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SOME PROBLEMS OF WESTERN CHINA:

COMMERCE, COMMUNICATIONS, AND REFORM

BY

THE EARL OF RONALDSHAY

Read February 12, 1908



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Proceedings of the Central
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SOME PROBLEMS OF WESTERN
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MR. VALENTINE CHIROL, the Chairman, in opening the proceedings, said : Lord Ronaldshay, whom I need not introduce to you, has been good enough to promise to give us a paper this afternoon on Some Problems affecting British Relations with China, especially Western China, a portion of the Empire with which we are far less acquainted, naturally, than with the great Eastern seaboard and with the lower valleys of the great rivers that pour into the China Sea. Lord Ronaldshay is, as you know, one of our young legislators who has had the public spirit and enterprise to devote a great deal of his leisure to the study on the spot of some of the great problems of Imperial policy, especially those connected with Asia, and it will therefore be doubly interesting to hear from him the results of his investigations during a journey he took about a year ago through Western China.

LORD RONALDSHAY'S paper was as follows :

On the two previous occasions on which I have had the honour of reading papers before the members of this Society I have dealt with those parts of Asia whose importance to Great Britain arises chiefly from the accident of their geographical position. Asiatic Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet occupy the position of pawns upon the Asian chess-board. Incapable of any movement of moment in themselves, they act as a screen, nevertheless, to the vital piece upon the board as represented by the Indian Empire. In the many problems which they present to British statesmanship, commerce plays a part of but secondary importance, being not infrequently employed as a means towards political ends. In other words, the ultimate aim of British statesmanship in these parts of Asia has been the maintenance and strengthening of a belt of neutral States, inhabited by friendly peoples, and ruled by

potentates, friendly, it may be, but in any case innocuous in as far as their powers of aggression—should they ever feel moved towards any such exhibition—are not of such a kind as to cause a Power like Great Britain serious apprehension. In such a programme the acquisition of strategic posts of vantage and the creation of political prestige have necessarily taken precedence of a single-minded development of trade in lands offering the merchant at the best a poor and unattractive soil.

In that part of Asia with which I propose to deal on this occasion these conditions are reversed. It is a generally accepted truth among those engaged in the study of Eastern problems that Western China is of interest to Great Britain chiefly on account of its potentialities as a market for British goods. Let me quote but a single opinion in support of this belief. 'It is indeed in this direction,' writes Sir Thomas Holdich, 'that England has more to hope for—more, indeed, to expect—than she has in any other part of the world. The wealth of the highly-developed provinces of Western China bears about the same proportion to the prospective value of the as yet undeveloped Sudan, for instance, as does the wealth of the city of London to that of any ordinary market town in England.' The view herein expressed is sufficiently emphatic, and accords generally with the result of my own personal investigation, though I would guard myself against being supposed to hold quite so sanguine a view of the value of Western China as a British market.

The vast network of mountains which run down from Tibet to Siam, quite apart from the essentially unaggressive character of the Chinese, provides a sufficient guarantee against any serious violation of India's eastern frontier. Questions of defence fall into the background; commerce stands out as the matter of paramount importance, and the acquisition of political influence becomes desirable, not as an end in itself, but for the purpose of securing the abolition of harassing restrictions upon British trade and a fair field for the play of British enterprise in growing markets. The expansion of trade in a country of vast areas demands, and will demand with increasing persistency, the improvement of communications; hence the second item which I have included for discussion in this paper. Again, the question of the introduction into China of modern methods of transport—*i.e.*, transport by railway and steamboat—is in its turn materially affected by the present reform movement in China, inspired, as it is, by the spirit expressed in the terms of the catch-cry of the Young China party,

'China for the Chinese.' In dealing with the one, therefore, it becomes necessary to touch upon the other.

With these preliminary remarks, let me conduct you rapidly from Shanghai, the great commercial metropolis of the Far East, to the fertile hills and basins of Ssuehuan, with its teeming population of frugal and industrious agriculturists, and thence to the rugged mountains and valleys of Yunnan, still showing traces of seventeen years of relentless revolution—a vast province, comprising some 122,000 square miles of hungry mountain, enlivened here and there, but not too frequently, by fertile and tolerably prosperous oases, and lying like a wedge between British Burma and its more fortunate and more prosperous northern neighbour. It is important to bear in mind the extent and physical character of Yunnan, because these factors are largely responsible for the fact that the 4½ million sterling (£4,773,148 in 1906) of Ssuehuan's external trade pass through the town of Chungking and up and down the 1,400 odd miles of the Yangtse River which lie between it and the sea. My own journey up the river from Shanghai to Chungking was accomplished at the most favourable season of the year in thirty-three days. This, however, cannot be taken as an average passage for merchandise, which occupies from six weeks to three months. Steamers run from Shanghai to Hankow, a large town which takes from £8,000,000 to £9,000,000 worth of foreign goods annually (£8,202,057 in 1906 and £8,820,219 in 1904), situated some 600 miles up the river, and connected since November, 1905, by 800 miles of Belgian-built railway with Peking, in three days. From here smaller steamers run on in from three to four days to Ichang, close upon 400 miles farther up the river, and standing at the eastern end of the first of the far-famed Yangtse gorges. It will be seen, therefore, that it is the next 400 miles that provide the obstacle to rapid transport, and which merit, therefore, a few words of description.

A mile or two above Ichang rise the mountain portals giving entrance to the first great gorge, and for ten days on end the traveller is borne through a wonderland of cliffs and towering pinnacles, where whole mountain ranges have been twisted and torn asunder by some terrific convulsion in the earth's surface. For the most part we were dragged by brute force against the current by a squad of trackers at the end of a rope of plaited bamboo, though recourse was also had to great sweeping oars, and when the wind was favourable to sails.

At this season of the year, when the water has fallen sufficiently

to mitigate the force of the current, and not enough to uncover the worst reefs, which are largely responsible for the danger of the rapids, all is more or less plain sailing. It is for this reason, perhaps, that those who have only a bowing acquaintance with the river have been led to underrate the difficulties of steam navigation. The members of the Blackburn Commercial Mission ascended the stretch between Ichang and Chungking in the month of November, and reported that 'the stretch between Ichang and Chungking has been credited with a character which in the estimation of this mission is ill-deserved; the terrors of the so-called rapids [*sic*] arise more from ignorance of fact and circumstance than experience.' And again, Sir Robert Douglas in a recent publication declares that 'repeated proposals have been made by foreigners to clear a passage, *as might easily be done* by the use of dynamite.' For myself, I prefer to accept the opinion of Captain Plant, at present pilot in the service of the French Government on the upper waters of the Yangtse, who can boast of ten years of practical experience of these waters, and who speaks eloquently of the 'enormous difficulties' of the 'chimerical schemes which have been put forward from time to time for the improvement of this part of the river.' That steamers *can* surmount the obstacles has been proved, first by Mr. Little in 1898, and again in 1899, and since that time by French and British gunboats. Nevertheless, the fact that light draught steamers with powerful engines, leaving little or no room for cargo, can ascend the river at favourable times of the year is no proof whatsoever that they could be run as a commercial success. The mere fact that since Mr. Little disposed of the *Pioneer* to the British Government in 1900 no further attempt in this direction has been made points rather to a conclusion in an opposite sense; and, indeed, to quote the opinions of Captain Plant once more, these attempts to run commercial steamers, 'abortive as they were, sufficed to demonstrate that steamers of necessarily high speed and of sufficient carrying capacity to make them pay were quite impossible.'

During 1906 an oft-suggested scheme for making use of steam haulage at the rapids crystallized in a more or less definite shape, the model followed being that of the system in use upon the Rhone. By Article V. of the Mackay Treaty of 1902 the Chinese Government admit that 'they are aware of the desirability of improving the navigability of the waterway between Ichang and Chungking, but place it on record that 'they are also fully aware that such improvement might involve heavy expense'—a striking instance of

the perspicacity of the governing body. They agree, therefore, that 'until improvements can be carried out, steamship owners shall be allowed to erect at their own expense appliances for hauling through the rapids.'

It appears to me, however, that in connexion with such schemes sufficient attention has not been paid to the enormous rise and fall of the water at different seasons of the year. Let us take an example. The summer of 1905 was remarkable in Ssuchuan for a prolonged period of drought. 'Towards the end of July the crops had become parched, and rain was earnestly looked for. As is customary, one of the city gates was closed, and the magistrate was called upon to offer up prayers at various temples' (Report of the Commissioner of Customs at Chungking, 1905). He prayed with prodigious effect. On August 5 he attended at the city temple, and on August 6 rain fell in torrents. Some distance higher up the river a waterspout burst, carrying away with it half a hill, and by the 10th the river at Chungking had risen 108 feet. 'Houses, coffins, corpses, and living freight on various supports were all making their way down river at a rapid rate, and the city walls were lined by natives watching the scene' (*ibid.*).

When the river rises 90 or 100 feet, what becomes of the hauling apparatus? If in the first instance it is set up at a sufficient height in the mountain-side to allow for such rises, what provision is to be made for hauling the colossal weight of the enormously long steel hawser which would have to be used? Finally, by what means is the necessary steering power to be obtained to counteract both the force of the current and the eddies and the huge weight of the hauling line? These are questions to which I have never succeeded in obtaining a satisfactory answer.

That improvement in communications *is* desirable may be demonstrated by the enumeration of a few simple facts. The freight given me as having been paid on a ton of English grey shirting from Shanghai to Chungking was £5 12s.—considerably more than double the freight paid on the same consignment from Manchester to Shanghai—and that on a picul (133½ pounds) of soda-ash, valued at 5 taels 55 cents in Shanghai, 1 tael 40 cents, or 40 per cent. of its value. Again, 'on a shipment of 600 boxes of soap the freight was 1,225 taels, and the insurance and other charges 486 taels, making the cost of the consignment about 40 per cent. of its original value' (Report of the Commissioner of Customs at Chungking, 1905); and £1 4s. was given me by a Chinese merchant as the cost of bringing a bale of cotton *Italians*

from Shanghai. But it is to future railways that we must look, in my opinion, rather than to the taming of the Yangtse rapids, to bring about improvement in this part of the world.

Let me return for a moment from this digression to my own journey up the river. There are no very large towns between Ichang and Chungking. On the ninth day out we reached Kwei-Fu, built on the steep side of an open valley. The town is of little concern to the British manufacturer. Some cotton yarn and coarse cotton cloth I saw, but the shops dealt chiefly with joss-sticks, food-stuffs, a little local silver ware, and pawned goods. The yarn, I was told, came from the mills at Wuchang, and a query from one of my informants as to whether similar goods were produced in my country tended only to confirm me in my opinion that the good people of Kwei-Fu are not in the habit of trafficking in foreign goods. Small wonder that the members of the Blackburn Mission declared: 'Commerce, the subject of our report, scarcely exists until Wan Hsien is reached.' On the latest map of Ssuchuan, issued by the Intelligence branch of the War Office, this latter place is quite gratuitously singled out as an example of an open port. As a matter of fact, it is nothing of the sort, and draws its stock of foreign goods almost exclusively from Chungking. I observed here a fair stock of cotton yarn from Wuchang, and weaving is the most prominent, if not the only, industry of the town. I take the following particulars from the report of the Blackburn Commercial Mission: 'In the town of Wan Hsien there are about 1,000 hand-looms. The weavers are paid by the piece, about 30 feet long and 16 inches broad. This it takes an average weaver two days to weave, working from daylight to 9 p.m., and for this he gets 100 to 120 cash—*i.e.*, 2½d. to 3d.—being provided with food which may cost about 40 cash a day, so that a weaver's wages may be put at 900 cash—*i.e.*, 1s. 6d. a week of six days, in which time he would produce 112½ square feet of cloth.' When we take into consideration the difference in the price of labour between Manchester and Wan Hsien, and the heavy freight which Manchester goods are called upon to bear, to say nothing of the risks incurred, we see one of the reasons why the teeming millions of China, who are not infrequently held up by those whose enthusiasm outruns their reason as the components of a prodigious market for British goods, are not unlikely to continue in the future, as in the past, to adequately supply their own demands.

On November 22, twenty-three days after leaving Ichang, I tied

up at the foot of the steep and narrow thoroughfares and the busy buildings of Chungking.

The various stages in the negotiations leading up to the opening of Chungking to trade provide much instruction and some little entertainment. Let me briefly review them. When the Chifu Agreement of 1876 was drawn up between Great Britain and China it was decided, among other things, that while Great Britain might send officers to reside at Chungking to watch the conditions of British trade, the port should not be open to British merchants until steamers succeeded in reaching it. As, however, under Article 47 of the Treaty of Tientsin ships resorting to 'ports of trade other than those declared open by this treaty' were, with their cargo, liable to confiscation, it gradually dawned upon the minds of those concerned that a Chinese puzzle had been propounded, the unravelling of which could only end in a *reductio ad absurdum*. The British merchant, however, has no time to waste in guessing at Chinese diplomatic conundrums, which have no answers, and in 1889 Mr. Little built an experimental steamer—the *Kuling*—with which he proposed to ascend the Yangtse as far as Chungking, and thereby claim the opening of the port to trade. Such Alexandrian methods of untying their Gordian knot had not entered into the mandarin's programme, and a diplomatic wrangle immediately ensued, the Chinese surpassing themselves in fertility of argument when they declared in an official dispatch to Sir John Walsham that 'the monkeys in the gorges would throw down rocks on the passing steamers, for which the poor Chinese Government would be held responsible.' The scheme was abandoned and the *Kuling* sold, but in the following year the Governments of Great Britain and China, being desirous of settling in an amicable manner the 'divergence of opinion' (*sic*) which had arisen with respect to the position of Chungking, agreed that the town should be declared open to trade (by an additional article to the Chifu Agreement, signed at Peking, March 31, 1890). Thus was one anomaly wiped off the slate of Anglo-Chinese diplomacy, only to make room, however, for another almost equally absurd, for it was agreed that when once Chinese steamers carrying cargo ran to Chungking, then, and not till then, should British steamers have access to the port. Chinese diplomacy had imposed a veto for a second time upon British aspirations. The position of the port and the question of steam navigation were finally decided by the Treaty of Shimonoseki between Japan and China in April, 1895, under which the port was placed on a par with other treaty ports,

and the waters of the Upper Yangtse thrown open to the steam navigation of the world.

The gateway, then, to the Golconda of Western China—the town of Chungking—stands open. It remains to examine critically the nature of the market, actual and potential, that is to be found on the other side. What do the 50,000,000 consumers of Ssuchuan require from the factories of the West, and what have they to offer in exchange? A journey of 500 miles from Chungking to Chengtu via the salt fields of Tzu-lu-ching, and from Chengtu via the Min River and the town of Chia Ting to Sui Fu, taking one, as it does, through some of the richest and most populous portions of the province, affords an opportunity of forming an opinion from personal observation.

There are many large towns along the route by which I travelled, and in all the towns were to be seen many well-stocked shops. And the lesson which the shops teach is this—that the requirements of the Chinese are elementary in kind. One-half of the shops are food-stores, where the curious medley of delicacies that tickle the palate of the Chinaman are displayed in extravagant profusion. With these the purveyor of Europe has no concern. Next in order come the stores at which are sold the stuffs with which the Chinaman clothes himself—some silk fabrics of Chinese make, but the vast bulk cotton materials—and of these latter (and this is the point which has not been duly taken into consideration by those who have formed, as I think, too sanguine an estimate of the possible demand for Western goods) by far the greater part coarse, narrow-width, loosely-woven, durable home-made cloth. I quote the following as an example of an observation which is liable to give a false impression of the real state of affairs regarding Ssuchuan as a potential market for Manchester shirting: ‘There are many things,’ writes Dr. Logan Jack, ‘of which the Chinese are large consumers—for instance, there is clothing. Now, there are no human beings who wear more cotton goods to the square inch than the Chinese—fold after fold, worn, I regret to say, till they are worn out; but, at any rate, fold after fold of thick padded cotton is added as winter goes on, and they are, I should think, among the very best consumers conceivable of cotton goods’ (*Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, March, 1904, p. 312). This is true; but the point that is lost sight of is this—that the millions of China who wear these yards of cotton cloth make for themselves a cloth which is eminently suited to their requirements and their conditions of life, and with which the

machine-made shirtings of Manchester do not and cannot compete. I have already given an example of the economic advantage which the home-made material of Ssuchuan must hold over the imported article in the looms of Wan Hsien. The further economic fact that in many districts almost every cottage has its loom, which employs the members of the family whenever there does not happen to be any other household duty pressing for fulfilment, is one which weighs heavily in the scale against the foreign product.

But the result of many inquiries and considerable observation has been to satisfy me that in this particular line of trade it is not even the matter of price—for thin machine-made grey shirting can be placed upon the market, as a matter of fact, at an astonishingly cheap rate—that tells with greatest weight in favour of the home-made cloth, but the greater warmth, the superior durability, and the more convenient width of the latter as compared with the former. The masses are engaged in a never-ceasing struggle for their daily bread. The loosely-woven native cloth stretches under stress of the wearer's physical exertions, the closely-woven machine-made fabric tears; the hand-made article is heavy and warm, the machine-made light and of little protection against the elements. Finally, the cut of the Celestial's clothes is such that a minimum waste occurs when they are made up from the 14-inch wide rolls of native cloth, whereas much waste is entailed in cutting up the wider cloths of foreign make. The importance attached to thrift by the Chinese labourer in any matter which closely concerns himself may be gauged by the fact that the purchaser of a box of Chungking-made matches, necessitating an outlay on his part of 3 cash, or $\frac{1}{4}$ part of a penny, may be seen laboriously counting the number of matches in the box, in order to assure himself that he is receiving full value for his money, and to enable him to discard any matches found without heads before finally concluding his bargain. Perhaps the actual process of purchase, as explained to me by a Ssuchuan coolie, may serve to emphasize the point which I desire to bring home—namely, the improbability, if not the impossibility, of British shirting competing successfully with the native article of clothing as far as the masses of China are concerned. The purchaser weighs instead of measuring the material, and then proceeds to bargain as to the price per ounce. The ruling price of an ounce of locally-made cloth was, according to my informant, about 28 cash. This works out at from 24 to 25 cash—*i.e.*, $\frac{2}{3}$ of a penny per Chinese foot. It would seem that reductions are to be obtained by patient bargain-

ing, for a boatman whom I employed on the Min River secured a piece weighing 28½ ounces for 670 cash, or 24 cash an ounce, equivalent to 21 cash a Chinese foot. At Chia Ting, one of the chief cities in that district, a Chinese merchant quoted 28 cash a Chinese foot as the price of the lowest quality Manchester grey shirting which he sold, and 36 cash as the price of his best quality.

Here, then, are the two chief items of consumption in Western China—viz., food and the clothing of the poor—wiped off the slate as far as the British manufacturer is concerned. Where, then, does he come in? Referring to a paper by Colonel Manifold, I find the following articles mentioned as being in much demand: 'Woollen goods, buttons, needles, thread, candles, clocks, lamps, brasswork of all sorts. The imports of these and numerous other British-manufactured articles will be enormously increased if better and cheaper means of communication are established, and the latent resources of the province are developed' (*Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, March, 1904, p. 307). Here, it is true, is a class of goods largely purchased by the Chinese. Next to the food-shops and the cotton-shops, stores displaying a bewildering variety of fancy goods—clocks, mirrors, lamps, soaps, buttons, toilet powders, belts, glass and china and enamel ware—are the most conspicuous. Such goods find a ready sale with all who can afford to buy them. But the clocks come from America, and the buttons, and crockery, and enamel ware, and perfumes and scented soaps from Austria and Germany, and in ever-increasing quantities from Japan and Canton.

There is, however, a class of goods which the British manufacturer provides now, and will continue to provide in increasing quantity—namely, the finer grades of cotton piece goods, such as plain and figured cotton lastings and coloured and black *Italians*, especially the latter—for which there is a large and increasing demand among the middle classes of the population. Manchester shirting, too, finds a ready sale among those who are not obliged to indulge in manual labour, as being infinitely superior in appearance to the coarser native cloth. The highest quality of black *Italians* are so beautifully finished that they have almost the appearance of silk, and are readily bought by the student and merchant classes. The difference in price in Chungking between cotton *Italians* and silk was given me by a Chinese importer as follows: black *Italians* of the quality most in demand, 2d. a squarefoot; silk, from 8d. to 11½d. a square foot. The consequent advantage possessed by the former over the latter to persons of moderate means is

amply apparent. It is to this class of goods that I look to enlarge the importation of British manufactures, and let me offer this observation: European retail merchants cannot compete with Chinese retailers in the interior. Time will tend to drive the white merchant more and more to a limited number of large emporiums such as Shanghai and Hankow, where his business will be that of middleman between the manufacturers of Europe and the retail merchants of China. But the European can push his goods in every part of China by employing native travellers, well supplied with a variety of samples, whose duty it should be to travel over the country, bringing their various qualities of goods to the notice of the retail merchants in the interior, taking orders to supply according to sample, and bringing back with them reports as to the fashions and tastes of the different localities they visit. This system has been recently put into practice by the Bradford Dyers' Association, who were employing when I was in China a staff of twenty trained native travellers, who visited all parts of the country with their samples of piece goods. The Association were at the same time unwilling to occupy the position of importers themselves, preferring to leave the business of supply to the already established houses in Shanghai and elsewhere. Their system was merely to *advertise* their goods, to give the name of the 'chop' or particular quality to the retailer, and to leave him to give his order through the usual channel.

Recent returns show the increasing demand for the class of goods to which I have referred, the importation of cotton *Italians* via Chungking having increased from 48,292 pieces in 1897 to 191,661 pieces in 1906, while the importation of plain grey shirting has dropped during the same period from 459,894 pieces to 322,804. This contention, I may add, applies to China generally, and meets with striking support from the Customs returns of the past four years. Thus, in 1903 the net importation of cotton *Italians* amounted to 1,671,113 yards, and in 1906 to 3,655,354 yards.

Looking at trade from an Imperial rather than a purely insular point of view, we find a large demand for Indian cotton yarn, which is now taken by the people in preference to spinning the thread themselves. I saw many looms in Ssuchuan, but scarcely a spindle in all the country-side. The import of Indian yarn into Chungking has increased from 197,352 piculs in 1897 to 386,669 piculs in 1906. New competitors, however, are making headway in the Chinese yarn market. The factories of Japan are pouring yarn into China, and mills are springing up with astonishing

rapidity in China itself, and have recently discovered the secret of making themselves pay. I came across considerable quantities of yarn in Ssuchuan from the Chinese mills of Wuchang. Further south in Yunnan the recently established mills in Indo-China are also beginning to find a hold.

The exports of Ssuchuan and Yunnan must be dealt with in a sentence. They may be classed under three heads: (1) Agricultural and horticultural products; (2) animal products; and (3) minerals. Under heading No. 1 come hemp, opium, rhubarb, sugar, and medicines; under heading No. 2, bristles and feathers, hides, skins, leather, musk, silk, white wax, and wool; and under heading No. 3, salt and tin. The export of medicine has increased in value from 600,056 Hk. taels in 1897 to 1,125,250 in 1906. Mr. Hosie, British Commercial Attaché at Peking, with indefatigable zeal, has drawn up a list of 220 varieties, which he declares, 'with the exception of a few well-known articles like rhubarb and liquorice, are practically—and it may be happily—unknown to Western medical science.' The sugar-cane, which grows prolifically in some parts of the province, is treated by a primitive process with only partially satisfactory results. I myself ran out of sugar, and was obliged to fall back upon the local product. 'This sugar very sour, master!' was the comment of my intelligent servant from the coast. And so it was; but acidity is not the property one looks for in sugar.

The centre of the salt industry is at Tzu-lu-ching. The salt is raised in the form of brine from a considerable depth below the surface, the method adopted being the boring of circular shafts of small diameter, which resemble the shafts employed in raising petroleum at Baku and other oil-fields. The main difference is to be found in the working of the system, the motive power used to raise the raw material in the case of the oil-wells being invariably steam or gas, whereas in the case of the Ssuchuan brine wells it is supplied by buffaloes, blindfolded and harnessed to a huge drum. The single steam-engine, imported a year or two ago by an enterprising Chinaman, lies in ruins, though whether its destruction was brought about by lack of mechanical skill on the part of those told off to put it into use, or by the hostility of the manual labour that it was intended to supplant, I was unable to ascertain. Other minerals undoubtedly abound in Ssuchuan, as in so many other parts of China; but a revolution in the character of the official classes will be necessary before these resources of the province will be developed. The obstruction which Mr. Little has recently met with in his endeavour to come to an agreement for working the

coal-seams in the neighbourhood of Chungking speaks eloquently of the immense power of resistance still inherent in the ponderous force of Chinese official conservatism.

Had I time, I might deal at length with the fiscal restrictions, regular and irregular, which are still imposed upon foreign trade. I am one of those, however, who incline to the belief that the actual imposts levied upon merchandise do not add very materially to the cost of the retailed article. Years of patience and reams of diplomatic correspondence have lightened to some extent the oppression and tyranny of the *likin* system. The abolition of all taxation could at the best cheapen the products of Lancashire looms by a few cash, and the opinion I have formed is that *the* desideratum is an increase in the purchasing power of the people. This can only be brought about by the scientific development of the resources of the country, and before this can be secured—putting aside for the moment all question of official opposition—improvement in communications is a *sine qua non*.

The lack of serviceable communications is a sufficient drawback to existing trade, as I have already shown. I have also pointed out that at least 100 miles of the Yangtse between Ichang and Wan Hsien put a bar in the way of steam navigation as an enterprise both profitable to its promoters and at the same time of advantage to trade. The obvious and only alternative is railways. And here we trench upon the domain of politics as well as of commerce, and find ourselves compelled to reckon with the new force of Chinese nationalism. I have not the time upon this occasion to sketch the history of the origin and growth of the new spirit now leavening the dough of Chinese inertia and indifference: suffice it to say that the alpha and omega of the movement are to be found in the aspiration 'China for the Chinese,' a catch-cry providing an effective watchword for the banners of the Young China party, and an agreeable text for the copious outpourings of a newly-born native press, round which the hitherto unknown phenomenon of a Chinese public opinion is rapidly being formed.

Of the extent and reality of the movement the traveller in the interior is early made aware. In all directions he hears of organized rejoicings held to celebrate the promise of a Constitution. He finds the influence of the 10,000 Chinese students who during the summer of 1906 filled the colleges of Japan already an appreciable force, and one which is being cast into the scale in favour of revolutionary change. At Chengtu, the capital of Ssuchuan, a modern college presents a striking example of the newborn

enthusiasm among the Chinese for the science and learning of the West, and at the time of my visit provided a course of modern instruction to close upon 400 students, who prosecute their studies with an avidity and a concentration undreamed of in the West. At another town in Ssuehuan, distant some 1,700 miles from the coast, I was an amazed spectator, amid some thousands of onlookers, at the keenly-contested athletic sports, carried through with all the enthusiasm which is characteristic of similar competitions among English public schools. As an example of the widespread diffusion of the movement, mention may be made of a recent public meeting held at an obscure little town in one of the most inaccessible districts of far-away Yunnan. Speeches were made in celebration of the promised Constitution, and some plain speaking was heard. The treatment meted out to Chinese in the United States of America was graphically, if not altogether accurately, described, and China exhorted to prosecute vigorously internal reform, that the day might not be long deferred when she should be in a position to meet the Powers of the West with their own weapons.

The present attitude of China towards Europe is the natural corollary of this new-found creed. European concessionnaires, capital, and control are incompatible with the doctrine of 'China for the Chinese,' and the Manchu camarilla of reaction, being in accord on this one point at least with the Chinese party of reform, oppose a stolid *non possumus* to all advances made on behalf of the introduction of the capital and enterprise of the West. An Anglo-French combination have declared themselves ready to undertake the main lines most urgently required, but are met with the reply that the officials and gentry propose to construct them themselves. If this attitude be persisted in, two results are likely to ensue—viz., the postponement of the construction of railways in Western China to the Greek Kalends, and the growth of a feeling of discontent among the lower classes, tending towards disturbance and even active insurrection. Taxation is imposed ostensibly for the purpose of constructing railways, while the proceeds not infrequently find their way into totally different coffers. Thus in Ssuehuan I found a special income-tax of 3 per cent. being levied on all persons possessing an income of more than 10 piculs of rice, and a feeling of no little irritation on the part of the people at the continued high price of rice, in spite of the fact that the harvest in the province had been the best known for years. In the town of Sui Fu it was estimated that 100,000 cash a day were being raised by

means of a new tax of 400 cash, leviable on every pig that was killed, and other smaller sums from further new imposts, such as a duty of 2 cash a night charged on the miserable trestle-beds in all public inns. The people, indeed, were beginning to learn that reform, both practical and theoretical, was a costly innovation, and herein lay the danger of popular discontent. My own arrival at Chengtu coincided with the issue of inflammatory placards in the neighbourhood, pointing out that while taxation was steadily increasing, the interests of the people were neglected, and amiably concluding in one case—with a view, presumably, to embroiling the officials—by offering rewards for all foreigners brought in, dead or alive, and by appointing a day for a general attack upon the foreign population.

It will be gathered, then, from what has been said, that the construction of railways in Western China is in a potential rather than an actual state of activity, and that such schemes as are likely to materialize in the near future are the products of foreign capital and enterprise. Without the spur of foreign incentive, the communications of the 300,000 square miles of Yunnan and Ssuchuan are likely to remain as they are for an indefinite period. After travelling close upon 2,000 miles in the territory concerned, I can only describe existing means of communication as inferior to those of medieval Europe, and decide that, as all dispatch-carriers proceed on foot, walking is the fastest mode of progression. If we except the limited area of level land provided by the Chengtu plain, where semi-comatose Chinese may be seen being trundled along in inconceivably uncomfortable wheelbarrows for a modest fare of 2 cash a li, or roughly $\frac{2}{3}$ farthing a mile, wheeled transport may be said to be unknown, and indeed, on the narrow paved roads which cover the country, and which in mountainous districts tend to become little else than a succession of stone staircases, to be a matter of physical impossibility. The man of means and position travels at his ease in a sedan-chair, his less fortunate brother with pony or mule, while the bulk of the population performs such journeys as may be necessary upon foot. Merchandise, where water transport is not available, is carried laboriously over hill and dale on the backs of ponies or men, at a vast expenditure of time, and at rates varying from 2d. to 8d. per ton mile.

It is not, consequently, busy, prosperous Ssuchuan, but sleepy, poverty-stricken Yunnan that, thanks to its contiguity to the possessions of two European Powers—Great Britain and France—has been the first of the western provinces to see the advent of the

railway. By 1910 it is expected that the French line, which already runs from Hanoi via Laokai on the Yunnanese frontier to a point some sixty or seventy miles beyond, will reach the capital of the province. This is the only line in all Western China that is in a state of actual construction, and may be said to have been brought into being indirectly by French jealousy of an anticipated advance by Great Britain into Yunnan from the side of Burma, and directly by the vast ambitions and imperious energy of M. Paul Doumer, late Governor-General of French Indo-China.

In evidence of this, let me recall rapidly the various chapters in the British railway scheme which was the primary, if innocent, cause of this vast expenditure on the part of France. A survey for a railway from Mandalay to the Burmese frontier at Kunlong, carried out between 1892 and 1894, and the commencement of construction on the first section of such a line in 1895, excited the animosity of the forward party among French Colonial statesmen. 'Our neighbours,' wrote Prince Henri d'Orléans in the latter year, 'who know full well that railways are the means of real colonization, think to establish a line running from Mandalay to Xien-hong. It imports us to retort to this new movement of England with a similar one of our own; and to this end it is absolutely necessary for us also to have a railway penetrating China.' Into the clause of the Anglo-Chinese Agreement of 1897, providing for the consideration of the construction of railways in Yunnan in the event of trade conditions justifying this, and for such railways being connected with the Burmese lines, was read a sinister design, speedily followed by a significant declaration by M. Doumer. 'England,' he declared to the *Conseil supérieur* of the French colony in 1897, 'with a determination which we on our side have not yet displayed, has set her face towards Yunnan and Ssuchuan, which seemed to be reserved for our commercial exploitation.' M. Doumer, however, was not the man to be discouraged by trifles. 'Nevertheless,' he added, 'if we only bestir ourselves, we are bound to win in this friendly rivalry. We find ourselves at an advantage, thanks to the facility for reaching Yunnan which we derive from the valley of the Red River.'

Yet while the utmost importance was attached by French statesmen to British schemes, these same schemes afforded matter for academical discussion at the hands of one Indian Viceroy, and evoked a flood of satirical denunciation from another. In December, 1898, Lord Elgin travelled over the Burmese railway system as far as it could take him, in the direction of what he conceived

must be at least 'two ultimate objects of its ambition—namely, connecting-links with Assam on the one side and China on the other'; and having done so, he expressed the opinion that neither of these hopes were likely to see realization in the near future, and that a good deal of this work lay 'outside the special sphere of the Government of India.' Whatever small hopes of Government help may have been entertained by private individuals after this declaration must have been rudely shattered by Lord Curzon's uncompromising utterance three years later. 'In my belief,' he declared, 'there has been a greater lack both of exact knowledge and of perspective in the treatment of this matter, and a looser rein given to the imagination, than in almost any subject of contemporaneous politics. The building of a railway across Yunnan to the Yangtse would be, if not a physical impossibility, at any rate so costly an undertaking that neither the Home Government, nor the Indian Government, nor any company or syndicate, could conceivably undertake it. The idea that if it were built the wealth of Ssuehuan would stream down a single metre-gauge line, many miles of which would have to scale the mountains by a rack to Rangoon, while great arterial rivers flow through the heart of the province of Ssuehuan itself, which are quite competent to convey its trade to and from the sea, is one, as it seems to me in the present stage of Central Asian evolution, almost of midsummer madness.' It is probable that it began to dawn upon the less impulsive among French statesmen about this time that an unnecessary importance had been attached to the British menace, while those primarily responsible for the drain upon the French exchequer entailed by the construction of the Laokai-Yunnan Fu Railway sought solace in the reflection put into words by M. Doumer, that 'it had had as its consequences the effect of bringing the Government of India to renounce the scheme which it had for long entertained of penetrating into Yunnan from Burma.'

Yet the case put by Lord Curzon was a perfectly legitimate deduction from geographical knowledge recently acquired. Space forbids anything more than the briefest reference to the labours of the Yunnan Company's Commission, dispatched by the enterprise of a private company to examine the country in 1899 and 1900. A possible though difficult line of, roughly, 1,000 miles from the Burmese frontier at the Kunlong Ferry to Nachi on the Yangtse was found. The section to Yunnan Fu, 485 miles in length, would contain upwards of 16,000 feet of rise and fall, would require a ruling gradient of 6 per cent., and curves varying from

an ordinary working curve of 16 degrees up to 20 degrees, and in some cases 24 degrees. When it is considered that the line under review would on the whole be more difficult even per mile than the Rocky Mountain section of the Canadian Pacific Railway; that it would consist of 1,000 miles of mountain railway, against the 575 miles of mountain track in the case of the Canadian line; that the country through which it would pass is sparsely populated, and has under present conditions little to export; that the bulk of the exports and nearly half of the imports of its ultimate goal—the province of Ssuehuan—are from and to the eastern provinces of China; and, finally, that even if they were not, freights on such a line could hardly hope to compete favourably even with the existing heavy charges by the Yangtse, it becomes apparent to the impartial observer that the attitude of the Government of India in 1901 was determined by more substantial and practical reasons than any provided by the rival enterprise of France.

England could indeed afford to look with equanimity upon the progress of a railway, built with other people's money, from the coast of Yunnan Fu. The tax which her goods pay—*i.e.*, one-fifth of the general tariff of Indo-China for the privilege of passing through that country—has had little effect, seemingly, upon her trade, since 78 per cent. of the imports by this route into Yunnan still come from Hongkong, as against only 22 per cent. from Tonking. It is worthy of note, however, that the importation of cotton yarn from the mills of Tonking shows a steady increase, and it is the opinion of the Commissioner of Customs at Mengtze that 'when the Tonking mills have developed their power of production, and can turn out yarn in sufficient quantities to undersell that of other and more distant mills, the Yunnan market will be entirely monopolized by them.' For India, who during the past five years has sent an average quantity of 98,599 hundredweight of yarn into Yunnan by this route, this prospect has its serious aspect.

For this reason, and because for political reasons some action may be advisable, with a view to maintaining the balance of power in a province marching for some hundreds of miles with British Burma, I propose to conclude this paper with an allusion to the possible avenues of ingress open to Great Britain. I have sometimes heard it said that the line of country to be followed by Great Britain, with a view to opening up a direct trade route with Western China, is across a comparatively narrow strip of country between Sadiya, in Assam, and Batang, on the confines of China and Tibet. I cannot conceive of any route less likely to benefit

British trade. If Batang were on the borders of the commercially valuable portions of Ssuehuan, such a route would indeed speedily become the highway into the province; but it is nothing of the sort. It is, in fact, eighteen days distant from the true Chinese border at Ta-chien-lu. Moreover, as Colborne Baber has pointed out, 'when the Chinese border is reached at Ta-chien-lu, the nearest city of any importance—namely, Yachou—is still seven or eight days distant, and has water communication with the sea.' Even so, were the country between Batang and Ta-chien-lu of a comparatively level nature, a railway would overcome these objections; but, far from the country being even comparatively level, it is a perfect labyrinth of stupendous mountains. The existing track over it is described by Mr. Hosie, who speaks of it as 'a road barred by numerous mountain ranges, whose lofty passes inspire terror in the breasts of the superstitious wayfarers'; and he mentions no less than ten passes of over 13,000 feet in height, including four of over 15,000 feet, the highest being 16,486 feet. In the spring of 1900 Captain Ryder travelled to Ta-chien-lu from the town of Yerkalo, some distance south of Batang. 'The first part of our journey,' he says, 'took us about a month, and a very rough time we had. Each pass we crossed cost us the lives of some of our mules . . . and we were all fairly worn out when we reached Ta-chien-lu.' I have said enough, perhaps, to make the objections to a route in this direction tolerably obvious.

The much-discussed question of the practicability of railway routes from Burma has, however, at length been answered in the affirmative, and it is interesting to find that, despite the sarcasms of Colborne Baber, it is the time-worn trade route from Bhamo via Teng Yueh to Tali Fu that expert opinion has finally fixed upon as the line of least resistance. The practicability of a light line from Bhamo as far as Teng Yueh was established by the members of the Yunnan Company's Commission in 1899, and as the result of a detailed survey made in 1906, by an expert dispatched from India, it was estimated that a light narrow-gauge electric railway could be cheaply and expeditiously built, with a fair prospect of covering expenses and paying a dividend of 2 per cent. With this information in hand, proposals were made for the joint construction of a line by British and Chinese, and a suggestion put forward that an expert from India should again be sent to examine the country beyond Teng Yueh, with a view to ascertaining whether it would be possible to carry such a line on to Tali Fu at a future date. At this juncture the influence of the 'China for the Chinese' party in

Yunnan began to make itself felt. A Yunnan-Ssuehuan Railway Company had been formed in Yunnan Fu in 1905, and regulations drawn up under orders from the Wai-wu-pu, on the basis of similar regulations governing the Chengtu-Hankow Railway Company. The nature of this Corporation may be gathered from a perusal of Rule 1, which declares that 'the Yunnan-Ssuehuan Railway Company is an undertaking by the gentry and people of all Yunnan. As in the case of the Chengtu-Hankow Railway, no foreigner will be allowed to hold shares, nor shall foreign capital be borrowed.' No sooner was it noised abroad that Great Britain was willing to cooperate with China in building a line from Bhamo to Teng Yueh than the Yunnan-Ssuehuan Railway Company added to their title, and became thenceforth the 'Yunnan-Ssuehuan and Teng Yueh Railway Company,' and announced that they themselves were competent to build a line from Teng Yueh to the Burmese frontier, where they would be willing to connect with the Burmese railways, in accordance with Article XII. of the Anglo-Chinese Agreement of 1897. The Government of India, desirous of obtaining an expert opinion in the country beyond Teng Yueh before committing themselves to a definite railway policy beyond their borders, refrained from pressing the matter of construction farther with the provincial Government, and persisted only in their request for permission for an engineering expert to carry on to Tali Fu the survey already successfully completed as far as Teng Yueh. A correspondence between Burma and the Yun-Kwei Viceroy, characterized by some acerbity, thereupon ensued, while the headstrong members of the student junta in the Yunnanese capital exceeded the bounds of diplomatic courtesy by publishing what practically amounted to an incitement to the populace to resist by force, in the event of the request being granted. In the end a compromise was reached, ordinary travellers' passports being granted to the members of an engineering party, no mention being made therein of the object of their journey. Thus does China save her face.

The results of the work thus undertaken during the spring and early summer of 1907 are now in the hands of the Indian Government, and will be found to have established the fact, so long disputed, that, at the expense of a considerable increase in mileage over the caravan route, no insuperable engineering difficulties stand in the way of the construction of a light railway the whole way from Bhamo to Tali Fu. It now rests, therefore, with the British Government to decide whether or not they are prepared to demand the right—admitted by Prince Ching, in reply to a note from

Sir E. Satow in 1902—to equal privileges with France in the development and opening up to the world of the provinces of Western China.

DISCUSSION

The CHAIRMAN: In the very interesting paper he has just read to us, Lord Ronaldshay has not, I think, in the least overrated the difficulties which the navigation of the upper reaches of the Yangtse presents. Less fortunate than himself, I attempted to go up the Yangtse some years ago at the season when the waters are expected to be high. They were, however, more than usually high, and my experience certainly was such as to make me realize how enormous those difficulties of navigation are. For about five weeks the water had risen to far above the usual high-water level. At Ichang there were no less than five miles' length of junks waiting to go up the river, and my friend and I were assured that it was useless for us to attempt the journey. As it was our only chance of doing it, we did attempt it. We got a first-rate junk and the best trackers and boatmen on the river. We succeeded in making our way up the first defile; but on entering the second, we worked one day from about five in the morning till seven in the evening, being hauled by a crew of about forty men, who spent most of their time struggling along the steep cliffs of the shore. Through all the hours of that long day we had travelled eleven miles, and we were just in sight of the point where we were to tie up for the night. By an unlucky accident our line got caught between two rocks. The trackers pulled with might and main, but the line was cut by one of the rocks, and in the thirty-five minutes which elapsed before we were able to stop our down-stream flight we had drifted one mile below the point where we had tied up the night before. We recognized the uselessness of further attempts, and returned ingloriously to Ichang. With regard to the question of steam haulage, Lord Ronaldshay has put his finger on the weak point. As he says, it is impossible to make provision for the enormous changes in the height of the water between the summer and winter seasons.

In these circumstances there remains, therefore, only the alternative of railway communication. I confess that at the present moment the greatest difficulty is the growth of popular feeling in China against Western enterprise. Only a few days ago I received from a friend in Peking, who has had long experience in China, and has been connected with several most important railway enterprises there, a letter, in which he expressed the belief that the movement had taken such hold upon the people that it would be almost impossible for any foreign

Government, that was not prepared actually to use force, to bring sufficient pressure upon the Peking Government to overrule the opposition which the latter originally stimulated in the provinces to serve its own obstructive purposes, but which has now outgrown any restraining influences the central authority can exercise over it. For such influences we shall have to wait until Western education—to the elementary beginnings of which in some measure is due the present feeling that China can do everything for herself as well as any other nation can—will have brought the Chinese to understand their limitations, and to realize the value of foreign assistance under such restraints as the legitimate interests of China may demand. This does not present a very hopeful prospect for our commerce in China, in so far as it can be helped by railway development. We must wait for the ripening by education of the wisdom of the Chinese people, and the process is one for the fulfilment of which we shall have to arm ourselves with patience.

COLONEL SIR THOMAS H. HOLDICH said : I am sorry I have not the technical knowledge which is necessary to deal with such a paper as Lord Ronaldshay has given us. But as he faces me with an opinion of my own, I may remark that that opinion was expressed some years ago, and a great many things have happened since then. It is only when travellers like Lord Ronaldshay set themselves to work to collect such an array of facts and figures as we have been presented with to-day that we are placed in a position to form a solid opinion about such matters as the development of commerce in the regions concerned. Hitherto we have only had the scattered impressions of many travellers, and have never had such a carefully-arranged epitome of factors in the situation as Lord Ronaldshay has given us this afternoon. In future, at any rate, we shall not be able to say that when the House of Commons discusses commercial and geographical subjects affecting this part of Asia, it has no member to participate in the debate who knows what he is talking about. (Hear, hear.)

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL A. C. YATE said : Some twenty years ago I was employed by the Government of India in operations which brought our newly-acquired rule in Upper Burma into touch with Yunnan. In November, 1887, by which time we had brought to a conclusion the operations for pacifying Upper Burma, Sir George White, doubtless under instructions from the Government of India and the Home Government, sent out from Mandalay two small columns, and annexed the Shan States as far as the Salween River. I was Intelligence Officer with the force. The area we annexed was about 20,000 square miles, the work being accomplished by 400 men with four mountain guns. There was very little fighting. One object we had in view was exploration, the hilly country west of the Salween River being at that time very little known to Europeans. An eye was

kept upon the possibility, already foreseen, of railway communication via Maymyo, Thibaw, Lashio, and Theinni to the Kunlong Ferry on the River Salween. Since those days that railway has been partially carried out. Furthermore, much interest has been taken in the possibility of extending that railway to the Yangtse Valley. As to what has actually been done I am in the main informed at second hand. I think that some now present here, especially those connected with the Royal Geographical Society, must know of the work that Major Davies did in exploring the country between the Salween and the headwaters of the Yangtse River. In the expedition of 1887-88 he went up with us while still a young sub-lieutenant of the Oxford Light Infantry, as transport officer. It must have been then that he laid the foundations of that knowledge and experience which later qualified him to explore the country between the Salween and the Yangtse. I gather that the great difficulty with which, as he found, a railway there has to contend is due to the conformation of the country. You have the Mekong and other important rivers all running from north to south, with the result that any such railway must be carried athwart successive ranges of mountains. If I remember rightly, the question of the possibility of following Major Davies's route was very seriously considered by the Government of India, and I think the late Viceroy, Lord Curzon, was responsible for the decision that, under existing conditions, the construction of a railway from Burma via the Kunlong Ferry to the Upper Yangtse Valley was not possible. Indeed, I understand that the once projected line has not yet even reached the bank of the Salween, and that any prolongation of it is indefinitely postponed.

The CHAIRMAN said : I think Colonel Yate is correct in stating that it is due to Lord Curzon that the question of railway communication into Yunnan was decided in the sense which he indicated. But it is to be borne in mind that the decision of the Government of India related to the construction of an ordinary heavy traction steam railway, and not to the light electric railway which has been spoken of by Lord Ronaldshay. The development of electric railways in the last few years offers facilities for surmounting those engineering difficulties to which Colonel Yate properly drew attention. Such facilities either did not exist, or at least were not fully appreciated, when the Government of India came to the decision referred to. It only remains for me to move a vote of thanks to Lord Ronaldshay for his exceedingly able and instructive paper. (Cheers.)

The proposal was seconded by Dr. COTTERELL TUPP and carried.

The EARL OF RONALDSHAY said : I think there are very few points for me to answer, and I will only say a word or two on the point raised by Colonel Yate on the projected Kunlong railway, since lack of time has prevented my reading the portion of my paper devoted to this subject. In the years 1899 and 1900 the Yunnan Company, in con-

junction with the Government of India, sent a party to survey that route as a possible line from the Burma Railway to the headwaters of the Yangtse. The length would have been 1,000 miles, and in one section alone it was estimated there would be a rise and fall of upwards of 16,000 feet. There would be a ruling gradient of 6 per cent., and curves varying from 16 to 24 degrees. In two or three instances the trains would have had to be assisted up the gradients by means of what is known as the 'rack' system. I have come across only one rack railway, and that was in Japan. It was only a short line, whereas this Kunlong Ferry railway would have been an exceedingly long one. Even on the short Japanese line they found that traffic was becoming so congested owing to the difficulty in hauling trains up the rack, that they were falling back on the expedient of building a second railway round the mountains instead of across them to counteract the congestion. I think a great deal is to be said for the enterprise of the Yunnan Company in having sent out this Commission. Lord Curzon threw a jug of cold water upon their project, for reasons I have indicated in my paper. I am not in a position to say whether the Government of India are prepared to do any more with regard to the Bhamo-Teng Yueh Railway. But as the survey has been carried out by an officer deputed by the Government of India, it looks as if they were prepared to go on with the project of an electric railway if the co-operation of the Chinese Government could be secured.

I have to thank you very sincerely for the patience with which you have heard my paper, which was necessarily a rather dull one, composed very largely of facts and figures. (Cheers.)

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY

THE FUTURE OF BRITISH RELATIONS WITH PERSIA

BY

H. F. B. LYNCH, M.P.

Read April 8, 1908



LONDON
CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY, 22, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
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THE FUTURE OF BRITISH RELATIONS WITH PERSIA

IN the absence of Mr. Valentine Chirol the chair was occupied by Sir Mortimer Durand, G.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., who, in opening the proceedings, said : I think that the less the Chairman talks on these occasions the better, so I will do nothing more than introduce Mr. Lynch, who has kindly promised to address us on 'The Future of British Relations with Persia.' You all know that there is no one better fitted than he is to deal with the subject.

MR. LYNCH said : Sir Mortimer, ladies and gentlemen—The subject to which I would invite your attention this afternoon is the situation as regards British interests in Persia, arising out of the signature of the Anglo-Russian Convention. I need not in any way discuss that Convention this afternoon, because it has already been very fully and lucidly examined during the debates that have taken place in the House of Lords and the House of Commons. My own contribution to those debates was unfortunately cut short by limits of time ; but if any member of this Society will do me the honour to read the speech in full, as it has been published by the courtesy of the editor of the *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*—copies of which I have put upon the table—he will be able to gauge, at all events, the facts on which I rely in that reply to Sir Edward Grey—facts which, I submit, justify me in the conclusion that this Convention, to put the case very moderately, was a grave political mistake. Probably most members of this Society are aware of the general effect of the treaty upon Persia. That effect was to divide the country into the three spheres which I have delimited on the map which hangs on my right hand. I have taken the delimitation from the map exhibited in the tea-room at the House of Commons by the Foreign Office. The first sphere is that of Russia, extending from the Turkish frontier near Kermanshah down to Isfahan and

Yezd, and to the Afghan frontier. There is, secondly, the neutral zone, or no-man's-land; and there is, thirdly, the British line, from the Afghan frontier down through Birjand and Kerman to a point arbitrarily determined near the port of Bunder Abbas. This sphere has sometimes been alluded to as Southern Persia, but that, I think, is a wholly incorrect designation. The British sphere comprises what we have been accustomed to know as South-Eastern Persia—the territory adjoining the Baluchistan and Afghan frontiers. I might speak at considerable length as to the political inexpediency of that line of demarcation; but I would only now dwell upon a point which is very important in relation to the future—namely, the statement that this line, having been drawn to Bunder Abbas, secures the mouth of the Persian Gulf. Its actual effect is nothing of the kind. Bunder Abbas, as I shall show later on, has a very shallow shore, and does not possess good natural facilities for a port. If the object be to control the mouth of the Gulf, you must be in a position to exert influence over Kishm and the smaller islands of Larak and Henjam, across what have been called the Clarence Straits. That is the strategic position which it is important to hold. Unfortunately it is a position which we have not obtained, though we might easily have obtained it had the line been drawn a little further west, to the port of Lingah. I cannot see upon what grounds Russia could have objected to this.

The Russian sphere brings Russia many hundreds of miles further towards the waters of the Gulf. It has been said that she requires ports in warm water. We have discussed this question at the Central Asian Society more than once, and I am sure that we have not discussed it in any jealous or grudging spirit. The truth is that all this talk about warm-water ports in the Persian Gulf is, to a great extent, idle talk. After all, Russia does possess ports on the warm water, and these are much nearer to the Gulf than our ports are. For example, Odessa, the great Russian centre in the Black Sea, is certainly nearer to the ports of the Gulf than any port in Great Britain. These Black-Sea ports are also close to the centres of Russian industries. You may ask yourselves, if that be the case, why Russia does not do an enormous trade with the Persian Gulf. How is it that we have practically monopolized that trade? The answer consists very largely in the fact that we practise the principle of Free Trade. I am glad to see here my friend Mr. Harold Cox, who is such an eloquent exponent of this principle. The effect of our Free Trade and of Russia's Protective policy has been, in no small measure, to deprive Russia of the power of effec-

tive competition with us in these regions. The Russian tariff, with all its consequences, has kept her Gulf trade within very narrow limits. On the other hand, her tariff acts as a powerful incentive to the land trade between Persia and herself, for Russia taxes Persian products at 5 per cent. or less on entry, while the corresponding competing products from other countries are taxed at much higher rates. By that means Russia develops the inland trade with herself, and that is the reason why probably the greater part of the exports from Persia go into Russia, and go in by the land frontier.

I am sure we all listened with pleasure to the very excellent address given a few weeks back by the London correspondent of the *Novoe Vremya*, the great Russian newspaper. I think we were all in the mood to congratulate M. de Wesselitsky upon having seen realized that *rapprochement* between this country and Russia of which he has always been such a persuasive advocate in this country and in his own. I noted with very great interest that M. de Wesselitsky told us that what we had secured from Russia in the Convention was that she had given up all claims in the Persian Gulf. That is, no doubt, a notable declaration, coming from such a source. He said, too, that we had overrated the assimilative powers of Russia—that, to use an Americanism, she had already bitten off more than she could chew, and that we might set our minds at rest as regards Russian ambitions towards the Persian Gulf. We were all pleased to hear that admission, and I hope it will form part of the policy of the Russian Government in relation to Persia in the future. But, at the same time, I think it does not absolve us from taking precautionary measures to ensure that there shall be no temptation for her to depart from that wise policy.

This Society sought last summer to perform a useful function in endeavouring to influence the details of a then possible Convention between the two countries. The treaty—for such it really is—was negotiated with such extraordinary secrecy that it was practically finished and ready for signature before we had any intimation of its purport. However, the Council of this Society took action. We memorialized the Foreign Office in respect to the disadvantages that would accrue from putting the termini of certain of our great trade-routes into the Russian sphere, and we uttered a note of warning on various points of that kind. Our memorial was sent in in August, and, unfortunately, was too late to have any effect. But this Society has, no doubt, performed a very useful part in educating public opinion on all matters relating to the safety of the

British dominions in Asia. I would like you to remember that we are a very young Society, having only been formed in 1901. I had the honour to read the first paper delivered before the Society in January, 1902, and that paper was on the Persian Gulf. We were formed too late to prevent that event from which all our subsequent failures in Persia have arisen—namely, the refusal on the part of the Government of this country, in 1902, to advance a loan to Persia. I dare say you know the terms of that loan. We were offered a loan of several millions sterling on the security of the Customs of the Gulf ports at something like 6 per cent. interest. The Chancellor of the Exchequer could have borrowed the money at 3 per cent., and could thus have made 3 per cent. on the transaction, so laying a nice nest-egg for old-age pensions. (Laughter.) He failed to do this, and he failed, no doubt, because of the extraordinary unfamiliarity of these questions to British statesmen. This is what the then Chancellor, Sir Michael Hicks Beach, said at Bristol on September 29, 1902: ‘Others wanted us to lend money to the Shah, or to guarantee railways in Persia, or in China, or in Mesopotamia, or in some other country in which they happened to take a momentary interest.’ Such was the airy fashion in which he dismissed the question of this loan, and the Russians at once took it up. It was an extraordinary error, not only of judgment, but also of political perspective. Although our Society, then only recently formed, was unable to bring pressure to bear to revoke this decision, a little later on, in the spring of 1903, we certainly were instrumental—owing largely to the admirable lecture and the action taken by Mr. Gibson Bowles, whom I am glad to see here—in persuading the Government of the day to recede from the German proposals in respect to the Baghdad Railway, to which they were preparing to give their adhesion. I am sure no one here has regretted the fact that the Government did so recede. I mention these events to show that, as a Society, we have done some good, and also to point a lesson for the future. There are very grave questions coming up for decision in Asia. There is the whole question of how we shall develop the British position arising out of the Anglo-Russian Convention; and there is the question of the Baghdad Railway, and what attitude the Government should take up in relation to that ambitious enterprise. These are serious questions, calling for debate and consideration, and also for some kind of propagandist organization. I do not know whether that can be undertaken by this Society, but I certainly think it becomes the duty of those who have knowledge of these questions, and of the

grave consequences they involve, to educate and to inform public opinion, so that, at all events, the gross ignorance that now exists about them may no longer be a blot upon the intelligence of this country. (Cheers.)

In the remarks which I shall venture to address to you on the subject of our future in Persia, I shall return to the earlier methods of the Society—namely, a spoken address, to be followed by debate. I will lay certain points before you, to be threshed out in discussion, so that we may come, as I hope, to a clearer conception of the problem. I shall confine myself to the single topic of what should be the future of our policy toward Persia; and, in order that I may do so profitably, I would ask you to consider in what our policy towards Persia consists in its fundamental aspects. What is the basis of British policy towards Persia? I can state it perhaps most lucidly in the language in which it has been authoritatively expressed by the Government of India in a very weighty dispatch which has recently been presented to Parliament ('Persia,' No. 1, 1908). It is a dispatch from the Government of India, dated September 21, 1899; but it is by no means out of date in its statement of British aims and policy. It is quite as applicable now as it was when it was penned. This is what Lord Curzon and his colleagues wrote to Lord George Hamilton: 'We desire deliberately to say to your lordship, with a full consciousness of our responsibility in so saying, that, difficult as we find it in existing circumstances to meet the financial and military strain imposed upon us by the ever-increasing proximity of Russian power upon the northern and north-western frontiers of India from the Pamirs to Herat, we could not contemplate without dismay the prospect of Russian neighbourhood in Eastern or Southern Persia, the inevitable consequence of which must be a great increase of our own burdens; while the maritime defensibility of India would require to be altogether reconsidered were the dangers of a land invasion to be supplemented by the appearance of a possible antagonist as a naval Power in waters contiguous to Indian shores.'

The Government of India could not regard without dismay the prospect of Russian neighbourhood in Eastern or Southern Persia. Well, that opinion is very generally shared, and not only by those of us who are closely conversant with the problem, but also by those thinkers who look upon these questions from an outside and perfectly impartial point of view. The subject has been admirably discussed by the American naval writer, Captain Mahan, in his 'Problem of Asia'—one of the weightiest books of the kind which I

know. He considers what would be the effect of Russian absorption of Persia and of the consequent appearance of a Russian fleet in the Gulf, and he comes to the conclusion that this would have a damaging effect upon the British naval position throughout the world. He says: 'The maintenance by Russia of a navy in the Persian Gulf sufficient to be a serious consideration to the efforts of Great Britain would involve an exhausting effort, and a naval abandonment of the Black Sea or of the China Sea, or of both. Naval divisions distributed amongst the three could not possibly give mutual support.' If that be the opinion of expert naval writers on this subject, then, obviously, what we have to do is to take M. de Wesselitsky's assurances seriously, as they were intended: to assume that Russia has abandoned her designs upon the Persian Gulf, and for our part to maintain and develop our existing position in Persia at large, so as to render a Russian approach to the waters of the Gulf practically impossible.

How can we carry this policy into effect? First and foremost, by exerting ourselves to convert the integrity and independence of Persia from what is rapidly becoming a diplomatic and legal fiction into a reality. That policy was considered by the Government of India in 1899 in the dispatch which I have quoted, and it was rejected after a review of all the circumstances. The Government of India could not see its way to the conversion of the Persian Government from a moribund into a solvent institution. But much has happened since then. Persia has endeavoured to imitate the methods of Japan. She is doing her utmost to effect reforms. A Parliament has been established. Discussion of public affairs is promoted by nearly a hundred newspapers, of which forty-seven are printed in the capital. I have taken some trouble to investigate the existing situation; and the balance of well-informed opinion inclines to the belief that, if circumstances are not too strong for them, the Persians are quite likely to work out their own salvation. I can scarcely think, however, that they are likely to achieve this result without some assistance. I do not know why Persia should not be encouraged to follow in this respect the example of the kingdom of Siam. In Siam the King and his Ministers are assisted by from 150 to 260 Europeans, many of them being specially picked men. I think those conversant with affairs in that country will bear me out that this sprinkling of Europeans over the Siamese Administration has brought about a marked and even, some say, a wonderful improvement in the affairs of Siam during the past decade. It seems to me that the resisting power of the Persians themselves requires to

be increased in a similar way—by an admixture of European officials; and such strengthening should be the first object of British diplomacy, because it is obvious that, if we are to continue to hold India with a handful of men, as we do at present, if we are not prepared to adopt universal military service, then the alternative policy lies in the maintenance of effective buffer States, which, by their geographical position in relation to India, render it difficult for Russia to adopt military operations against our great dependency (hear, hear). Well, that I put first; and I think the views of the Indian Government, as set forth in the passage of the dispatch to which I have just referred, might be modified to meet the change of circumstances.

In the second place, we should do all we can to develop the existing British position in Persia, and this part of my subject I will deal with under four heads—first of all, the Persian Gulf; secondly, the British sphere; thirdly, the neutral sphere; and fourthly, the sphere of Russia.

As regards the Persian Gulf, all members of this Society are aware that our trade in those waters is very considerable. The question of its value was gone into by the Government of India in 1899.* They pointed out that the annual trade in the Persian Gulf, including the Persian ports of Bunder Abbas, Lingah, Bushire, and Mohammerah, the Arab ports on the opposite coast, and Bahrein, for the years 1895-97 averaged £5,747,100, of which local trade amounted to £1,708,000 and external trade to £4,039,100. Of this external trade, over 80 per cent. was British—trade with British possessions. For the same three years, out of a total of 2,161 steamers which entered and cleared from the Gulf ports, 2,039 were British, and their tonnage represented 84 per cent. of the total tonnage. But these figures of the Government of India are inadequate. They do not include Busrah, where the average annual trade for the same period was £2,157,000, the great bulk of it being with British possessions.† For the years 1904-6, we may estimate, from the extremely imperfect figures available, that the average annual trade—local and external—at the Gulf ports, enumerated in the Government of India's dispatch, was about £5,860,000, of which £3,500,000 was British. In addition, the trade of Busrah now averages £3,500,000 per annum. When I

* See 'Persia,' No. 1, 1908, p. 7.

† The figure given by the Government of India for the trade of Busrah for the three years 1895-97 is evidently mistaken. It probably represents their estimate of the average annual trade.

addressed the members of this Society in 1902, Russian and German trade in the Gulf was *nil*. I do not say that Russian or German goods were not imported, but they were brought in British bottoms, and they were not accounted for separately. The Germans have now instituted a regular monthly service by the Hamburg-American line, and the Russians have a service from Odessa six times during the year. The dimensions of this trade at present are insignificant.

What steps should we take in the Gulf to promote our great interests in that region? We already do practically everything that gets done there. We buoy its waters; we survey and map its shores and inlets; we maintain order in the Gulf, put down piracy, and police it. At the same time, in the interests of commerce we might go further in this direction. There is one great defect: from its entrance to its head the Gulf is not lighted, and this makes navigation slow and dangerous. The provision of lighthouses is a measure which might commend itself to the Indian Government, especially as nearly the whole of the shipping is British. Secondly, we should undertake to dredge the bar at the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab—the united waters of the Tigris, the Euphrates, and the Karun. At high water there are good 18 feet on the bar; but this is not sufficient for great modern steamers, since the tide rises and falls as much as from 8 to 10 feet, necessitating considerable delays on the part of ocean steamers bound for Busrah. This improvement should be undertaken by Turkey—and Turkey cannot well plead a lack of money while she is devoting large revenues to the finding of kilometric guarantees for railways constructed by Germany. Revenues should be permanently laid aside for this purpose. My third recommendation in respect to the Gulf would be the provision of much greater facilities for handling cargo at the ports. This work should be undertaken by the Persian Government; but I think we should avoid anything in the nature of direct interference, because that might lead to dangerous precedents. Further, I should be inclined to suggest that we should concentrate our efforts in the Gulf on two points—namely, at Bunder Abbas at one end and at Mohammerah at the other. Probably our Resident in the Persian Gulf would continue to reside at Bushire, because Bushire occupies a central position and he is the *de facto* ruler of the Gulf. But in other respects I think we should concentrate on the two places which I have named, because in respect of the development of trade and internal communications the future will belong to them rather than to Bushire. The road from Bushire to the interior

traverses the steep mountain-passes known as the Kotals, and is probably not capable of much improvement except at enormous expense.

I now come to the British sphere, and naturally the first point is what we should do with Seistan. A great deal was made by the Government in the recent debates of the fact that this province is included in our sphere. Was anyone so foolish as to propose the omission of Seistan? What we required was that the British sphere should correspond to facts. The line of demarcation should have been drawn—as Sir Mortimer Durand is said to have drawn it some years ago—so as to include, not merely Seistan, but Kerman, Yezd, Isfahan, and Kermanshab. This was the Durand line,* of which only a small section has been embodied in the British sphere under the Convention. Much was made of the strategic value of Seistan, and this is undeniable. It is at present a desolate and most unpleasant region to live in. It is subjected to invasions of sand, which is whirled up at a velocity reaching seventy miles an hour by a fierce wind that lasts four months of the year. The inroads of the sand undermine the houses. I believe I am right in saying that the expedition for the delimitation of Seistan under Sir Henry McMahon lost 50 men and 4,900 camels. It is about as inhospitable a place as any on the face of the globe. No doubt it might be possible to restore this region to its ancient fertility by means of irrigation. But if we adopt that course, we shall be facilitating a military advance toward India. From the point of view of a layman, it would seem best to leave Seistan much as it is, because, in that case, it will be more difficult for an army to get down to India. Strategic considerations have also to be considered in connexion with suggestions for extending the Quetta - Nushki Railway to Kerman, Yezd, and Isfahan, with branches from Bunder Abbas and the Karun. That seems to me a doubtful policy on strategic grounds; but the same objection would not be open to the branch-lines, as they would run from south to north, and not from west to east. We might at least obtain the requisite concessions. What certainly should soon be done is to make a road from Bunder Abbas to Kerman. You observe from the map that the distance between the two places is not great—some 250 miles as the crow flies. But, owing to the configuration of the country, the road would have to be taken round by Rigan. The best account of that route is con-

* It is only fair to Sir M. Durand to state that this line was distinctly not a proposed line of partition. It merely indicated the regions where British trade and influence were, and still are, supreme.

tained in the *Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society* for 1905 (vol. xxi.), in the form of a paper, by Major Sykes. Major Sykes pronounces this route as quite feasible ; but it crosses a pass 8,000 feet high, and it is 480 miles long, whereas the direct distance between Bunder Abbas and Kerman is, as I have said, less than 250 miles. Rigan, however, would probably lie on the route of a future Nushki-Kerman Railway, should it ever be built. It might also be advisable to open up a road from Bunder Abbas to Shiraz via Lar, as to which I would refer members to a paper by Lieutenant A. T. Wilson in the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*, February, 1908, and especially to his summary of the route on p. 168. The two roads which I have suggested are the most obvious requirements of our commerce in the British sphere.

