquest or aggression beyond the limits described in Lord Granville's letter of October 17, 1872. On the other hand, the Russian Government have undertaken on their part to use their best endeavours to restrain the States over which they have any influence, from transgressing the limits of Afghanistan as above described.

Your Highness will see that the correspondence on the subject of the boundaries relates only to the external relations of Afghanistan; and I entertain a confident hope that, by the conclusion arrived at, the important object referred to in Lord Granville's letter of October 17, viz., the maintenance of peace and tranquillity between the States of Central Asia in their external relations will be attained, and that in future no aggressions will be made from either side of the boundary now fixed.

The result of the communications between the British and the Russian Governments has been, in my opinion, materially to strengthen the position of Afghanistan, and to remove apprehension of dangers from without. The boundaries of your Highness' dominions to which the letters refer, have now been definitely settled in a manner which precludes any re-opening of the matter by Bokhara or any other Power, or any further question or discussion on the subject between your Highness and your neighbours in those quarters. To this settlement the British Government are a party, and they are consequently even more interested than before in the maintenance of the integrity of your Highness' frontier. I have had some conversation with your Envoy on the subject of the policy which the British Government would pursue in the

event of an attack upon your Highness' territories. A copy of the record of these conversations is attached to this letter. But the question is in my opinion one of such importance that the discussion of it should be postponed to a more suitable opportunity.

I do not entertain any apprehensions of danger to your Highness' territories from without, and I therefore do not consider that it is necessary that your Highness should at present incur any large expenditure with a view to such a contingency. My hope is that having received the foregoing assurances, your Highness will now be enabled to devote your undisturbed attention to the consolidation and improvement of your internal government. The British Government desires to see your Highness' country powerful and independent. It is my determination to maintain the policy which has been adopted towards your Highness by my predecessors, Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo, and I repeat to your Highness the assurance given you at the Umballa Durbar, that the British Government will endeavour from time to time, by such means as circumstances may require, to strengthen the government of your Highness, to enable you to exercise with equity and with justice your rightful rule, and to transmit to your descendants all the dignities and honours of which you are the lawful possessor.

There are some details connected with the recent negotiations and other matters on which explanation has been given to your Highness' Envoy, Syed Noor Mahomed Shah, in a separate memorandum.

On the subject of the Seistan boundary, I have addressed your Highness in a separate letter.

I beg to express the high consideration I entertain for your Highness, and to subscribe myself your Highness' sincere friend.

And on September 15, 1873, the following report was sent to the Home Government (*A.*, pp. 109, 110) :—

To His Grace the Duke of Argyll, K.T., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

Simla: September 15, 1873.

My Lord Duke,—In continuation of our Secret Despatch No. 60, dated June 30 last, and with reference to the tele-

graphic correspondence,[1] we have the honour to forward, for the information of Her Majesty's Government, a copy of the papers connected with the communications that have recently taken place with the Envoy of his Highness the Ameer of Cabul, regarding the boundaries of Afghanistan and the general policy of the British Government towards that country.

2. There was little difficulty in explaining to the Envoy the result of the recent correspondence with Russia regarding the northern boundaries of Afghanistan. He appeared to appreciate correctly the nature of the arrangement concluded with Russia, but sought for an explanation on certain minor points which have been satisfactorily cleared up in the final letter from the Viceroy to the Ameer.

3. From conversations with the Envoy we were led to believe that the Cabul Durbar had interpreted the friendly assurances of Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo to mean that the British Government had bound themselves to comply with any request preferred by the Ameer. It was necessary, therefore, in the first place, to remove any incorrect impressions on this score, and in repeating to the Ameer the assurances given to him at the Umballa Durbar, we have given the Envoy distinctly to understand that, while the policy adopted towards Afghanistan by Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo will be maintained, the British Government reserve to themselves the right of judging as to the propriety of any request preferred by the Ameer.

4. In the course of the discussions the Envoy stated that he had been instructed to apply to the British Government for assistance, both present and prospective; the former for the purpose of strengthening the Government of Afghanistan, and the latter with the view of meeting the contingency of actual aggression by a foreign Power. Though believing, as the Envoy was distinctly informed, that the result of the recent arrangement with Russia has been to remove further than before the possibility of foreign aggression on Afghanistan, we were of opinion that the time had arrived for affording the Ameer present assistance in accordance with our settled policy. As your Grace was informed, we had promised the Ameer five lakhs of

[1] To Secretary of State, dated June 27, 1873.
From ,, ,, ,, July 1 ,,
To ,, ,, ,, ,, 24 ,,
From ,, ,, ,, ,, 26 ,,

rupees to assist him in adjusting the claims of his subjects who had suffered from raids in Seistan, and we have now decided on presenting his Highness with an additional sum of five lakhs of rupees and with 10,000 Enfield and 5,000 Snider rifles, for which he had applied previous to the Envoy's arrival.

5. The question of the policy to be pursued, in case of actual or threatened aggression on Afghanistan, was the subject of considerable discussion with the Envoy. After receipt of your Grace's telegram of July 1, the Envoy was informed at the interview of the 12th idem, that if, in the event of any aggression from without, British influence were invoked and failed by negotiation to effect a satisfactory settlement, it was probable that the British Government would afford the Ameer material assistance in repelling an invader, but that such assistance would be conditional on the Ameer following the advice of the British Government, and having himself abstained from aggression. Further and more definite explanations were given on this subject in the conversation with the Envoy of July 30, to which we beg to refer your Grace.

6. A copy and translation of these conversations were annexed to the letter which the Viceroy has addressed to the Ameer. But as the subject is one of great importance, and the Envoy appeared to doubt how far his instructions justified him in committing himself to any definite arrangement, we considered it advisable to postpone the settlement of it to a more favourable opportunity, when we trust the matter may be discussed with the Ameer in person.

7. From the separate Memorandum of the several points which the Envoy is to lay before the Ameer, your Grace will observe that we have suggested the expediency of deputing a British officer to examine the western and northern boundaries of Afghanistan. Though we think that the presence of accredited British officers at Cabul, Herat, and possibly also Candahar, would for many reasons be desirable, we are fully alive to the difficulties in the way of such a measure until the objects and policy of the British Government are more clearly understood and appreciated in Afghanistan. It is with the view of removing some of these difficulties that we have proposed the deputation of an officer to examine the boundaries. Independently of the valuable information, both geographical and political, that might be collected, a judicious officer would have it in his power to do much towards allaying any feelings

of mistrust that may still linger in the minds of some classes of the people in Afghanistan, and towards preparing the way for the eventual location of permanent British representatives in that country, if such a measure should at any time be considered desirable or necessary.

We have, &c.,

(Signed) NORTHBROOK.
NAPIER OF MAGDALA.
R. TEMPLE.
B. H. ELLIS.
H. W. NORMAN.
ARTHUR HOBHOUSE.
E. C. BAYLEY.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER THE SIMLA CONFERENCE AND BEFORE THE NEW POLICY.

It has been latterly asserted or insinuated that Shere Ali was so vexed at the result of the Simla conference that he became hostile to England and inclined to a Russian alliance from that time. He was undoubtedly vexed at not obtaining that cordiality or sympathy which was to show itself in unconditional promises, in large amounts of money, and in great numbers of guns and magazine stores, and he showed some irritation occasionally; but in substantial matters, and matters concerning his foreign policy, he did nothing unfriendly or wrong towards us. The bitter draught of the Seistan award he accepted, and he faithfully observed the terms of that award. He followed Lord Northbrook's advice in his dealings with some of the bordering Tekke Turkomans. He exerted himself at the instance of the British Government to procure the release of a Russian captive (*vide* C., pp. 46, 50, 61, 81). The project for sending officers to his north-west frontier was not pressed any further, so that he had not to consider whether to accept or reject it. All these were substantial matters. As regards matters of courtesy, and matters concerning his domestic policy, his mood would seem to have varied. He took the arms that were offered to him. He let the money lie untouched in the Treasury. In November 1873, he declared his son Abdoolah Jan to be his heir-apparent, and sent a complimentary notification of the fact to the Viceroy, who

returned a like reply (*vide* A., p. 118). In the same month he refused somewhat rudely to allow Colonel Baker, a gentleman travelling on his own account from Teheran, to pass through Afghanistan; and the Viceroy rebuked his rudeness, but did not complain of his decision, which may have been founded on very good reasons. A more important refusal took place in the case of Sir D. Forsyth, who wished to return from his mission to Yarkand through a portion of Shere Ali's dominions. The refusal however was perfectly courteous, and it was accepted by the Government of India as quite reasonable (*vide* A., pp. 122–124).

This refusal by Shere Ali has since been treated as a great offence, and it is fair to show the circumstances in which he was placed. In April 1873, a British officer, Major Macdonald, was slain by Behran Khan, one of the Momund tribe. The Momunds are among those border tribes over whom the Ameer of Cabul claims authority without always being able to exert it. The British Government required Shere Ali to punish the murderer. He, as was believed at the time, endeavoured to do so, but was frustrated by Nowroz Khan, the chief of the tribe, who was Behran Khan's half brother. He, however, did what he could by fining and displacing Nowroz, who stirred up sedition against him. Nowroz was also Shere Ali's brother-in-law, and the maternal uncle of Yakoob Khan, Shere Ali's turbulent son. Yakoob Khan, either from sympathy with his uncle, or because it was a good opportunity, broke out into rebellion against his father, and that rebellion was alive when Colonel Baker and Sir D. Forsyth applied for leave to travel through Afghanistan. It was not then unreasonable under these circumstances to think that there was danger in the movements of Europeans coming from Persia or Turkistan. It must also be recollected that Europeans had not been welcome in Afghanistan since the war; and that other nations, even a friendly one like Nepal, are extremely averse to their presence.

On the other hand, two actions of our Government

gave offence to Shere Ali. The chief of Wakhan, a feudatary subject of the Ameer, had shown some civility to a detachment of the Yarkand mission, and one Ibrahim Khan was deputed to take presents to him. It was intended that previous notice should be given, as in courtesy it should have been, to Shere Ali, but by some accident this was omitted. The matter was explained, but it caused annoyance to the Ameer, particularly because gifts were made directly to his feudatary by the British Government.

The other was a more serious affair. In November 1874, Shere Ali invited his son Yakoob to Cabul under a safe-conduct, and then flung him into prison. At this piece of treachery Lord Northbrook expressed displeasure, which Shere Ali strongly resented (*vide* A., pp. 124–126).

So things went on up to the time when the new policy was set in motion. Each side occasionally did what the other did not like, but there was no quarrel or apprehension of quarrel. There was, and is, no evidence whatever that Shere Ali thought of inviting Russian aid, or that the Russians were intriguing with him. Letters used to come from General Kaufmann, but they were brought quite publicly, and were, with the answers to them, shown to our Vakeel, Atta Mahomed Khan, and by him reported to our Government. The correspondence was such as, during Lord Mayo's and Lord Northbrook's time, was deemed at worst innocuous by both the Indian and Home Governments.[1] The Government of India at this time and up to January 1876, thought and said that our relations with Afghanistan were very far from perfect, as was to be expected between two Governments so unlike, but that they were certainly no worse, if not better, than they used to be. The attempts that have since been made to represent these relations as something intolerable, and as growing worse day by day, are wholly unwarranted by any authentic history.

[1] See this correspondence explained and discussed *inf.* pp. 252–268. See also p. 229.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEW POLICY RESISTED

On the 22nd January, 1875, Lord Salisbury, writing in the Secret Department of the Council of India, sent the following despatch (A., pp. 128, 129) to Lord Northbrook:—

To the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India.

January 22, 1875.

My Lord,—Her Majesty's Government have followed with anxious attention the progress of events in Central Asia, and on the frontiers of Persia and Afghanistan. Though no immediate danger appears to threaten the interests of Her Majesty in those regions, the aspect of affairs is sufficiently grave to inspire solicitude, and to suggest the necessity of timely precaution.

2. In considering the questions of policy which arise from time to time, Her Majesty's Advisers cannot but be struck with the comparative scantiness of the information which it is in your Excellency's power to supply. For knowledge of what passes in Afghanistan and upon its frontiers they are compelled to rely mainly upon the indirect intelligence which reaches them through the Foreign Office.

3. Your Excellency maintains a Native Agent at Cabul. I am informed that he is a man of intelligence and respectability. But it appears to be very doubtful whether he is in a condition to furnish you with any facts which it is not the Ameer's wish that you should receive. Even if you could rely upon the perfect frankness of his communications, it is not likely that any Native Agent would possess a sufficient insight into the policy of Western nations to collect the information you require. One of the principal qualifications for this function is the neutrality of feeling in respect to religious

and national controversies, which only a European can possess. Of the value of the Cabul diaries different opinions are expressed. It is obvious that they are very meagre, and doubts have been thrown upon their fidelity.

4. Her Majesty's Government are of opinion that more exact and constant information is necessary to the conduct of a circumspect policy at the present juncture. The disposition of the people in various parts of Afghanistan, the designs and intrigues of its chiefs, the movement of nomad tribes upon its frontier, the influence which foreign Powers may possibly be exerting within and without its borders, are matters of which a proper account can only be rendered to you by an English Agent residing in the country. There are many details moreover a knowledge of which it is material that the military authorities should possess, and with respect to which it is not to be expected that a Native Agent would be either able or willing to collect for your Government trustworthy information.

5. I have therefore to instruct you to take measures, with as much expedition as the circumstances of the case permit, for procuring the assent of the Ameer to the establishment of a British Agency at Herat. When this is accomplished it may be desirable to take a similar step with regard to Candahar. I do not suggest any similar step with respect to Cabul, as I am sensible of the difficulties which are interposed by the fanatic violence of the people.

6. The Ameer has more than once in former years expressed his readiness to permit the presence of an Agent at Herat, and it is therefore not possible that, if his intentions are still loyal, he will make any serious difficulty now. But if he should do so, your Excellency will doubtless point out to him that the interests which Her Majesty feels in the integrity of Afghanistan makes it essential that she should be able to receive, from the observations of her own officers, warnings of danger that may threaten it.

7. I have dwelt upon the importance of an English Agency at Herat exclusively for the sake of the information an English officer might collect. But it will have other material, though more indirect, results. It will be an indication of English solicitude for the safety of our allies, and may so tend to discourage counsels dangerous to the peace of Asia.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) SALISBURY.

It seems a very extraordinary thing that a Secretary of State should, without any previous consultation or warning, without any attempt to ascertain the opinions of Indian officers, or even the correctness of the assumptions on which he is proceeding, issue peremptory orders to the Government of India to take action in a delicate and important matter of Indian policy. It is still more extraordinary when the orders given are a departure from existing treaties and from a settled course of policy approved by a succession of Viceroys and Secretaries of State. Such a course can only be justified by the most urgent necessity for immediate action. The course usually pursued by the Home Government has been to ascertain the views of the Indian Government and of the most responsible Indian officers, before coming to a conclusion on Indian affairs. Thus in the history of the present case we find that Sir Stafford Northcote, on receiving the Memorandum of Sir H. Rawlinson, sends it in the first instance to the Government of India for comment, and that he receives from them a conclusive answer to it. Lord Salisbury however thinks it right to pursue a different course, and to make up his mind before hearing what is to be said by the men immediately concerned in the administration of the affairs with which he is dealing.

The despatch of January 22, 1875, though addressed to the Governor-General, came in due course before the Governor-General in Council, popularly called the Government of India, the body in which, subject to displacement in certain exceptional cases, and subject to the undoubted obligation to obey the positive orders of the Secretary of State, the whole civil and military Government of India is vested by law, and from which orders to Indian officers should proceed. That body was naturally surprised at Lord Salisbury's sudden orders to adopt a new policy, and at once telegraphed to know whether they were to be obeyed at once, or whether delay would be allowable. Some delay being accorded, the Government of India proceeded, accord-

ing to the usual and the prudent course, to make inquiries of its experienced officers. For it appeared to them not only that the measure ordered was inopportune and hazardous, but that the statements of fact on which it was based were of very doubtful accuracy. Some questions therefore were framed, and transmitted to the Government of the Punjab in the following letter (A., p. 135):—

The Viceroy and Governor-General in Council directs me to request that his Honour the Lieutenant-Governor will be so good as to submit his opinion on the following points at as early a date as possible:—

1st. Whether the Ameer of Afghanistan would willingly consent to the appointment of European British officers as Residents at Herat and Candahar, or at either place.

2nd. Whether the presence of such Residents at either place would be advantageous to the British Government.

3rd. Whether the Lieutenant-Governor is satisfied with the sufficiency and accuracy of the intelligence now received from the British Agent at Cabul, and if not, whether he can suggest any way of procuring fuller and more accurate intelligence.

His Excellency in Council would wish the Lieutenant-Governor confidentially to consult such officers in the Punjab as from previous or recent experience of the country he may consider competent to advise on these questions, and submit their opinions with his own.

It will be remembered that the Punjab Government is the local Government which is primarily responsible for the proper conduct of Afghan affairs.

Before going into the principal topic of controversy which has proved to be the turning point of the present quarrel with the Afghans, viz., the policy of pressing European officers upon the Ameer, it will be well to dispose of the minor issues raised by Lord Salisbury's despatch.

The hypothesis that Shere Ali once upon a time (Lord Salisbury says more than once) expressed a willingness to receive an European officer, has been clung to with a tenacity which would be surprising

even if the point were of importance. It rests on the statement of Captain Grey, founded on some notes which he made, at the time of the Umballa conference, of his conversations with Noor Mahomed, Shere Ali's Prime Minister (A., pp. 144, 145). Captain Grey notes that the Ameer was at that time eager to please. Supposing that he correctly understood Noor Mahomed, against that one expression by the Minister of a man eager to please, are to be set the clear opinion of the Ameer Dost Mahomed, the clear tenor of the Treaty of 1857, the clear understanding between Lord Mayo and Shere Ali himself at the Umballa conference, and the clear and strong expressions of Noor Mahomed at the Simla conference. Indeed, when Captain Grey writes to Noor Mahomed reminding him that he had expressed some qualified opinions in favour of British Residents (F. A., p. 10), Noor Mahomed declares (A., p. 195) that it prejudiced him seriously. 'It was as much as an order for my death. It was laid before the Durbar, and I was at once pointed out as the encourager of your Government in this design.' All these things show beyond a doubt that the strong bent of Afghan policy was against the admission of European Residents into the country.

Moreover, if there were any real reliance on former opinions expressed by Shere Ali, is it not clear that the very first approach to him would be made by reminding him of those opinions and saying that the time was now come to act on them? Yet in Lord Lytton's earlier communications to Shere Ali there is not a word to this effect. He does indeed insist on the point in his instructions to Sir L. Pelly for the Peshawur conference; but Sir L. Pelly seems to have been quite silent about it. The first mention of the topic in any communication by the Viceroy to the Ameer is in a letter (A., p. 215), which, owing to the discontinuance of friendly intercourse, never was answered.

After all this it is astonishing to find Lord Lytton's despatch of the 10th May, 1877 (A., p. 161) relying on

the same topic as if it were established in point of fact and were of importance to his case.

Supposing it to be true that Shere Ali himself, and not merely Noor Mahomed for him, had said in the year 1869 that he was ready to receive European officers, what could it signify if in 1876 we had reason to believe he was highly unwilling? Clearly the only important thing was to ascertain the state of his mind at the time of action.

Another question was as to the competency of Atta Mahomed, our Vakeel at Cabul. On this it seems sufficient to say that he was resident there for eight years, and it is not even now known that during that time anything of importance occurred in Afghanistan of which he failed to give timely notice. The Government of India know no instance, and none has been specified, to support Lord Salisbury's assertion that information about Afghanistan affairs came mainly through the Foreign Office.

The real and essential questions were, whether a European Resident was likely to do better service than an Indian one, and whether it was wise and politic to press upon the Ameer the reception of such an officer. And for the purpose of answering those questions it was desirable to know the state of Shere Ali's wishes.

The opinions of the officers consulted on these points will be found in A., pp. 136–146. There is not much substantial difference among them, and they are referred to in the next-quoted despatch. We quote here that of the officer of highest rank, Sir R. H. Davies, Lieut.-Governor of the Punjab:—

Copy of a Minute by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab on the Inquiries contained in the Letter from the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, No. 48 C.P., dated March 25, 1875.

Question 1. I have always had the impression that in the present state of affairs the Ameer would not willingly consent to the appointment of European British officers as Residents

at Herat and Candahar, or at either place, and from a perusal of the secret papers in this office and of Captain Grey's statement, it seems to me extremely doubtful whether his Highness ever intended to be understood as expressing such consent. My belief is that while he may have been ready to acquiesce in the appointment of mere news-writers, such as were Mr. Masson or Shahamat Ali before the occupation of Afghanistan, he never was ready to acquiesce in the appointment of Political Agents.

Question 2. I do not think the presence of Residents at either of the places named would be advantageous to the British Government. On the contrary, I think their presence against the Ameer's wish would irritate him personally, and would disincline him to communicate information to them himself, or to allow them to acquire it. On the other hand, the Residents might be courted by his Highness' opponents, which would add to his vexation; or they might be insulted with the direct object of embroiling him with our Government. Distrust and alienation on his part would not be unlikely to lead to complaint on ours; interference might follow on complaint, and interference would certainly be met with open or secret resistance. Nor can I see how a Resident at Candahar or Herat is better placed for acquiring early information of Russian movements than one at Meshed. At the same time, as the Ameer has professed his willingness himself to procure information, there could be no harm in requiring him to do so promptly and regularly, though I am much mistaken if he would require much pressing on this head, if he were under any apprehension of impending encroachment on his territories.

Question 3. The information contained in the bi-weekly diaries of the Native Agent at Cabul is for the most part correct. He has always appeared to me to be extremely cautious in what he writes, and to eschew superfluous details. It is probable that his influence with the Ameer depends in a considerable measure on his abstinence from criticism on the internal state of Afghanistan and on the persons trusted by the Ameer. On the whole, I consider this reticence favourable to British interests, and calculated to give weight to advice which the Agent on serious occasions may be authorised to put forward. I do not think that any innovations on the existing system would, at the present time, be of any advantage, and I consider that the Ameer having now got Herat

into his own hands, will probably be himself sensitive of any menace to it, and will not be slow to apprise the British Government thereof.

(Signed) R. H. DAVIES.

The unanimous opinion of the Government of India was transmitted to Lord Salisbury on June 7, 1875. A large part of the despatch is occupied with the minor questions, first, as to the competency of the Vakeel, which they think has been unfairly impugned; and, secondly, as to the wishes of Shere Ali, as to which they think 'on the whole' that either Shere Ali or Noor Mahomed had expressed some qualified willingness to receive European resident officers, but are clear that no importance is now to be attached to the point. The despatch then goes on to the essence of the matter (A., 132 134):—

21. We now proceed to consider the question whether, putting aside the supposition that the Ameer has on previous occasions assented to the proposal, it would be wise and politic to urge upon him the establishment of a British Agency at Herat or Candahar. And here we invite attention to the opinions of the able and experienced officers whose letters accompany this despatch.

22. If the concurrence of all those who may be supposed to have the means of forming a correct judgment of the sentiments of the Ameer is of any value, we must be prepared to find him most unwilling to receive a British Agent at Herat. On this the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, Sir Richard Pollock, Major-General Reynell Taylor, Colonel Munro, and Captain Cavagnari are all agreed, and their views are confirmed—

First. By those of Nawab Foujdar Khan and Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan, who have successively served as British Agent at Cabul, and who have means of knowing the present sentiments of the Ameer.

Second. By the opinion of Noor Mahomed Shah, the Cabul Envoy, who, when at Simla in 1873, advised the Foreign Secretary that a specific request should not be preferred to the Ameer for British officers to be stationed within the Afghan dominions.

Third. By the recent acts of the Ameer in objecting to permit Sir D. T. Forsyth to traverse Balkh on his return

journey from Yarkand and in discouraging[1] Colonel Baker from returning to India from Teheran *viâ* Cabul.

23. Assuming that the Ameer would object to the location of a British Agent at Herat, we are not of opinion that his objection would imply that his intentions have ceased to be loyal towards the British Government. It is true that such an objection, if raised by an European Power, or even by some Asiatic Rulers, although it might be justifiable by the principles of international law, would evince a disposition but little removed from actual hostility; but the motives of the Ameer cannot, in our opinion, fairly be judged by this standard.

24. There can be no reasonable doubt that there still exists a strong party among the Sirdars of Afghanistan opposed to the measure. Although the time which has elapsed since the Afghan war appears to us to be long on account of the succession of Governors-General of India, and the importance of the events that have intervened, there are many persons living in Afghanistan who were engaged in that war, and whose memory of what took place is probably the more lively from the narrow limits of their thoughts and actions. Those who have had the most intimate acquaintance with Afghanistan have always expressed their opinion that the establishment of complete confidence between the Afghans and the British must be a work of time, and this opinion will be found repeated in the enclosures of this despatch.

25. We consider that the reluctance of the Ameer to consent to the presence of British officers in Afghanistan is attributable mainly to the adverse feeling entertained by an influential party in that country to the measure, and to the consequent unpopularity he would incur by consenting to it. His position in Afghanistan is not so secure that he can afford to neglect any strong feeling among an important section of his subjects. He may also be influenced by the possibility of the safety of the officers employed being endangered by the acts of fanatics. This danger was hinted[2] at by both the Sadr-i-Azem and the Ameer at the time when Sir T. D. Forsyth's return through Afghanistan was discussed in the Cabul Durbar. It was for these reasons that we thought the Ameer's refusal to allow Sir T. D. Forsyth to return through Afghanistan might reasonably be explained without assuming that it was prompted by an unfriendly feeling towards the

[1] *Vide* enclosures of our Despatch, No. 7, January 23, 1874.
[2] *Vide* enclosure of our Despatch, No. 28, dated May 1, 1874.

British Government, and we accordingly abstained from pressing him upon the subject.

26. Besides the above reasons, there is probably also the apprehension that the permanent location of British officers in Afghanistan would bring to light proceedings which would be condemned by our standard of right and wrong, and might find their way into the public press, of which the Ameer feels a great dread. We may again refer to the diaries accompanying this despatch as containing illustrations in point. That such apprehensions are not confined to the Ameer of Cabul is evident from the strong feeling which has been expressed by the Maharaja of Cashmere against the appointment of a permanent Resident at his Highness' Court.

27. We have thought it to be our duty to state in what particulars our information as to the condition of Afghanistan and the sentiments of the Ameer towards the British Government leads us to differ from some of the opinions entertained by Her Majesty's Government. At the same time we agree with Her Majesty's Government that, having regard to the present aspect of affairs in Turkistan, it would be desirable that a British officer should be stationed at Herat. The appointment, it is true, would be attended with some risks, and the usefulness of the measure would depend on the discretion of the Agent who might be selected. But if an officer of experience and sound judgment were chosen who possessed the full confidence of the Ameer and the Afghan officials, we should anticipate great advantage from the arrangement. Under such circumstances, the Agent would be in a position not only to procure valuable information, but probably also to exert his influence with some hope of success in the interests of peace by preventing collisions between the subjects of Powers beyond the frontier and the subjects of Afghanistan. His presence at Herat would also, to some extent, be a check on any movements threatening to Afghanistan.

28. But for the attainment of these ends, it is in our opinion essential that the proposed arrangements should have the cordial consent of the Ameer. For the reasons given above, we are of opinion that, if we were to press the question on the Ameer at present, our proposals would in all probability either be refused or accepted with great reluctance.

89. If the Ameer should give an unwilling consent, the officers whom we have consulted are agreed that no advantage would be derived from the presence of a British Agent at

Herat. The case is forcibly stated in the 33rd paragraph of Major-General Taylor's letter, dated April 17, 1875, and the obstacles which would render the acquisition of valuable information impossible under such circumstances are described in paragraph 3 of Sir Richard Pollock's letter of 30th March. Moreover, if the Ameer should represent the risk to which our Agent might be exposed from the acts of fanatics or persons opposed to the presence of our officers in Afghanistan, and an outrage on the person of the Agent were attempted, we should be subjected to a humiliation for which under the circumstances we might not be justified in holding the Afghan Government responsible, and for which therefore it would be extremely difficult to obtain satisfaction.

30. If the Ameer should refuse, his refusal would impair the influence of the Government of India in Afghanistan. It must either be accepted without any change being made in our present policy towards Afghanistan, in which case the Ameer would be encouraged to act upon other occasions without regard to the wishes of the British Government; or we must treat it as a proof of unfriendly feeling on his part, modify our present policy, retire from our attitude of sympathy, and withdraw our assurances of support. If we are correct in believing that the refusal would not show the intentions of the Ameer to be disloyal, it would afford no sufficient justification for a change of policy which might throw Afghanistan into the arms of Russia upon the first favourable opportunity. We may also observe that the refusal would weaken the hands of Her Majesty's Government in any future negotiations with Russia when questions might be raised as to the real value of British influence in Afghanistan.

31. After a careful consideration of the information which we have collected as to the disposition of the Ameer and of the probable result of pressing him to accept a British Agent at Herat, we remain of the opinion which we expressed to your Lordship by telegraph on the 18th of February last, that the present time and circumstances are unsuitable for taking the initiative in this matter. We recommend that no immediate pressure be put upon the Ameer, or particular anxiety be shown by us upon the subject, but that advantage be taken of the first favourable opportunity that his own action or other circumstances may present for the purpose of sounding his disposition and of representing to him the benefits which would be derived by Afghanistan from the proposed arrange-

ment. The object in view is, in our judgment, more likely to be attained by taking this course than by assuming the initiative now. In the meantime we shall neglect no opportunity of obtaining full information respecting events in Afghanistan by such means as may from time to time present themselves.

32. It may not be out of place to add some observations upon our present relations with Afghanistan.

33. It is difficult to appreciate the feelings which influence the conduct of the Ameer Shere Ali, subject as he is to the risk of a revolution at home and apprehensive of attack from abroad. He cannot be expected to comprehend the language of European diplomacy, and his Ministers are imperfectly educated, of limited experience, and doubtful integrity. We believe however that he understands that the British Government have no designs of encroaching upon Afghanistan, that he feels that the interests of British India and his own are identical, that he is seriously alarmed at the progress of Russia, and that his main reliance is placed upon British support. His language after the return of his Envoy, Noor Mahomed Shah, from Simla in 1873, was certainly far from satisfactory; but we are disposed to attribute it either to his impression that we were so anxious for his support that by assuming an attitude of dissatisfaction he might obtain further assistance from us; or to his disappointment that we did not give him the distinct pledge he asked that the British Government would protect him under all circumstances against external attack, coupled perhaps with his discontent at the result of the Seistan arbitration.

34. Sir Richard Pollock, whose intimate acquaintance with Noor Mahomed Shah gives him the best means of forming a correct judgment of the Simla negotiations, and who on his return to Peshawur in the beginning of 1874 obtained confidential information as to the sentiments of the Ameer, stated his 'conviction that no unfavourable change whatever had occurred in the disposition of his Highness, that he leaned as much as ever on the British Government, and that he (Sir Richard Pollock) could find no symptoms whatever of an inclination on the part of the Ameer, or on the part of those about him, to seek assistance from any other quarter. On the contrary,' Sir Richard Pollock adds, '*it* would appear that he looks with increasing distrust and suspicion on his northern neighbours, while Persia, his only other neigh-

bour worth writing of, is his natural enemy.' Similar information has been received by us from other sources. We attach but little value to the vague rumours which have reached us from time to time that communications unknown to the British Government have passed between the Ameer and Russian officers, or that Russian Agents have penetrated Afghanistan. It must not be forgotten that such rumours are frequent in regard to those countries. Similar rumours prevailed with respect to our own communications with Bokhara, and are current even now as to our dealings with the Turkoman tribes, without any foundation in fact.

35. Since the Umballa conferences the Ameer has never shown any disposition to neglect our advice as to the external relations of Afghanistan. He accepted fully, although with great reluctance, the decision of the British Government in the Seistan arbitration, and we have no reason to doubt that he intends loyally to abide by it.

36. This being so, and if we have formed a correct judgment of the sentiments of the Ameer towards the British Government, the main objects of the policy which was advocated by Lord Canning in the time of Dost Mahomed, which was renewed by Lord Lawrence on the first favourable opportunity that occurred after the death of Dost Mahomed, which was ratified by Lord Mayo at the Umballa conferences, and which we have since steadily pursued, are secured. We have established friendly relations with Afghanistan: that country is stronger than it has ever been since the days of Dost Mahomed, and our influence is sufficient to prevent the Ameer from aggression upon his neighbours. It is to be regretted that old animosities and other causes have hitherto prevented the establishment of free intercourse between European British subjects and Afghanistan, and the location of British Agents in that country. But we believe that these things will naturally follow in course of time when our motives are better understood. Their attainment would be hastened by a further advance of Russia in Turkistan, or by any other danger that may threaten the integrity of Afghanistan.

37. Much discussion has recently taken place as to the effect that would be produced by a Russian advance to Merv. We have before stated to Her Majesty's Government our apprehension that the assumption by Russia of authority over the whole Turkoman country would create alarm in Afghanistan, and we think it desirable to express our opinion of the course

which should be adopted if it should take place. It would then become necessary to give additional and more specific assurances to the Ruler of Afghanistan that we are prepared to assist him to defend Afghanistan against attack from without. It would probably be desirable to enter into a treaty engagement with him; and the establishment of a British Resident at Herat would be the natural consequence of such an engagement, and of the nearer approach of the Russian frontier.

38. We think that these would be the measures best calculated to avert any dangers that may ensue from a Russian advance to Merv, and that they should be adopted when the necessity for them arises. The observations addressed on this subject by the Earl of Derby to Count Schouvaloff appear to us to indicate the policy which should be pursued by the Government of India, and we have before stated our opinion that the more clearly Russia is given to understand the position which we have assumed towards Afghanistan, the greater will be the probability of the maintenance of peace. To anticipate the Russian occupation of Merv by any active measures or specific treaty engagements would, in our opinion, be more likely to prejudice than to advance the interests of Her Majesty's Indian Empire.

39. We attach great importance to the moral and material advantages which are derived from maintaining friendly relations with Afghanistan; and we would impress upon Her Majesty's Government our conviction that such relations will best be secured by a steady adherence to the patient and conciliatory policy which has been pursued by the Government of India for many years towards Afghanistan; and by making every reasonable allowance for the difficulties of the Ameer, even if he should be reluctant to accede to the views which we may entertain as to the measures which may be advisable equally for his own interests and for those of British India.

40. In making these observations we by no means desire to imply that we are willing to concede any caprice of the Ruler of Afghanistan, and to grant everything that may be asked of us without requiring any return. Neither in the Umballa conferences, nor in the Simla negotiations of 1873, were nearly all the demands of the Ameer complied with; and recently, when we had reason to suppose that he intended to demur to our reasonable request that Ibrahim Khan should pass through Afghanistan with a communication from us to

the Meer of Wakhan, we insisted upon a compliance with our wishes. We should adopt the same course again under similar circumstances. We have, &c.,

(Signed) NORTHBROOK.
NAPIER OF MAGDALA.
H. W. NORMAN.
ARTHUR HOBHOUSE.
W. MUIR.
A. EDEN.

The next two despatches must be given in full.

No. 33. Secret, No. 34.

To His Excellency the Right Honourable the Governor-General of India in Council. (Extract.)

India Office: London, November 19, 1875.

My Lord,—I have carefully considered your letter of 7th June, and the papers accompanying it, with respect to the establishment of a British Mission in Afghanistan.

2. I do not gather that in your Excellency's mind, or in that of the able officers whose communications are appended to the despatch, any doubt exists as to the insufficiency of the information which you now receive from that country. The baldness and extreme scantiness of the diaries hardly require to be established by testimony, and it appears from the statements of Captain Cavagnari and Sir R. Pollock, that only such information as the Ameer approves of is contained in them. It would seem further that, in the opinion of Sir R. Pollock, intelligence from Afghanistan was never so hard to obtain as it is now. Still less are the present arrangements efficient for the purpose of obtaining intelligent reports upon Central Asian affairs generally, or any trustworthy estimate of the course they may be expected to take; or for exercising any influence in case of emergency on the minds of the Ameer or his nobles.

3. Your Excellency does not doubt that, having regard to the present aspect of affairs in Central Asia, it would be desirable that a British officer should be stationed at Herat, and you anticipate great advantage from the arrangement, if the officer should be a man of sound judgment and possessing the full confidence of the Ameer. The only point which you raise for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government is whether the advantages are such as to justify efforts being made for obtaining the concurrence of the Ameer, which

would be attended with difficulty, and would not be certain of success.

4. The question has been clothed with an importance it never possessed before by the recent advances of Russia, which have placed her outermost posts in some places almost on the frontier of Afghanistan, in others upon roads which lead to it by easy and well-supplied marches.

5. As the proximity of Russia to Afghanistan becomes closer and more established, the danger which is to be feared, whatever its extent may be, will probably take one of three forms. Russia may, by terror or corruption, obtain a mastery over the Ameer, which will detach him from English interests, and leave to her choice the moment for penetrating to any portion of the country. Or, secondly, if she fails to shake his loyalty, his hold on power may be destroyed by internal disorder, and Russia, by establishing her influence over the Chiefs who may become dominant, may secure the same advantages as would have resulted from the adhesion of the Ameer himself. Or, thirdly, if both the Ameer and his Sirdars remain insensible to the suggestions of the Russian Agents, they may by some imprudence come into collision with the frontier forces of that Empire, and afford a pretext for the exaction of some territorial penalty.

6. The general tendency of the information you have furnished to me is to the effect that no apprehension of the first alternative need be felt. Your Excellency and your most experienced officers appear to be convinced that the Ameer's dislike of the presence of any British representative in his dominions does not furnish ground for inferences unfavourable to his loyalty. But, whatever confidence present circumstances may justify you in entertaining, the well-known peculiarities of the Afghan character forbid the omission of such a contingency from any computation of the probable result of a close neighbourhood between Russia and Afghanistan.

7. The second and third alternatives appear, unfortunately, from the papers you have forwarded, to be still less beyond the range of probability. The fiscal corruption to which the Cabul diaries bear testimony, seems, according to the Candahar diaries, to have produced the natural result of excessive taxation, and consequent discontent. Captain Cavagnari speaks to an amount of oppression in the province of Balkh, which may probably lead to a revolt on the first favourable opportunity; and Gholam Hussein anticipates the breaking out of

serious disturbances before long, in consequence of the irritation of the Ghilzai Sirdars. Even therefore if the Ameer's loyalty could be counted on for an indefinite period, a field would still be left for foreign intrigue, dangerous alike to the Ameer's power and to the interests of Great Britain.

8. The military operations lately undertaken by the Ameer, which appear to have been resolved upon before any information was communicated to your Government, suggest that the contingency of collision between his forces and those of Russia or of the allies of Russia, must not be left out of account. Territorial boundaries in those countries are vague and ill-recorded, and the Ameer has never shown any disposition to seek peace by abating a doubtful claim. He may think himself bound to assert supposed rights which may trench on the claims of Russia or of her allies; and steps may be taken which, in the judgment of the frontier commanders, may render a movement in advance necessary to the honour of Russia before your Government has had the opportunity of interposing either remonstrance or restraint.

9. The chance that any of these opportunities would be offered for the establishment of a dominant Russian influence in Afghanistan would be materially diminished, if not wholly neutralised, by the presence of a British officer in that country. The evils to which I have referred would lose their formidable character if warnings could be given to your Government, or advice tendered to the Ameer, in good time. They could only grow to dangerous proportions if their first commencement were hidden from your knowledge.

10. I do not desire, by the observations which I have made, to convey to your Excellency the impression that, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, the Russian Government have any intention of violating the frontier of Afghanistan. The restraining force exercised from St. Petersburg may not have been altogether effectual in its results; and it may depend in the future upon fortunate circumstances, which an accident may terminate. Still, it is undoubtedly true that the recent advances in Central Asia have been rather forced upon the Government of St. Petersburg than originated by them, and that their efforts at present are sincerely directed to the prevention of any movement which may give just umbrage to the British Government. But the very fact that the measures of the frontier authorities do not always faithfully represent the ideas of the distant Government on whose behalf they act,

makes me more anxious that your Excellency should possess some channel of speedy and accurate information from the regions in which this dangerous policy is pursued. The case is quite conceivable, in which Her Majesty's Government may be able by early diplomatic action to arrest proceedings on the frontier which a few weeks, or even days, later will have passed beyond the power even of the Government of St. Petersburg to control.

11. On all these grounds Her Majesty's Government continue to attach very serious importance to the presence of a British Agent in Afghanistan. I do not gather that your Excellency is inclined to differ from this judgment. But, in your opinion, the moment for giving effect to it will not arrive until the advance of Russia is further developed and its forces have occupied Merv. In this opinion it is impossible for Her Majesty's Government to concur. If ever the Russians should accomplish the permanent occupation of Merv, the time would possibly have passed by when representations to the Ameer could be made with any useful result; for the influence of your Government at Cabul, already enfeebled, would, for such a purpose, have in a great measure disappeared. The Ameer has watched the steady progress of the Russian arms, scarcely impeded by such resistance as the Governments of his own race and creed have been able to offer. He has warned the British Government that one advance would follow another, and his prediction, disregarded when made, has been shown by the issue to be true. If, in spite of all promises given, and confidence expressed to the contrary, the Russians should advance to Merv, the Ameer will conclude, until at least the contrary has been established, that no Power exists which is able to stay their progress. He will then be hardly induced to consent to an arrangement which may cause him to lose favour in the eyes of the neighbour whom he esteems to be the strongest.

12. I gather from your letter under reply that the principal objection felt by you to an immediate effort to obtain the consent of the Ameer to a British Agency in Afghanistan is the fear that the effort would be vain. You apprehend that a refusal might lower the estimation of British power among the Afghans, and that England might be placed in an embarrassing position whenever it might hereafter be desirable to persuade the Russian Government of the existence of a real British influence at Cabul.

13. That a refusal would illustrate the feebleness of our influence with the Ameer cannot be doubted; but I apprehend little evil from this disclosure. It is not likely that either the Afghan Sirdars or the Russian Ministry are misinformed as to the true state of the case, or that any useful purpose would be served by keeping up, even if it were possible, an appearance of influence which does not correspond with the reality.

14. But I am not convinced that the Ameer's present disinclination indicates that his concurrence will be ultimately refused. He has had no opportunity of forming a more enlightened judgment. He has no assistance from any European mind in interpreting the events which have recently taken place in Central Asia. In judging of the probable course and the relative importance of the two European Powers upon whom the destiny of his country depends, he can only reason by his Asiatic experience and the counsels of a singularly prejudiced Durbar; and he is little able either to measure the gravity of the danger which threatens him, or to discern his best chance of safety. It is premature to abandon all hope of leading him to form a juster estimate of his position. Indian diplomatists, by superior intellect and force of character, have, in their intercourse with native Princes, often triumphed over more stubborn prejudices. The serious peril to which his independence is exposed, and the inability of the British Government to secure the integrity of his dominions unless it can watch through the eyes of its own officers the course of events upon his frontiers, will, if these topics are enforced in personal intercourse by an Agent of competent ability, probably outweigh in the Ameer's mind any rancour surviving from the events of thirty-five years ago, or any dissatisfaction with the issue of the Seistan arbitration.

15. The first step therefore in establishing our relations with the Ameer upon a more satisfactory footing will be to induce him to receive a temporary Embassy in his capital. It need not be publicly connected with the establishment of a permanent Mission within his dominions. There would be many advantages in ostensibly directing it to some object of smaller political interest, which it will not be difficult for your Excellency to find, or, if need be, to create. I have therefore to instruct you, on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, without any delay that you can reasonably avoid, to find some occasion for sending a Mission to Cabul; and to press the reception of this Mission very earnestly upon the Ameer.

The character you will give to it, and the amount of escort, if any, that it will require, I must leave entirely to your judgment. The Envoy whom you may select will be instructed to confer with the Ameer personally upon the recent events in Central Asia; to assure him of the earnest desire of Her Majesty's Government that his territories should remain safe from external attack; and, at the same time, to point out to him the extreme difficulty which will attend any effort on your part to ensure this end unless you are permitted to place your own officers upon the frontier to watch the course of events. In these communications he will not depart from the amicable tone in which your intercourse with the Ameer up to this time has been conducted. On the contrary, he will not forget that one of the chief objects of his Mission is to leave in the Ameer's mind an undoubting impression of the friendly feeling of Her Majesty's Government. But, maintaining this tone, it will be the Envoy's duty earnestly to press upon the Ameer the risk he would run if he should impede the course of action which the British Government think necessary for securing his independence.

16. I request that you will furnish me with an early report of the measures you have taken to carry out the instructions of this despatch.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 34. No. 10 of 1876.

Government of India.—Foreign Department.

Secret.

To the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

Fort William: January 28, 1876.

My Lord Marquis,—We have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Lordship's Secret Despatch, No. 34, dated November 19, 1875, in which, after reviewing our despatch, No. 19, of the 7th of June last, and conveying to us the views of Her Majesty's Government on the important questions of policy discussed in that despatch and in previous correspondence, you instruct us, without any delay that we can reasonably avoid, to find some occasion for sending a Mission to Cabul, and to press the reception of the Mission very earnestly upon the Ameer; the object of the Mission being to

urge upon his Highness the desirability of stationing British officers upon the frontier of Afghanistan.

2. Before explaining the reasons which make it necessary for us to ask for further instructions on the subject of the proposed Mission, we desire to observe, with reference to the remarks contained in the earlier paragraphs of the despatch, that the views and opinions set forth in our despatch of the 7th of June appear to have been misapprehended in several important particulars.

3. In paragraph 2 it is stated that we appear to entertain no doubt as to the insufficiency of the information at present received from Afghanistan; that the diaries of our Agent in Cabul are bald and extremely scanty; and that it appears from the statements of Captain Cavagnari and Sir R. Pollock that only such information as the Ameer approves of is contained in them. With reference to these remarks we would explain that in paragraphs 11 to 14 of our despatch of the 7th of June we stated our opinion that though there might be doubts as to the sufficiency of the intelligence given by our Agent at Cabul, the value of the information was not destroyed by such defects; that while the position of the Agent compelled him to be cautious in communicating news to the British Government, we had no reason to believe that information of importance was withheld; that, on the contrary, the information supplied was fairly full and accurate, and that the diaries contained internal evidence that the intelligence reported in them was not submitted to the Ameer for his approval. The opinion which we then expressed was based upon our own experience, confirmed by the views entertained by Sir Henry Davies, Sir R. Pollock, Colonel Munro, and Nawab Foujdar Khan.

4. The information we have since obtained confirms us in these opinions. It is true that Sir R. Pollock, writing in July 1874, stated that he had at no time experienced greater difficulty in procuring reliable intelligence regarding Afghan affairs, but he now informs us that he has every reason to be satisfied with the fulness and accuracy of the intelligence at present furnished by our Agent; and a perusal of the recent diaries is sufficient in our opinion to establish the improbability of the statement (for which indeed we have never seen any evidence advanced) that the Agent withholds information in deference to the wishes of the Ameer. As a matter of fact, we are not aware that any event of importance, which it would

have been the Agent's duty to report, has not been promptly communicated to us. The diaries received since our despatch of the 7th of June was written abound in matter which it is impossible to believe the Ameer ever saw, or would wish to be reported to the British Government.

5. It would also appear from paragraphs 3 and 12 of your Lordship's despatch, that our opinions with respect to the negotiations proposed by your Lordship with a view to the establishment of a British officer at Herat, as expressed in our despatch of the 7th of June, have been imperfectly apprehended. Our object was to inform your Lordship that there was an entire concurrence of opinion among all those who could be suppposed to have the means of forming a correct judgment of the sentiments of the Ameer, that he is most unwilling to receive British officers as Residents in Afghanistan; that his reluctance is consistent with his loyal adherence to the interests of the British Government; and that such being the case we consider it would be a grave error to urge upon him the establishment of a British Agency at Herat or Candahar at the present time, because it would be a deviation from the patient and conciliatory policy which has hitherto guided our relations with Afghanistan. We expressed an opinion indeed, that 'having regard to the present aspect of affairs in Turkistan it would be desirable that a British officer should be stationed at Herat,' and that 'if an officer of experience and sound judgment were chosen who possessed the full confidence of the Ameer and the Afghan officials we should anticipate great advantage from the arrangement.' But we considered that these advantages were contingent upon a condition of things which did not exist. We did not discuss the question whether the advantages to be expected from the proposed measure were 'such as to justify efforts being made for obtaining the concurrence of the Ameer;' because in our judgment the advantages to be gained from the presence of British officers on the Afghan frontier depended entirely upon the cordial concurrence of the Ameer, and would not be secured by his reluctant assent after pressure put upon him by us. We gave at considerable length our reasons for thinking that the Ameer's cordial consent could not be obtained, and we said that 'if we were to press the question on the Ameer at present, our proposals would in all probability either be refused or accepted with great reluctance.' In either case we pointed out the serious objections to the scheme, and we added:—'After a

careful consideration of the information which we have collected as to the disposition of the Ameer, and of the probable result of pressing him to accept a British Agent at Herat, we remain of the opinion which we expressed to your Lordship by telegraph on the 18th of February last, that the present time and circumstances are unsuitable for taking the initiative in this matter. We recommend that no immediate pressure be put upon the Ameer or particular anxiety be shown by us upon the subject, but that advantage be taken of the first favourable opportunity that his own action or other circumstances may present for the purpose of sounding his disposition, and of representing to him the benefits which would be derived by Afghanistan from the proposed arrangement. The object in view is, in our judgment, more likely to be attained by taking this course than by assuming the initiative now.'

6. We have deemed it necessary to enter at some length on these explanations, because, from the tenor of the despatch under reply, we gather that Her Majesty's Government have concluded that the measure we are now instructed to carry out would present itself to us in a more favourable light than that in which we really regard it.

7. Having made these preliminary observations, we proceed to explain the steps we have taken in order to comply with the instructions contained in your Lordship's despatch. Immediately after we received it we summoned Sir R. Pollock, Commissioner of Peshawur, to Calcutta to confer personally with us on the subject. The Viceroy also placed himself in private and confidential communication with the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. The result of our deliberations is that we are convinced that, if a Mission is to be sent to Cabul, the most advisable course would be to state frankly and fully to the Ameer the real purpose of the Mission, and to invite him to enter cordially into those closer relations with the British Government which the Mission is to endeavour to establish. The Ameer and his advisers are shrewd enough to understand that only matters of grave political importance could induce us to send a special Mission to his Highness' Court. If the Mission were ostensibly directed to objects of minor political importance, the Ameer and his officials would be incredulous. He might then decline to discuss the weightier questions brought forward by our Envoy, and in all probability his confidence in us would be shaken, especially as the proposal to establish British Agents in Afghanistan is, as we pointed out in our despatch of June 7, a departure from the understand-

ing arrived at between Lord Mayo and the Ameer at the Umballa conferences of 1869. A reference to the correspondence forwarded with our despatch, No. 46, dated May 22, 1873, will show that the Ameer is not likely to welcome any Mission we may send, unless its objects are fully and clearly explained to him beforehand.

8. If notwithstanding the views expressed in this despatch Her Majesty's Government determine that a Mission shall be sent, the Ameer should in our opinion be informed in a letter from the Viceroy that the present condition of affairs in Central Asia makes it expedient that the relations between the British Government and Afghanistan should be placed on a more definite footing than at present; that, while we have no proposals to make deviating in any way from the policy which has hitherto guided and will continue to guide us, of complete abstention from interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, we are desirous of arriving at a clearer understanding as to the arrangements necessary for obtaining full information of events on and beyond the frontiers of Afghanistan, so that the British Government may be able to avert by a timely exercise of friendly influence any danger which may threaten the integrity of Afghanistan; and that for this purpose direct personal conference with his Highness is necessary. We would then suggest to the Ameer either that he should come to Peshawur to meet the new Viceroy in person at some early and convenient time to be hereafter arranged, or, if his Highness preferred it, that we should send a Mission to such place as he might consider most convenient, to explain our views. It might be advisable to give the Ameer these alternatives, which were suggested by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, because it would be more difficult for him to refuse both proposals, and if he were not disposed for the personal interview, he might more readily accept the Mission.

9. On the whole however we doubt whether the Ameer would exhibit less reluctance now to receive a special Envoy than he did in 1873, when we proposed to send the Commissioner of Peshawur to Cabul to explain the result of the Seistan arbitration and the assurances given by Russia in respect to the boundaries of Afghanistan and the integrity of the Ameer's territory.

10. As the steps which we believe to be the best for commencing negotiations with the Ameer differ from the sugges tions contained in your Lordship's despatch in the important particular that the nature of the business would be indicated

in the first instance instead of the Mission being ostensibly directed to some object of minor importance, we should have thought it necessary, upon this point alone, to ask for instructions before making any communication to the Ameer. But, apart from the procedure to be adopted, we shall have to instruct the Envoy who will be charged with the negotiations upon several subjects regarding which it seems to us to be necessary that we should receive some further explanation of the views entertained by Her Majesty's Government.

11. The correspondence which has taken place with the Ameer of late, and the experience derived from the communications held with Syud Noor Mahomed at Simla in 1873, satisfy us, and our opinion is entirely shared by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab and Sir Richard Pollock, that at least two important questions will be raised by the Ameer if he entertains the proposal that British Residents should be placed at Herat and Candahar.

Those questions are—

1st. Whether Her Majesty's Government are prepared to give unconditional assurances of their determination to protect the territories of Afghanistan against any external attack.

2nd. If the Ameer should apply for assistance for the purpose of fortifying Herat and improving his army, to what extent his demands should be complied with.

12. Both these questions are of great importance. Your Lordship will doubtless have read the observations made by the Ameer in May 1873, and the communications which took place with Syud Noor Mahomed later in the same year, on the subject of the protection of Afghanistan. It then appeared that nothing short of a full and unconditional promise of protection against foreign attack would have been satisfactory to the Ameer; consequently in the Viceroy's letter to his Highness of September 6, 1873 the question was deliberately reserved for future consideration. We had no authority then, nor have we received authority since, from Her Majesty's Government to give to the Ameer any such unconditional guarantee, and we are of opinion that there are grave objections against binding the British Government by such an obligation. We are precluded by law from entering into a treaty of this nature without the express command of Her Majesty's Government, and unless such a treaty is accompanied by reciprocal engagements on the part of the Ameer which seem to us to be inapplicable to the present condition of affairs.[1]

[1] 33 Geo. III. c. 52.

13. The Ameer will in our opinion, judging from the whole tenor of his communications and from the language used by Syud Noor Mahomed in 1873, expect some large pecuniary assistance in aid of the protection of Afghanistan, if the contemplated negotiations are opened. The Syud studiously avoided making any definite official demand, but the sum of 100,000*l.* which, bearing in mind the dissatisfaction felt by the Ameer at the result of the Seistan arbitration, we then offered to put at his disposal, was evidently considerably below his expectations. Your Lordship is aware that up to the present time the Ameer has not taken advantage of the offer. The reason may be either that he was disappointed at its amount, or that, having objected to the return through Afghanistan of Sir Douglas Forsyth's Mission to Kashgar, he was reluctant to accept the gift. However this may be, his conduct affords no encouragement to the successful accomplishment of the objects of the proposed Mission. His objections to the presence of British officers in Afghanistan are clearly very strong, and his expectations of pecuniary aid are very high.

14. In our opinion it would be impolitic to expend large sums of money for the purpose of strengthening the position of Afghanistan. Considering the insecure basis upon which the Government of a country like Afghanistan rests, it is impossible to foresee the use to which the fortifications far from our own base of operations which would be improved, and the troops who would be raised and equipped, at our expense, might at some future time be applied. We concur in the objections expressed by Lord Lawrence[1] in the despatch of

[1] 'We foresee no limits to the expenditure which such a move might require, and we protest against the necessity of having to impose additional taxation on the people of India, who are unwilling, as it is, to bear such pressure for measures which they can both understand and appreciate. And we think that the objects which we have at heart, in common with all interested in India, may be attained by an attitude of readiness and firmness on our frontier, and by giving all our care and expending all our resources for the attainment of practical and sound ends over which we can exercise an effective and immediate control.

'Should a foreign Power, such as Russia, ever seriously think of invading India from without, or, what is more probable, of stirring up the elements of disaffection or anarchy within it, our true policy, our strongest security, would then, we conceive, be found to lie in previous abstinence from entanglements at either Cabul, Candahar, or any similar outpost; in full reliance on a compact, highly-equipped, and disciplined army stationed within our own territories, or on our own border; in the contentment, if not in the attachment, of the masses; in the sense of security of title and

January 4, 1869, to the imposition of heavy charges upon the revenues of India for such purposes.

