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The North-West Frontier of India

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Evening Meeting.

Wednesday, April 14th, 1869.

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR H. C. RAWLINSON, K.C.B., F.R.S., in the
Chair.

NAMES of MEMBERS who joined the Institution between the 5th and 14th
April, 1869.

ANNUAL.

Ommamney, Frederick G., Esq., Navy Agent. 1l.
Fulton, John, Lieut.-Colonel late Indian Army. 1l.
Ardagh, J. C., Lieutenant, Royal Engineers. 1l.
Rowley, Charles J., Captain R.N. 1l.

THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER OF INDIA.

By GEORGE CAMPBELL, Esq., Bengal Civil Service.

I do not pretend to lay before you any new discoveries with regard to the geography of the countries which are the subject of this paper, or any very minute details, but I must begin by a reference to what I may call the broad practical features of the geography, and that I think, I may best and most briefly submit in a pictorial form; that is to say, I have constructed a coloured map* showing in a somewhat glaring style the features of the countries to the north-west of India.

It may be generally said that the whole of that portion of the globe lying between the interior of India and the frontier of Europe is characterized by extremes.

It is a region in which great plains alternate with very high mountains, the highest in the globe. On the north-west, within the limits of India, we have an enormous plain; beyond that, we have the prodigious mountain system, of which only a small portion can be considered to form part of India; then again we have another great plain in which flow the Oxus and Jaxartes, otherwise the Amur and Syr, and within which lies the great salt lake, called the Sea of Aral,

* It being impossible to re-produce the coloured maps referred to in the paper, a general map of part of Central Asia is prefixed for reference.—G. C.

where those rivers lose themselves. This plain reaches to the Caspian and the Ural Mountains. The country we know as Turkistan. On the other side of the mountains you have another great plain forming what was Chinese Tartary, and is now called Eastern Turkistan. More directly to the west, we have somewhat less gigantic but still very great mountain chains branching out from the main system, and again the smaller plains of Scistan and Khorassan.

The position of the enormous mass of elevated land expressively called by the Easterns "Bam-i-dunya," the "roof of the world," is sufficiently indicated for my purposes by the blackest colours in my map. You will observe that the most compact, and best defined portion of the mass may be said to lie between Kokan on one side, and Kashmere on the other, and it is to that portion that the term "roof of the world" has been applied. Kashmere itself, a mere valley lying between mountains 15,000 feet high on one side, and 25,000 on the other, is no terminus to the high land, which is in fact continued with an undiminished elevation far to the east towards the frontiers of China. I have only omitted to mark the elevation here to so great a breadth, because in these parts we know little of it beyond our own frontiers, and it is beyond the limits of my present subject.

It is the fashion to speak of these elevated portions of the earth as table lands; but I believe that to be a mistake. It certainly is so as respects all those parts which we know. The high lands of the earth almost invariably consist of a succession of ridges, and that is very markedly the case as respects the highlands of Central Asia to which I more particularly refer. We have but mountain beyond mountain, and ridge beyond ridge. Any route across them shows a series of constant and sudden variations of altitude. In respect to the lowest point of the passes one minimum seems as it were to be maintained, below which the ridge at no point descends. The highest peak yet measured—it has been supposed the highest in the world—is on the frontier of Nepal, about 29,000 feet; but it seems to be yet doubtful whether it may not yet be displaced by some portions of the second or interior range between India and Turkistan, called the "Karakorum," which we are now exploring, and where our surveyors have already measured as high as 28,278 feet. It may be said that in the whole length of the range, it can nowhere be crossed without ascending over and over again to a height little less than 20,000 feet. The traveller in fact passes through a succession of gaps in the higher ridges, the crest of the gaps or passes themselves being 18,000, 19,000, and 20,000 feet high. So far as we know, about 19,000 feet may be taken as the minimum height at which the range may be crossed. Between the ridges, the traveller dips several thousand feet lower, sometimes to tracts level by comparison, or it may be that he must descend to the deep gorge of the Indus, the bottom of which in the direct line between Kashmere and Yarkund is only some 7,000 feet above the sea.

From the "roof of the world" the "Hindoo Koosh" range stretches to the west. Of the first portion we have no measurements, and scarcely any knowledge. The passes have never been traversed by any one

but rare native travellers, and from their accounts, we may assume that their height and character does not differ materially from those of the main range. In the parallel of Cabool, we first come to more practicable passes. Hereabouts, are one or two gaps, the heights of which are as nearly as we have been able to ascertain about 15,000 feet. And a little farther east we have the famous pass of "Bamean," which is somewhat lower, and which has long been used for mercantile and military traffic.

Like all other routes across the mountains, this "Bamean" pass is really not one pass, but a succession of at least four passes, over as many successive ridges of nearly equal elevation. The highest pass in the route is entered as 12,480 feet in Walker's latest map, where another pass in the same route is put at 12,190 feet, and a third at 11,320 feet. For our purposes we may take the maximum heights of the road to be about 12,000 feet.

To the west of Bamean the mountains rise again. It is not very clear whether the reason is physical or political, or both combined, but at any rate, these mountains have not within historical times been open to any ordinary traffic, and it may be said, that west of the "Bamean route" there are no available passes from Turkistan, till you come to those leading to Herat.

Here the mountain chain, without disappearing, is much diminished in height. About Meshed, it seems to rise somewhat again, but for some distance on the east of Meshed, towards Herat, and again to the west of Meshed, towards the Caspian, the country is certainly less difficult, till we reach the higher ranges of Persia again. There is no cessation of the hilly country, but on either side of Meshed there are tracts through which the mounted Turkmans can and do ride in plundering forays into Persia; by which Herat may be approached; and by which occasional caravans travel.

Both east and west of Cabool, the Hindoo Koosh joins or approaches the high ranges forming the proper Afghan country. The mountains to the south of the gorge leading up to Cabool are 15,000 feet high, the outer range known as the "Solimance" ranges from 10,000 to 12,000 feet; the routes farther to the west are throughout not less than from 7,000 to 8,000 feet; and the unknown country between, is no doubt very high and difficult. Still farther south in Belochistan, the hills are not quite so high, but are barren and inaccessible in the last degree. They are traversed by two or three passes, of which the "Bolan" is the easiest and most famous. It rises to a height of 6,000 feet, in a course of about 60 miles through a succession of defiles between Dadur and Quetta. Between Quetta and Candahar is a pass, 7,500 feet high, called the "Kojuck."

Not less important than the elevation, is another view of the physical geography, the supply of water; and I have depicted in green the tracts watered and habitable. From about the parallel of Lahore westwards and northwards, it may be said that all the way till we come to European limits, the rainfall is so scanty, that neither crops nor grass can be raised in any quantity, nor can human life be supported, except by artificial irrigation.

Interior India is well watered by the south-west monsoon, and the partial want of cultivation, there shown, is due to hills; till farther north, the supply failing, there is a scantiness of water. The monsoon of Eastern India, deflected by the Himalayas, comes from the south-east to the north-west, a rain-bearing current which gradually diminishes in volume, and hugs the face of the Himalayas. To this is due some fertile country immediately north of Lahore, but with this exception, the nearly rainless character which I have stated, applies not only to the Indian Desert, but also the greater part of the Punjab and Scinde, throughout which, cultivation is confined to the strips within reach of the great rivers.

In the other great plain of Central Asia, even these strips are wanting. It is no doubt due partly to physical, and partly to political causes, that there seems to be very little cultivation on the banks of the Amor and Syr, when they leave the hills and roll through the desert bordered by little but occasional brushwood and jungle. There are petty exceptions here and there; but that seems to be the general character of their course, except at one point about Khiva. There the Amor seems to have at one time altered its course, and there are facilities for irrigation in the Quasi-Delta between the old and new courses, which have given rise to the large Khivan oasis, watered from the Oxus itself.

With this exception, it may be said that cultivation is everywhere confined to the valleys in, or immediately under the hill-country where there are special facilities for artificial irrigation. It is a curious feature of the extreme aridity of the country, that while the greater rivers never reach the sea, the smaller streams never reach the larger ones, but are cut off and absorbed. If you examine the map, you will find this everywhere, a constant succession of streams pointing towards, and apparently designed by nature as feeders of the main rivers, but which never get so far. It is upon these smaller streams that the chief cultivation is found. The cultivated portion of the Khanat of Bokhara itself is not on the Oxus, but on one of those branches lopped off and separated from the parent stem, and is supplemented by another smaller tract on a smaller stream of the same kind. The Khokan territory is on the upper Syr, but it will be seen that it has great facilities for irrigation from the hill country on either side.