Turning now to the neutral zone, I should suggest that we should concentrate on Mohammerah and the valley of the Karun. Here we have concessions in our hands only awaiting development. There is first of all the Bakhtiari road, as to which progress has been very remarkable. The road was constructed by a member of this Society—Mr. Arthur Taylor—in 1900, and was open for traffic in the following year. In that year 100 tons of traffic were carried over it, while in 1906 the total was 1,280 tons, conveyed by 19,900 animals. The revenues are collected and enjoyed by the chieftains of the country, who last year received over £3,000 on this account. The undertaking has, no doubt, been a success ; but the road is in bad repair, and considerable works are required. A railway along this route is not impossible ; but, of course, in so mountainous a district the cost would be very considerable. I was last autumn travelling in Bosnia, where mountain railways can be studied with advantage. They are made on the 2 feet 6 inch gauge, and the engineers have adopted a system whereby, on the steeper ascents, the train takes up cogs without stopping. But, of course, construction in such a country costs a good deal of money, so that, whereas the average outlay in the most mountainous districts was £30,000 a mile, the cost of the same gauge under more ordinary conditions averaged £8,000. You could not hope to make a similar railway along the Bakhtiari route under an average of, at the very least, £10,000 a mile ; and this would involve a total outlay of three millions sterling. Whether this capital expenditure would be in any way recouped by the traffic I should not like to say ; but, at any rate, a concession for a railway should be obtained. In the second place, British subjects hold a concession for a road from the Karun through Dizful, Khoremabad, Burujird, and Sultanabad

to Teheran. Burujird and Sultanabad are in the Russian sphere; but they have already constructed the section from Sultanabad to Kum and Teheran. The remaining sections from Sultanabad to the Karun should be linked up as soon as possible. Some of you may suggest railways rather than roads; but I hold that roads or caravan-tracks must precede railways. The first aim must be to get into business relations with the people of the country; and when trade has been firmly established the question of railways may be considered. I should like to urge that we should lose no opportunity, in respect of all these roads, to obtain concessions from the Persian Government for railways in the future. We should do that in order to prevent our being supplanted by the Russians or by the Germans. You will recall that the late Shah, Nasr-ed-Din, gave the British Government a solemn assurance, to which they still hold, that when railways are promoted by Russia in the north, Great Britain shall have similar facilities in the south. We have, therefore, a perfect right to ask that such facilities should be given, and that the concessions, at least, should be in our hands, to be exploited as soon as favourable opportunities may arise.

Finally, I should like to allude to what may be done in the Russian sphere. Here Great Britain has many important trading and other interests. Some 90 per cent. of our telegrams to India and the Far East pass over British wires through the Russian sphere by way of Isfahan. Thence one line proceeds to the Gulf, and is connected by cable with India, while another is taken right across Persia through Kerman to the same destination. In addition to the telegraph, we have constructed a carriage-road from Teheran to Kum, and we hold a concession for its prolongation to Isfahan. This section should be taken in hand without delay. It would be most unwise to allow this main road to fall into Russian hands, and to rely upon the 'open door' in Persia. We only of all the Powers faithfully practise the 'open door' policy anywhere. The Russians may profess this policy in Persia, but they have plenty of ways of getting round it. Therefore it is of the utmost importance that the concessions which we already possess in the Russian sphere should not be allowed to lapse, but rather that they should be rendered effective as soon as possible, so that British trade, which has been hard hit by the terms of the Convention, may suffer the least possible damage therefrom. It must be admitted that these road enterprises have not yet paid expenses, and can, therefore, not be regarded from a strictly commercial point of view.

They were undertaken to enable British trade to penetrate into the country, and they have hitherto entailed considerable financial loss. It might be better, though probably more costly, if such works were to be undertaken, not by private firms, but by Government, as, indeed, has been the case with the Russian roads in Persia.

I have now completed my survey of the situation created by the Convention, and I have asked you to consider what steps we ought to take to safeguard our interests in the Shah's dominions under the new conditions. I have endeavoured to show the far-reaching effects upon our Empire of any absorption by Russia of large portions of Persia, and, with this danger in view, I have urged that we should put forth a strenuous endeavour to maintain the integrity of Persia. I have shown in detail by what means we shall seek to maintain and develop our position in Persia, and in particular that vast preponderance of interests which we still possess in the neutral sphere. (Cheers.)

DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN said: Before the debate upon Mr. Lynch's paper begins I should like to say a word or two.

In the course of his remarks he touched upon the Anglo-Russian Convention, and following Lord Crewe, who spoke on the subject not long ago in the House of Lords, he referred to 'the Durand line' in Persia. The phrase was used by Lord Crewe in connexion with a proposal I was supposed to have made, when Minister at Teheran, that Persia should be divided into British and Russian 'spheres of influence' by a line running from Khanikin, on the Turkish frontier, through Kermanshah, Hamadan, Isfahan, Yezd, and Kerman to Seistan and the Afghan border.

I have now been allowed by Sir Edward Grey to see the papers on the subject, and, as I expected, I find that I made no such proposal.

In saying this, I am not criticizing the Convention. Not only am I under the orders of the Foreign Office, but I have in the past suggested the possibility of a general agreement between Russia and England for the settlement of their relations in Asia. Moreover, as to the terms of the Convention, I am aware that the situation in Persia may not have been as favourable to us when the Convention was negotiated as it was when I was Minister in Persia, and that, in any case, when a general agreement was being discussed, the situation in Persia was not the only thing to be considered. All I wish to make clear is that I did not propose the arrangement which has been accepted by His Majesty's Government, or anything at all resembling it. I have the express permission of Sir Edward Grey to explain what my views really were, and to disclaim responsibility for recommendations which I did not make.

What I did when Minister in Persia was to point out the actual position which we held, and to make certain proposals for strengthening that position. I showed that our trade was in full possession of the country up to and including a line drawn from Khanikin by Kermanshah, Hamadan, Isfahan, Yezd, and Kerman to Seistan. I showed that up to and including that line our political influence was paramount and almost exclusive. Russia had only just begun to touch the fringe of this southern zone at Seistan and Isfahan. Neither her Consular establishments nor her trade extended beyond these points. In the North, on the other hand, we had our Consular establishments right up to the Russian border; and our trade, though suffering from Russian

competition, was by no means excluded. The southern zone was very much more in our hands, politically and commercially, than the northern zone was in Russian hands. The English Bank did business all over Persia, and was the only bank which could legally issue notes. Our telegraph department controlled a large part of the Persian telegraph system. Our political influence was still great even in the North, and our power was much feared.

In these circumstances I should never have thought of proposing to divide Persia into British and Russian spheres of influence bounded by the Khanikin-Seistan line. I did not, as a fact, propose to divide the country into British and Russian spheres of influence at all.

I repeat that I am not criticizing the Convention. I do not wish to express any opinion as to the arrangements made under the Convention, viewed as a whole. All I do wish to say is that I did not advocate any such arrangement with regard to Persia as has been attributed to me. The proposal, viewed as an isolated proposal, would have been indefensible, and I disclaim all responsibility for it.

Mr. J. D. REES, M.P., said : Mr. Lynch's address was so interesting and eloquent that it seemed quite short, but following speeches must actually be short. The remark that has just fallen from the chair bears out what I have always said—that we must bear in mind that the Convention does not relate to Persia alone ; that the Persian portion is only a part of a whole, which is generally acceptable. Mr. Lynch spoke as if, under the line drawn to demarcate the British sphere, we had no interest in the island of Kishm. We have had a station there, as a matter of fact, for many years, and I hope it is not to be assumed from what he said that we have left that strong strategical position open for Russia.

Mr. LYNCH : It is quite a small station.

Mr. REES : Still, we are there, and I don't think anybody else could get there. I am in general agreement with Mr. Lynch that we should apply for every possible concession in Persia, on the ground that, if we do not, somebody else will. We should in every direction, from the Gulf northwards, peg out our claims for roads and railways. I notice that the German Foreign Secretary said some days ago that the Anglo-Russian Convention expressly excluded the Persian Gulf, whereupon I asked Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons whether our position in the Gulf had not been expressly confirmed in connexion with the Convention, and whether this fact had been duly communicated to Germany. He replied that it had. So the speech of the German Foreign Secretary had not the somewhat sinister significance which it might have seemed to convey. Mr. Lynch said that it was only because we were Free Traders that we had in the Gulf a great commercial preponderance, while the Russians had not. He thought it was because we had most of the carrying ships and the Russians had

not. Perhaps we had the ships because we had Free Trade (laughter), but, at any rate, there were the facts.

Mr. Lynch was quite correct, he thought, in his opinion that our troubles in Persia and Russian ascendancy therein began when we refused to guarantee the loan raised in 1902. Great Britain ought most certainly to have taken up that loan. He (Mr. Rees) believed that just now the Germans had declared that their interests in the Baghdad Railway were purely and exclusively commercial. Why did we not before they became political cut in with capital to help in the construction of the line, or obtain the concession for the Gulf section, or at least arrange for complete internationalization? It was certain that this railway could in time be made right through, and it might then be too late to internationalize it, and we might then be completely cut off from participation.

Much was said in the lecture of the obligations of Persia toward ourselves in respect to pre-existing concessions. An important question was whether they would be bound by previous contracts now that there was the new factor of the Convention, which might be held to clean the slate. He had sent in a memorial to Sir Edward Grey pointing out that it was very important that we should know that the Persians adhered to their previous engagements, and particularly to the engagement that if Russia received railway concessions in the North, we could claim corresponding concessions in the South. Mr. Lynch had collaborated with him in this matter. The lecturer criticized the Government very forcibly for negotiating this Convention without giving any opportunity for prior discussion of its terms, and said that we only knew its details when their modification was no longer possible. He (Mr. Rees) thought that if this audience heard the tone of many of the questions put to Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons, it would feel that it is no easy matter for the Foreign Office to make so strong a stand for the protection of Imperial interests as we could desire. Our Ministers had to work under the greatest difficulties, having regard to the views of many of their followers. If the details of proposed agreements with other Powers were in the early stages made public, the Foreign Office would not be able to carry on the business of this country effectively—at any rate, while Parliament was sitting. (Hear, hear.)

He thought we ought to have some warship in the Gulf larger than the Indian marine vessels and the cruiser from the East India Squadron usually sent there. He had repeatedly put this matter forward. The East India Squadron's biggest ship, the *Highflyer*, was comparatively small, and we wanted a higher flyer there. (Laughter.) But how were we to make the necessary provision for the defence of Imperial interests when we had members in the House of Commons who, whenever the army question came up, urged that the army in India ought

to be greatly reduced because of the Convention, and the navy ought to be largely cut down? These critics included men, he was sorry to say, who had themselves served in India. Such reduction would be a fatal step, and he trusted it would never be assented to by the Government of this country. The present Government, indeed, had given satisfactory assurances in this behalf, in spite of the insistence of their followers on the extreme left, who were always digging pits in the amiable hope that their leaders would fall into them.

COLONEL C. E. YATE, C.S.I., C.M.G., said: Personally I cannot accept Mr. Rees's contention that, taken as a whole, the Convention is an acceptable one. I think we all cordially agree in our desire to promote a friendly understanding with Russia, and we can all endorse the principles of that understanding as laid down in the preamble to the Convention. It is only when we come to examine the way in which the principles there laid down have been applied in the subsequent articles of the Convention that we have cause to doubt whether Russia is really sincere in her professed desire to avoid all misunderstanding with Great Britain in the future. Great Britain has given Russia every real and practical proof of her sincerity that any one Power can give another. She has handed over to Russia every place in Persia where that country has the smallest interest whatever. She has given over Meshed, the main objective of our Indian trade from Quetta and Bundar Abbas, where the Indian Government have maintained an Agent and Consul-General for the last twenty-five years, and where we have large interests connected with Herat and Western Afghanistan. She has given over Tabriz, where we have had a Consul-General for years and years, and which is the place at which all the British trade through the port of Trebizond, on the Black Sea, enters Persia. She has handed over Teheran, the capital of the country, and she has handed over every other place where Russia has any footing whatever.

Russia, on the other hand, by stretching out her hands and taking to herself such places as Yezd, Isfahan, and Burujird, where she has practically no commercial interests whatever, has knowingly, purposefully, and wilfully taken to herself the power and opportunity to raise a conflict with British interests at any moment she pleases; and if she is really desirous of avoiding such conflicts, we should like to have some more real and practical proofs of this beyond mere words and protestations. When we consider the magnitude of British interests in the roads from the Gulf ports to Shiraz and Isfahan; when we consider the magnitude of British interests in our hard-won concession for the navigation of the Karun River, and for the roads from the Karun to Isfahan on the one side, and Burujird and Sultanabad on the other, I do not see how, under present circumstances, misunderstandings and conflicts of interests are possibly to be avoided

in the future ; and if Russia is really sincere in her professed intention to avoid all cause of conflict, then let her give proof of it, as Great Britain has given proof of her sincerity, by signifying her agreement to such places as Yezd, Isfahan, and Burujird, where British interests predominate, being included within the British sphere.

We have had the terms of the Convention fully debated of late in both Houses of Parliament. Lord Lansdowne, you may remember, in winding up the debate in the House of Lords, gave expression to a hope—mind you, a hope only—that the agreement would be loyally and honourably interpreted by the Russian Government, and that the British concessions might receive fair play at Russia's hands.

What sort of a treaty is this in which British interests have been left on so precarious a footing that we have no firmer ground to stand on than that of pious hopes? British interests should rest on duly recorded rights, not on hopes and appeals for fair play ; and the position is an humiliating one for us to be in. I see that the *Times of India*—than which no paper in the East has fuller knowledge and clearer insight in these matters—has said that, whether looked at from an Imperial or a local point of view, the treaty is one of the most deplorable instruments that a British Minister has ever put his hand to. It is indeed the irony of fate that all that has been done by the Government of India for the protection of Imperial interests in Persia should have been thrown away by the Home Government. As Lord Curzon has pointed out, the expenditure of the Home Government in Persia has been only £15,000 a year, while the expenditure of the Government of India has amounted to £70,000 a year, which is a large sum for any Government to spend on a country like Persia. Lord Curzon also pointed out that no supporter of the treaty had ever faced the question as to why those regions in Persia which ought to have constituted the British sphere had been converted into the neutral zone.

As to Kasr-i-shirin, I have always myself been in favour of meeting Russia with regard to railway construction in Western Persia. So long ago as June, 1906, I advocated, in the *Nineteenth Century*, our joining in with Russia in any scheme she might suggest. But that is a very different thing to surrendering the whole railways in Western Persia gratuitously into Russia's hands as we have now done. Had we retained our right of joint action, we should have been assured of equality of treatment for British imports with Russian exports. We might also have come to an agreement with Russia for joint action in future contingencies ; we might have had Russia, as our avowed ally, instead of being left to fight our railway battles alone. Russia, on the other hand, might have obtained a warm and unanimous ally in England, as undoubtedly she would have done ; whereas, by her overreaching and grasping policy, she has obtained only a cold, critical, and divided assent to the Convention from the English people, who have

to wait and see whether she is really going to give them fair play or not.

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES said : I rather regretted to hear Mr. Rees express distrust of the intervention of the House of Commons in foreign affairs. I myself believe that to be not only rightful, but useful, necessary, indispensable ; that not only has the House every right to voice the opinion of the nation as to a treaty before it is made, but I also believe that it has a most useful part to play in the discussion of details, which cannot be abandoned without grave disadvantage to the Government of the day. I observe from what has been said here that a number of uncertainties have already arisen as to the interpretation of the Convention and as to some of its effects, even on the part of gentlemen so well informed on Eastern affairs as those who have addressed us. Such uncertainties as exist would probably have been cleared up in the course of a debate in the House of Commons, if the draft of the Convention had been debated as a Bill is debated, with capacities for amending it. I think that an urgent necessity of our constitutional machinery is some such body as the Committee of Foreign Relations which exists in the United States as a link between the Executive and the Senate. I hold that, instead of having more, the Government should have less liberty to negotiate such treaties without reference to Parliament, and should in that respect be kept more in control by the popular assembly. That would make for safety.

The phrase we have heard so repeatedly this afternoon, 'spheres of influence', is a strange one. It represents nothing known to international law or diplomacy. It is not a sovereignty. It is not an alliance. It is not a protectorate. It is not annexation. It is a phrase intended to cover purposes of aggression : by it you really mean spheres of annexation, when you are strong enough to carry out that annexation. I observe that the lecturer, who gave us such an admirable exposition of the case, and Mr. Rees and Colonel Yate, go further than the phrase implies : they esteem a sphere of influence to be absolutely completed annexation. They all talk as if Russia actually and absolutely possessed her sphere of influence, and as if Great Britain possessed hers ; while as to the third remaining sphere, it was to be wrangled for between the two. That is an exaggerated view.

MR. REES : I deprecated that view myself.

MR. BOWLES : Then I mistook the tone of Mr. Rees's remarks. I understood him to assume that everything in the Russian sphere had become wholly Russian, and that she could work her will there, and the same with England in the English sphere. But there arises the question whether the antecedent contracts made by Persia have disappeared because England and Russia have arrived at a paper Convention as to spheres of influence. It is impossible to conceive that these contracts are thus abrogated. They still exist.

The CHAIRMAN: They are specially safeguarded by the Convention.

MR. BOWLES: But even supposing nothing had been said in the Convention respecting them, that instrument could not possibly have affected preceding contracts made by Persia herself. I confess I do not like these contracts between two great countries, marking out spheres of influence in a third. They are immoral. They are even impolitic. It is extremely inadvisable, if you have purposes of annexation and aggression, to mark them out in the eyes of the world beforehand. (Laughter.) If I may use terms of legal contradiction, it is a sort of daylight burglary. Mr. Lynch's complaint, however, is not that we have made this bargain, but that we have not got the best of it. His attitude reminds me of the story of two men sharing the same bed. One complained that the other had taken up too much of the bed, and left him insufficient room. 'No,' said the other; 'I have only my share.' 'Yes,' was the reply, 'but you take your share out of the middle of the bed, and leave me to take mine out of the two sides.' (Laughter.) The Russians have taken by far the best share of the Persian bed, and have left us only one of the sides. (Renewed laughter.) But may I be allowed to call the attention of this important meeting to the fact that the bed is Persian, and not English or Russian, and to the view which the Persians themselves may be supposed to take of this process of occupying the bed? The Persian must feel—and, in fact, I know he does feel (for I have recently returned from the East, and was last at Constantinople)—that he has been partitioned by England and Russia, so far as they can now partition him, and he is extremely disturbed about it. I think we can well understand that feeling. He is disturbed, first of all, because of the implied threat to bring him to an end; while, in the second place, he knows that such a division of spheres of influence never takes place except when it is felt that the Power subject to it is in a disjointed, degraded, and almost moribund state. (Cheers.) The Persians cannot be expected to look upon the Convention with any pleasure or satisfaction. As a matter of fact, the result has been, what an Eastern State often looks for, the advent of a third saviour—or what the French would call the *troisième larron*. The Persian, feeling that he is going to be ground between the upper millstone of Russia and the nether millstone of England, has turned his eyes to Germany. Germany is making the best of her opportunities: she has sent to Persia one of her ablest Ambassadors, and is lending money to Persia. The net effect will be to set up a German influence in Persia such as has never existed before, and which will afford this country matter for serious reflection in the future. (Cheers.) This irruption of Germany into Persian politics is the more significant because Germany and Turkey are almost agreed on a general course of policy. There are 30,000 Turkish troops on the Persian frontier at the present time; they have occupied Persian territory, and I believe that in this matter Turkey is, and will be, supported, so far as she can be, by Germany.

You may thus have in Persia before long a serious operation of factors which will materially alter the state of things in that part of the world. You may have to recast your spheres of influence. You may have to map out yet a German or a Turco-German sphere. What then?

As to the Persian Gulf I would say a word. I am a bit of a sailor myself, and naval matters always interest me. I am told that M. de Wesselitsky said here that Russia had given up the Persian Gulf, but complaint has been made to-day that the Gulf is not included in the scope of the Convention. I cannot see that this is of consequence. The Persian Gulf is always ours so long as we are predominant at sea. So long as we predominate there nobody will touch it; nobody can touch it. Therefore I attach no importance whatever to the absence of any declaration in the Convention of English predominance in the Gulf.

Mr. Lynch is of opinion that on the whole the Convention is a grave political mistake. Well, as I have already indicated, I am extremely doubtful of its morality and of its prudence in the long-run. But from one aspect I cannot fail to welcome it. I have long been anxious to see reconciled the wearing conflict of interests between England and Russia; and it is to me satisfactory to see the statesmen of both countries coming to an agreement. Though I am forced to admit that Mr. Lynch may be right in thinking that we have only a small part of the bed, and though I feel that there are objections also to the Tibetan and Afghan parts of the treaty, I cannot but welcome this Convention on the whole as a first step to a better understanding with Russia. Although we may not have got the best terms, I think from that point of view that the Convention was worth making. As to whether it will be kept, I think the condition of Russia at the present moment offers very considerable guarantees that it will be acted upon. Russia has kept her treaty-contracts with us in the past; and even apart from the question of good faith, I think the circumstances of the present and of the immediate future are such as will induce and even compel Russia to keep this Convention faithfully. On the whole, therefore, while I recognize that there are disadvantages and difficulties in this Convention, yet from the point of view of *rapprochement* between England and Russia I cannot fail to regard it with very considerable satisfaction. (Cheers.)

MR. LOVAT FRASER said: At this hour I do not wish to speak on the general question of the Anglo-Russian Convention, and I only rise to take exception to a passage in the remarks of the last speaker. Mr. Gibson Bowles said in effect that he was quite satisfied that British paramountcy in the Persian Gulf would be maintained so long as the British navy was predominant at sea. That kind of view is all very well, but I would like to ask Mr. Gibson Bowles whether he would maintain the same attitude if another Power obtained some

sort of naval station in the Gulf. (Hear, hear.) Such a possibility is by no means imaginary. Attempts of the kind have been made already. Russia tried some years ago to establish a coaling-station at Bunder Abbas, and very nearly succeeded. France attempted to obtain a coaling-station at Bunder Jisseh, on the coast of Oman, near the entrance to the Gulf, and was only thwarted at the eleventh hour. It is tolerably well known that Germany tried to lease a large tract of land on the shores of Koweit Harbour, ostensibly in connexion with the Baghdad Railway. (Hear, hear.) The presence of the British Fleet in the vicinity of Port Arthur did not deter Russia from hoisting her flag over that fortress. The point I wish to urge is that we must not be too confident because our naval predominance appears so strong. We must be watchful and vigilant, and must be ready to resist to the uttermost any attempt by any Power, however friendly, to establish a position on the shores of the Persian Gulf. This is essential in the interests of India, for the advent of any definite foreign influence in the Gulf would have an extremely disturbing effect upon the situation in India. (Applause.)

MR. HAROLD COX, M.P., said: The last speaker has urged that it would be dangerous for another Power to obtain a footing in the Persian Gulf. What I wish to point out is that, so long as any other Power can only get to any naval station it may desire to establish in the Gulf by sea, it would not greatly matter, because that naval station would be ours whenever we wanted to take it. The real danger comes in if any Power obtains a footing in the Gulf to which she has access all the way by land.

I may add that I am one of those who feel very great doubt as to the value of this Convention. I was confirmed in these doubts by the language Sir Edward Grey used in the House of Commons. After going through the various clauses of the agreement, and apologizing for most of them, as it seemed to me (laughter), the Foreign Secretary said that if we had not conceded all these points to Russia, we should have had no agreement at all. I venture to ask, What is the use of making an 'agreement' with a man who requires you to make the whole payment, and will pay nothing himself? (Hear, hear.)

MR. E. PENTON (the Hon. Secretary) said: The Quetta-Nushki Railway has been carried to Nushki, but not beyond. With regard to Seistan, I hope I may be permitted to say one word in its defence. Mr. Lynch has painted its climatic conditions in very lurid colours. I had the pleasure of spending a very happy fortnight there a few years ago during the hot weather, and I did not find the country quite so bad as it was painted. A little description of the country, however, might be interesting. When you enter Persia from Baluchistan, after rounding the Kuh-i-malik-Siah, you travel for about ninety miles through a desert. This desert has been formed because the waters of

the Helmund have changed their course. There is no doubt that this area was once populous; indeed, I believe one authority has said that he discovered the ruins of a city the size of London. I did not see any ruins answering that description; but if you care to stand on any of the small watch-towers of the British posts that lay between the Kuh-i-malik-Siah and our Consulate at Nasratabad, you can observe in every direction deserted villages. One night I entered one of these villages—or it might almost be called a town—and I found all the buildings in perfect condition with the exception that some of the lower parts were submerged in the sand. Within twenty miles of Nasratabad you strike the country watered by the Helmund, which you immediately find fertile and carrying a large population. This is entirely due to the waters of the river, and I believe that the changing of the course of these desert rivers is not an uncommon phenomenon. The fertility of the country is testified to by the fact that it is generally believed that Seistan was the granary of Alexander the Great when he invaded the Punjab.

MR. LYNCH said in reply: We have had a very interesting discussion, and a very varied one, and I should be wanting in courtesy to the speakers if I refrained from touching upon a few of the points that have been raised.

First of all, as to Seistan, I think Mr. Penton will admit, if he reads the report of the McMahan Mission, that I did not exaggerate the statements of that report respecting the climate of that province. Indeed, I left out many of the most doleful aspects of the picture—as, for instance, that in winter tempests are frequent, the gales attaining a velocity of 120 miles an hour. The gist of the report was that the present condition of the country is a deplorable one, and, indeed, dangerous for man and beast, but that it is capable of being made into a granary by means of irrigation. The last speaker considers that we should endeavour to restore the ancient fertility of Seistan. I certainly do not yield to him in my desire to see two blades of grass grow where one grew before. But it is manifestly a strategical question. Seistan is capable of forming a great granary and depot for an army, and, as we do not want it for crossing into Central Asia, shall we put it into such a state as to benefit a possible foe crossing it against us?

As regards the Persian Gulf, I confess I find myself in agreement with Mr. Harold Cox. The question is whether Russia shall come to the Persian Gulf by land or by sea. The British position has been defined by Lord Lansdowne, who has stated that we should regard it as an act of hostility for Russia to possess a port in the Persian Gulf; and this statement, made when he was Foreign Secretary, has practically been endorsed by the present Government.

I listened with great interest to the remarks of Mr. Gibson Bowles, who complained that I had not alluded to the effect of the Convention

on Persia, and the attitude concerning it of the Persian people. I can only say that, if he will do me the honour to read my article in the *Asiatic Quarterly*, he will find that I had a good deal to say on that aspect of the question in the speech which I intended to deliver to the House of Commons. I showed that it was no pleasant thing for the Persians to see their country playing the part of a *corpus vile* for dissection.

SIR MORTIMER DURAND, in closing the proceedings, expressed his thanks to the lecturer, on behalf of the audience, for his instructive and interesting address.

The following remarks have been received from a member, who was prevented from speaking by the lateness of the hour :

MR. PREECE: Mr. Lynch, in his paper read at the Central Asian Society on the 8th instant, in speaking of the possibility of a railway being made from Bunder Abbas to Shiraz, referred to a paper read by Lieutenant Wilson, in which it was pointed out that a line run from that port to Shiraz via Lar presented no difficulty. In 1884 I made a journey from Shiraz to Bunder Abbas and Jashk, a report of which was communicated to the Geographical Society; in this report I pointed out that the route via Darab and Forg was perfectly feasible, and that no engineering difficulties to the construction of a railway existed along it. The late Sir Frederick Goldsmid accepted this route, and it has also been referred to by Lord Curzon in his book on Persia, as also has the Lar route. From Saadabad a little to the south-east of Tarun I believe an easy route could be found to Kerman. So that up to that point one line would suffice; thence a junction would have to be made to Shiraz on the west, and Kerman to the north.

Mr. Lynch lamented that the Clarence Straits, west of Bunder Abbas, did not come within our sphere. As these straits are part and parcel of the port Bunder Abbas, I imagine we could utilize them; if not, it would in deed be a pity, as they afford the only deep water available in those parts where a port could effectually be created.

In contrasting the two routes from the sea at Bushire to Shiraz and the Karun to Isfahan, Mr. Lynch, gave preference to the latter; but I, who probably have traversed both the routes oftener than any European, and know their capabilities thoroughly, am inclined to think that the difficulties of the former are much overrated, and that they are much less than that of the Bakhtairi routes. From Bushire to the hills near Dalaki is plain sailing; about twelve miles to the west of that village exists a short pass called Kun Surkh, rising just above the village of that name. It is possible that a long incline up the hills could be made without much difficulty, bringing one on to a small plain, at the end of which the defile of the Shahpur River is reached; and the road follows this defile till it comes out behind the village of Khist, on the Konar Takhteh plain. It is possible, on investigation, that an easier route

would be found by following the Shahpur River from the point where it debouches into the plain from the hills; the proposed route then follows the Shahpur River until the Kamaridj Hills are reached. The above remark equally applies to an investigation of the Shahpur River from this point, where it leaves the hills, to its entering them from the Kazarun plain. I had always promised myself the pleasure of making these investigations, but regret I never had the chance. After reaching the Kazarun plain, the alignment would go straight to and through the Shahpur Valley, coming out at what is really a continuation of the Dasht-i-Barm; it would follow this plain for some few miles, passing the village of Naudun, and then, turning to the left, would enter a series of defiles, which would ultimately bring it out in the Dasht Arjin plain through the depression near to Kalah Mushir. From this point to Shiraz is perfectly simple, and requires no commenting on; so, also, is the continuance of the line to Isfahan. By this route the four severe passes of Malu, Kamaridj, Dokhtar, and Meyan Kotal would be turned. The roads from Bunder Abbas to Shiraz and Kerman would, I think, however, be a better commercial speculation, as they would open up larger markets and tap fine grain-growing countries.

Mr. Lynch has had the advantage of seeing a mountain railway in Bosnia. I regret I have not; but I have always had the idea that for a railway in such mountains as we have in Persia a mono-rail line, such as Behr's or Breiman's would best lend itself to the contours of the hills, and would be cheaper in construction than even a narrow-gauge line such as Mr. Lynch suggests.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY

THE PERSIAN CONSTITUTIONALISTS

BY

PROFESSOR E. G. BROWNE, F.B.A.

Delivered November 11, 1908



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THE PERSIAN CONSTITUTIONALISTS

THE CHAIRMAN (Lord Ronaldshay, M.P.), in opening the proceedings, said : We are here this afternoon to hear an address from Professor Browne dealing with the Constitutional Movement which has arisen and developed in Persia in recent years. Professor Browne is, I think, eminently qualified to speak on this subject. I do not know whether he has been in Persia in recent years or not, but I understand that he is one of the most fluent European speakers of the Persian tongue that we have at the present time. He is well known to the educated classes in Persia, and I am glad to say he has brought with him some leaders of the Constitutional Movement, including Sayyid Taqí-záda, and we shall probably have an opportunity of hearing their views. Professor Browne really needs no introduction, for he is well known to all who take an interest in Persian matters, and his deep concern for the progress of the Constitutional Movement has been shown by the letters he has contributed in recent months to the *Times*, the *Spectator*, and other prominent journals.

In the short time at my disposal this afternoon it is impossible to enter at all fully into the history of the Constitutional Movement in Persia, or to describe at any length the successive stages of the drama which has been enacted in that country during the last three years. With the main outlines of that history most of those present are, no doubt, familiar, and as regards the details of numerous matters whereon difference of opinion exists in this country, I am sure that you will wish to hear the first-hand information which my Persian friends, especially Sayyid Taqí-záda, Deputy for Tabríz, and the Mu'ázidu's-Saltana, Deputy for Tehrán, will be able to give you, rather than the second-hand information which I can impart.

All of you are probably familiar with the name of Sayyid Taqí-záda, whom I now have the pleasure of introducing to you, for it has been, since the Persian Parliament first met in October,

1906, much before the public. His high character, his true patriotism, his efforts for reform, and his devotion to the best interests of his country, are matters of common knowledge. A British officer in Persia, with whom I am not personally acquainted, sent a message to him through me a few days ago, and in the covering letter which he addressed to me apologized for any trouble that the conveyance of this message might cause me on the ground of 'his friendship and admiration for an honest and fearless man who has fallen on evil days.' I cannot choose better words than these to introduce to you Sayyid Taqí-záda, a man who won the esteem and affection, not only of his own countrymen, but of our countrymen, alike in the days of his power, when he so wisely directed and controlled the Constitutional or Popular Party, and struggled so heroically to reform the fiscal system of Persia, establish equal justice amongst all Persian subjects, and make his country strong, solvent, self-supporting, and progressive, and in the days when, during last June and July, he was a refugee in the British Legation at Tehrán, to whose protection he owes his life. With him in both phases of his career was his colleague, the Mu'ázidu's-Saltana, one of the Deputies for Tehrán, whom I also have the pleasure to introduce to you. Both of these, through myself or other interpreter, will gladly answer any questions which you may like to ask, and no one at present in London can, I think, speak with so much authority as these two on recent events in the Persian capital. For this reason, then, I desire in these preliminary remarks to be as brief as possible, and rather to suggest points for further discussion than to attempt any systematic essay on the history of the Persian Constitutional Movement. And in particular I wish to touch on certain points where, as it appears to me, misunderstanding has arisen in this country—I do not say generally, but in the minds of certain politicians, writers, and journalists.

Now, in the first place, some persons have taken the view that the Constitutional Movement in Persia was fictitious and artificial, and have implied that the late Shah granted his people a brand-new Constitution made in Europe, just as he might have introduced taxi-cabs into Tehrán, and that the Persian people neither wanted it nor knew how to profit by it. Such a view, in my opinion, can only arise from ignorance of the facts, or malicious misinterpretation of them. The Constitutional idea was vigorously preached and popularized in Persia at least twenty-two years ago by that remarkable man Sayyid Jamálu'd-Din al-

Afghán, and also by the late Prince Malkom Khán, who was for so many years the Representative of Persia in London. But the actual emergence into being and activity of a real popular party, determined to check the extravagance of the Court and resist undue foreign influences, dates from the obnoxious Tobacco Concession granted by Násiru'd-Din Sháh in 1890. Public opinion, which had hitherto been supposed not to exist in Persia, was strongly aroused, and was supported by the weight of the ecclesiastical authorities, and, after a long and fierce struggle lasting through the whole of 1891, the Shah was finally compelled to yield to the popular demand, and withdraw the Concession on January 5, 1892. This episode, of which very full particulars will be found in an interesting work, entitled 'Trois Ans à la Cour de Perse,' by Dr. Feuvrier, who was physician to Násiru'd-Din Sháh from the autumn of 1889 until the autumn of 1892, is of the greatest importance, since from it dates, on the one hand, the gradually increasing influence, political and commercial, of Russia, and on the other the growth of a real public spirit and public opinion amongst the Persians, strongly opposed to the extravagances of the Court, and fully alive to the ruinous nature of the course on which the Shah and his Ministers—especially the late Atábek, or Amínu's-Sultán—had now embarked.

The Tobacco Concession, and its withdrawal under popular pressure, had other important results. The Atábek, who had hitherto leaned on the English, formally visited the Russian Legation on February 10, 1892, to do penance for his past Anglo-phil sentiments, and to give promises (which he certainly observed during the remainder of his life—*i.e.*, until August 31 of last year, when he was killed by 'Abbás Ághá) that in future he would support Russian influences. This incident, which took place when the present *ententes* were undreamed of, is triumphantly chronicled by the Shah's French doctor, who loved the Russians and the Atábek, and cordially detested the English. Another important and deplorable result of the Tobacco Concession was that Persia was compelled to pay half a million pounds sterling as compensation to the Concessionaires, and this money she had to borrow (in April, 1892) from the Imperial Bank of Persia at 6 per cent. Thus was established an utterly unproductive National Debt, which resulted in an annual drain on the already exiguous revenues of £30,000 a year. A third, but less immediate, result of the state of things which arose in 1891-92 was the assassination of Násiru'd-Din Sháh on May 1, 1896, by Mírzá Rizá of Kirmán,

who had suffered cruelly for his participation in the riots directed against the Tobacco Concession.

The late Shah, Muzaffaru'd-Din, succeeded his father in May, 1896, and died soon after the granting of the Constitution at the beginning of 1907. He was of much gentler disposition than either his predecessor or his successor, or, indeed, than any other sovereign of the Kájár House. Averse from cruelty and bloodshed on the one hand, and unwilling to say 'No' to his courtiers on the other, freedom of speech and misgovernment increased *pari passu*; the causes of complaint and opportunities for complaint grew together. This resulted in a great strengthening of the popular movement in favour of a Constitution, especially as the state of the country grew steadily worse. In 1898-99 Belgian officials were introduced to supervise the Custom-houses, and they soon introduced a new tariff, which was at once very unpopular with the Persians and very damaging to English commerce. In 1900 a sum of £2,000,000 was borrowed by the Shah from the Russian Government, one condition of the loan being that the interest was to be secured on the Custom-houses of Persia (excepting those of the Gulf ports, and the south), and another that the previous loan of £500,000 from the Imperial Bank of Persia was to be paid off, so that Russia should be Persia's sole creditor. Two years later, in April, 1902, the Shah borrowed another sum of 10,000,000 roubles from Russia, and granted at the same time a concession for a Russian road from Julfa, on the Araxes, to Qazwin, through Tabriz.

In 1903 the struggle between British and Russian influence was very acute. On the one hand was Lord Curzon's visit to the Persian Gulf, Viscount Downe's mission to present to the Shah the Order of the Garter, which he had hoped to receive during his visit to England in August, 1902, an Anglo-Persian Commercial Convention, and Colonel McMahon's Sístán Boundary Commission. On the other, a Russo-Persian Commercial Agreement, which heavily penalized British imports, and various other more or less successful attempts on the part of Russia to extend her influence, including the establishment of a subsidized service of Russian steamers from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf ports. At this time the pro-Russian party at the Court was headed by the late Atábek, a man of great power and ability, but quite reckless of his country's interests, while the Anglophil party was headed by the Shah's physician, the Hakimu'l-Mulk, of Tabriz, who also enjoyed great influence with the Shah. Finally, in the autumn of this year (1902) the Atábek's intrigues triumphed, and

the Hakímu'l-Mulk was dismissed, and very shortly afterwards he died at Rasht, under circumstances which suggested that he had been poisoned by the Atábek or his adherents. The Atábek, however, did not at the moment profit by his decease, for he was denounced by the ecclesiastical authorities as an infidel who was selling his country to the Russians, and in December he had to flee the country, and take refuge in Russia. He was succeeded as Prime Minister by the much-hated and now notorious 'Aynu'd-Dawla, with the demand for whose dismissal the popular agitation, which culminated in the granting of the Constitution, first began in 1905.

The agitation against the misgovernment and tyranny of the 'Aynu'd-Dawla began to assume a serious form in December, 1905, when a number of *mullás* and merchants left Tehrán, and took sanctuary in Qum as a protest against the increasing misery and oppression; and, finally, to pacify the people, and induce the *mullás* and merchants to return to Tehrán, the late Shah promised to grant a Constitution, and convoke a National Assembly, or *Majlis*. For the moment tranquillity was restored, but in July, 1906, no further steps having been taken by the Shah to fulfil his promises, a number of *mullás* and merchants, headed by the *mujtahids*, Sayyid 'Abdu'lláh Tabátábá'í and Sayyid Muhammad, again took sanctuary at Qum, while a number of their followers assembled in the Masjid-i-Sháh. Troops were sent to dislodge these latter from the mosque, and a conflict ensued, in which some fifteen of the people, including a Sayyid named 'Abdu'l-Hamíd, were killed. On the death of this Sayyid the following lines were composed :

*Az naw Husayn shahíd bi-mayl-i-Yazíd shud :
'Abdu'l-Hamíd kusha-i-'Abdu'l-Majíd shud.
Bádá hazár martaba nazd-i-khudá qabúl
Qurbáni-yi-jadíd-i-tu, yá ayyuha'r-Rasúl !*

'Once more Husayn hath died to please Yazíd :
'Abdu'l-Majíd* hath slain 'Abdu'l-Hamíd.
May God accept anew, O Prophet mine !
A thousand-fold this sacrifice of thine !'

The excitement now became intense, and the Constitutionalists began early in August to take refuge in the British Legation, first by tens and scores, but soon by hundreds, until finally some 14,000 of them were encamped in the Legation grounds. Their

* 'Abdu'l-Hamíd was the name of the murdered Sayyid, while 'Abdu'l-Majíd is the personal name of the 'Aynu'd-Dawla.

behaviour was admirable ; they were perfectly orderly, and eager for advice and counsel from their English protectors. Each guild made its own arrangements for feeding its members, and maintaining order and discipline, but they declined to leave the shelter of the Legation until a rescript from the Shah was transmitted to them through the Legation, promising that the 'Aynu'd-Dawla should at once be dismissed, and the National Assembly convened without delay.

The elections began to take place almost at once, and before they were completed the National Assembly met on October 7, 1906, in the Baháristán, and continued to sit until it was forcibly destroyed on June 23 last in the manner with which you are all acquainted. On November 25 appeared the first number of the *Majlis*, in which its debates were fully reported, and on December 27 it was followed by the *Nidá-yi-Watan*, which appeared first weekly, then bi-weekly, then every two days and finally, from September, 1907, onwards, daily. Other newspapers rapidly followed, and soon almost every town of importance had its local press, and the total number of newspapers in Persia reached the number of eighty or ninety, many of them being of quite remarkable merit. The Fundamental Laws were promulgated on December 30, 1906, and a supplement to them was issued in the reign of the present Shah on October 7, 1907, exactly one year after the convocation of the National Assembly. This supplement comprised 107 articles. Articles 1-7 deal with General Dispositions ; Articles 8-25 with the Rights of the Persian people ; Articles 26-29 with the Powers of the Realm ; Articles 30-34 with the Rights of Members of the Assembly ; Articles 35-37 with the Rights of the Throne and the Royal Prerogatives ; Articles 58-70 with the Functions of the Ministers ; Articles 71-89 with the Powers and Functions of the Different Tribunals ; Articles 90-93 with the Functions of the Provincial, Departmental, and Municipal Councils, or *Anjumans* ; Articles 94-103 with the Finances and Fiscal Reforms ; and Articles 104-107 with the Army. At the end the present Shah, after stating that he had perused them, found them correct, and approved them, added the words : ' Please God, our Royal Person will observe and regard them all, and our sons and successors also will confirm these sacred laws and principles.'

We must return, however, for a moment to the late Muzaffaru'd-Dín Sháh. At the time the National Assembly was convened arrangements for a new foreign loan of £400,000, of which England

and Russia were each to provide half, were almost completed. The first act of the *Majlis* was, however, to refuse to sanction this fresh step on the path of bankruptcy. They had suffered too much from the result of previous loans to tolerate any further addition to the National Debt of Persia, and they were at least resolved, before resorting to so desperate a measure, to see what could be effected by radical reforms in the complicated and corrupt financial system which had prevailed for so long, and under which there had latterly been a yearly revenue of £1,430,000, a yearly expenditure of £2,000,000, and consequently a yearly deficit of £570,000. Pending the reorganization of the finances, it was decided, if possible, to raise an internal loan, and to establish a National Bank.

On January 4, 1907, Muzaffaru'd-Din Sháh died, and was quietly succeeded by his son Muhammad 'Alí, the present Shah, who was crowned on January 19, having taken the oath of fidelity to the Constitution prescribed by Article 39 of the Fundamental Laws. The new Shah resembled his grandfather rather than his father, being a born despot, imbued from the days of his youth by his Russian tutor, the notorious Shapshál Khán, who was originally trained for the Eastern Consular Service at the Russian Oriental Institute, with Russian ideas of autocratic administration. Naturally he very soon came into conflict with his Parliament, especially on financial questions. Hitherto all the revenues of the country had been regarded as the personal property of the Shah; now it was proposed to fix his Civil List at a definite yearly sum, and to put a stop to the sale of governorships and other irregular procedures, whereby the royal purse had been so copiously replenished in the past. In March, 1907, the Financial Commission, consisting of twelve Deputies from different parts of Persia (five from Ázarbayján, two from Tehrán, two from Fars, and one each from Khurásán, Hámadán, and Kirmán), of whom my friend Sayyid Taqi-záda was one, began its labours, and for seven months worked from sunrise until three hours after sunset at unravelling the appalling tangle of the *Kitábchas*, or account-books, kept in the most cryptic manner by the *Mustawfis*, or State accountants, and, finally, after Herculean labours, they produced their first Budget in October, 1907.

It has so often been stated by ill-informed or hostile critics of the *Majlis* that it did no useful work and spent its energies in barren discussions, that it seems to me very necessary to insist on the valuable result which it achieved in this most important

sphere. The reform of the fiscal system, the abolition of innumerable abuses connected with the collection and expenditure of the national revenues, and the transformation of the yearly deficit into a yearly surplus, were evidently the first essential measures which must be adopted if Persia was to be made an independent, solvent, self-supporting State. The net result of this first Budget, constructed with so much labour, was to convert the yearly deficit of £570,000 into a surplus of £230,000, or, in other words, to effect a saving of £800,000 a year, out of which £120,000 a year was assigned to the Shah's Civil List, leaving a balance to the good of £110,000 a year. This saving was effected almost entirely by economies in the expenditure, dealing especially with the various forms of waste connected with—

1. *Tuyúlát* (or the allocation to individuals of the revenues of particular villages).
2. *Tas'irát* (or the payment, at a very low rate, in cash of dues which should be paid in kind).
3. *Tafáwut-i-'amal* (increased revenue since last assessment, owing to growth of prosperity, this increased revenue having hitherto been pocketed by the Governor).

Measures were also taken to bring about the appreciation of silver, which measures effected a saving of some 130,000 *tímáns* (£26,000) a year. Pending a fresh survey and assessment, no attempt was made to increase the income, since to have attempted such reassessment without full data, not procurable in the time, would have been certain to produce widespread discontent, and probably actual revolt. The reassessment, which was in contemplation, would have required, even had the money to carry it out been actually available, at least two years' work, and the help of European experts would almost certainly have been needed.

One absurd theory which has been advanced in certain quarters is that the Shah's uncle, the Zillu's-Sultán, was the real promoter of the agitation which led to the granting of the Constitution. How improbable this theory is will be apparent to all when it is known that his yearly pension was reduced by the Financial Commission from 75,000 to 12,000 *tímáns*, while that of the Shah's brother, Shu'á'u's-Saltana, was reduced from 115,000 *tímáns* to 12,000 *tímáns*.

Another great reform was effected in the method of collecting the taxes. Formerly every fiscal official, from the highest to the

lowest, took his tithe of the money which passed through his hands, and of ten *tímáns* wrung from the wretched peasant not much more than one *tímán* finally reached the Treasury. The local councils, or *anjumans*, were charged with supervising the fiscal machinery, and, by a proper system of checks and receipts, insured that no taxpayer should be compelled to pay more than the sum due from him to the State.

The attempt to organize a Territorial Militia and to get rid of the Cossack Brigade unfortunately failed, but the establishment of equal rights amongst all Persian subjects, without regard to religion, was another great reform for which the *Majlis* deserves the highest credit.

I have purposely avoided so far the discussion of the Anglo-Russian Agreement, the official explanation of its nature, the question of how far it has been observed, and other controversial matters which have lately been pretty fully ventilated in the Press ; but, should time permit, I shall be glad to say a few words on these matters also.

DISCUSSION

SAYYID TAQI-ZĀDA, at the call of the Chairman, then addressed the meeting in Persian, and his remarks were interpreted by Professor Browne. He thanked all present for their attendance, and the evident sympathy with which they had received him. He pointed out that the history of Persia in modern times had been far from satisfactory. She had receded instead of advancing with the advancement of civilization. Her decline in the last century was as great as her progress in the days of the Achæmenian dynasty. It was the purpose and desire of the Constitutionals to bring Persia into the current of progress, and during the short time that the Majlis existed earnest efforts were given of the enlightenment of their ideals. One thing established by the Constitution was religious equality—(Loud cheers)—a real religious equality, and not a theoretical one. Before that non-Mussulmans had been treated as not on the same plane in the matter of liberty of observance as the followers of the Prophet. The unjust differentiation fell most heavily on the Zoroastrians. Christians enjoyed some protection, and also Jews, by reason of the support on which they could count from powerful States in Europe; hence it was the Zoroastrians who laboured most under disabilities. The clerical element in Persia was against the framing of a fundamental law of religious liberty, but the reformers succeeded in getting it through, and obtaining recognition of the great principle that in the eye of the law and the Administration there should be no difference between Christian or Muhammadan, Zoroastrian or Jew. When a well-known Zoroastrian merchant named Faridūn was murdered, the greatest pains were taken to secure the arrest and exemplary punishment of those implicated in the crime. One of the chief offenders was in the Shah's service, and His Majesty was much incensed because this individual was not spared the due punishment of his misdeeds. His Majesty seemed to think it intolerable that a personal servant of his own should be brought before an ordinary judicial tribunal.

The system of Government which the Majlis found in existence was effete and corrupt. There were in office no less than fifty-seven Ministers of one sort and another; but a reorganization of the public services on business lines permitted of the reduction of the number to seven. The Constitutional Government was also faced with the pressing problems of the extreme misery of the peasants, groaning under the

burden of extortionate taxes, and the disorderly state of affairs in the outlying provinces, and particularly Balúchistán, where villages were raided and people were taken into slavery. Even the Governor of the district named Kúchán had seized innocent persons and had sold them in order to increase his revenues. Parents of children would sell them to the local satraps, who sold them elsewhere, gaining considerable profit by the transaction. A Committee was appointed to prepare laws to bring an end to this deplorable situation. Of this Committee he (the speaker) was a member, and one of its most active members was now imprisoned in chains by arbitrary decree in the Bágh-i-Sháh. The Code drawn up by the Committee was modelled largely on the Belgian law, partly on the French, and partly on the law prevalent in Bulgaria. The question of excessive taxation was also taken up, and already when Parliament was dissolved 150 villages had been properly surveyed and reassessed.

The state of public finance was notoriously deplorable when the Constitution was granted—so deplorable that the task of reconstruction seemed hopeless. But, undeterred by the difficulties in their way, the reformers made genuine and self-sacrificing attempts to place the revenue and expenditure of the country on a sound and practical basis.

What he most desired to say to this assembly was that, above all else, the Constitutionalists stood for the non-intervention of foreign Powers. That could not be said too often or too emphatically. They were confident that, however critical their fortunes might seem to be, the Shah would never be able, apart from foreign intervention, to re-establish permanently a despotic autocracy. The Constitutional principle had taken too deep root for absolutism to be restored. It was the possibility of intervention which alone enabled the Shah to pursue his present course. The reformers had reason to fear that if they triumphed against the Royalist troops, Russia would intervene on behalf of the Shah. The wisest and most patriotic men in Persia felt that a sick nation was better than a dead one—that it was better to suffer from tyranny and misrule than to have foreign intervention, with its possibilities of absorption into another nation. It was on account of threats of intervention made by the Russian Minister at Tehrán immediately before the *coup d'état* of June 23 last that the National Volunteers had been deterred from putting forth their full strength, and this consideration was the cause of the prolongation of the struggle.

The CHAIRMAN having announced that the Sayyid was prepared to answer any questions bearing on the aims and objects of the Constitutional Movement, and on the course of recent events in Persia,

DR. RUTHERFORD, M.P., asked whether the Sayyid was of opinion that the withdrawal of the Russian officers now commanding the Persian Cossacks would insure for the Nationalists a rapid and easy victory.

SAYYID TAQÍ-ZÁDA said that, given the withdrawal of the Russian officers, the Shah would have no troops with which he could effectively oppose the Constitutional forces in Ázarbayján and elsewhere. If it were laid down that under no circumstances would Imperial Russian troops cross the frontier—the thing of which they were most afraid—the victory of the Constitutionalists would not be in doubt.

Asked what attitude the followers of Bábfism had adopted in respect to the Constitutional Movement, the SAYYID said that orders had come from Acre, the headquarters of the cult, that the Bábis were not to take sides in the Constitutional struggle. Religious reformation was their primary object, and they subordinated other considerations thereto. In this connection, Professor BROWN pointed out that the Bábis could not be oblivious of the fact that the Nationalists had been largely supported by the priesthood, though there was a strong reactionary element in that body. This element, as the Bábis foresaw, would have discounted the movement as anti-orthodox had the hated sect identified itself therewith. There was no reason to suppose that the sympathies of the Bábis, though not openly manifested, were directed otherwise than towards the party which stood for religious freedom.

Questions were then asked as to the constitution and methods of procedure of the Majlis.

SAYYID TAQÍ-ZADÁ said that the Majlis had 162 members, elected from all parts of the country. It usually met four days a week—ordinarily, on Saturdays, Sundays, Mondays, and Tuesdays. The sittings began at three o'clock in the afternoon, and went on until the business for the day was finished, often not till 9 or 10 p.m. On other days committees had a great deal of work to do. The Financial Committee, of which he was a member, worked for seven months, and their sittings sometimes lasted from sunrise until two or three hours after sunset. The enormous Pension List was overhauled, name by name, and where there was no just claim the pension was abolished, while in other instances it was reduced. Before the Fundamental Law was promulgated, a law governing elections to the Majlis was drawn up. Its provisions were somewhat too complicated to explain there in detail. There was a property test for the franchise. In large towns voters were required to have property to the value of 1,000 *túmáns* (£200), while in rural areas the property standard was lower. The age standard for qualification was twenty-five years. The electoral law was based on various European systems, and particularly on the German model. In each town six men were chosen to draw up a register of persons entitled to vote and to issue voting papers. This body of six men was given a title corresponding with the English 'Bench.' The electoral districts were constituted, and in due course warrants for the election to take place were received in each constituency from the capital.

On the day of election, as each man voted his name was crossed off the electoral roll for the occasion, to prevent a second vote from the same person. At the close of the voting, each paper was read out, so that the number of votes for each candidate could be checked by anyone present. The name of the particular voter was not declared, and, indeed, the voting papers were unsigned, so that the system was one of secrecy, like the English ballot. The proportion of electors voting varied considerably according to the place of election. In Tehrán, Tabriz, and other towns where the Constitutional Movement was strong, from 90 to 95 per cent. of electors went to the poll, while in other towns and in rural areas the proportion frequently did not exceed 50 per cent.

At this stage SIR ARTHUR WOLLASTON said he would like to ask Professor Browne whether he was to infer from what had been said that when Russia regretfully interfered and Persia came under the same category as Khiva or Bukhára, the Bábís would rejoice in the existence of a Russianized Persia ?

PROFESSOR BROWNE said that there could be no doubt that the Russians had been extraordinarily anxious for a long time to please the Bábís and exercise an influence over them. A well-known Russian officer had published a translation of one of the chief Bábí books, and had been studying their system in 'Ishqábád. The interest of the Russians in Bábí tenets might be scientific only, but in some quarters ulterior political motives were suggested. The Bábís numbered in their ranks many intelligent officials in the postal, telegraphic, and other services. The main interest of the Bábís was to secure the spread of their religion, and as it was a reforming, Puritan faith, he (Professor Browne) at one time felt that the regeneration of Persia was in their hands. But his sympathy was now transferred to the Constitutionalists, for he felt that their programme was more practical than that of the Bábís.

In answer to MR. H. F. B. LYNCH, M.P., SAYYID TAQÍ-ZÁDA said that the voting for the Majlis was direct, and not through the medium of an electoral college. The electoral law was promulgated before the Constitution was fully drawn up.

MR. LYNCH asked if the revival of the Constitution would necessarily carry with it the revival of the electoral law under which the members of the first Majlis were chosen.

SAYYID TAQÍ-ZÁDA replied that the Shah was reported to have again sworn fidelity to the Fundamental Law, at the same time asking the Prime Minister to draft a new electoral scheme, raising the property qualification, and excluding from the franchise certain classes of persons formerly included. The Constitutional Law referred to the three estates of the realm, and assumed their existence. Any attempt on the part of the Shah to govern without a Majlis would be illegal as

an abrogation of the Constitution. His Majesty might give instructions modifying the procedure of elections, but a Parliament was an inseparable feature of the Constitution.

ANSWERING DR. RUTHERFORD, M.P., the SAYYID said that the qualifications for membership of the Majlis were, in the main, the same as the qualifications of electors. The minimum age for election, however, was thirty instead of twenty-five—the voting age—and members were required to be literate and to be of good sense and reputation.

MR. DAVID FRASER said that as they had been told much that evening as to the enthusiasm of the Persian people for the Constitution, it was pertinent to ask how it was that the scheme for forming a National Bank in Persia had fallen through. When the British and Russian Governments offered a loan of £400,000 to meet grave difficulties in the financial situation, the offer was declined, and the Majlis declared that the money could be raised by the people themselves. The project of a bank with a very large capital was started, but he understood that the response to the request for money was very small, and the scheme had to be abandoned for want of support. If the people were so keen on making the Constitution a success, how was it that a greater demonstration of the keenness was not forthcoming in the shape of subscriptions ?

SAYYID TAQÍ-ZÁDA said that in the first place they must bear in mind the extreme poverty of Persia, and the very small amount of ready money available there ; and, secondly, there existed two formidable competitors, the Russian Bank and the Imperial Bank of Persia. Notwithstanding, considerable efforts were made, and even ladies came forward to give of their jewellery in the furtherance of the scheme. In Tehrán alone the sum of 1,000,000 *túmáns* (£200,000) was raised, and a similar amount was collected at Tabríz. Of course, the net result fell far short of what was required ; but regard must be had to the extreme difficulties of the situation, amongst them being the dislike of the Shah's creatures and many of the priests to the project. It seemed hardly fair to say that an effort was not made by the Persians.

MR. DAVID FRASER said he was in Persia at the time, and he was told that only 100,000 *túmáns* were raised, and that the greater part of that sum was derived from the sale of jewellery or by subscription from school-children. Except in Tehrán, the Persian Constitutionals themselves do not appear to have been willing to take advantage of a new National Bank as a means for deposit.

SAYYID TAQÍ-ZÁDA replied that a large amount of subscriptions was promised, and the money would have come in had the project been proceeded with. Replying to a further question from Mr. Fraser, he said he had no means of knowing how much was actually paid in cash. He knew that a hundred people in Tehrán subscribed 5,000 *túmáns* each, and two people alone subscribed 100,000 *túmáns*.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES : All I can say, sir, is to express my personal thanks for the most interesting mass of information which has been put before us by Professor Browne, and has been supplemented by the Sayyid. The question of interest to us is not the particular amount subscribed to a projected Persian Bank, but the international position in Persia. That is of importance to England and Russia, and of the greatest importance to the Persians themselves. As I understand it, the Persian gentlemen here this afternoon are Constitutionalists, while the Shah is anti-Constitutionalist. Of course, one can understand the growth of the Constitutional feeling in Persia, but as the Shah is opposed thereto the position is rendered somewhat difficult for us. We are no longer in the days of Lord Palmerston, who was ready to intervene on behalf of any oppressed nationality. Our Government is placed in a difficulty in being asked to support the Constitutionalists against their monarch. But, sir, there is a larger view of the case on which I should like some information from these gentlemen. The Anglo-Russian Agreement was certainly a most ominous agreement for Persia. When two European Powers announce to the world at large that they are going to guarantee the integrity and independence of another country, everybody knows that that country is in grave danger of losing both its integrity and its independence. (Laughter.) But when, in addition to that, two great nations proceed to map out the country in question into what are called 'spheres of influence' as between the two, then the danger of disintegration is greatly increased. I, for my part, can well understand the feeling of dismay as well as of disappointment with which every Persian must have received the news of the signature of the Convention. I know it was explained that this was an agreement by which England and Russia did not partition Persia, but one in which they prohibited each other from doing anything in the way of partition. Well, now, that is extremely satisfactory so far as it goes at the moment, but what I particularly wish to ask is whether Russia is engaged not to occupy Persian territory without the consent of England. That a secret understanding to this effect should be necessary, or be thought to be necessary, is a very serious thing, and almost a menacing thing, because it suggests that in certain circumstances Russia expects England to give her consent to the advance of Russian troops into Persian territory, and indeed, to its occupation.

PROFESSOR BROWNE said there had been various rumours of Russian troops having crossed the river Araxes. It was generally understood that there was some understanding come to that troops were not to enter Persian territory without the consent of the other signatory Power. The Sayyid told him that it was believed in Persia that so long as England did not give permission, Russia would not occupy Persian territory. Speaking from the English point of view, it seemed

to him that if Russia once intervened in Persia, her influence would soon be strongly felt in the Persian Gulf. Sistán was a province to which the British Government attached great strategic importance. Russian trade and influence had been pushed forward in the direction of Sistán in a rapid manner, and this fact could not be overlooked. From the standpoint of our British interests, both strategic and commercial, it was highly desirable to give Russia no excuse for direct intervention.

The CHAIRMAN said he was afraid they had put a somewhat severe tax upon the patience of their Persian visitors by the numerous questions asked. They were much obliged to Professor Browne for his extremely able lecture, and for the mass of information he had placed at their disposal. He wished on behalf of the audience to thank Professor Browne, and also the Persian delegates for their presence, and for the courtesy with which their leader had replied to the questions addressed to him. (Cheers.)

After interpreting these remarks to the Persian delegates, PROFESSOR BROWNE said that the debt was entirely on their side. They—for he identified himself with his Persian friends—were much obliged for the opportunity to state their views, for they desired above all else to lay their case before the British public. For himself, he had been dragged from the peaceful world of books into the turbulent arena of politics much against his personal inclinations. He disliked the rôle of an agitator, but he felt that it was a peremptory duty he owed a country he respected and loved to come to her aid in any humble way he could. She was in jeopardy, and had been so since the fateful June 23 last, when her Parliament was destroyed, and from that day to the present one her critical situation had never been out of his thoughts. The misery of the people in present circumstances and the overthrow of the Constitution pressed on him almost like a personal bereavement. He hoped all present would aid in disseminating the facts of the situation amongst their friends, and he would be happy to supply literature on the subject to those present who would give in their names and addresses for the purpose.

The proceedings then closed.

OCT 23 1913

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY

ASIATIC TURKEY AND THE NEW RÉGIME

BY

MR. MARK SYKES

Read December 9, 1908



LONDON
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ASIATIC TURKEY AND THE NEW RÉGIME

THE EARL OF RONALDSHAY, the Chairman, in opening the proceedings, said : This afternoon we are to have the pleasure of hearing Mr. Mark Sykes on " Asiatic Turkey and the New Régime." As you all know, he is well acquainted with the affairs of Asiatic Turkey. He has had much personal experience of the country as a traveller, and those who have read his books know that he is well qualified to deal with questions affecting the future of Turkey, questions now exciting the attention of the civilized world.

MR. MARK SYKES, who was received with applause, and who spoke throughout extemporaneously, said that Turkish affairs had in the last six or eight months attracted the close attention of the civilized world. People in this country had watched with sympathy and interest the course of a bloodless revolution which had overthrown a corrupt and unjust absolutism, and was evolving Parliamentary institutions. All men asked what the revolution would ultimately produce. To that inquiry he did not propose to give a direct answer. His purpose was rather to lay before them the facts and inferences which had come under his own observation as a frequent traveller in all parts of Turkey, familiar with Arabic from boyhood. He wanted to tell them the things that really mattered, to trace the factors of the problems presenting themselves to the Young Turks, to eschew statistics—which might be given by the bushel—and to tell them of the influences that had produced the Turkey of to-day, and the influences which had to be reckoned with in estimating the situation. In short, he would lay the cards on the table, and leave others to use them as they thought best.

The first thing that struck the student of Turkish history was that the Ottoman Empire had survived perils innumerable through the centuries. And the secret of the maintenance of

the Empire, albeit it had suffered successive acts of aggression in modern times, was to be found in the traditions surrounding the occupancy of the throne. The Sultan was first of all the Khan of the victorious Ottoman tribe. He was, secondly, whatever theologians might say to the contrary, the Khalif of the Sunni Mahomedans. And, lastly, he was the Cæsar of Constantinople, that centre of power in the early centuries of the Christian era. These three great traditions centred in the Sultan, and were supported by the bond of Mussalman unity. His dominions were divided eight or nine times in Europe and five times in Asia by nationality, but still, among all these nationalities, with their conflicting traditions and faiths, there was the leaven of the Mussalmans, who were in every province, sometimes in a narrow minority, but often in a great majority. Maintaining the fabric of this rule, there was the Byzantine bureaucracy, and, since the reforms of Sultan Mahomed, a system of modern military armament, somewhat on the lines of that of Prussia. Between the Sultan and the general population stood the two services—the Army and the Civil Service—and the power of those services, until the recent revolution, resided in the Palace.

The Palace, it must be remembered, was a very ancient tradition. From the time of Constantius they had always the Palace as the centre of power, and it had survived the shock of revolution, of sweeping reform, of rebellion of the Janissaries or of the Pretorian Guard. It had been scattered by rebellion or by reforming Sovereigns, but it had never died; that was to say, when the holders of power in the Palace had been scattered, they had always been replaced by others, and the rule of the Palace, with its harem, its eunuchs, its ministers, its spies, ever intriguing the one against the other, had been maintained.

Eras of reform had come and gone, but the Palace remained firmly established, and the experience of the Turkish people in being taken along the path of reform had not been encouraging. He would ask his audience to take a backward glance through the nineteenth century, beginning with the reign of Mahmud II., who was a real hero, and who entered on the reforms suggested to him by his predecessor. He killed all his Janissaries, and proceeded with the help of a metaphorical hunting-crop to flog Turkey into progressiveness. So long as he was content merely to destroy old things he was left in peace, but as soon as he began to build up new things, Europe showed her sympathy with progressive ideas by taking away from his dominions Greece

and the country between the Dniester and the Pruth, which became Russian, while his authority over Egypt tottered to its ultimate fall. His fleet was destroyed at Navarino, and he died broken-hearted.

After this there was rather a slump in reforms. But ultimately similar attempts at reform were made by Abdul-Mejid. This time the Turkish fleet was beaten at Sinope, and ultimately came the Crimean War, which brought no very great advantage to Turkey. In a later spell of reforming enterprise the Turks essayed to build a railway from Alexandria to Baghdad, it being suggested that England would be glad for this to be done. When account was taken of the vast potentialities of the Euphrates Valley, one could not but speculate what a vast effect such a railway built fifty years ago would have had upon the fortunes of the Ottoman Empire and on the international position. The Russian Government viewed the proposal with great disfavour, and went so far as to declare that they would look upon the undertaking as an act of war. Then came the times of Midhat Pasha, who happened to incline to constitutional government, though he did not understand very accurately what it was. He made some very solid attempts at improvement, and they were rewarded by the loss of Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina.

For the last thirty years Abdul Hamid had reigned without treading the path of reform, and we found the Powers only nominally annexing Crete. Thus Abdul Hamid's Government, with all its corruption, had kept together what remained of the Empire. That Government fell before the efforts of the Committee of Union and Progress, and immediately Austria, Greece, and Bulgaria proceeded to take the slices to which they considered themselves entitled.