15. Sufficient has been said to show the difficulty of the two questions which we have discussed and the necessity we are under of asking for further instructions with regard to them. But besides these questions it is our duty to urge upon your Lordship the difficulty we feel in framing directions to the Envoy as to the arguments which he is to use when pressing upon the Ameer the advisability of accepting British Residents in Afghanistan.

16. In your Lordship's despatch under reply, an opinion is expressed to the effect that the Ameer's independence is exposed to 'serious peril,' and the possibility of diminishing or neutralising that peril by the personal influence of a British Agent in Afghanistan and by timely information of the course of events on the Afghan frontier is the consideration which Her Majesty's Government desire to press upon the Ameer.

17. The dangers to the independence of Afghanistan may be considered as possible from two different causes—from the future action of the Russian Government or of Russian officers on the one hand, and from the action of the Ameer and the Sirdars or people of Afghanistan on the other.

18. We are in possession of no information which indicates an intention or desire on the part of the Russian Government to interfere with the independence of Afghanistan. In the correspondence forwarded to us with your Lordship's Secret Despatch, No. 32, dated 19th November last, there has been a frank interchange of views between Her Majesty's Government and the Russian Government on the subject of their policy in Central Asia, and Her Majesty's Government have intimated that 'they have now received with the most sincere satisfaction the assurances conveyed in Prince Gortschakoff's despatch as to the enlightened conviction of His Imperial Majesty that such extension,[1] either on the side of Bokhara,

possession, with which our whole policy is gradually imbuing the minds of the principal chiefs and the native aristocracy; in the construction of material works within British India, which enhance the comfort of the people, while they add to our political and military strength; in husbanding our finances and consolidating and multiplying our resources; in quiet preparation for all contingencies, which no Indian statesmen should disregard; and in the trust in a rectitude and honesty of our intentions, coupled with the avoidance of all sources of complaint which either invite foreign aggression or stir up restless spirits to domestic revolt.'

[1] *i.e.*, 'The further extension of Russian territory towards the Afghan borders.'

of Krasnovodsk, or of the Attrek, is contrary to Russian interests, and that formal orders have been given that all future action in those regions is to be strictly confined to the defence of existing limits and the protection of property and commerce from pillage and brigandage.'

19. In this satisfaction we fully share. As Her Majesty's Government are aware, we have always held that the wisest course to pursue is to explain fully to Russia the importance to British interests of the complete independence of Afghanistan, and to make it clearly understood that Great Britain could not look with indifference on any measures tending to impair or interfere with that independence. We therefore view with peculiar gratification the clear exposition of the policy of Her Majesty's Government as set forth in the Foreign Office Memorandum of the 11th May, 1875. At the same time we fully appreciate the force of the considerations referred to in the 10th paragraph of your Lordship's despatch, which render it conceivable that circumstances may occur, as they have occurred before, to draw the Russian Government into a line of action contrary to their real intentions and wishes.

20. At present however we are in possession of no information which leads us to look upon Russian interference in Afghanistan as a probable or near contingency, or to anticipate that the Russian Government will deviate from the policy of non-extension so recently declared. The Ameer has always watched the progress of the Russian power with alarm, and has at times been greatly agitated by the possibility of the Russian occupation of Merv and the immediate contact of the Russian and Afghan dominions. But we have been informed that Her Majesty's Government did not at all share his alarm, and considered that there was no cause for it. The Ameer was accordingly told that the result of the communications between the British and the Russian Governments regarding the boundaries of his dominions, has been materially to strengthen the position of Afghanistan and to remove apprehension of danger from without, and he was counselled to devote his undisturbed attention to the consolidation and improvement of his internal government. Apparently these communications have tended to remove the feelings of alarm which were undoubtedly felt by the Ameer when he first heard the rumour of a Russian expedition to Merv. In October 1873 he is reported to have written to his Agent at Bokhara as follows:—'It is evident that the British Govern-

ment has defined the Afghan boundary with the Russian and Persian Governments, and that even if the Russians take possession of Sarakhs and Merv Shahjehan it is not to be apprehended, with regard to the communications made between the Russian and the British Governments on the subject of the definition of the Afghan boundary, that they will attempt any advance into the Afghan border.' If representations of an opposite tenor are now to be made, the Ameer will expect to be fully informed of the grounds for them.

21. Moreover, the assurances given to the Ameer, that a good understanding exists between England and Russia on Central Asian affairs, and that his dominions are secure from Russian attack, have in our opinion had a salutary effect in inducing him to adhere to the policy of peace which he has hitherto pursued towards his neighbours. It is manifestly important to avoid anything which might lead him to doubt the correctness of the assurances repeatedly and advisedly given him, or might have the effect of unsettling his mind and of weakening the influence which we have for many years successfully exercised at Cabul in the interests of peace; collision between the Ameer and the frontier tribes or with the allies of Russia, which we consider under present circumstances to be unlikely, would become probable; and the understanding arrived at with Russia regarding the boundaries of Afghanistan and the independence of the Ameer's territories would be imperilled. Language which indicates a change of policy fraught with consequences so grave to Afghanistan and to British interests in Central Asia, ought not in our opinion to be used unless there be a material change in existing circumstances, and we are not aware that any such change has occurred.

22. We do not share to the full extent the apprehensions expressed in paragraphs 6 to 8 of your Lordship's despatch. Of course it is impossible to predict with confidence what turn affairs may take among a people like the Afghans. But so far as circumstances enable us to form a forecast, we have no reason at present to anticipate the occurrence of a collision between Russia and Afghanistan from any of the causes mentioned. Those officers of our Government who are best acquainted with the affairs of Afghanistan and the character of the Ameer and his people, consider that the hypothesis that the Ameer may be intimidated or corrupted by Russia (even supposing there was any probability of such an attempt being made) is opposed to his personal character and to the

feelings and traditions of his race, and that any attempt to intrigue with factions in Afghanistan opposed to the Ameer would defeat itself and afford the Ameer the strongest motive for at once disclosing to us such proceedings. Whatever may be the discontent created in Afghanistan by taxation, conscription, and other unpopular measures, there can be no question that the power of Ameer Shere Ali Khan has been consolidated throughout Afghanistan in a manner unknown since the days of Dost Mahomed, and that the officers entrusted with the administration have shown extraordinary loyalty and devotion to the Ameer's cause. It was probably the knowledge of the Ameer's strength that kept the people aloof from Yakoob Khan in spite of his popularity. At all events Herat fell to the Ameer without a blow. The rebellion in Lalpoora in the extreme east was soon extinguished. The disturbances in Budukshan in the north were speedily suppressed. Nowhere has intrigue or rebellion been able to make head in the Ameer's dominions. Even the Char Eimak and the Hazara tribes are learning to appreciate the advantages of a firm rule.

23. We by no means overlook the contingency referred to in paragraph 8 of the despatch under reply, but we think that Her Majesty's Government scarcely do justice to the Ameer and his unqualified acceptance hitherto of our advice in his dealings with his neighbours. The military operations referred to are probably the expedition to Maimena, a place which forms an integral part of the Afghan dominions. The reduction of the chief of Maimena to obedience is therefore a domestic affair with which it is contrary to our policy to interfere, and on which we should not ordinarily expect the Ameer to communicate with us. As a matter of fact however the operations were not resolved upon before information was communicated to us. We were kept acquainted with the whole course of the discussions in the Durbar previous to the despatch of the troops, and have been since regularly informed of the progress of the expedition.

24. But what we wish specially to repeat is that from the date of the Umballa Durbar to the present time, the Ameer has unreservedly accepted and acted upon our advice to maintain a peaceful attitude towards his neighbours. We have no reason to believe that his views are changed. On the contrary, so late as September last, when the Ameer received news of the disturbances in Kokand, and heard news of a

general rising against the Russians, he wrote to Naib Mahomed Alum Khan 'that he must make endeavours to obtain as much information as possible in this matter, but that he should be careful lest any person in his territory should act against the Russians, and that he should exercise such restraint over his people that no act contrary to the friendship existing between Afghanistan and Russia may take place.'

25. The observations which we have hitherto made apply to the manner in which the instructions contained in your Lordship's despatch could in our opinion best be carried into effect, and to the further instructions which appear to us to be necessary before the proposed negotiations can be commenced. But the matter is, in our own judgment, and in that of all those whom we have been able to consult, of such grave importance, that we feel it to be our duty to add some further remarks for the consideration of Her Majesty's Government, in the hope that the whole question may still be reconsidered.

26. It is in the highest degree improbable that the Ameer will yield a hearty consent to the location of British officers in Afghanistan which the Mission is intended to accomplish; and to place our officers on the Ameer's frontier without his hearty consent would, in our opinion, be a most impolitic and dangerous movement. Setting aside the consideration of the personal risk to which under such circumstances the Agents would be exposed and the serious political consequences that would ensue from their being insulted or attacked, their position would be entirely useless. They would be dependent for their information on untrustworthy sources. They would be surrounded by spies under the pretext of guarding them or administering to their wants. Persons approaching or visiting them would be watched and removed; and though nothing might be done ostensibly which could be complained of as an actual breach of friendship, the Agents would be checked on every hand, and would soon find their position both humiliating and useless. Such was the experience of Major Todd at Herat in 1839 when his supplies of money failed. Such was the experience of Colonel Lumsden when he went to Candahar in 1857 as the dispenser of a magnificent subsidy.

27. A condition of things like this could not exist for any length of time without leading to altered relations and possibly even in the long run to a rupture with Afghanistan, and thereby defeating the oject which Her Majesty's Government have in view. We already see the fruits of the conciliatory policy

which has been pursued since 1869 in the consolidation of the Ameer's power and the establishment of a strong Government on our frontier. The Ameer's not unnatural dread of our interference in his internal affairs, and the difficulties of his position as described in our despatch[1] of the 7th of June last, combined perhaps with the conviction that if ever a struggle for the independence of Afghanistan should come we must in our own interest help him, may have induced him to assume a colder attitude towards us than we should desire. But we have no reason to believe that he has any desire to prefer the friendship of other powers. We are convinced that a patient adherence to the policy adopted towards Afghanistan by Lord Canning, Lord Lawrence, and Lord Mayo, which it has been our earnest endeavour to maintain, presents the greatest promise of the eventual establishment of our relations with the Ameer on a satisfactory footing; and we deprecate, as involving serious danger to the peace of Afghanistan and to the interests of the British Empire in India, the execution, under present circumstances, of the instructions conveyed in your Lordship's despatch.

We have, &c.,
(Signed) NORTHBROOK.
H. W. NORMAN.
A. HOBHOUSE.
W. MUIR.
E. C. BAYLEY.
A. J. ARBUTHNOT.
A. CLARKE.

On these despatches it is to be observed that the despatch of Lord Salisbury is on the face of it imperfect, having the word 'Extract' attached to it. It may be that this imperfection affects the 15th paragraph, on which observations have been made by many persons. Taking the paragraph as it stands, it is impossible not to contrast unfavourably the tortuous course here enjoined with the manly and open one advised by the Government of India in the 7th paragraph of their reply, or to refrain from regret that measures aimed at nothing but to make the Ameer more dependent on the British Government, should be ushered in by professions of regard for his independence.

[1] Paragraphs 24 to 26 and 33 to 36.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW POLICY ENFORCED BY A NEW VICEROY.

With the despatches last quoted the discussions between the Home Government and the Government of India came to an end, and action was taken on the new principles, which by easy, consistent, almost inevitable steps, have led to war. It should here be mentioned that in the early part of the year 1875 Sir Henry Rawlinson, being a member of the Secretary of State's Council, published a book which appeared to advocate a seizure of Candahar and Herat. We say 'appeared,' because Sir H. Rawlinson denies that he did actually recommend such a step. But the book certainly gave that impression both in England and India, and there were those who said at once that trouble would come of it. It cannot be doubted that a recommendation to seize Afghan territory, coming from an eminent member of the Secretary of State's Council, was calculated to alarm Shere Ali. At what time he learned about it is not certain, but Lord Salisbury tells us (A., p. 157) that 'it is well known that not only the English newspapers, but also all works published in England upon Indian questions, are rapidly translated for the information of the Ameer, and carefully studied by his Highness.' It is extremely improbable that the new portent should not have come under his eye by the year 1876, and his goodwill could not be enhanced by it.

In the month of April 1876, Lord Northbrook quitted India, and Lord Lytton succeeded him as Viceroy. On February 20, 1876, before Lord Lytton quitted

England, Lord Salisbury furnished him with instructions (*vide* A., pp. 156–9), in which he directed the immediate execution of the plan of sending a temporary Mission to the Ameer, with the view of establishing a permanent European Mission in his dominions. This was done in the Secret Department, and the instructions are not given entire in the Blue-book, as appears by the word 'Extract' being appended to the document. So much as is given of it we subjoin :—

Enclosure in No. 35. (*Extract.*)

India Office: February 28, 1876.

My Lord,—The tranquillity of the British power in India is so far dependent on its relations with the trans-frontier States, that Her Majesty's Government cannot view without anxiety the present unsatisfactory condition of those relations. The increasing weakness and uncertainty of British influence in Afghanistan constitutes a prospective peril to British interests; the deplorable interruption of it in Khelat inflicts upon them an immediate inconvenience by involving the cessation of all effective control over the turbulent and predatory habits of the Trans-Indus tribes.

2. In view of these considerations, Her Majesty's Government have commended to the consideration of the Governor-General of India in Council, arrangements for promoting unity of purpose and consistency of conduct in the administration of the Sind frontier. They have also instructed the Viceroy to find an early occasion for sending to Cabul a temporary Mission, furnished with such instructions as may perhaps enable it to overcome the Ameer's apparent reluctance to the establishment of permanent British agencies in Afghanistan, by convincing his Highness that the Government of India is not coldly indifferent to the fears he has so frequently urged upon its attention; that it is willing to afford him material support in the defence of his territories from any actual and unprovoked external aggression, but that it cannot practically avert or provide for such a contingency without timely and unrestricted permission to place its own Agents in those parts of his dominions whence they may best watch the course of events.

3. It appears to Her Majesty's Government that the present moment is favourable for the execution of this last-mentioned

instruction. The Queen's assumption of the Imperial title in relation to Her Majesty's Indian subjects, feudataries, and allies will now for the first time conspicuously transfer to her Indian dominion, in form as well as in fact, the supreme authority of the Indian Empire. It will therefore be one of your earliest duties to notify to the Ameer of Afghanistan and the Khan of Khelat your assumption of the Viceregal office under these new conditions.

4. A special Mission, having for this purpose a twofold destination, might perhaps be advantageously despatched from Jacobabad, up the Bolan Pass, to Quetta, where the Khan could be invited to meet and receive it. After delivering your letter to the Khan, the Mission might proceed to Candahar, and thence, under an escort furnished by the Ameer, continue its journey to Cabul. From Cabul it would return to India, either through the Kooram Valley or the Khyber Pass, according to circumstances.

5. Her Majesty's Government however only suggest this plan to your consideration, with due reference to the circumstances of the moment as they arise. You may possibly find it advisable, on your arrival at Calcutta, to communicate indirectly with the Ameer through your Commissioner at Peshawur. This officer might privately inform Shere Ali of your intention to send a complimentary letter to him, as well as to the Khan of Khelat, and ascertain the route by which it would be most agreeable to his Highness that the Mission charged with the delivery of that letter should approach his capital. If the Ameer expresses any preference for the northern route, the Mission could proceed directly to Cabul by the Khyber Pass, returning to India through Candahar and Khelat.

6. To invite the confidence of the Ameer will be the primary purpose of your Agent. To secure that confidence must be the ultimate object of your Government. But to invite confidence is to authorise the frank utterance of hopes which it may be impossible to satisfy, and fears which it may be dangerous to confirm. Whether these hopes and fears be reasonable or the reverse, their open avowal is, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, preferable to their concealment.

7. The maintenance in Afghanistan of a strong and friendly Power has at all times been the object of British policy. The attainment of this object is now to be considered with due reference to the situation created by the recent and rapid

advance of the Russian arms in Central Asia towards the northern frontiers of British India. Her Majesty's Government cannot view with complete indifference the probable influence of that situation upon the uncertain character of an Oriental chief whose ill-defined dominions are thus brought within a steadily narrowing circle, between the conflicting pressures of two great military Empires, one of which expostulates and remains passive, whilst the other apologises and continues to move forward.

8. It is well known that not only the English newspapers, but also all works published in England upon Indian questions, are rapidly translated for the information of the Ameer, and carefully studied by his Highness. Sentiments of irritation and alarm at the advancing power of Russia in Central Asia find frequent expression through the English press, in language which, if taken by Shere Ali for a revelation of the mind of the English Government, must have long been accumulating in his mind impressions unfavourable to his confidence in British power. Whether the passivity of that power, in presence of a situation thus unofficially discussed with disquietude, be attributed by the Ameer to connivance with the political designs, or fear of the military force, of his Russian neighbours,—the inference, although erroneous, is in either case prejudicial to our influence in Afghanistan.

9. The Russian Ambassador at the Court of St. James has been officially informed by Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that the objects of British policy as regards Afghanistan are—

1st. 'To secure that State against aggression.'

2nd. 'To promote tranquillity on the borders of that country, by giving such moral and material support to the Ameer, without interfering in the internal affairs of his country, as may enable Her Majesty's Government to prevent a recurrence of the disturbances and conflicts between rival candidates for power among his own family, or the Meers of the different provinces.'

10. Her Majesty's Government would not therefore view with indifference any attempt on the part of Russia to compete with British influence in Afghanistan; nor could the Ameer's reception of a British Agent (whatever be the official rank or function of that Agent) in any part of the dominions belonging to his Highness afford for his subsequent reception of a Russian Agent similarly accredited any pretext to which the

Government of Her Majesty would not be entitled to except, as incompatible with the assurances spontaneously offered to it by the Cabinet of St. Petersburg. You will bear in mind these facts when framing instructions for your Mission to Cabul. To demands which you have no intention of conceding your Agent will oppose a frank and firm refusal. You will instruct him to prevent such demands from becoming subjects of discussion. Others, which under certain conditions, you may be willing to entertain, he will undertake to refer to your Government, with such favourable assurances as may induce the Ameer to recognise the advantage of facilitating, by compliance with your wishes, the fulfilment of his own.

11. If the language and demeanour of the Ameer be such as to promise no satisfactory result of the negotiations thus opened, his Highness should be distinctly reminded that he is isolating himself, at his own peril, from the friendship and protection it is his interest to seek and deserve.

12. The requests which may be made by Shere Ali in connection with his reception of permanent British Agents in Afghanistan will probably raise the question of granting to his Highness—

1st. A fixed and augmented subsidy.

2nd. A more decided recognition than has yet been accorded by the Government of India to the order of succession established by him in favour of his younger son, Abdoollah Jan.

3rd. An explicit pledge, by treaty or otherwise, of material support in case of foreign aggression.

13. The first of these questions is of secondary magnitude. You will probably deem it inexpedient to commit your Government to any permanent pecuniary obligation on behalf of a neighbour whose conduct and character have hitherto proved uncertain. On the other hand, you may possibly find it worth while to increase from time to time the amount of pecuniary assistance which up to the present moment the Ameer has been receiving. But your decision on this point can only be determined by circumstances which have not arisen, and considerations which must be left to your appreciation of such circumstances.

14. With regard to the recognition of Abdoollah Jan, whose selection as legitimate successor to the throne of his father has been made with much solemnity by Shere Ali, and ostensibly

acquiesced in by the most influential of the Afghan chiefs, Her Majesty's Government in considering this question have before them the solemn and deliberate declaration made in 1869 by Lord Northbrook's predecessor to the present Ameer, viz., that 'the British Government does not desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, yet considering that the bonds of friendship between that Government and your Highness have been lately more closely drawn than heretofore, it will view with severe displeasure any attempts on the part of your rivals to disturb your position as Ruler of Cabul, and rekindle civil war; and it will further endeavour from time to time, by such means as circumstances may require, to strengthen the Government of your Highness to enable you to exercise with equity and with justice your rightful rule, and to transmit to your descendants all the dignities and honours of which you are the lawful possessor.'

15. The Government of India having in 1869 made that declaration, which was approved by Her Majesty's advisers, have not based upon it any positive measures; while to the Ameer, who had received that declaration under circumstances of some solemnity and parade, it appears to have conveyed a pledge of definite action in his favour. It is not surprising that these conflicting interpretations of an ambiguous formula should have occasioned mutual disappointment to his Highness and the Government of India.

16. Her Majesty's Government do not desire to renounce their traditional policy of abstention from all unnecessary interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. But the frank recognition of a *de facto* order in the succession established by a *de facto* Government to the throne of a foreign State does not, in their opinion, imply or necessitate any intervention in the internal affairs of that State.

17. You may also find it in your power to bring about a reconciliation between the Ameer and his nephew, Abdul Rahman Khan, who is now a refugee at Samarcand, under Russian protection. The order of succession established by Shere Ali would derive increased solidity from the support of this powerful malcontent, whose adhesion to it might perhaps be secured through the friendly assistance of your Government.

18. Any of these arrangements might strengthen the position of the Government of India in Afghanistan, by securing its influence over the present Ruler of that country, and exhaust-

ing some of the sources of the political and social confusion which his death is now likely to occasion. But you will fully understand that, in adverting to them, I am only suggesting points to which your consideration should be directed, and am in no way limiting your discretion with respect to them.

19. It remains to consider the question of giving to the Ameer a definite assurance of material support in case of external aggression upon those territories over which Her Majesty's Government has publicly recognised and officially maintained his right of sovereignty.

20. With or without any such assurance, England would be impelled by her own interests to assist his Highness in repelling the invasion of his territory by a foreign Power. It is therefore on all accounts desirable that the Government of India should have at its disposal adequate means for the prevention of a catastrophe which may yet be averted by prudence, and the fulfilment of an obligation which, should it ever arise, could not be evaded with honour. The want of such means constitutes the weakness of the present situation.

21. In the year 1873, Lord Northbrook gave to the Envoy of the Ameer the personal assurance that, in the event of any aggression upon the territories of his Highness which the British Government had failed to avert by negotiation, that Government would be prepared 'to assure the Ameer that they will afford him assistance in the shape of arms and money, and will also, in case of necessity, assist him with troops.'

22. The terms of this declaration, however, although sufficient to justify reproaches on the part of Shere Ali if in the contingency to which it referred he should be left unsupported by the British Government, were unfortunately too ambiguous to secure confidence or inspire gratitude on the part of his Highness. The Ameer, in fact, appears to have remained under a resentful impression that his Envoy had been trifled with, and his attitude towards the Government of India has ever since been characterised by ambiguity and reserve.

23. If, therefore, Shere Ali be frank with your Envoy, he will probably renew to him the demand addressed in 1873, through his own Envoy, to Lord Northbrook, 'that in the event of any aggression on the Ameer's territories, the British Government should distinctly state that it regards the aggressor as its enemy; and, secondly, that the contingency of an aggression by Russia should be specifically mentioned in the written assurance to be given to the Ameer.'

24. To answer this renewed demand in terms identical with those of the answer formerly given to it would prejudice, instead of improve, your relations with the Ameer, by the evasion of an invited confidence.

25. Her Majesty's Government are therefore prepared to sanction and support any more definite declaration which may, in your judgment, secure to their unaltered policy the advantages of which it has been hitherto deprived by an apparent doubt of its sincerity. But they must reserve to themselves entire freedom of judgment as to the character of circumstances involving the obligation of material support to the Ameer, and it must be distinctly understood that only in some clear case of unprovoked aggression would such an obligation arise.

26. In the next place, they cannot secure the integrity of the Ameer's dominions, unless his Highness be willing to afford them every reasonable facility for such precautionary measures as they may deem requisite. These precautionary measures by no means involve the establishment of British garrisons in any part of Afghanistan, nor do Her Majesty's Government entertain the slightest desire to quarter British soldiers upon Afghan soil; but they must have, for their own Agents, undisputed access to its frontier positions. They must also have adequate means of confidentially conferring with the Ameer upon all matters as to which the proposed declaration would recognise a community of interests. They must be entitled to expect becoming attention to their friendly counsels; and the Ameer must be made to understand that, subject to all fair allowance for the condition of the country, and the character of the population, territories ultimately dependent upon British power for their defence must not be closed to those of the Queen's officers or subjects who may be duly authorised to enter them.

27. Her Majesty's Government are also of opinion that the establishment, if possible, of a telegraph from some point on the Indian frontier to Cabul, *viâ* the Kooram Valley, is an object deserving of your consideration, and the permanent presence at the Viceregal Court of a properly accredited Afghan Envoy is much to be desired, as a guarantee for the due fulfilment of counter obligations on the part of the Ameer, and the uninterrupted facility of your confidential relations with his Highness. Subject to these general conditions, Her Majesty's Government can see no objection to your compli-

ance with any reasonable demand on the part of Shere Ali for more assured support and protection, such as pecuniary assistance, the advice of British officers in the improvement of his military organisation, or a promise, not vague, but strictly guarded and clearly circumscribed, of adequate aid against actual and unprovoked attack by any foreign Power. Such a promise personally given to the Ameer will probably satisfy his Highness, if the terms of it be unequivocal. But Her Majesty's Government do not wish to fetter your discretion in considering the advantages of a treaty on the basis above indicated.

28. The conduct of Shere Ali has more than once been characterised by so significant a disregard of the wishes and interests of the Government of India, that the irretrievable alienation of his confidence in the sincerity and power of that Government is a contingency which cannot be dismissed as impossible. Should such a fear be confirmed by the result of the proposed negotiation, no time must be lost in reconsidering, from a new point of view, the policy to be pursued in reference to Afghanistan.

29. On the other hand, the success of those efforts (which, if they be made at all, cannot be safely delayed) will be pregnant with results so advantageous to the British power in India, that Her Majesty's Government willingly leave to the exercise of your judgment every reasonable freedom in carrying out the present instructions.

I have, &c.,
(Signed) SALISBURY.

The only thing quite clear from these instructions is that a temporary Mission was to be sent to Shere Ali (par. 3), to insist upon his reception of European Residents (par. 25), under threats (par. 11), which would be taken, certainly by a Ruler of his class, and probably by any other Ruler, to mean war. All the rest is very difficult to reconcile with itself or with any definite idea of policy. The two great objects of our policy are put forward in par. 9. One is to secure Afghanistan against *aggression;* whereas the whole gist of the instructions is that we are to insist on having something more than we have got, something which by treaty we have agreed not to have, and that, if it is not yielded to us, we will

certainly break off all treaties, probably go to war with the Ameer; and all this without any wrong so much as alleged to be done by the Ameer, but because we are jealous of the Russians. The second object is to give such support to the Ameer as may prevent conflicts between rival candidates for power, and yet this is to be done 'without interfering in the internal affairs of the country.'

The 'primary purpose' of the Mission is 'to invite the confidence of the Ameer' (par. 6); and this is to be done, first by proposing a course which, as all the Indian officers consulted had told Lord Salisbury, was certain to excite his suspicions and fears, and then, if he objects, by threatening him with danger.

The assurances given to Shere Ali by Lord Northbrook at the Simla conference are said (par. 22) to be 'too ambiguous to secure confidence or inspire gratitude.' Therefore (par. 24) Lord Lytton is instructed to give any more definite declaration which will remove the Ameer's doubts; but with this proviso, that the new declaration is not to differ from the old ones in substance, because it is to express an 'unaltered policy,' nor in detail, because it is to embody the very conditions which are said to have made the old assurances ambiguous, viz., the conditions that Her Majesty's Government 'must reserve to themselves entire freedom of judgment as to the character of circumstances involving the obligation of material support to the Ameer, and it must be distinctly understood that only in some clear case of unprovoked aggression would such an obligation arise.'

It is not surprising that the only portion of such a policy which was found capable of execution, was that fatally simple portion which is shadowed forth in pars. 11 and 27 of the instructions.

At the time when the aggressions of the Russians were being made the justification (par. 7 of the instructions) for our violent alteration of the relations between ourselves and the Afghans, Mr. Disraeli held the following language in the House of Commons. On May 5, 1876, he said—

Russia knows full well there is no reason why we should view the natural development of her empire in Asia with jealousy, so long as it is clearly made aware by the Government of this country that we are resolved to maintain and strengthen both materially and morally our Indian Empire, and not merely do that, but also uphold our legitimate influence in the East. Russia, so far as I have had any influence in the conduct of our affairs, has been made perfectly aware of these views, and not only that, but they have thought them consistent with a good understanding between the two countries. I believe, indeed, that at no time has there been a better understanding between the Courts of St. James and St. Petersburg than at the present moment, and there is this good understanding because our policy is a clear and a frank policy.[1]

After February 1876, there is a great gap in the correspondence between England and India. Important events took place during 1876 and in the early part of 1877; but until May 10, 1877, a period of more than fourteen months, there is no despatch from the Government of India on Afghan affairs. We believe such a thing to be quite unprecedented. That there were frequent communications between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State cannot be doubted, and the omission of official reports indicates a system of government which is not in accordance with the spirit, if it is with the letter, of the law, and which we hope may before long be made the subject of some inquiry.

One curious result of the omission to report until so late a period is that the Government of India then say that Lord Salisbury's instructions of February 1876, removed the chief ground of the objections made to his former despatches. Of course this is true of the members of the Government of India at the date of May 10, 1877. But it is certainly not true of those who were members in the year 1876, for three of them[2] retained their objections, and made fresh objections to the details

[1] See *inf.* p. 240 as to the feeling between the English and Russian Governments at this time.

[2] Sir Henry W. Norman, Sir Wm. Muir, and Sir A. Hobhouse.

of the new plan, and wished to exercise their statutory right of recording their objections in Minutes, which they have been prevented from doing by the delay of the report.

The first step taken after Lord Lytton's arrival was one in which all his Council concurred, viz., the prudent one of ascertaining beforehand, by letter and through our Vakeel, whether the Ameer was willing to receive Sir Lewis Pelly as Envoy. On May 22, 1876, Shere Ali returned a refusal, which will be found wrapped in a cloud of complimentary words in A., p. 175. From a contemporary letter of our Vakeel (*ibid.*) it appears that he assigned three reasons—First, that the persons of Englishmen could not be safe; and he referred to the case of Major Macdonald related above, and to the trouble that had come in consequence. Secondly, that European officers might make demands which would give rise to quarrels; and here he appeals to his treaty rights, and says that the Cabul Government has always objected to European officers 'from farsightedness.' Thirdly, he says that, if English come, Russians will claim to come too. He proposed that if a conference was wanted, an Agent of his should wait on the British Government.

When this answer, quite in accordance with what the skilled Indian officers had predicted, arrived, the Government of India prepared two letters, one to be sent direct to the Ameer by the Commissioner of Peshawur, and the other to reach him through the hands of Atta Mahomed, our Vakeel. Both are dated July 8, 1876 (A., pp. 176, 177). We subjoin them both in full:—

From the Commissioner of Peshawur to the Ameer of Cabul.

(Compliments.)

Dated July 8, 1876.

I have received your Highness's letter of May 22, and informed his Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of its contents.

In intimating to your Highness his intention of deputing his confidential Envoy, Sir Lewis Pelly, to wait upon your Highness at such place as your Highness should appoin, for

the purpose of announcing his accession to office, and the addition which the great Queen of England has made to her sovereign titles, the Viceroy was actuated by the most true friendship for your Highness. His Excellency considered that the proposed complimentary and friendly Mission would not only be acceptable to your Highness, as following the course adopted between all civilised Courts, but that it would also afford a desirable opportunity of improving the existing relations between the two Governments by means of frank communication on matters of common interest.

The reluctance evinced by your Highness to the reception of this friendly Mission is, therefore, much to be regretted.

But by a letter which I have received from the British Agent at your Highness' Court, I am induced to believe that your Highness' advisers, in counselling you not to receive the Viceroy's Envoy, may have been influenced by a misconception of the objects of his Excellency, or may not have fully considered the light in which such a refusal might be regarded by the British Government. I have therefore in accordance with the Viceroy's instructions, explained at length to the British Agent the views of his Excellency on the relations between the two Governments, and on the causes to which he attributes the reluctance of your Highness to receive the Mission. These views the Agent has been instructed to communicate to your Highness.

Your Highness has indeed suggested that it would answer all purposes were you to depute a confidential Agent to learn from the Viceroy the views of the British Government. My friend! The Viceroy cannot receive an Agent from your Highness when you have declined to receive his Excellency's trusted friend and Envoy. The British Agent at the Court of your Highness will explain to you the reasons which make it impossible for the Viceroy to accept such a proposal.

It is the Viceroy's sincere desire not merely to maintain, but also materially to strengthen, the bonds of friendship and confidence between the British Government and the Government of Afghanistan; so that the interests of your Highness, as the Sovereign of a friendly and independent frontier State, may be effectually guaranteed against all cause for future anxiety. But the support of the British Government cannot be effectual unless it is based on reciprocal confidence and a clear recognition of the means requisite for the protection of mutual interests.

I am to repeat that, in proposing to send a friendly Mission to your Highness, the Viceroy has been actuated by a cordial desire, which it rests with your Highness to reciprocate, for the continuance, on closer terms than heretofore, of amicable relations between the two Governments in view of common interests, more particularly affecting Afghanistan and the personal welfare of your Highness and your dynasty. It will, for this reason, cause the Viceroy sincere regret if your Highness, by hastily rejecting the hand of friendship now frankly held out to you, should render nugatory the friendly intentions of his Excellency, and oblige him to regard Afghanistan as a State which has voluntarily isolated itself from the alliance and support of the British Government.

From the Commissioner of Peshawur to the British Agent, Cabul.

Dated July 8, 1876.

Your letter of May 22 has duly come to hand, and I have submitted it to his Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General.

The unsatisfactory and inadequate reasons which, according to your above-mentioned letter, would appear to have induced the advisers of the Ameer to persuade his Highness not to receive a friendly and complimentary Mission from the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, have caused his Excellency profound surprise.

Your letter states, in the first place, that 'to assure the safety of the Sahibs is difficult' on account of religious and political enmities which the Ameer is powerless to control.

The Viceroy and Governor-General cannot suppose this objection to be serious, more especially as, in my former communication, it was intimated to the Ameer that his Excellency was prepared to send his Envoy to any place of meeting where it would be most convenient to his Highness to receive him.

In the second place, your letter specifies, as one of the reasons for declining to receive the Viceroy's confidential Envoy, that his Highness' advisers are not without a fear lest the Envoy should address to the Ameer demands incompatible with the interests of his Highness, which demands it might be impossible to comply with, and embarrassing to reject.

You are to inform the Ameer that this fear is quite groundless. It can only have been derived from idle reports,

or mischievous misrepresentations, by which his Highness will always be liable to be led into grievous error as to the intentions of the British Government, so long as he declines to avail himself of the opportunities afforded him for entering into frank and open communication with it.

The Ameer has on previous occasions expressed to the British Government the anxiety caused him by circumstances which did not, on those occasions, appear to the British Government so serious as to require any immediate measures on its part for the protection of his Highness. But some time has now elapsed since any interchange of opinions has taken place on this subject between the two Governments. The Viceroy would therefore have been glad to afford the Ameer a timely opportunity of making known his views in regard to the interests of Afghanistan under existing circumstances; and his Highness will incur a grave responsibility if he deliberately rejects the opportunity thus offered him.

The Ameer has already received from this Government substantial proofs of friendly interest in his welfare which I need not now enumerate; and his Highness must be aware that the British Government cannot be indifferent to any circumstance or contingency likely to affect the condition of a State so close upon the frontier of British India as the State of Afghanistan. The Viceroy will therefore regard the interests of Afghanistan as identical with those of the British Government so long as the Ameer proves himself to be its loyal friend and ally. In that case the Ameer need certainly have no fear of any desire on the part of his Excellency to interfere with the political independence or commercial freedom, of Afghanistan; whilst he may as confidently reckon upon the Viceroy's willingness to consider in the most frank and friendly spirit the best means of giving practical effect to any precautions which His Highness may desire to suggest for the increased security of his dominions and his dynasty.

But you will explain to the Ameer how impossible it is for the British Government to maintain this community of interests with the Government of his Highness, or to protect the independence and integrity of his State, under conditions incompatible with the ordinary intercourse between friendly Courts.

The Viceroy is moreover surprised by the statement in your letter that the Ameer would be obliged to receive Russian Sahibs if he received the British Mission intended to be sent by his Excellency.

As the responsible representative of the Queen of England and Empress of India, the Viceroy cannot consider this excuse a valid one.

The Ameer must be aware that the British Government, acting on behalf of his Highness' wishes and interests, has obtained from the Government of the Czar written pledges not to interfere directly or indirectly in the affairs of Afghanistan.

The reception of a British Envoy cannot therefore necessitate the reception of a Russian one; for in refusing to receive a Russian Envoy, his Highness would only be acting in conformity with the policy thus solemnly agreed upon.

The Viceroy is willing to believe that, in declining to receive the Envoy of the British Government, the Ameer may not, perhaps, have fully weighed all the considerations set forth in this letter, or realised their grave import.

If, on further reflection, his Highness should recognise the expediency of learning the true nature of his Excellency's views and dispositions in regard to matters which materially concern the interests of his Highness, Sir Lewis Pelly will still be authorised to wait upon the Ameer at such place as he may appoint; and, should the interviews consequent on this meeting lead to a more cordial and reliable understanding between the two Governments, the Viceroy will be happy to meet the Ameer in person at Peshawur in November next, if his Highness should so desire.

But you are, at the same time, to inform his Highness that, having due regard to all the circumstances of the present situation, and considering the friendliness and sincerity of the Viceroy's intentions, as well as the apparent mistrust with which your letter represents them to have been received by the Cabul Durbar, his Excellency is obliged to decline, as derogatory to the dignity of the British Government, and otherwise wholly inadequate, the alternative proposal of his Highness in regard to the deputation, on his part, of an Agent in view to becoming acquainted with what you designate 'the objects sought' by the British Government.

If the Ameer, after deliberately weighing all the considerations now commended to his serious attention, still declines to receive the Viceroy's Envoy, the responsibility of the result will rest entirely on the Government of Afghanistan, which will have thereby isolated itself from the alliance of that Power which is most disposed, and best able, to befriend it.

You are hereby directed to communicate his Excellency's views to the Ameer, and to prepare a careful and complete statement of all that passes at your interviews, and of the decision of the Cabul Durbar, for transmission to me.

You will, at the same time, hold yourself in readiness to come to Peshawur without delay, should your presence be required by his Excellency.

It was during the discussion of these two letters that the dissent of three members of Council was expressed in written Notes. They might then have recorded formal Minutes of dissent, but it was very justly suggested by the Viceroy, and agreed by the dissentients, that it would be more convenient to record Minutes when the report of proceedings was made to the Home Government, a step which it was then intended to take as soon as the Ameer's answer to the letters of July was received. The course of events however led to delay as above mentioned, and so the opportunity for recording Minutes of dissent was lost. One of the three dissentients, Sir William Muir, on leaving India, requested that his Notes (since made public) should be turned into Minutes when the report was sent; but this request was not complied with, and very likely was forgotten after the lapse of so much time.

The grounds of dissent, differently expressed, centred round the same point. They were to the effect that Shere Ali was within his right in refusing English Envoys; that the reasons he assigned were genuine as regarded his own belief, and rested on substantial foundations; that we had no right to use threats to him; that such a mode of addressing him was like the first step in a war; that it was not treating him fairly to insist upon the temporary and complimentary character of Sir L. Pelly's Mission, when the main object of it was, as the Ameer well knew, to enforce a permanent Mission; that it was impolitic not to deal fairly with him by saying what we wanted at once; that if he accepted the temporary Mission, and then refused the permanent one, our position would be one of great

embarrassment; and that we ought distinctly to resolve beforehand whether in such a case we should be content to accept the refusal, or should resort to force. It was also pointed out that we had no such tempting boon to offer as to induce Shere Ali to accept with it a very distasteful demand. He had declined our money, though no condition was attached to it; he would doubtless decline all gifts coupled with the condition of receiving English Envoys. He knew we should defend Afghanistan from Russian aggression for our own sakes. To guarantee him and his son Abdoollah Jan from domestic disturbances would be an inducement no doubt, but it was out of the question, because it involved our control over the domestic affairs of the country. The advice given was to wait till difficulties came upon Shere Ali, when he would want assistance, and we could make fair terms with him.

It should be said that the objections here summarised were made to the first drafts of the letters of July 8 (as plainly appears from Sir William Muir's Note), and that the drafts were moderated in language, but they were not so altered in substance as to remove the objections felt by the dissentients. They were however in a minority. Even if a majority had objected, it was only a question of time when the orders of the Secretary of State were to be carried into effect; and those orders, though by law they may be protested against, must be obeyed, and obeyed loyally, by the Government of India. At all events, the letters of July 8 were sent by the authority of that Government.

The letters produced a courteous answer, dated September 3, 1876 (*vide* A., p. 179), in which Shere Ali, still not consenting to the proposed Mission, suggested that our Vakeel, Atta Mahomed, should see the British authorities and explain matters to them. He was accordingly summoned to Simla, and conferred there with the Viceroy in the month of October (*vide* A., pp. 181–186). Atta Mahomed mentioned to the Viceroy a list of the Ameer's grievances, but as this was done after-

wards by a better authority, the Ameer's Prime Minister, Noor Mahomed, it need only be mentioned here that Atta Mahomed referred to a greater number of grievances than did Noor Mahomed, including among the additional ones 'that the results of the Mission in 1873 had offended the Ameer.' He also mentioned the matters which, as far as he knew, the Ameer and his advisers had at heart. The most material were (p. 182)—

1st. That no Englishmen should reside in Afghanistan, at any rate at Cabul.

2nd. The British Government should utterly disclaim connection with Mahomed Yakoob or any other pretender (actual or possible) to the Afghan Throne, agreeing to recognise and support only his declared heir.

3rd. That we should agree to support the Ameer, on demand, with troops and money in all and every case of attack from without. Also should he call upon us to do so, to aid him in the event of internal disturbance.

The Viceroy then delivered an address to Atta Mahomed, which (p. 185) he was 'to convey faithfully to the Ameer.' We give some extracts from this address.

The Ameer had apparently come to the conclusion that, having nothing to hope from us, and, at the same time, nothing to fear, he may safely stand aloof from the British Government; confident that, in the event of external attack, we shall be obliged to help him for the protection of our own interests, even if we are under no contract obligation to do so.

This was a very natural conclusion; but, unfortunately for the Ameer, there was a fatal flaw in its premises. It is true that, if the Ameer proves himself our friend and loyal ally, not our interests only, but our honour, will oblige us to defend his territories and support his Throne. But the moment we have cause to doubt his sincerity, or question the practical benefit of his alliance, our interests will be all the other way, and may greatly augment the dangers with which he is already threatened, both at home and abroad. As regards the former, the British Government can only assist those who

value its assistance; and the assistance which the Ameer seems at present disinclined to seek or deserve may, at any moment, be very welcome to one or other of those rivals, from whom he will never be free till he has our assured support. As regards the latter, our only interest in maintaining the independence of Afghanistan is to provide for the security of our own frontier. But the moment we cease to regard Afghanistan as a friendly and firmly allied State, what is there to prevent us from providing for the security of our frontier by an understanding with Russia, which might have the effect of wiping Afghanistan out of the map altogether? If the Ameer does not desire to come to a speedy understanding with us, Russia does; and she desires it at his expense.[1]

As matters now stand, the British Government is able to pour an overwhelming force into Afghanistan, either for the protection of the Ameer, or the vindication of its own interests, long before a single Russian soldier could reach Cabul. His Excellency illustrated this statement by detailed reference to the statistics of the Russian military force in Central Asia, and the British military force in India, showing the available troops of either Power within certain distances of the city of Cabul.

The Viceroy then said that, if the Ameer remained our friend, this military power could be spread round him as a ring of iron, and, if he became our enemy, it could break him as a reed. But our relations with Afghanistan could not remain as they are. They must become worse or better. It was his Excellency's sincere desire that they should become better; and on his part he was cordially willing to do all in his power to make them so.

The Viceroy however pointed out that he could not help a State which would not allow him the means of helping it; nor undertake responsibility for the protection of a frontier which he is unable to look after by means of his own officers. Unless we can have our own Agents on the Afghan frontier, and thus know what is going on there and beyond, we cannot effectually defend that frontier. It is out of the question that we should be committed to seeing the Ameer through a war with Russia, without being in a position to prevent his becoming involved in such a war.

. . . . . .

It is indispensable that his Excellency should be in a

[1] Nothing appears in the Blue-books to account for this language.

position to acquaint himself with the true state of things in Afghanistan. The Vakeel had said that the Ameer was strong, but what were the facts admitted by himself? His own son was his opponent. This son had been imprisoned certainly, but was still so formidable that the Ameer could not leave Cabul on his account. It was believed that conspiracies were rife in favour of this son; that the people were discontented on account of the conscription; that the treasury was empty; and, in fact, that the Ameer's position was surrounded with difficulties.

This, said his Excellency, is the man who pretends to hold the balance between England and Russia independent of either! His position is rather that of an earthen pipkin between two iron pots.

The Viceroy furnished Atta Mahomed with details of the concessions he was prepared to make to the Ameer, and of the conditions on which he would insist, and with a document called an 'aide mémoire' for his further guidance. He also proposed a meeting between Sir Lewis Pelly and Noor Mahomed. He added (p. 185)—

At the same time, the Vakeel should understand that his Excellency attached certain conditions to the opening of negotiations, without which it was needless for the Ameer to send down his representatives—

1. The location of British officers upon the Afghan frontier.

2. An attitude of friendship and confidence on the part of the Ameer.

. . . . . .

Should the Ameer not consider the advantages worth the concession required by him, viz., British agency on the frontier, and a really friendly attitude on the part of the Ameer himself, it would then be needless for him to depute his Minister to meet the Viceroy's Envoy, and the Viceroy would be free to adopt his own course in his re-arrangement of frontier relations, without regard to Afghan interests.

Atta Mahomed was dismissed by the Viceroy with gifts—a watch and chain and 1,000*l.*—'in acknowledgment of the appreciation of the Government of his past

faithful service' (p. 185). He left Simla on October 11, 1876, bearing with him a letter from the Viceroy to Shere Ali (p. 186), inviting the latter to the forthcoming Imperial Assembly at Delhi.

The true and full meaning of the concessions and requisitions detailed to Atta Mahomed, with the accompanying oral and written glosses, is more clearly and methodically set forth in a draft treaty (*vide* A., pp. 189–192) which formed part of Sir L. Pelly's instructions for the Peshawur conference. We therefore take the clauses of that draft, though in point of fact the Peshawur conference was broken off before any discussion of the treaty was reached. The draft consists of two parts, the second of which is called a subsidiary or secret agreement, and is supplementary to the first part. The principal articles are the following:—

Article 2. Between the British Government and that of the Ameer, Sher Ali Khan, Ruler of Afghanistan, his heirs and successors, there shall be perpetual peace and friendship. The friends of the one Government shall be the friends of the other; and the enemies of the one Government shall be the enemies of the other.

Article 3. In the event of the territories now possessed by his Highness the Ameer, Shere Ali Khan, being invaded by a foreign enemy, the British Government will aid his Highness, in the defence of those territories, with men and material of war; it being clearly understood and hereby provided, that the conduct of the Ameer and his Government shall, at the same time, be in strict conformity with the declarations contained in the above Article 2; and that his Highness shall have refrained from all provocation of, aggression on, or interference with the States and territories beyond his present frontier, save with the knowledge and consent of the British Government.

Article 4. In accordance with this understanding, his Highness the Ameer agrees to conduct his relations with foreign States in harmony with the policy of the British Government.

Which is supplemented in Part II., thus:—

It is likewise understood, in regard to Article 4, that, in return for the important pledge involved in the above article

on the part of the British Government, the Ameer binds himself to abstain from discussion of political, international, or State matters with any foreign Government, save in friendly concert with the British Government, to whom his Highness will unreservedly communicate all correspondence or overtures of this nature.

As regards resident officers.

Article 5. For the better protection of the Afghan frontier, it is hereby agreed that the British Government shall on its part depute accredited British Agents to reside at Herat and such other places in Afghanistan as may be mutually determined by the high contracting powers; and that the Ruler of Afghanistan shall on his part depute an Agent to reside at the Court of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, and at such other places in British India as may be similarly agreed upon.

Article 6. His Highness the Ruler of Afghanistan on his part guarantees the personal safety and honourable treatment of British Agents whilst on Afghan soil; and the British Government on its part, undertakes that such Agents shall in no way interfere with the internal administration of Afghanistan.

Supplemented as follows:—

It is likewise understood, in regard to Articles 5 and 6—

1st. That, unless or until otherwise mutually arranged between the two Governments, a native Agent only need reside at Cabul city.

2nd. That, wherever in the opinion of the Viceroy of India it may be necessary to communicate direct with the Ameer on matters of an important or confidential character, a special British Envoy shall be deputed on a temporary Mission to the Court of the Ameer.

3rd. That the principal duty of the British Agent or Agents shall be to watch events outside the frontiers of Afghanistan, and to supply timely information to the British and Afghan Governments of any political intrigues or dangers threatening the peace stability, or integrity of the Afghan dominions.

4th. That the local Afghan authorities shall cordially cooperate with the British Agent or Agents for the common interests of their respective Governments.

As to assistance against domestic enemies.

Article 9. In proof of its desire to see the Government of his Highness Shere Ali Khan consolidated, and undisturbed by domestic troubles, the British Government hereby agrees to acknowledge whomsoever his Highness may nominate as his heir-apparent, and to discountenance the pretensions of any rival claimant to the throne.

Article 10. The British Government, its officers and agents, will, as heretofore, abstain from all interference in the domestic administration and internal affairs of Afghanistan; except in so far as their assistance may at any time be required and invoked by the Ameer his heirs and successors, to avert from that country the calamities of a recurrence to civil war, and protect the peaceful interests which this treaty is established to establish and promote. In that case, the British Government will afford to the Government of Afghanistan such support, moral or material, as may, in its opinion, and in general accordance with the foregoing declaration, be necessary for the assistance of the Ameer his heirs and successors, in protecting equitable authority, national contentment, and settled order, from disturbance by the personal ambition of unlawful competitors for power.

Supplemented as follows:—

It is likewise understood, in regard to Article 10, that the British Government in no way desires to change its settled policy of non-interference with the internal affairs or independence of the Afghan nation; it will therefore only afford material assistance to the Ameer his heirs and successors, at their express request; provided also, that such request shall be accompanied by timely and adequate information, and that the British Government shall be the sole judge of the manner, time, and expediency of furnishing such assistance.

Then follow other articles for the establishment of telegraphs, trade routes, and so forth. The last secret article stipulates that the Ameer shall receive 200,000*l.* down, and 120,000*l.* a year afterwards, in addition to such assistance in men and money as the two Governments may deem beneficial for their interests.

Anybody who will compare these provisions with

the previous assurances given to Shere Ali, will find that, as regards the amount of assurance given to him, there is no substantial difference between them. It is true that the words of assurance used by Lord Lytton are more numerous and more important, but their sense is all cut down again to the previous level by the provisoes that the foreign aggression against which he was to be protected must have been unprovoked by him, and that in case of domestic trouble the British Government should be the sole judge of the *expediency*, as well as of the manner and time, of furnishing assistance. It is difficult to see how, except as regards money, Shere Ali was to take anything by this treaty which he might not have had from previous Viceroys. In return for the money he was to admit not only telegraphs, and free trade and intercourse with all their accompanying complications, but the dreaded English Residents, and to abstain entirely from politics beyond his own borders. His position then would hardly differ from that of Scindia, or the Nizam, and others of our chief feudataries.

Those who assert that sufficient concession was not made to Shere Ali in 1869 or 1873, when he would have been left with a large amount of independence, will do well to study how much it was thought expedient to offer him in 1876, when it was proposed to take away from him the whole of his liberty as to foreign affairs, and much of it as to domestic affairs.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PESHAWUR CONFERENCE.

On the return of our Vakeel to Cabul great consternation appears to have prevailed among the Durbar there, and Atta Mahomed wrote several times reporting their consultations (A., pp. 192-194). On December 21, 1876, he wrote two letters, stating that the Ameer, though still disliking to receive English officers, would, on account of the insistance of the British Government, yield the point; but only after his Ministers had at the conference made representations of his views, and stated all the difficulties.

The instructions given by Lord Lytton to Sir L. Pelly will be found in A., pp. 187–192.

Before relating the events of the conference we advert to some external circumstances in order to show under what apprehensions an Afghan statesman would probably and reasonably approach the important debate to which he was called.

Besides the threats conveyed to Shere Ali by the letters of July 8, 1876, and by the Viceroy's address to Atta Mahomed, two very alarming symptoms had appeared.

In the latter part of 1876 it became known that we were about to occupy Quetta in force, and it was actually occupied on November 2. Under treaty with the Khan of Khelat, made in the year 1854, we had a right to do this. But the disturbances in Khelat itself were hardly sufficient to justify such a step. The conjunction of it with menacing demands on Afghanistan was ominous: the more so because the occupation of

Quetta was the first step taken in our first invasion of Afghanistan. To an Afghan, or indeed to anybody, it it might well seem clear that we should not have incurred the risk and expense of advancing our frontier 150 miles or more, except for the purpose of outflanking or threatening Afghanistan.[1]

About the same time occurred another remarkable phenomenon. Preparations were made for moving British troops in the direction of Afghanistan, and for the formation of bridges or a bridge over the Indus. How far these demonstrations were carried, or what was their precise object, we do not know.[2] The papers are wholly silent on the subject. Lord Salisbury, when questioned about them on June 15, 1877, in the House of Lords, treated the matter very curtly, and as if there were absolutely nothing in it; but, unfortunately, we have learned to be very suspicious and critical of the words that proceed from that quarter. Certain it is that some such military demonstrations took place, and that they must have been alarming to an Afghan mind.

On our side there was suspicion on account of letters coming from the Governor-General of Russian Turkestan to Shere Ali. There was no secret about them, and they were communicated to our Vakeel, and by him to us, in the usual way. It is noteworthy however as indicative of the greater severity with which every possibility of relations between the Russians and the Afghans was now judged, that on September 18, 1876, the Government of India for the first time complained of this interference of the Russians. The matter was made the subject of much correspondence between the British and Russian Governments from October, 1876, to February, 1877 (*vide* C. A., pp. 83–106).[3]

There were also accusations made against Shere Ali of endeavours to excite a jehad, or religious war, against us among the Mahomedan population on our

[1] See *inf.* pp. 218, 219, and p. 289.
[2] Probably they were to threaten the Russians, see *inf.* pp. 273, 274.
[3] This subject is treated at length, *inf.* pp 252–268.

borders, and of intrigues with the border tribes in our pay.

Much obscurity hangs over these charges; they seem to have been founded on information coming, not from our Vakeel, but from other channels, through which many loose allegations were received. There is no improbability in them, and subsequent accounts have been such as to lead us to believe that Shere Ali was at least trying what chance he had either of frightening us, or of defending himself by exciting hostility to us; but the evidence of the charges in February 1877, when they were first made, is not given. Noor Mahomed denied them, whatever his denial may be worth. At all events, though of a nature quite serious enough to justify war, it is quite clear that at least up to May 1877 the Government of India thought these proceedings either not serious in intention, or not advanced in execution, or not substantiated in point of proof, to an extent sufficient to justify anything but peaceable professions towards the Afghans. But the charges form part of the Peshawur conference, and will appear in the course of the narrative.

Sir Lewis Pelly and Noor Mahomed, with their respective staffs, met at Peshawur in the month of January 1877, and the account of their proceedings will be found in A, pp. 194–221.

