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RUSSIA IN ASIA

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THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE.

Russia in Asia

A RECORD AND A STUDY

1558-1899

BY

ALEXIS KRAUSSE

WITH TWELVE MAPS

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PREFACE

THE growth of Asiatic Russia, while of engrossing concern to the political student, the soldier, and the commercial man, has never until now been treated on purely historical lines. My object has been to trace the successive stages of this growth, and to describe the deliberate prosecution of a policy which has in the past materially concerned British interests, and must do so still more largely in the future.

Russia in Asia does not profess to be more than a history, complete yet concise, of Asiatic Russia. In criticising the rival policies of Russia and England, my endeavour has been to present the clear and impartial deduction that a careful study of those policies yields. The historical chapters are based upon the writings of more than two hundred authorities. The accounts of the numerous military expeditions have, in most cases, been drawn from Russian sources, while my references to the part played by diplomacy are grounded on official correspondence and our own Government publications. I have not occupied space with a full list of the authorities consulted, thinking it sufficient to indicate to those who may desire a closer investigation of the subject, the principal sources where verification and amplification may be found.

Bearing in mind that a work of this nature is likely

to be used as a book of reference, I have endeavoured to make each of the various chapters dealing with historic events as complete as possible at the risk of being charged with reiteration. With the same end in view I have taken pains to render the Index exhaustive and complete.

The Appendices are intended to supplement the matter which precedes them by the reproduction of all the important treaties and conventions now in force respecting the Asiatic frontiers of Russia. I venture to hope that the maps will repay close attention.

ALEXIS KRAUSSE.

28th April 1899.

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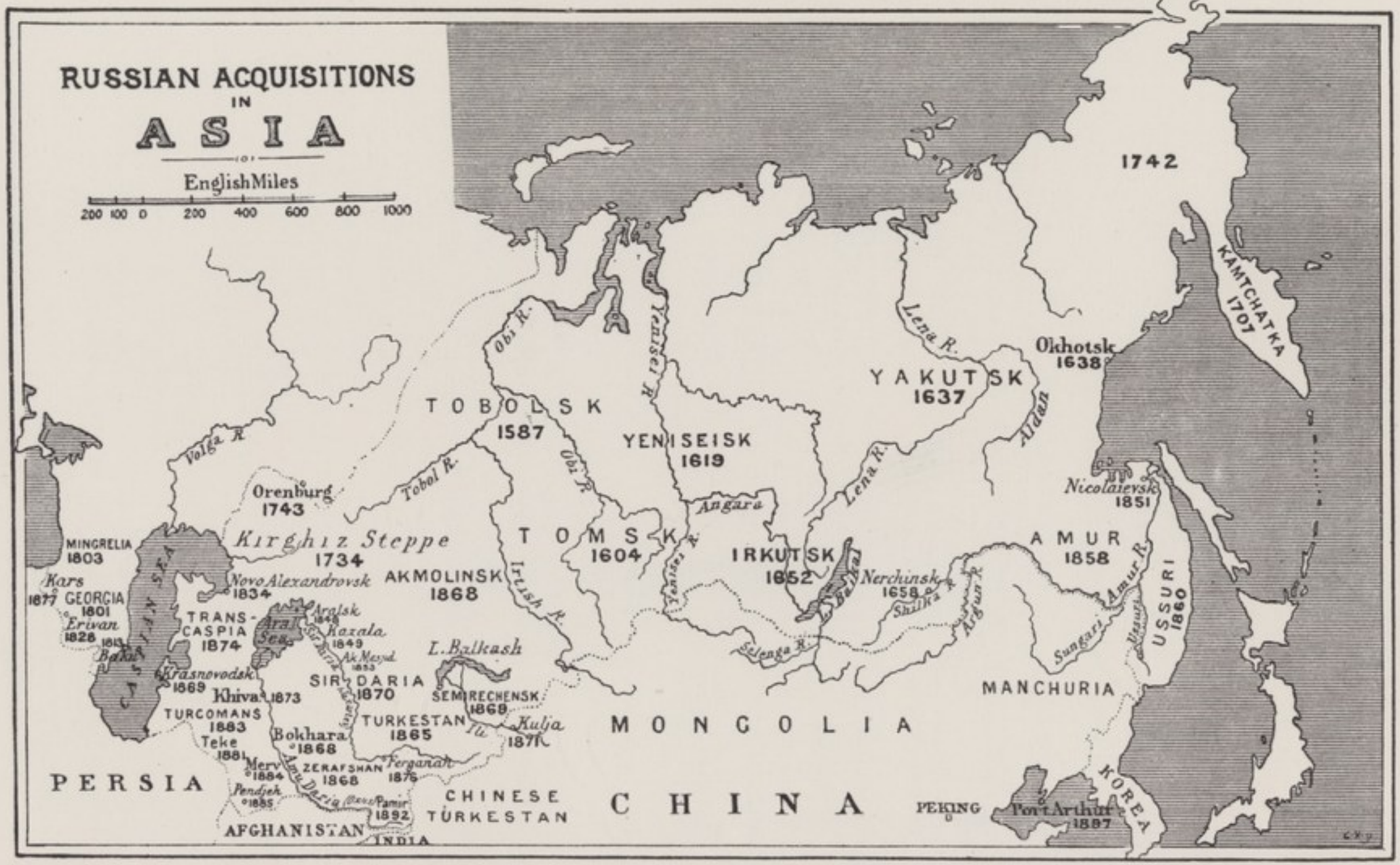
RUSSIAN ACQUISITIONS
IN
ASIA
English Miles
200 100 0 200 400 600 800 1000
1742
KAMTCHATKA
1707
Okhotsk
1638
YAKUTSK
1637
Lena R.
Aldan
Yenisei R.
Obi R.
TOBOLSK
1587
YENISEISK
1619
Volga R.
Tobol R.
Orenburg
1743
Kirghiz Steppe
1734
TOMSK
1604
Angara
IRKUTSK
1652
Baikal
Nerchinsk
1658
Shilka R.
Argun R.
Amur R.
AMUR
1858
Nicolaievsk
1851
USSURI
1860
MINGRELIA
1803
Kars
1877
GEORGIA
1801
Erivan
1828
Baku
CASPIAN SEA
TRANS-CASPIA
1874
Novo Alexandrovsk
1834
AKMOLINSK
1868
Irtish R.
Aralsk
Aral Sea
Kazala
1849
Ak Mesjid
Krasnovodsk
1869
Khiva
1873
TURCOMANS
1883
Teke
1881
Merv
1884
Pendjeh
1885
SIR DARIA
1870
L. Balkash
SEMIRECHENSK
1869
TURKESTAN
1865
Kulja
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Tu
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CHAPTER I

ASIATIC RUSSIA

Rapid Growth of Russian Empire—Extent to-day—Water Communications—Lack of Seaboard—Political Divisions—Asiatic Development—Climate—Caucasia, The Khirghiz Steppe—Turkestan—Transcaspia—The Khanates—Siberia—Races and Religions—European Influence in Asia—Bareness of Asiatic Territory—Neighbouring States—Spheres of Influence outside True Boundaries.

THE growth of Russian Empire is one of the most remarkable features in modern history. Originating in the fusion of a number of settlers and nomadic tribes, the Principality of Moscow became established soon after the country had been overrun by the Golden Horde of Tartars, and, owing largely to its geographical position, the capital held its place through the invasion of Tamerlane and the second Tartar incursion. The monarchial system was founded by Ivan III., who in 1482 took the title of Tsar of Muscovy, and by his thoroughly able, though despotic, rule, did much to consolidate the foundations of the coming empire.

The Kingdom of Muscovy comprised, at the death of Ivan Basilovitz, a territory extending over half a million square miles. To-day the Russian Empire comprises an area of nine million square miles, including most of Eastern Europe and the whole of Northern and Central Asia. This immense extension of territory has been attained in little more than four centuries, and while the onward march of Muscovy has been constant, no single instance of any important withdrawal from territory already occupied is on record. The history of Russia is, in short, a chronicle of aggression, of conquest, and of absorption. It began with Tula, with Permia and with

Novgorod, and it rests to-day with Merv, and Manchuria. In due order and at short intervals Esthonia, Livonia, and the region of the Caspian became merged into the Russian Empire. Finland and Poland were absorbed, Azof, Kerch, and the Crimea annexed. In 1795 what remained of Poland came under the ægis of the Tsar. Georgia was snatched from Turkey in 1801, a goodly slice of Persia followed in 1813, and another in 1828. In 1858 the Amur territory was occupied, and in 1865 the conquest of Central Asia was begun with the seizure of Tashkend. The annexation of Kulja, Khiva, Khokand, and Merv followed swiftly, and to-day Russia remains the cynosure of all the Powers, who watch her, wondering when she will next give rein to her greed of Empire.[1]

To-day Russia reaches from the eastern limits of Sweden and Germany to the Pacific, and from the Arctic Ocean to Afghanistan and Persia. Within its boundaries are comprised every variety of territory and of climate. Its physical features include a number of fine rivers and several inland seas. Much of its eastern and southern frontiers are mountainous, yet the bulk of the country consists of a series of vast plains. The most marked feature in the Russian dominion is the immense ramification of water communications, which extends in every direction. In addition to the waterways of the Baltic, the Black, the Caspian, and the Aral Seas, highways exist in Europe along the course of the Don, the Dniester, Dnieper, and Volga, and in Asia the Ob, the Tom, the Irtish, Yenisei, and Amur. Second only to these are the Oka, Kama, Sheksna, Oxus, Jaxartes, and Aral. But while the empire teems with navigable rivers and vast lakes, Russia is, in proportion to its size, the worst situated of any country in respect to maritime

[1] Area of Russian Empire at various periods—

Ivan III.,	1462,	502,000	square miles.
Ivan IV.,	1584,	1,530,000	" "
Peter the Great,	1689,	5,953,000	" "
Catherine II.,	1775,	7,123,000	" "
Alexander III.,	1881,	7,950,000	" "
Nicholas II.,	1899,	8,660,282	" "

access. Of the four actual seaboards to which it extends, one, the Arctic Ocean, is practically useless. Another, the Pacific, is available only to a limited extent, being closed by ice during a great portion of the year, besides being situated at such a distance from the centres of political and commercial activity as to be of restricted value. The Baltic also is closed for several months each year by ice, and the Black Sea, while affording an outlet at all seasons to the Mediterranean, lacks communications with the empire, and is apt to be closed in case of war. This want of seaboard forms a very prominent factor in Russian history, and is largely responsible for the dearth of intercourse between Russia and other nations, with its accompaniment of lack of progress, as well as serving as an incentive to the constant seizure of new territory with the view of practically working a way towards a maritime outlet which will serve to put the country on a parity with other nations.

The Russian Empire is divided for governmental purposes into a number of Provinces, which are in turn subdivided into governments. Thus European Russia comprises (1) the Russian provinces; (2) Poland; (3) the Grand Duchy of Finland: covering altogether an area of 2,095,504 square miles. Asiatic Russia is divided into (1) the Caucasus; (2) Central Asiatic dominions; and (3) Siberia: with a total expanse of 6,564,778 square miles. Thus Russia in Asia is more than three times as great as the European territory of the Czar; and this is the more remarkable when it is borne in mind that while European Russia boasts a history extending over six centuries, Russia in Asia in the modern sense dates from less than two hundred years back.

The acquisition of Asiatic territory has been gradual but constant. Excepting for the incorporation of Western Siberia, which may be regarded as a work of settlement rather than of conquest, the Oriental possessions of the Tsar may be said to date from 1722, when Peter the Great invaded Dagestan and occupied the greater portion of the Caucasus. Twelve years later

Anna Ivanovna received the surrender of the Kirghiz horde who had caused constant trouble on the southern border of the empire; and this first step in the direction of the conquest of Central Asia was followed by the seizure of the whole of Eastern Siberia from the Buriats, Tunguses, and Samoyedes, to whom that region had till then been sacred.

The commencement of the nineteenth century was marked by the display of considerable activity in Persia. Georgia was seized in 1801, Mingrelia in 1803, and Imeretia the following year. Baku and Shirvan were ceded by the treaty of Gulistan in 1813. Erivan came to Russia under the treaty of Turkomanchai in 1828, and Poti under that of Adrianople a year later. The reign of Nicholas I. is noteworthy in that it witnessed the commencement of serious operations in Turkestan. Fort Novo Alexandrovsk was founded by Perovski on the Caspian Sea in 1834. Fort Aralsk, on the Sea of Aral, was created in 1848, and Ak Musjid, captured from the Khokandians, was turned into Fort Perovski in 1853.

In 1858 was signed the Treaty of Aigun, under which the whole of the territory on the left bank of the Amur was given over to Russia. Two years later the Ussuri province of Manchuria was ceded under the Treaty of Peking, thus according the whole of Northern Asia to the Empire. In 1864 further conquest was urged in Central Asia. Chemkend and Turkestan were taken. Tashkend followed, and in 1865 the government of Turkestan was created. Samarcand fell in 1868, when the Zerafshan province was seized, and evidence of the intention of further conquests was provided by the creation of a military base at Krasnovodsk in 1869. Kulja was occupied in 1871, Khiva taken in 1873, the military district of Transcaspia formed in 1874, and Khokand finally annexed under the name of Ferghana in 1876.

In 1881 Skobeleff took Geok Tepe. The Tejend Oasis was occupied in 1883, and this was followed by the seizure of the Merv Oasis the following year. Having thus established Russian rule in Central Asia up to the

Afghan boundary, the exploiters paused a while. But only for a while. In 1891 the Pamirs were occupied, and a diplomatic campaign commenced with China, which resulted in the obtaining of many privileges and the right of Russifying Manchuria. This work has been progressing since 1894, and has resulted in the establishment of Russian military posts throughout the country. In 1897 Port Arthur was occupied by arrangement with the Chinese, and Russian agents are at present (January 1899) being engaged in driving the Russian wedge into the heart of the Valley of the Yangtze Kiang.

The area and population of Asiatic territory owned by Russia to-day is as follows :—

	Area.	Population.
Caucasus (including Transcaucasia),	180,843	8,350,000
Kirghiz Steppe territory, . .	755,793	2,000,000
Turkestan	409,414	3,341,000
Transcaspia	383,618	352,000
Siberia (including Amur region), .	4,833,496	4,874,335

These territories, extending over forty degrees of latitude, and across one hundred and seventy-three degrees of longitude, include every species of climate, soil, and people. The contrast between the Arctic plains of Northern Siberia and the fertile valleys of Bokhara is as great as that afforded by a comparison between the Samoyedes of Kamchatka and the Georgians of the Caucasus. A very considerable portion of Asiatic Russia consists of derelict territory, which is useless as the habitation of man. This is especially the case with those parts of Siberia which are within the Arctic circle, forming about one-third of the country, and the sandy wastes of the Ust Urt, Kara Kum, and Kizil Kum in Central Asia. Indeed the whole of Turkestan and Transcaspia, and a great proportion of the Kirghiz steppes consist of land capable of producing nothing, and the cost of conquest, and still more that of government, can only be justified in connection with Russian ambitions in respect to the future political bearing of these possessions.

For the purpose of the present volume it is not neces-

sary to dwell in any detail on the geography and topography of Asiatic Russia. But some account of the more noteworthy features of the various territories will tend to enable the reader to better appreciate the facts connected with the political aspect of Russia in Asia. The following brief résumé of the chief physical and ethnographical details concerning the Oriental governments of the Tsar will serve the purpose in view.

CAUCASIA.

The Caucasus is divided into two governments known as Northern and Trans-Caucasia. The former includes the districts of Kuban, Stavropol, and Terek, and the latter Baku, Daghestan, Elizabethpol, Erivan, Kars, Kutais, Tiflis, and Zakataly. Its total area is 180,843 square miles, and its population 8,350,000. The country comprised is for the most part extremely mountainous. The most remarkable feature distinguishing Caucasia is the great variety of different races to be found among its inhabitants. The most numerous of these are the Circassians, Oasetes, Abasians, Georgians, Mingrelians, Armenians, Turks, Tajiks, and Tartars. The soil is fertile, and among the produce of the valleys are grain, cotton, rice, flax, and tobacco. The mineral wealth of the country is considerable, copper, lead, and coal being plentiful. The Caspian seaboard teems with oil-wells which have done much to bring commercial activity and wealth. The centre of the oil district is at Baku, which is connected with Tiflis and Batoum by a railway. Caucasia is the most densely populated district in Asiatic Russia. Its people are civilised and industrious, and its trade flourishing. The capital of Caucasia is Tiflis, and the principal cities Batum, Stavropol, Elizabethpol, Poti, and Baku.

THE KIRGHIZ STEPPE.

The Kirghiz country extends from Orenburg to the Aral Sea, and embraces the whole of Central Asia north

of the 44th parallel. Its governments are Akmolinsk, Semipalatinsk, Turgai, and Uralsk. It comprises an area of 755,793 square miles, with an estimated population of two millions. The territory is almost entirely flat, and without either important rivers or big towns. Without being exactly a desert, it is for the most part bare of vegetation, excepting rank weeds. In some parts the steppe is very stony. In others it is marshy, the water being salt and unfit for drinking. The Kirghiz are a nomadic race who live in tents, and move about from place to place. They are divided into three great families or hordes which wander about in different zones, subsisting on their flocks and herds, which are as a rule their only possessions. In former years the Kirghiz were a warlike people who delighted in forays on settlers, or raids on passing caravans. Since they have been brought under the Russian yoke their manners have mended, and fear of the consequences seems to restrain them in their adventures. They still remain wanderers, though a section of the little horde is now engaged in agricultural pursuits. The climate of the steppe country is mostly severe. In the summer the intense heat, which burns up every species of vegetation, coupled with the lack of water, makes the passage of the desert perilous to all who are not well provided. In the winter the steppe is under snow for hundreds of miles; drifts accumulate, and many travellers have been lost. It was this circumstance which proved the chief difficulty in the various Russian expeditions to Khiva, and which for so long postponed the fall of that Khanate. Capital Semipalatinsk. Chief cities Akmolinsk, Turgai.

TURKESTAN.

This province is geographically the largest in Central Asia. It extends from the Caspian Sea to the Lob Nor, and from the Kirghiz Steppe to Persia and Afghanistan. Eastern Turkestan, also known as Little Bokhara, has not yet been absorbed by Russia, and remains a suzerainty of

the Chinese Empire. Western Turkestan includes the governments of Samarcand, Ferganah, Semirechinsk, and Sir Daria, at one time divided between the Khanates of Bokhara and Khokand, and the Kirghiz nomads. Politically the name is only applied to that portion of Central Asia to the east of Bokhara and Khiva, the western section being merged into the province of Transcaspia. The area of the Government of Turkestan is 409,414 square miles, and its population 3,341,000. The country is in great part desert, the sandy region known as the Kizil Kum extending right across from the Jaxartes to the Aral Sea, while those of the Moyun Kum cover hundreds of square miles in the north-east. The rest of the country consists of mountain chains, interspersed by more or less fertile valleys, those watered by the Jaxartes, Oxus, and Zerafshan being particularly productive. The rivers of Turkestan provide its most noteworthy feature, and in addition to their physical importance, are full of historic interest. The Amu Daria or Oxus is one of the great rivers of Central Asia rising in the Pamir Tableland, and flowing by a course of over thirteen hundred miles into the Aral Sea. There is reason to believe that at one period this river emptied itself into the Caspian, but from some unknown cause it is believed to have deserted its old bed, and now passes by Kungrad into the Aral. The Oxus formed the boundary of the Empire of Cyrus and of Alexander. To-day it serves in its upper course as the boundary between the Khanate of Bokhara and Afghanistan. The Sir Daria or Jaxartes originates in the junction of the Narin with the Gulishan in the highland district of Ferganah. It flows by Namangan, Khokand, Khojend, and the former Ak Mesjid, now Fort Perovski, into the Aral Sea at its north-eastern end, and served as a line of advance for the Russians during their various expeditions into Bokhara and Khokand. The Zerafshan rises in the Alai Mountains, and after fertilising the region between Samarcand and Bokhara, loses itself in the borders of the Kara Kum. The country in its non-desert portions produces flax, hemp, tobacco, and

silk. Coal and salt are also abundant. The chief occupations of the people are agriculture and the breeding of animals; horses, cattle, and sheep. The inhabitants comprise a number of peoples, the dominant race being Uzbegs. Among others are Turkomans, Kirghiz, Kipchaps, Sarts, and several tribes of Persian descent. The administrative capital of Turkestan is Tashkend, the chief cities being Samarcand, Khokand, Chemkend, and Khojend.

TRANSCASPIA.

The Transcaspian region, the last formed of the Russian provinces in Central Asia, dates from 1881, when it was constituted for the inclusion of the territory taken by the Russians from the Akhal Tekke Turkomans. It includes the greater portion of what was once Khivan territory, and extends from the Caspian across the Kara Kum waste to the Oxus; its northern boundary being the Ust Urt plateau, its southern the River Atrek and the Persian and Afghan frontiers. Excepting along the few rivers, and in the line of oases which border the northern slopes of the Kopet Dag range, this province is a waste incapable of cultivation. Its dwellers are mainly Turkomans of the Tekke and Alieli tribes, who gave more trouble to their conquerors than any other of the nomads of Central Asia. The value of Turkomania, like that of the Kirghiz steppe, is mainly strategic, and the district is remarkable for the railway which has been constructed from the Caspian along its southern border as far as Tashkend. The seat of government is Askabad, and the principal cities Chikishlar, Alexandrovsk, Krasnovodsk, Merv, and Kizil Arvat. The area of Transcaspia is 383,618 square miles, and the estimated population 352,000.

THE KHANATES.

Among the territories possessed by Russia in Central Asia are the Khanates of Khiva and Bokhara, which, while to all intents and purposes Russian territory, are

nominally governed by native rulers. The reasons which prompted this arrangement are simple. Each is peopled by tribes unaccustomed to supervision, and each is bordered by territory in Russian occupation. To have formally annexed either would have involved military occupation and expense, whereas by permitting them to remain under the nominal rule of their native princes, the suzerain country saves considerable outlay without sacrificing any of the advantages of possession.

Khiva, the smaller of the vassal states of Central Asia, comprises an area of 22,320 square miles, and contains a population of 700,000, half of whom are nomads. It contains four cities, Khiva, Urgenj, Hazar Asp, and Kungrad. The people are Mohammedans, and the chief produce consists of silk and cotton.

Bokhara comprises the richest territory in Central Asia. It extends over 92,000 square miles of territory, and has a population of 2,500,000. Its chief cities are Bokhara, Karshi, Khuzar, Shahr-i-Sabz, Hissar and Charjui. Its produce consists of corn, fruit, silk, tobacco, hemp, horses, cattle, camels, and cotton, and gold, salt, and sulphur are worked. The regulations respecting intercourse with nations other than Russia are extremely severe, and no foreigner is allowed within the frontier unless provided with a Russian passport.

SIBERIA.

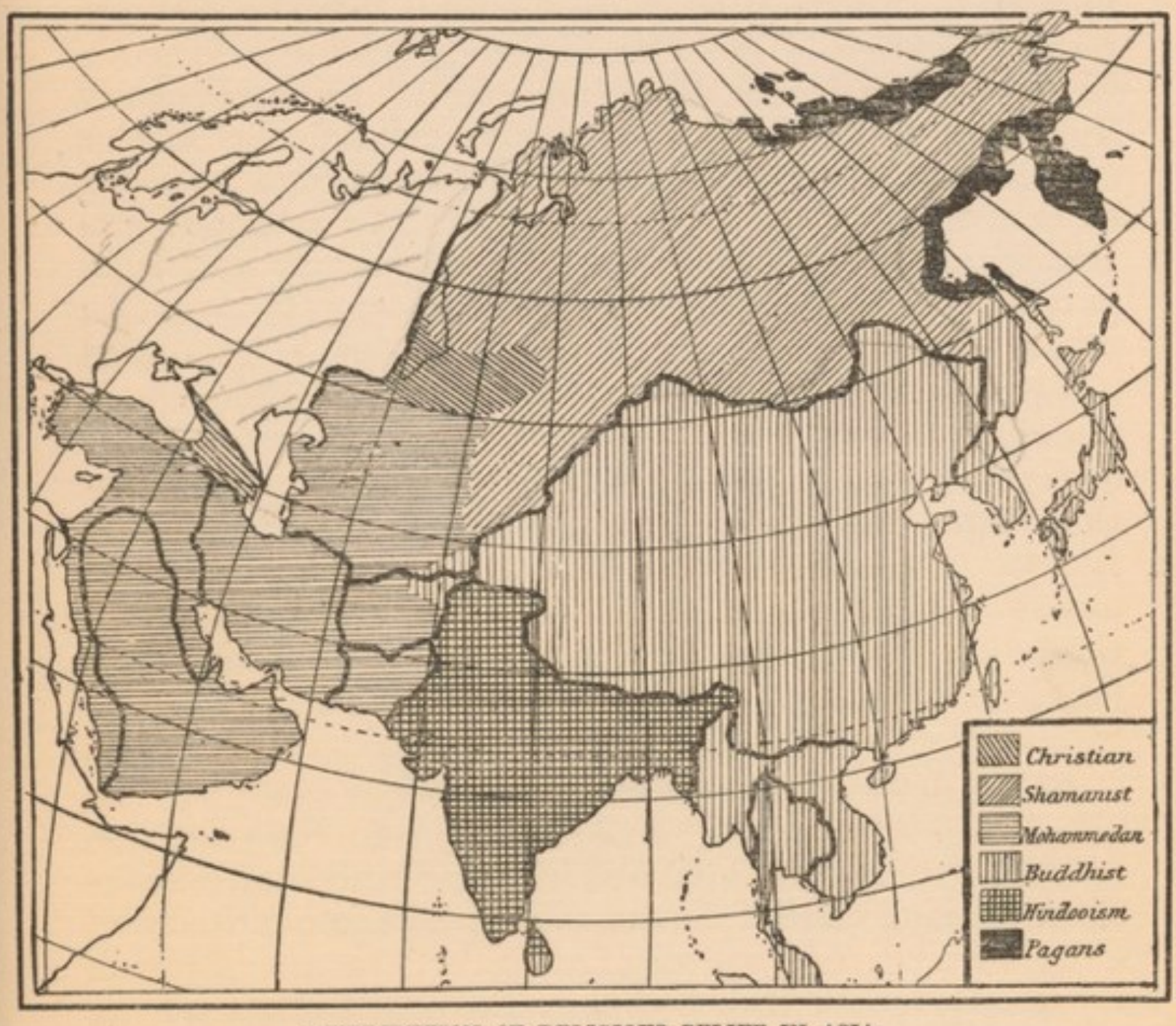
The great continent of Siberia, extending from the Urals to the Pacific, and monopolising more than one-third of the whole of Asia, is now divided into three regions known as Western Siberia, Eastern Siberia, and the Amur region, each being under the rule of a governor-general, and divided into sub-districts or governments under inferior rule. Although the oldest of Russian possessions in Asia, Siberia has by no means proved the most progressive, and despite the three centuries which have elapsed since the Don Cossacks first appeared on the Tobol river, the country remains only partially

developed, and its population is limited to an average of three persons to the square mile. The political divisions of Siberia are as follows: In Western Siberia there are the governments of Tomsk and of Tobolsk. In Eastern Siberia, Irkutsk, Transbaikalia, Yakutsk, and Yeniseisk; and in the Amur region, the Amur district and the maritime province, known also as Primorskaya. Not included in these, and hardly coming within the empire, is the Arctic island of Sakhalin, used only as a convict station, and containing some 29,000 square miles. As already stated the northern portion of Siberia is a veritable no-man's land, the climate being such as to prohibit habitation, except by Arctic tribes, like the Yakuts and Samoyedes, during more than a few weeks in the year. In point of climate Siberia is regarded as the coldest country in the world, and the steppes of the central region are throughout the winter little warmer than the more northern portions. The greater part of the western divisions consists of steppe land; the remaining portions being mountainous, especially along the Chinese frontier and Pacific seaboard. The rivers of Siberia, like those of Turkestan, supply its most noteworthy physical feature, and are among the most extensive in the world. The principal are the Ob and Irtish, the Yenisei, the Lena, and the Amur each with numerous tributaries which serve as means of communication throughout the country. The population of Siberia is very mixed, comprising a large number of different races. Among the aborigines the principal are the Ostiaks, Mongolians, Kalmucs, Tunguses, Ghilyaks, and Chinese. The Russian population consists of three classes: the exiles, criminal and political, who have for nearly two centuries been deported from European Russia; the officials, military and civil, charged with the government of the country and supervision of the prisoners; and the emigrants who have of late years been encouraged to venture into the country from the overcrowded districts of Southern Russia. In the steppe land, and generally in the Transbaikal and Amur

provinces the land is fertile, and large harvests of corn and other cereals are annually raised, while the breeding of cattle, sheep, and horses is a profitable industry. The hunting of various fur-producing animals also provides occupation for many of the inhabitants, others being employed in the various metalliferous mines which abound. The fishing industry is also actively followed on the great rivers. Manufactures are not indulged in, nor is trade developed to any extent. The chief political interest in Siberia at present centres in the great railway which is being constructed across its entire breadth. The work is already half accomplished, but it is still early to attempt any forecast as to the immediate effect of this vast undertaking on the welfare of the country. The capital of Western Siberia is Tobolsk; of Eastern Siberia Irkutsk. The Amur region is governed from Blagovestchensk, the other chief towns being, in Western Siberia, Omsk and Tomsk; and in Eastern, Yakutsk and Yeniseisk. The total area of Siberia is 4,833,496 square miles, and the population 4,874,335.

The vast territories above described have, during less than three centuries, been added to the area of Asiatic Russia. In no other period in the history of the world has such a growth of empire been recorded. To grasp the full import of the facts related it is only necessary to range a few figures. The total of the area to-day owned by Russia in Asia is in round figures 6,564,700 square miles. Yermak's annexation of Western Siberia was completed in 1581, just three hundred and eighteen years ago, and the area above quoted divided by 318 gives an average annual acquisition of twenty thousand six hundred and forty-three square miles of territory to the Russian Empire over the entire period. I leave it to those of my younger readers, who may delight in mental arithmetic, to discover how long it would take, supposing Russia continues to absorb territory at the same rate, for her to become the mistress of the world; but I desire to draw special attention to the fact related, as its consideration will form one of the principal topics dealt with in these pages.

A material point to be borne in mind when approximating the population of Asiatic Russia, is the lack of uniformity either in race or religion. Reclus gives thirty-four distinct races as forming the population of the Caucasus, while Siberia provides a place of residence for fifty-nine, and Central Asia for forty-two, differing species of humanity. And in their religious beliefs the subjects of the Tsar vary quite as much, including every species of creed from the Christianity of the Greek Church, to



DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS BELIEF IN ASIA.

be found in the Caucasus and Western Siberia, to the Shamanists, Buddhists, and Pagans of the Pacific seaboard. The most favoured religion in Asiatic Russia is Mohammedanism, and the largest proportion of the Tsar's subjects in that quarter of the world are Sunnites. The

members of the Greek Church come second. The Shamanists come next, and in the order of their numerical strength the Buddhists, Jews, Brahmins, and Pagans, the last three forming such a small percentage of the whole as not to claim more than a passing reference.

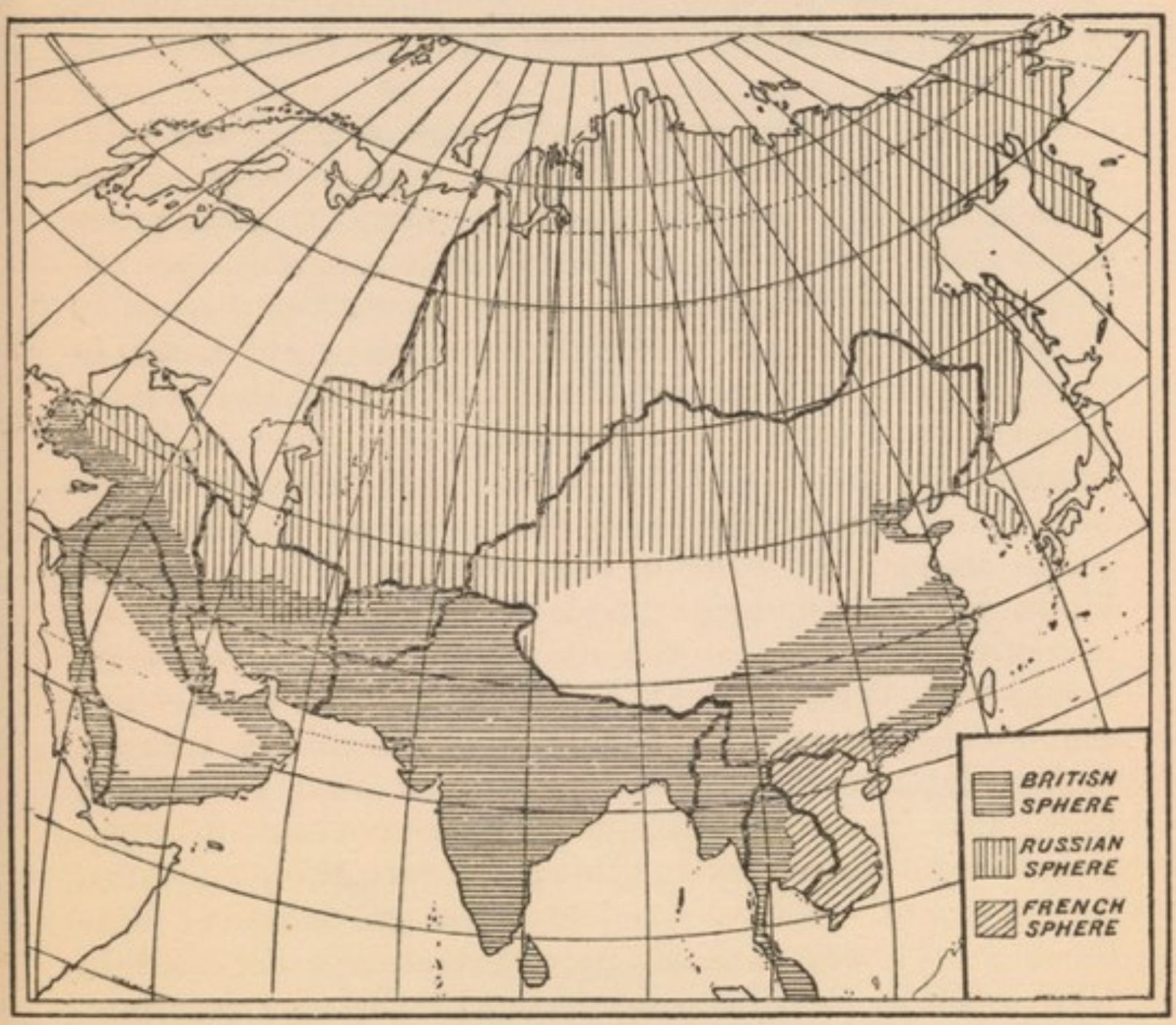
A glance at the preceding map, showing the location of religious belief in Asia, brings out a very noteworthy fact. I refer to the close approximation displayed between the political and the religious boundaries separating Russia from Eastern Asia. Russia has absorbed practically all the Mohammedan countries in Central Asia. Her frontiers are marked by the fringe of the Brahminical and Buddhistic races; the former fanatical, the latter indifferent. The religious question is one which has, so far at least, not troubled the Muscovite conquerors. The rulers have had the good sense to refrain from interference with the religious views of the conquered; and, with a few insignificant exceptions, nothing of the nature of a *Jehad* has been declared. When once the Buddhistic countries come under the rule of St. Petersburg—as in all probability they will some day do—Russia may find her hands full for a space, as the influx of Mongols and Chinese which would be certain to ensue into Central Asia, would doubtless have its result in a fanatical outburst in Turkestan similar to that which occurred in Ili in 1870.

Before turning to other considerations, it may be interesting if we glance at Asiatic Russia from another standpoint. Here is a table giving the area and population of Asiatic territory controlled by European powers :—

	Area, sq. miles.	Population.
Russia, . . .	6,564,778	19,388,317
China, . . .	4,218,401	402,680,000
Great Britain, . .	1,827,234	291,304,000
France, . . .	315,928	18,000,000
Germany, . .	53,000	12,000,000

From these figures it will be seen that while Russia owns the biggest territory, she possesses the smallest propor-

tionate population in the whole continent; and the anomaly can be made even plainer if the statistics are compared fractionally.



EUROPEAN INFLUENCE IN ASIA.

The total area of Asia is placed at 17,299,755 square miles, with a population of 803,000,000. Of these figures—

Russia owns more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of total area, but only $\frac{1}{42}$ of the population.

China owns less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of total area, but more than $\frac{1}{2}$ of the population.

Great Britain owns less than $\frac{1}{9}$ of total area, but more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of the population.

It is scarcely necessary for me to point out that the

prosperity of a country does not depend on its extent, but on its population, nor need I dwell upon the fact that a country which increases its area out of proportion to the population available for its development must end in the exhaustion of her resources and the destruction of her credit.

European Russia is physically one of the most self-contained countries in the world. Her boundaries are marked out on every side either by natural barriers or by racial lines. Her Asiatic limits are even more prominently defined than those which part her from her European neighbours. The Urals serve as a partition between Russia proper and the Siberian steppes, and form a line of demarcation in every sense complete; while on the south the borders of the Caspian are hemmed in by the range of Kirghiz steppes on the east, and the Caucasus on the west. The zones of country outside these natural limits are all of them unsuited to the habitation of man. Siberia, bleak and bare, offers small temptation as a field for emigration; while the deserts of Central Asia are not only repellent, but almost prohibitive on account of the dangers they offer to the traveller. It follows, then, that the ever-forward movement which has distinguished Russian policy during the past three centuries is one, not of opportunity, but of set purpose, and that the insistent extension of the empire is part of a definite plan which in the future is expected to bring a sufficient return for the immense expenditure of life and treasure which has been involved.

In order to gauge what this return may be, it is necessary to glance at the neighbours which surround the empire of the Tsar in Asia. Commencing in the west, and sharing with Russia the coast-line of the Black Sea, is Asia Minor, subject to Turkey, a nation effete and bankrupt, but maintained by the support of the European powers. The land of the faithful has already been despoiled in order to enlarge the sway of the Muscovite, and when time and opportunity serves will doubtless be further impoverished. Persia, which joins Turkey on the

east, forms a wedge between the Caucasus and Transcaspia, and breaks the continuity of Russian territory round the south side of the Caspian Sea. The dominions of the Shah have several times enriched the efforts of Russian exploitation, and there can be little question but that the seizure of at least the Caspian coast-line has long been determined on by the authorities at St. Petersburg. The way has been cleared by the prohibition of Persian ships of war upon the inland sea, and the ability which has been displayed in the rendering of Russian influence paramount at Teheran has resulted in the position of the Tsar's representative practically ruling the country through the medium of the figure-head which is for the present permitted to pose as the Shah.

Next in order comes Afghanistan: a country which, at immense cost, has been maintained by Great Britain as a buffer state between Hindostan and the Russian territory in Central Asia. By dint of an alternate use of force and bribery, the Government of India has cultivated an outer show of loyalty in the ruler of this country; but the game which has been played is one which is by no means restricted to a single power, and the communications which pass at intervals between the Ameer and his northern neighbours do not find their way into the newspapers.

Adjoining the north-east corner of Afghanistan is the one spot where at present British territory impinges on that of Russia. But the Pamir region is not one which lends itself either to incursions or military operations, and the inaccessibility of the 'Roof of the World' limits its use to that of a natural wall between two empires.

From this point to the far-off Sea of Japan, the Russian boundary borders the Empire of China. The greater portion of this line of over four thousand miles passes through ranges of mountains which mark the frontiers of Kashgar, Ili, Jungaria, and the Mongolian desert, while in the plains of the far East the frontier follows the course of the Amur and of the Sungari to the Bay of

Peter the Great at the junction of Manchuria with Korea.

Throughout this gigantic borderland there is only a small stretch of frontier controlled by a sturdy people. Apart from the extremely limited contact with Turkish territory, and the slightly longer incidence of Afghanistan and Chitral, the inhabitants of the countries impinging on Russian soil are either semi-savages or an effete race. The Persians, Kara Kirghiz, Kalmuks, Taranchis, Dungans, Mongols, and Manchus, are none of them fitted to hold their own or protect their frontiers against the attacks of the conquering Russians, and it follows that the expansion of Muscovite empire is restricted only by the desires of its government and the consent of the Great Powers. The territories of Turkey and Persia are protected merely by the influence of Great Britain and Germany. Afghanistan, practically a dependency of this country, is, like India, guarded by the soldiers of our Queen. China, with its dependencies, lies at the mercy of Russia, subject only to the protests of Great Britain; and Korea, long since threatened by the Northern Bear, is saved by the influence of England and Japan. In the case of the last-named another power would also probably have to be reckoned with in case Russia committed any act of aggression. The United States, hitherto a self-contained nation of traders, has quite recently stretched out its long arm for the acquisition of colonial empire; and, supported by enlarged interests, and backed by a liberal supply of common sense, would undoubtedly have its say in any question of land-seizure in Korea, where American citizens have many interests, and American capital is largely invested.

It follows, then, that the domination of Asia really rests between the Slav and the Anglo-Saxon, since the further expansion of the former can only be carried out with the consent—actual or implied—of the latter; and Russia, realising this, makes a point of conciliating the limitary Power with promises on the eve of every fresh

occasion on which she decides to commit an act of spoliation.

Vast as are the regions directly governed by Russia in Asia, they do not represent the whole of the Muscovite influence which obtains in that quarter of the world. Beyond the frontiers which mark the nominal limits of Tchinovik dominion, there are on every side advance posts of diplomatic interference, known as spheres of influence, wherein the wishes of the Tsar—or his representatives—are law.

In China these favoured spots are numerous. The whole of Manchuria, the greater part of habitable Mongolia, Jungaria and Ili are all subject to Russian interference. Military officers posing as consular agents are stationed in every town, Cossacks guard every route, and in all the trade centres the most prosperous merchants are Russians. In this way Kiakhta, Urga and Kalgan, Kirin and Mukden, Kulja, Yarkand and Kashgar all serve as Russian stations, and after having obtained the dominating influence in Peking, where the wishes of Russia override the demands of all other Powers, her agents are now devoting their energies towards the introduction of the suzerainty of the Tsar into the Yangtse valley.

In Afghanistan Russian officers are frequent sojourners. Herat and Kabul are as well known to these as Merv and Khiva, while Persia is even more absolutely in the toils of St. Petersburg than the Celestial Empire.

Such a record of prestige as this tends to make one inquire as to the means by which it has been achieved. And when this is discovered the inquirer finds further cause for wonder. For the Gargantuan empire which has been built up in Asia has been acquired not only with a minimum of fighting, but without a single struggle with a first-class Power. And herein lies one of the great secrets of Muscovite success. Determined, and possessed of an unusual amount of strength of purpose, the policy of Russia is essentially opportunist, and no step is ever taken without counting its probable cost. A conflict

with China, with the nomadic tribes of the steppes, or the rebellious fanatics of the Thian Shan, is regarded as an incident, and dealt with off-hand with all the certainty due to a sense of superior force. But a conflict with a first-class Power would be another matter, and any suggestion of displeasure from such an one causes an immediate withdrawal, for a time at least. It is indeed many years since Russia has had a conflict with one of the Great Powers, and on the last occasion she came off badly and has not forgotten the lesson, and so she prefers to work her ends by persistent but polite methods, and only flies in the face of European opinion when she has reason to believe that Europe is too busy to resent her action. Every advance made by Russia in Asia has either been condoned by more or less truthful 'explanations,' which have been offered by her representatives with a view to soothing the suspicions of foreign ministers, or has been made at a moment when the countries interested have been absorbed in the management of their own affairs. And so successful has this line of conduct proved, that in no single instance has she been compelled to forego that which she has seized.

SIBERIA
English Miles
0 100 200 400 600
Railways
ARCTIC OCEAN
KARA SEA
Novaya Zemlya
Wrangel I.
East C.
GULF OF ANADYR
BERING SEA
Bering I.
Kuril Islands
SEA OF OKHOTSK
SEA OF JAPAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
JAPAN
YEZO
Hakodate
TOKIO
SAKHALIN I.
Nicolaievsk
Ayan
Okhotsk
Petropavlovsk
KAMCHATKA
Koryaks
Kolymsk
Nyru
Verkhne Kolymsk
Sredne Kolymsk
Bennett Is.
New Siberia
ANJOU IS
Liakhof Is.
C. Chelyuskin
Taimyr Penin.
Lena Delta
Bulun
Verkhoiansk
Arctic Circle
Viliuisk
Yakutsk
YAKUTSK
EAST SIBERIA
Olekminsk
Vitimsk
Kirensk
IRKUTSK
Irkutsk
LAKE BAIKAL
TRANSBAIKAL
Chita
Nerchinsk
Albazin
Blagoveschensk
Khabarovka
AMUR
MARITIME PROV.
MANCHURIA
Aigun
Tsitsihar
KOREA
Mukden
Port Arthur
Talienwan
PEKING
Niuchwang
CHINESE EMPIRE
Gobi or Shamo
MONGOLIA
Urga
Kiakhta
Kerulen
Selenga
Kobdo
CHINESE FRONTIER
ZUNGARIA
Kulja
Vernoe
L. BALKASH
Semipalatinsk
Barnaul
Busk
TOMSK
Omsk
Tomsk
Yemseisk
Krasnoyarsk
Kansk
Minusinsk
Nijni Udinsk
Achinsk
Marinsk
Akmolinsk
Baraba Steppe
Tara
Tukalinsk
Petropavlovsk
Ishim
Tobolsk
Tiuman
Chelinbinsk
Kurgan
Yalutorovsk
Turinsk
Surgut
Berezof
Obdorsk
Golchika
Turukhansk
YENISEISK
Lower Tunguska
Stony Tunguska
Upper Tunguska
Yenisei R.
Ob R.
Irtish R.
Ural Mountains
RUSSIA
Perm
Pechora
Dvina
Yamal Peninsula
Gulf of Ob
Taz B.
Dickson Harb.
Khatanga R.
Anabara
Olenek
Lena
Yana
Indigirka
Kolyma
Aldan
Stanovoi Mountains
Olekma
Vitim
Zeya
Shilka
Nercha
Argun
Amur
Ussuri
Sungari
Sayan Mts.
Altai
Irtish
Ob
Yenisei
Angara
Lena
Kolyma
Bulun
Ulskoi
Dui
Gulf of Tartary
Tsitsihar
Kirin
Hoang-ho
Yellow R.
Peter the Great Bay
Vladivostok
Port Arthur
Talienwan
Niuchwang
Mukden
Urga
Kiakhta
Chita
Irkutsk
Krasnoyarsk
Tomsk
Omsk
Tobolsk
Tiuman
Yakutsk
Vladivostok
Khabarovka
Nicolaievsk
Hakodate
TOKIO
PEKING
Kulja
Kobdo
Semipalatinsk
Barnaul
Vernoe
Yakutsk
Verkhoiansk
Bulun
Olekminsk
Vitimsk
Viliuisk
Yakutsk
Irkutsk
Krasnoyarsk
Yemseisk
Turukhans

CHAPTER II

THE ABSORPTION OF SIBERIA

Discovery and first exploration of Asiatic territory—Yermak's expeditions—His claim to having been the first to invade Siberia—Founding of Tobolsk, Tomsk, Yeniseisk and Yakutsk—Poyarkoff's mission—Khabaroff continues his work—Simoviof joins him—Stepanof, his fate—Pashkof—Chinese opposition to Russian exploration—Albazin founded—Embassy to Peking—Chinese attack Russians on the Amur—Golovin's embassy to Peking—Treaty of Nerchinsk—Ides' mission to Peking—Annexation of Kamchatka—Commencement of penal colonies in Siberia—Ismaloff's embassy to Peking—His reception by Kanghi—Muravieff goes to Siberia—Nicolaievsk and Mariinsk founded—Muravieff starts down the Amur—Treaty of Aigun—Treaty of Tientsin—Amur and Maritime provinces formed—Treaty of Peking.

In the year 1558 Ivan the Terrible granted to one Gregory Strogonof a tract of land on the bank of the Kama river, which traverses the European base of the Urals. Strogonof came of a hardy and a fearless stock, and with other members of his family devoted his energies to the exploration and development of the estate he had thus easily acquired. Without loss of time he surveyed the spurs of the mountains, and eventually crossed the range, and stood on Asiatic soil. His visit proved unwelcome, and at first he got a rough reception from the Mohammedan inhabitants, but he succeeded in learning sufficient of the country and its resources to cause him to conjure up visions of conquest which pleased his fancy.

Strogonof realised that to enter Asia to any purpose would need support, and he accordingly obtained an audience with the Tsar, who gave him authority to take the offensive if necessary against the Tartars.

Among the inhabitants of the Ural district were a number of Don Cossacks, who had migrated thither when their territories were annexed. These men, reckless and

none too honest, had repeatedly got themselves into trouble by raids on more peaceable people, and despite official threats had become little better than a band of highwaymen. Strogonof, who knew these men, and appears to have obtained some influence over them, approached their leader, one Yermak Timofevitch, and obtained for him the pardon of the Tsar on condition that he agreed to take service under him in his forthcoming campaign. Accordingly the ex-robber gathered round him some eight hundred men—the rabble of the district—Russians, Cossacks, Germans, Poles and escaped prisoners; and with them crossed the Urals in 1579. The approaching natives were easily frightened off by the marauder's firearms, which were an entire novelty to the Tartars. And so Yermak and his men advanced without resistance through the virgin forests which fringed the Tobol, until brought up by the appearance of Kutchum Khan, who had come out from his capital of Sibir on the Irtish in order to slay the invaders. But the chief of the Nomads was no match for the Cossack. He was badly defeated. Sibir was captured and Mametkul, his cousin and right-hand man, taken prisoner.

On his return to Russia, Yermak was received with high honour, and was handsomely rewarded. He returned to Siberia to pursue his conquest, and speedily subjugated the banks of the Irtish and the Obi. The news of his prowess was received with acclamations in Russia, and the Tsar sent priests to the new country of Siberia in order that the people might become converted to the rites of the Greek Church.

It is the custom in Russia to regard Yermak as a great leader. He is reckoned a hero by historians and honoured as a saint by the Church. But I question much whether he was anything more than a swashbuckling highwayman, who found it to his interest to loot in his country's cause rather than his own. That he was not the discoverer of Siberia is proved by the fact that maps of the Obi country were in existence before he took service under Strogonof. Yet Reclus appears to be the only writer

who has noted this.[1] As a matter of fact the Sibir country was well known to the Novgorod merchants long before the Strogonofs received their grant of demesne. The city was the head centre of the fur trade, and its merchants paid regular visits to Nijni and to Perm.

Yermak did not long enjoy the fruits of his daring. After the seizure of Sibir he penetrated southwards and succeeded in opening up trade with the Khanate of Bokhara, but just as he was about to undertake fresh ventures he was drowned while swimming the Irtish in the endeavour to get away from his enemies, who had taken him by surprise. His death did not, however, put an end to the territorial aggrandisement of Russia. It is indeed questionable whether the work of conquest and absorption was ever before so rapidly performed. The success which had attended the attempts of Yermak had served to encourage other bands of adventurers, and whole tribes of Cossacks migrated from the Don and Terek districts in order to overrun the new country, which rumour stated teemed with wealth. Tobolsk was founded on the Irtish, ten miles below Sibir, in 1587. To-day nothing remains of the ancient Tartar capital, which is believed to have disappeared owing to the cliff on which it stood having been undermined and washed away by the river, but Tobolsk is a flourishing city, the capital of Western Siberia, with a population of 23,000 souls. The immediate prosperity which attended the founding of Tobolsk prompted exploiters to go further afield, and in the result Tomsk was founded in 1604, Yeniseisk in 1619, Yakutsk in 1632, and Okhotsk in 1638.

The subjugation of Siberia was effected with little trouble or loss of life. The country was found to be so sparsely populated and the distances so vast, that nowhere was it possible for an imposing army to be brought to bear upon the invaders, and so, by rapid strides, the whole of Western and Central Siberia became annexed to Tsardom, and the Kalmucs, Buriats, Tunguses, Kam-

[1] *The Earth and its Inhabitants.*

chadales, Koryaks, Ainos, Ostiaks, and Samoyedes, most of them ignorant of the very meaning of the word king or ruler, were made subjects of the great Russian Empire. In this way was accomplished in little more than half a century the conquest of four million square miles of territory, or just double that of European Russia to-day.

In 1636 a party of Cossacks had been sent from Tomsk to the Aldan river to collect tribute from the Tunguses living on its banks. The men under the guidance of their leader, Ivan Moskvitin, went due east, until three years later they found themselves on the shore of the Sea of Okhotsk, where they established themselves at the mouth of the Ulya river, and while there they heard of the tribes who dwelt on the Amur, of their arable lands and their prosperity. About the same time another party of Cossacks under Max Perfirief, on their way from Yeniseisk to Vitim, gathered news respecting the Daurians, who inhabited the region of the Shilka river, and who were said to be very wealthy, doing a large trade along the lower Shilka or Amur.[1] This information attracted a good deal of attention in Yakutsk, and Peter Petrovitch, its first governor, decided to send an expedition to explore the unknown river.

Accordingly, Vasilei Poyarkoff was provided with 132 men, ammunition and supplies, and left Yakutsk on the 15th July 1643. He ascended the river Aldan and its tributary, the Uchur, taking eleven weeks over the journey. On leaving the Uchur, he pursued his journey overland for four weeks, and then met with some Tunguses, who gave him a friendly reception. Under instructions given by these, Poyarkoff found his way to a village at the mouth of the Umlekan, a tributary of the Dzeya, and here he was made welcome by the inhabitants, who offered him cattle and meal, and readily afforded all the information desired. The explorer thus learned that the rumours respecting the fruitful country along the great

[1] The river was known as the Shilka in its upper course, and the Amur in its lower.

river Amur were true. He was also told that a wealthy Khan, named Borboi, lived in an important town some weeks' journey down river, and that Manchus regularly visited him for the purpose of trading their silks and tea.

The arrival of so large a party as that accompanying Poyarkoff at a little village in winter soon proved a strain upon the resources of the inhabitants. Provisions were beginning to get scarce, so the explorer despatched his lieutenant, one Yushkof Petrof, to Moldikichid, another village at the mouth of the Selimda, where, he was told, provisions were plentiful. Petrof accordingly set out on his errand with a suitable retinue, and in due course arrived at the place described. His advent was met with a very favourable reception. Two Daurian chiefs came out to welcome the visitor and offer their services. Their proffered assistance was returned by their being seized as hostages, while instant admission to the village was demanded. This demand was refused by the natives, whereupon Petrof threatened to torture the hostages, and behaved in so overbearing a manner that the people decided to attack his party. They came out of their village in numbers, and assailed the Russians vigorously. Ten of the invaders were dangerously wounded, others were taken prisoners, and finally Petrof had to fly to the forest, where he was again surrounded by the irritated Daurians. One of their chiefs was shot in the mêlée, the other escaped to his people, and, after being harassed by the natives for four days and nights, the Russians were permitted to return the way they had come.

On regaining Poyarkoff's headquarters without the desired provisions, Petrof was much abused. He was, moreover, refused his share of the remaining rations. Poyarkoff is said to have offered Petrof the bodies of those slain in the contest for food,[1] but whether this be true or no, he certainly gave him no supplies, and the exploring party had to live as best they could on the bark of trees and the roots of herbs. Eventually fresh

[1] Ravenstein.

supplies were brought into camp by a contingent of Cossacks, but not before fifty of the men had died of hunger and cold.

As soon as the supplies reached him, Poyarkoff decided to push on. He continued his way down the Dzeya, until on the fifth day he reached its junction with the Amur, at the spot where now stands Blagovestchensk. From here the explorer descended the Amur, the first Russian who had ever traversed its surface. It took him three weeks to cover the distance to the mouth of the Sungari, up which he sent a party of twenty-five men; but only two returned, the others being killed by the Ducheri tribes. Six weeks later the party reached the mouth of the Amur, where he fixed his winter quarters among the Natki, a friendly tribe inhabiting the lower reaches of the river, from whom he collected tribute in skins. He returned to Yakutsk in June 1646, and was greatly honoured for his work of exploration.

The accounts published of Poyarkoff's discoveries served to centre attention on the Amur exploration, and when in 1647 tidings reached Yakutsk that a new and shorter route had been discovered to the great river, it was at once determined to open up the road with a view to future explorations. Accordingly a party of Cossacks was despatched to the Amur to exploit the new route. They traversed the Olekma river, and duly reached their goal near the mouth of the Urka. They went cautiously, but learned much. Among other information gathered by this party was the fact that the biggest proprietor in the region was known as Prince Lavkai, who did a large trade with the natives, and owned an extensive town down stream. They also reported that a number of forts of wood guarded this man's territories along the river bank. On receipt of this news a young officer named Yerofei Khabaroff, who possessed considerable wealth, asked leave to visit the newly discovered territories and bring them under the subjugation of the Tsar. The enthusiast offered to bear the expenses of the expedition himself, and his offer was accepted. Late in the autumn

of 1649 Khabaroff left Yakutsk. He advanced as far as Tugirsk, where he wintered, and started on the 18th January 1650, on his way to the Amur, in sledges. On reaching the first of the line of forts it was found to be deserted, as was also the second, but on nearing the third a party of horsemen were seen approaching the invaders. The riders halted within speaking distance, and conversation commenced by an interpreter introducing the party, which consisted of Prince Lavkai, his two brothers, son-in-law, and a servant. The Prince had come out to ask what the Russians wanted. Khabaroff replied that they had come for purposes of trade, and that while a small tribute might possibly be required, the Tsar would take them under his powerful protection. The conference was then brought to an abrupt end by the Prince's party riding off. Khabaroff accordingly continued his visit to the forts, and subsequently burned four, leaving the bulk of his men in the remaining one, while he returned to Yakutsk to report.

He returned to the Amur in June accompanied by 130 more men and some cannon. With these he secured a number of barges, and commenced his descent of the Amur. The people at the various Daurian villages along the banks all fled at the approach of the flotilla. Nothing remarkable happened for three days. On the evening of the fourth, however, the party came in sight of a newly-constructed fort, which had been erected in the hope of checking the Russians. There was a strong garrison behind the earthworks, which was reinforced by some fifty Manchu horsemen, who were engaged in collecting tribute due to the Emperor of China. The Daurians strove to prevent the Russians landing, but the latter fired a volley which killed twenty of them, and the Manchu warriors fled, while the rest returned to their fort, where they plied the Russians with flights of arrows. During the night three cannon were brought into use, and a breach was made through which the attacking party entered the fort. No quarter was given. Very few escaped, and seven hundred were killed. A number

of women and children were taken prisoners. The loss on the Russian side was four killed and forty wounded.

In the morning the Manchu horsemen returned with a Mandarin, who expressed a desire to live on friendly terms with the Russians. The women and children were then liberated, and Khabaroff sent some of the male prisoners with messages to the neighbouring princes, requiring them to send in their submission to the Tsar. Receiving no reply, the Russians moved on and seized a number of villages along the river, most of which had been deserted by their inhabitants. On the 22nd July the fortified village of Tolga was taken by surprise in the absence of the Daurians, and on their return the people were made to swear allegiance, those who refused being cut down, while three Princes who accompanied the people were held as hostages. The victors then settled down amicably with their victims, and for a time all went well. But the drain made on the available provisions by so large a party of soldiers was soon felt by the natives, and the morning of the third of September the inhabitants were found to have fled. It thus became impossible for Khabaroff to remain. The fort and village were accordingly burned, the captive princes taken on board the barges, and the expedition sailed for the lower Amur.

It seems that the Russian commander vented his annoyance at the disappearance of the villagers by punishing the hostages within his grasp, and it is stated on excellent authority that Khabaroff admitted having tortured his prisoners. The senior Prince of Tolga, who had been barbarously treated, committed suicide by drowning himself on the second day of the voyage, and, according to the statement of one Natki or Nigidal, who gave his evidence in 1654, the other hostages, after being tortured in various ways, were burned by their captors. The early Russian exploiters of Siberia were regarded by the natives as devils incarnate, and the saying was current, at the time of the exploration of the Amur, that

the Muscovites would make gridirons of the parents to roast the children on.[1]

After an eight days' voyage, the expedition arrived off the mouth of the Sungari, and a week later, after apparently passing the mouth of the Ussuri without noting it, a large village inhabited by a tribe of Achani was reached at the mouth of a river which was probably the Khungar. Here Khabaroff decided to spend the winter, and he constructed a fort, which he named Achanskoi Gorod, in which he took up his quarters. Some trouble was, however, experienced with the natives, who refused to supply the provisions demanded for the force without payment, and the relations between the explorers and the people became strained. Finding a difficulty in arranging his commissariat, Khabaroff sent a strong body of men on an expedition up river in search of provisions, and as soon as these had left, the Achani, supported by a number of Ducheri, attacked the fort. The effort made to oust the Russians failed, however, and after killing a number of his assailants, Khabaroff put the fort in a stronger state of defence than before. On seeing this the natives sent messengers to the Chinese Mandarin at Uchurva, asking his protection and assistance in driving the invaders away. He at once gave instructions to the Tartar general Izinei to collect his army and march against the intruders, and ere long a band of horsemen, over two thousand strong, armed with bows and cannon, started across Manchuria for the Amur.

On the 24th March the Manchu force appeared before the Russian fort. Their guns were placed in position, and a breach was soon made in the wall, through which the soldiers attempted to effect an entrance. They were repulsed, however, with heavy loss, over six hundred being slain, the Russian dead numbering only ten. Fearing further attack from increased numbers, Khabaroff determined to quit his post, and on the 22nd April 1652 started up stream, and succeeded in reaching the mouth

[1] Middendorf.

of the Kamara, where he built another fort, called Kamarskoi Ostrog, on an island opposite that river.

In 1651 news had reached Moscow of the attempts which were being made to conquer Siberia, and grandiloquent reports as to the wealth of the country of Eastern Siberia were everywhere current. The subject attracted the attention of Alexis, the Tsar of Muscovy, and he ordered an expedition of 3000 men to be prepared for the purpose of proceeding to the Amur, and occupying the territories which had been explored. The command was entrusted to Prince Ivan Ivanovich Rostovskoi, and the advance guard was by him placed in charge of Dimitri Ivanof Simoviof, who quitted Moscow in March 1652, and reached the Lena in the autumn. By this time stories of the great wealth of the new regions had penetrated to every part of Siberia. Gold was stated to be plentiful. Silver, furs, and live stock were spoken of as being of no value, and the result showed itself in the departure of hundreds of adventurers, who set out across the dreary wastes in search of wealth. Simoviof reached the Amur, after many delays, in August 1653, and on arriving at the mouth of the Dzeya found Khabaroff, who had quitted Kamarsk in the interval. The command of the men was entrusted to Onufrei Stepanof, while Simoviof, accompanied by Khabaroff, started on the return journey to Moscow where the latter was required in order that he might personally report on the country to the Tsar.

Stepanof carried out his mission with varying success. He experienced considerable opposition at the hands of the native Ducheri, and on ascending the Sungari was met by an army of 3000 Manchu fighting men, whom he attacked and defeated; but he suffered from a want of ammunition and provisions, and was unable to build the forts which were necessary in order to make good his conquest of the land. The Russian force numbered at this time some five hundred men, and these wintered, in 1654, at the fort erected by Khabaroff opposite the Kamara river. In the early spring the party was attacked

by a Chinese army of 10,000 with cannon and storming machines. The assault was severe, and lasted for many days, but the Russians defended themselves heroically and eventually succeeded in driving the enemy off. Stepanof thereupon continued his raid, collecting tribute wherever he went, and on the 20th July he despatched twenty Cossacks to Moscow with what he had collected. On the journey, however, the party lost its way, and more than half perished. The remainder succeeded in reaching Tugirsk, whence in due course they continued until they reached the capital.

On the arrival of Simoviof at Moscow the proposed expedition under Rostovski was abandoned, but various honours were conferred on Stepanof, to whom the Tsar despatched an autograph letter assuring him of his favour and encouraging him to new enterprises.

Stepanof continued to claim territory and collect tribute, encountering a good deal of resistance in the process. He remained on the Amur till the autumn of 1657, when he again wintered at Kamarskoi. In the spring of the following year he descended the Amur once more, and was met by a fleet of nearly fifty Manchu barges armed with cannon near the mouth of the Sungari. On seeing this large force a number of the Russian troops deserted, and Stepanof was surrounded by the enemy. He fought bravely to the last, but without avail, and he was killed, together with the bulk of his men, the few who preserved their lives being made prisoners by the Chinese, with exception of some forty who escaped and bore the tale to Yakutsk and to Moscow.

While Khabaroff was surveying the region of the Amur, other explorers were opening up central Siberia. In the year 1654 Pashkof, governor of Yeniseisk, set out for the Shilka, which at that period was regarded as the upper course of the Amur, and, after a preliminary survey, started, with six hundred Cossacks, on a tour of exploration beyond Lake Baikal. On the 18th July 1656 he departed from his post, and reached Bratskoi on the Angora in the autumn. He wintered there, and in the

following year found quarters on the banks of the Irgan Lake. In the spring of 1658 he attained the Shilka and founded Neludskoi Ostrog at the junction of that river with the Nercha. Neludskoi has long since been merged into Nerchinsk. Pashkof engaged himself in the building of the future city for three years, returning to Yeniseisk in 1662, when the continuation of his work was entrusted to Tolbusin and Daniel Arshinski, who did much to forward the task set them.

After the death of Stepanof, the Russians left the Amur alone until 1669, when one Nikitor Chernigovsky, a Siberian exile, who was wanted by the authorities on the charge of having murdered the Vovoid Obukhof of Ilimsk, fled to the Amur territory accompanied by some eighty fugitives, who wearied of the monotony of the Siberian routine. Some of the fugitives perished on the road; others fell victims to the Tunguses, but ultimately the party arrived at the Amur and constructed a wooden fort at a well-protected spot on the north river bank, whereon there gradually grew up a town which was given the name of Albazin.

The news of the reappearance of the Russians on the Amur speedily reached Peking, where the Emperor Kanghi gave orders for a protest to be forwarded to Nerchinsk. On receipt of this the Russians despatched one Milovanof to Peking with an appropriate reply, and the ambassador appears to have been well received by the Emperor, who accorded him an interview and loaded him with costly gifts, as well as providing him with an escort to accompany him on his return journey to Nerchinsk.

Meanwhile the fugitives at Albazin had been reinforced by other escaped convicts, who seem to have devoted themselves loyally to supporting Chernigovsky in his schemes. Tribute was collected from the natives in sable skins, and duly remitted to Nerchinsk. The course pursued by the Russian colonists attracted the attention of the Governor of Nerchinsk to the possibilities of the situation, and early in 1671 he sent one Ivan Okolkof to assume the command at Albazin.

The formal recognition of the settlement on the Amur attracted many emigrants to its banks, and in 1672 a number of Russian villages were built in the neighbourhood of Albazin. The success which thus followed on the efforts of Chernigovsky served to draw attention to that individual, and a petition forwarded to Moscow by the settlers of Albazin, begging that its founder should be pardoned for his past offences, was responded to by Alexis, who awarded a sum of two thousand roubles as a present to the creator of the fort. At the same time, and in order to obviate the danger of difficulties with China, it was decided to despatch another emissary to Peking, and one Nicolas Spafarik was chosen for the task. He left Moscow in 1675 with a large retinue, and was received by the Mandarin at Tsitsihar, whence he was escorted with every honour to Peking. His mission appears to have been a success; and, having presented the letters he bore, he returned in 1676, charged with the claim of the Chinese to the exclusive right of navigation on the Dzeya and Lower Amur.

Meanwhile the Russians were rapidly establishing themselves further and further afield. Villages were built and forts constructed on the Dzeya and Numisha, the submission of the Touki, Kautagen, Uligari, and Magiri tribes was received, and forts were also erected on the Selimba and on the Dolonga.

In 1681 the Governor of Nerchinsk ordered Ignatius Milovanof to make an exploration of the Dzeya and Selimda. Milovanof carried out his instructions with great care, and surveyed the greater part of the rivers named, discovering Aigun, a flourishing town, the origin of which has never been revealed. In 1682 Milovanof published a report of his journey, together with a map showing the route he had traversed. The Russian settlements established in the Amur district at this time were Albazin with Panova, Soldatovo, Andruskina, and other villages on the Amur; Novo Zeisk, Selimbinskoi ostrog and Dolonskoi on the Dzeya; Dukikanskoi on

the Amgun; and Tugirsk and Udsk on the borders of the Sea of Okhotsk.

The activity of the Russians on the Amur had not escaped the notice of the Chinese. The whole of the territories in which these settlements had been made were under the suzerainty of the 'Son of Heaven'; and the fact that at Albazin alone some three thousand acres of land had been brought into cultivation by the Russians could not escape the notice of the Mandarin. In 1683 the Chinese began the fortification of the town of Aigun and the island which lies two miles above it in mid-river, and as the work proceeded they sent more and more fighting-men to garrison the place.

On the 17th July 1683, one Gregory Mylnikof left Albazin in command of a detachment of Cossacks, who were ordered to hold, a settlement on the Amgun river. On arriving off the mouth of the Dzeya, the party found themselves confronted by a large Chinese force in some hundreds of small boats, supported by fifteen thousand horsemen on the south river bank. Mylnikof landed his party, which numbered less than one hundred men, on the north bank, and on the invitation of the Chinese commander crossed over to have a conference. As soon as he stepped ashore he was seized and bound. The Cossacks, seeing what had occurred, and overawed by the numerical superiority of the Chinese, fled, but a number of them were pursued and taken prisoner. Mylnikof and the Cossacks were sent to Peking, while the Mandarin ascended the Dzeya and burned the Russian settlements of Dolonskoi and Selimbinskoi. The garrisons at Novo Zeisk and Tugirsk were taken prisoner, and all the Russian posts on the Lower Amur destroyed, excepting only Albazin, which the Chinese did not attack.

In the spring of 1684 the Chinese sent two of the Russian prisoners back from Peking with a letter to the Governor of Albazin demanding the immediate evacuation of the place. On receipt of this communication, Ivan Voilochnikof, the acting governor, held a council, at which it was determined to defend the place at all

hazards. A message soliciting men and stores was despatched to Nerchinsk, and the Russians hastened to put their defences in order. In June a new Governor, one Alexei Tolbusin, was sent to Albazin, charged with the office of dealing with the Chinese.

Early in 1685 news came of the approach of the Manchus. The Russian garrison numbered at this time under five hundred men, and they had muskets and three cannon. Tolbusin caused the surrounding Russian villages to be abandoned, and prepared to make a stand against the advancing enemy pending the arrival of expected reinforcements from Tobolsk.

The Chinese came up the Amur in over one hundred vessels. They numbered some 18,000 men, armed with bows and arrows and swords, and they were provided with a number of cannon, and arrived at Albazin on the 10th June. On the following day the Manchu general sent a demand for capitulation to the Russians, and offering lenient treatment if his proposal were acceded to. No answer being vouchsafed to this demand, the attack commenced on the 12th. The issue was certain from the outset. The defences were badly damaged, many of the Russian garrison killed, and the Cossacks' ammunition nearly exhausted. After defending the place for ten days, the people petitioned Tolbusin to make terms. The Governor thereupon approached the Chinese and sought permission to retire to Nerchinsk, which was accorded; but several of the fugitives went over to the Chinese, by whom they were well received.

The day after the garrison of Albazin had left, on their way to Nerchinsk they met the reinforcements which had been sent them, comprising a hundred men, guns, muskets, and ammunition, and after a council of war it was determined to return to Nerchinsk in accordance with the terms arranged with the Chinese.

After the Russians had left, the Manchus destroyed Albazin by fire, and then retreated down-river to Aigun, which stood on the left bank, and dismantled the town previous to rebuilding it on the right bank somewhat

lower down on the right of Tolga's former village. The new settlement was protected by a double row of palisades, and peopled with two thousand men, the rest of the Chinese force returning to Manchuria by the Sungari River.

On the arrival of the discomfited Tolbusin at Nerchinsk, he had an interview with Ivan Vlassof, the Governor, who had a number of men at his disposal, and who at once announced his determination not to allow the Amur district to be lost. He despatched a small reconnoitring party to Albazin, which returned a fortnight later with accounts of the destruction of the place by the Chinese, who, they stated, had retired to Aigun. On receipt of this news Tolbusin, with one Beiton, who had recently arrived at Nerchinsk with a regiment of Cossacks, was ordered to return down-river and re-establish the Russian post at Albazin. The expedition comprised nearly six hundred men, and was well supplied with arms and ammunition. Albazin was reached without mishap, and the demolished fortifications were reconstructed on a more imposing scale than before. A wall was built round the fort of earth and roots of trees, and this was raised to a height of twenty feet. The harvest, which had not been destroyed by the Chinese, was got in. Seeing that the Russians were once more established on the Amur, the natives renewed their fealty and continued paying tribute. The fancied security of Tolbusin was, however, short-lived. In March 1686 news came to hand of the approach of another Chinese army, sent by the Governor of Tsitsihar. The fort was at once put in a state of defence, and the cannon—of which there were eight—mounted on the walls. Then the garrison waited for the arrival of the enemy.

They came on the 7th July, by land and water. Three thousand horsemen first appeared, and surprised a number of peasants at work in their fields, killing some, and taking others prisoner. The fort was next surrounded, and the crops destroyed. Fifty barges lay off Albazin,

each with its quota of fighting men. The Chinese had forty cannon, and proceeded to bombard the fort without delay. But the walls withstood all efforts directed against it, and when on the 1st September the Chinese attempted to carry the place by assault, they were repulsed with many killed by the defenders, who made a series of sorties into the thick of the advancing host. In the course of one of these sorties Tolbusin was killed, and the command devolved upon Beiton.

The Russians had succeeded in holding their ground well during the three months the siege had lasted, but while few men were killed by the enemy, many had died from disease, which, provoked doubtless by the unhealthiness of the situation and the crowded state of the fort, had attacked nearly every defender of Albazin. By November the garrison had been reduced to a hundred and fifteen, and the ammunition was nearly exhausted; but provisions were yet abundant, and Beiton scornfully refused to accept the offer of a safe retreat made by the Chinese general.

At the end of November it became evident that the strong front exhibited by the Russians was beginning to have its effect on the besiegers. The Chinese began to retire, and though they did not abandon the siege, they removed to a distance of three versts from Albazin. In May 1687 they retired still further, and a truce was declared, pending negotiations. In July it became known that an embassy was on its way from Moscow to Peking, bent on arranging matters, and on the 30th August the Chinese withdrew from the neighbourhood of Albazin, and returned to Aigun and Tsitsihar, the Russians being left masters of the situation.

The oft recurring trouble between the Russian settlers and the Chinese had served to attract the attention of the Tsar's advisers, who, in the autumn of 1685, determined to come to an arrangement with Kanghi on the subject of the frontier. They accordingly sent two trusted counsellors, Nikifor Venukof and Ivan Fafarof, to Peking to open negotiations. These emissaries arrived

at the Chinese capital in the summer of 1686, and succeeded in inducing the Emperor to send instructions to the troops on the Amur to stay operations against Albazin. They assured the Manchu ruler of the good intentions of the joint Tsars,[1] and announced the early arrival of a special envoy charged with full powers for a delimitation of the Russo-Chinese boundaries.

Fedor Alexievitch Golovin, the envoy extraordinary, left Moscow on the 20th January 1686, accompanied by a suite, and escorted by a regiment of Strelzi Militia. A courier was sent in advance to proclaim the coming of the envoy. Golovin, with his numerous supporters, travelled *viâ* Yeniseisk to Rybenskoi, where he passed the winter, resuming his journey in the spring, and arriving at Udinsk on the 28th September. From this point he continued his way round the south of Lake Baikal to Selenginsk, whence he despatched one of his attachés to request the Chinese to appoint a place where the conference might be arranged. Various causes contributed to bring about considerable delay in the settlement of the preliminaries necessary to the holding of the conference. Difficulties with the Mongols, who were at this period not yet under the sway of China, rendered the frontier far from safe, and the authorities at Peking decided to postpone negotiations until the following year, this decision being communicated to Golovin by a letter acquainting him with the various difficulties in view. The Russian envoy replied, sending a letter to the Chinese Emperor written in both Russian and Latin, expressing an earnest desire to come to a settlement of the frontier question, and requesting that no more time be wasted over trifling excuses. In order to ensure his reply receiving attention, he entrusted it to a member of his retinue, who, supported by more than sixty persons, reached Peking on the 13th May 1689. On the 18th he received notification that the Chinese envoys would meet the Tsar's representative at Nerchinsk, and that

[1] Peter I. and Ivan V., who, at this period, ruled jointly over the destinies of Muscovy

they would leave Peking on the 3rd of June. In reply to a further question, it was stated that the number of the suite accompanying the Mandarin would not be greater than was necessary to ensure their personal safety.

The Chinese Embassy left Peking on the 13th June 1689, and consisted of Sofanlanya and Kiw Kijew, two Mandarin of the first class, with 1400 soldiers, many retainers, and two Jesuit fathers, Gerbillon and Pereyra, who had undertaken the duty of interpreters. The party arrived opposite Nerchinsk on the 11th July, and were there met by a large number of barges and armed junks, which had come up river by arrangement. On these vessels there were 1500 fighting men, and it is believed that the total number of the Mandarin's servants, retainers and camp followers was between 9000 and 10,000.

The numerical strength of this body of men caused some apprehension in the mind of the governor of Nerchinsk. Nor was this lessened by the non-arrival of Golovin, who remained at Udinsk, where a letter was forwarded, asking the reason of his absence.

To this the Russian envoy replied, pleading the bad state of the roads as an excuse for his delay, and finally on the 18th August the great man arrived at Nerchinsk, where the Chinese had been waiting for him for more than a month. The conference was arranged to commence on the 22nd, the place of meeting being a large tent, which was specially erected between the fortress and the river.

The first day of the conference was occupied mainly in matters of detail. The second seemed to show that the views of the diplomatists were practically irreconcilable, and when the Mandarin offered to meet the Russians to the extent of permitting them to retain Nerchinsk on condition that it should be regarded merely as a trading post, the proposal was openly scouted, and the Chinese broke up the conference, refusing to confer further with such discourteous adversaries. Attempts made on the

following day to effect a reconciliation failed. And so matters rested until the 25th, when a Russian officer visited the Chinese camp, and was shown the boundary demanded by the Mandarin. The scheme was explained to Golovin, who rejected it, and the Celestials, on hearing this, held a council, and decided to attack Nerchinsk, and incite the neighbouring Tartars to revolt against the Muscovites.

Just as it looked as though hostilities were about to begin, the Russians sent an interpreter to the Chinese to ask for a renewal of negotiations, and fearing the result of their temerity, the Mandarin gladly closed with the proposal. Father Gerbillon, the Jesuit interpreter, was accordingly invested with plenary powers for the settlement of the dispute, and crossed over to confer with Golovin in person. After a long interview between the two on the 27th August 1689 the terms of the Treaty of Nerchinsk were agreed on, and on the 29th copies of a first treaty between Muscovy and China were signed by the Plenipotentiaries, and duly exchanged, the ceremony concluding with a formal banquet, after which the company parted on the best terms with one another.

The Treaty of Nerchinsk is an important landmark in the history of Russia in Asia, not only because of its being the first convention entered into with an Asiatic power, but because it supplies one of the very few instances on which Muscovy has foregone territory which she has occupied. In its effect it shut out Russia from access to the Pacific for a century and a half. It is further remarkable for the fact that the Russian and the Chinese versions of the preamble differ materially. The Chinese version of this reads :—

> 'In order to suppress the insolence of certain scoundrels who cross the frontier to hunt, plunder and kill, and who give rise to much trouble and disturbance; to determine clearly and distinctly the boundaries between the Empires of China and Russia; and lastly to re-establish peace and good understanding for the future, the following articles are by mutual consent agreed upon :—'

In the Russian version of the treaty the preamble is

mute on the subject of the insolence of scoundrels, and reads :—

'The Plenipotentiaries, in order to remove all cause of discontent between the two empires, to conclude a permanent peace, and to settle the frontiers, agree in their conference at Nerchinsk to the following articles :—'

The articles referred to are six in number, short, and to the point. The boundary between Russia and China is defined as being formed by the river Kerbechi, and continuing along the range of mountains from its source to the Eastern Ocean. The rivers and streams flowing south of these mountains and entering the Amur belong to China, those flowing north, to Russia. Further, the Argun is fixed as the boundary between the two countries, and the Russian settlements situated on the south bank of this river are required to be removed to the north. The fortress built by the Russians at Albazin is to be demolished, and the subjects of the Tsar residing there shall remove to Muscovite territory. Hunters of either empire are prohibited from crossing the frontier, and any persons doing so shall be given up to be punished. Any attempted raiding is to be punished with death; and the events of the past are to be buried in 'eternal oblivion.' In the last article it is laid down that in consideration of the good understanding between the two empires, persons provided with passports may pass from one to the other, and be permitted to trade at pleasure.[1]

On the 29th August the Chinese left Nerchinsk, and the Russians proceeded to carry out their part of the contract relating to Albazin. Beiton and his garrison were recalled, and the fort was levelled by the Chinese as they pursued their way down river. And early in the following spring Argunskoi Ostrog, which had stood on the right bank of the Argun, was transferred to the left.

