

SOME CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

POLITICAL STATE

OF

THE INTERMEDIATE COUNTRIES BETWEEN

PERSIA AND INDIA,

WITH REFERENCE TO

THE PROJECT OF RUSSIA MARCHING AN ARMY
THROUGH THEM.

BY

Edward
STIRLING, Esq.

"
BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE.

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INTRODUCTION

At a time when our knowledge of the habits and
the character and the habits of the people of
the East is so imperfectly known, it is not
surprising that the public mind is so much
interested in the subject. It is not only
the public mind, but the minds of many
intelligent men have been directed to this
subject. The instructions of my much-esteemed
friend, Sir John Keble, M.D., the late envoy in
Persia, the following is the substance which
I have taken from his letter, which will
make evident the great importance he attached to the
subject of the introduction of the

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To Edward Stirling, Esq. Bengal Civil Service, Esq.
SIR,
Your having informed me of your intention of
returning to India via Khoson and Afghanistan, by the
most practicable route, it appears to me that in the course of
your journey you might be able to acquire such information
concerning the nature and resources of those countries, the
state of the roads, the disposition of the people, &c. &c. as
might be of great value and acceptable to Government, and
the impression I venture to trouble you with a few observations
on a subject which the natural position of affairs in this
country renders of the most ordinary importance.

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INTRODUCTION.

AT a time when our knowledge of the states between the Caspian and the Indus is daily increasing, and our intercourse with these long-secluded countries every year becoming greater, I am induced to offer these pages on a subject to which the attention of many intelligent men has been directed. They were written under the instructions of my much-regretted friend Sir John Keneir M'Donald, the late envoy in Persia. The following is the correspondence which took place on that occasion. A perusal of his letter will make evident the great importance he attached to the acquisition of the information he desired.

To Edward Stirling, Esq. Bengal Civil Service, Tehran.

SIR,

YOUR having imparted to me your intention of returning to India viâ Khorassan and Afghanistan, by the most practicable route, it appears to me that in the course of your journey you might be able to acquire such information concerning the nature and resources of those countries, the state of the roads, the disposition of the people, &c. &c. as might be at once useful and acceptable to Government: under this impression I venture to trouble you with a few observations on a subject which the actual posture of affairs in this country renders at this moment peculiarly interesting.

An investigation into the condition, capabilities, and military features of those countries by which a European army from the north or west could penetrate to India, has always appeared to me most desirable; and it was with this view that Government were induced about two years ago to sanction a proposal made by Mr. M'Neill, who then held an expedition of this description in contemplation.

The only two routes by which a Russian army could attempt the invasion of India are—1st, that which lies through the heart of Khorassan by Meshid, Turbat-i-Hydree, Heerat, Candahar, and Cabool, to the Attock; 2dly, that which proceeds from Buchara by Balk and the Hindoo Cosh to Cabool.

The state of our knowledge with regard to the facilities and the impediments which may tend to aid or retard the progress of a hostile force in those directions, is at the present period extremely defective. On this account it has occurred to me that, in the execution of your present determination, you might render an essential service to Government, by improving the geography of those countries as regards the existence of deserts, mountains, rivers, and other military objects of inquiry; the number, position, strength, and population of the towns that may lie on the high road; the number, power, and influence of the different independent tribes; how far they stand affected to the Government of Persia, Buchara, and Cabool; their feelings and dispositions towards each other, as well as the part they are likely to take in the event of a foreign enemy invading their countries; their power of opposing, or means of affording friendly aid to the invaders, whether arising from the adoption of hostile measures, the difficulty of obtaining supplies, the want of water, beasts of burden, or the badness of the roads.

The above are, I think, the principal points to which I should wish to invite your attention; but your own good

sense and understanding will of course dictate to you the nature and extent of the information you should, if practicable, acquire.

The ministers of this court have, I am happy to perceive, manifested every disposition to facilitate your journey; and you will, consequently, be provided with the necessary rukms to insure your safe conduct and civil treatment from hence to Heerat, beyond which the authority of his Majesty does not extend.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

J. M'DONALD.

Tehran, June 30, 1828.

To Colonel J. M'Donald, &c. &c. &c. Tehran.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, suggesting inquiries respecting the resources and geography of the countries through which I may pass in my return to India; and beg in reply to assure you of every disposition on my part to acquire, as far as my health, rapidity of my journey, and my means of inquiry permit, information on the different matters to which you have deemed it worthy to request my attention.

It would have been a source of satisfaction to me, and of some consequence to the Government, had I been furnished with the necessary instruments for fixing the situations of the principal places, for measuring distances and heights; but in the absence of these, I cannot hope that the result of my journey will be so useful as otherwise it might be; and therefore, *in limine*, I would claim your indulgence, and solicit you to moderate the expectations which you may be inclined to

form from the great interest attached to those countries. A person with considerable abilities and personal endowments of an intellectual nature, might, indeed, without the aid of such instruments, be able to collect and embody volumes of useful information; and although I cannot but feel highly flattered and pleased that you should have honoured me, I must not conceal that my slender talents are scarcely equal to the performance of the task even in a moderate way, much less in a way that would insure universal approbation.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

EDWARD STIRLING.

How far I have been able to execute the task which I undertook, must be decided by the result. I can only say, that I am sensible how very inadequately I have fulfilled his precepts; though, at the same time, I would claim some indulgence in consideration of the difficulties I had to surmount in obtaining even this scanty information, in a country where travelling was not easy, where jealousy encircled me, and where I could not always apply to the best sources of knowledge, my informants often being illiterate men, and, though intelligent, not raised above the labouring classes.

A copy of the foregoing instructions was sent to the Supreme Government at Calcutta; but on my return to that Presidency, I was not called upon to forward the information I might have collected in consequence of Sir J. M'Donald's letter. The greatest apathy prevailed, and the members of the Government

could not be roused to take an interest in the subject. The knowledge that I had been in these intermediate countries, produced no desire for intelligence regarding them ; and my reception gave no encouragement to the production of it.

Neglect had been preceded by the deprivation of my appointment—I was no longer Collector of Agra—that situation had been disposed of nearly two months prior to my reaching the Presidency: my return was deemed hopeless, and my death anticipated. Three-and-twenty days in excess of my leave of absence was sufficient to put me out of employment, though two months exceeded by the Hon. W. Melville and others, under circumstances that called for less indulgence, had not the same effect—they still retained their appointments. No explanations or representations weighed to alter the resolutions of Government in my case ; and I was not restored to a full collectorship till the expiration of eighteen months, and even the pay of this last office was afterwards reduced. These my grievances, although calling for and perhaps meriting redress, need not be further detailed : it is sufficient to say, that I was in no humour to give, and the Government appeared little disposed to avail themselves of the result of my travels. The labours of Burns, Gerard, and Connolly, have since appeared, and other works, some by foreigners, are in progress. Sir John M'Donald's views, communicated to me, have been developed by the mission of Capt. Burns. I shewed the facility and practicability of the path which has since been followed with greater success. My reward

was the approbation of Sir John Malcolm and Sir John M'Donald, — the good opinion of men whose knowledge and experience were undoubted.

The subjoined paper was written on my return to Bengal, from notes I had preserved on the subject, in expectation of being called upon for the information it contains : the few last pages, which appeared requisite to bring it to a conclusion, I have now added. I could have enlarged its size by drawing from the many new sources that have now become accessible ; but from this course I have refrained, as I should have had to recast it ; and how far it would, under these additions, have retained its original features, would have been very doubtful. To those who desire to compare information derived from different sources on the same subject, it may perhaps be deemed not the less acceptable in its present form.

EDWARD STIRLING.

London, 10th July, 1835.

ERRATA.

Page 10, line 17, *for* in the vicinity of Bukkur, *read* or the vicinity of Bukkur.

— 47, — 25, *for* on the left, *read* on the south; line 27, *for* on our left, *read* on our right.

TABLE

The following table shows the number of persons in the various countries of Europe, and the number of persons in the various countries of Asia, Africa, and America, in the year 1850.

SOME
CONSIDERATIONS,

&c. &c.

THE following remarks on the high roads between Europe and India are offered with reference to the political state of those countries through which they lie, and the importance they might assume in the event of the north-west frontier of our Indian possessions being menaced by an invasion.

I shall begin with Persia, as it is more exposed to the influence of a European power. By its geographical situation, Persia is accessible both to the English and Russian nations.

The Company's agents are already in possession of extensive influence in the Persian Gulf; all the Arab states that border on the Gulf are to a considerable degree directed in their political affairs by the residents at Bushire and Bussorah; nor can they undertake any measure

of extensive political importance without the sanction and knowledge of the British agents: even their domestic quarrels are referred to our agents for decision, and our authority would be sufficient to call all the energy of these Arabs into play against the southern coast of Persia, should their support ever be requisite. Moreover, the most ambitious and powerful of all those Arab chiefs, the Imaum of Muscat, is allied to us by the strongest bonds of friendship, and important benefits derived by his extensive commercial intercourse with the Presidencies of Bombay and Calcutta. This Imaum, unassisted by the other Arab states, would be quite capable of subduing many of the southern provinces of Persia, and would readily join any hostile enterprise of the kind which emanated from us. Should his assistance be required, we might with reason calculate upon his possessing himself of all the southern coast along the sea, as far as the mountains which bound the plains, running parallel, or nearly so, with the sea-coast. The whole of the coasts of Mekran, Kerman, Laristan, Gurmehsir, and Shesistan, would consequently fall into his hands. These countries, with the possession of the passes of the mountains to the north,

would form a strong and well-defended boundary against an enemy in that direction.

It seems evident, that with the assistance of the Arabs joined to our own means of attack, there would be little difficulty in wresting any part of the southern portion of Persia from the Persian monarch, (or any power that might have possession of that country), before a European power could possibly obtain entrance into the northern provinces, provided the information were early, which, with our means, it could scarcely fail to be. But should our alliance continue as strong as it has hitherto done with the Persians, there would be little occasion for the aid of the Arabs. On our assistance being required by the former, we should only have to march a portion of our Indian forces into the heart of Persia, to the rescue of our friends thus invaded. Such a force should be amply supplied with provisions; but perhaps less so there than in any other Oriental country. One article of food alone would be necessary to take with us, and that would be wheat; for Persia is badly supplied with grain. Sepoys, especially Hindoos, would not find it an easy matter to subsist, on account of the dearness of all kinds of grain, and the scarcity of water.

