



5 2092

14200

Dhananjayrao Gadgil Librar

GIPE-PUNE-016292

16292

1. Correspondence re: Affairs of Asia. 1884. 119p.
V4:8. MS Bk
2. Notes Exchanged between Persian Government
and the British and Russian Ministers
at Teheran. Feb. 18 - March 20, 1912. 1912.
(ed. 6103) 4p. V45:19. 30k58 E2
3. Agreement with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company,
Ltd., 1914. (ed. 7419) 29p.
X9(P555): (Z30k45, 3) E4

~~Review~~
CENTRAL ASIA. No. 1 (1884). *2092*

S2092
CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

1
AFFAIRS OF ASIA.

(In continuation of "Central Asia No. 4: 1881.")

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
1884.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.

To be purchased, either directly or through any Bookseller, from any of the following Agents, viz.,
Messrs. HANSARD, 13, Great Queen Street, W.C., and 32, Abingdon Street, Westminster;
Messrs. EYRE and SPOTTISWOODE, East Harding Street, Fleet Street, and Sale Office, House of Lords;
Messrs. ADAM and CHARLES BLACK, of Edinburgh;
Messrs. ALEXANDER THOM and Co., or Messrs. HODGES, FISHER, and Co., of Dublin.

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No.	Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	page
1	To Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	Dec. 30, 1881	Turkomans of Merv. Any intelligence of their submission to the Russians?..	1
2	Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	31,	Merv Turkomans. Information only of arrangement with Russia for future good conduct (see above) ..	1
3	" .. (Telegraphic)	Jan. 16, 1882	Eyoub Khan. Wishes to stay at Meshed till end of March ..	1
4	Sir E. Thornton ..	12,	Deputation of Merv Elders. Will proceed to Russian head-quarters ..	1
5	Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	25,	Eyoub Khan. Refuses to go to Tehran..	2
6	To Sir E. Thornton ..	Feb. 2,	Russo-Persian frontier. Conversation with Prince Lobanow, who thinks it a matter only for Persia and Russia ..	2
7	" ..	2,	Speech by General Skobelev. Conversation with Prince Lobanow, who repudiates sentiments ..	3
8	Sir E. Thornton ..	Jan. 30,	Garrison of Askabad. Reports as to strength erroneous ..	3
9	" ..	Feb. 1,	Transcaspian region. Reports in Russian papers as to tranquillity ..	4
10	To Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	12,	Eyoub Khan. Still on Afghan frontier..	4
11	Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	13,	Eyoub Khan. Movements ordered to be expedited. Will leave speedily (see above) ..	4
12	" .. (Telegraphic)	16,	Eyoub Khan. Refuses to go to Tehran. Application made for peremptory orders for his removal from Khorassan ..	4
13	" .. (Telegraphic)	18,	Eyoub Khan. Instructions sent to Meshed for his immediate dispatch to Tehran ..	4
14	To Sir E. Thornton ..	22,	Frontier of Afghanistan. Prince Gortchakow proposes delimitation to Sarakhs (see No. 6) ..	5
15	Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	Mar. 8,	Eyoub Khan. Left Meshed yesterday ..	5
16	To Sir E. Thornton ..	14,	Conversation with Prince Lobanow. His proposal as to Afghanistan and country north of it ..	5
17	" ..	22,	Advance of Russia in Central Asia. Interview with Prince Lobanow and Lord Hartington. Proposal of latter to recognize right of Persia to country between Baba-Durmaz and Sarakhs ..	6
18	" ..	22,	Russo-Persian frontier. Prince Lobanow told that we would be satisfied by agreement in sense of Lord Hartington's proposal, without England being a party to it..	8
19	" ..	24,	Tract referred to in Lord Hartington's proposal. Not within Persian frontier-line on Russian map ..	9
20	Mr. Thomson ..	Feb. 13,	Occupation of Merv territory. Persian Government have determined to give up idea..	9
21	Sir E. Thornton ..	Mar. 28,	Kouchine's caravan. Return from Merv to Askabad reported in "Golos" ..	10
22	" ..	Apr. 6,	Military measures in Transcaspian region ..	10
23	Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	12,	Detachment of Russians reported gone to Tejed. Conversation with Minister for Foreign Affairs ..	11
24	" .. (Telegraphic)	18,	Eyoub Khan. Arrived at Tehran ..	11
25	To Sir E. Thornton ..	22,	Central Asian question. M. de Giers awaiting communication. Account of conversation with Prince Lobanow to be read to him ..	11
26	Mr. Thomson ..	Feb. 26,	Jurisdiction over Oghurjele Settlement. Question will be settled by Commissioners for completion of demarcation of Akhal-Khorassan frontier ..	11
27	Sir E. Thornton ..	Apr. 26,	Advance of Russian troops to Karibend. M. de Giers discredits statement (see No. 23) ..	12
28	To Sir E. Thornton ..	May 3,	Wish of Russian Government to maintain good relations with England on Central Asian question. Conversation with Prince Lobanow ..	12
29	Sir E. Thornton ..	Apr. 29,	Russian policy in Central Asia: Conversation with M. de Giers. Opposed to occupation of Atek territory by Persia ..	13
30	" ..	29,	Governor-General of Turkestan. General Tcherniaeff will not be appointed ..	13

No.	Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
31	Sir E. Thornton	May 9, 1882	Askabad and neighbourhood. Article in newspaper respecting trade, &c.	15
32	Mr. Thomson	Apr. 15,	Advance of Russian troops to Karibend. Statement by Foreign Minister as to object of expedition	15
33	Sir E. Thornton	May 19,	Russian trade with Merv and Bokhara. Extract from "Golos"	16
34	" "	19,	Communication between Akhal and Persia. Views in "Moscow Gazette"	16
35	" "	23,	General Kaufmann dead. Probable successor General Tchernaiëff	17
36	" "	June 7,	Governors-Generals of Turkestan and the Steppes. Appointments of Generals Tchernaiëff and Kolpakovsky	18
37	" "	12,	Transcaspian region and Askabad. Order of Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff as to state	18
38	Mr. Thomson	May 1,	Tax levied on Oghurjele Turkomans. Russians have refused to refund	19
39	" "	15,	Geographical information of Transcaspian province. Forwards Report by Mr. Stephen	19
40	To Sir E. Thornton	July 10,	Report as to intended communication between Governor-General of Turkestan and Ameer of Afghanistan. Call attention of M. de Giers	25
41	Sir E. Thornton	13,	M. Lessar's surveys from Kizil-Arvat to Askabad and Sarakhs. Extract from "Invalide Russe"	26
42	" "	13,	Agent from Governor-General of Turkestan to Cabul. M. de Giers contradicts report (see No. 40)	30
43	Mr. Thomson	25,	Russia and Merv Turkomans. Letters from General Aminoff to Chiefs, and Convention signed by Colonel Grotekilm and Ottemish branch	31
44	To Sir E. Thornton	Aug. 3,	Agent to Cabul from Governor-General of Turkestan. Approves language (see No. 42)	33
45	Sir E. Thornton	2,	Transcaspian region. Administrative divisions, &c., as stated in "Vedomosti"	34
46	" "	7,	Political and commercial importance of Transcaspian region. Forwards extract from "Novoe Vremya"	34
47	Mr. Thomson	July 7,	Completion of demarcation of Perso-Russian frontier. Russian Delegate not yet appointed	35
48	Sir E. Thornton	Sept. 13,	General Tchernaiëff. Left to take up appointment of Governor-General of Turkestan	35
49	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	21,	Consulate at Asterabad. Advises abolition, and re-establishment of post at Resht	36
50	Sir E. Thornton	26,	M. Lessar at Merv. Reported by "Golos"	36
51	" "	30,	Advance of Russia towards India. Forwards extract from "Journal de St. Pétersbourg"	36
52	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	Oct. 9,	Two Russians with escort left Sarakhs for Sarik settlements	38
53	To Mr. Thomson	11,	Asterabad Consulate to be abolished; that at Resht re-established. Mr. Stephen to visit Meshed and northern border of Khorassan	38
54	Sir E. Thornton	17,	Supposed intention of Turkoman tribe to submit to Russia. Extract from "Golos"	39
55	" "	26,	M. Lessar's journey from Askabad to Herat. Extract from "Golos"	39
56	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	30,	Russian engineers in Heri-Rud district. Not allowed to enter Herat territory	48
57	" "	26,	Merv Turkomans. Have agreed to pay tribute to Khiva	48
58	Sir E. Thornton	Nov. 6,	M. Lessar's journey from Askabad to Herat. Continuation from "Golos" (see No. 55)	48
59	" "	7,	Russian engineers in Heri-Rud district. Reports denied by "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" (see No. 56)	55
60	" "	8,	New road from Geuk-Tépé into Persia. Newspaper reports	55
61	To Mr. Thomson	15,	Russian engineers in Heri-Rud district. Furnish particulars as to identity and proceedings (see Nos. 56 and 59)	56
62	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	16,	Russians in Heri-Rud district. Answers above	56
63	" " (Telegraphic)	25,	Mr. Stephen. Proposes to send him to Khorassan	56
64	Sir E. Thornton	22,	Aral flotilla. Disestablished	56
65	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	27,	Reported submission of Makhtum Kuli Khan to Russia, and visit of Russians to Merv.. ..	57

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

v

No.	Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
66	Sir E. Thornton	Dec. 6, 1882	Titles of Emperor of Russia. Addition of "Sovereign of Turkestan"	57
67	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	27,	Mr. Stephen. Left for Meshed on 7th	57
68	To Sir E. Thornton	28,	Mr. Stephen's journey in Khorassan. Fact should be communicated to Russian Frontier Commissioners	57
69	Sir E. Thornton	Jan. 4, 1883	Mr. Stephen's journey. Note from M. Vlangaly	57
70	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	18,	Murder of Russians near Chacha. Arrest of Chiefs by Russians. Remonstrances of Persian Government	59
71	Sir E. Thornton	17,	Attack on Russian officer by Merv Tékés. Extract from "Novoe Vremya"	59
72	" "	17,	Railway from Michaeloff Bay to Kizil-Arvat. Extract from "Golos" on management	59
73	Mr. Thomson	Dec. 11, 1882	Akhal-Khorassan Boundary Commission. Russian Commissioner appointed. Persian Government wish Commission to meet at once. Russian Government propose that it should not assemble till spring	60
74	" "	26,	Russian Agent at Kuchan. Mahommedan will be appointed	60
75	" "	27,	Mr. Stephen's journey to Khorassan. Interview with Minister for Foreign Affairs. Advantages of accurate information being obtained	61
76	" " (Telegraphic)	Feb. 6, 1883	Murder at Chacha. Culprits surrendered to Russians (see No. 70)	61
77	Sir E. Thornton	6,	Rumoured disturbances in Transcaspian region. Explanation in "Golos" and "Kavkaz" (see above)	62
78	" "	7,	Murder at Chacha. Culprits taken to Askabad (see above)	62
79	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	16,	Mr. Stephen's escort. Conflict with raiding Sarik Turkomans	62
80	Sir E. Thornton (Telegraphic)	18,	Mr. Stephen's escort. Attacked near Sarakhs (see above)	62
81	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	10,	Mr. Stephen. Interference of Russian to prevent his entering Ateks	63
82	To Sir E. Thornton	21,	Interference with Mr. Stephen by Russian official. Make representations to Russian Government	63
83	Sir E. Thornton	28,	M. Lessar's journeys in Transcaspian region. Abstract from Russian press	63
84	India Office	Mar. 5,	Lieutenant Alikhanoff's notes on Merv. Newspaper extract	64
85	Sir E. Thornton	3,	Aral flotilla. Article in "Cronstadt Gazette" on disestablishment	65
86	" "	5,	Interference with Mr. Stephen by Russian official. Correspondence with Russian Government	65
87	" "	5,	Project for diverting course of Amou Daria. M. Lessar's opinion on subject	68
88	Mr. Thomson	Feb. 9,	Murder of Russians at Chacha. Culprits sent to Askabad. Russians wish Makhtum Kuli Khan to be accepted by the Merv Elders as paramount Chief	68
89	" "	9,	Eyoub Khan. Proposal to return to Khorassan, if made, will not be entertained	69
90	" "	17,	Akhal-Khorassan Frontier Commission. Wish of Persian Government to proceed to delimitation not complied with	69
91	" "	18,	Mr. Stephen's journey. Escort attacked by Sarik Turkomans. Telegram from Mr. Stephen	69
92	" "	20,	Mr. Stephen's journey. Interference of Russian Agent	70
93	Sir E. Thornton	Mar. 14,	Murder of Russians near Chacha. Detailed account from official Gazette	70
94	India Office	Apr. 5,	Engagements between Great Britain and Afghanistan. Letter from Governor-General of India to Ameer	72
95	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	9,	Mr. Stephen. Returned from Khorassan	73
96	Sir E. Thornton	11,	Chief of Transcaspian region. Report that Lieutenant-General Komaroff will succeed General Röhrberg	73
97	" "	16,	Surveys by Russians in Central Asia. Article from "Turkestan Gazette"	73
98	Mr. Thomson	Mar. 1,	North-eastern frontier of Khorassan. Report by Mr. Stephen on progress of his journey	74

No.	Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
99	Mr. Thomson	Mar. 9, 1883	Sarik Turkomans at Yulatan. Have placed themselves under control of Khan of Khiva. Salor tribes at Penjdeh have refused	75
100	Sir E. Thornton	Apr. 20,	Exploration of Kara-Kum desert and western portion of Uzboi. Expeditions have left Kizil-Arvat and Bala-Ishar	76
101	" "	25,	Russian surveys in Central Asia. Extracts from "Invalide Russe"	76
102	Mr. Thomson	6,	Akhal-Khorassan frontier. Commission to begin labours in May, and settle questions of Hussein Kuli Settlement and Oghurjele Turkomans	78
103	Sir E. Thornton	May 9,	New trade route from Bokhara to terminus of Transcaspian Railway. Article in "Novoe Vremya" on M. Rosheff's journey	78
104	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	16,	Eyoub Khan. Has asked permission to leave Tehran	79
105	Sir E. Thornton	16,	General Tcherniaeff. Left to make himself acquainted with route from the Oxus to the Caspian	79
106	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	June 1,	Eyoub Khan. Intends to leave Persian territory unless prevented by force	79
107	" " (Telegraphic)	4,	Detention of Eyoub Khan. Aversion of Shah and Ministers to use of force	79
108	" "	May 21,	Eyoub Khan. Has applied for permission to leave Tehran. Has urged Persian Government to prevent departure	80
109	" " (Telegraphic)	June 13,	Shah left for Meshed with troops	81
110	Sir E. Thornton	19,	Russian expedition to explore Central Asia and Tibet. Article in "Novoe Vremya"	81
111	Mr. Thomson	10,	Detention of Eyoub Khan. Interview with Minister for Foreign Affairs	82
112	To Mr. Thomson	July 6,	North-eastern Akhal-Khorassan frontier. Malcom Khan has no information as to fresh Treaty between Persia and Russia	83
113	" " (Telegraphic)	17,	Convention between Persia and Russia respecting frontier. Any information?	83
114	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	19,	Convention for extension of Russian frontier. Minister for Foreign Affairs denies its existence	83
115	Mr. Finn	24,	Akhal-Khorassan Frontier Commissioner. Proceeding to Tehran	84
116	India Office	Aug. 17,	Northern boundaries of Afghanistan. Letter from Viceroy of India to Ameer	84
117	" "	17,	Annual subsidy. Letter from Viceroy of India to Ameer intimating grant	84
118	Mr. Thomson	July 24,	Nationality of Oghurjele Turkomans. Interview between Minister for Foreign Affairs and Russian Minister	85
119	" "	26,	Demarcation of Akhal-Khorassan frontier to Babadurmaz. Colonel Karavaieff appointed Russian Commissioner	86
120	" "	Aug. 4,	Visit of General Komaroff to Shah's camp. Reference by M. Melnikoff to advisability for agreement respecting Afghan frontier	86
121	India Office	30,	Grant of subsidy to Ameer of Afghanistan. Letter from Ameer to Viceroy of India acknowledging	87
122	To Mr. J. G. Kennedy	Sept. 1,	Interference by Russian official with Mr. Stephen. No answer received yet from Russian Government	88
123	Memorandum by Mr. Stephen	5,	Sarakhs. Draws attention to position on Russian map	88
124	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	7,	His Majesty the Shah. Returned to Tehran	88
125	Vice-Consul Finn	Aug. 6,	Russian Commissioner for delimitation of Akhal-Khorassan frontier. Expected movements	88
126	To Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	Sept. 12,	Eyoub Khan. Danger of his leaving Persia at point whence he might intrigue against Ameer	89
127	To Mr. J. G. Kennedy	18,	Position of Sarakhs. Copy of No. 123	89
128	Mr. Thomson	Aug. 28,	Akhal-Khorassan Frontier Commission. Proposals as to how work should be carried out	89
129	Prince Malcom Khan	Sept. 7,	Eyoub Khan. Persian Government cannot detain him, but will prevent his taking up abode on Afghan territory	90
130	Mr. J. G. Kennedy	27,	Position of Sarakhs in Russian map. Conversation with M. Zinovieff (see No. 127)	92
131	To Mr. J. G. Kennedy	Oct. 2,	Visit of Russian to Cabul. Inquire as to truth of report	92

No.	Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
132	Mr. J. G. Kennedy ..	Oct. 3, 1883	Visit of Russian to Cabul. M. de Giers denies truth of report (see above) ..	92
133	Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	9,	Detachment of Russians. Gone to the Tejend ..	93
134	Mr. J. G. Kennedy ..	7,	Occupation of Shugnan by Afghans. Remarks in "Novoe Vremya" ..	93
135	" ..	15,	Interference with Mr. Stephen by Russian official. Explanation received from M. de Giers (see No. 122) ..	93
136	To Sir E. Thornton ..	19,	Russo-Persian frontier. To what point on Tejend will it be drawn? ..	95
137	Mr. J. G. Kennedy ..	16,	Occupation of Shugnan by Russians. Comments and information in Russian newspapers ..	95
138	Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	20,	Persian Envoy to Cabul. Gone as Agent of Prince-Governor of Khorassan, with no political mission, Russian force. Returned to Askabad (see No. 133)	95
139	" .. (Telegraphic)	21,		96
140	" .. (Telegraphic)	22,	Eyoub Khan. Demands permission to leave Tehran. Endeavours of Persian Government to come to arrangement with him ..	95
141	" ..	1,	Akhal-Khorassan frontier. Understanding arrived at. Demarcation will begin at Baba-Durmaz. Hussien Kuli question will be settled last ..	96
142	Sir E. Thornton ..	23,	M. Lessar's travels in 1882. Précis of Report read to Russian Geographical Society ..	96
143	" ..	24,	Russo-Persian boundary. Conversation with M. de Giers (see No. 136) ..	98
144	Prince Malcom Khan ..	29,	Eyoub Khan. Will be allowed to leave Persia, but not stop on Afghan frontier ..	98
145	Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	Nov. 2,	Eyoub Khan. Has advised Persian Government not to agree to departure before further reference to Her Majesty's Government ..	99
146	Sir E. Thornton ..	1,	Russo-Persian frontier. Further conversation with M. de Giers (see No. 143) ..	99
147	To Mr. Thomson ..	6,	Eyoub Khan. Interview with Prince Malcom Khan. Persian Government will not detain him ..	100
148	Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	12,	Russo-Persian boundary beyond Baba-Durmaz. No formal agreement exists. Turkoman raid on Kelat ..	100
149	Sir E. Thornton ..	12,	M. Lessar's last journey through Ateka to Sarakhs and Merv. Condensed Report ..	100
150	" ..	12,	Russian expedition to Tejend. Extract from "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" denying ..	102
151	" ..	13,	M. Lessar's journey to Merv. Continuation (see No. 149) ..	103
152	Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	17,	Eyoub Khan. Will leave for Meshed with Persian official within a fortnight ..	105
153	" .. (Telegraphic)	22,	Eyoub Khan. Further respecting departure for Bokhara ..	105
154	To Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	24,	Eyoub Khan. His being allowed to quit Persian territory will be considered unfriendly act ..	105
155	Sir E. Thornton ..	20,	M. Lessar's journey to Merv. Continuation from "Novoe Vremya" (see No. 143) ..	106
156	" ..	21,	Proceeding of English agents at Merv. Article from "Novoe Vremya" communicated by M. Lessar ..	108
157	Mr. Thomson ..	2,	Eyoub Khan. Conversation with the Shah. Advice not to allow departure without communicating further with Her Majesty's Government ..	110
158	Sir E. Thornton ..	Dec. 4,	Transfer of troops to Oxus military section. Application for grant to Council of the Empire ..	111
159	India Office ..	16,	Eyoub Khan. Telegram from Viceroy of India. Departure will entail serious consequences ..	111
160	To Mr. Thomson ..	18,	Eyoub Khan. Permission to depart will be considered seriously unfriendly act ..	111
161	Sir E. Thornton ..	17,	Communication between Geuk-Tépé and Persia. Negotiations proceeding respecting ..	112
162	Mr. Thomson .. (Telegraphic)	28,	Russian force. Entered Atok on 20th for the Tejend ..	112
163	Sir E. Thornton ..	Jan. 2, 1884	Russian expedition to the Tejend. Conversation with M. de Giers ..	112
164	To Mr. Thomson ..	8,	Eyoub Khan. Prince Malcom Khan has asked what course Her Majesty's Government wish Persian Government to pursue ..	112
165	Sir E. Thornton ..	9	Establishment of order in Russian Turkestan. Abstract from "St. Petersburg Gazette" as to cost ..	113

TABLE OF CONTENTS.

No.	Name.	Date.	SUBJECT.	Page
166	To Mr. Thomson . . .	Jan. 14, 1884	Russian expedition to the Tejend for recovery of property from raiding Turkomans. Forwards copy of No. 155	114
167	" " . . .	22,	Eyoub Khan. Interview with Mslcom Khan. He wishes answer to request for advice how to deal with him	114
168	Sir E. Thornton . . .	22,	Kara-Kum desert. Paper read by M. Lessar to Imperial Geographical Society	115
169	Mr. Thomson	Feb. 8,	Eyoub Khan. Has reached Meshed, and is detained in citadel	118
170	To Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	9,	Submission of Merv Chiefs to Russia. Any confirmation of report?	119
171	Mr. Thomson (Telegraphic)	10,	Submission of Merv Chiefs to Russia. No confirmation (see above)	119
172	Sir E. Thornton	14,	Merv Khans and Representatives of tribes. Submitted to Czar at Askabad on 12th	119
173	" "	15,	Allegiance of Merv Turkomans. Will be accepted by the Czar	119

Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Asia.

No. 1.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, December 30, 1881, 7.15 P.M.

REPORTS have appeared in one or two newspapers here that the Turkomans at Merv have surrendered to the Russians. Has any intelligence reached you to that effect?

No. 2.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received December 31, 2.45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, December 31, 1881.

I HAVE no information of the surrender of the Merv Turkomans to Russia, nor has any such intelligence reached the Persian Government.

Communications appear, however, to have lately passed between the Turkomans and Russians with a view to submission or arrangement for future good conduct of the tribes; and it is reported that two of the late Koushed Khan's sons, with six other Chiefs, had gone to Akhal, and that result of their negotiations was not yet known.

Mr. Stephen is expected here in a few days. He will, no doubt, bring trustworthy and recent information of events in the Akhal country.

No. 3.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received January 16, 3.30 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, January 16, 1882.

EYOUNG KHAN is endeavouring to arrange for his being allowed to stay at Meshed till end of March.

No. 4.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received January 18.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, January 12, 1882.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram to Mr. Thomson No. 29 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to report that, according to the "Novoe Vremya" of yesterday, a new deputation of Merv Elders will shortly proceed to the Russian headquarters in the Transcaspian, the previous deputation, that newspaper states, having failed in its mission. It is added that the despatch of the new deputation was decided on by the Mervites themselves, and that Takhma Sirdar will have no connection with it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 5.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received January 25, 2.15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, January 25, 1882.

EYOUB KHAN refuses to go to Tehran. There is reason to suppose that he wishes to go to Bokhara.

No. 6.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 2, 1882.

IN conversation with the Russian Ambassador this afternoon I alluded to the friendly relations existing between the two countries, and remarked that they had rarely, if ever, been on a better footing. I could answer for Her Majesty's Government that they were animated by feelings of cordiality and goodwill towards that of Russia, and I believed that a similar disposition existed at St. Petersburg. This fortunate condition of affairs, I thought, offered an opportunity which should not be neglected to arrive at an understanding upon any question which was capable in the future of becoming a subject of difference or suspicion. It was on this ground that I wished to suggest whether some agreement might not be come to as regards the policy and position of the two Powers in Asia, which should remove the jealousy with which, as he was aware, public opinion in this country was inclined to view the success and progress of the Russian arms in those regions. It would, in my opinion, be not merely an advantage for England and Russia themselves that such an agreement should be attained, but it would materially contribute to the tranquillity and civilization of the Asiatic States and populations that the two Governments should be understood to be acting harmoniously.

I said that the subject was one on which Prince Lobanow had himself spoken to me when first I had taken office, that it must presumably have often occupied his thoughts, and I asked his Excellency whether it occurred to him to suggest any means by which such an object could be furthered.

Prince Lobanow said he had no positive suggestion to make, but he added that he was under the impression that some agreement had at one time been come to on the subject.

I asked Prince Lobanow whether he referred to the agreement which had been the result of the discussions between Prince Gortchacow on the one side and Lord Clarendon and afterwards myself on the other.

Prince Lobanow said that that was what he meant.

I answered that that agreement was perfectly clear and satisfactory as far as it went; that it was as formal as anything could be which was not the subject of a Treaty or Convention; that I was not aware that it was open to any question. His own Government had very recently acknowledged its validity, and it had never occurred to Her Majesty's Government to question its force and binding effect at the present moment. But there were points which it did not touch, and details which it left unsettled, which it might be advantageous to make the subject of further arrangement.

One of these questions was the position of Persia. England and Russia were agreed in regarding the independence of that country as a matter of mutual interest. But a considerable portion of her frontier to the north-east still remained undefined, nor had she by herself the means of laying it down. We understood that the Russian Government had come to an arrangement with that of the Shah as to the line of frontier from the Caspian to a considerable distance eastward and south-eastward, as far, I believed, as a place named Baba-Dormuz. I wished to suggest that an agreement should also be come to between England, Russia, and Persia, for the settlement of the frontier now left undefined between Persia and the Turkoman country from this point, Baba-Dormuz, to the point where the Persian frontier meets that of Afghanistan in the neighbourhood of the Heri-Rud, and for its subsequent demarcation by English, Russian, and Persian officers.

I thought that something might be done with regard to the adjacent Afghan frontier.

Prince Lobanow said that he did not know the place to which I alluded; that he was not aware of any point of contestation between the Russian and the Persian Governments as to their respective frontiers, and at first sight it occurred to him that

they might consider that the definition of the Persian frontier had been pushed as far as was necessary or useful for the present, and that if in the future it became necessary to define further the boundary between Russia and Persia, it was a matter to be settled between the two conterminous States.

I said that it seemed to me that when two powerful countries were admitted to be jointly interested in maintaining the independence of a weak neighbouring State, it was difficult to argue that the settlement of the frontier of this latter State was a matter which interested only that one of the two Powers whose territories were actually contiguous.

We agreed to resume the conversation at a later date, and to consider what had passed as merely preliminary conversation.

You will not allude to it until you have further instructions.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 7.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 2, 1882.

IN the course of the conversation with the Russian Ambassador, which is reported in my immediately preceding despatch, I alluded to the speech recently made by General Skobelev at a dinner at St. Petersburg, of which accounts have appeared in the public press. I told Prince Lobanow that I did not attach undue importance to addresses made by officers at public dinners, but that the character of the General's statements was certainly calculated to excite the apprehensions of those who entertained suspicions of ambitious views on the part of Russia. This, I said, was not only the case with those who might be thought Russophobes in this country, but from the accounts I had read it appeared that the speech had also excited much comment on the continent.

Prince Lobanow entirely repudiated the sentiments to which General Skobelev had given expression. He said that the speech was entirely without political significance—that the General was a good soldier, and as such would always obey the orders that were given him, but that he was no politician, and had no political authority.

I answered that I was quite ready to receive this assurance, but that the General was one of those good soldiers who, when in the field, did not always confine themselves to the limits of their instructions, but created the necessity of further advances which the Russian Government had often deplored.

I thought this an additional reason for coming to some more definite understanding as to frontier than at present existed.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 8.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received February 6.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, January 30, 1882.

A TELEGRAM purporting to be from Tiflis, and dated the 13th instant, is published in the Russian newspaper "Golos," to the effect that the information given by the English newspapers that the garrison of Askabad would reach 8,000 men is erroneous. It states that, according to General Röhrberg, the number of troops now there is less than it was last spring at the time of the occupation of the town.

It adds that the information given by the Reuter Agency about an alleged movement of Russian troops in the direction of Merv is also without foundation, and that in the neighbourhood of Askabad a small military post only has been established to serve as a starting point for the surveys of a line of road between Kizil-Arvat, Askabad, and the provinces of the Khorassan.

It also states that General Röhrberg left Tiflis for St. Petersburg on the 13th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 9.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received February 6.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, February 1, 1882.

THE "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of to-day quotes two articles from Russian newspapers, one from the "Caucasus," and the other from the "Golos."

The former of these states that complete tranquillity now prevails in the Trans-caspian region, that the transport of stores and the postal service between Kizil-Arvat and Askabad are carried on in perfect safety, and that the troops at the latter have been placed on a peace footing.

The "Golos" declares that the Merv Turkomans are now abstaining from all opposition to the new order of things, and recommends that the Government should devote itself to the development of commerce, making Askabad a commercial centre. It also advises Russian manufacturers to follow the example of their English rivals in making their cotton goods accord with the taste of the natives in the markets of Persia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 10.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, February 12, 1882, 5.30 P.M.

EYOUNB is reported to be still on Afghan frontier and to be stirring up intrigues. It would be very mischievous if he were to get back to Herat. Persian Government are stated to be very slow about interning him.

No. 11.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 13, 11 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, February 13, 1882.

I HAVE been constantly urging Persian Government to remove Eyoub Khan from Khorassan.

Repeated and strong telegrams have been sent to Prince-Governor, desiring him to expedite Eyoub's movements. Latter has now received money for travelling expenses, and Prince telegraphed on the 11th that he would leave speedily. Iskender Khan arrived here 8th instant.

No. 12.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 16, 11 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, February 16, 1882.

EYOUNB KHAN refuses to come to Tehran, and he is supposed to have made arrangements for admission to Russian territory, but he and other refugees now at Meshed may possibly attempt to re-enter Afghanistan.

I have applied to Persian Government for further peremptory orders for Eyoub's removal from Khorassan, and for the adoption of effectual measures to prevent his reaching Afghanistan. I have added that Persia would incur grave responsibility should he be allowed to cross the frontier.

No. 13.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 18, 11 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, February 18, 1882.

AN autograph message from His Majesty the Shah, and instructions from the Minister for Foreign Affairs, have been sent by telegraph to Meshed, censuring local

authorities for their conduct with respect to Eyoub, and containing stringent orders for his dispatch to Tehran within two or three days, and for proper measures being taken to prevent his evasion on the road.

No. 14.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 22, 1882.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon by appointment. His Excellency told me that he had reported to his Government the substance of the conversation we had had on the 2nd instant on the policy of the two Governments in Asia, as reported in my despatch of that date.

Prince Lobanow said that he had told his Government that I had commenced by stating that the present good relations between Russia and England offered an opportunity, of which it was desirable to take advantage, for coming to some further understanding as to the position of the two countries in Central Asia; that he had thereupon suggested a renewal of the agreement formerly made with Prince Gortchacow by Lord Clarendon and me; that to this I had replied that I looked upon that agreement as still existing in full force, but that it left certain matters undecided which it would be well definitively to settle; and that I had finished by proposing a delimitation of the Persian frontier from Baba-Durmaz to a point in the neighbourhood of the Heri-Rud.

He had now received the reply of his Government. They acknowledged the continued validity of the agreement formerly entered into by Prince Gortchacow, by which Afghanistan was admitted to be beyond the sphere of Russian influence. That agreement was, however, as I had said, incomplete; and they were ready to supplement it by a settlement of the frontier of Afghanistan, from the point where it had been left undefined as far as Sarakhs.

To this I replied that several observations occurred to me at once in regard to such a proposal, but that I would reserve them until I had been able to examine the matter carefully, and was in a position to present him with my views in a more complete shape.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 15.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 8.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, March 8, 1882.

WITH much difficulty Eyoub Khan has at length been induced to quit Khorassan. He left Meshed yesterday in charge of a Persian Colonel, who is directed to bring him to Tehran.

No. 16.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Extract.)

Foreign Office, March 14, 1882.

IN the course of conversation this afternoon the Russian Ambassador alluded to the Central Asian question.

I reminded his Excellency that when at our last interview he had mentioned to me the counter-proposal of the Russian Government for a delimitation of the frontier of Afghanistan from Khoja-Saleh to Sarakhs, I had said that certain observations occurred to me at once in regard to it, but that I would reserve them until I could consider the matter thoroughly.

I had since, I said, been confirmed in my impression—and I found that it was entirely shared by the India Office and Indian Government—that the proposal did not in any way meet the requirements of the case.

It was acknowledged, I continued, not only by Her Majesty's Government, but

by that of Russia also, that it was desirable to avoid any contact or very close contiguity between the frontiers of the British and Russian possessions in Central Asia or of the native States under their immediate and direct influence. Russia, on her part, had shown considerable susceptibility in this respect in regard to the possible eventuality of an English occupation of Herat, while on our side Lord Derby, when Foreign Secretary, had equally expressed the objections that would be felt here and in British India to an advance of the Russian arms to the immediate vicinity of the Afghan frontier.

During the last two years our movement had been in a retrograde direction. In this we had been influenced, as I was ready to admit, not by a deference to the wishes of Russia, but by political considerations of our own. Still, the fact remained. The Russian Government, on the contrary, had advanced far beyond what we had been led to expect from the assurances previously given to us. We now heard of a surveying party having proceeded beyond the Russian advanced positions as far as Sarakhs, and that point was mentioned by the Russian Government as the termination of a proposed delimitation of the Afghan frontier. It appeared to us that if the possession of Sarakhs were at any time to be arrived at by the Russian Government, it could not be necessary for the purposes which have hitherto been stated by them as their object.

In the meanwhile, the Government of India were placed in a position of considerable difficulty by the ambiguity of the Russian position. It was necessary for them to settle the whole question of their future relations with the Ameer, and it was natural and reasonable that they should desire to know on what footing they stood in regard to the intentions and claims of Russia, and for what eventualities they might have to provide.

I begged Prince Lobanow to believe that the matter was of serious importance, and that it was one which neither of the two Governments could afford to neglect.

Prince Lobanow said he had not very clearly understood what had been the object of my original proposal to him.

I told his Excellency that I had no hesitation in telling him frankly—for I believed it was in the interest of both countries—that our desire was to make an arrangement which should prevent any occasion or opportunity for a further advance of Russia towards Afghanistan. We believed that her present acquisitions were all that she could require for purposes of security. It had seemed to us that the interposition of a barrier, even though it were more of a moral than of a material character, by recognition of the territorial rights of Persia, over the adjacent region to the south might take away the opening for a further progress of the Russian forces, which we believed to be deprecated at St. Petersburg, though it might often be difficult under the circumstances to prevent it.

Prince Lobanow said he had understood that there had been at one time an attempt to agree upon a neutral zone between the possessions and dependencies of the two countries, and that this arrangement had been found to be impracticable. The Russian Government considered that Afghanistan should be an independent or semi-independent State, subject to English influence, and the country to the north of it, now under discussion, should remain a neutral territory, placed in a somewhat similar position with regard to Russia.

I told his Excellency that this view was new to me, and only observed how important it was that the Indian Government should clearly understand what the intentions of the Russian Government were.

Prince Lobanow agreed that it was not impossible, and certainly desirable, that we should come to some definite understanding.

I told his Excellency that if the negotiation could be pursued, I thought it would be very desirable to arrange a meeting between him, Lord Hartington, and myself, at which the details could be proposed and discussed.

No. 17.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

(Extract.)

Foreign Office, March 22, 1882.

THE Russian Ambassador came to the Foreign Office yesterday afternoon by appointment in order to meet Lord Hartington and me, and to resume with us jointly the discussion of the Central Asian question, which had hitherto been carried on between his Excellency and me alone.

between England and Afghanistan. She expected on her side to be left free to take any measures with regard to the States within the sphere of her influence which might be required for purposes of security.

I observed upon this that it might be inferred from his Excellency's words that Russia considered herself free to advance to Sarakhs. This, however, was exactly the kind of approach which the Russian and English Governments had always joined in deprecating. The Russian Government had especially in 1875 dwelt upon the more than inconvenient results that would attend an English movement upon Herat. Lord Derby used the same language as to advances on the part of Russia. As it happened, we had withdrawn from Afghanistan, while the Russians had advanced beyond the lines they occupied at that time. As an affair of national *amour-propre*, the present time was singularly propitious for Russia to make an arrangement which would restore confidence on both sides.

Prince Lobanow remarked that he was not in a position to make any reply to what I had said on the subject of Herat. It was a matter upon which he could not undertake to anticipate the views of his Government.

We returned to the discussion of the main question. In regard to the objections which had been advanced by Prince Lobanow as to the practical value of the proposed arrangement, I said that a combined pressure by England and Russia could not fail of inducing the Persian Government to take effectual measures in the territory which would be recognized as belonging to them. It was my belief that the Persian Government would accept without difficulty the conditions which might be attached to our recognition, and would seriously and conscientiously endeavour to fulfil them.

In this opinion Lord Hartington expressed his concurrence.

In answer to Prince Lobanow's argument, that the arrangement offered to Russia no *quid pro quo*, and that it was impossible, at the distance at which the English were, that they could offer Russia any security against molestation, I said I could speak to his Excellency with perfect frankness, as there was no chance of his misconstruing into anything of a possible menace that which I had to say. It seemed to me that there would be an immense advantage to Russia, no less than to England, if an agreement could be come to by which suspicion on both sides might be averted.

Prince Lobanow listened attentively to my observations, but said that his instructions were positive, and that he had no latitude to depart from the language he had held.

Lord Hartington and I requested his Excellency to lay before his Government the considerations which had been stated on either side, in the hope that it might modify their views.

This Prince Lobanow consented to do. At my request his Excellency has also been good enough to show me his account of the interview before forwarding it to St. Petersburg, and I am enabled to state that it corresponds substantially with that which I have given in the present despatch.

No. 18.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 22, 1882.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me again this afternoon, and brought to me the draft of his despatch giving an account of his conversation with Lord Hartington and me yesterday.

I have requested his Excellency to alter slightly one or two passages in which I thought Lord Hartington's and my language had not been quite accurately rendered, and to insert a few remarks which we had made and which he had omitted to mention.

I took the opportunity to make a further observation on the contention of the Russian Government, that the further delimitation of the Persian frontier beyond Baba-Durmaz was a matter which concerned Persia and Russia alone. I said that it had been for years a settled understanding between Russia and England that they both desired to maintain the stability and independence of Persia. I could not, therefore, admit that Her Majesty's Government were not interested in the settlement of frontier questions regarding the latter country.

But I continued that without giving up that principle we should be satisfied if

an agreement were arrived at between Russia and Persia in the sense of Lord Hartington's proposal without England being a party to it.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 19.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 24, 1882.

AT an interview yesterday the Russian Ambassador showed me a Russian map, according to which the tract which Lord Hartington had proposed to include in Persian territory in the delimitation beyond Baba-Durmaz did not come within the Persian frontier-line. I asked whether any assent had been given to this line by Persia, but his Excellency was unable to answer the question. I said I would mention the matter to Lord Hartington.

I have now informed Prince Lobanow that the information possessed by the India Office leads to a conclusion opposite to that which would be drawn from the map in question, and that, although the tract may possibly not at this time be in the actual occupation of the Persians, there can, in our opinion, be no doubt that it belongs to Persia of right.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 20.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville. — (Received March 27.)

(Extract.)

Tehran, February 13, 1882.

AT an interview which I had with the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday his Excellency informed me that the question of Merv and the future policy of Persia towards the Téké Turkomans had been carefully considered by the Shah in consultation with his Ministers. The result of their deliberations on these points had been that the Persian Government were now convinced of the fallacy of the idea which they had formerly entertained, that it might be possible for Persia to obtain possession of Merv and establish her supremacy over the Téké tribes by accepting the allegiance proffered to them by some of the Chiefs. It was well known that there was no unanimity amongst the tribes, and, especially with regard to this project, there was great diversity of opinion amongst them. The Persian Government, therefore, considered that it would be most undesirable to enter into any arrangement of this kind with the Merv Chiefs, as it would entail heavy expenditure without any certainty of a good result, and might possibly lead to serious complications and humiliating failure.

In the opinion of the Shah's Ministers, Persia could not establish and maintain her authority over the Téké Turkomans without having recourse to military operations, which could only be undertaken at great inconvenience and expense. The Merv campaign which they undertook in 1861 had taught them that a large and well-equipped force would be required to overcome the resistance of the Téké people, and that for many years a strong permanent garrison would be necessary to enable them to keep the tribes in order.

Under these circumstances, in view of the cost and risk of embarking on such a formidable undertaking, the Persian Government had decided that they could not attempt an armed occupation of the Merv territory. They had therefore determined to abstain for the present from all interference with Merv and the Tejjen districts occupied by Téké Turkomans, and instructions in this sense had been sent to the Prince-Governor of Khorassan for the guidance of the local authorities in that province.

I presume that the pressure brought to bear upon the Merv Turkomans by the Russians in the negotiations now carried on with them from Askabad, and the influence exercised upon the Téké Chiefs by the Khan of Khiva, acting in the interests of Russia, and by the Akhal portion of the Téké tribe, will at no distant date produce their effect, and that the Turkomans of Merv will offer their submission to Russia, or place themselves under her protection, and when either of these results has

been obtained the Russians will doubtless proceed to occupy the Tejend lands and such parts of the Dereghez and Kelat Ateks as may be necessary to afford them an open road towards Sarakhs, in which district they will, in my opinion, endeavour to establish themselves in a strong position, possibly without attempting to interfere with the territory on the left bank of the Heri-Rud River, which is now actually in the possession of Persia.

I am informed by the Hissam-es-Sultaneh, Prince Sultan Murad Mirza, who was for many years Governor-General of Khorassan, that the Persian town of Sarakhs is built on a very ill-chosen site. It was originally intended to have been constructed on the right bank of the river, but the Persian General to whom the work was intrusted having misappropriated the money given for the purpose, and finding that his proceedings were about to be made the subject of inquiry, hastily threw up some fortifications around the camp he then occupied, and these having been subsequently completed, now form the present Persian fort of Sarakhs. The river at that spot is dry for three months of the year, from July to October, when the water entirely disappears in the gravelly soil through which it runs, a supply sufficient for the wants of the garrison being, however, procurable by digging near the surface in the bed of the stream.

No. 21.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 3.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, March 28, 1882.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 21st instant, I have the honour to state that the "Golos" of the 17th (29th) March, 1882, publishes a telegram, dated the 14th (26th) March, from Askabad, which has been translated by Mr. Michell as follows:—

"Kouchine's caravan which safely reached Merv has now returned, having disposed of all its goods.

"On Tuesday, the 16th (28th) March, it is intended to commence planting trees throughout the whole Akhal Téké Oasis.

"The desert at the present time is being reconnoitred. Between Akhal Téke and Khiva many Téké auls, the existence of which was unknown to us, have now been discovered.

"The Tékéés have volunteered gratuitously to repair all the roads between Askabad and Kizil-Arvat under the direction of Russian sappers. The work is already commenced."

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 22.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 11.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, April 6, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Invalide Russe" of the 21st March publishes an Imperial Order respecting the formation of six rifle battalions, numbered 1 to 6. The same Order directs the formation of a siege artillery company for Askabad out of the 3rd company of the Gunib siege artillery train, and to replace the existing hospitals in the Transcaspian by lazarets at the following points: Krasnovodsk and Askabad, 150 beds; Chekishler, Bami, Kizil-Arvat, and Geuk-Tépé, 28 beds each.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 23.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 12, 1 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, April 12, 1882.

HAVING learnt that 140 Russians, with four guns, had gone from Askabad to Tejend to erect a fort, and had been repelled by Tékés of latter place, aided by those of Merv, I asked Minister for Foreign Affairs whether report was true. His Excellency replied that he had heard detachment of Russian cavalry had gone towards Tejend, and had made inquiry on subject of Russian Minister, who had stated that about fifty Cossacks had been sent to Karibend, on Tejend River, to secure safety of Russian merchants who had lately gone to Merv. He denied that Cossacks had guns, and said when they reached Karibend orders were given for their immediate return.

A Dereghz Chief now here informs me that Karibend is the most important position in the Tejend Settlement.

No. 24.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 18, 10.15 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, April 18, 1882.

EYOUNG KHAN and Luinab, with ten other Afghan Chiefs, arrived here to-day, with over 300 followers. Persian Government propose to apply for the dismissal of the latter as soon as possible.

No. 25.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 22, 1882.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon, and in answer to my inquiries informed me that he had received two private letters from M. de Giers, in which the latter spoke of the strong desire of the Emperor and of himself to be on the best terms with this country, and of their anxiety to meet the views of Her Majesty's Government with regard to Central Asia as much as possible. The question, however, M. de Giers added, was a difficult one, and required consideration, as it would be impossible for Russia to sacrifice what was necessary for her security. Prince Lobanow said that M. de Giers had twice informed him that he was waiting for your Excellency to open the subject with him.

I answered that on my part I was on the point of asking him (Prince Lobanow) whether he had received, or expected to receive, from M. de Giers an answer enabling him to continue the discussion.

I said that I had given your Excellency no instructions. I had only forwarded to you an account of the conversation which had been held on the subject. I would, however, at once telegraph to your Excellency requesting you to read these accounts to M. de Giers.

I observed that I had no objection to the question being discussed either here or at St. Petersburg, but that it appeared to me to be of doubtful advantage that there should be double communications going on at the same time.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 26.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 24.)

My Lord,

Tehran, February 26, 1882.

THIS question with respect to Hussein Kuli, the Oghurjele Turkoman Settlement, at the mouth of the Attrek, has been frequently discussed with the Russian Legation here without any definite result being obtained. The Russians claim that Hussein Kuli, being situated on the north bank of the Attrek, is within their territory,

and this would appear from Major Napier's map of that part of the Caspian, and from other evidence, to be the case. The Persians, however, pretend that if the river was not diverted from its natural channel it would leave Hussein Kuli on the left or Persian bank, and they further maintain that the Persian nationality of the Oghurjele tribe could not be affected by the position of this Settlement, seeing that the tribe and Chiefs all claim to be Persian subjects, and Russia is bound by the Agreement, under which she occupied the territory north of the Attrek River, to abstain from all interference with the Yemoot Turkomans owing allegiance to the Shah.

The Russians have lately commenced to levy taxes from the Turkomans on their side of the Attrek, and a demand which has been made for the payment to the Russian Government of an annual tax of 6 roubles from each family of the Oghurjelli tribe residing at Hussein Kuli has induced the Persian Government to reassert their claims in respect to that place and its inhabitants. The Minister for Foreign Affairs accordingly, by order of the Shah, addressed an official remonstrance to the Russian Minister against the continued interference of the Russian authorities with the Hussein Kuli Settlement. To this communication no written reply was returned, but M. Zinoviev called upon Mirza Saïd Khan and discussed the matter verbally with him. Having urged that it was not advisable for the Persian Government to enter upon an official correspondence on this subject at present, the Persian Minister agreed to withdraw his note and substitute in its place a Memorandum, proposing that all further action with regard to the Oghurjele tribe should be suspended by the Russian authorities pending an inquiry to be instituted by the Russo-Persian Commissioners, who will shortly be appointed to complete the demarkation of the Akhal-Khorassan line of frontier.

M. Zinoviev telegraphed this suggestion to St. Petersburg, and I am informed that it has been agreed to, and that the Commissioners will visit Chekishler and decide the question as to the possession of Hussein Kuli before proceeding to Chat to trace the boundary-line, thence to Baba-Durmaz.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 27.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 1.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, April 26, 1882.

I TOOK occasion last week to tell M. de Giers that I had learnt that some Russian troops had advanced from Askabad to Karibend, on the River Tejend, and I asked his Excellency whether he had received any information upon the subject. He replied that no news to that effect had reached him; that he did not believe the statement could possibly be true, and that the utmost which could have happened would have been that a few men might have been sent as an escort to a caravan of Russian merchants going to Merv. His Excellency added that the most stringent instructions had been given to General Röhrberg to avoid as far as possible sending any troops at all beyond the limits of the territory now held by the Russian forces, and to abstain to the utmost from exciting the susceptibilities of neighbouring States. M. de Giers assured me that the Government had great confidence in the discretion and prudence of General Röhrberg.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 28.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 3, 1882.

THE Russian Ambassador called upon me this afternoon, and asked me whether I had received any reports from your Excellency on the Central Asian question.

I said that your Excellency had informed me privately that you had had some informal conversation with M. de Giers on the subject, but that the interview had been interrupted; that M. de Giers had expressed a great wish to be on terms of cordial understanding with England, but seemed to think that there would be strong objections

to acknowledging Persian authority over the strip of territory between Baba-Durmaz and Sarakhs, believing that it would deprive the Russians of the means of defence against the inroads of the Turkomans, which the Persians would not of themselves have power to repress.

Prince Lobanow said that he had received a letter from M. de Giers of a similar tenour, but which he thought it necessary to show me, because M. de Giers said he was still waiting for a communication from your Excellency. M. de Giers had stated also to him the desire of the Russian Government to be in agreement and good relations with England, and intimated that the Russian Government could have no objection to our doing what we thought necessary within our own limits to make our position secure, but that they could not undertake to sacrifice their own means of security for the purpose.

I told the Prince that I should wait till I heard again from your Excellency, on the conclusion of your communications with M. de Giers, before making any observations.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 29.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 4.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, April 29, 1882.

IN accordance with the permission granted me by your Lordship's telegram of the 22nd instant, I have had two interviews with M. de Giers on the 26th and 28th instant, during which I have read to him your Lordship's recent despatches, informing me of conversations you had had with the Russian Ambassador in London respecting the Central Asian question.

M. de Giers agreed with your Lordship that it would be better that there should not be double discussions, and he stated that he had a few days ago sent further instructions to Prince Lobanow, the nature of which his Excellency will probably have already communicated to you. But as he seemed to wish to make me acquainted with his views, I listened, offering only enough observations to keep up the conversation.

His Excellency answered me not once, but several times during the conversation, that Russia had no intention whatever at present of advancing towards Sarakhs or Merv, or of occupying with her forces any territory in that region beyond what was already in her possession. He could positively assert that this was the feeling and determination of the Russian Government at present, and that he hoped it would be carried out for many years to come. What might happen in the far future it was impossible to say or divine; for circumstances might compel them to do what they had now no intention of doing.

The influence of Russia, he said, was entirely devoted to the establishment of firm and permanent peace in that region, and it was now beginning to have a good effect. It was, therefore, very desirable that there should be no troublesome or disorderly neighbours who would counteract the measures which the Russian authorities were now carrying out for the pacification and civilization of the Turkoman tribes in that region. The Russian Government could not acquiesce in the proposal made by Her Majesty's Government, that the Atek country from Sarakhs to Baba-Durmaz, and between that line and the River Tejend, should be handed over to the care and into the possession of Persia. His Excellency insisted that she had no right whatever to that country, and that whatever influence Russia and Great Britain might bring to bear upon her she would be utterly unable to govern it, and that any attempt to do so on her part would only excite discontent, and produce disorder where there now seemed to be some prospect of the natives abandoning habits of brigandage, and devoting themselves to commercial and agricultural pursuits. He understood that Her Majesty's Government were anxious that Russia should be confined within the limits now held, and should not extend her territory to the East or South, and the Russian Government declared that they had no desire to advance in that direction; but His Imperial Majesty was very averse to making any engagements to that effect with another Power, which the force of circumstances might hereafter render it impossible for the Russian authorities to keep. His Excellency was of opinion that the occupation of the Atek region by Persia would have just the contrary effect to that hoped for

and anticipated by Her Majesty's Government. He believed that it would create such a state of disorder ("un tel gâchis") in that country, that not only would the people of Merv avail themselves of it to come westward for purposes of plunder, but that the Atek Turkomans themselves would be making incursions into the territory now held by Russia, and attacking Russian caravans, so that the Russian military authorities would be compelled to enter the Atek territory for the purpose of punishing the wrong-doers, and preventing their hostilities from being repeated; and this, notwithstanding the most stringent instructions to the Russian military authorities that they should allow no movement in that direction, instructions which General Röhrberg had shown himself entirely disposed to obey.

M. de Giers informed me that very recently the Turkomans in the district of Dereghez had risen against their Khan, and that their motive in doing so was to throw off their allegiance to Persia and come under the control of the Russian authorities; that the Persian Government had consequently addressed themselves to the Russian Government, entreating them to use their influence in order to pacify the disaffected Turkomans; that General Röhrberg had, in compliance with this request, been instructed to cause the latter to be informed that on no account would the Russian authorities receive them under their protection or control; and that these instructions, having been carried out, had had the effect of undeceiving and pacifying the Turkomans in the Dereghez district.

But M. de Giers proceeded to say that, whilst the Russian Government were entirely opposed to allowing the Atek territory to be placed under the direct and sole control of Persia, they were much inclined to endeavour to come to some understanding with the Persian Government as to the government of that region. He was not prepared to say as yet what might be the nature of such an arrangement; for, indeed, it had not yet been sufficiently considered, and he was also desirous to await the arrival of M. Zinoviev, the Russian Minister at Tehran, who is now on his way to this city, but will not probably arrive here for three weeks or more. But in making any such proposal to the Persian Government they would be strongly recommended not to pretend to or to assert any rights over the district of Merv, nor to send an expedition for the purpose of establishing their supposed rights to that country. Such a move, his Excellency said, would be the cause of much confusion and disorder, and might force the Russian authorities to adopt more vigorous measures.

In the course of conversation, M. de Giers said that his Government would have no particular objection to Candahar being occupied by Her Majesty's forces, or even British authorities exercising controlling influence at Herat; but they had a right to expect that Russian influence should be allowed to prevail in the countries to the north of Afghanistan and Persia, with which they were encouraging the establishment of commercial relations, in the hope of imbuing their inhabitants with ideas of civilization.

M. de Giers added that, with a view to preventing disturbances on the borders of Afghanistan, he considered it to be of great importance that the boundary of that country from Khojah Saleh to the Persian frontier in the neighbourhood of Sarakhs should be formally and definitely laid down, and that he had instructed Prince Lobanow to endeavour to induce Her Majesty's Government to agree to the adoption of measures for this purpose.

M. de Giers spoke with great apparent frankness on the above subjects; but I gathered that the proposed occupation of the Atek territory by Persia had been carefully considered by the Emperor, the Minister of War, and himself, and had encountered the decided opposition of all of them.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 30.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 4.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, April 29, 1882.

AT the close of my conversation yesterday with M. de Giers on the Central Asian question, I asked his Excellency whether it was true that General Tchernaiëff was to be appointed Governor-General of Turkestan. M. de Giers replied that he believed that he would not receive that appointment; that it had certainly been thought of at one time, but that the idea had been abandoned, and he believed

that the administration of that country would be left in the hands of General Röhrberg.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 31.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 15.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, May 9, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Moscow Gazette" of the 25th April (7th May) publishes the following letter from Askabad, dated the 22nd March (3rd April), which has been translated by Mr. Michell:—

"Generally speaking, life in the Transcaspian is not so pleasant as at first appeared; Askabad itself is developing, and has a brilliant future as regards trade, the influx of goods from Merv on the one side and from Persia on the other being very considerable. Caravans with goods pass through incessantly.

"The main articles of Eastern trade are bright-coloured carpets and manufactures of silk.

"These goods are sent to Tiflis, Nijni-Novgorod, and Moscow, and, in return, manufactures of cotton and leather are sent to the Transcaspian, and find a market not only in Askabad, but also in Merv.

"A plentiful supply of provisions is obtained at moderate prices from Persia.

"The soil in the Akhal Téké Oasis, especially at and about Askabad, is very fertile. The men of the 74th infantry regiment of Stavropol raised their own vegetables, of which they had a supply during the whole winter; they also raised water-melons and pumpkins. During their stay at Askabad the soldiers of the same regiment erected eighty huts out of bricks of their own manufacture, and these structures give Askabad the appearance of a town.

"The great inconvenience, however, as regards Askabad, is the difficulty of communication between that place and Kizil-Arvat, the terminus of the railway.

"There is no regular postal communication, and the journey is both expensive and tedious, the usual time employed in traversing the 206 versts being eight days, and sometimes as much as two weeks are wasted, owing to insufficiency of means of transport.

"Provisions for the troops stationed at Askabad are transported from the commissariat depôts along the line in waggons drawn either by horses or camels. The excessive heat (55°) which prevails in summer renders the ordinary large transport waggons impracticable."

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 32.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 22.)

My Lord,

Tehran, April 15, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translated extract of a letter from Meshed, stating that 140 Russian horsemen, with four guns, had proceeded from Askabad to the Tejend, to erect a fort at that place. According to the information reported therein, the Tékes of Merv, hearing of this, expelled the two Russian merchants who lately went there, and then, having joined the Tékes residing on the Tejend, drove the Russians out of that district, whence the latter fled to the Ateks of Dereghez and Kelat.

I questioned the Minister for Foreign Affairs as to the accuracy of this statement. His Excellency replied that, having heard that a detachment of Russian cavalry had gone towards the Tejend, he had made inquiry on the subject of the Russian Minister. M. Zinoviev had informed him that about fifty Cossacks had been sent from Gavars to a place named Karibend, and that the object in sending this detachment in the direction of the Tejend district was to secure the safety of the two Russian merchants who had lately visited Merv. The latter had not been well treated at that place, and fearing that they would be detained or molested if they remained longer, they had sold

off their goods at a loss, and were endeavouring to get back by way of the Tejend. The Cossacks had no guns with them, and when they reached Karibend orders were given for their immediate return, and they came back at once, bringing with them the two merchants.

I have made inquiry of one of the Dereghez Chiefs now in Tehran, and it appears from his statement that Karibend is situated on the Tejend River, and that it is the most important place in that Settlement.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 32.

(Translation.)

April 1, 1882.

I HAVE just now learnt from an authentic source that 140 horsemen, with four guns, had left Askabad with the intention of building a fort at Tejend, but on their arrival there the Turkomans, finding out their intentions, turned them out and pursued them as far as the Atek of Dereghez and Kelat. They had also treated the two Russian traders who recently went openly to Merv in the same manner.

No. 33.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 29.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, May 19, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an extract, translated by Mr. Michell from the "Golos" of to-day, relating to the Russian trade with Merv and Bokhara, and the friendly relations existing between the Mervites and the Russian authorities at Askabad.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 33.

