THE AFGHAN FRONTIER.

BY

SIR G. CAMPBELL, M.P.

LONDON:
EDWARD STANFORD, 55, CHARING CROSS, S.W.
1879.

Price One Shilling and Sixpence.

1

THE AFGHAN FRONTIER.

211
1778

BY

SIR G. CAMPBELL, M.P.

LONDON:
EDWARD STANFORD, 55, CHARING CROSS, S.W.
1879.

LUZAC & CO.
Oriental Booksellers and
Publishers.
46, Gt. Russell Street,

DS 352
.C5

304353
22

Ly. B. 12-2-22

After the announcement that the Government proposed to retain the routes between Afghanistan and India recently occupied by our troops, I obtained by ballot a place for the following motion: "To call "attention to the difficult and expensive character "of the frontier now occupied on the north-west of "India; and to move, That, unless Her Majesty's "Government are prepared to occupy Ghuznee "and Cabul, it is not desirable to entangle Her "Majesty's Army in the very mountainous country "between the Upper Punjaub and those places, "which is entirely without lateral communications "and inhabited by independent tribes never con-"quered;" but owing to the unexpected effect of a technical rule I was not able to move it. Meanwhile the subject has grown in my mind, beyond the reasonable limits of a speech. I have therefore reduced my views to writing, and the result is printed with this. In case I should succeed in getting on my motion, I hope those who may care for the subject will take this as read.

G. C.

May 15, 1879.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
The Situation before the War	1
The Present Situation	4
The History of Afghanistan	7
The Geography of Afghanistan	14
The Peoples of Afghanistan	19
The Demand for Residents	31
The Scientific Frontier	38
Possible Arrangements	60
The Last Resort	68
Summary	80

THE AFGHAN FRONTIER.

It seems strange to the generation that learned the lessons of the first Afghan war, then sunk so deep into the national heart, that a second similar war should have been waged for precisely the same object, namely, the establishment of a friendly power on the north-west frontier of India. Then, as now, we sought to establish such a power by fair means or foul—by persuasion if possible, and failing that, by force, But so it is: we have embarked in such a war, and we must face the questions involved in it.

THE SITUATION BEFORE THE WAR.

Before this war I have often expressed my own views regarding the north-west frontier; they may be put in very brief compass. I have always thought and said that if the mountains of Afghanistan had been occupied by a people in any degree resembling those of the Himalayas,—if the Afghans had in any degree resembled in character the people of Cashmere or of the hill country of the

Kangra, Simla, or Kumaon districts, or even those of Nepaul—I should have thought it extremely desirable that we should in some shape occupy that country and so complete our defences ; but we know by painful experience that the Afghans are a people of a totally different character—turbulent—bred from infancy to the use of arms—and with a passion for independence in which they are exceeded by no people in this world. This love of independence is such as to make them intolerant, not only of foreign rule, but almost of any national, tribal or family rule. They are a people among whom every man would be a law unto himself. Experience has shown, too, that these traits are not of a passing kind ; the Afghans are not to be tamed by subjection and peace ; nothing induces them to surrender that love of independence which seems to be the essence of their nature. That being the character of the people occupying so difficult and inaccessible a country, I have thought that the difficulties and expense of any attempt to meddle with that country far outweigh the advantages. I have thought, too, that the passion for independence of a people occupying such a country is the best safeguard of our frontier, so long as the Afghans have reason to think that we, taught by experience, are less aggressive and less likely to encroach upon them than their other neighbours. Of these neighbours the most formidable are no doubt the Russians. Some day, possibly, the

Russians may be formidable both to Afghanistan and to India; but at present, as I have always said, separated as they are in Turkestan from their resources by immense and pathless deserts, they certainly are not dangerous to us and cannot be dangerous till they have established themselves much more thoroughly, and have constructed railways and other means of communication to the foot of the Afghan mountains on their side, as completely as we have constructed or are constructing such communications on our side. That being so, I have said that we may well play a waiting game; that it is not for us to fly to dangers and expenses which are certain in order to avoid future dangers which are uncertain. For it is not certain that Russia will hold together for another fifty years as a great military empire; that she will establish a complete dominion in Central Asia; that she will find the means of constructing great communications in vast territories which are as unproductive as India is productive. I think that recent events in Russia go very far indeed to fortify this view. There is evidently a great seething and fermentation there which may any day lead to revolution and disruption, and must at any rate greatly hinder the development of a strong aggressive power.

No doubt it is in every way most desirable that we should be on friendly terms with the Afghans. It always is desirable that we should cultivate

friendly relations with our neighbours — and I would certainly cultivate those relations with the Afghans, as far as the tribal divisions among themselves and the complications and uncertainties of their mode of government will permit. The instability of all Afghan rule and Afghan rulers is, however, such that I confess that I did not like even the approaches which Lord Lawrence and Lord Mayo made towards political intimacy with the ruler of Cabul. Looking to the position of that potentate and to the Afghan character, I have thought that for political purposes it would be better to leave him to come to us when he wanted our countenance and assistance, rather than that we should show our anxiety to deal with him. When you appproach an Afghan to make terms with him, you are very apt to turn his head, and you find the more he gets the more he wants.

THE PRESENT SITUATION.

Recent events have no doubt very much altered the situation. Whether one may or may not approve of the steps by which the present war was brought about, that war is a fact which we must take into account in dealing with this question. Looking at the enormous difficulties and expense of a permanent occupation of Afghanistan, I still think that it would be better that we should return

to our own Indian border; but I admit that it would now require very great moral courage to do this. The difficulties of our position have been immensely increased by what has lately passed; and if before this war there were arguments in favour of an advance, no doubt those arguments are now immensely strengthened. We have come more into collision with the independent tribes than with the ruler of Cabul, and things have passed which must go very far to create among those tribes a feeling of burning hostility towards us. We have caused the breaking up of the government established at Cabul, such as it was; and we seem to have insisted on lopping off further portions of the Cabul territory,—a measure which must very greatly increase the difficulty of any ruler of Cabul to exercise any semblance of power over the country at large. After what has recently passed we must expect that the Afghans, for a very long time to come, will think that the Russians are a less evil than ourselves, and as against us they will be at any time ready to throw themselves into the arms of Russia. Above all, what I fear is that, whereas up to this time the Afghan tribes are provided with nothing better than the old-fashioned firearms, it can hardly be but that in these days of cheap arms of precision, which enterprising traders are so ready to disseminate over the world, they must before long become possessed of such arms. Even if peace and the semblance of political friendliness

should be maintained between the Russians and ourselves, we can hardly hope that the Russians will or can stop the traffic in arms for our benefit. I confess that I think the strongest argument for dealing with the Afghans at the present time is that we may do so before they obtain arms of precision. Under these circumstances, I am not sanguine enough to hope that Her Majesty's Government will go back to the lines which they would have done better never to have left. What present indications lead me to fear is that, situated as they are, with very much on their hands, and divided between those who would go very far and those who would cautiously hold back, they are halting and in danger of a half-and-half policy, which to my judgment is the worst of all. My experience is, that if you have to deal with hornets only two courses are possible—one, not to stir them up or aggravate them, the other to smoke them out and take the nest. To stir them up, put your hand into the nest and keep it there is not what a wise man would do ; yet that is what I am afraid of, if our present position is maintained.

At any rate, I think it must be apparent that this question which has troubled us so long is not now to be met by temporary expedients. We must take a broad view of the whole subject and try to settle it on lines that shall be lasting. It is in that spirit that I desire to approach it. The subject is one which has interested and occupied me for

upwards of thirty years. It is just thirty years ago that in the year 1849 I put forth views on the subject which attracted a good deal of attention at the time; and I trust that after having matured those views in the interval from that time to this, I may not be presumptuous in submitting them for what they are worth.

The first fallacy against which I think it is necessary that there should be warning, is that of supposing that we can find or establish a strong and friendly government of Afghanistan with whom we may make terms. My belief is that in truth no such government is now possible. It is, as it were, contrary to the nature of things. To explain that view I must make a very brief historical retrospect.

THE HISTORY OF AFGHANISTAN.

Till very modern times no such country as Afghanistan was known to the world. Most of the territory which we now call Afghanistan was part of the province known to the Persians and Arabs as Khorassan. The Afghans were only known as tribes occupying some of the more hilly and inaccessible parts of the country, and from among whom successive rulers have drawn mercenary soldiers, many of whom have colonized in India. These Afghan tribes were not found in

the Caucasian range to the north of the country, but only in the mountains further south. Their origin is a puzzle to ethnographers. They are certainly a people quite different from the Persians on the one side and the Indians on the other. Their language is not a mixture of the languages of their neighbours, but a distinct language with very marked characteristics of its own, though it is generally classed as an Aryan tongue. These are the people whom we, using the Persian term scarcely known to themselves, call Afghans, while they call themselves Pathans or Puktans and their language Pashtoo or Puktoo. They have a myth that they are descended from the Jews, but the fact is that the Mahommedan religion is so much connected with Jewish origins that a good many Mahommedan tribes claim a Jewish descent; as do a good many others a descent from Secunder or Alexander. Their more distinct traditions ascribe their original seat to the mountains of Ghore, but it is not very clear where that is—apparently to the north-west of Candahar. At any rate, in times before history they had occupied all the hill country east of Candahar and Ghuznee, and thence to the borders of India. It was not, however, till comparatively modern times —say, since the beginning of the sixteenth century, —that they advanced across the Cabul River and occupied not only the valleys of Jellalabad and Peshawur and some of the submontane country,

but also some of the lower Caucasian country north of the Cabul River. It is certain that Peshawur and the Khyber hills and the valleys to the north were originally an Indian country. The peaks of the "Suffeid Koh" range still bear Indian names: and to this day Swat and the other Afghan valleys north of the Cabul River are only occupied by the Afghans as the dominant race, while most of the land is tilled by an inferior race of Indian blood in the position of serfs, who are the aborigines of the country and seem to be allied to the neighbouring races of Cashmere. The Afghan population has never occupied the higher parts of the Caucasian range further north, and the hilly country immediately north and west of Cabul is still held by other races. Even in the valley of Cabul and the rest of the more open country the Afghans seem to be still rather a dominant tribe than the mass of tillers of the soil. The accessible parts of the country have generally not been ruled over by Afghans at all, but by other and greater powers. We knew that this was so from the earliest dawn of history. Great empires have occupied the country at large, while the tribes have maintained a rude independence in their hills; in frequent collision with the greater powers by whom they were surrounded, but generally bribed and utilized by those powers.