Khiva, Khokan, and Bokhara are the three well known oases of the Great Desert of Turkistan; all the rest may be said to be absolutely desert. In Eastern Turkistan again, which is equally desert, we have several oases formed by irrigation at the points where the streams issue from the mountains, Khoten, Yarkund, Kashgar, and Aksoo.

As respects the hilly country between the Deserts of India and Central Asia, I have tried to depict in green all the tracts which yield considerable supplies of food. In the Indian territory we have the great valley of Cashmere, and I have marked the narrow valley of the Indus, and that of its branch the Ghilgit river. We have a good deal of cultivation in the undulating sub-montane country within the salt range, the Rawul-Pindee district; and we have the

fine valley of Peshawur surrounded by the Affghan Mountains. Along the foot of the range we have some valleys similarly situated, Kohat and Bunnoo belonging to ourselves, and other small valleys in the hills belonging to the Affghans, and communicating with the plain at points where streams run from the hills. Further south there is a kind of bay in the mountain wall, and I believe a good deal of cultivation in Cutch Gundava belonging to the Beloch Khan of Khelat.

On the other side where the high ranges almost suddenly dip into the Turkistan plain, said even here to be no more than 500 feet above the sea, you have again a succession of valleys between the Spurs, Koondooz, Khulm, and Balk; Andko, Siripool, and Maimana, and the valley of the Murghab, a considerable river eventually lost in the sand.

On the Persian side you have some considerable valleys about Meshed, and where the great range slopes to the plain of Khorassan.

Within the hill country, you have, west of Peshawur, the Jalalabad valley lying low on the Cabul river; farther west the larger and higher valley of Cabul, and the fine well-watered tract at the foot of the higher ranges of the Hindoo Koosh. North of Peshawur, on the streams running from the snowy range to the Cabul river, you have two or three fine valleys, of which Swat and Kuner (called in its higher parts, Kashkar or Chitral), are the principal. Farther south you have a little cultivation about Quetta, and the Pisheen valley, and a fine tract about Candahar and the Helmund, the river running from the northern mountains southwards to the Desert of Seistan. Finally, you have the valley of the Harerood, in which is Herat.

It is impossible to depict the narrow glens which are scattered in nooks and corners throughout Affghanistan. They are no doubt numerous, and are often very pleasant smiling places; but their culturable area is extremely limited, and with respect to the whole country, this important fact may be broadly stated, that it does not produce a sufficiency of food for its own inhabitants, much less to export or supply food to strangers. Fine a race as the Affghans are, nature having so much restricted their culturable land, they are as a rule very poor, and a large proportion of them are obliged to eke out their subsistence by foreign service or trade. Grain seems to be generally exorbitantly dear at Cabul, as compared with the neighbouring countries; and the city would often be starved, if deprived of supplies from Peshawur and India. There is no such meat supply in the country, as to make up for the deficiency of grain. North-Eastern Affghanistan is certainly not a grazing country. The tribes thereabouts are singularly destitute of flocks and herds. Western Affghanistan is more pastoral, but so far as I know, there is no large exportable surplus produce. India draws neither sheep nor cattle in any large quantities from Affghanistan. The horses called Cabul horses, which are imported in some numbers, come, I understand, from the north-western valleys (which are not really Affghan), where grass seems to grow in great abundance at certain seasons, and where horses are said to thrive better than men. Fruit is almost the only edible exported from Affghanistan. In a great part of the country, dried mulberries are the main support of the population.

I repeat then that the country between the Indus and the Oxus is one in which food is deficient.

I now come to the people of the countries which I have described. I have not attempted to go into the difficult physical question of the gradual desiccation of this portion of the globe, the occurrence of which in some shape, I believe to be a matter of little doubt; but to enable us in any degree to realize the present situation, as compared with that in former history, I must very briefly notice the changes of population.

My belief is, that the world may be divided into two classes, people who are, and people who are not, patient of foreign dominion. Sometimes people, who by no means want military qualities, for example, the Punjab people, nevertheless submit quietly to an equitable foreign rule. To others, mere independence is a passion. More especially in mountainous countries, it appears that the people are either extremely quiet and amenable, or very much the reverse. This we see in a very marked degree in Northern India. Take first the Himalayas, the hill-country between the snow and the plains. It is the most precipitous and defensible in the world, and some of the hill men are among the best soldiers in India. Yet nowhere have we so quiet and easy a hold of the country, nowhere are fewer troops required; nowhere can an unarmed and unprotected European enjoy such safe and pleasant ease, as in the secluded hill-glens. Go but a little farther west to the Affghan country; it is really not so difficult as the Himalayas, and contains some more open valleys; but we know by experience that it requires all our military power to enter a single glen within a short distance of the plain country.

I believe the ancient Hindoos to have been probably a softer race than the more recent immigrants; they were, perhaps, more nearly allied to the modern Kashmerees. The ancient Persians, or to use a wider term, the Iranians, were a cognate race, and the Greek accounts of them sufficiently show that they were not very hardy. Both these races have always easily submitted to foreign conquerors. My point is, that in ancient times these softer races held the country between India or China and Europe, now occupied by more pugnacious tribes; and that in this, is to a great extent, the solution of the easier passage of those regions in former times.

It is certain that some hundred years ago, Hindoo races occupied the valleys of the Cabul river, and the southern slopes of the Hindoo Koosh. The Affghans have acquired most of that country within historical times. There seems to be some reason to suppose that the fertile tracts north of the "Karakorum range" were first colonized by Hindoos, and the name "Kashgar" may be a trace of the connection with the "Kashas" of Kashmere. A mass of evidence shows that the pure Persians were the ancient occupants not only of Khorassan and the north slopes of the Hindoo Koosh, but also of the whole of what we now call Turkistan, where they are still represented by the Persian-speaking Tadjiks and Sarts, a handsome, but soft and subject people. There ancient travellers and conquerors encountered people not diffi-

cult to deal with. I take the old distribution of races to have been somewhat as represented in this small race-map.

In modern times not only the people of Persia, and the Northern Hindoos have been hardened by an alloy of Turkish and Scythian blood, and the tribes of the upper Caucasus have been inured to war by long centuries of self-defence, but almost the whole of the country on either side has been occupied by two of the most independent races in the world, the most untameable, and least tolerant of foreign dominion, the Affghans and the Turkomans. The Affghans have multiplied and advanced over the whole of the country south of the Hindoo Koosh, as well as into the valleys to the east; the Turkomans have possessed themselves of the whole of the country on the other side, leaving the Persian races, the Tadjiks and Sarts in a minority in point of numbers, and in political position, absolutely subject. The country may now then be ethnologically described somewhat, as shown in this other map.

The Turkish races are now dominant in the country to the east also. In the farthest points of his conquests or influence beyond the Indus, the Maharajah of Kashmere has come among people who speak pure Turkish, as I myself ascertained by taking down their words. They have possession of the hill country, in which the Amor has its northern sources, and of the petty mountain states north of Balk and Kundooz.

Higher up on the northern slopes of the Hindoo Koosh, Persian-speaking tribes still prevail. On one side of the range seem to be tribes of Indian affinities, the Kaushkar people and Kaffirs, on the other hill Tadjiks of Budakshan. North of Cabul you have the same race in the hilly country. We must not omit notice of the very peculiar people who occupy the higher country west of Cabul, the Hazarahs and Eimaks, who, though they speak Persian, have in their features most palpable marks of a large share of Turanian blood, which they themselves attribute to the settlement of a Mongol colony by Chengis Khan. They have none of the brutal and savage character of the Turkomans; on the contrary, they are a pleasant, industrious, hardworking race, whom one would suppose to be more allied to Thibetan races. Many of them have lately come down to take service on our public works, where they are distinguished as first-rate navvies. Yet they are bold and well skilled in arms, for they have maintained their independence intact against Affghans, Turkomans, and all comers.