Extract from the "Golos" of May 7 (19), 1882.

(Translation.)

THE "Golos" of the 7th (19th) May, 1882, contains the following extract from a Baku newspaper:—

"The 'Baku Intelligencer' states that the goods sent to Merv by the Russian merchant, Kouchine, were disposed of partly for cash and partly on credit. The Mervites are anxious to receive a further supply of goods, and accordingly a second caravan, which was destined for Bokhara, will stop at Merv. It appears that the road from Askabad to Bokhara via Merv is the shortest and most convenient of all the routes leading from Russian territory into Bokhara. The goods most in demand at Merv are cotton prints, small iron and copper ware, and kerosene. Raw cotton is the principal article of export from Bokhara. The Mervites guarantee the safe passage of Russian caravans through their territory to Bokhara, and their amicable relations towards the Russians are supported by facts; recently, at the request of the authorities of Askabad, they promptly returned to the owners all the goods, camels, &c., which they had seized from a caravan which was proceeding from Khiva to Askabad last year."

St. Petersburg, May 7 (19), 1882.

No. 34.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 29.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, May 19, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a telegram from Askabad, dated the 23rd April (5th May), and inserted in the "Moscow Gazette" of the 29th April (10th May), states that Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff, during his sojourn in the

Akhal Téké Oasis, became convinced of the necessity of extending the railway to Geuk-Tépé, and of constructing a road for wheeled vehicles from that point into Persia. The following are the remarks made by the "Moscow Gazette" on the subject, as translated by Mr. Michell:—

"The Akhal Téké Oasis is undoubtedly the most important Russian possession in Central Asia. It is there, more than at any other point, that Russia should establish a firm footing and enjoy freedom of action. This object can be attained the sooner by developing the resources of that country, which is destined in the future to become the chief base of Russian supremacy in Central Asia, and by establishing good means of communication. A railroad that shall penetrate through the oasis from the sea to its eastern frontier would not only be a military road, although important in that respect. The railroad was originally undertaken with military objects, but enough employment of another kind will be found for it, as already rich naphtha deposits have been discovered. Certainly at the present time there is not much work for the railway, but this is mainly attributable to the fact of its non-completion and its inaccessibility, owing to the absence of routes leading to it by which goods could be transported. From Askabad, for example, one of the most important points in the oasis, the distance to Kizil-Arvat is only about 206 versts; yet owing to the inadequate means of transport, eight, and as many as fourteen days are lost in traversing the distance. The want of proper means of communication with Persia, with which country Russia carries on a considerable trade, is severely felt, whereas much of this trade might easily and conveniently be transported by means of the Transcaspian Railway, on which no inconsiderable amount of money has been expended. Not to complete the railway would be equal to losing the money expended on it, and voluntarily to abandon the influence obtained by peaceful means over Merv, towards which, as well as towards Persia, England wistfully extends her glance."

According to a letter from the correspondent of the "Moscow Gazette" at Askabad, dated the 14th (26th) March, the past winter, which set in suddenly towards the end of November, was severely felt throughout the oasis. At Askabad the thermometer fell to 12° and at Bami to 17° Réaumur below zero. The troops were speedily housed in warm quarters, but the natives suffered considerably from the cold, many of them having lost all they possessed at the storming of Geuk-Tépé. In December the cold reached its maximum, and news came to Askabad of the suspension of the traffic on the railway, the whole line being buried under 2 feet of snow; telegraph communication was stopped, and the natives drove their camels into the desert, thereby causing an interruption to the transport of provisions. On the 10th December news came that Michailoff Bay was frozen, and thus Askabad was cut off from Krasnovodsk and the rest of the world. Thanks, however, to the energy of the officials, difficulties were soon adjusted, communication re-established, and 3,000 natives supplied with warm clothing; a grant of 3,000 roubles was, moreover, made to them by the Caucasian section of the "Red Cross."

The chief evil of the freezing of Michailoff Bay was the stoppage of the naphtha supply for fuelling the locomotives and water-filters, whereby the inhabitants of Michailofsk were compelled to consume snow water. On the 25th December a canal was dug in the ice, and barges with naphtha were able to reach the shore.

The correspondent writes that with the commencement of spring great activity prevails throughout the region, roads are being repaired, large numbers of trees are being planted, houses built, and regular telegraphic communication established. Moreover, surveys are being made of the new region, especially of the desert, where numbers of Téké Turkomans, now Russian subjects, are encamped, and friendly relations are being renewed with Merv. In order to promote the cultivation of cotton and silk in the region the Turkomans have been supplied with American seed cotton, and with seeds of the mulberry tree.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 35.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 29.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, May 23, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that General Constantin Kaufmann, Governor-General of Turkestan, died at Tashkend on the 16th instant.

It is again said that General Tcherniaiew is likely to be appointed General Kaufmann's successor at that post, as he is considered by His Majesty the Emperor to be the most capable of all his officers of satisfactorily performing the arduous and responsible duties of that position.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 36.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 12.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, June 7, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the official Gazette of the 26th May (7th June), 1882, notifies the appointment of Lieutenant-General Tcherniaieff to the post of Governor-General of Turkestan, and Commander of the troops of the Turkestan region.

The appointment of Lieutenant-General Kolpakovsky, now Acting Governor of the Turkestan region, to the post of Governor-General of the Steppes and Commander of the newly-created military circuit of Omsk, is gazetted on the same day.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 37.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 16.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, June 12, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of an article in the "Invalide Russe" of the 28th May (9th June), 1882, giving the substance of an Order issued by Prince Dondoukoff-Korsakoff relative to the state of the Transcaspien regions and of the town of Askabad.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 37.

Extract from the "Invalide Russe" of May 28 (June 9), 1882.

(Translation.)

IN an Order of the day, issued to the troops of the military circuit of the Caucasus by the Commander-General Prince Dondoukoff, it is stated that, during his visit to the Transcaspien region, which he inspected from Krasnovodsk to Askabad, he became convinced of the peaceful condition of the country and of the good relations existing between the inhabitants and the troops; likewise of the satisfactory development of the natural resources of the region, which served as a proof of the confidence felt by the inhabitants in the administration. At Askabad, which a year ago was only an insignificant and thinly-populated place, General Prince Dondoukoff framed the nucleus of a large town with a growing trade, well-constructed barracks for the garrison, and a strong fortification, erected by the labours of those glorious Russian troops, the conquerors of the Téké Oasis. The Order concludes with an announcement that, with a view to commemorate the great services of the Stavropol regiment, three battalions of which have been stationed at Askabad, and are now returning to the Caucasus, the General has ordered that one of the bastions of the fortress of Askabad shall be named after that regiment.

St. Petersburg, June 9, 1882.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received June 26.)

My Lord,

Tehran, May 1, 1882.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 26th February last, in which I reported that the Russian authorities at Chekishlar had levied a tax of 6 roubles from each family of the Oghurjele tribe residing at Hussein Kuli, who are claimed by the Persian Government as subjects of the Shah, I have now the honour to state that the Minister for Foreign Affairs has endeavoured, by verbal representations addressed to the Russian Minister here, to obtain repayment of the amount thus exacted, and that he has been informed that, had the Persian Government stated their objections sooner, orders could have been given to refrain for the present from levying this tax, but that as it had now been exacted, the amount could not be refunded.

The question of Persia's right to Hussein Kuli at the mouth of the Atrek, and to the Oghurjele tribe residing there, will be investigated, and finally decided by the Frontier Commissioners, who are shortly to visit the Atrek and the new Akhal Khorassan boundary. The Nessar-ed-Dowlet has been named by the Shah for this duty, and he is prepared to leave Tehran as soon as the nomination of the Russian Commissioner has been notified to the Persian Government. Mirza Saeed Khan inquired last week of M. Zinoviev when the Russian Commissioner would be ready to proceed with the Akhal frontier demarcation, and he was informed in reply that the Russian Government had not yet come to any decision on that point.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 39.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received June 26.)

My Lord,

Tehran, May 15, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a further Report by Mr. Stephen, in which he has embodied the geographical information which he was able to collect during his recent visit to Askabad with respect to the Transcaspian province.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 39.

Geographical Description of the Transcaspian Province.

THE Transcaspian province, as now constituted, may be said to consist of two portions: the one extending from Alexandrofsk southward and south-eastward to Chekishlar and Kizil-Arvat; the other stretching along the northern side of the Kopet Dagh as far as Baba-Durmaz. Owing to the exceptional severity of the weather and a heavy fall of snow the roads across the Kopet Dagh had become quite impassable, so that, much to my regret, I was prevented returning to the Caspian by the Atrek route. I am, therefore, unable to give any description of the south-westerly portion of the province. My route lay as follows:—Krasnovodsk to Michaelofsk by sea; thence by rail between the Great and Little Balkans along the northern side of the Kuren Dagh to Kizil-Arvat, and thence through the Akhal Oasis by road to Askabad. It is consequently to these districts that the following remarks principally relate.

There are three mountain ranges in the Transcaspian province, viz., the Balkan, the Kuren, and the Kopet ranges. In addition to these a ramification which may be held to be a branch of the Great Balkan runs along the northern shore of Balkan Bay to Krasnovodsk. Of these ranges, the Great Balkan perhaps presents the most imposing appearance. The higher portion of its south-western face is precipitous, its crest being estimated at about 5,300 feet above the sea level. I was informed that there were some fairly large juniper trees growing near the summit, but, as far as I could judge by my field-glass, the north-western, western, and south-western faces of these mountains were almost bare of vegetation. On the other hand, plentiful supplies of firewood were evidently to be obtained from the bushes (principally saksaul) which were growing in the sandy soil at their foot. I was unable to

gather any reliable information with regard to the formation of these mountains. A general impression appeared to prevail that they were rich in minerals, but, notwithstanding many inquiries, I failed to elicit any positive evidence in support of this theory. To the south of the Great Balkans, about 25 to 30 miles distant from its southernmost spur, lies the Little Balkan, a low bleak ridge, the highest point of which does not exceed 2,200 feet. Naptha has been discovered on the northern side of this mountain, and I was shown excellent specimens of mineral wax, large supplies of which I was told had been found in the neighbourhood. A branch line from Bala Hishem to the naphtha springs in the Little Balkan is now in course of construction. From the south-eastern point of the Little Balkan runs a low ridge of mountains called the Kuren Dagh, of which the average height does not exceed 1,500 to 2,000 feet. It extends in a south-easterly direction as far as Kizil-Arvat, where it joins the Kopet Dagh. This latter range presents a bolder appearance than the Kuren Dagh. It likewise stretches in a south-easterly direction, but its elevation is greater, its height increasing as it extends southward. One summit overlooking the Germat Valley has been estimated to be between 7,000 and 8,000 feet above the sea, but the average height of the range may, I think, be calculated at not more than 3,000 to 4,000 feet. Although the portions of this chain of mountains which stretches from the neighbourhood of the Great Balkan to within a short distance of Lutfabad have received separate names, there cannot be said to be any break between them. I would especially desire to draw attention to this fact, as being an important argument against the alleged existence of a southern branch of the Oxus, to which subject I will venture presently to allude. The distance between the northernmost point of the Little Balkan and the most southerly point of the Kopet Dagh is about 270 miles. The general appearance of the northern face of this chain may be described as follows: As seen from the Transcaspien railway, the Little Balkan and Kuren Dagh are bare of trees with few protuberances, the declivities being abrupt. With regard to the Kopet Dagh, however, it is otherwise. Soon after leaving Kizil-Arvat, clumps of trees are observable half-way up the mountains. At the foot of the range there are undulating hills surmounted by deep grooves and an irregular ridge. As the traveller proceeds the vegetation increases, the valleys become more frequent, and the scene presents a more picturesque appearance. From the information I received I am inclined to think that the declivities on this sides of the range are steeper than on the other. As far as my little scientific knowledge enabled me to judge, I should say the declivities of the northern slope of the Kopet Dagh were from 30 to 35 degrees.

Having thus briefly sketched the general character of the mountain system of the country, I will now describe the nature of its soil. The tract from Krasnovodsk to Kizil-Arvat is a barren, sandy plain, strongly impregnated in parts with salt. On the small islands at the mouth of the Michaelofski Gulf, and along the seaboard from Balkan Bay southward, the surface is undulating, owing to the sand-hills formed by the action of the periodical east winds. At Michaelofski these hills attain a considerable height. An engineer, a passenger on board the steamer from Baku to Krasnovodsk, informed me that it had been estimated that during the last few years there had been a rise of 12 feet along the coast. From the Great Balkan to Kizil-Arvat the ground is perfectly level, save at one point between Acha Kaima and Kezandjik, where there is a slight ridge with a gradient of 1 in 100. From Kizil-Arvat to Gavars stretches a flat oasis, known as Akhal. It is hardly necessary for me to say that this oasis has been formed by the alluvial deposits of the streams issuing from the northern slope of the Kopet Dagh. It is irregular in breadth, being narrow at its commencement, but widening as it extends southward. Its whole area may be estimated to be about 3,000 square miles. Soon after leaving Kizil-Arvat the soil becomes clayey, with occasional white patches of salt. As Bami is approached the signs of fertility increase. Corn and melon fields are occasionally observable on the side of the road; the white patches cease, and the ground becomes firmer. At Archman there are a few willow trees, and at Durrum, 29½ versts further on, there are several gardens of vines and mulberries. By far the richer portion of the oasis, however, lies between Geuk-Tépé and Askabad. This district is well adapted for cultivation, the streams being larger and the soil evidently more fruitful. Here there is good pasturage and a rich soil. Around Askabad itself there are several gardens containing peach, apricot, and mulberry trees, and, from the appearance of the ground, I should imagine that considerable quantities of corn could be grown in the neighbourhood. It would take too long to describe separately and in detail the vegetation and the cereals under cultivation in the different districts of Akhal. I will therefore sum up this portion of my Report as follows:—

Krasnovodsk to Kizil-Arvat.—Sand, camel thorn, and, occasionally, saksau shrubs.

Kizil-Arvat to Geuk-Tépé.—Trees: willow. Weeds: camel thorn, &c. Cereals: wheat, barley, maize, yundja, millet. Fruits: melons.

Geuk-Tépé to Gavars.—Trees: willow, nut, mulberry, apricot, peach. Weeds: camel thorn, &c. Cereals: wheat, barley, maize, millet, yundja, rice, cotton. Fruits: melons, grapes, mulberries, apricots, peaches.

The grass, of which there is said to be a plentiful supply between Geuk-Tépé and Askabad during the early summer, is succulent and fattening; and so variegated and brilliant are the wild flowers, that in the spring the surface of the plain has the appearance, I was told, of a gorgeous carpet. Akhal is watered by seventeen perennial rivers or streams. Their breadth varies from 2 to 18 feet, the stream flowing past Baghir Kale containing the largest volume of water. In addition to these there are one or two "kariz," or underground water-courses, besides several other streams, which, having a temporary existence during a short period of the year, have been inserted in some maps. Judging from the number of dry water-courses intersecting the road, the spring flood must be very heavy.

There are two roads from Krasnovodsk to Khiva, the one striking east and passing the wells of Siuli Gesli Ata and Tchagil; the other skirts the shore of Balkan Bay to within a short distance of the Great Balkan, and thence running inland on the northern side of the range passes the wells of Kara Tchargli, Kosh Agerli, Adja Kui, Burudja, Halmadja Anidja, Yapkedgé, and Chagil. The latter of these is the more frequented. From Burudja a branch road runs round the southern face of the Great Balkan to Molla Kari and Michaelofski, and from the neighbourhood of the Anidja Well another road runs to Kizil-Arvat. Besides the above, there is a road from Geuk-Tépé to Khiva, which, in olden times, was the commercial route between the latter city and the north of Khorassan; as also a road running to the west of the Little Balkan in a southern direction to Chekishlar and the Atrek. I have already described the route from Krasnovodsk to Askabad. As to the passes over the Kopet Dagh there are in all four. Speaking from native and Russian authority, none of them are very difficult, that from Bendesen to Bami being perhaps the easiest. The other three pierce the range at Kizil-Arvat, Geuk-Tépé, and Askabad. I must not forget to mention that I picked up at Kizil-Arvat several pieces of calcareous rock, composed entirely of marine shells, and found in large quantities in the Kopet Dagh, the discovery of which tends conclusively to prove the submarine origin of the Central Asian desert.

I would now venture to make a few remarks with reference to the ancient course of the Oxus, respecting which I was able to pick up several interesting details. So many high geographical authorities have taken part in the controversy on this subject that I broach the question with the greatest diffidence. In doing so, I trust it will not be imagined that I would be bold enough to start a new theory, in contradiction to the opinions held by geographers who have made a study of this question. My only desire is to set forth, for the appreciation of those most capable to judge, certain facts which have come under my notice.

The information which has, from time to time, been furnished regarding the Oxus is so varied and conflicting that it would take too long, and be out of place here were I to attempt to give a summary of it. I may, however, briefly state that, according to Russian and English authorities, the Oxus formerly discharged itself into the Caspian by several different channels. That this river may originally have found its way into the Caspian Sea would appear to be more than probable, but it is open to much doubt at what exact period and under what circumstances its divergence into the Sea of Aral took place. I would, moreover, beg to point out that the statements of many of the travellers whose authority has been quoted have been derived rather from what they have heard than from personal observation. Dr. Sievers, however, who accompanied General Stebnitski in his expedition to the old bed in 1872, has given a minute account of the appearance of the channel lying east of the Great Balkan; while General Gluhofski has furnished an equally detailed account of that portion which lies between Kunya Urgendj and the salt lakes of Sari Kamish. Both of these gentlemen bear testimony to the existence of a channel varying in places from $\frac{1}{2}$ a verst to a verst in breadth and from 25 to 120 feet in depth, but neither of them succeeded in discovering any signs of fresh-water shells or other such traces of the previous existence of a large river. Perhaps the most important survey yet made of the bed was that undertaken in 1876-77 by General Petroosevitch, who took levellings between Urgendj and Sari Kamish, showing a fall in the direction of the

latter of about $2\frac{1}{2}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches per mile. That the Sari Kamish lakes are lower than the present course of the Oxus there cannot be the slightest doubt, seeing that in 1849, and again in 1878, owing to the spring floods, the river forced its western bank and reached these lakes. The points to which I wish to draw especial attention with reference to this subject are (1) that it has been found that the surface of the waters of the Sari Kamish is 49 feet below the Caspian; and (2) that I was informed by an engineer who had taken part in the construction of the Transcaspian railway that, according to levellings he had taken, the bed of the Oxus at the point where it passes Aïdin (south-east of the Great Balkan) is more than 14 feet below that sea. In proof of the accuracy of the latter statement, I would beg to refer to the paper recently read at the Geographical Society at St. Petersburg by M. Lessar, a Russian possessed of considerable scientific knowledge, with whom I had several opportunities of discussing the subject. Accepting these facts as correct, the theory advanced by the Russians that the divergence of the course of the Oxus into the Aral has not been in consequence of any upheaval of the desert, but of certain other natural causes, is seriously affected; and the hopes so confidently expressed by many of them of turning the stream back into its old bed, and of thus opening up a water communication between the Caspian and India, must entirely fall to the ground. Even supposing that the levellings taken near Aïdin are incorrect—an improbable hypothesis, seeing that the engineers could hardly have constructed the railway, which, as is well known, twice crosses the bed, without accurately estimating the levels—centuries would have to pass before such flat ground as that surrounding Sari Kamish could be flooded sufficiently to cause its waters to flow into the Caspian. An interesting pamphlet, recently published by a Russian named Dochtin, estimates the volume of water flowing past Nukus, the point where the delta of the Amou Daria commences, as follows:—

1874.	Million cubic Fathoms.	1875.	Million cubic Fathoms.	1876.	Million cubic Fathoms.
..	..	January	253	January	314
..	..	February	267	February	417
..	..	March	208	March	319
..	..	April	252	April	219
..	..	May	343	May	362
..	..	June	463	June	621
July	892	July	698	July	945
August	761	August	771	August	886
September	431	September	479	September	534
October	316	October	396	October	352
November	256	November	269	November	305
December	240	December	259	December	254
Total	2,896	.. ..	4,658	.. ..	5,528

Supposing, therefore, that by engineering skill the course of the Amou Daria could be diverted into the Sari Kamish, the maximum yearly volume of water which, according to this estimate, could possibly reach these lakes, would be 5,528 millions of cubic fathoms. But considering that it has been calculated that the Khivan Oasis absorbs in the month of July alone 300 millions of cubic fathoms of water drawn by irrigating canals from the Amou Daria previous to its reaching Nukus, some idea may be formed of the filtration and evaporation that would take place as the waters rose and extended over the almost flat districts surrounding the present basin.

As no levels have been taken of these districts, it is impossible to say what area the lake would cover before the surface rose the required number of feet. But judging from the descriptions given of that portion of the desert, the lake would have to assume a gigantic size before its waters could discharge into the Uzboi.

Taking all these facts into consideration, it is not, I think, unreasonable to presume that it would only be after the lapse of many decades, if not of centuries, that the desired result could be obtained. It is true that it has been proposed to overcome this difficulty by the construction of an artificial canal joining the Kunia Daria with the Uzboi, but the expense involved in such an undertaking would be so enormous, that it may be held to be unfeasible. Even admitting the possibility of the success of such a scheme, the fact of the Uzboi near Aïdin being more than 14 feet below the level of the Caspian presents further difficulties of so gigantic a nature

that, practically speaking, it would not be too much to say that the conveyance of the waters of the Amou Daria by buckets to the Caspian would be almost as feasible as the artificial construction of a water-course across the Central Asian desert.

In making the above remarks, I have relied on the data given me in Akhal—data which I have every reason to believe is accurate. I regret to say that I was unable to obtain any information as to the ultimate conclusions arrived at by the expedition, which had set out to explore the old bed of the Oxus shortly before my arrival.

On my return journey I had an opportunity of noticing the bed between Molla Kari and Balkan Bay. Here it presented an appearance rather of a dried-up arm of the sea than that of an estuary of a river. Moreover, from the accounts given me, the breadth of the bed south of the Great Balkan is in places so considerable, and the marine traces along that portion so evident, that it would be almost more reasonable to suppose that, if the Oxus ever flowed into the Caspian, it discharged its waters at some point much further east than the present littoral of that sea.

There is another point in connection with this question, with reference to which I would beg to say a few words.

It has been maintained by several writers that, in addition to the main stream disemboguing into Balkan Bay, a southern branch of the Oxus traversed the Kuren Dagh somewhere in the neighbourhood of Kizil-Arvat, and flowed past the ancient city of Mestorian. In the 5th chapter of the 1st volume of his travels, Conolly somewhat minutely describes a dried-up bed south-west of the Kuren Dagh, which he took to be the ancient course of the Oxus. "The soil," he says, "differed from that above, having gravel and pebbles, and against the right bank many large stones were collected, and the earth near it was coned up, as if by the strong force of water."

It is not unlikely that a dry watercourse similar to that described by Conolly may exist, but I would venture to submit that, situated as it is, it could only have been formed by some mountain torrent, seeing that it is quite impossible that it could be the bed of any branch of the Oxus. The Kuren and Kopet Mountains form one continuous range, there being no such break between them as that erroneously marked in the Russian and English maps. If a southern arm of the Oxus ever in reality existed, it must either have branched off to the north of the Little Balkan, or, like the Murghab and Tejend Rivers, have discharged its waters into the desert.

I was unable to gather any accurate information with regard to the rainfall in the Transcaspian province. As far as I could learn, no registration of meteorological facts has been made since the occupation of Akhal by the Russians. From the accounts given me by the Turkomans, I should say the rainfall was at times heavy, far exceeding that in the Khivan Oasis. The ground in Akhal being clayey the rain is not readily absorbed, often remaining in pools on the surface. As regards the temperature, I was told that the heat in summer during the day was overpowering, but that the nights were cool. A Polish physician, in charge of the military hospital at Michaelofsk, assured me that last August the thermometer had registered 36° Réaumur in his tent. The winter climate varies. In some years there is hardly any frost at all; in others the cold is so severe that Krasnovodsk Bay is occasionally frozen over. The winter of 1880-81 was an exceptionally mild one, the troops employed in the siege of Geuk-Tépé hardly requiring overcoats. On the other hand, this winter has been almost Siberian. The Michaelofski Gulf was frozen, the snow on the plain lay 2 to 3 feet deep in places, and the roads across the mountains were for weeks impassable. Although my thermometer never registered more than 17° Fahrenheit, the cold at the time of my return was so piercing, owing to the high wind blowing from the desert, and the drifts of snow so deep, that many must have perished.

Various accounts have been written of the habits and customs of the Turkomans generally, but no description has, I believe, been yet given of the camp-life of the Akhal-Téké division. I may, therefore, perhaps be permitted to give a brief sketch of the manner I was received, and of what I saw in one of their Settlements.

Although it was late in the evening when I drew near to the aoul of Kelet, the surrounding scene was perfectly distinct, owing to the light of a nearly full moon. The air was quite still, and an almost appalling silence prevailed. Stretching away to the east, like some gigantic ocean, lay the desert bathed in silvery rays, while to the west rose the bleak and grimly-shadowed heights of the Kopet Dagh. As I approached I could at first see nothing that indicated the presence of an encampment. At last I caught sight of a few willow trees, and then, as if by enchantment, there seemed to spring from the ground a mass of earth. As I drew closer this mass gradually assumed a definite shape. I could now see the bastions at its flanks, that its walls were of

clay, and a few minutes afterwards I found myself at the gateway of one of the mud strongholds, of which there are so many lying scattered over the oasis. Still no sign of life. At last, after the horses had been tethered, and as we were thinking of going in search of a few sticks for a fire, the silence was broken by the bark of a dog. A few minutes afterwards I discerned some small faces peeping from the gateway, then I heard some children's voices, and then issuing from the gateway there came a tall, imposing figure, followed by five or six children. This proved to be one of the Elders of the camp. He at once asked me to come to his tent, sending on one of the urchins to announce my arrival, or rather, as it turned out, to awaken the inmates. As I entered the kalé other Turkomans came to meet me with invitations to their tents, and the face of the Elder who had first spoken to me wore a comical expression of offended dignity as, embarrassed by so many pressing appeals, I was on the point of following a grey-bearded Chief who was more importunate than the others. Within the kalé there were some twenty tents pitched at irregular intervals to the right and left of a broad pathway. In one corner a camel was feeding, in another there were a few sheep, while midway between the lines stood a horse enveloped in felt clothing. The scene was so peaceful that one could hardly realize that, with homes such as this, the Turkomans could be the savage marauders that history has proved them to be. Still homelier was the scene within the Elder's tent as, later on, men and children gathered round the wood fire that was soon burning brightly in the centre. To my right was the Elder's wife, an attractive-looking woman of some 20 summers, with a dark complexion, irregular features, and soft, merry eyes. Her manners were not in the least constrained, as she busied herself in preparing a greasy pilaf, which she mixed with her hands in a large wooden bowl. Nor was she in the least bashful. Occasionally glancing inquisitively at the preparations I was making for an evening meal, she kept up a lively conversation with her other visitors. When the pilaf had been properly mixed she rose, and addressing to me a few simple words of excuse, took up the bowl and left the tent, with a view, I was informed, of offering some supper to a sick neighbour. Most pressing were the invitations to stay the night, and many the delicacies I was offered by the good housewife as an inducement to stop. I was to have a carpet and felt rugs to sleep upon, embroidered saddle-bags for my pillow, and butter-milk and freshly-made bread for my breakfast in the morning. Indeed, so convivial and homely were the surroundings, and the Elder and his wife appeared so disappointed at my leaving, that, had I not been anxious to push onwards as quickly as possible, I would willingly have remained with them a few days.

It must not, however, be presumed that in describing the above scene I would wish to imply that the Akhal Tékés are less savage and predatory than the Mervis, Salors, Goklans, &c. On the contrary, the information I collected tended rather to show that they were, if possible, greater robbers and cut-throats than the latter. They all spoke with savage glee of the raids they had taken part in, and boasted of the number of Persians they had killed. It was amusing, too, to see how their attention at once became absorbed when shown a knife or some other arm. Even Takhma Sirdar, who since his visit to Europe affects to be partially civilized, spoke with unconcealed enthusiasm of his past exploits, and a Turkoman, notorious for the signal ferocity of his forays, was pointed out to me as an exceptionally fine fellow. Reflections have been cast by some authors on the bravery of the Turkomans, it being held that they are adverse to fighting in the open, and that the success of their alamans was owing to the cowardice of their foes rather than to their own prowess. After the events of Geuk-Tépé it would be impossible that such opinions could any longer be entertained. Judging from the accounts given me of this siege, the defence of the Turkomans was heroic in the extreme, the courage of the women equalling that of the men. The Tékés are fine, muscular men of medium height, with yellowish complexions, high cheek-bones, and irregular features. On the other hand, strange to say, some of their faces have a decidedly Jewish cast. Their dress consists of a loose garment reaching below the knee and bound tight round the waist by a long woollen or cloth sash, of a huge yellow or black sheep-skin cap, shoes, and drawers. The women do not conceal their faces. When young, they have bright, merry features, good figures, and soft eyes. The old women are hideous. They all wear long shifts or chemises made mostly of cotton, the maidens wearing round embroidered caps and plaiting their hair.

As regards the origin of the Akhal Tékés, I could learn nothing positive. According to Takhma Sirdar, they originally lived on the banks of the Amou Daria between Khiva and Bokhara. They then, it would appear, migrated across the desert to the neighbourhood of the Balkans, but finding the soil there completely barren, and

that there was almost an absolute dearth of water, they returned to their former homes. Soon afterwards (*i.e.*, about 130 years ago), hearing that there was a fertile tract of land at the foot of the Kopet Dagh, they again set out, and eventually reaching Geuk-Tépé pitched their camps there. The origin of the name Akhal is involved in even still more obscurity. Some of the Turkomans pretended that it was derived from a camp that previously existed between Kizil-Arvat and Durrun, while others asserted that it had been the name of the original Chief of the tribe. The Téké language closely resembles the Tartar dialects of the Caucasus, the pronunciation being somewhat harder.

I found the tents of the Turkomans as warm and comfortable as they have been represented to be. They have been so frequently described that any further account of them would be superfluous. It may be desirable, however, to say a few words with reference to their horses, of which I saw many fine specimens. The usual height of their horses is about $15\frac{1}{2}$ to 16 hands. The neck is long and slender, the head large, the chest narrow, the body somewhat clumsy, and the legs long. Nevertheless, their general appearance is noble and commanding, and they are full of spirit and endowed with considerable speed. A Turkoman told me that he thought nothing of riding his horse from Bami to Askabad (a distance of more than 150 versts) between sunrise and sunset, and numerous other anecdotes were related to me of the marvellous endurance of these horses. They are usually fed on barley, yundja (a kind of clover), and chopped straw. Their price varies. Since the Russian occupation a fine three-year-old will fetch 500 roubles. At Kezandjik I was shown a wild ass which had lately been captured in the desert. He was about as big as a small Shetland pony, with a thick woolly coat, and short ears, at least for a donkey.

The insects and reptiles in Akhal are prodigious, the tarantulas being particularly large, and the lizard sometimes measuring 2 to 3 feet in length. I saw quantities of birds, larks, grey crows, eagles, vultures, hawks, bustards, partridges, pin-tailed grouse, besides one or two flamingoes on the shore of the Caspian.

The Akhal Tékés are not at all fanatical. The women enjoy considerable liberty and influence, being frequently consulted in matters connected with the camp. Shortly previous to my arrival at Kizil-Arvat there had been a social convulsion in the aoul, owing to the women insisting on the recent appointment of an unpopular Chief Elder being revoked.

As is well known, the Turkomans are Sunnis. The Ishans or priests are few in number, and have but little influence over the people. At Annaù I was shown a Turkoman place of worship. It was a very primitive edifice, being nothing more than a mud hut containing a low-roofed room about 15 feet long; on one side of which there was a kind of alcove, where, I was told, the Ishans read passages from the Koran. The few religious books I met with were in Arabic, and had apparently come from Bokhara.

In conclusion, I would add that there are many points connected with the geography and history of Akhal on which I have refrained from touching in the present Report, the above being merely a summary of a more exhaustive paper I hope to have the honour of shortly submitting to the Geographical Society.

(Signed) A. CONDIE STEPHEN.

Tehran, May 12, 1882.

No. 40.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 10, 1882.

ONE of the daily papers here publishes a telegram from Moscow, dated the 6th instant, announcing that the "Moscow Gazette" states that an official will be sent by the Governor-General of Turkestan to Cabul, in order to negotiate with the Ameer for regulating commercial intercourse between Russia and Afghanistan.

I have to instruct your Excellency to call the attention of M. de Giers to this statement. You will inform his Excellency that Her Majesty's Government presume there is no foundation for it, as such a proceeding as is represented to be intended would be in contravention of the understanding existing between the Government of the Queen and the Government of the Emperor of Russia.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received July 17.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, July 13, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of an interesting article from the "Invalide Russe" of the 18th (30th) June last, which gives an account of a journey made by M. Lessar, one of the engineers employed by the Russian Government last autumn in making surveys of the country from Kizil-Arvat to Askabad and Sarakhs, with a view to the extension of the railway at least to Askabad, and perhaps to Sarakhs. It appears that M. Lessar was instructed to make the survey as far as the latter place, and that he actually went there.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWARD THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 41.

Extract from the "Invalide Russe" of June 18 (30), 1882.

(Translation.)

THE "Invalide Russe" of the 18th (30th) June last contains the following article which it reproduced from the proceedings of the Russian Geographical Society, descriptive of the route from Askabad to Sarakhs. The author of the article is M. Lessar, one of the Government engineers employed last autumn in making surveys of the country with a view to the extension of the Transcaspian railway to Askabad:—

"By the middle of the month of September 1881 the construction of the Transcaspian Military Railway from Mikhailofsky Bay to Kizil-Arvat was completed; although the immediate extension of this line was not contemplated, it was nevertheless decided to make surveys of the country as far as Askabad, and, so far as possible, beyond to Sarakhs. A portion of the country south-east of Askabad presented features of special interest on account of its being almost completely unknown.

"Surveying operations are best conducted in the Turkoman country during the months of September and October. The temperature is then cool and the sky generally clouded. The nights begin to be cold only early in November. The months of March and April and the beginning of May are less convenient for this work in consequence of the cold nights that are then prevalent. Notwithstanding this, surveying operations can only be conducted at that season in the arid portions of the Steppes. In the months of September and October rain falls but seldom, and the level of water in the rivulets and wells is at its lowest, while the pits containing rain-water become perfectly dry. The most abundant rainfalls occur early in spring, when the Steppes can be conveniently traversed in all directions.

"The military escort of the surveying party consisted of twenty-one Cossacks and one officer. Nine Russian workmen and two overseers were engaged for the heavy manual labour connected with levelling and surveying. The guide was a Merv Téké, taken from the Téké militia at Askabad. He formerly resided at Merv, and enjoyed the reputation of a brave man and celebrated leader of robber bands; at the same time, he was well acquainted with the roads. There were also two interpreters, one a Kurd, who had been as a prisoner in Merv, and who spoke the dialect well; and the other was a Russian Tartar soldier from Khosan, whose native language closely resembled that spoken by the Tékés.

"The surveying operations were commenced early in October.

"The road from Askabad to Annaù is level throughout, with the exception of a few sand-hillocks, which extend for about 300 fathoms and occur on the 10th verst. Annaù consists of an old dilapidated fort standing on a high mound and of some Téké encampments; the 'auls,' or encampments, are at a distance of 3 versts from the sands, while the fort, standing separately with its surrounding extensive ruins, which are spread along a small rivulet, is situated on a level plain nearer to the mountains. The fort is almost uninhabited, and there are only a few houses within the walls; nearly the whole population of the place lives in the encampment. Annaù is the only settlement along the whole line of country from Mikhailofsky Bay in which anything approaching a work of art is to be found. Here occur the ruins of a mosque, many of the towers of which have fallen; the walls and foundation are full of fissures, but the exterior façade of glazed tiles of a very fine pattern is in a good state of preservation,

The imposing size and good proportions of all the parts of the building raise it in architectural respects above all other structures met with in the Téké Steppes. As far as Giaurs the natives almost live exclusively in tents. Commencing from Bami and towards Askabad ruins of mud houses are met with, though in inconsiderable numbers; tombs constructed of sunburnt bricks are more frequently seen; they are all in the shape of ugly square structures crowned with a cupola, all smeared with clay. Near the mosque on the summit of a mound there is a deep well.

"For a distance of 20 versts between Annaù and Giaurs the road runs along a smooth, gentle declivity, and the remaining 10 versts of the road are intersected by sand-hillocks, which occur midway here, and which approach the hills. This is the only place along the whole line from Askabad to Sarakhs where, in constructing the railway, it would be necessary to make use of the shovel.

"There are three fortified places at Gavars: the upper fort, which is occupied by thirty Téké habitations, consisting of mud huts, occupying the middle of the fort; the middle fortification, which is held by forty Russian Djigits; and the lower fort, which is deserted and in a ruinous condition. During the progress of the survey between Askabad and Gavars caravans of Tékés were met with returning to Akhal from Merv and Tejend.

"The distance between Gavars and Baba-Durmaz is 30 versts, and the country appears to the eye to be quite flat; in reality, however, it consists of gentle declivities and ascents of the mountain-spurs. The water at Baba-Durmaz is conducted by a canal from a mountain stream. It is slightly salt, but men and horses drink it readily. It is also used for irrigating small fields in the neighbourhood of the old fortifications.

"The road from Baba-Durmaz traverses country similar in character to that above described, the only difference being that it is here covered with thick brushwood; the ground is honeycombed with holes of different animals, so that not only horses, but even men, fall through into these subterranean passages. Sand-hills begin to make their appearance on the 10th verst, as do also ruins of forts and watch-towers. Here, as also in Akhal, a watch-tower was a short time ago the necessary appurtenance of every field. The towers are either round or square, with a small aperture at the base sufficiently large to admit the passage of a human body. When robbers appeared on the scene the people working in the fields crawled into the tower, and closing the entrance to it with heavy stones, remained in these places of refuge until the marauders disappeared.

"Robberies are of less frequent occurrence now than formerly, and the towers are consequently not kept in repair. The atmosphere has a very destructive effect on buildings that are not constantly repaired; they rapidly crumble away, and in a short time present the appearance of a mound of greater or smaller dimensions.

"The whole distance from Baba-Durmaz to Luftabad is 22 versts; a small fortification, called Artyk, is encountered at a distance of 16 versts. From this point the country is cultivated, fields spreading on both sides of the road as far as Luftabad. There are no bridges over the 'aryks,' or irrigating canals. At two places there are primitive bridges, but their condition is such as to render them useless to travellers. Four fortified places, viz., Kale-mir, Shor-Kale, Luftabad, and Kuren, exist on the Durunger River, after its issue out of the Deregez. The two extreme fortifications are situated on mounds, and are seen from afar. The middle forts are surrounded by such luxuriant gardens that they only appear in sight at a distance of about 50 fathoms.

"At Kuren the inhabitants are Aleilis. Shar-Kala, Kaleh-mir, and Luftabad are inhabited by Persians, who lead a settled mode of life; there are no tents here, and all the people live in mud houses erected inside the forts, the latter being in appearance similar to all Téké structures of that kind: they have a quadrangular shape and are surrounded by a high wall; a bazaar extends along the sides of the only broad street in the place; from the bazaar narrow, dirty lanes, often shut off from each other by gates, run in different directions. The bazaar of Kuren is considered by the people of the Atek to be one of considerable importance.

"The country between Luftabad and Kaakhka—an extent of 30 versts—forms the most fertile and cultivated part of the Atek; here there is an abundance of water along the whole route. In point of density of population the country resembles that between Akhal and Geuk-Tépé. The road is frequently intersected by streams and 'aryks,' which are not bridged, and consequently impede the progress of the traveller. To the north of the road the whole country is overgrown with reeds and bushes, and vegetation becomes more and more luxuriant as the country recedes from the mountains; this continues to the Tejend River.

“Along the whole extent of road from Luftabad to Kaakhka settlements occur; at first these villages stretch in single line, developing further on into settlements consisting of two and three rows of habitations. In addition to these villages, there are many ruins of deserted forts. Some of these are built on the level plain, while others stand on detached hillocks, which frequently occur between Kodcha and Askabad, and beyond to Sarakhs. These mounds are evidently of artificial origin; they rise from a perfectly level plain, and the ground slopes in every direction from the mounds, in consequence, probably, of the land having been excavated all round for the purpose of raising these mounds, which are generally situated near streams and in places adapted for settlements. The mounds are sometimes of circular shape, and occasionally of elliptical or some fantastic form; they are generally 6, 7, and more fathoms high, and not infrequently are 50 fathoms in diameter; their slopes are generally abrupt.

“At Kaakhka, as in most of the settlements, there is a new fort which is inhabited, and also some empty ruins. After the assault and capture of a fort, the natives generally do not repair their old strongholds, but erect new ones. New Kaakhka stands on a natural elevation of ground; on the summit of this rises another mound with an inaccessible citadel; the place presents a ruinous appearance, though still imposing from afar. New Kaakhka is the most considerable village along the whole route, and contains as many as 600 habitations. The Elders exaggerate the number of these to 1,500. The inhabitants are Aleili Turkomans who fled from Khiva after their defeat by the Russian troops. The new fort was built five years ago, while the old fortification has been abandoned for about a century, when the Aleilis migrated to Khiva.

“At Kaakhka the report of the Merv Turkomans having gone on a plundering expedition was confirmed. At Luftabad information had been obtained to that effect. It was not, however, known whether raids would be directed against one single point, or whether several such would be simultaneously attacked; nor could it be ascertained in which direction the marauding expedition had started. In view of these rumours, the plan of surveying operations was somewhat changed. Up to Gavars the surveying party was not protected by any escort; between Gavars and Kaakhka five Cossacks were told off to protect the members of the expedition; the remaining Cossacks proceeded with the baggage from one village to another by the shortest road, and were joined at the end of the day by the surveyors. On reaching Kaakhka it was decided, in view of the possibility of encountering the marauders, to move forward in one body.

“From Kaakhka the advance was through a country completely unknown, and of which there was no map in existence. At first the road crossed an inconsiderable spur of the mountains by easy ascents and descents. After bending round this spur, three mounds appear in view, with a ruined fort standing between them; this fort, called Kara-Kala, belongs to one of the Merv Khans of that name. On the map of the 20 versts to 1 inch scale this fort is placed on the road to Sarakhs, whereas, in reality, it is situated several versts to the northward. The map of the country beyond may generally be said to be founded on hearsay, and therefore not very correct; this applies specially to the line of country from Kaakhka to Sarakhs, which runs, according to the map, almost from west to east, whereas its true bearings are 55° south-east.

“At 19 versts from Kaakhka is the village of Hodjamed; the inhabitants are Tékés, the fort is in ruins, and water is only procurable at about $\frac{1}{2}$ a verst from it. The population has settled nearer to the mountains, and are engaged in agricultural pursuits. Hodjamed lies in a depression, and is only visible from a short distance. At a distance of $1\frac{1}{2}$ versts from it are the ruins of Sermechit, situated on a high mound, and visible from afar.

“From Hodjamed to Dushak, over an extent of 20 versts, the road runs over a perfectly level open locality, from which Dushak is visible at a distance of 18 versts. The ground is burrowed in every direction by different animals. Proceeding southward from Kaakhka there are numerous porcupine holes. Of more frequent occurrence are white ant-hills; these are met with throughout the whole Caspian region—in this particular part they are especially plentiful. Along the line of Transcaspian Railway these white ants attack the timber work. As yet the sleepers have not been touched by them, probably owing to the vibration produced by the passing trains, which prevents them from adhering to the sleepers.

“At a distance of 2 versts from Hodjamed the road runs past a mound, and on the 12th verst a ruined fort is observed.

“Dushak and Chardeh consist of four fortified places constructed close to each other. Three are situated south of the road, on a gently sloping declivity; the fourth fort lies north of the road on a high artificial mound. This fort stands on the bank of a stream which flows from the Kelat Mountains. The stream is of considerable breadth, and rushes noisily over a gravelly bed; its breadth in winter is 2 fathoms, and its depth from 0·15 to 0·30 fathom. Its banks are about 2 fathoms high; but, being sloping, they are easily ascended and descended. During heavy rain the river leaves its bed; but even at the highest water-level it does not reach the Tejend. Around Dushak, and in addition to Chardeh-Tépé, on which the above fort is situated, there are several other considerable mounds. Along the road from Dushak to Mehneh ruins, a distance of 40 versts, no river or well is met with; the ravine that intersects the road midway along this distance contains water only after a heavy rainfall; the nearest stream is found in the mountains, at a distance of about 18 versts south of the road. The road here runs along level ground almost devoid of vegetation. Cultivated fields are met with at a distance of about 5 versts before reaching Mehneh ruins, and continue to extend for the same distance beyond these ruins, or to Mehneh and Ermaly Forts, which are now occupied by Tékés. The ruins of Old Mehneh occupy a considerable extent of ground. The new forts of Mehneh and Ermaly have a somewhat numerous population; in the first there are about 100 houses, and in the latter 150. The size of the Mehneh stream is about the same as that of Dushak.

“From the ruins of Mehneh, in the direction of the new fortification, the road bends almost due south, and then to the south-east to Chacha Fort, the character of the country being the same over a distance of 15 versts. On receding from the mountains and approaching the Tejend, almost impenetrable bushes and reeds are encountered.

“The road to Chacha trends past several mounds and two forts. Chacha is a small fort, the few remaining portions of the walls of which are in ruins. The inhabitants are Tékés, who occupy about thirty houses, and are employed in agriculture. Cotton is the plant principally cultivated. The Chacha rivulet has high banks; its breadth is about 2 fathoms, with a depth of from 0·30 to 0·40 fathom. Like the Dushak and Mehneh Rivers, its greatest overflow does not reach the Tedjent. The best road from Sarakhs to Kelat passes through Chacha and Karateken. The road from Meshed to Kelat, viâ Allah-Akber, is impassable for carts, and therefore all traffic on wheels between these two points must be directed through Sarakhs and Karateken. The road from Chacha to Sarakhs is 55 versts in length, and traverses a perfectly level country. At a distance of 20½ versts from Chacha is the artificial rain-water hole or reservoir called Kalchooz, now almost altogether filled up with earth. There is a small mound near this water-hole, formed of the ruins of Robot, which formerly stood here.

“Midway, *i.e.*, on the 28th verst from Chacha, and near Khan-Ghiran Mountain, the route is intersected by the road leading from Merv to Meshed. The road from the 30th to the 36th verst passes over ground the surface of which is covered with hillocks and small mounds of sandy clay, about 1 fathom high. This place is called Cherkezli. The bushes seldom exceed a man's height, and nowhere are they particularly thick. The progress of the baggage-cart between the mounds and hillocks was impeded by the narrowness of the beaten path. The nature of the ground is favourable for locomotion. After leaving this undulating country the bushes disappear, and the ground becomes covered with rank grass and prickly shrubs. On the 13th verst from Sarakhs a large mound, called Kendekli, is passed on the right.

“Sarakhs is an extensively fortified place, occupied by one battalion (about 700 men) of Persian infantry. The fields and vegetable-gardens are within the walls. The neighbourhood of Sarakhs was always the favourite marauding-ground of the Merv Tékés, and the Persians dare not venture beyond the walls of the town. The Commandant, in his excursions to places 5 or 6 versts distant, is accompanied by an escort of not less than fifty horsemen.

“The place is surrounded by high thick walls and a deep ditch. Of course the Tékés have never attempted to take Sarakhs. Such a feat was never necessary. The soldiers of the garrison inspired them with no fear, as these warriors never ventured to proceed to the assistance of caravans, which were robbed with impunity under the walls of the town. The soldiers have such dread of the Tékés that, fearing the darkness, they kindle fires during the night on the top of the watch-towers, of which there are twenty-four within the walls. The armament of the fortifications consists of six old guns; the artillerymen are ignorant of their duties; they are never

exercised or drilled, and since the construction of the fortress the guns have never been discharged.

"The bed of the Tejend at Sarakhs, or the Sarakhs Daria, is dry during the greater part of the year; its breadth is from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ verst, and in some places even more. Generally speaking, the river contains water only after a heavy fall of rain or after the thawing of snow in the mountains. At such times the lower course of the Tedjent to the northward of Sarakhs is filled with water, as are also the artificial lakes in which water is collected by the construction of dams for purposes of irrigation.

"Sarakhs is supplied with water: firstly, from wells inside the walls—water is procured at a depth of 20 feet (water is obtained at the same depth on the other side of the Tejend); and, secondly, by an 'aryk,' or canal, 14 versts long, conducted out of parts of the Tejend in which water is always to be found. At a distance of 16 versts from Dowletabad, dams have been constructed for the purpose of making the water flow into the 'aryk;' in this manner it flows in a narrow stream to Kale-No and Sarakhs.

"The survey of the ground for the railway and the exploring expeditions made in connection with that work resulted, in addition to the acquisition of special data, in the elucidation of the general character of the interior of the country, commencing from the Caspian. It was ascertained that there was no general ascent along the whole of the surveyed route. At Aidan many places are below the level of the Caspian, and all the country from the coast to the wells at the former place cannot be regarded as the dry bed of a river, but as once forming an inlet of the sea, a part of which, namely, that near the present coast, is being silted up by sand, while the depressions of the country beyond are being gradually levelled with the surrounding land by the detritus of the Greater and Smaller Balkans. From Aidan the railway runs along a mountain slope, and as the line approaches the hills small ascents occur, with corresponding descents as the railway recedes to the plain. There is no general elevation from the Caspian. Judging from the character of the locality, it is very probable that levellings made from the Téké oasis, in the direction of Khiva and Bokhara, would establish the existence of several places between these points with a level below that of the Caspian, as it was discovered to be the case at the Sara Kamish depression. Such levelling would also prove the erroneousness of the opinion now entertained by some persons of the fall of the Murgab and Tedjent into the Oxus, and would further show that these rivers at one time disembogued into the Caspian, when that sea had not receded to its present limits. Geological investigations made in connection with a survey of the country might also result in an explanation of the existence of various hollows and ravines which are at present regarded as the beds of old rivers.

"The surveying expedition returned to Askabad by way of Ak-Derbent, Meshed, the Allah-Akber Pass, and Mohamedabad. Two roads lead from Sarakhs to Meshed; one across the Muzderan Hills, which is the most frequented, in consequence of its comparative safety; although this road has been broadened and cleared, it yet presents obstacles for the passage of carts. The other road runs along the Heri-Rud and Keshef-Rud, and has not yet been cleared; its conversion into a good cart-road would not be attended with any difficulties, as no hills in the neighbourhood of the river occur along it. At present it is only used for the passage of pack-animals."

No. 42.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received July 17.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, July 13, 1882.

DURING a visit which I paid to M. de Giers yesterday, I called his Excellency's attention to an announcement stated to have been made in the "Moscow Gazette" that an Agent had been sent by the Governor-General of Turkestan to Cabul, with a view to entering into commercial arrangements with the Ameer of Afghanistan, and I stated that I could not suppose that there was any foundation for this assertion, as it would be in contravention of the understanding which existed between the two Governments with regard to Afghanistan.

M. de Giers assured me that there was no truth whatever in the statement; indeed, he said, there was at this moment no Governor-General in Turkestan. General Tcherniaieff had been appointed to that post, but had not yet started to take possession of it, nor would he do so for some time to come, for a Commission had been named to

examine into the administration of that country, which had been carried on in a somewhat irregular manner. M. de Giers' brother is the President of this Commission, which his Excellency said would not return for some time. General Tchernaiëff would wish not to leave St. Petersburg till this Commission should make its Report, and till he should come to an agreement with his Government as to the reforms which should be made in the administration of the affairs of Turkestan. But M. de Giers assured me that the General would go there with the most peaceable intentions, and with strict instructions to have no intercourse whatever with the Ruler or authorities of Afghanistan.

In the meantime, and since the death of General Kaufmann, the Government of Turkestan is being administered by General Kolpakowsky, who M. de Giers assured me is a most discreet officer, and his Excellency did not think it possible that he could have transgressed the instructions of which he was in possession by taking such a step as that announced by the "Moscow Gazette."

I have not yet been able to discover the number of that newspaper in which the above statement was made.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 43.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, July 25.)

(Extract.)

Tehran, July 25, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith to your Lordship certain documents which show that the Russians are endeavouring to procure the submission of the Merv Turkomans.

Two of them are letters from General Aminoff, Chief of the Staff at Askabad, and recently in charge of the Akhal Téké Government during General Röhrberg's absence, addressed to the Chiefs of Merv, assuring them of the satisfaction with which the Russian authorities in the Transcaspian Province had heard that the Merv tribes had sent a deputation to Petro-Alexandrofsk to claim the friendship and protection of Russia.

The third paper is the original Convention, signed by Colonel Grotékilm, Governor of the Amou Daria Province, and fourteen Elders deputed by the Ottemish branch of the Téké Turkomans of Merv to visit Petro-Alexandrofsk and communicate with the Russian authorities there.

This Convention comprises six Articles, containing the following stipulations:—

1. Russia engages not to interfere with the religion, customs, or form of government existing among the Turkomans of Merv, not to appoint any authorities over them, and not to levy taxes. To afford them the same protection on Russian territory as is afforded to the subjects of Bokhara and Khiva.

2. The Turkomans engage to cease for ever plundering the caravans and inhabitants of the neighbouring provinces of Persia, and to punish those who transgress this Agreement, restitution of property being also promised, or compensation to be afforded; in such cases the Chiefs being bound to carry out unconditionally the demands of the Russian authorities.

3. Russian Agents to be from time to time received at Merv, and special Envoys to be sent by Chiefs to the Russian Commandant on the Oxus.

4. Russian caravans to be protected on their passage through Merv territory, and no taxes to be levied beyond that now charged under the title of "baj."

5. Agents of other Powers not to be permitted to visit Merv.

6. Turkomans to provide horses and escorts for couriers sent by Russians to Khiva, Tashkend, and other places.

The Turkoman Elders who negotiated this Convention do not appear to have been Chiefs of note or influence, and they only represented the Ottemish portion of the Téké tribe. The Convention which they signed would appear not to have been adopted by the people of Merv, and negotiations are now being carried on between the Merv Chiefs and a Khivan Agent with the object seemingly of making an indirect offer of their submission to Russia by the tender of their allegiance to the Khan of Khiva.

The Treaty signed by Colonel Grotékilm was concluded on the 28th October last, Mr. Wyndham reported in his despatch of the 15th June, 1881, that M. de Giers

informed him there was no question of negotiating a Treaty with the Merv Turkomans, and that Baron Jomini had also stated that there were no formal negotiations going on for a Treaty with the Turkomans of that place.

Inclosure 1 in No. 43.

Colonel Aminoff to the Khans of Merv.

(Translation.)

Askabad, September , 1881.

To the Exalted and Most Honourable Khans and Elders of Merv.

THE Russian Governor of Turkomania and Commander-in-chief of the troops therein has duly received your letter, and is rejoiced that the Mervis have at last awoke to their true interests, and have decided to solicit our friendship, and seek the protection of our Czar.

The General fully approves of your intention to send twenty-four Elders of the Tochemish Turkomans to the Commandant on the Amou Daria, by way of Khiva.

On his part, my Chief to-day received twenty-four Elders of the Ottemish Turkomans, and listened attentively to all they had to say, addressing kind words to them, and promising them the friendship and protection of the Russian Empire. Thus all the Turkomans will enjoy Russian protection, and live happily and peacefully. So long as it may please the Turkomans they will experience nothing but friendship and kindness at the hands of the Russians. The Turkomans of Merv will be at liberty to travel freely through our territory, where every assistance will be rendered them in the discharge of their affairs.

All this I write by order of my Chief, and I am delighted that so agreeable a duty has fallen to my lot.

(Signed) Baron AMINOFF, *Chief of the Staff, &c.*

Inclosure 2 in No. 43.

Colonel Aminoff to the Khans of Merv.

(Translation.)

September 3 (15), 1881.

To the Most Honourable Khans and Elders of Merv.

MY Chief, General Röhrberg, has duly received your letter reporting that the Russian soldier had been sent to the Commandant on the Amou Daria, and that twenty-four Elders had likewise gone thither, and is much pleased at the news.

(Signed) Colonel AMINOFF, *Chief of the Staff.*

Inclosure 3 in No. 43.

Convention concluded between Russians and Ottemish Turkomans of Merv.

(Translation.)

Convention concluded between the Governor of Amou Daria Province and the Turkoman Elders of the Ottemish Tribe, who have arrived from Merv with a view of seeking the Protection of Russia.

THE Undersigned, the Governor of the Amou Daria Province of the Russian Empire, Colonel Grotekilm, in virtue of the full powers set forth in the instructions issued to him of the 25th September (7th October), 1881, by the Governor-General of Turkestan and the Representatives of the Ottemish Turkomans of Merv, Nazar Khan Beg, Mahomed Khan, Mahomed Berdi Khan, and eleven other Elders, viz., Jari, Batirr, Aitkurban Soufi, Jari Khan, Berk Ali Khan, Nafass Beg, Sovin Khan Beg, Khalmurad Beg, Eskender Beg, Kurban Nazar Pehlivan, Jari Beg, Geldi, who have come to the Amou Daria Province with a view of seeking the high protection of the Emperor of All the Russias, in virtue of full powers given them by the Ottemish tribe of Turkomans, as set forth in a letter to the Khan of Khiva, have, for the purpose of complying with the above-mentioned request of the Turkoman people, agreed upon the following Articles:—

ARTICLE I.

The Russian Government, in signing this Agreement with a view of meeting the wishes of the Ottemish tribe, engage not to interfere with the religion, customs, or form of government existing among the Turkomans of the said tribe, and not to appoint any authorities over them, nor levy any taxes. They moreover engage to afford them the same protection on Russian territory as is afforded to the subjects of the Ameer of Bokhara and the Khan of Khiva.

ARTICLE II.

The Ottemish Turkomans enter into a solemn engagement with the Russian Government to cease for ever pillaging and plundering the caravans and inhabitants of the neighbouring provinces of Persia, and, in the event of such acts being committed, to punish the delinquents and restore the plunder, or, should they be unable to do this, to fully compensate the sufferers. In such cases the Khans are bound to carry out unconditionally the demands of the Russian authorities.

ARTICLE III.

To receive with proper respect such persons as may from time to time be sent to Merv on the part of the Russian authorities, and, on their side, to send special Envoys to the Commandant on the Amou Daria.

ARTICLE IV.

The Turkomans engage to protect the Russian commercial and other caravans passing through Merv to Khiva, Bokhara, and Persia, and not to levy any tax on them over and above that levied under the title of "badj," without first coming to an agreement with the (Russian) Governor.

ARTICLE V.

The Turkomans are not to allow Agents of other Powers to visit them.

ARTICLE VI.

The Turkomans engage to provide horses and escorts, at a fixed price, for the couriers who may be sent by the Russian authorities to Khiva, Tashkend, and other places.

