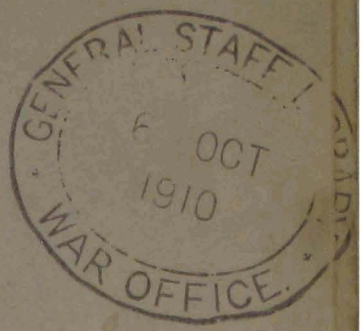

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THE RIVALRY OF RUSSIA AND ENGLAND IN CENTRAL ASIA

BY

M. GRULEF, St. PETERSBURG,

1909.

TRANSLATED FOR

GENERAL STAFF, INDIA.
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NOTE.

The author's motive, as stated in his introductory remarks, may be accepted as an honest desire to dispel the Chauvinistic views which for many years have found supporters in Russia; but, whether in his general treatment of the subject, the avowed object has been attained, must be left to the judgment of the individual reader.

Several of the facts adduced are obviously inaccurate; some of the quotations are now out of date and the authorities selected not always the highest and best, and the arguments and conclusions in some instances can scarcely be accepted without reserve.

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RECORD OF SERVICE OF THE AUTHOR.

MAJOR-GENERAL MICHAEL VLADIMIROVITCH GRULEF.

Born	20th May 1858.
Entered the service	3rd June 1878.
Present army rank	19th February 1905.

Graduated at the Staff College in the 2nd Class, 1888.

Staff Service :—

Trans-Baikal District, 1889—90.

Pri-Amur Military District, 1890—91.

Trans-Baikal District, 1891—92.

Pri-Morsk District, 1892—95.

Ferghana District, 1895—96.

Turkistan Military District, 1896—1901.

Staff, 62nd Infantry Reserve Brigade, 1901—02.

Chief of the Staff, 3rd Infantry Division, 1902—04.

Commanded 11th Infantry Regiment, 1904—06.

Present appointment :—

Member of the Military-Historical Committee at General Staff Head Quarters, dealing with the history of the Russo-Japanese War.

Campaigns :—1904—05.

Honours :—

Order of St. Stan, 3rd Class, 1892.

Order of St. Anne, 3rd Class, 1897.

Order of St. Stan, 2nd Class, 1903.

Order of St. Anne, 2nd Class, 1905.

Order of St. Vladimir, 4th Class, 1905.

Order of St. Vladimir, 3rd Class, 1905.

Golden Eagle, 1906.

Promoted Major-General for distinguished service, 1907, but to date from 19th February 1905.

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Author's Note.

The aim and object of this work is to draw attention to the dangerous delusions ingrained in the public mind regarding Russia's problems in Central Asia.

I was fated to serve for 14 years as a General Staff Officer on our distant frontiers; at first in the Far East and subsequently in Central Asia. During this period I had ample opportunity for studying Russia's military political position on the Continent of Asia. I formed the opinion that on the coastline of the Pacific there had come into existence what henceforth for us is a memorable era, which even then secreted the germs of those disastrous events which led us on to Mukden and Tsushima. Even at that time it was evident to the many who were not dazzled by unrestrained Chauvinism that an ultra-aggressive policy would lead to no good.

In 1895 I deemed it my duty to embody my views in a memorandum which I submitted to S. M. Dukhovski, then commanding the Pri-Amur Military District. Subsequently, when serving in the Turkistan Military District, I convinced myself that in Central Asia we were treading on the same dangerous ground as in the Far East. Having worked up and embodied the question in a special compilation. I solicited the permission of the General Officer Commanding—the same General Dukhovski above-mentioned—to publish it. In reply, I was ordered to give, in the first place, the result of my labours in the form of a "confidential lecture," at which only General Officers and General Staff Officers were permitted to attend.

The substance of my lecture—which is also the governing idea of this work—was a direct contradiction of the firmly established view, that Turkistan should serve as a *place d'armes* for the invasion of India. Nevertheless, my remarks not only aroused no opposition, but many of my comrades, officers of the General Staff, shook me warmly by the hand and expressed their entire concurrence in declaring their conviction of the necessity for dispelling the existing dangerous delusions. Dukhovski himself then and there stated that my conclusions and deductions concerning the subject dealt with had been fully established, but considered their publication was inopportune. This took place in 1899.

Since then, in the Far East, Fate has imposed on our country an experience, which has exceeded the worst expectations. Even General Kuropatkin, the originator of the Murghab Railway and Kushk fortress, the founder of the Termez garrison and the author of many other aggressive measures directed against England, but now grown wise by the bitter experience of the war in the Far East, expresses himself as follows in the 4th Volume of his "Report."

"Those sacrifices and dangers which we are experiencing or foresee by reason of the position we have taken up in the Far East should serve as a warning when we dream of obtaining access to the warm waters of the Indian Ocean at Chahbar. It is perfectly evident that the English are preparing to meet us there. The construction of a railway through Persia, the creation of a port at Chahbar with fortifications, with a fleet, etc., would be but a repetition of our experiences with the Eastern Chinese Railway and Port Arthur. In place of Port Arthur it will be Chahbar, and in place of a war with Japan we shall have an even more useless and terrible war with Great Britain."

It goes without saying that the English are just as jealous regarding everything affecting the security of India as in the matter of the acquisition by Russia of an exit in the Indian Ocean.

Having thus frankly declared the ruling idea on which this work is based it is necessary to point out that I have endeavoured to preserve an objective attitude and shall produce original quotations on this question from the more remarkable pronouncements of experts, both Russian and English. In this way, the reader can, at will, draw his own conclusions alongside with those contained in Chapter IX. In any case, the question dealt with, *viz.*— the everlasting rivalry of Russia and England in Central Asia calls for re-examination and re-appraisement.

A wise example has already been set by our Government; in August 1907, an Agreement was concluded with England on all Central Asian questions. It is now time to enlighten the public mind.

[CONFIDENTIAL.]

THE RIVALRY OF RUSSIA AND ENGLAND IN CENTRAL ASIA.

CHAPTER I.

A BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT OF RUSSIA AND ENGLAND ON THE CONTINENT OF ASIA.

Characteristics of the advance of Russia and England on the continent of Asia—Movement of Russia eastwards—First idea of a diversion towards India—Appearance and spread of the English in India—Birth of the rivalry of Russia and England in Central Asia and the Far East.

There is a marked difference between the forward movements of Russia and England on the Continent of Asia, a difference which lends a distinctive character to the possessions of the two Powers in these regions.

The Russian Empire, freed from the Tartar yoke and growing stronger and stronger internally, overflowed naturally and freely into the vast plains of the Old World, in some directions finding its natural boundaries and in others being temporarily checked. The growth of the Empire thus resembles a healthy tree spreading its branches in every direction. Favorable geographical conditions in conjunction, as we shall presently see, with the fundamental characteristics of the historical growth of Russia, resulted in the foundation of a vast and compact Empire whose heart is as firmly and organically connected with its most distant offshoots as are the branches and trunk of a single tree.

Quite dissimilar are the conditions under which the English dominions have grown in Asia, whither the English have followed the tracks of other nations, driven onward by that spirit of enterprise which filled the nations of Western Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries.

The first British colony in India gradually expanded under favouring conditions into a powerful State, which, as a separate Empire, is now incorporated in the possessions of the English crown.

Though, notwithstanding the brilliant success achieved by India as regards her economic and civil progress, she still remains, as it were, an extraneous body.

There is no doubt that the creation from small beginnings of this vast Indian Empire, with its population of over 300 millions, bears eloquent testimony to the wonderful enterprise of the English, their energy and activity. But the lust for gain which was the fundamental impulse that drove them to seek for wealth in India would appear to be the only bond between the English and their colony. Herein lies the great difference between Russian and English dominions in Asia. The loss of the whole of India would mean to the English but the deprivation of a very important market—the loss to Russia of the whole or a part of Siberia would mean the loss of a limb from a complete organism.

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On all her outposts of Empire Russia has come into contact, if not actually with the dominions of England, at any rate with the widely diffused spheres of influence of that country. And so, between the two Empires there have arisen on the continent of Asia two important theatres of rivalry, the Far East and Central Asia.

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The check to Russia's advance in Asia is scarcely edifying for us, owing to the insignificance of the actual facts. The fatal drag on the historical development of our country has always been the same; formerly it was "What will Kuchum, Prince of Tartary say?" in latter years it has been "What will Europe, what will England say?" Russia has often approached the realisation of her most sacred desires; after traversing waterless steppes, crossing mighty mountains and overthrowing numerically superior foes, all her hopes and triumphs have been shattered by outside cunning devices. It is only necessary to call to mind the late demarcations and events in Central Asia.

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Almost simultaneously with the Russian advance across Siberia to the Pacific, expeditions were made in another direction, *viz.*, towards Central Asia. The Cossacks formed, as it were, the tentacles which the Russian Government stretched out, and at the commencement of the XVII century they had already made raids

towards Khiva, as is seen from the writings of the Khivan historian, Abdul Ghazi Khan.

Commencing from the time of Peter the Great, the Russian movement in Central Asia trended in two directions, along the Amu-Darya and along the Irtish. These lines of advance were forced on Russia by the necessity of safeguarding her dominions from the raidings of the semi-barbarous nomads of the Central Asian steppes. Accordingly, Peter the Great commissioned Prince Bekovich in 1714 to explore the water routes from the Caspian towards India. This was sufficient to arouse in the imagination of the English and of our other well-wishers in Western Europe a regular panic in after years regarding the orders left by Peter the Great for the conquest of India, precisely as in Western Europe there is a firmly implanted belief concerning the other bequest of Peter the Great, touching the seizure of Constantinople.

Meanwhile, a glance at a map of Asia is sufficiently convincing that under no considerations could Russia remain in the advanced positions taken up. Having occupied and organised two defensive lines, Orenburg and Siberia, we left wide gaps through which the Kirghiz, Turkomans and Khivans raided at will. Nevertheless our advanced posts remained unaltered for over a century, following a decision not to bury ourselves in the depths of Asia. But in the second half of last century, having completed, by the inclusion of the Amur region and the extensive Pacific coast-line, the organisation of the Empire's outskirts, and having made a long halt on the Orenburg and Siberian lines, we moved on into the depths of Asia. This second and final advance, apart from the necessity for establishing a settled frontier line, concealed the artificial idea of the need of a diversion towards India. The necessity for this actually arose in the time of the Emperor Paul I, but was only accepted as a matter of State policy after the Crimean war of 1854-56. The forward movement commenced in 1864 with the conquest of Tokmak, Merke, Turkistan and other towns comprising the Novo-Kokand line. It continued uninterruptedly and was completed by the demarcations of 1888 and 1895, both of which brought us into contact with Afghan territory, where was secreted the influence of England, our rival from time immemorial. We have thus reached the Achilles' heel of our perpetual enemy, which Napoleon and Paul I so vainly sought.

Thus, Russia's advance on the continent of Asia in the first instance resembles a huge wave carried by an irresistible current

to the Pacific. On striking the northern extremity of the Pacific coastline it turned southwards from Anadyr promontory to Kamchatka, from Kamchatka to Okhotsk, from Okhotsk to Nicolaief, from Nicolaief to Vladivostok and thence to Port Arthur. Whilst in Central Asia, as we have seen, Russia on a broad front has come into contact with Afghanistan, at whose back stands England, our immediate rival. At the same time both Empires have also met in another portion of Central Asia, *viz.* Persia, which on two sides is bordered by Russian territory and on the third by Indo-British possessions.

The appearance and spread of the English in India.

England's first attraction in Asia was India, where in 1615 the East India Company established their first factory at Surat, at the mouth of the Tapti river.

Until the appearance of the English all Indo-European trade had been carried on through the medium of the Dutch, who, however, had not settled in India proper but had their factories on the islands of the Molucca and Sunda Archipelagos.

English competition led to collisions, resulting in the massacre of the English on the island of Aboyne in 1623. The English then turned their attention to India where other European competitors were not expected. In this they were mistaken, as the Portuguese justly claimed prior rights in the exploitation of India, they having opened the first sea route in 1498. A collision between the English and Portuguese was decided by a naval engagement off Surat, in which the former were victorious and from which they emerged sole masters of Hindustan.

Events in India itself contributed largely to the spread of English influence. The people had long been accustomed to a frequent change of foreign conquerors, enticed to their land by its reputed wealth and tropical nature. The weak and vacillating rulers of minor States, engaged in endless quarrels amongst themselves, eagerly turned for help to any foreigner. These were the circumstances under which the first English factory was established at Surat, following which many commercial depôts quickly sprang up on both coasts of the peninsula.

For the protection of these factories from attack by natives it was first of all necessary to have some defensive post, and, on the lines of our posts in Siberia, Fort St. George in Madras was erected. This fort was actually the first English possession

in India. The newly acquired territory did not, however, belong to the Government but to a special commercial company, founded on a shareholding basis with a capital of only £ 70,000. Taking advantage of the awkward position in which the British Government was placed in 1698, this East India Company obtained the monopoly of trade along the coasts of the Old World from the Cape of Good Hope to the Straits of Magellan, and, most important of all, the right to administer the land already acquired in India. These monopolies were granted to the Company on payment of an advance to the Government of £ 3,200,000.

Following the English, commercial factories were started by the French, Germans, Danes, Austrians and Swedes, but, with the exception of the French, none of them were serious rivals of the English.

Up till the middle of the XVIII century, or for more than 50 years, the East India Company was entirely occupied with trading operations and had no thought of conquest. But at this period the Moghul Empire, the remaining bulwark of India's might, collapsed and the numerous petty rulers concerned waged endless wars amongst themselves and drew into their disputes the French Governors, Pondicherry, Duma and Dupleix, who gained positions of influence on the peninsula.

The French successes, the destruction of Fort William and the capture of some Englishmen by the Bengal Nawab roused the Directors of the Company from their passive attitude. Thanks to the energy and skill of the youthful Lieutenant Clive, a small English force took Calcutta and Chandernagore, and defeated the troops of the Nawab, in whose place a new ruler was installed in Bengal and a contribution of 10,000,000 rupees paid to the Company. In addition, the Company received within its jurisdiction large tracts in Bengal with the right of collecting rents and taxes. Lieutenant Clive was appointed first Governor of Bengal by the Company. Clive successfully continued the struggle with the natives and the French; the influence of the latter had declined since the capitulation of Pondicherry in 1761. Twelve years later, in 1773, the English Parliament passed the so-called "Regulation Act" under which the Governor of Bengal assumed the title of Governor-General, and by which were confirmed the projects of the Company for the organisation of the administration, courts of justice, and armed forces within its extensive possessions in India.

The first Governor-General in India was Warren Hastings, renowned as the organiser of India's internal affairs, just as Clive

is regarded as her conqueror. Hastings also had to wage continual war on the Mahrattas and other rulers, usually resulting in contributions being exacted and made over to the Company. This system of plundering aroused indignation in England, and on his return from India, Warren Hastings was arraigned before Parliament and only acquitted after a lengthy trial.

The Marquis Wellesley, who succeeded Hastings, forthwith proclaimed the principle of English supremacy in India and entered on a wearisome struggle with the remnants of French possessions in the country.

The successful outcome of the Napoleonic wars strengthened the position of the English in India, and the French were dislodged even from their appointments as instructors to native troops. At the present time the sole French possessions in India consist of a few small settlements on the Coromandel and Malabar coasts, embracing an area of about 24 square miles with a population of 283,000.

In 1823 the East India Company became involved in a war of devastation in Burma, resulting in a further expansion of British possessions, including the annexation of Assam, Aracan, and Tenasserim.

In 1836 war with Afghanistan broke out, or rather war with the first appearance in Central Asia of the Russian 'invasion of India' bogie. The real reason of the war was the reception of a Russian Mission by Dost Mahomed. The East India Company, moreover, would not recognise the claims of Dost Mahomed to the Punjab. As a matter of fact, this rich and vast area, two-thirds of whose population is of Afghan descent, was conquered by the Afghan Amir, Ahmad Shah, Durani, who, in the middle of the XVIII century founded a vast Afghan kingdom, including the Punjab and all northern India, which was also peopled by tribes of Afghan descent.

The war with Afghanistan lasted 5 years, and from the Afghan point of view, it resulted in the defeat and expulsion of the English from Kabul, and the re-establishment on the throne of Dost Mahomed, who had been languishing in prison. During the war the English troops sustained two disasters during the memorable retreat through Khurd-Kabul and the Jagdalak defile, where the English detachment was massacred almost to a man by the pursuing Afghans. In its results, this bloody and costly war not only brought no advantage to the English but did not even induce

Dost Mahomed to abandon his lawful claims to the Punjab; some three or four years later he raised a rebellion amongst the Sikhs in the Punjab and openly assisted them.

After crushing this rebellion the English annexed the Punjab in 1848. Shortly afterwards the sepoy mutiny broke out, and this marks the most important epoch in the British occupation of India, since it resulted in the administration of India passing from the Company to the Queen's Government, and from this date the Governor-General assumed the unofficial title of Viceroy.

The expansion of British dominions over the whole peninsula continued uninterruptedly and was completed by the annexation of Burma in 1886 and the establishment of garrisons in Kashmir, Gilgit and Chitral, so that British India is now conterminous with Afghanistan, Tibet and Siam. It should be added that, owing to a variety of circumstances, British India, proclaimed an Empire in 1878, is surrounded by a broad zone of semi-independent countries, which in the matter of its defensibility serve as buffers against attack from Central Asia. The adoption of this so-called 'scientific frontier was devised by Lord Beaconsfield in 1879 after the second Afghan War, and took definite shape in 1894, when Mortimer Durand concluded an agreement with the Afghan Amir, Abdur Rahman, under which the latter surrendered all claims to the country lying in the Zhob, Gomal, Tochi and other valleys. Thus, in addition to the old or administrative frontier there is this new 'Durand' frontier, which marks the limit of the political influence of the Indo-British Government.

But can the Afghan Amirs really and entirely cut themselves off from these tracts of country, populated almost wholly by tribes of the same race and religion as themselves? The best answer is afforded by the recent tribal rising on the north-west frontier brought about by the unwillingness of the tribes to submit to English rule and their continuing to look to Kabul for assistance. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that this buffer zone will prove an inexhaustible source of trouble in the future.

The remaining more important English possessions in Asia have a pre-eminently strategical significance by assuring the free communication of England with India and the shores of the Pacific, *viz.* Perim, Singapore and Hong Kong.

Moreover, the sphere of English influence has been extended, on the one hand across Sistan and on the other along the valley of the Yangtse-kiang to Shanghai, *i.e.* to the Pacific coast. The English are striving by one means or the other to link up

their possessions "from sea to sea," which following the recent conquests in the Sudan, has almost been realised in Africa by connecting the Cape with the Mediterranean Sea.

In view of this wide expansion of Russian and English possessions in Asia, a collision between the two Powers seemed inevitable up to the conclusion of the recent Agreement.

Birth of the rivalry of Russia and England in Central Asia and the Far East.

Having thus briefly described the course of Russian and English incursions into Asia, let us turn to a consideration of more recent events which in our opinion have caused the rivalry of the two Powers in the two principal theatres. Let us first glance at Anglo-Russian relations in the Far East. Here relations became strained during the ten years following the Sino-Japanese war, although the causes for rivalry had been in existence long before and are traceable to the appearance of Russia on the Pacific. At the time of the Crimean War the English tried to destroy Petropavlovsk and vainly searched in those waters for our small 3-frigate squadron. With our economic expansion, the gradual conversion of Vladivostok into a fortified post, and the strengthening of our Pacific squadron, the more openly and loudly did the English express their hostility to the further consolidation of Russia on the Pacific. Finally, our occupation of Port Arthur in 1896 and the construction of the Siberian and Eastern Chinese railways made it possible for Russia to bring her whole strength in touch with the principal theatre of operations in the Far East. Unfortunately, these cheaply won successes of our diplomatists led them on to risky ventures and plunged Russia, altogether unprepared, into a discreditable war with Japan,—behind whose back England undoubtedly lay concealed.

Let use now briefly review the position of the two Powers in Central Asia.

From the time when Russian and English interests clashed in these regions, *i.e.* from the time of the first Afghan War in the thirties, things have changed beyond recognition, and entirely to Russia's advantage. Without going too far back, it will be sufficient to point to the extent of the increase of Russia's offensive powers during the last two decades. The vast waterless desert, which formerly separated Turkistan from its nearest base —the Caucasus—is now traversed by a railway. The Murghab railway renders possible a concentration of our forces three or

four marches from Herat, still named "the key to India." In dependent of the Central Asian line, a main line of rail has been constructed from Orenburg to Tashkent, thus connecting this outskirt with the very heart of Russia. Cart roads have been made over the Takhta-Karacha pass and across the Pamirs, bringing our troops along the shortest line of advance on India. Finally, the occupation of the Pamirs has diverted a considerable portion of India's strength and attention from the main front, the north-west frontier, bringing about indeed a division of England's means of defence in Central Asia.

The significance of the Pamir region stands out prominently in considering the tribal rising of 1897. To this day the English cannot definitely determine its actual cause, though both in England and India it is generally recognised that it was mainly occasioned by the stationing of troops in Chitral and the Swat valley. To explain this latter step it is necessary to refer to the history of Russia's occupation of the Pamirs.

The final step in Russia's advance in Central Asia was, as is known, the conquest of the Khanate of Kokand, which brought her into the Alai valley, *i.e.* to the present frontier of the Pamirs. A long series of uninterrupted expeditions extended the limits of Russia's dominions and necessitated the consolidation of her position before each successive step forward. Thus at each stage the civil organisation of the acquired country had to be taken in hand. It was of course not opportune to go into the various frontier questions, which devolved on us as heirs of the late rulers, and thus they remained unsettled. As things were, the policy was sound, seeing that the lofty Alai and Trans-Alai ranges securely protected our new frontier from the south, and that the Pamir Khanates—Wakhan, Shignan and Roshan—were 'terra incognita' to us. These were, generally speaking, the essential causes which induced us to leave the Pamir question alone for the time.

The above circumstances, however, did not escape the notice of the Indian Government, who pointed out to the Afghan Amir the possibility of annexing these Pamir Khanates, in desiring to divert his attention from the north-west frontier tribes, on whom the Afghan Amirs had always cast greedy eyes. The advice of the English took effect and, under the pretext of punishing the Shignan ruler, Said Akbar Shah, the Afghans settled on the Pamirs, in spite of protests from Russia. Thus in time

arose the Pamir question which made a stir all over the world and which was eventually settled by the demarcation in 1895 and the posting of a small Russian detachment.

This latter step induced the Indian Government, in its turn, to move a detachment forward into Chitral, and, to secure communication with this force, a fort was erected at Chakdara and a special brigade maintained on the Malakand pass in the Swat valley, notwithstanding solemn promises to the Swat tribesmen that an English garrison would be posted in Chitral alone and nowhere else. This led to the tribal rising of 1897 which cost the Indian Government over 2,000 casualties in dead and wounded and 270 millions of rupees. The position in the Swat valley is still by no means secure, since the fundamental cause of trouble, the presence of English troops at the Malakand and Chakdara, has not been removed. As a matter of fact, not a year passes without a rising amongst these tribes, and at the present time, as is known, there is wide spread revolt amongst the Afghan tribes of the north-west frontier.

Thus this small scrap of territory, situated in the garret of our Central Asian possessions, has indirectly caused the Indian Government much anxiety, and it was natural that the English Government should desire to come to terms with Russia, respecting all questions concerning the mutual relations of the two Powers in Central Asia. Freed from constant anxiety, and spared the loss of men and money which the presence of our small detachment on the Pamirs caused the Indian Government, it may confidently be said that the 1907 Agreement cost England very little, although bought at the price of some concessions to Russia.

CHAPTER II.

Delusions of the Anglo-Russian Struggle for India.

Opinions of General Skobelef, Lord Curzon and others—Prevailing opinions of the English public—Effect of the Murghab railway construction—Lord Curzon's activity when Viceroy of India—Measures for the defence of the north-west frontier of India—Attempts at seisures in Central Asia—First news of the conquest of Tibet.

We will pass now to an examination of the mutual relations of Russia and England with regard to designs on India. Without entering into the debris of past history we will limit ourselves to a review of events which have occurred in Central Asia during the last 15 to 20 years, previous to the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian Convention. For this purpose we will examine the prevalent opinions and ideas of prominent public men of Russia and England during this period.

In Russia much has been written and spoken during a whole century about a campaign against India. Putting aside this idea, which was first thought of in the reign of Paul I, Russia's desire for a struggle with England in the Central Asian theatre has cropped up whenever her relations with " perfidious Albion " have become strained. Thus during the Crimea, General Khrulef persistently urged the acceptance of his project for a campaign against India, pointing out that such a diversion would, better than anything else, have a sobering effect on Russia's hereditary rival. In course of time much has been written on the possibility of a Russian invasion of India. We will, however, limit ourselves to quoting the opinion of the late M. D. Skobelef, both because he was an intelligent exponent of the ideas and opinions of the Russian public in his time, and was at the same time a well-educated soldier and one capable of distinguishing between actual facts and mere dreams.

In 1876, the late M. D. Skobelef, in his capacity as Governor of Ferghana, in a special Memorandum submitted to General Kaufmann, the first Governor-General of Turkistan, expressed the following views regarding the respective military-political position

of Russia and England in Central Asia and the importance of Turkistan for a campaign against India.

"Russia's progressive moment in Central Asia was absolutely necessitated by the desirability of fixing some sort of settled frontier for the Empire. As Russia's statesmen have repeatedly declared, the occupation of Turkistan was rather a burden than a blessing for Russia. I will not examine the truth of these words, but merely deem it desirable to recall them. On declaration of war against England, Turkistan must announce all egotistical ideas and suborn herself to Russia's dearest interest. There can be no comparison between what we risk in deciding to demonstrate against the English in India and those universal consequences which the success of our demonstration would beget. Up to now Turkistan is not even a colony; and neither by the nature of its conquest and occupation by Russia can it be called anything but an operation base; the objective is pointed out by Providence.

Till now Turkistan has been held rather by personal influence combined with continuous valorous deeds in the course of the last 10 years, than by the large numbers of troops. There is no doubt whatever that both in the eyes of the English and of the whole of Asia Russia's prestige would suffer if Turkistan were to remain an impassive spectator of the decision of Russia's fate in the West. When Russian troops charge against Asiatics it seems to them even now that they spit fire. What would be the impression if by inaction in the decisive moment of the country's fate enemies realised that Russia does not know, does not understand and, what is more important, does not wish to understand why she has accidently wandered into Turkistan. The formation of the Governor-Generalship of Turkistan was the first step towards bringing the chaotic outbursts of preceding rulers to a definite issue; the conquest of Khiva, Kokand and the 10 years russification of Samarkand made this possible, by which alone Russia's settlement in Central Asia can be justified; otherwise the game is not worth the candle.

The necessity for Turkistan's participation in impending events is exemplified by the fact that, in the event of failure, a Russian evacuation of, or limitation in, Turkistan is inevitable. If we, in the event of complete failure of Russia's enterprises both in Europe and in Asia, show, even by an unfortunate spirit of enterprise, all the potentialities of our present position in Central Asia, then if it became necessary to conclude an unfortunate

peace, Russia perhaps would have to free herself at the cost of Turkistan, which has increased in value."

Skobelef says further that "a demonstration against the English in India under the existing mutual relations between the Empires and also with the military forces which Russia possesses is practically feasible."

Turning now to the probable measures which would have to be undertaken for carrying out a Russian diversion towards India, Skobelef goes on to say "of course I will not dare to express my opinion about the execution of such a gigantic enterprise, but the following would seem to serve our interests. Besides, I repeat, I have decided to express my opinion on this question exclusively for the purpose of making known the opinions of Englishmen, who have made a speciality of this question and undoubtedly enjoy authority in their own country—more than in any other country. One involuntarily deduces certain conclusions, which serve as an answer to the statements of Russia's enemies.

1. It would appear to be necessary to send an embassy to Kabul at as early a date as possible, for it is very desirable in the event of the despatch of a force, not to be distracted by any side issues, nor to waste valuable resources thereon, consequently it is necessary to endeavour to draw Sher Ali into an alliance with Russia, as also all territories under his influence.

There are many things which point to the successful issue of such negotiations:—

(*a*) the indelible impressions of the defeat of the English in 1842;

(*b*) distrust of the policy of the English which is shown by the fact that Sher Ali has not yet allowed an official English resident;

(*c*) the hereditary claim of Afghanistan to Peshawar and their hope of plundering India.

The above mentioned embassy should move on Karshi, Balkh, Khulm and Kabul. On the action of the mission the selection of the route of operations depends to a very large extent, *i.e. vid* Kabul or Herat.

2. To urge Persia to renew her claims to Herat, by which it would be possible to utilise the resources which in case of need Russia would obtain from the country under the Shah. Khorasan

in particular, and what is of greater importance to distract the attention and resources of the Tehran Government from the Russian frontier on the Araks, on which Russia's enemies reckon in case of any unfavourable occurrences on the Caucasus-Turkey frontier or in the Caucasus itself. In the event of a Russian advance, an alliance with the Persian Army would have no military significance, but would make available for Russia a quantity of transport, since Persia has for years been gravitating towards Herat and even Kandahar."

Passing to the strength of the force necessary for an advance on India, M. D. Skobelef thought that it would suffice to concentrate about 16,000 bayonets and sabres with 60 guns near Samarkand. Reckoning the march to Herat or Kabul to take ½ a month Skobelef proposed along the Amu Darya route to obtain about 1,128½ tons of supplies and also about 12,000 camels and 1,500 country carts (*arbas*). Next, to form a small reserve and to detail the cavalry for étape duties (staging purposes). If Sher Ali did not agree Bokharan troops would be sent towards Andkhoi and Maimana; but if he agreed the Bokharans would act against the Merv Turkomans; the object of this latter move being to draw the Bokharans off from Russia's lines of communication. Under these conditions Skobelef reckoned that there would be about 30,000 troops still in the country for the maintenance of internal order.