The hardy character of the Beloches to the south is well known. It is a curious circumstance that while in all southern and western India, Arab mercenaries have been entertained by the native powers, and even in the Beloch territory of Scinde, yet we learn from Palgrave and other recent travellers, that in the Arab territories in Arabia and Africa, the chiefs habitually entertain Beloch mercenaries to keep down their countrymen.

West of Meshed some Kurd colonies have been settled as a barrier against the Turkomans, and the dominant tribes of modern Persia are a mixed race much more warlike than the old Tadjiks and Sarts of the countries to the East.

In modern days then the whole of the countries between India and

northern Europe are occupied by races hardy and independent in the extreme.

It is very greatly to be regretted that since we have had so intimate a knowledge of Afghanistan, and there is so much scattered literature concerning it, the information has never been brought into one focus in any general description of the country and people later than that most admirable work, "Elphinstone's Cabul," the result of a visit to Peshawur in the early years of the century. Elphinstone, indeed, notwithstanding his limited opportunities, has in many respects occupied the ground so fully and so well, as hardly to leave room for another. But the political circumstances have entirely changed since his time, and we can hardly suppose that after years of British occupation there is not room for at least an enlarged and modernized work founded on the basis which Elphinstone has given us. I could wish that we had such a work before the personal knowledge of the Officers of the Affghan campaign is lost.

In Elphinstone's time there really was something of the nature of a Kingdom of Cabul. There was a ruler who claimed the character of King of a considerable country, and was possessed not only of Peshawur and the other valleys on the Indian frontier, but also of Kashmere and the neighbouring hills.

Now-a-days we speak of the country and kingdom of Affghanistan. It seems to be popularly supposed that there is something of the character of a King of that country, and that we may hope to promote the establishment of a strong and settled government of Affghanistan. How far there is a good deal of misapprehension in this idea, I would try briefly to explain.

"Affghanistan" is a mere English geographical term, hardly, if at all, known to the natives. Ethnologically there is certainly a large tract of country inhabited by a very marked race, properly called not Affghans, but Pathans. Politically speaking, the dominion of Cabul by no means includes the whole Pathan country.

At the very highest, the position of a Pathan King could only be compared to that of a King of Scotland in old times, and the state of affairs might be described as an exaggeration of Scotch affairs. The King was but the chief of one of many rival houses—a kind of chief among chiefs—obtaining a very precarious and limited allegiance from the other lowland chiefs, and a scarcely nominal allegiance from the highland clans. The principal difference as compared to Scotland would be, that the highlands of Affghanistan are in larger proportion and more inaccessible; the lowlands more scattered and difficult to rule; the people altogether more insubordinate: and just as a Scotch King never had much real power and authority till he acquired a great foreign dominion in England, and was thence able to bring money and influence to bear in Scotland, so a Pathan King has never occupied a strong position, except when he has had great foreign dominions, and could treat his own country as a mere nursery of followers and soldiers, to be petted and bribed into a sort of allegiance. In these days the ruler has been stripped of his foreign possessions, and even of some of the

Pathan lowland country. He does not pretend to the title of king; and curtailed as he is in power and in means to very narrow limits, it will not be difficult to understand the extreme difficulty of establishing anything like a strong government, except very partially during the dominance of some man of extraordinary personal vigour.

In truth, the Pathans are of all the people in this world the most democratic, the least subject to authority, the most independent. Physically they are one of the finest races created by God; and with them the spirit of freedom and independence amounts to a ruling passion. They are not only intolerant of foreign dominion, but yield scarcely any obedience to their own chiefs. They have none of the Celtic reverence, if such there really be, but rather the Saxon individuality. Elphinstone well describes their popular system of representation, the Jeergas of Clans, and the Sub-Jeergas of Sub-Clans, their allegiance to the community and not to the chief. To him I must refer you for particulars. It is to be feared, however, that even the popular assemblies exercise a very imperfect power. To a great degree, every man is a law to himself, and blood feuds, attended with great loss of life, are chronic among the people. Elphinstone explains their habits and manners, and the difference between the western and the eastern tribes; the former being more pastoral and perhaps also somewhat more amenable to rule; most of the latter purely agricultural, perhaps we might rather say horticultural, and democratic in the extreme.

It must be quite understood that these people are of that class of the human race which has an intense attachment to the land and to fixed property in the soil, as distinguished from the wandering tribal habits and claims of Turkomans, or nomadic Arabs. The difference in this respect between Pathans and Turkomans is as great as between Kabyle and Arab in Algeria. The two races have no sympathies, and nothing in common.

There is yet another distinction among the tribes of Eastern Affghanistan, which it is important to note. The pure Pathans south of Peshawur, with the Afreedees and other tribes of the Khyber, are a people without reverence, not only in politics but also in religion—a hard, energetic, practical people, without imagination, and without much moral sense. Although nominally Mahomedans, I believe that they will cut the throat of a true believer almost as cheap as that of any infidel. All their enthusiasm is political, not religious. But north of Peshawur a mixture of race has told largely on character. This is the country which the Pathans have acquired and colonized within historical times. In Swat and the neighbouring valleys they found an Indian people, whom I suppose to have been allied to the Kashmerees. To this day the Pathans are there a superior race, and there are still inferior people who are not called Pathans. The Pathans have been largely influenced by the blood and intellect of the subject people. The Euzofsies, and other tribes to the north, have thus acquired much of the imagination and some of the reverence of those early Aryan races. They have priests, even pay a sort of tithes to priestly chiefs, of whom the Akhoond of Swat is the most famous.

They are somewhat more polished than their rougher brethren, and are really zealous Mahommedans, sometimes even fanatics. An aristocracy, with serfs to do the inferior work, they are quite equal to the pure Pathans as soldiers. I believe that it is from these clans that the most numerous Pathan colonists in India have been supplied. It is among them that the zealous Indian Wahabees, who have not cared to live under our rule, have found a scanty and not very hospitable refuge (the other tribes would have stripped them of every farthing), and it was against them only, that our last considerable campaign was directed.

In the days of Mahmood of Ghuznee, and the early Mahommedan conquerors, the Pathans had scarcely got so far to the north-east as Cabul. The founders of the early Indian dynasties first established themselves in Ghuzneo and Cabul, and drawing the Pathans along with themselves, became, in fact, identified with them; so that the early Mahommedan Empire of Delhi was really a Pathan rule, and eventually became so avowedly.

Again, the Mogul power was first established in Cabul. I do not know whether the word Mogul is really "Mongol." By the people themselves it is applied, not to Mongols, but to the Persian speakers, who form a large section of the inhabitants of Cabul, as distinguished from Pushtoo speakers. There certainly was no considerable Mongol immigration into India. The number of people calling themselves Moguls is few, and there is not the slightest trace of Mongol feature. In fact, the Mogul dynasty too became, to a great degree, intimately connected with Afghanistan, and the Emperors maintained a suzerainty over that country by means of the wealth of India.

To the west, the Pathans have had various relations with Persia, and in the eighteenth century, during the decline of the Mogul power, these relations became very intimate. Early in the century, the western Pathans overrun Persia, and ruled there. Then Nadir Shah turned the tables and conquered them. On his death, Ahmed Shah Dooranee founded the Afghan dynasty, which in some sense subsisted to our day. This dynasty acquired from the declining Mogul Emperors, Kashmere and the greater part of the Punjab, and for a time protected the Moguls against the Mahrattas. When this Dooranee dynasty became distracted and weak, Runjeet Sing and the Sikhs were rising to power. They expelled the Pathans not only from the Punjab, but eventually from Kashmere also, and even from the Pathan sub-montane valleys, Peshawur, and the rest of the Trans Indus country. Meantime the descendants of Ahmed Shah had fallen in their own country, and remained exiles, except for the short time when our expedition galvanized into artificial life, the fallen dynasty. Dost Mahommed, Chief of the Barukzie clan, rose to a certain power, and wielded it by personal energy, but claimed no higher title than that of "Ameer," or Chief. We succeeded to the position on the frontier conquered by the Sikhs. Finally, Dost Mahommed dying, a disputed succession followed, as a matter of course. Hence the present situation.