The present Convention, drawn up in the Russian and Turkoman languages, and signed and sealed by the Contracting Parties, will be forwarded to the Governor-General of Turkestan for submission to the Emperor, and a certified copy thereof will be given to the Governor of the Amou Daria Province, as likewise to the Turkoman Elders of the Ottemish tribe.

Done on the 16th (26th) October, in the year of our Lord 1881, which corresponds to the Mahommedan date of 5 Zilhedjé, 1298.

(L.S.) (Signed) GROTEKILM, Colonel,
Governor-General of the Amou Daria Province.

No. 44.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 3, 1882.

I APPROVE the language held by your Excellency to M. de Giers, as reported in your despatch of the 13th instant, with reference to a rumour that the Russian authorities in Turkestan had dispatched an Agent to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received August 7.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, August 2, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "St. Petersburg Vedomosti" of the 18th (30th) July, 1882, states that the Transcaspian region is to include the former Transcaspian military circuit, the territory of the Téké Turkomans, and all the islands along that portion of the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea belonging to the region. The Chief of the Caucasian military circuit will be Chief Administrator of the Transcaspian, and the local Administration is to be placed in the hands of a senior official, who will also command the local troops.

The Transcaspian region is to be divided into three districts: Mangyshlak, Krasnovodsk, and Akhal Téké; these districts will be administered by Chiefs of districts. The town of Askabad will be the chief administrative centre. The district Chief of Akhal Téké will reside at Askabad; of Krasnovodsk, at the town of that name; and of Mangyshlak, at Fort Alexander.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received August 11.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, August 7, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an abstract, published in the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of the 5th instant, of an article in the "Novoe Vremya," relating to the Regulation recently issued for the administration of the Transcaspian territory.

It admits the importance of that territory since the annexation of the Akhal Téké oasis. At the same time it confesses that the commercial importance of the latter is not great, and that the attempt to establish trading relations with Merv has been a failure. But politically it considers the Transcaspian region of the greatest interest, and strongly recommends that the authorities should do their utmost to conciliate the Tékés and to inspire them with confidence in the Russian Government. It suggests that finally this region should be incorporated with the Government of Turkestan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 46.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of July 23 and 24 (August 4 and 5), 1882.

A PROPOS du réglemeut temporaire d'administration du territoire Transcaspian qui vient d'être promulgué, le "Nouveau Temps" jette un coup d'œil sur la situation de cette contrée. Celle-ci n'a acquis de l'importance pour nous, dit-il, que depuis l'annexion de l'oasis d'Akhal-Téké et la conséquence la plus immédiate de ce fait consiste dans nos relations avec la Perse. Les populations Kurdes du nord de ce pays ont perdu leur ancienne importance comme garde militaire; les occupations pacifiques leur sont devenues désormais complètement accessibles. La Perse modifiera sans doute progressivement le caractère administratif de ses provinces septentrionales et nos rapports avec elle deviendront plus étroits: il ne dépendra que des diplomates Persans de les rendre les plus sincères et les plus avantageux possibles pour les deux pays.

L'importance commerciale de l'oasis d'Akhal-Téké n'est pas considérable, vu qu'elle ne se trouve pas sur une route commerciale et que ni sa population clairsemée ni la production locale ne sont de nature à y assurer le développement futur du commerce. Les premières tentatives de nouer des relations commerciales avec Merv ont échoué et, eussent-elles réussi, elles n'auraient en tout cas point eu grande importance.

En ce qui concerne notre politique intérieure, bien que la population de l'oasis ne soit pas nombreuse et qu'on ne puisse espérer qu'elle s'accroisse, à cause de l'insuffi-

sance de terre et d'eau, l'Administration voit s'ouvrir pour elle dans ce pays un vaste champ d'activité.

Les Tékés sont un peuple non corrompu, fidèle à sa parole et à l'équité. Mais comme il est évident qu'ils doivent garder de la méfiance à l'égard des Russes, il faut se préoccuper tout d'abord d'établir des relations régulières en vue d'un apaisement complet, avec justice et sévérité là où percent la trahison et l'arrière-pensée. Il faut, comme l'a dit Scobéleff, que les fonctionnaires se tiennent moins dans les Chancelleries et qu'ils soient accessibles à chacun; qu'ils étudient en un mot le peuple et ses besoins. En Asie l'encre et le papier n'ont rien à faire là où se trouvent engagés des intérêts matériels. Il faut surtout agir avec prudence, en évitant des erreurs comme celles qui ont été commises dans l'Administration du Turkestan. Outre la réduction du nombre des fonctionnaires et la suppression d'un vain formalisme incompréhensible pour le peuple, il importe que l'on résolve régulièrement dès le principe la question des impôts et du commerce. L'expérience a démontré que le principe Musulman de la perception des impôts proportionnellement à l'avoir de chacun prédomine en Asie. Toute contribution extraordinaire doit être évitée comme illégale. Enfin, moins il y aura de fonctionnaires superflus, plus les dépenses diminueront dans l'intérêt commun.

Le territoire Trans-Caspien est partagé en trois districts: ceux de Manguischlak, de Krasnovodsk, et d'Akhal-Téké. Une certaine indépendance d'action est réservée au Gouverneur, qui ne relève que pour les cas importants du Commandant supérieur de la circonscription du Caucase, par l'entremise duquel sont présentés les comptes rendus annuels sur la situation du pays et des troupes, ainsi que les projets ultérieurs. La subordination au Caucase était motivée autrefois par l'exiguïté du territoire Trans-Caspien et par le fait que les détachements d'opérations militaires étaient pris dans les troupes du Caucase; maintenant que les choses ont sensiblement changé, il est à présumer que la nécessité se fera bientôt sentir de la séparation de la province Trans-Caspienne d'avec l'Administration du Caucase. Lorsque la contrée sera sortie de son isolement pour entrer en liens plus étroits avec le Turkestan, conclut le "Nouveau Temps," il paraîtra probablement plus logique de la réunir à cette dernière circonscription militaire.

No. 47.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received August 14.)

My Lord.

Tehran, July 7, 1882.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 1st May, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I yesterday asked the Minister for Foreign Affairs when the Persian and Russian Commissioners would meet for the completion of the Akhal frontier demarcation.

His Excellency replied that the Nesser-ed-Dowleh was ready to proceed at once to the frontier as Persian Commissioner, but that the Russian Delegate had not yet been appointed. M. de Giers had, however, requested the Governor-General of the Caucasus to select an officer for this duty, and it was probable that the Commission would meet at the mouth of the Atrek and begin work as soon as the summer heats in that region had somewhat abated.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 48.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received September 18.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, September 13, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that General Tchernaiew left St. Petersburg yesterday to take up his appointment as Governor-General of Turkestan. It is probable that he will be about twelve days on his journey to his post.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 49.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received September 21.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, September 21, 1882.

UNDER present circumstances, I see no advantage in maintaining Consulate at Astrabad. Occasional visit of an English official to Meshed and northern border of Khorassan would be more useful and less costly. When Russo-Persian Boundary Commissioners commence demarcation of Akhal frontier, probably this autumn, favourable opportunity for such visit will arise, and Mr. Stephen could undertake the duty very efficiently. In the event of Astrabad Consulate being abolished, I think it would be advisable to re-establish on former footing the Consulate at Resht.

No. 50.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received October 2.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, September 26, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a telegram from Askabad to the "Golos" newspaper states that M. Lessar, who has been recently occupied in surveying the Transcaspian territory between Kizil Arvat and Askabad, and thence to Sarakhs, and even Herat, with a view probably to the extension in that direction of the Kizil-Arvat Railway, was, on the 26th August (7th September), at Merv, where he was received by the Khans with great cordiality. The telegram adds that M. Lessar left Merv on the 3rd (15th) instant for the oasis of Khiva.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 51.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received October 4.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, September 30, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an article published in yesterday's "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" with reference to correspondence stated to have appeared in the "Morning Post," which treats of the advance of Russia towards India. This correspondence I have not had an opportunity of seeing.

The inclosed article denies that England has anything to fear from the establishment of Russian power in Turkestan and the Transcaspian territory. It declares that Russia has no interest in disturbing the British rule in India. It asserts that she is neither an effete country incapable of progress, nor an insatiable ogre desiring to swallow up the world. But she demands that she may be allowed to understand her own interests.

The article declares that Russia has nothing to gain by withdrawing India from the enlightened rule of England; but it claims that whilst England is endeavouring to find some new source of commerce in every part of the world, it is but equitable to allow that it is both the right and the duty of Russia to do the same.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 51.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of September 17 (29), 1882.

LE "Morning Post" poursuit sa campagne traditionnelle contre la Russie et il a à St.-Pétersbourg un correspondant qui sert avec beaucoup de zèle ses sentiments d'hostilité. Ce correspondant lui a adressé toute une série d'articles que l'on peut ranger sous ce titre sonore "Marche de la Russie vers les Indes."

Ce thème n'est assurément pas nouveau. On pouvait même le croire démodé. L'ingénieux correspondant trouve moyen de la rajeunir en utilisant les faits les plus récents. De nouvelles paroles sur un vieil air.

Nous n'analyserons pas ces inventions fantaisistes. Chacun peut se faire une idée des ornements qu'un correspondant exercé est à même de broder sur cette trame usée. Ce sont d'abord les progrès matériels accomplis par la Russie en Asie Centrale. Ils sont incontestables.

Ce sont ensuite ceux qu'elle médite afin de rattacher le tronçon de chemin de fer d'Askabad, par la Caspienne et le Caucase, aux voies ferrées du centre de la Russie, ce qui mettrait cette Puissance à même d'envoyer ses armées à Hérat plus vite que l'Angleterre ne pourrait le faire des Indes, même de Kyber et de Candahar.

Ce sont en outre les desseins cachés de la Russie, c'est l'émulation qui s'est établie entre les autorités militaires du Caucase et celles du Turkestan, à qui aura l'honneur et la gloire d'arriver la première aux Indes et d'y renouveler les exploits d'Alexandre le Grand.—Dans cette course au clocher, le Caucase avait pris la tête par l'expédition de Géok-Tépé. Mais aujourd'hui c'est le tour du Turkestan et la nomination du Général Tcherniaïew n'a pas d'autre signification.

Le danger est donc imminent, il frappe à la porte et ce serait un crime de la part des Ministres Anglais que de ne pas se mettre en mesure de le conjurer. Il n'est pas seulement politique; il est en outre commercial. La Russie n'est pas uniquement éprise de gloire, de conquêtes, de domination politique universelle. Elle a encore un Ministre de Finances ambitieux, qui a la prétention d'étendre les débouchés industriels de son pays à toute l'Asie, à la Perse et jusqu'aux Indes, afin d'en chasser les produits de l'industrie Britannique.

Contre ces périls de tout genre, l'Angleterre est désarmée. Ses forces militaires, maritimes, industrielles, commerciales sont distancées. Le Canal de Suez ne suffit plus pour rétablir l'équilibre rompu par l'ambition Russe. Il n'y a qu'un remède possible pour l'Angleterre, c'est de s'emparer de l'Asie Mineure et de se hâter de construire le chemin de fer de l'Euphrate. Malheur à elle si elle tarde un instant. Du moins le "Morning Post" n'en aura pas la responsabilité. Il aura honnêtement rempli son devoir de Cassandre.

Nous espérons en avoir fini avec ces fantasmagories depuis les explications amicales échangées entre Lord Clarendon et le Prince Gortchacow, depuis les arrangements qui en ont été la conséquence entre les deux Gouvernements, depuis les pénibles expériences tentées par Lord Beaconsfield et le programme de politique saine, rationnelle et sensée inauguré par Mr. Gladstone. Malheureusement, il y a en Angleterre une école de politiciens et d'hommes d'État qui ont enfourché ce dada de la sécurité des Indes, qui lui doivent leur notoriété, leur influence, leur position et leur carrière, et qui ne sont pas du tout disposés à y renoncer. Malheureusement aussi, l'esprit de parti aidant, ils trouvent dans une sphère élevée et considérable de la société Anglaise un terrain propice pour réveiller des passions passées à l'état de tradition. Et le résultat net de ce travail ne peut être que d'entraver le rapprochement pratique qui tendait à se faire entre les deux Gouvernements et les deux pays par une appréciation calme et rationnelle de leurs mutuels intérêts. Ce rapprochement, au lieu de se consolider, peut être arrêté par la défiance. Les bonnes dispositions mutuelles sont dominées par la crainte de voir un jour ou l'autre le jeu de bascule des partis ramener au pouvoir en Angleterre les idées invétérées dont le "Morning Post" se fait l'organe.

Nous n'entreprendrons pas de les réfuter. On ne combat pas des chimères. Tout ce que nous avons à dire, c'est que le "Morning Post" pourrait avoir une apparence de raison, s'il parvenait à démontrer que la Russie a un intérêt quelconque à troubler la domination Anglaise aux Indes. Les Russophobes tombent dans une singulière contradiction. Tantôt ils représentent la Russie comme un pays pourri, gangrené, voué au désordre, incapable de progrès sérieux; un colosse aux pieds d'argile prêt à succomber sous sa propre masse. Tantôt ils en font un épouvantail, un ogre insatiable prêt à dévorer le monde pour satisfaire ses appétits désordonnés. La Russie ne croit mériter ni cet excès d'honneur, ni cette indignité. Ce qu'elle demande, c'est qu'on veuille bien la croire tout simplement capable, comme toute autre Puissance, de comprendre ses intérêts, et déterminée à les développer et à les défendre comme toute autre nation. Or, en se plaçant sur ce terrain le "Morning Post" devra convenir que la Russie n'a absolument rien à gagner à voir l'Empire des Indes, soustrait à la domination éclairée de l'Angleterre, pour retomber dans la barbarie Hindo-Musulmane, et dans le désordre anarchique qui s'ensuivrait inévitablement. Ce serait évidemment anéantir non seulement l'œuvre civilisatrice de l'Angleterre en Asie, mais compromettre dans son germe celle qui échoit à la Russie dans la partie septentrionale de ce vaste continent. Et pour arriver à ce résultat directement contraire à ses propres intérêts, le Gouvernement Russe devrait s'exposer aux risques et aux

sacrifices d'une lutte colossale sur toutes les terres et les mers du globe contre une des plus grandes Puissances du monde! Nous sommes convaincus que le "Morning Post" lui-même, s'il était un journal Russe, trouverait une pareille politique absolument insensée.

Mais si ces vérités de simple bon sens sont méconnues par cette feuille, il est clair que c'est, non pas intelligence, mais parti pris. Ce serait peine perdue que de vouloir l'éclairer.

Ses jérémiades commerciales ne sont pas mieux fondées. Nous reconnaissons que l'Angleterre plus que tout autre pays, en raison de sa position insulaire, de son territoire restreint, de sa population croissante et de son développement industriel forcé, doit veiller avec sollicitude et énergie à ses débouchés commerciaux. Jadis on faisait des guerres pour fonder la prépondérance du commerce de son pays sur la ruine de celui des autres. Aujourd'hui l'économie politique a démontré que le calcul était faux et qu'on gagne plus à trafiquer avec des pays riches qu'avec des pays pauvres. La lutte est devenue concurrence et émulation; c'est en multipliant les échanges qui abaissent le prix des matières premières, en perfectionnant la main-d'œuvre pour réduire le prix des produits et en améliorant les communications pour diminuer les frais des transports, que les États cherchent à rivaliser entre eux. Sur ce terrain l'Angleterre a déjà un immense avantage par la perfection de son outillage industriel, par la facilité des transports maritimes, par son énorme flotte commerciale, le Canal de Suez qui abrège la route des Indes, et les chemins de fer Indiens qui mettent les portes de son Empire en communication rapide avec le centre de l'Asie. La sphère de son développement commercial est donc naturellement marquée par la distance où les frais de transport changent trop la marchandise pour qu'elle puisse concourir. Si les avantages qu'elle s'est acquis sous ce rapport ne lui suffisent pas, rien ne l'empêche de travailler à les augmenter, soit en améliorant ses produits, soit en diminuant le prix, soit en abrégant encore les distances par la construction du chemin de fer de l'Euphrate. Mais la plus simple équité exige qu'elle reconnaisse à la Russie non seulement le droit, mais encore le devoir d'en faire autant de son côté.

Il est pénible d'avoir à répéter des vérités aussi élémentaires. Elles ne convaincront pas le "Morning Post." Aussi ne nous reste-t-il qu'à en appeler au bon sens pratique du public Anglais pour faire justice de ces haineuses insanités.

No. 52.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 9, 1 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, October 9, 1882, 9.25 A.M.

I LEARN that two Russians, escorted by twenty Cossacks and a few Akhal Turkomans, left Sarakhs on the 1st instant for the Sarik Settlements.

No. 53.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 11, 1882.

AS I have already informed you by telegraph, Her Majesty's Government have determined to discontinue the British Consulate at Asterabad.

It will therefore not be necessary to extend the term just expired of Colonel Lovett's employment under this Department, and I have requested you to inform that officer, and to convey to him an expression of my thanks for the services rendered by him during the period of his holding the appointment.

I have been in communication with Her Majesty's Secretary of State for India with regard to the suggestion contained in your telegram of the 21st ultimo, that when the Russo-Persian Boundary Commission commences the demarcation of the frontier, Mr. Stephen should take that opportunity of visiting Meshed and the northern border of Khorassan. The valuable Reports of Mr. Stephen are evidence of his competence for such a duty, and Her Majesty's Government authorize you to employ him on such service.

Your proposal that the Consulate at Resht should be re-established on its former

footing is approved, and I shall communicate further with you on the subject of the arrangements to be made with regard to it.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 54.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received October 30.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, October 17, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a translation by Mr. Michell from the "Golos," being a communication from that newspaper's correspondent, relating to a supposed intention of a Turkoman tribe, said to number about 50,000 kubitkas, and to be encamped beyond Merv, near the Afghan frontier, to offer their submission to the Russian authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 54.

Extract from the "Golos."

(Translation.)

THE "Golos" correspondent at Kazalinsk, on the Syr-Daria, writing from that place under date of the 12th (24th) September, sends the following information:—

"A Turkoman of the Téké tribe, Ibrahim Saidusoff, who has adopted Russian nationality, recently received from his relatives, or, as he expresses it, his 'tribe or race,' the following letter:—

"The English, our unclean neighbours, are persuading us to recognize their Khansha as our Khan, in return for which they promise to respect our holy faith, our customs, and our Aksakals (Judges). We, to the number of 50,000 kubitkas, encamped beyond Merv, near the Afghan frontier, have heard from members of our tribe that you are living comfortably at Kazala. We have also heard that the English are deceiving us. They will not allow us to beat the enemies of our faith and take unbelievers into captivity. It is also said that the Russians will deceive us, but it may be that the Russians are better than our neighbours the English, and we therefore authorize you to present a petition to the Russian Ak-Pasha (White Czar), that we, your kindred, wish to subject ourselves to the Russian Ak-Pasha, and we have affixed our seal to a separate sheet of white paper. Act as you may be guided by the Great Allah and his Prophets. Amen."

The number of kubitkas, as stated at 50,000 in the opinion of the "Golos" correspondent, is an exaggeration not unusual in Central Asia. A few days ago the Turkoman Saidusoff, having received the letter, handed over to the authorities the "white paper" bearing the seal of the Khans and other Notables. The correspondent adds that the blank sheet of paper will, in all probability, be filled up just as the local authorities will think fit.

No. 55.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received October 30.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, October 26, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell from the "Golos" of the 1st (13th) and 4th (16th) September of a portion of notes made by the Russian engineer, M. Lessar, of his journey from Askabad to Herat. This would have been forwarded sooner to your Lordship but for the absence of Mr. Michell on leave.

These papers are to be followed by Parts III, IV, and V.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 55.

Extract from the "Golos" of September 1 (13) and 4 (16), 1882.

(Translation.)

"FROM ASKABAD TO HERAT:" by P. Lessar, Engineer.

IN the months of November and December of last year I made my first journey through the Atek country and Khorassan. Although only four months passed between that journey and a second made by me in the month of April of the present year, yet much had changed in the region during that interval owing to the circumstance that the relations between the Russians and the Akhal Téké Turkomans and the neighbouring hostile tribes had become clearly defined. The assault of Geuk-Tépé on the 12th (24th) January, 1881, closed the military operations in the Transcaspian region, and put an end to all resistance in the Akhal country. A considerable part of the population that had fled to Merv and the Tedjent during the war, and after the storming of Geuk-Tépé, would not venture to return to their former places of abode, notwithstanding the proclamation of a complete amnesty.

The arrival of Takhma Sirdar* at Askabad produced a great impression on the Tékés. The gracious manner in which he was received at St. Petersburg and the high reward bestowed on him dissipated the doubts of the most suspicious, and when he proceeded to Merv and described what he had seen of the greatness and glory of Russia, the ardour of those Tékés who still wished to continue the struggle abated considerably. The inhabitants of the Akhal country, convinced by his assurances that all the past was forgotten, that forgiveness was complete, and that the future depended on themselves, determined to return to their former settlements after gathering the crops they had sown in Merv and along the Tedjent. The unwillingness with which strangers are received by the Mervites in their midst in consequence of the growing scarcity of land and water had also considerable influence over the Tékés, and served to strengthen their resolution to return to their old encampments. The migration back of the Tékés to their former dwelling-places commenced in the month of September, and served as a signal for the pacification of the region. The infrequent cases of robbery which had hitherto occurred on the Persian frontier and along the routes in the steppes leading to Khiva and Bokhara then ceased entirely. The Merv Tékés inhabiting the Atek had never, previous to my visit to their country in the preceding month of November, seen a "Ferenghi," or European, and they therefore, although receiving me and my party in a friendly manner, displayed the reserve and timidity of Asiatics coming for the first time in contact with Europeans. Since then they had become acquainted with the Russians, and their visits to Askabad became more and more frequent, at first out of mere curiosity, and then for the purposes of trade. There had arrived before this deputations from Merv and Tejend conveying feelings of friendship to the Russians, and in proof of their amity, the Tékés had liberated the artilleryman Kadaeff, who had been their captive since the expedition against Khiva, and restored the property of which they had despoiled an Akhal Téké caravan in August when it was proceeding to Khiva. In the month of February of the present year a caravan carrying cotton prints, &c., of the Russian merchant Koushin had succeeded in penetrating even into Merv. At that period the country had become so pacified that there was no necessity for an escort for travellers, &c., journeying between Askabad and Sarakhs. The usual servants armed with guns were sufficient as a protection against any casual robbers. The inhabitants of the Atek received Russian visitors with due honours, and frequently appeared at the Russian posts seeking small favours. Of this state of things I took advantage when requiring attendants for travelling along the Heri-Rud and through the Saryk encampment. In the present condition of the country the Russian traveller will not encounter any danger, but still, as a matter of precaution, it is advisable for him to have a sufficient number of attendants, as small bands of robbers may exist among the different tribes.

The Elders of Kaakhka Settlement undertook to supply me with an escort. They bound themselves to provide me with twenty well-mounted Aleili Turkomans, at the rate of 40 roubles per man per month, and the men were to supply themselves with provisions and their horses with provender. Ten of these men were supplied with Berdan rifles from Askabad, and the remainder of the party were armed with their own muzze-loading guns.

* The leader of the Turkomans at Geuk-Tépé; he died at Bami in the month of June of the present year.

In addition to these weapons, each man carried on his person a whole arsenal, consisting of two or three old pistols, a sabre, and knife.

The Atek.

On the evening of the 16th (28th) April, 1882, I left Askabad, and reached Sarakhs on the 21st April (3rd May), having halted a day at Kaakhka for organizing my escort, which, notwithstanding the promises of the Elders, had not been fully equipped by the time of my arrival.

In order to spare the horses as much as possible, I allowed my Aleili followers to proceed by night to Sarakhs, and generally studied their convenience. The horse I rode was a strong animal, though of the ordinary Kabarda breed, and I always proceeded at a trot. This pace is unknown to the Téké horses, so that they are either ridden at a gallop or foot's pace. The road was perfectly safe, whereas last year the local inhabitants, when proceeding from settlement to settlement, always selected mountain-paths, and travelled in armed parties. When I traversed this country I frequently met single unarmed travellers, mounted on mules, and even on foot.

The whole road from Askabad to Sarakhs is 280 versts (186 $\frac{2}{3}$ miles) and trends at some distance from the mountains, parallel with them, and along perfectly level ground. It is only at Annaù and near Gavars, in two places, that small sand hillocks occur.

To the information I have already supplied in a former paper respecting the Atek country, I now add some additional data obtained by me during the present year.

The word "Atek," *i.e.*, mountain base, was formerly applied to the whole country from Kazandjik to Sarakhs. This designation, however, was but little used. The part of the oasis, as far as Gavars, occupied by the Tékés, was called the Akhal. The zone of country farther to the south-east is known in neighbouring territories as the Arakadj. The word "Atek" is not known either to the inhabitants of Afghanistan or of Persia. The necessity of separate appellations, both to conquered and independent parts of the oasis, gave to the word "Atek" a right of citizenship; and, at the same time, a definite signification was attached to it. It is now thus applied to the base of the mountains from the Russian eastern frontier to Sarakhs.

Giaurs is the last populated point of the Akhal Téké oasis. Baba-Durmaz, which is situated on the border of Russian territory, 71 versts (47 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles) from Askabad, remains unoccupied. Only two points in the Atek, Luftabad and Shilgan, are inhabited by Shiite Persians, subjects of the Shah. All the other points are occupied by Turkomans, *viz.*, Kaakhka, and partly Kùren, of the Aleili tribe; the remaining settlements are inhabited by the Tékés of Merv. All this population is of very recent origin. In the middle of the last century a portion of the Akhal, as far as Durana, was occupied by the Emraly and Karadashly tribes; and the country beyond this, to the south-east, near Yangi-kala, Hurman, and the neighbourhood of Geuk-Tépé and Askabad, formed the camping-grounds of the Aleili tribe. The Téké Turkomans had at that time migrated from Mangyshlak to Kizil-Arvat, and commenced persecuting and despoiling the inhabitants of the Akhal country. These relations between the two tribes continued for about 150 years, when the Tékés gained the supremacy. Early in the present century the Kardashy tribe retreated to Khiva; the Emraly to Mehneh and Chacha; the Aleili partly to Persia and Chinarat and partly to Kiazir (near Nukhur), and the remainder to Kùren and Abiverd.

Fifty-four years ago, Allah Kuli Khan, of Khiva, having defeated the Turkomans, drove away the Goklans, Aleilis, and Emralis to Khiva, while from the Tékés he took hostages and tribute. After the death of Tadelie Khan, killed at Sarakhs in 1855, both the Goklans and Aleilis returned from Khiva to their old camping-grounds, but the persecutions of the Persians compelled the Aleili tribe to withdraw once more to Khiva, and it was only in 1873, after the Khiva campaign, that they finally settled in the Atek and built the new Kaakhka fort. The migration of the Tékés to the Atek took place during the last few years.

Suffering from impoverishment of the soil and scarcity of water, the Merv Tékés are abandoning their oasis and gradually settling along the streams that issue from the Daman-i-ku range, where they find a virgin soil and sufficient water, both of which conditions combined insure them abundant harvests. The only disadvantage under which they now suffer arises from their proximity to the Persian Rulers of Ilkhani, Dereghez, and Kelat, who, since the conquest of the Akhal by the Russians, have summoned up courage, and take every opportunity for oppressing their former oppressors the Tékés.

The inhabitants of the Atek live both in mud huts and in tents, although of the latter there are fewer than of the former. Tents are not to be found at all in the settlements between Luterabad and Kaakhka; and at Dushak, Mehneh, and Chacha their number is decreasing with the pacification of the country. It is only the most timid Tékés who leave their families in Merv and come to the Atek for sowing their crops and reaping their harvests. The bulk of the population has settled for good in the Atek. Formerly each settlement consisted of a fort, or "kale," within the walls of which stood the mud huts of the inhabitants; tents were pitched outside the fort, and there, in case of danger, were removed into the kale. At present, at Chacha, all the new buildings are of clay, and they are erected beyond the walls of the fort.

As regards the distribution and abundance of water, this most important question in all Central Asiatic countries, the Atek is under the same conditions as the Akhal—*i.e.*, the quantity of water is very limited, and the streams are situated at great distances from each other. There is this additional disadvantage in the Atek, that the sources of the streams and a considerable portion of their course are situated in the mountains belonging to the Persians, who are consequently able to inflict injury on the Tékés by cutting off the water necessary for the cultivation of their fields. This frequently happens, and great loss of time, &c., is entailed thereby on the Tékés in inducing the Ruler of Ilkhani to order a proper distribution of the water. If this question be not soon settled satisfactorily, it is probable that the Tékés will be obliged to remove from their present settlements, and the Atek will then become a waste.

The following is the distribution of water and populated places from Askabad:—

Annaù, 13 versts ($8\frac{2}{3}$ miles) from Askabad, 200 tents, is supplied with water by the River Keltechinär, which flows from the Zyry-Ku range. Annaù belongs to Russia, and Askabad is at a short distance, consequently no questions arise as to water.

Gavars, 20 versts ($13\frac{1}{3}$ miles) from Annaù, 40 tents, and Baba-Durmaz, 38 versts ($25\frac{1}{2}$ miles) from Gavars, no inhabitants. These places have two separate streams, which also flow from the Zyry-Ku range; their course throughout is along Russian territory. At Gavars the water is sweet and in sufficient quantity. At Baba-Durmaz, though slightly salt, it is quite good for drinking purposes.

Artyk, 16 versts ($10\frac{2}{3}$ miles) from Baba-Durmaz, 20 tents, is supplied with water by the Durunger River, which waters the whole fertile Dereghez valley. Beyond Artyk the Durunger terminates in small sheets of water, into which it expands.

Lutfabad and Kuren, 5 versts ($3\frac{1}{3}$ miles) from Artyk, and all the succeeding settlements, which frequently occur here as far as Kaakhka, are supplied with water by branches of the Rud-Khan, or Rudbar River, which takes its rise in the Allah Akber Mountains. This is the finest river in the whole Atek. There is water here in abundance, and the whole country from Luterabad to Kaakhka is an oasis. About 500 tents are distributed on both sides of the road at twelve points. All the settlements are surrounded by gardens, and the fields under cultivation are of greater extent than elsewhere.

Kaakhka, 28 versts ($18\frac{2}{3}$ miles) from Lutfabad, 650 tents, is the largest settlement in the Atek. It is supplied with water by the Lain and Archingan Rivers, which, after issuing out of the mountains at Kelat and supplying some Persian settlements with water, unite into one stream in the plain at Kaakhka. During the existence of Abiverd the greater part of the waters of the Rud-Khan and Lain Rivers served for the supply of that town. The Archingan River then reached Karakhan Fort. In the gorge above the ruins of Hodjamed, 17 versts ($11\frac{1}{3}$ miles) from Kaakhka, at Nourek Settlement (about twenty tents), the Tékés are employed in husbandry. The stream which supplies them with water reaches the road only in spring.

Dushak or Chardeh, 21 versts (14 miles) from Hodjamed, 160 tents. It is situated on the Chardeh River, which runs through the whole of Kelat, and supplies it with water. The inhabitants of Dushak are here least dependent on the Persians; they cannot increase their area of cultivation in the narrow pass, and the water cannot be cut off.

Mehneh, 44 versts ($29\frac{1}{3}$ miles) from Dushak, 130 tents, and Chacha, 16 versts ($10\frac{2}{3}$ miles) 70 huts, are supplied with water by two parallel streams issuing out of the Kelat Mountains. Both settlements suffer much from Persian oppression.

For a distance of 55 versts ($36\frac{2}{3}$ miles) to Sarákhs there is no water; midway near Rabat Abdullah Khan ruins there existed at one time a cistern or reservoir for rain-

water; during the domination of the Tékés Rabat was destroyed, and the cistern was neglected; the earth in it now is level with its edges.

In this manner, along the whole extent of country from Baba-Durmaz to Sarakhs (exclusive of Lutfabad and Shilgan, which is inhabited by Persians), there is a population of about 7,000 Aleili Turkomans and Tékés (about 1,400 tents, reckoning on an average five men to each tent). These figures change from day to day; it is only at Küren and Kaakhka that there is a settled population, and at other points, with the pacification of the country, the population increases. No great increase of the inhabitants can be expected, as the Atek cannot supply means of existence for a dense population, although the soil throughout is fertile; but the quantity of available water being limited, further migration of the Merv and Tejend Tékés to the Atek will soon discontinue.

All the inhabitants of the Atek are engaged in agriculture and the cultivation of vegetables. The crops consist of wheat, barley, and clover; it is only at Chacha that cotton is grown. Melons and water-melons, the staple of food of the Tékés in the summer, are grown in abundance in the gardens. Fruit trees and orchards generally are met with only between Lutfabad and Kaakhka. There are no trees between the latter place and Sarakhs. Great poverty prevails. The Tékés who leave Merv are generally of an indigent class, and during the first year the emigrants suffered great hardships.

There is no trade in the Atek. The requirements of the Tékés are few, and even these they can scarcely satisfy owing to their poverty. The bazaars of Lutfabad and Kaakhka are more than sufficient for satisfying the wants of the whole of the Atek.

II.—*The Roads from Sarakhs and Merv to Herat.*

As after leaving Sarakhs there were five or six stages to be passed through an uninhabited country, I remained a day at the above place for the purpose of obtaining supplies of provisions, &c. Not a few changes had taken place there since my visit in the previous autumn. The Merv Tékés no longer ventured to make plundering expeditions in Russian territory, and had also ceased to do so in the direction of Khorassan. Complete tranquillity prevailed. Persians travelled without escort along the Muzderan road to Meshed in parties of two or three men. Even the aged Commandant of Sarakhs, Colonel Abas Key Khan, who formerly did not dare to show himself beyond the walls of his fortress without fifty armed followers, now rode about in every direction with ten attendants. He met me as an old friend, and it was with difficulty that I could prevail on him to allow my Aleilis to purchase their own provisions and provender. He wished to supply us with everything free of cost.

During my stay I and all my men were treated as his guests, and he insisted on supplying provender for my horses out of his own stores without payment.

While my men were employed in making the necessary preparations for our advance, I devoted my leisure to making inquiries as to the country through which I intended to travel. Although my guide, Ana Geldy Sirdar, was well acquainted with all the roads, as he had taken part in many plundering raids in Northern Afghanistan and Khorassan, and although several of my Aleili Tékés had journeyed along the course of the Heri-Rud, I did not place entire confidence in them. They were very averse to travelling in the country between the Heri-rud and Murgab. With great mendacity they endeavoured to assure me that there was no ferry across the Heri-Rud at Sarakhs, and that even a ford did not exist at that point, declaring likewise that there were no roads beyond; on the other hand, they unanimously praised the road leading along the Western Persian bank, which had great attractions for them on account of its safety.

Those who are acquainted with the artifices of the Tékés cannot be misled by them, for these sons of the desert are not masters of the art of lying. The information obtained by me from other sources led me to conclude that the best road from Sarakhs, southwards, runs between the Murgab and Heri-Rud, and not through Persian territory. I had already previously ascertained the fact of the existence of a ford at Sarakhs from some traders who had travelled from Merv to Askabad, and therefore on the morning of the 23rd April (5th May), on leaving Sarakhs, I ordered the guide given me by the Persian Colonel for showing us the ford to lead us across to the eastern bank of the Heri-Rud. The country in the neighbourhood of Sarakhs becomes more enlivened. Along both banks of the Heri-Rud and around the fortification settlements are distributed of Merv Tékés, who obtain the sanction of the Persian Government to occupy lands and to irrigate them with water, which they are allowed to divert from

the Heri-Rud; in return for this privilege they pay the Commandant of Sarakhs a tax of one-tenth of the produce of their fields.

Already at Dowletabad the river divides into several branches and overflows its banks to a considerable extent at many points, in consequence of which in the dry season, during the month of August, and even of July, the Heri-Rud does not reach Sarakhs. Sixteen versts ($10\frac{2}{3}$ miles) above the latter place there are dams which divert the water into deep canals ("aryks"), by which the water is not only brought to Sarakhs, but even 10 or 12 versts farther northward. Three main canals lead from the dam; one runs on the Persian bank, and the two others extend along the eastern bank; all three run almost parallel with the river. The canal on the western bank is maintained for the purpose of supplying Sarakhs and Kale No with water. The other two canals were neglected, and it was only during the present year that they were repaired and brought into efficient condition by the Merv Tékés, who have settled near it and at Old Sarakhs. These canals existed before the erection of the Sarakhs fort, and when Sarakhs was inhabited by Merv Turkomans. These canals now run as far as Old Sarakhs; formerly they extended still farther to the north-east, namely, as far as Askabad.

Before the capture of Geuk-Tépé the Persians did not dare to lay claim to lands on the eastern bank of the Heri-Rud, and even on the western bank there were no settlements beyond a distance of 50 versts from Meshed. Circumstances have now changed, and the Persians are playing the part of masters in the neighbourhood of Old Sarakhs, the Salyr Turkomans who formerly possessed the lands in this locality not being able now to maintain their rights to these lands. The country about here is the best adapted for agriculture along the whole course of the Heri-Rud, as far as Khosan, out of which the river flows between low banks, which extend, however, only to Pesh Rabat. Beyond this the Heri-Rud enters a gorge of high mountains. There are but few valleys capable of being irrigated, and the valleys that exist are of no great extent; it is only at Pul-i-Khatun, on the Persian bank, and at Kassan-Kala, on the eastern, that large settlements may be established. From Khosan to Pul-i-Khatun the Heri-Rud flows for the greater part in one stream, from 15 to 20 fathoms broad. The water in the river is high from the commencement of January to the end of March. At this time the river cannot be forded without great danger, owing to the rapidity of the current. In the month of April the river can be crossed at many points where the depth of water does not exceed 4 feet. During the summer the water in the river diminishes considerably, and in June and July the river may be crossed at all points, excepting at those places where the steepness of the banks would prevent such crossing.

The slopes of the mountains are overgrown with pistachio trees throughout the whole valley; mulberry trees are also occasionally met with. The edges of the river are overgrown with willow bushes and reeds, and in some places so thickly that they cannot be penetrated.

Grass for horses is found in abundance everywhere and of good quality. The water of the Heri-Rud, although not clear, is of good taste.

It is said at Sarakhs that in former years there was more water in the Heri-Rud; there are, however, no grounds for accepting this assertion as a fact. In 1832 Burnes found the bed of the river quite dry, and of such insignificant proportions was the bed that he took it for the course of some small affluent of the Tejend.

The further course of the Heri-Rud northward and to the north-westward from Sarakhs is known under the name of the Tejend; there is no current in this part of the river, except at high water; then the river is very deep, and in many places it cannot be crossed. O'Donovan swam across the river in February at a place north of Kangaly-Guzar. Lieutenant Alikanoff and Sokoloff, a Cossack officer who accompanied the Russian merchant Koushin to Merv, crossed the Tejend at Karybent dam; in the middle of February the Tejend had here a breadth of 12 fathoms, and a depth of $5\frac{1}{2}$ feet. Frequently the depth of the water here is greater, and then during a month or a month and a-half caravans can only cross the river at Alaman-Djungal, to which point the Tejend does not reach, the waters of it being conducted to the former place by canals. The river leaves its banks and inundates the surrounding country only when the dam across the river above Herat is destroyed; this dam serves for irrigating the Afghan portion of the Heri-Rud valley.

In summer there is no current in the Tejend; in places it becomes quite dry, and it may be said to consist mostly of long lakes, fed, in the opinion of the natives, by springs, and perhaps by a subterranean prolongation of the Chacha, Mehneh, and Dushak streams, which disappear in morasses situated 15 or 20 versts (10 or $13\frac{1}{2}$ miles)

from the Tejend. This opinion is founded on the fact that the water in these lakes is cold, and that it does not dry up in the hottest summer, which would hardly be the case if these lakes consisted of an accumulation of spring water in the deep holes of the bed of the Tejend.

The settlements of the Tékés who roam along the Tejend are concentrated to the northward of Karybent and in the direction of Alaman-Djungal. The remaining names which appear on maps designate ferries; there are no inhabitants in their vicinity.

The country between the Murgab and Heri-Rud had, up to the present time, been completely unknown. Along the Murgab and south of Merv the following Saryk settlements occur:—Yulatan, Penjdeh, and Bala-Murgab. Beyond this, southward, the Djemshidis and Teimuris occupy the slopes of the Perepamisus. West of the Murgab, and as far as the Heri-Rud, there is not a single inhabited point. All the forts along the Kulik are in ruins and abandoned by the inhabitants. The road from Merv to Herat, which runs along this river, was described by Shakespeare and Abbott, who travelled by it in 1840 and 1841. No information existed respecting the country between the Kulik and Heri-Rud; no European traveller had ever visited it, and among the neighbouring inhabitants it was only known to the Sirdars, or leaders of robber bands. The Saryks of Yulatan refrained from waging open warfare with their near neighbours of Merv, but the Saryks of Penjdeh and the Murgab constantly despoiled the Mervis. These, in their turn, retaliated in the same way. The relations of both tribes to the Djemshidis and Teimuris did not differ from those existing between themselves.

The principal and constant occupation of both Mervis and Saryks consisted in pillaging the settlements of Northern Afghanistan and Khosan. Wherever the point selected for attack may have been situated, the routes pursued by the robber bands always ran through the country above described, and no one dared to settle in it; and the forts that formerly existed along the Kulik and Heri-Rud were abandoned, as was also the maintenance of the roads. Neither caravans nor travellers ever risked venturing into this part of the country, for fear of encountering Saryk or Merv raiders on their way to Persia or Afghanistan. Now cases of robbery by Merv Tékés are of solitary occurrence, and the Saryks are the only Turkomans who continue to pilage openly. My Aleili followers were very much afraid of meeting some large party of Saryk marauders, particularly as a feud existed between them and that tribe; and the Aleilis were also at enmity with the Mervis. Ana-Geldy Sirdar, the guide from Merv, had, on separate occasions, received three sabre-cuts from the Saryks, and acknowledged that he had deserved them. All candidly confessed that their chance of safety lay in the present immunity of Russians from all attacks, the natives fearing to do them any harm.

We had no opportunity of judging the nature of the treatment that the Saryks would have extended to us, as we met none of their bands. Our encounters with Mervis and Afghans fully confirmed the opinions of the Aleilis. The first incident occurred at about 15 versts (10 miles) from Sarakhs, and, owing to a misunderstanding, nearly terminated in a fusilade. At a moment when I had ridden away from the road a party of men, who proved to be Mervis from the neighbourhood of Sarakhs, appeared in view; they were harmless workmen, on their way to repair a canal. My Aleilis lost their heads, and galloped in all directions in search of me; the Mervis, on the other hand, took us for a party of Saryks, and prepared for defence. Explanations, however, were soon after exchanged, and no affray ensued.

The road from Sarakhs to Khosan, 218 versts (145½ miles) was traversed in five stages.

From Sarakhs the road first runs in a south-easterly direction; at a point 1 verst (½ mile) distant from Old Sarakhs it turns due south. After proceeding half a verst beyond the old Persian fort we crossed the Heri-Rud at the ford, which is a very easy one. The river flows here in four branches, and only in one of them was the water up to the horses' girths; in the others the water was much shallower. The banks are sloping, and the soil is of compact gravel. There are no holes, roots, or stones in the river. The water in the river had already somewhat subsided at the time of our crossing. It sometimes happens that the river cannot be forded at Sarakhs, though this lasts only a few days.

By permission of the Persian Government the Merv Tékés are building a fort opposite to the ford; this fort will be called Popysh Peluan-Kala, after the name of their Elder. For 3 versts beyond the fort the road runs across the Saryks and fields of the new settlers.

To the Dookala ruins the road runs along the large canals which commence at Dowletabad, and which have been previously mentioned here. The country all the way is completely level: the soil is a sandy clay; the sandy wastes shown in maps do not exist in reality.

Dookala, 14 versts ($9\frac{1}{3}$ miles) from Sarakhs, consists of the ruins of a small fort. Here the road leaves the canal on the right, and trending for about 5 versts ($3\frac{1}{3}$ miles) as far as Kassan-Kala, along a plain, then extends beyond, through a hilly country, to the Persian fort of Noruz-Abad, on the western bank of the river. Along this extent the Heri-Rud flows close to precipitous, though not high, eastern bank. Here the road runs along the slight elevations at the back, which have easy ascents and descents. The soil is of clay, and wheeled vehicles could proceed without any difficulty. Opposite the Persian fort of Noruz-Abad the road again descends to the river, and at 4 versts ($2\frac{2}{3}$ miles) beyond passes the Téké ruins of Noruz-Abad, $21\frac{1}{2}$ versts ($14\frac{1}{2}$ miles) from Dookala. Both these points have been abandoned by the inhabitants owing to frequent attacks of the Tékés and Saryks.

For nearly 10 versts ($6\frac{2}{3}$ miles) farther, nearly as far as Shir-Tépé mound, the road continues to run along the Heri-Rud, and then deflects to the south-east, leaving the river to the right; it does not again approach the river until reaching Khosan.

From the turning point to Rabat ruins, at the entrance to the gorge of the pass through the Babak Mountains, about 50 versts ($33\frac{1}{3}$ miles) from Khosan, the general character of the road is almost the same; it partly runs through level country and partly across hilly ground; the elevation of the hillocks is inconsiderable; with few exceptions the soil is of sandy clay. Steep ascents and descents are rare. Wheeled traffic would change the direction of the road in some places, and in others it would be necessary to clear it; the labour, however, would be small, as the soil is throughout soft. Along the whole of this extent good food for horses is to be found in many places. Pistachio-nut trees, standing separately, are to be seen pretty frequently growing on the slopes of the hills.

At a distance of 29 versts ($19\frac{1}{3}$ miles) from Noruz-Abad the road runs for half a verst along a neglected "kariz."* In some of the wells water may still be found. According to my guides the bitter taste of the water is partly to be attributed to the circumstance that the wells have not been cleansed and cleared for a long time, in consequence of which the water has become stagnant; even when the "kariz" was in good repair the water is said to have been not quite sweet; it was, however, fit for use. The presence of salts in the geological formation of the surrounding mountains is also proved by the presence of two considerable salt marshes at a small distance from the road and at the foot of the hills which extend along the Heri-Rud; the surface of these salines is covered with a crust of bitterish salt, evidently washed down by rain, out of the surrounding mountains.

Adam-Eolan wells, 41 versts ($27\frac{1}{3}$ miles) from Noruz-Abad, are two in number, and lie in an elliptical hollow, between some mounds. When we visited these wells the water was quite sweet, notwithstanding that the wells had not been cleaned out for a long time. The Mervis, however, said that during very hot weather the water has a slightly saline taste. It must be supposed that the taste of the water must be bitter, and not salt, in consequence of the stagnancy of the water. The depth of the wells is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms to the surface of the water, and 2 fathoms to the bottom of the well. The guides stated that the wells are never dry. Formerly the wells were more numerous; at present all, with the exception of two, are filled up. There is excellent fodder for horses all round.

Agar-Cheshmé, $12\frac{1}{2}$ versts ($8\frac{1}{2}$ miles) from Adam-Eolan, spring, with excellent fresh water; at a distance of half-a-verst up the valley there is another spring which is at present choked up. In all the valleys around there is abundant food for horses.

Rabat Kungrueli ruins, $8\frac{1}{2}$ versts ($5\frac{2}{3}$ miles) from Agar-Cheshmé. The wells here yield, at a depth of $2\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms, plenty of water, which, however, is slightly brackish. If the wells were kept in proper condition, the water would be perfectly good, for Great Rabat, of which ruins only now remain, stood near these wells. From Kungrueli two roads lead to Afghanistan: one by way of Kyzyl-Bulak and Khombow, along which we proceeded, and the other through Ak-Rabat. The information I obtained respecting the last road I shall give in another part of this paper. The road from Kungrueli to Kyzyl-Bulak runs almost entirely over level ground.

* A "kariz" is a row of wells at a small distance from each other, and connected together by an underground passage. They serve for the collection of water, which is conducted to fields for irrigation.

Kyzyl-Bulak, $39\frac{1}{2}$ versts ($26\frac{1}{2}$ miles) from Kungrueli. An abundant spring of fresh water lies 200 fathoms off the road, in a small ravine leading to the Heri-Rud. The sides of this ravine are of red sandstone, to which the origin of the name of the spring must be attributed. On the 20th verst ($13\frac{1}{2}$ miles) the road is intersected by the Shur-ab rivulet, which contains such brackish water that not all horses will drink it. The road runs along this stream for about 5 versts ($13\frac{1}{2}$ miles) to Rabat ruins, on level ground; at the ruins it leads by a defile into the Barkhut Mountains. Here, on the banks of the Shur-ab, is a small spring of sweet water.

The ascent of the pass across the Borkhut presents no difficulties. With very little labour the present road could be made traversable by wheeled vehicles. The mountains are formed of sandstone. The road runs along the defile through which flows the Shur-ab, which is overgrown with reeds. The river takes its rise almost at the summit of the pass, and out of a morass which, in some places, is 200 fathoms wide. The height of the pass is 3,100 feet above the level of the sea, and about 900 feet above the surrounding locality. The descent to Khosan is more sloping and convenient than the ascent, and could even now be traversed by carts. About half-way down the descent is a sweet-water spring called Khombow, 36 versts (24 miles) from Kyzyl-Bulak; and 2 versts beyond, at the termination of a small stream that issues out of a spring, are the ruins of Rabat Abdullah Khan. From Khombow the gentle descent continues for 6 versts (4 miles) more. The road then divides; one leads to Pesh-Rabat, on the western bank of the Heri-Rud, the other to Khosan, both running through level country.

Khosan, $45\frac{1}{2}$ versts ($30\frac{1}{2}$ miles) from Khombow, is the first Afghan settlement on the banks of the Heri-Rud on the road from Meshed to Afghanistan. The road beyond Khosan to Herat has been described by many travellers, both Russian and English. It runs along the north bank of the Heri-Rud through level country.

Compared with other routes traversed by me, and according to all accounts, the road above described is the best between Sarakhs and Khosan, and consequently between Askabad and Herat. The roads to Herat from the Caspian, viâ Meshed, run through mostly inhabited and well-cultivated country, in which an abundant supply of water is found. The road therefore presents considerable facilities for active traffic. The disadvantages of the road lie in its traversing several mountain ridges. The construction of a good road over these for wheeled vehicles, and more especially the construction of a railway, would be a work of great labour. Still more unfavourable conditions are presented by the roads from Askabad to Herat, through Meshed. In order to reach Khorassan from the Akhal and Atek country it is necessary to traverse the Daman-i-Kari range. The Hermab Pass, leading from Geuk-Tépé to Boojnoord, is considered the most convenient, but even that pass would present great difficulties in the construction of a railway, and the removal of these obstacles would hardly be recouped by the establishment of greater facilities of communication with Khorassan. Should it be necessary to construct a railway as rapidly as possible, there can be no question of any other direction than that of Sarakhs.

The roads from Sarakhs to Herat, along the Persian bank, will be described by me below. That bank yields water in abundance, but the passes which the roads traverse present greater obstacles than those leading through Khombow. The entire length of the latter road, from Askabad to Herat, is 585 versts (390 miles). The construction of a railway over this distance would not involve any engineering works for the first 300 versts (200 miles), and the last section of 135 versts (90 miles); the intermediate part, which would extend over a distance of 150 versts (100 miles), would not present any greater difficulties than those most of our Russian railways which run partly through flat and partly over hilly ground have to contend with.

The pass is one of an easy kind. If a rapid construction of a railway were demanded, sharp bends in the line would be adopted, and the work on this portion of the line would be completed as soon as the other parts of it. This would be impossible if another direction for the railway be selected.

The road through Khombow is the most convenient for wheeled traffic. In addition to it there are several other routes which also run between the Heri-Rud and Murgab from north to south, and which are connected with each other by transverse roads.

I collected information respecting all these roads. As a possible road for wheeled vehicles from Merv to Herat, the most interesting is that which branches off from the road traversed by me at Rabat-Kungrueli ruins. From this point the road runs to Ak-Rabat, a locality abounding in fresh water, which is obtained from wells at a depth of not more than 1 fathom. These wells may be dug almost anywhere,

and water will be obtained. The road then passes through Guilen and Chilimé-Souz, two streams yielding a plentiful supply of fresh water. The pass over the Barkhut near Chilimé-Souz is said to be of the same character as that at Khomboù. Beyond the pass one road leads to Kussan along a perfectly level country, and another to Shekivan along a line of inconsiderable elevations. The road from Merv to Ak-Rabat first runs along the River Murgab, then along the Kulik River to Djeveneveida.* After this it strikes off in the direction of Ak-Rabat and passes by Islim-Chilimé Spring.

By this route the Perepamisus Mountains are avoided, as is also the pass at the source of the Kulik River, which led to the supposition that the road from Merv to Herat was impracticable for wheeled traffic on a large scale.

The whole distance of the road from Merv to Herat, according to this direction, is about 380 versts (253 $\frac{1}{3}$ miles).

No. 56.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 30, 1.15 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, October 30, 1882, 11.15 A.M.

I LEARN that two Russian engineers have lately surveyed the Heri-Rud district from Sarakhs to the Herat frontier. They wished to enter the Herat territory, but were refused permission by the Afghan authorities.

No. 57.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 6.)

(Extract.)

Tehran, September 26, 1882.

I HEAR on the authority of travellers who lately came from Merv that the Turkomans of that place had agreed to pay tithes and tribute to the Khan of Khiva in token of their allegiance to him. They do not appear by this arrangement to be precluded from making raids on the Persian territory, as a large party left shortly afterwards on a plundering expedition into Khorassan.

No. 58.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 13.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, November 6, 1882.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 26th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of Part III of M. Lessar's narrative of his journey from Askabad to Herat.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 58.

Extract from the "Golos" of September 1 (13) and 4 (16), 1882.

Continuation of M. Lessar's Narrative of his Journey from Askabad to Herat.

(Continued from No. 55.)

(Translation.)

III.—*Four Days in Afghanistan.*

THE original plan of my journey did not comprehend a visit to Afghanistan. It was fated, however, that I was to penetrate into that country. The direct road to Persia from Khomboù runs past the ruins of Pesh-Rabat; near these there are two or three fords which at the end of April could have been crossed without any difficulty

* This part of the road has been described by Shakespeare and Abbott.

with a good guide; none of my men, however, were capable of leading us across. I was consequently obliged to proceed to Kussan, for the purpose of getting a guide there, and then to return to Persia by the high road that runs from Herat to Meshed.

We reached Khosan at 9 o'clock in the morning. Leaving my Aleili escort behind, I rode on to the fort in company with two interpreters.

There are still many ruins at Khosan, but the results of the pacification of Central Asia are beginning to be visible even there; the ruined buildings are being rebuilt, and land that formerly lay neglected is now being cultivated, even at some distance from the fort. On our approach the guard at the gates displayed no hostility, but regarded us with great astonishment. When we explained to them by what route we had arrived their surprise was still greater, that road being inaccessible to the Afghans even to the present day.

Notice was sent of my arrival to Ata-Mamed Khan, the Commandant of the fort, while I remained talking with the soldiers. One of them came up and greeted me in Russian. He had been sold as a slave by the Tékés to the Khivans; liberated in 1873, he entered the service of some Russians, and subsequently returned to his native country.

In due time the Khan appeared at the gates, and invited me to his abode. After travelling some narrow lanes between fields and gardens, we entered a two-storied house standing in a beautiful garden, in which was a fine reservoir with water. The vegetation is remarkably luxuriant, owing to the abundant supply of water conducted to this place in "aryks" or conduits from the Heri-Rud.

The Khan was very amiable, and offered me food and refreshments. He boastfully told the members of his suite that he had seen many Feringhis, and knew their habits; in proof of this, he ordered the fowl for my repast to be roasted in halves in the European manner, and not cut to pieces, and then cooked, as is done in Afghanistan. After tea had been served some visitors came in, and a discussion ensued between them and the Khan as to the real signification of my visit; the road by which I had travelled gave them additional ground for surmise. Europeans, they said, and especially Russians, were rare visitors in their country, and some expressed a fear that the Ruler of Herat (Kunduz Khan) would be displeased if not apprised of my arrival; others, however, asserted that the Khan might get into trouble by detaining a Russian. After long hesitation and doubt as to the course he ought to pursue with regard to me, he decided on sending a letter to Herat announcing my arrival, and begged me to remain as his visitor for a couple of days, when an answer to his letter would arrive. To this I told the Khan that if it were necessary to obtain permission of the Ruler of Herat for proceeding from Khosan to Kiafir-Kale I should go to Gorian, and there await the requisite permit. Ata-Mamed was glad to pass me on in this manner to his Chief, the Khan of Gorian, and to relieve himself of all responsibility in the matter. The Khan's Assistant ("Naib") and three horsemen were told to escort me to Gorian.

The road from Khosan to Gorian branches off from the road to Herat near the fort, runs along the irrigating canals which lead from the Heri-Rud, and on the 12th verst (9th mile) crosses the bridge at Tirpulé. This bridge, which was built by Yar-Mahmed Khan, is, with its approaches, 40 fathoms, or 120 paces, long. The river at Tirpul flows in a single stream, through a valley of some breadth. On no occasion has the water in the river, even when at its highest level, left its banks at this bridge. The abutments and arches are of brick; the buttresses for protecting the bridge against ice are faced with hard stone; in severe winters the ice is so thick that it easily bears the weight of a horseman. A considerable quantity of ice is brought down the river in spring.

At high-water level the road from Herat to Meshed does not run through Khosan, but through Tirpul, and then proceeds along the bank to Kiafir-Kale. From Tirpul there is a road to Khaf; the mountains must be crossed at the bridge. The Heri-Rud flows close to the mountains on its southern bank, and the road both to Kiafir-Kale and to Gorian runs in the shape of a narrow pathway, and in some places along declivities of considerable steepness. Owing to this, when the water in the river is low, the river is not crossed at the bridge, but forded where the road on the other bank runs along more level ground. At a distance of 10 versts (6½ miles) from Tirpul the valley of the Heri-Rud becomes broader; luxuriant meadow-lands stretch along its banks, and afford pasture to numerous herds of horses, of which my Afghans assured me there were more than 40,000 depastured here. Horses form the principal object of exportation from the Province of Herat into Persia; the animals, however, are of small size, and common, or Yabu bred; on the other hand, they are strong and hardy. The inhabitants have other cattle also in considerable quantities.

From Gorian to Herat there is one stage of 45 versts (30 miles). The valley becomes still wider, and remains equally luxuriant. There is a dam on the Heri-Rud, a little below Herat, which serves for the distribution of water by means of irrigating canals throughout the valley, which no doubt is the most fertile in Central Asia south of the Oxus.

At present the produce of the valley consists of asafoetida, saffron, pistachio nuts, fruit of every kind, fine grapes, corn, barley, and clover. Silkworms are also bred in considerable numbers. Trees, and even bushes, are only found in places where the Heri-Rud overflows its banks; the summits of the hills are quite bare; each settlement has fine orchards; for fuel prickly plants, brought from great distances, are used.

