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Lord Lytton and the Afghan war (1879)

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LORD LYTTON

AND

THE AFGHAN WAR.

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BY

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THE importance of England's mission in the East can hardly be exaggerated, nor the results dependent upon its right appreciation by British Statesmen. Those Statesmen are responsible to the British people, who themselves ultimately share the responsibility, if they sanction the acts of their representatives. We have entered upon a war, the political consequences of which no one can foresee; but it will most probably entail a great loss of life, and certainly a large expenditure of money. In this crisis any individual, however humble, who, like the writer of this pamphlet, has been employed on the scene of action in former days, and has filled official situations which have given him the opportunity of studying the question, may be pardoned if he venture to place before his countrymen the conclusions at which he has arrived. If he can contribute in the slightest degree to the formation of a sound public opinion, if he can enforce caution, or correct error, his object will be attained. He has no party purpose in view. The honour, the justice, the interests of England, and the welfare and prosperity of India, are too dear to him to allow of his descending into the arena of party strife. He feels assured that the majority of thoughtful Englishmen only desire to have

brought before them the real facts of the case, to throw their influence into what they believe to be the right cause. But they must have the whole case, and all the documents necessary to enable them to form an impartial judgment upon it, and not a mere statement of the case on one side. Has the whole case—have all the requisite documents—been laid before the public? No unprejudiced person can answer these questions in the affirmative. Is it not a fact that authentic and official documents were long withheld, while one-sided statements and memoranda by men holding high positions under the Government, and therefore supposed to have access to the best means of information, were put forward from time to time to bias the public mind? Have not inspired telegrams, containing exciting intelligence calculated to arouse public indignation, been transmitted from India only to be diluted or explained away shortly afterwards? We were told, for instance, that the letter of Sher Ali, the full text of which was conveyed in the Viceroy's telegram of the 19th of October, but not published until recently, was of an insolent and defiant nature.

Why was it not given to the public at once, so as to enable competent persons to judge for themselves whether the interpretation put upon it by Lord Lytton was borne out by its tone and language, and why were not the letters from our officers to his officials to which Sher Ali referred also given? Without these letters of which he complained no fair judgment could be come to as to the provocation which led to the Amír's conduct. We have Sher Ali's letter now at page 252 of the "Afghanistan Papers," and it is characterized by Lord Lytton as "intentionally rude, conveying a direct challenge, and that any demand for an apology would only expose us to fresh insult." In order to form a correct opinion upon it, in common justice to the Amír, the Persian text ought to be submitted to ripe Oriental scholars, of whom there are several in the Council of India. But taking the English translation as it stands, few impartial persons will, it is believed, support Lord Lytton's view; and even the Ministers themselves, by very properly directing that a further communication should be forwarded to Sher Ali, would seem to have cast doubt on the

Viceroy's hasty conclusion. We have not before us, even now, all the information which would enable the English people to form a judgment as to the principles and policy which have plunged the country into what many consider to be an unnecessary, impolitic, and unjust war. Without having any voice on a question in which their interests are so deeply concerned, the nation has been compelled to take a tremendous leap in the dark. The most complete success must be attended by all the horrors and evils which follow in the train of war. Only the clearest and most undoubted necessity could justify the recourse to that extreme arbitrament. Did that necessity exist? and if it did exist where is it going to lead the country? Will not our difficulties be increased rather than diminished by the attainment of the ends proposed by the policy of the present Government? Shall we not be in a worse position, both in a military and a political point of view, even if the most entire success crown our efforts? These are questions of paramount importance to the people of England, requiring the utmost calmness and impartiality to come to a wise and right decision. But can a calm and deliberate judgment be hoped for, when some of the noblest of our citizens, and those the best capable of giving advice, are denounced with bitterness because they venture to resist the popular feeling, and strive to instruct the public mind? Such efforts are not incompatible with true patriotism; on the contrary, they have their origin in a sacred jealousy of their country's honour and reputation, and in a solemn sense of Christian duty.

But independently of the great principles of justice and morality, which are involved in this question of the War in Afghanistan, there are other questions of the highest importance, in relation to the new mode of governing India, which it behoves the English Parliament and people to look in the face, and at the proper time to exact a full explanation. Every day more and more startling disclosures are made of information withheld, of constitutional forms infringed and disregarded, and of a system of personal government inaugurated in the highest degree dangerous to our Indian Empire. We have the letters of those

eminent Indian functionaries, Sir Arthur Hobhouse and Sir Henry Norman. We have the suppressed minutes of Sir William Muir, replete with sound sense and ripe experience of our Indian administration.

What does Sir Arthur Hobhouse write?—

“Whether the mode of conducting Indian affairs during Lord Salisbury’s tenure of office has been in accordance with law, with previous practice, or with public policy, is a question fraught, as I think, with interest and importance to the nation, but quite apart from personalities.”

What food for reflection, what cause for anxiety, does not this pregnant sentence (emanating from one who has held with distinction the highest legal office in India) suggest to the minds of those conversant with Indian affairs.

John Mill said truly:—

“The great constitutional security for the good government of India lies in the forms of business.” “The Minister, placed in office by the action of political party, except in very rare cases, can possess little or no knowledge of India.”

The Viceroy, selected from similar party considerations, is, generally, equally inexperienced in Indian affairs. Both are assisted by Councils composed of eminent men, who have filled the highest offices in India, and bring to their work a thorough knowledge of all branches of Indian administration and of the peculiar usages, feelings, and prejudices of the people of India. English Statesmen of large minds, and comprehensive European experience, collect the opinions of their distinguished Councillors, weigh them well, and come to their own conclusions. This has hitherto been the practice of the greatest Indian Viceroys, and of the ablest Secretaries of State for India. Where differences of opinion have existed, the dissentients in the Councils have had the opportunity of recording their views, and in this manner both sides of the various important questions which constantly arise in the government of India have been placed before Parliament and the country. Even the bitterest opponents of the East India Company always admitted its excellence as a Government of record.

It appears that this salutary check on hasty and inconsiderate action has been lately set aside, or at all events greatly curtailed, both at home and abroad, and the evil results are already too apparent. Lord Salisbury testifies, in the House of Lords, that "in industry, caution, and sound hard discretion Lord Lytton has not been exceeded by any Viceroy who preceded him." Gibbon writes:—"Abu Rafe, servant of Mahomet, testifies to the wielding, as a buckler, by Ali of the ponderous gate of a fortress, which he and seven other men could not lift." Gibbon adds:—"Abu Rafe was an eye-witness, but who will be witness for Abu Rafe?" After a perusal of the "Afghanistan Correspondence," especially of the conversations of the Viceroy with Nuwab Atta Mahomed Khan, it will require more than Lord Salisbury's testimony to convince the thinking portion of the English people of the "caution and sound hard discretion of Lord Lytton."

All sorts of doctrines have been put forward by the Press, and by the writers who support the Imperial policy of the present Government, in reference to our relations with the Amír of Cabul, and, by implication, with the Native States of India. Some of these doctrines, enunciated by men of great intellectual power, appear to be so erroneous, and so opposed to the principles which have hitherto generally guided the policy of the British Government, that it behoves every man who has been connected with the administration of India, and who holds strong opinions of their dangerous tendency, to protest against their promulgation and adoption. Amongst erroneous assumptions it has been persistently affirmed that the Amír of Cabul has no claim to independence, because his father Dost Mahomed and he himself have received subsidies from the Indian Government. Has England never subsidized European States? What of Prussia and Portugal? Frederick of Prussia, in the seven years' war, through our subsidies kept the French armies employed near their own frontier, and thus enabled England to maintain her superiority in India and in America. Lord Chatham himself said:—"I have conquered America in Germany." Portugal preserved her very existence by the aid of the subsidies of England, but neither Prussia nor

Portugal on that account ceased to be regarded as independent Powers. There is, however, an illustration nearer at hand to Cabul. The Shah of Persia, through a long series of years, received subsidies from the Indian Government, but no one ever maintained that Persia therefore forfeited her independence.

Sir James Stephen, in his discussion of the Afghan question, has laid down principles which would seem to override the rights of every Asiatic State, and place them entirely at the mercy and discretion of the British Government. "Our relations with these States," he writes, "must be determined by the fact that we are exceedingly powerful and highly civilized, and that they are comparatively weak, and half barbarous." But it will be better to quote the whole passage, which is couched in a tone of national self-assertion calculated to wound the feelings and excite the resentment of all Native Princes and Asiatic Rulers, whether within our own territories or in countries adjacent to them.

If an Englishman, on perusal of these paragraphs, feels his blood tingle and his pulse beat high with indignation at such despotic doctrines, what must be the feelings of Princes like Sindia and Holkar, or of such enlightened Statesmen as Sir Salar Jung and Sir Madava Rao, or of the Amír of Cabul, who look at such questions from quite a different point of view, and take their stand upon the obligations of treaties and the broad rules of morality and justice, which are as applicable to the weak as to the strong? These rules, as John Mill says, "are as binding on communities as on individuals; and men are not warranted in doing to other countries, for the supposed benefit of their own country, what they would not be justified in doing to other men for their own benefit."

Sir James Stephen writes:—

"I do not admit that England, Russia, China, the Amir of Cabul, the Khan of Khelat, the Akhoond of Swat, the Nono of Spiti, and the Khan of Khiva, form an assemblage of practically equal moral persons, whose relations are to be discovered by consulting Grotius and his successors. Fictions cannot be stretched beyond a certain point. England, Russia, and China may treat on equal terms, but the other Rulers whom I have mentioned are simply the chief Rulers of clans, more or less extensive and

powerful, who, though not dependent upon us in the sense of any definite duties or allegiance to the Queen, must be dealt with on the understanding that they occupy a distinctly inferior position—their inferiority consisting mainly in this, that they are not to be permitted to follow a course of policy which exposes us to danger. This is the footing on which every State enclosed in the British dominions is practically treated. It appears to me that it is the only principle on which the adjacent Powers can be treated. Our relations with Sindia are, of course, different from our relations with the Amir of Cabul, as they are different from our relations with Holkar and the Nizam; but, at bottom, our relations with all of them stand on the same basis. They are all determined by the fact that we are exceedingly powerful and highly civilized, and that they are comparatively weak and half barbarous.”

It is very convenient for this sort of argument to lump together powerful nations and insignificant states, and to drag in personages whose names, perhaps even in India, are not known to one man in a thousand unless specially connected with them. Who, until lately, except officers employed on the North-West frontier, or those whose official duty it is to supervise Indian affairs, could give you authentic information as to the power and position of the Akhoond of Swat?

And who is the Nono of Spiti? The very mention of such a potentate seems to throw a shade of ridicule over a very grave question. It was a source of amusement to frontier officers a few years ago, when the Supreme Government penned a despatch, intimating to the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab that the penal code was to be introduced into the territories of the Nono of Spiti. The Lieutenant-Governor had a sketch made of this redoubtable potentate in his primitive costume, of a single cloth round his loins (commonly termed a langotí), with his plough on his shoulders, and his two little daughters carrying the seed, on their way to their agricultural labours. This sketch he sent into Government, and nothing more was heard of the introduction of the penal code. To place this head man of a wild valley in the Himalaya mountains, with an income of probably not more than three pounds a month, in the same category as the Amir of Cabul, requires great confidence in the ignorance of those to whom the argument was addressed.

Mr. Elphinstone writes that the Afghans appear to have been

entirely independent until the beginning of the seventeenth century. They then paid tribute to Persia; but at the commencement of the eighteenth century they conquered Persia, and established a short-lived Afghan dynasty, which was overthrown by Nadir Shah. In 1747, ten years before Clive won the battle of Plassey, Ahmed Shah Abdallee was crowned King of Cabul. Half-a-century later, one of the first political questions with which Lord Wellesley had to grapple, on his arrival at Calcutta, was the advisability of forming a defensive alliance between all the existing Powers of Hindostan, to resist an expected invasion of India by Zemaun Shah, King of Cabul.

On the 17th of June, 1809, the British Government concluded a treaty of alliance and co-operation with Shah Shuja. Then came the ill-omened tripartite treaty between Shah Shuja, Runjeet Sing, and the British Government, dated 20th July, 1838. On the 30th March, 1855, another treaty was made with the Amír, Dost Mahomed, on terms of perfect equality. There was no infringement of his independence, no implied understanding that he occupied a "distinctly inferior position," or the British officers entrusted with the negotiations might have found greater difficulty in bringing them to a favourable conclusion. Have we treaties of this nature with the Akhoond of Swat or with the Nono of Spiti? The principles put forward by Sir James Stephen are full of danger, and tend to destroy confidence in the good faith and fair dealing of the British Government. They would not have been tolerated in the days of the East India Company, and they would have found no favour in the eyes of the great Statesmen like Malcolm, Munro, and Elphinstone, who illustrated the Company's rule. It is not too much to say that those Statesmen never could have won their diplomatic triumphs in their dealings with Native States if such principles had guided their conduct. A distinguished member of the Council of India, Sir Erskine Perry, possessing a knowledge of Indian affairs, and, it may be added, of European politics, surpassed by few, thus records his protest against these principles:—

"I will only say, as a jurist, that I have been shocked at the doctrine

lately put forth by high legal authority, that the main principles of international law are not applicable to the East. Those principles are founded on large views of morality and justice, and if it is forbidden to a civilized Power in Europe to use poisoned weapons, to shell defenceless towns, to massacre or enslave prisoners, to invade a weak State because the possession of it would be convenient to the captor—according to my judgment these proceedings are equally forbidden to a civilized Power in Asia.”

This doctrine of the unlimited attributes of the British Government, as the paramount Power of India, to deal as it chooses not only with every Native State enclosed within its dominions, but also “with adjacent Powers,” to be, in fact, sole judge in its own cause when disputed questions arise, which are to be decided “according to its own interests,” was, soon after its promulgation, justly repudiated by Lord Northbrook, whose administrative ability, prudent, well-balanced mind, and long official training in the study and supervision of Indian affairs, pointed him out as one peculiarly fitted to preside over our Indian Empire. It is right to observe that Sir James Stephen subsequently explained and considerably modified the language of his first letter, and, to show his feelings about justice, quoted from a speech made by him in Calcutta, in which he says:—

“I believe that the real foundation on which the British power in this country stands, is neither military force alone, as some persons cynically assert (though certainly military force is one indispensable condition of our power); nor even that affectionate sympathy of the native population, on which, according to a more amiable, though not, I think, a truer view of the matter, some think our rule ought to rest (though it is hardly possible to overrate the value of such sympathy, where it can by any means be obtained). I believe that the real foundation of our power will be found to be an inflexible adherence to broad principles of justice, common to all persons, in all countries, and all ages, and enforced with unflinching firmness in favour of and against every one who claims their benefit, or who presumes to violate them, no matter who he may be.”

It is not intended to impute to Sir James Stephen any indifference to justice. But his original statement conveyed to such acute and practised minds as those of Lord Grey and of Lord Northbrook (and therefore, it may be supposed, to many European and Asiatic minds) a meaning utterly repugnant to that “affec-

tionate sympathy," to which he justly attaches so much value, and seemed to be a defence of high-handed principles of despotism, put forward for the sake of justifying our invasion of Afghanistan. The very fact of explanation being required demonstrates the necessity of caution, on the part of those capable of influencing the public mind. Opinions thus hastily given, which are liable to misconstruction, may lay the foundation of distrust and disaffection in the minds of the Chiefs and Princes of India. Even now the sting remains, and the doctrine is laid down, that with regard to the Native States of India, and to the adjacent Powers, no law nor rule exists to regulate the relations between them and the British Government but that which the British Government may, to the best of their judgment, deem most conducive to the happiness and lasting peace of its subjects and its neighbours, the grounds for this Imperial doctrine being that "none of them is strong enough or civilized enough to be really or permanently independent."

This is no new doctrine. In the days of annexation it was propounded, time after time, by those who supported the policy of absorbing the Native States, and bringing all Hindostan under British rule. But even Lord Dalhousie himself, whose Imperial proclivities were unmistakeable, in his minute of the 27th May, 1851, on the affairs of the Nizam, recorded his strong opinion in reprobation of so dangerous a doctrine. He writes:—

"I recognize no mission confided to the British Government which imposes upon it the obligation, or can confer upon it the right, of deciding authoritatively on the existence of native independent Sovereignities, and of arbitrarily setting them aside, whenever their administration may not accord with its own views, and although their acts in no way affect the interests or security of itself or its allies. Still less can I recognize any such property in the acknowledged supremacy of the British Government in India, as can justify its rulers in disregarding the positive obligations of international contracts, in order to obtrude on Native Princes and their people a system of subversive interference, which is unwelcome alike to people and to Prince."

It has been well observed that "the eternal principles of right and wrong should influence us in all parts of the world." The acts of England are not done in a corner. The eyes of all

nations are upon her. The millions of India are as sensitive to the infringement of the unalterable laws of justice as the more enlightened communities of Europe. Not only in Europe and in Asia, but even in Africa, deeds which redound to the credit or discredit of the British nation are discussed. Shortly after the unjust annexation of Sinde, Dr. Richardson, a traveller in Central Africa, relates the following circumstance:—

“The conversation was stopped by the entrance of a remarkable personage, the *quasi* Sultan of Ben Walid. Having heard that I was present, he said: ‘Christian, do you know Sinde?’ ‘Yes,’ I said. He then turned and said something to the people in the Ghadamasi language. I afterwards learned it was, ‘You see these Christians are eating up all the Mussulman countries.’ He then abruptly turned to me, ‘Why do the English go there, and eat up all the Mussulmans? afterwards you will come here.’ I replied, ‘The Amfrs were foolish, and engaged in conspiracy against the English in India, but the Mussulmans in Sinde enjoyed the same privileges as the English themselves.’ ‘That is what you say,’ he rejoined; and then continued, ‘Why do you go so far from home to take other people’s countries from them?’ I replied, ‘The Turks do the same: they come to the desert.’ ‘Ay, you wish to be such oppressors as the Turks.’ He then told me not to talk any more, and a painful silence continued for some time.”

But if bad deeds make their mark for evil, and cast discredit on the British name, good deeds exercise a sovereign influence for good, and pave the way for the blessings of civilization and Christianity in a manner little imagined by superficial observers of the course of events. The wisdom of British Statesmen, the heroism of British soldiers, the self-devotion of British missionaries, have all, under God, contributed to build up our magnificent Empire in the East. The moral force of individual character exercises unbounded sway over impulsive, half-civilized Asiatics. The line of demarcation is broken down between races, antagonism subsides, prejudices melt away, and it may be said of these benefactors of mankind, “Fragrance on their footing treads,” and their good deeds live after them. Outram won the hearts of the Bheels; Edwardes subjugated, without bloodshed, the wild tribes of the valley of Bunnoo. In the same manner the grandeur and simplicity of the character of Mountstuart Elphinstone created, as a native author states, “a most wonderful and noble

reversion of respect for the generosity, truth, and justice of the British nation in the minds of the Afghan Chiefs and people." Those who conversed with Afghans, forty and fifty years ago, can well remember the honour awarded to the name of "Ulfrish-teen," the traditions of whose splendid mission had been handed down from father to son amongst these wild but impressionable mountaineers.

Alas! the more bitter memories of the unfortunate Cabul expedition changed the currents of thought, and heaped up a wealth of hatred and execration on the British name in Afghanistan, while "disasters, unparalleled in their extent, unless by the errors in which they originated," seventeen millions of treasure wasted, thousands of lives fruitlessly expended, left traces in British recollections not to be wiped out even by the brilliant victories which restored the lustre of British arms. A long interregnum ensued, during which Afghanistan remained a sealed book to British influence, until, on the 30th March, 1855, a treaty was concluded with Dost Mahomed by Sir John Lawrence, under the instructions of Lord Dalhousie. Subsequently, in January 1857, in consequence of the war between England and Persia, an agreement was entered into with Dost Mahomed, by which he undertook to defend Herát against Persia; and for this purpose the British Government furnished him with money and arms.