I have alluded to the distinction between eastern and western Pathans. At the very utmost the present dynasty can only be described as chiefs of the Western Pathans. Over the eastern tribes they have no more authority than has the Lord Mayor of London. Even over the west they have a very imperfect hold. The proper Pathan country extends to the neighbourhood of Herat; and not only as a question of political arrangement, but also as one of nationality, Herat and the country about it, belong more properly to Affghanistan than to Persia. Yet it is so distant from Cabul, and so separated by the independent Hazareh country, that the ruler of Cabul has generally not been able to hold Herat also; and the latter place was throughout Dost Mahommed's rule held independently by another Chief, a member of the deposed royal family. Even Candahar was not under Dost Mahommed's rule till the latter years of his life.

Thus, then, Peshawur and the Derajat being cut off on one side, and Herat being a very uncertain possession on the other, the present dynasty, even supposing them to be united under one head, are almost confined to Cabul and Candahar, and such nominal allegiance as they have from some of the western tribes. On the east there remains to them little more than two or three small valleys, insecurely held. Over Swat and the valleys to the north, the Ameer has no more authority than over the hill tribes to the south. With so limited resources, it is impossible that the Chief can maintain a large army or considerable state; and he must be a genius indeed who so situated can control and rule over such a people as the Pathans.

I have still to notice the valleys at the northern foot of the Hindoo-Koosh. Tracts so situated must always be an object of contention between the powers in the plains below and those in the hills above. The latter have greater facilities for disturbing the quiet possession of the tenants below, and the powers being anything like equal, it will generally be found that the sub-montane valleys go with the hills. Accordingly, the Pathans long possessed the valleys, both on the side of Peshawur and on that of Balk. When they were weak and divided among themselves, they lost them to the Sikhs on one side, to the Turkomans on the other. When Dost Mahommed was firmly established, he succeeded in re-annexing Balk and Koondooz, and those tracts are still under Pathan rule. The population consists partly of the original Persian-speakers, partly of Affghan colonists, and partly of Turkish colonists. The Pathans seem to have settled in large numbers, and may now be considered to be the dominant race.

In the valleys to the west, a Turkoman population preponderates. They form a succession of small Turkoman states, and the Pathans have never succeeded in establishing power there.

I was one of those who thought that it might have been better to have made the Upper Indus our boundary line. Rivers are seldom boundaries of races, but in this case it happens that it is so. On this side to Attock we have Indians—beyond the Indus, Pathans. The Peshawur valley and other sub-montane tracts are occupied by portions of the same tribes which hold the adjoining hills. I thought that by stopping at the Indus, we should escape constant collisions with the

frontier tribes, and that the possession of the sub-montane valleys would both give means to the Cabul ruler, and would make him, as it were, vulnerable on the side of India, since he would hold some of his most valuable possessions open to be seized by us at any moment. On the other hand, it may be that without control over the hill tribes, he could hardly have held with profit, lands east of the Khyber; and our possession of Peshawur, Kohat, &c., has had an important political result, which may possibly be beneficial. It has brought us into extremely intimate relations with the Eastern Pathan tribes, whose geographical and commercial relations are much more with the East than with the West. Not only do large numbers of them serve us as soldiers, but they make what is to them great profit by trafficking with us. They have the freest access to our territories and cantonments; and being by no means a shy or modest or prejudiced people, they avail themselves of it to the very utmost, and never neglect an opportunity where they can, honestly or dishonestly, of earning a penny, or of stealing a penny's worth. In fact with some of the tribes, intimacy amounts to familiarity. On a market day at Peshawur, crowds of the independent Pathans may be seen making themselves thoroughly at home, and a stranger, ambitious of an interview with a noted hero of the Khyber, may be gratified on very moderate terms. Yet it is a curiously one-sided familiarity. They take advantage of all the freedom that we offer, but no European dare show his nose within their borders. This is from no personal prejudice or dislike, but simply from their passionate love of independence and extreme jealousy lest the secrets of their hills should be spied out by the race, whose genius for absorption they dread.

The ordinary punishment for minor offences committed by any hill tribe, is to blockade it, and prohibit the entry into our territory, of the people of the offending clan. More serious cause of armed collision we occasionally have, and always must have—it is a necessity of the situation—but it seems generally to result in a good-humoured kind of fighting, which can be amicably ended when terms are arranged. We never have, and scarcely can have, any general war with the tribes—they are so entirely without union among themselves.

Practically then, it may be said that the relations of the Eastern tribes are with us and not with the Ameer of Cabul. It would be madness to touch their independence, but we have unlimited facilities for negotiating with them, bribing them, and taking them into our pay when occasion requires.

This, however, must always be borne in mind, that the Pathans are a thoroughly practical people, in whom necessity and their peculiar political position has sharpened the wits and developed social astuteness to a remarkable degree. It is generally said by our frontier Officers, that for bold disregard of truth and unblushing fiction in the law courts, a Hindoo is a child compared to a Pathan. Make it worth their while, and we may get from them money's worth. But it is not for an instant to be supposed that we can hoodwink them, *diplommatize* them, gain their favour or affection, or secure them in any way, except for value had and received. They are terrible talkers, and always

ready to negotiate and hold forth in the most plausible manner; but you may always be quite sure that they are hard set on getting something out of you. They need money very much. We have a great reputation as good subsidizers. In this view every Pathan Chief is, above all things, anxious to be a friend of the English. The difficulty is, that they cannot control their people, and bargains fall through because the tribes cannot agree among themselves about the division of money received. The Khyber Pass has been closed for years on this account, because the Afreedees cannot agree among themselves; and the communication between Peshawur and Cabul is chiefly through the hills of the Momunds—a more amenable tribe, who have relations with both Governments.

The Beloches to the south are a different people. They are equally or even more predatory, being less attached to the soil, and roam more as wandering robbers; but they are said to be a good deal more amenable to the authority of their tribal Chiefs.

I cannot pretend to give many particulars regarding Turkistan and Tartary. My consolation is, that so far as I can discover, no one else can give reliable details of those countries. We have, from the descriptions of Yamberry and others, excellent accounts of the general character of the country and people. But what I mean is, that we have nothing that can be called statistics, or any approach to statistics, giving us any idea of the real extent of cultivated area or the population of the oases which exist in this great desert tract. I find the population of one of the largest Khanats variously estimated by the best authorities at from half a million to three millions. My own impression is, that much of what is said of extent, populousness, fertility, and production, is due to contrast with the wretched desert around, and that *positively* most of the oases are very petty countries. Still the settled tracts of the three well known Khanats, Khokan, Khiva, and Bokhara are, no doubt, in some sense considerable. The oases of Chinese Tartary I suspect to be less considerable. The valleys occupied by the Turkomans on the northern face of the Hindoo-Koosh are certainly but small tracts, and produce more grass than grain.

In the population, a distinction seems to be drawn, in common parlance, between the Turkomans—the wild and utterly untamed robber tribes, who roam over the deserts—and the Uzbegs, the latest conquerors, who now occupy all the settled tracts, and claim a nominal allegiance from the wilder tribes. The fact, however, seems to be, that they are all of the same Turanian race, the Uzbegs being merely the dominant, and, in some sense, more civilized tribe. Of the whole race it cannot too often be repeated, that they seem to be the most brutal, bloody, untameable, slave-dealers on the face of the earth. The word Cossak, or Khazak, is simply Persian for “thief,” and widely applied to all the Central Asian tribes of Turkoman blood.

I have used the term “Turkoman” generically to include the Uzbegs. The Chiefs of the Khanats, and the people of the valleys adjoining Afghanistan are Uzbegs, not Turkomans proper.

The Sarts and Tadjiks are now more the subject race in towns and

cities than a politically important section of the general population. I gather that most of the rural agriculture of the settled Khanats is in the hands of the Uzbeks.

The plains and oases of Turkistan are more or less, in some sense, divided among the three great Khanats. In the hills north of the Amor are some chiefs, practically quite independent, and the same position is held by the Chiefs settled on the skirts of the Hindoo-Koosh.

Since the Chinese yoke has been thrown off Western Tartary, the oases there are also ruled over by separate Khans.

My object hitherto has been rather to state facts than to enter into political argument, but I would like to be allowed briefly to recapitulate what I may call a few political facts.

First, with respect to Eastern Turkistan. I venture, once for all, very briefly, to assert, that we might put political questions aside altogether, and that merely as a question of plain physical geography, any hostile movement towards India from that quarter is simply impossible; that, in fact, the very idea is utterly absurd and out of the question. I may quote Sir Henry Rawlinson, as a great authority, in that view. That a modern Army should march three or four hundred miles over the highest portions of the globe, over a vast unproductive and almost inaccessible region, ranging from 15,000 to 21,000 feet high (without counting the higher mountains), is a thing not to be thought of till aerial machines are perfected. I dismiss the idea altogether.

