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THE
MILITARY GEOGRAPHY

OF

AFGHANISTAN.

PART IV.

KABUL.

BY

CAPTAIN A. H. MASON, D.S.O.,

DEPUTY ASSISTANT QUARTER MASTER GENERAL, INTELLIGENCE BRANCH.



SIMLA :

PRINTED AT THE GOVERNMENT CENTRAL PRINTING OFFICE.

1893.

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NOTE.

“The Military Geography of Afghanistan” has been compiled in five parts, namely :—

Part I. *Badakhshan*, by Major E. G. Barrow, Indian Staff Corps.

Part II. *Afghan Turkistan*, by Major E. G. Barrow, Indian Staff Corps.

Part III. *Herat*, by Major E. G. Barrow, Indian Staff Corps.

Part IV. *Kabul*, by Captain A. H. Mason, D. S. O., Deputy Assistant Quarter-Master General, Intelligence Branch.

Part V. *Farah and Kundahar*, by Colonel E. B. Elles, Assistant Quarter-Master General, Intelligence Branch.

The object of this work is to present in a concise and readable form information about the several provinces of Afghanistan of interest from a military point of view. This information has been compiled from reports, gazetteers, route books, and the records of the Intelligence party with the Afghan Boundary Commission.

The work was commenced in 1891 and finished in 1893, before the Kabul Mission took place. It is important to remember this as events are constantly happening, and fresh knowledge is being acquired, which tend to modify statements and opinions contained in this work. For instance, on page 2 of Part I, Major Barrow in writing of the road from the Baroghil pass to Mastuj *via* the Yarkhun valley, describes it as “an impassable route in summer and very difficult in winter.” From reports lately received from Captain F. E. Younghusband, C.I.E., and Lieutenant G. K. Cockerill, who examined this route in October and November 1893, respectively, it appears that the route in question is easy for eight months in the year, namely, from September to May, and that when it is closed, there is an alternative route *via* the Kankhun pass which is open during the summer.

It should also be remembered that any opinions given or deductions made, are only the personal views of the writers and have no official authority.

G. H. MORE-MOLYNEUX, *Lieut.-Colonel,*
Assistant Quarter-Master General,
Intelligence Branch.

CUSTODY AND DISPOSAL OF SECRET BOOKS, REPORTS, &c., ISSUED BY THE INTELLIGENCE BRANCH, QUARTER MASTER GENERAL'S DEPARTMENT IN INDIA.

The attention of His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief having been called to the want of system in the custody, use, and disposal of secret works, &c., His Excellency desires that in future the following regulations may be strictly adhered to:—

- (a) Officials to whom works of a secret nature are issued will be held personally responsible for their safe custody, and they must be very careful to keep them under lock and key, and under no circumstances to leave them where they are likely to be observed by people who should have no access to them. They will submit (on the 1st January) to the Intelligence Branch a return showing that such matter is still in their possession.
- (b) When an official to whom a secret work has been issued vacates his appointment or is transferred or proceeds on duty or leave (out of India for any period, or in India for any period exceeding three months), all secret works in his possession, if held in his official capacity, must be personally made over to his successor (be he temporary or permanent), and a report submitted to the Intelligence Branch by the officer handing over the issues showing that this has been done. The following is the form of report to be made:—

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In the case of officers of the District Staff, these reports must be sent through the General Officer Commanding.

- (c) In the case of an official leaving his station under circumstances other than above stated, it is optional for him to hand over the secret works in his charge to another officer with the above prescribed formalities; but, if he does not do so, he is as responsible for them during his absence as he is during his presence at his station.
- (d) Personal or complimentary issues of secret works will be held by the recipient until his departure from India, when the secret matter will be returned to the Intelligence Branch for safe custody, or special permission obtained for its retention.

ARMY HEAD QUARTERS : }
Simla, 1st October 1891. }

JAMES BROWNE, Major-General,
Quarter Master General in India.

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PART IV.

KABUL.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION.

The province of Kabul is the fourth great geographical division of Afghanistan. It is inhabited for the most part by Ghilzais and Hazaras, but a certain number of Tajiks, Dekhans, Safis, and other Farsiwans are to be found in the province, more especially around Kabul itself and in the Koh Daman and Kohistan of Kabul, as well as in Bamian, Kunar, Jalalabad, Zurmat, Upper Logar, and in and around Ghazni.

The information which we possess of the Kabul province is chiefly derived from the maps and reports made during the late Afghan war and to a lesser extent from the reports of the Afghan Boundary Commission, but our information is not so complete as it is regarding the provinces of Afghan-Turkistan and Herat treated of in Parts II and III respectively, which were thoroughly and systematically explored during the Afghan Boundary Commission. Parts of the Kabul province have never been explored or mapped. This remark applies especially to the southern and central portion of the Hazarajat and to the Ghilzai country.

Considered as a province, Kabul is bounded on the north by Kafristan, the Hindu Kush, and the Saighan, Kamard, Darra Yusuf, and Balkh-ab districts of Afghan-Turkistan; on the west by the Daolatyar and Ghorat districts of the Herat province; on the south by Zamindawar belonging to Farah and the districts of Tirin, Nawa-i-Arghandab, and Nawa-i-Ghundai belonging to Kandahar; on the east by Waziristan, Kuram, and the Safed Koh from the Sikaram peak to the western end of the Khaibar pass, and thence by the Mohmand country and Bajaur.

PHYSICAL FEATURES.

The Kabul province is for the most part mountainous, although it contains numerous fertile valleys. The lofty ranges of the Hindu Kush and Koh-i-Baba rising over 16,000 feet and the high uplands of the Hazarajat with an average elevation of 10,000 feet form natural barriers on the north and west. The Safed Koh range to the south of the Jalalabad district rises to 15,620 feet and the Paghman range to the north-west of Kabul to 15,447 feet.

The Koh-i-Baba is usually spoken of as a continuation of the Hindu Kush. It is so in fact, but there is this peculiarity, that the one range is not a simple prolongation of the other without break. The ends of the ranges do not meet, but overlap* and are united by a rather flat and open watershed. This watershed is the Shibar pass, to which further allusion will be made.

The Koh-i-Baba bears considerable outward resemblance to the Hindu Kush, being a sierra of which the highest peaks rise to over 16,000 feet. The passes are from 12,000 to 13,000 feet. They are, therefore, not much lower than the Hindu Kush, and appear to be closed for about the same time.

* See diagram on page 11 of Part II.

But there is this great difference between the Koh-i-Baba and the Hindu Kush, that while the latter is practically a single range, the Koh-i-Baba has a wide tract of mountainous country on either side of it, and the difficulties of the roads are by no means confined to crossing the main range.

The principal rivers of the Kabul province are the Kabul, the Helmand, and the Ghazni. The first named with its tributaries drains the north-eastern districts. It rises near the Unni pass, about 40 miles west of Kabul city, and flows through the district of Maidan, receiving as a tributary the stream which drains the Nirkh valley. Before reaching the capital, it also receives the drainage of the Paghman and Chardch sub-districts of Kabul. From Kabul city to the town of Jalalabad the river flows eastwards, receiving in its course the great northern affluent—the Panjshir (bringing down the drainage of Ghorband, Koh Daman, and part of Kohistan), the Tagao, Alishang, and Alingar, and the southern tributaries the Logar and Surkhab, besides numerous minor streams. From Jalalabad the general course is south-easterly as far as Dakka. The Kunar from the north joins the Kabul just below Jalalabad. It is an important tributary. It rises near the Baroghil pass and brings down the drainage of Mastuj, Chitral, and the Kunar valleys. Each of the northern affluents of the Kabul river forms a pass in the mountainous regions beyond. The main stream of the Panjshir leads direct to the Khowak pass into Badakshan. The Tagao, the Alishang, and the Alingar, all well populated and fertile valleys, lead into the heart of Kafirstan, and the Kunar forms a means of communication with Chitral and by the Dorah pass with Badakshan, or by the Baroghil with Wakhan and the Pamirs. The valleys of the Logar and the Surkhab to the south also mark good natural roads, the one from Kushi, near the Shutargardan pass, to Kabul, and the other perhaps the only practicable line of connection between the Kuram route at the Shutargardan and the Khaibar route at Jalalabad. From Dakka the Kabul river flows north-east, and then turns east and south again, forming a loop, which encloses a large section of the mountainous country of the Mohmands, and eventually debouches into the Peshawar valley at Michni. Having received the waters of the Panjkora and Bara rivers, it falls into the Indus at Attock after an entire course of about 300 miles.

The Helmand also rises near the Unai pass, but on its northern side, and flows south-west through the Hazarajat. Its upper course has never been explored, and little or nothing is known of it. Its tributaries, the Arghandab, Tirin, and Khud Rud, all appear to rise in the Hazarajat. Another tributary, the Tarnak, rises in the district of Mukur.

The Ghazni river drains the southern part of the district of the same name. It rises in a small valley about 12 miles from Ghazni. After passing that town, it flows in a southerly direction, receiving from the east the waters of the Gardez stream, which drains Zurmat. It then runs through a desolate tract strongly impregnated with salt, and falls into the Ab-i-Istadah lake.

In addition to the above, there are several smaller rivers. A stream called the Shamil drains Khost, and eventually joins the Kuram river within British territory; the Sar-i-Jangal and Lal streams rise in the eastern portion of the Dai Zangi country, and are tributaries of the Hari Rud; the Rud-i-Bandi-Amir, rising on the north side of the Koh-i-Baba, drains Yak Walang; and, lastly, the Bamian stream carries off the drainage of the valley of that name. These two last eventually fall into the Oxus.

ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICTS.

It is difficult to say with any certainty what are the administrative districts of the Kabul province, as authorities differ and frequent changes take place. The following are, as far as can be made out, the districts of Kabul at the present time:—Jalalabad, Laghman, Kunar, Khost, Zurmat, Katawaz, Mukur, Ghazni, Logar, Maidan, Kabul, Koh Daman, Kohistan, Ghorband, Bamian (including Yak Walang and the Dai Zangi country), and Besud. Besides these the Hazarajat also belongs to the Kabul province, and will be described with the above districts in Chapter II.

The administrative head-quarters of the whole province is at Kabul.

The towns are few in number. The only places besides Kabul itself, which can be dignified by the name of towns, are Ghazni, Jalalabad, Istalif, and Charikar.

CLIMATE.

The climate of the Kabul province is as diversified as its physical configuration, and its variations are almost entirely due to the difference of elevation rather than of latitude. Thus we find the winter at Ghazni (7,279 feet) most severe. For the greater part of the winter the inhabitants scarcely quit their houses, the snow lies for three months, and the thermometer sinks to 10° below zero. In Ghazni it freezes every evening in October, and the ice lasts till midday; in November it never thaws; in December the country is covered with three feet of snow, which does not melt till the middle of March. In the Hazarajat the winter is still more severe. At Bamian, when our troops were there in 1840, the thermometer during January frequently fell to 10° and 12° below zero, and the main stream was frozen over to a considerable thickness. Even in Kabul (5,780 feet) the snow lies for two or three months. The Koh Daman is considered by the Afghans to be the most favoured spot on earth as respects climate. During the summer months the heat of an Indian sun is tempered by cool breezes from the adjacent snowy ranges, whilst the rigours of winter are braved in the clothing of sheep skins and furs. From July to October, however, fevers and bowel-complaints are prevalent even in this favoured region. The winter in Jalalabad (1,950 feet) is very pleasant and resembles that of Peshawar.

The heat of the summer throughout the province is everywhere great, except in the most elevated parts. In the confined valley of Jalalabad the heat is intense, and is made more trying by frequent duststorms. Even at Kabul the thermometer ranges from 90° to 100° in summer. The monsoon which deluges India has scarcely any effect west of the Suliman range, nor are the falls, either of rain or snow, heavy during the cold season, while in the hot season the rains are for the most part slight and of rare occurrence. Further information relating to climate will be found in Chapter II.

SUPPLIES.

With regard to the question of supplies, this will be referred to when describing the different districts in Chapter II, but it may be mentioned here that our experiences at Kabul during the late war show that there are as a rule large reserves of supplies, such as wheat, barley, Indian-corn, and also fodder, both in the city itself and in the neighbourhood (especially in Logar and Maidan); and that these supplies are in excess of the quantity which the normal population require for their own support as well as for their cattle. Practically a force of, say, 10,000 men, with its followers and transport, arriving in Kabul at any period of the year, would find supplies of wheat, grain, and fodder for animals sufficient to last for quite twelve months, and it should obtain an ample supply of sheep to meet its requirements in the matter of meat. The result, however, of a force being quartered for a longer period at Kabul would be that these reserve supplies would gradually be eaten out, and for a force staying at Kabul for, say, a second year, serious difficulties would be met with in the matter of supplies. In 1879-80, with the exception of some *ghī* and at first tea, we practically obtained all our food and grain supplies locally, and had little or no assistance from India. } *Dal* is not obtainable. Firewood is procurable in good quantities, but difficulty might arise in respect to this article after the first year, as the expenditure in fuel would be necessarily heavy in the winter. The supply of vegetables at Kabul is very fine, hardly any potatoes, but the cabbages, turnips, beetroot, and carrots surpass anything seen in India. Similarly, there is a large supply of fruit in the season. These would enable beneficial changes to be made in the rations for the troops.