General Skobelef's proposal for an advance on India was approved and even began to be given effect to in 1878. For this purpose a special Jam detachment was formed near Samarkand, and yet a few other detachments, with the object of making a demonstration from three directions, *viz.* on Herat, Kabul and from the Pamirs. The Akhal-Tekke expedition of 1880 again roused in the late national hero the long existent conviction that it was possible to decide all Russia's problems in the Near East by means of a diversion against India. Thus Skobelef regarded the question. Thus thought—and perhaps even now think—many, who regard Turkistan as a ready-made *place d'armes* in which Russia's troops should assemble for a campaign on India. We will now see how the English regard this question.

One of the highest officers of the Indo-British army expressed the following opinion about 10 years ago on the question of the possibility of a Russian invasion of India.*

*Pioneer Mail.

"I compare the Hindu Khush to the Balkans, which the Russians have always traversed without difficulty even in winter. It is said that our transport arrangements are much better than the Russian. For me this is a surprise for I have always considered that transport is the weakest part of our organisation. In fact in 1880 we had to agree to all Abdul Rahman Khan's conditions, for our transport absolutely broke down. Similarly, in 1898 we had to enter into a hurried agreement with the Afghan frontier tribes because our transport had become perfectly useless. I wish that the Indian Government would be convinced of the soundness of such opinions of war, for then our constant frontier expeditions would cease. A frontier war under present conditions is a gold mine for frontier tribes. I have always considered that Russia's resources both in men and in animals are inexhaustible. In Southern Russia alone there are many million horses. Sir Charles Dilke, according to McGregor, affirms that in Central Asia the Russians can obtain 30,000 camels and that a still larger number can be obtained from the Persian frontier. It seems that people forget the rôle that automobiles will play in the future. Light railways can now be laid at the rate of 1-2 miles per day. Have military field railways and Lartinia mono-railways on iron sleepers been taken into account? The Russians have only to possess sufficient supplies of rails and railway sleepers at their advanced posts and they would be able to lay a line at the rate of 5 miles per diem for an ordinary light railway, for the mono-rails require no bed.

"We will next see to what extent our fleet could compel Russia to conclude peace on our terms.

"The Declaration of Paris does not in any way refer to ancient history, and the movement of trains in the theatre of war and of ships in the open sea have nothing in common with each other. If we denied the obligations which we undertook according to the Declaration of Paris we should be immediately excluded from the European Areopagus and shouts of indignation against "perfidious Albion" would resound in every European capital. It can be pointed out to us that Russia in her own time also denied similar obligations; but in that case I would say: Thank God, we do not possess such a low standard of political morals as Russia! One man may be able to steal a horse, whilst another may not be able to even look over another man's fence. The fact is that Russia is popular throughout Europe, whilst there is no more unpopular nation than ours, the reason for which is our wealth, hypocrisy and self-conceit.

"People forget that the Black Sea is closed to us and has become a Russian lake. We cannot wound Russia here. It is easy to say—force the Dardanelles; but I think that if Russia and Turkey co-operated against us, as they apparently would do, this would be beyond the powers of even our fleet. If, notwithstanding the Declaration of Paris, we insisted on our ancient right to detain contraband of war, we should create a European coalition against us. It was the pursuit of this very right which led to the American war of 1812, and it would only draw us into fresh complications with our American brothers. As far as coal is concerned people forget that there are large quantities of it in Southern Russia without even considering the naphtha refuse, which for war purposes is better than the best Cardiff coal.

"It is also not remembered that Russia is rather a part of the world than any ordinary country and that in the event of war she can satisfy all her requirements. The Russians are the most patriotic people in the world; they did not hesitate to fire their capital in order to defeat Napoleon. They are accustomed to an autocratic government, and however long a war might last they would never express dissatisfaction nor complain. Can we say the same of our English democracy and of our responsible ministers, whose only idea is to pander to public opinion? Can one think that our lower classes would regard a lengthy war with Russia with indifference? Can one not say with certainty that our pampered electors would cry "Peace at any price" as soon as they began to feel the pinch of a war? Would not a peace-loving ministry soon appear which would be ready to accept whatever terms Russia might propose?"

In dealing with the possibility of a Russian invasion of India the same writer points out the necessity of constructing a railway line from the Persian Gulf to Herat for the following reason. "My opinion is based on the supposition that the sea is England's real base of operations. From Herat to the Persian Gulf it is 1,300 miles in a straigth line. From Herat to Charjui, where the Russian post on the Oxus is, is another 300 miles, for the greater part of which there is already a railway. Russia's one weak point is Charjui, and therefore against the latter all our endeavours should be directed. If, at the commencement of a war, we could occupy Charjui with 50,000 picked troops and then fortify ourselves there and organise supplies we should to a considerable extent secure for ourselves a successful issue to a war. At Charjui we should cut the Russian line of communications and could act in any required direction against a Russian advance.

"The railway would bring up river gunboats in sections and we should thus be able to create a strong fleet on the Oxus.

"This would at once compel the Russians to retreat from Afghan Turkistan. In possession of Charjui we could only be attacked there and in Herat. The invasion of India would absolutely fail and the separate Russian detachments would be threatened with the grave danger of risings of their own unfriendly subjects. If a railway from the Persian Gulf to Herat, and thence to the Russian frontier, existed, an English invasion of Russian Central Asia would become much more possible than a Russian invasion of India, for the railway would lead Russia not to India but to the sea, to the real base of our operations. Consequently, I have always affirmed that the only real way of defending India is to prepare a strong, well-supported and executed attack on Russian Central Asia from the Herat side, which should serve as our base. He who first seizes and fortifies Herat will be the master of India. For Herat is the real key of India.

"When there is uninterrupted railway communication from Karachi *viâ* Baluchistan and Herat to the Russian frontier the fate of India will be decided not on the banks of the Indus, as the Russians now think, but on the banks of the Oxus. As long as we are strong in Herat and ready to advance on the Oxus Russia will never risk the occupation of Afghan Turkistan. We have then only to move out from Herat all our effective troops without paying particular attention to other frontier points. A long line of communication is considered to be a bad strategical error, but if there is a railway running its entire length, it does not signify. From the Persian Gulf to the Helmand no attacks need be feared, for the line here traverses a sparsely populated and desert country. From the Helmand to the Russian frontier the line will pass through country inhabited by mixed and for the most part friendly tribes.

"If it depended on me I would make Sind and Baluchistan a special command with a separate army corps. I would do with Baluchistan what we are doing with the Punjab, *i.e.* convert it by the aid of irrigation works into a fertile country. I would colonise these irrigated lands in Baluchistan with the surplus population of the Punjab, and run a railway through a country inhabited by a friendly and peaceful population. Under these conditions we should not have to retreat from Afghanistan as we have been obliged to do every time on account of insufficiency of supplies for our troops and followers. We should also not be obliged

to keep strong detachments on our lines of communication in order to guard them from a fanatical and hostile population, as in our later Afghan wars. It will be said that there is not money for all these measures. I would obtain the necessary money by joining the Bombay and Madras Presidencies into one governorship with only one army corps. If still more money were required I would sell a few government railways. I would even continue the Quetta railway up to Kandahar only, leaving a free expanse of country of 300 miles from Kandahar to Farah, which I would unite with Karachi and not with Kandahar. I would not extend the Peshawar line to the Khaibar Pass but at the beginning of a war I would lay a narrow gauge line to Jalalabad. Under these conditions the flower of the Indian Army would be in Herat for offensive operations and smaller bodies of troops would be in Quetta (Kandahar) and Jalalabad for defensive purposes, with a reserve at Rawal Pindi exclusively for defensive purposes. I would run a narrow gauge railway from Kushalghar (after first building a bridge across the Indus at this place) *viâ* Kohat, Bannu, Tank, along the Gomal and Zhob valleys to Pishin.

"I would annex all independent countries up the Indus, and would construct a narrow gauge line along the southern bank of the Indus right up to Gilgit. I would move up as many British regiments as possible from the south and dispose them on the heights of the southern hills overlooking the Indus. I can make no claims to originality in my views for they are, for the most part, borrowed from Sir Charles Dilke. If his work "Great Britain's Problems" is as true in general as the chapters about India then this is indeed the greatest work of the latter half of this century. At present we note only one error, *i.e.*, Sir Charles Dilke lays too much stress on his recommendation for an alliance with China. Nevertheless he is correct in saying that Russia is vulnerable in the territory adjoining the Pacific Ocean. I certainly allow that *by an alliance with Japan we should force Russia to conclude peace after having attacked her in Port Arthur and Vladivostok?* But I do not sympathise with the alliance with Japan nor, generally speaking, with any alliance with an Asiatic power against a European power, although it is said Russia is rather an Asiatic than a European power. But the greatest danger in the event of a protracted war with Russia would be disturbances in India in our rear, Hyderabad in the Deccan being a hotbed of sedition. That there is a strong and extensive feeling of dissatisfaction against us every thinking European well knows. This dissatisfaction is directed exclusively against

our civil administration and is not a general hatred of Europeans. Our civil administration is absolutely unadapted to local conditions. The people of India would prefer government by their own nobility to government by the best European administrators. The strong dislike of our civil administration is based exclusively on the deep hatred which the people nourish towards our subordinate native officials.

"Pindarians and other predatory tribes of the last century were never so corrupt and base as our present minor officials. The only thing to do is to again give over the country to native government in a civil sense, and ourselves maintain only a military administration, as Sir Charles Dilke advises."

Simultaneously with the opinion cited above there has been of late years noticeable in English military literature a change of public opinion. The necessity for a mutually inoffensive agreement with Russia has been pointed out more and more frequently. In the same year an article appeared in the official military organ "Pioneer Mail" which is published in Allahabad; this article was also by "one of the generals of the Indo-British Army" who had served many years in India; in it the author expresses the following ideas which are absolutely analogous to those quoted above. "For several centuries" says this general, "and up to the foolish Crimean war and senseless sallies of Lord Beaconsfield in 1877-78 Russia has been our real friend in Europe. The renewal of our former friendship with Russia should be the aim of every right thinking and responsible English statesman. But although I so strongly urge a friendship with Russia, yet more decidedly do I affirm that we should not let Russia be tempted to invade India. We need have no fear of such an invasion unless indeed we ourselves show Russia the road by our criminal weakness and carelessness. When by the aid of our strategic railways and concentration of our forces we also are in a position to invade Russian Central Asia as easily as Russia can now invade Afghanistan, then the Russian nightmare will no longer alarm us. India's best defence against a Russian invasion is to be ready for a strong and secure advance into Russian territory from Herat. But Herat will never be a suitable base for offensive operations until it is connected by rail through Baluchistan with Karachi, and until Baluchistan itself is converted from a waste into cultivated land. People talk about "exhausting" Russia in time, but this simply means cutting our own throats, for if Russia once marches into Sind our Indian Empire will collapse. If we require a defensive

position let it be Bandar Abbas, but not south of the Indus. If we are unable to defeat Russia in southern Baluchistan whilst based on the sea, then we may as well give up all hope of defending India anywhere at all.

"The railway Kushk-Herat-Karachi, which I advocate, should run at first along the coast from Karachi to Bandar Abbas but no further. From Gwadar a branch should run to Herat through the fertile Baluch district of Panjgur. Under present geological conditions the construction of a Russian railway from the Caspian to Bandar Abbas is a physical impossibility. There is no doubt that in time Russia will continue her Caucasian railway along western Persia to the Persian Gulf as far as or near Muhammerah. But I very much doubt if they would extend the line further along the northern shores of the Gulf. Long before the Russians bring a line to the Persian Gulf the Germans will build a railway along the Euphrates valley and connect Basra and Baghdad with Constantinople. I have always affirmed that the south-eastern corner of Persia should be included in our sphere of influence. As long as we are predominant at sea and hold in our hands the Straits of Ormuz from Ras-Muandim to Bandar Abbas, the Persian Gulf will be closed, and it will be a matter of indifference to us whether Russia gets to the south-western shores of Persia or not. When Turkey breaks up, a not very remote contingency, Germany will take Syria and Asia Minor to the west of 36° east longitude, and Russia will have the remainder of Turkey in Asia together with Persia. Similarly when China breaks up Russia will take the whole of Asia north of latitude 37°. We should not cavil at this for Russia would require a whole century to digest the enormous territory which she would swallow up, and during that period she would be too occupied to think of an invasion of India.

"The appearance of Russia in India would be the signal for extensive disorders and we should have to fight against external and internal foes at one and the same time. I would add that as long as the theatre of operations was limited by the Amu Darya and western parts of Afghanistan and Baluchistan we should have no revolts in our rear, but when once Russia crossed the Indus the whole of India would rise against us, arguing absolutely correctly that if we are unable to defend Afghanistan from Russia we should likewise be unable to protect the population of India. This is the chief reason why I urge the necessity for an advance. As long as we move forward the whole of India will be with us,

believing in our future; but as soon as we withdraw behind the Indus our star will wane and even those natives who are well-disposed towards us will go over to the winning side.

"The people as a mass do not understand gratitude and a feeling of self-preservation is for them a law of nature. This is noticeable in all political movements. We are weakest in northern India. We could not risk a set fight against a considerably stronger enemy in any position whatsoever north of Rawal Pindi. If we had sufficient time at our disposal Jalalabad could be converted into a splendid fortified camp. To avoid any open fighting in the Punjab I would not only construct a railway from Karachi *viâ* Gwadar, Farah and Herat to Kushk, but also a branch line from Kushk to the Amu Darya, on which river I would have a flotilla. In the present state of affairs Russia has time at her disposal, and if we continue to do nothing the Russians will be able to lead a much larger army into India than we will be able to oppose her with; for us to take the offensive presents some difficulty, as it either means considerably increasing our Indian army with a corresponding increase of expenditure and taxation, or waging war at a much greater cost than under present conditions, before we succeed in defeating Russia. This leads us to questions of finance and administration, which are closely allied with the question of the defence of India. If anybody should say that we occupied and occupy India solely for a disinterested object I should be inclined to tell him that he was a hypocrite. We possess India and have always possessed it simply because it is to our advantage to do so. But all our administration in this country has up to now been useless; we have administered the country neither to our advantage nor to that of India. It is true we have given the country peace, developed its natural resources to a certain extent and secured freedom of person and property. It seems to me that in many respects we might with advantage have organised our administration in India on the Danish colonial model. England is required in India primarily from a commercial point of view, and this circumstance has not received sufficient attention. Finances are our weakest point. Expenses, military expenditure in particular, always tend to increase under present conditions. If after a few years India is unable to pay, the English will ask "is it worth while keeping India?" The whole of India is more or less dissatisfied; what will be its state when taxes further increase? If the state of affairs does not change now how shall we be able after a few years to defend India when half our army will be fighting against Russia and the other half be

engaged at the same time in putting down rebellion in our rear? The recent strike of Mahratta and Brahmin pointsmen warns us against what might happen during a war on a large scale on our lines of communications.

"A sinking ship can often be saved if the masts be lopped off. Our Indian ship of state perishes from want of money; is it not then time to lighten it and cast overboard the political masts in order to ease the deck? In my opinion this would be attained if we confined our government of the country to commerce, communications and military defence, leaving everything else to natives to the mutual advantage of both.

"For this purpose it would be only necessary to replace our commissioners by native rajas, which is very easily done. Such rajas would be administrators throughout India, would administer justice, levy taxes and administer the police. As long as the inhabitants were satisfied and paid their taxes regularly into the general treasury we should abstain from all interference in their affairs. In return for this we should be freed from the unpleasant obligation of collecting taxes and applying ludicrous laws served up by our judges to the sorrow and torment of natives, and would cease to produce as guardians of the peace a predatory crowd of legalised robbers who rejoice in the name of police: the Europeans as yet enjoy popularity in the country although daily every vakil, chaprassi, munshi and amlalog (various police functionaries) and all other birds of prey in our civil service, who plunder the people more than the ancient hordes of the Pindaris, are the cause of the increasing hatred of our government.

"Thus in future we should do nothing but military work, commerce and communications, and leave civil administration, collection of taxes and police measures to native nobles who can carry it out easier than we can. This would be advantageous both for England and for India. Our present impersonal European government means for the mass of the people personal government by vakils, munshis, chaprassis and police officers; only those who have dwelt among natives know how millions of the people hate these administrators. Our government is blind and rests on its laurels; meanwhile if it continues thus the Russian invasion of India will lead to such scenes of anarchy, bloodshed and general chaos in comparison with which the 1857 mutiny will seem mere child's play. The best friends of England and India are those who do not embelish the situation but warn the government, at the risk of their necks, of the relatively serious danger into which it is

rushing headlong. The administration invented at Westminster is unsuited to a country inhabited, as Kipling justly says, by half devils and half children."

Effect of the Murghab railway construction.

When public opinion in England had been turned in the press to the necessity for the construction of the railway to Herat from the Persian Gulf, in order to lay the foundation of offensive operations and, by seizing the initiative, to frustrate a Russian invasion of India, the Russian government suddenly forestalled the pet ideas of English Chauvinists and constructed a line from Merv to Kushk post. As is known the initiator and builder of this purely strategic line was Lieutenant-General Kuropatkin, who at that time was commanding the Trans-Caspian railway troops and was afterwards commander-in-chief during our unfortunate war with Japan, where in practice he showed himself to be devoid of any personal initiative and offensive dash. I note this analogy in order to point out our deep-seated methods of preparing for war in peace and the realisation of this war preparation in the hour of need.

Above we have quoted Skobelef's deeply thought out ideas of how to organise the first steps towards a movement on India; but when these began to be put in practice God knows what happened: Stolyetof's expedition was sent to Sher Ali Khan in Kabul, and succeeded in so irremediably destroying Russian influence there, that Afghanistan's hostile attitude towards us, which has lasted up to now, is only but the echo of the work of that very same expedition. Again the formation, organisation and work of the forces formed in 1879 were so naive that the first steps towards the practical realisation of a movement on India (the Jam "campaign") culminated in a large cemetery near Jam, not far from Samarkand, where nearly the entire force lay victims of fevers—without even seeing a single Afghan or Indo-British soldier. It is, of course, not known how Lieutenant-General Kuropatkin would have utilised the Murghab railway which he built and which aroused great alarm among the English, chiefly because of its proximity to Herat, which is considered to be the key to India. The importance of Herat in this respect has been discussed in detail by Colonel Kerry*.

* "Shadows of coming events or the Eastern menace."

"There is," says Kerry, "one place which is of great importance for England, which should not be lost sight of—*i.e.* Herat. England should not allow a Russian force to fall suddenly on

Herat, which is the key of India. And therefore if a Russian force should threaten Herat the English should move out a force to defend it. At the instigation of Russia, Persia twice tried to seize Herat, in 1838 and in 1857 ; Herat in the hands of Persia would be a Russian town.

" The main road from Samarkand to Kabul is now much easier for Russia than for England, if the latter decided to advance. *Les issues des frontières* are now in Russian hands. With every forward step the advantages of the Russian strategical position increase. Russia possesses the initiative; the selection of place and time depend on her. "

" How are we to defend ourselves from Russia ? How are we to oppose the Russians ? The north-western frontiers of India are strategically so disadvantageous that it is impossible to defend them. The best and most decisive method of defence is to occupy Kandahar, Ghazni and Kabul without delay. But this means a great waste of men and money (this surmise was exemplified in the 1879 campaign of Roberts). The second means of defence against Russia is to act against their right flank (strategical). Little is known of the degree of submission in which Persia stands in relation to Russia. Persia is a vassal of Russia, and it is only by pampering Persian vanity that it is possible to arouse in them any feeling of nationalism. In fact England, as Persia's ally, could occupy Tehran and the southern shores of the Caspian in considerable strength. She would then be on a flank as regards the routes from Krasnovodsk and Orenburg to Herat and Kabul. Being obliged to cover their communications from possible operations from the Atrek side, the flank of the Russians would be very disadvantageously placed, it would be isolated and exposed to attacks by Turkomans who could be raised by us, organised and armed. Holding Tehran as a base, the English Army, allied with that of Turkey, could advance on Tiflis, stir up the people of the Caucasus, and rouse up against Russia, in the name of Mohammadanism, all the native population of Asia. Such a plan was proposed in 1854. "

" On the day we lose Herat, says McGregor, our prestige would be dealt such a blow, such disturbances would penetrate to the very heart of India that the entire country would be one general mass of ill-will. Every ambitious man or woman, every malcontent, every miscreant and idler in India, all, in the expectation of the future, would unite in one general hostile rabble and exert themselves to the utmost to catch the first glint of Russian arms. "

In 1898 the Murghab railway from Merv to Kushk Post was finished, and the construction of a frontier fortress at the latter place was immediately commenced. The strategical importance of this line was so apparent that it was futile to disguise the true meaning of the event. As already mentioned, the opening of this railway caused great alarm in England and in India, the more so that in the Trans-Caspian province was Lieutenant-General Kuropatkin, who himself initiated the railway and was soon after made War Minister. The public alarm was reflected in an article in the "Civil and Military Gazette" which pathetically exclaimed "Russia is now at the very gates of Herat, whereby communication by the shortest and most convenient route has been secured, of which nobody even thought. Those who judged Russian policy and Russian plans by the acts of their ministers and not by their words, have no doubt concerning the true aims of the Russians in north-western Afghanistan. Twenty years ago Skobelef pointed out the lines on which the development of the Trans-Caspian province was to proceed. Russia, he wrote, has encountered in England a dangerous and powerful rival. Skobelef's pupils, of whom the most promising was the late Minister for War in St. Petersburg—General Kuropatkin—finally adopted his opinions of Central Asian policy, *i.e.*, the principle of a movement on Herat on condition of Russian superiority in northern Afghanistan. The only difference of opinions among military authorities was the selection of the direction for a movement on Herat. The well-known, and perhaps for us shameful, Panjdeh incident in 1885 opened our eyes to the character of Russian aspirations in this part of Murghab, and to the motives with which Russian agents were inspired in their offensive movement towards Afghanistan. But our attention had been for so long turned in another direction that the possibility of a movement along the Murghab was not taken into account. Military authorities and experts had once for all made up their minds that if at any time Russia should make an advance in the direction of Herat it would necessarily be *viâ* Sarakhs, which would open the valley of the Hari Rud for her. Two such plans had been even drawn up by the military authorities in St. Petersburg; one in conjunction with the construction of a branch railway from Dushak *viâ* Mianeh and Chaacha on Sarakhs, the other by Merv towards Kinderpri Fort. The Merv-Sarakhs route was thought to better answer the theory of a Russian advance towards Afghanistan. Such a route would materially assist a rapid advance of Russian forces *viâ* the valley of the Hari Rud on Herat.

"But in this case the Russian troops would have to cover a distance of not less than 199 miles along an indifferent route ; the number of transport animals would have to be increased as well as supplies and forage. The Russians with their usual forethought selected the other route, as being the better both for present and future needs. This route secured a strategical advantage and lessened the transport difficulties.

"Although the line is called Merv-Kushk it will undoubtedly be continued up to Herat, otherwise what would be its military, economic and commercial import ? But in this case we have to deal with a very important fact. It is remarkable that up to the present the construction of the Kuskh line has called forth no comments or notice. Meanwhile, thanks to this line, Russia is at the very foot of the Hazrati-Baba and Ardewan passes—"the gates of Herat." From Kushk to the Afghan town the road is short and convenient. There are only 4—6½ miles to the Hazrati-Baba pass, 6½ miles to Shirmas and the same number to the barracks at the Herat gates. The total is about 40-45 miles. The Merv-Kushk line has removed the chief difficulty of a movement on Herat, *i. e.*, the transport and supply question is now simplified. In order to make their position doubly secure the Russians wish to convert the terminus of the line into a 1st class station, and gradually collect here the necessary material for the prolongation of the line to Herat, so that its actual construction shall be but a matter of a few days. With troops quartered at only a distance of 24 hours' march, with supplies and munitions of war at hand and with a direct and open route before them, what can prevent the Russians from attacking Herat whenever they please? With the siege guns, which the Russians will without doubt send here one fine day by means of the railway, the destruction of the ramparts of Herat will be a simple matter, and the town will scarcely be able to offer any defence. Factors which hitherto have presented difficulties such as means of communications, transport, security of lines of advance, water and supplies, have become feasible, thanks to the line of rail, which clearly and unmistakably indicates Russia's line of advance into northern Afghanistan. Whilst Russia is only at a distance of 60 miles from Herat, the British base at Quetta is 700 (*sic*) miles distant from Kandahar.

"With the construction of the Merv-Kushk line Herat is opened for Russia from Murghab, as Balkh is exposed to attack from Kerki on the Amu Darya.

"The construction of the line is a direct indication of Russia's policy and of her future intentions. Hitherto, whenever Russia

has undertaken railway construction in Central Asia commercial interests have invariably been kept in view. But the Merv-Kushk line is an exception to this, as Kushk is an unimportant point and can never at any time become an important trading centre. In itself it is nothing and is only of importance as being the terminus of a railway leading to Herat and the starting point of the shortest route to that place *viâ* the more convenient Hazrati-Baba pass, in addition to being the first possible military position in an advance on north-western Afghanistan.

"This undertaking finally explains many actions of the Russians which up to now have remained obscure. It is now clear why General Komarof attacked the Afghans in 1885, when they attempted to settle on the Murghab. We can now also understand Russian claims to the valley of the lower Kushk. Both these rivers lead the Russians in the direction to be taken in an advance on Afghanistan and which Skobelef had already pointed out—"after Merv—Herat."

"It is remarkable that the construction of a Russian railway right through Siberia to China has in recent times been discussed in political circles to such an extent as absolutely to distract all attention from a no less important movement towards India; it will therefore come as a surprise to many that next month the Trans-Caspian Railway will commence running trains right up to the Afghan frontier stopping at a distance of only 60 miles from Herat. But those who have carefully followed the development of railways in Central Asia will recognise in the completion of the Merv-Kushk line one step towards the completion of the task which Russia set herself after the Crimea. Having been unsuccessful in her endeavours to extend her territory at Europe's expense she transferred her forces to the unorganised and boundless tracts of Asia. The Ministers of successive Emperors closely pursued this goal and not only gave a new phase to the old Eastern question but created a new Eastern Empire, which still further increased Russia's influence in European affairs. Postponing for the time being the question of an exit to the Mediterranean she obtained, by the Siberian railway, an outlet to the Pacific.

"Forty years ago such an undertaking was not feasible, as well as being useless both politically and commercially. But now as we consolidate our Asiatic possessions by oversea routes so does Russia by means of a railway, a rivalry has been thus established between railway and steamship communications. At present Russia possesses 2 main railway lines, a northern through Siberia to the Pacific, and a southern from the Caspian and Orenburg to the heart

of Central Asia—Tashkent. By the combined utilisation of the lines of the north and south of European Russia and of the north and south of Asiatic Russia it is possible for Russia to concentrate her forces, as necessary, on the Chinese or Indian frontiers. We are particularly interested in this question from the point of view of our Indian possessions. Russia has learnt, very wisely, to utilise her movement in Asia against her European rivals. Just as the final conquest of the Caucasus and the rapid advance in Central Asia were the reaction of the Crimean war in 1854, so our despatch of Indian troops to Malta and Cyprus after 1878 called for the complete submission of the Turkoman Tekhes, the occupation of Trans-Caspian territory to Sarakhs and Merv and the construction of a railway to Samarkand.

"Russian diplomats thus obtained two points of pressure on British policy—in Europe and in Afghanistan. A few years later after the frontier had been extended from Zulfikar to Kamiab the kindly English rejoiced that Zulfikar remained with Afghanistan, entirely ignoring the fact that the Russians with their foremost posts only 60 miles from Herat had no need for a circuitous route *viâ* Zulfikar. The route *viâ* Kushk was finally recognised by Russia as the primary line of advance on India. Other routes to the Hindu Kush (*viâ* the Pamirs) are being explored and considered by Russia; but meanwhile direct railway communication from the Caspian to Kushk has been established. The remaining distance of 60 miles from the terminus to Herat presents no difficulties whatsoever; the steppes, marshes, hills and valleys to be traversed are quite accessible for troops, and the prolongation of the railway is feasible.

"Certain new factors give the Trans-Caspian railway a special importance which it has not hitherto had. The possible collision of Russian and English interests in China makes the Central Asian lines of advance towards Afghan territory a very real and present factor which must be reckoned with.

"Apart from all political considerations the enormous development of the naphtha industry on the western shores of the Caspian gives a fresh impulse to Russo-Asiatic exploitation. The Baku naphtha sources, which have been largely aided by English capitalists, are an inexhaustible supply of easily transportable fuel, and although the transport of naphtha on the Caspian from Baku to the starting point of the railway on the eastern shore is not always convenient, the difficulties of communication are minimised by the special adaptation of vessels to conditions of local navigation

Russia with her extraordinary foresight transfers her political centre of gravity further eastwards by concentrating the central government and railway administration at Tashkent. This points to not only a fresh starting point for an advance on India, but also a step forward in the further development of railways. Russia first secured her route to Persia, then to north-western Afghanistan and finally is now taking measures for joining up the main northern route with the central lines of Central Asia and for laying new railway lines for an advance on eastern Afghanistan and the northern frontier of India. At present she has reached the north-western frontier of Afghanistan; her next goal is to move up to the north-western frontier of India. At the same time she is busy with the opening of a waterway on the Oxus.

"In conjunction with the formation of a new railway battalion for Central Asia, the Russian Amu-Darya flotilla will soon be increased by new vessels for the purpose of overcoming obstacles to uninterrupted navigation.

"Fortunately the viceroyalty of India has now been entrusted to a man who is thoroughly acquainted with the state of affairs. Lord Curzon has studied the Central Asian question with remarkable patience and ability. He possesses not only a knowledge of the subject but also the strength and firmness to utilise his knowledge. He is one of the few Englishmen who have had the opportunity of being convinced that Russia's fixed policy is the creation of a great Empire in Central and Northern Asia with—if possible—the consent of other European powers, otherwise without it, if necessary. The time for the inevitable collision of Great Britain and Russia in the East is approaching."

Lord Curzon as Viceroy of India, and his opinions on Anglo-Russian relations in Central Asia.*

The construction of the Murghab railway was the immediate cause of Lord Curzon's appointment as Viceroy of India. This appointment was a sort of "checkmate" on the part of the English Government, for it was known that Lord Curzon was a strong supporter of an active English policy in Central Asia; therefore by entrusting the defence of India to such a well-known representative of the so-called "forward policy" the English Government

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*The opinions and views of Lord Curzon quoted below are taken from his speeches delivered in 1897 in Parliament, and from articles which appeared periodically in the "Times."

wished to show that it picked up the glove, thrown down before England in the guise of the construction of a strategical railway to the gates of India.

