

ANGLO-AFGHAN RELATIONS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AFGHANISTAN."

PART II.

AT the conclusion of the Tirah campaign the forward policy of the Government of India ceased to be measured by the virulence of Anglo-Afghan amenities, and relations between Kabul and Calcutta were dominated by the pleasant impressions of his guest which Abdur Rahman had gathered when, as the Honourable George Nathaniel Curzon, M.P., the incoming Viceroy had visited Kabul in 1894. With much care this distinguished student had made an elaborate examination of border politics, presenting the results of his diligence in a series of scholarly and exhaustive studies of 'Russia in Central Asia,' 'Persia and the Persian Question,' 'The Pamirs and the Source of the Oxus,' and 'A Recent Journey in Afghanistan.' By reason of these journeys across Asiatic Russia, the Pamirs, Afghanistan, and Persia, and through his remarkable opportunities for observation, unrivalled powers of assimilation, grasp of subject, luminosity of judgment, and lucidity of expression, Mr. George Curzon was without a peer as an authority on frontier problems. When this brilliant and indefatigable mind was called to India as Lord Curzon of Kedleston, the methods by which the forward policy had been regulated in the closing decade of the nineteenth century had broken down, the labour of reconstruction reverting to a man who at least was the foremost expert of his time. Modifications were now essential; and Lord Curzon at once put into execution a number of important reforms in the economic and military control of the north-west frontier. The regular garrison in Chitral was lessened by one-third. The soldiers in Lower Swat and the Malakand were reduced from 3550 men to one battalion and a half of native infantry and a small detachment of cavalry, while regular troops were withdrawn from the Gilgit Agency. Similarly, communication with Malakand was strengthened by constructing a railway, 2 feet 6 inches in breadth, from Nowshera to Dargai, to which four companies were posted, while a very large cantonment was created at Nowshera. In the Khyber the regular

completely overlooked by the adjacent hills. To a friend he wrote: "I shall not scruple to give you my opinion now that I have been upon the place: which is not the least part of our ministers' mistakes in reference to Tangier hath been leading the King to squandering near two millions upon what as much more would never make useful to him a place that, were it possible to be rendered useful, would never yet be made tenable against a Moorish or, worse, a Christian enemy."

Nor was he less disposed to censure the King's advisers from a naval point of view. Writing with reference to some disasters to shipping, he observed: "It is plain from these accidents how unsafe it is for great ships to lie without as, from the foulness of the ground, it is to lie further in the bay," adding, "strange that the road of Tangier should never have been insisted on before, no, not in the Report made just now by the Commanders, nor any application of it to censuring the place, till now I did it."

And so Tangiers, after twenty years of costly and useless possession, was suffered to revert to its original owners and to barbarism, to become the bone of contention of the European Powers in years to come.

HENRY N. SHORE.

establishment, 3700 strong, was replaced by two battalions (1250 in all) of the reorganised and enlarged Khyber Rifles, with an increased number of British officers and an improved scale of pay, while the plan of laying either the bed of a railway or a railway itself up the Khyber Pass was displaced by the extension of the existing North-West Railway from Peshawar to Jamrud, a distance of ten miles.

Between Peshawar and Kohat, the amiable co-operation of the Pass tribes was secured in the peaceable construction of the long-desired cart-road through the Kohat Pass, and a military road through the Mullagori country in the Khyber region, serving as a safe alternative road to that by way of Ali Masjid, was undertaken. At the same time a narrow-gauge line, linking Thall *vid* Kohat with Kushalgarh upon the Indus and now converted to broad-gauge, was projected. At a later date, Nushki was joined up with Quetta, and the finishing touch to an almost perfect system of frontier communications may be found in the preparations recently made for carrying the line along the left bank of the Kabul River to Dakka.

