



"from Bamian to Sonmiani."

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Friday, June 18, 1880.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE, Bart., G.C.S.I., C.I.E., in the Chair.

“FROM BAMIAN TO SONMIANI.”

By MAJOR-GENERAL Sir FREDERIC J. GOLDSMID, K.C.S.I., C.B. &c., &c.

IN preparing for the press the “Life of Sir James Outram,” to be issued in the course of the present month, I was much struck by the length and arduous character of the journeys which that Officer accomplished in little more than three months of 1839, both in Afghanistan and Baluchistan. His return from Bamián to Sonmiáni, for instance, was a matter of 800 miles, allowing for deviations from the ordinary line of traffic between Kabul and Kwatta; yet this distance was traversed in 104 days, or from August 12th to November 23rd, during which he carried out a whole campaign against the Ghilzais, and assisted at the storming and capture of Kalát. Space did not admit of any very detailed notice of this episode in Outram’s brilliant career in the text of a biography; so it has occurred to me that a few words on the subject might not be deemed out of place in the theatre of this Institution, nor possibly unsuited to the pages of its Journal. Moreover, the interest attaching to Afghanistan is naturally greater at the present day than in a period of less marked political transition. Our relations with that country are to a certain extent critical and undetermined; for whatever orders may be issued or policy pursued—in every forecast of coming events, place must be reserved for a chapter of accidents. In any case, whether we advance or retire, annex or abandon, we cannot stand still. I think, therefore, you will agree with me, that if, by reconsidering an old and almost forgotten page of Indian history, we draw attention to, and obtain any enlightenment on those tracts which are the least known to Afghan cartographers and which have not been traversed in the late campaigns, we shall not have spent an unprofitable hour.

Before commencing the narrative at the period of Captain Outram’s departure from Bamián, let us glance at the circumstances immediately preceding his arrival at that place. On August 3rd, a few days after the fall of Ghazni, he had left the army of the Indus, under Lord Keane, at the village of Haidar-Khail, on its way to Kabul, where he hoped to rejoin it in camp. He had been just appointed to command a suddenly-organized expedition of no small importance. Intelligence had come in that Dost Muhammad was in full flight towards Bamián; and it was thought advisable to send Outram in immediate pursuit. Ten British Officers and 100 cavalry, regulars and irregulars, with 2,000 of Shah Shuja’s Afghans, were placed at his disposal. Had half the

¹ The Institution is indebted to Sir Francis Outram, Bart., for the use of the maps which illustrate this paper.

latter number been fairly effective, and animated with half the spirit of their foreign leaders, it is probable that the end would have been attained; but the auxiliary army was composed of many imaginary men in buckram; the real soldiers were but few; and the native commandant was a traitor. Captain Outram's "Rough Notes of the Campaign in Sindh and Afghanistan," originally printed for the perusal of personal friends, enable us to give a tolerably clear account of the expedition and its result.

"At 4 p.m." the writer tells us, "our party assembled, according to order, at the tents of the Envoy, where the Afghans were also to have been in readiness; but although we waited until dark, not more than 300 effective men could be mustered, the residue of those present, consisting of from 4 to 500 Afghan rabble, mounted upon *yábús*, and starved ponies. It was, however, stated that all who were still deficient would shortly follow, and our detail was for the present reinforced by 100 of Captain Christie's horse."

Bamián is situated at a distance of about 80 miles, as the crow flies, north-west of Haidar-Khail; but a direct course across such country would be an impossibility, so that the journey may be reckoned at 100. The Dost was supposed to be making thither by the road leading from Kabul; and Outram's wish was to intercept him by reaching that road at a convenient point to the westward. Hajji Khan Kákar, however, his faithless native associate, proposed moving due north, to a village in the *maidán*, or "plain" district, thence turning westward along one of the more frequented tracks connected with the capital. As to have sanctioned such a proceeding would have considerably diminished the chances of overtaking the object of their pursuit, who had already had a start of 24 hours, Outram insisted on attempting the more direct route, and would listen to no modified arrangements. Accordingly, they "marched during the first night about 32 miles, crossing several ranges of hills, and winding along the channels of many rivers, until 7 a.m.," when they reached Goda, described as "a small village * * in a confined, but fertile valley." Not more than 100 of their Afghan escort came up at this time, but the rest dropped in during the day, "bearing unequivocal evidence of the cause of their detention, in the plunder with which they were laden." The word *godar*, which is commonly used for a "pass" in the whole region between Karmán and Karáchi, may explain the name of a place situated at the foot of the mountain range where the track indicates the practicable thoroughfare.

The next evening they marched again. After accomplishing ten miles of bad road "along the channels of mountain torrents, and the face of precipitous hills," they bivouacked until two in the morning, awaiting the rising of the moon. A five hours' march then brought them to another small village, called "Kádir-i-Safid," on the western side of the Paghmán range which they had surmounted by a steep and lofty * * pass. Barely 50 of the Afghans had come up, but as before, the stragglers joined during the day. Information was here received that Dost Muhammad was at Yourt, a village one march in advance, and on the road between Kabul and Bamián; but Hajji

Khan made this a plea for halting, and urged the necessity of sending back for a reinforcement. The Amir, he declared, had upwards of 2,000 followers, and could not be encountered by the small body of men under the British Officers with any hope of success. Setting aside the argument as futile, Outram ordered a muster of the Afghans in the afternoon. At sunset, they had got together 750, but only 300 of these were respectably horsed for service.

By dint of threats and persuasion, the third march was begun; but the men had hardly advanced four miles, when it was reported that the guides had deserted. The night was pitch dark; the detachment was left "in the midst of interminable ravines, where no trace even of a footpath existed;" no alternative offered to a halt until daybreak. Yourt was not reached until 7 a.m. of the following day. Here Outram learnt that the Dost was at Kharzár, only 16 miles farther on, and entreated the Hajji to push forward; but all efforts were vain to induce his men to stir. At length, he promised to proceed in the evening. When evening came, and the British Officers were in the saddle, their guide repeated the story of the forenoon; there was nothing for his followers to eat; they would be in no condition to overtake the Dost, who was at the head of 2,000 men; so he deferred movement until the morning. That night again, he came to Outram's tent, and renewed his arguments in favour of awaiting re-inforcements, hinting that the Afghans with him were not all to be depended on, while their opponents were desperate, and determined to fight to the death. Failing to gain his end, he adopted the truly Oriental expedient of sitting outside the tent door, and conversing in an undertone with his chiefs. "The latter," we read, "were overheard to upbraid him for assisting the Faringis in their endeavour to arrest Dost Muhammad Khan, inquiring whether the Amir had ever injured him—and, although the result of their deliberations did not transpire, Hajji Khan was heard to admit the truth of all they had advanced. It rained and hailed violently during the night." Outram's escort had been subsisting for two days upon a little parched unripe corn. They were then on the Kabul and Bamián road; on the Bamián side of the Unai, a high, but not very steep pass over the Paghman; among the sources, and about to cross the main source of the Helmand river.