The personality of the new Viceroy—Lord Curzon—appointed in 1898—on the one hand, and the new Russian railway almost up to the gates of Herat on the other, claimed the combined attention of England and Russia in the heart of Ceneral Asia. If both these factors did not threaten immediate complications they form, nevertheless, an appreciable phase in the history of the mutual relations of England and Russia in Central Asia. It is, therefore, important to trace the effect of these events on the public opinion of England and Russia. Recognising the immense political, commercial and strategic importance of the Trans-Caspian railway, Curzon, even before the Murghab line was built, foresaw its prolongation to Herat. He shows how easily the line could be continued from Merv up the Murghab valley to Penjdeh and says : " Russia already threatens Herat and then (*i e.* after the completion of the Murghab railway) Herat will be absolutely in her hands. Russia would not violate the Afghan frontier, would not move her rails further towards Herat and avoid a war with England ; but the terminus of a Russian railway would nevertheless be only a few marches from the Key of India, and any internal complication in Afghanistan might compel Russia forthwith to traverse the short intervening distance." Further concerning the possibility of running a railway through Afghanistan and joining up the Russian and Indian systems at Kandahar, Lord Curzon says : " General Annenkof both in the press and in conversation is enthusiastic about such a junction, expatiating on the tempting prospect for English travellers of journeying from London to India *viâ* the Caspian Sea and Herat in 9 days. He omits to say that the line traversing Russian territory would naturally be closed to English troops ; but General Annenkof magnanimously considers the line to be for commercial purposes and also, exceptionally, for the use of English officers. The physical difficulties of the construction of such a line may indeed be inconsiderable, but if the question is regarded from a political standpoint quite another aspect is presented. If it be admitted that the junction of the two lines would meet with Russian approval—which is inconsistent with her traditional policy—the consent of both Houses of Parliament in England would be necessary, and finally that of the English people. I sincerely hope that nobody in England will support this abstract and problematical idea which, in certain circumstances, might be a source of danger to us. I even doubt if England would commercially obtain any advantages from this line, for it cannot be doubted that Russia would levy a

prohibitive customs duty on our imports. Even now Russia has driven English merchandise from the markets of Central Asia, which were reached by caravan. On the other hand, if hostile duties were not imposed, Russian merchandise would flood the markets of Afghanistan, Baluchistan, of the Indian Frontier and of Sistan, and Southern Persia. Then England would understand how foolishly she had given the key of her trade monoply into the hands of her one dangerous rival. The continuation of the Russian railway through Afghanistan to Kandahar—which would doubtless be carried out by Russian capital and Russian workmen would produce in the entire East the impression of a blow to English prestige, which has already been shaken by a continuous series of defeats and diplomatic failures. It would mean the advance of Russian territory to Kandahar. This would make our possessions coterminous with Russian, and would bring our probable enemy about a month's journey nearer India. It would likewise mean that on the smallest straining of relations between the London and Petersburg cabinets we should have to put our frontier into a state of defence against an armed attack. This would finally necessitate an incredible concentration of our troops on the north-west frontier which would impose a heavy burden on our finances. For all these reasons do I hope that nobody in England will support such a fantastic project, which is a danger to the Empire ".

It is strange that although Lord Curzon himself at every step acknowledges that Russia's forward movement in Central Asia has been occasioned by force of circumstances without premeditated hostile intention against England, yet, like all Englishmen, he cannot overcome his offensive suspicion of Russia's every step. Following the conclusion of the Agreement, it would seem especially opportune to realise in Central Asia the larger civilising problems by the combined efforts of Russia and England; of these the foremost is the linking up of the Indian with our railway system by a direct line *viâ* Orenburg, Tashkent, Samarkand, Kabul and Peshawar. This problem would certainly be a worthy beginning to a new century and would open a new era of light in the life of Asia. But as will be apparent from what follows Lord Curzon is still suspicious of Russia.

Concerning England's relations to Afghanistan, the new Viceroy of India expresses himself very categorically and leaves no doubt whatsoever concerning the necessary line of action for the English Government. Lord Curzon is first of all averse to any sentimentalism with the Amir, and points out that obligations and

the honourable observance of undertakings should be strictly adhered to by both parties, by the Amir as much as by England. "Meanwhile, under present conditions," continues Lord Curzon, "England has undertaken to guarantee Afghan territory but in which during peace not a single officer or soldier can appear; even English civilians are not allowed in the country, whose alliance the English purchase at such a high price. The Amir allows England to control his external policy but does not allow an English resident in his capital. There is also not a single English agent nor post on that very portion of the Afghan frontier, for any violation of which the English have meekly agreed to go to war." Turning next to the question of the policy which England should pursue in regard to Afghanistan Lord Curzon warmly advocates the construction of frontier railways and expresses himself as follows:— "From my experience, based on personal observation of frontier railways, Russian and Indian, I can affirm that the best means of subduing certain Eastern Empires are railways. This method is more effectual than guns and bullets."

As regard the question of the defence of India against an imaginary Russian invasion there are, as is known, two parties amongst English military and political officials, advocating respectively the so-called "forward policy" or "backward policy;" but neither one nor the other has ever proposed to link up the frontier of Russian and English possessions in Central Asia. On the occasion of the last demarcation of the Pamirs in 1895, the natural course of events would have led Russia and England to meet for the first time face to face in the depths of Central Asia; but here again the English were averse to an immediate proximity with us, and would not even trust the greatest barrier in the world—the Hindu Kush.

In spite of all hopes and our undoubted rights, the English unfortunately this time again succeeded in putting a small 'buffer,' in the shape of a narrow strip of Afghan territory, between the Hindu Kush on the Indian side and the Panja river on our Pamir side.

Lord Curzon's opinion in the matter of British tribal policy is also very curious:—"It would be difficult to find anyone either in or without this House who in the least desires to deprive these tribes of their independence or to annex their territory. Likewise, we should not interfere in their customs, prejudices, religion, and certainly not in their interior self-government. But here our concurrence with the opposition ends and another question at once

presents itself—can we avoid a collision with them? No; we cannot, and for many reasons; firstly, however much we may try to leave them alone, they will not leave us in peace. Many of these tribes consist of people of savage and unbridled morals, who are addicted to predatory habits. They persistently raid our territory and drive off the cattle of tribes living under our protection. I am not at all astonished that we constantly hear of punitive expeditions.

"You are aware that once an insult is offered an expedition is forthwith organised. Troops are sent over the frontier as soon as possible; they burn a few villages and towns, destroy a certain amount of crops, creating destitution within the limits of their advance. They then retire to British territory leaving behind them the smouldering sparks of anger and revenge. This, I venture to believe, is not, in the majority of cases, a successful policy. What are its defects? Firstly, the blow is often struck too late; secondly, the actual offenders are not always punished and a large share of suffering falls on the innocent; thirdly, by withdrawing the troops you leave an impression of weakness and thereby provoke a repetition of offences. Take, for example, the numerous expeditions against the Waziris, or in the Black Mountains; during the last 10 years there have been 2 or 3 such expeditions. There is another reason why the tribes cannot be left alone to themselves; in the first place, our obligations to the tribes themselves, and secondly, the necessity of safeguarding our strategic frontier. As to the former, Mr. Gladstone first took one of the tribes under our protection after the Afghan War, in concluding a treaty with the Khaibar Afridis. Subsequently, in Sir R. Sandeman's time, we came to terms with the tribes of Baluchistan. In the north we concluded a similar treaty with the tribes on the Chitral route and with all the Waziristan tribes in the neighbourhood of the Hindu Kush."

After a short reference to the relations with the Amir, Lord Curzon points out how tribal obligations should be fulfilled:—"If such obligations actually exist we have the right of advancing sooner or later to the outer frontier of which I spoke, or, at any rate, to the Kabul-Ghazni-Kandahar line, and for this purpose you should be quite sure that you have at your absolute disposal the main passes concerned. But if you leave the tribes to themselves, which my highly esteemed opponents would wish to do, you will not in that case be sure of this, and it may happen that at the very time when it is necessary to defend the exterior frontier line you will also have to deal with hostilities in rear.

Thus, we must come to definite terms with the tribes. What form should they take? Certainly it is possible, as my honourable opponents have done, to propound a principle with which all else should conform, *viz.*, that these relations should, as little as possible, encroach on the territory and independence of the tribes. But here three essential points arise. We must possess means of communication by the principal routes and passes; we must control the Gomal and Khaibar passes, the Chitral road and the passes over the Hindu Kush. This is the first point. Secondly, we must watch the relations of the tribes with foreign states; frontier tribes must not have free intercourse with our enemies. Thirdly, we must be assured of their good behaviour which we are ready to pay for by reasonable money allowances. In my opinion, and in this case I express my personal opinion, the success of our relations with these tribes depends entirely on closer confidential relations with them. We have heard much during this session concerning Sir Robert Sandeman. I have the honour to know, and for a long time kept up a correspondence with this remarkable statesman, and on the strength of my personal observations of his policy, I can say that he never pursued a policy of "laisser faire, laisser passer." On the contrary, his policy was one of firmness and conciliation combined, and, what is of great importance, a policy of trust and desire to approach the tribes and obtain their friendship."

Immediately after assuming the office of Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon turned his particular attention, as was to be expected, to the strengthening of the defensibility of the north-west frontier of India, for it is from this direction that the advances of Russian troops are mainly expected. The following is what was said, at Lord Curzon's instigation, as Viceroy of India, about the question in the "Asiatic Quarterly Review" (No. 15).

"Although the frontiers of the Empire run for several thousand miles, it is only one section in Central Asia, from the Pamirs to the Persian Gulf, that is of exclusive import, according to English public opinion. Here is the heel of our Empire. Here our Empire is most vulnerable. Yet here rests the prop of Old England, who discovers for herself in India a defence as behind a wall of iron.

"Thanks to the 1898 Agreement we can consider the southern frontier of Canada free from danger. The Nile valley is also now secure. Thanks to Cromer and Rhodes the cry "from Cairo to Capetown" is no longer a chimera, and Cook and Son will effect the rest.

'And India can look eastwards with complete assurance, but in the west, the north-west frontier is a constant source of alarm and apprehension for the Viceroy and his Council, and begets endless fears for the future.

" At the end of 1898 it was known that Lord Elgin on leaving India bequested the final settlement of frontier affairs to Lord Curzon. The frontier rising of 1897 clearly demonstrated the undoubted defects of the existing system and the necessity for reform. The Viceroy's Council was naturally averse to confess their shortcomings, which, however, were apparent to the public. Whilst Colonel Mohammed Islam Khan * was negotiating in Jamrud, communicating through the Punjab Secretariat with the Government in Simla, things occurred which disclosed the undoubted unsoundness of the system : the Khaibar Rifles abandoned their posts, the weak frontier policy resulted in a rising in the Tochi valley culminating in a treacherous attack on the English force at Maizar ; the story of Tirah is one mistake from beginning to end redeemed only by the bravery and patience of the troops.

* Political Agent in the Punjab.

" But in addition to our relations with the frontier tribes the state of affairs in Afghanistan must be taken into account, as also the position and policy of Russia. And even more than this, it is necessary also to observe the state of affairs in Persia and in Turkish Arabia, these two enormous countries under the rule of Mussulman despots, which must, however, in course of time come under the political influence of Christian Governments. Twenty years ago Lord Lytton found it necessary to create a special administration beyond the Indus and to transfer the centre of government from Bombay to the Punjab, but the 2nd Afghan War prevented the execution of this project. Moreover, before Lord Lytton's time the importance of Kelat had been realised as a possible advanced post in the event of an advance from Merv on Herat, and the necessity for occupying it, which was done in 1854. It subsequently transpired that the administration of all the Trans-Indus territory was difficult of execution from the Sind Province. The necessity was shown for uniting all this territory into one province as a special political agency immediately under the Viceroy ; it was proposed to include in this agency all the Trans-Indus districts from Peshawar to Karachi.

" But this measure, which was proposed twenty years ago, is still far from realised even now, notwithstanding the fact that the Sind Province has meanwhile doubled both as regards the

area of cultivated land, population, and amount of taxes paid. The welfare of the inhabitants has so improved and the number of property owners has so increased that the recruiters for the Indian Army find no material here, although the people remained loyal to us during the Sepoy Mutiny, fought bravely for us in Delhi and other provinces, formed garrisons in the Punjab and thus maintained peace in that province. Since that period, the Indian Government has annexed everything that it could right up to its neighbours' frontiers—the Amir of Afghanistan and the Shah of Persia; only a few mountain tribes were left independent, their independence being retained at a heavy cost to us.

"Meanwhile the north-west frontier has changed beyond recognition; the old frontier line did not extend beyond the Punjab and Kashmir, but now it extends to the Pamirs and the Hindu Kush, touches Kafiristan, traverses Mohmand country, stretches to the western extremities of Waziristan and the Zhob valley to the advanced posts and terminus of the Sind-Pishin railway; thence it runs through the Baluchistan desert to Sistan and terminates at the shores of the Gulf of Oman. The Trans-Indus country exceeds in extent any province in India and is by far the most important; it is there that the final fate of our power and being in India must be decided. The governor of this territory will always be India's sentinel in the direction of Central Asia. Years will elapse before Russian and English armies will encounter each other here to decide who is to be master in Asia; but whenever this encounter may take place everything points to this territory being the scene of operations.

"It must be acknowledged that the rivalry of Russia and England will never diminish and will be ever ready to become acute. We have drawn the frontier from Zulfikar to Sarikol, but we can never be assured of a permanently settled state of affairs, for everything depends at one time on the caprices of the Amir of Afghanistan, at another on the disposition of the Russian Government or even on the temperament of frontier officials."

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In support of the above views, inspired by Lord Curzon, one of the more Chauvinistic newspapers in India the "Civil and Military Gazette" makes the following pronouncement concerning England's political problems in Central Asia:—"England's

and India's task in this part of the world is closely to follow every progressive step of Russia, which may have an aggressive tendency, the defensive measures taken by Russia in her Asiatic possessions have no interest for the English Government for there is no idea of attacking Russia in Asia."

" At the same time " adds the paper " we must acknowledge that Russia has made excellent preparations in Central Asia for offensive operations, thanks to the development of the railway system during recent years. In addition to the existing railways the construction of a main line from Tashkent to Orenburg is approaching completion. The example of the great Trans-Siberian line shows how little difficulty Russia encounters in expending such enormous sums of money. We should not indeed be surprised to hear that the Persian Government had agreed to the linking up of the Caucasus with Tabriz and Tehran by a railway, or the Trans-Caspian line with Meshed ; it would thus not be difficult for Russia to continue her Persian line through Hamadan and Baghdad or through Isfahan and Kirman to the Persian Gulf."

As the only possible solution of the position the paper suggests that the Indo-British Government should in certain cases follow Russia's example. The recent extension of the Turkistan Governor-Generalship and the amalgamation of all the Central Asian provinces are noted, and the paper considers it necessary similarly to create a central authority in the north-west provinces of India, where, at the present time, there are too many independent head officials. By strengthening the north-west frontier, as indicated, the " Civil and Military Gazette " opines that Russian seizures and the distribution of her troops over the enormous continent of Asia could be regarded with complacency.

English seizures in Central Asia.

The English have talked a great deal about the plans of conquest of other nations, and of Russia in particular, but have themselves, under cover of this, acquired enormous stretches of territory.

In East Africa they are clearly endeavouring to create an uninterrupted colony from the Mediterranean to the Cape. They have now set themselves a similar task in Asia, the object being to unite all their possessions in that part of the world from the Persian Gulf, or even from the Suez Canal, to the Pacific. For the realisation of this plan it was first of all necessary to

annex Tibet. Concerning this, as if by signal, the " Manchester Guardian," " Spectator," " Englishman " and other papers, appearing in England and India, began simultaneously to discourse in 1898.

This is what Major L. A. Wadell wrote on the subject in the " Englishman " :—" I have made a special study of the geographical and political aspects of Tibet from the Indian, Chinese and Burmese sides and in view of the present position in China I must say it is astonishing how with the close rivalry of Russia and England in the Far East due attention should not have been paid to Tibet, which as we shall soon see, is directly concerned.

" Following the inclusion of the very rich Yangtse-kiang valley in the sphere of England's influence we must consolidate our hold over Tibet, in place of its nominal weak dependence on the powerless authority of China. By this means we should not only prevent the possibility of territorial seizures by Russia between our possessions in India, Burma and China, but would strengthen our position on the entire Asiatic continent, for it would be possible to unite all our possessions from the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean to the shores of the Pacific. If to this be added the immense commercial advantages accruing from the annexation of Tibet the importance of such an acquisition becomes all the more apparent. We see the Celestial Empire being broken up before the eyes of the whole world, and that the European Powers are bitter rivals for the seizure of the remnants of its ruin. Tibet as a vassal of China, must inevitably become the prey of strong neighbours, for, being extremely weak and having no proper form of government, it will be powerless to preserve its independence. Hence the country will inevitably become the scene of rivalry between Russia and England. The Russians are already sending to Tibet their usual " scientific expeditions."

" Fortunately we have the advantage of the better strategical and geographical position ; the Russian possessions are so far distant frrom Tibet that Russian troops would take about a year to reach Lhasa, whilst the Indian Empire on the Bengal, Assam and Upper Burma side adjoins central Tibet. It is only a 10 days' march to Lhasa itself from Darjeeling, the terminus of our railway from Calcutta. And if a light railway was laid further north along the Torsa-Chumbi Valley, the capital of Tibet would only be a 3-4 days' journey from Calcutta.

" The commercial advantages of the annexation of Tibet are very great ; in the heart of the mountains lie latent the riches

veins of gold ore, without equal in the world, but which have as yet not been exploited. All other natural resources are also very considerable, and in healthiness of climate and natural beauty the country recalls the best parts of Switzerland and Kashmir.

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" To sum up I may repeat that circumstances seem altogether favourable for carrying out a very important acquisition at a very small cost. It is, however, necessary to hurry, otherwise we shall be forestalled by Russia and perhaps by France, for whom Tibet is of importance in view of her position in Cochin China and Yunnan. A Russian or French hold on Tibet would have very fatal consequences for our political and commercial position in Eastern Asia."

As is known, all these ideas culminated in the Tibetan expedition of 1904 and at the present time the country is financially and politically dependent on the Indo-British Government.

We will pass now to an examination of the fundatmental cornerstone of the mutual rivalry of Russia and England in Central Asia.

CHAPTER III.

THE FOCUS OF MUTUAL SUSPICION.

The Pamir region—Birth of the Pamir question—Strategical significance of the Pamirs—Pamir demarcation—To whom does Sarikol belong?—Military-topographical sketch of the Pamir region—Characteristics of the mountain passes of the Pamirs and Northern India—Practical measures necessary for the passage of troops across the Hindu Kush—General deductions regarding the strategical importance of the Pamirs—Chitral as a counterpoise to the Pamirs—Question of the occupation of Chitral by English troops—Opinions and pronouncements on the subject of Lord Curzon, Field-Marshal Lord Roberts and the English press.

In Chapter I it has already been shown that the conquest of the Khanate of Kokand in 1876 was the final step in Russia's forward movement in Central Asia, a step which brought her into the Alai valley, *i.e.*, on to the present northern frontier of the Pamir region. During the endless military operations, which followed one another almost uninterruptedly for a period of 10 years, attention was exclusively directed to the pacification of the region and to the strengthening of the acquired territory. Thus, as soon as a halt on the new frontier was possible, the organisation of the civil administration of the country was of primary importance. It was not the time, of course, to enter into the various frontier questions which affected us, as the heirs of the late owners. Moreover, we were from experience aware that each forward step in Asia leads sometimes to a series of unexpected and not always desirable developments. As regards the country lying to the south of the Alai, and included in the Kokand Khanate, these considerations were all the more reasonable in that the Alai and Trans-Alai ranges securely protected our new frontier from the south and that a further move southwards of the frontier, embracing the Pamir Khanates, would involve us in a collision with a host of petty semi-savage rulers. In addition, the Pamirs at that time was a 'terra incognita,' the scanty information available pointing to its being an inhospitable region, poor in natural resources. In any case, the settlement of the question was not a matter of urgency.

But all these considerations in no way weakened our undoubted rights to this country, acquired in conjunction with the Kokand Khanate. That a large portion of the Pamirs was included in the Kokand Khanate was evident from the traces and ruins of fortresses to be seen, and it is also confirmed by the local inhabitants. Finally, an agreement was concluded with the English Government in 1873, in the time of the Amir Sher Ali, by which it was laid down that the northern frontier of Afghanistan is represented by the Oxus throughout its entire course commencing from the Pamirs in the north-east to Kwaja Salar in the north-west; consequently, all the country lying to the north of the river Panja (the upper reaches of the Oxus) was recognised, *a priori*, as falling within the sphere of Russian influence.

Satisfied with her undisputed claim to the Pamir Khanates, Russia was in no hurry to establish her rights in a concrete form, the more so since at the time she was well occupied in parts of Central Asia nearer home.

Russia has then doubly established her claim to the Pamirs, legally in view of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1873, and by right of conquest, following the subjection of the Khanate of Kokand in 1876.

Meanwhile, the temporary withdrawal of Russia's attention from the Pamirs for a period of some years gave opportunity to her immediate neighbours, the Afghans and Chinese, to make seizures in this region. The first step in this connection was taken by Abdur Rahman in 1883. Firmly established on the throne of Kabul, with his authority extending to Herat and Badakshan, he interfered in the endless disturbances occurring amongst the Pamir Khanates, and occupied Wakhan and Shignan with small garrisons. His only right in the matter was the prevailing principle obtaining at the time that the strong may oppress the weak. The Russian Government forthwith protested against this violation of our rights. Owing, however, to the fact that our troops were far distant, the Afghan Amir was in no hurry, and for 10 years the Pamir question remained an open one, the Russians, for reasons already stated, taking no active measures to effect a setulement.

Meanwhile, the English press thought fit to take the Afghan Amir under its wing, and in pursuit of proofs of the rights of Afghanistan, "the friend and ally of England," in the matter of the Pamirs, resorted to all kinds of false statements, sometimes investing them with a cloak of scientific investigations; thus, in order to reconcile the Afghan seizures with the treaty of 1873, it was attempted to prove, on the basis of imaginary scientific data, that the

northern branch of the river Panja, namely the Murghab, and not the south branch, the Pamir river, flowing out of Lake Zor-Kul (Victoria) forms the source of the Oxus, and that therefore the Pamir Khanates lying to the south of the Murghab river (or according to the English, south of the Oxus) fall within Afghan territory. The falsity of these deductions was proved by the investigations of the English themselves during the Elias Expedition of 1885. But this in no way disconcerted the English papers, which continued to beat the 'alarm' to the whole world concerning Russia's dreams of conquest.

Relying on the support of England, the Afghans continued not only to assert themselves roughly in the Pamir Khanates, but imposed taxes on the Alichur Kirghiz, entailing pillage and plunder, and calling forth complaints on the part of the local Tajiks, who regarded themselves as Russian subjects.

In order to clear up these complaints and also to reconnoitre the Pamirs, an expedition under Colonel Yonof was organised in 1892. By this time the Afghans had spread well into the country and had established permanent posts on the shores of Lake Yeshil Kul, far beyond the limits claimed by the English.

On the 24th July the small party of 20 Cossacks, under Colonel Yonof, reached Somatash on the shore of Lake Yeshil Kul, and came into contact with the Afghan post of 30 men under Captain Ghulam Haider. In view of the complaints made by the Alichur Kirghiz and of the fact that the Afghans had no authority over them nor claim to Yeshil Kul lake, Colonel Yonof proposed to the Afghan officer that he should vacate the post and lay down his arms. The dispute ended in a sanguinary melée, in which Ghulam Haider and 5 Afghans were killed.

This incident, petty in itself, was greatly exaggerated by English alarmists, who drew the attention of the whole world to the Pamirs. The immediate practical result of the Somatash incident was the speedy consideration of the Pamir question, which had been dragging on for about 10 years. Fearing our further advance southwards across the Hindu Kush, the English Government forthwith came to an understanding with ours regarding the principal points for settlement during the impending demarcation of the Pamirs. The Treaty of 1873 was accepted as a basis; thus a portion of Darwaz, lying on the left bank of the Panja and belonging to Bokhara, was to be included in Afghan territory, and the portions of Roshan and Shignan on the right bank of that river, in that of Russia.

Thus was fixed the boundary between Russia and Afghanistan on the "roof of the world," a district cut off from the surrounding country by difficult or impassable mountain heights, a wild inhospitable region, but which nevertheless for a period caused Anglo-Russian relations to become strained and attracted universal attention. It is indeed Russia's southernmost outpost, standing almost within sight of India; sufficient reason for the English to picture a Russian descent on India across it. Hence the English Government insisted in 1895 on the formation of a Joint Boundary Commission, composed of Russian and English representatives. As neither the basis of agreement between Russia and England regarding the Pamirs nor a description of the new frontier is to be found in our military literature, it is thought that both may conveniently be stated here.

* Taken from "The Amir Abdur Rahman."—S.E. Wheeler, 1895.

The terms * of the Anglo-Russian Boundary Agreement were as follows:—

1. The spheres of influence of Great Britain and Russia to the east of Lake Victoria (Zor-Kul) shall be divided by a line which, starting from a point on that lake near to its eastern extremity, shall follow the crests of the mountain range, running somewhat to the south of the latitude of the lake, as far as the Benderski and Orta-bel passes. From thence the line shall run along the same range while it remains to the south of the latitude of the said lake. On reaching that latitude it shall descend a spur of the range towards Kizil Rabat on the Aksu river, if that locality is found not to be north of the latitude of Lake Victoria, and from thence it shall be prolonged in an easterly direction so as to meet the Chinese frontier. If it should be found that Kizil Rabat is situated to the north of the latitude of Lake Victoria, the line of demarcation shall be drawn to the nearest convenient point on the Aksu river south of that latitude, and from thence prolonged as aforesaid.

2. The line shall be marked out, and its precise configuration shall be settled by a Joint Commission of a purely technical character, with a military escort not exceeding that which is strictly necessary for its proper protection. The Commission shall be composed of British and Russian delegates, with the necessary technical assistance. The English Government will

arrange with the Amir of Afghanistan as to the manner in which he shall be represented on the Commission.

3. The Commission is charged with the exploration of the Chinese frontier to enable the two Governments to come to an agreement with China regarding the Chinese frontier contiguous to the line of demarcation.

4. The Russian and British Governments engage to abstain from exercising any political influence or control, the former to the north, the latter to the south, of the above line of demarcation.

5. The British Government engages that the territory lying within the British sphere of influence between the Hindu Kush and the line running from the east end of Lake Victoria to the Chinese frontier shall form part of the territory of the Amir of Afghanistan, that it shall not be annexed to Great Britain, and that no military posts or forts shall be established in it.

The execution of this Agreement is contingent upon the evacuation of the right bank of the river Panja by the Afghan troops, and of the portions of Darwaz to the south of the Oxus by the Bokharans; both Governments agree to use their influence respectively with the two Amirs in the observance of the above conditions.

The Joint Commission commenced work in June 1895, and in September of that year the last pillar on the new Russo-Afghan frontier was erected.

Since the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1873 had laid down that the frontier to the west of Lake Victoria is formed by a branch of the river Panja (the Pamir river) flowing out of the lake and further by the river Panja itself, the Commission was only concerned with the delimitation of the frontier line east of Lake Victoria up to the Chinese frontier.

No. 1 pillar was erected on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria; thence the frontier trends southwards, and crossing a small arm of the lake, runs down to a low spur of the Emperor Nicholas II range, on which is placed pillar No. 2. From here the frontier line runs to Peak Concord and thence to Emperor Nicholas II ridge forming the watershed between Lake Victoria and the Wakhan river. The line then proceeds eastwards for about 5½ miles, after which it again turns north-eastwards for 14⅔ miles as far as Peak Lobanof-

Rostof. Thence it runs for about 4⅔ miles in a south-easterly direction as far as Mount Salisbury, whence it turns north-east again till the Benderski pass is reached, on which pillar No. 3 is placed.

On leaving pillar No. 3, the frontier maintains a north-east direction for 1⅓ miles, when it turns sharply to the north-west, crosses Peak Elgin and continues eastwards for 8⅔ miles, to the arm of a mountain spur which separates the basins of the Shamal-Chai and Jaman-Shura rivers. Here the frontier bears to the south-east and crosses the Jaman-Shura, turns again to the east-north-east for about 4⅔ miles, and then due east to the Urta-Bel, on which is pillar No. 4.

Between pillars Nos. 3 and 4 the frontier follows the watershed of the rivers Istik and Aksu. On the summit of the ridge about ⅔ mile from pillar No. 4 is placed pillar No. 5.

From No. 5 the line runs eastwards for 3⅓ miles, along a spur jutting out from the ridge south of pillar No. 6, which is erected at the point where the Gunji-Bai stream, issuing from a ravine, continues its course in the valley of the Aksu; the line follows the Gunji-Bai till it falls into the Aksu, on the right bank of which at the junction of the two streams is pillar No. 7.

Following the river Aksu pillar No. 8 is reached, on the left bank, near the mouth of the river Mihman-djula. Here the frontier crosses the Aksu and runs for 2 miles up the Mihman-djula to a point on its right bank where pillar No. 9 is placed.

From No. 9 the frontier line runs south-east to Lake Bakhmadim Kul, thence for 1⅓ miles along the western arm of the Kashka-su stream which flows into Lake Bakhmadim-Kul. From here the line runs east-south-east to pillar No. 10 on the northern extremity of the spur which juts out from the Mustagh range near Peak Montague-Gerard and divides the waters of the Tegerman-su and Kashka-su. Continuing in this direction the frontier descends into the valley of the Tegerman-su at pillar No. 11, erected at the mouth of the Bezimen stream; whence it proceeds for a mile up this latter stream, where on the right bank is placed pillar No. 12; following the same direction the line reaches Mount Pavlo-Shvaikovski on the Mustagh range. This is the most easterly point of the frontier line with Afghanistan, whilst beyond this the Mustagh range marks the Chinese frontier on the Taghdumbash Pamir.