There are no horned cattle except those used for the plough or as transport, and not many of them, so the meat supply has to be obtained from the *dumba* sheep. They are of excellent quality, and in weight average over 40 lbs. when dressed. Large supplies of clothing can be obtained in the city of Kabul, *barak* and other locally manufactured material being utilized. Socks, gloves or mittens, and native shoes are also procurable. *Poshtins* are made in large numbers and of excellent description, the fleece of the *dumba* being used. In Kabul itself artisans and workmen of various description can be procured. In and around the city watermills are plentiful, and they can be utilized for grinding wheat or grain to a large amount.

ARMY.

Our information about the number of troops in the Kabul province is not very reliable, and the normal distribution of these troops is at the present time completely upset owing to the Hazara rebellion and affairs in the Asmar direction. General Ghulam Haidar Khan, the Commander-in-Chief, was reported last year to have with him in the Kunar valley and at Asmar two regiments of cavalry, five battalions of infantry, and fourteen guns, and these troops appear to be still there. Perhaps the best idea of the normal condition of things can be gathered from the returns of the strength of the troops in the Kabul province sent to the Government of India by the British Agent at Kabul at the end of 1891. From these returns it appears that the infantry then consisted of eighteen battalions, numbering 13,869 men, and the cavalry of nine regiments with a total strength of 3,762 men. There were thirteen batteries of artillery, including one of machine and two of screw guns. The total number of guns was 77, the *personnel* of the artillery numbering 1,243. There were five companies of Sappers and Miners (all Hazaras) numbering 752.

The majority of the troops in the Kabul province are located in and about the city. There is a small cantonment at Shinkai in the Mukur district, with a normal garrison of one cavalry and one infantry regiment. Regular troops are also in ordinary times located in Ghazni, Jalalabad, Kunar, and Khost, and there is sometimes a regiment in Kohistan and in Laghman.

ROADS.

The following are the principal roads in the Kabul province. Taking Kabul itself as the starting point, the distances to the principal points in and near Afghanistan by these routes are as given below:—

	Miles.
(1) Mazar-i-Sharif <i>viâ</i> the Hajigak or Irak, Bamian, Haibak, and Tashkurghan	318
(2) Mazar-i-Sharif <i>viâ</i> Charikar, the Shibar, Bamian, Saighan, Doshi, Haibak, and Tashkurghan	393
(3) Mazar-i-Sharif <i>viâ</i> the Chahardar, Doshi, Haibak, and Tashkurghan	285½
(4) Peshawar <i>viâ</i> Lataband and Jalalabad	181
(5) Thal <i>viâ</i> the Shutargardan and Kuram	152½
(6) Kandahar <i>viâ</i> Maidan, Ghazni, and Kalat-i-Ghilzai	313
(7) Kandahar <i>viâ</i> Logar, Ghazni, and Kalat-i-Ghilzai	328
(8) Herat <i>viâ</i> Daolatyar	467

In addition to these, there are roads from Ghazni to—

(9) Dera Ismail Khan <i>viâ</i> the Gunul	295
(10) Danna <i>viâ</i> the Tochi	187½

With regard to the above roads, the first is the main *kafilâ* route between Kabul and Afghan-Turkistan. It crosses the watershed between the Helmand and Kabul rivers by the Unai Kotal (11,000 feet ?); then traverses the north-east portion of Besud and crosses into Bamian by the Hajigak pass (13,000

feet?). Formerly the highway went over the Irak pass, but the road over the Hajigak has been improved by the present Amir, and consequently that is now the main route. The Hajigak is slightly lower and apparently easier than the Irak, and in point of distance is practically the same, being only one mile shorter. This road to Bamian is practicable for laden camels, and could with a little labour be made passable for wheels.

The road to Bamian by the Ghorband valley and the Shibar pass, although some 40 miles longer than that by the Hajigak, is practicable for wheeled carriage beyond Charikar, the present Amir having made a road 15 to 20 feet wide. It is probable, however, that it would require some repairs before it could be used for wheeled traffic. This route, crossing as it does the comparatively low Shibar pass (9,800 feet), is open all the year round, and is the only route between Kabul and Afghan-Turkistan which is so open. The Amir has continued the road from Bamian down the Saighan valley and by the line of the Surkhab to Doshi, so that the whole road from Kabul to Mazar-i-Sharif, although very long, is open throughout the year. It is divided into 34 marches as against 27 by the first route.

The third road from Kabul to Mazar-i-Sharif also passes through Charikar, but from the Ghorband valley it crosses the Hindu Kush by the Chahardar pass (13,900 feet). The road over the pass is made, and is supposed to be practicable for artillery. It meets the second route at Dahan-i-Iskar, one march west of Doshi. It is the shortest of the three routes, and is divided into 25 marches.

The main road from Kabul to Peshawar is so well-known that it requires no description. It is divided into 16 marches, and was traversed by wheeled artillery (including heavy guns) during the late war. The highest point on the route is the Lataband Kotal, which is 7,775 feet. This route is open all the year round.

The Kuram route is also well-known. It reaches British territory at Thal, which is, however, some 90 miles distant from the railway at Khushalgarh, to which point it is 26 marches from Kabul. This route crosses the Shutar-gardan pass (10,800 feet), which is closed to the passage of troops from the middle of December to the end of March. It was traversed by wheeled artillery in 1879.

The roads to Kandahar from Kabul *via* Maidan and Logar are 31 and 32 marches respectively. They have both been used by large forces accompanied by wheeled artillery. The heavy guns which accompanied Sir Donald Stewart's force in 1880 used the route *via* Maidan, but a battery of horse artillery and a field battery accompanied the main body moving into Logar. In crossing the Zamburak Kotal (8,100 feet) the guns had to be lowered down a steep gradient for about half a mile.

The road from Kabul to Herat *via* Daolatyar follows the *kafilas* road from Kabul to Bamian as far as the Unai Kotal, but after crossing this pass it branches off to the left, and runs through Besud and the Dai Zangi country to Daolatyar, which is about half way to Herat. This road was made by order of the present Amir about 1884, and is believed to have been widened and improved since. The last order was to complete the road to a width of 18 feet, and to make it practicable for wheeled guns all the way to Herat, but, as far as it is known, it is not so on account of the steepness of the gradients in many places. The great elevation of a considerable part of this route also forbids the probability of it ever proving of much military importance. The distance between Kabul and Herat by this road is divided into 41 marches.

Of the roads from Ghazni to British territory but little is known. That by the Gurnal is used annually by large *kafilas* of Pawindahs. Lieutenant Broadfoot traversed it in 1839. By this route it is 14 marches from Ghazni to Domandi, the furthest limit of British territory, and 10 on from there to Dera Ismail Khan *via* the Gwaleri pass.

The route by the Tochi has never been visited by any European, and our knowledge of it is derived from native information. It is the shortest road to Ghazni, and is only 12 marches from Bannu. When it is opened up, it will become an important line of communication between India and Afghanistan.

CHAPTER II.

DISTRICTS OF THE KABUL PROVINCE.

JALALABAD.

The district of Jalalabad is about 80 miles long from east to west, and on an average 35 miles broad from north to south. To the east it extends to the western end of the Khairar pass and to the Bazar valley. On the south it is bounded by the Safed Koh range. The western boundary is a lofty spur from the Safed Koh called Karkacha. This range, after running northwards to the latitude of Jagdalak, turns eastwards, and forms the northern boundary of the Jalalabad district (separating it from Laghman) to the point where the Kabul river enters the plain. The eastern portion of the Karkacha range is usually known by the name of Siah Koh (black mountain). The remaining northern boundary of the district is defined by the low hills north of Besud* to the Kunar, and by the Mohmand hills from the Kunar valley to Lalpura. The general surface of the district is diversified by long spurs thrown out by the Safed Koh in a northerly direction, reaching to within a few miles of the Kabul river, and by two short isolated ranges of hills, one to the south of Ambar Khana, and the other running from Ali Boghan to Lachipur. The Kabul river enters the district at Darunta, the eastern termination of the Siah Koh range, and flows in an eastern direction through the whole district, dividing it into two parts. That to the north is a narrow strip between the river and the mountains called Besud to the west of the Kunar river and Kama to the east of that river up to the point where the mountains come down close to the Kabul river. Eastward of this point lie Goslita and Chiknaur.

South of the Kabul river the district of Jalalabad may be described as an irregular, undulating tract, enclosing a few small plains, *e.g.*, Jalalabad, Chardeb, Peshbolak, Batikot, &c., covered with low, bare stony hills, and intersected by numerous streams issuing from the Safed Koh, and flowing towards the Kabul river. These streams depend upon the melting snow for their supply of water, and sometimes entirely run dry.

The Surkhab, which rises in the Safed Koh and flows along the eastern and southern foot of the Karkacha and Siah Koh ranges, is a considerable stream. When in flood its waters are of a bright red colour, whence its name of "red" river. On the left bank of the Kabul river the only tributary worthy of mention is the Kunar, which joins at a point four miles below Jalalabad with a volume of water, which is probably not less than that of the Kabul river itself.

The district of Jalalabad is thus seen to be entirely surrounded by mountains. The view from the town of Jalalabad in the winter is very fine in whatever direction the eye is turned. Most impressive is the splendid range of the Safed Koh towering to a height of 15,620† feet, and forming a magnificent wall of snow between Kuram and Jalalabad. North of Jalalabad, at a distance of about 20 miles, is the Kashmund range of mountains, rising to over 14,000 feet, and overlooking the whole of Kafristan. Beyond Laghman to the north-west some glittering peaks of the Hindu Kush are visible, and to the north-east stretches away a rolling sea of mountains towards Bajaur and Kunar. The southern portion of the district, lying along the skirts of the Safed Koh, is popularly known by the name Ningrahar.

The main roads traverse the district from east to west. One passes through Dakka, Basawal, Barikan, Jalalabad, Rozabad, and Fort Battye to Gandamak. The other leaves the road just mentioned at Basawal, and, pass-

* This must not be confounded with the district of the same name to the south-west of Kabul.

† Sikistan is 15,620 feet.

ing through Batikot and Mazina, rejoins the other road at Gandamak. The first mentioned is used by the natives of the country in the cold weather, and the other, which crosses the spurs from the Safed Koh, in the summer. During the late war an alternative road from Basawal to Jalalabad *via* Lachipur and Ali Boghan along the river was constructed. Roads also lead into Laghman and to Kunar. There are, moreover, several routes over the Safed Koh to Kuram, but these are only mountain tracks.

The climate of the plains of Jalalabad bears a general resemblance to that of Peshawar. After the Sikhs took Peshawar from the Afghans, Jalalabad, on account of the mildness of its climate compared with that of Kabul, was the favourite winter residence of the Kabul rulers. But for two months in the summer the heat is excessive. The wide stony waste or "dasht" of Batikot is dreared from a pestilential wind which blows over it in the hot weather. Rain usually falls in moderate quantities in the months of December, January, and February. Snow rarely, if ever, falls on the plains east of Gandamak. During the winter, from November to May, the wind steadily blows from the west, often bringing violent and disagreeable storms of dust. The west wind is generally the rain bringing wind. As the spring crop is getting ripe, this wind frequently causes much loss by shaking and bending down the heavy ears of grain. This wind blows most severely in the immediate neighbourhood of the town of Jalalabad, which may perhaps be attributable to the situation and configuration of the Siah Koh range to the west. From May to November the wind is from the east. The valleys of the Safed Koh and the heights of Gandamak afford cool and healthy retreats in the hot weather. The unhealthy season in Jalalabad, as in the Punjab, is autumn, when fevers are very common.

The inhabitants of the Jalalabad district belong to various tribes and races. Kama, Chiknaur, and Lalpura are mostly inhabited by the Khawaizai and Baizai sections of the Mohmands. Crossing the river into Besud, we find a very mixed population of Arabs, Dehgans, and Tajiks. On the western side of the district we come upon the great Ghilzai tribe. The strip of country between the Surkhab and the Siah Koh and Karkacha mountains is mostly in the hands of the Ghilzais. They have encroached upon the lands of the Khugianis west of Gaudamak, and several of the villages formerly in the possession of the Khugianis are now held by the Ghilzais. They are also found scattered in other parts of the district. They belong chiefly to the Jabbar Khel and Babakar Khel sections of the tribe. The whole of the south-western corner of the district is occupied by the Khugiani tribe. The Khugianis are a branch of the Durani tribe. East of the Khugianis come the Shinwaris, who inhabit nearly the whole of the skirts of the Safed Koh to the eastern limit of the district. The central portion along the right bank of the Kabul river, including Dakka, Hazarnao, Basawal, Chardeh, etc., is occupied by Mohmands of the same sections as those on the opposite side of the river. The inhabitants of the Surkhab valley are mostly Tajiks. In the other valleys to the east of the Surkhab the population is mixed, containing Mohmands, Dehgans, Shinwaris, Tajiks, *Saiads*, and a peculiar tribe called Tirais, who were formerly expelled from Tirah, and descended to the plains of Ningrahar.