It was Lord Canning's desire that these negotiations should be intrusted to Sir Herbert Edwardes, who, as Commissioner of Peshawur, had taken a leading part in bringing about a reconciliation with the Afghans. Lord Lawrence, in whose character magnanimity and self-abnegation are conspicuous, entertaining, as he did, the affection of a brother for Sir Herbert, and placing the highest value upon his ability and services, was quite willing to give way, although the conduct of negotiations of such moment would naturally have devolved upon him, as Chief Commissioner of the Punjab. But an unexpected obstacle arose to this arrangement. Dost Mahomed, with whom the name of John Lawrence was as a household word, would treat with no one else, and

refused to attend the meeting unless this was conceded. No doubt, besides the feeling of personal regard, there was the idea that his dignity would be compromised if he met an officer of inferior grade. These negotiations were therefore carried out by Lawrence and Edwardes, and the important consequences resulting from them were patent to all the world during the eventful years of the Sepoy mutiny, when a formidable inroad of Afghan hordes might have added greatly to our difficulties. It was at this meeting that the following affecting incident occurred:—

“See these coarse garments, said Dost Mahomed, opening his vest, how old and patched they are. Are these the proper robes for a ruling Prince? This shawl around my head is the sole piece of finery I possess. I have no money whatever. My sons and my Chiefs take everything I have. They leave me nothing, and they tear me into pieces with their dissensions. I live from hand to mouth among them, a life of expedients. I wish to Heaven that I could turn Faqueer, and escape from this heavy lot.”

Dost Mahomed remained our staunch friend until the day of his death, on the 9th of June, 1863. He had made himself master of Herát by a vigorous attack, not altogether unaided by the garrison, on the 27th of May. On the death of Dost Mahomed, Sher Ali commenced to rule, having been nominated heir-apparent some years before, on the demise of his brother, Gholam Hyder; but from the very beginning of his reign he met with determined opposition from a party headed by his elder brothers, Mahommed Afzal Khan and Mahommed Azim Khan. Then succeeded a revolutionary period in Afghanistan, lasting about five years, on which it is not necessary to dwell.

The Government of India, in accordance with the settled policy of the Government at home, kept aloof from any interference with Afghan internal affairs. Dost Mahomed himself counselled this line of action. “If you wish,” he said, “to be friends with the Afghans, beware of meddling with their intestine quarrels.” The object of the British Government was to leave the choice of a Ruler to the Afghan nation; the probability was that the most popular, the most able, and the most powerful of the Barukzye Chiefs, the fittest for the position, would gain the ascendancy. Ostensible British aid would not increase his popu-

larity. It might contribute to his temporary success, but it could not maintain him upon the throne without a continuous and exhausting drain of British resources, both of men and money. Moreover the proverbial fickleness and faithlessness of Afghan Chiefs would probably render him a broken reed very likely to pierce the hand in the hour of need. Except where their own interests are materially concerned, all history and all experience are against the notion that Afghan Rulers will ever prove "grateful and efficient allies." It must be recollected also that many of the acts of Sher Ali, though quite in accordance with the Afghan character, were not such as the British Government could approve. It was not at all improbable that he might have so conducted himself as to have estranged the majority of the Afghan Chiefs and people. If we had espoused his cause in the earlier part of the contest, we might have found ourselves supporting a tyrannical Ruler against the wishes of the Afghan nation. In 1868 Sher Ali finally established his authority in Afghanistan. The Viceroyalty of Lord Lawrence was then coming to an end; but one of his last acts before he quitted India was to enter into friendly relations with Sher Ali, by inviting him to a Durbar, and by promising to aid him with money and arms. The important letter of Lord Lawrence, of the 9th January, 1869, written on this occasion, shows the basis of our subsequent diplomatic relations with Sher Ali. Lord Lawrence writes :—

"I am leaving the country almost immediately, and am handing over the high office of Viceroy and Governor-General to my successor. But the policy which I have advisedly pursued with regard to the affairs of Afghanistan is one which I have entered on with anxious deliberation, and which has commanded the assent and approval of Her Majesty the Queen of England, and as long as you continue, by your actions, to evince a real desire for the alliance of the British Government, you have nothing to apprehend in the way of a change of policy, or of our interference in the internal affairs and administration of your kingdom."

Syed Noor Mahomed, at the conference with Sir Lewis Pelly, quotes passages from this letter,* and refers especially to Lord Lawrence's knowledge of "the circumstances of Afghanistan." "Its good and evil were clearly known to him." He states

* p. 207.

expressly "the acquiescence and satisfaction of the Amír in the policy of Lord Lawrence and of Lord Mayo."

"Our opinion," he says, "is the same as that from the time of the late Amír and Lord Lawrence to the time of the Umballa Durbar, and till the arrival of the present Viceroy has always been mentioned in our past correspondence, and we are firmly of those opinions now. Therefore how can we consent to the addition of such hard conditions, the performance of which in Afghanistan will be impossible, as we can show by many proofs?"

These hard conditions were the location of British officers in Afghan territory, on which Lord Lytton peremptorily insisted. It was left to Lord Mayo, who succeeded Lord Lawrence on the 12th January, 1869, to carry out the arrangements with Sher Ali. Hence the Umballa Durbar which took place in March 1869. Sher Ali preferred a great many requests with which Lord Mayo did not think proper to comply. The object the Amír had chiefly at heart was the recognition of his son Abdulla Jan as his heir. To this the Viceroy would not listen, neither would he consent to make a Treaty offensive and defensive, nor grant a fixed subsidy; but he promised that British officers should not be stationed in Afghanistan, and on this point Sher Ali, like his father before him, laid the greatest stress. Not, perhaps, that he had personally so great an objection; but he knew well that such a concession on his part would do him harm in the eyes of his ignorant and fanatical Chiefs and people. The power of Afghan Rulers is never sufficiently stable to allow of their giving a handle to insurrectionary movements, especially in the direction of religious bigotry. Although disappointed in many respects, there is no doubt Sher Ali returned to Cabul from the Umballa Durbar more friendly to the British Government than before. Lord Mayo's princely courtesy and frank genial demeanour made a deep impression on the Barukzye Chief, and produced the happiest results. That this friendly feeling lasted until Lord Mayo's death, the touching letter Sher Ali wrote on the occasion of that mournful event sufficiently testifies. This letter was addressed to the Acting Viceroy. In it Sher Ali writes:—

"The unvarying friendship and kindness displayed towards me by

him who is now no more had induced me to determine, if the affairs of Afghanistan at the time permitted the step, to accompany His Excellency on his return to England, so that I might have obtained the gratification of a personal interview with Her Majesty the Queen, and derive pleasure from travelling in the countries of Europe. Before the eternally-predestined decrees, however, men must bow in silence."

No one can peruse this letter without the conviction that sympathy and right feeling are not wanting in the Amír's character, and that by wise forbearance and treatment he might have been moulded to our own purposes, and our relations with him placed upon a satisfactory footing. The defenders of Lord Lytton's policy have endeavoured to show that the estrangement of Sher Ali dates from a period much earlier than the Umballa Durbar. A certain feeling of resentment probably did at one time exist in his mind, because the British Government had not aided him in his contest for the throne. It is clear, however, from the tone of this letter, and from other evidence, that this feeling had almost entirely disappeared, owing to the measures initiated by Lord Lawrence, and carried out with such tact and judgment by Lord Mayo. Soon after the Umballa Durbar the mission of Sir Douglas Forsyth to St. Petersburg occurred, and a lengthened diplomatic correspondence was commenced, which ended, during the Viceroyalty of Lord Northbrook, in the Russian Government accepting the definition of the territory of Afghanistan, as proposed by the Government of India, by which arrangement Sher Ali acquired a greater security with respect to the Northern boundary of his dominions than he had ever before possessed. It is desirable here to draw special attention to the wise step adopted by Mr. Gladstone's Administration, at the suggestion of Lord Lawrence's Government, in initiating these friendly negotiations. A frank interchange of the views of England and Russia on the affairs of Central Asia and Afghanistan ensued, which resulted in a distinct understanding that both Governments should exert all their influence to introduce peace and order into these troubled regions. The fruits of this good understanding were manifest on many occasions. We read, in Sir John Strachey's minute, dated 30th April, 1872:—

“To Russian influence in Bokhara was due the prompt withdrawal of a party of Bokhara troops who had crossed the Oxus in the winter of 1869. To the restraining hand kept by Russia on the Afghan refugees in Turkestan is to be attributed the absence of any attempt on their part to shake the throne of the Amír. When the most formidable of those refugees, Abdool Rühman, once openly represented that it would be for the interest of Russia to assist him in conquering the throne of Cabul, General Von Kaufmann replied that hospitality had been afforded him on consideration of his destitute circumstances, and not as an enemy of England, or a pretender to the throne of Cabul. General Von Kaufmann himself, in the spring of 1870, commenced a direct correspondence, which has been renewed from time to time, and has conveyed to the Amír assurances of the neighbourly sentiments entertained by the Russian authorities towards the Afghan Government.”

On being informed by Sher Ali of the first communication from General Kaufmann, Lord Mayo, on June 24th, 1870, wrote back to the Amír:—

“These letters will doubtless be, when rightly understood, a source of satisfaction and an additional ground of confidence to your Highness.”

It does not appear from these extracts that the morbid dread of Russian machinations, which has led Lord Salisbury and Lord Lytton to depart from the wise policy of their predecessors, had at that time any influence on the minds of those intrusted with the Government of India.

Lord Mayo lost his valuable life, by the hand of a foul assassin, on the 8th of February, 1872. Lord Northbrook succeeded him on the 3rd of May, 1872. The most important incident connected with Afghanistan during the period of his Viceroyalty was the dispatch to Simla, in 1873, by Sher Ali of a Special Envoy, Syed Noor Mahomed Shah.

Alarmed at the fall of Khiva, the Amír sought more intimate relations with the British Government, and desired to ascertain how far he could rely on British aid in the event of his territories being threatened by Russia. His demands however, in the first instance, were so extravagant that it was impossible for Lord Northbrook to comply with them, more especially as Sher Ali was unwilling that Afghanistan should be called upon to make any return for the assistance rendered by the British Government. In fact, the Amír, professing to believe that our interests were as

much concerned or more so than his own, sought an unconditional guarantee of protection and very large payments of money for the fortification of his frontier and the equipment of his army.

Lord Northbrook very properly objected to these requests, which would have entailed unlimited responsibility and expenditure, without our being able to exercise any control over the course the Amír might choose to pursue. But Lord Northbrook was quite willing to give a guarantee with reasonable conditions attached to it, and ultimately he assured the Envoy that the British Government, in the event of any actual or threatened aggression, would assist the Amír "with arms and money, and also, in case of necessity, with troops." A letter to this effect was addressed by Lord Northbrook to the Amír, to which the "Record of Conversations" with the Envoy was appended. This record was a formal document officially communicated to the Envoy, and signed by him, and in Lord Northbrook's opinion was binding on the British Government. The Envoy doubting how far his instructions justified him in committing himself to any definite arrangement, it was considered desirable to postpone the final settlement to a more favourable opportunity, when so important a matter might be discussed with the Amír in person. That the Amír accepted this promise of assistance as a binding engagement on the part of Lord Northbrook, in the same manner as he accepted the letters and assurances of friendship and support from Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo, is abundantly evident from the constant reference made to these assurances by Syed Noor Mahomed, at his conference with Sir Lewis Pelly.* The Envoy says:—"It is far from the welfare of States if there should be the possibility of objection to the promises made by such religious Governments, and such Ministers and Viceroy's." Again:—"Therefore, I earnestly hope, for the welfare of the two Governments, that his Excellency the Viceroy, through your good offices, will with great frankness and sincerity of purpose act in conformity with the course of past Viceroy's." And again, with mournful earnestness, he says:—"Your Government is a powerful and a great one, ours is a small and weak one. We have long

* p. 212.

been on terms of friendship, and the Amír now clings to the skirt of the British Government, and, till his hand be cut off, he will not relax his hold of it." But Lord Lytton, with the giant strength of British power at his back, is determined to press his obnoxious conditions, and is deaf to all other considerations. He does not even shrink from dealing with the acts and promises of his predecessors in a manner hitherto unknown in India, thus inflicting a serious blow on the confidence of every Native Prince in the assurances of Her Majesty's Representatives.

Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo, and Lord Northbrook had all given solemn promises in writing to the Amír; but, according to Lord Lytton, these were "only verbal understandings," as if formal official letters and written engagements were of no account unless embodied in definite treaties. Sir Lewis Pelly tells the Envoy:—"Your Excellency, however, appears to be under an impression that obligations and liabilities of this kind, though not contracted under treaty, have been none the less incurred by the British Government, through certain written and verbal assurances received by the Amír in 1869 from Lord Mayo, and by His Highness's Envoy from Lord Northbrook; this impression is entirely erroneous." It is of importance here to note that, in Lord Salisbury's Despatch of the 28th February, 1876, this verbal understanding of 1869 is spoken of as a "solemn and deliberate declaration approved by Her Majesty's advisers;" and it is admitted that, "to the Amír who had received that declaration under circumstances of some solemnity and parade, it appears to have conveyed a pledge of definite action in his favour." In reference, also, to the declaration of Lord Northbrook, in 1873, Lord Salisbury writes:—"The terms of the declaration, however, although sufficient to justify reproaches on the part of Sher Ali, if, in the contingency to which it referred, he should be left unsupported by the British Government, were unfortunately too ambiguous to secure confidence or inspire gratitude on the part of His Highness." Lord Salisbury is pleased to characterize Lord Northbrook's declaration as "ambiguous," but the Amír himself did not so accept it, as His Highness's Envoy repeatedly affirmed. It was left to

Lord Lytton, and to Sir Lewis Pelly under Lord Lytton's instructions, to repudiate the written engagements of previous Viceroys. Sir John Malcolm's maxim, inculcated upon political officers in the olden time, was more generous and more worthy of the British Government:—"When any article of an engagement is doubtful, I think it should be invariably explained with more leaning to the expectations originally raised in the weaker than to the interests of the stronger Power." It is difficult to conceive anything more calculated to sow doubt and distrust in the minds of the Envoy and of the Amír than this conduct of Lord Lytton. Lord Northbrook has stated that "he endeavoured, to the best of his ability, to carry out the policy of Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo, not only because he thought it right to carry on a successive policy, but because he entirely believed and concurred in that policy, and the reasons on which that policy was founded." In the conference with Sir Lewis Pelly, the Cabul Envoy affirmed that, from the time Lord Northbrook came to India to the time he left, although there were discussions on the subject, still he left the friendship without change, in conformity with the conduct of his predecessors, and with preceding usage.

Sir Henry Norman also writes:—

"My opinion was, and is, that up to the time of Lord Northbrook's departure the Amír had no feeling of hostility to us, though he was somewhat out of temper and was disquieted by writings which more or less pointed at measures distasteful to him. Any real resentment he may have subsequently shown is entirely due, according to my belief, to measures taken from April 1876 to the present time."

Lord Lytton succeeded to the Viceroyalty on the 12th of April, 1876, and agitating rumours began immediately to be circulated at home and abroad as to important changes about to be adopted in the policy that had hitherto been pursued on the North-West frontier, and in the management of our relations with the Amír of Cabul. Lord Lytton took to India Lord Salisbury's despatch of the 28th February, 1876, which prescribed a line of policy entirely opposed to that which had been carried out by previous Viceroys under instructions from successive Administrations at home. That policy had been pressed upon Lord North-

brook's Government, but weighty reasons had been given in opposition to it, showing the evils to which it would inevitably lead. Lord Salisbury himself, it would appear, had his misgivings, as he writes that, in case of "the irretrievable alienation of the Amír, no time must be lost in re-considering, from a new point of view, the policy to be pursued in reference to Afghanistan."

Lord Lytton, it is understood, kept this important despatch to himself for a considerable period without communicating its contents to his Council. It will be observed that it is addressed simply to the Governor-General of India, and not to the Governor-General in Council. According to law, the Government of India is vested in the Governor-General in Council, and it is not legal, nor has it hitherto been the practice, that the Governor-General should be recognized apart from his Council. This is, probably, one of the innovations alluded to by Sir Arthur Hobhouse, when he draws attention to Lord Salisbury's new mode of governing India. It may be further remarked, in reference to this despatch of the 28th February, 1876, which Lord Lytton carried to India, that, as far as can be discovered from the published correspondence, no reply to it was sent home until the 10th May, 1877.

During this long interval, when successive steps were being taken to inaugurate a complete change of policy, and when Parliament and the country were designedly kept in ignorance of the course of action pursued, the Government of India must have been carried on, as regards its foreign relations, in *demi*-official letters exchanged between Lord Salisbury and the Viceroy. This system of personal government may be in perfect accordance with the peculiar idiosyncrasies of Lord Salisbury and Lord Lytton; but the evils that are likely to flow from the exercise of unchecked authority by Viceroys and Ministers, and from the absence of due record and publicity, in such an important dependency as India, are patent to all who have studied the history of their country. John Mill writes:—

"The government of dependencies by a Minister and his subordinates, under the sole control of Parliament, is not a new experiment in

England. That form of Colonial Government lost the United States, and had nearly lost all the Colonies of any considerable population and importance."

Our proceedings on the frontier began at this time to excite interest in Europe, and various articles in the Continental Press drew attention to our dealings with the Khan of Kelat, and the apparently wider range of our general frontier policy. The following extract from *Le Temps* shows that, in these days of rapid communication and spread of intelligence through "our own correspondents," everything that takes place in India is made subject of comment, and its bearing upon European politics weighed and discussed. *Le Temps* writes:—

"Nos lecteurs auront sans doute remarqué dans les dépêches d'hier une nouvelle que la dernière lettre de notre correspondant de l'Inde faisait prévoir. Le gouvernement Anglo-Indien vient de signer avec le Khan de Kelate un traité qui recule les frontières militaires de l'Inde-Anglaise vers le Nord Ouest, ou en d'autres termes les rapproche de celles du Turkestan russe. La politique Indo-Anglaise rompt par cet acte avec des principes qu'elle professait depuis un assez grand nombre d'années. Elle s'était préoccupée à plusieurs reprises dans ces derniers temps de divers projets du genre de celui qui vient d'être adopté, et mis à exécution, mais une idée prévalait dans ses conseils, C'était que la domination Britannique ne devait pas être poussée au delà des limites atteintes. La politique opposée qui prend aujourd'hui le dessus, politique d'initiative, "spirited policy" disent les Anglais, n'aurait ni but, ni raison d'être, s'il ne fallait y voir le témoignage d'une méfiance en éveil et le programme même de précautions que l'Angleterre juge indispensables pour déjouer d'avance les plans supposés de la Russie, sa voisine dans l'Asie Centrale. L'envoi d'un Resident Anglais à Caboul pour surveiller l'Emir accusé d'intriguer avec les Russes paraît décidé. Ces mesures qui sont interprétées à Moscow et à Saint Petersburg dans un sens défavorable n'ont pas l'approbation de tout le monde en Angleterre. On fait valoir notamment contre l'occupation armée de nouveaux territoires, outre les considérations d'économie des raisons politiques et militaires dont la moins spécieuse n'est pas que le meilleur moyen de rendre service de son ennemi, c'est d'aller à son rencontre, parceque cela lui épargne la moitié du chemin."

Had Lord Northbrook remained at the head of affairs in India, his measures would have been understood to have been directed solely to the settlement of the Kelat disputes, to the protection of the commercial traffic through the Bolan Pass, and to the pacification of the Belooch tribes in that vicinity. They

would neither have given rise to any distrust or apprehension on the part of the Amir of Cabul, nor would they have afforded any grounds for the belief, that we were taking the first step to throw down the gauntlet to Russia, and were preparing for a further advance, with a view to the rectification of our North-Western frontier. But Lord Lytton made no secret of his ultimate intentions, nor of the Imperial scope of the policy which he had come out to India to inaugurate. Afghanistan must be brought within British influence; to this end British officers must be stationed in Afghan cities, and to use his own words, "having regard to probable contingencies in Central Asia," frontier affairs must henceforth be regulated with a view to more important objects than the temporary prevention of plunder on the British border."