South of Kohat the Samana Rifles, a force of tribal militia 450 strong under British officers and recruited from the Orakzai tribesmen, was furnished as an extra battalion to the border military police, and the strength of the regular garrisons, maintained on the Samana range, reduced from 1700 to 600 men. In the Kurram valley, the Kurram militia were reorganised in two battalions (1250 strong) under British officers. In Waziristan, two battalions of Waziristan militia, 800 strong, were raised, the one for the Tochi valley or Northern Waziristan, the other for the Gomul valley or Southern Waziristan, thus releasing the services of 4000 regulars. These changes were rendered possible by the organisation and training of border police, militia; and levies, the total strength of which is 10,000 men. The risk of entrusting to Irregulars the garrisoning of advanced posts was provided against by maintaining flying columns at Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu, and Dera Ismail Khan, and minimised by the marked improvements in road and railway communication with all strategic centres in the North-West Province. While the financial saving was great, efficiency, too, increased because regiments were no longer split up into detachments. The number of regulars serving beyond the administrative frontier was reduced from 10,200 in 1899 to 5000, while supporting garrisons were increased from 22,000 in 1899 to 24,000.

When the Viceroy of India was satisfied that these measures were destined to reap their complement of success, he supplemented

his experiments in frontier management by their concluding phase. On the 27th August, 1900, after eighteen months' patient inquiry and constant observation, he drew up a Minute advocating the separation of the administration of the north-west frontier from the control of the Punjab Government. These proposals were supported by the signatures of his colleagues in a covering despatch on the 13th September. Following the lines of Lord Lytton's celebrated Minute upon the creation of a distinct Trans-Indus District, 22nd April, 1877, Lord Curzon embodied in one of the most brilliant pieces of analysis ever placed before the Imperial Government a temperate and lucid exposition of the existing order of frontier administration. The acceptance of the views enunciated in this Minute was notified by the Secretary of State for India, Lord George Hamilton, on the 20th December, 1900, but it was not until the 9th November, 1901, that the establishment of the new territory, under the name of the North-West Frontier Province, was proclaimed.

While Lord Curzon during the first three years of his *régime*—January, 1899, to November, 1901—was occupied with repairing the fabric of Indian frontier administration, Afghanistan, in the early spring of 1900, became the cause of an exchange of diplomatic notes between the late Lord Salisbury, as Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and the late Russian Ambassador to Great Britain, M. de Staal, acting under the orders of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Count Mouravieff. In a communication dated the 6th February, 1900, M. de Staal informed the Foreign Office that the Russian Government were proposing that direct relations should be established between Russia and Afghanistan with regard to frontier matters; but that such relations should have no political character, as the Russian Government intended to maintain their former engagements and would continue to consider Afghanistan outside the sphere of Russian influence. An immediate reply to this request was vouchsafed, in which it was stated that, having regard to the understanding by which Afghanistan is outside the sphere of Russian influence—

“ . . . It would be impossible for the British Government to take into consideration any change in existing arrangements, or to frame proposals to be brought before the Amir without more precise explanation in regard to the method which the Russian Government would desire to see adopted for the exchange of such communications between the frontier officials, the limitations to be placed on them, and the means of ensuring that those limitations would be observed.”

To this intimation no reply at the moment was preferred by the Russian authorities, and the study of Anglo-Afghan relations

shifts once more to the dominions of the Amir. Throughout the period in which Lord Curzon was engrossed with the machinery of frontier and administrative reforms, Abdur Rahman had not been in any way an idle ruler. In spite of his failing powers, with great energy and determination, the Amir had concentrated his efforts upon the completion of his life's work. With that accomplished, assured of the good-will of the Government of India shortly after Lord Curzon's arrival in 1899 by the release of the munitions of war which had been detained through the outbreak of the Tirah troubles, he turned his hand to matters of more domestic concern. Satisfied with the improvements in his military establishment, content with the reforms which he had introduced in the administrative economy of his state, and having established its independence by elaborate artifices, he again sought the preservation of his line. In an effort to prepare his people for the acceptance and accession of Habib Ullah Khan as his heir, the Amir, in 1891, had delegated to this son authority to hold the public Durbars in Kabul. At the same time he had reserved to himself the control of foreign affairs, manifesting in this direction a keen appreciation of the value to the position of India which underlay the situation of Afghanistan. Menaced by growing physical infirmity and with strange premonition of his approaching end, at a special Durbar in the autumn of 1900 Abdur Rahman informed the assembled nobles and high officials of his inability to cope with the increasing volume of affairs, and amid a scene of great pathos, indicated that his son, Habib Ullah, would be given a still larger measure of authority.

