rabian frontier reaching to the Danube. There was the destruction of all the great fortresses on the southern bank of that river. In Asia there was the permanent acquisition of Kars, and of Ardahan with adjacent territories. There was farther the acquisition of Batoum, which Russia had not taken, and which English and Turkish fleets could have effectually prevented her from ever taking. This was, perhaps, the only important acquisition which it would have been in the immediate power of England to prevent. There is some reason to believe that the English Consul at Trebizond had encouraged the inhabitants of Batoum, who resented the cession, to expect the support of the British Government, and had even gone the length of subsidising, and therefore organising an opposition to that measure.*

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* My authority for this statement is a letter from "Five Merchants of Batoum" to the Governor-General of Trebizond, in which they say :—"Congratulate the Consul (English) on our behalf, and tell him that we have made good use of his subsidies." This letter appears in an article published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for October, 1878. The article is signed by the Rev. Malcolm MacColl. The letter he gives has all the appearance of authenticity, and is stated to have been attached to the original copy of a document forwarded by Mr. Layard, and published in "Turkey xlii., 1878." The genuineness of the document is farther corroborated by an allusion in the "Protestation des Habitants de Batoum," published in "Turkey xlv., 1878." This "Protestation" refers to the particular manifestations of English solicitude for their rights, and then states that they had deputed twelve of their notables to the British Consul at Trebizond to solicit his assistance. (P. 27-28.)

If this was really done, it must have been done with the sanction of the British Ambassador at Constantinople, though probably without any direct authority from the Government at home. There is no doubt that the cession of Batoum was the Russian demand most unpopular in England, and one of those most vehemently denounced by Mr. Layard. But under the Secret Agreement it was to be sanctioned after the usual mock discussion.

Such being the direct gains of Russia, let us now look at her indirect gains involved in the concessions on which England had insisted. She was to concede to the Queen's Government that the Bulgarians south of the Balkans should not enjoy the privileges of the new Principality. She was to concede farther, that such remaining privileges as Russia was to be allowed to retain for them should be narrowly restricted in the interests of the Turks. England was to be free to contend in Congress for a variety of limitations. In particular, England was to be allowed to secure, if she could, for the Ottoman Government the largest powers as to the occupation of the country by Turkish soldiers. It was specially provided that the Government of the Sultan should, under English patronage, be free to use those troops, not only to repel foreign aggression, but to suppress political insurrection, and this, too, whether these evils were "in a state of execution" or only in a

"state of menace."* Not even the native militia—the whole object of whose existence was to protect the liberties newly established—not even the militia was to be securely organised in the interests of the Christian population. England was to contend for the nomination of its superior officers by the Porte. It is needless to dwell on the general aspect and result of these Russian concessions. They all went to identify her action and her resistance to us, with the hopes and aspirations of the subject populations of Turkey. They went in a corresponding degree to identify the action of England with the interests of the Turkish Pashâs, and all this they did at a time and under conditions which made it obviously futile to revive Turkey with effect, or to trust to her as representing, even in a remote degree, those common interests of Europe which the Ottoman Empire had once been supposed to serve.

This position having been now secured for England by the Secret Agreement, the Cabinet of the Queen was no longer unwilling to enter Congress. But how was the old ostensible contention to be got rid of—the contention that there must be a full and free discussion of the whole Treaty? Diplomacy was equal to the occasion. A form of invitation was devised, which came from the German Government on the 3rd of June, under which both England and

* Article V. of the "Secret Agreement."

Russia equally pretended to accept the condition of complete discussion. On the same day this invitation was accepted. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary were appointed Plenipotentiaries of England: and the Congress was constituted at Berlin.

It is needless to say that the Secret Agreement with Russia constituted the real instructions under which the British Plenipotentiaries went to Berlin. But by a constitutional usage, which in this case was grotesque enough, the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary received some formal instructions from the Cabinet through Mr. Secretary Cross. It is remarkable that in these instructions the Cabinet was obliged to confess that, in the famous step of sending up the fleets to Constantinople, it had made a false move. The very first task assigned in the despatch of Mr. Secretary Cross to the Plenipotentiaries, was the task of offering to retrace it. We have seen that this measure had very nearly resulted in the Russian occupation of Constantinople, and that it did actually result in a considerable advance of the Russian army beyond the line which had been agreed upon by the armistice. Russia had continued to hold this advanced position. Thus the much vaunted movement of the British fleet had produced no other effect than that of tightening the grip of Russia on the throat of Turkey. The Plenipotentiaries were therefore directed to offer a new retire-

ment of the British fleet as the price of a similar retirement on the part of Russia from her proximity to the gates of Constantinople.* There was one other instruction somewhat ostentatiously put forward in the despatch of Mr. Cross—namely, that the British Plenipotentiaries should urge the claims of Greece to admission to a portion at least of the sittings of the Congress.

Further instructions, however, were given in the form of a despatch from the Foreign Secretary to the third Plenipotentiary, Lord Odo Russell. In this document the general outline of the Secret Agreement was followed, just so far as it was possible to follow it, without betraying the fact that such an Agreement had been made. But in order to avoid this betrayal it was absolutely necessary to pretend that many discussions would be free, the results of which were in fact foreclosed. Thus, for example, the great cessions in Asia were referred to as cessions on which "it was possible that the arguments of England would not be able to shake the resolution" of Russia; but Lord Odo was "not on that account to abstain from earnestly pressing upon the other Powers and upon Russia" the arguments of England.† The hollowness and insincerity of character which thus necessarily attaches to this document, deprives it

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* Turkey, XXXIX., 1878, No. 2, p. 2.
† Ibid., No. 3, p. 3.

of much of the interest which would otherwise attach to it. There are, however, some declarations in it which fairly represent the policy of the Cabinet. Of these, accordingly, it may be well to take notice here.

In the first place, it was declared that all the stipulations of the Treaty of San Stefano touching Servia and Montenegro, as well as the Turkish Provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, were stipulations which, though altering the Treaty of Paris, did not interest England in a primary degree. Two principles, nevertheless, were laid down for the guidance of the Plenipotentiaries in any contention they might raise. The first was, that the welfare and good government of the subject populations should be assured. The second was, that the ancient alliance between England and Austria, and the general coincidence of their interests, should be borne in mind. It was, however, distinctly added, that if Russia should be determined to adhere to the Treaty of San Stefano on any or all of these matters, the opposition of England was not to be pushed so far as to endanger the results of the Congress.

A similar declaration was made in respect to the retrocession of the Bessarabian frontier.

In one matter the despatch was candid. The provisions of San Stefano, which gave, or seemed to give, an exclusive Protectorate to Russia, were, of course, to be opposed. But it was added, that

probably "these would not be maintained in argument." This is a great admission. It proves that the only real and fundamental objection in point of principle to the Treaty of San Stefano, was one which it was well known Russia was willing to admit.

On the great question of Bulgaria the conclusions of the Secret Agreement were indicated in general terms. The new Principality was not to pass the Balkans. The Southern Province was to have the protection of institutions generally similar to those which had been proposed at the Conference of Constantinople. Great jealousy even of these was, however, distinctly indicated: and in particular it was intimated that "England could not acquiesce in the institution of any local militia in that province, unless its principal officers are nominated by the Sultan."

The Greeks were to be preserved from the danger of absorption in a Slavic population. The whole shore of the Ægean must be kept in the hands of Turkey; and the main end and object of all these contentions was explained to be that "the Sultan should be made strategetically so secure as to enable him to discharge independently the political duties which he has to perform."*

It would be needless in this work to follow in

* Ibid., No. 3, pp. 3, 4.

detail the various Protocols of the Congress. Two circumstances deprive those Protocols of more than a secondary interest. In the first place, the Secret Agreement reduces them to the position of discussions which were ostensible, and nothing more. In the second place, any reality which did really attach to the discussions at Berlin, attached to those discussions not as they appear in the Protocols, but as they were held in private. Whenever any propositions were made which were likely to raise serious discussion, the President, Prince Bismarck, was accustomed to tell the rival Plenipotentiaries that they had better go and settle the matter at a private meeting between themselves, and when they had arrived at an understanding it might then be discussed in full Congress. In this way the discussions recorded in the Protocols are but the echo of an echo. There are, nevertheless, some incidents which appear in the Protocols which signally illustrate the attitude taken by the English Cabinet and the aspect in which their country was presented to the world.

The first meeting of the Congress took place on the 13th of June, 1878. At this meeting Lord Beaconsfield made his concerted objection to the advanced position of the Russian troops at the gates of Constantinople. Count Schouvalow replied that this advanced position had been taken up by the Russian army in consequence of the entry of the English fleet into the Bosphorus. It had now been

held for three months without any serious collision. What Lord Beaconsfield appeared to want was the retreat of the Russian army, not merely to the lines indicated in the armistice, but to some unknown point much behind them. The proposition of Lord Beaconsfield does not seem to have met with any support, and Prince Bismarck, the President of the Congress, expressed himself satisfied with the Russian reply. He doubted, moreover, whether the question was not one "beyond the scope of the task of the High Assembly."*

The second meeting of the Congress took place on the 17th of June. "The order of the day" was the great question of Bulgaria. At the very opening of the discussion on this question the English Foreign Minister made a declaration which at once exhibited England in the position of contesting the whole arrangement in the interests of the Turks. It was a declaration, moreover, which implied that the British Government would have been glad if it were possible to get rid of the Treaty of San Stefano altogether. This declaration was conceived in the following terms:—"It is our task to replace her (Turkey), not upon the footing of her former independence, for it would be impossible entirely to annihilate the results of the war, but to restore to her a relative independence which shall permit her

* Ibid., p. 14.

efficaciously to protect the strategical, political, and commercial interests of which she is to remain the guardian." With this view, England laid down as her demand these two propositions—1st. That the tributary autonomous Principality of Bulgaria should be restricted to the part of European Turkey which is situated north of the Balkans; 2nd. That the Province of Roumelia, and all other territory south of the Balkans, shall be under the direct political and military authority of the Sultan; all necessary precaution being taken that the welfare of the populations shall be protected by sufficient guarantees of administrative autonomy, or in some other manner."

This second proposition conveyed the first public intimation of a profound effort of diplomacy. The country to the south of the Balkans had hitherto been always referred to as Southern Bulgaria. Even in the Secret Agreement it was so called. But now it had occurred to the English Plenipotentiaries that a new name would be more convenient. It is wonderful what faith in names and phrases can be harboured in diplomacy. It was the object of the Queen's Cabinet to divide countries which were really united in blood, in language, in religion, in the endurance of common injuries, and in common aspirations for freedom. Conscious of the inherent weakness of this arrangement, the British Plenipotentiaries had recourse to the wonderful device of con-

cealing it by a name. The country of the Southern Bulgarians was not to be called Bulgaria—it was to be called Eastern Roumelia.

This, however, is a small matter; but the last words of this second proposition ("or in some other manner") obviously admitted of any latitude of action in sacrificing or in securing the liberties of the Roumelian people. Two great uncertainties therefore attached to these propositions as a whole. First, they left entirely uncertain the area of country which was to be admitted to new securities. Secondly, they left in absolute uncertainty whether these securities were to be substantial or illusory.

Accordingly, the first of these uncertainties was urged by the Russian Plenipotentiaries; and the second of them was fixed on by Prince Bismarck.

Was England willing to include in the new Roumelia all that had been assigned to the Bulgarian Province at the Conference of Constantinople? It appeared not; and Russia urged that the former delimitation of the Conference would be the proper basis to discuss.

Then the President pointed out that the assent of Russia would probably depend on the nature of the institutions which England was willing to give to the southern Province.

As the English Minister was not prepared to enter into these details, Prince Bismarck hoped the Cabinets

most especially interested would meet in private, and then the Congress might help in completing the understanding.*

Of the private meeting which followed on the 18th of June we have, of course, no record; but when the curtain rises again upon the sitting of Congress held on the 22nd, we find that the British Plenipotentiaries had been contending for the limitation of the area of the northern Principality and for the restriction of the privileges of the southern Province. They seem to have driven as hard a bargain as they could. The other Powers, or at all events Russia, had demanded that the important town of Sofia, which is well known to be a place from which the Balkans can be turned upon the west, should belong to the new Principality. The English Ministers would consent to this only if the port of Varna were to be given back to Turkey, or if the basins of the Mesta Karasou and the Strouma Karasou were abstracted from Eastern Roumelia.

We find, farther, that our Ministers had insisted on the unlimited right of the Sultan to quarter his troops in any part of the sea or land frontiers of the new Roumelia, and that he should have the exclusive nomination of all the officers even of its own militia. The only qualification of this right consisted in the vague and perfectly nugatory declaration that the

* Ibid., pp. 24, 25.

Sultan "shall take into consideration the religion of the population." It will be observed that this was a demand in the interest of the Turks, which went far beyond the bargain of the Secret Agreement. The stipulation there was that the Sultan should appoint only the principal officers. It is needless to point out that this new demand was a still more violent departure from the conditions which had been laid down on this subject by united Europe at the Conference of Constantinople.

The Russian Plenipotentiaries now took due advantage of the position in which they were placed by the conduct of the British Cabinet. They publicly advertised the fact that Russia had given her most reluctant assent to many of the limitations and restrictions thus demanded by England on the privileges she had desired to confer on the subject populations of Turkey. There were, however, one or two of the English demands in this direction on which she must really appeal to the other Powers in Congress. Russia must contend against the unlimited power of the Sultan in respect to the employment of troops on any part of the frontiers of Eastern Roumelia. There must be some European check on this power. The mere institutions of the new Province would not be enough to protect it against the excesses of the military, "since institutions alone, however good they may be, have never protected a people when these same institutions have

remained under the protection of a military force which had no national interest in maintaining and protecting them." Russia therefore suggested that a European Commission should be charged with the duty of fixing on the points upon the frontier which were to be occupied by the Ottoman army. What was the reply of the English Prime Minister to this argument? Lord Beaconsfield said that it had been agreed unanimously "that the Sultan, as a member of the political body of Europe, was to enjoy a position which should secure to him the respect of his sovereign rights." For this purpose the Congress had given him (first) "a real frontier," and (secondly) "a military and political power sufficient to enable him to maintain his authority and to protect the life and possessions of his subjects." The Russian contention was inconsistent with these two resolutions. Lord Beaconsfield especially looked on a European Commission as evidently derogatory to the rights of the Sovereign.

The tone of the President, Prince Bismarck, was almost always that of a lofty impartiality. But as an International Commission had been one of the principal demands of the Conference at Constantinople, and a demand to which all the Powers had implicitly adhered as an indispensable security for reform in Turkey, this speech of the English Minister was too much for him. Accordingly, in the protocol of this sitting of the Congress we have

the following refreshing outburst of manly common sense:—"His Serene Highness thinks it his duty to add that on this question he cannot, as German Plenipotentiary, remain neutral. The instructions which he has received from the Emperor, his august master, previous to the opening of the Congress, enjoin upon him to seek to maintain for the Christians at least the degree of protection which the Conference at Constantinople had desired to secure for them, and not to consent to any arrangement which would attenuate the result obtained for that important object." His sympathies, therefore, were with the Russian amendment.*

At the same sitting Germany also gave her vote for keeping the port of Varna in the Principality of Bulgaria. Lord Salisbury had offered as a compromise that it should belong to New Roumelia. The meaning of this is obvious. It was the next best thing to keeping it for the Turks.

Again, at the sitting held on the 25th of June, we find that important points in the interest of the subject population of Roumelia were carried, if not against the vote and influence of England, at least at the suggestion and on the initiative of other Powers. The Queen's Plenipotentiaries had apparently been obliged to agree to a modification of the unlimited power which they had proposed to lodge

* Ibid., p. 49.

in the hands of the Governor-General of the Province, of calling in Ottoman troops in the event of either internal or external security being threatened. Three important limitations had been allowed—1st, The Sultan was not to employ Bashi-Bazouks; 2nd, The soldiers were not to be billeted on the inhabitants; 3rd, They were not to be allowed to stay in the interior of the Province when on their way to the frontier garrisons. Moreover, France had suggested the stipulation, not unimportant, that if the Governor-General should call in Ottoman troops, he must not only communicate the fact, but his reasons for doing so, to the representatives of the Powers at Constantinople. Russia, however, urged that these arrangements should be placed under the superintendence of a European Commission. This the English Plenipotentiaries opposed, and Russia took care once more to declare formally that she gave way only in consequence of the determination with which this opposition of England was maintained.*

It was at the eighth sitting of the Congress, on the 28th of June, that an important step towards the dismemberment of Turkey was sanctioned by the adoption of the proposal emanating from the British Plenipotentiaries, that the Provinces of Bosnia and

* Ibid., p. 77.

Herzegovina should be "occupied and administered by Austria-Hungary."*

This proposal, although it came from England, seems to have been matter of previous understanding among all the Powers. It was unanimously accepted—Turkey, of course, dissenting. It has been publicly stated by Lord Derby, in a speech in the House of Lords, that the virtual cession of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria-Hungary was part of the original agreement between the three Emperors some years before. The existence of any such agreement has never been publicly authenticated, and there is no satisfactory evidence of its reality. The belief, however, in its existence was one of the causes of that passionate outburst of national jealousy which had encouraged the Government in the fatal step of resisting the Berlin Memorandum. The antagonism of feeling which was subsequently apparent between the Russian and Austrian Governments makes it quite certain that if any such agreement existed at all, it was of the vaguest kind, and left each of these Governments free to pursue its own course as circumstances might arise. But this particular provision of the reported agreement was probably the best arrangement that could be made. It is true that the great object of Europe in respect to European Turkey ought to be, not its partition

* Ibid., p. 115.

among the great military Monarchies, but the enfranchisement of the people under governments of their own. But as regards these two Provinces, there were special difficulties in the way of establishing autonomous institutions. Desperate antagonisms of religion and of race were embittered by antagonisms still more desperate of economical conditions. Under these conditions the gift of self-government would have been simply the gift of anarchy. On the other hand, International Commissions are essentially a bad device. They are the hotbeds of political intrigue, they divide responsibility, and they are incompatible with a vigorous administration. What was wanted for these Provinces was a strong Executive Government; and in this respect Austria-Hungary had all the qualifications for the duty which was assigned to her. Even in the days, now more than thirty years ago, when Austria was the great representative of despotism in Europe, it was, at least, a despotism exhibiting some of the best features of that condition of things. The Austrian Government suppressed political liberty, but it took great care of the material well-being of its people. Nowhere in Europe were there such splendid roads, such substantial bridges, greater security for the fruits of industry, or more evident symptoms of prosperous and generally contented populations. What was bad then has been changed now whilst all that was good has been retained. It is no longer in a position which com-

pelled it of necessity to be the bitter opponent of every aspiration after political liberty in Europe. Some portions of its people were indeed thoroughly selfish and unprincipled on the Eastern Question. The Magyar party seemed eager to assist in holding down the Christian population under the Government of the Turks, simply because that population comes of a stock different from their own. The great leader of that party, Kossuth, has lost no opportunity of reading a great lesson to the world. He has shown how little we can trust to demagogues in the cause of real liberty when that cause is traversed by their own passions of party or of race. There was also another point in the Eastern Question on which Austria had a bias in the wrong direction. She was narrow-minded and ungenerous to the gallant Montenegrins. Unfortunately, in this matter she was thoroughly in accord with the temper of the English Cabinet. Nevertheless, on the whole the permanent interests of the Government of Vienna are coincident with the interests of Europe. Austria has long since adopted the system of Constitutional Government. It has lost its unnatural hold over countries which had inherited a civilization higher and more ancient than its own. It now unites under one sceptre many various races, and bids fair to give a signal proof to the world that men of different religions and different nationalities can live peacefully and prosperously under a Government in which they are equally represented. More-

over, Austria represents a nationality essentially antagonistic to that of Russia, and having a natural tendency, therefore, to oppose and resist the pretensions of Russia to exclusive influence in the whole Balkan Peninsula. The sins and blunders of the English policy had given a tremendous impulse and an insuperable opportunity to these pretensions. It was most desirable to have some counteracting force working from a position of advantage. No Government, therefore, could be fitter for the place which was assigned to her by the Treaty of Berlin; and whether the proposition came originally from the much-suspected source of the three Emperors, or whether it came from the British Plenipotentiaries, it was probably, on the whole, the best proposition which could be made.