Along the road we only met with encampments of herdsmen; all the villages are in ruins and abandoned by their former inhabitants in consequence of Turkoman raids. We were shown villages that had been pillaged in the preceding month of November by Merv Tékés. I was then engaged in making a survey for a railway between Askabad and Sarakhs. The report that 3,000 horsemen had started from Merv for some unknown place produced a panic throughout the Atek country. By various roads the Mervis sped southwards, and pillaged all the settlements between Shebesh and Shekivan. The attack was so rapid that the robbers could not be pursued, and they succeeded in carrying off much cattle and some prisoners. This was the last "alaman," or robber raid of the Merv Tékés. It is only the Saryks now who occasionally commit depredations; but they venture out for this purpose only in small bands.

I passed two days at Gorian. The Khan of that place did his best to please me. For my part, I continually expressed my dissatisfaction at being detained for a mere formality, and on the alleged ground that it was necessary to obtain permission, not, as in my case, to travel through Afghanistan, but for the purpose of crossing the river near the Afghan fort. I sarcastically asked the Khan how the Afghan traders were treated at Samarcand; whether in the case of each trader a messenger was dispatched to obtain the sanction of the Yarim-Padishah* for his entrance into Russian territory.

Particularly distasteful to the Afghans were the accounts I gave them as to how the Russians travelled in Persia and the Persians in Russia.

The Khan endeavoured to justify the measures adopted with regard to strangers in Afghanistan, on the ground that, the latter being a small country, a single individual could do it harm, whereas, Russia, he said, was a large Empire, and need not be afraid of any one.

On the evening of the second day there arrived from Herat, with many followers, Nizam-ed-Deen Khan, the Assistant and Chief Councillor of Sirdar Kunduz Khan, Ruler of Herat.

Nizam-ed-Deen Khan, better known under the name of Aghund Zadé, is considered at Herat a very clever and cunning man, and was sent to learn from me the real object of my visit. He was the bearer of presents for me of sweetmeats, tea, and sugar. The conversation began in the usual manner, with inquiries as to my health, my family, and whether I was satisfied with everything in Afghanistan. I returned thanks for the hospitality shown me, and expressed regret at having put to inconvenience a person who was so engaged in public affairs as himself. To this Aghund Zadé replied that the guest of so great a country as Russia was an honoured guest, &c.

After the exchange of all these courteous speeches had terminated, the Khan announced that he wished to speak with me in private. Having sent his suite away, he informed me that the Ruler of Herat had sent him to ascertain from me whether I required anything, and whether I had been charged with any special mission to Afghanistan. All would be ready to serve me, he said, for many Afghans visit Samarcand, and are well received there, while Afghans rarely have an opportunity of showing hospitality to Russians. Regretting the waste of all Aghund Zadé's astuteness and cunning, I hastened to reply to him as follows:—

"On leaving Askabad I never contemplated coming to Afghanistan; the necessity of engaging guides for crossing into Persia alone led me to Khosan, and the observance of Afghan formalities farther to Gorian. I should be very happy to be the Khan's guest at Herat, but circumstances do not allow me to enjoy that pleasure; I am obliged to go to Khaf, and I request you to supply me with guides to that place."

Aghund Zadé politely acceded to this request, and promised that two guides should be placed at my disposal next day at dawn.

* Hsif-Czar, by which name the Governor-General of Turkestan is known throughout Central Asia.

At last, towards dusk, Aghund Zadé took his departure, having given orders that all my wishes should be complied with. The local authorities, enlightened as to the favourable light in which my visit was regarded at Herat, redoubled their attentions towards me. When I left, they obtained a certificate from me to the effect that I was satisfied with the reception I had met with.

IV.—*Gorian—Turbet-i-Haideri—Meshed.*

At dawn on the 30th April (12th May) we left Gorian. The road at first runs through rich pastures, on which we saw feeding large flocks of sheep and herds of horses; the road trends north-west 80 degrees, and therefore rapidly leaves the Heri-Rud. We soon commenced to ascend, in order to cross a low spur of the mountains; in constructing a road for wheeled vehicles this ascent may be easily avoided. The highest point of the pass is 45 fathoms above the surrounding country. In a broad valley lying beyond we passed several Ghianzes and ruined "rabats."

In the cisterns of the Ghianzes water is still to be found; but the buildings, as well as those of the "rabats," have been reduced to ruins by the Mervis and Saryks. Here every step of the road bore traces of the exploits of these miscreants, and the whole valley, as far as Herat, is abandoned by its inhabitants.

The country is generally not well supplied with water. About mid-way a small stream, called the Sharou, flows out of the northern spurs of the hills; it is only after a fall of rain that there is a current in this river; when we passed it there were only small pools of water in it, and the water was slightly brackish. The "kariz," or wells, which formerly supplied the settlements and "rabats" along this road with water, are silted up and dry. At the distance of 1 verst (two-thirds of a mile) from Sharou I was shown the Perso-Afghan frontier; on maps this frontier is placed much farther eastward. The Afghans declared, however, that in former times, before the inhabitants had left the region, Sharou Kala was an Afghan settlement. North of the road along which we proceeded stretches the Bakherz Valley. A stream called the Teibad-Su issues out of the mountains a little beyond Herat; its water is all exhausted in irrigation at Teibad settlement; it is only after heavy rains that the waters of this river, as well as of other rivulets which are otherwise generally dry, gain the Heri-Rud.

To the right and left of the road occur artificial mounds, similar in appearance to those met with in the Atek country. The Afghans explained to me that they were raised by order of Nadir-Shah for the purpose of erecting forts and watch-towers on them.

From Herat the road runs for 6 versts (4 miles) along the small valley of the Ser-i-Tcheshmé rivulet, and then intersects the Derdeneh rivulet, both inconsiderable streams; owing to this, Kerat is supplied with water taken from "kariz" (underground cisterns). Beyond this point the road crosses over to the western side of the Kerat hills, and then descends to Shishou Spring, near which there is a small meadow with good grass. A few days before our arrival six men, natives of Khaf, who were driving camels to Herat, had been seized by the Saryks. A general panic consequently prevailed.

On seeing my Aleilis, some Persians who were journeying with some laden donkeys abandoned them and fled in dismay to the mountains. It was in vain that our Persian guide ascended some high mounds and endeavoured to reassure the fugitives by voice and gesture. They would not come out of their hiding-places.

From Shishou the road descends into a valley which slopes transversely in the direction of Khaf; this place becomes visible at a distance of 15 versts (10 miles); two streams running south are crossed before reaching the town. There is scarcely any fuel along the whole road, commencing from Gorian. There is also not much food for horses after leaving the rich meadows of the valley of the Heri-Rud.

Khaf is the head-quarters of Colonel Stuart, the English Agent at Herat.

During the Russian expedition of 1880-81 against the Tékés, disguised as an Armenian, and under the pretext of buying horses, he proceeded to Dereghcz, from whence he watched the movements of the Russian troops. He is principally occupied in riding about and surveying the country on the Perso-Afghan frontier. During this spring the Colonel was at Kerat, Kiafir-Kale, and also proceeded as far as Mohsinabad and Pesh-Rabat. After having organized some unsuccessful expeditions to Merv, he betook himself to the south of Persia.

The road from Khaf to Turbet-i-Haideri runs in a north-westerly direction along a broad valley; from its eastern side hills running continuously are visible, while

on the western these hills gradually become inconsiderable hillocks, and frequently no elevations are seen on the horizon. The road here runs on level ground and over a good gravel soil. Bridges span all the ravines, and these bridges can bear the weight of a cart not very heavily laden.

Both English and Russian maps do not show all the villages actually existing on the road to Meshed.

Since the pacification of the country new villages are springing up. The vegetation is everywhere very rich; but no great development of the country can be expected, owing to the limited quantity of water, in the region. . . . All the water that exists is sucked up by the "kariz," accumulated in them, and then conducted to the neighbouring villages, which present the appearance of green patches of cultivation in the midst of a barren country. No food for cattle is to be met with up to Meshed. Horses are only kept by the Khans. Donkeys are generally employed for travelling from place to place. Camels are rarely seen, and even then they belong to caravans coming from distant places. Fruit trees are to be found in each village. No forests exist in the country. "Rabats," or buildings erected for the accommodation of travellers, are numerous; they generally stand close to the road, and near a spring of water. The scarcity of wood is one of the drawbacks on this road to travellers. Wood for fuel cannot always be purchased; even prickly shrubs, which are here generally used for fuel, are obtained with difficulty.

The road near the small watch-tower at Gikdabady emerges out of the valley, and ascends some inconsiderable elevations. After passing these Turbet-i-Haideri becomes visible. The gardens surrounding the fortification spread over several miles; it took us more than an hour to pass through them. The water is supplied from springs and "kariz." Turbet-i-Haideri is one of the largest towns in this part of Persia. Within the fort there is a bazaar, which consists of a capital brick building, in the shape of the letter T. The principal articles exposed for sale are, as at Meshed, woven fabrics, saddles, bridles, saddle-bags, tea, French sugar, lamps, hardware, glass, and jewellery. There are also shops in which meat, vegetables, grits, barley, &c., are sold.

The mountainous part of the road begins beyond Turbet, and continues to be of this character as far as Meshed. Three passes, exceeding 6,500 feet above the level of the sea, have to be traversed. The road runs frequently over rocky ground, over which even donkeys slip and fall. The ascents and descents are very steep. The road in general presents great difficulties to travellers, and has never been constructed or put in order. Its worst part occurs near Meshed, from Kiafir-Kale almost to Tirok. There is everywhere plenty of water; there is, however, no food for horses, and no timber or fuel. At a distance of 15 versts the gilt cupola over the tomb of Imaam Riza becomes visible.

At Meshed I intended to pass two days in completing my arrangements for continuing my journey. Thanks to the hospitality of M. Nasyrbakoff, our Agent at Meshed, my preparations were greatly facilitated, and my stay in the town was rendered very agreeable. The report of my journey to Gorian had already reached Meshed, though in an exaggerated form. . . . On the eve of my departure the Vali of the Province of Khorassan, Prince Rukn-ed-Dowleh, brother of the Shah, started on a survey of the eastern Persian frontier, and also for the purpose of causing fortifications to be erected at Kowsheed-Kala, Old Sarakhs, and along the line of the Tedjent. In this manner the Persian authorities will gain possession of the fertile eastern bank of the Heri-Rud, and establish their influence over the Merv Tékés. The depredations of the latter having been put an end to by the Russians, the Persians no longer fear their once lawless neighbours; and endeavour to secure their good graces.

A persistent rumour was afloat to the effect that political intercourse between the Persians and Mervans was conducted through the medium of English Agents, one of whom, it was said, was to accompany Prince Rukn-ed-Dowleh on his journey. The expedition of the Prince consisted of a force of 1,000 infantry, 1,200 cavalry, 4 guns, with camp-followers and transport-train; his followers numbered 5,000 men.

V.—Meshed—Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam, Dogoru, Sarakhs.

We left Meshed on the 9th (21st) May, pursued our journey in the direction of Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam, with a view of reaching the Heri-Rud, and then advancing along the banks of that river to Sarakhs. There are several roads that lead from Meshed to Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam; the English maps show the road that trends nearest

to the mountains, and which used to be frequented at a time when the high road from Meshed to Herat was rendered unsafe by the frequent depredations committed along it by the Saryks and Tékés of Merv. The Russian map shows a road that runs much lower down, but it partly runs across the mountain-slopes and intersects deep ravines. Now that the country has been made safe for travellers this part of the road has been abandoned, and all traffic is carried on along the road that runs direct through a valley from Feriman to Katti-Shemshir, and the ruins of Hairabad and Leuker. By this route the distance is shortened by about 10 versts ($6\frac{3}{4}$ miles); besides, it is more easily traversed.

As compared with the road from Khaf, the road above described is barren and deserted. Traces of Turkoman exploits are still visible here, and the country is only beginning to recover from the evils inflicted on it. The road runs mostly on level ground, and it is only between Husseinabad and Feriman, over an extent of 6 versts, that ravines and hillocks occur; this road would present no difficulties for the construction of a railway. Beyond Feriman the country is perfectly level. There is plenty of water along the whole route, which passes through a populated region, excepting at Husseinabad, Hairabad (in ruins), Ganz-Sefid, and Abassabad, where there are few inhabitants. At Hairabad and Abassabad water was formerly procured from underground cisterns; when these forts were abandoned by their inhabitants, out of fear of the Tékés, the cisterns were destroyed. At Ganz-Sefid, the building of the Ganz is in ruins, but the water cistern is still in existence.

The inhabitants are Persians, except at Leuker, where there are many Salors, who settled here about thirty years ago. Their language consists of a mixture of Turk and Persian dialects.

The family and many of the followers of Eyoub Khan live at Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam.

For the protection of the road and the suppression of robbery two points of observation have been established, one at Budjgun and the other at Mohsinabad; in the former place 400 mounted militia are stationed, and 100 at the latter.

Mohsinabad is situated at a distance of 5 versts ($3\frac{1}{2}$ miles) from the high road; it consists of 300 dwellings, and is abundantly supplied with water from underground cisterns. Mohsinabad-Su, which is marked on maps as an affluent of the Heri-Rud, is known to the natives under the name of Ravas. In reality it is not a stream, but a gully, which becomes filled with water only after heavy rains; it soon becomes dry again. Reference to the maps of this region is very likely to lead the traveller to the false conclusion that the whole basin of the Heri-Rud affords a plentiful supply of water; many rivers and affluents are shown on the map, but in point of fact these are only gullies which serve to drain off the rain-water. There are only two rivers here—the Kara-Su and Jam. The real course of the Jam begins at Hairabad ruins; this river has no affluents. The Teibad-Su does not reach the Heri-Rud, and its waters are all exhausted at Teibad. The whole of this part of the country, as well as the whole of Khorassan, is poorly supplied with water.

From Mohsinabad I proceeded to Kariz. The road is level; the greater part of the villages are in ruins; the "rabat" is dismantled; the inhabitants were only beginning to return. Dogaru-Rabat, on the Afghan frontier, is also in ruins; the water conduit that formerly existed here is destroyed. The fort and "rabat" of Kiafir-Kale are clearly visible from Dogaru. Five men are daily sent to this place from Khosan for guarding the ferry; at night they return to Khosan.

After leaving Dogaru we turned to the north-east, and followed the road in this direction, eventually reaching the Heri-Rud at Pesh-Rabat, built, according to the Khan of Mohsinabad, by the daughter of Timur. An inscription to that effect appears, the Khan told me, on the wall of the fort, which is in a comparatively good state of preservation. At Pesh-Rabat, where the road reaches the Heri-Rud, both banks are overgrown with reeds, bushes, and trees. In many places they cannot be approached, neither on horseback nor on foot, so thick are these reeds, &c.

From Dogaru to Zoorabad there are three roads. One crosses the river which runs into the interior of the country; in this manner it avoids the mountains, and bends round to the Persian frontier at Zoorabad. The drawbacks to this route are the two fords on the river, which occur where the banks are very precipitous, and which are not traversable at all times of the year. The second and shortest route is that which I pursued. It proceeds across the mountains, but can scarcely be called a road; in some places there is not even a pathway or horse-track. The third road, although the longest, is the best; it runs through Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam and Leuker to Zoorabad only one pass occurs on this road.

The second of these roads runs from Pesh-Rabat along the banks of the Heri-Rud to Kalsan-Kala; it then proceeds westwards and intersects the Jam 3 versts (2 miles) from the point at which the river falls into the Heri-Rud. From here the road proceeds through undulating country; it runs past the ruins of Kale-i-Melu, where there is a stream of good water, and enters the mountains 8 versts ($5\frac{1}{2}$ miles) beyond. Hence the traveller must journey along narrow paths running through defiles and mostly over bare rock, ascending high passes and descending into deep valleys. There is no road, and even pack-animals can advance only with great difficulty; the construction of a road for vehicles would involve immense labour. There is plenty of water; streams run through nearly all the valleys, and there is good pasturage for horses. Trees grow on the slopes of the mountains. Near Ghelebet Spring there is a rather thick forest.

We issued out of the mountains at about 12 versts distance (9 miles) from the Salor settlements, and then passed several lines of abandoned conduits. After this we proceeded along an irrigating canal, by means of which water was conducted to the fields at Zoorabad.

Zoorabad has at present acquired considerable importance, the occupants of about 2,000 Salor kubitkas having, with the permission of the Persian Government, settled here. About the year 1870 they lived at Old Sarakhs. They were attacked at that time by the Merv Tékés, who drove away their cattle, and compelled the greater portion of the tribe to migrate to Merv. Neither land nor water was allotted to them there; they were therefore obliged to take to cattle-grazing or to become herdsmen for the Tékés. At the time of the Russian expedition of 1880-81 there were no less than 4,000 Salor kubitkas in Merv. The remainder of the Salor tribe was distributed as follows:—1,000 kubitkas were encamped among the Saryks along the Murgab, 400 at Tchardjui, and 200 at Maisiné; while at Pul-i-Salar, near Herat, there were about 100 Salor houses.

Acting on the advice of Takhma-Sirdar, the Merv Tékés decided last summer to allow the Salors to depart to their former dwelling-places. Numbering about 2,000 kubitkas, these Salors migrated back to Sarakhs. They found their former lands occupied, and were obliged to settle themselves at Zoorabad, where the Persian authorities gave them land, with the object of establishing a cordon of Saryk posts along the Heri-Rud to resist the raids of the Mervans and Saryks. About 2,000 Salor kubitkas remained behind at Merv. . . .

The chief Salor settlement is situated on a mound near the old Zoorabad fort. Near this place the Persians intend to erect a new fortification.

The Salors received me with great hospitality, and with expressions of devotion and gratitude to Russia. They attribute their liberation from Merv entirely to the conquest of the Akhal country by the Russians and to the advice given by Takhma-Sirdar. All this, however, did not prevent them charging very high prices for everything I procured from them.

Two roads lead from Zoorabad to Pul-i-Khatun. The first, which is the shortest, runs through the mountains; the second crosses over to the eastern side of the river, and again joins the Persian bank by way of Hermaù-Derbent, where it joins the first road.

The mountainous route presents, as far as Deana-Derbent, great difficulties, and is in character similar to the road from Kala-Melu to Zoorabad. Near Deana-Derbent the road descends to the Heri-Rud, and proceeds along its bank to Sarakhs; on the eastern side of the river the mountains continue to run almost as far as Pul-i-Khatun. On the Persian side of the river the mountains recede from it, and the road only in some places runs across their low spurs. From Pul-i-Khatun to Sarakhs the road runs along gently sloping ground.

At Pul-i-Khatun (Woman's Bridge) there used formerly to be a bridge over the Heri-Rud; four arches of it still exist, but the fifth was destroyed by Medhli Khan at the time of his expedition against Merv. The whole length of the bridge is 25 fathoms. The Kara-Su falls into the Heri-Rud near this bridge. Its breadth here is about 6 fathoms, although its depth is inconsiderable (not over a horse's knee). The ford is very inconvenient, owing to the enormous boulders that strew the bed of the river.

After having on the 18th (30th) May overtaken the Prince Rukn-ed-Dowleh, with his reconnoitring force, at Noruz-Abad, I soon reached Sarakhs, where great preparations were being made for the reception of the Vali.

Along the whole road to Askabad the inhabitants of the Atek complained of their pitiable condition. The Persians systematically deprive them of water when they

most require it for their crops. The Tékés do not dare to support their rights by force, and find that they must either become Persian subjects, and pay tribute to the boundary officials, or abandon their settlements and retire either to Merv or the Tejend, notwithstanding that such migration would entail on them serious losses and privations.

No. 59.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 13.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, November 7, 1882.

DURING the Session of the House of Commons on the 2nd instant Mr. Ashmead Bartlett asked a question with regard to the reported advance of a Russian force towards the Afghan frontier and Herat, and Sir Charles Dilke answered that two Russian engineers had attempted to enter Herat territory, but had been refused permission by the Afghan authorities.

This answer was reported to St. Petersburg by telegraph, and it produced a short article in the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of the 4th instant, copy of which is inclosed, and which states that no news has reached this city of the fact mentioned by Sir Charles Dilke, that it is not known what persons may be alluded to, and that there must be some mistake in the qualification of the persons spoken of by Sir Charles.

I have been unable to ascertain that there is any foundation whatever for the rumour mentioned by Mr. Bartlett of the advance of a Russian force 100 miles south of Merv.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 59.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of October 23 (November 4), 1882.

D'APRÈS une dépêche de Londres Sir Charles Dilke a parlé hier, à la Chambre des Communes, d'après un Rapport du Chargé d'Affaires d'Angleterre à Téhéran, en date du 30 Octobre, de deux ingénieurs Russes qui auraient cherché à pénétrer sur le territoire de Hérat, mais auxquels les autorités de l'Afghanistan auraient refusé l'autorisation à cet effet.

Tout ce que nous pouvons dire à ce sujet, c'est qu'on n'a à St. Pétersbourg aucune connaissance d'un fait de cette nature, qu'on ignore de quelles personnalités il peut s'agir, et qu'il doit y avoir erreur sur la qualification des individus dont Sir Charles Dilke a parlé.

No. 60.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 13.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, November 8, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, according to the "Moscow Gazette" of the 25th October (6th November), the "Baku News" states that "it is intended to construct a road between Ghermab and the Rabat Pass into Persia. This road is to start from Geuk-Tépé and terminate in Persia. The first Russian section of it, from Geuk-Tépé to Ghermab, is ready and now used by wheeled vehicles. A sum of 25,000 roubles is asked for by the Government for completing the second section. By the construction of this road a new route for merchandize will be opened to Meshed, which is a very important commercial centre in Central Asia. At present there is only one road to that point, and a very difficult pass occurs on it at Asterabad. Even at present the carriage of goods viâ Askabad is cheaper than by way of Gez. With the establishment of a good road for carts the cost of transport will be still less by the newly-projected road."

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 61.

*Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.**

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 15, 1882.

IN your telegram of the 30th ultimo, you stated that two Russian Engineers were reported to have lately surveyed the Heri-Rud district from Sarakhs to the Herat frontier, but that the Afghan authorities had refused them permission to enter the Herat territory.

A statement in the above sense having been made in the House of Commons by the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, the truth of the report has been denied by the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg," and I should accordingly be glad to learn whether you are in a position to furnish particulars as to the identity and proceedings of the persons who conducted the survey in question.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 62.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 16.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, November 16, 1882.

ON the 9th October two Russian officers with twenty Cossacks were seen at Turbet Jām, and stated that they were on their way from Zoorabad to Herat. On the 15th October news was received at Herat from Governor of Kuhsan that these officers had arrived on the frontier; after consultation, Herat authorities issued orders that Russians should not enter Afghan territory, but might express wishes in writing to be laid before Ameer, whose reply would be forwarded to them as soon as received.

No. 63.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 25.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, November 25, 1882.

RUSSO-PERSIAN Boundary Commission will shortly assemble, and I propose to send Mr. Stephen now to Khorassan.

No. 64.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 27.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, November 22, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, according to the "Turkestan Gazette" of the 12th (24th) October last, General Tchernaiëff, when passing through Fort Kazalinsk, *en route* to Tashkent, stated, in a speech addressed to the naval officers stationed at that fort, and attached to the Aral flotilla, that this flotilla would be disbanded. On the 21st September (3rd October), 1882, General Tchernaiëff instructed the Senior Naval Officer in command to hand over the steamers and barges of the flotilla to the Senior Engineer, and to discontinue the regular service of the vessels. Four days after the sailors were landed and housed in barracks preparatory to being sent to their respective homes.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 65.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 27, 1:30 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, November 27, 1882, noon.

I HEAR that Makhtum Kuli Khan has gone to Askabad to tender his submission, and that Russian surveying party has visited Tejend, north of Kelat.

I am also informed that party of eight Russians recently visited Merv, and that Agent residing there on the part of Khan of Khiva is dead.

No. 66.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received December 11.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, December 6, 1882.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the official Gazette of the 20th November (2nd December), 1882, contains a full enumeration of the titles of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia.

To the long list of Imperial titles is now added in the above enumeration the designation of "Sovereign of Turkestan" ("Gasudar Turkestanski").

The arms of Turkestan are described as consisting of an unicorn sable passant, on a field or, with eyes, tongue, and horn gules.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 67.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received December 27, 1 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, December 27, 1882, 12:40 P.M.

MR. STEPHEN left on the 7th, and will reach Meshed at about the end of month.

No. 68.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 28, 1882.

I HAVE to request you to take an opportunity of informing the Russian Government that Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran is about to dispatch Mr. Stephen, Second Secretary to the Legation, on a tour in Khorassan.

I understand that a Commission will shortly assemble for the demarcation of the Russo-Persian frontier, and it may be desirable that the Russian Government should be in a position to communicate the fact of Mr. Stephen's journey to the Russian Commissioners, whom he is likely to meet in the course of his travels.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 69.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received January 8.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, January 4, 1883.

ON the receipt of your Lordship's despatch of the 28th ultimo, I addressed a note to M. Vlangaly, informing him of the intention of Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran to send Mr. Stephen, Second Secretary to the Legation, to take a tour in Khorassan.

I have now the honour to inclose copy of M. Vlangaly's answer, in which he states that although it had been agreed in principle to send a Commission for the

demarcation of the Russo-Persian boundary, the time for its meeting had not been decided upon, and might not be near.

His Excellency adds, however, that the military authorities of the Trans-Caspian province would be apprised of Mr. Stephen's presence, so that, if the Russian Commissioners should meet him, they would receive him with the courtesy due to every English traveller recommended by Her Majesty's Representative.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 69.

M. Vlangaly to Sir E. Thornton.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Pétersbourg, le 22 Décembre, 1882 (3 Janvier, 1883).*

PAR la note du 21 Décembre, 1882 (2 Janvier, 1883), votre Excellence a porté, d'ordre de Lord Granville, à la connaissance du Ministère Impérial, l'intention du Ministre de Sa Majesté Britannique à Téhéran d'envoyer Mr. Alexander Condie Stephen, Second Secrétaire de la Légation, faire une tournée dans le Khorassan.

En outre, votre Excellence ajoute que Lord Granville, ayant appris qu'une Commission doit se réunir prochainement pour la démarcation de la frontière Russo-Persane, pense qu'il serait désirable que le Gouvernement Impérial puisse communiquer le fait du voyage de Mr. Stephen aux Commissaires Russes, qu'il sera probablement dans le cas de rencontrer dans le cours de ses excursions.

En remerciant votre Excellence de cet avis, je dois l'informer que bien que l'envoi d'une Commission de Démarcation sur la frontière Russo-Persane soit convenu en principe, l'époque de sa réunion n'est pas fixée et ne paraît pas devoir être prochaine, vu l'absence des cartes et données techniques locales qui devraient servir de base à ses travaux.

Le Ministère Impérial se réserve néanmoins d'informer nos autorités militaires de la Province Trans-Caspienne de la présence de Mr. Stephen, afin que si les Commissaires Russes venaient à le rencontrer, ils lui fassent l'accueil courtois dû à tout voyageur Anglais recommandé par le Représentant de Sa Majesté Britannique.

Veillez, &c.

(Signé) A. VLANGALY.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur, *St. Petersburg, December 22, 1882 (January 3, 1883).*

IN your note of the 21st December, 1882 (2nd January, 1883), your Excellency has brought to the knowledge of the Imperial Ministry, by command of Earl Granville, the intention of Her Britannic Majesty's Minister at Tehran to send Mr. Alexander Condie Stephen, Second Secretary of the Legation, to make a tour in Khorassan.

Your Excellency further adds that Lord Granville having learnt that a Commission is to meet shortly for the demarcation of the Russo-Persian frontier, thinks it would be desirable that the Imperial Government should communicate the fact of Mr. Stephen's journey to the Russian Commissioners, whom he would probably meet in the course of his travels.

I have to thank your Excellency for this communication, and to inform you that although the dispatch of a Demarcation Commission to the Russo-Persian frontier has been agreed upon in principle, the time of meeting has not been fixed and does not appear to be imminent, considering the absence of maps and technical data which must serve as a basis for its labours.

The Imperial Ministry nevertheless will inform our military authorities in the Transcaspian Province of Mr. Stephen's presence, so that, should the Russian Commissioners meet him, they may accord him the courteous reception due to any English traveller recommended by the Representative of Her Britannic Majesty.

Receive, &c.

(Signed) A. VLANGALY.

No. 70.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received January 18, 11 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, January 18, 1883.

TWO Russians having been recently killed by some Merv raiders near Chacha, in Atek of Kelat, Russians have sent an Agent to Merv with peremptory demand for surrender of the murderers. Detachment of Russian cavalry has also visited Chacha, and arrested Chiefs, who have been taken prisoners to Akhal. Body of Russian cavalry and infantry, with two guns, is reported likewise to have entered Atek districts. Persian Minister at St. Petersburg has been instructed to remonstrate against these acts of interference in the Persian territory. It is further reported that a Russian Colonel, with twenty-five Akhal Turkomans, has lately passed Sarakhs on his way to Penjdeh.

No. 71.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received January 22.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, January 17, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of an article in the "Novoe Vremya" of the ^{30th December, 1883} _{11th January, 1883}, reporting an attack made upon a Russian officer by some Merv Tékés.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 71.

Extract from the "Novoe Vremya" of ^{December 30, 1883.} _{January 11, 1883.}

(Translation.)

THE newspaper "Kavkas" states that about a month ago some Merv Tékés attacked a Russian officer of the Corps of Topographers, who was engaged in surveying, and wounded him. Other accounts state that he was killed. Of the four Cossacks who accompanied him, three were killed. The Russian authorities at Askabad have demanded from the Khan of Merv the surrender of the guilty persons.

No. 72.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received January 22.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, January 17, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of an article in the "Golos" of the ^{31st December, 1883} _{12th January, 1883}, relating to the management of the railway from Michaeloff Bay, on the eastern shore of the Caspian, to Kizil-Arvat, and to the cost of working the line.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 72.

Extract from the "Golos" of ^{December 31, 1883.} _{January 12, 1883.}

(Translation.)

THE "Golos" of the ^{31st December, 1883} _{12th January, 1883}, publishes the following information respecting the Trans-Caspian Railway:—

"The railroad, which is 217 versts in length, extends, as is known, from Michaeloff Bay to Kizil-Arvat, situated in the Akhal Téké steppe. This road will acquire further important military signification by dispensing with the necessity of maintaining a considerable military force for the security of the Akhal Téké oasis, whilst commercially its advantage will consist in attracting to it a considerable traffic of goods which has hitherto passed between Persia and Khiva by longer and less convenient

routes. The cost of working the line is estimated as follows: Cost of maintaining a reserve railway battalion, 217,417 roubles; maintenance of employés, exclusive of the above, and allowances to men of the railway battalion, 203,558 roubles; cost of maintaining the line, 170,869 roubles; making a total of 591,844 roubles. This amount, it is estimated by the War Ministry, will be more than covered as follows: (1) dispensing with the transport on camels of stores for the Akhal Téké detachment, which would cost about 400,000 roubles; (2) obviating the necessity of establishing post stations along the whole distance—a saving of 150,000 roubles; and (3) receipts for passengers and transport of goods belonging to private persons, about 100,000 roubles.

“The Trans-Caspian Railway is under the jurisdiction of the War Ministry and is worked by the above-mentioned railway battalion. The immediate supervision of the line rests with the Chief of the Trans-Caspian region, to whom the staff of the railway is subjected.

“The number of employés engaged on the railway is 782.”

No. 73.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 1, 1883.)

(Extract.)

Tehran, December 11, 1882.

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs has on several occasions during the past year pressed the Russian Government to appoint their Commissioner for the delimitation of the Akhal-Khorassan boundary, in accordance with the stipulations of the Treaty concluded between Persia and Russia in December last. The Russian Government has, however, avoided compliance with this request, alleging, in the first instance, that the necessary surveys of that portion of the frontier had not been completed; and, in the second place, that the Commissioners could not proceed with their work during the heat of summer. In reply to further urgent representations made at St. Petersburg and through the Russian Legation here, the Persian Government was lately informed that General Zelenoi had been selected for this duty, and that he would proceed to Asterabad and be ready to commence operations about the beginning of the present month.

The Nasseer-ed-Dowleh, who was appointed Persian Commissioner last winter, having been recently named Minister of Commerce, Suleiman Khan, a former Governor of Asterabad, has been appointed in his stead. When this official was leaving for Asterabad to meet his Russian colleague, M. Argyropoulo, the Russian Chargé d’Affaires informed the Persian Government that he had been instructed to propose that the Commission should not assemble till spring, as the maps were not ready, and the winter season was now too far advanced for commencing work. The Persian Ministers consider it very desirable that the demarcation of the line of frontier should be completed as soon as possible, and they have not therefore agreed to this proposal, but have suggested that the Commission should meet at once, and proceed to examine the question of the nationality of the Oghurjele Turkomans residing at Hussein Kuli, near the mouth of the Attrek—it having been already agreed that this disputed point should be the first matter to be inquired into and decided on the spot by the Commissioners.

Mr. Stephen left this for Khorassan on the 7th instant, and should reach Meshed in a fortnight from the present time. He will visit Turbet-i-Sheikh Jām and Bakherz, and will then proceed by way of Sarakhs to Kelat and Dereghez to report on the state of affairs at that part of the frontier.

No. 74.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 1, 1883.)

My Lord,

Tehran, December 26, 1882.

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs has been informed by the Russian Chargé d’Affaires that it is the intention of his Government to appoint an Agent, under the VIIth Clause of the Russo-Persian Boundary Treaty of the 21st December 1881, to reside at Koochan and act as intermediary between the Persian authorities and those of Akhal.

In reply to this communication, Mirza Saïd Khan has conveyed to the Russian

Government, on the part of the Shah, a request that the appointment in question should not be made at present, His Majesty being of opinion that the presence of a Russian Agent on the Persian frontier is not immediately required, and that before acting upon the clause of the Treaty which sanctions such appointments, the stipulation for the nomination of Commissioners to define the exact line of frontier between Akhal and Khorassan should be carried into effect. If, however, the Russian Government still desires that the appointment should be made at once, the Shah asks that a Mahomedan should be named to the post, and I understand that it has been agreed that this request shall be granted.

Meanwhile, the Shah has ordered the Minister for Foreign Affairs, in view of the likelihood of this appointment being made, to send one of the employés of his Department to reside in Koochan, in order that all communications between the Russian Agent and the Persian authorities may pass through his hands, it being considered that the Governor of the district has not sufficient experience of dealings with foreign officials to undertake that duty himself.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 75.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 1, 1883.)

(Extract.)

Tehran, December 27, 1882.

WHEN I saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 23rd instant, I spoke to him on the subject of Mr. Stephen's journey to Khorassan.

Referring to his Excellency's letter of the 10th December, which I had the honour to submit to your Lordship in my despatch of the 22nd instant, and to the statement therein contained—that the Persian Government—required to be informed of the object with which foreigners visited Persia or entered Khorassan—I said that I could not recognize any such claims, but that there was nothing in the policy of Her Majesty's Government in this country requiring secrecy, our object and constant endeavour being to strengthen and secure the independence of Persia, and that there was no reason, therefore, why the Persian Government should not be fully informed of the object of Mr. Stephen's journey. It had recently been reported from Khorassan that Russian Agents had visited the Herat frontier and the Saryk Turkoman settlements on the Murghab, and Mr. Stephen was directed to proceed in the direction of the Afghan frontier to make inquiry on that subject. He would afterwards visit the Dereghez frontier districts and report on the situation there, our information respecting recent events on that part of the Khorassan border being at present vague and unsatisfactory.

I added that it appeared from the conversations I had held with his Excellency from time to time relative to affairs in Khorassan that the Persian Government was itself ill-informed as to passing events and the proceedings of frontier officials in that province.

Mr. Stephen's journey, I remarked, might or might not be of service and productive of good results to Persia; it could not be supposed that it would be injurious to her interests; and one certain advantage that would be obtained would be that we should acquire more accurate information on these subjects than was now possessed by Her Majesty's Government or by that of Persia.

No. 76.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 6, 10.45 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, February 6, 1883.

MERV Chiefs have acceded to Russian demands and have surrendered murderers referred to in my telegram of 18th ultimo.

No. 77.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received February 10.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, February 6, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Golos" of the ^{26th January} _{6th February} states that the rumour of disturbances at Geuk-Tépé, in the Trans-Caspian region, may probably have originated out of the circumstance that some Merv robbers attacked a Russian officer of the Corps of Military Topographers, named Parféniew, and his escort of Cossacks. During the attack the officer was wounded, and three Cossacks killed.

According to the newspaper "Kavkas," the leader and one member of the band of robbers have been given up to the Russian authorities at Askabad by the Merv Turkomans.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 78.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received February 10.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, February 7, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a short article published in this morning's "Journal de St. Pétersbourg," announcing that the chief and another of the band of brigands who attacked and wounded the Russian topographer, M. Parféniew, and killed three Cossacks in the neighbourhood of Chacha, have been brought to Askabad.

It adds that the two culprits were given up by the Tékés of Merv.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 78.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of ^{January 26} _{February 7}, 1883.

UN télégramme d'Askabad, publié dans le "Caucase," annonce qu'on vient d'amener dans cette ville le chef et l'un des brigands de la bande qui a attaqué aux environs de l'aoul Chacha le topographe Russe, M. Parféniew, et tué trois Cosacques, en blessant M. Parféniew lui-même. Les deux malfaiteurs ont été livrés par les Tékés de Merv.

No. 79.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 16, 1.35 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, February 16, 1883.

MR. STEPHEN reports having met with 300 Sarik Turkomans on the 6th instant returning from a raid. His escort of 70 Salor Turkomans insisted on pursuing retreating raiders, and were repulsed with some loss. All his own party were uninjured.

No. 80.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received February 18, 1 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

St. Petersburg, February 18, 1883, noon.

MINISTER for Foreign Affairs yesterday received a telegram from Askabad reporting that Turkomans had attacked Mr. Stephen's escort near Sarakhs. Stephen himself escaped unhurt, but eleven of his escort were killed and nine wounded.

No. 81.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 19, 3 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, February 19, 1883, 4:50 P.M.

MR. STEPHEN telegraphs from Chacha, the 12th, 14th, and 16th February, that on the road he met a Russian named Knoss, who, in dictatorial language, tried to prevent him entering Ateks. Russian said Stephen must await at Chacha result of reference to Akhal authority. Stephen refused to recognize interference with his movements in Persian territory, and, in view of the friendly relations between the Governments, insisted on courteous treatment. Russian rode out on the 15th instant to prevent fresh escort from arriving from Kelat, stating that he would use force to prevent Stephen proceeding to Kelat before Askabad answer came. Persian officer said that he had orders to come and meet Stephen, and must carry them out. Finally, Russian allowed escort to arrive, but his language was very violent and unreasonable. On the 16th Russian received instructions not to interfere with Stephen's movements, and he is now on his road to Kelat.

No. 82.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 21, 1883.

I INCLOSE copy of a telegram from the Minister at Tehran, reporting that a Russian official has endeavoured, in a very discourteous manner, to prevent Mr. Stephen from proceeding on his journey to Kelat, pending a reference to Askabad.*

I have to request your Excellency to bring this matter before the Russian Government, and to represent to them the necessity of giving such orders as will in future prevent such unjustifiable interference on the part of a Russian official with the movements of a British subject on Persian territory.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 83.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 5.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, February 28, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of an extract from the official Gazette of the $\frac{1}{2}$ ⁵th instant, reporting information given by the Russian engineer, M. Lessar, to the Russian Geographical Society, with regard to the journeys which he has made in different parts of the Trans-Caspian region, including Merv, and in Afghanistan.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 83.

Abstract from the Russian Press.

THE official Gazette of the $\frac{1}{2}$ ⁵th February, 1883, contains an account of a meeting of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society held on the $\frac{8}{21}$ th February, and at which a communication received from M. Lessar was read.

In the early part of December, the account states, M. Lessar returned to Askabad, where he intends to pass the winter. Between April and December last year he made several excursions in the open country situated south and east of the newly-conquered Akhal-Téké region, for the purpose of elucidating several questions respecting the Aral-Caspian depression.

Up to the present time M. Lessar has been unable to draw up a detailed Report for presentation to the Geographical Society, owing to insufficiency of time to collect and arrange his notes and observations. At the same time, several facts which have come to light relate to questions of such interest that M. Lessar thought it expedient, without waiting for their complete elaboration, to give a brief outline of the results obtained.

The following is a list of the excursions made by M. Lessar:—

1. From Askabad, viâ Sarakhs, across the country between the Heri-rud and the Murgab, in the Herat Valley, to Khosan, and beyond to Gorian; thence, viâ Khaf and Turbet-i-Haideri to Meshed. From Meshed through Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam to Kafir-Kale, and then straight to the north viâ Zoorabad to Sarakhs, along the River Heri-rud. The main object in view was to explore the road leading southwards from Askabad.

2. The second excursion was through Deregez, Kelat, and the Pass of Khozar-Mosht (? Hezar Mesdjid) to Meshed; thence to Zoorabad. Excursions were again made by M. Lessar in various directions between the Heri-rud and the Murgab, with the object of exploring that part as much as possible. From here the traveller went to Sarakhs, and taking *en route* Neazgabad and Shentli to Merv; from Merv the Oxus was reached, somewhat north of Chardjui; thence he proceeded along the Oxus to Khiva, Ismukshir Charzshly, and the Fort of Durun, in the Akhal region.

3. In October month M. Lessar and Captain Maslofsky, of the Corps of Topographers, took barometrical levels between Askabad and Tejend. The levels were taken simultaneously by barometrical observations every 6 versts. Our mercury barometer was used.

4. At the invitation of the Khan of the Sitchmas tribe, M. Lessar, in the same month, revisited Merv, and drew up descriptions of the following roads:—(a) viâ Dashakh and Karibend to Merv; and (b) from Merv, through Tash Rabat, Shentli, Hoozi-Khan, and Kale Kowsheed to Sarakhs.

5. In November and December M. Lessar explored the mountains of Kelat, Deregez, and the Atek, being chiefly interested in the supply of water and the state of irrigation.

Thus, from April to December, M. Lessar travelled over 5,000 versts, and had only just time to make official Reports, &c., in the short intervals between his excursions.

A map of the places explored is being prepared, and will be published in a short time. M. Lessar intends to recommence his explorations in February month, if his health, which has been greatly impaired by his three years' travels in the Turkoman country, will allow him to do so.

St. Petersburg, February 1st/₂, 1883.

No. 84.

Sir L. Mallet to Sir J. Pauncefote.—(Received March 5.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, a translation of an account given in a Russian newspaper of Lieutenant Alikhanof's notes on Merv.

India Office, March 5, 1883.

Inclosure in No. 84.

Newspaper Extract.

AT a meeting of the Geographical Society at Tiflis, on the ^{26th January} ~~7th February~~ last, M. Levashof read some extracts from notes on Merv, written by Lieutenant Alikhanof, who had visited Merv in the disguise of a trader.

The following résumé of the paper is given in the "Kavkaz" of the ^{28th January} ~~9th February~~ :—

"Lieutenant Alikhanof begins with an historic notice of Merv, passing on to a minute description of the roads leading to the oasis, which is, in military respects, a place of great importance. He then proceeds with the geography and ethnography of the oasis, showing that it covers an area of 4,900 square versts, of which 4,000 are

suitable for agriculture, and 900 are totally unfit for cultivation. The Murgnab river, with its system of large and small canals, serves to irrigate a country extending 400 versts. There is also a lake in the oasis, called Ainakhe. There is hardly any rainfall from May to September, and the temperature in the shade varies from 35 to 45 degrees Réaumur. Snow lies on the ground for about twenty days in December and January, when the temperature is not lower than 7 degrees Réaumur: in February it reaches 30 degrees Réaumur. On irrigated lands wheat yields twenty-fold and sorghum one-hundredfold. A small quantity of cotton is grown and some silk fabrics are made. The quantity of water supply is the measure of the well-being of the people; they have not land enough, and are therefore comparatively poor. The population of the oasis does not exceed 32,400 tents,* or not more than forty-eight individuals to the square verst.

"The country is governed by three Khans, who, however, possess only an executive power, all affairs being settled by a Medjliss, or Council, which is assembled by the Khans and Ishans (Mollahs) when occasion requires. There are no regular taxes; these are levied by order of the Medjliss when necessity arises. There are many artizans amongst the people, but chiefly silversmiths. The women are clever at weaving carpets and rude silk fabrics. The Mervis are great gluttons, and they are particularly fond of sweets. Blood feuds, theft, and freebooting are common in Merv, and it would be difficult to eradicate these crimes. Trade and industry are but little developed, and the whole value of the trade of the oasis does not exceed 500,000 roubles (50,000*l.*). European sugar-plums or comfits and cotton prints are most in demand at Merv. Lieutenant Alikhanof believes that when Merv is annexed to Russia the oasis, occupying as it does a central position, is capable of a commercial development, and may become an *entrepôt* of Russian and West European trade with Central Asia."

No. 85.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 7.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, March 3, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 22nd November last, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Cronstadt Gazette" of the ^{18th February} 1883, ^{2nd March} states that a second Imperial Order has been issued respecting the disestablishment of the Aral flotilla. By virtue of this order the officers of the flotilla, as also those attached to the port of Kazalinsk, and the naval staff of the Turkestan region, will receive other appointments, whilst the men will be incorporated with the troops of the Turkestan region. The material and stores belonging to the flotilla will remain at Kazalinsk until some decision is arrived at respecting their sale.

"With the forward movement of our Central Asian frontier," the Gazette remarks, "the Aral flotilla has gradually lost the military and naval importance which it originally possessed, and has latterly been exclusively employed on transport service. The vessels of the flotilla will probably be made over to some private Company which will undertake the transport of goods and passengers along the river Syr-Daria."

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 86.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 8.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, March 5, 1883.

IN compliance with the instruction contained in your Lordship's despatch of the 21st ultimo, I addressed a note to M. de Giers, copy of which I have the honour to inclose, relating to the interference by a Russian official named Knoss with the movements of Mr. Condie Stephen within Persian territory.

I also inclose copy of M. de Giers' answer, which I received yesterday. In this note his Excellency states that he has received no information respecting the circumstances to which I had alluded, and that he can only attribute to a

* Generally calculated at four individuals to one tent.—R. M.

misunderstanding the facts of which Mr. Stephen complains, but that he has already caused inquiries to be made.

The point, however, to which I would particularly call your Lordship's attention in M. de Giers' note is his Excellency's assertion that the Atek cannot be considered as an integral part of Persia. He states that this territory has been the haunt of Turkomans, who came to rob the people of the Khorassan, and that the numerous bands of Mervians who in 1879-81 came to the assistance of their kinsmen of the Akhal passed through the Atek without the Persian Government being able to offer the slightest resistance to their transit. His Excellency claims that the improvement in the present condition of that country is only due to the military prestige of Russia, and that the safety which has been established can only be insured by the exercise of constant vigilance on the part of the authorities of the Transcaspian province.

His Excellency concludes by saying that as this supervision offers effective guarantees against the renewal of troubles and complications in Central Asia, the Imperial Government hope that Her Majesty's Government will not hesitate to recognize the justice of their views.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 86.

Sir E. Thornton to M. de Giers.

M. le Ministre,

St. Petersburg, February 14 (26), 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government have received a communication from the British Minister at Tehran to the effect that Mr. Condie Stephen had telegraphed from Chacha, under date of the 12th, 14th, and 16th instant (N. S.), that on his road he had met a Russian subject named Knoss, who in dictatorial terms tried to prevent him from entering the Ateks, and had said that he must await at Chacha the result of a reference to the Akhal authorities. Mr. Stephen refused to recognize the right of this gentleman to interfere with his movements in Persian territory, and in view of the friendly relations which exist between the two Governments, insisted upon being treated with courtesy. On the 15th instant M. Knoss rode out from Chacha to prevent a fresh escort from arriving from Kelat, stating that he would use force to prevent Mr. Stephen from proceeding to Kelat until an answer should be received from Askabad. The Persian officer in command of the escort stated that he had received orders to come and meet Mr. Stephen, and must carry them out.

Finally, M. Knoss allowed the escort to arrive, but his language was violent and unreasonable. On the 16th instant M. Knoss received instructions not to interfere with Mr. Stephen's movements, and the latter proceeded on his road to Kelat.

In compliance with instructions which I have received from Earl Granville, I have the honour to call your Excellency's attention to this matter, and to request that such orders may be issued as will in future prevent such unjustifiable interference on the part of a Russian official with the movements of a British subject in Persian territory.

I avail, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 2 in No. 86.

M. de Giers to Sir E. Thornton.

*Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, Département Asiatique,
le 20 Février, 1883.*

M. l'Ambassadeur,

J'AI reçu la note que votre Excellence a bien voulu m'adresser, en date du 14 (26) courant, au sujet de l'opposition que Mr. Condie Stephen aurait rencontrée lors de sa dernière tournée dans l'Atek, de la part d'un nommé M. Knoss, sujet Russe.

N'ayant reçu d'aucune part des informations relativement aux incidents auxquels il est fait allusion dans la susdite note, le Ministère Impérial ne saurait, pour sa part,

attribuer qu'à un malentendu les faits qui ont motivé les plaintes de Mr. Stephen, et il s'est déjà fait un devoir d'intervenir auprès de qui de droit pour les éclaircir.

Tout en me réservant de porter en temps utile à la connaissance de votre Excellence les informations qui auront été fournies au Ministère par les autorités compétentes, je ne puis m'empêcher de vous faire observer, M. l'Ambassadeur, que le Cabinet Impérial se voit dans une complète impossibilité d'admettre que l'Atek puisse être considéré comme partie intégrante de la Perse.

Il n'est que trop bien connu que de tout temps ce territoire a servi de repaire aux Turcomans qui venait assouvir leur rapacité aux dépens de la population du Khorassan, et que c'est par la voie de l'Atek que se sont dirigées les nombreuses bandes de Merviens, qui en 1879-81 se sont successivement portées au secours de leurs congénères d'Akhal, sans que le Gouvernement Persan eût pu opposer la moindre résistance à leur passage. Il est vrai que cet état de choses s'est considérablement amélioré depuis la conquête de l'Oasis d'Akhal Téké par les troupes Russes, mais il n'en est pas moins certain que cette amélioration n'est due qu'au prestige militaire de la Russie, et que la sécurité qui s'est établie dans ces parages ne saurait être maintenue qu'à la condition qu'une surveillance rigoureuse soit exercée par les autorités de la Province Transcaspienne sur l'attitude et les mouvements des populations Turcomanes établies dans l'Atek, ainsi que sur ces confins.

Cette surveillance étant de nature à offrir d'efficaces garanties contre le retour des troubles et des complications dans l'Asie Centrale, le Cabinet Impérial se plaît à espérer que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique n'hésitera pas à reconnaître la justesse du point de vue ci-dessus énoncé.

Veillez, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

*Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Asiatic Department,
February 20, 1883.*

M. l'Ambassadeur,

I HAVE received the note which your Excellency has done me the honour to address to me, dated the 14th (26th) instant, respecting the opposition which Mr. Condie Stephen seems to have encountered during his recent journey in the Atek on the part of Mr. Knoss, a Russian subject.

Having received no information whatever relative to the incidents to which allusion is made in the above-mentioned note, the Imperial Ministry can only attribute the facts which have caused the complaints of Mr. Stephen to a misunderstanding, and steps have been already taken to obtain full information from the proper sources.

While waiting to bring to the knowledge of your Excellency at the proper moment the information which will be furnished to the Ministry by the competent authorities, I cannot but observe, M. l'Ambassadeur, that the Imperial Cabinet considers that it is quite impossible to admit that the Atek can be considered as an integral part of Persia.

It is but too well known that for a long time this district has served as a haunt for the Turkomans who came to satisfy their marauding propensities at the expense of the population of Khorassan, and it is by the Atek that the numerous hordes of Mervites advanced, who in 1879-81 successively carried help to their kinsmen of Akhal without Persia being able to offer the slightest resistance to their passage. It is true that this state of affairs has considerably improved since the conquest of the Akhal Téké Oasis by Russian troops, but it is none the less certain that this amelioration is only due to the military prestige of Russia, and that the security established in these parts can only be maintained by the exercise of a rigorous supervision by the Transcaspien authorities over the attitude and the movements of the Turkoman populations established in the Atek as well as in the neighbourhood.

This supervision being of a nature to offer effective guarantees against the renewal of troubles and complications in Central Asia, the Imperial Cabinet hopes that the Government of Her Britannic Majesty will not hesitate to recognize the justice of the views above expressed.

I have, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

No. 87.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 9.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, March 5, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 27th February, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that some comments have appeared in the "Golos" newspaper on a letter addressed to that journal by M. Lessar on the subject of diverting the Amou Daria into its supposed former bed leading into the Caspian.

As a result of scientific investigations on the above subject, it would appear that the project of joining the Aral and Caspian seas by diverting the waters of the Amou Daria into the Ouzboi is impracticable. On the other hand, there is every reason to believe that an ordinary canal for navigation and irrigation could be made, but at a cost of from 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 roubles.

On this point M. Lessar is of opinion that the cost of the above undertaking would be far beyond the realizable profits. For the present the chief care of the Government should be to develop the trade of Central Asia by guaranteeing the security of the trade routes. Many more pressing undertakings are necessary in Russia in Europe, but it is evident that in the future the increased commerce of Central Asia will necessitate the construction of new water-ways, no matter at what cost, and consequently the projected canal should be kept in view.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 88.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 19.)

My Lord,

Tehran, February 9, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a Report, dated the 22nd January, stating that the Merv Chiefs had agreed to the peremptory demand made by the Russians for the surrender of the murderers of the two Russians who were lately killed by a Merv raiding party near Chahchaheh, and that the culprits had been sent to Askabad to be handed over to the Russian authorities there.

It also appears that the Russians are now desirous that Makhtum Kuli Khan should be accepted by the Merv Elders as their paramount Chief, and that the tribes are generally disposed to recognize him in that position.

The Khan of Khiva had appointed Rahman Bai to succeed the late Yusuf Bai as his Agent, or nominal Governor, at Merv.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 88.

(Translation.)

January 22, 1883.

KONAS, who had been sent to Merv by the Russians to demand the surrender of the murderers of the three Russians, has been successful in his mission, and is now on his way back to Askabad.

The murderers, four in number, were delivered up to him, but one of them escaped at Kahkaha. Konas told the Kahkaha people that they must either catch the fugitive or make over one of their own men as a hostage in his place. Forty of the local horsemen at once started in pursuit.

Konas is said to have engaged twenty horsemen at Kahkaha and thirty at Teijen at a salary of 10 tomans a-month.

Before leaving Merv the Russian emissary informed the Oktamish and Toktamish tribes that Makhtum Kuli Khan's authority must be accepted as paramount, and that the Elders of Merv must at once seize and send on to Askabad any person disobeying his orders. Makhtum Kuli Khan has been recognized as Chief by the Elders, but not without some resistance on the part of the younger members of the tribes.

The Khan of Khiva has sent a personage named Rahman Bai to be nominal Governor of Merv, in the place of Yusuf Bai, deceased. The Khan of Khiva is said to have told Rahman Bai that his nomination was due to the instances of the Oktamish and Toktamish tribes, and that he should claim full obedience from them. If they refused to obey him, he should at once return to Khiva.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 19.)

(Extract.)

Tehran, February 9, 1883.

SINCE his arrival here Ayub Khan has been living in great seclusion. He seldom presents himself at Court, and, with the exception of the first visits which he exchanged with the Shah's Ministers and some of the Princes, he seems to have had no intercourse with any of the influential people in Tehran.

I have no ground for believing that he contemplates leaving Tehran at present, but as it has been said by some of his adherents that he hoped to return to Meshed in the spring, I have thought it right to speak to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject, and his Excellency has assured me that, in the event of his applying to the Shah for permission to return to Khorassan, the proposal would certainly not be entertained by the Persian Government.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 90.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 19.)

(Extract.)

Tehran, February 17, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 11th December last, in which I stated that the Minister for Foreign Affairs had again endeavoured to induce the Russian Government to appoint its Commissioner, and proceed at once with the delimitation of the Akhal-Khorassan boundary, as stipulated in the IInd Clause of the Russo-Persian Frontier Treaty of December 1881, I have now the honour to report to your Lordship that Mirza Saïd Khan has informed me that his representations on this subject have had no effect, the same reply which was formerly given having again been repeated, namely, that the severe cold of winter, and the incompleteness of the frontier surveys, rendered it impossible for the Commission to meet at present, and that the matter must therefore be deferred till spring.

No. 91.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 19.)

My Lord,

Tehran, February 18, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copy of a telegram which Mr. Stephen has sent me from Noroozabad, near Sarakhs, reporting that he had some days previously met a large party of Saryk Turkomans, who were returning from a raid on the Persian territory, and that his escort of Salor Turkomans, who had accompanied him from Zoorabad, had attempted to defend the passage of the river at Pul-i-Khatun, but had been unable to prevent the raiders from making good their escape to the other side of the Heri-Rud. His escort consisted of seventy men, and the Saryk Turkomans numbered about 300. Notwithstanding this disproportion of numbers, the Salor horsemen, no doubt tempted by the prospect of recovering some of the booty and securing prisoners, insisted, contrary to Mr. Stephen's advice, upon following the raiding party after they had crossed the river, and they were repulsed with some loss. None of Mr. Stephen's party were injured.

A detailed report of this occurrence has not yet reached me, but I shall probably receive it by next week's post from Meshed.

The Prince-Governor of Khorassan has reported to his Government that he had sent a considerable body of horse to Mr. Stephen's assistance, and His Royal Highness takes credit for having thereby secured the safety of the party; this statement is not, however, altogether accurate, as Mr. Stephen reports that the Saryks retreated to the other side of the river after half-an-hour's skirmishing at an old fort in which his party had taken refuge.

In speaking to me yesterday on this subject, the Shah seemed to be of opinion that the Saryk Turkomans had come expressly with the object of attacking

Mr. Stephen's party, but this does not coincide with the statement of the latter that they were returning from a raiding expedition on the Persian side of the Heri-Rud.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMPSON.

Inclosure in No. 91.

Mr. Stephen to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.)

Noroozabad, February 6, 1883.

TWO days ago, party escorted by seventy Salor Turkomans had an encounter at Pul-i-Khatun with 300 Saryk Turkomans who were returning from a raid. We occupied ruined fort, and defended the passage of the river. After half-an-hour's firing latter retreated. Afterwards, notwithstanding my repeated orders not to do so on account of disproportion in numbers, escort followed Saryk into the desert; there second engagement took place, escort being routed, losing 13 killed, 6 wounded. All my party uninjured.

Have surveyed Heri-Rud route and streams from Afghan frontier. Proceed to-morrow to Sarakhs, and thence up Ateks with reinforcements.

No. 92.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received March 19.)

My Lord,

Tehran, February 20, 1883.