A few months later, in May of 1901, a more emphatic warning of the grave state of the Amir's health was received. Intelligence came through from Kabul to Peshawar that Abdur Rahman was no longer able to walk, and that he was not expected to live through the approaching winter. Incapacitated by a combination of Bright's disease and gout as he was, the mental faculties of the ruler of Afghanistan were nevertheless unimpaired, and throughout the closing year of his life he applied them constantly to the improvement of his country. Interested in the South African War, and grasping the salient lessons of our unreadiness, the Amir laid out much money in 1900-1901 upon a scheme of mobilisation; while in May, 1901, he secured permission to import from Germany some thirty howitzers and field guns. At the same time, and without informing the Government of India, he ordered a large number of castings for big guns, an order which was subsequently repudiated by Habib Ullah. In August, 1901, he personally directed the preparations for the suppression of the threatened disaffection in Khost, besides attending to the rising of the Tagis

of Hariob on the Peiwar in September. These events were the last affairs of a prominent description to which Abdur Rahman was able to apply himself. Even while engaged in the business attending the Tagis operations his Highness began to show signs of decline, and, on the 20th September, he was seized with a stroke of paralysis which disabled his right side.

His native physicians had prepared a compound of rare medicines, costing several thousand rupees; but, as the paralytic seizure was kept strictly secret in the palace, this concoction was not in readiness, and, when offered to the Amir, he could not take it. On the 28th September his Highness, feeling his end approaching, summoned his sons, the nobles, the principal civil and military officers, and the chief *raises* of Kabul, Hindu and Mahommedan. One son only, Mahommed Afzul Khan, a boy of thirteen, was absent. He was with his mother at Balkh, that lady belonging to the Saids of Balkh. When all had assembled the Amir by look acknowledged their homage, and then addressed them in a feeble but distinct voice, saying—

“ You know when a king becomes old and infirm, and near his end, he always desires to nominate a successor. I wish to have my successor settled now. Consider among yourselves whom you believe fit to succeed me.”

The listeners were affected to tears by this speech. They declared that the Shahzada Habib Ullah, who had managed the State affairs so well for eight years, was the ruler whom they desired. On this the dying Amir indicated that a sword with a belt set with precious stones should be handed to Habib Ullah, together with a big volume containing his will and instructions for the future management of the state. He then ordered Nasr Ullah Khan to gird his brother with the sword, and dismissed the audience. Abdur Rahman had always the presentiment that he would die in the same year as our lamented sovereign, Queen Victoria; and, after this assemblage, his condition became rapidly worse, and he died on the 1st October. The news was kept secret until the morning of the 3rd, when, his precautions against disturbance having been completed, Habib Ullah himself made it public. Later in the day, on the 3rd October, at a special Durbar, Habib Ullah was formally accepted as Amir, whereupon he issued the following proclamation to the high officers of state :—

“ His Excellency is informed of the demise of my august father, the light of religion and the kingdom (may his abode be in Paradise) who (as the verse runs, ‘ Death is the end of all, and not a moment’s delay is possible when it draws nigh ’) welcomed the invitation of God, and took his way to Paradise.