Finally, Golovin considerably strengthened the fortifications at Nerchinsk, and when he took his departure for Moscow he left behind him the cannon and arms, as well

[1] See Appendix B.

as a number of his troops. On his return he was received with great distinction, his family were ennobled, and he was made Commissary-General of War.

The signing of the treaty of Nerchinsk had the effect of inducing closer relations between Russia and China, and three years after the ratifications had been exchanged it was decided by Peter to send a friendly mission to Peking. There was already at this time a small Russian colony in the Chinese capital, comprising the subjects of the Tsar, who had, during the frontier struggles, been taken prisoners by the Celestials. These prisoners appear to have been well treated by their captors, and were allotted quarters in the north-east corner of the city, where they lived respectable and orderly lives, and were eventually formed into a Russian company attached to the Imperial bodyguard. The settlers had also obtained permission to erect a church, in order that they might follow the teaching of their religion, and the building dedicated to St. Nicholas was decorated with a number of sacred paintings which had been brought in from Kamarsk and Albazin. The improved relations between the two countries which followed the events of 1689 facilitated communication between Moscow and Peking, and it was on learning that the Cossack colony at the latter city was without a priest to supervise its spiritual needs, that Peter decided to send an emissary to the court of Kanghi. The person chosen for the mission was General Eberhard Ysbrand Ides, and he reached the 'purple forbidden city' in 1693, and succeeded in obtaining permission for a priest to reside in Peking to minister to the Russians there,[1] etc.

In 1707 the peninsula of Kamchatka was declared Russian territory, and two years later saw the first batch of prisoners sent to Siberia. The war with Sweden, which ended in the seizure of Finland, Ingria, Karelia, Esthonia and Livonia, was in full blast at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and Peter determined to send

[1] *Three Years' Travels from Moscow Overland to China in* 1706. By E. Y. Ides (trans.).

his prisoners of war to the steppe country of his newly owned Asiatic territories. No less than fourteen thousand persons were sent to Siberia in the year 1709, many perishing on the way from the hardships of the road, and while Asiatic Russia was thus made a place of exile, the Russians were busy organising the territories they had so recently acquired.

The Chinese, as soon as they had succeeded in ousting the Russians from the territories on the Amur river, hastened to take measures to prevent the re-entry of their despoilers. The garrisons at Aigun, Tsitsihar, and Kirin were strengthened, and a series of regulations introduced for the purpose of preventing communications between the natives and the Russians across the border. The Chinese were forbidden to emigrate, and the privilege of trading on the Amur was restricted to ten merchants who were specially licensed at Peking. Notwithstanding these precautions a good deal of trade was carried on across the frontier. The Mandarin, then as now, were at all times amenable to judicious bribery, and a small payment sufficed to obtain a special permit, which enabled goods to be sent out of the country in exchange for Russian gold.

Thus it came about that the trade across the frontier increased, and the Russians came to realise how much they had sacrificed by the treaty of 1689. In order that an attempt might be made to regain some of the facilities which had been lost, Peter determined to send another embassy to Peking, whose instructions were to endeavour to draw the bonds of intimacy between the two countries closer. The Ambassador chosen was Captain Leon Ismaloff, and he arrived at the Celestial capital in 1721, and was received with every token of respect by the Mandarin. A house was placed at his disposal in the Chinese capital, and the party remained the guests of the Emperor during its stay. When the question of an audience with the Emperor was mooted, however, Ismaloff was informed that he would be required to prostrate himself in accordance with the

ceremonial known as the Kowtow, and on his refusing to acquiesce he was told that the desired interview would not take place. Eventually a compromise was arrived at, one of the principal Mandarin going through the ceremony before the Tsar's letter which Ismaloff had brought, and that officer agreeing to do the same before Kanghi, the audience took place within the Palace.

Kanghi received the Russian emissary with a condescension such as had never before been known in China. He accepted the Tsar's letter with his own hands, and gave his consent to the request that Ismaloff might leave one of his secretaries at Peking as permanent diplomatic agent. In addition to granting this privilege, Kanghi replied to the Tsar's expressions of friendship by a declaration of good-will, which Ismaloff on his return to Moscow magnified into a pledge of increased facilities for intercourse between the two nations. Before quitting the Chinese capital Ismaloff installed his private secretary, M. de Lange, as diplomatic agent to the Chinese Court, and on receiving his ambassador's gratifying report Peter determined to at once fit out a large caravan to tap the fertile regions of North China and open up a land route to Peking. The caravan was accordingly prepared, and in due course arrived at the capital of China. But the position of affairs had altered materially since Ismaloff's departure—de Lange was practically a prisoner in his own house. The Mandarin refused to concern themselves with commercial matters, and Kanghi lay dying. After remaining a while at Peking the caravan was dismissed to the frontier. The Russian representative, de Lange, was told to quit the city, and requested to inform his master that for the future any trade which might be transacted between the two countries could be carried on at the frontier, beyond which neither caravans nor Russian traders would be permitted to encroach. And so Peter's efforts proved unavailing, and it became necessary to seek out other means for obtaining those increased facilities so keenly desired in Eastern Asia. As Siberia became better

known, so did the desirability of an outlet to the Pacific Ocean become more generally recognised. Müller, the historian, pointed out in 1741 the necessity of obtaining the right of navigating the Amur in order that the supplies needed to be periodically sent to Kamchatka might be sent by that route. This plea attracted much attention, and in the following year a large tract of unexplored territory on the extreme east of the continent was declared a portion of the Russian Empire.

In 1746 Cherikof advised the establishment of a fortified post at the mouth of the Amur, and the idea was warmly taken up seven years later by Myetlef, the Governor of Siberia. But nothing came of it, and matters were allowed to remain in accordance with the treaty of Nerchinsk. In 1806 one more, and last attempt was made to talk the Chinese round. Captain Golovkin was despatched on a mission to Peking charged with treating for free navigation on the Amur, or at any rate for permission to send a certain number of ships down river with provisions and stores each year. Golovkin was no more successful than his predecessors. The Chinese refused to make any concession whatever, and the envoy had to return discomfited. Still nothing was done to force China's hand, nor did the very full and careful report made by Alexander von Middendorf[1] of the result of his journey along the Chinese frontier in 1844 lead to immediate action.

In 1847 the governorship of Eastern Siberia became vacant, and the appointment was conferred by Tsar Nicholas on Count Nikolas Muravieff, and no sooner had he entered on his duties than he gave evidence of his intentions respecting the Amur question. His first step was to despatch a small party of Cossacks to explore the river. The party was placed in charge of Vaganof, the companion of Middendorf, who left Ust Strelka in the spring of 1848, and has never been heard of since. Inquiries as to the fate of the explorers proved fruitless. The Chinese knew, or said they knew, nothing.

[1] *Reise in den äussersten Norden Osten Sibiriens.*

Muravieff's next step was to send exploring parties to the sea of Okhotsk and the mouth of the Amur. Captain Nevilskoi, Lieut. Savin, and Lieut. Orlof all made surveys along the coast-line, and in 1850 the last-named discovered the mouth of the Amur, and Captain Nevilskoi ascended the river and founded Nicolaievsk, and Mariinsk in the following year. In 1852 Urup, one of the Kurile Islands, was occupied. In 1853 Alexandrovsk was founded in Castries Bay, and in the same autumn Major Busse, with a hundred men, occupied Aniwa Bay in the strait of La Perouse, and established a Russian post at Dui on the western coast of Sakhalin.

In the year 1854 Muravieff determined to seize the Amur. There is little doubt but that he would have taken this course in any event, as he had been working up from the moment of his assuming office in Siberia, but the outbreak of the Crimean war undoubtedly hurried matters, as the entrance of the French and English fleets into the Black Sea prevented the despatch of stores to the Siberian coast by the usual route, and it appeared as though the three Russian frigates which lay at the time in the Gulf of Tartary would have to go without provisions, as would also the newly founded Russian settlements along the coast.

The Mandarin at Kiakhta was first communicated with, but he stated that he was unable to do anything without reference to Peking. Muravieff knew that to approach Hienfung, the lately appointed Emperor of China, would be mere waste of time, and this was to be avoided. The Russian governor therefore got his expedition together, and started down the Amur from Shilinsk in the steamer *Argun*, accompanied by fifty barges and numerous rafts. He took with him a considerable staff, together with a party of scientists and some topographers, about a thousand soldiers and several big guns.

I do not propose at this stage to inquire into the rights of Muravieff's action. It has been charged to him that his conduct in invading territory which was acknowledged by treaty to belong to a neighbouring power with

whom Russia was at peace at the time, was an act against the law of civilised nations; but it must, on the other hand, be borne in mind that in his official capacity Muravieff was responsible for the victualling of the settlements which existed on the Sea of Okhotsk and the Straits of Tartary, and though these latter had been founded on territory which was defined by the Treaty of Nerchinsk as belonging to the Chinese empire, the settlers in them were Russian subjects, who looked to the Tsar's representative for succour. And so one is led to take the view of the case expressed by Ravenstein,[1] who puts the case for Muravieff in the sentence, 'Supplies were urgently required on the Lower Amur and necessity knows no law.'

Very complete accounts of Muravieff's journey down the Amur were written by members of the expedition.[2] On the 17th June Amba Sakhalin was reached. Most of the inhabitants fled, but some of the Russian officers landed and found the Manchus friendly. They made them some small presents and left the following morning for Aigun, where they found a number of junks moored along the bank. The Russians were invited ashore and well received. Entrance to the town was prohibited as being contrary to orders from Peking, but the visitors were entertained in a tent erected near the river bank, and they were greatly struck by the Chinese army of about a thousand men, which was paraded before them. The soldiers were miserably clothed and armed. Most of them carried bows and arrows, many had lances or poles blackened at the top to represent lances, and a few possessed rusty and probably useless matchlocks. Muravieff parted from the people on good terms, and arrived at Mariinsk on the 27th June, whence he returned to Irkutsk, and, satisfied with having succeeded in navigating the Amur to its estuary, nothing more was

[1] *The Russians on the Amur.*

[2] The best of these are Permikin's description of the Amur, and Sverbeef's description of the Governor-General's Voyage down the Amur, published in the *Memoirs* of the Siberian Branch of the Russian Geographical Society.

attempted pending the conclusion of the war with the allied powers.

Soon after the outbreak of the Crimean War, the allies despatched a small fleet to the far east with the object of engaging and destroying the Russian vessels on the Siberian station. The squadron in question consisted of five sailing vessels and a steamer, carrying altogether 190 guns and about two thousand men. The vessels arrived off Petropavlovsk in Kamchatka on the 28th August, and found the two Russian frigates standing in under the guns of the fort, which was prepared for defence. Just as the squadron was going into action Admiral Price, the British admiral, died, and the command devolved on the French admiral. The attack was thereupon postponed, but on the 1st September the fleet went in and took several of the batteries, after which it was decided to take the place by assault. The attempt, though bravely carried out, failed, and the landing party lost heavily. On the 6th the squadron put to sea, and soon after fell in with two Russian vessels conveying provisions and military stores. Both were captured and destroyed. After an interval of three months the squadron, slightly reinforced, returned under imperative orders to take Petropavlovsk, but the Russians abandoned the place before the ships arrived, and with their guns and ammunition cut their way through the ice, and reached Castries Bay early in 1855.

The presence of British and French warships in the Pacific and the blockade of the Black Sea made it more necessary than before that the right of navigating the Amur should be secured, and this was rendered the more easy by the absence of opposition on the part of the Chinese. In the course of the year 1855 three more expeditions left Shilinsk and conveyed down river three thousand soldiers, a large number of colonists, stores and implements. Muravieff went with the first of these expeditions which reached the coast without hindrance, but shortly after its arrival a party of Mandarin went to Nicolaievsk to negotiate about the boundaries. As these

were of low rank, Muravieff refused to have anything to do with them, and they retired discomfited, the Russians being left to continue their work of building towns and constructing defences. Contrary to expectation, the allied fleets did not make any attempt on the new Russian settlements. On the 31st May seven British vessels, under Admiral Bruce, entered the harbour of Petropavlovsk, but the Russians had already left, and all that remained for the squadron to do was to destroy the place, which was done. Another squadron, under Sir James Stirling, patrolled the Tartary channel while Commodore Elliot rode his ships in Castries Bay, but the Russian vessels succeeded in eluding the British. On the 22nd July the British fleet appeared off the entrance to the Amur, when they saw the *Okhotsk*, a Russian brig, making for the estuary. One vessel, the *Hornet*, gave chase, but failed to find the channel for two days. At last five boats were despatched to chase the Russian. These found the river entrance, and eventually came in sight of the brig, which had run aground. The Russian crew immediately set fire to the vessel and took to flight, but were chased, and eventually fourteen prisoners were captured and carried back to the fleet. On the 2nd August a Russian vessel, with two hundred and seventy-six officers and men, was captured, the prisoners being sent to Hongkong. On the 3rd September the united squadrons took the isle of Urup, which, as already related, had been settled by the Russians in 1852. It is remarkable that throughout the continuance of the war no serious attempt was made to enter the Amur and destroy the Russian settlements along its banks. The whole of the energies of the allied fleets appear to have been devoted to cruising in the Tartary Channel and Sea of Okhotsk looking for prizes, with occasional intervals of riding at anchor in Castries Bay, and the damage done to the enemy was out of all proportion to the capacity of the squadrons sent against him. In the middle of June 1856 the news was received that peace had been declared, and official notification to the same effect was received on the 1st July.

The conclusion of the war was the signal for the repeopling of the settlements which had been deserted during its continuance, and in a very short time Nicolaievsk, Mariinsk, the colony in Castries Bay and those in Sakhalin and Barracouta Bay were again inhabited. General Muravieff had gone to St. Petersburg to seek means for colonising the Amur in 1855, his place being taken by General Korsakof, who actively carried out the programme entrusted to him. A number of military posts were established along the river, where strong parties of Cossacks were stationed. One such post was constructed at the mouth of all the important tributaries, as at Kamarsk, at the mouth of the Kamara; Ust Zeisk (now Blagovestchensk) at the mouth of the Dzeya, and Sungarskoi Piket, at the mouth of the Sungari. And while new towns and military stations were being built the land was being colonised, vessels were being brought out for the navigation of the rivers, and post stations were established along the trading tracks. The gratification experienced by those responsible for the government of the Russian outposts was, however, somewhat damped by the knowledge of a tragedy which came to light in 1856. Towards the close of the previous year a party of infantry, four hundred strong, had been sent from Castries Bay to Kiakhta. Their instructions were given them by General Busse, who was responsible for their being properly equipped. The men started in barges up river with insufficient supplies, and clothing unsuited to the winter season. They covered a distance of 1200 versts,[1] and had reached a portion of the river absolutely uninhabited, when they perished from starvation and exposure. Of the 400 only eleven survived, these managing to exist by eating the flesh of their comrades. The details of the tragedy were hushed up, but the truth gradually became known. Nothing was done to punish those responsible, and General Busse was shortly afterwards promoted to the Governorship of the newly-formed Amur Province.

[1] 800 miles approximately.

Muravieff returned from St. Petersburg with a free hand, and on the 1st June 1857 despatched from Shilinsk a battalion of infantry, starting shortly afterwards himself with another body of troops. During the summer a number of emigrants and large quantities of provisions were conveyed down the Amur. Among the travellers was Count Putiatin, who used the Amur route for the first time as a convenient way to reach Japan. He sailed down the river to Mariinsk, and after visiting Nikolaievsk and Sakhalin, he subsequently went to the island of Port Hamilton, where he obtained the consent of the Koreans to establish a coaling station. From Port Hamilton Count Putiatin sailed to the Gulf of Pechili, and after considerable trouble succeeded in inducing a Mandarin to receive a letter addressed to the Emperor.

The letter forwarded by Putiatin to Peking contained a request, on behalf of the Tsar, for nothing less than the cession of Manchuria, and offering in return to assist the dowager Empress, the Emperor Tungche being a child, in putting down the Taeping rebellion, which was at the time in full swing. This offer was not accepted by the Chinese Government, nor would they agree to any definite arrangement respecting the question of the Russo-Chinese frontier. The only outcome of Putiatin's visit to China was indeed a series of protests from the Mandarins on the Manchurian frontier against the continued occupation of their territories by the Russians.

On receipt of these, Muravieff hurried to St. Petersburg, and conferred with the Government as to what steps should be taken to deal with the Chinese. It was decided that Muravieff should be given reinforcements and a free hand. Admiral Putiatin was also ordered to co-operate with the English and French[1] in harassing the Chinese so as to play into Muravieff's hands, and Admiral Kuznetzof was instructed to proceed without

[1] The English under Lord Elgin, with the French under Baron Gros, were at this period on their way to bombard the Peiho forts previous to advancing on Peking.

delay to the Amur with a squadron of vessels from Kronstadt.

On the re-appearance of Muravieff on the Amur in May 1858 the Chinese, who had suffered considerably at the hands of the French and English, were in no mood to show fight, and readily expressed their willingness to sign a treaty assigning to Russia all she had asked in respect to the navigation of the Amur. Muravieff was, however, not the man to let such an opportunity slip lightly by. He caused a treaty to be drawn up, which, while it accorded Russia far more than she had previously sought, gave China nothing in return, and this treaty was concluded at Aigun on the 28th May. By it was ceded to Russia the left bank of the Amur as far as the Ussuri river, and both banks from that point to the sea. The rivers Sungari and Ussuri were also declared open to merchants and travellers provided with Russian passports.

As soon as he had settled the Treaty of Aigun, Muravieff, who had just previously laid the foundation of the town of Blagovestchensk, descended the Amur, and founded Khabarovka at the mouth of the Ussuri, and subsequently returned to Stretyinsk.

While Muravieff was dictating the terms of the Treaty of Aigun on the Amur, Putiatin had been busy in China, where he succeeded in negotiating a treaty on behalf of the Tsar. The Count knew that Muravieff was bent on securing a treaty in Siberia, but had not heard how speedily the matter had been settled. He therefore exerted all possible pressure, and secured the Treaty of Tientsin, which, in the case of Russia, is very similar to those accorded to the other powers. By it Russia is given the right of maintaining an embassy at Peking, Chinese ports are to be open to Russians, commerce by land is to go on as before, consuls may be appointed at the ports, and a postal service is to be arranged between the two empires *viâ* Kiakhta. Finally the new frontier between China and Siberia is to be surveyed and mapped.

The signing of the Treaty of Aigun, which gave Russia dominion over the whole of Siberia was a veritable triumph for Muravieff, who had thus secured everything he desired without the expenditure of a single rouble or the loss of a single life. He was rewarded by the granting of several orders by the Tsar, and was created a count under the title Amursky. An Ukase issued at the same time decided that the newly-acquired territory should be divided into the Maritime Province of Eastern Siberia and the Amur Province, both being under the rule of the Governor-General. With a view to helping the industrial development of the country, an Amur company was incorporated by Imperial Charter in January 1858 on the same lines, and with the same idea as the Russia-American Company and similar undertakings, and steps were taken for the immediate laying of a telegraph wire between Moscow and the Amur. In order to bring about an increase in the scanty population of the new districts, passports permitting immigration were offered to political exiles in other parts of Siberia. The immediate result of these measures was a marked growth in the number of settlers. Ten thousand colonists arrived in the Amur districts from Western Siberia in the beginning of 1859, and the reported discovery of gold on the Upper Dzeya in the spring of the same year tended to increase the flow of immigrants.

When the Chinese conceded the Treaty of Aigun they were in the throes of a war with Great Britain and France, but in June 1859 the Mandarin had succeeded in repelling the allied ambassadors at the mouth of the Peiho, and not realising how short her triumph was destined to be, or how severe her punishment, China became once more arrogant in her self-conceit, and began asking herself why she had been so lenient to Russia. Very shortly after this mood had been reached, the Mandarin proceeded to annoy the Russians settled on the Amur in every possible way, and, when remonstrated with, retorted that China had never ceded the river, that Russians had no right there, and that they must quit it

forthwith. These tactics of the Chinese were continued for some time. One Russian officer was compelled to retire from the Sungari river, up which he was travelling as he was permitted to do by the Treaty, and another was obliged to abandon his station in the neighbourhood of the Sungari.

The many complaints which were made respecting the conduct of the Mandarin at last reached St. Petersburg, and General Ignatieff was despatched to Peking to remonstrate with the government there. He arrived as the allies were about to enter the city, and was a spectator of the scene, as well as of the destruction of the Summer Palace. When he approached the high Mandarin, he found them in anything but an aggressive mood, and ready after the lesson which had been taught them to agree to almost anything.

Accordingly Ignatieff made certain demands, all of which were granted, and he obtained without any difficulty the cession of the whole of the Maritime Province of Manchuria between the Ussuri river and the sea, making the frontier follow the course of the Amur to the mouth of the Ussuri, and thence coincide with that river until it terminates in the sea at the bay of Peter the Great. Nor is this all that was conceded by the Treaty of Peking on the 14th November 1860. Different articles in this treaty concede the country round Lakes Balkash and Issik Kul in Turkestan to Russia, accord the right of travelling to Peking on Russian merchants, authorise the establishment of a Russian Consulate at Urga, and annul the Treaty of Nerchinsk.[1]

[1] See Appendix B.

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CHAPTER III

THE CONQUEST OF THE KHANATES

Early Relations with Central Asia—Bekovitch's Expedition—Surrender of Kirghiz Hordes—Dealings with Khiva—Missions to Bokhara—Line of Forts Commenced—Perovski's Attempt on Khiva—Campaign against Khokand—Province of Turkestan created—Fall of Bokhara—Annexation of Zerafshan Valley—Fall of Khiva—Expedition against Turkomans—Yomud Massacre.

THE precise date at which Russia first had relations with Central Asia is not known, but it is on record that so far back as the beginning of the seventeenth century the Tsar, Michael-Feodorovitz, held communications with the Khan of Khiva, these being necessitated by the action of the Cossacks of the Ural, who on more than one occasion made raids in Khivan territory. The dwellers in Khaurism, however, proved themselves more than a match for their invaders, and the Russians appear to have been invariably worsted, and sometimes whole parties of them annihilated. In 1703 the Khan of Khiva, impressed doubtless by the reports of Russian prowess in Siberia, voluntarily declared himself a subject of the Tsar, and despatched an envoy to Moscow with the request that Peter should take Khiva under his protection. Nothing came of this application, and the matter was allowed to rest until ten years later, when the stories told of the wealth of the Amu river by a Turkoman named Hadji Nefes, who came as a trader to Astrakhan, attracted attention to the territories of Central Asia. Nefes stated that much gold was to be found in Khiva and thereabouts, and his story was believed. Shortly after this Prince Gagarin, Governor of Siberia, sent word that he had received a trustworthy report of large discoveries of

gold deposits in Bokhara, a country at that time practically unknown.

These rumours made Peter eager to prospect the unexplored regions beyond the Caspian Sea, and with a view to obtain further particulars of the Amu Valley, he ordered that Nefes should come to St. Petersburg. The visit took place in 1713, and the tale told by the Turkoman greatly increased the cupidity of the Tsar. The moment was auspicious. Charles XII. had been finally disposed of, and the war with Turkey had come to an end. There were no more lands to conquer in the West, so Peter determined to turn to the East. He appears to have been deeply impressed by Nefes' account of the course of the Amu, which he declared at one time had flowed into the Caspian, but had been diverted by the Uzbegs, who had dammed up the old bed from fear of the Russians, and caused the river to flow into the Aral Sea. And he decided to despatch an expedition into the country of Turkestan with the double object of exploiting its wealth and making an attempt to turn the Oxus into its original bed, so that it might flow once more into the Caspian, and enable the Russians to reach the Khivan territority direct from Astrakhan.

Peter entrusted the command of the expedition to Prince Bekovitch-Tcherkaski of the Imperial bodyguard, whom he instructed before beginning any military operations to pay a visit to the Khan, and make a secret reconnaissance of the country.

Bekovitch followed his instructions, and on his return reported to Peter that the Amu or Oxus had, as was stated, formerly emptied itself into the Caspian, and that during his exploration he had come upon the old bed of the river, to which he thought it would be a simple matter to restore it. The Prince was accordingly ordered to take command of an expedition of three thousand men, infantry, Cossacks, and dragoons, to return to Khiva, and to call upon the Khan to submit to become a Russian vassal, and to establish himself in Khiva as the Tsar's representative. From Khiva two caravans were to

be despatched, one to Bokhara, the other down the Oxus, which was to be explored, while trade was to be developed with the natives along its banks.

The expedition left St. Petersburg early in 1717, and going by way of Astrakhan and Guriev, reached the Ust Urt plateau in June. On arrival among the Kirghiz tribes, it was learned that the Khivans intended offering resistance to the entrance of so large an army into their territory. The expedition marched rapidly with a view to reaching the basin of the Oxus before the Khan had time to collect a strong army. By dint of forced marches averaging over twenty miles a day, the invading force came to the first arm of the Oxus, about one hundred miles from the Khivan capital, on the 15th August. The sufferings of the troops during this march of seven hundred miles, much of it over a difficult country, had been very great, and the loss of men by illness and defection had been considerable. The commander of the expedition had sent a messenger forward to warn the Khan of his approach, and in due course he received a cautious reply, containing many expressions of goodwill. In this respect, the two principals concerned were well matched, both being adepts in the arts of Eastern diplomacy, in which lying and treachery form the most important features. While protesting feelings of undying friendship to the emissary of the Tsar who was coming to pay him a visit of honour, the Khan collected his troops and marched out of his capital at the head of twenty-four thousand men, with whom to give battle to his Russian visitor.

As soon as Bekovitch heard of the Khan's intention to engage him, he arranged his men in a strong position on the river bank and waited to be attacked. By the time the Khivans arrived, the Russians were entrenched behind earthworks, with their six batteries in fighting trim. The attack of the natives was fierce but futile. They came on at intervals for two whole days, without displacing the Russian position, and many men were killed by the Cossacks' fire. On the third day

the Khivan commander realised that it would be useless to continue attacking the Russian position, and accordingly withdrew his men and retired.

On the following morning a messenger, bearing a flag of truce, came to the Russians with a message from the Khan. According to this the attack had been made without instructions, and the Khan assured Bekovitch that he desired to remain on the most friendly terms with the Russians. He requested that an officer should be sent to Khiva for the purpose of receiving his personal expressions of amity towards the Tsar and his people. In response to this message, Bekovitch sent a Tartar, who was instructed to inform the Khan that the Prince was the bearer of credentials from the Tsar. The Tartar duly delivered his message, and returned with the information that a council would be held in Khiva that day, and that a formal communication would follow. Meanwhile all hostilities were to be considered at an end.

On receipt of this message Bekovitch held a council, and laid it down that it would be ridiculous to reject proposals of peace if they were made. The chief of his staff, one Frankenberg, took the opposite view, and warned the Prince as to the shifty methods of the Asiatics, and his view was shared by several other officers; but Bekovitch, who had had no previous experience of Asiatic warfare, refused to be shaken in his determination to consent to negotiate.

While the council was still deliberating, the Khivans renewed their attack. A messenger was at once sent to the Khan to advise him as to what was taking place, and the attacking party were kept at bay, and after a while they were recalled, the Khan sending a profuse apology, and stating in explanation that the offenders were not his regular troops, but Turkomans, who, without his knowledge or instructions, had advanced against the visitors. In proof of the truth of this explanation, and the friendly feelings he evinced towards the Russians, the Khan ordered two men suspected of having promoted the attack to be punished by being led

round in front of the army by a thin string drawn through the nostril of one and the ear of the other. After this penalty had been inflicted, two of the Khan's ministers visited the Russian camp, and a formal treaty was drawn up, the ceremony of attestation being solemnified by Bekovitch kissing the Cross, and the Khivans the Koran. The next day the Prince visited the Khan in person, and handed him his credentials, together with the presents he had brought from the Tsar. The Russians were then invited to a state banquet, after which the Khan, accompanied by his guests and escorted by the Khivan army, proceeded to the capital. Once there, the Khan explained to Bekovitch that he would have liked the Russian army to have been entertained in the city, but that there was no accommodation for such a number, and suggested that to meet this difficulty the Prince should send instructions for a portion of his force to come into the city, the rest to remain at their camp.

Bekovitch agreed to this arrangement, and sent instructions to Major Frankenberg, who had been left in charge, to divide his force; but that officer was too astute to be led astray by so simple a device, and refused to obey the order, which he averred did not come from his chief. On hearing of this, Bekovitch repeated the order, instructing his commander to divide his army into five detachments, which were to follow as many guides who would conduct the different bodies to neighbouring towns in which they would find quarters prepared for them. Three times was this order sent to Frankenberg without effect, but when it was sent a fourth time, coupled with a threat of court-martial in the event of its being disobeyed, it was acted on, and the Russians divided into small bodies of about six hundred men apiece, each of which was led in a different direction.

Immediately the news of the success of the Khan's tactics reached Khiva, Bekovitch and his brother-officers were seized and killed. While this act of perfidy was being enacted in the capital, the different sections of the

Russian army were led to places where Khivans lay in ambush, and all were in turn massacred to a man. The heads of several of Bekovitch's staff were stuck on poles round the gate of Khiva, the prince's head being sent as a present to the Khan of Bokhara, who refused to accept it, explaining as his reason that he was not a cannibal!

On receiving news of the fate of his expedition, Peter gave orders for the forces stationed on the Caspian Sea to start on a tour of reprisal. But ill-fortune pursued Russian arms, and the fleet in which the regiments embarked to cross the Caspian met with a great storm, in which many vessels were wrecked. The others succeeded after many difficulties in reaching the eastern shores of the Caspian, and the men, in an exhausted condition, landed. But no attempt could be made to penetrate the Turkoman country, and the survivors suffered much from repeated attacks made by the nomads on their encampment. Eventually they were succoured by a number of ships sent in search of them, and early in 1718 they were taken back to Astrakhan.

After this series of misfortunes, the Khivans were suffered to remain undisturbed for a period of eight years. In 1725, however, Peter sent an ambassador, one Florio Beneveni, an Italian, to Khiva, and he appears to have been well received by the Khan, though his visit did not lead to any marked result. Six years later, the Tsarina Anna despatched Colonel Heryenberg on a mission to the Khan, with a view to the arranging of a treaty between the two countries, but the attempt failed, Heryenberg being refused permission to enter the city, and on his return journey he was attacked by Turkomans, and lost most of his baggage.

In 1734 the leaders of the Kirghiz hordes, hearing rumours of a Russian expedition against them, offered their formal surrender to Anna Ivanovitch. And in 1740 their example was followed by the Khan, whose action was doubtless one of the principal causes which

instigated Nadir Shah to order him to be put to death. The vacant throne of Khiva was offered by Nadir to Abdul Khair, Khan of the lesser horde of Kirghiz, who had already tendered his submission to the Tsarina; and at his request a Russian mission went to the Khanate and entered Khiva with its new ruler as evidence of the approval of his appointment by the government. A few days after his installation, Abdul received a command from the Shah to go to him for the purpose of an interview on affairs of State, and the latter, knowing something of his suzerain's temperament, became alarmed for his safety, and fled from the Khanate, accompanied by the three Russian officers who had assisted at his accession. On the departure of Abdul, the Khanate was conferred on Nour Ali, the son of Abdul Khair, who was well disposed towards the Russians.

In 1793 the Khan begged the Empress, Catherine II., to send a physician to Khiva to treat his uncle, who was nearly blind. Catherine assented to the request, and despatched her court oculist, one Blankenagel, to the oasis. On seeing his patient the oculist declared him incurable, and the Khan, unaccustomed to plain speaking, was so incensed, that he ordered Blankenagel to be tried by the Khivan Council. The courtiers advised that the offender should be allowed to return to Russia, but should be attacked and killed on the road, and this course was decided on. But the scheme became known to some Russians who were kept in captivity in Khiva, and they warned the intended victim, who succeeded in making a timely exit from the traitorous crew among whom he had fallen. With the assistance of a tribe of friendly Turkomans he found his way to the Caspian, and eventually reached St. Petersburg in safety.

The accounts given by Blankenagel of the treatment he had received from the Khan, and the bondage of Russian subjects in his territories, led to the despatch of several expeditions to the Khanate, charged with remonstrating on the enslaving of the travellers. Among the most important of these was that conducted by Captain

Muravieff, who in 1819 surveyed the eastern shores of the Caspian, and proceeded to Khiva, where he was imprisoned for two months, and finally released and ordered to return forthwith to Russia. On reaching St. Petersburg, Muravieff published a lengthy report on the condition of Khiva, which, he averred, came between the trade of Russia and Central Asia. Attention was also drawn to the number of Russians who had been enslaved by the Turkomans, who, finding that the Europeans realised high prices in the slave-markets of Khiva and Bokhara, seized them whenever opportunity occurred. These attacks on Russian travellers caused great indignation at St. Petersburg, and large sums were subscribed with the object of ransoming the victims of the Turkoman raids. The best military authorities were called into council, and General Verovski, at that time military governor of Orenburg, was requested to draw up a plan of campaign against the Khivans.

In 1834 a Russian fortress was constructed at the head of Kultuk Bay on the Caspian, under the name of Novo Alexandrovsk, and it was hoped that this would enable the Russians to keep the Kirghiz and Turkomans in order, and protect the eastern trade of the empire. Two years later a small expedition under Colonel Mansuroff was sent against the Kirghiz, who were acting with the Khivans, and attempts were made to negotiate the freedom of the Russians who had been enslaved in Khiva. The negotiations failed, and by way of reprisal all the Khivan merchants who visited the autumnal fair at Novgorod were arrested on their return journey at Orenburg, and detained with their merchandise. Notice was then sent to the Khan of Khiva that the captives would not be liberated until the Russian prisoners had been discharged, and all attacks on Russians brought to an end. At the same time General Perovski received instructions to take command of a large force and march on Khiva, and after having seized the place and taken the Khan prisoner, to effect the release of the Russian subjects who were held in bondage in the Khanate, to

establish trade relations with the people, to subjugate the Kirghiz tribes, who swarmed on the steppes and attacked peaceful traders, and to make a survey of the Sea of Aral.

The force raised by Perovski for the carrying out of this extensive programme was quite inadequate to its purpose. It numbered in all less than 6000 men, with some twenty guns. Many of the men were Polish exiles and criminals, and of the regulars the majority were recruits, and few had seen active service. The great problem to be considered in the organisation of this avenging army was its commissariat, which was necessarily extensive. It was at the outset recognised that all provisions and stores required for the wellbeing of the force would have to be carried in its train, and as the sterility of the steppes to be traversed offered little sustenance for horses, a large number of camels were procured to serve as transport columns.

On the 18th June 1839 the army started from Orenburg, escorted by 7700 carts and a large number of horses. From the outset difficulties beset the expedition. The heat was intense, and many of the animals perished. Cart-wheels split with the heat, and stores had to be abandoned. The supply of water became exhausted. Eventually, after experiencing many perils, the expedition reached the Ak Bulak on the 15th July, and here camp was made pending the obtaining of the necessary camels. After considerable difficulties, the Kirghiz of the district were persuaded to hire the requisite animals to the Russians, and by the autumn some 10,400 camels were procured, and the expedition waited only for the arrival of reinforcements from Orenburg to start on its journey across the desert to Khiva. On the 12th November these arrived in camp. Further delays were necessitated by the weather, which was arctic in its severity. The men were not inured to hardships, and suffered greatly. Many died, and the loss of camels and horses was very great. When at length the expedition resumed its march, nearly one-third of

the men were sick, and no fewer than 600 had died. By the beginning of April nine thousand of the camels had perished, and Perovski recognised that his mission was doomed to failure. In making his plans he had remembered the fate of Bekovitch's army, and recalled the difficulties it had experienced owing to the want of water. With a view to avoiding similar perils, he had resolved to start his expedition so as to traverse the steppes in the winter, when the snow would ensure a supply of drinking fluid. But he had not reckoned either on the severity of the cold or the difficulties of transport. By the beginning of May the deaths had reached a total of 80 officers and more than 800 men. After reaching a point only half-way between Orenburg and Khiva, Perovski bowed to circumstances, and began to retreat with the remnant of his forces, and, after undergoing many hardships, regained civilisation with less than one-third of his original number of men, and one thousand out of the ten thousand camels with which he had started. And to make the lot of the Russian commander the harder to bear, he learned shortly after having reached Orenburg, without having even seen the enemy he had intended to subdue, that the principal part of the mission he had started to carry out had been achieved by an English officer, Captain Abbott, who had visited Khiva while Perovski was attempting to reach it, and had by dint of diplomacy persuaded the Khan to liberate the Russian prisoners, who reached Orenburg shortly after the remains of the Russian expedition.

The facts relating to the rescuing of the Russian prisoners in Khiva are important, serving as they do to mark the first intercourse between Russian and British agents in Central Asia.

In 1837 the Tsar Nicholas had determined to take steps to explore the border-land of India with a view to possible contingencies. He had despatched Lieutenant Vitkievitch to Kabul, nominally on a complimentary mission to the Ameer of Afghanistan, really in order to

report on the relations existing between that ruler and the British. He had also, by dint of bringing pressure to bear on the Persians, instigated the Shah to despatch an expedition to Herat under the command of a number of Russian officers, and the news of this activity had caused the British to enter Afghanistan. The promptitude of Eldred Pottinger foiled the intended seizure of the Afghan stronghold, and the Persian troops retired across the frontier discomfited. The incident served to draw attention to Russian aims in Khiva, and it was decided by the British Government to send an independent mission to the oasis in order to learn the true state of affairs in the Khanate. Captain Abbott was accompanied by Sir Richmond Shakespear, who arrived in Khiva just as Perovski was retreating across the barren steppe, and he lost no time in bringing pressure to bear on the Khan, in order to effect the release of the many Russian subjects who had been enslaved in his dominions. The persuasion of the British officer proved more successful than the threats of the Russians. The Khan ordered the release of the prisoners, and accorded Sir Richmond authority to see that his command was obeyed. Accordingly he searched every part of the town, and left no building unvisited in which a Russian could be concealed. The prisoners released numbered over four hundred, and they were escorted as far as Novo Alexandrovsk on the Caspian, where they arrived towards the close of 1840.

On receiving news of the tragedy of Perovski's expedition, the Tsar decided to send a second mission, better equipped, to wreak vengeance on the Khivans; but the Khan, hearing of their intention, sent declarations of amity to St. Petersburg, and issued a proclamation forbidding the seizure or enslavement of Russian subjects, and good relations were re-established between the two countries. In 1841 the Tsar sent one Nikiforof to Khiva as special envoy, but he does not appear to have achieved much. In the following year another envoy named Danilefsky was sent to Khiva, and he obtained a treaty from the Khan in which he undertook never to engage in hostilities

against Russia or to permit acts of robbery to go unpunished.

The increased activity exhibited by the Russians in the direction of Khiva had attracted considerable attention in England, where the reported desire of the Tsar for territorial expansion in the direction of India was regarded with no little anxiety. When, therefore, Nicholas visited this country in 1844, he was interviewed on the subject by Lord Aberdeen, who knew that the Tsar had instigated the attack made on Herat by the Persians, and believed that he was intriguing against this country in Afghanistan. In the result Nicholas volunteered the statement that he recognised the desirability of coming to an understanding on the subject of Khiva and Bokhara quite as strongly as of agreeing as to the frontiers of Turkey itself, and he finally agreed 'to leave the Khanates of Central Asia to serve as a neutral zone interposed between Russia and India, so as to preserve them from dangerous contact.'

Notwithstanding the agreement arrived at, the conduct of the Khivans continued much as before. Russian travellers were attacked, Kirghiz traders, supposed to be under Russian protection, were robbed, and the steppes continued as unsafe as ever. But Russia was too busily occupied in extending her sway and her communications elsewhere to be able to keep her eye on the Khivan oasis. Slowly but surely the Russian host continued to perfect its line of communications into the country hitherto held by the Great Horde of Northern Turkestan. Forts were constructed to form links in the line of advance along the Jaxartes, and to the strongholds already existing at Karabutakskoie and Orenburgskoie was added in 1848 that at Aralsk on the Inland Sea. In the following year another fort was opened, under the name of Fort No. 1, at Kazala, where the Jaxartes makes its last great bend before emptying itself into the Aral Sea. This was followed by Fort No. 3, on the Kuvan River, near its junction with the Syr Darya, and in 1853 the famous Fort Perovski rose up from the ruins of Ak

Musjid, one of the most important positions on the Syr Darya.

The incidence of the Crimean War put a stop to active operations in Turkestan, but it was by this time an open secret that Russia meant to penetrate across the Kizil Kum desert, and to reap the reward of her prowess in the seizure of Tashkend, if indeed she did not push on as far as Samarcand and Bokhara. Khiva was for the time let alone, and, finding themselves free from Russian restraint, the subjects of the Khan returned to their favourite occupations of robbery, murder, and rapine.

The death of the Emperor Nicholas, in 1855, brought about various changes in the policy of St Petersburg. In the year 1857 the Khans of Khiva and Bokhara sent envoys with congratulations to Alexander II. on his accession, and their arrival at the capital served to remind the Tsar's advisers that much remained to be done in regard to both these rulers. Bokhara had never been in actual contact with the Russian Government, and the reputation of its ruler and its people was not above suspicion. A few years before Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, the accredited agents of the British Government, had been put to death in Bokhara, and subsequently M. Struvé, who had been sent to the Emir by Tchernaieff, in order to make an attempt to open up friendly relations with that ruler, had been imprisoned and subjected to a series of tortures extending over six months. The rule of the Emir Nasrullah was indeed one of the most dissolute, cruel, and bloodthirsty known in history, for even when on his deathbed he continued his atrocities, and, while at his last gasp, had his own wife brought to his bedside and beheaded, in order that he might indulge in his lust for blood to the very last.

Nasrullah was succeeded by his son, Mozaffar-Eddin, who had at least a less evil reputation than his father, but he also possessed less craft, and did not conceal his aversion to the Russian conquerors, whose advance along the Jaxartes was reported to him. He looked askance at the successful tour of exploration which was made by

General Ignatieff to Khiva and Bokhara in 1858 and 1859, and openly sympathised with the Khokandians in their efforts to retake Ak Musjid, and stem the Russian advance.

In 1860 the Khokandians under Khanaiat Shah moved against the province of Semiretch, where the Russians were established in force under Colonel Kolpakovski. The Asiatics were fifteen thousand strong, and their tactics were well conceived, but Kolpakovski got wind of the intended attack, and succeeded in defeating the enemy with a force of only eight hundred men, thus establishing Russian rule down to the Alai Tau mountains. Encouraged by this success, Colonel Tchernaieff, acting doubtless on instructions received from headquarters, drew up a plan for attacking Chemkend, the capital of Turkestan. The advance was made in 1864, when Tchernaieff advanced with a force from Siberia, to meet Colonel Vereffkin, who came with a small army from Orenburg, and make a joint attack on Aulie Ata, which was taken on the 16th of June. In October Chemkend was captured by the Russians after a severe struggle, and Tchernaieff decided to push on to Tashkend in the hope of being able to take the city. The defence was stubborn, and the Russians were repulsed with considerable loss. Tchernaieff decided to persevere in his efforts, and to use stratagem in order to reduce the city. He marched on Hiazbek, a small fort on the river Tchirtchik, sixteen miles from Tashkend, and dammed the stream, thus cutting off the supply of water from the city. This subterfuge placed the inhabitants in great distress. It was, however, impossible to lay siege to the city owing to the fact that the walls measured sixteen miles in circumference. An attack was therefore made upon the Kamelan gate, which was eventually taken, and on the 28th a deputation of the inhabitants surrendered the city unconditionally.

These successes encouraged the Russians to hasten their preparations for the final occupation of Khokand. But the operations necessitated by the taking of Turkes-

tan, which, containing the famous mosque of Hajret Isavi, was regarded as the Mecca of the Syr Daria, had once more drawn European attention towards Central Asia, and Prince Gortchakoff, who was the Russian Chancellor at this period, deemed it wise to issue a Circular Note to the Powers, explaining the policy which was being carried out, and defending the extension of Russian sway in Asia on the score of dire necessity. In this circular, the Russian statesman pointed out that Russia had found herself brought into contact with a number of semi-savage tribes, who proved a constant menace to the security and well-being of the empire. Under these circumstances the only possible means of maintaining order on the Russian frontier was to bring these tribes into subjection, but as soon as this had been accomplished it was found that the new converts to civilisation had in turn become exposed to the attacks of more distant tribes. And so it became necessary to establish fortified posts among the outlying peoples, and by a display of force to bring them into submission. The Chancellor pointed out that this position was in no way peculiar to Russia in Central Asia. The United States in America, France in Algeria, and England in India had all been compelled by absolute necessity to push their frontiers out so as to absorb people who formed a constant menace to their security, and the chief difficulty with which a statesman had to deal was the question as to when the expansion was to end. In conclusion, Prince Gortchakoff proceeded to define the mission of Russia in Central Asia. The great aim which the servants of the Tsar kept in view was the civilisation of the wild countries which formed the district known as Turkestan. No agent had been found more efficacious in this respect than the establishment of commercial relations. The people were ignorant and quarrelsome, and they had to be taught that more was to be gained by favouring and protecting trade than by robbery.

The reasoning of this circular, which was issued on the 21st November 1864, was so logical as to silence the

half-uttered protest which Great Britain had prepared, and the Russians, realising the success of the Chancellor's diplomacy, hastened to push on in the absorption of Khokand.

In December the people of Turkestan made an attempt to recapture their holy city, but without success, and the Emir of Bokhara, greatly alarmed at the steady advance of the Russians, entered Khokand with his army, and took possession of Khodjend, whence he sent a message to the Russians ordering them to become Mohammedans. Tchernaieff sent some of his officers to the Khan to remonstrate with him, but they were at once seized and imprisoned. On hearing of this, General Romanofsky was sent to deal with the Emir, who advanced to meet the Russians, and gave battle at Irdjar, with the result that the Bokhariots were put to flight, and Khodjend occupied by the Russians, and, profiting by the advantage obtained, General Kaufmann, who had come out to Central Asia to form the government of Turkestan, decided to push on to Samarcand and occupy the fertile valley of the Zerafshan. The advance of the Russians was effected without opposition. Kaufmann, who desired to effect his end without bloodshed if possible, sent a form of treaty to the Emir, ceding the city to the Tsar, while the Russians waited on the bank of the Zerafshan. In due time a messenger brought back a treaty from the Bokhariot camp, which was entirely different in its provisions from that forwarded. In reply, Kaufmann gave the Emir two hours in which to make up his mind whether to sign the treaty required or no. On hearing this, the enemy began firing on the Russians, who replied with such effect that the Emir's troops turned and fled. On the following morning a deputation from Samarcand came to announce the departure of the Bokhariot troops, and request the Russians to enter and occupy the city, and protect its inhabitants. On the 14th May, accordingly, the Russians took possession of Samarcand. In order to finally dispose of the Bokhariot army and end the war, Kaufmann, after stationing a small garrison in the citadel, marched out against the Emir

with the bulk of his men. As soon as he had withdrawn from the city, troops to the number of 20,000 came down from Shahrisabs and laid siege to it, and for three whole days did the handful of Russians defend themselves against this overwhelming host. Eventually the tidings of Kaufmann's final victory over the Emir's army reached the attacking force, and the siege was raised before the General's return, and prior to issuing a proclamation notifying the annexation of the province of Zerafshan to Russia.

A treaty of peace was next drawn up, which the Emir, feeling the uselessness of further evasion, agreed to sign. The principal clauses of this, the first treaty between Russia and Bokhara, decreed the payment of a war indemnity of 125,000 gold tilla[1] to General Kaufmann, to whom the valley of the Zerafshan with Samarcand and Kette Kurgun were ceded on behalf of Russia, while Kaufmann undertook not to occupy or molest the city of Bokhara. The right of trading freely throughout the Khanate was granted to all Russian subjects without distinction of creed, the responsibility for the safety of Russian travellers being placed on the Emir, and Russians were permitted free passage through the Khanate and to the neighbouring States. This treaty was signed on the 18th June 1868.

The success which had attended Russian arms everywhere along the Jaxartes prompted Kaufmann to turn his attention towards the Russianising of the whole of Eastern Turkestan. In the year 1851 the Treaty of Kulja had been negotiated with China, by which trade had been legalised between the two countries, but beyond the promotion of caravans between Jungaria and Semirechensk, and the establishment of Russian factories at Tchugutchak and Kulja, this treaty did not effect very much. The treaty was kept a secret for ten years with the object of evading the attention of England to Russian expansion in Asia; and the terms arranged were not allowed to transpire until 1871. The

[1] A gold tilla is valued at a fraction over 12 roubles.

Mohammedan rising in Kashgaria in 1865 drew the attention of the Russians towards Chinese Turkestan, and the capture of Kashgar, and subsequently of Yarkand by Yakoob Beg in 1866, served to remind the government that there remained other territories which might with advantage be taken under the Muscovite yoke.

For the moment, however, the Chinese frontier was left alone, while Kaufmann devoted his energies to the completion of Russian conquest in the West. Despite the repeated failure of all attempts to take the Khivan oasis, nothing had been done to secure the dominion of the upper Oxus. And Kaufmann felt that the time had come for him to take the matter in hand. But much remained to be done before it would be wise to venture across either the arid desert of the Kara Kum or the frozen region of the Ust Urt plateau.

In 1869 Colonel Stolyetof was despatched with a battalion of the Daghestan regiment and a number of Cossacks and engineers to Petrovsk, whence he embarked for Krasnovodsk Creek on the eastern shore of the Caspian. Here a strong fort was constructed, suitable for a future base from which to operate in the Turkoman country. The preparations thus made for the carrying out of the long-discussed Khivan expedition were interrupted by the outbreak of an insurrection among the Kirghiz, who, supported by the Cossacks of the Don, revolted and caused grave apprehension at Uralsk and Orenburg. The trouble continued for a considerable time, and it was not till the autumn of 1870 that the rebellion was finally quelled, and then the order was given for an army to march on Khiva without delay, the cause of the urgency being the outbreak of further trouble in Kashgar, where Yakoob Khan exhibited signs of conspiring with the rulers of Bokhara and Khiva for the declaration of a holy war against the Christian Russians. And while tidings of mischief found their way to St. Petersburg, the news arrived that the Chinese had abandoned Jungaria, and that the Mohammedans were in occupation of the district of Ili.

This unexpected climax necessitated the despatch of an army to Jungaria, and Major Balitsky, and subsequently General Kolpakovsky, left for Kulja with a force of two thousand men. The opposition met with on the Ili River was not serious. By June the rebels had withdrawn from Chinese territory, and the Russians promptly occupied the province, which was regarded as a Russian province for evermore.

As soon as the danger in Eastern Turkestan was over, General Kaufmann devoted himself to the breaking up of the coalition between the Khans of Turkestan. Russian influence was used, unsparingly and with success, to stir up the Turkomans to revolt against the Khan of Khiva, and the nomads, sympathetic towards the Russians, and hating the arbitrary rule of their chief, refused to pay taxes, and caused enough trouble to keep the Khan's attention centred on internal affairs. While Khiva was thus stirred in rebellion, the Russians determined to strike a blow at its independence, and for this purpose Colonel Markosoff was despatched to Krasnovodsk, from whence he sought to cross the steppe. The force at his disposal comprised fourteen companies of the line, three sotnias of Cossacks and twenty field-pieces. The expedition reached Kizil Arvat in safety in October 1872. But when well in the desert, its progress was opposed by the Khivans, who attacked the invaders at Igdy, and compelled them to retreat with the loss of most of their transport.

On hearing of this fresh repulse, General Kaufmann determined to take the matter of Khiva in his own hands, and to bring such a force to bear upon it as would suffice to settle the difficulty once and for all. His plan included a double attack on the Oasis, one body moving against it from the Caspian, and another from Tashkend. The latter expedition was to be strengthened by a smaller force which, drawn from Orenburg, was to be mobilised at Fort No. 1 on the Jaxartes. In order to thoroughly mature the whole plan of attack, Kaufmann went to St. Petersburg, where a series of councils were

held, and it was during these that Prince Gortchakof issued his famous notice respecting the abrogation of the Black Sea clauses from the Treaty of Paris. The news of Markosoff's repulse, coupled with the rumours of the intended advance on Khiva which reached Europe, caused considerable sensation in London, and the Tsar, recognising the desirability of keeping Great Britain quiet during the coming operations, despatched Count Schouvaloff to England to explain the Russian intention.

Schouvaloff arrived in London in January 1873, and had several interviews with Lord Granville, at which he reiterated a number of platitudes expressing the deep sense of friendship felt by his master, Alexander II., towards this country, and volunteered numerous pledges as to the absence of any intention on the part of Russia to annex territory in Central Asia. The main statement made by the Count, and repeated to Parliament by Lord Granville, was that the sole object of the expedition about to be despatched to Khiva was 'to punish acts of brigandage, to recover fifty Russian prisoners, and to teach the Khan that such conduct on his part could not be continued with impunity.' In regard to the suggested desire of the Tsar to annex Khiva, Schouvaloff declared that 'not only was it far from the intention of the Emperor to take possession of Khiva, but positive orders had been prepared to prevent it, and directions given that the conditions imposed should be such as would not in any way lead to the prolonged occupation of Khiva.'[1]

In March 1873 the expedition started on its errand. The column advancing from Tashkend was personally commanded by General Kaufmann, and consisted of some 5500 men, with eighteen guns, and a very large number of camels, while the Caspian column, which was ordered to advance from Chikishlar under Colonel Markosoff, comprised under 3000 men, with about the same number of camels. The third column under General Vereffkin, coming from Orenburg, included some 2000 infantry and six guns. The programme was for these columns to

[1] *Parliamentary Paper*, Central Asia, No. 1, 1873.

meet at Khiva, but as General Kaufmann desired the glory of capturing the city, the other generals were ordered, in the event of their reaching the Oasis before the army from Tashkend, to camp and wait for it to arrive before commencing the attack. The arrangements made were carefully thought out and skilfully followed. The three columns kept their appointed rate of speed, varying from twenty-seven to thirty miles a day. The cold was intense and the weather bad, but the troops stood it well, and the reports of the advance which reached the Oasis plunged the Khan in the greatest dismay.

In the hope of saving himself from the pending attack, he sent out emissaries to India and to Persia seeking an alliance against the Russians, but without result, and he then announced his intention of making a stand and holding out to the bitter end. The advancing hosts continued across the sandy deserts without interference beyond an occasional brush with parties of Kirghiz or Turkomans, and on the 26th May General Vereffkin reached the Oxus, where he found a fort of considerable size which had recently been occupied by the Khivans. On the following day a body of the enemy was observed lower down the river, and they on the approach of the Russians sent a deputation to the general offering to surrender. While the deputation was being received the main body ran off, and these tactics were repeated later in the day. In the evening the town of Khodjeili was reached and found deserted. The place was occupied by the Russians, to whom a number of representatives of the different Kirghiz tribes came offering submission. On the 20th May the invading force was attacked by a number of Yomud Turkomans who were repulsed. A night attack followed but was unsuccessful, and slight engagements continued daily without inflicting much loss on the Russians. On the 2nd June, a number of Khivans came in and implored protection against their fellows, who they pleaded had robbed them, and from these Vereffkin learned that the Khan's forces numbered only

some 7000 men. On the same day information came to hand from General Kaufmann, announcing that he would probably reach Khiva in three or four days. On the 6th the Khan sent an invitation to the commanding officer of the Russian forces, inviting him to come into Khiva to arrange terms of peace, and asking an armistice the while; but Vereffkin recalled the fate of Bekovitch and refused. Later came the news that Kaufmann had fought a pitched battle with the Khivan forces who had opposed his crossing the Oxus. The Khivans had been dispersed. Beyond this nothing was known of Kaufmann's position, and Vereffkin, who had reached the outskirts of the capital, found himself considerably harassed by the constant attacks made on his forces by small bands of Khivans, while the guns on the city walls were brought to bear upon the invaders.

Under these circumstances Vereffkin decided to attack the city without further delay, and on the morning of the 9th, still without tidings of Kaufmann's column, he began the attack in force, the natives retreating rapidly before the advancing columns. The measures taken were well planned, and the men worked steadily. Many of the Khivan guns were speedily silenced, three were taken, and the centre line of attack took up a position within fifty yards of the main city gate.

At this point, just when the whole town was at his mercy, Vereffkin remembered his instructions to wait for his chief. Just as his officers were ordering the assault to be made on the walls, Vereffkin decreed a retreat, and was wounded shortly after.

As soon as the Russian bombardment had ceased, an envoy came out of the city to sue for an armistice, and this was agreed to conditionally to the Khivans ceasing firing, but on the pledge given being subsequently broken, the bombardment recommenced.

At night a letter came from Kaufmann, announcing his camp only seven miles off, and in the early morning Colonels Lomakin and Sarantschoff went out to meet the commander-in-chief, who was engaged in arranging

terms of peace with the Emir Omra, the Khan's uncle, who had been sent out for that purpose. The terms agreed and set out in a treaty of peace were drastic enough, and entirely contrary to the declared intentions of Russia as defined by Count Schouvaloff. They included the cession of the entire territory of Khiva on the right bank of the Oxus, together with the delta of that river, to Russia, the payment of an indemnity of 2,200,000 roubles towards the cost of the expedition, the exemption of Russian traders from customs throughout the Khanate, and the relegation of the Khan to the position of a dependent of the Tsar.[1]

After this sweeping treaty had been signed, General Kaufmann entered the city on the 10th June 1873.

The fall of Khiva had been brought about entirely by the ability of General Vereffkin, and all that was done by the Tashkend division was to follow Kaufmann into the city, and assist in the carrying out of the orders given for the release of all slaves, and the ensuring of the good conduct of the people. This circumstance greatly incensed the officers who had joined the expedition in the hope of gaining distinction and promotion for themselves. Except for an engagement with an ill-found army sent out to oppose the Kaufmann approach along the Oxus, no fighting had taken place, and on arrival outside the city walls, it was found that all the hard work had been done, and it only remained for the late arrivals to march into the city, which was already at their disposal.

In face of these facts various conferences were held, and in the result Kaufmann decided on the perpetration of one of the biggest crimes which have been committed in modern history. A campaign was ordered against the Yomud Turkomans, a comparatively peaceful tribe who had exhibited much hospitality to Russian surveying expeditions in the steppes, and who bore a reputation for honesty and straightforwardness. The Yomuds had always been known as faithful friends in time of peace, and brave enemies in time of war, but they frequented

[1] See Appendix B.

the steppes in the neighbourhood of Khiva, and being handy to the Russian force, they offered the desired opportunity of an opponent who could be fought with a certainty of victory, to serve as a peg on which to hang the promotions and distinctions coveted by the intriguing officers of the Tashkend army column.

The fact that the Yomuds were among the first of the Turkomans to send their elders and head men to Kaufmann immediately on the fall of Khiva, in token of submission to the Russian yoke, was not allowed to weigh in their favour. It was put about that peace would be impossible unless the Turkomans were made to thoroughly feel the Russian power, and that it was necessary to change the order of things regarding the Turkomans by subduing their licence and their pride. Having taken steps for the circulation of these and similar statements among his officers, Kaufmann sent an invitation to the Yomuds for them to send their elders to him. In a few days the chief men came into Khiva, and were received by its new ruler, who informed them that he had decided to demand a payment of 300,000 roubles from them, one third of which must be paid within ten days, and the remainder within five days more. The elders, after the first shock of astonishment caused by this announcement, declared that the money should be paid, and five of them were sent back to their people in order to collect the money, the others being detained as hostages in Khiva.

It is hardly necessary to point out that the Yomuds, being a nomadic tribe, possessed little or no money, their possessions being their herds, which it was not always easy to realise at short notice. This was especially the case at a moment when the country was occupied by a foreign army, and the Khan practically deposed. Kaufmann of course knew this well, and without doubt fixed the terms of the imposition so as to render it impossible for the tribe to pay, and thus obtain the pretext he desired for entering on a 'glory hunt' at their expense. In order to render the performance of the task set absolutely impossible, it was decreed that the contribution demanded

would only be received in money, and that no payment in kind would be permitted.

The interview between Kaufmann and the elders took place on the 17th July. The ten days allowed in which to collect the first 100,000 roubles would expire on the 27th. On the day following Kaufmann gave a written order to General Golovatchef, directing him to attack the Turkomans forthwith. After reciting the amount and method of payment of the contribution demanded, this order, which is still in existence (No. 1167, Khiva, July 6, 18, 1873), reads—'I ask your Excellency to start with your detachment for Hazavat, and to encamp there. If you see that the Yomuds are not occupying themselves with getting together money, but are assembling for the purpose of opposing our troops, or perhaps even for leaving the country, I order you immediately to move upon the settlements of the Yomuds, which are placed along the Hazavat Canal and its branches, and to give over the settlements of the Yomuds and their families to complete destruction, and their herds and property to confiscation."

Golovatchef started on the 19th July, and on the 21st reported that the Turkomans had not collected any money, and that they were evidently intending either to run away or attack the troops, and that, acting on the instructions of the commander-in-chief, he had deemed it his duty to burn their villages along the road. This report brought a prompt reply from Kaufmann, approving the action taken, and giving instructions—'at the least attempt to migrate, carry out my order for the final extermination of the disobedient tribe.'

During the last days of the month the Turkomans became desperate, and some hard fighting took place, and on the 27th the communication between Golovatchef and Khiva was cut off by a large force of Yomuds. On finding no reports arriving, Kaufmann decided to go out and see for himself how matters stood. He left Khiva on the 27th, and Ilyali on the 31st, to find the Turkomans greatly disheartened and anxious for peace. Kaufmann

agreed to the request that he should receive a deputation from the Yomuds, and ordered them to pay the sum of 310,000 roubles in 12 days' time, to expire on the 14th August.

Thereupon the Yomuds set about realising their possessions in the hope of obtaining the money. The women stripped themselves of their necklets and bracelets, which they sold to the Russians for what they chose to give. On the 14th August the tribe had succeeded in collecting about one-third of the sum demanded. Kaufmann that day returned to Khiva, taking a number of Turkoman elders with him as hostages for the payment of the balance, leaving Golovatchef to carry out his orders for the butchery of the wretched Yomuds.

The orders given by this commander to his officers were unmistakable. Addressing his staff, he said: 'I have received an order from the commander-in-chief. I hope you will remember it, and give it to your soldiers. This expedition does not spare either sex or age. Kill all of them.' And when, subsequently, Golovatchef was reinforced by the arrival of a detachment from the army of the Caucasus, he had the officers called together and repeated his orders: 'You are not to spare either sex or age. Kill all of them.' These speeches were heard and noted by more than one reliable witness, and their authenticity is beyond question. And they were carried out with a thoroughness which must have delighted General Kaufmann. For five days the steppe was turned into a shambles. The Yomuds, young and old, men, women, and children, harassed and wearied by the hunting, outnumbered by their persecutors, were cut down and murdered on sight. The sands became dotted in all directions with mutilated corpses, with here and there a puling infant weeping over its dead mother, or dying of its own wounds.

The number of victims in this massacre will never be known. Nor will the action of the Russian conqueror ever be forgotten. Khiva had fallen, and with it the reputation of the inhuman butchers, who, without either

provocation or excuse devoted themselves to the 'outraging of women, the slaughter of suckling babes, and the massacre of unarmed men.'

The acquisition of all Khivan territory to the right of the river Oxus necessitated a new treaty between Russia and Bokhara, and Kaufmann utilised the opportunity for obtaining a series of fresh undertakings from the Emir for the benefit of Russian trade. M. Struvé was accordingly sent to Bokhara for the purpose of conducting the necessary negotiations, and the treaty was signed by the Bokhariot ruler on the 10th October 1873. The principal clauses of this treaty notified the transference of all Khivan territory on the right bank of the Oxus to Russia, pledged the security of caravans on either side of the frontier, gave the right of free navigation on the Oxus, and the privilege of establishing landing places and wharves on the left bank of the river, and decreed the opening of the whole of the Khanate to Russian trade.[1]

Having thus strengthened the Russian hold on the Khanates, Kaufmann turned his attention to further extensions in Central Asia. At his suggestion the Grand Duke Michael, brother to the Tsar and Governor of the Caucasus, sent to St. Petersburg a project for forming a new military district to include the territory between the Caspian and the Aral seas. The suggestion was approved by Alexander, and Colonel Lomakin, who had been raised to the rank of General for his share in the Khivan expedition, was appointed Governor-General of the new province, which was named Transcaspia, with a seat of government at Krasnovodsk.

Lomakin accordingly departed for his government in the winter of 1873, and proceeded to organise the district from its base on the Caspian. His work was interrupted at frequent intervals by the incursions of the Akhal Tekke Turkomans, who, resenting the presence of foreigners in their haunts, came out from Merv, from Kizil Arvat and other strongholds, and harassed the Russians. Numerous minor engagements occurred, the various

[1] See Appendix B.

exploring and surveying parties sent out by the Russians being frequently attacked. But the invaders always succeeded in dispersing the attacking parties, and Lomakin began to draw up a plan for the exploration of the Atrek and Sumbar rivers with the object of opening up a direct route between the new port of Chikishlar and Khiva. But the attention which this project attracted was diverted by other events in Turkestan.

Without any notice and quite unexpectedly, a rising occurred in Khokand, where the Kirghiz refused to pay certain additional taxes levied by Khudayar Khan. Troops were sent against the dissentients, who were persuaded to send their headmen to Khokand for the purpose of explaining their grievances. On their arrival they were seized by order of the Khan and executed, and this act of treachery caused an immediate general outbreak of hostilities among the Kirghiz and the Kiptchaks who formed the bulk of the steppe population.

Alarmed at the prospect, the Khan sent an envoy to Tashkend to seek assistance from Kaufmann, pleading that the Kirghiz were Russian subjects and were invading Khokand. This request was refused, and Kaufmann is reported to have telegraphed to St. Petersburg for permission to occupy Khokand in order to quell the rebellion, and to subsequently annex it to Russia, but the proposal was not entertained. The trouble continued all through the winter and well into the year 1875, when Kaufmann decided to despatch an expedition to Kashgar, and sent M. Weinberg, a diplomatic official, to interview the Khan of Khokand with a view to obtaining his permission for the expedition to pass through his Khanate on its way to Eastern Turkestan. Kaufmann's messenger found the Khan in a very perturbed state owing to the rebellion, and during his visit it was discovered that the Khan's brother had joined the Kirghiz. On hearing this the Khokandian army was summoned to the capital, but instead of responding, it went over to the enemy, and finding himself unable to take the field, the Khudayar placed himself under the protection of the Russians, and

decided to retreat with them to Tashkend. He succeeded in reaching Khodjend after running the gauntlet of the Kirghiz skirmishers.

Shortly after the flight of Khudayar, an envoy was sent to General Kaufmann by his son Nasreddin, who had succeeded him in the Khanate, explaining the origin of the insurrection as being due to the oppression practised on the people by the fugitive Khan, and expressing a desire to live in peace with the Russians. Kaufmann replied with a promise to recognise Nasreddin provided he bound himself to carry out the treaties and engagements existing between the two countries. But meanwhile proclamations were being issued by the Khokandians calling on the people to rise against the Russians. A religious war was declared, and a summons sent requiring the Russians to become Mohammedans.

In a few days Khudayar succeeded in reaching Tashkend, which was soon after cut off from communication with Khokand. General Golovatchef and Colonel Skobeleff at once placed themselves at the head of their men and marched out to meet the enemy, and the former dispersed a body of 5000 men on the road to Khodjend, which was invested by the rebels to the number of 10,000. The town was, after a stubborn resistance, taken, and General Kaufmann, who had assumed the command in person, started for Makhram with his forces on the 1st September, in order to give battle to the main Khokandian army which was reported to be gathered there. The rebels were discovered some distance outside the town, where a fort had been constructed. The Russians attacked this unexpectedly by a flank movement, and in less than an hour the whole body of defenders were driven out and put to flight, many being killed, and hundreds driven into the river and drowned.

This success produced a great effect on the Kirghiz, while it encouraged the Russians to carry on the work of conquest. After being reinforced by men from Khodjend, Kaufmann advanced on 7th September towards

Khokand. He was met outside the city by envoys from the Khan, but would have nothing to do with them, merely sending word that if the inhabitants would receive him with proper submission no harm would be done them, but if resistance were offered the town would be destroyed. This message produced the desired effect, and the Khan himself rode out to meet Kaufmann and conduct him into the city, through which the whole Russian force made a triumphal progress. But though Khokand was occupied by the Russians, the Khanate was not yet subdued. Strong bodies of troops had to be sent to Marghilan, Namangan, and Andijan to take these places from the natives who held them and refused to bow to the Russian conquerors. After considerable trouble the whole of the territory was subdued, and on March 2, 1876 the Khanate of Khokand was declared a portion of the Russian Empire under the name of Ferghana, its first Governor being General Skobeleff, whose promotion was due to the energy he had shown in the previous campaign.

CHAPTER IV

THE TAKING OF TURKOMANIA

Lomakin's expeditions into Turkomania—Lazareff assumes command in Transcaspia—His march against the Tekkes—Sudden death of the Commander-in-chief—Lomakin resumes command—He massacres the Tekkes at Dengeel Tepe—Failure of his expedition and defeat—Retreat of the Russian army—Lomakin disgraced—Skobeleff assumes command—His reconnaissance—March to Geok Tepe—The siege—Fall of the Tekke stronghold—Flight of the Turkomans—Massacre of the 8000.

After the final subjection of the Khanates, affairs quieted down in Central Asia, the conquerors staying their hand in order that they might devote themselves to the organisation of the territories they had acquired. The incidence of the Turkish War, involving the taking of Kars and Erzeroum, served moreover to divert attention from Turkestan to the Caucasus, while the subsequent negotiations which led up to the Treaty of San Stefano and the Berlin Conference, followed in turn by the outbreak of the second Afghan War, turned the balance of public interest in the direction of Europe and India. But while no active attempts were made towards the further conquest of Central Asia, the government of the newly formed Transcaspian region was busily engaged putting its house in order. The idea of an extensive exploration of the Tekke country had not been abandoned, and Lomakin had made several brief excursions inland, including a survey of the ancient bed of the Oxus, which at one time flowed into the Caspian instead of as now into the Aral Sea. The Governor-General had on one occasion ventured as far as Kizil Arvat, where he had been surrounded, and only escaped after burying his cannon in the sand.

In 1877 the garrison of Krasnovodsk was moved to Chikishlar, and there considerably reinforced. After various preparations, the troops allotted for the decreed expedition, six thousand in all, with twenty-four guns, left Chikishlar on the 3rd August 1878. The route followed lay along the bank of the Atrek as far as Tchat, and thence by the Sumbar river to Khoja Kala, where the army was besieged by a vast number of Tekke Turkomans, and had to beat a hasty retreat pursued by the enemy, who captured most of the transport and wounded many of the men.

Notwithstanding these two defeats Lomakin, immediately on his return to Chikishlar, proceeded to make preparations for another expedition, but the Government decided to supersede him, and early in 1879 appointed General Lazareff of the Caucasus army to command the projected advance into the Akhal country.

Lazareff, reputed to be one of the bravest officers in the service of the Tsar, was a very different type from his predecessor. On his arrival at Chikishlar he inquired how many Tekke prisoners there were, and on being told eighteen, summoned them to his presence and addressed them thus: 'You are at liberty. Go back and tell your people that I shall soon pay them a visit. Eighteen Turkomans are nothing to me; I shall take eighteen thousand Turkomans when I come, and will not leave a village in the whole district. Be off and tell this to your friends.'[1]

While Lazareff was engaged superintending the completion of the preparations for his departure, the Tekkes were not idle. News of the approaching invasion of their territory had reached them, as had also the intelligence that the Russians had collected over three thousand camels for the use of the troops, and that these were kept in the oases round Boornak, awaiting the arrival of an escort to convey them to Chikishlar. These the Tekkes determined to seize, and the attempt,

[1] MacGahan.

which proved in part a success, resulted in the battle of Boornak on the 20th April 1879.

The final arrangements for the advance were completed by the beginning of June. The total force amounted to 18,000 men, of whom 3000 were cavalry, and 36 guns, the largest Russian army seen in Central Asia. The baggage train comprised 15,000 camels and 6000 pack-horses, and the start was actually made on the 11th August. Tchat was reached without mishap on the 18th, the only trouble experienced being that caused by the intense heat. Then the army rested till the 20th, when the march was resumed along the Sumbar river without incident till the 27th, when General Lazareff, who had been ailing for some time, died from the effects of overwork and intense heat.

On the death of Lazareff the command devolved again on Lomakin, who hurried the expedition on without meeting with any large parties of the enemy, until Prince Dolgoroukoff, who commanded the advance guard, camped at Bendesen, in the Kozlinsky pass, through the Kopet Dagh. Here he heard news of Turkomans assembled in large numbers in the neighbourhood. On the 23rd a brief engagement was fought with success. The Prince after this waited for the main body to arrive. In due course Lomakin put in an appearance and the camps were pitched close together. A council of war was then held, and it was decided that the order should be an unceasing march forward, this being the more necessary on account of the insufficiency of the transport and provisions.

The bulk of the Tekke fighting men were gathered at Geok Tepe, some five marches from the scene of the council of war, and Lomakin hoped that by advancing rapidly the Turkomans might be beaten in a general engagement, which would open the road not only to Akhal but also to Merv. As soon as the decision arrived at became known to the troops the men became enthusiastic. They had feared that operations would be postponed until the arrival of a new commander to

replace Lazareff, and the prospect of an early victory was as pleasing to the men as was the chance of retrieving his ill-fortune to their general. He had failed three times, but he felt that at the fourth attempt he would return covered with glory.

On the 1st September the advance guard continued its progress towards Geok Tepe. On the 3rd an inspection of the troops was held by Lomakin before leaving camp with the main body, and the army in due course arrived at Yaradji on the 8th, without any more exciting incident than an occasional skirmish with some nomads. The accounts brought in by the Russian spies told of quite fifty thousand Tekkes in possession at Geok Tepe, where the women and children had been conveyed for safety.

In the early dawn of the 9th September Lomakin accompanied the advance guard, under Prince Dolgoroukoff and Prince Wittgenstein, along the base of the Kopet Dagh range in the direction of Geok Tepe. The main body under Count Borch followed, the total number of men available being 3790. The remainder were required to guard the baggage train in camp.

The expedition wended its way merrily. All were in excellent spirits, and when a curve in the mountain chain exposed a bare peak in the distance, there was a shout as the Turkoman guides pointed it out as Geok Tepe, and explained that the fort lay at its base. Presently a cloud of dust was seen in the direction of a black spot on the horizon, and it was realised that the Tekkes were coming out from the fort to meet the advancing host. At this juncture an orderly was sent to ride back to hurry up Borch with the main body. The advance guard then halted, and brought its rocket apparatus into play. A couple of grenades well aimed, and planted in the midst of the advancing dust-cloud, caused it to stop and disperse in the mountain-side. Then Lomakin rested, waiting for the main body; but it did not come, and two more orderlies were despatched, and after a while a lieutenant was sent to hasten Borch. An hour went by without any signs of the lost division, and then was heard

a distant firing of guns, which was at first supposed to be the long-expected signal of the approaching troops, but the listeners were soon undeceived. The firing became continuous, and at last it was realised that the Tekkes, knowing that the Russians were advancing in two bodies, had lain low while the first went by, and that now, placed between them, were attacking the second division.

And this was what was actually happening. The main body, which had made slower progress than it should have done, and had managed to get nine miles behind the advance guard, was suddenly surprised by over a thousand Tekkes, who managed to kill seven men and several horses before they were driven off by means of shells. It was just as the Tekkes were retreating that the second messenger from Lomakin arrived with instructions for the division to hurry on. The first orderly had been seen and killed by some passing Tekkes, and the lieutenant who was despatched with the urgent message had to return to the advance guard without gaining his object.

Finding that the main body did not put in an appearance, Lomakin committed the first of the fatal errors which led to his discomfiture and disgrace. Instead of intrenching himself where he was and waiting until his forces became united, he determined to push on and engage the enemy, and shortly before noon the advance guard formed up on a slight eminence opposite Dengeel Tepe, the Tekke stronghold. It may be explained here that the names Dengeel Tepe and Geok Tepe, so often mixed up in accounts of the campaign, refer to different places. Geok Tepe was the name of the district forming the centre of the Tekke influence. It also distinguished a small and relatively unimportant aul partially fortified. Dengeel Tepe was the great aul or citadel which afforded shelter to the whole tribe of Turkomans, and was probably the strongest and the biggest fort in Central Asia.

As soon as the troops had arrived at the hillock, and had got their guns into position, the bombardment of the

Turkoman stronghold commenced. Shells were sent with accurate aim into the midst of the vast enclosure behind the clay walls, which concealed, it was said, some twelve thousand Tekkes. And as each shell found its mark the kibitkas which served as homes for the imprisoned Turkomans could be seen disappearing, and numbers of dead and wounded falling around.

It will be noted that Lomakin had begun the attack without any parley with the enemy. No demand had been made for the surrender of Dengeel Tepe, neither had they been offered any terms.

After the bombardment had commenced, Tekme Sardar, the headman in command of the fort, had sent a messenger to the Russian commander asking that further firing might be suspended for two hours, so that he might endeavour to persuade the Tekkes to lay down their arms, but the request was not entertained. Failing to obtain fair play to the extent of an opportunity to surrender at discretion, the Tekkes opened the east gate, that being furthest from the attack, in order that the women and children might escape towards Askabad, but this movement was seen by the Russians, and a squadron of cavalry was at once despatched round the walls to cut off the retreat and close the road to Merv.

Four hours after the attack had commenced the main body under Count Borch joined the earlier arrivals, and the attack was at once commenced in real earnest, and so rapid was the firing, and so good the aim, that despite the previous failure, the Tekkes made a desperate attempt to escape. Their intention was quickly realised, and a division of dragoons and two sotnias of Cossacks were sent round to drive the fugitives back into the aul.

On seeing how the Russians were treating the non-combatant occupants of their stronghold, the Tekkes took heart and determined to die fighting. A sally was made on the west front, and a large body of Turkomans rushed out and fell upon the enemy, with but little result, owing to the superior arms and training of the Cossacks, who shot down their assailants almost to a man. A second

sally was made shortly after with the same result, and by three o'clock the three sides of the aul were invested by the attacking forces. Yet after a bombardment of nearly four hours the walls stood unassailed, and their defenders fought with a persistency undiminished.

At half-past three a council of war was held between the Russian generals, and it was decided to mass the main body on the north side of the Tepe, and after a heavy bombardment to make the assault.

The carrying out of this programme involved the shifting of a number of heavy guns, and the comparative cessation of the bombardment necessitated afforded another opportunity for the Tekkes to attempt to escape. Accordingly at four o'clock the women and children to the number of 5000 streamed out of the aul on the east side, with pack-camels bearing their belongings. The cavalcade made across the plain in the direction of the mountains where safety was to be found. But the movement was noted by the Russian cavalry, and the pace of the fugitives being necessarily slow, they were headed off with the greatest ease, and pursued back into the aul. The work of driving the women and children back into the Tepe was performed by Prince Galitzin, in command of Dragoons and Daghestani cavalry. His instructions, given him by Lomakin himself, were to keep all the Tekkes in the aul. His words were 'allow none of them to escape,' and the Prince had no recourse but to obey orders. When the women saw the Russians riding down on them, they threw themselves on the ground and begged for mercy. 'If you mean to kill us,' they cried, holding their infants up with outstretched arms, 'have at least mercy on our little ones. In the name of God do not send them back to be mangled before our eyes by the cruel shot from your cannon.' But a deaf ear was turned to their prayers. And Lomakin's orders were carried out.

Shortly after the women had been driven back into the aul, the Turkomans ceased firing, and sent a messenger to ask that the bombardment might cease in order

that negotiations might be attempted. The answer given to the appeal was discouraging, and the Russians did not cease their fire for an instant. Indeed about five o'clock, the artillery with the main column, who had arrived greatly exhausted, began to unite in the attack for the first time, and the order was then given for the assault to be made.

Accordingly under a protecting artillery fire all available men were massed with bayonets fixed ready to take the fortress by storm. The attempt was one which would never have been made by a capable commander. The number of Russians available for the attempt was, according to the account which appeared subsequently in the *Moscow Gazette*, 1200, and according to the *Novoe Vremya*, 1400. The defenders of Dengeel Tepe numbered, even at that hour of the day, from 18,000 to 20,000 men infuriated by the butchery of their womankind, and made desperate by fanaticism and hatred of the Russians.

At five o'clock the signal was given. The men rose from their shelter and charged towards the walls. The struggle which ensued was hidden by the smoke of the guns, but presently it was seen that the Cossacks had succeeded in gaining the outer rampart. Here a hard struggle took place, but the Tekkes were driven back, and the Russians sprang into the fosse, where they were rapidly surrounded by the Turkomans, in the ratio, it is said, of forty to one. To push on it was necessary to climb the steep wall which protected the main defences. And as the men turned in search of their scaling-ladders, it was discovered that they had been forgotten.

The Cossacks were infuriated, and their rage was increased by the severity of the fire poured down on them by the Tekkes on the ramparts above. Attempts were made to swarm up the wall. Soldiers stood one on the other and aided volunteers up the treacherous bastion, but the few who succeeded in reaching the top were speedily hurled back into the ditch below.