I HAVE received telegrams from Mr. Stephen, from Chacha, on the north-eastern frontier of Khorassan, in which he gives an account of the difficulties cast in his way by a Russian Agent named Knoss, and the manner in which the question was ultimately settled.

The hold, such as it was, which the Persians formerly had over the Turkoman Settlements in the Ateks of Dereghez and Kelat has of late, since the occupation of Akhal by Russia, been greatly relaxed, and the proceedings of the Russian Agent at Chacha, who attempted to prevent Mr. Stephen from prosecuting his journey along that portion of the Persian frontier, appear to indicate clearly that the Russians, though they have not yet taken military possession of the country, are gradually assuming complete jurisdiction over the whole Atek region.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 93.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received March 19.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, March 14, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 10th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Adam, Second Secretary to this Embassy, of an article in the official Gazette of this day's date, giving a detailed account of the attack made upon M. Parfenieff, a Russian engineer. It is stated that three of the Cossacks who were with him were killed. The place at which the attack was made was at about 32 versts from Chacha, and 40 from Sarakhs.

It could not have been very far from the point where an attempt was made by a Russian official, M. Knoss, to detain Mr. Condie Stephen. M. de Giers asserts that this point is not within Persian territory, though I presume that the Persian Government would maintain an opposite view. It does not appear, however, from the inclosed narrative that the Russian officials exercised any acts of jurisdiction at Chacha or its neighbourhood with regard to the attack on M. Parfenieff, but sent in search of the guilty parties to Mery, where they had taken refuge. The man Berdy Abu, who is stated to have been imprisoned at Askabad, has since been reported to have been executed.

From the statements in the inclosed article it is clear that there is more than one

Russian surveying party in the Ateks, and that the Russian authorities are making preparations for its ultimate occupation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 93.

Extract from the Official Gazette, St. Petersburg, March $\frac{2}{4}$, 1883.

(Translation.)

FROM official information relative to the attack upon the Topographer Parfenieff by Mervites, in November last, it appears that Parfenieff was carrying on surveys on the road from Meshed to Merv, 32 versts from the village of Chacha, and 40 from the Persian fortress of Sarakhs.

This place is called Khan-Giran, and is situated 280 versts from Askabad.

The attack of the Mervites occurred on the 10th November, at dawn. The robbers wounded Parfenieff, killed three of the Cossacks who were with them, and plundered the baggage (the surveying instruments escaped uninjured, only the screws being withdrawn from the plane table).

On receipt of information of the occurrence at Askabad, a sotnia of Cossacks of the Taman regiment was fitted out without delay for the protection of further topographical work; negotiations were entered into with the Khans of the four Merv tribes for the surrender of the robbers; application was made to the Head of the Section of Topographical Surveys for information respecting the condition of the wounded Parfenieff, the names of the killed, and the manner in which the guide, the Téké militiaman, and the fourth Cossack, who were with Parfenieff, had made their escape; and, lastly, news of the occurrence was telegraphed to the Governor-General, and likewise communicated to Tehran.

The sotnia of Cossacks left Askabad on the 14th November, reached Lutfabad on the 16th, and the village of Kaakhka (120 versts from Askabad) on the 20th. Here it was informed that the surveying party were already on their way to Kaakhka, and accordingly remained at that place.

Meanwhile, information reached Askabad that the robbers numbered forty men, that their leader was a Mervite of the tribe of Kara Achmet, named Berdy Abu, that Parfenoff had received a slight wound in the head from a scimitar, but had succeeded on the same day in reaching the village of Chacha; that an hour later the surviving Cossack, Zinchenko, and the guide, had also reached that place; that the Cossacks killed were Berdnik (non-commissioned officer), Dubinsky, and Borsuk; and that, at the time of the attack, the militiaman had been sent off to the Chief of the Section of Surveys, Captain Maslovsky. On receipt of these statements, on the 17th November, Makhtum Kuli Khan was dispatched to Merv, with special instructions to facilitate the detection of the guilty parties and their speedy surrender.

Subsequently, on the 23rd November, Parfenieff and the Cossack Zinchenko arrived at Askabad, and having both recovered from their wounds, they made a personal statement of the details of the occurrence.

In this the moment of the Mervites' attack was related as follows:—

On the morning of the 10th November, when the dawn had just begun to appear, a deafening shout, uttered by several voices, resounded about the camp; this led Parfenoff to put out his hand for his revolver; but before he could arm himself he received two scimitar-cuts in succession, one on the collar of his coat and the other on his head; after the latter blow he rushed out of his tent. Parfenieff succeeded in effecting his escape, owing to the fact that the robber who attacked him turned his attention to plundering.

The Cossacks, when the shouting occurred, were in the following positions: Zinchenko was sitting by the camp-fire, Berdnik walking about the camp, Borsuk was washing, and Dubinsky lying down.

The latter was at once cut down; the rest were seized, bound, and laid on the ground; at the same time they were kicked, and struck with the butt-ends of guns.

After this, the robbers seized the baggage, and after setting fire to whatever was not convenient to carry away, including the supply of forage, they took the surviving Cossacks and the guide, and started for Tedjent; of the prisoners, they cut down Borsuk on the way, when, in consequence of his wound, he was unable to go further,

and, after some time, they also shot Berdnik. Zinchenko and the guide were released 4 versts from Tedjent. Lastly, the guide declared that he was bound while asleep, and that as he followed as a prisoner, he pleaded with the Mervites for himself and the Cossacks, but did not win them over to indulgence till after the murder of Berdnik and Borsuk.

At Chacha Parfenieff hired horsemen to search for the bodies of the dead. The bodies were soon discovered and buried. There Parfenieff also learnt the departure from Merv of a considerable party of marauders in the direction of Sarakhs; the Commandant of the Persian fortress of Sarakhs advised our surveying parties not to venture too far from Sarakhs.

The Commander of the Cossack sotnia stated that, previously to his arrival at Lutfabad, the Mervites had driven off 1,500 sheep belonging to the inhabitants, but that one-half of these had been recovered by the Persians, who pursued after them; and that it was reported that 1,000 horsemen and 1,000 foot had left Merv on a raid, but that they were not acting with united forces, but divided into small parties.

This report of 2,000 marauders was shown by the evidence of M. Lessar, the engineer, to be exaggerated.

The leader of another surveying party, Second Lieutenant Vekiloff, has reported that his camp also, in the neighbourhood of Sarakhs, was approached by thirty mounted Mervites, but Vekiloff succeeded in preparing for resistance, and by threatening to fire upon them warded off the attack.

The formal investigation ordered in this case at first proceeded but slowly, owing to the absence of any individual culprits, but in the first days of December a certain Yagmyr Khan, who was implicated in the matter, was sent from Merv; his participation, it was said, was limited to pointing out to the band of marauders the possibility of attacking the Russian surveyors.

With the arrival of Yagmyr Khan at Askabad, the inquiry began to bring to light other guilty parties, and, on the discovery of their names, demands for their surrender were sent to Merv. The leading culprit of the band, Berdy Abu, whom the Mervites at first declined to surrender, was arrested by Sergeant-Major of Militia Prince Morgany (or Morshany), who was sent to Merv for that express purpose. Berdy Abu is now confined in the central guard-house at Askabad.

* * * * *

No. 94.

Sir L. Mallet to Mr. Currie.—(Received April 6.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, extract of a letter from the Viceroy of India to His Highness the Ameer of Cabul, dated the 22nd February, 1883, relative to the engagements between the British Government and that of Afghanistan.

India Office, April 5, 1883.

Inclosure in No. 94.

The Viceroy and Governor-General of India to Ameer Abdul Rahman Khan.

Fort William, February 22, 1883.

MANY vague rumours are doubtless afloat, but they are, for the most part, without foundation, and need cause your Highness no uneasiness, more especially as, under the engagements of 1880, which are embodied in the Memorandum presented to your Highness by Sir Lepel Griffin in that year, your Highness is in possession of the assurance of the British Government that, if any foreign Power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the dominions of your Highness, in that event the British Government would be prepared to aid you—to such extent and in such manner as may appear to the British Government necessary—in repelling it, provided that your Highness follows unreservedly the advice of the British Government in regard to your external relations.

Under these circumstances your Highness need be under no apprehension, but

may rest in secure reliance that the British Government has both the will and the power to make good all its engagements with your Highness.

I beg to express the high consideration I entertain for your Highness, and to subscribe myself your Highness' sincere friend.

No. 95.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 9, 5 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, April 9, 1883, 4 P.M.

MR. STEPHEN returned here from Khorassan on the 7th instant.

No. 96.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 16.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, April 11, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Moscow Gazette" of the ^{24th March} 1883, states that Lieutenant-General Komaroff, Chief of the Military Educational Section of the Caucasus, will succeed General Röhrberg as Chief of the Trans-Caucasian region. General Röhrberg, the account states, has been appointed to the command of the 25th Division.

I have not yet been able to ascertain whether the above-mentioned statement is well founded.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 97.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 19.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, April 16, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of an article in the "Turkestan Gazette" of the ^{22nd February} ^{6th March} last referring to surveys which have recently been made by Russian authorities in different parts of Central Asia.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 97.

Extract from the "Turkestan Gazette" of ^{February 22} ^{March 6}, 1883.

ON the $\frac{1}{2}$ ⁴/₆th February the Governor-General of Turkestan inspected the topographical work executed during the year 1882, and which is to be forwarded to St. Petersburg and submitted to His Imperial Majesty. Among this extremely interesting material, the following attracted special notice:—The surveys of the Ferghanah region, excellently executed; march-route surveys from Meshed viâ Sarakhs and Merv to Chardjui, and a map of the Merv oasis based on verbal data. The foregoing are all geographical novelties. The two last-mentioned works were compiled on information furnished by Lieutenant Naziroff, of the 1st Turkestan Rifle Battalion, who last year accomplished a very hazardous journey from Astrabad, viâ Meshed, Merv, Chardjui, and Bokhara, to Tashkent. The surveys of Karategin and Darvaz were made by M. Kossiakoff, who accompanied Mr. Regel on his journey through Darvaz. In order to survey as much ground as possible, M. Kossiakoff separated from Mr. Regel at Hissar, and proceeded by the valley of the River Kaffiragau to Kobadian, Kurgan-tubi, Kuliab, and Darvaz, where he rejoined Mr. Regel. Early in September M. Kossiakoff returned to Tashkent, and Regel proceeded farther to Shugan, where he wintered.

Moreover, particular notice was directed to the astronomical observations and surveys of the steppe of Kizyl-kum, executed by Captain Putiata; the magnetic

observations of F. Schwartz, astronomer; the labours of the Tashkent Observatory, and the surveys of the Ust-Urt, from Kungrad to Taman-Kairakt on the Caspian, executed by Colonel Alexandroff. A detailed survey of this part of the country is specially interesting, as the chief trade route from Central Asia to Russia will undoubtedly pass that way. We are informed that the Chief of the Turkestan region has nearly brought to a conclusion the question of constructing a line of railway across that part of the country, which would connect the whole basin of the Oxus with the Caspian Sea. Steam navigation on the Oxus and a line of railway across the Ust-Urt will at length solve the question raised by Peter the Great of a direct route from the Volga to Central Asia.

St. Petersburg, April 14, 1883.

No. 98.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 23.)

My Lord,

Tehran, March 1, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith a despatch I have received from Mr. Stephen, giving details respecting the progress of his journey on the north-eastern frontier of Khorassan.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 98.

Mr. Stephen to Mr. Thomson.

Sir,

Sarakhs, February 10, 1883.

ON the 6th instant I had the honour to address to your Excellency a telegram from Noroosabad, reporting that two days previously our party had had an encounter at Pul-i-Khatoon with 300 Sarik Turkomans, who were returning from a raid. The details of the affair are as follows:—

Early on the 3rd we set out from Zoorabad with an escort of seventy Salor Turkomans, and after crossing the Yedi Pass, encamped that night on the banks of the Heri-Rud, some short distance from the Germab Pass. It appears that on the previous day two Salors had left Zoorabad for Pul-i-Khatoon, in the neighbourhood of which spot there are a few tents inhabited by Turkomans of that tribe. According to the statement of one of them, who subsequently effected his escape, both were captured the following evening by the marauding party, who had the day before carried off some cattle and camels from the said small settlement. News of its arrival had already been dispatched to Zoorabad and Meshed, but as the messenger carrying the news to Zoorabad took a different route to the one we had chosen, it was not until we issued the next day from the mountains and perceived a large body of horsemen about a mile distant on the left bank of the Keshef-Rud that we became aware of the presence of an Alaman. The equipment of my escort being far from satisfactory, and as it was evident that the Sariks were in large force, I at once dispatched a messenger to Zoorabad for assistance, meanwhile instructing Takir Khan, the Salor Chief who accompanied me, to advance and defend the passage of the river, but to avoid, if possible, a general engagement, until I had time to repair the defences of a ruined caravanserai, which had meanwhile been occupied by our servants and the mules. Hearing firing in front, and news being brought to me that the Sariks had learnt (probably from the two Salors they had captured) that we were an English party, and had declared their intention of seizing me and my property, I directed my servants to open fire upon them with my rifles.

Having, in the meantime, by the aid of the muleteers, hastily repaired the gaps in the walls with stones and baggage, and seeing that, if it came to the worst, we were now in a position to make a fairly good defence until assistance arrived, I advanced with one of my servants to the river's edge, and opened a brisk fire upon the "Alaman" with a Winchester and Snider rifle. The result was satisfactory. Probably thinking that we were better armed than we were, and seeing that, even if they succeeded in routing my escort it would be no easy matter to storm the kale, they began to retreat slowly towards the desert. Fearing that we might be attacked

during the night, or on our way to Sarakhs the next day, under more unfavourable conditions, I proposed immediately following up our success by charging the marauders while they were still on low ground and in retreat, expressing my willingness to accompany the escort with my rifles. I am of opinion that, had my advice been followed, we would have succeeded, with little loss, in routing the Alaman, and recapturing the camels and cattle. As it was, valuable time was lost in discussion, and, when some twenty minutes later, Takir Khan proposed following it into the desert, I repeatedly ordered him not to do so, thinking it would now be folly to risk an engagement with so large a force so far from our base. Notwithstanding my orders, however, the Salors persisted in doing so; and, it appears that, two hours later on, some 8 miles from Pul-i-Khatoon, with their backs to the Heri-Rud, they attacked the Sariks, who, seeing that they were followed, had halted at the top of a hill. The result was that the Salors were completely defeated, thirteen being killed and six wounded.

Early the next morning a reinforcement of some forty horsemen and twenty foot arrived from Zoorabad, but being unwilling to proceed on my journey until I had done what I could to tend the wounded with the lint and bandages I had with me, I postponed my departure till the next day. Meanwhile I dispatched a message to Sarakhs, requesting that an escort might be sent to meet me at Noroosabad, in order that the Salors, who were much fatigued, might return the sooner to their homes. Yusuf Mohammed Khan, who, in the absence of his father, is temporarily in charge of the fortress of Sarakhs, promptly complied with my request, coming himself to meet me. Nothing, in fact, could be more satisfactory than the ready way the authorities acted in the matter, and although Takir Khan was wrong in not following my advice, yet I would wish to record that both he and his companions throughout displayed considerable pluck.

I trust that in thus entering into details it will not be imagined that I would wish any unnecessary importance to be attached to this affray. My object is to place your Excellency in possession of the true facts, in case the Persian Government should attempt to make out that the regrettable loss of life was owing to my not having sooner informed the authorities of my intention of selecting this route.

I would venture to submit that the language held by the marauders, as reported above, is of itself sufficient evidence that I did well to keep my proposed route secret as long as possible. So long as Takir Khan carried out my directions, all went well, and had he not been rash enough to follow the Sariks into the desert, there would probably have been no loss of life to record.

I have to report that I have carefully surveyed the Heri-Rud route and stream from the neighbourhood of Kafir Kaleh to this place. I proceed to-morrow up the Ateks to Kelat, with a strong escort of eighty horsemen, with which the Acting Governor of Sarakhs has been good enough to provide me.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. CONDIE STEPHEN.

No. 99.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received April 23.)

My Lord,

Tehran, March 9, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your Lordship herewith translation of a letter which I have received reporting that the Agent of the Khan of Khiva, whose authority is recognized by the Téké tribes of Merv, has induced the Saryk tribes at Yulatan to place themselves likewise under his control and government. Similar overtures had been made by him to the Salor tribes at Penjdeh, but it appears that these had not been favourably received.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 99.

(Translation.)

February 23, 1883.

A HUNDRED Russians arrived at Merv to claim the Government, but Rahman Bai coming from Khiva with 200 horsemen also claimed authority over Merv. The Russians refused to recognize Rahman Bai unless he produced a letter from the

Emperor of Russia, which Rahman Bai having done, the Russians retired to the Akhal territory, and Rahman Bai remained at Merv as Governor. Rahman Bai subsequently sent a messenger to Yulatan to summon the Saryk Chiefs to Merv. After giving them presents he nominated a Governor for Yulatan whom they accepted. Rahman also sent to Penjdeh to inform the inhabitants that they, too, were to receive a Governor from Merv. The Penjdeh people refused to acknowledge Rahman Bai's authority, declaring that they were subjects of Herat, but that if he would restore to them their inheritance in the lands of Merv, now held by the Tékés, they would migrate to Merv in a body.

No. 100.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 26.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, April 20, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "St. Petersburg Vedomosti," of the $\frac{7}{18}$ th April contains a telegram from its correspondent at Kizil Arvat, under date of the $\frac{6}{18}$ th April, to the effect that the Amu Daria expedition for surveying the western portion of the Uzboi left Bala-Ishar on the $\frac{1}{2}$ th March.

M. Lessar, accompanied by M. Konchin, mining engineer, and Lieutenant Khabalow, left Kizil Arvat on the $\frac{6}{18}$ th April. This expedition has for its object the exploration of the Chardjui branch of the Oxus and the central parts of the Kara Kum desert, and also the water communication between Bokhara and Askabad.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 101.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received April 30.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, April 25, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation of extracts from three numbers of the "Invalide Russe" relating to surveys in Central Asia which have been made by Russian officials, and which, in addition to many other proceedings, tend to show how deep an interest the Russian Government are now taking in all that region.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 101.

Extract from the "Invalide Russe" of April $\frac{7}{19}$, $\frac{8}{20}$, and $\frac{9}{21}$, 1883.

(Translation.)

Survey of Work done by the Topographical Department of the Russian War Office during the Year 1882.

WORK executed by Caucasian section of Military Topographical Department:—

In the Transcaspian region the topographers surveyed and mapped the country on a scale of 2 versts, from the Tchekishlar post, across Chat, the mountains of Massiner Chacha to Sarakhs, inclusive. The survey proceeded in a wide zone, embracing on each side the environs of the fort of Molla-Kari, the Island of Ashur-Ade, the Gulf of Hassan-Kuli, the upper part of the River Attek, a portion of the Akhal Téké oasis between Geok-Tépé and Artchman, and a slip of Persian territory in the neighbourhood of Boojnoord.

This survey enables the frontier-line to be drawn between the Transcaspian region and Persia along the whole of its length, a distance of 592 versts.

The transmission of astronomical observations, in the neighbourhood of Attek, from the hills to the plains, was rendered difficult by thick mists which are of frequent occurrence in this locality from the month of June to September. The absence of water and forage, the high temperature, which reached 35 to 36 degrees Réaumur, and other obstacles, greatly retarded the work.

Among the astronomical labours of the Caucasian section executed during 1882. the following are deserving of attention: (1) Determination of the longitude of Tiflis and Rostoff on the Don, the extreme point of telegraphic determination in European Russia; this work joined all the trigonometrical and astronomical determinations in the Caucasus with those made in Russia proper; (2) the chronometrical expedition in the Transcaspiàn region, which extended to Merv inclusively.

The following are the principal maps compiled and revised by the Caucasian section during 1882: (1) new map of the Caucasus on a scale of 5 versts to the inch; (2) newly revised 5-, 10-, and 20-verst map of the Caucasus, 50-verst map of Asiatic Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and Beloochistan; and (3) a map in relief of the theatre of war in 1877 and 1878 in Asiatic Turkey, with the adjoining country.

Work executed by the Turkestan section of the Military Topographical Department in 1882:—

Systematic survey of the Ferghana region in the neighbourhood of Marghelan and Namangan.

The survey of routes from Kungrad to the Gulf of Mertvy-Kultuk was undertaken by Colonel Alexandroff with the object of ascertaining how far the road from Kungrad to the Bay of Yaman-Airakty, on the Caspian, was practicable for wheeled vehicles. The idea of using this road for carts was started by Vanushin, a merchant of Uralsk, who sent a consignment of fish from the sea of Aral to Astrakhan.

The distance from Kungrad across the Tchink, on the Ust-Urt, to the Bay of Yaman-Airakty is 447 versts. On the return journey Colonel Alexandroff turned off at the wells of Amandjul, along another road more northerly, at the Chibin descent from the Ust-Urt. The ground passed over was hard, consisting of sand and stone, and quite practicable for carts. The ascent at Tchink-Adjul, and the descent to the Caspian Sea through the defiles of the Djagulgan, are very convenient for carts. The ascent at Tchibin would require some slight amelioration. There are no prominent physical features along the route, with the exception of several ruins of Khirghiz graves. The water supply from Kungrad to the ascent at Tchink is adequate, and then occurs a waterless tract of 135 versts to the wells of Tabyn-su, beyond which water is again plentiful. Along the northern route, the longest waterless march is 60 versts. The depth of the wells is from 10 to 29 arshins, and the depth of water is from 1 to 2½ arshins; the wells are everywhere lined with stones.

Prickly shrubs and the "saksaul" plant grow nearly along the whole route.

The construction of a landing-stage in the Bay of Yaman-Airakty is quite practicable. Whether it is possible for steamers to enter Mertvy-Kultuk and approach the Bay of Yaman-Airakty Colonel Alexandroff does not say.

The work in the Syr-Darya region consisted of surveys of the towns of Perofsk and Aulie-Ata, and in rectifying the surveys of Tashkend and the Kuramin district.

The roads through the passes of Abiaz, Kara-Mizar, Shagraz, Shant-Davan, were also explored, and a detailed survey made of the roads through the pass of Kendyr-Davan, to the Chilmakhram ford on the Syr-Darya, with the object of selecting the most convenient line of country for a road from Tashkend to Kokand.

M. Kossiakoff, who was attached to the scientific expedition to Darvaz and Shugnan undertaken by Dr. Regel, left Pendshakent with the expedition on the 14th July. At Hissar the expedition divided. Dr. Regel proceeded along the mountainous road to Baldjuan, and M. Kossiakoff descended along the River Karatag to the town of Kobadian, whence, viâ Kuran-tubi and Kuliab, he reached Kala-i-Khumb. From this point M. Kossiakoff pursued his explorations upwards along the River Piandj to Fort Vandj, and further along the River Vandj to its upper course. Returning to Kala-i-Khumb, he proceeded northwards to Fort Tavildara, on the River Vaksh (Hullias), and then upwards along the right bank of that river to the town of Kurgan-Ladjur. After having explored the upper course of the Ak-su River, Kossiakoff joined Dr. Regel at Kala-i-Khumb for the purpose of making explorations in Shugnan. This expedition, however, was abandoned, owing to the length of time that elapsed before permission was received from the Ruler of Shugnan to enter his territory, and M. Kossiakoff, ultimately falling ill, was compelled to hasten his return to Samarcand. Proceeding from Kala-i-Khumb to Talvar, down the River Ak-su to Fort Sarypul, and further to Baldjan, Dushambe, Dinau, and Baisun, M. Kossiakoff continued his march-route survey to Yar-Tubè, where, in consequence of the state of his health, he was compelled to abandon the work, and proceed to Samarcand. M. Kossiakoff drew up march-routes of about 1,400 versts, the angles being determined graphically by the aid of a small plane, and the distance by paces. An interesting description of the routes traversed is annexed to the march-routes.

During 1882 Captain Putiata explored the following routes in the Turkestan region: (1) the road from the station of Kara-Kuduk to the station of Maili-Bash ($204\frac{3}{4}$ versts); (2) from the station of Djulus to the station of Kura-Tugai ($252\frac{3}{4}$ versts); and (3) from the station of Djumos to the station of Ak-Suat ($231\frac{1}{4}$ versts).

The object of the expedition to Kizil-Kum was to determine astronomically a series of points by which all the surveys executed by various departments could be grouped together, and also to revise the maps of these surveys.

Captain Putiata determined in all fifteen points in Kara-Kum and in Kizil-Kum. During 1882 Lieutenant-Colonel Pomerantseff and Captain Zalesky determined the difference in the longitude of Tashkend and Samarcand.

The longitudinal difference between Pendshakent and Samarcand was determined chronometrically.

The trigonometrical survey of the Zaravshan executed in 1874 was extended in 1882 in the direction of Pendshakent, between the left banks of the Zaravshan and the southern forelands of the Zaravshan for a distance of 900 square versts.

No. 102.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 14.)

My Lord,

Tehran, April 6, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 17th February last, I have the honour to report to your Lordship that I am now informed that the Russian Government have announced to the Government of Persia that their surveys being now completed, they have appointed a Commissioner, and are prepared to proceed with the work of demarcation. The Persian Government have appointed Suleiman Khan as their Representative on the Commission, which, I understand, is to commence its labours some time in May.

I may add that an understanding has been arrived at between the two Governments to the effect that the work of the Commission is to begin with the settlement of the questions which have arisen as to the possession of the Hussein Kuli Settlement at the mouth of the Attrek, and the nationality of the Oghurjele Turkomans, and which are explained at greater length in my despatches of the 26th February and 1st May of last year, and in the Report from the Asterabad Agent which is inclosed in my despatch of the 5th instant.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 103.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 16.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, May 9, 1883.

THE "Novoe Vremya" of the ^{27th April}_{9th May}, 1883, publishes an account of the new trade route from Russia to Central Asia recently explored by M. Rosheff, a merchant of Orenburg, who was sent by the Russian Sea and Overland Transport Company to investigate the routes to Central Asia from Bokhara via Khiva, and thence by way of Kizil Arvat to the terminus of the Transcaspian Railway.

M. Rosheff started on his journey on the $\frac{1}{8}$ th December last, and reached Bokhara on the ^{11th}_{23rd} February by way of Orsk, Irgiz, and Kazalinsk. On visiting the bazaar M. Rosheff found there an immense quantity of English goods, i.e., prints, muslins, handkerchiefs, dyes, sugar, and green tea, sent to Bokhara via Afghanistan. Although these goods were sold at a rate only slightly dearer than Russian goods, the former were more readily purchased by the natives, especially by those of the better classes. M. Rosheff attributes their favourable competition of English goods principally to the alleged fact that they are imported into Bokhara free of duty, and partly to the cost of transport of Russian goods. This state of things, however, M. Rosheff considers will be materially altered when the new trade route is opened from Russia to Bokhara, by way of Karakul, to the landing-place at Ust-Kurgan, on the Oxus; thence down the Oxus to Petro-Alexandrofsk, to Kungrad, by way of the Ust-Urt, to Mertvoi Kultuk and the Yaman-Arakt landing-place. The distance from Kungrad to

Yaman-Arakt is, according to M. Rosheff's calculation, 434 versts (289½ versts*). General Tchernaiëff has already dispatched Colonel Alexandroff (who surveyed this route in 1881), to further investigate and improve the new trade route from Kungrad to Mertvoi Kultuk.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 104.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received May 16, 1.45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, May 16, 1883.

I HEAR that Eyoub Khan has asked Persian Government for permission to quit Tehran, and that he means to leave with or without permission. His intention is stated to be to go by Resht to Bokhara, to promote movement against Ameer in Turkestan.

No. 105.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received May 21.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, May 16, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, according to a telegram from Tashkent, published this day in the Russian newspapers, General Tchernaiëff, Governor of Turkestan, started from Petro-Alexandrovsk on the Oxus for Kungrad on the ^{1st April} _{23rd May} from whence it was his intention to proceed to the Caspian across the Ust-Urt. It is said that the object of his journey is to make himself acquainted with the new route from the Oxus to the Caspian. He will be back at Tashkent by the ^{17th} _{29th} May.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 106.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received June 1, 12.45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, June 1, 1883, 11.44 A.M.

EYOUNG KHAN has informed the Persian Government that he adheres to his resolution to quit Tehran and the Persian territory, and that if they desire to prevent his doing so, they must employ force. This I think the Shah will not use, unless in the event of his attempting to go to Meshed.

No. 107.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received June 4, 1.10 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, June 4, 1883.

COUNCIL of Ministers have been twice summoned to consider question of Eyoub Khan's detention. They admit obligation to prevent disturbance of Afghan frontier from Persian territory, and recommend, in view of friendly disposition recently shown by Ameer towards Persia, that Eyoub Khan should be prevented by every means short of actual force from leaving Tehran pending duration of the Shah's journey to Meshed. Shah's son, Ministers for Foreign Affairs and Commerce, have each ineffectually endeavoured to dissuade him from going, and Minister of Commerce has been ordered to threaten forced detention should he attempt to leave. He seems, however, to have understood force will not be employed, and he now declares his intention of going to Bokhara by way of Asterabad, or through some part of Geok-Tépé.

Strong aversion of Shah and Persian Ministers to do anything that might provoke resistance on the part of Eyoub's followers makes it very doubtful if effectual.

measures will be taken to detain him here, and Ameer would do well to take all precautions on the Herat and Turkestan frontiers.

No. 108.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received June 11.)

My Lord,

Tehran, May 21, 1883.

EYOUB KHAN having lately given out amongst his followers here and in Meshed that he had obtained permission to accompany the Shah on his approaching journey to Khorassan, I spoke to the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject, and received from his Excellency assurances that he would not, under any circumstances, be allowed to go to Meshed or to enter the Province of Khorassan. Eyoub Khan has, however, continued to make preparations which indicate an intention on his part to quit Tehran. I have now ascertained from one of his followers, who is in his confidence, that he has applied to the Persian Government for permission to leave Tehran, and that he is determined to leave whether the Shah gives him permission to do so or not. He intends to proceed to Resht, I am told, and to make his way thence to Bokhara, or possibly through the Turkoman country to the frontiers of Turkestan, with the object of fomenting disturbances at Meimaneh.

It has been reported that Eyoub Khan had been in communication with the Vali of Meimaneh, and that it was believed he had promised to assist that Chief in his defiance of the Ameer. I learn from a very trustworthy source that Eyoub Khan has lately expressed great confidence in his ability to bring about a general revolt against Abdul Rahman Khan throughout Turkestan should he succeed in reaching Meimaneh or the immediate neighbourhood of that place.

With this object in view, he has been endeavouring to persuade the son of the late Shah Newaz Khan, of Herat, to proceed with him to the Turkestan frontier, hoping that the outbreak of hostilities at Meimaneh will enable his numerous partisans in Herat, aided by the Shah Newaz Khan party there, to induce the Herat population to join his cause.

Mahomed Shereef Khan has also written recently from Bagdad to his friends in Meshed that he is about to come to Tehran and will shortly reach Khorassan. His presence there would probably be followed by intrigues which would favour Eyoub Khan's designs on the Afghan territory. I have thought it right, therefore, in view of the circumstances above mentioned, to urge the Persian Government to take steps to prevent the departure of Eyoub Khan from Tehran and the passage of Shereef Khan through the Persian territory to Khorassan.

I desired Mr. Dickson accordingly to make a verbal communication to Mirza Saïd Khan with this object, and I have now the honour to inclose, for your Lordship's information, a copy of his Report, from which it will be seen that the Shah has ordered steps to be taken by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in accordance with my request.

I have, &c
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

Inclosure in No. 108.

Mr. Dickson to Mr. Thomson.

(Extract.)

Tehran, May 18, 1883.

BY appointment I waited upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday afternoon, at the house of the Minister of Telegraphs, whom the Shah was honouring with a visit.

I told Mirza Saïd Khan that your Excellency had heard that Eyoub Khan was making preparations to quit Tehran, and that he intended proceeding towards Turkestan, either by Khorassan or by Resht across the Caspian; that Shereef Khan also, probably in combination with this movement, contemplated leaving Bagdad for Khorassan; and that you were anxious that steps should be taken to prevent their doing so, as their object was no doubt to create mischief against the Ruler of Afghanistan.

Mirza Saïd Khan said that some difficulty was felt by the Persian Government as to how they should deal with Eyoub Khan, who was not a prisoner but their guest;

that he was greatly influenced by one of his Sirdars, who was constantly filling his mind with ambitious ideas; that advice had frequently been given to both to remain quietly at Tehran; that as yet there was nothing to show that this advice was disregarded; but that if they disappeared it would be in opposition to the advice and without the knowledge of the Persian Government.

I observed to his Excellency that if Eyoub were permitted to return to the neighbourhood of that country and create disturbances, Abderrahman Khan might find himself forced to apply to the British Government for assistance, a contingency which it was very desirable to avoid. The Persian Minister expressed his entire concurrence in this view. Therefore, I added, his Excellency might give some sound advice in this sense; that he was still very young and had many years to look forward to; that his detention here was at present a political necessity, and that his wisest course would be to respect the wishes of the Shah and of Her Majesty's Government in the matter. The Minister approved these remarks.

I then told him that your Excellency would feel obliged to him if he would telegraph to the Persian Consul-General at Bagdad to prevent the departure of Shereef Khan. He replied that he would take the Shah's orders on the subject.

No. 109.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received June 13, 3.45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, June 13, 1883.

SHAH left yesterday for Meshed, accompanied by about 1,500 infantry and 2,000 irregular cavalry.

No. 110.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received June 25.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, June 19, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an extract by Mr. Michell from the "Novoe Vremya" respecting a new Russian expedition for the exploration of Central Asia and of a certain portion of Thibet.

The St. Petersburg "Vedomosti" also speaks of other expeditions of a similar nature in that region

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 110.

Abstract of Article in the "Novoe Vremya" of ^{May 28} June 9, 1883.

THE "Novoe Vremya" of the ^{28th May} 9th June, 1883, states that a fourth scientific expedition to explore Central Asia, and an area of 20,000 square geographical miles in Thibet, has been organized with the consent of His Imperial Majesty. Colonel Prjevalsky is to take command of the expedition, and he will be accompanied by two officers, one volunteer, one interpreter, and an escort of Transbaikal Cossacks. The sum of 16,080 silver roubles has been assigned for this expedition.

The St. Petersburg "Vedomosti" announces that the Oxus expedition for surveying the western half of the Uzboi (ancient channel of the Oxus) left Bala-Tshem. on the ^{20th March} 7th April. M. Lessar's expedition for exploring the Tchardjui bed of the Oxus, the central parts of the Kara-Kum desert, and the roads between Askabad and Bokhara, left Kizil-Arvat on the ^{6th} 18th April last.

Major-General Grodekoff has been appointed Military Governor of the Syr-Darian region and Commander of the troops stationed therein.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received July 5.)

(Extract.)

Tehran, June 10, 1883.

WITH reference to the telegrams which I have lately addressed to your Lordship relative to Sirdar Eyoub Khan's proceedings, I have now the honour to report that having received information some time ago that the Afghan refugees residing here were making preparations to leave Tehran, I brought the matter to the notice of the Minister for Foreign Affairs. His Excellency had no knowledge of the circumstance, and having referred to the police authorities, he learned from them that they had not heard of any intended movement on the part of the Afghans. I alluded to the subject again a few days later, and recommended Mirza Saïd Khan to see that measures were taken to prevent Eyoub Khan from leaving clandestinely. It was then ascertained that he and his followers had purchased horses and made other arrangements which would enable them to quit Tehran at a few hours' notice.

I heard soon afterwards through one of his confidential friends that Eyoub Khan had written to the Shah for permission to leave Persia, and that he intended to proceed to Bokhara by way of the Caspian. I therefore sent an urgent verbal communication to the Minister for Foreign Affairs with a view to induce the Persian Government to detain him in Tehran, and I received from the Shah, as reported in my despatch of the 21st ultimo, an assurance that steps would be taken with that object.

Further formal assurances were subsequently given to me by His Majesty, that every precaution would be taken to prevent Eyoub Khan from leaving Tehran.

It was found, however, that Eyoub Khan had no idea of consulting the wishes of the Persian Government in the matter, and that he was resolved to quit Persia with or without the Shah's permission. On two occasions when he saw the Foreign Minister he intimated that this was his determination, and to other Persian officials he adopted a still more defiant tone, saying that he was neither a prisoner nor a criminal in this country, and that if the Shah was resolved to keep him in Tehran, he would have to do so by force and no longer as a guest, but as a prisoner. This language made an impression upon the Shah and his Ministers, and a Council having been summoned to consider the question, it was decided that it would bring great discredit upon the Persian Government, and upon the Shah personally, if force were used towards a person in Eyoub Khan's position, as it might provoke resistance on the part of his followers and lead to bloodshed. The Council, therefore, recommended that he should be prevented by every means short of force from leaving Tehran, but that if he could not be induced by argument to remain, he should be allowed to go.

This course was decided upon, and several ineffectual attempts having been made to induce him to alter his plans, Eyoub Khan then wrote to the Shah thanking His Majesty for past favours, and saying that he now proposed to quit the Persian territory, and to proceed with his family either to Askabad by way of Khorassan or from one of the northern districts of that province across the Turkoman country to Bokhara.

Eyoub Khan's departure from Tehran, with the avowed object of creating disturbances in the Afghan territory, appearing to be thus certain, I called upon the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and afterwards upon three of the other Ministers who had been consulted by the Shah on the question of Eyoub Khan's detention, and discussed the matter with each of them separately. I recapitulated what had been already said as to the complications which might ensue if Eyoub now succeeded in entering Afghanistan at Meimaneh or elsewhere, and pointed to the obligation which rested upon Persia to prevent any such movement being made from her territory. I said that there was in reality very little difference between Eyoub Khan's being allowed to direct an attack on the Herat frontier from Khorassan and his being permitted to go from Persia through the Turkoman country, to stir up revolt on the frontiers of Turkestan; and as for the plea that the Shah could not compel him to reside in Persia against his will, I observed that it was an argument that might be used if he intended to withdraw from this country and reside peaceably at some point, like Bagdad for instance, remote from the Afghan frontier; but that every one knew what Eyoub Khan's designs now were, and he himself made no secret of its being his intention to proceed through Khorassan if possible, or by the nearest route open to him, to foment disturbances in the territory of the Ameer, who was at peace and on friendly terms with the Shah's Government, and that it appeared to me under the circumstances that the Persian Government would not only be perfectly justified, but that it

was incumbent upon them to prevent, by force if necessary, his carrying out this project. I added that Eyoub Khan had already given out to his followers in Meshed, and to others, that he had the Shah's permission to accompany the Royal camp to Khorassan, and that his designs were viewed favourably by the Persian Government. If he was allowed to proceed towards the Afghan frontier now, it would be believed by many that such was the case. Exaggerated reports would reach the frontier as to the number of troops in the Shah's camp, and the object of His Majesty's journey, and many who were now disposed to yield obedience to Abdurrahman Khan, might be led to take part with Eyoub Khan. I said that I thought it was, therefore, most undesirable in all respects that he should be permitted to quit Tehran at the present moment. My remarks seemed to make some impression on those to whom they were addressed, and especially on the Nasseer-ed-Dowleh, who promised to support my representations on the subject when they were submitted to the Shah.

The question was again discussed by the Shah and his Ministers next morning, and the Nasseer-ed-Dowleh was ordered to see Eyoub Khan, and inform him that the Persian Government had decided that his detention here during the Shah's absence in Khorassan was absolutely necessary.

No. 112.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 6, 1883.

I ASKED the Persian Minister this afternoon whether there was any truth in the Reuter's telegram which had appeared in the papers two days ago, stating that a Treaty had been concluded between Persia and Russia in regard to the north-eastern frontier of Persia as far as Afghanistan.

Malcom Khan answered that he had no information on the subject, but that he thought the report must refer to the Treaty of last year, of which I already had cognizance.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 113.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, July 17, 1883, 4.30 P.M.

UNDER date of 11th, Reuter's correspondent at Tehran telegraphs that preliminary Convention drawn up by Russian Minister at Tehran, and provisionally accepted by Persian Minister for Foreign Affairs, extends Russian frontier to midway between Sarakhs and Merv, and stipulates that in event of England protesting, Persia should refer Her Majesty's Government to Russia.

Have you any fresh information regarding this matter?

No. 114.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received July 19, 3.10 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, July 19, 1883, 2.40 P.M.

INFORMATION communicated by Reuter's correspondent is, I believe, premature. Minister for Foreign Affairs vouches for truth of the statement which he has repeatedly made that no Convention has yet been proposed or demands put forward relative to the extension of the Russian frontier.

No. 115.

Mr. Finn to Earl Granville.—(Received August 18.)

My Lord,

Resht, July 24, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to report the arrival here, on his way to Tehran, of M. Pokhitanow, formerly attached to the Russian Legation in Persia, who has been recently on leave of absence in Russia. This gentleman is now Secretary to Lieutenant-Colonel Kouzmin-Karavaieff, the Russian Commissioner for the delimitation of the Perso-Afhal frontier.

The latter gentleman will himself pass through here in a few days on his way to Tehran; thence, having received his final instructions from his Legation, he proposes proceeding to Astrabad, where the labours of the Commission will be opened.

I am informed that the Russian Commissioner has been specially instructed to see that an equitable division of the water supply is made along the frontier line.

M. Pokhitanow was specially attached to the suite of the Iz-ed-Dowleh during His Royal Highness' late visit to Russia for the coronation of the Emperor.

I have, &c.

(Signed) ALEXANDER FINN.

No. 116.

Sir L. Mallet to Mr. Currie.—(Received August 18.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, extract from a letter from the Viceroy of India to His Highness the Ameer of Cabul, dated the 16th June, 1883, on the subject of the northern boundaries of Afghanistan.

India Office, August 17, 1883.

Inclosure in No. 116.

The Viceroy of India to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

(After compliments.)

Simla, June 16, 1883.

YOUR Highness expresses a wish to be supplied with a document and map, showing the boundaries between Afghanistan and Russia and Persia.

The boundaries of Afghanistan were settled by the British Government with Russia in 1873, when the Afghan territory between the Oxus to the Heri-Rud was defined as follows:—

“This internal districts of Akcha, Sir-i-Pul, Maimena, Shibergan, and Andkoi, the latter of which would be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the north-west, the desert beyond belonging to independent tribes of Turkomans.”

This boundary has, however, never been laid down accurately on any map, and the country has not been examined on the spot with that view. No map, therefore, which could be sent to your Highness would show this line of frontier correctly; but I should be glad to be informed what districts your Highness understands to be described by the words above quoted, and exactly what you consider to be the boundary defined by them.

No. 117.

Sir L. Mallet to Mr. Currie.—(Received August 18.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, copy of a letter from the Viceroy of India to the Ameer of Cabul, dated the 16th June, 1883, intimating the grant to His Highness of an annual subsidy of 12 lakhs of rupees.

India Office, August 17, 1883.

Inclosure in No. 117.

The Viceroy of India to the Ameer of Afghanistan.

(After compliments.)

Simla, June 16, 1883.

YOUR Highness will remember that, at Sir Lepel Griffin's interview with you at Zimma on the 31st July, 1880, he said that the Government of India could only start your Administration by giving you a grant to pay your army and officials and your immediate expenses; and that, having recognized you as Ameer, it was anxious to see you strong; but after you had taken possession of Cabul, you must rely on your own resources.

I have always interested myself so much in your Highness' success, and have felt so great a desire for the establishment of a strong and friendly Power under your Highness' auspices in Afghanistan, that I have on various occasions gone beyond the determination then communicated to you, and have from time to time aided your Highness with sums of money and arms, besides devoting some lakhs a-year to the support of Afghan refugees and detenus, whose presence in Afghanistan is, I understand, regarded by your Highness as dangerous to your power. Still my view of the relations to each other of the two countries has throughout been that, in matters of internal policy and finance, India should not seek to interfere with Afghanistan, but should confine herself to the part of a friendly neighbour and ally. On these conditions, it would be in accordance with the practice of nations that Afghanistan should regulate her own finance and bear her own burdens, as she has always done heretofore.

As regards matters of external policy, your Highness was informed in the communication from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 20th July, 1880, and again in my letter of the 22nd February, 1883, that if any foreign Power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the dominions of your Highness, in that event the British Government would be prepared to aid you to such extent and in such manner as might appear to the British Government necessary in repelling it; provided that your Highness follows unreservedly the advice of the British Government in regard to your external relations.

On consideration, however, of your accounts of the condition of your north-west frontier, I have been satisfied that your Highness has to contend with exceptional difficulties in that quarter. I have understood that, owing to various untoward circumstances, your Highness has not yet been able to reduce the important frontier province of Herat to the orderly and secure condition so essential for the protection of Afghanistan as a whole; and therefore that, for the settlement of the affairs of that frontier, some friendly assistance may be needful to you. I further observe, with satisfaction, your Highness' assurances of good faith and loyalty to the British Government; and your Highness' language convinces me that you realize how much it is to the interest of Afghanistan to maintain friendly relations with the Government of India.

Impressed by these considerations, I have determined to offer to your Highness personally, as an aid towards meeting the present difficulties in the management of your State, a subsidy of 12 lakhs of rupees a-year, payable monthly, to be devoted to the payment of your troops, and to the other measures required for the defence of your north-western frontier. I feel that I may safely trust to your Highness' good faith and practised skill to devote this addition to your resources to objects of such vital importance as those which I have above mentioned.

No. 118.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received August 30.)

My Lord,

Tehran, July 24, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the Russian Minister had an interview with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 15th instant, at which, by desire of the Shah, the question of the nationality of the Oghurjele Turkomans, occupying the Hussein Kuli encampment at the mouth of the Attrek, was again discussed.

Persia's claims in respect to Hussein Kuli and the tribe in question have been reserved for investigation by the Commissioners who will shortly visit that part of the

frontier; and the matter would not now have come under consideration were it not for the demand recently made by the Russian authorities for the payment to them of taxes by the Oghurjele tribe. A similar demand was formerly made, but withdrawn on objection being raised by the Persian Government.

It appears that the Turkoman Chiefs who lately visited the Shah's camp in the neighbourhood of Astrabad complained that the tax had been reimposed, and orders were sent by His Majesty to the Minister for Foreign Affairs to endeavour to make arrangements with the Russian Minister that his Government should relinquish all claims of this nature pending a final decision of the question by the Frontier Commission.

M. Melnikoff has telegraphed to St. Petersburg on the subject, and has informed Mirza Saeed Khan that he anticipates no difficulty in obtaining orders for the exaction being discontinued for the present.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 119.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received August 30.)

My Lord,

Tehran, July 26, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that Colonel Karavaieff, an officer who was on General Skobelev's staff at Geuk-Tépé, and afterwards assisted M. Zinoviev in negotiating the Akhal-Khorassan boundary questions, has been appointed Commissioner for making out the line of frontier agreed to in Article II of the Russo-Persian Treaty of December 1881.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has been informed by the Russian Minister that Colonel Karavaieff will reach Tehran in a few days, and the Persian Commissioner, who was appointed eighteen months ago, is ready to proceed to the frontier whenever his Russian colleague arrives. The work of the Commission will then commence at the mouth of the Atrek, where the Persian claim to the Turkoman Settlement at Hussein Koolée will be investigated and disposed of.

I have, &c.
(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 120.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received August 30.)

(Extract.)

Tehran, August 4, 1883.

I HAD a conversation with the Russian Minister some evenings ago with reference to affairs in Khorassan. He alluded to General Komaroff's visit to the Shah's camp, and said that, having been misinformed as to the date of the Shah's arrival on the frontier, the General had left Askabad much too soon. On reaching Kuchan, he had found that His Majesty was not expected there for another ten days. Instead of waiting at that place he had thought it better to move on to Boojnoord, where he arrived on the 25th July. He was received by the Shah immediately on his arrival, and on the following day, at the Shah's request, his Cossack escort had manoeuvred with the Persian Cossacks in His Majesty's presence. He was to leave the camp immediately, and had probably returned to Akhal by this time.

In his conversation, M. Melnikoff expressed views similar to those lately put forward at St. Petersburg by his predecessor, M. Zinoviev, as to the advisability of an Agreement being now concluded between England and Russia with respect to that part of the Afghan frontier which has not yet been defined. He referred to the arrangement come to between the two Governments recognizing the boundary line between Afghanistan and Bokhara, and said that, since that Agreement was made, no difficulties or complaints had arisen on either side, the Shir Ali Khan incident excepted, and he thought an equally good result would be obtained, and an important element of discord removed, if the demarkation of the Afghan line of frontier from Khojeh Saleh to the Heri-Rud were agreed upon and speedily effected.

Sir I. Mallet to Mr. Currie.—(Received September 1.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Assistant Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and begs to forward herewith, for the information of Earl Granville, copy of a letter from the Ameer of Cabul to his Excellency the Viceroy of India, dated the 11th July, 1883, in acknowledgment of the grant to him of annual subsidy of 12 lakhs of rupees.

India Office, August 30, 1883.

Inclosure in No. 121.

The Ameer of Afghanistan to the Viceroy of India.

(Translation.)

(After compliments.)

6th Ramazan, 1300 H. (July 11, 1883).

I HAVE perused your Excellency's two friendly and cordial letters, dated the 16th June, 1883, corresponding to the 10th Shaban, 1300 H., which reached me at Jelalabad. My heart, the repository of concord, was exceedingly gratified and rejoiced by the glad tidings of your Excellency's perfect and sound health.

In one of the friendly epistles an allusion was made to Mr. (Sir Lepel) Griffin's interview with me at Zimma, and to the sympathy and commiseration shown by the illustrious British Government from time to time to me and to the people of Afghanistan. It also contained the observation:—

“My view (of the relations of the two countries to each other) has throughout been that in matters of internal policy and finance India should not seek to interfere with Afghanistan, but should confine herself to the part of a friendly neighbour and ally. I have determined to offer to your Highness personally, as an aid towards meeting the present difficulties in the management of your State, a subsidy of 12 lakhs of rupees a-year, payable monthly.”

In the other cordial letter your Excellency, referring to the definition of the internal districts and to the settlement of the boundaries of Afghanistan through the British Government with Russia in 1873, wrote thus:—

“The internal districts of Akcha, Sar-i-Pul, Maimana, Shibarghan, and Andkhai, the latter of which will be the extreme Afghan frontier possession to the north-west, the desert beyond belonging to independent tribes of Turkomans.”

I have read both the letters and made myself fully acquainted with their contents, and have been exceedingly pleased and satisfied at the manifold favours shown to me by the illustrious British Government. I have announced the glad tidings of your Excellency's determination, which is calculated to conduce to the well-being of the British Government and of the people of Afghanistan, and to put in order and keep going my affairs to the people of Afghanistan at large, who all offered up thanks, saying: “For many years we, the Afghan nation, have been suffering from innumerable calamities. Thanks be to God that a glorious Government like this (British Government) has befriended us.”

God willing, the people of Afghanistan will never allow their heads to swerve from the line of friendship to the illustrious British Government, and so long as I live I will not think of making friends with any one but with the illustrious British Government. I have offered my prayers to God for the (increased) glory of that powerful Government.

I have understood what my northern boundaries are, but I wished and am still wishing to get hold of a map to enable me to have a thorough knowledge of Afghanistan, so that I may know the exact limit (point) up to which I should direct my attention, and that I may endeavour to watch my frontiers properly, and improve my possessions. I have written to the Governor of Balkh to send me a statement, showing the boundaries of his province, viz., every village and hamlet on the border, whether it be Andkhai or Balkh, so that I may send it for your Excellency's information. I have also written to the Governor of Badakshan to furnish me with a similar statement of the boundaries of Badakshan and Kataghan, viz., every village and hamlet, so that I may forward it also to your Excellency.

Further, I have always prayed and I pray for your Excellency's health and prosperity.

No. 122.

Earl Granville to Mr. Kennedy.

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 1, 1883.

IN reply to a representation made by Sir E. Thornton to the Russian Government respecting the conduct of a Russian officer towards Mr. Stephen near Chacha, M. de Giers stated, in a note dated the 4th March, that he was in ignorance of the circumstances, but that he had caused inquiries to be made.

The result of these inquiries has not been communicated to Her Majesty's Government, and I have to instruct you to remind M. de Giers that they have not yet heard from him on the subject.

The officer was, in the first instance, described as Major Knoss, but it appears that this was not his real name, and that "Knoss" was a Turkoman corruption of the Russian title "Kniaz."

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 123.

Memorandum by Mr. Stephen.

I THINK it well to draw attention to the position of Sarakhs as plotted in latest Russian Map of the Transcaspian Province (1875. Corrected up to the 24th March, 1883).

Its position in this Map is latitude $37^{\circ} 4'$, while my survey of the Heri-Rud, based on bearings, taken from Mohsinabad, of Kehriz and Kohsan (two points astronomically fixed by Lentz), and checked by three sextant observations for latitude taken by me between the Herat frontier and Sarakhs, would place the latter spot at $36^{\circ} 23' 30''$.

(Signed) A. CONDIE STEPHEN.

September 5, 1883.

No. 124.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received September 7, 9 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, September 7, 1883.

THE Shah has quitted Meshed and proceeded by the direct road to Tehran.

No. 125.

Vice-Consul Finn to Earl Granville.—(Received September 8.)

My Lord,

Resht, August 6, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to report the passage through Resht, on his way to the capital, of the Russian Commissioner for the delimitation of the Akhal-Khorassan frontier, referred to in my despatch to your Lordship of the 24th ultimo.

Colonel Kouzmin-Karavaieff, who is accompanied by Captain Count Nirod, of the Imperial Guard, informs me that he expects to be detained at Tehran until the return of the Shah from Khorassan, some time in October, and that he will then proceed via Astrabad to Askabad, where he is to receive his final instructions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) ALEXANDER FINN.

No. 126.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, September 12, 1883, 4 P.M.

IN event of Eyoub Khan attempting to leave Tehran after the Shah's return from Meshed, remind Persian Government of danger of allowing him to quit Persian territory at a point whence he could make his way towards Herat or Valley of Murghab, or to settle at any place where he could with facility intrigue against Ameer's authority in western and north-western provinces of Afghanistan.

No. 127.

Earl Granville to Mr. J. G. Kennedy.

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 18, 1883.

I INCLOSE, for any observations which you may have to offer upon it, copy of a Memorandum by Mr. Stephen, Second Secretary to Her Majesty's Legation at Tehran, in which he points out that in the latest edition of the Russian Map of Transcaspia inclosed in Sir E. Thornton's despatch of the 21st June, Sarakhs is placed too far to the north.*

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 128.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received September 27.)

(Extract.)

Tehran, August 28, 1883.

SINCE the arrival here of Colonel Karavaieff, the Russian Commissioner for the delimitation of the Akhal-Khorassan frontier, the Russian Minister has had three interviews with the Minister for Foreign Affairs with a view to determine how the work of the Commission is to be carried out.

M. Melnikoff has proposed that he and the Minister for Foreign Affairs should sign and exchange a document stipulating that the Commissioners shall have full power to settle on the spot all questions without further reference to their Governments; that only questions connected with the demarkation of the frontier shall be brought before the Commission; and, thirdly, that in the event of a divergence of opinion between the two Delegates, rendering it necessary that a reference should be made to St. Petersburg and Tehran, the work of the Commission shall proceed pending such reference and the receipt of definite instructions from their respective Governments.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs has referred to the Shah for instructions as to the acceptance of these conditions. His Excellency is disposed to acquiesce to them, provided that the question of the Hussein-Kuli settlement at the mouth of the Attrek, where the work of the Commission will commence, is decided before the delimitation of the frontier is proceeded with.

While engaged in marking out the line of the frontier on the basis agreed upon in Article I of the Treaty of December 1881, it is proposed that the Commissioners should investigate and decide the following questions:—

1. The true position of Hussein-Kuli. There are two channels by which the Attrek enters the Caspian. The Russians assert that Hussein-Kuli is on the north bank of the river, and that it therefore belongs to Russia; while the Persians maintain that the principal channel flows to the north of that settlement, and that it is therefore within the Persian territory. When the Commissioners leave Tehran their first duty will be to visit the embouchure of the Attrek, and determine on which side of the main channel Hussein-Kuli is situated.

2. The right of Persia to withdraw the Oghurjele tribe from Hussein-Kuli in the event of its being decided that the place belongs to Russia. The Oghurjele Turkomans residing at Hussein-Kuli number about 800 families. They claim to be Persian subjects, and pay taxes to the Governor of Astrabad. If the district which

they occupy at present is transferred to Russia, the Persians claim the right to remove the tribe to another location within their own frontier.

3. The nationality of the Charvas, or nomad portion of the Persian Yemoots, who annually migrate to the summer pastures within the Russian territory north of the Attek from their permanent quarters on the south or Persian bank of that river. The Persian Government contends that the Persian nationality of these Yemoots should not be affected by their temporary residence on Russian territory, and that they should, in this respect, be placed on the same footing as the Persian Shahseven tribes in Azerbaijan, who annually migrate during the winter months to the Moghan Plains in Russian territory. The Choornoors, or agricultural portion of the Yemoot tribes, who are more numerous than the Charvas, maintain permanent encampments on their own lands, and do not quit the Persian soil.

4. The recent occupation of the Russians, in spite of Persian remonstrances, of a portion of the district of Keltch-Chinar, on the Akhal frontier. The frontier-line at Keltch-Chinar has not yet been clearly defined. The Russians have, nevertheless, taken possession of the land in question, upon which the inhabitants depend for their supply of corn. The Persian Government remonstrated, and the Russians promised to remove the Cossack outpost which they had placed at that spot. This promise does not appear, however, to have been fulfilled, as the Shah found the guard still there when he recently visited that part of the frontier. The removal, pending the decision of the Akhal Commissioners as to the true line of boundary, is now demanded.

No. 129.

Prince Malcom Khan to Earl Granville.—(Received September 29.)

Mon cher Comte,

Londres, le 27 Septembre, 1883.

LE Ministre de Sa Majesté Britannique a soulevé à Téhéran une question délicate sur laquelle je crois nécessaire d'appeler particulièrement l'attention de votre Excellence.

Pendant le dernier voyage de Sa Majesté le Schah à Khorassan, Ayoub Khan a voulu quitter Téhéran pour aller à Bokhara. Le Ministre de Sa Majesté Britannique à Téhéran, ayant fait des observations amicales contre l'opportunité de ce départ d'Ayoub Khan, le Gouvernement Persan, par pure considération pour les vues de la Légation Britannique, a employé tous ses moyens officieux à amener ce Prince Afghan à retarder son départ jusqu'au retour de Sa Majesté le Schah. Maintenant Ayoub Khan demande de nouveau à partir pour Bokhara, et Mr. Thomson de son côté fait des nouvelles instances pour que le Gouvernement Persan empêche ce Prince de quitter la Perse par voie de Khorassan.

Cette demande de Mr. Thomson est tout à fait contraire à tout ce que nous avons de plus sacré dans les règles de notre hospitalité Musulmane.