The following day, the fourth of the expedition, they marched at dawn. On reaching Kharzár, there were traces of the previous day's encampment to be seen, but no Dost Muhammad. The Amir had continued his flight towards Bamián. On went Outram and his countrymen with their own particular escort, but Hajji Khan and his Afghans remained behind. Scarcely had they started, when they were met by intelligence that the Dost was at Kalu, the next stage; whereupon Outram rode back to apprize the Hajji, and entreat him to bring up his Afghans without delay. Not succeeding in the attempt, he resumed his adventurous march and, after a nine hours' ride during which they crossed the Hajji-Gok, or perhaps Hajji-Khák Pass, at a height of 12,000 feet,¹ with snow

¹ 12,096½ is the mean height according to the estimates of Wood, Griffiths and Burnes.

observable 1,500 feet beneath—the party entered Kalu to find that the object of their pursuit “had departed so many hours previously,” and “must ere then have surmounted the Kalu Pass, the highest of “the Hindu Kush.” Their encampment was at the foot of the Kuh-i-Baba, the peak of which (the loftiest of that noble range), is stated by Outram to be “elevated 20,000 feet above the level of the sea, and “covered with eternal snow.” The Kuh-i-Baba, however, is a term applied by geographers to a continuation of the Hindu Kush and, in that sense, is crossed by the Hajji-Khák Pass just mentioned, as also by the Irak on the east, or the Pasht-i-Hajji Khak on the south of the Hajji-Khák—according to the season of the year. Wood considers the last to be the best of the three roads, though it is only open to caravans in July, August, and September. At the village of Kahzar, south of the Irak, the road divides—the track to the left leading over the Hajji-Khák and Kalu.

Early the next morning they were joined by Captains Taylor and Trevor, “with a reinforcement of 30 troopers, and about 300 “Afghans;” and Hajji Khan Kákar reappeared on the scene. This professed helper and adviser at once resumed his old practices, and used all his endeavours to detain Outram, even withholding the guides when he prepared to set out. But the small escort could now act independently of their so-called allies, for they were on the caravan road. So, pushing on across the “Shutar Gardan,” to within a march of Bamián, they halted on the banks of a stream running into the Oxus. This “Shutar Gardan,” or “camel’s neck,” is a name given in Afghanistan to more than one mountain pass, and corresponds with the “Deva Boiyún” of Asiatic Turkey. Doubtless the geographical feature is so described from its supposed similarity to that part of the useful animal’s body which is indicated. Outram’s estimate of its height makes it 3,000 feet above the Hajji-Khák; but this would seem to be somewhat too great an elevation. The “Kalu,” probably the same pass under another name, and mentioned by Burnes and Moorcroft, is said to be 12,480 feet.

Hajji Khan had sought to convince his English associates of the improbability that Dost Muhammad would attempt to escape from Bamián, beyond which place the roads had been closed against him; and now that the goal was so near at hand, he protested against the night march which they had proposed. Speaking of his own immediate followers, he said, “In broad daylight I may be able to take “them on, but if you do encounter Dost Muhammad Khan, not one of “the Afghans will draw a sword against him, nor will I be responsible “that they do not turn against yourself in the *mêlée*.” The horses had been knocked up by the day’s work, and it was finally resolved to await patiently until daybreak. Two Officers, however, were sent in advance to reconnoitre the Amir’s movements, and a council-of-war was held to lay down a programme for the morrow. This done, the occupants of the single *rauti*—or perhaps eleven of the thirteen, deducting the temporary ‘absentees’—passed a happy night under the exciting expectation of a decisive *coup-de-main*, so full of romance and perilous adventure that its realisation would have been a fortune to a

capable chronicler. Irrespective of daily vexations and trials, and the scantiness of their accommodation, they deserve credit for preserving a cheerful temper under circumstances of considerable discomfort. We read that they had "little to eat, nothing whatever to drink, and no bed on which to lie, saving sheepskin cloaks." Had they known of the disappointment in store, they might not have been so patient. At dawn, when in the act of mounting their horses, information was brought to them that the Amir, instead of halting on the previous day at Bamián, had pushed on one march in advance and was about to proceed still farther—for he had determined to seek the protection of an independent Uzbek chief, outside the limits of Shah Shuja's Government. Arrival at Bamián, and the presence there of some 70 horsemen dismissed from the Amir's service, enabled them to obtain confirmation of this dispiriting intelligence. According to Colonel Durand, there may have been discretion in the Kakar's efforts to delay the passage of the Kalu. "Akbar Khan, "with a party of picked men," he writes, "kept the top of the Pass "for 24 hours after the departure of Dost Muhammad and his family; "and had Outram, with a few straggling troopers, whose horses were "worn out with the fatigue of surmounting lofty mountain-passes, "reached the summit before Akbar Khan had moved off, the latter "could not have failed roughly to handle his pursuers."

Three unsatisfactory days were spent in the vain hope of receiving a reply to a letter addressed by Outram to the Chief accompanying the Amir. There was afterwards no course left but to return to the Head-quarters' camp, which they expected to find pitched at Kabul. We now begin the journey from Bamián to Sonmiáni, the whole extent of which seems to possess interest at the present hour. I propose to consider it in three sections only:—Bamián to Kabul; Kabul to Kwatta; Kalát to Sonmiáni. The link between Kwatta and Kalat is tolerably well known.

The first three marches to the eastern side of the Hajji-Khák Pass were over the same ground as already noted. Twelve miles are reckoned to the foot of the Kalu along the channel of a stream falling into the Oxus. Another 12 miles brought the party across the Kalu to the foot of the Hajji-Khák, the ascent of the former "occupying two-and-a-half, and the descent one-and-a-half hours." Eighteen or nineteen miles farther, they had crossed by "an easy ascent of about half-a-mile," the top of the Hajji-Khák, where they found the pools frozen, and passed "by the bed of a stream the whole way," to Gardan Diwal on the Upper Helmand. On the fourth day the march was thus described:—"To Sar-i-Chashma, nominally the source of the "Kabul River, but we had in reality followed a rivulet for 10 miles "before reaching these copious springs which here unite with it. "Five hours in the saddle. Estimated distance 17 or 18 miles, the "first five or six leading over numerous steep stony ascents and "declivities to the summit of a pass, the name of which has escaped "me, and thence descending the whole way through a narrow valley." The pass is undoubtedly the Unái; and as to the "Sar-i-Chashma," literally "fountain-head," Colonel Macgregor has mentioned the fact,

also apparent from maps, that there may be "another source about 12 "miles farther west, on the east declivity of the Unái ridge"—independently of other tributaries to the Kabul river observed in the same locality. A march of 17 miles to Kot-i-Ashru, and one of 20 miles over the "Oomje" Pass, completed the distance to the capital. I am a little uncertain as to the direction of these 37 miles, or how far removed is the "Oomje" from, should it not be identical with, the "Arghandeh Pass." The latter, we are told, may be avoided by the traveller from Kabul to Bokhara, if he take the Ghazni road as far as Maidán, and then march up the Kabul river.