If, however, we look at this proposition from the Turkish point of view, it assumes a very different aspect. It was a very violent proposition. It went very far beyond the Treaty of San Stefano. Nor was there any justification for it in the actual results of war. Bosnia and Herzegovina had not been overrun by Russia. It is true, indeed, that the native insurrection had never been suppressed, but neither, on the other hand, had it achieved any great success. There was no reason whatever to believe that the Turkish Government, when freed from other contests, would have been unable finally to re-establish its authority. Nothing, therefore, could justify the

proposition, except the right assumed by the European Powers to dispose of Turkish Provinces at their will. It was, consequently, wholly inconsistent with the arguments by which England resisted other propositions involving the same principle. The independence of the Porte was urged as a plea by the British Plenipotentiaries against any proposal inconsistent with their own plans, but was discarded with something very like contempt when it was pleaded by the Turks themselves against proposals which suited the English policy.

In this case, when the Turks remonstrated, they were told sternly by the President that unless they submitted to the proposals of the Congress, they would be left to deal with Russia alone, under the provisions of the Treaty of San Stefano.*

We now pass to another prominent transaction of the Congress of Berlin, which affords an excellent illustration of the whole policy and methods of proceeding of the English Cabinet. We have seen that in the instructions to their Plenipotentiaries, they had put prominently forward the claims of Greece to have her wishes represented and her arguments heard at those meetings of the Congress in which she had most natural concern. This was allowed to become publicly known in England before the meeting of the Congress. Much was made of it. It elicited general

* Ibid., pp. 118, 119.

approval. The friends of Turkey saw in it, at least, a handy weapon for use against the Slav. The friends of liberty in the East of Europe, without regard to race, saw in it, whatever might be its motive, a step which must tend to commit the policy of England in the right direction. Thus, from several different points of view, our patronage of the Greeks was ostentatiously paraded. It was not then known that by one Article of the Secret Agreement the Cabinet had already assumed that the Greek Kingdom was not to be allowed to acquire either Thessaly or Epirus. As this acquisition was the only one, except that of the Island of Crete, which Greece could hope to make, our public assumption of the Protectorate of the Greek Kingdom at the coming Congress does not seem to have been a very ingenuous device. Let us now see in what spirit this Protectorate was carried into effect, and what came of it.

At the first meeting of the Congress, on the 13th of June, Lord Salisbury gave notice that at the next sitting, "he should, on behalf of Great Britain, move the Congress that the Representatives of Greece should be admitted to its sittings."* Accordingly, at the second meeting of the Congress, on the 17th of June, this proposal came on for discussion. In the written statement of reasons read by the British Plenipotentiaries in support of this motion, care was

* Ibid., No. 4, p. 5.

taken to dwell upon every point of antagonism between the Slav and the Greek. It was urged that the "Greeks feared, and with reason, the subjection of their Church, the suppression of their language, and the gradual absorption and disappearance of their race, if their rivals should gain a preponderant influence." The two races were not on an equal footing before the Congress. "The Slavs had as their defender a powerful military nation, related to them in blood and by faith, strong in the prestige of its recent victories." England, therefore, proposes "that the Hellenic Kingdom should be admitted to fill this position on behalf of the Greeks, and to take part in the deliberations of the Congress; or, at least, to assist at all sittings in which questions in connexion with the interests of the Greek race shall be discussed."*

As on this occasion Prince Bismarck took the usual course of proposing that the question should be discussed first in private conferences, before it should be formally decided in Congress, there could be but little of a discussion. It is remarkable, however, that the Russian diplomatists took instant care, as usual, to leave England alone in the position of desiring to play off one Christian race against the other. Russia took an interest equally in all. She therefore cordially supported the English demand on behalf of Greece.

* Ibid., pp. 22, 23.

The French Plenipotentiary gave notice of an amendment, having for its object to limit the presence of the Hellenic representatives to those sittings of the Congress in which the subject matter of discussion should be the future of the provinces bordering on the Greek kingdom.

So far, therefore, England took the position of asserting on behalf of Greece the right of admission not only to those sittings of the Congress in which her own direct interests were to be dealt with, as affected by the lot assigned to adjoining provinces, but to all sittings in which the interests of the Greek race might be subject of discussion, even in provinces not adjoining the Greek Kingdom.

The curtain now rises upon the third sitting of the Congress held on the 19th of June, and a remarkable scene presents itself. Russia had prepared a written Memorandum on the question of the day. She, doubtless, knew by this time how hollow were the pretensions of the English Cabinet to do anything whatever in the interests of Greece. In particular she knew by the terms of the Secret Agreement which that Cabinet had extracted from her, that the British Plenipotentiaries had no intention of giving to Greece the only concession which was of any value. She knew, therefore, that even if the pretensions of the British Government to be the protector of Greece had been sincere they had been put forward in a form which made it easy for the Russian Plenipo-

tentiaries to take a course far more generous towards the subject populations than the Queen's Government had been or were prepared to take. Accordingly, Prince Gortchakoff's paper on the question before the Congress was skilfully directed not to resist but to stimulate, as well as to give form and substance to, the proposed demands of England on behalf of Greece. It was directed at the same time to throw upon the Queen's Government the exclusive task of using these demands as a weapon against the Bulgarians. Again, Russia formally declared that she was in favour of securing the liberty of both races. She made this declaration in language of irony which was unfortunately only too well deserved. "With the Hellenic race she has a powerful bond of union, that of having received from the Eastern Church the religion of Christ. If, in the present war, Russia has been forced to take up more especially the defence of the Bulgarians, this is due to the fact that Bulgaria has, owing to circumstances, been the principal cause and the scene of the war. But Russia has always contemplated extending, as far as possible, to the Greek provinces the advantages which she might succeed in winning for Bulgaria. She is gratified to see, by the proposals of the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and of France, that Europe shares these views, and she congratulates herself upon the solicitude which the Powers evince in favour of the populations of the Greek race, and the more so

as she is convinced that this solicitude will equally extend to the populations of the Bulgarian race. The Imperial Government of Russia will consequently willingly adhere to any proposition which may be laid before the Congress in favour of Epirus, of Thessaly, and of Crete, whatever may be the extent which the Powers may desire to give to the advantages which may be reserved for them."* Here was a challenge to the English Government to make a definite proposal in favour of Greece. It elicited no response.

In the discussion which followed Lord Salisbury, apparently without wincing, played out his part. The proposal as it came before the Congress was in the French, and not in the English form. That is to say, it contemplated the presence of Greek representatives only when the lot of provinces bordering on Greek frontier formed the subject of discussion. Lord Salisbury pointed out that this would admit them only when Epirus and Thessaly was to be dealt with. He desired, on the contrary, that even when such provinces as Macedonia and Thrace were to be dealt with, the Hellenic Kingdom should be heard. Lord Salisbury's account of his own eagerness for Greece and of the result of his exertions at this meeting of the Congress is quite pathetic: "I moved an amendment to the effect

* Ibid., p. 35.

that Greece should be present whenever any Greek provinces were in question, instead of the frontier provinces, as proposed in the French version. The Congress divided, Austria and Italy voting with us, and Turkey abstaining. There being, therefore, an equal number of votes on both sides, the amendment was lost ; and, therefore, with respect to the provinces not bordering on Greece, such as Macedonia and Crete, it will remain to be discussed in each individual case whether Greece is, on that occasion, to be admitted or not."*

This was very sad. But Greece could well afford to lose that which the British Plenipotentiary had been refused on her behalf, if only he had been willing to take due advantage of that which he had found no difficulty in obtaining. Thessaly and Epirus were the provinces which Greece most desired to have, and they were the provinces which themselves most certainly desired to be joined to Greece. The accomplishment of this union was of all others in the East of Europe the change most likely to give some security for the permanence of peace. The too narrow limits originally imposed on the new Kingdom of Greece was an error which had come to be universally acknowledged. In no possible way could the rectification of that error be begun so easily, so naturally, and with so little danger to

* Ibid., No. 7, p. 15.

what remains of Turkey, as by the annexation to Greece of Thessaly and Epirus. As a matter affecting the interests of Europe this was an arrangement infinitely more important than the delivery of Bosnia and Herzegovina into the hands of Austria. It was one tending to remedy a real evil, and to remove a constant source of danger. On the other hand, the evidence in possession of the Government as to the effects of Turkish misgovernment in Epirus was, as I have shown, conclusive. Our Consuls had reported over and over again on its dwindling population, on its decaying agriculture, and on the insecurity of life and property. On this subject the claim made on behalf of the Hellenic Kingdom that she should be heard had been fully admitted by the Congress. Let us see what the Power which so ostentatiously made this claim actually did with it when the time came.

Ten days later, on the 29th of June, the order of the day at the ninth sitting of the Congress was the 15th Article of the Treaty of San Stefano. This was the Article which dealt not only with the provinces bordering on Greece, but also with all the provinces of Turkey which contained Greek populations. It did so by providing for local autonomous institutions under a Russian Protectorate.

The President intimated that, in conformity with the decision adopted by the Congress, he had invited the representatives of His Majesty the King of

Greece to make to the High Assembly during to-day's sitting the communication with which they may be charged. Immediately after making this announcement, apparently without another moment's delay, "The President reads Article XV. of the Treaty of San Stefano."

Then rose the champion of Greece, the second British Plenipotentiary, the Marquis of Salisbury, and the record of his motion is thus entered in the Protocols :—

"Lord Salisbury asks for a modification of the last paragraph (of the Fifteenth Article) which runs as follows :—'Special Commissions, in which the native element shall have a large share, shall be entrusted with the duty of elaborating in each province the details of the new arrangement. The result of these labours shall be submitted for the examination of the Sublime Porte, which will consult the Imperial Government of Russia before putting them into execution.' His Excellency (Lord Salisbury) would desire that the words 'the Imperial Government of Russia,' should be replaced by the following, words : 'the European Commission.'" After a very short discussion the Protocol records the result thus : "Count Schouvaloff accepts the text proposed by England, to which the Congress equally gives its adhesion."* After this conclusion had been adopted,

* Ibid., pp. 132, 133.

but not before, we read in the Protocol as follows :— "Mr. Delzannio, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, and Mr. Rangalie, Minister of Greece at Berlin, are then introduced."

It thus appears that at the very first moment of that sitting of the Congress, and before the representatives of Greece had said, or had any opportunity of saying, one single word—before they had even been admitted at all—the British Plenipotentiaries had concluded, and had moved the Congress to conclude, against the only claim which Greece was in a position to make. The adoption of Article XV. of the Treaty of San Stefano, with no other change than that proposed by Lord Salisbury, was the rejection of the Greek demand.

I do not say that the long vaunted patronage by the English Cabinet of the Greek claim to be heard on the lot of the border provinces constituted any binding engagement on the part of England to adopt and to support the arguments of Greece after they had been heard. But, on the other hand, if it had never been really intended to support them, seeing that they were perfectly well known both in their course and in their conclusion, it is difficult to conceive what can have been the legitimate purpose of such ostentatious efforts to secure for them a hearing. The only inference is that the Cabinet desired to gain credit in England and in Greece for a liberal and enlightened policy

towards that Kingdom, which they never seriously entertained; or else that they desired to use the influence of Greece just so far as it might be found useful as a weapon against Russia, and then to cast it aside whenever that purpose had been attained. At least it would have been decent that any adverse conclusion against the claim of Greece in respect to Thessaly and Epirus should have been delayed until the Greek delegates had been heard. To open to them the doors of the Congress only just after it had come, on the motion of the British Plenipotentiaries, to a conclusion which effectually barred their claim, was a publication of insincerity if not of imposture, from which England might well have been spared by the representatives of the Queen.

But the farce was played out. It is needless to say that the communication of the Greek delegates asked the Congress to sanction the annexation to the Hellenic kingdom of the Island of Crete, and of the provinces of Thessaly and Epirus.

When it was read, the comedy was continued by an assurance from the President that the statement which the Congress had just heard would be printed and circulated, and that the High Assembly would examine it with attention. It was not till the thirteenth sitting of the Congress, on the 5th of July, that the question came on again. Lord Salisbury

had one other little amendment to propose on Article XV. of the Treaty of San Stefano as it had been modified on his own motion by the Congress on the 29th of June. According to that Article as it still stood, Special Commissioners were in each province to be entrusted or "charged" with elaborating the details of the new organisation. But it was not specified by what authority this "trust" was to be given—from whom this "charge" was to come. Was not the Government of the Porte the safest and most trustworthy of all authorities? Could this right and duty of initiating reforms be in better hands than in Ministers of the Sultan? And so, accordingly, Lord Salisbury's further amendment was this: that after the words "charged," should be inserted the following words, "by the Sublime Porte."* To this the Congress assented—the President humorously indicating that the mischief of it might be small, since the agency of a European Commission had already been agreed to. On this occasion the course which England had pursued had the advantage of being explained by the Plenipotentiary and the Minister who was chiefly responsible for it. Lord Beaconsfield explained that the attitude assumed by Greece must be attributed to the false idea which had gone abroad after the conclusion of the Treaty of San Stefano, as to the principles which should guide the Congress. The in-

* Ibid., p. 177.

tention of that High Assembly was not, as had been erroneously supposed, to proceed "to the partition of a worn-out State." On the contrary, it was to "strengthen, as the High Assembly had done, an ancient Empire which it considers essential to the maintenance of peace." It was true that two Turkish provinces had been handed over to Austria; but this was "no partition." On the contrary, it was a mere "territorial rearrangement" specially devised for the purpose of preventing partition.

I abstain from any comment on this sort of language. But there is one sentence in Lord Beaconsfield's speech on this occasion which was something more than a mere playing with words and phrases. It contained an important truth, and an all-important admission. "Returning to Greece," said Lord Beaconsfield, after a digression, "no one could doubt as to the future of this country. States, like individuals, which have a future are in a position to be able to wait."*

This was a public intimation that in the opinion of the English Minister the accessions of territory which at that moment it was expedient to deny to Greece, were not likely to be permanently withheld from her. It was only that she could afford to wait. This means that a "territorial rearrangement," which was in every way wise, and which it was com-

* Ibid., p. 198.

pletely in the power of the Congress to decide upon and enforce, was deliberately postponed till it should be brought about by new revolutionary agitations—and possibly renewed European wars. For this result it is only too apparent that England is alone responsible. Russia had pointedly and emphatically declared that she would not oppose any larger measure of liberty which the Congress might desire to secure to the provinces bordering on Greece. There was no symptom of any serious opposition from any other quarter. But England had deserted the cause of Greece after having pretended to support it.

That these proceedings, as they stand on the face of the public papers, are creditable to the English Government, is a proposition which would, I think, be very difficult to maintain. But there is only too much reason to believe that the aspect which they would assume would be very much worse if we knew the whole. What lay behind the scenes we know only in part; but this part is quite enough to throw a very unpleasant light on the probable motives of the Government. Dates go far to prove that they deserted and betrayed the cause of Greece, because they sold it to the Turks as part of the price to be paid for the Island of Cyprus.

For now we have come to the time of the Anglo-Turkish Convention—to the time of another of those Secret Agreements and Conventions which are,

fortunately, a novel feature in British diplomacy. Making every allowance which is due for the well-understood reserve of official language—for the necessity of having in all great transactions previous understandings and communications with the Powers concerned—we have in the Secret Agreement with Russia, and still more now in a new Secret Convention with the Turks, something entirely apart from the usual course of English dealing. We feel as if we were breathing not the atmosphere of negotiation but the atmosphere of conspiracy. The secrecies maintained were not for the purpose of avoiding misunderstandings, or of escaping from the influence of popular passions. They were secrecies maintained for the purpose of betraying friends and of deceiving colleagues.

On the 30th of May—the same day on which the Secret Agreement with Russia had been signed—Mr. Layard had been instructed by the Foreign Secretary to open a negotiation with the Porte, the object of which was that England should guarantee Turkish territories in Asia against farther Russian aggression. As the price of this guarantee on the part of England, Turkey was to do two things—first, to give certain assurances in respect to the good government of her Asiatic provinces; and secondly, to assign to England the Island of Cyprus. It cannot be doubted that these instructions, although ostensibly dated on

the 30th of May, had in reality been privately issued long before ; because the "Convention of Defensive Alliance," which resulted from it, is dated at Therapia only four days later—that is to say, on the 4th of June.* But the Convention, as it was signed on that day, provided only in general terms for the British occupation and administration of Cyprus. It also gave a vague general promise to England as to the better government of the Asiatic provinces. But it contained no stipulations providing for the conditions under which the Isle of Cyprus was to be occupied and administered. It is quite evident there was some difficulty in the matter, raising as it does many points full of complication. The reluctance of the Porte to cede territory, even under the plausible limitations offered by England in this case, is well known. On the other hand, the cession to England of the Island of Cyprus was the very part of the conspiracy which it was most important to keep absolutely dark until the object in view had been fully and formally secured. The Foreign Secretary was about to sit at the same table with colleagues in the Congress of Berlin, whose national susceptibilities would have been deeply wounded if they had known what was going on. If the Turks were to "peach," the whole game might be lost, or it would be gained only at the risk of serious quarrels. The Turks, therefore,

* Turkey, XXXVI., 1878, Nos. 1, 2.

had a tremendous hold over the British Plenipotentiaries at Berlin. Poor M. Waddington, who represented France at the Congress, and whose friendly disposition to England was of immense service in framing the "redactions" which smoothed difficulties and facilitated conclusions—he, above all men, must be kept in ignorance of plots which directly concerned the long-cherished aspirations of his country. Accordingly, during a whole month after the signature of the Convention—that is to say, from the 4th of June till the end of the first week of July—profound silence seems to have been kept as to what England was doing. The Convention was not communicated to the French Government until the 7th of July. But the most critical meetings of the Congress at Berlin were being held during this very time. Under these circumstances how could the British Plenipotentiaries seriously contend for farther territorial cessions from Turkey on behalf of Greece? They had already gone dangerously far in this direction when they had proposed the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary.

It is to be observed that when the Congress met on the 13th of June the Porte had not yet signed the Annex to the Convention which regulated the conditions under which Cyprus was to be occupied and administered by the British Government. The Sultan seems to have been holding out. On the 29th of June, as we have seen, it became apparent

that Lord Salisbury had thrown over the cause of Greece. But this seems to have been about the very crisis of the negotiation with Turkey, for it was not until three days later—on the 1st of July—that Sir A. H. Layard was able to announce that an Annex to the Convention of the 4th of June had that day been signed at Constantinople, by which Annex the details in respect to the possession of Cyprus had at last been finally arranged.*

It is with regret that I have traced the apparent connexion of these dates with the proceedings of the English Plenipotentiaries at the Congress of Berlin, as that connexion appears on the face of the papers presented to Parliament. I should be very glad indeed to be assured that the facts have not the significance which has been here assigned to them.

But whatever may have been the real cause or the real motive of England in abandoning the cause of Greece on the annexation to that Kingdom of Crete and of Thessaly and of Epirus, the impolicy of this abandonment remains the same. The alternative actually adopted by the Congress, and embodied in the Treaty of Berlin, was little better than a bad joke. It relegated to the Porte itself a question which cannot be settled without the intervention of Europe, and it recommended a small "recti-

* Turkey, XXXVI., 1878, No. 3, p. 4.

fication of frontier," which neither respected the principle of the integrity of Turkey, nor satisfied the most moderate and legitimate hopes of Greece.