But these cannot, perhaps, be viewed as insuperable obstacles; and after a short time, even the Hindoos would find little inconvenience, except from the severity of the climate, in living in Persia. Wheat taken thither could be easily ground by the excellent water-mills which are found all over Persia. The Mussulman soldiers would, I conceive, fare sumptuously on the natural products of the country; but it would not be advisable for them to eat the enticing fruits which are so plentiful there, as these, to newcomers, are generally productive of very malignant diseases, and would, it may not unreasonably be expected, have the effect of producing a serious mortality among foreigners recently landed.

Our Ambassador at the Court of Persia would of course endeavour to have our troops provided with all things necessary for their subsistence and accommodation in a foreign land; they would have no difficulty in reaching the most distant provinces in the course of a very few months; and the discipline and hardihood of our men might well be depended upon for surmounting the greatest impediments; while the skill of our officers would, we may with some confidence expect, command victory, unless

the forces opposed to them were overwhelming, and under unusually experienced leaders. Our local knowledge of the country would, we may trust, give us no small advantage in such a contest. The force sent to Persia might either enter that country from the side of Bagdad and Kermanshah, or from Bushire, according as facilities, or the position of the enemy in Persia at the period of our latest accounts, indicated. I am not prepared to decide as to the greater convenience of one, as compared with the other: it may, however, be inferred that Bussorah and Bagdad would offer many facilities for providing carriage-cattle, and obtaining horses for the cavalry; and perhaps the provisioning an army might be found easier at Bagdad than at Bushire. I have also to add, that I apprehend the passes into Persia from Bagdad are not so difficult as from Bushire; and if either of the routes by Kermanshah or Shuster were followed, much time would be saved: moreover, the Tigris is navigable, and would, in many respects, assist the transportation of the heavy baggage, stores, and provisions, including ammunition and guns.

It must appear, from the above remarks, that the English, from their Eastern empire,

have, to an extraordinary degree, the means of entering Persia from the south, either as an enemy or as a friend. From the exertions that have been made on various occasions, it is not too much to calculate that a force of 10,000 men, properly equipped, consisting of the usual proportion of Europeans, might, without any uncommon exertion on the part of the Supreme Government of Bengal, be provided and despatched to Persia. Such an organised force would do much; but it could not be expected to do every thing: it would be too small to allow of any part of it separating from the main body.

If such a force went to Persia for the support of the King, it would be quite sufficient to resist an invasion by the Russians, if it were assisted by the troops of the country under European skill and command. Russia, by its late ascendancy in Persia; its possession of the countries situated to the north of the Araxes; and the reputation she has acquired in the Turkish territory by her late victories, has become a most formidable combatant in the field of Asiatic warfare, and a competitor for universal empire in Asia. Having exacted, in the course of a very inconsiderable time, reparation from her two most enfeebled

enemies for the expenses of wars conducted on a scale of the largest extent, it is scarcely to be expected that she will rest contented with this successful display, without reaping the real fruit, of her power. These beginnings may be nothing else but the commencement of a system of the most extensive aggrandisement, which, as it is evident she will never check herself, so nothing but the force of an exterior enemy can compel her to restrain her power within those bounds necessary for the existence of neighbouring states. The result of these wars will long be felt, and may retard the progress of improvement in the two invaded nations.

Persia has, however, it may be supposed, suffered less than Turkey: it has been taught a serious lesson, if it can appreciate the causes of its losses; but we are not to expect that the pride and vain-glory of the Persians will allow them to be enlightened by the most disastrous defeats. Unless a new system and a better administration shall be introduced into the Government of Persia, it can scarcely avoid becoming, in its present lethargic state, the prey of its wealthier and more disciplined neighbours, the Russians, whose possession of the Caucasus, and some rich provinces on the southern slope

of it, affords them easy entrance into the centre of Persia. Their late conquests have rendered the country more open to future attacks and further invasion.

The energy of Turkey just now seems incapable of conceiving the idea of extending its possessions beyond its present limited sovereignty; and the notion of its attempting the conquest of the Persians, and walking over their carcasses to India, would, in these days of its weakness, be thought more futile than a feverish dream; and yet the Turks have been warriors of no inconsiderable renown; and with the cordial co-operation of the Greeks, it would appear an enterprise, although bold, no more than has been attempted in ancient times. Should the sceptre be wrested from the Sultan, and grasped by the Greeks, a concentration of the energy of their inherent spirit might again be effected, and they might, marching forward, repass the Hellespont, conquer Persia, and shew themselves on the Indus. Turkey is a barrier of no mean magnitude, towards the frontier of India, against European aggression, and as such might be strengthened.

We must look to India as the field to which all Europeans will direct their forces in the

event of a general war: it is the prize for which a most energetic game is to be played; and it is one of the greatest and most interesting countries which could be set up for the ambition of enterprising nations. We must anticipate that it will attract the attention of the most potent of the European powers; and perhaps the desire of making a conquest of it will first invite that nation which possesses the means and the nearest position. The very poverty of the plains of Russia, having little grain and such products as enrich other nations, would naturally incite them, as the northern nations that overran the Roman empire, to invade southern countries. In what way they will be able to effect an invasion of India seems to be still a matter of speculation; and while one party contends for the impossibility of such an extensive and long-continued warfare, at such an enormous distance from their own frontier and posts; the other party points out the route, the facilities of the journey, and the perfect practicability of reaching the banks of the Indus without any serious impediment, and attempts to demonstrate the unlikelihood either of defeat or reverse in this contemplated invasion.

Besides the high road through the middle

of Persia, there are three other routes by which India might be approached. And first: the Russians might transport the greater part of their force by water, as far as the eastern part of the Caspian, bordering on Khorasan, to Astrabad or its vicinity; thence they might march eastward without much opposition; and, except the pass on the east of that city (Astrabad), they would have no other to cross in moving towards Meshid, which is not situated above three hundred miles. Thence their route to the Indus would lie through Herat and Candahar; and from the latter place they could either proceed by Cabool, or cross to the south of the Kohi Suliman, and leaving Ghiznee on the left, make for Deera Khan, in the vicinity of Bukkur, a strong fort situated on the Indus.

Secondly: They might, perhaps, by allying themselves to the people of Oorgunge, pass through their territories, reach the Amoo, and then Bokhara, whence they might pass down the river by Charjoo, Kirchee, Ankhoee, to Balkh, where, having staid to receive and collect supplies for a long march, and cattle sufficient to convey provisions, they might afterwards undertake their journey across the

Himalayah by Bamian, or in a more easterly direction (if the season admitted of it), over the Hindoo Cosh itself, which, although colder, presents a better road for a large army. After crossing this belt of hills, they would find themselves at Cabool, whence to the Indus is a march of about ten or twelve days, and might be accomplished with facility; although, no doubt, the road is somewhat difficult, and lies over a mountain tract, bounded on the right by the Kohi Suffeed; and this is a range which runs from the northern hills to the last-mentioned one, and, in fact, joins them to each other. In summer-time this small belt is uncovered by snow; but at the time I passed it there was a good deal of snow as far as Jullalabad. After the latter place, the Khyber range must be passed; a range infested by a very wild tribe, who are accustomed to plunder travellers and kaffilahs, and would, no doubt, prove troublesome to an invading army. Peshawar lies in a fine, open, extensive, and fruitful plain, on the eastern face of the Khyber range: this valley extends east all the way to the Indus, bounded on the south by a continuation of the Khyber range, which runs across the Attock; and on the north

by the low but gradually ascending ranges of the Himalayah.

Thirdly: The last way in which the Russians could approach India, after reaching the Sehon,* would be down the valley formed by it as far as Kojend, passing Otrar, Shahrook, and Tashkend, in their way.† Thence the road to Samurkhund would be short and unimpeded down the highly cultivated valley of the Sogd, which abounds in every necessary, if not every luxury of life: thence they might, as before mentioned, proceed to Cabool and the Indus.

The first of these routes would, for the first two marches, be through a difficult country. The pass near Astrabad is represented as rugged and lofty; it is, however, constantly traversed by the Meshid kaffilahs which proceed to, and come from, Mazanderan and the city of Reshd. From Astrabad there are two roads

* Wheel carriages are employed from the town or city of Oosh to the other cities of Ferghana.—*Oriental Magazine*, 1825.

† To the north of the mountains of Andegon, the country is a wilderness; further north of which are the tribes of Kuzzaks and Kera Kalpaks, dependent on Russia. The people of the cities are Taujiks or Persians; their language is generally Turkish.—*Ibid.*

to Meshid : one that bends to the southward by Shahrood (which is said to be three marches from Astrabad), Subzwar, and Nishapour ; the other by Buznoord, Benevard, and Cashoon. Of these, greater supplies are to be expected by following the most southern, as the above cities would amply afford provisions. Shahrood could draw supplies from the more western countries, from Dumgaun, Semnian, and Mazanderan ; Subzwar would collect supplies from its neighbours on its south, as well as on its north, from the cities of Turchez and Sultunabad, and some fine villages near Jovain ; and Nishapour would afford every requisite. The people throughout this part of the country are poor : they are, however, hardy ; and their constant warfare with the Turkomans makes them soldiers. It is improbable that any considerable force (unless time was given) could be collected in these parts ; and its strength would greatly depend on the interest each individual commander had in the contest. Subzwar and Turchez are walled cities, which have towers, and bad ditches that are generally dry. Their walls are made of brick, I should suppose from four to six feet thick ; but these could, I imagine, be easily battered down. The road from As-

trabad to Shahrood lies over a lofty range of hills, which separate the Caspian districts from those more easterly. I have no exact information of the nature of the road; but it is considered, I believe, an easier one than that near Semnian. It is frequented by kaffilahs; and all that I may be allowed to affirm is, that it is passable for mules. From Shahrood to Subzwar, the road is very good: one range of hills is passed, situated between Miamé and Abasabad. This range is about twelve or thirteen forsangs across; but the passes through it are generally open and broad. I should think wheel carriages would not have much difficulty in traversing this belt. Beyond Subzwar, and between Deh Zepheran and Nishapour, is another range of hills, which must be passed to arrive at the latter place: the road is good, and there are no great declivities on either hand; the ascent is gradual, and not generally difficult. Beyond these hills, as you proceed into the valley of Nishapour, a deep nullah is met with: it may be called deep, not because it is unusually so, when compared with those of other countries, but as compared with the streams generally found in Persia: it is neither very broad nor very deep; and, when I

passed it, had very little depth of water. It may, however, be remarked, that it is very seldom such a stream, or so deep a bed, falls in the way of the traveller in these parts; and I do not recollect a similar instance. After crossing this small, deep-bedded stream, the valley of Nishapour is entered, when the finest crops of rice and wheat which can gratify the eye are seen: it is studded with walled villages, surrounded by gardens. These are pretty closely situated; and the whole of the beauties of this charming valley are highly estimated by the weary traveller. After having been so long accustomed to roads passing through sandy deserts and barren plains, they seem to afford him an agreeable repayment for all his toils.