A few Hindus are found in every large village.

A class of people called Kuchis deserve separate mention. The word "Kuchi" literally means a person who migrates, and it is applied to all the nomadic tribes who visit this district in the winter and remove to colder climates in the summer. Amongst the Kuchis are found Arabs, Mohmands, Ghilzais, etc. The Arabs and wandering Ghilzais bring their flocks of camels and sheep down to the plains of Jalalabad to graze during the winter, but remove to the hills towards Kabul in the summer. The Kuchis were largely employed as carriers during the late war.

The district of Jalalabad contains no towns, with the exception of Jalalabad itself, which is a miserable, squalid place, containing about 300 houses. The summer population does not exceed 2,000. The city is an irregular quadrilateral, surrounded by a wall which extends for 2,100 yards, and has bastions at

intervals. During the late Afghan war a fort called Fort Sale was constructed about a mile to the east of the city, in which quarters and hospitals were built, and which was used as an *entrepôt* for all kinds of warlike and commissariat stores during the campaign. The Governor or *Hakim* of the district, who is appointed from Kabul, resides at Jalalabad.

The villages in this district usually consist of several mud forts scattered over one or two square miles. The smaller villages consist of one large fort, inside which the people have their houses. Unwalled villages are few.

Compared with the total extent of the district the area under cultivation is small. The plains of Basawal, Chardeh, and Jalalabad, the low-lying lands of Besud and Kama, and the banks of the Surkhab are all highly cultivated. For the rest the cultivation is confined to the banks of the streams that descend from the Safed Koh, where a breadth of from one to two miles is carefully cultivated. The lower ridges and spurs of the Safed Koh that intersect the district are bare and unculturable, but the higher mountains of Kashmund, Karkacha, and Safed Koh are clothed with thick forests of pine, almond, and other trees. The area of cultivation could be considerably extended by the construction of irrigation canals from the Kabul, Kunar, and Surkhab rivers, especially near Jalalabad and in Besud; but there is little room for further cultivation in the vicinity of the smaller streams.

Two crops are obtained in the year when water is abundant. The spring crops are chiefly wheat and barley, and the autumn crops are *jowar*, *mash*, rice, and *bajra*.

LAGHMAN.

The district of Laghman is about 26 miles from east to west, and on an average 32 miles from north to south. It may be said to begin at the western end of the Darunta gorge, and, skirting the northern base of the Siah Koh, extends in an easterly direction up to Badpakht. The valley takes a northern direction at Mandrawar, and, proceeding straight up to Tegarhi (Tigri on map), bifurcates into two portions, one going up the Alingar, and the other up the Alishang valley. Its boundaries on the north are the Kafristan mountains, on the east the Kashmund range, on the south the Siah Koh range, and on the west the Usbin river separating Laghman from the Safis of Tagao. On the eastern side a chain of spurs runs down from the Kashmund range, terminating just above Chaharbagh. The aspect of the country in this direction is dreary to a degree, and consists of sandy hillocks without any cultivation or vegetation on them. The southern portion of the valley, though it has some cultivated lands and flourishing villages, has nothing to boast of in the way of beauty. The same remarks apply to the western portion, but nothing can exceed the grandeur of its northern parts. Looking north-west from Tegarhi, the eye rests on the beautiful Alishang, with its numerous villages, forts, and river. To the north-east extends the Alingar valley, with its villages and forts, belonging to the different Ghilzai chiefs, the whole bounded by a mass of snowy mountains. Well wooded spurs run down on either side of both the Alishang and Alingar valleys. The civil administration of the district is carried on by a Governor or *Hakim* appointed from Kabul, who usually resides at Tegarhi.

With regard to the rivers in this district, the Kabul flows from west to east through the southern parts of Laghman, and passes out through the Darunta gorge into the Jalalabad district. Numerous small canals are taken off from it to irrigate the land on either bank of the river. The Alishang river is supposed to have its source somewhere about Farajghan, and, flowing in a south-easterly direction, joins the Alingar a little below Tegarhi. The Alingar stream flows from the mountains of Kafristan, and, after joining the Alishang, the combined streams flow southwards, and meet the Kabul river close to Charharbagh.

The roads in the Laghman district are not many, nor are they much used. This is partly due to the fact that the main highway from India to Kabul passes south of Laghman, and also to the depredations of Ghilzai robbers, who render the roads unsafe. Were this not the case, an easy road runs from Kalasang *via* Dargai and the southern bank of the Kabul river to Darunta, and

soon to Jalalabad, lessening the distance six or seven miles between Kabul and Jalalabad. The only points where any considerable labour would be required to make this into a really good road for all arms are the Darunta defile and the Dabeli pass. Between these two points the road, as it exists in its unmade condition, offers unusual facilities to the march of a force from its contiguity to a large river and its easy gradients. A second road leads from Jalalabad to Tegarhi *viâ* Chaharbagh and Mandrawar. This road is a very fair one the whole way, and with a little improvement would be fit for any traffic. The Kabul river, however, has to be crossed, and, although there are several fords which can be used in the cold weather, the river is not fordable at all in the summer. The only regular ferry that exists plies just below the junction of the Alingar and Kabul rivers. From Tegarhi a small force went up the valley of the Alingar in February 1890 as far as Badiabad, where the English captives were detained in 1842. From Tegarhi another road leads to Badpakht, and so on to Kabul. This road is joined between Tegarhi and Badpakht by one coming from Mandrawar.

The climate of the southern portion of the Laghman valley is somewhat similar to that of Jalalabad, but more bracing and healthier. The heat during summer must be excessive, but there are no duststorms like those in the Jalalabad district, which render existence unbearable. Further north at Tegarhi, and up the Alishang and Alingar valleys, the heat in the summer is said not to be excessive, and during the worst period, from the 20th June to the end of August, there are pine clad valleys on the slopes of the high ranges which can be resorted to.

Formerly the inhabitants of the Laghman valley were for the most part Tajiks, but the Ghilzais have gradually driven out the peaceful Tajiks from their land, and have spread themselves all over the valley. At the present time we find the Ghilzais occupying the country on both sides of the Kabul river, and their forts and villages are scattered throughout the Alingar valley. The Tajiks occupy the villages in the Alishang valley, and extend to Tegarhi, Mandrawar, Haidar Khan, and Chaharbagh. Safis are to be found in the north-west of the district. Hindus are in all the villages. Kuchis visit the district during the winter and return with their camels, flocks, and herds at the approach of summer to colder regions.

The district of Laghman contains no town of any note. There are some 130 to 150 villages, of which Chaharbagh is the largest. It is unfortified, and consists of a collection of hamlets. Mandrawar is another large and flourishing village, also unfortified, with a good Hindu trading community within its walls. Tegarhi was also a flourishing place until a severe flood overthrew its hamlets and ruined its environs.

The district of Laghman is extensively cultivated, having three rivers and thirty-eight irrigation canals. The inhabitants of the valley have brought under cultivation all the land where they can manage to bring water, and the cultivation is of a high class. A large amount of supplies could, if required, be drawn from this district.

The chief products of the spring harvest are wheat and barley, and the autumn crops are rice, cotton, *jowar*, *mash*, &c. The chief crop in the country is rice, which is exported on rafts to Jalalabad, and taken by Kuchis to Kabul.

KUNAR.

The Kunar district consists of the valley of that name. It is bounded on the east and south-east by the Kabul Sagar range, which, rising to a height of 9,000 feet, separates it from Bajaur. This range appears to be a continuation of the Lahori (Lowarai) mountains separating Chitral from Dir, and forms the watershed between the Kunar and Bajaur river systems. On the north-west the valley is bounded by the Kashmir range, separating it from Kafirstan. On the west is the Laghman, and on the south the Jalalabad district. These boundaries are, however, not accurately defined, and in a map furnished by the

ex-Badshah of Kunar (Saïd Mahmud) in August 1892, the boundaries of the Kunar district (as it was in his time) only include the low spurs and the valley on either side of the river. It then extended as far up the valley as Chigar Sarai. Last year the Amir advanced his boundary some twenty miles in this direction as far as Asmar, which place he now claims as part of Afghanistan. This claim the Government of India have refused to admit, as they regard Asmar as an independent state, with which the Amir has no right to interfere. The distance from Jalalabad to Chigar Sarai as the crow flies is about 50 miles, but by the road along the valley it is some twenty miles more. This road has recently been repaired, and it was traversed by an Afghan force, including cavalry and artillery, at the beginning of last year, so it must be a fairly good road. For the description of the valley we are dependent on native information, as it does not appear that any Englishman has visited it above the town of Kunar. A little above Shewa, which is fourteen miles from Jalalabad, the valley narrows to about a mile in width, and exceeds that breadth only in the neighbourhood of Kunar itself, where it widens to three miles. Kunar is sometimes spoken of as Old Kunar to distinguish it from Pashat or New Kunar. At Chigar Sarai the Pech stream joins the Kunar. The Pech Darra is occupied by Safis.

The Kunar valley is drained by a river which rises near the Baroghil pass, and flows through Mastuj and Chitral. South of the latter place it is called the Chitral river, but lower in its course, until it falls into the Kabul, it receives the name of the Kunar. At Old Kunar the river is about 50 paces broad and is rapid and deep, and the stream is said only to be fordable sometimes in the cold weather.*

There is a road from Jalalabad to Chigar Sarai which keeps to the right bank of the Kunar the whole way, and another road which crosses at Patan by a ferry, and runs through Old Kunar and Pashat to Maraora close to Chigar Sarai, but on the opposite (left) bank of the stream. Besides these, several tracks lead over the hills on the east of the valley into Bajaur.

The principal towns are Shewa, Kunar, and Pashat, all of which are said to contain about 1,000 houses. The last mentioned place is now the headquarters of the district.

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Formerly the valley was under the rule of a family of *Saiads*, but Saïd Mahmud, known as the Badshah of Kunar, who is the present representative of the family, is now a refugee in British territory, and his territory forms the present Afghau district of Kunar.

Khost.

The district of Khost consists of the valley of that name, which comprises the upper portion of the valley of the Shamil or Kaitu river. It is bounded on the north, north-east, and north-west by Kuram and Zurmat, and by the Turi, Jaji, Mangal, Makbal, and Jadran tribes; on the east and south-east by the Darwesh Khel Waziris, west by the Jadran country, and south by Darwar. It is said to be forty miles long, and is watered by three streams, the most important of which is the Shamil. The drainage of Khost falls into the Kuram river at Zirwan. The inhabitants of the upper portion of the Khost valley are called Khostwals, while the lower portion is occupied by Waziris, with whom the Khostwals are on good terms, and with whom they are always ready to combine in attacking their Turi neighbours. The mountains which confine Khost on all sides afford plenty of timber, fuel, and pasturage.

* The winter has forded the Kunar river near its junction with the Kabul in the month of February.

In January 1879 General Roberts marched with a small column of all arms from Hazir Pir in the Kuram valley to Matun, the head-quarters of the Khost district. In his despatch he describes the whole district as richly cultivated and producing large quantities of rice, wheat, &c., and the people as possessing considerable herds of cattle and sheep. The fort at Matun was described as of the same general plan, but smaller than the fort at Kuram, and was at that time in indifferent repair.

There are no large villages in Khost, but there are numerous small hamlets scattered all over the valley. Matun, besides its fort, consists of a group of some thirty hamlets.

The Khostwals call themselves Pathans, but they are probably a mongrel race like the Bannuchis and Dawaris.

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The climate of Khost is warmer than that of Kuram. Matun, the capital and residence of the Afghan governor, has an elevation of 3,892 feet above sea level.

ZURMAT.

Very little is known of the district of Zurmat, and no survey of the country exists. It is said to be about 40 miles long by 20 miles broad. It is separated from Logar by an offshoot of the Safed Koh, which is crossed by the Altimur pass. South-west of Zurmat, and bordering on it, is Katawaz. The valley is drained by the Gardez stream, which falls into the Ghazni river south of Ghazni. The inhabitants of Zurmat are Tajiks and Ghilzais. The principal place in the district is Gardez, which is one of the chief centres of the Ghilzai tribe.

There are said to be four principal routes in Zurmat. These are :—

- (1) To Kabul *viâ* the Altimur pass;
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In September 1839 a force, including artillery and cavalry, visited Zurmat, and again in September 1841 troops were sent into Zurmat to reduce the country to order, and the forts, which were found deserted, were all destroyed. Unfortunately there is no detailed record of these operations, so that the routes followed cannot be determined.*

KATAWAZ.