Outram makes the whole distance from Bamián to Kabul 96 or 97 miles; whereas other authorities reckon it as much as 107, or even 112. But the precise routes followed may not have been the same; and we have shown that there are two or three used by *káfílas*. In any case, we are treating of a most important outlet from Kabul into Turkistan, of which Bamián is a significant landmark; and it is well to know that this particular section of a highway reaching to Tashkand, however short, is not one to be traversed at all seasons, nor easily at any season. In the first Afghan War, owing to the difficulties presented at the comparatively low Pass of the Arghandeh, 15 miles out of Kabul, a troop of horse artillery took seven hours to make a march of eight miles; and nearer Bamián, as it has been shown, the passes increase threefold in importance.

Three or four days after his arrival at Kabul, the services of Captain Outram were temporarily placed at the disposal of the British Envoy and Minister with His Majesty Shah Shuja'-u-l-Mulk, "for the purpose of conducting an expedition into certain disturbed districts "lying between Kabul and Kandahar, in order to tranquillise the "disaffected Ghilzai tribes, none of whom had yet submitted to the "King." A few days later he received more detailed instructions on the proposed mission. He was to depose, and if possible, arrest certain refractory chiefs and to "establish" certain newly-appointed governors; to punish certain malefactors, and to reduce certain forts, if found to be in possession of the adherents of his late associate, Hajji Khan Kákar, who had been arrested on a charge of treason and conniving at the Dost's escape. It will be seen that a large amount of work was to be done, and a large extent of country to be traversed, before this duty could be fulfilled. But a respectable force was confided to him. There was a wing of the Shah's 1st Cavalry, and Gurkha Battalion, with Abbott's battery of 9-pounders from Kabul; to be reinforced from Kandahar by a regiment of the Shah's Infantry, half of the Shah's 2nd Cavalry, and a Brigade of Horse Artillery. Moreover, he had the offer of 1,000 Afghan Cavalry, but his experience of these men, and the difficulties of providing so large a number with forage, and restraining the troopers from plunder, caused him to reduce the figure accepted to 500. These, again, were "divided into "small parties varying in strength," and placed under the orders of twenty Afghan chiefs, over whom "Muhammad Usman Khan, a "nobleman of great consideration, and uncle to the King," was the head.

We now come to the second division of our subject, embracing the large tract of country from Kabul to Kwatta, east of Ghazni and Kandahar, towns not visited by Outram in his downward march. A glance at the map will show that the line followed is over ground quite distinct from that of which the several stages have become more or less familiar to us through reports made during the present war as in former years. It is a line which, at least in part, owes its place in our maps at all to this particular expedition among the Ghilzais or Ghilji, and Kakars. Let us say one word of these races by the light of present knowledge. The first are described by Bellew as "a numerous and wide-spread people, extending from Jellalabad in the east to Kaláti Ghilji in the west, and occupying the adjoining slopes "and spurs of Sufed Koh, Suleman Koh, and Gul Koh (west of "Ghazni)." Up to this day they have remained in a state of quasi-independence of the ruling power, in whatever form displayed, and have habitually exercised influence over the Duráni chiefs. As regards our own relations with them, they have been and now are hostile to our armies, and jealous of our interference in the affairs of their country; but Bellew, whose experience is great, does not look upon the Ghilzai as "an implacable foe to us." He thinks, rather, that he is one of those who "by judicious management can be converted into a very useful friend." It should not be forgotten that from this race sprung an independent Prince of Kandahar, whose son became for a time Shah of Persia; and that it was only after a struggle of years that they abandoned their claim of sovereignty in Afghanistan. The Kákars for the most part inhabit the country in the south-east, and are to be found in the Valley of Pishin and about the Indus frontier. Towards our occupation they have quite recently shown themselves aggressive; but there is no reason to believe that their enmity is general or deep-rooted. MacGregor estimates that they possess from 14,000 to 20,000 fighting men. "They are," he says, "on friendly terms with, and consider themselves brethren of the "Ghilzais." Should Kandahar be retained, I have little doubt they would become as well-behaved as other Afghans—not from the sense of helplessness in the presence of a foreign army, but under the influence of the prestige belonging to civilized government.

I will hazard a parenthesis on this word. Among the many good and sound reasons for retention of Kandahar, it seems to me that one has been comparatively lost sight of; and that is, the "prestige" attaching to its possession. Command of the southern approaches may appear sufficient in a military point of view; but the effect of such a modified position (or half measure) upon the surrounding tribes, as upon all Afghans, and westward of Afghanistan, must fall far short of the mark of the other. The holder of Brentford or Hounslow has not the European reputation of the holder of London. In such respect, not even the occupation of Versailles or Fontainebleau, with their royal and historical associations, has anything like the moral weight of that of Paris. And if deficiency in this matter of "prestige" involves, as it well may, a loss of life (to what extent it need not be determined), is not the consideration military as well as political?

On the 7th October, Outram made his first march to "Chariser, "6½ miles on the Logar road." This, despite the discrepancy of spelling and distance, should be "Chár Asiah," the heights between which place and Kabul were so gallantly carried by the 72nd and native troops, 40 years afterwards, almost to the very day. He continued his march on the 8th to Muhammad Agha, on the Logar river, 15 miles, "through an open valley and over a good road." The next day he halted in the vain hope that his Afghans would come up, for he had left Kabul with no more of the numerical force at his disposal than 300 of the Shah's Hindustani cavalry, and 200 of Skinner's Horse. On the 10th he marched 11 miles to Bábus; on the 11th, 13½ to Mulkabad; and on the 12th, 19¼ to Kala-Ali Jah (or Aliján), in the Kharwar district. The last place was reached over the Kharwar Pass, the ascent by which is described "as three-quarters of a mile in length, extremely steep and difficult, and infinitely worse than that of the Kohjak." MacGregor has noticed three passes, one east and one south of Kharwar, and one between the two; but evidently not that traversed by Outram, who was detained for some hours getting over the baggage camels. After arresting certain of the relatives, and seizing five forts of a suspected chief; despatching prisoners, and taking the best measures which offered for the future security of a thinly-inhabited tract, which has the reputation of being "a favourite haunt of robbers"—proceedings which took up four whole days—the party moved into the Zurmál valley. Here, according to the Rough Notes, "some doughty Durrani chieftain was formerly defeated and slain;" and the locality had so dread a character, that "none of the kings of the country ever ventured to enter into it, unless at the head of a large army." * * Passing two ranges of hills (no special pass is mentioned), after a march of 17 miles, they arrived at the Fort of Fath Ullah Khan, where they were joined on the day following, the 18th October, by a wing of the 16th Bengal Native Infantry. The Shah's Afghans, it should be stated, had made their appearance in Kharwar, and were turned to account in various ways. Mir Alam Khan, one of the newly appointed Ghilji governors, made himself conspicuously useful and rendered valuable service.