In estimating the external influences which must be taken into consideration in the policy of the new régime, he would first consider the minor influences—those of Servia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Greece, and Roumania. The Balkan Peninsula might be described as covered with layers of various populations. Servia and Montenegro had a scattered population of people whom they choose to call Serbs, and they dreamed dreams of a great Pan-Servian kingdom. Among these Serbs there were many Bulgarians, and they, together with the people of Bulgaria, dreamed of a great Bulgarian fleet in the Mediterranean, with Salonika as a great naval base and seaport town. Every Bulgarian child born within the last twenty-five years had been

taught to look forward to that consummation as the natural sequel to the inevitable crash in the Balkans. It would be difficult to teach them now to be content to forget this dream. The Greeks formed another layer of population, scattered throughout the Empire, and they cherished the great Pan-Hellenic dream, which extended its survey into Asia Minor. Less important than any of the racial factors he had mentioned was the Rumelian idea of the establishment of a Kulze-Vlach kingdom. One heard of this from the Rumelian when he was in his cups. The idea might be regarded as chimerical, and it might not be very widespread, but its existence could not be ignored.

The major external influences confronting the new régime were of a serious character. In the forefront of the picture stood Russia, impelled by two motives—one popular, the other politic and strategic. There was the Slavonic cry, “We must go down and help the Serbs”; there was the Empire hemmed in for a thousand miles of desert, ending in ice-blocked ports, and bound by a law of nature to seek outlets in warm water, and to seek them along the lines of least resistance. Such an outlet was in her grasp westwards in Pacific seas, when the war with Japan closed that line of expansion. Russia had now to look southwards for the fulfilment of her desires, by access either to the Persian Gulf or through the Dardanelles. If such access was permitted, seeing that we could not keep many *Dreadnoughts* in the Gulf or the Mediterranean—our millions now having to go to the provision of old-age pensions (laughter)—we might as well give up India forthwith.

Germany was another of the external influences on Turkish policy, and we all knew that her influence in the immediate past had been considerable, and had yielded her railway and other interests in the Ottoman Empire of great importance. The influence she desired to exert was perhaps chiefly economic. It was an article of German faith that Turkey existed simply and solely for the purpose of purchasing German manufactures, and relieving her of the overproduction of manufactures.

As to Austria, her great desire was to have a good seaboard to the eastward. She had not got on very well with Italy, as some great Italian thinkers had anticipated, and consequently it would be a great advantage to her to have Salonika, giving her a good seaport and an outlet into the Mediterranean not dependent upon Italian good-will.

As to Italy herself, there was not much to be feared. She had put forward claims in respect of Tripoli and Albania chiefly because it was the fashion of the Great Powers to have an "Imperial policy" and to make such claims.

France might be considered as out of the calculation, so far as any direct ambitions were concerned, since she had renounced the protectorate of Roman Catholics in the East. But she had substantial commercial interests in Turkey, and in these days such interests were an important factor.

No other country, however, had such great commercial interests in the Ottoman dominions as ourselves. No less than 60 per cent. of the external trade of the country was in our hands. We had similar preponderance in regard to what might be termed "sentimental interests." In India alone the King-Emperor held sway over 72,000,000 Mahomedans, a large proportion of whom looked upon the Sultan as their spiritual Khalif, and all of whom regarded with sympathy and admiration the existence of this independent Mussalman Power, with her feet planted for centuries past in both Asia and Europe. Above all, there was the paramount necessity for maintaining unimpaired our waterway to India, which might be seriously imperilled were Turkey to be finally dismembered, and which could not be preserved were some of the ambitions to which he had referred to receive their fulfilment (cheers).

After this brief and necessarily abridged survey of external influences, he desired to speak of internal elements as they presented themselves to a traveller who had been brought into close touch with the diverse elements in the Turkish population. It seemed to him that the peasants of Anatolia formed the very backbone of Turkey. These men were determined not to be ruled by Christians, or, indeed, by any strangers. They were industrious, honest, but, unluckily, commercially backward. They constituted the best element in the Turkish Army, possessing in marked degree the virtues of endurance, discipline, and obedience.

In the Asiatic Greek, who abounded in Smyrna and other seaboard provinces, they had, however, a serious counterpoise to the Anatolian Turk. They were an intelligent people, and might be a strength to the State if they were imbued with patriotism—Ottoman patriotism. But this was never likely to be the case. With the spread of education and the growth of the press, these Asiatic Greeks would be more and more drawn

toward the Pan-Hellenic ideal, and this was a serious consideration for the Porte. Many of the Mussalmans living among these Greeks were probably descended from Greek stock, and, in any case, they were liable to be subdued and won over by the superior intellectual agility of the Greeks.

Then there was the great problem of Syria and the Arabs. The Arab was a poet and rhetorician, an architect, an artist ; but he could not govern himself, or allow anyone else to govern him, in peace and quietness, and with good grace. It was nonsense to talk of the Arabs as a people "rightly struggling to be free."

Next came the very serious problem of Armenia. There they had a population, most hopelessly jammed together, of Kurds and Armenians. Some ethnologists thought that the two races had a common origin, but personally he was inclined to doubt that very much. Some Kurdish tribes were undoubtedly Armenians who had become Mussalmans, and, having lost touch with other Armenians, could now be looked upon as Kurds. But the number of such tribes was small. Kurdistan was a country which had been overrun in the past for centuries by invading armies, and this experience had evolved two types of population. There was the Kurd who lived on the mountains and was a shepherd, and there was the Armenian, who cultivated the valleys between the mountain ridges. The Armenian became a sedentary and literary person, and, harried by successive invaders, he learned to be subservient, learned to bend his neck, learned to do nothing except surrender anything and everything, in order that he or his descendants might hold the land he cultivated. It was no uncommon thing for the Armenian farmer to allow himself to be shot, in the hope that one day his child, hidden, perhaps, in a box in the house, might carry on the farm. The Kurd, being a nomad, had fled from the invader to the inaccessible recesses of the mountains, and when the conqueror had retired, had descended into the plains, to be a parasite upon the subservient farmer. The Kurd would always beat the Armenian in war ; the Armenian would always beat the Kurd in peace.

He would now ask his hearers to turn their attention to the little-known country between Kurdistan and Baghdad, bounded on the one side by the Tigris and on the other by the Persian border. He preferred to give to this country the local name of Irak. It had a mixed population of old Arimæans, Kurds, and

Arabs, together with a few primitive Turks. These people were very violent and turbulent, inclined to be fanatical, and very independent. This country, like all other parts of Turkey, was to share the rights of constitutional government. But it seemed probable that the number of votes given to candidates would depend upon the number of Martinis they could respectively command. There would be lively electioneering incidents when the people began to understand what constitutional government meant.

Such were the diverse elements which had been drawn together by the corrupt and stupid misrule of the Palace clique. In all probability that clique would have still been dominating the position to-day if it had had one intelligent man in its higher ranks. But the clique was so stupid, and misgoverned to such a degree, that the dissonant mass of Turkish opinion had been drawn together in common purpose. The Palace had done what persistent and praiseworthy efforts from above to effect reformation in the past had failed to accomplish. It had given the whole Empire—Kurd, Turk, Armenian, Arab—a common sympathy, by making them disgusted with the Government. Its leading agents were so bad that they were not worth shooting. Some of the worst scoundrels had sought asylum in England and elsewhere, and others remained in Turkey, but fallen from their high estate.

The Committee of Union and Progress, which had held a watching brief for reform, had stepped into the shoes of the Palace clique, and, while free from the corruption which had been so notorious in the latter, proceeded to pull the same strings. Turkey had always been ruled by an irresponsible committee, and was so ruled still. There would be espionage, as before, the only difference being that, whereas reformers then had short shrift, pains and penalties would now fall upon the men who were reported as suspected of reactionary principles. The moment a constitutional Parliament did not do what the Committee of Union and Progress asked it to do, that moment it would come to an end. And no doubt care would be taken in electing a Parliament that it should reflect the views of the Committee—at least, so far as the views of a great majority of Deputies were concerned.

It was obvious from what he had said that the problems confronting the new Administration were many and grave. There was, to begin with, the problem of Babuism. As in Bengal, so

in Turkey, there were multitudes of young men who had been unsuitably educated, and who looked only to literary and clerical avenues for employment. They could not beg, to dig they were ashamed, and in their enforced idleness they might be a menace to internal peace. Then there was the problem of the mixture of a Mussalman and Christian population throughout the Empire. Was the Balkan Christian going to give the Balkan Mussalman a fair show? Was the Asiatic Mussalman going to give the Asiatic Christian his proper chance? His own observations led him to the conclusion that the Mussalman was willing to be a friend of the Christian, but only as a rider was the friend of his horse. He was not going to allow the Christian to rule him; he would rule the Christian. This sentiment was deeply engrained on the mind of the Asiatic Mussalman. Next came the Hellenic problem. The Greek aspirations to which he had referred were already showing themselves in the elections, as the news recently received from Constantinople went to show. The intellectual superiority of the Greeks was coupled with a genteel bumptiousness which was irritating to their Turkish neighbours. Still more noticeable was the want of compatibility between the Arab and the Turk. The Arab looked upon the Turk as a barbarian, and the Turk looked upon the Arab as an intriguing chatterbox. There was mutual contempt, and in governing circles a hazy prejudice against the Arabs was apparent. Should the Committee of Union and Progress take up an anti-Pan-Islamic attitude—and there was some indication of this—a very serious problem with regard to the Arabs would be raised. Just as the Arab looked on the Turk with contempt, so the Turk, quite improperly, looked on the Kurd. The Turks and Armenians would combine most probably to belittle the Kurd, and, if that effort went too far, there might be a very serious Kurdish rebellion in consequence.

The situation was one in which there were manifest dangers. One of the greatest of these was that the Committee of Union and Progress might lapse into the corruption and blackmail of the old Palace system—that, like one of old, they might wax fat and kick. Another danger was the existence of a large number of dismissed or degraded officials, to join the ranks of the unemployed *literari*, and some of these might find their only resource the throwing of bombs or the editing of revolutionary newspapers. Perhaps the most serious danger was that Parliamentary government, not being so strong as the autocratic

government of the Sultan, might lose the prestige attaching to the latter. This prestige under the old order was so strong that a single tax-gatherer, unescorted and armed only with a Snider that would not go off, could collect taxes from armed and turbulent Kurdish tribes, because he had the authority of the Sultan behind him. Two or three years of Parliamentary government might destroy that prestige, or, at least, weaken it considerably, in which case there would never be peace until there arose a military régime, which might produce a Cromwell or a Boulanger.

However, he did not desire to dwell only on the dangers threatening the new régime from within. It was more pleasant to refer to the splendid assets it possessed. There were enormous economic resources—among them coal, copper, silver, petroleum, and other minerals—awaiting development, and many parts of the country were extraordinarily fertile. There were also great moral and intellectual resources in the mental capacity of the Arab, the great industrial gifts of the Armenians, the splendid military and agricultural material supplied by the Anatolian Turks, the great capacity of the peoples of Irak, and the commercial enterprise of the high-class Greek. What was wanted was fifteen years of peace, to enable a policy of economic development to be pursued. Given such development, there would be far less reason to fear internal trouble. When there was prosperity, any sort of Government would do ; it was when there was decadence and poverty that trouble arose. It would be well for Turkey if for the next ten or fifteen years the Powers and the Balkan States kept their hands off the *status quo* (cheers).

He only desired to say one word in conclusion as to the policy Great Britain should pursue. She should look with sympathy upon the new régime (cheers). It should be made clear that she could not allow the ships of Russia to pass the Dardanelles in infraction of international treaty. We should insist on the internationalization of all railways south of the Taurus. If Turkey and Persia agreed that the boundary should be fixed at Lake Urumiah, it was no business of ours to prevent that being done (cheers). The point was important, for it was only by way of Lake Urumiah that Russia could obtain a comparatively easy route to the Persian Gulf, to territorial acquisitions in which, either by Russia or Germany, England must remain unalterably opposed (loud cheers).

DISCUSSION

MR. T. GIBSON BOWLES : I do not think an audience in this room has ever listened to a more detailed and complete account of the Ottoman Empire, from early times to the present day, than on this occasion, and rarely has this room been the scene of so animated a lecture, so full of knowledge, imagination, and bold illustration, not to say bold language (laughter), as that to which Mr. Mark Sykes has treated us to-day. My criticism as to its form is that it should be in at least three volumes, with numerous illustrations by the author. Though some of his remarks may be open to criticism, Mr. Sykes has, on the whole, very accurately described the regions, the races, and the difficulties of the Turkish Empire. His survey of historical events in Constantinople goes to prove the essential similarity of every system of government that succeeds a former system in a particular country. Each country has its own system of government—centralized, Republican, or whatever you may call it—and however much you may change the name of the Administration, the thing itself is almost always the same. Take France, for instance. After more than one hundred years of successive revolutions, the system of government which prevails to-day is precisely the same centralized system as was practised by Louis XIV. In Constantinople the system has remained Byzantine through the centuries. I am sure, from my knowledge of Turkish history and recent Turkish events—a knowledge much less profound than that of the lecturer—that he is quite right when he says that the essential thing centuries ago was the Palace, and that the essential thing now is the Palace. But there are palaces and palaces, and this one, I trust, will be a very different kind of Palace from that which formerly existed.

I cherish the belief that the revived Turkish Parliament—revived after thirty years' suppression—will, before it is thirty years old, have a most considerable effect upon the system of government and upon the political future of Turkey. I think Mr. Sykes will agree with me when I say that, while it is perhaps doubtful whether any people in the world is quite fitted for Parliamentary government, and to instruct its statesmen how its affairs should be conducted, yet if there be a people in the world fitted by nature and by practice for the discussion of public affairs, it is above all the Turkish people. They are always having little councils among themselves. They do not read so much, and muddle their brains, as we do, with the shilling shocker; nor have they the halfpenny paper in profusion. They think more, and, when they come to speak, they generally have something of weight to say on the matter under discussion. Therefore I, for one, believe that if ever there was a place where Parliamentary

institutions can have a brilliant and early success it is in Constantinople.

For five hundred years that admirably situated capital and the Ottoman Empire, as Napoleon truly said, have awakened the greed of all the aggressive nations of Europe—and all the nations of Europe are aggressive when the opportunity serves. She has been stripped like an artichoke, leaf by leaf. There is not an enormous amount of her remaining, and again the old quarrel has arisen as to who are to have the fragments. This time, however, it is something more than the Palace that is upstanding at Constantinople. I agree in thinking that the Young Turks deserve, and ought to receive, the support of Europe in the great experiment they are now about to make—the experiment not merely of governing Turkey, but of retaining it without dismemberment.

I believe myself that they are in scarcely less danger than before Russia fought Japan or before France gave up the protectorate of the Syrian Christians. But they have the means to meet that danger. If we stand by them, and do not allow the ring to be broken in upon, they will be enabled to weather the storms they have to encounter. To me the future of Turkey—not only European Turkey, but the Anatolian provinces whose peoples Mr. Sykes has so graphically characterized—is one of the greatest questions of our time. I believe that Turkey is capable of something like self-government. We know that it is capable of most enormous physical development. I earnestly trust that England will put herself on the side of those who will help to protect Turkey from being dismembered, and will assist its subjects to attain that sort of government it deserves, and which will make it not only a strong and valuable Empire, but one of the greatest contributors to the material prosperity of the world (cheers).

MR. SYKES, in reply, said there was one expert—perhaps the greatest of English experts—who took a view similar to that just expressed. He did not take that view himself, for he could see no direct ground for our quarrelling with Turkey. We knew, for example, how satisfactory was the answer of the Young Turks when the Egyptian Nationalists telegraphed, in effect : “ We are delighted at your success. Please take us in.” The answer was : “ You silly idiots ! Can’t you see that you have got all that we have been fighting for ? Hold your tongues ! ” It was possible we might be prepared ultimately to give a strong Turkey a hand in Egypt, under adequate and proper guarantees. He could not see, either in Egypt or elsewhere, any cause for conflict with Turkey, unless it were on sentimental grounds, such as the Armenian atrocities—and he supposed that nations did sometimes fight on sentimental grounds. But there was no tendency of the Turks to seek any territorial expansion. They had their own

country to develop and vast tracts of spare land to colonize. He recalled that when he was in the easternmost portion of the Sultan's dominions, in 1905, he met a Turkish division going to the Persian border. The General said to him : " Here I have been marching for six weeks through uninhabited desert, away from all supplies, and I seem no nearer now than before to the Persians." Turkey had much to do to develop her internal resources, and therefore would not be likely to pursue a policy of adventure.

While it would be a matter for congratulation to see the Moslem and the Christian in Turkey on terms of good-fellowship, facts must be recognized. Islam was the only force that had held Turkey together up to the present day. He did not want to see a weakening of that force. A bad Mussalman was very bad. When the Mussalman gave up his religion, he often took to drink, and was a very sorry fellow indeed. He feared the Young Turks might make the very grave mistake of throwing the Ulema overboard, instead of trying to enlighten and civilize them. A regeneration which had the effect of creating a sort of Westernized Mussalman would not, to his mind, be an agreeable spectacle. It would be a most serious thing if the Young Turks were to undermine the Islamic tradition in Turkey. They would have nothing to put in its place. They would have great difficulties in consequence. The Ulema would tolerate the Christian, and no more.

With regard to the spread of Western ideals, he had always been under the impression that it was rather the mission of the East to civilize the West (laughter), and for that reason he deeply regretted the system of a sham varnish of Western education superimposed on an Eastern civilization, which was ruining the souls of these people. We had done this in India, with unfortunate results, and why should we rejoice to see it done elsewhere ? Far better would it be for these people to pick up the threads of their own civilizations and develop their own literature and art. He had tried this method with the Turks, instead of approaching them with the idea that they must adopt his own habits and ideas, and his own ugly style of clothing (laughter). He had said to them : " Why do you not make the things you have made in the past, rather than imitate the things of Western countries. You have your own ideas of beauty, and they are very good. Put them into practice." The Turks had told him that they had never been talked to by a Westerner in that way before (cheers).

The CHAIRMAN having conveyed the hearty thanks of the Society to the lecturer for his admirable address, the proceedings closed.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY

A RAILWAY FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN TO INDIA

BY

CHARLES E. DRUMMOND BLACK

Delivered February 17, 1909

LONDON
CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY, 22, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
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**Proceedings of the Central
Asian Society**

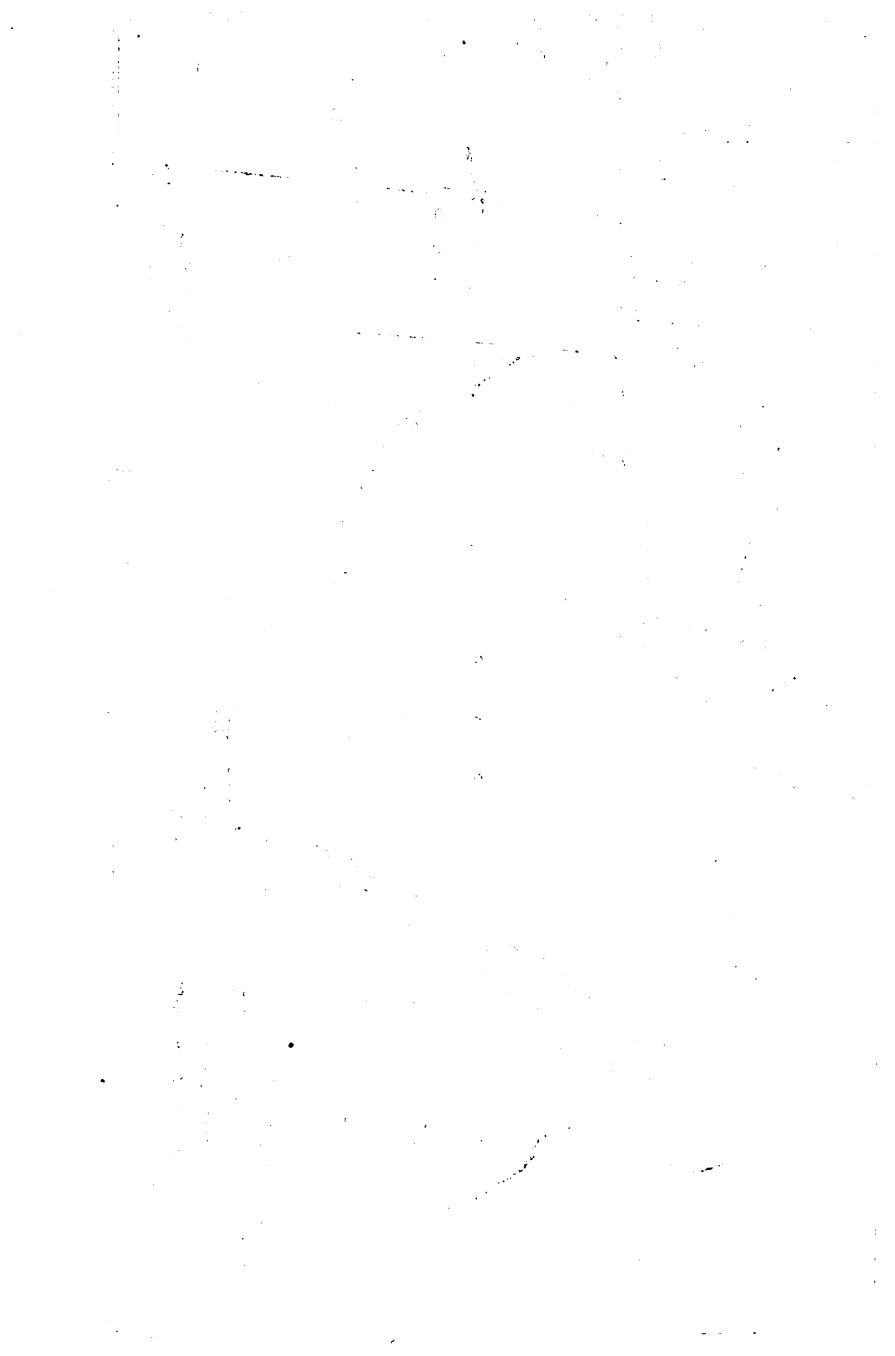
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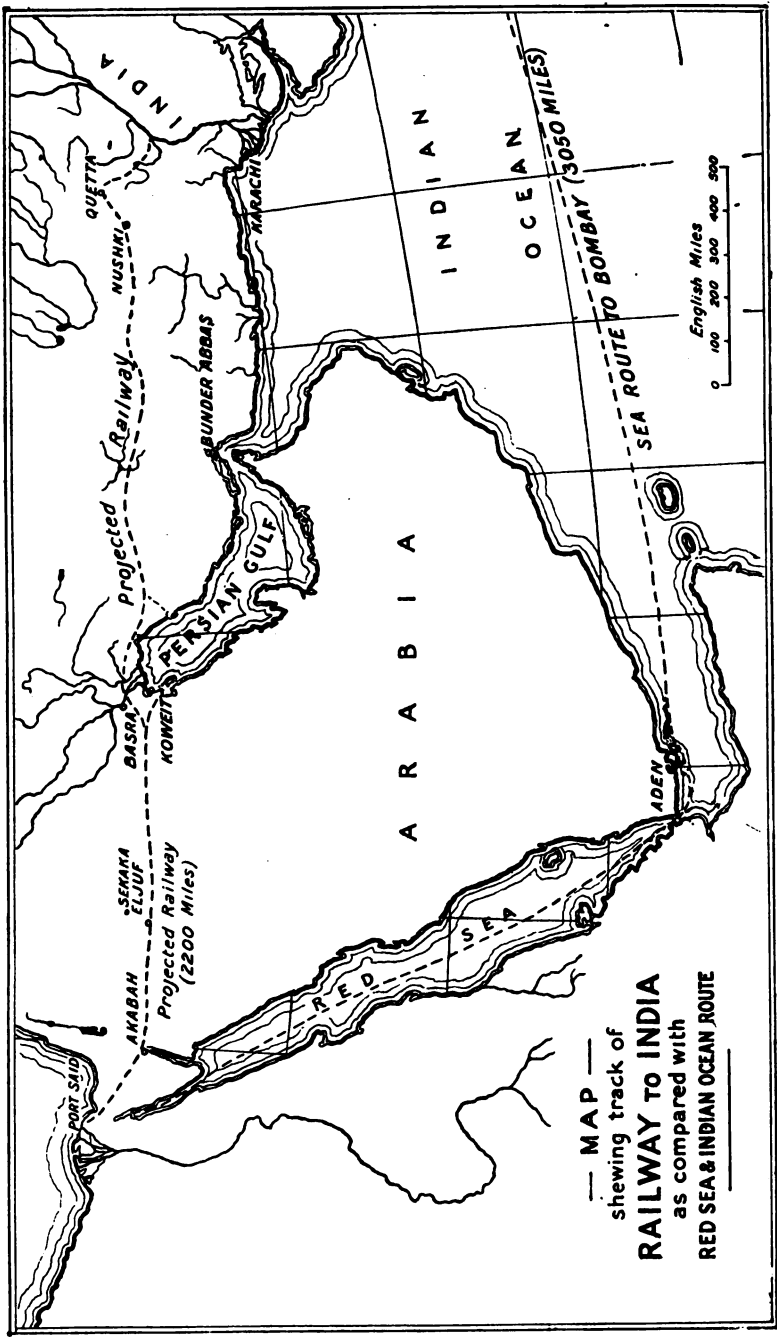
BY

CHARLES E. DRUMMOND BLACK

DELIVERED FEBRUARY 17, 1909

*N.B.—The map accompanying the paper has been
obligingly placed at the disposal of the Society by
the Editor of the 'Nineteenth Century and After.'*





— MAP —
 showing track of
RAILWAY TO INDIA
 as compared with
RED SEA & INDIAN OCEAN ROUTE

A RAILWAY FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN TO INDIA

IN the absence of the Chairman (Lord Ronaldshay, M.P.), the chair was taken by

LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR EDWIN COLLEN, who, in opening the proceedings, said : We are met together to listen to Mr. Black, on the subject of a new projected route to India—a subject which, I need scarcely say, is one of great importance. As you know, for access to India we have first the old sea-route via the Cape, which, under certain conditions, would undoubtedly be brought into play again ; secondly, there is the route via the Suez Canal and the Red Sea. We have heard much in recent years, and we should like to know a great deal more, about the projected route by the Bagdad railway. The projected route Mr. Black is about to describe to us starts, I understand, from Port Said, and crosses the Sinai Peninsula to Basra, and so into Persia, and on to Nushki, where it would join the Quetta railway, and thus be connected with the Indian railway system. Whatever may be the merits of this particular route—and of that we shall hear in the paper—I think you will all agree that we are indebted to anyone who will give this Society the benefit of study and knowledge of such a question, and who will make detailed suggestions as to new routes to the great Indian Empire, which is the focus and centre of the King's Asiatic dominions. Mr. Black will speak to us with the knowledge which comes from his having held the post of Geographer at the India Office for some years.

I am glad to be honoured with an invitation to address the Central Asian Society on the subject of a railway route to India, as the topic is one that has closely interested me for many years—in fact, ever since I joined the Geographical Department of the India Office in 1872. At that time a Select Committee of the House of Commons, appointed in the previous year to examine and report upon the whole subject of railway communication between the Mediterranean, the Black Sea, and the Persian Gulf, was concluding its taking of evidence, and later on produced its Report. This Report unanimously recommended the opening up of communications between the British and Turkish Governments for the construction of a railway from the Syrian coast to the Persian Gulf.

The way for this, I may mention, had been previously paved by full discussions and arrangements between Sir George Jenkinson, on whose motion in the House of Commons the Select Committee of Inquiry had been appointed, and Musurus Pasha, the Turkish Ambassador, acting under the instructions of his Government. It is rather important to recall here some of the points then arrived at, for though eventually the project itself fell through, there was full concurrence between the two countries over the heads of the agreement, and this might now serve as a useful precedent.

1 and 2. The funds were to be raised by an Ottoman loan, the interest of which was to be counter-guaranteed by England at 4 per cent. and 1 per cent. for a sinking fund, under a mixed English and Turkish Committee.

3. All the land for the railway was to be provided free by the Turkish Government.

4. The customs and duties and port charges of Alexandretta and Basra, as well as certain revenues and other resources of the provinces through which the railway would pass, were to be assigned by the Turkish Government to the Mixed Committee, as security for the payment of the interest on the loan and sinking fund.

5. The Turkish Government was to guarantee to England the privilege of conveyance of troops at all times by the railway, to and from England and the East, at the same rates as those paid for Ottoman troops.

6. The English mails were to be transported along the railway free of charge.

7. Until extinction of the loan by repayment of the principal and interest, the English Government and the bond-holders, as represented by the Mixed Committee, were to have an absolute mortgage on the line, lands, and works of the undertaking.

Thirty-six years have elapsed since those days, and though the railway then proposed and favoured by Great Britain is not an accomplished fact, it is fast materializing; only, be it observed, Germany has taken the place of England as the tutelary Power in the business. So far as we are concerned, the construction of a railway to India, as an alternative route to our vast Eastern possessions, stands exactly where it did at the completion of the Suez Canal, just forty years ago, almost to a day. I venture to submit that our inaction in a matter of such great national and imperial moment ought not to be prolonged. In case the Suez Canal were blocked (as happened only a week or two ago)

by an accident or design, in case of any sudden rising, raid, or serious complication, the existence of a line whereby reinforcements or supplies could be rapidly conveyed to the scene of action might be of vital importance to our tenure of India. In February, 1897, one of the North-German Lloyd mail steamers, bound for Australia, grounded in the canal, and in the course of a few days sixty-five vessels were blocked. That, however, was a trifling obstruction and soon remedied.

The shortening of the journey to the East by seven days, apart from its all-round convenience, might have far-reaching consequences in encouraging the visits of business people, familiarizing them with Indian economic questions, and thus attracting the flow of capital to the country. This would be powerfully aided by the more rapid conveyance of letters, and of such goods as could preferably be transported by rail rather than by sea.

We now come to the question of the best route for a railway line from Europe to Western India, and here it is instructive to note three or four great changes that have supervened since the days of the Euphrates Valley Select Committee. In the first place the annexation of Baluchistan has brought the western frontier of India 500 miles nearer to England than it was thirty years ago. Next, the occupation of Egypt has supplied us with a most important half-way house on the ocean highway to the East, and, most recent of all in point of time, the Anglo-Russian Agreement in respect of Southern Persia and the Persian Gulf has unmistakably defined and strengthened our special interests and authority in those parts. Between the north-west frontier of India and Egypt the only region that is outside our sphere is Northern Arabia—that is to say, that wide belt of little-known Turkish territory extending for 800 miles from Basra to the Gulf of Akaba. The excellent relations now so happily subsisting between Turkey and our own country encourage the hope that the construction of a railway line from Akaba to Basra would not be viewed with any less favour and satisfaction now than the Euphrates Valley project elicited in 1872. In fact, it is even more unobjectionable than the latter, as the isolated position of such a line, bounded by the Syrian desert on the north and by the Nefud or red sand desert on the south, effectually shields it from the intrusion or suspicion of rival interests.

It will be seen from the above that what I venture to submit for your consideration is a line which shall run as much as possible under British control. It is not an 'all-red route to India'—the

geographical circumstances preclude that—but it is the nearest approach to it we can get.

In order to define it in a way easy of recognition, I may point out that, roughly, it may be said to follow the line of 30° north latitude from Egypt to India, that wonderful parallel of latitude, on which, or near which, are situated many of the most history-making towns of the universe, such as Cairo, Suez, Basra, Shiraz, Kerman, Seistan, Quetta, Multan, Delhi, Lhasa, Hankow, Shanghai, and, last but not least, New Orleans.

To follow its course in detail, the proposed railway would start from its westernmost point at Port Said or Ismailia, and thence follow the pilgrim track in a south-east direction to the head of the Gulf of Akaba. Thence it would ascend one of the lateral gorges which branch eastward from the Wady-el-Arabah and lead up to the level of the Arabian plateau, across which the line would travel due east to Basra on the Shat-el-Arab, a branch diverging south-east and connecting with the port of Koweit.

Before we proceed further, it may perhaps be convenient that I should say something as to the topography and character of the country so far. From the shores of the Mediterranean to Akaba, the country which would be traversed by the railway is the Badiet et Tih, or Desert of the Wanderings, a scene of the greatest Biblical interest, for across it lay the road down into Egypt on which Jacob travelled to visit his long-lost son, and along the same way the Virgin Mother fled with her Divine Child: here, as the name still reminds us, the Children of Israel wandered, while the hilly plateau on the north-east was the home and pasture-ground of the Patriarchs. The general aspect of the country is desolate and arid, but not quite waterless, as the herbage, though brown and parched, and to all appearance burnt up and dead, bursts into sudden life with the spring and winter rains. In the larger wadys which drain into the Mediterranean and Gulf of Akaba, there is naturally more fertility. The line would follow as closely as possible the Haj, or pilgrim route, which descends to the village of Akaba and then re-ascends to the Arabian plateau. From hence to the head of the Persian Gulf the country is popularly but erroneously supposed to be sheer desert, but it is worth noting that it is more stony than sandy, the true Nefud or red sand desert being to the south. Moreover, there are two important oases on the route, that of El Jof having copious fresh-water springs, with plenty of palms, date, and other fruit trees, and inhabited by more than 40,000 inhabitants; while a few hours' journey farther on is Sekaka, with a population of 30,000. The

trade of these towns is at present with Damascus, Mecca, and Bagdad, but it is easy to imagine that railway communication to both the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf would supply a great impulse to business and develop population. There are also warm sulphur springs in El Jof. The Turkish railway to Medina and Mecca would be crossed by our projected line, and here, of course, there would be an important junction so as to enable the pilgrims, whether from Egypt, Mesopotamia, or India, to proceed southward to the holy cities of Islam. From Port Said to Basra would take thirty hours, allowing for the speed of thirty-three miles an hour, which for a through railway would not be too much. I may mention that Mr. Charles M. Doughty, the well-known Arabian explorer, and one of the few travellers who knows these parts, was quite in agreement as to the feasibility of a trans-Arabian line running in this direction.

A subsidy would probably be necessary to the Bedouin Amir of Jebel Shommer, in whose jurisdiction El Jof lies, for leave to carry the line through his territory; and according to testimony furnished to me some years ago by travellers who had conversed with the Amir, permission would probably be forthcoming. Similar local allowances might also be required for the chiefs of the principal tribes, who would by this means become responsible for the good behaviour and assistance of the tribes, not only while the railway was under construction, but after it was opened to traffic. I believe the plan of making allowances in this way to the Arab tribes, in the case of the telegraph line to Palestine, answers very well.

Before dismissing this part of the subject, one must not fail to take note of the object-lesson supplied by the success of the Hejaz railway from Damascus to Medina. It was at one time urged against the projected line we are considering that a railway across Arabia could never be constructed owing to scarcity of water. But the Hejaz railway, though traversing a more sterile region than a line passing through El Jof, has been built with great rapidity and cheapness, and has practically solved the water difficulty, as may be seen from the detailed reports of Auler Pasha. There is no doubt, therefore, that equal success, to say the very least, may be looked for in the case of the line to Basra.

The crossing of the Shat-el-Arab would no doubt be a difficult job, but nothing like so difficult as the crossing of the great Yellow River by the Luhan line, which now runs from Pekin to Hankow. From the Persian frontier, the best route would connect Shiraz and Kerman, and close on to the Nushki-Seistan caravan route, which

so many authorities have contended should be converted into a railway.

Here, then, we are in possession of the main features of the overland railway route to India, the only route, as I contend, which fulfils all the main advantages properly pertaining to such an undertaking. If we arrive at the conclusion that a route under British control is preferable to a route, say, from Calais, or Constantinople, or Moscow to Quetta or Karachi, whose only merit would be its continuity, and whose disadvantages would be countless—then, I submit, we are driven, by the elimination of the unsuitable, to the route I mention. Its total length would be 2,200 miles, which, at thirty-three miles an hour, would be covered in sixty-six hours, or two days eighteen hours, against 3,050 miles and nine and a half days by sea. The cost of construction was estimated some years ago by a personal friend of mine, a Civil Engineer, with considerable professional experience acquired in various countries, at from £5,000 to £6,000 per mile, and the results of the Hejaz railway, the nearest parallel we can get, more than justify this estimate, for its cost worked out at a smaller figure.

As to the commercial earnings of such a line, I must freely acknowledge that it is difficult to frame trustworthy estimates. In the case of the Euphrates Valley railway, Sir Henry Tyler, probably the most experienced railway witness that appeared before the Committee, said that 'calculations as to traffic are worth very little even in a settled country when you project a line; it is a mere guess. In almost every instance which I have ever heard of, the traffic has exceeded the calculation made before the line was opened.' We might cite the figures of the earnings of the Indian railways (5·77 per cent.) as what might be expected. But, even so, it can hardly be said that we should be comparing like with like, for the circumstances differ so widely. It must be realized that the line is a through railway designed to subserve the convenience mainly of end-to-end traffic, whether passengers or goods, and that its principal object is not to make money by local traffic earnings. The thousands of first-class passengers who would only be too glad to save a week in their enforced journey Eastwards or homewards; the far larger number of Muhammadan pilgrims who would gladly avail themselves of the opportunity of visiting the holy cities of Islam, an opportunity never before placed within their reach (and the number of Muhammadans in India alone, be it remembered, is 60,000,000)—these two items point to a very considerable source of income, sufficient, as I believe, to pay the interest on the capital

expenditure. With regard to the goods traffic that may be expected along the Persian section, it so happens of late that I have gone very carefully into the prospects of trade that may be expected there. The one great drawback to the development of the manufactures and mineral and other resources of Persia is the want of communications. There is scarcely a decent road and not a mile of railway in the whole of the Shah's dominions, and the evidence of our Consuls and the commercial Missions already referred to is that improved transit and facilities of intercourse and carriage of goods in that country would pay largely. Lastly, we must take account of the mail subsidies and the payment for the conveyance of troops along the whole line, both of which items would figure out to a very considerable sum in the tale of receipts. Or it might be open to our Government to guarantee a moderate interest on the capital expenditure with the proviso *per contra* that the mails and troops might be conveyed free of cost.

It may be supposed that the takings of the Suez Canal Company might fall off, but apart from the notorious fact that improved facilities of communication enlarge and create fresh trade, it must be remembered that there would be a great expansion of business at Port Said, the harbour-dues of which actually belong to the Canal Company.

I need hardly recapitulate the general advantages of such a second string to our bow, but I may perhaps notice very shortly the more obvious criticisms which occur to anyone confronted with such a project. In the first place, the countries which would be traversed are in many places hot and sterile. This is unavoidable from the geographical conditions of the problem that has to be solved. All the regions lying west and north-west of India have vast quasi-desert tracts, such as are found in Syria, Arabia, Persia, Transcaspia, Afghanistan, and Baluchistan. Some of the most important and successful railways in the world, such as those in West Australia, Egypt, Transcaspia, and Rajputana, have had to be carried through sheer wildernesses, but so far from this having proved a hindrance, it has actually cheapened in many cases the normal rate of construction, owing to the absence of lofty mountains and wide rivers. The easternmost section of the line I have indicated, between Nushki and the Persian frontier, would follow a caravan route which has been laid out and opened up by the Indian Government with the sole object of developing trade with Eastern Persia, and several Anglo-Indian experts have strongly pleaded for rails to be laid along this road, and for the

westward extension of the railway, which now breaks off short at Nushki, so as to stimulate the very object that the Government of India had at heart in laying out the caravan road.

The line would thus follow an alignment specially prepared for it. Between the frontier and Bam there is another belt of desert, but here I am told that several wells were discovered in the course of boring by the engineers of the Indo-European Telegraph Department. Bam, Kerman, and Shiraz are three Persian towns which urgently need to be connected by road, if not by rail. Two British commercial Missions, one official and one semi-official—Mr. Maclean's, as representing the Board of Trade, and Mr. Gleadowe Newcomen's, on behalf of the Chambers of Commerce in Upper India—have already traversed Persia with the object of furthering and developing our trade, and both have laid special stress on the great importance of improving communications as a preliminary to the extension of trade. I am glad to be able to state that steps are being taken by a British company to construct a road from Bunder Abbas to Kerman, a distance of 440 miles. Such a road will form the chief highway of the whole of Southern Persia, and will convert Kerman into a most important central mart, from whence British and British-Indian goods can conveniently be conveyed to the capital and all the chief cities of Central and Northern Persia by the caravan routes which radiate like the spokes of a wheel from Kerman. This coming road will form an invaluable auxiliary to the railway.

There is another pending work, the re-organization of the canal system of Mesopotamia under the supervision of Sir William Willcocks, who has done so much important work in connection with Egyptian irrigation, which, it has been announced, will shortly be taken in hand by the Ottoman Government. The remarkable fertility of this region has been well known from classical times down to those of the later Caliphs, and modern authorities have stated positively that nothing is required but the repair of the old Canals and restoration of the old irrigation system to bring back the fertility, productiveness, and civilization of past ages. This enterprise, it appears, the Turkish Government have now sanctioned, and there is no doubt that the railway we are considering would play an important part in conveying to eastern and western markets the produce so forthcoming.

From the above, I think it may be conceded that the question, from every point of view, is ripe for inquiry. If a partial scheme like the Euphrates Valley railway, which, starting from the Syrian

coast and stopping short at Koweit at the head of the Persian Gulf, would have made no effort at all to cover the remaining ground to India—if this was worthy of investigation by a Select Committee of the House, surely the present plan for actually uniting Egypt and India and opening up the intermediate country is far more complete and more deserving of examination.

If permissible, I would venture to express a hope that the Committee of Inquiry might be, with advantage, a joint Committee of both Houses, for there are gentlemen of the highest Eastern experience in the Lords as well as the Commons. It would fall to such a Committee to examine orally geographical and Anglo-Indian witnesses who could testify to the general nature of the countries between Europe and India, and who could review in turn the various projects for overland communication that have been at times formulated. Travellers and explorers who have personally visited the regions through which these lines would pass would describe them exactly; engineers would supply estimates of cost, distance, time of construction and speed; military officers could explain how such an undertaking would affect the movements of troops between England and India; and miscellaneous witnesses, conversant with the East, would give information as to the trade, passengers, and general traffic that might be expected, the whole body of testimony constituting an invaluable mass of detailed data as to an important and virgin field of inquiry.

The present political opportunity is so exceptionally favourable that it would be most regrettable if action in this direction were postponed until other countries have spread southwards their network of lines and established footing, prestige, and exclusive claims in ground where our preponderating interests stand at present unchallenged.

DISCUSSION.

SIR EDWIN COLLEN: I am sure you will agree with me that we have listened to a very concise and clear description of this project. It may seem to some of us a bold one; but we have to remember that projects presenting difficulties that seem almost insurmountable to-day become realities to-morrow. I am not prepared to express definite opinions on this particular line; but I may say that I have been much struck with the manner in which Mr. Black has laid before us the views and opinions he has formed after long study of this question. I am convinced that it is a subject meriting detailed investigation. Personally I should prefer a long deck-chair on board a P. & O. steamer to travelling by this route. (Laughter.) But however that may be, it becomes us to

discuss the merits and demerits of the project, and if it is found a feasible one, we, as a country, should put our heart and soul into it. I regret that a public engagement prevents my remaining for the discussion. I will ask Sir Frederic Fryer to take my place, and I venture to hope that you will have the full discussion this interesting paper has merited. (Cheers.)

Sir Frederic Fryer having taken the chair, he called upon

DR. COTTERELL TUPP, who said : I think that, in discussing so important a question as the one before us, the first thing we have to do is to consider the relation of this new project for a railway route to India to other projects of the kind. The subject has been before the public for many years, and we have to inquire whether the proposed new route will be superior to those previously proposed, as the lecturer claims, or the reverse. There are several well-known books on the Euphrates Valley route to the Persian Gulf, and on the question of a route between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf ; but there has been no work published, so far as I am aware, suggesting, as Mr. Black has done this afternoon, a route from Suez across the Arabian desert to Basra.

There are at least four proposed routes from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. The northernmost of these routes is the German enterprise from Constantinople by Konieh to the north-east corner of the Mediterranean near Alexandretta, and then to the Euphrates, where it turns east to Basra and Koweit. The second line is from Antioch via Aleppo across the top of Syria, joining the first-named railway at Deir. The third line is from Beirut by Damascus, through the northern part of the Syrian desert to the Euphrates at Anah, and thence down to Basra. All these routes are the same in that they reach the Euphrates ; they only differ as to the starting-point and the way of access to the great river. The fourth project is that of Mr. Black for a line from Suez across the Arabian desert by Akaba and El Jof to Basra.

The objections to the first route are the long railway journey to Constantinople and through Asia Minor ; and, from the English point of view, the fact that the railway passes through a number of Continental States any one of which could stop it in time of war. The objections to Nos. 2 and 3, the routes through Northern Syria, are that they are very much out of the way for vessels coming from Marseilles or Brindisi, which, instead of taking their natural route down to Egypt, would have to turn up the coast of Syria ; and, further, that they would involve crossing the great Lebanon range, which would be very difficult and costly. So I think we may eliminate Nos. 2 and 3, and leave in the Bagdad railway and Mr. Black's route.

The latter route has the advantage of being in the line from Marseilles to Brindisi to the Persian Gulf ; of starting from British territory, and

of lying as far as the Persian Gulf in Turkish territory, and in a desert where no European Power could get at it. As far, then, as the first part of the line is concerned—that from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf—I think we must admit that the Suez route is the best, and the one England ought to support against the others. As regards the second part of the line, from the head of the Persian Gulf to India, Mr. Black's proposal has no rival except the Russian line from Merv to Kandahar, which we might meet by a line from Quetta to Kandahar, if the Afghans ever agreed to this. We cannot tell what changes may come in Afghanistan now that all Oriental countries are changing so much, and it may be that before many years are over they will allow us to make the line to Kandahar.

The most important point in regard to the second portion of the proposed line is, I think, to keep on the high plateau of Persia, and not anywhere come down to the lowland near the coast, where the heat is unendurable, particularly for European passengers. If the line passed by Shiraz and Bam to Nushki, where the end of our Indian line is, it would avoid all the hottest region, but only those who know this little-known country can tell whether a direct line from Shiraz to Nushki is possible. If it is not, I do not see how a line from the head of the Persian Gulf to India can ever be made, for the heat on and near the coast is intolerable, and could not be borne by passengers.

I do not myself believe that the European traffic between India and Western Europe would ever be sufficient to make a railway like this pay. But the pilgrim traffic to Kerbela, Mecca, and Medina might be sufficient to largely support the railway; and if the Turkish scheme of re-irrigating Mesopotamia is carried out by Sir William Willcocks, the increase of trade and traffic on the line may gradually become very great.

I have thus tried to summarize the position for you as it now stands. It is for the experts to say which of the routes shall be first attempted, for in the end I have no doubt that all the main routes will be constructed. These are, first, the Russian route from their Turkistan railway at Merv, through Herat and Kandahar to Quetta; second, the German route, or Bagdad railway, from Constantinople, through Asia Minor, to the head of the Persian Gulf, but in respect to which there is no provision for continuance to India; and, third, the Egyptian-Arabian route from Alexandria to Suez and across the desert to Basra, and then across Persia by Shiraz and Bam to Quetta. These are the three main routes, and we have every reason to suppose that some day or other all three will be made. It is now a question which of them is the best from the English point of view.

If England is going to spend £16,000,000 on a railway to India, there is no doubt that she should spend it on the third of these routes. It is the most direct route, and the one most free from foreign

interference. The investment would be a good one politically, for it would make us independent of the German line through Asia Minor. There is little doubt that we should at first make only the desert line from Suez to Basra, leaving mails and passengers to go down the Persian Gulf to Karachi. Then, when we saw whether that railway paid, and whether enough traffic grew up round it to justify its continuance through Persia (which would be a much more expensive matter), we could decide, after proper surveys had been made, whether it was desirable to undertake the extension. In any case, that would be in the somewhat distant future—say twenty or thirty years hence. But the first portion, from Suez to Basra, should, no doubt, as a political precaution, be constructed as soon as it is possible to raise the capital for it. We were often told that the Turks would never raise the money for the Hejaz railway, but, chiefly from religious enthusiasm, they did succeed in doing so. We in England could not appeal to religious motives in such a connection, but there are strong political motives why England and her dependencies should raise the funds for this Egypto-Arabian railway. What is needed is for three or four great capitalists to take up the matter and guarantee the greater part of the capital. Without that being done, it is doubtful whether the required sum could ever be raised. I am afraid the hope that the English Government would provide it is not one on which it would be prudent to rely; but they might possibly guarantee a certain rate of interest on the capital, as is done in the case of some of the Indian railways. Certainly it would be a very good thing for India if we could secure the making of this railway. (Cheers.)

MR. H. R. SYKES said: I have no personal knowledge of the country from Port Said to Basra; but I have always understood that it is one which may not present great difficulties to the engineer. Of the Persian portion of the scheme I may be permitted to speak as one who has travelled in Persia. It seems to me that from Basra the line must make for Kerman on the Iran plateau. We may safely disregard the Gulf littoral and the Makran coast as an alternative route, both on account of their sterility and the terrible summer heat. But it is to be noted that, by the Anglo-Russian agreement, Great Britain undertakes not to support, in the interests of British subjects, any railway northward of a line connecting Kasr-i-Sherin, Ispahan, Yezd, etc. Now the two latter places are, perhaps, the richest cities in Southern Persia, but under the agreement the line would be debarred from tapping them.

The LECTURER said he did not propose to go into Yezd. He left that town a little to the north.

MR. SYKES: Yezd and Kerman lie in the same valley, a valley bounded on either side by lofty impenetrable mountain ranges, and to reach Kerman from the west without touching Yezd would involve

a tremendous increase of expenditure, incurred by carrying the line through so mountainous a country. The same difficulties arise when the line attempts to cross the region east of Basra. The general trend of the mountain ranges of Arabistan and Farsistan is from north-west to south-east, and the line must perforce cross a series of gigantic ridge and furrow which has been responsible for the general opinion that a line from the Gulf to the Iran plateau involves an engineering feat incapable of accomplishment.

But when once the plateau is reached, the difficulties of construction are unimportant. The line would hereafter follow the route of the Indo-European Telegraph line to Nushki, eighty miles west of Quetta. It would cross the 'Great Divide' separating the plateau from the coast by the Zain-ul-Abad Pass, some thirty miles south-east of Kerman. Although over 8,000 feet above sea-level, it is approached from either side by a gentle slope along a valley never less than five or six miles wide. Between Bam and Seistan there lies a hundred miles of desert, but when I crossed in 1904, Mr. King Wood, the chief engineer engaged in laying the new trans-Continental wire, was exuberant at the large volume of water with which his well-sinking experiments were rewarding him. On the other hand, the material he required in connection with his work had to be brought by no less than 1,000 transport animals. Except for one or two comparatively insignificant mountain ranges, the terrain is by no means difficult. But even so, the cost of construction must be much higher, I think, than Mr. Black estimates. A large portion of the country is impracticable for wheeled vehicles, and the only means of transport are the camel and the mule. The construction of a line involves the carriage of heavy machinery, and the removal of thousands of tons of earth. In some parts carts could be employed for this, but where only animal transport is available, the weight of any single article that an animal can carry is limited to half the burden, as the loads are slung on either side of the animal. While labour is cheap, transport is expensive in Persia, the resources of the country appearing to be only just sufficient for the normal requirements. Any extra demand not only disorganizes, but causes a marked increase in the price. The cost of transporting the telegraph material to which I have referred from the coast, the average distance being 400 miles, was about £9 per ton. In face of these facts, I think Mr. Black's estimate of £6,000 per mile is far too low. It is worth noting in this connection that the trans-Siberian railway cost £16,000 per mile before its actual completion.

Mr. Black predicts a saving of six and a half to seven days on the journey from Port Said to India. But to arrive at this conclusion he has to estimate an average speed of thirty-three miles an hour for a distance of 2,200 miles. I doubt very much whether this is possible, in view of the various impediments which would beset the line, and

considering the nature of the country through which it would pass. The longest run in the British Isles is, I believe, from London to Wick, a distance of 730 miles. The limited mail is allowed twenty hours for the journey, and this works out to an average of thirty-six and a half miles an hour. I do not think that in crossing Arabia and Persia a greater speed than twenty-five miles can be reckoned on. Assuming this to be the rate, and assuming also, as we are fairly entitled to do, that the present sixteen-knot boats are superseded before long by a twenty-knot fleet, the difference between the railway and the sea route becomes much less marked. The sea passage is reduced by two days, and the railway journey is increased by one. On a very liberal estimate I do not think the saving of time effected will be more than four days at most. Considering the inconvenience of several days' continuous railway journey through a dry, barren, dusty country, subject to frequent sandstorms, I think we shall agree with Sir Edwin Collen that a P. & O. deck-chair is preferable. The traveller who forgoes the comforts of shipboard for the railway journey through Arabia and Persia must indeed be in a desperate hurry to reach his destination. And while there is this drawback to through passenger traffic, it must be remembered that in Persia the line will pass through districts whose inhabitants are extremely poor, and it would be unwise, as the lecturer admits, to rely on local traffic for the support of the line.

But notwithstanding these criticisms I agree with the lecturer as to the great importance of securing British control of a line to India. Now that the subject has been raised it ought not to be allowed to drop. The matter should be investigated, and its significance should be brought home to the British public. (Cheers.)

MR. LYNCH, M.P. : I do not myself think that the extension of the proposed line through Persia presents any insuperable geographical difficulty. The mountain ridges run from a north-westerly to a south-easterly direction. To the traveller making his way from a port on the Persian Gulf to the cities on the tableland they present a series of precipitous ridges and deep valleys; but this is because he crosses the range at right angles. To find an easy way of access to the tableland from the head of the Persian Gulf, a direct crossing of the ridges will have to be avoided; and for this there would have to be a careful survey. When once the edge of the tableland has been reached, it is comparatively plain sailing to the threshold of India.

Of course there is a political aspect to the Persian section of this proposed line. Our Treasurer, I think, reminded us of the Anglo-Russian Agreement—in my view a most unfortunate Agreement as regards its particular provisions, however it may work out in practice. Only a very small part of this railway would be in the British sphere, as defined by this Agreement. That Convention, however, may not prove so alarming from the British point of view as we at first

supposed. We do not know at the moment whether it is operative. So far, at least, as the Afghan clauses are concerned, it is dependent on the assent of the Ameer, and the Ameer has never given his consent. As for the Persians, they are engaged in the task of regaining the Constitution. They are quite likely to regain it; and, should that be the case, they will want to administer their own affairs in their own way. Given a strong, independent Persia, the Agreement to a great extent must fall to the ground.

Our Treasurer has reminded us that this is a new proposal, and we are under obligation to the lecturer for the admirable and lucid manner in which he has presented it for our consideration. But there is much more we require to be told before we can arrive at the conclusion that the scheme is feasible. This is particularly the case in regard to the portion of the line from the Gulf of Akaba to the Persian Gulf. I myself have never met anyone who has crossed over that almost unknown country, and I do not know whether the lecturer has exact information in regard to it.

The LECTURER: Time did not permit me to say that there have been several travellers across the 'neck' of Arabia, and they have left on record their notes and impressions. One of them was a Frenchman named Huber, who wrote a big book on the subject. He said that in parts it was a fairly fertile country, and there are two towns along the route with populations of 30,000 and 40,000 respectively. This evidence is derived from the Rev. Mr. Forder, a missionary from Jerusalem, who visited those parts.

MR. LYNCH: I am interested to hear this; but certainly there are extremely few people who know this route, whether approached from Akaba or from Basra. It is to be remembered that there is a considerable European community in Basra, but not one of them has ever taken this most direct of routes home, so far as I know. We do not even know the altitudes and the height of the plateau. Any competent traveller who made any careful route survey must have arrived at some conclusions on such points. We want to know if this route is practicable and if it has equal geographical advantage to the Euphrates Valley route. The sooner we get at these facts the better. There is a proposal that Great Britain should put money into the Bagdad railway scheme—a considerable sum. If British money is locked up in the Bagdad railway it would not be available for this line. In these circumstances we ought to press for detailed and prompt examination of the scheme by experts.

I agree with Dr. Tupp that if the Arabian section is built we may leave the Persian section for the future. But we must get at the fundamental facts before we make up our minds. I hope that, if the project were adopted, there would not be any demand upon Turkey or upon Persia for kilometric guarantees. These guarantees have been

ruinous to Turkey. The railways thus supported have made heavy drains upon the pockets of the taxpayers, and they are insignificant in their economic effects. After all, the mere construction of the line to the Gulf constitutes the making of a great claim upon Turkey. We should be asking for a right of way across Turkish territory for our merchandise and passengers, and for our troops. That is a very considerable demand, though it may not be impossible of realization. It cannot be forgotten, moreover, that the line will require to be policed. The exercise of Turkish authority in those wild regions is of a somewhat shadowy nature. The same requirement, however, will exist in regard to some sections of the Bagdad railway.

We are very much indebted to the lecturer for bringing this important scheme forward. I can only express the hope that the matter will be thoroughly threshed out very soon, for if this is not done the ground will be cut from under our feet by the construction of the Bagdad railway.

COLONEL C. E. YATE : I quite agree with Mr. Lynch that as regards the portion of the project across Northern Arabia we can say nothing until the country has been examined from a railway point of view. With the limited information before us, we can form no opinion whatever. I agree with Mr. Sykes that the lecturer has over-estimated the length of the sea voyage, and under-estimated the time the railway journey would take. The sea voyage is pretty certain to be accelerated in the future. I think we may safely put the journey by sea at seven days instead of the nine and a half days named by the lecturer, and the journey by rail at four days at least, so that the saving of time would not be more than three days. Four days in the train in these dusty, hot, and arid regions will certainly not be very pleasurable.

Our Chairman said he thought many people would prefer a large comfortable P. & O. steamer. I for one entirely agree with him in that. The constant rattle, dust, and dirt of continuous railway travelling in such regions tells upon one far more than the sea voyage in ordinary weather between Suez and Bombay.

Something has been said as to the local traffic, and the possibility of developing the mineral resources of Persia. From my travels and observations there I believe there are no great or important mineral resources in Persia. Such resources as may have existed were worked out in ancient days, and little or nothing is now left. Altogether, I think the prospects of local traffic rather meagre.

As to tapping Yezd, it has been pointed out that under the Anglo-Russian Agreement the line cannot be taken into Yezd.

DR. TUPP : Yezd is just on the line of demarcation under the treaty, and the object can be achieved by taking the line a mile or so south of the town.

COLONEL YATE : Yezd is in the Russian sphere, and is out of bounds for us. Shiraz is in the neutral zone, and we have equal opportunity there. There is no such objection to our making a railway to Shiraz—if we can get there. But I cannot understand how the lecturer proposes to take his railway up to Shiraz from the valley of the Karun. He says the line can cross the Shat-el-Arab—in itself a very difficult engineering feat, I should think—but then there will be the great rise to get up from the Karun to the plateau. The ascent thereto is very steep, and I doubt if it will be practicable for a railway line. Mr. Sykes has given his opinion on this matter as a traveller in Persia, and it seems to me that there are very great doubts as to the possibility of taking the line the way the lecturer has outlined. As a matter of fact, he has simply ruled a straight line across the map. If the scheme is practicable it is to be heartily welcomed. Nothing could be better for us than to have a line in these regions under our sole control. Subject to the doubts I have felt it my duty to express, I wish every success to the project, and I hope it may be taken up and examined in real earnest. (Cheers.)

SIR FREDERIC FRYER : You will all agree that we have listened to a very interesting paper, and a very interesting discussion. We are no less agreed that a railway to India, mainly under British control, is highly desirable. But, naturally, the question arises whether such a railway as our lecturer has sketched out is practicable, and the question is one that requires to be decided by experts on making a survey for the line. There are not only physical difficulties, but also political difficulties, to be considered. No doubt it is possible to overcome the latter as well as the former, and the scheme seems in every way a desirable one. (Hear, hear.) This being so, we should press for expert examination of the proposed route.

The difficulties of transport, to which Mr. Sykes alluded, might be met, it occurs to me, if motor transport were adopted. There are now many kinds of motor lorries which might be used for railway construction, and thus would be obviated the great difficulty of getting together a sufficient number of baggage animals. As those of you who have served in the East are aware, baggage animals are generally scarce whenever a demand arises. Of late years they have become scarcer than ever, so far as India is concerned, because there is not the same prospect of continuous employment for them as formerly.

Of course, we know very little of the inhabitants of the part of Arabia the line would cross. I have lately read that the railway the Turks have made to Medina has been considerably obstructed by Arabs. I do not suppose that the Arabs on the projected line of route are particularly tractable, and the difficulty of policing the line is likely to be considerable. But this might be met, perhaps, by some form of subsidy to the Arab tribes, though this would increase the cost of the under-

taking, and would have to be borne in mind in estimating its financial prospects.

As to local traffic, I think that some speakers have taken a somewhat pessimistic view. I have had some experience of pioneer lines, and I have noticed that when the facility is given there generally springs up a considerable amount of local traffic. When it was proposed in Burma to make a railway to Mandalay, it was said it would never pay, whereas both railways in Burma have paid exceedingly well. Where there is a single line it is now being doubled to meet the growth of traffic. I do not suppose the projected railway would be a success if dependent on ordinary local traffic alone, but there would be a considerable pilgrim traffic both from a distance and from the towns and villages along the route.

I will conclude with asking you to accord the lecturer a hearty vote of thanks, and to give him our best wishes for the line he has advocated being made the subject of prompt inquiry. (Cheers.)

The LECTURER: I will detain you with only one or two observations in reply. I think Mr. Lynch put the case very fairly when he said that what we should ask from Turkey and from Persia would be a right of way. I believe that right of way is obtainable, and that there would not be great opposition to its being granted. It was for that reason I brought forward the precedent of the Bagdad railway, in respect to which the Ottoman Government has granted such a right of way.

It is gratifying to find there is general consensus as to the principle of the project I have had the honour to outline. I was afraid that so much might be said as to details that this main point would be disregarded. If the Euphrates Valley scheme was thought worthy of inquiry thirty-six years ago, surely, in the circumstances in which we find ourselves to-day, the more direct route now proposed may be deemed worthy of careful investigation.

Mr. Black has sent us the following memo in regard to the discussion which took place after the reading of his paper:

It was very satisfactory to me to find that, in spite of some criticism on points of detail, there was substantial and unanimous agreement among the speakers at the meeting that there ought to be a Government inquiry into the merits of the project which I ventured to submit to the Society. It was, however, pointed out at the same time that it would add materially to the value of the paper if I were to give more precise information as to the topography of the Arabian section, and the authorities on which I rely for that portion of the railway route. I will try and do so very briefly.

The five principal travellers who have described this section are Mr. W. G. Palgrave, Mr. Wilfrid and Lady Anne Blunt, Charles Huber, Baron von Nolde, and the Rev. A. Forder. All of these passed through,

and stayed some time at, El Jof (which is situated just about half-way across Arabia, and may be said to form the key of the project), and have described more or less of the approach from the west, as well as the oasis itself. The most practicable route from the west is that along the Wady-el-Sirhan, which Mr. Blunt says was formerly the natural high-road of Northern Arabia, and was studded with villages for a distance of 260 miles. At present, the wells of these villages alone remain. The Wady-el-Sirhan, however, runs generally north-west and south-east, and not due east and west, so that there remains a gap between that valley and the Gulf of Akaba, which would need to be examined for the purposes of the railway. This gap is, however, in no sense a *terra incognita*, for it is traversed north and south by the Hejaz railway, and the explorations conducted in connection therewith will suffice to suggest the best alignment for our purposes. Along the Wady-el-Sirhan numerous altitudes were taken by Huber. They average about 1,800 feet above sea-level. El Jof itself is 620 metres, or rather over 2,000 feet. It has been well described by Palgrave, and the Blunts, and Mr. Forder. The first-named, who calls it 'The Djowf,' speaks with enthusiasm of its appearance, vegetation, and fruits. The inhabitants informed him that they were once Christians, and were afterwards converted to Islamism. Palgrave continues: 'The most distinctive good feature of the inhabitants is their liberality. Nowhere else, even in Arabia, is the guest—so at least he be not murdered before admittance—better treated or more cordially invited to become in every way one of themselves.'

There is no doubt whatever that the oasis of El Jof is of great antiquity (it was called Duma in the centuries B.C.), and the evidence seems certain that formerly the population was greater than now. The estimates framed by various travellers during the past eighty or one hundred years vary considerably, but that of the Rev. A. Forder, who visited it only seven years ago, ascribes to it, on the authority of its Governor, a population 40,000 in number.*

North-east of El Jof is Sekaka, called Mezkakeh by the Blunts. Mr. Forder says the population is 30,000, but this seems rather too high.

East of Sekaka and Kara, a small village due south of it, we lack detailed topographical information for a distance of about 200 miles, till we strike the Hail-Bagdad route, which runs practically north and south. But Mr. Huber was informed by an Arab chief that east of El Jof there extends a long depression, containing very good pasturage, called El Udian, about 120 geographical miles in length. This depression then merges into a stony desert, called El Hegerah, which continues eastward for about four days' journey, till you cross at right angles the Bagdad pilgrim route, at a spot where there are the ruins of numerous buildings and extensive wells, constructed by Zobeidah, wife of Harun

* 'With the Arabs in Tent and Town,' p. 145. 1902.

el Rashid. Between this road and the port of Koweit there stretches a continuation of the same stony desert, giving place further east to numerous wadys and alluvial ground.

From the above it will be seen that the information to hand regarding the route from Akaba past El Jof to Koweit, is quite enough to reveal to us its general character and precise information regarding its western and central portions. It is clear that there are no great obstacles in the shape of lofty mountains or pathless deserts of sand. Some few years ago I was furnished with a passport and letter of recommendation from the British Resident at Bagdad to the Amir of Jebel Shommer, and had I been able to go out and undertake the journey from the Persian Gulf to Hail or El Jof, guides acquainted with the route would have accompanied me. During the last year or two Captain Butler has traversed North-Eastern Arabia to El Jof, and so home, but the eastern part of his route lay to the north of the line which we are considering.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY

EASTERN TURKESTAN: THE CHINESE AS RULERS OVER AN ALIEN RACE

BY

G. MACARTNEY, C.I.E.

Read March 10, 1909



LONDON
CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY, 22, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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EASTERN TURKESTAN :

THE CHINESE AS RULERS OVER AN ALIEN RACE

THE CHAIRMAN (Lord Ronaldshay, M.P.), in opening the proceedings, said : We shall have the pleasure this afternoon of hearing a paper by Mr. Macartney. As you are all aware, he is one of those Englishmen who know Central Asia thoroughly well from personal experience. He has been for something like twenty years of his life in that part of Asia of which he is to speak to us—Chinese Turkestan. He is going to describe to us the Chinese as administrators of that dependency. At the present day, when the Chinese are blossoming forth to meet the Western Powers on equal terms, the study Mr. Macartney is to give us, coming from so high an authority, cannot fail to be of the deepest interest.

To a nation like ours, which controls the destiny of a great number of alien races, it should be a matter of special interest to acquaint ourselves with the experience and methods of government of other people whom fortune has placed in a position more or less similar to our own. On or near our Indian border, no less than three great Powers hold sway over indigenous races separated from them by wide gulfs, whether of creed, or of language, or of culture—Russia in Western Turkestan ; France in Tongking ; and China in Tibet and Eastern Turkestan. To describe the administrative methods of each, and to compare them with our own systems of government, should be a study of no small scientific value. But to only a few men has the opportunity been given to acquire experience wide enough to deal with the subject in its *whole* range. On the other hand, there are many who have some knowledge of particular phases of it ; and as one whose lot it has been to spend many years in Eastern Turkestan, naturally that phase which I have observed relates to the Chinese rule

vis-à-vis the native Mohammedan population in that country; and this, with your permission, shall be my theme this evening.