The portion of Shignan and Roshan incorporated in Russian territory by the above demarcation was handed over to Bokhara as compensation for the strip of Darwaz ceded to Afghanistan.

Without entering into a critical appraisement of our new frontier, established by the above Agreement, it may be noticed that Afghanistan again in this remote corner of Central Asia plays the rôle of 'buffer.' The northern political frontier of Indo-British possessions in this region runs along the Hindu Kush almost from Mastuj to the Mustagh; our frontier, from the meredional bend of the Panja at Ishkashim *viâ* Lake Victoria to the Mustagh. Thus between Russian and English possessions is a narrow strip of Afghan territory about 47 miles long and in places not more than 10 miles wide, forming a 'buffer.'

From the above it is clear that the 1873 Agreement formed the basis for this demarcation of the Pamirs. Abiding with extreme fastidiousness by its former pledges, the Russian Government refused in 1895 to take advantage of its position and push the frontier right up to the Hindu Kush; a legal nicety by which important strategical advantages were lost. The British Government apparently considers that the Hindu Kush, the most formidable mountain range in the world, is insufficient for the protection of India, and so in 1895 made every effort to create, in addition, a special screen of Afghan territory.

Where is the Chinese frontier? To whom does Sarikol belong?

As has been stated above, on the east the Pamirs run conterminously with Chinese territory, but the frontier line has not been demarcated. It will therefore not be out of place to consider certain points bearing on the question.

If we turn to historical facts we find that the eastern boundary of the Pamirs should be moved back behind Sarikol to the line of the mountains of Kashgar, *i.e.*, to the Kashgaria frontier as it was in the sixties up to the time of the Yakub-Beg conquests; in other words to the line Artish-Ming-Yul-Upal-Igil-Yar, where to the present day traces of Chinese fortresses are to be seen. It was only owing to the weakness of the Kokand Khans that Yakub Beg succeeded in seizing almost the whole strip of territory up to what is now Sarikol. Susequently, when the Chinese re-established their rule in Kashgaria they adopted Yakub Beg's frontier line.

The Chinese themselves only actually occupied the Pamirs to the west of Sarikol on two occasions and then only temporarily, *viz.* in the middle of last century, when the Chinese General Fu-de, in pursuit of the Kashgarian Hadjis, who were fleeing to Badakshan after the conquest of Kashgaria and Yarkand by the Chinese, reached the Alichur Pamir, and was the first man to give any information about the country.

The second occasion was in 1884 when a small Chinese detachment, in pursuit of Jahangir, Hadji, who considered himself the heir to Kashgaria after Yakub Beg, defeated the Kashgarians and reached Lake Yeshil Kul. It being already autumn and the passes into Kashgaria blocked with snow, this Chinese detachment was obliged to winter there, the huts erected by them still, according to Gromchefski, existing along the eastern shore of lake Yeshil Kul and called by the local inhabitants 'kafir-kila,' or fortress of the unbelievers.

It is then upon this foundation that the slender claims of the Chinese to extend their frontier westward from Sarikol are based. On English maps the frontier line between Russian and Chinese territory on the Pamirs is traced along the eastern shore of lake Yeshil Kul near Somatash, that is at the very spot where Yonof's expedition met the Afghan detachment. By this demarcation of the frontier the English evidently wish to show that if the Alichur Kirghiz cannot be considered Afghan subjects, in any case the Russians have no right to consider as their territory land which must either belong to China or to no one. This also gave Mr. Freschwiller, Secretary of the Royal Geographical Society in London, a pretext, in his resumé of a paper read by George Littledale, for reproaching Russia with encroaching on territory in Asia, which, for different reasons, had been ignored by her neighbours.

There are no geographical data by which the frontier line between the Pamirs and Chinese dominions west of Sarikol can be traced. The mountain chain which traverses this area acts as the watershed of the separate basins of the rivers Amu and Tarim, and is undoubtedly the hydrographical chain of almost the entire Pamir region. If it be insisted that Chinese possessions on the west cease with the inclusion of Sarikol, then the whole question turns on the accurate definition of this geographical term. In this connection, an explorer of the Pamirs writes :—" the name of Sarikol, as far as is known from definite explorations, belongs to the valley of the river Tash-Kurghan with its northern source Tagharma. But as the Kirghiz inhabitants on the upper Gez river were formerly under the *beg* of Sarikol, and the many nomad encampments along the Gez and Tagharma rivers are all intermingled in an unbroken line, the term Sarikol has been extended to the country north of the Tagharma. Up to this day the district of Tash-Kurghan is included in Sarikol."

According to this, then, the dominions of China cannot extend beyond the western slopes of the Sarikol range, even so including a considerable slice of country in the valley of the Tash-Kurghan

river. Finally, according to the local inhabitants, the Alichur and Alai Kirghiz, the term Pamirs extends even as far as the basin of the Gez river.

The inhabitants of the Sarikol district, numbering about 6,000 of both sexes, speak the same dialect as the Pamir Shignanese, and so in this respect Sarikol is actually a prolongation of the Pamir Khanates.

From the above, it may be concluded that in whatever way the Sarikol question is viewed, it is more justifiable to include it in the Pamir region rather than in Chinese territory. In any case, the eastern boundary of the Pamirs as entered on English maps is purely a fantastic one, and no less mythical is the reproach levelled against Russia by Mr. Freschwiller.

The Pamir region as a base for an advance on India.

It is but a short while ago that the Pamirs almost provided a bone of contention between Russia and England, and attracted the attention of the whole universe. This circumstance alone, one would suppose, would have been enough to make this almost unknown corner of Asia an object of absorbing interest and of systematic explorations. But it has been quite the reverse. The questions in dispute were settled by the Joint Boundary Commission in 1895, and the subject of the Pamirs was soon forgotten. For over 16 years we have been masters of the Pamirs, and yet up to the present time we have not a single complete description of this isolated corner of our Central Asian possessions. From time to time individual explorers direct their steps to the Pamirs, attracted by the extraordinary interest this wonderful corner of Asia has for all branches of natural science : but all these explorations are purely scientific and of a specializing character, entirely divorced from the chief significance of the Pamirs, *viz.* its military situation on the frontiers of India. Meanwhile, the strategical rôle of the Pamirs was very clearly shown at the time of the last rising of the frontier tribes of India in 1897, when the appearance and passive presence on the Pamirs of our small detachment was the fundamental cause of a period of military and financial stress in India, covering a period of some years, and represented by a loss of 70,000 men and 480 million rupees in various expeditions in the direction of the Pamirs.

All this points to the necessity, on our part, of a more careful study of the Pamirs, more especially from a militay point of view.

Without in any way pretending to fill the blanks of military information regarding the Pamirs, we will endeavour merely to clear up a few of the vexed questions concerning the frontier, and also the state of the communications of this region with India, touching in passing on certain facts which characterize the Pamirs as being the advanced post of Russia on the road to India.

Military-topographical sketch of the Pamirs.

The geographical position of the Pamirs is a remarkable one.

Surrounded on all sides by lofty ranges and containing within itself many high mountains, the country represents a sort of watch tower, to which only mule tracks* lead from every side. The title "roof of the world" is probably traceable to the isolated and mountainous nature of the country. In order to explain the nature of the more important obstacles to a movement from the Pamirs southwards on India, we must move the conventional Russian frontier line further south to the natural boundary formed by the Hindu Kush. It is obvious that if our troops ever have to advance on India *viâ* the Pamirs, no artificial "buffer" represented by a small strip of Afghan territory can arrest such an operation: it can only be checked by the Hindu Kush. If, therefore, we take the latter as our natural boundary, the Pamirs become for Russia a lofty plateau, closed on three sides by mountain masses (especially to the south and north)—the Hindu Kush to the south, the Trans-Alai to the north and the Sarikol mountains to the east. To the west there is no sharply defined mountain barrier. This characteristic of the western portion of the Pamirs shows itself in the general slope of the country, from east to west, in which direction also the rivers flow.

The area now known as the Pamirs was but a short time ago thought by geographers to be an extensive tableland, surrounded by mountains. Such it appeared to Marco Polo, whose statements were confirmed in more recent times by the English explorers, Trotter and Gordon. Explorations undertaken within the last 20—25 years, especially those of M. Syeverstsef, have fully established the fact that the Pamirs form a plateau, 12,000 to 14,000 feet above the sea level, seamed with mountain chains and ridges stretching in every direction and covering the country with their

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* *N. B.*—In 1895 a cart road was made from Sufi-Kurghan over the Taldik pass to Pamirs' i Post, but owing to local conditions all communication by this road is still carried on by pack transport.

numerous spurs. The area of valley and level country to the mountainous portions is about 1 : 40. Owing to the general high elevation of the country, the valleys at the upper reaches of the rivers attain a height of 14,000 feet.

In spite of the complicated orographical nature of the Pamirs, certain uniform characteristics are observable, such as many hollows containing deep mountain lakes, the gradual slope of the river valleys, and the mountain chains scattered over the plateau of uniform altitude, with broad ridges with low and accessible passes. This uniformity accounts for the fact that explorers have given the title of "Pamirs" to several different districts, *e.g.* Khargosh Pamir, Tagdumbash Pamir, Alichur Pamir, Seres Pamir, etc.

It must be noted that in the western area the mountains mostly trend from east to west, descending to the river Panja. The explorations of Sven Hedin in 1894 confirm in part the conclusions of M. Syevertsef.

Sven Hedin classifies the Pamirs into three divisions :—

(*a*) typical plateau land, where there is no water drainage ;

(*b*) districts representing the transition from plateau to mountainous country ;

(*c*) purely mountainous country.

It will be seen that the area coming under (*a*) lies to the east and is contained by the Alai and Hindu Kush ranges on the north and south, by Sarikol on the east, and on the west by a line bisecting the lower reaches of the rivers Murghab, Alichur, Pamir and Wakhan. (*b*) consists of bare and uninhabited plains alternating with rugged mountains, their general trend being from east to west. There is no sign of vegetation save a few patches of thin grass. The general elevation of this plateau can be taken as 13,000 feet above sea level The streams and rivers are all sluggish. Climatic conditions are severe, winds, hurricanes and bitter frosts, the temperature sometimes varying as much as 90° (Fahr.) within 6 hours.

The area coming under (*c*) lies to the west. The rivers are swift and torrential, flowing through narrow ravines under overhanging crags. Owing to the lower elevation the climate is more temperate, and along the river valleys a certain amount of vegetation is met with, more especially in the west by the lower reaches of the Ghund, Bartang and Wanj, where there are considerable districts fit for cultivation.

Great Kara-kul lake.—This lake lies in a vast basin surrounded by mountains. It is 12,000 feet above sea-level and has an area of some 65 square miles. It consists of a single basin directed by two rocky promontories stretching out into the lake from north to south. According to Sven Hedin the eastern portion is very deep, reaching a depth of 755 feet, whereas in the western portion the depth never exceeds 72 feet.

The mountains surrounding the lake rise to a height of 12,000 feet above sea-level, and belong, in the north and west, to the Trans-Alai range, and in the east to the Sarikol mountains. Small streams flow into the lake from all sides, the more important being the Mus-kol, Ak-jilga and Kara-jilga. There is no doubt that the water level of the lake is getting lower; it is already some 10 feet lower than it was a short time since. The surrounding country is desolate owing principally to the wind and sharp changes of temperature, the effect of the former being intensified by the fact that it almost invariably blows from the same direction.

The Rang-kul basin, containing the two lakes Rang-kul and Shor-kul, forms the centre of most of the tracks which traverse the Pamirs in different directions. The following routes branch off from here:—to the south-west and further to the south *viâ* the Ak-Baital valley, to the Pamirski Post by a broad level track, 2 to 3½ miles long; to the east, to Chinese territory *viâ* the Sarikol passes of Oi-Balgik, Kok-Terek, Muz-Kur, Ara-Mali, Ak-Berdi, Kush-Jilg, Sari-Tash, and others; to the north-east, into the basin of the Great Kara-kul lake over the passes of Ishi, Tuz-Gun and Uz-Bel. The basin of the Rang-kul is bounded on the south by the valley of the Aksu, on the east by the Sarikol mountains and on the north a series of passes (Ishi, Ak-Berdi, Oi-Balgik, etc.) lead from the basin to the uplands, which form the southern slopes of the Trans-Alai range. The actual basin of the lake is a level surface with a scarcely perceptible slope to the west, where the river Ak-Baital issues out into the valley. Owing to the moisture of the soil, especially in the eastern portion of the basin, there is considerable vegetation and pasture land. The two lakes (Rang-kul and Shor-kul) have an area of about 11 to 13 square miles and are of the same level above the sea as Kara-kul; their water is brackish. A peculiarity of Rang-kul is the number of caves on its southern shore.

Lake Yeshil-kul forms a long and broad stretch of water in the valley of the rivers Alichur and Ghund; the former flows into the lake from the east, the latter from the lake westwards into the river Panja.

As in the case of Rang-kul, the Yeshil-kul basin forms the centre from which roads radiate in every direction. Into Shignan there is an easy route along the Ghund valley, or a more roundabout way over the Tagarakti and Kai-tezek passes; connecting Yeshil Kul with the Pamir and Wakhan rivers are a number of passes, *viz.*, Khargosh, Kuya-Gedi, Bash Gumbaz, Teter-su, etc., the shortest and best route lies along the river Yol Mazar; finally, communication with the Murghab valley is supplied by routes along the valleys of the Great and Little Marchenai, over a pass of the same name: these two streams flow parallel to one another in a northerly direction. Lake Yeshil-kul, unlike the majority of other lakes on the Pamirs, abounds in fish and its water is quite fit for drinking. At the junction of the Alichur river with the lake there are hot sulphur springs, the temperature of the water being estimated at 67°—83° (Cent.): these are claimed by the Kirghiz to have healing properties.

Mountain ranges.—We will now turn to a description of the mountain ranges of the Pamirs with regard to the communications with India and Turkistan.

Hindu Kush.—Geographically this title refers to the two ranges which, in prolongation of one another, form the Kafiro-Badakshan system; but on closer examination it will also be found to be a prolongation of the Himalayas and to be included in the vast area known as the "Rock Belt."

According to the Topographical Departments of the General Staff and the Turkistan Military District, the Hindu Kush is bounded on the east by the Mustagh range and on the west by the source of the Gorhend river; according to English sources of information ("Map of the North-West Frontier of India, showing the Pamir region and part of Afghanistan") its extent is considerably more limited. However, in the present instance, in examining the obstacles intervening between the Pamirs and India, we are concerned with the eastern section of the Hindu Kush forming the natural southern boundary and eastern prolongation of the Kafiro-Badakshan system. The general extent of this section is about 113½ miles from east to west, and at either end are the Mustagh and Wakhan ranges with a mean elevation of not less than 15,000 feet. Along the whole of this extent the Hindu Kush divides the basin of the Amu from the waters flowing southwards into the Indus.

It is to be noted that notwithstanding the deep perpetual snow which covers the Hindu Kush and the wealth of glacial for-

mations in the deep ravines, the northern Pamir basin receives but a small volume of water. It is owing to this fact that there are but few transverse valleys leading from the Pamirs to the Hindu Kush and affording good means of communication, and also that the passes across the range from north to south are not very accessible. On the southern slopes, although the valleys are comparatively more numerous yet they descend so gradually and become so narrow in winding amongst the precipitous cliffs that at their lower extremities there is scarcely room for even a mule track. Even where some sort of path has been made, communication is often closed by avalanches when the snow melts, and in the rainy season when the roads are flooded and washed away by the rush of the mountain torrents.

It is to be noted that with few exceptions not one of the Hindu Kush passes, as at present known, is accessible the whole year round, and as a rule, they are blocked by snow for several months, during which period communication is either entirely interrupted or rendered very difficult.

The absence of good communications between India and the Pamirs, owing to the intervening Hindu Kush, supplies the reason why attacks on the Pamirs have invariably come from the three sides, from Badakshan, Kokand and Chinese Sarikol, and not from the south, from India, whence attacks have been exceptional and of small dimensions.

But it must not be supposed that the passes already discovered represent the sole means of communication across the Hindu Kush. There must be many others, but the difficulties of exploration are enormous owing to the inhospitable nature of the country and the hostility of the inhabitants. The shortest and easiest route from the Pamirs to India *viâ* the Yonof* (Sukhsuravat) pass was discovered quite by chance in 1893 by Colonel Yonof's expedition and after only a short period of exploration. The passes at present known are fairly equally spread over the whole extent of the range and are not grouped in any one particular area offering special facilities for access. This would seem to prove that the whole range of the Hindu Kush is equally accessible and that there must be other undiscovered passes lying on one side or the other of the main routes and leading from the flanks and centre of the Pamirs to Chitral, Yasin and Gilgit. This may be the explanation of the historical fact that the invaders of India at different times have evaded the Pamirs. In any case, it is ignorance of the Hindu

* Apparently the Khora Bori (*Translator*).

Kush more than the height and inaccessibility of the range which is the greatest obstacle to a Russian advance on India.

A competent authority, Colonel Sir Thomas Holdich, in a paper* read before the Geographical Society in London on 11th Marh 1901, gave it as his opinion that the northern frontier of India is completely safe-guarded by this mountain range, which only here and there is crossed by narrow rough ravines suitable only for single foot passengers. And that generally along the whole northern front from the Indus to the Kunar river or Chitral, India may be regarded as inaccessible from the Pamirs. Although there are some passes leading across the Hindu Kush into the strategically important valley of Chitral, these may, in Sir Thomas Holdich's opinion, be disregarded as they also lead into the region of the Jalalabad fortifications. He considers that the only danger to India comes from the direction of the Kabul river route, and on Herat-Sistan-Kandahar-Quetta.

* "The Geography of the North-West Frontier of India" published in the "Geographical Journal."

The Anglo-British Government, however, does not apparently share Colonel Holdich's optimistic views, and insists, at great sacrifice, on the occupation of Chitral and other points of India's northern front opposite the Hindu Kush.

Principal passes leading from the Pamirs to India.

(1) *Borgil, Borogil or Borzil Pass.*—This pass commences 30 miles below Bozai Gumbaz, near the Wakhan village of Sarhad, and leads from the Wakhan valley into that of the Yarkhun. Near Sarhad the pass is 10,975 feet. The upward slope is gentle as far as Borgil, 1 to 1⅓ miles from Sarhad, which is the highest point, 12,450 feet; thence a gradual descent to the valley of the Obi-Darkit, which further down is named Yarkhun. This pass is considered accessible and is open all the year round. The ascent and descent is easy, the slope being about 44 feet in ⅔ of a mile, and is said to be fit for loaded carts. In winter, owing to the open nature of the pass, the snowstorms are sometimes dangerous for man and beast. This lofty steppe, called Dasht-i-Borgil, is the watershed between the Amu and Kabul river basins.

From the hamlet of Borgil there are two routes; one to Chitral *viâ* the Yarkhun valley, and the other to Yasin *viâ* the Darkot pass. Movement by the former in summer is very difficult or quite impossible owing to the frequent flooding of the valley by

the sudden overflowing of the river Yarkhun. Movement by the latter is no less difficult by reason of ice and snow and its wild inaccessible character.

(2) *Yonof pass** (Sukhsuravat) is considered easy. It commences at the hamlet of Kara-Gujek, about 12,305 feet, and at first leads along the valley of the Baikara river, and thence crosses into the valley of the Sukhsuravat, which lower down is called the Ishkumman. The highest point of the pass is 17,000 feet, and is open for the five summer months.

* (Khora Bort ?)

Detailed information of the remaining passes of the Hindu Kush is not available, but they are known to be difficult even for single animals during the few summer months they are supposed to be open.

These passes are :—

(*a*) The *Ochil* pass, on the Kala-Panja-Chitral route, height 18,400 feet, and accessible with difficulty during some of the summer months.

(*b*) The *Rich* or *Janali* pass, also on the Kala-Panja-Chitral route, height 16,700 feet.

(*c*) The *Kilik* and *Mintaka*, leading from Sarikol into the Kanjut valley. The former is the more accessible of the two and is open summer and winter, but leads into the Hunza basin, which is enclosed by wild and impassable mountains. According to Count Stenmore the route into Hunza and Gilgit is 3 days shorter by the Kilik than by the Mintaka.

The Trans-Alai range.—This range forms the northern extremity of the Pamirs and from the direction of Ferghana appears as a gigantic curtain screening the mysterious "Roof of the World."

The range commences in the corner formed by the rivers Kizil su and Muk-su, and running in an easterly direction crosses the Russo-Chinese frontier near the river Markhan-su, and in Chinese territory unites with the extreme northern spurs of the Sarikol mountains. The mean elevation of the range is 18,000 feet, the highest point being Peak Kaufman, 23,000 feet.

The Trans-Alai mountains right from the Bokharan frontier to the Chinese boundary form a serious obstacle to communication

between the Pamirs and Turkistan. There are indeed only two roads for pack transport leading to the Pamirs ; (*a*) from New Margilan (Skobelef), whence a broad cart road runs to Uch-Kurghan, and then enters a narrow defile, the road of which has also been made and may be considered fit for artillery and transport, as far as Langar ; on leaving the latter, the road becomes a mule track crosses the Tengiz-Bai pass and issues into the Alai valley at Daraut-Kurghan, an important junction of roads, thence along the Alai valley into Ferghana, Bokhara and to the Pamirs. From the Alai valley the road rises to the Pamirs *viâ* the Ters-Agar pass.

(*b*) The second road leads to the Pamirs *viâ* the Taldik pass, over 12,000 feet. The latter section of the road from the Taldik to Sara-Tash was made fit for the passage of artillery and wheeled transport in the summer of 1897. To the north-east of the Trans-Alai run the snow-topped Aliga-Bara mountains, between the north Kara-Jilga river and the main range. Peak Kaufman forms the junction of various minor mountain chains, of which the principal is the Kokui-Bel stretching for $86\frac{2}{3}$ miles from Peak Kaufman to the Aksu river. There are also two other "perpetual snow" ranges, which stretch from Peak Kaufman north-east and south-west, and join up with the northern spurs of the Sarikol mountains. These enclose the extensive Kara-kul basin, and in the north coincide with the direction of the main Trans-Alai range, being crossed by the Kizil Art pass, 14,260 feet. From the latter pass, there are two roads leading south, one to the Great Karakul lake, the other into Chinese Sarikol *viâ* the Uch Bel pass and a ford across the Markan-su river.

The Alai valley.—The general direction of this valley is from west to east for a distance of 100 miles with a breadth of from $\frac{2}{3}$ mile at the village of Karamuk to $10\frac{2}{3}$—$11\frac{1}{3}$ miles near Bordaba. To the west the Alai valley adjoins the high ground near the village of Karamuk (8,000 feet), while to the east it gradually ascends to the Taun-Muran pass (12,000 feet). This latter pass serves as the water-parting to the two important tributaries of the Kizil-su, which run in opposite directions, the western watering the whole Alai valley and the eastern, Kashgar.

The surface of the valley is for the most part level, though in the northern portion it is intersected by shallow winding gullies in which flow the small streams issuing from the Alai mountains. In the southern portion there are also numerous rivulets, and low hillocks covered in summer with stunted vegetation. In spite of

the abundant irrigation there are no trees in the whole valley, but at the end of summer the grass is luxuriant and attracts the Kirghiz with their flocks from the adjoining districts of Ferghana, Margilan, Osh and Andijan.

The Sarikol mountains.—As mentioned, these mountains from the eastern limit of the Pamirs and the conventional boundary of Chinese territory. To the south, the spurs of the Sarikol range gradually rise to the snow-capped crests of the mighty Mustagh Ata; to the north, they gradually descend and link up with the Trans-Alai range. The country lying amongst the various mountain ridges forms a broad plateau with excellent pasture land, where the Sarikol Kirghiz are to be found with their flocks during the summer months. This plateau is sometimes called "Kizil Art" and is at the same elevation as the valley of the Tagharma near Tashkurghan. To the east of the plateau rises the snowclad range running towards the Kuch-Bel pass, where it skirts the plain to the north and unites with the Neza Tash mountains, which in turn form the western limit of the plateau. To the south the Kizil Art plain gradually narrows and falls into the basin of the Little Kara-kul.

The Sarikol range is the watershed of the rivers Oxus and Tamir. A characteristic are the breaks which exist in it in the form of narrow defiles, through which the waters of the Pamirs pass and issue in the Tamir basin, as in the case of the rivers Markhansu and Gez.

Almost in the centre of the Sarikol range lies the Little Kara-kul, connected with the Pamirs by good roads *viâ* Tagharma and the basin of the Rangkul; the roads* are, however, lacking in water and fodder. Besides that of the Little Kara-kul basin there are numerous other feasible passes over the Sarikol mountains, of which may be mentioned :—

*N. Syevertsef "*Orographical sketch of the Pamir mountain system.*

(*a*) Kuch Bel pass leading into the Muji basin.

(*b*) Akberdi pass over which a road runs from Sarikol into the Rang-kul basin, whence is another road joining the main Sarikol route (Taghdumbash-Muji) *viâ* the passes of Kara-Turuk, Tokh-Terek and Ulug Rabat.

(*c*) Berdish pass, across which runs the road from the Tagdumbash valley to that of the Aksu.

From the more recent explorations, more especially those of N. Syevertsef, the fact is established that the Pamirs are intersected by many mountain chains, deep valleys and lake basins. The general trend of the mountains in the interior of the Pamirs is from east to west; consequently, they cut across the roads, which for the most part run north and south. The roads, as a rule, follow the river valleys, and the passes by which they cross the mountains are seldom very high, since a characteristic of the valleys of the Pamirs is that they themselves stand at an elevation of 12,000—13,000 feet, *i.e.*, but little inferior in height to the mountains which average 15,000—16,000 feet.

The most important of the mountain chains in the interior of the Pamirs is the South Wakhan, which stretches for about 86½ miles along the right bank of the Wakhan river, resting on the spurs of the Mustagh range in the east, and on the west combining with the Ishkashim range to form a right angle round which flows the Panja river. The inaccessibility of this Wakhan range is shown by the fact that between the two parallel valleys of the Pamir and Wakhan rivers and throughout the whole extent of the range up to the Ak-su or Little Pamir valley, there is no cross-road; it is only in the latter valley that there is a road leading to the Yonof (Kohra Bort?) pass, and linking up the Great Pamir valley *viâ* the Benderski or Andemin pass; this latter is 15,463 feet and in winter is watched by our scouts.

The average height of the Wakhan range is not less than 18,000 feet, and almost throughout its entire length is covered with deep snow all the year round.

To the north of the Wakhan range rises the Shignan ridge (Drum plateau) stretching between the Ghund and Shakh rivers. In many places it is intersected by deep ravines especially in the eastern area where there is a road across the Duzakh-Dara pass, connecting these two river valleys. Further eastwards roads connect these same valley, *viz.* from Somatash into the Pamir valley *viâ* the Khargosh pass, 14,662 feet; road from lake Sasik Kul *viâ* the Kumdi pass; road from Rabat along the valleys of the north and south Bash Gumbez across a pass of the same name, direct into the basin of Lake Victoria.

North of the Shignan range runs a ridge of mountains between the Bartang and Murghab valleys in the north and those of the Ghund and Alichur in the south. Throughout its extent from the Panja river to the Kara-su there is only one road running from Somatash to Sarez, along the Marchenai valley and crossing a pass (15,900 feet) of that name. This route is extremely difficult.

To the north of the Bartang mountains, the mountain system of the interior of the Pamirs connects with the Wanj and Darwaz ranges, filling the whole north-west area of the Pamirs with lofty rocky masses of a wild and inaccessible nature, the mean elevation being 15,000—18,000 feet.

In the west of the Pamirs there are no sharply defined ridges. The country enclosed by the curve of the Panja is covered with mountain masses, but which have not yet been closely explored. The high ridges running along the right bank of the Panja almost entirely interrupt communication between Badakshan and the interior of the Pamirs. In the north-west corner of the Pamirs rise the Wanj mountains, exceeding 22,000—23,000 feet, and separating the Pamirs from Darwaz. The few passes that are to be found in these mountains are only open for a few months or even weeks during the year.

From the above short description, it is evident that communication between the different districts of the Pamirs is very difficult, and that, generally, movement is confined to the river valleys.

Thus the roads, fit for pack transport only, run along the river-banks and in many cases along the river bed itself, since the ravines and valleys are often so narrow that there is but room for the actual stream and no space for even a mule track. In such cases, movement must be very uncertain and attended by considerable risk, owing to slippery rocks and stones, liability to sudden floods, etc. Yet this is less dangerous than being obliged to cross rivers on skin-rafts ("gupsars") with the transport animals and horses swimming behind, as one may have to do in the absence of fords. (*Note.*—Captain Verestchagin in the summer of 1903 lost his life when crossing a river in this way.)

To avoid such dangers, paths are sometimes hewn out of the rocks above the river-bed along the perpendicular sides of the ravines, or narrow balconies constructed on which the road is laid. These latter are made by driving piles into the face of the cliffs: they are often not more than 1-1½ paces in width and so frail that they shake and sway with the weight of even a single foot-passenger. It follows that a journey under such conditions can only be accomplished with the help of experienced local inhabitants and by using Kirghiz horses accustomed to such work.

We will now briefly review the characteristics of the more important rivers and valleys of the Pamirs. Following the mountain system the general flow of the rivers is from east to west. Much in

the same way as, according to Sven Hedin, the country changes in following this direction from plateau land to that of a purely mountainous nature, so also do the rivers.