On January 28 Dr. Bellew, a British officer, and an old and friendly acquaintance of Noor Mahomed, held a conversation with him, part of which is thus reported by Dr. Bellew (p. 195) :—

> I observed that I was much concerned to hear him say this, as I had always considered that the disposition of the British Government towards that of the Ameer was of a most friendly character, and that I felt sure, from all that I could see, as a private individual, that its most earnest desire was to see the Ameer's government strong and prosperous, and consolidated on a firm basis.
>
> The Envoy rejoined, with some animation :—
>
> 'This is what you say. But the promises of your Govern-

ment are of one sort and their acts of another. Now listen to me. I tell you what I know. It is twenty-two years since the Government of the Ameer made a treaty with John Lawrence Sahib, and it has not from that time to this diverged from it. At that time the Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan refused to consent to the residence of British officers in his country, because he knew the lawless character of his people, and how they had killed Englishmen in the streets of Cabul at the time of Shah Shuja's overthrow. Well, his explanation was accepted, and friendship continued, and then after a time the Ameer (Shere Ali Khan) came down and met Lord Mayo. Again the question of British officers was advanced, and on the same grounds objected to. After this you came with Pollock Sahib to Seistan. You will recollect that on one occasion he spoke in praise of Yakoob Khan, and I immediately warned him that if he desired to secure the Ameer's confidence he would never mention the name of Yakoob Khan again. Well, when I returned from Teheran I met Lord Northbrook, and discussed various matters at Simla, where the question of British officers coming to Afghanistan was again mooted. Now why all this pressing to send officers to Afghanistan, when you declare that you have no wish to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan? It has roused the suspicion of the Ameer, and his suspicion is confirmed by the arbitrary acts of your Government, and he is now convinced that to allow British officers to reside in his country will be to relinquish his own authority, and the lasting disgrace thus brought on the Afghan people will be attached to his name, and he would sooner perish than submit to this. The British nation is great and powerful, and the Afghan people cannot resist its power, but the people are self-willed and independent, and prize their honour above life. Now I will tell you what has turned the Ameer's confidence from your Government (Sarkar). In Lord Mayo's time his confidence was perfect, and he agreed to refer all overtures and correspondence received from Russians to Lord Mayo, and to send back such replies as the British Government might desire, and he did so in perfect good faith. But what came to pass in the time of Lord Northbrook? I will now tell you. Lord Northbrook wrote to the Ameer on behalf of Yakoob Khan, who was in prison at Cabul, to send him back to Herat, and said that if he were reinstated there the friendship between the Ameer's and the British Government would remain intact. Now, the

Ameer was angry and resented this interference with his home government, and, since he has not sent Yakoob Khan back to Herat, he considers the friendship between the two Governments is no longer intact. Then again after the Mission to Yarkand returned, Lord Northbrook sent a man called Ibrahim Khan with presents to the Mir of Wakhan, by way of acknowledging his attention to the British officers who visited that part of the country. But no reference was made to the Ameer, nor was his permission asked before dealing direct with one of his responsible Governors. Now when I came here, I did not send for your Arbabs to come out and meet me at the frontier. You did this yourselves, and I appreciate the honour; but if I had summoned them it would have been a breach of propriety. So was the other case. This act threw the entire Durbar into alarm for the security of their authority, and, now that it is again requested that British officers be allowed to reside in the country, the Ameer and all his people object, knowing that they will lose their own authority. Again, Grey Sahib wrote me a letter recently, referring to my acquiescence, when at Simla, to the coming of British officers to Cabul. It was as much as an order for my death. It was laid before the Durbar, and I was at once pointed out as the encourager of your Government in this design. I have said all this to you in private, but there are other things I will say in the presence of the Mir Akhor. Then, after that, I will go into all particulars *seriatim* in private with Pelly Sahib, either at his house or when out driving, or elsewhere. But matters have now come to a crisis, and the situation is a most grave one. This is the last opportunity for settlement, and God only knows the future.'

During all this long discourse, which I have put down as closely as I remember it, the Envoy spoke with a marked earnestness and gravity.

The first interview between the Envoys took place on January 30, when Sir L. Pelly laid down (p. 196) that—

> the acceptance of the principle that British officers may reside in Afghanistan is absolutely necessary as a preliminary to the commencement of negotiations. This point being granted, other details can be discussed and settled hereafter. But, unless the principle of British officers residing on the Afghan frontiers, and of informing the British Government of events passing on or beyond those frontiers, be conceded,

it is impossible for the British Government to take upon itself the formal responsibility of assisting the Ameer to defend his country from the attacks of external foes.

Syud Noor Mahomed Shah desired more than once to interrupt and defer this point to a later period of the negotiation. But Sir Lewis Pelly begged that he might repeat that the Viceroy understands from the letter of his Excellency's Agent at Cabul, and from the arrival of his Highness' Envoy at Peshawur, that the principle of the residence of British officers on the Afghan frontiers has been accepted and agreed to by the Ameer.

Sir Lewis Pelly then, and at the desire of the Cabul Envoy, reiterated the above condition, in order that it might be perfectly understood word for word, so that nothing might remain obscure. And Sir Lewis Pelly added that he desired to speak on this and all other matters with the greatest frankness and sincerity, and in the most friendly manner, so that all questions might be thoroughly understood by both sides, and leave no room for its being subsequently said by either side that such and such words were not so understood at the time.

On this particular condition however, Sir Lewis Pelly said he had no discretionary powers. His instructions from the Viceroy were categorical as to the admission of the principle that British officers should be permitted to reside permanently on the frontiers of Afghanistan, and that, until he is clearly informed that the Ameer accepts this principle, Sir Lewis Pelly could not otherwise even commence negotiations, although the settlement of the details by which the arrangement would be carried out might form a subject of full and free discussion. It was far from being the wish or intention of the Viceroy unnecessarily to embarrass the Ameer.

With respect to this *sine qud non*, which was rigidly adhered to, Noor Mahomed on February 7 held in private conversation the language reported by Dr. Bellew (*vide* p. 202):—

The Cabul Envoy here paused a short time, and then said: 'It is a very serious business, and this is the last time that the Ameer will treat with the British Government. God grant that the issue be favourable (well). But you must not impose upon us a burden which we cannot bear, and if you overload us the responsibility rests with you.' I interposed here, and asked the Cabul Envoy what the burden was which

he alluded to. He at once replied: 'The residence of British officers on the frontiers of Afghanistan.' He then went on with some warmth and excitement to enlarge upon the objections of the Afghan people to the presence of foreigners in their territories, and upon the difficulty the Ameer would experience in protecting them from insult and injury in the event of his acceding to the condition of their residence in his country. He said further that he did not see why they were wanted on the frontiers at all, and, even if there, what good they could do; for they would be utterly useless and helpless without the cordial support of the Ameer.

I remarked that it was, of course, understood that the Ameer, in accepting the condition of British officers being posted as Government Agents on his frontiers, if indeed he did accept the condition, did so with the conviction that it was for his own advantage, and was prepared to protect them and assist them as friends of himself and his Government.

The Cabul Envoy, in reply, shook his head negatively, and said: 'We mistrust you, and fear you will write all sorts of reports about us, which will some day be brought forward against us and lead to your taking the control of our affairs out of our hands.'

During five days there were conversations and debates between the two Envoys, which may be passed over with brief notice. On February 5 Sir L. Pelly gave expression to the theory that the Ameer was highly dissatisfied with his position. He said (*vide* p. 199): 'As regards the old treaty it appears that it gave no satisfaction to the Ameer, who had repeatedly requested an agreement of a more specific and detailed character.' This was denied by Noor Mahomed. He said (*vide* p. 199):—

The first proposition was that Sir Lewis Pelly desired to remove certain anxiety from the mind of the Ameer. If there should come any anxiety in the mind of the Ameer, it is owing to transgression of previous agreements; and our opinion is the same as that which from the time of the late Ameer and Lord Lawrence to the time of the Umballa Durbar, and till the arrival of the present Viceroy, has always been mentioned in our past correspondence. And we are firmly of those opinions now. Therefore, how can we con-

sent to the addition of such hard conditions, the performance of which in Afghanistan will be impossible, as we can show by many proofs?

And again (*vide* p. 200):—

What did Lord Mayo say, in reply to the Ameer, to produce an anxiety in the mind of the Ameer on his return to his own country? What was the result of that meeting, that the Viceroy should now wish to remove anxiety from the mind of the Ameer?

. . . . . .

Further, in my opinion, the Ameer returned from Umballa without anxiety.

To this Sir L. Pelly retorted that (*vide* p. 201)—

had the Ameer not still retained anxiety in his mind after the conclusion of the Umballa conference, it is improbable that he would have addressed to Lord Northbrook, through the British Agent, his letter of 1873, and have deputed Syud Noor Mahomed Shah himself to the conference which ensued on the Ameer's letter.

To which retort Noor Mahomed promised an answer.

After this Noor Mahomed commenced his main argument, which occupied three days. In the course of it he points out more than once, with reference to Sir L. Pelly's last remark, that the Simla conference originated, not with Shere Ali, but with Lord Northbrook, who then introduced the subject of Russian progress; and he says that all matters were then discussed, and that nothing, not a shred of the questions, was left unconsidered. So he says it shall be now (*vide* pp. 203–4–5).

He then narrates his master's grievances as four in number (*vide* pp. 206, 207). The first is a trifle which has quite dropped out of the controversy. The other three are—the interference about Yakoob Khan, the gifts sent to the Chief of Wakhan, and the Seistan award, all of which have have been explained above (*vide* pp. 40, 41, 52).

Nevertheless, he says (*vide* A, p. 207):—

Now, if there be cause for anxiety (*andesha*) in such matters as those referred to, there is much more in the pro-

posal which is now under discussion, for its adoption in Afghanistan is very difficult, and its result will be remorse (*pashemani*); because, referring to the former state of affairs at the time that the late Ameer and Lord Lawrence met at this very Peshawur and concluded a treaty, this very question which we are now discussing was mooted between them. Had its entertainment been possible, it would have been at that time acceded to, for the above-mentioned Lord was very well acquainted with the circumstances of Afghanistan, and its good and evil were clearly known to him. The late Ameer himself explained in detail to Lord Lawrence that the entertainment of this proposal was impossible, and that it could not be carried out at his hands. And Lord Lawrence consequently settled and decided the point, and, for the sake of maintaining the mutual friendship, omitted the proposal from the written treaty. Let this be considered, and let no proposal be brought forward between us which may abrogate that treaty and other assurances.

And he insists (*vide* p. 206) that –

till the time of the departure of Lord Northbrook, that previous course continued to be observed. From the discussions, then, that have taken place in these meetings at Peshawur, what anxiety can there be in the mind of the Ameer that you should now remove it?

And again (*vide* p. 208):—

As to the state of affairs from the time Lord Northbrook came to India till the time he left India. Although there were discussions on the subject, still he left the friendship without change, in conformity with the conduct of his predecessors, and in conformity with the preceding usage.

He then gives the reasons why English Envoys should not be admitted (*vide* p. 208):—

In the first place, the people of Afghanistan have a dread of this proposal, and it is firmly fixed in their minds, and deeply rooted in their hearts, that, if Englishmen or other Europeans once set foot in their country, it will sooner or later pass out of their hands. In no way can they be reassured on this point, and it is impossible to remove these opinions from their minds, for they adduce many proofs in support of them, the mention of which now would greatly prolong this discussion.

And he dwells on the danger of assassinations and consequent quarrels, referring to the case of Major Macdonald, and concludes the subject as follows (*vide* p. 208):—

Therefore, what would be the advantage if the Ameer should comply with such a proposal, in which there is both loss of reputation and injury to Afghanistan, as well as bitterness of feeling, besides alienation of the two Governments either now or hereafter? Under the previous arrangement, up to the present, nothing has occurred contrary to friendship in conformity with the terms of writing and documents.

And what advantage is there, that the Ameer should now knowingly make such an arrangement, the result of which would be enmity and regret to the two Governments, and alienation of the friendship between them? If he now undertake this difficult task, and it be impossible to carry it out, you will be the first to say, Why do you enter into an arrangement which it is impossible to perform? And what will all people and all nations on the face of the earth say? And further, since, with all the treaties and documents of the British Government which he has in his hand, no blame can be attached to the Ameer, any alteration now will impose a load of blame on him which will be both injurious to Afghanistan and reprehensible also. Now blame is the worst of all things in any matter. Why, therefore, should the English Government, notwithstanding the friendship which the Ameer so much expects from them, be disposed to impose such a load of blame upon so sincere a friend?

Sir L. Pelly adhered to his preliminary condition, and said (*vide* p. 210):—

But, in the most friendly manner, I beg the Envoy to understand that, if the Ameer reject all we offer and all we ask, and no basis of negotiation is left, the Viceroy, while observing the terms of the treaty of 1855,[1] will decline to

[1] The Envoy at this point interrupted, and wished Sir Lewis Pelly to alter the wording of his remarks, in view to specifying more clearly what was meant by strengthening the frontier, and in view also to showing that the Treaty of 1857 was referred to as well as that of 1855. The Cabul Envoy then with great emphasis repeatedly declared the Ameer adheres to the Treaty of 1857 as well as to that of 1855. Sir Lewis Pelly remarked that the Articles of Agreement of 1857 did not supersede, but confirmed, the Treaty of 1855. Sir Lewis Pelly declined to alter the wording of his remarks, but said that when he had concluded he would be happy to reply to the Cabul Envoy's questions on the above subject.

support the Ameer and his dynasty in any troubles, internal or external, and their unknown consequences, and will continue to strengthen the frontier of British India without further reference to the Ameer, in order to provide against probable contingencies.

. . . . . .

Sir Lewis Pelly here concluded his remarks. On this, the Cabul Envoy observed that he did not understand what was meant by strengthening the frontier of India without further reference to the Ameer.

Sir Lewis Pelly said, in reply: 'The Viceroy will take such measures as he may deem wise and lawful for strengthening the frontier of British India and providing for the safety and repose of that empire; and this without communication with the Ameer.'

The Cabul Envoy on this asked: 'In regard to the strengthening of the frontier of British India, without reference to the Ameer, which you have alluded to, I would ask, Does this mean, within the territories of the Ameer of Afghanistan, or otherwise?'

'I have already stated,' Sir Lewis Pelly replied, 'that the object of the present conference is not to interfere with Afghanistan.'

This is a very remarkable utterance, as being the first indication of an intention on our side to take territory. It occurred on February 15, 1877. In the correspondence between the British and Russian Governments (*vide* C., p. 112) the Russians were informed on June 13, 1877, that certain movements of theirs would impose on Her Majesty's Government the necessity of 'making a corresponding advance.' It would seem, therefore, that during the first half of 1877 our Government came to the conclusion that, in order to gain some advantage over the Russians, it was lawful and expedient to take the possessions of somebody else.

On February 19 there was some further argument delivered by Noor Mahomed. He insisted that Lord Northbrook had entirely assured Shere Ali about any fear of the Russians (*vide* p. 211). He again and again claimed to adhere to existing treaties, assurances, and arrangements, and expressed his confidence that

the British Government would continue constant and stick to that basis (*vide* p. 213).

When he had concluded Sir L. Pelly said that as the *sine quâ non* was declined, the conference could not proceed; but it was agreed that the matter should be referred to the Viceroy and await his further instructions.

On February 27 Sir L. Pelly wrote to Noor Mahomed, accusing the Ameer of the jehad and hostile acts before mentioned, which Noor Mahomed met by a denial (*vide* F A, pp. 11, 12). It is remarkable that the Russians also had heard about a jehad, and concluded that it was directed against themselves. Whatever Shere Ali attempted in this direction, it is clear that he totally failed; and if his attempt were serious, his failure shows how little we had to fear from such a quarter.

When the Viceroy's answer returned it was put by Sir L. Pelly into the form of a letter from himself to Noor Mahomed, and transmitted under date March 15 (*vide* A., pp. 214-20). By that time Noor Mahomed had become dangerously ill. He seems never to have attended to business again, and he died on March 26. The letter is long, and contains a statement of the whole case as it appeared to the Viceroy at that time. He seems to refer the origin of the whole negotiations to the desire of the British Government to meet what they supposed to be the Ameer's wishes. He alleges (*vide* p. 215) that the Ameer is dissatisfied with his relations to the British Government; and after pointing out that no demand had been made for an English Resident at the city of Cabul, and complaining that the question whether the Ameer would accept British Residents had been evaded and not answered, he says:—

> The Viceroy has however intimated to the Ameer his willingness to discuss with his Highness the terms of a definite treaty of alliance, involving the appointment of competent officers in other parts of Afghanistan, to aid both his Highness and the British Government in watching the progress of events which the Ameer has repeatedly represented as sources

of alarm to him; and the reason is, that many previous utterances, on the part both of the present Ameer and of his Highness's father, had induced the British Government to believe that the advantages of such an arrangement would be cordially welcomed and gratefully appreciated by his Highness. If, as your Excellency's language tends to imply, this belief was entirely erroneous, there is an immediate end of the matter; for the British Government has not the slightest desire to urge upon an unwilling neighbour an arrangement so extremely onerous to itself.

The Envoy was challenged to give an immediate and plain answer to the plain question whether the Ameer desires the alliance of the British Government, and whether he refuses to receive British officers in any part of Afghanistan.

Then follow the arguments to show that the Treaty of 1857 does not exist, which has, in p. 3 of this work, been shown to be an error, and a list of accusations (*vide* p. 217) intended to show that the Ameer had broken the Treaty of 1855:—

The Ameer has refused permission to the Envoy of the British Government, bound on a peaceful mission to another neighbouring State, to pass through his territory; and the determination of his Highness to withhold from the British Government all such natural good offices has been conveyed to it in terms scarcely consistent with courtesy, and certainly not consistent with friendship. Colonel Macdonald, a British subject, was barbarously murdered on the borders of the Ameer's territory by a person subject to the authority of the Ameer, and for whose punishment his Highness was therefore responsible. But instead of cordially and efficiently co-operating to avenge this crime, the Ameer has allowed the murderer to remain at large. The Viceroy forbears to dwell upon the Ameer's discourtesy in leaving wholly unanswered the proposal made to his Highness by the late Viceroy for the demarcation of his boundaries, in refusing to receive a complimentary Mission from the present Viceroy, and in taking no notice whatever of the very friendly invitation to Delhi which was subsequently addressed to his Highness. More serious grounds of complaint exist in the fact that the closing of the Khyber Pass for the last two years appears to

be mainly attributable to the unfriendly influence of the Ameer; that his Highness has openly received at Cabul in an authoritative manner, and subsidised, the heads of frontier tribes who are in the pay and under the control of the British Government; that he has, for some time past, been speaking and acting in such a manner as to indicate hostile designs upon territories beyond his own, and in the neighbourhood of the British frontier; and that, even since the commencement of the present negotiations, he has been openly and actively endeavouring to excite against the British Government the religious animosities of his own subjects and of the neighbouring tribes by misrepresenting the policy, and maligning the character of the British Government.

Some of these charges are without any just foundation, such as that which relates to Sir D. Forsyth and Major Macdonald, whose cases have been mentioned before (*sup.*, p. 52). Others are mere acts of incivility. How the more serious ones would have been met if the letter had come to Noor Mahomed's hands in time we cannot tell. Whatever justification they might afford for war, the British Government did not intend at this moment to make war on Afghanistan. The letter concludes thus (*vide* p. 220):—

It would appear, however, from the whole tone of your Excellency's language, and from the statement so carefully made by your Excellency of the Ameer's present views and sentiments, and submitted by me at your Excellency's request to the Viceroy, that his Highness now no longer desires the British alliance and protection. The British Government does not press its alliance and protection upon those who neither seek nor appreciate them. This being the case, it only remains for the Viceroy to withdraw at once the offers made to the Ameer in the month of October last; and, in so doing, to express his deep regret that these offers, and the spirit in which they were made, should have been so completely misunderstood and so publicly misrepresented by his Highness. Such unwarrantable misrepresentations of our recent policy however render it necessary to guard against similar misrepresentation of our present position. I am therefore to explain distinctly to your Excellency, and to place on record, in language not susceptible of misconstruction, that, in withdrawing from the Ameer those offers of material assistance in

reply to which his Highness has instructed you to inform me that he neither requires nor is disposed to accept them, the British Government harbours no hostile designs against Afghanistan.

The British Government has no sort or kind of quarrel with the people of Afghanistan. It sincerely desires their permanent independence, prosperity, and peace. It has no conceivable object, and certainly no desire, to interfere in their domestic affairs. It will unreservedly respect their independence, and should they at any time be united in a national appeal to its assistance it will doubtless be disposed, and prepared, to aid them in defending that independence from aggression. Meanwhile, the Afghan people may rest fully assured that so long as they are not excited by their Ruler, or others, to acts of aggression upon the territories or friends of the British Government, no British soldier will ever be permitted to enter Afghanistan uninvited.

But the British Government repudiates all liabilities on behalf of the Ameer and his dynasty. The British Government does not indeed withdraw from any obligations previously contracted by it; but it absolutely and emphatically denies that it has ever incurred any such obligations as those imputed to it by your Excellency; and it further affirms that it will never, in any circumstances, undertake such obligations without adequate guarantees for the satisfactory conduct of the Ameer.

At the same time the British Government will scrupulously continue, as hitherto, to respect the Ameer's independence and authority throughout those territories which, up to the present moment, it has recognised as being in the lawful possession of the Ameer, and will duly abstain from interference so long as the Ameer, on his part, no less scrupulously abstains from every kind of interference with tribes or territories not his own.

The Ameer therefore, so long as he remains faithful to those treaty stipulations which your Excellency has invoked on behalf of his Highness, and which the British Government fully recognises as still valid, and therefore binding upon the two contracting parties, need be under no apprehension whatever of any hostile action on the part of the British Government.

We have seen that for all practical purposes the conference was closed on February 19, when Sir L. Pelly

declared that, as Noor Mahomed had rejected the *sine quâ non*, matters could go no further. It was formally closed on March 30, 1878, when the Viceroy telegraphed to Sir L. Pelly as follows (*vide* p. 222):—

Close conference immediately, on ground that basis on which we agreed to negotiate has not been acknowledged by Ameer; that, Mir Akhor not being authorised to negotiate on that basis, nor you on any other, conference is terminated *ipso facto*; and that you will leave Peshawur on a stated day. The date of it you will fix yourself, but it should be as early as conveniently possible, in order to show we are in earnest and avoid further entanglement.

The motive for this step is stated in the next quoted despatch. It shows a complete change of policy between March 15, when the Viceroy was still pressing Shere Ali to receive English Residents, and was depicting the disastrous consequences of a refusal, and March 30, when he no longer wished to have his demand complied with.

So ended the Peshawur conference.

Up to this time, if there was any cause for war—as probably there was not—nothing was brought forward as such. It is true that the British Government had assumed at its own will to set aside a treaty, to repudiate obligations, to demand fresh advantages, under the threat of exchanging friendship for hostility, and of following its own interests without reference to the interests or the rights of the Ameer. But still professions of peace and justice were on its lips. On March 15 the Afghans were assured that if they were not themselves excited to aggression, 'no British soldier will ever be permitted to enter Afghanistan uninvited.' And the Ameer was assured that so long as he abstained from interference with tribes and territories not his own, 'the British Government will scrupulously continue as hitherto to respect the Ameer's independence and authority' throughout the territories of which his possession has been recognised as lawful. How have those assurances been observed?

CHAPTER IX.

OFFICIAL VERSION OF THE PESHAWUR CONFERENCE.

On May 10, 1877, the Government of India sent home the report of their proceedings during the last fourteen months. It is long, but we must give it in full :—

No. 36. No. 13 of 1877.

Government of India.—Foreign Department.

Secret.

To the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury, P.C., Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India.

Simla: May 10, 1877.

My Lord Marquis,—We have already notified to your Lordship by telegraph the close of the recent conference at Peshawur between the Envoys of the British and Afghan Governments; and we now take the earliest opportunity in our power of submitting a full report of our proceedings in connection therewith. Those proceedings have been governed by the general principles laid down for our guidance in your Lordship's despatches of January 23 and November 19, 1875, and your further separate instructions of February 28, 1876. We were informed by the above-mentioned communications that, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, the time had arrived when it was desirable to place our relations with Afghanistan on a more definite and satisfactory footing; and that for the attainment of this object the first favourable opportunity should be taken to open amicable negotiations with the Ameer of Cabul.

2. For the complete explanation of the steps taken by us in accordance with the views thus held by Her Majesty's Government, we must preface our report of them by a brief

recapitulation of our past relations with that Prince, so far as they affect the questions dealt with in this letter.

3. The only formal obligation still extant between the British Government and the Barackzai Rulers of Afghanistan is the Treaty of March 30, 1855. This treaty comprises three short articles. The first article established perpetual peace and friendship between the British Government and Dost Mahomed Khan and his heirs; the second pledged the British Government to respect the territories then in his Highness' possession, and never to interfere therein; the third pledged the Dost, his heirs and successors, similarly to respect the territories of the British Government, and to be the friend of its friends and enemy of its enemies, without any such corresponding obligation on our part. It did not take long to prove the somewhat imperfect character of the treaty thus contracted. Two years afterwards, on the first occurrence of a crisis affecting British interests in Afghanistan, a much more complete engagement stipulating for British Agencies in Cabul, Candahar, and Balkh, and granting aid to the Ameer in money and arms, was entered into by Sir John Lawrence and Dost Mahomed. That engagement, though limited to the duration of the war then being waged between the British Government and the Shah of Persia, was declared by Lord Canning to be sound in principle, liberal, and simple; tending to 'redress the somewhat one-sided character of the Treaty of 1855, in which we appeared to take more than we gave;' and his Excellency expressed an earnest hope that, independently of the war in which we were then engaged, the relations of the British Power with Afghanistan might remain upon a permanent footing, similar to that upon which the above-mentioned engagement had placed them.

4. Dost Mahomed Khan was informed during the course of the negotiations of 1857, that the British Government's support and assistance of him would be conditional on its officers being received in Afghanistan with the countenance and protection of his Highness. They were not however to exercise authority or command on Afghan territory; their duty (in the performance of which the Ameer was expected to afford them every facility) being simply to give advice when required, and to obtain all the information needed by our Government. The readiness with which the Ameer and his Sirdars perceived the propriety of this condition was, it is said, remarkable; and the measure, although not unattended

by risk, met with reasonable success. This at any rate may be assumed from a careful review of past records, and from the views entertained by the experienced Head of the Mission then stationed at Candahar in favour of a renewal, at the present moment, of the policy then adopted.

5. It must however be observed that, although the residence of a British Mission at Cabul formed part of the stipulations agreed to in 1857, this step was not enforced by the British Government. The Dost urged that the Afghan people would view it with dislike; but Sir John Lawrence deemed it more probable that the real motive of this representation was the disinclination of his Highness to let British officers discover the weakness of his rule, or come in contact with disaffected Chiefs at his capital. Provision was thereupon made in the treaty that, whenever the subsidy should cease, and the British officers have been withdrawn from the Ameer's country, a Vakeel, not an European officer, should remain at Cabul on the part of the British Government, and one at Peshawur on the part of the Government of Cabul. The stipulation thus agreed upon has, so far as the British Government is concerned, been tacitly observed, for convenience sake, from that day to this; but it is worthy of remark that the Government of Cabul withdrew its Vakeel from Peshawur in 1858, and has never replaced him by another. With the exception of this last-mentioned provision, the obligations of the Treaty of 1857 were contracted for a special and limited purpose which has long since lapsed with the lapse of time; it fixed the relations of the British Government with the Ruler of Cabul and their reciprocal obligations for the duration of the war with Persia; and our only object in referring to it now is to bring to recollection the good feeling of the Afghan Ruler and people, some twenty years ago, in regard to the stationing of British Missions in their territory, elsewhere than at Cabul.

6. No further change occurred for some years in the relations between the two Governments. They remained in a condition of friendly reserve. After the death of Dost Mahomed in 1863, Afghanistan became involved in civil war, which lasted four years; it did not necessitate, in the opinion of Lord Lawrence's Government, any active interference on our part. The present Ameer, alone and unaided, after varying fortunes and many severe reverses, regained the throne bequeathed to him by his father, the Dost. But no sooner was he firmly established thereon than he expressed a great desire,—not

without some feeling of resentment for the neutral attitude which had been observed towards him in his hour of need,—to bring himself into friendly relations with the British Government. Lord Lawrence responded to his wishes; he presented his Highness in 1868 with a free gift of money and arms, and would have effected a friendly meeting with him at Peshawur, had not the expiry of his tenure of office obliged his Excellency to return to England.

7. That meeting was however carried out at Umballa, in March 1869, by Lord Lawrence's successor in a manner which laid the foundation of closer relations between the two neighbouring Powers, and enabled Shere Ali to consolidate his authority on his return to Cabul. The Ameer, in his conferences with the Viceroy, bitterly complained of the one-sided character of the existing treaty relations—those of 1855—between the two Governments, and earnestly solicited an amendment of them. Lord Mayo however was precluded, not only by the orders of Her Majesty's Government, but by his own convictions, from acceding to the wishes of his Highness. The policy of the Viceroy was, in his own words, an 'intermediate' one, susceptible of development in proportion to the subsequent consolidation of the Ameer's authority, and the continued good conduct of his Highness in his dealings with the British Government. In order however to meet in some measure the wishes of the Ameer, and to give him a tangible proof of the friendship of the British Government, Lord Mayo added a large gift of arms to that of the money already presented to his Highness; he moreover handed the Ameer a written assurance that the British Government would assist his Highness in strengthening his Government as circumstances might require, and would view with severe displeasure any attempt on the part of his Highness' rivals to disturb his position as Ruler of Cabul. This document was in no way intended to have the force of a treaty; it was given to the Ameer in compliance with the earnest representations of his Highness that, without such an assurance, he would be unable to return to Cabul; and it is needless to observe that it did not commit the British Government to any unconditional protection of the Ameer, or to any liabilities which were not dependent on his future conduct towards us.

8. We may here mention that there are undoubted grounds for the conviction expressed to your Lordship in our despatch, No. 19, of June 7, 1875—a conviction since strengthened by

reference to persons in Lord Mayo's confidence, who conversed frequently at Umballa with Shere Ali and his confidential Minister—that a readiness was then manifested on behalf of his Highness to agree to the presence of British Agents at any places in Afghanistan, excepting Cabul itself, on condition of more substantial assistance and open support than the British Government was willing to afford him in 1869.

9. Owing to the strong personal influence established by Lord Mayo over Shere Ali, our relations with Cabul, though still somewhat distant and indefinite, remained for a few years upon a satisfactory and friendly footing. During this period the British Government completed, on behalf of the Ameer, successful negotiations with the Government of the Czar for the definition, in a manner most favourable to his Highness, of the exact limits of the northern boundaries of Afghanistan, within which the Russian Government engaged to refrain from all interference.

10. The result of those negotiations, which had extended over more than three years, was communicated to Shere Ali early in 1873, when Lord Northbrook's Government, in its review of our position towards Cabul up to that period, expressed the opinion that—

'Although we have abstained from entering into any treaty engagement to support the Ameer by British troops in the event of Afghanistan being attacked from without, yet the complete independence of Afghanistan is so important to the interests of British India that the Government of India could not look upon an attack upon Afghanistan with indifference, So long as the Ameer continues, as he has hitherto done, to act in accordance with our advice in his relations with his neighbours, he would naturally look for material assistance from us; and circumstances might occur under which we should consider it incumbent upon us to recommend Her Majesty's Government to render him such assistance.'

11. The Ameer, apparently actuated at this period by a deep-rooted fear of the Russians, professed himself at a loss to understand the great delay and difficulty which had arisen in the deliberations between the British and Russian Governments; he informed the British Agent that it was 'impossible for the Russians to remain always firm in their negotiations;' and that his anxiety would never 'be removed unless the British Government adorns the Afghan Government with great assistance in money and ammunition of war for the troops, and

unless great aid is given for the construction of strong forts through the northern Afghan border. If an emergency arises,' he said, 'for the Afghan Government to oppose the Russians, such opposition cannot take place without the co-operation of the disciplined troops of the British Government. It is plainly obligatory on the British Government to show their cordiality in this matter before anything happens.'

12. With these thoughts in his mind, his Highness deputed Syud Noor Mahomed Shah in the summer of 1873 to wait upon Lord Northbrook, and submit this and other matters to the consideration of the Viceroy. The Envoy's object appeared to be the establishment of an assumption on the part of the Ameer that both Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo had given his Highness unconditional promises of aid in money and arms—an assumption which Lord Northbrook at once refuted, reminding the Envoy that the British Government alone was to be the judge of the propriety of any request for assistance preferred by his master. The Viceroy, finding that the Envoy was instructed by Shere Ali to apply to the British Government for assistance, both present and prospective—the former for the purpose of strengthening the Government of Afghanistan, the latter with the view of meeting the contingency of actual aggression by a foreign Power—and learning moreover that he was not satisfied with general assurances, telegraphed to Her Majesty's Government for further instructions. On receipt of these he informed Syud Noor Mahomed that it would be the duty of the Ameer, in case of actual or threatened aggression, to refer the question to the British Government, which would endeavour, by negotiation and by every means in its power, to settle the matter and avert hostilities; but that, should these endeavours prove fruitless, the British Government was prepared to assure the Ameer that it would afford him assistance in the shape of money and arms, and, in case of necessity, aid him with troops. Lord Northbrook however deemed it advisable to avoid giving Syud Noor Mahomed any more definite pledge than this, or to comply with the request preferred by him for a distinct statement by the British Government that, in the event of any aggression on the Ameer's territories, it would consider the aggressor as an enemy to itself.

13. During the presence at Simla of the Afghan Envoy the subject of the location of British Agents in Afghanistan became, as in 1869, a topic of discussion. Our Foreign Secre-

tary suggested the deputation of a British officer, of high standing and in the full confidence of the British Government, to the Court of the Ameer, as the best preventive of the danger apprehended by his Highness: this officer could advise Shere Ali as to the circumstances of each case, and the action which in cases of emergency it might be necessary to take until the Government of India could be communicated with; whilst such a measure need not be followed by the location of Russian Agents in Afghanistan, which would be incompatible with the pledges given by Prince Gortschakoff to Her Majesty's Government. The object of the location of British Agents in Afghanistan would, Mr. Aitchison said, be primarily to obtain accurate information on all matters affecting the external relations of Afghanistan, whilst in no way exercising interference in its internal affairs. The Envoy expressed his general concurrence in the principle of some such arrangement, but declined to recommend to the Ameer any specific proposal for giving effect to it, on the ground that it might occasion mistrust and misapprehension. He suggested, as an alternative, the deputation of a British officer to inspect the western and northern boundaries of Afghanistan, who could enter by Candahar and return by Cabul, and be again deputed to the capital, if necessary, at a later period. Such a course would, he said, familiarise the Ameer and the people of Afghanistan with the idea of receiving a permanent British representative, and eventually effect the desired object.

14. A Memorandum embodying the Envoy's alternative proposal was consequently communicated to the Ameer by the Government of India. The proposed arrangement was in this Memorandum strongly urged as highly desirable, on account of 'the responsibilities that have been undertaken by Her Majesty's Government on behalf of Afghanistan,' and 'the imperfect information which they possess regarding the border in respect to which these responsibilities have been incurred.' The Government of India, when reporting its proceedings in the matter, expressed to your Lordship's predecessor the following opinions:—

'Though we think that the presence of accredited British officers at Cabul, Herat, and possibly also Candahar, would for many reasons be desirable, we are fully alive to the difficulties in the way of such a measure until the objects and policy of the British Government are more clearly understood and appreciated in Afghanistan. It is with the view of re-

moving some of these difficulties that we have proposed the deputation of an officer to examine the boundaries. Independently of the valuable information, both geographical and political, that might be collected, a judicious officer would have it in his power to do much towards allaying any feelings of mistrust that may still linger in the minds of some classes of the people in Afghanistan, and towards preparing the way for the eventual location of permanent British representatives in that country, if such a measure should at any time be considered desirable or necessary.'

15. The Envoy left Simla without having obtained the avowed object of his mission. On bidding farewell to those members and officers of the Government of India with whom he had been associated during the course of it, the Syud was profuse in his expressions of personal gratitude for the hospitality of his entertainment, and the courtesy with which he had been treated. But no sooner had he returned to Cabul than it became apparent that his feelings towards the British Government were most unfriendly; and from that time forward his influence in the Cabul Durbar, which we believe to have been considerable, was exerted on every occasion to the prejudice of our relations with the Ameer.

16. At the conclusion of the Simla conference the Viceroy presented the Ameer with 100,000*l.* and 20,000 rifles. But, notwithstanding his Excellency's gifts and assurances, the attitude of the Ameer became increasingly frigid, sullen, and discourteous. His Highness evinced deep disappointment at the result of his Envoy's interviews with the Viceroy. To all appearance, whilst mistrusting our repeated assurances that he had nothing to fear from the rapid and unchecked advance of Russia towards his Asiatic frontier, he had nevertheless persuaded himself that, in any emergency, the British Government would be compelled by its own interests to afford him unconditional assistance. Under this impression he seemed to believe that in the meanwhile he might with impunity disregard its advice, and reject its offers of conditional protection.

17. The fallacy of these views lay in their erroneous estimate of the political necessities of this Government, which are as adverse to the wholly uncontrolled personal action of any Afghan Ruler as they are favourable to the territorial independence of Afghanistan. It may however be admitted that the Ameer was at this time led, not altogether without

cause, to hope and seek from the British Government evidence, more conclusive than he had yet received, of its professed regard for his interests. The arms and money denied to his Highness at a time when they might perhaps have saved his country and himself from prolonged civil war, were subsequently given to him when his need of them was infinitely less, and his cause for gratitude proportionally small. But the particular form of support which, as the established legitimate Ruler of Afghanistan, he then most needed was again refused him, at the time when, if given, it would have been best appreciated. On the part of the British Government he had seen nothing but extreme caution in committing itself to his support, whilst it lost no opportunity of assuring his Highness of its friendship with Russia and its reliance on her promises. On the part of Russia he saw nothing but a system of aggression on territories neighbouring his border, and a series of pledges unfulfilled. He had been officially informed in 1869 by Lord Mayo that the Government of the Czar would not interfere in Afghanistan, and would recognise as his all the territories then in his possession; and yet he was shortly afterwards beset with communications from General Kaufmann which seemed to him inconsistent with this assurance; nor was it till nearly three years afterwards that Russia finally withdrew her strong opposition to the recognition of his authority over a most important portion of his territories. Again the promised restoration of Samarcand by Russia to the Ameer of Bokhara had been formally announced to him by us, and yet evaded; whilst he found the pledge of the Russian Government not to annex Khiva virtually disregarded, and the Russian forces firmly established on the Oxus close to his own frontier.

18 In such circumstances it is perhaps hardly to be wondered at that the assurances given to his Highness by Lord Northbrook in 1873 failed to satisfy the Ameer, or to restore that confidence and good feeling, which for some time previously had been upon the wane. His reply to Lord Northbrook's letter, submitted to him through his Envoy, was ungracious and evasive. He accorded no further notice to the Viceroy's proposals for sending an officer to inspect his boundaries than the curt statement that he had read and understood them; he hesitated for some time to receive the arms that were sent for his acceptance; and the subsidy of ten lakhs of rupees, lodged to his credit at the Kohat

Treasury, he contemptuously rejected. Moreover, in terms positively offensive, he refused to permit any English officer to enter his territories; and peremptorily prohibited Sir D. Forsyth from passing through Cabul on the return of that officer, in the capacity of British Envoy, from Kashgar to India. In his recent interesting narrative of the journey of Syud Yakoob Khan to Russia, Captain Molloy reports, and comments on, the prejudicial effect of this unfriendly act upon our position in Kashgar and our prestige throughout Central Asia. Of such conduct, on the part of the Ameer, the reports received from our Native Agent at Cabul afforded no intelligible explanation. Of the actual condition of affairs in Afghanistan, of the projects and proceedings of its Ruler, the strength of his military force, the sentiments of his advisers, and the circumstances of his subjects, the Government of India was then without any trustworthy information, or any means of obtaining it. The evidences of a strong irritation in the mind of the Ameer against the British Government were obvious enough; but the true causes of this irritation our Native Agent seemed unable to remove, or even to indicate. It was also sufficiently apparent that, whilst the British Vakeel exercised no influence over the Ameer, the Ameer was exercising considerable influence over the British Vakeel; the tenor of whose correspondence with the Commissioner at Peshawur suggested an impression (which subsequent information proves to have been accurate) that his letters, if not always submitted to the Ameer for approval, were generally written in the sense believed by the writer of them to be in complete accordance with the wishes of his Highness; and that they never contained any intelligence, or the expression of any personal opinion, which could expose him to the Ameer's resentment, if those letters were to fall into the hands of the Cabul Durbar.

19. Such was the condition of our relations with Afghanistan when we received your Lordship's despatch,[1] conveying to us the instructions of Her Majesty's Government to take an early opportunity for improving them, if possible, by endeavouring to secure the Ameer's assent to the establishment of a British Agency at Herat. We informed your Lordship that, whilst fully appreciating all the advantages to be anticipated from such an arrangement, we could not disguise from ourselves the practical difficulties of carrying it out;

[1] No. 3, January 23, 1875.

and that, for any immediate attempt to overcome them, the time and circumstances appeared to us inopportune. In fact, the late Viceroy was of opinion that precautionary measures in regard to Afghanistan might be advantageously deferred till the Russian frontier had been pushed on to Merv. It would then, in the opinion of his Excellency, be necessary to give more specific assurances to the Ruler of Afghanistan, and be probably desirable to enter into a treaty engagement with him, followed by the natural consequence of the establishment of British Agencies upon his frontier.

20. Your Lordship informed us in reply[1] that it was impossible for Her Majesty's Government to concur in this opinion. If the Russians advanced their frontier to Merv the time would probably have passed when representations to the Ameer could be made with any useful result. The Ameer's reported and very probable disinclination to the establishment of a British Agency in his country might possibly be overcome, if his Highness could be convinced of the inability of the British Government to secure the integrity of his dominions without this precautionary condition. At any rate, the attempt was, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, well worth making without further delay, since such delay was unjustified by any prospect of spontaneous change for the better in the ascertained tendency of Central Asian affairs, or any initiative on the part of the Ameer for the improvement of his relations with the British Government. Your Lordship therefore renewed the injunction previously made on the subject of a special mission to Cabul for the above-mentioned purpose.

21. On the receipt of the despatch conveying to us this expression of the views of Her Majesty's Government we asked[2] your Lordship for further instructions, pointing out that any overtures to Shere Ali, of the kind commended to our adoption, would probably provoke from his Highness counter demands which could not be satisfied without the previous sanction of Her Majesty's Government. All the recent conduct and language of this Prince had pointed to the conclusion that he cared little or nothing for such eventual protection of his country as our own political necessities might oblige us in any case to afford it against foreign aggression; and that what he really did care to obtain from us was

[1] No. 34, November 19, 1875.
[2] No. 10, January 28, 1876.

some unconditional pledge of personal and dynastic support to himself and family. On this point we desired to learn the views of Her Majesty's Government before proceeding further. Those views[1] were received by us at the hands of the present Viceroy, and immediately commanded our careful consideration. In the main they removed the chief ground of our objection to any step which might have the effect of bringing to a crisis the relations of this Government with the present Ruler of Afghanistan, by informing us that Her Majesty's Government were prepared to enter into a more definite, equilateral, and practical alliance with his Highness. Our consideration of your Lordship's above-mentioned instructions was also influenced to some extent by the information which the present Viceroy was enabled to place before us, after personal conference, not only with Her Majesty's Government, but also with the Russian Ambassador in England, on the general circumstances of the situation we were now called upon to deal with. Whilst still alive to the difficulties and risks inseparable from any attempt to enter into closer and more responsible intercourse with a barbarous neighbour, so suspicious, discontented, and untrustworthy as Shere Ali, we certainly could not regard with unconcern the increasing inconvenience and possible peril of the extremely ambiguous and uncertain character of our existing relations with him. It was impossible to deny that the practical results of the Afghan policy, patiently pursued by us for several years, were far from satisfactory.

22. In 1869 overtures for closer relations between the two Governments and freer intercourse between their respective subjects had been initiated by Shere Ali. In 1876 there was every reason to anticipate that similar overtures, if initiated by us, would be rejected by his Highness. The Ameer left Umballa apparently much impressed by the power, and most solicitous of the friendship, of the British Government. Since then his respect for the one and his desire for the other had, to all appearance, been steadily decreasing. In the meanwhile his Highness had received from the British Government 12 guns, 21,400 rifles, 11,000 muskets, 1,200 carbines, 1,000 pistols, and a quarter of a million sterling of money. It was certainly not in our power to point to any reciprocal benefits which, during the same period, the British Government had received from the Ameer. The turbulent

[1] No. 3A, February 28, 1876.

tribes which occupy the mountain passes between Cabul and Peshawur constitute a social barrier between Afghanistan and India, which the Ameer would doubtless endeavour to strengthen if he mistrusted our friendship. On the other hand, if he were sincerely desirous of improved intercourse between the two countries, and more practical relations with the Government on whose military support the protection of his Asiatic frontier has been assumed to be dependent, then he would naturally do all in his power to assist us in removing such a barrier by bringing these turbulent tribes under orderly control, and keeping open the passes which it is in their power (if uncontrolled) to close between Cabul and Peshawur. This indeed his Highness engaged to do when he took leave of the Viceroy at Umballa; and for a short while after his return to Cabul he adhered to his engagement. But for the last three years he has withdrawn the allowances previously given by him, in conformity with that engagement, to the Afreedis for keeping open the Khyber Pass, which has consequently remained practically closed against us. In the meanwhile the negotiations which had taken place between the Cabinets of St. James and St. Petersburg had placed us in the apparent position of the avowed protectors and controllers of the Ameer of Cabul. Prince Gortschakoff had not been slow to fix upon us all the responsibilities of such a position. Were Shere Ali, by his dealings with the Tekki Turkomans, to provoke the hostility of the Russian Power in Central Asia, it is the British Government which the Government of Russia would endeavour to hold responsible for the conduct of the Ameer; and in fact complaints on the supposed intentions, or rumoured action, of Shere Ali have already on more than one occasion been addressed in this sense by the Russian to the British Government. Yet the imperfect character of our relations with his Highness virtually rendered us unable to control his action, or even to obtain timely knowledge of his intentions. At the same time, were the Ameer's conduct such as to subject Afghanistan to a sudden attack from the Russian forces, the interests of our own Empire, complicated by the assurances we had repeatedly given to his Highness, would probably compel us to resist the attack *vi et armis*. In short, the policy hitherto pursued by the Government of India, in its relations with the Ruler of Cabul, had bequeathed to it certain imputed liabilities towards Russia on the one hand, and

Afghanistan on the other, which the practical results of that policy did not enable it to fulfil except under conditions heavily disadvantageous to its own interests. For all these reasons we considered that, although the prospect of any attempt to improve our relations with the present Ameer of Cabul was extremely unpromising, still the necessity of bringing those relations to a definite issue, and promptly defining the position in which they could safely be left by us, was no longer open to reasonable question.

23. We, therefore, lost no time in acting on the last instructions of Her Majesty's Government. The Viceroy was of opinion that the opportunity and pretext hitherto wanting for the despatch of a complimentary special mission to Cabul were furnished by his Excellency's recent accession to office, and the addition which the Queen had been pleased to make to her sovereign titles with special regard to India. Concurring in that opinion, we made immediate preparations for announcing these events to Shere Ali by a special Envoy, secretly authorised to use his best endeavours to bring about a favourable opening for the renewal of the discussions commenced in 1869 with the Ameer, and continued in 1873 with the Minister of his Highness, on matters of common interest to the two Governments. But in order to ensure, if possible, the friendly reception of it, we decided to depute, in the first instance, a trusted native officer charged to deliver to the Ameer a letter from the Commissioner at Peshawur, announcing to his Highness the ostensible objects of the proposed Mission. With this letter Ressaldar-Major Khanan Khan reached Cabul on the 17th of May, 1876. His arrival there was announced to us by our Cabul Agent in a letter stating that the Ameer would 'decline the interview, as on former occasions.' This information was shortly afterwards confirmed by a communication from the Ameer himself, declining the proposed Mission, on the ground that he desired no change in his relations with the British Government, which appeared to have been defined by that Government to its own satisfaction at the Simla conference. If the British Government had now anything new to say about them, he would prefer to send his own Agent to the Viceroy, in order that the subjects of discussion, 'weighed by a minute and exact investigation, might be committed to writing.' An explanatory letter, simultaneously received from the British Vakeel at Cabul, stated that the additional reasons professed to him by the Ameer for

declining the proposed Mission were—first, that he could not guarantee the personal safety of 'the Sahibs;' and, secondly, that if he admitted a British Mission, he could not refuse to receive a Russian one for the similar purpose of better defining his relations with the Russian Government.

24. After full consideration of these communications we came to the following conclusions:—First, that the result of the Simla conference having been eminently unsatisfactory to ourselves, and apparently no less unsatisfactory to the Ameer, it was not desirable to renew that experiment; secondly, that the Ameer's objection to a British Mission, on the ground that it would oblige him to receive a Russian one, involved a conscious and significant disregard of the understanding arrived at on his behalf between the British and Russian Governments, and communicated by us to his Highness; thirdly, that in the Ameer's interests, as well as our own, it was undesirable to regard as absolutely final an answer which appeared to have been written without due deliberation, and might possibly have been inspired by a very erroneous estimate of the position in which his Highness would find himself placed if we at once proceeded to act upon it. We therefore exhorted his Highness once more to consider seriously, before he rejected our proposals, the consequences to himself of obliging the British Government to look upon him henceforth as a Prince who had voluntarily isolated his personal interests from its proffered alliance and support. We felt that the studied ambiguity of his response to our preceding communication made it more than ever incumbent on us to ascertain promptly the precise nature of his real disposition towards us, and the extent to which we might rely in case of need upon his recognition of the favours he had received from us, up to this time without any corresponding obligations on his part. The terms of our answer to his letter were governed by these considerations. But in order not to leave untried every legitimate means of convincing his Highness that our promises, as well as our warnings, were sincere, we authorised Dr. Bellew, and other personal friends of theirs in the service of our Government, to address at the same time to the Ameer and his Ministers letters, unofficially explaining our sentiments and the importance of the opportunity then offered to the Afghan Government for materially strengthening its position at home and abroad.

25. The Ameer replied to our above-mentioned communi-

cations after a significant delay of two months. In the meanwhile, we had received from our Vakeel at Cabul reports of the reception by his Highness of frequent confidential emissaries from General Kaufmann. Of what had passed between the Ameer and these Russian Agents our knowledge was entirely confined to the contents of a letter delivered by one of them to his Highness from the Russian Governor. A copy of that document, communicated by the Cabul Durbar to the Government of India, and forwarded by us to your Lordship, has already been the subject of a correspondence between the Government of Her Majesty and that of the Czar. The answer finally received from the Ameer submitted to us two alternative proposals—first, that an Afghan Envoy should be deputed to meet one from the Viceroy at Peshawur; and, second, that the British Vakeel at Cabul should proceed to Simla charged with a confidential explanation to the Viceroy of the personal views and sentiments of the Ameer on the subject of his relations with the British Government. As regards the first of these proposals, we were of opinion that it was clearly inexpedient that representatives of the two Governments should be authorised to commence negotiations which could not fail to attract the attention and excite the curiosity of the public, before the basis of such negotiations had been duly considered and distinctly accepted by each party to them. The second proposal appeared to us, not only free from objection, but altogether advantageous to the realisation of our chief object, which was to ascertain the real sentiments of the Ameer. We therefore authorised our Vakeel to set out for Simla immediately, after placing himself in communication with the Ameer on the subject of his instructions.

26. This Vakeel, the Nawab Atta Mahomed Khan, reached Simla on October 6 last. At first, though pressed to be explicit, he threw little light on the views and feelings of the Ameer. His Highness was, he said, resentful to the rebuffs met with by his previous representations to the Government of India, and resolved not to incur any repetition of a result which he deemed offensive to his dignity. Further pressure however elicited from the Vakeel four special causes of grievances as alleged by the Ameer against the Government of India. The first was a communication from Lord Northbrook in 1874, on behalf of his rebellious son, Yakoob Khan, whom he had imprisoned. This he resented as an unwarrantable

interference in his most domestic concerns, as well as a support given to his personal enemies. The second cause of complaint was our decision on the question of the Seistan boundary, which he regarded as an unfriendly act, depriving him of his legitimate possessions. In the third place, he resented, as an interference with his authority, and an offence to his dignity, the gifts sent by the late Viceroy direct to the Chief of Wakhan, who is a tributary to his Highness. Finally, the Ameer was profoundly mortified by the repeated rejection of his previous requests for a defensive alliance coupled with our formal recognition of the order of succession as established by him in the person of his youngest son, Abdoolah Jan. It was also elicited from the Vakeel that the Ameer was much in want of money, and his people much disaffected by his expedients for obtaining it; that the undoubted reluctance of his Highness to receive British officers was occasioned, not by fears for their personal safety, but by a dread of their probable popularity and possible intervention on behalf of oppressed or discontented subjects; that the Ameer, confident in the strength of the army our gifts had enabled him to equip, no longer felt his old dread of the power of Russia; that, in accordance with our own exhortations, he had lost no opportunityof improving his relations with the Russian authorities in Central Asia; and that between General Kaufmann and his Highness permanent diplomatic intercourse was now virtually established by means of a constant succession of special Agents, who held frequent conferences with the Ameer, the subject and result of which were successfully kept secret. In short, the information gradually extracted from our Cabul Agent convinced us that the system on which we had hitherto conducted our relations with Shere Ali had practically resulted, not only in the alienation of his Highness from the Power which had unconditionally subsidised and openly protected him, but also in the increased closeness and confidential character of his relations with the only other Power that can ever cause serious danger to our Empire in India. The Vakeel however represented to the Viceroy that the Ameer, though strongly disinclined to admit British officers into any part of Afghanistan, would probably, if the point were pressed, accept such a condition rather than forfeit the advantage of a long-desired alliance with the British Government upon terms certain to strengthen his personal position at home, about which his Highness was chiefly anxious.

27. These statements gave us, for the first time, a clue to the Ameer's feelings and the motives of his previous attitude towards us. After prolonged consideration of them in connection with the last instructions received from your Lordship, the Viceroy came to the conclusion that the treaty of alliance and the formal recognition of the Ameer's selected heir, which his Highness was supposed to desire of us, might be safely and advantageously accorded to him; provided that his willingness and ability to fulfil with loyalty his own part in the reciprocal obligations of such a treaty were first manifested to us in a satisfactory manner. These concessions, sanctioned by your Lordship's last instructions, would not practically commit the British Government to anything more than a formal reaffirmation of the assurances already given by it, through Lord Mayo, to the Ameer in 1869, and a public recognition of its inevitable obligations to the vital interests of its own Empire. There was great reason to believe that for the ultimate stability of his previously contested authority, the father of the present Ameer was mainly indebted to the supposed protection of the British Government. It might therefore be presumed (and such a presumption was strongly confirmed by all our most verified knowledge of the social condition of Afghanistan) that, notwithstanding the apparently precarious tenure of Shere Ali's power, and the youth of his appointed heir, the timely and positive proclamation of such protection would effectually prevent those civil conflicts, otherwise certain to recur upon the death of the present Ameer. On the other hand, the conditions on which the concessions thus contemplated would be made dependent, were such as any neighbouring Prince, sincerely desirous of our active friendship, might accept with personal cordiality and national benefit. They involved no interference with the Ameer's independent authority, no occupation of any portion of his territory, no foreign control over his civil or military administration. They were strictly confined to the location of at most two or three British officers (accredited to his Highness, placed under his protection, and precluded from all interference in the internal affairs of his Government) upon those points of his frontier whence we were unable to obtain intelligence by other means, and which were most exposed to the attacks against which we were asked to defend it. The Viceroy was nevertheless of opinion that it would be wholly inconsistent with the dignity, and contrary to the interests,

of this Government to urge any proposals on the unwilling acceptance of the Ameer, or afford his Highness the opportunity of rejecting its positive demands. The Ameer's apparent object was to place the British Government in the position of a petitioner; and that position it behoved the British Government to reverse. Such were the opinions of the Viceroy, in which we generally concurred.

28. The Vakeel was consequently instructed to return to Cabul, and there explain to the Ameer, with the utmost possible precision, the moderate and necessary condition on which the British Government was prepared to sign with his Highness a treaty of alliance, and to accord its formal recognition to his heir-apparent. The Vakeel was charged to explain to the Ameer very clearly that our assent to the conference, suggested by his Highness in reply to our previous communications, would be entirely dependent on his agreement to this preliminary condition as a basis of negotiation. In order to prevent the possibility of misunderstanding on that point, Atta Mahomed received from the Viceroy an *aide mémoire*, which he was authorised to communicate to the Ameer. The Viceroy also addressed to his Highness a friendly letter, inviting him to Delhi as the guest of the British Government at the Imperial assemblage, and proposing on that occasion to sign with him the treaty of alliance, which, subject to the above-mentioned condition, Sir Lewis Pelly would be authorised to negotiate at Peshawur with the Envoy of his Highness.