Of the district of Katawaz also hardly anything is known. Its length is said to be about 48 miles and its breadth 2½ miles. The plain is level and open, bounded on the east by the Kohnak range and on the west by the Katasang and Zhera hills. To the north it reaches Zurmat, and to the south as far as lake Ab-i-Istadab. This district entirely belongs to the Suliman Khel Ghilzais;

* With regard to the 1841 expedition, the force consisted of the following troops :—200 men of Her Majesty's 4th Foot, 5th Native Infantry, Anderson's Horse, 6th Sikh's Infantry, Captain Backhouse's mountain train, four guns of No. 6 Battery, two 8-inch mortars, two iron 9-pounders, and three companies of Shah's Sappers. This force crossed the Altimur pass (9,600 feet) on the 3rd and 4th October 1841; the guns were dragged over by 500 Afghans, the carriages being much shaken and some seriously damaged. The descent beyond the pass was found to be easy. After visiting and destroying the forts in the valley, the force recrossed the Altimur pass on the 10th October in a snowstorm. Captain Abbott (from whose journal the above is taken) described the Zurmat valley as well watered and susceptible of great fertility, but the inhabitants were few in number, and not above half the available land was cultivated annually, the other half remaining fallow. The hills were sprinkled with stunted firs, resembling the juniper in foliage. He described Gardez as a remarkable object in the valley, being built on an isolated hill, about 40 feet above the plain, having a sort of citadel on a natural mound rising 20 or 30 feet higher.—(*Journal of Major-General Augustine Abbott, C.B., 1838-42*).

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the settled sections living in the centre of the valley, and the nomads wandering about the foot of the mountains. The villages are generally groups of five or six forts, each containing ten to sixty houses. The above is taken from the report of Lieutenant Broadfoot, who passed through Katawaz in 1839.

The Pawindah route from Ghazni to the Punjab *via* the Gumal runs through Katawaz, and is used by the Pawindahs in their annual migrations.

MUKUR.

The district of Mukur is bounded on the south by the Kandahar province, on the west by the Hazarajat, on the north by the Ghazni district, and on the east by Katawaz. The main road from Kandahar to Kabul runs through the centre of this district. This road, which as far as Mukur follows the valley of the Tarnak, was traversed by wheeled artillery both in the first Afghan war and in the 1879-80 campaign.

Mukur is said to be a populous and well cultivated district. Its appearance is, however, not attractive owing to the deficiency of trees. The inhabitants are Ghilzais, chiefly of the Taraki section; but there are also Andari and Suliman Khel.

They live in fortified villages, which appear to be very numerous. The crops grown are chiefly wheat and barley.

The head-quarters of the district is Mukur itself, on the right bank of the Tarnak stream near its source. It is 6,561 feet above sea level, and is 6½ miles from Ghazni and 70 miles from Kalat-i-Ghilzai. Grass and forage are said to be procurable here in abundance. There are a great many villages protected by mud forts in the neighbourhood of Mukur, and, judging from the rich cultivation around, grain in plenty should be procurable. Goats, sheep, cattle, &c., are said to be kept in large numbers; but as the villages in 1880 were all deserted, neither supplies nor live-stock were obtainable, except such as were buried or otherwise hidden, and afterwards found by foraging parties.

Some 10 or 12 miles to the west of Mukur is Shinkni, where the present Amir has established a small cantonment.

GHAZNI.

The Ghazni district is bounded on the north by Maidan and Besud, on the south by the districts of Mukur and Katawaz, on the east by Logar and Zurmat, and on the west by the Hazarajat.

It is drained by the Ghazni river. A plentiful supply of water appears to be obtainable in the district, except in the months of June and July, when it is scarce. The western portion of the district is hilly; the northern portion consists of the Wardak valley between Logar and the Hazara hills; and the remainder is said to be generally an irregular plain, well irrigated and cultivated in many parts, with here and there tracts of waste, diversified by undulations, and by low, stony, and bare hills.

The main roads from Ghazni are to Kandahar *via* Kalat-i-Ghilzai (221 miles), and to Kabul *via* Maidan, 92 miles, or *via* the Logar valley (106 miles).

These roads have all been traversed by troops of all arms. There is also a road to Band-i-Amir, and so on to Mazar-i-Sharif, *via* the Darra Yusuf. This road runs through Besud, and crosses the Koh-i-Baba by the Zard Sang Kotal. It is said to be practicable for baggage animals; probably mules only and not camels. The inhabitants of the Ghazni district consist chiefly of Ghilzais (for the most part belonging to the Taraki, Andari, and Ali Khel sections), Wardaks, Tajiks, and Hazaras. There are besides a few Duranis and Hindus.

The main divisions of the Ghilzais have separate tracts of country known by the name of the tribe or section occupying it. The villages are usually made up of a group of forts, or walled enclosures, which collectively bear a common name. The inhabitants of the district are divided into two parts—

the settled population, and the "Kuchis" or nomads. The latter are only to be found in their tribal homes in the summer. They are all Ghilzais, and belong mainly to the sections known as Kharotis, Mian Khels, Nasirs, Mulla Khels, Mianis, and Dotanis. Many of the above come down to British territory in the winter, and are known as Pawindahs. Except among the Tajiks and Hazaras, the Pushtu language is generally spoken. The Hazaras are *Shiaks*, but the rest of the inhabitants are *Sunnis*.

With regard to the climate, rain usually falls in March and April, and is generally preceded by a north wind. The chief characteristics of the climate are the severe cold of winter and the mildness of the summer heat. The Ghazni winter, which commences in November and ends in March, is more severe than the Kabul one, and there is always a great deal of snow. During the months of May and June there is often a strong wind from the Wardak direction, which brings with it violent and disagreeable storms of dust, and is destructive of the fruit. Fevers prevail in the autumn. The chief products of the spring crops are wheat, barley, and *gram*, and of the autumn crops rice and Indian-corn. Vegetables are grown round Ghazni and the larger villages, and considerable quantities of fruit are also raised. Wheat and barley are exported from Ghazni to Kabul, and supplies for a large force are obtainable in the neighbourhood of Ghazni itself.

The civil administration of the district is in the hands of a Governor or *Hakim* appointed from Kabul. His head-quarters are at Ghazni. There are also *Hakims* in the Wardak, Ali Khel, and Taraki divisions of the district, who are under the orders of the Ghazni *Hakim*.

The only place in the district which can be called a town is Ghazni itself. This is situated on the left bank of the Ghazni river, and is in shape an irregular square. It is surrounded by a high wall (about 30 feet high) built on the top of a mound, in part natural and in part artificial. This wall is flanked at irregular intervals by towers. The total circuit, exclusive of the wall of the citadel, is 2,175 yards. The citadel is perched on the top of a knoll on the north side of the city. It is 150 feet above the plain and commands the city entirely, but both the town and citadel are commanded by the hills to the north-east. In 1890 the city was described as "merely an assemblage of wretched houses, with nothing deserving the name of street". A ruined citadel, broken and useless parapets, cracked and tumbled-down towers, crumbling curtain walls, and a silted up ditch are all that remain of the once famous stronghold of Ghazni."

Owing to its being commanded within range from the north-west, Ghazni would never be able to resist the attack of a modern European army; yet its position is of strategical importance, whether considered as part of a line of defence against an enemy advancing from the west, or as a position giving an invader from the east a dominance over all the country of Afghanistan. As stated above, it is connected by roads practicable for all arms with Kabul and with Kandahar *via* Kalat-i-Ghilzai. It is also connected with India by roads from Bannu *via* the Tochi and from Dera Ismail Khan *via* the Gumal. These roads are practicable for everything except wheeled traffic.

LOGAR.

The Logar district consists of the valley of the Logar river, and may be roughly described as extending from Amir Kala on the south to Safed Saug on the north. For convenience sake, it may be divided into three portions:—

- (i) Upper Logar, extending from Amir Kala to the other side of the pass lying between Mir Saidan and Hissarak, called Tangi Hissarak. This is by far the most populous and prosperous part of the valley, containing as it does the very large and flourishing groups of villages known respectively as Baraki-Rajan, Baraki-Barak, Padkao Roghani, and Padkao Shahana, under one of which names almost all the villages enclosed within the great area of cultivated and irrigated land is grouped for revenue purposes, and it is this portion of the valley that may be looked upon as constituting the real granary of Kabul.

- (ii) Middle Logar, extending from Tangi Hisarak, inclusive of the Tangi Waga Jan. This portion of the district is more sparsely populated and cultivated. The villages and cultivation lie almost exclusively along the banks of the river, and the irrigation canals are much fewer and less extensive than in Upper Logar. The principal groups of villages are Hisarak, Kulangar, and Dadu Khel.
- (iii) Northern Logar comprising the valley from the Tangi Waga Jan to the Safed Sang pass at the entrance of the Chaharasia sub-district of Kabul. This portion of the valley is thickly cultivated on both sides of the river, but it is quite barren at a short distance from the bed of the stream. Its principal villages are Deh-i-Nao, Muhammad Aga, Gumran, Saidabad, Kuti, Khel and Zargan Shahar, the last named being situated four miles from the right bank of the river, and entirely dependent for its water-supply on the *karez*s that have been dug from the district of Surkhao to the east.

On every side Logar is completely shut in by high, barren hills, with passes leading into Zurmat, Kharwar, Wardak, and Maidan. Two excellent bridle roads traverse the valley on both sides of the river, which latter is fordable at almost all points owing to the quantity of water that is diverted into the irrigation canals.

One of the roads from Ghazni to Kabul traverses the whole length of the valley, and in 1850 was made practicable for wheeled artillery. The Kuram route to Kabul also runs through the Logar district from Kushi as far as Safed Sang.

The three principal outlying districts of Logar are Surkhao, seven miles to the east of Zargan Shahar; Kushi, an exceedingly prosperous Tajik district, situated near the entrance of the Shutargardan pass; and Cherkh, on the extreme south of the district. This last is a most fertile little valley, forming a *cul-de-sac*. It is well wooded, with an abundant supply of water, and is inhabited entirely by Tajiks, who have a well-to-do and prosperous appearance.

With the exception of these three districts, the cultivation in Logar is continuous, and the villages are closely situated one to another. During the ripening of the harvest, Upper Logar presents to the eye an immense unbroken surface of waving corn. Where the cultivation ceases, the desert commences on either side of the river, and continues right up to the hills.

The spring crops consist of wheat and barley, and the autumn crops are rice and Indian-corn.

The supplies obtainable in Logar, according to Major Euan Smith, are "to all intents and purposes practically inexhaustible, and an army could be maintained there for a very long period, and find no difficulty whatever in supplying itself with all the necessaries of life both for man and beast. The yearly crop of grain and of cereals of various kinds is immense, and the grazing for camels is illimitable, and the supply of green forage and *bhusa* is ample for the supply of a very large force. The water of the Logar river is excellent."

This is probably a somewhat exaggerated view of the resources of the Logar district, but there is no doubt that large quantities of supplies can be obtained there.

In an ordinary winter snow does not lie on the ground for more than ten days; should it remain for three weeks, the season is called extremely severe. At such times the scarcity of fodder for cattle is great. Fever is common in the autumn, but on the whole the valley may be said to be healthy.

The inhabitants of the Logar district are Ghilzais and Farsiwans, the latter including Tajiks, Hazaras, and Kizilbashes. The Ghilzais are the most powerful community. There are also about 150 Hindu families in Logar.

MAIDAN.

The district of Maidan consists of the upper part of the valley of the Kabul river, and extends to within about 20 miles of Kabul city.

It is bounded on the south by the Wardak valley belonging to the Ghazni district, on the west and south-west by the Hazara country, on the north by Ghorband, and on the east by the Kabul district. Maidan is well irrigated and richly cultivated, and it is studded with numerous forts and villages. Large quantities of supplies for man and beast are procurable from Maidan in excess of the requirements of the population, and camel forage is plentiful. The inhabitants are chiefly Umar Khel Ghilzais.

To the south of the Maidan valley proper is a small branch valley known as Nirkh. This contains a good many villages, and is highly cultivated. It is entered from the west, and is surrounded by hills on its other sides. It was visited by our troops in 1879, and some of its villages were destroyed.

The road from Kabul to Bamian by the Unai pass traverses Maidan from east to west, crossing the Kotal-i-Safed Khak, which separates Maidan from the Kabul district.

This road is practicable for all arms, but would require some work on it before it was fit for wheeled traffic. Another important route, that from Ghazni to Kabul, also passes through Maidan from south to north. It was traversed in 1880 by heavy artillery.

From the southernmost point of the bend of the Kabul river there is a gorge running up into the hills on the east of the valley, and up this is a track to Kabul, which was the route used by Brigadier-General Baker's brigade in December 1879.

KABUL.