A typical example is the Ak-su, the middle reaches of which are named the Murghab, and the lower the Bartang. Thanks to a large volume of water and a broad level valley, its upper reaches resemble a river of the plains. It rises at a height of about 14,000 feet near the hamlet of Bozai Gumbaz, and flows at first north-east through a succession of small mountain lakes. At the junction of the Istik river it gradually widens out and flows through a broad level valley, winding between low banks. In spite of the large volume of water the current is moderate and even. At the Pamirski Post where the Ak-Baital flows into the Ak-su, the main stream takes the name Murghab. At this point the river valley is as much as 5½ miles broad, and the current becomes more rapid. Subsequently, the valley narrows and the river-bed deepens. After junction with the Kara-su the valley becomes a gorge with rocky spurs blocking the mule track and necessitating crossings from one bank to the other, or the use of "gupsars" when possible. For this reason, the majority of travellers prefer the longer route *viâ* the Pshart valley, the right tributary of the Murghab, which leads to the Sasik Kul lake, not far from the junction of the Pshart and the Murghab. This route is about 46⅔ miles. The width of the Murghab varies from 14 to 105 feet, and it is fordable almost throughout its length except when the snow is melting or after heavy rain. But in its lower reaches fording is very risky, not so much by reason of the depth of the river as on account of the swiftness of the current. The name of Bartang is given to the river below its junction with the Great Marchenai.

Along the whole valley of the rivers Ak-su, Murghab and Bartang there is a mule track open to traffic, except in the lower reaches of the Murghab and in small stretches along the Bartang. The circuitous route *viâ* the Pshart valley in many places runs along the actual bed of the stream. About 1—1⅔ miles from its junction with the Murghab, the Pshart valley widens and in many places is covered with vegetation, the river flowing quietly and evenly.

The Pshart unites with the Ak-Baital about 4 miles from its junction with the Murghab. There is a road along the Ak-Baital valley connecting the two chief centres, to which lead most of the main lines of communication in the Pamirs, *viz.* the Pamirski Post and the basin of the Rang-kul lake. The Ak-Baital, in its upper course, is a typical mountain torrent: in its middle

reaches, owing to the number of streams flowing in on the right hand, the volume of water is considerable, so that at "Rabat"* No. 2 it can only be crossed by a fairly deep ford. The breadth of the river at this point is as much as 70 feet, and the depth from 3—5 feet. The valley is not more than 50—100 paces across, and only in the lower reaches of the Ak-Baital reaches a width of 2—2⅔ miles. The whole valley is strewn with shingle and boulders and almost devoid of vegetation. At 8 miles from rest-house No. 2 the road along the Ak-Baital valley bifurcates, one branch leading north-east to lake Rang-kul and the other north-west *viâ* the Ak-Baital pass to Great Kara-kul lake. This latter pass is 15,070 feet and may be regarded as one of the more accessible passes of the Pamirs. The ascent from the Pamirski Post is very steep and winds in many zig-zags over rough ground, movement being difficult. The descent into the Muskol valley is easier by a comparatively broad and even track.

* The term "Rabat," both in the Pamirs and in Turkistan generally, is applied to small earth rest-houses built by Government in the more wild and unpopulated districts on the recommendation of the local authorities.

After crossing the Ak-Baital the road turns due north along the Muskol valley, the banks of which are swampy owing to numerous springs. Almost parallel to the main route along the Ak-su, Murghab and Bartang valleys, but more to the south, runs the valley of the rivers Gorumdi, Alichur, Ghund, also from east to west, through which passes another of the main routes of the Pamirs, connected with the above mentioned routes by several cross roads running north and south.

The *Gorumdi river* flows from the Urta-Buz pass (14,000 feet) and with streams from the neighbouring mountains forms the source of the Alichur river. It has but a small volume of water and for some months in the year completely dries up.

The *Alichur* in its upper and middle reaches flows through a valley which in places reaches a width of 2⅔—3⅓ miles. The valley almost throughout is marshy but provides good grazing. As it nears lake Yeshil Kul the valley narrows and the river-bed deepens, but communication almost along its entire length presents no special difficulty. But on reaching the Ghund river, a continuation of the Alichur, the river valley becomes a mere gorge and communication becomes difficult as in the case of the Bartang mentioned above. Lake Yeshil Kul is the meeting place of the roads running through the Gorumdi, Alichur and Ghund valleys, and roads run from it, north to the Bartang and south to the Pamir river valley.

The mountain passes of Northern India and the Pamirs.

The region of high mountain passes on the northern frontier of India stretches northwards of the line Peshawar-Leh. There are two roads from the Punjab to Chitral; the shortest of these is *viâ* the Lowari pass (10,450 feet); the second, and the one more generally used, starts along the Khang valley, crosses the Babuzar pass (13,589 feet), continues to Chilas, and thence *viâ* Gilgit, the Shandurski pass (12,223 feet) and Mastuj. There is also a third road to Chitral, ordinarily used by the Kashmir Imperial Service Troops, and also by a few English officers. This road connects Gilgit and Kashmir *viâ* the Tragbol or Rajdiyan (11,700 feet) and Borzil (13,500 feet) passes. At Rambat this road joins up with the Khang valley and the road leading to Chilas. The road from Srinagar to Leh and Gilgit *viâ* Skardo is but seldom used by Kashmir troops *en route* to Ladakh and the Gilgit Agency. There are no passes on the road from Kargil to Gilgit, but towards Leh are the Namik Ha (13,000 feet) and the Fotu La (13,446 feet) passes

The high passes along the Himalaya, Karakorum, Mustagh and Hindu Kush ranges lead into Afghanistan and lie beyond the posts occupied by Indo-British or Imperial Service Troops.

Generally speaking, all the passes on the Indian side are feasible for troops and pack animals for 4—5 months of the year. This, at any rate, is the opinion of Captain Godfrey, the Political Agent at Gilgit. But the writer, from personal experience, is aware that each pass of the Pamirs has its own peculiarities. For example, the Taldik and Terek-Daran passes in the Ferghana district, lying close to one another and each leading into the Alai valley and to Kashgar, are opened and closed to traffic alternately. The author crossed the Terek-Daran on horseback without difficulty in March 1896, at a time when the Taldik was so blocked by snow that it could not have been crossed even on foot, either from the north or from the south.

Passes of 15,000 feet are open from June to October; those from 11,000—15,000 feet for a considerably longer period. But even during the short period when they are open, the snow does not entirely disappear, and movement may be much hindered. Before June and the beginning of October, the passes are not free of danger for horses, as the powerful sun in the daytime weakens the crust of frozen snow, so that unless an early start be made before daybreak there are likely to be accidents with the animals. Measures against frost-bite must be taken, and the author recommends

boots of rice straw over two pairs of woollen socks, and a pair of leather socks, the feet being well rubbed with fat.

Commanders of troops moving over these snow-clad mountain passes must pay the strictest attention to details connected with boots and weather. Each man should carry food and some dry firewood and be provided with dark spectacles. If such precautions be taken, as also the advice of the local inhabitants as to day and hour of marching, the passes can be crossed in late spring or early winter, and if necessary even in mid-winter.

Conclusions.—From what has been said above, the following conclusions may be arrived at regarding the significance of the Pamirs for offensive operations against India :—

1. Both the topographical conditions and the poverty of the country renders the Pamirs unsuitable as a base for a force of any considerable size advancing on India. History shows that previous invasions of India have not been launched from the Pamirs.

2. Nevertheless, owing to the short distance and the special military-political conditions obtaining, it would undoubtedly be advantageous to despatch a small column (not less, however, than a rifle brigade with mountain artillery) *viâ* the Pamirs, with a view to direct some of our opponent's forces to this wild frontier, far removed from the political and vital centres of India. The history of the rising on the north-west frontier of India in 1897-98 confirms the idea that a diversion from the Pamirs might have a powerful influence on the course of military operations along India's principal lines of defence.

3. There are good grounds for supposing that in the Hindu Kush, the main obstacle intervening between India and the Pamirs, there exists, in addition to those already known, other passes suitable for the movement of troops. Hence it is most desirable that a more careful exploration of the range should be made and of the routes leading to it both from the Pamirs and from India.

Chitral as a counterpoise to the Pamirs.

The demarcation of the Pamirs and the settlement of the knotty questions involved, could not, of course, entirely satisfy public opinion in England. The consolidation of Russian supremacy on the "Roof of the World" and the appearance there of a Russian detachment greatly alarmed the Anglo-British Government. Although, as we have seen, this incorporation with our possessions of a portion of the Pamir Khanates was no fresh act of

conquest, but merely the resumption of previously acquired right, yet the English Government could not bring themselves to regard it in any other light save an unfriendly act on our part, demanding a corresponding extension of British dominion in Central Asia. The security of India was not even indirectly threatened; the English themselves are thoroughly agreed as to the doubtful possibility of moving a force of any size across the Pamirs.

Meanwhile, the immediate result of consolidating our position on the Pamirs was a British move northwards towards the passes of the Hindu Kush and a general extension of the frontiers of India to the north and north-west; up to the present this has been followed by an unbroken series of military expeditions.

It would thus appear that, whereas during the last 30 years Russia has not advanced her frontier in Central Asia, England has continued uninterruptedly to push forward the boundaries of India, and unceasingly to point to Russia's schemes of conquest.

As soon as the Pamir question arose, the English Government determined to settle matters with Kashmir; with this object a quarrel was picked with the Maharaja Pershab Singh, and this vast country with its 3 million inhabitants passed into the hands of the English.

Then, immediately after the Pamir Boundary settlement, arrangements were made for the mobilisation of the Peshawar Division for the conquest of Chitral, which, in the words of the diplomatists, was to serve as compensation for concessions made in the Pamir business, and to be the advanced post of India's defence. The conquest of Chitral, however, cost the Indian Government over a thousand killed and wounded and 21½ million rupees.

In order to safeguard Chitral it was necessary at once to commence a series of expeditions against the Swats, Mohmands and Pathans, who hold the lines of communication. Judging by the struggle with the Afridis, these conflicts appear likely to continue for many years; and yet for the last half century the English have been paying the Afridis a handsome subsidy of £1,370* per annum, though scarcely a year passes without hostile acts on their part and by the Waziris.

* "At present these kindly 'allies' who shed so much English blood, receive an annual subsidy of 1,400,460 rupees."
(H. B. HANNA.)

It is much the same in the case of the Mohmands. Moreover, this struggle with the tribes becomes year by year more serious

since by constant experience they are beginning to show signs of co-operation and method in their operations. In 1897, to meet the trans-frontier tribes, it was necessary to mobilise a larger force than was required for the Afghan War in 1879, and this year (1908) for the subjection of a small Mohmand tribe a strong force of all arms had to be mobilised. This will evidently be the normal state of affairs in the future, *i.e.* the Indian Government are faced with a chronic state of warfare with the Mohmands and Swats.

And all this is due to excessive suspicion of Russia on the part of the English, aroused by a small scrap of the Pamirs on the "Roof of the World."

[The chapter concludes with long quotations, without any comments by the author, from Lord Curzon's speeches and from the "Civil and Military Gazette" (stated to be "The official organ of the Anglo-Indian War Department") and "Pioneer Mail" on the subject of the occupation of Chitral and Anglo-Russian relations.

To save space and also seeing that without some indication of the author's opinion of the views expressed, these quotations lose much of their interest, they are not reproduced.

Lord Roberts is merely quoted as saying that "the occupation of Chitral which has given rise to a series of complications on the frontier is easily explained by the general principles of a forward policy."]

CHAPTER IV.

England and Afghanistan.

The importance of Afghanistan as a buffer between Russia and England in Central Asia—The change in Russian and British influence in Afghanistan—Political bequests of Abdur Rahman—Political programme of the present Amir Habibullah—Characteristics of the more important military administrative centres of Afghanistan.

The importance of Afghanistan as a factor in the mutual relations of Russia and England in Central Asia has been considerable ever since the two Powers began to approach one another in the thirties of last century. But whereas Russia's policy was of a platonic nature, restricted to mere negotiations, the despatch of Missions, etc., England adopted aggressive measures. Thus, in 1837, when the Persians were besieging Herat, as an answer to the presence in the Persian camp of a solitary Russian agent, the English despatched a complete expeditionary force to Afghanistan *viâ* the Persian Gulf. Again, in 1838, the trifling preference shown by Dost Mahomed to the Russian agent over the Indo-British official in Kabul brought about the invasion of Afghanistan in 1838-39. Similarly, in answer to General Stolyetof's Mission, which, as was well known to the English, was not followed by any movement of Russian troops, the Indo-British Government embarked in a bloody war against Afghanistan, resulting in the taking of Kandahar.

This passing allusion to these points is made solely as a reply to the reproaches so frequently levelled at Russia by the English that Russian policy has been directed with a view to the ultimate conquest of Afghanistan.

In any case, the nearer Russia and England have approached the Afghan frontier, the greater importance has Afghanistan acquired, embracing, as it does, the main lines of operations from Russian possessions on India —the centre of gravity of the power and wealth of modern England. On this account, until the conclusion of the recent Agreement, a collision in Central Asia seemed inevitable, in which event Afghanistan would have played an important part, as being a powerful lever in the hands of one or

other of the rival Powers. This point is emphasised by the annual subsidy paid by England to secure the friendship of Afghanistan.

What rôle would Afghanistan play in the event of a collision between Russia and England in Central Asia ? What awaits a Russian army in Afghanistan were an expedition against India undertaken through that country? Such questions, following the recent conclusion of an Agreement with England, may appear out of place; but we have embarked on a review of the military political position of Russia in Central Asia and consequently we must endeavour to throw some light on our present relations with Afghanistan—the most important factor in all the questions dealt with in this work. Let us refer to the book of the late Amir Abdur Rahman, whose policy is being rigidly followed by the present Amir Habibullah Khan.

(Here follows a word for word quotation from "The Life of Abdur Rahman, Amir of Afghanistan," 1900, Volume II, page 277 *et seq.*, edited by Mir Munshi Sultan Mahomed Khan.)

"But the kingdom of Afghanistan is a growing Power, a Power which will be of the greatest importance, and which must always be reckoned with by Russia and England in their designs upon each other. To either of these two great and mighty neighbours the friendship or enmity of a strong Afghanistan is of far greater importance in Asia than that of any other great Empire in the world, for the reason that Afghanistan has a brave army at her disposal, numbering hundreds of thousands of Islamic heroes, who are born warriors, whether trained soldiers or simple peasants, and who would all sacrifice every drop of blood till the last man was killed, in fighting for their God, their Prophet, their religion, their homes, their families, their nation, their Sovereign, their liberty and independence. The ruler of Afghanistan is also of great importance, on account of the political and geographical position of his country. Should Afghanistan be in existence at the time of a war breaking out between Russia and England, that Power would certainly be victorious which could secure the support of Afghanistan. In fact, I consider that, so long as Afghanistan exists and remains united within itself and with Great Britain, it is impossible for Russia ever to attempt to attack India, or to go to war against England in Asia."

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"The policy of Afghanistan towards her two strong neighbours should be friendly towards the one which is least aggressive, and hostile to the Power wishing to pass through her country or interfere

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with her independence. Afghanistan must not, however, by her actions, provoke either of her neighbours, neither must she allow either of them to enter her country under any pretence whatever, no matter what treaties or promises they make.

"The policy of the Russian statesmen who guide the movements of Russia in Asia is worthy of great admiration. The advances of the Russian political circle are like the columns of an army moving under the command of a very capable commander-in-chief, who, having divided his army into four parts, carries on several campaigns at the same time. He arranges the four columns in such a manner that no one of the four seems to show any intention of fighting or attacking the enemy until a suitable opportunity occurs. He keeps the attention of the enemy from being concentrated upon any one point, and immediately he finds that they are becoming weak and neglectful, he attacks immediately, without giving them any time for preparations for defence.

"The officials of the Russian Government are busy at the same moment at each of the four following places in the East:—Korea and China on the one side; towards the Pamirs and Afghanistan on the other side; towards Persia on the third side; and Turkey on the fourth. They leave out of their calculations any other quarter, outside these four, which they see is wide awake and prepared to oppose their aggression, confining their attacks to those which are weak and neglected."

"I could make many suggestions for stopping and putting an end to this aggressive policy of Russia towards India and Afghanistan, but I will confine myself to giving only a few necessary hints now. The first and most important one is what I have before emphasised, *viz.*, that England and Afghanistan must be firm allies: while such an alliance continues Russia will never attack either of them. Englishmen who say "Why should we go to war with Russia for the sake of Herat or any other part of Afghanistan"? do not know that to fight for Herat, which is the key to India, is in reality to fight for India itself. If Russia were to take Herat and Afghanistan, she need not trouble much about attacking India, because it would be very difficult for England to rule in India, when her borders should touch those of Russia, necessitating the presence of a very large army, larger indeed than the Indian Treasury and Exchequer could afford to keep. Many more grave complications and difficulties would arise from having Russia as a close neighbour of India. At a time, too, when the brave fighting

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races of Afghanistan and Turkomans were standing and fighting under the Russian flag, it would require an immense army on the part of England to defend herself and her possessions. If England has no intention of breaking her faith and treaties (which I am sure she has not) that she has made with my Government to protect Afganistan against Russian aggression, and if she does not desire to go to war with Russia merely upon the question of Herat, then Englishmen should not make public statements of this policy, because if Russia ever did attack Afghanistan it would be for the purpose of invading India.

"As long as Russia knows that the unanimous desire of Englishmen and that of the Afghans is to stand and fall together, she will never attack either the one or the other, knowing well that the two combined are too strong for her.

"The second hint is: Russia will never stop moving forward till England stops her. If England wishes to put a stop to this aggressive policy, she herself must cease to practise a weak, apathetic, indifferent policy towards the movements of Russia, such as has been carried out by past English politicians. If Russia is once made to understand that any further aggression on her part would be the cause of war, she would be easily turned back by a strong protest. I know well that at the present moment Russia is not prepared, nor is she desirous of going to war against England, but so long as the English exhibit silence and indifference towards Russian aggression, so long will the Russians continue their slow movement forward. If Russia occupies or takes under her influence any one of the three countries — Afghanistan, Persia, or Turkey — it would injure the other two as well as affect India. Therefore her aggression should be opposed when it is turned against any one of these countries. Sadi says: "When a spring of water first breaks through a small hole, it can be stopped by a finger being placed upon the hole; but it cannot be stopped by putting an elephant before it when it is too large to be stopped.

"The third way of stopping Russian aggression in the direction of India is for England to make Afghanistan strong by giving her every help in the shape of money and war material, and to show Russia in plain unmistakable language that during my lifetime, as well as after my death, any interference in the affairs of Afghanistan, or putting forward claimants for the throne of Kabul, would mean war between Russia and England.

"Afghanistan neither needs nor does she desire that the English army should enter the country at any time under any excuse of

fighting against Russia, or the like, so long as we have sufficient money or arms. The only time that the Afghans would willingly admit the English army into their country would be when they had been decisively and officially defeated by Russia, and could not stop her from taking their country by any possible means. But as long as the Afghans can fight for themselves they ought not, and they would not let one soldier of Russia or England put his foot in their country to expel their enemy, as it would be impossible to get rid of the army which they themselves had invited to help them, who would always have the excuse for remaining by saying that they were keeping the country peaceful. In such a case, if they found that the country was peaceful, and the people contented under their rule, they would remain there. If the people rose against them they would say: "as you have broken the peace, the promise we made that we would return the country to you does not hold good any more."

"If England and Russia were to agree to divide up Afghanistan between them, they may make certain that this would be the foundation of a war between them in India, that would soon come to pass after such a treaty had been entered into. In the case of such a division, Balkh, Turkistan, Kataghan, Herat and Farah, countries lying on the west of the Hindu Kush, would come under the Russian division; they are the richest and most fertile provinces of Afghanistan, whilst those of Jalalabad and Kabul, falling to the share of the English, are scarcely rich enough to pay their expenses. It is a great mistake that suspicions should exist in the minds of British statesmen about my friendship; when the British find that the ruler of Afghanistan is wise, strong, and loyal, it is their duty and interest to support him: a weak, inexperienced, and untrustworthy Amir on the throne of Kabul would be dangerous for Afghanistan as well as for India.

"My fourth suggestion is that the English should not neglect Persia and Turkey, as they have done in the past few years; they must prevent both these countries falling into the hands of Russia or under her influence: they must do their utmost to make Persia and Turkey strong, and endeavour to win their friendship.

"In accordance with my suggestion mentioned elsewhere, England must also take steps to help Persia, Turkey and Afghanistan to enter into a triple alliance, which means erecting a strong wall in the face of Russian aggression, by the union of the whole Islamic world. This would result in a general universal peace throughout the whole of Asia where Russian aggression is going on, and which

threatens a most serious war in the future. It is quite obvious that if these three Islamic Powers, who are bound to each other by ties of religion, and whose safety lies in their being friendly allies, were friendly to England, the whole Islamic world would be bound to look after British interests.

"My fifth suggestion is, that it is necessary for both England and Afghanistan to maintain the strength of their forces: they should work together making their subjects rich and contented, keeping an army sufficient to oppose the advance of an enemy; just as taking a tonic is better than taking medicine after falling ill. As one of the poets says: "Show preparations for war if you wish to keep the peace, and to educate, enrich and please the subjects makes the foundation of the kingdom strong, as the subjects are the walls on which the building of the Government stands."

"The welfare of Afghanistan can best be achieved by promoting industries and improving trade and commerce, and thus keeping the subjects well employed, whereby they can earn comfortable livings. Another means is bringing about social intercourse between the ruling nations and the ruled, and by studying the feelings of the people, redressing their grievances, and giving them all equal rights, without any distinction of nationality, caste, colour or creed. I admire one point in the Asiatic policy of Russia, that in Russian Turkistan their Russo-Oriental subjects also rise to the positions of colonels and generals, while inter-marriage and social intercourse between the two races are much more frequent than between the Anglo-Indians and the Indians in India who are always aloof from each other. If an English person marries an Indian the whole English community looks upon the couple with prejudiced eyes and contempt. The result of this is, that the English and the Indian are not in the position of studying each other's feelings and remain utter strangers to each other. There is another regretable circumstance in India, namely that the friendly intercourse that used to exist between the old English officials and the Indian in India is on the decline, because the newly educated young civilians who come to India from England, having passed their examinations, but having no experience of the world and life, look upon their term of service in India as a temporary measure, and owing to the easy means of travelling between India and England, they can more frequently visit their friends in England, and therefore do not care about making friends in India. The old Anglo-Indians used, on the other hand, to settle down in

India, looking upon it as their home, and so were bound to seek society and friends among the Indians themselves.

"After having stated the probability of a Russian attack upon India and Afghanistan, and the means of stopping such a plan, I will try to explain how far the Russians are wrong in their ideas, whether their invasion of India is possible or not.

"In answering this question I am very sorry to disappoint my Russian friends, from whom I received much courtesy and hospitality; but I must honestly tell them that so long as Afghanistan does not join Russia, the invasion of India is impossible, and the joining of Afghanistan with Russia in such an invasion is still more impossible. If the Russians would take my advice as their true friend—and I really give them honest advice, as I am under heavy obligations and owe them a debt of gratitude—they must not try this game. The result would be the ruin of Russia, and is sure to end like the following story:—A man was very thin, and his wife was anxious that he should become a little stouter. This man was very fond of playing with wasp nests, though his wife had often told him not do so. It happened one day that the irritated wasps attacked him, and stung him most fearfully. When he reached home he was quite swollen and stout and full in the face. His wife, who was very pleased at this change in his appearance all at once, asked him how he had managed it. He answered that he had been bitten by wasps and that he was in terrible pain. His wife began to pray: O, Lord, make the pain go, but let the swelling remain! But unfortunately the contrary was the result; the swelling soon went down but the the blood-poisoning remained. This will be the end of Russian attempts to invade India; that they will not be able to take India, and the pain and sufferings of the terrible war would remain to add to their sorrow. If any future ruler of Afghanistan should join Russia in her plans of invading India, the friendship and support of such an Amir would be of far greater importance than that of any other Empire, for the reason that he is such a close neighbour of India. But as I have clearly explained above, such a combination is quite impossible, and it is a delicate and difficult problem. Should, however, any future Amir be so foolish as to invite Russia or England to occupy his country or to pass through it, the result would be the same as it was in the time of Shah Shujah, when the Afghans killed the Shah as well as the English who had been invited by the Shah to enter into their country. The English Government, having tried two experiments, do not want to try a third; and if Russia is wise she will learn a lesson from the expenses and pains.

and sufferings of the English, and not interfere in Afghan affairs, even if the Amir of Afghanistan should invite them to do so."

[*Note by translator*:

The author next proceeds to give an account of the armed strength of Afghanistan and of the Hazaras. He states that his information was obtained in 1898 from a Hazara Khan, Mahomed Azim, the head of a numerous Afghan tribe, which revolted in 1892 against the Amir Abdur Rahaman. Mahomed Azim was defeated and taken prisoner, but escaped to Tashkent, where he remained under the protection of the Russian Government.

As will be gathered, the information is out of date, consequently inaccurate and considerably at variance with that contained in the "Military Report on Afghanistan." Its reproduction here, therefore, would seem to serve no useful purpose. On the other hand, it is of considerable interest to note that the author, in spite of his standing and experience, had no better source of information on this important subject.

The chapter concludes with the following notes on the more important military-administrative centres of Afghanistan.]

Herat.—Apex of the strategical triangle, with Kabul-Kandahar as base. It is impossible to hold Afghanistan without possessing this triangle. The importance of Herat is not limited by its strategical position. Its valley is very fertile and rich, and can in a short time furnish an army with supplies and transport for a further movement.

Situated on the bank of the Hari Rud watered by numerous canals leading from the river, Herat has in its centre the citadel of Chahar Bagh, surrounded by a moat, which can always be flooded. The city is surrounded by high earthworks (50 feet) with walls of 25-30 feet. English Engineers have tried to make Herat a modern fort, but at present it offers no serious impediment to a move from the north. Herat is as famous as a central mart for the products of India, China, Turkistan, and Persia as it is in the east for its own industries. Its manufactures include carpets, swords, blades (so-called Damascus) and wine. A great quantity of corn is grown in the district, which could at once provide the necessary supplies and transport (?) for any army of 100,000; no district like it exists between the Caspian and the Indus.

Kabul City.—Divided into wards, the latter into sections, each surrounded by a wall. In the event of civil war or disorders in the town, the doors and gates of these walls are closed, and the city presents as many fortresses as there are sections, a system locally

termed "Kutshaband." The Lahore and Shar sections outside the Kutsha barriers are the centres of Kabul life. The former splendid covered bazar was destroyed by General Pollock in 1842, and its ruins now serve as a refuge for the destitute.

Ghazni.—About 97 miles from Kabul and the strongest Afghan fortress. It protects Kabul from an enemy advancing from the south and south-west, and commands all the routes from north to south of country. Two centuries ago Ghazni was the capital of a vast Empire, founded by Mamud. It is called a second Mecca, and attracts a large number of pilgrims.

Up till 1839 the citadel was regarded as impregnable, but was then captured by the English after a prolonged siege. Again in 1842 the English took it after a 3-months siege, when all the officers of the 27th Infantry Regiment, taken prisoners by the Afghans, were starved in a pit. The English subsequently destroyed the fortress and burnt and sacked Ghazni itself. Dost Mahomed rebuilt the fort, and Sher Ali completed the defence of the town with the assistance of Russian engineers, who taught the Afghans to construct masked casemates. Ghazni is as unimportant from a commercial point of view as it is important from a military standpoint.

Kandahar.—As in the case of Kabul, no one can dominate Afghanistan without possessing Kandahar. Situated in a fertile valley between the rivers Tarnak and Arghandab, it is cut up into numerous little islands by the tributaries of these rivers. The population exceeds 80,000. A brisk trade is carried on with Bombay *viâ* Karachi, and with the construction of an Indo-Afghan line, will be the chief centre for Anglo-Indian trade in Central Asia. It is very rich and has often been the prey of Persians, Usbeks, Afghans and the English. It cannot be called an impregnable fortress, as its water-supply can easily be cut off. It is nevertheless strategically important, commanding as it does the roads leading to the Punjab and Sind. In the event of Russian invasion of India, Kandahar would be the next objective after the capture of Herat, and if taken would serve as a "point d'appui" for further operations. (Skobelef's plan). In the event of a British advance on Herat, troops in Kandahar could anticipate them, and failing that shut them up in the former. Holding Kandahar, an English army, if numerous and if roads are constructed could quickly gain possession of Ghazni and Kabul without any special difficulty, and stop our advance. Hence, in the event of an Anglo-Russian conflict the English will not hesitate to seize Kandahar, as we shall occupy Herat.

CHAPTER V.

Russia and Bokhara.

Characteristics of Anglo-Afghan and Russo-Bokharan mutual relations—The laying of the Trans-Caspian railway—The formation of Russian garrisons at Charjui, Kerki and Termez—The construction of roads, assimilation of the Customs, etc.—Budget and armed strength—Characteristics of the people—System of taxation—Characteristics of present Russo-Bokharan relations.

Just as Afghanistan, subservient to England, intervenes as a a buffer between India and Central Asia, so on the Russian side, the Khanate of Bokhara, a vassal dependency, borders Afghanistan. Strictly speaking, Anglo-Afghan relations on the one side and Russo-Bokharan on the other are radically different : for whereas the English Government is deprived of the right of having its representative in Kabul, Russia has a political agent in Bokhara, who in many matters has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of the Khanate. The political dependence of Afghanistan on England in general is limited to the Amir being deprived of the right of direct communication with Foreign Powers. In return for this reservation the Afghan Amir receives from the Indian Government a yearly subsidy of about 2 million rubles (£ 211,110). In all other matters the Amir enjoys complete independence, not only in all questions of internal policy but in many affecting Anglo-Afghan relations. Thus, to this day the Amir does not permit an English representative in Kabul. Moreover, the Indian Government has repeatedly tried to obtain the consent of the Amir to the despatch of English engineers to carry out surveys for a railway from Peshawar to Kabul, but has so far always met with an obstinate refusal. The Amir with like obstinacy has refused the despatch of English officers to fortify Herat, etc. He maintains a similar independence in his commercial relations with India, notwithstanding the complaints and protests of the English. On the other hand, Russian relations with the Bokharan Khanate have been quite different. By the construction of the Trans-Caspian line in 1887 the Khanate was traversed by a railway, connecting our Turkistan possessions with the rest of Russia. Naturally such a line could not be left unguarded in Bokharan territory, and hence on its completion, a Russian garrison was stationed at Charjui, where the railway

crosses the Amu Darya. At the same time, in order to watch the Afghan frontier, especially the strategically important crossing at Kerki, a garrison of all arms was stationed at the latter place. This was the more necessary as after the construction of the main line through Bokhara it was impossible to entrust the guarding of the Amu Darya solely to Bokharan troops. Then again we have seen in Chapter II that many English strategists, influenced by the "forward policy" are carried away with the idea of a forward move to the Amu Darya and the Russian possessions in Central Asia, in the direction of Samarkand. Hence it became necessary to establish, in 1896, yet a third Russian garrison, at Termez, on the Afghan-Bokharan frontier, commanding the shortest route from Kabul to Samarkand. Thus the Bokharan Khanate, occupying a re-entrant between our Central Asian possessions was intersected by our railways and garrisoned with our troops. The ultimate result of this situation was the construction of new roads and the founding in the Khanate of other institutions of Russian citizenship. After establishing Russian garrisons in Charjui, Kerki and Termez it became necessary to construct the following lines of communication :—

(1) From Charjui—on the one side towards the frontiers of the Khivan Khanate and on the other towards Kerki. (The construction of this road which was reconnoitred by the writer in 1898 is somewhat primitive. Bridges and *caravanserais* have been built only where absolutely necessary, so that wheeled traffic can only be used with difficulty and delay.)