While this attempt was being frustrated, a separate attack was being delivered on the north side, where the

Chasseurs and Grenadiers succeeded in forcing a way into the aul. The reception they met with will never be forgotten. The party found itself surrounded by thousands of desperate Tekkes, inspired with a fanatical disregard of death, who fell upon them like devils incarnate, while the women, infuriated by the sights they had seen, turned on the Russians like tigresses, hurled stones at them, and poured boiling water over their heads.

And so what was left of the storming parties fled from the aul, with the Tekkes at their heels. Nothing could have exceeded the reckless bravery of the Turkomans. They followed the Cossacks right up to the artillery lines, and when the fugitives turned and formed up with bayonets fixed, the Tekkes threw themselves on the steel points with outstretched arms, and pulling the guns together, made lanes for the others to rush along and break up the formation. This incident was mentioned in the report which appeared in the *Novoe Vremya*. The Russians had abstained from firing their big guns during this running fight for fear of killing their own men, but when the Tekkes worked their way up to the cannon, and began sabring the artillerymen, the guns were fired, and the Turkomans immediately in front of them were shattered, many being literally blown to bits. On this the Tekkes wavered, and fled to their aul, followed by the Russians, who killed numbers before the walls were reached.

While these events were being enacted on the main front of attack, the Erivan battalion with the Grenadiers were repulsed by a sortie in strength from the north front. In this case also the Tekkes fought like demons, and, absolutely indifferent to death, advanced right up to the cavalry, and attacked the troopers in their saddles. And while the Russians were being worsted on two sides of the aul, the cavalry stationed on the road to Astrabad, in order to cut off the retreat of the women and children, remained idle.

After the Tekkes had retired behind their walls, a fusilade was for a time maintained, but the Russians were

disheartened, and at eight o'clock Borch's troops abandoned their positions, and, after collecting their wounded, retired, followed by the advance guard to a camping-place, situated a mile from Dengeel Tepe. Later on an order was sent to Prince Galitzin, who remained with his cavalry on the Astrabad road, bidding him follow the others, and the Russian army exhausted by its long activity, wearied by its exertions, and dejected by its virtual defeat, crept into camp across the blood-stained plain.

The Russian loss was found to be several hundred. The precise number was eventually returned at 454, but on the night of the repulse exaggerated statements were circulated. No ambulance arrangements existed for the conveyance of the wounded beyond the inadequate provision made by the Red Cross Society. The troops appeared overwhelmed. No attempt was made to pitch tents. No fires were lit. The men lay huddled together, expecting every moment through the night to be attacked by the Tekkes and annihilated.

A council of war was held at midnight, at which it was decided to retire ; and this decision was put in force at dawn, when the whole force formed up in the order of retreat with its face towards the Caspian.

While the Russians were passing the night in a state of helpless misery, the Tekkes were discussing the situation amongst themselves. Their loss had been four thousand, of whom two thousand had been women and children. Among their dead were nearly all their leaders, and it was recognised that to continue the struggle against their pitiless foe, would entail the fruitless extirpation of the Tekke people. With a view, therefore, to terminating the pitiable position, it was decided to send messengers to the Russian camp with the unqualified submission of the garrison. In the early morning accordingly, four chiefs who had been selected for the task, set out from Dengeel Tepe and made for the Russian camp a mile away. But on reaching the spot where the camp had been, they found that the place was deserted,

and in the far distance across the plain they descried the cloud of dust which showed the Russian army to be in retreat.

They hurried back to the aul with the joyous news, and the people unanimously agreed to give chase. They rode out, and soon caught up the retreating army, which they harassed as it wended its painful way over the sand. The Russians were jaded, weary, and without heart. The pace, owing to the number of the wounded, was slow, averaging less than a mile an hour, and the Tekkes rode right up to the rear guard, and picked off men with the greatest coolness, after dismounting the better to take aim. But the pursuit was not persevered in. After a while the retreating enemy was permitted to continue its way, and the Turkomans returned to their aul, rejoicing at the sight they had seen.

The road was dry and dusty, and the heat intense. The wounded suffered agonies, and the bulk of the troops became demoralised. The army reached Beurma on the 15th, exhausted by fatigue and privations. Food and forage gave out, and the officers were in constant dread of an attack, owing alike to the condition of the troops, and the practical exhaustion of the ammunition store. Most of the camels died by the way, and at one part of the retreat were abandoned at the rate of twenty or thirty in every mile covered. The difficult road through the Kozlinsky Pass further exhausted the men, and the force arrived at Bendesen to find an absolute lack of the expected stores. On this account the promised rest had to be foregone, and the march was continued. A cavalry column was despatched hence with orders to proceed to Chikishlar to prepare supplies to be forwarded to the succour of the army.

On the 30th September the cavalry arrived at Tchat, where they were met by General Tergukasoff who had been appointed to succeed Lazareff. The new commander-in-chief left the following day for Tarsakan, where the main body of the retreating army still lay. There he reviewed the troops and ordered them to continue

to Chikishlar, where they arrived at the beginning of November, a sorry remainder of the army which had set out with so much display four months before.

The disasters which, largely if not entirely owing to the incompetence and vaingloriousness of Lomakin and his staff, overwhelmed the Turkoman expedition of 1879 did not fail to attract general attention and disappointment throughout Russia. It was felt that the Russian army had disgraced itself, as well as failed in an important undertaking, and that immediate steps should be taken for the retrieving of the misfortune which had fallen on Russian prestige in Asia.

And as though to still further convince the Russians of the need of another expedition against the Tekkes, the nomads of the Caspian region, encouraged doubtless by the prowess of the defenders of Dengeel Tepe, resumed their raids on the Russians and the friendly tribes, stole their camels, and continually killed or wounded travellers.

It was therefore amid a general chorus of rejoicing that, early in 1880, the announcement was received that General Skobeleff had been appointed Governor-General of Transcaspia. Skobeleff was at that time one of the most popular officers in the Russian army, and the very highest estimate had been formed of his abilities. His career had been exceptionally brilliant, and he had seen more service than probably any other officer of his age. Beginning in the Polish revolt of '63, he followed the Danish war as a spectator. He took part in the taking of Krasnovodsk, was a member of the Khivan expeditions of 1871 and 1873, and was present at the fight at Kizil Takir, which ended in the Yomud massacre under Kaufmann. In '75 and '76 he played a leading part in the Khokand war, and was subsequently made governor of the conquered region. In 1877 he took command in the Turkish war, where his achievements acquired European fame. On his return after the fall of Plevna, he was created commander of the Fourth Army Corps, and his appointment to the Transcaspian region left no doubt as to the final dispersal of the Turkoman raiders.

Skobeleff arrived at Chikishlar on the 25th May 1880, and ordered an immediate reconnaissance of the Turkoman region. He advanced with about a thousand men on the 2nd June, and reached Bami on the 23rd. At several points his passage was opposed by the Tekkes, who were always dispersed with loss. On the 3rd July he made a successful reconnaissance of Beurma, where he remained for some days, surveying the country. On the 13th he advanced against Geok Tepe, reaching Bateer Kala, six miles from the scene of Lomakin's discomfiture, on the 17th. He then went on right up to the walls of Dengeel Tepe, which he bombarded until his ammunition became exhausted, and he retired satisfied that the fort could only be taken by a regular siege. He then returned to Chikishlar to make preparations for the final attack. Drafts of men to the number of 12,000 were requisitioned from the army of the Caucasus. One hundred heavy guns were asked for, and while these were being despatched, the road to Bami was strengthened by the erection of several forts. An interesting piece of evidence as to Skobeleff's intentions in the coming campaign is supplied by the letter he wrote to the chief of the Caucasus military staff, in which he requested the despatch of officers for the expedition. This letter was published by Grodekoff in 1883, and may be regarded as in every sense above suspicion :—

'The hard necessities of war are everywhere alike, and the steps taken by Lomakin in September 1879 require no justification. There is no doubt as to this in my own mind, nor as to the soldier being permitted to have no opinion of his own in such matters, and being solely obliged to obey orders. I must ask you for the good of the service, and for the sake of the duty entrusted to me, only to send me officers whose sole idea is their duty, and who do not entertain visionary sentiments.'[1]

The road chosen having been duly protected, and the forts strengthened, preparations were completed by the middle of December. On Christmas Eve Skobeleff was

[1] *Voina v Turkmenie* (The War in Turkomania).

joined by Colonel Kuropatkin, who had ridden from Samarcand. The two officers immediately set out on a reconnaissance towards Geok Tepe, but were attacked on the way by a force of 20,000 Tekkes, who had come out to meet them, and the fight was so severe that the Russians had to send for reinforcements before they could be dispersed.

On the 1st January 1881 the army of attack moved forward on its final advance in three columns, having a total strength of more than 8000 men. All the infantry were armed with breechloaders, and the artillery included 52 big guns as well as 11 Hotchkiss machine-guns and a number of mitrailleuses and rocket batteries. The enemy were reported to number 30,000. They were badly armed, without artillery and undisciplined. Their fortress was surrounded by ramparts of clay, as was also the smaller fort which had been erected on the plain close by with the apparent object of operating against the Russians on the flank while they were attacking Dengeel Tepe.

It was to this temporary stronghold that the Russians first devoted their attention, and as soon as a few shots had been fired over the breastworks, the garrison fled, and ran through the shower of bullets which greeted them, across the plain towards Dengeel Tepe, losing many men on the way.

On the 2nd January another reconnaissance was made by General Petroosevitch. He was promptly attacked by the enemy, who sallied out against him in such force as to necessitate Skobeleff's despatching a strong party to his rescue.

On the 4th the siege began in earnest. On this day the Russians pushed ahead until within eight hundred yards of the aul. The Tekkes had overnight been reinforced by about 5000 men from Merv, and considerably hampered the attacking force by their sallies, in the course of which General Petroosevitch and two of his officers were struck down. Despite the fierceness of the Tekkes' attack, the Russians succeeded in laying their first parallel, refraining from engaging the Turkomans

except for the purpose of driving them off when too closely attacked.

On the 7th, the second parallel was laid four hundred yards from the ramparts without much resistance being experienced; but on the night of the 9th the Tekkes came out in force and rushed the Russian lines, driving the companies out and taking possession of the outworks and a great part of the second parallel, as well as capturing four guns and three mortars. They then strove to gain the outermost trenches, but were driven back, leaving many Russians dead upon the field.

The third parallel was laid the same night after the Tekkes had retreated, and on the morning of the 10th the bombardment of the works began. On the following day the bombardment was continued till dusk, when the enemy made a sortie on the left flank of the Russians, attacking the camp at the same time, and succeeded after a desperate struggle in capturing a redoubt containing two guns, and cutting the artillerymen to pieces. The Russians subsequently succeeded in driving the Tekkes out, and the fighting continued throughout the night.

These tactics were continued by both sides until the 16th, the Russians continually bombarding the fort, while its defenders made frequent sorties, attacking the enemy tooth and nail, and neither giving nor asking quarter. This stage of the siege was brought to a close on the 18th, when the Turkomans made a bigger sally than before, and were, after hours of fighting, defeated with much bloodshed.

By this time the condition of the hundreds of bodies lying between the Russian lines and the walls of the Tepe was such as to require immediate attention, and Skobeleff decided to send a messenger to the Tekkes with the object of arranging a suspension of hostilities for this purpose. The Tekkes accepted the proposal without hesitation, a truce of an hour being arranged, and in order to prevent any misunderstanding it was agreed that the defenders should be the first to recommence firing. This arrangement having been made, the two sides proceeded

to bury their dead, and it was subsequently placed on record by Skobeleff that the Turkomans behaved most honourably in the observance of the stipulated terms.

On the 20th the first breach was made in the defences. On the 23rd this was enlarged with dynamite, and on the 24th the final assault was made. It began at seven o'clock, and by eleven the south-west corner was carried. The work was completed by the explosion of a mine containing two tons of powder, and the Russians entered the breaches in force, though kept at bay for over an hour by the desperate opposition offered by the Tekkes.

But their efforts were vain, and after a useless resistance, the defenders had to fly from their stronghold and make their way across the plain, leaving 4000 dead behind them.

The cost of the actual storming to the Russians was 54 killed and 669 wounded, their total loss since their first reconnaissance being 268 killed and 1200 wounded, more than had suffered in any previous campaign in Central Asia.

As soon as the flight of the Tekkes had begun, Skobeleff led his cavalry through the breach and ordered a pursuit to be made by both horse and foot soldiers, who were instructed to give no quarter. The command was obeyed by the infantry following the flying host for seven miles, and the cavalry for eleven. All who had not succeeded in escaping previously—men, women, and children—were killed by the pursuers, the number of slain being estimated by Skobeleff at 8000. In his report of the campaign, which was subsequently republished as an official paper in this country,[1] he states that during the pursuit after the assault 8000 of both sexes were killed, and he puts the total number of Tekkes slain during the siege at 20,000.

In the pursuit, which no less a writer than Lord Curzon, the present Viceroy, says was 'not a rout but a massacre, not a defeat, but an extirpation,'[2] the soldiers

[1] *Report* of the Siege and Assault of Denghil Tepe, 1881.
[2] *Russia in Central Asia.*

cut down the fugitives wherever they found them, leaving the dead upon the plain mown down as if with a scythe, men and women, children and infants, all dead, many frightfully mutilated in the cause of the civilising spread of Russian influence. After the pursuit the troops were allowed to loot for four days, and it is estimated that booty to the value of more than half a million sterling was found.

Thus ended the conquest of Turkomania, a campaign which had been spread out over a course of nearly six years, and which, on its termination, gave to Russia the dominion over the whole of Central Asia, excepting only a few of the lesser Oases which remained to be absorbed.

The work of reclaiming Akhal from the Turkomans was continued by Skobeleff with an energy strengthened by his success at Dengeel Tepe. A suitable force pushed on over the twenty-eight miles which separate that place from Askabad, in some respects the most important spot in Turkomania, since it is here that the roads from Persia and from Khiva meet. Hence it was intended to push on across the Tejend plain to Merv. Askabad was occupied on the 9th February, and while yet engaged in making the arrangements necessary for its control, the news arrived of the assassination of Alexander II., and this was followed by the announcement of Skobeleff's recall from Central Asia. One of the first acts of Alexander III. was to stay the march of conquest then in progress in Turkomania, and the order requiring Skobeleff to report himself at St. Petersburg forthwith was accompanied by instructions for the abandonment of all operations in Central Asia. This order was a severe disappointment to Skobeleff, who had come to regard himself as destined to found a new empire. It is even whispered that he contemplated an immediate movement on Herat, but his dream was destined to disappointment.

Alexander III. was a firm believer in the efficacy of diplomacy as opposed to war. He saw that what remained to be achieved in Turkomania could be attained by peaceful means, and this method possessed the further advantage of not attracting so much attention in Europe

as an extended campaign would do. Force was therefore abandoned. Relations were opened up with the Tejend oasis, and Lieutenant Alikhanoff was charged with the conduct of the negotiations with the people of the district.

Alikhanoff, accompanied by two Russian officers, went to Turkomania disguised as a Russian merchant, and proved himself as capable an actor as he was a diplomatist. His instructions were to make a survey of the Merv district, to sound the inhabitants as to their feelings towards Russia, and to pave the way to the future establishment of Muscovite rule in the oasis. Above all, it was stipulated that Alikhanoff's mission was to be a secret one, and that in the event of his journey becoming known, he was to take the entire responsibility upon himself, so as to shield the government from any charge of having interfered in the affairs of an independent territory.

Alikhanoff with his small party set out from Askabad early in 1882. At Luftabad his caravan was approached by a party of Persians, who demanded its destination and business, and it was explained in reply that the caravan was a Russian one, belonging to Severin Bey of Moscow, bound for the city of Meshhed. This statement was made with a view to preventing news of the approaching visit reaching Merv before the party arrived there.

After a long and adventurous journey, during which the adventurers were in constant expectation of attack from the Turkomans of the district, Merv was reached, and the disguised officers saw for the first time the immense fort which had been erected with a view to receiving the attack Skobeleff was expected to make on the place after the fall of Geok Tepe. As soon as the party had arrived letters were sent to the khans announcing the coming of a friendly party of Russian merchants who desired to trade with the people of Merv. A meeting of the elders was called, and the disguised officers were at once accorded an audience in one of the biggest kibitkas in the place.

As soon as the proceedings opened, Alikhanoff intro-

duced himself as one Maksood, representing Severin Bey, a wealthy Russian merchant who desired to trade with Merv. Severin was represented as being a very influential person, who was a personal friend of the general staff; and Alikhanoff assured his audience that it was entirely due to the statement made by the staff that the Russian government would view any attempts to open up trade with Merv with great satisfaction, that he had brought the caravan so far.

The elders of Merv do not appear to have been greatly taken with their visitor's address, and pointed out their fear for the safety of Russian caravans traversing the steppe, which was the haunt of the unruly Turkomans. They feared that if any harm came to such a caravan the Russian government might hold the people of Merv responsible, and send an army to punish them; and they therefore requested that the caravan should return to Askabad.

Alikhanoff replied that they had come to trade, and were determined in their views. He pointed out that the Merv Tekkes came to the bazaars of Askabad, and that the Russians claimed a like right of trading in Merv. He denied being an emissary of the Russian government, and assured the elders that he was merely a trader, but that if he was not allowed to trade in Merv he would return without opening his packs, and report the attitude of the Mervli, and then the Russian authorities would not allow the Tekkes to put foot on Russian soil.

Still the elders were not convinced, and reiterated the request that the Russians should return to Askabad accompanied by some delegates, who would discuss the matter with the authorities there.

Alikhanoff repeated his previous statements. He dwelt on the point that neither he nor his fellow-travellers had anything to do with political questions, but were merely peaceful traders who desired to traffic with the Mervli, and finally threatened not to waste any more time, but to return to Astrabad and inform the authorities there of the treatment he had experienced. This

threat greatly impressed the elders, who asked how long Maksood intended staying. Alikhanoff replied that he did not wish to remain more than two or three days, upon which the council agreed that the caravan might remain and trade with the people.

The pseudo-merchants thereupon proceeded to exhibit their wares and deal with the people, but the elders were not to be imposed upon, and frankly told the Russians that they were political agents, and the different khans vied with one another in entertaining the party. On the third day of the visit Alikhanoff disguised himself in the sheepskin costume of a Tekke and paid a secret visit to the Kaushid Khan Kala, the great fortress which had been constructed by the Mervli. The walls of this extend over five miles of country and are eighty feet in height.

After a stay of three days, during which the pseudo-merchant took voluminous notes, which he subsequently published, and from which the above details are taken, Alikhanoff returned to Askabad, and issued a very complete report on his mission to the Governor-General, who thus became informed not only as to the aspect and surroundings of the Tekke capital, but also as to the opinions and politics of its inhabitants.

For a while the Tekkes were allowed to continue in their fancied security. Matters of importance had to be attended to elsewhere. The Russians realised that a point had been reached in the development of their empire which called for the utmost precaution, in order, firstly, to make recent attainments perfectly secure, and, secondly, to prevent any trouble cropping up with other nations. For the nonce her agents acted on the defensive, and her policy of aggression was temporarily abandoned in favour of one of inquiry. The large accession of territory so recently added to the Tsar's dominions had brought the Russian frontier for the first time into direct contact not only with Khorassan, but also with Afghanistan, and the far-seeing ministers at St. Petersburg were desirous of making the position thus attained thoroughly secure. While Alikhanoff was

executing his first mission to Merv, another secret emissary was paying a visit to Kabul, the person chosen for this delicate task being Colonel Venkhoosky, while in order that the district of Akhal and the Persian boundary might be thoroughly explored, Captain Gospodin Lessar was instructed to survey the new frontier, and to report as to its suitability for the construction of a branch line of railway along it from the Transcaspian line to the Afghan border. Lessar accordingly started from Askabad in 1882, and surveyed the country in the valley of the Hari Rud as far as Herat.

In 1883 General Komaroff was appointed Governor-General of Transcaspia, and on taking up his command he proceeded to continue the policy outlined by Skobeleff, adopting only other means than those favoured by his predecessor. His first undertaking was the occupation of the whole of the Tejend oasis, which was accomplished without loss of life, and he then directed his attention in the direction of Merv.

Alikhanoff was again sent to the Tekkes in the character of a merchant, and once more did he ply his ingenuity on the doubting Mervli. The elders were talked round by dint of specious references to a Russian army in the immediate neighbourhood, while the chiefs were bribed to acquiesce in the oath of allegiance to the Tsar.

Having got thus far, Alikhanoff sent the news to Komaroff, who had held himself in readiness, and advanced with all possible rapidity. Merv was in the hands of the Russians before the inhabitants could organise themselves to resist. The small opposition which did manifest itself was speedily quieted by a few shots from the Cossacks, and the fortress of Kaushid Khan Kala, erected at great sacrifice and cost, to keep the Russians out, found them its first occupants. Thus quietly fell Merv, the ancient 'Queen of the World,' into the hands of the despoilers, and on the 14th February 1884 became a portion of the dominions of the Russian Tsar.

Meanwhile the report of Gospodin Lessar had been received at Askabad, and acting on the hints therein

contained, Komaroff seized Sarakhs, on the right bank of the Tejend, a place which had always been regarded as of great strategic importance, besides being under the rule of the Shah. It was of Sarakhs that Sir Charles MacGregor wrote :—

'Sarakhs, placed at the junction of the roads to Herat and Meshed, and the best entrance to Khorasan from the north, it cannot fail to exercise a very serious influence on the momentous issue of the Russo-Indian question. If England does not use Sarakhs for defence, Russia will for offence.'

On the 6th of May a convention respecting Sarakhs was agreed to between Russia and Persia, by which the claims of the former were, as usual, allowed, and, satisfied with the result of his temerity, Komaroff took possession of Penjdeh on the Murghab, and Pul-i-Khatun on the Hari Rud, thus extending the Russian dominion still further south. This last extension came unquestionably within the limits of the Ameer's territory, and it called forth a strong protest from Kabul, backed up by a demand for a verification of the frontier by Great Britain.

This notification was supported by fighting within the disputed territory. The Russians having pushed on were confronted by a number of Afghans on the Kushk river, a tributary of the Murghab. The Russians, commanded by Komaroff, attacked the Afghans at Aktapa on the 30th March 1885, killing hundreds and losing fifty-three Russians. It was afterwards stated that the attack was provoked by the Afghans, but this statement was subsequently disproved by Sir Peter Lumsden, who was sent out to preside over the Boundary Commission which had been agreed to by the Afghans and Russia. The work of the Commission was, however, rendered extremely difficult by the obstructive conduct of the Russians, who had occupied the Zulfikar Pass, ninety miles from Herat, and went to the length of mobilising an army at Askabad, ostensibly with the object of making war on Great Britain and Afghanistan.

On the 22nd August Komaroff, acting doubtless on instructions from St. Petersburg, evacuated the pass, and

an Anglo-Russian Protocol, promulgated in London on the 10th September, was supposed to have settled the dispute. Penjdeh was given over to Russia and a joint commission appointed to delimitate the frontier. The work commenced on the 12th November 1885, and ended in July 1886. During the interval the whole of the Russo-Afghan frontier between Khoja Saleh, on the Oxus, and the Zulfikar Pass, where Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan meet, was surveyed over a course of 350 miles, pillars being erected at intervals to mark the line. The Commission subsequently met at St. Petersburg, when the question was finally settled in July 1887.[1]

Scarcely had the trouble caused by the advance of Russia into the Afghan country subsided when it was re-enacted elsewhere. Continuing her policy of exploration, Russia sent Colonel Gromtchevski on a mission to the Pamir Plateau, which extends at a height of thirteen thousand feet between China, Bokhara, and Afghanistan. The object of this mission was said to be scientific, but there can be no question but that its real purpose was to survey the district which, while useless as a sphere of influence, possessed undoubted strategic value. The expedition which started early in 1889 was stopped by the Afghan outposts. In 1891, the Russians despatched Colonel Yonoff with a considerable force, with the object of driving the Chinese and Afghans off the plateau, and declaring it a portion of the Russian Empire. The Chinese quitted the district agreeably to the summons made them, but the Russians, after meeting Captain Younghusband and Lieut. Davidson and turning them back across the Afghan frontier, met with a refusal to regard the Pamirs as Russian territory from the Afghan tribes who habitually hunted there. For a time the Russians were left in occupation, but on hearing that a strong body of Goorkhas were advancing, Colonel Yonoff retired, and his action was subsequently condemned and apologised for by the Russian Government.

Notwithstanding this, Colonel Yonoff returned to the

[1] See Appendix B.

Pamir region, and on the 24th July a collision occurred between his men and a party of Afghans, in which sixteen were killed. On this the Russians withdrew, but returned the following year, when constant trouble cropped up between the Afghans and the Russians, and this continued at intervals until 1895, when an agreement was entered into between Great Britain and Russia for a demarcation of the respective spheres of influence. A joint Commission subsequently visited the spot and delimitated the frontier, the work being concluded in September of that year.[1]

[1] See Appendix B.

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CHAPTER V

THE PARTITION OF PERSIA

Relations between Russia and Persia — First War with Persia—Annexation of Persian Provinces—Treaty of Gulistan—Second War with Persia—Treaty of Turcomanchai—Attack on Herat—Failure of Siege—Occupation of Ashurada—Second attempt on Herat—Persian War with England—Growth of Russian Influence in Persia—Annexation of Caspian coast line — Krasnovodsk replaces Ashurada—Michaelovsk and Chikishlar established—Atrek boundary established—Sarakhs occupied—Future of Persia—A Russian dependency—Helplessness of the people—Supremacy of Russia in Northern Persia.

RELATIONS between Russia and Persia date from 1722, when Peter despatched an embassy to the Shah for the purpose of demanding compensation for various imaginary grievances. There can be little question but that Peter had made up his mind to try his luck on the west of the Caspian, in the hope that he might find better fortune waiting him on that side than he had found on the east. Accordingly, after invading Daghestan, he sent to demand possession of Derbend, and this being refused, he sent an army there and took it by force.

Having thus easily attained his desires on the Caspian seaboard, the Tsar turned his attention to bigger undertakings, and set about stirring up the independent State of Georgia, which contained the richest districts in the Caucasus. Unfortunately for him, Peter died before witnessing the result of his machinations, and it remained for the Empress Catherine II. to follow out the policy he had laid down. In this she was very successful. The state of Persia brought about by Russian interference was such as to greatly alarm Heraclius, Prince of Georgia, and he decided to seek the protection and support of some ruler stronger than himself, in order that he might

escape the toils being laid for him by Aga Mahomed, the new ruler of Iran. He accordingly approached Catherine, and, after some negotiation, signed a treaty of allegiance to her and her successors, in return for a guarantee of protection against attack or partition of his territory, in July 1783.

Twelve years later, the Shah invaded Georgia with a large army, and without much difficulty took Tiflis, and, according to a Persian historian, 'gave to the Georgian unbelievers a specimen of what they were to expect on the Day of Judgment.' The fortunes of Georgia were broken, and the Persian host swept the country, devastating all they came across.

In 1796, Catherine sent a Russian army against the Persians, and without much difficulty Derbend and Baku were taken, and the invading Persians driven out of the country. And as they retreated, they were followed by the Russians almost up to the walls of Teheran. The prospect looked as if Russian arms would conquer the whole country in a single campaign, but the death of Catherine postponed this event, the first act of the Emperor Paul being to recall the army. The actual result of the invasion was therefore nil, nor were any further steps taken towards the partition of Persia until after the death of Paul, which occurred in 1800.

The Tsar, Alexander I., soon proved himself as keen on the conquest of Persia as his predecessor had been antipathetic. An expedition was despatched down the Volga to the Caspian, and thence Georgia was entered, and annexed by a proclamation dated 21st September 1801. An army under the command of General Zizianoff captured Mingrelia, Ganjeh, Shirvan, and Karabagh. Imeretia was taken early in 1804 without resistance. Throughout the whole of these operations, which resembled rather a triumphal progress of the Russians than a war, the Persians did little or nothing except run away, and when the army was compelled to make a stand in a pitched battle near Erivan, the men appear to have cast their arms away and waited for defeat. Great

Britain had been appealed to by the Shah, and had responded with the loan of a number of officers to lead the troops against the Russian foe, but on friendly relations recurring between this country and Russia in 1812, the officers had to be withdrawn. The British representatives then interested themselves in bringing about a cessation of hostilities, and succeeded in negotiating the Treaty of Gulistan, which was signed the 12th October 1813.[1]

This treaty is remarkable for the number and extent of privileges it secures to Russia, while Persia gets nothing whatever. All the territories taken by Russia during the war are declared to be under the sovereignty of the Tsar. Russian men-of-war are permitted to navigate the Caspian, but no others, and the duty to be levied on Russian goods going into or out of Persia is limited to five per cent. Despite the stringency of this treaty, which, it will be noted, forbids the Persians to have a fleet upon their own seaboard, it was signed without demur, for the reason that the Shah was not in a position to protest.

Sweeping as were the clauses in the Treaty of Gulistan, they were so haltingly drawn and so vaguely worded, as to tend rather to add to the differences between the two countries. For thirteen years was the frontier a constant scene of squabbles and fighting, until at last, in 1826, Paskevitch, the commander of the Russian force, occupied the district of Gokcha, on which Abbas Mirza, the heir to the throne, marched into Russian territory.

The war which followed extended over a period of two years, the whole campaign being one continual triumph for Paskevitch. At last the Persians cried 'enough,' and on the 10th February 1828 signed the Treaty of Turcomanchai, which re-enacted all the clauses of the Gulistan Treaty, and, in addition, ceded to Russia Khanates of Erivan and Nackhitchevan, as well as the payment of an indemnity of thirty millions of roubles. It practically gave to Russia the whole of the Caucasus,

[1] See Appendix B.

excepting only a small corner in the south-west bordering on the Black Sea.

While these operations were in progress in Asia, Russia had been at war with the Porte in Europe, and when the campaign was brought to a close by the Treaty of Adrianople, she obtained Poti on the Black Sea, as well as the fortress of Akhaltsikh, between Tiflis and the sea.

The Treaty of Turcomanchai,[1] besides being a great score for Russia, tended to bring about more friendly relations between the two countries. The Shah had learned that he could not hope to successfully oppose the will of St. Petersburg, and he profited by the lesson, in exhibiting an attitude of studious consideration to the slightest expression of Russian desires. Owing to this it became possible for Russia to embark on that career of intrigue which, after continuing for more than half a century, has resulted in the practical suzerainty of Muscovy over Iran to the exclusion of most other interests.

The great aim of Russia in the early days of her Persian ascendency was to bring about a rupture in the existing relations between Great Britain and the Shah, and, by dint of careful nursing, that monarch was egged on to march against Herat, with the avowed object of rescuing that city from Afghan rule. Hearing of the Shah's intention, the Indian government despatched Sir Eldred Pottinger to aid in the defence of the so-called 'Key of India.' The Persian army was officered and led by Russians, and the siege lasted from November 1837 to June 1838. A direct appeal was also made to the Shah by the British Minister, Sir John M'Neill, who presented an ultimatum, but it was too late to persuade the Persian ruler to believe in the policy of England. The Shah had committed the keeping of his country to the servants of the Tsar, and Sir John M'Neill's efforts proved fruitless, and resulted only in his being treated with such discourtesy that he withdrew from Teheran. A British expedition was thereupon sent to the Persian Gulf, when the island of Kharrack was occupied. The whole of the

[1] See Appendix B.

operations were actually, though not avowedly, a struggle between Great Britain and Russia for possession of Herat. Persia was but the catspaw of Count Simonitch, the Tsar's representative at Teheran, and had Herat fallen, its destinies would have been forthwith controlled by Russia.

These designs were, however, frustrated by the ability of Pottinger, who successfully defied the attack of the Russo-Persian army. The siege was raised, and Count Nesselrode immediately disowned Simonitch and all his deeds, and replaced him by General Duhamel. And so the incident terminated, its only outcome being the starting of a series of circumstances which led to the first Afghan War. The policy pursued by Russia throughout these events had been exceedingly successful. Indeed she stood to profit by events whatever the immediate result might be. If the Shah's attempt on Herat proved successful, then Russia would at once become—through Persia—pre-eminent in Afghanistan. The submission of Kabul and Kandahar would follow as a matter of course, and the Indian frontier would be open to the machinations of the Tsar's advisers. If, on the other hand, the British Government interposed in order to rescue Herat from Persian clutches, her status with the authorities at Teheran would be damaged, and Persia would in consequence turn to Russia as her best friend. Thus was Russian diplomacy bound to profit, and making the most of the ill-will which England's aid in Herat had served to cultivate at Teheran, the Russian advisers of the Shah paid little or no attention to the events of '39, and suffered the fall first of Kandahar, subsequently of Kabul, to pass unnoticed.

After all these years of patient waiting, Russia felt that the time had come for her to benefit by the influence she had cultivated. While playing the part of adviser behind the scenes, she had not neglected either her interests or her opportunities. The exclusive rights obtained on the waters of the Caspian had encouraged a series of careful surveys, and in 1838 or 1839—the exact period of occupation is not known—a party of Russians had landed

on the island of Ashurada, situated at the extremity of the neck of land which forms the lagoon alongside the harbour of Astrabad. When information of this occupation reached the British Minister at the Persian court in 1841, it was explained that the Shah has authorised the Russians to construct a naval arsenal on the island, which was to serve as 'a rendezvous' for the Caspian fleet. Ashurada not only served as an ideal naval station, but sufficed to guard the entrance into the Bay of Astrabad, and proved a very forcible reminder of the paramount influence possessed by Russia in Persia.

While the question of the occupation of Ashurada, coming immediately after the trouble at Herat, went very near precipitating Russia and England into war, the tension of the situation was relieved by the border dispute which broke out between Persia and Turkey. The trouble was caused by the action of certain nomad tribes who, while they committed constant excesses upon the frontier, found a ready sanctuary in the Turkish districts of Mosul and Baghdad. The question at issue was further complicated by a series of disputes over the custody of certain shrines which each country claimed as being within her boundary. Throughout these differences Russia ardently espoused the cause of Persia, with the obvious object of showing her goodwill to the Shah, and thereby supplanting British influence in his councils. Just as this scheme was being worked out, and Russia was about to obtain the reward of her disinterestedness, Mahomed Shah died (September 1848), and in the events which attended the installation of Nasir-ed-din, his successor, Muscovite schemes were once more rendered futile.

The reign of Nasir-ed-din began at a critical period in Persian history. The country was the scene of a species of triangular duel between England, Russia, and Persia, and great was the speculation as to the direction in which the favours of the new ruler would be bestowed. His first step was a wise one. He chose the Amir Nizam for his Prime Minister, who speedily proved his fitness for the confidence placed in him. Possessing a very unusual

quality for one of his nation, honesty and devotion to his country, the chief minister proceeded to put the affairs of the nation in order. He overhauled the nearly exhausted treasury, and drew up a sound financial programme. He turned his attention to reforms, and set about quelling the rebellion which, encouraged by Russian intrigue, had broken out in Khorassan; and in every respect proved himself an honest and a capable ruler. He strove to keep clear both of English and of Russian influence, and when compelled by force of circumstances to make a concession to either, he immediately offered a corresponding privilege to the other, so that he might retain his independence, and not be regarded as the mere tool of either country.

The success of this diplomatist was, however, short-lived. The reputation he speedily achieved for himself, and the respect which his impartiality evoked, seemed to arouse the jealousy of the Shah, and this feeling was accentuated by the encomiums he heard passed on his minister's actions by the foreign representatives in Teheran. Accordingly the Amir Nizam was condemned to death, and lest pressure should be brought to bear by Russia or Great Britain with a view to securing his reprieve, Nasir-ed-din ordered that he should be executed forthwith.

The Prime Minister of Persia was murdered early in 1852, and a very short time elapsed before his master began to realise the mistake he had made. At the close of the previous year Yar Mahomed Khan, who had long ruled over the Western Principality of Afghanistan, died, and his son, Said Mahomed, who succeeded him, finding himself anything but a *persona grata* with the people of Herat, offered his allegiance to Persia, and sought her support. As soon as news of this development reached St. Petersburg the authorities determined to do all they could to precipitate matters, which, it was seen, would infallibly lead to a war which could not but further Russian designs in Afghanistan. But meanwhile the authorities in India were exerting themselves to counteract this influence. The British Government had laid it down as a fundamental principle that the integrity of

Herat must be maintained, and that the place should remain in Afghan hands; and these requirements were renewed in the form of a convention which Persia was required to subscribe to, in which she undertook not to send troops to Herat, except in case of attack from the East, and to refrain from imposing any form of subjection or allegiance on its people. This convention was executed in January 1853, and served to considerably perplex Nasir-ed-din as to the course he ought to take. His very natural desire to profit by Said Mahomed's invitation was strongly encouraged by the Russian minister, but indignantly scouted by the British. After hesitating for nearly three years, the Shah made up his mind, and in December 1855 sent an army to Herat, which was at once admitted and made welcome by its ruler, who was only too glad to acknowledge his dependency, carrying with it the protection of the Persian throne. This state of affairs did not long continue. After an occupation of only a few weeks the people rose, deposed Said Mahomed, and made as though they would drive the Persians out of the country, but the struggle was a half-hearted one, and finding succour coming neither from Kabul nor from India, the Herati hauled down the Afghan flag and surrendered the city to the Shah. The surrender was effected in November 1856, and brought about the so-called 'Persian War' with England. In March 1857 a treaty of peace between the two countries was signed at Paris, in which the chief clauses related to the immediate withdrawal of Persia from Herat, and the city was evacuated in the July following.

Thus was Herat restored to Afghanistan instead of passing through the hands of Persia into the grip of St. Petersburg. The irritation of Russia at this unexpected result of its diplomacy was very great, but it was not made public. Intent on her conquests in Turkestan, the Tsar sought by his successes in Central Asia to forget the disaster of the Crimea, and in order to learn what was the actual position in Herat, a mission, nominally scientific, actually military and political, was despatched

in charge of Lieutenant Khanikoff to Herat and Kabul. The report brought back by this expedition has never been published, but it is generally understood to have been largely instrumental in the subsequent change in Russian policy in regard to Persia and Afghanistan.

From the time of the occupation of Ashurada, Russia had been approached at frequent intervals by Persia with demands for its return to her keeping. But the Tsar had not the slightest intention of withdrawing, the plea put forward being that the Russian fleet required a suitable base from which to keep a watch upon the Turkomans, who played the part of pirates on the Caspian. That the actual object of the seizure was other than that stated is proved by the announcement published at the time by the Cronstadt *Vestnik*: 'It was found necessary, in order to exercise an influence on the policy of Persia, to have some powerful *point d'appui*, than which better than the island of Ashurada could not be found.'

That the establishment of a Russian station in the Caspian did tend to diminish piracy is beyond question. Outrages along the coast ceased, and the Persian seaboard became secure and undisturbed. This result of Russian influence served as a lever by which the Shah hoped to get rid of his unwelcome visitors. He pointed out that the Turkomans were now quiet, and became insistent in his requests for the withdrawal of the Russians. In order to provide an excuse for refusing to vacate Ashurada, the Muscovite envoy at Teheran suggested that a few Russian merchants should be subsidised as an encouragement to open up trade with Astrabad. This suggestion was promptly acted on, and in 1845 several firms opened branches on Persian territory, one even building a factory at Gez, on the way to Astrabad. On receiving the next request for withdrawal from the Shah after this, the Russian representatives replied that it was impossible to withdraw from Ashurada 'while there were Russian lives at Gez and Astrabad whose safety it was her duty to watch over from the vantage-post afforded by the island.'

While the Russians continued their occupation of Ashurada, they were continually extending their frontier along the western shore of the Caspian. But notwithstanding repeated attempts, the Tsar's agents had failed in obtaining the cession of any territory on the southern shore of the inland sea. And Russia knew that it would be mistaken policy to force the matter, for the refusal of Persia was encouraged, if not instigated, by Great Britain, with whom she had so recently signed a treaty of peace. And so, after a quarter of a century spent in useless effort, Russia, supreme in the Caucasus and in Turkestan, exclusive in her command of the Caspian, was yet held in check by the Shah, aided and abetted by the very Power whom Russia had so recently striven to crush—in vain.

Meanwhile matters were becoming urgent, for what the Persians had failed in doing, the sea was about to accomplish with the greatest ease. Ashurada, the only Russian base in Persia proper, was rapidly disappearing, and it became necessary, since no effort could bring a cession on the mainland, to decide what was to be done with the establishment which was being threatened with destruction.

The alternative was taken in 1869, when Colonel Stolyetof descended on Krasnovodsk and constructed a fort there. The only stronghold on the east of the Caspian at that period was Fort Alexandrovsky, established by Perovski in 1834, which had been allowed to become neglected since the occupation of Ashurada. Krasnovodsk had several things to recommend it. It possessed an admirable harbour, it afforded an excellent base for operations against the Turkomans, and it was conveniently situated for excursions into Persian territory if ever such were deemed desirable. And so Russia occupied Krasnovodsk, and took her fleet from Ashurada to the bay outside the new fort.

To the protests made by Persia as soon as the news of the occupation reached Teheran, Russia replied that Persian territory ended at the Atrek river, beyond

which Krasnovodsk was. And having thus formed a new base, the Russians proceeded to annex the whole of the Eastern shore of the Caspian, with military posts at Michaelovsk and Chikishlar, the latter within a few miles of Astrabad. By 1873 the whole of the Caspian coast was controlled by Russia from Baku to Chikishlar, and in order to quiet the outcry which was being raised in Great Britain against the repeated seizure of Persian territory, Russia turned her attention to the conquest of Khiva, which had been rendered possible by her latest acquisitions. The succeeding years were therefore devoted to the final subjugation of the Uzbegs, and Khiva and Khokand were successively coerced. While this work was being done in Turkestan, the Caspian region was being overhauled and organised, so that after the fall of Khokand, and while jubilating over the taking of Kars and Erzeroum from the Turks, the military district of Transcaspia was found well suited to serve as the base of an extensive expedition against Turkomania.

Persia still disputed her stolen territory, and for a while it seemed as if the small consideration shown to the natives of the Astrabad district was likely to develop into a *casus belli*, but the Russians did not consider the time ripe for the final seizure of Iran, and settled the outstanding grievance by the compact of 1881, which fixed the Atrek as the boundary between the two nations.[1] About the same time Astrabad was added to the dominions of the Tsar. The acquisition of the whole of the Akhal district which was brought about by these changes served to round off the limits between Russian Turkomania and Khorassan, but it did not provide what the governor of Transcaspia most desired, a series of military posts of strategic strength. Three places on the Persian border lend themselves especially to the attainment of this end:—Astrabad, Meshhed and Sarakhs. The former had long been under the influence of Russia, and, owing to its position in regard to the Caspian, could be occupied by a Russian force at a few

[1] See Appendix B.

hours' notice. Meshhed, capital of the Khorassan district, was actually, if not ostensibly, ruled by the Russian consul stationed in the city; and Sarakhs, commanding what is probably the most important military position on the frontier, was occupied suddenly and without notice by Russia in 1884. The importance of this post has long been realised by students of Eastern politics. It is indeed questionable whether, in its possibilities, Sarakhs is not a more important acquisition than Merv. More than one authority has in years gone by drawn attention to the possibilities of Sarakhs, of whom one, Sir C. MacGregor, has been already quoted. Russia has occupied Sarakhs, where a fort has been constructed, which serves as the depot of the 5th Transcaspian Rifle Battalion; and while Muscovite dominion is nominally restricted to the right bank of the Hari Rud, it is well known that Russian influence dominates Meshhed and Astrabad, just as though the whole of Khorassan were a dependency of the Tsar. Excepting when under the rule of Nadir Shah, the one strong man who has ruled Persia during the past century, Persia has ever since the rule of Peter the Great been at the mercy of her northern neighbour, who has preyed upon her weakness, and profited as far as has been deemed safe to do by the non-interference of other Powers. The only Power which has any active interest in Persia, besides Russia, is Great Britain; and while she retains considerable influence in the southern portion of the Shah's dominions, she has been dispossessed of any claim to interest herself in the north by the paramount position which has been achieved by the Russian agents at Teheran.

The future fate of Persia, if it were ever surrounded by any doubt, was settled by the capture of Merv. This feat—performed in defiance of specific pledges given voluntarily, as well as in response to inquiries from the British Government—besides completing the annexation of the Khanates, and the hemming in of Bokhara, secured the boundary of Persia, and rendered the seizure of

Khorassan merely a question of time. As to the ultimate fate of this province, there can be not the slightest question, while, Khorassan once a Russian province, the Caspian seaboard will of a surety follow. The importance of Persia to Russia could not be well exaggerated. Her northern provinces break the continuity of Russian territory, and render a sea voyage necessary in communication between the Caucasus and Central Asia. On the west the Persian border confronts the Turkish Empire, and gives access to Baghdad and the Euphrates. On the east it provides a base from which to move on Afghanistan and India. Small need for wonder, then, if Russia has during long years of waiting kept the future dominion of Persia steadily in view, until, after a consistent programme of alternate crippling and nursing, it is only the opportunity that is lacking to bring about the final seizure of the northern empire of the Shah.

And while Russia has been steadily increasing her hold over Iran, the Persians have shown themselves too helpless, or too indolent to protest. The Persian is indeed as incapable in ability as he is contemptible in morals, and as a race is quite effete. This attribute is well described by Colonel MacGregor, who says:—'Improvement in Khorassan is impossible with the accursed Persian system of mingled tyranny and imbecility,' and during the whole modern history of Persia, the people have repeated the barbaric tactics formerly employed in warfare against the Turkomans. When, prior to the Russian descent on the valley of the Atrek, the Tekkes raided in Khorassan, they used to kill the men and abduct the women. The Persians used to flee before the bandits, but when a few Turkomans chanced to be captured by a number of Persians, the prisoners were crucified. No idea of attempting either to protect their frontier or to educate the Tekkes appears to have been made, and any modicum of success against the nomads was invariably celebrated by atrocities revolting in their brutality. Thus, when in 1875 the Shah's brother was made ruler of Khorassan, a score of Turkoman prisoners

were impaled on spikes before him in order to celebrate the event. And, while the Persians have become more and more hopeless and demoralised, Russia has crept further and further beyond their frontiers, until to-day, besides possessing a railway along some three hundred miles of the Khorassan border, she dominates all other influences in Azerbijan and Mazanderan; claims the Atrek as a Russian river, and the Caspian as a Russian lake; while the Tsar's agents, acting in the nominal capacity of consuls, actually control the government of Meshhed, of Astrabad, of Resht, and of Teheran, pending the time when the whole of Northern Persia becomes subject to the will of St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER VI

RUSSIAN POLICY IN ASIA

First intrusion of Russian merchants into Asia due to chance—Objects of Yermak and Chabaroff—Necessity of inflicting a lesson on Kirghiz Nomads—Difference between Russian invasion of Siberia and Central Asia—Reasons which have led to continued conquest—Benefits conferred by Russian rule—Cruelty of Russian methods—Skobeleff's justification of same—Russia's impulse towards the East—Russian social system—Military methods in Asia—Love of decorations—Corruption—Russian love of intrigue—The Oriental mode of reasoning—Balance of evidence as to benefit of Russian rule in Asia—Civilising influence—Universal militarism of Russian system—Neglect of the needs of the people—Restriction of freedom and lack of public opinion—The Church and the Army—The outcome of their influence—Russian diplomatic methods—Unscrupulous and successful—Secret agents—The only limitation of Russian growth.

THE reader who has followed the facts recorded in the preceding chapters cannot fail to have been impressed by the constancy with which successive exploiters of Russian empire have forged their way further and further afield. It will also have been noted that at the outset the intrusion of Russian merchants into Asia was the outcome rather of chance than of any settled policy on the part of the ruler of Moscow.

The doings of Yermak and of Chabaroff in Siberia aimed rather at the attaining of fresh markets for Russian produce than at the increase of Muscovite dominion; and the subsequent invasion of Central Asia was brought about, not by any political designs on the part of Russia, but by the necessity of teaching a lesson to the Kirghiz marauders who made the limits of the Orenburg steppe unsafe to the caravans which traversed it in the direction of Khiva. The circumstances of the peoples affected in these different districts of Asia varied greatly. In the north, the inhabitants of what

has become Western Siberia were neither a very fierce nor a very warlike race, and as soon as the occupants of the capital of Siber had been taught the superiority of the Cossacks of the Ural, the races of Tobolsk accepted the dominion of Moscow. The rest of the acquisition of Siberia was accomplished by a process of gradual absorption, varied by an occasional massacre; the only opponents met with who were at all qualified to dispute the onward march of Russian agents were the Chinese, whose opposition succeeded only in delaying the final acquisition of the Amur provinces for a brief space of time.

In Central Asia, the circumstances which accompanied Russian absorption were quite different. The peoples against whom it was found necessary or politic to despatch military expeditions, were wild and warlike, possessing good physique, used to life in the open air, fierce by nature, cruel and remorseless. The Kirghiz of the Steppes proved themselves no mean opponents, and were only finally subdued after a conquest extending over many years. And when the Kirghiz leaders surrendered to Anna Ivanovna, Russia found in the people of Khiva and Bokhara, and still more in the Turkomans of the Kizil Kum, races far more difficult to deal with than had been those already subdued. Indeed the fact is worth noting, that among the populations of Central Asia, the races appear to be ranged in the order of their ferocity from north to south. Thus the Turkoman excels the Kirghiz, and is in turn surpassed by the Uzbeg, whose dominions are bordered by the Tekke Turkomans, a people who for inherent wildness and the readiness with which they take to arms are only excelled by their neighbours, the tribes of Afghanistan.

The conquest of these people and the acquisition of their territory was only achieved by a vast expenditure of life and money. And it is a matter for grave doubt whether the enormous amount of treasure which has been expended in the conquest of Central Asia will ever bring a commensurate return. The first question which

strikes the student who comes upon this fact is why Russia should have devoted so much blood and treasure to the acquisition of empire which can never make a suitable return; and one is naturally led to assume that she has relied on some ulterior gain by which to recoup herself for the cost of conquest. The point raised is an interesting one; it is also important in connection with any attempt to rightly appreciate the standpoint from which Russia views the situation in Asia to-day. I propose therefore to deal with the subject at some length.

The tract of country known as Central Asia, extending from the Caspian Sea to the Chinese frontier, consists for the greater part of vast stretches of sandy desert. The water system of this territory is limited to two great and some half dozen smaller rivers, which serve to reclaim the districts along their banks, and create oases capable of providing sustenance to a sparse population. Of these rivers, the most important are the Amu Daria or Oxus, and the Sir Daria or Jaxartes, both of which rise in the mountains of the Thian Shan range, and after flowing through countries widely separated, both empty into the Aral Sea. The Oxus is in some respects the most notable of the rivers of Asia, both on account of its history and its political importance. Previous to 1570 this vast river emptied into the Caspian, thus affording a ready means of communication between the limits of South-East Europe and Turkomania. In that year, however, from some cause never satisfactorily ascertained, the Oxus changed its course, and now empties into the southern extremities of the Aral Sea. The oasis on the lower course of the Oxus has for generations been known as the Khanate of Khaurism or Khiva, and the larger tract of more fertile country, extending along its right bank as far as the Afghan frontier, forms the domain of the Khan of Bhokara. Beyond these favoured regions to the west stretches the Kara Kum, and to the east the Kizil Kum, two waterless deserts, devoid of vegetation and unfavourable to life. To

the north, between the Caspian and the Aral Seas, lies the great plateau of the Ust Urt, and north of that, extending from the Caspian to the lake of Balkash is the Kirghiz steppe.

The Jaxartes closely resembles the Oxus in the character of its surroundings. Its oases had long served for the development of the cities of Hazret, of Chemkend and of Tashkend, whilst its upper course runs through the former Khanate of Khokand.

On the south of the great Kara Kum are the rivers Atrek, Tejend or Hari Rud, and Murgab, which fertilise the oases of Tchat, of Sarakhs and of Merv. Apart from these, and the fertile valley in Bokhara watered by the Zerafshan, the whole of Central Asia is a desert country, producing nothing capable of supporting a permanent population, and closed to commercial development. It is this country which Russia has, in slow but sure strides, gradually absorbed into the dominions of the Tsar.

In Northern Asia, the fruits of conquest are but little more satisfactory. A considerable proportion of Siberia, being within the Arctic circle, is of no account in the assets of the nation, nor is the gigantic forest region, which extends between it on the southern limits of the empire, of much greater utility. In the southern stretches of Central and Eastern Siberia there are said to be vast zones of land, especially suited to the growth of cereals, and of the mineral wealth of the country there is ample evidence, but the severity of the climate, the sparseness of the population, and the lack of communications detract from the value of these factors to a large extent, and fully justify the question, whether the possession of such a country adds to or lessens the relative prosperity of the Russian empire.

Notwithstanding the untempting character of the greater portion of the country comprising Asiatic Russia, there has at no moment from the commencement of Siberian conquest in 1558 to the present day been more than a temporary break in the ever-forward movement of Russian exploitation. At one time by dint of an

avowed campaign, at another by a sudden *tour de force*; sometimes by means of a published treaty, at others in response to secret negotiations, Russian rule has been gradually pushed ahead, until all the unsettled regions surrounding her erstwhile frontier have been enclosed, and she stands to-day bounded on all sides by nations whose frontiers are well defined.

The reasons which have led to this immensity of conquest are of different kinds, varying from the mere desire to open up trade with new markets, to the necessity of maintaining order along a frontier entirely unpoliced by its rightful owner. But beyond such reasons as these capable of a logical justification, there are many instances on record, where no explanation of such acquisition is possible, excepting on the assumption of a desire to invade other countries, or an intention to despoil other rulers. The greater portion of the territorial acquisitions of Russia in Asia have been due to spontaneous colonisation, protection against nomadic tribes, and that strong desire to attain a seaboard free from climatic or political limitations, which has been so keenly felt by the rulers of Russia since the days of the great Tsar, Peter the First.

It is only fair to admit that in the great majority of instances the territory acquired, for the reasons above given, has been benefited by being brought under the rule of St. Petersburg. This is especially the case in those portions of Central Asia, where up till the Russian incursion the people were lawless and given to rapine and robbery. In one respect alone Russian rule has conferred an immense benefit on Central Asia. It is entirely due to the action taken by the conquering Russians that slavery, formerly so rampant within the Khanates of Khiva and Bokhara, has been practically suppressed. The dimensions to which the slave trade of Central Asia extended prior to the taking of Khiva in 1873 were such as to imperil the lives of all strangers who ventured into the regions periodically swept by the Kirghiz and Turkoman clans, who patrolled the deserts and raided

caravans with the object of enslaving the travellers, who were promptly conveyed to the markets of Bokhara and Samarcand. The cruelties perpetrated by these hordes of wretches almost surpass belief. A victim who was deemed useless as a slave would be held to ransom, and if this was not forthcoming, they would be tortured in a variety of ways, favourite methods being plunging the victims' legs in boiling oil, or placing red hot stones on their bare stomachs while strapped to the ground. The tortures accorded to their victims by the nomadic tribes were exceeded in their villainy by those frequently inflicted at the orders of the Khans, some of which absolutely defy description, and the fact remains that since the establishment of Russian rule in this quarter of the globe, these abominations have, so far as is known, entirely ceased. That Russia has herself been guilty of considerable cruelty in her conquest of Central Asia is undeniable, and such incidents as the massacre of the Yomuds by Kaufmann, and that of the Tekkes, first by Lomakin, and subsequently by Skobeleff, which have been detailed in earlier chapters, were quite indefensible on moral grounds. For reasons of expediency, however, the Russian authorities have openly defended these butcheries. On a notable occasion, Skobeleff, who was himself responsible for the slaughter of 8000 defenceless Tekkes at Geok Tepe, went into the whole question, and justified his action on the principle that with Asiatics the duration of peace is in direct proportion to the slaughter you inflict upon the enemy. 'The harder you hit them, the longer they will be quiet afterwards.' Continuing, Skobeleff said, 'My system is this—to strike hard, and keep on hitting till resistance is completely over, then at once to form ranks, cease slaughter, and be kind and humane to the prostrate enemy.' Whatever the ultimate verdict as to the measures adopted by Russia in her campaigns against the Tekke Turkomans, there can be no question but that by their final suppression the conquerors conferred a lasting benefit on the surrounding regions. The Tekkes indeed had

long been the terror of Central Asia. They had depopulated whole districts, and were so fearless as to invade towns of considerable size, and carry off the inhabitants in broad daylight. On one occasion, a large body of these marauders visited Toorook, a city of 70,000 inhabitants, situated within a few miles of the capital of Khorassan, when 500 families were deported into slavery at one swoop. O'Donovan, the famous correspondent of the *Daily News*, bore testimony to the good work achieved by the Russians in quelling the Tekkes, and in September 1880 wrote :—

> 'The people of the Perso-Turcoman border look on the Russians as their friends, as they have given them considerable relief from the persecution they have suffered during centuries at the hands of the border tribes.'

It is also generally acknowledged that one of the principal causes of the preponderating influence exerted by Russia in Northern Persia is to be found in the fact that the Russians have long been everywhere welcomed by the Persians, who recognised that it was only they who could terminate the terrorising influence of the Tekke tribes upon the border. This fact is further evidenced by Consul Churchill, the British agent at Astrakhan in 1879, who bore testimony to the improvement in the conduct of the Turkomans on the borders of Khorassan.

But while the aggression of Russia in Turkestan and Turkomania is thus fully justified, the same cannot be said of the spoliation of Persia or the infringement of the Afghan frontier; just as, in Eastern Asia, the absorption of the whole of Siberia, peopled as it was by ignorant and uncivilised tribes, was merely a matter of natural expansion, while the snatching of whole provinces from the Chinese, with the gradual descent on the very capital of China, was an act of aggression which calls for further explanation.

The reasons which have been urged in justification of Russia's incursions are various. At the first glance it

would appear that an empire so thinly populated as is Russia should have no occasion to constantly add to her territories, but it must be remembered that the Russians are an agricultural people, and as such have a natural tendency to wander afield in search of fresh lands as the fertility of their own becomes impoverished. The reason for this was pointed out by Malthus, when he explained that the supply of food never increases in proportion to the population. Thus it came about, that the people of Russia went further and further afield, and for a long while met with no opposition. But by degrees the emigrants found themselves brought into contact with new races to whom they were unknown, and trouble arose, ending in border warfare and frequent raids, and after a while the Government of Russia was brought face to face with the problem of how to deal with the savage tribes. She had the option of two courses. She might maintain a force along her boundaries sufficiently strong to keep order and act as a protective police, or she might conquer and absorb her troublesome neighbours, thereby economising future effort and strengthening her empire. She invariably chose the latter course, and so, by small degrees, felt her way across Northern Asia, and into the heart of the Continent.

The Russians themselves make no secret of what they believe to be the future mission of Russia. One of the best esteemed of Russian writers thus refers to the subject:—

'The irresistible force of circumstances and the conditions of our existence impel us towards the east. The commencement of this movement coincides with the time of Ivan the Terrible (1583-1584). The conquest of Kazan was the first step, and ever since then we have been pushing out further and further towards the east. The greater part of the Steppes of Central Asia are to-day behind our foreposts, and we are now approaching the limits of our movement. With the pacification of the Steppes will practically cease those military operations which have cost us so much blood and money. Then will commence the period of actual peace, and Russia will be at liberty to occupy herself with the organisation of the vast territory lying between the sources of

the Amu and Sir on the one hand, and the Caspian on the other. Then commerce will be able to circulate freely through its proper channels, and new combinations will be formed of which we can have no conception to-day.'[1]

However accurate this forecast may prove in the future, it cannot be denied that in the present much remains to be done before Russia can claim to have made any attempt at developing the resources of her Central Asiatic possessions. Vast areas are without population, and the expenditure involved in the system of military government which prevails throughout the empire is far in excess of any return likely to be attained for many years to come. The want of population is the most marked feature throughout Asiatic Russia, in no part of which is a tithe of the land under cultivation, or the population sufficient to develop the resources of the country. Notwithstanding this, Russia refuses to encourage immigration from outside her own boundaries, and while her Asiatic subjects are out of all proportion to the extent of her dominions, she continues to acquire yet more territory further afield.[2] The cost of administrating these under-populated areas involves a very large annual loss, which has to be met by the treasury of St. Petersburg; and for this reason the question again rises, Why does Russia continue her unremunerative policy, and what can be her possible aim?

In order to appreciate the bearings of this question, and to understand the causes which have led up to the ever-forward movement of the Tsar's Government, it is neces-

[1] Petroosevitch.

[2] The following table shows the area and population of the various provinces of Asiatic Russia:—

Province.	Area, Square Miles.	Population.	No. of inhabitants per square mile.
Caucasus, . . .	180,843	8,350,000	46
Kirghiz Steppe, . .	755,793	2,000,000	2
Turkestan, . . .	409,414	3,341,000	8
Transcaspia, . .	383,618	352,000	1
Western Siberia, .	870,818	2,834,000	3
Eastern Siberia, . .	3,044,512	1,797,000	0·6
Amur Region . .	888,850	250,000	0·2
Sakhalin . . .	29,336	26,500	0·9

sary to glance at the social system which obtains in Russia. Unlike any other country, the various degrees of rank are determined, not by birth as such, but by an arbitrary grade of distinction known as Tchin, which is conferred at the pleasure of the Tsar on those who serve him. The system inaugurated by Peter the Great includes fourteen classes of Tchin, and it is only the Tchinoviks, or holders of these distinctions, who are eligible for service in the State. These degrees are the subject of much rivalry among the official classes, and, together with the decorations periodically allotted to the military officers, comprise the main stimulus to distinguished service, as well as a fruitful bone of contention among interested parties. The typical Russian inherits a disposition in which vanity is by no means deficient, and the officer who is not possessed of a goodly array of medals and orders cuts but a sorry figure amongst his fellows. It follows that every Tchinovik is at all times eager to avail himself of any opportunity which occurs for earning distinction, and it is impossible to deny that, in the outlying territories of the empire especially, officers have at times been tempted to perform acts which redound neither to their own nor their country's credit. Thus it has been stated by Russian writers that the hideous massacre of the Yomud Turkomans by Kaufmann was perpetrated merely that he might have some claim to a grand cross for distinguished service in the field, the facts of the case being that he arrived with his army outside Khiva after the Khan had surrendered to General Vereffkin, who had preceded the main body in the attack. Finding the work he had come to perform already accomplished, Kaufmann is accused of having ordered the massacre of the Yomuds, so that he might be able to report his having taken part in some actual fighting. The facts of this historic slaughter have been placed on record by so many authorities as to be quite beyond question, and the variations between the versions given in the Russian press; by MacGahan, who was almost a spectator of the affair; and by Schuyler, who made an exhaustive inquiry into all

the circumstances, are absolutely trivial. Kaufmann received the cross of St. George for this exploit, and his success encouraged other officers to imitate his tactics. It is well known in Russian military circles that campaigns have on more than one occasion been inordinately prolonged in order that extended opportunities for obtaining distinction might be afforded to the army engaged. This has been admitted more than once, and one of our greatest authorities, who knew Russia as few know it to-day, wrote :—

'Russia has always attributed to her military chiefs a degree of power in influencing the national policy which in this country we find it difficult to realise. She used to explain the slow progress that was made in subjugating the Caucasus by pointing to the self-interest of the army, which forbade the premature closing of so fertile a source of promotion and honours.'[1]

Another writer[2] of equal knowledge brings a similar charge against Lomakin for his conduct of the campaign against the Tekkes. On the occasion of the storming of Dengeel Tepe, this general refused to allow the garrison to capitulate, preferring to make a big job of the business, and afford his commanders an opportunity of covering themselves with glory. That such proceedings should be possible in the Russian army does not reflect credit on the Muscovite officer. But it must be borne in mind that the subjects of the Tsar are a race by themselves, differing in character and descent from all those peoples who may properly lay claim to come within the limits of Western civilisation, and holding opinions as greatly at variance with those of other nations as is the system of government under which they serve. The armies of Asiatic, are in some respects in greater contrast to the rest of the world than those of European, Russia. The reason for this is easily discovered. The interests of the class from which the Russian officer is drawn are centred in St. Petersburg, where alone is the life to be compared to that of Paris or Vienna. The further afield

[1] Sir Henry Rawlinson. [2] Charles Marvin.

the soldier goes, the less popular is the command, and the distant military districts of Siberia and Central Asia are shunned by the officer of influence as places of exile. They have, however, their redeeming features. Separated from the civilisation of the capital by such vast distances, the commands of the Amur or Transcaspia afford a useful retreat for a man beneath a cloud, and in addition to this they possess the further advantage of affording more frequent opportunities for seeing service, carrying with them possibilities of attaining distinction, than are to be found in European Russia. It follows that the military districts of Asia have become a species of penitentiary to which officers who have fallen under the displeasure of the Tsar or the War Department, who have outraged the laws of honour or become financially bankrupt, are deported in order that they may be given an opportunity of purging their offences, and working their way back to favour by feats of valour.

Thus it comes about that the officers to be found in Asiatic Russia do not comprise the flower of the Russian army, while the circumstances under which they reach their commands tend to make them reckless and daring to a degree. An acquaintance with these facts helps materially in aiding one to understand one of the main causes responsible for the constant forward movement of Russia in Asia. An opportunity rightly seized, and acted on with decision, may at any time terminate in the obtaining of important benefits, territorial or otherwise, to Russia. If brought to a successful issue, such a venture, though made without instructions or even approval from headquarters, is readily adopted by the Government, and the daring individual to whom it was due is properly rewarded by a rise in rank, conferring of the much-coveted order, and possibly the command of a district. If the attempt fail, the incident may never reach the ears of St. Petersburgers; but if it does, governmental liability can be easily denied, and the responsible party punished by the displeasure of the Tsar. Thus every officer regards himself as the arbiter of his own destinies, and

realises that if his disregard of instructions be conducted to a successful issue, rewards and honours will fall to his lot. Among the many instances which might be cited in substantiation of these facts is the case of the conquest of Khiva carried out by General Kaufmann in distinct disobedience not only to his orders, but also to the pledges voluntarily given by the Tsar to Great Britain. The rumour of an impending movement on Khiva had caused some alarm in Western Europe, where, even in 1873, the advance of Russia in Asia had come to be regarded with suspicion. In order to calm the fears of the British Government, which were at the time published in the press and elsewhere in no measured terms, the Tsar had despatched Count Schouvaloff to London, charged with a personal message to the British Government, in which it was distinctly stated that 'not only was it far from the intention of the emperor to take possession of Khiva, but positive orders had been prepared to prevent it.' And the count further stated that the object of the forthcoming expedition was to punish acts of brigandage, to recover fifty Russian prisoners, and to teach the Khan a lesson. There is not the slightest question but that this announcement was made in all honesty, and there is ample evidence that the instructions accorded to Kaufmann were in agreement with the Tsar's pledge. What happened has already been recorded, and so far from being disgraced for exceeding his instructions, the general was greatly honoured by the master whose orders he had disobeyed.

There are probably few monarchs who have the necessary moral courage to forego acquisitions which have been won for them, in order to keep faith with previous pledges, and in the case of Russia, more than any country, to do so would probably prove a somewhat risky experiment. It must be remembered that the Russian army, apart from its numerical importance, forms at once the most influential and the most representative class in the nation. The Russian army, with its grand total of three and a half million of men, comprising, as it does,

one thirty-seventh of the population of the empire, is a factor in the political fortunes of the country not to be despised. The military element is supreme throughout Asiatic Russia; the government of the various provinces is purely military, and each in its way is fully as absolute as that of the Tsar. To say that the rule of these military autocrats is kindly or progressive would be to stretch a point beyond their deserts, but in certain respects there can be no denying that Russian rule is well adapted to the needs of the people of Central Asia, and to it must be credited the transformation from slavery and torture to security of life and stability of rule. On the other hand, it would be useless to deny that the baser traits in the Russian character have been unduly developed on Asiatic soil. The bulk of the Tchinoviks assembled in Central Asia have been neatly summed up by the present Viceroy of India, who, in 1895, characterised them as people 'who care very little about morality, but a great deal about medals,' and the fact is undeniable, as is also the low standard which obtains in such matters as sobriety and religion in further Russia. There is, unfortunately, little doubt but that the Russian officer of to-day closely resembles those who preceded him. This subject was dealt with at some length by Schuyler in his admirable work on Turkestan, and it is to be feared that in matters of fair play, bribery, corruption, and maladministration, matters have changed but little since his time. And in addition to this, a system of petty tyranny, extending to jealous rivalry between the different officials engaged in government has on more than one occasion developed to such an extent as to render wholesale dismissals necessary. A well-known correspondent of the *Times*, writing from Turkestan, once said: 'We hear a good deal about Russian intrigues outside Russia, but for intriguing amongst themselves, and undermining one another with diabolical unscrupulousness, commend me to the Russian officials at home. The truth of this characterisation will be endorsed by all unprejudiced observers who have had opportunities for

studying the Tchinovik in his native land. Intrigue appears to be the very breath of the Muscovite nostrils. Its spirit is inborn in him, and comes as naturally to his development as does the taste for spirits and more vicious indulgences. Of the corruption of the Muscovite military executive there have been many *exposés*; the taxes of whole provinces have been stolen, false returns have been made to the Treasury, and in more than one instance unauthorised taxes have been levied for the personal benefit of officialdom. On the other hand, the Russian officer, himself steeped in Asiatic leanings, understands the Oriental character better than any other white man. In his dealings with the Mohammedan, the stolid tolerance exhibited by the Russian goes a long way to promote friendly relations. And the readiness with which the army fraternises with the people it has conquered tends to promote more intimate relations, and a better understanding between the rulers and the people, than is possible under such a system of bureaucratic supervision as that carried on by us in our Eastern possessions. Ten years after Russia has conquered a people she has absorbed them so intimately that the succeeding generation is as much Russian as Asiatic, and this fact supplies one of the strongest elements in the success which everywhere attends the sway of the Tsar in the East.'

Apart from the causes above referred to, which are of themselves largely responsible for the growth of Russian empire in Asia, there are certain fixed principles generally recognised by the guardians of Muscovite interest, which considerably simplify the process of territorial gain. Ever since Russia learned that other nations were given to raise objection to the constant extension of her frontiers, she has been careful only to take the aggressive against her neighbours on receiving provocation, and in cases, where the dread of the civilising mission of the great White Tsar has served to restrain the aborigines of Asia from offending against the Russian frontier, the desired excuse has been obtained by judicious manipulation,

bribery, or the despatch of provocative agents. The Russians, in short, thoroughly understand the A B C of Oriental politics, and throughout her lengthy dealings with Mohammedan nations, Russia has studiously avoided falling into the error which has wrecked the prestige of so many nations aiming at the development of Empire in the East.

The Oriental mind appreciates only two sets of principles. From choice it recognises only those laws which are in accordance with the teaching of Islam, and enforced by the will of a follower of the prophet. Outside this category, the only principle regarded is that of superior force. And a single failure on the part of a conqueror will suffice to wipe out the moral effect of years of dominion. This principle has long been understood by Russia, and in the whole course of her dealings with the Mohammedans of Central Asia, she has rarely withdrawn from a position once attained, or given up a territory she has occupied. Even on those occasions when, for reasons of policy it has been deemed wise to abandon a line of conduct, Russia has saved her face by adhering to what she has ostensibly renounced. Thus, when she has felt impelled to recall one of her agents, she has always taken care that his policy shall be continued by his successor. An admirable instance of this practice is that of General Tchernaieff, who was recalled from Central Asia in 1866 for having exceeded his orders, but his successor, General Romanovski, continued to carry out the line of policy laid down by his predecessor, and when a reasonable interval had intervened, Romanovski was promoted to another command to make way for the return of Tchernaieff.

One of the severest critics of Russian policy in Central Asia is Lord Curzon of Kedleston, who has summed up the Muscovite record in unmistakable terms :—

'I admit that Russia has in her career of Central Asiatic conquest by devious, and often dishonourable, means achieved a successful and a salutary end'[1]—

[1] *Russia in Central Asia in* 1889.

and any attempt to estimate the true value of Russian influence in this region must be accompanied by a conscientious consideration of the extent to which a given end may justify the means by which it is achieved. The debit and credit side of the Russian account in Asia is interesting, and apt to prove instructive. On the former we have a record of savage warfare, accompanied by much cruelty, the importation of numerous vices, including drunkenness, gambling, and prostitution; the development of a corruption in government previously unknown, and an absence of any attempt to educate or improve the condition of the newly made subjects of the Tsar.

On the credit side Russia may boast that she has established throughout her dominions a semi-civilised in place of a barbaric system of government; that she has abolished the raiding of the Turkomans and the Kirghiz, and that the principle of security of life and property has been introduced in regions where it was previously unknown. She has, in short, fully justified the correctness of her view as to the reasoning of Mohammedan peoples. She establishes her power in the first instance with a severity such as to impress her victims irrevocably with the futility of resistance, and after having once proclaimed her dominion, she leaves her subjects fairly free, and by a careful abstention from interference with their religious or racial views, succeeds in gaining their goodwill, and establishes friendly, and even domestic, relations with them.

On the other hand, any examination of Russia's much-vaunted mission of civilisation must result in a verdict of not proven at the hands of any qualified inquirer. Posing as a Christian empire, the mission of Russia, if such a thing exist, should be first and foremost the Christianising of her people, and, further, their education and refinement by the methods commonly adopted by civilised nations among barbaric races. For the carrying out of such a programme Muscovite methods are utterly unsuited. No attempt is made to preach the gospel among the Asiatic tribes, their education is neglected,

and remains to-day much what it was before the Tsar inflicted the benefits of his rule on Turkestan. The youth of Bokhara are taught in the local Medrasse, and beyond the repression of murder, slavery, and highway robbery little or nothing has been done to benefit the dwellers in the Oases. While another instance of Russia's civilising methods is to be found in the fact that no one is permitted to travel in Central Asia without the express permission of the War Minister at St. Petersburg.

The works undertaken by Russia for the development of Asia, though important in themselves, are restricted to one direction, and to this every other consideration is made subsidiary. I make this statement without the least fear of contradiction by any one who knows the facts. Russia in Asia is at present a purely military power. Her mission, as viewed by those responsible for her policy, is neither to develop territory nor to refine people. Her destiny is to use that which she already possesses as a means by which further conquests are to be made, until, by dint of an ever-forward movement, she finds herself in possession, not of India, or of China or Persia, but of the whole Asiatic Continent, which under the military sway of an army, ruled by the great White Tsar, may once again control the destinies of the world.

The principle of militarism is patent throughout Asiatic Russia; the railways, which have of late years been pushed forward with such feverish haste, are nowhere schemed with the view to the development of the resources of the countries they traverse, they are, without exception, strategic lines designed so as to facilitate the transport of troops, and increase the strength of frontier posts. In Siberia, while several of the most important commercial centres are devoid of access, except by water or by unmade tracks over barren steppes, the railway has been constructed over half the extent of Northern Asia, and is now being pushed forward through regions which cannot for centuries pay for its construction, in order that the Russian power of aggression may be brought to bear in the regions of the far East.

In Central Asia, where the railway can only be reached by a voyage across the Caspian Sea, involving a détour of considerably over a thousand miles between St. Petersburg and Tashkend or Samarcand, no direct communication is possible with Europe, for the reason that the railway has only been built so as to connect the important towns and military depots with the Afghan and the Persian frontier, and while no means of communication exist between Tashkend and Orenburg or Akmolinsk, a line of rail was opened in the last week of the last year between Merv and the Afghan frontier, with the avowed object of enabling Russia to throw an army of occupation into Herat at any moment that such a course is deemed desirable.

Throughout the whole of her Asiatic dominions the policy of Russia is one of aggressive militarism, the government is in every instance entrusted to military officers, and the whole resources of the provinces devoted to the organisation of a series of military districts which shall be as nearly perfect as possible. Little or nothing is done to encourage the development of trade; the great point kept in view is to constantly extend the government of the Tsar, without regard to the internal interests of the country or the requirements of its people. Her power of expansion is, in short, that of assimilation, and no attempt is made to benefit the condition of the people who are from time to time added to the population. To quote Lord Curzon :—

> 'The Russian system may be government, but cannot be called improvement or civilisation; it is without moral impulse, and does not allow of attention being paid to higher things than forts and roads, railways and telegraphs.'

Owing to the system of government in force, Russian policy is unhampered by those difficulties which so materially handicap European diplomacy. The publicity due to a free press is absolutely non-existent, and the candid expression of individual opinion unknown. The absence of anything of the nature of representative

government obviates the frequent change of policy inseparable from any system of party rule, and the nominal autocracy of the Tsar not only prevents the assertion of more than one opinion in the councils of the empire, but outwardly at least prevents anything like a split among his counsellors. As a matter of actual fact the part played by the Tsar in the forging of Russia's destiny is but slight. Wedded as he is to a train of thought inherited through a long line of ancestry, tied by precedents, and bound by the necessity of considering the prejudices of those around him, the freedom of action retained by this ruler of millions is far smaller than that enjoyed by many constitutional sovereigns, and in matters affecting the religion and education of the people, and the militarism of the empire, his influence is so weighted as to practically restrict him to the respecting of precedents. The Russian hierarchy is dominated by two parties, each paramount in its own degree: the Church, which, nominally under the supreme control of the Tsar, actually rules his people, and is largely responsible for the extraordinary wealth of ignorance to be found among the masses throughout the empire; and the army, which in Russia more than elsewhere dominates the country, and is the real autocrat of Russia. The Tsar may promote or degrade a particular officer, he may approve or forbid a particular course; but, not being actually omnipotent, he cannot control events, whereas the army can manipulate circumstances in such a way as to justify the necessity of any course which it desires to take. This has been done in nearly every instance of recent Russian expansion in Asia, where, from the taking of Khiva to the capture of Merv, each occupation was carried out on the initiative of the military party in distinct disregard of the pledges given by Russia, and in disobedience to the orders of the Tsar. And so long as the present system continues, the interests of the nation will be ruled by its officers, to discredit whom would be as inadvisable as it would be difficult. With her frontiers controlled by men who in character are often mere swash-

bucklers, there is little cause for wonder that boundary disputes are always available to serve as an excuse for an expedition, with its accompanying excitement and chance of distinction; the only matter for surprise is that these incidents are not far more frequent than is the case. And so by constant instalments the military posts are moved ever onwards over the territories weakly ruled by Asiatic tribes, until at last the frontier is brought up against a boundary too formidable to be dared. And this policy is as well marked in the Russia of to-day as it was in 1851. In the interval, the whole of the nomadic tribes and lesser Khanates of Central and Northern Asia have been absorbed, and the line of Russian advance is now brought up by the frontiers of China, of Persia, and of Afghanistan. In accordance with the principle disclosed, whereby the weakest opponent is always dealt with first, the efforts of the military exploiters of Central Asia have now become directed against Persia, while those of Siberia are being brought to bear upon the Celestial empire, in which the game described is being played afresh in the inevitable march of Russia to the sea.

In the carrying out of the fixed designs which constitute her self-imposed task, Russia is restricted neither by considerations of the laws of war nor by any code of self-imposed morality. The ethics of Russian diplomacy are extremely simple. Diplomacy, being the means employed in the attainment of the ends most necessary to the future prospects of the State, is used without restriction of any kind. If diplomacy be worth anything, it should succeed, and the importation of any fixed principles, which tend to handicap the diplomatist, is to be decried. It thus comes about that Muscovite diplomacy is utterly unscrupulous, and pledges given or promises made are merely subterfuges, with the object of attaining something which is desired. In addition to these vital considerations, the stability of the Russian train of thought, which tends to render her success more certain, places all competitors at a disadvantage; and the ability with which the statesmen of St. Petersburg will deliver moral

platitudes, justified by aid of hair-splitting definitions, adds a further strength to the position their diplomacy attains. In a country where the visible outcome of a State religion is practically nil, and the beauties of truth unappreciated, it is no matter of difficulty to test the representatives of nations who refuse to state that which is not, or to make pledges which they cannot hope to keep. The Russian politician is ready to make any moral sacrifice in order to attain his end; and the wonder is, not that the Muscovite succeeds in renouncing that sense which we are accustomed to call self-respect, but that his specious unscrupulosities should succeed in taking in any but the most inexperienced opponents. Russian diplomacy might well be defined as a system by which a well-considered end is irrevocably attained by a compromise between lack of scruple and a judicious use of opportunity. Where the wishes of the Tsar run counter to the views of the other Powers interested, their execution is delayed, pending a favourable opportunity; but so soon as it appears likely that the objectors are too much occupied elsewhere to actively interfere, the step already decided on is taken, and the Russian aim achieved. It is noteworthy that most of the biggest additions to Russian territory have been made at times when the other Powers were occupied with their own affairs. The Primorsk provinces of Siberia were annexed during the Crimean war. Kulja was occupied and the final campaign against the Turkomans inaugurated while Europe stood an interested spectator of the Franco-Prussian war. And in a smaller degree every event which has monopolised the interests of the Western Powers has been utilised by Russia as a suitable opportunity for the extension of her territories. In many instances the nominal occupation of a district is a mere matter of ceremonial, occurring at a considerable interval after its actual possession has been assured; and most of the extensions in Central Asia have been made possible by secret agents who have been despatched to exploit the threatened districts. Among these, such men as

Pashino, Grodekoff, Alikhanoff, and Lessar have played most important parts in the subjugation of Asiatic territory, and for every name that has transpired in this connection, there are several who are unknown. The system of exploitation of coveted countries by secret agents has always been a very favourite method of Russian growth, and the clumsiness with which the real objects of these agents is concealed is not without a suggestion of humour. The plea put forward by Lieutenant Vitkievitch, who conducted a secret survey of Bokhara, that he had been unexpectedly driven to the Khanate by a snowstorm, will hardly have deceived his interlocutors; and the very thin disguise under which the frequent filibustering raids made by the Russians in Asia are passed off as scientific expeditions is as little likely to deceive as was the famous reply to the inquiries as to Russian intentions in 1869, when the arrival of an army at Krasnovodsk, intended to form the advanced attack on Khiva, was stated to be merely a commercial expedition aiming at opening up caravan routes and developing trade with the Turkomans.