China has been connected with the country now known as Eastern Turkestan for the last twenty centuries. I shall not weary you with a recital of historical facts, many of which are but ill understood even by the best sinologists of the day. On the other hand, a retrospect of the past, however cursory, is useful if we wish to understand the present; and for this reason I hope you will bear with me if I just touch upon a few of the most prominent features of China's relations with this remote region.

The Chinese have never been an aggressive people. And nowhere is this fact better exemplified than in the process by which they have eventually absorbed Eastern Turkestan—a process which has been a sort of 'pacific penetration.' Whenever the Chinese intervened in this country, not on a single occasion do I believe they did so for purposes of self-aggrandizement. On the contrary, their action was always dictated by some dread of danger on their own border of Kansu, which from the earliest times had been the scene of a fierce and continuous struggle between the barbarian hordes of Central Asia and the peaceful and civilized inhabitants of Inner China. When the Chinese captured Kashgar in 76 B.C., during the Han dynasty, they were acting from motives of self-defence. The Hsung-nu, or the Huns, as we call them, were, by their constant incursions, troubling the Chinese on their north-west border; and as in 76 B.C. Kashgar was in their hands, the expedition against the town was probably undertaken as a part of the policy of the Han Emperors to overcome the Han ascendancy, which seriously menaced the stability of China. For similar reasons of defence, about 600 years afterwards, the Tang Emperors sent expeditions to Central Asia; but at this period their efforts were directed no longer against the raids of the Hsung-nus, or Huns, but against those of the Tu-chueh (Turks) and of the Tufans, or Tibetans, of the Koko Nor region. The Tang dynasty is one of the most illustrious in the Chinese annals, and under its sway, China shone with extraordinary splendour. Victory was achieved over the Tu-chueh and the Tufan tribes, and Turkestan became in A.D. 634 a dependency of China: probably, however, more by the force of her superior civilization, which compelled the respect and submission of the Turkestanians, than by the awe of her military prowess. Be this as it may, there can be no doubt that under the Tangs, Turkestan was effectively ruled by the Chinese, whose suzerainty at this period—the seventh and the

eight centuries—was acknowledged even in the neighbouring States of Kashmir and of Kokand. It is expected that in connection with China's relations with Kashgaria during the Tang era, the recent archæological discoveries by Dr. M. A. Stein and Professor von Lecoq will throw some much-needed light; but even the few scraps of Chinese MSS. and coins which I myself have secured from the now sand-buried sites near the modern town of Khotan bear witness to the fact that Chinese money was current, that Chinese magisterial seals were used on administrative documents, and that Chinese officials collected the taxes in Turkestan during the Tang period. The native Buddhist Kings were apparently allowed to remain; but there is evidence to show that their administration was controlled by Chinese Imperial Commissioners, residing at their Courts.

After the Tang period the condition of China became very troubled. Through the vista of centuries, we perceive a long line of dynasties, mostly of barbarian origin, springing from regions on the north and west of the Great Wall—the Liaos, the Hsias, the Sung, the Chins, the Yuens, the Mings—who, whilst each in their turn, at their appointed time in history, struggled for mastery in China, had to bow down to her superior culture and became sinicized. Truly can China be compared to a sea, into which all waters flowing become salted. But during all these vicissitudes, the rule which the Tangs in the sixth century established over Turkestan faded out of existence. The country was converted from Buddhism to Islamism in the eleventh century, and it was for a very lengthy period left to its own devices. In 1615 the Roman Catholic friar, Benedict Göes, whilst on his way from India in search of the country called Cathay, which it was not known then was merely another name for China, passed through Kashgaria, then called the country of the Seven Kingdoms; and he has left us some interesting information about the Turkestan people, who, he significantly said, were unwarlike, and could be easily brought under subjection by the Chinese 'if that nation was at all addicted to making conquests.' Although at Benedict Göes' time, the Seven Kingdoms of Turkestan were independent, yet they maintained a certain intercourse with China through what Göes described as *fictæ legationes*—sham embassies. It was in those days a part of China's policy to gain the goodwill of the tribes on her border by preserving a relationship which, whilst it flattered her own *amour propre*, helped to keep the tribes under control by openings for personal profit—a relationship which on China's side was ascribed

as the payment of tribute to a predominant power, but which, from the point of view of the natives, largely partook of the character of periodical trading embassies. These embassies, travelling in large caravans, loaded with the jade of Khotan—a stone which from times immemorial has been famous in China—visited the Imperial Court at stated intervals; and large was the profit which the Seven Kingdoms derived from their despatch. This, I take it, sums up China's relation with Turkestan in the course of the seventeenth century.

Events, however, were soon to occur which brought this region once more under her effective rule. Here, again, we have another illustration of an intervention reluctantly undertaken, and only for the sake of self-defence. In the reign of Kangshi, of the Tsing dynasty—that which now governs China—a great Zungarian chief, Galdan by name, raised his hordes of Eleuths and defied the Chinese so far as to make incursions even to within the Great Wall. The Emperor Kangshi employed alternately diplomacy and force to bring the enemy to a more peaceable frame of mind; but, in spite of temporary successes, all his efforts failed to secure tranquillity for the Chinese border on the Mongolian and the Turkestan sides. The troubles increased during the reign of the next Emperor, Yung-Ching; but Kangshi's grandson, Chien-lung, one of the most illustrious Emperors who ever sat on the Dragon throne, would tolerate the situation no longer. He sent repeated expeditions into Ili and Zungaria, and crushed the powers of the Eleuths on the north side of the Tianshan; but as Turkestan itself was then governed by a Khoja Prince—Burhanudin—in close alliance with the Eleuths, and into whose territory the latter took refuge, Burhanudin's territory was also invaded and captured by Chien-lung's troops. The conquest of the region on the southern side of the Tianshan—that is, Turkestan proper—was effected with remarkable ease, as can be seen from the following details given by the Chinese General Chao-hui, in a report which he made to the Emperor on his entry into Kashgar. 'The inhabitants,' he said, 'surrendered to us without resistance and with every demonstration of joy, which was a sign that they ask for nothing better than to live under the laws of Your Majesty. They came before us bringing refreshment, which I accepted, and caused to be distributed amongst the soldiers, whilst giving, in all cases, to those who brought presents of food, small pieces of silver, not under the name of payment, but rather as a reward.'

Thus, however troublesome the Eleuths on the north of the

Tian-shan might have been to the Chinese, the Turkestanians on the south of the same range made their submission almost without a single blow having been struck—a remarkable confirmation of Göes' words, written a century and a half previously, that the Turkestanians were unwarlike. The Chinese régime, which had been non-existent since the later Tang period—that is, for about ten centuries—was accordingly re-established in Turkestan; and thence onwards up to the present time China has maintained her control over the country—with sundry interruptions, however; some of them serious enough to overthrow her rule for short intervals.

The thorn in China's side was one, not of indigenous, but of exotic, growth. The Kokandian Kings beyond her border, on the western side of the Tian-shan, enjoyed a prescriptive right to the collection in Kashgar of certain trade dues—a right which was admitted by China. They had also arrogated to themselves the position of spiritual leaders of the Kashgarians, and certainly exercised unbounded influence in the Chinese dominion, east of Tian-shan. On the establishment of the new Government in Kashgaria, the old Khoja Royal Family—the same which ruled over the country prior to its subjugation by Chien-lung—found a ready asylum in the Kokand Khanate, and, under the instigation of the Kokandians, Khoja pretenders, actively assisted by their friends with soldiers and treasure, made frequent efforts to get their former subjects to rise and to expel the infidel Chinese. Thus it was that booty-loving fanatics, partly from the warlike Kirghiz nomads of the Tian-shan Mountains and partly from Osh and Margillan—towns now situated in the Russian province of Ferghana—were ever on the alert to surprise Kashgar, and by working on the religious feelings of the Kashgarians, they actually caused them to revolt in 1827, 1829, 1846, and 1857. But cowardice and half-heartedness had ever been the characteristics of the people of the Seven Kingdoms; and so, if they rose at all, they made their rebellions without conviction, knowing in advance that their efforts were condemned to a failure which they never received with disappointment, but greeted rather with a secret sense of relief; for none remembered better than themselves the tyranny of former days when they were under their own rulers.

I need not dilate on the last rebellion—that which subverted the Chinese power in Central Asia from the year 1863 to 1877—these events having occurred within the memory of most of us present this evening. Suffice it to recall that the revolt did not originate in Eastern Turkestan, but was the reaction of what took place in

China Proper. In 1850 the Tai-ping insurrection broke out, and was followed in 1862 by the rising of the Tungan Mohammedans in the Province of Kansu. At that time the Chinese troops in Kashgaria were largely recruited from the Tunganis, and, as may well be imagined, these soon joined their co-religionists in Kansu. The result was that the Chinese in Turkestan, with their retreat cut off to the inner provinces, were massacred without mercy. The Tunganis in Turkestan, however, profited nothing by this discomfiture of their late rulers, for in the general disorder a member of the old Kashgarian Khoja family, Buzurg Khan, who had been a refugee in Kokand, was brought back to Kashgar and set on the throne. He was soon deposed by his General, Mohamad Yakub Beg, a Kokandi soldier of fortune, who, as many of us can still remember, established himself as the Amir of Turkestan in 1867, and maintained a hold over the country until the Chinese, having quelled the Tungani rebellion within China Proper, subdued the Tunganis on the north of the Tian-shan range, and retook the entire province from which they had been expelled for fourteen years.

The reoccupation took place in 1877, and since then the Chinese have remained in undisturbed possession.

The administration, as it is now carried on by the Chinese, differs in some essential points from that which they established previously. From the days of Chien-lung up to the time of the last Tungani rebellion Turkestan, was looked upon in Peking as an outlying dependency—not as an integral part of the Empire—and was given a special form of Government. The officials were not Chinese, as they now are, but invariably Manchus. The supreme authority was vested in an Imperial Commissioner, or Chin-chai, at Ili, who had the direct charge of the country north of the Tian-shan, whilst the Government at the south of that range—that is, in the Lob Basin, or Turkestan proper—was confided to a Deputy Governor, with headquarters at Yarkand. The Imperial troops were not Chinamen, but recruits from the Manchu Banners, and, as I have already pointed out, from the Tungani Mohammedans of the neighbouring Province of Kansu. Administrative posts of importance were also given to the natives of the country. The collection of the revenues, the administration of justice amongst the non-Chinese element, the levy of custom dues on the frontiers and in the towns, were all left to native Hakim Begg, who, in their rôle of district magistrates, were very grand personages, and enjoyed no small degree of pomp and circumstance.

But under the present régime, there has been a general tightening-

up from Peking of the administrative links. China's possessions on the north and the south sides of the Tian-shan—no more called by the vague term of Si-yu, or Western region—have been named afresh as Sin-Chiang, or New Dominion; and, instead of the country being treated as a colony, it has been formed into a province of the Empire, on the same footing as the eighteen provinces in China Proper, and with a local administration organized on an identical basis. The seat of Government is established at Urumtchi, made the capital of the province in 1878, and the headquarters of the Futai, or the Governor. Forming a Council with, but in subordination to, this high functionary are the usual Pu-chen-ssu, or Provincial Treasurer, the Ngan-cha-ssu, or Provincial Judge, the Hsio-tai, or Commissioner of Education, and the Titai, or Provincial Commander-in-Chief. For local administrative purposes, the province is divided off into four circuits, each in charge of a Taotai, whose position resembles somewhat that of a Commissioner in India. The Taotai's circuit is again parcelled off into districts—some forty in number for the entire province—in charge of each of which are officials of various grades, just as in China Proper, some styled Chih-fu, others Chih-chou, and others again Chih-hsien, all practically independent of each other, but all subjected to the supervision of the Taotai, who forms the intermediary of communication between the higher authorities at the provincial capital and the lower ones in district charge. As in India, so in Turkestan, the district is the unit of administration; and the duties of a Chinese district officer appear to be just as various as those of an Indian Deputy Commissioner. He is responsible for the general tranquillity of his charge—is the judge, in the first instance, in civil and criminal matters, the collector of the revenue, the governor of the jail, the registrar of the land transfers, the coroner; in fact, there is scarcely anything connected with the district in which the Amban, as this many-sided official is called by the natives, is not expected to take some interest; and truly he is given an ample opportunity to act up to the Chinese idea that a district officer is the father and mother of his people. The administration of the sub-districts is entirely entrusted to the native Begs—or Tahsildars, as we would call them in India—nominated by, and holding their post at the pleasure of, the Amban. The Begs are petty judges in their way, as well as tax-collectors for the Amban, and having under their order a number of yuzbashis, or men in charge of one hundred families; mirabs, or distributors of irrigation water; dizikchis, or night-watchmen.

Such, then, in outline, is the system of government in Turkestan. It has a certain co-ordination, and in theory there is no reason why it should not work well, but in practice it is vitiated by a good deal of oppression—not more, however, than what the native population can cheerfully put up with. There is no blinking the fact that the taxes of a district are simply farmed out to the Amban; but considering the almost irresistible temptation to extort to which the system makes him liable, it must be confessed that he generally behaves with remarkable moderation. It is, or rather it was a few years ago, the fashion in Europe to look upon the Chinese mandarin as a monster of rapacity. Certainly it is easy to condemn, but it requires latitude of mind, as well as kindness, to appreciate and understand him. For my own part, the more I have come in contact with Chinamen of the official class, the more I think that the virtues they possess are their own, and their faults, those of the system under which they work. By system I here refer specially to the mode of recruitment of the Civil Service in Turkestan. I cannot accurately say how many Civil Service appointments of the higher grades there are in this province—some 200 perhaps; and so for the actual needs of the civil administration some 200 men would be sufficient. But what do we find? We find a whole army of office-seekers who have paid, by way of investment, large sums of money to the Government in the purchase of brevet ranks. Of course it is only fair that these men should be allowed a return on their outlay, and so the pernicious system has sprung up of permitting an official who happens to be in the occupation of a post to remain in it for a short time only—however well he may be fitted for a prolonged tenure—so that some other expectant of office may be given a chance of appropriating its flesh-pots. The tendency is what might have been anticipated—haste to make a fortune whilst in office; indifference to local problems; and in the case of foreign pressure, concessions often unwisely made; all because of the desire to be left undisturbed to one's private finances. At the same time it is only fair to say that really worthless officials are quite the exception, in spite of the drawbacks of the system, which, after all, is perhaps not much worse than our own was in India in the days before the Mutiny. Quite a large proportion of mandarins in Turkestan do strive to rule equitably and in a manner most conducive to the welfare of the natives. No doubt there is a good deal of what we would call venality and corruption; but it is too often forgotten that officials are practically the unpaid agents of the Government who employ

them, and that unless they supplement their ridiculously small emoluments by commissions and the like, it is a moral impossibility for them—I will not say to maintain themselves, for they certainly cannot do that—but even to pay the salary of the staff which they keep at their personal expense. The absurdity of the situation is manifest when I say that the regulation pay of a district magistrate in China is 200 taels per annum, equal to some £40 of our money.

But you may ask, What, after all, is the net result of the Chinese rule over the natives of Turkestan?

I think we may recognize that this rule has, on the whole, been a successful one. At the same time, it is only just to premise that the task of the Chinese has been vastly facilitated by two factors—independent of the Chinese themselves—the one being the natural docility of the governed race, and the other, the suppression of the disturbing influence of Kokand by the Russian annexation of that Khanate.

The historical review which I have already given will serve to illustrate these two points.

In the first place, what is the character of the native Moham-medans of Eastern Turkestan? All who have written about this people are unanimous in describing them as good-humoured but unenterprising, and even cowardly. Their unwarlikeness was remarked upon by Benedict Göes in 1615; and Chiun-lung's General, Chao-Hui, who captured Kashgar in 1759, tells us of the singular ease with which his victory was achieved.

But to come to modern times. The most recent book I have seen on Chinese Turkestan is, I believe, Professor Ellsworth Huntington's 'Pulse of Asia,' published a couple of years ago. The following extract will show what impression the native character has made on this highly scientific explorer :

'I have made a list of the qualities of the Chantos (natives) which most impressed me, and which I find most frequently mentioned in the writings of others. Among the good qualities, the chief are gentleness, good temper, hospitality, courtesy, patience, contentment, democracy, religious tolerance, and industry. Among the bad are timidity, dishonesty, stupidity, provincialism, childishness, lack of initiative, lack of curiosity, indifference to the suffering of others, and immorality. It is noticeable that strong characteristics, whether good or bad, are absent. Determination, courage, aggressiveness, insolence, violence, fanaticism, and the like, are almost unknown among the Chantos.'

This description is, I think, very fair, and I can endorse almost every word of Professor Huntingdon.

But you may say that, if the Turkestanis are as mediocre as they have been painted, how is it that the Chinese rule over them was overthrown on several occasions in the nineteenth century ?

Now, if we look into the matter carefully, we shall find that the rôle played by the native Turkestanians in all these revolutions had always been a most insignificant one. It was the Kokandians from over the border who unceasingly defied and undermined the Chinese authority, and agitated, for their own benefit, the re-establishment of the old Khoja régime ; and as for the Kashgarians, if they rose at all, they did so, not from any sense of ambition or of conviction, but merely to save their face before their co-religionists. Nor did these people depart from their habitual passive attitude during the last great rebellion which overthrew the Chinese power in Turkestan from 1862 to 1877. In this case the troubles did not originate from the usual quarter—that is, Kokand—but from a totally new direction—the Chinese Tungani Mohammedans, a race with whom the Kashgarians never had any sympathy. And when the Chinese quelled the Tungani rebellion in 1876, and their General, Tso-Tsung-Tang, was marching on Kashgar, what was the attitude of the natives ? See what Sir Francis Younghusband, who travelled through the country when the embers of the conflagration had only just died down, writes on the subject in his 'In the Heart of a Continent': 'On hearing that the Chinese were close to the town, the natives hastily threw aside their uniforms or disguises as soldiers, and, assuming the dresses as cultivators, walked about the fields in a lamb-like and innocent manner. The Chinese entered the town, and everything went on as if nothing had happened. The shopkeeper sold his wares, the countryman ploughed his fields, totally indifferent as to who was or who was not in power.'

Now I think I have brought forward sufficient evidence in support of my first point—namely, that the natives of Turkestan are essentially a docile and easily managed people—and there can be no question that the task of the Chinese administration has been correspondingly alleviated.

But China has also been benefited by a condition of things created by her neighbour on her northern and western border—I mean Russia. The cause of all China's woes in Turkestan was centred on the Khanate of Kokand, whose influence and intrigues were so much feared by the Chinese that the latter, in order to

purchase the goodwill of the Kokandians, used to pay them a yearly subsidy equal to £3,500 of our money. Kokand was taken by the Russians in 1876, and, with the loss by the State of its independence, the Chinese were well rid of a troublesome and fanatical element on their border. Of course, it might be argued that the Chinese gained nothing by the substitution of Russia for Kokand. Be this as it may, one thing is beyond question—and it is, since the incorporation of Kokand into the Russian Empire, the peace of Kashgar has remained undisturbed, and that for a period of over thirty years. It is true that at certain times the shadow cast by the Northern Colossus over Chinese Turkestan was ominously large. But when we bear in mind what strong cards Russia had in her hands, what political use she might have made of all the shadowy rights of Kokand to which she succeeded, how geographically and militarily the country was at Russia's mercy—well, I won't say that she has behaved with conspicuous moderation, but I will say that she might have gone a good deal farther than she did.

Still, however much China's administrative task may have been lightened by the two factors to which I have alluded—namely, the natural docility of the native Kashgarian and the suppression of Kokandi intrigues, it would be a gross injustice to her to suppose that these form anything like the foundation of her strength. This strength rests on far more substantial ground—no less than the good-will of the governed—good-will in return for benefits received.

Eastern Turkestan has, under the Chinese rule, enjoyed the blessings of peace for over thirty years, and there can be no doubt that in the interval, the country has advanced considerably in prosperity. I do not say that the Chinese by extraordinary activity have contributed to this result; but I do say that indirectly, by giving the country what it most needed—repose and order—they have created a condition of things wherein the people have had a better opportunity than they ever enjoyed before to work out their own salvation. The 7,000 or 8,000 troops which the Chinese maintain at different centres in the Sin-Chiang Province still on the old-fashion model are, of course, hopelessly ineffective to meet a foreign invasion, but they serve the purpose for which all Chinese provincial armies are created—to cope with what may be called the normal incidents of local life: repression of bandits, petty disturbances, fiscal riots. And with the establishment of an orderly Government, the people have been freed from the grosser sort of oppression. Property is fairly secure; much waste land has been reclaimed by the construction of numerous irrigation canals; the

population has been on the increase ; the standard of comfort has risen ; trade has progressed, and with the accumulation of wealth in the country, the purchasing power of the natives for foreign goods has grown—a condition of things which is reacting favourably on the trade with India, but in a more marked degree with Russia, the value of which has, at least, trebled within the last twenty-five years.

It may be thought by some that even to have produced these results, superficial as they be, the Chinese authorities must have been gifted with a rare political insight, when it is considered that the race they are governing is not a kindred, but an alien one. No doubt some credit is due to the Chinese ; at the same time, it would be wrong, I think, to suppose that they have ever been placed in Turkestan face to face with a native problem of such complexity as would require them to approach it from an angle of vision other than that which they ordinarily take in relation to affairs in their own country. In the first place, both parties are Orientals, and as such they have much in common in their ideas of government ; and in the second, China, by her ancient civilization and her individuality, which she has preserved through all changes, does compel the respect and the submission of a race as simple as the Turkestanis, just in the same way as, in bygone ages, by these very factors, she exercised an overwhelming influence on the Mongols and the Manchus. Thus the Chinese entered into possession in Turkestan with a moral equipment of a superior order, and yet of an order not incomprehensible to their Mohammedan subjects ; and they readily saw that their methods of administration—those which have been employed from times immemorial in the inner provinces, might be transferred to this outlying region. The guiding principles are therefore much the same here in Turkestan as they are in China Proper. Those which have struck me most during my sojourn in Kashgar may be summed up under the four following heads :

1. Toleration.
2. Control of the mass by winning over the gentry.
3. Personal responsibility on the part of the officials for all breaches of the peace in their jurisdiction.
4. Prestige, founded on the preservation in its fulness of Chinese individuality in an alien environment.

Perhaps you will bear with me if I enlarge somewhat on these points. It is a paradox, but it seems to me none the less true, that in her very laxity and *laissez-faire* lies one of the secrets of China's

power in this Mohammedan country; for the Chinese thoroughly appreciate the spirit of the French saying, 'Trop de zèle, beaucoup de bêtises,' in meddling with the social system of an alien race. The consequence is, given certain general principles, no attempt is ever made to interfere with or to disorganize native institutions, or to subject the population to those vexatious restraints which are often imposed by legislation aiming at making people happy in spite of themselves. Administer as little as possible is the golden rule of the Chinese. On the other hand, the Chinese theory of Government, and especially of the limits of its power, corresponds fairly well with that commonly accepted by Mohammedans. The Government is there to collect the taxes, to watch over the public security, and to punish crime; but it has little to do with civil matters, which in China Proper are left to merchant guilds, or to village elders, or to the arbitration of friends; and in Turkestan we find the Chinese following the parallel system of relegating all such, when they involve no question clashing with their own prerogatives, to the Shariat—that is, the Mohammedan religious Court. But in order that the power of the Kazis, Muftis, etc.—who constitute the Shariat—may be kept within due bounds, their nomination, which is made by the people, has to receive the ratification of the local Chinese district official, who reserves to himself an unfettered discretion to remove any Mohammedan judge shown to be unworthy of the post. The whole system is remarkably tolerant, but not ill-balanced, and does, as a matter of fact, avert conflicts between the rights of the rulers and those based on the religion of the ruled.

My second point is that the Chinese idea of government, democratic as it is, is not, as it is with us in Europe, from the lower stratum of society to the upper, but from the upper to the lower; and this idea is in special evidence in Turkestan, where Chinese officials rarely come in contact with the common people, and still more rarely affect to understand their needs. Does the Amban care for the good opinion of what we would call the man in the street? I should say not. Government, in his view, is not an institution for the elevation of society, but an organization simply for the maintenance of public order; and he is philosopher enough to comprehend that order is seldom troubled by the lower classes, who are dumb even under oppression, if they be without a leader. It therefore serves no useful purpose for the official to gain the favour of the flock, but it behoves him to ingratiate himself with the shepherd. The Chinese administration, consequently, deals with important native personages; and so long as these are

content, all is well, even if the rank and file be left somewhat to their oppression. This view of things is in striking contrast to our own methods in India, where an attempt at least is made to safeguard the rights and privileges even of the humblest of the community. And yet, taking the Chinese administration as we find it—one without the slightest altruistic aims—we cannot but admire the practical character, if not the callousness, of its method, which, after all, has some points of resemblance with that successfully followed by the Romans of old in their Provincial Governments. Needless to say that under such a system nothing is done to raise the moral level of the masses by what we would call education.

The third principle which all Chinese officials in district charge are expected to bear in mind is that they are held personally responsible for any insurrection or discontent sufficiently pronounced to disturb the serenity of the atmosphere in the higher Yamens. The grain-tax—the only one which really weighs on the people and likely to cause friction—must be gathered in judiciously; and by ‘judiciously’ a scrupulous adherence to the regulations is not meant; for the scale of taxation, as fixed by law, framed a long time ago, and on no account to be changed so long as the present dynasty lasts, is absurdly low; but circumspection is implied, that the patience of the people must not be tried beyond endurance. In practice it has been found that a grain-tax amounting to about 25 per cent. of the crop may be levied without manifestations of discontent, and most district officials keep within this safe limit. But I well remember that once an acquaintance of mine went up to seven times the official rate, with the result, however, that he had to disgorge, and had to be recommended a change of air.

But even under the best of governments, popular disturbances will happen, sometimes caused by the faults of individual officials, and sometimes produced by events quite beyond their control. To the honour of the Chinese administration, be it said, that seldom is any attempt made to uphold a really undeserving official—he is disgraced or cashiered, or even cast into prison. The procedure, however, with regard to the other case—that is, when a disturbance takes place under circumstances for which we, at least, would not hold the official on the spot responsible—is rather anomalous according to our notions. With us, when a district is disturbed, the first consideration is to uphold authority—to send troops, if need be, to the scene. Not so with the Chinese. Force is seldom resorted to, for the simple reason that they have very

little force behind them. The first step is, *per fas et nefas*, to fix the blame on the district officer and to remove him. He was responsible for the tranquillity of his charge, and because there had been an outbreak, he had, *ipso facto*, shown himself incapable or undiplomatic. The situation calls for a scapegoat, and the sacrifice of the local official is made, in order to soothe the mob, and to bring them to a more tractable frame of mind. The next step is for the higher authorities to draw in the reins by holding an inquiry, not necessarily at the local Yamen, but preferably at their own, usually some distance from the scene of disturbance. The ringleaders are asked to attend ostensibly as witnesses; but in nine cases out of ten they end up by being converted into criminals and given a severe punishment, always on the unimpeachable ground of having made a row, instead of representing their grievances to the higher authorities.

The face of the Government having been thus saved, a fresh *modus vivendi* is arrived at by mutual concessions. Order is re-established, and so far as the disturbed district is concerned, the matter is at an end. But what of the official? Is he to be altogether sacrificed? Vicariously, he must bear the brunt of the situation, even if the fault lay not with him, but with his superiors whose mandates he was carrying out. But in practice a sense of justice prevails in the long run; the sacrificed official is given a chance to clear himself, and often compensation by a transfer or even a promotion to some other charge. Underlying the whole system, two settled rules of action—both highly opportunist—may be detected. The one is that, whatever disturbance occurs, the Provincial Government, as a whole, must never be compromised, and that, out of every débâcle, its reputation for benevolent intentions towards the population must emerge immaculate. And the other rule is that the district official may govern or misgovern as much as he pleases, subject, however, to the acquiescence of the people, who are his natural checks, and have a perfect right to clamour and to make their grievances known at headquarters. Frequently have I seen officials getting themselves into serious trouble, not because they have been more rapacious than others, but simply because they happen to have found themselves in a district where the population are more than usually intriguing or tenacious of their rights. How often, too, have I seen native deputations travelling to Kashgar to lay their complaints before the Taotai; and how often also have I heard of threatened district officials, fearing the consequences, ignominiously sending out

agents to waylay the deputies and to bring them back, if possible, by blandishments or threats.

The fourth principle I seem to discern in the administration is, that a Chinese official must preserve intact, in his foreign surroundings, his national individuality. Tolerant as he is towards those he governs, he exacts tolerance in return, and a strict compliance with Chinese customs and formalities in the conduct of business in the Yamen. His legal procedure is a simple replica of that current in China Proper; and native Mohammedans in a trial are subjected to the humiliation of going down on their knees and of uncovering their heads, just in the same manner as Chinamen would be, under similar circumstances, in their own country. On principle, the Amban speak no language but Chinese in Court, communicating with the parties through an interpreter. He never relaxes into familiarity with the natives, always treating them with the air of a grand *seigneur*, and maintaining a dignified, but a kindly, attitude of isolation, which stamps him as a man of quality and culture. Thus it is that, despite his peccadillos and jugglery of administration—which, be it said, do not necessarily shock the native mind—he remains an imposing personage in his foreign surroundings.

Such, then, are some of the principles of the Chinese administration in Turkestan; and on the whole I think they have been successfully applied, if a fair measure of native contentment may be taken as a criterion. It would be idle to ask if the Chinese, as such, are popular with the Mohammedan race they govern. We might just as well ask if we Britishers are personally liked by the races of India. But both the Chinese and we have a common basis for our strength, in that the natives of Turkestan, as well as those of India, recognize that the foreigners have been able to establish forms of government more righteous and more tolerant than any which they themselves, with all their clashing interests, could ever have evolved. And as for the Turkestanis, I firmly believe that were it possible to take their suffrage to-morrow, putting the Chinese on the one side, and the old Khoja royal family on the other, they would unhesitatingly prefer the foreigner, under whom they have always enjoyed a reasonable security of person and property, to their own people, under whom these blessings have been conspicuous only by their absence. To sum up, the Chinese administration in Eastern Turkestan is mild and humane—more supple than firm; and in spite of its corruption, seems to satisfy the natives of the country for the present; although it must be said that under pan-Islamic influences, there are already

vague indications of an awakening amongst them—awakening which sooner or later will have to be taken into account by the governing race. At the same time, you will agree that the Chinese administration — apart from its feature of tolerance — presents nothing for imitation by us, as rulers of Asiatics, who have already been taught by us to share in the responsibility of government, and to expect from those in authority something more than the elementary function of policing and taxing a country.

DISCUSSION

Dr. A. M. STEIN: After the truly admirable survey of the political and social condition in Chinese Turkestan we have had, I feel some hesitation in responding to the call from the chair to speak. I came here absolutely convinced that anything Mr. Macartney would tell us about the political conditions in Turkestan and about the rule of the Chinese would be, as it were, the last word that could be heard on the subject. There can be no one in this country, or indeed in any country of Europe, who has studied Chinese rule in Turkestan longer or with a keener eye than he has done. I have had the good fortune to travel far in this dependency of China, and I have not been in any part of this extensive territory without hearing the same thing—that if any Sahib knew anything of the country it was Macartney Sahib. It has been a special piece of good fortune for the Indian Government and the British Empire that our interests have been represented there for something like twenty years by so admirable a judge of men as Mr. Macartney, and one so exceptionally qualified not only to understand the facts, but also to grasp the ideas, and sympathize with those with whom he is brought into contact. The opinion I have just expressed is held not by the Chinese officials alone, but also by the Begs, or native subordinate officials, and the people in all parts where Mr. Macartney has travelled.

There are only one or two points in the survey we have heard on which I would like to say a few words. I am glad to note that the lecturer recognizes the slow but steady improvement which I believe is taking place in the country. Going back as I did three years ago, after an absence of nearly six years from the country, it was to me a most striking fact that the Administration was trying to develop the economic resources of the land, and the officials realized more than they did before that, after all, it was to the advantage of the rulers themselves, not only to maintain security and peace—an elementary duty they have steadfastly discharged—but to encourage an extension of cultivation. Coming back by way of the oasis of Kelpin, it was a great pleasure to me to note that extensive tracts had been regained from the desert. This has, no doubt, been the work of the cultivators, and not of the Chinese officials. But the work is to some extent speculative, and the landowners would not have entered upon a task

not immediately productive if they did not know that the colonists in the new tracts would be well treated. The work, you must remember, involved what is for those regions extensive irrigation. That they have been treated fairly well is proved from the fact that this enterprise continues steadily, and it is advantageous not only to the big landowners, but also to the actual occupants of the new lands.

With regard to the character of the Turkestanis, I think we might have a very long discussion if we went into an historical retrospect bearing on the causes contributing to their characteristics. What they are is largely the result of a long history, in which a part was played by different nations and peoples. They have been described as indifferent, slow, wanting in enterprise, and so on. I believe that one of the chief reasons for these traits is to be found in what is, after all, perhaps, a fortunate circumstance. Turkestan is under-populated, and it has been under-populated for a very long period. There is no pressure of competition driving the people into hard exertions, such as we find not only in Europe, but in many parts of India, where the population tends to exceed the capacity of the soil to maintain it. I am not saying whether under-population is a good thing or a bad thing; I am only calling attention to its existence as explaining the absence of an enterprising spirit, and to show that this lack need not surprise us when we think of the country as one where a living can be made without much exertion. Whether that is pleasant or not, I leave to be decided according to the principles of those who judge their fellow-creatures either by their economic condition, or by their intentions, or by their moral standards. ✓

Another point on which I wish to speak is that corruption is practised, so far as I have observed, by the native Begs more than by the Chinese officials. These Begs belong to families which have always exercised influence and secured posts. The money they make, after all, is not drained away. It remains in the country, and goes back to the population in the purchase of food and other necessaries. This applies in some degree to the gratifications taken by the Ambans. The amount 'drained' into China Proper is by no means large. The bulk of the money passes into the hands of the local traders and the more enterprising classes. As regards the administration of justice, I am not qualified to express any special opinions; but I do feel one thing—that the country is blessed in the absence of pleaders. (Laughter and cheers.) If the Chinese official keeps the money of the man he favours, and returns the bribe of the other side, the amount that passes is very small compared with the enormous takings in India of the lawyers and pleaders, whose sentiments and feelings are no more understood by the people at large than are those of the Chinese officials in Turkestan.

As to State education, it is conspicuous by its absence. Whether the Chinese are not quite right to leave the attainment of their literature and art to the unaided efforts of the people is a matter I will not here discuss. But it is noteworthy that the people, unaided by the State, do secure genuine elements of education. I read in a well-known book, of shepherds in a certain tract as being half savages. Well, I visited those shepherds, and found they were quite as civilized as the shepherds—say, in Central Europe or Eastern Europe, possibly as those in certain parts of the Highlands. (Laughter.) I found that these men had been at school in a distant town, and had obtained some elementary knowledge. The fact of each man having sat at the feet of a strict master as a boy for two or three years had a very good disciplinary effect, and it had the advantage that it did not spoil him for the kind of life he was destined to lead. (Hear, hear.) We cannot say that education has always succeeded in that respect in other countries.

The Central Asian Society is to be congratulated upon having heard from a most competent judge of Eastern Turkestan such a comprehensive survey of its political condition. The publication of the lecture will soon, I hope, follow, for the accessibility of this paper will be of service to all those who are working at Central Asian problems, and it will illustrate once more how much that is ancient survives to this day in Turkestan. (Cheers.)

Mr. E. DELMAR MORGAN said that he was in Turkestan in 1880, thanks to the kindness of the Russian authorities, who allowed him to travel alone. In those days, more than these, it was a difficult thing to get into the country, and he was fortunate in being there when relations between Russia and China were strained. The Russians were marching on the Chinese capital in those regions, but the negotiations ended in a pacific solution of the dispute. A strong force of cavalry and infantry was on the march up the valley of one of the principal feeders of the River Ela. He there met great generals and officers of the Russian army, including General Kaufmann and General Kuropatkin. The Mongols who accompanied him as servants were good fellows, but they could not exchange observations, excepting that one of them spoke a few words of Russian, and he was therefore able to understand him a little. They were typical Mongols, riding their horses as if they had been almost born in the saddle. Since then the country had been explored by distinguished travellers, Dr. Stein amongst them, and much light had been thrown upon its storied past. He was himself much impressed by visiting the graveyards of the Nestorian Christians, who seemed to have entered the country from the West. They perished in the Islamic invasion, and Christianity was swept back. The Moslem faith was carried on and on, and spread

to most parts of China. He thought this fact had something to do with the Tai-ping rebellion which broke out so many years ago, and which was put down in great measure by General Gordon. He believed one of the best books they had on Chinese Turkestan was written by an American traveller, Mr. Huntingdon. He was of opinion that a great future awaited this interesting country, particularly by the adoption of irrigation on a large scale. Much had been done in this way in Russian Turkestan, and this example could be followed in the Chinese dependency, where the land would be suitable for the growth of cotton and other things.

The CHAIRMAN proposed a vote of thanks to Mr. Macartney for his paper on a subject on which he might be said to be the highest living authority.

The vote was carried with acclamation, and the proceedings terminated.

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY

INDIA IN IMPERIAL DEFENCE

BY

CAPTAIN D. I. MACAULAY

Delivered November 10, 1909



LONDON
CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY, 22, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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INDIA IN IMPERIAL DEFENCE

IN the absence of Lord Ronaldshay, M.P., GENERAL SIR EDWIN COLLEN took the chair, and, in introducing Captain Macaulay, said that for several years he had carefully studied the subject on which he was to speak. His father, a personal friend of his own, was Mr. Colman Macaulay, of the Bengal Civil Service, who headed the Tibet Mission in 1884, and was thus the means of bringing together the representatives of Tibet and of the Government of India for the first time, he believed, since the days of Warren Hastings. The large map of the globe they saw before them was prepared two or three years ago by Captain Macaulay at his own expense. He had had a very short time to prepare the paper for them, as he was leaving for India on the following day. This added to their obligation to him for dealing with what must be to all of them a most interesting subject. (Cheers.)

The subject I propose to deal with this afternoon is India in Imperial Defence. I fear this question does not strictly come within the purview of the subjects which attract the special interest of the Central Asian Society. I am aware that, since its foundation, the Society has very considerably extended its original field of research. In fact, as sketched by Lord Curzon at the Society's Annual Dinner last year, your field now includes the whole of Asia. My subject, however, extends beyond the limits of Asia itself, and I therefore feel that it needs some apology. My main object this evening will be to show that the military policy necessary to India for her own local defence is precisely similar to that best suited to her as a unit in British Imperial Defence. Indian local defence is almost entirely—though not absolutely entirely—dependent on Asiatic influences, which will therefore be my starting-point. If I afterwards look outwards from Asia, I will do so from an Asiatic standpoint. My object will be to show that India is the pivot of world strategy east of Suez, and that Indian defence is the key to the defence of all our territory touching the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

I will begin my subject by a survey of Indian military policy with regard to the great Asiatic Powers.

RUSSIA.

First we may take Russia. Russia has been for many decades the darkest and largest cloud on the Indian military horizon. Her gradual and almost unceasing approach has been watched with deepest interest and apprehension by generations of British and Indian statesmen and soldiers. But of late we have, fortunately, been permitted to see that even this cloud has a silver lining. Our Agreement with Russia has certainly had some effect in lightening pressure on India's North-West Frontier. As regards Russia, India's military policy has always been a purely defensive one, but it requires her to maintain, if she had no other need of it, a large army of the highest efficiency. Her policy against possible Russian aggression is to maintain a buffer State, and, in the event of hostilities, a strategic defensive on an advanced line. The Indian North-West Frontier is, generally speaking, a defensive one.

AFGHANISTAN.

We now come to the buffer State Afghanistan, which in the past has been the source from which many a flood of invasion has burst over the plains of India. Whether the future will ever bring a repetition of history in this respect no one can tell. We devoutly hope it will not. For present purposes it is sufficient to say that we have always to be prepared for disturbances beyond our North-West Frontier, and that, in certain eventualities, our policy would be one of correction, by means of military forces, combined with offensive strategy, though after the application of the required correction, our policy of the buffer State might be resumed without annexation of territory. Afghanistan demands the same efficient land forces as does Russia. And though I dismiss it in a few lines to-night, I do not wish in any way to incur a charge of under-appreciating the difficulties with which we might be faced in a war in Afghanistan under modern conditions. I would, indeed, point out that, large and efficient as the Indian Army is, a war with either Russia or Afghanistan would certainly demand a large reinforcement from oversea of the Indian garrison, and this necessity for reinforcement is one that must be constantly kept in view.

CHINA.

Next, I will move to the North-East Frontier, which will not delay us long. Here we have China, another colossus, who, if she is awaking, has not yet succeeded in shaking off her lethargy

of ages. The future of China is still in the lap of the gods, and the question of the possible defence of the North-East Frontier need not yet be considered as within the sphere of practical politics, to the extent of gravely influencing the military policy of India. Looking into the future, it is fairly safe to say that even if China does become a great world-Power, we, aided by the great natural barrier which our North-East Frontier presents to a hostile advance, would treat it as a defensive one, and use offensive strategy against China by sea forces against sea forces, and with expeditionary forces strike at one or more of the many exposed points of her immense sea-line. The main point to be noticed with regard to China's possible influence on India's war policy in the future is that she may make sea forces as well as land forces necessary for India's defence. We may, I think, safely neglect for our present purpose France in Indo-China and Siam.

PERSIA.

Returning now to the west, we have Persia. Persia is in the melting-pot, and no human mind can foretell how she will issue from it. As a menace to Indian territory, she may be considered a negligible quantity. At the same time, her future and her present is a subject of the deepest interest to India and Great Britain. We cannot help sympathizing with her in her hour of trouble. As things are at present, she has two great and powerful nations standing by to render assistance in her hour of distress. Our agreement with Russia has so far had this happy result for her. India's interest in Persia centres mainly in the future of the northern littoral of the Persian Gulf and of Khorassan.

TURKEY.

Leaving Persia, we come to Turkey. India's peculiar interest in the Turkey of to-day is threefold—interest in her new political life, in the Bagdad Railway, and in the future of Egypt. To the first of these I only allude in passing. The rise under democratic institutions of a great Mohammedan power, which under its old and discarded form of government was known as the Sick Man of Europe, must be, of course, an event of supreme importance in the future problems of Central Asia and Northern Africa. The influence on India of the recent movement may be far-reaching.

The Asiatic-Turkish railway system will consist of a trunk from the European head, with two strong limbs stretching south

and south-east, and affecting Egypt with the Suez Canal on the one hand, and the Persian Gulf on the other. Both the Suez Canal and the Persian Gulf are objects of the deepest interest to the whole Empire east of Suez, and in a special degree to India, and anything affecting them must certainly affect her military policy in the future in common with that of the Empire in general. Heretofore the defence of Egypt was merely a matter of sea power in the Mediterranean. The question of the Persian Gulf has ever been one of anxiety to India. Our agreement with Russia dealt partially with one of its acutest phases. But the Bagdad Railway keeps the question in evidence. Personally, I think that the best solution to both these problems, as far as India is concerned, is to be found in a railway joining Egypt to India, traversing Northern Arabia, and touching the head of the Gulf. I find that this very railway has been discussed already before the Central Asian Society by Mr. Drummond Black, whose paper I have had the privilege of reading. I will not, therefore, reopen the subject further than to say that this line seems to me to kill three birds with one stone. It would give us decisive influence in Southern Persia, and flank the Euphrates Valley and Mecca lines.

The Asiatic railway system of Turkey is a matter of special military interest to us at present. Only the other day it was announced that the section of the Bagdad Railway to Aleppo was sanctioned, and about to be commenced. At Aleppo it will join up with the Damascus-Mecca line.

JAPAN.

I now turn to Japan. The rise of Japan as a great world Power is not a question of the future. It is already an accomplished fact. It has violently and suddenly altered world strategy. It has had an extraordinary disturbing effect on almost the whole of Asia. Turkey owes to it her rejuvenation. Persia, in her age and inherent weakness, has taken her inoculation almost as a disease—whether as a fatal disease or a prelude to new life the future can alone decide. India, with her millions, has been stirred by it. Even China has shown signs of waking up. What is of more interest to us now is the effect on Indian strategy of the rise of a great foreign Power in the Pacific. The strategical influence of Japan on India has been somewhat obscured by the Japanese Alliance. But alliances, I submit, are the most fleeting and the most changeable of influences on

strategy. They may affect strategical dispositions, but they should never be permitted to alter the fundamental basis of strategic policy and future proper strategic organization. Alliances, moreover, are founded on interest, not on sentiment. They are apt to be more lasting when based on equitable provision of strength than if they result in the neglect of ordinary military precaution in organization and armaments. The maintenance of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance is of great practical interest to India.

In considering the rise of Japan as an influence on Indian defensive policy, we are only considering a part of a much larger whole. The development of Japan may be considered as a present-day manifestation—or, at least, the acutest symptom of the development of the Pacific—and it is as a manifestation of the latter that we should regard it for our present purpose. It is not by any means the only manifestation of this new influence on the Indian Defence System. The foreshadowed awakening of China, the establishment in the Philippines of the great Power from the Eastern Pacific, the rapidly approaching completion of the Panama Canal, the question of the future of the Dutch East Indies, are all more or less important parts of the same problem. No part of the British Empire—and we may say no part of the world—is more interested in the development of the Pacific than is India. Its first effect on her is this : It has made Colombo and Singapore as essential parts of the Indian Defence System as are Quetta and Peshawar, because the former are the natural defences of India against the Pacific. In the event of a naval war in the Western Pacific, a hold on Hong-Kong and Labuan would be as necessary to India as might be Kabul and Kandahar in other circumstances. The safety of all these places depends fundamentally on sea-power. It is India's first interest that in the future there should be somewhere between Colombo and Hong-Kong British naval forces, whose strength should be commensurate with that of foreign naval Powers in the Pacific. That seems to me by far the most important requirement for Indian defence which we have to consider in connection with modern world strategy.

GERMAN NAVY.

I now turn for a moment to an influence on Indian defence which is not Asiatic—the rise of the German Navy. The rise of the German Navy, combined with the disappearance of Russian naval forces from the Pacific, has had the effect of concentrating

in European waters the whole of our two-Power standard navy. The two-Power standard, as we know, was originally designed as a strategic generalization to cover the problems arising out of developments of naval power in Europe, or, at least, of the distribution of European fleets in various parts of the world. The distribution of our two-Power standard navy is, therefore, mainly dependent on the distribution of European fleets. The disappearance of a large European fleet from the Pacific and the rise of another in the North Sea, has resulted in the transfer of the main part of our naval forces in the Pacific to home waters. Now, so long as we had naval forces in the Pacific capable of dealing with European fleets there, and so long as we had the command of the Mediterranean, it is clear that India had nothing to fear from the sea.

But India is now left denuded of naval protection from the East ; and I would suggest that naval protection from the East is becoming more important for her than it ever was before. The rise of *Pacific* naval Powers is a very different thing from European naval forces located in the Pacific. European naval forces, based in the Pacific, had the inherent weakness that they were fundamentally based in Europe. While we had absolute command of all the routes from the West they could not be reinforced. If all other things were equal, it would be much more difficult to deal with a Chinese fleet in the Western Pacific than it would be with a French or a German one, or even a Russian. This is an important point to be remembered.

Now, if the distribution of the two-Power standard navy is—as it evidently is—dependent on the distribution of European navies, it is clear that it can in no sense be considered a generalization covering all the modern problems of world strategy, including that of the naval defence of India under modern conditions. When it was laid down as a strategic generalization there was no truly Pacific foreign Power worth considering. The two-Power standard stands at present merely on sufferance. It could not exist for another day if the Japanese Alliance came to an end, or if there arose a potentially hostile modern Chinese fleet.

You will remember Mr. Asquith's theory about an Extra-European naval Power. He maintained that there was no necessity for us to build against them ship to ship, because their aggressive power against us was clearly diminished in proportion to their distance from the British Isles. He took an awakened China as an example to illustrate this theory, and endeavoured to show

that, because China is 10,000 miles distant from the United Kingdom, we need not consider her aggressive power as measured by her strength in battleships.

Now, an Extra-European Power would certainly not attack the British Isles, any more than Japan would send an armada to the Gulf of Finland, but would attack that part of British territory in which she had special interest. With the exception of South American States in the Pacific, there is no Extra-European Power which is not much nearer to those parts of British territory in which it has special interest than are the British Isles—*e.g.*, the United States to Canada ; China and Japan to Hong-Kong, Singapore, India, Canada, and Australia. It is clear that it would be on these points that the attack of an Extra-European Power would be made. In the seas in their vicinity naval supremacy would be decided. The factor of distance is therefore against us, and not in our favour, and the greater the distance, the greater would be our disadvantage.

Besides this, the navy is an offensive force. The strength of purely defensive forces, such as our Territorial Army or the Swiss Army, is calculated on the aggressive power of possible enemies. The strength of offensive forces such as the British Navy or the German Army is calculated on the aggressive force necessary to overcome possible enemies. The distance of an Extra-European Power from the British Isles is a factor against us, and diminishes our aggressive power against them. It is, therefore, a reason for increase in our comparative standard of our offensive forces, not for decrease. And the greater the distance, the greater the comparative increase required. So true is this that there is a point (which we may take roughly as 4,500 miles) where geographical distance becomes so great that it can no longer be considered as a mere magnifying influence on our naval standard. It requires not merely a higher standard, but an entirely new naval system *in addition to* the two-Power standard, so placed as to eliminate as far as possible the factor of distance altogether. That this line of thought is correct is proved by the Defence Conference and the organization of a Pacific fleet. No part of the Empire is more vitally interested in the establishment of this Eastern naval system than is India. And it is manifestly her interest, from the point of view of her own defence and the defence of her fast-growing sea-borne trade, to do what she can to assist in the development of the new naval system. This seems to me to be a consideration which

should have considerable influence on India's policy in the future.

Before proceeding to consider the measures which India might take in the future in support of our Eastern naval system, I would wish to indicate some reasons why India's policy to this end in her own interest may justly be considered as her best contribution to Imperial defence. I will endeavour to show that a fleet so placed as to directly protect India herself is also so placed as to best defend Imperial interests east of Suez in general. It is clear that if this is so, it must be essentially due to the actual strategic position and value of India, which I now proceed to examine. I would first draw your attention to a rather curious comparison between the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, and their respective influence on the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. You will find that, taking everything on a much larger scale, there is a very significant geographical, and therefore strategical, resemblance between the North Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean. We have, first, the narrow waters of Aden corresponding—shall we say?—with the Suez Canal. We have in each a central peninsula—India here, Italy there. We have Ceylon corresponding—in its relation to the central peninsula—to Sicily or Malta in the Mediterranean. We have Singapore corresponding to Gibraltar—these places commanding the exit from the smaller to the larger expanses of water in each case. We might continue the comparison by contrasting the Himalayas with the Alps, and indicating the lines of invasion of either peninsula from north-west to north-east. We could also call the Persian Gulf our Black Sea. The comparison, of course, ceases to be anything like exact towards the south, but if we consider our possessions on the east and south of Africa and Australia, and our numerous strategic possessions in the Indian Ocean, and the general absence of foreign naval bases, we may consider the Indian Ocean a *mare clausum* to a certain extent. For the purpose of our comparison we may take Africa as roughly corresponding with Egypt and the Soudan, and Australia as our West African possessions, with the Dutch East Indies as Morocco. It will be admitted that in geographical structure there is a very considerable resemblance between the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, especially as regards their northern shores. But the resemblance is confined to geographical structure alone. In political structure they are entirely different. The Indian Ocean is practically a British Mediterranean.

Now let us examine the Mediterranean politically constituted,

as is the Indian Ocean of to-day, and see what effect it would have on the Atlantic, and the Atlantic on it. Suppose Italy possessed not only Sicily, but the south coast of France (Burma), Gibraltar (Singapore), Bordeaux (Hong-Kong), our West African possessions (Australasia), and Canada. Suppose that the Black Sea contained no foreign naval Power, and that Italy merely wished to prevent the development of a foreign naval power there. With these as data, how would Italy place her naval forces to protect her possessions against possible hostilities with England (Japan), France (China), and the United States ? First, where would she place them to protect herself ? and, secondly, where would she place them to protect West Africa (Australia) and Canada ? Let us give the United States Vigo to correspond to Manila.

Would Italy divide her forces between Bordeaux (Hong-Kong), Freetown (Sydney), and Salonica (Bombay) ? I do not think so. If she did either, England or France could crush the Bordeaux unit, seize Gibraltar, and attack either Italy or West Africa, with only one unit to deal with. For her own direct defence I do not think there is any doubt whatever that, though she might keep advanced guards at Bordeaux and Freetown, she would concentrate her main forces between Gibraltar (Singapore) and Sicily (Ceylon). And would she change these dispositions to protect West Africa and Canada ? I do not think so. At Gibraltar she is directly on the flank of any attack by England, France, or the United States or West Africa. And what about Canada ? From Gibraltar, with Bordeaux as an advanced base, she is nearer to England or to France than either of these countries are to Canada. They can, therefore, make no attack in force on Canada until they have dealt with her main fleet. Sicily and Gibraltar are the key to the Atlantic problem, as well as to the defence of Italy.

If, then, we look back to the Indian Ocean and the Pacific, we find that in precisely a similar manner, Colombo and Singapore are the key to the Pacific problem, as well as to the defence of India. An Indian Ocean Fleet based on Colombo and Singapore would also directly protect South Africa both from the Pacific and the Atlantic, because Colombo is nearer South Africa than any foreign fleet. The Aden-Colombo line, with a destroyer and small cruiser base at Bombay, is amply sufficient to look after the Persian Gulf. And, finally, a fleet based on Colombo and Singapore could either reinforce, or be reinforced from, the Mediterranean so long as the Suez Canal was passable. I think, then, that it is evident that in the North Indian Ocean we have a

position whose strategic value is exceptional for the solution of modern problems of world strategy, both as regards the territories we have to defend and the Powers against whom, in the future, we may be called upon to defend them (Mahan).

That there should be eventually a strong fleet in the position I have indicated is obviously to the interest of India for her own defence, and to the interest of the whole Empire. I therefore submit that it should be the aim of India's policy to secure the existence of that fleet in her own immediate interests, and that in doing so she is carrying out her most appropriate task as a unit of the British Empire for British Imperial Defence.

The question now remains : What can India do towards this end from the practical point of view of her own interests, and what can she be fairly called upon to do as a unit of the British Empire ? Upon what principle should the creation of this fleet be based, and what steps towards it are practical at the present moment ? I may say at once that I am not going to propose to you that India should at once start building and maintaining a fleet of her own. I do not think that this would be a practical policy from the point of view of her own resources, financial or otherwise; from the point of view of the strength which such a fleet should attain, and from the point of view of political expediency. As a purely personal opinion I would suggest that the principles governing the Indian Ocean Fleet of the future should be that *India should maintain the fleet*, which should be given to her and *owned by* the self-governing parts of the Empire in partnership. The maintenance of the fleet by India would be analogous to her maintenance of British land forces. The joint ownership of the fleet by the ruling race would make it our first truly Imperial asset, and thereby supply a centripetal force to counteract the possible centrifugal tendencies which may lie in local navies.

Our present Pacific Fleet, consisting of three fleet units, is probably the most extraordinary strategic organism in history. It is, indeed, not an organism, but an embryo, without head, or trunk, or vital organ. As definite successive steps towards the creation of our Eastern naval system I suggest—

1. That India should take over complete responsibility for the defence of Colombo and Singapore, which, as I have said, have become essential parts of her Defence System. This would cost her next to nothing, as the Crown colonies concerned practically pay for their garrisons and defences. Armaments have lately been supplied by the Imperial Government. The money now

being expended in Bombay should be spent on Colombo—India's best defensive base. A fully equipped dockyard should be established at Singapore by the Imperial Government, and handed over to India.

2. That the East India and China Squadrons should be definitely incorporated as one fleet under a Commander-in-Chief appointed in peace. The headquarters base of the fleet should be Singapore, with alternative bases at Colombo and Hong-Kong (each about 1,500 miles from Singapore) for the cruiser units respectively. This would be a very different thing to two independent squadrons based on Bombay and Hong-Kong (4,000 miles apart).

3. That Port Darwin should be fortified and (with a strengthening link at Thursday Island) made an alternative base to Sydney for the Australian fleet unit. This would bring the Australian naval forces into touch with the Singapore system, and would facilitate co-operation in war and combined training in peace without interfering with local control. Port Darwin is about 1,700 miles from Singapore; Sydney is over 4,000. The fortification of Port Darwin will, in any case, be rendered necessary by the building of the Australian Trans-continental Railway, which has at last been determined on. With Port Darwin as a fortified naval base and terminus of a Trans-continental Railway, the value of Australia as a unit in world strategy would be entirely revolutionized. The north coast of Australia is her only offensive-defensive sea base. Even from a domestic point of view Port Darwin will be her park gate, not her back-door, as Australians seem to think. From a military point of view it will be her portcullis gate, and not her postern.

4. That India should take over the maintenance of the East India and China Fleet units, as soon as the new vessels agreed on in the Defence Conference are built. Australia would be well advised to send her *Invincible* to this fleet, and by doing so would increase the strategic value of her three *Bristols*. A South African *Dreadnought* is, of course, a matter for the future. With it a complete *Dreadnought* unit could be organized. Even with these two projected *Dreadnoughts* the naval burden of India would not be great. The maintenance of these fleets would cost about £600,000 a year. Her own £100,000 contribution and New Zealand's contribution (£200,000) would be available towards it.

5. That the self-governing parts of the Empire would consider the question of constructing at least four *Dreadnought* battleships to be eventually handed over to the Indian Fleet.

6. That expenditure for this purpose should be met by a loan, the sinking fund and interest charges to be met by the self-governing nations on a fixed basis. This would be an opportunity for initiating Imperial finance on a basis of white population. The fleet, owned by the ruling races in partnership, would be our first truly Imperial asset. As such, it would have political as well as strategical value.

To show what this expenditure would mean, let us suppose that £10,000,000 were required for four *Dreadnoughts* and perhaps other details for the Indian Fleet. The annual charges on this Imperial debt would for the first five years be in the neighbourhood of £800,000, and after that period considerably less than this sum. The initial shares, on the estimated white population of 1908, would be approximately : United Kingdom, £625,000 ; Canada, £87,000 ; Australia, £58,000 ; South Africa, £17,500 ; New Zealand, £12,500. Newfoundland's share, if she wished to subscribe, would be about £1,500.

It will be seen that the share of the United Kingdom would be covered by relief from maintenance of the China and East India Squadrons. It would therefore involve no increase in our naval estimates, which will be large enough if we maintain the two-Power standard against Europe, as we undoubtedly should. It will also be conceded that the expenditure of Australia and Canada would not place any serious financial drag on the development of their local naval forces. New Zealand's share would be included in her present contribution, the balance of which would be available to assist India in maintaining the fleet. As regards South Africa, if we suppose that, after the Union, she would expend on naval defence twice the amount hitherto given by Cape Colony and Natal alone (a not unreasonable supposition), she could evidently not only defray the construction charges above calculated, but provide a "nucleus" *Dreadnought* by capitalizing the remainder of her annual outlay.

As regards India's expenditure in maintaining the fleet, I have discussed its expediency for her own as well as Imperial defence. If India in the future upholds her old tradition of responsibility for her own defence, she must maintain offensive sea forces as well as a defensive land force.

I would, therefore, deny with special stress that I make any suggestion for wringing a squadron out of India for Imperial defence. My proposal is that a squadron should be given to her, and maintained by her, for her *own* defence, in a properly balanced

system of Imperial defence. If India's strategical position is such that her own defence by sea also comprises the defence of other portions of the Empire, so much the better for the Empire, and for India herself, because she can justly claim some aid in return from the parts which her naval system would directly protect. At present this aid could most usefully be given through the medium of expeditionary forces, and it is thus India's first interest to secure the safe passage of such forces. It is evidently to India's interest that there should be available for her assistance expeditionary forces independent of European complications and the Suez Canal. I may add that the 11,000 bluejackets of the Indian Fleet will always be within a few days' steam of the great ports of Bombay or Calcutta, in the event of reinforcements being immediately required.

India's total naval expenditure would not exceed £2,000,000 to £2,500,000, allowing for maintenance of dockyards at Singapore and Colombo. This would not be incurred for some years. It must be remembered that India's sea-borne trade is already well over £200,000,000, and that the above expenditure would represent only about 1 per cent. insurance on that trade.

A glance at the map will show that with these changes our Pacific Fleet would become an Eastern Cerberus, with head and eyes in all directions, and a body of considerable strength. It would be very different (even without the four *Dreadnoughts*) to our so-called Pacific Fleet of to-day.

These are successive steps, which could be commenced now, and completed by, if necessary, 1912. If they can be, we may yet be in time. What is wanted is an Imperial Defence System that will be of effective value in the near, as well as the distant, future. Lord Roberts and Mr. Haldane are agreed that the dangerous time for the British Empire is *between* "twenty months" and "twenty years" hence.

DEFENCE CONFERENCE.

I now turn for a moment to the Defence Conference. Of the actual results, the military have been more valuable. The definite acceptance of an Imperial General Staff implies that the land forces of the different parts of the Empire will not be considered as local defence forces pure and simple, but will be available, by previous organization and predetermined plan, for extra-local—*e.g.*, mobile and offensive—strategical employment. That is a matter of great significance from an Indian point of view, because reinforcements

from oversea may always be necessary for her, either in a great frontier war or in widespread internal disturbances, and it is essential that these reinforcements should be independent of threatening European complications or of any interception in the Suez Canal.

As regards naval results, it is difficult to speak with as much satisfaction. They may be summed up as political strategy, which sometimes means bad politics, and almost invariably bad strategy. I am not going to enter here into a long discussion of the relative value of local navies and a united navy. Geographically, and therefore strategically, one navy is sound because the sea is one. Moreover, the self-governing provinces are not strategically well placed for strategic naval action. They are on the circumference, and not at the centre of the circle.

At the same time I would not have you think that I can see no good in local navies. I see a great deal of good in them. They will, of course, interest the Colonies in navies, and will increase our supply of naval personnel. Local navies and the Imperial General Staff will turn the thoughts of the Colonies to strategy. Hitherto they have thought only of development, and have had no time to think of strategy. Hence they think politically rather than strategically. New Zealand is a brilliant exception. This, perhaps, is due to her being an island. I think, then, that local navies will be of great instructional value. The more the Colonies learn of naval strategy, the more they will want a united navy, on whatever principle the unification may be founded. They may even discern that what they wanted is not all they thought it to be. The Canadian Parliament voted *unanimously* for a local navy before the Conference. There is now a strong body of opinion both in the Parliament and through the country in favour of contribution to the Imperial Navy. And this from Canada, who, up to a few months ago, steadily refused to have anything to do with a navy at all.

My chief objection to local navies is that they must be weak for a long time, and do not give us what we want. The question is, Have we time to get ready to meet the crisis before us? However, the local navy principle is accepted. But that is all the more reason for establishing a pivot on which the navies could work.

And now I come to what, to my mind, was the chief defect of the Defence Conference. India was not represented. The defence of India—the core of Imperial defence east of Suez—was not specially considered. As Lord Curzon said in his great

speech on India the other day at Edinburgh with reference to the omission of India from Imperial Conferences, "Even the problem of Imperial defence has often been discussed without relation to what is, in a sense, its pivot—viz., the defence of India." If in a strategical problem you omit the central strategical factor, you will certainly have faulty results. At the same time, I do not for a moment mean to imply that in this case the omission of India was avoidable. In fact, I think there is every reason to suppose that it was unavoidable. It certainly was considered, and was publicly advocated by Sir Edward Chapman in the *Times* before the Conference took place. Nor can we put it down to want of opportunity. It is seldom that a Commander-in-Chief-Elect of India can be in London at the time of an Imperial Conference, as was Sir O'Moore Creagh on this occasion. The presence at the Conference of Sir O'Moore Creagh, who will direct the military policy of India for the next term of years, would have been of great value to the delegates, and would have had a tightening effect on our Imperial strategy east of Suez. I do not say that Sir O'Moore Creagh would have advocated an Indian Ocean Fleet. But I do say that his presence would have made the delegates reflect on Indian defence. Had they done that, they would have found the key to their own defence, because the defence of India means the defence of all our territory touching the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

We can, however, console ourselves with the thought that the Conference of 1909 is not the end of all things. The inclusion of the Indian General Staff in the Imperial General Staff is an important step forward since the Conference itself. Lord Kitchener's visit to Australasia will probably produce important results on our Defence System east of Suez, particularly as regards expeditionary forces. And I think we may take for granted that India will be represented, and Indian defence specially considered, at the Conference of 1911. The question is, Have we got time? If we are to be in time, we must keep pushing on, and I think the first thing we have to try for is a central fleet for our Eastern naval system.

DISCUSSION

GENERAL SIR EDWARD CHAPMAN said the paper they had heard was of first-rate importance because it was a distinct acknowledgement that India was a sea Power. That acknowledgment had not before been publicly made, or, at least, it had not been put forward so clearly and in such detail. (Hear, hear.) He hoped that they would carefully consider the calculations Captain Macaulay had put before them. A redistribution of the British fleets was made about three years ago, in consequence of certain European complications, and of our alliance with Japan, and one outcome was to weaken our naval forces towards the Pacific. Such weakening would not have been permitted had it been recognized that India was to be regarded as a sea Power. At the recent Imperial Defence Conference there was no mention of India as a sea Power, and she was allowed no share whatever in the deliberations. It was very important, therefore, that those of them who took a sustained interest in India should bring to public notice clearly and distinctly the reasons why India should be regarded as a sea Power. If she was so regarded, all the rest would follow. Reinforcements for her assistance could be looked for from Australia and from South Africa, saving us in some measure the difficult and hampering task of trying to send reinforcements through the Mediterranean or round by the Cape at a time of international complication. Australia or South Africa might thus be able to save India in the same way as India saved South Africa. If ten years ago India had not had a force of 10,000 men thoroughly equipped and ready to go to the front at a moment's notice, we should have sustained crushing reverses, and should have lost Natal. The Boers would then have assumed the offensive towards Cape Colony. The more they could think out the details Captain Macaulay had laid before them the better; but they must first and foremost assert the principle that India's position as a sea Power must be acknowledged. Further, he would only say that the people of India needed to share in our Imperial thoughts. If we did not give them opportunities of expending their enthusiasm by becoming conscious of the partnership of Empire, they would be led to take part in Asiatic movements of a purely native character, and we should find it difficult to control them. (Cheers.)