“ His Excellency is now given a detailed account of what happened. His

late Highness had been frequently unwell ; but notwithstanding his chequered health he was not for a moment found lacking in the conduct of his kingly duties, until the light of his life was put down. He breathed his last on Thursday night, dated 19th Jamadi-ul-Sani, at Kala Bagh, his summer residence. He gave his soul to the Creator of the Universe (truly all things tend towards God). On Friday 20th, rumours got abroad, and the news was communicated to the capital for the information of officials. The people of the country, subjects as well as military, came together to convey condolence, one and all. Beyond the possibility of doubt, they considered the monarch was their kind father and their gracious ruler. The people of the territories of Herat, Kandahar, and Turkestan, etc., who were present in the metropolis, attended the exalted Court and My Presence (who am the slave of God) and praised the Almighty. Great was the concourse and so large the number of those who witnessed the *Fateha* * that it is known to God and to God alone. All of them followed the service with sincerity of heart and purity of mind. Then they took the oath of allegiance with praises to Omnipotent God. They said as follows : ' We desire to make your Highness our king, so that we may not live in an uncivilised state. We wish you to acknowledge our oath of allegiance ; and we beg your Highness to take the management of all the affairs of state, and that of our nation ; and we ask you to discharge your duties night and day like his Highness, the deceased ruler of ours, and to give us rest and repose.'

" After the close of the speech and prayer I, too, with the Throne's usual kindness and munificence, accepted their oath of allegiance and request ; and I have given them such entire satisfaction as lies in my power. On that very day all our brothers took their oath of allegiance, and after them all the members of the House Royal and persons of the noble families of Mahommed Zai and other tribes, *sajids*, priests, gentry, and all officials of state, civil and military, took the oath ; and I, too, for my reign and time, acknowledged the oath. Then all offered up their prayers for the late monarch (may his abode be in Paradise), and gave thanks to God for my reign. After the dismissal and breaking up of all the aforesaid proceedings, the officials of state, civil as well as military, and all those who could afford and spare time from matters temporal, took their road to Kala Bagh, and, together with those who were already present, joined the funeral procession of the late ruler (Light of the Country and Religion). The blessed corpse of that august and potent king, according to his will, was carried to the royal cemetery with great pomp and honour ; and he was interred in the ground and placed in the place which is the real and ultimate abode for man. That august and potent monarch, that king of pleasing and praiseworthy manners, expired and sank in the depth of the kindness of God (may his abode be in heaven).

" His Excellency is now informed of all that has happened. He is given an account for his full information ; and a separate report is despatched to His Excellency, the Viceroy of India, on account of the alliance that exists between us."

A second Durbar was held on the 6th, when the commander-in-chief, the principal military officers, the tribal chiefs then in Kabul, the leading nobles and the chief mullahs renewed publicly their agreement, made with the late Amir in the autumn of 1900, regarding the succession of Habib Ullah. With the Koran before them they affixed their seals to an oath which ran as follows : —

* Funeral service.

"We, all military officers, together with the army, all Afghan tribal chiefs, sirdars, mullahs and other followers of Islam in Afghanistan, do swear by the Koran to accept Amir Habib Ullah as our King of Islam."

Habib Ullah replied—

"You have appointed me as your king and I accept the office. Please God I will be always a follower of the religion of Mahomet the Prophet of God (may peace be on him), and I will be guardian of the Mussalmans of Afghanistan who will obey me as King of Islam."

The thousands of people assembled on the occasion of this Durbar solemnly removed their turbans, loudly acclaiming Habib Ullah as their new ruler. The leading Hindus of Kabul, headed by Dewan Harinjan, afterwards presented their agreement to the Amir, who graciously accepted it with the assurance that they should continue to live in peace and quietude, and promising a reduction of the taxes hitherto levied on their community. In Kabul, on the 8th October, yet another Durbar was held, whereto Sirdar Nasr Ullah Khan brought the Koran, the sword and the flag belonging to the late Amir. Habib Ullah rose on the approach of his brother. Placing the Koran upon his head and fastening the sword round his waist, he raised the flag and took the oath to rule Afghanistan as a true Mahomedan. He said his brothers, the whole army and the people had appointed him king. He accepted the office and publicly asked God to pardon all his sins. The Amir then declared that he confirmed his brother, Nasr Ullah Khan, in the offices which he had held under the late Amir, at the same time appointing Omar Khan to take charge of the Revenue Department and Amin Ullah Khan to preside over the Judicial Department.