Let us pass now from the method of negotiation by which the Anglo-Turkish Convention was secured to the substance of that Instrument itself. It is called a "Convention of Defensive Alliance between Great Britain and Turkey." It engages England singly and alone to defend the whole of the Asiatic dominions of the Sultan against any future demands by Russia of territorial cession. More than this, it also engages England to defend Turkey against "any attempt at any future time by Russia to take possession" of any part of Asiatic Turkey. There is no limitation of this guarantee to any one or more provinces of Asiatic Turkey. It covers the whole Ottoman dominions from Bagdad and Bussorah to Trebizond, and from Scutari to the flanks of Ararat. Nor is there any condition limiting this obligation to cases in which Turkey may be unjustly or gratuitously attacked. It applies equally to a case in which Turkey may be the aggressor, or to cases in which she may have given Russia just cause of offence and of war. Turkey may do what she likes—give what provocation she chooses—but England is to protect her against the cession of an inch of her present Asiatic territory. Thus, for example, to take a practical case which is very likely to arise: she

may harbour on her frontier wild and lawless tribes of Koords, and her officials, either from weakness or corruption, or from both, may wink at the depredations they commit on the adjoining populations in the Russian Empire. She may repel all remonstrance and complaint. Russia may have the most just cause of quarrel, and may determine to seek her remedy by arms. But England is bound to keep in the hands of Turkey the mountains in which these robber tribes are harboured. It may be impossible to check their predatory habits without the submission of their country to a strong and settled Government. But England is to give to them, through the dominion of Turkey, a permanent guarantee against any such interference with their predatory habits. Or, again, the cause of war between Russia and Turkey may be the contravention by Turkey of some other Article of the Treaty of Berlin. It may arise in Europe and not in Asia. It may arise at a time when England has other work on hand, and under circumstances most unfavourable for success in resisting some new advance by Russia in Asiatic Turkey. Already in possession of the fortress of Kars, of Ardahan, and of Batoum, her advance upon Erzeroum might easily be rapid and overwhelming. Close to her own resources, issuing from impregnable positions, free to choose her own time, Russia is to be opposed in a far distant and inland country by England alone, or

with no other ally than Turkey. And for the performance of this very onerous obligation we are to rely, as a base, on the "proximity" of the Island of Cyprus.

This, and nothing less than this, seems to be the scope and effect of the first Article of the Convention; so far, at least, as the first clause of it is concerned. But there is a second clause in the Article. In return for this vast guarantee on the part of England, Turkey "promises to England to introduce necessary reforms into the government and for the protection of the Christian and other subjects of the Porte in these territories." These reforms are not specified in the Convention. They are to be "agreed upon later between the two Powers." This clause is, at least, a formal homage to the principle that we cannot and dare not keep up the Government of Turkey at any cost to the subject populations. The grand old doctrine that the good government of these populations is a secondary and quite an independent consideration, not for a moment to be brought into competition with "British interests" as identified with the interests of the Sultan—this doctrine is, at last, formally admitted to be untenable. In the despatch to Mr. Layard of the 30th of May, directing him to negotiate the Convention, it is expressly declared that "Her Majesty's Government were not prepared to sanction mis-

government and oppression."* So far, the declared object of the Convention is not immoral, as the support of Turkey in Europe would have been immoral, when she had refused every security for reform. But when we look at the provisions in the Convention for fulfilling this acknowledged duty of England towards the subject population of Asiatic Turkey, we find that they amount to nothing whatever, except a renewal of those Turkish promises and assurances which had been treated by Lord Salisbury at the Conference of Constantinople with just contempt. The directions to Mr Layard were of the vaguest kind. England was to be "formally assured of the intention of the Porte," &c. It is to be remembered that, so far as government is concerned, Asiatic Turkey is simply chaos. The account given of it by Sir Fenwick Williams in 1854, and which is quoted in the second chapter of this work,† has been repeated by every competent authority over and over again during the four-and-twenty years which have since elapsed. Official corruption and Turkish barbarism in every form of development have been reducing some of the fairest regions of the earth, and the seat of an abundant ancient civilization to a state of a growing desolation. If we took military possession of the country, or administrative possession of it, as we have taken possession of the Island

* Turkey, XXXVI., p. 2. † Vol. I., p. 41.

of Cyprus, it might be possible to arrest the process. But this is a tremendous work, and one which there are no signs of our having been placed in a position to undertake. We have exacted a promise from Turkey that she will introduce reforms ; but we have apparently exacted no promise that we are ourselves to be entitled to introduce them, if Turkish officials fail. It is, however, a comfort to interpret the second clause as an absolute limitation of the first. Unless the reforms are introduced, the guarantee does not hold good. If this be so, the Convention is at least not quite so dangerous as at first sight it appears to be.

Let us now return to the Congress at Berlin, and see what our Plenipotentiaries were doing there.

By Art. XVI. of the Treaty of San Stefano the Porte undertook an engagement to Russia "to carry into effect without farther delay the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by Armenians, and to guarantee their security from Kurds and Circassians." Now, as Armenians are scattered over the whole, or nearly the whole, of Asiatic Turkey, this engagement was one which gave Russia a separate right of interference in the misgovernment of the country. It was therefore rather a difficult Article for the British Plenipotentiaries to deal with. They did not wish to betray their own Secret Convention. It was impossible to reject the San Stefano Article

without some pretence of a substitute. The result was that the English Foreign Secretary was obliged, at the fifteenth sitting of the Congress, on the 8th of July, to move the adoption of an Article copied from the Article in the San Stefano Treaty, but with the addition that Turkey was "periodically to render account of the measures taken with this intent to the Powers, who will superintend them." It is obvious, however, that the adoption of this Article in the Treaty of Berlin does not in any way effect the object of preventing Russia having a separate and concurrent right with all the other Powers to complain of and to resent any infraction of the promise given by the Turks. In the first place, it does not abrogate Article XVI. of San Stefano. And every Article of that Treaty which stands unaffected by the Treaty of Berlin stands good as between Russia and Turkey. In the second place, even if it did abrogate or supersede Article XVI. of San Stefano, it substitutes for it another Article which gives the same right to every one of the Signatory Powers. In the Treaty of Paris of 1856 there was an express Article, making the Porte the executrix of her own promises, although, failing such execution, separate action remained to each and to every Power, at least after mediation had been tried. But in the Treaty of Berlin there is no such Article, and therefore it is impossible to deny that, in spite of the onerous and exclusive obligation

undertaken by England in the Secret Convention with Turkey, we have not acquired any exclusive right over the Asiatic dominions of the Sultan. All the Powers, and Russia especially, have secured by Treaty, each and all of them, a right to call upon Turkey to reform the administration of those countries. It is impossible to foresee the complications which may arise out of these intricate and concurrent stipulations. But it is quite easy to see that these complications are nearly inexhaustible. The form in which Lord Salisbury's amendment of the Treaty of San Stefano is embodied in the Treaty of Berlin will be found in Art. LXI. of that instrument. It simply copies Article XVI. of San Stefano, and adds to it the following words :—"It (the Porte) will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers, who will superintend their application." No machinery or organisation of any kind is provided for the joint performance by the Powers of this duty, or for the joint exercise of the rights which it involves. It annihilates at a blow any pretence of independence as belonging to the Sultan over the administration of his Asiatic provinces. It gives a right of direct interference to all and to each of the Powers. It leaves this right to be fought about or wrangled over by the local Consuls of the Great Powers, or by their respective Ambassadors at Constantinople, or by the Cabinets of each, according as occasion and opportunity may

arise for any one of them to take advantage of this provision of the Treaty.

But perhaps there is no part of the proceedings at Berlin which casts a stronger glare upon the position in which England was placed by the conduct of her Cabinet than that part of them which relates to the cession of Batoum to Russia. It is evident that in the secret negotiations which led up to the Salisbury-Schouvaloff Agreement, Russia had stood firm in respect to this demand. On the other hand, it was precisely the demand of Russia which was most obnoxious to Turkey, and especially to her friends and protectors in England. It affected the great question whether for the future Russia or Turkey shall have the naval supremacy of the Euxine. The Salisbury Circular laid stress on this demand of Russia as one of those which must be submitted to the unfettered discretion of the European Congress. But the English Cabinet knew very well that no other Power in Europe attached the smallest importance to the maintenance of Turkish maritime supremacy in the Black Sea. The British Government therefore found itself in the position of having to choose between the alternative of agreeing to this cession or of fighting to prevent it. Very wisely they came to the conclusion that the retention of Batoum in the hands of Turkey was not an object justifying a war with Russia. They therefore adopted the alternative of acquiescing

in the demand of Russia, and of throwing on their successors in all time to come the obligation from which they shrank themselves—namely, that of resisting by force all similar cessions for the future. This being so, it would have been at least dignified to make the concession frankly, and without any attempt at concealment. Instead of this, it seems to have been part of the bargain with Russia that she was to qualify the apparent harshness and danger of her demand by announcing that she would make Batoum a "free port." It is needless to say that this has nothing whatever to do with the value of Batoum to Russia as a naval station. A free port means a port at which no harbour dues, or perhaps where no custom duties, are levied. It does not mean a port which is to be devoted exclusively to commerce, or a port which is not to be converted into a naval station. A free port may be a port defended by the most formidable armaments, and sheltering the most powerful fleets. Yet the British Plenipotentiaries thought it consistent with the dignity of their country to pretend not to see this distinction, and to accept the illusory concession of Russia as one of substantial value. It is impossible to read without some tingling of the blood the 14th Protocol of the Congress, which relates the proceedings of the 6th of July. The Prime Minister accepted the Russian concession with effusive gratitude. He regarded "as a happy idea

the transformation at the conclusion of a great war of a disputed fortress into a free port, and into a commercial depôt for all nations." The word "transformation" in this sentence is intended to convey the impression that the condition of a fortress is incompatible with the condition of a free port. We may well ask whether it was worth the while of the First British Plenipotentiary to put forward a plea which cannot stand a moment's investigation? But the Prime Minister went on to say that, "Full of confidence in the declarations of the Emperor of Russia, Lord Beaconsfield sees undoubtedly in the advantages of the freedom of this port a compensation for an annexation which he could not approve." Lord Salisbury went still farther in giving definite expression to this fictitious representation of that which Russia was really getting, and of that which she was really promising to do. He declared "that he had had objections to several points in Art. XIX. of the Treaty of San Stefano. His Excellency in the first place feared lest the possession of Batoum should be a danger to the freedom of the Black Sea. The graceful concession offered now by Russia, if he fully understands it, appears to set aside this apprehension."* We may well be grateful for a decision which avoided war. But we cannot be grateful for forms and methods of defending that decision, which were so insincere and so humiliating.

* Turkey, XXXIX., 1878, pp. 208, 209.

The only real concession which was obtained from Russia in respect to the Asiatic conquests she had made, was that she agreed to restore to Turkey Erzeroum, Bayazid, and the Valley of Alleckkerd—the new Russian frontier being thus thrown back so far as to leave free the principal caravan and commercial route between Trebizond and Persia. It is to be observed, however, that although the new Russian frontier, as settled by the Treaty of Berlin, does not include this commercial route, it outflanks it at no great distance, and in the event of any quarrel between Russia and Turkey, or between Russia and any of the other Protecting Powers on the subject of the Treaty, Russia, from her new frontier, and from the strong places which she has acquired within it, would be able almost at a moment's notice to repossess herself of the country through which this route passes.

The general result therefore of the Treaty of Berlin, so far as the Asiatic Provinces of Turkey are concerned, was to confirm Russia in all her most important conquests, to give her a new and valuable harbour on the Black Sea, which she had failed to secure by arms, and to confer upon her, along with other Powers, a joint and several right of interference in the internal administration of the country, which is absolutely incompatible with the independence of the Sultan.

Let us now return to Europe, and let us see what our Plenipotentiaries were doing there. They were

always at the same work. Almost wherever we open the Protocols we find them fighting to restrict the area of freedom, and to keep as much territory as possible under the direct Government of the Sultan. The theory on which they acted was that everything gained by the Christian populations was so much gained by Russia. This is a theory which, when acted upon practically by England, goes a very long way to fulfil itself. Nothing could be so powerful in establishing the influence of Russia over those populations, as the spectacle of England contesting every inch of ground which was to be redeemed from Turkish misgovernment. Yet this is the spectacle presented to us whenever we open the doors of the Congress at Berlin. Thus the English Plenipotentiaries always fought hard to limit as much as possible the area of the new Principality of Bulgaria, and when they could not succeed in depriving it of some particular district, the plan they proceeded upon was to demand as a compensation to Turkey and to England, that some other district should be abstracted from the new Eastern Roumelia. In this way even the limited privileges of "autonomous administration," which had been the demand of England at the Conference of Constantinople over a much wider area, were now to be confined within geographical limits as restricted as possible. We have an excellent illustration of this in the higgling which took place over the western boundaries of the new Principality. Russia had from the beginning

insisted on including in the Principality the important town and sandjak (district) of Sofia. At a private meeting of the Powers, held on the 18th of June, the English Plenipotentiaries had been obliged to agree to this, subject to a "strategic rectification" of the frontier line of the district in the interests of Turkey. But they had given their consent very reluctantly, and had driven a very hard bargain by way of compensation. They tried to get the important harbour of Varna on the Black Sea withdrawn from the Principality that it might be kept "*in the hands of the Turks.*" Or, failing this, they insisted that two important valleys—namely, those of the Mesta Karasou and the Strouma Karasou—should be abstracted from the new Province of Eastern Roumelia.* Thus the consent of England to the inclusion of the Sandjak of Sofia in the new Principality had to be bought by Russia, either by giving Varna to be held by the Turks, or by excluding two fine districts to the south of the Balkans from the benefits of even autonomous institutions. Russia, very wisely, accepted this last as the least injurious of the two alternatives, and the new Principality was thus secured an outlet to the Euxine. This arrangement was sanctioned by the Congress at its fourth sitting, held on the 22nd of June.†

* Turkey, XXXIX., 1878, No. 9, Inclos., p. 27.
† Ibid., p. 50.

But the British Plenipotentiaries had not yet exhausted their ingenuity in bargaining on behalf of Turkey. At the fifteenth sitting of the Congress, held on the 8th of July, we find them working hard to make the most out of the point which still remained unsettled—namely, the strategic rectification of the frontier line of the Sandjak of Sofia. The object was to bring the Turks as close as possible to this important town, and to cut off from the Principality as much as possible to the east and to the south. The spirit of huckstering in which this contest was carried on may be illustrated by a single example. England had consented to give the Sandjak of Sofia to Bulgaria in return for the consent of Russia that the two valleys of the Strouma and Mesta should be taken off Eastern Roumelia and restored to Turkey. But on examination it was found that part of the Strouma Valley had always belonged to the Sandjak of Sofia. Consequently, that part of the valley formed no part of the required subtraction from Roumelia. Consequently, also, something remained still due to Turkey, to be cut off from Bulgaria, south of the Sandjak altogether. This was the reason why the British Plenipotentiaries had voted for the larger extent of "rectification" now complained of by Russia as amounting to more than a mere rectification—to a substantial cession of territory which had been agreed upon as belonging to Bulgaria. To this very sharp practice Count Schouvaloff retorted that the bargain

England had driven was that the Strouma Valley should be excluded from Eastern Roumelia. If any part of it had never belonged to that Province, it could not be subtracted from it, and no compensation elsewhere could be demanded for it. It is needless to follow farther this petty work. Lord Salisbury in his despatch to the Government at home, of July 8, boasted that "the frontier of Roumelia in the direction of Sofia was agreed upon in a manner satisfactory to the Turkish Plenipotentiaries."* Russia, however, had effected some compromise. The general result is that Russia succeeded in establishing the new Principality upon ground which outflanks the Balkan—which lies to the south of that great water-shed, and which consequently embraces the upper course of streams falling into the Ægean.

The same spirit was shown by the British Plenipotentiaries throughout the Congress. Whether the question concerned the area of the new Principality, or the area of the new autonomous Province, or the amount of territory to be added to Servia, or the amount of territory to be added to gallant and victorious Montenegro, the voice of the English Cabinet was uniformly given against every enlargement of the "bounds of freedom," and also, as we have seen, in favour of every possible restriction even on the autonomous institutions which it was compelled to sanction.

* Ibid., p. 187.

The one dominant idea of the British Government was to keep as much as possible in the hands of the Turks. They could not conceal their antipathy to everything which recorded the triumph of Russia and her allies in the cause of the Christian populations. If there was one subordinate agency in that triumph which might have had the sympathy of Englishmen, it was surely the Principality of Montenegro. The splendid gallantry of its people, and the long historic duration of its contest with the Moslem, ought to have commanded the admiration and the cordial acknowledgment of the representatives of the British Government. But it was not so. Montenegro had committed the unpardonable sin of fighting in alliance with Russia, and of fighting, too, for the freedom of other people than her own. Consequently, at the tenth sitting of the Congress, on the 1st of July, when the Second Article of the Treaty of San Stefano came under discussion, the English Foreign Secretary moved an amendment which it is difficult to interpret otherwise than as a mere expression of hostile feeling. The Article ran thus:—"The Sublime Porte definitively recognises the independence of the Principality of Montenegro." Upon this paragraph being read, "Lord Salisbury said that his Government have never recognised its independence, and demanded the suppression of the word definitive."* No other Plenipotentiary joined in this

* Ibid., p. 157.

demand. The Congress seems to have treated it with indifference, if not contempt. It was referred as a mere question of form to the "Drafting Committee." But in this body the sentiment of Lord Salisbury appears to have prevailed, because in Article XXVI. of the Treaty of Berlin the word definitive is wanting. This is one of the diplomatic triumphs of our Plenipotentiaries at Berlin, for which England has been called upon to be proud and grateful.

And now we come upon another more important result of this temper and disposition, which in itself is highly discreditable to the British Government, and may not improbably be the cause of great future embarrassment. By the Treaty of San Stefano Russia had not only established a much larger Province of Bulgaria, but she had stipulated for autonomous institutions, more or less effectually restrictive of Turkish tyranny, in the Provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, of Thessaly and of Epirus. But she had done more than this. After all the deductions from the direct dominion of the Sultan which were secured by these provisions,—by the large Bulgaria, by the enlarged Servia, and by the autonomous institutions of the other Provinces above enumerated,—there still remained a very considerable extent of territory left to the Sultan which did not belong to any one of these Provinces, and which would have remained without any security whatever against the worst abuses of Turkish administration. Russia had provided against

this omission. The Emperor had promised in his Proclamation, when he crossed the Danube, that he had come to liberate the Christian population in the whole of the Balkan Peninsula. Accordingly, in Article XV. of the Treaty of San Stefano, after providing for constitutional securities in Crete, and in Epirus, and in Thessaly, these words were added:—"And the other parts of Turkey in Europe, for which a special constitution is not provided in the present Act." These words covered the whole of European Turkey.

It is needless to point out that the importance of this provision became immensely greater after the result of the Berlin negotiations. Large areas of country were cut off from the Provinces which were to have independent or semi-independent institutions. Less than Russia intended was given to Servia, less to Montenegro, less to Bulgaria, less to Eastern Roumelia; and the whole difference went to swell the bulk of country which was to be restored to the Sultan, without any stipulation whatever, for a reformed administration.

At the thirteenth sitting of the Congress, held on the 5th of July, Article XV. of the Treaty of San Stefano came under the consideration of the Plenipotentiaries. It was impossible to deny its reasonableness. It could not be opposed altogether. But the next best thing to do with any stipulation obnoxious to the Porte was to insert some condition or qualification which should have the effect of enabling the

Turkish Government itself to neutralise its effect. Accordingly this expedient was resorted to by the English Ministers. By the San Stefano Article, "Special Commissions" in each Province were to be entrusted with the task of elaborating the details of the new institutions. This was in strict accordance with the whole contention of the Powers before, and during, and since the Conference of Constantinople. That contention was that nothing could be secure which was left dependent wholly on the Porte. Lord Salisbury now moved that after the words "Special Commissions, &c., shall be charged," these words should be inserted, "by the Sublime Porte."* That is to say, the whole stipulation was made dependent on the pleasure of the Sultan's Government—than which no Government in the world knows better how to checkmate any movement in favour of purity of administration by insurmountable obstacles of dilatoriness and deceit.

At the fourteenth sitting of the Congress, held on the 6th of July, Russia again called attention to the increased importance of Article XV. of the Treaty of San Stefano, and expressed some anxiety as to the universal application of the corresponding Article which had been agreed to in the new Treaty then under consideration (Article XXIII.). This elicited from Prince Bismarck, President of the Congress, an emphatic declaration

* Ibid., p. 197.

that Article XV. of San Stefano had been adopted by the Congress in its entirety, and that "it extends it in principle to all portions of the Empire."* It is evident that, although this declaration is satisfactory in itself, it is one which records the intention of the Congress, and nothing more. Lord Salisbury's amendment had the effect of depriving the Article of all self-working power. Yet each and every one of the Signatory Powers must retain its right to insist on the fulfilment of the Article by the Porte. The result is that we have in this Article little more than a melancholy record of the shortsightedness of the English Government, and a fertile source of future contests between all who are concerned.

There remains, however, to be noted one other illustration of the policy of the British Plenipotentiaries which is equally significant, and may very probably be the source of endless future complications.