DR. MILLER MAGUIRE : I quite agree with the gallant General that in all probability the Boers would have poured right through Natal at the beginning of the South African War had it not been for the timely assistance of the Indian contingent. I was soon after in correspondence with an official of the Boers, who told me that when the Boers

were considering their plans in the first instance, the possibility of such a thing as immediate reinforcements from India did not once occur to them. The General also referred to the extraordinary fact that India was not included in the recent Defence Conference. I would remind him that at the Imperial Press Conference a little earlier the situation in respect to the defences of the Empire was discussed for a long time, but all through the main consideration—that of the defence of India—remained undiscussed. This was an astonishing display of helpless incapacity by our pastors and teachers, and I essayed to call attention to it at the time, but it is scarcely necessary to say that no remarks of mine were permitted to reach the public. India has been the key-note of strategy in all ages, from Alexander the great to Napoleon. The great idea of the latter was to take Egypt and get control of India. The Pacific has become what the Mediterranean once was—the centre of naval strategy. It would be madness on our part not to most carefully consider the naval as well as the military requirements of the British possessions watered by the Pacific and the Indian Oceans. Everything has been changed since 1894-5, when Japan's victory over China altered the situation in the Far East, and when, a little later, the United States became supreme in the Philippines; and when, more recently, Japan beat Russia, Australia saw for the first time that possible danger to her was from the Far East. . . .

This afternoon, at the Royal United Service Institution, we have been considering the question of the food-supply of our Empire in time of war. It was clearly shown that there were possibilities of starvation for the people of these islands within three months of the outbreak of war. In this possibility we have another ground for making our position in the Pacific supreme, for our food-supplies are largely drawn from Pacific lands.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL A. C. YATE said that Lord Curzon recently delivered an important address, in which he spoke of the strategic importance of India to the British Empire; but he did not recollect that the ex-Viceroy said anything of India as a naval base. This aspect, however, of the question was bound to arise now that the self-governing portions of the Empire were carefully considering the formation of an Imperial Navy. Captain Macaulay had not said very much about Canada as one of those parts of the Empire touched by the waters of the Pacific, but he thought that Canada was as important in this connection as South Africa. He had fresh in his memory a very curious German pamphlet dealing with the future of the British Empire, and it contained a prophecy that Australia would be handed over to a yellow race—he did not know whether it was China or Japan. (A voice: "Both.") That was a curious prophecy, but it ought to serve as a warning to us that there were possible dangers which obliged us and our Colonies to maintain adequate protection for ourselves in the Pacific; and, moreover, that to the maintenance thereof the self-governing dominions should, in their own interest, contribute. The greater our naval forces in those waters, the better should we be able to

frustrate any ambitions inimical to our interests to which these yellow races might be incited. It was, no doubt, a far cry to the time when such ambitions might take shape ; but in statesmanship they must take the long view, and it was well to consider even distant possibilities.

At the discussion at the Royal United Service Institution to which Dr. Miller Maguire had referred, he ventured to say a few words as to the value of India in connection with the food-supplies of this country. India was, in fact, one of the largest and most important of our granaries. In conclusion, Colonel Yate mentioned that General Sir O'Moore Creagh, the new Commander-in-Chief in India, when appealed to to support, as Lord Kitchener had done, the work of the St. John Ambulance Association in India, replied that he did so readily, because he believed that a great ambulance corps maintained in and by India would benefit, not only India, but the Empire. Colonel Yate recognized with pleasure in the Chairman that day (Sir Edwin Collen) one who had given him most valuable help when he commenced his St. John Ambulance campaign at Calcutta in March, 1901.

MR. HART DAVIES, M.P., said : As you are all well aware, Australia is going to have, ultimately, a couple of *Dreadnoughts* of her own, and they are to patrol chiefly on the China seas. It must be remembered that the great dread of Australia lies in that direction. The Colonies are very touchy on questions affecting their independence, and although the fleet Australia is providing will be under the control of the British Admiralty in a way, it will be mainly under the orders of the Australian Government. . . . Such control the Colonies would be very reluctant to give up. In considering a plan for a united fleet maintained by India, it is to be remembered that the Australians do not regard the defence of India as one of the chief things coming within their purview. This difficulty would have to be overcome before we could get a real working unification such as has been suggested. Nor can it be forgotten that the fleet in European waters must be maintained in strong force. Even if trouble arose in the Pacific, we should have to keep the main body of the British naval forces in European waters. . . . But there can be no doubt of the strategic importance to us of the Pacific, and there is no doubt that ultimately, with the assistance of the Colonies, there will be evolved some such scheme for a united fleet as Captain Macaulay has adumbrated this evening in his instructive and valuable paper.

MR. C. E. DRUMMOND BLACK said that he noted with satisfaction the lecturer's support of the scheme for a trans-Arabian railway which it was his honour to submit to the Society some months ago. In connection with the scheme, he desired to ask Captain Macaulay whether he did not think it would be possible to establish a military base in the Sinai Peninsula for the location of British soldiers, so that, in case of anything happening in India or in Egypt, it would be possible to move troops to the point desired. If such a scheme were feasible,

it would provide an additional argument in favour of the projected railway.

THE CHAIRMAN : It is the function of the Chairman to sum up these discussions, and to allude to certain leading points in the lecture. All I can say is that I find it extremely difficult to deal, in the course of a few minutes, with a discussion which has ranged geographically from Thursday Island to the Sinai Peninsula. As, however, I have been connected a long time with India, I should like to say that many of us have, officially and unofficially, put forward our view in times past that India should be regarded as the great Eastern base of the British power.

The lecturer did not dwell very much upon the assistance which India might receive from the self-governing dominions. That was a point we always had in view. Both Australia and New Zealand will be able to render us great assistance in the event of any internal trouble or of an external enemy attacking India. If I say that the naval problem bristles with difficulties, I am far from attempting to belittle the strategical principles which have been laid before you this evening. Indeed, I entirely agree with nearly everything the lecturer has said with regard to the strategical position of India, Colombo, and Singapore. The plan he has sketched involves the creation of what may be called an Indian Navy. Now, I am one of those who have always regretted the disappearance of the Indian Navy. I believe it would have given great auxiliary services to the Royal Navy without entrenching upon the Imperial authority in that navy. I exerted my humble efforts for many years, in conjunction with various colleagues, to try to save from the remains of that navy a marine service which should be of real assistance to India. It has become more especially a transport service, although it has other most useful functions ; but, as showing the difficulty there is in carrying through any project which is not centred in London, I may mention that we had armaments for the ships of the Royal Indian Marine, but that the Admiralty would never allow us to put them on board. (Laughter.)

I believe that the Marine Service of India possesses a body of officers who would certainly become the nucleus of the personnel of the Indian Fleet ; and I am entirely with the lecturer in thinking that India should possess a naval force of its own. But I confess I see great difficulties in the proposed co-operation of Australia. The Australians naturally desire that the section of the fleet they contribute should belong to them. Although that is not opposed to the principle which the lecturer laid down, I do think that they would absolutely veto any proposition that they should give up their ships to form an Indian Ocean Fleet. Still, the lecture, in my opinion, is based upon sound views of Imperial strategy. We are all indebted to its author for the pains and labour he has taken in preparing it, and I know I shall only be expressing your sentiments in offering him our very hearty thanks. (Cheers.)

CAPTAIN MACAULAY said his critics had been so kind that he found

himself with very little to answer. As to the non-inclusion of India in the Defence Conference, it was quite obvious that this was to a certain extent the cause of the loose results that accrued. It could hardly be otherwise with a central strategic feature of the Imperial problem omitted. The mistake was pointed out beforehand by Sir Edward Chapman in a letter to the *Times*, and it could easily have been rectified by the inclusion of Sir O'Moore Creagh, who was then in London. There was a growing belief that a united naval force in the Pacific was required, and meanwhile the locally-controlled navies would have a great instructional value. They would teach the colonists to interest themselves in strategy. At present New Zealand was the only colony which had any idea of naval strategy. Canada proposed to divide its sea forces, just as Russia had done with results so disastrous to herself. Having got what they wanted, the Colonies would find, on studying the problem, that they wanted something else. Until lately Canadian opinion was unanimous for a local navy, but now there was a strong party in the Dominion against the principle. So far as India was concerned, no less than Australia, the whole problem of the Yellow Peril was one of sea power. The North-East Frontier of India had not been the scene of great historical invasions, because of the great natural barriers it provided.

A conversation here ensued between the lecturer and Colonel Yate as to the opinion of the former against Esquimalt as a naval base in the Pacific. The lecturer said that to give assistance to India vessels from Esquimalt would have to travel 6,000 miles, and it was only large battleships that could get across that distance without fresh coal-supplies. The United States and Japan were the only two Powers that could possibly attack Canada. Japan was 4,000 miles away. The United States would never dream of attacking the west coast of Canada. She would first fight the English Navy, and her next objective would be Winnipeg.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL YATE said he was not thinking of war with the United States or Japan. The latter was our ally, and our relations with the former were most friendly. He was thinking that if we had trouble in India, Canada could detach the west coast navy to assist us in the Indian seas. He believed that ultimately Canada would maintain a navy on both ocean borders.

THE LECTURER said that Russia maintained a fleet on three coasts, and was severely beaten.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL YATE said the difference was that Canada would have the co-operation of the British fleet. Russia had no friends and no base in the Pacific.

THE LECTURER said that the best preparation we could have in the Pacific was a disposition of naval forces that would secure immunity from what was called the Yellow Peril. For his own part, however, he was not greatly alarmed about the Yellow Peril, because Japan had made the great mistake of putting its foot on the mainland. It was a commonplace of history that when an island Power put its foot on the

mainland it was kept occupied for centuries. This was our own experience in respect to France. In the position in which Japan now found herself it would be to her interest to wake up China, or the day might come when China would fight her again for Manchuria. Indeed, the desire of China to get back her own would probably stand in the way of any effective combination between them. Replying to Dr. Miller Maguire, he said he was not apprehensive of the Yellow Peril by way of Yunan. It would be a long while before railways were constructed in Western China that would be capable of throwing large forces into Burma. Replying to another question, he said he quite agreed that the most effective safeguard of Australia was that of industrial occupation of the northern territories. The geographical basis of strategy could seldom be changed, except by such great engineering undertakings as the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal. But strategy was largely conditional upon development by railways and population. The effective occupation of the northern territories would entirely revolutionize Australia as a strategic issue. At present, with a base at Sydney, she could not take the offensive. In conclusion, he thanked the audience for the way in which they had received his lecture, which he consented to give with considerable apprehension, as he was not accustomed to addressing learned societies.

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THE NEW RÉGIME IN TURKEY

BY

SIR R. HAMILTON LANG, K.C.M.G.

Read December 8, 1909



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THE NEW RÉGIME IN TURKEY

BY

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IN the absence of the Earl of Ronaldshay, M.P., the chair was taken by the Right Hon. Sir ALFRED LYALL, who, in introducing the lecturer, said that Sir Robert had been so very long resident in Turkey that anything he said on the subject of the new *régime* there would be most interesting, and would be received as coming from a competent authority.

Sir R. HAMILTON LANG said he would much have liked to read his own paper, but was sorry to say that he was suffering from a cold, and his voice was not sufficiently strong for the effort, but Mr. Penton had kindly undertaken to read the paper for him.

The Hon. Secretary then read the paper as follows :

MY LORDS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

My connection with Turkey dates back to October, 1856, fifty-three years ago.

The Congress of Paris in the early part of that year had closed the Crimean War and restored peace to Turkey. This had been followed by the Hatti Hamayoum of Sultan Abdul Medjed, which proclaimed equality of rights and privileges between his Christian and Mohammedan subjects, security of life and property, good administration throughout the Empire, and the development of its resources. This Imperial Decree may be said to be the conception of reform in Turkey. On its proclamation Turkey was accepted by the Great Powers as a member of the comity of European nations, and a new era of prosperity and wealth for Turkey was thought to be inaugurated. Well do I remember the impression made upon me, a lad of nineteen, by the perusal of leading articles in the English Press, picturing in brilliant colours liberty and order supplanting in Turkey venality and oppression, great mineral and agricultural wealth to be developed, a profitable field

for Western capital and enterprise in a vast Empire which hitherto had remained almost beyond their ken.

The attractive picture was true, but only those who lived, as I have, to be septuagenarians, are seeing the dawn of its realization, thus teaching the great truth that the period of gestation with nations is not to be reckoned by months, but by generations or half-centuries.

Introduced into the comity of European Powers, and accredited, as it were, to the Bourses of Europe by England and France, who became its guarantors for a loan in 1855, Turkey proceeded, like a prodigal spendthrift, to contract millions sterling of foreign debt on the pretext of developing the resources of the country, but in reality to fill the pockets of sordid financiers and corrupt agents. Loan after loan continued in rapid succession, until a total of foreign debt of about 200 millions sterling was reached between 1856 and 1875, with nothing permanent or productive to show for it, save about 20 millions spent for the badly-constructed railway from Constantinople to Philippopolis. Like all air-bubbles, sooner or later, this financial air-bubble burst in 1875, when, her credit being exhausted, Turkey declared herself bankrupt. The financial straits into which the country had fallen produced universal discontent in the capital and the provinces, which led the Sultan Abdul Hamid, shortly after his coming to the throne, to grant a Constitution in 1876, at the instigation of Midhad Pasha; but it was short-lived, and after one Session the Parliament was prorogued *sine die*. This abortive remedy of Constitutionalism had, however, the important result of drawing the attention of the thoughtful minds in the Empire to the only true hope of reform—ministerial responsibility and the abolition of absolutism. Midhad Pasha's views were just, but they were in advance of his times. He paid for his patriotism with his life; but as it is said the blood of the martyrs was the life of the Church, so Midhad Pasha's views and his tragic death gradually penetrated into the soul of the nation, and his ideal of reform became the rallying point of all thoughtful reformers. A seed had been sown which flourished apace, and which, after twenty-two years of absolutist misrule, became a well-rooted tree under which the Ottoman people were to find shelter.

Encouraged by the penury and discontent prevalent in Turkey, Russia declared war against her in 1877, and, notwithstanding the heroic but too protracted resistance of Osman Pasha at Plevna, the Turkish armies were defeated, and the victorious Russian troops arrived at San Stephano, a few miles from the walls of Constanti-

nople. The energetic policy of England, under the guidance of Lord Beaconsfield, then Mr. Disraeli, saved the Ottoman Empire from the grasp of Russia, and the Peace of San Stephano was concluded, the conditions of which were, however, afterwards modified at a conference of the Great Powers at Berlin in 1878.

The financial sacrifices imposed upon Turkey during the war were stupendous. A loan, called the Defence Loan, of 5 millions sterling was attempted to be floated in London, but so great was the discredit into which the country had fallen, that only £5,000 was subscribed by the public. Paper money called *caïmés* was put in circulation in the Empire which gradually depreciated in value until 1,000 piastres of paper money represented only 100 piastres in gold. The debased coinage of *Beshlies*, in which the largest part of the Government revenues were paid, and which filled the safes and purses of the population, were reduced by Imperial decree from five piastres on one night to two and a half next morning. Fancy our five-pound note falling to a value of ten shillings, and our penny to only a halfpenny from night to morning. But in Turkey that took place without murmur or complaint. Truly the Ottoman people are models of patience.

During the war with Russia the Imperial Ottoman Bank and a group of local bankers had advanced to the Government some 8 or 9 millions of pounds. A year after the Peace was concluded, the Sublime Porte was induced to cede to them the encashment and administration of six of the Indirect Contributions of the Empire in order to repay their debt. The success of this European Administration was so great, and inspired such universal confidence, that Saïd Pasha Kutchuk, then Grand Vizier, in 1881, conceived the idea of compromising with the holders of the foreign debt, by handing them over the European Administration and the revenues assigned to it. The foreign bondholders, who had received nothing from their debtor during seven years, and whose bonds had fallen to a quarter of their nominal value, were naturally disposed to treat on very liberal terms.

The negotiations led to the compromise which goes by the name of the Decree of Moharrem, promulgated on December 28, 1881.

The foreign debt treated of in that compromise, with interest in arrears, amounted to in round numbers $250\frac{1}{4}$ million pounds sterling. That capital sum of debt was reduced to $104\frac{1}{2}$ millions. The reduction in the interest and sinking fund of the original debt of $250\frac{1}{4}$ millions was much greater. That original interest and sinking fund was about 10 millions. The new scheme of interest

and sinking fund by the Decree of Moharrem is very complex, but it may roughly be said to amount at present to about 1,900,000 pounds sterling annually—a little less than a fifth of the amount promised by the bonds. Advantageous although these conditions were to the Turkish Government, and onerous although they were to its debtors, they sufficed to restore the country to solvency, and led to the establishment of a European financial institution in Turkey called the “Caisse de la Dette.” That institution, with its European and international characteristics, inspired confidence in the Bourses of Europe, and especially in the Bourse of Paris. After the bankruptcy of 1875, the English investing public threw away, in large part, their holdings in Turkish securities; and the investing public in France, after the Decree of Moharrem and the institution of the Caisse de la Dette, very shrewdly went in for Turkish securities as the English investors went out, so that in a few years three-fourths of the foreign debt of Turkey was held in France. The steady rise in Turkish securities which took place, by the regular working of the Caisse de la Dette, encouraged French investors. Year by year **they saw** their Turkish investments increasing in value, and it is no exaggeration to say that by the continuous rise of these investments, French investors profited in twenty years to the extent of 60 millions sterling. As honey attracts bees, it is profit which attracts capital. This is the simple explanation of the fact that to-day the Bourse of Paris is the only established market for Turkish securities; so much so that 5 millions sterling of the most recent Turkish loan was placed with the clients of a few large French banking establishments, without more than a nominal public issue.

These financial measures resulting from the success of a European financial administration, which led to the creation of the Caisse de la Dette, was the first step achieved in the reformation of Turkey. But under an incapable and selfish absolutism, maladministration in the provinces, demoralizing corruption, and a cursed espionage, grew yearly more intense. Many of the most enlightened Ottomans had been exiled or obliged to take refuge in the capitals of Europe from a relentless persecution. These exiles bore their hardships with exemplary patience, never ceasing to make known the grievances of their country by means of papers and leaflets scattered broadcast among their fellow-citizens, civil and military, appealing, not to their vile passions, but to their reason. Gradually their views permeated into the minds of the nation. These views

were not anarchical. The exiles advocated constitutionalism as the remedy for a vicious absolutism, the liberty of the subject as the only escape from an intolerable tyranny, impartial justice and honest administration in place of the venality and corruption which was rampant in high places. The evils they combated needed no demonstration, they were known to all, realized by all, from Pasha to peasant and from General to common soldier; and the remedy of constitutionalism which was pleaded, in its moderation and practicality, appealed to the common-sense of every thoughtful and patriotic mind.

Sultan Abdul Hamid could not shut his eyes or ears to the ever-increasing storm of discontent which was raging in the breasts of his subjects, but in his infatuation he could think of no better remedy than severer tyranny. Consulting with the corrupt agents of his secret police, on whom he relied, Sultan Abdul Hamid, like King Rehoboam of old, virtually said to his people, "If in the past I have chastised you with whips, in the future I will chastise you with scorpions." The cursed espionage was increased in intensity until no one felt safe from its secret machinations.

The troubles in Macedonia led to a great concentration of troops from Asia, who were thus brought into more intimate contact with the reforming party, of which Salonica was an important centre. These troops, officers and men, became rapidly inoculated with the serum of discontent. Abdul Hamid heeded little the discontent of civilians as long as he felt confidence in the loyalty of the army, but the growl of his soldiers was a shock to his craven nerves.

The position of the reforming officers in Macedonia became critical. They realized that they were singled out for the vengeance of the tyrant at Yildiz, and that they had to make choice between surrender to a tyrant who had no mercy, or revolt. One of these young officers, Niazi Bey, feeling confident of the sympathy of his men, in the early days of July last year decided to march out of his barracks and raise the standard of revolt. He was afterwards joined by Enver Bey. The revolters declared that the motive of the mutiny was to demand the restoration of the Constitution of 1876, and added that they would not lay down their arms until it was granted. It was a bold stroke, but wisely done. It indicated a peaceful solution, which the well-known cowardice of Sultan Abdul Hamid might lead him to accept. He himself had proclaimed that Constitution and prorogued it *sine die*. It was a simple matter to restore it to activity. There was neither violence nor bloodshed associated with the declaration of the young officers. There was

not even a word of recrimination, when so many might have been expected; there was not a breath of disloyalty to the unworthy head of their faith. The echo of this declaration resounded through all classes, civil as well as military. It voiced their feelings and sentiments. Very shortly the army in Macedonia made it known that, if the restoration of the Constitution was not granted, it would march on Constantinople to enforce it.

What happened at Constantinople I can best describe in the words of a high-placed member of the régime, whom I asked to tell me how the surrender of Sultan Abdul Hamid to the demand for the Constitution came about. He replied: "When rumours of the serious disaffection of the army in Macedonia came to the knowledge of the Sultan, he at once sent off a confidential agent to Salonica to ascertain what truth there might be in them. This envoy remained only three days in Salonica, and returned to report that the rumours were only too true, and that the disaffection permeated all the troops in Macedonia. The Council of Ministers interrogated the envoy, and deliberated to a late hour without coming to any definite decision. I did not go to the palace that night, and was much surprised to learn next morning that the Sultan had come to the resolution to accept the re-establishment of the Constitution."

His Majesty, acting on his own initiative, had shrewdly realized that when the army threatened the game was up, and that he incurred personal danger in resistance. There was neither dignity nor lofty principle in the surrender; it was simply a bowing to the inevitable from personal fear.

A bloodless victory had been achieved by the patriotic party. Indescribable were the results of the victory. The moderation and self-control of the victors, both in their action and declarations, attracted all classes to their standard. The movement was patriotic, not racial. The Constitution was a guarantee of liberty and equality to all citizens of the Empire, without respect of creed or race; and quite marvellous was the outburst of fraternity which it called forth. Moslems, Jews, and Christians, were all proud to class themselves under the one nomenclature—Ottoman—even the racial animosities in Macedonia were calmed as if by magic. The history of the world has recorded no such sudden metamorphosis.

Said Pasha Kutchuk, a veteran statesman, was Grand Vizier when Sultan Abdul Hamid, on July 24, 1908, proclaimed the re-establishment of the Constitution; but he resigned on August 8, on a difference in regard to the nomination of the Minister of

War. He was succeeded as Grand Vizier by Kiamil Pasha, an aged statesman, who was respected by all classes for his integrity and ability. To him devolved the task of organizing all the electoral details. The Greek Rayahs gave the greatest trouble. Of the different races in the country they alone, from their knowledge of the electoral system in Greece, understood all the electoral manoeuvres which were possible, and naturally they endeavoured to obtain for their section the largest possible number of Deputies in the new Parliament. The difficulties, however, which they created were solved by tact and conciliation on both sides, and Parliament reassembled on December 17, 1908, after a vacation lasting twenty years.

When we remember the vastness of the Ottoman Empire, and its lack of communication, causing that from many of its parts Constantinople could only be reached after a journey of thirty days, it will appear marvellous that the first Parliament was able to meet four months and twenty-three days after the re-establishment of the Constitution by Imperial decree. And the Deputies who assembled were fairly representative of the various races and creeds of the population. Of the total number of Deputies about one-fifth were Christians. The ideal of the reforming party was that the number of Deputies of the various creeds should be proportional to their numerical strength, but accurate statistics were wanting. These will be obtained in time, and the basis of numerical strength for representation seems a just one.

Kiamil Pasha also amicably arranged the difficult question of the cession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria, and he prepared the way for an arrangement with Bulgaria. Indeed, it will be admitted by all that Kiamil Pasha rendered invaluable services to his country in the early days of the new régime. During these early days the Committee of Union and Progress exercised its influence in an irresponsible way, a kind of secret committee acting outside of the Government, and influencing, sometimes even dictating, its views upon the executive authorities. This system, although irregular, presented the advantage of guiding the people in the exercise of their electoral privileges; but when Parliament had reassembled, it became galling to the executive, and especially to the Grand Vizier, who felt that his Ministers might be receiving orders unknown to him from an influential but secret body of men. Such a case occurred early in February of this year, and induced the Grand Vizier to change a Minister of War whom he thought too subservient to the secret committee. Although the nominee

of the Grand Vizier was entirely unobjectionable—indeed, exceptionally capable—the Committee of Union and Progress resented the change, and induced Parliament on a Saturday to demand explanations of the Grand Vizier. The latter, without attending in person, conveyed to the House his desire that the explanations should be deferred till Wednesday. The House insisted that the explanations should be given at once, and the Grand Vizier, still declining to attend before Wednesday, resigned office on February 11. The incident was regrettable, and might perhaps have been avoided with more calmness on both sides ; but, in reality, in the situation such a conflict was certain to arise sooner or later.

Kiamil Pasha's successor in the Grand Vizieret was Hilmi Pasha, and affairs might have resumed their normal course. But the evident break in the relations between Kiamil Pasha and the Committee of Union and Progress encouraged the reactionaries, and led them to lay plans to overthrow the power of the Committee of Union and Progress. An opposing organization, which styled itself the Liberal Union, had been formed, which was joined by many who, though not avowed reactionaries, were jealous of the dominant position of the other committee. All the plans of the revolutionary movement were carefully laid. The troops in the capital were, in large measure, prepared for revolt.

Very early on the morning of April 13 the citizens of Constantinople were roused from their slumbers by the march of bands of soldiers through the streets, led by non-commissioned officers. The soldiers had killed or otherwise disposed of their regularly appointed officers, and marched out of their barracks in mutiny. Some proceeded to the square in which Parliament House was situated, others, followed by an immense mob, surrounded the Ministry of War. Stamboul was for the time at the mercy of these mutinous soldiers. Civilians, however, were not molested, and even received reassuring promises. Leading members of the Committee of Union and Progress had to take refuge in hiding. The mutinous soldiers clamoured for the dismissal of the Ministry, of Ahmed Riza, President of the Chamber, and for the exile of various editors of the Press who were supporters of the Committee of Union and Progress. They also destroyed the offices of that Committee and some of its printing presses. It thus became evident that the objective of the revolt was the Committee of Union and Progress. The Ministry at once sent in its resignation to the Sultan, and on His Majesty's action the future of the revolt depended. Its organizers doubtless hoped that the Sultan would seize the

favourable moment which presented itself to regain his absolute power; but they were mistaken. The Sultan accepted the resignation of the Ministry, but named, in the place of the Grand Vizier, Tewfik Pasha, for long years Minister of Foreign Affairs, who in his turn named as Minister of War Edham Pasha, the successful General in the Greek War, both men of high character, and liberal but moderate views. These appointments made, the Sultan harangued a body of the mutineers from his palace of Yildiz, addressing them, as he had a considerable knack of doing, as his children, and ended by saying that he granted an amnesty to all the mutineers.

These measures took the heart out of the revolt. The mutineers, realizing that their excesses had rendered them liable to severe punishment, were delighted with the amnesty accorded them, and spent the next day in harmless demonstrations of joy. The instigators of the revolt, disappointed in the hope of support from the Padishah, recognized that things had not gone as they expected, and, finding themselves deserted by many who had been inclined at first to encourage them, hesitated to push matters further.

The new Ministry named Nazim Pasha as Commander of the first army corps, which was in possession of the capital. His reputation as a good soldier and strict disciplinarian was well known to the army, and when, on the second morning after the revolt, he explained to the troops that, while the amnesty pardoned the excesses previously committed, any further excesses would be punished with the utmost severity, his declaration was believed, and the soldiers hastened without demur again to yield allegiance to their officers. The city returned to its former calm, and the army quietly busied itself with its drill.

Two events, however, outside the capital transpired of momentous gravity. On the day when in the capital Nazim Pasha was recalling the first army corps to a disciplined allegiance, a regrettable massacre broke out at Adana, in Cilicia, which resulted in the sacrifice of the lives of many Christian Armenians. It was doubtless the work of the reactionaries, who thought a time of disorder in the capital and the prostration of the executive a fitting moment to wreak their fanatical passions upon their Christian fellow-citizens. The massacre was not, however, a crime of which the authorities in the capital were culpable, but was the result of a temporary suspension of all authority—the lawlessness of the vicious when the control of the law was eclipsed.

The second event was the effect which the disorders in the capital produced upon the military authorities in Macedonia. These authorities may be said to have been the restorers of the Constitution as well as its most vigilant guardians. When the news of the revolt of April 13 reached Salonica, the leaders of the reforming party there were profoundly alarmed, and realized that no half-measures would suffice to crush a movement which threatened the collapse of all that had been achieved. It was resolved that the third army corps, which could be relied on, should at once proceed to the capital. So rapidly was this measure carried out, that by the 21st over 20,000 troops, under Mahmud Shevket Pasha, were concentrated outside the walls of Constantinople.

A strong impression prevailed that the Sultan Abdul Hamid had been privy to the revolt, and the question which preoccupied the minds of the Constitutionalist was: "Is it wise to retain in power a Sultan of such wily resourcefulness, who, intentionally or unintentionally, was a rallying point to the reactionaries?" Although unavowed publicly, the conviction was come to that it was unwise; but as the loyalty to the Constitution of the troops around Yildiz could not be relied upon, it was necessary, as a first step, to supplant these troops by others on whom reliance could be placed. Mahmud Shevket Pasha quietly laid his plans, and at an early hour on April 24, to the surprise of all, civilians and military, his troops marched through Stamboul and Pera, occupied the heights above Yildiz, and took possession of the various barracks of the first army corps. In a few instances only was any resistance encountered, and by midday civilians were again able to walk the streets. My daughter, whose house was about 200 yards from the Taxim barracks, where the resistance was most severe, was able to walk out at midday with her husband, past the barracks, and saw the tramways transporting wounded soldiers to hospital. No civilians had been molested—indeed, they were continually reassured by the advancing troops.

The capital, including Yildiz, was now in the hands of troops loyal to the Constitution, and perfect order and quiet prevailed.

On April 27 the Sheikh ul Islam read out the *fetva* in Parliament, sanctioning the deposition of Sultan Abdul Hamid, and the same day the legal heir to the throne, Reshad Effendi, took the oath to the Constitution, and was proclaimed Sultan under the title of Mohammed V.

About midnight of the next night Sultan Abdul Hamid was informed that he must be ready to leave Yildiz in two hours. A special train was in waiting for him at the Stamboul station, into which he entered with two sons and several ladies of his harem, and the party were transported to Salonica, and lodged in a villa belonging to Mr. Alatini. "Sic transit gloria mundi."

I have thus rapidly sketched the fall and fate of Sultan Abdul Hamid, and I would only detain you a second to draw attention to the wonderful self-control which the Young Turk Party exhibited in their dealings with a Sovereign who had exiled and persecuted many of them, who was guilty of Midhad Pasha's blood and of that of many other patriots, and who, by his misrule, had brought the country to the verge of ruin.

Two qualities are essential to success—patience and self-control. These two qualities the Young Turks had exhibited in the most remarkable manner, and under circumstances of great temptation. I think you will agree with me when I say that such patience and self-control augur well for the future of their country and the success of its reformers.

I must have so exhausted your patience that I would fain here bring my remarks to an end; but I feel that, before closing, I ought to say something of the prospects of success for the new régime whose inauguration I have described. May I still crave your indulgence for a few minutes while I do so?

The Constitution is now established, with a constitutional Sovereign and a Parliament of two chambers. Return to a rule of absolutism is impossible. And the question which naturally arises in the minds of all is, "Is the task before this new régime in Turkey beyond its powers?" Goodwill, laudable intentions, honesty of purpose, may all succumb before insuperable difficulties, and the question I have put to my mind is, "Are there such insuperable difficulties?" I trow not.

Turkey has in years past been menaced by difficulties from outside. There is only one Power superior in strength around Turkey which could menace her, and that is Russia. Bulgaria and Greece are in no position to measure their strength with Turkey. The political situation of Russia has so entirely changed of late years that no serious politician would to-day anticipate on her part a policy of adventure against Turkey, and this was confirmed by a spontaneous and emphatic statement made to me last October by the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople, whose words were, "We desire to have a prosperous Turkey as neighbour." The

policies of nations change, but all I say is that at present Turkey has nothing to fear from Russia.

The financial situation bequeathed to the new régime by its predecessor was an overburdened one; but, after all, the foreign debt of Turkey is less than £4 10s. per head of population, and its burden less than 4s. per head. The Budget for 1910-11 shows a deficit of about 4 millions sterling, but that includes a repayment of debt amounting to three-quarters of a million, and the remaining 3¼ millions may easily be made up by an increase of the Custom duties, which is not likely to be refused by the Powers, and by the natural increase in other revenues from more honest and orderly encashment. If even it requires two years to establish budgetary equilibrium, no inconvenience will result. The essential is that, until budgetary equilibrium is established, no loan should be made except for reproductive works. I learned with pleasure, when in Constantinople in October last, that since Mr. Crawford was controlling the Customs department a substantial increase in revenue has been recorded. Under the present Minister of Finance and his able adviser, Mr. Laurent, we may rely upon the financial situation being wisely safeguarded.

Of good administration there is no reason why the country should not have it. The remark is often made that the Young Turks lack experience in administration, and the consciousness of this led them for some time to hesitate to assume ministerial responsibility. But that stage is past, and in reality provincial administration presents no problems which cautious common-sense cannot easily master. There is no more honest, docile employee than a Turkish civil servant—and I speak with a considerable experience—provided he is assured of three things: regularity of pay, stability in his position, and just appreciation by his superiors. These he is at present receiving, and the result cannot fail to be an immense improvement on the past.

The Budget for 1910-11, which has just been published, is most elaborate, and of a nature to enable the Treasury to control the most minute detail of incomings and outgoings. So far salaries are being punctually paid, and the resources of the Treasury are sufficient to meet all its engagements with regularity. The same moderation and self-restraint which the Constitutional Government has exhibited must, however, continue to be exercised. Large schemes of development are talked of, concession-hunters are numerous and persistent, but the Mohammedan members of the Ministry indulge in no illusions, and do not allow themselves to be

hurried by their more sanguine and also, perhaps, more self-interested Christian colleagues. For solidity and sobriety of temperament the Mussulman section of the population is most to be relied upon. Fortunately, they are the most numerous in Parliament, and it is to be desired that they exercise a wholesome check upon extravagant schemes of both European and native Christian origin. It is only by steady but measured progress that sound and lasting results can be attained.

The Cretan Question is at present exercising an unfavourable influence. It presents no serious danger, but it excites unrest and disaffection in the breasts of the Greek Ottomans, which is causing a good deal of literature to be published hostile to the new régime in Turkey. This must be borne in mind when reading these *ex parte* criticisms. Personally, I greatly regret that from the first the Cretan Question was not looked upon by the new régime as one of those half-settled questions for which the old régime was responsible. That old régime treated with four Great Powers for its solution, and these Powers led the Cretans to believe that if they exercised patience, their wish of annexation to Greece might be realized. In consequence the position in which these great Powers, all friendly to Turkey, is placed is a very difficult and delicate one. On the other hand, equally difficult and delicate is the position of the Constitutional Party in Turkey. It declared on the house-tops that it would resist all further alienation of Ottoman territory, and, to be consistent, it cannot sanction the alienation of Crete. Let us hope that diplomacy may find a solution of the difficulty, and that both parties may wait patiently. Fortunately, the *status quo* for Crete presents no serious disadvantages. The island Government is presided over by a Greek High Commissioner, the laws are equitable, and the taxes probably much lighter than in Greece proper. The patience, therefore, which wisdom seems to dictate can be exercised without serious detriment, and it is greatly to be hoped that it will continue to be exercised.

Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen, you have listened with very laudable indulgence to my rather dry-as-dust description of the genesis of reformation in Turkey, and I feel grateful to you. Permit me in conclusion to suggest that we have good reason to consider that the initial stage of reform in Turkey has been successfully passed, thanks to the wisdom and moderation with which the Constitutional Party has steered the ship through menacing rapids, and that we can trust the Ottoman people, represented in their Parliament, to carry on the work of reformation,

resuscitation, and development in a spirit of patriotism, prudence, and forbearance.

The Empire possesses immense resources which require to be developed, but in doing so it must ever be remembered that "Rome was not built in a day" ("Qui va piano va sano, qui va sano va lontano"). The financial situation of the country I look upon as sound, but requiring watchfulness to prevent leakage; moderation, to inspire confidence, and a strict limitation of expenditure to resources—a cutting of the coat according to the cloth. Administrative reform will gradually be established if the hydra-headed monster of corruption remains eradicated; and in this respect I would venture to recommend concession-seekers to avoid all temptation to corrupt, for every concession tainted with corruption will ultimately recoil upon its recipients. I am not so optimistic as to suppose that there will not be from time to time in Turkey changes of ministries and questions which excite popular passions. These occur in all constitutional countries, but they will yield to constitutional treatment, and prove only temporary obstacles. I see in the Ottoman people elements of patient self-possession and of lofty patriotism, and in the Empire a field of profitable enterprise and growing wealth—not the excitement of the gambler, but the healthier labour of the agriculturist and industrialist.

DISCUSSION

MRS. ARCHIBALD LITTLE said she felt diffident about offering one word of criticism in respect to so interesting a paper, which had evidently been most carefully compiled. It had, however, dealt chiefly with the financial aspects of the task before the new Government, and she had heard little or no allusion to the various peoples of Turkey, their prosperity, and their chances even of life. From January 1 to August 22 last no less than 413 Bulgarians had been murdered in Macedonia alone, and whatever might be the merits of the new régime, it seemed to have very little power to preserve peace and order in that afflicted province. The people were reported to be raising bands, because they said they could bear it no longer. From Bosnia the Mohammedans were taking possession of the fields of these peaceful Christians—if they might be called peaceful. But one of the most serious matters to her mind was that a Turkish paper, the *Zamina*, had suggested that 300,000 Mohammedans should enter the Christian districts and give the inhabitants the option of conversion to Islam or disappearing. That was published without the conductors of the paper incurring the slightest punishment at the hands of the Turkish Government. We had all been rejoicing at the thought that the Turks had won constitutional liberty. Well, it seemed to her that there were three parties in the case: one that longed for the sweets of office and had secured them; secondly, the idealists, who were bitterly disappointed that much at which they aimed had not been carried out, and who had in many cases accepted service in foreign administrations; and thirdly, the army. The latter had shown its weakness by calling in the aid of Sandanski and his cut-throats to manage their affairs at Trilis. Surely they would not have done that if they had been confident of their own strength. She understood that numbers of non-Moslems were being enrolled in the army, but that no arms were served out to them. It was, of course, a question whether it would be discreet to serve out arms to the non-Moslem soldiery. Under all the circumstances she had mentioned, it was questionable whether the charming picture presented to them was quite true to fact. It seemed to her that the dark background of the position of Macedonia and the persecution of Christians in various parts of Turkey had been left out; she understood it was harder than ever now for Christians to obtain any sort of justice at the Konak.

Colonel Sir HENRY TROTTER said : I may speak as one who has had considerable experience of Turkey. I went out in the Turko-Russian War of 1877-78, and became acquainted with the officers and men of the Turkish army, and many of the various races of the Empire assembled at the seat of war in Asia. I was subsequently at Ezeroum as Consul, and there also became acquainted with many aspects of the Armenian question—a question which may still give great trouble in Turkey. I was afterwards military attaché for seven years in Constantinople, where I met men of every race, religion, and nationality in the Empire. I made friends amongst them all, whether Turks, Christians, Jews, or others. I was afterwards four years in Syria, where I had a good deal to do with the Druses, the Maronites, and all classes of Arabs, as well as other races.

There are, no doubt, great difficulties ahead of the new Turkish régime. The lecturer has referred to Crete as not being likely to give very serious cause for trouble later on. I must say that I rather disagree with him on that point. Then there is the Macedonian Question, which the lady who has just spoken has apparently studied on the spot. There is no doubt that that question is far from settled. We have also to consider the attitude of the Arabs in Arabia proper, and the state of affairs in Mesopotamia and Kurdistan. It is not so long ago that we were informed of Turkish troops and English engineers being fired at while going down the Tigris. Another important question is that of the military service. Hitherto the army has been composed entirely of Mohammedans. Christians who paid a small sum for exemption from military service are crying out to be admitted, but there are many practical difficulties in the way.

Having lived so long among these people, I know something of the divergence of views and interests—nay, more, the hatred—that exists between the various races, not only between Christian and Moslem, but between Arabs, Turks, Koords, and others. These animosities constitute one of the most serious difficulties the new administration has to face, as, I think, Sir Hamilton Lang will agree. The only chance for peace and progress is to have a strong Government at Constantinople, and good strong local administrations in the provinces. But the people must be willing to subordinate minor differences to the public good. Whether they will be prepared to do that to the end remains to be seen. When I first heard of the bloodless revolution in Turkey, and of the extraordinary way in which the different races in Constantinople, Salonica, and Syria hobnobbed together, and went arm in arm, singing patriotic songs, in the streets, I looked upon it as a miracle. Well, there has been one miracle, and we will hope and trust that there may be another : that the Government will be able to get safely through its difficulties, and that we may have a strong and well-governed Turkey. (Cheers.)

Mr. E. R. P. MOON asked the lecturer for further information as to the two Committees of which he had spoken—the Committee of Union and Progress, and the opposing organization known as the Liberal Union.

Sir R. HAMILTON LANG, in reply, said: I will begin with the point last raised. I am glad to have an opportunity of saying what I know in regard to the Liberal Union. It was got up as an opposition organization to the Committee of Union and Progress. After the events of April 13 it dissolved, simply because it was better not to belong to it—it had become unpopular. Those who had been connected with it were in danger. For example, Ismail Kiamil Bey disappeared, and we have not heard much of him since. It was got up to suppress the Committee of Union and Progress, very naturally because that Committee was in a very strong position. It is in human nature to be jealous of another who is in a strong position. In regard to the Committee of Union and Progress, I tried to indicate in the paper that the mistake they were making was that they were working in an underhand way—they were exercising an influence on the authorities, and dictating the policy of the Executive without taking the responsibility. Happily, they abandoned that attitude after the events of last April, and now leading men in the present Ministry are among the chief men of the Committee of Union and Progress. I may mention Talat Bey, who was here in England some time ago, and is probably known to some of the audience, a clear-headed and very impressive man, and one with a great future before him. Then there is Djevad Bey, the Minister of Finance, who was professor of political economy in Salonica. He did not know much of national finance when he took office, but it is astonishing how soon a man may understand a complicated question when he sets to work to study it and has a reasonable amount of good judgment. When I was in Constantinople in October I saw a good deal of him, and I found that he had studied the departmental questions and understood perfectly well the work that was before him. Talat Bey, too, is at the Ministry of the Interior, working hard to put things straight. Last, but not least on the list, there is Hilmi Pasha, the Grand Vizier, a man of great capacity. When we have men like these working honestly to do their very best for the country, I think the least we can do is to give them a fair and sympathetic trial.

In regard to what the lady told us of the loss of life by outrage in Macedonia, I have no doubt that the figures she gave are correct. We all know that Macedonia is still in a troubled condition, that there are races there the one struggling against the other, and that, in a word, the situation is still very unsettled. But you have to remember that it is only since April of this year that the present régime has had a free hand. I remarked to the German Ambassador to the Porte in October

that it was marvellous to see so much accomplished in one year. He replied : " Don't say one year—say since April, six months." Think of the hard work involved in the establishment of a real Constitutional system and the creation of an electoral system when nothing of the kind existed before. We must give them time. There is still a great deal to be done, but what I say is this : that they are daily working and striving to do what they can. They have done a great deal already. For example, the difficulty with Austria—a great and perplexing problem—has been satisfactorily solved. The question of Bulgaria, also very difficult, has been solved. The question of the Oriental railways was difficult ; it has been solved. The present régime has done so much in the past six or eight months that I, for one, have confidence in giving them further time to work out the many, many problems which lie before them. As Sir Henry Trotter said, the difficulty in Macedonia will not be settled in a short time. It will be a long struggle ; but, at all events, there is far less bloodshed than there was two years ago.

The question of conscription is a difficult one. When the revolution had been effected the Christians wanted to be soldiers, but now they rather draw back. But I hope that the problem will not give real trouble. As to the Cretan Question, I do not see that it is at all possible for war between Greece and Turkey to break out in respect to it. A solution must be found, and I trust it will be peaceful. In reference to Mrs. Little's observations as to the attitude of a Constantinople newspaper, I generally know what is being said in the Turkish journals, but I have not seen any translation of an article suggesting the incursion of 300,000 Mohammedans to bring about forcible conversions to the Moslem faith. I would like to know what paper it was ?

Mrs. LITTLE said she had forgotten, but she would send the lecturer the passage to which she had referred.

Sir HAMILTON LANG : I am much obliged, but I would point out that you cannot believe half of what you see in the newspapers (laughter), especially those of Constantinople. In many cases it is all bosh. (Laughter.) In respect to the acceptance of the services of Sandanaki, I think it is a pity that at first the Young Turks received him. But I think he went to them—they did not go to Sandanaki. It is to be remembered, however, that the effect was good in this respect—it brought about a diminution of the racial animosity which had existed in Macedonia.

I thank you for the patience with which you have heard me. Though we have not arrived at a solution of the difficulties in Turkey, we can at least say this, that we see daylight dawning, and if we only have patience, that daylight will become brighter and brighter. When education and enlightenment have spread, we may hope to see the

development, under constitutionalism, of a free, independent, prosperous people. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN : We are grateful to Sir Robert Hamilton Lang for his clear and instructive account of the important events which have recently taken place in Turkey, and the discussion which followed has thrown a good deal of light—and, I think, necessary light—on various points. I do not know any great Empire that has undergone more vicissitudes since its beginning than the Ottoman Empire. In the sixteenth century it was, perhaps, the strongest Empire of the world. Its navies swept the Mediterranean sea ; its armies penetrated east and west, and conquered Hungary. But in the eighteenth century we find it going down and falling back in every way, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century it had been brought down to be regarded as a decaying and moribund Power. In fact, throughout the nineteenth century the great Powers were considering whether they should divide it up piecemeal, and it was only in consequence of mutual jealousies that the thing was not done. Just as we thought it was at its last gasp through corruption and mismanagement, it has suddenly revived by the revolution Sir Hamilton Lang has described. This is one of the most extraordinary things which has happened in the history of the world, and it was totally unexpected by anybody, even by the best authorities, as Sir Hamilton Lang will admit. And the conspiracy was carried out with such secrecy that it succeeded at once. I have always understood that the reason why the army in Macedonia determined to revolt was that they saw—or thought they saw—the extraordinary maladministration and corruption of the whole Empire giving such chances and openings for the European Powers to interfere that, sooner or later, it must break up and be parcelled out by the Concert of Europe. They felt that they must remove the source and cause of all this trouble, and that is why they struck in and deposed the Sultan.

Well, as has been suggested this afternoon, the thing is only beginning, and there are immense difficulties in the way. We have to remember that revolutions are never accomplished and completed in a hurry—that the first outbreak never settles a great issue. I think those who know the history of Europe in the nineteenth century are quite agreed on that point. There were revolutions early in the century in Spain and Italy, but they were suppressed, and the old despotisms came back for a time. In 1848 half the kingdoms of Europe were overturned, but the new order of things did not last very long, though in the end constitutional government was established. Revolution goes through various waves, backwards and forwards, and, judging from past experience, the Young Turks may expect great reaction and trouble, a good deal of tacking of sails and of weathering of storms, before they are safely landed upon some solid and sure foundation.

When I heard the lecturer's reference to the proclaiming of " liberty,

equality, fraternity," and when it was said last spring that racial animosities were ceasing like magic, I must say I felt some doubt and hesitation as to whether these instantaneous changes of ideas and institutions were likely to be realized. Many wonderful things have happened in Turkey, but this would be the most wonderful of all. When we think how very recently Christians and Mohammedans were at each other's throats, when we remember the difficulties in the Lebanon fifty years ago, where French and English Governments had to interfere to prevent the Mohammedans exterminating the Christians, one feels, while cherishing the best wishes and hopes for success, that some time must elapse before these ancient quarrels are really composed. Of course, efficient administration is a powerful salve to racial wounds, but, as Sir Hamilton Lang said, administration is very little (though something) without the goodwill and co-operation of the people themselves. If we can look forward to such co-operation, as I hope we can, then the resurrection of Turkey will be the most extraordinary and fortunate thing which has happened in our day, and it will profoundly affect the policy not only of Europe, but of Asia. If a great and powerful Government rises again on the shores of the Bosphorus we shall all be exceedingly glad, and we shall have seen one of the most remarkable political miracles of these times. (Cheers.)

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SOME ASPECTS OF ASIATIC HISTORY

BY

THE RIGHT HON. SIR ALFRED LYALL, G.C.I.E.

Delivered February 9, 1910



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SOME ASPECTS OF ASIATIC HISTORY

IN the absence of the Earl of Ronaldshay, M.P., the chair was taken by Colonel Sir FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND. In opening the proceedings he said : We have all been so engrossed in the General Election that we have been rather inclined to forget that there is any other country outside our own, until, at the close of the elections, the floods in Paris reminded us that there was at least a country called France. Later on we had an intimation that Crete was still in existence, and now Sir Alfred Lyall, a very distinguished man of letters and administrator, has with extreme kindness come here at short notice to tell us about Asia. He, of course, needs no introduction from the Chair, and I will now ask him to address you. (Cheers).

I propose, in the first place, to offer some general remarks on the character of Asiatic, and particularly of Indian, history ; and I shall go on to draw attention to the periods in which the two histories, Asiatic and European, have run together, when we owe so much of our knowledge of Asiatic history to European writers ; and the latter part of my address will be mainly concerned with the historians of the British dominion in India.

The difference between Asiatic and European history is very wide. For Europe we have accurate and authentic records of the course of events, in the more important countries, during many centuries ; we can read how the kingdoms grew, how and why they prospered or perished ; the historian can give us the progress or decline, at various times, of arts, literature, political institutions, and jurisprudence. He can show us the changes, moral and material, of the different communities ; he can explain the slow development of nationalities. Of all these, and many other things, he can trace the rise or the decay, and their influence upon society during past ages. He can treat history, in short, not merely as a narrative of facts, but also, by way of inquiring into the forces that produced the results, he can deal fully with the cause and circumstances that determined the fortunes of a people.

The Asiatic historians—and here I mean the *Asiatics* who wrote history—had no such ample storehouse of information to work

upon. They had very few of the materials provided by documentary records, except, possibly, in China. And I believe that in this respect the history of ancient India is especially deficient, though for an authoritative account of the sources of Indian history I must refer you to Mr. Vincent Smith's standard work on the 'Early History of India.' I think that the Hindus can hardly be said to have written any history at all of their country, for the times before the Mohammedan invasion in the eleventh century. Their contributions to literature seem to have been in philosophy, poetry, and, to some degree, in science. The two great national epics—the Mahabharata and the Ramayana—are, indeed, not wholly devoid of historical matter. But in these poems the doings of men are always of less interest than the exploits of the gods, and history is overlaid by myth and fable. The Hindus are, perhaps, the most profoundly spiritual people in Asia—the continent where all the great world-religions took their origin. Their instinct for metaphysical speculation seems to have so preoccupied the Hindu mind as to leave little room for interest in the record of mundane affairs in what they might call the world of appearances; they were too much absorbed in speculations as to man's ultimate destiny to care for the present or the past. Their system of chronology has been said by Cowell to be fictitious and extravagant. We can only follow the track of events in ancient India by the help of inscriptions, stone monuments, the edicts of mighty rulers, and their coins, so far as the Indian records are concerned. The state of early Hindu society is chiefly to be gathered from the codes of religious law and precepts.

With the era of Mohammedan conquest, indeed, the period of authentic history may be said to begin; we pass from myths and legends, heroic and divine, to genuine facts, from epic poetry to prose. The transition is clearly marked by the earliest Mohammedan writer on India—Alberuni. He was a man of letters at the Court of Mahmud of Ghazni, who invaded India from Central Asia in the eleventh century.

Alberuni wrote a remarkable account of the philosophy, religion, of the manners and customs of the Hindus. Of this book the German translator says in his preface: 'It is like a magic island of quiet impartial research in the midst of a world of clashing swords, burning towns, and plundered temples.' And in fact, though the work cannot be precisely termed historical, it contains a valuable account of what the modern historian desires to know about the habits, beliefs, and social institutions of a people; it

describes the stage of civilization in mediæval India just before the irruption of Islam had spread far enough to break it up politically. But Alberuni's mind had been more or less trained upon Western literature; he had studied Greek authors through Arabic translations. He stands out in relief as an observer of facts and a philosophic inquirer above all Mohammedan writers upon India. The later Mohammedan historians took very slight note of these things. They were content to depict, in general, the pomp and magnificence of Eastern monarchs, their courts, camps, and palaces, the procession of great armies across the stage, the deeds and fortunes of the leading actors in the drama of war and conquest; they tell us little about underlying causes, and still less about the condition of the people.

About sixty years ago Sir Henry Elliot, a distinguished member of the Indian Civil Service, issued his 'Index to the Native Historians of India,' a laborious compilation made from the original manuscripts. In his preface he reviews their general character and contents. 'It must be understood,' he says, 'that this index has not been constructed on account of any value in the histories themselves—indeed, it is almost a misnomer to call them histories; they can scarcely claim to rank higher than annals. They comprise, for the most part, nothing but a mere narration of events, arranged in chronological sequence, without speculation of causes or effects, without a reflection or suggestion that is not of the most puerile kind, and without any observations calculated to interrupt the monotony of successive conspiracies, revolts, intrigues, murders, and parricides, so common in Asiatic monarchies, and to which India, unhappily, forms no exception. If (he continues) we are somewhat relieved from the contemplation of such scenes when we come to the accounts of the earlier Moghul emperors, we have what is little more inviting in the records of the stately magnificence and ceremonious observances of the Court, and the titles, jewels, swords, standards, elephants, and horses bestowed upon the dignitaries of the empire. . . . Of domestic history we have in our Indian annalists absolutely nothing.'

Elliot goes on to lay stress on the complete absence in these histories of any notice of the vicissitudes of institutions, political, social, and religious, and of observations upon the practical effect on a nation of despotic government. But the truth is that the form of Oriental society has not the complexity or variety of political life that interests us in the fortunes of European communities, ancient and modern—the contest among different systems

or constitutions of government, the growth of a vigorous national spirit. In regard to political vicissitudes there was little to relate beyond the rise and fall of rulers and dynasties and the movement of armies.

As to religion, which has always been the main disturbing element in Asiatic politics, most of the historians were, or professed to be, exclusively interested in the triumph of Islam. On the whole, however, these annals necessarily reflect the features of a stationary society, depressed and disheartened by insecurity of life and property, impoverished by the misrule of kings and governors whose own life and tenure of power were precarious. Except during the brilliant reign of the Emperor Akbar, a contemporary of our Queen Elizabeth, who carried out administrative reforms, and attempted daring religious innovations, the annals of the Moghul emperors of India exhibit little more than the story of a vast dominion formed and maintained by superior military force and genius, with an administration sufficiently organized for the collection of a great revenue, whereby the rulers could keep on foot powerful mercenary armies to defend their frontiers and suppress revolts. Yet the first six Moghul emperors were strong rulers; they were masters of India for nearly 200 years. This was because each successive emperor, except one, had to fight his way to the throne, and the result was that the ablest man of the imperial family came in by a kind of natural selection. But the characteristics of despotism, immobility of type and instability of tenure, prevailed, not only throughout India, but also throughout all the adjacent countries connected with India, preventing any material change or durable improvement in the condition of the people. It would almost seem as if the subjection of many generations to the pressure of despotism rendered some races incapable of moving forward to any other form of government. We can therefore understand why Asiatic history bears generally this impress of sameness, it lacks vivid interest; there is no evolution of political forms, and very slight intellectual activity. As the level of civilization is everywhere similar, the narrative is monotonous; the historical landscape is indeed swept by great storms of war and invasions, yet its essential features reappear unchanged.

If, however, we take the state of political society in Europe during the Middle Ages, before the great nationalities and compact kingdoms began to be formed, and compare it with the condition of Western Asia under the Mohammedans, I doubt

whether the comparison would be greatly in favour of Europe. Long desolating wars, revolts, massacres, assassinations,

‘Sad stories of the death of kings,
How some have been deposed, some slain in war,’

fill the mediæval chronicles of Europe as plentifully as the pages of the Asiatic annalists. We may conjecture that the Asiatic peasantry as a class were better off than the mediæval villain or serf in Europe, for the stronger Mohammedan governments always attempted to protect the tillers of the soil; and it may be guessed that life was more tolerable in those times than the modern reader will suppose. Probably a majority of the people were unaffected by the violent catastrophes that shook or overturned thrones, while there must have been many who enjoyed the stirring life and the fortunes of war. The townspeople of India, however, were undoubtedly more exposed to plunder and ill-usage than the bourgeoisie of Europe, for towns play no part at all in the political history of India; they never acquired charters or municipal liberties, they appear to have been incapable of self-defence, and to have been always at the mercy of the military despots.

Thus Asiatic history deals with the fortunes of the rulers, not with the character or condition of their people. It resembles a mediæval chronicle, or it may be likened to the unrolling of a series of scenes and figures upon tapestry, depicting kings on their thrones and the shock of armed warriors. One might almost say that the historical books of the Old Testament exemplify the ordinary subjects of an Asiatic annalist, though the style of the Bible is far superior. Its strenuous simplicity is infinitely above the diffuse language and ornamental rhetoric of the Indian annalist. But it must be admitted that an Asiatic historian wrote under many disadvantages. His materials were comparatively scanty; he must have had great difficulty in collecting them. The confusion and uncertainty of political affairs, the interruption of communications, left him few opportunities of extensive research, and the records of preceding times must have been frequently destroyed by the influx of unlettered invaders and the waste of wars. Public documents must have very commonly perished in this way, and correspondence or contemporary memoirs must have been rare; yet more than one Moghul emperor kept diaries. The Memoirs of the Emperor Bâbar, who conquered Northern India in the sixteenth century, have indeed preserved for us an interesting and even amusing personal narrative, which

relates his own deeds and adventures, and gives his impressions of the country and the people. Bâbar had some natural literary taste, for he wrote to his son Humáyan, who succeeded him, that he (Humáyan) certainly did not excel in letter-writing, and desiring him in future to write without affectation, with clearness, using plain words, that would cost less trouble both to writer and reader. In short, the history of Asiatic countries, as written by Asiatic historians, must be admitted to be rather dull reading. It is to poetry, not to prose, that we must look for the glories of Asiatic literature. Fortunately, however, we are not altogether dependent on these historians even for the early history of Asia. Certain periods, separated by considerable intervals of time, have fallen within the range of European historians, for Asiatic affairs have been touched upon by Western literature at least since the days of Herodotus. And I think I may say, generally, that these have been the luminous periods—when some of the main currents of history, Asiatic and European, have come into contact, have been intermixed; when the events on either continent have interacted upon each other, have affected each other politically.

For ancient history these luminous intervals are, in fact, the periods of European dominion in Asia—Greek and Roman. In the earlier writings of the Greek and Roman historians we get glimpses of the old Asiatic world as it really was and still is, for Asia has changed very little, below the surface, during the last 2,000 years. And for *modern* Asiatic history we are mainly dependent on European writers, especially for Indian history since the English have been established in India.

On the whole, the periods which are most interesting to European students are, I think, the periods of European dominion in Asia—Greek, Roman, and English. For European influence—the effect of Western civilization upon the destinies of the Asiatic Continent—has been at times very powerful, and at the present moment the inter-connection of relations between the two continents is visibly modifying Asiatic ideas and institutions. And if we look back over the earlier history of these relations, the swaying to and fro of the long contest for superiority between Asia and Europe, the ebb and flow of the tide of territorial conquest, present a wide and attractive field of historical survey. I am not sure that a connected view of the subject has ever been undertaken. The various points of comparison, the curious similitude of administrative methods and political expedients adopted by the ruling European Powers in similar circumstances at long intervals

of time, suggest remarkable analogies to an Englishman who is familiar with the same problems of government as those that were encountered by the Greeks and the Romans in Asia.

I should like to illustrate these remarks by a quotation from Mr. Bevan's book, 'The House of Seleucus,' which is written with admirable breadth of view, and with a true insight into the points of comparison between ancient and modern times. He is speaking of the reign of the Seleucid dynasty in Asia. He observes; 'There is one particular part of the activity of recent Western civilization that lends its principal interest to the history of the Macedonian kings in the East, and that is the extension of European rule in the East of to-day. It was a consequence of the smallness of the ancient free State that it could not compete with the great monarchies of the world in military power. But this limitation has been done away, and the States of Western culture have risen to a position of immeasurable military superiority. This is one of the capital features of modern history. To-day an enormous part of the East is under the direct government of Europeans. . . . We may say with perfect truth that the work being done by European nations, and especially by England, in the East is the same work which was begun by Macedonia and Rome, and undone by the barbarian floods of the Middle Ages. The civilization which perished from India with the extinction of the Greek Kings, has come back again in the British official. What will the effect be? An experiment of enthralling interest is being tried before our eyes. Those who predict its issue by some easy commonplace about the eternal distinction of East and West have given inadequate consideration to the history of East and West. . . . Whatever the issue may be, a peculiar interest must be felt by Englishmen in those Western Kings who ruled in Asia twenty centuries ago.'

Mr. Bevan, you see, regards the dominion of England in Asia as a revival of the civilizing—what he calls the Hellenizing—process that was begun by the Greeks. We may agree with him generally. Nevertheless, he lays down two propositions, to which I am inclined to demur. First, I must take exception to the passage where Mr. Bevan discards, as an easy commonplace, the belief in an eternal distinction between East and West. One does not like to predict anything, but to me the evidence of past history seems to give manifest support to this belief, to prove that this distinction is real, and goes very deep. At any rate, no European civilization, whether Greek, Roman, or English, has ever yet taken deep and lasting root in Asiatic soil, or has permanently obliterated the prejudices, on both

sides, of race and religion. The civil polity of Rome, which stamped its impress indelibly on the language, literature, and laws of Europe, has left hardly a trace beyond ruins and the shadow of a mighty name (Room) throughout all the Asiatic lands which it once overspread, from the Euphrates River westward to the Mediterranean shores. Relics of Greek art and architecture still lie scattered about Asia, but the Hellenic culture and institutions have vanished utterly. As for modern European civilization, it is still on its trial; one may question whether it would survive the disappearance of European dominion. Secondly, Mr. Bevan takes the immeasurable military superiority of the West to be one of the capital features of modern history. Now, it is evidently true also that one of the capital features of ancient history was the superiority of the Western nations or races in war. We know from Herodotus that the Greeks thought very little of the soldiers of the Persian king; they are called 'barbarians who engage in battle, wearing loose trousers, with turbans on their heads, easy to be overcome.' The Greek and (afterwards) the Roman generals seem to have dispersed Oriental armies, and to have beat down the ancient Asiatic monarchies as easily as Russia and England did the same thing in Central Asia and India during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This they did in old times as we did in later days, by the discipline of their soldiers and the trained skill of the commanders. Lord Roberts marched from the Shutargardan Pass to Kabul, and from Kabul to Kandahar, with exactly 10,000 soldiers, Indian and English, much more easily than Xenophon, when he marched with 10,000 Greeks from the Euphrates to the Black Sea; though it must be remembered that Lord Roberts' march was shorter and much less difficult. Nevertheless, we English have had our disasters in Afghanistan; and, moreover, if we look back over the later history of the interminable conflict between East and West, we shall have ample cause for remembering that at certain periods superiority in arms has not been always on the side of the European.

Let me take a brief glance backward over these periods of European dominion in the Asiatic Continent. The authentic history of them begins with the expedition of Alexander the Great, when a European army was first seen in India. We know that his conquests founded a Greek empire in Asia, which overspread all Western Asia, and that afterwards the Roman empire—that greatest monument of human power, as Dean Church has called it—ruled in Western Asia at one time from the Mediterranean to

the region bordering on the Caspian Sea. That empire, while it lasted, fused all the miscellaneous races into one vast political society, treating the local and miscellaneous polytheism with complete toleration, so long as it did not interfere with government—just as we English do in India at the present day. But in the seventh century of our era came an event of immense importance that profoundly altered the whole order of things, spiritual and temporal, throughout all Western Asia, and as far eastward as India—the rise of Islam, a powerful military and missionary faith. And here I may ask you to remark the effect produced by the spread of this religion upon the character and political condition of the Asiatic peoples who accepted it. It seems to have waked up, to have electrified, their warlike energy, to have inspired them with a fanatical enthusiasm hitherto, I think, quite unknown in Asia. For the three great religions of earlier ages, Buddhism, Hinduism, and the faith of Zoroaster, were pacific, at any rate, not militant; and, moreover, they never overspread the western countries of Asia that had been subject to Rome. But Islam absorbed and unified great communities on the basis of a common belief to a degree quite unknown previously. The triumph of Islam coincides with the establishment of great warlike monarchies in Western Asia, and the religious spirit took the political shape of violent aggression. Religious unity gave force and purpose to the Mohammedan armies. The clash and conflict of two great rival creeds, Islam and Christianity, opened the era of religious wars—a new and very fierce kind of war, not known, I think, upon any considerable scale to the ancient world; and this created an antagonism which has ever since embittered the perpetual struggle between East and West, between Europe and Asia. By the eighth century the faith of Mohammed had triumphed, as Gibbon says, from Seville to Samarkand. The Byzantine Empire lost Egypt and Syria to the Arabs, and it was gradually dismembered by the Turkish hordes; until by the middle of the fifteenth century the Mohammedans had swept European dominion and Christianity entirely out of Asia. The Turkish Sultans at Constantinople not only did this, they broke into Europe and ravaged all the south-eastern countries.

It has been said that the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453 spread through Europe, for the moment, an alarm that Christendom might be destined to be overpowered by Islam; for the crescent had supplanted the cross throughout Asia and Northern Africa, in regions where the religion, the civilization, and the

language of the West had prevailed for centuries. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Osmanli Empire at Constantinople had become the most formidable fighting Power in the world. Busbecq, who was the Austrian ambassador at the Sultan's Court in the middle of the sixteenth century, writes from Constantinople that 'the Turkish soldiers are far better than the Christian troops of the European monarchies, and that the result of a meeting between the two armies cannot be doubtful.' But after the seventeenth century the tide of conquest began to turn again eastward. All the principal kingdoms of Western Asia seem to have degenerated, to have lapsed into a state of decrepitude. Before the end of the eighteenth century the Osmanli Empire was reckoned to have fallen so low that nothing but the jealousies and the dissensions of the European Powers prevented the partition of the Sultan's territories. Persia had become weak and impoverished, and what concerns us particularly, by the beginning of the eighteenth century the Moghul Empire of India, once so wealthy and powerful, had fallen into complete dilapidation.

Through the operation of some general causes, not easily to be discerned or defined, the energy and warlike force of Persia, Turkey, and India had all become enfeebled, while the armies of Europe were now incontestably the stronger. Probably the main cause was that the European Governments of the eighteenth century were ruling compact and civilized nationalities; that commerce, arts, and particularly science, had made steady progress in the West, while the old Asiatic despotism and religion had crippled all advance in wealth and knowledge. Renan attributes the decline of the Mohammedan States to the intellectual nullity produced by the bigoted hostility of their religion to any scientific progress, to their contempt for education, to the closing of the mind against new ideas and enlightenment. I myself conjecture that the superiority of Europe may be attributed to the formation of nations united under hereditary royalties, which were disturbed, but not overset, by civil wars and political convulsions. Whereas the huge Empires of Asia were constantly subject to change of masters, they were exposed to constant rebellions and wars of succession; above all, their Governments were never effectively and permanently organized. Whatever may have been the causes, by the beginning of the eighteenth century the Asiatic Empires were on the decline, and European dominion was again spreading into Asia. From this time forward, at any rate, the course of Asiatic history begins to widen, it runs clear and comparatively accurate.