Beyond Nishapour, to get to Meshid, it is necessary to cross or turn one of the Paropamisian hills: one of the roads passes it by Durroot and Turkey Bey; the other, keeping the range on the left, goes round it by Shereefabad (or some such name), and enters the valley of Meshid by Robat Turkey on the south-east of the town. The pass by Durroot and Turkey Bey is exceedingly difficult: the ascents are very lofty, and the road is bad, stony, and un-

even, and frequently abrupt: I should not think it would answer to take cannon over this range; but for the transportation of guns and ammunition, the lower road might be chosen, which passes by Shereefabad; or should this not seem advisable, there is another road that passes to the north-west of Nishapour, and enters the valley of Meshid somewhere in the vicinity of Cahsoon. By this route some guns were conveyed, while I was at Meshid, by a friend of mine, the Topcheebashee, to Nishapour. I accompanied him as far as Ghoonabad, the first stage north-west from Meshid.

That the lower road from Shahrood to Meshid is perfectly practicable for artillery, and the marching of large forces, seems to be proved beyond a doubt, by the large army brought from the westward, accompanied with a park of artillery, by Sirdar Hossein Khan in 1828. It consisted of 15,000 men, and entered Meshid from the south-east, by the lower road, turning the Paropamisian range. I witnessed its arrival: nearly all the city turned out; and the principal men went on the Istakbahl. The troops were all mounted: among them there were various parties of Turkomans, under their separate chiefs. Each

tribe was formed into a band or company, of different numbers. Some of the chiefs were pointed out to me. Their horses in general were rather small, but hardy in appearance: they were heavily laden, and carried a great deal of clothing for their riders, besides nummuds, kullians, &c. &c.; and I should have thought them, in the state in which I saw them, a very inefficient force. They were drawn up in line, and seemed to have some conception, though rude, of arrangement and keeping together. They had little baggage; and the day after, when I saw them encamped, they certainly appeared to require very little ground, and their tents were extremely small: the Sirdar alone had any thing like large tents, of which there were three. It is enough to say, they presented no better mode in their encampment than our irregular horse do in Hindoostan; but worse, inasmuch as their horses were picketed without regularity, and their tents pitched without any reference to order. The artillery was placed near the chief's tent. Their ground of encampment was on the west of the town of Meshid, immediately beyond the walls.

It is of consequence to remark, that the

arrival of this army produced some, although a very inconsiderable, change in the value of provisions. The price of necessaries did increase, but not above one-eighth, even if so much. The bakers wished to raise the price of bread; and other tradesmen had the same desire with respect to their particular articles of sale: at last it became necessary for the Sirdar to summon the different tradesmen, when a settlement was made, and a price-current adopted, to the entire satisfaction of all parties.

It is but just, in praise of the discipline preserved by the Sirdar, to notice, that no excesses were committed in the town by the troops under him, but that every thing remained in perfect peace. He and his soldiers daily went to say their prayers at the tomb of the Imaum Ally Ruza.

The character of the Sirdar stood very high in Khorasan, in consequence of the reputation he had acquired, at a preceding period, by subjecting the country to the authority of the king, and reducing the turbulence and checking the predatory habits of the Turkomans. He therefore met with a flattering reception on his arrival; and every chief, except Ruza

Kooly Khan, the chief of Cashoon, was inclined to forward his views in the restoration of peace and tranquillity to the distracted country.

In the foregoing route to Meshid there are warlike people both on the left and right: on the south are the inhabitants of Turchez, Tabas, and Sultanabad, besides the wandering tribes who inhabit the desert: their troops are chiefly composed of horsemen; but they possess also many matchlock men, who fight on foot, and know how to conduct themselves behind town-walls. On the north are the Turkomans.

Mahomed Khan, of Turbat, is, perhaps, from his habits for the last ten or fifteen years, the most formidable chief. His rebellion against the king has been one of the most successful known in these parts; he has been enabled to dissipate numerous forces which have been sent against him: but so high does his character stand with Hassein Ally Mirza, the last and now nominal Governor of Khorasan, that this prince, on his departure with a large army to Tehran, to aid his father in opposing the progress of the Russians, gave his eldest son into his charge, warning him (while he directed his son to follow his advice on all important occa-

sions), that should any disturbance take place in Khorasan during his absence, he should hold him responsible. Well had it been for Halakoo Mirza had he followed the advice of his father, and not given way to the persuasions of the chief of Cashoon.

The road from Astrabad to Meshid by Abeverd, Buznoord, and Cashoon, skirts the Turkoman desert; and an army coming from that direction might be expected to be attacked or greatly annoyed by the Turkoman tribes, who are in possession of the deserted country on the north of that line of road. It is scarcely to be anticipated that they could effect such a union among their tribes as to appear in sufficient force to be able to make a combined attack upon a disciplined army: indeed, such an attack would be much to be desired, as it would give an opportunity either of exterminating them at once, or reducing them to a certain degree of subjection. As the country from the passes of Astrabad to the vicinity of Cashoon is, I believe, rather open, it is not probable that any collected force would make a stand until the invading army reached the neighbourhood of the latter place, which lies in the same valley as Meshid, and between the same

ranges of hills. In the intermediate way between Astrabad and Cashoon, the want of water is great, and large supplies would probably be required for the troops: I imagine the country also to be less productive than that on the south. Even the latter has its deserts, and long distances without water, especially the first two or three stages; viz. between Shahrood, Miamé, Abassabad, and Mezinan.

Near Astrabad, but on the east of the passes of the Caspian Hills, is a hill on which a fort has been made; but it is now, I believe, in ruins. As far as I can understand, it is scarped, has a smooth table-land on its top, and is, if I am not mistaken, well supplied with water: it is named *Manu Simalgon*, and is situated to the west of *Buznoord*. The several towns that intervene between Astrabad and Cashoon are all surrounded by walls more or less strong; but they could not stand being battered by a European enemy.

The citadels of the principal towns, such as Cashoon and Nishapour, are made much stronger than the other part of the fortifications, and are ordinarily defended by very lofty walls and deep ditches, and are such that they cannot be forced by cavalry: they have some-

times been known to resist the usual means employed by the artillery of the king, which, although not pointed with such skill and science as might be expected from the facilities their artillerymen have of acquiring a knowledge of the art from the English officers at Tubreez, is yet the best in this part of the country, and often managed with no mean degree of knowledge.

Supposing a European army had made its way good to Meshid, and surmounted all the obstacles and impediments which obstructed its progress, arising from the scarcity of provisions and water in the longest marches, and had contrived to repress the Turkomans, and conquered some of the opposing states which lay on its flanks, the march to Herat would be the next object to effect. The road is extremely good; but the country through which it passes has long been a scene of devastation. This road winds chiefly in a valley formed on the north by the Paropamisian range, which runs east to the Hindoo Cosh; and on the south by a parallel range of inferior mountains, which is crossed in marching from Nishapour to Meshid. This valley is chiefly inhabited by the Timoorees and the Huzarees, two very wild

and lawless tribes, whose chief towns are Jam, Noahshehr, and Khauf, and who sometimes possess Baghis and Lengher.

The Herat river is passed. There is a bridge over it, called the Pooli Maulun, which is reckoned a handsome structure. This river joins the river that passes Meshid, and the united streams assume, on reaching the Turkoman Desert, the appellation of the Tedjen. When I crossed the Tedjen, near Sherruks, before I reached the town, its bed was perfectly dry: in the proper season, if I may judge of the width of it, there must be a large body of water to occupy and fill it. In breadth it cannot be less than 300 or 400 yards; its depth may be from four to eight or ten feet: its bottom was composed of large gravel, the stones often as big as a man's skull.

The road to Herat does not seem difficult; but it would be subject to the incursions of the Turkomans, who are well acquainted with the localities of the country as far south as Kain. An army might also be impeded on its march by a union of the forces of the Jemshedees and Huzarees from the eastward, whose habitations are situated on the north of the Paropamisian range: they are constantly in the habit of

making incursions to the south side of the range. The Jemshedees, the Huzarees, and the Turkomans, were in league in their attack on Meshid in 1828, when they managed to capture 2,000 head of cattle, and several hundred captives. But, perhaps, the road might be travelled before the people had time to take measures; which was the method pursued by Alexander, when he made an expedition to Herat to suppress a rebellion that had taken place, headed by one of his own officers.

However, these wild tribes are without proper heads and chiefs: Durvish Ally Khan, chief of the Jemshedees, and Byram Khan, of the Huzarees, who inhabits the neighbourhood of Jam, are the only respectable characters for energy and conduct. Herat would, most probably, if active measures were taken, be in possession of the invading army before they could appear in the field.

Herat is surrounded, as usual, with a strong wall, aided by a deep ditch. It has, I believe, a citadel; but I have not understood that it possesses any uncommon degree of strength. It stands in the plain, and the hills on either side are situated at a considerable distance. Around it are innumerable gardens,

orchards, and plantations, which would furnish excellent shelter to an enemy, and afford materials, if required, to aid them in the siege, should it not immediately capitulate. The forces of the different tribes near the road and about Herat would, most probably, be beaten in detail. At present the most formidable is the chief of Turbat. Of late years it has been his practice to league himself with the Turkomans and the Huzarees, who are under Sheer Mahomed Khan.