In her political interests Russia strongly deprecates publicity, and the energies of the Asiatic department are always directed towards the repression of news relating to developments in the direction of the frontier. On some occasions, matters of considerable importance to the State have been concealed for lengthy periods, as in the case of the treaty of Kulja, which was made in 1851, but was not published till ten years later. In the case of her campaigns, Russia resents the publication of any details, excepting such as it is deemed politic to issue by the officer in command, and in many cases nothing is known of the circumstances of Russian conquest except to those engaged in them. The idea of their military operations being witnessed by independent spectators has always been regarded by the Russian authorities with the greatest horror; and the disinclination to permit correspondents to accompany Russian columns on service has given occasion for the performance of some very

remarkable achievements, most notable among which are MacGahan's famous ride across the desert in pursuit of General Kaufmann's army, and O'Donovan's visit to Merv. But despite feats such as these, performed by the few able and fearless men who have succeeded in evading the bulwarks of exclusiveness with which Russia surrounds herself in Asia, the occasions on which reliable evidence has been forthcoming of the actual progress of a campaign are very few, and from the fact that the attainable records do not reflect much credit either on the ability or the methods of the Russian army, it is only fair to assume that warfare *à la Russe* is not an exhibition that it is well to see.

The question which naturally occurs to the student of Russian history is, When will the limit of Russian expansion be attained? and the logical answer is that forecast by Lord Palmerston many years ago. The end of the growth of Russian empire can only be brought about by her reaching a frontier held and, if need be, defended by a nation stronger than herself. Until she is brought up by a boundary which she can neither break through nor surmount, Russia will most infallibly continue to advance her lines and to cover them, the advanced line of yesterday becoming the covered line of to-day; and when from lack of opportunity or excuse she for a while restrains her growth, she busies herself with preparing for the future by a repetition of those tactics which have proved so successful in the past.

Since 1885 Russia has not extended her boundaries in Central Asia, while in the Far East her frontier remains as settled by the treaty of 1860; but she has not been idle since then, and in China, Manchuria, and even distant Korea, Russian agents and Russian scientific expeditions have explored and exploited with an eye to future developments. In Persia, in Tibet, and even in Afghanistan, despite her evil reputation and her blemished word, Russian interests have been cultivated apace until Khorassan has degenerated into little better than a Russian province, Seistan contains more Russian

agents than Persian officials, and the people of Herat live in daily expectation of a Russian descent upon their city.

The student is therefore led to ask, How is this to end, when and where will Russia be brought up in her career by that stronger power which alone can place a limitation on her growth? Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan, China —none of these possess the strength, the wealth, or the ability necessary to cope with such a foe. There is in the whole of Asia but a single Power qualified to deal with Russia: the Power which, by competing interest, commercial rivalry, and political antagonism, has for fully a century been her natural enemy. The cause for quarrel between England and Russia is a matter neither of prejudice nor of personal hatred. The relations between the two countries are decided neither by the policy of the Government nor by the views of the people, nor are they controlled by the majority of Russophobes or Russophils. The interests of England and of Russia are naturally opposed to one another. The ever-forward movement which dominates Russian policy is directly opposed to the accepted interests of Great Britain, and as by her continued advance Russia creeps nearer and nearer to British Asia, so do the difficulties of maintaining an appearance of friendly understanding become more acute.

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CHAPTER VII

THE MARCH ON INDIA

First Russian designs against India—Simon Malinki—de St. Génie—Paul—Napoleon—Duhamel's proposal—Skobeleff's plan—Russian aim in conquest of Central Asia—Russian view of British rule in India—Secret Missions—Vitkievitch—Pashino—Grodekoff—Stolyetof—Russia's option respecting Afghanistan—Possibility of a Russian invasion of India—Difficulties of communication in Afghanistan—Base of supplies—Probable strength of invading force—Russian aim in Afghanistan—Impossibility of an invasion from Merv or Herat—Probabilities relied on—Russian intentions long decided—Option of this country—Choice of routes into Afghanistan from Central Asia—English views of Russian policy—Cost of conquest in Central Asia.

It is customary to credit Peter the Great with having been the first to have designs against India. His claims to this distinction are, however, somewhat vague, and there is no evidence to show that he ever contemplated attempting the invasion of Hindostan. There is, however, little doubt but that rumours of the great wealth of the country south of the Central Asian wastes had reached him and provoked his curiosity, and he despatched a secret envoy, one Simon Malinki, to explore the region which was at that time being contested by France and England. Malinki started from St. Petersburg in 1694, but he never reached his goal, for he perished on the way. Defeated in his first attempt, Peter strove by other means to gain information respecting India. He invited various potentates from the Khanates bordering the Oxus to visit his capital, with the object of gathering information from them; and on learning that in order to reach the coveted land it would be necessary first of all to traverse Turkestan and subdue its turbulent people, he gave orders for the ill-

fated expedition of Prince Bekovitch, whose assumed victory over the Khivans was to open up the way towards the Hindu Koosh.

The first definite scheme for the invasion of India was drawn up by A. M. de St. Génie, and submitted to the Empress Catherine in 1791; but though the proposal was regarded with some favour by the Empress, it led to nothing definite, and the subject was allowed to rest until the year 1800, when the Emperor Paul proposed a joint invasion of India to Napoleon.

Paul was a profound admirer of Napoleon, whom he made his hero, and to whom he confided, in the year 1800, his scheme for the invasion of India and the overthrow of British rule therein. The moment seemed propitious: France held Egypt, and the French were influential in more than one of the Indian States. The expedition was to be made simultaneously by different routes. A Russian force was to proceed by Khiva and Bokhara to the Upper Indus, while another, consisting of French and Russian troops combined, was to reach India *viâ* Persia, by way of Herat and Kandahar. The whole scheme appears to have been drawn up by Paul, who viewed the achievement to be attempted from the standpoint of an enthusiast. Little or no attempt appears to have been made to arrange for the transport or commissariat necessary for so large an army. The success of the attempt was regarded as a certainty by the optimist Tsar, whose instructions to the officers intrusted with the carrying out of his scheme still survive. Addressing the Ataman of the Don Cossacks, who were instructed to mobilise at Orenburg, he wrote:—

'I am preparing to be beforehand with the English, who intend attacking me by land and sea. I propose to attack them in their most vulnerable part, where they least expect it. It is three months' march from Orenburg to Hindostan; to you and your army I confide this expedition; assemble your men and begin your march to the river Indus and the English settlements in India. The troops there are light troops like yours; you will have over

them the advantage of your artillery. Prepare everything for this campaign; send your scouts to prepare the roads. The enterprise will cover you with immortal glory, will secure you my goodwill, will load you with riches, give an opening to our commerce, and strike the enemy a mortal blow. India, to which I send you, is governed by a supreme head called the Great Mogul, and a number of small sovereigns. The English possess commercial establishments there, which they have acquired by means of money, or conquered by force of arms; my object is to ruin these establishments, and to put the oppressed sovereigns in the same state of dependence on Russia as they are at present in towards England. Be sure to remember that you are only at war with the English, and the friend of all who do not give them help. On your march, assure all men with the friendship of Russia. The expedition is urgent; the earlier the better.'

Paul's orders were dutifully followed, an army was assembled, and, despite the inclement season, succeeded in crossing the Volga on the floating ice, and set out on its journey across the steppes to Orenburg, 40,000 strong.

Meanwhile, preparations for the second army were being actively made; it was to consist of 35,000 French and 35,000 Russians. The former were to come down the Danube in vessels lent them by the Austrians, and to be conveyed up the Don and down the Volga to the Caspian, which they were to cross, and land at Astrabad, where the Russian force would be found in waiting; hence the united army was to march across Afghanistan to the Indian frontier. A special note in the scheme drawn up refers to the precious objects, which it was suggested the French should take with them, for the purpose of propitiating the native rulers in India, and it was also laid down by Paul that 'brilliant fêtes, accompanied by military evolutions,' were to be held, with the object of impressing the natives. Childish as was the whole scheme, and deficient in the most ordinary precautions, the headstrong Tsar does not appear to have entertained the slightest doubt of its success; and he replied to Napoleon's questioning by making out that the countries to be traversed were

very different from what he must have known them to be. He laid special stress on the fact that caravans traversed them every year, and made the journey in thirty-five or forty days, and that in 1739 Nadir Shah had marched through the reverse way, from Delhi to the Caspian; and finally disposed of all suggested difficulties by stating that what an Asiatic army had done could without doubt be done by an army of French and Russians.

The Cossack army had reached the plains of Orenburg, when it was recalled with the news of the assassination of the Tsar. Thus ended the first scheme for the invasion of India, one which, while it was built up on supposition, and included many absurdities, served nevertheless as the groundwork of all those which have followed it. It will be noted that the points on which Paul laid a special stress were the fact that the expedition was only to attack the English, that it was to neglect no opportunity of making a good impression on the natives, and that in all probability the Asiatic princes and petty rulers would join forces with the invaders. Each of these principles has been repeated in more recent schemes for the ousting of British rule from Hindostan. On the point of commissariat Paul's scheme was strangely silent, the suggested difficulty being explained away by the loose statement that the country of Herat was a very rich one, and would amply suffice for the sustenance of an army of any proportions; but when the actual facts come to be examined, as I hope to examine them further on, the fancied security of Tsar Paul's suggestion disappears.

So far as actual achievement goes, the scheme of 1800-1801 came nearer performance than any; but while Russia has never ventured to make an avowed attempt at invading India, she has drawn up more than one scheme for such a venture, and it is no secret that there is at the present moment a very complete plan in existence in the archives of the War Department at St. Petersburg.

The second serious proposal for a Russian invasion of India was made by the Emperor Napoleon to Tsar Alexander I. in 1807, but failed to tempt that astute ruler; nor did a third scheme, presented to Tsar Nicholas by General Duhamel in 1855, lead to anything definite, for the reason that the success of the venture depended on the acquiescence of Persia, which country was not disposed to become mixed up in such an undertaking.

The fourth and best known of the invasion programmes was that drawn up by Skobeleff in 1878, which, unlike its predecessors, took all considerations involved into account. In this it was proposed that a strong advance-guard of Cossacks should clear the road to the Indus, and it was assumed that this movement would serve the double purpose of causing the nomads of Central Asia to join the invaders, and the natives of India to rise against the British. The regular horsemen were to be followed by an army of carefully equipped troops, who were to rendezvous on the Persian frontier, whence they were to seize Herat, take possession of Kabul, and, aided by the rising of the native tribes, find an easy entrance to the Punjab. This scheme, which was originally drawn up by Skobeleff after the Turkish war, and was largely responsible for the outbreak of the Afghan war, has never been tested in any way; and it is more than doubtful whether the necessary transport and commissariat arrangements could be carried out, even supposing that the forecast as to the rising of the natives were borne out. The scheme is still regarded in Russian military circles as being a good one, and since the death of Skobeleff has been carefully revised and elaborated by Prince Kuropatkin.

Thus it will be seen that the Russian idea of invading India, which may be said to date from the beginning of the nineteenth century, is as strong to-day as it has ever been, and any one who has had opportunities of meeting Russian officers will know that, whatever the intentions of the authorities may be, the idea of marching across the Indus is the most popular subject which could be

discussed; and if the order were to be given to make the attempt, there would be the keenest rivalry among the officers, both in European and Asiatic Russia, to be allowed to take part in the campaign.

Before proceeding to consider the possibility of Russia attaining a footing in India, it may not be uninteresting to review briefly the means which she has taken to prepare the way for such a step. In her campaigns against the peoples of Central Asia, Russia had never been confronted with a very formidable foe. The repulses she had suffered on various occasions in Turkestan and Turkomania were due, not to the skill of their opponents, but the want of ability on the part of the Russian generals, and when the Cossacks were ably handled, the result had always been complete victory. The achievements of Tchernaieff, Romanovsky, Kaufmann, and Skobeleff were rendered possible, as much by the prestige they had won, as by the skill with which they conquered all before them. In 1860 a detachment 800 strong beat a Khokandian army of 20,000 men, and the same handful subsequently took Tashkend by storm, despite the 76,000 people it contained. In 1866 a body of 3000 Russians defeated the Bokharan army of 40,000 men at Irdjar, and in 1868 a detachment of 3500 Russians took Samarcand, which was defended by 60,000 Bokhariots. One of the greatest sources of strength to the Russian arms was the complete knowledge of the ground to be covered, and the difficulties to be faced, which was invariably possessed by the general staff. From the very earliest times it has always been part of the system of Russian extension to encourage the exploration of territory which it might, at some future time, be desirable to occupy; and the emissaries despatched for this purpose have not only invariably performed their work thoroughly and well, but have indulged in the love of intrigue which is inherent in the Russian character for the purpose of negotiating secret alliances, or sowing the seeds of future dissension. Among the Russian agents who have taken part in the forward

movement, Alikhanoff and Lessar have already been referred to, but there are others to whom it is necessary reference should be made. First of these was Captain Vitkievitch, who was sent to Kabul in 1837, charged with the negotiation of a treaty for the surrender of Herat. The occasion is noteworthy, being the first instance of a desire on the part of Russia to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The attempt failed. The next Russian traveller who played a part in furthering Russian knowledge was one Gospodin Pashino, who in 1873 was charged with exploring the Punjab. This mission he duly accomplished, notwithstanding that attempts were made to stop him by the Indian Government, and on his return he issued a report of his travels which found ready credence among his fellow-countrymen. He stated that the British oppress the people of India most cruelly; he explained that the administration is composed of needy scions of the English aristocracy, who are sent to India to enrich themselves at the expense of the natives; that British rule in India is weak and unpopular, and that were any succour offered to the down-trodden natives, they would rise up to a man and sweep the English into the sea.

One of the most noteworthy of the band of Russian exploiters was Colonel Grodekoff, who in 1878 proposed that he should explore Herat and the roads leading thence to the Indian frontier. He received a warm reception at Herat, which had not been visited by a European for over five years, and his reports of the place and its defences have proved extremely valuable to the Russian staff. And last among the more important missions of exploration despatched by Russia was that of General Stolyetof, who in the summer of 1878 was sent to Kabul. He was accompanied by a considerable staff, and after visiting Herat, and surveying the roads bordering that place, he arrived at the capital, where he was well received. Friendly negotiations were opened up with Shere Ali, who was promised the protection of the Tsar. The proceedings of this mission at Kabul led to the out-

break of the second Afghan war with this country, which served as a timely hint to Russia that Great Britain remained firm in her determination to prevent the assertion of Russian influence in the territories of the Ameer.

Thus did Russia continue the policy she had pursued throughout her acquisition of Asiatic territory. After having by a series of explorations, attempted negotiations, and campaigns, seized the whole of the independent Khanates of Central Asia, she set about repeating the process in the territories of Afghanistan. In one respect there is, however, a very great difference in the two situations. In her operations against the peoples of Central Asia, she had acquired territory which had never known stable rule, and which, peopled by a savage and turbulent race, formed a danger and a menace to the surrounding countries. No other nation of importance was in any way concerned in Russia's doings in Turkestan; her expansion in that quarter of the world brought her no nearer the possession of an open seaboard. It did not increase her military efficiency, nor did it cause her to infringe on the frontier of a rival Power. But with the reaching of the Afghan and the Persian frontier the situation became changed. The Atrek and the Oxus served to mark the limit beyond which Russia could not act as a free agent. Behind the weakly rule of Persia, supporting the sturdy instability of the Ameer's government, lurked the prestige of a power as great, as able, and infinitely more resourceful than St. Petersburg, whose interests demand that the freedom of both countries from the intermeddling of Russia shall be maintained; and it became necessary for the agents of the Tsar to go slow, and to rely rather on diplomatic than on the purely military methods for the eventual obtaining of her ends. Having reached the limit of her natural expansion, Russia had the choice of three courses in the formation of her future policy. She might for the first time in her history keep faith with the pledges she had made; she might continue her march towards the

sea at the cost of a war with this country; or she might steer between two courses and continue her policy of extension, when opportunity served, temporising the while. She chose the last, and while devoting herself assiduously to the clearing of the road to further extensions, has by dint of professions of friendship which she has not felt, and pledges which she had not the least intention of observing, succeeded in allaying the suspicions of British politicians. The position of Russia along her southern border is somewhat peculiar. She has by dint of secret agents, consular authorities, scientific missions, and accredited envoys, exploited the whole of Persia and Afghanistan as well as the greater portion of Baluchistan, and if she were guaranteed immunity from interference she could with ease annex the whole of these regions. Persia, which has sunk to much the same position of helplessness as China, entirely unable to act on the defensive, could be occupied almost without the firing of a shot. Khorassan has long been practically a Russian province, and the whole of Northern Persia is dominated by Muscovite agents, at Meshhed, at Resht, at Tabriz, and at Teheran. To seize Persia would be to acquire at one stroke the command of an extensive seaboard and an entirely new and relatively easy road to India. But the prospect is clouded by the fact that such a course would be resented by Great Britain, and would in all probability lead to a war between the two powers. The conquest of Afghanistan—though, owing to the formation of the country and the character of the people, a less easy task—would not present any insuperable difficulties to a Russian general; but so long as the British Government continues its present policy, any attempt made against Kabul or Kandahar would be opposed by the Indian army. The expansion of Russia beyond her present boundary depends therefore entirely on the attitude of England. And the deliberations of Russian politicians are entirely devoted to the hoodwinking of the British authorities.

My consideration of these points has been based

merely on the assumption that Russia desires to continue her long-declared policy of acquiring a maritime frontier. There are, however, two other factors of equal importance in the situation. On the south-western borders of the empire the natural march of events has long been restrained by artificial barriers. According to the ordinary acceptation of the law of nations, which depends like the law of individuals on the triumph of strength over weakness, the development of the resources of the Russian empire should have enabled it to absorb its decaying neighbour on the Black Sea. That Russia does not rule in Constantinople is no fault of her own; it is merely the result of the bolstering up of a moribund nation by the Powers interested in the maintenance of peace. But while her attempts to establish herself on the Bosphorus have always failed, Russia has by no means given up the idea. She has merely changed her ground of attack, and finding that all attempt to attain her end across the Danube is doomed to failure, she has resolved to follow the example of the Osmanlis of old and to gain possession of Constantinople by a roundabout route which would involve the conquest of the whole of South-West Asia. The acquisition of Persia or even of its northern portion would give the command of the back-door to Asiatic Turkey, and there can be little doubt but that once a Russian army occupies that region, the Armenian Christians will welcome the heralds of their future freedom, and that the Russians will find their way to the Bosphorus with little difficulty.

With regard to the invasion of India the Russian view is to be accounted for only by two suggestions, both of them due to a want of knowledge, or at least a misconception of the facts. The desire which undoubtedly exists to invade India is due not so much to the geographical position of Hindostan as to the greatly exaggerated reports which are everywhere current of the wealth of the country. The number of Russians who have explored Afghanistan and who have penetrated even beyond the frontier forts of the North-West is many. But

I am not aware of a single Russian traveller of any ability or distinction having visited any of the provinces of Hindostan, nor have I met with a single Russian book giving the reader an authentic account of British India. It need therefore be a matter of no surprise that Russian ideas on the subject are extremely vague, and that the Russian opinion formed on them is entirely misleading. Small wonder, then, that after greatly exaggerating the wealth of the country, the Russian publicist exaggerates the fanaticism of the people and professes to believe that their hatred against the English rulers is so great as to cause them to rise and overthrow them at the mere rumour of an impending Russian invasion. The believers in this very faulty reasoning make no attempt to defend their supposititious deductions. I have never succeeded in getting an explanation as to why fanatics should prefer the rule of Russia to that of England, seeing that Russia poses as being a Christian country, and that her doctrine is far less tolerant than that of the established church. The only possible reply to such a question would be to the effect that notwithstanding the teaching of the great church and the treatment accorded to unbelievers in European Russia, the Mohammedan and other peoples of Asia are left to practise their own beliefs without any interference. But while admitting this point, I cannot see that it could make any difference in the appreciation of the relative advantages of British and of Russian rule. The people of India have no grievance against the Government on the score of religious intolerance: the whole difficulty is restricted to the one great fact that the believer is subject to the unbeliever, and so long as this feeling exists it will be as keenly manifested towards one Christian nation as towards another. It is highly probable, therefore, that if ever Russia ventures to put her plans into execution she will be wofully disappointed; and even supposing the Afghans were to welcome the invading army, it is very improbable that it would succeed in penetrating as far as the outermost bulwark of the Indian frontier. The

difficulties of such an attempt are simply enormous, and the chances of ultimate success practically nil. The question of the ability of the Indian army to repel the Russian attack is not one which calls for discussion in this chapter, but a brief consideration of the difficulties which would have to be surmounted before an actual attack could be attempted will assist at an appreciation of the existing danger. The country of Afghanistan is largely mountainous, and by no means well adapted to the movement of large forces of men; its climate is severe, and liable to the extremes of heat and cold. The people comprise a number of distinct tribes of Persian, Turkish, and Turanian descent. They are for the most part hardy and warlike, fearless and fanatical, and ready to take the field against all comers who may be suspected of intentions against the independence of their country.

The multiplicity of highlands which stretch in most directions in Afghanistan limit the lines of communication, which are, in many places, mere tracks over mountains or through rugged passes in between them. Except in the extreme north-west, the country produces little, and it is no unusual thing for a scarcity of food to be experienced even in the city of Kabul itself. The base of supplies in this impoverished empire is to be found in the former Khanate of Herat, amid the fertile plains of which provender is plentiful. Owing to the conformation of the country, Herat forms what is practically the only entrance into Afghanistan from the north-west. The place is easily reached either from Persia or from Central Asia, and could be readily brought in touch with the Caspian. But to send an army of sufficient strength to make an attempt on the Indian frontier from Herat to the entrance to either of the passes which guard that frontier, would necessitate an undertaking such as has never been attempted. I have already said that excepting round Herat, Afghanistan produces little. Her only exports in the way of food consist of a small quantity of rice, some fruit, and some honey; and it would be an absolute necessity for an army to carry its own provisions with it

—a necessity which involves not only the obtaining of the requisite stores, but also the providing the means of transport. The exact amount of transport necessary for the supply and provisioning of an army is well known to the military authorities, the various figures having been obtained from the results of experience. It has been found that in our own Afghan wars one camel has been necessary to carry supplies for every two fighting men. The probable strength of an army necessary to force its way into India is a point on which the Russian authorities have, so far as is known, never agreed, nor are the English authorities at one on the subject. It can, however, be safely assumed that at the very lowest estimate the invasion of India would not be attempted by Russia, even with the goodwill and assistance of the Afghans, with less than 250,000 men, of whom 50,000 would be required to occupy and hold Herat, Kandahar, and Kabul, and the lines of communication between them. Assuming that the country was already in the hands of such an invading army, and that the commissariat of the troops in occupation was in perfect working order, the 200,000 fighting men, who would be accompanied by at least half that number of camp followers, making 300,000 in all, would require 150,000 camels, or their equivalent, to carry the necessary supplies. Nor is this all. As there is no pasture available along the lines by which the invading force would have to pass, a further number of camels would have to be collected to carry the provender required by the transport animals. It will thus be seen that if ever Russia makes the attempt of invading India, she will have her hands full even before she meets the first Sepoy, or is brought up by the forts which line our political frontier. To work out the whole of the requirements of an invading army, or to attempt to discount its probable fate, are subjects better left to the military expert than the publicist; but it is difficult not to agree with the writers who have discussed the question in all its bearings, and who are unanimous in the opinion that the invasion of India by Russia is a matter of

physical impossibility, and the difficulties of a complete invasion of Afghanistan are so great as to hardly come within the limits of political discussion.

Opinions as to the possibility of a Russian invasion of India have of late years changed materially. Until recently it was generally understood that Russia's great aim in her extensions in Central Asia was to obtain a footing from which she might overrun the Punjab. To-day authorities unite in asserting that an invasion of Hindostan is a physical impossibility, owing alike to the character of the approaches and the strength of the defences commanding them. Notwithstanding this, the Russian onward policy remains unchanged, and never a year goes by without some further development pointing to the feverish desire of a nearer approach to Indian soil.

There is no question but that the Russian policy in Afghanistan is based on very different information to our own. The Russian is not a well-informed person, and outside matters of military knowledge is largely dependent on such items of information as are obtainable from the columns of an exceptionally unscrupulous press. The knowledge of India possessed by the resident of St. Petersburg is of the kind provided by such writers as General Annenkoff or General Soboleff. The former of these referred to British rule in India, in the course of a pamphlet describing the scope of the Trans-Caspian Railway, as a country only used as a means for the enrichment of the British; and among other charges made against the authorities is the neglecting of the public works which were formerly maintained for the benefit of the people. Annenkoff defines the Indian Civil Service as a means for enriching the younger sons of the nobility, and says that the ryot has all his substance swallowed up in taxes. He also states that ten millions perished in the famine of 1870. Soboleff, in a pamphlet contrasting Russian and British rule in Central Asia, says :—

'England lays a heavy hand on her dependent peoples. She reduces them to slavery only that English trade may profit and

Englishmen grow rich. Thousands of natives only await Russia's crusade of deliverance. England is a vampire sucking the last drop of blood out of India.'

There are many such self-constituted authorities in Russia. Men who, for the most part, have never been outside the limits of the Tsar's empire, and who possess no knowledge of British rule; men whose train of thought is such as to preclude their understanding the principles which underlie British dominion, and would prevent their appreciating the British system were they afforded an opportunity of studying it: these set themselves to educate Russian opinion to an appreciation of the enormities committed by Russia's rival in Asia. It is, unfortunately, impossible to deny that our rule in India has not always been entirely judicious, nor have the constant variations of policy indulged in by different Governments tended to consolidate our position in the peninsula. But the crimes imputed to Great Britain by political writers in Russia are mere absurdities, likely to deceive no one excepting, unfortunately, the people for whose delectation they have been prepared. It is the military party in Russia who are most interested in India. An intended invasion of the Punjab would bring with it ample opportunities for attaining distinction, so dear to the Muscovite, and in the event of such an attempt being successful, the opportunities for plunder would probably beat the record. Small wonder, then, that Russian officers should strive by every means in their power to bring the 'pitiable condition' of the natives of India under the notice of their fellows.

It is, of course, difficult to reconcile the two points above referred to. The officers of the Russian staff, however ill-informed respecting the actual condition of India, cannot be without some knowledge of the strength of the defences which have during recent years been constructed along the frontier, nor can they be in any doubt as to the nature of the country which separates the Russian empire from the British. Why then should they deem it worth while to keep harping on the desir-

ability of what they must know to be at best an extremely hazardous undertaking? This problem has been discussed by most of the experts who have studied the rivalry between the two Powers in Asia, and no satisfactory explanation has yet been suggested. As to the impossibility of a Russian army invading India under existing conditions all modern authorities are agreed. Whether we turn to military thinkers like Colonel Hanna, who says, 'The only question for us would be where to crush our foes, and for them, whether death or surrender should be their choice,'[1] or to political writers like the present Viceroy of India, the opinion is the same. Lord Curzon wrote:—

> 'The project of the actual conquest of India is too preposterous to be entertained. It would involve the most terrible and lingering war the world has ever seen. On the day that a Russian army leaves Balkh or Herat for Kandahar, may the British commander exclaim, "Now hath the Lord delivered them into my hand!"'[2]

To suggest that the Russian military authorities are ignorant of these opinions would be to pay a poor compliment to their ability. There can be little doubt but that the Russian ministry of war is as well informed as to the defences of the Bolan and the Khyber as our own strategists. But they reckon in their calculations on another set of factors which do not appear to have received the careful consideration by our own experts that they deserve. The Russian view of an attack on India is limited by three conditions which must be coexistent, and two of which, it is claimed, will in due course be brought about by Russian machinations. The circumstances are, firstly, the obtaining of direct access to the British line of defence by means of a gradual absorption of Afghanistan. Of the existence of this item in the Russian programme there cannot be the slightest question. The acquisition of the Ameer's territory by cession, conquest, or 'friendly occupation,' has not only long been recognised as the immediate aim of Russian policy,

[1] *Can Russia invade India?* [2] *Russia in Central Asia.*

but has already been begun, and the seizure of a considerable tract of Afghan territory was authorised by the Boundary Commission of 1885. The second condition which Russians firmly believe they will, when the proper time arrives, be able to bring about, is a general rising of the people of India. It is held in Russia that, apart from the distaste which the Mohammedans of the north-west provinces have for British rule, they would eagerly welcome the dominion of the Tsar for political and religious reasons, and that it is only necessary to repeat the tactics so often and so successfully followed by Russian exploiters in order to cause such a rising throughout Northern India as would find more than sufficient occupation for every soldier in British pay. With such a combination, it is held that it would be a comparatively easy matter for a Russian army to cross the Indus, and if the moment chosen was one in which Great Britain was engaged in a European campaign which would prevent her sending reinforcements from home, the chances of Russia's success would be greatly enhanced. This last circumstance forms the third condition held to be necessary for such a venture to be brought to a successful issue, and it is hoped that the success which would attend Russian arms would suffice to make allies of the natives and thus enable British influence to be finally overthrown. But even if it were found impossible to hold India for any length of time, Russia would derive very great advantages from the venture. She would, in the first place, have a free hand for the furtherance of her schemes in Persia. She realises that so long as British influence in Persia is protected by her prestige in India, the acquisition of a Russian port in the Persian Gulf would entail a declaration of war. But with England hard pressed in India the case becomes altered, and the establishment of even a temporary Russian base along the Indus would at once be followed by the subjugation of Southern Persia. The crippling of British rule in India would mean more than this. It would permit of Russia once more turning her attention towards Constantinople, and

attaining that coveted position by way of Asia Minor, a course of action which would long ago have been pursued but for the opposition of the European Powers, led by Great Britain. That such a venture as this would be opposed by other Powers is probable, and Germany might even make such an undertaking a *casus belli*; but with a European war in progress, it is scarcely likely that Germany would remain a disinterested spectator. And even if she were not compelled to take an active part in the hostilities with or against this country, it is extremely unlikely that she would break her neutrality and start a second war in order to maintain the independence of the Porte. The aims of Russia in the direction of the Bosphorus and her march towards the Indian frontier are closely connected. The one only commenced when Russia found herself compelled to postpone the other. And it is more than probable that had she been permitted to obtain a footing on the Bosphorus, she would not have embarked on the conquest of Central Asia. Having been compelled to postpone her claim to Constantinople, she set herself to gain her end by roundabout means, and there can be little question but that in the end she will gain it. This view is neither new nor original, but that it is correct I have not the slightest doubt. It was foretold by one of the most acute observers who has ever studied Russian policy—James MacGahan, who wrote from the Oxus region so long ago as 1876:—

> 'The Russians are steadily advancing towards India, and they will sooner or later acquire a position in Central Asia which will enable them to threaten it. Should England be engaged in a European war, and not show herself sufficiently accommodating on the Bosphorus, then indeed Russia would probably strike a blow at England's Indian power.'

As to the intentions of Russia in regard to India, there has not been the slightest room for doubt during the past half century, and the project for its invasion has been kept green by the writings and the speeches of the leaders of the Russian military party. There is scarcely

a Russian general of any note who has not in some form added to the literature of the subject. Golovin, Grigorieff, Kostenko, Petroosevitch, Terentieff, Danewski, Annenkoff, Martens, and Soboleff have each added his quota towards keeping up the interest in India and the misapprehension of British rule therein.

It does not need any great perspicacity to understand that the constant repetition of such statements in the ears of willing listeners does not tend to bring about a better understanding of the true aspects of the case; and the remarkable success which has all along attended Russian action in the direction of India, coupled with the promptness in which British attempts at exploration have been denounced, have not tended to lessen the expectation as to the future among the Russian military party. Thus it has come to be regarded as a fixed item in the political programme of Russia to push forward until she finds herself able, by seizing an appropriate opportunity, to hurl her army south of the Hindu Kush, through the heart of the Suliman range, and across the Indus. But if the youngest of officers be engaged in conversation on this subject, he will laugh at the ordinarily accepted theories of the Russian intentions respecting the invasion of India. Among the many excellent essays which have been written by experts qualified to discuss such matters from stragetic and tactical points of view, it does not appear to have occurred to any one that Russia would make any attempt against India except by a forcible advance through Afghanistan; and it seems to me that it is high time that the fiction of such a campaign being seriously contemplated should be swept aside, and the actual probabilities of the sequence of events be mastered and carefully considered. It is admitted by Muscovite politicians that Russia could not force her way into British India, for the reason that she could not convey a sufficiently large body of troops through the difficult country of Afghanistan in face of the opposition which would be made by the people, and the immense difficulties of transport and commissariat.

The point is conceded. Under the conditions laid down, Russia cannot hope to even reach the Indian frontier, while any attempt she might make to pass it would be doomed to failure. But assuming Afghanistan to be non-existent, and the Russian boundary to be coincident with the Indian, the case is altered. Under such circumstances Russia would be as much at home on her side of the boundary as Great Britain is to-day on her own. Instead of having to rely for supplies on a distant base, she would be able to accumulate an ample store upon the spot. In short, Russia would under such circumstances have her depôts just across the frontier, corresponding with Peshawar, Mooltan, and Jacobabad.

The average reader who comes to the foregoing lines will probably laugh at the supposition in which I have indulged. The view is one which has not hitherto been seriously regarded by English politicians, and one's natural impulse on coming upon it, is to remark that the British Government would never tolerate a Russian occupation of Afghanistan. Whether this is so or no depends partly on the Government which happens to be in power when the occasion arises, partly on the opportunity chosen by Russia for her advance; but that such an advance will at least be attempted is an absolute certainty, and if Great Britain desire to maintain her prestige in India, it will be well for her to make up her mind as to the course of action she will pursue when the occasion arises.

There is only one certain way of preventing a Russian occupation of Afghanistan. It is by occupying that country ourselves, and it behoves us to make up our minds exactly what course we shall follow in this connection. When Russia occupies Herat, as she probably will, we shall have either to permit her to have her way, or to go to war in nominal alliance with the Afghan people and drive her out. Assuming that in the end we succeed in dispossessing her, and though the feat would be no easy one we should eventually do so, we should have to either occupy the country or pledge ourselves as the

guarantors of an undivided Afghanistan—an undertaking which would mean a practical occupation of the country, without any commensurate return or advantage over our existing frontier.

The importance of Herat has already been referred to. Its geographical position greatly favours a Russian occupation; and the fact that the Russian advance post is in direct railway communication with Merv, and within a few hours' march of Herat, puts the Russians in a position to seize and occupy the citadel, and even to mount guns along its walls, before a British force could be brought to bear upon it from the Sibi valley. And Herat is only the best of the three possible routes by which Russia can forge her way into Afghanistan: the road to Balkh by way of the Oxus is quite open, and the whole of Afghan Turkestan could be occupied with ease, while Wakhan is commanded from the Russian Pamir, where military outposts of Cossacks are always stationed.

The fact that Russia has possessed herself of all the territories between her erstwhile frontier and Afghanistan necessitates either an ending of the forward policy which has distinguished her arms during the last three centuries, or the breach of the numerous pledges which she has given respecting the Afghan frontier. That she will adopt the former line of action will not be seriously suggested by any one whose judgment is not affected by his politics. The British public have been for so long inured to the party system which is responsible for so many of the mistakes in the foreign policy of the country, that they are apt to estimate the intentions of Russia rather in accordance with their predilections than with the teachings of knowledge or past experience. And thus while one large section of the community habitually regards Russia as the arch enemy of England, and sees her malignant influence in every disability under which the country suffers, another strives to prove that the interests of this country are synonymous with those of St. Petersburg, and clamours for an alliance which would be certain to land us either in a prolonged war or politi-

cal extinction. The one view is as absurd as the other; Russia is no more the evil genius of England than she is her natural ally. The rivalry of respective interests between the nations is keen, and the commercial struggle which is inevitable in adjoining empires, destined to increase rather than to subside. Russia will continue to extend her frontiers so long as they are bordered by those of nations weaker than herself. If once she finds herself within the shadow of a stronger Power than she, her policy of aggression will be exchanged for a cheerful obedience to force of circumstances. See the case of the greater portion of her European boundary: no suggestion is ever heard of any attempt of encroaching on the appanage of Germany, nor would she attempt to evade the treaty obligations of any frontier with a Power possessing the strength and ability to protect, and the moral sense to use them; but so long as she finds herself bordering a nation too weak to maintain its independence, or too unpractical to utilise the strength it has, so long will the aggressive instincts of Muscovite employers lead to interference, invasion, and final occupation.

There is another consideration which is responsible in a very large measure for the hold which the idea of the invasion of India occupies in the minds of the Russian military party. I refer to the immense outlay which has been made in Central Asia. The greater portion of the area of Turkestan and Transcaspia is waste land incapable of cultivation. The population is small, the industries few, and the natural wealth undeveloped. With the exception of the limited area of Mid Bokhara, and certain portions of Ferghana, the land is not fertile and produces barely sufficient to feed the population. The cost of the various military expeditions necessary for the conquest of this region was simply enormous, and yet its poverty is such that even to-day it does not pay the cost of occupation and of government. It is a matter for surprise that Russia deemed it worth her while to conquer country so undesirable, and it is extremely doubtful whether the Governments of Central Asia will

become self-supporting during the present generation. In addition to its financial aspect, possession of Central Asia carries with it several disadvantages. Its people are not calculated to make model citizens. Its boundaries are in places ill marked, and bordered by warlike peoples; its communications are restricted and difficult, and its climate severe in both extremes. What then can have tempted Russia to venture so much gold, and risk so much life in the acquisition of such an empire? The necessity for repressing the raiding of the Kirghiz and the Turkestanis who preyed on the peaceful traders of the Russian frontier was admittedly a matter of urgency; but the subjection of the whole of the region as far as the Oxus was needful neither for the maintenance of order, nor the welfare of the State; and the seizure of the Caspian seaboard has served to add to the responsibilities and the expenditure of Russia without producing any commensurate return. Yet Russia is not apt to enter on undertakings of such dimensions without having the practical purpose in view. And in the case of Central Asia this must be well defined in order to justify the vast expenditure necessitated by her policy. The total population of Central Asia is in round figures four millions, to keep whom in order Russia maintains an army of forty-five thousand men, being a ratio of one Cossack to every eighty-eight of the population; nor has she yet succeeded in consolidating her rule sufficiently to gain the confidence of her subjects. Despite the fact that among the peoples of Central Asia are to be found some of the finest fighting material in the world, the military authorities do not deem it safe to trust these to carry arms in her service; and the stalwart Turkomans, the fierce Kirghiz, and the doughty Uzbegs, who for so long held their own against their present rulers, are denied the privilege of wearing the uniform of the Tsar. These facts are not a very handsome testimonial to the success of the constantly vaunted civilising mission of Russia in Central Asia, nor do they supply a fitting corollary to the criticisms of British rule in India

so freely indulged in by the Muscovite publicist. In India the two hundred and seventy million people whose lot is so greatly pitied by Russian writers of the Annenkoff school are not under military rule at all. Instead of a series of military governors whose orders are carried out by companies or battalions, the natives are ruled by civilians, and the British force available for the maintenance of order added to the army charged with the protection of the frontier reaches the total of seventy thousand men, being a proportion of one soldier to every 3857 natives, the bulk of the ordinary military duties incidental to the government of a vast empire being performed by the natives themselves, who wear the Queen's uniform and assist in the policing of the frontier to the number of 150,000.

Despite the enormous contrast exhibited by these facts, the Russians continue to protest that British rule in India is odious and tyrannical, and that the natives only await a hint from across the Oxus to rise in their millions and drive their rulers into the sea.

In this very circumstance is the true policy of Russia revealed. On its own account the conquest of Central Asia is worthless. Instead of being a source of strength to its possessor, it is one alike of financial and of military weakness. It was not taken in ignorance, but by carefully thought out design, as part of a programme, the execution of which its possession will assist. The capture of the Khanates was attempted, not as an achievement, but as a means to an end; not as a pathway towards the coveted Persian Gulf, but as a road which would lead to the Punjab and all that is beyond. And now that the preliminary steps have been completed, the serious undertaking is about to be begun.

It is generally understood in the Russian army that the cost of the conquest of Central Asia will one day be recouped by the looting of India. It remains to be seen, when the attempt is made, whether the result will justify the expectations which are to-day so freely expressed in the military centres of Central Asia.

CHAPTER VIII

RUSSIA IN CHINA

Origin of relations between Russia and China—Treaty of Pekin Rebellion in Ili—Russian Occupation of Kulja—Chunghow's mission to St. Petersburg—Treaty of Ili—Russian exploration of China—China-Japanese War—Russian interference in terms of peace—The Cassini Convention—Occupation of Port Arthur—Russian influence in China.

POLITICAL relations between Russia and China date back to the seventeenth century, when the incursions of the exploiters of Siberia along the Amur river attracted the attention of the Mandarin, and led to the hostilities which culminated in the treaty of Nerchinsk. The events which led to the early friendship of the Chinese Emperor with the Russian Tsar have already been related in the chapter dealing with the absorption of Siberia, and it will be remembered that the intercourse which commenced in hostilities over the Amur territory culminated in the despatch of several Russian missions, which met with varying receptions at Peking. The position on the Russo-Chinese frontier at the time of the signing of the treaty of 1860 was one which everywhere pointed to the superiority of Russia, and it was doubtless only the distance of the Celestial Empire from the centres of Russian activity, coupled with the lack of communications, which prevented a descent upon the Middle Kingdom, and the inclusion of its northern portion within the limits of Tsardom. Russian intercourse with China was conducted at this period almost

entirely across the caravan route which runs from Kiakhta along the Gobi desert to Peking, and notwithstanding occasional interruptions, due to the desire of the Mandarin to exclude Russian influence from their country, a good many caravans found their way across the Great Wall, and a considerable amount of trade was carried on with Urga, with Kalgan, and with Peking. British influence was at this period restricted to the region round the Canton river, and the attempts made by this country to open up direct communications with the Son of Heaven resulted only in failure. The field remained therefore in the occupation of Russia, who did not fail to avail herself of the utmost of her opportunities, as was shown by the various treaties which were accorded in response to the insistence of the emissaries of the Tsar. A good deal of the friendly understanding which was cultivated between the two empires was due to the presence of a small Russian colony in Peking, the members of which were the descendants of the prisoners who had been captured during the prolonged struggle for the possession of the Amur region.

The feature which strikes the student of the early relations between the two empires most is the undoubted moderation which was for nearly two centuries shown by Russia in her dealings with Peking—a moderation in marked contrast to the treatment accorded to the countries of Central Asia; and the explanation is only to be found by attributing to Russia a lack of information respecting the real quality of the eighteen provinces of China. It does not appear that any Russian explorer succeeded in penetrating beyond the precincts of the northern capital, and the estimate of the wealth of China was probably based on what was known of Mongolia and Manchuria, regions for the most part bare, offering few attractions to the colonist, and unfavoured by the climate. There can be little doubt that had the advance-guard of Russian exploitation suspected the true character of the wealth and resources of China,

very different measures would have been adopted towards that empire, which would have followed the fate of Siberia, and become added to the territories of the Tsar.

As already recorded, the treaty of Peking, which forms the Russian Magna Charta in China, was executed in 1860. Among its main provisions were the cession of Lakes Balkash and Issik Kul, the rectification of the Manchurian frontier, and, most important of all, the accordance of the free right to travel throughout the Chinese empire on all Russians without restriction. Despite the facilities thus provided, Russian energies do not appear for many years to have been directed towards the furtherance of Muscovite aims in China, and the position between the two countries remained one of friendly understanding, free from the interruption of opposing interests. So tolerant, indeed, were the Russian representatives of foreign rivalry, that they accorded every possible assistance to the French and English invaders who occupied Peking in 1860.

Three years later events transpired in Chinese-Turkestan which had a marked effect on the relations between the two countries. In 1863 a rising occurred among the Mohammedans of Jungaria, who were determined to shake themselves free of Chinese rule. The origin of the outbreak is unknown. By some it is put down to the corrupt rule and constant extortion of the Chinese. By others it is asserted to have been prompted by the secret emissaries of Russia; while a third and more probable theory credits the outbreak to have been the natural sequence of the victories of Yakoob Khan, who had succeeded in creating an independent state in Turkestan. Whatever its causes may have been, the insurrection rapidly attained dimensions which defied all attempts at suppression, and the triumph of the rebels over the Chinese army sent against them resulted in a general massacre in which some thousands of Chinese were killed. Civil

war ensued, the Mohammedans of Ili, reinforced by the Taranchis, carried all before them, and for a series of years the whole district became a shambles. As soon as the rebels had wiped the Chinese off the face of the earth they started quarrelling among themselves, and their numbers gradually became decimated. Fresh rulers were appointed almost daily, to be in turn deposed and assassinated. The district of Ili borders the Russian province of Semirechensk, through which the river flows to Lake Balkash, and the reign of terror which endured throughout the region for eight years was not without its effect across the frontier. After watching the despatch of one Manchu general after another against the rebels, without producing any improvement in the state of affairs, the Russians decided to interfere and to quell the rebellion themselves. A force was accordingly equipped and despatched to the town of Kulja. As soon as the rebels discovered the quality of the army which had marched against them, they surrendered at discretion, and the Russians occupied the town, and eventually the entire district.

Having restored order in the province of Ili, Russia sent a notification of what she had done to Peking, and added that she had no desire to effect a permanent occupation, but that she would be ready to hand the district over to the Chinese as soon as they could make arrangements necessary for the effectual maintenance of their authority. Distasteful as this announcement must have been to the Government of the Emperor Tungche, the Mandarin could not help themselves, and had perforce to accept the situation. The distance between the province of Ili and the Chinese capital was so great, and the difficulty of crossing the Gobi desert with an army so well known, that the Mandarin were obliged to acquiesce in the Russian programme.

By dint of almost superhuman efforts, aided by the sudden death of Yakoob Khan, in 1877, the Manchu generals succeeded in re-establishing Chinese rule in Kashgaria, and having recovered their self-esteem by

these means, they marched on Ili, and demanded that the Russians should evacuate the district in favour of the Chinese. The request was received with indifference by the Russians; no refusal was offered, but no attempt was made to carry out the suggestion. Difficulties were raised, and the Chinese deemed it prudent to retire, and await the arrival of instructions from Peking. The negotiations were thus transferred from the outermost region of the empire to the capital; but the prayers of the Mandarin fell on deaf ears, and seeing that no satisfactory settlement was to be obtained at the hands of the Russian ambassador, the regents determined to send a special envoy to St. Petersburg to press their claims and obtain the desired evacuation. The person selected was one Chunghow, a mandarin of high rank, who had on a previous occasion been sent to Europe, and who arrived at St. Petersburg in the autumn of 1879.

The mission which Chung had undertaken was no easy one. Russia had tasted the sweets of possession, and recognised that the region watered by the Upper Ili would make a very desirable addition to her steppe territory. And the envoy was kept waiting a long while before he was accorded an interview with the Tsar, which he finally obtained only by proceeding to Livadia. After a series of lengthy negotiations, finding that it was impossible to obtain all that he desired, Chunghow agreed to the best terms he could get, and entered into a contract under which Russia was to restore a portion of the Ili territory to China, in return for the payment of five millions of roubles to recoup the expense of occupation, and the granting of certain commercial privileges to Russian traders. With this agreement Chung returned to Peking, where he met with an indignant reception. The Empress Regent refused to ratify the treaty, Chunghow was repudiated and placed under arrest, and after a mock trial, the unfortunate ex-envoy was flung into prison under sentence of death.

On hearing of the treatment which had been dealt out

to his recent guest, the Tsar despatched ships and men to the Chinese coast, and matters began to look serious. The judicious intervention of the British Government served, however, to postpone a declaration of war. Colonel Gordon, who was at the time at Nanking, went to Peking, and exerted his great personal influence with the Government, who instructed the Marquis Tseng, at that time Chinese ambassador in London, to go to St. Petersburg and negotiate a new treaty. Chunghow was pardoned, and the Tsar consented to discuss the subject of Ili once again. The Chinese position at this juncture was disunited owing to a split in the palace party. Prince Chung was strongly in favour of declaring war offhand, while Li Hung Chang, the only minister who rightly appreciated the strength of Russia, strove to maintain peace. Even the Tartar general, Tso Tsung-tang, who had been in command of the Chinese army in Turkestan, announced himself eager to fight the Russians, whom he boasted he would easily defeat. Meanwhile the Marquis Tseng had arrived at the Russian capital, and by dint of his remarkable courtesy and good temper, backed by some measure of firmness, and supported by the influence of the British minister, succeeded in negotiating the treaty of St. Petersburg, by which Russia agreed to restore practically the whole of the disputed territory to China. In return for this concession, the indemnity named in the previous treaty was considerably increased, and the stipulation of the Russian right of navigating the rivers of Manchuria, which marks the first step towards the eventual Russification of that country, was inserted. By the time that the treaty of 1881 had been negotiated, the efforts of the British and other ministers to bring the Chinese Government to reason had succeeded, and on the return of the Marquis Tseng with his treaty, he was received with honour, and the ratification was promptly proceeded with. Thus was the danger of war between Russia and China narrowly escaped, and the prompt evacuation of Ili by the Russian army caused the dispute to be rapidly forgotten. The

incident is, however, not without its lessons to the observant student. The ten years of Russian occupation had served to afford ample opportunities for a systematic study of Chinese Turkestan, which was surveyed by scientists specially ordered from St. Petersburg. In evacuating the greater portion of the Province of Ili, Russia had the consolation of knowing that she could at any moment repossess herself of what she was giving up, and to make this easier, she stipulated that the western portion of the district should remain permanently in her possession. Her interests were further secured by the insisting on the rights of Russian subjects, who had been placed in possession of land in Ili, to retain their holding; and the indemnity of nine million metallic roubles demanded and received from China will have considerably more than paid the cost of occupation they were supposed to have made good. Among the subsidiary points in this treaty are several enlarging the powers of Russian consuls and the rights of Russian traders; so that, while Russia nominally gave up her claim to a portion of Chinese territory, she cannot be said to have lost by the transaction.[1]

For a series of years after the Ili incident relations between Russia and China continued normal. Owing to the difficulty of communication, Russia was unable to take any active steps for the furtherance of her designs across the Celestial border. But the time was not being wasted. The geographical position of Russia in relation to China is peculiar, inasmuch as the wealthiest districts are situated at the greatest distance from St. Petersburg, and can only be reached by traversing a varying extent of desert territory. With exception of the fertile valleys along the Turkestan border, the whole of the western annexe of the Celestial Empire is a region consisting either of mountain ranges and snow-covered tablelands or of sandy desert, both equally impassable to large bodies of men, and unsuited to military occupation. It would be useless for Russia to annex either the uplands

[1] See Appendix B.

of Tibet or the plains of Mongolia. While sparsely inhabited and easy to acquire, they would both be practically impossible to hold, and if regarded merely as routes to the rich lands of Sechuan or Yunnan, they would require such a force for the keeping open of the lines of approach as would prevent any adequate return from the enterprise. Apart from the approach by sea, entailing a voyage of 11,000 miles, there are only two gateways through which Russia can enter China. The one suited exclusively to the needs of caravan traffic, and quite impossible for the passage of large bodies of men, is the desert track from Kiakhta, through Urga and Kalgan to Peking. The other, the only one where military expeditions are concerned, is through Manchuria. This fact, long suspected, became thoroughly apparent to the Russian authorities when in occupation of Ili, and it is doubtless due to this fact that Russia consented to the partial evacuation of that territory. Since 1881 the efforts made to improve the Manchurian route to China have been unceasing. At different periods the military posts along the great Siberian road, which crosses the continent from east to west, and is for the most part the merest track across the steppe, have been strengthened and enlarged. The outposts on the Amur have been rebuilt, and the trading facilities with the Manchurian towns improved. Russian colonies have been established in Mukden and Kirin, and have been extended to Tsitsihar. The navigation of the Ussuri and Sungari rivers has not only been developed by Russian vessels, but the natives have in many instances been compelled to refrain from exercising their indisputable rights to trade along them. The change which has been effected during recent years in Manchuria is indeed remarkable, and no greater contrast could be imagined than that between the weak and impalpable rule of the Chinese officials and the domineering attitude everywhere assumed by the advance-guard of Russian civilisation. Slowly and unobtrusively, yet surely, has the process of occupation been carried on. The routine is repeated with

monotonous regularity: one or two Russian traders establish themselves in a native town; if they are ill received, a hint conveyed to the nearest Russian station results in the prompt arrival of the inevitable sotnia of Cossacks, charged with the office of protecting the traders, whose right of settlement is guaranteed by treaty. If no excuse is offered for the establishment of a military post, one is invented,—in any case the process goes on without intermission, the settlers and their protectors moving further and further afield developing commerce, mortgaging the land, and gradually establishing a military occupation.

For a series of years the carrying on of this programme attracted little or no attention, and the opportunity was made the most of. From 1881 till 1895, Russia devoted her utmost energies to the gaining information respecting China. Surveying parties were despatched in all directions. Scientific observers, always protected by Cossack escorts, were despatched to various parts of the empire, until her geographers knew more of the physical features of China, and her military surveyors more of her strategic possibilities, than the Chinese themselves. In these respects Russia has beaten the record. Her knowledge of China is more complete and more reliable than that possessed by any other country, and the student who desires to be thoroughly posted on the subject must necessarily turn to books published in St. Petersburg, and maps devised by Muscovite surveyors.

Nor were the energies of Russia during this period confined to the exploiting of the Chinese Empire. The measures which were being taken in China and Manchuria were repeated in the kingdom of Korea, a region towards which she is known to have cast an envious eye for the past forty years. The reason for this leaning is evident. After obtaining the Pacific port of Vladivostok, it was found that her ambitions were only half satisfied, owing to the harbour being closed with ice during a considerable portion of the year, and the authorities began to look further afield in search of a more favourably

situated port. The indented coast-line of Korea offered many alternatives, which would have satisfied all requirements, but Russia knew that any action in this direction at an inopportune moment was certain to bring a hornet's nest about her ears. She therefore reverted to her traditional policy of patience; but though not daring to follow the bent of her desires, she was determined that no other nation should steal a march upon her, and when Great Britain occupied Port Hamilton in 1885, her diplomatists commenced a series of protests which resulted in the evacuation of the island the following year. The representations made on this subject by Russia, through China, were for some time evaded, but on the Russian *Chargé d'affaires* at Peking giving the explicit guarantee of his Government that Russia would not ever occupy any portion of Korean territory, Great Britain consented to adopt the desired course. The reader unversed in Russian policy will probably be struck by the readiness with which Russia thus gave up her undoubted desires, but the action in question affords no real cause for surprise, and in the result the pledge came in very useful on at least two historic occasions.

The outbreak of the war between China and Japan in 1895 gave a new direction to Russian policy in China. The whole of the campaign consisted of a series of surprises, which served to expose the utter rottenness of the Chinese nation, and the outcome of the struggle has proved of the utmost importance to Russian interests. It has been suggested that the events which led up to a declaration of hostilities were due to the action of the secret emissaries of the Tsar, but no direct evidence has come to light connecting Russian diplomacy with the events which transpired in Seoul in June 1894. Indeed, had the result of the war been a victory for the Chinese, there is little doubt that Russian interests would have been adversely affected, and for this reason alone it is extremely unlikely that that country will have willingly attempted to hasten the war.

On the conclusion of the eight months' war, the

Japanese, who had been the victors all along, agreed to a treaty of peace which, while onerous in its terms, was not unduly severe. The main clauses in the Treaty of Shimonoseki required the independence of Korea, the cession to Japan of the Liaotung Peninsula in perpetuity, and the Island of Formosa, together with the payment of a large indemnity. As soon as the terms of the treaty were published, the Russian Government protested against the cession of any territory on the mainland of Asia to Japan, on the plea that the integrity of the Chinese Empire must be maintained in the interests of peace. This protest was supported by France and Germany; and recognising the uselessness of running counter to the wishes of three great Powers, Japan agreed to forego the cession of Liaotung in return for an increase in the indemnity arranged.

The diplomatic triumph attained by Russian influence at the end of the Japanese war afforded ample material for her diplomatists' consideration, serving as it did to add greatly to Russian prestige in the councils of the Celestial Empire. Although most unquestionably actuated solely by her own interests in the steps she had taken for the rescuing of Liaotung from the Japanese clutch, there can be no question that the Chinese Government was given to understand that it was purely in the interests of Peking that Russia had intervened; and it is suggested by some politicians, who have the reputation of being well informed, that Russia made a direct bargain with China before she exerted herself to stop the spoliation of the empire. Whether this is so or no, there can be little doubt but that Russia did not fail to remind the Chinese Government of the obligation under which she had been placed.

The most representative individual among Chinese officials during the past thirty years has been Li Hung Chang, a mandarin who has held several of the most important posts in China, and who has chanced to come into communication with more Europeans than the majority of his fellows. Being, even for a Chinaman,

exceptionally acute, Li has largely profited by his opportunities, and has gathered a knowledge of European ways quite unusual among his class. Unfortunately for his country, the recent Viceroy of Chi-li is a typical Chinaman at heart, and his enlightenment and ability are dimmed by a cunning and a love of gain typical of his species. In 1896 Li Hung Chang was despatched to Moscow as the special envoy of the Son of Heaven, to attend the coronation of the present Tsar, and while in Russia he had several interviews with Prince Lobanow, the minister in charge of the foreign policy of Russia at that period. It is generally understood that the convention which was arrived at on this occasion had been previously arranged by Count Cassini, the Russian minister at Peking, before Li had started for Russia; but whatever its history, the fact remains that a secret treaty was agreed to between the parties named, and little by little the principal clauses in what has been termed the Cassini convention have been divulged. In effect, the agreement consisted of an exchange of guarantees, Russia undertaking to support China against foreign aggression in return for certain facilities for the extension of Russian interests and the construction of railways in Manchuria.

The secret convention remained unsuspected for nearly two years, despite the fact that the disclosure of the agreement between China and Russia for the construction of the Manchurian railway towards the close of 1896 caused some surprise to the uninitiated, and to this day the actual terms of the treaty have not been published. In the beginning of 1898, however, a summary of the convention found its way into print at a time when Russia had already benefited to the full without being called upon to make any return. The convention is to-day practically a dead letter, inasmuch as while Russia has attained all that she desires—an open port and a free hand in Manchuria,—recent events have served to supply her with an ample excuse for default in case she were called upon to carry out her part of the contract by assisting in the guaranteeing of Chinese autonomy.

The position of Russia in Manchuria is one of considerable strength, and reflects great credit upon her military advisers. Bordered on the west by the limitless waste of the Gobi desert, Manchuria is bounded on the other three sides by the advanced posts of Russia. The river Amur, which forms its northern limit, is commanded by two important military stations—Blagovestchensk, the capital of the Amur district, a strongly fortified town on the river bank, from which a small army could at any moment be sent into China; and Khabarovka, capital of the maritime province, which, besides possessing great strength and containing a large garrison, is the present terminus of the railway from Vladivostok. In the immediate vicinity of the Manchurian frontier are also the strongholds of Chita and Nerchinsk, each with a considerable garrison. The eastern frontier of Manchuria is bordered by the maritime province and the Korean frontier, the whole of the former being traversed by the Ussuri railway; so that even before the events of the last two years, Manchuria may be said to have been dominated by the power of Russia along her territorial mountains. The agreement arrived at in 1896 for the construction of the Trans-Manchurian Railway has been utilised as a charter conferring a free hand on Russia throughout that country. The agreement in question contains a number of remarkable clauses besides those authorising the construction of the line. Special pains were taken to exclude the suspicion that the treaty had been arranged by or at the suggestion of the Russian Government, and the document poses as being an ordinary commercial agreement between the Chinese Government and a syndicate known as the Russo-Chinese bank. Among the most remarkable of the features of this document are the rights of exploitation granted to the bank by the Chinese Government. Passengers' luggage brought from within the Russian frontier is to be carried without any liability as to customs dues or import duties, nor shall the rates charged be liable to taxation. Goods imported from Russia are to pay one-third less duty than

that imposed at Chinese seaports, and all goods brought into China by the railway, and destined for conveyance into China beyond the limits of the line, shall be subject to transit dues to the extent of only one-half the amount of the import duty.[1]

It is doubtful whether a more astute document has ever been drawn up. The clauses above-mentioned are not only entirely one-sided, but inflict manifest hardships on all other nations; and it is truly remarkable that the treaty in question should have been in existence for close on three years without evoking a protest from any of the other countries affected. The granting of a reduction in the duties payable on goods imported from Russia introduces the principle of preferential rates into Chinese commerce, and should, one would suppose, have elicited a prompt remonstrance at least from Great Britain and the United States. The agreement does not, however, appear to have attracted more than passing attention. Besides the clauses referred to above, there is one other which can only be termed remarkable. It is distinctly stated in the agreement that none but Russian and Chinese subjects may hold shares in the company, and as the Chinese have not yet been educated in the principles of joint-stock undertakings, the result of this clause will be to keep the whole of the interests of the line in Russian hands. The agreement therefore supplies a very powerful lever for the Russification of Manchuria, and one which it would not be in accordance with the principles of Russian diplomatists to forget. The actual features of the railway are dealt with elsewhere. It will suffice to mention here that the projected railway is designed to unite the province of Transbaikalia with Vladivostok by a direct line from Nerchinsk, thus avoiding the immense détour made by the Siberian railway between Nerchinsk and the Russian naval base on the Pacific.

The construction of a railway across a comparatively unknown country requires careful surveying and much

[1] See Appendix B.

preparation, and this was, early in 1897, undertaken by Russian engineers, whose explorations were always made under the protection of companies of Cossacks, and were, as a rule, accompanied by military officers, whose attention was devoted rather to the racial and strategic features of the country than to the physical formation of the road to be constructed. In this way the districts of Tsitsihar, Kirin and Ninguta were thoroughly explored; and as the Russians moved across Siberia they left small parties of Cossacks stationed in the various towns with the object of protecting Russian interests and maintaining order. By the end of 1897 there was scarcely a town in Manchuria which had not its Russian outpost, and the road was thus clear for a fresh move. The only necessity was an excuse for action, for the long-desired move on the southern limits of Manchuria was recognised to be attended with considerable risk. The seizure of the maritime province had been accomplished at a period when the European Powers were too busy to pay much attention to the incident. The survey of Manchuria by Russian agents had been conducted so quietly as to pass entirely unnoticed, but the seizure of any portion of the Liaotung peninsula might cause friction with Russia's great Asiatic rival. The unexpected events of November 1897 were eagerly welcomed by Russian politicians. The action of Germany in seizing the harbour of Kiaochau in recompense for the murder of two missionaries was jumped at by Russian agents as the desired opportunity. It was pleaded that Germany's action had upset the balance of power in the Far East, thereby adversely affecting Russian interests. On the 18th December the Russian fleet, which had been fitting out at Vladivostok, entered the harbour of Port Arthur and landed a considerable force of men, who proceeded to occupy the heights and fly the Russian flag. For a month Russia's action was the one subject of discussion in political circles, and all sorts of rumours were put about as to its true signification. It was stated by certain politicians that Russia had only taken refuge at Port Arthur for the purpose of repairing

some injuries to her ships. It was alleged by others that she had received permission of the Chinese to ride the winter out at Port Arthur owing to the vessels having been excluded from Vladivostok by the formation of the ice at an earlier date than usual. Among that section of the British public usually spoken of as Russophobe it was alleged that Russia intended annexing the Liaotung peninsula. In the end of March 1898 it was announced that the Chinese Government had leased Port Arthur and Talien-wan to Russia; and by the time the announcement was formally made, the former port was already occupied by a large force, which had placed it in such a state of defence as to render it practically impregnable. The occupation of Port Arthur by Russia completed her hold on the province of Manchuria, since it supplied her not only with a base on the third side of its frontier, but placed her in command of the maritime approaches to its ports. In addition to this, Russia's latest acquisition brought her in juxtaposition with all the Powers interested in the Chinese capital, and for the first time justified her in demanding a voice in matters affecting the Far Eastern question.

The area of Manchuria is computed by Colonel Browne[1] to contain 362,310 square miles, and its population has been estimated by a Russian engineer at 11,250,000. The country is extremely rich, though utterly undeveloped, and the lack of roads is to a great extent compensated by the excellence of the water communications. Of the Russian intentions respecting the future of Manchuria there cannot be the slightest doubt. Ever since the signing of the railway agreement of 1896, she has been importing bodies of men into the country, until at the present moment many thousands of Cossacks are stationed in the different towns, extending from Tsitsihar to Newchang, and from Kirin to Vladivostok. The force at Newchang alone was reported so recently as the 15th of last month [March 1899] to be 7000 men, and there can be no question but that Russia is only waiting a suitable

[1] *Blue Book*, China, No. 1, 1899.

opportunity to proclaim a formal protectorate throughout the country.

The importance of this most recent addition to Russian territory is extreme, inasmuch as, apart from the accession of dominion, of wealth, and of population which it brings, it provides an extension of seaboard, with its attendant naval possibilities, so long sought by successive Tsars. It is one of the most remarkable features of the Russian Empire that her maritime outlets are in distinct contrast to her area, and it is doubtless largely due to this disadvantage that the limited commerce and civilisation throughout the empire is due. Throughout her dominions Russia boasts of only nine first-class ports. Of these, five are on the Baltic, three on the Black Sea, and two on the Pacific. In the event of war, the fleets of the Black Sea and the Baltic would most infallibly be closed by the opposing power, and their fleets imprisoned during the existence of hostilities. The only effective naval bases from which Russia could hope to send out fleets to cope with an enemy are, therefore, the Pacific ports of Vladivostok and Port Arthur, and pending the time when a suitable opportunity occurs for the continuation of her progress southwards, the policy of Russia will be devoted to the strengthening and the arming of these ports, destined at no distant date to become prominent factors in the political history of the world.

In the development of her naval power, however, Russia is confronted with certain difficulties which must tend to materially handicap the achievement of her aims. The most important of these is to be found in the vast distances separating her naval stations, which are placed in clusters of two or three close together, each cluster separated from the others by distances so great as to render them useless for mutual support in times of need. From the Baltic to the Black Sea involves a voyage of nearly five thousand miles, and from the Black Sea to the Gulf of Pechili is approximately double that distance. Throughout the intervening distances Russia is devoid of harbours or coaling stations, and must rely

on the good offices of friendly Powers better situated than herself. With the outbreak of hostilities all of these would be closed to her, even neutral States being prohibited from assisting belligerents with supplies of coal, and it follows that, isolated and lacking means of communication, the Russian fleet would be unable to follow any active policy at a distance from Port Arthur or Vladivostok.

That Russia realises the difficulties of the situation is made evident by the policy on which she has recently embarked. The determination to expend a sum of twenty-four millions sterling on the construction of a Pacific fleet during the next few years comes as an advance note of her future policy, and serves as a useful sidelight on the disarmament proposals of the Tsar. And while a powerful fleet is being provided, the better to enable Russia to continue her conquests in Asia, and take a leading part in the politics of the world, her existing naval bases are being strengthened and enlarged, while her military strength is being steadily increased along the Manchurian seaboard, with the evident object of a descent at no distant date on the Province of Pechili. The armaments of Vladivostok have of late been greatly strengthened, and the number of men sent there has been so large as to exhaust the capacity of the existing barracks; and new ones are now being built on the hillside overlooking the Eastern Bosphorus.

The occupation of Port Arthur gave Russia the command of a territory three times as big as Great Britain, a territory in which the consistent efforts of able agents have rendered Russian influence paramount. And having set the seal of her dominion on the whole province, she hastened to turn the neglected defences of her newest base into a series of bulwarks intended to convert the stronghold into a second Cronstadt. This work has now been in progress for twelve months past, and the place is still being strengthened.

It is, however, questionable whether the estimate generally held as to the strength and utility of Port

Arthur is not exaggerated. Its position leaves little to be desired. It commands the water-way to Peking, and is admirably located as a harbour of refuge; but the deep water area is limited, and is so placed as to necessitate large vessels being anchored within sight and within range of the outer sea. The accommodation offered inside the harbour is insufficient for more than a small squadron of battleships, and the entrance-channel is so narrow as to present considerable risk to the passage of a fleet. A single vessel sunk at the entrance to the harbour would effectually seal up all the ships inside, and in this respect render Port Arthur useless. Another drawback is the lack of land suitable for erecting buildings in the vicinity of the harbour, which is surrounded by hills, almost at the water's edge; and its defences from the land side are so exposed as to necessitate the erection of a series of forts for its protection. Another drawback to this much vaunted naval base is the difficulty of communication with the rear. The approaches are circuitous and difficult, besides being open to attack from the sea, and supplies have to be brought by water. It may therefore be said, that while Port Arthur possesses undoubted strength and may be impregnable to any ordinary attack, the protection it is capable of affording to a fleet is very limited, and the risk of its being starved out in case of war extremely great.

The occupation of Port Arthur, as already stated, served to shed considerable light on the Chinese tactics of Russia, and was accepted in this country as the sounding of a note heralding a policy of aggression in the Gulf of Pechili. There can be no question as to the advantageous position which Russia attained over Great Britain by the seizure of Port Arthur; and failing an insistence on her immediate withdrawal, the only possible reply was to be found in the acquisition by this country of a naval base similarly situated and in the same locality. As to the wisdom of the choice made between these courses, I do not propose at this juncture to offer an

opinion. But having once condoned the grabbing of Port Arthur, it is doubtful whether any better course remained open to Great Britain than the acquisition of Wei-hai-Wei, which, though quite unsuitable as a mere naval base, owing to its exposure and the impossibility of adequately defending its approaches, affords anchorage to any number of vessels, and, besides being as well favoured strategically as is Port Arthur, possesses the further advantage of commanding that place. It would not indeed be claiming too much for Wei-hai-Wei to say that a fleet stationed there in time of hostilities would practically command the approaches to Port Arthur, and the action of Great Britain in occupying the place may therefore be said to have gone a long way towards discounting the advantages obtained by Russia in the seizure of Port Arthur.

Nor was Russia slow to realise this fact, as was shown by the prompt protests she made, but finding herself powerless to persuade the Chinese to refuse the desired lease, she reconciled herself to the inevitable and sought other means for the urging of her Chinese policy.

While Russia has been busily engaged in the furthering of her aims in Manchuria, she has not been neglecting her interests in China proper. Indeed, the whole of the past two years has been a period of exceptional activity throughout the Celestial Empire. While the reserve cruisers which are posed under the pseudonym of the 'volunteer fleet' have been making regular voyages laden with war material and men between Odessa and Port Arthur, and sotnias of Cossacks have been drafted from the depôts of Irkutsk, Udinsk, and other posts in Siberia to the inner districts of Manchuria, Russian agents have been busy extorting concessions from the government of Peking, and Russian expeditions have been conducting surveys and explorations throughout the eighteen provinces, with a view to the furtherance of Russia's thirst for power and her greed for territory. In this way, while to the outer world at least her action has remained unsuspected, Russia has thrust out

feelers into the most widely separated provinces; and even where she had previously possessed no influence, and had no excuse for interference, she has sent her agents, who have established themselves ostensibly to protect on behalf of Russia interests which are non-existent, and so by slow and sure degrees is she repeating in the middle kingdom that line of policy which she has practised with such success in Central Asia.

I am not one of those who are so absorbed by the Russophobe idea as to profess to see the hand of Russia in each event which does not happen to tend in the direction of British interests, nor am I prepared to fix responsibility of the recent *coup d'état* at Peking on Muscovite intermeddlers; but such of the actual circumstances which have till now been made public point with no uncertain finger to the promptings of a Russian mind. The greatest blow which has affected Russian prestige in China during recent years was without question the dismissal of Li Hung Chang, which came as a thunderbolt on the 8th September last. The fall of the 'Grand Old Man' of China, which was, not without reason, credited to the influence of Sir Claude Macdonald, must have proved little short of disastrous to the Russian aim. For a long time past the deposed Viceroy has been a retainer of the Russian cause, and despite the publicity which this fact had attained in China his influence remained unblemished in the councils of the State. His fall carried with it the loss of an active coadjutor to the Russian *Chargé d'affaires*, and at one blow destroyed the overwhelming influence so long exerted by that personage at Peking. The friendship which had existed for some forty years or more between the ex-secretary and the Emperor's aunt would not of itself in all probability have been sufficient to induce her to restore the fallen minister, in face of the increased reputation of the British representative due to his dismissal; nor is it likely that that strong-minded woman would have dared to have deposed the ruling emperor without being guaranteed the support of at least one of the Powers

possessing influence in Peking. The only country likely to be prejudiced by the forward policy of Kwangsu was Russia, and the combination of circumstances becomes eloquent when examined by the light of subsequent events. That the Russian representative made a protest against the onwardness of the edicts which followed the fall of Li to the Tsungli Yamen need not be doubted, nor is it likely that the members of that eccentric council, opposed to a man to the liberal policy of their emperor, will have conveyed the notification to Thsi an, in whom lay their only hope of salvation. The briefest of communications between the masterful aunt and the Russian embassy will have sufficed to have brought about an understanding; and the *coup d'état* was put in force under the guarantee of Muscovite protection.

The factors in the above negotiations are instructive and interesting. We start with an understanding between two parties, neither of whom is famous for trustworthiness, but whose interests happen for the moment to be identical. By the arrangement made, the one, the present Dowager Empress, obtains a reversion of power, while the other gains a priority of interest, as well as a triumph over competitors; and, in addition to this, the one party happens to be utterly corrupt, while the other is possessed of the means wherewith to be unscrupulous. Small need, then, for wonder at the continuance of Russian influence at Peking.

Nor are the demonstrations of Russia's power limited. Her agents, fully aware that they command the situation, do not scruple to assert themselves on every occasion. Instances in which the wishes, and indeed the accorded rights of other countries, have been over-ridden at the bidding of the Russian representative at Peking are numerous, and her prestige has for some time past been such as to cause the merest expressions of her wish to be accepted as law. As soon as it had been determined to take possession of the Liaotung peninsula, a concession was obtained for the construction of a railway to connect Port Arthur with the Trans-Manchurian railway already

referred to, and in the plans drawn out by the engineers special pains were taken to avoid the treaty port of Newchang by as wide a berth as possible. The reason for this was the desire to limit the utility of the proposed railway to Russian interests, and to exclude the traders of other countries who had quarters at Newchang. By these means it was hoped that the considerable commerce at present carried on at the most northerly treaty port in China would be destroyed, and that the needs of Manchuria would be supplied exclusively by Russia. From various causes it was subsequently found desirable to bring the port of Newchang into communication with the new railway, and the Russians in charge of the works, acting presumably under the orders of the minister of Peking, descended on Yingtse, turned numbers of Chinese out of their dwellings, and forcibly purchased a square mile of territory at a price named by themselves. The whole of the district now swarms with armed Cossacks, whose presence is accepted so much as a matter of course that no surprise was evinced when on the occasion of the visit of Lord Charles Beresford to Newchang they supplied a guard of honour during his stay. In connection with the Russian railway which is to place Port Arthur in communication with St. Petersburg, a series of negotiations which narrowly escaped ending in trouble has recently been conducted over the contract of a neighbouring railway to be constructed under the auspices of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank. By the original agreement for the construction of this line, the railway was to be mortgaged to the bank in security for the money advanced with which to build it. This arrangement was negatived by M. Pavloff, the real reason of his protest being that the existence of a mortgage on land in Manchuria might be raised as an objection to the final absorption of that country by Russia. The demands urged against the Chinese director of railways were combated by the British minister at Peking, but after a series of negotiations extending over many months the Russian point was gained, and the security of the line beyond the Manchurian frontier foregone.

Russian influence in China has by the insistence of her policy become paramount. Her agents dominate the country from Peking in every direction, and by dint of repeating the policy which gave her control of the whole of Central Asia, she has succeeded in attaining a like result, with far greater benefit to herself. The extent of area over which her tentacles are spread in Eastern Asia is probably unsuspected by most outside her councils, but for the first time within the record of her Asiatic power she is about to grasp, as the reward of her persistence, a realm which is not merely a stretch of territory, a series of mountain spurs, or a dreary barren steppe. In China, Russia is destined to attain that which she has long hoped to reach in Hindostan. The result will more than repay the cost of waiting, and will possess the additional sweetness of having been attained in face of the opposition of those as strong as she.

CHAPTER IX

CONQUEST BY RAILWAY

Introduction of railways into Russia—Main Siberian highway the only road till 1880—Origin of the Trans-Siberian railway—Central Asiatic railway scheme—Peculiarities of construction—Strategic aim of the line—Its future development—The branch to Kushk—Effect of Transcaspian railway as a civilising influence—Siberian line—Changes in original plan—Engineering difficulties—Distances—Manchurian branch—Exaggerated popular estimate of its military importance—Schemes for Chinese railways—Vastness of Russian railway schemes—British interest to check these.

RAILWAYS were first introduced into European Russia so far back as 1838, when a short line was opened between St. Petersburg and Pavlovsk, and this was followed, after an interval of a few years, by the line constructed at the cost of a hundred million roubles between St. Petersburg and Moscow. The outbreak of the Crimean War served to impress the necessity of the construction of strategic railways on the authorities, and it is generally believed in Russia that the difficulties of transport, added to those of maintaining communications between the shores of the Black Sea and the administrative centres of the country, were largely responsible for the course of events which ended the campaign. So recently as 1880, Russia had no railways in Asia, though Great Britain had constructed nearly 10,000 miles of iron road in India. The only means of communication available in Asiatic Russia at this period were the routes consisting of mere tracks or water-ways by which the districts of Siberia and Central Asia were traversed. The main Siberian highway ran from the mouth of the Ural river across the steppe to Orenburg, and thence, through Petropavlovsk and Omsk, towards the Chinese frontier in one direction and

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Central Siberia in the other. For upwards of a century these were the only roads by which traffic was maintained with Siberia, but in the eighteenth century a new route was opened up from Perm, whence the Urals were crossed and the rivers of their eastern slope navigated by Tobolsk to Tomsk. From this point a track was made to Krasnoiarsk on the Yenisei, which river served as a highway to the Angara, which gave access to Irkutsk and Lake Baikal. From the margin of this inland sea a route led cross country to Nerchinsk, whence an open road was provided by the Shilka and the Amur to Manchuria and the Pacific. The heavy traffic incidental to the exile system soon served to show the inadequacy of the existing communications, but nothing was attempted to remedy the trouble, or lessen the sufferings of the convicts, and the numerous proposals for a railway, which were from time to time made, failed to bring about the construction of the much-desired line. In 1875 several petitions for a railway to unite Vladivostok with the Manchurian frontier were received at St. Petersburg, in all of which the necessity of preparing for future intercourse with China was dwelt upon. This plea attracted immediate attention. It is indeed worthy of remark that Russia, while generally more or less indifferent to schemes for the development of her resources, the improvement of her communications, or the benefiting of her people, is always ready to adopt any proposal which has for its ultimate object the extension of her political influence or territory. The suggestion of the possibility of increasing Russian influence across the Chinese border sufficed to achieve what the interests of the Siberian natives, the welfare of the Russian exiles, or the requirements of her mining industry had failed to do. A series of surveys were undertaken and a design prepared for the construction of a trunk railway, under the supervision of a committee consisting of the leading ministers of the Tsar, who were to act under the presidency of the present Emperor of Russia. The constitution of this imperial committee was settled by a

rescript issued by Alexander III. on the 17th March 1891, and its object was to decide as to the construction of a railway from Miass through Cheliabinsk to Tomsk, and thence, in as direct a line as possible, across the continent to Vladivostok.

While the construction of railways in Siberia was hanging fire, the country of Central Asia was being opened up by the construction of an iron road. The preference accorded to Transcaspia over Siberia was not due to any favouritism, but was the result of political developments. The circumstances attending the Russification of Central Asia were so different from those affecting the settlement of Siberia as to require the employment of entirely different means. The power of Russia in northern Asia was consolidated before railways were invented. The extension of Russian rule was not threatened by other powers, nor throughout the whole breadth of the continent was there a single people sufficiently warlike to stay the 'civilising mission' of Russia. In Central Asia the people were a sturdy and aggressive race, fearless, brave, and formidable opponents in war; and in the immediate vicinity were several rulers owning the men and the means necessary to the preservation of their independence. The main difficulty throughout the many Russian expeditions in Central Asia had been the question of transport, and when General Skobeleff went to Akhal in 1880 to redeem the disaster which had attended the Lomakin expedition of the previous year, he pointed out to General Annenkoff, the director of military transport, that the only efficient means of conveying an army from the Caspian would be by means of an improvised railway. Annenkoff proved himself an able organiser; without loss of time he took the matter in hand, but found himself handicapped by the difficulty of obtaining the necessary rails. An application to St. Petersburg produced no result, but he fortunately remembered that there had been some hundreds of tons of rails lying at Ungeni, where they had been stored for the purposes of the Russo-Turkish war.