The homo district of Kabul, *i.e.*, the land immediately around the capital, is very fertile and populous. Its principal sub-divisions are Chardeh, Paghman, Butkhak, Chaharasia, and Chahil Dukhtaran, and within these limits are numerous townships and villages. The district is watered by the Kabul and Logar rivers and by several streams from the west, which unite and fall into the Kabul at Guzargah. Irrigation by means of *karezes* is extensively practised, and the natural streams are thereby much reduced in volume. Wheat is the chief product, and after it barley. Corn is imported from the Ghazni and Logar districts; rice from Logar, Jalalabad, Laghman, and Kunar. From Turkistan and Herat come cattle and sheep, whilst horses and ponies are imported from the former as well as bred in the district itself. For carriage, bullocks are used chiefly in the valley about Kabul; traders to the north use camels; to the east and south camels, mules, and ponies; and to the Hazara country mules and ponies.

With regard to the sub-divisions of the Kabul district and the city itself, a very brief description is all that is required.

Chardeh.—The Chardeh valley lies to the west of the city. It is as nearly as possible six miles square, and is very fertile. It is watered by the Kabul river and its tributaries, and also by numerous *karezes*. The Chardeh villages and forts number more than sixty, and are inhabited principally by Tajiks and Kizilbashcs.

Paghman.—The villages of this sub-division are located to the west of the Chardeh valley in the glens running down from the Paghman range, and the cultivation is carried on by means of the small streams running through these glens.

Butkhak.—This sub-division lies to the east of Kabul. Its largest village, known as Butkhak, is $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Kabul, and is occupied by Ghilzais, Tajiks, and a few Khugianis. It contains 400 or 500 houses. It is an important place

owing to its position at the junction of the roads *vid* the Khurd Kabul and Lataband passes. The country towards Kabul is level with a good deal of cultivation, but much cut up by watercourses.

Chaharasia.—This sub-division consists of a group of hamlets lying about 10 miles to the south of the city. It consists of a small plain enclosed by hills on all sides, except the south-west. The Logar river cuts through the eastern range, and makes its exit through a gorge at the north-east corner of the plain. The main route to Kabul runs through this gorge. Other roads lead over the hills into the Chardeh valley. The inhabitants of Chaharasia are chiefly Tajiks, but there are also Ghilzais, Barakzais and Kizilbashs to be found here.

Chahil Dukhteran.—This sub-division includes the country in the neighbourhood of the large village of that name about two miles south of Chaharasia. Its inhabitants are Barakzais, Tajiks, and Ghilzais.

Kabul.—With regard to Kabul itself, a little more detailed description will be necessary. It is the capital of Afghanistan, and is situated on the right bank of the Kabul river, six miles above its junction with the Logar. North of the city, on the left bank of the river, is Deh-i-Afghan and other suburbs, beyond which is the military cantonment of Sherpur, about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from Deh-i-Afghan, backed by the Bemaru hill. South of the city are the Sher Darwaza heights, whilst to the east is the Bala Hissar and the Siah Sang range. On the west the Kabul river flows through the gorge formed by the Asmai and Sher Darwaza hills. The city is $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles in circumference, and is no longer walled. The population (including that of the suburbs) is about 140,000. Of this number over 103,000 are classed as Kabulis. These closely resemble Tajiks, and away from Kabul they call themselves such, and are apparently tolerated by the latter as inferior kinsmen. After the Kabulis come the Tajiks proper, who number 12,000. The other inhabitants in order of numerical strength are Kizilbashs, Hindus, Sais, Duranis, Kashmiris, Parachas, Ghilzais, Armenians, and Jews, the last only numbering about 50.

The climate of Kabul may be pronounced a healthy one. The height of the city above sea level is 5,760 feet. The low-lying marshy land in its vicinity gives rise to malaria, and consequently to fevers; but with proper drainage and good shelter from the rigours of winter and the midsummer sun, the place should be well suited to European constitutions. Both British and native troops at Kabul in the winter of 1879-80 suffered a good deal from pneumonia, but this was due to the exposure to cold they had to undergo. The city itself, wedged in as it is between two hills, its confined streets, want of proper drainage, and proximity to extensive marshes, seems to labour under strong disadvantages, but in compensation it has the benefits of a fine atmosphere, excellent water and provisions, with delightful environs. The water-supply is derived from wells, and also from an excellent canal (amongst several others) which is brought from the Paghman hills, and joins the Kabul river near the Chandaol quarter of the city. There are five bridges across the river at Kabul, of which four were in 1880 fit for the passage of guns.

For further details, the article on "Kabul" in the "Gazetteer of Afghanistan" may be referred to.

KOH DAMAN.

The district of Koh Daman is about 30 miles in length, and varies from 4 to 5 in breadth. It extends along the foot of the Paghman range of mountains, which forms its western boundary. Its southern limit is a low ridge jutting out nearly at right angles from the Paghman range, and separating the Koh Daman from the Chardeh and Paghman valleys. On the east it is bounded by low hills, along the foot of which runs a stream, which eventually becomes the Shakar Darra river, and receives the whole drainage of the valley.

To the north Koh Daman merges into Kohistan somewhere in the vicinity of Charikar. The Koh Daman may be considered the garden of Kabul, the greater part of the cultivated land being taken up by orchards and vineyards.

There are two fairly well defined belts of cultivation, one extending along the foot of the Paghman hills, where the mouth of each valley is occupied by a large village or town surrounded by extensive and well watered gardens; the other, where cornfields alternate with vineyards, stretching along the centre of the main valley on the left bank of the Shakar Darra stream. The villages in this tract are more scattered, and none of them are of such size and importance as those on the higher slopes.

Along the skirt of the hills the most important towns are Ghaza, Shaker Darra, Bezati, Koh Darra (including Bedak and D-h-i-Nao), Farza, Istalif, and Istarghij. Istalif is the largest place in the district, and is said to contain 1,200 houses. In the lower valley lie Karez Mir, Baba Kush Kar, Haji Kaik, Karinda, Kala Khan, Ak Sarai, and many smaller villages. The majority of the villages have towers for defence and loopholed walls. Between the two cultivated strips lies a considerable expanse of gently sloping open and stony ground, intersected by ravines, and it is across this that the main road to Charikar lies, thus enabling a force to advance on a tolerably wide front instead of threading the narrow and tortuous paths which lead through the strongly enclosed vineyards and gardens.

The Koh Daman can be entered from Kabul by several passes. The main road is by the Khirskhana Kotal passing to the west of the Wazirabad lake. The road over this *kotal* is a made one, the gradients are easy, and it is passable for guns. Through the district itself there may be said to be only one main road. This leads through Kala Murad Beg and Haji Kaik, and then skirts the western side of the vineyards of Baba Kush Kar. This road is usually in fair order and practicable for all arms and baggage animals, with the exception of wheeled artillery; but as it crosses numerous naals and watercourses, obstructions could easily be made at such places. Timber is, however, plentiful, and bridges could be rapidly constructed. The district is well watered by streams and *karezes*.

The district is chiefly famous for its grapes and other fruits, but wheat and barley are also grown, especially in the northern part of the district. Lucerne and clover are procurable in moderate quantities, but, in the event of a prolonged occupation of the valley, forage would be a difficulty.

The population of the Koh Daman is composed chiefly of Tajiks. There are two villages occupied by Afghans, and there is one which is entirely Hindu.

KOHISTAN.

The Kohistan district is situated to the north of Kabul, and consists of the valleys of Tagao, Nijrao, Panjshir, and Charikar, with the minor valleys which open into them. It is not known if Ghorband forms part of the Kohistan district. It has here been treated as a separate district.

The *coup d'œil* presented by Kohistan when viewed from the plain of Bagram is most magnificent; the winding courses of the rivers, the picturesque appearance of the gardens and forts, the verdure of the pastures, the bold and varied aspect of the environing hills crowned by the snowy summits of the Hindu Kush form a landscape which can scarcely be conceived but by those who have witnessed it.

Kohistan is only cultivated in the neighbourhood of its streams, but this bears but a small proportion to the mountains, which are high, steep, and covered with firs. The cultivated parts yield wheat and some other grains, but not enough for the inhabitants, and grain is imported from the Koh Daman.

The following is a brief description of the different sub-divisions of Kohistan:—

Tagao.—This is a valley lying to the west of the Laghman district, and between Laghman and Nijrao. The Tagao stream rises in the mountains bordering Kafirstan, and joins the Kabul river somewhere to the north-east of Lataband. Very little, however, is known of the geography of this region,

which has not been visited by any European, and the map is therefore not to be depended on. The valley runs north and south, and its lower end is inhabited by Ghilzais; the upper portion by Sais.

The latter are said to have 8,000 houses. The people are chiefly agricultural, and the valley is tolerably productive.

Nijrao.—This is a valley between Tajao and Panjshir but, as in the case of the former, but little is known of it, and it has never been mapped. The stream draining the valley falls into the Panjshir river. Nijrao is almost entirely inhabited by Tajiks, the lower villages only being owned by Afghans. It is said to be populous and to be well watered and highly productive. Grain is exported to other parts of Kohistan and to Kch Damau from Nijrao.

Panjshir.—This valley is drained by the river of that name which rises in the Hindu Kush near the Khawak pass (11,640 feet), and which, after being joined by the Ghorband, Shakar Darra, and other streams, eventually falls into the Kabul river. The upper part of the valley from its head to the Darband pass, which divides Panjshir from Charikar, was traversed by a party attached to the Afghan Boundary Commission, and this part of the valley, some 80 miles in length, has been fully described in the Afghan Boundary Commission routes. The remainder of the Panjshir valley to its junction with the Kabul river has not been visited.

The upper part of the valley is described as a glen varying in width from 200 yards to $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles. There are numerous villages and a good deal of cultivation, and dense orchards surround almost every village. These orchards form an obstacle to the passage of baggage animals. A road runs up the valley to the Khawak pass. This is not fit for laden camels in its present state, but mules can use it. The inhabitants of Panjshir are Tajiks.

Charikar.—This sub-division of Kohistan consists of the town of Charikar and its neighbourhood. The Governor of Kohistan resides here. The town (5,200 feet) was said to contain 3,000 houses in 1882. Its inhabitants are Tajiks, Uzbaks, Kizilbashes, Hazaras, and Hindus. The latter are Sikhs, numbering 150 families, all traders and shop-keepers. The position of Charikar is strategically of great importance, as the roads over the Hindu Kush proper unite in its neighbourhood. In the first Afghan war troops were stationed at Charikar. Major Eldred Pottinger, who was Political Agent there at the time, says:—"The valley of Charikar offers every advantage for the cantonment of troops; it abounds in supplies of all kinds; labour is cheap, the forage for horses and camels excellent, and the climate is milder than that of Kabul."

GHORBAND.

This district comprises the valley drained by the Ghorband river lying between the Hindu Kush on the north and the Koh-i-Baba and the Paghman ranges on the south. At the head of the Ghorband valley the Hindu Kush and Koh-i-Baba overlap, as explained in Part II.

The district extends from Do-Ao, one day's march east of the Shibar pass, to Tutam Darra, about six miles north of Charikar.

The *hakim* of Ghorband resides at Siah Gird. Here the valley is 5 or 6 miles wide, and a broad gravelly *dasht* on the right bank would afford camping space for a very large force, say an army corps. Supplies in considerable quantities are procurable from the many villages in the valley, and firewood and water are abundant. The elevation of Siah Gird is 6,277 feet, and the population consists of about 200 families, chiefly Tajiks. The upper part of the Ghorband valley is inhabited by Sheikh Ali Hazaras, who are said to number 5,000 families, and the river above Siah Gird is called the Sheikh Ali stream. The Saida Darra is occupied by Afghans who number about 2,000 families. The rest of the inhabitants of Ghorband are for the most part Tajiks and Shinwaris. These last inhabit some of the ravines between the upper part of the valley

and the Pazlman mountains. They number some 500 families, and are the principal owners of sheep. They also own about 1,000 camels, the only ones to be found in Ghorband. There is grazing for about 10,000 camels near Fringal.

In the lower villages wheat, barley, and Indian-corn are cultivated. There is only one crop a year. Fruit is plentiful. In the lower valleys both of the Pazlman and Hindu Kush ranges firewood is obtainable in large quantities. The total population of Ghorband may be put down at 46,000. There are numerous passes leading over the Hindu Kush to the north. The most important of these is the Chahardar, over which the Amir has made a road intended to be practicable for wheeled artillery. The subject of these passes will be referred to again in Chapter III. The road up the valley leading over the easy Shibar pass into Bamian is also said to be fit for wheeled artillery.

BAMIAN.

A portion of the district of Bamian has already been described in Part II, but, as the district forms part of the province of Kabul, it is necessary to repeat the description here. Bamian is the only part of the Kabul province north of the great range of the Koh-i-Baba and Hindu Kush. It comprises (i) the valley of Bamian and its different glens all draining to the Surkhab (Kuuduz river); (ii) the considerable district of Yak Walang, which is to the west of Bamian, and is drained by the head-waters of the Rud-i-Band-i-Amir, the ancient Balkhab; and (iii) the north-western Hazarajat districts, commonly called the Dai Zangi country.

The climate of the whole district is severe in winter, the elevation being nowhere less than 8,000 feet, and rising in the highest inhabited parts to 11,500 feet.