In order to form an estimate of the force which the surrounding tribes might be able to collect, it may be mentioned, that when the Huzarees, Jemshedees, and Turkomans, went to surprise Meshid, their horsemen amounted only to about 3,000 men of every kind; but as this was a secret expedition, and composed of choice individuals, I am inclined to think it formed only half the number of those whom the same chiefs on emergency could bring into the field. The force which Mahomed Khan, of Turbat, is said to have, amounts to about 5,000 men. The families who are subject to him, of several tribes, are reported to be 100,000; of these, his own tribe, called Korrai, is estimated at 20,000. He is unequalled in

bravery and military talents by any chief at present existing in Khorasan. These high qualifications, joined to his successful resistance of the king's (Fatty Ally Shah's) troops, have acquired for him a very extensive reputation, which, in a good cause, could scarcely fail of attaching the greater part of the tribes and the people of Khorasan. The largest force which in modern times Khorasan has been known to assemble was rated at about 30,000 men, when they were led against the Afghans by Hussein Ally Mirza, the king's son: they fought at Kafir Killah, near Herat, and defeated the Afghans in a pitched battle. In this encounter the artillery which the Khorasains had was of eminent advantage, and may be said to have been the chief cause of their gaining the victory. But unless some time were given, I should very much doubt whether above 10,000 horsemen could be collected to oppose an invasion; and these, from their being unsupported by field-pieces, could only expect immediate defeat.

The possession of Astrabad, Meshid, and Herat, to an invading army from the west, would be absolutely essential, and these would need garrisons. The two latter would require little time and expense to take them; and the

valleys would be protected from the Turkoman tribes, by guarding about four or five of the principal and almost the only passes to the Turkoman Desert; by which the Turkomans would be unable to find access into the plains and valleys on the south, and be confined to wander in their deserts until sufficient time could be afforded to reduce them to obedience. The placing of strong garrisons in the above cities, combined with a conciliatory conduct towards the people, would, I have no doubt, preserve the country in strict subordination, and be sufficient to realise the revenue. The ordinary force kept up at Meshid does not exceed 300 men who have the citadel, and about an equal number of militia who do the services of the town, assist the police, and occasionally man the walls.

At Herat, probably, no greater force is kept up than at Meshid, unless the fear of inroad from Candahar makes it necessary. The present force available at Herat, under Kamran, does not exceed 8,000 men; of these, 4,000, when I was at Meshid, had come thither for the purpose of assisting Halakoo Mirza, and to effect a peace between him and Mahomed Khan, of Turbat, with whom he had entered

into a war. Kamran has a very small park of artillery, managed by a man who had made his way from India, and who was formerly in our service. His artillery is inferior to that of Meshid, where there are not above eight small field-pieces, drawn by horses, and either two or four mortars, of which, I believe, none of the artillerymen understand the use.

Thus we see that the whole of this part of Khorasan, inclusive of Herat, could not, on an ordinary occasion, bring more than 18,000 or 20,000 men, nor a greater number of artillery than ten or twelve guns wretchedly served, into the field to oppose an invasion. These, I imagine, could do nothing in the face of a disciplined regular force, animated with the desire of conquest, and finding their own superiority in every partial encounter.

With regard to the wild Turkomans,* it may be observed, that their habits of predatory

* The Turkomans are divided by Klaproth, I believe, into Eastern and Western. Of the former the Usbecks are the ruling tribe in Bokhara, Ferghana, and Khiva. They are also predominant in Balk and the neighbouring districts; and although they consist in part of nomadic and predatory hordes, they contain a larger proportion of domestic and agricultural population than any other Turkish community. The Turko-

warfare would lead them to harass an army in its passage, by intercepting convoys and capturing stragglers, as well as by night attacks on ill-defended points ; but, as far as practicable, they would avoid coming to any open encounter with a disciplined army. The other tribes, it is probable, might be induced to venture upon a battle, foolishly trusting to their skill in the use of their celebrated swords. But such an attempt would only put them more in the power of their invaders.

It cannot be doubted that, with common prudence, the whole of Khorasan might, with very little difficulty, be subdued, and kept in subjection, by a European power. What subsequent measures might be taken by the neighbouring princes and states of Persia and Bokhara, would be a subject of further speculation. Should both these states unite in an attack upon the common enemy, and make a simultaneous

mans derive their name from the word "Turk." This was originally the epithet of a part of the Altai chain, from its supposed resemblance to a helmet, called in Turki "Tu-ki;" and a considerable tribe, occupying the country at the foot of this mountain, was designated by the same appellation, which was thence applied to all branches of the common stock. — *Oriental Magazine.*

movement, executed with a common degree of skill, the result would be doubtful ; and should victory crown their efforts, the enemy, on this reverse, would be placed in a wretched plight, as retreat would be very difficult, if not impossible. The way back would be long, and through an inhospitable country, in which only enemies would be found, and force alone could procure them provisions. In the disastrous retreat of the Ten Thousand we may foresee the likely result of a warfare thus carried on in a country far removed from their magazines and posts : all the hardships which are related by Xenophon to have attended the Greeks, might be anticipated in the event of such a catastrophe. What would be the best remedy to provide against such a contingency, it seems difficult to say.

It is evident, however, that if the posts and garrisons left in the rear were small, they would be unable to provide for the maintenance of order and tranquillity, when fortune had turned against the invaders ; it might, therefore, be most judicious to have these military posts of sufficient strength to ensure the obedience and the confidence of the inhabitants, in case of failure in the advance of the main army. By maintaining these, they might still find them-

selves sufficiently strong to keep their ground until the ensuing campaign, when they might be able to draw large supplies of men, ammunition, and provisions, from their own country.

I will, however, suppose that such an army has successfully made good its way as far as Herat, on its way to India; still it would find itself at the distance of forty days' march from the Indus, exclusive of the halts, and the delay in fighting battles and making good its conquests, as well as in paving its road thereto by treaties, conferences, and negotiations.

Although there are two roads to Cabool, yet the upper one is so difficult, and the supplies procurable so scanty, that it is not to be supposed it would be chosen by an invading army, unless in order to surprise: therefore the lower road is the only one which could be expected to be selected. The upper one passes through Deh Zinghee, and other villages within the Paropamisian range. The lower one lies through Candahar and Ghisnee. Some wild tribes, who inhabit the hills to the north of it, are said to infest the road. About Candahar dwell some of the most independent Afghan tribes; and here the Barekzzees and Sudoozees have their

original seats. And on the south of this line of road the Beloches and the Sestanees must not be forgotten, being warlike races. What opposition these could make to an enemy, cannot well be calculated, as it depends on so many circumstances; and it might so happen that they could be easily reconciled, and, far from throwing impediments in the way of such an army, they might assist them to their utmost: so likely are they to be actuated by caprices and circumstances. It must be owned that they are much in the same rude state as that in which the Highlanders are reported to have lived a century and a half or more ago: but surely, in such a condition, they would be incapable of making any effective resistance to organised forces disciplined according to European tactics.

A reference to Mr. Elphinstone's work will explain the different tribes that inhabit the skirts of this road. Candahar would probably be taken after a battle, in which the invading soldiers could scarcely fail to reap the victory that would be insured to them by their skill. It must, however, be observed, that these chiefs of Candahar are by no means destitute of artillery; and if I remember right, I think it was

reported to me that they had about forty pieces of cannon. To what use they might apply this park of artillery, or whether they would be able to employ it at all, would remain a subject to be developed by the facts themselves. At present, as there is little, and has for the last twenty or twenty-five years been very little government, much faith is not to be placed in their attachment to the ruling power; and they would most probably shew their perfidy in many instances to their own chiefs.

Candahar is a large and populous, and was formerly a rich, city; but its magnificence has greatly declined since the confusion that has prevailed in the Government. It is famed for a good deal of cultivation, and for the fruits in its vicinity, which are uncommonly plentiful and agreeable. It is also renowned for science, and has many learned men.

From Candahar there is a very direct road to the Indus, which it joins at Dera Khan; the road passing through rather a deserted country, and I am not sure whether a part of it does not cross sandy plains; but as the kaffilahs continually frequent this road, and as it is especially travelled by the Lawanees annually, it will not, I imagine, be found on inquiry a very imprac-

licable route. It was recommended to me by a well-known chief of Herat, named Yar Mahomed Khan; and I have no doubt it was the most direct and best road by which I could have reached the Indus from Meshid, had I gone to India viâ Herat: it was, however, my fate to go by another route; so that I had no opportunity of personal observation.

The road to the Indus by Cabool and Peshawar is the upper road, and could be traversed in spring or summer; but the snows which fall about Ghisnee in the winter would inevitably obstruct the road, and render the advance of an army at that season of the year almost impossible.

It might also be a subject for consideration, how far it would be proper to risk the loss of a portion of the army, as well as the time, in reducing Cabool, Ghisnee, and Peshawar, when compared with the short space of time it would take to reach the banks of the Indus by the lower route, and the comparatively less risk in pursuing the latter than the former route.

On the way to Cabool from Candahar, it would be necessary to get possession of Ghisnee, and perhaps to reduce the several tribes met with on each side of the road; some

of which are not the least brave and courageous of the Afghans. In the Appendix will be found an attempt to estimate the distance between Astrabad and Cabool, on such data as are at present available.

It is now time to advert to the second route, from the north-west, by which Russia could hope to penetrate to India, viz. that of Oorgunge. Our materials are very scanty, and furnish us with few or no accounts. We, however, learn a few particulars from the narrative of a Russian, who happened to be made a slave by the people of Oorgunge.

From Oorenburg to Khiva* or Oorgunge is a desert, containing a widely scattered population of Kirghees. They possess no towns; water is procured with great difficulty; and little grain can be obtained except at Khiva: but there seems to be a good deal of pasturage in favoured spots.

Khiva is represented as a poor place; ruled by a set of marauders, whose chief employment

* Hanway states the distance of these two places to be thirty-three days' journey of forty versts a-day, reaching Khiva by the road lying on the west of the Aral Lake.

is making slaves of foreigners on either side of the deserts that surround them, or in purchasing and selling slaves; and this traffic they keep up with Bokhara, and perhaps with the more northern states. They have no species of commerce except this and the rude manufacture of a few of the most common articles of iron, some copper utensils, and the sale of a few skins. They appear to be at constant war with their neighbours both on the southern and northern quarters; and although they are frequently repulsed, they still continue this predatory warfare.

These marauders have lately embroiled themselves with the Ameer of Bokhara, Behader Khan, and had attacked Merv, which that prince was attempting to repopulate and restore to its pristine vigour, being convinced that its possession was the only means of keeping the Turkoman tribes in subjection. These hostilities had not ceased when I left the country; and this inroad of the Oorgunges prevented my proceeding to Bokhara, with the intention of reaching which I had set out from Meshid.