Ayoub Khan, un Prince presque Persan, déjà personnellement connu à la Cour de Téhéran, est venu librement, comme tant d'autres Chefs de sa famille, demander à Sa Majesté le Schah une hospitalité qu'aucun Souverain Oriental n'aurait pu lui refuser. Aujourd'hui ce Prince veut quitter la Perse pour aller à Bokhara et cela par la seule route directe qui conduit de Téhéran à cette capitale. Quel est le Ministre Musulman qui oserait accepter l'odieuse mission de détourner forcément un tel hôte de sa route naturelle?

Qu'Ayoub Khan quitte la Perse par telle voie ou par telle autre, cela nous est parfaitement indifférent; mais vouloir engager le Schah à faire subir à son hôte respecté un traitement qu'aucune loi internationale ne justifie, ce serait préparer pour Sa Majesté une humiliation d'autant plus amère qu'elle serait inutile, car, Ayoub Khan ne pouvant partir ostensiblement, partirait à l'insu de notre Gouvernement; et l'effet de sa présence à Bokhara serait, pour les intérêts Britanniques, exactement le même. La violation de l'hospitalité qu'on aurait imposée au Gouvernement Persan n'aurait donc servi qu'à faire inutilement une blessure profonde à l'amour-propre d'un Souverain ami.

Je puis assurer votre Excellence que le Gouvernement du Schah entretient les meilleurs sentiments envers le Gouvernement actuel de l'Afghanistan; et il a tout intérêt à veiller à ce que rien ne vient troubler la tranquillité des frontières de Khorassan; il est donc parfaitement aisé de concilier, dans le cas actuel, les règles de l'hospitalité avec les devoirs d'un bon voisinage: Ayoub Khan serait libre de quitter la Perse par n'importe quelle route; seulement le Gouvernement Persan aurait

soin à ce qu'il ne se fixât pas sur aucun point de nos provinces limitrophes de l'Afghanistan.

Cet arrangement naturel sans aggraver les inconvénients qui s'attachent à la position personnelle d'Ayoub Khan, éviterait à Téhéran des longs tiraillements d'autant plus regrettables qu'ils seraient inutiles.

Si votre Excellence, par une juste appréciation de la position du Gouvernement du Schah, approuvait l'arrangement que je viens de proposer alors, je serais heureux de télégraphier, en ce sens, un mot de réponse qu'on attend à Téhéran.

Votre, &c.
(Signé) MALCOM.

(Translation.)

My dear Lord,

London, September 27, 1883.

HER Britannic Majesty's Minister has raised a delicate question at Tehran, to which I think it necessary to call your Excellency's particular attention.

During the last journey of His Majesty the Shah to Khorassan, Eyoub Khan wished to quit Tehran in order to go to Bokhara. Her Britannic Majesty's Minister at Tehran having made friendly representations as to the inopportunity of Eyoub Khan's departure, the Persian Government, purely out of consideration for the wishes of the British Legation, employed all officious means at its disposal to persuade that Afghan Prince to delay his departure until the return of His Majesty the Shah. Now Eyoub Khan is again requesting that he may leave for Bokhara, and Mr. Thomson, on his side, is making fresh representations in order that the Persian Government may prevent the Afghan Prince from leaving Persia by way of Khorassan.

The demand of Mr. Thomson is altogether opposed to everything that we hold most sacred in our rules of Mussulman hospitality.

Eyoub Khan, a Prince almost Persian, already personally known to the Court of Tehran, came of his own accord, as so many other Chiefs of his family have done, to ask from His Majesty the Shah a hospitality which no oriental Sovereign could refuse him. Now this Prince wishes to leave Persia in order to go to Bokhara, and that by the only route which leads direct from Tehran to that capital. What Mussulman Minister would dare to accept the odious mission of forcibly causing such a guest to turn aside from his proper route?

Whether Eyoub Khan leaves Persia by one route or another is a matter of perfect indifference to us; but to wish to bind the Shah to make his respected guest submit to treatment which no international law justifies would be to expose His Majesty to humiliation all the more bitter because it would be useless: for Eyoub Khan, not being able to leave openly, would depart without the knowledge of our Government; and the effect of his presence at Bokhara would be, as far as British interests are concerned, exactly the same. The violation of hospitality forced on the Persian Government would thus have only served uselessly to inflict a deep wound upon the feelings of a friendly Sovereign.

I can assure your Excellency that the Government of the Shah entertain the kindest feelings towards the present Government of Afghanistan, and they are in every way interested in taking care that nothing should disturb the tranquillity of the frontier of Khorassan; it is, therefore, perfectly easy in the present case to reconcile the rules of hospitality with the duties of a friendly neighbour. Eyoub Khan would be free to quit Persia by any route whatsoever; only the Persian Government would take care that he did not establish himself at any point of our provinces bordering on Afghanistan.

This natural arrangement, without aggravating the inconvenience attaching to Eyoub Khan's personal position, would avoid long struggles at Tehran all the more regrettable because of their useless character.

If your Excellency, justly appreciating the position of the Government of the Shah, should approve the arrangement proposed by me, I should be happy to telegraph in that sense the reply awaited at Tehran.

Yours, &c.
(Signed) MALCOM.

Mr. J. G. Kennedy to Earl Granville.—(Received October 1.)

(Extract.)

St. Petersburg, September 27, 1883.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch of the 18th instant, I have the honour to report that in a recent conversation with M. Zinovieff respecting maps of Central Asia, I mentioned the different position assigned to the town of Sarrakhs in two Russian maps belonging to Her Majesty's Embassy of 1877 and 1883, as pointed out by Mr. Stephen in his Memorandum forwarded to me in your Lordship's above-named despatch.

M. Zinovieff informed me that he was aware of the fact, but that he attached no importance to it, because Sarrakhs being a Persian fortress would always lie outside of any Russian line of frontier.

M. Zinovieff added that no correct maps of that region existed, but that the surveys actually in progress would rectify many errors.

No. 131.

*Earl Granville to Mr. J. G. Kennedy.**

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 2, 1883.

A REPORT has reached Her Majesty's Government of an intended visit of a Russian to Cabul bearing a letter from the Emperor of Russia to the Ameer.

Such a proceeding on the part of the Russian Government would be inconsistent with the assurances which they have given to Her Majesty's Government from time to time on the subject of Afghanistan.

I have to instruct you to inquire as to the truth of this report, and to inform me of the result by telegraph.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 132.

Mr. J. G. Kennedy to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, October 3.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, October 3, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to state that on receipt to-day of your Lordship's telegram of the 2nd instant I immediately waited on M. de Giers at the Foreign Department, and inquired of his Excellency whether there was any truth in a report which had reached Her Majesty's Government that a Russian intended to go to Cabul, furnished with a letter to the Ameer from the Emperor.

M. de Giers at once replied that such an event was impossible. The Emperor was most unlikely to give any letter addressed to the Ameer to any one. No such letter could be written without M. de Giers' knowledge, and he could positively and solemnly assure me that no such letter had been written by His Imperial Majesty.

M. de Giers further states that so anxious were the Emperor and himself to avoid all suspicion of Russian communication with Afghanistan that strict orders had been sent to the Governor-General of Turkestan to desist from the transmission of letters of ceremony or even of letters of recommendation to the Ameer in favour of travellers. In fact, all possible steps were taken to prevent intercourse between Russia and Afghanistan, which latter country was considered to be in England's "orbit."

In reply to a suggestion of mine, M. de Giers stated that no such letter could have been written during the Moscow Coronation festivities, at which period the Emperor had been most guarded in all his dealings with the various Asiatic potentates there assembled.

M. de Giers also promised to inform me at once whenever any intention existed of such an improbable event as the transmission of a letter from His Imperial Majesty to the Ruler of Afghanistan.

In conclusion, his Excellency observed that he was at a loss to account for the

* Substance telegraphed.

rumour which had reached Her Majesty's Government, and intimated that Russia had many Asiatic subjects, and that possibly some Persian or Turkoman might for his own purposes pretend to have been furnished with letters of recommendation to the Ameer by Russian authorities.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. G. KENNEDY.

No. 133.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 9, 1.40 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, October 9, 1883, 12.8 P.M.

I HEAR that detachment of 1,200 Russian cavalry has gone from Akhal, by the Atek of Deregez, to the Tejend, where some earthworks have been thrown up, apparently for storing grain.

No. 134.

Mr. J. G. Kennedy to Earl Granville.—(Received October 16.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, October 7, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to report that the "Novoe Vremya" of this day states that, according to information it has received from Central Asia, Shugnan, a small and hitherto independent Bekdom, situated on the upper waters of the Oxus, has been occupied by the Afghans. In this manner, observes the above journal, that which Russia endeavoured to prevent has nevertheless been accomplished—the Russian and Afghan frontier has become conterminous in the Ferghana.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. G. KENNEDY.

No. 135.

Mr. J. G. Kennedy to Earl Granville.—(Received October 19.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, October 15, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose copy of a note which I have received from M. de Giers, in reply to a note which I addressed to his Excellency on the 12th ultimo, in obedience to the instruction conveyed to me in your Lordship's despatch of the 1st ultimo, reminding his Excellency that Her Majesty's Government still awaited the result of the inquiries instituted by the Russian Government respecting the conduct of a Russian officer towards Mr. Condie Stephen near Chacha, on the Khorassan frontier.

In his above-mentioned note M. de Giers states that the Russian functionary who stopped Mr. Stephen was a non-commissioned militia officer named Marchani. I learn, however, that the officer in question bears the Georgian title of Prince Marchani, which would account for the Turkoman corruption "Knos" of the Russian word "Kniaz."

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. G. KENNEDY.

Inclosure in No. 135.

M. de Giers to Mr. J. G. Kennedy.

M. le Chargé d'Affaires,

St. Pétersbourg, le ³⁰Septembre / ¹⁹Octobre, 1883.

PAR votre note en date du ³¹ Août / ¹⁹ Septembre vous avez bien voulu m'annoncer que le Principal Secrétaire d'État pour les Affaires Étrangères serait désireux de connaître les résultats des informations prises par le Ministère Impérial au sujet d'un conflit qui aurait eu lieu entre un fonctionnaire Russe et Mr. Condie Stephen, Secrétaire de

la Légation Britannique à Téhéran, et qui a fait l'objet de la note de Sir E. Thornton du 14^e Février dernier.

Des renseignements à ce sujet m'étant parvenus récemment de la part du Chef de la Province Transcaspienne, je suis en mesure de vous informer que le fonctionnaire Russe en question n'est autre qu'un nommé Marchani, Sous-Officier de la milice locale, employé par les autorités Transcaspiennes dans leurs rapports avec les Turcomans.

Ayant rencontré Mr. Stephen au moment où ce dernier se dirigeait vers Tchahtchah accompagné de Mirza Abbas Khan, Agent Britannique à Meshed, le sus-nommé Marchani fit observer à cet Agent qu'il l'engageait, lui, ainsi que son compagnon à ne point continuer leur voyage jusqu'à ce qu'il en eût référé au Chef de la province et reçu les ordres de ce dernier. Informé de cet incident le Lieutenant-Général Komarow s'empressa d'inviter le Sous-Officier Marchani à ne point s'opposer au voyage de Mr. Stephen, et le chargea même d'offrir au Secrétaire Anglais une escorte que ce dernier refusa pourtant d'accepter. Le Sieur Marchani prétend qu'il n'a même pas eu l'occasion de conférer directement avec Mr. Stephen, qu'il s'était borné à adresser des observations à Mirza Abbas Khan, et qu'il s'était bien gardé d'employer des termes de nature à blesser ces voyageurs.

En me faisant un devoir de vous faire part des informations ci-dessus exposées je me plais à espérer que M. le Principal Secrétaire d'État pour les Affaires Étrangères voudra bien reconnaître que l'incident qui a fait l'objet de la note de Sir E. Thornton ne saurait être attribué qu'à un malentendu, ainsi que je l'avais du reste prévu dans ma note responsive du 20 Février dernier.

Agréer, &c.
(Signé) GIERS.

(Translation.)

M. le Chargé d'Affaires, *St. Petersburg, September 30 (October 12), 1883.*

BY your note of the 31st August (12th September) you were good enough to inform me that Lord Granville was anxious to know the result of the inquiry made by the proper Department of the Imperial Government with regard to the dispute which is stated to have taken place between a Russian official and Mr. Condie Stephen, Secretary of the British Legation at Tehran, and which formed the subject of Sir E. Thornton's note of the 14th (26th) February last.

Information on this subject having lately reached me from the Governor of the Transcaspien province, I am enabled to inform you that the Russian official in question is a man of the name of Marchani, a non-commissioned officer in the local militia, and employed by the Transcaspien authorities in their relations with the Turkomans.

Having met Mr. Stephen at the moment when the latter gentleman was advancing towards Tchahtchah, accompanied by Mirza Abbas Khan, the British Agent at Meshed, the above-named Marchani invited that Agent, as well as his companion, not to continue their journey till he (Marchani) had referred the matter to the Governor of the province and received the Governor's orders. Lieutenant-General Komaroff, on being informed of this incident, hastened to instruct the non-commissioned officer Marchani not to oppose Mr. Stephen's journey, and even ordered him to offer the English Secretary an escort, which, however, the latter refused to accept. Marchani states that he had no opportunity of holding personal intercourse with Mr. Stephen; that he confined himself to addressing observations to Mirza Abbas Khan; and that he took every care to avoid employing any terms of a nature to offend the travellers.

I have thought it my duty to communicate the above facts to you, and I venture to express the hope that the Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs will be good enough to acknowledge that the incident which formed the subject of Sir E. Thornton's note can only be attributed to a misunderstanding—as I had anticipated, moreover, in my reply of the 20th February last.

Accept, &c.
(Signed) GIERS.

No. 136.

Earl Granville to Sir E. Thornton.

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 19, 1883.

HER Majesty's Government think it desirable that your Excellency should request information from the Russian Government as to the point on the Tejend to which it is proposed that the Russo-Persian line of boundary from Baba-Durmaz should be drawn. It would also seem expedient to obtain explanations as to the nature and extent of the claim of Russia to control the country to the east of that frontier-line.

This question has an obvious reference to the previous engagements between England and Russia with regard to the north-western frontier of Afghanistan.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 137.

Mr. J. G. Kennedy to Earl Granville.—(Received October 20.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, October 16, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch to your Lordship of the 7th October, I have the honour to report that the St. Petersburg newspapers continue to comment upon the alleged occupation of the Begdom of Shugnan by the Afghans.

The St. Petersburg "Vedomosti" of the 12th instant, referring to a telegram from Tashkend published in the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg," remarks:—

"According to our information, Shugnan is situated between the Murgab and Hund Rivers, on the right bank of the Oxus. Between the Begdom of Shugnan and Kara Tigin there exists the Begdom of Roshan, beyond which is Darwaz. Kara Tigin certainly is conterminous with the Fergana region, but only to the mountains of Hon.

"In 1875-76 Russian troops occupied Karikul and the whole of the Hurgash Pamir to the passes of Uz-bel-su-Tink-an, as far as the River Paliz, which borders on Shugnan, and not on Bokhara territory.

"It is stated in the telegram from Tashkend that Yusuf Ali Beg had retired to the pass and begged us for an asylum, whereas, if Shugnan were conterminous with Kara Tigin, he could not have addressed such a request to us."

Another telegram, dated Tashkend, 13th instant, states that the Afghans have also occupied Wakhan, and that the Beg of that country has taken flight, accompanied by a large body of his subjects.

The Northern Telegraphic Agency supplies the following, dated Tashkend, the 15th instant:—

"Favourable news has been received here respecting the progress of the Pamir expedition. The travellers, Captain Putiata, the Mining Engineer, Ivanoff, and Bendersky, of the Corps of Topographers, visited Alichur and the Great Pamir without meeting a human being during twenty days; they then crossed the Murgab and entered Kara Tigin."

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. G. KENNEDY.

No. 138.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 20, 4.50 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, October 20, 1883.

I AM desired by the Shah to inform Her Majesty's Government that Mir Masum Khan, the Persian Envoy lately sent to Afghanistan, has gone not as the Representative of His Majesty or the Persian Government, but solely as agent of the Prince-Governor of Khorassan, and that his mission has no political object whatever.

No. 139.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 21, 10 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, October 21, 1883.

THE Persian Government has received information that the Russian force referred to in my telegram of 9th instant has returned to Askabad without proceeding to the Tejend.

Russian Minister confirms this intelligence, and informs me that the movement was intended to intimidate the Merv Turkomans, who have lately recommenced their raids.

No. 140.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 22, 1.45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, October 22, 1883.

EYOUNG KHAN has written to the Shah demanding permission to leave Tehran, and stating intention to join his family in Khorassan, and then quit Persian territory. At audience on the 20th His Majesty gave me an assurance that every effort would be made to prevent his entering Khorassan or approaching the Afghanistan frontier, but expressed doubt as to his compliance with the orders of the Persian Government. Minister of Commerce is now communicating with Eyoub Khan, and endeavouring to make an arrangement in accordance with the wishes of Her Majesty's Government. If unsuccessful, the question of employing force, to which Shah is averse, will have to be decided. The Russian Minister has informed Persian Government that Eyoub Khan will not be allowed to proceed to Bokhara through Russian territory.

No. 141.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received October 24.)

My Lord,

Tehran, October 1, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 28th August, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that the Minister for Foreign Affairs having now come to an understanding with the Russian Minister as to the manner in which the work of the Akhal Boundary Commission is to be carried out, it is proposed that the Commissioners shall commence operations on the frontier without further delay.

It has been agreed that the work of marking out the Akhal frontier shall be commenced from Baba-Durmaz, and not, as originally intended, from the Caspian Coast; and the Persian Commissioner, Suleiman Khan, has already left for Meshed, whence he will proceed to Askabad to meet his Russian colleague, Colonel Karavaieff, who is still here, but intends leaving in a few days, after the return of the Shah, for the Akhal frontier by way of Krasnavodsk and Kizil-Arvat.

By the arrangements now made the question whether the Hussein Kuli settlement at the mouth of the Atrek is situated on the Russian or Persian side of the main channel of that river, which was to have been the first point considered by the Commissioners, will be inquired into and decided when the demarcation of the rest of the Persian line of frontier has been completed.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 142.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received October 29.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, October 23, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a Memorandum, drawn up by Mr. Michell, giving a précis of a Report read by the Russian Engineer, M. Lessar, at a meeting of a

Russian Geographical Society on the 18th instant, relative to his travels during 1882 in the countries bordering on the Transcaspian region.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 142.

Abstract from the Russian Press.

AT a meeting of the Russian Geographical Society, held on the 1st/₁₈th October, 1883, M. Lessar gave an account of his travels during 1882 in the countries bordering on the Transcaspian region.

The following is a condensed account, as published in the Russian press, of the notes read by M. Lessar on the above occasion :—

“From Astrabad the traveller proceeded—viâ Megihed, Sarakhs, and Merv—to the Oxus, on the frontier of Bokhara. As the route lay through a country infested with robbers, a convoy of twenty Tekké horsemen was engaged. This number was amply sufficient, for the bands of robbers consist only of from five to ten men. If a vigilant watch is sustained no attack is made; it is only the unwary that are attacked. Caravans are also pillaged, and camels and horses driven off. The robbers are armed with old guns, pistols, daggers, &c., only fit for exhibition in a museum. Their horses are poor, unable to support more than twenty days' work, and succumb in two days if not supplied with water. When a friendly meeting takes place the robbers do not disguise their profession; they never attack their own tribesmen, and give trustworthy information respecting the route and watering-places. When flying from pursuit with booty they poison the water in the wells by throwing in dead bodies.

“When two bodies of horsemen meet in the Steppe measures of precaution are taken on both sides: arms are prepared, and men are sent out, who, from a distance, make inquiries with regard to their respective tribes, friends, &c. The Tekkés are not valorous, as they are said to be by the timorous Persians. The Tekkés are robbers, possessing predatory instincts; they are false, lying, idle, cowardly, selfish, and savagely merciless.

“After the fall of Geok-Tépé the country to the north from Askabad to Persia became tranquil, and raids almost ceased; but the Persians took advantage of the position of affairs. Out-posts of Persian troops were advanced, and under their cover the avidity of the Persian tax-collectors knew no bounds. The Tekkés frequently complained of the Persians to M. Lessar, but that traveller did not consider himself justified in listening to these appeals.

“The general character of the country is such as to render the construction of roads comparatively easy. The mountain passes are not steep, and the water supply is abundant. At one of the passes M. Lessar found an historical monument, the ladder of Nadir-Shah. It is cut out of the rock, and the steps are in a good state of preservation.

“In Merv and the vicinity there are 150,000 inhabitants. The poverty of the people forcibly strikes the eye. There is hardly any trade, the bazaar being open only twice a-week. The articles of trade are: green tea, khalats (robes), and coarse linen. The owner of 700 sheep is regarded as a wealthy man. The money in circulation is Russian, Persian, and local silver coins. Coins are made by any person who understands the process, and many are of a very low standard.

“In the year 1860 there was constructed near Merv a four-cornered fort of earth, armed with eight old useless guns. The Mervites are desirous of opening up relations with the Russians, and readily visit Askabad to purchase goods.

“No map accompanied M. Lessar's communication. He is said on good authority to be now compiling one on the basis of data obtained by him during his travels through the Transcaspian country, as also on the strength of recent surveys made by Russian military topographers. This map will be published in the month of December next.”

St. Petersburg, October 1st/₁₈, 1883.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received October 29.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, October 24, 1883.

I HAD the honour to receive last night your Lordship's despatch of the 19th instant. I called upon M. de Giers this morning, and inquired of his Excellency, for the information of Her Majesty's Government, to what point on the River Tejend the line of boundary would be drawn.

M. de Giers replied that he was not prepared to give me an immediate answer to this question; that he had not yet examined it carefully; but that he would do so, and would have a further conversation with me on the subject.

His Excellency expressed his opinion that the Ateks did not extend so far south as Sarakhs. But he said that the Imperial Government were actually engaged, through their Representative at Tehran, in endeavouring to come to an arrangement as to what was to be considered the Ateks, and as to the boundary-line between Baba-Durmaz and Tejend.

In the course of the conversation, M. de Giers informed me that he had this morning received a telegram from the Russian Minister at Tehran, from which he had learnt that a very extensive raid had been made into Persia by the Turkomans, who had committed great havoc and carried off a deal of property. His Excellency added that His Majesty the Shah had earnestly begged that the Russian authorities would endeavour to procure the restitution of the spoils, and would take vigorous measures for the prevention of future raids. He said that the Persian troops were utterly unable to cope with the Turkomans, and did not dare to meet them. M. de Giers could not tell me the exact point at which this raid was made, for he had at once sent off the telegram to the Emperor, but he did not seem to be certain that the incursion of the hostile Turkomans was made from any part of the Ateks. He adduced the incident, however, as a proof of the utter inability of the Persian authorities to control the Turkoman tribes, wherever it might be.

I further inquired of M. de Giers, with reference to former engagements between England and Russia with regard to the north-western frontier of Afghanistan, what was the nature and extent of the control exercised by Russia to the east of the Tejend. His Excellency, in reply, disclaimed her having any direct control over that territory; indeed, he refused to admit the word control, although he acknowledged that General Tcherniaieff had employed a certain moral influence in the interest of peace. He said that the different Turkoman tribes at Merv were constantly quarrelling and fighting among themselves, and that the General had recommended them to submit to the authority of the Khan of Khiva; the greater part of them had consequently consented to be governed by the person named by the Khan. But his Excellency insisted that this was the extent of Russian intervention, the result of which had been, he maintained, comparative tranquillity in that region.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Prince Malcom Khan to Earl Granville.—(Received October 31.)

Mon cher Lord Granville,

Londres, le 29 Octobre, 1883.

J'AI reçu de Tehran télégrammes sur télégrammes m'informant que les violentes persistances d'Ayoub Khan, de vouloir partir pour Bokhara, sont sur le point de faire naître des incidents fort fâcheux pour le Gouvernement du Schah. Et comme Sa Majesté, malgré tout son désir d'appuyer, dans cette circonstance, les vues du Gouvernement Anglais, se trouve dans l'impossibilité de retenir par force ce Prince Afghan, le Gouvernement Persan a décidé de le laisser quitter la Perse, sans plus de délai, pour aller où il voudrait.

Je puis ajouter cependant, que le Gouvernement du Schah se conformant aux règles de bon voisinage, aura soin à ce que Ayoub Khan en traversant nos provinces, ne puisse se fixer sur aucun point du territoire Persan limitrophe de l'Afghanistan.

Votre tout dévoué,

(Signé) MALCOM.

(Translation.)

My dear Lord Granville,

London, October 29, 1883.

I HAVE received telegram after telegram from Tehran, informing me that the violent persistence of Eyoub Khan in his wish to depart for Bokhara is on the point of giving rise to incidents of a very unpleasant nature for the Government of the Shah; and as His Majesty, in spite of every desire on his part to support the wishes of the English Government in this matter, finds it impossible to forcibly detain this Afghan Prince, the Persian Government has decided to permit him to quit Persia without further delay, and to go wherever he may desire.

I may add, however, that the Government of the Shah, in conformity with the customs in force between neighbouring and friendly nations, will take care that Eyoub Khan, in his passage through our provinces, does not remain at any point of the Persian territory bordering on Afghanistan.

Yours, &c.
(Signed) MALCOM.

No. 145.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 2, 9-40 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, November 2, 1883.

MALCOM KHAN telegraphs that he anticipates no objection to Eyoub Khan's departure through Khorassan, if he is not allowed to linger on Persian territory near Afghan border. He states that he has written in this sense to your Lordship. Shah wished to act at once on this suggestion, but I have recommended His Majesty to await result of a further reference to Her Majesty's Government through the Persian Envoy.

Eyoub's object is to reach Maymene frontier by way of Sarakhs.

No. 146.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 5.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, November 1, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 24th ultimo, I yesterday inquired of M. de Giers whether he could give me any further details with regard to the proposed line of boundary from Baba-Durmaz to the Tejend.

His Excellency replied that he had been making inquiries upon the subject of M. Zinovieff, who was well acquainted with the matter, and that he had ascertained that the negotiations upon it were not so far advanced as he had supposed, and that, in fact, there had been no official negotiation at all at Tehran; for the preliminary surveys which were necessary before the question could be discussed between the two Governments had not yet been completed, owing to the Russian officers who had been detailed to make the surveys not having arrived in time to complete them during this season, and that, consequently, they would not be ready till next spring or summer.

In the meantime, and until this work should be completed, it would be impossible to decide what direction the proposed boundary should take.

As to the control exercised by Russia over the country to the east of the Tejend, M. de Giers repeated that the control was not direct, and that it was no more than a certain influence which the Russian authorities had acquired in that region, and which was employed by them in endeavouring to persuade the different tribes to refrain from hostilities among themselves, and from making incursions and preying upon their neighbours.

M. de Giers again alluded to the hostile incursion which had been recently made into Persian territory, but seemed to have very vague ideas as to the locality at which it had taken place. He stated, however, that it was made, not by Turkomans, but by Mervites, and that these had carried off as much as 50,000 animals, between cattle and sheep.

Upon my inquiring at what point on the Tejend these marauders had crossed into Persian territory, he replied that they had not crossed that river at all, but that the raid was made into Khorassan. In compliance, however, with the request of the

Shah, instructions had been sent to the Russian authorities to endeavour to induce the raiders to restore the property of which they had taken possession.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 147.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 6, 1883.

THE Persian Minister called here on the 2nd instant, and said that he wished to confirm verbally what he had already communicated to me by letter, viz., that, although the Persian Government could no longer forbid the departure of Eyoub Khan, they would take care that he should not stop on the Afghan frontier, or be allowed to use Persian territory as a basis for intrigue in Afghanistan.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 148.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 12, 3.20 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, November 12, 1883, 12.3 P.M.

RESULT of the information obtainable here is that no formal Agreement exists respecting boundary beyond Baba Durmaz.

Merv Turkomans have recently recommenced raids; last month a serious incursion was made on Kelat, forty prisoners and large herds being carried off. Prince-Governor proceeded with small force from Meshed to that part of the frontier.

No. 149.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 17.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, November 12, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of a condensed Report of M. Lessar's last journey through the Ateks to Sarakhs and thence to Merv. The original of this account is published in the "Novoe Vremya" of the 5th instant, and is stated to have been compiled from M. Lessar's diary. It is announced that a second part of this account will shortly appear in the same newspaper.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 149.

"THROUGH PERSIA TO MERV."*

(Translation from the Russian.)

Lessar's New Journey: Kelat, Dereghex, and Badkhyz.

LAST year we communicated to our readers the details of two journeys performed by M. Lessar towards the end of 1881 and in the month of April 1882. In these two journeys M. Lessar explored the country of the Atek, as far as Sarakhs, i.e., the continuation of our newly-acquired Akhal-Téké territory, as also the adjoining Persian province; from Sarakhs he proceeded southwards along the Heri-rud River to Western Afghanistan. Advancing in this direction to within 40 versts of Herat he returned by way of Gorian through Persia to Askabad. Finding that the information obtained on these journeys was incomplete, the indefatigable traveller determined to traverse the same ground again in the months of August and September 1882. The country known under the name of the Badkhyz, between the Murgab and Heri-rud, had, up to that time, been completely unexplored.

* The present account of M. Lessar's last journey was published by the "Novoe Vremya" of October 24 (November 5), 1883, and is a compilation made by that newspaper direct from M. Lessar's diary.—J. M.

In 1841-42 Shakespeare and Conolly, when respectively proceeding from Herat to Merv, advanced along the course of the Murgab. Later, in 1870-80, Petrushevitch travelled from Sarakhs to Khosan along the northern portion of the Heri-rud River and beyond through Turbet-i-Sheikh-Jam. Nothing was known, however, about Badkhyz. With the object of exploring this territory M. Lessar started on the 3rd (15th) August last year, with an interpreter and a convoy of ten Turkomans, chosen from the militia of the conquered portion of the Turkoman country. On this occasion, instead of adopting the route already traversed by him to Sarakhs and thence through the Atek, M. Lessar chose the more circuitous road through Dereghéz, Kelat, and Meshed, for the purpose of making himself acquainted with the water system of these Khanates as connected with the irrigation of the Atek.

All the rivers whose waters irrigate the fields of the Atek settlements take their rise in, and chiefly flow through, the Dereghéz and Kelat Khanates. In consequence of this the various Turkoman tribes inhabiting the Atek were always, in the matter of their crops, dependent on the Persian rulers on their borders. Previous to the conquest of the Akhal-Téké country by Russia, this dependence was not much felt. The Khans exacted for the water, which the Atek inhabitants always got in abundance, one-tenth of all the crops, and, moreover, their frontiers were gratuitously guarded against the inroads of Akhal and Merv robbers by a chain of outlying Turkoman settlements. This was very important, considering that the reported inaccessibility of Kelat proves true only as regards the valley of the Chardé (between the Arghoon Shah and Naphthé mountain passes).

After the capture of Geok-Tépé the mutual relations changed. The Persian Rulers no longer stood in need of a defensive cordon of settlements, while the inhabitants find it no longer necessary to cluster for protection in the vicinity of forts. They were free to extend their fields, and the question of water supply at once gained great importance, particularly as a tax on water is, according to Mahomedan usage, considered illegal.

Travelling from west to east, M. Lessar carefully collected information respecting the irrigating capabilities of the Rivers Duranger, Kozgan-Su or Rudbar, Lain; the Rivulets Neu-Rek and Dekche-Su, and the Rivers Dushah or Chardé (the largest stream along the northern slope of the Hassar-Mesjid Mountains); the Mehneh Khour or Chacha-Su. M. Lessar finds that all these streams would abundantly supply the whole of the population with water, provided some order were established for its distribution.* In exceptional years the water supply is insufficient for all; but this could be easily avoided by establishing a strict control over the canals. Owing, however, to the enmity that exists between the inhabitants who belong to different tribes, each village has water courses of its own, to the injury of itself and its neighbours, and sometimes the inhabitants of one settlement forcibly divert the water of their neighbours to their own use. Besides this, the position of the population of the Atek is a miserable one, owing to the arbitrary conduct of the semi-independent Persian Rulers on the frontiers, who are not much amenable to the control of the central authorities, and do nearly what they please. It is very likely that these settlers will at no distant day revenge themselves cruelly on their oppressors.

From Askabad M. Lessar proceeded to Meshed through Kelate-Chinar, Mahomedabad, Kozgan, Kiabád-Giunbut, and across the Hezar-Mesjid Mountains, between the villages Kardé and Vardé. The first portion of this route, *i.e.*, as far as Mashed-Obad, is the best part of the whole road to Meshed, on account of the abundance of water found along it, as also because it runs partly through a populated country, and is, therefore, comparatively little exposed to attacks of robbers, who are greatly feared by the Persians. On the road beyond Mamed-Obad, on the southern declivity of the Allah-Akber Pass, a most interesting historical monument occurs. This is the ladder of a thousand steps ("Nerdban") cut out of the rock by order of Nadir-Shah. It is a work on which a great amount of labour has been expended. The length of the steps is 5 feet, the breadth 1 foot, and the height about 7 inches. . . .

From Meshed, the capital of Khorassan, with which Russian traders and Russian goods are becoming more and more familiar, M. Lessar proceeded to the Badkhyz, by way of Zur-abad, a small fort on the frontier, not far distant from the western banks of the Heri-rud. Here the Shah-Zadé, or Prince Ruler, endeavoured, though unsuccessfully, to prevent our traveller continuing his journey.

* In some parts of Kelat, owing to the frequency of rain, irrigation is not employed in the cultivation of the fields. This style of agriculture is called "damié."

After crossing over to the eastern bank of the Heri-rud, M. Lessar first shaped his course southwards, in the direction of Herat, and then turned northwards towards Sarakhs.

This part of the journey was performed in safety. Some Merv robbers, consisting of four men, at first took M. Lessar and his followers for Sarakhs. On discovering the Russian character of M. Lessar's party, they sought to be presented to him.

The Badkhyz country does not possess a good climate, owing to strong northerly winds which blow here during the greater part of the year. Hence the derivation of the name of the country: "bad" = wind, and "khashten" (from the root "khyz"), to rise. Water is found throughout in abundance; but the country once populated now presents the appearance of a wilderness of ruins, thanks to the Mervis and Sarakhs who have selected this country as the centre of their predatory operations. M. Lessar found no current in the Heri-rud River. Here and there there were pools of water, occasionally salt to the taste. The bed of the river consists throughout of large cobble stones, and during the prevalence of high water a current is visible, especially in the deep parts of the river. The natives attribute the existence of pools in the river in the hot months of the year to an underground flow of water. The flow of water ceases almost at Khosan in the months of July and August. The river again renews its course more to the northward, where the Heri-rud falls into the Kara-Su, and attains considerable proportions at Noruz-abad, where it is fed by copious springs rising in the neighbourhood.

The river is full of water along its whole course about November or December, and a little later reaches Karibend.

Arriving at Sarakhs on the 22nd August, M. Lessar determined to return to Askabad by the circuitous route through Merv, Chardjui, Khiva, and then across the Ust-Urt. As the route thus selected presented many difficulties and possible privations, M. Lessar reduced his escort to five men. The road to Kale-Kowsheed, the chief settlement in Merv, passed as described by the natives through an arid country, in which salt water was alone procurable. On the road M. Lessar nearly fell a victim to the attack of a party of Mervis, who mistook him and his escort for a Persian caravan.

No. 150.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 17.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, November 12, 1883.

THE inclosed short extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of the 10th instant alludes to an article in the "Agence Havas," which I have not seen, but which is stated to have reported a Russian expedition to the Tejend, the consequent dissatisfaction of the Persian Government, and the pretensions of the latter with regard to Merv.

The journal denies these statements. It admits that a reconnaissance was made on the Tejend for the purpose of repressing brigandage in those parts. It adds that Russia has no intention of going to Merv, neither has Persia the pretension nor the means to occupy that country, "which lies without the frontier agreed upon."

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 150.

Extract from the "Journal de St. Pétersbourg" of October 29 (November 10), 1883.

L'AGENCE HAVAS est à l'affût des nouvelles à sensation. C'est son métier. Mais elle parle de choses qu'elle ne connaît pas, et c'est un tort.

Elle a entretenu dernièrement le monde d'une expédition Russe sur le Tejend; du mécontentement du Gouvernement Persan, des prétentions de celui-ci sur Merv, &c.

Tout cela n'existe que dans l'imagination du correspondant. Il y a eu en effet une reconnaissance faite sur le Tejend. C'est la conséquence de la mission qui incombe au Gouvernement Russe de mettre un terme aux brigandages dans la steppe. Cela explique le mystère signalé par "l'Agence" sur les raisons qui ont motivé le

retour de l'expédition. Une reconnaissance a toujours pour résultat le retour du détachement qui l'a accomplie.

Les Gouvernements Russe et Persan sont d'accord sur le but à poursuivre dans ces parages. La Russie n'a pas plus l'intention d'aller à Merv que la Perse n'élève la prétention et n'a les moyens d'occuper cette contrée, qui reste en dehors de la frontière convenue.

L'Agence Havas en est pour ses frais d'imagination. Ses renseignements ne troubleront pas le *statu quo* pacifique résultant des négociations amicales entre la Russie et la Perse.

No. 151.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 17.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, November 13, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 12th instant, I have the honour to inclose a translation by Mr. Michell of the continuation of M. Lessar's journey to Merv and other places in that neighbourhood.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 151.

Continuation of M. Lessar's Journey in 1882.

(Translation.)

In Dereghex, Merv, &c.

HALTING for the night at a short distance from Merv, I awaited the return of the Téké whom I had dispatched to the Khans to intimate to them my arrival. My messenger came back during the night with a reply that the Khans were very glad of my visit, and that they would send some of their followers in the morning to meet and conduct me to Merv.

The Khans in Merv are frequently changed. In August 1882 the following was the position of affairs there:—

The Merv Turkomans, as is known, are divided into two great tribes, subdivided into two principal branches: the Otamysh, formed of the Bakshi and Sitchmaz tribes, and the Tokhtamysh, consisting of Beks and Vekils.

The present hereditary Khans of both tribes are men of no energy and influence. Early in 1882 the Otamyshes chose as their Chief Maily, grandson of Oraz, who was formerly Khan of the whole of Merv, and son of Berdy Niaz, and also nephew of Amon-Niaz, the two last Khans of the Otamysh tribe. But Maily Khan proved so weak and deficient in intellect that no one recognized his authority, and in the month of July of the same year the Bakhshis elected as their own Khan Sary-Batyr, who, though a man of obscure descent, was very clever and astute.

In the month of October Maily was re-elected Khan, and in December a change took place again, and the Bakhshis chose as Khan Sardy-Batyr, while the Sitchmiaz tribe elected Bek-Murad, a well-known robber, who so much persecuted Mr. O'Donovan during the whole of his stay in Merv.

Still worse are the Khans of the Tokhtamysh tribe: Baba-Khan, son of Koushut Khan, who defeated the Persians in 1860, and Kur-Verdi Yusun, son of Kur-Verdi Khan, the no less celebrated defender of Geok-Tépé, exercise no influence over their tribesmen. The present Chief of the Tokhtamysh is Kara-Kuli Khan, who, though not of good descent, is an ambitious and energetic man. His influence, however, is also not great. In order to understand the social structure of the Turkomans, it is necessary to bear in mind the fact that they are not a race united by a community of interests, but simply a band of robbers on a large scale. For such a fraternity no Government is of course necessary, but only a few rulers are requisite for the division of booty, as also is some understanding for the maintenance of friendly relations between themselves, by showing mutual respect for each other's property. It is only the big dam on the Murgab River which distributes water throughout the whole oasis; that is of grave and equal importance to all the tribes. When this dam is destroyed

by floods, which occur every twelve or fifteen years, the whole population of the oasis suffers great privations. The question of the maintenance of this dam is the only one treated with some degree of attention.

The best proof of the inaptitude of the Tékés of Merv for dealing with matters of common interest is afforded by their attitude towards the Sarakhs, who, notwithstanding their small numbers, terrorize the whole Merv oasis, and render almost impossible all trading relations between it and the neighbouring countries. The Tékés have only to combine and Pende would cease to exist. Instead of doing this, they send out marauding parties of four or five men, who, approaching the Sarakh settlements by stealth, carry off women and children and also cattle.

On the 25th August, at 6 A.M., Sary-Batyr's messengers arrived and conducted me to the Khan's encampment. On the road I was besieged by Tékés on horse and on foot, eager to look at the Russian Boyar. The length of the road to Sary-Batyr's camp from the wells, where we passed the night, is about 4 miles, and thence to Koushut Khan Kala, also about 4 miles. The distance from Sarakhs to the latter point is reckoned at 6 menzelis (Persian stages of 13 miles to 15 miles each). According to my surveys I make out the distance to be the same, viz., 130 versts (86½ miles). The Khans received me with great civility. I was asked among other questions when the Russians would march to Merv. That, I explained, depended on themselves, for so vast a country as Russia cannot exist side by side with a nest of robbers, who give their neighbours no peace. I further told them if they would take to peaceful pursuits and maintain friendly relations with their neighbours, there would in such case be no necessity for Russia to occupy Merv. The administration of the conquered Akhal country, with a population of 50,000, cost Russia a great deal, and only necessity would compel her to spend more money on a province of equal size. At one time, I proceeded to say, the Bokharians, Khivans, and Persians strove to conquer Merv; but then wars were waged for the purpose of despoiling the conquered. From the way in which the Russians rule in Akhal, the Tékés of Merv find they are not despoiled. The questions put to me as to the Russian advance on Merv were not inspired by fear, but rather by a desire for an influx of money into the country. There are, indeed, many men among the Tékés who impatiently desire to see Russia in occupation of Merv.

After having heard so much of the riches of Merv, I was struck by the poverty that in reality prevails there. . . . The Téké is by nature a thief, and possesses the vices of a thief not counterbalanced by any good qualities. He is lazy, and works only to save himself from starvation. The soil of Merv is good, and water abundant, but the Tékés cultivate only such crops as require the smallest amount of labour expended on them. Clover is generally sown, because it yields several crops during the year, and one sowing lasts for many seasons. Wheat, on the other hand, is but little cultivated, and during bad harvest years is purchased in Bokhara and Persia. Robbery, it would seem, also yields but little profit. . . . A Téké who possesses 700 sheep is considered a very rich man. There is scarcely any trade. The roads leading to Bokhara and Meshed are unsafe, owing to the depredations of the Sarakhs. The wants also of the poverty-stricken Mervis are but few. A bazaar is held twice a week, but owing to the scarcity of money but few sales are effected. When it is necessary to make a purchase two or three Tékés join together, pack up some of their productions—carpets or feltings—and start off to Khiva, Bokhara, or Meshed: latterly they have taken to resorting to Askabad, where they dispose of their wares, and return with green tea, one or two "khalats," and a few yards of Turkey red cotton tissue. Such is the character of the whole trade. Artificers of any kind are rarely found in Merv. The only things made there are—fur hats, robes, coarse linen, and carpets. All other articles necessary for domestic and other uses are bought in the neighbouring countries.

According to Téké testimony, the population of Merv does not exceed 200,000 men. Those who are better acquainted with the state of things estimate the population at 125,000, or at 150,000 as a maximum computation. This latter calculation is, in all probability, correct; generally speaking, the numbers of the Turkomans, established on hearsay evidence, have always proved exaggerated. The Akhal may be cited as a proof of this; its population before the war was supposed to consist of 150,000 souls, while the real number now proves not to exceed 40,000. Taking into account the losses sustained by the Tékés during the war and the numbers who fled the country, the original figure could never have surpassed 75,000. Besides, there was not enough water in the Akhal country for a large population. Good horses in the oasis are very rare. It is difficult to make any positive assertions as to the powers

of endurance of their well-bred horses during long campaigns. Owing to the small quantity of food a Téké gives his horse the latter cannot travel more than twenty to twenty-five days; even some well-fed animals seen by me yielded in powers of endurance not only to Russian Cossack horses, but even to those of Persian origin. The Tékés of Merv are badly armed; properly speaking, the tribe is unarmed. A serviceable gun costs about 4*l.* at Meshed—a sum only a Khan can afford to pay; and in reality it is only men of this class who have breech-loaders at all. Even the worst possible guns are rarely met with among the Tékés; robber bands alone are generally provided with such weapons. Swords are the only arms carried by those who accompany caravans.

The Téké, with all his laziness, is also avaricious and parsimonious. He starves his horse, and his own fare is of the scantiest. He tries, as far as possible, to live at the expense of his neighbours; he spends a few copecks in purchasing tobacco and green tea, which he drinks very weak, without sugar.

When starting on long journeys I was always obliged to look whether there was even a little corn in the saddle-bags for the horses of my Téké escort.

This avarice and parsimony is attributed by M. Lessar to the widely prevalent practice of hoarding money with a view of purchasing wives; love for the fair sex being, next to robbery, the dominating passion of the Téké. The average price for a wife varies between 40*l.* and 50*l.* According to M. Lessar, the relations between the sexes in the oasis are rather of a loose character, and the Tékés are generally much given to amorous gallantry, the pursuit of which, however, as our traveller states, is frequently attended with considerable drawbacks, and even pecuniary losses.

No. 152.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 17, 10.30 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, November 17, 1883.

I UNDERSTAND Persian Government has resolved to allow Eyoub Khan to quit the Persian territory by way of Khorassan; he will accordingly leave Tehran within the next fortnight, and proceed to Meshed, accompanied by a Persian official deputed by the Shah to escort him to the Persian frontier at Sarakhs.

No. 153.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received November 23, 11 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, November 22, 1883, 9.20 P.M.

EYOUB KHAN will probably leave Tehran in ten days and cross Persian frontier at Sarakhs about the 10th January, with avowed object of proceeding by Merv to Bokhara; he will have from 300 to 400 followers with him. I continue to object to his going towards the Afghan border, especially with such a numerous retinue, but the Shah is so anxious to get rid of Afghan refugees, that I fear latter can now no longer be detained in Persia.

No. 154.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, November 24, 1883.

I HAVE received your telegram of the 17th.

You might intimate to the Persian Government that in the event of Eyoub Khan being allowed to quit Persian territory at a point where he could with facility intrigue against the authority of the Ameer of Afghanistan in his western and north-western provinces, it would be regarded by Her Majesty's Government as a very unfriendly act, and they could no longer use their influence with the Ameer with a view of restraining Persian refugees in Afghanistan from residing near the Persian frontier and carrying on intrigues against the authority of the Shah in Persia.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 26.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, November 20, 1883.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 13th instant, I have the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell, from the "Novoe Vremya," of the continuation of M. Lessar's journey to Merv, and thence to Bokhara.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 155.

Extract from the "Novoe Vremya" of October 24 (November 5), 1883.

Continuation of M. Lessar's Journey through Persia to Merv in 1882.

(Translation.)

ON the third day, in the morning, I started to pay a visit to Kara-Kuli Khan. The distance from the settlement of Sary Khan, where I had taken up my quarters, was about 4 miles. I was accompanied by an interpreter and guide. The road lay through gardens and fields. We crossed the Murghab at the ford, the water being up to the horses' knees; the breadth of the stream was about 8 fathoms. Near the ford is a small wooden bridge, erected on piles, and covered with brushwood and earth; this bridge, however, not being very strong, is used chiefly by pedestrians. Directly beyond is situated the large fort of Koushut Khan Kala. Between the bridge and the fort is the bazaar, consisting of a row of stalls made of clay. Close to the bazaar I saw an old cannon taken from the Persians in 1860. Afterwards I saw several of these pieces; they were all antiquated, and would be dangerous only to those who tried to fire them.

The fort of Koushut Khan Kala was named after Koushut Khan, who defeated the Persians in 1860, and who commenced its construction.

After the defeat sustained by the Turkomans during the Khivan Expedition, the Mervees, fearing an advance of Russian troops southwards, commenced to construct forts, but at once desisted on becoming convinced that their apprehensions were unfounded. The same thing occurred after the fall of Geok-Tépé, notwithstanding all the entreaties of O'Donovan; as soon as our troops stopped advancing the construction of forts by the Tékés was abandoned. The Tékés very unwillingly apply themselves to the work of erecting these colossal forts, and only submit to do so in moments of danger. The fort is in the shape of an irregular quadrangle, with two large walls, of about 1 mile in length, and one smaller, about half-a-mile long; the wall from the south side has not yet been commenced. The walls have a very sharp profile, being about 70 feet at the base and 40 feet in height; earth has been taken both from the inside and outside; the moat is not deep, and the Tékés are unable to increase its depth, as water is met with close to the surface. On the north side, which is lower, the moat is overgrown with reeds, and in places there are pools of water. A colony of Jews, who trade in Merv, live within the walls of the fort.

Close to the fort is the domicile of Kara-Kuli Khan. The same conversation took place with him as with Sary-Batyr. I noticed, however, that the Chief of the Tokhtamysh was somewhat annoyed. He commenced by inveigling against the Otamysh Turkomans: "They received you," he said, "and lost no time in sending a messenger to acquaint the English Agent at Meshed of your arrival." I was surprised to hear this, had I thought the matter of interest I would, when at Meshed, have told him of my intended journey.

Respecting O'Donovan, Kara-Kuli Khan spoke contemptuously. The man was always intoxicated; no one in Merv cared to know him. I laughed, and replied that we knew of the doings of the "Ingliz" from his correspondence. Kara-Kuli Khan did not again refer to the "Ingliz."

My hope of getting rid of the Tokhtamyshes by an ordinary visit was not realized. On taking leave, Kara-Kuli Khan explained to the interpreter the cause of his displeasure. I had passed three days with the Otamyshes, and was going to leave Merv without accepting the hospitality of the Tokhtamyshes. What motive could I have? The Tokhtamyshes were the more powerful tribe, and not less friendly towards Russia. Why, therefore, this affront? It was in vain, I explained, that with us a visit was equal

to residing in the house of a friend. The Khan's displeasure only increased. Of course, I could please myself, but the Tokhtamyshes did not deserve this slight. I was obliged to give in, and lost no time in transferring myself to Kara-Kuli Khan's domicile, on the understanding that I was to be allowed to depart on the following day. In all this incident self-interest played no small part. Kara-Kuli Khan hoped to supply me with camels, guides, &c., at his own price. This, however, was not the sole motive; probably the Khan would have been ready to put himself to a loss rather than allow the Otamyshes to boast of their having monopolized a guest. Jealousy is a prominent trait in the Merv character, as in the case of all marauding bands. It is impossible to remain ten minutes with one tribe without hearing something prejudicial to the others.

Kara-Kuli Khan lives in a felt tent; but he has erected a small house for the convenience of his guests.

The ordinary round of visits commenced; the most interesting was the visit of Makhdum-Kuli, the son of Nurverdi Khan, who commanded the Akhal Tékés in 1879. On the death of his father, in the early part of 1880, Makhdum-Kuli was regarded as the Khan of the Akhal Tékés, although, in view of his youth, the defence was conducted by Tykma-Virdar, in the character of Commander-in-chief. On the fall of Geok-Tépé, Makhdum-Kuli fled to Merv, and, on the strength of promises held out by O'Donovan, he did not appear with the other Khans to offer his submission. When O'Donovan left Merv, Makhdum-Kuli Khan recognized that he had acted injudiciously, but it was too late. Tykma-Virdar, in consequence of the rank conferred on him by the Russians, acquired considerable importance in Akhal, and thus Makhdum-Kuli's influence gradually diminished. . . . My arrival at Merv gave rise to many surmises; of course, as I was journeying from Sarakhs to Bokhara, Merv lay in my route, but the Mervees were convinced that I had other objects in view. My guide was repeatedly interrogated regarding the real purport of my visit.

Makhdum-Kuli Khan entertained hopes that I was the bearer of certain proposals on the part of the Russian Government; he was surprised at the indifference with which he was treated at Askabad, and he tried to ascertain what awaited him if he returned? The answer was always the same; there was no necessity for his presence; if he desired he might return; it rested with him; Russia bore him no ill-will for the part he took in the war; there was nothing for which to punish him.

The Khan came to see me without his suite. Everybody expected something confidential, and when the Khans entered the room all rose and withdrew. We remained alone with the interpreters. The Khan was evidently agitated; after greeting each other, he regarded me with an expectant look: I conversed on ordinary topics, in which the Khan showed no interest, and remained silent. After the Khan had drunk two large cups of tea, I broke the silence by asking if he wished to say anything. "No," replied Makhdum Khan, in a very decisive tone of voice. The interpreter filled the Khan's cup with tea, which he sipped slowly, and shortly took his leave.

I saw him a second time at Askabad, in the month of October, before my departure for Merv to attend the election of Maily Khan.

In the presence of the Commander of the troops of the region, Makhdum-Kuli Khan took his oath of allegiance to the White Czar; Makhdum-Kuli Khan was accompanied by a suite of about twenty men; a number of Akhal Tékés also collected to witness the ceremony. He gave up his sabre, and being still under the impression that he would be punished for the tardiness of his return, he repeated after the Mollah the words of the oath in a voice trembling with emotion. When General Röhrberg announced to him that the past was forgotten, the Khan begged only that he should be remembered when he had given proofs of his fidelity. Makhdum-Kuli Khan does not possess considerable influence in Akhal, and consequently his submission could have no effect on the tranquillity of the region; it was merely interesting as a sign that even the most obdurate Tékés are becoming convinced of the irrevocability of the condition of things established after the 12th January, 1881. This conviction is at present very strong, and may for a long time avert the necessity of any advance of Russian troops, if only no influence is brought to bear on Merv from without.

From Merv to Bokhara.

M. Lessar left Kowshut-Kala on the 28th August, proceeding along the caravan road to Bokhara. This route is accounted very dangerous, as it is frequently subjected to the attacks of the Saryks. The traveller, however, did not attach much importance to these attacks; he considers the bravery of the Turkomans exaggerated.

Forty versts from Kowshut-Kala water is found in abundance; beyond stretches the

sandy waste. The road leads across a desert, but wells occur frequently. Commencing from the well of Sirab (96 versts from Kowshut-Kala), the roads to Bokhara branch off. It was found on inquiry that some of these roads, though more convenient, have become impassable owing to the Saryks having polluted the water in the wells. From Sirab to the well of Adil, the most difficult portion of the route is encountered; for a distance of 90 versts there is no water, and the road is over friable sand.

M. Lessar divides the sand of the Transcaspian Steppe into three kinds. The first consists of a clayey soil, with a large proportion of sand; the country presents rows of mounds, about a fathom in height, and generally overgrown with brushwood; the passage of riders as well as of vehicles over this ground is not difficult. Such is the road from Merv to the Attek, at Cherkezli, and between Sarakhs and Chatcha.

The second description consists of mounds containing a greater proportion of fine sand; the sand is not friable, being bound by brushwood. The passage of wheeled vehicles over this ground is very difficult; horses, however, and especially camels, pass freely. This description of sand is encountered in the steppe, on the road from Khiva to Akhal Attek and Merv, between Mikhailofsky Bay and Molla-Kara, &c. . . . Experience in connection with the Transcaspian Railway has proved that traffic suffers less from sand drifts than from snow drifts in Russia.

The most dangerous, however, are the so-called "barkhans" (sand hillocks); the sand is perfectly fine, and there is no vegetation. The slightest wind fills up the tracks of the caravan almost as soon as they are made.

Adam-Kyrylgan is the name given to one spot, and means the "destruction of man"; at this place whole caravans have been buried under the sands by hurricanes. This sand occurs in the south-eastern corner of the Transcaspian desert near the Oxus. A bright sun lights up the dismal picture of these sand mounds; on all sides the horizon is broken by small yellowish grey mounds, which oppress the sight of the traveller with their uniform configuration. Progress over such ground is very laborious, the horses sinking at every step, and scarcely able to drag their feet out of the sand. Great caution is necessary in order not to lose the road; there is nothing from which to construct leading marks, nor anything on which to suspend camel bones; only at long intervals the traveller passes sticks, thrust into the sand by caravans in order to indicate the route.

From Adil-Kué the travellers proceeded safely to the Bokharian settlement of Boyun-Usun on the Oxus, not far from Chardjui. On the route they frequently passed small depressions, about 3 fathoms in depth, which for some reason the natives regard as the ancient bed of the river. M. Lessar found the whole route from Sirab to the Oxus very bad and difficult.

After reaching Khiva, the traveller shortly returned to Askabad across the steppe along the great caravan route to Shakh-Sinem, Bala-Ishem, Kazi and Durun.

During the year 1882, M. Lessar traversed about 5,000 versts, and has, moreover, in the months of April and May of this year, made other excursions in the desert.

Nq. 156.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received November 26.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, November 21, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of an extract from the "Novoe Vremya" of yesterday, being a communication made to that paper by M. Lessar relative to the proceedings of so-called English agents in Merv. He argues that their influence is prejudicial; that they can only acquire any by encouraging the marauders in that region, who, he asserts, are the only discontented portion of the population. He contends that it would be better to exercise no such influence, and to cease to encourage predatory habits; for that if these should continue to exist, Russia may be forced to interfere in order to prevent disorder, and, in doing so, may acquire a position which might be considered more dangerous to England.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 156.

Abstract from Russian Press.

IN a communication addressed to the "Novoe Vremya" of the 8th (20th) November, 1883, on the subject of Mr. O'Donovan's proceedings at Merv, which are severely condemned, M. Lessar makes the following remarks with reference to the relations of Russia to Merv, as also the evil consequences resulting from the presence of alleged English Agents in the Merv oasis:—

"The Mervis have long since become convinced that all the promises held out by O'Donovan were false; and England's prestige in Central Asia has not gained therefrom. Of course, O'Donovan was personally responsible for his actions; it was generally announced that he was merely a correspondent, and if he incited the Mervis against Russia he did so from motives of his own, and not by authority."

This incited agitation in Central Asia meets but little approval on the part of prominent English statesmen; on the contrary, protests are made against it; on various occasions, Rawlinson, whilst recognizing the danger to England from the spread of Russian influence in Asia, at the same time admitted that it was impossible to deny the good effects arising from the establishment of order, which accompanied such spread. At a meeting of the London Geographical Society in 1882, the President, Lord Aberdeen, stated "that the barbarous condition of these countries could not be maintained merely to avoid the danger that might accrue to the British Empire." As an Englishman, and as a man, he loudly protested against the view held at the same meeting by Sir Richard Temple. As a fact, the pacification of the steppe is carried out by Russia with such disinterestedness, that her enemies are only to be found among that portion of the population which suffers from the introduction of order, *i.e.*, among marauders; and the only means of agitating against Russia in this quarter is by supporting robbery and pillage.

Of course, the present English Government would not have recourse to the assistance of robbers under any circumstances whatsoever; but in view of the distance separating England from Central Asia, the employment of secondary agents cannot depend entirely on the Government in London; consequently, other individuals have made their appearance since O'Donovan, who have acted in the same spirit that he did.