The modern Afghanistan was part of ancient Persia—then came the Greek dominion, which we

know to have lasted a long time, though its history is lost; then the revived Persian empire; then the Arab dominion; and then the invasion and occupation of the country by Turk and Mongol conquerors. Mahmoud of Ghuznee, the first conqueror of India, no doubt took his title from a place in Afghanistan, but we know that he was a Turk who had come there as a conqueror, and thence conquered India. Subsequently some dynasties of Afghan origin ruled in India, but these dynasties were founded by soldiers of fortune who had risen to power under the Turks. The Moguls, too, acquired Afghanistan, or rather, I should say, the country we now call Afghanistan, first, and India afterwards; and while they reigned over India they still held most of the Afghan country, by means of the resources which they drew from India. Much trouble they had in dealing with the Afghans, and it was only the revenues of their great foreign territories which enabled them to keep the tribes in check, partly by bribing them and partly by controlling them; but sometimes they wholly failed to control them and suffered great disasters at the hands of the tribes. They very much utilized the Afghan soldiers, as the English Government did the Highlanders of Scotland. It may be said that under all the Mahommedan rulers of India the Afghan soldiers very much took the place which is now occupied by our European soldiers; and thus

it was that they found their advantage in serving the emperors. It must also be remembered that both the employers and the employed professed the same Mahommedan religion, and altogether the emperors had much more in common with their subjects than we can have,—so that they had in that respect great advantage over us. The Afghans who settled in India became Indianized and civilized, and acted as a sort of military colonists in support of the Mahommedan government.

In the decadence of the Mogul government the Afghan tribes again asserted their independence, and the great Ghilzye tribe at one time overran Persia, but the Persians again under Nadir Shah conquered and annexed Afghanistan. It was after the death of Nadir Shah that the Afghan Ahmed Shah Duranee established a kingdom of his own, and then we first hear of the country of Afghanistan. Ahmed Shah became a great conqueror, claimed the title of Shah or King, and as we know repeatedly invaded India, broke the Mahratta power in the year 1759, and apparently had India at his feet. It has always been one of the greatest puzzles of history why he failed to take advantage of that position. I believe the truth was that his dominion had so little strength or union among his own Afghans at home, that it was inherently weak. He was strong to conquer for a time, but he could not keep his forces together. Under his

successors his kingdom soon became very weak. Although he had left Dehli to the Mogul, and had abandoned the Empire of India, still the country to the west of Delhi—the Punjaub and all the plains of the Indus, with Cashmere and the hill country to the north,—were attached to Afghanistan. But very soon the Sikhs made themselves independent in the Eastern Punjaub; and when in the present century Runjeet Singh rose to power as a great Sikh ruler, and established a regularly disciplined army, he soon conquered the Western and Southern Punjaub, Mooltan and Cashmere; and eventually crossing the Indus he conquered the proper Afghan country of Peshawur, Kohat, and the rest at the foot of the hills. Sinde fell away from the Afghan kingdom, Beloochistan became independent, and altogether it was sadly reduced.

Without the command of money it is impossible to control the Afghan tribes, and so it was that when the dominions of the King of Cabul were thus lopped off, they expelled their king and he became a refugee in our territory, till we tried to reinstate him and brought him to an unhappy death at Cabul, in 1842, under circumstances which are well known. After the expulsion of the Shah, the family of Dost Mahomed did not claim the title of King, but were content with the lower title of Ameer or chief. In truth there was not one Ameer, but several Ameers. Cabul was under one ruler, Candahar under another, Herat under

another, and Balkh for a time was lost. Dost Mahomed was a very remarkable man, and he gradually recovered all these places, but it was not till the very last days of his life that he took Herat. Neither he nor any other Ameer have made the least pretence of ruling over the great mass of the Afghan tribes who hold the country adjoining India from Swat in the north to Quettah in the south. I mean, not only that they have exercised no effective rule, but that there has been no pretence of any feudal sovereignty over the tribes; on the contrary, unable to restrain or influence them, the Ameer has always disclaimed all responsibility for them.

When, after the vicissitudes and changes of fortune subsequent to Dost Mahomed's death, Shere Ali at last established himself as the successor of the Dost, he certainly showed some personal strength and courage, if not other qualities. With the aid of the money and arms which he obtained from us, and with our example before him, he did something towards establishing what was supposed to be a reformed system and a regular army, and certainly held his own a great deal longer than might have been expected; but the proof of the utter rottenness of the reformed system is evident in the result of his collision with us. His power fell to pieces at the very first touch. He did not fight at all. His government was, as it proved, hopelessly feeble and rotten.

The truth is, that in Afghanistan the only chance of exercising a considerable authority is when power falls into the hands of a very strong and wise man with money at his command. Without plenty of money, not an angel from heaven could rule that country.

THE GEOGRAPHY OF AFGHANISTAN.

Let us try to realize something of the geography and people of this country which we call Afghanistan. In doing so we must always remember that the Afghanistan of the Ameer is not by any means the country of the Afghan people. On the contrary, most of the Afghan people are outside the Ameership, while the Ameer has ruled over a good many countries which are not Afghan in their population.

The geography is so complicated a congeries of hills that it is very difficult to describe it. To the north is the great Caucasian range. Any one who looks at the map of Asia sees that the great backbone, represented to the north of India by the Himalayas, is continued by the Indian Caucasus or Hindoo Coosh to the north of Cabul, and thence through the north of Persia and the Kurd country into Armenia and the Russian Caucasian province. To the north-east of Afghanistan the peaks approach very nearly the highest in the world,

reaching the altitude of upwards of 28,000 feet; and on the borders of that country the great peak of Nanga Parbat, or "naked mountain"—a prominent object from the Peshawur Valley—is marked on Colonel Walker's map as 26,629 feet high. The passes over the higher ranges are never less than 16,000 or 17,000 feet. We have no survey of the range to the north of Afghanistan, but no doubt it somewhat diminishes in height as it proceeds westward. The easiest pass north-west of Cabul, leading to Bameean and Turkestan, is a little over 12,000 ft. high; and the neighbouring mountains are about 20,000 ft. West of that again we know little of the mountains, but they seem to be inaccessible till, as the range approaches Persia, it becomes for a space considerably lower. Connecting with this range, just after it leaves India, is the mountainous country of Afghanistan, in which, from north to south, one range succeeds another in close proximity. The Sufeid Koh range south of the Cabul River is upwards of 15,000 ft. high, while the ranges of the Suleimanee farther south, so far as we know them, seem to run to 11,000 and 12,000 ft.

It is the characteristic of many mountain ranges that they are, as it were, tilted up on one side, with high elevated plateaus on the other side, often containing lakes without an exit. That is notably so in regard to the Himalayas—very precipitous on the Indian side, while Tibet behind is a rugged

and very elevated plateau. Farther west the steep side of the Caucasus is towards Turkestan and the Oxus, and that of the Afghan ranges is towards India, while much of Afghanistan is elevated. Taking the country from the slopes of the Caucasus to Beloochistan, it may be said that parallel to the Indus there is a breadth of about 200 miles of mountain country of the steeper and more difficult character. The whole of this country is one mass of the steepest and most inaccessible mountains, intersected by very deep and low gorges, and with very scanty valleys scattered among them. It all drains towards the Indus, and the main ranges run east and west. Consequently the few difficult routes through the country also run east and west, while north and south there is scarcely any communication, the physical difficulties being almost insuperable. It may generally be said that the further we go south the less insuperable are the difficulties of this country. The most practicable passes are towards the south; and in Beloochistan the country becomes a good deal more practicable. I have said that this tract, draining towards the Indus, is about 200 miles in breadth, from east to west. We then come to the watershed, and west of the watershed is a high country which cannot well be called a plateau, for it is interrupted by ridges and much accented, but still in a rough way it may almost be described, for want of a better term, as a sort of

plateau. The heights of the different places in this country, as marked on the map, will generally be found to be within the range of 5500 ft. to 7500 ft. in altitude. A considerable portion of this tract immediately south of Ghuznee drains into an inland lake without an exit, called the Abistadeh Lake, situated about 6500 ft. above the sea. This country is in the direct line between Ghuznee and Quettah. Being at an elevation so comparatively uniform, there are no such great mountains and great depressions as in the country farther east, and, difficult though it be, there are some sort of communications through this tract; so that from Quettah or Pisheen you may go to Ghuznee without anywhere ascending or descending on a very great scale; and the main road from Cabul to Ghuznee and Candahar runs over this elevated tract. Cabul is at a height of 6400 ft., Ghuznee about 7500 ft., and Khelat-i-Ghilzye again about 5800 ft. West of Ghuznee the country drains south-west into the Helmund and Turnuk Rivers, and so into the inland sea or Lake of Zurrah, in Seistan. Towards Candahar and Seistan this country descends considerably, Candahar being about 3000 ft. above the sea, while the Zurrah Lake is apparently only about 1200 ft. Between the hills which drain to the south and the main range of the Caucasus is the valley of the Harirood, in the western part of which Herat is situated. This river runs a long way from east to west, near

and parallel to the main range of the Caucasus, much as the Cabul River on the other side runs from west to east. Further on the Harirood runs into the north-east corner of Persia, and thence loses itself in the deserts of Turkestan, passing through in fact the only gap in the Caucasian range—about the point where the Turcomans have been in the habit of entering and harrying Persia. It must be remembered, however, that a considerable range of hills intervenes between Herat and the valley of the Helmund, on the way to Candahar, while the direct route from Herat to Ghuznee and Cabul passes over almost impracticable mountains; so that there is not really a complete gap in the mountain barrier. It must also be borne in mind that there is not, as some people seem to suppose, a clear road between Herat and Merv. On the contrary, there is a high portion of the Caucasus between the Herat Valley and Turkestan.

Col. Abbott, who travelled from Herat to Merv, prudently declines, for strategical reasons, to give details of the mountain route; but as he congratulates himself much on safely getting over the pass "where many have perished in the snow," it is evident that this crossing is high and difficult.

On the north face of these mountains the Murghab River has its sources, and that river loses itself in the desert of Turkestan, about the place which we mark in our maps as Merv. In former days, when all these countries were much more moist and

fertile than they are now, and the water was better preserved and utilized, the damming of the Murghab supplied ancient Merv and probably gave the means of a considerable cultivation. Now all these countries have been much desiccated, and the irrigation works have gone very much to ruin. There is a half-ruined Turcoman village somewhere not far from the site of ancient Merv, to which we give that famous name.

Streams from the northern face of the Indian Caucasus also supply the means of irrigation to Balkh, Khulm, and the other cultivated tracts of Afghan Turkestan — that is, the country between the mountains and the Upper Oxus; but these streams are all absorbed by irrigation before they reach the Oxus. The banks of the Oxus itself, in that part of its course, are for the most part desert and little inhabited. It is for that reason that the Oxus as the boundary between Afghanistan and Turkestan (so settled between ourselves and the Russians) is a very suitable boundary—far more suitable than are most river boundaries.

Badakshan and Wakhan farther east are hilly countries of the high Oxus, lying on the slopes of the Caucasus running down towards that river.

THE PEOPLES OF AFGHANISTAN.