From Khiva and Oorgunge to the neighbourhood of Bokhara must likewise be consi-

dered a desert; and unless very large supplies were carried with an army, or were in store at Oorgunge, it would be impossible for troops to proceed; as they could expect nothing till they reached the Amu river, in the vicinity of Bokhara.

This, of all the routes, seems the most difficult: barren deserts, scantily inhabited by inhospitable tribes, would mark every inch of the way; and no force could reach these scattered inhabitants of boundless plains. A few fruits, and perhaps a very small supply of rice, wheat, and barley, might, under the most favourable circumstances, be expected to aid the Russians.

It must be remembered that nearly all the cultivation of the fields and orchards is the result of the labour of the slaves, and is but just enough for the consumption of the families by whom they are employed; and that they manage to do with very little bread and grain, as they live much on animal food, the produce of their flocks and of the chase.

Probably no strongholds, towns, or other defensive positions, are to be met with from Oorenburg to Bokhara; and I imagine no impediments would have to be encountered, ex-

cept the crossing of the Amu at Oorgunge, or a little lower down the stream. The hills, by all accounts, are inconsiderable and unimportant.*

Having thus animadverted on the road between Oorenburg and Bokhara, I shall defer its prosecution to Cabool until I have considered the practicability of the other road from Russia to Bokhara, whence I shall pursue the route to Cabool.

I have no documents at hand to inform me of the state of the roads that lie between the southern parts of Russia and the northern parts of Bokhara;† but am far from thinking they can be altogether impassable; and I should suppose that, at all events, sufficient water could be procured in the snowy season, should no provisions whatever be obtained from the wandering tribes of Calmucks and Kirghees.‡

* This was written before I had read the account of the mission of the Russians to Khiva in the year 1818 or 1820; a narrative that contains many interesting particulars.

† The mission that was sent by Russia to Bokhara about the year 1820, was only known to me subsequently to the writing of this paper.

‡ The original seat of the Kirghees tribes was in Siberia. They are divided into the eastern and western tribes. The

However, I mean to inquire how far these are practicable, when I have opportunity: at present, it is sufficient to say, that I shall take it for granted that the Russians have been able to make good their road to Otrar, whence they might march down the river Sihon. To arrive at Otrar, they might, perhaps, come down by Turkistan,* situated on the Talas, or Taras, a river which flows into the Sihon; and from Otrar they could proceed to Tunkat and Tashkend. We have the authority of Baber Shah for supposing that from Tashkend†

eastern division now occupies part of Chinese Turkistan and Turkistan Proper. The western division, or Kirghees Kuzzak, is partly subject to Russia, and partly independent. Besides these distinctions, the Kirghees are divided into the great, the middle, and little hordes. The great horde call themselves Brat-Erdena, or Barat, and are spread throughout Turkistan, Tashkend, Kashghar, and Yarkund. They are now much less wealthy and powerful than the middle horde, which consists of the Alagni, Naimun, Argia, Arwah, Girei, and Kipchak Turks. They reside east of the Sara-su, and about the sources of the Tobol and Targen rivers. The little horde is the most westerly of these. The Calmucks are a division of the Mongul and Tatar family.—*Oriental Quarterly Magazine*, 1824, 1825.

* The country about Tashkend is called Turkistan. — *Ib.*

† Formerly Tashkend was named Shash. The Chirchek flows below it; and it is pleasantly situated.

to Kojend the country is ill inhabited, and little better than a desert. But Kojend once reached, the countries around are so fruitful and prolific, that we cannot doubt very large supplies might be drawn from Marghinan,* Andejan, and other dependencies of Ferghana to the eastward. Kojend† may form a grand point, whence the whole of the valley of the Sogd might be attacked. It is to be apprehended that no inconsiderable armies might be collected in these quarters; and while their numbers were great, their impetuosity and desire of resisting the invaders would render them formidable.

Armies of much strength have frequently been collected in this neighbourhood: the population, I presume, even at this day, is by no means small, although the whole country is in

* One of the chief cities of Ferghana. It contains the tomb of a monarch, said to be Alexander the Great. The place is agreeable, and the people well disposed and pleasant in their manners. Silk is produced here, and very fine shawl-wool is obtained and wrought into shawls, but inferior to those of Cashmeer.—*Izzut Oollah's Journal*.

† This celebrated city is situated at the distance of one or two arrow-throws on the left bank of the river Seer. It is defended by a mud wall. Fruits are abundant; there are many running streams; and the people are of an agreeable disposition.—*Ibid*.

a distracted state.* The armies mentioned by Baber Shah, Timour Shah, and Gengis Khan, may serve to prove the possibility of multitudes of men being collected in a short time to resist an enemy; and I should suppose that an army of not fewer than 40,000 fighting men might be anticipated to be ready for the Russians when they approached.† To conquer this force, considerable *matériel* would be necessary, as the men of these parts do not seem at all inferior in physical strength to Eu-

* The only people subject to the government of the Kokan are the Kirghees and Turks, and the Kipchak, Meng, and Kuzzak races. It is true that the authority of the Ameer is in many cases nominal; but a powerful prince would exert an extraordinary degree of influence.

† Since writing the above, I find that Meer Izzut Oollah estimates the military force of the Ameer at about 10,000 regular or nearly regular troops, besides 30,000 men of his own tribe (Ooloos), but which are considered to be more a species of militia, who provide themselves, and are consequently neither subject to much discipline, nor likely to endure a campaign protracted above a month and a half. But the whole of the force that might be collected on the banks of the Seer, in the event of a Russian invasion, would doubtless be much greater than the individual one of the Ameer of Kokan. Assistance would, it may be anticipated, be given by the chiefs of Bokhara, Samurkhund, Ourah Tuppah, and the neighbouring wandering tribes.

ropeans; and perhaps many of them are not wholly ignorant of the weak points of the Russians, and by this knowledge might foil them in several ways. Such a battle, supported by all the courage of the Usbecks, might be expected to be a very bloody conflict; for if the latter were in earnest, their sacrifice of life would be, as it has often been in wars of public interest, tremendous; and every effort of the Russians, aided by all their European skill and valour, would be found absolutely necessary to insure the victory over these half-civilised people.*

We are ignorant of the present state of the Calmucks, as well as of the Khirgees tribes; but we have no reason to suppose them more enfeebled than they were in times heretofore.† Until lately, they have been in the habit of

* The valour, courage, and perseverance of the Usbecks will, it is conceived, not be a matter of dispute to those who have perused the very interesting Memoirs of Baber, as translated and published by Mr. Erskine. They would have overrun Persia, had they not been stopped and defeated in the vicinity of Merv — a second Palmyra, standing an oasis in the midst of the Turkoman desert, lying between the Oxus or Amu and the cultivated parts of Khorasan.

† The Kirghees tribes, the three hordes together, are estimated at somewhat above two millions of men. Vide an

sending mercenary troops to the kings of Cabool; and a force of 800 or 1000 men used to be kept up by them. Some of their descendants I met at Cabool, in my way to India: they still continued as a distinct corps, but much reduced, under Dost Mahomed Khan, the chief of Cabool. The Russians entertain many Calmucks in their service: whether they come from the part of the country under discussion, I do not know; but I imagine not, as this is the name of a race widely spread throughout the southern states of Russia.*

Should the Russians be successful in the foregoing anticipated battle, it is not too much to expect that they would gain possession of the valley of the Sogd as the result; when Samurkhund and Bokhara would open their gates to the victors. Some time would be required to settle the neighbouring country; and after they had made themselves perfectly masters of it, they might then think of measures to

intelligent article on the Kirghees tribes, in the Asiatic Journal some years ago.

* The Calmucks, as stated in a previous note, are a division of the great Mongul and Tatar family; but they do not appear to be considered strict Mahometans, as they deviate in many essential points of ceremonious observances and faith.

enable them to pursue their conquests to the south.

Combined with other difficulties, the immense extent of country which would intervene between Russia and India by this tract, appears a most formidable impediment; but are these difficulties greater than those which Alexander the Great had to surmount? Perhaps not: the country, however, between Russia and India is at the present moment in a most distracted condition, which was not the case when Alexander attacked Persia; as it was then under the government of one monarch.

The two roads, the one by Khiva, the other by Kojend and Samurkhund, meet at Bokhara, whence they take a common course to India. From Bokhara to Balkh is not more than twelve days' journey, as made by the kaffilahs; and the road is good, but not always well supplied with provisions. Aukchah is one of the best towns on the route. The river Amu is, I believe, crossed by boats near or at Turmooz, and the passage is not represented as difficult.

On arriving at Balkh, it might perhaps be advisable to take possession of Ankhoee and

Khoolum, together with the town of Muzar, wherein is the tomb of Morteza Ally Sheeri Khoda, which is much frequented. It is, I apprehend, very rich, and would not be overlooked by an enemy. It was here that the party of Mr. Moorcroft were robbed of the horses and other property belonging to their deceased master.

The chief Moollah is unprincipled to the last degree, which will be acknowledged when it is stated, that he pledged his faith for the security and safety of Mr. Trebeck, and the property in his possession; but after that gentleman came to reside in Muzar, he resigned his office of chief priest in favour of his brother, that his relation might do that which he himself in his own name could not do, without being liable to the imputation of perfidy, in having promised hospitality, and afterwards breaking his word. His brother perpetrated the deed, and usurped to his own use the whole of the property left by Mr. Trebeck for the heirs of Mr. Moorcroft. Some of the horses were in Muzar when I passed; and the most famous of them, I was told, was still alive, and gracing the stables of one of these Moollahs.

I did not visit Balkh, but was informed that

its population had been greatly reduced, and that the houses were not half inhabited. The bazars had likewise gone to ruin, and every one acknowledged that the town was then in a very dilapidated and wretched condition. About Muzar there are a number of well-watered fields, orchards, and gardens; and I should imagine a great deal of land was brought into cultivation by means of the water obtained from the Balkh river, which is distributed all over the west of the road that leads from it to Muzar, and probably irrigates a considerable portion of the country. The stream contributes, I believe, to about thirty canals, which run to and supply as many villages as lie in their course. That which flows to Muzar contains a large body of water, measuring, perhaps, nearly a cubic yard or more, and runs with a rapid course; but it is dirty, and in the autumn is said to be unwholesome.