Annenkoff determined to convert the rails to his present needs. The stacks were accordingly transported to the Caspian and in a very short time landed in the neighbourhood of Michael's Bay, whence twenty-six versts were laid in the direction of Molla Kari. This fragmentary railway, which was temporarily extended by a narrow-gauge trolley line proved of considerable service during the final subjection of the Turkomans, and as soon as the fall of Geok Tepe had been brought about and the oasis of Akhal annexed by proclamation, it was decided to continue the railway as far as Kizil Arvat. The necessary plant was brought from Russia *viâ* Astrakhan and Michaelovsk. The work proceeded apace: workmen were engaged at Baku and at Astrakhan. In 1881 a hundred and sixty miles of line were made, and in three years the whole of the distance from the Caspian to Samarcand, nine hundred miles in all, was completed, the Samarcand terminus being opened in 1888. The undertaking was in every respect a notable one both from the political and the engineering point of view. The motives which prompted the undertaking were entirely military, and the ground traversed extremely difficult, consisting over a very considerable proportion of the whole distance of barren steppe and sandy desert. The region in the neighbourhood of the Caspian consists entirely of drifting sand, as does the hundred miles stretch between the Merv oasis and the Oxus, the condition of the last mentioned being such as to make it a matter of great difficulty to prevent the line being buried or destroyed. The ability of the Russian engineers backed by the genius of General Annenkoff, succeeded in triumphing over all difficulties, and although not to be compared to the railways built in Western Europe, it serves its purpose, and has already proved of the greatest assistance in the settlement of Central Asia.

The direction followed by the railway coincides with the Russo-Persian frontier for a considerable portion of its length. Its western terminus, after being twice changed, is now established at Krasnovodsk, the principal

distances between the more important stations being as follows:

Krasnovodsk	to	Kizil Arvat	190	miles.
Kizil Arvat	„	Askabad	136	„
Askabad	„	Merv	214	„
Merv	„	Charjui	147	„
Charjui	„	Bokhara	66	„
Bokhara	„	Samarcand	175	„
Samarcand	„	Tashkend	187	„

For a long time Samarcand remained the terminus of the line, it being decided to postpone its further construction until the existing portion brought in a return on its cost, and so the capital of Turkestan was for a number of years left out in the cold. There were various reasons for this delay, among which the most notable was the necessity of constructing a bridge across the Jaxartes, an undertaking which the previous experience gained in the building of that across the Oxus had caused to be dreaded. During the past fifteen months the work of pushing the line on to Tashkend has been in active progress and is now practically completed, while a branch from Samarcand to Khokand and Andijan is in operation.

Throughout the construction of the Central Asiatic railway, the only object kept in view has been the strategic consolidation of the country. In no one instance has the line been diverted for a single verst in order to meet the convenience of trade or the population. Many of the stations are placed at a great distance from the towns they serve, and the first duty of the line is invariably regarded as being to serve the requirements of the army and enable the military authorities to visit the various posts with ease. The station at Merv is at some distance from the town and placed on the reverse side of the Murghab, the reason being that it is the only important station between that river and the Tejend, where rolling stock is kept so as to be ready for immediate use in the event of it being desired to move troops on to the Afghan frontier, and by being

placed on the left bank of the river they would remain available even if the bridges over both streams were destroyed. The vital importance of this point is more marked now that the Murghab railway is completed, as it secures the possibility of an attack on Herat at a few hours' notice.

The station at Bokhara is more than ten miles from the capital, the object being to prevent the population seizing the railway in the event of a rising, and for similar reasons many of the other stations are placed far afield. Throughout its entire length the Central Asiatic railway may be said to threaten the Afghan frontier by connecting the various military posts and enabling a large force to be poured at any moment across the frontier into Herat by way of Kushk, or *viâ* the Oxus by Kerki to Balkh, and while the military strength maintained in Central Asia is sufficient to enable a considerable army to be mobilised at a few hours' notice, the direct access afforded by the railway to the Caspian, whence limitless additions can be brought from Europe, allows of the concentration of any army which might be requisitioned for the end in view.

The great question at present agitating the government of Turkestan is the continuation of the Central Asiatic railway. Several schemes have been propounded, each possessing some advantage, which is in turn decried by its opponents. The whole question turns on the peculiar characteristics inherent to the character of the Russian Tchinovik, who has generally personal motives to consider and personal jealousies to indulge, which frequently lead to positions the reverse of creditable. It has indeed happened, more than once, that the construction of the railway has been temporarily stayed owing to the enmity between high officials in charge of different portions of the line. And at one time the work of spanning the Oxus, which is crossed at Charjui by a bridge a mile and a quarter in length, was delayed for some months owing to the officer in command on the Caspian section of the line refusing to forward the

necessary supplies of timber which remained in his control. The administration of Central Asia generally appears to have a considerable leavening of corruption in its methods, corruption which at times outgrows the possibility of official condonation. This subject has attracted the attention of most of the independent visitors to Turkestan. It was dealt with at length by Mr. Schuyler in his famous book, it has been referred to by Mr. Dobson in his letters to *The Times*, and was commented on by Lord Curzon in his account of his visit to the country in 1889. The mischief has doubtless somewhat decreased of late years, the wholesale dismissal of officials throughout the district which occurred nine years ago having served as a salutary lesson, but there can be little doubt but that a good deal takes place in Central Asia which is not in accordance with the instructions issued by the chiefs of the Asiatic department in St. Petersburg.

To revert to the future of the line. Its present termini are at Tashkend and Andijan. The latter branch can wait awhile, as it already opens up the principal military posts of Ferganah, but the surrounding country is a mountainous one, and the need for a direct line to the border of Chinese Turkestan is not pressing. The main line is, however, differently situated, and while Tashkend is at last placed in direct communication with the Caspian, it can only be reached by traversing the entire length of the railway through Central Asia. A far more direct route to Moscow and St. Petersburg would be supplied by a railway from Tashkend along the Jaxartes valley to Orenburg, where the existing European system of railways would be joined. The construction of such a line would bring several advantages to Central Asia. The distance from Orenburg to Tashkend is roughly nine hundred miles, and the route would be Chemkend, Turkestan, the forts along the Jaxartes, and Orsk, thus opening up a new line of country, and, what is more important, doing away with the voyage across the Caspian. The reasons urged against this

scheme are instructive. It is held by the authorities of Transcaspia that the provision of an alternative route to the valleys of Bokhara and Ferganah would prove disastrous to the existing railway and would deplete the trade of the Caspian. The authorities regard the construction of a more direct line as threatening the prospects of the existing one, and for this reason the strongest opposition is certain to be brought to bear against such a scheme. The alternative plan to the Orenburg extension is the continuation of the railway from Tashkend along the eastern side of Lake Balkash to Semipalatinsk, and from thence to Omsk, where the existing Siberian railway would be met, and this plan possesses certain strategic advantages in the connecting of the military bases of Siberia with those of Central Asia. For these reasons it may be regarded as highly probable that the later scheme would be adopted.

It still remains to glance at the actual military advantages afforded by the Central Asiatic railway. From the moment of the inception of the original scheme, its influence on any future expedition to the Indian frontier has been kept steadily in view. All other considerations have been made subsidiary to this, and it must be admitted that so far as affording an opportunity for the mobilisation of an army on the Afghan frontier, or even the seizure of Herat, the existing arrangements are practically perfect. The view held by the late General Annenkoff, who designed and constructed the whole of the line to Samarcand, in this regard is worthy of quotation :—

'Henceforth the Transcaspian region—the theatre of future events of universal importance—will be a reliable forepost, whence Russia may successfully counteract the hostile designs of England. Russian troops from the bases of Kazan or the Caucasus have only 360 versts[1] from the Tejend station to Herat, 430 versts[2] from Herat to Kandahar, 200[3] from Kandahar to Quetta, and 320[4] from Quetta to the valley of the Indus, altogether 1310 versts, or 867 miles. The troops of Turkestan, in order to reach the same destination, have only 1290[5] versts to go from the station of Merv.

[1] 238 miles. [2] 285. [3] 132. [4] 212. [5] 854 miles.

At the same time, from the Russian outpost of Kilif, on the Amu Daria, which is now directly united with the railway by regular steam navigation, there are only 400 versts[1] to Kabul, and thence less than 300 versts[2] to Peshawur, from which point the Indian railways would convey the army into the very heart of India.'

If any student of Russian action presumed that the forward policy in Central Asia had been ended, the idea would be disposed of by the recent opening of the Murghab river branch railway which now runs from Merv to Kushk post, within five miles of the Afghan frontier. This line, which has a total length of two hundred and twenty miles, has been built to enable Russia to throw an army into Herat at any moment desired, and though the work has been in progress for a considerable time, it has been done so quietly as to apparently have escaped the notice of European politicians. The completion of this undertaking supplies a fresh piece of evidence, if any be needed, of Russia's intentions. It would be simply absurd to attempt to justify the undertaking on the score either of the development of the commerce or resources of Central Asia, or of the protection of the Russian frontier. The terminus of the railway is at the apex of the triangular strip of Afghan territory which was awarded to Russia by the frontier commission of 1885-7. The military station which has been constructed at this extreme point of Russian territory is on a scale quite out of proportion to the needs of the situation, and the strength of men maintained there in itself conveys a standing threat to the surrounding region of Afghanistan. The whole position bears out the forecast made by Baron Jomini, one of the Russian Under-Secretaries of State, to Lord Dufferin in 1879. Discussing the scheme for the construction of the Asiatic railway, he said:—

'Although we don't intend to do anything which may be interpreted into a menace to England, you must not deceive yourself; for the result of our present proceedings will be to furnish us with a base of operations against England hereafter, should the British

[1] 265 miles. [2] 198 miles.

Government, by the occupation of Herat, threaten our present position in Central Asia.'[1]

One of the side issues raised by General Annenkoff in connection with his scheme for the construction of the railway, was a branch line from Merv, through Afghanistan to India, which would bring the Punjab within a nine days' journey from London. According to this proposal, the existing line was to be prolonged from the station at Merv to Herat, which would form the terminus of the Russian section. The British section was to be constructed from Herat to Sibi, where it would join the Indian system of railways. The idea was practically a replacement of the old Euphrates valley scheme, with the difference that the only sea-passage necessary would be that across the Caspian, taking thirty-six hours. While under certain circumstances such a railway would possess undoubted advantages, more especially in connection with the conveyance of mails, etc., it possesses at least one fatal drawback, inasmuch as it is not conceivable that Russia would permit it being used for the conveyance of British troops, and its existence would therefore enable Russia to invade India while preventing Great Britain from strengthening her defences.

During the past year or so, a modification of this scheme has been proposed by Russian engineers which finds considerable favour in Muscovite military circles. It is for an extension of the recently completed branch from Merv to Kushk post which is to be carried on by Herat and Kandahar to Kelat; and if any doubts exist as to the probability of such a railway being seriously undertaken, it is only necessary to inquire of any Englishman recently returned from Quetta or Baluchistan as to the signs of Russian activity which have for some time past been in evidence in that neighbourhood. Such a railway once constructed would do much to satisfy the most ardent desires of Russian politicians. It would provide direct access to the Arabian Sea, would facilitate aggression

[1] Blue-Book *Central Asia*, i. 1880.

in South-east Persia, and above all would outflank the British position on the Indian frontier. The fact that the carrying of the line through Afghanistan would involve considerable engineering difficulties need not be taken into account in face of the many equally difficult undertakings which have been completed by Russia for political ends. It is of course probable that the construction of this railway would be rendered impossible by the action of the Indian Government, but this is a matter which is open to discussion, depending, as it does, as much on the government which happens to be in power at the time, as on the astuteness with which Russia fixes her opportunity.

It may be well before leaving the subject of the Central Asiatic railway if we inquire into the effect it has had as a civilising influence among the peoples of Transcaspia and Turkestan. It is remarkable that its construction was carried out practically without any interference from either the nomads or the settled inhabitants. This was probably due to the severity of the lessons which had been inflicted on them by Russian arms; and the only incidents of note which marked the opening of the line were occasional quarrels arising from individual feeling or misunderstanding. The whole line was constructed under military supervision, the labourers invariably worked under the guard of Cossack pickets, and every station was in charge of a number of soldiers who were responsible for the maintenance of order. In the first few days of its working existence some Cossacks lost their lives at the hands of natives who did not take kindly to the traffic regulations, one instance occurring in which a Turkoman responded to a touch on the shoulder, given as a hint to stand back from the train which was about to start, by producing his knife and ripping up the Cossack. But, all things considered, the railway has worked very smoothly from the first, and while it cannot claim to have affected very much either the morals or the civilisation of the individual natives, it has undoubtedly assisted largely in bringing about an

appreciation of the power of the Russian Government and rendering anything in the nature of a rising extremely unlikely. On the other hand, the eccentricities of management inseparable from military control hampered the development of the line as a freight carrier, and although the competition of the road reduced the cost of camel transport something like seventy-five per cent., the difficulties made in the forwarding of goods speedily brought the price up again, and the general result cannot be said to have equalled expectations. In one respect the line has caused a remarkable development. I refer to the cotton-raising industry of Bokhara, which, owing to the transport facilities afforded, has been vastly increased of late years. One of the most remarkable results of the railroad is the effect it has had on the caravans which every year wend their way from all parts of Asia to Meshed. By a brilliant inspiration, soon after the completion of the line, Annenkoff caused a number of notices to be printed in native dialects and posted at the various stations as well as in all the towns of Central Asia, in which pilgrims were offered passage to Astrabad, the nearest point to the Holy City, at nominal fares. The result was surprising, and the venture proved so successful that whole trains are each spring crowded by pious Mussulmen, who have abandoned the time-honoured ship of the desert in favour of the iron steed.

Regarded as a strategic railway the Central Asiatic is an undoubted success. Not only does it secure to Russia all that she has seized, but it enables her at any moment to mobilise her armies preparatory to seizing more. As an ultimate means of developing the commerce of the Khanates, the undertaking would probably eventually prove a valuable factor. As a civilising influence, a means for the education or refinement of the people, it cannot claim to have achieved any great measure of success, nor has it hitherto succeeded in attracting to the country any noteworthy addition to its sparse population. Like most of the railways of Russia the line is designed, not for the development of the Empire,

but for its extension, and the continuance of Muscovite aggression.

The Siberian railway was called into existence by a very different method from that employed in the case of the Central Asiatic. The latter was constructed by the genius of an enthusiast, who was held personally responsible for the undertaking to which he devoted all his energies. Starting with a settled plan, he succeeded by sheer strength of character and endless resource in triumphing over every difficulty as it arose, and in the result the line stands an admirable example of success attained under difficulties. The Siberian railway was entrusted to a committee, which, possessing little information, and the most limited knowledge of the country concerned, was bound to make many mistakes. As a result, the plan of the line has been materially modified more than once, and the undertaking, when completed, will vary considerably from the original scheme. The decision arrived at by the committee, shortly after its appointment, in 1891, was for the construction of a trunk line across Siberia to Khabarovka, and thence through the Primorsk province to Vladivostok. The total distance of the line from Cheliabinsk, the then limit of the European system of Russian railways, was 4741 miles, and for purposes of construction the whole scheme was divided into seven sections of different length, the limits being for the most part decided by the incidence of the great rivers requiring bridging. It was decreed that the undertaking should be commenced simultaneously at both ends; and the visit of the then Tsarevitch to the eastern limits of the empire, in 1891, was made the occasion of formally inaugurating the great undertaking. The first barrowful of earth was moved with much ceremony by the present Tsar at Vladivostok, and rapid progress was made at both ends. The original plan was to continue the Riazan and Samara line from Moscow, through Western Siberia to Krasnoyarsk and Irkutsk. Thence it was to be carried round the north end of Lake Baikal to

Nerchinsk, whence the valley of the Amur was to be followed to Khabarovka and Vladivostok, but as the necessary surveys proceeded, it was found that the country to the north of Lake Baikal was unsuited to the construction of the railway, and it was determined to carry the line round the southern end instead. By this route the distance between St. Petersburg and Vladivostok would be 5912 miles.[1]

The construction of the Ussuri branch from Khabarovka to the Pacific terminus of the line was facilitated by the easiness of the country traversed, and by the end of 1895 the whole section was completed. Meanwhile the railway was being pushed on from Cheliabinsk, through Petropavlovsk to Omsk, and the completion of the surveys about this time revealed the fact, that except for the bridging of the Yenisei at Krasnoiarsk, and of the Oka at Zimensk, there were no difficulties of any magnitude west of Irkutsk. The report respecting the country to the south of Lake Baikal was, however, discouraging. Many serious difficulties were reported, including steep gradients, high embankments, deep cuttings through the solid rock, and a tunnel 12,530 feet long. It was therefore decided to leave this section awhile, and as an alternative, to prolong the road from Irkutsk to Taltsinskai, on the margin of the lake; whence the train could be conveyed across the twenty miles of water to the opposite shore, where the line could be resumed and continued through Verkhne-Udinsk, Chita, and Nerchinsk, to the Amur valley. The first section of the line at the European end was completed in 1896, and in 1897 trains were run as far as Omsk. Nijni Udinsk was reached in 1898, and in the beginning

[1] The sections of the line were as follows :—

1. Cheliabinsk to the River Ob,	885	miles.
2. River Ob to Irkutsk,	1169	"
3. Irkutsk to Misovskaya,	195	"
4. Misovskaya to Stretyinsk,	637	"
5. Stretyinsk to Khabarovka,	1333	"
6. Khabarovka to Grafskaya,	231	"
7. Grafskaya to Vladivostok,	255	"

of the present year the train service was extended to Irkutsk. The construction of the Trans-Baikal section of the railway is still only partially decided on, and it is highly probable that the line, as originally designed, will not be constructed for many years to come.

Apart from the engineering difficulties of construction, the portion of the road east of Lake Baikal, which passes through the valley of the Amur, was found to be periodically visited by such heavy floods, that no earthwork could be expected to resist the pressure, and in the autumn of 1897 a stretch of 200 miles which had been constructed from Stretyinsk to Mitrophan was entirely swept away. It is therefore probable that the railway will not be carried beyond Nerchinsk, in the direction originally intended, but will be diverted thence across Manchuria, as authorised in the Manchurian railway agreement already referred to. The communication between Nerchinsk and Khabarovka will be maintained by means of steamers plying along the Amur.

Reverting to that portion of the line already in operation, the distance from Cheliabinsk, where a junction is effected with the Moscow railway, to Irkutsk, is a distance of 1910 miles; the entire route from St. Petersburg to Irkutsk being 3500 miles. The whole of this distance has been completed, excepting for the gaps at the two rivers already named, but although the railway has not been long constructed, and its traffic is of the lightest, it is an open secret that a very considerable proportion of the road is unsafe, and requires reconstruction. This fact is due to several causes, of which the chief are the haste and want of skill in the construction of the earthworks, and the lack of strength and poor quality of the material. The rails which are laid on the universal Russian gauge of five feet, weigh only sixteen pounds to the foot, and are fixed to the permanent way, by being spiked to the sleepers through holes in the flange. No 'chairs' are used, and it is no rare incident for a train to be considerably delayed while the track is adjusted for its continued progress. The

embankments have also sunk in many parts of the line, and constant attention is necessary to allow the traffic being maintained. These defects are about to be remedied, and a careful survey is now in progress (April 1899), which will probably result in the removal of the existing rails, and their replacement by heavier ones. The traffic arrangements up to the present are not very extensive, and the principal use of the line is the conveyance of emigrants from European Russia, who are being sent in large numbers to the arable districts of Siberia, which it is hoped will thus become gradually developed. The railway at present working is divided into two portions. That from Cheliabinsk to the River Ob, known as the West Siberian Railway, which is served by tri-weekly trains, doing the distance of 825 miles in from 65 to 70 hours; and a continuation from the other bank of the River Ob to Irkutsk, a distance of 1169 miles, which is covered in about 80 hours, by less convenient services. The passage of the River Ob, like that across the Yenisei has, for the present, to be performed by steam ferry, entailing a change of trains, and considerable delay in the journey; but both rivers will in time be spanned by iron bridges, which are already in course of construction, and the whole journey to Irkutsk will probably be feasible without change of trains before the close of the century.

The section of the line which will unite Nerchinsk with Vladivostok and Port Arthur is not yet fully surveyed. The work is, however, in active progress, and in certain districts, notably at its southern end, and in the neighbourhood of some of the larger towns, the works are actually in progress. No particular difficulties are likely to be experienced in the construction of this railway, which will be little over 1270 miles in length, of which 950 miles will be in Manchurian territory.

The probable results of the Siberian railway are to-day being actively discussed in Russian circles. The original idea which led to the construction of the line was two-fold: the objects included the development of the

trade and resources of Siberia, and the furtherance of Russian policy on the Pacific. It is beginning to be realised by Russian thinkers that the fulfilment of neither of these objects is likely to be achieved in the near future to an extent sufficient to repay the immense amount of capital sunk in the construction and maintenance of the line. The saving in the cost of transporting the convicts and political prisoners sent into exile by the use of the iron road is doubtless considerable, but the traffic is too small to produce even a percentage of interest on the outlay, and while the recent opening of the central section brought an immediate increase in the number of emigrants carried, it is by no means certain that the emigration movement is likely to continue, and it is already asserted that large numbers of recent settlers in the Trans-Baikal and Amur districts have given up their allotments and returned to European Russia. The return therefore to be expected under the first heading is likely, for some time at least, to be extremely small, while regarded from a strategic point of view, the railway, in its present form at least, is practically non-effective. The utility of a single line for the conveyance of large bodies of men over even restricted areas is well known to be extremely limited, and the liability of communications being broken very great. In the case of a trunk line traversing upwards of 4000 miles the shortcomings are largely increased, and the possibility of Russia's being able to convey an army, with all its *impedimenta*, across Northern Asia by means of a railway, cheaply constructed of indifferent materials and badly equipped, is one which must be regarded as largely a matter of trust in Providence. On the other hand, there can be no question but that Russia is already benefiting in prestige by the construction of this line. The lay mind is so accustomed to regard a railway as being the natural and easy means of conveying anything which it is called upon to convey, that it does not pause to consider the special requirements involved in the dealing with large bodies of troops.

Military men, however, who have had occasion to take part in mobilisation experiments know better, and I have no hesitation in asserting, that even with the Trans-Manchurian railway in full working order, it would take as long to convey an army from European Russia to the Pacific across Siberia as it does now to take them over the same distance by sea. And in the event of the experiment being made, the entire absorption of the railway resources necessary for the end in view, together with the continued stress entailed by the conveyance of the requisite commissariat and stores, would be likely to seriously damage the prosperity of the scattered population, who, for many years to come, must be entirely dependent on the line for most of their supplies. And beyond this, the completion of the road is yet a long way off, for it is one thing to run a tri-weekly train service at the rate of fourteen miles an hour, with frequent interruptions and breakdowns; but quite another to maintain a constant succession of military trains, which, on a system traversing the entire width of Asia, would necessitate a quantity of engines and rolling stock, such as is not to-day to be found in the entire continent.

For all of which reasons I consider it safe to opine that however hopeful the views of Russian experts as to the future of the Siberian railway may be, its influence on the dominating power of Russia over the Pacific seaboard is being greatly exaggerated. In addition to which there are other considerations, which I hope to deal with later on, which point to the weakening rather than the strengthening of Russian influence in Northern Asia.

The future prospects of the Siberian railway, gauged from a disinterested standpoint, are, however, entirely distinct from the aims of its designers, and it is no secret that the principal object of the urgent haste which is being made to complete the undertaking is to strengthen, not so much the Russian power of defence on the Chinese frontier, as her capacity for aggression.

The claim for the complete control of the Manchurian railway has already been conceded to the Russian agents, as has also her right to a voice in the development of the eighteen provinces. By dint of a persistent policy of insistence, she has obtained the right of constructing at least one important railway in China proper, besides enjoying a suzerain influence over the trunk line which is to unite the northern capital with the centre of the Yangtse Valley, and it does not need any great gift of prophecy to foresee that in due time a demand will be made for connections between these disunited systems; a demand which, if conceded, would imply the placing of the most productive districts of the empire under Russian dominion. And Russia will be careful only to make the demand at a moment when circumstances combine to insure that her request is conceded, even if by the employment of force.

Among the Russian schemes for future railways there is one which, while as yet barely suggested, is of paramount interest in its future possibilities. The line in question runs from Peking *viâ* Ching Ting, Tai Yuen, and Sigan, uniting the modern and the ancient capitals of China, and opening up the heart of the fertile province of Shensi. There is doubtless considerable wealth awaiting the enterprising trader in this out-of-the-way district of the middle kingdom; but it is, at the first glance, somewhat difficult to understand how it is that Russian capitalists, possessed of so many openings for the investment of their capital in engineering undertakings within the empire, should care to invest in a railway situated more than a thousand miles from the Russian frontier, and in the heart of a country noted neither for the friendliness of its people nor the stability of its rule. The explanation is twofold: in the first place, the construction of railways is the favourite method employed by Russia in the conquest of its neighbours. Beginning with the line itself, its constructors soon find themselves possessed of an excuse for the protection of their interests upon it, and by small degrees, the despatch of military missions of

varying proportions clears the way to diplomatic negotiations, which terminate, by means of mutual treaties of support, in a protectorate, followed by final absorption. In this direction Russia's methods are extremely ingenious, but they lack variety. The process recently begun in China is but a repetition of that which proved so marked a success in Central Asia. In the interests of peace war must not be declared, but friendly relations, cultivated under a suggestion of available force, are used, until the right of interference is attained, and finally Russian rule is established for the preservation of peace under threats of war.

The second and equally important reason which has prompted the obtaining of the concession for the Shensi railway is the future construction of a second trans-continental line uniting the Caspian with the Pacific. The route suggested for this road is a continuation of the Central Asiatic railway from Tashkend by Vernoe and Kulja to Peking, and the building of the line from Peking to Sigan will mark the completion of the eastern section of the future circuit. Ambitious as this scheme may sound, it has long been rescued from the region of suggestion. It has occupied the attention alike of the Ministry of War, the Ministry of Ways and Communications, and the Asiatic Department for the past two years, and the only points which remain for settlement are the exact route to be traversed across the deserts of Jungaria and Gobi between Kulja and Lanchow.

Nor are these the only dreams of Russian ambition. In South-West Asia are a number of possible designs which, if they prove feasible, will tend to speedily attain the fondest hopes of Muscovite ambition. Since Northern Persia has become a Russian province, endless schemes have been proposed for the opening up of Iran. Certain of these are remarkable only for the ingenuity of their design, others more practical have been under consideration at St. Petersburg, and when opportunity occurs, some one or more will be proceeded with. Among these schemes is a line from Tiflis to Tabriz and Teheran,

whence, it is suggested, it might be prolonged even to the Persian Gulf. Without stopping to consider how such a scheme seriously commenced would be regarded by the British Government, I pass on to the next proposal, which unites Astrabad with Herat *viâ* Meshed, and last, but by no means least, is a continuation of the present advanced line at Kushk post to Herat, Kandahar, Kelat, and Sonmiani. As this railway would outflank the frontier of British India, traverse a portion of Baluchistan which is under British influence, and terminate on the Arabian Sea, at a point within sixty miles of Karachi, it is not likely that it will be undertaken so long as this country maintains its present position in the East. While, therefore, the last scheme does not call for more than mention, it must be admitted that this is not the case with the others. Of the fixed determination on the part of Russia to obtain an open port on the Persian Gulf or Red Sea there cannot be the slightest question. So deeply impressed are her ministers with the necessity of this, that they would probably be prepared to risk all but a war against a combination of European Powers in its attainment, and, failing other means, if her favourite methods of pledges and promises withdrawn fail to obtain that which she so keenly covets, she will seek but for an opportunity in order to achieve her purpose.

And who is there to stay her hand? In her aims in Persia or Arabia, just as on the Black Sea or the Gulf of Pechili there is only one power whose interests form a barrier to her desires. In every part of Asia are the aims of Russia cramped by the command of Britain, but for whom the empire of the Tsar would be doubled as soon as time would serve for occupation. And it is Britain only that stands between this Russia and her heart's desire—the part of a naval power in the councils of the world. The position cannot thus endure for ever, and the time is surely approaching when the matter must be settled, either by the achievement of the hopes of Russia or their abandonment. The first could only be

attained with the consent of England, the second by the defeat of Russia, for whatever pledges she may make or treaties she may sign, so long as she possesses the power, so long will she await the opportunity for the attainment of her aim.

CHAPTER X

RUSSIA AND ENGLAND FACE TO FACE

Anomalies in Russian policy—Rivalry between Russia and England—Origin of this—History of conflict between Russia and India—Afghan War—Conquest of Central Asia—Compact of 1844—Crimean War—Position of Russia in Turkestan—Gortchakoff's Circular of 1864—Reception accorded it in England—Lord Clarendon's proposal for declaring neutrality of Afghanistan—Russo-Afghan frontier of 1872—Schouvaloff's assurances respecting Khiva—Lord Palmerston's summary of Russian methods—Russian mission to Kabul—Second Afghan War—Altered Russo-Persian frontier—Sarakhs—Merv—The Key of Herat—Russian assurances—Russian duplicity—Lazareff's message—Afghan Frontier Commission—Rawal Pindi Conference—Russian advance on Penjdeh—British concessions—Batum—Pamirs dispute.

THE antagonism which exists between Russia and England throughout Asia has been developed by force of circumstances and without the seeking of either nation. Unlike the rivalries among most Powers, it is neither due to racial hatred nor to that craving for martial glory which has been responsible for so many of the bloodiest wars in the history of the world. It has arisen by slow degrees from small beginnings, until it has become a second instinct along the frontiers on which the rule or interests of the rival nations touch.

That this should be the case is the more remarkable when considered in connection with the leading characteristics of either Power. Russia is the most backward of the realms of civilisation. Her resources are undeveloped, her territory vast and thinly populated. The obvious aim should, one would suppose, be to educate her people and develop her heritage; to strengthen her empire, and to join the march of progress in the company of her neighbours. England, with her vast population and her

restricted area, might well seek opportunities for the enlargement of the territories beneath her rule, and the further development of her trade. And yet these suggested policies are reversed. Russia, with her surplus of land and her paucity of people, her undeveloped wealth and her exhausted budget, is ever agog for yet more territory, the acquisition of which will still further impoverish what she has, and deplete her resources beyond their present limit. Great Britain, with every inducement to forge ahead, refrains from conquest and restricts her efforts to the further development of what she owns, resting content with the mission she has set herself, to benefit the people over whom it is her destiny to rule.

The rivalry between Great Britain and Russia for dominion in Asia is of recent growth. The opening up of India coincided with the discovery of Siberia, and while each nation was busy with the furtherance of its schemes on opposite sides of the continent, neither followed the actions of the other, nor, one would have supposed, was there the slightest chance of a death struggle arising between them. But as each extended its influence and enlarged its boundaries, the distance between became diminished, until, encouraged by the successes she had achieved, Russia cast envious eyes around, and hungered for the more favoured territories possessed by her neighbour in the south. And so was heard at the beginning of the present century the scheme for the conquest of Hindostan, which, once uttered, took hold of men's minds, and has never since been dropped.

The resources of Great Britain were able to cope with any alarm resulting from such a threat. But all the same it was desirable to be prepared, and from time to time steps were taken to explore the country which separated British India from Asiatic Russia. The results attained were satisfactory. The territories beyond the British border consisted, for the most part, either of mountain ranges or of sandy deserts, interspersed here and there with oases of varying extent peopled by fierce and warlike nomads, impatient of control, and likely to

maintain their own against all comers. And so the rulers of India took comfort in the fact that not only would a Russian attack on India be an extremely difficult undertaking, but that the boundaries of the Tsar's domain would be for all time separated from the Indian frontier by the deserts, the mountains and the tribes which rendered communications extremely hazardous.

The actual conflict between Russia and India may be said to date from the attempt to take Herat made at the suggestion of Russia by a Persian army, reinforced and commanded by Russians, in 1838. Thanks to the ability of Eldred Pottinger the attempt proved unsuccessful, but it opened the eyes of the British to the aims of Russia, and led to important developments. Realising that it was necessary to checkmate the diplomacy of the Tsar, Lord Palmerston gave instructions for the cultivation of an understanding with the Shah of Persia, and an alliance with the Ameer of Afghanistan. The former was not a matter of great difficulty, but the people of Kabul were divided among themselves, and the throne of Dost Mahommed was in peril. So the Indian Government opened up relations with Sha Suja ul Mulk, whom it supported against the ruling prince. This course, opposed to all reason as it now appears, was adopted not from any desire to assist in the elevation of the pretender, but entirely in the hope of stopping the march of Russian influence in Afghanistan, and by supporting Sha Suja, to bring him into a faithful alliance with Great Britain.

The war which ensued is ancient history, with which every schoolboy should be acquainted. The taking of Kabul, the murder of Sir William Macnaghten, and the disastrous retreat of the British, left the Afghans masters of the situation. Dost Mahommed regained his throne, and promptly set about making alliances, with the object of overthrowing British rule in India. The battle of Gujerat again changed the position, and the Ameer, deciding to make a virtue of necessity, approached the English with an offer of friendship.

The offer was accepted, and an alliance concluded at

Peshawur in March 1855, in the hope that by it the Russian advance towards the Indian frontier would be stayed. But this expectation was short-lived, for Russia took the first opportunity of manifesting the paternal interest taken by her in the affairs of Herat. The death of Yar Mahomed Khan in 1851 had occasioned much anxiety in that Khanate, owing to the action taken by the Shah, who attempted to have a voice in the nomination of his successor. The British minister at Teheran, who was able to discount the Russian influence brought to bear on the succession, succeeded in arranging a convention between Persia and England, in which the Shah undertook never again to attempt to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan. The Ameer was then nominated Khan of Herat by England, but did not succeed in ousting the claims of Ahmed Khan, his nephew. In 1855 Persia again sent an army against Herat, which was taken without difficulty. England at once declared war against Persia, and by dint of a small expedition sent to the Persian Gulf, speedily brought the king of kings to his senses. Peace was eventually arranged by the Treaty of Paris, which conveyed to England the right of appointing consuls wherever Russian consulates had been established in Persia.

The events of the first Afghan War had served to show the ease with which Herat might be seized from without, and the rapidly developing distrust of Russian aims about this time began to prompt the direction of British policy on the Indian frontier. Nor were the English satisfied with the advantages gained by the Treaty of Paris. The outer frontiers of Afghanistan were surveyed, and found to be ruled by a number of petty khans, who proved a constant menace owing to dissensions among themselves. In a few years Dost Mahommed, supported by British prestige, succeeded in bringing these under his rule, the new province thus acquired being known as Afghan Turkestan, extending as far as the Oxus, which separated the territories of the Ameer from those of the Emir of Bokhara.

The death of Dost Mahommed in 1863 produced the customary trouble throughout the empire he had so greatly strengthened. Various claimants disputed the succession, and although England supported the claims of Shere Ali, the son whom Dost Mahommed had appointed his heir, the country became divided against itself, and Kabul, Herat, and Kandahar were at one time held by three different claimants to the throne.

While these events had been in progress, Russia had been making preparations for the future conquest of Central Asia. It was undoubtedly the news of her activity which prompted the Government of India to take the course it did for the control of Afghanistan.

Nor was the action of England limited to the domination of Afghanistan. Agents were sent out to the Khanates to inquire as to the prospects of a Russian advance, and the reports of these did much to dissipate the ignorance which prevailed as to the country and its rulers. The account published by Wolff, the missionary, of his visit to Merv in 1831, and of Lieutenant Burnes, of his tour in Bokhara in the following year, served to impress the importance of these places as advanced posts on the panic-mongers; and the disastrous expedition of Perovski against Khiva encouraged the British to send Major Abbott, and Colonels Richmond and Shakespear, to Merv, Khiva, and Bokhara, where they were unsuccessful in obtaining the release of Lieutenant Conolly who still languished in the clutches of the Emir.

The secret mission of Lieutenant Vitkievitch to the court of Dost Mahommed in 1837 did not tend to reassure British opinion as to the aims of Russia in that part of Asia, nor did the amicable agreement drawn up between the Tsar Nicholas and Lord Aberdeen, respecting the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire, tend to alter the conviction that the Asiatic policy of the Tsar was the reverse of friendly to Great Britain.

Part of the understanding of 1844 referred to the Asiatic Question, and it was agreed that 'the Khanates of Central Asia should be left by Russia to form a neutral

zone between the two empires, so as to preserve them from dangerous contact.' So long as this undertaking was respected by Russia, there was small chance of any trouble arising in Asia between the two Powers. And the result is seen in the fact that for nearly ten years the pledge was kept, and nothing occurred to disturb the friendly relations, until the outbreak of the Crimean War, which was made the opportunity for the commencement of serious operations against the Khanates, terminating only in their final absorption by Russia.

The disastrous outcome of Russia's attempt to gain Constantinople, which ended in the death of Nicholas, did not result in remodelling of Russian policy. Alexander II., whose first act was to end hostilities with England and her allies, and announce his intention of pursuing a policy of peace and domestic reform, was in reality only adopting a change in the aims marked out by his predecessor. Within twelve months of the signing of the Treaty of Paris, he decided to attempt to gain from the Asiatic side that which had proved unattainable from the European. Failing the ability to seize Constantinople by sea, he decided to march against it by land through Asia Minor, and marched an army of 150,000 men into the Caucasus as the first step in the venture. And after a struggle on the part of the people, such as has probably never been exceeded in bitterness, or the heroism displayed, the province was declared an appanage of Russia; and the highway to Asiatic Turkey was secured.

The outbreak of the Indian Mutiny served as further encouragement to the Russian aim. Missions were despatched to Central Asia to prepare the way for future action. Ignatieff visited Khiva and Bokhara, and Khanikoff ventured as far as Herat itself. In 1859 forts Chulak and Yani Kurgan were captured, and Tchernaieff set out on his famous tour of conquest against Khokand, which opened with the taking of Chemkend and Turkestan.

As soon as the news of this new campaign reached

England a general outcry arose. Questions were asked in Parliament, and the newspapers began to talk of war with Russia. This was only what had been foreseen by the authorities at St. Petersburg, and Prince Gortchakoff, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and confidential adviser to the Tsar, proceeded to allay the apprehensions which had arisen by the issue of his famous Circular, dated the 21st November 1864, containing the first of those expressions of Russian policy, which supply so eloquent a commentary on Russian action in Central Asia. The chief points in this historic document are as follows :—

'The position of Russia in Central Asia is that of all civilised states which are brought into contact with half-savage nomad populations possessing no fixed social organisation.

'In such cases, the more civilised state is forced in the interest of the security of its frontier, and its commercial relations, to exercise a certain ascendancy over their turbulent and undesirable neighbours. Raids and acts of pillage must be put down. To do this, the tribes on the frontier must be reduced to a state of submission. This result once attained, these tribes take to more peaceful habits, but are in turn exposed to the attacks of the more distant tribes against whom the State is bound to protect them. Hence the necessity of distant, costly, and periodically recurring expeditions against an enemy whom his social organisation makes it impossible to seize. If, the robbers once punished, the expedition is withdrawn, the lesson is soon forgotten; its withdrawal is put down to weakness. It is a peculiarity of Asiatics to respect nothing but visible and palpable force. The moral force of reasoning has no hold on them.

'In order to put a stop to this state of permanent disorder, fortified posts are established in the midst of these hostile tribes, and an influence is brought to bear upon them which reduces them by degrees to a state of submission. But other more distant tribes beyond this outer line come in turn to threaten the same dangers, and necessitate the same measures of repression. The State is thus forced to choose between two alternatives—either to give up this endless labour, and to abandon its frontier to perpetual disturbance, or to plunge deeper and deeper into barbarous countries, when the difficulties and expenses increase with every step in advance.

'Such has been the fate of every country which has found itself in a similar position. The United States in America, France in

Algeria, Holland in her Colonies, England in India; all have been forced by imperious necessity into this onward march, where the greatest difficulty is to know where to stop.

'Such have been the reasons which have led the Imperial Government to take up, first, a position resting, on one side, on the Sir Daria, on the other, the Lake of Issik Kul, and to strengthen these lines by advanced forts.

'It has been judged indispensable that our two fortified lines, one extending from China to the Lake of Issik Kul, the other from the Sea of Aral, along the Sir Daria, should be united by fortified points, so that all posts should be in a position of mutual support leaving no gap through which nomad tribes might make their inroads and depredations with impunity.

'Our original frontier line along the Sir Daria to Fort Perovski, on the one side, and on the other, to Lake Issik Kul, had the drawback of being almost on the verge of the desert. It was broken by a wide gap between the two extreme points; it did not offer sufficient resources to our troops, and left unsettled tribes over the back with which any settled arrangement became impossible.

'In spite of our unwillingness to extend our frontier, these motives had been powerful enough to induce the Imperial Government to establish this line between Issik Kul and the Sir Daria by fortifying the town of Chemkend, lately occupied by us. This line gives us a fertile country, partly inhabited by Kirghiz tribes, which have already accepted our rule, and it therefore offers favourable conditions for colonisation, and the supply of provisions to our garrisons. In the second place, it puts us in the neighbourhood of the agricultural and commercial population of Khokand.

'Such are the interests which inspire the policy of our august master in Central Asia.

'It is needless for me to lay stress on the interest which Russia evidently has not to increase her territory, and, above all, to avoid raising complications on her frontiers, which can but delay and paralyse her domestic development. Very frequently of late years the civilisation of these countries, which are her neighbours on the Continent of Asia, has been assigned to Russia as her special mission.'

The remarkable document of which the foregoing is a summary is in many ways interesting. It is the first official announcement of Russian policy in Asia, and it is based on undeniably sound premises. With exception perhaps of the paragraph dealing with the special mission of Russia, there is not a single statement in the circular

which is not based on fact, or which is open to criticism. The action taken by Russia up to that period was fully justified, and the aims about to be achieved, forecast. The only exception possible to be taken to the document as a whole is that pointed out by Colonel Malleson,[1] who suggests that Prince Gortchakoff implies, though he is careful to avoid stating definitely, that the final point of Russia's advance was reached in 1864.

While holding that the tenor of the circular is calculated to lead to such a conclusion, it must be admitted that the pleadings on which the conclusions reached in the document are based point to possibility of further encroachments in the event of those already attained being found to be insufficient to achieve the end in view; and while it is possible, as has been suggested, that the subsequent hostilities which arose in Bokhara were fomented by the action of Russian officers, the fact remains that the Khanate caused such trouble along the new Russian frontier as to justify the interference of the authorities.

The reception accorded the Circular of Prince Gortchakoff in this country was one of friendly toleration. The outspoken candour of the document, added to the suggested pledges it carried of future non-intervention, served to relieve the tension of the moment, and the British Government relapsed from a position of threatening protest into one of disinterested satisfaction.

It does not appear that the only practical course which suggests itself at such a juncture occurred to any one of the statesmen of the period, or if it did occur, it was abandoned from a dislike to incur the responsibility which such a policy would entail. The simplest expedient to be adopted in reply to the Russian Circular would have been to reciprocate the expressions used, and to propose a joint guaranteeing of the independence of the Khanate of Bokhara, which at the moment formed the buffer state between Turkestan and Afghanistan. Instead of this, the Circular was accorded the customary

[1] *The Russo-Afghan Question.*

diplomatic acknowledgment, and the matter was forgotten for some six months, when attention was once more directed towards Central Asia by the outbreak of the war with Bokhara, and the taking of Tashkend, Khokand, and Samarcand.

The progress of these events caused an amount of uneasiness in England and India which was not to be disarmed by the assurance reiterated from St. Petersburg that the Tsar 'had no desire to add to his dominions.' The news of the fall of Tashkend and Samarcand produced a sensation throughout the breadth of India, where the conquests of Russia were spoken of with bated breath, and the future fate of Hindostan under Russian rule speculated on. These developments were not wasted on the Government of India, and the notifications made to the Home Government resulted in a formal communication between Lord Clarendon and Prince Gortchakoff as to the desirability of some definite understanding on the subject of future Russian expansions. Lord Clarendon in the course of these negotiations made a proposal which for its absurdity has probably never been surpassed by a Foreign Minister. He urged the desirability of constituting Afghanistan a neutral zone. Gortchakoff jumped at the proposal, replying that the Tsar looked upon Afghanistan as completely outside the sphere within which Russia may be called upon to exercise her influence.

The correspondence opened up by this proposal extended over a considerable period. Eventually, however, it was agreed that the northern boundaries of Afghanistan should be fixed, and that they should include all the territory in the effective occupation of the Ameer. The representations of the British cabinet were received by Russia with the utmost courtesy. Repeated expressions of the lack of any intention of going further south were made, as was also the proposition that 'extension of territory was extension of weakness.' The decision which was arrived at, after a discussion of nearly two years, was coupled with the appointment of General

Kaufmann, who, as governor of the province of Turkestan knew most about its boundaries, as judge of the Afghan border land, on which he was asked to report to the joint Governments.

At this point the matter rested. Months elapsed without any report being received, and finally, in October 1872, Lord Granville sent a despatch to Lord Augustus Loftus for communication to the Russian Government, in which he stated that not having received any information from Russia he had been compelled to define the frontier in the manner considered most just by the British Government. The boundary thus arrived at ran along a line drawn from Sarakhs to Khoja Saleh on the Oxus, and along that river to a point on its tributary, the Koktcha beyond Faizabad.

The frontier delimitated by Lord Granville was duly accepted by Prince Gortchakoff on the 31st January 1873. Meanwhile Russia had been busily engaged in preparing for the final subjugation of Khiva, which had been rendered possible by her recent acquisitions in Central Asia. In 1869 she had erected a fort at Krasnovodsk. In the following year she caused another to be built at Chikishlar. General Ignatieff was sent on a mission to Khiva, without result, and this was succeeded by the expedition of General Markazoff, which ended in disaster in 1872. An expedition was accordingly prepared on an extensive scale under the supervision of Kaufmann, and the news of its proportions duly reached India, and caused considerable anxiety. Inquiries were in due course made by the Foreign Office, and these were replied to by the Tsar sending Count Schouvaloff as special envoy to London, charged with explaining the intentions of Russia, and quieting the apprehensions of the British Government.

Schouvaloff's declarations of 1872 are in marked contrast to those contained in Gortchakoff's Circular of eight years before, inasmuch as while those of the latter were, so far as they went, just and accurate, the statements made by the former were absolutely without justification,

and untrue both in letter and spirit. Schouvaloff declared that while it was perfectly true that the Tsar was about to send an expedition to Khiva, 'it would be a very little one, consisting only of four and a half battalions, and that it was simply and solely to punish acts of brigandage.'[1] 'Far from it being the intention of the Tsar to take possession of Khiva, positive orders had been issued to prevent it.'[2]

No better example could be found of the methods adopted by Russia for the furtherance of her aims than that afforded by Schouvaloff's mission. The freedom from diplomatic interference which enabled her to work out her cherished schemes was obtained by the utter disregard of truth and the most barefaced distortion of facts, and the name of the Tsar was dragged into the business without any regard to the moral obligations involved. The whole achievement was attained by a repetition of that line of policy which Lord Palmerston was the first to diagnose. In a letter written to Lord Clarendon in July 1853 Lord Palmerston dwelt at some length on the aggressive policy of Russia, which he summarised as follows :—

'The policy and practice of the Russian Government has always been to push forward its encroachments as fast and as far as the apathy or want of firmness of other governments would allow it to go ; but always to stop and retire when it was met with decided resistance, and then to wait for the next favourable opportunity to make another spring on its intended victim. In furtherance of this policy the Russian Government has always two strings to its bow—moderate language and disinterested professions at St. Petersburg and at London ; active aggression by its agents on the scene of operations. If the aggression succeed locally, the Peters-

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[1] The united expeditions sent against Khiva in 1873 comprised 9000 infantry and 3000 cavalry and 40 guns.

[2] At the grand council held at St. Petersburg to discuss the details of the Khivan expedition of 1873 the main point discussed was whether the Khan should be merely punished and fined, or whether his territories should be seized. The decision was taken by vote, 35 being for the capture of Khiva, and 9 against. The minority was led by Prince Gortchakoff. The Tsar, the Grand Duke Michael and General Kryzhanofsky Governor General of Orenburg were with the majority.

burg Government adopts them as a *fait accompli* which it did not intend, but cannot in honour recede from. If the local agents fail, they are disavowed and recalled, and the language previously held is appealed to as a proof that the agents have overstepped their instructions.'[1]

And so the expedition which Count Schouvaloff had declared to be, like the famous infant in *Midshipman Easy*, 'only a very little one,' marched on Khiva, and after narrowly escaping destruction on the road, fell upon the city and rendered the Khan a dependent of the great White Tsar.

The fall of Khiva secured to Russia the first step in the actual march on Afghanistan. It rendered possible the capture of Merv and of Sarakhs, which in turn commanded the approach to Herat, and it is unquestionable that had Russia not taken Khiva she would never have been able to push her frontier on to the borders of Afghanistan—and beyond.

Notwithstanding the breach of faith evinced by Russia in taking Khiva, the British Government do not appear to have been greatly incensed. They were probably too innocent of the strategic importance of the incident to be impressed by its occurrence, and when Lord Granville, the mildest mannered Foreign Secretary of the departing century, was questioned in the House of Lords as to Russia's latest move, he replied with expressions of unbounded and unalterable faith in the honesty of Russian diplomacy, and declined to examine too minutely recent events, which 'he felt confident were in strict accordance with the assurances recently given to Her Majesty's Government by Count Schouvaloff.'

The success which had up to this point invariably attended the peculiar tactics of Russian diplomatists encouraged their continuance and rendered the task she had set herself the easier.

In 1878, while contemplating the further conquest of Central Asia, it occurred to Alexander II. that it would

[1] *Life of Lord Palmerston*, by the Hon. Evelyn Ashley.

be well before pushing on to the Afghan frontier if a friendly understanding were arrived at with the Ameer. In order to achieve this, General Stolyetof was despatched with a party of experienced officers to Kabul, charged with the negotiation of a treaty with its ruler.

On hearing of the presence of a Russian mission at Kabul, the Government of India, recognising the probable outcome of such an incident, notified to the Ameer its intention of sending a British Mission to his court. But after consulting his Russian visitors, with whom he had just signed a treaty which placed his throne and country under the protection of the Tsar, Shere Ali refused to receive the proposed embassy, and declined to reopen diplomatic relations with the Indian Government.

On receiving the Ameer's reply the Indian authorities, acting on instructions from London, ordered General Roberts to advance from the Kuram Valley towards Kabul.

As soon as the news of the approach of the British reached Shere Ali, he fled in company with the members of the Russian mission to Turkestan, where he shortly afterwards died, his throne being occupied by his son Yakub Khan, who declared himself Ameer.

The events which followed are recent history. The protestations of friendship of Yakub Khan and the signature of the treaty of Gandamak ceding to Great Britain the passes necessary to complete the scientific frontier of India, with the undertaking to support a British Embassy in Kabul in return for British protection and an annual subsidy of six lakhs, led to a feeling of satisfaction in this country altogether unjustified, and the demand for peace made by the Home Government became so insistent as to over-ride the warnings of Lord Roberts and other experts on the spot. The British army was accordingly withdrawn. Sir Louis Cavagnari was sent to his death at Kabul. Then followed the second Afghan War with its attendant horrors, culminating in the defeat of the rebels, and the appointment of Abdur Rahman to the throne, with the promise of British

support, and an annual subsidy in return for his loyalty to the British cause.

The absorption of Khiva, Bokhara, and Khokand left only a single corner of Central Asia to be desired, and towards it Russia turned her eyes without ado. The region of the Turkomans of Akhal, of Tejend, and of Merv, a country useless for emigration or development, yet possessed the greatest of attractions for the Muscovite octopus from the fact that it borders Khorassan, and trends on the limits of the Khanate of Herat. This district was accordingly, as has been detailed, conquered with much bloodshed. The acquisition of the Akhal region did not attract much attention in this country, probably owing to the fact that people did not know where Akhal was or what its possession implied. But among the men who had served their country in India, in Persia, and on the Central Asiatic border, there were few who did not realise the vital importance of the step. And some of them raised their voices in warning of the peril which threatened British interests at the hands of Russia.

The altered Russo-Persian frontier conceded by the Teheran Treaty of 1881 was of immense strategic importance to Russia, and enabled her to subsequently bear on Sarakhs as an outpost of Merv. But for this, the subsequent steps in the advance upon Herat would not have been possible, and this fact was commented on by more than one expert at the time. The occupation of Sarakhs in 1884 was of vital import to the interests of of England, but despite the appeals of Sir Charles MacGregor, of Colonel Malleson, Charles Marvin, and other patriotic writers who recognised the true bearing of the step, nothing was done to counteract the move.

Placed at the entrance to the province of Khorassan, midway between Meshed and Herat, Sarakhs has always been a position of considerable importance from a military standpoint. To occupy Sarakhs is to command the richest districts of both Persia and Afghanistan. The place, to quote Sir Charles MacGregor—

'cannot fail to exercise a very serious influence on the momentous issue of the Russo-Indian question. This must happen whether it falls into the hands of the friends of England or into those of her foes. Whether Russia use Sarakhs as a base for offensive measures against Herat, or England use her as a defensive outpost to defeat any such operations, that position will be heard of again. And if my feeble voice can effect a warning, ere it is too late, let it here be raised in these words: If England does not use Sarakhs for defence, Russia will use it for offence.'[1]

The above passage was written by Sir Charles MacGregor in 1875, long before he became Quarter-Master General in India, and the result has fully borne out his prediction. But though the prophecy was widely read, and admitted to be made by an exceptionally able man, it produced no result, and the British Governments remained wedded to their ostrich-like policy of keeping their eyes shut and trusting to luck.

And so Russia took Sarakhs in 1884. And when the usual polite inquiries were made, her representative replied that 'there were two Sarakhs, and that the place occupied was not the fortress but the old town.'

The truth of the matter was hardly to be gauged by the reply quoted. It was accurately stated that Russia had not occupied the old fort of Sarakhs. And for a good reason. Ill-designed, useless for defence, and constructed only of mud walls, the fortress was useless. But the old town, situated on the other bank of the river, commanded the whole of the plain through which the Hari Rud runs, and offers every convenience for a strategic post of great strength. The spot is of exceptional importance, commanding as it does the roads to Merv, to Herat, and to Meshed, and beyond that, the road to Herat meets at Penjdeh that which comes from Merv. Sarakhs thus dominates a triangle of communications which control the route to India by the Khanate of Herat, and it was given to Russia on the understanding that it was only the old town which had been seized, a plea which was only rendered possible by the ignorance of the guardians of British interests.

[1] *A Journey through the Province of Khorassan and North-West Afghanistan.*

While question and answer were being exchanged between the two Powers on the subject of Sarakhs, Russian agents were busy organising her occupation of Merv, which had fallen into her hands by arrangement with the elders. The question of Merv had long exercised the minds of British statesmen. It was realised by all who had studied the question that Merv commanded Herat just as Herat commanded Kandahar, and that, apart from its value as a gateway to Afghanistan, the Merv oasis afforded exceptional facilities for the creation of an advanced base in any attempt which might be made by Russia against India. In addition to these advantages, the possession of Merv, viewed in connection with the annexation of Akhal, implied the subjection of many thousands of the finest horsemen in the world, requiring only the most elementary training to fit them for an attack upon Afghanistan. And above all, the conquest of Merv by its strategic importance would naturally lead to the acquisition of Meshed, of Herat, and of Balkh, if not of Kabul and Kandahar. To quote Sir Charles MacGregor once more :—

> 'Merv is within *coup de main* distance of Herat, and it is in this fact and in this alone that the value of Merv to the Russians lies. Once place Herat beyond the possibility of a *coup de main*, and I cannot imagine the astute statesmen of Russia persisting in the occupation of an isolated spot in the desert, the maintenance of which must cost a great deal.'

For many years before the event the taking of Merv was foreseen by all who knew the country. It was only the authorities in Downing Street who did not realise the danger. The first reference to the possibility of a future occupation of Merv by the Russian Government occurred during the correspondence respecting the Russo-Persian frontier which took place in 1870, in which it was urged by Prince Gortchakoff that 'great care must be observed in the protraction of this line, so as to exclude from Afghan dependency the old city of Merv and the adjacent

Turkoman districts, which are becoming of much commercial importance.'

Among those who foresaw the importance of the Merv question was Eugene Schuyler, one of the soundest writers who have dealt with Central Asia, who wrote in 1877 :—

'At present there is an uneasiness about Merv, and the Russophobist party are using all their efforts to show either that the Russians must not be allowed to take Merv, or if they do take it that Herat must be occupied. In all probability Merv will be occupied by Russians, and in all probability the English Government will do nothing at all.'

And about the same time Alayar Khan wrote to Colonel Baker :—

'How do you expect to prevent Russia from taking Herat when once she is at Merv? The Moorgab runs from Afghanistan to Merv. You know well that in this country, where there is water, troops can move. The banks of the Moorgab are fertile. How near Herat along this river do you intend to let Russia advance and settle?'

Still these warnings fell on deaf ears, and despite the abject terror with which successive Governments regarded the Russian advance, nothing was done to stay her hand. Unavailing even was the appeal of Sir Henry Rawlinson, who wrote in 1875 :—

'All politicians who have really studied the question seem to be agreed that a Russian occupation of Merv would be attended with danger to India. Russia by advancing on Merv evidently means mischief. She would never embark on an enterprise of so perilous a nature for mere purposes of trade and policy. Political objects of high import could alone justify the movement. Those objects necessarily point to Herat, which would lie at the mercy of a European power holding Merv, and from whence India could be seriously threatened.'[1]

When the news of the impending expedition against the Tekke Turkomans reached London the question of Merv was raised in both Houses, and inquiries were in

[1] *Later Phases of the Central Asia Question.*

due course made of the Russian Ambassado ras to Russia's intentions. On the 9th July 1879 Count Schouvaloff assured Lord Salisbury :—

'That the Russian Government had no intention of sending an expedition from the Caspian with the object of occupying Merv. The expedition would be against the Tekkes only. He disbelieved the existence of any wish to advance to Merv among Russian statesmen, and that even if it had been true that Russia had the intention of occupying Herat as a stepping-stone to India, Merv did not lie upon the nearest road between the Caspian and Herat.'

While the Russian Ambassador was thus reassuring the fears of Parliament in London, Lord Dufferin, our representative at St. Petersburg, was sounding M. de Giers, the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who on the 16th July gave specific assurances that there was not the least intention of occupying Merv, which assurances were repeated on the 30th July, and again, 'with the especial sanction of the Emperor,' on the 19th August.

On receipt of these repeated pledges, Mr. Stanhope made a statement in the House of Commons, conveying the undertaking given by M. de Giers with the approval of the Tsar, that Russia had no intention of ever occupying Merv, and this announcement was extremely well received. On the following day, however, M. de Giers took exception, through Count Schouvaloff, to the terms of Mr. Stanhope's communication, and said :—

'While the undertaking recently given to Lord Dufferin was thoroughly valid, it was not intended to serve as a solemn pledge given for all time to preclude Russia from ever going to Merv. But that Great Britain might rest assured that Merv was in no sense the object of General Lazareff's expedition.'

This notification does not appear to have had any marked effect on our politicians, who seem to have been eager to accept any assurances from Russia which would serve as an excuse for shelving the Merv question; but it is instructive to note that, in the month of April, four months before these assurances were given, General Lazareff, while at Baku on his way to take command

of the expedition against the Tekkes, had publicly stated :—

'I have sent to the Tekkes, before crossing the Caspian to advance up the Atrek, to tell them that I mean to annex their country, and have warned them that if they intend to fight they had better get ready at once. I mean to subjugate and annex the country. If circumstances compel me to go to Merv, to Merv I shall go.'

The result has been chronicled in the foregoing pages. It completed the Russian occupation of the whole of Central Asia, and brought her frontier into contermination with that of Afghanistan. And having, by dint of repeated breaches of faith, attained the limits of the Afghan frontier agreed upon between Lord Granville and Prince Gortchakoff in 1873, a frontier which had never been disputed, or even questioned, since its acceptance, Russia's first act was to raise objections to the line drawn, and demand its reconsideration, and with its customary amiability the British Government agreed to the appointment of a boundary commission.

The events which marked the proceedings of this arrangement were truly characteristic of both parties to the contract. England prompt, business-like, and eager to carry out her engagement honourably and to the letter, despatched Sir Peter Lumsden, an officer of exceptional record and great experience, to the Afghan frontier, while Russia, whose demand for a commission had only been made in order to conceal the aims she had in view, refrained from sending the promised commissioner to meet the British agent. But while Sir Peter Lumsden and his staff were kept waiting at the appointed rendezvous, Russia sent numerous parties of soldiers into the region occupied by Afghans which had long been recognised as part of the territories ruled by the Ameer of Afghanistan, and in this way the Russians placed themselves in possession of Pul-i-Khatun, more than thirty miles south of the agreed Russo-Afghan boundary, and of the Pass of Zulficar, which is another thirty miles

nearer to Herat. This barefaced action, besides being absolutely without justification, was taken in direct violation of all rules of civilised courtesy between nations. Having demanded a commission for the rectification of a frontier which had never been questioned, Russia refrained from sending her commissioner to the spot appointed, and while keeping the British mission waiting, actually crossed the acknowledged boundary and seized the territory which was the unquestioned appanage of a neighbouring state with whom she was at peace.

And so Sir Peter Lumsden waited for the Russian commissioner for four months, while General Zeloni, who had been appointed to the task, had been despatched to Tiflis in utter contempt of the engagement entered into.

In April 1885 the Ameer Abdur Rahman Khan was accorded a meeting by the Viceroy of India at Rawal Pindi. The interview had been arranged at the request of the Ameer, who desired to be put in possession of the views of the British Government as to the amount of protection to be afforded him in the event of his territories being threatened by Russia. Lord Roberts has told us how, at the opening of the interview, Abdur Rahman reminded Lord Dufferin that he had repeatedly warned the British Government of the approach of the Russians towards Afghanistan, and of the unsettling effect their advance was producing on the minds of his countrymen.[1] But reproaches cast over the past neglect of the British authorities do not lessen the injury caused to British interests, and the Ameer's reminder will not have been any startling revelation to the Viceroy.

The rejoinder made by Lord Dufferin to the plea of Abdur Rahman is noteworthy, forming as it does a pledge as to the future policy of Great Britain. He said that England was determined to maintain the integrity of Afghanistan, and that a Russian advance on Herat would be met by a declaration of war. As though to test the amount of reliance to be placed on this announcement,

[1] *Forty-one Years in India.*

the news of the Russian attack on Penjdeh was received at Rawal Pindi the next day. Now Penjdeh had always been regarded as a portion of the territory constituting the Khanate of Herat, and when that city was assured to Afghanistan, passed with it into the hands of the Ameer. In 1840 it was formally guaranteed to Afghanistan by Lord Auckland, and the attempt made by a body of Russian troops in November 1884 had been repulsed by the Afghans with loss. The question of the ownership of Penjdeh is established beyond any possibility of doubt. Ignoring altogether the evidence adduced by British travellers, its liability to the Ameer's rule is testified by Vambery and Dr. Regel the explorer of Darwaz, who unite in bearing testimony to the fact that it has never been subject to Russian influence, and was unquestionably a portion of the country of Afghanistan.

Despite these facts, Russia had crossed the border line she had herself approved, which had for many years been marked on all Russian maps, and while at peace with the Ameer and with Great Britain had made an armed attack on Penjdeh. Never had the Government of the Tsar employed the methods exposed by Lord Palmerston with more discretion. England was at the moment immersed in the conduct of a campaign in the Soudan. The Government in power was one which Russia had always found peculiarly disposed to be victimised by her alternate bluster and evasions, and rarely had the amicable protestations of St. Petersburg been in greater contrast to the aggressions on the frontier.

The British Government found itself placed under the necessity of carrying out its pledge to the Ameer or swallowing its words. There was no evading the promise given. England had declared her determination to maintain the integrity of Afghanistan, and undertaken that any advance of Russia on Herat would be met by a declaration of war.

And here was Russia, not threatening only, but actually occupying, a portion of the Ameer's territory in the direct

road to Herat. The situation was embarrassing and it was imperative to take action. Mr. Gladstone rose to the occasion and swallowed the promises so recently made by Lord Dufferin. By a series of excuses, promises of friendly negotiations, and expressions of faith in the intentions of Russia, he sought to explain away her occupation of Penjdeh, and justify the do-nothing policy he adopted. In short, to quote the *Times*:—

'He sought to avoid war by simple abandonment of claims which have not been investigated by competent authority, and to permit Russia to retain positions which she has seized in defiance of her own admission of their doubtful ownership, and thus to proclaim ourselves impotent in the presence of audacious aggression, and to deprive ourselves of the confidence which alone can lead to firm and fruitful alliance with Afghanistan.'

Among the specialists who at this period uttered words of wisdom which are as relevant to-day as when they were written, was one who alike by his experience, his ability, and his exceptional opportunities, may be regarded as among the greatest of his kind. On the 19th March 1885 Sir Edward Hamley wrote to the *Times*:—

'A very real danger has come, without our seeking, to meet us on the Afghan frontier. It is impossible to conceal from ourselves the design with which Russia is pushing on. Our manner of meeting her is among the marvels of the most unaccountable period of her history. We treat her as one of two established conterminous powers whose respective limits require definition. The facts are dropped out of sight that a few years ago she was a thousand miles from the Afghan frontier, and that she grounds her brand new title to contest its territory with us, on her conquest of certain predatory tribes on whose outskirts other predatory tribes wander, and that on the strength of this extraordinary claim she suddenly puts forth the impudent formula, "Whatever territory you cannot satisfactorily prove your right to is mine," which thenceforth becomes the basis of negotiation.'

The facts contained in the foregoing extract are undeniable. And yet, no sooner had they occurred than the British Government, terrified at the possibility of

becoming engaged in a war with Russia, abandoned itself to terror, and humbly bowed its head before the insistence of mere audacity. The occupation of Afghan territory by Russia was promptly condoned 'pending the definition of the frontier by the commissioners of the two countries,' and in face of the failure of the appearance of the Russian commissioner to meet Sir Peter Lumsden, he was promptly instructed to return to the frontier. And while that officer was on his way to keep his tryst, news reached England that the Russians had made an unprovoked attack under General Komaroff on the Afghans at Penjdeh, in which the Afghans had been defeated with heavy loss under the very eyes of Captain Yate and the officers of the boundary commission who yet awaited the arrival of the Russian commissioner.

The position thus became serious. By her action Russia had not only added another instance to the many on which she had infringed treaties and broken her word, but had put herself outside the code of consideration vouchsafed to civilised nations by outraging international law, invading a friendly territory in time of peace, and committing an act of war without previous notice. The allegations made by the Russian officers engaged in this discreditable affair are all negatived by the evidence of the British officers who were on the spot. The claim that the Afghans attacked the Russians is denied, nor has the slightest piece of evidence been adduced in support of the statement. The announcement that the Afghans were drawn up in threatening attitude is contradicted by the fact that despite the solemn pledge of Russia that she would not move forward from the posts she then occupied until the question of the actual frontier had been definitely settled by the joint commission, she had moved on to almost within range of the Afghan position at Penjdeh, though the Afghans had neither advanced nor threatened any attack. On the other hand, the evidence of the British officers who were witnesses of the affair shows that the Russians did all in their power to induce the Afghans to fight, and that

Russian troops had attempted to force their way through the Afghan position.

If the action of Russia in this matter was not an act of war, it would be interesting to learn what is. And the rest of the world looked on in hourly expectation of hostilities between England and Russia, undertaken not only to punish the recent acts of brigandage, but to secure the road to India, and show the Tsar that the limit of his expansion had been reached. But these expectations were destined to remain unfulfilled. A few more specious explanations from St. Petersburg, and the *amour propre* of the British Government was satisfied. The work of the boundary delimitation was resumed, and Russia whose intention had unmistakably been the acquisition of Herat, consented to postpone that adventure awhile, and rest content with the permanent cession of Penjdeh together with Pul-i-Kishti and the surrounding country, all which was dutifully made over to the Tsar by the boundary commission.[1]

Thus was the most discreditable of Russia's ventures brought to the conclusion she desired, the only consideration derived by the British being the undertaking known as the 'solemn covenant' entered into by Russia on the 16th March, in which she binds herself not to advance further into Afghan territory, an undertaking which she doubtless intends respecting just as long as is deemed desirable.

The Afghan boundary question was settled in September 1885, but was reopened two years later by the Russian occupation of Kerki and Kwaja Salar, when it was finally closed at St. Petersburg, these territories being transferred to Russian rule.

In 1886 occured an incident which though in itself of only passing import, is destined to have the most far-reaching results on Russian interest in Asia. By the treaty of Berlin the port of Batum was ceded to Russia on condition that it was not to be fortified, and was to be maintained as a free port. These restrictions had

[1] See Appendix B.

doubtless been agreed to by Russia with the mental reservation that they need be only temporarily observed. To have refused would have been to risk losing Batum, and the importance placed on its acquisition was such as to cause it to more than recompense for the expenditure of blood and treasure necessitated by the Crimean War.

In July 1886 accordingly, Russia notified the powers that Batum would cease to be a free port; and at the same time as the Russian tariff was introduced in the port, the fortifications which, the treaty of Paris notwithstanding, had been commenced, were continued, until Batum became one of the strongest positions on the Black Sea.

And then it began to dawn upon the Powers that Batum formed the permanent base of any future attack on India.

Having strengthened her position on the north-western frontier of Afghanistan, and secured her direct line of communication from the Black Sea, Russia set about effecting an equal advantage on the north-east, where she hoped to make good a direct approach to India *viâ* Badakhshan, and for this purpose turned her attention to the Pamir plateau, which at a height of some twelve thousand feet borders the limits of Bokhara, Kashgaria, and Chitral. The region is, however, so bare, uninhabitable, and valueless, that no one would suppose that a ruler would take the trouble to claim any portion of it; and when the Afghan boundary was fixed in 1873, the Russian claim to the possession to the Pamirs was carelessly conceded, regardless of the possibility of future complications. But in 1889 a Russian exploring expedition in charge of Colonel Gromtchevski marched across the Pamirs until they reached the British outposts, where they were stopped and turned back, and this incident made such an impression on Russian susceptibilities as to cause the despatch of Captain Yonoff, in charge of a strong military force, to patrol the table-land. This force chanced upon Captain Young-

husband and Lieutenant Davidson who were travelling on the little Pamir, and promptly excluded them from the 'roof of the world.' On hearing of this incident, a party of Goorkhas was sent to the spot, but Captain Yonoff retired, and in February 1892 the Russian Government apologised for his action, which it admitted to be illegal.

Later in the same year Captain Yonoff returned and reoccupied the post from which he had retired the previous year, and a collision followed between the Russians and a party of Afghans in July, in which fifteen of the latter were killed. The dispute thus brought about continued for some time, but was eventually settled by the appointment of a joint commission which marked out the frontier along the Pamirs, the work being completed in September 1895, this termination of the difficulty being rendered possible by the discovery on the part of Russia that the country was unsuited to the passage of large bodies of troops, and therefore useless for any future movement against India.[1] Such is the record of the struggle between Russia and Great Britain on the Afghan frontier, a record which reflects as little credit on the good faith of the one as on the far-sightedness of the other. From the moment when the completion of the conquest of Central Asia brought the frontier of the Muscovite advance into contact with the Oxus and the Atrek, to the present day, Russia has successfully maintained every advance she has made, nor is there a single instance recorded when the tactics of Great Britian have gained the ascendency. The bulk of the pledges which have been obtained from St. Petersburg by British statesmen have been disregarded, and, in face of our protests, over-ridden; nor is it assuming too much to suggest that the undertakings now in force will be as lightly repudiated when the time is ripe for further aggression. It remains only to examine the respective aims of the two empires, and to sift the policy of each, in order to obtain an understanding of their actual relative positions and prospects to-day.

[1] See Appendix B.

Before doing this, however, it is necessary, for the better understanding of the facts, to take a brief survey of the policy which England has followed for the protection of her interests, and to inquire into the reply she has prepared against the further incursions of Russia on her sphere.

The task is at best a thankless one, nor does it tempt the writer. Truth to tell, the record of Great Britain in Asia is calculated neither to flatter the instincts of the Englishman, nor to reflect credit on his country. But I do not propose to play the part of commentator. I prefer to lay merely the actual facts before the reader, and let him draw his own conclusions.

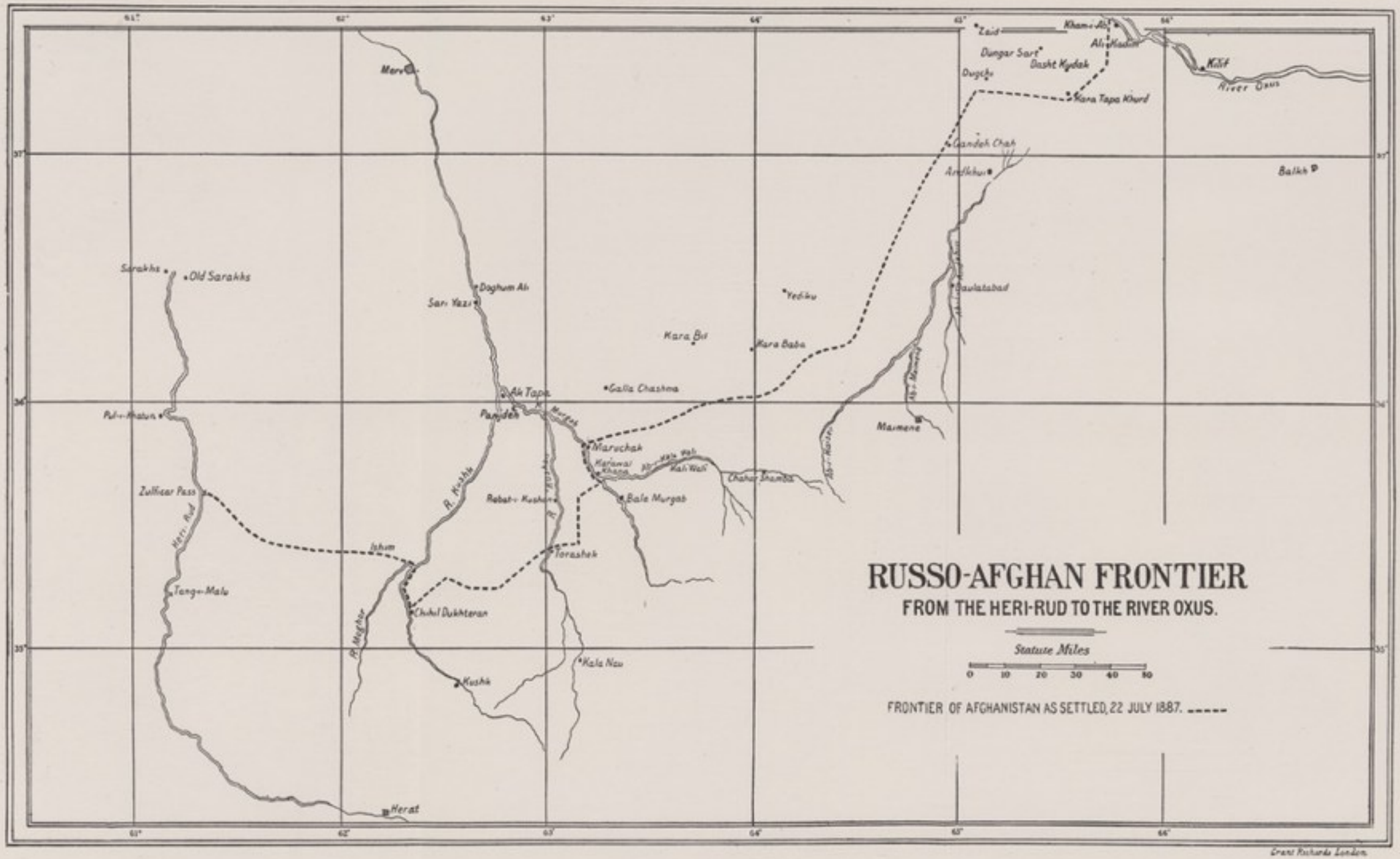
CHAPTER XI

THE THEORY OF A BUFFER STATE

Possibility of a Russian invasion of India—England's policy in regard to same—First understanding with Russia as to Central Asia—Palmerston's views—Afghanistan—First Afghan war—Umballa conference—Dissatisfaction of Shere Ali—Backsliding of British Government—Lord Lytton's overtures too late—Stolietoff mission at Kabul—Second Afghan war—Neglected opportunities—Kandahar and its occupation—Abdur Rahman—His reasoning—Failure of British Policy—The Afghan frontier—Its defences—Routes to the Indus—Herat the key to India—Its position and defences—Prospects of Russian occupation—The duty of England—Skobeleff's forecast of events—Prospects of Ameer's death—Critical juncture approaching.

THE possibility of an attempt on the part of Russia to invade India has been recognised by those responsible for the administration of that empire since the early years of the present century, when rumours of the schemes of the Emperor Paul and Napoleon reached England. The subject was discussed with varying interest at different periods, according to the relations existing between Russia and England, and every Governor-General and every Viceroy has in turn added to the precautions which have been taken with a view to rendering the success of such a venture the more unlikely.

The events of the first Afghan War served to draw the attention of the British Government to the importance of maintaining a friendly understanding with the ruler of Kabul, and the contemporaneous activity exhibited by Russia in Central Asia added to the apprehensions of our statesmen. The expedition conducted with such disastrous result by Perovski had served to open the eyes of British statesmen; and the information received from its agents in Afghanistan by the Government of India of the offers of arms and support made by


RUSSO-AFGHAN FRONTIER
FROM THE HERI-RUD TO THE RIVER OXUS.
Statute Miles
0 10 20 30 40 50
FRONTIER OF AFGHANISTAN AS SETTLED, 22 JULY 1887.
Merv
Sarakhs
Old Sarakhs
Sari Yazi
Doghum Ali
Yediku
Kara Bil
Kara Baba
Gulla Chashma
Ak Tapa
Pandeh
Maruchak
Kalawai Khana
Kali Wali
Chahar Shamba
Bala Murgab
Rebat-i-Kushk
Torashek
Ishim
Chahil Dukhteran
Kala Nau
Kushk
Herat
Zulfikar Pass
Tang-i-Malu
Pul-i-Khatun
Herat
Maimene
Andkhui
Daulatabad
Gandeh Chah
Dungar Sart
Dasht Kydak
Dugeju
Kara Tapa Khurd
Zaid
Khamab
Ali Kadam
Kaif
River Oxus
Balkh
R. Kushk
R. Murghab
R. Meghar
Heri-Rud
Grant Richards London

Captain Vitkievitch to Dost Mahommed was not calculated to reassure the British public. By slow degrees, therefore, the defensive policy of England became formulated in two directions. In the first place it was recognised as desirable to stay by all possible means the advance of Russia beyond her existing frontier. In the second, it was deemed necessary to raise a permanent barrier between the frontier of India and the country beyond. Thus it came about that, almost unconsciously, the country came to adopt the policy of a neutral zone or buffer state, and this principle was formally recognised in the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1844, in which it was agreed that the Khanates of Central Asia should be regarded as a neutral zone between the two empires.

Having arrived at this understanding with Russia, the Government of England set about taking the measures desirable for the strengthening of the Indian frontier, and Lord Palmerston set himself to obtain the best expert advice on the question under consideration. Among the authorities consulted were Lord Hardinge and the Duke of Wellington, and both agreed in regarding the possibility of a Russian invasion of India so remote as scarcely to be worth consideration. Lord Hardinge wrote, after describing the Indian frontier :—

> 'As regards the intentions of Russia, I am confident no hostile attempt will be made. A Persian and Afghan force intermixed with Russians on the same principle as our Indian army would be required to be supported by a large and well-equipped field train of artillery with its numerous stores. This modern necessity entails great difficulty in moving an army through sterile and mountainous country. The Afghan war has solved the problem of the possibility of Russian invasion. Afghanistan has no resources, it is by nature too poor to feed a large invading army; and even if such an army could reach the Indus, our British means are at all times ample to overwhelm it. Here you have no cause for apprehension. As to a Russian invasion of India, depend upon it, my dear Lord, that it is a political nightmare.'

This opinion was fully endorsed by the Duke of

Wellington, to whom Lord Hardinge's letter was shown, and who wrote on the 3rd June 1847 :—

'Lord Hardinge is quite correct in his account and description of the frontier. You may rely upon it that you have nothing to apprehend from Russia in that quarter. The possession of Scinde is a great security.'

Lord Palmerston, when he received these communications, gauged them with his accustomed shrewdness. Writing to Lord John Russell on the subject of India he said :—

'Both generals are great military authorities. . . . Both seem to agree in thinking that the Russians cannot conquer India, and in this opinion they are clearly right. I do not think, however, that Hardinge has demonstrated that the Russians might not give us much trouble, and put us to much expense in India. . . . The advance of a Russian army is far from being as impossible as Hardinge seems to think it. Persia must, I fear, now be looked upon as an advance post for Russia, whenever she chooses to make use of it. She will command it either by overpowering force or by bribing the Shah by prospects of acquisitions in Afghanistan. A Russian force in occupation of Afghanistan might not be able to march to Calcutta, but it might convert Afghanistan into an advanced post of Russia, . . . and whatever Hardinge may say of the security of the rest of our frontier, you would find in such a case a very restless spirit displayed by the Burmese, by the Nepaulese, and by all the unincorporated states scattered about our Indian possessions. The best method of preventing these embarrassments seems to be to take up such a military position on the frontier . . . as would make it plain to everybody that we could not be taken by surprise, that the decisive position could neither be snatched from us by a rapid movement nor be wrested from us by a forcible assault.'[1]

Thus it was recognised, as far back as 1847, that Afghanistan was destined to be the scene of the future struggle between England and Russia for supremacy in the East. And from that day to the present have the territories of the Ameer been the theatre of intrigue and the advanced post of diplomatic striving.