At the fifteenth sitting of the Congress, on the 8th of July, the first Russian Plenipotentiary read to the Assembly an important communication which he had been ordered by his Government to make. It set forth that Russia had made great sacrifices during the war, and some sacrifices not inconsiderable since the war, in order to come to a good understanding with the rest of Europe. She had a right to expect that these sacrifices were not to be made gratuitously,

* Ibid., p. 212.

and that the work which had been done should not be fruitless through want of execution. It was from this cause that previous attempts at the pacification of the East had failed. Russia could not accept the prospect of a renewal of the painful crises such as that to which the Congress had been summoned to put an end. The Russian Plenipotentiaries had therefore been ordered to "ask the Congress before it concluded its labours by what principles and in what manner it proposed to insure the execution of its high decisions."* The consideration of this communication was made the order of the day for the next meeting of the Assembly.

At that meeting, the sixteenth, held on the 9th of July, the Turkish Plenipotentiary declared that he "could not grasp the bearing of the Russian document." But he proceeded to make a speech which showed that he grasped it well enough. Parts of the Treaty, he said, would come into immediate execution, other parts were to be executed through Special Commissions appointed for the purpose. And if there were some parts not falling within either of those categories, for these the Congress had the assurances of the Ottoman Government that its resolutions would be put into execution with the least possible delay. What could any human being desire more satisfactory than the renewed promises of the Porte?

* Ibid., p. 232.

The President, Prince Bismarck, was very cautious and very adroit. He did not think that each State separately should be obliged by Treaty to use force for the execution of the Treaty. If the Powers engaged themselves jointly to use force at need, they would run the risk of provoking among themselves grave disunion. But, on the other hand, if Russia would be satisfied by a draft "indicating that the sum total of the obligations signed in the Treaty should form a whole, the execution of which the Powers would oblige their representatives at Constantinople to watch over, reserving to themselves the right of taking counsel in case this execution should be defective or slow," then he, the President, would entertain no objection to the Russian proposal. The Russian Plenipotentiaries accepted Prince Bismarck's interpretation of that which they desired, and undertook to prepare a draft by which effect would be given to it.

At the seventeenth meeting of the Congress, held on the 10th of July, the Russian draft was produced. It consisted of two propositions. The first declared that "the stipulations of the new Treaty were regarded by the Congress as forming a combination of stipulations, the execution of which the Powers engage to control and superintend, whilst insisting on their being carried out entirely in conformity with their intentions." The second proposition declared that they reserved to themselves the right to come to an understanding, in case of need, as to the requisite means to insure a

result which neither the general interests of Europe nor the dignity of the Great Powers permit them to leave invalid. Again the discussion was postponed till the next meeting,—not, however, before Lord Salisbury had intimated the opposition of England to any "declaration of this nature."* Prince Bismarck, on the contrary, intimated his opinion that the idea expressed in the first of the two Russian propositions would be unanimously approved by the Congress.

At last, on the 11th of July, in the eighteenth sitting of the Congress, the Russian proposal was finally disposed of, and the manner in which it was disposed of is very curious. Austria at once accepted the principle involved in the first Russian proposition, but wished it to be embodied in shorter and simpler terms. Her Plenipotentiary accordingly moved to substitute for the Russian form the following simpler draft :—"The High Contracting Parties look upon the totality of the Articles of the present Act (Treaty) as forming a collection of stipulations of which they undertake to control and superintend the execution."

Short as this formula was, it involved and sanctioned the principle, not only that the Powers intended to give obligatory force to the provisions of the Treaty (for this, of course, is involved and assumed in the very signing of such an instrument), but also that they recognised the duty of enforcing compliance with the

* Ibid., p. 253.

provisions of the Treaty upon all those who had duties to perform in virtue of those provisions. Turkey and her friends immediately perceived the danger. She might positively be coerced to perform her promises to Europe. But as this was not an objection which it was expedient to dwell too much upon, some other must be found. Lord Salisbury resorted to the truly Turkish device of declaring that "he could not comprehend the object of the Russian proposal." He knew no sanction more solemn or more binding than the signature of his Government. Prince Bismarck asked whether the objection of the English Plenipotentiary extended to the amended proposition of Austria-Hungary, and expressed his own opinion that "it would not be undesirable to express that the Congress undertakes to superintend and control the carrying out of its work, and that such a declaration would be in no respect unusual."* The Turkish Plenipotentiary did not conceal his perfect comprehension of the scope and bearing of the declaration. Turkey would not be so free as she hitherto had been to break her promises with impunity. "The Porte would thus find itself obliged to admit within its own limits the control of other States." Here we have the same ground taken as in the Conference of Constantinople, and before the war. It is impossible not to admire the imperturbable obstinacy with which Turks

* Ibid., p. 265.

can maintain their point. This speech of the Turkish Plenipotentiary on the one hand, and the strong and repeated declaration of the President that he thought the Russian proposal a reasonable one, seem to have made Lord Salisbury more cautious in any farther development of his objections. He saw that by a less dangerous course he could probably frustrate the Russian proposition altogether. France was, above all things, bent on avoiding any possible entanglement in the Eastern Question. Her one idea is well known to be to husband every resource for a contest in which she is far more vitally concerned. Italy, for other reasons, had the same desire of keeping her freedom of action unembarrassed. The simple abstention from giving any vote by England, France, and Italy, together with the hostility of Turkey, would be sufficient to prevent the adoption by Congress of the Russian proposal. Russia agreed, indeed, to modify that proposal so as to make it very nearly identical with that of Austria-Hungary. The Austrian Plenipotentiary then accepted it. But nothing could induce the British Plenipotentiaries to vote for any proposal which looked in the direction of interference with the free-will of the Turks. Accordingly, when the vote came to be taken on the modified proposal of Russia, England, France, and Italy took the course of reserving their vote. Turkey, of course, was adverse. Russia, Germany, and Austria were insufficient to carry the proposition. It therefore fell to the ground, and thus

through the opposition of the British Plenipotentiaries all executive force is taken from the Treaty of Berlin, and a great part of its provisions have no other security than Turkish promises on the one hand, and Russian promises on the other.

It is time, however, now to stand back a little from the canvas, and to regard the picture presented by the work of the Berlin Congress, not in its details, but in its general effect.

Looking at it from this better point of view, there is one great general result which is apparent at a glance. With three exceptions, presently to be specified, everything which is good and hopeful in the Treaty of Berlin comes straight from the Treaty of San Stefano. That is to say, that, saving and excepting the three points referred to, everything that has been gained to the cause of human freedom in the East of Europe by the Treaty of Berlin, has been gained wholly and entirely by the sword of Russia. It need not have been so. It ought not to have been so. But so it is. This is not a pleasant conclusion to arrive at; and the facts which prove it are a serious deduction from the benefits which the arrangements sanctioned by the Treaty are otherwise calculated to secure. But the best remedy for the evil is to be found in the frank recognition of it as an indisputable fact, and in that amendment of policy for the future, of which the acknowledgment of past errors is an essential part.

Let us now see what are the three good provisions in the Treaty of Berlin which are not taken from the Treaty of San Stefano. In the first place, the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary is, in my opinion, on the grounds before indicated, a better solution of the difficulties affecting those Provinces than the solution which was provided by the Treaty of San Stefano. Institutions framed on the model which has not worked very well in Crete were still less likely to be successful in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the second place, so much of the deduction of territory from the Bulgaria of San Stefano as was necessary to exclude from it districts purely or mainly Greek, was a useful, and indeed almost a necessary amendment of that Treaty. In the third place, the insertion of the various words and phrases which were required to substitute the right of Europe for any exclusive rights which had been assigned to Russia in the protectorate of the subject populations of Turkey, was an amendment still more valuable in respect to the principle which is involved. All these provisions, however, were mere amendments of the Treaty of San Stefano. To the first of them Russia gave her cordial assent; to the second, she does not seem to have offered any serious opposition; and to the third, so far as appears, she submitted without remonstrance.

Putting, then, these three provisions aside, and remembering that they are in their very nature nothing more

than rectifications of the substantial work which had been done by Russia, we find that the whole pith and substance of the Treaty of Berlin is a mere adoption, more or less grudging and reluctant, of the great deliverances effected by the Treaty of San Stefano. The final redemption of all the Danubian Principalities from even the nominal yoke of Turkey; the enlargement of the Servian territory; the final and public recognition of the independence of the gallant mountaineers who, in the Black Mountain, had for centuries kept the Turks at bay when all around them had succumbed; the erection of Northern Bulgaria into a Christian Principality, owing nothing but a fixed tribute to the Porte; the destruction of the great fortresses on the Danube, which had so long been the strongholds of Turkish military resistance; the establishment to the south of the Balkan of a Province, of which the governor must be a Christian, in which the Sultan cannot even choose what Christian he pleases, but must submit his selection to the sanction of other Powers—a Province in which the Sovereign cannot quarter his own army, and in which the militia is to a considerable extent independent of him; the public sanction given, by a European Treaty, to the principle that Turkey, in every part of her dominions, is under engagement to the Christian Powers to amend her administration, and that each and all of them have a right of interference if she fails to do so;—these are the solid gains in the cause of freedom in the East of Europe which the Treaty of Berlin sanctions, and they

are every one of them due to Russia, and to the Treaty she extorted by arms from Turkey. Not one of these great steps in the history of human progress would have been gained if the policy of the English Cabinet had prevailed. They all belong to that class of results of which Lord Salisbury so frankly said, at the beginning of the Congress, that England "could not annihilate them."

Unfortunately there is even more than this to be said. Not only would these great gains to humanity have been lost if the policy of the English Cabinet had prevailed, but there is the strongest ground for believing, as I have shown in the previous chapters of this work, that, in that event, the condition of the Christian populations of Turkey would have been rendered even more intolerable than before. The pusillanimous abandonment of duties sanctioned by Treaty, but resting really upon transactions of which Treaties were nothing but a record, was defended ostensibly upon arguments of international law which would have asserted for the Government of the Sultan an unlimited right of spoliation and of massacre. But in reality that abandonment of duty was prompted by motives having a deeper seat. Motives of assumed self-interest of the narrowest kind, as shortsighted as they were immoral, led a large portion of the political classes of England to avow and defend the doctrine that the welfare of the subject populations of the Porte was quite a secondary consideration compared with the policy of maintaining

and defending the Government of the Sultan. The establishment of this doctrine had a direct and inevitable tendency to make that Government more and more reckless and corrupt. Fortunately a very large portion of the people of Great Britain, which, whether it was a majority or not, was quite large enough to make its power felt, protested against this doctrine, and effectually prevented any action being taken in its sense. But they could do no more than neutralise the action of the Cabinet: they could not give it a right direction. The sad result was that in the great work of liberation in the East of Europe England has had no share, and that her official attitude was at least that of sulky and reluctant acquiescence. Everything was left to Russia, and everything was done by her.

I am one of those who think that this was a great misfortune, because Russia, although a civilising Power in Central Asia, cannot have the same character in any advances she may make among the Christian States of Europe. Her ancient and hereditary hostility to the Moslem Empire of the Turks has made her power a fitting instrument in the gradual destruction of the most desolating dominion that has ever cursed the world. She has made out of the transaction some profit for herself, as she could not fail to do. But the greatest of all her gains was in the attitude of England at the Berlin Congress. Higgling over every inch of territory, and over every item of political freedom which Russia had secured for the Christian

populations of Turkey, the British Plenipotentiaries did their very best to give to Russia a place and rank in the affections of that population which will give her an immense advantage in the contests which are yet to be. The Russian Plenipotentiaries may well be envied the opportunity of retort which was afforded to them by a somewhat vaporous speech of M. Waddington at the eighteenth meeting of the Congress. He spoke of the sacrifices which the Congress had imposed upon Turkey. To this Count Schouvaloff replied with effect, that the sacrifices which had been imposed upon Turkey "were not the work of the Congress, but the consequence of the war." It was not Europe, it was Russia, by her own unaided efforts, that had wrung from Turkey those sacrifices which were the hope of the subject populations. The Congress, and the English Plenipotentiaries especially, did nothing but sanction what they could not prevent, and limit to the utmost those liberties which, for very shame, they could not altogether refuse.

Looking again at the work of the Congress from the most important of all points of view,—namely, that in which it is seen in connexion with the probable future of those countries,—it is impossible to see in it a work of wisdom. It is true, indeed, that the public mind of Europe was not yet fully prepared to deal with the final problem of the possession of Constantinople, and the complete exclusion of Turkish Government from every corner of Europe. So long ago as 1829, the Duke of Wellington was prepared to see that

problem solved, and declared his opinion that it was a pity the solution of it should be postponed. But any attempt to dispose of this question in 1878 would probably have led to an European war, and Russia herself did not seek or desire to precipitate a decision. The Congress of Berlin is therefore not to be blamed if it assumed that something of Turkey in Europe was for the present to remain. But, on the other hand, the evidences of her growing corruption and decline had been accumulating so rapidly in recent years, and her defeat by Russia had been so crushing and complete, that not even the most bigoted victim of ancient superstitions could fail to see that, though the end is not yet, it is coming soon. Under these circumstances it would have been obviously wise to make at once such territorial changes in the natural direction as could be made with the general consent of Europe, and to do everything that was possible to prepare the way for the gradual and peaceful accomplishment of such other changes of the same kind as remain to be effected. First and foremost among the changes which might have been made at once, not only without risk of quarrel among the Governments of Europe, but with their universal approval, was the transfer of Thessaly and Epirus to Greece. They are abominably misgoverned. They yield little to the Porte, and the chronic discontent of the population compels Turkey to hold them with a large military force. On the other hand, the Greek Kingdom, which it is eminently the interest of England to support and encourage, is

unnaturally cramped and confined without these Provinces. The postponement of this transfer by the Congress of Berlin was a political blunder of the first magnitude, and there is every reason to believe that this blunder was entirely due to the influence and the action of the British Government.

Again, as regards the Principality of Bulgaria, the work of the Congress was not only incomplete, but to a large extent it was mischievous and most embarrassing for the future. It was quite right indeed, as I have said before, to exclude from that Province districts which were mainly Greek. But the device of cutting off from it areas of country to the south of the Balkans which are peopled by the same race, and with the same political aspirations, was one which can only end in mischief. The southern Province is to be endowed with just so much of freedom as must bring it into constant collision with the Turkish Government, must inspire it with a determined desire for more complete emancipation, and must furnish it at the same time with large opportunities and facilities for successfully working towards the desired end. It is an arrangement essentially unnatural, artificial, and ingeniously inexpedient. And then, what are we to say of the elaborate provisions to enable the Turks to hold the Balkans as a military frontier? Is there any man so blind as to suppose that, when the day of contest comes, this provision can in any way determine its result, or do anything but make the war more bloody than it had need to be? The

possession of Sofia by the new Principality turns the Balkans on the west, whilst the Servian State, which, in any war involving the fate of Moslem power in Europe, must necessarily take the Christian side, gives ready access to the heart of the Roumelian Province. On the east, the Principality of Bulgaria has been placed in possession of Varna, on the Black Sea, at which point Russia can co-operate with that revived and regenerated fleet which she is sure to establish in the Euxine. Nothing proves more clearly the unpremeditated character of this last war with Turkey on the part of Russia, than the fact that, although she had been free for five years to reconstitute her Black Sea fleet, she had not done so, and that Turkey was as predominant in that sea when the war broke out as if the clauses in the Treaty of 1856, restricting Russia in this matter, had never been repealed. But, of course, Russia will not allow herself much longer to be in this position of inferiority to a Power which she hates and despises. It must therefore be counted upon as a certainty that Russia will construct a fleet in the Black Sea sufficient to enable her to cope with Hobart Pacha and his successors. The Balkans will then be outflanked at both ends. We know what the worth of the Balkans has been to Turkey in the way of enabling her to stop the Russian advance, even when she held in front of it the line of the Danube, and the great fortresses of Schumla, Rustchuk, and Silistria; when she was in secure possession of

Sofia, on the one flank, and of the Black Sea upon the other. We can estimate therefore what the value of it will be for the same purpose when she has none of these advantages—when she holds nothing but a long and extended ridge of mountains, capable of being forced at many points.

And then there is another matter in which the Treaty of Berlin leaves behind it nothing but confusion. Article XIX. of the Treaty of San Stefano had saddled on Turkey the enormous money indemnity of 1410 millions of roubles. It had, however, consented to strike off from that sum 1100 millions of roubles for value received in the territorial cessions in Asia and in Europe. There still remained, however, 310 millions of roubles, which was imposed as a debt upon Turkey. In the bankrupt condition of Turkish finance—bankrupt before the war, and still more insolvent after it—this is a very serious obligation. In the eleventh meeting of the Congress, held on the 2nd of July, the Turks protested against it, and pointed out the impossibility of their being able to pay such a sum if they were to pay their other debts, and if they were to spend anything on administrative reforms. Lord Salisbury observed that, if this indemnity were to be convertible into farther territorial cessions, the English Plenipotentiaries would resist it altogether. But the substantial surrender of this point to Russia had no doubt been settled beforehand under the Secret Agreement.

Russia consented to declare that in no case would she demand farther territorial cessions on account of the indemnity, nor would she claim any preferential security over the previous creditors of Turkey. The acceptance of this as a solution of the difficulty is of a piece with the acceptance of the Russian declaration in respect to the commercial freedom of the port of Batoum. The Russian declaration may be satisfactory to the holders of Turkish Bonds, but it does not in any degree mitigate the political effect of Russia being a creditor to Turkey for so large an amount of debt. The sum due to Russia may not come before the other creditors of Turkey. But it comes before her own most necessary expenses. It comes before the payment of her army and navy; it comes before the payment of a reformed judiciary; it comes before the expenditure on new roads and bridges; it comes before every one of the thousand demands upon the Turkish Government which are essential to an improved administration.

It may be true, as the Russian Plenipotentiaries said, that not more than one-third of the revenues actually raised from the people ever reached the Imperial Treasury, the remaining two-thirds being absorbed by the corrupt and vicious system of collection. It may be true that reform in this matter would yield a margin out of which all obligations could be discharged. But this observation indicates the special interest and the special right which

Russia has acquired to make herself heard on the large and wide subject of Turkish administrative reform. I do not mean to argue that the British Plenipotentiaries ought to have resisted the San Stefano Article which imposed the indemnity. Russia had incurred an enormous expenditure to secure results which all Europe, and England especially, had at least professed to desire. She did secure them, and the Congress at Berlin did little but give to them a formal sanction. Russia had a full right to demand, after a victorious war, compensation for the treasure she had spent; and large as that compensation was, it is very doubtful whether it covered the outlay. But it is not to be concealed that the establishment on the part of Russia of such a debt against the dilapidated and well-nigh exhausted resources of the Turkish Government, is one of the grave consequences which have followed directly from the conduct of the British Cabinet. It was they, more than any other agency, who impeded and prevented that common action and concert of the Powers which could alone take out of the hands of Russia functions which it was the common duty and the common policy of Europe to discharge. It was too late at Berlin to retrieve the error. The British Plenipotentiaries were obliged to yield on every one of the principal demands which Russia had made on her own account. This indemnity was one of them. It cannot fail to be a standing cause of trouble. It is one of the many elements of

confusion which remain as the monument of perverted sympathies, of lost opportunities, of neglected duties. But although the compulsory acquiescence of the Berlin Congress, and especially of the British Plenipotentiaries, in this Russian demand, was in itself rather a humiliation, it was by no means so great a humiliation as the boastful or deceptive language under which all these submissions were concealed. We have seen from an analysis of the provisions of the Treaties of San Stefano and of Berlin, together with the Anglo-Turkish Convention, how much remains of independence to the Government of the Sultan. Bound hand and foot by a number of stipulations concerning her most purely internal concerns, and bound by these stipulations to each and to all the Powers under the most various and complicated conditions, Turkey is now not only a dependent State, but it is dependent under bonds which do not even leave it the rights which have been given to its dismembered Provinces—the rights of what are called "administrative autonomy." Yet, in consenting to these stipulations as part of the Treaty of Berlin, the English Prime Minister thought it worth his while to declare that it had been established by unanimous consent that the Sultan, as a member of the political body of Europe, is to enjoy a position which shall secure to him the respect of his sovereign rights,* and again that "the Sultan should be master in his own dominions."† Prince Gortchakow was

* Ibid., p. 48. † Ibid., p. 89.

able to administer to this sort of language a severe and a proud rebuke. He said that "he and his colleagues representing Russia had presented not phrases, but facts to the High Assembly."