Beyond Muzar the country, which is watered by the above canals, extends, I believe, in a westerly direction as far as the Turkoman desert; and many villages and large tracts of open land are fertilised by these streams. To judge from the rapidity of the Balkh river, the descent to the river Amu, into which it must flow, if not

expended by the canals during its course, is great. A plentiful supply of grain and fruits is undoubtedly raised, which, together with the animal products, would afford good provision for an invading army. A great many sheep and goats are probably reared; and the country likewise affords excellent horses, both large and small, which are seen in flocks, and belong generally to the wandering tribes of the Usbecks.

From Balkh to Muzar and Khoolum the road is open and good; and about half-way between Muzar and Khoolum is a pass, likewise good, and easily traversed: it is situated in a wild and uninhabited part of the country, which is generally infested by the Turkomans. Between Muzar and Khoolum not a village or cultivated spot is to be met with. At about half-distance between the above pass and Khoolum, and a mile or more from the road-side, a guard was stationed by the Wallee, for the protection of travellers.

From Muzar to Khoolum is not less than twelve hours' march, and may be estimated at about fifty-five miles. Khoolum is situated under a lofty range on the left, at an angle formed by the hills which we had kept close on our left after leaving the forementioned pass,

and is a town of considerable importance. It is the entrepôt between Bokhara and Cabool, and is inhabited by rather wealthy Hindoo merchants, by whom and through whom the trade from the south to Bokhara is carried on. Through their agency the late Mr. Moorcroft negotiated bills to a very considerable amount. Indigo and Cashmere shawls form the most valuable articles imported; and their exports are saffron, Russian commodities, sometimes horses, and bullion.

An enemy would probably find it necessary to secure to himself the district of Kandooz, which lies to the east of Khoolum, or to gain the friendship of its chief, Murad Beg, as he has large possessions in the hills to the south of Khoolum, which at present extend as far as the Kamurd river, and the territory of certain dependants of the governor of Cabool, bordering on the Kamurd and Sigan rivers. It would be absolutely essential to occupy the numerous defiles on the south of Khoolum; and it would perhaps be better policy to beat Mahomed Murad Beg in the plains, than to encounter him and his forces in the strongholds of the mountains.

From Khoolum to Cabool there are two

roads, which are generally travelled; one by Ghoree and the Hindoo Cosh, and the other by Eyback and Bamian. If the season be favourable, the former is reckoned, on many accounts, the better and the nearer one. The latter is traversed at all times, but in the winter is often extremely difficult, on account of the ice and snow. I passed it towards the end of December and the first four days of January, when the cold at Bamian and near to Cabool was very severe. The rivulets were sometimes completely, at others only partially frozen, and crossing over them was a matter of difficulty. Some of our cattle were killed by the weather; others died in consequence of falling into the half-frozen streams, and our being unable to recover them from the effects of the cold.

Baber, in his Memoirs, mentions other roads besides the above two, making the whole number as many as five; and I think his authority deserving of attention, as he frequently traversed them, and had opportunities of acquiring the most minute information. I believe the road by the Hindoo Cosh is the one that has been the most generally travelled; and both

Arungzeeb and Timour Shah adopted it within the last hundred and fifty years.*

Gengis Khan, and, I believe, Timurleng also, went by Bamian, or, at all events, visited the latter place, in journeying to Cabool. The Hindoo Cosh is very lofty, and snow lies all the year round: it is consequently within the tract of perpetual snow. In passing over it, men, and animals of all kinds, become sensible of the rarefaction of the atmosphere, finding extreme difficulty in breathing, and experiencing effects similar to those mentioned by Humboldt in ascending the lofty mountains of the Andes, and by Capt. Webb in traversing those of the Himalaya.

The road over the Hindoo Cosh is reckoned very good; the ascent and descent are gradual; and it has been recommended to me as much superior to that by Bamian.

In travelling from Khoolum to Cabool with the kaffilah we took twenty-two days, inclusive of two halts, one at Eyback, and the other

* Nadir Shah marched from Candahar to Bokhara; but by what particular route is not mentioned by Hanway. There is a road, however, across the Paropamisian range, from Candahar to Mymuna, which is probably the one he chose.

at Bamian, for the settlement of the duties. I believe, however, the journey by the Hindoo Cosh is much shorter, and may be made with ease in fifteen days.

As the villages are poor, and as their inclination or ability (either from animosity or indigence) to supply an invading army is very problematical, considerable stores of provisions would be requisite, which would have to be carried over the Hindoo Cosh along with the army.

When Nadir Shah* invaded Cabool, his provisions were conveyed by mules, and his march was quick and expeditious. He must have prepared at Khoolum or Balkh sufficient supplies to last him a month or more; for on the road he could only have obtained, under the most favourable disposition of the inhabitants, some grain and fruits: the latter of which, if he had gone at the proper season, would have been found in great plenty, as there are innu-

* This allusion to Nadir Shah's crossing the Hindoo Cosh is somewhat incorrect:—he himself marched from Candahar and Ghisnee: some of the detachments sent by his son, or his dependents in Turkistan, may have joined him at Cabool by this route. However, what is stated is the result of information which I obtained at Cabool.

merable gardens and valleys, some of which are particularly fertile. Grapes, pears, walnuts, and olives, were the chief fruits I met with; but there are many others which I had not an opportunity of observing.

At Bamian an excellent species of barley is cultivated, called *kaljou*, which affords more nourishment than any of those kinds found in other countries.

It would be possible, perhaps, by the adoption of timely measures, to establish one or two magazines within the hills; but I presume that, unless well guarded, they might be cut off by an enterprising enemy. Nadir Shah was detained more than a month before Cabool; and I believe he at last gained the fort by some treachery. The defiles and passes between Khoolum and Cabool are without number; in short, the Himalaya commences here, and the barrier it forms must be surmounted.

Twenty days' march is the extent of this vast range, through a very difficult and close country, in which very small bodies of men might oppose large armies with the greatest prospect of advantage; and with respect to this fact, Alexander's march over the Caucasus, as given by Quintus Curtius, may be consulted.

His army was almost starved, and suffered much from the cold and the severity of the season.

We have now brought all the routes to meet at Cabool, which is the chief and most wealthy city in the whole country, forming a point in advance of Persia, Russia, and Turkistan, and in many respects vying with and surpassing Meshid on the one hand, and Lahore on the other. It is situated among the hills, and has an elevation of several thousand feet above the level of the sea.* The climate resembles, in almost every respect, that of Europe: the cold during the winter is intense, snow lying on the ground for two or three months; but the spring, summer, and autumn, are all that can be desired.

The inhabitants of the city, as well as those in the neighbourhood, being bred up in the midst of civil commotions, and accustomed to arms from their infancy, are in a high degree warlike. The Cohestanees, in particular, are celebrated for their turbulent disposition; and as these tribes of mountaineers inhabit the vicinity, and are rendered fierce and independent

* Here water boiled at 10 deg. below the boiling point of the thermometer, viz. 202 deg.

by their situation, they prove, from their courageous ferocity, and practical knowledge of the use of fire-arms, very powerful partisans in the warfare carried on around them.

A precipitate descent is made in advancing towards Hindostan and the south; and all the defiles leading through the mountains in these directions are capable of the strongest defence. The country is on every side inhabited by the most hostile and unruly races, whose practice it has been, from time immemorial, to stop the passage of troops and travellers through their territory, and to foil and harass all those who are bold enough to make the attempt. Of these the Khelgees, the Kyberees, and the Vizeerees, are the most famous. Among these defiles some of the greatest defeats and conquests which have happened in the country have taken place; and an invading army would therefore find it necessary either to conciliate or subdue these tribes.

From Cabool to Peshawar the Khelgees and Kyberees are found in great force; and the Mymuns, who inhabit Lalpoor, are also numerous, and live on the left of the Cabool river, opposite to Dukha. There are many passes of magnitude and difficulty both on the range of

hills situated between Cabool and Jellahabad, and between the latter place and Peshawar.

Owing to the frequent interruption of these last passes, two other routes, though circuitous and difficult, are often chosen by travellers and kafilahs; one of which I myself took, and found it in many places troublesome and dangerous: our mules could not pass without great risk, and sometimes we had to unload them. This road enters the plains of Peshawar at Muchnee, where the Cabool river quits the western hills. Between Dukha and this place we crossed the river twice, on a small raft made of inflated buffalo-skins and a few cross sticks. The stream is rapid, and, I should imagine, at the spot where we first passed over, deep: it was confined in a rocky bed, and hills formed its banks and narrowed its channel.

The road which leads through the Khyberee pass branches off in the vicinity of Dukha: it is the high road, and the best in all respects, except that it is infested by the Khyberee tribe. It is the one usually travelled by armies and large bodies of men; but, notwithstanding every precaution, the mountaineers frequently manage to harass and plunder them, and to cut off small parties.

There is another road, more to the north than the one by Dukha; but I know little concerning it: it is, however, represented as not so good, though shorter, than that of Dukha.

From Jellahabad to Peshawar, jallahs or rafts, made of inflated buffalo-skins, frequently navigate the river; but very great dexterity is required in several channels and difficult straits, where no inconsiderable danger exists.* There is plenty of water in the river, but how far it might be navigable for boats it is not easy to foresee; it may, however, be mentioned that two, very strongly constructed for the purpose of ferrying over people and cattle, were found at Lalpoor, where the chief of the Mymuns reside: but it may fairly be left a matter of doubt whether such boats would answer for river navigation; for if they were found useful, would they not be employed?—would not the natives of the country have increased their number?

Owing to the strong rapids, and other obstacles, nothing, I imagine, is found to be more suited to the navigation of the river than these

* Humayoon, the father of Akber, went down the river in this manner to Peshawar from Jellahabad; and my servant travelled in the same way without any difficulty.

inflated rafts, however coarse the materials and rude the architecture. I was told it was not uncommon for the fruit-merchants to transport their property and merchandise on them from Jellahabad as far as Peshawar, and even to the Attock; and the men, therefore, who conduct these rafts ought to be well experienced. When they have arrived at their destination, the raft is taken out of the water, the wind allowed to escape, and the skins ordinarily conveyed by their owners back to the place whence they had started.

It is worthy of observation, that it was in the valley of the Soorkaband, near Jellahabad, that open and undefended villages were first remarked. This resemblance to the villages in Hindostan was very striking about Jellahabad: not only these open and unprotected villages, but all the natural productions, both animal and vegetable, indicated our approach to the country of the eastern sun. We now but seldom met with fortified villages; and even the people had become very black in their complexion, and less athletic in their appearance.