Here we have a distinct change of policy enunciated, and the object declared without reserve, that object being the rectifying of the British frontier, to counteract the advance of Russia in Central Asia. This departure from a line of policy which the British Government had pursued for so many years was contrary to the spirit, if not to the letter, of our understanding with the Russian Government, and as the writer in *Le Temps* says, "could have no possible aim or reason except as a countermove and measure of precaution against the supposed designs of Russia." The Russian Government had several times assured England that "Afghanistan was outside the sphere of Russian action." We learn from Sir John Strachey's minute, and Lord Northbrook has confirmed the statement, that Russia had shown on many occasions that it had "no desire to depart from its engagements in that matter." Of course this compact could exist only on the supposition that England and Russia continued on terms of amity, and that England herself preserved her neutral attitude.

When the discussions in Europe assumed a threatening aspect, and native troops were brought from India, and when all sorts of rumours were afloat in reference to the hostile intentions of England, Russia naturally felt absolved from her tacit understanding. We must look at these matters from a Russian as well as from

an English point of view. Russia is as jealous and suspicious of us as we are of her, and is as much entitled to take precautions with regard to her possessions in Central Asia as we are with regard to India. The warlike preparations of Lord Lytton on the banks of the Indus, which alarmed the Amír of Cabul, were currently reported to be preparatory to a movement, through Afghanistan, upon the dominions of Russia in the countries beyond the Oxus. What did General Skobelev say to Colonel Brackenbury?—

“I cannot make out what has become of that column of ten thousand men, organized by your people to raise Central Asia against us.”

As in Russia, so in England there is a class of people, gifted with facile pens and fertile imaginations, who are constantly employed in sounding the alarm, and prognosticating evil results from the advance and progress of what they are pleased to term rival nations. France, America, Russia, at different intervals, have come under this category. These men, while loud in their professions of patriotism, by fostering a spirit of antagonism, and pandering to national prejudices, are the worst enemies of their country, the real substantial interests of which depend mainly on the continuance of peace, and on the cultivation of friendly relations with all the world. Every thoughtful Englishman must lament the bitter state of feeling against Russia which pervades England at the present moment, and all who estimate aright the dreadful calamities a conflict would entail on both countries must desire to remove any causes of misunderstanding which would tend to precipitate such a catastrophe. There may not be any danger of immediate collision, but the worst feature of our present policy in Europe and in Asia is that it enlarges the area of prospective antagonism, and is pregnant with future mischief.

The real questions are, were the proceedings of Russia in Central Asia, including the dispatch of General Stolietoff's Mission to Cabul, such as to give England just cause of serious complaint? Have the explanations afforded by Russia been of a character to satisfy the British Government? We have the statement of the Prime Minister that, looking to the strained

relations that existed between England and Russia at a certain not very distant period, the expedition which Russia was preparing in Central Asia at that time, with which the Mission to Cabul was connected, was perfectly allowable. Lord Salisbury also is quite contented to accept the explanations of M. de Giers, and takes for granted that "all the former assurances of the Russian Government in regard to Afghanistan have now recovered their validity." Russia is therefore entirely absolved, and Lord Beaconsfield declares her conduct to have been "very satisfactory;" but he adds:—

"After all that had occurred it was totally impossible for us to leave things as they were; you could not go on after you had found Russian armies almost in sight of Cabul, and an Embassy within its walls; you could not go on on the old system. It was absolutely necessary to consider what course should be taken."

It is to employ somewhat figurative language, to speak "of Russian armies almost in sight of Cabul," but it was necessary to make out a case of British interests in jeopardy. It was politic to accept the explanations of Russia, but a danger had been disclosed against which it was imperative to provide. Whether that danger was real or unreal, or whether, if real, it was best met by the course adopted, are the points at issue. In pursuance, however, of his object, the obligations of justice, of reciprocal treaties, and of the rights of an independent nation to preserve its freedom, which it had enjoyed for hundreds of years, were apparently of small moment to Lord Beaconsfield. In a similar spirit Prince Bismarck, on the occasion of the annexation of Hanover, declared "that to attend to like considerations would be to substitute the superficial for the essential, and that his objects must be carried through by blood and iron. Upon those who venture to remonstrate against such imperial doctrines, Lord Beaconsfield strives to affix the stigma "of peace at any price advocacy," and backed by his present large majorities in both Houses of Parliament, he is enabled to snatch a temporary triumph; but it remains to be seen whether, when the whole case is before the country, this verdict will be confirmed.

Mr. Burt, the honest and able representative of the working classes in the House of Commons, stated :—

“He had many opportunities of ascertaining the feelings of the working classes, and he did not know a single man who believed that we were right in this war. He had not met with any working man who did not believe that we were engaged in an unjust and cowardly war.”

The instincts of the working men of England, in favour of justice and fair play, are as strong and as true as of many of those who, by the accidents of outward position, exercise a more authoritative voice in determining the policy of the country. Lord Canning, when he set his face like a flint against the ravenous cry for blood, and earned, to his immortal honour, what was then considered by the unthinking many, the opprobrious epithet of “Clemency Canning,” lived to witness the revulsion in his favour ; and the illustrious names of Gladstone and of Lawrence, in common with hundreds of England’s most distinguished citizens, can afford to fling back with scorn the “peace at any price” stigma sought to be cast upon them by Lord Beaconsfield. It may be stated, once for all, that those who are the foremost in condemning the injustice and impolicy of the present Afghan war, would be the first, in the event of unprovoked aggression by Russia, or by any other Power, to advocate the putting forth the whole strength and resources of England to avert any real danger from our Indian Empire.

The conduct of Russia having been so “very satisfactory,” according to Lord Beaconsfield, where was the necessity of driving Sher Ali into a corner, so that he could not but stand at bay, or lose his influence with the ignorant and fanatical tribes over whom he exercised a precarious sway ? Was the danger to India so pressing and imminent that we were obliged to act “with breathless haste?” to use Sher Ali’s expression. We learn from Lord Northbrook that when he left India, “though Sher Ali would have disliked any interference on the part of England, he would have disliked any shown on the part of Russia to a far greater extent.” Sir Henry Norman confirms this statement. What induced Sher Ali’s change of feeling ? It was owing to the various measures adopted by Lord

Lytton, which, step by step, were inevitably leading up to the present calamitous war. This was foreseen by the most experienced members of Lord Lytton's Council, while those best conversant with Indian affairs at home watched the progress of events with undisguised alarm. Under this aspect the subject was brought before both Houses of Parliament, in order to elicit explanations from the Ministers who are primarily responsible for our Indian policy. Before the attempt is made to trace the successive measures adopted by Lord Lytton, which have culminated in the present disastrous results, it will be important to point out the nature of the Ministerial explanations which have proved so much at variance with the real facts of the case. It will be advisable also to state clearly the distinctive features of the past and present policy in reference to the North-Western frontier of India.

On the 9th of August, 1877, in answer to Mr. Grant Duff, Sir Stafford Northcote spoke thus :—

“ My honourable friend, the member for the Elgin Burghs, with the knowledge he has, and the clearness with which he always speaks on these subjects, speaks of two schools in respect to this frontier question, the one which is called the forward policy, and the opposite school which is rather for looking back, and not committing ourselves to advancing beyond our frontiers. Well, I have, as my honourable friend reminded us, always leant to the policy of the second of those schools. I have always demurred to the idea, which has been put forward by some, that the best way to meet danger is to advance beyond our own frontier ; and I have always maintained that the true lines we ought to lay down for ourselves are those to strengthen ourselves within our own frontiers, and to do so by a combination of measures moral and material.”

Then, after giving a rapid sketch of the measures that commended themselves to his judgment, Sir Stafford added :—

“ In all these views, which I have been always led to hold, as to the best mode of protecting India from direct attack, I believe there is no change whatever in the policy of Her Majesty's Government.”

Lord Salisbury spoke to the same effect, in answer to the Duke of Argyll, in the House of Lords. Sir Stafford Northcote, having himself filled the office of Secretary of State for India, must have been well aware that, for years past, there have been two antagonistic schools of opinion, with reference to the policy to

be pursued on our North-Western frontier. He must have had before him the recorded views of all the eminent servants of the Government on both sides of this much vexed question. He must have studied and weighed these views, and having come to deliberate conclusions, he must have brought them before the Cabinet of which he was a member, and then, as the organ of that Cabinet in regard to the affairs of India, he must have embodied the decision of himself and his colleagues in the various despatches transmitted to the Viceroy. Sir Stafford Northcote, therefore, speaks with authority upon a question with which he is familiar, on which he has had the best opportunity of forming a correct judgment, and in the right decision of which the most important results to India and to England are involved. There is no doubt also that the views he expresses have been held and acted upon by successive Administrations, through a long series of years, and have been recommended and enforced by all the eminent Viceroys from Lord Dalhousie to Lord Northbrook. What then is the policy which has received the sanction of so many distinguished Statesmen, both at home and in India, which has been acquiesced in with satisfaction by the British nation generally, and from which Lord Lytton has been the first to depart, in obedience to instructions from the Ministry who appointed him to the Viceroyalty? It is not, as one of its opponents states, in an elaborate article, written in defence of Lord Lytton, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, of August 1877, "absolute inaction within, and indifference without, the border." It is not, as a distinguished officer, Sir Henry Havelock, wrote in a letter to the *Daily News*, "to do nothing, sit still, fold your arms, let matters glide, and let us hope that it will all come right in the end." It is not a timid, hesitating, half-hearted policy, blind to the march of events, ignoring possible dangers, wrapped in a fool's paradise, without prevision of the future, or apprehension of any change of circumstances which might necessitate modifications, or even an entirely new course of action. Its main features are delineated in the following pregnant paragraphs of Lord Ellenborough's proclamation of 1st October, 1842:—

“Content with the limits nature appears to have assigned to its Empire, the Government of India will devote all its efforts to the establishment and maintenance of general peace; to the protection of the Sovereigns and Chiefs, its allies; and to the prosperity and happiness of its own faithful subjects. The rivers of the Punjab and Indus, and the mountainous passes and barbarous tribes of Afghanistan, will be placed between the British army and an enemy approaching from the west, if, indeed, such enemy there can be, and no longer between the army and its supplies. The enormous expenditure required for the support of a large force in a false military position, at a distance from its own frontier, and its resources, will no longer arrest every measure for the improvement of the country and of the people. The combined army of England and of India, superior in equipment, in discipline, in valour, and in the officers by whom it is commanded, to any force which can be opposed to it in Asia, will stand in unassailable strength upon its own soil, and for ever, under the blessing of Providence, preserve the glorious Empire it has won in security and honour.”

These paragraphs sketch in broad outline the frontier policy adopted at that date, and persevered in until Lord Lytton's accession to the Viceroyalty. No doubt, in the thirty-six years that have elapsed since that period, vast changes have taken place. England and Russia have advanced to meet each other across the continent of Asia with giant strides. As Sir Robert Peel stated in the debate of June 23rd, 1842, “between civilized nations and nations very much their inferior there is a great tendency in the former to extend their empire in order to give security to what they possess.” England on her part has added to her dominions the country of the Amirs of Sinde, a conquest designated by Sir Henry Pottinger as “the most unprincipled and disgraceful that ever stained the annals of our Empire in India.” Sir James Outram also spoke of it “as most tyrannical, positive robbery.” Colonel Meadows Taylor writes:—“I do not believe that Lord Ellenborough ever desired the conquest or annexation of Sinde; but he was in the hands of a man who, led on by personal unscrupulous ambition and daring, formed, as it appears to me, from the beginning, the resolution of displacing the Amirs, and regarding its strategic importance of converting Sinde into a British province.” In the *Contemporary Review* of November 1876, Mr. Gladstone states:—“The organization of the Empire (Russian), efficient for many purposes, does not appear

to secure effective control from the head over the more distant members. At different periods our own Central Government has had occasion to feel the insufficiency of its restraining force. A notable example occurred in 1843, when Sind was conquered by Napier, under the auspices of Lord Ellenborough. That conquest was disapproved, I believe, unanimously by the Cabinet of Sir Robert Peel, of which I can speak, as I had just entered it at that time. But the Ministry were powerless, inasmuch as the mischief of retaining was less than the mischief of abandoning it, and it remains an accomplished fact." This weakness of the extremities is, as Burke writes, "the eternal law of extension and detached empire." It is scarcely needful to point the moral of this incident to the case of Khiva. Russia has her Kaufmanns, as we have our Napiers.

In 1848 we conquered the Punjab, the land of the five rivers, with its area of 95,768 square miles, and its population of 17,500,000 souls. In 1856 the fertile and flourishing kingdom of Oude was brought under British sway. In striking contrast to these rich acquisitions of territory it is curious to read Mr. Schuyler's account of the Russian possessions in Central Asia. He writes:—

"Central Asia has no stores of wealth, and no economical resources; neither by its agricultural, nor by its mineral wealth, nor by its commerce, nor by the revenue to be derived from it, can it ever repay the Russians for what it has already cost, and for the rapidly-increasing expenditure bestowed upon it." Again—"Of the whole of Russian Central Asia (excluding the late annexed Kyzilkum desert), only $1\frac{6}{10}$ per cent. is cultivable, which speaks plainly as to the value of the recently-acquired possessions." Again—"Owing to the actual insufficiency of the local production, most of the grain for army use has to be brought from Vierny, Kopal, and Southern Siberia."

A well-informed writer, in the *Quarterly Review*, of January 1879, states:—

"Russian Turkestan, notwithstanding its great extent, is not in any point of view, in productiveness, in trade, in population, or in military power, to be compared with one single province of the Punjab."

In addition to the Punjab and Oude, year after year witnessed the annexations of Sattarah, Jhansi, Nagpore, Pegu, and other small Native States. Lord Dalhousie thus announced his policy:—

“It is my strong and deliberate opinion that, in the exercise of a wise and sound policy, the British Government is bound not to neglect or put aside such rightful opportunities of acquiring territory or revenue as may, from time to time, present themselves.” Although there is no case so flagrant as that of the unfortunate Amírs of Sinde, yet, weighed in the scales of justice, some of the annexations under the rule of Lord Dalhousie will scarcely be deemed by impartial judges to merit the designation of “rightful.” It behoves an Englishman, therefore, “to cast out the beam out of his own eye, and then he will see more clearly to cast out the mote out of his brother’s eye.” While England was gradually absorbing native kingdoms and principalities in the Indian peninsula, and pushing forward her territories to the great mountain border line beyond the Indus, Russia was overrunning large tracts of country in Central Asia, and subduing Mohammedan States, where tyranny and misrule prevailed to an extent, equalled perhaps, but never surpassed, in the history of the world.

What British heart does not throb with indignation at the recollection of the sufferings of Stoddart and Conolly in the dungeons of the fiendish Nasiroollah Khan, Amír of Bokhara, who reigned from 1826 to 1860? The common saying was, “In Bokhara nobody knows what is to be done, to-day you are alive, to-morrow they behead you.” One of Nasiroollah’s last acts was to order the execution of his wife. “The executioner tied her hands, and shot her with a pistol in the back of her head.* He did not kill her at once; she fell, and struggled for some time. The executioner kicked her twelve times on her breast and back till she died.” Vambéry states “that she was executed close to the dying Amír, and the abominable tyrant breathed his last with his glazing eye fixed upon the gushing blood of the sister of his detested enemy.” What a picture Mr. Schuyler gives of another Ruler, Khadayar Khan, of Khokand:—“Under him, neither virtue nor life was safe.” “By the wholesale butchery of 20,000 Kiptchaks he excited the hatred of his subjects.”

* Schuyler, Vol. I. p. 97.

As a contrast to these Rulers, Sir Bartle Frere writes thus of the Rajah of Sattarah :—"The late Rajah having been a liberal and humane, a just and popular, Ruler, any supposed want of equity in the appropriation of his dominions will lack the popularity which a similar measure, whatever its grounds, would always find amongst the industrious and peaceful inhabitants of a State delivered from anarchy and oppression." In spite of the remonstrances of Sir Bartle Frere, and of other eminent men, Sattarah, a model of good native administration, fell a victim to the dominant passion of annexation, which then prevailed in Indian councils.

Not to enlarge more on this branch of the subject, sufficient to say that, exemplifying the truth of Sir Robert Peel's statement thirty-six years ago, instead of the two Empires of England and Russia being divided by half the continent of Asia, there is now intervening between their political frontiers a mere narrow strip of territory a few hundred miles across. By the force of circumstances, as some would say, but rather under the control of a Higher Power, who mysteriously works out His own purposes known from the beginning, through the instrumentality of war, and who regulates all things to subserve one great end, step by step two mighty Christian nations seem to be closing in upon the Mohammedan kingdoms of the world, and bringing them under Christian domination.

There is no foundation for the oft-reiterated assertion that the various Indian Governments which preceded Lord Lytton were blind to the results that might flow from the gradual advance of the Russians in Central Asia. In his despatches of the 3rd of September, 1867, and of the 4th of January, 1869, Lord Lawrence draws the attention of the Home Government to this question, and suggests the course to be pursued. But the proceedings of Russia were not viewed through an exaggerated medium; they were not regarded with a petty selfish reference to British interests alone, but under the broader aspect of the benefits that would accrue to mankind generally by the substitution of a great Christian and improving Government in lieu of the oppression and barbarity of Mohammedan tyrants.

In the same spirit, Sir Herbert Edwardes wrote twenty years ago, "Can anyone say that to substitute Russian rule for the anarchy and manstealing of Khiva, the dark tyranny of Bokhara, and the nomad barbarism of Khokand would be anything but a gain to mankind?"

England has preceded Russia in her mission of introducing civilization and Christianity into Asia, and, in spite of many drawbacks and shortcomings, her rule has been a beneficent one, and she has given order, and security for life and property, and respect for law, where formerly anarchy and misrule for the most part prevailed. Our conquests have been generally the result of unforeseen circumstances, and frequently carried out against the express orders of the Home authorities. There was no settled policy of territorial aggrandizement. In the pursuit of commercial advantages the East India Company from an insignificant factory built up a magnificent Empire, and bequeathed it as a legacy to the Crown. Wherein lies the great difference between the conduct of Russia and that of our own country? Even admitting that the impelling force is stronger in Russia, including as it does the religious element, and that the restraining force is less powerful and persistent, from the absence of free discussion, and independence of thought and action, still, without having recourse to the apocryphal Will of Peter the Great, every thoughtful reader of history will recognize the same causes which underlie the advance both of England and Russia, and in like manner forbid retrogression.

Is it then for England with her Colonies and possessions, and vantage strongholds snatched from other nations in all quarters of the globe, to arrogate the right to say to another great nation, "Thus far thou shalt go, and no further"? Would England herself submit to such dictation? Why should England look at these questions only in the light of a jealous rival of Russia, watching each movement with jaundiced eye, putting the most unfavourable construction on every act, and thus creating a state of angry feeling which must inevitably, sooner or later, lead to collision, and thereby entail immeasurable evil on both countries?

In a despatch of Lord Mayo, dated June 3rd, 1870, he

recognizes the fact of England and Russia having "a common mission in Asia, namely, the establishment of good government and the civilization of the mighty nations committed to their care," and recommends a course of action which Sir Henry Rawlinson pronounces to be "thoroughly unselfish," but "hardly practical." Would to heaven that British policy with regard to this question could at all times have merited the epithet of "thoroughly unselfish." There is little doubt that eminently practical results would have followed. But then the unselfishness must have been real, without spot or blemish, patent to the world. There must have been no secret conventions, no sharp practice, no attempt to over-reach other nations. Lord Carnarvon told us recently that the old jealousies and sources of irritation between England and America had died away; and how has this been brought about? "By the right intention of each Government, and by the exercise of tact, judgment, good feeling and sense, on the part of their representatives."