On October 21, Outram made a night march to surprise some "Kanjak banditti," of whom he had heard, among mountains 18 miles to the eastward. These, shown in his "Notes" as "Indran," are doubtless intended for what are known as "Jadrán"; they were described many years ago by Broadfoot, to be "chief of the Sulimán chain," and a range which "runs north-north-east." The short account of this expedition is thus graphically given:—

"Arrived, as the day broke, at a deep dell occupied by the gang, and "while the Infantry advanced from the front, I despatched the Horse in "two bodies to cut off retreat from flanks and rear. The ground "being very broken and difficult, however, most of the enemy had "found time to ascend a precipitous hill, along the ridge of which they "must have escaped, had I not fortunately been mounted on an "exceedingly active horse, and thus been enabled to gallop ahead, and "deter them from advancing until the cavalry came up. Finding

"themselves completely surrounded, they made a most stout defence, and maintained their position until their ammunition was nearly all expended, when, on a general rush being made from every quarter at once, they were induced to throw down their arms; after 16 of the most desperate of their body had been killed, and several others wounded. Even the women assisted in the fray, by handing ammunition to their husbands, and throwing stones at our troops. The loss on our side amounts to three Sepoys and one horse killed, and two Lieutenants, one Risaldar, one Dafadar, and several men and horses wounded. In the evening we returned with 112 prisoners, comprising some women and children who, with the men killed in the attack, form the whole of the Kanjak gang. Not a soul contrived to escape, and the whole of their arms and property, together with 112 camels, have fallen into our hands; nearly all of the latter bearing the Company's mark, showing that they were stolen from the British Army during its advance."

This extract illustrates so clearly the active character of the work required at the hands of Captain Outram, that we shall confine ourselves to a mere geographical consideration of the remainder of his journey to Kwatta. From the mountain range he appears to have returned westward to the village of Shorkach; thence to have moved from the westward to Chalak, and southward to Mushkhail; thence to have reached Panna to the west, by a northerly sweep (and seemingly across the Katasang hills), through Malinda, turning thence again to the south, and from Panna to have pushed on to Ukori and Ushlan—sending back to Kabul the worked out detachment of the Shah's 1st Cavalry from the former place, and being strengthened by the Puna Auxiliary Horse at the latter. These seven stages amounted in all to 96 miles; and it may be well to see what collateral evidence we have of their respective positions in the map.

Shor Kach is mentioned by MacGregor, quoting Broadfoot, as "a village in the Karoti country," at the source of the Dwa Gomál branch of the Gomál river. The Karoti (or Kharoti) Ghilji form part of that well-known community which, carrying on a large traffic between India and Afghanistan, is generally designated Povindah. Chalak and Mushkhail are shown by Thornton to be villages situated, one at 32, the other at 40 miles south-east of Ghazni. Malinda is most probably Melanai, reached by a return movement towards the last named town; and if so, it is described by MacGregor, after Outram and Broadfoot, as "a cluster of huts, inhabited by Andars," whom Bellew accepts as a true "Türk" clan. In MacGregor again we find, of Panna, that it is "inhabited by about 500 Andar Ghilzais;" that "supplies for a small force could be obtained" there; that among the adjacent hillocks "are camps of shepherds and Loháni merchants who emigrate in winter—and that 'there is a supply of water from kárez'"—this being the ordinary local watercourse. The same authority acknowledges Outram's diary to be his warrant for stating Ukori to be "a village in the Ghilzai country, about 30 miles north of 'Lake Abistáda:'" but quotes Broadfoot only in stating Oshlan to be "two forts in the Ghazni district, with 20 families." Now I maintain

that had it not been for Captain Outram's expedition to the Ghilji, not one of these places would have been found in map or gazetteer at the present day; yet this Officer's work is connected, as it were, with Melanai and Ukori only. The fact is, that Thornton must have got his information from Outram's report or Broadfoot's, and Broadfoot was really employed under Outram.

In February, 1854, Outram, when detained in Calcutta, wrote for Lord Dalhousie's perusal a very valuable paper on the possibility of an invasion of India from the westward. As much of the matter contained in it will be shortly before the public, I will now merely refer to one passage in which he expressed his belief that Government were in possession of "precise information" respecting the Pass entering the Suliman range at Derah Ismâil Khan. The grounds for that belief were that he himself had, "when occupied in the Eastern Ghilzai country, deputed Lieutenant Broadfoot, of the Bengal Engineers, to examine it;" which Officer he certified had "accomplished the somewhat perilous undertaking very effectually."

Following the pages of the Diary, we observe that it is thus recorded of the march southward from Ushlan:—"Advanced to Dila, 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles, "situated on the great Salt Lake mentioned by Sultan Babar, and of "which I estimate the diameter to be about 12 miles. On the banks of "the Ghazni stream, which here flows into it, thousands of dead fish "were strewn." With reference to the latter circumstance Broadfoot explains, that "the fish brought down by the Ghazni river from its "upper parts, on entering the salt part, sicken and die, and may be "taken in all stages of illness by the hand." MacGregor estimates the length of the lake to be 17 miles, and the breadth 15. The elevation Thornton places at 7,076 feet, "taking the height of Ghazni "and the fall of the river as the basis of his calculation." The words *âb-istâda*, meaning stagnant water, "must not be confounded with "the proper name of a place. From Dila, Outram marched the same "evening 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles to Mansur, and by pushing on another 12 miles to "Firuz, had completed 42 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles in the twenty-four hours. Mansur is "called by MacGregor, Mansur Karez; and it is said to consist of six "forts" belonging to the Taraki Ghilzais of the Shib Khail section. "It is situated at the south-west corner of the lake; whereas Firuz "is reckoned at about 12 miles to its south."