(2) From Samarkand to Termez on the Amu Darya *viâ* the Takhta-Karacha pass. (Considered fit for wheeled traffic but is not so in reality owing to steepness of the gradients.)

(3) From Karshi towards the Amu Darya at Kelif *viâ* Guzar. (At present under construction.)

(4) From New Margilan (Skobelef) *viâ* the Tengiz-Bai pass into the Alai valley and through Garm to the Amu Darya. (This road is at present under construction—is scarcely fit for pack transport and quite unsuited to the movement of heavy transport.)

In addition to land communications, by rail and road, simultaneously with the completion of the Trans-Caspian line, steamer communication was inaugurated on the Amu Darya at first as far as Kerki, and subsequently up to Termez.

Together with the opening up of communications in the Khanate, the Russian Government took steps to establish postal and telegraphic communication throughout the country. A telegraph line was laid along the left bank of the Amu Darya from Khiva to Kelif and Termez, and post offices were opened at Bokhara, Charjui, Kerki and other places. To crown all these measures the Bokharan Khanate was brought under our customs regulations. The reason for this latter measure was that previous to the building of the Trans-Caspian Railway all our Central Asian markets were flooded with English wares sent through Afghanistan and Bokhara. When the railway was opened Moscow manufactures easily ousted foreign goods from our possessions. The Bokharan Khanate, however, still acted as "middle-man" for the distribution of Indian goods (chiefly tea, indigo and muslin) throughout our Central Asian possessions, whence these goods even reached Russia, evading thereby the payment of customs dues. For this reason the Bokharan Khanate was included in our customs system and since the later eighties customs houses have been established on the Bokharan-Afghan frontier, which is watched by four brigades of Frontier Guards. To what extent the cost of maintaining these guards is covered by customs receipts is another matter; but the Bokharan Khanate as regards customs union is now a component part of the rest of the Empire.

The present Emir of Bokhara, Said Abdul Ahad Khan, behaves with the strictest correctness in his relations with Russia, loyally fulfilling his vassal obligations with regard to his powerful protectress and refraining from any political relations whatever with foreign Governments without the cognisance of Russia. The Emir observes this so strictly, that any letter received by him from abroad is forwarded unopened to our political agent. Nevertheless, the Bokharan Emir of course, cannot, without some twinges of jealousy, see his neighbour, the Afghan Amir, enjoying comparatively complete independence and being liberally subsidised by the English Government for a slight restriction of it. This difference between the mutual relations of Russia and England on the one side and Bokhara and Afghanistan on the other is explained by the different in the military-political and strategical positions of these Khanates: for whereas the rôle of Afghanistan, in the event of a collision between Russia and England in Central Asia is an important one, that of Bokhara, surrounded on three sides by our possessions and traversed by our railway and telegraph, is highly problematical. But if the military-political significance of Bokhara is not great, its strategical position on the borders of Afghanistan and also its military resources could, if properly ex-

ploited, be of incomparably greater use to the defensibility of our Central Asian possessions then they are at the present time under the extremely indifferent attitude of our Government both to the interests of Russia and to those of the 3½ million Bokhariots living under our protection. Everything is sacrificed to the personal interests of the Emir, who continues deftly to conduct his Asiatic policy of bribery and complaisance.

Budget and Armed Forces.

Budget.

It goes without saying that the Government of the Emir conceals from our political agent everything concerning the internal life of the Khanate and especially its financial resources. Judging from the information, which is *officially* communicated by the Emir to our Government, the Bokharan budget appears to be as follows :—

Total revenue—about 2,780,000 rubles (£291,900).

Expenditure :—

Maintenance of troops, etc.—1,071,130 rubles (£112,468).

Privy Purse—600,000 rubles (£63,000).

(To meet extraordinary expenditure for journeys, etc., the Emir receives a special allowance from an unknown source.)

Maintenance of mullahs and charitable institutions—50,000 rubles (£5,252).

Needless to say these figures are very unreliable.

Armed forces.

The Bokharan Army.—Up to 1892 the armed forces of the Bokharan Khanate consisted of 11,400 infantry, 400 regular cavalry, 2,070 militia and 151 guns with 620 gunners. At that time the question was raised by the Governor of Turkistan, in agreement with the Minister of War, as to the necessityof entirely disbanding the Bokharan army, the existence of which was not justified from any point of view, and whose maintenance swallowed up more than half the total revenue. However, the Bokharan army still exists though now reduced to 10,000 men. The fact is that the Emir jealously guards this semblance of sovereign power, although for the maintenance of internal order in the Khanate he has to rely mainly on the prestige of Russia and in no way on his own strength as represented by the negligible and ill-organised Bokharan troops.

Recruiting. Pay.

The Bokharan army is recruited by voluntary enlistment, without any age limit, so that youths of 17 are seen alongside old men of 50—55. The soldier receives 4 to 7 rubles (8*s.* 10*d.* to 15*s.* 6*d.*) per mensem, so that it is impossible to support a family on it. The soldiers, therefore, in addition to their military service, supplement their incomes by outside labour, trade or some craft, but even so are condemned to a pauper's existence, as out of their pay they have to feed themselves and provide their own uniform.

Uniform.

The Bokharan troops mostly wear old uniforms of our Turkistan troops, all sorts of patterns of which are to be met with; occasionally Indo-British uniforms are also to be seen which have probably filtered through from Afghanistan.

Armament.

The armament of the infantry consists of a rifle of 6—7 "line" calibre, and also of others of old patterns.

The artillery is armed with ancient guns of no military value. The tactical training is beneath contempt. In general the military value of the Bokharan army not only in its capacity as an armed force for internal defence, but also for the maintenance of internal order, as an administrative police force, is *nil.* The Bokharan Khanate even under the present Emir has been repeatedly shaken by popular risings, which the Emir's army has proved powerless to suppress. The absence of risings during the last 15—20 years is not to be attributed to the existence of Bokharan troops but to the good will of the Russian Government towards the Emir. The masses realise that b hind the Emir stands Russia, who would restore order with the assistance of Russian and not Bokharan troops.

Population.

Data regarding the population was colleeted along the Amu Darya from the "amlyakdars" and "aksakals." It is hard to say how far this estimate is correct. One must take into consideration, that the lower and middle administrative authorities in the Bokharan Khanate guard more closely than anything else, from outside curiosity, all information likely to throw light on the source and extent of their revenues, the basis of which is the number of people under their charge. Under such conditions every item of official information is carefully guarded and the inquirer is treated with suspicion and hostility.

There is no doubt, however, that the "aksakals" and "amlyakadars" as also the "Begs," living as they do in close and intimate relations with the population, keep their own very reliable statistics by means of personal observation. The statistics of population and productiveness of the country thus collected serve as the basis of the material welfare of the collectors themselves, so that the completeness and reliability of these statistics are guaranteed in a way hardly known even in European states; but as stated above these data are not accessible to the casual investigator. Enquiries established the fact that the "Begs" compile their own books, in which is registered in detail everything affecting the population and productiveness of the country; but this information was refused the author, and the very existence of the books denied.

The total population of the Bokharan Khanate according to the official information of our political agent in Bokhara in 1904 was 4,593,400.

Characteristics, social and moral life of the Turkomans.

Turkomans, Tadjiks and Uzbeks belong to the common stock of Turki tribes, speak the same language though with slight variations, and have many typcial traits in common. The Turkomans, however, do not admit their close relationship with the Tadjiks and Uzbeks; nor a closer relationship with the Uzbeks than with other tribes, though they have closely copied the moral and social life and general ideas of the latter, who are their conquerors. Thirty years ago, according to Vambéry, the Ersari-Turkomans lived a nomad life and adapted a great deal from their Bokharan protectors, under whose sway they came in the twenties of last century; the influence of the Bokharans only partly civilised them, exchanging their former valour and honesty for the Koran and hypocrisy. This opinion was expressed by Vambéry in the sixties when the inhabitants of the Amu Darya still lived under the spell of the Turkoman raids and their country was covered with ruins. Nowadays this state of things is reflected in the characteristic architecture of the Ersari-Turkoman houses: each separate homestead is often surrounded by a high wall of hard clay, evidently intended to serve as a refuge when needed; the farms of well-to-do people are regular fortified castles (very similar to the Chinese farms in Manchuria). But since the subjugation by Russians of the Turkoman Tekes and the russification of Trans-Caspia, peace has reigned on the banks of the Amu Darya. Under the influence of a peaceful settled life the Ersaris have quickly adapted themselves to the Bokharans, with a few reservations, in regard to their mode of life, architecture and views of life.

The Trans-Caspian Turkoman Tekes are above the average height, obese and with open pleasant faces (especially the old men). They are courageous and not without chivalrous ideas in war, as was demonstrated in the last Akal-Tepe expedition. The Amu Darya Turkoman Ersaris, on the contrary, are small, of poor physique and timid. The distinguishing feature of the Turkoman character is their hospitality. A guest's life is perfectly safe in his host's house, even if a blood-feud exists between them. The latter are carried on for three generations. In their manner of life the Turkomans have preserved intact their respect for their seniors: a younger brother stands up on his elder brother entering, does not permit himself to speak in his presence and only answers questions. These excellent traits are, however, being choked under the burden of their material and political condition and in their gait and conversation the Turkomans betray the customary Asiatic phlegmatism and mental apathy.

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(The author proceeds with information regarding food, clothing, dwellings, education and system of taxation, which is of little interest or importance.)

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Conclusion.

In conclusion I venture to make a few remarks on the present relations existing between Russia and Bokhara, which I was enabled to observe personally during my travels in the Khanate.

More than thirty years have elapsed since the conclusion, in 1873, of the "Treaty of Friendship" with Bokhara by which the Khanate came under the protectorate of Russia. During all this time we have entirely failed to sow the smallest seed of our citizenship in the country. Thanks alone to our assistance and protection the already rapacious appetites of the native authorities have exceeded all bounds; the poor inhabitants, oppressed by centuries of despotism, have now to pay double: the native authorities argue that they have now to take double toll—for themselves and for their protectors, the Russians.

In former days in Bokhara, during the collection of taxes, a popular rising was almost an annual occurrence, and this circumstance had a restraining influence on the "Begs" and kept them from exceeding certain recognised limits. Now there is no such limit. The native authorities take advantage of the prestige of Russia; while the presence of garrisons at Charjui, Kerki and Termez act

as a restraint on all outbreaks. In this way, in the name of Russia and under her protection is carried on the most monstrous plundering, which has reduced an industrious population of 3,000,000 souls, not so long ago fairly well off, to abject poverty and gradual extinction.

It is quite comprehensible, that the Bokharan Government should exert all their powers to wring from the inhabitants the last vestige of their miserable pittance, understanding full well, that Bokhara, surrounded by our railways and garrisons is living the last days of her independence, to which an end will be put sooner or later. In the circumstances, from the point of view of the native authorities, there is no necessity to "take heed for the morrow." In view of this the logic of our policy with regard to Bokhara is really surprising, for it recognises that the present state of affairs is the best preparation the natives could have for an eventual transfer of the Khanate to Russian rule. A fine preparation, when after 33 years of our protectorate we have only succeeded in getting a customs union, which, incidentally, brings to our Treasury a debit and not a credit, if we take into consideration the necessary expenditure for the maintenance of the frontier guards; when we have only one Russo-native school of doubtful quality in Bokhara and have also succeeded in getting abolished the barbarous method of capital punishment (burying alive) and a slight improvement in the Bokharan prisons. These form the sum total of our civilising successes, which were so noisily advertised by our diplomats before all Europe. Then again if we examine even superficially the internal life of this unfortunate country we see a heart-rending picture of the domination of an Asiatic régime, such as is hardly to be met with in any other corner of Asia. In the whole Bokharan Khanate, there is not at the present time the smallest trace of public or private charity: people at times die of hunger, sick people often roam the streets, finding no asylum. And at the same time the "Begs" and even "amlyakdars," the pillars of the Emir, keep in their stables dozens of Arab horses and have enormous harems of boys and women, simply rolling in Asiatic luxury. Natives suffering from hunger and sickness often seek refuge in our barracks and hospitals and at the same time our Government permits the Emir to spend millions yearly on the admittedly useless and absolutely unnecessary Bokharan army. We have in Charjui, Kerki and Termez our own garrisons, which of course fully assure the safety of the country, both internally and externally; but it is flattering to the Emir to have his own troops and we most obligingly allow him to indulge this caprice, which

costs this impoverished country 1½ million rubles (£158,332), swallowing up more than half the whole budget. Of course the Russian Government has no idea as to what the revenue of the country actually is, chiefly because the Bokharan authorities keep all the information on the subject secret. Moreover, the entire system of taxation is based on the most primitive and uncivilised methods, giving wide scope to endless malpractices: the Emir informs each "Beg" of the sum to be forwarded, and the latter are free to extort from the living and dead as much as they can. Under these conditions, it is not surprising that from year to year the population is being impoverished to such an extent, that on the showing of the Bokharan authorities themselves the natural expansion of the population has long since stopped and a gradual shrinking is taking place—and it could scarcely be otherwise. Is it not plain to everyone, that the native authorities will not eschew personal gain from patriotic motives, especially with the knowledge that soon perhaps they will have to give place to a Russian administration? Under the ægis of Russian power the "Begs" in this way wring the last mite from the impoverished population, knowing that it cannot go on much longer.

Is it not time, however, for the Russian Government to interfere in the internal administration of the Bokharan Khanate? For in the end the Russian people will, even in this case, have to bear the burden of the sins of the past, both of its own diplomacy and of the native administration. After all it is possible, without violating our treaty with Bokhara, and appreciating at its worth the loyalty of the Emir, to force him to introduce the most essential reforms, if only by means of the native administration, but under the control of our authorities. In the first place it is essential to reorganise the farcical Bokharan army, with a view to converting it into a contingent of auxiliary troops, on the lines of the British Indian army. Then the 1½ million rubles (£158,332) now spent on the maintenance of these "toy" battalions will not be, at any rate, an admittedly unproductive expense. The fear expressed that we shall thereby create in a native state an armed force is without sound foundation: in the first place because we have our own powerful garrisons at Kerki and Termez, which are more than sufficient for all eventualities: in the second place all danger can be absolutely obviated by the judicious stationing of the Bokharan troops: and finally, the English have succeeded in India in organising a large army of Indo-British troops, why cannot we also form just a few battalions from the already ready-made contingent of Bokharan troops?

In any case the introduction of reforms, for which the country has already waited too long, is pressing, if the Russian Government, apart from the Emir, recognises its moral obligations towards the 3,000,000 souls taken under its protection and who by rapacious plundering are being reduced to abject poverty.

CHAPTER VI.

Russia and England in Persia.

Spheres of Influence—Points of rivalry—A warm water port for Russia—Russian railway projects—Rivalry of Russia, England and Germany, on the Persian Gulf—Bandar Abbas—British telegraphs in Persia—The Army, and internal affairs of Persia.

The mutual rivalry of Russia and England, after years of ceaseless intrigue, was terminated by the Treaty of August, 1907, and almost immediately afterwards the whole of Persia was submerged in a political crisis which still continues. It is hard to say what effect this would have had on the relations of Russia and England had the Treaty not been concluded, but now the two rival European Powers are, as it were, friendly and impartial spectators. The struggle for political predominance in Persia has, however, been postponed but not concluded. Sooner or later the many points of rivalry in Persia between Russia and England will have to be decided.

Russian Railway projects.

The rivalry between Russia and England is primarily one for commercial predominance. Russia's frontier marches with Persia for over 2,000 versts (1,333 miles), from Ararat to Zulfikar, but her trade is not correspondingly large; being far less than that of England. One of the principal causes for this is the deplorable state of the roads. As the Persian mullahs often say "Let those who have not good horses worry about roads. Allah has given the Persians good horses, so roads are unnecessary." Despite this, the mutual trade demands are so great that trade is increasing rapidly, rising from 19·1 million rubles to 40·6 in the last decade. The continuation of the Russian railway system into the trading centres of Persia would thus be very advantageous commercially, and would extend our political influence in a way that would be very useful, in the event of the disintegration of the Persian kingdom.

There is already an important junction of roads on the Trans-Caucasian-Persian frontier, where the rivers Kara and Aras also

form a useful means of transport. The Trans-Caucasian railway joining the Black and Caspian Seas is connected up with Kars and Erivan, whence a branch line runs to Julfa. Thus a way has already been opened for the extension of the political and commercial influence of Russia in Persia. Although the southern shores of the Caspian are entirely Persian, Russian trade predominates, thanks chiefly to the excellent water communication afforded by the Volga. This, then, would seem to be the most favourable route whereby Russian influence may be advanced, more especially as communications on the Trans-Caucasian frontier are hindered by a difficult and almost inaccessible mountain range.

The northern frontier of Persia is even more open from the direction of the Central Asian Railway, which, between Kizil-Arvat and Dushak, runs almost along the actual frontier, and thus commands the whole of Khorasan. The importance of this railway has been further increased by its branches to the Murghab and to Ferghana and the completion of the Orenburg-Tashkent railway. Its commercial and political value are quite separate from any strategic value it may possess for aggressive designs which are mostly boomed by England to stimulate public opinion. Russia has absolutely no call to dissipate her strength in Central Asia on the line to India, when all her interests are centred in Persia, and to a lesser extent, in Turkey.

However, though there may be no struggle between these two Powers for the possession of India, there may be rivalry in southern Persia. Though neither Persia nor the Persian Gulf are on the straight line from England to India, yet England has long established trading interests there and a telegraph line connects England and India *viâ* the Gulf. In this direction also is the nearest outlet for Central Russia to the southern seas.

But in spite of the attractiveness of the idea of a Russian port on the Persian Gulf, reached by railway, many people consider we should preferably construct a railway in Persia from west to east, from Alexandropol through Erivan, Julfa, Tabriz, Mianeh, Zingan, Kazvin, Tehran, Semnan, Shahrud, Sabzavar, Nishapur, and Meshed to one of the stations of the Murghab branch of the Central Asian Railway, either Chemek-i-Bid or Kushk. The attraction of a railway to the Persian Gulf vanishes when one considers the conditions of trade and the political relations between Russia and England. The railway would only be an effective weapon in Russia's hands if the sea terminus was entirely secure (*i.e.*, only when Russia had won a strong position on the Persian Gulf). So long as the British navy and her

merchant fleet dominate the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, a Russian railway to the Gulf would merely furnish England with an open door in to Persia. Hence it follows that a railway to the south can only be advantageously constructed under the protection of the Russian army. A railway from Alexandropol to Kushk *viâ* Tabriz, Tehran, Meshed, would have quite a different character. Both termini of such a line would be Russian; England could derive no benefit from it. But it would be of great political and commercial use to Russia, as it would traverse the richest provinces of Persia, and would connect the three most important towns in the Empire—Tehran, the capital, Tabriz, the centre of trade, and Meshed, a sacred city. Thus, avoiding the worst sections of the caravan route, Russian trade could without difficulty extend throughout the whole Persian plateau, whilst English trade would have to reach it from the coast by roads as bad as those now used on the Russian side. Russia would then stand a very good chance of driving English trade out of a great part of Persia, and of stopping the existing trade route from Europe *viâ* Trebizond to Tabriz. Possibly England's political predominance in the Persian Gulf would wane with the decline of her commercial predominance, and then would be the time to realise, by peaceful means, our legitimate aims for a railway to the Persian Gulf. Of course England will not wait with folded arms whilst Russian trade drives her trade out of Persia but in any case the proposed Alexandropol-Kushk line, having both bases in Russia, would give us such a strong commercial and political hold on north Persia, that England could do nothing to counterbalance it, for an English railway could only have the sea as its base. Be it understood that I mention these enterprises, not because the moment is opportune for their realisation, but because they concern the question of Anglo-Russian rivalry in Persia. It is not so long ago that the envious dreams of our Jingoes, to obtain a port on the Gulf, almost landed us in a situation similar to that in which we were caught in the Far East.

England's sphere of influence.

England's influence in Persia mainly results from her predominant rôle in south Persia and the Persian Gulf. Here in 1890 England occupied the Island of Bahrain which is especially valuable on account of the pearl fisheries; in 1904 alone pearls to the value of 2½ million rubles (£265,000) were obtained. In 1895 the inhabitants rose in rebellion against the English régime, and English gunboats bombarded and burnt many villages on the coast. The

rising was suppressed, but though the ill-feeling subsided, the English were obliged to keep a garrison from the Indian Army on these islands. At the present time England undoubtedly dominates both shores of the Gulf. In all the important coast towns there are British consuls and agents, who at once inform the gunboats, cruising in these waters, when they are wanted to suppress the natives. The general direction of English affairs in the Gulf is in the hands of the special Resident at Bushire, and the Political Agent at Mascat, both of whom have extended powers and are directly under the Persian Gulf Department in Bombay. England is openly suspicious of any attempt by any other Power to get a foothold in the Gulf, and the history of recent years has given many examples of this. The first rumour of the desire of Russia to obtain a port on the Gulf was the subject of a question in Parliament and though officially denied, public anxiety did not abate.

Equally hostile was England 10 years ago to the proposed appointment of a Russian Political Agent in Bushire, and of a Russian Consul at Bandar Abbas. Again in 1898 the appearance in the Gulf of the German warship "Arcona" caused considerable alarm at the time. A far more serious turn of events was caused by the unexpected announcement in February 1899, that the Sultan of Oman had ceded to France the port of Bandar-Jizak on the Arabian coast. England suspected that behind France stood Russia, who wanted this port as a base to capture Bandar Abbas. The English Resident at once took energetic measures and the Sultan, most of whose towns were on the sea coast and were therefore exposed to the English gunboats, was compelled to agree to enter into no relations with foreign Powers without the consent of the Resident. France also gave way, having no wish to fight England over the unimportant question of Bandar-Jizak.

England prizes the Persian Gulf more on account of its future than its present commercial value. Everything points to the future importance of the Gulf. Two international railways are projected to it, a Russian from the Caucasus through Persia, and a second one through Asia Minor. There can be no doubt that these lines will have a powerful influence on trade relations between Europe and India and the Far East. A railway to connect up these lines with the Indian railway system would assuredly follow. These lines will all contribute to the importance of the Persian Gulf, from whose shores the adjacent country can be dominated.

The realisation of the projected Russian railway to the Persian Gulf must await a settlement between Russia and England. Pro-

fessor Bem in the "Geographische Zeitschrift" says "Russia is striving after the construction of a railway to improve her commercial relations with India, and she will undoubtedly succeed, if possible by peaceful but if necessary by warlike means. The Russian and Indian railway systems can scarcely be linked up by way of Afghanistan; mutual distrust and antagonism of England and Russia there is too great. England could not assent to Russia approaching so close to India. Probably England would prefer that a Russian line should have its terminus on the Gulf, as in that case England would still remain master of the communication to India."

It is evident that England is becoming more and more convinced that the influence of Russia in Persia is inevitable, so she is determined to retain her dominant position in the Persian Gulf, a position held purely by force of arms, military residents, fortified posts, garrisons and gunboats. Thanks to her military strength, England step by step has advanced from India till she has reached Ormuz. She can advance no further without infringing the rights of Persia. By the annexation of Baluchistan in 1878 the Government of India took up a strong strategic forward position, though that shore of the Gulf is distinguished by its unhealthy character, and is rarely visited by English ships. In 1898 it was announced that the Nuskhi district, about 150 square kilometres (58 square miles) in area, would be included in British India in consideration of an annual subsidy to the Khan of 9,000 rupees. This district is important as a half-way stage between Quetta and Sistan which in 1872 was divided between Persia, Baluchistan, and Afghanistan. If the rumours of an English railway to Nuskhi are correct, it will be the best proof of the gradual spreading of English influence towards Southern Persia. As Karachi is the best point for the observation of Southern Persia and the Persian Gulf, the chief Anglo-Indian papers urge the speedy construction of a broad gauge line from Karachi to Ahmedabad, and of a bridge across the lower Indus; this would, they say, be the best check to the designs of Russia or France. They also demand the establishment of a more important consulate at Bandar Abbas, furnished with a strong escort for reconnaissances into the interior.

The chief ports on the Persian Gulf are Bushire, Lingah, Bandar Abbas, Jashk, Chahbar. Lingah is only important on account of its pearl fisheries. Bandar Abbas though only third in commercial importance, on account of its central position is the most desirable port for us to obtain. It is the terminus of the caravan routes to

Shiraz, Yazd and Tehran, with branches to Isfahan, Kerman, Birjand and Meshed, connected by many roads with Khorasan and Afghanistan. A fleet based on Bandar Abbas, at the narrowest place in the Gulf, could watch all in and out-going vessels. The harbour is only exposed to winds from the south-east, being bounded on one side by the mainland, and on the other by the Island of Qisham, Ormuz and Larak, which must of course be occupied to protect Bandar Abbas from attack. England has already formed a coaling station on the Island of Qisham.

Russian spheres of influence.

If England is predominant in Southern Persia, Russia is equally so in Northern and Central Persia. Let us first glance at the economic condition of Persia. In 1873, when the Shah Nasr-i-din first returned from abroad, it was generally expected that he would introduce the necessary reforms, but nothing was done. In vain foreign enterprise tried to stimulate the economic situation, by the construction of roads, factories, etc. It all came to nothing, owing to the ignorance and corruption of the administration. Take, for example, the history of railway concessions. In 1872 the celebrated Baron Reuter obtained a concession for a railway from Enzali, through Western Persia to Bushire, but within two years, this concession was revoked, to avoid foreign interference. In 1877, the Government similarly refused a Russian Company a railway concession, but ten years later the influence of Russia became so great, that in 1898 the Persian Government, in face of British opposition, agreed to grant Russia the monopoly of railway construction in Persia.

Russia has not taken advantage of this concession, beyond constructing a metalled road to Isfahan where the roads to Bushire and Bandar Abbas meet. In 1898, the Persian Government desiring to raise funds for various reforms, handed over the Customs to Belgium and tried to raise a loan of 50 million francs in France. The French financiers in return demanded a monopoly of all enterprises in Persia. Instead of granting this the Persian Government established the Russian Bank, which is guaranteed by the Russian Governement. The bank was given a monopoly of all enterprises in Azerbaijan, the richest province of Persia. At the same time, the Russian Government undertook the survey of the Julfa, Tabriz and Hamadan railway with a branch to Tehran to be some day continued to Isfahan, Kerman and Bandar Abbas.

Bandar Abbas.

From 1898 to 1900 the question of the proposed acquisition by Russia of this port attracted much attention in Russia and England, which bore fruit in the establishment of a regular steamship service between Bandar Abbas and the Black Sea ports. Mr. A. Vambéry, distinguished by his knowledge of Central Asia, as also by his hatred of Russia, started a strong anti-Russian agitation in the Press, stating that although Russia in the seventies had received a concession for the construction of a railway from the Central Asian Railway to Bandar Abbas, the various other Powers interested had only recently heard of this concession. The proposed line would traverse Meshed, Khaf, Birjand and Kerman, with a special branch from Birjand to Nasratabad, *i.e.*, to the south-east corner of the Afghan-Persian frontier.

Bandar Abbas is destined to play so important a rôle in any Russian schemes for the attainment of a port on the Persian Gulf that a short description taken from Lord Curzon's "Persia" and the Anglo-Indian press will not be out of place here.

Bandar Abbas is situated on a broad sand-bank. Anchorage for ships of 24 feet draught is only found 2 miles from the shore. The town extends in a narrow strip along the shore. At one end of the town projects a stone mole, surmounted by a flagstaff, two English-made cannon and two old carronades. In the centre of the town is a Customs House and the Governor's house. On the east are two ruined bastions, once forming part of the fortifications erected by the Shah Abbas. Immediately behind the town rise up sandhills, which, 15 miles away, lead to a rocky height 8,500 feet above the sea. The population, even in the hot season, when the town empties, totals 50,000. The Customs duties bring in 53,000 tumans a year, whereas those of Lingah only bring in 12,000. Other revenues of Bandar Abbas bring in 30,000 tumans. When the roads of North Persia were infested with bandits, Bandar Abbas was the most important centre for internal trade in Persia, for a good road led from there to Shiraz and Isfahan. Since the opening of the routes from Tabriz to Enzali in the northern provinces, and the route through Bushire and Baghdad, the importance of Bandar Abbas has declined and her trade has been confined to the south-eastern Provinces of Persia, and the neighbouring districts of Afghanistan.

Three caravan roads lead from Bandar Abbas—

(1) to Tehran *viâ* Yazd and Kashan (900 miles);

(2) to Meshed and Bokhara *viâ* Birian (Kerman ?);

(3) to Herat and Kabul *viâ* Biryad (Birjand ?).

If the islands of Karan and Ormuz and the eastern end of Qishm were fortified, Bandar Abbas would be a hard place to capture, and whoever held it could control the entrance to the Gulf and the neighbouring territory of Persian Baluchistan. Masqat and the other places would then have no strategic value. Chahbar, the only other port on this coast, has a bad anchorage and is exposed to the full force of the monsoon. The climate of the Gulf is very disagreeable for Europeans. The unbearable damp heat in summer is like a vapour bath. The "shamal" which blows in June and July brings up so much dust from Mesopotamia that it forms a thick fog. Sudden squalls, in winter from the south, and the rest of the year from the north, render sailing precarious. Another wind from the south-east is called the "kaus."