Strange as it may seem, after all our experience of Afghanistan, by far the best account of the

country and the people as a whole, in fact I may say the only systematic account of Afghanistan in one view, is Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone's "Kingdom of Cabul," the result of his visit to the Afghan borders in the year 1808. There was then still a kingdom of Cabul in the sense which I have mentioned, that is a potentate with more or less authority in the valleys and accessible parts of the country, who claimed a feudal superiority over the tribes, and who, in addition to all the territories which we now reckon in Afghanistan, still possessed part of the western and all the southern portions of the Punjaub, Moultan, Cashmere, Sinde, and in some sort Beloochistan; but he was little able to hold his own, and his dynasty was tottering to its fall.

Mr. Elphinstone fully describes the extremely limited character of the kingly authority in Afghanistan proper, and the very democratic system of the Afghan people; see particularly chapter 2 of his second book, on "the divisions and government of the Afghan nation," and in the second volume more detailed accounts of the political system and practices of the Eusofzais, Duranees, Ghilzyes, and other leading tribes. He explains that in some of the tribes in more immediate connection with the king, the king had to some degree the privilege of selecting the principal chief from among the members of the oldest family, while in other septs or oolooses the chief

was elected directly by the people. The heads of the inferior divisions, the clans and subdivisions of clans, were, he tells us, always elected. In any case the government was of the most democratic character. The government of the ooloos and of the clan was carried on by assemblies of chiefs and headmen called Jeerghas — a popular representative body which our frontier officers very well know ; but it seems after all that the members of the Jeergha are hardly representatives, but rather delegates; for according to Elphinstone it is only in matters of small importance that the Jeergha can act without consulting their constituents. In matters of more importance he says the sentiments of the whole tribe are ascertained before anything is decided. He adds that "throughout all the tribes the clannish attachment of the Afghans, unlike that of the Scotch Highlanders, is rather to the community than to the chiefs, and though in their notion of their khan the idea of a magistrate set up for the public good is certainly mixed with that of a patriarchal and natural superior, yet the former impression will always be found to be the strongest."

The Jeerghas are not only political but also judicial in their functions. Criminal and other trials are, as Elphinstone fully explains, conducted by judicial Jeerghas.

Elphinstone also explains the distinction, which he draws somewhat broadly, between the Eastern

and Western Afghans. The Eastern Afghans are those who inhabit the rugged country draining towards the Indus, which I have described. Most of them are agricultural rather than pastoral ; so far as the limited soil at their disposal permits, they raise crops and fruit. A great part of their subsistence is derived from the fruit of the mulberry-tree, dried and pounded. Their means of subsistence are so scant that they must live much on their neighbours, either honestly by service or dishonestly by plunder. They are, even among Afghans, more especially democratic and independent and very combative, constantly carrying on little wars amongst themselves. The Western Afghans, on the other hand, who occupy the elevated country to the west and the slopes down towards Seistan, are more pastoral in their habits, and having given reigning families to the country, have become more accustomed to some sort of kingly rule in the sense of owning fealty to a feudal king. These Western Afghans are mostly comprehended in the two large septs of the Ghilzyes who occupy the country near Ghuznee and Cabul, and the Duranees, formerly called the Abdallees, who have the country about Candahar and from thence westward.

All modern accounts make it clear that the Afghans are still just the same people as they were in Elphinstone's time, except that, having got rid of the semblance of a king of the whole country,

they are even more independent and uncontrollable in their ways than they then were. The Eastern Afghans have, as I have stated, ceased to have any connection with the ruler of Cabul, and they either govern themselves or are not governed at all.

Considering the many waves of population and conquest which have passed over the country, it is not surprising that there are few parts of Afghanistan in which the population is not more or less mixed; but it may be said that the Afghans proper, or Pashtoo-speaking people, form the main population of the country, from the valley of the Cabul River on the north to about latitude 30° in the south, and from the plains of the Indus on the east to near Ghuznee, Kelat-i-Ghilzye, and Candahar on the west. In fact, a great deal of the central portion of this country has been held by the tribes in so independent a fashion, that it has never been explored. We know nothing of the country of the Wazeerees and some other tribes.

In the Duranee country, from Candahar westward, the population is more mixed, the dominant Duranees being a pastoral population, while the arable lands are a good deal cultivated by other races, as is indeed the case throughout a great part of the whole country west of the watershed.

It is impossible to estimate the numbers of the Afghans proper. We know nothing of a great portion of them. They are generally taken to be from a million and a half to two or three millions,

of whom one portion are British subjects in the submontane tracts; another and very large portion are independent; and another portion have generally been more or less subject to Cabul, —rather less than more.

The Afghans are physically a very fine people. There is probably no finer race in the world, and that they should be so, in spite of poverty, poor food, and the absence of washing, is a curious physiological fact. The climate no doubt is a very fine one, tending to robustness.

They have the character of being avaricious, mercenary, treacherous, and predatory. Avarice is the result of poverty combined with energy and ambition. Situated as they are, and long accustomed to serve as mercenary soldiers, it is not unnatural they should be mercenary; and so they are in an extreme degree. They can generally be bought over to anything except the surrender of the independence of their own hills; and one great cause of their weakness as a people is that every Afghan assumes as a matter of course that every other Afghan is open to an offer, so that no man trusts any other man. Treacherous, too, they are, for they have so long held the passes leading from inner Asia to India, and have been so accustomed to be bought by the many rival powers passing that way (who find it cheaper to buy them than to fight them), that it is scarcely surprising that one bargain is apt to be superseded by a

better offer. Predatory they are by nature and necessity—plunder they will always get when they can. On the other hand, they have much pluck, industry, and enterprise. Under favourable circumstances they make excellent soldiers; they make the most of their poor hill-glens, and carefully tend the orchards which supply a great trade in preserved fruits; and as pushing and hardy small traders, who find their way into the farthest part of India, they are unrivalled.

They are almost all of the Soonnie or orthodox sect of Mahommedans; but their religion sits very lightly on them. They are more governed by their own customary laws than by the Mahommedan Code, and seem just as ready to sell their swords to an unbeliever as to any one else, even though it is to fight against believers. It is generally said that if an Afghan is employed to cut a throat, he will do so with the most entire absence of religious prejudice. They have, however, their own religious ideas, and seem to be very fond of holy shrines. The story is either true or well found which represents the people of an Afghan village, jealous of their neighbours who possessed such shrines, as having caught a holy man, killed him, and set up his shrine and worship in their village. We are far too much given to attribute religious fanaticism to all Mahommedans; indeed, in all countries such fanaticism is most frequently developed when it

also serves as a political bond; and among the Afghans especially, fanaticism is much more political than religious. Like many other matters, this is, however, very much a question of race, and there seems to be a good deal more of real religious feeling among the Eusofzyes and other north-eastern Afghans, whose blood has been a good deal mixed with the aborigines of their valleys, by descent Indians,—a more imaginative race. I think that almost all the assassinations on the frontier that have seemed to partake of a character of religious fanaticism have been perpetrated by people of these north-eastern tribes.

After the Afghans the most important people of Afghanistan are the Persian-speaking populations, who are probably almost as numerous in Afghanistan as a whole as the Afghans themselves, and are certainly much more numerous in the territories which were ruled over by the Ameer. I have used the term "Persian-speaking" because we must not confound these people with the modern Persians, of whom there are only a few in the towns and some outlying portions of the country. We may, however, fairly apply the term "Persian," in a large sense, to the great old Persian race as distinct from the Persians of modern Persia. These old Persians were a very great people, and occupied, besides modern Persia, Bactria and the neighbouring countries; in fact, not only most of what we now call Afghanistan,

but almost the whole of Turkestan. They have been conquered by Turks and Mongols, but their descendants still remain in all these countries, forming a large part of the cultivating and trading population, and everywhere retaining dialects of their own Persian language. The Persian is a charming language—charming in its simplicity as well as in other qualities: it may be called the English of the East; and none who have once had the advantage of using it seem ever to abandon it. Modern Persia is a part of old Persia which, like the rest, was conquered and overrun by Turkish tribes, who still form the dominant race in Persia. But the Persian language prevailed there—the people of Persia now speak Persian, except in parts of Western Persia, where the immigrant tribes retain their Turkish tongue. The nationality of modern Persia is in a great degree due to the adoption by these Persians of the Sheeah form of Mahommedanism, by which they are separated in bitter feud from all their neighbours. The Turkish conquerors, like the Normans in England, have become amalgamated with the Persians, and so has been formed the modern Persian people.

Outside of the limits of this modern Persia the old Persians retain their self-government in some degree only where they have had the protection of inaccessible hills. It may be said that they still occupy the whole range of the Caucasus, from the borders of Turkey to the borders of India.

I do not know if the Armenians are allied to the Persians, or whether among the variety of race and language which prevail in the Russian Caucasus, any peoples of Persian origin are to be found; but the languages of the Kurds show them to be a Persian race, and in the hill country in the north of Persia we have the most Persian of modern Persians. Further east, the Eimaks and Hazarehs, tribes occupying a portion of the Caucasian range up to the vicinity of Ghuznee and Cabul, are Persian-speaking, but not pure Persians, as their features evidently show. They have strong Mongolian traits. This is said to be the result of an immigration of Tartars which took place in the time of Chengis Khan. They must have amalgamated with the aboriginal Persians, and the language of the latter prevailed. I have not learned much of the Eimaks, but they seem to be allied to the Hazarehs, and the Hazarehs are well known, not only because they were frequent at Cabul during our occupation there, but because they come down in search of work to the Punjaub territories, where they make capital labourers. A Hazareh navvy is said to be better than any native of India. In the character of labourers, at any rate, they are a useful and pleasant people.

The Kohistanees, or Highlanders of the hill country north of Cabul, are old Persians without the intermixture of blood which makes the Hazarehs a separate people; and again further

east, Badakshan and Wakhan, and it may be said the whole of the northern face of the Indian Caucasus till we reach Tibet, are inhabited by this old Persian race. Affinities of language seem to show that the interesting race of Kaffirs, or unbelievers, of the high ranges—that is, the aboriginal race never converted to Mahommedanism — are also of this ancient Persian stock. All these hill tribes retain the robustness of the original race. In a tamer condition the same race forms the mass of the cultivators of the valley of the Harirood and the neighbourhood of Herat, and also of the more southern province of Seistan. They form a large proportion of the agricultural population of the valleys about Cabul and Ghuznee; in fact, of the whole of Afghanistan except the portion bordering upon India. They also occur about Balkh and the other cultivated portions of Afghan Turkestan as well as farther north. They are always quiet and good cultivators. In Afghanistan and some parts of Turkestan, they are generally called "Tajiks," while in the further parts of Turkestan the same people are known as "Sarts" and are frequently described under that name. They are also known under the general name of Parseewans or Persians. They are all Soonnie Mahommedans (in that respect entirely differing from their cogeners the Sheeahs of Persia) excepting only the Kaffirs, and also I may add, the Parsees of Western India. This

latter race seems to have emigrated into India rather than accept Mahommedanism. A little difference in spelling often prevents us from recognizing a word, but the words Parsee and Parsee-wan are really identical with our Persi and Persi-an. Just so we find it difficult to recognize the same word in the Turkish Spahi, the French Cypayè, and the English Sepoy, properly Sipahi.