Alas! such is not the position of England and Russia. To the hindrance of progress, to the misfortune of mankind, to the opprobrium of our common Christianity, these two mighty nations, with no conflicting interests, no conceivable reason why they should interfere with each other, have drifted into an antagonistic attitude fraught with the direst evils to themselves and to the world.

Let it be admitted that there are classes in all countries which, from ignorance, inertness, or interested motives, are blind to the tremendous consequences and calamities of war. Still, the government of the world is not carried on by these classes. Rulers and Statesmen, it may be charitably supposed, are actuated by higher impulses, and have a deeper sense of their responsibilities. Attila, Tamerlane, Nadir Shah, and Napoleon have passed away, and have left the brand of infamy attached to their names in the world's annals. Can it be believed that Russian Rulers and Russian Statesmen, in defiance of all laws human and divine, are bent on a settled and deliberate course of territorial aggrandizement? Is it credible that the Czar, with whom the chief power rests in such

matters, like the Oriental Despot held up to execration in the burning words of Burke, "resolves, in the gloomy recesses of a mind capable of such things, to compound all the materials of fury, havock, and desolation into one black cloud, to pour down the whole of its contents" on the peaceful and fertile plains of India?

Russia has ample work before her for a long time to come, to apply a healing salve to the bleeding pores of her wide-spread territory, to allay internal disorder, to restore her impoverished finances, and to consolidate her conquests in Central Asia. But, of course, if England adopt towards her an irritating policy in Europe and in Asia; if so many English pens, dipped in gall, constantly hold her up to scorn and indignation, and sow hatred broadcast between the two nations, but one result can follow. Years ago, Montalembert wrote:—"L'insupportable arrogance de la diplomatie Anglaise envers les faibles, et de la presse Anglaise envers tout le monde, a soulevé la juste indignation d'une foule d'honnêtes gens." There are noble exceptions in the English press, but their voice is drowned in the general chorus of exciting language and indiscriminating abuse.

Granting, however, the fact, that Russia means mischief, what course ought England to pursue? We should not, I presume, "idly and stupidly gazing on the menacing meteor," fold our arms, sit still, and let matters glide. We should prepare to meet the danger. We should, in fact, have been in a state of preparation long before the crisis. There is not the smallest probability of Russia being able to steal a march upon us, so as to take us unawares. The measures of defence to be adopted would depend on the nature of the attack; the whole strength of the British Empire would be put forth to maintain the security of our Indian dominions. There is no difference of opinion on this vital point between the advocates of a forward policy and the supporters of the opposite school. The only question is as to the means by which this end is to be sought.

Until lately the Governments at home and in India have held

the opinion of Sir Robert Peel, when he stated :—“ Whatever may be the conduct of Russia, I believe that the Governments of England and of India are sufficiently powerful to protect themselves. I do not think that we are, as a nation, dependent on the co-operation or good faith of Russia or of any other Power.” These few words contain the germ of a great truth, which it would be well if England’s Ministers of the present day, and England’s citizens, would take to heart. We need no entangling alliances with unknown future responsibilities as a bulwark to India or to any other portion of British territory. England relies upon herself; in quietness and confidence is her strength. She seeks not to give offence, and is not easily provoked; but, while apparently passive, she silently concentrates her power, and is not the less ready in a just cause, if, unhappily, such cause should arise, to defend her rights, and to preserve unsullied the rich inheritance of fame and dominion transmitted to her from her forefathers. In the case of undoubtedly aggressive measures on the part of Russia in regard to India, England would not hesitate to accept the challenge; but the main brunt of the shock of conflict would not be on the banks of the Indus, but in Europe; and God forbid that the necessity should arise for such a gigantic trial of strength between the two nations. To avert this calamity, the greatest wisdom, prudence, and forbearance on the part of the Statesmen and representatives of Russia and England are imperatively required; and herein lies the essential distinction between the advocates of what Sir Stafford Northcote designates “the forward policy” and the policy pursued up to Lord Lytton’s Viceroyalty by the British Government.

It is now time to ask, What is this forward policy? How did it originate? by whom has it been chiefly advocated? Let us endeavour to trace its rise, progress, and development in the recorded opinions of its chief supporters. Foremost in the controversy we have two distinguished servants of the Indian Government, Sir Henry Rawlinson and Sir Bartle Frere; Major-General Jacob, however, preceded them in the field, a born soldier, with true military instincts, but not

on that account best fitted to determine a great political question. His suggestions towards the permanent defence of the North-West frontier were submitted for the consideration of Government five and twenty years ago. "The Queen of England formally to assume the style and title of Empress of India" was one of his recommendations, and his policy may well be called an Imperial policy, requiring Imperial resources. He states that "England committed an egregious error in not driving every Russian back to the Caucasian range," a task more easily spoken of than accomplished. He was a strong advocate for the advance to Quetta; and having occupied that post, and located a large force there, he would under certain circumstances, have subsidized all Afghanistan with money and arms. In a previous minute he had stated that "the Afghans were utterly faithless and untrustworthy, that he never even admitted one of their nation into the ranks of the force he commanded." Further, "looking onward to a great European war, he would garrison Herat with 20,000 men, which would not necessarily, he stated, cause any increase to our Indian army, or at least to its cost." It may be here observed that it is a favourite argument with the advocates of a forward policy, that our military expenses would not be increased, as the garrisons and troops stationed in Sind and the Punjab might be diminished, and an improved frontier line obtained with little additional outlay. The same argument was put before the Russian Government. Mr. Schuyler tells us:—"It was said that the diminished expenses of Orenburg and Western Siberia would furnish sufficient funds for the Government of Central Asia, but it was found that the expenses of Orenburg and Western Siberia had rather increased than diminished." After specifying other details, General Jacob concludes:—"Unless these and other subsidiary arrangements are speedily applied, and manfully carried out, our Indian Empire will be lost within the next generation of men." In reference to General Jacob's recommendations, Sir Herbert Edwardes, to say the least, an equally eminent authority, wrote at the time:—"So vast a pile of impracticable schemes seems more like some dream of conquest

than a sober system of Imperial defence. The meaning of distances, the necessity of support, the physical difficulties of countries, the moral difficulties of races, past experience of them all, the future outlay involved, and present financial position of India, seem alike defied or ignored in such astounding speculations."

Sir Henry Rawlinson, a disciple of Sir John McNeill, is the most powerful and persistent advocate of the forward policy. His views are stated at length in his book, "England and Russia in the East," which he published as a sort of manual for students of the Eastern question. It is indeed a mine of information on all questions connected with Central Asia and the North-West frontier of India. But it is written entirely from the standpoint of a thorough, and doubtless sincere, conviction of Russian intrigue, perfidy, and settled purpose of territorial aggrandizement, undertaken with the ultimate object of hostile designs upon our Indian dominions. Sir Henry writes:—"I take some credit to myself that at so early a period as 1865 I forecasted the development of Russian power very much as it has since occurred, and I then suggested the policy to which I now recur, of proceeding on the approach of real danger to man the outposts of our Indian Empire at Herât and Candahar, in order to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy." "Real danger." A great deal depends upon the interpretation put upon these words. Lord Sandhurst, a man eminently qualified for the task as a soldier and statesman, with large Indian and European experience, controverted Sir Henry Rawlinson's views in an article which appeared in the *Edinburgh Review* of July 1875. He had previously, as Commander-in-Chief in India, recorded his dissent from Sir Henry Rawlinson's memorandum on the Central Asian question, dated 20th July, 1868, which had been forwarded to India by order of the Secretary of State. All the other members of the Indian Government, which it may be remarked was at that time exceptionally strong in ability and in Indian experience, expressed, at great length, their deliberate judgment upon this memorandum. The opinions also of officers holding high employ-

ment on the North-West frontier were collected and sent home with the minutes of the Government to the Duke of Argyll as accompaniments to the Government despatch of the 4th January, 1869, of which it will be sufficient to quote the two following paragraphs:—

“The various proposals brought forward in that memorandum, in order to counteract in some measure the advances of Russia in Central Asia, and to strengthen the influence and power of England in Afghanistan and Persia, have received from us that careful consideration which is due to the well-known career and abilities of the writer, and to the magnitude of the events and interests of which he has treated. A careful perusal of the memorandum forwarded to us, and a further discussion of the subject in all its bearing, has not led us to recommend any substantial alteration in the course of policy to be adopted on the frontier or beyond it. On the contrary, the closer and more constant the attention which the subject receives at our hands, the more settled is our conviction that any serious departure from the principles which we have already enunciated would be the cause of grave political and financial embarrassments, and would probably involve us in doubtful undertakings, the issue and duration of which no Statesman would venture to predict.”

To one who has been associated with Sir Henry Rawlinson in public life, and who has always entertained a high opinion of his ability, industry, and rare knowledge on all topics connected with the East, but has still felt it his duty to oppose his views, it is matter of surprise, and it may be added sorrow, to find that, in spite of the overwhelming weight of authority which so long resisted his forward policy, as unsound and dangerous, that policy has at length obtained the ascendancy in the Councils of the British Empire. It is to be hoped that Sir Henry and the abler advocates of his side of the question will be moderate in their triumph, and give no countenance to the schemes of annexation, and large extension of frontier, which find support in many quarters, and which it is understood Lord Lytton favours.⁷ Sir Henry Rawlinson has himself denounced “the iniquity of extinguishing independent States for the mere purpose of obtaining a convenient line of territorial demarcation.” On every question connected with Persia, Sir Henry Rawlinson speaks with high authority; but his suggestion, that it would be better for England to meet Russia (coming as an invader of India) in Persia rather

than upon our Indian frontier, Lord Sandhurst pronounces to be "one of the wildest which ever crossed the imagination of a military diplomatist labouring under a fixed idea."

Sir Henry Rawlinson would also make the Russian advance to Merv a *casus belli*. He writes:—"So long as she held aloof from Merv we should hold aloof from Herát; but if she deliberately threw down the gauntlet, she must expect it to be taken up." He attaches paramount importance to Herát, as the key to India, and considers that an expeditionary column detached from India to hold it need not exceed a strength of 10,000 men, 5,000 only being allotted to the garrison of Herát, the remainder for the occupation of Gerishk, Furrah, Candahar, Quettah, and Pisheen.

Lord Sandhurst considered this force too small to occupy so many forts, and protect such a long line of operations. In order to subdue a single tribe of Afghans, General Wilde, an experienced frontier officer, demanded 20,000 men. In the Umbeyla expedition in 1863, we lost 36 British officers, and 871 British and native soldiers killed and wounded. It should be recollected that convoys, with supplies and munitions of war for the troops, must constantly be passing to and fro, exposed to attacks from hostile tribes, and that, at such a distance from our base, provision must be made for unwonted sickness, which very often in these countries greatly reduces the strength of regiments. Lord Sandhurst estimated the force required at 31,000, instead of 10,000 troops, and the number deemed necessary for our present advance into Afghanistan exceeds even this larger estimate.

Sir Henry Rawlinson, however, professed to believe that we should be able to carry out the policy he recommended in concert with the Afghans and with the Amír; but he was prepared for the other alternative, as he added:—

"Of course if the perversity of the Amir were to continue, and he were inclined to thwart the expedition, from feelings of jealousy, or from a mistrust of our intentions, the difficulties of the march would be much increased, and our preparations would require to be made upon a larger scale, including, perhaps, a demonstration at the mouth of the Khyber; but under no circumstances need the expeditionary column, as far as I can form an opinion, exceed a strength of 10,000 men."

With regard to the occupation of Quettah, Sir Henry Rawlinson also assumed that we had the concurrence of the Amír, and his language deserves to be weighed in reference to the causes that have led to the present war:—

“It is doubtful,” he writes, “how far such a proceeding would be regarded at Candahar and Cabul. If our position were already secured with Sher Ali Khan, and he could thus be led to look upon the Quettah post as a support to his own power, then we should hardly be deterred from undertaking it by mere considerations of expense; but if, as is more probable the tribes in general regarded the erection of a fortress above the passes as a menace, or as a preliminary to a further hostile advance, then we should not be justified for so small an object in risking the rupture of our friendly intercourse.”

This is a very significant admission in respect to one of Lord Lytton's measures on the part of a strong advocate of the forward policy. All Statesmen, from the time of Mountstuart Elphinstone, have been of opinion that we should go to Afghanistan as defenders, and not as invaders. The Afghans would receive aid against invaders with gratitude, and if they needed aid they would be quick enough in asking for it; for, as Sir Harry Lumsden writes, “modesty has never been an Afghan weakness;” but whatever Power invaded their country they would be glad to seek the alliance of any other Power to drive them out.

Sir Bartle Frere's views may be gathered from his elaborate letter to Sir John Kaye, of June 12th, 1874, and from an important memorandum, dated 10th November of the same year. In opposition to Sir Henry Rawlinson, he deprecates the idea of making the advance of the Russians to Merv a *casus belli*:—“The place is nothing to us except as a necessary step towards Herát and Cabul, and it is not a necessary step to either.” He emphatically condemns our “negative policy,” but he admits that “a defensive policy is not necessarily inactive, nor merely stationary, still less is it necessarily weak.” This is the very point for which those who stand on the ancient ways contend. The active measures which seem to him to be essential are—1st, the placing of an advanced post at Quettah; 2ndly, well-selected English agents should be stationed at Herát,

Cabul, and Candahar, thus establishing a perfect intelligence department of European officers in Afghanistan. He would not attempt the subjugation of the country nor its military occupation, nor would he hold Herát by a force of our own troops; at least, not until we had tried the effect of such measures as Todd, and Pottinger, and Rawlinson proved could be so effectual in like cases." These instances, adduced by Sir Bartle Frere in support of his argument, appear to be singularly unfortunate. The political assistant to Sir Henry Pottinger, stationed at Shikarpore, in Sinde, in 1838—1840, had access to all the correspondence, official and non-official, connected with the period Todd and Pottinger were at Herát. Pottinger's heroic conduct in saving that city from the Persians ought to have ensured him the eternal gratitude of the Herát Chief and his people. But not two months after the siege Pottinger was subjected to the grossest treatment, insulted in the presence of the King, and ordered to leave the Herát territory. He was then asked to remain, but was again insulted, his house attacked, and one of his servants seized and publicly mutilated.

The amount of Todd's expenditure at Herát used to startle the officers of the Sinde Residency, for they had the means of knowing what was going on from the Shikarpore merchants, through whom many of the bills were cashed. Sir John Login, who was attached to Todd's mission as surgeon, states that the advances amounted to £190,000 in a short period. They have been estimated at upwards of £300,000. Yar Mahomed Khan received £2,500 a month, and during all this time he was carrying on a treacherous correspondence with the Persian Governor of Mushed, having for its object the expulsion of the infidel English from Afghanistan. Just as Sultan Mahomed Khan, the brother of Dost Mahomed, whom we loaded with benefits, requited us by betraying to the Sikhs our officers who had taken refuge with him after the outbreak at Peshawur. Finally, Major Todd, unable to submit any longer to the humiliating insults of an ungrateful miscreant (to use the words of Sir John Login), withdrew the mission to Candahar.

Under these circumstances, what Sir Bartle Frere can mean, by affirming that the measures adopted by Todd and Pottinger proved effectual, it is difficult to understand. Sir Henry Rawlinson was shut up in Candahar with Sir Wm. Nott's division of the Cabul army. There is no analogy between his position under the wing of a large military force and that of officers stationed in isolated situations, like Herát and Balkh, dependent upon their individual influence, and the prestige of distant British power.

This question of stationing British officers in Afghanistan may not seem of great moment to those unacquainted with the Afghan character. The English mind can scarcely understand the repugnance exhibited by Dost Mahomed and Sher Ali. Lord Salisbury, having no knowledge on the subject, dismissed it in the House of Lords with the remark, "If an ally could on such a ground exhibit any soreness of feeling, I cannot think he can be an ally about whose temper we need trouble ourselves much." Syed Noor Mahomed, Prime Minister of Cabul, who was more immediately concerned, says:—"Grey Sahib wrote me a letter recently, referring to my acquiescence, when at Simlah, to the coming of British officers to Cabul. It was as much as an order for my death."* The atmosphere of Cabul in such matters is very different to that of the House of Lords, as Lord Salisbury would perceive if he were suddenly transported to the Capital of Afghanistan.

Lord Lytton also, looking at the question from a purely English point of view, considers that "the presence and every-day acts in their midst of earnest, upright English gentlemen" was the one thing required to civilize the Afghans. To those who know the Afghans from the habit of daily intercourse with them, these words of the Viceroy denote an ingenuous simplicity, and tend to provoke an involuntary smile. "Earnest, upright English gentlemen" would have little chance of influencing Chiefs like Yar Mahomed Khan, unless endowed with other and rarer qualities; and their "every-day acts" would be as distasteful to fanatical Moollahs, Mouluvees, and Mohammedans, as the every-day acts of Afghan Chiefs and people would be distasteful to

* "Afghanistan Correspondence," p. 195.

English minds. Sir Bartle Frere says:—"Train up men like Malcolm, Elphinstone, and Metcalfe;" but such men are not as plentiful as blackberries, even in services of which Mr. Canning long ago said "that no monarchy in Europe had produced within a given time so many men of the first talents in civil and military life within the same period."

Dost Mahomed may be supposed to have known the temper of his countrymen better than Lord Lytton, and with all his desire to cement a friendly union with the English, the one thing he shrank from was a British officer, as dry-nurse, at his Capital. Gholam Houssein Khan, whose fidelity to British interests has never been doubted, and whose opportunities for forming a judgment must be allowed to have been exceptional, gave the same advice. Sir Harry Lumsden also writes:—"Unless under the most pressing danger to Afghanistan, and at the spontaneous and urgent demand of that Government itself, no proposition involving the deputing British officers into the country should, for a moment, be entertained." It has been the fixed and settled opinion of the various eminent men who have ruled India before Lord Lytton, that "one of the best securities for success and harmony in our dealings with the Afghans, and for the avoidance of embarrassments, consisted in our having as few points of contact with them as possible."

We have in previous paragraphs passed rapidly in review some of the main features of the recommendations and suggestions advanced by the most eminent advocates of "the forward policy." Following in the train of these greater luminaries are numerous satellites of inferior brilliancy, whose schemes for the preservation of our Indian Empire from Russian aggression take a wider range, and embrace measures which would seem to require a fathomless exchequer and a perennial supply of soldiers, which our Crimean experiences would scarcely give us warrant to believe that the British Islands could furnish. Many of these writers are not satisfied with rectifying our frontier in India by obtaining a footing in Afghanistan, and by garrisoning Herát,

Candahar, Balkh, and Cabul, but they would push our outposts to the Oxus, and some even contemplate with complacency hostile expeditions to the deserts of Central Asia. As a specimen of the Imperial scope of such projects, it will be sufficient to quote from a recent letter, published in the *Scotsman*, and transferred to the *Morning Post*, of the 11th October, 1878. After alluding to the possibility of a Russian advance "by Persia and the valley of the Attreck to Herát," the writer goes on:—

"In the meantime, what should England be doing? Carrying out heartily the Anglo-Turkish Convention; constructing a railway from the Bosphorus to Bagdad, another from the Mediterranean to join it, and another branch to Erzeroum; making roads in all directions, both for commercial and strategical purposes; encouraging, and creating if necessary, a large steam flotilla on the Tigris; possessing ourselves, by purchase or otherwise, of the Island of Karrack. With all this, preparing by every means a strong military position near Erzeroum."

It is worthy of remark, and of serious consideration, that the Prime Minister endorses this proposition in his speech at the Mansion House, in which he stated that "the city of Erzeroum will in all probability be the scene of the strongest fortifications in Asia Minor." But to return to the work that the writer of the letter in the *Morning Post* cuts out for English brains and English money:—

"Surveying all the passes leading from Asia Minor into Persia, aiding in every way in the regeneration of the Turkish army by lending British officers, &c."