With the exception of Bushire and Bandar Abbas there are no large towns on the Gulf. The other places are mere villages, the inhabitants of which occupy themselves in fishing and pearling, and trading in dried fruits and raw cotton. Coasters up to 400 tons, termed "bagalas" are the indigenous transport. Foreign vessels visiting the Gulf, except for a few American, are all English.

For the last ten years the Persian Gulf has been recognised as a future area of international rivalry, though to a lesser extent than China. In recent years Germany has entered the lists, and in 1899 despatched a strong expedition for the comprehensive investigation of Asia Minor, Armenia and Mesopotamia. The "Times" regarded this as the first step of a long-intended policy, as 50 years ago Von Moltke had advocated it. The visit of the Emperor Wilhelm II to the Holy Land gave a great impulse to the numerous schemes for the political-economic conquest of the Euphrates valley, in which the Germans had already got a foothold by the Anatolian railway. German influence with the Sultan was then supreme, and in the forefront of various projects was one for the construction of a railway from Constantinople to the Persian Gulf.

The Sultan appears to have offered but little opposition to the scheme and no objection was raised to the extension of the German line from Angora to Konieh, although England is not allowed to continue the Smyrna-Aidin line. Possibly the influence of Germany will weaken under the new constitution in Turkey, which will not be so amenable to secret personal influence. In any case

there is no doubt that Germany is pushing her influence to the Persian Gulf, for the sake of those phantom interests for whose protection the gunboat "Arcona" was despatched in 1899.

The British Telegraph System in Persia.

England has tried to influence the economic life of Persia by her telegraphic system, just as Russia has done by her roads. In strong contradistinction to the miserable line of the Persian Government, the British telegraph line is magnificently constructed and maintained. Its influence has been particularly great during the recent political risings and frequent breaks in the Government line. The Anglo-Indian line joins London and Calcutta *viâ* Berlin, Warsaw, Odessa, Kerch, Tiflis, Julfa, Tabriz, Kazvin, Tehran, Isfahan and Karachi. The line, a double wire, is constructed on metal posts, and cost in Persia about 7,000 * rubles a verst (£ 1,108 a mile). Passing through the chief commercial and administrative centres of the country, it has immense influence. Well equipped stations are established along the line in Central and Southern Persia, and these enable the English to have their agents under the guise of telegraphists and inspectors. Some of the staff are officers in the Indian Army. The Persian Government reserved itself the right to attach a wire of its own to the English telegraph line standard in some sections. Such a line exists between Tehran and Kazvin.

The English lines transmit private telegrams in addition to State ones. The charges—95 kopeks (2 shillings) a word to any European country—are high but the transmission is quick and accurate. Part of the receipts go to the Persian Government but notwithstanding it is known that the Anglo-Indian Telegraph Company makes a handsome profit. In addition to the main line a few years ago the English rented and put in good order the Persian line from Tehran to Meshed. This line is also of considerable political and commercial importance. Meshed is 250 versts (166 miles) from Askhabad, and 350 versts (233 miles) from Herat and is moreover the chief town of Khorasan, important also on account of its sanctity. Hence the telegraphs to all the most important places in Persia are in English hands, though they nowhere touch the Persian shore of the Caspian Sea, which is practically without telegraphic communication.

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* "St. Petersburg Vyedimosti" (newspaper).

The Army of Persia.

Throughout the existing revolution in Persia a prominent part has been played by the Persian Cossack Brigade, instructed and led by Russians officers. They have saved the throne and perhaps even the life of the present Shah Mahomed Ali Mirza, but very little information about them or about the Persian Army has yet been published.

(1) *The Regular Army.*—Up to 1902, owing to an arrangement between the Governors of the 10 provinces and the Commander of the Army, a large portion of the army existed only on paper. The nominal establishment was 80 battalions of infantry, each of 800 or 900 men. Seven of these were the Shah's Guards, 3 of whom were ordinarily quartered in Tehran, and the remainder, for financial reasons, were dismissed to their homes. Then there were 18 regiments (300 men each) and 13 "destas" (100 men each) of field artillery. There were also 3 regiments of cavalry (1,000 men each) which composed the Body Guard of the Shah. Of these about 1,500 men really existed. There are also some irregular horse to be conscripted in the southern provinces in the event of war. So on paper, the total strength of the Persian Army did not exceed 114,000 men, including 70,000 regulars but exclusive of the Cossack Brigade. The armament is very varied. Along with all kinds of rubbish, one frequently sees a Verbdl rifle of 1877 pattern. The cavalry is armed with Berdan and Mannlicher rifles, the artillery, besides 1,000 smooth-bore cannon, has 250 breech-loaders of various patterns, including 100 mountain guns.

In 1905 the Shah ordered the Army to be brought up to 120,000 men (92,000 infantry, 22,000 cavalry and 6,000 artillery) to be organised in 12 divisions under a Commander-in-Chief with the necessary complement of engineers, transport and medical units. According to a British paper the strength of the First Army is 7,700 infantry, 2,900 cavalry, 500 artillery—a total of about 10,000, without counting the auxiliary troops. It is doubtful, however, if the Shah's order has been carried any further, for nothing has been heard of the formation of any additional corps. Every attempt thoroughly to organise the forces is nullified by the absence of liability to military service, the weakness of the Central Government and the independence of provincial governors, and also the lack of funds. Instead of universal liability to service, the various provinces are bound to raise and maintain a certain number of regiments, and the provinces are again sub-divided for this purpose.

Commandants of regiments and generals are appointed by special "firmans" of the Shah. Regimental officers are promoted by the commandants, according to the bribes received or orders received from above, not according to their military worth or qualifications. The rank and file are bound to serve as needed, but are often released on leave, for an indefinite period, after one year's service. The pay is only 1 ruble 90 kopeks (4 shillings) a month and no rations. In consequence of the rampant bribery, arms and equipment are wretched, the funds for them being mostly appropriated by the commandants. The lot of the soldiers is really not so pitiable. Their families are supported during their absence by the community. They themselves augment their pay in various indirect ways, including begging. With better organisation and good officers the Persians might make good soldiers. Military training is confined to the most elementry company or battery drill and guard duties. In great contrast to this horde, miscalled an army, the Cossack Brigade, formed in 1902 under the Shah Nasr-i-din, is a force of real military value.

2. *The Cossack Brigade.* —This brigade consists of 4 mounted regiments, each of 650 men, modelled on the Russian Cossacks, and 2 companies (200 men each) of infantry, one field battery of 6 guns (3·4″) and 2 horse batteries each of 4 guns of a French pattern. Latterly two machine gun sections of Krupp guns were added. The Shah's Body Guard under the Emir Bejudar was also included. It is said that the success of the Cossack Brigade has determined the Shah to raise the force to 25,000 men on conclusion of the present disorders. The Brigade is formed of voluntarily enlisted men, mostly from the province of Azerbaijan. The people of this province of are Turko-Tartar or Kurdish descent, famous for their bravery and endurance. Many men serve continuously for years. They are furnished with uniform and arms of the Russian patterns, and if their horses are killed on service, the State replaces them. Their uniform is a long tunic buttoning at the side, high boots and sheepskin cap. Their pay is quite sufficient, so much so, that even the rank and file are held in honour by the people. The Shah shows them attention on every possible occasion, and the whole brigade, except one regiment (which is at Isfahan) is at Tehran. Small detachments are constantly being sent on police or other special duty. One of the 3 regiments is always in the palace. The Commander of the brigade is a Russian officer on the active list; the commandants and staff of regiments are also Russian officers, mostly of Armenian descent. There are also a few Russian non-commissioned officers as instructors.

There are about 200 Persian officers in the Brigade, in accordance with the usual large proportion in the Persian Army. No qualifications are needed for this rank, but most of them belong to the highest families in the land.

The commander of the brigade is subordinate to the Military Governor of Tehran and the Russian Ambassador, but not to the War Minister. This shows his independent position, as well as the political significance for Russia of this force.

The officers of the brigade are more fortunate than those in other regiments. They usually get their pay promptly and in ready money, not in grain. In recent years one-fifth of the pay of officers of the other regiments has been cut by Government: though the annual pay is only 34 tumans for a subaltern, 112 for a captain and 214 for a lieutenant-colonel (a "tuman" is 3 rupees approximately.—*Trans.*)

The Cossack Brigade is treated exceptionally well in every way. Their barracks are well built and comfortable. Married men are allowed to live out. During the summer months the Brigade goes into camp, 3 miles from Tehran, on a shady plain near the summer palace of the Shah. The late Shah often used to watch his Cossacks training.

Characteristics of recent events.

The year before the recent revolution, Persia had passed through a trying economic crisis. The destitution of the people and the disorganisation of the government were apparent everywhere. A newspaper correspondent states that in the bazars of Tehran every minute you could hear people saying "Oh, Allah! when will this end? When will the Russians come?" The Persian nation usually so quiet and patient under despotism, like true fatalists, have at last lost patience, and openly inveigh against the present régime. The unfortunate Persian must stand all day before a bread shop to buy 2 or 3 lbs. of bread, and *such* bread, a mixture of sand, sawdust and flour. There has been no famine in Persia. Thousands of pounds of wheat rot in the barns of the officials, landowners, and mullahs. The credit of the Government is so low that no one will lend it any money without security. Wearied to death of the eternal despotism the destitute people rose against the government, and forced the declaration of a constitution. The first assembly of the "Medjlis," supported by popular "Anjumans," formulated a lot of demands which were too

radical for the Shah. He secretly left Tehran, and shut himself up in Bageshah, one of his suburban palaces, and having sent an ultimatum to the "Medjlis" he dissolved it with the Cossack Brigade, and had the building pulled down.

At the present moment (the end of August 1908.?) Tabriz is the centre of the revolution. There many of the leaders and champions of the revolutionary party have fortified themselves.

Meanwhile Russia and England, in consequence of the Treaty, remain as passive spectators.

CHAPTER VII.

The armed strength of India.

Re-organisation of the armed strength after the Mutiny in 1857—*Military hierachy—Tactical organisation of troops—Composition and strength of English and Native troops—Establishments of Native troops—Armament—Pay—Native States' troops—Characteristics of the position of the English officer and soldier in India.*

After the great Mutiny, the English Government issued a Proclamation to the effect that from the 1st January 1859, they would take over the administration of India from the East India Company. The Company's forces at that time totalled 280 000, including 40,000 European troops of all arms. The latter were called 'Queen's troops', as opposed to the Company's forces. The Native troops of the three Presidencies, Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, had each their own Commander-in-Chief, but all the British troops were under the Commander-in-Chief of Bengal. The 'Queen's' and Company's troops had separate Staffs. In 1858 a Commission, under General Peel, recommended the abolishment of the local Indo-European troops and all the native artillery, with a few minor exceptions. Accordingly, the artillery and European troops serving under the Company were brought on to the establishment of the 'Queen's' troops, which numbered 69,000 in 1862-63. At the beginning of the nineties this 'Home Army' consisted of 9 regiments of cavalry, 88 batteries or companies of artillery, and 53 battalions of infantry, with a total of 72,648. All these units were maintained at full strength.

The same Commission fixed the proportion of one European to 2 natives to be maintained in the Bengal Army, and of 1 to 3 in the Madras and Bombay Armies.

The functions of the army in India are :—

1. To repel external attack.
2. To suppress internal disorder.
3. To hold in check the forces of Native States.
4. To take part in external expeditions.
5. To uphold prestige, law, and order.

The organisation and strength of the Indian army is based on the probability of war with Russia. Sir John Strachey, author of the well-known work "India," wrote in 1892: "the proximity to India of a great European Power has entirely altered our position in India, and has also affected that of the Native States. At every step we have to take into consideration the proximity of Russia. It is a disturbing element, creating apprehension in the minds of some, and surreptitious hopes in the case of others; it has disorganised the finances of the country, and retarded all Government measures for increasing the productiveness of the country by agricultural improvements. Hence, English statesmen should strive that the armed strength of India may inspire foreign aggressors with due fear and respect." This view was, so to speak, the reason for the introduction of several important changes, sanctioned by Parliament in 1893, and brought into force from 1st April, 1895.

Higher Army Administration.

[The author's information is correct as far as it goes, *i.e.*, as things were prior to the changes introduced from 1st April 1909. But it is now out of date and is therefore not reproduced.—(*Transr.*)]

Tactical Organisation of the Anglo-Indian Army.

This is in a state of transition, and the composition of brigades, divisions and armies varies considerably.

The following are the normal tactical war formations :—

Infantry Brigade —

Brigade Staff.

4 battalions of infantry, British or Native.
2 Field Hospitals, British or Native.
1 Supply Column.
1 Field Post Office.

Cavalry Brigade —

Brigade Staff.

1 British and 2 Native Cavalry Regiments.
1 Horse Battery.
1 Section British, 1 Section Native Field Hospital.
1 Artillery Park.
1 Supply Column.
1 Field Post Office.

Division —

1 British Infantry Brigade.
2 Native Infantry Brigades.

Divisional Troops —

1 Regiment of Native Pioneers.
1 Regiment of Native Cavalry.
3 Field Batteries.
2 Mountain Batteries.
2 Companies of Sappers.
1 Artillery Park.
½ British Field Hospital.
1 Native Field Hospital.
1 Divisional Supply Column.
1 Divisional Troops Supply Column.
1 Printing Press.
1 Field Photo-Lithograph Press.
1 Field Post Office.

The strength of a Division, in round numbers, is —

12,000 bayonets.
30 guns.
28 machine guns (including 2 "pom-poms").
600 sabres.

Units of Mounted Infantry are formed on mobilisation from men trained in peace time (160 per British and Native regiment). It is proposed to form Mounted Infantry Battalions of 4 Companies each and 125 men per Company. Thus in war time each Division will have 2 battalions of Mounted Infantry, one British and one Native.

Under Lord Kitchener, mobilisation measures have greatly improved. The most important reform was the organisation of the troops in peace time into Brigades, Divisions and Armies, with which they would proceed on service. In addition, the troops, which up to 1904 had been scattered about with more regard to internal policy than tactical considerations, are now echelonned along the two main railway routes :

Northern line :— Calcutta—Lucknow—Meerut—Lahore—Rawalpindi—Peshawar.

Southern line :—Madras—Bangalore—Belgaum—Poona—Bombay—Mhow—Haiderabad—Sukkur—Quetta.

The disposition of troops in peace time is based on the principle that the nearer the frontier the thicker the troops. Previous plans for the formation of 'Army Corps' have been dropped, and the organisation is now by Divisions and Armies. The Indian Division is more self-contained than its counter-part in England.

Composition and strength of English Troops in India.

(The author's authority for the information given under this heading is "Indian Army List, July 1908." With a few minor exceptions, it is correct as far as it goes. He estimates the total strength of British troops in India at—officers 3,168; rank and file 71,825.—*Tr.*)

Volunteers.—The Volunteer forces, comprising Europeans and Eurasians, have performed great service, especially during the Mutiny of 1857. Previous to 1860 they had no regular organisation, but later one corps was formed in Nagpur and two in the Punjab, and in 1862 the Behar Light Horse was raised. There are now artillery, cavalry, mounted and dismounted rifle Volunteer Corps, and also three Naval Volunteer Corps, at Calcutta, Karachi and Aden. Since 1857 these Corps have frequently taken part in campaigns. For example, a Company of Mounted Rifles, organised in Rangoon, served in Upper Burma in 1885 and took part in the taking of Mandalay.

According to the latest organisation, the Volunteers are intended for employment in defence of European settlements, roads, etc., when the regular army takes the field. Volunteers may also be called upon to serve outside the limits of India.

According to the Budget Estimates, 1907-08, the number of Volunteers, excluding reservists but including the cadre establishments, should have totalled 33,774, but from "Indian Army List, July 1908," the total number, excluding cadre establishments but including 1,648 reservists, amounts to 34,673, of whom 32,821 are trained.

The paucity of numbers led to the formation in 1887 of the Volunteer Reserve. The sole qualification for transfer to the Reserve is that a man should be under 35 years of age and pass a short musketry course. Reservists are provided with Martini-Henry rifles and uniform, and receive 10 rupees a year pay.

Reservists are not organised in separate corps, but are borne on the strength of their respective Volunteer Corps. At the end of 1906 they numbered 1,648.

Composition and strength of Native Troops.

Infantry:—131 regiments, 122 of one-battalion establishment and 9 (No. 39 and 8 Gurkha Battalions) of two-battalion, in all 140 battalions.

Every battalion has 160 men trained in Mounted Infantry duties. All battalions consist of 8 Companies. Separate regiments (battalions in peace time) are formed in war time into Composite Regiments, with a special regimental staff.

Cavalry:—39 regiments and 5½ independent squadrons. Each regiment has a 4-squadron establishment, except the Guides which have three. Total 160½ squadrons.

Artillery:—Native Artillery consists of 10 Mountain Batteries and Frontier Garrison Artillery. The former are armed with 10-pr. breech-loaders. The latter consists of 6 Companies, stationed at Kohat, Malakand, Chakdara, Peshawar, Bannu and Dera Ismail Khan, and are for service in the frontier forts. A Corps of Native Indian Coast Artillery is now in process of formation for service at Indian ports, comprising 8 service and 1 depôt company. These will release a corresponding number of British Fortress artillery companies for service on the north-west frontier and with the field army.

Engineers:—3 battalions of Sappers and Miners, each consisting of 6 service companies and 2 depôt companies. Two independent Railway Companies.

Sanitary Troops:—11 Companies, Army Hospital Corps, and 29 Companies, Army Bearer Corps.

Transport:—As in the case of British Cavalry, the Native Cavalry have their own transport, consisting (per regiment) of 87 'mobilisation' mules, employed in peace time on grass duty, and 229 grass-cutters' ponies. The transport on service consists of these 87 mules, supplemented by additional mules from transport depôts.

Total strength of the Native Army:—

British officers	3,119
Native officers	3,032
British ranks	202
Native ranks	151,738

Organisation of Native Troops.

The mixed class system, introduced after the Mutiny on the recommendation of a Commission which considered the matter in 1859 has since undergone several modifications in the matter of class company regiments being replaced by class regiments.

Sir John Strachey observes:— "The native army varies considerably in quality owing to the different races of which it is composed. But it would be difficult to find better fighting material than the Gurkhas, Sikhs and Pathans, and these tribes form an unlimited reserve for the native army."

The recruiting centres are:—

1. Peshawar, for Pathans.
2. Rawalpindi, for Punjabi Mussulmans.
3. Amritsar, for Sikhs.
4. Sialkot, for Dogras.
5. Delhi, for Hindustani Mussulmans.
6. Lucknow, for Hindus.
7. Gorakhpur, for Gurkhas.

With the exception of Lucknow and Gorakhpur, all these recruiting centres are in the Punjab, as being the best area for the purpose. Each depôt is under a special officer, who furnishes the recruit with all that is necessary and despatches him to his regiment. The recruit must engage to serve out of India if required, and can claim his discharge after 3 years' service. Soldiers invalided receive a gratuity proportional to the length of service, which may extend to 21 years.

Armament.—The re-armament, with the ·303 Lee-Enfield rifle, 1895 pattern, of the Anglo-Indian army, including Volunteers and Reserves, was completed in 1903-04, and in 1904-05 Budget provision was made for 28,936 of these rifles to form a reserve. But meanwhile the 1903 pattern of short rifle had been adopted in England, and 50,000 rifles of this latter pattern were sent to India in 1904-05. In addition, it was decided to proceed in India with the conversion of the 1895 pattern to that of 1903. At the present time both these patterns are in use, but the Frontier Militia are armed only with old Martini-Henry rifles and even Sniders. Every British battalion has 2 (·303) Maxim machine guns, and out of a total of 288 machine guns required, 262 had been received at the beginning of 1905.

The cavalry are armed with Lee-Enfield carbines, revolvers (officers and non-commissioned officers) and swords. Lancer regiments carry lances in addition. The native cavalry are similarly armed, and the Volunteer mounted units have Lee-Metford carbines. The Imperial Service cavalry have Snider carbines, but are being rearmed with Martini-Henry carbines.

Each British cavalry regiment has a 1-pr. 'pom-pom' and a Maxim. In the artillery, the re-armament of field batteries with 18½-pr. quick-firers and of horse batteries with 12½-pr. quick-firers has been commenced. In 1905, 126 quick-firers were ordered from Woolwich, and in 1906 the manufacture of these guns was started in India at the Kolipur (*sic*) arsenal.

The mountain artillery is armed with 10-pr. breech-loaders.

Pay and allowances.

(The author's information under this heading is for the most part accurate, but as it is of but little importance, it is omitted.)

The Troops of Native States.

There are 120 Native States, of whom the principal are :—

	Area in sq. kilom.	Population.
	—	—
Hyderabad	210,000	10 millions.
Gwal'or..	75,000	3 „
Mysore	64,000	4 „
Jaipur	37,000	2·5 „

With the exception of Nepal, all the Native States recognize the suz rainty of England. This authority was enthusiastically accepted in 1877 on the assumption by Queen Victoria of the title of 'Empress of India.'

Armies are maintained by these Native States for the preservation of internal order and to uphold their prestige. On paper the total number of troops is imposing, amounting to 380,000 men, including 69,000 cavalry, and 11,000 gunners with 4,000 guns. But these figures are misleading, as only a small proportion of these troops have any organisation and are fit to take the field. Their armament also is outside all criticism; they have no quick-firers nor rifled guns, and generally, according to the opinion of Sir Lepel Griffin, the whole force could not stand up against two or three British regiments.

The Imperial Service Troops were the outcome of the idea of entrusting the internal security of the country to native contingents in exchange for safety from outside aggression, guaranteed by the Indian Government. The principle was accepted that the troops of Native States should be under the command of English officers. But after the Mutiny of 1857, in which all the Native States, except Hyderabad, took part, the Indian Government gradually disbanded their forces. In a few States, however, undisciplined ill-armed bodies of troops continued to exist, more of a danger to internal peace than to the enemy from without. They were divided into 'regulars' as guards to the palaces of the rulers, and 'irregulars' to police the country.

* * * * *

Various projects have been considered for improving the military status of these Imperial Service Troops. In 1885 when Anglo-Russian relations became strained, the Indian Government were obliged to consider the defence of India and the part to be played therein by these native contingents. But the negotiations between England and Russia terminated peacefully and the matter was dropped.

In 1887, the Nizam of Hyderabad notified the Viceroy that in commemoration of the jubilee of the Queen he proposed to present a large sum of money to increase the defensibility of India, and also to place a large portion of his army at the disposal of Government in case of necessity. His example was followed by the other Native Chiefs. The Government of India accepted the offer as regards the troops, but declined the money, except so far as it was needed for the proper organisation of the contingents. Hence, the special category of 'Imperial Service Troops,' intended exclusively for the defence of India from outside aggression. They are distinct from the Indo-British army, but are under the control of English officers, and are at the disposal of Government on mobilisation being ordered. In peace time they are under the Foreign Department. The final scheme of organization was formulated in 1888. At first only contingents were formed in certain of the Punjab and Rajputana States, under an inspector with two assistants. These inspectors were military advisers to the States as regards organization, training, etc. The troops of each State are composed exclusively of subjects of the particular State, the officers being taken from the ruling classes. Non-commissioned officers from native regiments of the Indo-British army are employed as instructors and men are sent to be trained as

instructors. Very satisfactory results have been obtained, thanks chiefly to the enthusiasm of the Native Chiefs, who in some cases pass the whole day in barracks and the stables. This excessive keenness is indeed viewed by the Government of India with some alarm, and the instructors are under orders to restrain it. From time to time the Imperial Service Troops are brigaded with native regiments for training and manœuvres, and several of the contingents have actually been on service, *e.g.* the Kashmir Contingent, which acquitted itself creditably in the Hunza-Nagar expedition, 1891-92.

The pick of the Imperial Service Troops number 19,000, and belong to 23 different States, as follows:—

Kashmir	4,350
Other Punjab States	4,950
Rajputana	4,000
Central and Western Provinces	4,500
Southern Provinces	1,400

All these troops are splendidly trained and armed and could meet on equal terms the best regiments of the Indian Army. This points to the wealth of military material in India, and the remarkable loyalty of the Native States.

Characteristics of the position of the English officer in India generally, and with native troops in particular.

The Indian Staff Corps consists of two categories:—

(*a*) British officers serving with native units and in the various military departments, and

(*b*) Military officials; political agents, residents with Native States, etc.

These latter are promoted on the same terms as officers of the combatant branch, after fixed periods of service, *viz.*

to Captain after 11 years' service.
to Major „ 20 „ „
to Lt.-Col. „ 26 „ „

Although the British officer in India is treated generously, the press is nevertheless calling attention to the inadequate number of British officers with native troops. A century ago, under the Company, it was considered necessary to have 22 British officers in every regiment, counteracting in this way the want of confidence felt in the native ranks. But owing to the expansion of

the British Empire during the first half of last century and the corresponding increase in the armed forces, so many officers could not be spared for service in India, and at the time of the Mutiny the number had considerably diminished.

Another defect is the insufficient knowledge displayed by the officers of the language spoken by their men. How can intimate relations exist between officer and man when they cannot even understand one another ? Many incidents in recent campaigns have pointed to the evil results of this confusion of tongues, and for this reason the Government has increased the standard of knowledge required. But the difficulty will remain, in the first place because the British officers only regard their life in India as a temporary exile from 'home' to which they ever look, and in the second because six different languages have to be learnt, *viz.*

Pushtu	in 44 units.
Paravetia	in 16 „
Punjabi	in 21 „
Hindi	in 30 „
Tamil	in 24 „
Mahrati	in 13 „

After the reorganisation of the Indian Army it was considered sufficient to have 8 officers in an infantry and 9 in a cavalry regiment. This was enough to preserve India from her internal enemies, but meanwhile (in the words of Major Mullaly) a new factor has arisen, *viz.* the close proximity to India of two great allied Powers. Afghanistan also is gradually adopting western civilisation and improving her military system. Finally, the frontier tribes require more attention than formerly.

In short, the army in India is more for external defence operations than for the preservation of internal order, and it is for this reason that the number of British officers is insufficient.

As regards the tactical training of the British soldier in India, it must be observed that in mountain warfare he is far inferior to his native comrade. Every impartial observer of the Tirah operations will endorse this. In this latter campaign the Sikhs and Gurkhas particularly distinguished themselves. This was acknowledged by the British soldiers themselves, as a British soldier expressed it:—" mountain warfare is work for Gurkhas; if I am worth a shilling a day, he is worth two."

It has been calculated that every soldier landed in India has already cost the Government £ 100.

CHAPTER VIII.

The invasion of India question.

Rooted delusions of public opinion—Various attempts to create diversions in the direction of India—The brochures of Lebedef and Sobolef—Colonel Hanna's investigation of the advance of a Russian Army towards India—Historical review of the invasions of India under various leaders—Characteristics of the approaches to India viâ the north-west frontier and viâ the Hindu Kush from the Pamirs.

The above is a question which for some time past has misled public opinion in Russia, and which, consequently, may some time or other engulf our country in a catastrophe similar to that recently experienced in the Far East.

Opportunity has repeatedly been afforded me to express my views on the subject both in confidential lectures before experts and in the public press. It may not be out of place to repeat here what I wrote last year (1907) in the "Razvyedchik"—

"For more than 3 centuries Russia has slowly but surely been advancing to the open sea, and with but small sacrifices has acquired vast possessions on the continent of Asia. Her progress was rudely shaken by the unfortunate war in the Far East only because the guardians of our foreign policy lost the sense of proportion, and were carried away in a false direction. But it would be still more disastrous if not only individuals but public opinion at large, befogged by fallacious representations of national problems, should systematically stray in quest of chimerical renown.

The duty and obligation of the Press is, as far as it can, to dispel erroneous ideas in the public mind concerning military-political matters. If at the time the Press had but vehemently proclaimed the fatal significance of the acquisition of Port Arthur—a fact perfectly obvious—we undoubtedly should not have witnessed the pitiful events of recent years.

It is of incomparably greater importance to establish a correct appreciation of our position in Central Asia, embracing, as it does, more momentous consequences than the Far East. Amongst the

educated classes, however, the opinion has taken root that in Central Asia our rôle is to lay perfidious Albion by the heels; that it is here that we can settle old scores with England, that the road to Constantinople lies not as formerly through Vienna, but through India; here, in fine, is the knot of international questions and of the world's politics. Such fallacies have not only filled the heads of strategists, but have sometimes been put to a practical test, at the price of heavy sacrifice. Without going too far back, it will suffice to recall the so-named "Jam Expedition", undertaken at the time of the appearance of the English squadron in Bezika Bay, with the object of scaring England by an advance of our troops towards India. The expedition resulted in the country being deprived of the services of many of her loyal sons, victims of fever, without any benefit whatever. During recent years similar ventures have been made. At the time of the "Boxer" outbreak in China "a trial of the efficiency of the Murghab railway" was undertaken on the strength of some occult political considerations; in other words, a diversion towards India, which cost many lives, victims of fever, not only without benefit but with actual harm to Russia. Again, in the Far East, the prelude to the disastrous war with Japan was the appearance of our troops on the Yalu, as a counterstroke to the Japanese descent on the Korean coastboard.

As has been observed, as regards Central Asia, the position is worse. Public opinion has been nurtured on the everlasting delusion that in the matter of invading India, Russia is master of the situation; that the will only is necessary for us to take the bull by the horns and pay off old scores with England. The late (General) Skobelef settled the matter categorically—"give me 100,000 camels and I will conquer India" he used to say in 1882, in the conviction that it was only necessary for our Cossacks to show themselves on the other side of the Hindu Kush, for a general rising of the natives of India to take place against their eternal oppressors. The foreign military Press too for many years encouraged this delusion in Russian minds, in the hope of attracting her military power to her Asiatic possessions as indeed happened in the Far East.

General Kuropatkin, as War Minister, fully recognized the danger of this reckless thirst after chimerical projects for the invasion of India, and insisted on the necessity of being at one with England on all questions touching the supremacy of Europeans in Central Asia and India. In practice, however, he initiated measures of such a nature as to convince Russian public opinion and the world at large that Russia was eagerly preparing for such an invasion.