The people of Indian race found in the northern and western borders of Afghanistan are now converted to Mahommedanism, but throughout the country Hindoo bankers and traders, still retaining their own religion, are everywhere more or less found.

In Afghan Turkestan, besides the Persian population which I have already mentioned, there is a considerable population of Uzbegs, the race of Turkish conquerors from whom the country came to be called Turkestan; but these Uzbegs seem now to be settled down as a tolerably peaceful people.

I need hardly mention the Belooches as part of the population of Afghanistan; as Beloochistan has for many years been quite independent of the Afghans; but some of our maps, include, I think, in the extreme south a little of the country bordering on the Lower Punjaub, which is really held by Belooch tribes. I may say of the Belooches generally, that it is well known to our political officers that they are in their character

materially different from the Afghans, being much less rabidly independent, if I may so express it, and more amenable to be dealt with through their chiefs.

THE DEMAND FOR RESIDENTS.

Such being the country and people of Afghanistan, let us look to our recent action. As is well known the present complications originally arose out of our demand to station British Residents in Afghanistan. We must quite realize what this means. We must always remember that nearly connected as Afghanistan is with India, the people there must necessarily view these things from an Indian point of view. It is difficult to persuade them that a Resident does not mean something of the same character as that to which the term is applied in India. Now, the British Resident in India is a very well-known character. He is by no means merely the minister or ambassador of a friendly power. He is much more than that. It is his duty to overlook and criticize the native state to which he is accredited. This near supervision and criticism is just what all native governments exceedingly dislike. They are willing enough to submit to our military superiority and political control, but it is the constant overlooking their domestic affairs that they hate; and

all of them who can by any manner of means escape from this supervision, spare no effort to do so. Not only is this the case in regard to the smaller states who have not hitherto been honoured with Residents, but I may instance the case of the large state of Cashmere. That is a state of our creation. It is by its original construction feudatory and tributary to ourselves. It has never been at all refractory or troublesome, but on the contrary has been what I may call a very amenable state. Yet the constant struggle of the Maharajah's life is to escape the infliction of a permanent Resident, in which object he has hitherto, I believe, succeeded, though he submits to a temporary Resident sent up for six months each year. For my part I think it a mistake too much to force Residents on native states. I have always found that if they are to be maintained at all, they get on best when they are left alone with a certain fear before their eyes of that sacred right of rebellion of which the people are deprived when we take the matter in hand. In my opinion, by far the best managed states in India and those most accepted by the people, are the smaller ones which have no Residents. I believe the Russians are much wiser than we in the management of the states in Asia which they have reduced to a protected condition: they have a very effective military control over them, but do not worry them with Residents.

The only case of an Indian Resident which might seem to supply some precedent for Afghanistan is in Nepaul. We have a Resident in Nepaul who is not a master but a British Minister only. We have made in some respects satisfactory enough arrangements with the Nepaul government, namely, that while that state retains its complete domestic independence, it is bound to take no Europeans into its service without our permission, to consult us in regard to any disputes with its neighbours, and especially to submit to our arbitration any disputes with one neighbour, namely, Sikhim. In Nepaul there is a comparatively settled government over a quiet people, and there are no dangerous neighbours. Yet in truth in one respect our relations with Nepaul are somewhat humiliating. The members of our Residency are strictly confined to the neighbourhood of the Residency. The Nepaulese prohibit in the strictest manner any of our officers or any Europeans whatever from travelling about, or, as they would put it, spying in any part of their country, except only the one direct road from the plains to the capital. So strictly do they adhere to this rule, that when I was last in India the officer commanding the division in which Darjeeling is situated, happening when on a visit to that place to have gone a little tour in the hills, either from carelessness or accident, overstepped the Nepaul boundary, and being in Nepaul territory was apprehended by

the Nepaul police and put in guard for the night. The next morning he was taken before the Nepaulese magistrate, when he was graciously released with a warning. The Nepaulese were acting so strictly within rule, that we could make no reclamation. I think we should hardly desire to occupy in Afghanistan a position so humiliating as that which we thus hold in Nepaul. My opinion is, that we should do much better not to demand the admission of a permanent Resident at Cabul or Candahar, if we do not proceed to a military occupation of those places. It would be quite enough for our purposes that we should have access to the territories of the Ameer when occasion requires, and, probably, that we should be permitted to station a British Agent at Balkh to look after frontier matters and settle any difficulties which may arise with the Russians. The population about Balkh is not Afghan, and there are not the same difficulties and objections to a resident Agent that there are among an Afghan population, where, even if the Afghan government consents, the people are apt to make the position a very dangerous one.

Herat too is not a very Afghan place, and, so far as the population is concerned, there would probably be no very great objection to the residence of a British Agent ; but I do not see what would be the advantage of such an Agent, for we have already free access to the neighbouring Persian

territory, and that is really much more convenient for dealing with the Turcoman frontier, to which there is much easier access from Persia than from Herat. Not only is Meshed much nearer to Merv than is Herat, but the Persians hold Surakhs and other places on the immediate border of Turkestan.

I feel however that in truth this question of the Turcoman border requires to be carefully dealt with. Merv, as I have explained, is now a mere name; but the village in the vicinity which we are pleased to call Merv is really a specimen of a class of places which involve important questions with regard to the position of the Turcomans. The Russians have it appears brought under control all the settled Uzbeg Khanates. There remain only the wandering Turcoman tribes of the desert lying between Khiva and the hilly boundaries of Persia and Afghanistan, who though punished have not been brought under subjection, and who, predatory as they are, give a great deal of trouble. We may gather, however, that these people are not altogether incorrigible when they have the means of settling down to an honest livelihood. Considerable numbers of them seem to have settled to cultivation within the Persian borders, and they have considerable cultivated tracts of their own. They have it appears a line of agricultural settlements stretching along the northern face of the hills from Kezil Arvat, the present limit of the Russian military power, eastward to Merv. All along

that line of country streams coming down from the hills give the means of irrigation and cultivation which these Turcomans have utilized, and so formed a number of small settlements. The Merv district upon the larger stream, the Murghab, is a somewhat larger settlement of the kind. The last Englishman who visited Merv, Colonel James Abbot, describes it as a village of about one hundred huts, some twelve miles from the site of Old Merv. There is, he says, considerable irrigation and cultivation, but only the poorer grains are produced, and from his account it appears that far from its being a granary of Asia, as some people have supposed, grain is really brought across the desert from Khiva to Merv and thence into the barren hills lying between Merv and Herat. The Turcomans of the desert have their places of refuge and recruitment in the various oases which I have described along the foot of the hills—thither it is that the Russians may find it necessary to chase them. They have chased them, and are apparently about to chase them again into the smaller oases to the west, and some day they may have ground for chasing them into Merv. That is really the whole question of Merv, about which so much has been said. No doubt we cannot expect that the Russians should submit to allow these people to retain asylums from which they themselves are debarred. While the Turcomans still issue for purposes of plunder it seems quite necessary that

some settlement should be made, and that between the Russians, the Persians, the Afghans, and ourselves an arrangement for, if I may so express it, policing the Turcomans, and if possible settling them down, should be come to.

In another quarter, north of the Caucasus, there is also the prospect of difficulty. The last news is that the Badukshanees have wholly revolted from the suzerainty of the Afghans; which is just what might have been expected, for the Afghan dominion over them is very recent, and never was very complete. Over Wakhan, I believe, the Afghan dominion was purely nominal. In the arrangement that was made with Russia by which Badukshan and Wakhan were reserved to Afghanistan, we counted without the Badukshanees and Wakhanees. If we should try to force them back to Afghan rule it may be that we shall drive them into the arms of Russia. As things now stand, if they have really thrown off the Afghans, it may be necessary that we should establish direct communications with them through British Agents. If we acknowledge their independence, this may not be difficult, for these Persian races are much more tractable than Afghans.

As regards the question of a permanent Resident at Cabul, we must always bear in mind that the Ameer, even with the best intentions, really would have very great difficulty in securing the safety of the mission, while the internal discords among the

Afghans themselves must render the position of any Resident most difficult. In case of commotion and revolution he would find it very difficult indeed to regulate his conduct without giving mortal offence to one party or other. Suppose the variations of fortune which occurred after the death of Dost Mahommed to follow the death of Shere Ali also (and in truth we should expect them to be much more aggravated) how impossible it would be for a British Resident at the capital to hold a safe and impartial position without the support of a military force. Let us not put ourselves in so unpleasant a position.

THE SCIENTIFIC FRONTIER.

Next we come to the scientific frontier, which we are told is not the cause but the consequence of the war. I must examine that question a little in detail.

I set out my views of a safe and scientific frontier in 1849, when we annexed the Punjaub. What I then considered to be the scientific frontier was the upper course of the Indus. General Hamley, an authority very much to be respected, suggests several objections to the Indus as a frontier, but I find that his statement of the case refers entirely to the lower course of the river, where it flows through broad plains separated by a

long distance from the mountains, and where the Indian populations overpass it and are found equally on both sides. I quite admit that the Lower Indus is not a suitable frontier—but my Indus frontier is the Upper Indus, where it divides the lower hill country of the Punjaub and the range known as the Salt range from the mountains and valleys of Afghanistan. In the latitude of Peshawur and Kurram the Indus runs through this hilly country with little or no cultivation on its banks. The Afghan districts beyond the Indus which were conquered by Runjeet Singh, and to which we succeeded, namely, Peshawur, Kohat, and Bunnoo, are valleys surrounded by the Afghan hills, and their cultivation depends on the irrigation which they draw from the hill streams. The population of these districts is really almost wholly Afghan. The Indus, in fact, in this part of its course is a true ethnological boundary, the population on one side being Indian, and on the other side Afghan. Runjeet Singh had in fact held these districts but a short time, and the Sikhs had never thoroughly brought them under control. The civil government was carried on through Afghan Sirdars, and the military government was in the hands of the Italian General Avitabile, who held his own by dint of copious hanging. My proposal in 1849 was to give back these extra-Indian districts to the Afghans, establishing our own scientific military frontier upon the Upper Indus. The Indus is

there a rapid and difficult stream, forming an admirable military boundary. Confined within high banks, it is not so broad or devious as to prevent our bridging it by the aid of modern science. We might have had bridges commanded by our forts. I went, however, a little farther, and proposed a plan by which the Afghan districts which had been conquered by Runjeet were to be given back, not unconditionally, but as fiefs of the British crown, for which homage was to be done, and in consideration of which the Afghans were to be bound to our alliance, and were to be debarred from political relations with foreign powers. My idea was that by a gift on these terms, besides getting rid of an expensive encumbrance, we should not only have given an accession to the means of the ruler of Cabul which might the better enable him to maintain some sort of regular government in Afghanistan, and bind him to us by the obligation of this gift, but also we should have something upon which we could come down in case of any misconduct without the disagreeable necessity of a campaign in the Afghan hills. I also suggested that we should reserve the privilege of marching through these Afghan fiefs in order to block the passes whenever such a step might be considered necessary; and I threw out for consideration that possibly we might establish an easily-garrisoned hill fort at the mouth of the Khyber—a sort of "Porter's Lodge," as I

described it—where would be kept the key of the gate, and admittance given or refused as we should desire. I must admit, too, that at this time I proposed as part of the arrangement that the Ameer should receive a Resident British Minister at Cabul. It is possible that if things had been so arranged at that time, and a very substantial benefit conferred in return for what we asked, things might have settled down on that basis, and the arrangements might now have become permanent and satisfactory to both parties. But perhaps I should say that I am wiser now, and see the difficulties and disadvantages of the British Resident more clearly than I did then.