Let me now pass from these general observations on Asiatic history to the history of India under British dominion. Here we are undoubtedly in a luminous period, and have at last ample light on the course of events. The narratives have been compiled, classified, and edited by European writers who have had access to sources beyond the reach of the native annalist. For the Moghul Empire, and for the intervening time that preceded our supremacy, they have had the reports of adventurous travellers, merchants, missionaries, who travelled about the country, and who visited or resided at the courts and camps of the Moghul emperors—like Bernier and Tavernier, or special envoys like Sir Thomas More, who was sent from England to the Emperor Jehangir in the reign of our James I. And later, when the English dominion was established in India, came the time for archæologic research and the collection of documents. So it may be said that the production of exact and authentic history for India began to spread with the establishment of English rule in India.

Now, in history, as in natural science, there are no isolated phenomena; the correlation between events in countries far distant on the map can often be discerned by those who can take a survey of the whole field, and trace carefully the connection between causes and remote effects. And in history, as in scientific research, the important work is to follow out these lines. It is therefore essential, for the proper understanding of Asiatic, and particularly of Indian, history, to bring it into relation with the general history of the period with which we may be dealing, and to observe the connection between European and Asiatic politics.

The modern history of European dominion in India begins in the earlier part of the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese had made good their footing on the western coast of India. Before Vasco da Gama sailed round the Cape of Good Hope to India the commerce between Asia and Europe had been in the hands of the Mediterranean cities—Alexandria, Constantinople, Venice, Genoa. From the sixteenth up to almost the end of the eighteenth century a naval contest went on for superiority over the ocean route, until, in the nineteenth century, trade returned to its ancient channels by the Mediterranean, across Egypt, and down the Red Sea. But whatever may have been its direction, the trade routes between Asia and Europe were for a long time the cause of incessant fighting; and this commerce has always been an inestimable prize to the nation that has secured it.

There are two cardinal points in the history of India during

the sixteenth century from which we might draw lines of causes and consequences, which, when prolonged through two centuries, converge and meet in the climax of the establishment of the British Empire. The first is the acquisition by a European nation—the Portuguese—for the first time in the world's history of a solid territorial footing on the Indian mainland. The second point is the foundation of the Moghul Empire by the chief of a Tartar tribe from beyond the Oxus (Bâbar) in 1525.

Both these events belong to the first quarter of the sixteenth century, and I say that they led up to our own dominion in India, because the British Empire rose upon the fall of the Moghul; and the English followed the Portuguese into India. Let us leap over two centuries, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth. For India the event of paramount importance in that century was the collapse of the Moghul Empire. It broke up, went to pieces, and sank like a ship in a storm which had lost steerage-way under incapable command. Its end was that of other Oriental Empires known to history: assaulted from outside by foreign invaders, and distracted internally by revolts, it fell at last with a mighty crash, and was torn to fragments by the usurpers, the successful rebels, and military adventurers, who fought over the spoils. Then ensued, as we know, an interval of confusion and anarchy. All India became a great war-field—the arena of a tournament where a crowd of combatants were engaged in a *mêlée*, or free fight, open to all comers. Mahrattas, Sikhs, Rajputs, the Mohammedans of the north and the south, pass over the stage in disorder; the Moghul Emperor, a wandering phantom of his past glory, flits across the scene, seeking refuge in one camp or another, lending his imperial name to any party that will give him protection. And in this eighteenth century we may remark another coincidence of remarkable and decisive events, leading up, there also, to the establishment of British dominion. In 1759, not long after Clive's victory at Plassey in Bengal, Ahmed Shah, the Afghan King, marched down into India; and in 1761 he completely defeated the Mahratta army at the great Battle of Paniput, near Delhi. But Ahmed Shah did not stay in India; he withdrew into Afghanistan, and from the date of his departure the irruptions into India from Central Asia practically ceased.

Now 1761 is the year when Lally surrendered Pondicherry to the English, and this terminated the dominion of the French in South India. Neither by sea nor by land, from that time forward, has any important hostile force crossed the Indian frontiers; thence-

forward the English had only to contend for sovereignty with the native Indian princes. Their naval superiority had enabled them to beat off all their European rivals by sea just at the time when all serious invasions of India by land had come to an end. The gates of India, by sea and land, were thus shut against all foreign rivals, and the English were left undisturbed masters of the situation.

As I have already said, with the beginning of English dominion begins also the period of authentic Anglo-Indian historians; they were no longer Mohammedan, but English. From the eighteenth century, when the European struck in upon the scene of confusion that followed the collapse of the Moghul Empire, and took a hand in the scramble for its provinces, we have trustworthy contemporary writers, who at any rate had lived in India, were personally conversant with the affairs of the country, and in close contact with the events which they related. I refer to men like Orme, Wilkes, Grant Duff, and Mountstuart Elphinstone. We have, besides, authors who wrote in England from a careful study of ample documents. James Mill's 'History of India,' has on this account some substantial value, though in his philosophic and somewhat ponderous volumes we often perceive the disadvantage under which a writer labours who belongs to a totally different society and *milieu*, for he never saw India. He was a conscientious doctrinaire whose prepossessions inevitably led him to some erroneous conclusions. The writers who had lived in India understood the facts better; they had the true view of the character and consequences of the events; but their narratives (with the exception of Elphinstone's history) are almost always confined to particular parts of India; they deal with special sections or compartments of the general history. And, moreover, I am afraid that some of the remarks which I have made upon the character of Asiatic history in general, its monotony, its lack of the varied interests that animate the records of European nations, the absence of social and intellectual movement—I am afraid, I say, that these remarks still apply, though in a less degree, to Anglo-Indian history during the later part of the eighteenth century and up to the first years of the nineteenth. The confusion of the period necessarily complicates its history; the situation changes at each turn of the political kaleidoscope. It is chiefly a narrative of comparatively petty wars, military expeditions, obscure sieges and skirmishes, and complicated political negotiations over the cession or exchange of territories, over annexations, or subsidiary treaties. All these are, in short, the diverse operations, military or diplomatic, by which a compact and civilized government gradually

supersedes or brings into subordinate alliance unstable rulers, and pacifies unruly tribes. With the close of the eighteenth century ends what one might call the heroic period of Anglo-Indian history. The times are unfavourable to the appearance of men whose original genius enables them to play a great part in affairs—the era of adventures, irregular fighting, and the struggle for land or rule, is ceasing. Clive and Hastings have no successors of equal calibre among Englishmen; nor after that period does any Asiatic of first-class historical reputation come upon the Indian scene. The last of the great Asiatic commanders, Ahmed Shah Abdali, won the Battle of Paniput in 1761, which is the last pitched battle on a great scale that has been fought in India. And, after all this rough-hewing work has been finished, there follows a period of interior administrative organization—a business of great importance, but which is not a good subject for historical treatment, and very hard to make interesting generally. From about the middle of the eighteenth century the Anglo-Indian historian takes up the wondrous tale, and thenceforward, instead of scarcity of details, we have almost too many particulars. The narratives are exact and elaborate, so much so that, for the average reader, they become tedious and prolix. The story is taken up from different standpoints, from Madras, Bengal, Bombay; we are puzzled by outlandish names of princes, places, and races, so that a comprehensive view of the main current of events becomes difficult. The story is not clear and consecutive, like the links of a chain; you have to weave together the separate strands of a rope. To give one instance. Formerly examiners in Indian history kept in stock one question: Can you give a succinct account of the war in the Carnatic? Well, no one who has not laboriously unravelled the complicated series of intrigues, conspiracies, skirmishes, sieges, and changing of sides by partisans, that are included under this brief denomination, can adequately conceive how hard it was to write correctly a succinct answer. Yet the result of this war, in which the French and English East India Companies took opposite sides, was of great importance; it brought Clive to the front and ruined Dupleix.

Toward the close of the eighteenth century the British Government at home began to give serious attention to Indian politics, but the English nation at large knew little about them, and found Anglo-Indian books unreadable. Those who wrote from special personal knowledge of India have very rarely possessed also the gift of imparting it in the style and shape demanded by the high standard of even popular literature; their books were rarely read,

and this general ignorance and inattention was very damaging to the reputation of Indian administrators, who seldom got a fair hearing. I believe that it was Macaulay who first woke up the English people to a general interest in the early exploits of their countrymen in India. His famous essays on Clive and Warren Hastings actually created the public opinion almost universally held up to the latter part of the nineteenth century upon the bold political strokes by which certain resolute Englishmen had carved out an empire in Asia. Those great historical cartoons of Clive and Warren Hastings stamped their impressions ineradicably upon the minds of ordinary readers, insomuch that if the average Englishman knew anything of these things, he implicitly believed Macaulay's version of them; and it would have been vain to protest that there was another side to the story. Yet, although Macaulay's strictures were severe, and in some degree unmerited, the general effect was to the advantage of Clive and Hastings; he set them up on a pedestal, he brought out the heroic element in their deeds and character—the signal services that, in spite of their faults, they rendered to their country. And qualities of this kind are always appreciated by our people, who are not disposed in such cases to be hard upon moral shortcomings. If a man commands success, the nation is not greatly concerned to inquire whether, from that point of view, he deserves it.

These essays are a fine example of the power of style. Macaulay is a great impressionist, who knows the art of managing detail so as to bring out striking effects, to sharpen the leading points, and to group his figures in high relief. A few strokes of his pen illuminate the whole landscape, and we have before us a picture. In two brilliant pages—no more—of his essay on Clive he sketches the scene of confusion and strife of races which followed the dilapidation of the Moghul Empire; and you may remember that he begins that essay by deploring the little interest excited among Englishmen by the great actions of their countrymen in the East. The subject, he says, is to most readers insipid and even positively distasteful, and he adds that the fault lies partly with the historians. Unfortunately, Macaulay's splendidly rhetorical essays on Clive or Warren Hastings only threw into deeper shade the sober Anglo-Indian literature. The general reader was quite satisfied with Macaulay, he had no desire to go further, and the plodding conscientious Anglo-Indian writers, mostly men who had spent their life among the scenes and people whom they described, were left more than ever in obscurity.

Even Mountstuart Elphinstone, the best and most readable of Anglo-Indian historians, was discouraged. He had just settled down to an account of the growth of the English dominion under Clive and Hastings, when Macaulay's essays appeared. He was dazzled and disheartened by their brilliancy. He decided that Mill had treated the period philosophically, and Macaulay dramatically, in a manner that left him no excuse for going over the same ground, and he abandoned his work in a fit of despondency. We thus lost all but the first volume of a history which, so far from being superfluous, would have probably succeeded in just those parts of the subject which Mill and Macaulay misunderstood, or unintentionally misrepresented. James Mill has no sympathy with the difficulties of the English in India, nor did he rightly understand the structure of Asiatic States and societies. Macaulay saw at a glance the whole panorama of the wreck of the Moghul Empire and the tossing sea of confusion upon which the English embarked so audaciously. But he is at times inaccurate as to facts and their significance, for he had not Elphinstone's personal familiarity with them, or his profound insight into Asiatic character. He was content, as an historian, with making a bold plunge into that labyrinth of complicated events. His two essays were flashes of genius that illuminated for the moment the obscurity that hung over the field of Anglo-Indian war and politics in the eighteenth century, and which is still, I fancy, a cloudy region for most home-keeping Englishmen. The truth is that details are of little use to a reader unless he is provided beforehand some framework of general knowledge in which they may be located and arranged.

An unfinished volume, intended by Mountstuart Elphinstone to be a continuation of his valuable 'History of India,' was published after his death by Sir Edward Colebrooke, who supplemented it by a final chapter, bringing the narrative up to 1783. In the last page of this chapter Colebrooke wrote that from 1783 until the British armies crossed the Indus in 1839 all the wars of the English in India arose from their relations with the native States only, with no reference to the affairs of Europe. Elphinstone was intimately connected with the foreign politics of India from 1800 to 1815, during the long war with France. In 1808 he was deputed on a mission to Afghanistan for the purpose of counteracting Napoleon's plan of threatening India through Persia. I feel sure that he himself would never have written this sentence of Colebrooke's, for I believe that it expresses a limited, and therefore inadequate, view of the political situation during the earlier years, at any rate, of

the nineteenth century. For example, it was Tippu Sultan's attempt to ally himself with France, then at war with England, that brought down the British army upon Mysore in 1799, which caused his ruin.

With regard to the nineteenth century I shall only say a few words. It may be true, as Mr. Bryce observes in one of his admirable historical essays, that 'only for a few moments in the century and a half, since the Battle of Plassey (1757), have Indian affairs gravely affected English politics.' Possibly, Mr. Bryce here means the domestic politics of England, the parliamentary controversies over constitutional and economical issues, though, even with this meaning, I am inclined to differ from his opinion. But I should certainly say that the external affairs of India, in regard to such important matters as the defence of our Indian frontiers, and the relation of India with the Asiatic States beyond, have often affected very gravely the foreign politics of England. At any rate, to put the proposition another way, inversely, I should confidently assert that from the eighteenth century up to the present time the foreign politics of England, her wars and alliances in Europe, have gravely affected Indian affairs.

In 1756, about 150 years ago, the Seven Years' War began in Europe, and England at first took part in it for objects and reasons very slightly connected with India. Yet among the principal consequences of that war were the expulsion of the French from India and our own conquest of Bengal. As I have said already, it was our war with the French Republic that precipitated the fall of the Mysore Sultan, Tippu; and I think I should be able to prove that European politics and Indian affairs have been constantly acting and reacting upon each other, with important results, up to the close of the nineteenth century.

In the history of that century the acquisition by Great Britain of the sovereignty over all India is a fact of the first magnitude. Not only has it impressed a perceptible bias on our foreign policy; it has added much to our wealth and power, and it has secured a large expansion for our trade. Mr. Brooke Adams, an American writer, tells us that 'From the dawn of European history to the rise of modern London the Eastern trade has enriched every community where it has been centred'; and the remark, though it is not original, may be cited here to explain the keen competition which has gone on, from the days of the Roman Empire down to our own time, over the commerce between Europe and Asia. The commercial ventures of our East India Company in the seventeenth

century were the beginning of a national enterprise, in which England finally triumphed in India by skilful administration and the success that attends daring in war. The latest Italian historian of Rome, Ferrari, has written with regard to the Roman Empire: 'It would not be easy to discover in the whole course of history a State which accomplished conquests so extensive, with resources so slender, as Rome.' I may venture to suggest that some parallel might be discovered in the history of the rapid steps which led England to supremacy in India.

DISCUSSION

Mr. J. D. REES, M.P., said: It struck me very much that what Sir Alfred Lyall said as to there having been little change in Asia under the surface for the last two thousand years has a particularly important bearing upon some of the great problems in respect to India now under consideration. Only a few days ago the *Contemporary Review* came out with an article by Mr. Bepin Chandra Pal, who is one of the most conspicuous and, as I think, the ablest of all the agitator enemies of British rule in India. He asserts—indeed, it is the main theory of a very interesting article—that there is in India a sense of nationality, a national solidarity running right through that vast country. I confess I had always been of the exactly opposite opinion, and still am. His theory is that this national feeling is ground for most of the reforms that are claimed, and that it was created, as we believe ourselves to some extent, by the British system of education. There is undoubtedly a feeling abroad amongst the people of India which accounts for recent phenomena which we can only regret. If the right hon. gentleman had anything to say upon this subject, I am sure it would be of great interest to those who, like myself, humbly follow him in explaining the real conditions prevailing in India, as distinct from those represented in this country by people who come here speaking in the name of the Indian people, but having in India, at any rate, ceased to be representative. Sir Alfred Lyall also referred to the absence in the writings of Indian historians of information regarding the condition of the people and the country. That, of course, is due to the histories being mainly personal chronicles of the doings of kings and potentates, as the right hon. gentleman said. But I would point out that a book lately published does throw very considerable light upon the condition of the people in the Moghul days, and constitutes a very complete answer to those who vaguely and indefinitely suggest that in pre-British days there was a kind of golden age in India. I refer to the *Chronicles of Nicoli Manucci*, admirably translated by Mr. Irvine. Anyone who reads that scholarly work, and places it beside an official

review lately published of fifty years of Crown rule in India, will have the opportunity to compare the economic conditions of the two periods, and will see how utterly misleading are the comparisons unfavourable to British rule sometimes made. If these remarks lead anyone here to read these admirable and most fascinating Chronicles, I am sure he will think that I have not spoken in vain. Sir Alfred Lyall compared the march of Roman civilization in the East with the march of Western civilization there to-day. I do not know whether I am quite right in the view that the Romans made all their colonists and conquered peoples citizens—Roman citizens—with some at any rate of the rights as citizens which people had at home in Italy, but I rather think that was done. If so, I think the analogy with British administration cannot be closely pressed. The theory has been put forward that any British subject in any British possession is entitled to have the rights of any other British citizen in any other British possession. It seems to me that that theory, if pressed home, would lead to the break-up of the British Empire. The theory is urged on behalf of British Indians in the Transvaal. But surely it would be fatal to apply it to an Empire like the British, consisting as it does of so many different nationalities, many parts of which have their own forms of self-government, which, I believe, was never the case in the Roman colonies, these being always under the immediate dominion of the Home Government. Sir Alfred Lyall reminded us that the sober and less interesting Anglo-Indian historians of the early part of last century were eclipsed by the brilliancy of Macaulay. I think there is more reason for regretting that now than at any other time since we have administered India, because there could be no better corrective of the theories that are now confidently advanced about India being ripe for parliamentary government than the writings of John Stuart Mill, a Radical philosopher who expressed grave doubts whether any democracy under any circumstances could govern a distant foreign possession like India. I think that if the writings of Mill were more read than the philosophies of Herbert Spencer by Indian politicians, and they also discarded a great many other writings forming their stock-in-trade, the change would have a beneficial effect upon the present state of Indian politics and the relations between England and India. (Cheers).

The CHAIRMAN : I am sure you will all agree that it has been a very great pleasure and instruction to us to listen to the admirable lecture we have had this afternoon, and the observations upon it of Mr. Rees. In the early part of his lecture Sir Alfred Lyall pointed out the great amount of space devoted by Eastern historians to recording the doings of kings and rulers, and spoke of the kings reaching their thrones by a process of warlike selection. Anyone who has had acquaintance with Asiatic countries not under the dominion of European Powers knows

that in this respect Asia has not wholly changed, and knows that before a ruler comes to the throne he has to fight his way amongst, perhaps, several brothers, cousins, and uncles. He rules, not because he is the eldest son, but because he has fought his way through obstacles and counter-claims; this means that in some degree at least the fittest man arrives at the throne. In the case of Chitral, for example, I remember that when the old Mehtar died in the early nineties there were seventeen sons still living. About a fortnight after he died there were only four left. We may assume that in some degree the inefficient had been eliminated by that process, and that in the long course of ages the system has to a certain degree ensured the rule of the fittest. Another point in Sir Alfred Lyall's illuminating lecture which, I think, deserves some consideration is his remark that he does not feel quite sure that if European dominion was taken away from Asiatic countries, European influence and civilization would remain any longer nowadays than it had done in the past. Well, in considering that point I think there is one thing that ought to be borne in mind, and that is the difference which science has made, since the days of Hellenic culture and Roman conquest, in bringing all the countries of the world more closely together by railway, steamship, and telegraphic communication. It seems to me that, even if British dominion were withdrawn from India, there would always be European travellers and residents in that country, and conversely there would be Asiatic travellers and settlers in Europe. In that way, I think, European influence would survive the disappearance of European dominion very much longer and very much more profoundly than in the past.

The CHAIRMAN then moved a vote of thanks to the lecturer, and it was heartily accorded.

Sir ALFRED LYALL: I think that the suggestions which Mr. Rees and the Chairman have been good enough to make upon my address are quite worthy of attention, and to a certain extent I agree with them. I should explain, however, that I never intended to touch upon contemporary politics, though one or two remarks I put in my address, and which Mr. Rees took up, had a certain connection that way. What the Chairman says as to European influence being more permanent under the conditions of modern science I concur in. All that now remains is for me to thank you for the attention with which you listened to the paper. (Cheers).

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PROCEEDINGS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY

RAILWAY EXPANSION IN CHINA AND THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN POWERS ON ITS DEVELOPMENT

BY
MR. A. J. BARRY

Read April 13, 1910



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RAILWAY EXPANSION IN CHINA

AND

THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN POWERS ON ITS DEVELOPMENT

THE CHAIRMAN (Lord Ronaldshay, M.P.) said they had been looking forward for some time to the paper they were to have that afternoon. The question of Chinese railway expansion was extremely interesting from a great many points of view, and especially to Englishmen, because they had a considerable amount of capital invested in many of these railway projects in China. Mr. Barry was extremely well qualified to speak on the question, for he had great practical knowledge of Chinese railways. He was an engineer by profession, and he had had a great deal to do with negotiations for building lines in that vast country. In these circumstances they could look forward to a most interesting paper from him.

I had the honour of reading a paper last spring before the Society of Arts on very much the same subject with which my paper deals to-day.

In the previous paper to which I refer I endeavoured to give a résumé of the history of the changes which have taken place in the attitude adopted by the Chinese—both the official classes and the people themselves—towards the construction of railways, from the time when their fanatical intolerance of innovation led to the destruction, when scarcely completed, of the first railway built in China—the Woosung line—down to the present day, when we find the Chinese Government itself endeavouring to pursue a policy of railway construction on a large scale, and at the same time many lines of railway being projected, and some constructed, under auspices of private enterprise.

But if the prejudice of the Chinese against such a foreign innovation as a railway has been entirely overcome, their traditional dislike of the foreigner remains. In the early days of railway construction the foreigner, entrusted with a considerable measure

of control, had to be tolerated, partly because the necessary foreign capital could not be borrowed otherwise, and partly because foreign engineers and railway officers were necessary; but times have changed, and are changing rapidly. The Chinese have learnt much in the matter of railway construction and management, and most of them, perhaps, believe they have learnt all there is to know; whilst the competition of foreign financiers to lend China money for railway construction, until quite recently, had become so keen that, one by one, the Chinese Government had been able to eliminate from each succeeding loan-agreement conditions and stipulations which prescribed the supervision, and to some extent control, by foreigners. China now seems to be within measurable distance of achieving her ambition—viz., of borrowing foreign capital for railway construction unconditionally, so far as expenditure is concerned, and thus being able to dispense with the foreigner, and to build and manage her railways in her own way. Whether this haste to get rid of the foreigner, whose skill and loyalty to his employers can be relied on, will in the end benefit China's best interests is a question concerning which some of China's most able statesmen are doubtful; but the cry of 'China for the Chinese!' becomes more insistent, and the Central Government cannot afford to ignore provincial agitation, or to neglect the nearest approach to public opinion that obtains in China—namely, the views, uninformed though often they be, of the students, the provincial gentry, and the Press.

But if the attitude of the Chinese towards the foreigner has changed, so also has the attitude of the foreigner towards China; and to-day I propose to touch more particularly on these changes, and to attempt to follow them through their various phases, from the time when the policy of 'spheres of influence'—which was, perhaps, a euphonious synonym for territorial aggrandizement—was the guiding policy of most foreign nations in their quest for railway concession from China, to the time when, the policy of the 'open door' having been universally adopted, competition between foreign nations for railway concessions, as a means of extending the markets for their special industrial products, became so keen as to lead to a tendency to reckless finance, and thence to the present day, when, with the object of arresting cut-throat competition, foreign nations are endeavouring to arrive at a comprehensive agreement amongst themselves, and are defining satisfactory conditions for joint participation in future railway finance in China.

If ever such an arrangement be achieved—and in the case of the Hankow Sechuan Railway, after many tedious months of negotiation, a solution would seem possible—there remains the question whether, however satisfactory to foreign interests, it will meet with the unqualified approval of China. For China has always found it possible in the past to play off rival political and financial interests against one another, to her own advantage; but whether she will venture to commit herself to obligations that might be enforced by a concert of Foreign Powers is another matter. We shall return to this subject later on.

In the first stage of the struggle of the nations for railway concessions, England and Russia were the central figures. In the far south-west of China France was occupied in completing her railways in Tonkin, and in endeavouring to establish her influence in Yunnan and Kwangsi. The Germans had not so far made an effective entrance in the arena, and Belgium had not then attached herself to any of the Great Powers.

In the North, however, English and Russian interests were sharply opposed. British commercial interests had established themselves firmly in the northern province of Pechili and in Manchuria. As the result of British initiative and enterprise, Tientsin and Newchwang had become important trade centres, and the largest share of the expanding trade of both these places was in the hands of British merchants.

In 1890, after facing innumerable vicissitudes through which the enterprise had been skilfully and patiently piloted, the Northern Chinese Railway Company had, under the direction of British engineers, been constructed up to within sixty miles of Shan-hai Kwan, where the Great Wall of China forms the south boundary of Manchuria.

Li Hung Chang, the great Viceroy of the metropolitan province of Pechili, who had given his powerful support to the enterprise since its commencement, had, in 1891, taken over control of the railway on behalf of the Imperial Government. An Imperial Edict had been issued in 1888 commanding Li Hung Chang to extend the railway, for strategical reasons, to Shan-hai Kwan, where is situated one of the principal military camps of North China.

In the meantime, whilst powerful reactionary elements in Peking were opposing all attempts at railway development within the Empire, and while the more progressive officials were timidly recommending the paltry extension of the Northern Railway to Shan-hai Kwan, Li Hung Chang's master-mind had evolved a far

grander scheme—nothing less, in fact, than the construction of a railway from Shan-hai Kwan to Mukden, and thence to Ninguta and Hunchum, and, branching off from this railway at Mukden, another line was to connect it with Newchwang, the port of the province of Fengtien. The object which Li Hung Chang had in view in promoting this great scheme is self-evident. Surely and steadily Russia had for years pursued a policy of expansion at the expense of China. To adopt one of Li Hung Chang's own similes, 'China was like a mulberry-leaf, and Russia the silkworm nibbling at her edges.' The time was fast approaching when Russia would be in a position to lay hands on Manchuria, and, when once firmly established there, Pechili, the metropolitan province, even Peking itself, would be threatened by so powerful a neighbour. The Viceroy realized that to China such a consummation must constitute a grave danger; to British trade in the North of China it evidently meant a serious set-back.

So far as China was concerned, under the existing primitive conditions of her means of communication with Manchuria, she was hardly in a position to offer serious opposition to Russian encroachment; and Li Hung Chang was therefore acting wisely in endeavouring to strengthen her position in Manchuria before the great Siberian railway—the construction of which was on the point of being commenced—became a *fait accompli*, and before Russia thus became placed in a position to pursue her schemes of penetration, peaceful if possible, if not, then forceful, in Manchuria.

Let us try now to look at the problem through Russian eyes.

That the Russian Empire, with its huge and growing population, requires room for expansion goes without saying, and it is clear that the line of least resistance to this expansion lay, at that date at any rate, eastwards, through Central Asia.

The first step towards Far Eastern expansion was taken as long ago as 1581, when Yermak, the great Cossack leader, under the patronage of the powerful border family of Strogonoff, led his followers across the Urals. So rapid was his success that, in spite of dangers and difficulties, which would have daunted any but these hardy and reckless freebooters, he was able from Sibir, the conquered Tartar capital of Western Siberia, to send his lieutenant to Moscow to announce the success of the first step towards a Russian Empire in Asia, and to claim for himself and his followers the revocation of the sentence of death, passed upon them a few years earlier by the Czar, for piracy on the Volga. Far from resting on his laurels, Yermak, now reinforced from Russia,

continued his victorious career eastward, and after his death by drowning in 1584, his successors carried on his work with the same restless energy, extending the eastern frontier of the new territory of Siberia, until, in 1638, the Russian flag was planted on the shores of the Pacific, less than sixty years since Yermak first crossed the Urals.

During the next fifty years a series of raids southwards into Manchuria aroused the serious attention of the Chinese. Now for the first time the Russians found themselves opposed by forces as well armed as themselves, for the Manchu conquerors of China were then at the height of their power, and as a result of the hospitality they had accorded to the Jesuit missionaries had acquired a considerable knowledge of European arms and the science of war. The scattered Cossack bands could make little or no headway against the resources of the Chinese Empire. Few in number, far from their base of supplies, and now neglected again by the authorities at Moscow, their position was desperate, and in 1689 the Russian Government concluded the treaty of Nerchinsk with China, under which they relinquished the basin of the Amur River and nearly all the country now known as Eastern Siberia.

During the next 150 years Russia was fully occupied in settling and developing the Asiatic possessions, which she still retained, and it was not until the middle of last century that a further movement of expansion eastwards began.

The appointment of General Muravieff in 1847 as Governor-General of Siberia marked the inauguration of a new era in the eastern extension of the Russian Empire, which was carried on with ever-increasing energy and success from that time until the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in 1904. Until the first China War in 1840, Russia had been the most important of European Powers enjoying direct trade relations with China, but the Treaty of Nanking proved to her and to the civilized world that new conditions were arising in that region which Muravieff had marked out for absorption into the Russian Empire.

On the conclusion of the treaty of Nanking (1842), England definitely entered on the scene as a dangerous competitor to Russia in the Far East. Until that date British trade with China had been comparatively insignificant, and carried on merely by virtue of the tacit consent of the Chinese Government. Now, however, China found herself compelled to concede the demands of foreign merchants for definite recognition, and to open five of her ports to

foreign trade, which at that time was nearly all British. Russia speedily realized that unless she took timely precautions there was danger of her being forestalled by England in the Far East. An active policy in Siberia was indicated, and for the successful pursuit of that policy no better selection than that of General Muravieff could have been made for the important appointment of Governor-General of the Russian Asiatic possessions. Muravieff quickly grasped the splendid possibilities that lay before his country in the Far East. He appears to have pictured to himself a vast Russian Asiatic Empire stretching from the Urals to the Pacific Ocean, and from the Arctic Ocean to the Yellow Sea. He realized that the possession of the great waterway of the River Amur was the key to the problem of the future which he had set himself to solve. He very soon discovered that the control exercised by China over the country which forms the basin of the Amur was more nominal than real, and he set himself to weaken it still further as a prelude to Russian annexation. Year by year he despatched expeditions of exploration and colonization down the river, and paid scant attention to the protests from China that these called forth. The Crimean War gave him the pretext for which he had been waiting. The blockade of the Baltic and the Black Sea had cut Russia off from her Colonies on the Sea of Okhotsk, and, since supplies could now only be transported to them down the Amur River, he boldly seized it, and explained his action to the protesting Chinese Government by making a virtue of necessity.

But although his occupation of the Amur region was an accomplished fact, he failed to persuade the Chinese formally to recognize it, until, in 1858, when China becoming involved in a war with England and France, he succeeded in persuading her that the only means of closing the waterway to the allies' hostile fleets and thus preventing a possible flank attack was formally to cede the Amur to Russia. Thus, having once more adroitly taken advantage of circumstances, he prevailed on China to sign the Treaty of Aigun, which recognized Russian claims to the Amur River and all the country to the north of it.

A year later, however, owing to the repulse of the British attack on the Taku Forts in 1859, the Chinese were emboldened to repudiate the treaty.

The reverse of the allied forces was, as you are aware of course, only temporary, and before many months elapsed they were at the gates of Peking.

The Chinese Government then became tractable enough and

ready to concede Russia's demands for satisfaction for its breach of faith, which took the form of a cession to Russia of all the territory north of the Amur and east of the Usuri, including the port of Vladivostock.

So far Muravieff's dreams of a vast Russian Asiatic Empire had been fulfilled in a marvellously short time.

In the meantime the trade between Great Britain and China was rapidly increasing in importance and volume. British merchants were making full use of the commercial facilities which China had been compelled to grant to foreigners, and were extending British commercial interests farther and farther north, even into Manchuria. From a Russian point of view all this threatened seriously to interfere with the final execution of her plans, which would not be complete until at least Manchuria, and perhaps Korea as well, were added to her Asiatic possessions.

Not only did the fertility of these countries make them desirable in the extreme, but even more desirable still were the warm-water ports on their coasts, for so far the whole Russian Empire possessed no ice-free port which could not be closed at the will of a possible enemy. Vladivostock, with all its advantages, suffered from the drawback of being ice-bound for several months in the year.

Circumstances therefore forbade delay. By 1890 Russian influence in Manchuria had been established, and so long as no third party intervened the conversion of that influence into actual control, and finally possession, could only be a matter of time.

The only power that appeared to Russia to be dangerously antagonistic to her scheme was Great Britain.

Such was the situation in 1891, and Li Hung Chang was far too astute a politician not to grasp the trend of affairs. In promoting his new scheme of railway extension in Manchuria, and by employing English engineers for the purpose, there is little doubt he had in view the necessity of forestalling Russia by strengthening China's hold on the outlying provinces of Manchuria, and of introducing other foreign interests there to counterbalance those of Russia.

The problem which Russia now had to face was clearly defined, if difficult to solve. She had to delay as long as possible Li Hung Chang's railway scheme, and in the meantime to carry out as rapidly as possible her own great project, of the construction of a railway right across the continent of Asia from the Urals to Manchuria.

The former task was not particularly difficult of accomplishment, for in Peking Li Hung Chang had against him the powerful antagonism of the reactionary party, led by Prince Tsun; but the successful carrying-out of that colossal undertaking, now known to the world as the Trans-Siberian Railway, was not so easy. In the history of railway construction there has been nothing to compare with it in boldness of conception, and it is impossible to regard with anything but the most sincere admiration a people possessed of the energy and resources which enabled them to plan, and successfully carry out, so stupendous a work in so short a time, in the face of so many natural difficulties.

In 1891 the Siberian Railway was commenced; in 1901 it was completed; but during those ten years much had happened in China. Although Russia had been successful in thwarting Li Hung Chang's project for a railway across Manchuria in 1893, he succeeded, despite Russian opposition, in obtaining the Imperial sanction to extend the Northern Railway beyond the Great Wall, its objective being Mukden, with a branch to Yinkow, a point on the Liao River opposite Newchwang.

Before many miles had been constructed the Chino-Japanese War broke out (1894); by the spring of 1895 all was over, and China had been hopelessly defeated at every point.

Situated as she was, Li Hung Chang had no alternative but to sign, on behalf of his country, the Treaty of Shimonoseki, which ceded to Japan the island of Formosa, the Liaotung Peninsula, and established the independence of Korea. No sooner, however, was the treaty signed than Russia, supported by France and Germany, protested so vigorously, that Japan was compelled to relinquish practically all that was of any great value to her of what she had gained by her victorious war.

Once more Russia had scored heavily. She was able enormously to enhance her prestige in Peking as the powerful friend of a humiliated China. She was easily able to checkmate Japanese schemes for territorial aggrandizement (which, if successful, would have been absolutely fatal to her own plans), for Japan was certainly not then in a position to undertake another war against such a powerful combination.

Now for the first time we find Germany entering the political arena in China, subscribing to the policy of spheres of influence, and it was not long before it became recognized that she had marked out Kiaochow and the province of Shantung as the price of her support to Russian intervention.

Although Japan, under the circumstances, had been forced quietly to submit to the rebuff she had received, she never forgot it, and from that date silently set to work to prepare herself for the struggle for very existence with Russia, which she foresaw was inevitable. Russia, on the other hand, appears to have underestimated the resources and determination of her future opponent, and to have regarded England as her really dangerous rival, rather than Japan.

We now come to the circumstances which converted Li Hung Chang from being the most astute opponent of Russia's schemes of aggrandizement at the expense of China, to one of her most energetic allies. Soon after the signing of the Treaty of Shimonoeski the coronation of the Czar took place in Moscow, and Li was invited to be present as the representative of China. He was received with special attention, and, during his stay, had several interviews with the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs; before he left the famous Cassini Convention was arranged. Under this Convention Russia undertook to support China against foreign aggression in return for valuable concessions in Manchuria.

The actual circumstances that led to Li's conversion will probably never be publicly known, but the result was to give Russia a free hand in Manchuria.

The first practical outcome of this Convention was the grant of permission to Russia to carry her Siberian Railway right through Manchuria. For the sake of appearance the final agreement, however, was not made with the Russian Government itself, but with an institution that had just been founded for the purpose, called the Russo-Chinese Bank, a semi-political institution. No time was lost in commencing the work of construction the moment the concession had received Imperial sanction, and in 1897 the works were in full swing.

In the meantime Germany was preparing to secure her own position so that, as Baron von Bülow put it, should the partition of China come to pass, 'come what may, Germany herself should not go empty-handed.' It was not, however, until 1898 that the looked-for opportunity for overt action presented itself. In that year two German missionaries were murdered in Shantung. Without delay Germany seized Kiaochau Bay, and compelled China to grant her a lease for ninety-nine years of that port and a considerable slice of territory in its vicinity. At the same time Germany indicated the province of Shantung as her sphere of influence, and soon after concluded a convention with China,

giving her the right to construct certain railways in that province, of which about 280 miles have been constructed, and are now being worked by a German railway company. The German section of the Tientsin-Pukow Railway, now under construction, will form a junction with the German railway in Shantung and, when completed, will put Tientsin and the North of China in direct railway communication with the German port of Tsingtau, in Kiaochoh Bay.

On the seizure of Kiaochoh by Germany, China called upon Russia to comply with the conditions of the Cassini Convention, and to protect her against this instance of foreign aggression, but protection against so powerful an opponent was more than China could reasonably expect. On the contrary, on the signing by China of the lease to Germany of Kiaochoh, the Russians proceeded to take possession of Port Arthur by way of a counterpoise, and secured a lease of the Liaotung Peninsula, which, three years before, she had forced Japan to hand back to China. In addition she insisted on China's acquiescence to her demand for the right to build a branch-line from her Siberian Railway to Port Arthur and Talienwan. Thus, at last, Russia had accomplished her full designs on Manchuria, for it was now practically in her hands, and the Russification of the province went steadily forward.

Port Arthur was fortified. Talienwan was rapidly converted from a small Chinese settlement into a fine new Russian town under the name of Dalny.

As yet Japan gave no sign of impatience. She was not yet ready to compel attention, and had therefore no desire to attract it.

The Northern Chinese Railway, managed as it was by an English chief engineer and an English staff, was still a thorn in the side to Russia; and when, therefore, towards the end of 1897 the Chinese authorities decided to resume its extension to Yinkow, Russian opposition made itself felt. Their first step was to attempt, fortunately unsuccessfully, to persuade the Chinese Government to dismiss the English chief engineer—not, as M. Pavloff explained, 'because he was an Englishman, but because he was not a Russian, for the Russian Government had decided that no Chinese province bordering on the Russian frontier must come under the influence of any nation except Russia.' In view of the attitude thus adopted by Russia it is at first somewhat surprising that she did not offer more strenuous opposition than she did when, next year, China negotiated with the British and Chinese Corporation a loan for three and a quarter millions for the purpose of extending the

railway to Hsinmintun and Yinkow. Russia was, however, debarred from openly opposing the introduction of British capital for the extension to Newchwang, she having agreed at the time when she obtained her lease of Port Arthur that it should be no concern of hers from which country the capital required for the extension in question should be borrowed, or the nationality of the engineers employed. That being the case, she was constrained to confine her opposition to the details of the loan-agreement, and successfully objected to that part of the clause defining the security for the loan, which gave to the bondholders a mortgage on the section of the railway beyond the Great Wall. Further difficulties with Russia arose when the prospectus of the loan was published in London in 1899, but these were adjusted, and at the same time an arrangement was come to between England and Russia with the object, as it was asserted, of removing the possibility of future misunderstanding. The arrangement took the form of an undertaking by Russia not to seek for herself or others railway concessions in the Yangtse Valley, whilst Great Britain gave a similar undertaking as regards railways outside the Great Wall.

However beneficial to Russian interests in China this Anglo-Russian agreement may have been, it was certainly very much the reverse of beneficial so far as this country was concerned. At the very time when this agreement was being discussed, a Franco-Belgian syndicate, supported by the Russo-Chinese Bank, was on the point of concluding an agreement with China for the construction of the trunk line from Peking to Hankow. North of the Great Wall important British commercial interests were already established, whereas in the Yangtse Valley Russia had none. It was, therefore, anything but a fair bargain that tied the hands of Great Britain in the North, where she had legitimate commercial interests already established, whilst it did not prevent Russia from working through her ally, France, and her adherent, Belgium, in antagonism to British interests in the Yangtse Valley; and, as a matter of fact, she was already engaged in covertly working in opposition to these interests in those regions.

In 1898 a Belgian syndicate obtained a concession for the Peking-Hankow Railway, the northern half of the most important trunk line in China. To this concession, accepting, as she did, China's dictum that 'Belgium was but an iron and steel manufactory, and acknowledged to be a small country, without any wish for aggrandizement, and that borrowing money from them would be most advantageous, and attended with little risk,' England at first

offered no opposition, but scarcely had the preliminary agreement been signed, and before it had been ratified by the Chinese Government, than it became known that France and the Russo-Chinese Bank were acting with, and behind, the Belgians. The news, on reaching London, created something like consternation. Telegraphic instructions were given to Sir Claude Macdonald in Peking to do all in his power to prevent the ratification of the concession, but, in spite of his vehement protests, it received the Imperial sanction. It is instructive to note that the Chinese Foreign Office had been asked for, and had given a solemn undertaking that the Russo-Chinese Bank should not be admitted into the contract. A few days later it was discovered that the Tsungli Yamen had deliberately broken their word. Nothing, however, could be done except to claim adequate compensation for this breach of faith; accordingly, the British Government demanded the immediate completion, on terms identical with those of the Peking-Hankow Railway convention, of the preliminary agreements made with the British and Chinese Corporation for the construction of the Shanghai-Nanking, the Soochow-Hangchow-Ningpo, Pukow-Sinyang and Canton-Kowloon Railways, and also the railway projected by the Peking Syndicate. To this the Chinese Government assented, although, as a matter of fact, owing to radical changes in the political and financial conditions in China which took place before the details of these agreements were finally concluded, their original conditions have never been carried out.

Attention must now be directed to the Hankow-Canton or southern section of the trunk line between Peking and Canton. A concession for the construction of this railway was given, by the advice of the late Chang Chih Tung, to a powerful American Syndicate, who obtained it in the face of strenuous opposition on the part of the French and Belgians. Unfortunately, however, financial conditions in America made it impossible at that time for the American Development Company (a Company formed for the purpose) seriously to prosecute the work of construction, and thus the opportunity was afforded to the Belgians of gaining by indirect means what they had failed to attain directly.

The Americans had in the year 1900 offered the British and Chinese Corporation a half interest in the Hankow-Canton Railway, but unfortunately, at that time, the Boer War had broken out, and under the circumstances British capitalists did not see their way to accept the offer. The Belgians meanwhile had proceeded to buy up the founders' shares of the American Development Company,

until they succeeded in obtaining a controlling influence in its operation. It was not until 1903, however, that they openly declared themselves. In that year the American manager and engineers were dismissed and superseded by Belgians, a proceeding which evoked the strongest of protests from the Chinese Government, and eventually led to China's re-purchase of the concession.

At that time, therefore, the general position was as follows: Russia was firmly established in the North, whilst France, backed up by Russia and with the assistance of the Belgians, seemed on the highroad to achieve her ambition, to control a central trunk line across China, and join hands with her ally in the North.

We must return, however, for a few minutes to take up the thread of the history of the Northern Railway where we left it. Towards the end of 1899 and early in the year 1900 the first indications of a coming storm which culminated in the Boxer outbreak, began to manifest themselves. Missionaries stationed in outlying districts, particularly in Shantung, sent to their Ministers in Peking alarming reports of a growing feeling of hostility on the part of the natives towards foreigners. Native servants in many cases warned their foreign masters of impending danger, and urged them to fly for safety to the nearest foreign settlement. Mysterious placards, printed in red, were found posted on walls, calling on all foreigners to leave the country on pain of being destroyed. Incendiary fires began to break out nightly, particularly in the native city of Tientsin. Strange bands of natives would be met, clad in white and with red bands round their waists, practising mysterious and grotesque rites, thus to render themselves immune from foreign bullets. All this was certainly ominous, but, on the other hand, there was an element of absurdity about it, which perhaps went far to prevent foreigners from regarding these manifestations as seriously as they deserved, and at first to look upon them rather as evidence of a sporadic and semi-articulate antagonism to foreigners, which the Chinese officials could crush at any moment, rather than an organized anti-foreign movement with which many of the Chinese officials themselves sympathized.

In May, 1900, however, matters began to be more serious. Attacks on foreigners and foreign property took place. Foreigners of all kinds in outlying districts, missionaries, engineers, railway officials, and others, had to fly for their lives to Peking, Tientsin, or the nearest large foreign settlement, and those who failed to escape were murdered under the most brutal circumstances.

It was clear enough now that a great storm was about to burst,

for in Pekin itself the anti-foreign movement had been allowed by the authorities to gain such a hold that neither the Empress nor Yung Lu dared openly oppose it. Warships of various nationalities were hurried up to Taku, and, with the object of keeping open the communication between Tientsin and the sea, the surrender of the forts guarding the mouth of the Pei Ho demanded. On this being refused, they were taken by force after a short fight. On the same day the Chinese garrison in the native city at Tientsin commenced the bombardment of the European settlement. The Legations at Pekin were attacked, and the whole country was up.

How the foreigners in Tientsin were relieved after a week of incessant bombardment and fighting, and the Legations in Pekin six weeks afterwards, is a matter of history which does not here concern us.

On the relief of Tientsin, the engineers of the allies commenced to repair the railway which had been destroyed between Tientsin and Tongku. These engineers were, however, shortly afterwards replaced by a large party of Russian engineers, who arrived from Port Arthur. The Russians also proceeded to take possession of the railway from Tongku to the Great Wall, and from the Great Wall to Newchwang, and, following in the wake of the Pekin relief force as they marched from Tientsin, possessed themselves also of the railway between Tientsin and Pekin.

It must not be supposed that the British permitted the control of the railway, in which they were so deeply interested, to be taken out of their hands and seized by Russia without protest. On the contrary, although, owing to the fact that we had our hands full with the Boer War just then, our contribution to the allied forces in China was small as compared with that of Russia, the railway stations both at Pengtai and Shan-hai Kwan were occupied by small British forces before the arrival of the Russians, and the British flag was hoisted over them. Nor was it hauled down on the Russians claiming the railway by right of conquest, until the matter had been referred to Count Waldersee, the Commander-in-Chief of the allied force. These high-handed proceedings of the Russians with regard to the railway, and their generally aggressive attitude, were possibly due to the fact that at that time the Boer War was not going very well for us; and if Count von Waldersee's sympathies appeared to be possibly less inclined towards us than the Russians, it must be remembered that Great Britain was far from popular in Europe just then.

However this may be, Count von Waldersee's decision on the

subject under dispute led to very strong diplomatic representations being made by the British Government at Berlin and St. Petersburg, with the result that a few months later the Russians agreed to retire beyond the Great Wall, and to hand over the railway between Shan-hai Kwan and Peking first to the Germans, who in their turn handed it over to the British military authorities. It was not until October, 1902, that the Russians relinquished their hold on the section of the Northern Railway outside the Great Wall. At that time the Chinese Government had been re-established in authority, and had requested that the British military authorities should return to them the control of the railway. This was agreed to, on condition that at the same time the Russian authorities returned to the Chinese Government the section of the railway outside the Great Wall. To this at last the Russians consented, and the railway was returned to the Chinese.

That the Russians were constrained to release the hold they had obtained on the Northern Railway is perhaps somewhat surprising; but three possible explanations must be borne in mind: First, a British military controlled railway in the province of Pechili would not have suited Russia's book at all; secondly, there was no longer any doubt as to how the Boer War would end; and, thirdly, Russia was beginning to realize that she might ere long have to reckon with a more dangerous rival than England—Japan.

We now come to the turning-point in the history of China's relationship with foreign nations—at least, in so far as her internal affairs are concerned. We also come to the turning-point in the attitude of foreign nations towards each other, in so far as their respective interests in China are concerned. We come, in fact, to that great historical epoch when Japan, being at last ready, and having secured a fair ring by her alliance with England, determined before it was too late to try conclusions with Russia, fought a war in which her very existence was at stake, and came out of it triumphant, to take her place as one of the Great Powers of the world.

For some years before the actual outbreak of the war it seemed to many that it was inevitable. It seemed obvious that Japan, with its large, enterprising, and rapidly increasing population, must seek expansion on the mainland; equally obvious, that if Russia were finally to succeed, as she had nearly done, in *her* scheme of expansion, Japan's position would become impossible. The strangest feature of the situation was that Russia persistently under-estimated the temper, strength, and resources of the

Japanese nation. The crisis was eventually forced upon her before she had had time to consolidate her position in Manchuria, and she was terribly handicapped by the fact that she was badly informed by her political agents and officials on the spot, whose advice was in certain instances based on personal rather than patriotic motives. Russia's errors were also due to a wrong perspective of the situation, and to the idea that her most dangerous opponent in China was Great Britain. However this may be, the results of the war were disastrous to her aims. Driven back once more from a practicable road to the sea, and deprived of much that she had won by long years of patient effort, she had good reason to repent her rash precipitancy. It is idle to speculate as to what might have been the ultimate result of the war had it continued for another six months, or to speculate what may happen hereafter, when the doubling of the Siberian Railway is completed, and Russia's position on her new frontiers consolidated.

That which chiefly concerns the subject we are discussing now is the result of the war on China. So far as Great Britain is concerned, its result was to relieve the tension between England and Russia in Asia, and since then the steady growth of new and enlightened ideas in Russia has done much to win for Government and people the sincere sympathy and admiration of England, and some realization of the stupendous possibilities that lie before the Russian Empire. All this can only lead to good, since it makes for the peace of the world and the prosperity of both countries. On China the effect of the war was even more marked and immediate. It restored for the time being the balance of foreign power in the Far East; it gave new ideas of Eastern power and new enthusiasms to Far Eastern peoples, and it led to a very wide extension of the popular cry of 'China for the Chinese.' What Japan had done, China could surely do.

The Treaty of Portsmouth, which closed the war, bade fair, for a time, to put an end to the 'spheres of interest' régime, and to establish the principle of the 'open door' and equal opportunities on Chinese territory for all nations. It appeared to put an end to all further fear of foreign aggression, and the bugbear of the partition of China, which had for fifteen years obsessed the Chanceries of Europe, was to be consigned to oblivion. It seemed to leave China free and fearless to work out her own salvation along gentle paths of reform; and, indeed, this was the opinion which chiefly actuated 'Young China,' and which led him to form an exaggerated idea of his own importance.

This was the ideal; the reality, as you may have observed from recent events, is not so satisfactory. Six years elapsed since the Russo-Japanese War, but China's position to-day, politically speaking, is still far from assured, and by the death of the Empress Dowager she has lost the master-hand that guided her so skilfully through many dangers. Even if externally she has been, for the time being at any rate, relieved from the pressure of foreign aggression, internally she suffers more and more acutely from the growing antagonism between the Imperial and Provincial Governments. The Sick Man of Asia is still far from recovery, and his would-be heirs, whilst congratulating him on the turn for the better he has taken, deem it wise to be prepared for eventualities.

One of the first results of the breathing-space gained for and by China, in the defeat of Russia by Japan, was to induce her officials and people to declare themselves definitely opposed to any more of those railway concessions which had hitherto, in some instances, been merely a cloak for schemes of territorial aggression to the detriment of China's sovereign rights. It is only right to say, however, that while this movement was largely due to resentment against what was regarded as a form of aggression, it was also due to an equally natural desire on the part of the Chinese gentry and officials to get railway construction, and its 'squeezes' into their own hands. This fact is undeniable, and clearly proved by the fact that while the provinces loudly denounce foreign loans for railways when proposed by Peking, they themselves have made, and are making, many efforts to obtain foreign capital for their own local uses. It is, as has been said, a game of pull devil, pull baker, where both parties want the same thing, and neither will let the other have it, which makes it just as difficult for the would-be lender as if neither wanted it.

A typical case arising from this situation is that of the railway from Shanghai to Hang Chow and Ningpo, to which I have already referred. For this railway, as part of England's compensation for the Luhan incident, the Chinese Government made an agreement for the loan of £1,500,000 under conditions which involved regular accounts, and the services of British engineers. The province of Chekiang, thus deprived of any share in the enterprise, flatly declined to permit the carrying-out of the Central Government's agreement, raised native capital on its own account, and refused to allow the British engineer-in-chief to have anything to do with the line, which the local gentry proceeded to build in their own way. The Peking authorities dared not assert them-

selves. The line is now under purely provincial control, while a large portion of the British loan-funds are being lent out, not unprofitably, by the Peking officials, to Chinese banks, and have never been devoted to the purposes named in the prospectus of the loan.

But an example even more interesting of the existing state of affairs has occurred in the negotiations, still unconcluded, for the 'international' loan to construct the northern section of the Hankow-Canton Railway, and the first sections of the railway from Hankow westwards to Szechuan. In these negotiations are to be observed, on the one hand, the latest attempts, not entirely successful, to reconcile conflicting political interests under a cosmopolitan system of finance; and, on the other, the latest phase of the railway problem as it obtains between Peking and the provinces.

As I have stated above, China repurchased from the American Syndicate in 1905 its right to construct the Hankow-Canton Railway, because the Americans had allowed the Belgians to obtain financial control of the undertaking. To provide the funds required for the re-purchase, the Chinese Government authorized the Viceroy, Chang Chihtung, to borrow £1,100,000 from the Hongkong Government, and it was stipulated that, in recognition of the very liberal terms which the Viceroy obtained, British capitalists were to be given a first option on any loan that might thereafter be made for the construction of this railway and any other railways in Hupeh. At the time this agreement was made the gentry and local officials of Hupeh and Szechuan loudly proclaimed their intention and ability to provide the necessary funds themselves, and a certain amount of money was patriotically subscribed. As usual, however, the intention was better than the execution, and under the unbusinesslike direction of the Viceroy this money was expended to no purpose. Recognizing the futility of this method, and anxious to complete the trunk line, the Viceroy, in 1907, opened up negotiations with the British Syndicate and Chinese Corporation for a loan of £3,000,000, half of which was to be used for the southern line and half for the Szechuan Railway. At the same time, availing himself of the very loose and unsatisfactory wording of his promise to the Hongkong Government, he violated the spirit of that promise by opening up negotiations, with every incentive to competition and political intrigue, with German, Japanese, and Belgian financiers. It should be added that the British and Chinese Corporations were associated in these negotiations with French capitalists.

From the outset of these negotiations it had been the object of the British Government, closely concerned on behalf of the Crown colony of Hongkong in the permanent success of the enterprise, to obtain loan-conditions more satisfactory and less dangerous than those which had brought the Hangchow line to such a humiliating fiasco. While intimating its wishes in this sense, however, it did not go so far as to absolutely insist upon the Chinese Government's recognition of the British rights, which had been clearly established, not only by the Hongkong Government's loan, but by previous declarations obtained from the Chinese Government. As the result of these negotiations a tripartite agreement was concluded, in February of last year, at Berlin, whereby, subject to its ratification, all concerned agreed that, the terms of recent loans having been proved unsound as regards security, no more money should be lent for Chinese railways except under new and improved conditions. These were to include full control of loan-funds expenditure by representatives of the foreign banks, and other safeguards which experience had shown to be necessary. The advisability of some such understanding was indisputable, whatever one might say as to its feasibility, and the prospect of its conclusion might therefore well carry no small weight with the British Government, even to the exclusion of purely British interests. The agreement referred to having been arrived at, the British financiers' representative in Peking definitely informed the Chinese of the necessity for more careful protection of the loan funds than would be possible under the conditions offered by the Chinese. But no sooner had he done this than the German agent in Berlin concluded an independent agreement with the Viceroy Chang on terms which provided none of the safeguards essential for the protection of bond-holders. They justified their action on the ground that the tripartite agreement, not having yet been ratified, its conditions had not come into force. This action on the part of the Germans was naturally resented by the British and French groups; but eventually negotiations were renewed between the British, French, and German banks and the Chinese Government. From these a new loan-agreement eventually resulted, which left the final control of loan-funds, etc., in the hands of the Chinese. But the banks subscribed to an agreement amongst themselves for pooling all future railway loans.

Apparently everything was now settled, but the partners to the agreement had lost sight of one important consideration, which asserted itself dramatically at the eleventh hour and just as the agreement was on the point of conclusion—or rather after its

signature but before it had come into effect. The Governments and financiers of England, France, and Germany had discussed and concluded a formal agreement for the construction of the first section of the Seychuan Railway, without taking into account the fact that the United States had certain vested rights and interests in that line, granted to her in August, 1903, at the same time as England obtained those from which Germany had at first ousted us. But if the English, French, and German banks had lost sight of American rights, the American Government clearly showed they had not, and made it quite clear to China that the business could not go further until the United States had been admitted to rights of equal participation. This claim was at once admitted by China, and eventually agreed to by the tripartite financiers and their respective Governments; but, although nearly a year has since elapsed, the negotiations for re-division of the loan, etc., into four, instead of three, parts have not yet been concluded. There are also signs, unmistakable on the part of the provinces, that the Chinese view with suspicion and alarm arrangements which would create a financial 'ring fence' around China, and it is certain that, even if the four Powers come to terms, there will be a renewal of violent opposition to the loan by the provincial assemblies and gentry. The situation is, in fact, extremely complicated and delicate, for the Seychuan gentry have already begun work on one section of the line on their own account.

In conclusion, a word as to the attitude of the Japanese in Manchuria. Before the war the Chinese wished to extend the Northern Railway from Sinmingtun to Fakumen on the Liao River, at which point it was designed to tap a heavy traffic which is transported to that place down the river in boats. This extension the Russians refused to permit. When, however, the Russians had been replaced in that part of Manchuria by the Japanese, it was hoped that the latter, having subscribed to the policy of the open door and equal opportunity for all, and being pledged to maintain China's unimpaired sovereignty, would raise no objection to the construction of the proposed extension. The Chinese, therefore, made arrangements for the provision of necessary capital in England and entered into a preliminary contract with a British firm of contractors for the construction of the line. It was soon found, however, that the Japanese were as obdurate as the Russians, and in refusing to permit the railway to be built based their objections on the plea that it would be in direct competition with their own South Manchurian Railway. The Chinese were

constrained to submit, their position being prejudiced by a secret convention which Japan had obtained at Peking in September, 1905, whereby China undertook not to build any line competing directly with the South Manchurian Railway. The Chinese Government have now proposed another extension of the Northern Railway—viz., from Chin Chow northward via Tsitsihar to Aigun on the Amur River. So far as this line is concerned, there can be no question of competition (in the accepted sense of the term) with the South Manchurian Railway, and it has been made clear that any opposition to the scheme must be purely political and strategical. In due course an Imperial edict was issued, authorizing the building of the line, the capital to be provided by Americans and the work of construction carried out by the original firm of British contractors. But the Japanese have once more raised objections, claiming on this occasion rights of participation in the enterprise, and asserting that in projecting it without their co-operation the Chinese Government are committing an unfriendly act. Russia also, pleading a similarly privileged position in North Manchuria, has advanced similar claims to participation, so that China's position (and incidentally that of the American and British interests involved) is one of no small difficulty and embarrassment. It is difficult to reconcile Japan's action in Manchuria with her solemn engagements entered into in her treaty with this country to join us in maintaining the integrity of the Empire of China and equal opportunities for the commercial industries of all nations.

And the conclusion of the whole matter? To my mind it is this, that until China shall have been led to re-organize her railways, finance, and other vital matters on some practical basis of joint action between Peking and the provinces, the present chaotic conditions which surround the problem of the development of the Chinese railway system and of the general resources of the Chinese Empire will continue, and further, that unless and until a Central Government is able to assert its authority in the provinces, the cry of 'China for the Chinese!' may develop into 'Down with the foreigners!'

DISCUSSION

COLONEL SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND said: I should like to say how highly we ought to appreciate the paper we have just heard. Mr. Barry is an engineer of exceptional ability, and he has spoken to us to-day from a most authoritative standpoint, because as a railway engineer he has frequently visited China and Siberia. Indeed, I think I am right in saying that he has only recently returned from such a visit. I am also right in saying that he is exceedingly well acquainted with many of the high officials in China, and perhaps also in Russia.

To me what he has been saying to-day is extremely interesting, because twenty-four years ago Sir Evan James and I travelled all round Manchuria, about which much of the great railway fight has been concentrated. At that time there was not a single mile of railway in Manchuria, and of all those black lines you see on the map I think there was only one existing. That was a small bit of line from Pekin to Tientsin. The first line ever built was between Shanghai and Woosung; but this, after a short existence, was pulled up by the local Chinese. Twenty-four years ago it seemed impossible to imagine that there could be within a quarter of a century the development that has taken place. This development owes much to Mr. Kinder, a railway engineer at Taiping, a man of extraordinary diplomatic and engineering ability, for it was he who first induced the Chinese to take up railway construction in earnest. He took the railway to Pekin, and I think it was he who opened the eyes of that great Viceroy, Li Hung Chang, to the possibilities of railway enterprise in the country.

This great strategic battle in Manchuria of competing railway interests, which is one of the greatest in the world, has come to a certain stage, but no one can imagine that it has by any means reached its final stage. The Russians have been thrown back for a time, but they have by no means given up the battle. They are still struggling on with the Siberian Railway, and we shall hear a great deal more in the near future of the pressure in Manchuria. Meanwhile the Chinese are awakening, and the cry of 'China for the Chinese!' will probably find favour with them for some years to come. But, on the European side I think there are some signs, which Mr. Barry indicated, that that extreme antagonism between the European Powers, of which the Chinese so often made use to the disadvantage of individual Powers, is giving way to a certain degree to a larger spirit of co-operation. There is certainly not now the antagonism between the British and

the Russians that there used to be, nor between the British and the French. Although it is a consummation which we most devoutly wish, we can hardly, as practical men, expect it; yet we can hope that in future the European Powers will be able to co-operate to a very much larger extent than in the past, to develop China not merely for the benefit of the Chinese, but also for the benefit of the civilized world in general. And one of the best means to promote that end is that extremely able men like Mr. Barry should be going out there so frequently, to come back in due course to inform us of their conclusions.

MR. E. R. P. MOON referred to the lecturer's statement that the Russians were dissatisfied with the character of their ports on the Pacific, on account of their being ice-bound. In 1898 he was in Vladivostock, and on his way a travelling-companion was the Maire of the town. No doubt he was anxious to make the most of the commercial and strategic importance of his town and port. He gave him (Mr. Moon) to understand that although in a sense Vladivostock was ice-bound, in reality it was not so, because they used powerful ice-breakers there. Axis of the harbour was from north-west to south-east, and during the winter months the prevailing wind insured that the ice, after being broken up by the dredgers, floated out to sea. It was not like Lake Baikal, where the crushed ice merely disappeared under the unbroken ice and came back to the cleared space. His informant suggested that Vladivostock was really as efficient an all-the-year-round port as the warm-water ports Russia afterwards claimed in Manchuria. He would like to know the lecturer's opinion on the subject.

CAPTAIN YATE said he should like to ask about the reliability of the Pekin-Hankau Railway. The line was potentially of great strategic importance. The Chinese forces were largely concentrated in the metropolitan province of Chili and lower Yang-tzu basin, and in the event of war it must be a matter of paramount importance whether troops could be promptly conveyed from Pekin to the Yangtze Valley, or *vice versa*. Much depended, therefore, upon the quality of the line, whether it had good siding accommodation, frequent crossings, and other appliances that would facilitate the transportation of troops. The line, he believed, was liable to flooding, and traffic had often been suspended on that account. Could it be counted upon to deal promptly with large masses of Chinese troops? He asked the lecturer this, as he felt that it was a matter of very great importance, in the event of war taking place on land.

MR. BARRY: With reference to the inquiry about Vladivostock, it is true that the Russian port authorities have two big ice-breakers there, but they have to keep them constantly and steadily employed in order to keep a comparatively narrow channel permanently open.

They find it absolutely necessary to keep these ice-breakers, and the channel is only kept open with considerable difficulty.

With regard to the other question, the Pekin-Hankau Railway has been enormously improved since it was first constructed. Originally it was not particularly well built, and the stations provided little or no siding accommodation. It has since been much improved, and many sidings have been added. Although I should be sorry to say that it is quite capable of carrying a very large number of troops rapidly at the present time, I can say that it would not be a very difficult or expensive business to add the necessary sidings at various stations, and in other ways to make the line equal to any such strain. With regard to floods, for the first three or four years after construction traffic was stopped as regularly as possible from this cause in the wet weather, and bridges were carried away. The fact of the matter is that the great idea of the Belgians, when constructing the line, was to keep the amount actually spent upon it as small as possible; and so they skimmed the bridges, and the allowance for flood openings was much too small. But they got a good deal of money by way of indemnity for the Boxer outrages—in fact, over a million sterling—which gave them the opportunity to devote more capital to the line. They also charged the reconstruction of some of the bridges to maintenance account. Altogether they have succeeded in making the line now almost immune to breaching from floods, though it is still possible that there will be some breaches at times, particularly in a bad year. The key to the problem is whether the bridge over the Hwang-ho will last for all time. So far it has lasted, but there is risk of failure. The matter is causing serious anxiety to the Chinese Government, who have now taken the line over.

The CHAIRMAN: In proposing a vote of thanks to Mr. Barry for his very valuable paper, I should like to say how entirely I agree with him that the matter of most interest to foreigners at the present time is the recrudescence of the cry of 'China for the Chinese!' I was interested in Mr. Barry's statement that the gentry of Seychuan had already started on their section of the Hankau Railway. When I was in the province they were endeavouring to collect funds. After doing so they published the first balance-sheet. It showed that the first three years' collection had only produced a few thousand pounds, which would not have paid for the survey. Investigation showed that the whole of the money had gone in financing an expedition to the borders of Tibet. This shows how far the construction of a railway is likely to go if entrusted entirely to Chinese hands.

MR. BARRY: £600,000 locally subscribed has already been spent, and I think they have just turned the first sod.

The CHAIRMAN: £600,000, and only the first sod turned! Seychuan

is a very mountainous country, and it is to be remembered that the ordinary Chinese idea of curves and gradients is somewhat crude. It is quite true that the Chinese have constructed two small railways. One of these was from Peking to Kalgan, but that was a comparatively easy line to build, and it was made by Chinese who had been under the direct influence of the gentleman referred to by Sir Francis Younghusband, Mr. Kinder. There was a small mountain to be pierced; they began tunnelling at both ends, and I was told that the tunnel did not meet in the middle (laughter). But that was, let us hope, a libel on the Chinese engineer.