[1] *Life and Correspondence of Lord Palmerston.*

The country of Afghanistan comprises a series of mountain ranges interspersed by valleys which, on the extreme north and north-east, open out into a fertile plain. The people consist of a number of fierce and warlike tribes, given to internal dissensions and impatient of control. Risings against the Ameer, their ruler, are frequent, and in support of their fighting instincts they possess a bravery and power of endurance unknown elsewhere. In adopting the policy of considering Afghanistan in the light of a buffer state, the British Government overlooked the instability of Afghan rule and the necessity of interference, when occasion arose, in order to maintain the integrity of the country. Nor do they appear to have taken into account the peculiar character of the people, a character notable for the strong Asiatic traits by which it is marked. The Afghans, besides being warlike, are by nature cruel, treacherous, and grasping, and are therefore doubtful allies and dangerous friends. The rulers of Afghanistan have always been at the disposal of the highest bidder, and from the time of Dost Mahommed to that of Abdur Rahman, have carried on negotiations with British and with Russians in turn, accepted bribes from both, and been loyal to neither. To deal satisfactorily with such a people calls for the highest administrative ability. In order to secure an effectual alliance with such it is absolutely necessary that the strength of the protecting State shall be made apparent, while the support accorded to the Ameer shall be constant and unmistakable.

It does not appear that these points have been realised by the British Government, and the action of England in regard to Afghanistan has, in consequence, been the reverse of judicious. The whole record of British relations with Afghanistan is, indeed, one of alternate error and friendly demonstration, and when an Ameer has decided to cast in his lot with the Government of India, his request for pledges of protection against Russian aggression have, with one exception, been refused.

At the outset, the first Afghan War was a fatal error.

It estranged the Afghans, and caused us to appear ridiculous in their eyes. After dethroning Dost Mahommed, suffering the loss of a large army, and involving ourselves in an enormous expenditure, we were compelled to reinstate the ruler we had deposed. What value could be placed on the treaty of friendship subsequently signed between that ruler and Lord Dalhousie? Even the support accorded to Shere Ali, who had been chosen by Dost Mahommed to succeed him, can only have been regarded by the Afghans as the act of the nation which had interfered without provocation in the affairs of their country.

The prolonged civil war which prevailed after the death of Dost Mahommed was ended mainly owing to the support accorded by the British to Shere Ali, who was supplied with money and arms until he had defeated his brothers, who disputed his right to the throne, and when he had finally triumphed and been declared Ameer, he sought and was accorded a conference by Lord Mayo at Umballa in March 1870.

Lord Mayo had only recently come out to India. He had been specially selected by Mr. Disraeli for the important post of Viceroy because of his great reputation for ability and tact, and his exceptional knowledge of mankind. There can be little question as to the outcome of the Umballa conference had Lord Mayo possessed a free hand. Unfortunately the Government had changed between the appointment of Lord Mayo and his meeting with the Ameer. Mr. Gladstone had come into power, and had reversed the Viceroy's instructions, warning him especially against any measures which might tend to give umbrage to Russia. And so the Viceroy who had been especially chosen for his capacity to construct a boundary against Muscovite aggression found himself tied to a policy of 'masterly inactivity' which has been well defined as giving a free hand to Russian schemes in Asia.

Shere Ali, who had learned to respect the power of England, came to Umballa hoping to obtain the support

of her strong arm against any aggressions on the part of his northern neighbour. The fall of Samarcand had greatly alarmed him, and he sought for the protection which, as a dependent ruler, he had a right to expect from his suzerain, together with the recognition of his son as his successor.

He returned to Kabul disappointed. Strict in his obedience to his orders, and preferring to do his duty rather than exercise his wisdom in the service of his country, Lord Mayo refused to accord the desired promises, and all that the Ameer could obtain was a series of vague undertakings couched in such general terms as to bind the British to nothing. He was told that 'he would be strengthened from time to time as circumstances might seem to require'; that his applications for aid would at all times be received with consideration and respect. His request that he be supported against any attempt which his rivals might make to unseat him was responded to by the statement that the British Government would view such an attempt with severe displeasure; and his urgent plaint respecting the recognition of his son as his heir was answered by a polite but final expression of the Viceroy's regret at his inability to give the guarantee desired.

Shere Ali had come to Umballa keen on a definite offensive and defensive alliance with Great Britain. He returned to Kabul a disappointed man, insecure in his throne and defeated in his hope of maintaining his line. His feelings were extremely bitter on the subject of his errand, and he is reported to have said, 'The English care only for themselves.'[1]

The capture of Khiva by Russia two years later served to renew his anxiety. He foresaw the time when his dominions would follow the fall of his Central Asiatic neighbours, and forgetting the snubbing he had received at Umballa, he once more sent a prayer to the Indian Government, pointing out that the emergency was increasing, and asking to be informed as to the extent of

[1] Malleson, *The Russo-Afghan Question.*

British support he might rely on receiving in the event of his territories being invaded.

Lord Mayo's term of office had been prematurely ended. His successor, Lord Northbrook, possessed neither the knowledge, the diplomatic ability, nor the sympathetic manner of his predecessor. He was a mere administrative machine, and as such telegraphed the Ameer's message to the Home Government for instructions. In due course they arrived and were duly acted on. The official telegram in question ran as follows :—

> 'Cabinet thinks you should inform Ameer that we do not at all share his alarm, and consider there is no cause for it; but you may assure him we shall maintain our settled policy in favour of Afghanistan if he abides by your advice in external affairs.'

The message sent to Shere Ali by Lord Northbrook in conformity with these instructions came as a shock to the Ameer. He had stated certain facts which were well known to him, and which pointed to the approach of danger to his kingdom. And in reply he was told that there was no occasion for alarm! Despite his disappointment, however, Shere Ali did not give in. He decided to make another attempt to engage the sympathies of the Indian Government, and to that end despatched one Saiad Nur Muhammad Shah, an Afghan noble who was one of his most trusted councillors, to Simla, to obtain an interview with the Viceroy, and to put before him the facts as to Russian operations in Central Asia, with the certainty that when once Lord Northbrook was in possession of these, he would not only change his view of the Central Asian question, but promptly accord the Ameer those guarantees which he so earnestly desired. Nur Muhammad was impressed with the vital importance of two points: the obtaining of an assurance of support against Russia, and the recognition of the Ameer's son as his heir.

Nur Muhammad arrived at Simla on the 12th July 1874, and was duly accorded an interview by the Viceroy, to whom he disclosed the urgency of the desired under-

standing. The Viceroy listened, and bowed his visitor out. The only outcome of the mission was the sending of a letter to Shere Ali, in which he was informed that although the Viceroy did not entertain the slightest fear of complications with Russia, yet the British Government would from time to time endeavour to strengthen the Ameer's rule. In conclusion, he was reminded of the assurances which had been given by Russia as to Afghanistan being quite outside the sphere within which she was called upon to exercise influence. In face of the existence of this assurance the Viceroy did not deem it necessary to discuss what measures might be taken in the event of an attack upon Afghanistan.

Nor was this extraordinary treatment the only grievance under which Shere Ali suffered. His great hope was that his favourite son, Abdula Jan, to whom he was greatly attached, should succeed him. The Indian Government openly favoured the cause of his eldest son, Yakub Khan, and this fact so enraged the Ameer, who clung to the customary right observed throughout his territories of a father appointing his heir irrespective of primogeniture, that he had Yakub Khan seized and imprisoned; and the protests which were forwarded to him in respect of this action only tended to incense him the more.

Small wonder, then, that on the arrival in Kabul of a Russian mission, its members found little difficulty in gaining the Ameer's ear; or that finding his new friends ready to promise him all those things which the English had refused, he gave them his confidence, and decided that after the rebuff of his repeated overtures to England, he would close with the generous offers made by Russia.

It was at this juncture that Lord Northbrook's term of office expired, and he was succeeded by Lord Lytton, whose first act was to despatch a message of friendship to Shere Ali with a request for a conference. The Ameer had had enough of such things. The time for an understanding with Great Britain had gone by, but in

order to maintain an appearance of that good-will he did not feel, he agreed to send an envoy to meet a British commissioner. A conference was accordingly arranged for the spring of 1877, when the Afghan ambassador met Sir Lewis Pelly at Peshawur.

There can be little doubt but that the Ameer had instructed his representative to act so as to render the conference abortive. The order of the day was indeed that of the meeting at Umballa reversed. In 1873, the British representative had refused to agree to the proposition of the Ameer. In 1877, the Ameer's envoy declined every proposition made by Sir Lewis Pelly. Ultimately the conference ended without result. The well-intentioned policy of Lord Lytton had come too late, and through no fault of his it failed, as it deserved.

Further communications between Calcutta and London followed the *impasse* created by the Peshawur meeting, and the order came out 'to maintain an attitude of vigilant reserve until the Ameer realised his position and interest.' This plan was accordingly followed for nearly two years without result. But while the British Government lay supine, waiting for the Ameer's conscience to prick him, the agents of Russia were not idle, and the friendly feelings between the Ameer and the Tsar had reached such a point in 1878, that Shere Ali agreed to receive a formal embassy sent him by the orders of the Russian Emperor.

The reception accorded to the Stolyetof embassy at Kabul was without doubt an infringement of the engagement made by Dost Mahommed in 1854, and confirmed by Shere Ali at the Umballa conference of 1870, by which the Ameer agreed to be 'the friend of the friends, and the enemy of the enemies, of Great Britain.' But the circumstances which had led up to it were at such utter variance with those which existed in 1854, that without attempting to condone a breach of faith on the part of the Ameer, it is impossible to deny his extreme temptation.

On hearing of the ostentatious reception accorded to

the Russian mission, Lord Lytton announced his intention of sending a similar mission to Kabul, in order to assert the position of Great Britain in regard to Afghanistan. The result is a matter of history which has been already chronicled.

That the second Afghan War would not have been necessary had our Government shown reasonable ability in its relations with Afghanistan during the years which preceded it, is unquestionable. The breach of faith on the part of Shere Ali, which led to it, was without doubt caused by the extraordinary shortsightedness of our 'dog in the manger' policy, which, while it attempted to restrain the Ameer's independence, and make him a ruler subject to ourselves, yet refused either to guarantee his rule or his succession. And our policy failed, as such a one is bound to do, and a second time was Afghanistan conquered by a British host.

Regrettable though the occasion was, it afforded, at least, an opportunity for ending the Russo-Afghan question, which had already cost so dear. And this fact was recognised alike by the Indian Government and that at home. Lord Lytton saw his opportunity. Lord Beaconsfield recognised it, and in his famous Guildhall speech promised a scientific frontier, which should safeguard our empire in India; and it was recognised throughout the country that the war had come as a blessing in disguise, in that it would enable us to reconstruct our defences in the North-West. Nor were the men wanting to complete the work. Roberts, Stewart, MacGregor, and a dozen more, giants in their abilities, were available for the creation of a new bulwark in Asia.

The events of the war have been recorded. It dragged on with intervals until the autumn of 1880, when it was brought to a close by the brilliant victory of Lord Roberts at Kandahar.

During the war, the Government had again changed. The supporters of a scientific frontier had been succeeded by those who pledged their faith to a policy of masterly

inactivity, and the necessity of continuing operations troubled them sorely. But the end came sooner than had been expected, and England found herself in possession, not of a strictly scientific frontier, but of a good deal of territory which went towards the making of one: she held Kandahar.

But the new Government did not for one moment dream of keeping possession of this vital strategic point in the defences of India. Despite the appeal of the Opposition, in face of the pleadings of such experts as Sir Edward Hamley, and Colonel Malleson, the Government decided to relinquish the advanced post they had acquired. The reasons given for this course of action were curious. It was stated that the maintenance of Kandahar would entail a grave responsibility on the Government; that it would entail a heavier charge on the revenue of India; and that it was quite unnecessary as a military post. Sir Henry Norman opposed its retention on the ground that 'the probability of our having to struggle for Herat, or to defend Kandahar, is so remote, that its possibility is hardly worth considering,' and Sir Evelyn Baring agreed with him. Mr. Gladstone, on the 27th November 1879, had disposed of the fear of a Russian attack on India in an historic sentence—'I have no fear myself of the territorial extensions of Russia, no fear of them whatever. I think such fears are old woman's fears.'

The question came up for debate in Parliament, in March 1881. The motion for the retention of Kandahar was carried in the House of Lords, by a majority of 89. In the Commons it was lost by a majority of 120. And so Kandahar was evacuated, in order that our folly might serve as an object lesson to ourselves for half a generation, for the far-reaching results of that evacuation have not been mastered yet.

The evacuation of Kandahar occurred just as Skobeleff was setting out on his expedition against the Akhal Tekke Turkomans. It was followed shortly after by the Russian occupation of Akhal and of Merv. Is it to

be wondered that the one set of events were immediately connected with the other by the fanatical races of Afghanistan, by whom it is to this day believed that England retreated only on hearing of the Russian advance?

The rule of Abdur Rahman has, outwardly at least, passed quietly enough. Since 1881 he has been ruler over the whole of a more or less united Afghanistan, and he has managed to maintain at least an outward show of loyalty to Great Britain. But in its relations with him the British Government has consistently refrained from giving him that support to which he considers himself entitled, and in consequence his goodwill has been qualified by mistrust, occasionally bordering on open rupture.

At the outset Abdur Rahman had every reason to throw in his lot with the English. But the hair-splitting attitude which successive Viceroys have been compelled to take against his desires has tended to make him by degrees suspicious, doubtful, and distrustful of his protectors. He cannot understand why Russia should advance year by year with unvarying success, while England remains within her ancient limits, except on the supposition that we are the weaker power; nor can he explain our consenting to Russia's breach of the Afghan boundary of 1872 by the uncalled-for and totally unjustified concessions of 1885-87. He seeks to know why, if we are able to hold our own against Russia, we do not mark out a limit beyond which Russia shall, under no circumstances, be permitted to come; and ponders over the alternate outcry and condonation with which the repeated breaches of faith of Russia are greeted by England. It is not difficult to gauge the mind of the Ameer under these circumstances. That he dislikes us is patent to the most casual student of politics. His attitude of respect is maintained merely from a knowledge of our power in proportion to his own; but that he would choose us for his ally if he had a choice must be extremely doubtful, the probabilities being that he stands by his engagements with England only since he dislikes Russia more.

There can be no question as to the views held by Abdur Rahman of his immediate neighbours. Russia he dreads, and with reason. He spent some years within her territories at Tashkend and realises to the full the meaning of Russian rule. England he mistrusts, nor has he forgiven the oft-repeated snubs which she has accorded to his country. Small reason, then, to wonder at the part which the Ameer has played in the various campaigns conducted by the British on his borders, including, though it does, the supply of arms to tribes who fought against our rule.

The efforts of England towards Afghanistan, however well intentioned, have not been crowned with success. Her record, extending over more than fifty years, includes two wars, a number of lesser expeditions, and a varying policy. In its result we have a neighbour who mistrusts us, a reputation for instability, and an expenditure close on one hundred millions, more by far than would have been entailed by the permanent occupation of the country, and despite all this Russia is nearer to us to-day than she ever was before, and has attained a position from which she is able to occupy Herat at a few hours' notice.

But in her territorial policy England has been far more fortunate. While she has neglected the advice of those qualified to speak with authority, and refused to retain possession of Kandahar, she has retained sufficient of the neighbouring country to ensure her being able to regain that important post with ease and at short notice, and the frontier she has adopted is regarded by military experts as of sufficient strength to render an invasion from the North-West an impossibility. The only unfavourable criticism to be offered to the existing frontier is that it does not go far enough.

Of the importance of Kandahar in the defence of Afghanistan it would be difficult to say too much. It is at once the most exposed and the most easily protected point in the country. It is bordered by plains which, while they supply an easy road to an approaching foe, are in turn dominated by the city, and the absence of the surrounding hills by which Kabul is enclosed renders an

attack by the native mountaineers unlikely, as well as enabling the place to be held by a comparatively small force. To occupy Kabul would entail an army sufficient to hold the line of hills in its vicinity. Kandahar can be held by a force sufficient to occupy its citadel and walls.

But it has been urged that it is not sufficient to hold Kandahar. The true scientific frontier, by which, I assume, is meant the true strategic frontier, has been set by the highest authorities on the Helmund, where, it is claimed, advancing artillery could be kept in check with greater ease than would be the case with Kandahar, in addition to which an advanced line on the Helmund would secure a large extent of productive land in the rear, and thus render it available for the support of the defending army, while the country beyond the river is less bountiful, and would, for this reason, not avail an army of attack.

While Kandahar is, by the general consensus of opinion, regarded as the most likely point to be attacked by the main body in the event of a Russian invasion, it is by no means the only possible one. Nor, supposing that it were held by us and fortified on the most modern principles, could it be said that the North-Western frontier of India was adequately protected. In order to render this the case there are a number of other points which require to be fortified, and it is claimed that these have been put in a position to render the passage of an invading army impossible.

Without accepting any *ex parte* statement, it may be useful if we glance round the existing North-West frontier of India, and inquire how we are fitted to deal with an attempted invasion.

There are two and only two possible lines of attack on the North-West frontier from the Afghan side. The one comes from Tashkend and Samarcand through Balkh and Khulm to Kabul, whence India would have to be entered by either the Khyber or the Kurum route. The other is from Baku and the Caspian *viâ* Merv to Herat, whence there is a fairly good road to Kandahar. From

this point the route to India lies along either the Thal Chotiali or the Bolan route. There is, of course, an alternative line of approach, by which an army could march direct from Kabul to Kandahar, but in such a case it would be placed precisely as if it had come direct to the latter place, with the additional handicapping incidental to a longer and more fatiguing route. In either case the invaders would have to force a passage through a country which is claimed by the greatest military authorities to be impregnable. The difficulties of conveying an army from Central Asia to either Kabul or Kandahar are extremely great. To reach the former would entail the passage of a large tract of territory, the crossing of the Oxus, and the traversing of a difficult country beyond the Afghan boundary. Assuming that such an army succeeds in reaching Kabul, and that when there it is not overwhelmed by the Afghan tribes,—in other words, supposing that it comes with the consent or on the invitation of the ruler of the country, it will have to transport its food and supplies from beyond the Oxus, for the reason that Kabul does not succeed in supplying sufficient food for its population, and that a scarcity is by no means infrequent. In addition to these considerations, the climate of this portion of Afghanistan is such as to preclude the marching of an army except during the summer months. Assuming, then, that a Russian army were to follow this route, it would necessarily reach Kabul greatly exhausted, and would still have the serious work of the undertaking before it. For these reasons it is generally believed that Russia would not choose the Kabul route.

The Kandahar route is in every respect easier than the other, and indeed up to the immediate vicinity of the city offers no difficulties at all, beyond those which might be raised by a defending army. But on its arrival at Kandahar an invader would have to face the advanced guard of the Indian army, and here would have to be fought a battle in which the defenders would have all the advantages of position, supplies, and communications.

Assuming that the invading army succeeds in disposing of the defenders, there remains a choice of five routes to India.

I. To Multan by the Bolan and Jacobabad, a distance of 605 miles.
II. To Multan by the Thal Chotiali route, 459 miles.
III. To Multan by Ghazni and the Gomal Pass, 866 miles.
IV. To Rawal Pindi by Ghazni, Kabul, the Kurum Valley, and Kohat, 649 miles.
V. To Peshawur by Ghazni, Kabul, and the Khyber, 490 miles.

The passage of each of these routes has been rendered, humanly speaking, impossible. The Bolan Pass, with its length of close on six miles, and the defences which have at such vast expense been constructed along it, may well be regarded as impossible to an invading force, while apart from these points its stony track, constantly crossing river, extreme narrowness, and the scarcity of its water supply all tend to render it impregnable.

The Khojak Pass, by which the Thal Chotiali route is reached, attains a height of 8500 feet in an arid and desert country without water, and terminates in a plain through which flow three wide rivers. It is, moreover, only practicable during seven months in the year, and an army using it would stand the risk of finding its retreat cut off.

The Gomal is practically impossible for a large army, owing to the extremes of climate to which it is liable, the lack of supplies which would be experienced, the number of rivers and streams which cross it, and the steepness and narrowness of the defile.

The Kurum Valley route, involving the passage of the Shutargarden at a height of 11,500 feet in a climate unknown elsewhere, entails the crossing of a fever-stricken district and the passage of a wide river, a combination of circumstances which would most infallibly prevent an army traversing it and emerging at Kohat in a condition fit for work.

And, lastly, the Khyber Pass is admittedly the only one which by its natural features lends itself to the passage of an invading force. But this fact is fully equalised by the defences which have been constructed by us along it. So far as human ingenuity can ensure a result, the Khyber route may be regarded as impossible for the passage of an army through its defiles without our previous consent.

The defences of our Indian frontier begin where the uplands of the Hindu Kush merge into the table land of the Pamirs. Here we have the outlying posts of Chitral and Gilgit, well fitted to cope with any attempt which might be made to reach the Indus by way of Darwaz or the Alai Plateau. Peshawur, which dominates the Khyber, is one of our most important outposts, for the reason that it commands the direct road to Kabul, and thus secures the possibility of access to the Ameer in case of need. To the south of Peshawur is Kohat with its neighbouring Kurum Valley, from which two alternative routes to Kabul branch. This point is commanded from Kohat, from Thal, and from Bannu, and is quite impassable without leave.

Dera Ishmael Khan, the next point in order, is important for its command of the route to the Gomal Pass, a highway which has, according to some authorities, not been sufficiently looked to. It has been stated only recently by Sir Richard Temple, who for some years himself held the command in this region, that the protection accorded to the Gomal route is insufficient, and that further protection at the Indian mouth of the pass is to be advised.

The last and most important of the British outposts on the Indian frontier is that at Quetta, which was annexed by treaty with the Khan of Kelat in 1887. Quetta, like our other stations along the frontier, is in communication with India by railway. The defences of Quetta are in every respect proportioned to the immense importance of the position, and now that the railway has been pushed on through the Chamen Tunnel to the limits of the plain which surrounds Kandahar, it may be held that, although

we do not occupy that stronghold, we are in a position to cover the ninety miles which intervene between rail-head and its citadel in ample time to anticipate the arrival of any foe moving against it.

To sum up: it is indisputable that the British position on the North-West frontier is as strong as it could be made without a further advance into the Ameer's territory; and our capacity for holding that position against any force which succeeds in crossing the intervening country is, humanly speaking, unquestionable.

But the policy which England has adopted for the protection of her North-West frontier demands more than this. She stands pledged not only to maintain her frontier, but to preserve the integrity and independence of Afghanistan, which is a very different thing, and a brief consideration of the attendant circumstances will show that her ability to do this may at any moment be called into question.

The north-west and a small portion of the extreme north of Afghanistan possess features in marked contrast to those found in the other parts of the country. The mountain ranges, deserts, and unproductive valleys which constitute almost entirely the bulk of the Ameer's territory, give place in the regions specified to a series of fertile plains, watered by limpid streams, and divided east and west by the Paropamisus range. In the centre of this region is the ancient city of Herat, long a bone of contention between rival States, and recognised by repeated writers since the early years of the century as the key to Afghanistan and the approach to India. Nor does the importance of Herat depend on its position alone. The fertility of the region is so great as to suffice for the needs of a large army for an indefinite time, and thus while the possession of Herat implies the command of Afghanistan, its occupation by an opposing army would be the more serious in that it possesses all the needs of a perfect base.

It is, in short, only through Herat that Afghanistan, and therefore India, can be successfully invaded. So long as Herat is held by a friendly Power, so long is an

attack on India impossible. Immediately Herat is held by an enemy, the road to Kandahar is before it. This principle is not a new discovery. It has been discussed and commented on by strategists and politicians during the past quarter of a century. It has been referred to as the key of India by every officer who has visited its surroundings. Nor does its reputation rest on the discoveries of modern travellers. Herat has been besieged more often than any other city in Asia. It has been invested by as many as 80,000 men, and has always afforded the supplies needed for their support.

The defences of Herat are in themselves ill-proportioned to the importance of the place. It is surrounded by an immense mud-wall, which forms an impregnable protection against the attacks of rebellious natives. Against modern artillery, such as is used by Russians and British, it is not likely that the city would be able to hold out for many hours. But this might easily be remedied, and there is every probability that if the work is not undertaken by the Indian Government, it will, ere long, be accomplished by the Russian. It would in short, be the merest folly to allow Herat to fall into the hands of Russia. To quote Colonel Malleson :—

> 'The possession of Herat by Russia means the possession of the one line by which India can be invaded. The possession of Herat by England means the annihilation of all the Russian hopes of an invasion of India.'

And yet no definite steps have been taken by this country to prevent a Russian occupation. Great changes have of late years been made in the disposition of our frontier force in Afghanistan, but our efforts have been restricted to the strengthening of our advanced posts and the construction of frontier railways. Herat, in respect to the British base, stands where it did, but the Russian limit has been creeping steadily on and on, until it lies to-day within some sixty miles of the citadel. Writing in 1883, Sir Charles MacGregor, then Quartermaster-General in India, said :—

'I have two papers got ready, one showing how soon we could put 10,000 men into Herat; another, how soon the Russians could do the same. We are about equal now, and could beat them, but every day tells against us.'

This was when the Russians rested at Tashkend and Samarcand, with a base at Askabad. At that period there was no railway nearer than Kizil Arvat, and the Russian advanced post was three hundred miles away. To-day the railway runs to a Russian post within sixty miles of Herat, enabling her by a forced march to occupy the citadel in thirty-six hours.

Sir Henry Rawlinson, who devoted his life to the unravelling of the Central Asiatic question, concluded his great work [1] in these words:—

'So long as Russia held aloof from Merv, we should hold aloof from Herat; but if she deliberately threw down the gauntlet, she must expect it to be taken up. We could not, as the guardians of the interests of India, permit her, on the pretext of curbing the Turkomans or establishing a trade route through Asia, to take up a position unopposed on the Murghab, which would compromise the safety of Herat. That city is both strategically and politically an indispensable bulwark to India, and we cannot and will not allow its future fate to be at the disposition of a foreign power.

The views enunciated in the above declaration, although they coincide with those expressed by such authorities as Vambéry, Temple, Malleson, Marvin, and Baker, have not been adopted by the authorities. Russia was permitted to occupy Merv without anything more than a mild protest from this country; and since then she has been permitted to creep steadily onward, yearly diminishing the distance between her outposts and the point she covets, without evoking more than a grumble from the Power she threatens.

The policy of our present mood appears to be a reliance on our frontier line, leaving the question of Herat in abeyance. That this policy is a wise one may well be questioned. By abstaining from a protest against the Russian tactics we are strengthening her hand, and pre-

[1] *England and Russia in the East.*

judicing our future right of complaint, while by leaving our intentions respecting the occupation of Herat unknown, we risk being drawn into a war which might have been avoided.

In regard to the interests of India the course is plain. The frontier which has been arrived at by slow degrees, and as the result of much thought, is one which suits our needs. On it we are in a position to hold our own; of that there can be no human question. If we deemed it desirable, in the event of war, to advance beyond that frontier and occupy Herat, we could do so. Against such an undertaking there is only one serious objection. To occupy Herat would mean to advance our base from Quetta to Herat, a distance of 583 miles, and would entail the inconvenience of prolonged transport and increased expense, to say nothing, on the other hand, of exchanging a well-designed and thoroughly-equipped base in direct railway communication with other bases and the rest of India, for an advanced post, possessing doubtful walls, within two marches of the enemy's line of rail.

But there is another aspect of the case. How do we stand in point of honour in respect to the ruler of Afghanistan? What is our duty to the Afghan people? Are we pledged to maintain the integrity of the kingdom and to support the reign of the ruling house?

I do not think that it is possible, without adopting the Russian code of diplomacy, to avoid answering this question in the affirmative. Such a compact was offered to the Ameer in 1880. It was repeated, in the form of a definite undertaking, by Lord Dufferin at the Rawal Pindi conference in 1885, and was further strengthened by the Durand mission in 1893; and if we were to break our pledges, we should be converting the Afghans into deadly enemies. We are, then, bound to prevent Russia from occupying Herat or Balkh, or any portion of Afghanistan within the boundary agreed by the commission of 1885-87, provided always that the Ameer follows our advice in his foreign policy. This duty is a serious one, which we may be called upon to perform at any moment.

Skobeleff, whose foresight was always regarded as extreme, as his ability was unquestioned, gave it as his opinion that Russia would be unable to advance beyond Herat upon India for at least a generation; but added, 'In the meantime this railway of ours is assuming a menacing position towards England which will keep her occupied in India and prevent her impeding us in other parts of the world.' The menace of 'this railway of ours' has been well maintained, and has been pushed on right up to a point beyond Skobeleff's fondest expectations. Herat, though not yet in Russian hands, is within the shadow of the Russian grasp, and all that is wanting is a fitting occasion. In the estimate of Russia England's peril is her opportunity, and the moment that we find ourselves involved in a European war, or threatened by some peril which, by absorbing our energies or testing our resources, restricts our power—that moment will Russia choose for marching into Herat.

At the present moment the servants of the Tsar are eagerly waiting for the death of Abdur Rahman Khan, who, though not an old man (he was born in 1854), is suffering from a malady which cannot give him more than a few months of life. The question of succession in Afghanistan is always hotly contested, and the number of possible claimants to Abdur Rahman's throne is large. The probability, therefore, is that Afghanistan will ere long be in the turmoil of a struggle between rival candidates, and in such an event, there is not the slightest question but that Russia will, on the plea of aiding in the maintenance of order, occupy Herat, if she does not indeed attempt to reach Kabul as well. The reply to be made by England depends mainly on the party which happens to be in power at the time. It would be premature to discuss probabilities beyond the point suggested, but it needs no gift of prophecy to state that on the action taken in such a contingency depends, not only the peace of England, but the future of her Indian Empire.

CHAPTER XII

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS

Opposite views of Russian policy—These tend to play into Russia's hands—Position of Russia—Rationale of her methods—Only test of diplomacy, its success—Its constancy—Guiding principles—Contrast between Russian and English methods—How Asiatic peoples are civilised—Russian rule in Central Asia—British rule in India—Variation of British methods—Folly in Afghanistan—The Kandahar episode—Britain's weakness Russia's strength—Russia's characteristics—Necessity of abandoning theories in judging Russian methods—The two classes to be found in Russia—The Tchinoviks—The masses—The Russian army—Its influence—Condition of the people—Rivalry between England and Russia—Russia's limits—The contest in China—The Port Arthur episode—Russian railways in China—Russian views of British methods—Russia's difficulty—The financial question—The Tsar's Rescript—Its object and its possible result.

In his estimate of Russian aims and Russian methods, the average Englishman is apt to be guided rather by his individual sympathies than by the actual merits of the case he is attempting to gauge. The interests of Russia and of Great Britain are in such marked contrast, and the means adopted for their furtherance so varied, as to have caused the questions at issue between the two countries to form an important factor in the party politics of Great Britain. In marked contrast to most other problems of foreign policy, the rivalry between the empires of the Tsar and of our own Queen is not gauged on its merits or by the light of the interests of this country, but is prejudged according to the Russophile or the Russophobic view which the individual critic may hold, and thus it has come about that our politicians are divided into two classes: those who regard the Russian as the best of all possible governments, the predestined ally of England, and those who view it as an

uncivilised and an untrustworthy bureaucracy, incapable of aught but treachery and deceit, the natural foe of Britain, and a standing danger to her existence.

The fact is to be regretted, but that it is a fact is undeniable. Gauged from an impartial standpoint, the view of the one party is as absurd as is that of the other. But the effect of these extremists is unfortunately not restricted to its absurdity. The alternations of impulse which are induced by their mutual strivings have proved, and are likely to prove, one of the greatest dangers to the prosperity of the nation; while the policy of extremes to which they give rise is largely responsible for the advantages which have so frequently been attained by Russian diplomacy.

The policy of Russia might be defined as the opposite of that of England. And it is largely due to this fact that it is so generally successful. Of this there can be no two opinions among those who free their minds from the thrall of party feeling and gauge the two systems and the results they attain by the light of reason. It is to this that Russia owes her success as a factor in the government of the world, and her pre-eminence in Asia. Her position is to-day supreme: more than this, it is unequalled in the history of the world, and it has been brought about entirely by dint of a policy which is the most able, and therefore the most successful, ever known.

And yet, if judged by the ordinary tests by which nations are regarded, there is no justification for the position she has attained. Her extent of territory is great, but it is not so great as is our own. Her population is out of all proportion to her area. Her resources remain undeveloped, her people are ignorant, and their power of production small, her manufactures limited, her trade restricted and microscopic in contrast to her empire, her morals lax, and her tastes gross and unrefined. And, finally, her finances are impoverished by the constant drain imposed on them, and the nation is within measurable distance of bankruptcy. Such qualifications do not point to the evolution of a world-power

whose irresistible will shall triumph over the wishes of all others, whose might shall dominate a whole continent, and whose wiles shall be successfully waged against the nation which rules the seas, has ever been the apostle of civilisation, and controls the trade, the resources, and the wealth of the world. The position is a veritable paradox; yet not a paradox, for it is but the outcome of the immutable law of nature which decrees that mind shall triumph over matter; that genius shall dominate mere wealth or strength, and that ability rightly used is a more potent factor in the fate of the world than either.

And on this point there can be but one verdict. The ability of your Russian transcends that of all his compeers. His policy is the most successful in the world because the most able. Whether tested by its inherent cleverness or judged by its almost invariable success, its pre-eminence must be admitted by the merest student of history, and however discouraging the fact may be, it would be folly to deny the inability of our own diplomacy to hold its own against the wiles of the Muscovite politician.

Wherever Russia comes into conflict with other Powers she attains her aims, and being careful only to take to arms in the case of opponents weaker than herself, she attains them cheaply. In this principle lies one of the secrets of the success which has rewarded her efforts. The greater portion of the vast territories which have been added to Russian empire has been acquired by purely diplomatic means, and such regions as the Amur Province, Maritime Manchuria, Merv and the Tejend Oasis, the Kirghiz Steppe, and the greater portion of Siberia have been brought under the dominion of the Tsar without striking a single blow.

The points brought out by these transactions are instructive, bearing as they do on the methods employed in Russian dealings in the East and elsewhere. The policy of Russia is persistently opportunist. It is essentially unscrupulous, and it is also invariably constant. And therein lies the great secret of its success. If

diplomacy be worth anything, it should succeed. To attain that which is desirable in the interests of his country is the highest aim of the diplomatist, and for him to hamper his freedom of action by importing into the question at issue a code of unwritten morality is a foible unworthy of a capable politician. This, at least, is the view of the Russian diplomatist, whose code closely resembles that of the dying patriarch who offered this advice to his first-born: 'My son, get money—honestly, if you can, but get money.' To point out to a Russian diplomat that it is outside international honesty to make pledges which there is not the slightest intention of keeping, would evoke the reply that a capable diplomatist never makes pledges at all unless he is driven to do so as a last resource, in order to obtain that which his country desires: and that pledges thus extorted by our opponent cannot be reasonably regarded as binding. A prominent member of a famous Russian Legation once said to me, 'Honesty in these matters is a purely relative term. I may make statements to you to-day in all good faith, and feel justified in pledging myself to be alsolutely bound by them, my action being governed by a certain set of circumstances. To-morrow I may learn that some of the circumstances which guided my judgment generally have materially altered. Am I to be expected to abide by a pledge which was given yesterday? Certainly not!' The Russian view of pledges, treaties, and similar inconvenient 'works of reference' is not altogether unlike the Chinese, who regard a treaty as an instrument which is to be adhered to as little as circumstances will allow.

I have said that the policy of Russia is invariably constant. The fact is unquestionable, and the reason close to hand. There is in the Russian Empire no Government to come in or go out at the will of the people. There are no Ministers to reverse their predecessors' policy, or to indulge in little fads of their own. There is but one supreme head, one Autocrat of All the Russias, brought up from his earliest infancy in the train of thought of his forebears, until he becomes permeated with

fixed ideas, and wedded to the continuance of the only order that he knows. Public opinion there is none. Individual thought among the masses is as impossible as is newspaper criticism. The Tsar wills: such is the formula by the aid of which ideas become accepted throughout the Russian Empire, and in the result all classes, one might almost say every individual, do their part in bringing about the desired end. There are, in short, no Trafalgar Squares in Russia, a country in which Mr. John Burns and the senior Member for Northampton would be impossible.

There is one form of opinion in the territories of the Tsar, and one only. It is that of the army, or, to be more precise, of the military officers, who occupy every post, and form the means of communication between the Tsar and the people. The immense army maintained in Russia has become a potent factor in its fortunes. It is there to support every law. It looms behind each diplomatic request. It supports each succeeding territorial acquisition. It does everything, in short, except fight a first-class Power, and that it will only do if forced by foreign attack. For the great principle of Russian policy in the East, as in the West, is the attainment of the desirable as cheaply as possible; and, taken in connection with the first rules which govern all Muscovite action, the principle is easily maintained. A policy which is constant need never be hurried. Its opportunism has long since taught the lesson that possibilities recur at frequent intervals, and if these prove somewhat risky, the lack of scruple, so typical of Russian reasoning, comes to the diplomatist's aid, and renders what might, without it, be considered impossible, easy. In every respect, therefore, the Russian policy is in contrast to the British. In the one case we have ability backed with knowledge, patience born of resource, insistence linked with a lack of hesitation. In the other we see indifference wedded to lack of understanding, and a constant alternation of impulse, sufficient to wreck the ablest attempt at continuity. Russia never, under any circum-

stances, does anything in haste. She formulates her aims; and attains them as opportunity serves.

She does not fight for territory. She simply absorbs when the ruler about to be dispossessed has his hands full, or is looking the other way. One step follows another at uncertain intervals, but it always follows, even if years intervene. Great Britain rarely acts at all, excepting on an acute emergency. She begins by trusting her rival, despite all experience of the folly of doing so. She is beaten at every point, and after refusing to take any action at all hastily does the wrong thing in the hope of retrieving the irretrievable. No better instance of this 'lame-duck' policy could be quoted than that supplied by recent events in the Yellow Sea. The definite pledges made by Russia as to the opening of Port Arthur and Talien-wan to the trade of the world deceived nobody who had the slightest acquaintance either with Russian policy or with Russian diplomacy. It was not for one moment to be believed that such an announcement would be acted on, for the simple reason that to have kept to it would have effectually cancelled all that had been gained by their cession. The British Government, however, believed the statement made by Count Muravieff. They were probably the only persons who did, and when sixteen days later the same minister went back from his word, Lord Salisbury and his colleagues were probably the only persons who were in any sense surprised.

And there are other features in the attitude taken up by Russia in Asia which deserve attention. Having once entered on the game, the agents of the Tsar are always on the alert. The obtaining of a lease or the granting of a concession does not satisfy the Slavonic emissary. He watches developments much as does a cat when toying with a mouse, ready at all times to pounce down and claim any further advantage which may offer; and thus it is that the fixed policy of forward, ever forward, is being urged day and night by different agents at different places, with the result that scarcely a week

passes without bringing some gain, great or small, to the great empire, so ambitious in its aims and so elaborately served.

The success which has attended this policy has been truly remarkable; and it is accentuated by the fact that no single retrograde step has been made, despite the repeated aggressions against the independence of neighbouring Powers. The occasions on which she has been compelled to disgorge territory she has occupied are but few, and the regions concerned, with one exception, unimportant. Thus she ceded Astrabad to Persia, after occupying it for a considerable time. In 1856 she gave up the mouths of the Danube and part of Bessarabia which she held, and in 1881 she renounced the province of Ili or Kulja, which she had occupied for ten years, on the pretext that China could not keep order there, and that the doings of the people were a standing menace to the neighbouring Russian States. But while the Danubian provinces are still beyond her reach, and likely to remain so, Astrabad has long been a Russian town in all but name, and the Ili district is at the mercy of the Tsar when he thinks fit to claim it.

To deny that Russian diplomacy is unscrupulous would be to fly in the face of facts. The charge is one which, regarded from the British code of honour, may be termed serious. It is, however, not difficult to justify. In her methods she is many-faced, presenting one front to Europe, another towards Asia, and again others to each and every Power with whom she is brought into contact. But her very duplicity is stamped with ability, clear-headedness, and foresight. West of the Urals she poses as the herald of Christianity. She persecutes the Jews, and treats sectarianism as something worse than a crime. In the East she offers protection to the Buddhists, Taoists, and Mohammedans who come under her sway. Her views are as elastic as they are many-sided. She champions China when Japan obtains the cession of the Liao-tung Peninsula, on the ground that it is incumbent on her to maintain the solidarity of the Celestial Empire;

and two years after she absorbs not only the Liao-tung Peninsula, but practically the whole of Manchuria, herself. She protests against the retention of Mr. Kinder, an English engineer, on the Northern Railway of China, and resents the financing of that line with British capital on the ground that she has herself the monopoly of railway construction within her sphere of influence, and, while she protests, is busily engaged surveying a line of railway, which is to be constructed with Russian capital and to be controlled by Russian engineers into the very heart of the British sphere in Central China. She resents exclusive privileges being accorded to any other Power, while she is continually negotiating for the granting of such to herself. This tendency to exclusiveness has always been a very favourite principle of Russian policy. By the treaty of Aigun, obtained in 1858, it was conceded that the "navigation of the Amur, the Sungari, and the Ussuri should only be permitted to ships of the Chinese and Russian Empires, the navigation of these rivers being forbidden to vessels of any other State,' and in the contract between Russia and China for the construction of the Manchurian branch of the Siberian Railway it is expressly stipulated that only Chinese and Russian subjects shall be permitted to hold shares in the undertaking. At Vladivostok it has long been the rule not to permit more than two foreign vessels to enter the harbour at a time, and the notifications which have been issued enhancing the exclusiveness of Port Arthur are too numerous to be catalogued here.

Nor does the persistent policy of Russia end with these idiosyncracies. In addition to an insistent design, the Muscovite diplomat brings to his aid a thoroughness unequalled throughout the world. The Russians are the most plodding of civilised nations. Nothing is too difficult for them to accomplish, nothing too trivial to be worth their while. The Russian official will stand out for a concession which no other country would consider worth fighting for. In order to attain this he will dispute and threaten. He will wheedle and abuse by turns.

He will stop at nothing in attempting the reaching of his desire, except war: unless the unresponsive State be a weakling, a nation ruled by semi-savage power, or one which has no friends. And, in addition to these attributes, the Russian is better served than others, owing to his knowledge of human nature and his recklessness in using it. Every Chinese official of any importance or utility is in the pay of Russia, and the annual sum expended in bribes and retaining fees within the Chinese Empire must be enormous. But the money is well spent, and to this expenditure is largely due the fact that Russia to-day dominates China from Peking in face of all the other nations represented.

Owing to the difference in idea incidental to racial evolution, the imitation of Muscovite methods by ourselves must remain impossible. The Briton is not accustomed to regard the end as justifying the means, apart from all moral considerations. Nor is the disregarding of solemn pledges, the breach of treaties, or the withdrawal of guarantees, to be lightly learned by such as may be entrusted with the keeping of the country's honour. To this extent, then, the Russian method can only be guarded against by the light of experience and the exercise of caution and mistrust. But there is a factor in the constitution of the Briton which handicaps his judgment. The Russian devotes himself to the achieving of a certain end, which he resolves to gain independent of difficulties, dangers, or circumstances. In order to attain that end he will stick at nothing. No consideration, moral or physical, is allowed to interfere with its ultimate attainment, and any obstacle which arises, be it a standing promise or a treaty long observed, has to go by the board. The moral aspect of his action does not appeal to the Muscovite diplomatist, but if it did it would be made subservient to his duty or his pleasure. Predilections he has none. Personal like or dislike does not enter into the question. He has to attain an end, and he attains it, careless of the means, the consequence, or the opinion of the world. It is this

policy which permits him to be polite, nay, friendly, with his enemies; which prompts him to discuss the future invasion of India with the Anglo-Indian his guest; and which enables him to accord his victims the most marked consideration before he slays them. When Skobeleff was laying siege to Geok Tepe, he consented to abstain from the continual bombardment in order to permit its defenders to bury their dead, with whom the field was thickly strewn. The act was that of a great soldier and a gentleman. Its conditions were rigidly observed, and on its conclusion the onslaught was renewed and continued until the fortress capitulated. Then Skobeleff fell on his vanquished foe without a thought of mercy, and massacred the survivors of the siege, men, women, and children, without mercy or compunction. The deed was one which, while capable of justification from a certain standpoint, was only possible to a Russian. No British officer could have adopted such a line of conduct. But it was in strict accordance with Muscovite ideas, and is still upheld as an instance of the most wise and most merciful method of conducting warfare against semi-civilised tribes. It is argued that by wiping out an entire people a lasting lesson is inflicted which will serve to the end of time, whereas a mere battle is soon forgotten, and the survivors remain implacable foes of the conquering power. In proof of this it is customary for Russian officers to contrast the Russian frontier with that of India. It is the proud boast of Russians that there has never been an attempted rising in either Khiva, Bokhara, Ferghana, or Turkomania since those regions were conquered, and the explanation given is that by the method of their conquest they so asserted the dominion of the Tsar as to strike terror into the hearts of even the turbulent Turkomans and the bloodthirsty Uzbegs. The lesson thus inculcated will, it is claimed, last for at least a generation, and before the end of that time the civilisation which it is the mission of Russia to carry along the line of her conquest will have converted these people into useful subjects of the Tsar.

In the case of India, on the other hand, it is urged that England has, instead of civilising the tribes and strengthening her rule, succeeded only in making herself disliked by the exhibition of an alternating policy of strength and weakness. It is pointed out by Russians that England's idea of punitive expeditions is quite erroneous. It is, they say, a fatal error to retire in Asia. If you wish to impress an Asiatic, you must adopt means which are suited to his understanding. The Asiatic is cruel, grasping, and relentless. He does not understand the principle of mercy, and it is useless to exert it towards him. If it be necessary to advance into an Asiatic country in order to make an example of its people, it is mere folly to retire, for retirement is construed into defeat, and the withdrawal of a conquering army is regarded as an admission of its inability to remain. Yet it is this policy which has been repeatedly indulged in by England, and each repetition has injured her interests the more.

The logic of this reasoning is unmistakable. But to profit by it in the case of a country possessing a 'non-conformist conscience' and a 'little England party' is, to say the least, difficult. And what is quite as marked a disability in regard to the foreign policy of Britain is the constant change of design inseparable from a system of party government. The outcome of this has been nowhere more marked than in Persia and Northern Afghanistan. In both cases our cause has suffered and our interests become subservient to those of Russia, not through lack of able men on the spot, qualified to deal with any emergency, but through the persistence with which men who, either through lack of ability or of knowledge, or owing to the possession of a conscience whose one idea is to hold their posts at all hazards, have overruled them.

It was the meddling of such incompetents that brought about the first Afghan War, an adventure which went far towards costing us our empire, and caused a feeling against our rule which has not yet disappeared. It was

a series of similar exhibitions which led to the defection of Shere Ali and the second Afghan War. The Ameer, in this case, was absolutely loyal to England; but he feared Russia, and desired an offensive and defensive alliance with Great Britain. The then Viceroy recognised these facts, and guided by an exceptional knowledge of men and things, and well realising the duties of his post, desired to respond to the Ameer's desires. But the Home Government knew better. The Viceroy's hands were tied, and Shere Ali had to return disappointed. The pledges which he desired, which his country needed, and which would have been of equal advantage to England and Afghanistan, had been denied him. Yet the Afghan ruler remained loyal to us. He sought another interview and was received by another Viceroy, less sympathetic, more official, who, keeping strictly to his instructions, repeated the refusal of his predecessor. Is it to be wondered that this ruler, twice repulsed, eager only to secure the safety of his throne and people, should turn elsewhere in the hope of obtaining that support denied him by Great Britain in return for his loyalty?

The result was the second Afghan War, a war which, while not attended by the dire catastrophe of its predecessor, was at best a most discreditable incident in our history. Still, even at that, the events of 1878 might be overlooked if our rulers had profited by their lesson. But not a bit. Having placed Abdur Rahman on the Afghan throne, he also came to realise his anomalous position. Hemmed in between two Great Powers, the one intent on the acquisition of his territory, he naturally turned towards the other, his natural protector, for pledges of support. But were they accorded? Have they been given? Or have our rulers contented themselves with a few vague suggestions of implied support in certain contingencies, suggestions made with the object of maintaining the loyalty of the Ameer without binding the country to any definite responsibility in return? The point is both interesting and important.

And Kandahar! After effecting its occupation by

means of a feat of generalship which forms the one relieving feature in a dismal record, British prestige ran high along the frontier, and it was whispered that the English after all were the true rulers of the world. The occupation of this stronghold was regarded by military authorities as the most important stroke of policy since the acquisition of the Punjab. Its abandonment was unanimously agreed to be a fatal error both to our military position and our prestige. But the Government at home knew nothing of Afghanistan, nor did they care to know. What it did care for was the safety of its majority. The party of belittlement was abroad, and had dinned its views into the ears of the free and independent electors, until the holding of Kandahar had become unpopular. So, in face of the unanimous opinion of experts, military, geographical, and political; in face of the memorial presented by the Kandahari pleading for a permanent occupation, despite the prayers of the people of the Chotiali district for continued protection, the order went forth; Kandahar was abandoned—and the British Government saved!

There should be no need for me to paint the reverse of the picture. The contents of the foregoing pages will have served to show how Russia would, in our place, have avoided committing our follies. How the desired guarantees would have been accorded Shere Ali, even if there had been no intention of carrying them out; how not only would Kandahar have been retained, but with it most of Afghanistan. I am not pleading for the importation of Russian methods into this country, but I do plead for the importation of a modicum of common sense into British rule.

To turn to another point. Why is it that there is no finality in our negotiations? To take only one example. In 1872 Russia agreed as to the Afghan boundary. There was no uncertainty about the frontier described. It was charted alike in British and in Russian maps, and remained unquestioned for twelve years. In 1884, Russia, having in the meantime pushed her frontier forward until

it coincided with that of Afghanistan, suddenly questioned the validity of what she had herself agreed to. It rested with England either to remind Russia of the agreement of 1872 and insist on its being respected, or to agree to Russia's desires and aid her in unsettling what had been definitely settled. Had she chosen the former course, the objection would have been at once admitted, and Russia would have remained behind the Sarakhs-Khoja Saleh limit. But the Russophile party was in power, and in this attempt at further extension, the British Government only saw a desire to arrive at a friendly understanding over a boundary question—which did not exist. In the result, the Commissioners despatched to the spot, after being kept waiting for months, mere witnesses of a massacre of Afghans, gave to Russia most of what she had the courage to demand.

It is this constant readiness of England to take Russia at her own valuation that has proved the most valuable factor in her success. Instead of being her enemy, Britain has, unconsciously perhaps, repeatedly proved herself her ally, and it is as much to the misplaced confidence in Russian pledges of our Russophiles, as to the inherent ability of Russian wiles, that the brilliant success of Muscovite policy is due.

But, while Russian promises have a tendency to prove deceptive, and Russian action is apt to exhibit a change of front, it would be absurd to deny that in its finite aim Muscovite policy is invariably constant. The Tsar's advisers do not aim at making experiments. They know what it is they desire to achieve, and every consideration is made subservient to the end in question. A Russian officer once said in my hearing, 'Your Government will never be able successfully to oppose Russia. Your Ministers have never made up their minds, and it is whispered in St. Petersburg that the reason for this is that they have no minds to make up.' And the following extract, translated from a diplomatic treatise on European warfare, published in St. Petersburg as far back as 1882, may be said to fit the case to-day as

thoroughly as at the time the statement was published:—

> 'Nothing is more difficult to define than a shifting policy, of which the whole system consists in having none, and shaping its course according to events. Far from dominating and directing events, the English Cabinet suffers them. It is in tow!'

Few more sweeping truths have been penned in connection with this subject. It is the first necessity for any effective policy that those whose duty it is to construct a line of action must be fully informed. How often has it happened that a British leader has been thoroughly posted in matters concerning the Far East? In 1853 John Bright said: 'As to Russia getting to India, that is a very remote contingency'; but he lived to see a Russian stronghold established within a hundred miles of Herat, and an outpost on the borderland of Afghanistan.

The policy of Russia in Asia has, from its inception in the reign of Peter the Great to the present time, never changed. Steadfast, persistent, and irresistible, her aim has always been one ceaseless forward movement, seeking always the extension of her frontiers further afield. To this end all else has been abandoned. The code of morals that could cramp her action does not exist. No consideration of right or wrong, of pledges made or treaties entered into, has for one instant checked her growth. Her strength of purpose has survived defeat in battle, and impending bankruptcy. It has been maintained alike at the cost of her internal interests and the repression of her people. The cost was heavy, but the aim was great, and it continues unsatisfied and unchecked, and is destined to continue until it ends in the conquest of the world, or in the utter collapse of the nation sustained on a principle so rotten.

Russian policy is the incarnation of the Russian mind. To fathom its why and its wherefore, one must understand not only the train of thought of the Slav intelligence, but the mode of life of the Slav people. And this

is a task not easy for an Englishman to achieve, for he has nothing in common with the subjects of the Tsar. It is only by long residence among Russians that the Western mind can gain a knowledge of the Muscovite idea, or fathom that impenetrable stolidity of character which lies concealed beneath an exterior of outspoken frankness. It is only after a long experience of the causes which control Russian society that one can realise the shams which cloak the real workings of the nation. The difficulty is great, the more so as in order to solve it much has to be unlearned, including the belief in most of the ideas by which the empire is supposed to be ruled. The Majesty of the Tsar, the influence of the Church, the emancipation of the serfs, the education of the people, and the civilising mission of Russia! Mere ideas, these, all of them. Ideas which exist on supposition only, and which in reality are vain, if not impossible. Of what, then, does this empire, which crosses half the earth, consist? How is it governed? What forces keep it together and enable it to grow? How far will it spread? and how can its career be stayed?

To adequately answer half these questions would entail the writing of many volumes. But it is yet possible to present, though vaguely, some explanation of the problem set, in a few pages; providing only that the reader starts on their perusal with a mind unbiassed. It is a simple matter to provide facts for the consideration of the reasoning being, but to subvert the prejudice of the uninformed is a task which the wise man shuns. To the Russophobe it is mere waste of time to point out the remarkable ability, the strength of purpose, the admirable organisation inherent in the Russian mind. He views the Muscovite as a lost being, a depraved creature past praying for, of whom he will believe no good. And the Russophile, while realising these points in the Russian's favour, shuts his eyes to the facts of history, and refuses to regard him as capable of evil. Let both of these retain their views, I attempt to cater for neither.

Russia affords the remarkable spectacle of a nation

existing under false pretences. The statements authorised as to her government, her rulers, and her people are the merest sham. The Tsar, so far from being an autocrat, in fact, is the merest slave of his ministers, who are in turn controlled by the class which rules the country on the strength of its being accorded the right to serve it. The *Tchinoviks*, the military *Tchinoviks* more especially, not only form the ruling class in Russia: they form the only class. Outside that, except by special favour or protection awarded by them, there remain only the masses, the common herd, which is kept ignorant and degraded in order that its betters may prosper and keep the joys of life unto themselves. And, most curious of all, the people do not realise that their poverty, their ignorance, or their degradation is other than according to the lot which they have been destined to fill.

The life, the energy and the intelligence of Russia are centred in her army, which, with certain exceptions, claims the service of every male within the age limit. Among the people, the millions under the sway of the Tsar, each male spends eighteen years of his life in the standing army, during which he is regarded as a machine, without individuality or intelligence, a mere unit in the force by which the aims of Russia are wrought.[1] A diminution in the period of service is gained by attaining a certain standard of education; but as the opportunity of reaching this standard is not readily afforded, the proportion of the masses who benefit by the regulation is infinitesimal. The number of persons who can read throughout the Russian Empire is under three per cent. of the population, and the existing school accommodation caters for under two million pupils out of a total population of one hundred and twenty-nine million. And this state of things is likely

[1] By the law of the 13th January 1874 the whole male population of the Russian provinces, without distinction of rank, is liable to personal military service from the beginning of the 21st to the end of the 43rd year, of which the first eighteen years are spent in the standing army, the remainder in the militia.

to remain, for in the ignorance of its people lies the security of Russian Bureaucracy.

Among the classes, the commercial and professional grades, the great aim is for the sons to attain the necessary standard to equip them for officers' commissions, and the men who obtain these vary more than is the case in the army of any other nation.

Thus the entire population, excepting only a small proportion of specially favoured men of superior attainment or social position, are connected with the army in some capacity. And it is the army which governs Russia. The various government departments, the State railways, the Asiatic dependencies of the empire, the learned societies supported by the State, and the bulk of the more important political posts, are all entrusted to the army, which throughout Russia takes the place of our own Civil Service, our political officers, railway managers, and scientific explorers. The Russian officer is everywhere in evidence; and he is everywhere supreme. The Russian Empire is, in short, administered by some seventy thousand military men, who command a force of over a million units. In Russia the army is all-powerful. It is the active force which dominates the country and the people, and in the councils of the State it is the factor which takes the place of the public opinion of other countries. The proportions to which the army has grown have naturally tended to the encouragement of a strong *esprit de corps*, coupled with a keen rivalry in the hunt for promotion and for place. The force thus brought to bear upon the State is considerable; sufficient, indeed, to influence the acts of a strong ruler like Nicholas I. or Alexander III., and likely to completely dominate the individuality in a weakling like the present Tsar. And so the aims of Russia are persistently pursued with a success possible only to a nation similarly placed.

But the continued repetition of this line of policy is not unattended by restrictions. One difficulty especially crops up from time to time with increased force, and it is this which will in the end revolutionise the whole

position. The constant activity necessitated by the present policy, with its attendant extension of militarism, is extremely costly, and this is telling on the finances of the Empire. With all its wealth, the Russian treasury is not inexhaustible, and the vast expenditure which has of late years been indulged in has so depleted the revenue as to bring the country within measurable distance of bankruptcy. In addition to the vast annual cost of her army and her navy, Russia has recently added a huge expenditure on further armaments and railways. The national debt has increased by thirty-four million roubles within the last ten years, during which there has been no war to cause a heavy drain on her resources. The whole of this money has been expended in strategic railways and military expeditions, and the limit of such folly is nearly reached. Yet while the efforts of the nation are thus directed towards the continual expansion of the country, nothing is done to develop that which she possesses, and outside St. Petersburg, Russia remains ignorant and benighted, barbaric, uncivilised, sickly, and half-starved. Education is throughout the land practically unknown, except to the upper class. The peasants, who should represent the strength of the country, being almost to a man tillers of the soil, are so unskilled in the most ordinary methods of cultivation as to be subject to frequent famine, the result of their agricultural ignorance. From the moment when, with so loud a flourish of trumpets, Alexander II. decreed the emancipation of the serfs, nothing has been done to train, educate, or to raise this miserable people from their degradation, and while hundreds of millions have been spent in the indulgence of the craze for militarism and for conquest, inherent in the one class which is consulted in the country, the Moujiks have been retrograded rather than assisted in emerging from their condition of animal existence. A tithe of the money expended in the exploitation of Manchuria, the sending of secret missions to Afghanistan, and the filching of territory from Persia and the Khanates of

Central Asia, would have sufficed for the enlightenment of the Russians, the emancipation of the country from its conditions of primitive civilisation, and the introduction of education throughout the territories of the Tsar. But to have attempted these things would have been to threaten the existence of the Tchinovik dominion, and have hastened on that revolution which one day will shake the Empire to its foundations, and lead—no one knows where.

And so the country remains undeveloped, and its people ignorant, while the ruling party continues its policy of aggression and of extension in order that it may be occupied, and that the civilising mission of Russia may be furthered. Thus, while the people of Central and Southern Russia are in the throes of a famine, which carries in its train an epidemic of the most virulent known disease—of typhus—Russia is intent on the Russification of Manchuria, the handicapping of British interests in the Yangtse Valley, and the final preparations for a descent—by railway—on Herat. And while thus occupied, unmindful of aught but her vain desires, she seeks to divert the attention of Europe from her actions by the issue of a Peace manifesto in the name of the Tsar.

In the gradual usurpation of Asia by Russia there has been only one disturbing element; yet, despite the success which has attended Muscovite pertinacity, the opposing element in question has in most directions handicapped, if not the conquest, at least the speed with which it has been made. The factor, which is alone responsible for this, is the influence of Great Britain, an influence which Russia has at every turn been made to feel, an influence which opposed at every opportunity the fondest hopes of succeeding Tsars, and which is alone responsible for the continued presence of the Turks in Constantinople, the Shah in Teheran, and the Ameer at Kabul. As if by a decree of fate, the aims of the two nations are at every turn opposed, and, as a result, England and Russia have become each the natural enemy of the other. No question of racial hatred or of ancient

wrong enters into the position. The two nations are natural rivals, competitors in the partition of Asia, and, as such, a constant enmity is aroused, which, on the least provocation, is liable to culminate in open war. The safeguards which have at various periods been employed, with a view to the abatement of the rivalry between them, have proved ineffectual. The one great idea to which the peace party in this Empire clung—the Buffer State idea—has failed, and is to-day rapidly vanishing from the map of Asia.

By dint of persistent, though oft-postponed, effort, backed by an ability as marked as it has always been unscrupulous, Russia has borne down upon us in Asia, until, finding herself brought up by the State we had interposed for our salvation, she took two slices from out the frontier of that, and already exerts her influence over a considerable portion of the Buffer State itself.

And how has England sought to stay her hand?

In nearly every respect the policy of Great Britain has been the reverse of that pursued by Russia. While the latter has been earnest, constant, well-informed, unscrupulous, and able, the former has been characterised by indifference, changeable, often ignorant, upright, and weak. The fixity of Russian policy, dependent on the stability of Russian interests, is as pronounced as the instability of the British idea, which changes with each succeeding Government, and as often as not runs counter to the views of her own experts. Nor is this contrast restricted to matters of high policy. In the conduct of her affairs Russia has always followed out her line of conduct, irrespective of the views of this or of any other country. But in our relationship with the Muscovite Government, we have repeatedly gone out of our way to adopt a course distinctly prejudicial to our interests, at the mere request of the Russian military authorities.

The reader of the present volume cannot but have been struck by the frequency and success with which Russia has from time to time sent secret missions of exploration to countries beyond her frontier. At first to

Khiva, Bokhara, and Khokand; later, to Sarakhs, Merv, and Astrabad; she has sent surveyors and explorers to bring back reports as to the lie of the land and its political condition. Her secret emissaries have more than once penetrated to Balkh, to Herat, to Kabul, and even to Kandahar, without being hindered, as they might easily have been, by the agents of the Indian Government. Yet when an Englishman has ventured, not into the heart of Russia, but into territories which were not under Russian rule, intent merely on visiting the country, and learning something of the habits of the people, he has more often than not been peremptorily recalled by his own Government, in response to the protest raised by the ever susceptible Russian Administration.

Thus was Colonel Valentine Baker, who had proceeded patriotically at his own expense into Turkomania in 1873 in order to explore the regions bordering the Persian and Afghan frontiers, recalled by his own Government before he entered Merv. In the year following Captain Napier, son of Lord Napier of Magdala, was forbidden to go, even into the vicinity of Merv. In 1875 Colonel MacGregor, subsequently Sir Charles MacGregor, late Quartermaster-General of India, started on his ride from the Persian Gulf to Herat. He reached Sarakhs in safety, and was about to set out through the desert towards Merv when he was stopped by a courier, who had been sent from Teheran, at the request of the Indian Government, prohibiting him from crossing the Persian frontier into Central Asia. About the same period Colonel Fred Burnaby was recalled from Khiva at the request of the Russian authorities, and the same fate was accorded Captain Butler, who started out to explore Central Asia from Khorassan three years later.

In 1880, when Skobeleff was preparing his expedition against Geok Tepe, at a juncture when some definite information about the district was absolutely necessary to this country, Captain Stewart and Captain Gill set out from the Persian frontier in order to explore the country round Merv. News of their proposed tour reached the

Russian authorities, however, and, at their request, the Indian Government sent peremptory orders for them to return forthwith. And while, in obedience to the requests of Russia, British exploration has thus been restricted, and British explorers snubbed, Russia has sent out travellers by the score, who, while either disguised as traders, or posing as scientific explorers, have really been but the scouts of her further advance. What could have been a more flagrant insult to this country than the official mission of Grodekoff to Herat in 1878, what more impudent disregard of the susceptibilities of England than the despatch of Lessar to Herat, or of Alikhanoff and Sokoloff to Merv. Has ever a more scandalous breach of neighbourly duty been committed than that entailed in the sending of the Stolyetof mission to the country of Shere Ali, or, later still, that of Venukoff to Abdur Rahman; and yet, marked as is the contrast between the policy of the two countries, that distinguishing the treatment of the agents concerned is still more pronounced. Grodekoff's ride was rewarded by an audience with the Tsar, the awarding of two decorations, and an appointment on the General Staff. Alikhanoff's exploration of Merv brought him a generalship. Stolietoff's mission, though unsuccessful, was rewarded by a governorship; and so with all of them. The British officers, who at their own risk and expense have devoted their leave to the exploration of unknown territories, and the obtaining of information of the utmost value to the authorities, have been handicapped in every possible way, and even reprimanded, while no single reward or distinction has even yet been accorded to the self-denying explorers of Central Asia. Even Edmund O'Donovan, the heroic visitor to Merv, whose account of the oasis was the only one by a Briton who had reached the stronghold of the Turkomans since they had held it, was never offered the slightest recognition either for his wonderful performance or the service he rendered to his country.

And as with the treatment she accords to those who

serve her, so with that she vouchsafes her rival. From start to finish, we have never held our own against the wiles of Russia, and until our methods undergo a radical change we never shall. Honest ourselves, we do not appear to possess the capacity for dealing with the policy of fraud. Slow to learn, we are not disposed to profit by our long experience, and realise that the word of Russia is not to be taken, and that her pledges are made only to be broken. And for so long as we continue tied to exploded theories, ignorant of pregnant facts, and unmindful of the contrast between the Russian train of thought and our own, so long will Russia best us at her own sweet will, so long will she triumph over us at each encounter.

The question then arises: How far will Russia succeed in forging ahead? How is it possible to stay her progress?

To answer the first of these questions is not a matter of any great difficulty. She will continue to extend her influence, and to use it for her own benefit, so long as she can do so without disastrous results to herself. She will continue to coerce China, just as she has coerced Central Asia, until she is either brought up by reaching the boundary of a country as strong as herself, or until she is shown that she has reached the limit which a first-class Power will tolerate without creating a *casus belli*. The moral of all the factors which I have reviewed in these chapters is evident. Russia will continue to expand by every means open to her excepting that of declaring war against a first-class Power. That this is the *ultima Thule* of her policy has been shown on many occasions. As long as she dares, so long will she negotiate and bribe, quibble and explain, advance and, if compelled, retire. But her ideal of aggrandisement is by the arts and wiles of diplomacy, not by the prosecution of war, for a war would seriously cripple the Empire, powerful though it be, and a war with England would spell insolvency.

In Central Asia, Russia and England have not as yet come into actual contact. The breaches of pledges, faith,

and treaties which have distinguished her dealings with the British Government have related merely to her gradual approach towards the Afghan frontier, and having reached it, we hastened to show our displeasure by according to the aggressing power a large slice of that country whose independence it had always been our policy to maintain! But so far as actual contact, in either political or commercial relationship, the two countries had remained apart.

In the far East, events have moved even more rapidly than in Central Asia. In China, Britain and Russia have met and struggled. As might have been expected from the weapons with which she fought, Britain has been worsted in the encounter, and has retired comforting herself with the repetition of the pet theories which have proved so unavailing in the contest.

The actual struggle between this country and Russia in China dates back but some eighteen months. The position had, of course, been carefully worked up to by Russia in her Cassini Convention, a document of which the last has been by no means heard. But the Cassini Convention and the succeeding Manchurian railway agreement, which decreed the Russian occupation of Manchuria, were not made public, and their existence was not even suspected by the British Government until they were published in the columns of the newspapers two years after they had been signed. The occupation of Port Arthur, however, served to suggest to the British Government that something was going on in China which required watching, and instructions were sent to our representatives at St. Petersburg and Peking to make the customary inquiries with a view to satisfying the not unnatural curiosity evinced at the Foreign Office. The results in both cases were extremely reassuring, and, failing to profit by past experience, the British Government chose to believe every assurance offered, and professed itself highly indignant at any suggestion which tended to throw a doubt on the validity of the Russian word.

The lengthy series of communications, epistolary and telegraphic, passing between Lord Salisbury and our representatives abroad, respecting Russian doings in China between November 1897 and April 1898 affords an admirable example of Russian methods and British simplicity.[1] There can be no doubt whatever but that the seizure of the Liao-tung peninsula had long been determined on by Russia after arrangement with the Chinese, and it was only an excuse which was required to justify the desired course. The seizure of Kiao Chau by Germany, though a poor excuse, was seized on with avidity.

The occupation of Port Arthur began with a subterfuge, as is shown by the first announcement made of the intention. It was announced that five Russian men-of-war were going to winter at Port Arthur by permission of the Chinese Government. By this, all chance of the project being hindered by the sending of a British fleet to Port Arthur was obviated. When asked for explanations respecting the presence of the ships, Count Muravieff deliberately stated to Mr. Goschen, at the time on a visit to St. Petersburg, that 'It was only owing to the existence of a certain difficulty in keeping more than a certain number of ships of war in Japanese ports at one time that the Russian ships had gone to Port Arthur'; and subsequently the Count repeated this explanation, and added that the movement of the ships had absolutely no connection with the occupation of Kiao Chau by Germany. Following this demonstration on the part of Russia, the British Government deemed it judicious to send two British men-of-war to Port Arthur, which was done. This action called forth an immediate protest on the part of Russia, which was repeated at intervals, on the ground that the presence of British war-ships at Port Arthur was an unfriendly act; and eventually the ships were withdrawn. After Russia had by these means obtained possession of Port Arthur, and taken preliminary steps to fortify the heights by which it is

[1] China, No. 1, 1898.

surrounded, the fact transpired that she had leased that port as well as Talien-wan from China for the purpose of a naval base, the reason for this action being stated by the Russian *chargé d'affaires* at Peking as 'to assist in protecting Manchuria against the aggression of other Powers.' On being pressed as to the truth of this rumour, Count Muravieff informed the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg that an ice-free port was a matter of vital importance to Russia, and that Port Arthur and Talien-wan had been leased from the Chinese Government, but that they would be open to trade the same as any other treaty ports in China, and that it was not the intention of Russia to interfere with the sovereign rights of China over the Liao-tung peninsula. Subsequently to this the Russian Foreign Office sent notice to its foreign representatives announcing the leasing of Talien-wan and Port Arthur, and stating that the former would be open to foreign trade. The British representative thereupon drew Count Muravieff's attention to the omission of Port Arthur as an open port, and received in reply the explanation that the Count adhered to his previous assurances, but that the moment was inopportune for publicly announcing them. And finally, when a further application was made in writing to the Russian foreign minister for a definite statement respecting the future of Port Arthur, he replied, on the 1st April 1898, in a communication to Sir Nicholas O'Conor which may be regarded as a model of Muscovite methods, and as such I append a translation.

'M. L'AMBASSADEUR,—The note which your Excellency was good enough to address to me indicates certain misunderstandings which I am anxious to rectify without the least delay.

'I will begin by pointing out that the ideas which I may have expressed very confidentially on the 16th and 23rd March, relative to the conditions in which it seemed desirable to me that Port Arthur and Talien-wan should be placed, if China consented to grant a lease of them to Russia, ought never to have been interpreted as "assurances," and could not in reality have such a signification.

'It was evidently impossible for me to make the slightest engagement on this subject before the conclusion of the arrangements, which were only signed at Peking on the 27th March. An amicable exchange of views between your Excellency and me might well take place, but you will certainly agree, M. l'Ambassadeur, that no Government could pretend to the privilege of being made acquainted with negotiations in progress between two perfectly independent and friendly Powers.

'You asked me whether, in taking Ports Arthur and Talienwan on lease, Russia intended to maintain the rights of sovereignty of China, and to respect the treaties existing between that Empire and other States. I answered in the affirmative, and I added that we hoped, moreover, to obtain the opening of the port of Talienwan, which would offer great advantages to all nations. Now that the negotiations with China have brought about the desired result, all that is entirely confirmed. The substitution of the Russian usufruct for possession by China of Ports Arthur and Talien-wan has not affected in any way the interests of the other Powers in those regions; quite on the contrary, thanks to the friendly agreement arrived at between the two great neighbouring Empires, a port hitherto closed is open to the trade of the whole world, and placed under exceptionally favourable conditions, as it is destined to be connected with the great line of the Siberian Railway.

'As regards all other points, the respect for the sovereign rights of China implies the scrupulous maintenance of the *status quo* existing before the lease of the ports which have been conceded.

'Your Excellency having observed to me that men-of-war and merchant ships are, in certain cases provided for by the Treaties, admitted even into the closed ports of China, I answered that accordingly this facility would be assured to them by the Regulations in force.

'It follows that Port Arthur will be open to English ships on the same conditions as it has always been, but not that Russia should abuse the lease which has been granted to her by a friendly Power to arbitrarily transform a closed and principally military port into a commercial port like any other.

'These are the few observations which I have thought it right to make to your Excellency to complete the conversations which we have had on the same subject. I have, etc.'

It is unnecessary for me to comment on this document. It speaks for itself, and serves as an admirable example of the chicanery which is employed by the highest officials in Russia for the attainment of their aims. And

in the working of her policy, Russia is greatly assisted by the action of her rival.

While Great Britain refuses to take steps for the opening up of China to British commerce, Russia is busy not only over the construction of railways in her own sphere, but also in the surveying of routes in the British sphere, as well as the opposition of schemes drawn up by private British enterprise. The line of railway which is nominally to be constructed by a Belgian syndicate, between Peking and Hankow, was originally schemed out by a party of Russian engineers, who, on the excuse that they were interested in the making of a geological survey, traversed the line of country through Pechili, Shansi, Honan, and Hupeh, took levels, and drew up their plans. The 'Belgian syndicate' is the merest scapegoat. Had the concession been a genuine one to Belgian capitalists, there would have been no need of the admitted French and Russian guarantee; and if a guarantee had been desired, the Belgians interested would have sought the influence of Great Britain as being alike more solid and more reliable than that of either France or Russia.

It has long ceased to be a secret, that besides being an undertaking formulated by France and Russia, the projected railway is destined to play a very important part in the political development of the latter country. The branch of the road designed between Pao-Ting and Sigan-Fu will be the terminal section for the Central Asiatic Railway, which is already open from the Caspian to Tashkend, and is being eagerly surveyed forward thence towards Siberia. In its future influence over the destinies of Asia, this railway will be called upon to play an even more important part than the more advanced but less ambitious Siberian Railway, inasmuch as it will place South Russia and Central Asia in communication with China and Manchuria, and will traverse far richer territories, and more important markets than will the northern girdle, which for centuries to come must be important in its strategic rather than its commer-

cial relation to the Empire. And while these ambitious aims are being steadily kept in view, Russia secures an immense moral accession of strength by the main Lu-han line, which will unite Peking with the Yangtse Valley.

The position already secured by Russia in Northern China is the cause of much jubilation at St. Petersburg. The most enthusiastic of Russian Tchinoviks was scarcely prepared for so triumphant a progress all along the line of Manchurian aggression as has been achieved, and it is this very success that has caused one or two displays of recklessness, notably in the case of M. Pavloff at Peking, which would not have occurred otherwise. It was expected that the seizure of Port Arthur would have caused complications with England backed by Japan, and it was owing to this expectation that such precautions were taken to have men and armament available for the strengthening of Port Arthur before the final step was taken. The Liao-tung Peninsula is to-day fully secured, and Port Arthur is already practically impregnable. It could be starved out, perhaps, but to do this would necessitate the holding of the belt of land behind Talien-wan, and with the large number of men available, this would require a very strong force indeed. Russia is therefore at ease in respect to her Manchurian base, and for the present is resting on her oars, while she continues to add to her strength in Northern China, and devotes her energies to the obtaining of further facilities for future aggrandisement. The methods she adopts for the consolidation of her position and the exclusion of her rivals are as admirable as they are impudent. One day her emissaries protest against a concession being given to Great Britain; another they demand the exclusive right of training Chinese sailors in the Chinese Navy; on a third it is formally announced that only vessels manned entirely by Chinese or Russian sailors will be permitted to trade with Port Arthur. In short, Russia takes steps in regard to British interests in China which she would not dare to

take against Germany, for she is a good judge of human nature, and knows what each of her rivals will stand.

How is one to come to an understanting with so slippery a customer? We are told by certain well-meaning but non-observant people, that we make no attempt to understand Russia; that she is our heaven-sent ally in the civilisation of the world; that she is the harbinger of universal peace and goodwill upon earth, and that it is ridiculous to regard her as our enemy. It would be absurd to attempt to reason with these innocents. An ounce of fact is worth a ton of sentiment; and the fact remains that Russia and England are—alike by their geographical position, their commercial instincts, and their individual ambition—destined to be rivals in Asia; that owing to the distinction of race, religion, and morals which keeps them so utterly asunder, they are necessarily irreconcilable with one another; and lastly, that because of the immense difference in the modes of thought, tastes and ambitions of the two people, they are natural opponents. By no possibility could the two nations become united for a common end. On the one side an observance of the considerations due to a community of interests is impossible, on the other the natural attachment to fair dealing, and the observance of conditions laid down would prevent anything like an equal enjoyment of the advantages of union.

England has never yet benefited by the clauses of a treaty concluded with Russia, for the reason that Russia has never abided by any treaty for one instant after she has deemed it to her advantage to disregard it, and this principle is as true of Russia to-day as it is of the Russia of the Black Sea Treaty, the Gortchakoff Memorandum, or the Schouvaloff Agreement.

Indeed, apart from her inability to play the part of a nation conducted on honourable lines, it is extremely doubtful whether Russia has the slightest desire to arrive at an understanding with England. Treaties are apt to give trouble, owing to the amount of prevarication necessary to account for their breach, but in the absence

of treaties Russia retains a free hand; and again, although she may not have the slightest intention of adhering to the clauses to which she puts her signature, England has such a way of regarding treaty obligations seriously, and what is more, of reminding Russia of their existence at inconvenient intervals, that it is deemed more satisfactory to forego the advantages of ensuring friendly relations with a Power which Russia has come to believe will not quarrel with her. And Russia is surely wise, for the correctness of her views is made plain by the success which has attended her efforts during the past five years. Broken treaties, and disregarded frontiers in Central Asia have been rewarded by the according of strips of territory out of the very frontiers which have been outraged. Broken pledges, and the exclusion of natives from their own territory in China have led to the acquisition not only of practically the whole of Manchuria, but the control of China, and that in face of the much vaunted commercial and financial superiority of Great Britain.

There is only one check to the final realisation of Russian aims in Asia. By her ability, her persistence, and her lack of scruple, she has paved the way to the final absorption of China, and such other regions as are not under British rule. Persia but for England would long ago have gone the way of Khiva and Khokand. But the case of China is different. China is more readily held by an army than is Persia. Its communications are infinitely better, its waterways the finest in the world. And saving a very sudden change of front on the part of England, Russia will attain her aim sooner than is supposed. There is indeed only one difficulty in the way of Russia's triumph over Asia. It is the natural deficit in her treasury resulting from the immense additional expenditure of the last few years on armaments and railways, expenditure which, while it impoverishes the country and exhausts its available resources, brings no return. The result of the tactics followed by Russia during the past few years is impending bankrupcy, and it

is largely in the hope of averting this that the Tsar's advisers have approved the issue of the famous Peace rescript.

The extraordinary document which is at present occupying the attention of the crowned heads of Europe, and which appears to have so fascinated the public eccentricities of this country, does not come within the scope of this volume, except in so far as it is likely to affect the Asiatic policy of Russia. Whether the aims set forth in the Tsar's manifesto are likely to be attained or no, is a question which will not trouble the intelligence of any person of moderate experience and sound mind. The limitation of armaments among nations is a physical impossibility, as unattainable as are the well-intentioned but equally impracticable objects of the Peace Society. But there is a certain practical utility in the rescript which may prove useful. I refer to the light it throws on the position of Russia to-day. Regarded from the standpoint of the dispassionate student, the manifesto points to one of two circumstances. It implies either that the long looming bankruptcy of Russia is nearer than has been supposed, and that it is hoped that such an understanding may be arrived at which may enable Russia to economise awhile; or that it is intended to divert public attention from some deep-laid scheme for Russian aggrandisement which is about to be put into execution.

To suggest that the rescript is merely what it intends to be, the honest attempt of a government to live at peace with the rest or the world, and to that end to curtail its expenditure on its military forces, is to insult the intelligence of the most ordinary thinker. It is Russia who has all through her history been the Power most given to promote war. She has seen more fighting than any other first-class Power, and the fighting has in nearly every instance been of her own seeking. It is Russia that has necessitated the armament of other nations to a degree never dreamed of before she became their neighbour. The forces maintained by Germany,

by Austria, and by Turkey along their frontiers are due to the swashbuckling attitude and the inscrutable methods of the Great White Tsar, while the costly defences of our own North-West frontier would never have been in existence but for the declared intention of a succession of Tsars to invade our Empire and despoil it. Russia in her postulate of peace becomes impossible. It is like the expert and oft-convicted burglar issuing a plea for the reduction of the police force on account of its cost, and beyond serving as a peg on which certain old ladies of both sexes may hang strings of moral texts and Christian mottoes, can serve no possible practical end, unless it be to show to what depths of credulous simplicity certain publicists can descend.