Lord Dalhousie,—that great man, who was then Governor - General,—himself told me that he approved in principle of my suggestions, and would have preferred the Indus boundary to that which was adopted, if other considerations had not interfered; but he said that the Afghans had come down and given some assistance to the Sikhs during the war, and that this precluded him from making such a concession as I suggested. I have always had the greatest respect for and admiration of Lord Dalhousie, and I have been his follower in most things ; but I must say I think that in this matter he too much sacrificed permanent to passing considerations. After thinking over the matter for thirty years more, I am, I confess, of the same opinion still, and believe that the Indus

would have been the best boundary. I not only admired Lord Dalhousie's great genius, but thought him entirely right in the annexations which he made within India, the Punjaub, the Nagpore country, and the rest—(Oude be it remembered he did not annex: he declined that because he thought we could not justly do it). If, however, that great man had a weakness, it was perhaps in a disposition to carry annexation too far, and I ventured to think him wrong when he overstepped the natural and ethnographical boundaries of India in going beyond the Indus on one side and into Burmah on the other. It is somewhat curious that now, thirty years later, both those extra-Indian annexations have brought us into trouble. It may be that if we had never crossed the Indus in 1849 we should not now be involved in a new Afghan war; and whatever the immediate advantages of the Burmese annexation, if we had not gone beyond India to the Irawady, we should not now be troubled with the question which looms before us in Burmah.

However, as a matter of fact, in 1849 we carried our frontier up to the foot of the Afghan hills, and for the last thirty years we have encountered there the difficulties which I and others anticipated. With our strong and equal hand we have no doubt managed directly to administer the annexed districts as Runjeet Singh never did, but we have have had great trouble with them. For instance,

I am told that the Punjaub criminal returns show more murders than the rest of India, and the one district of Peshawur more murders than all the rest of the Punjaub. The difficulty of bringing the perpetrators to justice is extreme, for I am told that in point of audacious, unblushing, and well-supported perjury a Bengalee is a mere child to an Afghan. These difficulties, however, are trifling compared to those caused by the raids of the hill tribes upon our borders. These raids always have been from the beginning of time, and I am afraid always will be. We have had the most extreme difficulty in devising sufficient means of dealing with the tribes upon our borders. We have tried blocking them out from all traffic with our territory, but that has been only partially successful, and every now and again we are obliged to undertake expeditions into the outer hills. From the time of Sir Charles Napier and Sir Colin Campbell down to the present, these expeditions have always been of the same character, with the same results, or rather *no* results. We always, with much fuss, arrange expeditions, each of which is is to be the really effective and exemplary one, which is to settle the question finally. We always go up into the hills and generally encounter but little resistance in going. When we get into the petty settlements within our reach the hill people disappear with their flocks and herds and goods, and leave us their miserable

huts, upon which we wreak our vengeance, as we do upon any petty crops they may have left, if it is the crop season. When that is done, nothing remains but to go back again. As soon as we turn, the hill tribes are down upon our rear; and thus having marched up the hill, we march down again in a somewhat humiliating way, howled at and fired upon by the Afghans as we go; so with more or less loss we get home again and write a despatch, describing the whole affair as a most successful expedition, crowned by a glorious victory. That has been many times repeated. It must be admitted that this state of things is not very satisfactory, and in spite of our so-called victories the evil has not been cured. But upon the whole the raids and the expeditions are of late years somewhat less numerous than they were before. Some of the hill people we have induced to settle in the lower districts, upon land we have given them. And at any rate we know the worst —we have become accustomed to the situation. There is a limit to the exposed border; and after all it may be said, that these troublesome tribes are rather thorns in our side than a serious political danger. One thing is quite certain, that for offensive action against us, the Afghan tribes are wholly contemptible. No two tribes ever seem to be capable of uniting against us for offence, and if ever they did unite, they would still be entirely contemptible enemies down in the plains. There

a single division would very easily dispose of them.

That was the position till the other day. Now let us see the new position that has been taken up. On the first day of the present session of Parliament, Lord Beaconsfield in the Lords and Sir Stafford Northcote in the Commons made a simultaneous and almost identical announcement, to the effect that the objects of the present war had been already accomplished by the occupation of the points which our troops had reached, and Lord Beaconsfield went on to say that this accomplishment of the object of the war consisted in the occupation of the three main routes between India and Afghanistan, which he said he hoped we should permanently retain. In saying this he referred to the occupation of what are known as the Khyber, Kurram, and Bolan routes. Now as a matter of fact, the Kurram is certainly not one of the three main routes between India and Afghanistan, for the plain reason that by this route Cabul and the upper country are only reached over a succession of difficult passes, the highest of which is 12,000 feet high,—say twice the height of the Simplon. It is quite clear that such a mountain pass is not one which can ever admit of an easy and abundant traffic, or of the passage of troops encumbered with baggage and wheeled carriages. This route has never been and cannot be used to any considerable extent for mercantile purposes.

It is in no sense one of the main routes. There are really three main routes, but the principal route lying intermediate between the Khyber and the Bolan is not the Kurram, but a route much further south known as the Gomul or Goleree. We have very little knowledge of this route, and have never surveyed it, but it must be a comparatively easy way to the high tract between Ghuznee and Quettah, for it seems that it is really more used by traders than any other route ; the private traffic that way is I gather larger than by either the Khyber or the Bolan.

I leave the question of the Bolan for the present. Here I desire to examine the effect of our occupation of the Khyber and Kurram routes—especially of the Kurram. The result of that arrangement is that we have projected our occupation along narrow valleys far into the hills, and have taken possession in each case of long strips of country which may be described as all length and no breadth. The result evidently is and must be a great multiplication of our old difficulties; for whereas we have hitherto had comparatively short lines of frontier along the foot of the hills, we have now, by running very far up into the hills at several points, made that frontier several times longer than it was before. The result has been, and must continue to be, that we have had many more collisions with many more tribes than ever we had before; for we come into contact with a

great many tribes whom we had not before touched. The accounts which we almost daily receive sufficiently evidence that this is the state of things. Every two or three days the telegraph brings us an account of a fight with this tribe or with that. The general result seems to be that 200 or 300 of the natives are killed to two or three on our side. Sometimes our loss is more considerable. Correspondents have been brought under military control, and we are not permitted to know the truth of these things; but from such accounts as we have I am rather inclined to fear that some of the actions in which the losses on the two sides are so utterly disproportionate, are little more than attacks by our troops on villagers who have not at once made submission. Other affairs have been more serious. For instance, I believe there is no doubt that the expeditions we undertook against the Affreedees of the Khyber, whom we attempted to punish in the Bazaar and Teerah hill valleys, really were a failure, ending in our retreat for strategical and political reasons. It is well understood, too, that a good deal of such success as we have had with the tribes has been achieved as much by bribing as by fighting. The many small fights which are grandiloquently described in the telegrams may be exhilarating to our troops, but they are by no means so to the Afghans. On the contrary, they must inevitably lead to a very great bitterness and deep hatred.

The most notable instance of the impolicy of this petty style of warfare is General Roberts's expedition into the Khost Valley. In former days, in connection with operations on the other extremity of India, I have had the pleasure of knowing and appreciating General Roberts's military qualities. He was then in a subordinate position, and no one man could have been better; but I must say it now seems that, having risen somewhat suddenly to high military and political command, he appears to have been left too unbridled, and not only to have carried his military action improvidently far, but to have dabbled too much in politics to which he was not bred. The Valley of Khost is far away in the hills, altogether apart from our former frontier, and also quite off the line of the Kurram route to Cabul. The inhabitants of that valley had given us no cause of offence whatever when General Roberts undertook their subjugation. The descriptions of the correspondent of the *Standard* probably were highly coloured, but in the main I cannot see that they have been at all contradicted. General Roberts's telegrams did in fact confirm the main portion of the correspondent's statements. There seems no doubt whatever that General Roberts did carry fire and sword into that comparatively peaceful and happy valley—if such a term can be applied to any Afghan valley; that he did burn, destroy, and plunder a number of villages and

killed many of the inhabitants. I had assumed that the justification of these proceedings would have been that the Afghans had committed atrocities according to the military code which we choose to set up; that is to say, that not being able to meet us in open stand-up fight according to the fashion which suits us best, they had carried on a guerilla warfare, and cut off our stragglers, &c., according to the fashion which suits them best, but which we do not recognize. Somewhat to my surprise, I find from General Roberts's dispatch that this is not so. In that despatch he does not allege any atrocities on the part of the Afghans as a reason for the severe punishment which he had avowed that he meted out to them; their original offence was that "it was very evident that the arrival of the British forces was not a welcome event to the inhabitants of the country." On the contrary, they collected in the villages and allowed the neighbouring hill tribes to collect there in a way that was deemed to imply an inclination to resist the forcible annexation of the country. It was upon that ground that the British troops attacked them, and treated them with such extraordinary severity. I must say I cannot see what justification we can have for carrying on war in a manner so contrary to civilized usages in a district where we were acting simply with the desire to annex new territory. After all, it turned out that General Roberts in going into Khost had attempted

what was beyond his means, and he was obliged to retreat in a somewhat ignominious way. The result certainly must be to leave memories of bitter hatred among the people of Khost without our having accomplished any object whatever.

Not only did we thus come into collision with tribes in the very heart of Afghanistan with whom we had no previous quarrel, but the result was to stir up all the hornets about, and as an immediate consequence of this expedition the great tribe of the Waziris made a serious and successful raid into our own territories on the other side of the hills.

The whole Kurram movement was, I think, a mistake. We have scattered our forces imprudently. We should have done much better to concentrate them on the Khyber and the Bolan, both of which are far more practicable routes. Of the Khyber this at least may be said, that it is the only route practicable for guns and carriages, and that it is that which has always been followed. It does not involve the surmounting of passes at a great elevation, but only the ascent to Cabul through passes difficult but not impracticable. Of the Bolan I shall speak presently. Here I will only add, that about Candahar also it has seemed to be a strange policy to allow of advances to Gharisk and other places, involving disagreeable collisions with the people followed by retreat. That can only irritate and embolden the tribes. We should have been in a better position if we had

halted quietly at Candahar, unless we had resolved to advance to Cabul. I suspect the Afghans may with some truth suppose that we have a sort of superstitious dread of Cabul.