A busy week now ensued. On October 6th, Outram made a long march to the south-west with the object of seizing a powerful Ghilzai chief in the fort bearing his name, Kala-i-Abdul Rahman Khan, otherwise called Kala Margha or Nawa Margha. Though he succeeded in surprising him in his stronghold, and had made arrangements for an assault on the following day, yet by some mischance the watching officer allowed his man to escape during the night. The next two days were taken up with mining and demolishing the fort, and on the evening of the second day, Outram rode over 20 miles to General Wiltshire's camp at Haidar-Khail. The General was moving the Bombay column in a direct line from Ghazni to Kwatta, and halted a day to enable the new comer to organize a force for further action, leaving him behind on continuing his downward march. He rejoined the

force, however in the evening, and marched with it for the next four stages, Kistni, 12 miles, Goondan, over the Goondan Pass, 11 miles, Sewa, $9\frac{3}{4}$ miles, and Sperioury, $11\frac{3}{4}$ miles. The first of these places may be undoubtedly identified with Kisháni, "117 miles from Ghazni;" the second is the Ghúndáo of the Quartermaster-General's route of the Bombay Army, the Pass being explained by "a road across a low range of hills very difficult for guns;" the third is doubtful, but the last is most probably Spinwari, which Colonel Neill Campbell has explained to be the name given to a district as well as "the ruins of a city near a river in a cultivated valley * * * 156 miles from Ghazni by the direct road."

About 10 miles from Spinwari, on the way to Kwatta, are a few huts bearing the name of the river on the bank of which they are situated—Surkh-áb, the "red water;" and at much the same distance, in the same line, is the Sar-i-Surkháb, a place of encampment near the bed of the above river, which pursues a winding course through a range of hills. The road by the river bed is described as "difficult for guns." This whole distance of 20 odd miles accomplished by the returning Bombay column, was, however, considerably exceeded by Outram, who, in his capacity of soldier-Political, had to inflict punishment on certain Bárakzáis who had plundered and cruelly treated the members of a *Káfila* or caravan proceeding from Kandahár towards India. In order to effect his object, he took out a squadron of H.M.'s 4th Light Dragoons, the Púna Auxiliary Horse, four 24-pound howitzers, some Sappers and Miners, and a wing of the 19th Bombay Native Infantry under Colonel Stalker, from Spinwari to Maruf, a point far to the westward. In fact, the ground he got over was that of two sides of an equilateral triangle, compared to that of the column, which proceeded over the base or third side. For, having secured his recusant chiefs, disposed of his prisoners and destroyed his fort, he rejoined General Wiltshire at Sar-i-Surkháb by a twenty-mile march from Maruf. His next four marches with the General were short. On October 20th, fourteen, and the 21st, eight miles, to places which he has not named, were, according to the Quartermaster-General, to Khúdu Chaman, a native encampment on the banks of a small river, at the foot of a range of hills; and to Kadini, a collection of sundry huts. Before arriving at the first place, we learn from the official report that "the road reaches the summit of the Surkháb range half-way; then descending, comes an undulating valley, in general very difficult for guns." Between the first and second places, it winds by the river bed and crosses another section of difficult hilly country. On October 22nd Gokarak (twelve miles) looks much like a misprint for Tokarak, a halting-place 92 miles from Ghazni, but that in the Quartermaster-General's route there is a distinct "Kotarik." In any case, if there be two, or indeed three places bearing the names respectively shown, they must be very close together. The road, we are told, "crosses another range of hills midway; ascent and descent rugged, stony, and very difficult for guns." Outram describes it as passing "through a succession of mountains which, from their fantastic figures, might be likened to the ocean petrified

"during a storm: excepting an occasional shepherd's tent, no human habitation has been observed the whole way." On the 23rd there was a halt, and on October 24th, the column marched 12 miles and 3 furlongs to Kach Toba, or, according to the "Rough Notes," 12 miles to "Oker Sahib." Next day, the march was of about 8 miles, to near Toba, one of the forts of Hajji Khán Kákar, which was found by Outram to be deserted. The three following marches were to Shah Kuli or Shahr Galái; Barshuhra, or Barshora, and Surkháb the fort of Páiyanda Khan, mainly along a river bed through hills, but ending in the "extensive and cultivated plain" of Peshin. Outram's distances are a little in excess of those shown in the Quartermaster-General's route—40 instead of 38 miles for the whole distance. At the gorge of the Pass traversed on the road to Surkháb, was another and a larger fort of Hajji Khan. This, although not occupied when first reconnoitred, it was afterwards found necessary to demolish, owing to the conduct of the Kakars, who had threatened our baggage and cut down our followers. To accomplish so desirable an end, Outram was detained for two days; and he had to make a double march of 25 miles to overtake the General at Kushlak (Kujlak?) on the 30th October. On the 31st he marched in with the column to Kwatta, about 11 miles. Since entering the plains of Peshin, they had come upon several villages and forts, cultivation, and fine streams of water.

It will be foreign to our purpose to give any particulars of the siege and capture of Kalát, which occurred on the 13th November. The event is circumstantially related in history, and Outram's own account has been reproduced in the pages of his Life, he himself having acted a conspicuous part on the occasion. We may note that the road from Kwatta to Kalát is not given in detail by that Officer, whose journal of the first seven marches he states to have been mislaid. But it is no sealed book, and has been frequently traversed and described by Englishmen.

We now come to the third and last section of the "Journey from "Bamián."

At the termination of the siege, Captain Outram was relieved from military duty, and had to make the best of his way to Bombay in charge of General Wiltshire's despatches to the Government of that Presidency. He would, however, not return by the route he came, or through Sind at all, but endeavour to keep to the territory of the Khan of Kilat and his quasi feudatory, the Jám of Baila, reaching the sea at the port of Sonmiáni. There were two roads by which this was to be effected; the more easterly one passing through Khozdar and Wadd, the other through Nál, said to be the better for caravans. The first had been traversed and reported on by Colonel Pottinger in 1810, nearly thirty years before. Outram therefore resolved upon exploring the Nál route; he rightly considered it to be a "point of great importance to ascertain the existence, or otherwise, of a practicable road for troops from "Kandahar and Shál, through Baluchistan, *viâ* Kalát, to the sea;" and General Wiltshire's views agreed with Captain Outram's.

Colonel Pottinger and Captain Christie had proceeded upward, it

may be remembered, from Sonmiáni, in the assumed characters of agents to a Hindu merchant, disguising themselves, in the first instance, by partly changing the European for the native dress; afterwards, by shaving their heads and adopting the entire native costume. They passed through Baila, the capital of the Jám's country, and by the bed of the mountain-river Urnách. It is apparently between these two points that the road bifurcates, and that the earlier travellers took the direction of Túr-kabar and Wadd. At Khozdár they met with an Afghan trader, purchasing sheep to be driven up to Kandahár, a distance of some hundreds of miles. This person, we are assured, after sitting for some hours with the two Englishmen, left them under the impression that they were what they represented themselves to be—in other words, “fully satisfied” that his new acquaintances were true Musalmáns. At Sohrab, the road from Nál fell into their own. Thus, for the eighty miles or so between Sohrab and the junction to the southward, we must limit the extent of the alternative tracks. The rest of the distance between Kalát and Sonmiáni is—with one slight exception near the sea—to all intents and purposes accomplished by means of the same road.