29. On this errand, in the satisfactory result of which he professed great confidence, Atta Mahomed returned to Cabul at the end of October last; and at the same time the Viceroy left Simla on a tour of inspection round the frontier. About this time events occurred in Europe the effect of which was immediately apparent on our negotiations with Shere Ali. Throughout India and Asia there was a prevalent expectation that war between the Sultan and the Czar was imminent, and that it must lead ere long to war between England and Russia. Had this expectation been realised, the policy which had hitherto governed our relations with Afghanistan would have been promptly brought to a very practical test. It was immediately evident that the Ameer had no intention of committing himself to an English alliance on the supposed eve of a war between England and Russia. His apparent policy was to stand aloof from us till the latest possible moment, and then, if he found himself unable to maintain a strict

neutrality between the two belligerents, to sell his alliance to the highest bidder, Russian or English, on the dearest terms. For this purpose it was essential to his Highness to gain time. Accordingly, on his return to Cabul, the British Vakeel was informed that the Ameer was too unwell to receive him. This transparent pretext was prolonged till the Vakeel, instructed by the Viceroy to insist on its abandonment, was at last admitted to the presence of his Highness. The Ameer then informed him that he was still much too ill to discuss business, or even to receive the Viceroy's messages, and the Vakeel, either from stupidity or disloyalty, accepted the excuse. So matters went on for more than a month. During this period the Ameer, though too unwell to discuss business with the British Vakeel, was able to review troops and issue military orders. An Agent from General Kaufmann remained at his Court, and was supposed to be in secret communication with his Highness. But of all that was passing at Cabul we knew less than ever; for the reports of our own Agent there had become studiously infrequent, vague, and unintelligible. Thus, after many years of a waiting policy, patiently pursued and confidently trusted, our attainment of the object, for which we had so long been waiting, proved to be perilously uncertain, at the very moment when certainty in such a matter was most essential to our interests; nor could we tell whether the lakhs of rupees and rifles, unconditionally lavished on Shere Ali by the British Government, might not at any moment be used against it by his Highness. At length the Ameer, finding himself unable to evade any longer the issue put to him, without bringing his relations with us to an open rupture (a result no more compatible with his purpose than placing them on a definitely cordial footing), despatched his Minister, Syud Noor Mahomed Shah, to meet Sir Lewis Pelly at Peshawur, and wrote to the Commissioner there, briefly informing him of the Minister's departure, with instructions to open negotiations, but without noticing the Viceroy's letter or answering the invitation it contained.

30. The Ameer's Minister, who was in ill health and could only travel by easy stages, reached Peshawur on January 27. Thither Sir Lewis Pelly also proceeded, with detailed instructions for his guidance. At the first meeting between the two Envoys it appeared that the Afghan Envoy had no authority from his Government to accept the basis we had laid down as a *sine quâ non* condition of our assent to the negotiations

he had come to open. He however requested permission to defer his final answer on this point until he had made a full and detailed statement of the Ameer's views respecting his relations with us, and of certain episodes in the history of those relations which his Highness considered himself entitled to complain of. As we had all along been anxious to obtain authentic information of the Ameer's real sentiments on this subject, the Envoy's request was at once agreed to; on the condition, which he understood and accepted, that his statement should not be received by us, or be treated by him, as a basis of discussion.

31. This statement by the Afghan Envoy, which is herewith enclosed, is an interesting, instructive, and important document. It repeats and confirms the information previously given by Atta Mahomed to the Viceroy in regard to the Ameer's professed grievances against the British Government. It assumes, as a matter of course, that the British Government is already bound, in honour and by written contract, to afford to the Ameer and his dynasty unconditional military support, both at home and abroad, whenever called upon to do so by his Highness. On this assumption, it naturally questions the advantages to the Ameer of any treaty of alliance which, on our part, would merely reaffirm liabilities already contracted by us towards his Highness; whilst, on his part, it would involve the definition and acceptance of liabilities altogether novel towards ourselves. Furthermore, it refers indirectly to the Ameer's relations with Russia in terms which seem to imply an impression on the part of his Highness that the claim of the Russian Government upon his consideration is practically much the same as that of the British.

32. Owing to the Envoy's increasing ill health, several weeks were occupied in the delivery of this long statement. During that time intelligence reached us from Cabul that the Ameer was straining every effort to increase his military force; that he was massing troops on various points of his British frontier; that he was publicly exhorting all his subjects and neighbours to make immediate preparation for a religious war, apparently directed against his English rather than his Russian neighbours; both of whom he denounced however as the traditional enemies of Islam; that, on behalf of this jehad, he was urgently soliciting the authoritative support of the Akhoond of Swat, and the armed co-operation of the Chiefs of Dhir, Bajour, and other neighbouring Khanates; that, in vio-

lation of his engagements with the British Government, he was, by means of bribes, promises, and menaces, endeavouring to bring those Chiefs and territories under personal allegiance to himself; that he was tampering with the tribes immediately on our frontier, and inciting them to acts of hostility against us; and that, for the prosecution of these objects, he was in correspondence with Mahomedan Border Chiefs openly subsidised by ourselves.

33. In acknowledging the receipt of the Afghan Envoy's statement, the Viceroy instructed Sir Lewis Pelly to point out to the Envoy that the alleged grievances, over which the Ameer appeared to have been resentfully brooding for some years in unbroken silence, were mostly the result of mutual misunderstandings which could not possibly have occurred had the two Governments possessed the ordinary means of diplomatic intercourse with each other. With this remark, Sir Lewis Pelly proceeded to correct the Ameer's interpretation of our existing engagements with his Highness, and explain the thoroughly conditional character of them. He demanded from the Envoy an explanation of the reported hostility of the Ameer's language and conduct, at a time when the representative of his Highness was still engaged in friendly and pacific negotiation with the British Government; and finally he required from his Excellency an immediate and decisive answer on the Agency condition, which we had declared to be our only recognised basis of negotiation.

34. The Envoy replied that the reports which had reached us of the Ameer's utterances and proceedings were, he trusted, much exaggerated; he feared, nevertheless, that since his own absence from the Cabul Durbar his Highness had fallen under mischievous influences which he himself deplored and condemned; he would lose no time in adressing to the Ameer strong remonstrances on this subject. With regard to the Agency condition, he regretted to say that he was still without instructions, for which, however, he would again make special reference to Cabul. He was reminded, in reply, that the condition of our assent to negotiation with the Ameer had been distinctly explained to his Highness many months before he had decided, after deliberately considering it, to open the conference at Peshawur. If the Ameer had subsequently changed his mind, and now wished to revoke his acquiescence in this condition, we were in no disposition to urge it on his acceptance. It was merely part of a general arrangement to which,

if seriously desired by his Highness, we were willing to assent. If the Ameer considered the arrangement disadvantageous to himself, he had only to say so, and the discussion of it would cease *ipso facto*. But we must, in either case, insist on a prompt and plain answer.

35. The Afghan Envoy, who had long been suffering from a mortal disease, expired shortly after his receipt of this communication. His surviving colleague, the Mir Akhor, declared that he had no authority to answer any question from the British Government; and Sir Lewis Pelly was consequently instructed to close the conference, on the ground that there was no basis for negotiation.

36. Apparently the Ameer, whose object was still to gain time, was much surprised and embarrassed by this step. At the moment when Sir Lewis Pelly was closing the conference his Highness was sending to the Mir Akhor instructions to prolong it by every means in his power; a fresh Envoy was already on the way from Cabul to Peshawur; and it was reported that this Envoy had authority to accept eventually all the conditions of the British Government. The Viceroy was aware of these facts when he instructed our Envoy to close the conference. But it appeared to his Excellency that liabilities which the British Government might properly have contracted on behalf of the present Ameer of Cabul, if that Prince had shown any eagerness to deserve and reciprocate its friendship, could not be advantageously, or even safely, accepted in face of the situation revealed by Sir Lewis Pelly's energetic investigations. Under these circumstances the prolongation of the Peshawur conference could only lead to embarrassments and entanglements best avoided by the timely termination of it.

37. To the letter addressed by Sir Lewis Pelly to the late Syud Noor Mahomed Shah, on closing the conference at Peshawur, no reply has yet been received from the Ameer. Some time previously we received from secret Agents of our own, information that the Ameer had despatched a confidential Envoy to Tashkend; and this information has lately been confirmed by a telegram from Her Majesty's Minister at Teheran. Such a proceeding was to be expected on the part of his Highness, whose policy is to play off against each other his two powerful neighbours. Seeing no immediate prospect of further support from the British Government, and fearing perhaps the consequences of its surmised resentment, he

would naturally become more urgent in his advances towards Russia. But the war now raging between that Power and the great Mahomedan Empire of the West will render it extremely difficult for his Highness to receive open support from the Russian Government, or enter into closer relations with the Russian authorities, in face of the religious fanaticism which the Ameer himself has done his utmost to inflame throughout Afghanistan. Meanwhile, his endeavours to organise a general jehad against the British Government appear to have completely failed.

38. The motive of this abortive attempt was not, in our opinion, a religious, but a purely political one, easily explained by the history of the Ameer's relations with the British Government during the last four years. So long as Shere Ali cherished the hope of obtaining eventually from us a personal and dynastic support, he was willing to associate his interests with our own, and even anxious for the protection of the British Government. When, however, the discouraged hope of such support with each succeeding year grew feebler, he appears to have turned his attention to such sources of strength as might, in case of need, be derived from the fanaticism of the Mahomedan populations occupying the wild tract still left between the British and the Russian outposts. For some years his influence, so far as we can judge, has been passively opposed to our own over the border tribes, and at last the apparent determination of the British Government to bring its ambiguous relations with his Highness to a definite issue, coinciding with the critical and sinister situation of the whole Eastern question, doubtless induced the Ameer to believe that the decisive moment, to which he had long been looking forward as ultimately inevitable, was then imminent. Under this impression, he attempted to place himself at once at the head of an armed movement, fanatical on the part of his dupes, but purely political so far as he himself was concerned in it. The attempt however failed. The Akhoond of Swat mistrusted the designs of the Ameer even more than he disliked the neighbourhood of the British. Old, wary, and with nothing to gain by the sword, this spiritual Potentate temporised with the secular ruler who had raised an inconvenient religious cry; but, when it came to the point, he refused to identify himself with it. The Ameer's subjects responded coldly to his call, and the neighbouring Chiefs, to whom he had appealed, availed themselves only of the favourable opportunity

to extract money from him. So completely had the whole movement collapsed before we closed the conference at Peshawur that the first step taken by the Ameer, immediately after that event, was to send messages to the authorities and population of Candahar, informing them that the jehad project was abandoned, requesting them to do all in their power to allay the religious excitement he had till then been endeavouring to arouse, and adding that his relations with the British Government were eminently satisfactory.

39. If those relations are not as satisfactory as Shere Ali would have them supposed, we have at least every reason to believe that they involve no feelings of irritation against us which are not entirely confined to his Highness. Our relations with the people of Afghanistan are as friendly as they have ever been. At Candahar, where recent events in Beloochistan have brought us into contact with Afghanistan from a new side, we have every evidence of the amicable feeling of the population, and their disposition to look to us as protectors rather than as enemies. From Sibi the Chiefs and Headmen, subjects of the Ameer, recently waited on the British Agent in Khelat for the purpose of inviting his mediation in their domestic and intertribal quarrels, and his protection from their neighbours, the Murrees. Elsewhere the British officers lately at Thull, on a mission of inspection, were received by the Ameer's people beyond the border, and invited inside their frontier posts with every demonstration of cordiality and confidence. On the other hand, all our reports from Afghanistan concur in representing the Ameer's subjects as generally disaffected, on account of the heavy military burdens recently imposed on them; his army in arrears of pay, and portions of it mutinous; his treasury nearly exhausted, and his personal position precarious.

40. The further course of Cabul politics we cannot foresee, and do not attempt to predict. But we await its natural development with increased confidence in the complete freedom and paramount strength of our own position. In the meanwhile we see no reason to anticipate any act of aggression on the part of the present Ameer, or on our own part any cause for interference with his Highness. Our relations with him are still such as we commonly maintain with the Chiefs of neighbouring and friendly countries. But whilst, on the one hand, they are now relieved from all liabilities, real or imputed, on behalf of his personal fortunes

or those of his dynasty, on the other hand, they have been placed by our recent arrangements with Khelat (and others which will be separately reported to you Lordship) in a position much less dependent than heretofore upon the personal disposition, or uncontrolled conduct, of so uncertain a neighbour.

41. In closing this unavoidably long report upon the cause, the course, and the result of the Peshawur conference, we desire to express our entire satisfaction with the manner in which that conference was conducted by Sir Lewis Pelly. We are of opinion that, in the skilful discharge of a very delicate task, Sir Lewis has upheld with marked ability the dignity of our Government and the interests of this Empire. That opinion will, we trust, be fully shared by your Lordship, after perusal of the papers annexed to our present despatch.

We have, &c.

(Signed) LYTTON.
F. P. HAINES.
E. C. BAYLEY.
A. J. ARBUTHNOT.
A. CLARKE.
J. STRACHEY.
E. B. JOHNSON.
W. STOKES.

There are, as we conceive, many inaccuracies in this despatch, the more material of which we will proceed to observe on.

Paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 seem to give a very incorrect account of the treaties. It has been shown above (pp. 2, 3) that the Treaty of 1855 was not 'the only formal obligation still extant.' The Treaty of 1857 remained in force at least till the Peshawur conference, when, if one of the parties could annul it, it may possibly be said to have been annulled by Lord Lytton. But that was an act of violence. That treaty was not observed 'tacitly,' or for mere convenience sake, but was openly insisted on by Lord Lawrence, whose action taken upon it continued till the Peshawur conference. The formal and solemn letters of previous Viceroys were also binding on us, though Lord Lytton denies it.

The reference to Lord Canning in paragraph 3 im-

plies that he was in favour of the plan of European Residents, and such, it is believed, was his opinion until he had heard from experienced officers the reasons against it. Lord Canning was not above the teachings of experienced men, and he changed his opinion. Mr. Laing, who was a member of Lord Canning's Council, wrote a letter on the subject on November 4 last, which was published in the *Daily News* of November 5. He says that 'Lord Canning's policy entirely coincided with that which had been advocated by Lord Lawrence in his recent letters to the *Times*,' and adds: 'I recollect hearing Lord Canning explain fully the reasons which led him to prefer a Native to an English Resident at Cabul, even supposing that the Ameer did not object to receive one. They were, shortly, these: that the presence of an English Resident must necessarily tend to involve us in complications with Afghan affairs, which would inevitably lead us on to further interference, and end in our having to withdraw our Envoy, after having alienated the Afghans, or to establish a Protectorate supported by an army, a result which Lord Canning considered would be ruinous to the finances and most detrimental to the true political interests of our Indian Empire.' In the last paragraph of the despatch of the Government of India, dated January 28, 1876 (p. 155), they referred to the opinion of Lord Canning, and supported their reference in a marginal note by giving the date of the Minute, February 6, 1857, in which he expressed that opinion. The marginal note has been omitted from these papers. Lord Canning's words, in that Minute, were as follows:—'It would be an object to convince that' (the Afghan) 'Government, and the people of Afghanistan, that they have nothing to fear from us unless when injury has been done to us, that we are ready to help them whenever they are attacked from without, just as we are now helping them, and that we have no desire to send a single Englishman, armed or unarmed, into their country, except with their own good-will.'

The assertion in paragraph 4, that the British

officers residing in Afghanistan in 1857 met with reasonable success, is directly contrary to the opinion expressed by the Government of India in their despatch of January 28, 1876 (*sup.*, p. 84), which opinion was founded, not only on the experience of Major Todd in 1837, but on that of Colonel Lumsden in 1857. Lord Lawrence, in the House of Lords, on June 15, 1877, gave the following account of Colonel Lumsden's position at Candahar, in 1857:—'The old Ameer, Dost Mahomed, received two British officers, and allowed them to go to Candahar, where they remained so long as they could do so with safety. But the elder of them, the present Sir Harry Lumsden, assured him (Lord Lawrence) that, owing to the espionage practised on him at Candahar, less information was obtainable there than could be got without difficulty at Peshawur;' and there is no man who knows so much of the history and position of that Mission as Lord Lawrence.

It is impossible to protest too strongly against the doctrine here propounded, that a solemn assurance given in a letter from a Viceroy of India to a neighbouring Ruler is of less force than a treaty. Such a doctrine is calculated to shake titles on which many Native Potentates rely, and to make them doubt our good faith.

Paragraph 8.—The 'conviction' here spoken of was only a doubtful opinion founded on a balance of evidence, that Shere Ali *or* his Minister expressed the readiness here mentioned; and it was coupled with a clear opinion that under the circumstances no importance could be attached to the point (*vide sup.*, p. 61).

Paragraphs 11, 12, 15.—In the opening words of each of these paragraphs it is represented that the Simla conference was originated by Shere Ali, and that the avowed object of that conference was that he should ask for assistance against the Russians. How completely that representation is at variance with the facts has been shown above (*sup.*, p. 41–43). It is extraordinary that so palpable an error, and one so easily corrected by reference to the contemporary documents, should be

persisted in by the Government of India, and by the Home Government, after it had been pointed out by Noor Mahomed.

Paragraph 17. —The object of this passage is to show that Shere Ali was full of fears about the doings of the Russians, and the slackness of the British Government to support him; and the case is very much exaggerated. The establishment on the Oxus, 'close to his own frontier,' is at Petro Alexandrovosk, 500 miles at least from that frontier. The communication from General Kaufmann in 1869, on which stress is laid, was the first of the kind, and naturally disturbed Shere Ali's mind, but it seemed to Lord Mayo and to the Government of the day to be rather a desirable thing than otherwise, and Shere Ali was completely satisfied on the point.[1] The Russian 'opposition to the recognition of his authority over a most important portion of his territories' is the boundary dispute before mentioned (*sup.*, p. 41), and was a fair difference on a doubtful question, as to which the Russians finally gave way. Undoubtedly the circumstance frightened Shere Ali not a little, but he was completely reassured on that point at the Simla conference, as Noor Mahomed states at the Peshawur conference.

The want of support which is made the ground of insinuation against Lord Lytton's predecessors, means only the refusal of unconditional assistance and guarantees; and it comes ill from a Viceroy whose proffers of support were accompanied by conditions infinitely more onerous than any other Viceroy had ever thought of, and were looked upon by Shere Ali, not as a defence, but as an attack.

Paragraph 18.—This is at direct variance with the opinion of the Government contemporary with the events spoken of. See the despatches of June 7, 1875, and January 28, 1876 (*sup.*, pp. 62, 74), and (*sup.*, p. 124) the comments on the corresponding passage in the letters of March 15, 1877.

Paragraphs 19, 20, 21.—These passages give a very misleading turn to the discussion between the Government of India and Lord Salisbury. Anyone reading them would think that the difficulty felt by the Government of India was the reluctance of the Home Government to give sufficient assurances of support to Shere Ali, and that the difficulty was removed at once when the Home Government expressed a willingness to give those assurances. Now, passing over the fact that the assurances authorised by Lord Salisbury's instructions of February 1876 must have been just as unsatisfactory to Shere Ali as the previous assurances given to him, the objection expressed by the Government of India in 1875 was based on the absolute unwillingness of Shere Ali to admit English Residents at all, a difficulty which was not and could not be removed, and which events have proved to be insuperable except by force. The draft treaty (*sup.*, pp. 107–110) shows how far our Government was willing to enter into more definite alliance with Shere Ali. And what is the equilateral character of an alliance in which one of the parties undertakes to surrender the whole of its foreign affairs into the hands of the other? This is the test-point by which the position of a subordinate native State is determined.

Paragraph 22.—It is here represented that our ignorance of Shere Ali's affairs virtually rendered us unable to control his conduct towards his neighbours. No instance is adduced, and only one is suggested, of difficulty arising from such a cause. The Government of India, in June 1875 and January 1876, denied the existence of any substantial difficulty of the kind. The one instance alleged by Lord Salisbury to the contrary was found to be a case in which the Government of India had sufficient knowledge, but did not interfere, because the operations of Shere Ali were not against his neighbours, but were confined to his own dominions. (See the despatch of January 28, 1876, paragraph 23.) The cases of the Seistan award, of the north-east boun-

dary, of relations with the Tekke Turkomans, of the Russian prisoner, show that the Government of India, while not pretending to deprive the Afghans of their liberty in foreign affairs, as Lord Lytton's treaty would have done, exercised a substantial and beneficial influence in keeping them at peace.

Paragraph 26.—The assertion that there was 'permanent diplomatic intercourse' between General Kaufmann and the Ameer is an exaggeration. The volume of C A papers shows what the intercourse amounted to.

Paragraph 29.—Our Vakeel, Atta Mahomed, who is here expressly accused of stupidity and disloyalty in October and November 1876, and in other parts of the despatch is implicitly accused of inefficiency in former years, is the same man who received praise and rewards at Simla on October 13, 1876.

Paragraph 32.—See the observations (*sup.*, p. 124) on the corresponding paragraph of the letter of March 15, 1877. It is remarkable that the attempted jehad should have been, ostensibly at least, directed as much against the Russians as against ourselves.

Paragraphs 33, 34.—We cannot find in the Blue-books anything answering to the communications here narrated, except so far as they coincide with Sir L. Pelly's letters of February 27 and March 15 (*sup.*, p. 122). It would seem that some other letters must be referred to.

Paragraphs 36–40.—This is a very remarkable statement. It appears that when Lord Lytton instructed Sir L. Pelly to close the Peshawur conference he was aware that a fresh Envoy from the Ameer was on his way, and that it was reported he would consent to all the conditions of the British Government. Probably the report was quite true, because it accords with what our Vakeel reported in December 1876, and there is nothing in Noor Mahomed's speech to the contrary. The Ameer, it seems, wished all his arguments to be heard, all his difficulties to be stated, and, if that did not convince the Viceroy, he would then yield. All that Noor Ma-

homed did was to insist on being heard and on having his arguments transmitted to Lord Lytton, before he would answer about the English Residents. And yet with the knowledge that the time of yielding had in all probability now come, Lord Lytton abruptly breaks off the conference. He explains his motive thus: 'If the Ameer had shown any eagerness to deserve and reciprocate our friendship the negotiations might usefully have gone on, but, 'in face of the situation revealed by Sir L. Pelly's energetic investigations,' only embarrassment could result from them. Now, so far as shown by the Blue-books, there had been no investigations whatever, except the debates with Noor Mahomed; and nothing had been revealed, except the state of things which the Government of India took as the basis of its opinion in 1875. They then speak to this effect: 'If the Ameer is willing, well and good; but if he is not, and we are confident he is not, nothing but harm can come of the attempt to force English Residents upon him.' This is precisely the principle which, in May 1877, Lord Lytton says induced him to break off the conference on March 30. Again, in May 1877 the Government of India 'await the natural development [of Cabul politics] with increased confidence in the complete freedom and paramount strength of our own position.' This, when stripped of verbiage, was precisely what was advised by the Government of India in 1875. A more frank and ingenuous exposition of the utter failure of Lord Salisbury's policy, and of the wisdom of Lord Northbrook's advice, cannot be imagined.

But it still remains to be explained how the statesmen who, throughout 1875 and 1876, and down to March 15, 1877, acted in diametrical opposition to Lord Northbrook's advice, should on March 30, 1877, have perceived its wisdom, and have endeavoured, though in vain, to return to the strong policy of patience, justice, forbearance, moderation, and peace, which had been pursued for more than thirty years, and which their rash actions had irretrievably disturbed.

CHAPTER X.

MINISTERIAL MISINFORMATION.

It will be remembered that the despatch of May 10, 1877, which must have reached England at latest during the first week of June, was not published. Indeed all the correspondence between India and England on this topic was secret, so that the public knew nothing accurate as to the meaning of such a phenomenon as the Peshawur conference. It is important for those who wish to approach these matters from their Constitutional side, to see how they were represented by the Government to the English people.

On April 20, 1877, the following conversation took place in the House of Commons (*vide* 'Hansard,' vol. ccxxxiii. p. 1538):—

QUESTIONS.

India.—Relations with Afghanistan.

Mr. Grant Duff asked the Under-Secretary of State for India whether any change has recently taken place in the relations to the Government of India with Afghanistan; whether he is able to give the House any information with respect to the negotiations at Peshawur; and whether he is now in a position to lay the Khelat Papers upon the table.

Lord George Hamilton: Sir, in reply to the first part of the question, I have to say that no change whatever has occurred in the relations between the British Government and the Ameer of Afghanistan. There were several questions upon which communications with the Ameer were desirable, and, as he was reluctant to receive a British officer in his own dominions, it was thought better to discuss them at Peshawur.

As the death of the Envoy has interrupted these negotiations, no conclusion has at present been arrived at. Papers relating to the settlement of the difficulties in Khelat will at once be laid upon the table of the House, but they are very voluminous, and, I fear, will not be in the hands of hon. members for some time.

Mr. Grant Duff: Have the negotiations with the Ameer entirely ceased?

Lord George Hamilton: I believe that the Ameer has expressed a wish to carry on negotiations, and the matter is under the consideration of the Government of India.

Now, April 20 was sixty days after the practical closure of the conference by Sir Lewis Pelly, thirty-six days after the letter of March 15 was sent, twenty-five days after the death of Noor Mahomed, and twenty-one days after the formal and final closure of the conference by Lord Lytton's order. Six months before that time the Ameer had, either directly or through one who was faithfully to convey it to him, been told that, not having accepted English Envoys, he had isolated himself from the alliance and support of the British Government (*vide* A, p. 176); that we might come to an understanding with Russia which would wipe Afghanistan out of the map altogether; that if he did not wish to come to an understanding with us Russia did, and desired it at his expense; that if he became our enemy we could break him as a reed; that our relations with him could not remain as they are, but must become worse or better; that he was an earthen pipkin between two iron pots (*vide* A, 183); that he had only verbal understandings with us; and that Lord Mayo's letter, on which he relied, was no treaty (*vide* A, pp. 183, 184). Thirty days before that time the Ameer had been told that the British Government repudiated *all* liabilities on his behalf. Twenty-one days before that time the Ameer's Envoy, coming to Peshawur with instructions, as is believed, to yield everything, was barred by the news that all negotiation was broken off, and therefore that

all these threats were in full force. It is almost certain that before that time we had withdrawn from the Court of Cabul the Agency which had represented the British Government there for thirteen years. Fifty-two days before that time the Ameer was formally charged, and he still stands charged, with having tampered with frontier tribes in our pay, with maligning the character of the British Government, and with actually exciting a jehad against us. Is it possible that the authorities of the India Office knew none of these things? And yet is it possible that, knowing them or any of them, they could have permitted their spokesman to say that *no change whatever* had occurred in the relations of the British Government with the Ameer? Lord George Hamilton knew of the death of Noor Mahomed, and that the Ameer had expressed a wish to carry on negotiations. He must, then, have had information to a date considerably later than March 26, when Noor Mahomed died. It must have been known in England that neither the practical nor the formal closure of the conference had the slightest reference to the death of Noor Mahomed; the one being due to his non-acceptance of the preliminary condition, and the other to the change of policy on Lord Lytton's part. It is very strange if it was not known that twenty-one days had elapsed since Lord Lytton had put a peremptory end to all negotiations whatever. How, then, came it to be said, firstly, that it was the death of the Envoy which interrupted the negotiation; and, secondly, that the matter was under the consideration of the Government of India?

On June 11, 1877, Lord Salisbury, replying in the House of Lords to Lord de Mauley, spoke in the most scornful terms of the fear of Russian inroads on the frontier of British India. On the same day the same Peer spoke in the same sense at Merchant Taylors Hall, calling the fear in question 'a nightmare.' On the same day Lord George Hamilton, answering Sir Charles Dilke, who had moved for papers relating to the Peshawur

conference, said: 'No change in our obligations to the Ameer has been the result of the conference, but it would not be consistent with the interests of the public service to publish the conversation.'

Now at this time the despatch of May 10, 1877, must have been lying some days at the India Office, and the authorities there must have known that the Government of India had 'repudiated all liabilities to the Ameer.'

Moreover the whole affair was over, and what public interest was there which would have been injured, or rather which would not have been benefited, by the publication of the papers?

On June 15, 1877, the Duke of Argyll spoke in the House of Lords as follows (*vide* 'Hansard,' vol. ccxxxiv. p. 1833):-

The Duke of Argyll: The Ameer of Afghanistan was not perhaps a great Power, but another Afghan war would be, he need hardly say, a very serious matter. But though they had of course no cause to dread such a movement, at the same time another war would cost several millions of money, and it would, in any event, be a great misfortune if our good understanding with the Ameer were seriously disturbed. He was bound to add that, if he had put the question ten days ago, he might have been suspected of doing so from fear that the noble Marquis was affected by Russophobian propensities; but after the speech the noble Marquis delivered in their Lordships' House last Monday, followed by his speech the same evening at Merchant Taylors Hall, he could now have no such apprehension, and he could not but thank the noble Marquis for the language he held on those two occasions.

. . . . . .

Although those speeches assumed a light form, and administered some friendly "chaff" to certain alarmists, he believed the noble Marquis's language had served to calm the public mind both in India and England. It was however all the more important that the noble Marquis should have an opportunity of giving their Lordships' House and the country an assurance that he did not contemplate any serious change in the policy heretofore pursued towards Afghanistan,

and above all that he desired to continue, at all events, that friendly but watchful course of conduct which he believed was the only safe course to adopt in our relations with such a sovereign as the Ameer.

Lord Salisbury answered as follows:—

Of course it is perfectly true that there has been a conference at Peshawur. A great many subjects were discussed at it, but it will be difficult to produce papers, because the politics of the East, much more than those of the West, are of a personal character, and often communications, which, if they occurred in Western nations, it would be very easy to lay upon the table, involve in the East the personal feelings of Potentates to such an extent as to make such disclosures inexpedient. Therefore the conversations which occurred at Peshawur are not matters which I could prudently place on record among the papers laid before Parliament.

. . . . . .

With respect to the information asked for by the noble Duke I can hardly give him such a positive knowledge, but I think I can give him some negative information. He has derived from the sources open to him the following statement, as I understood him—that we had tried to force an Envoy upon the Ameer at Cabul; that we had selected for that purpose Sir Lewis Pelly, whose vigour of mind and action might possibly inspire apprehension in the councils of a native Prince; that we had supported this demand by a large assemblage of troops on the North-Western Frontier; and that we were preparing boats on the Indus. Now, we have not tried to force an Envoy upon the Ameer at Cabul; the troops were assembled without the slightest reference to any such demand; and, with regard to the boats on the Indus, I never heard of them until to-day. Our relations with the Ameer of Cabul have undergone no material change since last year. I do not believe that he is worse disposed towards us than hitherto, or that his feelings are in any way more embittered towards the British Government.

. . . . . .

I only wish emphatically to repeat that none of those suspicions of aggression on the part of the English Government have any true foundation; that our desire in the future, as it has been in the past, is to respect the Afghan Ruler, and to maintain, as far as we can, the integrity of his dominion.

There is no ground for any of the apprehensions to which the noble Duke has referred, or for suspicions which are too absurd to be seriously entertained. The affairs of the frontier are maintaining a peaceful aspect, with the exception of a little trouble with a local tribe—the Afreedees. We have also maintained our relations with Khelat, and the papers we have laid on the table will explain what has occurred. But there is no reason for any apprehension of any change of policy or of disturbance in our Indian Empire.

When the Afghan Papers came out, Lord Salisbury was challenged with having made this statement, and he attempts to reconcile it with the truth by saying that in using the expression 'Ameer *at* Cabul,' he referred to the city of Cabul, where it was not proposed to have a resident Envoy; whereas all his hearers understood it in the ordinary sense of the 'Ameer *of* Cabul,' the 'country,' 'state,' or government' of Cabul. Cabul is the name of a country as well as of a city, and in connection with the words 'Ameer' or 'Government' is used to signify the ruling power of Afghanistan. Among the hearers of Lord Salisbury were two former Secretaries of State for India, and two former Viceroys; as skilled a body of officials as could be found to consider such a question. They were deceived by the statement of Lord Salisbury, believing that he meant to say that it had not been the policy of the Government to force English Residents on the Ameer. Lord Northbrook in particular expressed his satisfaction at the declared policy of the Government, and he certainly would not have felt any satisfaction at a mere announcement that English Envoys were not to go to the city of Cabul, if they were to be forced on the Ameer at all, for the latter was the proposal against which he had so strongly advised. Lord Salisbury allowed the expression of Lord Northbrook's satisfaction to pass in silence, with no attempt to correct the error into which he had been led. As for the assurances that 'our relations with the Ameer of Cabul have undergone no material change since last year,' and 'I do not believe that he is worse disposed

towards us than hitherto,' or that his feelings 'are in any way more embittered towards the British Government,' the explanation is that the Ameer's 'feelings were already as hostile to us as they could well be.' What particular time is meant by 'already' is not easy to say. But the assertions of June 1877 were taken, as Lord Salisbury well knew, to cover the whole period of Lord Lytton's action, and if they meant anything, they meant that Shere Ali was not more irritated with us in June 1877 than in April 1876. That is clearly untrue. Even if true, it would not cover Lord Salisbury's assertion that our relations with Shere Ali had 'undergone no material change since last year,' because those relations were in one direction, and for the worse, changed by every step that Lord Lytton took; and were changed definitely and by express and formal notification in the month of March 1877. These explanations, therefore, amount to a confession of deceit. Part of Lord Salisbury's statements on June 15, 1877, was untrue in the strictest acceptation of the letter, and what was true was true only in the letter and not in the spirit.

It is not too much to say that persons not in the secret were completely hoodwinked by these declarations, which set them at ease till the news came that we were on the brink of war.

In his defence delivered on December 5, 1878, Lord Salisbury treated his obligations to truth as a matter of 'small personal detail.' On December 10, speaking on the same subject, he lightly said that he would abandon his character in the eyes of his assailant rather than keep their Lordships out of bed. He added, 'if you insist that no answer shall be given except such as contains a complete revelation of the policy of the Government, the only inference I draw is that in the future no answer at all shall be given to a question of this kind.'[1] On this we observe that there are occa-

[1] These accounts are taken from the reports in the *Times* of December 6 and 11, 1878.

sions on which a Minister may properly decline to answer a question on the ground that silence is better for the public interest: and that, so far as we know, Ministers are allowed much discretion, and are treated with confidence and generosity in such matters by both Houses of Parliament. But it is a new thing to hear that a Minister may give a false answer in order to parry an unpleasant question. Neither in this case would it have been true to say that the public interest required silence. The public interest required publicity. Silence was required only by the private interest of the Minister whose ill-advised policy had entirely broken down.

Another declaration as to the general policy of the Government was made by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the House of Commons, in answer to Mr. Grant Duff.[1] After recognising that there were two schools of politicians, the advocates of the forward policy, and those who would not commit us to advance beyond our frontier, he says (*vide* 'Hansard,' vol. ccxxxvi. 'House of Commons,' p. 718):—

> I have myself, as my hon friend has reminded us, always leant to the policy of the second of those schools. I have always demurred to the idea which has been put forward by some, that the best way to meet danger is to advance beyond our frontier, and have always held that the true lines we ought to lay down for ourselves are these—to strengthen ourselves within our frontiers, and to do so by a combination of measures moral and material.
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> . . . . . .
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> I think it is most important that we should in every possible way endeavour to husband the wealth and resources of India, and that it is of great importance to do all we can to complete—I am now speaking in a correct sense of a military question as to which I am no authority—to complete our internal lines of communication, so that we should be able to proceed rapidly to any point where we might be threatened, rather than that we should expend our force by distance, and weaken ourselves by an unwise advance. In all these views—which are the views I have always been led to

hold as the best mode of protecting India from direct attack —I believe there is no change whatever in the policy of Her Majesty's Government.

He then said that as circumstances were apt to change, measures must change too, and went on to justify the occupation of Quetta on that basis. With regard to an expression used by Lord Lytton, to the effect that the frontier policy of India was to be taken as a whole, of which the advance to Quetta was only a part,[1] he denied that it was thereby meant to change the policy from one of inactivity to one of activity, and went on to explain the expression by reference to a proposal for placing the command of the frontier under a single hand. He concluded by saying:

> The main lines of our policy are unchanged, and I believe the country will be satisfied with them, and will wish them to continue.

[1] See *inf*, pp. 213, 215.

CHAPTER XI.

AFTER THE PESHAWUR CONFERENCE.

It is a very singular thing that through the whole of these papers there is not to be found any statement of reasons why our Vakeel was withdrawn from Cabul, or even of the fact of withdrawal. And yet it is a most important fact to consider when we are judging Shere Ali for receiving a Russian Mission. Our Vakeel was a very important personage in the Cabul world; he had his residence and his staff in the city of Cabul; he attended the Durbars; he frequently had private conversations with the Ameer; he was privy to all important operations, perhaps to all operations, of Afghan foreign politics; he was the outward and visible sign of the British alliance. On his removal a great visible blank space would remain, notifying to all observers that the British alliance was no more as it had been. Nothing short of actual hostilities could so closely bring home to the mind of Shere Ali that we had cast him off. When our Resident was taken away, our deeds had tallied with our words. We had told him that if he refused English Residents he would 'isolate himself from the alliance and support of the British Government' (*sup.*, p. 99). We had told him that the moment we ceased to regard Afghanistan as a friendly and firmly allied State, there was nothing to prevent our agreeing with Russia to wipe Afghanistan out of the map, and that Russia desired such an agreement at his expense (*sup.*, p. 105). We had told him that our military power could break him as a reed; and that he was as an earthen

pipkin between two iron pots. Later on we had warned him that unless he yielded to our demands at once the terrible isolation had been completed, and that we repudiated all liabilities on his behalf (*sup.*, p. 125). Then, when he was sending an Envoy to make concessions, we abruptly, and with an evident sudden change of policy, broke off the negotiations. And now, to crown the whole, we withdraw, and do not replace, the Representative we have had in Cabul for some eight years, and the Agency we have had for twenty. If the letters of July 1876 were, as predicted at the time, the first step in a war, the withdrawal of the Vakeel was a second and a very long step. Yet even now, when the war has come, we are told nothing about it.[1]

From such unofficial accounts as have appeared it would seem that the Vakeel, who was present at the Peshawur conference, never returned from thence to Cabul; so that he was withdrawn on March 30, 1877. If this be so, it is an additional condemnation of Lord Salisbury's assurances in June 1877, that our policy had undergone no change.

On the supposition that the clauses of the Peshawur conference meant that we were to take the first opportunity of breaking with the Ameer, the withdrawal of the Vakeel is an intelligible action. But supposing that we intended to act on the professions of the despatches of March 15 and May 10, 1877, to respect Shere Ali's independence and authority (*sup.*, p. 125), and to maintain with him such relations as we commonly maintain with the Chiefs of neighbouring and friendly countries (*sup.*, p. 151), the reasons for withdrawing the Vakeel are not easily to be conceived. Nor indeed is it easy to understand why, merely in our own interest and for the sake of information, we did not keep some representative at

[1] In a work recently published, and called *Through Asiatic Turkey*, Captain Geary gives an interesting account of an interview between Shere Ali and the Envoy sent to him by the Sultan of Turkey in 1877. Shere Ali dwelt significantly on the occupation of Quetta and on the withdrawal of our Vakeel. The whole chapter (xvii.) is well worth reading. A portion of it is extracted *inf.*, pp. 287–291.

Cabul. As before stated, Atta Mahomed gave us timely notice of all material events. When he was gone, we were in the dark and open to false impressions. In the 18th paragraph of his despatch (*inf.*, p. 192) Lord Cranbrook shows the disadvantage at which we were placed by imperfect means of information.

On October 4, 1877, Lord Salisbury wrote to Lord Lytton (*vide* A., pp. 222–4). The despatch, for the most part, is an endorsement of the proceedings of the Government of India, and need not be quoted. The last paragraph runs thus:—

11. The independence of Afghanistan is a matter of importance to the British Government, and, as an essential part of arrangements for its protection, Her Majesty's Government would still be glad to station Agents upon whom they could rely at Herat and Candahar. In the event therefore of the Ameer, within a reasonable time, spontaneously manifesting a desire to come to a friendly understanding with your Excellency on the basis of the terms lately offered to, but declined by, him his advances should not be rejected. If, on the other hand, he continues to maintain an attitude of isolation and scarcely veiled hostility, the British Government stands unpledged to any obligations, and, in any contingencies which may arise in Afghanistan, will be at liberty to adopt such measures for the protection and permanent tranquillity of the North-West Frontier of Her Majesty's Indian dominions as the circumstances of the moment may render expedient, without regard to the wishes of the Ameer Shere Ali or the interests of his dynasty.

The last sentence is a distinct note of war. The 'isolation' into which our gratuitous demands, followed by a declaration that our treaties were at an end, and by the withdrawal of our Vakeel, had cast Shere Ali, is imputed to his own act. 'Scarcely veiled hostility' is imputed to him, who undoubtedly had shown his fear of us, but who had done no hostile act, unless it be the excitement of a jehad, which was denied, and which had only proved, and had been treated by Lord Lytton as proving, his utter impotence to hurt us. On these grounds 'the British Government stands un-

pledged to any obligations' and in 'any contingencies' may take measures for their 'protection and permanent tranquillity' as 'the circumstances of the moment' may dictate. Language of this sort is the common prelude to acts of aggression; and a strong Power, once in this mood towards a weak one, seldom waits long for a 'contingency' which may give it the excuse for moving. But nothing new had occurred between us and the Afghans since the Peshawur conference was closed; and how is the language of this despatch to be reconciled with the language of those of March 15 and May 10, 1877, to the effect that the independence and authority of the Ameer are to be respected, and that no British soldier shall ever be permitted to enter Afghanistan uninvited as long as the Afghans themselves are not excited to aggression? How, again, is it to be reconciled with the assurances given to Parliament and the Nation in June, 1877, that there was no change of our policy towards Afghanistan, and that the Ameer was no worse disposed to us than hitherto?

CHAPTER XII.

COMMENCEMENT OF WAR.

It was not very long before one of the 'contingencies' contemplated in the despatch of October 1877 occurred. In the spring of 1878 we had gone great lengths towards war with the Russians, and they, certainly well knowing the sensitiveness of our Government in relation to Afghanistan, probably well knowing the issue of their recent attempts to coerce Shere Ali, and their repudiation of all liabilities on his account, seem to have bethought themselves of effecting a diversion by sending a Mission to Cabul. Doubtless their desire to frighten us in that quarter was sharpened by the circumstance that we had threatened them with Indian troops. On June 7, 1878, the earliest rumour of the advent of a Russian Ambassador to Cabul was telegraphed by the Government of India to England (*vide* A., p. 226). Speedy representations were made by our Government to the Russians, who on July 3 (*vide* C.A., p. 132) denied that any Russian representative had been, or was intended to be, sent to Cabul, either by the Imperial Government or by General Kaufmann. This denial proved to be no more trustworthy than the declarations made by our own Ministers to Parliament. The representative was coming, by whomsoever sent, and on July 30, 1878, Lord Lytton telegraphed to Lord Cranbrook, then the Secretary of State for India, as follows:—

If such Mission be authenticated, I will telegraph again. It will be difficult to act or instruct frontier officers without definite indication of views of Cabinet on such conduct on part

of Russia and Ameer, having regard to Russia's formal promises, and Ameer's refusal to receive British Mission in any shape. What I shall then require to know without delay is, whether this will be treated by Her Majesty's Government as an Imperial question with Russia, or left to us to deal with as a matter between Ameer and Government of India. In latter case, I shall propose, with your approval, to insist on immediate suitable reception of European British Mission. I will communicate with you further on measures which may in this contingency become necessary for securing due permanent preponderance in Afghanistan. The alternative would be continued policy of complete inaction, difficult to maintain and very injurious to our position in India.

On August 2 Lord Lytton telegraphed again (*vide* A., p. 228), saying that the Russian Ambassador was General Abramoff,[1] and continuing:—

To remain inactive now will, we respectfully submit, be to allow Afghanistan to fall as certainly and as completely under Russian power and influence as the Khanates. We believe we could correct situation if allowed to treat it as question between us and the Ameer, and probably could do so without recourse to force. But we must speak plainly and decidedly, and be sure of your support.

It appears to us that the contingency contemplated in the Secretary of State's letter, No. 2 of January 2, 1875, has arisen; and we propose, therefore, in the first place, to insist on reception of suitable British Mission at Cabul. To this we do not anticipate serious resistance; indeed, we think it probable that Ameer, adhering to his policy of playing Russia and ourselves off against each other, will really welcome such Mission, while outwardly only yielding to pressure. We would thus endeavour to effect arrangements similar to those urged on us by your Lordship's predecessor in despatch above quoted, but avoiding all dynastic obligations. It is possible we should find considerable difficulty in obtaining Ameer's assent to such arrangements; but in hands of skilful negotiator difficulties might be overcome, and at least it is desirable to make the effort in the first instance. Ameer is aware we are in position to enforce our demands. Failing in these endeavours to re-establish the preponderance of British influ-

[1] It was General Stoletoff. For an account of this Mission, as gathered from the C.A. papers, see *inf.*, p. 291, *et seq.*

ence in Afghanistan, which we believe to be necessary for the safety of India, we shall then have to consider what measures are necessary for the protection and permanent tranquillity of our North-West Frontier, as indicated in last paragraph of Secretary of State's despatch, No. 64 of October 4, 1877. We earnestly solicit an early reply, as situation is urgent.

On August 3 the Secretary of State accepted the Viceroy's plan.

This was the last step which made war inevitable. It is true that Lord Lytton and the advisers of the aggressive policy were still persuading themselves that Shere Ali could not refuse what they had set their hearts on having; but a resolution to demand in peremptory fashion something which has been steadily refused through a length of time, and in spite of threats, is a resolution which, except for some very lucky accident, must lead to war. What may be the letter of January 2, 1875, referred to in the last quoted telegram, we do not know. There is a letter of January 22, 1875 (*vide* A., p. 128), but that letter does not contemplate any contingency of the kind mentioned in the telegram.

Sir Neville Chamberlain, a very distinguished soldier of Indian experience, was appointed Envoy to Cabul, and an experienced and trustworthy Pathan officer, the Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan, who had formerly been British Vakeel at Cabul, was deputed to convey to Shere Ali a letter from Lord Lytton, bearing date August 14, 1878, which was as follows :—

From His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India to His Highness Ameer Shere Ali Khan, Walee of Cabul and its Dependencies.

Simla August 14, 1878.

The authentic intelligence which I have lately received of the course of recent events at Cabul and in the countries bordering on Afghanistan, has rendered it necessary that I should communicate fully and without reserve with your Highness upon matters of importance which concern the interests of India and of Afghanistan. For this reason I have considered it expedient to depute a special and confidential British Envoy of high rank, who is known to your Highness, his Excellency

General Sir Neville Bowles Chamberlain, Knight Grand Cross of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Knight Grand Commander of the Most Exalted Order of the Star of India, Commander-in-Chief of the Madras Army, to visit your Highness immediately at Cabul, in order that he may converse personally with your Highness regarding these urgent affairs. It appears certain that they can be best arranged for the welfare and tranquillity of both States, and for the preservation of friendship between the two Governments, by a full and frank statement of the present position. This letter is therefore sent in advance to your Highness by the hand of Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan, C.S.I., a faithful and honoured Sirdar of my Government, who will explain all necessary details as to the time and manner of the Envoy's visit. It is asked that your Highness may be pleased to issue commands to your Sirdars and to all other authorities in Afghanistan upon the route between Peshawur and Cabul, that they shall make, without any delay, whatever arrangements are necessary and proper for effectively securing to my Envoy, the representative of a friendly Power, due safe-conduct and suitable accommodation according to his dignity, while passing with his retinue through the dominions of your Highness.

I beg to express the high consideration I entertain for your Highness, and to subscribe myself.

On August 17, Abdoollah Jan, Shere Ali's favourite son and designated heir, died. Business was suspended during the period of mourning, and the Viceroy sent (*vide* A., p. 234) a letter of condolence to Shere Ali.

On September 8, 1878, Lord Lytton reports (*vide* A., p. 234) that he has ordered the Ameer's officers to be informed that Sir N. Chamberlain's Mission would leave Peshawur about the 16th, 'that its objects are friendly, but that a refusal of free passage and safe-conduct will be considered acts of open hostility.'

On September 17, Sir N. Chamberlain, being then at Peshawur, sent to the Viceroy a report (*vide* A., p. 241) of Gholam Hussein's operations, as follows:—

Native Envoy presented the letters from the Viceroy to the Ameer at a private interview, no one else being present. The Ameer then handed the letter from the Commissioner to the address of Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan to the latter to read.

This letter was that sent in accordance with the Viceroy's cipher telegram of the 7th instant One of similar purport was sent at the same time to the Mustaufi. These letters went by the Ameer's post from Peshawur.

Ameer was very much displeased, objected to the harsh words, and said: 'It is as if they were come by force. I do not agree to the Mission coming in this manner; and until my officers have received orders from me, how can the Mission come? It is as if they wish to disgrace me; it is not proper to use pressure in this way; it will tend to a complete (rupture?) and breach of friendship. I am a friend as before, and entertain no ill-will. The Russian Envoy has come, and has come with my permission. I am still afflicted with grief at the loss of my son, and have had no time to think over the matter. If I get time, whatever I consider advisable will be acted upon. Under these circumstances they can do as they like.' Nawab adds that the advance of the Mission should be held in abeyance, otherwise some harm will occur. Should the Ameer decide to receive Mission, he will of his own accord, and will make all necessary arrangements. If Mission advanced now, Nawab anticipates resistance.

On the 18th he reports again:—

Another letter received from Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan after an interview with Wazir Shah Mahomed, who assured Nawab, on his oath, that the Ameer intimated that he would send for the Mission in order to clear up mutual misunderstandings, provided there was no attempt to force this Mission upon him without his consent being first granted, according to usual custom; otherwise he would resist it, as coming in such a manner would be a slight to him. He attributed the English grievances against him to mischievous reports of news-writers. He reiterated his Quetta grievances, &c. He says he did not invite the Russian Mission, but that, as his country was quite exposed, and he was estranged from the English, he was obliged to let them come on after they crossed the Oxus. He denies that the Russians came for any other purpose than to exchange civilities in consequence of their having a common boundary with Afghanistan. He believes that a personal interview with British Mission will adjust misunderstandings. He has no wish to give Russians a right of way through his country. He says that there has been sickness at Cabul, and that some of the Russian servants are lying ill;

but that, as soon as they recover, he hopes to give them their *congé* in a suitable manner, after which he will send a confidential messenger to escort the British Mission. He undertakes to be responsible for the safety of the Mission and its good treatment, if he invites it. He wishes Mission to remain a short time longer at Peshawur. He stated that friendship has existed between the two Powers for a long time, and that he does not wish to destroy it; that in two or three days he will send for the Nawab, and, after consultation with him, will fix a date and make all arrangements for the coming of the Mission; that the Nawab should write and say that the sending of the Mission without Ameer's consent will be a slight on the Ameer. Nawab thinks that the Russian Envoy will be dismissed after the Eed, and that the Ameer will then send for the British Mission.

The 'Eed' mentioned in this report is with the Mahomedans a solemn season, such as Easter with us. It was then near at hand.

It will be noted here that Shere Ali has done nothing that was not the natural consequence of our breach of alliance with him; nothing that might not have been foreseen by any person with ordinary knowledge of human nature and not possessed by a theory; nothing that was not foretold by the Government of India in June 1875 (*sup.*, p. 64), when they said that his refusal to admit British Residents would not justify a policy (the policy of menace) which might throw Afghanistan into the arms of Russia on the first favourable opportunity. Shere Ali now says 'he did not invite the Russian Mission, but that as his country was quite exposed, and he was estranged from the English, he was obliged to let them come on.'

On September 19, Sir N. Chamberlain reports again (*vide* A., p. 243):—

The Nawab says that the Ameer is in a bad humour, and the Ministers tell me that on account of grief and indisposition he cannot bear to hear alternately harsh and conciliatory language. The Ministers express hope that when replies were received to the Nawab's letters of the 12th and 13th, the reception of the Mission will be satisfactorily arranged for.

Further, that if Mission starts on 18th, without waiting for the Ameer's permission, there would be no hope left for the renewal of friendship or reconciliation. In such a case we cannot hold ourselves responsible for anything. What will happen will happen. If Mission will await Ameer's permission everything will be arranged, God willing, in the best manner, and no room will be left for complaint in the future. The Minister adds that the Ameer is much annoyed by the various unbecoming communications, some to his own address, some to his officers. Communications should not be written in an authoritative tone, nor should any be addressed to his officials, as they are the servants of the Cabul Government, and not of the British.

He expresses his own opinion to the effect that the Ameer is trifling with us. He continues:

It has been said in the clearest language by the Ameer himself, by his Minister, and by his officers in command of his outposts, that they will, if necessary, stop the advance of the Mission by force. That determination is just as clear, to my mind, as if half of our escort had been shot down. Unless your Lordship accepts this position, all chance of a peaceful solution seems to me gone.

On the same day the Viceroy ordered the Mission to start. On the 21st Sir N. Chamberlain went from Peshawur to Jumrood, and Major Cavagnari with a small escort went forward as far as Ali Musjeed, an Afghan fortress placed to guard the road through the Khyber Pass. There he was turned back by the Commandant, who, while obeying his orders firmly, behaved, as Major Cavagnari reports (*vide* A., p. 249), 'in a most courteous manner, and very favourably impressed both Colonel Jenkins and myself:' otherwise he thought tha a collision would have occurred. On the report of this occurrence an immediate concentration of troops was ordered.

On October 6 Shere Ali replied to Lord Lytton's letters, and his reply appears to have been received on the 19th (*vide* F. A., pp. 18, 19).

After the usual complimentary beginning—Be it known

to your Excellency (Janáb) that your Excellency's friendly letter, which was sent by the hands of the highly-honoured Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan, and which contained the news of the deputation of a friendly Mission, namely, a Mission from the British Government, has been perused by me; and on perusal I have fully informed myself of its contents. But the above-named Nawab had not yet been honoured with an interview, and your Excellency's friendly letter had not yet been seen by me, when a letter addressed by Major Waterfield, Commissioner of Peshawur, to Mirza Habibulla Khan, an official of this God-granted Government, having arrived here, was perused by this supplicant before the throne of God. And great surprise and astonishment was caused by the writing of the officer above mentioned—that is, the Commissioner. What can be the result, meaning, and advantage of such a vehement[1] communication to an ally and friend, and of advancing by force a friendly Mission in this manner?

Subsequently three more letters from the same officer, in the same tone and style, to the address of the officials of this God-granted Government, were seen. Moreover, in the course of a few days, several other letters, which were received from that direction, were seen. These were not free from harsh and rough words and expressions, which are inconsistent with the forms of courtesy and civility, and contrary to the mode of friendship and sympathy.

In consequence of the attack of grief and affliction which has befallen me by the decree of God, great distraction has seized the mind of this supplicant at God's threshold. The trusted officers of the British Government, therefore, ought to have observed patience, and to have stayed, at such a time; and this would have been the most commendable and appropriate course. Your Excellency should be pleased to have regard to (mulahaza farmáyand) this harsh (style of) address and provocation, as well as to the altercation with such anger with my officials. How inconsistent is this with the sublime way of friendship and alliance! In any case the officials of this God-granted Government, notwithstanding the threatening communications of the officials of the British Government, which communications are still in the possession of the officers of this Government, will not evince any hostility or opposition to the British Government. Moreover, they do not entertain any hostile or antagonistic feelings toward any

[1] Literally, 'blustering,' or 'full of noise.'

Government whatever. But should any Government entertain without cause any hostile and inimical feelings towards this God-granted Government, I commit all my affairs to the merciful God, upon whose will and intention all matters depend. He alone suffices for us, and he is the best to be trusted.[1]

The highly-honoured Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan, who is the bearer of this friendly letter, has, in accordance with the instructions received from the officers of the British Government, asked leave to return, and the requisite permission has been granted.

After communication with the Home Government, it was resolved to send to Shere Ali the following Ultimatum, which apparently was despatched on October 31 (*vide* A., pp. 254, 255):—

I have received and read the letter which you have sent me by the hands of my Sirdar. It will be in your recollection that immediately on my arrival in India I proposed to send you a friendly Mission for the purpose of assuring you of the good-will of the British Government, and of removing those past misunderstandings to which you have frequently alluded.

After leaving this proposal long unanswered, you rejected it, on the grounds that you could not answer for the safety of any European Envoy in your country, and that the reception of a British Mission might afford Russia a pretext for forcing you to receive a Russian Mission. Such refusal to receive a friendly Mission was contrary to the practice of allied States, yet the British Government, unwilling to embarrass you, accepted your excuses.