Taking a purely military view of the occupation of the occupation of the three routes through the hills, it is not for me to attempt to determine the matter by arguments of my own. On this subject I appeal to the authority of General Hamley and other scientific military authorities, who have, I think, very clearly shown the extreme strategical objections to the plan of occupying separately all three routes, if we are not to do more than that. Besides the constant exposure to attacks on either side of a very long line of occupation on each route, what they specially dwell upon as fatal to the plan is the entire want of lateral communication between the forces occupying the different lines. The Khyber route is separated from the Kurram route by the Sufeid Koh range, the height of which is so great and so uniform that there are absolutely no passes through or over it whatever. It appears to maintain throughout its length a pretty uniform altitude of about 15,000 ft., so that the force stationed along the Khyber route is absolutely cut off from that on the Kurram. The Kurram route communicates with Cabul, and the upper country only over the Shutergurden pass, 12,000 ft. high, blocked by snow great part of the year, and at its best only practicable for very light

traffic. It is literally the fact that General Roberts's force cannot communicate with that of Sir Samuel Brown's by any other means than either by going back through Kohat and Peshawur and up the Khyber again, or else over the Shutergurden and back to the Khyber through Cabul. On the other side we cannot tell the height of the mountains and the character of the passes between the Kurram and the Gomul or Goleree route, simply because that is an inaccessible country, to this day wholly unexplored, and regarding which we are almost entirely without information. It may certainly be assumed that it does not admit of easy military communications. That being so, it is scarcely surprising that no responsible military men have been found to advocate this plan of occupying the three routes, so far as I have been able to learn. The only man of authority who did, I believe, some years ago when he was a younger man and had not his present experience advocate the occupation of the Kurram Valley, was General Peter Lumsden, the present Adjutant-General in India ; but I am told that in his late letters he expresses an opinion decidedly adverse to the positions which we have take up. Lord Napier of Magdala's opinion seems to be decided on the point. He was long in favour of holding on to our Indian frontier. Now his opinion has advanced, and he argues that we must place our frontier beyond the tribes whose hostility gives so much

trouble, and says, "it is for the interest of the empire that when the day for the struggle comes we should fight our battles beyond the mountain barrier. I think it necessary for the interests of our Indian Empire that we should advance beyond the mountain barrier and fight the battle of India outside and not inside of it." This view, then, is that if we advance at all we must take up positions, not merely within the mountain passes but beyond them.

In addition to the strategical disadvantages of the plan for holding these different routes through the mountains, another great objection is the unhealthiness of the hot and narrow valleys. Peshawur has always been a most unhealthy place, which has created great havoc among our troops, and already we have begun to experience the same difficulty in the more advanced posts. This, too, seems to be a strong reason why we should either not advance at all, or advance further into the higher and healthier country.

Certainly this plan for occupying the three routes is not dictated by military science.

Well, then, if this new frontier which we have now occupied is not scientific from a military point of view, is it a scientific frontier from a political point of view? On this subject I am able to quote a very high authority, no less than the real author of the plan of the scientific frontier. Dr. Bellew has accompanied several missions into Afghanistan,

has probably seen more of these hills than any other man, and so far as his knowledge goes there certainly could be no better authority. It is generally understood, I may say known, that he is the only man whom Lord Lytton has very fully admitted into his confidence in this matter. It seems that some years ago Dr. Bellew had published his opinions on the subject of the frontier, and now, after the advantage he has had of full communication with Lord Lytton, and with a complete knowledge of what is going on, he has republished his views in the form of a little pamphlet which has been sent to me from India. Reading that pamphlet I have found to my surprise that the idea of "rectifying" the frontier in order to obtain "a scientific frontier" which we had attributed to Lord Beaconsfield, is really plagiarized from Dr. Bellew, whose letters, published years ago, are entirely devoted to urging this plan—the terms "scientific frontier" and "rectification" being those which he continually repeats. Let us see, then, what Dr. Bellew's plans are. First, I may quote him as showing with much greater authority than I can the objections to a mere occupation of the routes through the hills according to the present plan. He says :—

"The Kurram Valley would involve the addition of about 150 miles of hill frontage to our border, and would bring us into contact with the independent Orakzais, Zaimukhts, Toris, Cabul-Khel,

Waziris and others, against whose hostility and inroads, here as in other parts of the border, we shall have to protect our territory. By its possession, as we are now situated, we should be committed to the defence of a long narrow strip of land, a perfect *cul de sac* in the hills, hemmed in by a number of turbulent robber tribes, who are under no control and acknowledge no authority. In ordinary times its acquisition would add to the serious difficulties of our position. In times of trouble or disturbance on the border its possession would prove a positive source of weakness, a dead weight upon our free action. In it we should run the risk of being hemmed in by our foes in the overhanging hills around, of being cut off from our communications with the garrison at Kohat, by the Orakzais on the one side, by the Waziris on the other. These are the disadvantages of the step. In return what advantages should we derive? Not one. With Kurram in our possession, we certainly could not flank either the Khyber or the Goleri pass, because between it and the one intervenes the impassable snowy range of Sufed Koh, and between it and the other intervenes the vast routeless hilly tract of the Waziris. From Kurram we could neither command Cabul nor Ghazni, because the route to either is by a several days' march, over stupendous hills and tortuous defiles, in comparison with which the historical Khyber and Bolan passes, or even the less widely known

Goleri pass are as King's highways. These are the main objections to the adoption of the scheme with our border as it now stands. But let the border be rectified, let the frontier line be reconstructed, and all these objections and disadvantages disappear."

Well, he says that everything is to be put right by rectifying the frontier, and he proceeds to tell us what that means. He says :—

"But what does the rectification of the border mean? What does the reconstruction of the frontier imply? By reconstruction of the frontier is implied the subjection of the border tribes, and the embodiment of schemes for their employment. We must now no longer pursue the course we have hitherto followed. We must now change our policy entirely; we must now alter our tactics altogether. Instead of, as heretofore, settling our border quarrels by expeditions against the offending tribes, we must now, and for the future, take advantage of them to settle our border line. We must, in future, wage war with each offending tribe. We must annex their hills, disarm the people, and reduce the clans to subjection. We must tell them that they are bad neighbours, not fit to be free; that we have tried them for twenty years, and found them habitually abusing their independence; that they are no longer tolerable as neighbours; and that we now come to take their country under our rule, and to reduce them to

subjection. On their subjection, a suitable garrison permanently located in the hills, the people disarmed, a proportion employed as militia and police, &c., &c., form elements in the settlement of the country, and the reconstruction of the frontier. We shall convert a set of lawless hill robbers into prosperous subjects and valuable soldiers. We shall supply all our frontier deficiencies and get rid of all our frontier troubles."

This, at least, is intelligible enough. Dr. Bellew's plan is not merely to hold the passes, but wholly to conquer and occupy the country of the hill tribes and thoroughly to keep them down. My only objection to the plan is that he does not in the least attempt to show how this is to be done. He says "Do it," and stops there. Evidently what he proposes is much easier said than done. It would no doubt be very desirable if it could be done, but we should have a good many very hard nuts to crack before we could do what he proposes. I have heard Afghanistan compared to our Scotch Highlands. I have heard it said, "You put down those troublesome Highlanders and turned their hills into delightful recreation and shooting grounds—why should not you put down the Afghan tribes in the same way?" Well, the objections are that Afghanistan is many times larger than the Highlands of Scotland, that the mountains are many times higher, that the people are far less amenable to authority, that we are

many times more distant from our resources, that the resources and revenues of India are not in the same proportion as the resources and revenues of England, and that you can hardly carry the Afghans across the seas to colonize a new country as you did with the Highlanders, when you substituted sheep for men, and grouse for sheep, and deer for grouse. I confess I am not bold enough to recommend any such attempt in Afghanistan.

On the contrary, I am not for attacking the independent hill tribes at all. It seems to me that in the House of Commons the strong common-sense of Mr. Burt, the Member for Morpeth, brought him very much to the point when he said, that professing as we did to enter into the war only to coerce the Ameer of Cabul, we really have expended most of our energies in fighting the independent peoples of Afghanistan. There can be no doubt of this, that if we attempt a conquest of the tribes in order to obtain a scientific frontier, we must enter on a war which can hardly be said to have yet begun. As I have already remarked, our present positions have been won as much by bribery as by fighting, So long as we do not do more than we have yet done, the tribes which have not specially suffered do not seem to take our proceedings very much to heart; in fact, they have something of the same feeling towards us which hunters may be supposed to have in regard to an invasion of rich fur-bearing animals—they may do

some damage at first, but it is hoped that they will leave their skins behind them in the end. A facetious Special Correspondent, the other day, telegraphed that there was a panic in Afghanistan upon the rumour that we were about to retreat. That, no doubt, was a pleasantry; but it is certainly the case that if we were to attempt to master the interior hills, the war would assume an entirely different character from anything that it has yet had, and the independent tribes would certainly fight very much better than they have yet fought.

I assume, then, that the conquest of the tribes will not be attempted; and if without that thorough measure the occupation of such positions as General Roberts has taken is attended with such difficulties as Dr. Bellew has so vividly painted, we must look elsewhere for the scientific frontier. I am much convinced that if we advance at all we cannot again arrive at a scientific frontier till we reach the high country which I have described, lying further west. There, no doubt, it might be possible to establish a new frontier, beyond and commanding the hills and valleys of the eastern tribes, and situated in a country which would admit of lateral communications between one part and another.

So long as we occupy just enough to irritate without isolating and controlling the tribes, it must almost necessarily be that besides continually

harassing us, they will intrigue with Cabul, while Cabul will intrigue with Russia, and our latter state will be worse than our first. We shall thus be in continual hot water till we are obliged in self-defence, and under pressure of circumstances, to make a farther advance. I shall say something more of the advanced frontier when I come to the "last resort."

POSSIBLE ARRANGEMENTS.

Now comes the question, "It is very easy to object to everything, but what would you do?" I am very clear as to what I would have done a little time ago, and that is—*nothing*. Now that we are involved in the present complications, it is much more difficult to say what should be done, but I will try the best I can.