Looking now at the Treaty of Berlin as a whole, we cannot be too grateful for some of its results. In the first place, it was a public confession on the part of the English Cabinet that a war with Russia was not justifiable for the purpose of preventing her from securing the substantial gains she had won for herself by war and in the Treaty of San Stefano. In the second place, it was a public confession that such a war was impossible for the purpose of supporting Turkey against the main provisions secured by the same Treaty on behalf of the subject populations of Turkey. In the third place, it took a long step forwards in the direction of the final partition of the Sultan's European dominions, redeeming from even the forms of vassalage the old Danubian Principalities, and establishing in two other important Provinces institutions which must lead to future independence. In the fourth place, it embodied in the public law of Europe the fertile principle that the Sultan is under pledge to the other Powers in respect to the good government of all the dominions that remain to him, whether in Europe or in Asia. All these great elements of good ought to be acknowledged, although most unfortunately every one of them has been due to the interests and to the power and to the policy of Russia. On the other hand, there are some great evils

connected with the Treaty and the proceedings of the Congress, which constitute serious deductions from the good it has effected. In the first place, it has postponed the settlement of some points which were ripe for solution, which can only be settled in one way, and which it is only too probable cannot now be settled without another war. In the second place, it clogged the institutions of autonomous administration, which it professed to confer upon Eastern Roumelia, with provisions conceived in the interests of the Turks, which are incongruous and inconsistent, and are sure to be the source of future trouble. In the third place, the Treaty has left the joint and several rights of the Signatory Powers in respect to the Protectorate over the subject populations of Turkey in a state of utter confusion, without the indication even of any methods of operation, or any provision whatever against the intrusion of selfish and exclusive action as opportunities may arise. In the fourth and last place—and this, perhaps, is the crowning evil of all—the whole proceedings of the Congress have exhibited the English Government as jealous of, and hostile to, the growing power and advancing freedom of the Christian populations, and Russia as the only Power which is heartily on their side. For all these deductions from the value of the Treaty of Berlin the Cabinet of the Queen is mainly, if not exclusively, responsible. They are results, in my opinion, damaging to the interests of England, and to the honour of the British Crown.

CHAPTER XIV.

OUR RELATIONS WITH AFGHANISTAN FROM THE FIRST AFGHAN WAR TO THE AGREEMENT WITH RUSSIA IN 1873.

OUR Indian Empire is having a very marked effect on the national temper. We regard it with a passionate pride and with a passionate jealousy. These feelings are but slightly founded on any deliberate estimate of the good we may be doing there. That good may be very great, but the contemplation of it is an after-thought. It has been so with conquering races in all times. The spread of the Roman Empire carried with it the spread of Roman civilisation, and scattered wide over the world the seeds of Roman law. But this thought was not in the mind of Roman senators or of Roman generals. It did not inspire the march of Cæsar, or build the walls of Trajan. Many of those who are most proud and most jealous of India would be the first to disclaim, almost with disgust, the purely humanitarian estimate of our position in the East. They are not thinking, unless in a very secondary degree, of extended civilisation,—of the diffusion of Christian knowledge,—of the wider area

given to just and equal laws. Neither the Schoolmaster, nor the Missionary, nor the Jurist, is the symbol of that which we adore. It is the Imperial Sceptre of the Moguls. It is the Throne of Delhi.

The small group of clever Englishmen who call themselves Positivists, and who bow down before the dry bones of Comte's Philosophy, have lately been good enough to intimate that they disapprove of our Indian Empire. It is always inspiriting to see the courage or the audacity of small minorities. If these writers would help to make their countrymen a little less nervous and a little more just, in questions affecting our interests in India, they would be doing good service. But if they preach the doctrine that we ought to have no interests and no duties there—then dogs baying at the moon are creatures employed in an avocation quite as useful and quite as hopeful. The pure Instinct of Dominion, unadulterated by any other feeling more rational than itself, is one of the very strongest of human passions. It has always been strongest with the strongest races; and through them it has been the most powerful of all agencies in the history of human progress. Never perhaps has it had a more legitimate field of application than in the British conquest of India. That conquest came upon us unawares, without forethought and without design. It was begun by a few servants of a "Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies," and its strong foundations were laid by men who acted against the

orders of Directors, against the policy of the Crown, and against the jealousy of Parliament. It grew out of the pure ascendency of superior mind. It upset nothing which was worth preserving. The Mahomedan conquerors of India had spent their force, and the Empire they founded had sunk far in that irremediable decline which is now visibly affecting every Moslem Government in the world. The thrones of Hindostan had long been the prize of every Palace intriguer, or the prey of every soldier of fortune. Our conquest of India has not been effected by foreign troops, but mainly by the native races yielding themselves to our cause, and fighting for it with incorruptible devotion. The power of inspiring that devotion, and of yoking it to our service, are the best title and the best justification of the Empire which it has won.

But the pride of possession and the instinct of dominion, like all other primary passions of the mind, are liable to irrational excesses and dangerous abuse. And never has this abuse been more signally illustrated than in the temper of mind which has been engendered in a very large section of English politicians. In particular, the jealousy and the fear of Russia have become a mania. It dictates towards that Power a policy of chronic suspicion, only varied by paroxysms of undignified alarm. This is bad enough, but it is not the worst. The fact that Russia is a Power possessed of an Asiatic Empire much older than that

of England, that she is advancing her possessions there from analogous causes and with like effects, and that she may therefore ultimately come into a geographical position co-terminous with our own—this is a fact and a prospect which it is wise to bear in mind, and which must influence our conduct in many ways. But that influence ceases to be safe or legitimate when it overbears every other consideration, and sits like a nightmare on every conception we have of our duties in foreign policy, whether in Europe or in Asia. It is not too much to say that this is what the fear and the hatred of Russia have come to be. On account of it, the Government of Lord Aberdeen was seriously blamed for not having widened the area of bloodshed in the Crimean contest, and for not having aimed at raising revolutionary wars in Poland and in the Caucasus. On account of it, we have a man so able and so experienced as Sir Henry Rawlinson implying regret that we had not then spent the blood and the treasure of England in securing the assistance and in establishing the independence of the most ruthless savages that exist in any portion of the world.* On account of it, we think it legitimate to support in Europe the corrupt and desolating Government of the Turks, and to proclaim openly that we consider the welfare of the subject populations of Turkey as a matter of secondary consideration. On account of

* See Memorandum, No. 12B, p. 31, in Afghanistan Corresp., 1878.

it, forty years ago, we plunged into a most unrighteous war beyond the boundaries of India, shedding the blood, and interfering with the independence, of a people with whom we had not even a decent pretext of quarrel. On account of it, we desire that the vast spaces of Central Asia, with their few swarming areas of population, should be kept the perpetual hunting-ground of tribes whose whole business is to rob caravans and to steal men. On account of it, we exhibit ourselves to the princes and peoples of India as in a state of constant trepidation whenever some Kaufmann moves, and when he subjects to a Government comparatively civilised some barbarous Khan who has hitherto lived upon the Slave Trade. On account of it—and this is, perhaps, worst of all—we are now to see English Secretaries of State instructing the Viceroy of India to practise deceit in our dealings with a neighbour, and to make "ostensible" demands upon him which are to cover a direct breach of faith.

In the preceding Chapters we have traced the working of this spirit in the politics of Europe. Let us now trace its workings in the politics of India.

Two separate narratives have been given to us on the authority of her Majesty's Government, of the events and transactions which I am about to review. One of these is contained in Lord Lytton's Despatch, dated May 10th, 1877.* It was written at Simla when

* Afghan Corresp. I. 1878, No. 36, p. 160.

it became necessary for the Viceroy to give an account of his policy. The other of these narratives is contained in the despatch of Lord Cranbrook, dated November 18th, 1878.* It was published in the newspapers a fortnight before the Session of Parliament which began on the 5th December, 1878, when it became necessary for the Cabinet to present its policy in the most favourable aspect, and when, for that purpose, it was very important to anticipate the production of the Papers. Both of these narratives are misleading on matters of fundamental importance. Fully to expose all the inaccuracies woven into the very texture of these documents, it would be necessary to occupy much more space than I can here afford. But the narrative now presented will traverse both those other narratives at many points ; and these will be noticed as we proceed. For convenience, and to avoid personality as far as it may be possible to do so, I shall refer to Lord Lytton's Despatch as the "Simla Narrative," and to Lord Cranbrook's Despatch as the "London Narrative."

The lesson on Frontier Policy which during many years most powerfully impressed the Anglo-Indian mind was the lesson read by that solitary horseman who, on the 13th of January, 1842, staggered, half-unconscious, into the gate of Jellalabad.† He was

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* Ibid., No. 73, p. 260.

† Kaye's War in Afghanistan, vol. ii. p. 217.

the sole survivor of a British army—the only man who, out of that army and out of all its followers, had escaped captivity or death. It may be true that the terrible completeness of this memorable catastrophe was due to the incapacity of the officers in command of the British Army of Occupation in Cabul. It is certainly true that, so far as the mere military honour and reputation of England is concerned, these were speedily re-asserted and vindicated with complete success. But it was impossible for the Indian Government of that time, and it is impossible for any historian of it now, to look back upon the political struggle in Afghanistan which had been gallantly maintained by Sir William Macnaghten and Sir Alexander Burnes, without seeing and feeling that the position in which we had been placed by Lord Palmerston's or Lord Auckland's Afghan expedition had been a thoroughly false position. We had interfered with the independence of a people with whose independence we had no right to interfere, and whose independence, moreover, it was above all things our interest to maintain. The particular object of our interference had been as foolish as it was unjust. We had opposed ourselves to a brave and an able Prince, and we had sought to set up in his stead a man who was naturally weak, and whom we had induced to be a traitor to his country and to his race. For this miserable purpose we had been drawing heavily on the resources of the people of India, and were involved in an undertaking which must have taxed those re-

sources more and more. Above twenty millions of money had been spent out of the revenues of India, first in inducing, and then in retrieving, a great disaster. It is possible, indeed, that by reckless perseverance, and by an enormous military expenditure, we might have completed the conquest of Afghanistan. But the cost and the embarrassment of such a conquest, so far in advance of our own frontiers, of our resources, and of our bases of operation, had been brought home to the convictions of every statesman both in India and at home. With universal approbation, and with complete success, confession was made of the great error we had committed. We soon found it to be our best policy to swear friendship with the gallant man whom we had for a time expelled from his throne, and we made him during the rest of his life our firm and faithful ally.

But if that terrible Afghan expedition made an indelible impression on the mind of English and of Indian statesmen, we cannot wonder if it made an impression not less indelible on the minds of the Afghans. Not to dwell on the personal grievances which many of them had borne from the conduct of our men and officers when resident in the country—grievances which the historian of the war, however unwilling, has been compelled to mention—the proud chiefs of a proud race had seen us disposing of the Government of their country at our pleasure, pulling down one and setting up another. They had seen us

conferring the Crown upon a man who at our instigation had consented to make her people tributary to their great enemy, Runjeet Singh, and to his Sikh Empire. Our Political Agents, wherever they were stationed, assumed to be, and actually were, the supreme governors of the country. It was impossible that the Afghans could assign this conduct to any other motive than a desire to subjugate their country, and reduce it to the condition of a province of our Empire. And if this impression was strong at the close of the Afghan war, there was much to keep it alive in subsequent events. We talk coolly of the gigantic strides—this is the stock phrase—made by Russia in her career of Asiatic conquest. But her gains have been as nothing to the gains of the British Empire during the same period in conquests and annexations.

The strides must be gigantic which an Empire takes when it has to cross deserts which are two thousand miles long by more than a thousand miles in breadth.* But the gigantic length of such strides takes something out of the vigour of the organism which is impelled to make them, and does not necessarily bring it much nearer to new sources of vitality. During the forty years which have elapsed since the first Afghan war, we have conquered and annexed provinces containing many times more millions of

* Rawlinson Memorandum, Afghan Corresp. I. 1878, p. 31.

men than exist in all the Khanates of Central Asia between the Volga and the Wall of China.* Afghans, who in their youth may have assisted in the massacres of Macnaghten and of Burnes, are not now old men. But they have lived to see the Government of British India annex Oude with eleven millions of population ; conquer the Punjaub, with a population of more than seventeen millions; and subdue the country of the Ameers of Scinde, with a population of more than two millions. That is to say that within a period of less than forty years we have absorbed and conquered countries with a population of upwards of thirty millions. These are "gigantic strides" indeed, not "gigantic" like the strides of Russia, in the width and in the poverty of the distances traversed and of the regions gained,—but gigantic in the resources they have opened up, and in the treasures of which they have put us in possession. They are all annexations and conquests lying well into our former possessions, filling up and consolidating the boundaries of Empire. They are Provinces prolific as recruiting grounds, and some of them rich in the resources of revenue. The Afghans have seen from their

* The whole population of the immense stretch of country inhabited by the Tekeh Turcomans, which extends from Kizil Arvat to beyond Merve, is roughly calculated at about one million souls. See Article VIII. in *Quarterly Review*, January, 1879, which I think I cannot be wrong in assigning to the authorship of Sir Henry Rawlinson.

hill-tops all these leaps and bounds of British dominion, bringing that dominion close up to the foot of their own mountains, and giving ready access to the defiles by which their Capital is approached. Nor have they been unobservant spectators of the method by which some of these annexations have been brought about. They must have seen that this method has often stood in close connexion with the previous establishment of resident British officers, political or military, in the States which have been absorbed. The demands these officers have made on the Native Governments, the interferences they have practised with Native rule, the reports they have sent up of Native abuses and of Native maladministration, have been the usual and regular preliminaries of British annexation. And even where the internal independence of tributary or protected States is professedly respected it is notorious in India, and is well known to all our neighbours, that the presence of British officers in an official position in Native States—however necessary it may be for our purposes—is an arrangement which generally ends in making those officers the centre of authority.

It is in the light of these facts and of these memories that we are to estimate every jealousy of the Afghans, and every promise given to them in the way of reassurance by ourselves. It was our object to convince them of the reality of our

reformed intentions, and of the sincerity with which we desired to avoid for the future every approach to interference. The pledges on this subject which we gave with a view to regain their confidence are to be construed in the spirit as well as in the letter. We knew what they had in their minds, and they knew what we had in ours. The Treaty concluded by Lord Dalhousie with Dost Mohammed, in 1855, was signed and negotiated by Sir John Lawrence as Chief Commissioner of the Punjab. In him the restored Sovereign of Cabul had to deal with one whose powerful character, and whose resolute sincerity of purpose, constitute the very type of all that is best and noblest in the Indian Services. Through him mainly the confidence of the Ameer was securely gained; and it is important to observe what the engagement on our part was which Dalhousie and Lawrence knew to be the one most desired. The first Article of the Treaty may be considered formal; but the second contains the promise which was the price of friendship. We promised to respect the territories then in the possession of the Ameer, "and never to interfere therein."* In the third Article a similar engagement on the part of the Ameer towards us and towards our territories, gave a sort of diplomatic reciprocity to the transaction: but in the third Article the Ameer gave a pledge to us for which in

* Ibid., No. 1, p. 1.

reality there was no other return on our part than the promise we had given in the second. For at the conclusion of the third Article, after the words of mere reciprocity, these words were added as a special engagement on the part of the Ameer,—"and to be the friend of the friends and enemy of the enemies of the Honourable East India Company." This was a really onerous undertaking on the part of the Ameer, and one which was of great value to us. It was a Treaty binding him to assist us against all enemies, whilst on our part it was a Treaty involving no similar obligation towards the Ameer. As against the Ameer it was a Treaty of alliance, offensive, and defensive. As against us, it had no such character. In this respect the covenant was essentially one-sided. And yet the Ameer did not hesitate to sign it—under no other inducement than the one great promise we gave him in the second clause, that we should never interfere in his dominions.

The next Treaty which we concluded with Dost Mohammed was one which arose out of a temporary cause, and the greater part of which ceased to be operative when that cause had been removed. England in 1857 went to war with Persia on account of the seizure of Herat by that Power, and on account of the farther intentions which were ascribed to it of attacking the possessions of Dost Mohammed. We agreed to subsidise the Ameer largely during the war with Persia to enable him to defend his territories. But

we gave this subsidy on conditions. The object of these conditions was to see that the money was properly applied to the purposes of defence for which it was given. There was no other possible method of doing this than that of sending British officers with suitable establishments to the cities and frontiers of Cabul, wherever an Afghan army might be assembled to act against the Persians. Accordingly, a Treaty was concluded for this purpose on the 26th of January, 1857. By the fourth Article, British officers were to be our Agents in Afghanistan for the prosecution of that particular war. But this was strictly the limit of their Mission, both as regarded their duties, and as regarded the spots at which they were to be stationed. Three places, and three places only, were specifically mentioned as points where British officers might be stationed. These were Cabul, Kandahar, and Balkh. But the sole purpose of the Mission was still more clearly indicated in the words which followed—"or wherever an Afghan army may be established against the Persians." Their duty was specified with equal jealousy. "It will be their duty to see generally that the subsidy granted to the Ameer be devoted to the military purpose for which it is given, and to keep their own Government informed of all affairs."* But even this was not deemed enough. Lest it should be construed

* Ibid., No. 2, p. 2.

as even approaching "interference," the same Article limited the information which the Ameer promised to give our officers to "all military and political matters connected with the war." And yet, although this mission of British officers into Cabul was for the purpose of defending the Ameer, or of assisting him at least to defend himself, so clearly was it recognised as an arrangement which in itself would be distasteful to the Ameer, and a departure from the promises given in the previous and permanent Treaty of 1855, that a special Article, the seventh, was inserted in the new Treaty, expressly providing that, "Whenever the subsidy should cease the British officers were to be withdrawn from the Ameer's country."

There could be no more emphatic testimony than this as to the understanding both of the Ameer and of the Indian Goverment as to inseparable connexion between the residence of British officers in the Afghan country and the "interference" which we had promised never to repeat. But the seventh Article does not end there. It proceeds to indicate another arrangement which would be in consonance with the promises of 1855, and which, therefore, it was agreed by both parties might be adopted instead of that which was forbidden. The Ameer did not desire to be without official intercourse with the British Government. But he did desire, above all things, that such intercourse should not be carried

on through a British, that is to say, an European officer, resident in Afghanistan. Accordingly, the seventh Article concluded by declaring it to be understood that the British Government might at its pleasure appoint an Agent (Vakil) at Cabul, with the express reservation and condition in respect to the nationality of such Agent, that he was "not to be a European officer."*

There could be no more conclusive evidence than this of the complete understanding of both contracting parties as to what was, and as to what was not, consistent with the solemn promise we had given to Dost Mohammed "never to interfere" in his dominions. And it is the more important to observe this evidence, as it is contained in an Article of the Treaty of 1857, which necessarily survives all the Articles which were of a purely temporary character. It remained as binding on us in 1878 as it was in 1857.

There are few parts of the Simla Narrative more inaccurate than the paragraphs in which it refers to this Treaty of 1857. I must add that there are few parts of it in which the inaccuracies have a more obvious bearing upon the object with which that Narrative was composed. That object was to defend a policy of insisting on the residence of British officers as Political Agents in Afghanistan. For this purpose it is, of course, convenient so to represent the transac-

* Ibid., p. 2.

tions recorded in the Treaty of 1857 as to give them the aspect of a precedent. But in order to support this view it is necessary either wholly to suppress, or to throw into the shade, those parts of the Treaty which define and limit so very strictly the duties assigned to the British officers who were then to be sent into Afghanistan. Accordingly, in the Simla Narrative (paragraphs 3-4) all this is boldly and at the same time dexterously done. There is no mention whatever made of the principal duty of the officers —namely, that of seeing that the subsidy was applied to the purposes for which it was given. This limitation of the Treaty is suppressed. Next, in obvious connexion with the same purpose, exaggerated prominence is given to the duty of "keeping the Indian Government informed of all affairs"—this duty being so represented as if it were the principal one,—as it would be the principal duty of officers sent as Residents. Again, no mention is made of the limitation of the Article at its close—a limitation which distinctly points to "matters connected with the war" as the only matters on which the Ameer was to keep our officers informed. But, lastly—and this is worst of all—in the Simla Narrative a duty is expressly assigned to our "officers" under the Treaty of 1857, which is not only not included in the Treaty, but which is therein expressly excluded. It so happens, moreover, that is precisely the kind of duty for which it was most desirable to assert a precedent.