Bamian.—Bamian proper is a long deep valley immediately at the foot of the northern spurs of the main range, with all the glens and ravines running into it. The stream which runs through it is shallow in the autumn and only a few yards wide. Its western boundary is the watershed between the Bamian stream and the sources of the Rud-i-Band-i-Amir. Looking east from this watershed, Colonel Maitland describes the general aspect of the Bamian district as bleak and barren.

The population is four-fifths Hazara, very little beyond the actual narrow valley being held by the Tajiks and *Saiads*, who constitute the remainder of the inhabitants. Forts or high walled villages are scattered up and down the valley. The total number of families is said to be 4,310.

There is a good deal of cultivation in the valleys and glens of Bamian, but no large amount of supplies is procurable. Wheat and barley are grown. In the more elevated tracts there is no wheat, and the people eat barley bread. With regard to supplies, 500 maunds of *ata* and 2,000 maunds of barley might perhaps be collected extra to the amount required for the wants of the inhabitants. A depôt at Bamian might, however, be stocked from Darra Yusuf. Sheep are abundant, and *ghi* is procurable from Besud. The pack animals of the district are *yabus* and bullocks. There are no camels. Camel forage at any time of the year would probably be scarce. The *Hakim* of the district lives in a small fort about the middle of the valley known as Kala Sarkari, to the south of which is a plateau which would form an excellent camping-ground for troops. It is watered by a *karez*, and lucerne is here cultivated.

The present Amir has greatly improved the roads to Bamian from Kabul, and the chief importance of the district lies in the fact that the main road from Kabul to Afghan-Turkistan passes through it. This road runs *via* Arghandi, Gardan Diwal, Kharzar, and the Hajigak pass to Zohak in Bamian. Here it is joined by the routes from Kabul *via* the Irak and Shibar. Over this last runs the Amir's made road through Ghorband above-mentioned; this is open all the year round, the height of the Shibar being only 9,800 feet, whereas the Hajigak

and Irak are between 12,000 and 13,000 feet, and are closed for at least three months in the winter. From what has been stated above it will be seen that all the roads from the three principal passes over the Koh-i-Baba to Kabul unite near Zohak, and the strategic importance of the position fully accounts for the ancient prestige of that ruined fortress. The main route from Kabul to Turkistan after leaving Bamian runs through Saighan and Kamard, and thence over the Kara Kotal to Haibak and Tashkurgan. The Amir has, however, made a road *viâ* the Surkh-ab valley to Ghorî, and thence to Haibak; and this is intended to be used as a winter road in conjunction with the Shibar, and, though very long, will be passable all the year round.

The importance of Bamian is therefore due to its position. A force located there would cover the Koh-i-Baba group of passes, and would command the main route from Turkistan to Kabul.

Yak Walang.—The sub-district of Yak Walang lies to the west of Bamian proper, and is drained by the head-waters of the Rud-i-Band-i-Amir. On the north Yak Walang is bounded by the Darra Yusuf and Balkh-ab districts of Afghan-Turkistan, on the west by the Dai Zangi country, and on the south by the Koh-i-Baba range, the height of which here is about 13,000 feet. It covers a large area of about 2,800 square miles, a part of which, however, is barren and uninhabited, except by people grazing their flocks in summer.

The inhabitants of Yak Walang are all Hazaras and Hazara *Saiyids*, and number 3,000 families. The district grows a considerable amount of wheat and barley in its fertile glens, and also a little fruit. The people have a good many small horses and ponies and also cattle. Sheep are not numerous. It is estimated by Colonel Maitland that, if necessary, 2,000 maunds of wheat and 6,000 maunds of barley could be collected in this district. *Ghi* in proportion to *ata* might be forthcoming, and deficiencies could be made up from Besud, where it is produced in large quantities. Grass is abundant in Yak Walang, and baggage animals would find grazing in most parts of the district in spring and summer. The source of the Rud-i-Band-i-Amir is in the curious series of lakes called Band-i-Amir on the northern side of the Koh-i-Baba. From these lakes to Sulij the deep valley of the river, though generally speaking more than 8,000 feet above the sea, is fairly populated and tolerably fertile. It then enters a series of gorges bounded by enormous cliffs, while the river becomes deep, swift, and unfordable. The road down the valley is quite impracticable for baggage animals. The only importance, therefore, of the Yak Walang district is that it is traversed by two roads, one of which runs from east to west from Bamian to Daolatyar *viâ* the Bakkak (11,560 feet) and Sar-i-Kejak (11,690 feet) passes, and meets the main road from Kabul to Herat at Kala Safarak. This route is easy, with the exception of the north side of the Bakkak Kotal, which is long and steep. The other road runs from south to north, and, starting from Ghazni, traverses Besud and crosses the Koh-i-Baba by a lofty pass (the Zard Sang) to Band-i-Amir. Thence it runs *viâ* Darra Yusuf to Tashkurgan. Practically June to September is the only season during which use could be made of these routes by troops.

Dai Zangi.—The Dai Zangi country is extensive, and was till lately practically independent. It has been brought into good order by the present Amir by the simple expedient of driving a road through it, and using it for the passage of troops between Kabul and Herat.

It is really part of the Hazarajat, but it pays revenue to Bamian, and is considered part of that district. It lies to the south of the Koh-i-Baba, and is bounded on the west by the Daolatyar district of the Herat province, on the south by the Hazarajat, and on the east by Besud. The western part of the district is drained by the Lal and Sar-i-Jangal streams, which unite west of Daolatyar, and become the Hari Rud. The eastern part of the district is very hilly, and consists of deep glens and valleys draining to the Helmand. The population is estimated at 11,000 families, of which 10,000 are Dai Zangi Hazaras, the remaining 1,000 being Dai Kundis.

The Dai Zangi country produces grain, chiefly barley (the country being mostly too cold for wheat), pulse of various kinds, *ghi*, and wool. Sheep are very numerous, and there is good grazing for them, also for *yabus*, all over the district. Cattle are very plentiful. There are a certain number of small horses in the country. They are active, hardy little animals, which would do well for mounted infantry.

The main road from Kabul to Herat *via* Daolatyar passes through the district from end to end. This is a made, or rather it may be called an improved, road. In 1885 it was 12 feet wide in some places; in others only 6 feet or less. The few rocky places where blasting would be required were untouched. The gradients were often too steep, and, what was worse, the clayey soil of the hills holding much water rendered the track impracticable for baggage animals till long after the melting of the snow had nominally opened the passes. In dry weather again the road was liable to be cut up if subjected to heavy traffic. The road is said since 1885 to have been made 18 feet wide throughout, but this is doubtful. In summer and autumn, that is, from June to October inclusive, it is the regular postal route between Kabul and Herat.

It is also much used for the movement of small bodies of troops moving in relief, and the people of the districts through which it passes are accustomed to collect supplies for Afghan troops. The Dai Zangi country it is estimated could produce, if proper notices were given, about 1,000 maunds of *ata* and 3,700 maunds of barley, besides mutton and *ghi* in abundance.

The country, like the Hazarajat in general, is very treeless. The only things that can be called trees throughout the greater part of it are small willows by the side of the streams. In most parts of the district fuel is scarce.

BESUD.

The district of Besud is the most easterly portion of the Hazarajat, but it is a regular district of the Kabul province.

It comprises all the upper basin of the Helmand, and north of Gardan Dival it includes Khash, which drains to Ghorband. On the north the Koh-i-Baba divides Besud from Bamian, on the east the watershed between the Helmand and Kabul rivers forms the boundary, on the south it is not possible to define its limits, as the country is practically unknown, but Besud is supposed to include the Khawat valley; lastly, on the west the district is bounded by the Dai Zangi country. The length of the district from east to west is therefore about 60 miles, and its width from north to south is somewhat less than 50 miles. Its elevation must be fully 10,000 feet. On the road from Ghazni to the Zard Sang pass, which crosses the district from south-east to north-west, only one of the camping-grounds is under that height, whilst the lowest spot on the road, the crossing of the Helmand, is 8,700 feet. The whole district is hilly like the Hazarajat in general, but it can hardly be called mountainous, that is to say, the hills do not rise to any great height above the valleys; neither are they rocky nor very steep. Besud is considered the most fertile district in the Hazarajat. A great deal of wheat and barley is grown, but the population is so large for the size and nature of the country that there can be little surplus. Indian-corn and pulses of sorts are also cultivated. Bullocks are used for ploughing and as pack animals. Donkeys are common, but there are not many horses, and no camels in Besud. The people own a large number of sheep and also goats. The *ghi* is said to be the best in Afghanistan. Grass appears to be abundant, but the district is almost totally destitute of trees, and firewood is frequently difficult to procure.

The climate of Besud is very severe in winter, and owing to the snow the whole district may be considered impassable for troops from December till April inclusive in an average year. The harvest is late, not till the end of September or beginning of October, and there is only one crop a year.

The population of the Besud district are all Hazaras of the Besud section, who number some 15,000 families, or not less than 50,000 souls. The nominal head-quarters of the Afghan *Naib*, who is in charge of the district, is at Gardan Diwal, but he sometimes lives in Kabul, only making a tour in the summer to collect the revenue.

Besud is traversed by several important roads. There is first the main route from Kabul to Afghan-Turkistan *viâ* Bamian, which crosses the eastern part of the district, entering by the Unai and leaving by the Hajigak pass. Next there is the road from Kabul to Herat *viâ* Daolatyar, which branches off from the Bamian road shortly after the latter enters Besud. Finally, there is the route already mentioned from Ghazni to Band-i-Amir, and thence by Darra Yusuf to Mazar-i-Sharif. This crosses the western part of the district, entering by the Karnala Kotal, and leaving by the Zard Sang pass (about 13,300 feet) over the Koh-i-Baba. The first two are made roads, and may be considered practicable, though with difficulty, for wheeled artillery. All these routes are completely closed in winter.

HAZARAJAT.

The country of the Hazaras is commonly known as the Hazarajat or Hazaristan. In common parlance these terms seem to be applied to the country south of the Koh-i-Baba, between the watershed of the Helmand and the Wardak country on the east and the Taimani plateau on the west. On the south it may be said to be bounded by Zamindawar, by the Kandahar districts of Tirin, and Nawa-i-Arghandab. On the south-east is the Ghazni district of the Kabul province. A large number of Hazaras contiguous to Ghazni pay revenue to the *Hakim* of that place. It is doubtful whether the country of these Hazaras is considered as being in the Hazarajat or not. The country of the Shekh Alis and the districts of Yak Walang, Bamian, &c., although inhabited by Hazaras, are not included in the Hazarajat. The country of the Dai Zangis, although a portion of Hazaristan, is part of the Bamian district, and has been described under that head. Besud in the same way, although included in the Hazarajat, is a separate district of the Kabul province, and has been described as such.

Besides the Dai Zangi country on the north and Besud on the north-east, the Hazarajat includes the following districts:—On the west the Dai Kundi country; on the south-east a considerable tract inhabited by Hazaras, who were till quite recently independent, and whom the Amir has during the past year been trying to bring into subjection. East of these again are the Ghazni Hazaras, about two-thirds of whose country may be included in the Hazarajat. Nawa-i-Arghandab, Dahla, Tirin, Derawat, Khunai, Baghran, &c., portions of which are inhabited by Hazaras, are not, however, considered to belong to the Hazarajat, but are portions of the Kandahar and Farah provinces.

The total length of the Hazarajat, as above defined, is something less than 200 miles from north-east to south-west, and its greatest breadth is 150 miles.

The whole of the Hazara country is mountainous. Its average elevation is somewhere about 10,000 feet. There are peaks in it of over 13,000 feet. Those of the Koh-i-Baba rise to upwards of 16,000 feet. But the average elevation of permanently inhabited places may be taken at about 8,000 feet.

Roughly speaking, the Hazarajat is the basin of the Upper Helmand. The general character of the country is very different from those portions of Afghanistan which are best known to us from having been occupied by our troops during the war of 1878-80.

In its physical aspect the Hazarajat may be said to hold an intermediate position between the bare rocky and forbidding hills of the tribes on our north-west frontier and the finely grassed downs which are characteristic of large portions of Badakshan, Afghan-Turkistan, and the northern part of Herat. Taken as a whole, the Hazarajat bears a certain resemblance to the highlands of Scotland. The mountains are generally covered with soil and rise in great folds, presenting a decided contrast to the sharp bare ridges of rock which prevail in those parts

of Afghanistan nearest to India. On many of the Hazara mountains there is cultivation far up the sides, nearly to their summits. The valleys of the streams and rivers are generally narrow, and the further the stream is descended, the deeper the valley, and the more frequent the gorges through which it passes. As a rule, the upper valleys and glens are shallower and more open than the lower. No doubt there are many exceptions, but in the course of a long stream its valleys may be expected to contract rather than expand as it is descended. For this reason roads do not usually follow the valleys of main streams, or, if they do, they frequently take to the hills on either side to avoid difficult defiles. In all the northern, that is to say the upper, part of the country the valleys, though frequently narrow, are not very deep, and the hills on either side are comparatively low and generally easy of access. The latter are also often well covered with grass in spring and summer.