Thus, in the early part of November month, there arrived at Merv four Afghans. They openly announced that they were English agents; they counselled the Mervis not to open relations with Russia, distributed presents, and promised Ysuf, the youngest son of Nur Verdy Khan, to place him on the Merv Throne. The position of these agents is extremely unenviable; they only find partizans among the unruly portion of the population; they are obliged to propitiate robbers, and make promises which cannot be fulfilled, and all this to no purpose; the money with which these agents are always well supplied is accepted by the Mervis, and letters are written. On the following day the same Khans will declare that they cannot influence their tribes, and that when the time shall arrive they will act according to circumstances. Undoubtedly, this coquetting on the part of the English will always be accompanied by the renewal of robbery and pillage in the region. Towards the end of last year there were several raids made from Merv, and each time these raids were preceded by rumours that English agents had arrived at Merv and were distributing arms and money. It may have been that these agents actually appeared, or that the Mervis in their simplicity imagined that the rumours of British agents would save the marauders of their tribe from the punishment they merited. The important fact of the matter is, that the Turkomans harbour a conviction that English protection is bound up with the possibility of renewing robbery, pillage, &c.

It is difficult to see who is to benefit by all this; true, bands of robbers from time to time interfere with travellers and merchants proceeding from Russia, but they cannot inflict any material harm on that country. Independent Merv is not dangerous to Russia; the rich Merv nation, about which so much was spoken, no longer exists; there is a large band of robbers, consisting of about 150,000 poverty-stricken individuals, completely unorganized, badly armed, and placed as regards defences in a much worse condition than the Akhal Tékes. This rabble, of course, cannot affect political combinations. Injury can only accrue to Russia when the pillaging raids of these robbers become so audacious that she will be compelled to go to war on their account.

Not a single conquest has Russia made in Central Asia with the object of threatening England; all such conquests were the result of the necessity of establishing order on the frontier; the history of all intercourse with savage marauding tribes has long since shown that the establishment of order can only be attained by their complete subjection; all expeditions dispatched for purposes of chastisement have only proved palliative, and at the same time very expensive ones.

On the other hand, it is very natural if Russia, in these involuntarily conquests, acquires strategical advantages that she should utilize them when circumstances demand; consequently, if the English consider the occupation of Merv by Russia detrimental to England's interests, they should endeavour to stave off, as long as possible, such occupation. All that is necessary is, that no inciting influence be brought on Merv from without; the Mervis left to themselves will not forget for a long time the punishment incurred by the Akhals; they will restrain their predatory propensities, and in such case it may be long ere Russia need think of advancing on Merv. Whether a collision will take place between England and Russia in Asia, when it may come about, and whether Merv will be of any benefit to Russia in such case, are all very problematical questions, and in all probability they will be solved in the distant future; at the present time, we have too many more pressing affairs to occupy us than rooting out a nest of robbers, and too many more necessary outlays to make than to spend money in maintaining troops and guarding new profitless territory. The longer Merv remains independent the better for Russia; its occupation at any time would not be difficult, whilst its possession would be extremely unprofitable. Merv in this respect bears a great resemblance to Candahar.

(Signed) LESSAR, *Engineer.*

No. 157.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received December 5.)

My Lord,

Tehran, November 2, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that I brought the question of Ayoub Khan's proposed departure from Tehran under discussion during the conversation which I had with the Shah on the 20th ultimo. I referred to the communications which had passed between the Minister for Foreign Affairs and myself on this subject, and especially to the note I had addressed to his Excellency on the 14th September, in which I called the attention of the Persian Government to the danger of allowing Ayoub Khan to quit the Persian territory at any point whence he could with facility intrigue against the Ameer's authority on the frontiers of Afghanistan. The Shah said that he had read the communication to which I referred, and that he was most anxious to carry out the wishes of Her Majesty's Government in the matter. He found himself placed, however, in a position of some embarrassment, Ayoub Khan being apparently resolved to leave by way of Khorassan, and the Persian Government being decidedly reluctant to prevent him forcibly from doing so, seeing that he had from 200 to 300 armed followers with him, who might offer resistance and bring about a serious conflict with the Persian authorities. It had been suggested that they would escape from this difficulty, the Shah said, if Ayoub Khan left by way of Russia, and the Russian Minister had been asked if he would be allowed to proceed through Russian territory to Bokhara, to which place he had declared his intention of going, but M. Melnikoff had replied that he would not be permitted to do so.

His Majesty assured me that every effort would be made to dissuade Ayoub Khan from proceeding towards Khorassan, and during the last ten days the Nasseer ed Dowleh has been in almost constant communication with him and some of his chief adherents with that object, but as yet he has been unable to come to any satisfactory arrangement with them.

I yesterday received a message from the Shah, desiring that I should see the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who had a communication to make to me on the subject. I accordingly called upon his Excellency during the afternoon, and he read to me a telegram he had received from Malcom Khan in reply to an instruction which was sent to him last week respecting Ayoub Khan. Malcom Khan stated that no objection could be made to Ayoub Khan's departure by way of Khorassan, if care was taken to prevent his lingering on Persian territory near the Afghan frontier, and he informed the Minister for Foreign Affairs that he had written in this sense to your Lordship.

The Shah was disposed to act at once on this suggestion, and to allow all the Afghan refugees to leave Tehran for Meshed forthwith. I have recommended His Majesty to await Malcom Khan's report as to the result of the communications he has held with Her Majesty's Government on this subject, and I have advised the Persian Government to bear in mind that Ayoub Khan's being allowed to proceed to Khorassan or through Persian territory to any place where he can intrigue and create

disturbances on the Afghan border, may lead to retaliation on the part of Abdul Rahman Khan and serious complications with the Afghans hereafter.

I have, &c.

(Signed) RONALD F. THOMSON.

No. 158.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received December 10.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, December 4, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Novoe Vremya" of the 21st November (3rd December), 1883, states that on the strength of representations made by General Tchernaiëff, the Ministry of War has applied to the Council of the Empire for the assignment of 41,679 roubles to cover the expenses of transferring some of the troops stationed at Tashkend to the Oxus military section. This transfer, it is stated, is necessary, in view of the scheme now adopted for the construction of a new fort on the Oxus, and the establishment of steam-boat navigation on that river.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No 159.

Mr. Godley to Mr. Currie.—(Received December 16.)

Sir,

India Office, December 16, 1883.

WITH reference to former correspondence relative to the movements of Eyoub Khan, I am directed by the Earl of Kimberley to transmit, for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a telegram received from the Viceroy of India, pointing out that the intention of the Persian Government to allow Eyoub to quit Persia immediately by Khorassan will probably entail very serious trouble in Afghanistan.

I am, &c.

(Signed) J. A. GODLEY.

Inclosure in No. 159.

The Viceroy of India to the Earl of Kimberley.

(Telegraphic.)

December 15, 1883.

HER Majesty's Minister at Tehran telegraphs that the Persian Government has officially notified intention of allowing Eyoub to quit Persia immediately by Khorassan. This will probably entail very serious trouble in Afghanistan.

No. 160.

*Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.**

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 18, 1883.

I HAVE received through the Secretary of State for India a copy of a telegram from the Viceroy of India, stating his opinion that if Eyoub Khan be permitted to quit Persian territory by Khorassan, it will probably entail very serious trouble in Afghanistan.

I have to instruct you to point this out to the Ministers of the Shah, and to state that the grant of such permission by the Persian Government, with the knowledge of the danger which must result to the peace of Central Asia cannot but be regarded by Her Majesty's Government as a seriously unfriendly act towards England.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

* Substance telegraphed.

No. 161.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received December 24.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, December 17, 1883.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the "Moscow Gazette" of the 3rd (15th) December, 1883, states that negotiations are proceeding between the Russian and Persian Governments respecting the construction of more convenient means of communication between the two countries. At present there is only one such route, viz., viâ Astrabad, but this road presents difficulties.

The Russian Government propose to establish communication with Persia from Geuk-Tépé by means of two roads, i.e., through the Herbash and Rabat Passes. The first-named road is finished, and the sum of 25,000 silver roubles has been assigned for the completion of the second. The negotiations now in progress with the Persian Government refer to the construction of roads in Persia in connection with these two Russian roads.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 162.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received December 28, 6.45 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, December 28, 1883.

I HEAR that Russian force of 1,000 infantry and 500 cavalry, with 10 guns, entered Atek of Deregez on the 20th, proceeding to the Tejend.

No. 163.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received January 7.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, January 2, 1884.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch of the 29th ultimo, during an interview which I had this afternoon with M. Vlangaly, I told him that news had reached me of a Russian force consisting of 1,000 infantry, 500 cavalry, and 10 guns having entered the Atek of Dereghez, and being on their way to the Tejend. I inquired what would be the object of this expedition.

His Excellency replied that he was not aware of any force having been sent in that direction, but he was not much surprised at learning it. He said that on the occasion of the raid which had been made about two months ago into Persian territory by Turkoman raiders, when they carried off a number of cattle and sheep, and, as he believed, some men, the Persian Government had appealed to the Imperial Government to use their influence for the recovery of their property, &c., which had been taken.

Instructions had consequently been sent to the Commander of the forces at Askabad to do his best to meet the wishes of the Persian Government. M. Vlangaly supposed that it had been found impossible to do so without the use of force, and that a small detachment had consequently been dispatched for that purpose: but his Excellency doubted whether it could be nearly so large as I had mentioned, nor could he answer my inquiry as to the particular direction which the force in question would take.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 164.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 8, 1884.

THE Persian Minister at this Court called on me on the 4th instant, and after the delivery of a complimentary message from the Shah, inquired what suggestion Her Majesty's Government could make as to the future of Eyoub Khan.

Malcom Khan said that the Shah might, although it was a matter of great difficulty on account of the claim of a guest upon a Mahomedan Government, for a time fulfil his engagement with Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran for the custody of Eyoub Khan, but that it was impossible to keep him a prisoner, or to use force which might ultimately end in the death of Eyoub Khan.

He wished Her Majesty's Government to suggest what course the Shah should take.

I informed Malcom Khan in reply that I would consult with the Secretary of State for India, but that I presumed that the answer would be that the object of Her Majesty's Government, which was a reasonable one, was well known to the Shah, and that as for the means of accomplishing it, the Shah must be the best judge.

Malcom Khan said that it was a friendly request for a suggestion, and asked whether Her Majesty's Government would invite Eyoub to India, or have him sent to some place in Turkey, such as Bagdad.

I am, &c.
(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 165.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received January 11.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, January 9, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of an abstract from the "St. Petersburg Gazette" of the 5th instant, testifying to the good order established in Russian Turkestan. It shows, however, that this result has been effected at a heavy cost to the Imperial Government, and that during the last sixteen years as much as 115,000,000 roubles has been spent upon that country beyond what its revenue has produced.

I have, &c.
(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure 1 in No. 165.

Abstract from the Russian Press.

(Translation.)

ACCORDING to the "St. Petersburg Gazette" of the 24th December, 1883 (5th January, 1884), the result of M. de Giers' mission of revision to the Governor-Generalship of Russian Turkestan tends to show that the country has been completely pacified; that the right of property is respected, and that complete religious toleration exists. It would appear also that crime is on the decline, which would seem to prove that the material condition of the population is satisfactory.

On the other hand, M. de Giers is said to have arrived at the conclusion that the comparative prosperity of the Governor-Generalship has been attained at a heavy cost to the Imperial Exchequer. The revenue of the region has always been insufficient to meet the expenditure. In this manner the annual deficit during the sixteen years of existence of the Governor-Generalship averaged about 7,000,000 roubles. The general deficit during the same period amounted to no less than 115,000,000.

The accompanying Table which has been printed in the official section of the "Turkestan Gazette" (No. 48 of the 6th (18th) December, 1883), gives the amounts of revenue and expenditure in Russian Turkestan during the last fourteen years, the annual average deficit during that period being computed at 5,745,709 silver roubles 96 copecks.

Inclosure 2 in No. 165.

Extract from the "Turkestan Gazette" of December 6 (18), 1883,

(Translation.)

OFFICIAL Return of Revenue and Expenditure of the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan for the Years
1869 to 1882.

Year.	Amount of Revenue.		Amount of Expenditure.		Deficit.	
	Rbs.	c.	Rbs.	c.	Rbs.	c.
1869	2,356,241	36	4,207,417	92	1,851,176	56
1870	2,915,983	64	6,114,833	21	3,198,899	57
1871	2,102,955	5	6,820,945	65	4,717,990	60
1872	2,008,374	99	7,576,126	69	5,567,811	70
1873	2,617,653	21	8,663,840	61	6,016,187	40
1874	2,949,918	36	8,103,866	87	5,153,948	51
1875	2,976,478	52	8,350,685	13	5,374,206	61
1876	4,020,958	11	9,029,186	33	5,008,228	22
1877	3,865,899	4	10,169,074	82	6,303,175	78
1878	3,835,800	61	11,958,550	7	8,122,749	46
1879	4,202,470	89	11,604,101	0	7,401,630	11
1880	4,120,491	69	11,428,310	71	7,307,819	2
1881	5,979,891	30	14,128,386	55	8,148,495	16
1882	6,315,458	29	12,583,079	12	6,267,620	83
Yearly average	3,590,612	50	9,338,461	76	5,745,709	98

Remark.—In 1882 a Governor-Generalship of the Steppe was established, which included the Semirechensk region, the receipts of which in 1882 amounted to 1,281,723 rbs. 21 c., and expenditure to 2,965,564 rbs. The deficit of the Governor-Generalship of Turkestan for 1882, after deducting the above, would consequently be reduced to 4,586,333 rbs. 15 c.

No. 166.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 14, 1884.

WITH reference to your telegram of the 28th ultimo, informing me of the report which you had received of the invasion of the Atek of Deregez by a Russian force of 1,000 infantry, 500 cavalry, and 10 guns, on their way to Tejend, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a despatch on the subject from Her Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg.*

You will observe that, on being questioned on the matter, M. Vlangaly, whilst professing ignorance of the circumstance, expressed no surprise, and informed Sir E. Thornton that the expedition alluded to was probably the result of a request of which he was aware from the Persian Government to that of Russia for assistance in the recovery of property taken by the Turkomans in a recent raid.

Instructions had consequently been sent to the Russian Commander at Askabad to do his best to meet the wishes of the Persian Government. This, M. Vlangaly supposed, could not be done without the employment of force, though he was as doubtful of its being as numerous as was reported as he was of the direction that it would take.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 167.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 22, 1884.

THE Persian Minister called at this Office on the 9th instant, and pressed for an early answer from Her Majesty's Government with regard to the future of Ayoub Khan. He stated that Ayoub would shortly be arriving at Meshed, when the Persian authorities would have to decide what steps should be taken,

It was pointed out to Malcom Khan that an assurance had been given to Her Majesty's Minister at Tehran of the most positive kind, that Ayoub's followers would be reduced in numbers, and that he would be sent to Boojnoord, or some other point remote from the Afghan frontier.

Malcom Khan then again reverted to the difficulties which a compliance with the wishes of Her Majesty's Government caused to the Shah. The expense of keeping him in Persia was great. The Afghan refugees had, for many years, cost the Persian Government 20,000*l.* a-year. If the Indian Government attached so much importance to Ayoub being kept away from Afghanistan why could they not make some pecuniary sacrifice, and either provide such a stipend as would reconcile him to remaining in Persia, or offer him an asylum in India? If the Indian Government would give 8,000*l.* or 10,000*l.* a-year for a few years the affair could be arranged. On being asked how he proposed that the money should be paid, Malcom Khan replied that it should be done through the Persian Government, but that 8,000*l.* was the least sum that would suffice. This suggestion was, he added, a personal one, but he was officially charged to press strongly for an early answer to the request he had addressed to me a few days ago for advice as to the mode of dealing with Ayoub Khan.

I am, &c.

(Signed) GRANVILLE.

No. 168.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received January 25.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, January 22, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith a translation by Mr. Michell of an abstract of a paper recently read by M. Lessar, on the Kara-Kum desert, at a meeting of the Imperial Geographical Society.

It will be seen that at the end of this paper it is stated that the Tékés are desirous that Merv should be occupied by the Russians in order that their property may be safe from the raids of the Mervees.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

Inclosure in No. 168.

Extract from the "Novoe Vremyia" of December 30, 1883 (January 9, 1884).

(Translation from the Russian.)

THE "Novoe Vremyia" of the 30th December, 1883 (9th January, 1884) contains the following abstract of a paper recently read by M. Lessar, on the Kara-Kum sands, at a meeting of the Imperial Geographical Society:—

"The country bordered by the Ust-Urt, Khiva, Bokhara, Afghan Turkestan, the Atek and Akhal bears the general name of Kara-Kum, although it is not everywhere covered with sand, other description of soil being found.

"With regard to the so-called dry beds or channels which are found in the Kara-Kum, leading in various directions, no importance need be attached to them as a future means of water communication by the diversion of the Oxus.

"Only the confines of the region are irrigated by streams and rivulets.

"The traveller in the Kara-Kum must depend for his water supply solely on wells and kaki (rain-holes). The cisterns that existed formerly at various points have been destroyed by the Turkoman tribes.

"The wells, both as regards the quantity and quality of water, are very unequally distributed. The fresh-water wells are for the most part concentrated at no great distance from the borders of the desert; principally along the south-west and north-east frontier, parallel with the Kopet-dagh range and the Oxus.

"In the southern parts of the desert the wells become fewer and mostly contain salt water; along the northern frontier they are found in great number and bear the reputation of fresh-water wells, although in reality even the best of them (Bala-Ishem, for instance) contains an admixture of salt.

"Wells emitting a sulphurous odour are often met with in the desert, and this

arises from the well not being cleaned, or from the water having been polluted by Turkoman robbers.

"The majority of the wells in the desert are situated among the 'takirs'* and are supplied:—

"1. By water percolating in a natural manner through the sub-soil; and

"2. From the surface by means of water-courses dug for the purpose by the natives.

"Formerly great attention was paid by the inhabitants towards keeping these water-courses leading to the cisterns in order. Now, however, since the steppe has become nearly deserted, these water-courses have become silted up with sand. Wells in the centre of the desert are only met with at long intervals, generally from 150 to 170 versts apart, and only as an exception at a distance of 20 to 30 versts.

"In former years the Kara-Kum was more animated than it is at present; all the Turkoman tribes settled in the oases surrounding the steppe encamped there in winter for the purpose of depasturing their cattle, whilst some of the richer portion remained there during the whole year.

"When the Tékés settled at Merv, some thirty to forty years ago, the Kara-Kum was divided for camping purposes among the principal tribes as follows:—the south-western portion was occupied by Tékés of Akhal. To the east lay the camping-ground of the Tedjents and the Mervis, and only that portion nearest to the Oxus belonged to the Ersaris. The Turkomans of Khiva camped near that town. The north-western corner, abounding with water, was occupied by the Sheikh Turkomans, the Ata Turkoman camping between the Uzboi and the wells of Mersachili to the west, and the Onguz to the east.

"These nomad Turkomans seldom engage in pillage; like all persons possessed of some wealth they are anxious for the preservation of tranquillity in their region, and it is always the indigent portion of any tribe that robs and pillages when the opportunity presents itself. The success of the Tékés in 1855 and 1860 made them masters of the steppe, and the order of things in the Kara-Kum, as described above, underwent a change. After the death of Medemi Khan the Khivans ceased to meddle in the affairs of the nomads and the first to suffer were the Ata Turkomans. They had been entirely subjected to the Khan, and under his protection enjoyed considerable prosperity.

"The successors of Medemi Khan were too weak to afford any one protection, and could scarcely defend their own Khanate from pillage and raids. The Jomuds, Saryks, and Mervees commenced to attack the Ata, and these latter, having lost their flocks, dispersed in various directions. A similar fate befell the Sheikh tribe.

"The camping ground of the Tékés settled at Merv and at Akhal considerably diminished in extent.

"The cattle and flocks of the Akhalis in 1880 and 1881 were driven into the sandy steppe, and consequently did not suffer much from the war; the great loss occurred from raids of neighbouring tribes. The Akhalis were pillaged by the Jomuds and Goklans, and at times by their own brethren of Merv; these latter, however, always avoided shedding human blood.

"Before the fall of Geok-Tépé, the desert of Kara-Kum was frequented by bands of Kurd and Persian robbers, who were fitted out for these expeditions by Persian Khans living on the border; now, however, these raids are rare, and occur chiefly on the frontier near Persian territory.

"After the conquest of Akhal robbery diminished considerably on all sides; the Akhalis very seldom raid in the desert; when the inclination becomes too strong, the Akhal Turkoman pays a visit to the Mervis and joins them in their raids against the Saryks, and sometimes against the Persians.

"The Mervis most frequently attack the Saryks settled at Pendi. With the Ulatans, owing to their vicinity to Merv, there is no open hostility, and mutual attacks are rare. With the Saryks of Pendi, however, the Mervis carry on a fierce struggle, which is, of course, purely predatory; the robbers of both tribes generally advance by separate routes in order to avoid an encounter, and only attack unarmed travellers and caravans on the borders of the oasis.

"The Mervis also commit depredations on Persian and even on Afghan territory, but not frequently; in these cases, the Merv Headmen, in their explanations at Askhabad, attribute these raids to the Saryks.

"The Saryk Turkomans pillage all their neighbours; southern Turkomania is still inaccessible to caravans, and the eastern frontier of Khorassan is far from being completely pacified. The Saryks seldom advance in the Kara-Kum desert northwards

* A hard clayey soil, void of vegetation.

of the roads from Merv to Bokhara and Sarakhs, although occasionally they carry their depredations as far as Dert-Kui and Karry-bent; along the above-mentioned roads their appearance is very common, and constitutes the chief obstacle to the development of trading relations between Bokhara, Merv, and Persia. *The Eresaris, who recognize the authority of the Ameer of Bokhara, carry on their depredations secretly and in small parties; if the robbery is discovered the guilty are handed over to the Ameer, and the plundered property restored to the rightful owners by the Khan of Tchardjui. Owing to the supineness of the Bokharian authorities the majority of the depredations pass unpunished.

"In summing up the foregoing it may be said that the northern portion of the Kara-Kum is completely pacified; the central part, which possesses importance as regards the relations of Southern Akhal and Khiva, presents certain danger to trade caravans from attacks of robber bands. The southern portion, i.e., the route from Atek and Khorassan to Merv, and further to Bokhara, remains in very much the same position as heretofore, that is to say, danger abounds everywhere.

"The borders of the desert offer very slight obstacles to communication, but these difficulties increase as the centre is approached.

"The routes traversing the Kara-Kum are only practicable for pack animals; those parts that are adapted for wheel traffic are separated by sand, through which it would be impossible to penetrate on wheels. Of course I am speaking now of the practicability of the routes for the transport of goods; the passage of mountain or even field guns, which are generally transported in small numbers and, in most cases, regardless of trouble or expense, is quite possible along nearly all the routes.

"With regard to the routes which do not cross the Kara-Kum itself, but merely pass along its frontier (the roads from Khiva to Krasnovodsk and from Atek to Merv), it may be said that wheel traffic would not be impeded to any great extent by sand.

"All the large routes are equally adapted, as regards the soil, for horses, camels, donkeys, and mules, but in summer time the scarcity of water renders it impossible to employ horses. In view of this caravans generally consist exclusively of camels. Even the escort drivers are on foot, and afford but a slight protection against mounted robbers.

"It is only the camel that is able to exist three days without water; these animals are allowed a good rest at the wells and at their journey's end, and they suffer but little. From June to the end of August, however, the scorching winds of the desert render travelling almost impossible even with camels.

"During summer communication between the Akhal and Atek, and Khiva and Bokhara, notwithstanding the length of the route, is carried on by skirting the Kara-Kum from the north (via Bala-Ishem) or from the south by way of Merv.

"In consequence of the enumerated difficulties traffic and depredations of robber bands commence late in the autumn and continue till early spring; during the great heats attacks are impossible; the horses of the Turkoman robbers would be exhausted before the caravans were encountered.

"As stated above, the wells in the desert are for the most part badly supplied with water and when exhausted refill very slowly; on this account caravans are always split up into small parties; where there is not much danger of robbers (on the road from Khiva to Krasnovodsk) caravans of three or four camels, with two or three attendants, are the usual complement.

"The foregoing precautions for lessening the difficulties of travelling in the desert are only possible where no danger exists, otherwise communication becomes extremely difficult. This is the reason why since the death of Medemi Khan and the defeat of the Persians in 1860, trade traffic across the Kara-Kum has diminished to its present insignificant extent.

"In reviewing the means for improving the means of communication in the Kara-Kum, the essential point is to decide what should be done to re-establish pack traffic in the desert, inasmuch as the introduction of other means of communication is at the present time scarcely practicable.

"One of the chief measures must be of course to re-establish the former water supply and adopt means for the further development of the same.

"Very many wells, at places which formerly constituted the chief halting stations in crossing the Kara-Kum are now filled up; there, where formerly caravans found water at short intervals, now waterless tracts of 100 versts and more occur. This is owing partly to the fact that the wells have been neglected by the nomads and

principally to the pollution of the water by robbers when returning from their raids in order to render pursuit as difficult as possible. The restoration of the wells should be a matter of first consideration, and luckily does not require great outlay.

"The erection of leading marks along the routes would be very serviceable in many places, and is not a difficult or an expensive undertaking, seeing that the material is always at hand; for this purpose would serve pieces of limestone and brushwood where the soil is clayey, and brushwood and the bones of camels and horses on the sandy steppe. It is only in the drifting sands, that no material could be found, but this could be conveyed to certain parts without much difficulty.

"To what extent the erection of marks is necessary and their want recognized is shown by the fact that the neighbouring Khans always erected marks when any considerable body of men crossed the Kara-Kum. Along all the routes traversed by Medemi Khan with his troops are marks to indicate the "Farsangs."

"The construction of caravanserais near wells, which would always be points of protracted stoppage, would complete the improvement of routes in the Kara-Kum; but there is no absolute necessity for these places of shelter, owing to the scarcity of rain.

"The maintenance of the roads when once improved would depend on the subjugation of the region. In time of tranquillity the cleansing of wells is not difficult; it has been shown above how the presence of robbers affects the condition of the roads.

"The complete pacification of the steppe is necessary not alone for stimulating trading relations between the neighbouring countries, but also for the advancement of the prosperity of the Turkoman tribe. In Akhal, Khiva, Bokhara, and even in Merv, the majority of the inhabitants have become convinced that it is impossible to return to the former condition of things and to exist by pillage. The present tranquil state of the steppe is regarded, however, as only temporary and inspires but little confidence in the minds of the Turkomans; most of the inhabitants continue to live in settlements, and are afraid to develop their cattle-breeding, notwithstanding that it is their sole means of acquiring wealth. A similar temporary tranquillity existed not long ago, during the rule of Medemi Khan, but it was of short duration: with the death of the Khan there commenced an unprecedented period of disorder in the Kara-Kum.

"The Tékés, themselves, indicate the means of a final pacification of the region, i.e., the occupation of Merv by the Russians. The Tékés candidly admit that they would prefer their former mode of life, but all sensible people understand that this is impossible, and in the absence of any choice all hopes are centred in peaceful development. But not all the inhabitants of Merv are sensible people; there are many who still hope for a reversion to the old order of things, and the unruly portion of the population is only restrained by the recollections of the storming of Geok-Tépé; when these shall have become somewhat obliterated there is no doubt that pillage and depredations will recommence, and the Mervees will not spare their brethren who have submitted to Russian rule.

"In view of this contingency the Akhalis do not venture to increase their flocks and to remove to any considerable distance from the line of settlements at the foot of the mountains. In the opinion of the Tékés the conquest of Merv will complete the pacification of the region; the importance attached to this point in Central Asia is so great that its possessor will be able to command the whole country as far as the mountains; the Ersars, pressed on one side by the Russians, and on the other by the Bokharians, will have to submit to the new order of things; whilst the Saryks need not be taken into account; this insignificant tribe have only hitherto been able to maintain an independent existence owing to the disorder which existed in Merv."

No. 169.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 8, 10 A.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, February 8, 1884.

EYOUB KHAN reached Meshed on the 5th, and is now detained under a strong guard in the citadel there.

No. 170.

Earl Granville to Mr. Thomson.

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, February 9, 1884, 11:40 P.M.

"ST. PETERSBURGH GAZETTE" reports that the Merv Chiefs have submitted to Russian rule.

Have you any confirmation of this report?

No. 171.

Mr. Thomson to Earl Granville.—(Received February 10, 6:10 P.M.)

(Telegraphic.)

Tehran, February 10, 1884, 4:24 P.M.

I HAVE no confirmation of reported submission of Merv Chiefs. Intelligence just received, dated the 3rd February, states that Chiefs had rejected Russian demand for submission and for restitution of property lately plundered from Persia.

No. 172.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, February 14.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, February 14, 1884.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a telegram addressed to His Imperial Majesty by Colonel Komaroff was published in this morning's "Official Messenger," to the effect that the Khans and twenty-four Representatives of the four tribes of the Merv Turkomans had presented themselves at Askabad on the 12th instant, had sworn allegiance to the Ozar, and had expressed the hope that Russia would take charge of the government of their country.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

No. 173.

Sir E. Thornton to Earl Granville.—(Received by telegraph, February 15.)

My Lord,

St. Petersburg, February 15, 1884.

M. DE GIERS informed me last night that His Imperial Majesty has determined to accept the allegiance which the Representatives of the Merv Turkomans had sworn at Askabad, and to send an officer to administer the Government of that region. This officer would perhaps be accompanied by an escort of Turkomans.

I have, &c.

(Signed) EDWD. THORNTON.

V178

~~R 420~~

PERSIA. No. 2 (1912).

S2092

NOTES EXCHANGED

BETWEEN THE

PERSIAN GOVERNMENT

AND THE

2

BRITISH AND RUSSIAN MINISTERS
AT TEHRAN,

FEBRUARY 18—MARCH 20, 1912.

*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.
March 1912.*

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE.

To be purchased, either directly or through any Bookseller, from
AN AND SONS, LTD., FETTER LANE, E.C., and 32, ABINGDON STREET, S.W.; or
OLIVER AND BOYD, TWEEDDALE COURT, EDINBURGH; or
E. PONSONBY, LTD., 116, GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN.

PRINTED BY

HARRISON AND SONS, PRINTERS IN ORDINARY TO HIS MAJESTY,
45-47, ST. MARTIN'S LANE, W.C.

~~R 420~~

[Cd. 6103.] Price 1d.

LIST OF PAPERS.

No.		Page
1.	Joint Note addressed to Persian Government by British and Russian Ministers at Tehran	February 18, 1912 1
2.	Reply of Persian Government	March 20, — 3

Notes exchanged between the Persian Government and the
British and Russian Ministers at Tehran,
February 18–March 20, 1912.

No. 1.

*Joint Note addressed to the Persian Government by the British and Russian Ministers
at Tehran on February 18, 1912.*

ANIMÉES du désir de mettre les relations entre le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique, le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie et le Gouvernement Impérial de Perse sur une base solide d'amitié et de confiance et désireuses d'aider autant que possible le Gouvernement persan dans sa tâche de rétablir et de maintenir l'ordre et la tranquillité dans le pays, les Légations de Russie et d'Angleterre, d'ordre de leurs Gouvernements, ont l'honneur de faire au Gouvernement persan les propositions suivantes :—

1. Les deux Gouvernements sont prêts à avancer, pour faire face aux dépenses urgentes, au Gouvernement persan une somme de 100,000*l.* chacun. La Banque Impériale et la Banque d'Escompte ouvriront chacune un crédit pour cette somme aussitôt que les deux légations auront reçu une réponse favorable à la présente note, et il est entendu que le crédit de la Banque d'Escompte sera mis à la disposition du Gouvernement persan en roubles, s'élevant à la somme de 945,750 roubles.

2. Les sommes susindiquées seront prêtées à un taux d'intérêt de 7 pour cent par an et devront être remboursées du premier produit du prochain emprunt du Gouvernement persan, et jusqu'alors les excédents des revenus des douanes du nord et du sud; qui jusqu'ici ont été mis par les deux banques à la disposition du Gouvernement persan, devront être employés intégralement et respectivement pour le service de l'amortissement et des intérêts des parties russe et anglaise de la présente avance.

3. L'avance doit être dépensée sous le contrôle du trésorier général et d'après un programme élaboré par ce dernier d'accord avec le Cabinet et approuvé par les deux légations. Il est entendu qu'une partie considérable sera affectée à l'organisation de la gendarmerie gouvernementale avec l'aide des officiers suédois. En faisant cette proposition et pour atteindre les buts indiqués au commencement de cette note, les deux légations espèrent que le Gouvernement persan s'engagera (1) à conformer dorénavant sa politique aux principes de la convention anglo-russe de 1907 ; (2) à licencier, aussitôt que Mohammad Ali Schah et Salar-ed-Dowleh auront quitté la Perse, les fédais et les forces irrégulières qui se trouvent actuellement au service persan ; (3) à discuter avec les deux légations un projet d'organisation d'une petite armée régulière et effective ; (4) à arriver à un accord avec Mohammad Ali Schah au sujet de son départ de la Perse, de sa pension et d'une amnistie générale à ses partisans.

En espérant une réponse favorable, nous saisissons, &c.

G. BARCLAY.
POKLEWSKY-KOZIELL.

(Translation.)

ANIMATED by the desire to place upon a solid basis of friendship and confidence the relations between the Government of His Britannic Majesty, the Imperial Government of Russia, and the Imperial Government of Persia, and desirous of assisting the Persian Government as far as possible in their task of re-establishing and maintaining order and tranquillity in the country, the Russian and British Legations have the

honour, by instruction of their Governments, to make to the Persian Government the following proposals :—

1. The two Governments are prepared, in order to meet urgent expenditure, to advance to the Persian Government a sum of 100,000*l.* each. The Imperial Bank and the Banque d'Escompte will each open an account for this sum as soon as the two legations have received a favourable reply to the present note, and it is understood that the sum paid into the account by the Banque d'Escompte will be placed at the disposal of the Persian Government in roubles, amounting to the sum of 945,750 roubles.

2. The above-mentioned sums will be lent at a rate of interest of 7 per cent. per annum, and will be repayable out of the first proceeds of the forthcoming loan of the Persian Government, and until then the surpluses of the northern and southern customs revenues, which have hitherto been placed by the two banks at the disposal of the Persian Government, will be wholly and respectively assigned to the amortisation of and to the payment of interest on the Russian and British portions of the present advance.

3. The advance will be expended under the control of the treasurer-general, in accordance with a programme prepared by him in agreement with the Cabinet and approved by the two legations. It is understood that a considerable part will be assigned to the organisation of the Government gendarmerie with the assistance of the Swedish officers. In making this proposal, and in order to attain the ends indicated at the beginning of this note, the two legations hope that the Persian Government will undertake (1) to conform their policy henceforth with the principles of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 ; (2) as soon as Mohamed Ali Shah and Salar-ed-Dowleh have left Persia, to dismiss the fedais and irregular forces now in the Persian service ; (3) to discuss with the two legations a scheme for the organisation of a small regular and effective army ; (4) to come to an agreement with Mohamed Ali Shah on the subject of his departure from Persia, of his pension, and of a general amnesty to his followers.

Hoping to receive a favourable reply, we avail, &c.

G. BARCLAY.
POKLEWSKY-KOZIELL.

No. 2.

*Reply of the Persian Government, dated March 20, 1912.**

M. le Ministre,

J'AI eu l'honneur de recevoir la note que votre Excellence a bien voulu m'adresser en date du 29 safar (18 février) dernier, d'accord avec son Excellence le Ministre de Russie, au sujet de certaines propositions tendant à établir sur une base solide de confiante amitié les relations existantes entre les Gouvernements persan, anglais et russe, ainsi qu'à faciliter au Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Impériale le Schah le soin de rétablir et de maintenir l'ordre et la tranquillité dans le pays. Le Gouvernement Impérial très touché des bonnes intentions des deux Puissances voisines et animé du désir de donner à l'ensemble desdites propositions la suite la plus favorable, a l'honneur de porter à votre connaissance ce qui suit :—

A.—1. Sur la question du crédit de 200,000*l.* que les Banques Impériale et d'Escompte ouvriront au profit du Gouvernement persan, à titre d'avance sur le premier emprunt que la Perse va conclure, mon Gouvernement consent à ce que cette somme soit remboursée par le premier produit dudit emprunt. En attendant, les intérêts seront calculés à raison de 7 pour cent par an ; et les excédents des recettes douanières du nord et du sud seront affectés intégralement et respectivement pour le service de l'amortissement et des intérêts de la présente avance.

2. Pour assurer l'emploi intégral de cette somme aux dépenses déjà fixées par le Gouvernement, et connues des deux légations, le gérant de la Trésorerie générale sera chargé par le Gouvernement Impérial de contrôler les dépenses imputées sur ce crédit. Il est entendu qu'une partie considérable de l'avance sera affectée à l'organisation de la gendarmerie gouvernementale avec l'aide des officiers suédois.

B. En ce qui concerne les quatre points de la partie *in fine* de la note collective,

* The French version, here printed, of the Persian original was furnished, as is customary, by the Persian Government. In order to avoid delay in publishing these papers, the English translation has been made from the French, not from the Persian.

le Gouvernement persan, convaincu que le respect de l'intégrité et de l'indépendance de la Perse ainsi que son développement pacifique forment l'objet de la sollicitude sincère des deux Gouvernements amis, accueille avec plaisir ces bonnes dispositions en y répondant dans les termes suivants :—

1. En vue de témoigner son vif désir d'établir sur une base solide d'amitié et de confiance les relations entre la Perse, la Grande-Bretagne et la Russie, le Gouvernement persan se montrera soucieux de conformer sa politique aux principes de la convention de 1907, et il prend acte des assurances contenues dans le préambule de ladite convention.

2. Conformément à ce qui a été arrêté dans le programme de mon Gouvernement, après le départ définitif de Mohamed Ali Mirza et de Salar-ed-Dowleh du territoire persan, les mujahids seront licenciés et les autres forces irrégulières seront disciplinées et incorporées dans le cadre des forces régulières au fur et à mesure du développement de l'organisation militaire.

3. En vue du maintien de l'ordre et de la sécurité dans le pays, l'organisation d'une armée régulière et effective constitue un des points fondamentaux du programme ministériel. Il est évident que l'armée à organiser sera proportionnée aux besoins du pays.

Dans le but de faire partager aux deux Puissances voisines la conviction qu'il considère comme son devoir des plus impérieux de procéder à l'organisation de cette armée, le Gouvernement persan informera les deux légations du programme de ladite organisation afin qu'un échange de vues amical puisse avoir lieu sur les points nécessaires.

4. En ce qui concerne le départ de Mohamed Ali Mirza et l'octroi d'une pension en sa faveur, par déférence pour les propositions des Gouvernements de la Grande-Bretagne et de Russie, un accord qui fera l'objet d'une note à part est déjà intervenu à ce sujet.

Pour enlever tout obstacle à l'apaisement du pays et au rétablissement de l'ordre et pour assurer l'efficacité des mesures prises par l'État pour le maintien de la sécurité publique, le Gouvernement persan a le ferme espoir que les deux Puissances voisines ne manqueront pas de lui prêter tout leur concours, de façon à écarter tout danger d'une nouvelle tentative de rentrée en Perse par l'ex-Schah. Désirant donner suite à la proposition formulée par les Gouvernements de la Grande-Bretagne et de Russie, le Gouvernement Impérial accordera une amnistie générale aux partisans de Mohamed Ali Mirza. Cette mesure ne concernera bien entendu que les faits et agissements antérieurs et ne pourra être étendue aux faits postérieurs à la date de l'amnistie.

C. Ayant donné dans ce qui précède les preuves de ses intentions amicales à l'égard des deux Puissances et de son désir sincère de rétablir l'ordre et la sécurité dans le pays, le Gouvernement persan tient à obtenir le concours efficace des deux pays voisins sur les deux points suivants :—

1. Pour la conclusion urgente de l'emprunt nécessaire à la réalisation des réformes, et dont les conditions se rapporteraient exclusivement aux taux d'intérêt, à l'amortissement et à la garantie.

2. Pour que l'évacuation du territoire de la Perse par les troupes étrangères s'accomplisse dans le plus bref délai possible conformément aux souhaits du Gouvernement persan.

VOSSOUGH-ED-DOWLEH.

(Translation.)

M. le Ministre,

I HAVE had the honour to receive the note which your Excellency was good enough to address to me on the 29th Safar (18th February) last, in conjunction with his Excellency the Russian Minister, relative to certain proposals with a view to establish on a solid basis of confidence and friendship the relations between the Persian, English, and Russian Governments, and to assist the Government of His Imperial Majesty the Shah in their task of re-establishing and maintaining order and tranquillity in the country. The Imperial Government, deeply sensible of the good intentions of the two neighbouring Powers and animated by the desire to carry out these proposals in their entirety in the most satisfactory manner, have the honour to inform you as follows :—

A.—1. In regard to the question of the sum of 200,000*l.* for which the Imperial Bank and the Banque d'Escompte will open an account in the name of the Persian

Government, representing an advance on the first loan which Persia is about to contract, my Government agree that this sum shall be repaid out of the first proceeds of that loan. In the meanwhile, interest will be calculated at the rate of 7 per cent. per annum; and the surpluses of the northern and southern customs revenues will be wholly and respectively assigned to the amortisation of and to the payment of interest on the present advance.

2. In order to secure that this sum shall be wholly employed to meet expenditure already decided upon by the Government, and known to the two legations, the officer in charge of the treasury-general will be entrusted by the Imperial Government with the duty of controlling the expenditure defrayable out of this account. It is understood that a considerable part of the advance will be assigned to the organisation of the Government gendarmerie with the assistance of the Swedish officers.

B. As regards the four points in the last part of the joint note, the Persian Government, convinced that the integrity and independence of Persia, as well as her peaceful development, are the object of the sincere solicitude of the two friendly Governments, welcome with pleasure this favourable attitude and reply thereto in the following terms :—

1. In order to prove their earnest desire to establish on a solid basis of friendship and confidence the relations between Persia, Great Britain, and Russia, the Persian Government will take care to conform their policy with the principles of the convention of 1907, and they take note of the assurances contained in the preamble of that convention.

2. In accordance with what has been decided in the programme of my Government, after the final departure of Mohamed Ali Mirza and Salar-ed-Dowleh from Persian territory, the mujahids will be dismissed and the other irregular forces will be disciplined and gradually incorporated in the regular forces, as the military organisation is developed.

3. With a view to the maintenance of order and security in the country, the organisation of a regular and effective army constitutes one of the fundamental points of the ministerial programme. It is evident that the army to be organised will be proportionate to the needs of the country.

In order to convince the two Powers that they consider the organisation of this army as one of their most pressing duties, the Persian Government will inform the two legations of the programme of this organisation with a view to a friendly exchange of views on the necessary points.

4. As regards the departure of Mohamed Ali Mirza and the grant of a pension to him, in deference to the proposals of the British and Russian Governments, an agreement, which will form the subject of a separate note, has already been arrived at.

In order to remove every obstacle to the pacification of the country and to the re-establishment of order, and to ensure that the measures taken by the State for the maintenance of public security shall be effective, the Persian Government are confident that the two neighbouring Powers will not fail to render them every assistance, so as to obviate all danger of a fresh attempt by the ex-Shah to enter Persia. Desiring to act upon the proposal of the British and Russian Governments, the Imperial Government will grant a general amnesty to the followers of Mohamed Ali Mirza. This measure will of course only apply to events and acts previous to the date of the amnesty, and will not extend to those subsequent thereto.

C. Having in the preceding paragraphs given proof of their friendly intentions towards the two Powers and of their sincere desire to re-establish order and security in the country, the Persian Government are anxious to obtain the effective assistance of the two neighbouring countries on the two following points :—

1. For the immediate conclusion of the loan necessary for the realisation of the reforms, the conditions attached to such loan to relate only to the rate of interest, amortisation, and guarantee.

2. To effect the evacuation of Persian territory by foreign troops within the shortest possible period, in accordance with the wishes of the Persian Government.

VOSSUK-ED-DOWLEH.

PERSIA. No 2 (1912).

NOTES exchanged between the Persian Govern-
ment and the British and Russian Ministers at
Tehran, February 18-March 20, 1912.

*Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command
of His Majesty. March 1912.*

LONDON:
PRINTED BY HARRISON AND SONS.

R 1111

NAVY (OIL FUEL)

S 2092

AGREEMENT

WITH THE

3

ANGLO-PERSIAN OIL COMPANY, LIMITED.

Presented to Parliament by Command of His Majesty.



LONDON:

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF HIS MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE
By EYRE AND SPOTTISWOODE, LTD., EAST HARDING STREET, E.C.,
PRINTERS TO THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

To be purchased, either directly or through any Bookseller, from
WYMAN AND SONS, LTD., 29, BREAMS BUILDINGS, FETTER LANE, E.C., and
28, ABINGDON STREET, S.W., and 54, ST. MARY STREET, CARDIFF; or
H.M. STATIONERY OFFICE (SCOTTISH BRANCH), 23, FORTH STREET, EDINBURGH; or
E. PONSONBY, LTD., 116, GRAFTON STREET, DUBLIN;
or from the Agencies in the British Colonies and Dependencies,
the United States of America, the Continent of Europe and Abroad of
T. FISHER UNWIN, LONDON, W.C.

1914.

[Cd. 7419.]

Price 7d.

AGREEMENT WITH THE ANGLO-PERSIAN OIL COMPANY (LIMITED).

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM.

1. Appended hereto are the following documents :—

- (1.) A copy of an Agreement entered into by the Treasury and the Admiralty on the 20th May, 1914, with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company (Limited).
- (2.) Report by a Commission of Experts under the presidency of Vice-Admiral Sir Edmond J. W. Slade, K.C.I.E., K.C.V.O., giving the results of their local investigation of the resources of the oilfields comprised in the Concession of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

2. The Agreement provides that His Majesty's Government shall subscribe to the capital of the Company as follows :—

Ordinary shares ..	..	..	..	..	..	£ 2,000,000
Preference shares	..	..	..	..	..	1,000
Total share capital to be held by Government ..						£ 2,001,000
First debentures ranking <i>pari passu</i> with existing debentures ..	..	..	..	..	..	199,000
Total Government subscription ..						£ 2,200,000

The Company undertake, prior to the Government shares being subscribed for, to pass the necessary resolution for the addition to their capital of 2,000,000*l.* in Ordinary shares, and for the detailed amendments of the Articles of Association of the Company as specified in the Schedule to the Agreement.

The Preference shares and debentures fall within previous authorisations.

The total share capital and debentures of the Company will be as follows :—

Existing Ordinary shares ..	..	..	..	..	..	£ 1,000,000
Existing Preference shares	..	..	..	..	..	999,000
Total share capital held other than by Government ..						£ 1,999,000
Total share capital to be held by Government as shown above ..						2,001,000
Total proposed share capital ..						£ 4,000,000
Existing debentures ..	..	..	..	..	..	600,000
Debentures to be held by Government ..	..	..	..	..	..	199,000
Aggregate of proposed shares, capital, and debentures ..						£ 4,799,000

The Preference shares (6 per cent., participating to the extent of 2 per cent. in dividends after payment of 6 per cent. on Ordinary shares) have the same voting power as Ordinary shares. The Government will thus hold a majority of 2,000 share votes. An option has been secured to take over existing debentures when redeemable, viz., the 31st December, 1920.

3. The Agreement has been signed and sealed and is therefore binding upon all parties subject to the due performance of the undertakings in Clause 1 of the Agreement, viz., on the part of the Company, the passing of the resolutions referred to above and the entering into of a contract with the Admiralty for the supply of oil fuel; and on the part of His Majesty's Government, the due provision by Parliament of the funds necessary to give effect to the Agreement. The Company are issuing notices convening a meeting of shareholders. In regard to Parliamentary provision, the necessary

Financial Resolution and Money Bill will be presented forthwith, in order that the Government may be able to authorise immediate steps to be taken by the Company to proceed with development.

4. The Agreement and the amended Articles of Association provide for the appointment of two *ex officio* directors by the Treasury, one of whom will be chosen to represent the Admiralty directly.

To enable Government interests in the Company to be duly protected but with the minimum of interference with the conduct of its ordinary business, a power of veto over all acts of the Board and Committees of the Company and its subsidiaries is conferred upon the two *ex officio* directors, with right secured to the other directors to appeal to His Majesty's Government as represented by the Treasury and the Admiralty. His Majesty's Government do not, however, surrender their right to be represented on the Board by a larger number of directors proportionate to their share in the Company, if such a step should become necessary at any future time.

His Majesty's Government have given an assurance to the Company that this veto will be exercised with due regard to the financial and commercial interests of the Company, and only in respect of matters of general policy, such as the supervision of the activities of the Company as they may affect questions of foreign and military policy, any proposed sale of the undertaking or change of status of the Company, and new exploitation and other matters directly bearing on the fulfilment of current contracts for the Admiralty.

5. The capital furnished by His Majesty's Government will be issued in instalments as required, and is intended to provide for such development of resources and extension of facilities as may be necessary to secure an abundant quantity of oil for naval purposes over a term of upwards of twenty years. The Company have furnished full particulars of all pertinent matters relating to their financial position and prospects as well as preliminary estimates of expenditure and a scheme of development. No provision is included in the Parliamentary Bill for the exercise of the option of redemption of debentures in 1920 referred to above, which will have to be submitted to Parliament if and when His Majesty's Government decide to redeem the debentures. Purchases of oil for the Admiralty will continue to be a charge to naval votes.

6. The report of Admiral Slade's Commission indicates that, with judicious working and control, the Company's Concession may be expected to produce abundant supplies of oil over a long period of years. The Concession is a very large one, with good indications of oil in many places other than those at present being worked, and existing wells have proved productive and of good durability. The Admiralty has for some years past kept touch with the development of exploitation in this region, and has had the advantage also of considering the evidence on this subject given before the Royal Commission on Fuel and Engines, of which Admiral of the Fleet Lord Fisher of Kilverstone was Chairman. This evidence is confirmed by the investigations of Admiral Slade's Commission. As shown in paragraph 35 of the report of the latter Commission, some of the Company's wells have been "throttled down" to keep the production within the limits of current requirements and the capacity of the existing pipe-line, and it may be added that the policy adopted in the development of the field has been to drill the wells only to such depth as to prove the continuity of the oil-bearing formation without actually bringing them into production. The statistics of production up to September 1913 given in the report simply indicate the limited quantity of oil which has been allowed to flow from a few of the wells, and are in no sense a measure of what the Company's output might be expected to amount to if the whole of the existing wells were brought into full productivity, still less of the possible maximum output when additional wells are drilled. Information has quite recently come to hand showing that one of the wells from which supplies have long been drawn has suddenly begun to spout with great violence, with the result that this well alone yields more oil than the present pipe-line is capable of transporting. It has, therefore, become necessary, in order to minimise the loss of oil, to undertake very considerable extension of the transport, storage, and refining facilities with the least possible delay. The favourable anticipation expressed by Admiral Slade's Commission as to the aggregate resources of the Company's Concession has thus already received considerable support.

7. The supply contract will be regarded in the public interests as confidential, for reasons which have been frequently explained to Parliament. It may be stated, however, that provision is made therein for the supply for a term of years on a favourable scale of price of a reasonable proportion of the total estimated annual requirements of the Admiralty on the present basis of policy of oil consumption and with due allowance for expansion. The contract is for oil only, and the Admiralty will make its own arrangements for transport. Options of increase of quantity and of variation of description are provided for to meet possible contingencies. The Admiralty has been taking moderate supplies from Persia for some time past, and is satisfied that the oil will prove to be of good quality for naval purposes.

8. The advantages secured by the use of oil fuel in His Majesty's navy, based upon Admiralty experience, and the opinions of the Royal Commission on that subject have been stated to Parliament by the First Lord of the Admiralty in the debate on the 17th July, 1913, on the navy estimates of 1913-14, on the 2nd March, 1914, in the discussion of the supplementary navy estimates of that year, and on the 17th March, 1914, in introducing the navy estimates for 1914-15. Those statements also included particulars of the present policy of the Admiralty in regard to the extent of the use of oil fuel and the arrangements for its supply. (Extracts from those speeches are printed as an appendix to this paper for convenience of reference.)

9. In the statements referred to it was pointed out that according to present experience the superiority of oil fuel over coal is most marked in ships of a certain type, *e.g.*, light cruisers and destroyers, in which the use of oil gives decided advantages in design, first cost, economy of upkeep, and in personnel. Experience in the use of oil fuel in ships of the largest size will be gained in due course when the five battleships of the 1912-13 programme, which burn oil only, are commissioned. With the further engineering development of internal combustion engines it may be expected a greater economy in oil consumption will be realised. Seeing, however, that at present most of the larger fuel-consuming units of His Majesty's fleet still use coal, and will continue to do so in the immediate future, the latter fuel will continue to form the principal combustible in use in His Majesty's navy for some time to come. Oil fuel is, however, of very great importance, and the proportion that the amount consumed bears to the total quantity of fuel used is an increasing one. Experiments are being carried out by numerous investigators to arrive at the most economical method of extracting oil from shale and coal. It is hoped, therefore, that when the use of oil in His Majesty's service shall be so extended that it will form the major part of the fuel used, instead of the minor part as at present, the production and commercial utilisation of oil and other products of coal and shale will have reached such a position that the oil fuel so obtained will supplement natural petroleum to a greater extent than is at present the case. It would then be practicable to meet a portion of the increased demand from these sources.

10. The whole circumstances of the supply of oil fuel have been very carefully investigated by the Admiralty, with the valuable aid of the Royal Commission. The situation has been considered from the point of view both of the amounts of natural petroleum that may be reasonably expected to be obtainable and of the possibility of the increased quantities that may be available from the sources referred to in paragraph 9.

11. The quantity of oil fuel that is used by His Majesty's navy is indeed only a small proportion of the world's total production of petroleum oil, but it must be remembered that not all oil products are suitable for use in His Majesty's ships, nor is there as a rule at any given moment any large quantity of suitable oil immediately available on the market, and what there is is liable, particularly at times of political stress, to large fluctuation of price. There is also the possibility of restriction of supply, whether natural or artificial, to be guarded against, and therefore, in order to place the country in a position of security as regards the supply of oil fuel, it is necessary to provide that some considerable portion of the Admiralty's annual requirements shall come from a source which shall be as free as possible from these disturbing influences.

12. The policy of the Admiralty with regard to the provision of oil is to spread its contracts as much as possible over widely separated fields. Thus in time of war if some areas should be closed others will remain open. But while it is not desirable to draw all our supplies from one source, it is essential that the fields over

which His Majesty's Government will have control shall be so developed that in times of emergency they will be able to supply at short notice any deficiencies that may arise through failure of deliveries elsewhere. By taking over such control the Admiralty is only extending the policy which has been adopted with regard to other articles of prime necessity to the State in time of war, *e.g.*, ships and munitions of war, and it is only by assuming such control that the State can effectively ensure that supplies shall always be forthcoming in times of emergency, and that the prices in such cases shall not be artificially inflated by interested producers and marketing agencies. It must also be borne in mind that foreign navies are on the road to become large consumers of oil, and that in the course of time they will be entering the market for increased quantities, and competing still more keenly with His Majesty's Government for prompt supplies. This will probably have the effect of inflating prices or reducing available supplies, and for this reason alone it is necessary to make provision now to safeguard the position.

At the present time the production and distribution of petroleum oil is fairly well distributed among a number of Companies. There is, however, an evident tendency for the oilfields of the world and the marketing of their products to fall more and more under the control of a comparatively few large concerns. To a great extent this is probably unavoidable. The policy of amalgamation is founded on considerations of expediency similar to those which induce a large oil consumer to distribute orders as widely as possible, *viz.*, greater security of supply, in order that a possible shortage in one direction may be counterbalanced by abundance elsewhere.

13. A large consumer like the Admiralty, with the national interest of naval defence in its keeping, cannot, however, place itself in a position of dependence for vital supplies upon a few large Companies whose interests are necessarily cosmopolitan and financial, although the Admiralty may properly place a reasonable portion of its contracts in the hands of such organisations, admittedly efficient, and possessing great resources. It is important and essential in naval interests to secure that at least one large British Oil Company shall be maintained, having independent control of considerable supplies of natural petroleum, and bound to the Government by financial and contractual obligations. Such an arrangement can hardly fail to have its effect not merely on the supplies directly so obtained, but on the terms and conditions on which the whole of the Admiralty's requirements will be met, owing to the greater independence and bargaining power thus obtained.

14. The principal conditions which have to be fulfilled in order to obtain a satisfactory settlement of the fuel question are :—

- (a.) Oil of a quality suitable for use in His Majesty's ships.
- (b.) Security of supply.
- (c.) Reduction of liability to great fluctuations in price, and economy in average cost.
- (d.) Economy in transport, and regular employment for tank-vessels.
- (e.) Economy in storage.

The control over a large producing property which yields a quality of oil eminently suitable for use in His Majesty's ships, and which when fully developed will supply a considerable proportion of the requirements of the Admiralty goes far to satisfy (a) and (b). In addition a system has been adopted of placing forward contracts with reliable companies (including the Shale Oil Companies of Scotland) operating fields which are geographically widely separated. There will still remain a balance to be purchased according to the exigencies of the market, and in effecting such purchases all sources of supply will be kept in view. Supplies available from the United Kingdom, and other parts of the British dominions will certainly receive due consideration.

The realisation of (c) must follow from the fact that the Government will control a large portion of their regular supplies with the power of expansion in case of necessity. Similarly (d) and (e) will be greatly facilitated by the substitution of a regular source of supply under Government control for a system of contracts on the open market, which, in order to keep the average price within reasonable limits, entails buying large quantities when the market is favourable with the consequent heavy fluctuations in the demand for freight. It also reduces the necessity of maintaining more storage available than is necessary for the regular reserve, so as to provide accommodation for a sudden increase in quantity, owing to larger purchases on a favourable market.

15. With all the foregoing considerations in mind, the First Lord of the Admiralty stated to Parliament on the 17th July, 1913, that a necessary part of the ultimate policy of the Admiralty must be that the Government "should become the owners, or at any rate the controllers at the source, of at least a proportion of the natural oil which we require." The Royal Commission, whilst deprecating expenditure in unpromising cases, and advisedly making no attempt to estimate the relative weight of particular claims, expressed the general opinion that circumstances might require Government financial assistance to be rendered for the control of important sources of supply already fully tested.

16. The grounds on which His Majesty's Government arrived at their decision to enter into the Agreement with the Anglo-Persian Oil Company are purely naval, viz., the imperative need of direct control of a reasonable proportion of the supply of oil fuel required for naval purposes. There are obviously other questions involved besides that of finance and the security of finding sufficient oil, and these questions have received due consideration. The opinion expressed in paragraph 11 of Admiral Slade's report, viz., as to the excellent effect in the matter of local tranquillity and progress already produced by the enterprise of the Anglo-Persian Company, confirms what had been learned from other sources, and it may be expected that an extension of the activities of the Company will strengthen the effect already produced and indirectly aid in other branches of local industrial development.