Undoubtedly, for the purposes of trade between British India and Eastern Turkistan, it is most desirable that the direct route should, if possible, be opened up, and great credit is due to the Officers who have pushed the matter. The advantages of the route are manifest, both in an immense saving of distance as compared with the route by Cabul and Khokan, and in the fact that the political obstacles to trade, so glaring in the other route, do not exist, if we can only get over the physical difficulties of the road, which are enormous.

I trust that the transit will be accomplished, and that a very beneficial local trade, both in the shawl wool of the high regions, and with the countries beyond, will spring up.

In a political point of view, I should say that so far as our interests are concerned, we might highly applaud the occupation of Eastern Turkistan by the Russians, if they should push on in that direction. It would occupy their hands, and keep them away from us, placing them perfectly safe on the other side of the wall as it were, and all on the way to China, instead of to India. Even their tariffs would hardly treat our trade worse than those of barbarous native princes; and if the road were opened to travellers, it would be a pleasant diversion of the monotony of Indian life to run over and visit Russian settlements in Yarkund and Khoten.

The question of the approach to India by the Caspian and Khorassan has been so fully discussed for the last thirty years, that I shall say little about it. Russia is in that direction no nearer to us than

before; and in any question of this kind, the great thing is to keep before us simple figures of distance and height; and to bear in mind relative magnitudes.

Astrabad at the south-east corner of the Caspian, is as nearly as may be, 1,250 miles from the Indus; say from the shore of the Caspian, by Meshed to Herat, 500 miles—Herat to Candahar, 370 miles—Candahar to Shikarpore in Scinde, 378 miles. Short of being absolutely impassable to Armies (like the routes 20,000 feet high), the whole road is one of the most uncomfortable and impracticable in the world, being a succession of deserts and mountain passes—the seats of predatory tribes—with the rare cultivated tracts which you see, hundreds of miles apart. Most of you are better qualified than I am to judge what would be the difficulties of such a march of 1,250 miles—somewhere I suppose about the distance from Paris to St. Petersburg—ending in by far the most disagreeable and least promising part of India. After all, too, the Caspian is not the ocean with all the resources of ocean steamers; we found it a pretty serious undertaking to land a few thousand men on the coast of Abyssinia; how much more difficult to land and supply a great Army on the southern shore of the Caspian, with only the naval resources of the Caspian.

The routes from the Caspian to the Khanats seem to have been for the present nearly abandoned by the Russians. The lines of wells marked on the maps notwithstanding, there is practically for military purposes a nearly waterless and utterly desert tract of some 500 miles between the Caspian and Khiva, and the latest papers seem to treat the route as impracticable for armies, although there are projects for reviving it, and creating a communication with Georgia and the Caucasus.

We come then to the line of advance by the Syr Darya, by which the Russians have lately pushed forward, and where the present interest of the question lies. It will be seen, that by this route little would be gained on the way to Bokhara and Khokan by using the Sea of Aral. In truth that seems to be a most uncomfortable sea, with utterly desert, shallow and sandy shores, yet stormy, so that shallow river boats cannot venture on it. The great rivers exhausted in their course through the desert, enter it by very shallow channels, giving not more than at most two or three feet of water. Any communications by the Sea of Aral are but supplementary to the land route, which the Russians really use. They have now, I believe, a force of about 13,000 men in all in Turkistan, and the difficulties of getting their troops there, may be judged from the following sentence taken from the official report of General Romanoffski. "*At present it takes two years to march a body of troops from the Volga to Turkistan.*" Only consider that, to say nothing of the route from Turkistan to India!

I would describe the situation somewhat thus:—In the middle of the last century we had not advanced in India beyond the neighbourhood of Calcutta, the Russians had not advanced far beyond Orenburgh and Petropaulsk. Taking the Hindoo-Koosh mountain system as the dividing barrier, Calcutta and Orenburgh are about equidistant from the foot of the mountains on either side, say

about 1,400 miles from Calcutta to Peshawur, and the same distance from Orenburgh to Balk and Khulm. We may take India and the countries on the other side to be also, in a rough way, about equal areas. But the difference is, that India is a fertile and well-watered country, inhabited by a race singularly patient of foreign rule, while the other is the most desert country on the earth, inhabited by the most intractable of human creatures. Consequently, it has happened, that in the course of a hundred years, we have occupied the whole of India, and not only occupied it, but established a complete and settled dominion there. We have made a network of railways through our dominions. Already two lines from either coast are all but completed as far as Lahore, a great part of a third line is constructed, and the missing link will probably soon follow; also a fourth line by way of Baroda. The continuation from Lahore to Peshawur is undertaken, engineers and materials have been dispatched. But the Russians contending with much greater difficulties, have in the same period made much slower progress. They have not occupied half of the country which lay before them; only of late years have they established themselves on the upper Syr, and come into collision with the chiefs beyond. Real roads or railways in any part of those regions they have scarcely yet dreamt of. They have but established caravan routes in the Desert, with halting places, along which caravans and small bodies of troops are painfully pushed, in two years' marches, as I have shown. As one swallow does not make a summer, so one successful expedition does not subjugate such a country; we must not jump to that conclusion, even if their troops advance further than they yet have. Supposing that the Russians were fully, firmly, and finally established in the whole country North of the Hindoo-Koosh, we should still be separated by a barrier say six to eight times as great as the Alpine barrier between France and Italy, a succession of mountain ranges more than twice as high, and three or four times as broad. The distance from Balk to Peshawur is 470 miles, the heights to be surmounted upwards of 12,000 feet; that distance over such a country might be enough to keep apart any two peoples, unless they are very desperately anxious to fight.

But this is looking into a far distant future. How long will it take Russia to settle herself in Turkistan? How much will it cost her? Is she able?—is she willing to incur the enormous cost? Supposing that she can, and does do so, the country will not be a second British India, but at best a sort of exaggeration of Algeria, a country infinitely more inaccessible to Russia than is Algeria, lying at the very door of France, many times the size of Algeria, much more desert, inhabited by more savage and untameable races. The thing is not to be done, except at an enormous expense. At present Russia can hardly find money for necessary works; where is she to get it for so vast an undertaking? And is the chance of what may come after, worth such cost to her, if she could get the money? Modern wars against civilized powers are not now conducted by mere hordes rushing down to conquer; every day, war becomes more and more a question of money and material. I take it, that in any view, it is totally im-

possible that Russia should attempt an invasion of India, till she has settled herself in Turkistan, as we are settled in India; till she has made railways to Bokhara and Balk, as we have to Lahore and Peshawur. If she attempts that, I will give her at a moderate computation fifty years to do it. But what may not happen before it is done? The proper Slave races may live off, and Russia be dismembered. We may abandon India, or it may be conquered by the great Australian Empire of the South. If we both subsist as great powers, why then, in the time of our grandchildren, the question may give rise to some diplomacy and anxiety. The Affghans may make a great deal of money out of both powers, putting themselves up to the highest bidder; but after all, there will still be the mountains between, and the power-attempting to cross them, will be at an enormous disadvantage.