Simultaneously with these announcements several acts of clemency and generosity were proclaimed. In each of the important centres prisoners, confined for minor offences, were released; while various sums of money for charitable distribution, in all aggregating one lakh of rupees, were entrusted to the local authorities. Kabul naturally came in for especial marks of grace. The trading community was advised of the remission of the more oppressive taxes, and certain guilds were notified that Treasury grants would be made to them. Five hundred prisoners in the capital province were also set at liberty. In a general way, since Abdur Rahman's scheme of taking one able-bodied man in eight for military service had given rise to discontent, Habib Ullah advanced the pay of all ranks in the Regular and Irregular establishments. The pay of the cavalry was increased from twenty rupees to twenty-five rupees per month, the infantry from eight rupees to ten rupees per month, and the levies from six

rupees to eight rupees per month. The officers enjoyed a proportionate increment. These evidences of consideration secured the tranquillity of the people at a change of ruler, although the perspicacity of the late Amir, in arranging matrimonial alliances for Habib Ullah with the leading families in the army and priesthood, had already secured the allegiance to his successor of these two important factors in the state. The accession, therefore, was undisturbed; and, while couriers bore the news far and wide to officials, the issue of a fresh coinage, bearing the impression in Turkish characters "Amir Habib Ullah Khan, Amir of Kabul, the Seeker of God's help," carried conviction in the market-place. At the same time in India, the 14th October was observed as an official day of mourning, and Habib Ullah was informed that a Mahommedan deputation, charged with condolences of the Government of India and the personal greetings of the Viceroy, would immediately set out for Kabul. A few days later Habib Ullah's pre-occupation with the affairs of state passed from the civil to the spiritual side, when the new ruler of Afghanistan gave an ominous sign of that bigotry which has since distinguished him. For the first time in the country's history the head of the state publicly performed the priestly functions in celebrating the Id at the Idgah Mosque. The chief priest of Kabul immediately proclaimed Habib Ullah to be the successor of Mahommed, whereupon the Amir of Afghanistan delivered an address inspired throughout by a spirit of intolerant ecclesiasticism. Among other things, he laid down that a fine not exceeding ten Kabul rupees would be inflicted on all who did not offer prayers night and morning in the mosques. A register of the daily attendance of all individuals in the various quarters was to be kept and a "box of justice" set up in each, into which secret reports upon any who neglected their religious duties could be dropped.

(To be continued.)

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN POLITICS AND STRATEGY.

BY CAPTAIN R. D. BARBOR, A.S.C.

“The Art of War in its highest point of view is Policy, but no doubt a Policy which fights battles instead of writing notes.”—CLAUSEWITZ.

EVERY soldier knows that the whole Art of War is governed by one great principle, namely, to secure at the outset every possible advantage of time, place, armament, numbers, and morale. It is impossible to consider this fact without conceding that in modern war more depends upon what is accomplished before the commencement of hostilities than after the first shot has been fired. This is universally spoken of as “preparation for war,” and it is commonly assumed by those outside the Army that this is the duty of the soldier alone. What is not generally realised is, that the original responsibility should rest with the State and not with the Army.

It is a military platitude that the soldier is the servant of the politician, and for that very reason it becomes the duty of those who direct the affairs of a nation to ensure that the strategist who conducts the actual operations of war shall not be prevented, through political want of foresight, from starting with the odds in his favour.

The study of history, whether English or Continental, shows that this duty of the politician towards the strategist was not always recognised; in fact, the tendency in the past has been that when the State had made a diplomatic tangle and failed to unravel it, the affair was handed over to the strategist to make what he could of it. If the issue was glorious, the honours were divided; if inglorious, the general bore the disgrace. “The Government are terribly afraid,” wrote Wellington to Admiral Berkeley in 1810, “that I shall get them into a scrape. But what can be expected of men who are beaten three times a week in the House of Commons? A great deal might be done if there existed in England more public and less party sentiment.” No one even inquired whether the general had been asked to make bricks without straw, and fortunately for the honour of our race the valour of the