The most difficult part of the Hazarajat is that occupied by the independent Hazaras. The Dai Kundi country is also said to be very mountainous, but no portion of either of these tracts has as yet been explored. Those parts of the Hazarajat which are best known to us, namely, the Dai Zangi country and Besud, are by no means difficult for a hill country.

The whole of the Hazarajat is very treeless. Even the juniper, which is found in most other parts of Afghanistan, appears here to be rare. The only trees seem to be small willows by the watercourses, and here and there some white poplars. The common fuel of the Hazaras is obtained from bushes and low scrub, including wormwood, which grow on the hills, and which are known by the general name of *bula* (bushes).

The fertility of the Hazarajat is considerable for so hilly a country. Although the amount of irrigated land in the valleys is not large, there is a considerable area cultivated which is unirrigated, and fields may be seen all over the hillsides; and, though seldom or never terraced, the crops are said to do well. The higher parts of the country are almost too cold for wheat, but barley is successfully cultivated in most places. An inferior kind of barley called *kaljao* is largely grown, and on this and various kinds of pulse the Hazaras greatly depend for their food supply.

Sheep are numerous in most parts of the country, and the Hazaras also possess many small horses, which have much endurance and are very clever in getting up and down their native hills. Bullocks are used for ploughing and also as pack animals. Donkeys are common, but there are no camels in the Hazarajat. The climate is very severe in winter, and the greater part of the country is impassable for several months. In the higher parts, as the Pas-i-Koh and the Dai Kundi country, snow lies on the ground for five months. After the melting of the snow in April, there is a month or six weeks of rainy weather, when the clayey soil, saturated with moisture, renders travelling very difficult and all the streams are in flood. From May or June to the end of September the climate is said to be magnificent.

The important roads in the Hazarajat are few. The main *kafila* route from Kabul to Afghan-Turkistan *via* Bamian passes through the eastern end of Besud as already mentioned. It is a good camel road. The main route from Kabul to Herat branches from the above and traverses the whole of northern Hazarajat from end to end. It has been made, or rather greatly improved, by the present Amir, and is now much used during the summer months. The opening up of this route has contributed in a notable manner to the subjugation of the country through which it passes. A road from Ghazni through Besud and over the Zard Sang pass to Band-i-Amir has already been mentioned, and appears to be much used. We know nothing of any roads from the Tirin and Derawat districts of Kandahar, or from Upper Zamindawar northwards through the Dai Kundi country. Of course some such must exist, but they are probably very difficult. The road up the Helmand to Ghizao is distinctly stated to be very bad in places.

As to supplies, it is not to be supposed that any great amount could be obtained in the Hazarajat. It is true the country is more fertile than might be expected of a mountainous region, but the population is comparatively large, and the food surplus must be small. Grass should be fairly abundant

in most places, but firewood is everywhere scanty. *Ata* or wheat is said to be very good in the Hazarajat, though the poorer classes can seldom afford to eat it. The *ghi* is also excellent. Mutton should be fairly plentiful. There is no salt, and this has to be imported.

With regard to the population of the Hazarajat, Colonel Maitland estimates it as 77,500 families, exclusive of the population of Besud and of the Dai Zangi country, which have been separately considered. This number includes 11,000 families of the Dai Kundis, 41,500 families of independent Hazaras, and 22,000 families of Ghazni Hazaras.

In character the Hazaras are simple, good-natured, and honest. They are reputed not to be very warlike, but that they can fight well in their own hills was shown last year, when they had to meet Afghan troops armed with breech-loaders, their own arms being only swords and matchlocks.

The villages of the Hazaras are small, irregularly built collections of mud huts. Each village has its tower of refuge, if not a small fort in its vicinity; and these are generally strong and neatly built. The forts of the chiefs are often well finished structures, with high walls and towers for flank defence.

The Hazaras of the Hazarajat are *Shiaks*, and are extremely attached to that form of the Muhammadan faith. They have a rooted antipathy to the Afghans, who are *Sunnis*. Their feelings are decidedly friendly towards the British, as was shown during the late war. They probably look upon us as the enemies of their foes, the Afghans. They would gladly accept British rule, as they are well aware it would mean freedom and not oppression; and as British subjects they might be reckoned on not only to support our rule, but also to resist our enemies to the best of their ability.

CHAPTER III.*

STRATEGICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

From what has gone before, it will be seen that the region to the west of the Kabul province known as the Hazarajat may be considered impracticable for military operations on a large scale. Formerly the Hazarajat was regarded as an extremely difficult region, but this view has been somewhat modified since the return of the Afghan Boundary Commission. The Amir, as already mentioned, has driven a road 18 feet wide right through from Kabul to Herat, and this road is occasionally used by troops. The gradients are, however, bad, and in its present condition the road is hardly practicable for wheeled artillery. Moreover, the distance from Kabul to Herat is 41 marches or 467 miles. Colonel Maitland considers that "it might be possible for a British Indian division, with its ordinary complement of artillery, to march from Kabul to Herat in somewhat less than three months, *provided* (1) it started at the proper season; (2) that previous arrangements had been made for the collection of supplies along the road; and (3) that no opposition was encountered. If the artillery consisted entirely of mountain batteries and the marching power of the troops could be relied on, the time might be reduced to seven weeks. It must also be noted that under the most favourable circumstances local supplies would be short in many places, and altogether wanting in some others, so that 15 to 25 days' rations for men and animals (without *bhusa*) would have to be taken from Kabul." The same reasoning applies *mutatis mutandis* to a Russian advance from Herat to Kabul; and, if the latter place were occupied by a British force, not only could the march of the division be harassed, but it could be opposed in earnest at any selected point as it neared Kabul, and a repulse there would be disastrous to the Russians, ending probably in the practical destruction of the force. (The great elevation of the road, especially where it passes through the Hazarajat, would also be a serious objection to its use for military operations, as it is closed for some months in the winter. On the whole, it would seem unlikely that this road, even at the very best time of the year, could be used by ourselves or by the Russians for an operation of any magnitude, and it may accordingly be omitted from strategical calculations.)

With regard to the Hazarajat generally, although it is not so difficult as was formerly supposed, yet in moving troops a continued series of marches over steep gradients wears out both men and animals, even when no serious obstacle is anywhere encountered. Added to this there is the difficulty in obtaining supplies in quantities sufficient for a large force; also the fact that the country has an average elevation of 10,000 feet, and is only passable for about five months in the year. Moreover, with the exception of the one above mentioned, there do not appear to be any roads through this region. For these reasons the whole of the Hazarajat may be considered impracticable for regular military operations.

North-east of Kabul lies the almost unknown country of Kafristan. The explorations of Colonel Lockhart's mission showed that the Kafristan portion of the Hindu Kush is for military purposes impassable, and it is owing to the impracticable nature of the country itself that Kafristan has been able to maintain its independence for centuries, although surrounded on all sides by fanatical Muhammadan tribes. This same impracticability would prevent it being made use of for military operations on a large scale, and it may therefore, like the Hazarajat, be omitted from strategical calculations. The same remark applies to the region extending from Kafristan to Kashmir, *provided* we have the command of Chitral, and can prevent the passage of any force by the Dorah, Baroghil, or intervening passes through Chitral to the Kunar valley.

* For the information contained in this chapter, I am chiefly indebted to reports by Colonel Maitland and Heldich.

There are thus two impassable blocks protecting the west and north-east of the Kabul province, but these are connected by a region of the very highest importance, since through it lie all the roads from Afghan-Turkistan and Badakshan to Kabul. The three most important of these roads have been mentioned in Chapter I. The first two lead to Bamian, one *viâ* the Unai and Hajigak passes, and the other *viâ* Charikar, the Ghorband valley, and the Shibar pass; the latter is longer, but it is open throughout the year. From Bamian the road to Mazar-i-Sharif goes either *viâ* Saighan, Kamard, and the Kara Kotal to Haibak and Tashkurghan, or *viâ* Saighan, Doshi, and Haibak to Tashkurghan; the latter is longer, but if taken in connection with the road from Bamian to Kabul *viâ* the Shibar is open all the year round. The third road from Kabul to Afghan-Turkistan is *viâ* Charikar and the Chahardar pass to Dahan-i-Iskar, where it meets the road above mentioned from Bamian to Doshi. The distances by these three roads are given in Part I. It may be mentioned here that they have all three been made or improved by the present Amir and are practicable for laden camels, and probably with difficulty for wheeled artillery.

Besides the above, there are other routes which for strategical purposes it is necessary to consider, but it may be premised that none of them are practicable for wheeled traffic. West of, and parallel to, the road from Bamian to Haibak *viâ* Saighan, Kamard, and the Kara Kotal is a route *viâ* Darra Yusuf to Mazar-i-Sharif. This road runs from Band-i-Amir (Kala Jafir) in Yak Walang, and is continued south over the Koh-i-Baba by the Zard Sang pass (about 13,300 feet) through Besud to Ghazni. It appears to be a very fair mule track the whole way, but it is closed for at least four months every year. The distance from Ghazni to Band-i-Amir is 11 marches or 126½ miles, and from there on to Mazar-i-Sharif is 17½ miles divided into 1½ marches. This gives a distinct road practicable for troops with mountain artillery from Ghazni direct to Mazar-i-Sharif. A large amount of supplies can often be procured in the Darra Yusuf district, and Besud is considered the most fertile portion of the Hazarajat.

The most important roads, however, are those over the Hindu Kush which unite about Charikar. These are the roads which have been used by some of the most successful of the invaders of India from Alexander the Great downwards. Timur Lang and Babar both crossed the Hindu Kush, and, coming down to later times, Aurangzib's passage of this range by the Chahardar pass is still talked of in the country. He is said to have had a numerous artillery, which was transported on camels.

The length of that portion of the great range which extends from the Shibar at the head of the Ghorband to the head of the Panjshir valley, and which may be called the Hindu Kush proper, is about 150 miles. Within this distance it is crossed by fifteen recognised roads. Certainly many of them are bad, but several may be considered practicable for infantry, cavalry, and laden mules. The best of these roads is that over the Chahardar pass, which has been mentioned above. It has been made practicable for wheeled artillery. It is the most direct road from Afghan-Turkistan to Charikar and Kabul. From Dahan-i-Iskar it runs up the Darra Iskar and crosses a long and elevated spur of the Hindu-Kush by the Ensak Kotal (10,020 feet), and then descends again to Chahardar. From Chahardar the road, which is very well made, runs gently up to the Hindu-Kush watershed, which it crosses by the Chahardar Kotal (13,400 feet), and then falls again somewhat more steeply into the Ghorband valley.

To the east of the Chahardar route is a collection of passes commonly known as the Khatjan group. It includes the Walian, the Kaoshan, and the Bajgah (or Salang), also called the Parwan. Immediately there are many other tracks across the mountains, the names of which have all been obtained and the approximate positions laid down; but these are the main routes, and the only ones that could be utilized for heavily laden transport.

The best of the Khinjan group of passes is the Kaoshan (14,340 feet). Captain the Hon'ble M. Talbot, who crossed it in 1886, says that before the construction of the Chahardar road it was considered by the local authorities as the best natural *kafilā* route from Kabul to Afghan-Turkistan, east of the old route *viā* Bamian, in spite of its altitude. Even now it is much used. It is a very fairly good road for laden camels (as Afghans use camels), with the exception of certain portions here and there, which are exceedingly bad, chiefly from obstruction of boulders. Captain Talbot considered, however, that it would be difficult to improve the road to any great extent. A large number of bridges would be necessary and an immense amount of labour in clearing, &c., and he did not consider that it was practicable to make the road passable for wheel-ed artillery.

The Walian seems to be of the same class exactly as the Kaoshan. It crosses the Hindu Kush about seven miles west of the latter at about an equal altitude. It is described as a worse pass than the Kaoshan with similar characteristics.

To the east of the Kaoshan is the Bajgah. This route runs from Anderab up the Darra-i-Bajgah to the pass of that name, and then descends to Parwan by the Darra-i-Salang, so that this pass is apt to have several names applied to it. The pass is open and is only 12,500 feet, but the gradients on the south side are very steep, there being a fall of 4,000 feet in the first five miles, which gives a gradient steeper than 1 in 7, steeper than on any of the other routes mentioned above. Near Parwan the only available roadway for laden camels is the actual bed of the stream, which would be impracticable in time of floods. One favourable feature about this pass is its low altitude compared with that of the Kaoshan. Moreover, it is a route along which supplies are obtainable from end to end.

The great advantage possessed by this group of passes—the Walian, the Kaoshan, and the Bajgah—is that they have but one *kotal* to cross. They are closed only ten days or so earlier than the Chahardar. It may be reckoned that they are certainly closed between the middle of November and the end of April to all but footmen, and they may be blocked both earlier and later.