Take the present situation; it is at least 1,000 miles, as the crow flies, from Orenburgh to Bokhara—by road it must be considerably more—through an unmitigated desert almost the whole way. It is, of course, still farther from the Volga, the real basis of Russian advance. If the Khokan oasis be taken en route the distance will be considerably longer. From Bokhara to Peshawur the distance is 760 miles, and what are the practical difficulties of that route may be judged from the fact that under the most grievous provocation which a great nation could endure, the barbarous imprisonment and murder of our accredited Officers, we were unable to make any attempt to reach the Khan of Bokhara. Thus we have from Orenburgh to Peshawur a distance of at least 1,800 miles, for a practicable route we may say 2,000, or from Russia in Europe 2,500 miles, over horrid deserts, mountain gorges, and passes fully 12,000 feet high. Just realise what a pass of 12,000 feet is. It is all very well to talk of the "Bameean Pass" as practicable for artillery, because on some occasions one or two guns have been dragged across by mere manual labour of thousands of men. Ferrier says that Nader Shah took his artillery over, but the proof of it does not say much for the route, viz., that one of the guns is to be seen there to the present day, stuck on the road! Vamberg tells us that for trade, the road is not much used on account of the difficulties of the Hindoo-Koosh. The pass is well called the "Dand skikan"—the "tooth breaker." It is only passable from June to the beginning of November. Consider what would be required to convey a modern park of artillery and all its material over a succession of passes *twice* the height of the Simplon, and for upwards of 400 miles of such roadless ground. Even if it be possible, what would it cost to march an Army from the Volga to Peshawur? What did it cost us with every possible facility and means of sea transport, with no enemy on the route, and a country not half so high and difficult as the Hindoo Koosh, to place some 3,000 men in line at Magdala, something over 300 miles from the sea-coast? How much more would it cost to march a much larger Army so much greater a distance, in so much more difficult a country, held by tribes whose profession is plunder? I do not believe that the thing is to be thought of in our day. Even Orenburgh is not yet connected with Russia proper by a long way.

In truth, the efforts of Russia, the systems of railways on which she is engaged, are not directed to the east but to the south. She is, I believe, not working in the direction of Orenburgh, but is concentrating her strength in the interior, and directing it by lines of rail towards the Black Sea—it may be towards Constantinople. If she has still any such designs it might probably well suit her that we should alarm ourselves about the East. By betraying, as it were, a raw place in that direction, a sensitive place where we can easily be made to wince, we are but playing her game. And still more by the continual repetition of these alarms, we are ourselves creating in the native Indian mind that very belief in Russia which we deprecate.

My object has been, as I have said, to submit broad, simple, and uncontested facts, and I do think that the mere realization of the most prominent facts and figures, the number of miles which divide us from the Russian power, the height of the mountains, the character of the country and people, may well allay alarms, and satisfy us that we may adjourn the Russo-Indian question for the possible consideration of the next generation, or the generation after that.

All this, moreover, is on the supposition of possible unfriendly designs on the part of Russia. It is well to take into account the most unfavourable contingency, but I had very great pleasure in listening to the important communication made the other day by Sir Roderick Murchison, in this theatre, that the Emperor had pledged himself to harbour no designs against our eastern possessions, and not to interfere in the politics of Afghanistan. I admire the friendliness of that declaration, and I also admire its good sense, for I am sure that nothing will be so beneficial both to the Russians and to ourselves as a good understanding, which will obviate the chance of both being victimized and bled by the Affghans, and prevent the abuse, by the disaffected on either side, of rumours regarding the proceedings and projects of the other. Especially must we be careful of receiving stories of Russian proceedings from the Affghans, the very people whose interest it is to magnify everything of the kind; and it is because all our Indian news of Central Asia comes through this channel that it is little to be relied on.

It would not be desirable that I should say much of our relations with the Ameer Sher Allee, of which we have no complete knowledge. I do not doubt that the Ameer is a very excellent Affghan chief, and very worthy of our friendship. As respects, however, any great degree of intimacy with him, the extreme instability of everything in Affghan politics must always be borne in mind, and this, too, which I have explained, that the Ameer's dominions really scarcely march with ours at all: he is merely a power near but not adjoining us, with whom we may well cultivate a friendly commerce and acquaintance. In my view, to send a European agent to Cabul would be undesirable for two reasons; first, that his life would not be safe, and we might by the act of some discontented individual become involved in a hostility especially to be deprecated; and, second, that if the thing went on smoothly it would still be putting our head into the lion's mouth; our agent would be considered by every chief in Central

Asia fair game to squeeze for money, and all who did not get it, would be aggrieved and disgusted.

My idea would rather be, that from our own borders we should cultivate general relations of friendliness; that we should make it thoroughly apparent that beyond those borders no one has reason to fear our aggression or interference; and above all things, that we should convince the Mahomedans of our own districts, by our practice and our manners, that we have no other desire than to cherish them as good subjects of the Crown, and that we shall never permit that political or religious prejudice against them should in the slightest degree actuate or colour our conduct.

THE CHAIRMAN: After the very interesting paper which you have heard read, probably some gentlemen may be desirous of offering observations or of addressing questions to Mr. Campbell. As time presses, I must request any gentleman who may rise to condense his observations as much as possible. I say these few words in order to invite discussion. I see a gentleman present who has an extensive acquaintance with the subject, the meeting would be very desirous of hearing any observations he may think it desirable to offer, Sir Charles Wingfield?

SIR CHARLES WINGFIELD, M.P.: I really do not think I can enlighten the meeting at all, and what I have to say on the question I had better, probably, reserve for a future occasion, when the question may come before Parliament. Unfortunately I have not heard the whole of Mr. Campbell's paper, as I have only just come into the room. There is one point, however, upon which I should like to get the opinion of people who are much better informed than myself. Without apprehending any acts of hostility on the part of Russia, suppose that a demonstration should be made against British India, I should like to have the opinion of people more conversant with military matters than myself, what would be our strongest line of defence; whether we should confine ourselves to occupying the mouths of the passes on our side of the mountains, or should we cross the mountains and occupy the entrance of the passes on the side of Afghanistan?

General Sir VINCENT EYRE, K.C.S.I.: I am not prepared to enter fully into the question raised by Sir Charles Wingfield, but looking at that map I cannot help thinking that the view taken by Count Nesselrode was a very accurate one; that it is a very ugly looking map, that the country which is there represented, and still more as it really exists, is a very formidable barrier between India and Turkistan, and that the Emperor of Russia is a very wise man in what he has recently stated as his intended pacific policy. I do not believe that any wise man, placed as the Emperor of Russia is, with very great responsibilities, looking at that map, and still more looking at that country as I have seen a great portion of it, would undertake to hurl an Army against such a force as exists to meet him in British India. With regard to the points mooted by Sir Charles Wingfield, I think there can be no question that, although, no doubt, we have a very strong barrier in the river Indus itself, with the means which we can bring to bear to strengthen it in the weakest points, it would, nevertheless, be the duty of any British General commanding the frontier, to occupy the passes beyond. I believe those passes to be exceedingly strong and defensible with comparatively small bodies of men. I hope that the negotiations which have recently taken place with the Ameer of Cabul may facilitate the placing of those passes more at our disposal in the hour of need. I am not aware to what extent these negotiations have been carried on. As it has been stated by Mr. Campbell in his able lecture, we know that the tribes inhabiting those passes are in a very great measure independent of the Ameer of Cabul, to such an extent that it was stated lately that on his visit to our territory he was obliged to pay black mail himself in order to get through the Khyber Pass. I believe the chiefs and tribes of those passes are quite open to negotiations, and there would be no difficulty whatever, if ever such a crisis arrived, in our obtaining a sufficient hold of them to oppose an efficient barrier to any force that might attack us.

Mr. WYLLIE: I desire very cordially to concur in the remarks which have fallen from Mr. Campbell, as to the want of credibility which attaches to statements coming to us from India with reference to the progress of Russia. They are, as Mr. Campbell says, entirely derived from Affghan sources, and Affghans, as Mr. Campbell says, have an obvious interest in making the advance of Russia as formidable in our eyes as they can. There is another point which Mr. Campbell brought forward, I think very well, namely, the parallel which he drew between Scotland in former days, and Affghanistan up to a recent date, and even up to the present time. The country contains a variety of independent tribes, and the head of the principal tribe holds a very loose and undefined sway over even his own tribe, and to a still greater degree are the other tribes independent of his control. On the other hand I may mention a matter to which I think Mr. Campbell might perhaps have accorded more prominent mention, that is, the politicians who do enlarge upon the dangers to our Indian empire by Russian progress, speak of the advance by Herat through Persian territory, and of the great danger that might accrue to us from any offensive alliance between Russia and Persia. I should have been glad, therefore, to have heard Mr. Campbell ventilate the arguments connected with the Persian route. Indeed, as regards the other routes referred to by Mr. Campbell, it is generally acknowledged that any military movement by way of Balkh, Bamecan, and Cabul, could only be of effect if conducted in concert with greater operations from Persia and the Caspian through Herat; and Sir Henry Rawlinson, from whose lips every word is of the utmost importance, has long ago dissipated any fear of danger to us, however small or remote, by way of Changchenmo or any other pass from Eastern Turkistan. Lastly, Mr. Campbell appears to me to take too seriously the declaration made by Sir Roderick Murchison the other day as to the pacific intentions of the Emperor of Russia. I doubt very much, indeed, whether the Emperor of Russia is in a better position than ourselves to forswear for ever, under all possible circumstances, any attempt to interfere with the independence of Affghanistan. It is very courteous and diplomatic language on the part of the Emperor of Russia. I am very glad to hear it, and I do not at all question its sincerity, but it is a declaration to which I can not, for practical purposes, attach the slightest value.