I believe that about this time the French will have completed their railway from Indo-China to Yunnan, for it was to be completed this month. It will give the French the great advantage of entry into China from the south. With regard to the railway skirting Manchuria and Mongolia, of which the lecturer has spoken, the position of the British Government is a rather delicate one. On the one hand we have the rights and interests of the English contractors urging us in one direction, while, on the other hand, we have our allies, the Japanese, seeking to drag us in an opposite direction. The previous project of a railway to Fakuman on the Liao River would certainly have competed with the South Manchurian Railway far more than the Chin Chow-Aigun Railway will do. It is quite natural that the Japanese should wish for no railway to be constructed that would seriously compete with the South Manchurian line. We must remember that they spent millions of money and a quarter of a million lives in the Manchurian War, and the only material asset they have for this vast expenditure of blood and treasure is the railway through Manchuria. The Japanese are not a rich nation: in fact, they are a poor nation. They therefore naturally resent any project which is likely to have the effect of diminishing the financial, as well as the political and strategic, value of the South Manchurian Railway—the one asset they have to show for their immense expenditure in Manchuria.

We shall look with interest in the future to see how far European financiers are able to work together, as they appear to be doing at the present time, to break down the hostility of the Chinese towards the introduction of foreign capital and enterprise into their country. We are indebted to Mr. Barry for the very lucid exposition he has given of the present state of affairs, as also for his valuable historical sketch of the circumstances leading up to them, and we shall pass this vote of thanks with acclamation. (Cheers).

MR. BARRY expressed his thanks, and the meeting closed.



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PROCEEDINGS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY

THE PLACE OF PERSIA IN WORLD-POLITICS

BY

MR. BERNARD TEMPLE

Read May 4, 1910



LONDON

CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY, 22, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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THE PLACE OF PERSIA IN WORLD-POLITICS

LORD LAMINGTON presided, and, in introducing the lecturer, said : We are all aware that the great countries of Asia are awakening, but in no country in the East has there been a more remarkable revival of political life than has been exhibited in Persia. Although any political movement in any part of the world must be of interest to the people of a world-wide Empire, this is particularly the case in respect to Persia, a country bordering our Indian Empire. I believe we shall all agree, after hearing Mr. Bernard Temple's paper, that we have learned a great deal of recent events in that country, and of the ideas that are there current. . . . I believe I am right in saying that he spent more than a year in Persia, which he traversed from south to north. He has for many years been resident in India, and has been in a position to absorb and assimilate knowledge obtainable in that vast country. His journalistic training enables him to discriminate between important and unimportant facts. I am quite sure, therefore, we shall have presented to us an interesting and valuable lecture.

The views which I am about to lay before this learned Society, concerning the place of Persia in world-politics, are part of the fruits of fourteen years' residence and travel in India, Persia, and Turkish Arabia.

First I shall explain what, for the purposes of this paper, is the scope of the term 'world-politics.' Afterwards I shall indicate the grounds upon which the place assignable therein to Persia may be considered.

World-politics arise out of the divisions and combinations of the world's populations. The science of ethnology has divided and combined the world's populations into races. Is it not a curious thing, then, that the science of ethnology should have hardly any bearing upon world-politics? Ethnological terms, like 'Caucasian' or 'Indo-Germanic,' carry no practical significance among ordinary men of affairs. Ethnological bonds do not unite; ethnological barriers do not divide. An Aryan in Calcutta, an Aryan in Shiraz and an Aryan in Berlin, as I can personally testify, are sundered

by antipathies. An Aryan in Madras, a Mongolian in Rangoon, and a Malay in Singapore, as I have often found, are linked by sympathies. On the other hand, non-ethnological terms, like 'European' and 'Asiatic,' have a daily currency and a forceful meaning. This might seem to suggest that geography, not ethnology, determines the political groupings of humanity. But if so, why does a Greek count in popular sentiment as a European, and a Turk as an Asiatic? And why can a Colorado navvy, as I was lately informed, claim a higher status in Johannesburg than a Zulu nobleman? That geography does play an important part in clustering and distributing the populations of continents is indisputable. But, clearly, geography is not the supreme arbiter in the matter. There is a still more potent force, whose dominancy is visible all through the course of human history. I mean religion. It is upon religion that the essential divisions and combinations of the human race are permanently founded. When we employ such antithetical expressions as 'white and coloured,' 'Western and Eastern,' 'European and Asiatic,' 'civilized and uncivilized,' we really mean, in nearly every case, 'Christian and non-Christian.' For the last sixteen centuries the fundamental question has been whether Christian or non-Christian peoples should preponderate upon this earth. That will still be the question, perhaps, for centuries to come. Friendships and enmities may appear and disappear among the various Christian nations from time to time; the balance of power in Europe may be preserved or disturbed; wars may be waged or treaties concluded by white Government with white Government; but these are not the things which in themselves constitute 'world-politics.' I shall show, in due course, that these are not the things which Germany (who claims to have invented the term) is understood in Persia to mean by 'world-politics.'

For the last 400 years the non-Christian world has been sunk in somnolence. The supremacy of Christendom all that time has been left unquestioned, or at any rate unchallenged. Europe now imagines that the earth has at last solved its destiny, and after much tribulation delivered itself into Christian keeping for ever. Europe has almost ceased to be interested in so dead a question (as it is thought to be). Even in this new day of new ideas and new forces, though the first flutter of a mighty awakening is stirring all Asia and many parts of Africa, Europe has not the patience to stand watching those sluggard continents rub their eyes and stretch their limbs.

The population of the Christian world numbers 591,000,000. The population of the non-Christian world numbers 1,060,000,000. The proportion is almost 2 to 1 against Christendom. There are evidences that almost every part of the non-Christian world, in some sort of way and with some sort of spirit, is beginning to bestir itself. A thousand million people cannot be kept in permanent subordination unless they be kept in permanent ignorance. Christian principles will not sanction a political course based upon withholding for all time enlightenment and culture from two-thirds of the human race. Even if Christian principles could be accommodated to what might be supposed to be Christian policy, it would no longer be possible, in this age of tireless communications, to bottle up knowledge in privileged Western corners of our great globe. Roads and railways, posts and telegraphs, have penetrated, or are in process of penetrating, every continent. Steamships sail the remotest seas. Commerce drives forth and scatters abroad, in ever-increasing numbers, representatives of even the most backward countries. Nations which only thirty years ago lived the life of thirty centuries ago, to-day read newspapers and go to business in tramcars. Sophistication has spread beyond imagined bounds. The hope may be permitted to Christians that, when what used to be called the uncivilized world comes fully into the pale of civilization, it will also enter the fold of Christianity. But a hope cannot be bartered for an assurance. The fact that, after 1,600 years of sometimes fitful but mostly continuous effort to Christianize the dark continents, there are to-day more Christians in New York than in all native Asia and Africa is hardly fortifying. If, when the thousand million lately slumbering non-Christian people awake, they awake to something other than Christianity, what will be the position in the world of the five hundred million Christians? It is this which forms the primary subject-matter of world-politics.

What is the special concern of Persia with this large question? In Persia there have lately originated three new thought-movements. From Persia those thought-movements have already overflowed into India, Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt. Thence, more slowly, they are extending into other Muhammadan countries. They are charged with incalculable dynamic energies. I shall present these thought-movements to you as Muhammadans in a score of Oriental cities have earnestly, sometimes passionately, presented them to me.

Muhammadans, as everyone knows, reverence the Old and New Testaments as inspired precursors of the holy Quran. They regard the Book of Genesis as an historical document of unquestionable

validity. They accept Biblical narratives, not as allegories, but as literally accurate records of fact, corroborated in many cases by the Quran. One of these Biblical narratives tells that a deluge destroyed all mankind except Noah and his family. It would follow that all mankind to-day is descended from Noah. It would also follow that every living man and woman is specifically a descendant in the male line of either Shem or Ham or Japheth. This triune doctrine of the descent of man is, in Muhammadan estimation, not an abstraction, but an operative political law. The population of the world, in spite of many permutations, is held to be actually divisible into Shem-ites (or Semites), Ham-ites, and Japheth-ites. Muhammadans will admit, of course, that other divisions of the human family, not consonant with the original tripartite plan, are known to history and to ourselves. But throughout the seeming flux of ethnological entities there has been, they contend, no real fusion of the three basic elements. This need not be taken to imply that flesh-and-blood pedigrees back to one of Noah's three sons are individually provable. The virtues of great genealogies are spiritual. In the main, doubtless, there has been constancy of corporeal breed also, but the argument is not dependent on its physical basis. For what are the true lines of ethnological cleavage as thus viewed? Shem is the father of Muhammadanism; Japheth is the father of Christendom; Ham is the father of the rest of the world, commonly called Pagan. Japheth is the West; Shem is the Middle; Ham is the East. Japheth is the White; Shem is the Brown; Ham is the Yellow. 'Yellow' is here a loose designation, to be employed only as a terminological convention. 'Yellow' for this purpose embraces the true Yellow or Mongolian population of China, the Mongoloid and Buddhistic populations of Central Asia, Burma, and Siam, the people of Japan, the Hindu or Brahmanic population of India, the various Malay races, and also the Black or indigenous races of Africa, as well as the Red or indigenous races of America. Muhammadans would have us note how, in the main, geography gives an aspect of solidarity to this peculiar plan for massing the millions. The two continents of America, being now practically all-Christian, may be regarded from the larger view as adjuncts of Christian Europe. America thus out of the way, the rest of the populous land area of the globe may be contemplated in two extensions, one running east and west from Portugal to Japan, the other running north and south from Lapland to Cape Colony. In the east-and-west extension, looking at the map, we have Japheth lumped compactly on the left, Shem elongated in the

centre, and Ham outspreading on the right. In the north-and-south extension, we have again Japheth in dense formation on the top, which is Europe; Shem drawn out in the centre, which is Turkey and Northern Africa; and Ham expanding at the bottom, which is Central and Southern Africa. In either case Japheth and Ham cannot meet, whether as friends or as enemies, except by way of Shem. Shem, or Muhammadanism, is the ethnic centre of the inhabited world. We are further required to note that the plan is stationary. It has even an appearance of immutability. The various religious propaganda of our times produce no appreciable effects upon it. For fully 500 years this broad grouping of humanity has stood as a fixed verity. Such is the bearing of the first of the three thought-movements which have gone forth from Persia. Considered scientifically, the postulate upon which it rests, if without proof, is not altogether without reason. Some sort of ethnological authority can be cited for the view that somewhere in the region of the mountains of Ararat the main streams of early migratory humanity had a common source; that the first outpourings from this Armenian fount were those of the Hamitic families, who wandered southwards into Mesopotamia; that these were followed by the Semitic families, who, operating like a wedge upon the Hamitic Mesopotamians, drove one part of them first into Canaan, next into Egypt and Ethiopia, and lastly into Central Africa, and the other part through Persia into India, Further India, China and Japan, themselves occupying South-Western Asia; that finally there issued forth the Japhetic families, who on one side penetrated Europe by way of the Caucasus and Asia Minor, and on the other side shot out branches into Persia and India. Be that as it may, this Noachian theory of racial origins would, of course, count for but little in practical affairs if it were no more than an ingenious flight of individual speculation. The point is that in the minds of millions of Muhammadans it is coming to stand for a spiritual principle and a religious belief. Persia is now bent on indoctrinating all Islam with it.

The second of the three thought-movements emanating from Persia, and suffusing the Muhammadan world, arises logically out of the first. If Islam, or the Semitic branch of the human race, be a fixed element, what is its destiny? When only the Japhetic world was awake and doing, and the Semitic and Hamitic worlds lay wrapt in slumber, such a question was not asked. Nowadays, when civilization is carrying torches to the ends of the earth, and all humanity is astir, the question is not only asked, but answered.

The destiny of the Semites, it is declared, is to revive the glories of their past. 'Blessed be the Lord God of Shem,' exclaimed the patriarch Noah, in a benedictory transport, as recorded in Genesis ix. 26. Why did the medieval glories of Islam fade? Because the organized strength of Islam was only spiritual, not at all temporal. The Moslem genius, by its fire and ferocity, could conquer the world, and could found an inter-continental empire, but it could not acquire the tame arts of peace. Industrial discipline, scientific culture, political progress—these the Semitic spirit did not inculcate; they had to be learnt from Japhetic teachers. Subjection is a necessary preliminary to tuition—hence the overthrow of the Saracenic Empire. Islam was subdued that Islam might be instructed. This is what the Prophet Noah foresaw in his blessing to Japheth: 'God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem' (Genesis ix. 27). But the age of tents—that is to say, the age of savagery, of nomadism, of internecine strife—is passing away. A new day is dawning for Shem. A new day, however, is also dawning for Ham. The Hamitic world is also coming to self-consciousness; is also cherishing hopes and pondering how to realize them. The Semitic world is not to have the field to itself, even in the Orient. Shem, then, must have a policy as well as a purpose. Shem enters an arena where one redoubtable gladiator, Japheth, has preceded him, and another, Ham, follows close behind. A combination between any two of those gladiators would be serious, and might be fatal to the third. Presently Shem and Ham, as rivals, will be competing for the friendship of mighty Japheth. Already a great Hamitic nation, Japan, has made a league with a great Japhetic nation, England. A great Semitic nation, Turkey, has failed in an effort to do likewise. The portent is serious for Shem. A master endeavour must be made. Only the strong are admitted into alliance with the strong. The weak are a danger to their friends even more than to themselves. Shem, then, it is held, must be strong. Every Islamic country must be regenerated. Through every Muhammadan land must sweep great religious, social, and economic reforms. Turkey and Persia have lately inaugurated successful political revolutions, but these are only the first means to a distant end. When each Muhammadan country has independently made itself efficient, a union or coalition of Muhammadan States must follow. This confederacy will then have at its command for all the purposes of world-politics the massed influence, power and

resource of the Islamic universe. Preachers and teachers must go forth from Persia to all parts to spread this new Muhammadan gospel of 'kingdom come.'

There are two reasons, one practical and the other sentimental, why Shem would prefer to be allied with Japheth rather than with Ham. The practical reason rests on the fact that the Hamitic peoples number roughly five-ninths of the total population of the globe, the Japhetic peoples three-ninths, and the Semitic peoples one-ninth. Other things being equal, an alliance between the two numerically weaker groups—namely, Japheth and Shem—would establish an equipoise; whereas an alliance between Shem and Ham would throw odds of 2 to 1 against Japheth. Incidentally it is to be remarked that an alliance between Japheth and Ham would practically obliterate Shem with adverse odds of 8 to 1. The figures, roundly, are—

Shem	...	...	175,000,000 people.
Ham	...	...	885,000,000 „
Japheth	...	...	591,000,000 „

The sentimental reason for a Semitic alliance with Japheth rather than with Ham lies in the sympathy which exists between Muhammadanism and Christianity, both of which are monotheistic, and in the antipathy which exists between Muhammadanism and Paganism. Mohamet regarded Jesus as a prophet of God, and taught outward respect for the Christian faith and for its followers.

The last of the three thought-movements proceeding from Persia has to do with Persia's own place in this Muhammadan scheme of world-politics. I have difficulty in reducing my presentment of this essential part of the subject to convenient compass. I must, however, make the attempt. The Muhammadan world, it is argued, is geographically continuous, stretching almost from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Beginning in the East, in China, it comprises Turkestan and the Russian Khanates of Central Asia, Northern and North-Western India, Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Persia, the Caucasus, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Asia Minor, Syria, Turkey, Egypt, the Soudan, Somaliland, British East Africa, Zanzibar, Nyasaland, Tripoli, Tunis, Algeria, Morocco. If Muhammadan aspirations are in due season to be realized, this territorial cohesion must be preserved. Persia is the most precious pearl in the long necklace. Persia is at once the geographical, political, intellectual, and strategical centre of Islam. Persia promises also to become in the not distant future the religious centre of Islam. A keystone is not more necessary to an arch than Persia is to Pan-Islamic aggran-

dizement. Some people will, perhaps, be for dismissing this claim as a rhetorical extravagance. But the grounds upon which it rests are worth examining. First comes the geographical pretension. Persia lies in the exact centre of the Muhammadan area. More than that, if we exclude frigid lands to the north of the St. Petersburg and Kamchatka latitude, and torrid lands to the south of the Soudan and Siam latitude, Persia is also the centre of the earth. Tehran stands exactly midway between the Pacific and the Atlantic. The population of Asia, considered in its mass, is compressed within a belt or zone lying between the fiftieth and the tenth parallels. Athwart the western confines of that zone stretch the Caspian Sea and the Persian Gulf with its continuations. The consequent conformation of land areas is peculiar. Persia, lying between the Caspian and the Gulf, becomes an isthmus, affording the sole convenient terrestrial communication between all the dense populations of inhabited Asia on the east and all those other dense populations which occupy the European, Asiatic and African littoral of the Mediterranean on the west.

Persia's claim to political ascendancy in the proposed Muhammadan confederation is grounded in history. Mankind in the past has looked upon but four world-empires. Hermit China was not one of them. Neither was dreamy India nor esoteric Egypt. Even tumultuous Assyria and luxurious Babylonia were not of the number, being but morbid swellings that burst as soon as pricked. The four world-empires to count were : Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome and the Saracens. Of these, the first, and in a certain sense the last, pertain to Persia. From Persia first went forth world-power in the time of the Book of Ezra ; to Persia it was brought back in the time of the 'Arabian Nights,' when Baghdad was still a Persian city. It was the hereditary political genius of the Persians which thus enabled them at a very early period to take the lead in civilization. Then, as now, the Persians were Aryans. No other branch of the human family has ever risen to the political height attained by Aryans. The Aryans alone have been the persistent pioneers and the propagandists of civilization. Practically all progressive Europe to-day is Aryan. Practically all non-progressive Asia, except Persia, is non-Aryan, because the Hindus, whose ancestors were Aryan, have darkened their blood almost beyond identification in the turbid streams of indigenous Tartarism and Dravidianism. What has been called the White Man's Burden might, with an extended outlook, be called the Aryan Man's Burden. In the remote past, 500 years before the birth of

Christ, it was Aryan Persia which alone could assemble, organize and energize the diffident constituents of the Semitic Orient. Later, it was Aryan Persia which took administrative possession of the empire of the Semitic Saracens, and gave to it, by means of Persian Ministers under the Caliphs, all it had of governmental consistency, stability and method. It is Aryan Persia which to-day is filling the mind of non-Aryan Asia with thoughts and hopes of a sort that shall make lethargic nationalities quiver.

The claim of Persia to intellectual as distinct from political supremacy in the Muhammadan domain starts with the pretension that Persia has Aryanized the Muhammadan religion. The Shia faith is held to be a Christian metamorphosis of the Sunni faith. The martyrdom of Hussein is made to parallel, both in its circumstances and in its significances, the martyrdom of Jesus. Except Hussein had been sacrificed, Muhammadans could not be saved. Except Muhammadans acknowledge the sacrifice, it avails them nothing. There was no compulsion on Hussein to suffer the pangs of death; he voluntarily endured them to save sinners. In the blood of Hussein the soiled souls of Muhammadans will be washed white. The Shias have their Lenten period, their Good Friday equivalent, their Passion play, and their Messianic hope. These doctrines and rites are peculiar to the Shias; that is to say, they are peculiar to the Aryan Muhammadans. But Shiaism has influenced Sunnism, which is Semitic Muhammadanism, in many impalpable ways. It has softened its savagery and intellectualized its emotionalism. The new Persian religious movement called Bahaism will, many believe, unite Shias and Sunnis in a strong bond of brotherhood, and will regenerate both sects in concert. Outside religion, Persia claims intellectual superiority on account of its language, which is the richest, the most expressive and the most musical in modern Asia; and on account of its literature, which stands alone in appealing with almost equal charm to the East and to the West. Persian was the Court language of the Mogul Emperors at Delhi, and subsequently the official language of India under British rule. It is still, more than any other, the polite, the ceremonial and the diplomatic language of the Muhammadan world. I found when I was in Northern India that I could not pay a more delicate or graceful compliment to my friends in the ancient Muhammadan aristocracy than to address them in Persian. The Persian poets are world-classics. Hāfiz and Sādi are not more appreciated in Damascus, Lahore and Bokhara, than in Paris, Berlin and Chicago.

Persia's claim to **strategical** pre-eminence among Muhammadan States has both a political and an economic aspect. It is considered that, were Persia to fall into the hands of a non-Muhammadan Power, there would be an instant end of the Moslem dream of political resurrection. That proposed federation of Islamic kingdoms and principalities which is to combine and vivify the disparate elements of modern Muhammadanism would sink into the limbo of abandoned projects. To realize the magnitude of such a disaster in Muhammadan estimation, Christendom must try to imagine a non-Christian Power, say Turkey, taking possession of Austria and Germany, or at any rate of a broad belt of land across Central Europe extending from Hamburg to Venice. What the Suez Canal is to the aqueous regions of the globe, Persia is to the terrestrial regions. From Alexander to Napoleon, great militarists have acknowledged Persia's strategical importance in Asia. Even to-day there are soldiers and statesmen who think it possible that the Indian Empire, the Turkish Empire, the Russian Empire, and even to some extent the Chinese Empire, may shape their destinies, or may have their destinies shaped for them, on the plateau of Iran. Economically there is the consideration that history seems to move in cycles and to repeat itself; that Persia was the commercial highway of the antique world, affording the sole means of land-communication between Macedonia, Lydia, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, and Mesopotamia, on the one hand, and Bactriana, Turkestan, China, India, and Malay, on the other; that Persia began to lose her commercial importance when men began to go down to the sea in ships and to navigate the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea; that marine carriage was as fast as land carriage in the olden times of camels, but is not as fast in the modern times of locomotives; that the comparative cheapness of waterways has not prevented maritime Europe from being heavily seamed with railways, and will not in the long-run keep iron roads out of undeveloped Asia; that every great scheme or dream of railway exploitation in Western Asia is concerned either immediately or ultimately with the practicableness of girdling Persia with broad-gauge lines; that whether the future railway systems of Persia assume in the main a north-and-south trend or an east-and-west trend, or both, they will affect materially, and even profoundly, the commercial fortunes of many lands besides Persia.

It all comes to this, then: World-politics, as viewed by the

political leaders of 175 million Muhammadans, resolve themselves into a struggle—not necessarily a bloody struggle, but still an intense and vital struggle—for place and power between the three great divisions of mankind. The Muhammadan mind is deeply stirred by the prospect. Every Muhammadan country is in communication with every other Muhammadan country: directly, by means of special emissaries, pilgrims, travellers, traders and postal exchanges; indirectly, by means of Muhammadan newspapers, books, pamphlets, leaflets and periodicals. I have met with Cairo newspapers in Baghdad, Tehran and Peshawar; Constantinople newspapers in Busra and Bombay; Calcutta newspapers in Mohamera, Kerbela and Port Saïd. Everywhere, and by everyone, it is held that Persia is and must be the foundation-stone of Muhammadan endeavour. Persia injured is Islam assailed. Persia demolished is Islam overthrown.

Let us pass, in conclusion, to the practical outcome of all these considerations. Of the 175 million Muhammadans in the world, no less than 142 millions, or four-fifths of the whole, are under non-Muhammadan sovereignty, control, or protection. Of these 142 millions, 112 millions, or five-sixths, are in Christian keeping, and 30 millions, or one-sixth, are in Pagan keeping. The great Muhammadan Powers of the world number seven, of whom only three profess Muhammadanism. In order of statistical magnitude these seven Muhammadan Powers are:

Britain	...	...	...	...	78,000,000	Muhammadans.
China	...	...	...	...	30,000,000	„
Turkey	...	...	...	...	17,000,000	„
Russia	...	...	...	...	16,000,000	„
France	...	...	...	...	15,000,000	„
Persia	...	...	...	...	10,000,000	„
Afghanistan	...	...	...	...	5,000,000	„
Others	...	...	...	...	4,000,000	„
Total	...	...	...	...	175,000,000	„

Britain is thus by far the greatest of all Muhammadan Powers, in virtue of having authority over exactly half the total Muhammadan population of the world. The distribution of Britain's Muhammadan interests is no less remarkable for its expansiveness and diversity of area. Here is a rough census, parts of which are necessarily conjectural:

ASIA—				
India	62,458,077	Muhammadans.		
Baluchistan	765,368	„		
Laccadive Islands	10,274	„		
Ceylon... ..	248,140	„		
British Borneo	50,000	„		
Bahrein Islands	75,000	„		
Oman	800,000	„		
Aden and Perim	41,222	„		
Kuria Muria Isles and Sokotra ...	12,000	„		
Cyprus	51,309	„		
AFRICA—				
Egypt	10,431,265	„		
Soudan	2,000,000	„		
Somaliland	300,000	„		
British East Africa	200,000	„		
Zanzibar Protectorate	236,000	„		
Nyasaland	947,168	„		
Natal	10,000	„		
Mauritius	41,208	„		
Northern Nigeria	6,000	„		
Southern Nigeria	5,000	„		
Gold Coast	5,000	„		
Sierra Leone	7,396	„		
Gambia	1,000	„		
AUSTRALIA (mostly Indian emigrants)...	20,768	„		
Total	78,722,195	„		

The population of the United Kingdom is 41 millions. The total Christian population of the whole of the British Empire is 62 millions. Britain's Muhammadan peoples (*i.e.*, subjects, dependents, tributaries, etc.) thus outnumber her Christian peoples by 16 millions. If we could imagine ourselves here as knowing nothing of the circumstances of the British Empire except what these bare statistics disclose, we should still feel that we were on safely platitudinous ground in opining that Muhammadan goodwill is an important factor of Britain's stability as an empire. But we know a good deal more than any statistics can demonstrate. We know that in India, where 62 millions of our 78 million Muhammadan fellow-liegemens are concentrated, there has arisen of late a political crisis of uncommon magnitude. We know that everyone in India, from the Viceroy downwards, regards the position and the prospect there with gravity. We know that, while it would be

unjust to generalize too widely, it is correct and fair to say that the elements of sedition and anarchy in India are found practically entirely among non-Muhammadan classes of the population. We know, because it has been universally acknowledged, that in these difficult and perhaps dangerous times in India the loyalty of Indian Muhammadans has been, and still is, a source of immense strength and encouragement to us. No doubt world-politics, like home-politics, on the 'give-and-take' principle, must often demand sacrifices in exchange for gains, but it would be hard to imagine a political object the attainment of which might justify us in forfeiting Muhammadan attachment. Is there any risk of such a forfeiture?

Only a few years ago Britain was regarded by the Persians with feelings of friendliness, admiration and trustfulness. I have lately returned from a year's tour of Persia, and everywhere on my way, from the Persian Gulf to the Caspian Sea, I found that the feelings with which Britain is now regarded by the Persians are those of suspicion, dislike and apprehension. I set myself to study both the causes and the consequences of this surprising revulsion of sentiment. I gained, with difficulty and after tireless persistence, the cautious confidences of Persians of almost all classes. I interviewed Muhammadans, Armenians, Parsees, Jews, Babis, Bahais and Europeans. I communed with merchants, artisans and priests, with Provincial Governors, tribal chieftains and army Generals, with Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament and permanent officials. I discussed Persian politics and Muhammadan politics with at least 300 representative men. I was a reader also of the now comparatively ably edited and cleanly printed Persian newspapers. Almost unanimously Persians heaped upon me the opinion that Russia is the irreconcilable and eternal enemy of Persia, and that Britain, by going over to Russia since 1907, has broken with immemorial Anglo-Indian traditions and has betrayed Persia. Persia, under the heel of Russian intervention, has in her extremity appealed in vain to Britain for succour. Britain's reply throughout, as Persia understands it, has been to endorse, actively or tacitly, Russia's every proceeding. Persia is now transferring her invocations to the Muhammadan nations, and particularly to Turkey and India. This is Persia's last effort and last hope. To state the alleged grounds upon which anti-British sentiment rests would be to relate at length and in detail the tangled history of the recent revolution in Persia, and the still more tangled course of administrative and diplomatic affairs since the Nationalist Government

overthrew the Royalist Government and inaugurated a constitutional régime. Such a narrative, full of the romance and mystery of European and Asiatic statecraft as practised in the East, I may yet have to give to the public, but the limits of the present paper will not endure it. My immediate purpose goes no farther than to show in broad outline how Muhammadan thought is moving.

I come to the culminating point in these studies. I had been seeking, during my long rambles in Persia, to understand how astute Persian politicians, who credit British diplomacy with acumen if with nothing else, could reconcile their accusation of British perfidy with their knowledge of British interest. I shall summarize in the briefest compass the import of the many astounding answers I got, and then I shall have finished.

The argument runs as follows : Of the three great divisions of the human race, the Christian or Japhetic division is at present in the ascendant. It wishes to remain so. It desires the political growth or progress of neither of the other divisions. It will not ally itself with either, except perhaps temporarily, as a distasteful expedient, to maintain its own supremacy against the third. At present Christendom holds in subjection three-fifths of the Muhammadan world and one-half of the Pagan world (roughly). It will not consent to diminish its sway ; rather, it will seek to expand it. This is plainly to be seen in contemporary history. Only the mutual jealousies of the individual Christian Powers saved Pagan China more than once from dismemberment. Only the rivalries of Christian England and Russia in the past averted a like disaster from Muhammadan Persia. In the case of China, which is still backward and conservative, Christendom conceives that it can afford to hold its repressive hand awhile, though Japan has cleverly taken advantage of Europe's inattention. But in the case of Persia the recent revolution and the intellectual and religious awakening of the people have appeared in too dramatic a fashion to escape notice. They indicate warningly to Europe that Islam is preparing to imitate Japan. Islam must be checked. Especially Persia, the head and heart of Islam, must be checked. Hence outstanding Anglo-Russian differences are hastily composed, and a joint policy of suppression in Persia is espoused. In all these doings an exceptional position is occupied by Germany. Germany (according to this view) has attained her present greatness among the nations in virtue of possessing the finest army in the world. Germany cannot extend, or even perhaps maintain, her advantages unless she also possess the finest navy in the world. The finances

of no country can conceivably bear the double burden of invincibility by land and by sea. Germany must therefore either forego her dream of amphibious supremacy or procure an ally who will supply either an army or a navy. The great naval and military Powers of the world are for the most part averse from alliances with Germany. They have, in fact, erected a hostile ring-fence of alliances round Germany. A potential ally for Germany, feeble and unorganized at present, but capable under proper direction of developing almost unlimited military strength, is discernible in the group of Muhammadan countries. No one doubts that some of the Muhammadan countries, like Turkey and Afghanistan, contain the finest raw material for an army that the world can show. If the various Moslem States and principalities could be regenerated under the guidance of German statesmen, reorganized by German administrators, drilled, disciplined, armed and led by German generals, and consolidated by German diplomatists, Germany with such an ally could venture to disband more than half her present army, and devote the savings to building up a navy that would overawe Europe. The sincerity of Germany's friendship for Islam, it is further argued, is evidenced by the fact that not a single Mussulman anywhere in the world has been brought under German rule, though no less than 15 million Pagans have been subjugated by the 'Mailed Fist.' It was Germany, in her friendship for Shem and her dread and dislike of Ham, who started and for a long time sustained in Europe the cry of the 'Yellow Peril.' It was Germany who alone perceived the necessity for maintaining and strengthening the Semitic world as a buffer between the Hamitic and the Japhetic worlds. Almost all Germany's quarrels with Europe have been in defence of ill-used and unprotected Muhammadan States. Witness the diplomatic troubles in the Balkans, in Morocco, in Crete, in Mesopotamia, and now in Persia. On the other hand, who are Germany's arch-opponents in this great field of world-politics? England, Russia and France: England, lord of 78 million Muhammadans; Russia, lord of 16 million Muhammadans; and France, lord of 15 million Muhammadans. Germany has sought to promote the development of backward Muhammadan areas by projects of railway construction, as in Asia Minor, Syria, and Turkish Arabia. Anglo-Russian hostility has had to be encountered all the way along. The so-called railway concessions, or monopolies, extorted by England and Russia from the Persian Government, were not designed to facilitate railway development in Persia: held tenaciously, as they have been, for years, they have not resulted in the

laying of a single mile of railway ; they serve only to exclude German engineers and German capitalists who might be willing to extend their enterprise from the Mesopotamian plain to the Iranian plateau.

Such are the new thought-movements which are agitating the public mind in Persia, and by overflow from Persia are likely to permeate the whole of the Muhammadan world. Wild and wonderful they may, perhaps, be deemed, but I think it will be felt by this learned Society that they afford some justification for considering afresh the place of Persia in world-politics.

DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN : I do not think that, as a Society, we have often listened to a paper showing such evidence of close observation, careful thought, remarkable judgment, and great power of detachment, as that Mr. Temple has read to us. I take it that he was pressing on our notice facts as he saw them, rather than making bold assertions of opinion. In the first place he pointed out that geography, and not ethnology, determines the political groupings of humanity ; and, if I remember rightly, I read a leading article in the *Times* not long since to the same effect. It follows that, when people talk about racial feeling, it is really an improper term to use. There is no such thing as distinct racial feeling, as all countries are a combination of different races. It is geographical influence that produces in time what is called racial feeling, and I think that was really Mr. Bernard Temple's argument. But he went on to talk of religion as being the main important factor in determining the character of countries, and from this he proceeded to show the mighty forces there are at work at the present time in the Moslem world. As a people belonging to a world-wide Empire, we have to consider our own interests in regard to any of these deeply significant movements that are taking place. I noticed his passing allusion to the state of feeling in India. He has been in that country more recently than myself, and his observations on that subject must be held to be those of an authority. I was, therefore, the more sorry to hear the dark view he took of the state of feeling in that Empire. I sincerely trust that that feeling is passing away, and that, under careful guidance, and with the new methods of government that have been instituted, there will be a better feeling.

Mr. Temple told us that we had offended public opinion in Persia. From the position we hold in that country, and from the very fact that all great occurrences in Persia affect our Imperial interests, the state of feeling he reports cannot be disregarded. I do believe and hope we

shall re-establish ourselves in the favour of the Persian people by the sincerity of our support of their independence. I always have held that such independence is an essential factor in safeguarding our Indian and general Imperial interests.

Mr. H. F. B. LYNCH: I rise, at your invitation, sir, with great diffidence to discuss a subject which I do not feel qualified to pronounce opinions upon with any definiteness—for the lecturer has taken us over the very wide field of world-politics as seen by the eyes of Persians. I would like to know positively his source of inspiration. I am pretty sure it was a combination of Persian sources: the lecture had the true Persian ring about it. It is a most interesting presentment of how Persians look upon their own country as a factor in world-politics at the present day. Upon the picture thus presented I would like to say this: I do not think that the Persians, in estimating the circumstances, have sufficiently taken account of the position which their nation occupies amongst Muhammadan peoples on purely religious grounds. All those of us who know Persia—and there are many of us in this room—will agree that an outstanding feature of our observations in Persia and adjacent countries has been the intense hatred between the Sunni and the Shia. As a witness on the spot of the events accompanying the recent Turkish revolution, I am bound to say I found very little support of a practical kind for the Persian movement amongst the Young Turks. In the very critical times when Russian troops advanced across Persia towards the Turkish border, and when many of us feared they would overrun Persia altogether, the movements on the side of Turkey were not very pronounced. That may be accounted for to some extent, no doubt, by the consideration that Turkey, being in a delicate diplomatic position, did not want to impair her relations with Russia. But I think that want of action on the part of Turkey may also be attributed, at least in part, to want of sympathy between the Sunnis of Turkey and the Shias of Persia. I hope the lecturer will let us know how far he thinks the Persians have duly estimated that factor in their general survey of world-politics with Persia lying at the centre of the problem.

I was greatly disappointed to hear that the Persians regard England with some disfavour. I am surprised at that statement. I have been in very close contact with the Persian reformers during the past two years, including the men who led the revolution; I am bound to say that I have not found a shadow of that feeling amongst them. We have heard some of them here in this room, including Taghi Zadeh, one of the principal leaders of the revolution, and it will be recalled that he made a speech most sympathetic towards Great Britain. Surely none of those who were behind the revolution can fail to realize and appreciate how great was the measure of sympathy they had from the

British people—I do not now speak of the Government—and that but for this sympathy the revolution which dethroned Mahomed Ali would never have been successfully accomplished. Russia had to face the fact that there was in this country a considerable wave of public opinion in favour of the Persian constitutional party, and she was made to feel that she ran the risk of rupturing her good relations with Great Britain if she went too far in her attitude towards Persia. There are among us many critics of the Anglo-Russian Agreement, and in this very room we bitterly criticized some of its provisions. But, at all events, let us admit this: that under the shadow of that Agreement, and in view of the friendly feelings between England and Russia which are consequent upon the results of that Agreement, it is now possible for Persia to regenerate herself. If Persia now makes a serious effort to put her own house in order, and if she gives evidence that she is determined not to be led away from that purpose, I feel certain that neither England nor Russia will seek to overthrow the present system of Constitutional Government, and still less that they will have designs of partitioning the country. I feel strongly that the political future of Persia now lies in the hands of the Persians themselves. The very worst thing they could do would be to alienate their two great neighbours, England and Russia, by coquetting with Germany. This would tend to bring about the very catastrophe which, from their national point of view, they must be most anxious to avert—namely, that of robbing them of the fruits of the Constitutional changes effected under circumstances of British sympathy and with British support.

COLONEL C. E. YATE: With reference to what Mr. Lynch has said regarding the ancient feud between Sunnis and Shias, I think there is a growing tendency for these two rival sects to amalgamate more than they would have done a few years back. I cannot say how far this amalgamation has gone in Constantinople and Teheran, but certainly in India we have seen a great fusion of the two sects in the All India Moslem League, under the leadership of His Highness the Agha Khan, and it seems to be an acknowledged fact that the two sects there have resolved to work together to further the interests of Muhammadans as a whole. A limited Islamic movement is, therefore, a force to be reckoned with.

The lecturer has given us to-day so much to think about, that it is difficult to speak on the spur of the moment, but it will not surprise any of us here who know the Persian character to learn from him that the Persians consider Persia to be the hub of the universe, whether reckoned, as the lecturer pointed out, from north to south, or from east to west. The inflated ideas of the Persian mind as to their own importance are well known. Every Persian goose is a swan to a Persian. What we have to consider is whether Persia has the power

or the strength to maintain itself as the hub of the universe. The immediate task before the Persian people, as Mr. Lynch has said, is to maintain their own independence, and by themselves they cannot do this.

It is to England and Russia that Persia owes her independence, and if the Persians try to bring in a third Power into Persia between England and Russia, as the lecturer tells us they are inclined to do, the question is, Will Persia be able to maintain the independence of her country, or will this be the first step towards its disintegration?

The friendship of England and Russia is greatly to Persia's advantage, and I agree with Mr. Lynch that they will make a great mistake if they bring in a third party.

Mr. E. R. P. MOON asked the lecturer whether the thought-movements he had outlined prevailed in the remoter portions of the Islamic world, and whether, too, they prevailed in such intellectual Muhammadan centres as the El Azhar, near Cairo, or the Aligarh College in India. He thought that Mr. Temple had been conveying the views of Persians more than those of the Muhammadan world in general, or of the Sunni section in particular. He wished to express his appreciation of the treat the lecturer had given them by a paper so marked by striking phrases and impressive antitheses.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL A. C. YATE said that he had been struck by the elaborate word-painting of Mr. Temple's lecture, and by the originality and power with which he had handled the several problems raised. His own personal knowledge of Persia was a quarter of a century old. He recalled the fact that, when near Herat in 1885, Sir West Ridgeway handed to him, for the purpose of translation into English, a Persian missive in which the Mahdi called upon the Imam-i-Jum'ah of Mashhad to unite with him in fomenting a general uprising throughout Islam. The Mahdi's aim was to reassert the predominance of Muhammadan power as in the seventh and eighth centuries after Christ. Mr. Temple had just told them that such dreams were still entertained. Doubtless they were. Colonel Yate was unable at the moment to express an opinion as to the probability of an attempt being made to realize the dream, but he thought that the time was far distant, and that Mr. Temple had been looking far ahead.

One of the main reasons for the existence of the Anglo-Russian Convention was, he believed, the recognition by both England and Russia of the possibilities opened up by German ambition and enterprise in the regions of the Middle East. From day to day evidence was given of the efforts Germany was making to establish her rights and influence in the leading Muhammadan countries both of the mid-East and North-African littoral. If Persian opinion was tending in the direction which Mr. Temple indicated, then it seemed to him that the

Convention was thoroughly justified. The Convention had its weak and strong points. On the one hand it freed the Indian Government from incessant military activity and watchful anxiety, and strengthened the British position on the Baluchistan border and in the Persian Gulf. On the other hand, this calm assignment of spheres of influence and interest, regardless of the feelings of the country and people thus arbitrarily partitioned, was calculated to tempt the victim to call in the good offices of a third Power. This is what Persia seemed to have done. While Russia and England were deliberating what concessions each should have, Germany steps in as the concessionaire favoured by the Constitutional Government, which owes its existence and stability to the policy of the Governments of their Majesties King Edward VII. and Czar Nicholas II. So much for *Persica fides*. The Amir of Afghanistan again had committed himself to nothing. He simply ignored the Convention. A copy was sent to him; he did not even acknowledge it. He treated it as the Czar and the Duma treat the representations of British busy-bodies on the treatment of the Jew and the Constitution of Finland, only even more cavalierly. None the less, Colonel Yate considered that, at a very critical juncture in the affairs of Persia, the Anglo-Russian Convention had proved itself to be an instrument of value; and we may yet live to see it enforce the maintenance of the *status quo* in Afghanistan.

Mr. E. EDWARDS said that he could well understand that there was some amount of misgiving on the part of the Persians as to the attitude of Russia and England in the last few months, more particularly since the revolution. If the statements made in the Press were true, the conditions imposed in respect to the proposed loan were very onerous, and he thought the misgivings of the Persians were justifiable. The terms almost seemed designed to put the control of the finances of Persia into the hands of the two Powers. He trusted the two Powers would afford this ancient people sufficient grounds for the renewal of their confidence and trust in them. It was recognized everywhere that England had been the best friend of Persia in the past, and it was still the case that England had every interest in maintaining the independence of Persia, if only as a buffer State. Personally, he thanked Mr. Temple for his excellent and most comprehensive paper.

The CHAIRMAN: Before I call on Mr. Temple to reply, I wish to refer to Mr. Lynch's observation that the people of Persia are now in a position to put their own house in order, and that it lies with them to make good their claim to maintain independence. In this view I cannot agree with Mr. Lynch, for the reason that, as is well known, they have not the material means whereby they can maintain their independence. They have reason to feel aggrieved, not that we

entered into the Convention, but that we have not taken adequate means to give the Convention vitality. The preamble of the instrument stated distinctly that its purpose was to maintain the independence of Persia. The country cannot get on with an empty Exchequer, and it fell to the two countries who declared this independence to be their aim for Persia to try and remedy that defect. But as the last speaker indicated, terms were insisted upon for the loan of half a million sterling that were too onerous for any self-respecting people for one moment to submit themselves to. I feel that in the interests of the world at large an independent Persia is required. It is to the interest of our Indian Empire, and I believe it is to the interest of Russia too, though of course that is not our business.

Mr. TEMPLE, in replying to the discussion, said he fully appreciated the kindly tone of the criticism his humble efforts had called forth. He would at once say that his position in regard to the subject-matter of this paper was that of a photographer. He had not come there to give them his ideas about Persian politics and British policy in Persia; he had been giving them pictures of the thought-movements in the Muhammadan world. Of course, it was fairly open to opinion whether as a camera he was altogether a competent instrument, whether his lens was properly adjusted, or whether he had developed his plates correctly. All these points were open to fair question, but he could at least say that he had been very painstaking in the investigation. (Hear, hear.) He had had long experience of the East and of Eastern manners to fortify him in his explorations of the Moslem mind. Mr. Lynch had said in the way of kindly praise that the paper covered a wide ground. But the discussion had covered a still wider ground. If he was unable in the few minutes at his disposal to enter these further paths with the fulness of reply that they deserved, it was from no want of consciousness of the importance of the issues raised.

There was no doubt that, as Mr. Lynch had said, the feeling of animosity between the Sunnis and the Shias had in the past been intense. He had himself seen riots between the two sects in India. But there had been in recent times distinct evidence of many tendencies of a coming together of these previously hostile divisions of the Moslem world. But more than that there was the new religious movement called Bahatism in Persia, of which he had spoken, which was promising to attract into a common fold many different sects, races and creeds. He would be giving a lecture on the subject towards the end of the month at the Royal Society of Arts, when it would be found that this new religious movement was probably destined to produce remarkable consequences in the non-Moslem as well as the Moslem world, and that it would almost certainly bring together upon terms of workable amity, in a way that had never been seen before, the two

great divisions of Islam. It might be fairly predicted that this conjunction would be early and striking, and that its results would be even more conspicuous in their political power than in their religious aspects. We should hear of events in consequence of this coming together that would astonish that part of the world which was only conscious of the historical hostility of Shia and Sunni and regarded the difference as impossible of reconciliation.

As to Mr. Lynch's observation that other Muhammadan peoples, Sunnis, had not taken a very practical interest in the revolution in Persia, and generally in the fate of Persia, that was no doubt true. But the explanation was also obvious. At the time the revolution came to a head in Persia, and for long years before that time, Britain was regarded as the true friend, because the disinterested friend, of Persia, and it was felt by Turkey and by India (as he could personally vouch) and by other Muhammadan countries, that the interests of Persia, as against the encroachments of Russia, were perfectly safe in Britain's hands. It was only because in the past two or three years the course of politics had shattered that opinion that the Sunni countries were coming to see that the interests of Persia were not safe in Britain's keeping, and that now was the time to do things (whether encouraging German advances or organizing Moslem forces) which would avert the ill-effects it was supposed might in these circumstances ultimately accrue under the Anglo-Russian Convention. He thought if Mr. Lynch, or any other experienced observer, were now in Constantinople, or in Cairo, and certainly in India, there would be no want of evidence of the almost strained state of Muhammadan feeling in regard to what was looked upon as Britain's betrayal of Persia. This attitude did not arise from the signing of the Anglo-Russian Convention; but from the fact so pertinently brought out by Lord Lamington that the agreement to preserve the integrity of Persia was not being adequately kept. Persia asked no more from Russia and England than to be left alone to work out her own destinies; at the same time, being given the facility a loan on reasonable terms would connote. The whole of the facts respecting the proposed loan, and the quartering on Persia of Russian troops, would justify any impartial observer in saying that the Agreement, in so far as it provided for maintaining the independence of Persia, had not been kept, and not only so, but that everything had been done to prevent Persia working out her destinies on the lines they all there that afternoon wished her to proceed along. Against England there was no accusation of active animosity. The complaint was that England had been a decidedly consenting party to all Russia's proceedings. He did not think that the charge against England went further than that, even in the mind of the most intense pro-Persian. There was still in the Persian and Muhammadan mind

generally a lingering feeling of goodwill and respect towards England, which only wanted some display of goodwill on the part of England to revive feelings as warm and grateful as ever before. The Persian appeal was that, instead of being a consenting party to putting every difficulty in the way of the new Nationalist Government, England should give any help and succour she reasonably could, and should leave the Persian Government undisturbed and unhampered by foreign intrigues and interference. They believed that very soon after this was done they would be able to prove their competency. England, by giving her moral support, would be rendering a service of enormous value, and would thereby be retaining the affection of the Muhammadan world—at any rate, of that part of the Muhammadan world which in the present stage of history was of most importance. He was afraid one could not be too sanguine as to that hope being realized ; but, at any rate, that was the substance of Persia's attitude so far as the Agreement was concerned.

The question had been asked whether the thought-movements he had outlined were current at such intellectual centres outside Persia as El Azhar or Aligarh. His personal inquiries had not extended into Egypt, but in regard to Aligarh the answer was certainly in the affirmative. Indeed, curiously enough, he first heard of these thought-movements when he was at Aligarh College, in connection with the visit there of the Ameer of Afghanistan—in other words, when a Sunni monarch was visiting what was then in the main a Sunni college. What he heard during that visit led him into the long course of inquiry the results of which he had communicated to them that evening. From Aligarh he traced this moving of the Moslem mind all over Northern India, and then some time afterwards he went to Persia, and found that to be the true originating region of these ideas.

Mr. Lynch had said that Persia was in a position to work out her own destiny, but the present state of affairs there was opposed to that idea. Persia, so far from being free to go ahead, was tied and bound in every possible way, and found Russia setting bounds for her plans and checkmating her every course. No doubt, as had been said, English public opinion was on the side of Persia, and there was a feeling of gratitude towards those who had actively espoused her cause. Most admirable sentiments had been expressed, but the desire was that they should be translated into practice by the Government. Notwithstanding the efforts made, our official policy in Persia remained for the most part unchanged. The need for change of policy was pressing, for in a very few years it might become impossible for Persia to organize her forces and carry on her Government without foreign intervention. This would mean, not only the end of Persian national

aspirations, but the end of the Muhammadan aspirations he had outlined. He earnestly hoped that something might be done, perhaps in a very short time, to bring about such a change of policy as to give effect to the declared intention to promote Persian independence, for on such a change very great issues in the history of the world depended. (Cheers.)

A vote of thanks to Mr. Temple, proposed from the chair, having been passed, the proceedings closed.

OCT 23 1919

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY

OUR POSITION IN TIBET

BY

COLONEL SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND, K.C.I.E.

Read November 2, 1910



LONDON
CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY, 22, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

1910

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OUR POSITION IN TIBET

In the absence of the Earl of Ronaldshay,

SIR ALFRED LYALL took the chair. He said he thought there was no one among living Englishmen more competent than Sir Francis Younghusband to speak on 'Our Position in Tibet,' and perhaps there was no subject in relation to Central Asia which was of greater and more immediate interest at this moment for the Empire.

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND :

It was only after I had sat down to write this paper on our position in Tibet, that I realized that I had no idea what our position is. I know pretty accurately what it was six years ago, when I left this country. I know with as much accuracy as can be extracted from a Blue Book what it was six months ago. And I have my own very definite opinions as to what it ought to be. But of what it actually is now, in November, 1910, I must confess myself wholly ignorant. Tibet has ever been a mysterious country. It seems destined by Nature to be hid behind a veil. When the Tibetans themselves do not draw this veil, the Chinese draw it for them. But of late years we ourselves have been just as anxious as Tibetans or Chinese to preserve Tibet's mysterious character. The Tibetans have been willing to let Europeans travel in Tibet. The Tashi Lama was ready to give Sven Hedin every assistance. It is we ourselves who have raised the obstacle. The Tibetans have asked us to send a British officer to Lhasa, but their request was not acceded to. And whether it is want of enterprise on the part of British journalism, or whether it is the modesty of Government, who, liking to hide its good deeds behind a bushel, lets no information of its actions come to light, certain it is that only the scrappiest pieces of information have lately reached this country.

We know from the recent Blue Book that the Dalai Lama and his Ministers fled from Lhasa to India last February ; that he asked the Viceroy to aid him, and to preserve his right of direct communication with us. We know that his Ministers asked for a

British officer and troops to be sent to Lhasa, and for an alliance between us and Tibet on the same terms as our alliance with Nepal. We know also that, while our Government definitely refused to help the Dalai Lama, it nevertheless had already made representations to the Chinese Government, insisting upon the maintenance of an effective Tibetan Government. We know, too, that in July a considerable body of British troops was ordered to the frontier to protect our Agent at Gyantse, halfway to Lhasa. But after that the mists gather again.

The Chinese report from their side that all is tranquil, and that the Tibetans have lethargically accepted the new conditions. Reports from Darjeeling, on the other hand, say that the Tibetans bitterly resent the deposition of the Dalai Lama and the threatened execution of the Abbot who acts as his Agent in Lhasa. The movement of our troops to the frontier has been countermanded, so we may presume that our Agent at Gyantse is not in danger; but whether the obstructions which, up till last April, the local Chinese had placed in his way have been removed, we know not, and we know nothing of the result of our representations to Peking.

And while we know so little, there is also little demand here in England to know more. Tibet is vastly distant. Crippen, airships, revolutions in Portugal, strikes in France, and riots in Berlin are near, and naturally attract more attention. Yet our line of action in Tibet is entirely dependent on the state of opinion in this country, and the whole question of the North-East Frontier of India was never in a more critical stage than it is at the present moment. Force may not be required to settle it, but foresight, forethought, and foreknowledge most assuredly are. Indifference and a bored desire to wash our hands of the whole business, or a lazy trust in the good feeling of the Chinese, will not suffice. We hear a great deal nowadays of the awakening of China. All down our North-East Frontier, in Tibet and Yunan, bordering on Burma, the wider awake the Chinese are the wider awake we ourselves must be. This is the point to mark and remember, for our practical experience in India has been that these very wakeful Chinese have not been so well-disposed to us in detail as their more somnolent predecessors. We formerly had reason to complain of the lethargy of the Chinese in Tibet, but not of actual obstructiveness, and at Lhasa the Chinese Amban, or Resident, was of considerable help to me in 1904 in effecting a settlement. Now the complaint is not merely of lethargy, but of positive obstruction.

We have every reason, then, to be awake. The British public should be aware of the essentials of the position, and what is really necessary to know for the purpose of forming a judgment, enterprising journalists and inquisitive Members of Parliament should find out.

Meanwhile, there are a few permanent factors upon which I will dwell this afternoon. Firstly, there is the physical factor. There is no need in a society like the Central Asian Society to emphasize the fact that Tibet lies behind the mighty range of snowy mountains which bound our Indian Empire on the north-east. But because India is thus bounded by Nature, we must not run away with the idea that we can afford to be unconcerned with what takes place on the other side. Snowy mountains are not absolutely impassable, even in the depth of winter, as our expedition to Lhasa proved. There is always some amount of intercourse, and we must always be concerned to a certain degree in the state of affairs on the other side. If, instead of the English Channel, a range of snowy mountains separated us from France, we should still be interested in the question whether a general strike turned into revolution or subsided as quietly as it arose. Intercourse between us and the French might be slight, and our interest in French affairs small. We would, however, necessarily take *some* interest, and similarly those in India are compelled to take some interest in Tibet, though opinion will differ as to how far that interest should be practical and how far merely academic.

Now, it is a fact worth remembering that our interest in Tibet has constantly been quickened by action from the Tibetan side. We ourselves have ever been prone to sluggishness in regard to Tibet. The British public takes very little interest. Manning, the only Englishman to reach Lhasa before 1904, was given so little encouragement or assistance that he refused on his return to make known the results of his journey. British officers in India have always been discouraged from entering Tibet, and now are definitely forbidden by their own Government. The clever and enthusiastic Colman Macaulay was able for a short time to awaken the interest of Government, and obtain permission to proceed to Lhasa; but the interest was evanescent. It soon died down, and his mission was countermanded before it had left Darjeeling. Even when, as the result of Lord Curzon's strenuous advocacy, we had obtained certain tangible results in 1904, apathy soon set in again. One after another the results were thrown away. The Chumbi Valley was abandoned after *three* years, when we had the right to occupy

it for *seventy-five*. The right we had acquired for our Agent at Gyantse to proceed to Lhasa was given up. The indemnity was reduced from 75 lakhs of rupees to 25 lakhs. The right to disapprove of commercial and mining concessions to any other Power was foregone. Any many little points which we had acquired the right to insist on we did not trouble ourselves about. Personally, I think we were wrong to let anything we had so hardly and so expensively acquired slide from us in this indifferent fashion. But whether we were right or wrong, the point I wish here to make is that on the whole we have been extraordinarily apathetic in regard to Tibet. We have had no settled, pushful, aggressive policy. Through long course of years we have been supine and sluggish to what, for my own part, I consider a reprehensible degree.

But as I have said, it has been action from the Tibetan side which has from time to time stirred us into action. Before a single soldier of ours had crossed the frontier into Tibet, 10,000 Tibetan soldiers had crossed the frontier into Sikkim. As you will remember, in 1886, they, under the instigation, it now turns out, of a magician, occupied a position well inside Sikkim, a feudatory state of the Indian Empire, and far on the Indian side of the Himalayan watershed. We applied to their Chinese suzerains to have them removed, but the Chinese expressed themselves as powerless to do this. We wrote to the Dalai Lama, but received no reply. We wrote to the Tibetan commander, but again received no response. At last, after nearly two years of diplomatic effort, we had to use force to turn them out ourselves. They returned, and again we had to remove them. Eventually we had to pursue them into the Chumbi Valley. But we retired the next day, and, though these operations had cost the Indian tax-payer about three quarters of a million sterling, we exacted no indemnity nor occupied any portion of territory as guarantee for the fulfilment of the treaty the Chinese now pressed us to make.

Again, in 1903 it was action on the part of the Tibetans which was the final determining cause of action on our part. We had for years allowed the Tibetans and Chinese to disregard their treaty obligations, and would probably have remained indifferent to our rights for many years more, but constant Tibetan Missions to Russia, and rumours from many different quarters—from China, India, and Russia—of some kind of an understanding between the Tibetans or Chinese and the Russians caused the Indian Government to bestir itself. The Russians, as is well known, subsequently assured us that the Missions only related to religious matters, and that they had no

political intentions in regard to Tibet. But comings and goings between Lhasa and St. Petersburg had taken place at the time when our letters from India were refused, and the very natural result of these Missions was, that the Tibetans believed that they could count on Russian support in flouting us. And it was the existence of this attitude which caused us to wake up and pay regard to our treaty rights.

Now again, in 1910 it is action on the Tibetan side of the mountains, though this time by the Chinese, that is arousing us to wakefulness. We had lapsed again, after 1904, into our usual lethargy, when Chinese action woke us up. Chinese are not generally believed to be hustlers. Nevertheless, they are capable at times of very strenuous action. For years they are absolutely inert and motionless. But suddenly and without warning they will vigorously bestir themselves. In 1886, when the Tibetans were aggressing on us, they were unable or unwilling to do anything to prevent it. After we had concluded a treaty, at their own request, they were unable to see it observed. In 1903-04, the Chinese Resident took over a year in reaching Lhasa from Peking, and when he got there could not leave the place to meet the Mission or to have the slightest influence upon the Tibetans. But suddenly, in 1908, the Chinese aroused themselves. A man of altogether higher standing than usual was appointed to the control of Tibetan affairs, Chao-erh-feng, the acting Viceroy of Szechuan, who had already distinguished himself by his effective measures to reduce the lawlessness of the semi-independent states of Eastern Tibet. In 1906 he had converted Batang from what we would call in India a native state into a Chinese district, to be administered in future by Chinese officials. He had also taken special action to break the power of Lamaism in this new district. The chief monastery was razed to the ground. Orthodox temples were to be constructed by Chinese officials, but no Lamas were to be allowed to reside in them, and the number of Lamas was to be restricted and their names registered. New taxes were to be levied on the temple lands, and the custom of making donations in kind to the Lamas was to be abolished.

Somewhat similarly Chao-erh-feng had converted Derge from a native state into a Chinese district. Of two rival brothers to the chieftanship of this state he had assisted one to supplant the other. The successful protégé had then requested Chao to be allowed to hand over the whole of the state to the Chinese Emperor, and the Reform Council at Peking had recommended that 'the native

state of Derge should be allowed to adopt our civilization and come under our direct rule.'

After Chao-erh-feng's appointment as Resident in Tibet, he advanced to the other native state of Chiamdo, which was not a part of Lhasa territory, though it was ruled by an incarnate Lama as Tibet Proper is governed, and this also as well as Diaya and Kiangka he occupied.

Early in the present year he turned his attention to Lhasa itself. About Christmas Day of last year the Dalai Lama, who had fled when we approached Lhasa in 1904, had returned, but only to hear of the advance of Chinese troops to his capital. The number of Chinese troops stationed in Lhasa in ordinary times is about five hundred and is generally considerably less. Now 2,000 additional troops were advancing on the capital. The Tibetans were thoroughly alarmed. They had heard what had taken place in Batang, Derge, Chiamdo, Diaya, and Kiangka. They knew that this powerful Chao-erh-feng was making a dead set against Lamaism. So when, on the arrival of these troops, the Chinese sent ten soldiers to the house of each Minister while the Ministers were in conclave with the Dalai Lama, that Pontiff and his Councillors thought it time to flee from Lhasa before they could be made prisoners. They consequently departed that very night. Before the Dalai Lama could reach Darjeeling an Imperial edict deposing him had been issued at Peking. The Tibetan mint, arsenal, and arms, were seized by the Chinese; a guard was placed on the ferry over the Brahmaputra, and no one without a permit from the Chinese Resident was allowed to cross. The sole remaining Tibetan Minister was not allowed to do anything without the consent of the Chinese Resident. Chinese replaced Tibetan police. And to all intents and purposes the Government of Tibet was taken over by the Chinese.

Again, then, by action across the Tibetan border we were forced to take action on our side. That the Chinese should check and curb the power of the Lamas, which had vastly overgrown all reasonable proportions, was only to be expected, and to such action we could have no possible objection. That they should bring the Dalai Lama under more effective control was also an evident necessity. And that in general they should establish better order in Tibet, and make their suzerainty properly effective, so that they could insure the Tibetans fulfilling their treaty obligations, was obviously desirable. But the Chinese were going a good deal beyond this. They were going a long way towards turning their

suzerainty into sovereignty and making Tibet a Chinese province as they had just made Batang and Derge Chinese districts. And, far from making the Tibetans fulfil their treaty obligations, they were actually preventing them. The Chinese prevented the Tibetans from having direct dealings with our trade Agent as provided for in the Treaty of Lhasa, and the administration and policing of the trade-marts had, inconsistently with the trade regulations, been taken over by the Chinese. Besides, there was, in the words of Lord Morley, 'a marked absence' of friendly relations with our officers, and of a desire on the part of the Chinese local officials to co-operate with our own in a friendly manner. These officials had, indeed, in a newspaper published at Lhasa, attempted to instigate the Tibetans against us. They had explained that the soldiers of Chao-erh-feng were not intended to do harm to Tibetans, but to 'other people.' In Tibet were 'some wicked and aggressive foreigners,' and the Tibetans were to join hands with the Chinese, Nepalese, and Bhutanese to preserve their religion and 'resist the foreigners.' The number of Chinese troops marched into Tibet was disproportionately great for the mere preservation of order. Unsettlement was caused thereby among the frontier states on our side of the border, and this and the rumour of the location of a garrison at Yatung constituted in the opinion of the Indian military authorities a menace to the peace of our border. Yatung is at the far end of the Chumbi Valley, which is on the Indian side of the main watershed, and stretches out like a tongue from Tibet in between Sikkim and Bhutan, so that Chinese troops stationed there with any inimical purpose would clearly cause trouble for us in those two protected states.

So the position in the spring of this year was that we had had to protest against this disturbing action on the part of the Chinese. We disclaimed any intention of interfering in the internal administration of Tibet, but we stated that we could not be indifferent to disturbances of peace in the country which is both our neighbour and is on intimate terms with other neighbouring states upon our frontier, and especially with Nepal. We complained that the Chinese had tendered us no friendly explanation before embarking on a policy which, in the absence of such explanation, could not but appear intended to subvert the political conditions set up by the Lhasa Convention and confirmed by the subsequent Convention with China. And we claimed that, whatever the intentions of the Chinese Government might be as regards the future of Tibet, an effective Tibetan Government should be maintained, with

whom we could, when necessary, treat in the manner provided for by those two Conventions.

The Chinese Government, in reply, stated that they intended no modification of the *status quo* and no alteration in any way of the internal administration. The troops were merely sent to tranquillize the country, protect the trade-marts, and see that the Tibetans conformed to their treaty.

To this statement of the case, however, the Indian Government demurred. Their reports showed that all power at Lhasa had been taken by the Chinese into their own hands, and that they did not allow the Tibetans to deal directly with us as laid down by treaty. We therefore entered a renewed protest. We took note of the assurance of the Chinese Government that it would fulfil all treaty obligations affecting Tibet, and informed it that we should expect that pending negotiations and representations on the subjects of tariff, trade Agents, monopolies, tea-trade, and so forth, would not be prejudiced by delay or by any change of administration. We further clearly intimated that we could not allow any administrative change in Tibet to affect or prejudice the integrity of Nepal or the rights of a state so closely allied to the Government of India. Sikkim had long been under British protection, and by a recent treaty the foreign affairs of Bhutan were under the control of the British Government, and it was accordingly intimated to the Chinese Government that of these states also we could not allow the change in Tibet to affect the integrity or rights. The Chinese Government were pressed to send strict orders to their local officials to co-operate with our officers in a friendly manner, since, without such friendly relations, friction between the two Governments was certain to arise. Finally, we impressed on the Chinese the inadvisability of locating troops upon the frontier of India in such numbers as would necessitate corresponding movements on the part of the Indian Government and the rulers of the states concerned.

Such were the representations we made to the Chinese. We have no cause, in my opinion, to fear a Yellow Peril. The Chinese, indeed, have much more reason to fear a White Peril. Nor need we fear a Chinese invasion of India through Tibet. But rough, tactless handling of the Lamas and movements of Chinese troops in Tibet cause unrest all along the North-East Frontier. They necessitate movement of troops on our part, and might conceivably involve us in a permanent increase of our garrison. We have, then, need to be in a position to know what is going on beyond the

mountain-barrier, and to prevent, by diplomatic means, troubles, such as the present, ever arising. Until there are symptoms that the Chinese intend to act in a neighbourly way, we are bound to resist any curtailment of that influence in Tibet which we established at so much cost. It was the slackness of the Chinese as suzerains which necessitated the establishment of that influence at the expense of the Sikkim campaign and the Lhasa Mission, and we cannot afford to let it go until we are assured of the friendliness of the attitude of the Chinese towards us. The representations we made are therefore the minimum we could have made, when, by reducing the indemnity and evacuating the Chumbi Valley, we had given such tangible evidence of our own good-will.

What we want to know now is the result of those representations. If the Chinese officials in Tibet have changed their attitude and shown themselves as ready to co-operate with us as Yu-tai was to work with me in Lhasa in 1904, and if they are disposed to treat the Tibetans sensibly and reasonably, then we need have no objection to the increase of Chinese influence in Tibet. But if the Europeanized Chinese officials who have recently flooded Tibet are to continue their anti-British propensities, then we shall have to stick tenaciously to every little right we have, and even to every little point of etiquette, for otherwise that prestige, which is so intangible and so little understood in England, but which is of such immense practical value in the East, will dwindle away to what it was in 1903, and its place will have to be taken by permanent garrisons on that frontier.

Those who know the Chinese best, speak the most favourably of their high character, of their sterling qualities, and of their reliability. We have, then, good grounds for believing that in the long-run they will prove excellent neighbours on our Indian frontier. At the same time we, in this Society, received a warning only last spring from that well-informed and acute observer, Mr. Barry, that the cry of 'China for the Chinese' was becoming more pronounced, and might not improbably turn eventually into the cry of 'Down with the foreigner.' It is possible, therefore, that for twenty or thirty years to come we shall have to contend with an unfriendly spirit on our North-East Frontier. At any rate it behoves us while China is awakening to be more, not less, vigilant on our own side. It is impossible for us in England, with a constitutional crisis, impending General Elections, budgets, and fiscal changes, to exercise the needful watchfulness. But we can at least support those men on the spot whose duty it is to be vigilant.

We are just sending to India a Viceroy who must know this question completely from the international and Imperial sides. When he has also studied it in India, and realized what sacrifices India has made, and how often she has been thwarted by international and Imperial considerations from making a settlement which would satisfactorily meet Indian requirements, we should have confidence that what he and his Councillors then recommend is a reasonable solution of the problem how to keep the North-East Frontier quiet without periodical expeditions, Missions, and assemblages of troops.