Outram adopted the Afghan costume, and was accompanied by two Saiyids of Shal and their two armed attendants, together with one servant of his own. Six in all, they left the British camp in the dead of the night, mounted “on four ponies and two camels,” taking provisions for themselves, and as much grain for the animals as could conveniently be carried. They started on the 15th October, a day earlier than intended, so that they might precede, if it were possible, the tidings of the death of the chiefs of Wadd and Nál, both of whom had been killed in the combat which ended in the capture of Kalát by the British. On the 16th, after a moonlight ride of four hours, they halted at Rodinjo, resuming their march at day-break to Sohrab, a cluster of villages. Both localities were deserted, owing to the winter, when migration to a warmer climate is thought desirable. During the march they had been joined by “many groups of fugitive women” “from Kalát,” who recognised and addressed the Saiyids, a circumstance which placed our traveller in an awkward predicament; for one of the families thus brought into contact with him was that of the Khan's minister, killed at the siege, from whose wardrobe the prize agents had issued the very raiment in which Outram was attired. They bivouacked with intent to stay the night among the walls of a deserted village; but the intrusion of inquisitive strangers determined them not to await the dawn, so they shifted their position to a stream of clear water six miles farther on their downward road. Altogether they had been some 19 out of the 24 hours in the saddle. On the 17th, they continued their journey during ten hours to Parkur, where, among the ruins, they found a so-called “comfortable asylum for the night,” and “were exempted from the society of strangers.” The next day was one of mishap and inconvenience. They had to pass Nál without going into the village, remaining in concealment in the jungle three miles beyond; and the members of their party, detached to procure grain, missed their

hiding-place. Eventually, however, all came right; they pushed onward again and, out of the day and night, were 17 hours in the saddle. On the 19th, they bivouacked in the bed of the Urnáchi River, where a little green grass enabled them to give their horses "the first forage" they had possessed time or opportunity to procure, "the poor beasts having subsisted upon a scanty allowance of grain brought . . . from Kalát" and afterwards added to at Nál. "On our entering that valley," writes Outram, "the sight of the luxuriant green tamarisk bushes was really quite refreshing, forming as they did the most agreeable contrast to the brown and stunted vegetation of Afghanistan, which ever seems as though it had been scorched by fire or blighted by frost. With exception of a few juniper bushes in the Kakar Hills, this was indeed the very first green foliage that I had seen since leaving Kabul; and its appearance, together with that of mat-rushes, and many familiar Indian trees, such as the *Babul* and *Neem*, of which I had entirely lost sight after entering Afghanistan, served not a little to enliven my last night's moonlight march. To me, even the scanty yellow grass on the side of the hills which bound the Sohrab Valley proved a gratifying sight; for nowhere betwixt that place and Kabul is grass to be found growing wild, saving where it occasionally fringes the running water-courses. During this day's march we saw neither a human habitation nor a human being."

Outram's own words may now be quoted freely, to describe the remainder of the journey into Sonmiáni:—"The moon was almost at the full, and we marched at midnight of the 20th, in a sequestered dell, lying in the very heart of the hills, and seemingly quite isolated from the rest of the world by the wild sterile mountains surrounding it: we passed several fields of *jowári*, the first I had beheld since leaving India, and also some straggling hamlets. Notwithstanding the peaceful appearance of their secluded abode, the inhabitants of this valley are represented to be a particularly wild and savage race, and we therefore passed silently on our way, without communicating with, or arousing a soul. We next surmounted the Purali range, which appears to be higher than that styled Urnáchi; and here my hopes of the practicability of this route, which had hitherto been sanguine, were completely extinguished. The road over this pass, which I saw no means of otherwise turning, is a path so narrow, steep, and rocky—sometimes winding along the sides of precipitous hills, at others through narrow fissures in the hard rock—as to be utterly impracticable for guns, and incapable of being made so, unless at immense cost of time and labour."

From the sketch map accompanying the "Rough Notes," it is quite clear that the above noted Pass over the Purali Mountains and Pottinger's Bārán Lukh, or "Rain Pass," are quite distinct localities. It is not improbable that our distinguished chairman may have had occasion to ask information hereon, in the course of his recent investigations into the practicability of the Sonmiáni routes. Pottinger places the bottom of his pass 14 miles north of Khánaji, and

mentions that he was "about an hour and a half ascending to the top of it, where the path for one hundred yards or upwards is very narrow, and would almost seem to have been excavated through the solid rock." There was no descent from the summit, and he continued his way towards Khozdar and Kalát, along a stony plain to the bed of the Ūrnách.

After 11 hours in the saddle, Outram dismounted and, with his companions, passed the day in a ravine, affording "a scanty supply of water and a little green pasture for the cattle." He relates how the "Bombay Times," which he then took occasion to read, had been obtained from the hands of a Baluch who, ere the heat of action had abated, held it up to a party of soldiers, in default of more orthodox vouchers, as a warrant for considerate treatment; and he adds that he was surprised in his reading by the apparition of a ferocious-looking native, "armed with a long matchlock," whom he suddenly perceived scanning him from the top of the bank. In the evening he pursued his journey for some hours over a range easy of ascent and descent. He continues:—

"The road generally wound along smooth firm sandy beds of dry water channels which, in their descent, gradually widened to the expanse of a magnificent river, though totally destitute of water. The banks are sometimes flanked by sloping hills, and skirted with shady tamarisk trees of gigantic growth, at others hemmed in by bare perpendicular rocks of great altitude. In the former case the hills generally open into wide valleys; in the latter, the iron-girt walls contract to a narrow channel." Except the mysterious visitor specified, he did not see a single inhabitant of the country during that day's long march of 18 hours. "The bold mountain scenery throughout the whole distance, alternately cast in deep shadow, and next lighted up by the brightest moonbeams, was striking and beautiful; and in many clumps of the 'prickly pear,' I had the pleasure," he says, "of recognising an old Indian acquaintance which conjured up pleasing reminiscences of boar and tiger hunts." A march of $9\frac{1}{2}$ hours the next day, advanced them nearly 30 miles on their way to the sea. They bivouacked on the bank of the Purali River, and Outram's natives profited by the opportunity afforded to indulge "in a fatted lamb." He himself continued to observe his usual diet of dates and water, not to infringe the rule of abstinence befitting his assumed character. Rising early on the morning of the 22nd October, they sought to pass Baila before dawn, but were delayed by the provoking inquisitiveness of the members of a caravan met with outside the town. In the evening they resumed their march and, travelling through the night, reached Sonmiáni, by the Láyári route, at 10 in the forenoon, having been 14 hours in the saddle.