Mr. RIDDELL: I do not think those who fear a direct attack on India by Russia have any sound reason for their alarm, but those who have lived in India, especially those who have travelled over the length and breadth of the country, as I have often done, must be fully aware that there is a general feeling of uncertainty prevailing among the native population as to the permanence of our rule in India. Any attack by Russia or Persia, or any other nation, I will not say Russia, because I do not believe that Russia would attempt anything of the kind, or if she did, that we should be beaten by her, but any nation that seriously threatened us upon our northern or western frontier, would excite in India a state of feeling which would cost us many millions to repress, and which it is well worth our while to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds to prevent. Therefore, I think the Government have very wisely, at this moment, determined to subsidize, or if subsidize is a phrase which one ought not to use, to induce the Ameer of Cabul to be our friend, and to listen rather to our blandishments than to those which may be used by powers more to the west. With respect to the question, whether an invading Army, if it is not resisted by us, could penetrate through the Suliman range, and through those ranges which border our frontier on the west from Peshawur to Scinde, I think those who know those parts, and who have questioned merchants who annually traverse the passes, can have no doubt whatever that unless we are prepared to resist it on the western side of the Suliman range, an Army could debouch on the plains of India, and be ready to attack us on our frontier there, and certainly with more chances of success than if we held the passes and crest of the Suliman range. Never having been there, I cannot pretend to speak from personal knowledge, but from information which I have acquired from merchants, I believe I may say that between Peshawur and Shikapore, there is not forty miles of our frontier which could not be penetrated with perfect ease by an Army with guns, with the whole of its ammunition, with its whole force, provided there was no opposition in the mountains themselves. The question then is, is it cheaper and better for us to make friends with the tribes on

the west, than to remain sulkily and sullenly within our own boundaries, and say to the tribes who are semi-independent, "Do as you please, we will not assist you, we will not help you. If an enemy comes you may assist him, but we in the meantime during peace will not assist you." That appears to me the question of the present day; that is the main question. As to whether Russia will come, or Persia will come, or whether Affghans will come, that is a question that I do not pretend to enter into, and I hope it is one that within our generation we shall not need to discuss.

The CHAIRMAN: Probably, before Mr. Campbell replies to any of the observations that have been made, it may be convenient that I should briefly state my own views upon the subject. In making that proposition, however, I would beg it to be understood that I do not speak in any official capacity whatever; I speak simply as an observer like any other gentleman who may be present at this meeting, and I think there are certain grounds which really entitle me to give an opinion, for it so happens that it is now thirty-five years since I first went into the public service in Persia, and that from that time to the present I have been continuously engaged in studying, and occasionally in directing, our relations with the nations of Central Asia, so that, as far as experience goes, I may be permitted to speak with some authority, at the same time, of course, I may be liable to error like any other gentleman. Now, with these few words of preface, I would just ask the meeting to consider what the real question before it is; I mean the political question, for that is the most interesting point for the public, not that I at all undervalue the geographical and ethnographical portions of Mr. Campbell's paper, they are all of first rate importance. But the particular question which, undoubtedly, at the present time most engages public attention is, how far there is any real danger to India from the position and movements of Russia in the east, and if there is any such danger, how it may best be met. On this point, then, I say frankly that I do not believe there is any *real* danger at all. When I say *real* danger, I mean danger of actual invasion. If the public understood what the present position of Russia in Turkistan was, or what it may be in the future, I think that very much of the present feeling of apprehension would be dissipated. But, unfortunately, great ignorance prevails upon these subjects. The general notion is that Russia has overrun all Turkistan, and annexed it, has, in fact, conquered the whole country, and has thus become almost a neighbour to us in India. But such is not by any means the case, all that Russia has really done up to the present time is to conquer and annex the country as far as the Jaxartes. That projecting line which you see marked on the map by a thread, stretching from the Jaxartes beyond Samarcand, is not a conquest, it is a mere cordon of military posts. Russia has not, in fact, annexed any portion of the country on this side of the Jaxartes. Although she occupies Ura-tepeh, Jezzak, Samarcand, and Katta-Kurgan, it is merely as a military cordon, established for a specific purpose. This advanced movement, indeed, was suggested by one of her Generals, for the purpose of what we call, in nautical phrase, "breaking the line." The object, as Romanoski distinctly says, of pushing on to Samarcand, was to divide the territories of Kokand from those of Bokhara, and to press equally upon both. Although, indeed, she has thus run a line of military posts as far as Katta-Kurgan, she has not annexed any part of the country south of the Jaxartes, that is, she does not collect the revenues, nor does she exercise jurisdiction. There are, in fact, no Russian courts, or any of the machinery of government such as is in full work on the northern side of the Jaxartes. Let us consider, too, what she proposes to do in the future, what is the political position at which she aims? She intends avowedly, sooner or later, to bring the Khanates as much under her control as possible. But she never meditates conquest or occupation in the wholesale way in which we have conquered and occupied India. She is perfectly aware that such an entire supersession of native power is beyond her means. To occupy and annex the three Khanates, to incorporate them in her dominions, to collect the revenues, to bring the Russian laws into play throughout the country, would require probably an Army of 100,000 men, and for such a gigantic task she is not prepared. All that she proposes, then, to do, is to exert a strong influence over the country, to maintain a military occupation at certain points, but to keep the native governors generally in power, and through them to exercise

a full political control over the inhabitants. Now that is precisely the position in which we were placed during our occupation of Afghanistan in 1839-42. It is a false position for any European nation to occupy in Asia, and it would be for Russia in Turkistan a still more precarious position than it was for us in Afghanistan, inasmuch as she would be much further from her supports, and would be without any party in the country to befriend her, such as we had in Afghanistan. Therefore, if she realizes what her own Officers say she aims at, she will be in a position in which we shall have much more power to injure her than she will have to injure us. That is the great truth which I am anxious to point out. Instead, then, of our having to apply to her for forbearance, the more natural course would be for her to apply to us for forbearance. So long as affairs remain in the position I have indicated, it is quite absurd to talk of danger to India from an invasion by Russia. All that she could ever possibly do would be to intrigue with the Afghans, and through them to create disorder on our frontiers. But if she attempts anything of that kind we have the means of retaliating. I am, of course, putting an extreme case. At present we know that Russia has no intention of the sort, and it is very unlikely that she will ever have any such intention. It is true that in the semi-official Russian papers allusion is made to the possibility at some future time of a Russian demonstration against India. It is argued, indeed, by Russian politicians as one of the most valuable results of their present movements in Central Asia, that in the event of any complications in Europe, Russia will be in a far stronger position as regards England than she was at the time of the Crimean war, and who will gainsay this argument? It is a self-evident truth, and if Russia did not avow the feeling we should all equally know that it existed. But it is equally possible that she may exaggerate the value of her present improved position. I do not myself think that that position, regarded as a better means of injuring us, is really of any great importance. At any rate, if we keep up friendly relations both with Persia and Cabul, it seems to me that Russia is nearly powerless to harm us. I lay great stress at the same time upon those two points, and it is in that view that I think we have acted most judiciously, I will not say in subsidizing, because we have not subsidized, but in establishing friendly relations by means of a liberal pecuniary assistance with the Ameer of Cabul, and I further think we should equally be acting judiciously in exerting ourselves, as was suggested the other day by Sir Vincent Eyre, in the lecture he delivered in this room, to strengthen our interests in Persia, and to cultivate intimate relations with that power. So long, indeed, as we are really on sincere and cordial terms with our neighbours in Persia and Afghanistan, not only can no invasion or demonstration against India be attempted, but no possible intrigues, if they were attempted, could succeed in raising trouble on the frontiers. There are two further points referring to our relations with Russia which I am desirous of briefly noticing. Firstly, it has been suggested by some of the leading organs of the English press, as well as by others in India, that there should be some specific agreement or convention with Russia for the neutralisation of Afghanistan, and this suggestion seems to have been very favourably received by the public of both countries. The second point refers to the announcement which was made the other day in this room by Sir Roderick Murchison, that the Emperor of Russia had officially declared that Afghanistan was beyond his sphere of action, that under no circumstances would he interfere in any way, politically or otherwise, with the Afghans. Now I must say that if such a communication has been really made, it must be received as a very gratifying mark of the good feeling of a friendly power, but I do not think it can have any practical bearing upon the future treatment of the Central Asian question. I should at any rate feel exactly as comfortable, and probably more independent, if no such assurance had been given. I think we are strong enough in India to look after our own interests. I cannot conceive any necessity for our going to Russia to propose a convention for a delimitation of frontier. I think it would be better that matters should be left to run their course. As I said before, Russia has as much need of forbearance from us as we have from her. At the same time I do ask, what is the use of all these jealousies and recriminations? Surely Asia is quite large enough for both of us. I should say let Russia run her own course in Central Asia without any interference on our part; let her settle and