Nevertheless you have now received a Russian Envoy at your capital, at a time when a war was believed to be imminent, in which England and Russia would have been arrayed on opposite sides, thereby not only acting in contradiction to the reasons asserted by you for not receiving a British Mission, but giving to your conduct the appearance of being actuated by motives inimical to the British Government.

In these circumstances, the British Government, remembering its former friendship with your father, and still desiring to maintain with you amicable relations, determined to

[1] Literally, 'the best Wakeel.'

send, after such delay as the domestic affliction you had suffered rendered fitting, a Mission to you under the charge of Sir Neville Chamberlain, a trusted and distinguished officer of the Government, who is personally known to you; the escort attached to his Mission, not exceeding 200 men, was much less numerous than that which accompanied you into British territory, and was not more than was necessary for the dignity of my Envoy. Such Missions are customary between friendly neighbouring States, and are never refused except when hostility is intended.

I despatched by a trusted messenger a letter informing you that the Mission accredited to you was of a friendly character; that its business was urgent, and that it must proceed without delay.

Nevertheless, you, having received my letter, did not hesitate to instruct your authorities on the frontier to repel the Mission by force. For this act of enmity and indignity to the Empress of India in the person of her Envoy, your letter affords no explanation or apology, nor does it contain any answer to my proposal for full and frank understanding between our two Governments.

In consequence of this hostile action on your part, I have assembled Her Majesty's forces on your frontier, but I desire to give you a last opportunity of averting the calamities of war.

For this it is necessary that a full and suitable apology be offered by you in writing, and tendered on British territory by an officer of sufficient rank.

Furthermore, as it has been found impossible to maintain satisfactory relations between the two States unless the British Government is adequately represented in Afghanistan, it will be necessary that you should consent to receive a permanent British Mission within your territory.

It is further essential that you should undertake that no injury shall be done by you to the tribes who acted as guides to my Mission, and that reparation shall be made for any damage they have suffered from you; and if any injury be done by you to them, the British Government will at once take steps to protect them.

Unless these conditions are accepted, fully and plainly, by you, and your acceptance received by me not later than November 20, I shall be compelled to consider your intentions as hostile, and to treat you as a declared enemy of the British Government.

The only condition of this Ultimatum which bears a character of permanence is that which relates to a British Mission, and it exhibits another revolution of policy, or professed policy. From January 1875 to March 1877, the declared policy of our Government was to force English Residents on Shere Ali, however unwilling he might be to receive them. Then it was discovered very suddenly that such a course would only lead to embarrassment; negotiations were broken off at the moment when Shere Ali was prepared to give way; and we assumed the position of 'freedom,' 'confidence,' 'paramount strength,' and non-interference. Now, with equal suddenness, we recur to the plan of forcing English Residents on the Afghans, though their reluctance to receive them has been shown more emphatically than before.

Which of these policies is genuine, and which is merely professed? or is the whole departure from the previous thirty years' policy of moderation due to the simple determination, by right or wrong, to effect a visible aggrandisement of the British dominions? In ordinary affairs, when we find a man's actions inconsistent with one another and with the motives he professes, we conclude that he has never told us his true motives.[1]

No answer to the Ultimatum was received, and on November 21 war was declared by the following proclamation (*vide* F. A., pp. 20, 21):—

Proclamation issued by the Viceroy, in English, Persian, and Urdu, on November 21, 1878.

The Viceroy of India to the Ameer Shere Ali Khan of Cabul, to his Sirdars and subjects, and to all the people of Afghanistan. It is now ten years since the Ameer Shere Ali Khan, after a prolonged struggle, had at last succeeded in placing himself upon the Throne of Cabul; at that time his dominion still needed consolidation, and the extent of it was

[1] From the latest utterances of the Prime Minister, made after these sheets were put into print, the true motive appears to be acquisition of territory. See *inf.*, Cap. IV.

still undefined. In these circumstances the Ameer, who had already been assisted by the British Government with money and with arms, expressed a wish to meet the Viceroy of India; his wish was cordially complied with; he was courteously received and honourably entertained by the Viceroy at Umballa; the countenance and support he had come to seek were then assured to him; he at the same time obtained further unconditional assistance in arms and money. These tokens of the good-will of the British Government, which he gratefully acknowledged, materially aided the Ameer after his return to his own country in there securing his position and extending his authority; since then the Ameer Shere Ali Khan has received from the British Government, in confirmation of its good-will, large additional gifts of arms; the powerful influence of the British Government has secured for him formal recognition by the Emperor of Russia of a fixed boundary between the kingdom of Cabul and the khanates of Bokhara and Kokand; the Ameer's sovereignty over Wakhan and Badakshan was thereby admitted and made sure, a sovereignty which had till then been disputed by the Russian Government; his subjects have been allowed to pass freely throughout the Indian Empire, to carry on trade, and to enjoy all the protection afforded by the British Government to its own subjects; in no single instance have they been unjustly or inhospitably treated within British jurisdiction; for all these gracious acts the Ameer Shere Ali Khan has rendered no return; on the contrary, he has requited them with active ill-will and open discourtesy. The authority over Badakshan, acquired for him by the influence of the British Government, was used by him to forbid passage through that province to a British officer of rank returning from a Mission to a neighbouring State; he has closed, against free passage to British subjects and their commerce, the roads between India and Afghanistan; he has maltreated British subjects, and permitted British traders to be plundered within his jurisdiction, giving them neither protection nor redress; he has used cruelly and put to death subjects of his own on the mere suspicion that they were in communication with the British Government; he has openly and assiduously endeavoured by words and deeds to stir up religious hatred against the English, and incited war against the Empire of India. Having previously excluded British officers from every part of his dominions, and

refused to receive a British Mission; having left unanswered friendly communication addressed to him by the Viceroy, and repelled all efforts towards amicable intercourse between the British Government and himself, he has, nevertheless, received formally and entertained publicly at Cabul an Embassy from Russia; this he has done at a time when such an act derived special significance from the character of contemporaneous events in Europe, and the attitude of England and Russia in relation thereto. Furthermore, he has done it well knowing that the Russian Government stands pledged by engagements with England to regard his territories as completely beyond the sphere of Russian influence. Finally, while this Russian Embassy is still at his capital, the Ameer has forcibly repulsed at his outpost an English Envoy of high rank, of whose coming he had formal and timely announcement by a letter from the Viceroy, attesting the importance and urgency of the Envoy's Mission. Even then the British Government, still anxious to avert the calamities of war, deferred hostile action, and proffered to the Ameer a last opportunity of escaping the punishment merited by his acts. Of this opportunity the Ameer has refused to avail himself. It has been the wish of the British Government to find the best security for its Indian frontier in the friendship of a State whose independence it seeks to confirm, and of a Prince whose Throne it has helped to support. Animated by this wish, the British Government has made repeated efforts to establish with the Ameer Shere Ali Khan, those close and cordial relations which are necessary to the interests of the two neighbouring countries, but its efforts, after being persistently repulsed, have now been met with open indignity and defiance. The Ameer Shere Ali Khan, mistaking for weakness the long forbearance of the British Government, has deliberately incurred its just resentment. With the Sirdars and people of Afghanistan this Government has still no quarrel, and desires none. They are absolved from all responsibility from the recent acts of the Ameer, and as they have given no offence, so the British Government, wishing to respect their independence, will not willingly injure or interfere with them, nor will the British Government tolerate interference on the part of any other Power in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Upon the Ameer Shere Ali Khan alone rests the responsibility of having exchanged the friendship for the hostility of the Empress of India.

CHAPTER XIII.

LORD CRANBROOK'S DESPATCH.

ONE or two days before war was declared, the views taken by Her Majesty's Ministers of these transactions were given to the public under the form of a despatch from Lord Cranbrook to the Government of India. We quote the document in full.

India Office: London, November 18, 1878.

My Lord,—The letters[1] and telegraphic despatches which your Government has transmitted to me, reporting the circumstances connected with the reception of a Russian Mission at Cabul in July last, and the subsequent rejection by the Ameer Shere Ali Khan of the special Embassy accredited to his Court by your Excellency, have been considered by Her Majesty's Government with the care due to their importance.

2. The various communications which have from time to time passed between the Government at home and that of India, ending with Lord Salisbury's despatch of October 4 last year, contain a complete exposition of the general policy of the British Government towards Afghanistan, and set forth moreover the considerations which lately induced Her Majesty's Government to endeavour to place their relations with the Ameer on a more satisfactory footing. In order however that no misapprehension may exist on this subject, I deem it advisable to recapitulate some of the leading features of that policy, and to trace the course of events which have led to the present condition of affairs on the frontier.

3. Although much difference of opinion has existed, and still exists, amongst eminent authorities on the subject of the

[1] No. 53, Secret, August 5, 1878. No. 86, Secret, August 16, 1878.
„ 61 „ „ 19 „ „ 93 „ „ 26 „
„ 67 „ „ 27 „ „ 95 „ Oct. 3 „
„ 79 „ Sept. 9 „

frontier policy to be pursued by the Indian Government, that difference has reference rather to the methods to be followed than to the objects in view. The consistent aim of the British Government during a series of years has been to establish on its north-western border a strong, friendly, and independent State, with interests in unison with those of the Indian Government, and ready to act, in certain eventualities, as an auxiliary in the protection of the frontier from foreign intrigue or aggression. The Treaty of 1855, negotiated by Lord Dalhousie, with the approval of Lord Aberdeen's Government, and still in force, bears witness to the importance then attached to friendly relations with Afghanistan. It was described by the Governor-General[1] in words which fully explain its intended effect:—'The treaty gives to the Government of India on its western frontier as complete security against a foreign and distant enemy as it is possible for us in the nature of things to compass.'

4. The question however has assumed special prominence since the period of the transfer to the Crown of the direct administration of India. The growing interest in the subject has been the result partly of the increased responsibilities assumed by the Government of Her Majesty in maintaining her Indian Empire, and partly of the intestine disorders to which Afghanistan became a prey after the accession of the present Ameer to the Throne in the year 1863. Upon Lord Lawrence devolved the direction of the policy to be adopted in this new state of affairs, and that statesman considered that the objects of the British Government would be best obtained by abstaining from active interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and by the friendly recognition of the *de facto* Rulers of that country, or of portions of it, without undertaking inconvenient liabilities on their behalf. On this basis Lord Lawrence thought that the British Government would have the greatest chance of gaining the permanent friendship and alliance of the Afghan people. The outposts of Russia were then distant from the borders of Afghanistan, and his Lordship's Government attached no special importance to the probability and danger of the growth of the former Power in the direction of India, which, they considered, would in any case be best restrained or rendered innocuous by a friendly understanding on the subject between the English and Russian Cabinets.

[1] Minute, April 30, 1855, in Secret Letter, No. 3, of May 10, 1855.

5. The views of Her Majesty's Government of that day on the subject of their relations with Afghanistan were in complete harmony with those of Lord Lawrence. They did not desire to exercise active influence at Cabul, nor to interfere in the conflicts then rife between contending parties in Afghanistan, so long as those conflicts did not jeopardise the peace of the frontier. This policy was therefore adhered to, although not without some inconvenient results, during the civil war which raged for so many years after Shere Ali's accession, and might not unreasonably be thought suited to the circumstances of the time. But the final and unaided success of the Ameer in regaining his Throne, in the autumn of 1868, in some measure changed the position of affairs, and, in the opinion both of Lord Lawrence and of Her Majesty's Government, justified some intervention in his Highness's favour, and the grant to him of such assistance in money and arms as appeared conducive to the maintenance of his authority.

6. The policy followed by Lord Mayo's administration in its dealings with Afghanistan was to a considerable extent in accord with the course of action thus finally adopted in the autumn of 1868 by his predecessor. Whilst however Lord Mayo did not deviate in any material degree from the attitude of non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, which had been so long maintained, he recognised Shere Ali as the *de jure* as well as the *de facto* Ruler of that country, and, in a letter addressed to that Prince, engaged to view with severe displeasure any attempt on the part of his rivals to disturb his position. This step, added to the marked personal influence obtained by Lord Mayo over the Ameer, was sufficient at the moment to remove a certain feeling of resentment which had been generated in his mind by the apparent indifference shown by the British Government to the result of his struggle for power, and at the same time rendered his Highness' position at Cabul more assured than that of any previous Ruler.

7. The advances of Russia in Central Asia had not, up to this period, assumed dimensions such as to cause uneasiness to the Indian Government. Lord Mayo agreed therefore in the views of his predecessor, that the best means of averting interference on the part of the Turkistan authorities in the affairs of Afghanistan would be by a frank interchange of views on that subject between the Government of Her Majesty and that of the Czar. Her Majesty's Government

had independently arrived at the same conclusion, and early in 1869 initiated friendly negotiations at St. Petersburg, which terminated in a very distinct understanding on this subject, and in the recognition by the Czar's Government of the limits of the Ameer's territories, in complete accord with the wishes of Shere Ali and of the British Government.

8. The policy of his predecessors was that substantially followed by Lord Northbrook, although the rapid development of events in Central Asia was gradually increasing the difficulty of abstaining from closer relations with the ruler of Cabul. The capture of Khiva by the forces of the Czar in the spring of 1873, and the total subordination of that khanate to Russia, caused Shere Ali considerable alarm, and led him to question the value of the pledges with reference to Afghanistan which had been given by his Imperial Majesty to England, and which had been communicated to his Highness by the British Government. Actuated by his fears on this score, his Highness sent a special Envoy to Simla in the summer of that year, charged with the duty of expressing them to the Government of India.

9. Finding that the object of the Ameer was to ascertain definitely how far he might rely on the help of the British Government if his territories were threatened by Russia, Lord Northbrook's Government was prepared[1] to assure him that, under certain conditions, the Government of India would assist him to repel unprovoked aggression. But Her Majesty's Government at home did not share[2] his Highness' apprehension, and the Viceroy ultimately informed the Ameer that the discussion of the question would be best postponed to a more convenient season.[3] The effect of this announcement on his Highness, although conveyed in conciliatory language, was not favourable; the policy which dictated it was unintelligible to his mind, and he received it with feelings of chagrin and disappointment. His reply to Lord Northbrook's communication was couched in terms of ill-disguised sarcasm; he took no notice of the Viceroy's proposal to depute a British officer to examine the northern frontier of Afghanistan; he subsequently refused permission to Sir Douglas Forsyth to return from Kashgar to India through Cabul; he left untouched a

[1] Telegram to Viceroy, July 26, 1873.
[2] Telegram from Viceroy, July 24, 1873.
[3] Letter from Viceroy, September 6, 1873, in Secret Letter, No. 75, dated September 15, 1873.

gift of money lodged to his credit by the Indian Government, and generally assumed towards it an attitude of sullen reserve.

10. Such was the position of affairs when Her Majesty's present Advisers assumed office in 1874. The maintenance of Afghanistan as a strong and friendly Power had at all times been the object of British policy. The method adopted in attaining that object had not met with the success that was desirable. Its accomplishment was nevertheless a matter of grave importance, and it had now to be considered with reference to the rapid march of events in Turkestan. Her Majesty's Government could not view with indifference the probable influence of those events upon the character of an Asiatic Prince whose dominions were thereby brought within a steadily narrowing circle between two great military empires, and although no immediate danger appeared to threaten British interests on the frontier of Afghanistan, the situation in Central Asia had become sufficiently grave to suggest the necessity of timely precaution. Her Majesty's Government considered that the first step necessary was the improvement of their relations with the Ameer himself. With this object in view, they deemed it expedient that his Highness should be invited to receive a temporary Mission at Cabul, in order that an accredited British Envoy might confer with him personally upon what was taking place, might assure him of the desire of the Queen's Government that his territories should remain safe from external attack, and at the same time might point out to him the extreme difficulty of attaining this object unless it were permitted by him to place its own officers on his frontier to watch the course of events beyond it. It was true that the Ameer's relations with the Russian Governor-General of Turkistan had of late become more intimate, and that a correspondence, which that official had commenced with the Cabul Durbar in 1871, and which at one time had caused serious disquiet to the Ameer, was being carried on with increased activity, whilst his Highness's original practice of consulting the Indian Government as to the replies to be sent to General Kaufmann's communications had been discontinued.[1] Nevertheless, Her Majesty's Government were willing to believe that Shere Ali, if his intentions were friendly, would be ready to join them in measures advantageous to himself and essential for the protection of common interests.

[1] See comments on this paragraph, *inf.*, 266–8.

11. In view of these interests, and of the responsibilities which had morally devolved upon the British Government on behalf of Afghanistan, looking also to the imperfect information available with regard to the country, in respect to which those responsibilities had been incurred, Lord Northbrook's Government had, in 1873, expressed the opinion that the temporary presence in Afghanistan of a British officer, as then proposed by them, might do much to allay any feelings of mistrust lingering in the minds of the Afghan people, and might at the same time prepare the way for eventually placing permanent British representatives at Cabul, Herat, and elsewhere. Encouraged by this opinion, Her Majesty's Government came to the conclusion that, although Lord Northbrook's efforts to attain the desired object had not met with success, the time had come when the measure thus indicated could no longer with safety be postponed. Your predecessor in Council had indeed, whilst appreciating all the advantages to be anticipated from it, frankly represented to Her Majesty's present Advisers the difficulties attending the initiation of it; he believed the time and circumstances of the moment to be inopportune for placing British Agents on the Afghan borders, and was of opinion that such a step should be deferred till the progress of events justified more specific assurances to Shere Ali, which might then be given in the shape of a treaty followed by the establishment of agencies at Herat and other suitable places. Her Majesty's Government however were unable to agree in this view; they deemed it probable that if events were thus allowed to march without measures of precaution on the part of the British Government, the time would have passed when representations to the Ameer could be made with any probability of a favourable result; and they considered it important that the actual sentiments of his Highness, in reference to which different opinions were held by different authorities, should be tested in good time.

12. Accordingly, on your Excellency's departure from England to assume the Viceroyalty, Her Majesty's Government instructed you to offer to Shere Ali that same active countenance and protection which he had previously solicited at the hands of the Indian Government. It was clearly impossible however to enter into any formal engagement in this sense without requiring from the Ameer some substantial proof of his unity of interests with the British Government. Whilst Her Majesty's Government therefore authorised your Excel-

lency to concede to his Highness substantial pecuniary aid, a formal recognition of his dynasty, so far as it would not involve active interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and an explicit pledge of material support in case of unprovoked foreign aggression, you were directed not to incur these heavy responsibilities unless Shere Ali, on his part, was prepared to allow a British Agent or Agents access to positions in his territories (other than at Cabul itself), where, without prejudicing the personal authority of the ruler, they could acquire trustworthy information of events likely to threaten the tranquillity or independence of Afghanistan.

13. The measures which your Excellency adopted on your arrival in India to give effect to the instructions of Her Majesty's Government were framed with discretion, and in a spirit of consideration towards Shere Ali. You sent your Native Aide-de-camp, Ressaldar-Major Khanan Khan, to that Prince, charged with the duty of informing him of your desire to depute temporarily to his capital, or to any other point in Afghan territory agreeable to his Highness, a special Envoy, whose Mission was not merely to be one of compliment but one for the discussion of matters of common interest to the two Governments; and you took care to convey to his Highness verbal assurances of the friendly character of your advances to him. But Shere Ali rejected your overtures and declined to receive your Envoy.

14. Your Excellency exhorted the Ameer to consider seriously the consequences of an attitude which might end in compelling the British Government to look upon him thenceforth as a Prince who voluntarily desired to isolate his interests from those of the British Government. In a conciliatory spirit you abstained from pressing upon him the reception of your Envoy, and you acceded to a suggestion of his Highness that your Vakeel at Cabul should make personal representations to you on the Ameer's behalf. These representations proved to be a recapitulation of grievances dating from 1872, and were briefly as follows :—

1. The communication which he had received from the late Viceroy in 1874 on behalf of his rebellious son, Yakoob Khan, whom he had imprisoned.

2. The decision on the question of the Seistan boundary.

3. The gifts sent by the late Viceroy direct to the Chief of Wakhan, who is a tributary to the Ameer.

4. The repeated rejection of his previous requests for

an alliance and a formal recognition of the order of succession as established by him in the person of his son Abdoolah Jan.

15. These grievances appeared to weigh heavily on his Highness' mind, and you therefore lost no time in assuring Shere Ali, through the Vakeel, of the friendly feeling of the British Government towards him, of your desire to remove by a frank exchange of views all causes of irritation on his mind, and of your willingness to accede to his proposal that, in lieu of Sir L. Pelly proceeding to Cabul, an Afghan Envoy should be deputed to meet one from your Excellency at Peshawur.

16. Your Vakeel thereupon returned to Cabul, charged with the duty of explaining to the Ameer, with the assistance of a clearly worded *aide mémoire*, the favourable treaty which the British Government was prepared, upon certain conditions, to negotiate with him, and its desire to clear up past misunderstandings. His Highness evinced no cordiality in his reception of him; but after some delay he deputed to Peshawur his Minister, Syud Noor Mahomed Shah, there to carry on with Sir Lewis Pelly the negotiations which Her Majesty's Government had considered of sufficient importance to have taken place on Afghan soil with the Ameer himself. Although the Ameer had been informed in writing, both of the concessions which the British Government was ready to grant to him and the conditions attached to them, and although, at the same time, it was signified to him that it would be of no avail for him to send his Envoy to Peshawur unless his Highness were prepared to agree to those conditions as the bases of the proposed treaty, it became apparent in the course of the conference that the Minister had received no specific authority to accept them. As, moreover, the language and conduct of Shere Ali, which had so long been dubious, became openly inimical, you judiciously took advantage of the sudden death of his Highness' Envoy to discontinue negotiations, the bases of which had been practically rejected.

17. This step on your part, as well as all your proceedings throughout the year preceding the conference, met with the entire approval of Her Majesty's Government. As observed by my predecessor in his despatch of October 4, 1877, Her Majesty's Government had felt justified in hoping that the advantages which they were ready to tender to the Ameer

would have been accepted in the spirit in which they were offered. At the same time, the attitude of his Highness for some years past had been so ambiguous as to prepare them for a different result. Far however from regarding the possibility of failure as affording sufficient grounds for total inaction and continued acquiescence in the existing state of relations with the Ameer, they had arrived at the conclusion that while the prevailing uncertainty as to his Highness' disposition rendered caution necessary in their advances, it was in itself a reason for adopting steps which would elicit the truth. From this point of view Her Majesty's Government could not regard the result of the Peshawur conference as altogether unsatisfactory, inasmuch as they were no longer left in doubt as to the reality of the Ameer's alienation, which had previously been a matter of speculation. On the other hand, the proceedings at the conference, and the previous negotiations, had placed before the Ameer in a clear light the views of Her Majesty's Government as to their existing obligations towards him, and had, at the same time, informed him of the terms, so favourable to his interests, on which they were willing to draw closer the bonds of union between the two countries, and to place their mutual relations on a footing more advantageous to both.

18. Their overtures having been thus treated, Her Majesty's Government were of opinion that no course was open to them but to maintain an attitude of vigilant reserve until such time as the Ameer might better realise his own position and interests. This view had been anticipated by you in the final assurances conveyed to the Afghan Envoy by Sir Lewis Pelly, and your policy since the close of the Peshawur conference has been in accordance with it. Whilst carefully watching the course of affairs in Afghanistan, so far as the imperfect means of obtaining information has admitted, you abstained from all interference in them, in the hope that time would enable his Highness to realise the dangers accruing to himself by the rejection of the friendly advances of the British Government. That hope however has not been realised. The Ameer has persisted in his unfriendly isolation, and ultimately, having two years ago declined to receive a British Envoy even temporarily, within his territory, on the ground that he could not guarantee his safety, nor thereafter be left with any excuse for declining to receive a Russian Mission

he has welcomed with every appearance of ostentation an Embassy from the Czar, despatched to his Court at a time when there were indications that an interruption of friendly relations between this country and Russia might be imminent.

19. In these circumstances your Excellency represented to Her Majesty's Government that a policy of inaction could no longer be persisted in, and that the Ameer's reception of the Russian Mission at such a time, and under such circumstances, left him no further excuse for declining to receive at his capital an Envoy from the British Government. Your Excellency proposed therefore to demand a reception of a Mission to Cabul, headed by an officer of rank, in the person of Sir Neville Chamberlain, whose name and family were held in high esteem by the Ameer.

20. This proposal was approved by Her Majesty's Government. It was evident that a Potentate who willingly admitted to his capital, at a critical period, Envoys of a Power which at the moment might be regarded as making its advances with objects not friendly to the British Government, could not reasonably refuse to receive a Mission from a Power with which he had continuously been in alliance. Your Excellency in Council did not anticipate any such refusal, and Her Majesty's Government saw no reason to question the soundness of your opinion on this point, based, as it must have been, on the best information at your command.

21. The anticipations both of your Excellency and of Her Majesty's Government were however disappointed by the event. In a friendly letter, carried to Cabul by the Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan, you informed the Ameer of the date on which Sir Neville Chamberlain was to leave Peshawur, and you gave his Highness adequate time in which to issue orders to his local officials for the reception of the Mission. You caused it moreover to be intimated to his Highness and his officials that a refusal of free passage to the Mission would be regarded by you as an act of hostility. The orders sent to the Afghan officers at Ali Musjid were, nevertheless the reverse of what you had a right to expect, and Major Cavagnari, who went in advance of your Envoy, was distinctly informed that any attempt to enter Afghan territory would be resisted by force, of which an ostentatious display was at once made.

22. This conduct on the part of the Ameer was wholly without justification. He was aware, from various communications

addressed to him by your Excellency's predecessors, that the Russian Government had given assurances to the Government of Her Majesty to regard his territories as completely beyond its sphere of action; he was equally aware that the whole policy of the British Government since his accession to the Throne had been to strengthen his power and authority, and to protect him from foreign aggression, although the methods adopted for doing so may not have at all times accorded with his Highness' own views; he had received from the British Government evidence of good-will, manifested by large gifts of money and arms, as well as by its successful efforts in obtaining from the Czar's Government its formal recognition of a fixed boundary, agreeable to himself, between his kingdom and the neighbouring khanates; his subjects had been allowed to pass freely throughout India, to the great benefit of the trade and commerce of his country; and in no single instance has the Ameer himself, or any of his people, been treated unjustly or inhospitably within British jurisdiction. By every bond of international courtesy, as well as by the treaty engagement of 1855 existing between the two countries, binding him to be the friend of our friends and the enemy of our enemies, the Ameer was bound to a line of conduct the reverse of that which he adopted.

23. In reporting to Her Majesty's Government the forcible rejection of your friendly Mission, your Excellency expressed the conviction of the Government of India that this act deprived the Ameer of all further claim upon the forbearance of the British Government, and necessitated instant action. Her Majesty's Government were however unwilling to accept the evasive letter brought from Cabul by the Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan as Shere Ali's final answer to your Government, and determined to give him a short time for reconsideration. While therefore Her Majesty's Government acknowledged fully as binding on them the pledges given by Sir N. Chamberlain to the friendly Chiefs and people who undertook the safe conduct of his Mission, they decided to make an effort to avert the calamities of war, and with this object instructed your Excellency to address to his Highness a demand in temperate language, requiring a full and suitable apology within a given time for the affront which he has offered to the British Government, the reception of a permanent British Mission within his territories, and reparation for any injury inflicted by him on the tribes who attended Sir N. Chamber-

lain and Major Cavagnari, as well as an undertaking not to molest them hereafter. These instructions were promptly carried into effect by your Excellency's Government, and the Ameer has been informed that unless a clear and satisfactory reply be received from him by November 20, you will be compelled to consider his intentions as hostile, and to treat him as a declared enemy.

24. It only remains for me to assure your Excellency of the cordial support of Her Majesty's Government in the onerous circumstances in which you are placed, and to state that I have received the commands of Her Majesty to publish this despatch for the general information of the public, in anticipation of the papers connected with the important question with which it deals. Those papers are in course of preparation, but, as they cover a period of not less than fifteen years, they must necessarily be voluminous.

I have, &c.,
CRANBROOK.

Much of this despatch is an echo of what had already come from India, and is subject to the same criticisms. A few more are to be added on the new matter.

Paragraph 3.—Lord Cranbrook here claims for the Government identity of object with all their predecessors, viz., the object of making Afghanistan strong, friendly, and independent. This seems to us mere juggling with words. How can a State be called independent which, to say nothing of other obligations towards a strong neighbour, is not allowed to transact a single stroke of foreign policy? Or how can a State be thought friendly when it is browbeaten into most distasteful concessions? The words, as used by Lords Mayo or Northbrook on the one side, bear quite a different meaning from the words as used by Lords Lytton or Cranbrook on the other side.

It is observable that Lord Cranbrook here mentions the Treaty of 1855 as if it were the only existing one. Lord Lytton does think it necessary to argue away the Treaty of 1857, but Lord Cranbrook quietly drops all mention of it.

Paragraphs 8, 9.—Lord Cranbrook here gives the same erroneous account of the origin of the Simla conference as is given by Lord Lytton; as to which see above (pp. 41, 42). The paragraphs are aimed at showing that the quarrel which Lord Salisbury fastened on Shere 'Ali through the agency of Lord Lytton was owing to the refusal of Mr. Gladstone's Government to allow Lord Northbrook to give to Shere Ali the requisite amount of assurance against Russian aggression. The refutation of these representations is found in the documents which we have been abstracting and elucidating. It is clear that in 1873 the Home Government put no prohibition on Lord Northbrook; that Shere Ali was fully assured as to the boundary question with Russia which had then frightened him; that his requests for further promises of assistance were utterly unreasonable and inadmissible; that they were such as Lords Lytton and Salisbury shrank from granting equally with Lord Northbrook and the Duke of Argyll; and that, though Shere Ali was sometimes irritated and sometimes discourteous, he was in no sense hostile till the autumn of 1876, when he had been encroached upon and threatened by Lord Lytton.

It is noticeable that Lord Lytton's account of what passed at the Simla conference, as distinguished from his account of its origin and ulterior effects on Shere Ali's conduct, is quite correct; so that the insinuation that Lord Northbrook was thwarted by the Home Government is new and of English growth.

Paragraph 15.—Lord Cranbrook says that Lord Lytton lost no time in assuring Shere Ali, through our Vakeel, of the friendly feeling of the British Government towards him, and of Lord Lytton's desire to remove all causes of irritation on his mind. It seems then, that to tell a man in picturesque language that he is a frail vessel and in a way to be crushed, and that if he does not do what he is bid his country is likely to be wiped out of the map, with other similar intimations, is the way to

assure him of friendly feeling and to soothe his irritation. Surely we must read 'friendly feeling' towards the Ameer to mean a determination to have command of his country, and 'removing irritation' to mean frightening him out of any will of his own. Throughout these documents the reader must be very cautious in accepting the ordinary meaning of any words used by the Home Government and, after the departure of Lord Northbrook, by the Government of India, to indicate the relations between us and the Afghans. Well may the unfortunate Ameer say that the ways of Lord Lytton are 'inconsistent with the sublime way of friendship and alliance.'

Paragraph 17.—Lord Cranbrook thinks the result of the Peshawur conference to be satisfactory in one respect, viz., that it left the British Government in no doubt as to the reality of the Ameer's alienation. Lord Salisbury said something of the kind in his despatch of October 4, 1877. But no 'alienation' in the sense of hostility was shown by the conference; only great fear and suspicion owing to Lord Lytton's proceedings. The attempts to excite a jehad amount to manifest hostility. But the conference brought no evidence, only denial, of such a movement; the evidence of it, whatever it may be, came from other quarters, and it only tends to show hostility in the latter part of 1876. That there was previously some unreasonable irritation on Shere Ali's part, owing partly to the refusal of preposterous demands, and partly to the friction which will occur in the course of affairs, was well known, and was told to Lord Salisbury in 1875. But it was nothing unusual, nothing to be alarmed at, nothing to be called hostility or even alienation; nothing inconsistent with a number of friendly offices and relations; nothing which might not well be borne with, and overcome by patient moderation and firmness.

Paragraphs 17, 18.—The threats used by Lord Lytton, his termination of the alliance, his withdrawal of our representative from Cabul, seem to be thought

quite unworthy of notice in this statement of the posture of affairs.

Paragraph 20.—Lord Lytton's opinion, against all warnings from past experience, that the Ameer would not reject his new Mission, is accepted by Her Majesty's Government because it was based on the best information at his command. But it does not appear to be based on any information at all (*vide* A, p. 218). In fact, Lord Lytton had cut himself off from information by withdrawing our Vakeel.

Paragraphs 22, 23.—It is remarkable that Lord Cranbrook here insists, as Lord Lytton before insisted, on the Treaty of 1855 in our favour, though we had virtually broken off all treaties with the Ameer after the Peshawur conference. The sole reason assigned for war, or what is the same thing, a new demand backed by war, is Shere Ali's reception of a Russian Embassy; because, it is said, he knew that the Russians had undertaken not to send one. That might be cause of quarrel with the Russians. But Shere Ali had never undertaken not to receive one; and, even if he had, our complete abandonment of him would have set him free. It seems something monstrous that when a strong Power has done something which it has agreed with us not to do, we should quarrel, not with it, but with a weak Power, which has done nothing whatever at variance with our rights, but has only been unable or unwilling to resist what the strong Power has done.

Nothing however can be clearer than these paragraphs to show that the cause assigned for the war is, not Shere Ali's offences, but our jealousy and fear of the Russians; that our Government was only waiting an excuse for getting a fancied advantage by occupying Afghan territory; that we have simply been pursuing our own supposed interests at the expense of a weak neighbour; and that nothing that Shere Ali could have done, short of a complete surrender of his independence to us, would have satisfied our Government.

CHAPTER XIV.

SUMMARY.

AND now the die is cast. Our irresistible military force is put in motion to overrun Afghanistan, and the Ameer, protesting to the last that he has done us no wrong, and that he does not entertain any hostile feelings, and will not evince any hostility to us, but knowing that he is doomed, 'commits all his affairs to the merciful God, upon whose will and intention all matters depend. He alone suffices for us, and He is the best Vakeel.'

Those who have attentively followed this necessarily long exposition of the affairs treated of in the Afghanistan Papers will have had no difficulty in seeing that, while war was the almost certain consequence of the high-handed course resolved on in 1875 and pursued in 1876, the tactics have been twice suddenly changed. The rupture of March 30, 1877, as explained by the despatch of May 10, 1877, is totally inconsistent with the course taken during the preceding month. The Ultimatum and the declaration of war are totally inconsistent with the ground taken in the despatch of May 1877. In that despatch and the enclosed one of March 15, 1877, the British Government was represented as a model of dignity and moderation. We were hurt at the perversity of Shere Ali in rejecting the measures we designed for his good; but in our paramount strength we confidently awaited the development of Afghan politics. We assured the Afghans (*sup.*, p. 125) that so long as they are not incited to acts of aggression upon the territories or friends of the

British Government no British soldier will ever be permitted to enter Afghanistan uninvited. We assured the Ameer (*ibid.*) that the British Government would scrupulously continue to respect his independence and authority throughout the territories up to that time recognised as in his lawful possession, and would duly abstain from interference so long as the Ameer on his part no less scrupulously abstained from interference with tribes or territories not his own. Alas! there comes a rumour of a Russian Embassy which touches us like the spear of Ithuriel. All the assumed confidence and dignity falls off in a moment, and we prepare for aggression. We make a demand beyond our existing rights—a demand which any man who could reason from antecedent events must have known would be refused—give notice that the refusal of it will be taken as an act of hostility, and on the refusal declare war. The Afghans have abstained from all aggression, yet British soldiers have entered their country uninvited, and are slaying its inhabitants and destroying their property, because they resist. The Ameer has not interfered with any tribes or territories not his own, yet we have overthrown his independence and authority by force. For all this violence the only formal plea put forward is, that the Ameer has had with another nation an intercourse from which they, and not he, had promised to abstain; an intercourse not invited by him, to all appearance reluctantly accepted by him, and from which, except by our own rashness, no evil consequences need result. The substantial plea, underlying our professions, and now openly advanced by the apologists who are always found for a warlike policy, is, that we have a right to provide against danger, by taking an innocent neighbour's land, and liberty, and life. To such melancholy inconsistencies all statesmen are liable who are really bent on ambitious ends, while they strive for a time to use the language of justice and moderation. But to those of our countrymen—we hope the greater part—who desire justice and peace, who wish

to keep oaths sworn to our neighbours, though it be to our own hindrance; who think that there are rules of right and wrong even between strong nations and weak ones; who believe that this world is so governed that the sins of nations as well of individuals find them out at last; to all such it is indeed a bitter humiliation that our statesmen should have led us into an unhallowed enterprise which no military success can purify. We do not here discuss the question whether our safety is increased in any appreciable degree by taking our neighbours' territory, though we firmly believe that by so doing we are not avoiding any danger, but are incurring great danger, and are wasting the resources of our Indian subjects in ruinous conquests. What we have endeavoured to point out is, that our Ministers have, against the best advice, embarked us on a policy at direct variance with that of their predecessors for many years; that they have forced it on in defiance of natural rights and of express treaties; that they have departed from truth in their words as well as from justice in their acts; and that, while plunging us into a war of ambition and aggression, they have with unexampled craft concealed what they were doing from the nation they serve.

PART II.

QUETTA.

QUETTA, otherwise called Shāl-Kot, chief town of the province of Shāl, now belonging to the dominions of the Khan of Khelat, is a fortified place containing about 1,200 houses, in N. lat. 30° 11′, E. long. 66° 40′. Situated about 5,500 feet above the level of the sea, at the head of the Bolan Pass, Quetta commands the valley of Peshin and the road to Candahar, a large and important city, the original capital of the Durrāni kingdom.

The provinces of Shāl, Mastung, and Shorawak formed part of the Afghan State founded by Ahmed Shah Durrāni. They were subsequently made over to the Khan of Khelat, in return for his allegiance and the maintenance of a contingent of troops for the service of the Afghan king. In 1839, when Shah Shuja was carried by a British army to the Throne of Cabul, it was considered an essential point in our policy to enforce the subordination of the Khan of Khelat to the Afghan sovereign. In the operations of that year the fortress of Khelat was stormed by a force under Sir Thomas Willshire; the Khan was killed in the assault, and his son, Meer Nusseer Khan, compelled by a treaty dated October 6, 1841, to give up the town of Quetta and the province of Shāl to the Afghan kingdom, and 'to acknowledge himself and his descendants the vassals of the King of Cabul, in like manner as his ancestors were formerly the vassals of his Majesty's ancestors.' Two other 'tracts of country,' Kutchee and Mastung, 're-

sumed on the death of Meer Mihrab Khan,' were restored to Meer Nusseer Khan and his descendants, through the kindness of his Majesty Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk.'

The Khan of Khelat also bound himself by this treaty 'not to hold any political communication with foreign Powers without the consent of the British Government and of his Majesty Shah Shuja-ul-Mulk, and in all cases to act in subordinate co-operation with the Governments of British India and of the Shah.' [1]

Subsequently to the withdrawal of our forces from Afghanistan and the restoration of the Ameer Dost Mahomed, the province of Shāl and town of Quetta were again placed in possession of the Khan of Khelat, who, without any new engagement, subsided into the position of a feudatary and protected Prince under the Government of India. The above-mentioned treaty of 1841 was not, however, 'annulled' until the year 1854, when a new treaty was made between Meer Nusseer Khan and the Marquis of Dalhousie, Governor-General of India, in which the Khan of Khelat agreed to 'act in subordinate co-operation' with the British Government, and to allow British troops 'to occupy such positions as may be thought advisable by the British authorities,' 'in any part of the territory of Khelat.' [2]

Historically, ethnologically, and geographically the town of Quetta, with the provinces of Shāl and Mastung, are included in Afghanistan. 'On entering the Bolan Pass you are in Khorassan' -*i.e.*, Afghanistan.[3]

'The provinces of Shāl and Mastung, formerly subject to Cabul, contain a large Afghan population.'[4]

Dr. H. W. Bellew, C.S.I., of the Bengal Staff Corps, says that 'these districts,' Shāl and Mastung, with Shorawak, 'are still considered by the Afghans as por-

[1] *Treaties with Native States of India since* 1834 (House of Commons, 341 of 1856), pp. 35, 36.
[2] *Treaties with Native States* (341 of 1856), pp. 36, 37.
[3] Hough's *Operations of the Army of the Indus* (Allen, 1841), p. 49.
[4] Pottinger's *Beloochistan* (Longman, 1816), p. 316.

tions of their country, though they remain under the rule of the Khan of Khelat.'[1]

The occupation of Quetta as an advanced post, for the purpose of exercising a dominating influence over Afghan affairs, and securing a strategical advantage against the progress of Russia in Central Asia, has frequently been recommended by certain Anglo-Indian officials, chiefly attached to the Bombay Presidency, and whose duties had placed them in more or less close connection with the frontier of Sind. Among these three distinguished men now living may be numbered—Sir Henry Rawlinson, Sir Bartle Frere, and Sir Lewis Pelly.

Down to the year 1876 this forward movement was, however, strongly deprecated by each successive Viceroy, supported unanimously by his Council and by each successive Secretary of State. The weight of experience and authority was decidedly against such a policy.

In a despatch dated January 1, 1869, the Viceroy, Sir John (now Lord) Lawrence, in Council, transmits to the Secretary of State, the Duke of Argyll, a series of Minutes and other papers, bearing on a confidential Memorandum by Sir Henry Rawlinson, which had been forwarded by Sir Stafford Northcote, then Secretary of State, for the consideration of the Government of India, proposing various measures 'to counteract the advances of Russia in Central Asia, and to strengthen the influence and power of England in Afghanistan and Persia.'[2] The Viceroy and his Councillors, General Sir W. Mansfield (afterwards Lord Sandhurst), Sir Henry Maine, Sir John Strachey, Mr. G. N. Taylor, and Sir Richard Temple, were of one opinion, that there should be no 'substantial alteration in the course of policy to be adopted on the frontier or beyond it.'

In his own Minute, dated November 25, 1865, the Viceroy, Sir John Lawrence, says:—

[1] *From the Indus to the Tigris* (Trubner, 1874), p. 99.

[2] *Afghanistan Papers*, published by order of the Secretary of State for India, 1878, p. 43.

In respect to the occupation of Quetta, I am still firmly of opinion that this would be quite a false move. It would assuredly be looked on by the Afghans as the forerunner of our advance to Candahar, and perhaps to Herat. I do not, moreover, believe that the presence of a force at Quetta would be acceptable to the Chiefs and people of Khelat; and unless that force were large, and composed of a considerable proportion of British troops, placed in a strong fortified position, it would, in the event of a formidable invasion, be liable to be cut off. Under such circumstances we should have to occupy Sind, not, as now, with the minimum number of troops, but in considerably increased force, so as to provide support to Quetta. [1]

Sir Richard Temple (now Governor of Bombay), in his Minute, dated December 8, 1868, says, 'with regard to the proposed occupation of Quetta':—

This would be a cause of fear to Khelat, and would be regarded as a menace by Candahar. Here, again, we should have the disadvantage of inspiring the Afghans with distrust till the war with Russia comes, and when that does come we shall be obliged to move on from our advanced post at Quetta, instead of selecting our own ground near the mouth of the Bolan Pass.' [2]

In his Minute dated December 8, 1868, General Sir Henry Norman included the proposed occupation of Quetta among plans 'unnecessary, and perhaps useless, for the object aimed at, and certain to involve us in difficulties and expense.' 'The occupation of Quetta,' according to Sir Henry Norman, 'could exercise no more sensible influence on Russian advance than does the existing occupation of Peshawur or Jacobabad.' [3]

The Commander-in-Chief, Sir W. Mansfield (afterwards Lord Sandhurst), in his Minute dated December 24, 1868, thinks 'the argument is complete against a British occupation of Quetta.'

Mr. (now Sir Henry) Davies, late Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, in a Minute dated December 27, 1868, 'cannot regard Sir Henry Rawlinson's pro-

[1] *Afghanistan Papers*, 1878, p. 63. [2] *Ibid.* 1878 p. 69. [3] *Ibid.* 1878, p. 70.

posals otherwise than as an untimely revival of the policy of 1838, which nearly ruined the Empire, and the effects of which we have still to get over.'[1]

General Sir Harry Lumsden, having been requested by the Viceroy to record his views on the subject, said:—

As to the project of occupying Quetta as a *place d'armes*, pushed 250 miles beyond its nearest supports, with nothing in front, and its only communication through a long, difficult, and, in many places, waterless path, flanked all the way by wild and warlike tribes, the idea suggests to my mind nothing but a wanton throwing away of troops and resources which would be of immense value elsewhere.[2]

Sir Donald Macleod, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, said, in a Memorandum dated October 10, 1868:—

I by no means advocate the occupation of Quetta as a strategic military position, however advantageous this position may be deemed by some from a political point of view. Sir Henry Rawlinson admits that we should not be justified in taking this step if we should thereby run the risk of the loss of our friendly intercourse with either Cabul or Beloochistan. And as I feel fully convinced that it would cause extreme suspicion and uneasiness, on the part of the former at all events, I would strongly deprecate all thought of this or any analogous scheme for obtaining a footing in foreign territory until it shall be absolutely forced upon us by aggression and by the occurrence of a state of things not now existing. I believe it to be quite essential, both for our own credit and interests, and for the future well-being of the territory committed to us, that we abstain in the most scrupulous manner from evincing any desire whatever for future territorial acquisitions.[3]

Sir Bartle Frere again brought up the proposal of occupying Quetta in a letter addressed to Sir John Kaye, dated June 12, 1874, which was printed, and circulated by the Secretary of State, the Marquis of Salis-

[1] *Afghanistan Papers*, 1878, p. 79. [2] *Ibid.* 1878, p. 47. [3] *Ibid.* 1878, p. 50.

bury, to the members of the Council of India. Sir Bartle Frere considered it 'essential for our present purpose'—

First, to place an advanced post of our frontier army in the Khan of Khelat's territory at Quetta, sufficiently strong to prevent the place being carried till reinforcements can arrive from the Indus, between which and Quetta the communication should be improved, as far and as fast as practicable, to the foot of the Bolan and through that Pass. This would establish above the Passes, and in the territory of a Power bound by treaty to act in subordinate co-operation with us, an advanced post in an excellent position for watching Southern Afghanistan, and acting, if necessary, on the flank of anything which might threaten India from the Khyber Pass and Cabul.

In a Memorandum dated November 4, 1874, commenting on Sir Bartle Frere's letter to Sir John Kaye, which was also printed at the India Office, Lord Lawrence observed:—

'Sir Bartle Frere revives the old question of the occupation of Quetta. I know that some able men are of his opinion and in favour of that measure. It seems, however, to me to be an unwise step, both in a political and military point of view. It will, I think, do much to revive and strengthen the old jealousy of the Afghans, and lead them to think that we contemplate the reoccupation of their country.

It is, I believe, the case that those who advocate the occupation of Quetta contemplate an advance on Candahar and Herat. What would be the strength of the force, and what would be the cost of carrying out such measures? If we are to meet an invasion by Russia, nothing under an army of 30,000 men, largely composed of Englishmen, would suffice. What would be the cost of half that force operating at a distance from its supplies and resources?

I wish to speak with diffidence on the military side of the question of occupying Quetta. But I have strong convictions on it also. That position would be an outwork, pushed far beyond the ordinary line of our frontier defences, on the north-western border of India. The position must be held in considerable strength, and be well supported, or it might lead to

disaster in the face of a formidable enemy. A weak post at Quetta would invite attack and court insult.

A post at Quetta in view of resisting invasion, such as is contemplated, ought not to consist of less than a brigade of all arms in a strong fortification. It should also be supported by a force ready to move forward at very short notice. A brigade at Quetta could not safely operate on the flank of a formidable army moving by way of Cabul on India through the Khyber Pass. Were Quetta not strongly held, it might be destroyed by a sudden onslaught as the invaders advanced. Such arguments seem to me to be of additional strength should we advance beyond Quetta.

To occupy Quetta securely entails a rearrangement of the occupation of Sind, and of a considerable increase of the force in that province, and probably of the Bombay army. Sind has a climate very inimical to the health of all foreign troops, and more especially of English soldiers.

The Khan of Khelat, Nusseer Khan II., with whom the Treaty of 1854 had been concluded, died in 1857, and was succeeded by his younger brother, Khodadad, the present reigning Khan. From his accession down to 1871 constant disputes prevailed, which had, indeed, commenced in his predecessor's time, between the Khan and his Chieftains, who claimed to hold their estates rather on a federal than a feudal tenure, and to have a consultative share in the Government. In 1871, after several minor insurrections, a formidable revolt broke out against the Khan's authority. The Government of India was now called upon by both Sir W. Merewether, who was then Chief Commissioner of Sind, and by the Government of Bombay, to support the Khan by force of arms.

The Government of India, Lord Mayo being Viceroy, absolutely refused to have recourse to arms in support of the Khan, but in order to terminate the dispute, desired both parties to submit to British arbitration, promising to the Khan an annual payment of one lakh of rupees if these terms were fully accepted and carried out.[1] After much hesitation and consulta-

[1] *Beloochistan Papers*, No. 1, 1877, p. 116.

tion, both sides agreed to the terms laid down by the Government of India. Neither the Khan nor the Chiefs, however, were satisfied with the settlement that was made, and the country fell into great confusion, until at length, in May 1873, the British Agent, Major Harrison, was withdrawn from Khelat, and the payment of the Khan's subsidy was suspended.[1]

The practical result of this action was that plundering and anarchy prevailed over the whole of Khelat, except in the vicinity of the capital town and on the Punjab frontier; the Bolan Pass remained closed to traffic for three years, and the Khan assumed an unfriendly attitude towards our Government.

Sir William Merewether, the Chief Commissioner of Sind, in conformity with whose advice these dealings with the Khan and his Chieftains had hitherto been carried on, proposed on several occasions that military measures should be adopted for the re-establishment of good order in the territories of Khelat; but after much correspondence and personal consultation with Sir W. Merewether at Calcutta, the Government of Lord Northbrook decided in January, 1875, that the circumstances did not justify a resort to hostilities. In the despatch dated January 5, 1875, from the Viceroy in Council to the Marquis of Salisbury, Secretary of State for India, the following passage occurs:—

> Apart from the immediate objections to the Commissioner's proposals which we have already described, we are unwilling at present to adopt measures which might have the effect of arousing suspicions in Afghanistan as to our intentions, and which, with reference to the present aspect of affairs in Central Asia, would be liable to misconstruction.'[2]

In a despatch dated July 8, 1875, Lord Salisbury thus expressed his full approval of the policy and proceedings of Lord Northbrook's Government:—

> Much as Her Majesty's Government regret the distracted state of affairs in Khelat, they see no reason to question the

[1] *Beloochistan Papers.* [2] *Ibid.* No. 1, 1877, p. 529.

justice of your opinion that it is due more to the inability of the Khan to control his subjects than to any hostile feeling on his part towards the British Government. In this view, armed intervention would appear an unfriendly act towards a State with which our relations have, until recently, been cordial, while it would possibly entail a prolonged occupation of the country, and might involve ulterior results of a serious kind in other quarters.[1]

The chief objects that the Government of India desired to secure in the settlement of Khelat affairs were the prevention of plundering near the British frontier, and the safe transit of trade, especially through the Bolan Pass. Captain (now Major) Sandeman, Deputy Commissioner of the Dehra Ghazee Khan District of the Punjab, was directed by instructions from the Government of India, dated October 16, 1875, to endeavour to settle amicably quarrels between the Chieftains and Tribes and the Khan's Government, and to devise plans for protecting the trade route *viâ* the Bolan Pass, and these duties he was to carry on in communication with Sir W. Merewether, the Commissioner of Sind, and to some extent under his orders. Captain Sandeman's proceedings being completely in accord with the views of the Viceroy in Council, while Sir W. Merewether considered that they were so objectionable and embarrassing that he ordered Captain Sandeman to return to his district, and requested that he might be kept there, the Government of India were constrained to relieve the Commissioner of Sind of all responsibility for Khelat affairs, and to place them in charge of Captain Sandeman's immediate superior, the Commissioner of the Derajat division of the Punjab.[2]

In a letter dated August 28, 1876, Colonel Munro, Commissioner of the Derajat, reports to the Government of India the successful results of Major Sandeman's negotiations for the reconciliation of the Khan of Khelat and his Chiefs, for the due discipline of certain predatory tribes, and for the protection of the traffic

[1] *Beloochistan Papers*, No. 1, 1877, p. 530. [2] *Ibid.* No. 2, 1877, p. 159.

through the Bolan Pass. In this letter Colonel Munro recommends that a British officer should be 'temporarily' located at Dadur, at the south entrance of the Bolan Pass, 'during the cold and trading season.' 'The re-establishment of friendly controlling intercourse with the Khan of Khelat, and the location at Khelat again of a European officer as Political Agent, would doubtless tend to obviate the necessity for any long continuance of a British officer at Dadur.'[1]

In a letter, dated September 1, 1876, Colonel Munro, Commissioner of the Derajat, suggests to the Government of India that 'in furtherance of the arrangements made by Major Sandeman in concert with his Highness the Khan of Khelat and the Chiefs of tribes in the Bolan Pass for the safe conduct of caravans through that defile to and from Candahar, it seems necessary that orders should be solicited from his Highness the Ameer of Cabul for securing protection to caravans between Quetta (Shāl Kot) and Peshin, the latter place being in the Ameer of Cabul's territory.' Colonel Munro concluded by expressing a 'hope that the Government of India may deem it advisable to cause his Highness the Ameer of Cabul to be favourably moved in this matter.'[2]

Up to this time, in the midst of diverse and conflicting opinions, not one of the authorities in Sind, in the Punjab, or in the Government of India, during these long-continued proceedings for the settlement of Khelat affairs, had proposed the occupation of Quetta, either with reference to the preservation of order and subordination in the Khan's dominions, or to the better security of the trade route through the Bolan Pass.

When the Government of India decided on Major Sandeman's mission to Khelat being accompanied by a military 'escort' of strength sufficient 'for his protection and dignity,'[3] care was taken lest any anxiety or alarm should be given to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

[1] *Beloochistan Papers* No. 2, p. 246. [2] *Ibid.* No. 2, 1877, p. 276.
[3] *Ibid.* No. 2, 1877, p. 168.

The Secretary to the Government of India, in a despatch to the Government of the Punjab, dated March 20, 1876, requests that the 'substance of the orders passed by the Governor-General in Council, in reference to Khelat, and a brief statement of the object which the Government has in view, namely, the pacification of the country, may be communicated to the British Agent at Cabul, in order that he may be in a position to acquaint the Ameer with the particulars of the case, in the event of his Highness seeking for information.'[1]

On April 12, 1876, the administration of the Government of India was made over by Lord Northbrook to the present Viceroy, Lord Lytton. The change that then came over the spirit and tendencies of our policy towards Khelat, and its complication with the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government, will appear in the following extracts from a despatch of the Government of India to the Marquis of Salisbury, dated March 23, 1877:—

The present Viceroy, having had the advantage before leaving England of personal communication with your Lordship on the general subject of our frontier relations, was strongly impressed by the importance of endeavouring to deal with them simultaneously, as indivisible parts of a single Imperial question mainly dependent for its solution on the foreign policy of Her Majesty's Government, which is the ultimate guardian of the whole British Empire, rather than as isolated local matters. From this point of view, and bearing in mind the ambiguous and unsatisfactory character of our relations with Afghanistan, it had been his Excellency's intention to depute a confidential *Envoy to the court of Cabul vid Candahar, in and about which locality the Afghan population is most friendly to the British Government.* This Envoy, in addition to other amicable communications suggested by a desire for the improvement of our relations with that State, and the better definition of the mutual obligations at present existing between its Government and our own, would have been instructed to explain frankly to the Ameer our exact position in regard to Khelat, and the steps which had been or

[1] *Beloochistan Papers*, No. 2, 1877, p. 162.

might be rendered necessary for the protection of British interest, on our western frontier.

The execution of this project was, however, rendered impossible by the instructions which had already been issued to Major Sandeman during his Excellency's journey to India; and the Viceroy, in these circumstances, immediately recognised the expediency of supporting and aiding Major Sandeman in the discharge of his difficult and important task.