There are, no doubt, great physical obstacles to be overcome to make the road available for military purposes between Sonmiáni and Kalát; but it must be remembered that nearly 40 years ago it was found practicable for the passages of troops and, I believe, guns. We have yet to learn the result of recent experiences, and whether any more promising tracks than those through Nál and Khozdar have

been discovered, to facilitate the transit. I am informed, on excellent authority, that a troop of Horse Artillery and two companies of the 41st Regiment marched from Mustang, *viâ* Kalât, to Sonmiani in about September, 1841. How the former fared, particulars might doubtless be obtained; but none have been supplied to which I can at this moment refer. As to the infantry, I learn that they experienced no special difficulty; they had been provided, for purposes of carriage, with 850 camels collected in the neighbourhood of Mustang.

The town of Sonmiani I have myself visited when *en route* from Karachi to Gwádar on the Makrán coast. A few notes made upon it in 1862 may not be inappropriate; but as regards its trade and natural resources, I must refer for detailed information to those more capable of satisfying natural curiosity on so interesting a subject. Sonmiani suggested to me the idea of Karáchi prior to British occupation, being little more than a fishing village, as its name "miáni" implies; why the prefix of *son*, "gold" should be accorded to it seemed hard to divine. The houses were built of mud and few had a substantial appearance. The *bádbán*, or ventilator, was seen on the roof of the greater number, yet the climate can be little different from that of Karáchi. The thermometer during our stay (in December), ranged from about 64° to 80° in the day-time. There were there about 300 houses, of which at least one-third were Hindu. Beside these, consisting chiefly of Banyas of the Loháno division, there were a vast number of Mohános or fishermen, and some Mehmans and Khojas. The customs were farmed at 13,000 rupees for two years. Articles coming from the interior were taxed an *ad valorem* duty of one anna in the rupee, half of which was levied at Baila, and half at Sonmiáni. The same practice prevailed with the land traffic from Karáchi, the half exaction having effect at a midway station. The harbour has long ago been pronounced by scientific authority unfitted to receive large vessels, which would have to anchor outside, in 6 or 7 fathoms water. This anchorage is, however, unprotected from southerly and westerly winds, and is subject to a heavy ground swell. Lieutenant Montrieu reported that there was a bar across the harbour, the channel through which deepened over "into a channel on the eastern shore, terminating at "about 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ mile westward of the town." He added that on the western side of the entrance there was "only a boat channel leading "into a deep-water channel."

The road from Karáchi to Sonmiáni, 49 miles, presents no insurmountable obstacle to the march of troops of all arms; it is broad and well defined for the few miles in our own territory. up to the verge of the Hab river, though a mere pathway on the Baila side. Some miles out of Karáchi it rises to the passage of the low hills terminating in Cape Monz; then descends into the valley of the Hab, rises to higher and higher ground up to the Lakh Bedok, and then drops abruptly upon the low ground between the sea-shore and the nearly parallel sandhills. The character of the soil is sandy and alluvial. On the line of march, the prickly pear and wild caper abound, together with the feathered and many common grasses of

Sind; and as Sonmiáni is approached, the tamarisk is, for a brief interval, eclipsed by mangoes, and other trees of garden growth. If there were a good practicable road from Sonmiáni to Kalát, it could be entered at any time by land from Karáchi without any material difficulty.

To return for an instant to Captain Outram. On arrival at Karáchi he was well received by Sett Nao Mull, a Hindu merchant of repute, of late years rewarded for his good offices to the British Government by admission to the Companionship of the Star of India. Provided by the same attentive host with a boat, he proceeded on board with his Afghan pony, of which he relates that, although not more than 13 hands in height, it had carried himself and saddle-bags, "weighing" altogether upwards of 16 stone, the whole distance from Kalát in "seven days and a half (an average of nearly 47 miles per day), "during which time he had passed 111 hours on its back." His appearance on arrival at Karáchi is thus described:—"A small *pagri* " (native turban) composed of a twist about as thick as a finger "sparsely bound about his head, the hair cropping through the "interstices; white native tunic and trousers; native slippers; all "very dirty and mean looking. There was no saddle on the pony, "merely a cloth over his back." From Karáchi he embarked, on the evening of November 24th, for Bombay. Not many days after arrival there, he learnt that, at midnight, on the date of his departure from Sonmiani, the son of Wali Muhammad Khan, Chief of Wadd, killed at the siege of Kalát, had reached that port from the interior, in pursuit of him, expressing much disappointment and irritation at missing his intended prey.

Colonel Sir WILLIAM MEREWETHER, K.C.S.I., C.B. : As I happened to have been present in some parts of this country, I may perhaps be able to throw a little additional light upon the subject, and I therefore venture to say a few words in continuation of the lecture by my friend, Sir F. Goldsmid. There is not the least doubt that with the aid of modern science and the appliances we can bring to bear through our military schools, the road from Sonmiani to Kelat might be made perfectly practicable. As for the "Baranlak," or Baran Pass, I am certain (I have never been there, but I have had it described to me by a number of people) that it is not nearly so bad as the Devil's Staircase, as it was called, that we went through in Abyssinia, which in six weeks was made by two companies of Sappers practicable, not only for field guns but for heavy artillery, and Baranlak might be made equally so. The difficulty of the route is in the matter of supplies. Sir Richard Temple inquired into the subject, and he will bear me out when I say that from Sonmiani to Kelat, except at Bailla, there are scarcely any towns or bazaars where supplies can be obtained. It would be necessary, therefore, if troops were sent in that direction, to place beforehand supplies at the different halting places. Then there is another point that ought always to be borne in mind, that if we had not possession of Scinde, if we had possession of Beluchistan only, it would perhaps be advisable to utilize that route; but having possession of Scinde, having a railway that extends from Karachi up to Sukkur, and having also the river Indus with a fleet of steamers upon it to carry our heavy material, I think it is scarcely necessary to devote much time or expense in forming a road from Sonmiani to Kelat. In addition to the railroad I have mentioned, we have the further advantage of that portion of railway which, through the energy and the active support given to it by our Chairman, we have recently heard has been completed from Sukkur to Sibi, to within 96 miles of the plateau of Southern Afghanistan; up to that point it is carried on the broad gauge, and I confess I should be happy to hear that the plans and estimates, when sent in, had

not shown such a fearful array of figures as to prevent its being carried on the same gauge the whole way to Candahar. The railway must have great military as well as political and commercial importance, therefore it would be an immense advantage that the line connecting Candahar with the Indus valley should be of the same gauge as that which connects the Indus valley with Calcutta and Karachi. Be that as it may, it is of the utmost importance that this railway communication should be carried out, and if it cannot be taken on the broad gauge, I believe it is proposed that the narrow gauge should be substituted from Sukkur. Having that railway communication, and having also water communication to Sukkur, we must necessarily be able to carry our military stores and troops with far greater facility and speed by that route than by the land route from Sonmiani to Kelat and Quetta. From Sonmiani to Kelat is, I believe, about 354 miles; and from that again there is the additional distance on to Quetta. The whole of the route is through hilly country. Except in some narrow valleys, there is scarcely a bit of plain ground; it is all sand and stone, and when you have to move troops the advantages of iron will be preferred to sand and stone.