colonize the Khanates. It will take her a long time, it will take her at least a generation before she brings them into any real subjection to her authority. Let her occupy herself with that task, and if she succeeds it will be a great gain in the way of civilization. As philanthropists we must needs wish for her success, and politically I really do not think it matters much one way or the other. In the meantime I think we ought principally to attend to our own duties in Hindostan; and, secondarily, to cultivate friendly relations with our neighbours. Let us conciliate the Affghans by liberal presents of arms and money, for that is the only way effectually to touch them, and having once secured them in our interest, let us maintain them as a sort of "buffer," to prevent a contact with powers beyond them, which might, under certain circumstances, be dangerous. There is one other point which has not been alluded to, but which is nevertheless of some importance at the present crisis, I mean, commercial rivalry. Putting aside all political questions, I still think there will be, as a necessary consequence of the recent movements, considerable commercial rivalry between Russia and England in Central Asia. Russia is exceedingly anxious to bring her own produce and manufactures into that country, and she will thus be naturally disposed to shut out our commerce as much as possible. I need hardly remind the meeting that the doctrine of free trade has not penetrated into Russia. In St. Petersburg they are still protectionists, and maintain a prohibitive tariff upon our cotton goods up to the present day, and this system will assuredly be extended to all the Russian conquests in Central Asia; but this after all is an evil that will correct itself, because if the Indian trade is found to be lucrative, there will arise an extensive system of smuggling on the Turkistan frontier, which will be most injurious to the exchequer and most damaging to public morality (as has been the case on the Western frontier of Russia). Before concluding, I cannot help saying that I think it is a great pity a discussion of this important subject has not been entered upon in a more public and general way. I regret exceedingly that on two occasions such discussions should have been stopped in Parliament. I still hope, however, the day will come for a full discussion. It seems to me that the more this question is ventilated, and the more the *pros* and *cons* of it are publicly discussed, the more tranquillizing will be the effect both in India and England. In India the public will learn that Russia is not advancing with mighty strides, as we sometimes hear, to swallow us up bodily. They will learn that she is really stationary; that she has no desire to injure us; and that if she had any such desire she has not the power. While we, in England, shall also derive considerable benefit from the discussion. One result will be that we shall see it is not wise to irritate a friendly power by querulous and premature complaints; that it is not wise either to try and bind a giant in the silken cords of diplomacy. What we should do is to pursue our career of good government and improvement in India; to avoid all causes of offence and misunderstanding with our neighbours, while, at the same time, we take all legitimate precautions with the view to strengthen our own position, and are prepared if the occasion should arise to adopt any further measures that may be necessary for the protection of our interests or the vindication of our honour.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Gentlemen, I deem it a very great happiness that my feeble efforts to inform you, have been the occasion of bringing out so much more ripe and authoritative an exposition of this subject, from our gallant and learned Chairman, who has just addressed you. I feel that what he has said almost relieves me of the necessity of adding much more upon the subject by way of reply. I am afraid I have detained you a long time. I have beat a long way about the bush, but Sir Henry Rawlinson, as far as the political question is concerned, has stated the very kernel of the matter. He has explained clearly and authoritatively that Russia has not conquered Turkistan, but has only established a chain of military posts in a certain portion of that country. I am proud to have a confirmation of the suggestion that I ventured to throw out, that if Russia should determine to conquer that country it will take her a long generation to do so; also that it will not be profitable to Russia to attempt the conquest of that country; and that the probability is that she will not attempt it. That has been put before you so clearly by Sir Henry Rawlinson, that I think the political part of the argument has been clinched, and made

evident to almost every one in this room. I do not think there are many more points on which I need say much. I would rather avoid expressing an opinion with respect to the negotiations with the Ameer Shere Ali. I have no information upon that subject: and I should be sorry, as a servant of the Indian Government, to attempt to express an opinion at present. Therefore, I will only say generally, that I most thoroughly and heartily concur in all that has been said by Sir Henry Rawlinson and other speakers, with regard to the expediency of cultivating friendship with the Ameer of Cabul. I believe it is desirable in every way, whether for Indian interests, or for Affghan interests, or for our policy and commerce in Central Asia, to cultivate friendly relations with the ruler of Cabul. To give him assistance is a different matter. And how far we should assist him or pledge ourselves in any degree as to assistance in any shape in the future is a matter upon which I would rather not express an opinion, because I have not the means of forming an opinion. I should like to say one word, as respects the declaration of intentions and policy of the Emperor of Russia to which allusion has been made, and which Sir Roderick Murchison announced in this room the other day. I think Sir Henry Rawlinson's remarks have so far differed from me on that point, as to lead you to believe that I was wrong in expressing pleasure at that announcement. With every deference, I will say this, that while I thoroughly concur that it would be altogether inexpedient for us to go to the Emperor of Russia and say, "We are excited and annoyed by these rumours of your proceedings, we hope you will tell us that you are not going to injure us," I think, on the other hand, the Emperor of Russia, being a friendly power and having himself an interest in Central Asia, being at least as vulnerable in that quarter as we are, if the Emperor of Russia, as a friendly power in Europe, thinks proper of his own accord to come forward and tell us that we need not disturb ourselves, since he pledges himself not to interfere in Affghan politics, we may very well accept that assurance with the same frankness that he has made it. It is an indication of good will on the part of Russia, which we ought to accept, as tending to a good-understanding advantageous both to ourselves and to Russia. As I ventured to say before, if we throw dirt enough, some of it is sure to stick, so if we propound ever so false and ever so unreasonable ideas upon the subject of Russia through the press, it permeates the public mind; and it is, no doubt, the fact that the public mind in this country has been a good deal drawn to this subject. Then, there is another view to be taken. It is said that the native mind in India is disturbed by these reports. I will say at once that if, in any degree, the native mind in India is disturbed on this subject, we owe it entirely to ourselves. I believe nothing has happened in Central Asia, and nothing has come from Affghan sources sufficient seriously to disturb the natives. The natives of India know the Affghans as well as we do, and scarcely believe, and, at all events, do not act upon their stories. I think there is not much importance to be attributed to these stories among the natives, except so far as they are derived from our newspapers. Is it not the fact that our newspapers teem with alarming rumours with respect to Russia? We are told that Russia is here, that Russia is there, that Russia has crossed the Oxus, and so on, as if they were at our doors. These paragraphs appear in our English newspapers. You do not suppose that those paragraphs are not copied into the native newspapers? Of course they are. We do all we can to excite the native mind, and make them believe that we are really apprehensive of the Russians. Therefore, I think if the Emperor of Russia does come forward and say he does not intend to push towards our frontier or to interfere with Affghanistan, if we have the pledge of the Emperor of Russia, who is the responsible head of a great European State, that he will not interfere with Affghanistan, I say it will relieve us of a good deal of trouble, and especially of some of those reports which may affect the native mind. I do not allude to the Persian route, because I feel that that is a subject that has been fully discussed for the last thirty or forty years. The Russians are no nearer to us in that direction than they were; and in the presence of Sir Henry Rawlinson I would not attempt to give an opinion upon that subject.

The CHAIRMAN: Before the meeting breaks up, permit me to express your unanimous thanks to Mr. Campbell for his paper.