To the east of the Khinjan group of passes is the Khawak route. This leads from Narin and Anderab to the head of the Panjshir valley. It is a low pass (11,240 feet). There is an alternative *kotal* which may be used known as Til, and this seems to be better than the Khawak, though a little higher.

We have thus the following groups of passes leading from Afghan-Turkistan to Kabul:—

(1) From Bamian to Kabul:—

- | | | |
|------------------|----------|--|
| (a) The Hajigak. | } | } Both of them high roads, but (with the Unai pass south of the Helmand) involving at least three high passes, and liable in the winter to be blocked by snow. |
| (b) The Irak. | | |

(2) Bamian to Kabul *viā* Charikar.

The Shibar, also a high road, and always open.

(3) Ghorī to Kabul *viā* Charikar.

The Chahardar, a high road crossing two passes, and liable in the winter to be blocked by snow.

(4) Khinjan to Kabul *viā* Charikar.

- | | | |
|------------------|----------|---|
| (a) The Walian. | } | } All of them crossing the Hindu-Kush at a very high altitude, but involving only one principal pass. None of them are good roads, and are liable to be blocked by snow for at least four months. |
| (b) The Kaoshan. | | |
| (c) The Bajgah. | | |

(5) Anderab to Kabul *viā* Charikar.

The Khawak, a comparatively low pass over the Hindu-Kush, generally open, but circuitous, and involving several minor passes.

Besides the above, which are all open to the passage of mountain artillery, cavalry, and infantry, there are many footpaths and tracks passable for horsemen. Colonel Holdich considers it improbable that a practicable route for a force advancing from Badakshan exists east of the Khawak pass. It will thus be seen that the reputation, which the Hindu Kush formerly possessed as a formidable barrier to an advance from Afghan-Turkistan towards Kabul, has been reduced considerably by the more recent information obtained by the officers of the Afghan Boundary Commission. The real difficulties appear to lie rather in the general scarcity of supplies and forage than in the physical character of the range.

The general character of all the passes appear to be much the same. The paths ascend narrow glens on the south side of the range to the lofty and desolate crest, with its splintered granite peaks and patches of perennial snow. The scenery here is not in the least like that of ordinary Afghan mountains, but rather resembles that of the higher Grampians. Northward, the descent is down larger and less narrow glens at an easier gradient. These glens have a very Scotch look about them, and the lower parts are fairly well wooded. Towards the mouths of the glens on both sides are masses of orchards, with strips of cultivation, and more or less scattered villages, some of them of considerable size.

The Hindu Kush, speaking generally, is passable for about seven months in the year from May to November inclusive; but on account of the difficulty of crossing the unbridged streams during the early part of the season, the roads are not considered open until about the end of June.

It must also be remembered that the Hindu Kush proper is a single range and not a mountainous region, and, although of considerable elevation, it can be crossed by any of the routes in four or five marches.

From the above it will be seen that an enemy from the north might cross the Hindu Kush in several columns near enough to have a fair chance of supporting each other, and if he once penetrated into the Koh Daman with his infantry and mountain guns, it would not take him long to bring up wheeled artillery by the Chahardar road, which would in the meantime have been improved by his sappers. Colonel Maitland points out that considering the Russian army in 1877-78 crossed the Balkans and marched for weeks in the depth of winter not only without tents, but absolutely without baggage, and had no greater protection from the weather than their great-coats, it is not to be supposed the passage of the Hindu Kush in summer would prove an impossible exploit. The only transport necessary would be that for supplies and ammunition. It would not, however, be possible for the Russians to attempt such an operation unless they had been for some time in possession of Afghan-Turkistan and had a railway at least as far as Tashkurghan. Before that it is to be hoped we should be in secure possession of the Kabul province, and that our boundary would extend at least as far north as the further foot of the Hindu Kush and the Kara Kotal beyond Kamard.*

All the roads over the Hindu Kush proper converge and meet in the neighbourhood of Charikar, so that this is a most important strategical point for concentrating the reserve of any forces or detachments observing the Hindu Kush passes. Charikar is 40 miles or 4 marches from Kabul.

"It is not likely the enemy would make use of any pass east of the Bajgab, since doing so would involve a wide dispersion of his force without any corresponding advantage. From the conformation of the country it would not be very easy to strike the advancing columns in succession before they united. They would to a great extent afford each other mutual support, and the spurs dividing the ravines or glens by which the roads descend from the crest of the mountains are accessible to infantry. In fact it is quite likely the enemy's infantry would march along the top of the spurs while the trains followed the

* See Lieutenant-Colonel Maitland's remarks about this boundary in "Afghanistan Strategically Considered," 1887.

tracks at the bottom of the glens. Still an effort to retard and separate the columns during the movement would, of course, be made, and here bodies of Kohistanis armed by ourselves, and under British leadership, might be of assistance, or levies of Kohistanis and Koh Damanis might be directed over the mountains by some of the less known roads to fall on the enemy's rear and communications. This presupposes that the country is in our own hands; otherwise the assistance of the Kohistanis would be of very doubtful value."*

The Koh Daman, as has been seen, is a very fertile and thickly populated district. Owing to the numerous orchards, vineyards, and villages surrounded by walled fields, and also to its numerous irrigation channels, the country is very close and difficult for the movement of troops. If, therefore, the attempt to prevent the junction of the enemy's columns be unsuccessful, he would have to be attacked vigorously as soon as possible after debouching from the hills; but if this also failed to stop him, then it would be necessary to fall back slowly through the Koh Daman, and take up a position in and about Kabul. This place could be converted into a strong entrenched camp for thirty or forty thousand men by constructing a circle of detached works on Siah Sang, Bemaru, Asmai, Sher Darwaza, &c. These works once completed and properly provisioned could hold out for several months, and, as Colonel Maitland points out, "it is important to remember that a siege could hardly be maintained during the winter. This is not so much on account of the severity of the climate as of the difficulty the enemy would be in with regard to his communications. The Hindu Kush must be crossed in summer. June perhaps would be the earliest month in which such an operation would be feasible, and the passes are closed again in October, or at latest about the beginning of November, so that the time available for active operations in the field is somewhat short. If the defending force had been driven within the works at Kabul by the time the passes closed, the besieging enemy could communicate with Turkistan by Ghorband and the Shibar pass; but it is a long road, and the convoys of food and ammunition necessary for supplying his troops at the front could hardly arrive with sufficient rapidity or certainty."

It is of the utmost importance that we should anticipate the Russians in occupying Bamian; otherwise they would obtain the immense strategical advantage of being able to advance either by the Hajigak or Irak passes or by the Shibar pass into Ghorband. As Major Barrow has pointed out in Part II, the Bamian position is by no means a bad one for resisting the attack of superior forces, and has this advantage, that it limits the number of men who can be brought into line of battle. This position would have to be held as long as possible, but if forced to retire from Bamian, the troops holding it might fall back and take up a position in Besud, so as to cover Ghazni as well as Kabul. If forced to evacuate this position, the troops would have to retire on Ghazni or on Kabul according to circumstances.

The present Russian activity on the Pamirs, and more especially a series of articles on Chitral which appeared in the *Karkaz* in December last, show that the Russians are fully alive to the strategical importance of Chitral, and it was only on the supposition that we had a sufficient force there to prevent the passage of Russian troops to the Kunar valley that this region was considered impracticable for troops. Should, however, Russia succeed in establishing her influence in Chitral, she will be in a position to seriously threaten our communications on the Khaibar line. We know that in 1876, when war was imminent, the Russians concentrated a small column at Osh with the intention of marching it southwards across the Pamirs, and if such a column should succeed in penetrating into Chitral, it would be capable of much mischief. There is also the bare chance of the Russians getting into Kafirstan from thence into Laghman. To be quite free from any danger of our communications being cut by a Russian advance into Chitral or Kafirstan, the adoption of the Tochi route from Bannu to Kabul has been advocated. If this route, after being properly explored, were found suitable for a line of railway, and if the present railway were extended to Bannu, it would without doubt be a much better line than that *via* the Khaibar and Jalalabad.

* "Afghanistan Strategically Considered" by Lieutenant-Colonel P. J. Maitland, 1887.

The Gumal route to Ghasni also offers a possible line for a railway, but our present information of it is so meagre that its feasibility or otherwise cannot be decided. It would, however, appear absolutely necessary to have a railway line to Kabul if we are to be in a good position to hold it against a Russian advance from the north, and the earliest opportunity should be taken advantage of to thoroughly explore both the Tochi and Gumal routes.

The above are a few of the salient points which strike one in looking at the Kabul province from a strategical point of view. It is not necessary to enter into the subject in more detail here. The strategical considerations which affect Afghanistan generally are fully dealt with in the report by Colonel Maitland referred to above.

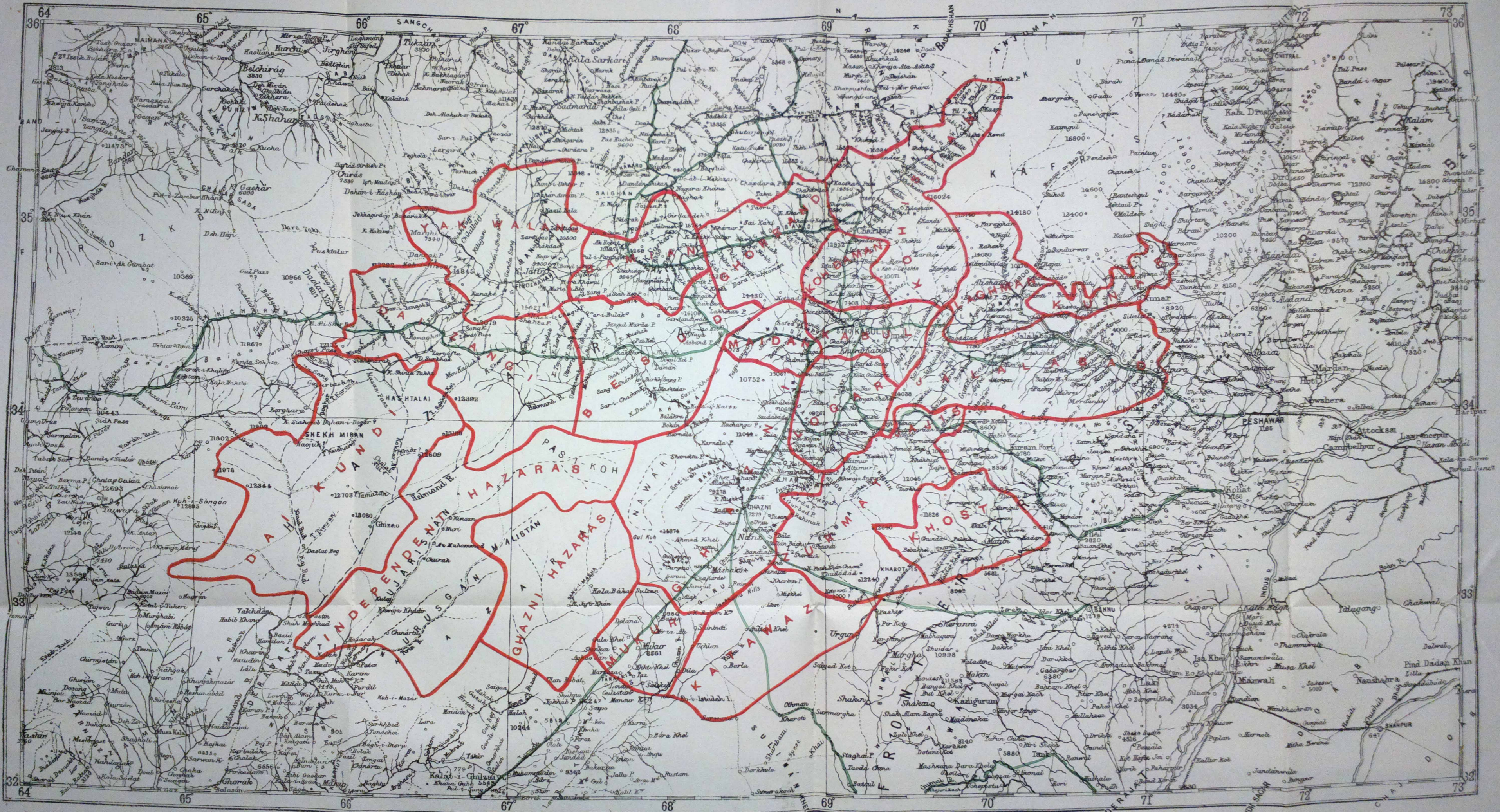
SIMLA ;
The 1st February 1893. }

A. H. M.

E. R. E.

[G. C. F.]

MAP TO ILLUSTRATE
THE MILITARY GEOGRAPHY OF AFGHANISTAN
PART IV.—KABUL PROVINCE.



Ed. C. J. A.
March 1892

Topo. Dy. No. 435.

Scale 1 inch = 24 Miles.



NOTE.—The boundaries of the province and districts of Kabul are shown in red, but they can only be considered as roughly approximate. The principal roads are shown in Green.

A. H. M.

9.5.1917