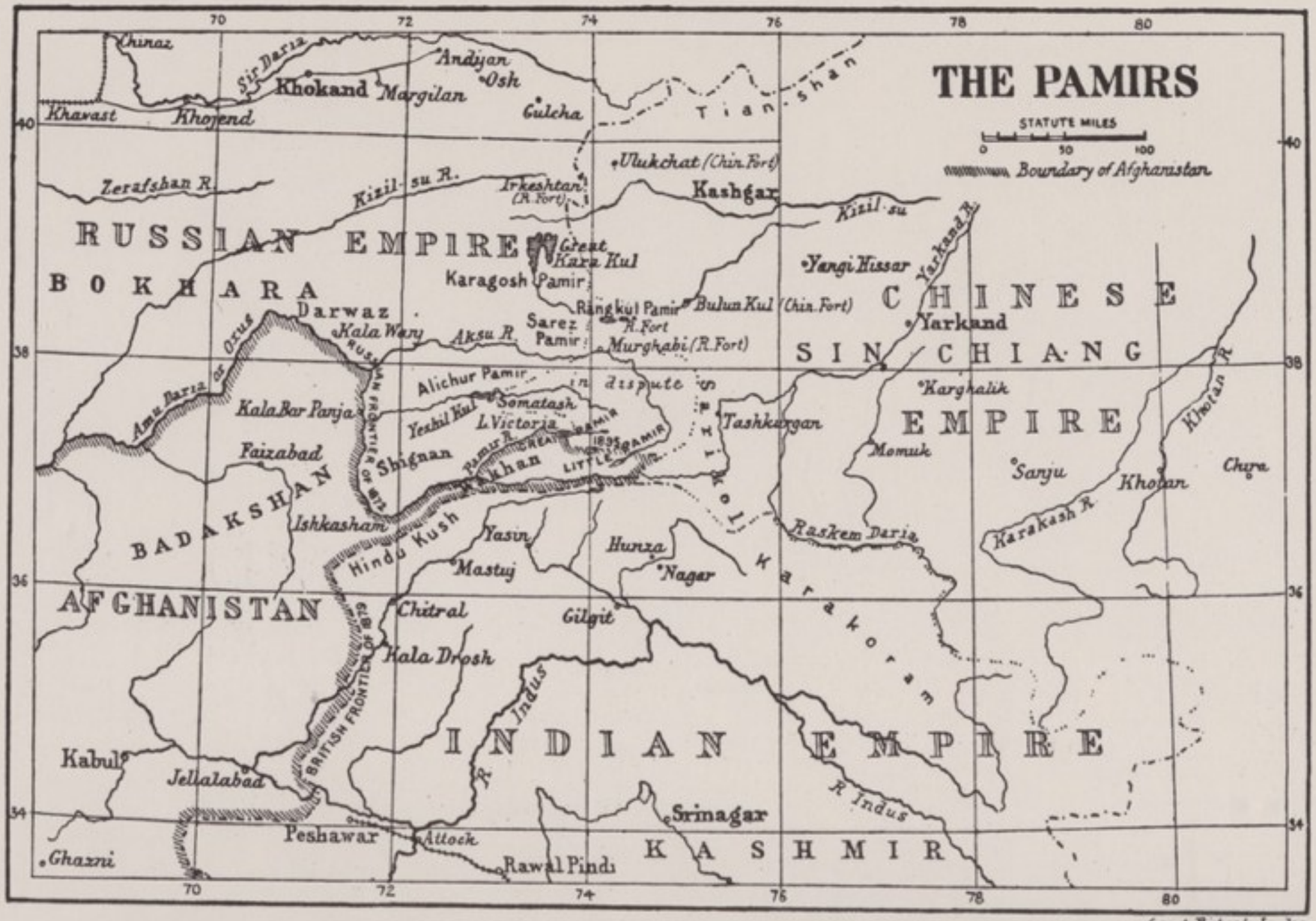
Notwithstanding this, there are several points about this same rescript which are worthy of notice, and to which I am impelled to refer. The first and most instructive of these, a point which does not appear to have struck our commentators, is the fact that the rescript is directly aimed at this country, as will be seen on the most casual examination of the document. Nominally addressed to the nations of the world, it is nevertheless indisputable that in its inception Russia must have had those nations in her mind which either border her frontiers or come into rivalry with her aims. Thus Russia will not have troubled herself about the armaments of Italy or of Spain, of Holland or the United States. Nor will the rescript have been directed against such countries as China or Persia, which, while they are neighbours, yet possess no armies in the modern sense, and as opponents are entirely non-effective. There are, in short, but two Powers to whom the document can have been addressed, and of these the one was not likely to be influenced by aught but its own conception of its own interests. Can Nicholas II. be so extremely guileless as to suppose that his cousin of Germany is likely to be influenced by an appeal for disarmament? I think not. But England, the nation which on every side and at every turn seeks to thwart Russian aims and defeat her desires, England

is ruled by sentimentalists and is therefore likely to be impressed by the prayer of a peace-loving Tsar. And if only the attempt were to succeed—it would mean so much to Russia. Of this there can be no more question than of the honesty of the document itself or of him who decreed its publication.

The aim of the approaching Peace Conference is to arrive at an understanding respecting the amount to be spent on increased armaments during a certain number of years. The direct object in view by the rulers of Russia is the gaining of time during which to put the country's finances in a healthier state than at present, and to complete the strategic railways now under construction, as well as to develop the territories which have been recently added to the Russian Empire.

If the Powers consent to the proposal, or if England alone consents to it, Russia will have gained her object, and by being freed from the necessity of spending money on additions to her navy, or the increasing of her Asiatic armaments, will be enabled to devote herself to the final preparations necessary before entering on a life and death struggle for the control of Asia.

If, on the other hand, England refrains from binding herself, her rival can take her choice between losing ground in the race on which she has entered, or a bankruptcy which will so prejudice her future credit as to relegate her to the position of a third-rate Power for the next fifty years. The problem is an interesting one, and its solution may well be watched with interest.



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CHAPTER XIII

THE OUTLOOK

Asiatic frontiers of Russia—The Pamirs Question—Russo-Afghan frontier—Continuity of Russian success—Conflict of interests between Russia and England—Russia's future action cramped by British opposition—Extreme views of Russophobe and Russophil parties—Rivalry between Russia and England due to natural and not to artificial causes—Reason for the constant diplomatic triumph of Russia over Britain—Weakness of British Governments—The story of Port Arthur—Lack of reliable information in official circles—Weakness of British foreign policy—Its cause—The theory of a 'buffer state'—The 'open door' craze—Remarkable tolerance by Britain of Russian protests in Far East—Futility of unsupported policy of protest—The Afghan question—Asia Minor—Persia—Tibet—China—Only possible limits of Russian aggression—China at the mercy of the Tsar—Impossibility of existing social conditions being indefinitely prolonged—Siberia, a contrast to European Russia in feeling—Its people—Causes at work tending to the spread of individual thought—Sympathy between the army and the people—Artificiality of Russian system—Its limits—Its destiny.

THE Asiatic frontiers of Russia are so well defined as to leave little room for the raising of questions of doubtful boundary. And yet, by the exercise of an ingenuity peculiarly her own, Russia may be said to be always at issue with one or other of her neighbours over some fresh question of disputed territory. On the west, bordered by the European Empire of the Tsar, and on the north by the Arctic Ocean, the only possible causes of trouble must be sought on the east and southern sides, and of these nearly two-thirds are occupied by China.

The Russo-Chinese frontier, as at present recognised, runs from a point at the mouth of the River Tiumen north of the Korean frontier on the Sea of Japan, to a point on the Aksu River slightly to the south of Kizil

Rahat, and near Aktash; where Chinese Turkestan and the Russian Pamirs meet the Afghan Khanate of Wakhan. The total length of this frontier line is little short of five thousand miles, and it is throughout its greater portion a paper frontier which has never been accurately laid down or surveyed. The only sections which are fully demarcated are those laid down in the treaties of Peking and Ili, the rest of the boundaries being vague, and depending largely on the views of the Russian authorities for the time being.

Thus, while the Russo-Manchurian frontier is by the treaty of Peking formed by the rivers Amur and Ussuri, Russia is at present in practical occupation of the whole of Manchuria, and while her further progress southwards will probably be postponed by the agreement now being negotiated between St. Petersburg and London, the road to Peking lies open to her Cossacks, and the establishment of her authority in the Chinese capital remains only a matter of time. In the same fashion the district of Ili, and indeed the entire Province of Kulja, though nominally a Chinese dependency, is fully ear-marked to Russian statesmanship, and the regions of Kashgar and Yarkand, indeed the whole of Eastern Turkestan, will most infallibly one day swell the area of the Russian Empire.

At the point where the territories of Russia, China, and Afghanistan adjoin is the Pamirs, the wonderful upland region, which has been well named the Roof of the World. The average altitude of this country is 13,000 feet, and it is traversed by the most stupendous mountain ranges of the world. The table-lands and valleys, of which the Pamirs mainly consist, are cut up in every direction by water-ways spreading here and there into good-sized lakes. The region is during the greater part of the year covered with snow, and the climate is more severe than that in any other part of the world.

The value of this territory for purposes of habitation or development is *nil*. The only people who exist in the Pamirs are a few bands of nomadic Kirghiz of low type,

and the country would doubtless continue in its erstwhile deserted condition but for the political importance of the position. This point appears to have first struck the Powers concerned shortly after the conquest of Khokand, to which the Pamirs was nominally attached, and the advent of Russia to the region of Marghilan was the signal for Afghanistan and China to extend their frontiers, so as to lessen the risk of a Muscovite invasion of their territories. In this way the Afghans occupied Roshan, Shugnan, Badakshan, and Wakhan, while the Chinese advanced from Kashgar and Yarkand, and established a number of frontier posts along the uplands of the Kuen Luen and the valleys of Sirikul.

The action taken by Russia in 1891, when Colonel Yonoff with a thousand Cossacks crossed the Pamirs, established the fort at Murghabi, and came into collision with the Afghans, has already been chronicled, together with the subsequent negotiations which resulted in the convention of 1895.[1] This settled the Russo-Afghan frontier, but it did not definitely settle the limits of Russian and Chinese influence, and the Russo-Chinese boundary remains one of 'understanding,' which is already in danger of being upset by the threatened seizure of Sirikul, which has for years past been regarded by Russia as Chinese territory, as evidenced by the agreement entered into by Russia in 1894, in which she undertook not to interfere with that portion of the Pamirs occupied by China. The total population of the Russian Pamirs is officially stated to be 1232, mostly Kirghiz.

The chief interest in the Pamirs question centres in the probability of the region proving the meeting-place of the British and Russian frontiers. Along the entire southern limit of the Russian Pamirs as at present recognised, the British and the Russian boundaries are separated by the district of Wakhan, which, even at its narrowest part, is some twenty miles wide. If, however, Russia were to annex Sirikul, we should have a series of Cossack outposts guarding one side of the Mustagh

[1] See Appendix B.

mountains, which extend to the Karakorum range, and form the northern boundary of Runjat and Kashmir. It is, of course, a feature in the present policy of England to prevent the coincidence of her frontier with that of Russia, and for this reason it is probable that the aim of the latter to absorb the Taghdumbash Pamir will be opposed by this country.

The Russo-Afghan frontier, which has been so frequently modified to suit Muscovite fancies, to-day rests on the Pamirs Convention of 1895 from the Chinese frontier to Lake Victoria; and thence westward to the terminal pillar (No. 79) of the Afghan Boundary Commission of 1887, near Kilif on the River Oxus, is determined by the Granville-Gortchakoff agreement of 1872. From the Oxus to the Hari Rud, near the pass of Zulficar, where Afghanistan meets Persia, the frontier has been defined by a series of pillars erected by the Russo-Afghan Frontier Commission, and thus the whole of the northern boundary of Afghanistan has been minutely defined, and can only be violated by Russia in defiance of treaty obligations. In view of the great importance of these, I have included them in Appendix B, where the whole of the Russo-Afghan boundary will be found described.

The Russo-Persian frontier rests on the Treaties of Gulistan and Turkomanchai, and the Akhal Khorassan Convention of 1881. These documents will be found in the Appendix B.

The history of Asiatic Russia is a record of uninterrupted conquest and absorption extending over a period of more than three centuries. During that period no single Power has ever stood up against the advance of the Muscovite, nor have the efforts of any of the victims of her ambition proved sufficient to ensure their continued independence. In the attainment of her end, Russia has been favoured by the weakness of her neighbours, which has everywhere rendered her conquest easy; and the few reverses inflicted on her arms have been due not to the power of her antagonists, but to the inclemency of the elements, or the incapacity of her own commanders.

In the carrying out of her programme for the annexation of the continent of Asia, Russia has only been hindered by the presence of a single Power whose interests are in distinct antagonism to her own, and whose strength is sufficient to effectually stay her march. Beginning in remonstrances concerning her conquests in Central Asia, the questions at issue between England and Russia have become more acute as the boundaries of their respective spheres have approached, and the claim so recently made by the latter for an exclusive interest in the markets of China has hastened matters so greatly as to bring the two countries into a rivalry such as may at any moment necessitate action of the promptest kind.

Nor are the conflicting interests of England and of Russia confined to the Far East. On every side of Asia do the two impinge, and at every contact is the struggle for the victory renewed. In Persia, in Afghanistan, in Tibet, in Baluchistan, along the Chinese frontier, across the whole of the eighteen provinces, and down into the heart of the Yangtse valley, has Russia worked her way, as much with the aim of hindering the spread of British influence as of preparing for the future consecration of these realms to her own ends. But at every point it is realised by the ministers who rule the Tsar that their opportunities are cramped by the ubiquitous Britain, who on every side appears with her treaty rights or prior claims, and erects one barrier after another in the way of Russian progress. Thus Russia finds herself at the end of her natural limits of expansion, and is impelled to watch events and bide her time, pending the moment when circumstances may combine to afford a safe opportunity for a further advance.

The reader who has perused the foregoing pages will have no hesitation in acknowledging the extreme ability of Russian policy. Unscrupulous it is, dishonest it may be, but its inherent cleverness is shown by its invariable success, a success which, while mainly due to the foresight of her diplomatists, is also largely assisted by the

weakness of her opponent. It is the habit of the Russophobe party in this country to see in every action of Russia the work of the Devil. It is held that the Russians are a race of barbarians, who possess no claim to be regarded as civilised people, and that the utter lack of honesty and good faith exhibited in all their relations with other countries disqualifies them from consideration. This line of argument is so common that it must be familiar to all readers of newspapers, where it finds frequent expression by way of contrast to the creed of the Russophil, which has for its guiding principle a firm belief in the utter benevolence of the Muscovite, and a corresponding desire to form an alliance with Russia for the settlement of all differences of opinion between the two countries. The absurdity of the one standpoint is at least as great as is the folly of the other.

The Russophil has one point in common with the Russophobe, one link which connects the extremes of their opinions. The views of both are due to a lack of understanding which prejudices the case of each. Natural allies are developed by circumstances and interests, and are not chosen at the dictation of sentimentalists, or to satisfy the demand for a community of Christian States. Sentimentality has no influence over the interests of nations, and, from start to finish, the interests of Russia and of England are opposed. It is not necessary to go far afield for proof of this. It is the opposition of England which has alone in the past come between Russia and the attainment of her desires. But for her the Muscovite would have been in Constantinople a century ago; and after, Turkey, Greece and probably Hungary would have fallen neath the rule of the Tsar. But for England Russia would have taken Persia for her own, have possessed a fleet fitted to cope with that which rules the seas, and had a voice in every matter which concerns the world. But for England Russia would have moved more quickly in her present task and have taken China as a whole—but the power of England has prevented these things, and, discomfited at every move,

Russia finds herself compelled to gain by devious ways those things which she dare not openly demand. While thus held in check, she does not love us, nor do our methods tend to gather her respect. Politically and commercially Russia and England are rivals who must ever strive for the mastery, and if this country seeks to hold her own and avoid the *debâcle* which is being prepared for her, she must profit by the lessons of the past, and consider her position.

The plain truth of the matter is, that in her every contest with Russia England has been beaten, not by the strength or resources of her rival, but by the weakness and incapacity of her own rulers. The Government of England, always concerned in the continuity of its own existence, is by the immutable laws of nature driven to administer its policy by the light of its effect on its own fortunes, and, catering for a community largely leavened with theorists and faddists, it, as a rule, shrinks from the adoption of any course which, however it might protect the interests of the country, might give offence to a portion of the electorate. Added to this, the Government is frequently ill-served, and the system on which foreign affairs are administered is one which discourages the attainment of information, and renders difficult the right appreciation of events.

The complaints so frequently urged against the policy of Russia, on the ground of its consummate dishonesty, are but an admission of incapacity on the part of our rulers to cope with them. And for such there can be no excuse. Allowing, in accordance with the insular view, that Russian methods are lacking in honesty, there is surely no reason why means should not be taken to discount them, and guard the security of our interests. We have plenty of dishonest people to deal with at home, but we take legal means to cope with them, and in the result we minimise their power for mischief. But in the case of Russia we allow her to achieve her aims unhindered, and after gracefully conceding all that she demands, we justify our weakness by bringing charges of dishonesty

or breach of faith, the triumphing of which is the severest censure on the incapacity of our own methods.

And if all other means fail, if our statesmen are unable to cope with the Machiavellian methods of the rulers of Russia, there still remains the policy of imitation, which would at least place us on level ground, and release us from those ties which have so handicapped our action in the past. But such a policy would be decried throughout the land as being un-English, dishonest, and immoral.

Yet we ourselves adopt it in dealing with other dishonest people. In our campaign against crime we descend, through the medium of the officers of the law, to the pettiest of deceptions, the meanest of snares, in order to inveigle the evil-doer and secure his conviction. Why then hesitate about applying to those matters which affect alike the prosperity and the existence of the nation, the means which are every day employed for the protection of our own society?

We have, however, always accorded to the representations of Russia the same amount of consideration and belief as we have done to those of Powers more in accordance with the usages of modern civilisation. And in the result we have been alternately fooled and reassured until our rival has attained, by merest false pretences, those things which we should never have permitted her to take by force. Her methods have been as simple as they are unvaried. From the capture of Khiva to the descent on Manchuria, the *modus operandi* has remained the same. The great principle on such occasions is to be found in the realisation that, while England might go to war to prevent the accomplishment of something she considers undesirable, she would never dream of doing so in order to undo what has been accomplished. Russia has long recognised this, and, acting on it, she invariably quiets our fears by denying the truth of any information which may have reached us, until she has achieved her aim, and then justifies her action either on the score of having been led by force of circumstances to depart from

her previous intention, or by the plea that her assurances had been misunderstood.

To deal with such a policy should not, one would think, require any very superhuman effort on the part of a government. And yet it continues to flourish exceedingly despite the efforts of succeeding ministries. To take a single example of recent occurrence—I refer to the seizure of Port Arthur.

The leasing of this place to Russia by the Tsung-li-Yamen was due to the ascendency which the Russian *chargé d'affaires* had obtained over that body. To defend the action taken on either moral or political grounds would be impossible. Russia had herself taken the lead among the Powers which had protested against the cession of the Liao-tung Peninsula to Japan, on the plea that the partition of China was undesirable, and on that account not to be tolerated, and it was fully in accordance with Russian methods for her to herself occupy the Peninsula, under the absurd plea that she was doing so merely temporarily under a lease granted at Peking. When the first news of the arrival of a Russian squadron at Port Arthur reached the British admiral on the China Station, Sir Edward Seymour, acting on his own responsibility, took a course which reflects the greatest credit on his foresight and ability. Reasoning that the presence of a number of Russian men-of-war in Chinese waters could result in little good either to this country or to China, he sent the *Iphigenia* to Port Arthur to watch events. This step at once defeated the Russian aim, which was to quietly install itself in Port Arthur, and put the place in a position to defend itself, before announcing the existence of the treaty for its cession. So long as a British vessel lay alongside the Russian squadron further preparations were impossible, and to announce their intention to Great Britain before it had been carried out would be to provoke a protest, and possibly war. The Russian efforts were therefore aimed at obtaining the withdrawal of the British cruiser. And after a few representations made in turn to the British

Ambassador at St. Petersburg and Lord Salisbury in London, the *Iphigenia* was withdrawn from Port Arthur, and the Russians enabled to carry out their programme in the secrecy they desired. When, later on, the assurances given by Count Muravieff were so freely broken, Russia was in full possession of her desires, and to have driven her out of Port Arthur would have meant war. Whereas, had our Foreign Office only been better informed, and Lord Salisbury been better advised, the whole sequence of events might have been prevented without the expenditure of a life or the firing of a shot.

One of the principal causes of weakness in the foreign policy of England is the lack of information, due to faulty organisation and a fondness for red tape. The reason for this is twofold. In the first place, our agents abroad are neither supplied with the means to obtain early information, nor encouraged to forward it promptly. In the second, offers of information made by a private person are stedfastly discouraged. In Russia, and indeed in every other first-class Power, the reverse is the case. The representatives of the Tsar are everywhere eager to gain the best, and above all, the earliest intelligence of whatever is going on, and in point of the information it possesses, the Foreign Secretariat and the office of the General Staff in St. Petersburg are probably the best supplied departments in the world. With us the custom appears to be to repress any desire on the part of accredited agents to forward early news, and to question the accuracy of all intelligence received through independent channels. The absurd position in which Mr. Balfour and Lord Curzon were placed during the 1898 session of Parliament by the repeated publication of news in the *Times* of which no information had been received from our envoy at Peking, will be within the recollection of my readers, and the example thus afforded is by no means singular. Early and reliable news must in all countries be sought, and if needful paid for, and no method of representing a nation's interests could be less calculated to attain its aim than the frigid formality born

of red tape, and supported by an unlimited sense of individual importance, which distinguishes our embassies and consulates throughout the world. It is only as I write these lines that a report appears to the effect that, before the fall of Kang Yu Wei, the reformer whose action led to the *coup d'état* of the Dowager-Empress in Peking, that leader of Chinese thought sent his most trusted councillor to our Embassy at Peking, charged with giving to the British Minister some information of what was going on, but that the messenger failed to obtain an audience with Sir Claude Macdonald, and returned without having imparted the facts which it was deemed desirable to bring to the knowledge of the British Government.[1] I cannot substantiate the foregoing statement, and I do hope that it is absolutely without foundation, but, on the other hand, if it be true it is an incident quite on a par with the methods mostly favoured by British officialism.

Is it to be wondered at that with such contrasts between Muscovite and British methods, the one is invariably successful at the expense of the other? Is it surprising that we, with our hands tied by sentiment, our power crippled by party manœuvres, and our agents handicapped by the necessity for obeying fixed principles, should be beaten by a Power which is at once the most able, the most unscrupulous, and the most daring in the world? Is it to be hoped that our policy, ill-informed, easily misled, and overawed by mere matters of changing majorities at home, can ever hold its own against the persistent aims of brilliant men, whose only creed is to attain their ends, whose only peril to miss them? For the Russian Minister is no tool of a mere majority. He is for the time being the wielder of a power which is both interminable and infinite. He directs forces which are irresistible by dint of the mere exercise of his abilities. He is answerable but to the Tsar, and while outwardly obeying an autocrat, it is in reality the autocrat who is influenced by him. The contest between

[1] *Morning Post*, 1st March 1899.

the two is entirely one-sided. Our cause is foredoomed to failure.

Russia achieves her aims by a process of reasoning based on fact. England strives to stop her by a policy founded on supposititious theories which will not bear examination. In the case alike of Central Asia and the Far East, Britain has sought to protect her interests by the adoption of policies alike impracticable and absurd. The policy of the buffer State, which has for half a century been clung to in Central Asia, has a fitting companion in that of the open door, by which it was hoped—I believe among certain sanguine statesmen it is still hoped—that the threatened partition of China might be prevented till the end of time; and yet it is difficult to believe that a single one of the politicians, who so freely accord their support to these high-sounding phrases, could justify his attitude by the test even of his own logic.

The theory of the buffer State, an invention intended to serve a useful purpose in postponing the day of reckoning between opposing countries, is at least but a sorry mode of shifting our own responsibilities on to the shoulders of the coming generation. No buffer State can continue to exist beyond the moment when one of its neighbours finds its area cramped, or its power of expansion restricted. Sooner or later the intervening territory must become absorbed either by the one or the other, and the disputation over the absorption, when that process is to be no longer postponed, is likely to be far more acute than would have been the case had the buffer been annexed by one or other of the interested neighbours before the growth of mutual interests had caused each to cast covetous glances towards it. To defend a buffer State beyond one's frontier must always be a far more serious undertaking than to hold one's own along a protected boundary, and to ensure the existence of such a territory is only possible when its independence is guaranteed by a majority of the neighbouring Powers.

The cry of the open door is a creed far more fallacious than that of the buffer State. It is a principle which is possible only to Great Britain, for the reason that it is this country alone that is capable of holding its own in open trade competition with other nations. In the case of other Powers, consenting to abide by a policy of the open door would carry with it a gift of the greater portion of their commerce in the region affected to Great Britain, and to follow such a course would scarcely tend to bring in a suitable return for the cost of developing the territory acquired. The only way for this country to enforce the open door policy in accordance with her treaty rights would be to declare a protectorate over China, and supply that supervision which the Chinese are unable to afford. While nothing is being done, and we are still harping on the open door, Russia having long since brought Chinese officialdom to its knees, is carrying out her programme, not merely in Manchuria, but in Peking, in Tientsin, and in Hankow, to say nothing of various cities in the interior; and is only biding her time to show her hand, which, when shown, will come upon the British Government as a startling surprise. As to the intentions of Russia there is not the slightest doubt. The gradual absorption of North China, accompanied by a judicious elbowing of Great Britain, is only the first process in a scheme for the seizure of the whole of the eighteen provinces, a scheme which, however absurd it may sound, is already in progress. But while the intentions of Russia are well-known to every student of Chinese affairs, and while periodic warnings of the necessity for prompt action are issued by those who are entitled to speak, the guardians of our interest remain mute and impotent, and tolerate the interference with treaty rights, and accorded privileges, by agents such as Pavloff or De Giers.

The toleration accorded to the repeated protests of Russia, in respect to the undoubted rights of this country in China, is indeed incomprehensible. And the readiness with which we brook the impertinences of her agents

serves but to encourage repetition. Having already once consented to waive that portion of the security offered and accepted for the Shan Hai Kuan railway loan, by foregoing any claim to the road beyond the Great Wall, the Russian representative now demands a further abandonment of clauses in the agreement, and it remains to be seen whether we shall exhibit sufficient courage to insist on our freedom of contract, or whether our dealings with China can only be conducted by the good-will of her self-appointed guardian.

The whole policy of this country in regard to Russia in Asia has been one of vacillations built on initial error. The dread of Russian rivalry, which at the outset prompted our opposition to the attainment of a port on the Mediterranean, served only to postpone the event, and has been largely responsible for the action which successive Tsars have been led to adopt in Asia. A Russian occupation of Constantinople would not have affected British interests in the least, while it would have benefited the Turks, and tended to gradually allay the fanaticism of the near East. The power of Russia to affect our communication with India would have been *nil*, so long as our fleet retained its superiority, and by the possession of her long-coveted Mediterranean port, Muscovite ambition would have been, for a while at least, content.

Our statesmen of bygone days decided that the wisest policy to adopt in regard to Russia was to cramp her action, to confine her fleet, and to irritate her statesmen at every opportunity. By doing so we showed our fear of the growing power of Tsardom, and encouraged the strengthening of the Russian army and the Russian fleet. Unable to rightly gauge our opportunities, we exhibited at every move a keen anxiety to thwart even the most natural desires of our dreaded foe, and urged repeated protests against her every act, knowing well our inability to back these up by more than words. The terror which was for close on twenty years evinced at every extension of Russian rule in Central Asia brings

into marked relief the forlornness of the buffer State expedient. The day when the Russian frontier should touch the British in India was regarded as the threatening of the crack of doom, and the efforts made in the hope of postponing the evil hour tended neither to add to the reputation for pluck or ability on the part of our rulers. From start to finish mere verbal protest was futile. No diplomacy will prevent a nation following out the policy on which it has set its heart unless the protests are supported by an available force, and England has never been in the position to send out a force of sufficient strength to oppose the Russian advance in Central Asia, and to support the native Khans, so as to enable them to keep her beyond their boundaries.

The absorption of Turkestan was therefore foredoomed, and the only option open to Britain lay in the choice of the particular line beyond which Russian aggression was to be repelled by force. If Afghanistan was to be maintained at all costs, then should the defences of its frontier city, Herat, have been overhauled. With Herat equipped for the standing of a siege—and this could be effected with comparative ease—and a few forts constructed in appropriate positions in its neighbourhood, there should be little difficulty in checking the advance of any force that Russia is likely to despatch into Afghanistan. This policy has not been followed, and the general opinion of our military experts, who are best qualified to judge the question, supports the action of the authorities who, it is believed, possess in the existing line of frontier from Peshawar to Quetta a stronger, better, and in every respect more satisfactory barrier than would be possible were our outposts more extended. It is indeed generally agreed that had we only continued to hold Kandahar, our frontier would have been the best and most scientific which could be attained, and there could be little question as to our again occupying Kandahar the moment there is any serious prospect of trouble from a Russian invasion.

Having thus taken up our position on the line best

suited to our requirements, it would be the merest folly for us to regard the outlying portions of Afghanistan as being sacred to our friend and ally, the Ameer. The existence of any state is dependent entirely on the ability of its ruler to defend it from aggression. There is little question but that, in the event of a Russian invasion of Afghanistan, the natives would rise to a man, and would give their visitors a good deal of trouble, but they could hardly exceed the good-will or bravery of the Khokandese or the Turkomans, all of whom eventually had to bow to the Russian yoke; and the ultimate result of a Russian invasion of Afghanistan would never be for a moment in question so long as the Afghan tribes were pitted against the enemy single-handed.

The question turns therefore on the policy of England. Should we make common cause with the Afghans against a Russian attack, or should we remain behind our own frontier pending an actual onslaught? This, the great question of the near future, is not likely to be decided until it actually arises, and on its answer, when it does arise, depends in no small degree the future of our prestige in the East.

But the question of the Indian frontier, vital though it be to England, is by no means the only one which offers food for speculation in regard to the aims of Russia. There is the question of Asia Minor, dormant for the while, but existing, and likely to break out acutely at any moment; the Persian question, destined shortly to be taken in hand, if rumour be correct. There is the question of Tibet, as yet scarcely mentioned as a problem of the future; and, lastly, there is the great China problem which, so far at least, has been so woefully muddled by this country. Where do all these tend? When will Russia reach her limit? How is she to be restrained? The question has in part been already answered. Russia will continue to advance so long as the exciting forces are at work within, and she meets no insurmountable barrier without. Except in one contingency, Russia is destined to creep onwards, until she finds herself brought

up by a barrier maintained by a Power stronger than herself. In Europe she has such a boundary in the German frontier. In India she will find it in our own. But Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan, China! All are at her mercy, failing the protective action of other and stronger Powers. Thus is Turkey safe, so long as Germany and ourselves stand prepared to champion her existence. The Persian Gulf will remain unattained, so long as its seizure would imply a war with England. Afghanistan will exist until Great Britain withdraws her pledges from the Ameer, and consents to be penned behind her posts at Peshawur and Kohat, at Quetta, and at Dera Ghazee Khan. But China; who is to stay the Muscovite descent on the middle kingdom? It will not be effected by mere protests, by treaties or agreements. Neither is it in the power of ourselves single-handed to oppose her march southwards, for we are no match for her, neither by the test of our brains, nor of our multiplicity of men.

To stop the inroads of Russia must there be a barrier erected through which neither the strength of her militarism, nor the wiles of her diplomacy can force a passage, and until that be done will she continue to expand, so long as the exciting forces remain at work within.

But for how long will that be? For surely there must be a limit to the continued existence of conditions so artificial as those which alone render Holy Russia a factor in the history of the world. Where else has such a state of things existed? Nowhere in the history of this world for sure, nor is the instance likely to be repeated. The leading factors have been dealt with.

Russia exists as an instance of corruption, of the law of might, and of the triumph of mind over matter. The pride of success which has accompanied the triumph of officialism tends, by the excesses it encourages, to bring about, through the moral degradation of the ruling class, its downfall, and the day when it will no longer be possible to withhold from the masses the blessings of educa-

tion will mark such a social revolution as has never yet been known. The power of the Tchinoviks exists only in contrast to the degradation of the masses. Let the latter once gain but a suggestion of what is denied them, let the continuance of their own ignorance, the dominion of their superstition once be broken, and the whole fabric of the system will fall to bits, and Holy Russia cease to exist. The continuance of existing conditions is already doomed. The recent policy of Russianising Russia is bound to bear fruit. The withdrawal of privileges long enjoyed converts contented citizens into expectant rebels, and while the policy of regarding ignorance among the people as the greatest safeguard of the existence of the State may prove successful a while in Central Asia, in Siberia an entirely different condition of things obtains.

The population of Northern Asia differs from that of other districts. The bulk of the people are Russians who have been expelled from Europe for their opinions or their crimes. They are mostly educated folk, men with character and ideas, and already is an entirely different tone observable in such places as Irkutsk, Tomsk, and Tobolsk, from that evident in St. Petersburg, Moscow, or Kieff. Of late large numbers of emigrants have been encouraged to go to Siberia in search of wealth; and these, chosen, for the most part, from the ignorant Moujiks of the south, are becoming less ignorant by dint of expansion of ideas and the example of those with whom they come into contact. In time these facts will tell, and things will occur which may change the trend of events in a manner which will surprise no one more than the authorities at St. Petersburg.

The objection, which the casual observer will urge against such a suggestion, is the enormous preponderance of the Russian army over any strength which is likely to arise against the nominal rule of the Tsar. But a moment's thought will serve to dispose of this objection. The Russian army, like that of all States where conscription is in force, is made up of the people, who view their

service the more adversely owing to its being compulsory. In Russia a rising of the people carries with it the sympathy of a portion at least of the army, and if once such a movement begins, the outcome is bound to be as marked as it will be far-reaching. It is not possible to carry on indefinitely a mode of government dependent on the continued repression of the people, nor can an aggressive rule be perpetuated by the aid of an exhausted treasury. The political system of Tsardom has long been one of the greatest anomalies of the time. By it the usual order of things is reversed. The many are made subservient to the few, and the laws of political economy are evaded in order to render possible the continuance of a condition of things alike unnatural and undesirable in the interests of humanity. The rule of Russia carries in its train the repression of national life, the humiliation of the masses, and the abolition of the spirit of freedom in either action or thought. No greater contrast could be devised than that between the rule of Russia and our own. The aim of the one to darken the life, to limit the intelligence of the people, to keep the multitude in the bondage of ignorance and superstition; of the other, to educate, to enlighten, and to confer all the blessings of freedom upon the masses. The destiny in store for each is clear. The one bred of cruelty and greed, dominated by the fanaticism of a pseudo-Christian creed, is doomed to serve but as an instance of the temporary survival of the most unfit, a condition of things which cannot long endure, and which will collapse from the rottenness of its own superstructure, which, decaying from the top, will sap the building to its foundations. The age when an artificial condition of life could be sustained by the mere determination of a few interested monopolists is gone by. Owing largely to the example of that other rule, which has become a portion of the heartfelt creed of every Briton, the reign of ignorance, of darkness, and of corruption is doomed, and the day when even 'Holy Russia' will awake to the whisperings of truth and knowledge cannot long be delayed. Each step taken in the name of the Tsar, for

the strengthening of the autocracy of a soulless system, marks a lessening interval between the days of subjection and the period of enlightenment, which, when it comes, will result in the collapse of one of the greatest tyrannies the world has ever known.

APPENDIX A

LANDMARKS IN THE HISTORY OF ASIATIC RUSSIA

1300	Moscow made the Capital of Russia.
1380	Tartars invade Russia.
1395	Tamerlane invades Russia.
1482	Ivan III. takes title of Tsar.
1505	Vasali.
1533	Ivan IV.
1552	Conquest of Kazan.
1554	Conquest of Astrakhan.
1558	Territory of the Don Cossacks annexed.
	Discovery of Siberia by Strogonof.
1579	Yermack began his expedition to Siberia.
1584	Feodor I.
1587	Tobolsk founded.
1600	Tsar Feodor Ivanovitch declares Khanates of Khiva and Bokhara subject to him.
1604	Tomsk founded.
1610	March of Yaitsk Cossacks against Khiva.
1619	Yeniseisk founded.
1637	Yakutsk founded.
1638	Okhotsk founded.
1643	Poyarkoff's expedition starts to explore Amur.
1645	Alexis, father of his country.
1649	Khabaroff's expedition to the Amur.
1655	First Russian mission to China.
1658	Pashkoff founds Nerchinsk.
1663	Albazin founded.
1675	Mission to China.
1676	Feodor Alexievitch.
1682	Peter I. and Ivan V. joint-Tsars.
1684	Mission to China.
1689	Peter I. alone.
	Treaty of Nerchinsk.
1692	Ides' mission to Peking.
1703	Khan of Khiva declares himself a Russian subject.
1707	Kamchatka seized.

1709	14,000 Swedish prisoners sent to Siberia.
1713	Hodja Nefes reports discovery of gold in the Oxus.
1717	Prince Bekovitch Tcherkaski's expedition to Khiva.
1719	Peter sends Ismaloff on Mission to Peking.
1721	De Lange expelled from Peking.
1722	Invasion of Daghestan.
1725	Catherine I.
1727	Peter II.
	Treaty of Kiakhta.
1730	Anna Ivanovna.
1732	Church and Mission founded at Peking.
1734	Anna receives surrender of all the Kirghiz hordes.
1740	Ivan VI. Tsar.
	Khan of Khiva invokes Russian protection.
1741	Elizabeth, Tsarina.
	Russian agents enter Khiva with Abdul Khair.
1742	East Siberia seized.
1762	Peter III. Tsar.
	Catherine II. Tsarina.
1783	Georgia revolts to Russia.
1789	Evrenkoff penetrates to Merv.
1793	Catherine sends Blankenagel to Khiva.
1796	Paul, Tsar.
	Unsuccessful war with Persia.
1800	Proposed invasion of India by Paul and Napoleon.
1801	Alexander I. Tsar.
	Georgia annexed.
1802	War with Persia.
1803	Seizure of Mingrelia.
1804	Seizure of Imeretia.
1806	Mohammed Rahim, Khan of Khiva.
1807	Proposed invasion of India by Napoleon and Alexander.
1809	Shah Suja fled.
1813	Treaty of Gulistan.
1819	Eastern shores of Caspian surveyed.
	Muravieff visits Khiva without result.
1820	Negri's mission to Bokhara.
1824	Russian caravans first sent to Bokhara.
1825	Nicholas I. Tsar.
1826	War with Persia.
	Nasrullah, Ameer of Bokhara.
	Allah Kuli, Khan of Khiva.
	Dost Mohammed, Ameer of Afghanistan.
1827	Erivan taken.
	Attempt of Khivan Embassy to visit St. Petersburg.

1828 Treaty of Turkomanchai with Persia.
War with Turkey.
1829 Treaty of Adrianople with Turkey.
1831 Wolff visits Bokhara.
1832 Alexander Burnes visits Merv.
1833 Demaison's mission to Bokhara.
1834 Fort Novo Alexandrovsk established by Perovski.
Mohammed, Shah of Persia.
1837 Persia sends army led by Russian officers to Herat.
Lieutenant Vitkievitch sent on mission to Kabul.
Release of Russian prisoners at Khiva.
1838 Stoddart sent as British envoy to Bokhara.
Russians appear at Ashurada.
Siege of Herat raised by Eldred Pottinger.
First Afghan War.
1839 Perovski's expedition against Khiva.
Flight of Dost Mohammed.
Shah Suja, Ameer of Afghanistan.
1840 Abbott, Shakespear and Conolly sent to Khiva.
1841 Russia formally occupies Ashurada.
Assassination of Sir A. Burnes and Sir W. Macnaghten.
Murder of Shah Suja at Kabul.
1842 First Treaty with Khiva.
Retreat of British army from Kabul.
Execution of Stoddart and Conolly at Bokhara.
Dost Mohammed restored.
1844 Anglo-Russian agreement.
Khudayar, Khan of Khokand.
Submission of Great Horde of Kirghiz.
1848 First fort built at Aralsk.
Nasreddin, Shah of Persia.
1849 Fort No. 1 built at Kazala.
1850 Balkh annexed to Kabul.
1851 Treaty of Kulja.
Factory established at Nicolaievsk by Muravieff.
1853 Ak Musjid captured and renamed Fort Perovski.
Anglo-Persian convention *re* Herat.
Crimean War.
1854 Kandahar annexed to Kabul.
1855 Alexander II. Tsar.
1856 Russia strengthens her position in Ashurada.
Persians take Herat.
British war with Persia.
1857 Indian Mutiny.
Caucasus annexed.

1858 Treaty of Aigun.
Ignatieff's mission to Khiva and Bokhara.
Lieutenant Venukoff explores Ussuri.
Khanikoff's mission to Herat.
1859 Government of India transferred from the Company to the Crown.
1860 Treaty of Peking.
Mozaffur Eddin, Ameer of Bokhara.
1863 Dost Mohammed recovers Herat.
Death of Dost Mohammed.
Vambéry visits Khiva, Bokhara and Samarcand.
1864 Tchernaieff storms Chimkend.
Turkestan taken.
Prince Gortchakoff issues his circular note to England.
Khojend occupied.
1865 Province of Turkestan created.
Tchernaieff storms Tashkend.
Khokand taken.
Seid Mohammed Rahim, Khan of Khiva.
Yakoob Beg captures Kashgar.
1866 War with Bokhara.
Battle of Irjir.
Shah visits Ashurada and confirms Russia's powers.
Khojend taken.
1867 Kaufmann forms government of Turkestan.
1868 Kaufmann takes Samarcand.
Zerafshan Province annexed.
Treaty with Bokhara.
Treaty with Khokand.
1869 Krasnovodsk occupied by Stolietoff.
Fort built at Chikishlar.
Shere Ali Khan, Ameer of Afghanistan.
Lord Mayo receives Shere Ali at Umballa.
1870 Michaelovsk occupied.
First expedition against Turkomans to Kizil Arvat.
Gortchakoff repudiates Black Sea clauses.
Mohammedan rebellion in North-West China.
Russians occupy Urga.
1871 Kulja occupied.
Black Sea clauses abrogated.
Colonel Markosoff attacked on his way to Khiva.
Turkomans attack Michaelovsk, Russians destroy Kizil Arvat.
Fort built at Chikishlar.
1872 Schouvaloff visits London to explain Khivan Expedition.

1872 Russia recognises independence of Kashgar.
Gortchakoff-Granville agreement as to Afghan frontier.
1873 Khivan Expedition starts.
Shah visits St. Petersburg.
Fall of Khiva.
Kaufmann massacres Yomuds.
Treaties with Khiva and Bokhara.
Amu Daria province formed.
Colonel Valentine Baker visits Turkomania.
1874 Lomakin forms military district of Transcaspia.
1875 Expedition to Krasnovodsk.
War with Khokand.
Kaufmann takes Khokand.
Colonel Charles MacGregor visits Khorassan.
Colonel Burnaby rides to Khiva.
Rebellion in Khokand.
1876 Khokand formally annexed as Ferghana.
1877 Russia takes Kars and Erzeroum.
Death of Yakoob Beg.
Peshawur Conference.
1878 Treaty of San Stefano.
Stolyetof's mission to Kabul.
Treaty of Berlin.
Second Afghan War.
Fort built at Tchat.
Grodekoff's ride from Samarcand to Herat.
Flight of Shere Ali.
1879 Treaty of Ili.
Lazareff dies while moving against Tekke Turkomans.
Lomakin succeeds Lazareff, and marches against Geok Tepe.
Lomakin massacres Tekkes at Dengeel Tepe.
Disastrous retreat of Russian army.
Treaty of Gandamak.
1880 Russian Correspondence discovered in Kabul.
Skobeleff appointed Commander-in-Chief in Transcaspia.
First reconnaissance of Geok Tepe.
Transcaspian Railway commenced.
Bahmi occupied.
Abdur Rahman Khan, Ameer of Afghanistan.
Battle of Maiwand.
1881 Fall of Geok Tepe and massacre of Turkomans.
Askabad occupied.
Alexander III. Tsar.
Final subjugation of Tekkes.

1881 Formation of Transcaspian province.
Transcaspian Railway opened to Kizil Arvat.
Treaty with Persia respecting Akhal and Khorassan boundary.
O'Donovan at Merv.
1882 Transcaucasian Railway completed, Baku to Tiflis.
Secret mission of Venkhoosky to Kabul.
Secret mission of Alikhanoff to Merv.
Secret mission of Lessar to Herat.
Ili restored to China.
1883 Transcaucasian Railway completed, Tiflis to Batum.
Tejend Oasis occupied.
1884 Komaroff takes Merv.
Sarakhs occupied.
1885 Lessar's mission to London.
Russians advance to Zulficar Pass.
Solemn covenant by Russia not to advance further.
Seid Abdul Ahad, Ameer of Bokhara.
Komaroff attacks Afghans at Ak Tapa.
Fight at Kushk.
Abdur Rahman meets Lord Dufferin at Rawal Pindi.
1886 Russia declares Batum a free port.
Afghan boundary settled.
1887 Russia occupies Kerki.
Afghan boundary protocol signed.
1888 Transcaspian Railway opened to Samarcand.
1889 Captain Atchinoff attempts to seize port near Obock, but is fired on by the French.
1891 Tsar issues rescript placing Siberian Railway under Tsarevitch.
Tsarevitch visits Siberia, and starts work of Siberian Railway.
Captain Yonoff retires from Little Pamir on advance of Goorkha army.
1892 Pamirs Dispute with England.
1893 Tsar issues rescript expediting Siberian Railway.
Eastern Section of Siberian Railway opened.
1894 Nicholas II. Tsar.
Russo-Persian frontier settled by commission.
Chino-Japanese War.
1895 Russia protests against cession of Liao-tung Peninsula to Japan.
Agreement with Great Britain respecting Pamirs question.
Cassini Convention.
1896 Trans-Manchurian Railway Agreement signed, 8th Sept.

1896 Muzafer-ed-din, Shah of Persia, 1st May.
Li Hung Chang attends coronation of Nicholas II., 26th May.
1897 Russia occupies Port Arthur, 18th December.
1898 Russia recognises sovereign rights of China over Manchuria, 13th March.
Convention signed for leasing Port Arthur and Talienwan, 27th March.
Russia opposes Newchang Railway Concession, 8th July.
Tsar issues his Peace Rescript, 24th August.
Completion of railway from Merv to Kushk Post, December.
1899 Russia attempts to obtain coaling station at Muscat, February.
Russia threatens to re-open Pamirs Question and annex Sirikul, March 26.

APPENDIX B

TREATIES

TREATY OF NERCHINSK

Signed between Russia and China, 27th August 1689

1. The boundary between Russia and China is to be formed by the river Kerbechi, near the Shorna, which enters the Amur, and the long chain of mountains extending from its sources to the Eastern Ocean. The rivers or rivulets which flow from the southern slope of these mountains, as well as all territories to the south of them, will thus belong to China. The territories and rivers to the north of the said mountain chain remain with the Empire of Muscovy. The boundary is further to be found by the river Argun, which enters the Amur; the territories south of the said river belong to the Emperor of China, those to the north of it to the Empire of Muscovy. The towns or dwelling-houses at present situated to the south of the Argun shall be moved to the northern bank of the river.

2. The fortress built by the Russians at a place called Atbazeir shall be demolished, and the subjects of the Tsar residing there shall remove with their property to Muscovite territory. Hunters of either empire shall on no pretence cross the frontiers. If one or two persons cross the frontier to hunt, steal, or pilfer, they shall be arrested and given up to the nearest Imperial officers to be punished according to their deserts. In case, however, armed parties of ten or fifteen people cross the frontiers to hunt or plunder, or in case of any person being killed, a report shall be sent in to both emperors, and the parties found guilty shall be punished with death. On no account shall war be declared in consequence of any excess committed by private parties.

3. Everything which has occurred hitherto is to be buried in eternal oblivion.

4. Neither party shall receive fugitives or deserters from the date of this treaty. Subjects of either empire flying to the other shall be arrested and given up to the nearest authority on the frontier.

5. Subjects of Muscovy now in China, or Chinese now in the Empire of Muscovy, may remain where they are.

6. In consideration of this present treaty of peace and the reciprocal good understanding of the two empires, persons may pass from one empire to the other, provided they are furnished with passports, and they shall be permitted to carry on commerce and to sell or purchase at pleasure.

Copies of the above treaty, properly signed and sealed, shall be exchanged by the plenipotentiaries. The various articles of the treaty shall be engraved on stones in Tartaric, Chinese, Russian, and Latin, to be erected on the frontiers between the two empires as a permanent testimony to the good understanding between them.

TREATY OF GULISTAN

Signed between Russia and Persia, 12*th October* 1813

1. After the conclusion of this treaty the hostilities which have hitherto existed between the States of Russia and Persia shall cease, and peace shall be established between the respective sovereigns and their allies for ever.

2. The *status quo ad presentem* having been agreed on as the basis of treatment in virtue of this arrangement, the several districts hitherto possessed by the respective States shall remain under their subjection, and the frontier is determined in the manner underwritten. The line of demarcation is to commence from the plain of Aduna Bazar, running direct towards the plains of Mogham to the ford of the Anas at Yulu Bulook; up the Anas to the junction of the Capennuk Chace at the back of the hill of Mekri; from thence the boundary of Karabagh and Nukshivan Erivan, and also part of Georgia and of Kuzah and Shums-ud-deen-Loo is separated by Eishuk Meidaun; from Eishuk Meidaun the line is the chain of mountains on the right, and the river of Humya Chummun, and from the tops of the mountains of Alighuz it runs along the village of Shoorgil and between those of the village of Mystery until it reaches the river of Arpachahi; and as the district of Talish during the hostilities has been partially subjected by the contending parties, for the purpose of strengthening mutual confidence after the conclusion of the treaty, commissioners shall be appointed respectively, who, in concurrence with each other and with the cognisance of the governors concerned, shall determine what mountains, rivers, lakes, villages, and fields shall mark the line of frontier, having first ascertained the respective possessions at the time of making the treaty, and holding in view the *status quo ad presentem* as the basis on which the boundaries are to be determined. If the possessions of either of the high contracting parties shall have been infringed on by the above-mentioned boundaries, the commissioners shall rectify it on the basis of the *status quo ad presentem.*

3. His Majesty the King of Persia, in demonstration of his amicable sentiments towards the Emperor of Russia, acknowledges, in his own name and that of his heirs, the sovereignty of the

Emperor of Russia over the provinces of Karabagh and Georgia, now called Elizabeth Paul, the districts of Shekie, Shiriwan, Kobek, Derbend, Bakoobeh, and such part of Talish as is now possessed by Russia, the whole of Degestan, Georgia, the tract of Shoorgil, Achook, Bash, Goorea, Mingrelia, Abtichar, the whole country between the boundary at present established and the line of Caucasus, and all the territory between the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea.

4. His Majesty the Emperor of Russia, actuated by similar feelings towards His Majesty of Persia, and in the spirit of good neighbourhood wishing the sovereign of Persia always to be firmly established on the throne, engages for himself and heirs to recognise the prince who shall be nominated heir-apparent, and to afford him assistance, in case he should require it, to suppress any opposing party. The power of Persia will thus be increased by the aid of Russia. The Emperor engages for himself and heirs not to interfere in the dissensions of the prince unless the aid of the Russian arms is required by the king of the time.

5. The Russian merchantmen on the Caspian Sea shall, according to their former practice, have permission to enter the Persian harbours, and the Persians shall render to the Russian marine all friendly aid in case of casualties by storm or shipwreck. Persian merchantmen shall enjoy the same privilege of entering Russian harbours, and the like aid shall be afforded to the Persian marine by the Russians in case of casualties by storm or shipwreck. The Russian flag shall fly in the Russian ships-of-war, which are permitted to sail in the Caspian as formerly; no other nation whatever shall be allowed ships-of-war on the Caspian.

6. The whole of the prisoners taken either in battle or otherwise, whether Christians or of any other religion, shall be mutually exchanged at the expiration of three months after the date of the signature of the treaty. The high contracting parties shall give a sum to each of the prisoners for his expenses, and send them to Kara Ecclesia; those charged with the superintendence of the exchange on the frontier shall give notice to each other of the prisoners being sent to the appointed place, when they shall be exchanged; and any person who either voluntarily deserted or fled after the commission of a crime shall have permission to return to his country, or shall remain without molestation. All deserters who return to their country shall be forgiven by both contracting parties.

7. In addition to the above Articles, the two contracting sovereigns have been pleased to resolve to exchange ambassadors, who at a proper period will be sent to their respective capitals, where they will meet with that honour due to their rank, and due

attention shall be paid to the requests they may be charged to make. Mercantile agents shall be appointed to reside in the different cities for the purpose of assisting the merchants in carrying on their trade; they shall only retain ten followers; they shall be in no way molested; they shall be treated with respect and attention, and parties of either nation injured in the way of trade may by their interference have their grievances redressed.

8. With regard to the intercourse of caravans, the merchants of either country must be provided with a passport, that they may travel either by sea or land without fear, and individuals may reside in either country for the purpose of trade so long as it suits their convenience, and they shall meet with no opposition when they wish to return home. In regard to merchandise and goods brought from Russia to Persia, or sent from Persia to Russia, the proprietors may at their own discretion either sell or exchange them for other property. Merchants having occasion to complain of failure of payment, or other grievances, will state the nature of their cases to the mercantile agents; or, if there are none resident in the place, they will apply to the governor, who will examine into the merits of their representations, and will be careful that no injustice be offered this class of men. Russian merchants, having entered Persia with merchandise, will have permission to convey it to any country in alliance with that State, and the Persian Government will readily furnish them a passport to enable them to do so. In like manner, Persian merchants who visit Russia will have permission to proceed to any country in alliance with Russia. In case of a Russian merchant dying in Persia and his goods remaining in Persia, as they are the property of a subject of a friendly State, they shall be taken charge of by the proper constituted authorities, and shall be delivered over, on demand, to the lawful heirs of the deceased, who shall have permission to dispose of them. As this is the custom among all civilised nations, there can be no objection to this arrangement.

9. The duties on Russian merchandise brought to Persian ports shall be in the proportion of five hundred dinars (or five per cent.) on property of the value of one toman, which having been paid to one city, the goods may be conveyed to any part of Persia without any further demand of duty being made on any pretence whatever. The like percentage, and nothing more, will be paid on exports. The import and export duties from Persian merchants in Russia will be levied at the same rate.

10. On the arrival of goods at the seaport towns, or such as come by land-carriage to the frontier towns of the two States, merchants shall be allowed to sell or exchange their goods without the further permission of the Custom House officers, because it is

the duty of Custom House officers to prevent all sorts of delay in the prosecution of trade, and to receive the king's customs from the buyer or seller, as may be agreed between them.

11. After the signature of this treaty the respective plenipotentiaries shall immediately announce the peace to the different frontier posts, and order the suspension of all further hostilities; and two copies of this treaty being taken with Persian translations, they shall be signed and sealed by the respective plenipotentiaries, and be exchanged. They must then be ratified by the signatures of their Majesties of Russia and Persia, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in the course of three months.

TREATY OF TURKOMANCHAI

Signed between Russia and Persia, 21*st February* 1828

1. There shall be established from this day peace, amity, and perfect understanding between his Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias on the one part, and his Majesty the Shah of Persia on the other part, their heirs and successors, their respective States and subjects, in perpetuity.

2. Considering that the hostilities between the high contracting parties, now happily terminated, have caused the suspension of the obligations imposed on them by the Treaty of Gulistan, his Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, and his Majesty the Shah of Persia, have deemed it proper to replace the said Treaty of Gulistan by the clauses and stipulations, which are intended to regulate and consolidate more and more the future relations of peace and amity between Russia and Persia.

3. His Majesty the Shah of Persia, as well in his own name as in that of his heirs and successors, cedes in full right and property to the Empire of Russia the Khanate of Erivan on either side of the Araxes, and the Khanate of Nakhitchevan. In consequence of this cession, his Majesty the Shah engages to cause the delivery to the Russian authorities, within the space of six months at farthest from the signature of the present treaty, all of the archives and public documents concerning the administration of the two Khanates above mentioned.

4. The two high contracting parties agree to establish, as the frontier between the two States, the following line of demarcation: Commencing from that point of the frontier of the Ottoman States which is the nearest in a direct line to the summit of Little Ararat, this line of demarcation shall proceed as far as the top of that mountain, whence it shall descend as far as the source of the river called Karasson inferior, which flows from the southern side of Little Ararat, and shall pursue its course down to the river's mouth in the Araxes opposite to Cherour. At this point the line shall follow the bed of the Araxes as far as the fortress of Abassabad; above the exterior works of this place, which are situated on the right bank of the Araxes, there shall be drawn a radius of half an agatch, or three and a half Russian versts, which

will extend in every direction; all the territory comprised in this radius shall belong exclusively to Russia, and shall be marked out with the greatest exactness within the period of two months from this date. From the point where the eastern extremity of the radius shall have joined the Araxes, the frontier line shall continue to follow the bed of that river as far as the ford of Jediboulouk, whence the Persian territory shall extend along the bed of the Araxes over a space of three agatch or twenty-one versts, below the confluence of the two little rivers called Obinabagar and Sarakamyche, and shall proceed along the right bank of the eastern stream of Obinabagar up to its source, and thence as far as the apex of the heights of Djikoir, so that all the rivers which terminate in the Caspian Sea shall belong to Russia, and all those whose course or disemboguement is on the side of Persia shall belong to Persia. The boundary of the two States being here marked by the ridge of mountains, it is agreed that the declivity on the side of Talische shall belong to Russia, and the opposite declivity to Persia. From the ridge of the heights of Djikoir the frontier shall proceed as far as the summit of Kamar Konia, the mountains which separate Talyche from the district of Archa. The ridges of the mountains forming the separation on both sides, the course of the rivers shall determine here the frontier line in the same manner as is above indicated in regard to the distance comprised between the source of Obinabagar and the heights of Djikoir. The frontier line shall then proceed from the summit of Kamar Konia, the ridge of mountains separating the district of Gouvant from that of Archa to the limits of Welkedge, always conformably to the principle laid down respecting the course of the rivers; the district of Gouvant, with the exception of the portion situated on the opposite side of the apex of the said mountains, shall fall to the share of Russia. From the limits of the district of Welkedge the frontier line between the two States shall follow the summits of Klopontz, and the principal chain of mountains which intersect the district of Welkedge as far as the northern source of the river called Astara, always observing the principle regarding the course of the rivers; thence the frontier shall follow the bed of that stream to its embouchure in the Caspian Sea, and complete the line of demarcation, which shall henceforward separate the respective possessions of Russia and Persia.

5. His Majesty the Shah of Persia, in testimony of his sincere friendship for his Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, solemnly recognises the present article, in his own name, and in that of his heirs and successors to the throne of Persia, the appertainment for ever to the empire of Russia of all the countries and the islands

situated between the line of demarcation indicated by the preceding article on one side, and the ridge of the Caucasian Mountains, and the Caspian Sea on the other, as also the wandering tribes who inhabit those territories.

6. With a view to compensate for the considerable sacrifices which the war between the two States has occasioned to the empire of Russia, as well as the losses and injuries which have resulted therefrom to Russian subjects, his Majesty the Shah of Persia engages to make good these by the payment of a pecuniary indemnity. It is agreed between the two high contracting parties that the amount of this indemnity is fixed at ten crores of tomans, or thirty millions of silver roubles, and that the mode, time, and guarantee in respect to the payment of this sum shall be regulated by a separate arrangement.

7. His Majesty the Shah of Persia, having deemed it expedient to nominate as his successor and heir-presumptive his august son the Prince Abbas Mirza, his Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, with a view to afford to his Majesty the Shah of Persia a public testimony of his amicable disposition, and of his desire to contribute towards the consolidation of this order of succession, engages to recognise henceforward, in the august person of his Royal Highness the Prince Abbas Mirza, the successor and heir-presumptive of the Crown of Persia, and to consider him as the legitimate sovereign of that kingdom from the moment of his accession to the throne.

8. Russian merchant vessels shall enjoy as formerly the right of navigating in freedom the Caspian Sea and of landing on its coasts. They shall find in Persia aid and assistance in case of shipwreck. The same right is granted to Persian merchants' vessels of navigating on the *ancient footing* the Caspian Sea, and of landing on the Russian banks, where, in case of shipwreck, the Persians shall receive aid and assistance reciprocally. With respect to ships of war, those carrying the Russian military colours being *ab antiquo* the only vessels which have had the right of navigating the Caspian Sea, that exclusive privilege is for this reason now equally reserved and secured to them, so that, with the exception of Russia, no other Power shall be able to have ships of war in the Caspian Sea.

9. His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, and his Majesty the Shah of Persia, cordially desirous of drawing closer by every means the bonds so happily re-established between them, have agreed that the ambassadors, ministers, and Chargé d'Affaires who may be reciprocally delegated to the respective High Courts, whether on a temporary mission or for the purpose of residing there permanently, shall be received with the honours and distinc-

tions due to their rank, and suited to the dignity of the high contracting parties, as well as to the sincere friendship which unites them and the usages of the countries. In this respect the ceremonies to be observed on both sides shall be agreed upon by means of a special Protocol.

10. His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, and his Majesty the Shah of Persia, considering the re-establishment and extension of the commercial relations between the two States as one of the principal benefits which the return of peace should produce, have agreed to regulate all the arrangements relative to the protection of commerce, and the security of their respective subjects, as stated in a separate Act hereunto annexed, concluded between the respective plenipotentiaries, and which shall be considered as forming an integral part of the present Treaty of Peace. His Majesty the Shah of Persia reserves to Russia as formerly the right of appointing consuls or commercial agents wherever the good of commerce may require, and he engages to allow these consuls or agents, each of whom shall not have a suite of more than ten individuals under his protection, the enjoyment of the honours and privileges due to their public character. His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias promises on his part to observe a perfect reciprocity in regard to the consuls or commercial agents of his Majesty the Shah of Persia; in the event of any well-grounded complaint on the part of the Persian Government against any one of the Russian consuls or agents, the minister or Chargé d'Affaires of Russia, residing at the Court of his Majesty the Shah, and under whose immediate orders they shall be placed, will suspend him from his functions, and confer the charge provisionally on whomsoever he may think proper.

11. All the affairs and demands of their respective subjects, suspended by the event of the war, shall be resumed and settled conformably to the principles of justice after the conclusion of peace. The debts, which their respective subjects may have contracted among themselves, shall be promptly and wholly liquidated.

12. The high contracting parties agree, with a view to the interests of their respective subjects, to fix a term of three years in order that those who possess simultaneously immovable property on either side of the Araxes may have the power to sell or to exchange the same freely. His Imperial Majesty of all the Russias excepts, nevertheless, from the benefits of this arrangement (as far as it respects them) the late Eriven Surdar Hossein Khan, his brother Ha Jun Khan, and Kurreem Khan, formerly Governor of Nakhitchevan.

13. All prisoners of war made on either side, whether in the

course of the last war or before, as well as the subjects of the two Governments, who may have fallen into captivity at any period whensoever, shall all be delivered over within the term of four months; and after having been supplied with provisions and other necessary articles, they shall be sent to Abassabad, to be there made over to the Commissioners respectively deputed to receive them, and to take measures for their conveyance to their homes. The high contracting parties will adopt the same course in regard to all prisoners of war, and all Russian and Persian subjects reciprocally found in captivity, who may not have been restored within the term above mentioned, either by reason of the distance at which they may have been, or owing to any other cause or circumstance whatever. The two Governments expressly reserve to themselves the unlimited right of claiming them at any time, and they bind themselves to restore them reciprocally as soon as they shall present themselves or shall be claimed.

14. The high contracting parties shall not demand the surrender of refugees and deserters who may have passed under their respective denominations before or during the war. With a view, however, to prevent mutually the prejudicial consequences which might result from the communications which some of these refugees may maintain with their old compatriots, the Persian Government engages not to tolerate within its possessions, situated between the Araxes and the line formed by the river called Tehan, the lake of Aroomiah, the river of Djikaton, and by the river named Higil Ogane, as far as its confluence with the Caspian Sea, the presence of the individuals who shall be designated by name now, or who may be so indicated hereafter. His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias promises equally on his part not to permit Persian refugees to settle in the Khanates of Karabagh and Nakhitchevan, as well as in the portion of the Khanate of Erivan, situated on the right bank of the Araxes. It is understood, however, that this clause is not, and shall not be, obligatory, except in regard to individuals invested with a public character or of a certain dignity, such as khans, begs, and spiritual chiefs or mollahs, whose personal example, instigations, and clandestine communications might have a prejudicial influence on their old compatriots. As far as concerns the mass of the population in the two countries, it is agreed between the high contracting parties that their respective subjects, who might have already passed, or who may hereafter pass from one State into another, shall be free to settle or sojourn wherever the Government, under whose authority they may place themselves, shall deem proper.

15. With the benevolent object of restoring tranquillity to their States, and removing from their subjects all that can aggravate

the evils inflicted on them by the war, to which the present treaty has so happily put an end, his Majesty the Shah grants a full and entire amnesty to all the inhabitants and functionaries of the province called Azerbegan. None of them, without any exception, shall be persecuted or molested for his opinion, acts, or conduct either during the war or during the temporary occupation of the said province by the Russian troops. There shall be granted to them further the term of one year from this date to remove freely with their families from the Persian dominions into the Russian States, to export or to sell their property without the slightest opposition on the part of the Government or the local authorities, or the imposition of any duty or fee on the effects or articles sold or exported by them. With regard to their immovable property, a period of five years shall be granted to them for its sale or disposal, according to their pleasure. From this amnesty are excepted those who may be guilty, within the period above mentioned of one year, of any crime or misdemeanour liable to penalties inflicted by the tribunals.

16. Immediately after the signature of the present treaty of peace, the respective plenipotentiaries shall lose no time in transmitting to every quarter the necessary advices and instructions for the immediate cessation of hostilities. The present treaty, drawn up in two parts of the same tenor, signed by the respective plenipotentiaries, impressed with their seals, and exchanged between them, shall be confirmed and ratified by his Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias and his Majesty the Shah of Persia; and the solemn ratification, bearing their own signatures, shall be exchanged between their plenipotentiaries within the term of four months, or earlier if possible. Signed by the plenipotentiaries of the high contracting parties.

THE TREATY OF PEKING

Signed 14*th November* 1860

1. The eastern frontier between the two empires shall commence from the juncture of the rivers Shika and Argun, will follow the course of the river Amur to the junction of the river Ussuri with the latter. The land on the north of the river Amur belongs to the empire of Russia, and the territory on the south to the junction of the river Ussuri to the empire of China. Further on, the frontier line between the two empires ascends the rivers Ussuri and Sungacha to where the latter issues from Lake Kinka; it then crosses the lake, and takes the direction of the river Belen-ho or Tur; from the mouth of that river it follows the mountain range to the mouth of the river Huptu, a tributary of the Suifun, and from that point the mountains situated between the river Hun Chum and the sea, as far as the river Tumen-Kiang. Along this line the territory on the east side belongs to the empire of Russia, and that on the west to the empire of China.

2. Defines the frontiers between Russia and China towards the west, and confirms Russia in the possession of the country around Lakes Balkash and Issik Kul.

3. Arranges the appointment of a joint commission for placing the frontier marks. For the inspection of the eastern frontiers the commissioners will meet at the mouth of the Ussuri in the month of April 1861.

4. On the whole frontier line established by articles 1 and 2 of the present treaty, trade free of all duty or restrictions is established between the subjects of the two states.

5. Restores to the merchants of Kiakhta the right of going to Peking, and they may also trade at Urga and Kalgan. At Urga a Russian consulate may be established. Russian merchants provided with passports may travel throughout China, but must not congregate in a greater number than two hundred in the same locality.

6. Grants to the Russians a site for a factory, with church, etc., at Kashgar. The Chinese Government is not, however, responsible for any pillage of travellers by tribes beyond its control.

7. At the places thrown open, no restrictions whatever are to be

imposed upon commercial transactions, which may be carried on on credit, or otherwise as best suits the interests of the parties concerned.

8. Russia may establish consuls at Kashgar and Urga to watch over the conduct of the merchants, who are to be punished by the laws of the country to which they belong. The Chinese may also send consuls to Russian towns. Commercial disputes are to be settled by arbitrators chosen by the parties concerned. Criminals seeking refuge in either country are to be given up, to be judged by the government to which they are subject.

9. Annuls the treaties concluded at Nerchinsk 1689, and at Kiakhta 1727.

10. Refers to the restoration of cattle which may have strayed across the frontiers.

11. Regulates the transmission of written despatches on a reciprocal amicable footing between the authorities of the respective empires.

12. Settles the postal arrangements between the two empires. Letters are to leave Peking and Kiakhta once a month; parcels, Kiakhta every two months, Peking once in three months. Twenty days are allowed for the transmission of letters, forty days at the utmost for parcels.

13. Determines that the ordinary correspondence between the two Governments is to be sent through the post, but that during the residence of a Russian envoy at Peking despatches of special importance may be forwarded by couriers.

14. Empowers the Governor-General of Eastern Siberia to conclude any additional arrangements with the frontier authorities of a nature to facilitate intercourse.

15. States that after the exchange of ratifications the treaty will be in full force.

CORRESPONDENCE SETTLING THE RUSSO-AFGHAN FRONTIER OF 1872

Earl Granville to Lord Augustus Loftus, Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

Foreign Office, October 17, 1872.

Her Majesty's Government have not yet received from the Cabinet of St. Petersburg communication of the report which General Kaufmann was long since instructed to draw up on the countries south of the Oxus which are claimed by the ruler of Afghanistan as his hereditary possessions. Her Majesty's Government have awaited this communication in full confidence that impartial inquiries instituted by that distinguished officer would confirm the views they themselves take of this matter, and so enable the two Governments to come to a prompt and definitive decision on the question that has been so long in discussion between them. But as the expected communication has not reached them, and as they consider it of importance, both for the maintenance of peace and tranquillity in Central Asia and for removing all causes of misunderstanding between the Imperial Government and themselves, I will no longer delay making known through your Excellency to the Imperial Government the conclusion at which Her Majesty's Government have arrived after carefully weighing all the evidence before them. In the opinion, then, of Her Majesty's Government the right of the Ameer of Kabul (Sher Ali) to the possession of the territories up to the Oxus as far down as Khoja Saleh is fully established, and they believe, and have so stated to him through the Indian Government, that he would have a right to defend these territories if invaded. On the other hand, Her Majesty's authorities in India have declared their determination to remonstrate strongly with the Ameer should he evince any disposition to overstep these limits of his kingdom. Hitherto the Ameer has proved most amenable to the advice offered to him by the Indian Government, and has cordially accepted the peaceful policy which they have recommended him to adopt, because the Indian Government have been able to accompany their advice with an assurance that the territorial integrity of Afghanistan would in like manner be respected by those Powers beyond his frontiers which are amenable to the

influence of Russia. The policy thus happily inaugurated has produced the most beneficial results in the establishment of peace in the countries where it has long been unknown. Her Majesty's Government believe that it is now in the power of the Russian Government, by an explicit recognition of the right of the Ameer of Kabul to these territories which he now claims, which Bokhara herself admits to be his, and which all evidence as yet produced shows to be in his actual and effectual possession, to assist the British Government in perpetuating, so far as it is in human power to do so, the peace and prosperity of those regions, and in removing for ever by such means all cause of uneasiness and jealousy between England and Russia in regard to their respective policies in Asia.

For your Excellency's more complete information I state the territories and boundaries which Her Majesty's Government consider as fully belonging to the Ameer of Kabul, viz.:—

(1) Badakshan, with its dependent district of Wakhan from the Sirikul (Woods Lake) on the east to the junction of the Kokcha River with the Oxus (or Penjah), forming the northern boundary of this Afghan province throughout its entire extent.

(2) Afghan Turkestan, comprising the districts of Kunduz, Khulm, and Balkh, the northern boundary of which would be the line of the Oxus from the junction of the Kokcha River to the post of the Khoja Saleh, inclusive, on the high road from Bokhara to Balkh. Nothing to be claimed by the Afghan Ameer on the left bank of the Oxus below Khoja Saleh.

(3) The internal districts of Aksha, Seripool, Maimenant, Shibherfan, and Andkoi, the latter of which would be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the north-west, the desert beyond belonging to independent tribes of Turkomans.

(4) The western Afghan frontier between the dependencies of Herat and those of the Persian province of Khorassan is well known and need not here be defined. Your Excellency will give a copy of this despatch to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.—I am, etc., GRANVILLE.

[REPLY.]

PRINCE GORTCHAKOFF TO COUNT BRUNNOW (*communicated to Earl Granville by Count Brunnow, 5th February* 1873).

St. Petersburg, 31*st January* 1873.

M. LE COMTE,—Lord Augustus Loftus has communicated to me the reply of Her Britannic Majesty's principal Secretary of State to our despatch on Central Asia of the 19th December.

I enclose a copy of his document.

We see with satisfaction that the English Cabinet continues to pursue in those parts the same object as ourselves, that of ensuring to them peace, and, as far as possible, tranquillity. The divergence which existed in our views was with regard to the frontiers assigned to the dominions of Sher Ali. The English Cabinet includes within them Badakshan and Wakhan, which, according to our views, enjoyed a certain independence. Considering the difficulty experienced in establishing the facts in all their details in those distant parts, considering the greater facilities which the British Government possesses for collecting precise data, and above all, considering our wish not to give to this question of detail greater importance than is due to it, we do not refuse to accept the line of boundary laid down by England. We are the more inclined to this act of courtesy as the English Government engages to use all her influence with Sher Ali, in order to induce him to maintain a peaceful attitude, as well as to insist on his giving up all measures of aggression or further conquest. This influence is indisputable. It is based not only on the material and moral ascendency of England, but also on the subsidies for which Sher Ali is indebted to her. Such being the case, we see in his assurance a real guarantee for the maintenance of peace. Your Excellency will have the goodness to make this declaration to Her Britannic Majesty's principal Secretary of State, and to give him a copy of this despatch. We are convinced that Lord Granville will perceive in it a fresh proof of the value which our august Master attaches to the maintenance and consolidation of the most friendly relations with the government of Her Majesty Queen Victoria.—Receive, etc., (Signed) GORTCHAKOFF.

TREATY OF KHIVA

Signed between Russia and Khiva, 24th August 1873

1. Seyid-Mahomed-Rahim-Bahadur-Khan acknowledges himself to be the humble servant of the Emperor of all the Russias. He renounces the right of maintaining any direct and friendly relations with neighbouring rulers and khans, and of concluding with them commercial or other treaties of any kind whatsoever, and shall not, without the knowledge and permission of the superior Russian authorities in Central Asia, undertake any military operations against such neighbouring countries.

2. The boundary between the Russian and Khivan territories shall be the Amu Daria from Kukertli down the river as far as the point at which the most westerly branch of the Amu Daria leaves the main stream, and from that point the frontier shall extend along such branch as far as its mouth in the Aral Sea. Further, the frontier shall extend along the sea-coast to Cape Urgu, and from thence along the base of the chink (escarpment) of the Ust-Urt, following the so-called ancient bed of the Amu Daria.

3. The whole of the right bank of the Amu Daria, and the lands adjoining thereunto, which have hitherto been considered as belonging to Khiva, shall pass over from the Khan into the possession of Russia, together with the people dwelling and camping thereon. Those parcels of land, which are at present the property of the Khan, and of which the usufruct has been given by him to Khivan officers of state, become likewise the property of the Russian Government, free of all claims on the part of the previous owners. The Khan may indemnify them by grants of land on the left bank.

4. In the event of a portion of such right bank being transferred to the possession of the Ameer of Bokhara by the will of His Majesty the Emperor, the Khan of Khiva shall recognise the latter as the lawful possessor of such portion of his former dominions, and engages to renounce all intention of re-establishing his authority therein.

5. Russian steamers, and other Russian vessels, whether belonging to the Government or to private individuals, shall have the

free and exclusive right of navigating the Amou Darya river. Khivan and Bokharan vessels may enjoy the same right, not otherwise than by special permission from the superior Russian authority in Central Asia.

6. Russians shall have the right to construct wharves (landing-places) on the left bank wheresoever the same shall be found necessary and convenient. The Government of the Khan shall be responsible for the safety and security of such wharves. The approval of the localities selected for wharves shall rest with the superior Russian authorities in Central Asia.

7. Independently of such wharves, Russians shall have the right to establish factories on the left bank of the Amou Darya for the purpose of storing and safe-keeping their merchandise. For the purposes of such factories the Government of the Khan shall allot, in the localities which shall have been indicated by the superior Russian authorities in Central Asia, a sufficient quantity of unoccupied land for wharves, and for the construction of storehouses, of buildings for the accommodation of servants of the factories, and of persons transacting business with the factories. and of merchants' offices, as well as for the establishment of domestic farms. Such factories, together with all persons residing thereat and with all goods placed therein, shall be under the immediate protection of the Government of the Khan, which shall be responsible for the safety and security of the same.

8. All the towns and villages, without exception, within the Khanate of Khiva shall henceforward be open to Russian trade. Russian merchants and Russian caravans may freely travel throughout the entire Khanate, and shall enjoy the special protection of the local authorities. The Government of the Khan shall be responsible for the safety of caravans and stores.

9. Russian merchants trading in the Khanate shall be free from the payment of custom duties (zakat) and of all kind of dues on trade, in the same manner as the merchants of Khiva have long enjoyed immunity from zakat on the route through Kazalinsk, at Orenburg, and at the stations (landing-places) on the Caspian Sea.

10. Russian merchants shall have the right of carrying their goods through the Khivan territory to all neighbouring countries free of customs duties (free transit trade).

11. Russian merchants shall, if they desire it, have the right to establish agents (caravan bashis) in Khiva and other towns within the Khanate for the purpose of maintaining communication with the authorities and superintending the regularity of their trade.

12. Russian subjects shall have the right to hold immovable property in Khiva. A land tax shall be leviable on the same by agreement with the superior Russian authority in Central Asia.

13. Commercial engagements between Russians and Khivans shall be fulfilled inviolably on both sides.

14. The Government of the Khan engages to examine (inquire into), without delay, the complaints and claims of Russian subjects against Khivans, and in case such complaints and claims shall have proved to be well founded, to give immediate satisfaction in respect of the same. In the examination of disputes (claims) between Russian subjects and Khivans, preference shall be given to Russians in the respect to the payment of debts by Khivans.

15. Complaints and claims of Khivans against Russian subjects shall be referred to the nearest Russian authorities for examination and satisfaction, even in the event of such complaints and claims being raised by Russian subjects within the confines of the Khanate.

16. The Government of the Khan shall in no case give refuge to emigrants (runaways) from Russia having no permit from Russian authorities, without regard to the nationality of such individuals. Should any Russian subjects, being criminals, seek concealment within the boundaries of Khiva, in order to avoid judicial pursuit, the Government of the Khan engages to capture such persons, and to surrender them to the nearest Russian authorities.

17. The proclamation made by Seyid-Mahomed-Rahim-Bahadur-Khan on the 12th of July last respecting the liberation of all slaves in the Khanate, and the abolition in perpetuity of slavery and of trade in men, shall remain in full force, and the Government of the Khan engages to employ all the means in its power in order to watch over the strict and conscientious prosecution of this matter.

18. A fine is inflicted on the Khanate of Khiva to the extent of two millions two hundred thousand roubles, in order to cover the expenses incurred by the Russian Exchequer in the prosecution of the late war, which was provoked by the Government of the Khan and by the Khivan people. Since, owing to the insufficiency of money in the country, and particularly in the hands of the Government, the Khivan Government is unable to pay the above sum within a short time, the Khivan Government shall, in consideration of such difficulty, have the right of paying the said fine by instalments, with the addition of interest thereon at the rate of five per cent. per annum, on condition that, during the first two years, one hundred thousand roubles shall be annually paid into the Russian Exchequer, one hundred and twenty-five thousand roubles per annum during the two ensuing years, and, after that, one hundred and seventy-five thousand roubles per annum during

the succeeding two years, and in the year 1881, that is to say, after the expiration of eight years, the sum of two hundred thousand roubles shall be paid; and, lastly, a sum of not less than two hundred thousand roubles per annum shall be paid until the final settlement of the claim. The instalments may be paid both in Russian bank-notes and in the current coin of Khiva at the pleasure of the Government of the Khan. The first instalment shall be paid on the 1st of December 1873. On account of this instalment the Khan shall have the right to levy a tax for the current year from the population on the right bank, according to the assessment hitherto in force. This collection shall be terminated by the 1st of December, by agreement between the Khan's collectors and the local Russian authorities.