Again:—

"If we make proper use of the time we shall have at our disposal, we ought to be able to collect in that country (Asia Minor) at short notice (shorter than Russia could collect 100,000 men at Herát) 500,000 men—British, Turks, and Indians. With such a force at our disposal, we ought to be able to hold in check the Russian army of the Caucasus, and in addition to form columns which could enter Persia in different directions through the Western frontier, and attack the rear as well as the communications of any Russian army in its advance on India." (This is Sir Henry Rawlinson's idea, commented on by Lord Sandhurst.) "Further, another force, dispatched from India to the Persian Gulf, could operate from the South, while from Beloochistan a force could act from the East—in fact, holding Asia Minor, we could absolutely paralyze Persia from the West and from the East and from the South."

A little further on, in the same letter, we find :—

“ In spite of every opposition on the part of many eminent men, the Indian Government has been induced to occupy Quetta, in Beloochistan, which position is being turned into a powerful ‘*place d’armes*,’ in which a British army could assemble with all the resources of England and India at its back, and meet the advance of a Russian one.”

Again :—

“ I have now tried to point out that if we carry out the Anglo-Turkish Convention, and have as a condition, absolutely essential, the alliance of Turkey, we have nothing to fear from Russia. But Russia knows as well as we do the necessity of a Turkish alliance to us, and every effort will be made by her to prevent its being realized. She holds in her hand a fearful weapon to use in her favour—the indemnity, and it would be worth our while to pay it ourselves sooner than lose the alliance of Turkey !”

This last proposition, surely, is a climax. It is piling Pelion on Ossa with a vengeance on the shoulders of British tax-payers. As we read, with bated breath, the startling list of all we ought to undertake to preserve ourselves from the machinations of Russia, the reflection could not but arise, Who is sufficient for these things? But when we are told that we are to pay the Turkish indemnity, there is a feeling of relief, because we may be certain that even the blandest and most audacious of Chancellors of the Exchequer, however imbued with Imperial doctrines, would hardly venture, especially after the experiment of the Rhodope grant, to make such a proposition to Parliament. Money, the sinews of war, is the great want of Russia, and we ourselves are to supply this want, and for what purpose? to secure the alliance of Turkey. It does not seem at all incredible to those who have studied the cavernous workings of the Asiatic mind, that before any great length of time we may be brought to loggerheads with our friends the Turks. Mountstuart Elphinstone, no mean observer of the teachings of history, wrote long ago :—“ I never knew a close alliance between a civilized and an uncivilized State that did not end in mutual hatred in three years. Our payment of the Turkish indemnity would be worse than our pouring thousands into the lap of Yar Mahomed Khan of Herát, all the time that the wily Afghan Chief was chuckling in his sleeve, and telling the King of Persia, the Asylum of Islam, that “ he merely

tolerated the presence of the English Envoy from expediency, as he (the Envoy) was by no means niggardly in the expenditure, jewels," &c. If this sort of language is used to the Turks, they must indeed believe that we are in great straits for their alliance, and that no demands which they could make would be too onerous for us to grant. "Capital fellows these Feringhees" (the Belooches used to say on the occasion of our first advance to Afghanistan.) "We sell them our camels one day, steal them the next, and sell them again to them on the third day." All these suggestions must appear, one would imagine, to soberminded practical Englishmen as dreams, vague unsubstantial dreams, like those put forward in former years, that England should go to war with France to prevent the annexation of Savoy and Nice, or step in with armed interference to forbid her acquisition of the left bank of the Rhine; or, at a still later date, that Germany should be coerced into the relinquishment of any claim she might make to the possession of French territory. But these are not the suggestions of "anonymous paragraph writers," nor "the harebrained chatter of irresponsible frivolity;" they are the deliberate and matured recommendations of General Sir Henry Green, a distinguished military and political officer, who has done excellent service on the Sinde frontier, and has always been one of the busiest and most persistent advocates "of the forward policy." His letter was published in the *Scotsman*, as was said, at the request of the Duke of Sutherland, who endorsed its sentiments as emanating from an Officer who had spent his life in India, chiefly in Afghanistan and Beloochistan, and who was well able to judge of the effect of European politics on the minds of the natives of India.

Moreover, these views are to a certain extent recognized and sanctioned by the Prime Minister himself, as we can gather from his speech at the Mansion House, and from other utterances. They are built up on the same foundation as the secret Anglo-Turkish Convention, which gave us "peace with honour;" they are conceived in the same spirit which would fain make us believe that Cyprus was an outlying bulwark of the British Empire, and

a defensive post for our Indian territories. The Prime Minister tells us that "if Asia Minor and the valley of the Euphrates were in the possession of a very weak, or a very powerful State, it would be by no means impossible for an adequate army to march through the passes of Asia Minor, and through Persia, and absolutely threaten the dominions of the Queen." Here we have the germs of the suggestions of Sir Henry Green, of the new Imperial policy, which Lord Lytton was sent out to India to inaugurate, and which no doubt found a responsive echo in his ardent and poetical imagination. The same master mind which has linked free and enlightened England, teeming with life and progress, to an effete and decaying Sovereignty, approaching the last stage of decomposition, which has pledged British resources to fight the battle of the Turks, and meet a formidable adversary on her own ground in Asia Minor, no doubt contemplated with satisfaction the rectification of our Indian frontier, and the location of British troops in the midst of a hostile population, on the confines of the Hindoo Koosh mountains, or on the edge of the Turkuman deserts. In this lies the grand distinction between the old policy of Lord Canning, Lord Lawrence, Lord Mayo, and Lord Northbrook, and of the successive Ministries under whom they served, and the new Imperial policy of Lord Lytton, Lord Salisbury, and Lord Beaconsfield. The marvel is that, with this broad distinction existing, which must be patent to all men now that it is revealed, Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote should have both stated, so late as June 1877, "that there was no change in the policy of the Government."

The first result of the new policy is an unnecessary, impolitic, and unjust war; but before we proceed to substantiate this charge, and to show that the measures adopted by Lord Lytton have been the main cause of this great calamity, it will be necessary to explain the state of affairs on the North-Western frontier at the period of Lord Lytton's arrival in India. One of the first questions Lord Lytton had to decide was connected with the Khan of Khelat, and the tribes which owe him more or less real allegiance. This question had been constantly before Lord

Northbrook's Government throughout his administration, and had given rise to voluminous correspondence. At length matters had reached such a state that the Commissioner in Sind, Sir William Merewether, had recommended armed intervention. To this Lord Northbrook would not consent, but at the same time he determined that a complete change of policy must take place. We had hitherto endeavoured to deal with the frontier tribes entirely through the Khan, giving them to understand that they were regarded solely as his subjects. This policy, after long and patient trial, had failed. It was now decided to make our own arrangements direct with the frontier tribes, or rather to mediate between the Khan and the Chiefs of the tribes, thus treating the Khan more as *primus inter pares* than the absolute Ruler of the country. Before the measures requisite to inaugurate this new policy were completed, Lord Northbrook quitted India, and Lord Lytton succeeded him, and proceeded to carry out the details in a different spirit, and with a different object. In order to bring out the striking contrast between the measures of Lord Northbrook and Lord Lytton, a reference may be made to one of Lord Lytton's speeches (commenting on Sir John Strachey's financial statement of March 1877), in which he uses the strongest condemnatory language in regard to the policy of his predecessors in the Viceroyalty. He says:—

“Those neighbouring regions, after twenty-five years of the closest geographical contact between us and them, remained almost the only ones in the whole world which are forbidden ground to British footsteps, except on some mission of vengeance, and for the purpose of burning the homes and destroying the property of our neighbours, in retaliation for outrages committed by them upon our own territory. Surely this is not a state of things which any Englishman can contemplate with unmitigated satisfaction, or which any English Statesman would wish to perpetuate. . . . I do not think that, consistently with its high duties to God and man, as the greatest civilizing Power, this Government can watch, coldly and immoveably, its closest neighbours floundering in anarchy and bloodshed without extending to them, in their hour of need, a kindly and a helpful hand, if they seek its assistance and invoke its guidance. Such a policy would be, in my opinion, an atheistic and inhuman one.”

What the exact meaning the Viceroy intended to convey by

the use of the word "atheistic" it is difficult to determine, but the word "inhuman" is easily understood. Lord Lytton had only been a few months in India; his previous training and experience had given him no acquaintance with Indian affairs, or qualified him in any way to pronounce an authoritative judgment on a difficult administrative problem, to the solution of which the best intellects and the largest practical experience of officers of the Indian civil and military services had been devoted since the time when the Punjab came under British rule. Lord Lytton had evidently not read carefully the despatches of the Home Authorities, nor the reports of the officers employed on the frontier, but formed a hasty opinion from imperfect information, and clothed it in strong expressions. Had he studied the question he would have found that the orders sent out by the various Secretaries of State, and acted upon by the Lieutenant-Governors, and the able officers employed under them, inculcated anything but "an atheistic and inhuman" policy. The following paragraphs from a despatch by Lord Halifax, dated 16th January, 1864, after the Umbeyla campaign, gives in detail his views of the policy to be pursued towards the tribes on the North-West frontier:—

"Our true course ought to be not to interfere with their internal concerns, but to cultivate friendly relations with them, and to endeavour to convince them, by our forbearance and kindly conduct, that their wisest plan is to be on good terms with us, in order that they may derive those advantages from intercourse with us which are sure to follow the interchange of commodities and mutual benefits." Again:—"Advantage should be taken of every opportunity to conciliate the Chiefs of these tribes, and to create and improve a friendly feeling in the minds of these hereditary leaders, whether religious or otherwise, who in semi-barbarous communities usually exercise so great an influence over the minds of their followers, and whose own conduct, when not influenced by caprice, is generally determined by self-interest." Again:—"It is of paramount importance that these Chiefs should be made to understand that our policy is peace, and, while resolute to repel and chastise any aggression upon our own territories, we do not seek to extend our frontier, nor do we desire to interfere with our neighbours."

These we believe to have been the principles which animated and directed our officers from the earliest period after the annexation of the Punjab.

Can any exception be taken to this policy of conciliation mingled with firmness—the determination to uphold British supremacy, in order to afford protection to British subjects living in the vicinity of the frontier, and yet at the same time to use every effort to cultivate friendly relations with the wild and independent tribes inhabiting the mountain ranges? Is it just to brand such a policy with the epithets of atheistic and inhuman? If rumour is to be credited, Lord Lytton soars above details, and he has probably, therefore, never turned his attention to the deeply interesting and instructive reports of the Punjab administration, nor even to the published statements of the moral and material progress of India, presented annually to Parliament. These statements are not exhaustive of the numerous subjects of which they treat, and they are very unequal, depending on the industry and ability of the officer selected to prepare them; but they are founded on authentic documents at the India Office, and are generally compiled with care and judgment. An attentive perusal of them shows a gradual improvement in our relations with the frontier tribes, that the border has of late years become decidedly more peaceable, and that there are causes at work, certain, if not interfered with, to produce, in course of time, most important results. The establishment of hospitals and dispensaries, the offer of waste lands on liberal terms, the interchange of friendly visits, and, above all, the admittance into the ranks of our army, police, and civil establishments, of large and increasing numbers of these border tribes, are measures tending gradually to create respect for our power, and confidence in our good feeling and justice. The philanthropic efforts of British officers employed on the frontier are beyond all praise; they are known to few, but they reflect the highest credit on the officers and on their country. Many of them, no doubt, read with pain Lord Lytton's hasty and unjust remarks, betraying such a want of knowledge of the subject, and such an absence of due appreciation of their persevering and self-denying labours. The same precipitation and inexperience in Asiatic modes of thought, usages, and prejudices characterize Lord Lytton's conduct in reference to the

affairs of Afghanistan, and have mainly contributed to the present rupture with the Amír of Cabul.

All the proceedings, however, of Lord Lytton have met with the entire approval of Her Majesty's Government, and both Houses of Parliament have ratified that approval, after a very brief time afforded them for studying the correspondence connected with this important question. It remains to be seen whether the people of England when they have had the opportunity of examining the whole case will confirm the verdict. Those who believe that the new policy adopted by Her Majesty's Government, and carried out in such a hasty and inconsiderate manner by Lord Lytton, has plunged the country into an impolitic and unjust war are bound to use their best endeavours to place the facts of the case before their countrymen. In furtherance of the instructions conveyed to him by Lord Salisbury in his Despatch of the 28th February, 1876, the first step taken by Lord Lytton on his arrival in India was to send his Native Aide-de-Camp Resaldar Major Khanan Khan, with a letter to the Amír dated 5th May, 1876, barely twenty-five days after his assumption of the Viceroyalty, announcing a proposed British Mission to Cabul. Sher Ali declined to receive this Mission; and we learn from Lord Lytton's Despatch of 10th May, 1877, that his grounds were "that he desired no change in his relations with the British Government, which appeared to have been defined by that Government to its own satisfaction at the Simla Conference. If the British Government had now anything new to say about them, he would prefer to send his own Agent to the Viceroy, in order that the subjects of discussion weighed by a minute and exact investigation, might be committed to writing." Sir William Muir has recorded his opinion that Sher Ali's refusal was couched "in as courteous terms as the case admitted." But Lord Lytton took offence immediately, as if he desired to seize the first opportunity and pretext for pushing matters to extremities. It must be borne in mind that Sher Ali firmly believed, that under the solemn promise of Lord Mayo, he might consider himself safe from having British Officers forced upon him against his will, and against the wishes of his Chiefs and people. /

Lord Northbrook distinctly states, when Syed Noor Mahomed objected to the step on similar grounds, that "he felt he had no right under the assurance that had been given by Lord Mayo, that British Officers should not be sent against the opinion of the Amír, to consider that any offence had been committed against the British Government." Lord Lytton was of a different opinion, and but for the interposition of the more experienced members of his Council, he would have written to the Amír in such menacing terms that a favourable answer could hardly have been expected, and the British Government would then have been placed at the very outset in the embarrassing position either of sitting down quietly under an open affront, or of being compelled to have recourse to measures of coercion. Eventually a modified letter was addressed to Sher Ali, dated the 8th July, 1876, closing with the intimation amounting to a threat, that if he hastily rejected the hand of friendship, the Viceroy would be obliged "to regard Afghanistan as a State which has voluntarily isolated itself from the alliance and support of the British Government." Lord Lytton writes at this time:—"We authorized Dr. Bellew and others to address the Amír and his Ministers letters, unofficially explaining our sentiments, and the importance of the opportunity then offered to the Afghan Government for materially strengthening its position at home and abroad." This appears to have been a very unusual and illadvised step, as it would only tend to confuse and perplex the Amír, and to make him suspicious of his Ministers. The thought would occur to him that underneath all this pressure there was some deep-laid scheme, which threatened his own interests, and boded ill for Afghan independence. Asiatics are naturally suspicious, especially the Afghans, and to negotiate successfully with them it is important to pursue a simple straightforward course, and to deal with the Chief, and not with his subordinates. Finally, the Amír sends an answer submitting two alternative propositions. Lord Lytton accepts the second, that the British Vakeel at Cabul should proceed to Simla, charged with a confidential explanation "of the personal views and sentiments of the Amír on the subject of his relations with the British Government."

The British Agent, Nawab Atta Mahomed Khan, reached Simla on the 6th of October, 1876, and on the next day Sir Lewis Pelly, Lieut.-Colonel O. T. Burne, and Captain Grey had an interview with him. A summary of the conversation that took place is given in the Afghanistan Papers (p. 180). Atta Mahomed assigns eight reasons for the estrangement of the Amír.

1. The decision on the Seistan boundary.
2. Our recent proceedings in Khelat territories.
3. Our remonstrances, in 1874, on behalf of Yakoob Khan.
4. The transmission of presents to Wakhan.
5. The results of the mission of Syed Noor Mahomed in 1873.
6. Matter contained in a recent letter from the Commissioner of Peshawur to the British Agent at Cabul.
7. The Amír's impression that our policy is one of self-interest, irrespective of the interests of Afghanistan.

8. Our refusal to sign a definite treaty of alliance in 1873.

Lord Lytton, in his letter to Lord Salisbury, of 10th May, 1877, alludes to only four of these grievances—the first, third, fourth, and eighth,—all of which occurred before his accession to the Viceroyalty. It is not necessary to dwell on each of these four grievances, but it may be observed that not one of them afforded any just ground of complaint against the British Government. Much of the ill feeling, therefore, manifested by Sher Ali must be attributed to his own morbid temperament. Sir Harry Lumsden described him, twenty years ago, “as a man of violent temper and cruel disposition,” but “possessed of intelligence and aptitude for business.” He is prone to fits of depression, causing, at times, the belief in his insanity. His conduct, on the death of his favourite son, Mahommed Ali, at the battle of Kujbaz, gave countenance to this belief. In dealing with a man of this disposition, a Viceroy, desirous of promoting peace, would have been slow to take offence, and would have exercised more than usual forbearance. The decision with regard to the Seistan boundary in 1872, no doubt excited a deep feeling of resentment in the mind of Sher Ali. The objects of the British Government

were wholly disinterested. They desired to remove a cause of quarrel between Persia and Afghanistan, and to avert, if possible, the chance of collision and bloodshed. No officer better fitted to carry out their wishes could have been selected as Commissioner than Sir Frederick Goldsmid, but he was thwarted throughout by Mirza Maasim Khan, the Persian Commissioner, whose conduct afforded sufficient ground for breaking up the Commission, and leaving the question for settlement at Tehrán. This would have been the wisest plan, as, although the decision of the British Commissioner was perfectly equitable, it gave offence both to Persia and to Sher Ali. The less we interfere with the internal affairs and disputes of Asiatic Rulers the better.

Lord Lytton makes no mention of the second alleged grievance—"the recent proceedings in the Khelat territories." These included the occupation of Quettah, which the Amír described to the Turkish Envoy as "placing an armed man at the back door of his house," adding, "what can be his motive, except he wants to find his way in when you are asleep?"* Under an article in our treaty with the Khan of Khelat, we had a perfect right to occupy Quettah, as it is situated in Khelat territory. But Lord Northbrook has stated that its occupation did not form part of his contemplated arrangements for the settlement of Khelat affairs. As a significant step in the direction of Lord Lytton's rumoured policy, combined with the threatened advance of Kashmir troops towards Chitral, at our instigation, and the opening of new relations with the Chiefs to the north of the Cabul river, it naturally alarmed the Amír. At this period, also, preparations were being made on the banks of the Indus in the collection of supplies and means of transport; a bridge of boats was thrown across the river at Kooshalgur, and the air was full of warlike rumours. No wonder the Amír became anxious and distrustful. Sir Henry Rawlinson suggests that "it was the Amír's consciousness of his

* This forcible expression of the Amír, uttered to the Turkish Envoy in the confidence of private intercourse with a co-religionist, is strong evidence of his feelings on the subject of the occupation of Quettah. It is related in Mr. Grattan Geary's Work, "Through Asiatic Turkey," Vol. II., page 323, as communicated to him by a Turkish politician at Constantinople.

own disloyalty which made him regard the movement on Quettah as a menace." But up to the time of Lord Lytton's aggressive measures, Sher Ali had shown no symptom of disloyalty to us. As a weak State between two mighty Powers, he naturally felt suspicious both of England and of Russia. Sir William Muir, when endeavouring to prevent the Viceroy from sending his menacing letter, writes:—"Hitherto his whole line of conduct has exhibited an alarm and distrust of Russia, which has, up to the present time, made him entirely dependent upon us. What the effect of the present menacing letter may be it is impossible to foretell." Lord Northbrook and Sir Henry Norman both support this statement.