In this despatch the Viceroy in Council recognises the success of Major Sandeman's Mission, which, under the arrangements made by Lord Northbrook's Government, had been accompanied, in order to give it weight and to mark its importance, by an escort consisting of 1,056 men of the Sind and Punjab frontier forces. By 'well-directed sympathy and unfailing patience,' Major Sandeman, having 'reduced the respective claims and grievances' of the Khan and his Chiefs 'into an intelligible shape, and narrowed them to a practical issue,' had 'effected between them a comprehensive settlement, on terms that were welcomed by the disputants on each side as mutually satisfactory.' An instrument embodying these terms of reconciliation was duly concluded and recorded, and assent given by all parties to 'measures for the protection of the Bolan Pass.'[1]

Major Sandeman had expressed his opinion 'that the *presence of an experienced European officer (for the present at all events) at the Khan's Court, fully supported by our Government,* to aid and guide him in the management of the Khanate, is essentially necessary, and unless this is granted, I am of opinion the present mediation will not get a free trial, and the peace of the country consequently will probably not last.'[2]

The despatch from Lord Lytton in Council, dated March 23, 1877, already quoted, apparently refers to this opinion of Major Sandeman's in the following pas-

[1] *Beloochistan Papers*, No. 2, 1877, pp. 356, 358.
[2] *Ibid.* No. 2, 1877, p. 254.

The British mediator himself had in very emphatic terms recorded his deliberate opinion that a more direct and active interference than heretofore would long be needed to secure the fruits of his mediation. With this opinion before us we were constrained to acknowledge that we could not decline the position thus bequeathed to us by a long course of antecedent circumstances without thereby incurring the grave responsibility of deliberately plunging into renewed bloodshed, and interminable anarchy, a neighbouring and a friendly State which had urgently appealed to us for timely rescue from those evils.

Whilst, therefore, we were fully alive to the difficulties and responsibilities of the permanent intervention advocated by Major Sandeman, we could not disguise from ourselves the greater difficulties and responsibilities of renouncing the position in which the success of his mediation had conspicuously placed us. Moreover, we were also of opinion that the highest and most general interests of this Empire (interests no longer local but Imperial) rendered it necessary to place our relations with Khelat on a much firmer, more durable, and more intimate footing than before. Whatever may have been the personal disinclination of this Government in times past to exercise active interference in Khanates beyond our border, it must now be acknowledged that, having regard to possible contingencies in Central Asia, to the profound and increasing interest with which they are already anticipated and discussed by the most warlike populations within as well as without our frontier, and to the evidence that has reached us of foreign intrigue in Khelat itself (intrigue at present innocuous, but sure to become active in proportion to the anarchy or weakness of that State and its alienation from British influence), we can no longer avoid the conclusion that the relations between the British Government and this neighbouring Khanate must henceforth be regulated with a view to more important objects than the temporary prevention of plunder on the British border. But, indeed, the experience of late years is no less conclusive that even the permanent protection of British trade and property equally demand a more energetic and consistent exercise of that authority which we are now invited, by its Ruler, its Chiefs, and its People, to exercise in Khelat.[1]

The immediate objects proposed for Major Sande-

[1] *Beloochistan Papers*, No. 2, 1877, p. 359.

man's mission having been attained, Lord Lytton decided on proceeding in person to the frontier post of Jacobabad for the purpose of meeting the Khan of Khelat, of ratifying a new treaty with that Prince, and of directing some new arrangements rendered necessary, in the new Viceroy's opinion, for the 'highest and most general interests of the Empire, interests no longer local but Imperial.' It was necessary, also, according to the despatch of March 23, 1877, to give some orders as to the disposal of Major Sandeman's escort.

We were of opinion that as our adoption of the general basis on which Major Sandeman had, with our entire approval, succeeded in placing our relations with the Khanate, would necessitate the retention, for some time at least, of his escort in Khelat, it was desirable that we should have, as soon as possible, the opinion of a more experienced military officer as to the safety and distribution of the troops.

Accordingly whilst withholding our official reply to Major Sandeman's above-mentioned report, we deputed Colonel Colley, in accordance with the suggestion of the Viceroy (that officer being his Excellency's Military Secretary, and an officer of political as well as military experience, more especially in regard to the management of frontier tribes and troops), to proceed to Khelat in an unofficial capacity as the bearer of communications from his Excellency to the Khan and Major Sandeman respectively. We anticipate great advantage to the public interests from the opportunity thus afforded to Major Sandeman of learning our views in complete detail from an officer in the Viceroy's personal confidence. Our anticipations have been justified by the result.

We had now to decide whether we should withdraw these troops, well knowing that their withdrawal would weaken the position of our Envoy, discourage the hopes, and perhaps irretrievably alienate the confidence, of a population which recognised in their presence the only practical guarantee for its continued peace and future prosperity. Even before the signature of the treaty these troops had ceased to perform the part of a mere military escort to the Envoy. They had, with the cordial concurrence of the Khan, and with the best possible effect, been located in various parts of the country

where their presence was deemed most conducive to its permanent pacification or the protection of the re-opened trade routes. The security of the troops themselves had been carefully considered. After consultation with Colonel Colley, Major Sandeman had recommended that any occupation of the mountains and defiles of the Bolan should be avoided, but had selected two points of military as well as political importance, Quetta and Mittree, where the troops would be amidst a friendly, peaceful, and industrious population in an open and well-cultivated district, free from any risk of being compromised, or provoking collisions or complications. Meanwhile there could be no reasonable doubt of the Khan's personal inability, for the present at any rate, to enforce his newly re-acknowledged authority without at least some show of material support from the British Government.

Under all these circumstances we deemed it wise to give practical effect to an arrangement contemplated by the Treaty of 1854, and completely in accordance with the provisions and intentions of that Treaty, an arrangement obviously required by the present condition of Khelat, and the interests of the Indian Empire so far as they are thereby affected.

While at Jacobabad, the Viceroy took advantage of the presence of the Commissioner of Sind, together with that of the General Officer commanding the Sind District, and of the Officer commanding the Sind Frontier Force, to confer on certain questions connected with the disposal of Major Sandeman's escort and the strength and disposition of the troops to be stationed in Khelat territory. For military as well as political reasons Quetta had been selected in preference to Khelat for the headquarters of this force. It offers an exceptionally strong military position, a small hill rising in the middle of a wide open plain, well watered, and in the midst of a district abounding in supplies, a position almost unassailable if occupied by troops armed with the most improved modern weapons, and which a small force could hold for any required time against vastly superior forces. It is an important strategical position, commanding the richest and most important valleys of upper Beloochistan, as well as the great trade routes both through the Bolan and to Khelat. The surrounding population is peaceful and industrious, retaining the most friendly recollections of our former occupations, and welcoming the arrival of the troops as the security for peace and prosperity.

[1] *Beloochistan Papers*, No. 2, 1877, p. 359.

Accordingly, Quetta was occupied on November 2, 1876, by a detachment of the 4th Sikh Infantry, under Captain A. Scott,[1] the force to be stationed there being, by a resolution of the Government of India dated February 1877, fixed at one regiment of Infantry, one squadron of Cavalry, and one mountain battery of Artillery, while the troops for the neighbouring station of Mittree were to be of the strength of one regiment of Cavalry, a wing of Infantry, and one mountain battery.[2]

In the despatch of May 10, 1877, announcing the failure of Sir Lewis Pelly's negotiations with the Envoy of the Ameer Shere Ali of Cabul at Peshawur, Lord Lytton informs the Marquis of Salisbury of his belief that whatever may be 'the feelings of irritation' entertained by his Highness the Ameer, 'our relations with the people of Afghanistan are as friendly as they have ever been. At Candahar,' he continues, 'where recent events in Beloochistan'—alluding, of course, to the occupation of Quetta—'have brought us into contact with Afghanistan from a new side, we have every evidence of the amicable feeling of the population and their disposition to look to us as protectors rather than as enemies. From Sibi the Chiefs and Headmen, subjects of the Ameer, recently waited on the British Agent in Khelat, for the purpose of inviting his mediation in their domestic and inter-tribal quarrels, and his protection from their neighbours, the Murrees.'[3]

During the conference between the Nawab Atta Mahomed Khan, the British Native Agent at Cabul, Sir Lewis Pelly and Colonel O. T. Burne, the Viceroy's Private Secretary, at Simla, on October 7, 1876, the Agent described as one of 'the causes of estrangement and annoyance' that had alienated the Ameer Shere Ali from the British Government, 'that our recent proceedings in the Khelat territories had given umbrage to the Ameer, who regards those territories as having formed a portion of the Afghan State since the time of Ahmed

[1] *Beloochistan Papers*, No. 2, p. 324. [2] *Ibid.* No. 2, 1877, p. 334.
[3] *Afghanistan Papers*, 1878, p. 171, 172.

Shah Durrāni. But the Agent, on being asked if he were speaking seriously, laughed, and admitted that the grievance was of a sentimental character, and not seriously urged.'[1]

It must not be overlooked that the opinion as to the 'serious' or 'sentimental' nature of the grievance felt by the Ameer of Cabul at the occupation of Quetta, is only the private opinion of the Native Agent, a servant of the British Government, who was, also, probably referring not to the menacing occupation of Quetta, but to the historical claim of the Afghan State to the *possession* of Quetta and the supremacy over Khelat, which can doubtless be considered as nothing more than a 'sentimental' grievance.

In the 'Diary of News' for March 2, 1877, it is said: 'A few Chiefs of Candahar who were discontented with the Ameer have gone over to the side of the English at Khelat, on account of which the Ameer feels very anxious.'[2]

In a letter to the *Times*, dated October 30, 1878, Lord Lawrence says:—

It is said that Quetta is not in Afghanistan, and that we have acquired the right of occupying it by treaty with the ruler of Beloochistan. This I admit; the question, however, is not one of right, but of policy. In 1854, when the occupation of Quetta was advocated, it was done so openly, on the ground of its being a first step in advance to the occupation of Candahar and Herat; or, in other words, the invasion of Afghanistan; and this view has been reiterated from time to time in the press and in documents of an official character which have been made public. Hence the grounds of offence and apprehension to the Afghans.

[1] *Afghanistan Papers*, 1878, p. 180 [2] *Ibid* 1878, p. 221.

CHAPTER I.

THE UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ENGLAND AND RUSSIA.

It was in the year 1864 that the Government of the present Czar took the first formal step towards enlightening Europe as to its policy in Central Asia. This it did in the following circular despatch, addressed by the Russian Chancellor to the representatives of Russia abroad:—

(Circular.) St. Petersburg: November 21, 1864.

The Russian newspapers have given an account of the last military operations executed by a detachment of our troops in the regions of Central Asia with remarkable success and important results. It was to be foreseen that these events would the more attract the attention of the foreign public that their scene was laid in scarcely known countries.

Our august Master has commanded me to state to you briefly, but with clearness and precision, the position in which we find ourselves in Central Asia, the interests which inspire us in those countries, and the end which we have in view.

The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilised States which are brought into contact with half-savage nomad populations, possessing no fixed social organisation.

In such cases it always happens that the more civilised State is found, in the interest of the security of its frontier and its commercial relations, to exercise a certain ascendency over those whom their turbulent and unsettled character make most undesirable neighbours. First, there are raids and acts of pillage to be put down. To put a stop to them, the tribes on the frontier have to be reduced to a state of more or less perfect submission. This result once attained, these tribes

take to more peaceful habits, but are in their turn exposed to the attacks of the more distant tribes.

The State is bound to defend them against these depredations, and to punish those who commit them. Hence the necessity of distant, costly, and periodically recurring expeditions against an enemy whom his social organisation makes it impossible to seize. If, the robbers once punished, the expedition is withdrawn, the lesson is soon forgotten ; its withdrawal is put down to weakness. It is a peculiarity of Asiatics to respect nothing but visible and palpable force ; the moral force of reason and of the interests of civilisation has as yet no hold upon them. The work has then always to be done over again from the beginning.

In order to put a stop to this state of permanent disorder, fortified posts are established in the midst of these hostile tribes, and an influence is brought to bear upon them which reduces them by degrees to a state of more or less forced submission. But soon beyond this second line other still more distant tribes come in their turn to threaten the same dangers and necessitate the same measures of repression. The State thus finds itself forced to choose one of two alternatives, either to give up this endless labour and to abandon its frontier to perpetual disturbance, rendering all prosperity, all security, all civilisation an impossibility, or, on the other hand, to plunge deeper and deeper into barbarous countries, where the difficulties and expenses increase with every step in advance.

Such has been the fate of every country which has found itself in a similar position. The United States in America, France in Algeria, Holland in her Colonies, England in India —all have been irresistibly forced, less by ambition than by imperious necessity, into this onward march, where the greatest difficulty is to know when to stop.

Such, too, have been the reasons which have led the Imperial Government to take up at first a position resting on one side on the Syr-Daria, on the other on the Lake Issyk-Kaul, and to strengthen these two lines by advanced forts, which, little by little, have crept on into the heart of those distant regions, without however succeeding in establishing on the other side of our frontiers that tranquillity which is indispensable for their security.

The explanation of this unsettled state of things is to be found, first, in the fact that, between the extreme points of this double line, there is an immense unoccupied space, where

all attempts at colonisation or caravan trade are paralysed by the inroads of the robber tribes; and, in the second place, in the perpetual fluctuations of the political condition of those countries, where Turkistan and Khokand, sometimes united, sometimes at variance, always at war, either with one another or with Bokhara, presented no chance of settled relations or of any regular transactions whatever.

The Imperial Government thus found itself, in spite of all its efforts, in the dilemma we have above alluded to, that is to say, compelled either to permit the continuance of a state of permanent disorder, paralysing to all security and progress, or to condemn itself to costly and distant expeditions, leading to no practical result, and with the work always to be done anew; or, lastly, to enter upon the undefined path of conquest and annexation which has given to England the Empire of India, by attempting the subjugation by armed forced, one after another, of the small independent States whose habits of pillage and turbulence and whose perpetual revolts leave their neighbours neither peace nor repose.

Neither of these alternative courses was in accordance with the object of our august Master's policy, which consists, not in extending beyond all reasonable bounds the regions under his sceptre, but in giving a solid basis to his rule, in guaranteeing their security, and in developing their social organisation, their commerce, their well-being, and their civilisation.

Our task was, therefore, to discover a system adapted to the attainment of this three-fold object.

The following principles have, in consequence, been laid down:—

1. It has been judged to be indispensable that our two fortified frontier lines—one extending from China to the Lake Issyk-Kaul, the other from the Sea of Aral along the Syr-Daria—should be united by fortified points, so that all our posts should be in a position of mutual support, leaving no gap through which the nomad tribes might make with impunity their inroads and depredations.

2. It was essential that the line of our advanced forts thus completed should be situated in a country fertile enough, not only to insure their supplies, but also to facilitate the regular colonisation, which alone can prepare a future of stability and prosperity for the occupied country, by gaining over the neighbouring populations to civilised life.

3. And, lastly, it was urgent to lay down this line defini-

tively, so as to escape the danger of being carried away, as is almost inevitable, by a series of repressive measures and reprisals, into an unlimited extension of territory.

To attain this end a system had to be established, which should depend not only on reason, which may be elastic, but on geographical and political conditions, which are fixed and permanent.

This system was suggested to us by a very simple fact, the result of long experience, namely, that the nomad tribes, which can neither be seized nor punished, nor effectually kept in order, are our most inconvenient neighbours; while, on the other hand, agricultural and commercial populations attached to the soil, and possessing a more advanced social organisation, offer us every chance of gaining neighbours with whom there is a possibility of entering into relations.

Consequently, our frontier line ought to swallow up the former, and stop short at the limit of the latter.

These three principles supply a clear, natural, and logical explanation of our last military operations in Central Asia. In fact, our original frontier line, extending along the Syr-Daria to Fort Perovsky on one side, and on the other to the Lake Issyk-Kaul, had the drawback of being almost on the verge of the desert. It was broken by a wide gap between the two extreme points: it did not offer sufficient resources to our troops, and left unsettled tribes over the border, with which any settled arrangement became impossible.

In spite of our unwillingness to extend our frontier, these motives had been powerful enough to induce the Imperial Government to establish this line between Lake Issyk-Kaul and the Syr-Daria, by fortifying the town of Tchemkend, lately occupied by us. By the adoption of this line we obtain a double result. In the first place, the country it takes in is fertile, well wooded, and watered by numerous watercourses; it is partly inhabited by various Kirghiz tribes, which have already accepted our rule; it consequently offers favourable conditions for colonisation and the supply of provisions to our garrisons. In the second place, it puts us in the immediate neighbourhood of the agricultural and commercial populations of Khokand. We find ourselves in presence of a more solid and compact, less unsettled, and better organised social state; fixing for us with geographical precision the limit up to which we are bound to advance, and at which we must halt, because, while on the one hand any further extension

of our rule, meeting, as it would, no longer with unstable communities, such as the nomad tribes, but with more regularly constituted States, would entail considerable exertions, and would draw us on from annexation to annexation with unforeseen complications; on the other, with such States for our future neighbours, their backward civilisation, and the instability of their political condition, do not shut us out from the hope that the day may come when regular relations may, to the advantage of both parties, take the place of the permanent troubles which have up to the present moment paralysed all progress in those countries.

Such, sir, are the interests which inspire the policy of our august Master in Central Asia: such is the object, by his Imperial Majesty's orders, of the action of his Cabinet.

You are requested to take these arguments as your guide in any explanations you may give to the Government to which you are accredited, in case questions are asked or you may see credence given to erroneous ideas as to our action in these distant parts.

It is needless for me to lay stress upon the interests which Russia evidently has not to increase her territory, and, above all, to avoid raising complications on her frontiers, which can but delay and paralyse her domestic development.

The programme which I have just traced is in accordance with these views.

Very frequently of late years the civilisation of these countries, which are her neighbours on the continent of Asia, has been assigned to Russia as her special mission.

No agent has been found more apt for the progress of civilisation than commercial relations. Their development requires everywhere order and stability; but in Asia it demands a complete transformation of the habits of the people. The first thing to be taught to the populations of Asia is that they will gain more in favouring and protecting the caravan trade than in robbing them. These elementary ideas can only be accepted by the public where one exists; that is to say, where there is some organised form of society and a Government to direct and represent it.

We are accomplishing the first part of our task in carrying our frontier to the limit where the indispensable conditions are to be found.

The second we shall accomplish in making every effort henceforward to prove to our neighbouring States, by a system

of firmness in the repression of their misdeeds, combined with moderation and justice in the use of our strength, and respect for their independence, that Russia is not their enemy, that she entertains towards them no ideas of conquest, and that peaceful and commercial relations with her are more profitable than disorder, pillage, reprisals, and a permanent state of war.

The Imperial Cabinet, in assuming this task, takes as its guide the interests of Russia. But it believes that, at the same time, it is promoting the interests of humanity and civilisation. It has a right to expect that the line of conduct it pursues and the principles which guide it will meet with a just and candid appreciation.

(Signed) GORTSCHAKOFF.

It was, however, with England especially that the Russian Government seemed most anxious to cultivate a friendly understanding in respect to the affairs of Central Asia and of the Turkish Empire. The following may serve as a specimen of this disposition on the part of Russia. It is from a despatch from the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, dated December 6, 1865 :—

Prince Gortschakoff has again expressed to me his satisfaction with the reports which he has recently received from Baron Brunnow of his conversations with your Lordship, and he said he trusted the two Governments may be able to carry out in practice the good understanding which he believes to exist between them in theory.

He represented their policy and interests to be the same in all questions of present importance.

England, he said, desires to promote the maintenance of peace and of the present balance of power in Europe, and so does Russia. England likewise desires to maintain the integrity of the Turkish Empire, but at the same time to secure the Christian subjects of the Sultan against oppression, and so does Russia.

The policy and interests of the two Governments in Europe and in Turkey being, therefore, identical, would it not, he asked, be wise and prudent were they to act together in endeavouring to carry out, by moral influence, their common objects, and to guard against eventualities which may arise at no distant future, of a nature to disturb the balance of power in Europe, or endanger the existence of the Sultan's Empire ?

The position of Russia in Central Asia, he said, ought not to be a cause of difference between them, and he trusted that any misgivings, which may have been felt in England respecting the late military operations in Turkistan, will have been removed by the explanations which have already been given to Her Majesty's Government, and by the despatches of General Kryjanoffsky which have just been published.[1]

The next important landmark is the accession of Mr. Gladstone's government to office in the end of 1868. In the early part of 1869 active steps were taken, both by the Home Government and by that of the Viceroy of India, to come to an understanding with Russia respecting the affairs of Central Asia. Let us see, in the first place, how matters were managed in India.

After five years of civil war the authority of Shere Ali was acknowledged in the capital of Afghanistan in September, 1868. Various circumstances combined at same time to offer a fit opportunity for coming to an the understanding with Russia respecting Central Asian politics. Shere Ali, though somewhat hurt at the neutral attitude of the Indian Government during his struggles against his rivals, looked nevertheless towards India as towards his best friend the moment he found himself in undisputed possession of the throne of Afghanistan. He expressed accordingly a wish to pay a visit to the Viceroy at Calcutta. The wish was reciprocated by Sir John Lawrence. But the state of internal politics in Afghanistan prevented the interview from taking place during Sir John Lawrence's tenure of office. 'I regret,' said the Viceroy, in a letter which he addressed to Shere Ali on this occasion, 'that obstacles of an insuperable nature should have prevented my meeting your Highness at some suitable place on the frontier of both kingdoms.' And, 'as a further proof of the desire of the British Government, which fears no aggression, and which wishes for no conquest, to see a strong, a just, and a merciful government established by your Highness at Cabul and throughout

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 178.

Afghanistan,' the Viceroy promised the Ameer a sum of money, 'to be applied by your Highness in the manner which you may think most conducive to the furtherance of your interests and to the consolidation of your authority.'

Such was the policy, and such were the relations with Afghanistan, which Lord Lawrence, on the eve of his departure from India, bequeathed to his successor, Lord Mayo. That lamented nobleman's dealings with Afghanistan have been related in another part of this publication. They formed a part of a wise and generous system of foreign policy, which has been described by Sir John Strachey in a careful Minute written immediately after Lord Mayo's death in the spring of 1872. The following passages are worth quoting:—

> The cardinal points of the foreign policy which, in Lord Mayo's opinion, the Government of India should steadily pursue, may easily be described. He desired to establish with all our frontier states intimate relations of friendship; to make them feel that, though we are all powerful, we have no desire to encroach on their authority; but, on the contrary, that our earnest desire is to support their power and maintain their nationality. He believed that we could thus create in these States outworks of the Empire, and assuring them that the days of annexation are past, make them practically feel that they have everything to gain, and nothing to lose, by endeavouring to deserve our favour and support. . . . To apply a radical remedy to those evils (*i.e.*, the 'chronic state of turbulence and disorder' which prevails in the territories lying between British India and Russia) was the main object of Lord Mayo's foreign policy. Honestly proclaiming and showing by his acts that the spectre of annexation was laid for ever, he taught our neighbours that they had nothing to fear from us.
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> By bringing about a common understanding between the countries on our frontier, as to their mutual boundaries, he sought to remove every pretext for war and aggression. By assisting the rulers of these States to strengthen their internal government, and by bringing both his own personal influence and the moral support of the British Government to bear in putting down rebellions and revolutions, he endeavoured to

establish firm, just, and merciful government. By the encouragement and development of trade, he hoped to break down the barriers which isolate those countries from us, and to create, both within and beyond our frontier, a permanent interest in the maintenance of good order. By free and friendly intercommunication, he desired to remove that ignorance as to our policy and that jealousy of our intentions which in past years have been so fruitful of mischief. And lastly, by endeavouring through frank and amicable discussion with the Russian Government to secure the adoption on their part of a similar policy in the countries on the Russian frontier in Asia which are subject to Russian influence, it was his hope that he would be instrumental in securing some degree of peace and prosperity to the exhausted countries of Central Asia, and in removing the causes of disquietude as to the designs of England and Russia which have been so prominent in the public mind in both countries.

The friendly interchange of assurances that both nations intend to devote all their influence to introduce peace into the troubled regions of Central Asia has been repeatedly renewed since then between the representative of Her Majesty's Government and the Ministers of Russia, and the fruits of this good understanding have been frequently manifested. To Russian influence on Bokhara was due the prompt withdrawal of a party of Bokhara troops who had crossed the Oxus in the winter of 1869. To the restraining hand kept by Russia on the Afghan refugees in Turkistan is to be attributed the absence of any attempt on their part to shake the throne of the Ameer. When the most formidable of those refugees, Abdool Rahman, once openly represented that it would be for the interest of Russia to assist him in conquering the throne of Cabul, General von Kaufmann replied that hospitality had been afforded him in consideration of his destitute circumstances, and not as an enemy to England, or a pretender to the throne of Cabul.[1] Russia, he said, wished

[1] Kaufmann's answer was communicated to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg on April 19, 1870. It is given as an extract from letters of Kaufmann's published on p. 41 of *Central Asia*, No. 2 (1873), and is as follows:—'Abdool Rahman Khan, who was interned meanwhile by the Emir of Bokhara in the town of Karchi, sent a confidential messenger with several letters to General Kaufmann, to offer him his influence and relations with Afghanistan, and to ask in return the support necessary for the maintenance of his rights. The General gave him as his reply that Russia was determined not to interfere in the internal affairs

every prosperity to Shere Ali, who had never given her any cause for dissatisfaction. General Von Kaufmann himself, in the spring of 1870, commenced a direct correspondence, which has been renewed from time to time, and has conveyed to the Ameer assurances of the neighbourly sentiments entertained by the Russian authorities towards the Afghan Government. There is every reason to hope that the permanent definition of the boundaries between Afghanistan and Bokhara, a matter in which Lord Mayo took deep interest, will before long be accomplished with the consent of all who are concerned.

Much still remains to be done before a feeling of security from foreign aggression is finally restored in those parts. The bitter experience of centuries has led the people to believe that strength is only used as an engine of conquest, and that when a new Power appears on the scene its progress would never cease spontaneously, but only when it has encountered a barrier stronger than itself. Any disposition on the part of one or other of the two chief Powers, who guide the destinies of Central Asia, to extend their arms beyond existing limits would undo in a moment the good that has been effected. But the British Government in Europe and Asia has done its part in endeavouring to avert the possibility of any such disaster. In the last three years it has left nothing undone, by counsel, to bring those who are most immediately concerned to a preference for the ways of peace, and by negotiation to get the principles, which should regulate their action for the future, placed on permanent record, not only as a guide to the immediate actors, but also as a basis for the expression of its opinion by the voice of Europe, if peace is again disturbed.

Sir John Strachey is now one of the leading members of Lord Lytton's Government. His testimony therefore in favour of the policy which Lord Lytton has deliberately reversed is doubly important.

of Afghanistan, and that consequently all negotiation was unnecessary. According to the last news received, in spite of this discouraging reply, Abdool Rahman has arrived at Samarkand, and will not fail to proceed as far as Tashkend. General Kaufmann intends declining categorically his offers as well as his requests, and will inform him that we can only offer him an asylum on the condition that he abstains from all political intrigues and projects. He will inform him also that he must not reckon on Bokhara for the realisation of his designs.'

Stated briefly, the understanding aimed at between England and Russia during Mr. Gladstone's administration was to the effect that an antagonism between the two Governments in Central Asia would be detrimental to their mutual interests as well as to the general interests of humanity and civilisation; that they ought therefore to afford each other what help they could to maintain peace and uphold justice within the spheres of their respective influences; that, in order to this, it would be advantageous to arrive at a general agreement as to the domain within which either should acknowledge the right of the other to exercise an exclusive influence; but that, inasmuch as the instability and vicissitudes of native rule in Asia made it impossible to regard the existing frontiers of England and Russia in the East as absolutely incapable of alteration, an international agreement on that point would be useless, and might produce difficulties; that a friendly understanding, on the other hand, was most desirable. It was accordingly agreed between the two Governments that the sphere of their respective influences and operations should end with the Turkistan frontier of Afghanistan. Russia was to consider Afghanistan outside the sphere of her influence and operations, and she seems to have understood at the same time that England was to adopt a similar view in respect to the Khanates of Turkistan. Some discussion, however, took place as to the legitimate limits of Afghanistan. The English view of the case is stated by Lord Granville in a despatch to Lord A. Loftus, dated October 17, 1872.[1]

There he claims as territories belonging to the Ameer of Cabul the districts of Badakshan and Wakhan, also Afghan Turkistan, including Kunduz, Khulum, and Balkh, and the regions north-west as far as Andkoi.

Prince Gortschakoff, on behalf of Russia, objected to the frontier line claimed for Afghanistan, as including territory which did not of right belong to that State. In doing this he took occasion to recapitulate as

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1873), p. 1.

follows the different phases of the negotiations between Russia and the English Cabinet upon this question:—

The two Governments were equally anxious to forestall any cause of disagreement between them in that part of Asia. Both wished to establish such a state of things as would secure peace in those countries, and consolidate the relations of friendship and good understanding between the two Governments.

They had consequently come to an agreement that it was expedient to have a certain 'intermediary' zone, for the purpose of preserving their respective possessions from immediate contact.

Afghanistan seemed well fitted to supply what was needed, and it was consequently agreed that the two Governments should use all their influence with their neighbouring States towards preventing any collision or encroachment on one side or the other of this 'intermediary' zone.[1]

All that remained, in order to make the agreement between the two Cabinets complete in fact, as it already was in principle, was to trace the exact limits of the zone.

Prince Gortschakoff then gave his reasons, supported by geographical and historical arguments, against the boundary traced out by Lord Granville. The latter replied in a friendly despatch, expressing the hope that the Russian Government would agree to the British view of the extent of Shere Ali's territories, so as to put an end to the wild speculations, so calculated to distract the minds of Asiatic races, that there is a chronic antagonism between England and Russia, on which they may build hopes of being allowed to carry out their border feuds for purposes of self-aggrandisement.

To this appeal Prince Gortschakoff responded in a kindred spirit, as follows:—

The divergence which existed in our views was with regard to the frontiers assigned to the dominions of Shere

[1] It has been already shown that this agreement was honourably carried out by Kaufmann—*e.g.*, in preventing Abdool Rahman from carrying out his aggressive designs against Shere Ali. When, on the other hand, the Khan of Khiva appealed to Lord Northbrook for aid against Russia, the Viceroy answered that Russia had a just cause of complaint against him, and advised him to avert chastisement by timely reparation.

Ali. The English Cabinet includes within them Badakshan and Wakhan, which, according to our views, enjoyed a certain independence. Considering the difficulty experienced in establishing the facts in all their details in those distant parts, considering the greater facilities which the British Government possesses for collecting precise data, and, above all, considering our wish not to give to this question of detail greater importance than is due to it, we do not refuse to accept the boundary line laid down by England.

We are the more inclined to this act of courtesy as the English Government engages to use all its influence with Shere Ali in order to induce him to maintain a peaceful attitude, as well as to insist on his giving up all measures of aggression or further conquest. This influence is indisputable. It is based not only on the material and moral ascendency of England, but also on the subsidies for which Shere Ali is indebted to her. Such being the case, we see in this assurance a real guarantee for the maintenance of peace.[1]

The whole discussion is an admirable illustration of the spirit in which the Governments of two great countries should conduct the controversies which may chance to arise between them. There is throughout the correspondence an evident desire on both sides to minimise differences as far as possible, to put the best interpretation on each other's language, and to give each other credit for good sense and honest intentions. A controversy conducted in this spirit of mutual respect and confidence could hardly avoid ending in a friendly understanding.

Meanwhile a persistent career of misconduct on the part of the Khan of Khiva forced the Russian Government to send an expedition against him. Some portion of the public press in England appeared to attach to this expedition an undue significance and importance. To remove these apprehensions Count Schouvaloff, who was sent on a special mission to London for another purpose, was authorised to explain the object and dimensions of the expedition. The result of Count Schouvaloff's interview with Lord Granville is related

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1873), p. 15.

by the latter in a despatch[1] dated January 8, 1873. The following extracts give the gist of it:—

The Emperor, said Count Schouvaloff, knew of no questions in Central Asia which could affect the good understanding between the two countries. . . . His Imperial Majesty had agreed to almost everything that we had asked. There remained only the point regarding the provinces of Badakshan and Wakhan. There might be arguments used respectively by the Departments of each Government; but the Emperor was of opinion that such a question should not be a cause of difference between the two countries, and His Imperial Majesty was determined that it should not be so. He was the more inclined to carry out this determination in consequence of His Majesty's belief in the conciliatory policy of Her Majesty's Government. Count Schouvaloff added, on his own part, that he had every reason to believe, if it were desired by Her Majesty's Government, the agreement might be arrived at at a very early period.[2]

With regard to the expedition to Khiva, it was true that it was decided upon for next spring. To give an idea of its character it was sufficient to say that it would consist of four and a half battalions. Its objects were to punish acts of brigandage, to recover fifty Russian prisoners, and to teach the Khan that such conduct on his part could not be continued with the impunity in which the moderation of Russia had left him to believe. Not only was it far from the intention of the Emperor to take possession of Khiva, but positive orders had been prepared to prevent it, and directions given that the conditions imposed should not be such as should in any way lead to a prolonged occupancy of Khiva. Count Schouvaloff repeated the surprise which the Emperor, entertaining such sentiments, felt at the uneasiness which it was said existed in England on the subject, and he gave me most decided assurance that I might give assurances to Parliament on this matter.

Lord Granville admitted the existence of the uneasiness to which Count Schouvaloff referred, and accounted

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1873), p. 12.

[2] Within three weeks from this date the Russian Government, as we have seen, waiving the question of right, agreed, for the sake of friendship, to accept the English view of the matter.

for it in part by the fact that 'the progress of Russia in Asia had been considerable, and sometimes, as it would appear, like that of England in India and of France in Algeria, more so than was desired by the central Government.' As to what Count Schouvaloff had said about the situation in Central Asia generally, and the expedition to Khiva in particular, Lord Granville replied as follows:—

The only point of difference which now remained, as Count Schouvaloff had pointed out, concerned Badakshan and Wakhan. . . . With regard to the expedition to the Khan of Khiva, Count Schouvaloff was aware that Lord Northbrook had given the strongest advice to the Khan to comply with the reasonable demands of the Emperor, and if the expedition were undertaken and carried out with the object and within the limits described by Count Schouvaloff, it would meet with no remonstrance from Her Majesty's Government, but it would undoubtedly excite public attention, and make the settlement of the boundary of Afghanistan more important for the object which both Governments had in view, viz., peace in Central Asia, and good relations between the two countries.

Eventually it was found necessary to increase the military strength of the expedition to about 10,000 men—more on account of the tremendous difficulties of the route than from fear of any opposition which they were likely to meet from the Khivans. For 'Khiva is an oasis in a desert, lying 600 miles from Tashkend, 930 miles from Orenburg, and 500 miles from Krasnovodsk on the Caspian.'[1]

The Russian occupation of Khiva was not unduly prolonged; but a strip of territory was annexed for reasons explained as follows in the St. Petersburg 'Messager Officiel' of November 30:—

The motives which gave rise to the expedition to Khiva are well known. Continual acts of brigandage, exactions imposed upon the Kirghis subject to our rule, incitement to revolt among those nomad tribes, and the capture and enslave-

[1] Schuyler, *Turkistan*, ii. 335.

ment of our subjects—such are the facts which have for many years called for decisive action against that Khanate. Our Government had not, however, given up all hope of arriving by peaceful means at the establishment of more regular relations with these turbulent neighbours.

More than once we have addressed to the Khan temperate representations, but they had either remained unanswered or had been met by a haughty refusal on his part.

After the failure of these repeated efforts an expedition was determined upon. Its object was, in the first place, to punish the Khan for his past conduct, and next, to originate a state of affairs which would secure our subjects from the incursions and depredations of the Khivans and Turkomans, and render possible the development of peaceful commercial relations.

The difficulty of this problem lay chiefly in the fact that the fundamental bases of all the States of Central Asia are so precarious and ill-consolidated that it was to be feared that in inflicting upon Khiva a well-deserved chastisement, it might cease to exist as an independent State. Such a result would have been in no way consistent with the views of our Government, who, until now, have devoted their constant efforts to the maintenance and consolidation of the autonomous existence of the other States bordering upon our possessions in Central Asia, such as Bokhara and Khokand.

After the occupation of Khiva, and when we were in a position to learn the conditions of the internal life of the country, we were convinced that, even with the best intentions on the Khan's part, and on that of his advisers, to maintain with us relations of good neighbourhood, he would not have had the strength necessary for the purpose, since his influence with the nomad or semi-nomad Turkomans is only displayed intermittently; it is often null, and it sometimes happens that he himself, no less than his colonised subjects, have to submit to the ascendency of these brigands of the steppes.

Thus, after the departure of our expeditionary corps, the same inroads and depredations would infallibly have recommenced and required fresh punishment, and then no effort would have succeeded in preserving the autonomous existence of Khiva.

It was therefore necessary to take precautions against so undesirable an eventuality, which would have exposed us to great sacrifices, and to a grave deviation from the programme of our policy in Central Asia.

It was therefore considered indispensable to establish a fortified position, provided with a sufficient garrison, in order to secure our frontiers against the attacks of brigands, to protect our caravans and those of the Khivans, and, at the same time, to support the Khan if he should be threatened by the Turkomans.

The best point to have chosen for the erection of this fort would perhaps have been the southern shore of the Sea of Aral, which would have assured us a communication by water with the mouths of the Amou-Daria. Unfortunately, this coast, surrounded by uninterrupted marshes, presents no favourable spot for the erection of a fortified station.

We had, therefore, to construct the fort on the right bank of the Amou-Daria; it was, moreover, necessary to assure the communications of the fort and of its garrison with the Province of Turkistan. Without mentioning the difficulties of navigation on the Amou-Daria—in winter it becomes entirely impossible, and no other way but the steppe remains—it was considered indispensable to annex to our possessions the arid desert which stretches between the fort and the Province of Turkistan. Certainly, had it been possible to find any other guarantee which would have given us satisfactory securities for the future, it would have been preferred. But, however barren and burdensome such a territorial acquisition might be to us, it was inevitable inasmuch as the Khan of Khiva himself admitted that he would only be able to fulfil his obligations towards us and to re-establish the desired relations with our Government, on the positive condition of having a fort and a body of Russian troops in his proximity. His wishes went even further; he urgently requested the maintenance of the Russian troops in the town of Khiva itself.

Prince Gortschakoff called the attention of Lord A. Loftus to this article as an authoritative exposition of the facts, and added:—

Had the Russian forces retired altogether, disorder would have recommenced, and if they had been obliged to make a second expedition to Khiva, no other course but that of annexation would have remained.

The Emperor himself gave a similar explanation; and then, writes the Ambassador,—

His Majesty expressed his anxious wish that no cloud, as regarded Central Asian or any other question, should darken the happy relations between the two Governments; and he told me on every occasion when any difficulty manifested itself, to address myself directly to the Chancellor, adding that he would be happy to receive me whenever I judged it necessary. I thanked His Majesty for his gracious permission, and said that I should gladly avail myself of it if circumstances should render it necessary.[1]

As some erroneous impressions still exist in this country with respect to this Khivan question, it may be useful to place thus on record the plain facts. To make the annexation of the comparatively small strip of territory surrendered by the Khan of Khiva the foundation of a charge, as it has sometimes been made, of a 'breach of his word of honour,' on the part of the Emperor of Russia, is preposterous. There was no 'promise on his word of honour' in the matter. He had simply, as an act of friendship to this country, voluntarily explained his intentions to our Government before the expedition to Khiva started. It was with some reason, then, that Prince Gortschakoff complained to Lord Derby in April 1875:—

The Cabinet of London appears to derive from the fact of our having on several occasions spontaneously and amicably communicated to them our views with respect to Central Asia, and particularly our firm resolve not to pursue a policy of conquest or annexation, a conviction that we have contracted definite engagements towards them in regard to this matter. From the fact that events have forced us, against our will, to depart to a certain extent from our programme, they seem to conclude that the Imperial Cabinet have failed to observe their formal promises.[2]

There was, in fact, never any promise made, never any contract entered into. Even the right of Great Britain to ask for a promise was never claimed by us, much less admitted by Russia. A statement was voluntarily made

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), pp. 3 and 4.
[2] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 39.

by the Russian Government of what they intended and expected. Circumstances led to another course being, in fact, taken. But this is something altogether different, both legally and morally, from the breach of an engagement.

In the beginning of 1874 Mr. Gladstone's Government retired from office. At that date the Parliamentary Papers show that a cordial understanding existed between England and Russia with regard to the territories which lay between their respective frontiers in Asia. Both Governments pledged themselves to respect the territorial integrity of Afghanistan. Russia, however, while disclaiming for itself any desire or intention to interfere in Afghanistan, not only conceded to England a right to interfere in that country; it expressed, in addition, its hope and expectation that England would use its influence to restrain the Ameer of Cabul from troubling the tribes and Khanates to the north of the Oxus. On these Russia claimed to exercise the same right of supervision which she conceded to us in Afghanistan. In a conversation with Lord A. Loftus, on January 28, 1874, Prince Gortschakoff 'referred to the positive injunctions given to Abdul Rahman Khan by the Imperial Government, as the condition on which he was permitted to reside in Samarkand, that he should abstain from all intrigues and designs dangerous to the present Ruler of Afghanistan, and report to me [*i.e.*, to Lord Loftus] that should he contravene them, he will be removed from his present place of residence.'[1]

The next landmark in the history of the negotiations between the two Governments with respect to Central Asia is a despatch from Lord Derby to Lord A. Loftus,[2] dated November 6, 1874. In that despatch Lord Derby directed the British Ambassador 'to call the attention of the Russian Government' to a circular of General Llamakin's, in which that officer 'styles

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 7.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 20 and 21.

himself commander over the Turkoman tribes of the Attrek and the Goorgan, and to point out that the territory between the Attrek and Goorgan is unquestionably Persian territory, in which General Llamakin would not be justified in interfering.'

In the absence of Prince Gortschakoff, Lord A. Loftus addressed himself to M. de Westmann, the Acting-Minister of Foreign Affairs, with the following result:—

M. de Westmann stated that the incident of General Llamakin's Circular, to which your Lordship referred, had been a *mal entendu* which had given rise to a correspondence between the Imperial and Persian Governments, and that the explanations given by the Imperial Government had been perfectly satisfactory to the Persian Government.

His Excellency admitted that General Llamakin, in lieu of naming the tribes to which he referred by their proper appellation, had generalised them in the terms he used, and he observed that the tribes referred to were in the habit of repairing for a portion of the year to Russian territory.

The whole circumstance, his Excellency said, had been misrepresented, consequent on an incorrect translation from the original Tartar text of General Llamakin's Circular, but this misrepresentation had been happily and satisfactorily rectified with the Persian Government.

Having made this statement with regard to the incident referred to, his Excellency then stated that he must express his surprise that an explanation should have been asked by Her Majesty's Government of an incident of so little importance in itself, and which solely concerned Russia and Persia. It was not customary, his Excellency observed, to interfere in the international relations between two independent States, and he could not comprehend in what way the incident referred to could affect Great Britain.

. . . . . .

Take for instance (said his Excellency), the case of Kashgar. It is an independent State, geographically separated from India. Although information of an unsatisfactory nature in regard to the late mission of Mr. Forsyth has reached the Imperial Government, I should not think of asking for an explanation from Her Majesty's Government, for I should expose myself to receive as a natural answer that the

relations between the Indian Government and the Ruler of Kashgar did not concern the Imperial Government.

There is here, from whatever cause, a distinct change of tone in the communications between the two Governments: on the one side a disposition to see hostile intentions where none seem to have been intended; on the other, a feeling of resentment at what is regarded as unmerited suspicion. Suspicion is apt to beget suspicion, and in the following March the Russian Ambassador betrays some uneasiness as to the intentions of the Indian Government on its North-Western frontier. In a despatch dated March 19, 1875,[1] Lord Derby relates as follows a conversation with Count Schouvaloff:—

> He asked me whether he was right in supposing that there was no inclination on the part of England to advance farther in the direction of the Russian possessions, unless such advance were considered by us necessary for defensive purposes, in order to protect our actual dominions. I said that his view was undoubtedly correct, and that, so far from desiring to annex any part of Afghanistan, we should deprecate such a result as bringing only increased cost and trouble without advantage. We wished to be on good terms with the Afghan ruler, and to exercise a friendly influence over his policy, but his independence was not likely to be menaced by us. The only case in which I could conceive an advance of British troops westward as probable was in the event of any Russian movement tending to the occupation of Merv.
>
> I reminded Count Schouvaloff that I had warned him some months back of the great importance which the Indian Government attached to Merv, and of the danger to our relations that would ensue if it were meddled with. He said that he remembered what I had told him on that subject, and had communicated it to his Government. He quite saw the danger that might arise if the two Powers were brought face to face in the neighbourhood of Herat. 'Was he justified,' he asked, 'in assuming that our action in this matter would depend on that of Russia, that England would not move if

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 24.

Russia did not?' I said I thought he might feel safe on that point; we only desired the maintenance of the *status quo*, and certainly should not be the first to take steps that might be considered aggressive. He said his Government would be perfectly satisfied with this expression of intentions from me, hinting that the language of some of our newspapers had created distrust and suspicion in Russia.

A fortnight later Lord A. Loftus wrote from St. Petersburg:—

I have reason to believe that the Russian Government are somewhat disquieted by the newspaper reports of the intention of the Indian Government to occupy Quetta, and that they consider that this move will be the precursor of the occupation of Herat.[1]

On May 3, the Secretary of State for India recommended Lord Derby, 'without entering into the merits of the question, to remind Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg, for his own information,' that the Indian Government had a treaty right to 'station troops in any part of Khelat territory.'[2] On the 15th of the following September, Lord Derby wrote to instruct the chargé d'affaires at St. Petersburg, 'to take an opportunity of mentioning this matter to the Russian Government; but,' he added, 'you will not fail to accompany your statement by an explanation that Her Majesty's Government have no intention of using their right unless a necessity for it arises.'[3] Quetta was afterwards occupied, under circumstances which have already been described in another part of this work.

Meanwhile Lord Derby had received from the Russian Government an important Memorandum,[4] recapitulating at considerable length the various discussions between the two Governments with regard to Central Asia, and the understanding eventually arrived at as the result of such discussions. These are, in substance, already before the reader. One or two claims, however,

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 25.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid*, p. 51.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 27.

which before were only implied on the Russian side, are now stated categorically. The Russian Government asserts that the understanding with England 'leaves Russia complete liberty of action over the territory between our' (Russian) 'frontier and those of Afghanistan.' Consequently, asserts the Memorandum, 'the Khanate of Khiva fell completely within our sphere of action,' and therefore it was merely 'as a matter of courtesy' that the Emperor 'thought it right to take no decisive step against Khiva without informing the English Government.' A similar claim is put forward in respect to Merv, 'inasmuch as Merv is far beyond the frontiers recognised as belonging to Afghanistan.' Afghanistan, on the other hand, was to constitute 'an intermediate zone' between England and Russia, 'if its independence was secured on either side from all encroachment.'

On June 22, 1875, Lord George Hamilton was directed by Lord Salisbury to address to the Foreign Office some criticism on the Russian Memorandum. Lord Salisbury contended that 'the proposal of a neutral zone, so far as the English Government was concerned, had been definitively abandoned.' He also took exception to Russia's claim to exercise 'full liberty of action upon any portion of territory situated between the Russian frontier and Afghanistan, without any apparent right of remonstrance on the part of the English Government.'[1]

About this time a debate on Central Asia took place in the House of Commons. The language of the Government gave great satisfaction at St. Petersburg, and in expressing that satisfaction to the British chargé d'affaires, Baron Jomini volunteered the following important statement, as reported by Mr. Doria:[2] —

> His Excellency said to me that at first a neutral zone had been talked of and proposed as a limit to the advance of both empires, but, he added, a neutral zone is an impossibility in a territory of barbarians. Belgium, he said, can be considered

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), pp. 43 and 44. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

a neutral country, because civilised and in a position to respect certain acknowledged international rights which are frequently entirely disregarded by the various turbulent tribes of Central Asia; that to enforce upon them a respect for the maintenance of peace often entailed on Russia a necessity of direct interference, doing away with the professions of the existence of a neutral zone, which could only be maintained in a moral sense.

But the main point of his Excellency's conversation went to show the fixed idea existing in his mind that the British and Russian empires must eventually become limitrophe. His Excellency repeated the opinion I had the honour to recount to your Lordship in my despatch of the 23rd ultimo, that if the empires of Russia and Austria or Germany, having a common frontier, can exist on terms of peace, why not England and Russia? And, his Excellency said, if England found it to her interests to annex Afghanistan to her Indian empire, the Russian Government would not regard it as a menace to them, nor would they endeavour to prevent it, and that, therefore, they cannot comprehend why the future absorption of Bokhara and Khokand should raise such excitement and alarm in the minds of Englishmen.

I think that Baron Jomini viewed with satisfaction the statement that the correspondence between Her Majesty's Government and that of Russia had not led to any agreement as to the limits of a neutral zone.

I have arrived at this conviction, that many Russians, and amongst them men of political position and in Government service, entertain the full persuasion that the maintenance for any number of years of a great neutral territory between the two empires of Russia and India is an impossibility, and that the notion must be abandoned.

It was not, however, till October 25 that Lord Derby replied to the Russian Memorandum. The pith and tone of his reply may be gathered from the following extracts:—

The (Russian) Memorandum refers to an agreement of opinion between the Chancellor of the Empire and Lord Clarendon, on the occasion of their interview at Heidelberg in 1869, 'founded on the maintenance by Russia and England of an intermediary zone,' destined to separate their Asiatic possessions; adding that in 'this order of ideas it was under-

stood that Afghanistan should form an independent State which should remain outside the sphere of Russian action.

The interview in question took place after confidential communications between Lord Clarendon and Baron Brunnow, at that time Russian Ambassador in London, on the same subject.

It appears from the correspondence which took place at this period, that the 'intermediary' zone, then under consideration, was intended on both sides to be at the same time a 'neutral' zone; and from this point of view, Lord Clarendon distinctly informed Baron Brunnow, in April, 1869, while thanking the Russian Government for the friendly feelings which had dictated the communication, that, in the opinion of the Secretary of State for India, 'Afghanistan would not fulfil those conditions of a neutral territory which it was the object of the two Governments to establish, as the frontiers were ill-defined; and if the Russian forces advanced to those frontiers, disputes with the chiefs on the border would, sooner or later but infallibly, ensue, and Russia might be compelled, however unwillingly, to disregard the arrangement she had entered into; and it was, therefore, thought advisable to propose that the Upper Oxus, which was south of Bokhara, should be the boundary line, which neither Power should permit their forces to cross. This would leave a large tract of country apparently desert, and marked on the map as belonging to the Khan of Khiva, between Afghanistan and the territory already acquired by Russia, and, if agreed to, would, it might be hoped, remove all fear of future dissension.

This proposal, as is correctly stated in the Memorandum, was declined by the Imperial Government, on the ground that it gave an extension to the frontiers of Afghanistan, which they could not admit; and this negative answer put an end to the confidential communications between the Russian ambassador and Lord Clarendon, on the question of a 'neutral zone.'

But the Memorandum goes on to say that, after being definitely closed in London, this question was reopened at St. Petersburg by Mr. Forsyth, on the occasion of his visit in 1869, and that, as a result of the exchange of views between that functionary and the Imperial Cabinet, it was agreed:—

1. That the territories in the actual possession of Shere Ali should be considered as forming the limits of Afghanistan.

2. That the Ameer should not seek to exercise any influence or any interference beyond those limits, and that the

English Government should use every means to restrain him from any aggressive attempt.

3. That on its side the Imperial Government would employ all its influence to restrain the Ameer of Bokhara from making any attack on Afghan territory.

On this statement, Her Majesty's Government think it desirable to remark that whatever may have been the nature of the personal communications between Mr. Forsyth and the Imperial Cabinet, it formed no part of his instructions to reopen the question of a 'neutral zone,' nor does it appear that in the general agreement of opinion under the three heads cited above was this question in any way involved.

So far as Her Majesty's Government are concerned, the idea of a 'neutral zone' was definitively abandoned at the time of Lord Clarendon's communication in April 1869, as one which, upon close examination, had been found to be wholly incompatible with the objects which both Governments alike had in view throughout these discussions.

The discussions which took place in the succeeding years as to the delimitation of the frontiers of Afghanistan, happily terminated by the 'full and entire' adhesion of the Imperial Cabinet in their despatch of January 19, 1873 to the line of demarcation proposed by Lord Granville in his despatch of October 1872, had exclusive reference to the recognition of Afghanistan as an independent State which should remain external to the action of Russia.

Her Majesty's Government insisted on including Badakshan and Wakhan within the limits of Afghanistan, because such delimitation was, in their view, strictly in accordance with historical facts, and therefore necessary in order to satisfy the legitimate claims of the Ameer.

Her Majesty's Government have always cordially acknowledged the friendly and conciliatory course taken by the Imperial Cabinet in accepting the views thus set forth by Great Britain, and in thus removing, it is hoped, the only remaining obstacle to a complete understanding between the two Governments with respect to the position of Afghanistan. But it is apparent from the *résumé* of the agreement given at the close of the Memorandum, and the paragraphs which follow, that the Imperial Cabinet is of opinion that, in arriving at an understanding with respect to Afghanistan, the common policy of the two Governments has been completely fulfilled, and that it is a part of such understanding that

entire liberty of action is left to Russia in all the territories lying between her own frontier and that of Afghanistan.

It is with reference to this opinion that it is essential that the views of Her Majesty's Government should be clearly explained.

The point of departure of the two Governments in exchanging their views was the mutual desire to arrive at some common understanding as to the best means of preventing the contact of their respective possessions in Central Asia.

Various combinations were proposed and discussed with this object,—the creation of a neutral zone, the delimitation of frontiers, the recognition of the Oxus as a line which neither Power should permit their forces to cross, the maintenance of Afghanistan and Bokhara as independent States, the former under British, and the latter under Russian influence.

This last combination, as represented in the Memorandum under consideration, appears to be the only form of an arrangement with regard to which any definite understanding has been found practicable, and Her Majesty's Government have always fully appreciated the conciliatory spirit in which this question has been approached by the Russian Government.

But it is obvious that the settlement made with respect to Afghanistan can only partially effect the object which the two Governments desired to attain, namely, that of averting possible causes of future collision between them.

Her Majesty's Government fully accept the assurances of the Imperial Cabinet as to the extension of the southern frontiers of Russian territory; but they equally admit the force of the arguments which have been advanced to explain the repeated annexations which, in spite of these assurances, have taken place.

However sincere, therefore, the desire of the Russian Government to avoid future extension of territorial responsibilities, Her Majesty's Government cannot regard the present line of Russian frontier as fixed and immovable. The recurrence of similar causes may lead to similar results, and Her Majesty's Government could not regard with indifference, and as a matter with which they have no concern, further occupation and absorption by Russia of the regions which still separate Afghanistan from the Russian territory.

The grounds of the apprehensions entertained by Her Majesty's Government on this subject have been so fully stated on former occasions, that it is only necessary now to

refer to previous communications, and particularly to Lord Granville's despatch to Lord A. Loftus of January 7, 1874, which discusses them at length.

Whatever may be the ultimate destiny of Russia in the course of its civilising mission in Central Asia, it is impossible not to see that, in view of the present conditions of the Turkoman tribes, of the relations in which they stand to the ruler of Afghanistan on the one hand, and those between that ruler and the Government of India on the other, that each successive advance of the Russian frontier towards Afghanistan may involve complications which it is equally the interest of both England and Russia to avoid, and may raise up the most serious obstacles to the continued pursuance of the policy which has hitherto guided both Powers alike to maintain intact the integrity of Afghan territory.

This is an object to which Her Majesty's Government attach the highest importance, and they must reserve to themselves the most complete liberty of action under all future contingencies as to the measures which may, in their opinion, be necessary to secure it. They cannot but feel that such an event, for instance, as the occupation of Merv, which would bring the line of Russian territory into direct contact with Afghan territory, would arouse the susceptibilities of the Ameer to the highest degree, and possibly involve him in a common course of defensive action with the Turkoman tribes upon his borders. Under such circumstances it is unnecessary to observe how difficult it might be for the Imperial Government to maintain a policy of strict abstention in accordance with its present assurances, or how impossible it might be for Her Majesty's Government to exert any effectual control over the actions of the Ameer, without undertaking responsibilities which they would most reluctantly assume, and which would virtually involve the very result which both Governments desire to avert, viz., the contact of the two Powers in Central Asia.

Whatever may be the desire of both Governments to act in concert in bringing the agencies of civilization to bear upon the wild and predatory races of the regions which separate their dominions, the time has not arrived when such a co-operation could be made intelligible to the rulers and people of the Khanates.

The points in this important document which seem to call for special attention are the following :—

1. The English Government formally and finally abandons the idea of a 'neutral zone' as impracticable.

2. Her Majesty's Government could not regard the present line of Russian frontier as fixed and immovable; on the contrary, it regarded the advance of the Russian frontier as inevitable.