The words of the Simla Narrative are these:—"Their duty (in the performance of which the Ameer was expected to afford them every facility) being simply to give advice when required, and to obtain all the information needed by our Government."* Now, the words of the Treaty carefully and expressly exclude this duty of "advice," which the Simla Narrative as carefully and as expressly asserts. The words of the Treaty are these:—"They will have nothing to do with the payment of the troops, or advising the Cabul Government." (Art. 4.)† It cannot, therefore, be too emphatically asserted, that so far from the Treaty of 1857 affording any precedent for attempting to force European officers upon the Ameers of Afghanistan, as our Agents in the country for any purpose whatever, the Treaty of 1857, on the contrary, proves to demonstration that we bound ourselves not to do so, and placed on record in a solemn Treaty our full and free acquiescence in that well-known policy of the Afghan Government, which made them irreconcilably hostile to any such arrangement.

We have the evidence of Lord Lawrence, that when he personally met Dost Mohammed at Peshawur in February, 1857, immediately after the conclusion of this Treaty, the Ameer showed no inclination to regard with any favour even such interference on the part of the British Government as might be required

* Ibid., p. 160. † Ibid., p. 2.

to secure his own dynastic succession, aud thus avert the evils of civil war. He told Sir J. Lawrence "that it was his wish and the earnest desire of all Afghans that we should not interfere in their quarrels, but should allow them to manage their own concerns and to fight out and settle their own domestic broils in their own way."* The attempt to settle those feuds in our way had, indeed, not been so successful as to hold out any inducement to the Indian Government to try the experiment again.

It was in compliance, therefore, not only with the settled policy, but with the definite engagements of the British Government, that when in June, 1863, Dost Mohammed died, and a contest arose among the members of his family for the vacant throne, the Indian Government acknowledged the right of the Afghan Chiefs and people to settle the right of succession for themselves. It was impossible for us to settle it. We had not the knowledge enabling us to do so with justice, or with any prospect of success. Even, if we could be sure of the best man, he might very easily become the worst on account of our patronage. The Afghans had not forgotten the disgraceful conditions to which we had forced Shah Soojah to submit, as our client, and as the vassal of the Sikhs. Presumably the best Ruler of Afghanistan would be the man who in such a contest, should, without any help from us, prove himself to be the strongest.

* Ibid., p. 60.

There is, however, in such matters no possibility of acting upon any rule so absolute as to dispense with the exercise of some discretion. It is obvious that the policy of recognising every Ruler of Cabul who was able to make good his position, and had secured the allegiance of the people, was a policy which left open to the Government of India the exercise of a very important, and, it might be, of a very difficult discretion, namely, that of deciding on the measure of success which was to be regarded as conferring on any one of the contending Princes a fair claim to be recognised as *de facto* Ameer. In the condition of society which prevails in Afghanistan, it is impossible to be sure of the permanence of any victory, or to foresee the counter-revolutions which may arise. Defeated Chiefs have the habit of retiring to the protection of neighbouring and rival Governments, and of thence emerging as opportunities may arise, to gain or re-establish their ascendency. It was therefore perfectly consistent with the declared policy of the Government of India to prolong or to cut short, in each particular case, the period of suspense, and to confer the benefit of its recognition, whatever that might be, upon any Ruler whom it could fairly regard as having won his crown.

The action taken by the Government of India on the death of Dost Mohammed, and during the civil war which followed, was governed by an honest desire to do what was just and prudent. The severe illness

of the Viceroy, Lord Elgin, at the moment when Shere Ali announced his father's death, and his own succession to the throne, together with the doubts entertained as to the security of his position, led to some delay in acknowledging him as Ameer of Cabul. But as he had been designated to the succession by his father, and as he was in actual possession of Cabul, this recognition was accorded to him by the acting Governor-General, Sir William Denison, on the 23rd of December, 1863.*

When Sir J. Lawrence assumed the Government of India, in the same month, as successor of Lord Elgin, he found this question settled and this recognition given. After nearly two years and a half of civil war, however, the fortunes of Shere Ali were reduced to so low an ebb that the British native Agent at Cabul, overstepping the limits of his functions, was induced to make overtures of friendship on behalf of the British Government to Sirdar Azim Khan, one of the rival brothers. For this act he was recalled by the Government of India, and Sir J. Lawrence recorded in a despatch, dated the 21st April, 1866, his opinion that "the cause of the Ameer Shere Ali was by no means finally lost, and that the Government considered that until such a result was reached, they were bound equally by good faith and by considerations of policy to recognise no other chief as Ameer of Afghan-

* Ibid., p. 8.

istan."* At last, however—in February, 1867—Shere Ali was driven from Cabul, and took refuge in Herat. The Government of India then thought it necessary to recognise the successful brother as Ameer of Cabul and Candahar, but continuing to recognise Shere Ali as Ameer of the Province of Herat, of which he still held possession.†

Sir J. Lawrence explained to Ufzul Khan that the British Government deplored the dissensions of the great Barukzye House, and the calamities they had brought on the Afghan people: that though the Viceroy felt pity for Shere Ali Khan, he was disposed to hail hopefully any event which might bring Afghanistan nearer to the attainment of a strong Government. He assured Ufzul Khan that he had not interfered by any secret aid to Shere Ali, as had been falsely alleged. He gave him to understand that the recognition of the British Government was due to nothing but his own gallantry and success; and he declared that if, unhappily, the struggle for supremacy was not concluded, the Viceroy would pursue the same course of siding with neither party.

It is important to observe that in this official communication to the new Ameer, Ufzul Khan, the Viceroy of India was careful to intimate still more in detail his own scrupulous adherence to the promises given in 1856 and in 1857 to Dost Mohammed. He

* Ibid., p. 9. † Ibid., No. 7, pp. 12, 13.

reminded the Ameer of the seventh Article of the Treaty of 1857, which entitled the British Government to accredit to Cabul "a Vakeel," not a European officer; he intimated that in accordance with this provision of the Treaty, "a Mahomedan gentleman of rank and character would be deputed as representative of the Viceroy at his Highness' Court."*

It has been represented in recent controversy that this policy of abstention and non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan was a policy founded entirely on local considerations, and did not take into contemplation the questions which were looming in the distance beyond the farthest boundaries of that country. But there is no truth whatever in this representation. The advances of Russia in Central Asia, and also the possibility of her acting as she had already done through the agency of Persia, were contingencies not only present to the mind of Sir J. Lawrence and of his Council, but expressly referred to as an important element in the consideration of the best and safest course to be pursued. With reference to both contingencies, he considered non-interference in the Afghan civil war expedient, because whatever Ruler might gain the upper hand would be disposed by the necessities of his position to rely rather upon the British Government than upon any other Power; and because whatever temporary alliances he might have been

* Ibid., p. 14.

induced to form during the contest would probably be abandoned when he had attained success. But in the contrary event Sir J. Lawrence did not intend to bind himself to the same course. On the contrary, the Viceroy never had it out of view that any external interference on the part of other Governments with the affairs of Afghanistan, or any intriguing on the part of its Rulers with our enemies beyond, would of necessity bring the policy of abstention to an end, and would compel us to adopt counter-movements. Accordingly, when in September, 1867, reports reached the Government of India that Shere Ali, then Ameer or Ruler of Herat, was entering into intrigues with Persia, the Viceroy and his Council at once expressed their opinion in an important despatch to the Government at home,* that it "might be highly for the interests of British India to declare the Treaty then subsisting between us and Shere Ali at an end," and openly to assist his opponents at Cabul, with money and with arms, if they were at all likely to form a stable rule. In pursuance of this policy,—not of abstention, but of active interference,—Shere Ali was warned by the Viceroy, that if he allied himself with Persia, the British Government would at once take part against him.†

It was in this despatch that the Government of India first drew special attention to the advances of Russia in

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* Ibid., No. 10, pp. 18, 20. † Ibid., paras. 6, 7, pp. 19, 20.

Central Asia, which Sir J. Lawrence and his colleagues said had been lately rapid, and which had from time to time been forced upon their notice. It was pointed out that the influence of Russia would soon be, or had already become, paramount in Samarcand and Bokhara, as for some time past it had been in Kokhand. It was in this despatch also that the Viceroy suggested to Her Majesty's Cabinet the expediency of coming to some understanding, or even some engagement with the Government of Russia, which would enable us to look without anxiety or apprehension at the proceedings of Russia on her southern frontier, and to welcome the civilising effects of her Government on the wild Turks of the Steppe, and on the bigoted and exclusive Governments of Bokhara and Kokhand; while Russia, on the other hand, assured of our loyal feeling in the matter, would have no jealousy in respect of our alliance with the Afghan and neighbouring tribes. The principle indicated as the basis of such an agreement was this: "that up to a certain border the relations of the respective Governments should be openly acknowledged and admitted as bringing them into necessary contact and Treaty with the Tribes and Nations on the several sides of such a line."*

In the face of this despatch it is impossible to contend that the Government of India, under Sir J. Law-

* Ibid., pp. 20, 1.

rence, was not fully awake to the contingencies arising out of the progress of Russia in Central Asia. And be it observed, that no subsequent event has brought these contingencies nearer home than the events indicated by Sir J. Lawrence and his colleagues. Bokhara is a country actually marching with Afghanistan for many hundred miles, and the paramount influence of Russia there is a much more significant fact than her advance on distant Khiva, or the absorption of a part of that Khanate into her own dominions. In all the revolutions of Afghanistan Bokhara had played an important part. It has been the refuge of every fugitive Ameer, and the two States have with each other many hereditary causes of difference and quarrel. Yet the Minister, who was my own immediate predecessor in the India Office—Sir Stafford Northcote—after a cordial and intelligent approval of Sir J. Lawrence's policy in respect to our relations with Afghanistan, replied on the 26th December, 1867, to the Government of India in a spirit of the utmost incredulity as to the existence of any danger from the advances of Russia: "Upon this point Her Majesty's Government see no reason for any uneasiness or for any jealousy. The conquests which Russia has made, and apparently is still making in Central Asia, appear to them to be the natural result of the circumstances in which she finds herself placed, and to afford no ground whatever for representations indicative of suspicion or alarm on the part of this

country. Friendly communications have at various times passed between the two Governments on the subject, and should an opportunity offer, Her Majesty's Government will avail themselves of it for the purpose of obviating any possible danger of misunderstanding, either with respect to the proceedings of Russia or to those of England. This is all that it appears necessary or desirable to do."* It will be seen that this confidence was expressed not only in view of the fact that Russia had made rapid advances in Central Asia, but also in the calmest contemplation of the probability that she was likely to make more. It was all in the natural course of things, and Her Majesty's Government had no anxieties on the subject.

In the meantime—on the 7th of October, 1867—the Ameer Ufzul Khan died at Cabul, and his brother Azam Khan was elected in his stead. This succession was at once acknowledged by the Government of India on the 13th of November, 1867.† It was followed, however, by an immediate renewal of the civil war, by a sudden revival of the cause of Shere Ali, and by a revolution which, in the course of nine months, restored him to his father's throne. On the 8th of September, 1868, he took triumphant possession of Cabul, and lost no time in announcing to the Viceroy of India his desire to con-

* Ibid., No. 12, pp. 24, 26. † Ibid., p. 24.

tinue the relations of amity and friendship which had been established between the two States.*

The Viceroy replied to this intimation on the 2nd of October, in a frank and friendly letter, expressing his sorrow that the family of his great father, Dost Mohammed, should have been broken up into contending factions, advising him to deal leniently with those who had opposed him, and assuring him that he was prepared not only to maintain the bonds of amity and goodwill which had been established with his father, but "so far as was practicable" to strengthen them.† In proof of this disposition Sir John Lawrence very soon after, in the same month of September, 1868, proceeded to assist Shere Ali with money to the extent of £60,000, as well as with a supply of arms. This assistance was so important at the time that Shere Ali publicly acknowledged at a later time that it materially contributed to the completion of his success and to the consolidation of his power.

It is curious that a little more than two months before this event, but at a time when the success of Shere Ali had become probable, Sir Henry Rawlinson had written an able and elaborate Memorandum, in which he endeavoured to arouse the languid interest and the slumbering alarms of the Secretary of State for India on the Central Asian Question. From his

* Ibid., No. 13, Inclos. 2, p. 43. † Ibid., Inclos. 3, p. 43.

well-known point of view, he urged the immediate importance which attached to the Russian victories in Bokhara, and the necessity of taking certain measures of precaution. Of these measures, the first was simply the immediate recognition and active support of Shere Ali, by subsidies and by the close association of British representation at Cabul; the second was the re-establishment of our lost influence at the Court of Persia; and the third was the completion of our Indian military lines of railway leading to the frontier. A fourth measure was indeed suggested, and that was the occupation of Quetta at the western end of the Bolan Pass. But the distinguished author of this Memorandum distinctly declared that unless this step could be taken with the cordial approval of the Ruler and Chiefs of Afghanistan, he was not prepared to recommend it, and considered that if the tribes in general regarded it as a menace, or as a preliminary to a farther hostile advance, we should not be justified for so small an object in risking the rupture of our friendly intercourse.*

This Memorandum, dated 20th July, seems to have been forwarded on 21st August, 1868, to the Government of India by Sir Stafford Northcote, the Secretary of State, unaccompanied by any expression of his own opinion, or of the opinion of her Majesty's

* Ibid., p. 41.

Government.* That opinion, therefore, so far as known to the Government of India, remained as it had been set forth in the despatch of December, 1867. This is very remarkable, because the Memorandum of Sir H. Rawlinson was full not only of what Russia had done, but of the alleged violation of promises which had been involved in doing it. It referred to the pacific Manifesto published by Prince Gortchakow in 1864, declaring that recent annexations had taken place against the will of the Government, and asserting with categorical precision that the expansion of the Empire had now reached its limit. It assumed—or without directly assuming, it implied—that these declarations or intimations of policy and of intention were "promises" in the sense of being engagements taken towards other Powers. It reminded the Government that the "ink had been hardly dry with which this Manifesto was written before its specific promises were completely stultified." It pointed out how hostilities had been almost immediately resumed in the valley of the Jaxartes; how Chemkend and Tashkend and Khojend had been captured in succession; how Romanofski had proceeded to invade Bokhara, and had established the Russian power within hail of Samarcand. All these proceedings were denounced in the Memorandum as "flagrant departures" from Prince Gortchakow's Manifesto, and as having been adopted under "various pretexts."† Nevertheless

* Ibid., p. 31, foot-note. † Ibid., pp. 31, 32.

under all this fire of warning, and a perfect tempest of prediction, the Cabinet of Mr. Disraeli gave no sign, —allowed their expressed confidence in Russia to remain on record as a dissent even from the guarded suggestions of Sir John Lawrence, and simply forwarded the Rawlinson Memorandum to form the subject of elaborate Minutes by the Viceroy and his Counsellors.

Sir H. Rawlinson, in a late edition of his work "England and Russia in the East," has indicated his impression that the action of Lord Lawrence in subsidising Shere Ali was due to the influence of his Memorandum, and he describes that action as one which "threw to the winds at once and for ever the famous policy of masterly inactivity."* The dates, however, do not favour this view, because the Memorandum was only sent from England on the 21st of August, and does not seem to have been under the consideration of the Government of India when Lord Lawrence determined to subsidise the Ameer. The truth is that Sir H. Rawlinson has always misconceived what the Lawrence policy was, and very naturally regards as departures from it, acts which were really in complete accordance with its fundamental object and intention. We have already seen that so early as 1867 Sir J. Lawrence had spoken of subsidising any Ruler at Cabul whom, for any reason,

* Chap. VI., p. 302.

it might be our interest to support. The aid he gave to Shere Ali in September, 1868, was in perfect consistency with the plan of helping any *de facto* Ruler, and of keeping ourselves free to judge according to circumstances, of the measure of success which sufficiently indicated possession of power, and the assent of the Afghan people. Sir J. Lawrence was not the man to lay down for himself any such wooden rules as have been ascribed to him by ignorant friends and zealous opponents.

Such was the position of the Central Asian Question in connexion with the declared policy of the British Government when the Cabinet of Mr. Gladstone came into power. In that Cabinet I had the honour of being Secretary of State for India, and was the organ of the Administration in Indian affairs during the whole of the Viceroyalty of Lord Mayo, and during two years of the Viceroyalty of Lord Northbrook. In Lord Mayo we had to deal with a new Viceroy who had been sent out by our predecessors in office, and who had actually left England to assume his government before we had ourselves received our appointments from the Queen. I had not therefore the advantage of having any personal communication whatever with Lord Mayo, or of ascertaining from him any one of his opinions on any Indian question, or of expressing to him any opinions of my own. I mention this not at all by way of complaint, for it was the result of peculiar and accidental circumstances; but

for the purpose of explaining how it was that of necessity more than usual remained to be done by means of private letters. I call these letters private letters only to distinguish them from formal despatches, because they were not the letters of a private friend on the personal aspect of public questions. It so happens that I had never enjoyed the honour and advantage of Lord Mayo's acquaintance. Our communications, therefore, were essentially of an official character, although in a form which admitted of the more free handling of delicate affairs, sometimes containing passages which were confidential then, and must remain confidential still. Some of these letters are referred to in the despatches which have been lately published as essential parts of our official intercourse. The Viceroy's letters to me were very full, and as I soon found that our views were in complete accordance, I am able to present the following account of our policy, and of what was done in pursuance of it, drawn mainly from the circumstantial details given by himself.

And here I must begin by pointing out another of the innumerable inaccuracies of the London Narrative. It is one which concerns a very important point, and one which, as usual, has a direct connexion with the views which it was convenient for the Government to present. They have departed as I am about to show, from Lord Mayo's policy, quite as much as from the policy of Lord Lawrence. In order

to defend this departure it is their interest to make out that circumstances have greatly altered, and in particular, that Lord Mayo had not to deal with those "gigantic strides" of Russia which, it is implied, are of later date. I have already pointed out that there is no foundation whatever for this representation of the historical facts. Yet in the fourth paragraph* of the London Narrative this erroneous representation is made in the broadest terms. Referring to the period of Lord Lawrence's administration it says: "The outposts of Russia were then distant from the borders of Afghanistan." The fact, on the contrary, I believe to be, that the Russian outposts which are nearest to Afghanistan—namely, those which she acquired in the subjection of Bokhara—were then almost exactly where they are now. When Lord Mayo succeeded to the Viceroyalty of India, Russia had completed every one of those conquests which were most formidable as regarded the interests of India. During no previous period had her "steps" been more gigantic than during the four years from 1864 to 1869. In 1865 the Russians had taken Tashkend. In 1866 they had taken Khojend and had broken the power of the Khanat of Kokhand. In 1867 they had invaded Bokhara, and had established fortified positions far south of the Jaxartes. In the same year they had established the new Province of Turkistan, and had

* Afghan Corresp. I. 1878, No. 73, p. 261.

erected it into a separate Viceroyalty with Tashkend for its Capital. In 1868 they had taken Samarcand, and had established complete power over the Khanate of Bokhara.

This conquest, and the establishment of this power, virtually brought Russia into contact with Afghanistan. No later Russian movement in Central Asia is to be compared in importance with this movement which had been completed in 1869. Sir Henry Rawlinson was quite right when he pointed out in his Memorandum the peculiar significance of Russian domination in Bokhara. It meant Russian domination over a Government which marched with Afghanistan along the greater part of its northern frontier, and which had special relations with the people and Rulers of Cabul. What, then, are we to say of the accuracy of the London Narrative when (para. 7) it says, speaking of the early days of Lord Mayo's Government, "The advances of Russia in Central Asia had not, up to this period, assumed dimensions such as to cause uneasiness to the Indian Government?" No doubt there is an ambiguity in this phrase. It might be construed to mean that the Indian Government had not, as a matter of fact, felt uneasiness. Even this is not correct, as Sir J. Lawrence's Despatch of 1867 proves. But its real meaning evidently is that the advances of Russia had not then "assumed dimensions" sufficiently large to attract much attention, and that later advances have

wholly altered the position. The fact is that no later advances have been made by Russia comparable in importance to those which made her mistress of Bokhara and Kokhand. And another fact is that the Indian Government had its eyes wide awake to the significance of these events, and that Lord Mayo's policy was deliberately adopted in full contemplation of all the possible dangers they might involve. If the Government of India felt no serious alarm on account of these events it was because that Government consisted at that time of men with some nerve, and with some common sense.