TREATY OF BOKHARA

Signed between Russia and Bokhara, September 28, 1873

1. The line of frontier between the dominions of his Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of all the Russias, and those of his Eminence, the Ameer of Bokhara, remains unaltered. All the Khivan territory on the right bank of the Amu Daria being now annexed to the Russian dominions, the former frontier separating the possessions of the Ameer of Bokhara from the Khanate of Khiva, and stretching on the west from the locality called Khalata towards Gugertli, 'Togai,' on the right bank of Amou, is abolished. The territory situated between the former Bokhara-Khivan frontier, the right bank of the Amu Daria from Gugertli to Meshekly, 'Togai' inclusive, and the line passing from Meshekly to the point of junction of the former Bokhara-Khivan frontier of the Russian Empire, are annexed to the dominions of the Ameer of Bokhara.

2. The right bank of the Amu Daria being detached from the Khanate of Khiva, all the caravan routes leading from Bokhara to the north into the Russian dominions traverse henceforth exclusively lands belonging to Bokhara and Russia. The Governments of Russia and Bokhara, each within its own limits, shall both watch over the security of the march of caravans and of the transit trade.

3. Russian steamers, and other Russian Government vessels, as well as vessels belonging to private individuals, shall have the right of free navigation on that portion of the Amou Darya which belongs to the Ameer of Bokhara.

4. Russians shall have the right to establish wharves (landing-places) and storehouses for merchandise, in such places on the Bokharan banks of the Amu Daria, as may be judged necessary and convenient for that purpose. The Government of Bokhara shall undertake to watch over the safety and security of the said wharves and storehouses. The ratification of the selection of localities for the establishment of wharves shall rest with the superior Russian authorities in Central Asia.

5. All the towns and villages of the Khanate of Bokhara shall be open to Russian trade. Russian traders and Russian caravans

shall freely pass through all parts of the Khanate, and shall enjoy the special protection of the local authorities. The Bokharan Government shall be responsible for the security of Russian caravans within the confines of the Khanate of Bokhara.

6. All merchandise belonging to Russian traders, whether transported from the Russian possessions into Bokhara, or from Bokhara to Russia, shall, without exception, be liable to a tax of two-and-a-half per cent. *ad valorem*, in the same way as a duty of one-fortieth is charged on merchandise in the Turkestan Province. Besides this zakat no other supplementary tax shall be imposed.

7. Russian traders shall have the right to transport their merchandise through Bokhara to all neighbouring countries free of duty.

8. Russian traders shall be allowed to establish caravanserais for the storage of their merchandise in all Bokharan towns in which they may consider it necessary to do so. Bokharan traders shall enjoy the same privilege in the towns of the Turkestan province.

9. Russian traders shall have the right to have commercial agents in all the towns of Bokhara, whose business it shall be to watch over the regular course of trade, and over the legal imposition of customs dues, and who shall also be authorised to enter into communication with the local authorities. Bokharan traders shall enjoy the same privilege in the towns of the Turkestan province.

10. Engagements of trade between Russians and Bokharans shall be held sacred and inviolable on both sides. The Bokharan Government shall promise to keep watch over the honest fulfilment of all trading engagements, as also over the conscientious conduct of trading affairs generally.

11. Russian subjects shall, equally with the subjects of Bokhara, have the right to occupy themselves in the Bokharan dominions with the various trades and crafts which are allowed under the Sharigate, in exactly the same way as Bokharan subjects are permitted in the Russian dominions to follow those occupations which are sanctioned by the laws of Russia.

12. Russian subjects shall have the right to possess immovable property in the Khanate, *i.e.* to acquire by purchase gardens and cultivable lands. Such property shall be liable to a land tax on an equality with properties of Bokharan subjects. The same right shall be enjoyed by Bokharan subjects within the limits of the Russian Empire.

13. Russian subjects shall enter the Bokharan dominions with permits, issued by the Russian authorities, for crossing the frontier; they shall have the right of free passage throughout the entire

Khanate, and they shall enjoy the special protection of the Bokharan authorities.

14. The Government of Bokhara shall in no case admit into its country any emigrants from Russia, whatever may be their nationality, who are not provided with permits from Russian authorities. If a criminal, being a Russian subject, seeks refuge within the confines of Bokhara from the pursuit of the law, the same shall be arrested and delivered over to the nearest Russian authorities.

15. In order to hold direct and uninterrupted relations with the superior Russian authorities in Central Asia, the Ameer of Bokhara shall select from among those around him a person of confidence, whom he shall establish at Tashkend as his Envoy Plenipotentiary. Such Envoy shall reside at Tashkend in a house belonging to the Ameer, and at the expense of the latter.

16. The Russian Government may in like manner have a permanent representative in Bokhara, who shall be near the person of his Eminence the Ameer. The Russian Plenipotentiary in Bokhara, as in the case of the Ameer's Plenipotentiary in Tashkend, shall reside in a house belonging to the Russian Government, and at the expense of the latter.

17. In deference to the Emperor of all the Russias, and for the greater glory of his Imperial Majesty, his Eminence the Ameer, Seyid Mozaffur, has resolved that henceforth and for ever the shameful trade in men, which is so contrary to the laws of humanity, shall be abolished within the limits of Bokhara. In conformity with this resolution, Seyid Mozaffur shall immediately send to all his beks the strictest orders to that effect. Besides the order abolishing the slave trade, commands shall be sent to all the frontier towns of Bokhara to which slaves are brought for sale from neighbouring countries, to the effect that in case slaves should be brought to such places, notwithstanding the orders of the Ameer, the same should be taken from their owners and immediately liberated.

18. His Eminence, Seyid Mozaffur, being sincerely desirous of developing and strengthening the friendly and neighbourly relations which have subsisted for five years to the benefit of Bokhara, shall be guided by the seventeen articles composing the Treaty of Friendship between Russia and Bokhara.

TREATY OF ILI

Signed between Russia and China, February 12, 1881

1. His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias consents to the re-establishment of the Chinese Government in the country of Ili, which has been temporarily occupied, since 1871, by the Russian forces. Russia remains in possession of the western part of that country, within the limits indicated by Article 7 of the present Treaty.

2. His Majesty the Emperor of China undertakes to issue the necessary Decrees, in order that the inhabitants of Ili, to whatever race or religion they may belong, may be freed from all liability, whether as concerns their persons or their property, for acts committed during or after the disorders which have taken place in that country. A Proclamation, in conformity with this undertaking, will be addressed by the Chinese authorities, in the name of his Majesty the Emperor of China, to the people of Ili before that country is made over to the said authorities.

3. The inhabitants of Ili will be at liberty to remain in the places where they at present reside as Chinese subjects, or to emigrate to Russia and to adopt Russian nationality. They will be called upon for a decision on the subject before Chinese authority is re-established in Ili, and a term of one year, to be reckoned from the date of the restoration of the country to the Chinese authorities, will be granted to those who express a wish to emigrate to Russia. The Chinese authorities will place no obstacles in the way of their emigration, and of the removal of their personal property.

4. Russian subjects holding land in Ili will retain their rights of ownership, even after the re-establishment of the authority of the Chinese Government in that country. This arrangement does not apply to those inhabitants of Ili who adopt Russian nationality at the time of the re-establishment of Chinese authority in that country. Russian subjects, whose lands are situated outside the areas assigned for Russian factories, in virtue of Article XIII. of the Kulja Treaty of 1851, will pay the same taxes and contributions as Chinese subjects.

5. The two Governments will send to Kulja Commissioners,

who will proceed on the one part to cede, and on the other part to resume, the administration of the Province of Ili, and to whom will be confided, in general, the execution of the stipulations of the present Treaty which relate to the re-establishment in that country of the authority of the Chinese Government. The said Commissioners will carry out their instructions in accordance with the understanding to be arrived at as to the manner of ceding on the one part, and resuming on the other, the administration of Ili between the Governor-General of Turkestan and the Governor-General of the Provinces of Shen-si and Kan-sou, to whom the management of this business has been entrusted by the two Governments. The transfer of the administration of Ili should be concluded within a term of three months or earlier, if possible to date from the day of the arrival at Tashkend of the official delegated by the Governor-General of Shen-si and Kan-sou to the Governor-General of Turkestan, to notify to him the ratification and promulgation of the present treaty by his Majesty the Emperor of China.

6. The Government of his Majesty the Emperor of China will pay to the Government of Russia the sum of 9,000,000 metallic roubles, to meet the expenses of the occupation of Ili by Russian troops since 1871, to satisfy all pecuniary claims which have been brought forward up to this date for losses of Russian subjects whose goods have been plundered in Chinese territory, and to assist the families of Russian subjects killed in armed attacks, of which they have been the victims, in Chinese territory. The above-mentioned sum of 9,000,000 metallic roubles is to be paid within a term of two years from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of the present Treaty, in the order and in accordance with the conditions agreed to by the two Governments in the special Protocol annexed to the present Treaty.

7. The western part of Ili is incorporated with Russia to serve as a place for the establishment of the inhabitants of that country who adopt Russian nationality, and who will therefore have had to abandon the lands they possess. The frontier between the Russian possessions and the Chinese province of Ili, starting from the Bedjin-Taou mountains, will follow the course of the Khorgos river as far as the spot where it falls into the River Ili, and crossing this last river, will take a southerly direction towards the Ouzon-Taou mountains, leaving the village of Koldjat on the west. From this point it will follow in a southerly direction the line laid down by the Protocol signed at Tchougoutchak in 1864.

8. A portion of the frontier-line to the east of Lake Taïsan, as laid down by the Protocol signed at Tchougoutchak in 1864 having been found incorrect, the errors pointed out, and to estab-

lish a sufficient separation between the Kirghiz tribes subject to the two empires. The new line shall, as far as possible, take a direction intermediate between the old frontier and a straight line starting from the Kouïtoun mountains towards the Saour mountains, and crossing the Tcherni-Irtych.

9. The two contracting parties will have commissioners for erecting boundary posts upon the line fixed by articles 7 and 8, as well as upon the portion of the frontier where no posts have been erected. The time and place of meeting of these commissioners will be settled by an understanding between the two Governments. The two Governments will also name commissioners to examine the frontier, and to erect boundary posts between the Russian province of Ferganah and the western part of the Chinese province Kashgar. These commissioners will take the present frontier as the basis of their labours.

10. The recognised treaty right of the Russian Government to appoint consuls at Ili, at Tarbagataï, at Kashgar and at Urga, is henceforth extended to the towns of Sou-Tcheou (Tsia-Yu-Kouan) and Tourfan. In the following towns, Kobdo, Oulias-soutai, Khami, Ouroumtsi, and Goutchen, the Russian Government will establish consulates accordingly as they are called for by the development of commerce; and after coming to an understanding with the Chinese Government, the consuls at Sou-Tcheou (Tsia-Yu-Kouan) and Tourfan will exercise consular functions in the neighbouring districts, where the interests of Russian subjects may call for their presence. The provisions of Articles v. and vi. of the treaty concluded at Peking in 1860, relating to the concession of lands for consular dwellings, for cemeteries, and for pasturage, will be in like manner applicable to the the towns of Sou Tcheou (Tsia-Yu-Kouan) and Tourfan. The local authorities will assist the consuls in finding temporary residences until the consular houses are built. The Russian consuls in Mongolia and the districts situated on the two slopes of the Tian-chan will, for travelling purposes and for forwarding their correspondence, make use of the Government postal establishments according to the stipulations of article xi. of the treaty of Tien-Tsin, and article xii. of the treaty of Peking. The Chinese authorities, when called upon by them for this purpose, will afford them their aid and assistance. The town of Tourfan not being a place open for foreign trade, the right of establishing a consulate there shall not serve as a precedent, upon which to rest a similar right with respect to the ports of China to the internal provinces and to Manchuria.

11. Russian consuls in China will communicate on business matters, either with the local authorities of their place of residence,

or with the superior authority of the district or province, accordingly as the nature of the interests respectively intrusted to them, and the importance or urgency of the business to be transacted may require. The correspondence between them will take the shape of official letters. As to the rules of etiquette to be observed in their interviews, they will be based upon the consideration which the officers of friendly Powers owe to one another. All questions arising on Chinese territory with regard to commercial or other matters between the dependents of the two States will be examined and settled by common consent by the consuls and the Chinese authorities. In disputes concerning commercial matters, the parties may settle their differences amicably by means of arbitrators chosen by both sides. If by this course an understanding cannot be arrived at, the question will be examined and settled by the authorities of the two States. Written engagements between Russian and Chinese subjects concerning orders for goods or their carriage, the hire of shops, houses, and other places, or relating to other similar transactions, may be presented for the legalisation of the consulates and of the higher local administrations, whose duty it is to legalise documents presented to them. In case of the non-fulfilment of engagements contracted, the consuls and the Chinese authorities will consider as to measures calculated to ensure the execution of such obligations.

12. Russian subjects are authorised as heretofore, to carry on trade free of duty, in Chinese Mongolia, in those localities or Aimaks where there are Chinese authorities, as well as those where there are none. Russian subjects may likewise carry on trade free of duty in the towns and other localities of the province of Ili, Tarbagatai, Kashgar, Ouroumtsi, and others, situated on the northern and southern slopes of the Tian-Shan range, as far as the Great Wall. This privilege will be withdrawn when the development of trade necessitates the enactment of a customs tariff, in accordance with an understanding to be arrived at between the two Governments. Russian subjects may import into and export from the aforesaid provinces of China products of every kind, no matter what their origin may be. They may effect purchases and sales either for cash or by barter; they will be entitled to make payments in merchandise of all kinds.

13. In the localities where the Russian Government is entitled to establish consulates, as in the town of Kalgan, Russian subjects may construct houses, shops, store-houses, and other buildings on the land they may acquire by purchase, or which may be granted to them by the local authorities, in accordance with what is laid down for Ili and Tarbagatai by article xiii. of the Kulja treaty

of 1851. Privileges granted to Russian subjects in the town of Kalgan, where there will be no consulate, constitute an exception which cannot be extended to any other locality in the internal provinces.

14. Russian merchants wishing to send from Russia by land goods for the inner provinces of China may, as formerly, send them by the towns of Kalgan and Toun-Tcheou to the port of Tien-Tsin, and thence to other ports above mentioned, or in the river markets. They will likewise be entitled to proceed on commercial business to Sou-Tcheou, the terminus of Russian caravans, and will there enjoy all the rights granted to Russian commerce at Tien-Tsin.

15. Trade carried on by land by Russian subjects in the inner and outer provinces of China will be governed by the regulations annexed to the present treaty. The commercial stipulations of the present treaty, as well as the regulations which serve as its complement, may be revised after the lapse of ten years to date from the day of the exchange of the ratifications of the treaty; but if within the course of six months before that term expires, neither of the contracting parties should manifest a desire to proceed to its revision, the commercial stipulations, as well as the regulations, will remain in force for a further term of ten years. Trade by sea carried on by Russian subjects in China will come under the general regulations established for foreign maritime commerce with China. Should it become necessary to modify these regulations, the two Governments will come to an understanding on the subject.

16. Should the development of Russian trade by land call for the enactment of a custom's tariff applicable to goods exported from and imported into China, which shall harmonise better with the necessities of that trade than the existing tariffs, the Governments of Russia and China will come to an understanding on the subject, taking as a basis for fixing the export and import duties an *ad valorem* rate of five per cent. Pending the enactment of this tariff, the export duties levied on certain kind of teas of inferior quality which are at present subject to the rates established for teas of higher quality will be lowered in proportion to value. The settlement of those duties for each kind of tea will be sought for by means of an understanding between the Chinese Government and the Russian envoy at Peking, within the term of one year, at the outside, from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of the present treaty.

17. Differences of opinion have heretofore arisen as to the application of article x. of the treaty concluded at Peking in 1860; it is hereby agreed that the stipulations of the aforesaid article

concerning the settlement of claims arising out of the theft or driving astray will be condemned to pay the real value of the cattle not restored to the owners. It is understood that, in case of the insolvency of the guilty parties, the indemnity to be paid for the missing cattle shall not fall upon the local authorities. The frontier authorities of both States will prosecute with the full rigour of the laws of their country parties guilty of driving astray or stealing cattle, and will take such measures as may lie in their power to restore to the rightful owners cattle which have been driven astray or which have crossed the frontier. The tracks of cattle driven astray, or which have crossed the frontier, may be pointed out not only to the frontier guards, but also to the elder of the nearest villages.

18. The stipulation of the treaty concluded at Aügoun on the 16th May 1858, concerning the rights of the subjects of the two empires to navigate the Amur, the Sungari, and the Ussuri, and to trade with the inhabitants of riverine places, are and remain confirmed. Both Governments will proceed to the establishment of an understanding concerning the mode of applying the said stipulations.

19. The provisions of former treaties between Russia and China, not modified by the present treaty, remain in full force.

20. The present treaty, after having been ratified by the two emperors, will be promulgated in either empire for the information and guidance of all persons concerned. The ratifications will be exchanged at St. Petersburg within six months from the date of the signature of the treaty. Having settled the aforesaid articles, the Plenipotentiaries of the two contracting parties have signed and sealed two copies of the present treaty in the Russian, Chinese, and French languages. Of the three texts duly collated and found to correspond, the French text shall be held to be authoritative for the interpretation of the present treaty.

AKHAL-KHORASSAN BOUNDARY CONVENTION

Signed between Russia and Persia, 21*st December* 1881

1. The frontier line between the possessions of the Russian Empire and Persia, east of the Caspian Sea, is fixed as follows:—Beginning at the Hasan Kuli Gulf, the course of the River Atrek serves as the frontier as far as Chat. From Chat the frontier line follows in a north-easterly direction the ridges of the Songou Dagh and Sagirim ranges, thence extending northward to the Chandir river, reaching the bed of that river at Tchakan Kale. From Tchakan Kale it runs in a northerly direction to the ridge of the mountains dividing the Chandir and Sumbar valleys, and extends along the ridge of these mountains in an easterly direction, descending to the bed of the Sumbar at the spot where the Ach-Agaian stream falls into it. From this point eastward the bed of the Sumbar marks the frontier as far as the ruins of Medjet Dainé. Thence the road to Durrun forms the frontier line as far as the ridge of the Kopet Dagh, along the ridge of which the frontier extends south-eastward, but before reaching the upper part of the Giamab Pass, turns to the south among the mountain heights dividing the valley of the Sumbar from the source of the Giamab. Thence taking a south-easterly direction across the summits of the Misino and Tchoubest mountains, it reaches the road from Giamab to Rabab, passing at a distance of one verst to the north of the latter spot. From this point the frontier line runs along the ridge of the mountains as far as the summit of the Dalang mountain, whence, passing on the northern side of the village of Khairabad, it extends in a north-easterly direction as far as the boundaries of Geok Keital. From the boundaries of Geok Keital the frontier line crosses to the gorge of the River Firuzé, intersecting that gorge on the northern side of the village of Firuzé. Thence the frontier line takes a south-easterly direction to the summits of the mountain range, bounding on the south of the valley, through which the road from Askabad to Firuzé passes, and runs along the crest of these mountains to the most easterly point of the range. From here the frontier line crosses over to the northernmost summit of the Aselm range, passing along its ridge in a south-easterly direction, and then skirting round to the north

of the village of Keltechina, it runs to the point where the Ziri Kou and Kizil Dagh mountains join, extending thence south-eastward along the summits of the Ziri Kou range until it issues into the valley of the Baba Durmaz stream. It then takes a northerly direction and reaches the oasis at the road from Gavars to Lutfabad, leaving the fortress of Baba Durmaz to the east.

2. Whereas in Article 1 of the present convention, the principal points are indicated through which the frontier between the possessions of Russia and Persia is to pass, the high contracting parties are to appoint special commissioners with a view of accurately tracing on the spot the frontier line, and of erecting proper boundary marks. The date and place of meeting of the said commissioners shall be mutually agreed upon by the high contracting parties.

3. Whereas the forts of Giamab and Kulkulab, situated in the gorge through which the stream watering the soil of the Trans-Caspian province passes, lie to the north of the line which, in virtue of Article 1 of the present convention, is to serve as the boundary between the territories of the two high contracting parties, the Government of His Majesty the Shah engage to evacuate the said forts within the space of one year from the date of the exchange of the ratifications of the present convention, but shall have the right during the said period to remove the inhabitants of Giamab and Kulkulab to within the Persian frontier, and to establish them there. On its part, the Government of the Emperor of all the Russias engages not to erect fortifications in these said localities, nor to establish any Turkoman families therein.

4. Whereas the sources of the River Firuzé, as well as of other streams watering the soil of the Trans-Caspian province contiguous to the Persian frontier, lie within the Persian territory, the Government of His Majesty the Shah engage, on no account whatever to permit the establishment of fresh settlements along the course of the said streams and rivulets, from their sources to the point where they leave Persian territory, and not to extend the area of land at present under cultivation, and under no pretence whatever to turn off the water in larger quantities than is necessary for irrigating the fields now under cultivation within the Persian territory. With a view to the immediate observance and fulfilment of this stipulation, the Government of His Majesty the Shah engage to appoint a sufficient number of competent agents, and to subject any infringer thereof to severe punishment.

5. With a view to the development of commercial intercourse between the Trans-Caspian province and Khorassan, both high contracting parties engage to come to a mutually advantageous agreement as soon as possible for the construction of waggon-

roads suitable for commercial traffic between the above-mentioned provinces.

6. The Government of His Majesty the Shah of Persia engage to strictly prohibit the export from His Majesty's dominions along the whole extent of the frontier of the provinces of Astrabad and Khorassan of all arms and war materials, and likewise to adopt measures to prevent arms being supplied to the Turkomans residing in Persian territory. The Persian frontier authorities shall afford the most effective support to the agents of the Imperial Russian Government, whose duty it shall be to watch that arms are not exported from the Persian territory. The Government of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias, on its part, engages to prevent arms and war materials being supplied from Russian territory to Turkomans living in Persia.

7. With a view to the observance and fulfilment of the stipulations of the present convention, and in order to regulate the proceedings of the Turkomans residing on the Persian frontier, the Government of His Majesty the Emperor of all the Russias shall have the right to nominate agents to the frontier points of Persia. In all questions concerning the observance of order and tranquillity in the districts contiguous to the possessions of the high contracting parties, the appointed agents will act as intermediaries in the relations between the Russian and Persian authorities.

8. All engagements and stipulations contained in treaties and conventions concluded up to this time between the two high contracting parties shall remain in force.

9. The present convention, done in duplicate, and signed by the plenipotentiaries of both parties, who have affixed to it the seal of their arms, shall be confirmed and ratified by His Majesty the Shah of Persia and His Majesty the Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias; the ratifications to be exchanged between the plenipotentiaries of both parties at Teheran within the space of four months, or earlier if possible.

RUSSO-AFGHAN BOUNDARY CONVENTION

Agreed at St. Petersburg, 10*th July* 1887

1. The frontier, the description of which is contained in the Annex to the present Protocol, and which is included between the Pillars No. 1 and No. 19, and the Pillars No. 36 and No. 65, is considered as definitively settled. The trigonometrical points on the portion of the frontier-line described above, and included between Pillars No. 19 and No. 36, are likewise admitted as definitive; the description of this part of the frontier, as well as that of the part to the eastward of Pillar No. 65, may be completed after the demarcation. The synopsis of Pillars attached to Protocol No. 15, dated the 1st (13th) September 1886, is admitted to be correct and definitive as regards Pillars No. 1 to No. 19 and No. 36 to No. 65; it will be completed subsequently by the synopsis of the Pillars from No. 20 to No. 35, and by that of the Pillars to the east of No. 65.

2. Leaving Pillar No. 19, the frontier shall follow a straight line up to the summit of the hill marked 2740 on map No. 1 annexed to the present Protocol. This point where Pillar No. 20 shall be placed is known under the denomination of 'Trigonometrical station of Kara Tépé' (latitude 35° 17′ 49″, longitude 62° 15′ 17″). Further on, the line shall descend the crest of the hills, being directed from this point towards the confluence of the Kushk and the Moghur; Pillar No. 21 shall be placed on a point of this crest or of its slope, so as to be seen from the confluence above mentioned. A straight line shall connect No. 21 with No. 22, placed in the valley of the Kushk on the left bank of the river, 900 feet to the north of the confluence of the Kushk and the Moghur (about 6300 feet from Mazari Shah Alam, indicated on map No. 2 annexed to the Protocol). Leaving Pillar No. 22 the line shall ascend the thalweg of the Kushk to Pillar No. 23, placed 2700 feet above the head of the new canal on the right bank of which the water supply is situated about 6000 feet to the north-north-east of the Tiaret of Chahil-Dukhter. From Pillar No. 23 a straight line shall be traced to the point marked 2925 on map No. 3 annexed to the present Protocol (latitude 35° 16′ 53″, longitude 62° 27′ 57″, Pillar No. 24). Whence the frontier shall

follow the line of the water-parting, passing through the following points:—the point 3017 (Bandi Akhamar, latitude 35° 14′ 21″, longitude 62° 35′ 48″, Pillar No. 26), the point 3198 (latitude 35° 14′ 20″, longitude 62° 41′ 0″, Pillar No. 27), and the point Kalari 2 (latitude 35° 18′ 21″, longitude 62° 47′ 18″), and shall run on to the point marked No. 29 on map No. 4 annexed to the present Protocol. The frontier shall cross the valley of the river Kashan in a straight line between Pillars No. 29 and No. 30 (trigonometrical station of Tori-Scheikh, latitude 35° 24′ 51″, longitude 62° 59′ 43″, map No. 3), where it meets the line of the water-parting of the Kashan and the Murghab, shall pass on to this latter, and shall follow it up to the trigonometrical station of the Kashan (latitude 35° 38′ 13″, longitude 63° 6′ 4″, Pillar No. 32). From this station a straight line shall be traced to a point on the Murghab (Pillar No. 35) situated 700 feet above the canal-head of the canal Yaki-Yuz or Yaki-Yangi. Further on, the frontier, descending the thalweg of the Murghab, shall join Pillar No. 36 of the frontier demarcated in 1885-86. To the east of Pillar No. 65 the frontier shall follow the line marked A B C D on map No. 8 annexed to the present Protocol, the point A being situated at a distance of 3500 feet south of the walls of Tinam Nazar; the point B being near Kara-Tépé-Khurd-Kak, which remains to the Afghans; the point C about midway between the east and west walls of Katabadji; and lastly, the point D about midway between the wells Ali Kadim and the wells marked Chahi. The wells of Tinam Nazar, Kara-Tépé-Khurd, West Katabadji, and Ali Kadim remain outside of Afghan territory. From the point D a straight line shall be traced as far as the commencement of the local frontier demarcated between Bosagha and Khamiab, which shall continue to serve as frontier between the two villages, with the single reservation that the canals of Bosagha along all their course, that is to say, as far as Koïnli (point H) shall be included in Russian territory. In other words, the present demarcation will confirm the existing rights of the two parties on the banks of the Amu Daria, that is to say, that the inhabitants of Khamiah shall retain all their lands and all their pastures, including those which are east of the local frontier marked E F G on maps Nos. 9 and 10 annexed to the Protocol. On the other hand, the inhabitants of Bosagha shall retain the exclusive enjoyment of their canals as far as Koïnli, with the right of repairing and supplying them, in accordance with the customs in force in regard to those of Khamiab, when the waters of Amu Daria are too low to supply directly the canal heads of Koïnli. The officers who shall be charged to execute on the spot the provisions of the present Protocol between the above-named Pillars shall be bound to place

a sufficient number of intermediate Pillars, taking advantage for this purpose as much as possible of the salient points.

3. The clause in Protocol No. 4 of the 14th (26th) December 1885, prohibiting the Afghans from making use of the irrigating canals in the Kushk valley below Chahil Duphter, which were not in use at that time, remains in force, but it is understood that this clause can only be applied to the canals supplied by the Kushk. The Afghans shall not have the right to make use of the waters of the Kushk for their agricultural works north of Chahil Dukhter; but the waters of the Moghur belong exclusively to them, and they may carry out any works they may think necessary in order to make use of them.

4. The clauses in Protocols No. 4 of the 14th (26th) December 1885, and No. 15 of the 1st (13th) September 1886, relative to the construction of a dam on the Murghab, remain in force. M. Linoview having expressed the wish that the obligation imposed on the Ameer of Afghanistan to give up for this purpose a tract of land on the right bank of the Murghab, under the conditions stipulated in the said Protocols, should be extended to the whole course of the river below the canal-head of Yaki-Yuz, Colonel Ridgeway is of opinion that the necessary steps to obtain the assent of the Ameer might delay the conclusion of the present arrangement; but he is nevertheless convinced that the assent of the Ameer to this cession, under the same conditions, of a tract of land on the right bank can be obtained without difficulty, if later on the Imperial Government should inform Her Britannic Majesty's Government of their intention of proceeding to the construction of a dam above the canal-head of Bendi Nadiri.

5. The British Government will communicate without delay to the Ameer of Afghanistan the arrangements herein agreed upon, and the Imperial Government of Russia will enter into possession of the territory adjudged to them by the present Protocol from the 1st (13th) October of the present year.

6. The frontier agreed upon shall be locally demarcated by a mixed Commission according to the signed maps. In case the work of demarcation should be delayed, the line traced on the maps shall nevertheless be considered binding by the two Governments.

[The frontier was duly demarcated, and agreed to in sections, the Protocol for each section being signed separately, and at a different date. For purposes of easy reference, the entire frontier between the Hari Rud and the Oxus is here given in the order of its geographical position.]

The Frontier of Afghanistan from the Hari Rud to the Oxus.

The frontier begins on the right bank of the Hari Rud at a point marked on the map by Pillar No. 1, about 8500 feet distant from a small tower situated on a mound at the entrance of the Zulficar Pass. Pillar No. 2 is placed on the top of the neighbouring rock which commands Pillar No. 1. From Pillar No. 2 the frontier turns to the north for a distance of about half a mile as far as Pillar No. 3, which is situated on an eminence at the western extremity of a detached portion of the cliff. From thence the frontier runs in a straight line towards the top of a steep hill about a mile and a half distant in an east-north-easterly direction, and reaches Pillar No. 4, placed on a low mound in the plain. Beyond this Pillar the frontier, taking a more easterly direction, runs for a distance of four miles as far as Pillar No. 5, placed on an eminence, and well in view of the second line of heights on the northern side of a natural cavity in the rock. From this point the frontier runs in a south-easterly direction along the crest of the second line of heights as far as Pillar No. 6, placed on the ridge of the northern cliff of the eastern defile, at a distance of about a mile from the centre of the defile. Pillar No. 7 is placed below Pillar No. 6, near the road in the middle of the pass, and Pillar No. 8 is on the top of the southern cliff, facing Pillar No. 6. The frontier then descends the crest of the second line of heights in a southerly direction, and crosses the path leading to Karez-Elias and Abi-Charmi at a point about 2½ miles distant from the bifurcation of the four roads converging at the eastern extremity of the defile of Zulficar. Pillar No. 9 is placed to the east of the path on a small rock which overhangs it. From this Pillar the frontier gradually ascends the line of water-parting as far as the highest summits of the range of Dengli-Dagh, marked by Pillar No. 10. At the eastern extremity of this range stands Pillar No. 11. At a distance of 9½ miles in a south-easterly direction are three low hills. On the middle one is placed Pillar No. 12. Again turning somewhat to the east, the frontier runs towards Pillar No. 13, placed beside the road about half-way between Ak-Robat and Sumbakarez, and thence to Pillar No. 14, situated at a distance of 2½ miles to the east on the top of a hill.

Pillar No. 15 is 9 miles from Ak-Robat on the road leading to Au-Rohak; from thence the frontier runs in a straight line towards Pillar No. 16, placed on the more easterly and the higher of the two mounds of Koschia-Tchinguia, 5½ miles north of Au-Rohak. At about the same distance to the north-west of the spring of

Ishin stands Pillar No. 17, placed on a flat-topped hill; on the side of the road between Au-Rohak and Ishin, on a gentle slope, is placed Pillar No. 18, about 3 miles west of Ishin, on the southern side of the stream. Pillar No. 19 is placed on the rounded crest of a small chain of heights 3 miles south of Ishin.

Leaving Pillar No. 19 the frontier runs east by south in a straight line for some 7⅓ miles (as measured on the map) to Pillar No. 20, which stands on the summit of the high hill, distant about 4 miles to the north by west of the Kara Tépé Mound. From Pillar No. 20 the lines run in a south-easterly direction to a long, round-topped hill at the head of a ravine running down to the Kushk river, and thence along the crest of a ridge in a southerly direction to a point overlooking the valley of the Kushk known as the Tiarat-i-Kwajah Alam Dar, marked by a heap of stones. From there the line runs straight down the side of the hill and straight across the valley to Pillar No. 22 on the left or western bank of the Kushk river, at a distance of 300 yards below its junction with the Moghur stream. Pillar No. 22 stands near the edge of the bank above flood level and about 2600 yards north of the Kara Tépé Mound. From Pillar No. 22 the boundary runs up the course of the river Kushk for some 9½ miles (as measured on the map in a direct line) to Pillar No. 23, built on the edge of the right or eastern bank of the river and nearly in the centre of the valley, at a distance of 900 yards from the head of the canal taking off the river on the right bank at the northern side of the Chitral-Dukhtaran point, below and on the opposite side of the river to the Tiarat-i-Chitral-Dukhtaran. Pillar No. 23 is distant some 275 paces from the mound where the road up the right bank of the river, after crossing the Chitral Dukhtaran point, debouches again on to the plain. The boundary runs north-eastward in a straight line from Pillar No. 23 for some 14⅓ miles to Pillar No. 24, described hereafter. The intermediate Pillars are Pillar No. 23A standing 360 paces to the north-east of Pillar No. 23 on to the top of the bluff forming the eastern edge of the valley, and about 175 paces from the mound on the roadside above mentioned; Pillar No. 23B is situated on the sky-line at a distance of about 1½ miles, No. 23A on a low, flat-topped mound, visible from both up and down the Kushk valley, but not visible directly from No. 23A; Pillar No. 23C standing on the ridge of the northern slope of the hill known as the Band-i-chah-i-Khish. The Pillar is situated on an isolated knoll in the ridge, and some 300 yards to the north of of a higher and sharper shoulder of the same ridge. Pillar No. 23B is situated 6½ miles to the south-west, and Pillar No. 24 rather more than 5¾ miles to the north-east. Pillar No. 24 stands on the western end of a long, steep white hill, as seen from the south, on

a point known as Ziarat-i-Baba-Taghi. This Pillar is built on the mound of stones marking the site of this Ziarat, and to the west of some graves. From this point the boundary turns east by south, and follows the line of the watershed of the Bandi-i-Chingurak range. Pillar No 24A is built just to the north of the footpath running along the summit, where the boundary takes a turn to the south round the head of a steep-sided ravine or hollow running northwards, known as Khami-i-Sabz. Pillar No. 24B stands on the watershed at the south-east angle of the same hollow. Pillar No. 25 stands on the top of the Kotal above the Chasmah-i-Chingurak on the eastern side of the road, and distant about 6¾ miles in a direct line from Pillar No. 24. Pillar No. 26 stands on a high hill, with a steep bluff on its northern side covered with pistah trees, some 1¾ miles from Pillar No. 25. The Pillar is built on a heap of stones close to some graves known as the Ziarat-i-Chingurak. Thence the line bends slightly southwards again, still along the same watershed, round the head of a deep hollow, with a spring in its south-eastern corner, known as the Chasmah-i-Gaz, and on to another high point, and thence on to Pillar No. 27, on the point beyond that again, a high bluff without name, and distant in a direct line from Pillar No. 26 rather more than 4¾ miles. Pillar No. 28 stands on the eastern of two high points about 7½ miles to the north-east of No. 27; and Pillar No. 29 about 10¾ miles further on beyond that again in the same direction. The boundary follows the watershed all the way. Pillar No. 29 immediately overlooks the Kashan valley, and stands on a shoulder of the hill on the western side of the valley, just below the southern of the two peaks on its summit, and opposite a southern bend of the river. Here the boundary leaves the watershed and runs in a straight line across the Kashan Valley in a north-easterly direction for rather more than 3 miles to Pillar No. 30, which stands on a heap of stones on a rocky point at the summit of the hills on the eastern side of the valley, and immediately to the west of and overlooking the mouth of a precipitous gorge known as Palang Khawali. Between Pillars Nos. 29 and 30 two intermediate Pillars were erected to mark the line of crossing in the Kashan valley. The first (No. 29A) stands on the left or western bank of the Kashan stream, on a bit of high bank between the Kashan and its affluent, the Kahmal, and just above its junction with the latter, at a distance of about three-quarters of a mile from the domed reservoir at Torashaikt and about the same distance from Pillar No. 29. Pillar No. 29B stands on the crest of the rocky ridge on the right or eastern side of the valley, rather more than a mile from Pillar No. 30. From Pillar No. 30 the boundary follows the line of the watershed of the Torashaikh ridge, running eastwards for rather more than

5 miles to Pillar No. 31, erected on the top of a hill at the point where the line of the watershed between the Kashan and the Murghab river joins that of the Torashaikh ridge. From this point the boundary turns northward and follows the line of the watershed between the Kashan and the Murghab Rivers for nearly 15 miles to Pillar No. 31. Between Pillars Nos. 31 and 32 three intermediate Pillars were erected—the first (No. 31A) on the northern side of the road which leaves the Kashan valley at Kak-i-Doulat Beg and runs to Mangan. The Pillar stands on the top of the Kotal, where the road crosses the watershed, and at a distance of nearly 5 miles from Pillar No. 31. The second (No. 31B) stands on a round-topped high hill, about half a mile to the north of, and visible from, Pillar No. 31A. The third (No. 31C) stands on the northern side of the road between Taki Gachan in the Kashan valley, and Tannur Sangi on the Murghab, at the top of the Kotal forming the watershed between the two valleys, and about 3¼ miles from Pillar No. 32. Pillar No. 32 stands on the top of a conical hill, the highest hill on the watershed divides near the head of the Kul-i-Madir-i-Naib, which runs northward from there down to the Murghab. From Pillar No. 32 the boundary turns in an east-north-east direction, and runs in a straight line for a little over 3 miles to Pillar No. 33, built on the top of a long, high ridge, and then on in a straight line for nearly 4 miles again to Pillar No. 34, on the top of the southernmost point of a high flat ridge, between Shor Tannur Sangi and the next Shor on the west, and about 1¼ miles from Tannur Sangi itself. From thence the line crosses the Tannur Sangi Shor in a straight line, and runs on for a little more than three-quarters of a mile to Pillar No. 34A, built on the top of a high rounded knoll on the east side of the Tannur Sangi Shor, and between it and the Murghab, and thence on in the same straight line for a little under half a mile to Pillar No. 35, built on the left bank of the Murghab and close to the water's edge, 700 feet above the Tannur Sangi ford. From Pillar No. 35 the frontier follows the course of the river Murghab till it joins Pillar No. 36 at the northern end of the Meruchak valley.

From Pillar No. 36, placed on the right bank of the Murghab, about 3 miles north of Meruchak fort, on a height commanding the river, the frontier runs eastward towards Pillar No. 38, passing by Pillar No. 37, which is situated on the road leading from the valley of Meruchak along the Galla-Chasma-Shor. Pillar No. 38 is placed on an elevated point of the 'Chul' at about 11 miles from the valley of Meruchak. The frontier from thence continues in an east-north-easterly direction towards Pillar No. 39, situated about a mile south-east of the spring of Kwaja

Gongourdak; after that in a straight line, and with north-easterly direction towards Pillar No. 40, on an elevated point of the 'Chul,' from thence east-north-east towards Pillar No. 41, situated on a height about 12 miles north of Kila Wali; further on, the frontier follows an east-north-easterly direction towards Pillar No. 42, placed on a height two miles west of the Pakana Shor, and continues in the same direction as far as Pillar No. 43. From this Pillar the frontier runs in a south-easterly direction towards Pillar No. 44, placed on the most elevated point of the watershed between the basins of the Kara-Bátú and the Kaissar known by the name of Bel-i-Parandas. Following this line, in a northerly direction, the frontier reaches Pillar No. 45, situated about 3 miles south-west of the well of Reshdara. From thence it follows, in a north-easterly direction, a branch of the watershed and arrives at Pillar No. 46, situated at a distance of more than a mile to the south-west of the well of Bashdara. It runs from thence, in an easterly direction, irregularly towards Pillar No. 47, situated at about 4½ miles from the point where the road from Khrouja-Gachai and Kassawa-Kala crosses the Shor-Egri. From thence the frontier runs to the north-east along a secondary watershed towards Pillar No. 48 and follows the same line as far as Pillar No. 49, which is placed at the highest point of the watershed north of the Shor-Egri, and about 6 miles to the west of the confluence of the Shor-Gandabulak and the Shor-Egri. From thence the frontier runs in a straight line to the north-east, crossing the Shor-Gandabulak at Pillar No. 50, which is placed on a hill with two peaks, rising from the line of water-parting between the Shor Gandabulak and the Shor-Sara-Kui. Following the same direction it reaches Shor-Sara-Kui where Pillar No. 51 is placed near the road from Jelaiour on the Kaissar to Jalgun-Koudouk and Kara-Baba. The frontier passes thence in a north-easterly direction to Pillar No. 52, at a point a mile to the north of the well of Alihi. From this Pillar the frontier runs north-north-east towards Pillar No. 54, crossing the Daulatabad-Hazara-Koudouk road near Pillar No. 53. Pillar No. 54 is placed on the highest point of a group of sandy hills 2 miles north of the well of Katar-Koudouk; from thence the line of the frontier runs for about ten miles with a slight inclination to the north-north-west towards Pillar No. 55, placed on a mound at the end of a chain of hills which extends between the depression of Kui-Sarai and that in which the well of Khwoja-Ahmad is situated. From this pillar the frontier runs in a straight line northwards for 1¼ miles towards Pillar No. 56, which is situated on a natural elevation a few feet south of the road between Jalanguir and Meruchak; from thence it proceeds to Pillar No. 57, 2¼ miles to the north-north-west, and situated on the top of the heights which

form the northern limit of the depression of Kui-Sarai. From this point the frontier runs to the north-north-east towards Pillar No. 58, placed on one of the sandy mounds of the heights which command the plain extending to the west of Audkhoi; the frontier then turns rather more to the east, towards Pillar No. 59, placed on a low sandy hill about 2¼ miles to the east-south-east of the wells of Sari-Mat. It next reaches, in a north-north-westerly direction, Pillar No. 60, placed between the wells of Chichli and Gok-Chah, about a quarter of a mile to the west of the wells of Chichli. Leaving Gok-Chah to Russia and Chichli to Afghanistan, the frontier runs in a straight line to Pillar No. 61, placed 300 feet to the east of the road which leads from Audkhoi to Sechanchi; thence, following the same direction, it reaches Pillar No. 62, placed on a well-defined sandy mound known by the name of Madali-Konin; the frontier line then reaches in an east-north-easterly direction Pillar No. 63, placed to the north of Oikul, an elliptically-shaped valley 3600 feet in length, and at the bottom of which are situated two 'kaks,' or basins, of fresh water, which remains within Afghan territory. Turning then in an east-south-easterly direction, the frontier reaches in a straight line Pillar No. 64, placed on a sandy hill known by the name of Gichi-Kumi, and continues in a north-easterly direction as far as Pillar No. 65, placed on the high road between Audkhoi and Dugchi and Karki, at a point 4½ miles to the south of Dugchi, and 2¾ miles to the north of Sultan Robar. From Pillar No. 65 the boundary runs in a straight line for 2¼ miles in an east-by-south direction to Pillar No. 66 which stands in the open plain close to the west side of the road from Audkhin to Imam Nazur. Thence the line runs almost due east for some 9¾ miles to Pillar No. 67, placed on the top of a sandy rise 20 yards to the west side of the road leading from Ak Khan Bhai Khak to Sash Kuduk, and thence on in the same straight line for another 4½ miles to Pillar No 68, built on the east side of the road from Thibarghan to Kara Tépé Khurd and Sash Kuduk and 150 yards to the north of the main or southernmost of the two Kara Tépé Khurd Kaks, both of which remain on the Afghan side of the frontier. From Pillar No. 68 the frontier turns in a north-easterly direction, and runs in a straight line for 5¼ miles to Pillar No. 69, on the top of a slight rise 30 yards to the south of the road running from Kara Tépé Kalan to Dunguz Surt, and thence on in the same straight line for 4¼ miles to Pillar No. 70, built on a fairly high and solid mound among low sand hills half a mile to the east of the main road from Kara Tépé Kalan to Bosagha and exactly midway and in a straight line between the wells of east and west Katataji, the former of which remains to Afghanistan and the latter to Bokhara. From this point the boundary runs due north in a straight line for

nearly 6¾ miles to Pillar No. 71, which stands about midway between the wells of Alikadim and Chahi, to the north side of the road between them and close to the point where the road from Alikadim *viâ* Deb Kilah to Khamiab forks from the road to Chahi. The Pillar stands on a low rise in the dry water-course that runs past Alikadim westward towards Dunguz Surt. From here the frontier runs north by east in a straight line for 6¾ miles to Pillar No. 72, on a small patch of round open ground amid sand hills, about half a mile outside the edge of the Khamiab cultivation, and thence on in a straight line for half a mile to Pillar No. 73, built at the mouth of the road that runs through the cultivation along the Buz Arik canal. The Pillar stands at the south-west corner of the compound of Muhammed Wali Sufe's house. From Pillar No. 73 the boundary runs for 365 yards up the centre of this road to Pillar No. 74, built on the east side of the road at the point where it crosses the Buz Arik canal by a wooden bridge, at the northern end of this bridge, and on the western bank of the canal, which here turns off to the west into Bosagha land. From Pillar No. 74 the boundary follows the course of the Buz Arik canal for 3 miles through the cultivation to Pillar No. 75. The canal throughout this distance belongs entirely to Bosagha, the trees along its left or southern bank belonging to Khamiab and those on its northern bank to Bosagha. Pillar No. 75 is built on the northern bank of the Buz Arik or Gangi Arik canal, at a distance of 15 yards to the east of the wooden bridge over that canal, situated about 200 yards to the north-east of Aral Bai's house and 250 yards north-west of Kara's house. From this point the boundary turns northwards across the canals and river flats, and runs pretty well in a straight line to the bank of the river. From Pillar No. 75 the line follows a low eastern bank or ridge for 182 yards to Pillar No. 76, on the top of the southern bank of the Mizza Beg Ibdal canal, and thence for 155 yards further, during which it crosses the Mizza Beg Ibdal, the Nikcha, the Shaikh Arik, and the Saligh canals to Pillar No. 77, built on the northern bank of the Saligh canal, 50 yards to the east of the canal crossing east of Juma Bai's house, and at a point marked by the remains of some old canal which has been here cut through obliquely by the Shaikh Arik and Saligh canals. From here the boundary follows the line of the track running from the canal-crossing above mentioned in a direction slightly to the east of north across the river flats to Pillar No. 78, built on the the south bank of a small creek crossed by the track, at a distance of 736 yards from Pillar No. 77, and thence on in the same straight line to Pillar No. 79 on the left bank of the Oxus, just above flood-level and close to the west side of the track above mentioned.

CONVENTION BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND RUSSIA

WITH REGARD TO THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE OF THE TWO COUNTRIES IN THE REGION OF THE PAMIRS. *Dated March* 11, 1895

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

2. The line shall be marked out, and its precise configuration shall be settled by a joint commission of a purely technical character, with a military escort not exceeding that which is strictly necessary for its protection. The Commission shall be composed of British and Russian delegates, with the necessary technical assistance. Her Britannic Majesty's Government will arrange with the Ameer of Afghanistan as to the manner in which His Highness shall be represented on the Commission.

3. The Commission shall also be charged to report any facts which can be ascertained on the spot bearing on the situation of the Chinese, with a view to enable the two Governments to come to an agreement with the Chinese Government as to the limits of Chinese territory in the vicinity of the line, in such manner as may be found most convenient.

4. Her Britannic Majesty's Government and the Government of His Majesty the Emperor of Russia engage to abstain from

exercising any political influence or control, the former to the north, the latter to the south, of the above line of demarcation.

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

MANCHURIAN RAILWAY AGREEMENT

1. On the strength of the agreement concluded on the 27th August 1896, by the Imperial Chinese Government with the Russo-Chinese Bank, a company is formed, under the name of the 'Eastern Chinese Railway Company,' for the construction and working of a railway within the confines of China, from one of the points on the western borders of the province of Wei-Lun-Tsian to one of the points on the eastern borders of the province of Kirin, and for the connection of this railway with those branches which the Imperial Russian Government will construct to the Chinese frontier from Trans-Baikalia and the Southern Ussuri lines.

The company is empowered, subject to the sanction of the Chinese Government, to exploit, in connection with the railway, or independently of it, coal mines, as also to exploit in China other enterprises—mining, industrial, and commercial. For the working of these enterprises, which may be independent of the railway, the company shall keep accounts separate from those of the railway.

The formation of the company shall be undertaken by the Russo-Chinese Bank.

With the formation of the company all rights and obligations are transferred to it in regard to the construction and working of the line ceded in virtue of the above-named agreement of the 27th August 1896.

The company shall be recognised as formed on the presentation to the Minister of Finances of a warrant of the State Bank, certifying the payment of the first instalment on the shares. In any case, such payment must be made not later than two months from the day of confirmation of the present statutes.

The succeeding instalments on the shares shall be paid in such order of gradation that the shares shall be fully paid up at their nominal value not later than one year from the day of formation of the company.

Owners of shares of the company may only be Russian and Chinese subjects.

2. In virtue of the agreement with the Chinese Government the company shall retain possession of the Chinese Eastern Railway during the course of eighty years from the day of the opening of traffic along the whole line.

3. In recognition that the enterprise of the Chinese Eastern Railway will be realised only owing to the guarantee given by the Russian Government in regard to the revenue of the line for covering working expenses, as well as for effecting the obligatory payments on the bonds (§§ 11, 16), the company on its part binds itself to the Russian Government, during the whole term of the concession, under the following obligations:—

(A) The Chinese Eastern Railway, with all its appurtenances and rolling-stock, must be always maintained in full order for satisfying all the requirements of the service of the line in regard to the safety, comfort, and uninterrupted conveyance of passengers and goods.

(B) The traffic on the Chinese Eastern line must be maintained conformably with the degree of traffic on the Russian railway lines adjoining the Chinese line.

(C) The trains of all descriptions running betweeen the Russian Trans-Baikal and Ussuri lines shall be received by the Chinese Eastern Railway and despatched to their destination, in full complement, without delay.

(D) All through trains, both passenger and goods, shall be despatched by the Eastern Chinese Railway at rates of speed not lower than those which shall be adopted on the Siberian Railway.

(E) The Chinese Eastern Railway is bound to establish and maintain a telegraph along the whole extent of the line, and to connect it with the telegraph wire of the Russian adjoining railways, and to receive and despatch without delay through telegrams sent from one frontier station of the line to another, as also telegrams sent from Russia to China, and conversely.

(F) Should, with the development of traffic on the Chinese Eastern Railway, its technical organisation prove insufficient for satisfying the requirements of a regular and uninterrupted passenger and goods traffic, the Chinese Eastern Railway shall immediately, on receipt of a notification on the part of the Russian railways to augment its capacity to a corresponding degree, adopt the necessary measures for further developing its technical organisation and the traffic on it. In the event of a difference of opinion arising between the above-mentioned railways, the Chinese Eastern Railway shall submit to the decision of the Russian Minister of Finances. If the means at the command of the Chinese Eastern Railway prove insufficient for carrying out the necessary work of its development, the Board of Management of the railway may at

all times apply to the Russian Minister of Finances for pecuniary assistance on the part of the Russian Government.

(G) For all transit conveyance of passengers and goods, as also for the transmission of telegrams, there will be established by agreement of the company with the Russian Government, for the whole term of duration of the concession, maximum tariffs, which cannot be raised without the consent of the Russian Government during the whole term above referred to. Within these limits the tariffs of direct communication, both for railway carriage and telegrams, will be fixed by the Board of Management of the company on the strength of a mutual agreement with the Russian Minister of Finances.

(H) The Russian letter and parcels post, as also the officials accompanying the same, shall be carried by the Chinese Eastern Railway free of charge.

For this purpose the company shall set apart in each ordinary passenger train a carriage compartment of three fathoms in length. The Russian postal authorities may, moreover, if they deem it necessary, place on the line postal carriages, constructed by them at their own cost; and the repair, maintenance (interior fittings excepted), as well as the running of such carriages with the trains shall be free of charge and at the cost of the railway.

The above-mentioned engagements, by which, as already stated, the grant of a guarantee by the Russian Government is conditioned, and the consequent realisation of the enterprise of the Chinese Eastern Railway, shall be binding on the railway until the same, after the expiration of the 80 years' term of the concession, shall, without payment, become the property of the Chinese Government (§ 29). The redemption of the line from the company before the above-mentioned term in accordance with § 30 of the present statutes shall not in any way diminish the effect of the above specified engagements, and these latter, together with the railway, shall be transferred to its new proprietor.

In the same manner, during the course of the whole 80 years' term of the concession (§ 2), the following privileges granted to the railway by the Imperial Chinese Government shall remain in force :—

(*a*) Passengers' luggage, as also goods, carried in transit from one Russian station shall not be liable to any Chinese customs duties, and shall be exempt from all internal Chinese dues and taxes.

(*b*) The rates for the carriage of passengers and goods, for telegrams, etc., shall be free from all Chinese taxes and dues.

(*c*) Goods imported from Russia into China by rail and exported from China to Russia in the same manner shall pay respectively

an import or export Chinese duty to the extent of one-third less as compared with the duty imposed at Chinese seaport custom-houses.

(*d*) If goods imported by the railway are destined for conveyance inland they shall in such case be subject to payment of transit duty to the extent of one-half of the import duty levied on them, and they shall then be exempted from any additional imposts. Goods which shall not have paid transit duty shall be liable to payment of all established internal carrier and *tits-zin* dues.

4. In regard to the place of acquisition of materials for the requirements of the railway, the company shall not be liable to any limitations. If materials be obtained beyond the confines of Russia, they shall, on importation through Russian territory, be freed from payment of Russian customs duties.

5. The breadth of the railway track must be the same as that of the Russian lines (5 feet).

The company must commence the work not later than the 16th August 1897, and conduct it in such a manner that the whole line shall be completed not later than six years from the time when the direction of the line shall be finally determined and the necessary land assigned to the company.

When tracing the line of the railway, cemeteries and graves, as also towns and villages, must, so far as possible, be left aside of the railway.

When effecting the connection, in accordance with § 1 of these statutes, of the Chinese Eastern Railway with the Russian Trans-Baikal and South Ussuri lines, the company shall have the right, with a view of reduction of expenditure, of abstaining from building its own frontier stations, and of utilising the frontier stations of the above-named Russian lines. The conditions on which they shall be so utilised shall be determined by agreement of the Board of the company with the Boards of the respective railways.

6. The tariffs for the carriage of passengers and goods, as also for supplementary carriage rates, shall be determined by the company itself within the limits indicated in § 3.

7. Crimes, litigation, etc., on the territory of the Chinese Eastern Railway shall be dealt with by local authorities, Chinese and Russian, on the basis of existing treaties.

In regard to the carriage of passengers and goods, the responsibility for such conveyance, the lapse of time for claims, the order of recovering money from the railway when adjudged, and the relations of the railway to the public shall be defined in rules drawn up by the company and established before the opening of the railway traffic; and these rules shall be framed in accordance with those existing on Russian railways.

8. The Chinese Government has undertaken to adopt measures for securing the safety of the railway and of all employed on it against any extraneous attacks.

The preservation of order and decorum on the lands assigned to the railway and its appurtenances shall be confided to police agents appointed by the company.

The company shall for this purpose draw up and establish police regulations.

9. The whole amount of the capital of the company shall be determined according to the cost of construction calculated on the basis of estimates framed when the survey of the line was carried out. The foundation capital shall be charged with (*a*) the payment of interest and amortisation of the foundation capital during the construction of the railway; (*b*) the purchase from the Russian Government of the results of the surveys of the direction of the railway to Manchuria which were made by Russian engineers; the sum payable for these surveys will be determined by agreement of the Russian Minister of Finances with the company.

The capital of the company shall be formed by the issue of shares and bonds.

10. The share capital of the company shall be fixed at 5,000,000 nominal credit roubles, and divided into 1000 shares at 5000 nominal credit roubles.

The shares are to be issued at their nominal value.

The guarantee of the Russian Government does not extend to them.

11. The remaining portion of the capital of the company will be formed by the issue of bonds. The bonds will be issued in measure of requirement, and each time with the special sanction of the Minister of Finances. The nominal amount and value of each separate issue of bonds, the time and condition of the issue, as also the form of these bonds shall be subject to the sanction of the Minister of Finances.

The Russian Government will guarantee the interest on and amortisation of the bonds.

For the realisation of these bonds the company must have recourse to the Russo-Chinese Bank, but the Russian Government reserves to itself the right of appropriating the bond loan at a price which shall be determined between the company and the bank, and to pay to the company the agreed amount in ready money.

12. As payments are received for bonds guaranteed by the Russian Government, the company shall be bound to keep such sums, or interest-bearing securities purchased with the same by permission of the Russian Minister of Finances, under the special supervision of the Russian Ministry of Finances.

Out of the above receipts the company shall have the right to make the following payments:—

(*a.*) According to actual fulfilment of the work in progress and execution of orders, and at the time when various expenditure shall become necessary, such payments to be made on the scale and on the conditions specified in the working estimates.

(*b.*) During the construction of the line, of interest, as it becomes due, on the bonds issued by the company, subject to the conditions of their issue, and the company shall pay the sums necessary for the above purpose within the limits of the amount realised by it in the emission of its bonds.

13. On the payment of the first allotment on the shares, the founders shall receive temporary certificates on which subsequently, when the board of management of the company shall have been formed, the receipt of the further instalments on the shares will be inscribed.

When the shares shall be fully paid up, the temporary certificates issued to the founders shall be replaced by shares.

The shares of the company are issued to bearer, under the signature of not fewer than three members of the board of management. To the shares will be attached a coupon-sheet for the receipt once yearly under them of any dividend that may be payable. On the coupon-sheets becoming exhausted new sheets will be issued. A dividend on the shares out of the net profits of any year, supposing such accrue, shall be payable on the adoption by the general meeting of shareholders of the annual report for that year, and the dividend shall be payable at the offices of the company, or at such places which it may indicate.

The company shall notify for general information in the *Official Gazette* and in the *Finance Messenger*, as also in one of the Chinese newspapers, the extent and place of payment of the dividend.

14. The reserve capital is destined—

(*a*) For the capital repair of the railway, its buildings, and appurtenances.

(*b*) For defraying extraordinary expenditure of the company in repairing the railway and its appurtenances.

The reserve capital of the company is formed out of annual sums put aside from the net profits of the working of the railway (§ 17).

The reserve capital must be kept in Russian State interest-bearing securities, or in railway bonds guaranteed by the Russian Government.

At the expiration of the term of possession of the railway by the company, the reserve capital shall be first of all employed in the payment of the debts of the company, including among them

sums due to the Russian Government, if such exist; and after the debts of the company shall have been paid, the remainder of the reserve capital shall be divided among the shareholders. In the event of the redemption of the railway by the Chinese Government, the reserve capital becomes the property of the shareholders.

15. The net revenue of the company shall be the remainder of the gross receipts after deduction of working expenses. Under these expenses are classed—

(*a*) General outlays, including assignments towards pension and relief funds, if such be established on the line.

(*b*) Maintenance of the staff of the board of management, and of all the services; as also the maintenance of employés and labourers not on the permanent list.

(*c*) Outlays for materials and articles used for the railway, as also expenditure in the shape of remuneration for using buildings, rolling-stock, and other various requisites for the purposes of the railway.

(*d*) Outlays for the maintenance, repair, and renewal of the permanent way, works of construction, buildings, rolling-stock, and other appurtenances of the railway.

(*e*) Expenditure connected with the adoption of the measures and instructions of the board of management for insuring the safety and regularity of the railway service.

(*f*) Expenditure for the improvement and development of the railway, as also for creating and developing its resources.

16. Should the gross receipts of the railway prove insufficient for defraying the working expenses and for meeting the yearly payments due on the bonds, the company will receive the deficient sum from the Russian Government, through the Russian Minister of Finances. The payments referred to will be made to the company as advances, at a rate of interest of 6 per cent. per annum. Sums paid in excess to the company in consequence of its demands and on account of the guarantee will be deducted from succeeding money payments.

On the presentation to the general meeting of shareholders of the annual report of the working of the railway for a given year, the company shall at the same time submit to the general meeting, for confirmation, a detailed statement of the sums owing by the company to the Russian Government, with the interest that has accrued thereon. On the confirmation of this statement by the general meeting, the board of management shall deliver to the Russian Government an acknowledgment of the company's debt, to the full determined amount of the same, and this acknowledgment, until its substitution by another, shall bear annually interest at the rate of 6 per cent.

The acknowledgment above mentioned, given by the board of management to the Russian Government, shall not be subject to bill or deed stamp tax.

Subjects of minor importance are dealt with in the following sections:—

17. Distribution of net profits of the railway.

18. Functions of board of management, the seal of which will be at Peking and St. Petersburg.

19. Constitution of the board, which is to consist of nine members, elected by the shareholders. The chairman is to be appointed by the Chinese Government. The vice-chairman is to be chosen by the members of the board from among themselves.

20. Order of transaction of the business of the board.

21. General meetings of shareholders, and the subjects that shall come under their notice.

22. Order of convening general meetings.

23. Conditions under which general meetings shall be recognised as legally held.

24. Participation of shareholders in proceedings of general meetings.

25. Local management of works of construction.

26. Local management of railway when in working order.

27. Questions to be submitted for confirmation by Russian Minister of Finances.

28. Committee of audit.

29. In accordance with the agreement concluded with the Chinese Government, the latter, after the expiration of eighty years of possession of the railway by the company, enters into possession of it and its appurtenances.

The reserve and other funds belonging to the company shall be employed in paying the money due to the Russian Government under the guarantee (§ 16), and in satisfaction of other debts of the company, and the remainder shall be distributed among the shareholders.

Any money that may remain owing by the company to the Russian Government at the expiration of eighty years in respect of the guarantee shall be written off. The Russo-Chinese Bank will incur no responsibility in respect of the same.

30. In accordance with the agreement concluded with the Chinese Government, on the expiration of thirty-six years from the time of completion of the whole line and its opening for traffic, the Chinese Government has the right of acquiring the line, on refunding to the company in full all the outlays made on it, and on payment for everything done for the requirements of the railway, such payments to be made with accrued interest.

It follows as a matter of course that the portion of the share capital which has been amortised by drawing, and the part of the debt owing to the Russian Government under the guarantee, and repaid out of the net profits (§ 17) will not constitute part of the purchase-money.

In no case can the Chinese Government enter into possession of the railway before it has lodged in the Russian State Bank the necessary purchase-money.

The purchase-money lodged by the Chinese Government shall be employed in paying the debt of the company under its bonds, and all sums, with interest, owing to the Russian Government, the remainder of the money being then at the disposal of the shareholders.

RUSSO-CHINESE CONVENTION

RESPECTING PORT ARTHUR AND TALIENWAN

(*Signed* 27*th March* 1898)

1. In order for the protection of the Russian fleet, and (to enable it) to have a secure base on the north coast of China, His Majesty the Emperor of China agrees to lease to Russia Port Arthur, Talienwan, and the adjacent waters. But this lease is to be without prejudice to China's authority in that territory.

2. The boundary of the territory leased in pursuance of the foregoing extends from Talienwan northward, in accordance with the requirements (of the situation) on land, and of the protection of the territory, and permission shall be given for its being placed at whatever distance may be necessary. The exact boundary and the other details of this Convention shall be jointly arranged at St. Petersburg with Hsü Ta-fêu, after the signature of this Convention, with all possible expedition, and a separate special Article drawn up. After the boundary has been decided, all the territory included in it, and the adjacent waters, shall be entirely handed over to Russia to use under lease.

3. The term of lease is fixed as twenty-five years from the date of signature. On expiration, an extension of the term may be arranged between the two countries.

4. Within the term fixed, in the territory leased to Russia, and the adjacent waters all movement of forces, whether naval or military, and (the appointment of) high officials to govern the districts, shall be entirely left to Russian officers, one man being made responsible, but he is not to have the title of Governor-General or Governor. No Chinese troops of any kind whatever are to be allowed to be stationed within this boundary. Chinese within the boundary may leave or remain at their pleasure, and are not to be driven away. Should any criminal cases occur, the criminal is to be handed over to the nearest Chinese official to be punished according to law, in accordance with the arrangement laid down by the 8th Article of the Russian-Chinese Treaty of the tenth year of Hsien Fêug (1860).

5. To the north of the territory leased there shall be left a piece of territory, the extent of which is to be arranged by Hsü

Ta-fêu and the Russian Foreign Office. This piece is to be entirely left to Chinese officials, but no Chinese troops are to enter it, except after arrangement with the Russian officials.

6. The Governments of the two countries agree that, as Port Arthur is solely a naval port, only Russian and Chinese vessels are to be allowed to use it, and it is to be considered a closed port as far as the war and merchant vessels of the other Powers are concerned. As to Talien-wan, with the exception of a part within the port which, like Port Arthur, is to be reserved for the use of Russian and Chinese men-of-war, the remainder is to be a trading port, where the merchant vessels of all countries can freely come and go.

7. Russia definitely recognises the territory leased, but Port Arthur and Talien-wan are of special importance. (As to) provision funds, she will herself erect what buildings are required for the naval or military forces, for the erection of batteries or barracks for the garrisons, and generally provide all the funds required.

8. The Chinese Government agrees that the principle of the permission given in the 22nd year of Kuang Hsü (1896) to the Manchurian Railway Company for the construction of a railway shall now, from the date of signature, be extended to the construction of a branch line from a certain station on the aforesaid main line to Talien-wan, or, if necessity requires, the same principle shall be extended to the construction of a branch line from the main line to a convenient point on the sea coast in the Liaotung Peninsula, between Ying-tsu (Newchang) and the Yalu River. The provisions of the agreement of the 8th September 1896, between the Chinese Government and the Russo-Chinese Bank, shall be strictly observed with regard to the branch line above mentioned. The direction of the line and the places it is to pass shall be arranged by Hsü Ta-fêu and the Manchurian Railway Company. But this railway concession is never to be used as a pretext for encroachment on Chinese territory, nor to be allowed to interfere with Chinese authority or interests.

9. This Convention shall come into force from the date of exchange by the plenipotentiaries of both countries. After Imperial ratification, exchange shall take place at St. Petersburg.

Additional Stipulations respecting Port Arthur Convention (signed 7th May, 1898).

1. In accordance with the 2nd Article of the original Treaty the northern territory leased and yielded to Russia—Port Arthur, Talien-wan, and the Liaotung Peninsula—shall commence from the north side of A-lang Mountain (the mountain ridge being included

in the leased ground) to the east coast of Liaotung, near the north side of Pi-tsû-wo Bay. Russia shall be allowed the use of all the waters adjacent to the leased territory and all the islands around it. Both countries shall appoint special officers to survey the ground and determine the limits of the leased territory.

2. To the north of the boundary fixed in Art. 1 there shall, in accordance with Art. 5 of the Peking Treaty, be a neutral ground, the northern boundary of which shall commence on the west coast of Liaotung, at the mouth of the Kai-chou River, shall pass north of Tu-yeu-ch'âng to the Ta-yang River, and shall follow the left bank of that river to its mouth, which shall be included in the neutral territory.

3. The Russian Government consents that the terminus of the branch line connecting the Siberian Railway with the Liaotung Peninsula shall be at Port Arthur and Talien-wan, and at no other port in the said peninsula. It is further agreed in common that railway privileges in districts traversed by this branch line shall not be given to the subjects of other Powers. As regards the railway which China shall (may) herself build hereafter from Shan-hai-kuan in extension to a point as near as [*lit.* nearest to] possible to this branch line, Russia agrees that she has nothing to do with it.

4. The Russian Government assents to the request of the Chinese Government that the administration and police of the city of Kiuchow shall be Chinese. Chinese troops will be withdrawn from Kiuchow and replaced by Russian troops. The inhabitants of the city have the power to use the roads from Kiuchow to the north boundary of the leased territory, and the waters usually required near the city, but they have no power to use the sea-coast round about.

5. The Chinese Government agrees [*lit.* agrees to recognise]:—

(1) That without Russia's consent no concession will be made in the neutral ground for the use of subjects of other Powers.

(2) That the ports on the sea-coast, east and west of the neutral ground, shall not be opened to the trade of other Powers.

(3) And that without Russia's consent no road and mining concessions, industrial and mercantile privileges shall be granted in the neutral territory.

ANGLO-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT

Respecting Spheres of Influence in China[1]

(*Signed 28th April* 1899.)

The following is the text of the Identical Note exchanged between the United Kingdom and Russia with regard to their respective railway interests in China. The Notes are issued as a Parliamentary Paper (Treaty Series), a copy of which was laid on the table of the House of Commons on Friday night.

Sir C. Scott to Count Mouravieff

The undersigned British Ambassador duly authorised to that effect has the honour to make the following declaration to his Excellency Count Mouravieff, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs: Great Britain and Russia, animated by a sincere desire to avoid in China all cause of conflict on questions where their interests meet, and taking into consideration the economic and geographical gravitation of certain parts of that Empire, have agreed as follows:—

1. Great Britain engages not to seek for her own account, or on behalf of British subjects, or of others, any railway concession to the North of the Great Wall of China, and not to obstruct, directly or indirectly, applications for railway concerns in that region supported by the Russian Government.

2. Russia on her part engages not to seek for her own account, or on behalf of Russian subjects, or of others, any railway concessions on the basin of the Yang-tsze, and not to obstruct, directly or indirectly, applications for railway concessions in that region supported by the British Government.

The two contracting parties, having nowise in view to infringe in any way the sovereign rights of China on existing treaties, will not fail to communicate to the Chinese Government the present arrangement, which by averting all cause of complications between

[1] This agreement was concluded after the greater portion of this book had gone to press. It is included here for purposes of consultation.

them is of a nature to consolidate peace in the Far East, and to serve the primordial interests of China herself.

(Signed) CHARLES S. SCOTT.

St. Petersburg, April 28, 1899.

The Russian Note to Sir Charles Scott, signed by Count Mouravieff, 'duly authorised to that effect,' is identical in terms with that of the British Note, the only difference being that paragraphs 1 and 2 are therein simply transposed.

The second Identical Note, subscribed to by both the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg and Count Mouravieff, the Russian Minister, is an addendum to the other, and is in the following terms:—

In order to complete the Notes exchanged this day respecting the partition of spheres for concessions for the construction and working of railways in China, it has been agreed to record in the present additional Note the agreement arrived at with regard to the line Shanghaikuan-Newchang, for the construction of which a loan has been already contracted by the Chinese Government with the Shanghai-Hong Kong Bank, acting on behalf of the British and Chinese Corporation.

The general arrangement established by the above-mentioned Notes is not to infringe in any way the rights acquired under the said Loan Contract, and the Chinese Government is at liberty to appoint both an English engineer and a European accountant to supervise the construction of the line in question and the expenditure of the money appropriated to it. But it remains well understood that this fact cannot be taken as constituting a right of property or foreign control, and that the line in question is to remain a Chinese line, subject to the control of the Chinese Government, and cannot be mortgaged or alienated to a non-Chinese company.

As regards the branch line from Siaoheichan to Sinminting in addition to the aforesaid restrictions it has been agreed that it is to be constructed by China herself, who may permit European, not necessarily British, engineers to periodically inspect it and to verify and certify that the works are being properly executed.

The present special agreement is naturally not to interfere in any way with the right of the Russian Government to support, if it thinks fit, applications of Russian subjects or establishments for concessions for railways which, starting from the main Manchurian line in a south-westerly direction, would traverse the region in which the Chinese line, terminating at Sinminting and Newchang is to be constructed.

APPENDIX C.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AUTHORITIES ON ASIATIC RUSSIA.

It would be a simple matter for me to append a list of several hundreds of books which have appeared on subjects connected with Asiatic Russia, but I prefer to give a brief catalogue of those only which may be safely regarded as authoritative and worthy of consultation. It seems to me that the lengthy lists of books so often found at the end of volumes dealing with history are apt to be confusing to the reader who consults them, as well as rendering it a matter of difficulty to choose those which will best suit his purpose. I have, therefore, preferred to arrange this portion of the appendix in the form of a brief chapter dealing with the best books on the various topics referred to in the foregoing pages, and I believe that the student who consults it will be able to find all he requires without the necessity of wading through endless pages of mere titles.

Russian History.

The history of Russia does not appear to have received the amount of attention it deserves. The existing works dealing authoritatively with the subject are few, and those which are obtainable in the English language leave much to be desired. The standard work on the subject is that by Karamzin, which has been translated into French. Other histories which have not been translated are by Soloviev, Kostomarov and Bestuzhef-Riumin. Of the Russian histories in English the best is undoubtedly that by Rambaud, which has been translated by L. B. Lang, and published in three volumes at a reasonable price. The only other worthy of mention is the admirable little history by Professor Morfill in the 'Story of the Nations Series,' the only fault of which is its brevity. The space devoted in these to Russia in Asia is, however, very

small. Among the works which may be regarded as authoritative in connection with this subject are—

History of the Mongols. Sir Henry Howorth.
Russia. Sir D. Mackenzie Wallace.
L'Empire des Tsars et les Russes. A. Leroy Beaulieu.
The Land of the Czar. O. W. Wahl.

Central Asia.

The number of books which have been published on Central Asia from an historic, a geographical, or a political standpoint is endless, many of them being mere compilations, or written in order to air their writers views on the Indian Frontier Question. Commencing with Central Asia as a whole, there are five writers whose works should be carefully read in order to obtain a thorough acquaintance with the subject. They are Professor Hellwald, Colonel Kostenko, Eugene Schuyler, Charles Marvin, and Lord Curzon of Kedleston. The well-known work of the first-named, written in German, has been translated under the title *The Russians in Central Asia,* and is a most reliable book, giving a full history of the beginning of Russian rule in Turkestan. Colonel Kostenko's books, *Srednyaya Aziya i vodvorenie onei rooskoi grajdanstvenosti* (The Installation of Russian Civilisation in Central Asia) and *Toorkestanski Kri* (The Country of Turkestan) are standard works —Mr. Schuyler's monumental work on Turkestan is still the best extant—and Lord Curzon's *Russia in Central Asia in* 1889 is a most valuable contribution to the subject. The late Charles Marvin probably knew more of Russia in Asia than any Englishman of the century, and his writings, encyclopædic in their knowledge, are as good reading to-day as when they appeared. Unfortunately their utility is greatly marred by the absence of indices, and their arrangement leaves much to be desired. They should be studied by all who desire to attain a true appreciation of Russian policy. They are: *The Disastrous Russian Campaign against the Akhal Tekke Turcomans; Merv, the Queen of the World; The Russians at Merv and Herat; Reconnoitring in Central Asia;* and *The Region of Eternal Fire.*

For those who care to study the opinions of others there are a number of works which may be consulted with advantage, among which the most notable are to be found among the writings of Boulger,[1] Grodekoff,[2] Danauski,[3] Stumm, Valikhanoff,[4] Lieutenant

[1] *England and Russia in Central Asia.* Demetrius C. Boulger.
Central Asian Questions. Demetrius C. Boulger.
[2] *Grodekoff's Ride from Samarcand to Herat.* Trans. by Charles Marvin.
[3] *La Russie et l'Angleterre dans l'Asie Centrale.*
[4] *The Russians in Central Asia.* Trans. by J. & R. Michell.

Wood.[1] Herr Stumm's *Russia in Central Asia* and *Russia's Advance Eastward*, both of which are to be had in English, are works which should not be missed by the student. In addition to these, Dr. Lansdell's *Russian Central Asia* gives the writer's personal impressions of his tour in that country, and the well-known *Excursion en Turkestan et sur la frontière Russo-Afghane* by Count de Chalet is full of interesting matter.

Leaving Central Asia as a whole, and turning to its divisions, there are many works which deal with the Khanates.

Khiva.

The best books on the Khanate of Khiva are: a translation of *Prince Beckovitch Cherkassi's Disastrous Expedition in* 1717, published in 1873; General Abbott's fascinating *Narrative of a Journey from Herat to Khiva*, etc.; Colonel Burnaby's well-known *Ride to Khiva*; and MacGahan's *Campaigning on the Oxus.*

Bokhara.

The most readable book on this subject is the *History of Bokhara* by Arminius Vambéry which, despite the very severe criticisms passed on it by Professor Grigorieff, remains the standard work. Next to this comes Lieut. Burnes' *Travels in Bokhara*, and the Rev. Joseph Wolff's *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara.* Captain Grover's *The Bokhara Victims* comprises a full account of the murders of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly in 1844; and Khanikoff's *Bokhara: its Amir and its People*, translated by Baron A. de Bode, gives an account of the Khanate from a Russian standpoint; while a full account of the war with Russia is to be found in Colonel Kostenko's *Puteschestvie Bukhara Russkoi misii* (Description of Russian Military Expedition to Bokhara).

A readable account of Khokand is that provided by Nalivkin, which has been translated into French under the title of *Histoire du Khanas de Khokand.* A similar work is the *History of Khokand*, by S. H. Singh.

Turkomania.

The choice of works on Turkomania as a whole is small, the best being A. N. Kuropatkin's *Turcomania and the Turcomans*, translated by Robert Michell. Of the famous campaign of 1879-81 there are a number of accounts, the most noted being the official report of the Siege of Dengeel Tepe, issued to the Russian War

[1] *Journey to the Source of the Oxus.*

Department by Skobeleff, which was translated and issued as an official paper in London in 1881; and Colonel Grodekoff's *Voina v Turkmenie* (The War in Turkomania), which has not been translated. The most valuable general account of the campaign is Marvin's *Russian Campaign among the Tekke Turkomans*, which was compiled from exclusively Russian sources of information.

Transcaspia.

Among the volumes dealing with the latest of Russia's provinces in Central Asia, is one of the most delightful books of travel extant. I refer to O'Donovan's *Merv Oasis*, which is more exciting reading than any romance. Others to be recommended are Marvin's *Merv, the Queen of the World*, and *Russians at Merv and Herat*. The Transcaspian Railway is already beginning to possess a literature of its own. Excluding the earlier publications, which are now quite out of date, there are two works devoted to the subject: Heyfelder's *Transkaspien und seine Eisenbahn* and Mr. George Dobson's *Russian Railway Advance into Central Asia*. More recent details of the development of the railway are to be found in the writings of Mr. G. N., now Lord, Curzon, and in the columns of *The Times*.

Persian Frontier.

Among recent books is one which from encyclopædic scope, and the skill and knowledge with which it has been compiled, may be said to have rendered all others on this subject unnecessary. I refer to Lord Curzon's *Persia and the Persian Question*, published in 1892. If any supplement is needed to this, there are Sir John Malcolm's *History of Persia*, which is an admirable work but unfortunately considerably out of date; Sir Frederick Goldsmid's *Eastern Persia*; Dr. G. Radde's *Reisen an der Persisch-russischen Grenze*; Sir C. M. MacGregor's *Narrative of a Journey through the Province of Khorassan in* 1875.

Herat.

Colonel Malleson's *Herat, the Granary and Garden of Central Asia* may be taken as the authority on this subject, while Marvin's *Russians at Merv and Herat* is also valuable.

Indian Frontier Question.

To give even a moderately representative list of the works on this subject would fill many pages of print. The following are

the names of a few which may be consulted with advantage by those who desire further information than is contained in the present volume:—

Afghanistan and the Afghans. H. W. Bellew.
Afghanistan and the Anglo-Russian Dispute. T. F. Rodenburgh.
Asiatic Neighbours. S. S. Thorburn.
External Policy of India. J. W. S. Wyllie.
Russian Projects against India. H. S. Edwards.
Russia's Warnings. Sir H. E. Jerningham.
Can Russia Invade India? Colonel H. B. Hanna.
The Russo-Afghan Question. Colonel G. B. Malleson.
History of the War in Afghanistan. Sir J. W. Kaye.
Northern Afghanistan: Letters from the Boundary Commission. Major C. E. Yate.
England and Russia face to face in Asia. Major A. C. Yate.
Rival Powers in Central Asia. J. Popowski.
England and Russia in Central Asia. D. C. Boulger.
England and Russia in the Far East. Rawlinson.
Forty-One Years in India. Lord Roberts.

Siberia.

The literature connected with Siberia does not offer a very large choice of authorities, and the bulk of the books there are, deal with the place from the traveller's rather than from the historian's or politician's standpoint. Of the volumes with which I am acquainted the following are the best—Alexander von Middendorff's *Reise in dem äussersten Siberiens,* Fischer's *Siberische Geschichte,* Bulitscheff's *Reise im Ostsiberien,* Ravenstein's *The Russians on the Amur,* and J. Y. Simpson's *Side-Lights on Siberia.*

China.

Further information respecting the history of early Russian intercourse with China will be found in Mr. Boulger's admirable *History of China,* and Brand's account of *Ides' Mission to China.* Detailed records of the more recent history of the Empire are included in the present author's *China in Decay.*

Afghanistan.

The best book on the history of the buffer State is the well-known *History of Afghanistan* by Colonel G. B. Malleson. Major A. Le Messurier's *Kandahar in* 1879 is also a valuable work. Sir H. B. Lumsden's *Journal of a Political Mission to Afghanistan in* 1857 is also worthy of note.

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