I have hitherto said nothing of the Bolan pass, and I will now go to that part of the question. In fact, the Bolan is situated very differently from the other routes. The Sulimanee mountains, the habitat of the Eastern Afghans, and the southern extremity of which is held by Belooch tribes, seem to come to a sudden end to the south, at a point between the 28th and 29th parallels of latitude. There seems to be there a sort of retrocession of the mountains. The high outer range disappears, and the plain country takes a long stretch to the

west. The Bolan pass, instead of running like the others for a couple of hundred miles through the great outer barrier of mountains, 12,000 ft. to 16,000 ft. high, consists of a much shorter ascent from the plains of Cutch-Gundava to the high quasi-plateau country. The route from Shikarpore, near the Indus, to Dadar, at the foot of the Bolan pass, though easy enough in winter (the difficulty of obtaining carriage apart), is said to be very hot and unhealthy in summer, and to be very much flooded during the high Indus. But that part of the route would easily be surmounted by a not very expensive railway, which is certainly quite necessary if we are to make a permanent advance in that direction. From Dadar upwards the first part of the route seems to be very gradual, and apparently there is only some thirty or forty miles of considerable ascent to Quettah, which is above the pass, at the height of 5500 ft. The country through which the hilly part of this route passes is a Belooch country very sparsely inhabited; and though not free from predatory habits, the Belooches are much more tractable and easy to manage than the Afghans. In fact, we have already both by treaty and by occupation complete access to the Belooch country, and there would not be difficulty on that score. At Quettah we are in our right; in occupying it we have done that which we have full treaty right to do. That, at any rate, is a great advantage. Whatever objections

I have hitherto entertained to any advance into countries beyond the natural limits of India, I have always reserved the question of Quettah; and I am free to confess that now that we have gone so far, I think that either Quettah or some better cantonment in that part of the country should be permanently occupied in strength and connected with India by thoroughly efficient means of communication. Just look at the map and it will be seen how extraordinarily commanding a position this about Quettah is. The border line of the Afghan hills, which from Peshawur to the southern extremity of the Punjaub runs nearly north and south, has here so far retroceded, that Dadar, on the edge of the plains, is considerably to the west of Cabul and Ghuznee, while Quettah and the neighbouring valley of Pisheen are a long way west of those places. Quettah is infinitely nearer to Candahar than are Ghuznee and Cabul. The Khoja Amran range, which lies on the way to Candahar, is about 7500 ft. above the sea, that is nearly 2000 ft. higher than Quettah. No doubt we should hold command of the routes up to that point, and from thence we should be in a position easily to descend at any time to the valleys about Candahar. I cannot see then that there would be any object in going down to Candahar for the purpose of permanently occupying that place. We have a more direct route to Ghuznee and Cabul over the high level country without any great ascent or descent.

There is this great political objection also to the occupation of Candahar, that by doing so we should cut in half the only Afghan country in which any settled government is possible, and thus make such a government impossible.

I quite accept then that it would be desirable to select for an advanced post the best and healthiest site to be found in the neighbourhood of Quettah or Pisheen, 5000 ft. or 6000 ft. high, in a country suitable for the European soldier; and to establish there a considerable cantonment of European and other troops in immediate communication with India, who would thus be able both to guard the passes and to come down whenever they are wanted for Indian purposes, leaving only a garrisoned fort. The railway would be made as far into the pass as possible, and a thorough good road for the short remainder of the distance.

On the other side, to the north, since in 1849 I committed myself to the idea of a "Porter's Lodge" in the Khyber, I will not go back from that now, if the military and political authorities think it practicable. No doubt we have long been in a great dilemma at Peshawur on account both of the unhealthiness and of the very long-debated question whether we are to establish a great fortification there. If we can get rid of the sanitary and military difficulty by establishing a more tenable post at some higher spot in the Khyber hills commanding the pass, possibly it may be a good

arrangement. Further than that I cannot venture an opinion, for I have no intimate acquaintance with the Khyber tribes.

I would certainly abandon the Kurram country altogether. It seems to me that the occupation of that route is emphatically what I have before described as putting your hand into a hornet's nest and keeping it there. This Kurram route takes us into the very heart and centre of the independent country. Established there, we shall continually set the whole nest of hornets in motion outside and inside; we shall continually come into collision with them throughout our whole line of occupation; and continually they will retaliate upon us, on their outer borders towards the Punjaub, as they have already done. By all means let us avoid all positions which bring us into collision with these tribes, where it is possible to avoid it.

Assuming, then, that we hold the Bolan and Quettah, and the mouth of the Khyber, abandon all other positions, and carefully abstain from farther irritation of the tribes, I would then say that if we can find any Afghan government capable of coming to terms with us and controlling the country, we might accept the position and make with that government the terms necessary to our security—viz., that while the Afghans should have full domestic independence, and should not be worried with permanent Residents at their head-quarters, they should guarantee us free communi-

cation when necessary, and access to Balkh and the Turkestan frontier; should engage not to employ Europeans without our permission; and should undertake not to negotiate with any foreign power except through us. If any capable government would make such terms and keep the peace, that would be a very good result; but my difficulty is, that I do not believe that any such government is now possible. I have already shown why I think that, without the command of money and large foreign territory, no permanent government of Afghanistan as a whole is possible. Even if the personal ascendancy of some strong man should be established for a time, by a kind of accident, it cannot last. It may be, though I think it probably will not be, that Yakoob or some one else might establish some sort of authority in the open country about Cabul, Ghuznee, and Candahar; but that he should control even those tribes which have hitherto acknowledged some sort of feudal authority, I think very improbable: and then how about Badukshan and the other outlying territories which have already thrown off the Afghan yoke? So far as we can gather from the recent accounts, there seems to have been a complete revolution in Badukshan, which has wholly got rid of all Afghan authority, and set up for itself. The Balkh country, too, seems to be in a state of anarchy; and Abdoor Rahman, the son of Shere Ali's elder brother and

predecessor for a time, is preparing to invade that country from the side of Turkestan. Any ruler of Cabul who seeks to regain Badukshan and the rest, must reconquer these territories—a very improbable event under present circumstances. However, we are already apparently in the position to put this question to the test, so that I need not seek to argue it at length. All I can say is, that if such a government as I have described can be found, by all means let us avail ourselves of it.

On the other hand, if we do not find such a government, or it does not succeed in maintaining itself without our aid, what I would seek to press in the strongest terms which I can command is, for God's sake don't attempt to establish such a government by means of our influence and support. That would be the most fatal mistake of all. Our experience of the government of Shah Soojah sufficiently shows that. No one, I should say, can read the history of those days without being convinced that we should have been infinitely more likely to hold the main positions in the Cabul country if we had done so ourselves without the intermediary of that unmanageable puppet the king, whom we set up, and whose mismanagement went very far to cause all the evil. We could have dealt with the tribes ourselves infinitely better than through him. Do not let us make this mistake again in dealing with Yakoob or any one else. If any such person can establish himself

without our aid, let him do so; but establish him not by our aid, for if that is done the hand of every man in Afghanistan will be against him. This is the real difficulty in any negotiations with Yakoob. No doubt poor Yakoob, in the unpleasant position he holds, will readily enough agree to terms with us; but how is he to carry them out? If ever a man was, he is between the devil and the deep sea. If he makes terms with us, he has all Afghanistan against him; if he does not, we are prepared to overturn him. It is on that account that I am very distrustful indeed of any arrangements which it may now be possible to make by negotiations with Yakoob or any one else who may take his place.

The last telegrams from India seem to indicate that the Government have resolved to give up Candahar and Jellalabad, and so to cut short the occupation of two of the routes in a way which I think very prudent, if the upper country is not to be occupied; but there remains the Kurram country, which General Roberts (no doubt acting under Lord Lytton's instructions) took upon himself to annex without any authority from Her Majesty's Government, as we have been distinctly told. It surely would be very weak indeed to maintain our hold of most embarrassing positions in order to support an act thus done without authority. The whole question now hinges upon that. So long as we insist on holding the Kurram

route, no amicable settlement with the tribes is possible, and any pretended settlement will only lead to fresh complications.

Yakoob is said to have accepted our terms; and many people jump to the conclusion that, this done, everything is settled. On the contrary, that is the beginning of difficulties. It remains for Yakoob to assert his own position—to go back to Cabul and say, "I have surrendered part of our territory; I have accepted the demand for Residents; I have yielded everything. Now obey me; and having obeyed me, help me to recover the possessions of my father which have revolted from me, to defeat Abdoor Rahman and all other rivals, and to establish a stable government." I hardly expect to see such things effected. However, we shall soon see; and if that fails, then our more serious difficulties will commence.

THE LAST RESORT.

Failing any arrangement of the kind which I have just mentioned, I would again say that in my opinion the difficulties and expenses of an occupation of Afghanistan are so great that, rather than undertake a more extensive occupation, I would leave the country to its fate, holding only Quettah and the mouth of the Khyber, and, trusting to the chapter of accidents. I would risk the difficulties which would now no doubt attend this course rather

than face the greater difficulties which an extended occupation must necessarily involve. But if this may not be—if Her Majesty's Government are not prepared to retire to the line of the real Indian frontier—then in my view, far preferable to the half-and-half plan of holding the several routes through the most difficult and troublesome parts of the country, would be the bolder, more thorough, and more scientific measure of going beyond the mountains and taking up a position on the high land stretching from Cabul through Ghuznee to Quettah. That is what I understand to be establishing a position beyond the mountain barrier, as recommended by Lord Napier of Magdala and others. Ghuznee, the culminating and commanding point of this tract, is the old historical centre from which the country has been commanded, so far as any previous dynasty has really commanded it. From the high line, of which Ghnznee is the centre, no doubt a strong force would command the passes from Central Asia on the one side, and in some degree dominate and isolate the independent Afghan tribes on the other side.

If we thus isolate, as it were, the country of the independent tribes, then I think there is no reason whatever why we should seek to deprive them of their independence, and of those democratic institutions which are their birthright. On the contrary, I would encourage them to develope those indigenous self-governing institutions, democratic though they

be, which form the ancient law of the Afghan race. Under the shadow of our external military protection I would foster those institutions and would seek to establish an Afghan Republic or congeries of Republics. It has always seemed strange to me that we, who so much pride ourselves on our popular institutions, appear to be the last to recognize anything of the kind among other peoples. We seem always in the habit of supposing that all over the world the absolute power of despotic rule is the natural state of things, though nothing can be more contrary to the facts. Our conduct in India, in Turkey, and in Egypt, seems to have been throughout guided by that belief; and in Afghanistan, which is, as I have said, one of the most democratic countries in the world, the greatest danger seems to be in the idea that if we can only find or establish a king and come to terms with him, all will be settled. One would have thought, as I have already said, that our experience of 1841 might have cured us of that delusion. So far then as regards all the country east of Ghuznee, the course which I would follow is to isolate it and make it self-governing and independent. I would hold the Bolan and Khyber routes, but not the Kurram. The Goleree route we might hope to keep open for mercantile purposes only. On the other hand, as regards all the remainder of the country really Afghan, that is the districts about Candahar and thence westward,

consisting principally of the Duranee country, my view would be that as these western tribes have been more accustomed to some sort of kingly rule, and the family of Dost Mahomed are now really the chiefs of the Duranees, I would give every facility to Yakoob, or any other member of the family who may be more acceptable to the people, to establish himself as reigning chief of the Duranees, with the possession of Candahar and all the Duranee districts and dependencies. Herat is hardly properly included in these terms, but that part of the valley of the Harirood seems properly to belong to no other tribe or nationality, and exposed as it is to depredations by the hill men, it could hardly be independent ; so I would seek to make that also a dependency of the Duranee chief of Candahar. With that chief I would make the terms I have before suggested—domestic independence, but political dependence upon us.