17. There is ground for confident anticipation that the step which has been taken will be of great benefit to the navy, and that the exercise of foresight in this matter, after the fullest investigation into the many complex questions that have arisen, will ultimately prove to have contributed greatly to the security of important naval supplies and to a very large economy of expenditure in providing for a fuel which will without doubt become an absolute necessity in order to secure the full efficiency of His Majesty's naval service.

Admiralty, S.W.,
May 20, 1914.

EXTRACTS FROM SPEECHES OF THE FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY IN REGARD TO OIL FUEL.

(1) 17th July 1913. *In Debate in Committee of the House of Commons, on the Navy Estimates for 1913-14.*

I have on previous occasions referred to the advantage of using oil fuel in ships of war. There is no doubt that with otherwise similar warships the one that burns oil possesses a large excess of speed over that which burns only coal, and even exhibits its superiority in this respect over that which burns coal and oil. The radius of action of a ship of war, when using oil instead of coal, is increased, I am informed, by at least 40 per cent. for the same weight of fuel. Moreover, oil can be stowed in some places in a ship from which it would be quite impracticable to bring coal to the furnaces with the certainty of still further increasing the radius of action. Oil bunkers can be replenished with great rapidity and without interference with the fighting efficiency of the ship, and a few men suffice for the work. On the other hand, the operation of recoaling is, as everyone acquainted with the Navy knows, lengthy and laborious. It necessitates the exertions of the whole of the crew, with the result that the men are physically exhausted by the effort, and the ship is for a time rendered unfit to fight. The use of oil is also attended by the saving of a large amount of labour involved in coal trimming and stoking, as well as in the removal of ashes, clinkers, and soot when coal is burned. This enables a very large reduction of stokehold *personnel* to be made.

Oil gives the very great advantage, as compared with coal, of admitting of a rapid increase of steam production, and enables variations of steam pressure due to the necessity for cleaning coal-burning furnaces to be eliminated. In a coal-burning ship, after part of the coal has been used, the ship cannot attain her full power without throwing a great strain upon the personnel, who have to be brought from other stations to trim the coal from remote or inconveniently placed bunkers; whereas oil is delivered to the furnaces with continuous facility until the whole has been consumed. The use of oil as fuel instead of coal makes it possible in every type of war vessel to produce a ship which will fulfil given conditions of speed and armament upon lesser dimensions, and consequently at smaller cost, than could be done with coal. But further than this, the great advantages which liquid fuel presents in solving the problem of our naval design makes it possible to obtain vessels of very high speed compared with the dimensions—a speed compared with other dimensions which could never be attained if coal remained the only fuel. All these advantages attendant upon the use of oil can be reaped by every other nation that chooses to employ it, but, as I explained last March, there is one great special advantage which oil confers upon the British Fleet which would not be enjoyed by any weaker naval power—I mean the special advantage to the strongest navy of not being forced to leave its fighting position in order to refuel. It may be assumed that the weaker navy will bide its opportunity in port, while the stronger must keep the seas continuously. Recoaling, therefore, imposes a continued strain on the stronger fleet without any corresponding deduction from the weaker. Oil which can be fed so easily from one vessel to another would, therefore, add an appreciable percentage to the relative fighting strength of the British Navy, without any corresponding discounts in other directions. So much for the general advantages of oil fuel, which I think it will be admitted are considerable.

* * * * *

The light-armoured cruisers simply could not be constructed on a coal-burning basis; they would either have to be greatly increased in length and consequently in displacement, in which case they would become too expensive craft for the numbers and service required, or else they would lose from three to four knots in speed, and consequently be quite unfit for the tactical duties for which they were designed. Without the use of oil, and oil only, these excellent types would have been permanently denied us. Oil has been used for some time for the new flotillas of torpedo-boat destroyers. The increased speed of these vessels renders them all the more dependent upon its use. A coal-burning destroyer does not bear any

comparison in speed or endurance with an oil-burner of similar size and cost. In this branch of construction cost and size are the limiting factors. The destroyers can scarcely advance beyond their present dimensions without merging into cruisers and becoming too expensive for the work they have to do.

* * * * *

Our stake in oil-burning ships is becoming so important that we must have the certainty of being able to buy a steady supply of oil at a steady price. Not to take proper steps in time would mean we should gradually but rapidly get into the position of being forced purchasers. We should be grossly overcharged. It does not mean we should not get the oil. At a certain price it would pay nobody else but us to buy it. It does not mean we should not get the oil. Let that be dismissed from everyone's mind. It would mean, however, that we should be made to pay an excessive price for it.

I have only unfolded the general outline of the problem to the Committee. What is our policy towards it? It is a twofold policy. There is an ultimate policy and there is an interim policy. Our ultimate policy is that the Admiralty should become the independent owner and producer of its own supplies of liquid fuel, first, by building up an oil reserve in this country sufficient to make us safe in war and able to override price fluctuations in peace; secondly, by acquiring the power to deal in crude oils as they come cheaply into the market. When a new field is developed, and those who are producing it have exhausted their original capital and have not yet opened up new lines of consumption and customers, there are opportunities of purchasing large quantities of oil, if the means of storage and transport are available, at prices which bear no relation to what that same oil will afterwards be sold at when the field is firmly established, and when its customers and markets are clearly marked out. This second aspect of our ultimate policy involves the Admiralty being able to retort, refine, top—top means driving lighter products off by evaporation—or distil crude oil of various kinds until it reaches the quality required for naval use. This again leads us into having to dispose of the surplus products—another great problem—but I do not myself see any reason why we should shrink, if necessary, from entering this field of State enterprise. We are already making our own cordite, which is a most complex and difficult operation. We already keep our great system of the dockyards in full activity in order to provide a check on private constructors, and I see no reason, nor do my advisers, why we should shrink from making this further extension of the vast and various businesses of the Admiralty. The third aspect of the ultimate policy is that we must become the owners, or at any rate, the controllers at the source of at least a proportion of the supply of natural oil which we require. On all these lines we are advancing rapidly and we are moving towards that position of independence outside the oil market which it is our ultimate policy to secure, which we are quite strong enough with the power of this country to secure against any combination, and which must be secured before any fundamental change is made in the main coal-burning basis of the fleet.

I come to the interim policy which is required for the building up of the oil-fuel reserves and for the period while the complicated, administrative, scientific, and financial questions involved in the ultimate policy are being settled. The interim policy consists in making at once a series of forward contracts for about five years, with a certain power of renewal, to secure a regular and an adequate supply during this immediately future period at reasonable and steady prices. It is the need of concluding promptly this series of forward contracts now being prepared which is the principal and immediate reason which leads me to open this subject so fully to the Committee to-day. I have one difficulty in presenting my case satisfactorily to the Committee, and that is that this subject is highly confidential. These oil contracts are well within the ordinary competence of the Admiralty to settle subject to Treasury control. It has never been the practice of the Admiralty to publish the terms of its contracts or even the names of its contractors for important munitions of war, such as oil must be regarded. Parliament has always approved that course being followed, and it never was more necessary that this rule should be adopted and observed than in regard to oil contracts. When you are carrying through a series of complex and delicate negotiations which may powerfully affect a market limited and controlled like the oil market, or when you are trying to hold a balance between various oil combinations, and preserve and develop independent sources of supply you do not exactly want to go and tell everybody what you are doing beforehand. Our power, such as it is, to make good and thrifty contracts for the public depends very largely on our being preserved by the House in

our right of confidential negotiations. But quite apart from commercial reasons, which, though important, are not comparable in importance to the other aspects of the subject, the quantities of oil needed for the fleet, the amount kept stored in reserve, the amount consumed by various vessels under various conditions—all these facts are as secret in a military sense as the supply and reserve of ammunition or torpedoes. I cannot, therefore, attempt to discuss in public the details of these contracts. I cannot give an exhaustive list of the contracting firms nor state the quantities of oil we derive from each, nor the exact duration of the contract, nor the price, nor the other conditions.

I can, however, state the principle on which we are proceeding. The future of the oil market is so uncertain, the subject is so specialised, and present prices are so unfavourable, that a balance has to be struck on the one hand between the relative advantages and disadvantages of making forward contracts at fixed prices and of providing for rapid periodical revisions of price on the other hand. This has been kept carefully in view. In framing the tableau, if I may use such an expression, of the contracts which have now been prepared, three governing principles have been observed: First, a wide geographical distribution, to guard against local failure of supplies and to avoid undue reliance on any particular source, so as to preserve as much security and as much expansive power or elasticity in regard to each source as possible; secondly, to keep alive independent competitive sources of supply, so as to safeguard the Admiralty from becoming dependent on any single combination; and, thirdly, to draw our oil supply, so far as possible, from sources under British control or British influence, and along those sea or ocean routes which the Navy can most easily and most surely protect. Let the Committee observe that it is not a case of choosing between alternatives—it is not a case of choosing this course against that. On no one quality, on no one process, on no one country, on no one company, on no one route, and on no one oil field must we be dependent. Safety and certainty in oil lie in variety, and in variety alone.

* * * * *

(2) *2nd March 1914. In debate in Committee of the House of Commons on the Supplementary Navy Estimate for 1913-14.*

It was suggested last year that the policy which the Admiralty had followed during my tenure in regard to oil-burning ships was contrary to the recommendations of the Royal Commission. Both the series of reports and the minutes of evidence of that Commission, except perhaps the final report which I am now considering, are strictly confidential for military reasons, and also because the bulk of the evidence given was given on the distinct understanding that secrecy would be observed. I have, however, received from the chairman of the Commission, Lord Fisher, the following statement, which has been agreed upon unanimously by the whole Commission. That Commission, I must remind the Committee, contains some of the most distinguished men of this country, and certainly the highest authority that could be convened in this country, to consider questions connected with oil supplies. This is what Lord Fisher writes, and I will lay the document from which I take this extract on the table:—

“I have obtained the authority of my colleagues to write this memorandum in order that the following summary of the unanimous views of the Commissioners may be available for such use as you think fit to make of it.

(1) The advantages to be derived from the use of oil fuel and the imperative necessity for such use if the Fleet is to be maintained in a condition of the highest attainable efficiency are conclusively established by the Commission's first interim report.

(2) The Commissioners are of opinion that the oil resources of the world are amply adequate to meet the requirements of the Fleet if suitable measures are taken to secure supplies.

(3) Large reserves should be accumulated in this country, and with certain other storage centres on British territory, the extent of these reserves should bear a prescribed relation to the consumption under peace requirements, and this will give a definite basis.”

In asking the House to approve the action of the Government in spending 500,000*l.* on increasing the oil reserves of the moment—or, rather, ante-dating our accumulation of a certain standard of reserves—I think I can claim to prove that we have acted throughout on the highest expert authority; that we have taken in good time all the

measures which are necessary to assure what is undoubtedly a very difficult and complex operation.

(3) 17th March 1914. *In Committee of the House of Commons on the Navy Estimates for 1914-15.*

The advantages of oil were very fully explained by me to the House towards the end of last session, but I have the authority of the Chairman of the Royal Commission on Fuel and Engines to state that the evidence taken by the Commissioners shows that the adoption of oil and oil engines will increase very greatly the advantages attaching to the use of oil as a substitute for coal in steam raising. I am dealing now with the burning of oil under the boilers in the ordinary way, but, of course, the advantages are greater in the case of oil engines. The Chairman of the Royal Commission goes on to state the advantages. He says:—

“There is no doubt that, with otherwise similar warships, the one that burns only oil possesses a large excess of speed over that which burns only coal, and even exhibits superiority in this respect over that which burns coal and oil.

The radius of action, when using oil in place of coal, is increased at least 40 per cent. for the same weight of fuel.

The use of oil enables a fleet to re-fuel at sea with great facility. With coal this is impracticable, except under very favourable weather conditions.

The special advantage to the British Fleet of not being forced to leave its fighting position in order to re-fuel need not be enlarged upon. The strength of the British Fleet is thereby increased by at least 25 per cent. (while not adding that percentage of strength to the enemy's fleet), as so large a proportion of the coal-burning ships have to be absent re-fuelling. This also leads to a large unnecessary expenditure of fuel going to and returning from the coaling base, and additional wear and tear of machinery.

Oil bunkers can be replenished with great rapidity and without interfering with the fighting efficiency of the ship, and a few men suffice for the work. On the other hand the operation of coaling is lengthy and laborious, necessitating the exertions of the whole of the crew; with the result that the men are physically exhausted by the operation and the ship is rendered for a time unfit to fight. The use of oil is also attended by the saving of the large amount of labour involved in coal-trimming and stoking, as well as in the removal of ashes, clinkers, and soot when coal is burned, and by a reduction in the stokehold of some 55 per cent.

Oil gives the great advantage, as compared with coal, of admitting a very rapid increase of steam production and of eliminating variations of steam pressure due to the necessity for the cleaning of coal-burning furnaces.

In a coal-burning ship, after part of the coal has been used, the ship cannot attain her full power without taking men from the guns to trim the coal, whereas the oil is delivered to the furnaces with continuous facility until the whole has been consumed; moreover, oil can be stowed in some spare spaces in a ship from which it would be quite impracticable to bring coal to the furnaces, with the certainty of still further increasing radius of action.

The use of oil fuel instead of coal makes it possible in every type of war vessel to produce a ship which will fulfil given conditions of speed, armament, &c., on lesser dimensions and at smaller cost. Further than this, the great advantages which liquid fuel presents in the problem of naval design make it possible to obtain vessels of very high speed in relation to their dimensions, which would be wholly impracticable if coal were retained as the sole fuel.”

Those are some of the reasons which have been furnished to me by the Chairman of the Royal Commission, and which he informs me are assented to unanimously by the whole of the Commission. There is one other which I will add which has been brought into prominence by the manœuvres this year. The great dangers to which ships of war will be subjected from submarines will not be in the open sea, but when they are returning to their harbour for fuel. They may be waited for by submarines when coming in or going out of their harbour and suffer fatal injury. The coal ships will have to go to fixed stations and to regular harbours to coal, but oil-burning battleships, of which we have only five at present, will be able to fuel at sea in many cases, and in other cases to fuel behind any shelter without ever going to any fixed

point. Consequently, these vital units on which such enormous sums of money have been spent will enjoy comparative immunity from this great and new danger, to which all large vessels are being increasingly subjected. I also pointed out to the House that the light cruisers and the fast battleships of the 1912 programme were built with special reference to our war needs and tactical requirements, and that we could not have built ships to answer the requisite needs if we had adhered to coal and had not been prepared to take the step of adopting oil only. The immense burden of building up the oil reserve out of income has been borne, and it has fallen on my shoulders to bear that burden. Oil in great quantities has been purchased and is in this country, and large quantities will reach us during the period covered by the new Estimates. Let me repeat that oil is a marketable, commercial asset, and it is an abuse of language to call it expenditure or consumption in the ordinary sense of those words.

* * * * *

There is no difficulty in obtaining oil, none whatever; the difficulty is to get it at a good price, and we must look to sources which are independent of existing combinations, and also to the development of the home production of oil, both from shale and, later on, as we believe it will be possible, from coal. When internal combustion becomes a realised fact—of course, it has lagged on the road in the last two years, but when it becomes a realised fact—all the advantages which have been described with regard to oil will be very greatly increased, and every ton of oil will do three or four times as much work as is now possible. Meanwhile, the principle on which we are proceeding is this: Oil will be used as the sole fuel for small craft and for light cruisers of the "Arethusa" type, and for capital ships of exceptional speed. For all the rest, and for the line of battle, coal will continue to remain the motive power.

* * * * *

An Agreement made the twentieth day of May 1914
 Between THE LORDS COMMISSIONERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S
 TREASURY (hereinafter referred to as "the Treasury") by JOHN
 WILLIAM GULLAND M.P. and HENRY WEBB M.P. two of the said
 Lords Commissioners of the first part THE COMMISSIONERS FOR
 EXECUTING THE OFFICE OF LORD HIGH ADMIRAL OF THE
 UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND (hereinafter
 referred to as "the Admiralty") of the second part and THE ANGLO-
 PERSIAN OIL COMPANY LIMITED a Company having its registered
 office at Winchester House Old Broad Street in the City of London (hereinafter
 referred to as "the Company") of the third part.

WHEREAS the Company has an authorised share Capital of £2,000,000 divided into (1) 1,000,000 Ordinary Shares of £1 each all of which have been issued and are fully paid up and (2) 1,000,000 Participating Preference Shares of £1 each of which 999,000 have been issued and are fully paid up.

AND WHEREAS the Company has issued £600,000 First Debenture Stock secured by a Trust Deed dated the 25th day of May 1909 and made between the Company of the one part and the Duke of Sutherland and the Earl of Lichfield of the other part.

AND WHEREAS the Company is interested in and is working various petroleum or oil bearing lands in Persia and is possessed of a refinery at Abadan Island and various pipe lines and other plant.

AND WHEREAS the oil products which the Company produces include oil fuel.

AND WHEREAS the Company is desirous of obtaining further Capital for the development of its undertaking and more particularly in order that it may be enabled adequately to perform any Agreement which it may enter into with the Admiralty for the supply of oil fuel to the Admiralty.

AND WHEREAS the Company has proposed to the Treasury that such further Capital shall be provided by the Treasury upon the terms and subject to the conditions herein contained and the Treasury are willing to accede to such proposal.

NOW IT IS HEREBY AGREED between the parties hereto as follows :—

1. This Agreement is conditional upon :—

- (a.) The Company's Ordinary Share Capital being increased as hereinafter mentioned.
- (b.) The Company's Articles of Association being altered as hereinafter provided.
- (c.) The necessary monies for enabling the Treasury to carry out the provisions of Clause 3 hereof being duly provided by Parliament.
- (d.) An Agreement satisfactory to the Admiralty being entered into between the Company and the Admiralty for the supply of oil fuel by the Company to the Admiralty.

2. The Company shall forthwith obtain the necessary powers to increase its Ordinary Share Capital by the issue of 2,000,000 additional Ordinary Shares of £1 each ranking in all respects *pari passu* with the 1,000,000 Ordinary Shares already issued.

3. The Treasury shall upon the conditions mentioned in clause 1 hereof being duly fulfilled subscribe at par for 2,000,000 Ordinary Shares of the Company of £1 each and shall also subscribe at par for the 1,000 Preference Shares of the Company of £1 each which still remain unissued. The monies to be paid in respect of the said respective Shares shall be payable as follows :—

- (1.) One-fourth on the date of the application for the same
- (2.) The remaining three-fourths as and when required by the Company (but subject always to not less than one calendar month's notice in writing of such requirement being given by the Company to the Treasury).

The said Shares shall be allotted to such persons as shall be appointed by the Treasury in such amounts as shall be directed by the instrument of appointment. The respective allottees shall upon payment in respect of the Shares allotted to them respectively of the monies mentioned under Heading (1) of this Clause be forthwith registered as the holders of such Shares and shall thereupon be entitled to full voting powers in respect thereof.

4. For the purpose of conferring on the Treasury the right of being at all times represented by two *ex officio* Directors on the Board of Directors of the Company and of defining the powers of such *ex officio* Directors and of making provision for other matters which it is hereby agreed shall be provided for the Articles of Association of the Company shall forthwith be altered by Special Resolution in the terms set forth in the Schedule hereto.

5. The Company shall in regard to the First Exploitation Company Limited the Bakhtiari Oil Company Limited and any other subsidiary Company in which the Company (party hereto) shall have a sufficient controlling interest (each of which Companies is hereinafter called a subsidiary Company) forthwith

- (a.) Procure the appointment on the Board of each subsidiary Company of two *ex officio* Directors to represent the Treasury and to have the same powers and to be subject to the same provisions as to appointment tenure of office and otherwise as will be by the Articles of Association of the Company (party hereto) when altered in accordance with the Special Resolution in the preceding Clause mentioned be conferred on and made applicable to the *ex officio* Directors of the Company (party hereto).
- (b.) Procure such alterations to be made in the Articles of Association of each subsidiary Company as may be required for enabling such appointment powers and provisions to be respectively effected conferred and made applicable.
- (c.) Procure that the Treasury and the Admiralty shall respectively have such other rights powers and privileges in regard to each subsidiary Company as it is by Clause 7 hereof agreed that the Treasury and the Admiralty shall respectively have in regard to the Company (party hereto).

6. The Company shall not enter into or be party to any Trust or Combine but shall always be and remain an independent British Company.

7. The Treasury and the Admiralty shall respectively be at liberty from time to time to appoint such person or persons as the Appointing Department (which expression shall mean the Department—that is to say the Treasury or the Admiralty as the case may be—making the appointment) may think proper with such powers as the Appointing Department may consider necessary or expedient for the purpose of visiting and inspecting and of reporting to the Appointing Department upon the undertaking wells and works of the Company (including any wells or works which may be for the time being under construction) and the plant machinery and stores belonging thereto and/or for the purpose of investigating the accounts and affairs of the Company whether in the United Kingdom or in Persia and the Company shall afford every person so appointed all facilities (including such facilities as are given to the Accountants or Auditors of the Company) for the purpose of enabling him to perform the duties entrusted to him by the Appointing Department. Provided always that the powers and privileges which are by this Clause given to the Treasury and the Admiralty respectively are independent powers and privileges and are also independent of such powers as may from time to time be vested in or exercisable by the *ex officio*

Directors of the Company or by the persons for the time being holding Shares as nominees of the Treasury or by any Department of His Majesty's Government through the medium of such last mentioned persons.

8. The Treasury shall as and when required by the Company (but subject always to not less than one calendar month's notice in writing of such requirement being given by the Company to the Treasury) take up at par Debenture Stock of the Company not exceeding in the aggregate the sum of £199,000 Debenture Stock which shall be issued to such nominee or nominees of the Treasury as the Treasury shall appoint. Such stock shall be part of and rank *pari passu* with the First Debenture Stock secured by the said Trust Deed of the 25th day of May 1909 and the Company shall from time to time do all such acts and things as may be necessary for the purpose of creating and issuing the same. Save as aforesaid no Debentures or Debenture Stock shall without the consent in writing of the Treasury be created or issued by the Company to rank *pari passu* with the First Debenture Stock secured by the said Trust Deed.

9. The Company (if required by the Treasury by notice in writing given to the Company not later than the 31st day of January 1920) shall on the 31st day of December 1920 redeem the whole of the present issue of £600,000 First Debenture Stock in accordance with the liberty in that behalf which is conferred on the Company under or by virtue of the said Trust Deed of the 25th day of May 1909 and shall reissue such stock when so redeemed to the nominees of the Treasury at the redemption price of £105 per cent. and shall do all such acts and things as may be necessary for the above purposes.

10. In view of the provisions contained in the House of Commons (Disqualification) Acts 1782 and 1801 no member of the House of Commons shall be admitted to any share or part of this Agreement or to any benefit to arise therefrom.

11. The Company shall at all times carry on its business in a proper manner and shall comply with the terms of any concession of lands or rights in Persia which it may hold or in which it may be interested and shall do all such acts and things as may from time to time be necessary to preserve each such concession or to prevent the same from being forfeited and shall not do or suffer any act or thing or commit any default which may lead to a forfeiture of any such concession or which may render the security constituted by the said Trust Deed of the 25th day of May 1909 enforceable or which may give rise to any right on the part of the trustees of such deed to take possession or appoint a Receiver of the Company's undertaking or property or any part thereof.

12. The Company shall have at all times its registered and head office in England.

13. So soon as the Capital of the Company shall have been increased as aforesaid and the Special Resolution hereinbefore referred to shall have been confirmed the Company shall forthwith execute and do all such instruments acts and things as may be necessary or proper for giving full effect to this Agreement and in particular if necessary or proper or if required so to do by the Treasury or the Admiralty shall cause the Seal of the Company to be reaffixed hereto or to be affixed to a supplementary document confirming this Agreement.

14. The Schedule to this Agreement shall be deemed to be part of this Agreement in all respects as if the same had been incorporated therein.

IN WITNESS whereof the said JOHN WILLIAM GULLAND M.P. and HENRY WEBB M.P. two of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury have hereunto set their hands and seals the Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland have hereunto set their hands and seals and the Company has hereunto caused its Common Seal to be affixed the day and the year first above written.

SCHEDULE.

Special Resolution to be passed by the Company—

That the Articles of Association be altered as follows :—

At the end of Article 2, add the following definitions :—

- (F.) "The Treasury" shall mean the Lords Commissioners for the time being of His Majesty's Treasury.
- (G.) "The Admiralty" shall mean the Commissioners for the time being for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.
- (H.) "His Majesty's Government" shall include the Treasury and the Admiralty, and every other Department of His Majesty's Government, and any reference to "His Majesty's Government" shall unless otherwise specifically provided be deemed to be a reference to such Department of His Majesty's Government as may be concerned.
- (I.) "A Government share" shall mean any share which the Treasury shall notify in writing to the Company is the property of His Majesty's Government.
- (J.) "Director" shall mean and include both an ordinary Director and an *ex officio* Director.
- (K.) "An Ordinary Director" shall mean a Director other than an *ex officio* Director.
- (L.) "An *ex officio* Director" shall mean a Director appointed by the Treasury under Article 81 A hereof.

After Article 4, add the following new Articles :—

4 A. Except as hereinafter specifically provided, all acts and notices which under or by virtue of these Articles may be done or given by the Treasury or by the Admiralty, may, as to the Treasury, be done or given by a Secretary to the Treasury, and may, as to the Admiralty, be done or given by a Secretary to the Admiralty.

4 B. The Company shall at all times have its Head Office in England.

After "not," in first line of Article 11, insert :—

"except as herein mentioned"

Before "The," in first line of Article 22, insert :—

"Subject to the provisions of Article 23 A hereof"

After "shares," in second line of Article 23, insert :—

"(not being Government shares)"

After Article 23, add the following new Article :—

23 A. The Treasury may from time to time by instrument in writing under the hands of two of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, appoint any person or persons to be the holder or holders of any Government shares, and the Board shall, immediately upon receiving notice of such appointment, register the person or persons so appointed as the holder or holders of the shares specified in the appointment, and such person or persons when registered as the holder or holders of any Government shares shall, subject to any provisions to the contrary in these Articles contained, have such rights and privileges in respect of such shares as are by these Articles conferred upon members of the Company. Save as aforesaid no instrument of transfer shall be required for the transfer of a Government share; and in no case shall a Government share be transferred without the consent in writing of two of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury.

After "shall," in third line of Article 25, insert :—

"subject to the provisions of Article 23 A hereof"

Before "Any," in first line of Article 26, insert :—

"Subject to the provisions of Article 23 A hereof"

After "shall," in first line of Article 28, insert :—

"except in regard to Government shares"

After "share," in second line of Article 29, insert :—

"not being a Government share"

After "may," in first line of Article 34, insert :—

"(but, so far as regards any Government share, only with the consent in writing of two of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury)"

After the first word "shares," in third line of Article 36, insert :—

"not being Government shares"

At end of Article 47 add :—

, Provided always that the provisions herein contained in regard to Government shares shall so far as applicable apply to the stock into which such last-mentioned shares shall have been converted.

At end of Article 54 add :—

, Provided always that a General Meeting shall only be held at some place in England.

After "Board," in first line of Article 56, insert :—

"and also an *ex officio* Director"

After "they," in first line of Article 56, insert :—

"respectively"

After "and," in second line of Article 56, delete "they" and insert :—

"the Board"

After "holder," in fifth line of Article 74, insert :—

"(not being a Government share)"

After "share," in ninth line of Article 74, insert :—

"(not being a Government share)"

At end of Article 76 add :—

, Provided that this Article is not to apply to a proxy appointed by any member who holds shares as the Nominee of His Majesty's Government.

In the second line of Article 81 delete "nine" and insert :—

"eleven."

After Article 81 add the following new Articles :—

81 A. The Treasury shall have the right to be at all times represented on the Board of Directors of the Company by two Directors, who shall be called *ex officio* Directors, and shall be appointed from time to time by the Treasury. An *ex officio* Director shall hold office during the pleasure of and may from time to time be removed by the Treasury. Save as aforesaid, an *ex officio* Director shall not be removable. Every instrument appointing or removing an *ex officio* Director shall be under the hands of two of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury.

81 B. Every Director must be a British subject.

After "of," in third line of Article 82, insert :—

"ordinary."

After "additional," in fourth line of Article 82, insert :—

"ordinary."

After "office," in sixth line of Article 82, delete ";" and insert ".". Delete remainder of Article.

After "as," in second line of Article 84, delete "a" and insert :—
"an ordinary"

After "vacancy," in third line of Article 84, insert :—
"among the ordinary Directors"

After "retiring," in first line of Article 85, insert :—
"ordinary"

Article 85, second line, delete first word "a" and insert :—
"an ordinary"

After "or," in second line of Article 85, delete "a" and insert :—
"an ordinary"

After the first word "of," in first line of Article 87, delete "a" and insert :—
"an ordinary"

At end of Article 87 add :—

No qualification shall be necessary in the case of an *ex officio* Director.

At end of Article 91 add the following :—

(L.) Enter into any agreement with his Majesty's Government in regard to such matters as may be deemed expedient, including the supply of oil fuel to the Admiralty, upon such terms and subject to such provisions as may be determined upon, and the provision of capital by the Treasury by taking up, in the names of Nominees, Debenture Stock of and/or shares in the capital of the Company; and, in particular, execute and do all such instruments, acts, and things as may be necessary or proper for giving full effect to an Agreement dated the twentieth day of May, 1914, and made between the Treasury of the first part, the Admiralty of the second part, and the Company of the third part (whereby the Treasury have agreed to provide the Company with further capital upon the terms and subject to the provisions therein appearing), and, if necessary, or proper, or if required so to do by the Treasury or the Admiralty, cause the seal of the Company to be reaffixed thereto or to be affixed to a supplementary document confirming the same.

After Article 91 add the following new Article :—

91 A. An *ex officio* Director shall have the right of negating any resolution which may be proposed at any meeting of the Board or of any Committee of the Directors, provided always that in the event of the aforesaid right being exercised it shall be open to the other Directors, or a majority of them, to submit the proposed resolution to His Majesty's Government, who shall thereupon, after full consideration, determine in writing whether the same ought to be given effect to or not; and if His Majesty's Government shall determine that the proposed resolution ought to be given effect to, it shall be deemed to have been duly passed at the meeting at which it was proposed. For the purpose of this Article, His Majesty's Government shall mean the Treasury and the Admiralty acting jointly; and notice of any submission hereunder to His Majesty's Government shall be given both to the Treasury and the Admiralty.

At end of Article 92 add :—

No meeting of the Board or of any Committee of the Directors shall, without the consent in writing of the *ex officio* Directors, be held outside England.

After "Chairman," in first line of Article 93, insert :—
"or an *ex officio* Director"

After "two," in first line of Article 93, insert :—

"ordinary"

After "shall," in first line of Article 94, insert :—

"subject to the provisions of Article 91 A hereof"

After "such," in third line of Article 96, delete :—

"member or"

After "delegated," in fourth line of Article 96, insert :—

"(but subject to the provisions of Article 91 A hereof)"

At end of Article 96 add :—

The *ex officio* Directors shall always be members of any such Committee.

In second line of Article 97, delete :—

"consisting of two or more members"

After "of," in first line of Article 100, insert :—

"an ordinary"

After "reappointed," in fifth line of Article 100 (c), delete "a" and insert :—

"an ordinary"

At end of Article 101 add :—

Provided always that an *ex officio* Director shall, notwithstanding anything herein contained, be entitled to vote as a Director in respect of any contract or arrangement in which His Majesty's Government may be interested whether as vendors or purchasers or otherwise or to or in which he may in any manner be a party or be interested on behalf of or as representing His Majesty's Government.

After "of the," in third line of Article 102, insert :—

"ordinary"

After "of," in seventh line of Article 102, insert :—

"ordinary"

After "an," in first line of Article 107, delete "extraordinary" and insert :—

"ordinary"

After "any," in second line of Article 107, insert :—

"ordinary"

After "places," in second line of Article 111, insert :—

"in Great Britain"

After "to the," in sixth line of Article 113, insert :—

"Treasury, to the Admiralty, to the"

At end of Article 121 add :—

Provided that this Article is not to apply to any dividends or interest payable in respect of Government shares which dividends or interest are to be satisfied in full.

At end of Article 122 add :—

Provided always that any dividend or interest payable in respect of any Government share shall belong to His Majesty's Government.

After "share," in second line of Article 123, insert :—

"not being a Government share"

After "shares," in second line of Article 125, insert :—

"other than Government shares"

At end of Article 125 add :—

Any dividend bonus or interest payable in cash in respect of Government shares shall be paid in such manner as the Treasury shall from time to time direct.

At the end of Article 126 add :—

A duplicate of any notice served on the holder of Government shares shall also be forwarded to the Treasury and to the Admiralty.

Signed Sealed and Delivered by

JOHN WILLIAM GULLAND, M.P.,

(Sd.) JOHN W. GULLAND.

L.S.

and

HENRY WEBB, M.P.,

(Sd.) HENRY WEBB.

L.S.

two of the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury in the presence of

(Sd.) A. W. BROWN,

*Treasury, S.W.,
Solicitor.*

Signed Sealed and Delivered by

The RT. HON. WINSTON LEONARD SPENCER-CHURCHILL, M.P.,

(Sd.) WINSTON S. CHURCHILL.

L.S.

and

ADMIRAL H.S.H. PRINCE LOUIS ALEXANDER OF BATTENBERG, G.C.B., G.C.V.O., K.C.M.G., A. D. C.,

(Sd.) LOUIS BATTENBERG.

L.S.

being two of the Commissioners for executing the Office of Lord High Admiral of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in the presence of

(Sd.) J. E. MASTERTON SMITH,
*Assistant Principal Clerk,
Admiralty.*

The Common Seal of The Anglo-Persian Oil Company (Limited) was hereto affixed in the presence of

(Sd.) C. W. WALLACE, *Vice-Chairman*

(Sd.) JOHN T. CARGILL, *Director.*

(Sd.) C. GREENWAY, *Managing Director.*

(Sd.) F. MACINDOE, *Secretary.*

SEAL
OF THE
ANGLO-PERSIAN
OIL COMPANY
(LIMITED).

ADMIRALTY COMMISSION ON THE PERSIAN OILFIELDS.

Following on negotiations between the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Limited, and the Admiralty, concerning a large forward contract for fuel oil, a Commission was sent to report upon the resources of the Company. The Commission was composed as follows:—

REAR ADMIRAL SIR EDMOND J. W. SLADE, K.C.I.E., K.C.V.O. (Chairman).

PROFESSOR JOHN CADMAN, D.Sc., F.G.S., M.Inst. C.E. (Professor of Mining in the University of Birmingham, and Petroleum Adviser to the Colonial Office).

E. R. BLUNDSTONE, Esq., B.A., F.C.S. (Geologist).

J. C. CLARKE, Esq., Admiralty (Secretary).

E. H. PASCOE, Esq., M.A., D.Sc., F.G.S. of the Geological Survey of India, having been deputed by the Government of India to assist the Commission, joined them on their arrival in Persia.

The Commission arrived at Mohammerah on 23rd October 1913, and returned to England on 25th January 1914. Mr. Blundstone unfortunately fell ill on 25th November, after the Commission had visited the Company's refinery, the producing field and some other areas, and he was unable to take part in the work of the Commission after this date. He did not visit Kishm and therefore expresses no opinion as to its petroliferous prospects (*vide infra* paras. 20 and 25).

FINAL REPORT.

1. In our Interim Reports we have dealt in detail with the Maidan-i-Naphtun Oilfield now being worked by the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Limited, and with the localities which we examined along the shores of the Persian Gulf. In this report we propose to review the evidence that we have collected, and to re-state the conclusions arrived at, so that they may be available for consideration in a concise form.

2. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Limited, was formed in 1909, with the object of working a concession obtained from the Persian Government in 1901 by Mr. W. K. D'Arcy, which runs for 60 years from the 28th of May 1901, and gives the exclusive right to drill for, produce, pipe, and carry away oil and petroleum products throughout the Persian Empire, except in the provinces of Azerbadjan, Ghilan, Mazendaran, Asdrabad and Khorassan. The Company's capital consists of 1,000,000*l.* Fully Paid Ordinary Shares (all issued) and 1,000,000*l.* Cumulative 6 per cent. Participating Preference Shares,—of which 900,000*l.* have been issued to date. It is empowered to create Debenture Stock to the extent of half the Share Capital of the Company. At the present time 600,000*l.* have been issued.

3. The late Lord Strathcona was Chairman of the Company from its formation until his death, and all the directors are British subjects. The Burmah Oil Company—which is entirely under British control—is largely interested in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, holding, as it does, the great bulk of the Ordinary Shares, and for several years it has guaranteed the interest on the Preference Shares.

4. Before the formation of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company preliminary examination and testing were necessary, and in order to carry out this work, and to comply with the terms of the Concession, a company known as the First Exploitation Company, Limited, was formed in 1903, with a capital of 600,000*l.* of which 544,000*l.* have been issued to date. The Concession provided for the allotment to the Persian Government of 20,000*l.* Fully Paid Shares in this Company, as well as for a payment of 20,000*l.* in cash.

5. On the inception of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, in 1909, the actual holding of the First Exploitation Company was limited to one square mile in the Maidan-i-Naphtun field, which is situated in territory belonging to the Bakhtiari Khans. In accordance with the terms of a separate agreement, the latter receive 3 per cent. of the shares in any Company formed to work oil in their country, and in order to facilitate the working of the agreement, it was decided to introduce a second subsidiary Company, known as the Bakhtiari Oil Company (Limited), with a capital of 400,000*l.*, to work the remainder of the oil bearing lands in the Bakhtiari country other than the square mile allotted to the First Exploitation Company.

6. All the shares in these two Companies not held in Persia are the property of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, the respective holdings being as follows:—

First Exploitation Company:—	£	
Anglo-Persian Company	-	478,460 = 87·95 per cent.
Persian Shareholders	-	65,540 = 12·05 „
Bakhtiari Company:—		
Anglo-Persian Company	-	388,000 = 97·00 „
Persian Shareholders	-	12,000 = 3·00 „

7. A royalty of 16 per cent. of the net yearly profits is payable to the Persian Government.

8. While the Subsidiary Companies are entirely under the control of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, it will be seen that the Persian Government and the Bakhtiari tribes are considerably interested in their prosperity. This is an important factor both in ensuring amicable relations between the Company, the Government, and the tribes, and in protecting the Company's undertakings from disturbance, a point of no little importance in view of their isolated positions in a somewhat disturbed country.

9. The Company's Concession covers an area of some 500,000 square miles, and only a very small portion has so far been examined. Oil has been found in quantity at Maidan-i-Naphtun and has also been proved at Kasr-i-Shirin, whilst surface indications of petroleum have been observed at White Oil Springs, Kishm, Daliki, Ahmadi, Rudan, Kuh Champa, and numerous other places. The places mentioned are shown on the accompanying topographical map.

10. The Company's production is at present obtained entirely from the Maidan-i-Naphtun area, lying 140 miles N.N.E. of Mohammerah, which is situated at the junction of the Shatt-al-Arab and Karun Rivers. From Maidan-i-Naphtun the oil has to be conveyed 150 miles by pipe line to the refinery at Abadan, and materials have to be transported to the field by river and across a difficult tract of country by mules.

11. The present workings are entirely under the charge of British subjects: the skilled labour is mainly recruited from India, while the unskilled labourers are, in accordance with a provision of the Concession, largely Persians, and no difficulty has been hitherto experienced in securing an adequate supply. The agreements with the Khans for the policing of the field works and upper section of the pipe line, and with the Sheikh of Mohammerah for the same work in connection with the refinery and the lower section of the pipe line, have been carried out loyally with satisfactory results. The material benefits obtained by the peasants in the form of regular employment and medical attention have had a considerable effect in producing a condition of tranquillity amongst a hitherto disturbed population.

Previous Geological Examinations.

12. Part of the area held by the Company has been examined from time to time by several well-known geologists, including—

Mr. H. T. Burls, F.G.S., who examined Kasr-i-Shirin, Ahwaz, and the White Oil Springs in 1901.

Mr. W. H. Dalton, F.G.S., late of His Majesty's Geological Survey of Great Britain, who examined the Kasr-i-Shirin, White Oil Springs, Shardin and other districts in 1903.

Mr. E. H. Cunningham Craig, B.A., F.G.S., late of His Majesty's Geological Survey of Great Britain, and late Government Geologist of Trinidad, and Geologist to the Burmah Oil Company, who surveyed the Maidan-i-Naphtun and Shardin areas in 1907.

Mr. Basil F. Macrorie, F.G.S., Geologist to the Burmah Oil Company, who examined the Maidan-i-Naphtun, Shardin, White Oil Springs, and Ahwaz areas in 1909.

Mr. S. Lister James, F.G.S., late Geologist to the Burmah Oil Company, who examined Maidan-i-Naphtun, Ahwaz, and the White Oil Springs in 1913.

13. We had the advantage of reading the reports made by these gentlemen, who have all pronounced favourably as to the petroliferous possibilities of the territory. We were fortunate enough to find Mr. Lister James still at Maidan-i-Naphtun, and to have the opportunity of discussing with him the geological features of the district. Mr. James accompanied us during the remainder of our stay in Persia, and his co-operation proved extremely valuable.

14. We have also perused a report by Sir Boverton Redwood, Bart., written in 1909, upon the oilfields of Persia, in which he summarises the data contained in the reports of Messrs. Burls, Dalton, and Cunningham Craig, and forms a very favourable opinion as to the value of the Concession.

Geology of the Fields.

15. Elsewhere we have recorded at length the geological characteristics of the districts examined by us, and expressed our views thereon. Besides examining the producing field at Maidan-i-Naphtun, we also visited the following localities where petroliferous indications had been reported:—

The White Oil Springs, 38 miles N.E. of Ahwaz.

Ahwaz, 65 miles from Mohammerah.

Hal-al-Naft, on Kishm Island.

Lingeh.

Sarzeh, near Sirik.

The neighbourhood of Jask.

16. Our examination of the areas visited enables us to agree with the conclusion of Dr. Pilgrim,* that the principal petroliferous zones occur in the Fars Series, representative of, if not coincident with, the Miocene of Europe, and in examining

* Memoir Geol. Survey of India, Vol. 34, Pt. 4, p. 36.

these beds in the Maidan-i-Naphtun field we have, as a matter of convenience, adopted Mr. Lister James's subdivision, viz. :—

Upper Fars.

Lower Fars :—

Passage Beds.

Gypsiferous stage with a band of calcareous sandstone in the middle.

Lower Limestone stage.

17. In the Maidan-i-Naphtun field the highest petroliferous zone occurs 1,000 feet above the base of the Upper Fars, and the lowest horizon tapped in the wells is about 1,000 feet below the top of the Lower Limestone stage, showing that a thickness exists of about 3,000 feet in which petroliferous beds may occur.

The Lower Limestone Stage contains thick beds of a peculiar cavernous or cellular limestone, which appears to be detrital in origin. The total thickness of these beds has not been determined, as the base is not visible.

The Gypsiferous Stage is represented by some 800 feet of soft beds of alternations of gypsums and red clays.

The Passage Beds, of some 350 feet in thickness, are similar to the Upper Fars, but are distinguished by alternations of thin beds of gypsum.

The Upper Fars are composed of sandstones and shales, the latter containing numerous veins of selenite. The thickness has been estimated to be about 6,000 feet.

18. It was possible to connect in a general way the rocks of other petroliferous areas with those of the Maidan-i-Naphtun field, but no correlation was attempted other than to agree generally that they were of Fars age. Considerable lateral variation exists, and there is no doubt that a satisfactory correlation will be effected as soon as a survey is undertaken across the belt of country intervening between the isolated areas examined by us.

Structure.

19. Flexures of considerable extent were observed in all the areas examined, revealing structures suitable for the conservation of petroleum. At the Maidan-i-Naphtun Field one large anticline appears to exist, although detailed mapping reveals that it has been puckered into several minor folds, the predominant direction being N.W. and S.E. The structure of this field is complicated, and as we have fully described it elsewhere, it is unnecessary to deal further with the subject here. We have, however, shown that a large area exists in which petroleum will in all probability be enclosed, and we have estimated this area to be approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ square miles. As the Company's production of crude oil is at present derived from only a small portion of the area, the importance of this estimate is at once apparent.

20. The structures observed at Ahwaz, White Oil Springs, and Kishun are all suitable for the storage of petroleum, but as no test has yet been made, we are unable to suggest to what extent any of them may be productive. Test drilling is already in progress at the two first-named places.

Actual Evidence of Petroleum.

21. At Maidan-i-Naphtun there is one main oil horizon in the central field which has been proved at depths varying from 1,200 to 1,300 feet. This horizon is the one from which the production of the field has been principally obtained, and upon which reliance is now placed.

22. As already stated above, the oil is found in a hard, porous limestone. This fact is important, because under such conditions a steady production can be maintained, with very little necessity for cleaning out the wells.

23. At Maidan-i-Naphtun, apart from the successful borings which are producing at the present time, evidence of petroleum is obtained at the outcropping of an oilrock in the Naphtha Stream, where a black, sticky oil exudes at the rate of 10 to 12 barrels per day. Other oil shows, though not so prolific, are to be seen in this area, where oil rises through the alluvial gravel.

24. At the White Oil Springs two seepages occur on the crest of a fold, from which a colourless oil resembling kerosene is obtained. This production amounts to about 20 gallons per day, and is used by the natives for domestic purposes. The Ahwaz anticline is some 36 miles to the south-west, and although no evidence of petroleum appears at the surface the same horizon as is exposed at the White Oil Springs is expected to exist at some attainable depth below the surface.

25. At Kishm oil issues from the lowest exposed beds at two places, about half-a-mile apart. The seepages are not considerable, but are sufficient to strengthen the evidence furnished by the favourable structure.

26. Several other instances of oil seepages have been reported, at which further investigation is desirable. The limited time at our disposal did not enable us to visit the localities.

The Producing Field, Pipe Line, and Refinery.

27. On the Maidan-i-Naphtun field 30 wells had been drilled up to the time of our visit. Only 12, however, have been carried through to the oil horizon, and these have all produced oil, but some are wholly or partly shut down as their production is not at present required.

28. Substantial workshops, storehouses, and stables have been erected, as well as bungalows and houses for the staff and native labourers, of whom over 900 are employed. There is storage available on the field for 60,000 tons of crude oil, either in steel tanks or open reservoirs.

29. The oil is conveyed by pipe line to the refinery at Abadan, distant about 145 miles, and about 800 feet below the level of Maidan-i-Naphtun. The pumping station is situated at Tembi, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the field, where powerful modern pumping machinery has been installed. The pipe line is 6 inches in diameter as far as Wais (53 miles), and 8 inches thence to Abadan, and has an estimated capacity of about 1,000 tons per day, though this figure has been appreciably exceeded over short periods. The greater size of the pipe line from Wais will enable considerable quantities of oil to be carried from the White Oil Springs and Ahwaz, if the borings there are successful, without reducing the quantity being carried from Maidan-i-Naphtun. The pipe line is provided with gate-valves 10 miles apart, and stations have been placed at intervals of 20 miles for the purpose of keeping an hourly record of the pressure, with a view to detecting and avoiding any loss by leakage. The line is patrolled from each of these stations, and there is telephonic communication between the field, the stations and the refinery at Abadan. About 75 men are required for the working of the pumping station and pipe line.

30. The refinery, which employs a large number of men, is of modern construction, well designed, and laid out with a view to future extensions. It contains four benches, consisting in all of 34 stills, and petrol, kerosene of two qualities, and oil fuel are produced.

31. To prepare an oil fuel suitable for Admiralty requirements it is only necessary to remove about 30 per cent. of the light products; allowing 5 per cent. for loss in refining, a quantity of oil fuel is obtainable equivalent to 65 per cent. of the original crude. A bench of 4 stills is capable of treating 7,500 tons of crude oil, giving an output of about 4,800 tons of Admiralty fuel per month, and as the refinery is at present constructed, 20 stills could be turned on for this purpose which would produce about 24,000 tons a month, or in round figures about 280,000 tons a year.

32. The total capacity of the pipe line is not sufficient, however, at present to deliver the necessary amount of crude oil, and the maximum possible output of oil fuel at the present time cannot be estimated at more than 20,000 tons a month, or about 240,000 tons a year.

33. The total storage at the refinery, completed or under construction, will have a capacity of nearly 110,000 tons, of which 60,000 tons will be for crude oil. A steel jetty has been built on the river bank near the refinery, having a depth of 25 feet of water alongside at low water spring tide, but tank steamers load to only 18 ft. 6 ins. at the pier, and take the remainder of their cargo from lighters below the bar of the Shatt-al-Arab. It is expected that it will eventually be possible for vessels to load to a considerably greater depth at the refinery.

The Output.

34. The Company's present output is limited, not by the production of the field, but by the capacity of the pipe line and the refinery. The amount of oil passed through the pipe line since its completion has been as follows :—

Months.	Total Production.	Used as Fuel on the Field.	Passed through Pipe-line.
	Tons.	Tons.	Tons.
1912 :—			
April - - - - -	4,943	551	4,392
May - - - - -	2,837	667	2,170
June - - - - -	2,335	611	1,724
July - - - - -	6,180	651	5,529
August - - - - -	10,566	661	9,905
September - - - - -	3,471	653	2,818
October - - - - -	6,771	558	6,213
November - - - - -	5,260	487	4,773
December - - - - -	9,476	393	9,083
1913 :—			
January - - - - -	10,250	235	10,015
February - - - - -	9,480	240	9,240
March - - - - -	10,544	279	10,265
Total (12 months)	82,113	5,986	76,127
April - - - - -	14,642	443	14,199
May - - - - -	24,402	455	23,947
June - - - - -	25,701	314	25,387
July - - - - -	27,745	274	27,471
August - - - - -	24,991	274	24,717
September - - - - -	21,364	168	21,196
Total (6 months)	138,845	1,928	136,917
Grand Total	220,958	7,914	213,044

35. Owing to the production being so much in excess of the requirements, it has been necessary to keep some of the wells throttled down, and in none of them has the production been pushed to the stage of pumping. It is therefore, impossible at present to give any statistics which will show the rate at which the wells may be expected to fall off in productivity.

36. Although 10 wells, most of which are partly shut down, are at present producing about 900 tons per day, 800 tons of the total is contributed by three wells only. The wells which have been large producers are all within a somewhat restricted area in the central field, and it would be rash to expect these figures to be maintained throughout the area. It is, however, an important fact that hitherto all the wells have flowed for periods varying from four months to five-and-a-half years without any mechanical assistance, and without any cleaning from the time the oilrock was struck.

37. It is impossible, in the absence of more conclusive evidence, to frame any definite estimate as to the life of this field, but the evidence so far obtained points to an extensive life with an aggregate production much in excess of the present output.

38. The influence of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company has increased the general tranquillity of the district, but it would be wrong to assume that there will never be a relapse, and in the event of an outbreak of lawlessness amongst the tribes, the situation would present certain difficulties which, though serious, should not be insurmountable.

39. In view of this contingency it is desirable that the development of the Company's Concession should not be limited to one district, but should be distributed as much as possible consistent with economy of working.

Conclusions and Recommendations.

40. We are satisfied that the Company's Concession is a most valuable one and, providing no unforeseen factor intervenes, the existing field is capable, with proper development, of supplying a large proportion of the requirements of the Admiralty for a considerable period, while the whole Concession, judiciously worked, would probably safeguard the fuel supply of His Majesty's Navy.

41. After an examination of certain districts in Persia adjacent to the Persian Gulf, we consider that the southern parts of the Concession offer reasonable prospects as petroliferous regions, and that the Company should be urged to test these localities without delay. Obvious advantages would accrue from the discovery of a productive field in the South, but we are none the less of opinion that even should these regions prove disappointing, ample supplies would be forthcoming from the northern fields, provided proper steps are taken to prevent their undue depletion.

42. The Company cannot adequately develop this very extensive Concession without additional capital, and we understand that the question of His Majesty's Government affording it financial support is under consideration. Should such a course be decided on, we are of opinion that it should be made a condition that Government should have a voice in the direction of the Company's general policy. We would indeed strongly recommend that such a measure of control should be obtained as to ensure—

1. The efficient supervision of the expenditure of the new capital.
2. The proper conservation of the oilfields in order that the rate of output may be carefully proportioned to the resources of the fields, so that the delivery of oil under contract to the Admiralty can be adequately safeguarded.
3. General supervision of the future development of the Concession.

43. In conclusion we desire specially to record our appreciation of the valuable services rendered by our Secretary, Mr. J. C. Clarke.

EDMOND J. W. SLADE, Rear Admiral.
JOHN CADMAN.
EDWIN RICHARDSON BLUNDSTONE.
E. H. PASCOE.

J. C. CLARKE,
Secretary.

6th April 1914.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE DIFFERENT CLASSES OF CERTIFICATES.

1. INNS AND HOTELS.

25 & 26 Vict.
c. 35, s. 37.

In rural districts, or in populous places not exceeding 1,000 inhabitants, a house to be qualified for this certificate must have at least two apartments set apart exclusively for the sleeping accommodation of travellers. In towns and their suburbs the house must have four such apartments at least.

Inns and hotels have the privilege of selling to lodgers and travellers during closing hours. We have already dealt with the change which should be made in the certificate at the discretion of the licensing authority in order to meet the traveller nuisance.

Angus,
44,750.

It should be added that no hotel should be allowed to sell for consumption off the premises on Sunday. Very great trouble has arisen from this off-sale, as, for instance, at Greenock, where persons come from Glasgow, purchase liquor, carry it out, and treat the people of the district.

We have already seen that houses which are in no sense qualified are licensed through lax administration as hotels, and thus obtain the privileges attaching to that class of house.

The village hotels are generally of a very low standard indeed, and there are numbers of hotels, even in such a town as Perth, where neither a bed nor a meal can be procured.

Nasmyth,
52,379.
Campbell,
48,082.
Wright,
51,958.
Captain
McHardy,
47,716.
47,782.

A certain social status is attached to a hotel license which is looked upon as a little more respectable than the ordinary publican's license, and the privilege of accommodating Sunday travellers when all the public-houses are closed is eagerly sought for, as may be seen by the fact that in the burgh of Kilwinning, with less than 4,000 inhabitants, two hotels were added last May to the four already existing; in a number of villages, however, in consequence of the abuse of these bogus hotels, the hotel certificates have been taken away.

Recommendation.

The qualifying number of rooms should be raised, and the licensing authority should be satisfied from the police reports that the existing number of rooms do really afford the accommodation upon the assumption of which the certificate is granted.

2. PUBLIC-HOUSES.

We have already suggested that non-residence of the certificate holder or complete separation of the liquor premises from the dwelling-house should be made a condition of the certificate, and that the general construction and alteration of the premises should be subject to the complete control of the licensing authority.

3. GROCERS' LICENSES.

i. *General.*

Though the grocers' license for sale off the premises dates back only to the Act of 1853, the connection between the trader in groceries and intoxicants is very much older, many grocers having long before that date sold for consumption both on and off the premises.

The certificate for "dealers in exciseable liquors and grocers and provision dealers trading in exciseable liquors" authorises the sale of all intoxicating liquors or beer only, or beer and wine or sweets to be consumed off the premises.

A person holding the full certificate can take out the excise grocers' spirit license at a cost ranging from 4*l.* 4*s.* for premises valued at under 10*l.* to 13*l.* 13*s.* for premises valued at 50*l.* or upwards. This license permits the sale by retail of beer and spirits without restriction as to the nature of the vessel or the minimum amount.

He may also take out the grocer's wine license costing 2*l.* 4*s.* 1*d.*, and permitting sale in any quantity.

If he takes out the grocer's beer license only, he pays 2*l.* 10*s.* for premises valued at under 10*l.*, and otherwise 4*l.* 4*s.* Sale in any form or quantity under wholesale is permitted.

ii. *The Grocers' License Commission.*

In 1877-8 a Royal Commission made a very exhaustive examination into grocers' licenses in Scotland.

The main question before the Commission was, in their own words, s. 57, "whether the combination of the trade of liquor dealer with that of grocer is so inherently bad that it calls for the entire disturbance of a trade which is of very old standing, and which has been expressly recognised by Acts of Parliament."

To this question they returned a rather ambiguous answer.

"It has been shown in evidence that a large portion of the persons engaged in it (the trade) are accused of no offences, and are among the most respectable and long-established traders in the community. But it appears to us that the combination is fraught with great danger, and has been productive of great evil, and we are inclined to believe that the only perfect solution of the difficulty or complete cure of the evils complained of, would be the entire separation of the two trades. It cannot be doubted, however, that there are many difficulties in the way of carrying out such a proposal and seeing it is probable that these difficulties would prove insuperable, we recommend that other measures should speedily be taken to restrain the evils of which we have reported."

In the next paragraph the strong opinion here expressed is further modified and a number of recommendations of a restrictive character conclude the report.

iii. *Summary of Recommendations by the Grocers' License Commission.*

1. The provisions of section 35 of the Licensing Act (England), 1872, and sections 16 and 17 of the Licensing Act (England), 1874, giving power to the police at all times to enter on any licensed premises, should be applied to all licensed houses in Scotland.

2. The county licensing committee and the joint committee for the burgh should be empowered to fix, for a period of years, the maximum number of licensed houses for each town, district, or populous place, and the minimum rent of licensed houses in each county or town, or in each district of a county or town.

3. The following general provisions should be made conditions in granting licenses to grocers, namely that there shall be:—

- (i.) No internal communication between the licensed premises and the dwelling-house or other unlicensed premises.
- (ii.) No back or side entrance to the premises.
- (iii.) No blinding or obscuring of the windows or door.
- (iv.) No screen or partition within the premises.

4. Penalties, including forfeiture of license, as provided in section 9 of the Licensing Act (England), 1872, should be imposed for making, after obtaining the license, any such alterations in the premises as shall be in breach of the foregoing restrictions.

5. No spirits should be kept within the licensed premises except in bottles or jars, corked and sealed.

6. The provisions of the Licensing Act, England and Ireland, with respect to drinking near the premises, should be applied to Scotland.

7. Two convictions of breach of certificate shall involve the forfeiture of the license, instead of three being required, as is at present the case.

8. The entry of spirits in any pass-book or account under any other name should be considered a breach of certificate.

9. The provisions of section 62 of the Licensing Act (England) 1872, with regard to the evidence of sale or consumption of liquor, and also of section 19 of the Public-houses (Scotland) Acts Amendment Act, 1862, with regard to the proof of sale in unlicensed premises, should be made applicable to charges of alleged drinking on or near the premises of licensed grocers.

10. The penalties imposed by section 5 of the Licensing Act (England), 1872, upon the seller for allowing drinking on the premises contrary to his license, should be applied to the premises of licensed grocers, and the purchaser who consumes on the premises should also be subject to a penalty.

11. Licensed grocers should only be permitted to have their premises open between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., and with the consent of the licensing magistrates until 10 p.m. on Saturdays.

12. Penalties, as provided by section 9 of the Licensing Act (England), 1874, should be imposed for infringing the law as to the hours of closing.

13. No sale or delivery of spirits to a child under 14 years of age should be lawful in any description of licensed house, on any pretence.