3. This extension of Russian territory, however natural and justifiable, could not be regarded by the British Government with indifference. The uneasiness, however, would not arise from any danger apprehended from Russian hostility or unfriendly designs, but from causes beyond the control of the Government and officials of Russia. It is admitted that good would probably result from a closer proximity between the frontiers of the two Governments in Central Asia—good not merely to their respective interests, but also to the interests of civilisation generally. But Lord Derby considers that the time is not yet. The state of feeling among the native rulers and people is not ripe for the development of such a policy. The occupation of Merv by Russia, for example, would place her in direct contact with Afghan territory. This might frighten the Ameer of Cabul, and induce him to make common cause against Russia with the Turkoman tribes on his borders. Russia would thus be drawn into hostile action against Afghanistan, and England could not control the Ameer without reluctantly embarking on a policy which would practically end in pushing her frontier up to that of Russia. The prudent course, therefore, was 'the continued pursuance of the policy which has hitherto guided both Powers alike to maintain the integrity of Afghan territory.'

Prince Gortschakoff replied to Lord Derby's Memorandum on February 15, 1876.[1] The following extract from his despatch will suffice:—

Have the goodness to inform his Excellency, by order of our august Master, that we entirely agree in the conclusion

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 69.

that, while maintaining on either side the arrangement come to as regards the limits of Afghanistan, which is to remain outside the sphere of Russian action, the two Cabinets should regard as terminated the discussions relative to the intermediate zone, which have been recognised as unpractical; that, while retaining entire freedom of action, they should be guided by a mutual desire to pay due regard to their respective interests and necessities, by avoiding as far as possible any immediate contact with each other, and any collisions between the Asiatic States placed within the circle of their influence.

We are convinced that by keeping to this principle, and cultivating feelings of equity and reciprocal goodwill, the two Cabinets will succeed in consolidating the friendly relations so happily established between them, for the advantage of the general peace in Europe and Asia.

The history of the communications between the two Governments, with a view to a friendly understanding on Central Asian affairs, would not be complete without some reference to Mr. Disraeli's speech in the House of Commons in the summer of 1876. The speech, says Lord A. Loftus, in a despatch from St. Petersburg, dated May 12, 'has given great satisfaction here, not only in the official circles, but also generally among all classes.'[1] The Ambassador continues:—

I have the honour to enclose to your Lordship an article published in this morning's 'Journal de St. Pétersbourg' from the 'Moscow Gazette' (the organ of the Russian press which has hitherto been the least favourably disposed towards England in regard to the affairs of Central Asia), in which, after stating that the frank and firm reply of Mr. Disraeli places the two countries in the position conformable to their dignity, their greatness, and to their mutual interests, it hails with satisfaction the statement that the good understanding between the two Governments had never been more complete than at the present moment.

It further continues to observe that the mutual concord and confidence of the Great Powers had never been more decisive for the peace of Europe, and it terminates by stating that, in the midst of the general concord, the mutual con-

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 73.

fidence between England and Russia was an element of decisive value.

I met General Kaufmann yesterday at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and he expressed to me the pleasure with which he had read Mr. Disraeli's speech, and he expressed a hope that England and Russia would act cordially together in Central Asia for their mutual welfare, and for the advancement of civilisation.

General Kaufmann informed me that he was on the eve of returning to Tashkend to resume the duties of Governor-General of Turkestan.

The passage in Mr. Disraeli's speech which was singled out for special commendation in Russia was that in which he declared that 'so far from being alarmed at the progress of Russian power in Central Asia, he sees no reason why Russia should not conquer Tartary as England had conquered India;' and that 'he only wished that the people of Tartary should derive no less advantage from their conquest by Russia than the people of Hindustan had derived from their conquest by England.'

The extract from the official 'Journal of St. Petersburg,' to which Lord A. Loftus refers—after complimenting Mr. Disraeli on his frankness and penetration in recognising the security of English rule in India, and the true character of Russian advances—concludes as follows:—

Ce qui nous paraît le plus remarquable dans le discours du Ministre, ce sont les paroles suivantes:—

Loin de m'alarmer des progrès de la puissance russe dans l'Asie Centrale, je ne vois pas de raison pour que la Russie ne conquière point la Tartarie comme l'Angleterre a conquis les Indes. Je désire seulement que le peuple de la Tartarie retire autant d'avantages de la conquête russe que le peuple hindou en a retiré de la conquête anglaise.

Ces paroles ne sont rien d'autre que la vérité; il y a longtemps que nous avions dit la même chose et beaucoup de feuilles anglaises s'étaient ralliées à notre appréciation. Mais du moment que le Gouvernement anglais s'associe franchement à cette manière de voir toutes les objections disparaissent comme d'elles-mêmes.

Here then we have it declared on the highest authority, both in England and Russia, that an understanding of the most complete and friendly character exists between the two Governments with respect to the position and mission of each in Asia. The Prime Minister of England wishes Russia God-speed in her mission of subduing and civilising the populations of 'Tartary' (meaning by that expression apparently the territories north of the Oxus), and suggests the career of England in Hindustan as an example for Russia to follow. The Government of the Czar expresses its lively satisfaction at the speech of Mr. Disraeli; General von Kaufmann is delighted with it; and the representative organ of the ultra-national party in the Russian press declares that 'the frank and firm reply of Mr. Disraeli replaces anew the two Governments respectively in the situation which is most agreeable to their dignity, their grandeur, and the interests of each.' It follows, of course, that in May, 1876, the Government of England, if we are to believe its chief, so far from apprehending any danger to our Indian Empire from the doings or designs of Russia in Central Asia, regarded that country as a friendly ally in the mission of carrying the blessings of civilisation in the train of beneficent conquests.

So much as to the understanding between England and Russia with respect to Central Asia generally and Afghanistan in particular.

CHAPTER II.

COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN KAUFMANN AND SHERE ALI.

LET us now see what bearing the correspondence between General von Kaufmann and Shere Ali has upon that understanding.

The long extract from Sir John Strachey's Minute, given on a previous page, shows that the Government of Lord Mayo apprehended nothing but good from the interchange of friendly communications between the Ameer of Cabul and the Russian Governor of Turkestan. Lord Mayo's opinion on that point appears to have been shared by the Home Government and by his two successors, with a single exception during the Viceroyalty of Lord Northbrook, down to the autumn of 1876. At all events, no objection, with that single exception, was made before then to the continuance of the correspondence. Let us glance at the facts as they are set out in the Central Asia papers.

General Kaufmann sent an English duplicate of his first letter to Shere Ali, probably with a view to its being made known to the Government of India; and it may be well to add that there is nothing all through the correspondence to indicate any desire on the part of Kaufmann to keep it secret from the British authorities. The following is a transcript of Kaufmann's English duplicate of his first letter to Shere Ali:—

To the Ameer of Cabul, Shere Ali Khan.

You probably will have heard that your nephew, Abderahman Khan, who a few years ago was Regent of Balkh and of other parts of Afghanistan, is just arrived in Tashkend, and that I, as representative of my gracious Emperor, have allowed him an honourable hospitality. In order that the staying here of the above-mentioned Afghanistan Sirdar might not be erroneously interpreted by you, I suppose it necessary to ex-

plain to you, with my accustomary sincerity and veracity, my point of view concerning the relations I should like to see established between Russian Turkistan and you.

The Asiatic possessions of His Majesty the Emperor have no common limits with the country now submitted to your supremacy; they are separated by the Khanate of Bokhara, whose ruler, the Ameer Seid Mosafar, having concluded a treaty of peace with Russia, stays now in friendly relations to us, and is enjoying the mighty protection of our great Emperor. Between us both there must not be any misunderstandings and vexations at all, and, though distant neighbours, we ought to live in friendship and harmony. I am quite far of longing for meddling with the interior affairs of Afghanistan, not only because you are under the protection of the British Government, with which, as you know, the Russian Government is in the best and most friendly relations, but also because I did not see any infraction from your part in the internal affairs of Bokhara. Afghanistan and Bokhara ought not to have any point of contact together, both of them must go their separate ways, without caring for the welfare of the neighbour.

These considerations leaded me when, having received from Abderahman Khan the request of being admitted to Tashkend, I answered him that His Majesty the Emperor of Russia graciously affords hospitality to everybody, so much the more to an unfortunate, but that he must not in the least reckon on my interference in his quarrel with you, and not expect any assistance from our part. I should not like to be in discordance with you, because your behavour gave no matter for complaints. I hope also that our mutual relations will remain the same, and therefore I send you this letter, and should be glad to receive from you the assurance that, on your part, the analogue principles of neutrality will be strictly observed concerning the Khanates of Bokhara, Kiva, and other neighbours.

Tashkend, $\frac{\text{March } 30}{\text{April } 11}$, 1870.

The Turkistan Governor-General and Commander
of the Troops of the Turkistan
Military Circle,
(Signed) VON KAUFMANN,
General Aide-de-camp.

Pour traduction conforme:
Le Conseiller d'Etat et Gentilhomme de la Chambre.
(Signed) C. STRUVE.

The Ameer was much troubled at the receipt of this letter for reasons described as follows by our Native Agent at his Court:[1]—

1st. What reasons can the Russians have for writing letters in a friendly strain to a State which has already friendly relations with the British Government?

2nd. Having seated amongst them one of our enemies ('muanid'), why should they write pointing out the fact?

3rd. What is the meaning of their writing that Asia has no boundaries?

4th. What do they mean by saying, as a reason for our establishing permanent friendly relations with them, that up to the present time they have had no occasion to be angry with me?

5th. What do they mean by asking for a reply agreeably to the aims ('muafik apné meent ké')?

There is room for apprehension, for the King of Bokhara has already submitted himself to, or become a dependent of, Russia, and it would not be surprising to find Russian officials establishing themselves on the actual border of Afghanistan. If (which God forbid) they should so establish themselves on the actual border and harbour our enemies, what hope is there of the borders of Turkistan, Balkh, and Herat remaining on a satisfactory footing without full ('kamil') arrangements being made, and it is impossible that such complete measure can be carried out for the protection of these borders without the help and assistance of the British Government, with which the Afghan kingdom is allied ('muta ahid'). The Ameer also feels anxiety as to what may have been said by Russia to the British Ambassador at her Court as to her meaning and intention in writing such letters, or what the Ambassador may have learnt as to such intentions, or what action may have been taken, or be about to be taken, by the British Government in the matter. The Ameer defers replying to the letters, meaning to be guided entirely by the wishes and counsels of the British Government. A duplicate set of these letters has to-day reached the Ameer, received through the Meer of Samarkand and the Turkistan officials; the duplicates have been kept at Cabul, and the Ameer's apprehensions have been further aroused by the receipt of the duplicate letters; he wonders why they should be at such trouble in the matter.

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 180.

Two things are to be noted here: first, the nervous susceptibility of Shere Ali as to any possible designs against his independence and territory either by Russia alone, or as the result of a private understanding with England; secondly, his disposition to lean for support on that Power which seemed to threaten his independence least.

The Ameer wrote direct to Lord Mayo, soliciting a draft of such a reply as the Viceroy might consider 'appropriate and advisable,' to send to General Kaufmann. Lord Mayo responded to this request as follows:—[1]

My friend, it affords me great pleasure to inform you that I have received intelligence from Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India that, in September last year, Prince Gortchacow, the chief of the statesmen to whom the Emperor of Russia has confided the government of his country, assured Her Majesty's Minister for Foreign Affairs that Russia has no intention of extending her boundary further south. I have also heard from Mr. Forsyth, one of my high officers who visited St. Petersburg last year, that he had the honour of an interview with the Emperor, when he informed His Majesty of the deep interest which the British Government take in your independence and welfare, in reply to which the Emperor remarked there was no intention of extending the Russian dominions, and that, if the idea of conquest were banished from your Highness' mind, there would be peace in Central Asia. The Ambassador of the Queen at the Court of St. Petersburg, together with Mr. Forsyth, has also received assurances from the Ministers of the Emperor of Russia, with the full concurrence of His Majesty, that all the provinces that your Highness now holds should be accepted as Afghanistan; and that, whilst the good offices of England should be exerted to dissuade your Highness from aggression, Russia should similarly use all her influence to restrain Bokhara from transgressing the limits of Afghan territory.

I have also been informed that Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg has reported to the Secretary of State that instructions have been sent to General von Kaufmann to the effect that, as the Government of India had taken measures

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 184.

to carry out the understanding come to with Mr. Forsyth, the Russian authorities should act in a similar spirit, and should make it known that England and Russia are agreed as to the policy that should be followed with a view of securing the tranquillity of the countries on their respective borders, and the peace of Asia. I have further received information that General von Kaufmann has informed the Sirdar Abdul Rahman Khan (now supposed to be resident at Tashkend) that Russia is firmly resolved not to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, and that consequently all negotiations with him (Abdul Rahman Khan) are useless, and that General von Kaufmann will once more intimate to Abdul Rahman Khan that he can only be granted an asylum in the territories of Russia on condition of his abstaining from intrigues and political projects, for the realisation of which he must not in any way reckon on assistance from Bokhara.

The letter which General von Kaufmann has addressed you contains, as I have already stated, assurances on the part of the Russian Government of their resolution to adhere to this policy of peace; and these letters will doubtless be, when rightly understood, a source of satisfaction and an additional ground of confidence to your Highness, because they indicate that, so long as you continue the course you have so happily pursued since the visit you honoured me with at Umballa, it is most unlikely that your territories will be disturbed by Russia or by any tribe or State which may be influenced by the officers of the Emperor.

My friend, these assurances given by His Imperial Majesty himself—by his Ministers of State—and now by the distinguished General who commands His Majesty's Forces in Russian Turkistan, have given to me unfeigned satisfaction. For in these I see a further and an aditional security for that which I so much desire, namely, the permanency of your rule, the complete establishment of your power, and the maintenance of a just, wise, and merciful administration throughout the whole of Afghanistan. Further, it is a matter of great gratification to me that the servants of the Queen, both in England and in India, have, by the representations made by them in your behalf to Her Majesty's ally, been enabled to contribute in this important manner to the interests of your Highness and of your State.

I therefore suggest for your Highness' consideration that it would be wise that you should reply to General von Kauf-

mann to the effect that you are glad to receive his assurances that no interference, direct or indirect, will be undertaken by any officer in the service of His Imperial Majesty in the affairs of Afghanistan, and that no assistance or encouragement will be afforded by them to your enemies; that in pursuance of the counsel and advice repeatedly given you by the British Government, you have instructed your frontier officers that, while they should firmly defend your border and maintain your authority, they must not permit any aggressions to be made on their neighbours, and that they must abstain from interference in the political affairs of countries and tribes beyond the legitimate borders of Afghanistan; and, further, that you are determined to adhere to this policy, not only because you have been advised thereto by the Viceroy of India, whose Sovereign is in strict alliance with the Czar, but also because you are convinced that it is in accordance with the best interests of your kingdom and the welfare of your people.

In reporting the incident to the Home Government the Viceroy and his Council stated their view of the matter as follows:—[1]

General von Kaufmann's communication appears to us to be the result of the instructions which, as reported in your Secretary's Secret letter, dated May 6, 1870, the Court of St. Petersburgh had determined to send to Tashkend, viz., that General von Kaufmann should make it known everywhere in Central Asia that a perfect understanding exists between the Governments of Great Britain and Russia with reference to the affairs and interests of those countries. In answering the Ameer's letter we have taken the opportunity to explain to him the repeated assurances we have received from the Russian Government of their determination to pursue a peaceful policy in Central Asia. We have also informed him that the letters addressed to him by General von Kaufmann, containing as they do a renewed expression of this policy to the Ameer himself, will doubtless be, when rightly viewed, a source of satisfaction and an additional ground of confidence to his Highness that, so long as he continues the course he has so happily followed since his meeting with the Viceroy at Umballa, it is most unlikely that his territories will be

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 179.

disturbed by Russia, or by any tribe or State which may be influenced by the officers of the Emperor.

We beg to refer to the Viceroy's reply to the Ameer for a full expression of our sentiments. A copy in print is inclosed but the original was sent as usual in manuscript.

We have, &c.,

(Signed) MAYO.
NAPIER OF MAGDALA.
JOHN STRACHEY.
R. TEMPLE.
J. F. STEPHEN.
B. H. ELLIS.
H. W. NORMAN.

The Viceroy's letter had the effect of completely reassuring the Ameer, as the following reply from him shows :[1]—

The Ameer of Cabul to the Governor-General of India.

(Translation.—After compliments).

Cabul, Saturday, 16th Rubee-oos-Sanee, 1287 Hijree. (July 16, 1870).

The noble and kind letter which your Excellency, from friendship and unity, wrote to me in reply to my communication, reached me at an auspicious time, and was (to me) an expounder of State matters and of views of primary importance.

The pleasure and thanks which your Excellency, on account of my good intention and sincere nature, has expressed, have proceeded from the firm bonds of sincere friendship, nay, may be said to be the reflection of the mirrors of the hearts of two parties sincere in their mutual relations.

In fact, when the welfare and interest of the two parties, coming out from the circle of contrariety, become identical, it is naturally to be expected that the joys of friends shall delight friends. The few paragraphs which have been kindly written to me, containing gratifying assurances that firm and complete arrangements in respect to border matters have been made between the officers of the British and Russian Governments, to the effect that my territories will not be disturbed

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 187.

by any tribe or State which may be influenced by the officers of the Russian Emperor, have laid me and all the people of this country under great obligation. Your Excellency has expressed gratification at the welcome thought (literally, joyful tidings) that the authorities of Hindustan and England take interest in the firm establishment of the rule of the country of Afghanistan.

Such friendly sympathy, which will in reality result in the firm establishment of the authority of my dominion, has led me to expect that my various hopes will be realized in future, and has particularly given a hope of peace and tranquillity to the inhabitants of the country of Afghanistan. For this friendly favour what words can I make use of to express my thanks? The prosperity of the garden of my State always depends on the kindness of the British officers.

Considering that the few lines which were, out of friendship, written at the conclusion of your Excellency's letter, with the view that a reply might agreeably thereto be returned to the Russian Government, would, if adopted in my reply, prove of benefit to the territory of Afghanistan, I have, in accordance therewith, sent an answer to the letter from the Russian Government. A perusal of its copy will show how it is couched from the beginning to the end. I have issued strict orders to the officers in charge of my frontiers to watch and defend always the borders, so that it may be the cause of assurance to the mind of both those who are in the vicinity and those who are at a distance. Further, by the grace of God, great possible exertions will be made according to the wishes of the British officers to keep relations of friendship.

I hope that your Excellency will consider me as a friend, and will kindly continue to gratify me with accounts of your health.

That this is a genuine expression of the Ameer's mind appears from the report of the British Agent at Cabul.[1] 'After mentioning the contents of the murrasilla,' says the Agent, 'the Ameer expressed himself highly gratified with the British Government, and remarked:—

Owing to the patronage ('himayut') and kindness of the British Government I was quite assured that they would

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 188.

devise suitable and appropriate measures in regard to the security of the Afghan border, and my protection and that of all the people of Afghanistan from the threats of foreign assailants. I myself and all my officials are unable to express sufficiently our gratitude at the contents of the above murrasilla. However, I am grateful to state that I have been thoroughly reassured as regards the Turkistan border, and it is desirable that a complimentary murrasilla should be addressed to his Excellency the Governor-General of India in a suitable style; also, a murrasilla should be sent, in accordance with the instructions of the British Government, to the Russian Governor in Tashkend, in reply to the one received from him.

General von Kaufmann replied to Shere Ali's letter in the terms and with the results described in the following despatch:[1]—

The Governor-General of India in Council to the Duke of Argyll.

(Secret.)

Simla, May 9, 1871.

My Lord Duke,—With reference to our Secret despatch dated August 26 last, we have the honour to forward, for the information of Her Majesty's Government, copy of papers from which it will be perceived that the Ameer of Cabul has received a reply to the letter which he addressed to the Russian Governor-General in Turkistan in July last.

General Kaufmann's letter is, in our opinion, most satisfactory, and the Viceroy has advised his Highness the Ameer to reply, briefly expressing his gratification at the friendly assurances which it contains.

We have, &c.,

(Signed) MAYO.
NAPIER OF MAGDALA.
JOHN STRACHEY.
R. TEMPLE.
J. F. STEPHEN.
B. H. ELLIS.

The correspondence thus begun and continued has lasted down to the flight of the Ameer from Cabul. It

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 188.

is unnecessary to go through it in detail. Suffice it to say that neither Kaufmann nor the Ameer made any secret about it, and that no exception was taken to it either by the Government of the Viceroy or by that of the Queen before the autumn of 1876. Moreover, both General Kaufmann and Shere Ali had every reason to believe that a correspondence sanctioned and encouraged by men like Lord Mayo, Lord Napier of Magdala, and Sir J. Fitzjames Stephen, could not be otherwise than agreeable to the British Government. With very few exceptions, the correspondence did not travel out of the region of commonplace and compliment. Nor do the exceptions, save one or two, call for particular remark.

Kaufmann informed the Ameer of the capture of Kuldjah by the Russian troops in 1872,[1] and of Khiva in 1873.[2] Kaufmann's object in announcing Russian conquests to Shere Ali seems to have been to allay, by a frank explanation, any alarm which the Ameer might feel at the progress of the Russian arms. Thus in the case of Khiva he explains that the Khan had given a *casus belli* by acts which were notably hostile to Russia, but which were, in addition, contrary to Mahomedan law. Kaufmann had a further cause for communicating the capture of Khiva to Shere Ali in the fact that among the 30,000 slaves which the Russians set at liberty there were '400 Afghans,' who 'wanted to go back to their country, some through Bokhara, some through Balkh, and some through Maimena.'

On another occasion some Turkomans on the borders of Afghanistan carried off a Russian officer and held him to ransom. The Indian Government advised the Ameer to do his best to effect the release of the Russian captain. This naturally caused some correspondence between the authorities at Cabul and in Tashkend.[3]

A nephew of Shere Ali, Sekander Khan by name, who had been for some years in the military service of Russia, wishing to return to Afghanistan by England

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 195. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 10. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 62, 81.

and Hindustan, Kaufmann wrote a letter to Shere Ali to bespeak a friendly reception for his nephew.[1] The Ameer sent the letter to Lord Northbrook, and replied to it in friendly terms, but without saying anything about Sekander Khan, whom he did not wish to receive.

Some months later Kaufmann wrote another letter, in which a casual reference was made to the boundary between Afghanistan and Bokhara. This occasioned some anxiety to the Ameer, which he confided to the British Agent at his Court, and which the latter communicated to the Viceroy.[2] This was at the time when the Russian and British Governments were on the point of coming to an agreement as to the recognized frontiers of Afghanistan. Lord Northbrook accordingly sent a reassuring reply to the Ameer. In answer to a later letter of similar character the British Agent at Cabul was instructed as follows:—

> Should his Highness the Ameer allude to these letters, and manifest the apprehensions which his courtiers entertain, the Agent should be instructed to state that the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council sees in them no ground whatever for apprehension, but rather additional reason for believing that the Russian authorities desire to maintain none of the relations but those of amity with the Government of Afghanistan.

During the absence of Kaufmann in St. Petersburg in the end of 1873 his *locum tenens*, General Kolpakofski, wrote to Cabul announcing his temporary charge of Turkistan. The Viceroy took exception to the following passage[3] in this letter, and called the attention of the Duke of Argyll to it:—

> Being charged with the Government of Turkistan during the absence of his Excellency, I consider it my duty to express to you my satisfaction as regards the feelings of friendship and devotion which you set forth in your letter.
>
> In despatching the same to the High Governor-General for his favourable consideration, I entertain the hope that he

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 194. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 198. [3] *Ibid.*, pp. 15, 16.

will not refuse your request, and that he will represent to His Majesty the Emperor your conscientious mode of action, and your endeavour to become worthy of the grace of my august Master.

The Agent at Cabul was instructed at the same time to ascertain from Shere Ali what the reference to his 'request' meant. One of the documents recently published on the affairs of Central Asia explains the matter, and divests it of all importance. An emissary of the pretender Abdul Rahman was apprehended at Cabul, and his confession induced the Ameer to make the 'request' which Lord Northbrook sought to clear up. The following is the document[1] referred to:—

Extract from Cabul Diary from November 8 to 11, *inclusive.*

The messenger sent by Sirdar Abdul Rahman Khan, whose apprehension at Cabul was mentioned in the Cabul Diary of the 7th instant, on being rigorously examined represented as follows:—

I recollect that three guns, which could be drawn by mules, were cast in the iron factory at Balkh. Of these two were missed from the said factory, and I saw them concealed at Samarkand, in the house of Sirdar Abdul Rahman Khan. Some of the Meers of Turkistan send rebellious letters from Balkh to the Sirdar. I do not know their names. I have brought no letter from him, except that for Azimudin Khan, Commandant of the Jezailchees in Indrah.

After hearing these representations the Ameer remarked that, in forwarding a reply to the murrasilla dated August 1, 1872, or the 9th Jamadiul Sani, or August 14, 1872, from the Russian Governor-General at Tashkend to the address of Naib Mahomed Alum Khan, Governor of Turkistan, which was received at Cabul on September 2, 1872, and to which no reply has yet been sent, the Naib should fully mention the above-described hostile conduct of Sirdar Abdul Rahman Khan, and that, after transmitting the original letter from the Sirdar to the address of Azimudin Khan to the Russian Governor-General, he should request him to hold the Sirdar answerable for the submission of such communications. His Highness further observed that a copy of the letter received

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 203.

by Azimudin Khan from the Sirdar, together with a copy of the murrasilla, which will be forwarded to the officiating Russian Governor-General, on the part of Naib Mahomed Alum Khan, should be submitted to the British Government, with a view to their being forwarded to the Russian Government through the British Ambassador, requesting them to adopt suitable measures regarding the hostile behaviour of the Sirdar.

A murrasilla has therefore been sent to Naib Mahomed Alum Khan, to the address of the Russian Governor-General at Tashkend, together with the original letter received from Sirdar Abdul Rahman Khan. The Naib will forward them in the usual manner, by hand of one of his agents, to Tashkend, after attaching his seal to the murrasilla. Copies of both of these papers are inclosed by desire of the Ameer. His Highness ordered Mahomed Umar Khan, Baghban Bashi, and Mirza Abdul Haah Khan, trusted agents of Naib Mahomed Alum Khan, to proceed quickly to Turkestan, and wrote to the Naib that he should endeavour as far as possible to arrange for the security of his border, and transfer any of the men of the Hajdahuahri cavalry who may be considered unfit for service in Turkestan, or may be suspected of raising disturbances, &c.

The whole circumstances had in fact been carefully communicated to the Indian Government at the time by its faithful Native Agent at Cabul. This is one out of many proofs which the papers furnish that no information of the least importance escaped the vigilance of our Agent. It is indeed difficult to see in what respect a European Agent could have served us better, or indeed, so far as the procuring of information went, served us so well.

In August, 1875, Shere Ali summoned the British Agent to his presence and told him that 'a Russian Envoy,' a native of Samarkand, had crossed the Oxus with a letter for his Highness. The Envoy was received hospitably, and his letter was shown to the British Agent, who communicated all the circumstances to his Government. Kaufmann's letter announced his return to his post in the following terms:[1]

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), pp. 63, 64.

I (the Governor-General) remained for about one and a-half years at St. Petersburg to settle some matters. Two letters were received from your Highness at that place. In one you announced the appointment of Sirdar Abdul Khan as your heir apparent, and we were highly gratified. The friendship existing between Russia and Afghanistan will increase and become firm owing to the recent alliance between England and Russia, and I hope that the countries under the protection of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor and Her Majesty the Queen will enjoy peace and comfort.

The Russian messenger, after a sojourn of three weeks at Cabul, returned to Tashkend with a civil answer from the Ameer. On October 27, 1875, Kaufmann acknowledged the receipt of this letter, and took occasion, 'through real friendship,' to inform him of the Russian expedition against Khokand.[1]

In February, 1876, the British Agent at Cabul reports the arrival of 'an Agent of the Russian Government' on the borders of Afghanistan, and the Ameer's instructions 'that, should the Envoy have reached Mazar-i-Sharif, he should be forwarded to Cabul in an honourable and hospitable a manner.'[2]

This closes the communications between General von Kaufmann and Shere Ali during the Viceroyalty of Lord Northbrook. In his despatch to Lord Lytton, of November 18, 1878, this correspondence is referred to by Lord Cranbrook as a proof of intrigue between Shere Ali and the Russian Government before the present Government acceded to power. In order to be quite fair to Lord Cranbrook, we will quote the whole paragraph:[3]—

Such was the position of affairs when Her Majesty's present advisers assumed office in 1874. The maintenance of Afghanistan as a strong and friendly Power had at all times been the object of British policy. The method adopted in attaining that object had not met with the success that was desirable. Its accomplishment was, nevertheless, a matter of grave importance, and it had now to be considered

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 71. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[3] *Afghanistan*, p. 262.

with reference to the rapid march of events in Turkistan. Her Majesty's Government could not view with indifference the probable influence of those events upon the character of an Asiatic prince whose dominions were thereby brought within a steadily narrowing circle between two great military empires, and although no immediate danger appeared to threaten British interests on the frontier of Afghanistan, the situation in Central Asia had become sufficiently grave to suggest the necessity of timely precaution. Her Majesty's Government considered that the first step necessary was the improvement of their relations with the Ameer himself. With this object in view they deemed it expedient that his Highness should be invited to receive a temporary mission at Cabul, in order that an accredited British Envoy might confer with him personally upon what was taking place, might assure him of the desire of the Queen's Government that his territories should remain safe from external attack, and at the same time might point out to him the extreme difficulty of attaining this object unless it were permitted by him to place its own officers on his frontier to watch the course of events beyond it. It was true that the Ameer's relations with the Russian Governor-General of Turkistan had of late become more intimate, and that a correspondence which that official had commenced with the Cabul Durbar in 1871, and which at one time had caused serious disquiet to the Ameer, was being carried on with increased activity, whilst his Highness's original practice of consulting the Indian Government as to the replies to be sent to General Kaufmann's communications had been discontinued. Nevertheless, her Majesty's Government were willing to believe that Shere Ali, if his intentions were friendly, would be ready to join them in measures advantageous to himself and essential for the protection of common interests.

Lord Granbrook's general statement of 'the position of affairs when Her Majesty's Government advisers assumed office in 1874,' has been already dealt with. We are concerned here with his version of the correspondence between General Kaufmann and Shere Ali. His account is altogether incorrect. He is wrong, to begin with, in dating the correspondence from 1871. It began in March, 1870. It is also, to say no more, a grave omission to pass by the fact that the Ameer's

'serious disquiet' was removed by the assurance of Lord Mayo and his Council that the letters of Kaufmann were a token of the cordial understanding and friendship of Russia and England towards each other, and towards the Ruler of Afghanistan as well. Nor is it correct to say that the Ameer's 'original practice of consulting the Indian Government as to the replies to be sent to General Kaufmann's communications had been discontinued.' Shere Ali's replies were always communicated to the British Agent, as the Parliamentary Papers on Central Asia abundantly show. Whenever Kaufmann's letters were written in Russian—*i.e.*, in a language which Shere Ali did not understand—he always continued to send them to the Viceroy of India; and in whatever language they were written, he made no secret of them. If he did not consult the Viceroy directly in each case, it was because both Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook had repeatedly advised him as to the general character of the answers to be sent to Kaufmann. That he followed that advice is proved by the official documents. The persons who brought General Kaufmann's letters are sometimes called 'Envoys' in the Cabul Diaries. They were, in fact, mere messengers or letter-carriers. They were not Russians, but natives of Samarkand or Bokhara, selected as messengers, not by Kaufmann himself, but by some one in Bokhara or Samarkand. Lord Northbrook, who ought to know, has declared publicly that down to the time he left India in April, 1876, there was no reason to suppose that the Russians were conducting any intrigues in Cabul in connection with the correspondence between General Kaufmann and Shere Ali. Lord Cranbrook's statement, if it could be substantiated, would, in truth, amount to a severe censure on the Government of which he is a member. The Papers on Central Asia show that the Governments of the Viceroy and that of the Queen were kept fully informed of all that passed between Shere Ali and the Russian officials; yet it was not till the autumn of 1876 that either

Government thought of hinting at a remonstrance.[1] Lord Lytton did not, any more than his two predecessors, discourage before the middle of September, 1876, the communications between Cabul and Tashkend. And when he did object, the ground of his objection was a Russian letter which he had received from the British Agent at Cabul three months previously, and which he had sent home to Lord Salisbury without remark. Neither did Lord Salisbury at the time attach any importance to it.

Thus far, then, the Papers on Central Asia have led us by two routes to the same conclusion. The correspondence between the English Foreign Office and the Russian Government on the affairs of India and Central Asia culminated in the speech of Mr. Disraeli in the summer of 1876—a speech which was absolutely inconsistent with any belief on the part of the Ministry, of which Mr. Disraeli was chief, that any danger was arising to British interests in India, through Afghanistan or otherwise, from the extension of Russian rule in Central Asia. The same conclusion is inevitable from a perusal of the correspondence between Shere Ali and General von Kaufmann. Not only does that correspondence fail to establish any Russian or Afghan intrigues, but the tacit approval of it by the Viceroy's Government down to September 16, 1876, and of Lord Beaconsfield's Government down to October, 1876, proves that neither Government had previously considered it in any way objectionable. And even when the Foreign Secretary did call the attention of the Russian Government to the matter, he was careful to confine his objection to one letter; and with respect to that one letter, he is careful to observe that, though he thinks 'the tone and insinuation of General Kaufmann's letter to the Ameer of Cabul to be undesirable, the letter itself does not contain any statement of a distinctly objectionable character.'[2]

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 79.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 80. There is nothing to show that the letter is Kaufmann's, and there is internal evidence to show that it is not.

CHAPTER III.

INTERRUPTION OF THE FRIENDLY UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ENGLAND AND RUSSIA.

We have seen that in the beginning of May, 1876, the relations between the English and Russian Governments were of the most cordial character. The Prime Minister of England not only repudiated all fear and jealousy of Russia; he did more: he expressed a wish that her career of conquest in Central Asia, so far from stopping, would follow the example set her by the progress of our arms in India. This went beyond anything previously uttered by an English statesman, and the party of action in Russia were not slow to note the importance of that fact. The party of annexation, represented by Kaufmann, and of Muscovite interests, represented by the *Moscow Gazette*, thanked the English Premier and congratulated the Russian public on the complete understanding between the two Governments, which Mr. Disraeli's speech proclaimed to all the world. It was the highest mark of confidence yet reposed by an English Minister in the intentions of the Russian Government. Unfortunately it also marked the turn of the tide. Mr. Disraeli's next utterance on the relations between the two Governments was the notorious Guildhall speech of the following November, in which he taunted Russia with her annexations and menaced her with three campaigns. How shall we account for the violent change? In the interval the Bulgarian atrocities had been perpetrated; the Berlin Memorandum had been rejected; war had in conse-

quence broken out between Servia and Montenegro on the one hand and Turkey on the other; the state of feeling in Russia made a war of liberation probable; Mr. Disraeli would have intervened by force of arms in defence of the Turkish Government if the agitation aroused in England by the doings of the Turks in Bulgaria had not prevented him. That is the explanation, and here are the proofs.

The Berlin Memorandum was received by the English Government on May 15. The popular impression is that it was rejected on the ground that it was an affront to the dignity of England to propose to it for signature a document in the preparation of which it had not been consulted. The Blue-books give no countenance to that impression. The reasons why the Berlin Memorandum was rejected may be summed up in Lord Derby's concise phrase on the occasion, that the Government of Lord Beaconsfield 'deprecated the diplomatic action of the other Powers in the affairs of the Ottoman Empire.'[1] 'The integrity and independence' of that empire were at that time the object nearest to the Ministerial heart. The notion that the Berlin Memorandum was rejected because it trenched on the *amour propre* of the British Cabinet has often called forth the cheers of the credulous. But it is a fiction. Lord Derby's despatches are on record to disprove it. And, in truth, there was nothing in the circumstances to justify the inference. In drawing up the Berlin Memorandum, and then submitting it to the consideration and criticism of the other Powers, the three Emperors had before them the example of France and England in 1860. When the Syrian massacres roused the indignation of Europe the Governments of France and England, as being primarily interested in the matter, submitted a project of intervention to the other Cabinets. These, so far from taking umbrage, applauded the initiative taken by France and England, and the pacification

[1] *Turkey*, No. 3 (1876), p 174

of the Lebanon speedily followed. But the defection of England from the European concert in the summer of 1876 led first to the war between Turkey on one side and Servia and Montenegro on the other, and then to the Russo-Turkish war. England was kept out of the fray by the much-abused Bulgarian agitation. This is not a disputable inference: it is capable of documentary proof. On July 1, 1876, Lord Derby wrote to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg as follows:—

> The Russian Ambassador called to-day and asked me whether, in the event of war breaking out between Turkey and Servia, Her Majesty's Government intended, as he had been led to believe, to adhere to a policy of strict and absolute non-intervention. I said that such was undoubtedly the case, but that it must be clearly understood that Her Majesty's Government entered into no engagement to continue to abstain from intervention in the event (which, however, I could not assume as probable) of a different course being pursued by other Powers.[1]

Here we have a sufficiently plain intimation that if any other Power intervened against the Porte, England might take up arms in defence of the Porte. War did break out between Turkey and Servia as a direct result of England's desertion of the cause of freedom, which was unanimously upheld by the other Great Powers. A Russian officer took the chief command of the Servian army, and between 2000 and 3000 Russian soldiers volunteered under his banner. The pro-Turkish party in England set itself to influence the public mind against Russia, and the guiding spirit of the Government chafed angrily at the agitation which made a war in support of the rule of the Turk in Bulgaria impossible. But let the Government speak for itself. On August 29, 1876, Lord Derby sent the following telegram to Sir Henry Elliot:—

> I think it right to mention, for your guidance, that the

[1] *Turkey*, No. 3 (1876), p. 351.

impression produced here by events in Bulgaria has completely destroyed sympathy with Turkey. The feeling is universal, and so strong that, even if Russia were to declare war against the Porte, Her Majesty's Government would find it practically impossible to interfere.

On September 5 this was expanded, in a written despatch, as follows:—

It is my duty to inform you that any sympathy which was previously felt here towards that country (Turkey) has been completely destroyed by the recent lamentable occurrences in Bulgaria. The accounts of outrages and excesses committed by the Turkish troops upon an unhappy, and for the most part unresisting, population have roused an universal feeling of indignation in all classes of English society; and to such a pitch has this risen, that in the extreme case of Russia declaring war against Turkey, Her Majesty's Government would find it practically impossible to interfere in defence of the Ottoman Empire. Such an event, by which the sympathies of the nation would be brought into direct opposition to its Treaty engagements, would place England in a most unsatisfactory, and even humiliating position. Yet it is impossible to say that if the present conflict continues the contingency may not arise.[1]

There could not be a plainer confession that public opinion alone restrained the Government from going to war against Russia in the event of Russia going to war in defence of the Christians of Turkey. How bitterly the Prime Minister resented this frustration of his policy we have learnt from the Aylesbury speech on September 20, 1876, in which he declared Mr. Gladstone a greater criminal than Chefket Pasha.[2]

The course of events forced Lord Beaconsfield to accept, a few weeks later, a Conference at Constantinople. But how much it went against the grain with him to accept what promised to be a pacific solution of the question is shown by the warlike language of his

[1] *Turkey* No. 1 (1877) p. 105.

[2] Lord Beaconsfield's Speech at Aylesbury, published by authority, pp. 8, 9.

speech at the ensuing Lord Mayor's feast. In announcing the choice of Lord Salisbury as Envoy to the Conference the Prime Minister threatened Russia with three campaigns in case she went to war against Turkey. The Czar met this threat by declaring his determination, if pacific arguments failed, to enforce the terms of the Conference on the Porte at the point of the sword. A strange prelude to a conference of peacemakers! Is there no ground for the inference—even if it were not, as it is, supported by other facts—that Lord Beaconsfield at least would not greatly regret the failure of the Conference? Be that as it may, it is past all doubt that in the autumn of 1876 he had begun to regard a war against Russia as a probable contingency.

But a war between those two Powers in Europe would resemble, to quote Bismarck's *mot*, 'a war between a dog and a fish.' And as the dog in this case would be too cunning to forsake his own element, the fish would have but small chance of saving his *protegé* from being worried. But could the balance be adjusted in Asia? Lord Beaconsfield thought it might. He had made preparations for sending an army through Afghanistan to attack Russia in Central Asia. The particulars of this *coup* are given as follows in a letter dated August 28, 1878, from the inspired Simla correspondent of the official *Pioneer* of Calcutta:—

> I believe it is no longer a secret that, had war broken out, we should not have remained on the defensive in India. A force of 30,000 men, having purchased its way through Afghanistan, thrown rapidly into Samarcand and Bokhara, would have had little difficulty in beating the scattered Russian troops back to the Caspian, for, coming thus as deliverers, the whole population would have risen in our favour. In the feasibility of such a programme the Russians fully believed.

This statement receives independent confirmation from a letter published by Colonel Brackenbury in the *Times* of last October 5.

'One day in Bulgaria,' he says, 'I think it was the day when Gourko's force captured the Shipka, and we met young Skobeleff on the top of the Pass, that brilliant and extraordinary young General said to me suddenly, "Have you any news from India?" I replied that the Russian postal authorities took care that I had no news from anywhere. His answer was, "I cannot find out what has become of that column of 10,000 men that has been organised by your people to raise Central Asia against us." 'Perhaps there was such an idea,' Colonel Brackenbury adds, 'perhaps there was not. At any rate General Skobeleff believed it, which means that the Russian Government had information to that effect.'

There is a wide discrepancy between the strength of the invading force given by General Skobeleff and that given by the Simla correspondent of the *Pioneer*. The explanation, we believe, is that the force of British troops would be little in excess of 10,000. But it was to form the nucleus of a large native force, and was to be furnished with a surplus staff of officers to take command of the Turkoman and other Asiatic tribes which it was intended to raise against Russia.

Here then we have the date and cause of the interruption of the friendly understanding between England and Russia in regard to Central Asia. The divergence between the two Governments dates from the rejection of the Berlin Memorandum by Lord Beaconsfield's Cabinet in the latter part of May, 1876. But Lord Beaconsfield did not seriously contemplate the likelihood of a war against Russia till the following autumn. It was accordingly in the following autumn that both Lord Lytton and the Home Government first discovered that there was anything amiss in the correspondence between General Kaufmann and Shere Ali. What had previously been regarded as a mere interchange of friendly courtesies is now denounced as a system of intrigue against England. Here is the first note of alarm :—

The Viceroy of India to the Marquis of Salisbury.

(Telegraphic.)

Simla: September 16, 1876.

We send you a despatch by this next mail, expressing decided opinion on necessity of Her Majesty's Government remonstrating with Russia on Kaufmann's repeated correspondence with Ameer by hand of Russian agents, two of whom are now in Cabul.

Although hitherto the Government of India have not asked Her Majesty's Government to formally remonstrate on this open breach of repeated pledges, we now deem it necessary to request you to do so, as the correspondence is creating much sensation at Cabul, and forms basis of intrigue which may seriously impair our relations with Ameer.

We will on our part take earliest favourable opportunity of co-operating with any action you may deem expedient to impress on Ameer risk he runs and necessity for his stopping reception of these intriguing agents.

If without waiting receipt of despatch you can act at once on this information, result of such action communicated to me by telegraph may favourably affect negotiation mentioned in my accompanying telegram.[1]

Lord Derby took action, as follows:[2]—

The Earl of Derby to Lord A. Loftus.

Foreign Office, October 2, 1876.

My Lord,—In my despatch to your Excellency of the 6th ultimo, I inclosed a copy of the Cabul Diaries received from the Indian Government.

You will find at page 10 of those Diaries a letter addressed by General Kaufmann to the Ameer of Cabul which appears to have been conveyed to its destination by an Asiatic agent, who still remains at Cabul, and it is reported from other sources that his instructions are to induce Shere Ali to sign an offensive and defensive alliance with the Russian Government as well as a Commercial Treaty.

Although the tone and insinuation of General Kaufmann's

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 79. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

letter appear to Her Majesty's Government to be undesirable, the letter itself does not contain any statement of a distinctly objectionable character. Your Excellency will address a note to the Russian Government, reminding them of their repeated assurances that 'Afghanistan is completely outside the sphere within which Russia may be called upon to exercise her influence,' and you will endeavour, if possible, to obtain from the Russian Government a written disclaimer of any intention on their part to negotiate Treaties with Shere Ali without the consent of Her Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.,

(Signed) DERBY.

It is to be noted in passing that the Viceroy's telegram refers to 'intriguing agents.' It has already been shown that the persons in question were not 'agents,' but mere letter-carriers. Nor is there a tittle of evidence to prove their alleged 'intrigues.' The telegram also refers to a 'negotiation mentioned in my accompanying telegram.' This accompanying telegram has not been published, and the reference to it shows that other reports to the Home Government were made by the Government of India besides those given in the published papers.

On October 12 the Russian Government 'denied categorically that Kaufmann was acting at Cabul either by an agent or in any other manner.'[1]

On September 18 Lord Lytton followed up his telegram of the 16th by a despatch, in which he complains at some length of the correspondence between Shere Ali and General Kaufmann. Mention is made of 'secret nightly conferences' between the Ameer and Russian agents. But the Viceroy adds that his information is derived 'from an unofficial source,' which consequently he is, 'of course, unable to verify.'[2]

On the other hand, the Diaries of the Viceroy's vigilant Native Agent at Cabul give no support to the unofficial rumours which reached the Indian Govern-

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 81. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

ment. The following, for example, was received by the Viceroy only a few days before he despatched to the Home Government his telegram of remonstrance against Kaufmann's letters to Shere Ali :-

Extract from Cabul Diary from August 22 to 24, 1876.

Yesterday Mirza Mahomed Yusaf Khan, Mervi, the Russian Envoy, put up, by desire of the Durbar, in the house of Sardar Mahomed Yusaf Khan, with Mirza Abdul Karim Khan, the first Envoy, and they both received cooked food from the Durbar. To-day at 10 A.M. he waited on the Ameer, in company with Sardar Mahomed Yusaf Khan, and after communicating the compliments of the Governor-General in Russian Turkistan, submitted a murrasila from the latter in the Russian and Turki languages. His Highness, after formal inquiry (as to health, &c.), in twenty minutes allowed him to return to the Sardar's house, and got the murrasila translated from the Turki language. It appears that the Governor-General has sent this murrasila merely to inform his Highness of his return to Tashkend from St. Petersburg.[1] He writes that the Emperor of Russia summoned him to St. Petersburg to discuss about some important affairs of (Russian) Turkistan, that he returned to Tashkend in six months, that he is glad to say that the friendship existing between his Highness and the Russians has now become firm, and that the Ameer's rectitude will keep the subjects of both Governments happy. A copy of the murrasila will be submitted as soon as it is obtained.

This hardly seems to justify the alarm of the Viceroy. Kaufmann's 'murrasila' proves that the long letter about Khokand was sent during Kaufmann's absence

[1] Kaufmann's letter is as follows:—

'*Abstract Translation of Murrasila, dated 13th Jamadi-ul-Sani (July 6, 1876), from the Russian Governor-General to the Ameer.*

'To discuss about some important Turkistan matters I was summoned by the Emperor, and after remaining about six months at St. Petersburg returned to Tashkend. I have considered it advisable to send this information to you. The friendship existing between you and the Russian Government and between you and me has been promoted. I pray God for your (long) life. Your rectitude will tend to the comfort and happiness of the subjects (of the Government of Russia and Afghanistan).'

in St. Petersburg. It was evidently the work of a subordinate, and Lord Derby frankly admitted, as we have already noted, that 'the letter itself does not contain any statement of a distinctly objectionable character.'

Shere Ali's reply to the Russian letter explaining the cause of the annexation of Khokand is about as vague and colourless as it is possible to imagine. If it gives evidence of anything at all, certainly it is not of a mind intriguing with Russia, but rather of a nervous anxiety to steer clear of all complications. The letter is as follows :—[1]

Abstract Translation of Murrasila, dated 7th Shaaban (August 27, 1876), from the Ameer to the Russian Governor-General.

Your[2] murrasila, dated Mohurram (February) anent Khokand matters, which you sent from Tashkend by hand of Mirza Abdul Karim Khan, reached me at Cabul in Jamadi-ul-awal (June), and I have mastered its contents. If those persons who are in the neighbourhood or propinquity of great and powerful States, and for whom it is easy and feasible to undertake certain affairs in their country or city according to their capabilities and the customs and usages of that country or city, maintain (friendly) relations with (those) States, undoubtedly it is not politic or advisable that they should deviate from such relations. But as the Government of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor is great and powerful, and as it is customary for its neighbours and the people in its adjacent territories to expect kindness and rectitude from it, if such great and noted Government shows kindness and mercy to the people in its neighbouring or adjoining territories, certainly it will tend to the encouragement (*lit.* hopes) of neighbours and the comfort of the people of God. Continue to afford me happiness by informing me of your health, &c.

It has been alleged that General Kaufmann's object was to impress the Ameer's mind favourably, and inspire

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 88.

[2] It has been pointed out already that this murrasila was sent to Cabul during Kaufmann's absence from Turkistan. It was without signature, and the Ameer acknowledges it as if it had come from Kaufmann.

him with a desire for alliance with Russia. There does not seem to be any ground for this idea. But assuming it to be true, the design failed altogether. For Shere Ali's last letter is just as guarded and general, just as much a repetition of mere political and moral platitudes, as his first one.

These letters between Kaufmann and Shere Ali are noticed as follows by Lord Derby in a despatch to Lord A. Loftus, dated October 24, 1876 :— [1]

> I take this opportunity of sending your Excellency a copy of a further letter from the India Office, inclosing copies of despatches from India, in which it is shown that General Kaufmann for many years past has been in the habit of keeping up a correspondence with the Ameer, a proceeding which, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, is opposed to the understanding between England and Russia, which stipulates that Russia shall not interfere in any way in the affairs of Afghanistan.

The Foreign Secretary writes as if 'the correspondence with the Ameer, for many years past,' had come upon him as a new revelation. This seems somewhat hard on the eminent correspondents, when we remember that the correspondence was begun with the sanction and continued by the advice of the Indian Government.

On November 15 Lord A. Loftus called Prince Gortschakoff's attention to the subject.[2]

> Prince Gortschakoff replied that there was no Russian Agent at Cabul as far as he knew, and that General Kaufmann had merely forwarded a complimentary letter to the Ameer, as he was in the habit of doing on returning to his post.
>
> 'But,' added his Highness, 'quand nous avons en main une baleine, je ne puis pas m'occuper des petits poissons.'

Prince Gortschakoff denied at the same time 'the report of a projected expedition to Merv.'

On November 17 Lord A. Loftus reported an inter-

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 86. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 89.

view held that day with M. de Giers, the director of the Asiatic department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.[1]

M. de Giers then stated that there was no question of General Kaufmann entering into political communication with the Ameer of Afghanistan, nor was there the remotest idea of any treaty engagements. The Agent was simply charged to deliver a letter of courtesy from General Kaufmann to the Ameer, which was an usual custom on his resuming the duties of his post, and as the Governor-General of a neighbouring State.

To this I replied that he was not the Governor of a neighbouring State, inasmuch as the Khanate of Bokhara was still to be regarded as an independent State, and that I therefore considered it necessary that General Kaufmann should receive express orders from the Imperial Government to desist in future from sending Agents to Cabul and from entertaining political communication with the Ameer of Afghanistan.

M. de Giers then informed me that the Imperial Government had received information both from General Kaufmann, and through the Imperial Minister at Teheran, that the Afghan Government were making great military preparations. He stated that 10,000 men were assembled at Herat, with 1,600 cavalry, all well armed and equipped; that they were being constantly drilled and exercised, and that a cannon foundry was established at Herat capable of producing one cannon per day. From the information the Imperial Government had received, this armament was destined for an expedition against the Turkomans and against Merv.

It would appear, from the report of General Kaufmann, that he was somewhat disturbed in mind by this reported expedition.

General Kaufmann in his report referred also to certain incursions beyond their frontier which the Afghan troops were undertaking in the direction of Zaraffshan and Karateguin, and he referred to them as likely to produce a disturbance of the relations between Bokhara and Afghanistan.

On my inquiry, his Excellency further informed me that in consequence of a disagreement between the Turkomans and the Khan of Khiva, the latter had expressed a wish to renounce his rights of government in favour of Russia, but that

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1874), pp. 90, 91.

General Kaufmann had opposed this wish, and was now acting as the arbitrator between the Khan and his subjects.

His Excellency stated that the Imperial Government desired anxiously that no change in the *status quo* should take place, and that peace and order should reign in Central Asia.

On December 1 M. de Giers sent a written reply to the communication made to him by the British Ambassador.[1] He repeated the categorical denial of the statement that a Russian Agent had been sent to Cabul to negotiate a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive with Shere Ali. He then appealed to the correspondence itself in proof of its innocence, and went on to express some uneasiness on the part of the Russian Government in respect to the intentions of the Indian Government:—

Your Excellency, meanwhile, has no doubt convinced yourself that the letter of General Kaufmann mentioned in your last note contained nothing beyond a message of courtesy, and did not give evidence in any way of the existence of any political negotiation whatsoever between our authorities in Turkestan and those of Cabul.

The care which the Cabinet of London devote to watching over the strict observance of the understanding established between them and Russia in 1872 relative to Afghanistan induces the Imperial Ministry, on their side, to mention some information which has reached them from Tashkend, having reference to a simultaneous movement of troops of the Indian army, on the one hand, into the States of Ahmoud Sahib, Ruler of Swat, and of Afghan detachments, on the other hand, into Darvaz, a small independent State beyond the frontiers of Badakshan and Wakhan, and bordering on the north-east on Karategin, both provinces being vassals of the Ameer of Bokhara.

We learn at the same time that considerable armaments are taking place at Herat, in view of an expedition against the Turkomans of Merv.

If these facts received any confirmation, they would constitute a direct infraction of the understanding of 1872, by which Great Britain engaged to dissuade the Ameer from any

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 94.

aggression beyond the zone recognised as being under Afghan dominion.

The Imperial Ministry do not doubt that the British Government will employ all its influence at Cabul to prevent encroachments of this nature.

The relations between the two Governments were evidently becoming strained. They were in an attitude of mutual suspicion, and were prone to see evil intention in acts which in themselves may have been innocent enough. Meanwhile Kaufmann himself replied to the accusations made against him, and his letter—which is here subjoined—was communicated to Lord A. Loftus on December 15:—

November 9, 1876.

Your Excellency was good enough to transmit to me, in your letter of October 8 last, the translation of a note of the English Ambassador at the Imperial Court relative to a supposed Agent whom I was said to have despatched to Cabul, according to information received by the British Government, in order to conclude a treaty of alliance offensive and defensive, and also a treaty of commerce.

I consider it my duty to inform your Excellency that, since entering on my duties as Governor-General of Turkestan, my relations with Shere Ali Khan have been limited to interchanges of civility, and that I have never sent to Cabul either Agents or even a single Djiguitte.

My letters have always been sent, once or twice a year, through the Ameer of Bokhara, who forwarded them to Cabul, or by a Djiguitte of Samarcand addressed to the Chief of Balkh, who sent them on to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

These communications had never any other character than one of pure courtesy, as your Excellency can convince yourself from the copies kept in the Asiatic Department.

I avail myself of this opportunity to affirm that my conduct towards the neighbouring Khanates and others has never been a mystery to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and that it has always been in accordance with the supreme orders which His Majesty the Emperor has been pleased to give me since my nomination to my post.

My personal convictions do not admit the necessity of any stratagem or subterfuge for the satisfactory transaction of

affairs, and I venture to hope that a long series of years has convinced the Imperial Government of the absence of any political intrigues in my relations with the Asiatic Khanates, intrigues contrary to my personal character, which is as much opposed to deception in political as in private life.

His Highness the Chancellor of the Empire has entirely approved this view of our affairs in Central Asia.

I have the honour, therefore, to beg your Excellency to be so good as to protest formally against the assertions contained in the note of the British Ambassador, which are completely without foundation.

I deny that the source from which this entirely erroneous information may have been derived can have any authentic character.

I have, &c.

On January 27, 1877, Lord Salisbury reviews the answers of M. de Giers and General Kaufmann in the following terms:—[1]

Lord Salisbury observes from these papers that the statement that Russian Agents have been sent to Cabul with the object of negotiating a Treaty with the Ameer is denied both by the Russian Government and General Kaufmann, and that it is asserted that the General's communications have been merely letters of courtesy sent through the Ameer of Bokhara.