At Cabul we should come into close contact with the Kohistanees and Hazarehs of the hill country to the north and west, and might make separate arrangements directly with them ; as likewise with the people of Badukshan and the neighbouring principalities, who are, as I have explained, of the same Persian race as the Kohistanees. I would give to these countries the form of government which the people are found to like best. Possibly some of them might even prefer our rule if fairly

administered with due consideration to their wants and wishes. Both the Kohistanees and Hazarehs have, I think, the reputation of being troublesome and difficult to manage in their own hills, but all this very much depends upon ethnological considerations, and we never can tell how far a people are amenable to quiet rule till they have been fairly tried with it. I may take as an instance of this the example of Oude. Because that country had been filled with baronial mud-forts and given up to extreme lawlessness, the belief was entertained that the population of Oude was very warlike. It was under the influence of that belief that, Lord Clyde being excessively anxious to finish the mutiny campaign, terms were given to the Talookars with arms still in their hands, but really trembling for their lives, which were very humiliating to us, and a great political blunder. This action was the result of an ethnological mistake. Those of us who knew the people knew that they were the same as their cogeners of the districts of Oude which we annexed at the beginning of the century, and they have in fact proved as quiet as any sheep. So it might not improbably be that the Kohistanees and Hazarehs who occupy the great Caucasian range, which is after all the real barrier against invasion from Central Asia, might prove amenable enough. I cannot suppose that such good honest labourers as the Hazarehs are not amenable to fair manage-

ment at home ; and the old Persian race are everywhere a quiet good people whom it is not very difficult to control. They give no trouble to their rulers either in Afghanistan or in Turkestan, and probably might be brought to reasonable self-government, in Kohistan and Badukshan, if they are protected and encouraged.

I have little doubt then that if we must advance on Cabul and Ghuznee, and can find the finances necessary for the maintenance of our position there, we should really command the great Caucasian barrier towards the north without encountering those insuperable difficulties which seem to attend the occupation of any properly Afghan country.

In the event of such an occupation of the strategical positions in Afghanistan as I have contemplated in the last resort, I think we should proclaim that to all those who can in any way successfully govern themselves, we shall give self-government in the form which is most acceptable to each people, and that we shall ask them for no revenue or tribute, and shall not interfere in their domestic affairs, unless it be to arbitrate between them either at their request or where internal disorders render such interference absolutely necessary. On the other hand, we may in some sort bribe them into acquiescence, while utilizing them for our own purposes, by offering to many of them military and other service under ourselves.

That is a consideration which would go very far to reconcile them to accept our political superiority and the protection against external aggression which we should afford them.

I really do seriously hope that under our protection something like successful republican institutions might be maintained. I know that to many who think that free institutions are only for ourselves and not for others, the idea of an Afghan republic will seem somewhat ridiculous; but I would only ask such unbelievers to read Elphinstone's account of the institutions of these people, and satisfy themselves whether, notwithstanding the anarchy and disturbance which have prevailed, democratic institutions do not underlie the whole framework of Afghan society. Things have been so much disturbed that we cannot expect that these people should at once become peaceful, but we might well hope that things would gradually be regulated, and that with self-government the position might be very greatly improved.

Although most of my own early service was passed on what was then the north-west frontier of India, I have never been personally responsible for the management of the tribes on the Afghan border; but when in later years I had to deal with peoples on the other extremity of India, upon the frontiers of Eastern Bengal and Assam, my experience has been that it is quite possible to tame

and regulate tribes which have hitherto been quite unregulated. These Eastern tribes of which I speak are, no doubt in many respects, very different from the Afghans, but many of them are nearly as robust. Like the Afghans of the inner hills, they had never been conquered by the Hindoos or the Mahomedans or any other rulers of India; and in recent days they have raided on our territory and disturbed us quite as much as the Afghan tribes. My experience is that when peoples of this kind are isolated and cut off from the savage countries behind them, it is far best to take them in hand and bring them to regular and peaceful government. Some of these tribes were found to have very democratic institutions which we have very successfully encouraged and developed. I may particularly notice the Cossyas, in the hill country south of Assam. They are a people whose laws of marriage and descent, &c. are of the most archaic description, and who derive what little civilization they have from China and not from the west; but they are now quietly governing themselves under their indigenous democratic institutions, with all the machinery of elections and the rest. We are only troubled by that product of modern civilization, bribery and corruption at elections. The Cossya country is now just as quiet and accessible as the county of Surrey, except that some people have a prejudice against the ordinary

mode of travelling—namely, being carried in a creel upon a woman's back.

I hardly hope that the Afghans would settle down as readily. No doubt they would less readily brook our interference; but gradually a settlement might be effected, and I should not despair that as they gain confidence and belief in our desire to let them govern themselves for their own benefit, their country might become accessible to us like any other country.

The great difficulty of such a plan as I have proposed is of course the expense. That no doubt would be very considerable. And we should practically derive no revenue from the country, for any little that we might collect from the few districts directly occupied by ourselves would be expended on the local administration. For myself I see no objection on principle to making India pay for undertakings which are connected with India and are in some sort intended for the benefit of India. The mother country pays more than her share of the expenses of the empire : we do what we can for India, and India might fairly enough pay her share if she only had the money; but then, as a matter of fact, she has not the money. Her people are undoubtedly very poor. The more I see of other countries, the more I realize the poverty of India and the cruelty of taxing the people more than we can help. The position of

Indian finance is unfortunately such that there is no hope of a surplus, and I do not see that we can fairly raise more taxes in return for the old-fashioned style of government. If it be possible still to raise some further rates or taxes, I think that these should only be obtained, as has lately been done, as a means of paying for additional benefits evident to the people, the money being, in fact, expended by themselves. If Afghanistan were occupied in the way I have mentioned, some considerable saving might be effected in the military expenses in India itself, Afghanistan being henceforth the frontier fortification by which India is shielded and the troops there held ready to send to India, in case of an emergency. The money thus saved in India would be a fair contribution towards the expense of Afghanistan; but no more than this could be derived from India, and any further expenses England would have to pay.

But after all, this is a rich country, not very heavily taxed; and if we would really have a spirited foreign policy, great foreign dominions, and a strong military position, I believe that the occupation of Afghanistan would be an important step towards that object. I speak of the permanent position of this country apart from the present depression; for after all, despite the depression of our industries, we still have capital —money is cheap—the yield of the income-tax does not fail. We still are, and may hope to

remain, the money-lenders of the world. We can bear well enough another penny in the pound upon property if we would have the great position I have mentioned.

It is better, too, that we should honestly realize the fact that whether from the inherent difficulties of our position, or whether from not fully and properly carrying out the system adopted, our present military arrangements are a failure; or, at any rate, even if we have made a successful commencement of the plan of increasing our reserves at home, they are a failure as regards foreign service. The difficulty of supplying a great army in India under the short-service system has never been fairly faced; and on the occurrence of the late African emergency there has been made painfully manifest our entire failure to keep even a few battalions in an efficient state as the next on the roster for foreign service. On the other hand, since the mutiny we have been afraid to employ too many Indian soldiers. We really have not a great native army in India as compared to the country, and the greater part of what we have is not really efficient for severe or foreign service. So it is that having one war on our hands in India, we have been obliged to send heavy dragoons and imperfect regiments of English boys to Africa instead of the light Indian regiments, which, with a nucleus of Europeans, would have been far better fitted for the service. Afghanistan would

certainly offer us several varieties of excellent soldiers, divided by race and language from the Indian soldiers, and also very much divided one from another. We might enlist not only Afghans, but also Kohistanees, Hazarehs, Kaffirs, Beloochees, and even perhaps some Uzbegs—all different nationalities. We might thus carry much further than hitherto the *divide ad impera* policy. We might hold India with the aid of Asiatic non-Indian soldiers. We might station in Afghanistan, in a good climate, a large portion of our European army, assisted by Indian soldiers and perhaps by a native militia. Our resources being in India, regiments stationed in Afghanistan could come down when wanted very lightly equipped; and whereas, at present we really have in India available for foreign service only a very few picked regiments, we might greatly multiply that number from the new populations of the Afghan territories and borders. We might thus make large numbers of good soldiers available for service abroad and lessen the drain upon our own population. That I believe to be really a very great object, if we would combine great foreign possessions and a great position abroad with industry at home. We shall certainly feel the want of men very much indeed if there should be any revival of our manufacturing prosperity. I really believe that we might make a good deal of the plan which I put forward as that of last resort, if we are

willing to pay for it. But pay for it we must. Dost Mahommed used to say that his country produced only two things in abundance—men and stones: the rest we must supply.

SUMMARY.

To sum up. My view is very decidedly that we cannot without great complication and disturbance hold our present position in Afghanistan; that we really must either go back or go forward. I am convinced that to entangle ourselves in the most difficult part of the hills, and to hold a succession of routes through those hills without holding the high lands above, is quite the worst policy of all. Especially I think that the occupation of Kurram Khost and the so-called route that way to Cabul, in the very heart and centre of the real Afghanistan of the Afghans, and surrounded by the most troublesome of the independent tribes, would be the greatest possible mistake. Let us choose then one of two alternative plans—an Indian or an Afghan frontier. In the one case we must concentrate our forces and call off General Roberts. We must not irritate, but conciliate the tribes; and if we are not to surround and isolate them, the best solution is to leave them alone as much as possible, and not push ourselves among them. In that case, still holding Quettah, let us try again, if we will, the possibility of an Afghan state such as that of

the late Shere Ali, claiming to ourselves only access to Balkh and the other terms which I have mentioned. Failing that arrangement — and I greatly fear that it must fail,—then for my part I would leave Afghanistan alone, and see what may come. If that may not be, then I come to the plan which I have described as "The Last Resort," that is, do not try to conquer the independent tribes, but isolate them, and protect them in the exercise of their indigenous institutions. Give up the played-out kingdom of Cabul, and boldly take up a central and commanding position on the high ground about Ghuznee and Cabul, communicating with India by the Bolan and Khyber routes. Let us then put ourselves in direct communication with the more amenable peoples beyond our positions, control them, secure our frontier, and add new races of soldiers to our army. If this must be done, it is probably better that it should be done soon than later.

Such a policy would no doubt be a fine, I may say—a magnificent game. Holding India in a stronger and more dignified way, if our possession of part of Burmah should some day involve a further advance in that direction, we should have the necessary troops. If events are really tending to force upon us a great African empire, we might draw from our Asiatic possessions the troops best fitted for such an undertaking. And if we must hold a great position in the Mediterranean, we

might have a better chance of doing so than when, last year, we sent a single division of native troops there. Such a policy would involve the abandonment of half measures—it would be intelligible enough, and might be tempting enough—but it must be an expensive and risky policy. I only throw it out as the alternative to be considered in the very last resort. I am myself all for economy, peace, and quiet at home, and would only seek to hold India so long as we can do so without being forced into ambitious projects beyond the Indian borders. That was my view in 1849, and that is my view in 1879.

EDWARD STANFORD, 55, CHARING CROSS, S.W.

LRpMy 23