We want to be as little as possible troubled with Tibet. But by merely ignoring its existence we do not, thereby, avoid trouble. Events occur on the far side of the mountains which force us into action. What we need, then, is some agency for influencing those events, or, at least, for intelligently anticipating them before they occur. It is not sound business to be continually at the mercy of events. And the urgent need is some warning agency on our North-East Frontier which will enable us to take timely precautions against any threatening trouble before it arises. The Tibetans are now asking for a British officer to be sent to Lhasa, and I can see no better solution of our difficulties than to permanently establish an officer there.

DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN: I am sorry, and we are all sorry, that our Chairman, Lord Ronaldshay, has not been able to come and preside at this meeting. One of the many reasons for which I am sorry he cannot be with us is that I have reason to know that he is altogether in sympathy with the views of Sir Francis Younghusband, and he would have advocated them without hesitation. He would also have added a certain amount of criticism of the policy of our Government towards Tibet. We are very much indebted to Sir Francis for his lecture, and we shall all look forward to the publication to-morrow of his book, which will give a full and complete account of everything concerned in this question. We must remember that Sir Francis is the only Political Officer who has guided a military expedition which forced its way up to Lhasa, a place which for so many years had never been visited by any Englishman. For this very successful expedition very great credit is due both to the military and to Sir Francis Younghusband. While I do not myself agree in the policy of the Lhasa Treaty, I doubt whether Sir Francis Younghusband's very meritorious services have been adequately recognized. (Hear, hear.)

Upon our general policy in regard to Tibet there is this to be said: the Tibetans have proved very troublesome, intractable neighbours—stubborn, ignorant, barbarous. They would have no communication with us, they rejected all our advances, and they actually invaded our territory, and would not leave our frontier quiet. Their power has now been taken from them, and the Chinese have introduced their own authority. One cannot say what the result may be. But we do know that the Chinese have been our neighbours, in what Sir Francis would call their somnolent state, along a frontier more than a thousand miles in length for a very long time. On that frontier they have given us no trouble at all. Therefore we may hope, as Sir Francis Younghusband said at the end of his lecture, that they may probably in their awakened state have the prudence and policy to give us no future trouble. It is to their interest to do so; they know that any collision with England on the land frontiers might bring us upon their ports and coast where they are practically defenceless.

You cannot well wonder at the policy of China in taking Tibet. Tibet, you must remember, was a sort of buffer land between themselves and us, and Asiatic kingdoms have reason to distrust European neighbours. That buffer land was left untouched for a very long

time; it was not invaded or encroached upon. But latterly there were perceptible indications that the Russians might come in there, and force of circumstances compelled us to march right to the capital. I do think the Chinese cannot be blamed for being rather alarmed at this prospect. They did, so far as I can understand, very much what we should have done in the same case; they substituted sovereignty for suzerainty, as we have done in a good many cases ourselves. They said: 'This buffer state is not strong; therefore we will go in and make it strong.' I do not think we can blame them for doing what most nations would have done for their security. Our business now is to keep on good terms with them if possible. I hope they will understand in their awakened state that the best thing for them is to be neighbourly to us, having regard to the immensity of our resources and power in so many directions. I have to admit that it is not possible to say what sort of Government the Chinese may get within the next nine or ten years. A strong movement for what they call representative institutions has turned into a sort of impatient democracy the very oldest Empire in the world, and what will become of that movement we cannot yet tell. But I do think that on the whole we may trust the Chinese, a long-headed, patient people, to behave prudently in their relations with us on the other side of the border in Tibet.

SIR J. D. REES said that, though he had not heard the paper, he had had the pleasure of reading it, and he was not very clear what it was Sir Francis Younghusband thought ought to be done. The reversal, if they so called it, of the policy of the expedition Sir Francis so admirably conducted was not the work of any one party in the State. It was first initiated and carried out by a Conservative administration, and was then adopted and approved by a Liberal administration. That being so, he would like to ask what Sir Francis thought ought to be done, and what he thought had a fair chance of being done.

SIR FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND said that the question put by Sir J. D. Rees had been answered in the concluding paragraph of his paper. It was that they should accede to the Tibetan request to send a British officer to Lhasa. He thought it was by the personal influence of a British officer at the capital that we should have the best means of preventing serious trouble arising on the frontier. The Tibetans had gone so far as to ask for an alliance with us on the same terms as our alliance with Nepal. He knew it was considered to be dangerous to have an Agent quartered so far away from our frontier. But at the present time we maintained an Agent at Gyantse, halfway to Lhasa; and he could not see that an Agent would be in any more danger at the capital than at Gyantse, whereas at the capital he would have the chance of knowing what was going on, of intelligent anticipation of

events before they occurred. If we had had an Agent there last year he would probably have been able to prevent the trouble then brewing, and in particular to prevent the Dalai Lama fleeing from Lhasa. If it were said that Tibet were now a Chinese province, his answer was that we might as well have a representative in the Tibetan province as in Turkestan, Yunan, Manchuria and other parts of the Chinese Empire.

SIR J. D. REES, while thanking the lecturer for his answer, asked him whether in pursuit of his solution of the problem he was prepared to see a revision of the Anglo-Russian Convention. If we sent an Agent to Lhasa—even on the same footing as the Agent we sent to Kabul—the Russians, under the terms of the Convention, would be entitled to follow suit. If Sir Francis felt that it was a pity that the trouble we took and the treasure we squandered in getting to Lhasa had not been turned to more fruitful account, he felt much sympathy with this view ; but he would like to know what should be done within the limits of our existing engagements with a friendly Power.

The CHAIRMAN said he did not think the question quite fell within the limits of the discussion ; but he would leave it to Sir Francis to answer if he desired to do so.

SIR F. YOUNGHUSBAND said he had already expressed in public his views on this point. He thought the time would come—he did not know whether it had come at present—when, instead of two great Powers like ourselves and Russia agreeing to have nothing to do with Tibet, we should agree to both be represented by Agents at Lhasa. That, in his view, was the permanent solution of the Tibetan problem, as affected by the Anglo-Russian Convention.

The CHAIRMAN said that the very interesting paper they had heard had elicited only slight discussion, but the reason was plain. Tibet was a long way off, and none of those present, except Sir Francis himself, had been there. That explained why they had not felt competent to criticize his lecture. All that remained was to join in a hearty vote of thanks to him for what he had told them, and for his general indication of views as to future policy.

SIR F. YOUNGHUSBAND thanked the meeting, and the proceedings closed.

OCT 23 1913

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY

THE PROPOSED TRANS-PERSIAN RAILWAY

BY

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL A. C. YATE

Read February 8, 1911



LONDON
CENTRAL ASIAN SOCIETY, 22, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.
1911

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Proceedings of the Central
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THE PROPOSED TRANS-PERSIAN
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READ FEBRUARY 8, 1911

THE PROPOSED TRANS-PERSIAN RAILWAY

THE CHAIRMAN (the Earl of Ronaldshay, M.P.) said they would have the advantage of listening to a paper from Colonel Yate on a subject which had become one of considerable interest, in that, for the first time for a great number of years, it really looked as if the project of the construction of a great transcontinental railway from Russian territory through Persia, eventually to be linked up with the Indian railways, was entering the domain of practical politics.

We are indebted to Mr. Rudyard Kipling for the sentiment "East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet"; but when we turn the searchlight of history on to this epigrammatic couplet, we find the handiwork of man has been from time immemorial directed to drawing the twain closer and closer. Our earliest available records, as far as I am aware, show that the caravan by land and the sailing-ship by sea conveyed men and merchandise alike from the East and from the West to those great ports and cities which by geographical position had become the central marts of the civilized world—viz., Tyre and Sidon, Carthage and Alexandria, and the capitals of the "Great Oriental Monarchies" which flourished in the centuries before and after Christ between the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates and those of the Oxus and the Indus. Later, Rome, Constantinople, Baghdad, Bruges, Venice, and Genoa monopolized this trade; and, finally, with the discovery of the Cape route, it passed successively into the hands of the merchant adventurers of Portugal, Holland, and Great Britain. If proof be needed of Arab maritime skill and power, let me mention that the Arabs established their naval supremacy in the Levant within thirty years of the Hijra (*vide* Muir's "Caliphate") by signally defeating the Byzantine fleet.

The Scotch historian, Dr. Robertson, has collected in his monograph on "India" much curious and interesting information, elucidating the early intercourse between East and West; and I

believe I am right in saying that by sea the Phœnician and Arab mariner, and by land the inhabitants of the Arabian and Central Asian Steppes, were quite at home in the ports and marts of the Far East, when as yet the Caucasian races had no direct commercial intercourse with the lands of Cathay and Ind. With ever-varying conditions, and under the auspices of ever-changing nationalities, this traffic by caravan and sail continued, until the invention and development of steam-power suggested the possibility of more rapid methods of communication. It seems quite clear that at least 2,000 years before M. de Lesseps immortalized his name, the Pharaohs and Ptolemies established and maintained a navigable water route, connecting the Red with the Mediterranean Sea; but under Arab rule this route fell into disuse. Locomotion by steam suggested to two men—Chesney and Waghorn—the possibility of vastly accelerating communication between Europe and Asia. The former devoted all his energies to the Euphrates Valley, the latter to the desert between Alexandria and Suez. The statue of Waghorn, as the pioneer of the "Overland Route," stands, I believe, on the scene of his labours. The memory of Chesney is perpetuated in print only. For more than forty years now the Suez Canal has been the great channel of communication between East and West. During the last decade German enterprise has been busily employed in pushing forward a railway from Haidar Pasha, opposite Constantinople, across Asia Minor to Baghdad.

It was the genius of Beaconsfield which bought from Ismail Pasha every Suez Canal share that he (the Pasha) held, and thus gave to Great Britain direct power of control over a water-way of vital importance to British commerce; and, again, it was the genius of Beaconsfield which would, after the Berlin Conference of 1878, have inaugurated the construction of a railway from Alexandretta to Koweit. Cyprus, garrisoned by British troops, covered the Bay of Iskanderum; the Persian Gulf was then, as now, policed and patrolled by British men-of-war; Messrs. Lynch and Co. monopolized the river traffic between Baghdad and the mouth of the Shat-el-Arab; and Turkey at that moment, if ever since the Crimean War, looked upon England as a genuine friend. However, a fickle electorate returned Mr. Gladstone to power in 1880, and the projects of General Chesney and Mr. W. P. Andrew were left for Germany to realize a quarter of a century later. The scheme which at the conclusion of the Berlin Conference commended itself to Lord Beaconsfield as being, in the interests of

the British Empire, sound, is now being carried out by a German syndicate.

During the thirty-two years which have elapsed since that Conference, the balance of power in the Near and Middle East has undergone important modifications ; and although various schemes have from time to time been put forward for connecting Europe by rail with India, these have all now been concentrated in three main railway systems, all of which will, I think, in process of time be completed. These are—

1. The railway from Constantinople, via Konia, Adana, and Baghdad to Koweit.
2. The railway from Baku across Persia and Baluchistan to a junction with the North-Western State Railway of India.
3. A line connecting Russian Turkestan through Afghanistan with the North-Western Frontier of India.

This last-named line, though long talked of, must await for its completion the goodwill of the Amir of Kabul. The question of railway construction in Afghanistan is not directly connected with the subject-matter of this lecture, but its possibilities are so far-reaching that we may well devote a moment or two to considering what its future is likely to be. While the Amir preserves his suspicious and conservative attitude, progress will be going on all round his dominions. The system of railways in Russian Turkestan is connected by Orenburg with Russia direct, by Samarkand and Krasnovodsk with the Caucasus, and by Andijan with the western borders of China. A branch from Merv to Kushk leads to within sixty miles of Herat.

It is more than twenty years since I travelled along the Trans-Caspian Railway from Uzunada to Samarkand and thence by tarantass to Tashkent. General Sir James Hills-Johnes and Mr. C. E. Biddulph were my companions, and General Annenkoff, who journeyed with us as far as Samarkand, proved a most kind and helpful friend. Since that time the Turkestan railway system has undergone both extension and improvement (the wooden bridge, for instance, over the Oxus at Charjui, which we crossed at a cautious snail's pace in 1890, has been replaced by a steel-girder bridge on granite piers); but one project, which, as I have always understood, was cherished by General Annenkoff, does not appear to have been as yet even begun. I refer to a line connecting the Trans-Caspian Railway, via Vernoe and Semipalatinsk, with the Trans-Siberian Railway, probably at Tomsk. I gather, however, from occasional references in the Press, that this line, serious under-

taking as it may seem to be, is not lost sight of in Russia; but I think that the political pressure of the hour is impelling that Power to think more of railway expansion in a southerly than in an easterly or northerly direction. The same active brains that designed and carried out the railways in Turkestan and Siberia have projected possible extensions, not only into Western China, but even as far as the valley of the Hoang-ho; and if so far, then to the shores of the Pacific. The era of railway activity has now begun in earnest in China, but I must confess I regard the Thian Shan Mountains and the vast Gobi Desert as obstacles which will retard the construction of a through line from Tashkent to the Great Wall for a good many years. Other extensions, which were contemplated a few years ago by the Russians in Central Asia, were from Charjui and Samarkand to Kilif on the Oxus opposite Balkh; and even the difficulties of the Hindu Kush failed to discourage dreams of a railway from Kilif to Kabul. The line from Kuskh to Kandahar has, we know, long been a desire of the Russian heart.

Let us turn now to the eastern and southern sides of Afghanistan. Of our Indian railways we need only say that they are ready to cross the Afghan frontier whenever the Amir sends them an invitation to do so. I cannot but believe that he will ere long realize that railways are essential to the prosperity of his kingdom and the aggrandizement of his throne. He must see that he wields a power not less to-day than that of the Shah of Persia, and yet at the Courts of Europe he is not represented. A potentate who closes his own frontiers and his own Court to foreign nations cannot expect to be so represented. He keeps wealth, moreover, from his doors, and wealth is power. Any change, however, in the constitution and foreign relations of his country is a question which an Amir of Afghanistan may well regard with a wary eye. He is girt around with States, large and small, all of which acknowledge the rule, protectorate, or influence of the West. His own aloofness is his strength.

If the Trans-Persian Railway is constructed, I think that in course of time Mashad and Herat, and also Kirman and Kandahar, either via Farah or by the valley of the Helmand, will be connected by rail. This is not an exhaustive sketch of the railway possibilities which are in a measure waiting on the Amir's will, but enough, I think, has been said to show that Afghanistan lies across the direct path of communication between East and West, and especially between Europe and India.

In view of the circumstances of his own day the Amir Abdurrahman was right in warning his heirs and his subjects against the admission of railways until such time as the military power of Afghanistan sufficed to render invasion improbable; but since his day there has been a notable change in the political situation of the Middle East. Placed as he and his son Habibullah Khan have been for thirty years between the Russian and the Indian Empires, their policy has been perforce a strictly defensive one. But the advent of Germany as a powerful factor in the politics of the East has materially altered the relations between Great Britain and Russia, and so relieved the strain on Afghanistan. In the important debate which was raised in the House of Commons on January 22, 1902, by Mr. Joseph Walton, the first hints were given of the policy which culminated five years later in the now familiar Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. When the terms of that Convention were first made public, they met, as might be expected, with searching criticism; but at the end of four years' experience of its operation we may reasonably admit that the preservation of the integrity of the kingdoms of Persia and Afghanistan is no less compatible with existing conditions than it was when Great Britain and Russia sat watching with ultra-jealous eyes each other's every move. The Amir of Afghanistan received and has kept without comment his copy of the Convention of 1907. There is nothing to show that so far it has affected his policy; but I think that in time, when a round dozen or so of railway termini are touching his frontiers, he will be unable to resist their seductive conveniences, and then Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, and Mazar-i-Sharif will appear in Bradshaw's Continental Guide, and lines formerly closed to the British traveller will enable Indian officials to make the most of their privilege leave.

The Society before which I have the honour of lecturing to-day came into existence, I think, in the year 1902. Anyone who studies its proceedings and who follows closely the course of Near and Middle Eastern politics, knows that its members have given close attention to railway development in Asia, and notably in Western Asia. The lectures given by Colonel Picot on "Railways in Western Asia," by Colonel Beresford on "Russian Railways towards India," and by Mr. Charles Drummond Black on "A Railway from the Mediterranean to India," will be remembered by most of us, and the discussions which followed the lectures are full of valuable suggestions. I may add that many of the other lectures, notably those delivered by the Earl of Ronaldshay, General Sir E. F

Chapman, Mr. H. F. B. Lynch, Mr. Lovat Fraser, and Mr. Dunn, incidentally embrace much information on this subject. Further, I need hardly remind this audience that in Mr. Chirol's "Middle Eastern Question," and in Sir Thomas Holdich's "The Gates of India," much is said on the same subject, and to all these I acknowledge with sincere pleasure my indebtedness for the assistance which they have afforded me in preparing this lecture. Among other authorities whom I have consulted, I may mention Lord Curzon's "Persia," Mr. W. P. Andrew's lecture on the "Euphrates Valley Railway Route," delivered in 1873 at the Royal United Service Institution, and Sir William Willcocks's lecture, delivered in November, 1909, before the Royal Geographical Society, on "Mesopotamia—Past, Present, and Future." At the last moment, too, when I had already sent my manuscript to be typed, I came across a lecture delivered by Captain Lakin, Indian Army, at the Staff College, Quetta, in July, 1909. Almost every line of railway that I have mentioned or am about to mention is laid down on the plan which accompanied his paper, excepting those from Trebizond to Tabriz and from Kirman via Kandahar to the Gomal. His lecture is published in the *Journal* of the United Service Institution of India for July, 1910, and appears to be the result of careful study.

I propose in this paper to consider briefly the Trans-Persian Railway scheme from the geographical, political, commercial, and financial points of view. I am not struck with the happiness of the name "Trans-Persian" for the suggested route, and, considering that it follows closely the Indo-European telegraph line through the Caucasus, Persia, and Baluchistan, I think that "Indo-European" would be the more appropriate title. In this paper, however, I adhere to the term "Trans-Persian."

It is more than probable that this will be the first railway to reach India direct from Europe. The present attitude of the Amir precludes the idea of an early connection between the railways of Russian Turkestan and those of the North-West Frontier of India, and in no sense would the term "Indo-European" be applicable to the Turco-Teutonic Railway which is intended to traverse Turkey in Asia from the Sea of Marmora to the Persian Gulf. I say "intended" without any prejudice to the opinions of those who consider that Great Britain is entitled to settle direct with the Turkish Government the conditions on which the section of the Baghdad Railway from Sadiye to Koweit shall be constructed, opinions with which I have the strongest sympathy. If the best-

informed organs of our Press are not in error, the time is at hand when Great Britain and Turkey will settle this point.

Lord Curzon's historic denouncement of the Minister who would grant to a Foreign Power a port on the Persian Gulf may appropriately be extended to the Government which fails to uphold the time-honoured rights of Great Britain on the Tigris and the Shat-el-Arab. Since the days when our Chartered Companies persuaded the Dutch and the Portuguese to transfer their enterprise elsewhere, we have practically monopolized the trade of Southern Persia and Turkish Arabia through the Persian Gulf. We have kept the law and order in that Gulf at the expense of our money and our men. H.M.S. *Hyacinth* at Debai is the last witness to the truth of this. We have developed all the trade routes, notably that of the Karun River, debouching on the Gulf; and it is our travellers who, for more than a century, have opened up this, till recently, imperfectly known country to the more civilized world. Were this not so, the British ultimatum to Persia of three months ago would have been a farce. It was, at any rate, not intended in that sense.

The Potsdam negotiations have put Turkey on her mettle. She may employ German capital and engineering talent to make her railways, but the control of them is hers. I am told that the employees on the Anatolian Railway, and on that section of the Baghdad Railway which is now open, are French-speaking Levantines, and that German colonists in Asia Minor are forbidden by the Turkish Government. It seems, therefore, that Turkey in Asia has not yet been placed under a German Protectorate, as the recent tone of German journalism might lead us to infer. A pregnant sentence in Lord Curzon's rectorial address at Glasgow may appropriately be quoted here. "Asia Minor will probably remain Turkish, but may accept some form of foreign protection" (*Times* report). If that be so, is not Great Britain best qualified and best entitled to accept the duty of "foreign protector" of the province of Baghdad and of the coast-line of Arabia bordering on the Persian Gulf?

On November 21, 1910, the *Times* and the other daily papers published a communication made to Reuter's agent regarding the Trans-Persian Railway by M. Svegintseff, a member of the Duma and one of the Russian promoters of the railway, who had just arrived in London. This communication, together with a Reuter's telegram which appeared in the *Times* and other papers on November 22, are appended to this lecture. The pith of these

communications, put forward officially in the name of the Russian promoters, is: (1) That the company shall be international; (2) that its chief offices shall be in London, Brussels, or some Western city; (3) that English and Russian rights shall be equal, the participation of other groups being invited on terms to be defined hereafter; and (4) that the service of the line shall be from Calais to Calcutta, using existing lines, and passing through Persia. The length of the line to be constructed from the Caucasus to the Indus Valley is put at 1,600 miles, the cost is estimated at £21,000,000, and the period of construction at four years. It is assumed that Nushki will be the point of destination on the Indian side, but that assumption, as I will show later, is not at all a safe one. The length of the journey from London to Bombay is put at seven days, the distance being 5,700 miles, and the cost of the railway ticket £40. Incidentally we are reminded that the P. & O. charge £60 for a fourteen days' journey. All Anglo-Indians regard the P. & O. as a great national institution—one to be proud of; but they would regard any incentive to reduction of fare or acceleration of speed applied to that company as a kindly interposition of fortune in their favour.

The visit of M. Svegintseff was followed early in December (1910) by that of M. Timiriazeff, President of the Russo-British Chamber of Commerce, and a member of the Russian Imperial Council of State. During his stay in London, I had the pleasure of half an hour's conversation with him. He told me that he did not consider that any definite move in regard to the Trans-Persian Railway could be made until at least the present month, and that, as we see, has proved to be the case. The *Times* correspondent telegraphed from St. Petersburg on January 29 (1911) that the Council of Ministers had approved the Trans-Persian Railway Scheme, provided that it involved no outlay by the Treasury, and no serious damage to Russian trade; and that the Russian promoters expect that the visits to London and Paris, to be made in February, will result in definite arrangements. I can only trust that, amid the Constitutional changes which must largely absorb the attention of both Houses of Parliament, the quieter atmosphere of the Foreign Office and of the City, may find the leisure and peace to consider the political and financial aspects of this proposed railway. The most influential organs of our home and Indian Press appear to be distinctly disposed to favour this scheme, and, speaking for myself, I think it is a very fascinating one; but if it promises advantages, it also involves risks.

I propose now to trace the probable route of the Trans-Persian Railway from its starting-point in the Caucasus to its terminus in the Indus Valley. The Russian railway system running southward from St. Petersburg and Moscow crosses the River Don at Rostov, and, passing by Vladikavkas and Petrovsk, arrives at Baku. It is this line which the Russians propose to extend into Persia. At first sight it would seem more natural to extend the line already built from Tiflis to Julfa onward to Tabriz and Teheran; but there is an obvious geographical objection to this. The great range of the Caucasus passes between Vladikavkas and Tiflis, and although an excellent road by the Dariel Pass connects these two points, Russian engineering skill and finance have not yet ventured to cope with the very difficult and costly task of connecting these two places by a railway. I may also add that there is a possible strategic reason why Russia prefers the Resht to the Julfa route. The former is secure from attack; the latter is within reach of the Turkish frontier. The Trans-Persian Railway, then, will take off from a point on the Baku-Tiflis line* about sixty miles south-east of Baku, and from there will be carried along the west shore of the Caspian to Resht, and thence ascending the valley of the Safid-Rud, cross the Elburz Range to Kasvin, and then follow the well-known postal route via Teheran, Isfahan, and Yezd to Kirman. It is generally agreed that the engineering task between Resht and Kasvin is a difficult one, and will involve heavy expenditure. This line, though the most convenient, and, indeed, at present the only possible one for direct communication by land with Russia, will not adequately serve the traffic of the Black Sea. The bulk of the imports and exports of Persia pass through the ports of Batoum and Trebizond. It is practically certain that the Russian Government will extend the line which connects Batoum via Tiflis with Julfa, so as to join the main line already described at Kasvin. The Tiflis Press in November last strongly urged this extension, arguing that all British and German trade for Northern Persia would then come to Batoum. This is to ignore Trebizond. The construction of a railway between Tabriz and the latter port is a matter which in the main concerns the Turkish Government; but Trebizond, if it is to compete with Batoum, must also be connected by railway with Tabriz. It would appear from the telegraphic reports regard-

* Lord Curzon ("Persia," vol. i., p. 626) writes in 1892: "The Russians, in laying the Tiflis-Baku line, constructed a particularly fine station at Adji-Kabul, seventy miles west of Baku, with an admitted view to an extension towards Resht."

ing the Potsdam negotiations that Russia and Germany intend, apparently without consulting Great Britain and such other nations as it is proposed to invite to support the Trans-Persian Railway scheme, to settle between them what branch lines shall connect the railways of Turkey in Asia with those of Persia. Against this Great Britain would be justified in protesting, the more so as the Turkish Government has plainly asserted that it is not Russia or Germany or any other Power, but Turkey itself, that regulates the railway rights and policy of Turkey, and, further, that it rests with Great Britain and Turkey to settle between themselves the points that specially concern them. The Trans-Persian Railway is international, and all that affects its welfare should be regarded and treated from the international point of view. The Trebizond route is of great importance to Persia. Russia objects, it is said, to a Turkish railway from Trebizond to Erzeroum, and thence to Tabriz, on strategical grounds. International interests can hardly accept "strategical grounds" as being a valid excuse for robbing an international railway of its profits. Russia has not offered to make Batoum a free port. If the Trebizond-Tabriz line is not to be laid, and if Batoum is not to be a free port, the interests of the International Trans-Persian Railway will assuredly suffer, and that to benefit Russia only. On November 23 last the merchants of Moscow loudly protested that those of Great Britain and Germany would gain more by the proposed railway than they themselves would. M. Klemm assured them that they would be well cared for, but that Imperial policy must prevail. This agitation on the part of the Moscow Chamber of Commerce has since been renewed, and met with some support from the Ministry of Ways and Communications. Russian political and commercial policy are, it seems, not at one in regard to this Trans-Persian scheme. To my thinking the Moscow grievance is illusory, perhaps designedly so. This railway gives to Russian trade access to the markets of Central and Southern Persia, and promises no certain *quid pro quo* to British Commerce. It may possibly obviate the prolongation of the Baghdad Railway along the head of the Persian Gulf; but if Great Britain should take Mesopotamia under the ægis of her protection, we may look upon such prolongation with more equanimity than we can at this moment. We in the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean, as everywhere, maintain the policy of the "open door." Russia should respond in the Black Sea. In July, 1885, I came to Batoum and found earthworks in the course of construction. Russia was then fortifying Batoum in defiance of the Treaty con-

cluded at Berlin in 1878. In 1886 Batoum ceased to be a free port.

The second important point raised between Russia and Germany is the construction of a branch connecting the Persian main line via Kermanshah with Khanikin, to which point the Baghdad Railway Syndicate holds the right of laying a branch line from Sadiye, a place situated some twenty to thirty miles above Baghdad on the Tigris. British rights in Southern Persia and in Turkish Arabia, as before pointed out, are so well established that they are entitled to a just mead of attention. Barely five years ago, before this society, Sir Thomas Gordon and Sir Lepel Griffin spoke of the country between Kirmanshah and the Karun River as "districts which would add to the granaries of the world." It was an Englishman and a member of this society, Mr. Arthur Taylor, working for an English firm, Messrs. Lynch and Co., who opened up the Karun route, and it is fully as reasonable that the produce of this region should find its way via Ahwaz to Muhamra, as via Khanikin to Sadiye. More so in fact; for Russian and German, as well as British steamers, trade to the Shat-el-Arab ports, and water-transport is cheaper than that by railway.

M. Svegintseff stated to Reuter's agent in November last that the Trans-Persian Railway was to be international, and was not to be divided into sections controlled by different groups. That rule will surely apply to the branches as well as to the main line. To refuse to Turkey the line from Trebizond to Tabriz is to take the bread out of the mouth of Trebizond, and to put it into that of Batoum. Both these ports should naturally be feeders of the Trans-Persian Railway, and the same measures should be meted out to both. When addressing the conference of railway merchants at Moscow on November 23, M. Klemm stated that he felt sure that financiers in London and Paris would not support the scheme unless it could be made a commercial success. The knowledge that the trade of Trebizond is to be lost to the railway can hardly fail to influence unfavourably the financier of London and Paris and even of Berlin. My own feeling in regard to this point is that the "internationality" of this railway—a railway of which the Persian section should ultimately become a Persian State line—should be rigidly safeguarded on international principles, and not sacrificed here and there to the special interests of any one Power. If it is, surely intrigue, injustice, and trouble will result. I am well aware that years must elapse before the Persian State section of the railway can be entirely entrusted to Persian management;

but till that time comes, international management should be fairly and strictly maintained. This is strictly in accord with the advertised Russian scheme, and yet already we hear of special negotiations about the Trebizond-Tabriz and Khanikin-Teheran branches set on foot by Russia on her own initiative.* If, as Mr. Mackinnon Wood implied, in his reply to Mr. Lloyd in the House of Commons on February 7, Russia is to do as she pleases in her own "sphere," regardless of the interests of Persia, the so-called internationality of the railway becomes a farce.

It is generally accepted that the country from Teheran to Kirman is not a difficult one from the point of view of the railway engineer. At Kirman we enter the British sphere. The reports which have come from St. Petersburg and Moscow, and the communications made by M. Svegintseff and M. Timiriazeff during their visit to London, show that the Russian promoters of this railway expect to join the existing Indian railway system at Nushki. From such knowledge as I possess, I infer that there are serious objections to this plan. Between Kirman and Kuh-i-malik-siah lies the desert called Dasht-i-Lut, which no railway, I believe, can cross. To the west of Kharan, again, is another impracticable desert. Thus a line from Nushki, following the caravan route to Robat, situated at the base of the Kuh-i-malik-siah, would have to make a very wide detour, either to the north or to the south, in order to reach Kirman. Lastly, the steep gradients which lead up from Nushki to Quetta, and down from Quetta to Sibi, are to be avoided. Traffic over such gradients is very expensive, and it seems absurd to make a great through railway wind up and down among mountains for 100 miles or more if a straighter and more level alignment can be found. In 1891 General Sir James Brown showed me a plan on which, if I remember rightly, the proposed route for a railway from Karachi, via Las Bela, Panjgur, and Bāmpur, to Sistan was laid down. Such a line between Sonmiani and Karachi is commanded from the sea, and that, having regard to our naval power as a safeguard to India, is a point not to be overlooked.

In "The Gates of India" Sir Thomas Holdich has indicated the line which he considers would be the easiest and best. It runs from Kirman, via Bāmpur to Panjgur, from which latter point, he states, the alignment must depend on the objective. Now, the Russian promoters of the railway name as the starting-point of its

* I think myself that there is something to be said in favour of an International Conference on this railway scheme to be held at Teheran, the Amir of Afghanistan being represented on it.

service Calais and as its destination Calcutta. That being so, the main line from Panjgur would pass through Quetta, Hindu Bagh, and the Gomal Pass to Lahore, avoiding the descent and detour by Sibi and Sukkur. Such a route at least seems possible. From Panjgur, again, a branch would almost certainly be made to Karachi, the easiest channel for all traffic to and from Central, Western, and Southern India. Thus Nushki would be left *en l'air*, and, as far as I can judge, its communications with Sistan and Khorasan would continue to be by caravan. It has long been the ambition of Russia to connect its Central Asian possessions by railway with the Persian Gulf, and I gather that a branch from Kirman to Chahbar or Pasni on the shores of the Gulf is part of the Trans-Persian Railway scheme. Such a branch, be it noted—and this is important—would traverse and terminate at a port in either the British sphere of Persia or British Baluchistan. If Kirman is connected by railway with Mashad and Dushakh on the Trans-Caspian Railway, Russia's ambition will be attained, and that by a line traversing from Birjand southward territory either British or under British protection. With such a line Nushki might, in course of time, be connected.

I noticed that the *Pioneer*, in discussing this railway scheme, is led on to consider the possibility of through communication from Europe through India to China. As is generally known, the great obstacle to connecting India by rail with China lies in the difficulty of crossing the great parallel ranges which separate Burma from Yunan. Major Davies, of the Oxfordshire Light Infantry, spent one or two years, under the orders, I believe, of the Government of India, in surveying this country. In recognition of his work he received the Gold Medal of the Royal Geographical Society, but so far his surveys have not been put to any practical use. I think it is clear, however, that if any through railway from Central Europe to the Far East is to be made within the next decade it will be achieved through the Indian railway system. Eastern Bengal has advantages so distinct over Western Turkestan as an avenue to China that I do not think that I need say more now. It is well to realize that the ultimate issue of the Trans-Persian Railway may make Northern India the halfway-house of a vast railway system directly connecting Central Europe with Central China.

I think it must be accepted that the primary aim of the original promoters of this railway is political, but I believe that it is capable of being made commercially successful. I admit that the competition of other routes, land and sea, converging on the East is a

serious thing to face—competition by the Suez and Panama Canals, by the Cape route, and by the great transcontinental railways of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres—but I venture to feel confident that a railway which taps the wealth and traffic of the vast populations of Europe and of India, and of the lands where flourished the “Great Oriental Monarchies” of pre-Christian days, and across which Alexander marched his victorious forces, will be a commercial success.* The industries of India are growing very rapidly, and will find an outlet by rail as well as by sea. All tradition, all history, tells of the almost fabulous profits of the trade between East and West, and equally of the prosperity which existed in Khorasan and Sistan until Turk and Tartar hordes had overrun and laid waste countries once fertile and populous. Sir Colin Scott-Moncrieff went to Merv in 1890 to show the Russians how to revive the greatness of a city which once bore the proud title of “Queen of the World,” and Sir William Willcocks is restoring the Garden of Eden; and it is a British firm, Sir John Jackson, Limited, which has got the contract for the erection of a great dam at the head of the Hindia branch of the Euphrates as part of the irrigation of Mesopotamia. Sistan and Mekran still await their deliverer. The Trans-Persian Railway may play that rôle. Lord Curzon discusses in chapter xviii. of his “Persia” the economic chances of an Indo-Sistan and Trans-Persian Railway, and guardedly gives expression to the belief that in time they would prove profitable speculations.

The ocean greyhound of to-day is a serious rival to railway enterprise; but if the caravan and the clipper could live side by side, cannot also the iron horse and the Cunarder or P. & O.?

For the last ten years “the railway race to the Persian Gulf” has been a mere question of time. It is seven or eight years since I wrote an article under that title for the *Empire Review*. It looked then as if there were to be three entries for the race—Great Britain, Russia, and Germany. But as Germany has put all her money on that iron horse Baghdad, Great Britain and Russia appear to have formed a confederacy, and are surely not in the humour to let their “nomination” be beaten.

When it comes to considering this railway from the financial point of view, I can but quote the opinions of others. The Russian syndicate has estimated the cost at £21,000,000 sterling. A writer in the *Pioneer*, forming his judgment independently, named

* Sir John Malcolm in his “Sketches of Persia” dwells upon the greatness of the resources of that country.

£20,000,000 as the probable cost. Experience shows that when Russia has strong political reasons for wishing to make a railway, the capital will be forthcoming, and as proofs of this I quote the Trans-Caspian and Trans-Siberian and such-like railways. When Russia, being of this mind, is supported by British feeling and British capital, the problem is even more easily solved.

One point we have not yet considered, and it is a most essential one—viz., the probable attitude of the Persian Government and of the Persian people towards this scheme. Forty years ago the construction of the European telegraph line had to contend with a good deal of covert bigotry and ill-will, and we cannot be certain that the same spirit may not be encountered again ; still, we can surely rely on British and Russian diplomacy to convince the Persian Government that the mere construction of the line means bringing millions of money into this country, and that the railway which becomes one of the great links between Europe and India, and, eventually, the Far East, cannot fail to restore Persia to a degree of prosperity which she has not known for at least two centuries. As I was preparing this lecture, I chanced to come across a little volume of "Miscellaneous Poems" by Sir John Malcolm, famous a century ago as our Ambassador to the Court of the Shah of Persia. The following passage struck me as being appropriate to the state of Persia at the present hour :

" Yet thro' the mist of ages past we trace
The dazzling glories of a wondrous race,
Ferodosi's song and sculptured rocks still tell
How Rustum conquered and how Sohrab fell,
How great Jemsheed all other Kings outshone,
Who tried on earth to raise a heavenly throne ;
And still, Persepolis, thy ruins grand
Shed a proud lustre o'er a fallen land,
Like the dark shade of Persia's ancient power
On her degenerate sons thou seemst to lour."

In the carrying out of this scheme Persia may be no more for the moment than the instrument of the ambitions of greater Powers ; but none the less the prospect is full of promise for her, and if ever she has the opportunity of reviving the past glories of Naushirwan and Shah Abbās, this is it.* British interests, political and commercial, are best served by a strong Persia, and if this railway strengthens Persia, it strengthens Britain.

* See Curzon's "Persia," vol. i., p. 629.

We have now for a century been watching with some anxiety the gradual approach of Russia towards the North-West Frontier of India, and we have consistently adopted such methods, diplomatic and otherwise, as have appeared calculated at the moment to check her progress. We have achieved some successes and made a good many mistakes. The upshot of it all is that the frontier of Russia now marches with that of Afghanistan. We have come to realize that India may be called upon to defend herself from invasion by land. Similarly we for a number of years have watched with jealousy the attempts of any other Power to obtain a foothold on the Persian Gulf. We have prescriptive rights there—rights which we have established by taking upon ourselves the maintenance of order for the protection of our own and others' commerce. I refrain from enlarging here on all that Great Britain has done in the Persian Gulf and in Southern Persia and Turkish Arabia, because only three years ago Mr. Lynch and Mr. Lovat Fraser addressed this Society on these very subjects, and because I can add nothing to the facts set forth in the recent leaders in the *Times*. I would merely remind you of two points germane to the present question to which the discussions following the lectures of Messrs. Lynch and Lovat Fraser gave prominence. Sir Mortimer Durand stated that, prior to the conclusion of the Convention of 1907, he had informed Sir Edward Grey that British commercial and political influence was paramount up to and including a line from Khanikin by Kirmanshah, Hamadan, Isfahan, Yezd, and Kirman to Sistan. Sir J. D. Rees urged that the strength of the naval squadron in the Persian Gulf should be increased.

It appears that the same destiny which has advanced the frontiers of Russia to the Oxus is slowly paving the way for the approach of Russia and Germany to the Gulf. I do not say that they will necessarily acquire ports on it, but as their merchant vessels trade to it, and railways in which they are intimately concerned will run down to it, it stands to reason that their rights and interests there cannot be disregarded. If the reply to an advance by land is a strengthening of the army, the obvious answer to an approach by sea is an increase of our naval strength in Indian waters. It is barely a year since Captain Macaulay in this very room urged that the Government of India should maintain its own naval contingent. We hold Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Egypt, Aden, and the Cape, and by these we keep open our lines of communication by which either military or naval reinforcements can reach India. In India itself we have a strong naval base, and, if other

help be needed, the military and naval forces of Australasia and of the Union of South Africa will be within call. In fact, India, Australasia, and South Africa, coupled with Ceylon, Singapore, Mauritius, and Hong-Kong, may well in the future be responsible for mutual protection, and for the maintenance of British power in the Indian and Pacific Seas—nay, more, Canada also is within reach. It has been suggested that when the naval and military strength of the King's Overseas Dominions, grouped around the Pacific Ocean, has attained its due development, India may reduce her military garrison. I do not myself consider that recent events in that dependency justify this forecast, welcome as it might be from a financial point of view. Besides, the mere fact that railways—three at least—will in the course of a few years connect the Indian frontier and Indian seas direct with Europe, constitutes a caution against denuding India of her defensive forces. I perfectly recognize that the progress of civilization overrules objections to railways on strategical grounds; but if commerce and convenience demand railways, security counsels safeguards against the use of railways as a means of invasion. Holding as we do India, still, if not the land of the pagoda-tree, at least a source of power to us, with its three hundred millions of people, its eighty millions of revenue, and its ever-growing wealth and commerce, we must guard it as vigilantly as the dragon watched the Golden Fleece. (Incidentally I might remind you that Batoum and Colchis, now called Poti, are very near neighbours.) From a strategic point of view, I think that there is no railway route safer for India than that of the proposed Trans-Persian Railway. Given that the Amir of Afghanistan's aversion to railways be overcome, there is yet one other route possible for the Kirman-Lahore section. It would pass through Sistan to Kandahar, and thence by the Kadanai Valley to the Gomal Pass. I am obliged to define this route vaguely, because personally I have seen it only at two points—viz., near the Khāsh Rud in Sistan and between the Helmand and the Kadanai Rivers. A railway reaching Lahore via Kandahar is strategically valuable to India, opens up a country more productive than Western Baluchistan, enjoys a more equable and therefore less trying climate, and would command a superior supply of labour. The Hazara coolie is famous, and the Pathan is no mean navvy. There is much to be said in favour of this alignment, but an international railway must select its own international route. Still, as Russia seems to have settled the Baku-Resht-Teheran section, and to be inclined to veto the Trebizond-Tabriz branch, India may very

well decide the alignment between Kirman and the North-West Frontier in the interests of herself and of her ally and protégé the Amir of Afghanistan.

A review of the position of the three Mohammedan monarchies, the territories of which divide India from Europe, suggest reflections not without interest. Turkey with its marvellous record of conquest and of centuries of antagonism to Christendom, and Persia with a stirring history, glorious and, at times, the reverse, which loses itself in the mists of time, have—say what their Press and Ministers may—become instruments in the hands of nations which have simply left them behind on the path of moral and material progress. Afghanistan, which, compared with these two, is of mushroom growth, holds itself rigidly aloof, warned by the fate of all its neighbours to keep the European at arm's length. Three European Powers—Great Britain, Germany, and Russia—are competing for the control of the markets and industries of these countries. Two, Germany and Russia, are exposed to temptations which might lead to their desiring to annex or establish a protectorate over a portion of their territories. The third Power, England, has no such temptation. To her the integrity of these three States is precious because they protect her Indian dominions, they contribute to her commercial prosperity, and the many millions of our King's Mohammedan subjects are bound by a strong tie of sympathy to the millions which acknowledge the sway of the Sultan, the Shah, and the Amir. I know well that the British Government is now entering upon a fresh phase in the arduous struggle to maintain itself in that position, political, strategical, and commercial, which is necessary to the stability of its Indian Empire and of Great Britain as a world Power. I do not believe that the British Empire, while it remains steadfast to itself, need dread the issue. We wield a mighty power, naval and military, based on mighty resources in the British possessions which are washed by the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and, given internal peace and unity, we may confidently expect that within the brotherhood of the Empire the East will prove itself a loyal fellow and ally of the West.

APPENDICES

(From the *Times* of November 21 and 22, 1910, and January 29, 1911)

THE PROPOSED RAILWAY ACROSS PERSIA.

M. SVEGINTSEFF'S VIEWS.

M. SVEGINTSEFF, a member of the Duma, who has come to London on business connected with the Russian proposal to connect the railways of Russia and India by means of an international line through Persia, made a statement on the subject yesterday to a representative of Reuter's Agency. In the course of it he said: "Such an enterprise could be formed only as an international combination of financial and commercial men, while the leading interest should be Russian and English. The Russian promoters of the idea have, therefore, formed a Russian group with the view of ultimately developing it into an international company to study the question and afterwards build the line. In the opinion of the group this line must not be regarded as a tool for local political interest, and it is held that the line cannot be divided into sections controlled by different groups. It must exist as a whole, and the company must have an international character, not only as regards the financing of the enterprise, but also as far as the board that will have to be constituted is concerned. For that reason, though the interests of Russia, England, and Persia (the first two as owners of the two ends of the line, and the latter as the owner of the territory on which the line develops) must be predominant, yet French, German, and Belgian interests, and the interests of any other group that may find it convenient to invest, will be most heartily welcomed. In this way the scheme will bring together in the Near East interests which might otherwise compete and give rise to friction, and the enterprise can therefore be regarded as a most powerful political weapon to ward off possible causes of mutual dissatisfaction. With regard to the Baghdad Railway already under construction, this scheme affords no menace whatever to that line. At the present rate of construction the latter cannot reach the region through which this Persian line proposes to travel for a period of at least eight years, and there is no reason whatever why the Baghdad Railway should not at that period profitably effect a junction with the international line now being considered. In fact, the fusion of commercial interests in the two lines will prove a valuable factor in averting possible political difficulties."

THE COST.

Turning to the commercial side of the question, the capital required for the undertaking is very much less than has been stated. The length of the line to be built to connect the existing Russian and Indian lines is only 1,600 miles, and a rough survey

which has been made leads to the conclusion that for the sum of £18,800,000 the line could be completed. Adding to this the necessary rate of interest for the invested capital for four years (the period of construction) would necessitate the expenditure of another £2,500,000. This would mean a total expenditure of £21,000,000, which the Russian group think quite sufficient for the enterprise.

It will thus be seen that the whole line can be constructed for a sum of £21,000,000, including the interest on the money invested during the period of construction. As to the possible success of the enterprise from the purely financial standpoint, it is hoped that, given the possibility of taking passengers and mails from London to Bombay in eight days six hours, at the very moderate estimated speed of twenty-eight miles per hour, or with a speed of thirty-three miles in exactly seven days, and with a daily service, the transit traffic would be developed from its very first days, especially if it is remembered that the English traffic, for the purpose of saving four and a half days, maintains a special service from Calais to Brindisi. A through ticket from London to Bombay for passengers by the proposed system would cost about £40 for a journey of seven days, as against some £60 for a journey of double that period by the London-Brindisi route.

As to the engineering problem, the most difficult section of the line is that part which goes through Baluchistan, and which has already been built by English enterprise to Nushki, and a certain part of the line where it will have to go from the Caspian Sea on to the Persian Plateau. The rest of the line will be more or less level work along the plateau.

In conclusion M. Svegingtseff said: "This is no mere scheme in the air. It has been shown that there are no political objections. Those concerned with the scheme in Russia have not proceeded until they have been assured that they would have no hindrance from the Imperial Government there. With regard to the next step, it may be stated that, both from a political and financial standpoint, everything necessary has been done in Russia. So far as the political aspect of the project is concerned, we hope that no political objection is likely to be raised in London. It now remains, therefore, to ascertain the views of the financial groups on this side of the Channel."

THE TRANS-PERSIAN RAILWAY SCHEME.

THE RUSSIAN PROMOTERS.

The Russian promoters of the scheme for linking up the Russian and Indian railway systems are, Reuter's Agency learns, the following: M. Homiakoff, ex-President of the Duma; M. Timiriazeff, Chairman of the Russian Bank of External Commerce and a Member of the Upper House; M. Barck, Managing Director of the Volga-Kama Bank; M. Bechkovski, Chairman of the Vladikavkas Railway Company; MM. Bunge and Palashkovski, railway and harbour contractors; M. Rafalovitch, a nephew of the Russian

Financial Agent in Paris ; M. Guchkoff, senior partner of Botkin, the largest tea and sugar house in Russia, and Mayor of Moscow ; and M. Sveginsteff, member of the Duma.

It is intended that there shall be from ten to fifteen Russian founders and an equal number of British founders. In addition to the nine names given, it is expected that there will be one representative of the cotton industry, one of the tallow and skin industry, and at least one of agriculture.

The agreement signed by the Russian group provides, among other things, (1) that the company shall be international ; (2) that its chief office shall be in some Western city (London and Brussels have both been proposed) ; (3) the direction of the line must follow the shortest route from Calais to Calcutta, using existing lines and going through Persia ; (4) the English and Russian interests must be equal ; (5) the participation of French, German, Persian, and other groups will be welcomed, but the amount of their participation must be decided later by mutual agreement ; (6) the founders' shares to receive no dividend until after the ordinary shareholders have received 6 per cent.

APPROVAL BY THE RUSSIAN MINISTRY.

The Council of Ministers has approved the Trans-Persian Railway scheme, provided that it involves no outlay by the Treasury and no serious damage to Russian trade. The formation of a *société d'études* is apparently assured. The Russian promoters expect that the visits to London and Paris to be made next month will result in definite arrangements. The *Novoe Vremya* warmly champions the scheme, pointing out that whatever advantage might accrue to German trade will be counterbalanced by the development of Russian commerce in Persia. The Opposition organs recommend a route to India through Afghanistan.

The main argument for the Trans-Persian route is based, however, on the contention that a branch of the Baghdad Railway to Khanikin would in any case enable the Germans to flood Persia with their goods, and it is therefore preferable that they should pay for transport by the shorter Russian route.

THE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GERMANY.

The Russo-German negotiations are said to be concerned merely with details of the arrangement already outlined—namely, an undertaking by Russia to build an eventual line from Teheran to Khanikin, and pledges by Germany not to build lines to the north of Khanikin and to exercise her influence on Turkey with a view to inducing the latter to abstain from an aggressive policy on the Persian border. The attempts of certain German organs to explain away these pledges are apparently intended to conciliate Turkish susceptibilities.

All railway proposals affecting Persian territory are subject, however, to Persia's consent. The formation of the proposed international company to build the Trans-Persian line will presumably obviate any serious objections at Teheran to this particular enterprise.

DISCUSSION

THE CHAIRMAN said that they would all agree that Colonel Yate had read an admirable paper. Personally he was so interested in the various schemes mapped out by the lecturer that he was astonished to find how the time had been passing. After suggesting that in consequence of the lateness of the hour speakers should confine themselves to four or five minutes, and stating that he intended to thus restrict his own remarks, the Chairman continued : On one point of detail I would like to correct, or rather supplement, what Colonel Yate has told us as to the survey made by Major Davies with a view to ascertaining whether it would be practicable to extend the Indian railway system into China across the great parallel ranges separating Burma from Yunnan. Colonel Yate said there had been no practical results. That is correct in one sense, but it must not be forgotten that very admirable maps of Western China were made, and these will prove valuable to us in the future. But what I want to say is that since Major Davies did this work another Indian officer, Mr. Lillie, of the Public Works Department, has made fresh surveys, and has come to the conclusion that it would be practicable to construct a railway, not where Major Davies was surveying, but farther north, along the line of the old trade route from Bhamo to Talifu.

Turning to the main issue of the lecture, it seems to me that when the question of constructing a Trans-Persian Railway is practically approached, it is the finding of the money which will be found to be at the root of all the difficulties confronting the promoters. After all, though Colonel Yate suggested at the end of his lecture that when Russia had strong political reasons for wishing to make a railway the capital was forthcoming, that observation was rather discounted by the fact that earlier in the paper he had informed us that the promoters of the scheme had received an assurance from the Council of Ministers at St. Petersburg that they would not oppose the railway so long as it did not involve any demand upon the Russian Treasury. To say the least, the Russian Government do not seem particularly keen to do anything towards finding the capital required. If the raising of the capital is to be in the hands of purely private financiers, surely they will see that the most direct route from Europe to India, the shortest, and by far the easiest, is the route across Afghanistan. The engineering difficulties there must be far less than would be encountered by any railway across

Persia. The estimated cost of £21,000,000 is a very large sum for private capitalists to pour into a country like Persia, which possesses at the present time a not very stable form of Government—(Sir J. D. Rees: "Parliamentary Government")—Parliamentary Government, as Sir John Rees says, but still not very stable. It is a country which has been facetiously described from a physical point of view as consisting to the extent of one-half of desert without salt, and to the extent of the other half of desert with salt. (Laughter.) When all these questions are looked into, as they will be looked into by the financiers, we may be sure that the root difficulty will be that of raising the money.

MR. H. F. B. LYNCH proposed that in view of the lateness of the hour and the importance of the subject the discussion should be adjourned; but the proposal was not accepted.

GENERAL SIR E. CHAPMAN not being able to speak, his written remarks were read by the CHAIRMAN as follows: I feel that we are all indebted to Colonel Yate for the lucid way in which he has put before us the very difficult question of possible railways through Persia. The problem that is for consideration by us who are members of the Central Asian Society is, how the railways which are to pass through Persia may facilitate the connection between the Russian and Indian systems, which, in the near future, must result in a through line of railway, starting from Calais and reaching Lahore.

Colonel Yate has very happily stated the difficulties in the way of such a line, indicating that they may be overcome. In Asia we have the interests of five countries to reconcile—Russia, Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and India. They all have a direct interest in the management and development of such a line, and I think we must all accept Colonel Yate's idea that, so far as these countries are concerned, an international agreement must be entered into, which might be formulated at a conference, which might be assembled at Teheran.

With some hesitation I propose to deal with the chief difficulty—viz., the dislike hitherto expressed by the Amir of Afghanistan to any project for making railways in his country, but I submit that that dislike—originated in a fear of aggression, and that the policy under which it was proposed by us to make railways of strategic value in Afghanistan—has disappeared. We wished to prepare for the advance of troops to protect the northern boundary of Afghanistan against Russian encroachment. Happily, our friendship with Russia has done away with this necessity and for the necessity of our massing a large number of troops on the North-West Frontier, which, however much they were designed for warlike operations against Russia, have always been regarded as a menace by Afghanistan.

The "Buffer Policy" has died a natural death, and with it the supreme difficulty of gaining the Amir's consent to the advance of civilization

and of trade is, I should hope, nearly at an end. I believe that the Amir is chiefly concerned to secure his recognized independence as a Sovereign ruler. We no longer are prepared to quarrel with Russia we cannot, therefore, perform our part in an engagement by which he allows his foreign relations to be arranged through the Foreign Office of the Government of India. There would seem to be no objection to an acknowledgment of his independence being made by us, and to his being invited to a conference on a footing of equality.

SIR J. D. REES : There are one or two questions I should like to ask the lecturer, and the first is as to the estimated cost of £20,000,000. This works out at nearly £13,000 per mile for 1,600 miles mainly of more or less level country, with no great amount of bridging, and with no serious engineering difficulties to encounter. This seems to me a very excessive estimate, having regard to the cost of the construction of lines even in difficult country. Colonel Yate spoke of the task of connecting Viadikavkas and Tiflis as likely to be difficult and costly. For myself I must say that when I travelled over the Dariel Pass it struck me as one of the finest roads I had ever seen in any part of the world, and I believe a railway could be constructed along this route without difficulty. Another point on which I wish for information is as to the remark in the paper about the prolongation of the Baghdad Railway along the head of the Persian Gulf. I would like to know under what circumstances the railway could be so prolonged without infringement of the Anglo-Russian Convention? Again, Colonel Yate spoke of the impossibility, as he believes it to be, of constructing a railway across the extreme south end of the Dasht-i-Lut. I would agree with him, but I may point out that that particular difficulty would be escaped by the adoption of the route indicated by Sir Thomas Holdich. As to the Russians making a railway from the Caspian down to the Gulf, I should regard this as impossible unless the Anglo-Russian Convention was first denounced. It would be an act altogether incompatible with the terms of that agreement, especially as the railway would come down into the unfortunately very small British sphere of interest.

Colonel Yate spoke of upholding our rights in the Persian Gulf and in Turkish Arabia. If there is any way of upholding those rights except by having a great navy and bringing home to our people the necessity for adequate defence, I do not know it. These claims to special interests in non-British lands and waters amount to nothing unless we have the armaments to uphold them.

As to the Ameer's reluctance to admit railways into his territories, I confess I sympathize heartily with it, for I believe the coming of the railway would mean the end of independent Afghanistan. The chairman spoke of the risks of pouring £20,000,000 of capital into Persia,

and I certainly think there is need for caution, seeing that Persia is now suffering from a severe attack of Parliamentary Government. (Laughter.) Twenty years ago the roads in that country were as safe as Piccadilly, but now no track is safe for man, woman, or child. It seems to me that in these regions—in Asiatic Turkey and in Persia—England does not take full advantage of her opportunities, and that it is doubtful whether such opportunities will recur. It is of the utmost importance to cement good understandings between ourselves and these Mahomedan countries, but I fear that that happy consummation is hindered by the malign activity of some members of our Parliament, who ignorantly and perversely attack all Mahomedans, and absurdly describe them as, and indeed probably regard them as, heathens.

LORD LAMINGTON: I do not know whether the speakers who have preceded me approve of the underlying policy of a line to India or not. I gather that most of us think it is an evil, though perhaps a necessary evil, that India should be linked up by railways with the rest of the world: but we know it must come, and that we cannot stop the march of progress. When it is agreed that a line should be made, then we may consider which route should be followed. The lecturer talked about "the race to the Persian Gulf." The race seems to me to be confined to two nations, and we are entirely out of it. As to the talk of the internationalization of the line, I do not know that anyone can say that we are being consulted at the present moment. When I raised the question in Parliament yesterday, Lord Morley distinctly said we were to be fully consulted and informed as to what was going on between Russia and Germany; but he carefully refrained from saying that we were now being consulted and knew what was going on. I think that in the House of Commons Mr. Lloyd was more successful. The Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs did say we were being informed, but in a very guarded manner.

Sir John Rees is very severe upon the Persian Nationalist Government. I was informed only yesterday by a high authority that the trade routes in Southern Persia are absolutely secure at the present moment. (Hear, hear.) If there is any insecurity, it is due to the fact that Persia has no money to carry on administrative necessities. When you have a foreign Power sitting down in one part of your territories and practically exercising the authority of government, it is surely hard to be taunted with inability to keep order in another part of your dominions.

MR. GEORGE LLOYD, M.P., said that the question must be looked at from the political and commercial point of view. From those stand-points we ought to give all our attention to the shortest land-route combining the shortest sea-route. There was a scheme under discussion which was not the Baghdad Railway nor the Trans-Persian

Railway. It was the direct route from Damascus to Baghdad and the Gulf. That route seemed to him to be the most agreeable to our political and commercial interests. On that line we should not be subjected to differential railway rates, which we should be bound to be subjected to in any railway through Russia and Persia. The Damascus route would do the least to impair our maritime trade, upon which our position and safety in the Gulf so largely depended. (Hear, hear.)

MR. CHIBOL: In reference to one point in the lecture, I desire to point out that it cannot be said that Russia has vetoed the Trebizond-Tabriz line. What happened was that the ex-Sultan Abdul Hamid made an arrangement with Russia whereby Turkey agreed not to build any railways to the Black Sea except in consultation with Russia. . . . I believe that at the present moment negotiations for a concession to a French Company are proceeding, and that it will probably be found that the Russian Government is a consenting party.

I agree with Mr. Lloyd that the scheme of which he speaks would be the best scheme for us, if there were the very remotest chance of its being practicable. But I do not see how Turkey, having given the concession to Germany for the Baghdad Railway, could possibly give a concession for what would be the competing line of a British or French Company. Even if she were willing to give the concession, Germany would certainly not allow her to do so. In considering these problems, we have to take into account the predominant influence of Germany at Constantinople under a semi-military régime which Parliamentary forms of government only imperfectly disguise.

COLONEL C. E. YATE, M.P.: We have not heard recently what further progress has been made with the Baghdad Railway, but we ought always to bear in mind the supreme importance to us of controlling, or at least having an equal influence in, the branch line from Baghdad which is to join up with the Persian line at Khanikin. This branch, it is stated in the lecture, is to take off from the main line at a place called Sadiye, situated some twenty or thirty miles above the town of Baghdad. All the heavy traffic from India—that is, all traffic heavier than can be slung on a camel or a mule, enters Persia at present by the Baghdad-Khanikin route, and unless we have a controlling or equal influence in the branch line when constructed, we may find our trade cut out by preferential rates, or handicapped in some way or other to our detriment.

Our interests in Baghdad are of much longer standing than those of other countries, and our Political Resident and Consul-General there has a standing or position there far higher than that of other Consul-Generals.

It is essential to us that we should maintain our special position

there, and when we talk, as so many do, of securing our interests by getting the control of the last section of the line from Baghdad downwards to the Persian Gulf, we must remember that that section would not give us equality of control over the one portion that is essential to us so far as our Persian trade is concerned, and that is the branch line from Sadiye to Khanikin.

When we talk, therefore, of Baghdad, we must talk of the Province of Baghdad, not simply of the town of Baghdad. Our share in the control of the Baghdad Railway to be of any use to us must not extend simply from the town of Baghdad to the Gulf, but from the northernmost part of the Baghdad Province down to the terminus on the Persian Gulf, wherever that terminus may be.

MR. H. F. B. LYNCH : It is impossible to deal in two or three minutes with a subject so many-sided as that which we are discussing; and I only hope, if the debate is not to be adjourned, that we may have a paper upon some analogous subject which will give opportunity for this question to be further threshed out. At the same time I think our discussion has a certain unreality about it, since the scheme for a railway across Persia may be said to be in abeyance. I dare say some of you saw a telegram in the *Morning Post* on January 30 quoting the opinions of two leading Russian newspapers in relation to the announcement of the Council of Ministers that the scheme must not involve any expense to the Russian Treasury, nor any loss to Russian trade in Persia. One of them, the *Ryech*, said that this condition made the work of the Committee appointed to deal with the matter that of squaring the circle; the other, the *Novoe Vremya*, wrote that the decision might be considered as giving a decent burial to this fantastic scheme. (Laughter.)

Whatever may happen to this particular project, it seems that we are endeavouring to make an arrangement with Germany in connection with the Baghdad Railway. But I must confess that I am doubtful whether we shall be able to arrive at a satisfactory arrangement; and, if that be the case, then the whole of our weight will have to be thrown into the scale of other railway projects, whether in connection with a trunk line across Persia or in some other way. From the point of view of Russia, if the Afghanistan route were adopted, it would mean that most of the money which Russia might otherwise spend on a Trans-Persian Railway would be employed in developing her own railway system leading to the Afghan frontier. That would be an immense advantage to Russia. Only 400 miles of Afghan territory would have to be crossed, as against 1,100 miles of Persian territory for the Persian line. As it is obvious that the latter could not be economically successful, the interest on a very large sum would have to be guaranteed. Such a guarantee could only be given by Great Britain and Russia, and

as the Russian Government is unwilling to give a guarantee, the prospects of construction seem remote. The matter has also to be considered from the Persian standpoint, and it seems to me that a Trans-Persian line would be premature. It must be remembered that only a very short time has elapsed since the absolutism of the Shah of Persia and his friend Sir John Rees (laughter) ceased to guide the destinies of the country. That absolutism brought Persia to the verge of ruin from which the Persians are seeking to recover by means of Parliamentary institutions. Until those institutions have had time to strike root, I feel that any proposals of this kind would constitute a grave menace to the independence of Persia.

LORD LAMINGTON suggested that Mr. Lynch should be asked to read a paper on the subject. (Cheers.)

CAPTAIN MACAULAY pointed out that there would have to be a break of gauge, as the Russian gauge is 5 feet, and the Indian standard gauge 5 feet 6 inches. It was a matter of great importance to us when this break occurred. The farther north the better for us. Russia had markets in Northern Persia to which the railway would give her better access; we had deserts and only small markets in Southern Persia. It was to be remembered that Yezd was within the Russian sphere of influence. The break of gauge should at least not be north of this point. As to the route to be followed, it was to be remembered that Nushki was nowhere near any trade centre in India. Quetta was not a trade centre, and then there were great desert tracts on either side of the Indus. Thus there would be an immense length of line receiving very little local support. A further consideration was that in Europe there would be still another break of gauge, since the Continental gauge did not correspond with that of the railways of Russia. Hence traffic from Great Britain would have to undergo three trans-shipments overland. It was also certain that the foreigner would be benefited rather than ourselves in respect to through traffic. As to the political aspects of the problem, the line by way of Nuski would give Russia facilities to put troops in the flank and rear of the Kabul-Kandahar line, and this without our being able to use our sea-power directly against these proceedings. There could be no question that strategically it would be a great advantage for us for the line to run from Kirman via Bampur. This route would have the great value of being within influence of our sea-power, and also not have the same flanking effect on our North-West Frontier position that a Nushki line would have. He thought we should certainly stipulate that this should be the route of approach to India in the event of the Trans-Persian scheme materializing, and that we should also stipulate for construction and control of any branch lines connecting the Trans-Persian Railway and the Persian Gulf. This would also be commercially advantageous, as

it would give an opportunity of combining the longest sea-transport and shortest land-transport.

COLONEL A. C. YATE said he would reply on a few of the points raised. As to the estimate of cost, there was no doubt something in the criticism of Sir John Rees. He had always understood that £10,000 a mile was a good average for a railway in difficult country. After all, any estimate must be largely conjectural until proper surveys had been made. As to the attitude of Afghanistan, he was not, of course, in a position to suggest the means whereby the Ameer's veto could be removed. While that veto remained they had to look elsewhere than Afghanistan, and this being the case, the Trans-Persian line was the most feasible project which had been brought forward. He had been asked as to the prolongation of the Baghdad Railway round the head of the Persian Gulf. In the old days, when it was considered impossible to take a railway across the heart of Persia, he had always understood that one projected line to India was round the head of the Gulf, and following its northern shores across Mekran to Karachi. There were certain reasons why we should oppose that route, but they would be removed in large degree if we secured control of the eastern section of the Baghdad Railway. As to the Dariel Pass, he had not himself been over it; but there was the fact that the Russians had never thought of making a railway across it to deal with the traffic between Russia and the Central Caucasus. He had not intended to convey the impression that Russia should make a railway from the Caspian to the Persian Gulf. He had, on the contrary, specially pointed out that Chahbar and Pasni were within the British sphere. Russia's access to the Persian Gulf would be either via Khanikin or via Kirman, and in either case she would reach the Gulf by a route under non-Russian control. He had himself in his lecture most strongly advocated the strengthening of the British naval force in Indian seas, and on that point had quoted with approval the opinions of Sir John Rees and Captain Macaulay. He was inclined to concur with Lord Lamington that the race to the Persian Gulf was now confined to two nations, with this corollary, that the last section, that touching the Gulf, would be in the hands of Great Britain. He was much pleased to hear from Mr. Chirol that Russia would not oppose the construction of a Trebizond-Tabriz line; but for his own part he detected strong symptoms in Russia of a desire to construct an "international" railway on national lines. When Batoum became a free port he would modify his views. Mr. George Lloyd had expressed himself clearly in favour of a line from Damascus to Baghdad, and Mr. Chirol had sympathized with him, but pronounced the project impracticable. He (the lecturer) had some faith in Sir William Willcocks and the self-assertiveness of Turkey. The Mediterranean

coast had attractions and advantages for the trade of Ormuz and of Ind, which would rise superior to political machinations. What Captain Macaulay had said was very much to the point. The Russian gauge was 5 feet, but why was it presumed that an "international" railway was to adopt the Russian gauge? It might just as well adopt the Indian (5 feet 6 inches), and it would be the duty of the British representatives to see that the Indian gauge was carried as far as possible into Persia. Anyhow, the battle of the gauges was to be fought out on "international" lines. He had in his paper advocated due regard for the British naval power in its relation to this railway project.

NOTE.—Since the reading of this paper before the Society, it has been reported that the Canton-Kowloon Railway has been completed and is open to traffic. Kowloon is on the Chinese Mainland, opposite to Hong-Kong Island. The railway terminus is situated in British territory. The journal which reported the completion of the railway added the suggestion that some day the Canton-Kowloon line might form the final section of a great Trans-Continental Railway from Calais to Hong-Kong. If so, the Trans-Persian Railway should form part of it.—A. C. Y.

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