It is a curious illustration of the historical accuracy as well as of the argumentative value of this 7th paragraph of the London Narrative, that the leading expeditionary columns which were directed in 1878 by Russia towards the frontiers of Afghanistan, moved from territories which had been either actually or virtually acquired in 1869, and that no military movement was found practicable from the Caspian base.*

Although the specific measures which were summarised in the last paragraph of the Rawlinson Memorandum were not in themselves of any very formidable kind, and although the first and most impor-

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* One of the columns was to move from a point on the borders of Kokhand, and a small remnant of this once-powerful Khanate was allowed by Russia to remain nominally independent till 1876. But this remnant had been completely at the mercy of Russia since 1867.

tant of them,—the recognition and support of Shere Ali,—had actually been adopted by Sir J. Lawrence and his Government before or about the time of the arrival of the Memorandum in India ; yet the general tone of the Memorandum, and the ulterior measures which it indicated for the future, led to its being closely criticised by the Government of India, and by many of the most able and experienced officers to whom it was referred by the Viceroy. The general result was summed up in a despatch, signed by Sir John Lawrence and his Council addressed to me, and dated the 4th of January, 1869. They were strongly adverse to any advance, beyond our own frontier, on political, on military, and on financial grounds. They declared for the policy of husbanding the resources of India, and not wasting them on costly and difficult expeditions, or in the maintenance of distant outposts. They objected to any active interference in the affairs of Afghanistan by the deputation of British officers, or to the occupation, whether forcible or amicable, of any post or tract in that country, as a measure sure to engender irritation, defiance, and hatred, in the minds of Afghans. On the other hand, they agreed with the Rawlinson Memorandum in desiring that greater attention in the interests of India should be paid to the strength and character of our Mission to Teheran. They announced that the Government of India had already conferred upon Shere Ali a subsidy of six lacs of rupees, and was pre-

pared to give him arms. They requested authority to repeat this kind and measure of support at the discretion of the Government of India. With regard to the advances of Russia in Central Asia, they repeated the recommendation that some clear understanding should be come to with the Court of St. Petersburg as to its projects and designs in those regions. They complained that this subject had been pressed on Sir Stafford Northcote without any result, except his despatch of December, 1867. And, finally, they advised that Russia should be told, in firm but courteous language, that she cannot be permitted to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan, or in those of any State which lies contiguous to our frontier.*

Such was the policy which Lord Mayo found the Government of India had declared to be its own when he assumed the functions of his great office. It was a policy distinct and definite both in its negative and affirmative aspect; both in the things which it proposed to do, and in the things which it resolutely refused to undertake. It was in pursuance of this policy that Lord Clarendon began those negotiations with the Cabinet of St. Petersburg which had for their object some understanding and agreement respecting the limits not only of our respective possessions in Asia, but also, beyond these, of our respective fields of predominant influence. It was in pursuance

* Ibid., No. 14, pp. 43-5.

of the same policy in its Indian branch that Lord Mayo had immediately to prepare for a personal meeting with the Ameer of Cabul, a meeting which had been suggested and sought by Shere Ali, and which Sir John Lawrence had recommended to the favourable consideration of his successor.

On the 26th January, 1869, Lord Mayo wrote to me the first letter in which he indicated his views in respect to our policy towards the Ameer. It is remarkable as indicating incidentally (1) that he recognised the utility of having a European official in Cabul, if this measure could properly be adopted; (2) that he did not consider the difficulties in the way of it as difficulties that would be necessarily permanent; and (3) that he was fully aware of the fact that, as matters then stood, it would be inexpedient to attempt it. On this subject his language was as follows:—"With the friendly feelings that Shere Ali entertains towards us in consequence of the assistance in money and arms that we have given him, we may, without sending at present any European official to Cabul, exercise sufficient influence over him to keep him on the most amicable terms with us." It is clear from this passage that Lord Mayo had this question fully before him, and that what he was about to determine in regard to it, was so determined on overruling considerations of policy or of good faith.

On the 30th of January, 1869, a letter was addressed to the Viceroy by Sir Donald Macleod, Lieut.-Governor

of the Punjaub, informing him that the defeat of Azim Khan, and of his nephew Abdul Raman Khan, had terminated the civil war in Afghanistan, but that the portion of country north of the Hindoo Koosh, commonly called Afghan Turkistan, remained but imperfectly subject to the Ameer Shere Ali. Macleod added that "this district was likely ere long to become the area of intrigue on the part of the Russians, whose high officials avowed that their projects comprised the whole country up to the Hindoo Koosh." He further informed the Viceroy that the Ameer was most anxious to arrange an interview, and that he was so set upon it that, in all probability, if it were necessary, Shere Ali would even be prepared to undertake a journey to Calcutta.

This communication was forwarded to me by Lord Mayo in a letter, dated the 7th of February, in which he informed me that he expected to be able to arrange for the desired interview, and that, if it were prudently conducted, he anticipated great good as its result. In particular, he explained that he anticipated that a considerable effect would be produced "throughout all Central Asia."

This letter, added to the facts which have been already narrated, puts a final extinguisher on the plea which has been already dealt with on a previous page, that Lord Mayo's policy is out of date because it was before the advances of Russia in Central Asia had become serious, or had attracted

the attention they deserved. The recent establishment of Russian influence in Bokhara, on the very borders of Afghanistan, the Memorandum of Sir H. Rawlinson, and the discussions in India to which it had given rise, the alarming intimation freshly conveyed by Sir D. Macleod that Russian high officials were claiming Afghan Turkistan as one of their legitimate fields of operation, and Lord Mayo's own explanation above given of the importance he attached to his coming interview with the Ameer—all prove conclusively that the Central Asian Question in its most urgent aspects was fully before Lord Mayo in 1869, and that the policy he pursued was the policy which he considered the wisest and the best in full view of all the contingencies of a close Russian approach to the borders of India.

Nor is this all: the same letter of the 7th of February shows that Lord Mayo was exposed to all those influences of an excited atmosphere of opinion which, under such circumstances, are apt not only to disturb the judgment, but to pervert the moral sense. In that letter, Lord Mayo informed me that the Press of India was teeming with articles representing Shere Ali as "completely in the hands of Russia and of Persia." Reports and assertions of this kind, the offspring of Barracks and of Bazaars, are never wanting. They have very often a tremendous effect upon nervous politicians, inspiring them with silly fears and incurable suspicions. Let

it then be clearly understood what were the circumstances under which Lord Mayo went into the Umballa Conference, and in the full contemplation of which he deliberately shaped his course. He knew all the dangers—when he determined not to bully. He knew all the suspicions—when he determined to be himself perfectly truthful and sincere. He knew all the fresh advances which Russia had been making, and the farther advances she had still to make—when he resolved to keep with absolute good faith all the promises, whether verbal or written, which had been given by those who had preceded him in the great office of Viceroy of India.

On the 2nd, and again on the 8th of March, Lord Mayo addressed to me farther communications on the approaching Conference, which had then been arranged for the 25th of that month. In the first of these he repeated an expression of the importance he attached to it, not only as likely to have the most beneficial effect on public opinion in Central Asia, Persia, and Hindostan, but also as likely to lead to some definite arrangement with the Ameer. The nature of that arrangement he explained to be, that we should assist him to form a strong and durable Government, whilst he, on the other hand, was to give facilities to our trade, and to maintain order on those portions of our frontier over which he had any influence. Lord Mayo, however, declared himself to be entirely opposed to any attempt being made "to

take any direct part in the internal affairs of Afghanistan." In the second letter, the Viceroy specified, further, as one of the objects he had in view, "the obtaining of accurate information as to the events that occur in Central Asia." So that this aspect also of the value to be attached to the presence of British officers in Cabul, was fully in the Viceroy's mind before he went to the Umballa Conference.

Two days later, on the 10th of March, Lord Mayo wrote to me another letter on the same subject, entering more fully into an explanation of his views: "With regard to the approaching interview with the Ameer, my intention is to avoid any engagements of a permanent character. I am opposed to Treaties and subsidies. Sir J. Lawrence gave him 60,000*l.*, and had engaged to give him 60,000*l.* more. This probably placed him on the throne, as it enabled him to pay his army, which his rival could not do, and he is, I am told, very grateful. . . . . I believe his visit will do much good. It will show him that we have no other wish than to see a strong Government in Afghanistan, where we have no thought of interfering with him in any way. We want no resident at Cabul, or political influence in his kingdom." Here we see coming, link by link, more distinctly into view, that chain of evidence which connects the subsequent transactions of the Conference with Lord Mayo's knowledge of the promises and engagements which would be most valuable to the Ameer. We have

seen him indicating how well he knew that British residents would be useful if they were acceptable to the Ruler and people of Cabul. We see him now indicating his perfect knowledge that those favourable conditions did not exist, and that one of the great advantages to be derived from the approaching Conference would be the opportunity it would afford the Viceroy of satisfying the Ameer that we did not want to press any residents upon him.

But further evidence is not wanting, even during the few days which yet remained before the Conference. In every letter I received which was written by Lord Mayo about this time, further links in the same chain of evidence are supplied. On the very day on which he left Calcutta, and, as he told me, just as he was about to step into the train, he addressed to me a letter, in which it might almost seem that he spoke as a prophet on the sad transactions of recent years. After assuring me of his entire agreement with the opinions I had expressed to him on the policy to be pursued towards Afghanistan, he proceeded thus :—"I see that there is to be a Central Asiatic debate in the House of Commons. I hope that sensible men will not advocate the extreme lines of absolute inaction, and the worse alternative of meddling and interfering by subsidies and emissaries. The safe course lies in watchfulness, and friendly intercourse with neighbouring States and Tribes."

At last, in the early morning of the 27th of March,

the Viceroy of India rode into Umballa, where the Ameer had already arrived two days before. Every pains had been taken to give to the meeting something more even than the usual pomp and state of an Indian Durbar. As an important part—or, at least, as an important indication—of the policy to be pursued, Lord Mayo endeavoured, in all matters of reception and ceremonial, to give the visit the character of a meeting between equals, and to show to the world that we looked on the Ameer as an independent, and not as a feudatory Prince. With this view former precedents were so far departed from as to show that an occurrence of a precisely similar kind never took place before in India. At first the old Sikh chiefs of the Punjaub, who detest an Afghan, were disposed to be jealous of these proceedings. But when it was explained to them that the Viceroy expected them to aid him in welcoming to their country a distinguished guest, they entered heartily into the position in which they were placed.

When the Conference began it was Lord Mayo's first object to find out what it was that the Ameer really expected and desired. After the dignified reserve which seldom deserts an Oriental had been somewhat overcome, the Viceroy found no difficulty in understanding the feelings of Shere Ali. He gave expression to them at last with much vehemence. They were perfectly natural feelings; and looking at the facts from his point of view, it is

impossible not to regard them with much sympathy. His fundamental grievance was the "one-sided" character of the Treaty of 1855. The terms of this Treaty have already been explained. They were extremely unequal as regards the obligations imposed on the two contracting parties. The Indian Government promised nothing except to respect the territories of Afghanistan, and never to interfere therein. But the corresponding obligation on the Ameer was very different. He promised to be "the friend of the friends, and the enemy of the enemies, of the Honorable East India Company." Thus, on the part of the Ameer, it was a Treaty of Alliance, offensive and defensive. On the part of the Indian Government it had no such character.

Accordingly, the moment Shere Ali opened his mouth at Umballa, this inequality was the burden of his song. He complained that our friendship with his father had been a "dry friendship," and "one-sided." We had not helped Shere Ali himself, as we ought to have done, to secure the throne. We had simply acknowledged him when, by his own good sword, he had secured it, or at least had very nearly secured it, for himself. We had equally recognised others when they had gained temporary success. What he now wanted was that we should guarantee, not himself only, but his lineal descendants on the throne which he had won. He could not be content with our system of recognising any *de facto*

Ruler. But if the British Government would recognise himself and his dynasty as the *de jure* Sovereigns of Afghanistan, then he would be our friend indeed. For this purpose, what he desired was, that we should accept the same obligation as that which the Treaty of 1855 had imposed upon his father. We must make with him a Treaty offensive and defensive. His enemies must be our enemies, and his friends must be our friends. He required, also, that we should give him a fixed subsidy, in the form of an annual payment.

Lord Mayo refused all these demands. He intimated to the Ameer that they were altogether inadmissible. They would have bound us to support the Ameer against internal insurrection, however much rebellion may have been justified by his own misgovernment. They would have bound us to support his own nomination of a successor, however unjust his selection might be, and however obnoxious to his people. But this result, which was most objectionable to us, was precisely what Shere Ali most desired. It was not against external attack that he was really anxious to secure from Lord Mayo a binding guarantee. He and his Minister fought his case with pertinacity, and always with one great end in view—a British guarantee for himself and for his family, as the rightful rulers of Afghanistan. Foreign aggression was hardly present to his mind at all. "It is most remarkable," said Lord Mayo in his

private letter to me, giving an account of the Umballa Conference, "that during all the Ameer's conversations here, he has hardly ever mentioned the name of Russia. Whether it is that he is so wrapped up in his own affairs, or knows little of their proceedings, he does not give them a thought, and when we have casually referred to them, he generally says that we shall not hear much of them in Afghanistan for a long time."

It is needless to say that the offensive and defensive Treaty which he desired would have been equally open to objection in its relation to foreign affairs. It would have placed the resources of India unreservedly and unconditionally at the disposal of Shere Ali. He would have been far more than the Foreign Minister for England in the politics of the frontier. In either point of view it was impossible to give him what he asked, and the only course left open to Lord Mayo was to offer him everything which it was safe to give.

Accordingly, in the letter which the Ameer finally accepted from Lord Mayo as the utmost in the direction of his wishes which could be conceded to him, the phraseology is such as to have little or no special reference to the case of external attack. "Although, as already intimated to you, the British Government does not desire to interfere in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, yet considering that the bonds of friendship between that Government and your Highness have lately been more closely drawn than heretofore,

will view with severe displeasure any attempt to disturb your position as Ruler of Cabul, and rekindle civil war; and it will further endeavour from time to time to strengthen the government of your Highness to enable you to exercise with equity and justice your rightful rule, and to transmit to your descendants all the dignities and honours of which you are the lawful possessor."*

It will be seen that this sentence "sailed very near the wind." It caused some uneasiness at first to the Government at home lest it should have led the Ameer to suppose that he had actually got the guarantee which he desired. But Lord Mayo's ample explanations set this anxiety at rest, and I had the satisfaction of conveying to the Viceroy in a despatch dated the 27th August, 1869,† the full approbation of her Majesty's Government of the course which, under very difficult circumstances, he had taken. Lord Mayo had carefully and repeatedly explained to the Ameer that "under no circumstances was he to expect that British troops would cross the frontier to put down civil war or domestic contention."

General assurances were given to Shere Ali that from time to time we should give him such assistance and support as the circumstances of the case might seem in our judgment to justify or require. As an

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* Ibid., No. 17, Inclos. 3, p. 90.
† Ibid., No. 20, p. 100.

earnest of our friendly intentions in this matter a considerable sum of money, and a further supply of arms, were given to him.

It may well be asked if this was enough to satisfy the Ameer as a substitute for all the demands he had made—for the treaty offensive and defensive, for the guarantee against domestic enemies, for the assurance of his succession, for the annual subsidy. No; there was one more concession which Lord Mayo made, and made willingly—he promised to the Ameer "that no European officers should be placed as Residents in his cities."

It has been since contended on the evidence of Captain Grey, who acted as the Viceroy's interpreter at the Umballa Conference, that in the course of that Conference "the Ameer did freely consent to the appointment of European British officers in Balkh, Herat, or anywhere but actually in Cabul."* Even if there were no evidence against the accuracy of this impression on the mind of Captain Grey,—even if it were strictly and undeniably accurate,—it could have no bearing on the question of our obligations to the Ameer. That which alone is binding on the parties to such a Conference is the conclusion arrived at. It must happen in every negotiation that suggestions and proposals are made on both sides which are set aside in the course of the discussion. The utmost use that can be

* Ibid., No. 32, Inclos. 12, p. 144.

made of such suggestions, even when all the circumstances and conditions under which they are made are correctly recollected and reported, is to throw light on the processes of elimination by which the final results were reached. The fact of any particular suggestion having been made, coupled with the fact that it was not adopted, but, on the contrary, was thrown aside, can have no other effect than to prove that the rejection of it did not arise from accident, but from a deliberate decision.

So far, therefore, very little importance attaches to Captain Grey's impression that at one moment during the Conferences, and probably on conditions which were never granted, the Ameer evinced a willingness to admit European officers as Residents in his dominions. It so happens, however, that there is the strongest, and, indeed, conclusive evidence, that Captain Grey must have misconstrued the language of the Ameer.

In the first place, it is not borne out by the only documents upon which he himself relies. These documents are (1) a Note submitted by himself to Lord Mayo, reporting certain conversations held on the 29th of March with Noor Mohammed, the confidential Minister of the Ameer, and (2) a relative passage in his own private memoranda. Now, on turning to the words of that Note, we find that the reported conversation had reference to the supposed case of Russian aggression against the Northern frontier of Afghanistan. The Minister is said

to have expressed doubts of any Russian power of aggression for years to come, but still thought precautions should be taken. He is then reported to have said that he would construct forts on his own part or under British superintendence, and admit European garrisons, "if ever desired;" and further, that he "would be glad to see an Agent or Engineer Superintendent in Balkh, Herat, or anywhere but actually in Cabul." These words, even if reported with perfect accuracy not only in themselves, but in their connexion, do not at all justify the construction put upon them by Captain Grey. That the Ameer should have been willing to admit English garrisons into his forts in the event of a Russian attack upon his frontiers, is probable enough, and all the more probable from the fact that Noor Mohammed evidently regarded such a danger as not a very near contingency. But this has nothing whatever to do with the proposal to station European officers as permanent Political Agents in his dominions. Neither have the succeeding words quoted from the Note, any reference to this proposal. He was willing to see "an Agent" or "Engineer Superintendent" in Balkh, or anywhere else except in Cabul. The Ameer never objected to British "Agents" anywhere, so long as they were not Europeans, and this passage of the Note does not specify the nationality of the Agent. But even if this passage did distinctly refer to an European, it probably referred to one who should be in charge of the fortifications previously referred to, and this connexion of ideas is still more

plainly indicated by the alternative expression which is used, "or Engineer Superintendent."

As regards the second document relied upon by Captain Grey—viz., his own private memoranda, the passage he quotes is still more insufficient for the heavy superstructure he builds upon it. Indeed such evidence as it affords seems to me to point strongly the other way. The Ameer was asked to "accede to our deputation of Native Agents wherever we pleased"—a demand, on our part, plainly indicating how well we knew his objections to European Agents. The Ameer is then said to have been asked if he would be "agreeable to the deputation of an Envoy at some future date." This question is obviously of the vaguest kind, and it was clearly impossible for the Ameer to say that never at any future time, or under any possible circumstances, could he receive an Envoy. But the reception of an Envoy does not necessarily mean the reception of a permanent resident Envoy. On the contrary, the wording of the question rather implies a special Embassy. "At some future date" is hardly the expression that would be used to describe the establishment of a permanent Mission. Yet even to this very vague question Captain Grey reports a very cautious answer:—"The Ameer expressed his willingness to receive an Envoy as soon as things had somewhat settled down, anywhere except at Cabul, where he thought it would affect his power with the people."

It appears, then, that even in the entire absence of

any extraneous evidence against the assertion of Captain Grey, it is one which is not justified by the only documentary witness which he can summon in support of it.

But we have abundant other evidence in refutation of Captain Grey's interpretation of the facts. Mr. Seton Karr, who held the high office of Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, and who filled it for many years with acknowledged ability, was present during the whole of the Umballa Conferences, and has declared that neither the Ameer nor his Minister ever expressed any willingness to receive British officers as residents in his Kingdom. If this evidence stood alone it would be quite enough. On a question of such capital importance, which was the subject of Treaty stipulations of subsisting force—a question, as I have shown, on which the mind of the Viceroy had been specially dwelling for several weeks up to the moment of the Conference—it is not possible that such a communication can have been made either by the Ameer or by his Minister without attracting the attention of the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India.