Had we adhered to the wise policy of keeping within the boundary line which had marked the limits of our Indian territories for so many years, no cause of distrust could have arisen; and, on the first serious difficulty with Russia, Sher Ali would most probably have sought the protection of the British Government. It would seem evident to all unprejudiced minds that, under the old aspect of affairs, Sher Ali and the Afghans would naturally cling to England rather than to Russia. Since the withdrawal of our armies from Cabul, the British Government has conferred nothing but benefits upon the Chiefs and people of Afghanistan. Constant intercourse must have made known generally the advantages of a British alliance, while the contrast between an aggressive and a non-aggressive Power must have tended to inspire confidence in us, and increasing distrust of Russia. The Afghans are a manly race, and admire manliness in others. The attachment shown by many of them who have enlisted in our ranks to their officers is remarkable. Personal friendships have also existed between British Officers and Afghan Chiefs. All these elements of goodwill are in our favour in comparison with Russia. One deeprooted feeling, however, separates alike the Englishman and the Russian from these Mohammedan nations—religious fanaticism, "the springs of which are as obscure as the effects are tremendous." Baron Jomini, in arguing that he saw no reason for "mutual jealousy" between

England and Russia, remarked "that, should the two Governments act more together, in the interests of general progress and civilization, it might be the means of strengthening both in their respective Eastern dominions, where a powerful antagonistic element existed in the Mussulman population, a menace to both Governments, and should at any time a leader of daring character arise, much was to be feared by such an event."* There is great truth in this observation, and Lord Lytton would do well to bear it in mind in his dealings with the contingents of Native Princes to further schemes of territorial aggrandizement. We are a handful of foreigners ruling over conquered millions, and it would be a fatal error to fritter away our military strength and resources, more especially our European troops, in the distant regions of Afghanistan. We can never trust to India as a secure base of operations as we would trust to England in the event of an European emergency. In any struggle with an European Power our military strength in India must be increased rather than diminished. It was a vain flourish of trumpets, which deceived no one acquainted with the true state of affairs in India, to bring native troops at a vast expense to Europe with the view of intimidating Russia.

On the 10th of October another meeting was held with Atta Mahomed Khan, at which the Viceroy was present. Sir Lewis Pelly, Colonel Burne, and Captain Grey also attended. It will be observed that the Foreign Secretary of the Government was absent from both of these important meetings, that is to say, the responsible head of the office through which the Viceroy's communications with all Chiefs and Princes are invariably conducted, was not present at discussions which had an important bearing on orders that he would eventually have to carry out. If the Foreign Secretary was unable to attend through illness, or any other cause, the Under-Secretary in the Foreign Department could have attended. This was done in Lord Dalhousie's time in a similar contingency. Thus, also in regard to the affairs of Khelat, it will be remembered that the Viceroy deputed his own Military Secretary to be the bearer of confidential communications

* "Central Asia Papers," p. 45.

to the Khan, and to the British political Officer at that Court. In the despatch of the 23rd of March, 1877, in vol. 2 "Beloochistan Papers," paragraph 27, it is stated that "Colonel Colley carried out his mission with care and judgment." Admitting fully the qualifications of Colonel Colley, it is clear that he was only one of the officers of the Viceroy's own staff, and had no official or responsible position connected with the Government of India, neither had Colonel Burne as Private Secretary. The advice and assistance of these officers in their proper sphere are calculated to be of great value to the Viceroy, but that is not a solid ground for allowing them to supersede the regularly-appointed officers of the Government of India, who are the responsible advisers of the Government, and who possess, what officers on the personal staff of the Viceroy generally do not, trained experience in the working of our Indian Administration, and are therefore better fitted to carry out the decisions of the Government. One of the disadvantages of this irregular proceeding was, as will be remarked in this case, that there is no official record of instructions to Colonel Colley, nor any formal report from him. Under the old system of government, these irregularities would have been animadverted upon by the Home Authorities. In connection with this new mode of transacting business we have, in the published "Afghanistan Correspondence," extracts from private notes and memoranda put forward to establish certain important points (the details, for instance, of what passed at the Umballa Conference) which have been shown to have been positively incorrect. In fact, in one instance, a gentleman not present at an interview is allowed, years afterwards, to put his own interpretation on what passed at the time, and what was really recorded then and there by the Under-Secretary in the Foreign Department.

At the second meeting with Atta Mahomed, Lord Lytton took occasion to explain to him, as he said subsequently, "without reserve all that he had in his mind; he had no doubt that the British Agent would convey this faithfully to the Amír." How Lord Lytton, holding as he did in his hand the momentous issues of peace and war, could conceive that the use of language,

so calculated to provoke the bitterest feelings of hatred and indignation in the breast of the Amír, was becoming the dignity of his high office, it is difficult to understand. Let us select a few of the choice expressions of this conciliatory message to Sher Ali:—"Our only interest in maintaining the independence of Afghanistan is to provide for the security of our own frontier. But the moment we cease to regard Afghanistan as a friendly and firmly-allied State, what is there to prevent us from providing for the security of our frontier by an understanding with Russia, which might have the effect of wiping Afghanistan out of the map altogether? If the Amír does not desire to come to a speedy understanding with us, Russia does, and she desires it, at his expense." "If the Amír remained our friend, this military power (the British) could be spread round him as a ring of iron, and if he became our enemy, it could break him as a reed." "His own son is his opponent, conspiracies are rife in favour of his son, the people are discontented, the treasury is empty. The Amír's position is surrounded with difficulties. This is the man who pretends to hold the balance between England and Russia, independent of either. His position is rather that of an earthen pipkin between two iron pots." This latter homely illustration, although, perhaps, Lord Lytton is not aware of it, is a term of low abuse amongst Orientals, and conveys a gross insult. Imagine Atta Mahomed's astonishment at such language in the mouth of the Viceroy. A chord of sympathy pervades the hearts of all Mohammedans. With many high qualities, and capacities for rule, they are a haughty, unforgiving, fanatical race; they cherish the memories of their glorious Past; and, doubtless, in his inner mind, Atta Mahomed felt the insult offered to the Amír, and commented upon it, in no friendly spirit to the British nation, when closeted with his co-religionists.

"Is He the Angel Gabriel come down from heaven that he should talk to me in this manner?" said an old Mohammedan Chief on the banks of the Indus forty years ago, when addressed in somewhat similar language by a young political Agent, whose careless words bore bitter fruit in after times of trouble. Mr. E. Schuyler tells us "that the Russians personally have not so much

of that contemptuous feeling which is so marked in the dealings of the Anglo-Saxon race with people of lower culture and civilization." The evil effects of such a pernicious example on the part of a Viceroy are incalculable. We read in Gibbon of the haughty message of the Mohammedan Caliph to the Roman Emperor in the VIIIth century, and its barbaric grandeur strikes the imagination. "In the name of the most merciful God, Hárún Al Rashed, Commander of the Faithful, to Nicephorus the Roman dog. I have read thy letter, O thou Son of an unbelieving mother. Thou shalt not hear, thou shalt behold my reply." "It was written in characters of blood and fire on the plains of Phrygia." In the XIXth century we look for more measured language and Christian humility from a Viceroy, who, Lord Salisbury has the hardihood to tell the House of Lords, "in caution and sound hard discretion has never been exceeded by any Viceroy." The same Minister, when pressed home to explain his misleading and unsatisfactory replies, says boldly, with true Strafford ring, "In the future no answer at all shall be given to questions of that kind." Let Englishmen who love the liberties of their country beware of such "Grand Viziers of government by prerogative." On the 11th of October Lord Lytton addressed a letter to Sher Ali, and intrusted it to Atta Mahomed Khan, who returned to Cabul at the end of that month. In this letter Lord Lytton sent an invitation to the Amír to attend the assemblage at Delhi on the 1st of January, 1877, for the proclamation of Her Majesty's Imperial title. This was a mistake. It was not likely that the Amír, as an independent Sovereign, would be flattered by the invitation, or would accept it, as it would place him on a level with the feudatory Princes of India. He returned no answer. Lord Lytton also intimated that Sir Lewis Pelly would meet Sher Ali's Prime Minister at Peshawur, if the Amír still desired to enter into a treaty engagement.

Various letters from Atta Mahomed, after his arrival at Cabul, state the result of discussions by Sher Ali's Ministers on the question of receiving British officers. "Such an arrangement filled them with apprehension." "Their opinion was that this

request of the British Government should be declined." In the end, however, "owing to helplessness," "though considering that the residence of British officers would not at all be advantageous to the two Governments," the Amír consented, and his Prime Minister, Syed Noor Mahomed Shah, was despatched to Peshawur, where he arrived on the 27th January, 1877, in very ill health. Sir Lewis Pelly met him, and it may be remarked, without any imputation upon that officer, who has filled many responsible situations with credit, that his selection for this duty seems to have been unfortunate. His Sinde antecedents were not likely to prepossess the Afghans in his favour, nor his previous connection with the Persian Mission at Tehrán. He was a well-known supporter of the aggressive policy of General Jacob and Sir Henry Rawlinson. His name, too, had been prominently associated with the deposition of the Guikwar. He was a new man on the Punjab frontier, having had no dealings with the Afghans, nor they with him. The Amír had been informed that he was the Special Envoy whom Lord Lytton had brought out with him from England, and intended to send to Cabul, and whose mission the Amír had declined to receive.

The previous measures of the Viceroy were calculated to alarm Sher Ali, and it was very probable that he would connect Sir Lewis Pelly in some way with these measures. Syed Noor Mahomed Shah had suggested the name of Colonel Pollock as Commissioner to meet him :—"On account of our former intimacy they would be able, when they met, to talk over all matters frankly and fully together." Sir Henry Rawlinson calls Syed Noor Mahomed "the Amír's evil genius," and says, "he was bitterly opposed to us." But this desire to meet an old friend is rather proof to the contrary. The conditions sought to be imposed upon the Amír by Lord Lytton were, many of them, entirely inconsistent with Sher Ali's independence. The Viceroy certainly offered to become the jailer of Yakoob Khan, a concession, one would imagine, scarcely in accordance with the dignity of Her Majesty's Representative. Even such a concession was not likely to réconcile the Amír to proposals for the establishment of

telegraphic communication through his dominions, to the indiscriminate admission of Englishmen, official and non-official, into Afghanistan, and to the location of British Agents in Herát, Balkh, and other Afghan cities.

There were other solid advantages no doubt, if only Sher Ali could be brought to appreciate them, and that he would do so in the end Lord Lytton, looking at the matter from a purely English point of view, apparently believed, as he states in his telegram of the 2nd August, 1878:—"We believe we could correct situation, if allowed to treat as a question between us and the Amír, and probably could do so without recourse to force." No opportunity, however, occurred of ascertaining whether the Amír would accept the conditions proposed by Lord Lytton, as the preliminary condition on which Sir Lewis Pelly was directed to insist as a *sine quâ non* (viz., that of stationing British officers in Afghanistan) occupied the whole time of the Conference, until the death of Noor Mahomed Shah, which took place on the 26th March, 1877.

It is impossible to read the proceedings of the Conference, without perceiving that one single question was uppermost in the mind of the dying Envoy, charged as he was to convey the sentiments of the Amír, and of the Afghan Chiefs and people. "Why all this pressing," he says, "to send British officers to Afghanistan, when you declare that you have no wish to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan? It has roused the suspicion of the Amír, and his suspicion is confirmed by the arbitrary acts of your Government, and he is now convinced that to allow British officers to reside in his country will be to relinquish his own authority, and the lasting disgrace thus brought on the Afghan people will be attached to his name, and he will sooner perish than submit to this. The British nation is great and powerful, and the Afghan people cannot resist its power, but the people are self-willed and independent, and prize their honour above life."* What are Afghan honour and Afghan independence to Lord Lytton? The distant and unreal danger of a Russian advance on India overleaps such minor considerations. What are villages burned, and homes destroyed, and women and children

* "Afghanistan Papers," p. 195.

starved, and misery and hatred and despair sown broadcast throughout the land, in comparison with ideal British interests and the scientific rectification of a frontier? Yes, the British nation is great and powerful, as the dying Envoy said, with marked earnestness and gravity, and the Afghan people are weak, and Lord Lytton can break them as a reed, and trample them under foot as an earthen pipkin, if they venture to stand in the way of his Imperial policy. But God resisteth the proud; and this temper of mind, whether in individuals or in nations, makes to itself great reverses.

On the death of Syed Noor Mahomed, Lord Lytton lost no time in closing the Conference, although he was aware that a fresh Envoy was on his way from Cabul, who, it was reported, had authority to accept all the conditions of the British Government. Instead of exercising forbearance, and seizing on every opening which afforded a prospect of bringing about a peaceful settlement, Lord Lytton seems on all occasions to have taken the exactly opposite course, and to have determined to cut the Gordian knot of difficulties with the sword. At this critical juncture, when it was especially desirable that some representative of the British Government should be near Sher Ali, to take advantage of any propitious moment to soothe his angry feelings, to allay his suspicions, and to place matters in as favourable a light as possible, not only with the Amír, but with the Chiefs about his Court, Lord Lytton withdrew the British Agent from Cabul. It is difficult to imagine a more ill-advised step. If Russian intrigues were dreaded, this was to act precisely as they would wish, and to throw the game entirely into their hands. It deprived the Amír of all moral support, removed every check, and, with a Chief of his moody and sullen disposition, sharpened his sense of wrong, and gave him additional grounds for apprehension. It discouraged the well-wishers of the British Government, and left them without a rallying point to make head against the fanaticism of the anti-British party. They could not trust each other, but they could trust a British Agent of rank of their own creed, who would report favourably on their conduct,

and ensure them a reward. It was indeed a hostile measure, and calculated to provoke hostility. It had the further disadvantage of leaving the British Government in ignorance of what was going on at Cabul. Intelligence from that quarter henceforth only reached India through questionable and uncertain channels of communication.

From March 1877 until July 1878 there appears to have been no correspondence between the Viceroy and Sher Ali. Then came the news of the arrival of a Russian Mission at Cabul, "the true purpose of which," Sir Henry Rawlinson tells us, "was to confirm Sher Ali's hostility to England, and to provoke us to enter on an armed conflict with the Afghans, the benevolent aim of Russia being to lead us on to exhaust our strength in what she hoped would be an endless and profitless struggle at Cabul." This is mere conjecture; we know little or nothing of the real relations between Sher Ali and the Russian Mission, one of the mischievous consequences of the withdrawal of the British Agent at Cabul. We know that the Russian Mission was detained a month on some pretext before it was permitted to proceed through Afghan territory. The Amír declared he did not, in the first instance, invite it. Lord Northbrook says "that he tried to prevent its going;" but he gave it permission to come on when he had no alternative. Its object, he said, was only to exchange civilities. "He had no desire to give Russia a right of way through his country." It was a source, no doubt, of embarrassment to him, and led to the postponement of the British Mission, which it will be recollected he did not reject, but only postponed. If, however, it was the "benevolent aim" of Russia to involve us in war with the Afghans, she succeeded. One of Napoleon's maxims in war was "never to do what the enemy wished you to do, for this reason alone, that he desired it." Lord Lytton seems to have acted on the contrary principle. This Russian Mission of four or five Europeans, and a few Cossacks, which Lord Beaconsfield admits was quite allowable, and which was withdrawn immediately on a representation being made at St. Petersburg, fills Lord Lytton with alarm, and is the basis of

the violent policy subsequently pursued towards the Amír. He despatches an urgent telegram, dated the 2nd of August, to the Secretary of State, announcing "his intention to insist on reception of suitable British Mission at Cabul, that he did not anticipate serious resistance, that to re-establish the preponderance of British influence in Afghanistan was necessary for the safety of India," that influence apparently, in the Viceroy's opinion, being endangered by the temporary presence of a few Russian Officers at Cabul. If such were the case the safety of India must indeed rest on a very sandy foundation. Lord Metcalfe certainly did say "that we were sitting on a barrel of gunpowder in India, and never knew when it would explode;" and again, "that we should wake up some morning, and find that we had lost India." But Lord Metcalfe pointed to danger from within, and not from without. In reference to the present state of affairs, that eminent Statesman made another striking remark. "Depend upon it," he said, "the surest way to bring Russia down upon ourselves, is for us to cross the Indus, and meddle with the countries beyond it."

Lord Lytton, ignoring alike the lessons of history and of past experience, fixes his eyes on Russian machinations, and seems blind to other contingencies. It is decided by the Viceroy that Sir Neville Chamberlain shall be deputed to Cabul, as British Envoy, and Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan is directed to proceed in advance with a letter to the Amír. On the 17th of August, Abdulla Jan, the heir apparent, dies, and a delay occurs before the Mission can commence its journey. Meantime Lord Lytton telegraphs to the Commissioner of Peshawur, to inform one of the Amír's principal officers that the Mission will, in any case, leave Peshawur about the 16th of September; that a refusal of free passage and safe conduct will be considered "an act of open hostility." Nawab Gholam Hussein Khan reached Cabul on the 10th of September. He was well received on the journey, and hospitably entertained on arrival. On the 12th he had an interview with the Amír, and reported him to be very much displeased, and as saying, "It is as if they were come by force. I do not agree to the Mission coming in this manner. It is as if they wish

to disgrace me. I am a friend, as before, and entertain no ill will." If Mission advance now, "resistance anticipated." Again, "that the Amír intimated that he would send for the Mission to clear up mutual misunderstandings, provided there was no attempt to force the Mission upon him without his consent being first granted, according to usual custom, otherwise he would resist it, as coming in such a manner would be a slight to him."* In a later letter, dated Cabul, 15th September, Gholam Hussein states:—"If Mission starts on 18th, without waiting for Amír's permission, there would be no hope left for the renewal of friendship or reconciliation."† On the 19th of September, Sir Neville Chamberlain telegraphed to the Viceroy, that it was now quite evident that the Amír was determined on asserting his claims to total independence of action with regard to the Mission; but that he held out the hope that hereafter he would receive it honourably. "Unless your Lordship accepts this position, all chance of a peaceful solution seems to me gone." Under instructions from the Viceroy, the Mission moved out of Peshawur to Jumrood on the 21st of September, and Major Cavagnari was sent forward with a small escort in the direction of Ali Musjid, to demand a passage through the Khyber from the commandant of the fort, Faiz Mahomed, who declared that, without orders from the Amír, he could not allow the Mission to pass his post, but "who from first to last," Major Cavagnari writes, "behaved in a most courteous manner, and very favourably impressed both Colonel Jenkins and myself."‡

Major Cavagnari asks, "Shall I make another attempt to-morrow morning, and try to bring Faiz Mahomed to reason, or make him fire upon us?" Sir Neville Chamberlain does not wish to push matters to this extremity, and returns to Peshawur, and the Mission is dissolved. He writes in his report:—"The Mission had failed; it had been turned back at the threshold of the Amír's dominions with an affront delivered before all the world." The affront was the more pointed, as two scions of the noble families of Tonk and Jeypore accompanied the Mission. But whose conduct led up to this affront? Was it not that of Lord Lytton? He knew well beforehand that the Mission would not be allowed to

* p. 243.

† 243.

‡ p. 249.

pass without the Amír's previous consent, and he had every reason to believe, also, that if he waited a short time that consent would be obtained.

Eugene Schuyler says justly, with reference to the Khokhandians, what applies equally to the Afghans:—"Asiatics do not practise common sense, which would forbid them to begin a struggle disproportionate to their means." With the overwhelming strength of British power we could have afforded to wait. It was as certain as anything could be that by hurrying matters we should bring on a conflict, and that that conflict would entail the shedding of blood—the blood of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of innocent persons, inhabiting the hills and valleys where their forefathers had dwelt for ages in freedom, owning allegiance neither to the Amír, nor to the British Government, nor to anyone except to their own Chiefs. With our improved arms of precision, our mountain guns, and formidable field artillery, our almost unlimited resources in men and money, there was no doubt that we could coerce these wild, undisciplined mountaineers. We could carry fire and sword throughout their homes; and if we chose, we could, as some have recommended, exterminate whole tribes. But is such conduct worthy of a great Christian nation? Will it commend itself to the millions of Asiatics over whom we rule in India? Will it tend to allay the feelings of dislike and disaffection with which there is little reason to doubt, unfortunately, that the larger portion of our Mohammedan subjects regard British domination?