Lord Salisbury has received the assurance given on the first point with satisfaction, but he cannot accept as correct the general view of the correspondence taken by the Russian Government without referring to earlier communications; it is impossible to regard as a mere letter of courtesy General Kaufmann's letter of February last,[2] which contained a detailed account of the Russian conquest of Khokand with justificatory remarks of a suggestive character; while as regards the allegation that the bearers of the different letters have not been Russian Agents, but messengers employed by

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 99.

[2] Kaufmann was at St. Petersburg when this letter was written. See *Central Asia*, No 1 (1878), p. 82. The letter, as already pointed out, must have been written in Kaufmann's absence by a subordinate. It may be observed also that Lord Salisbury attributes to the letter an importance which Lord Derby (see p. 277) failed to see in it.

the Ameer of Bokhara, it is enough to observe that they have been viewed at Cabul in the former light, and treated accordingly. The fact that the character, both of the letters and of their bearers, is open to such misconstruction is, in Lord Salisbury's opinion, a sufficient reason for the issue by the Russian Government to General Kaufmann of orders to altogether discontinue his communications to the Ameer.

At the same time Lord Salisbury threw doubt on the report of aggressive intentions on the part of Shere Ali; and while claiming, on behalf of the English Government, the right to send an expedition against Swat, he disclaimed all knowledge of such an expedition in matter of fact.

Lord Derby accordingly instructed Lord A. Loftus to address a formal note in this sense to M. de Giers.[1] Before receiving this note M. de Giers had made the following explanation[2] to the British Ambassador:—

M. de Giers called on me yesterday, and, in reply to my inquiry, stated that the name given in the Cabul Diaries of the reputed Russian Agent was the same as that mentioned by General Kaufmann, but his Excellency said that he was not personally employed by General Kaufmann, nor was he personally known to him. The letter of which he was the bearer had been sent by General Kaufmann to the Ameer of Bokhara for transmission to Balkh, from thence it was forwarded to the Ameer at Cabul.

The Agent in question was the mere bearer of a letter, was neither selected by, nor personally known to General Kaufmann, and consequently was in no way authorised to assume the character of a Russian Agent or Envoy at Cabul.

M. de Giers stated that he had sent a copy of the extracts from the Cabul Diaries which I had given him to General Kaufmann, and had observed to him that the assumed character at Cabul of a Russian Envoy by this messenger was incorrect, liable to misconception, and consequently to be guarded against for the future.

On March 5, 1877, the Russian Government made a formal reply, by the hand of M. de Giers, to the formal

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 101. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 102.

note addressed to it by the British Ambassador.[1] After some words of courtesy on behalf of his Government, M. de Giers proceeds :—

> With this view they felt ready to give, in the notes of November 19 / December 1 and December 3/15, to which your Excellency refers, the assurance that Russia had not endeavoured to conclude any arrangement, commercial or political, with the Ameer of Cabul, and that the rare relations of our authorities in Central Asia with the latter had never borne any other character than one of pure courtesy, in conformity with local usages in the East. While now renewing these assurances, the Imperial Government hope the British Government will recognise that practically we have never swerved from them, whatever may have been the erroneous interpretations placed by the native Asiatic Governments on the communications of General Kaufmann, and whatever false importance may have been attributed to the method of transmission adopted by him. Misunderstandings on this subject were nearly inevitable, considering the uncertain character of the native populations of Central Asia, and their inveterate inclination to intrigue; the only effective way, in our opinion, of meeting this danger, lies in the good faith and loyalty which, we are glad to think, will never cease to influence, on either side, any interchange of views between us and the British Cabinet.

The Russian Government here formally denies that General Kaufmann's correspondence with Shere Ali was in any sense a breach of the understanding between the British and Russian Governments regarding Afghanistan. M. de Giers at the same time pointedly abstains from giving the desired pledge that the correspondence shall not continue; and the English Government appears to have acquiesced in that refusal.

On June 12, 1877, Lord Salisbury forwarded, without comment, to the Foreign Office a despatch from the Government of India, complaining of the continued correspondence between Kaufmann and Shere Ali.[2]

On September 12, 1877, M. de Giers complained to Lord A. Loftus that an Envoy from the Sultan of

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 105. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 110.

Turkey to the Ameer of Afghanistan had passed through India:[1]—

His Excellency stated that the object of the Envoy's mission was to preach a religious crusade amongst the Mussulman population of Central Asia, and, through the Ameer of Afghanistan, to induce the Ameer of Bokhara to excite the populations of Central Asia to revolt against Russia.

The Ameer of Bokhara, his Excellency observed, had proved a faithful ally to Russia, and the Imperial Government placed full confidence in him. But difficulties might arise in consequence of religious agitation between Bokhara and Afghanistan which might compromise the friendly relations between those Rulers. It was, therefore, of importance that seasonable advice should be given to the Ameer of Afghanistan to abstain from any action which could endanger the peaceful relations of the two States.

M. de Giers added that General Kaufmann had been instructed to be guided by the arrangements entered into between Great Britain and Russia in regard to Afghanistan, and to remain strictly within the limits of those arrangements.

The following is Lord Derby's reply, addressed to Lord A. Loftus on October 17, 1877:[2]—

With reference to your despatch of September 12, reporting a conversation which you had had with M. de Giers on the subject of the recent Turkish Mission to Afghanistan, and the passage of the Envoy through India, I have to state to your Excellency that, at the request of the Porte, a Turkish Envoy to Afghanistan was allowed to pass through Indian territory, but that Her Majesty's Government have no reason to suppose that the object of his mission was to preach a crusade in Central Asia.

Her Majesty's Government will continue, as they have hitherto done, to use such influence as they possess with the Ameer of Afghanistan to induce him to maintain peace with Bokhara.

This is an evasion of the request addressed to the British Government by the Russian. Lord Derby promises to use the influence of the British Government to induce Shere Ali to keep the peace with

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 124. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 122.

Bokhara. But what Russia desired was the exercise of British influence to prevent the preaching of a Mussulman crusade against her amongst the Asiatic Khanates by Turkish Agents sent through India. This point, which was the gist of Russia's complaint, is tacitly passed over by Lord Derby.

The attempt of the Turkish Government to induce Shere Ali to lead a Mussulman crusade against Russia in Central Asia was noticed at the time by the Constantinople correspondents of several London newspapers, and some additional light has been thrown upon the subject in a recent publication.[1] 'This "Turkish Mission to Cabul,"' says Mr. Grattan Geary, 'attracted considerable attention at the time in India.' An interesting account of what passed between the Ameer and the Envoy was given to Mr. Geary last autumn by a Turkish politician at Constantinople. As the Ameer has had no opportunity of placing his own case before the British public, the reader will be glad to see the Turkish politician's version of it:—

The Turkish Envoy informed his Highness that his Imperial Majesty naturally had the interest of all Mussulman States at heart, as he was himself the head and champion of Islam. It was therefore certain that he would not give any advice which would be calculated to diminish the power or independence of his Highness' State, or any other which was a bulwark of the True Faith. On the contrary, he would wish to see Afghanistan strengthened, and his Highness' power and influence augmented, and it was with a view of contributing to that result that he sent the Mission to Cabul to make the Ameer acquainted with the real source of the danger which was threatening the whole of Islam. His Imperial Majesty understood that the Ameer was apprehensive with regard to the British Government and had been making preparations as if to resist a movement from the side of India. Now his Highness should bear in mind that England had long since given up all ideas of annexing Native States, even in India itself, where there were many

[1] *Through Asiatic Turkey*. By Grattan Geary, Editor of the 'Times of India,' ii. pp. 320–27.

which could not offer resistance, and could be annexed and held without difficulty, if the British had any designs of that kind. What object could be obtained by annexing Afghanistan? The country was poor; it was far away from the parts of India where the English were well established; it would cost a great deal to govern it. The British Government would have to spend more money to garrison it and to administer it than the taxes to be got from the people would bring back to the Treasury. It was not therefore to be supposed that they would take the country for any profit to be made by the conquest. It would cost more than it would bring in. If avarice was a motive, it would be much more likely to induce them to annex some of the rich Native States in India, but not one had been annexed for a generation. The system was quite laid aside.

Again, it was urged by the Envoy that the British Government could have no desire to seize his Highness' territories for the sake of obtaining soldiers. There were so many people in India that the Government could not want more for any military purpose; and every one knew that the Afghans would not be soldiers for a Christian Government; they would be always in rebellion, and would be a great source of trouble. It was clear, then, that the English could have no design upon Afghanistan, seeing that the country was remote and mountainous, and too poor even to repay what the Government would have to lay out in administering it, while the people, instead of being willing subjects, would always be giving trouble, and would never be likely to forget what their fathers did in the time of his Highness' father. From the side of England, therefore, his Highness appeared to have no reasonable ground to expect aggression. But on the side of Russia, the Envoy continued, the real danger was to be found. That Power was the enemy of all Mussulman States, without exception. She was assailing the Sultan himself; she had destroyed the independence of Bokhara, of Khokand, of Khiva. She had not left a single State in Central Asia its independence. The fact that some of them were quite as poor as Afghanistan had made no difference; what she wanted was territory, and to gratify her enmity towards all Islam by keeping it in subjection. It was therefore necessary that his Highness should see plainly that his real enemy was not England, for from her he had nothing to fear, but Russia, which would assuredly treat him as she treated the other Mussulman princes.

His Highness the Ameer listened to this exposition of the political situation with great attention, and then proceeded at considerable length to give his views thereon. It was a mistake, he said, to suppose that he was hostile to the British Government, or wished to make war upon England; but the British Government was pressing upon him, and it was necessary that he should not be caught unprepared. They had taken possession of Quetta, and established a force there, looking in at Candahar. If an armed man places himself at the back-door of your house, what can be his motive, unless he wants to find his way in when you are asleep?

To this the Envoy replied that the occupation of Quetta might very well have a different object. Beloochistan was always giving trouble, and the Khan of Khelat himself was glad to get a British force at Quetta to keep the country in order. It was not at all likely that the post was occupied with a view to the seizure of Candahar, for the possession would be valueless to England. What would she gain by holding so distant a place at great cost, and against the will of the Afghans? As for Quetta, the Khan and the people were glad to see the English there, and only a handful of men were required to occupy it. But, even supposing that the English had gone to Quetta without regard to the Ameer's susceptibilities, would it not be better to try and come to some understanding on that point, instead of playing into the hands of the Russians, who were the real enemies of Islam, and therefore of Afghanistan, which was one of the chief Mussulman States? His Highness had received quite recently two, if not three, Russian Envoys, and had actually sent one himself to Tashkend. It was also said that a Russian force of 5,000 men had approached the boundaries of Afghanistan, near Balkh. All that seemed to many people to indicate that his Highness was showing greater favour to Russia, which was at war with Islam, than to England, the only Christian Power which was willing to do what was right by the Mahomedan Powers.

To this Shere Ali replied that he had not shown any special favour to Russia; he had received the Envoys in question simply because the Russian frontier had now very nearly approached his own, and it was necessary to know what the Russians were contemplating. The 5,000 men who had come near to his frontier came there without his invitation, and he naturally wished to find out the object of their coming. He

sent a messenger to Tashkend, with a letter to General Kaufmann, as a civility, and also to ascertain the purpose of the approach of the body of troops. But in all that there was no thought of allying himself to Russia. The English used to have an Envoy permanently at Cabul, but they withdrew him of their own accord.

The Turkish Envoy said that the English were desirous of having a regular mission at Cabul, but his Highness had refused his consent, and that appeared to have given rise to an impression in India that his sympathies were not on that side.

Shere Ali declared that personally he had no objection whatever to having Englishmen in Cabul, representing their Government; but the Afghans were not, like the Turks, tractable and prepared to submit like civilised people to what the Government wished. Some one would feel offended at the presence of an Englishman, and would perhaps shoot him. If anything of that kind happened the British Government would at once make himself (the Ameer) responsible, although by no possibility could he prevent it. The result would be very serious, and it seemed to him better not to run the risk. He had only partially succeeded in making the wilder sort of people obedient and well-behaved. If all were like the people of Stamboul, then, of course, he could do as he pleased in regard to foreigners. The Russians sent a native of Samarkand on their last mission. As long as the English wished they kept a native of India as their representative in Cabul.

These matters being fully and very amicably discussed, the Sultan's Envoy broached the subject of an alliance between Afghanistan and Turkey against the common enemy, which was Russia. By coming to a good understanding with England it was impressed on the Ameer that he would find his hands free to assist the oppressed Mussulman States of Central Asia, and materially aid the Sultan in defending the cause of Islam from the Muscovite aggression.

The Ameer heard this proposal very patiently, and then gave a long argumentative statement of his reasons for declining to enter into the proposed alliance. 'Afghanistan,' he said, 'was too distant from Turkey to give assistance to the Sultan's troops in the field, or to receive aid from them, and he was not powerful enough to cope with Russia single-handed in Central Asia. If he made war against the Russians, he would be face to face with them, and the Sultan could not possibly send him any

help. What was the use of his incurring certain defeat? It could do the Sultan no good. He hoped the Sultan would be able to defend himself and prove victorious over his enemies. He was sorry that from the nature of the case he could not help the Sultan with his Afghans. But why did not the English help Turkey? They could send their soldiers everywhere, for they had a great number of ships; they could give the Sultan all the assistance that would be necessary to beat the Russians; but Afghanistan was too weak, and too far away to be of any weight in the struggle. If the English were the friends of the Sultan, why did they not help him?

It was on June 7, 1878, that the Government of India first heard of the intended Russian Mission to Cabul.[1] On the 26th of the same month Lord Salisbury calls the attention of the Foreign Office to the matter.[2] Lord A. Loftus, at the instance of Lord Derby, questions M. de Giers on the subject on July 2, 1878:[3]—

M. de Giers replied that no such Mission had been or was intended to be sent to Cabul, either by the Imperial Government or by General Kaufmann.

I observed to his Excellency that, for some time past, a Russian Agent had resided at Cabul, and that intrigues had been apparently carrying on with a view to create dissensions between the Ameer of Afghanistan and the Indian Government. I stated that this course was not in conformity with the arrangement entered into between the Governments of England and Russia, and that if it continued it must inevitably produce results prejudicial to the good relations between the two Governments.

M. de Giers replied that there had been a moment when war appeared to be almost imminent, and that, under those circumstances, no doubt the military commanders conceived it to be their duty to take such measures as might be necessary and serviceable to their country. He denied, however, as far as he was aware, that there had been any intrigues with the Ameer of Cabul of the nature to which I had alluded. He admitted that he had sent M. Bakouline, the Russian Consul at Asterbad, to Meshed to watch the move-

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 130. [2] *Ibid.* p. 131. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

ments of Captains Butler and Napier, who were reported to be inciting the Turkoman tribes to hostilities against Russia. This was the only diplomatic measure he had taken.

I stated to M. de Giers that Captain Butler was a mere traveller on his own account, and no agent of Her Majesty's Government, and that urgent orders had been sent to him by the Commander-in-Chief in India to return forthwith to his military duties.

M. de Giers, who appeared to be well informed both in regard to Captain Butler and Captain Napier, stated that he was aware that Captain Butler had been recalled, but that nevertheless he had refused to obey the orders he had received, and was persisting in his intention to visit the Akhal tribes. He referred even to the letter which Captain Butler had addressed to certain Turkoman Chiefs, of which his Excellency had evidently received copies.

A significant comment on the above is supplied in the following extract from the *Bombay Gazette*, quoted in the *Times* of January 3 of this year:—

It is reported that Major Butler, the Central Asian explorer, who has just returned from Turkistan, has been so successful in his interviews with the Turkoman Chiefs that they are willing to co-operate with the British either against the Afghans or the Russians.

At this stage the relations of the British and Russian Governments towards each other appear to have been somewhat as follows:—General Kaufmann on the one hand and Lord Lytton on the other were apparently acting, in some degree, independently of the Central Government in each country. Kaufmann, as we may infer from the article in the *Pioneer*, coupled with General Skobeleff's inquiry, had knowledge of an intended Anglo-Indian expedition against the Asiatic possessions of Russia, using Afghanistan as a base of operations. The measures which he contemplated with a view to meet or anticipate this attack are described in an article in the *Turkistan Vedomist*, quoted in the *Moscow Gazette* of July 18–18/6, and sent to Lord Salisbury (who had meanwhile become Secretary

for Foreign Affairs) on July 31, by Mr. Plunkett, British Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg. The *Vedomist* says: [1]—

The following is an account of the Mission undertaken by M. Weinberg, the Diplomatic Agent attached to General Kaufmann, who was furnished with special instructions to negotiate with the Ameer of Bokhara in regard to the passage of Russian troops along the upper course of the Amu-Darya (Oxus).

M. Weinberg, accompanied by Captain Shlikter, arrived at Karsh on May 21, and on the following day was presented to the Ameer, and handed him the letter sent by the Governor-General of Turkistan, stating that his Excellency, in view of the present state of affairs and the probable advance of Russian troops along the Amu-Darya, relied on the same friendly disposition on the part of the Ameer which he had shown during the Khivan expedition, as also on the co-operation of the Bokharian authorities in the matter of obtaining supplies for the Russian detachments from the inhabitants of the districts through which they would pass. The Ameer, who at the commencement of the interview had seemed somewhat agitated, heard M. Weinberg in silence, and replied that he was perfectly willing to carry out the wishes of the Governor-General, and that he would endeavour, as far as lay in his power, to assist our troops, trusting by these means to strengthen the amicable relations at present existing between Bokhara and Russia.

In answer to the Ameer's question in what way we intended arranging our affairs with Cabul, M. Weinberg considered it necessary to answer candidly that the Turkistan Governor-General nourished no ill-feeling against Afghanistan, and meditated despatching an embassy to Shere Ali Khan, by which means our relations with the latter would in all probability become defined one way or the other, either in an amicable or hostile sense; everything would depend on the straightforwardness and good sense displayed by the Ameer. 'We,' added M. Weinberg, 'entertain no ulterior views in respect to him.'

On the termination of this interview the Ameer desired to see M. Weinberg on the following day, for the purpose of further discussion.

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 141.

The purchase of supplies in Bokhara for our Amu-Darya detachment has been sanctioned by the Ameer.

This shows two things. It shows, first, that when General Kaufmann resolved to send the Mission to Cabul there was no agreement or understanding between himself and Shere Ali. The very object of the Mission was to 'define one way or the other, either in an amicable or hostile sense,' the relations between the two. In case Shere Ali appeared inclined to side with the British Government against Russia, General Kaufmann held over him the threat of helping his nephew and rival, Abdul Rahman, to drive him from his Throne. General Kaufmann began to adopt these tactics when news reached him of the despatch of the Indian troops to Malta, and Shere Ali received information of the dilemma in preparation for him in the beginning of May last year. Shahghassi Sherdil Khan, then Governor of Afghan Turkistan, wrote about that time to the Ameer in the following terms:—

As it seemed advisable, I have postponed my visit to Cabul to some other time, and forwarded my son, Khusdil Khan, to wait upon your Highness with presents. Mirza Salahaddin, whom I deputed towards Samarkand and Tashkend to collect news from those directions, has returned and made a statement to the effect that the Russians intend to induce Sirdar Abdul Rahman Khan to submit to them a petition setting forth that he has been putting up there under the protection of the Russian Government for a long time; that he has often petitioned them to help him in securing the restitution of his ancestral territory from the Ameer of Cabul, but his prayer has not been acceded to; and that he has now heard that the Russians are preparing to fight against the British Government; that they have sent Envoys to wait upon the Ameer, to request him to allow passage through his country to the Russian troops going to India and returning therefrom, should a necessity arise for such a passage; and that, such being the case, he offered his services, in case his Highness refuses to grant the request of the Russian Government, to capture Balkh with a small assistance from the Czar, and then subdue the whole of Afghanistan, which is

not a difficult task. The Russian officer Ibramoff asserts, that should the Ameer refuse to comply with the request of the Russian Government, the petition of the Sirdar will be forwarded to his Highness to terrify him. This communication from the Shahghassi frightened the Ameer.

This information was sent to the Indian Government in the confidential newsletter from the Government Agent at Peshawur, dated May 13, 1878.[1] The Ameer was evidently thrown into dire perplexity. He was, in fact, between the 'two iron pots' with which the Viceroy had threatened to crush him.[2] His first impulse apparently was to choose the Russian alliance. This we infer from the following passage in the newsletter quoted above:—

Some person having sent a letter to the Ameer from Peshawur, his Highness, immediately after the perusal of the communication, desired Mirza Abdul Wali, his Mir Munshi, and Mustaufi Habibullah, to prepare a statement of the despatches received by him from the British Government, but to which he gave no replies.

At the same sitting the Ameer remarked that it appeared advisable to send for all such members of his family whom he had committed to the custody of the British Government. With reference to this remark, General Daud Shah stated that this question had been under the consideration of his Highness for a long time, and that, as differences arise between him and the British authorities, it was not desirable that the men should be allowed to continue in their custody

The Ameer's second thoughts, however, are thus described in an extract from the Peshawur diary by Major Cavagnari, dated June 16, 1878:—

In order to settle what reply shall be given to the Russian proposals, great efforts are being made by the Cabul Durbar to collect an assembly of all the Chiefs, Khans, and chosen men of the kingdom and its neighbourhood, which will probably take place next month. (The Mahomedan month Rajab will commence on June 28.) The Ameer desires that

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878) p. 136.
Afghanistan, No. 1 (1878), p. 183. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

Afghanistan may remain independent, and that there should be no Envoys of a different religion to Mahomedanism in his kingdom.

The Ameer, in alluding on one occasion to the proposals of the Russians, stated that these proposals were adverse to the interests of the British Government, and that it remained to be seen how the British authorities, when they heard of them, would act in their own interests with regard to the Indian Empire. That he adhered to his original determination, and did not want to make enemies of either of the Great Powers; but that if any one tried to injure him he would do what he could to withstand them, and that 'elevation or destruction is in the hands of the Almighty.' Whatever Government approached him in a friendly manner he would make similar advances.

Here we have evidently portrayed the state of mind of a man whose most ardent desire was to be left alone. The miserable 'pipkin' saw the two 'iron pots' approaching, and, after an unsuccessful effort to stop both, it gravitated towards the one which wore the friendlier aspect.

The second thing which the tactics of Kaufmann, as described in the *Turkistan Vedomist*, seem to show is that he acted very much on his own responsibility, without thinking it necessary to consult the Government at St. Petersburg or to keep it accurately informed of what he was doing in his distant province. There is no more reason to suppose that the ignorance confessed by M. de Giers was feigned than there is for believing that Lord A. Loftus was feigning ignorance when he told M. de Giers that 'Captain Butler was a mere traveller' (see p. 294). It is hardly credible that Captain Butler would have ventured to disobey 'urgent orders sent to him by the Commander-in-Chief in India to return forthwith to his military duties.' Captain Butler, so far from returning forthwith to his military duties, proceeded to intrigue among the Turkomans; and, instead of being punished for disobedience, he was promoted in his absence. Must there not have been somebody who gave instructions to Captain Butler

independently alike of Commander-in-Chief and Secretary of State for India?

By the latter half of May 1878 General Kaufmann had pretty well completed his military and diplomatic arrangements against the anticipated attack upon him through Afghanistan from India. The military arrangements are described in a letter published in the *Moscow Gazette* of July 9, 1878, from its Tashkend correspondent. The letter is dated June 11.[1]

We must now trace briefly the leading facts connected with the Russian Mission to Cabul. Its motive, we have seen, was to guard against Afghanistan being made a base of operations for an Anglo-Indian army operating against Russia in Central Asia. General Kaufmann made up his mind to force Shere Ali to declare himself either as a friend or foe of Russia. In the latter case there is little doubt that hostile measures would be taken against him, of which the first would be a civil war, headed by the exiled Abdul Rahman.

The Viceroy of India had early intimation of the projected Mission, for he sent telegraphic intimation of it to the Secretary of State for India on June 7.[2] The reports which reached him, however, were inaccurate as to details. For example, he was told at one time that Kaufmann himself was at the head of the Mission; at another that its chief was General Abramoff. The Mission had reached Cabul before it was ascertained for certain by the Viceroy that it was under the conduct of General Stoletoff.

Major Cavagnari's Peshawur diary of June 7, 1878, bears evidence to Shere Ali's alarm at the news of the Russian Mission and to his endeavour to stop it:[3]—

> The Mir Akhor has been suddenly summoned to Cabul. He has taken with him one of the Sangu Khel elders.
>
> The Ameer is said to be contemplating summoning all the Chiefs and leading men, to consult with them as to which of the two great European Powers he should ally himself to.

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 135. [2] *Afghanistan*, p. 226.
[3] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 138.

—— ——— has received a letter from Cabul, informing him that the Shahghassi has reported that the Russians have commenced road-making between Badkoya (believed to be somewhere near Khiva) and the banks of the Oxus, and thence to Akcha, and that the brother of the Khan of Khiva, with 800 horsemen, has been directed to protect the working parties; and he is to accompany the Russian Envoy who is about to visit Cabul. The Russian Agent at present at Cabul also informed the Ameer that an Envoy, with equal power to the Governor-General at Tashkend, will shortly reach Cabul. The Ameer was annoyed at hearing this, and wrote to Shahghassi Sherdil to inform the Governor-General at Tashkend that it was not advisable to send a European Agent, as the Afghans are an uncivilised and ignorant race, and might do the European some injury; but before he despatched this he received a letter from the Governor-General, informing him that the Envoy was being sent by the orders of the Emperor, and cannot now be detained, and will soon leave for Cabul. An Afghan Agent is required to be located at Samarkand or at Tashkend, if the Emperor wishes it. On this the Ameer got very angry, and in a petulant manner exclaimed that it was useless for him to depute an Afghan Agent, nor could he do anything to prevent the Envoy's coming to Cabul. He wrote to the Shahghassi to keep him informed of all the Russian movements. Sayid Mahmud, of Kunar, and the Mir Akhor were summoned to Cabul to consult with the other Chiefs and advise the Cabul Durbar as to whether the Ameer should ally himself with the English or the Russians. Mir Afzal Khan, of Candahar, has also been summoned, if he can conveniently leave his post. It is considered unlikely that he will attend.

Is it not clear that ordinary judicious treatment of the Ameer, when he was in this frame of mind, would have robbed the Russian Mission of all significance and rendered its journey an entirely barren one? The man, of all others, who would have been most anxious to get rid of the Mission would have been the Ameer himself, if he had only been let alone.

Some false reasoning and much superfluous rhetoric have been imported into the controversy owing to the erroneous impression that the Mission left Samarkand

on the day after the signature of the Treaty of Berlin. The date of its departure, therefore, and the particulars of its journey, are of some importance; and we, therefore, insert here the following letter from a member of the Mission in the *Golos* of November 16, 1878. We give the English translation published in Central Asia, No. 2 (1878) p. 23. But we have corrected the date of the Mission's departure, which is undoubtedly a mistake, and which is given accurately in the French translation on p. 25. It was obviously a physical impossibility for the Mission to have left Samarkand on July 14, to have been delayed some weeks on the way, yet to have arrived in Cabul within a month from the date of departure. It will be observed that the special messenger which carried the *Golos* correspondent's letter from Cabul to Tashkend was on the road from August 14 to the beginning of November:—

Extract from the 'Golos' of November $\frac{14}{26}$, 1878.

(Translation.)

The *Golos* of November $\frac{14}{26}$, 1878, contains the following letter addressed to it by a correspondent from Cabul, and descriptive of the journey of the members of the Russian Mission to the Ameer of Afghanistan. This letter, the *Golos* says, was despatched by special opportunity soon after the arrival of the Mission at Cabul, posted to St. Petersburg at Tashkend on November 4, and received here on the 25th of the same month:—

Cabul, August $\frac{2}{14}$.

The Russian Mission, consisting of seven officers (among whom was one general), twenty-two Cossacks, four servants, and fifteen Kirghis horsemen, left Samarkand on the $\frac{12}{24}$th June.

Our route lay through Bokharian territory; and, as the Ameer of Bokhara was at Karshi, we proceeded in the direction of that town.

The Ameer of Bokhara showed the Mission every courtesy, and the members presented themselves to him.

The road selected for reaching the Oxus was through Huzar, Shirabad, and Chushkogosar, which, though presenting some difficulties, running as it does along a rocky

ridge of hills, was traversed in five days. On this route the Mission passed through the famous defile known in ancient times under the name of the 'Iron Gates,' and now called Burghasse Khana.

At Shirabad we met an Afghan messenger, who was the bearer of a letter to the Chief of the Mission. In this letter Shir-i-dal Khan, the Governor of Afghan Turkistan, asked us to wait ten days at Shirabad, as he had not yet made the necessary preparations for the reception of the 'prized visitors.' He also informed us that he had not yet organised the honorary escort which was to accompany the Mission from the Oxus to Mizar, Sheriff, and further to Cabul.

Notwithstanding this request, General Stoletoff considered it advisable to continue the advance to the Oxus, and there to halt, if it were really necessary to do so. The Oxus was crossed by the Mission in very primitive boats. On the banks of this river we waited three days, when we were joined by the Afghan escort, consisting of two hundred men and two generals. They were all well armed, and excellently equipped. They received the Russian Mission with great politeness, and apologised for having caused its detention. In order to avoid the great heat of the day, which reached 41 degrees in the shade, it was determined to resume the march at night.

The advance of the Mission was very picturesque. Two long lines of horsemen, with pennons flying, flanked the Envoy and his party on both sides, and closed the rear. The sounds of drums and trumpets broke the silence of the desert. We progressed all night across a sandy arid steppe, intercepted by hillocks, and next morning reached Karshiak settlement, which is situated in a cultivated country.

We made three stages before reaching Mizar and Sheriff; and on entering the latter town, which was lined with soldiers in our honour, we were received by Hosh-dal Khan, son of the Governor of the province. A salute of eighteen guns was also made, to welcome our arrival.

Great crowds thronged the streets, and gazed with curiosity on the people from the distant North. There were no visible traces of fear or fanaticism among the spectators. In this town, where we were to pass a fortnight, we were lodged in the palace of the Governor-General, which was shaded by large Chinar trees. The Governor-General, who was ill when we arrived, and could consequently not welcome us personally, died soon after. The Mission was, under these

circumstances, unable to proceed until the appointment of a new ruler had been made.

After an interval of some days Hosh-dal Khan received his nomination from Cabul as Governor, in succession to his deceased father.

On the expiration of two weeks we resumed our journey in the direction of Cabul; the escort from this point was still more numerous and brilliantly equipped. The Afghans showed themselves very well disposed towards us by anticipating all our wishes. On reaching a halting-place we always found everything prepared for us; tents were spread and excellent repasts frequently provided, &c.

After leaving Tashurgan we reached the spurs of the Hindu-Kush, and journeyed to Cabul during twenty days.

Ascending at first in gentle slopes, the Hindu-Kush gradually rises higher and higher, forming, amidst its frequent passes, terraces of increasing height.

After traversing a series of such terraces we reached the elevated Bamian Valley (8,500 feet), in the proximity of which are the Kalu and Great Tran Passes (13,000 feet).

A few stages before Bamian we were welcomed by Lal Mahomed Khan, Governor of Bamian, who was accompanied by a numerous suite.

After passing the famous Bamian idols, chiselled on the face of the rock, we cleared the Great Tran Pass, and then descended from the Ugly Pass into the Cabul Darya Valley. A journey of three days was still before us.

At Koteashrik village, fifty versts from Cabul, we were met by the Sirdar Nasruddin Khan, the Afghan Minister for Foreign Affairs, and at Kala and Kazy by the Afghan Vizier, who was mounted on an elephant. Here the members of the Mission were also supplied with elephants, each elephant carrrying two persons, and in this manner we advanced to Cabul.

At a distance of seven versts from Cabul we were met by Prince Abdullah Khan, Shere Ali's nephew. He rode on an enormous elephant, of ashy-grey colour, and with long gilded tusks. The Prince himself was seated in a basket profusely ornamented with gold. He invited General Stoletoff to seat himself on his elephant, and they then entered the town together. We followed also on elephants, the sowdas of which were ornamented with silver. A brilliant body of cavalry followed in the rear of the Prince. Crowds

lined both sides of the road, and even the neighbouring rocks and trees were covered with people. The 'Urus' were the objects of the greatest curiosity, and the blessings of the four Caliphs were invoked on them.

Entering on a large plain, we found it filled with regular troops. On the left flank stood the cavalry, and twelve brass and steel guns, which glistened in the sun, were placed in front. As soon as the elephant on which the Envoy was seated was in a line with the troops a salute of thirty-six guns was fired. The mournful though very original air of the Afghan National March was struck up, the strains of which were, however, soon drowned by the vociferous exclamations of the crowd, who called down on us, especially on General Stoletoff, the blessings of the first four Caliphs. This greeting is equivalent to the Russian hurrah. Followed by these exclamations we entered the Bala-Hissar, or citadel of Cabul, and at the gates we were met by its keepers, who wore the Highland uniform. After traversing some of the streets we reached Shere Ali's palace, where everything was in readiness for the reception and entertainment of the Russian Mission. The Ameer himself did not come out to meet us; and it was only on the following day, namely, the 30th July (11th August, new style), that, with General Stoletoff at our head, we were formally received by him in audience in his Hall of State, and in the presence of the highest nobles of Afghanistan.' Further particulars of this reception I shall send hereafter.

Viscount Cranbrook was misled by the misprint in the English translation of the letter in the *Golos*, and the following correspondence ensued between himself and the Viceroy:—

Inclosure 1 in No. 12.

Viscount Cranbrook to Viceroy of India.

India Office: November 7, 1878.

(Telegraphic.)

In apparently trustworthy letter from Tashkend, Stoletoff said to have left Samarkand July 14, and reached Cabul August 10. These dates do not agree with yours. Can you explain discrepancy? Has Nawab Ghulam Hussein any information on point?

Inclosure 2 in No. 12.

The Viceroy of India to Viscount Cranbrook.

November, 12, 1878

(Telegraphic.)

Yours 7th. Impossible to verify now by fresh evidence precise dates of Stoletoff's journey and arrival at Cabul.

Ameer certainly mentioned in full Durbar, July 7, that Russian Envoy had crossed Oxus. He reached Cabul about 26th; was certainly received in full Durbar July 26.

See inclosures to my despatches August 5, 19. Evidence is authentic and cumulative; could hardly be strengthened.

Lord Lytton's information dates the arrival of General Stoletoff at Cabul a little earlier than the letter in the *Golos*. Possibly a member of the Mission may have arrived in advance of the general body. But, however that may be, the following points are beyond a doubt:—The Mission left Samarkand in the early part of June; it was detained for some weeks on the way; the Ameer of Cabul made an ineffectual attempt to stop it; and the Indian and Home Governments had knowledge of it before the Congress of Berlin met.

The arrival of the Russian Mission was evidently a great embarrassment to Shere Ali. The Ameer's state of mind is thus described in the newsletter from the Government Agent at Peshawur reporting the arrival of the Mission at Cabul:[1]—

The [Russian] Envoy stated before the Ameer that friendly relations existed between the Russian Government and his Highness for some time past, and that the Russian authorities desired that the friendship should be strengthened and perpetuated by a treaty of amity. The Ameer is said to have remarked in reply that the matter required consideration and consultation with his Ministers and the Grandees of his State, and that a proper reply would be given to the proposal after this had been done. . . . . The Ministers of the Ameer's Court are generally of opinion that his Highness will not enter into any engagement with Russia which would impose a condition of

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 2 (1878), p. 1

Russian interference with his country. It is, moreover, said that the Ameer asserts that he would like an English officer of excellence, learning, and acquainted with the affairs of Afghanistan, to come to Cabul for a few days, in the capacity of Envoy from the British Government, with whom he may personally discuss the proceedings which passed between him and the English Government within the last few years, when he would acknowledge without any grudging any blame which might be justly thrown on him; but, at the same time, the British Envoy should acknowledge (or give in) if, with reference to the principles of justice, he is convinced of the soundness of his Highness' objections to the proposals made to him by the British Government.

The Ameer further remarks that he is quite aware that the news-writers in the employ of the two Governments (Cabul and the English) have unnecessarily widened the gulf of imaginary differences. His Highness says that a small territory, of which he is the ruler, lies between the dominions of two Great Powers, and that, as a matter of policy, and in the interests of his country, he will incline himself towards the party whose alliance would be deemed more beneficial to him. It is said that the Chief is now in great anxiety on account of the arrival of the European Russian Envoy at his capital.

It must be remembered that Lord Lytton had long before this removed the British Agent from Cabul. The Ameer had, therefore, no direct means of communication with the Indian Government. Yet it is here on record that in the beginning of August the Viceroy was in possession of the following facts:—He knew that the Russian Mission was in Cabul. He knew that its presence there annoyed and alarmed the Ameer. He knew that the Ameer declined to pledge himself to a 'Treaty of Amity' with Russia. He knew that the Ameer was anxious to receive a British Envoy, in order to consult him as to the course he should follow. He knew that the Ameer was willing to make amends for any just offence that he may have given to the British Government. He had the Ameer's frank warning 'that, as a matter of policy,' the 'earthen pipkin' would incline towards the party which showed the least desire to

crush him. And, knowing all this, how did Lord Lytton act? He had just before (July 30) telegraphed to Lord Cranbrook to know whether the Russian Mission would be 'treated by Her Majesty's Government as an Imperial question with Russia, or left to us to deal with as a matter between Ameer and Government of India.' In the latter case he proposed, with the approval of the Home Government, 'to insist on immediate suitable reception of a European British Mission. . . The alternative would be continued policy of complete inaction, difficult to maintain, and very injurious to our position in India.'[1]

When the Viceroy sent this telegram he had the vaguest possible knowledge of the strength and purpose of the Russian Mission. His proposed counter move was, therefore, rash and precipitate, and Lord Cranbrook accordingly telegraphed on August 4:[2]—

> Make yourself certain of the facts before insisting on the reception of British Envoy. Perhaps you might send a native to ascertain whether Russians are really there, and telegraph to me when the truth is known.

But the Viceroy was eager to bring matters to a crisis. Instead of sending a native to Cabul to ascertain how matters really stood, he telegraphed twice back to Lord Cranbrook on August 2, urging 'immediate' action. This telegram is marked 'extract;' from which it may be inferred that the part omitted did not err on the side of prudence.

A few days later the Viceroy received the Peshawur newsletter quoted above. From this he learnt that the alternative to 'insisting' on forcing a European Mission on the Ameer need not be a 'policy of complete inaction.' The Ameer, it was clear, was only too anxious to get rid of the Russian Mission and come to a friendly understanding with the British Government. What course would have been adopted under the circumstances by a Viceroy whose main object was to

[1] *Afghanistan*, No. 1 (1878), p 227. [2] *Ibid.*, p 228

conciliate the Afghan Ruler and to detach him and his people from any dalliance with Russian Envoys? Would he not have met the Ameer's friendly advances half-way? Can any one doubt that this would have been the policy of Lord Canning and of every Viceroy who followed him down to Lord Lytton? One of Lord Lytton's gravest accusations against the Ameer is that he endeavoured to stir up 'a religious war' against the British? But when did the Ameer make this endeavour? There seems to be no evidence that he did anything of the kind till the Viceroy was on the eve of declaring an unprovoked war against him. There is proof, on the other hand, that Shere Ali, just after the arrival of the Russian Mission in his capital, repudiated with indignation the suggestion of a religious war, or even a hostile demonstration against the British. The following is from the Peshawur newsletter[1] of August 3, already quoted:—

An anonymous writer sent a petition to the Ameer from Peshawur, in which he informed the Chief that the British and the Russian Governments were on friendly terms with each other, and agreed in the unity of purpose, that Persia was on the side of Russia, and the Persian territory adjoins the Russian possessions, and that the three Powers desired to somehow take possession of his Highness' dominions and to partition them among themselves. The writer further remarked that it was known that Turkey was first weakened, and that Russia, England, and the other Powers then interfered with the country and encumbered the Turkish exchequer with a large war indemnity; and that, under these circumstances, the Chief should not be lax in the administration of the affairs of his country at such a critical time, but should issue arms and money to the different tribes inhabiting the hills and the plains, *and induce them to be ready to engage in a religious war in his behalf.*

The petition having been read to the Ameer, his Highness uttered hundreds of abusive words against its writer, and tore it up.

From this it appears that ever after the arrival of

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 2 (1878), p. 2.

the Russian Mission at Cabul the Ameer, as we have said, repudiated with indignation the suggestion that he should proclaim a religious war.

Let us now see how the Home Government dealt with the question.

Lord Lytton telegraphed, as we have seen, to ask whether Her Majesty's Government intended to treat the Russian Mission 'as an Imperial question with Russia,' or as a local question between the Government of India and the Ruler of Afghanistan. Lord Cranbrook's own inclination was to hold Russia alone responsible, and to deal directly with the Russian Government. As a fact he allowed himself to be persuaded by Lord Lytton to combine both methods, while laying most stress on the Imperial aspect of the controversy. On August 8 he instructed Sir L. Mallet to address the Foreign Office as follows:[1]

To meet this difficulty, the Viceroy has proposed, as a preliminary measure, to insist on the reception by the Ameer of a suitable British Mission at Cabul—a proposal which, as will be seen from the telegram quoted in the margin, the Secretary of State for India has deemed it expedient to sanction.

But Lord Cranbrook cannot consider this step as adequate in itself to the occasion, and is strongly of opinion that Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg should be at once instructed to address the Russian Cabinet upon the proceedings of the Russian authorities in Turkistan.

It is the Russian Cabinet alone which is responsible for the acts of its Agent; and it is the Russian Governor-General of Turkistan, rather than the Ameer Shere Ali, who, with or without authority, is at this moment pursuing a policy of which the effect must be to seriously agitate the minds of Her Majesty's subjects throughout India.

But Shere Ali was 'an earthen pipkin,' and could be easily crushed. Russia was 'an iron pot' with which collision might be dangerous. Mild remonstrances were accordingly addressed to the Power 'which alone is responsible.' Peremptory demands, on the other hand,

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 142.

were addressed in menacing language to the comparatively innocent Ameer.

On August 14 M. de Giers, while claiming a right on the part of Russia to take both military and diplomatic precautions against our importation of Indian troops to Malta, assured at the same time our Chargé d'Affaires at St. Petersburg that 'the political as well as the military precautions . . . had been stopped.' [1]

On September 8 M. de Giers wrote from Livadia to inform Mr. Plunkett that the Mission to Cabul, which had been avowedly sent in prospect of a war with England, was now, in consequence of the pacific result of the Congress at Berlin, 'of a provisional nature, and one of simple courtesy.' [2]

On September 27 Lord A. Loftus wrote from St. Petersburg that on his passage through Baden-Baden five days previously he had had an interview with Prince Gortchakoff, who had given him the same explanation, 'in exactly the same terms as those used by M. de Giers in his note to Mr. Plunkett,' quoted above.[3] Prince Gortchakoff added 'that the Emperor could never forego his right of sending complimentary missions to any foreign sovereigns or neighbouring princes.'

On September 20 Lord Salisbury forwarded M. de Giers' note to Lord Cranbrook, with the observation—

> Lord Salisbury infers from M. de Giers' note that his Excellency acknowledges that all the former assurances of the Russian Government in regard to Afghanistan have now resumed their former validity.[4]

On the same day Lord Salisbury addressed the following despatch to Mr. Plunkett, at St. Petersburg: [5]—

> In the note from M de Giers of August 27/September 8, of which copy is inclosed in your despatch of the 13th instant, reference is made to explanations which the Russian Charge d'Affaires in

[1] *Central Asia*, No. 1 (1878), p. 147. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 164.
[3] *Ibid.*, No. 2, p. 7. [4] *Ibid.*, No. 1, p. 165. [5] *Ibid.*

London had been instructed to offer in regard to the recent proceedings of the Russian authorities in Central Asia.

The communications made by M. Bartholomei have been generally to the same effect as what has been stated by M. de Giers. He has stated that the military and political measures adopted in Turkistan were actuated by the necessities of the situation caused by the state of affairs in regard to Turkey, and were called forth especially by the attitude of Great Britain towards Russia. General Kaufmann's proceedings, he said, must therefore be regarded as the result of a course imposed upon him by the force of circumstances.

As I had spoken to M. Bartholomei of a letter from the Emperor which was supposed to have been transmitted to Shere Ali Khan, he asked the Russian Government for information on the point, and subsequently said that he was authorised to state that there had never been any question of sending such a letter.

The Russian Government, therefore, asserted its right to do two things: (1) to send political Missions to Cabul whenever the relations between the Russians and British Governments were of an unfriendly character; (2) to send 'complimentary Missions' to the Ruler of Afghanistan at all times. In this twofold claim Her Majesty's Government, as represented in the Parliamentary Papers on Central Asia, tacitly acquiesced. Lord Beaconsfield, moreover, declared in his speech in the House of Lords on the 10th of last December that Russia was justified, under the circumstances, in all that she had done. Where, then, is the justification of the war against Shere Ali? He tried to stop a Mission which the British Government has admitted that Russia had a right to send. Failing in this, he made friendly overtures to the British Government, and expressed his willingness to make amends for any offence which he may have given, provided the Viceroy met him in a similar spirit. The Viceroy, on the contrary, treated him as an enemy, and ordered him to receive a Mission attended by a much larger military escort than that of the Russian Mission. The Mission started before the Ameer had time to reply, and was courteously stopped

on the frontier by the officer in command, who, however, offered to despatch a messenger at once to the Ameer for instructions. The offer was rejected. The Viceroy treated the incident as in 'insult,' and dispersed the Mission. Forced against his will to send an Ultimatum to the Ameer before declaring war against him, the Viceroy gave him just barely time to send an answer within the period of grace allowed him. The Ultimatum, moreover, was not despatched with the usual forms of diplomatic courtesy. Instead of a messenger being sent with it to Cabul, one copy was dropped into a letter-box at Jumrood, and another left at the fort of Ali Musjid. In his answer to the Ultimatum the Ameer offered to receive a British Mission of the same dimensions as the Russian. But hostilities had been already commenced against him.

As regards Russia, if we ever had a case against her our Government has abandoned it. They have admitted that Russia was justified by the importation of Indian troops to Malta in making a counter-move towards Afghanistan. They have required no assurance from her that she will discontinue her Embassies of courtesy to Cabul. They have, in fact, fallen back upon the old understandings, and have even admitted, as appears from the papers published on February 20, that our obligation to recognise Afghanistan as an independent State under British protection is once again in full force.

CHAPTER IV.

THE PRESENT SITUATION.

ANY examination of the causes of the Afghan war would be incomplete which omitted to notice the justification of that war offered on two separate occasions by the Prime Minister. The first occasion was the banquet on last Lord Mayor's Day. It is seldom that a Prime Minister's speech is looked forward to with so much curiosity and anxiety as was Lord Beaconsfield's that evening. He knew, therefore, when he rose to speak, surrounded by the leading members of his Government, that his speech would be read by the whole nation as a grave statement of Ministerial policy. And, knowing this, Lord Beaconsfield explained as follows the motive and purpose of the war against the Ameer of Afghanistan:—

My Lord Mayor,—The attention of Viceroys and Governments in India and in England has for a long time been attracted to that question of the North-Western Frontier of our Indian Empire. So far as the invasion of India in that quarter is concerned, it is the opinion of Her Majesty's Government that it is hardly practicable. The base of operations of any possible foe is so remote, the communications are so difficult, the aspect of the country so forbidding, that we have long arrived at an opinion that an invasion of our Empire by passing the mountains which form our North-Western Frontier is one which we need not dread. But it is a fact that that frontier is a haphazard, and not a scientific, frontier; and it is possible that it is in the power of any foe so to embarrass and disturb our dominion that we should, under the circumstances, be obliged to maintain a great military force in that quarter, and consequently entail upon this country and upon

India a greatly increased expenditure. These are evils not to be despised, and, as I venture to observe, they have for some time, under various Viceroys and under different Administrations, occupied the attention of our statesmen. But, my Lord Mayor, while our attention was naturally drawn also to this subject, some peculiar circumstances occurred in that part of the world which rendered it absolutely necessary that we should give our immediate and earnest attention to the subject, and see whether it was not possible to terminate that absolute inconvenience and possible injury which must or would accrue if the present state of affairs were not touched and considered by the Government of the Queen. With these views, we have taken such measures as we think will effect the object we require. When these arrangements are made—and I cannot suppose that any considerable time will elapse before they are consummated—our North-Western Frontier will no longer be a source of anxiety to the English people. We shall live, I hope, on good terms with our immediate neighbours, and perhaps not on bad terms with some neighbours that are more remote. But, my Lord, in making these remarks, I should be sorry if your Lordship believed that it was the opinion of Her Majesty's Government that an invasion of India was impossible or impracticable. On the contrary, my Lord Mayor, if Asia Minor and the Valley of the Euphrates were, in the possession of a very weak or of a very powerful State, an adequate force might march through the passes of the Asian mountains, through Persia, and absolutely menace the Empire of the Queen. Well, my Lord Mayor, we have foreseen that possibility, and provided for what we believe will secure its non-occurrence; and the chief mode by which we have provided for that result is that Convention with Turkey of which you have heard so much.

This is an exposition of policy as remarkable as it is authoritative. Let us take it to pieces and see what it comes to when stripped of the oratorical drapery in which it is shrouded.

The frontier of our Indian Empire, says the Premier, is practically vulnerable through Persia only. In that direction 'an adequate force' from Asia Minor 'might march through the Asian mountains' and 'absolutely menace the Empire of the Queen.' The

sagacity of the Prime Minister has averted this danger by engaging to defend the Sultan of Turkey against Russian aggression on two conditions: first, the occupation of Cyprus by England as tributary to the Sultan; secondly, the introduction of such reforms in Asia Minor as would be satisfactory to Her Majesty's Government. How absurd this apprehension is, how useless this protection, considering that Russia has already Persia at her mercy by sea and land, we need not stop to point out. It is a delusion likely to cost England dear.

India being thus secured against Russian aggression through the 'Valley of the Euphrates'— 'the only practicable route'— we might suppose that there was no urgent need to take any further precautions. But this, it seems, is a mistake. The North-Western Frontier of India, though 'hardly practicable' for 'an invasion'— which, therefore, 'we need not dread' —'is a haphazard, and not a scientific, frontier.' Consequently 'it is in the power of any foe' to oblige us 'to maintain a great military force in that quarter.' The Russian Mission to Cabul compelled the British Government to take 'immediate' action to 'effect the object we require.' When that is done 'our North-Western Frontier will no longer be a source of anxiety to the English people.'

With the logic of this statement we are not concerned. What we wish to point out is that the acquisition of a 'scientific' in lieu of a 'haphazard' frontier is stated in plain terms to be 'the object we require.' This avowal was too cynical to please even the followers of the Government. Lord Beaconsfield accordingly gave a new version of what he meant by a 'scientific frontier' when he spoke in the House of Lords on the 10th of last December:—'It has been said that on a recent occasion—not in this House—I stated that the object of the war with Afghanistan was a rectification of boundaries, and that we were to have a scientific instead of a haphazard frontier. I never said that that was the object of the war. I treated it

as what might be a consequence of the war—a very different thing.' Lord Beaconsfield's words are before our readers, and they may judge for themselves how far they correspond with his revised version of them. What, then, did Lord Beaconsfield mean? He meant, according to the explanation which he gave in the House of Lords on December 10, the presence of British 'Consuls-General at some of his [the Ameer's] chief towns. Virtually that would have been a rectification of our frontier'! Yet, within an interval of two sentences from this explanation, we are told that 'a scientific frontier' is a frontier which 'can be defended by a garrison of 5,000 men, while a haphazard one will require for its defence an army of 10,000 men, and even then will not be safe against attack.'

How is one to reconcile these contradictions? The *Times*, which is evidently well informed as to the intentions of the Government, writes as follows on February 10:—'The purpose of the campaign, *as stated by the Prime Minister, and repeated by his colleagues*, was to obtain a more defensible frontier, in order that the Indian Empire should no longer have to rely on the good-will or the caprice of such a Potentate as Shere Ali for security against the encroachments of powerful States.' This 'scientific frontier' is declared to have been now 'reached.' And the necessity for securing it, Lord Beaconsfield told the House of Lords, 'was the sudden appearance of Russia in the immediate vicinity of Afghanistan.' 'You could not go on the old system after you had found Russian armies almost in sight of Cabul, and an Embassy within its walls.' When the Government determined to force a Mission on the Ameer at the point of the sword the 'Russian armies' were no nearer Cabul than they had been when Lord Beaconsfield wished them success in conquering Tartary. But, in any case, what had the Ameer done, even on Lord Beaconsfield's showing, that British armies should slaughter his subjects, burn his villages,

capture his cities, and drive him from his capital? Lord Beaconsfield was profuse in assuring the Lords that Russia had done nothing amiss. Her conduct was 'perfectly allowable.' 'Her Majesty's Government made representations to the Court of St. Petersburg, and it was impossible that anything could be more frank and satisfactory than the manner in which they were met.' 'Russia says: We have ordered our troops to retire beyond the Oxus [her troops had never crossed the Oxus, and consequently no such order could have been given]; our Embassy is merely a temporary one, upon a Mission of courtesy, and as soon as possible it will disappear.' But if the Russian Mission was so innocent, why punish the Ameer with fire and sword for receiving it, especially when it was well known that he did all he could to stop it? Lord Beaconsfield praises the 'frankness' of Russia. Why not imitate it, and confess boldly that he is making war upon the Afghans because he wishes to turn, at their expense, 'a haphazard' into 'a scientific' frontier?

Since the above was written the Prime Minister has been frank enough. In his speech at the opening of Parliament (Feb. 13) he is reported to have used these words:—

> Her Majesty's Government have the satisfaction of feeling that the object of their interference in that country has been completely accomplished. We are now in possession of the three great highways which connect Afghanistan with India, and I hope that this country will remain in possession of those three great highways (Ministerial cheers). We have secured the object for which the expedition was undertaken. We have secured that frontier which will, I hope, render our Indian Empire invulnerable.

The disguise is dropped at last, and it is plainly confessed that the real object of the war was quite different from the avowed object. Neither in Lord Cranbrook's despatch of November 18, nor in Lord Lytton's Ultimatum or Proclamation, is there a hint

given that 'the object of their interference in that country' has been what Lord Beaconsfield now declares it to have been. The Russian Mission to Cabul was evidently not unwelcome to the authors of this policy. It gave them a plausible excuse for forcing a quarrel on the Ameer and wresting from him a portion of his territory to which we have no more right than France has to Belgium or Prussia to Holland. It is an act of high-handed aggression, aggravated by duplicity and a gross violation of the faith of treaties. Can such conduct prosper in the long run? Is it desirable that it should? And, putting aside the immorality of its acquisition, is it so certain that the coveted frontier will prove as secure as Lord Beaconsfield imagines?

The future will probably show that our troops must either advance or retire. The advocates of the new policy make no secret of their opinion that the 'scientific frontier' should expand, as occasion may offer, till it touches the Russian frontier, or at least embraces the Hindu-Kush. Russia desires nothing better. Some of her statesmen have more than once within the last twenty years urged that policy upon us. It would suit her admirably. If we meet her as friends she will find it much easier to control the wild tribes that now infest her borders. They would no longer be able to harass her from a secure retreat beyond the Oxus. If, on the other hand, there should be any danger of war between the two countries, what could Russia desire better than to have our frontier close to hers, with all those advantages on her side which Lord Beaconsfield, in his last Mansion House speech, declared truly were now on the side of England? It would be *our* 'base of operations' that would then be 'so remote,' *our* 'communications' that would be 'so difficult;' and 'the forbidding aspect of the country' would be behind instead of before us, with a population eager to avenge the robbery of their territory and the loss of their independence. Thus, pursuing the *ignis fatuus* of a

'scientific frontier' in place of one which is admitted to be practically unassailable by an invader, we seem to be wantonly courting the danger which we seek to avert. Whether we annex Afghanistan in whole or in part, one inevitable result will be that Russia will have there a nation of eager allies, if it should ever suit her purpose to trouble us in India.

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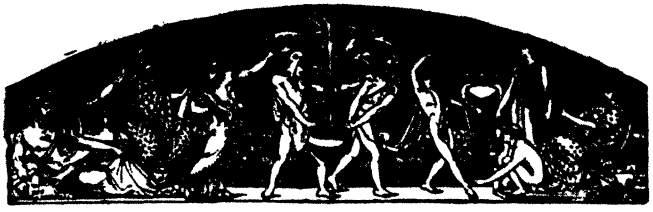

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