Here the mina and the parrot were recognised among the feathery tribe, while the orange and the sugar-cane saluted our sight among the

productions of the vegetable world. Here also we began to meet with the full-channelled rivers, navigable streams, and effeminate faces. These symptoms were more apparent when we entered the valley of Peshawar, where the extensively cultivated plains, defenceless villages, and wide-scattered hamlets, might have been taken for a portion of Hindostan: and I was much struck with the pertinent resemblance.

After reaching the valley of Peshawar, the remainder of the journey to Hindostan is easy and unembarrassing. Some few geographical difficulties may, however, be traced as far as Jellum; a few hills and ravines crossing the road till that point is reached, some of which might be occupied for the purpose of defence.

Above the Attock the whole country is nearly flat, or very slightly undulated, as far as the northern hills. The river is crossed at several places above Attock, and on the whole does not seem such an obstacle to an invading army as has been usually represented. In fact, it has seldom been found any impediment; for both Alexander and Timour passed it without difficulty; and it did not long detain the victorious army of Nadir Shah, who was, indeed, stopped by the fort, and not by any embarrass-

ment in passing the river. Its banks, however, become defensible when it reaches the fort, as the rocks rise on either side, and its channel is confined ; while its volume is increased by the addition of several streams coming from the west, the north, and the north-east.

On the west side, lower down, is the fort of Khyrabad, situated under a hill, which contains one or two redoubts up the face of the elevation. The village of Khyrabad is walled, but probably is not of much strength.

The fort of Attock resembles many hill-fortresses in India, in the construction of which, taking advantage of the ground, lofty walls are erected ; and considerable redoubts form its further defence. It is perhaps capable of a certain degree of resistance, and it might take some time to break down its lofty and rocky walls. It seems to be commanded by a superior hill in the same range, and by a caravan serray on its right or north point. There is also some rising ground on the west of the river ; but I do not know how far this might aid an attack.

To throw impediments in the way of an invading army, the famous Sheer Shah planned and built the strong defence of Rotas, a power-

ful fortress, about fifteen miles or more west of the town of Jellum, and situated on the crest of a range of mountains, the ravines of which are so employed as to form the ditches of the place.

The tract of country lying between the Attock and the Jellum has always been considered extremely strong and defensible, by reason of its rivers and their feeders, the hilly nature of the country, and its depressions and ravines. It has, moreover, always been occupied by warlike races, which constituted the strength of the army of Porus, as they now do of that of Rungeet Sing. These tribes are known under the several names of Joodis, Ghekhurs, Kautirs, and, I believe, Hazaries. Major Rennel remarks, "that the inhabitants of this hilly tract (meaning both Joodis and Ghekhurs, or their predecessors) have generally sided with the invaders of Hindostan at large, considering their own rugged and sterile country only a passage to the other. They invited Alexander, and they appear to have invited Humaioon; and they rather favoured the progress of Tamerlane and others. Probably, from the nature of their country, they have ever maintained a sort of independency of the Hindostan

emperors, excepting in the most vigorous periods of their government."

This district of the Punjaub is called Patwar. When I was there I found it in only an imperfect state of subjection to the authority of Rungeet Sing, more especially the mountainous parts. Large detachments of troops were either stationary, or passing through it. The great chieftains and landholders rendered only a nominal obedience. They had fought and resisted the Seiks as long as they could, and consequently had suffered much in their circumstances.

Beyond Rotas to Lahore and to Delhi no hills intervene to impede the advance of an army: the road passes the whole way over an uninterrupted plain, frequently intersected by large rivers, the passage of which has never been difficult, and may be aided by boats and rafts, easily obtained, or expeditiously constructed, from the quantity of wood always at hand.

Following the road on which are situated Lahore, Amribsur, Loodihana, and Kurnal, the desert, which lies south and south-east of Lahore, would be left on the right. This route would pass through a fertile, champaign, and

prolific country, affording every requisite. The obstacles to a free passage would be the hostility of the Seiks and the mountain-tribes; the forts of Lahore, Amribsur, and a new fort near it (built by Rungeet Sing, where he keeps the greater part of his wealth and his jewels); and the opposition of our own nation.

The following has been given as a sketch of the strength of the Seik army, which certainly does not appear to be over-rated:

	MEN.
Regular cavalry	5,200
Irregular ditto	43,300
Regular infantry	6,000
Irregular ditto	17,000
	<hr/>
Total infantry and cavalry	71,500

The artillery is thus stated:

	GUNS.
In different forts	108
For the horse artillery	58
Kept in store	142
	<hr/>
Total	308

Besides these pieces of artillery, there are nine mortars and 315 jambaraks, or camel-guns; and to serve the artillery there are 1500 Goolandauzees attached.

The Seik army has long been drilled according to the European discipline, which was introduced some years ago by Messrs. Allard and Ventura, whom Rungeet Sing had engaged in his service. The advantages derived by the ruler have been great; and as benefits have likewise accrued to the people from the security afforded to them, this innovation cannot be altogether regretted.

The Punjaub is a very well-watered and fruitful country, possessing considerable resources: in agricultural products it is rich, but, with the exception of salt, its minerals are few; and it has a good breed of horses. The inhabitants are remarkable for their industry and talents, and devote themselves to commerce, agriculture, and manufactures. The soldiers are unusually tall, and expert at their arms: they do not shrink from privations; but, in the opinion of their neighbours, they are deficient in spirit, and incline to sloth and inactivity. It is probable that Rungeet Sing would long ere this have been in possession of Peshawar and the country to the westward, but that the law which prohibits the sound of the azan from the top of the mosque, and forbids the killing of the ox or the cow, must be resisted, as far as

practicable, by men born and bred in the Mahomedan faith.

In considering the probable impediments to an invasion of India, we must not forget the particular nature of the climates of the countries through which an army would have to pass, and the distempers which arise therefrom, or which have a local existence from other causes.

It is an undoubted fact, evinced in all wars, whether ancient or modern, that climates, and their effects in the production of diseases, have proved as injurious and destructive as lost battles. The severity of the winter in Russia mainly contributed to defeat the schemes of Bonaparte, and overthrew one of the greatest armies of the present day. The epidemic that attacked our troops on landing at Walcheren was more prejudicial than any expected reverses. In the warmer countries of the East, excessive mortality from these two causes occurs in nearly every war, and imperiously demonstrates the necessity of accurate information and knowledge in regard to them.

The countries through which armies from the West would be likely to pass, in making an attack on the north-west quarter of India, are

situated in the temperate zone. The northern parts of Persia are highly elevated, and, both from this cause and their northern latitude, are subject to excessive cold for many weeks, if not months, during the year, which is represented by Sir John M'Donald and other travellers to be more painful of endurance than that of most northern climes. Many of the valleys are elevated from three to four thousand feet above the level of the sea, and the tops of the higher hills are covered with snow for nearly eight out of the twelve months. In the southern provinces, on the contrary, the heat is excessive during the greater part of the summer. The deserts of Kerman, and all the districts situated on the southern shore, or on the Persian Gulf, are intolerable from heat, wind, and a clouded atmosphere, thickened with minute particles of sand.

In one part of Turkey, *i. e.* in Asia Minor, the Russians, in their last campaign under Marshal Paskewitch, suffered severely from pestilential disorders soon after they had left Persia.

The cholera morbus, which has lately been raging in Persia, cannot be referred to the climate of that country in particular, which must,

in general, be considered healthy, and free from those diseases that desolate tropical climes. The spring, summer, and autumn, are seasons perhaps unsurpassed in any country: the clearness of the heavens, the absence of rain and moisture, and the few atmospherical changes, are altogether remarkable: such is the equality of the greater portion of the year in the more northern regions. In the southern, from October to April is considered the most agreeable and fruitful, the severity of climate being there in the summer months.

The parts which are deemed the most unhealthy in all Persia are the province of Mazin-deran, and the countries that lie on the coast of the Caspian. A traveller named Dr. Cooke has given a most distressing description of the effects of an epidemic that prevailed in Mazin-deran, and with which he himself was attacked. He ascribes it to various causes, but none of them are satisfactory. He alludes to the fruits as being very prejudicial; and so far I think him correct. The climate and sudden changes, together with the frequent rains, conspire to render this part of Persia peculiarly unhealthy. Khorasan is perhaps as healthy as any part of Persia, and the people as robust: on the very

easternmost part of it, however, there is one tract very insalubrious; viz. the banks and vicinity of the Moorgaub river. Travellers who visit these productive parts in the end of autumn are very subject to severe attacks of fevers, which frequently prove fatal. When I was in Meshid, a kaffilah arrived from that neighbourhood, and several of those who had accompanied it suffered. When I afterwards visited the valley of the Moorgaub, I found that the most malignant fevers had prevailed a month previously among the inhabitants, and that the people who remained there in the autumn were subject to these disorders. This known unhealthiness caused the valley to be deserted for a short time, and the people to remove to more wholesome spots.

It may here be remarked, that the autumn months are more trying to the constitution in northern Persia than other portions of the year. All swamps, rivers, salt soils, and streams, should be avoided; and, as far as possible, the body protected from atmospherical influences. The heat of the country south and east of Sestan, for the greater part of the year, is immoderate. The desert inhabited by the Turkomans has a climate which, though very arid, is

healthy, but is exposed to pernicious winds that come from the Caspian. The banks of the rivers they dwell upon in the autumn months are not salubrious, and fevers are the consequence. The Turkomans are subject to diseases of the eye, which affection is supposed to arise from much the same cause as produces the same effect on the people living on the borders of the Persian Gulf—the impalpable sand contained in the atmosphere, combined with the refraction of the sun's rays from the objects on which the eye rests when in the open air.

The climate of Bokhara is considered in some degree better than that of Khorasan. Being situated at a greater distance from the equator, and being so far inland, the changes of season are more gradual; but the winter is very severe. The autumn months here, as in Persia, are uncongenial to the human frame, and fevers are the consequence. The disease, however, most remarked by travellers is that of the worm bred in the leg, the process used in the extraction of which is both long and tedious. The swamps of Kundooz, near Balkh, and several places in the vicinity of the latter town, are in the autumn most destructive, not

only to visitors, but to the inhabitants and residents themselves. The malignancy of the fever may be estimated from its effect on the party of poor Mr. Moorcroft, who was himself the first victim. Mr. Guthrie followed; and Mr. Trebeck lingered out a month, with a mind subdued by disease, foreseeing his own fate in the loss of the friends whom he mourned: his last days were embittered by the treachery of those in whose protection he had confided, and harassed by jealousies and want of union among his servants. The cholera morbus, when I was at Khoolum, carried off a great number of the population of the town.