There is a ~~lip~~ service founded on fear, and there is a deeper service of the heart based on justice, which all men in all countries can reverence and appreciate. Sir Henry Rawlinson writes:—"War with the Afghans is to be deprecated beyond all other wars, because, however it may end, it will leave behind it a heavy legacy of debt, and the hatred of a people who ought to be our friends." Again:—"Our old blood feuds with the Ghilzyes and Duranis will be revived and intensified, so that it will be next to impossible to restore that mutual confidence, which could alone warrant our placing in the hands of the

Afghans the permanent defence of our extreme Northern frontier." There are not only present evils, but the seeds of future evil sown, to bring forth a plentiful harvest of trouble hereafter. All this is done, according to the Viceroy's proclamation, in order that "the British Government may find the best security for its Indian frontier in the friendship of a State whose independence it seeks to confirm." In the same strain Sir Neville Chamberlain writes:—"The object of the Mission was to promote peace, and to bring about, if it was possible, a return to friendly and close relations with the Amír."

Surely all this talk of peace and friendship is a strange perversion of language taken in connection with what was evidently to be the result of the course Lord Lytton was pursuing. But to blame Lord Lytton is not to exculpate the Amír. Everyone can see that Sher Ali behaved like a madman, and hurried on to his own destruction. An individual may behave badly when a quarrel is forced upon him, but if he is not the aggressor, allowances are made for his conduct. In Sher Ali's case, we have on the one side Christianity and a boasted higher civilization, and on the other a half-civilized Ruler and a still less civilized aggregate of ignorant and fanatical tribes, and *quasi* independent Chiefs, on whose fitful support the Amír could place but little reliance. "Had there been no Russian Mission at Cabul," Sir Henry Rawlinson writes, "no indication of a desire on the part of the Turkestan authorities to interfere in Indian politics, we might have allowed the Amír to be sulky and grumbling, and even insolent, for the term of his natural life."

Here we have stated in plain and direct terms the real grounds of our forward movement into Afghanistan. Sher Ali and the Afghan nation were powerless by themselves to cause any anxiety or alarm, unless backed by Russian troops and Russian resources.

Now it may be asked with confidence whether it was in the smallest degree probable that Russia, at the close of an exhausting war with a comparatively feeble antagonist, where her losses in men and officers had been so great, and her expenditure so heavy, would have been likely to provoke a fresh contest with one of the

most powerful nations in the world. If the Russian Mission was pregnant with disastrous consequences to India, as has been so persistently affirmed, but which remains to be proved, we had only to demand its withdrawal, and Russia would have acquiesced, as in fact she did acquiesce. We could have then dealt with Sher Ali at our leisure. Lord Lytton's course of action had no doubt complicated the question, alarmed the Amír, and thrown obstacles in the way of friendly negotiations. But with the disappearance of the Russian Mission the greatest difficulty would have been removed. Sher Ali declared that on the departure of the Russians he would receive the British Mission, and he might have been persuaded to meet the Viceroy at Peshawur, or elsewhere, where by an interchange of friendly courtesies, as at Umballa in 1869, a better state of feeling might have been brought about. But to effect this, the obnoxious condition of stationing British officers in Afghan territory must have been withdrawn. This, however, was a cardinal point in the policy of Lord Salisbury and Lord Lytton to be forced on Sher Ali at all hazards, and on the Afghan people, who were more averse to this measure than Sher Ali himself. We find, at page 367 of M. Ferrier's "Caravan Journeys," a narrative of the risk he ran at Candahar, though under the protection of Kohundil Khan, a brother of Dost Mahomed, then Ruler of that city. The people were dying of cholera. One of the Ulemas declared that "while Candahar was sullied by the presence of an infidel, the enemy of God and man, there would be no cessation of their affliction." M. Ferrier's house was besieged for three days; Kohundil Khan himself was obliged to take refuge in the citadel until a reinforcement of troops arrived and put an end to the insurrection. The same spirit of fanaticism still exercises unbounded sway over the large majority of the Afghan population, and though, under the coercive influence of a British force, it may be quiescent for a time, any favourable opportunity would bring its dormant elements into dangerous activity.

On the dissolution of Sir Neville Chamberlain's Mission, Lord Lytton directed the assemblage of troops, with a view to early

ulterior operations. Shortly afterwards the answer of the Amír, dated 6th October, to the Viceroy's letter, conveyed by Nawab Gholam Hussein, was received. This answer of Sher Ali was couched in a tone of indignant remonstrance, complaining of letters transmitted to the Cabul Officials by the Commissioner of Peshawur, and of the harsh and breathless haste of the proceedings of Lord Lytton, but it was neither defiant nor insulting. The Viceroy, however, considered it as conveying a direct challenge, and would have immediately commenced hostilities.

Lord Canning's reluctance to enter upon warlike operations against Persia forms a marked contrast to Lord Lytton's precipitancy in hurrying on a collision with the Amír. Lord Canning writes to Mr. Vernon Smith, April 22nd, 1856:—"Do not be afraid of my being unduly hasty to punish Persia. Unless the Shah should steam up the Hooghly with Murray swinging at his yard arm, I hope that we shall be able to keep the peace until your instructions arrive." Lord Lytton sent a telegram to the Secretary of State counselling instant action, but her Majesty's Government very properly determined to make another effort to avert the calamities of war, and the Viceroy was directed, before crossing the frontier into Afghanistan, to demand an apology from Sher Ali in temperate language. Unfortunately the Ultimatum was not drawn up in a conciliatory tone, the acceptance of a permanent British Mission was still insisted upon, and a very few days were allowed for the Amír to make up his mind. Sher Ali returned no answer to the Ultimatum within the appointed time, the 20th of November, and on the 21st of that month the Viceroy issued his Proclamation of War. On the same day the British troops advanced and, as was to be expected, complete success crowned their operations. In spite of advantages of position, and the great natural obstacles of the country, the Afghan undisciplined tribes have always succumbed easily to the valour and discipline of a British force when well handled, and have never made any determined resistance like the Goorkahs or Sikhs, or even the Rajpoot and Mahratta armies. Many of the Afghans are individually brave, but they have no cohesion, no trust in

their leaders, who possess little military capacity. Each Afghan fights for his own hand, and they have always proved themselves contemptible enemies when they have been met in the open plains.

The Cabul catastrophe casts a dark shadow over past campaigns in Afghanistan; our constant easy victories during years of warfare faded out of sight, and Afghan prowess was much exaggerated. Sir William Nott wrote:—"The Army at Candahar has defeated the enemy in some sixteen actions, tranquillized the whole country, made every Afghan bend the knee, never met with a reverse, however outnumbered by the enemy."* It must be recollected also, in Sir Wm. Nott's days, the range of the British musket in the hands of the Sepoy was inferior to that of the Afghan weapon (the Jezail). It is a very different matter at the present time, when the superiority of our arms of precision gives us an immense advantage.

Any danger from an invasion of India by Afghans, which has been held up by some as a reason for an advance of frontier, may be dismissed as undeserving of serious consideration. Sir Henry Rawlinson tells us that "Aryans, Greeks and Scythians, Turks, Persians and Afghans, have, at different periods of history, swept down upon India, and that it has never been found possible to arrest the progress of the invader before he crossed the Indus." Sir Henry does not add, what is an important element in the calculation, that invaders of the present day would have to meet a very different enemy to those of former periods of history—a well-disciplined, well-equipped British army, composed of as fine troops as any in the world, and furnished with the latest arms of precision, and any amount of artillery and munitions of war. These troops, led by officers of the highest professional skill and capacity, acting under a strong united Government, abounding in all the resources that vast wealth can provide, in complete contrast to the Governments that existed at the time of successful invasions of India, which were, without exception, weak, corrupt, and divided amongst themselves, with traitors in their camps and Councils, who looked more to their own interests than to the defence of their country.

* Sir W. Nott's Life," Vol. XI., p. 68.

In 1868, Sir Henry Rawlinson drew "an alarming picture of 50,000 Persian Sirbaz, supported by a Russian column, and hinted that it might be successful, owing to the prevalent disaffection of the Mohammedan population of India." In like manner, quite recently, he brings to notice the rumoured project of the Russian Minister of War to transfer bodily across the Caspian to Asterabad the army of the Caucasus for an attack on Herát; but in subsequent paragraphs he demolishes this scheme, "as all the Volga steamers would be quite insufficient to move 70,000 men," and, "without the co-operation of Persia, which could not be relied on, neither carriage nor provisions could be obtained for the march through Khorasan." If these important elements for the success of an invading army would not be available in Khorasan, the want of them would be likely to be still more felt in Afghanistan, where, as Sir Henry Lawrence wrote in 1856, "a large army would be starved in a week." In reference to Sir Richard Temple's statement of Mohammedan disaffection in India, Sir Henry Rawlinson characterizes the language used as "alarmist in tone, and exaggerated in substance." Many persons will be inclined to think that the threatened danger of 50,000 Persian Sirbaz in 1868, and of 70,000 Russians in 1878, may well be classed in the same category.

The immeasurable superiority of the power of the British Empire, compared with the petty disorganized kingdom of Cabul, is beyond dispute. When the season permits of a renewal of warlike operations, if the Afghans have not previously submitted, at more or less cost of life and money, according to circumstances, it is clear that we can overrun, and, if we choose, subjugate the country. But, as the Duke of Wellington said in reference to the campaign of 1839, "our difficulties will commence where our military successes end." The important question then arises, What do we intend to do? Has the Government any fixed policy, or is it drifting along, the creature of circumstances, to find itself, at no very distant period, saddled with responsibilities political and financial, which, at the outset, never entered into its calculation, and which may prove disastrous to the welfare and prosperity of

our Indian Empire? Lord Wellesley always spoke contemptuously of the folly of occupying a land of "rocks, sands, deserts, ice, and snow." Is this what Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Lytton have in contemplation? Lord Lytton states in his Proclamation that "with the Sirdars and people of Afghanistan this Government has still no quarrel, and desires none. They are absolved from all responsibility from the recent acts of the Amír, and as they have given no offence, so the British Government, wishing to respect their independence, will not willingly injure or interfere with them." General Roberts's announcement that the districts occupied by his troops are henceforth to be considered British territory is scarcely in accordance with the Proclamation of the Viceroy; but how far this apparent pledge of annexation commits the Government remains to be seen. Sher Ali has fled from Cabul, whether, like Dost Mahomed, to appear again upon the scene, time will show. Lord Northbrook's Government tells us in their despatch of 28th January, 1876, "there can be no question that the power of Amír Sher Ali Khan has been consolidated throughout Afghanistan in a manner unknown since the days of Dost Mahomed. Nowhere has intrigue or rebellion been able to make head in the Amír's dominions."

It was foreseen by those acquainted with Afghan politics that our advance into Afghanistan would shatter the Government. Our object was to have a strong and friendly State upon our North-Western frontier. The first result of our present policy is to weaken and disintegrate the cohesion, which, for the last ten years, had been assuming a more permanent form, and to let loose the elements of disorder, which have so generally prevailed in Afghanistan. Besides breaking up their Government, we have made the Afghans our enemies. As long as they believed that we had no intention of annexing any territory beyond the passes, they would have felt more fear of Russia than of ourselves. Our advance to Quettah alarmed them, and our present proceedings will have confirmed them in the view that it is our determination eventually to occupy their country. This is not a good foundation for a safe frontier. We desire to raise up a barrier against Russian intrigues. There could not have

been a better barrier than Afghan jealousy of interference and love of independence: all those feelings are now enlisted against us, and on the side of Russia. We may build fortresses at great cost, but unless we hold the country in strength, with a hostile population, our posts would be always in danger, and useless for the purpose for which we profess to advance them. And to what point are we to advance? A recent writer in the *Quarterly Review*, evidently master of the subject, sketches out what we may have to do:—"It might be necessary to take up strong and commanding positions in front at Mymeneh, at Bamian, and on the river of Badakshan, so as to overawe Turkestan, and compel the Russians to act on the defensive rather than the offensive."

If we contemplate the relative distances of Mymeneh, Bamian, and the river of Badakshan, how far removed they all are from our base, how great the difficulties must be of obtaining supplies, how vast the expense of maintaining garrisons in these remote provinces, and, after all, how inadequate such precautions must prove to overawe Turkestan, the British Government may well pause before it embarks upon such a crusade. Moreover, should these advanced posts be really threatened by Russia, reinforcements must be hurried up at all hazards, stores of all kinds, especially munitions of war, must be transported at enormous cost. Major Wood states that every round shot brought to Central Asia by the Russians is computed to have cost nearly two pounds sterling in transport. The difficulties of obtaining carriage and supplies for the convoys, regular communication with the rear being certain to be interrupted, would be almost insurmountable.

Those who are opposed to the present advance into Afghanistan do not believe in the wisdom of a policy that would seek to overawe Turkestan. They do not consider that Russia has either the power or the resources to undertake so gigantic an enterprise as a hostile invasion of India. Her hold on Central Asia requires consolidation. She has overrun rapidly a vast extent of territory sparsely inhabited, the inhabitants being chiefly nomad hordes—poor, fanatical, as likely as not to break out into insurrection should a favourable opportunity occur. India does not afford us

as secure a base of military operations as we could wish, but it is much more secure than Turkestan to the Russians; and all the resources of the British Empire are nearer and more easily available on the banks of the Indus than the resources of Russia on the banks of the Oxus. Mr. Schuyler tells us "that the revenues of Central Asia are insufficient to meet the expenses of administration, more and more taxes are demanded, and since the occupation of the country by the Russians, the condition of the population has not only not grown better, but on the contrary is every day getting worse and worse."

We may put aside any prospect of present danger from Russia, but it is said we must provide for the future. We must convert a haphazard into a scientific frontier. Until lately this so-called haphazard frontier was considered the best adapted for our security by the highest military authorities. At the present moment, it is believed that the preponderance of military authority is against an advance of frontier, even on purely strategical grounds. Admitting, however, that there may be a question on this point, as there are doubtless names of great weight on either side, there can be no question of the political and financial disadvantages that must result from a further extension of our Indian territories. These disadvantages, will, of course, prove of greater or less magnitude, according to the final arrangements made by Her Majesty's Government for the settlement of Afghanistan. If we are moderate in our demands, and forbearing in our hour of triumph, we may yet limit our responsibilities, and spare India a financial burden she is ill fitted to support. If, on the contrary, the easy success which has hitherto attended our arms becomes a snare and a delusion to lead us on to the permanent occupation of Afghan territory, and to direct intervention in the fathomless gulf of Afghan politics, the wisest Statesman may be at fault in rightly estimating future difficulties. Prominent among these difficulties is the establishment of satisfactory relations with the independent Afghan tribes inhabiting the mountain ranges between our present border, and the country owing allegiance to the Amir of Afghanistan.

These tribes have enjoyed their independence for hundreds of years; strong in their mountain fastnesses, inured to arms from their youth upwards, their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them, they cling with tenacity to their republican institutions, and have never bowed their necks to any settled government. They were a thorn in the side of the Mogul Emperors, and on several occasions inflicted severe defeats on armies sent against them.

In a night attack, for which the Afghans have always been famous, the Eusofzyes killed Bir Bal, one of Akber's favourite Generals, and destroyed many thousands of his troops. Mr. Elphinstone writes:— "They were never more formidable than in the reign of Aurungzebe; they resisted repeated attacks from the Kings of Persia and Cabul, and retain their turbulent independence undiminished to the present day." When Runjeet Sing pushed his dominions beyond the Indus, these tribes carried on an internecine war with the Sikhs, who vainly strove to coerce them, by building forts, and punishing them with Draconian severity. General Avitabile, Governor of Peshawur, dared not leave his capital, except accompanied by a large force. On the annexation of the Punjab the country afflicted with this chronic state of disorder passed under our rule, and ever since it has been the endeavour of the British Government to place our relations with these border tribes on a better footing. Progress in this work of conciliation and improvement has been necessarily slow; the habits of centuries are not overcome in a few years, and the administrative exigencies of a vast Empire are so various and extensive that attention could not be concentrated on one corner of our territories, so as to produce very rapid effects. But all acquainted with the subject will admit that very tangible results had been produced, the chief difficulties had been overcome, and greater results would have followed. Now, however, we are to commence afresh on a new course of action, we are to take all the passes into our own hands, and keep down by force of arms tens of thousands of these warlike and independent mountaineers. With this object we are to place isolated posts in exposed positions, where they will have

enough to do to take care of themselves, and will exercise little or no influence over the mountain fastnesses on every side of them, from whence the predatory tribes will have the opportunity of issuing forth to plunder convoys which must be continually passing to and fro to supply the garrisons.

While these tribes were in front of us, we could always meet them at an advantage, when they ventured into the plains. We generally had timely notice of their approach, and could collect a sufficient force to preclude the chance of any untoward accident; but with an immensely extended area of operations, it will be more difficult to use the same precautions, and to provide against all contingencies. Although they owed no allegiance to the Amír of Cabul, and set his authority at defiance whenever it suited their purpose, plundering the baggage of Dost Mahomed and Sher Ali, as they plundered the property of every one who trespassed on their confines whenever they saw an opening, still the rulers of Afghanistan had a certain amount of influence, which when exerted in favour of peace and order was not without its value. In rendering the Afghans hostile to us we add another disturbing element to the task of conciliating the tribes and pacifying the frontier, and also another element of discontent with our rule, which may prove contagious at a moment when we are least prepared with means of repression. The native army, reorganized since the mutiny, contains within its ranks a larger proportion of Mohammedan soldiers, many of them enlisted from the tribes on the frontier. When stationed amongst their own native hills, and employed to coerce their own countrymen, the loyalty of these troops will be put to a test to which in its full extent it has not hitherto been subjected, and which is not without danger. Twenty years ago we passed through a tremendous ordeal, and through God's mercy emerged from it triumphantly. What has happened may happen again. If at that period large bodies of our troops had been stationed in forts and garrisons far distant beyond the passes in Afghanistan, it may be left to any reasonable person to determine whether our difficulties would not have been greatly increased.

While there is danger in this respect, on the other hand service in Afghanistan will always be unpopular with natives of Hindostan of all castes and classes. The Sikhs and Goorkhas will view with inveterate dislike any prolonged residence at such a distance from their homes, which involves separation from their wives and families, in an uncongenial climate where all the necessaries of life are so expensive. The Goorkhas are especially sensitive in regard to separation from their families. If the service in Afghanistan is distasteful to native troops, much more so must it prove to the numerous class of camp followers so essential in India to the well-being and efficiency of an army in the field. The sufferings of these poor creatures in our last advance to Cabul and in the disastrous retreat were dreadful, and if rumour speaks truly, the heaviest burden has also fallen upon them in the present campaign.