As regards those measures it is only necessary to refer to the laying of the strategical railway line to Kushk, the construction of Kushk fortress, as a convenient *place d'armes* for operations against Herat, "the key to India", the making of a cart-road * over the Takhta-Karacha, the first link on the second line of operations; the location of a fairly strong garrison at Termez; "trial of the efficiency of the Murghab railway"; finally, the establishment of through railway communication from the heart of Russia to Tashkent, the primary object of course being purely economic, but providing at the same time a strategical trump for an advance on India. All 'these trumps 'taken together are of course insufficient for so gigantic an undertaking, but they suffice to give an exaggerated idea of their value. And when one is inspired with confidence and imbued with the conviction that one possesses a well-sharpened weapon, the desire to put matters to the test is generated and "rifles have a way of going off by themselves" in spite of all common-sense reasoning.

* Samark and-Termez route.

Meanwhile, according to the most moderate estimate, the invasion of India is an undertaking which during a period of many years would involve Russia in a Titanic struggle with vast military resources and unknown elements of every description.

Why should we suppose that India will rise *en masse* against the English as soon as our leading troops cross the Hindu Kush or reach the Indus? In point of fact we know that during the tribal rising of 1897, the Afridi officers and men remained with their regiments and fought against their lawless relatives, notwithstanding the manifesto of the Indian Government, which absolved them from the painful duty.

There is, therefore, no reason to suppose that these same Afridis who remained staunch under such trying circum stances, would necessarily betray the English and throw themselves into our arms. Then again in 1885, when our relations with England were strained after the fight on the Kushk river, the native rulers of India displayed remarkable unanimity, in offering assistance with troops and money, whence came into existence the special category of troops known as "Imperial Service."

Nowadays, of course, no one thinks seriously of an invasion of India. Only recently, however, we have met in the Press statements to the effect that Russia should not throw away her 'trumps' in the game against India. By such senseless fallacies we encourage a systematic enmity of Russia in England, without the slightest

benefit to ourselves. The English are not so simple as to surrender any of their material interests under the threat of some problematical danger. Thus we observe that in their relations with Russia in Europe, they take their own line just as though Russia had no footing whatever in Central Asia, in close propinquity with India. Sufficient proof of this is the difficulty of pointing to a single diplomatic success during the whole century of the existence of the Central Asian question, where, disagreeing with England over European questions, we have scored owing to our being able to bring pressure to bear on India.

Nevertheless the question of an invasion of India is settled amongst us somewhat cavalierly.

Some 10—15 years ago there appeared a small brochure by Mons. Lebedef, with the resounding warlike title of "To India", after the example of the French Press at the commencement of the 1870 campaign, which counted on scaring the opponent by the war cry "To Berlin."

This brochure caused considerable stir at the time, both in the Russian and foreign press, although unworthy of the attention paid to it.

Later L. N. Skobolef appeared on the scene as a vehement champion of the "invasion of India" idea, with his brochure "Is an invasion of India possible?"

Skobolef bases his conclusions not on a study of the actual conditions obtaining, but on the fact that as Alexander the Macedonian invaded India so can we. "History teaches," says he," that the majority of ventures for the conquest of India have been crowned with success. What has been repeated, almost from century to century during 2,000 years, is scarcely likely not to recur, when undertaken by a mighty military power. History shows also that the ruling races of Central Asia, with a well-organized army and led by a monarch of strong will and determination, have been unable to withstand the temptation to enter India, enticed thither by the natural splendour of the country and the fabulous wealth of the people.

"These successful enterprises, moreover, benefited mankind generally in opening India up to the world at large.

"Cyrus, Darius, Alexander, Uguz-Khan, Arshak, Nushirvan, Mahmud of Ghazni, Mahomed Huri, Chingiz Khan, Timur Bek, Baber, Nadir Shah—these are the leaders who successfully took

advantage of the strategical position of Central Asia, and did not hesitate to traverse the mighty ranges of Afghanistan, which enclose India on the north-west and west.

"The history of these expeditions indicates that over both the Hindu Kush and the Suleiman range there are a number of passes suitable for the passage of considerable forces of infantry, cavalry and even artillery. It is shown that the invading armies did not encounter special difficulties in the matter of supplies, forage and fuel. In the high lying valleys of Afghanistan, water is plentiful and good. Difficulties were experienced only with the warlike inhabitants, for whom, however, the enticement to invade India was so strong, that from being enemies they became friends, joining the ranks of the invading armies, with whom they advanced enthusiastically into the valley of the Indus. A remarkable feature of all these past invasions and a factor but little understood by us Europeans, is that the invading armies not only did not diminish in numbers as they advanced, but actually increased. In India itself these armies have found powerful allies from amongst the ruling Chiefs. Such was the case in former expeditions and so, in all probability, it will prove to be in the next."

It is clear that Skobolef has no desire to examine existing conditions, but contents himself with the naive hypothesis "others could do it, why not we?" But such reasoning when dealing with a question of this nature, can only be judged as both dangerous and imprudent.

Following our occupation of the Pamir region and the establishment there of a Russian detachment, we began seriously to talk of the possibility of transforming this 'roof of the world' into a special *place d'armes* for the invasion of India from this direction. Let us consider how existing conditions affect an advance on India from Central Asia and the Pamirs. As regards the former line of operations, *i.e.*, an attack by us on the north-west frontier, we may refer to the work of Colonel H.B. Hanna of the Indo-British Army, who was Chief of the Staff to General Stewart and Field Marshal Lord Roberts at the time of the second Afghan War in 1879, and who consequently thoroughly studied the approaches to the north-west frontier of India *viâ* Afghanistan and the feasibility of moving troops through that country.

It must be observed that Colonel Hanna is a representative of the so-called "backward policy", *i.e.*, of the military-political party advocating concentration on the actual frontier, as opposed to the "forward policy" faction. Colonel Hanna supports his

conclusions by a detailed investigation of the natural obstacles which close the north-west frontier of India from attack from Central Asia. It may be deemed preferable to examine the difficulties of such an undertaking, and not its facilities and feasibility as demonstrated by Sir E. Hamley, Napier of Magdala, Macgregor, Lord Curzon and many others. We are prone to listen to what is painted in glowing colours, and to discard anything that foretells troubles and trials. And it is in this way that public opinion has been misled.

Common prudence demands that in every undertaking not its favourable features, but its difficulties should be considered. For this reason the following extracts, mostly from Colonel Hanna's work, are given, which clearly demonstrate the difficulties to be overcome by an army advancing on India from Central Asia.

[*Note.*—The following 53 pages of Major-General Grulef's book contains a word-for-word quotation from pp. 9-105 of "Can Russia invade India" by Colonel H. B. Hanna, 1895. The original matter by Grulef is noted below.]

[Following page 89 of Colonel Hanna's work.]

From the above it is sufficiently clear that the invasion of India is by no means such an ordinary undertaking as Skobolef would have us suppose. If, as compared with the epoch of Alexander, an invading army has now at its disposal railways and other technical contrivances, the defence benefits in a corresponding degree. Moreover, the invader will now encounter in India a more powerful opponent, supreme master not only of all India, but also to some extent of the adjacent countries, through which the attacking army would perhaps have to fight every step of its way.

Another point to be noted is that Skobolef favoured the invading army by supposing the Afghan Amir's inaction or even his co-operation with its advance. But this is opposed to the mutual relations obtaining between Russia, England and Afghanistan.

Moreover, the armed strength of Afghanistan is far from being a '*quantité negligeable.*'

In amplification of the information already given (Chapter IV) the following* may be added :—

*Neue Militärische Blätter, No. 21.

On his death, the Amir Abdur Rahman bequeathed an army of 67,000 infantry, 12,000 cavalry and 300 guns, the latter being

mostly Krupp of latest pattern. The majority of these troops are organized and trained on European lines and distributed at Maimana, Balk, Mazar-i-Sharif, Kunduz, *i.e.*, preferably on the line of operations leading from Russian possessions through Afghanistan to India.

Before overcoming the difficulties of the Afghan deserts, an invading army would assuredly have to reckon with the Afghan army.

Approaches to India from the Pamirs.

Above has been given Hanna's critical analysis of the approaches to the north-west frontier of India along those lines of operation utilised by invaders in the past. It goes without saying that this frontier is the more vulnerable one from our Central Asian borders.

The occupation of the Pamirs brought us almost conterminous with Indian territory, for an attack on which new approaches were opened up. Macgregor, in his famous study "The Defence of India" even considers possible the advance of a Russian Army, 30,000 strong, from this direction.

In Chapter III were detailed the characteristics of the topography of the Pamirs and of the approaches thence to India. From the data adduced it is perfectly evident that this line is altogether unsuitable for the movement of anything like a large body of troops. And this is confirmed by past history.

(A brief unimportant historical resumé of past invasions of India follows.)

* * * * * *

(Following page 105 of Hanna's work.)

That all that has been said above regarding the inaccessibility of the Hindu Kush passes for the passage of troops is in no way exaggerated was confirmed by my own personal experiences when crossing the Pamirs from Ferghana in 1896.

CHAPTER IX.

The New Era.

The significance of the recent Anglo-Russian Agreement—Re-appreciation of Russian rooted opinions regarding Central Asian problems—Question of linking up the railway systems of Russia and India.

The recent Agreement with England, concluded in August of last year (1907), and which embraced all Central Asian questions, has dispelled—let us hope for many a day—all those visions of an alarming encounter, which for so long have disturbed the mutual relations of the two countries on the continent of Asia. But a diplomatic Treaty cannot of course by a stroke of the pen eradicate convictions and ideas which have for a long period been fostered in the public mind. Following the Agreement with England, an examination of the question is specially opportune.

The fact is, that in our traditional desire to be revenged on England, to settle old scores for her persistent enmity towards Russia, we have apparently been led away on to a hazardous track. The primary reason for this desire is our firm conviction, based on self-deception alone, that we are masters of the situation in Central Asia, in all that affects the security of India.

Shortly before the late war in the Far East, in an appreciation of the mutual relations of Russia and England in Central Asia, one came across paraphrases of Goethe's well-known saying regarding Napoleon I and Prussia, that after the example of the former on the Rhine, Russia has only to whistle in Central Asia and England's power in India will collapse, and together with it all her wealth and world-wide domination. It may be asked, how have such views come to be formed ? Are we not under a misapprehension as to the real limit of our military predominance in Asia ? Have we not proceeded too far in this delusion ? What may be the resulting effect ? These are questions of obvious importance, which may be asked with all the greater insistence in view of this keen fostering of dangerous delusions.

Does Russia aim at the conquest and annexation of India ? Following our experiences in the Far East and recent internal

troubles, this question sounds particularly pathetic and strange. Who in Russia now thinks of such a thing? Naturally the question of an advance on India arouses but little interest at the present time. But a question which for centuries has occupied the public mind cannot be obliterated by the fleeting events of recent years. Hence the importance of submitting the matter to scrutiny, fate having provided an instructive though painful warning.

In a famous report by the late War Minister and Commander-in-Chief, General Kuropatkin, we find the following impressive pronouncement concerning our Central Asian policy:—

(Here follows the quotation already given in the Author's note, page ii.)

These are the words of the initiator of the Murghab railway, possessing exclusively a strategical importance as against the English in India; thus speaks the founder of the Termez and Kerki garrisons, representing the advanced guards of an advance on India, and the originator of Kushk fortress, constructed solely for offensive purposes. This is what sapient experience means! But surely General Kuropatkin does not suppose that England will resist only on the appearance of Russia in the Persian Gulf, and will permit free access to India.

If during preceding years the question of the conquest of India has not been directly raised, it is only because there are not two opinions as to the answer. We all recognize that India is of no use to us; that the incorporation of 300 million polyglot subjects of various religions, far removed from the central power, would draw Russia away from her vital centres. But it is said—an advance on India is necessary as a diversion, that *there* is hidden the desired key to Constantinople.

But will not this be a too roundabout method whereby to attain our true object? We need not indulge in various strategical considerations, a glance at the question is sufficient to bring conviction that this method is too conjectural if only we realize that with all our military-political advantages in Central Asia, it will not suffice merely to whistle in order to snatch India from the English. We have known the route to Constantinople for a thousand years; more than once our victorious troops have actually got there, whereas the route to India we only know from meagre accounts, from English sources of information. Would such a diversion be possible, requiring, in any case, enormous means? Would it not be preferable, when the time comes, to employ those means directly

for the attainment of our precious and inherited object? We may be told that to talk of India does not necessarily mean its invasion, but our '*feu sacré*.'

In short, that a confident military spirit is not in itself a great evil : that the ambitions fostered for centuries in the direction of India mean the half-attainment of our object, in that public opinion will be well prepared when the time comes to settle accounts with our perpetual opponent.

All these considerations involuntarily bring us back to the same dilemma. It would be all right if these positive means lead to the attainment of our true object. What if we are on the wrong track? Then unwittingly, we may be drawn away in quest of an undesirable and unnecessary goal.

In the history of European nations there are many examples of Governments being led astray by public opinion. It will suffice to recall our Russo-Turkish war of 1877. It is an historical fact that the Emperor Alexander II was for a long time against the war, and up to the last moment hoped to avert it. But public opinion was violently aroused, in part by the press, and war was made inevitable, the result being that we entered on it when conditions were not altogether in our favour The re-armament of the artillery had only just been commenced and in the case of the infantry it had not been completed. Indeed, our whole military system, based on the War Regulations, 1874, was in a state of transition, and not fully organized. The war, in a word, was inopportune : had we entered on it three or four years later we would perhaps have finished it off three—four times quicker, and probably with more brilliant results.

Our late war with Japan is an example of an opposite nature: the Government, allured by its own aggressive designs, engulfed the whole country in a disastrous struggle, regarding which the mass of the people were indifferent. But this allurement of the Government itself is by no means as dangerous as the reckless impulses of public opinion, nurtured for centuries on a fallacious comprehension of the nation's interests.

During recent times, at the slightest straining of our relations with England, our politicals at once have endeavoured to apply pressure in the direction of India. And although during the whole period of our perpetual attempts to lay hands on India we have not advanced a step nearer the solution of the problem, we are nevertheless imbued with the hope that in Central Asia we have only

so to desire and we can always settle matters with England, seeing that the security of India is a matter of life and death to her, and that this security lies, as it were, in the hands of Russia.

It is difficult to say on what such reckless self-assurance is based, which takes no account of the geographical, military, political and many other factors involved.

None of our military writers have seriously examined the possibility or impossibility of an invasion of India. We have no detailed compilations such as those of Rawlinson, Macgregor, Hanna and many other English investigators, but only irresponsible and ignorant brochures, which have persistently driven Russia towards India, by instilling into the public mind dangerous ideas easily calculated to subject us to a still more bitter experience than what we have recently been called upon to face in the Far East.

Although deeply-rooted mutual suspicion cannot be easily eradicated by Treaties and Agreements, there can be no doubt that this recent Agreement marks a new departure. It must be remembered that during the whole period of rivalry in Central Asia, the first attempt has been made to settle amicably disputed points and to establish good faith and goodwill in place of suspicion and envy. And thus by the creation of new conditions both sides will be able to approach the question from a fresh standpoint.

Russia is more particularly concerned. Hitherto, we have only concerned ourselves with the strategical value of our Turkistan dominions, as " a base for an advance on India ", and ignored economic considerations. It will suffice to adduce such facts as the following :—

The Ferghana district alone supplies almost the whole Moscow commercial area with cotton, representing an annual profit of not less than £2,638,875 to £ 3,166,650 ; nevertheless this district for a long time has suffered from a lack of good communications, whereas the construction of the Murghab railway was expedited, only because it possesses a certain strategical importance, its economic value being ' nil '.

In the same way, with much difficulty and considerable expense were constructed the roads, economically valueless but strategically important, from Samarkand *viâ* the Takhta-Karacha pass to the Afghan frontier, the new road from Osh to the Pamirs, and others. But the construction of a short road between Marghilan and Namangan, which would greatly benefit the economic interests

of that region, is not to be expected. In order to occupy a threatening position as regards Afghanistan and India, we formed the fairly large garrison of Pata Kesar, which costs Government a considerable sum and draws our troops away from more important centres. Whole battalions are buried here, victims of fever, and of military-political dreams, whereas they might have been immeasurably better employed elsewhere. And thus it has been in other cases.

Since our occupation of Turkistan we have never really turned our attention to this wonderful region, the gift of Providence, but have been looking beyond in quest of something in the dim distance. It is time, and has long since been time, to regard our possessions from a different point of view, as a source of strength and wealth for Russia, and not as stages for fresh unending projects. In place of retaining these regions as a clenched fist, eternally threatening somebody, it would be infinitely more advantageous to open the fist and employ its muscles in the more essential interests of Russia. But the Anglo-Russian Agreement in its relation to Central Asian affairs undoubtedly marks a new era in Russia's dealings with her frontiers.

The first problem for solution is the question of linking up the railway systems of Russia and British India. An Anglo-Indian telegraph line already passes through Russian territory; it is now the turn of a railway line. From both directions—from Russia and India—railways run to the Afghan frontier, where they are brought to a stop by mutual distrust and suspicion. Once let both sides recognize the groundlessness of all suspicion, and there would be no occasion to delay the realization of the project.

For many years the English have contemplated the project of a railway from Europe to India, by the most circuitous route through Turkey and Baluchistan, avoiding for obvious reasons Russian Central Asia. It would be incomparably simpler to link up the two systems by the shortest route through Afghanistan. In place of a fanciful exit at an inanimate port in the Persian Gulf, our railway system would acquire an extensive outlet in all the busy ports of India, and our Central Asia would represent the connecting link between the 500 million inhabitants of Europe and India.

This linking up of the railway systems of Russia and India will undoubtedly come about sooner or later, however remote and strange it may appear at present. One has only to glance at a map and see the railways marked right up to the Afghan frontier

to be convinced that their junction is but a matter of time. This is vouched for by the conditions of modern life, which plays as great a part in our time, as does the force of gravitation in nature itself. Hence I am firmly convinced that the mutual gravitation of railways from Europe on the one side and from India on the other is so great, that no reciprocal mistrust of Russia and England will be able to prevent their junction.

If for whole centuries Europe persistently sought for unknown sea-routes to India, is it likely that she will not open up routes through insignificant Afghanistan, which now separates the last links of railway connection between Russia and India?

The extent to which the English value the question of communications is to be seen from the fact that on the introduction of steam, the East India Company at once offered a prize of £20,000 to the captain of the first steamer to reach India. Subsequently after the opening of the Suez Canal, the route chosen was *viâ* Trieste and is now *viâ* Brindisi. But this broken route does not meet requirements for the intercourse of almost half the universe, and the Brindisi route is only tolerated because the shortest route for railway communication *viâ* Russian Central Asia is blocked by the traditional reciprocal mistrust of Russia and England.

But this mistrust will not last for ever: and meanwhile by a settlement of this question as to the more convenient and shortest Indo-European overland route, traversing a considerable stretch of Russian territory, a final point in Russia's advance in Central Asia will be reached.

It must be observed that there are many English opponents of the scheme. At their head stands Lord Curzon, late Viceroy of India, who in 1897 expressed himself very forcibly on the subject. Even the construction of the Trans-Caspian line appealed to Lord Curzon as threatening the security of India. Shortly previous to being appointed Indian Viceroy, he expressed himself as follows:—

*"Times of India."

*"My conclusions concerning the strategical significance of the Trans-Caspian Railway are based on the pronouncements of authoritative people. With the Trans-Caspian Railway, the centre of gravity of Central Asia has been changed from Tashkent to Askhabad and from Turkistan to Trans-Caspia. I am far from any desire to exaggerate Russia's military strength and position in Trans-Caspia: agreed that Russia could not place more than 50,000

troops on the Afghan frontier without previous preparation, but requiring, of course, a certain amount of time. The fact, nevertheless, is established that an advance by Russia on Herat, the Helmand or Kandahar, which but a few years ago was deemed impossible, has become quite feasible with the construction of the Trans-Caspian line, which has doubled Russia's defensive and offensive power in Central Asia. If we take into account the strength of Turkistan and remember that troops could advance thence independently on India, we can comprehend the extent to which Russia's menace in this quarter has developed. I merely emphasize the respective positions of Russia and England in Central Asia as the result of recent events, and which stand out in such bold relief, when the previous position of these Powers in Asia is considered.

"It is useful to remember that while English statesmen have been chattering in Parliament and expending much ink and wasting much paper in the Foreign Office, our only rival in the Far East has silently and without hindrance pursued a course of conquest and assimilation of the local people. The result is that at the present time Russia's offensive power is immeasurably greater than that of England, and as regards defence Russia's possessions in Central Asia are invulnerable."

Passing to a consideration of the fundamental reasons which have compelled Russia to go forward, Curzon says:—"In her advance in Central Asia Russia has not encountered physical difficulties, the enemy understanding defeat only. This naturally impelled Russia to move forward with the same consistency as that with which the earth moves round the sun; those only can complain who might have hindered the forward movement, but have not done so spontaneously. Russia's entry into Central Asia was not a matter of deliberate political foresight but merely the impulse of natural causes. But it has resulted in the occupation by Russia of a menacing position with regard to India, ready when occasion offers to profit by her advantageous position. I do not think that in Russia an invasion of India is seriously contemplated. It is doubtful whether any people of intelligence could be found—except certain speculative theorists and rash subalterns—who would seriously dream of such an exploit. It would be a step in comparison with which the conquest of India by the English Trading Company—one of the phenomena of history — would seem child's play. It would entail the most terrible and protracted war ever yet witnessed. The defeat of England would involve not only the loss of India, but the down-

fall of the English race, a loss more important for the whole human race.

"But if Russia's ambition does not aim at the subjugation of India, it does not mean that Russian diplomatists and generals have no designs in that direction. Their object is manifest; the goal of their desires is not Calcutta but Constantinople. The Russians think to secure the keys of the Bosphorus more easily on the banks of the Helmand than on the heights of Plevna. Russian diplomacy aims at keeping England occupied in Central Asia, and thereby render her impotent in Europe."

Notwithstanding this pronouncement of Lord Curzon, who sees in the linking up of Russian and Indian railways a grave danger for India, projects for the construction of a Central Asian grand trunk line are constantly being considered, both in England and India. As far back as 1856 an English company was formed for the construction of a railway *viâ* Vienna, Constantinople and Asia Minor to the Persian Gulf and onwards through Baluchistan to India. This project was nearly realized, being guaranteed by capitalists and by a *firman* of the Sultan. But Lord Palmerston, bent on maintaining cordial relations with France where the scheme was not favoured, stepped in as an opponent. Moreover, apart from political considerations, the alignment of the proposed railway was unsatisfactory, as out of a total length of 2,500 miles about 1,400 miles traversed sterile deserts; the cost of construction to Karachi would not have been less than 20 millions sterling, and goods traffic, to any great extent, could not be counted on. Thus these railway projects have remained unrealized, and caravans, as of old, have carried silk, spices, sugar and other Indian merchandize by the ancient routes to Balk, thence to the Oxus and Caspian Sea. The Trans-Caspian Railway brought some relief. The history of its rapid construction reads like a fairy tale. Without going into details it will suffice to mention that in 1886 the line was laid over the Turkoman steppes to Merv; six months later the bridge at Charjui was completed and the line crossed the Oxus, and in 1888 direct communication with Samarkand was established. The railway caused a revolution in trade routes; in place of the above mentioned antiquated route, goods were despatched by sea from Bombay to Batum, and thence by rail and steamer reached the markets of Europe and Central Asia. The line has long since lost its exclusively military character and is now, chiefly, an economic factor; its financial success made possible the construction of the Murghab branch.

As an answer to the Trans-Caspian line the English constructed a railway from Sukkur to Chaman, 60 miles short of Kandahar.

Thus, at present between the terminals of Indian and Russian railways, there remains an interval of about 438 miles. In 1899, a scheme was mooted in England for the construction of a railway *viâ* Sabsawar, Farah, Girishk and Kandahar. This alignment presents no technical difficulties and its cost would not exceed £3,000,000.

According to the project the journey from London to Bombay was to be reduced by a week. This was before the construction of the Orenburg-Tashkent line.

The estimate is by no means problematical when it is remembered that the rate of speed over European lines now reaches 32 and in Asia 25-30 miles on hour.

Taking these rates, the following is arrived at :—

	Distance. — Miles.	Duration of journey. — Hours.
1. London-Calais-Berlin-Alexandrovo.. ..	917	28
2. Customs inspection at Alexandrovo ..	..	1
3. Alexandrovo-Warsaw-Gomel-Merefa-Rostov Petrovsk-Baku.	1,968	63
4. Baku-Krasnovodsk (by sea)	198	15
5. Krasnovodsk-Merv-Kushk	714	30
6. Kushk-Chaman	438	18
7. Chaman-Sukkur-Karachi	481	19½
Total	4,716	174½

Turning to the political aspect of the question, the following statement was made in connection with the above project :—

" It is necessary in the first place to point to the incongruity of all these objections to placing our routes to India in hostile hands. If such be the case the Brindisi route should be abandoned, which might find itself in hostile hands in the event of a war with France. On the other hand, under present conditions, the Russians can reach Herat much quicker than we can, but through railway communication would place us on more

level terms. It would be much simpler to detach ourselves from preconceived suspicions, and come to some sort of agreement with Russia; otherwise, sooner or later, Russia by herself will construct this railway with the consent of the Afghan Amir, who will accord his assent if the subsidy now received from the Indian Government is provided by Russia for the protection of the line.

"As regards the economic side of the question, and independent of the objection to the system of protection obtaining in Russia, importance is to be attached to the magnitude of the project. Moreover, both sides can exchange several untaxable commodities without detriment to local industries.

"Finally, the passenger traffic to India, attracted by a journey through many interesting countries, rapid, cheap, and comfortable, will undoubtedly be diverted to the railway route."

In Russia, the question of linking up the systems was revived more particularly in 1898-1900, when investigations were undertaken for through railway communication from European Russia to Central Asia.

Two alignments were considered :—

(1) *viâ* Orenburg to Tashkent;

(2) *viâ* Alexandrof-Gai (Riazan-Ural line) to Charjui.

The former aligment answered the more immediate needs of the State, and has now been opened to traffic for four years. The latter was connected with the question of liking up with the Indian system: its realisation is still awaited, and it is important to note the considerations put forward at the time both by the interested party—the Riazan-Ural Railway Company—and by the Government representative, Privy Councillor Gorchakof, head of the Government Railway Department.

Almost all the projects for the construction of a magistral line in Central Asia have been in their time considered by the press, and examined by Government and scientific institutions; but all, without exception, have been negatived and have met with scant sympathy at the hands of the public. In their realization only difficulties, vast expenditure, failure and disappointment have been foretold. Neverthless the data and estimates adduced lead to the undoubted conclusion that Russia will establish a short, cheap and convenient route to the distant markets of Central Asia, for the exchange of Russian goods for the raw materials of the south.

In times of old, the Greeks, Romans, Arabs and Genoese exchanged the products of Europe and Asia, through the countries now belonging to Russia.

With the opening by the Portuguese of the sea passage to India round Africa overland connection with the Slav countries came to an end. Peter the Great, wishing once more to attract the world's trade through Russia, desired to connect Russian seas and rivers artificially, in order to establish an inland through water route from the Oxus and Volga to the Neva and Bosphorus, but the idea remained unrealized and the intention was for long forgotten. Since science has furnished new means for rapid communication, many Russians and foreigners have contemplated the construction of a railway from Europe to India and China, *viâ* Turkistan, the Caucasus or Siberia. The renowned Lesseps was prepared to place "Le Grand Central Asiatique" at the head of the world's enterprises and declared that an Indian-European railway through Russia would not only not prove detrimental to the Suez Canal, but, on the contrary, by bringing peoples togther and developing their intercource, would increase its activity.

Should the English in course of time construct a railway *viâ* Constantinople, it will not in any case be able to compete with a line *viâ* Samarkand, for everything demanding rapid transit and delivery will give preference to the shorter route. An Indo-European railway, 8,000 miles in length, would link up the extreme western and eastern points of Europe and India respectively—Lisbon and Calcutta (*viâ* Madrid, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, Samarkand, Kabul and Delhi).

Many think that the English, apprehensive of the approach of Russia to the Indian frontier, may oppose the linking up of the Central Asian Railway with the Indian system through Afghanistan. But from a military point of view there is but little difference whether the Central Asian Railway is carried on to the Indus or stops short at the Oxus.

Commercially, the English alone are losing, requiring more than others improvement in communications for their Indo-European dealings. Hence, doubtless in the near future, English and Russian surveyors, followed by railway lines, will meet on one of the mountain passes of the mighty range which separates the waters of the Oxus and Indus, and thanks to the Central Asian Railway, Russia and England, having shaken hands across the Hindu Kush, will drop rivalry and become reconciled, and will

aid one another in introducing citizenship and civilization amongst the peopies of the East.

At the present time, in view of the Anglo-Russian Agreement, the question of through Indo-European railway communication is gaining additional supporters in England, and the talk now is only of the choice of the best alignment.

In a recent number of the "Russki Invalid" it was stated that in discussing the question English papers regard Quetta as the point which should play the rôle of intermediate town. If the Amir should refuse his consent to a railway from Kushk *viâ* Herat and Kandahar to Chaman then India can be linked up *viâ* Quetta with Southern Persia, conditionally on the Baghdad railway being continued to Nasratabad. The project of constructing a line by Russian engineers, from the station Dushak *viâ* Meshed and Nasratabad to Kuh-i-Malik Siah (meeting point of the Persian, Baluchistan and Afghan frontiers), to be continued thence by English engineers, is criticised adversely by the English press owing to the fact that the Naumid desert has to be crossed and the consequent difficulty of attracting private capital to a venture unlikely to pay, except in so far as the flourishing province of Khorasan is concerned.

Thus, so far, English projects for linking up the railways of Europe and India have assiduously avoided Russian territory. But in the end this connecting link will pass through our Central Asian possessions, because it is the shortest route, and this in the matter of mutual human intercourse has the same unavoidable significance as a slope for the flow of water.

G. M. Press, Simla.—No. C. 359 I. B.—15-7-10.—90 —H. A. W.