The tract between Khoolum and Cabool is of course subject to all the changes of climate and atmosphere usually experienced in highly elevated regions. The diseases are few, and require no particular observation. In one part of this region, the snow lies nearly the whole year.

The climate of the Afghan country must be esteemed excellent, and may be characterised, although so far south, as European: the temperature is increased by its general elevation. The winter at Ghisnee is peculiarly severe; at Cabool the snows lie for a considerable time:

Peshawar, on the contrary, suffers from violent heat, as observed by Mr. Elphinstone, which is likewise the case with the most southern districts. No peculiar diseases appear to harass the existence of this interesting people, who live in a locality very much favoured by Providence, as far as climate and productions are concerned.

In conclusion, I beg to offer the following remarks :

Although it is very natural that apprehension should be entertained by the English Government of the views of such a powerful state as Russia, with regard to its dominions in the East, may it not be a question whether hostile movements are not likely to originate from quarters less remote? Moral and physical obstacles seem to oppose an invasion from the side of Russia; and while England retains her present ascendancy in European politics, such an attempt on her part is not likely to be allowed or designed. Moreover, should such an attempt ever be made, England might assail the European possessions of Russia, and compel her to withdraw her forces from the East. If that system of aggrandisement which Russia

has pursued so many years, and with such prodigious success, should not be checked, she would find Persia a much easier prey than India, while the possession of it would pave the way for the further extension of her eastern conquests; but a division in the power of Russia is as likely to occur as the subjugation of either of these countries.

I conceive that the introduction of European sentiments and improvements into the central governments of Asia will very probably have the effect of consolidating the rule of some potent state intermediate between Persia, Russia, and India, and of uniting the inhabitants, facilitating intercourse, and increasing their wealth and resources. The possibility of states whose names are perhaps unknown to us at present suddenly rising into importance, is proved by facts of history, and by the numerous invasions of Hindostan, to ward off which little or no preparation seems to have been made.

The central Asiatic tract adverted to is, and has been for a series of years, in a state of the greatest confusion, and almost without a government: civil wars, domestic feuds, and predatory excesses, have consumed its

resources, and destroyed the inhabitants. The Tartars, Turkomans, Usbecks, Khorasmians, and Afghans, have all been formidable tribes, and, when united under powerful chiefs, have frequently subdued Persia and India, where resistance was found useless. The Mongols subject to Genghis Khan also invaded the confines of Europe; and his grandson, Batou Khan, conquered the Russians and overran Poland.

No dependence can be placed on the continuance of the present distracted state of the Afghans, the Usbecks, and the Turkomans, or in the unwarlike disposition of the people more remotely situated, who inhabit the steppes lying between Russia and Bokhara, the borders of the lakes, and the mountainous regions on the north-west of China. Of these latter races we are entirely ignorant; but the tract they occupy we have no reason to suppose either barren or without its due portion of population; in fact, from its being situated in a temperate climate, possessing numerous rivers, lakes, streams, and fertile pasturages, if not large sources of mineral wealth,—we may be inclined to form a very favourable opinion, both in regard to the number of people and the products of their country. It seems certain, that,

whatever the present state of these countries may be, in former times very large bodies of men were furnished and equipped by them.

In these remote and sequestered parts, peopled with races whose affections have been long alienated by the imbecility of their rulers, the minds of men would appear highly favourable to the assumption of the sovereignty by any powerful and energetic individual chief who would lead them on to conquest and victory. It is such a combination which India has to fear; and it is the duty and interest of Russia, England, and China, to watch over the movements of these intermediate wild tribes, to protect their frontiers from attack and frustrate any hostile movements, to confine them to their present limits, and to prevent future incursions. China has been long compelled to adopt this salutary policy on its frontiers.

To stifle the jealous feelings between Russia and England on the subject of our Eastern dominions, it seems only requisite to define the boundaries of the pretensions of each state; and the river Oxus, or the river Sihon (*i. e.* Sir), appear to be clear and distinct enough for this purpose: Russia has claims over the Kerghis

and Calmuck tribes; but she can have no plea for passing the Sihon: all south of that river should be left free. Let this line of demarcation be once agreed upon and established, and all jealousy would cease; but, of course, if violated, explanations might be demanded by the offended state.

As both the above rivers flow into the Aral Sea, a supposed direct line might be extended to the Caspian. The eastern sources of these rivers being situated in the lofty mountains that bound China on the west, would not, it is presumed, form any difficulty in adjusting the general line pointed out.

A treaty with Russia, made on grounds similar to those adverted to, would, I should think, tend greatly to remove all feelings of jealousy, and give a degree of permanency to our Indian empire that would be highly beneficial, and would restrict Russia within certain bounds, beyond which she could not advance without at once declaring her intentions; while it would prevent our Indian foes from intriguing with Russia to obtain aid or indirect assistance.

Whether it may be convenient or politic to form such a treaty at the present moment,

opinion must decide; but some such understanding, ere long, with Russia appears very desirable, to assuage the heart-burnings and the jealous suspicions to which the latter country has given rise by her several avowed missions to Bokhara, Khiva, and Khojend; and, if I am rightly informed, the foundation of some new colonies and establishments on the eastern shores of the Caspian.*

If Englishmen are not permitted to enter the armies of the states of interior Asia, by the suspension of the Enlistment Bill, foreigners will certainly not scruple, as they have already shewn, to train the forces of these countries, and teach them the art of war *à la Européen*. And what should prevent Russian officers from entering the service of the Khans of Khiva, Bokhara, and Andegan, to discipline their irregular troops? The Khans of these and all the

* "The India Gazette of the 5th of February contains accounts from Cabul, which state that reports were current that the Russians had taken possession of Margishlah, and were building a fort there, with the intention of garrisoning it with Russian troops. This appears to have occasioned a considerable sensation in Calcutta." — *Morning Chronicle*, June 29, 1835.

neighbouring states are exceedingly anxious to have European artillerymen, both to increase the number and serve their guns.

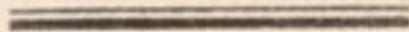
In the course of five years such a progress may be made by these people in the military art as will astonish not only Persia and India, but even Europe; and these rude and unlettered Asiatics—these plunderers, slave-sellers, and traffickers in human flesh—may of a sudden start up, and claim a portion of the usurped conquests of *Genghis Khan, their ancestor*, and lay waste with fire and sword the fruitful countries of the west and south: at all events, it appears clear to me that these long-neglected countries will soon undergo an alteration, and that the evils or benefits of war, if not the march of intellect, will shortly cause a very considerable change in their moral and physical condition.

For such a change it behoves England to be prepared, if she is not ready to second and direct it to her own advantage. This throwing off of old habits, sentiments, and prejudices, and the adoption of new and opposite ones, by these remotely situated tribes and nations, must be watched with vigilance and assiduity. To

shew, by some slight attention now, that we feel interested in their welfare, may secure to us great influence hereafter in their concerns; and we should make them sensible that we are disposed to cultivate their acquaintance and acquire their friendship. Such friendly intercourse would cost us little or nothing, and be attended with advantage.

The condition of the Afghans, more particularly at the present moment, demands our attention. Their country has long been subject to anarchy: the people want a settled government, and would gladly see tranquillity restored by our influence. The character of Englishmen, thanks to Mr. Elphinstone, and all other gentlemen who have visited that country, stands very high with the people and their rulers, for honour, generosity, and good faith. Knit by an intimate alliance with the Afghans, having the assistance of their forces and the resources of their country to depend on, we should be able with facility to repel all attacks of Russia, or of any other state. Even the natural boundary of the Hindoo Cosh and Paropamisian range would do much to stop the progress of a hostile movement, should not a man be

employed in their defence; but the passes of these ranges and the friendship of the Afghans secured, we might then bid defiance to a combination of European forces to invade our Eastern dominions.



APPENDIX.

THE following estimate of the distance between Delhi and Asterabad is made from such authorities as are available.

Major Rennel :—

	Miles.
Delhi to Lahore	380
Lahore to Rotas	83
Rotas to Attock	87

Sir John M'Donald estimates the distance between Delhi and Attock at 570 miles.

Attock to Peshawar	34
Peshawar to Cabool	125

Sir J. M. estimates it to be 230 miles between these places.

Cabool to Ghisnee	58½
Ghisnee to Kandahar	167½

Sir J. M. calculates the distance between Kandahar and Cabool at 176 miles.

— 935

Sir John M'Donald :—

Kandahar to Herat, 95 farsangs, 3½ miles each	332½
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The estimated route is given; but in another place Sir J. M. makes the distance 370 miles.

Herat to Meshid, 60 farsangs, or	210
Meshid to Asterabad, by the upper road, 121 farsangs, or	423

By the lower route as far as Bastam it is 94 farsangs, to which three average marches may be added—say 21 farsangs—making 115 farsangs, which, reckoned at 3½ miles each, equals 402½ miles.

— 965½

Total	1900½
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Foster makes the distance between Cabool and Herat 621 miles, being 177 farsangs.

Sir John M'Donald makes the distances of the two places by the high road as follow :—

	Miles.
Cabool to Kandahar	176
Kandahar to Herat	332
	<hr/>
Total	518

Horsemen have gone from Cabool to Herat in 11 days, by proceeding through the Huzaree country; and even larger bodies have marched the distance by the same route in 13 days. It is usually stated to be 20 days' journey by the lower road, and no hills are crossed.—Vide *Asiatic Journal of Bengal* for 1834, p. 18; also, *ELPHINSTONE'S Cabool*.

From Herat to Meshid is estimated at 210 miles; but it is well known that kaffilahs go to and fro in ten days, and even in a shorter time; and therefore I should think it perhaps less than the distance stated.

I am inclined to suppose that the whole distance between Delhi and Asterabad, as above stated, viz. 1900 miles, rather exceeds than falls short of the truth. When these countries become better known to us, we shall probably find that distances have been magnified, from the difficulty of obtaining good data to serve the purpose of calculation.

THE END.