All these causes of future embarrassment and difficulty connected with an advance of frontier are overlooked by many persons who have neither the time nor the opportunity to study this important question. In the lapse of years the lessons of the former war in Afghanistan have been forgotten by the people of England, but its baneful effects have left a deep impression on the minds of the people of India. This impression is not likely to be effaced, or to conduce to their contentment, when, according to the decision of Her Majesty's Government, they are called upon to pay additional taxes in order to defray the expenses of the present war. At the time Lord Canning was leaving India, Raja Dinkur Rao wrote a memorandum for him, full of suggestive remarks, from a native point of view, as to the policy the British Government should pursue towards its native subjects. He says:—"To every Government the foundations of security are twofold—1st, the strength of the army; 2nd, the contentment of its subjects. Both these are essential. Then after enumerating the benefits conferred upon India by British rule, he writes:—"While all these things are before the subjects in favour of a Government which does so much for their comfort, they are still greatly dissatisfied with the severity of some of the regulations which are against their

customs, and with various kinds of stamp duties and taxes, almost all classes are very much bewildered from being harassed in all the ordinary occupations of their lives. By this means the people have forgotten the goodness of the British Government, the love which they once entertained for it, and have begun to prefer the tyranny of Native Princes." He goes on to complain of the income tax, the license tax, and the heavier salt tax, as especially obnoxious to the people, and adding to causes of former discontent. All those acquainted with India are aware that increased taxation becomes more and more dangerous to the tranquillity of the country. Several of the distinguished Statesmen who have filled the high office of Viceroy have brought this subject, of late years, to the notice of the Home Authorities in forcible language. Owing to the recurrence of famines, the depreciation of silver, the general depression of trade, and other causes, India, at the present moment, is less able than ever to support additional financial burdens, and the cost of an unnecessary war is not likely to render them more palatable to native opinion. What would entail a very light pressure on England might prove of serious moment in India. Lord Salisbury has himself stated:—"The difference between England and India in matters of finance is this, that in England you can raise a large increase of taxation without in the least degree endangering our institutions, whereas you cannot do so in India." According to a statement in Parliament by the Under Secretary of State for India, based upon a calculation made by the Indian Government as to what the war was likely to cost, the expenditure to be incurred within the present financial year, which closes on the 31st of March, 1879, was put down at £950,000. And as there is an estimated surplus of £1,550,000, the Secretary of State adds:—"It must be perfectly obvious that the Indian Government could pay the whole cost of the war during the present year without adding a shilling to the taxation or the debt of the country."

It may be observed that the gist of the matter is not what may be actually expended from the Treasury on the war up to the 31st of March, but what will be the whole expenditure by the time the

war is brought to a conclusion. It is to be hoped that the sanguine expectations of the Government may be realized, but those who recollect the expenditure incurred in the last war in Afghanistan may be permitted to express a doubt upon this vital point.

From the published Parliamentary papers, it appeared there were ten millions of accumulated surplus in the various treasuries of India, when the war in 1839 began. Not only was this entirely expended by the end of the year 1841, but a loan of five millions had to be raised at an unusually high rate of interest. Sir Robert Peel stated in Parliament, on the 23rd June, 1842, that there had been a surplus revenue, just before the commencement of the war, of a million and a half, which, in 1840-41, was converted into a deficit of £2,324,000. In his letter to Lord Aberdeen, of September 1841, Sir Henry Willock stated that so severely were the finances of Calcutta pressed, that a stoppage of payment at Fort William was at one time contemplated by the Supreme Council.

On the 6th April, 1842, the Court of Directors brought to the notice of the President of the Board of Control, that the Government of India had intimated their intention "to discontinue their remittances for the supply of the Home Treasury, by means of advances upon goods hypothecated to the Court. The Local Government have been compelled to adopt this course by their financial difficulties, which have been wholly caused by the expensive operations in which they have been engaged beyond the Indus."

The total military expenditure of India, during the five years ending with 1837-38, amounted to a little more than thirty-eight millions sterling; in the following five years it exceeded forty-eight millions. It was affirmed, on good authority, that nearly a million sterling was expended on camels alone—70,000 of these animals were reported to have perished during the campaign. The loss of horses also was very great. Major Hough states that in one day it was requisite to shoot fifty-three horses. Want of forage for the cattle, and want of provisions for the troops and followers, characterized the former advance into Afghanistan. It is well known that in many parts of the country the population

itself is constantly in a state of semi-starvation. There is no reason to believe that the productiveness of Afghanistan has increased of late years, but, on the contrary, that it has diminished. What must, therefore, be the difficulty and expense of procuring supplies for men and cattle during a long campaign? British energy, and a lavish expenditure of money will, no doubt, overcome these difficulties; but all this will contribute to swell the cost of the war, and lead to further embarrassments.

Sir James Outram writes, in his rough notes, on 29th April, 1839 :—"The army is in great distress for want of provisions, six days' supplies only remain in the Commissariat stores, and the merchants of Candahar, who profess to have nothing in reserve, retail wheat flour in small quantities, at the rate of two seers (4 lbs.) the rupee, everything else being proportionately dear." Again :—"Provisions are daily becoming scarcer, and more dear, and flour has actually attained the exorbitant rate of a single seer for the rupee, a price which is, of course, quite beyond the means of our impoverished followers. No grain has as yet been obtained for the horses." "The effects of the unwholesome food which the wretched followers have been obliged to consume, is everywhere painfully manifest."

He had previously written :—"The followers of the army were compelled to eke out their subsistence by picking up weeds." Subsequently the followers received their rations from the Commissariat in the same manner as the native troops, a very merciful measure; but the enormous expense entailed upon the Government by such a concession, with provisions at famine prices, may well be imagined. The effect of the exorbitant price of food of all descriptions, and the consequent increased scarcity, must have been to inflict great hardship and suffering on the poorer classes of the population of the country, and on classes with fixed stipends; and Sir William Macnaghten states that this was one of the causes of British unpopularity. In the present campaign it is believed that the native troops who have crossed the frontier receive rations from the Commissariat, as in the previous war. When it is recollected that the number of troops in the three

armies now employed exceeds those sent forward on the former invasion of Afghanistan, some idea may be formed of the expenditure likely to be incurred. In order to reduce this expenditure to the lowest point, Lord Lytton has not shrunk from the risk of denuding India of its garrisons, resorting to the questionable expedient of being indebted to Native Princes for contingents of troops to fill their places. Lord Dalhousie, in his minute of 28th February, 1856, observed:—"No prudent man who has any knowledge of Eastern affairs, would ever venture to predict the maintenance of continued peace within our Eastern possessions. Experience—frequent, hard, and recent experience—has taught us that war from without, or rebellion from within, may at any time be raised against us, in quarters where they were the least to be expected, and by the most feeble and unlikely instruments."

As far as can be ascertained, we have now seventeen regiments of British cavalry and infantry, and thirty-eight regiments of native cavalry and infantry, and about twenty-five batteries of artillery employed in Afghanistan, or on the very confines of our North-West frontier, in support of the troops in advance. In order to replace this large portion of the garrison of India, two regiments of British infantry, which were to have come home, have been detained, and fifteen thousand recruits have been added to the native army. If trouble should arise in the interior, or at the other extremity of our dominions, the Government might find itself in a dilemma to provide troops to meet the emergency. By the proposed advance of frontier, we multiply greatly the chances of collision both from within and from without, and impose upon India the absolute necessity of paying for a larger proportion of European troops, as any force stationed in Afghanistan must be chiefly composed of British regiments. On a very moderate estimate, even the occupation of posts above the passes would entail an additional burden on the revenues of India of more than a million sterling a year; and, in the event of a further advance, which would most probably occur, enhanced expenditure would of course follow. The want of means has been the real reason why important works connected with the strengthen-

ing of our North-Western frontier, which have been for a series of years recommended by the highest military authorities, have not been executed. The completion of our railway communication to Peshawur, the construction of bridges across the Indus, the erection of fortifications in suitable positions, have all been constantly before the Government, and only delayed from financial considerations. These works relate only to the frontier; but how many undertakings of the highest utility throughout India are obliged to be indefinitely postponed from the same cause? Already, at the very outset of the present war, the local Governments have been compelled to issue resolutions suspending the execution of all public works and grants of money until the state of the finances will permit of sanction being accorded.

To use the words of Lord Sandhurst, "it cannot be too often repeated that the occupation of Afghanistan, on account of the financial difficulty, is the stoppage of progress in India." Her Majesty's Government, it is but fair to conclude, have an equal interest with previous Governments in the welfare and prosperity of India, and in undertaking the grave responsibility of an advance into Afghanistan, they must believe that such a step is imperatively necessary for the safety of our Eastern dominions. But they cannot be blind to the impoverished state of India, nor to the political risks to be incurred by any attempt to impose additional taxation. They must therefore desire, as much as the strongest opponents of their present policy, to reduce to a minimum the burden about to be thrown on the Indian finances. It is clear that, however costly the expenditure incurred in the advance into Afghanistan, the permanent occupation of the country will entail a far heavier pressure upon the revenues of India; those revenues, according to Sir John Strachey, possessing "no true surplus over expenditure to cover the many contingencies to which a great country is exposed." What, then, is the course to be pursued? What is the solution of the present difficult conjuncture of affairs, which is likely to be attended with the fewest political responsibilities, and the smallest probable future expenditure?

It must be admitted that the difficulties to be surmounted are

very great, and depend to a certain extent upon contingencies not to be foreseen. The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water, the end is often beyond our own control. The first thing to be achieved is to bring the war to an honourable conclusion. The brilliant success that has attended the operations already undertaken bear ample witness to the gallantry and endurance of our troops, and to the promptitude, skill, and judgment of the generals in command. Whatever our armies may be called upon to perform, it is quite certain they will do their duty with the same valour and efficiency which they have always shown in all previous campaigns in every quarter of the globe. Peace, therefore, will be secured, either by an early submission of the Afghan leaders, or, after a short delay, as soon as the season permits of warlike movements. Hostilities being ended, and our power vindicated, the grand feature of our policy should be moderation in our demands.

Lord Lytton has proclaimed to the world that "with the Sirdars and people of Afghanistan the British Government has no quarrel, and desires none;" and that "it will respect their independence." Let us act up to this declaration by insisting upon nothing that will wound the national feeling, and thus tend to keep alive a spirit of bitterness, and sow the seeds of future dissension. Meanwhile, now is the time to place our relations with Russia, in regard to these countries, upon a permanent and definite footing. We have hitherto never gone to the root of this great question with Russia, we have dealt with things on the surface in a vague undecided manner. Mr. Schuyler, who, it may be observed, is perhaps not wholly impartial, but whose opinion nevertheless carries weight, writes:—"The attitude of England towards Russia, with regard to Central Asia, can hardly be called a dignified one. There are constant questions, protests, demands for explanation, and even threats, at least in the newspapers, but nothing is ever done." Subsequently to the understanding entered into at the period of Mr. Gladstone's administration, Russia certainly endeavoured to fasten upon England the responsibility of controlling Sher Ali, but this was

entirely repudiated by Mr. Gladstone in his important speech of 23rd April, 1873. Russia then let it be understood that, if England had preserved her freedom of action, Russia had done the same. Again, Mr. Schuyler writes, evidently speaking from a Russian point of view:—"Unless some new arrangement should be made, Russia has a perfect right, in case of troubles on the Oxus, to cross it and inflict punishment on the troops and provinces of Sher Ali." A new arrangement should undoubtedly be made between the two Governments, not a mere understanding, but a binding engagement. In order, however, that negotiations should have the best prospect of a happy termination, England should bear in mind the advice of a friendly French Minister (quoted by Sir Charles Dilke in a recent speech):—"It is of the most essential importance that the English Government should avoid, both in attitude and in language, everything in the least like arrogance." We should approach the discussion of this important question in no spirit of dictation nor of jealous rivalry, but on the footing of the perfect equality which belongs to two of the greatest nations in the world. We require nothing more from Russia than that she should enter into permanent and definite engagements, in accordance with her former assurances, with regard to Afghanistan, we on our part binding ourselves to respect the integrity and independence of the Afghan kingdom, and to abstain from all interference with the affairs of Central Asia beyond the Oxus. We should also undertake to exercise our influence to prevent the Ruler of Afghanistan from giving offence to Russia, or embroiling himself with his neighbours, and we should seek no commercial advantages to the prejudice of Russia. It is so much to the interest of both countries that such an engagement should exist that it is difficult to imagine that any serious obstacle could arise to prevent its conclusion.

We proceed, then, to deal with Afghanistan. Weighty arguments have been put forward by the highest military authorities against any advance of frontier in that direction. General Sir Henry Norman, himself a high authority, writes in a recent number of the *Fortnightly Review*:—"While many opinions

have been given as to the folly of advancing our frontier, it seems an undoubted fact that no opposite opinion ever was expressed by any of the able Governors-General who have held sway in India up to the arrival of Lord Lytton, by any Commander-in-Chief in India, by any Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, the officer through whom, until 1876, all Cabul affairs used to be transacted, or by any member of the Supreme Council, before which all important questions affecting the Indian Empire come. Many officers in these positions have left on record the strongest possible objections to a forward movement except as an operation of war." In reference to the occupation of any post beyond the Khyber, General Hamley writes:—"There is much to be said against it, nothing for it. It would be a source not of strength but of weakness." He then goes on to say on the question of meeting danger from invasion:—"I should feel confident of the result even in the Valley of the Indus, I think our position vastly improved by the occupation of Quettah, but I should think it all we could desire if we occupied Candahar." There is no doubt that Candahar, converted into a strong fortress, and held by an adequate garrison of British troops, would prove a formidable obstacle to an invading army. Its situation in the most fertile portion of Afghanistan, commanding the three roads to India, offers great advantages in a purely military point of view. But cogent political and financial reasons forbid the extension of our frontier, and enjoin the preservation, if possible, of an independent Afghan Kingdom intermediately between our own boundary and that of the Russian possessions in Central Asia. It is a subject of regret that we advanced to Quettah, more particularly without the consent of the Amír, who, if properly approached in the first instance might have acceded to our wishes; but having done so, and having, under treaty with the Khan of Khelat, an undeniable right to locate troops in his territories, it may not be advisable that we should withdraw from a position of strategical importance, both with reference to the control of the Afghans and Belooches and to ulterior contingencies. Whether the town of Quettah itself in respect to salubrity

and other considerations fulfil all the conditions needed to render it the most eligible position we could occupy can only be determined by competent professional advisers on the spot. If not, there could doubtless be found in its vicinity some other locality where a large entrenched camp could be formed, which, held in strength, would secure all the required objects defensive and offensive. Our first duty should be to complete the communications with our base, including the railroad to Dadur, and a bridge across the Indus at Sukkur, with posts in support of adequate strength along the line to the rear.

These works, essential on military grounds, would be highly beneficial also commercially. Our domination of the Bolan and the other passes near at hand, and our necessarily more intimate connection with the countries beyond, by rendering traffic more secure, and by guaranteeing freedom from vexatious imposts and restrictions, would give a great impulse to trade. Amongst the measures to be taken on the cessation of hostilities, and the renewal of relations with the Ruler of Afghanistan, there should be an arrangement for placing British commercial interests on a proper footing, and for protecting them against any hostile tariffs or immoderate transit duties. In the absence of official information it is difficult to determine how far the Government is committed to annexation by the reported announcement of General Roberts that the inhabitants of the Khost and Khurum Valleys were henceforward to consider themselves British subjects. These raids upon outlying districts of the Amír's kingdom, which have been the cause of an immense amount of human suffering, without exercising any perceptible influence on the main purpose of the war, are to be lamented. The annexation of this territory, which is not likely to produce sufficient revenue to pay the cost of administration, and is certain to require additional troops to protect that portion of the population which is peacefully disposed, would prove a source of future trouble and increased expenditure. It would be well that the British garrisons should be withdrawn within the original border-line of British territory on the right bank of the Indus. In fact, we should eschew all annexation of

Afghan territory. Our object should be to conclude a treaty with whatever Ruler the Afghan nation may select, without interference with the integrity of their dominions or with their independence. We should beware of setting up a nominee of our own, but leave the choice to the Afghans themselves. In order to afford them a convincing proof of our desire to maintain their independence, we should make the concession to their prejudices of withdrawing our demand for the residence of British Officers at Cabul, and in other Afghan cities. We should be content with a Mohammedan Envoy of rank and influence at Cabul. His salary should be increased and his establishment placed on a much more liberal scale than has hitherto been the practice. Selected Native Agents of intelligence might also be stationed at Herát, Balkh, or in any other Afghan towns which might appear desirable.

It was a cardinal maxim of the policy of the Nepaul Government for many years to keep the secrets of their own fastnesses unspied into by us, and a great jealousy of Europeans still exists in that country; in Burmah, also, and even in Kashmir, there is an undercurrent of dislike to the presence of British officers. Why should we then insist on the compliance of the Afghans with a condition which it is clear is so repugnant to the feelings and prejudices of the Chiefs and people? The time may come, and in the interests of humanity and civilization all will desire to hasten it, when the Afghans themselves may be willing to waive the objection on which they have hitherto so strongly insisted, and when this wild fanatical people will be brought under the ameliorating influences which British rule exercises on the population of India. Much has been done within the last half-century, but there is still sufficient work to tax to the utmost British energies, and to satisfy British ambition, without adding more territory to our already overgrown Eastern Empire. It remains to recapitulate the points which it has been sought to establish in the foregoing pages.

1st. That the settled policy of former Administrations, composed of both parties in the State, in regard to the defence of the North-Western frontier of India, has been, without sufficient cause, departed from by Lord Lytton, acting under instructions of the present Ministry.

2nd. That the danger apprehended from Russian aggression has been greatly exaggerated, and that the measures adopted in consequence are calculated to prejudice the best interests of our Indian Empire.

3rd. That the hasty, inconsiderate action of Lord Lytton precipitated hostilities, and led to an unnecessary, impolitic, and unjust war.

4th. That any annexation of Afghan territory would increase our political and financial difficulties, and entail a grievous burden on the revenues of India.

5th. That an attempt to secure more effectual hold on the passes lying between our border line and Afghanistan, and to coerce the mountain tribes by placing military posts in their fastnesses, would fail in its object, except at a cost too burthensome to be sustained.

6th. That the expenses of the present war will far exceed the estimate of the Government, and that in the impoverished state of India, increased taxation may be attended with most serious results.

The essential condition of progress and improvement in India is the continuance of peace. However erroneous the policy enjoined by Lord Salisbury, it is possible that more temper, prudence, and forbearance, on the part of Lord Lytton, might have averted its worst consequences. In Lord Lytton's hands it culminated in war, and it contains the germs of future wars. Mr. Gladstone wrote of our Indian Empire, in a recent number of the *Contemporary Review* :—"This astonishing fabric was in the main built up by a mercantile Company, with secondary aid from the counsels and control of the Government, and under the guidance of the practical good sense which is so remarkable in our countrymen, except when some peculiar *Até* bewilders and misleads them." And again :—"The Company delivered India from the flighty genius of Lord Ellenborough, who leant to the ostentatious policy that has lately received, upon more dangerous ground, a more serious development. The toleration they established was one only too wide. They boldly gave education to the

people. They established a Free Press half a century ago. They laid the foundation of the railway system. They discouraged to the best of their ability aggression on the Native Princes and on neighbouring territories. Their policy was, in the best sense, Conservative, and at the time when they handed over their high office to the Government, there was not a point, in the whole of our case with India, at which we could say they had neglected duty or precaution, or had either feigned or courted dangers." The East India Company may well be proud of this meed of praise from England's greatest and noblest living Statesman. Its calm, equable, sagacious, administration typified admirably English sobriety, moderation, and practical good sense. The names of its illustrious servants are enshrined in the foremost roll of English Worthies. Mr. Gladstone's allusion to the "flighty genius of Lord Ellenborough" suggests an apt parallel to the distinguishing feature of the intellectual constitution of the present Viceroy. In a letter to the Duke of Wellington, dated 21st January, 1844, conceived in the same spirit of pride and self-sufficiency which dictated Lord Lytton's haughty message to the Amír of Cabul, Lord Ellenborough, wrote of the Court of the Directors of the East India Company:—"I am satisfied that if they were left to themselves they would lose the country in three months." In little more than three months the Court of Directors, in the interests of the good Government of India intrusted to their keeping by the nation, took upon themselves the grave responsibility of recalling Lord Ellenborough from his high office. Parliament and the people of England ratified the act. It may be confidently affirmed that, under the East India Company's direction of Indian affairs, where party prejudices and prepossessions never intruded, Lord Lytton's impulsive action, disregard of established forms of procedure, and tendency to personal Government, would not have been lightly passed over. In the fulness of time it is believed that the practical good sense of the English nation will pronounce a just judgment on this second Afghan War, and on the merits of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration.

* page 41-9 of Lord Colchester's "Indian Administrations of Lord Ellenborough."