But this is not all. On the 4th of April, before Lord Mayo had left Umballa, and when every minutest feature of the Conferences was still fresh in his recollection, he addressed to me a very long and very minute account of every important circumstance connected with his own communications to the Ameer,

and of the Ameer's communications to him. In particular, he gave a detailed narrative of what passed at the Conference on the 29th of March—the very day to which Captain Grey's note refers. There is not a word in that account to indicate that the Ameer or his Minister made any such intimation as that to which Captain Grey refers. It was at this interview that the Ameer insisted not only with vehemence, but with great excitement, on the one object which he had most at heart, namely, that of an absolute dynastic guarantee from the British Government in favour of himself and his heirs of blood. To obtain this it is possible that he might have consented, or might have proposed to consent, to very hard terms. But the very hardest of those terms would have been the admission of resident British officers in his dominions. Lord Mayo was determined not to give him a dynastic guarantee, and he was equally determined not to press upon him a demand which would have been in violation of a subsisting engagement, and which the Viceroy had apparently come to regard as likely to be really injurious, under existing circumstances, to the authority of the Ameer. It was in this spirit that he assured Shere Ali that whilst the British Government desired to support him, and had already done so in a most effective way, it did not desire that this support should be manifested in a form which might suggest the idea of his "being maintained mainly by extraneous aid." And so, having felt himself

obliged by imperative considerations of public policy to decline giving to the Ameer that on which he had set his heart, the Viceroy wisely determined to give him every compensation in his power, and instead of pressing on him the acception of European officers, he promised him, on the contrary, that no such demand would be made at all.

The extreme jealousy of the Ameer and of his Minister on the subject of European Agents of the British Government was strongly shown at the Conferences which were held on the 1st and on the 3rd of April, of which notes were appended to Lord Mayo's letter to me of the 4th. One of the questions asked on the 1st was, "Would the Ameer sanction native Agents in Afghanistan, either as visitors or as permanent residents, supposing the British Government wished it?" Even on this question Noor Mohammed did not wish to commit himself, and showed the suspicion and the fear which was deeply rooted in the mind of every Afghan, by "asking, rather anxiously, whether European Agents were intended?" Before the close of the day's proceedings the Foreign Secretary assured the Minister that he "had reserved nothing, and had nothing to reserve."

The Viceroy continued his correspondence with me on the subject of the Conferences for several weeks after he left Umballa. One of his letters, which was written on the 18th of April, is remarkable, as that which contained the summary of the results arrived

at in the Umballa Conferences, which is quoted in the public Despatch dated July 1, 1869.* The summary arranges those results on the principle which has been explained in the Preface of this work,—that, namely, of giving a separate list, first of the proposals which had been negatived, and next, of the proposals which had been affirmed. Among the proposals which had been negatived were those of sending into Afghanistan either troops, or officers, or Residents. Troops the Ameer might sometimes have liked to get—provided they were to be entirely at his own disposal. Officers also he might sometimes have desired to get—provided they were to be nothing more than his drill-sergeants, and to retire when he ceased to need them. "Residents," that is to say, officers resident in his country as Political Agents were, above all things, his dread and his abhorrence. But as he was not to have the things which he might have accepted as a boon, so neither was he to have thrust upon him a burden which he disliked. All those proposals, therefore, some for one reason, some for another reason, were equally negatived.

But this letter of the 18th of April is further remarkable as containing expressions of opinion which throw an important light on the reasons for Lord Mayo's silence with the Ameer regarding causes of anxiety which, nevertheless, he had

* Ibid., No. 19, p. 95, parag. 22.

full in view. In that letter he expressed it as his opinion (in which I did then and do now entirely agree) that our policy towards Afghanistan "ought to be the basis of our Central Asian policy." But one of the most essential parts of that policy, in the Viceroy's opinion, was not to feel and not to exhibit nervous anxiety and unreasonable fears. In his letter to me of the 4th of April Lord Mayo had, as we have seen, explained to me that the Ameer hardly ever mentioned Russia at all. Under these circumstances it was the Viceroy's wise policy not to exhibit ourselves in the light in which too many English and Indian politicians are never weary of exhibiting themselves to the world. They are perpetually assuring us that they do not dread the actual invasion of India by Russia, but that they do dread the disturbance and unsettlement of mind which the advances of that Power will occasion in the minds of the Indian Princes and people. But it is plain that this evil, whatever it may amount to, is aggravated by nothing so much as exhibitions of alarm on the part of the English Government. Lord Mayo was determined that no such apprehensions should be exhibited by himself. In this same letter he said upon this subject, "Sanguine politicians at home will be disappointed that what is termed the Central Asian question did not prominently appear at Umballa. I am sure you will agree with me that it was a great blessing it did not. I certainly determined not to broach it, because I am

of opinion that it is most desirable to show the Ameer that we have no apprehensions from the North. He, on the other hand, is so intent on establishing himself on the throne of Cabul, that he appears to think very little at present of either Russia or Persia."

The result was in one respect most important with respect to the whole scope and effect of the engagements made at Umballa. It dissociated those engagements entirely from the contingency of foreign aggression on Afghanistan. We have seen that Sir J. Lawrence, when Shere Ali was reported to be acting in alliance with Persia, at once intimated to the Government at home that his policy of abstention would not apply to such a case. In like manner Lord Mayo pointed out to me that, "as the question of the invasion by a foreign European Power of his territory was never alluded to by the Ameer or by me, our course of action in the event of such an occurrence taking place is not affected by anything that took place at Umballa."

I now come to one of the most important of this series of letters, dated June 3rd, 1869. It was written by the Viceroy expressly to explain various misapprehensions which he found had arisen respecting what he had said and done at the Umballa Conferences, and was, indeed, intended to anticipate, among others, those misconceptions which led to my Despatch of the 14th of May.* In fact this Despatch and Lord

* Ibid., No. 18, p. 91.

Mayo's letter of June 3rd crossed each other. In this letter he says emphatically, "The only pledges (to the Ameer) given were: that we would not interfere in his affairs; that we would support his independence; that we would not force European officers or Residents upon him against his wish." There is no ambiguity here. We have here Lord Mayo's distinct declaration that at Umballa he did renew and repeat that "pledge" to the Ameer which had been embodied in the 7th Article of the Treaty of 1857 with his father. It was a pledge which he and his family had always valued almost above all others, and the fulfilment of which was doubly due to him now when Lord Mayo had felt himself compelled to refuse so much that he had eagerly desired. This letter of June 3rd places beyond all doubt Lord Mayo's estimate of the binding character of those promises which he had given to the Ameer, and of the rank and place among those promises which had been assigned to the engagement on the subject of the residence of European officers in Cabul.

And now having concluded my account of the Umballa Conferences, taken from the most authentic of all sources, I must express my opinion, as the Secretary of State under whom the sanction and approval of the Crown was given to Lord Mayo's conduct, as to the binding character of the promises which were given by that Viceroy. Sir James Stephen, in a letter lately communicated to the *Times*, has put forward

the doctrine that in our relations with semi-barbarous States like that of Afghanistan, we are not bound by the somewhat technical and elaborate code of rules which go by the name of International Law, and which are recognised as binding between the more civilised nations of the world. In this general proposition I agree. I have too sincere a respect for the high character as well as for the great abilities of Sir James Stephen to suppose that in laying down this proposition he intended to defend, or even to palliate any departure from the strictest good faith with such nations where engagements, direct or indirect, have been made with them. I am sure he cannot have intended to "use this liberty as a cloak of licentiousness." The truth is, Sir James Stephen's doctrine—in the only sense in which I agree in it, and in the only sense in which, as I believe, he ever can have intended to propound it—is a doctrine which leaves us free to apply to all engagements with half-civilised Governments, even a higher standard of honour than is usually applied to international dealings between equal States. For example, there are technical distinctions, well known and recognised among them, which establish different degrees of obligation as attaching to different forms of diplomatic documents. It would be dishonourable, in my opinion, and dishonourable in the highest degree, to take advantage of any such distinctions, in cases where they cannot be equally known and equally

recognised by both parties. If the pledged word of a Viceroy of India is not to be held as good and as binding as any Treaty, there is an end of our claim to confidence in the East. We ought not to tolerate the smallest trifling with this absolute demand upon us. We have only to look at the 54th paragraph of Lord Mayo's public despatch on the Umballa Conference;* to see what a high place must be given in the Court of Honour to the pledges which he gave to the Ameer. He says, he thought it undesirable to engage in voluminous written communications with the Ameer, because "the visit was one of a personal character, conceived in the spirit of amity and good faith."

The pledges given at the Umballa Conference are all the more binding on us from the effect which they actually produced. Except these pledges, there was nothing to account for the good humour with which Shere Ali returned to his Kingdom from his conference with the Viceroy. Beyond the repetition of some immediate assistance in money and in arms, and beyond the promise not to embarrass him with the presence of European Agents, we had given him nothing that he desired to have. Behind these promises, indeed, there remained the personal influence of Lord Mayo. His manly presence, his genial open-hearted countenance, and his transparent sincerity of character—these had produced a great effect, even on an angry and suspicious Asiatic.

* Ibid., No. 18, p. 98.

It would, however, be a very great mistake to suppose that the Ameer was ever really satisfied ; or that, if he was so for a moment, his discontent did not soon return. The unhappy relations which he speedily established with the ablest and most powerful of his sons, and the usual influence of the harem which induced him to desire the succession of a later child—these things kept constantly before him the dangers of intestine strife, and the prospect of a disputed throne. An Afghan does not readily abandon any purpose, and the steady refusal of the British Government to pledge itself to one party or another in the family feuds of Afghanistan, while every day that refusal became more and more clearly necessary as well as just, became also more and more a practical grievance to the Ameer.

Shere Ali had brought with him to Umballa the boy Abdoolah Jan, and this young prince had, at all the Durbars, sat on the left hand of the Ameer, whilst the Viceroy sat upon the right.* This position seemed to point to the acknowledgment, by the Ameer at least, of Abdoolah Jan as his heir-apparent. But no nomination of his successor had as yet been formally announced by the Ameer. It is now evident that this was the very matter which made Shere Ali so bent on obtaining a dynastic guarantee, and it is probable that if this guarantee

* Ibid., No. 17, Inclos. 2, p. 90.

had been given, Abdoolah would have been at once proclaimed the successor of the Ameer. In this event, and in the event of the death of Shere Ali, the British Government would have been committed to the support of Abdoolah in the civil war, which would have been immediately raised by Yakoob Khan. But failing in his demand for a dynastic guarantee, Shere Ali seems to have hesitated to avow his intentions. During one of the Conferences at Umballa, Lord Mayo did make inquiries of the Ameer upon the subject, and intimated that it was a question on which the British Government could not but feel a friendly interest. The Ameer, however, parried the inquiry, and said that his determination in that matter when it was come to, would be communicated from Cabul.

The progress of events soon showed the danger attaching to such guarantees as that which Shere Ali had desired. In 1870, Yakoob Khan raised the standard of rebellion; and in June, 1871, had made himself master of Herat. In the same month Lord Mayo heard that Yakoob had made advances to his father for a reconciliation, and he determined to take the very delicate step of writing to the Ameer, advising him to come to terms with his son. This accordingly he did. The letter of the Viceroy reached our native Agent at Cabul on the 16th of June, and was immediately communicated to the Ameer. The advice of Lord Mayo probably corresponded

at that moment with the Ameer's own estimate of the wisest policy to be pursued towards his powerful and successful son. He therefore immediately addressed a letter to Yakoob Khan in the sense of Lord Mayo's advice, and assured Yakoob that if he came to express repentance, and make his submission at Cabul, he would be forgiven and received. The result was that Yakoob came to Cabul, and that his father deemed it expedient to send him back to Herat, with the appointment of Governor of that important City and Province. This result gave much satisfaction to the Viceroy, and it was indeed a very remarkable proof of the influence which he had acquired over the mind of Shere Ali by the pursuance of a perfectly open and friendly policy.

It is, however, a signal illustration of Lord Mayo's excellent judgment and good sense that the success, or apparent success, of this friendly intervention in the internal affairs of Afghanistan did not for a moment shake his former views as to the serious danger and impolicy of anything approaching to formal engagements with the Ameer in relation to such affairs. On the contrary, the whole transaction confirmed him in those views, because they brought out in a vivid light the essential instability of Shere Ali's throne, and the still greater instability of any predetermined order of succession. Accordingly, on the 7th of July, before Lord Mayo had, as yet, heard of the final result, but when he knew that his letter

had been successful, and that Yakoob was then on his way to Cabul, he addressed to me a letter in which he reiterated, in the strongest language, his confidence in the policy which had been pursued by Sir J. Lawrence and himself, in opposition to the policy which recommended more active interference. "It is impossible," he said, "to express in too strong terms how entirely I disapprove of the policy of interfering in the family quarrels of the Barukzyes." He proceeds to illustrate this opinion by illustrations in detail, which it is unnecessary to quote, because they contain allusions and references to persons which are among the very few passages of a really private character which occur in our correspondence on the subject. Suffice it to say that Lord Mayo indicated his opinion that Yakoob Khan would probably be the future Ruler of Cabul, and that it would be most unfortunate if we were ever again to be in the position of maintaining on the throne of Cabul a "hated Sovereign."

Meanwhile, however, the immediate effects of the Umballa Conference were such as to keep Shere Ali in good humour. The measure of assistance which had been given to the Ameer, first by Sir J. Lawrence and then by Lord Mayo, both in the moral effect produced by the support of the British Government, and by the actual funds put at his disposal, had enabled Shere Ali to establish his authority over the whole of Afghanistan, and of the country called Afghan Turkestan, lying between the Hindoo Koosh and the

Oxus. So soon after the Umballa Conference as the 1st of May, 1869, Colonel Pollock, the Commissioner of Peshawur, had reported as the direct and immediate result of the Umballa meeting, that the Ameer had been able to recover Balkh without a struggle, and had secured the submission of Badakshan.

Whilst the opinions and policy of the Government on the Central Asian question were thus being carried into execution in India, through the Viceroy, with a dignity of conduct and a steadiness of judgment which left us nothing to desire, the same opinions and the same policy were being prosecuted at home through the Foreign Office. During the same weeks in which Lord Mayo was preparing to receive Shere Ali at Umballa, Lord Clarendon was in communication with the Russian Ambassador in London, intimating the desire of the Cabinet to arrive at some understanding with the Government of Russia on the questions which might be raised by the rapid advances of the Russian Empire in Central Asia. In these communications with Baron Brünow, Lord Clarendon explained that the main object of such an understanding was to pacify the public mind both in England and in Asia. So far as the Government was concerned, we felt that "we were strong enough in India to repel all aggression." We made no complaint, and we repudiated any feeling of alarm. On the other hand, we expressed no such implicit confidence as had been expressed by Sir

Stafford Northcote. On the contrary, we pointed out that the progress of Russia in Central Asia was, like our own progress in Hindostan, the effect of tendencies and of causes which were more or less in constant operation, and that certain results would naturally and almost necessarily follow from them which it would be wise on the part of both Governments to foresee and to prevent. In indicating what those results were, we did not pretend to any right or to any desire of stopping Russia in her career of conquest over the desert wastes and the robber tribes of Central Asia. We did not hint that a large portion of the world was to be kept in a state of hopeless barbarism, to save us from having nervous fears. We specified and limited the demands which we thought we had a fair right to make,—and these were that measures should be taken to prevent any aspiring Russian general from intriguing with malcontent Indian Princes, or disturbing the States and populations which touch our frontiers. For this purpose, moreover, a definite arrangement was suggested, and that was, that "some territory should be recognised as neutral between the possessions of England and of Russia in the East, which should be the limit of those possessions, and should be scrupulously respected by both Powers." Baron Brünow concurred with Lord Clarendon in the suggestion. He made a report of it to his Government, and on the very day on which Lord Mayo was receiving Shere Ali at Umballa he brought

to the Foreign Office a letter from Prince Gortchakow, specifying Afghanistan as a territory and a State well fitted to occupy the position which was indicated in Lord Clarendon's suggestion. He was therefore authorised to give a "positive assurance that Afghanistan would be considered as entirely beyond the sphere in which Russia might be called upon to exercise her influence."*

It is of great importance to look closely at the language of the letter from Prince Gortchakow to Baron Brünow, dated on the 7th and which Lord Clarendon received on the 27th of March. That language was quite distinct that the object in view was to be that of keeping "a zone between the possessions of the two Empires in Asia, to preserve them from any contact." It is clear, therefore, that whatever territory might be fixed upon by the two Governments as constituting this zone, it was contemplated that the actual possessions of Russia and of England might come to touch it on opposite sides. But Russia was as yet very far from actually touching any part of the Afghan frontier. Bokhara touched it, if Afghanistan was fully understood to extend to the Oxus. And Bokhara was now under the command of Russia. But if Afghanistan were not understood as extending to the Oxus on its northern frontier, then the acceptance of that country and

* Central Asia, II., 1873, No. 1, p. 1.

Kingdom as constituting the proposed zone would leave room for a large advance on the part of Russia, to the south of her then acknowledged frontier, and might thus possibly be held to sanction her absorption of the whole territory between Bokhara and the Hindoo Koosh. Lord Clarendon, therefore, with very proper caution, in thanking the Russian Government for the spirit of their communication, and in expressing general agreement in the principle of the proposal, reserved his acceptance of Afghanistan as the territory to be selected, upon the ground that "he was not sufficiently informed on the subject to express an opinion as to whether Afghanistan should fulfil the conditions of circumstances of a neutral territory between the two Powers, such as it seemed desirable to establish."*

It was of course at this time my duty to inform Lord Clarendon upon those political and geographical facts which were of importance to the question then under discussion, and which were only known, or best known, to the Government of India and its officers. I was at that very time receiving communications from Lord Mayo which, as I have already explained, represented Russian officials as holding very suspicious language on the subject of the limits of the Afghan Kingdom.† These reports might not be correct. But,

* Ibid., No. 1, Inclos., p. 3.

† See ante, pp. 257, 258.

on the other hand, they might be true; and at all events, they suggested caution and inspired serious doubt whether it would be safe to accept Afghanistan as fulfilling the required conditions, unless it were clearly understood by both Governments what were the territories included under that name. Accordingly, after hearing all that could be ascertained from our Indian experts as to the somewhat obscure geography of the northern frontier of Shere Ali's dominions, I came to the conclusion that it would be unsafe and inexpedient to accept Afghanistan as the farthest limit of Russian advances, unless it were at the same time admitted as a fact that Afghanistan extended to the Upper Oxus. It appeared to us farther that it would be best to take that great river as the boundary of the "zone" for some distance even beyond the point where it ceased to touch the Afghan dominions. The effect of this would have been to include in the territory which was to be intermediate between the possessions of England and of Russia, not only the whole of Shere Ali's dominions, but also a large tract of country, for the most part desert, which was laid down in the maps as belonging to the Khan of Khiva.

Accordingly, these proposals were communicated to Baron Brünow by Lord Clarendon on the 17th of April, 1869, and it was specially explained that they were founded on "the decided opinion of the Secretary of State for India," after consultation with

those members of Council who were best acquainted with the country.*

This proposal at once compelled the Government of Russia to show its cards : and on the 2nd of June Prince Gortchakow avowed that very opinion of which the Indian Government had been suspicious, namely, that Afghanistan did not reach the Oxus, and that, on the contrary, the territory of Bokhara extended to the south of that river.†

In the discussions which followed, the last of our two proposals came to be abandoned. That proposal, namely, the extension of the proposed "zone" beyond the Afghan Kingdom to some point farther westward upon the Oxus as yet undefined, was a proposal which was completely overshadowed by the paramount importance of a clear and definite understanding as to the extent of territory which was included in Afghanistan. The discussions on this subject were protracted during the long period of three years and a half. The discussion was conducted in a most friendly spirit, generally of course through the Foreign Office, but at one time also, in a subordinate degree, through an officer of the Indian Government, Mr. Douglas Forsyth. He visited St. Petersburg in October, 1869, furnished with instructions and private letters from Lord Mayo, in which full explanations were

* Central Asia, II., 1873, No. 3, p. 4. † Ibid., No. 7, p. 6.