Colonel MALCOLM GREEN, C.B.: I can testify that the part between Nal (where I was for some time stationed) and Quetta is perfectly passable, there being no obstruction.

Sir RICHARD TEMPLE: I may perhaps be permitted to corroborate what has fallen from Sir William Merewether. The importance which, in the days of Pottinger and before the annexation of Scinde, attached to the line which has been described in the lecture has of late considerably diminished, for precisely the reasons that have been so well stated by Sir William Merewether. In the days when Karachi was a little fishing village, hardly known beyond its immediate neighbourhood, Sonmiani was a tolerably flourishing sea-port. Now Karachi, as we all know, instead of being a fishing village, has become a great sea-port, a flourishing town, an important military station, and a place of considerable wealth, with a trade of between three and four millions sterling annually, and a population of hardly less than thirty or forty thousand souls. Such is the result of a single generation of British rule. Sonmiani, on the other hand, has been entirely snuffed out by the rise of Karachi. I visited Sonmiani just fourteen months ago, and stayed there two days, and a more miserable place you can hardly imagine. It was always rather wretched in its best days; now it is miserable in the extreme. Its trade has been almost extinguished. The caravans that used to come there from the central plateau of Beluchistan now take straight routes down to Karachi. The drinking-water of the place is extremely brackish, and can scarcely be drunk safely except by those who are acclimatized. The approaches to the place from the sea are too detestable to be described. The Government steamer which carried me had to lie far off upon the horizon, and it took us the greater part of the day to get from the steamer to the shore: we were floating about amid sandbanks and the like all day. So that except for the fishing, which is still very considerable and important, Sonmiani is a place which is to be numbered with the dead and the past. As regards the country near it, there are considerable means of development. There is a tolerably extensive plain between Sonmiani and the nearest hills, Lyari, and if the rains of the season have been abundant there are extensive lakes, with splendid pea-fowl shooting, and the like, and all around there is a considerable amount of tamarisk jungle suited for breeding camels, so that it may be called a fine camel-breeding country. Then with regard to the military route I may explain that since the days of Outram, within the last very few years, the route has been traversed by the political authorities of Kelat. Major (now Sir Robert) Sandiman passed that way upon political duty with, I think, almost an entire regiment of Scinde horse, and the records of that march and of other marches are to be found in the annals of the Quartermaster-General's Department of Bombay. And recently we sent a considerable convoy of camels and stores from Sonmiani for the assistance of the forces under General Stewart operating upon Candahar. As some attention was at the time drawn to the experiment, I ought to explain to this strictly professional gathering of military men that the expedition was not undertaken for any military purpose, but merely for providing transport. We never dreamed of sending troops by that way, or even supplies. Our line of British communication is by

the Indus, and not at all by this back route through Southern Beluchistan. The fact was, we were seeking for camels; we had furnished 20,000 camels for the invasion of Southern Afghanistan, and the supply being nearly exhausted, it became necessary to send about 15,000 more, or some other means of transport equivalent to what may be called 15,000 camel-power. So that you can readily imagine that rich as Scinde is in camels, a draught of 20,000 exhausted it, and another draught following of 15,000, was a serious matter, and it compelled me and my Officers to look out for camels in every direction. We got some from the Rajputana country, some from the Scinde desert, some from all quarters of the compass. We heard great stories of this camel-breeding country of Sonmiani to which I have referred; we consequently attempted to get about 3,000 camels from the country near the sea-shore, and having got them we thought it better to march them straight up by the route described by Sir F. Goldsmid, to Kelat and thence to Quetta. You will see that it was a saving of distance. We might possibly have sent them across to Karachi, and round to Sukkur, and so on to Quetta; but it was easier to march them straight up, particularly as the other route was excessively crowded with traffic of every kind. There was no political or military significance attachable to our proceedings. Of course we did not forget that the exploration of military and political routes is always more or less desirable, and that any additional knowledge that could be obtained in this manner was so far to the good; but that was really quite secondary. Our primary object was to get at the shortest means of sending 3,000 or 4,000 camels up to Quetta. As regards Bala, that is a place of some importance politically. It is separated from Scinde by several ranges of mountains, not marked on the map. The route is of considerable interest, and the opening and frequenting of it does tend to the better political control of the interior of the Kelat territory. Then I might remark on the great importance politically of some of the other places mentioned in the lecture. The straight route from Ghuzni to Kelat, avoiding Candahar and the valley of Pishin, is of some political value; it is important for British interests that it should be opened up and developed. When Outram, in 1854, wrote his paper about the importance of the route which leads from the Gomal Valley to Daira Ismail Khan, he perhaps little thought of the interest which would attach to it in the future. If there is to be anything like a "scientific frontier" established down the line of the Indus, no doubt the Gomal route will have to be considered much more than it has been. People have been too apt to think that there are only two routes from Afghanistan to India, the old Khyber and the old Bolan. Would they be surprised to hear that there is an intermediate one which, in former invasions of India, has played an important part? Probably the route by which Muhmood of Ghuzni, the first Mahometan invader, approached India, was that touched upon in Sir F. Goldsmid's lecture. As regards the upper portion of the map, the district of Bamian, that is one of the most important in the whole land of Hindu Kush, or the Indian Caucasus. It has been of the first military and strategic importance from the days of Alexander the Great. It was passed and repassed by that great conqueror; and the carvings on that wonderful wall of rock by the Buddhists attest the importance which in mediæval centuries was attached by all nations to its possession. In any future arrangements that may be made between Russia and England in Central Asia, the possession of Bamian will have to be very carefully considered. I know not how far the name may be familiar to the ladies and gentlemen present, but it has always been a place of importance, and, if not in our lifetime, in the lifetime of those who come after us, it will play a prominent part in the general political arrangements of Asia. So that notwithstanding General Goldsmid, with characteristic modesty, rather deprecates any great interest being attached to the country he has been describing, I can assure you, after making all abatements for the political decadence of Southern Beluchistan, that the route which you have been invited to travel over in imagination comprises a country of the greatest interest and political importance. I will now ask you to accord by acclamation a vote of thanks to Sir F. Goldsmid for his interesting lecture.