

order of the emir, who sent word that he would be happy to receive them. The day following the friendly reception, the Russian ambassador examined the presents sent by the governor-general of Turkestan to be delivered to the chieftain, and found to his great dismay that they consisted of almost worthless things. According to the author, they were shabby to behold, and beyond the most indulgent criticism. Gen. Stolettoff, anxious to prevent the reputation of his country from being damaged by a fraudulent governor, selected three of his best horses given him by the emir of Bokhara. He had them provided with richly ornamented Bokharian saddles, with brocade blankets, and the officers cheerfully added their silver tea-set, most of their plate, some costly fire-arms, and various other valuable objects. The emir graciously accepted these gifts, sending in return 11,000 rupees, which, after some remonstrance, had to be accepted by the Russians in order not to offend the princely donor.

During their sojourn at Kabul, two events of importance took place. The heir to the throne of Afghanistan died after an illness of only a few days. In consequence thereof, the paragraph in the projected Afghano-Russian convention, that "the imperial Russian government recognizes Abdullah-Dshan as heir to the throne of Afghanistan," was changed as follows: "The Russian government is ready to recognize as heirs such persons as may be nominated by Emir Shir-Ali-Khan."

Shortly afterwards the emir received the unexpected message that an English embassy was under way to pay their respects to him, and that he should receive them "according to the usage of hospitality becoming to a good neighbor of India." This piece of news was surprising, for two years previous the emir had entirely fallen out with the English. Under these conditions, he could by no means receive the embassy. Like a good diplomat, he used the recent death of his son as a pretext, and informed them that he was in mourning; but to no effect. The English insisted upon being received. After holding a consultation with the Russian general, he sent them the only possible answer: he emphatically declined to receive them.

On the 11th of August, Gen. Stolettoff, accompanied only by the author and a number of Cossacks, suddenly left Kabul. Twenty days later, they again reached Samarkand, after an absence of almost fifteen months. The rest of his staff had been directed to remain at Kabul to await further orders.

We regret that we can dwell no longer upon this interesting and timely work, but we hope that we shall soon have an opportunity of reviewing the second volume, which has not reached us. We wish the translator might have displayed a little more artistic taste. That he has performed his work with minute correctness, cannot be denied; but his German style is by no means elegant. Sentences like the following, — '*Ich wollte furchtbar schlafen,*' or '*Sie werden sich zerschlagen*' (p. 137), — remind us too vividly of the idiom used by Señor Pedro Carolino in his 'English as she is spoke.' It is true that he states in his preface that he had attempted to render his translation as correct as possible; but we are far from even admiring the language of his introduction. We are, however, indebted to him for a better track-map than the one in the original, though the orthography of the names in the text does not always agree with that on the map.

#### THE RUSSIANS AT THE GATES OF HERAT.

No higher compliment could be paid to Mr. Marvin's little book than the fact, that, within ten days after it appeared, it formed the basis of leading articles on the Afghan dispute in nearly all the principal papers in the country, and in most of them without any acknowledgment. No one but a man who had made a most careful study of the subject could have condensed so much, and such timely, information in such small space and on such short notice. The preface bears the date of March 23; and the book gives the clearest possible insight into the progress of Russia's advance from the Caspian during the last few years, the purpose and aim of her movements, the origin of the boundary dispute, and its condition on the date named. With the aid of this book, the telegrams in the daily papers become clear and intelligible, and any one can follow the development of events hereafter with a clear understanding of them.

Mr. Marvin has passed a considerable part of his life among the Russians, and understands their language. While he is naturally alarmed at Russia's progress, and opposed to her intentions, yet he writes in a calm and moderate tone. He always strives to be just, and comes as near being so as is possible when one is a party to a controversy. In his inter-

course with the Russians during the last five years, he has gained a clear conception of what is the real object of Russia's advance across central Asia, and he is the first to explain it in the English language. It can be summed up in the phrase of Gen. Skobelev: "Russia does not want India, she wants the Bosphorus." It is England that maintains the Turk on the Bosphorus, and prevents Russia from taking it: hence Russia seeks a position from which she can threaten England with disaster, if she continues her opposition; and this position is on the frontier of India. To suppose that any body of Russians has ever seriously contemplated the conquest of India, is a mistake; but it is a fact, that the great mass of the Russian army firmly believes that England holds India by a feeble tenure, that a small force of Russian troops could cause an uprising in India which would overthrow the English rule, and that, when Russia possesses certain points on the Indian frontier from which it can injure the English, the latter will come to terms about the Bosphorus. These ideas first began to spread in Russia after the Crimean war, but they received a tremendous accession in consequence of the action of England in 1878. Their chief advocate was Skobelev, who had taken part in several of the campaigns in central Asia, and was marvellously familiar with the Asiatic question in all its bearings.

In pursuing this advance to the borders of India, Russia has acted on two lines; and Mr. Marvin dwells at length upon this fact, so as to avoid the confusion which vague notions of geography have caused in England. The first line, which was followed from 1863 to 1876, was from Orenburg south-eastward across Turkestan. This movement practically ceased with the conquest of Khokand or Ferghana, and the virtual subjugation of Bokhara in 1876. It gave Russia a territory about as large as France, Germany, and Austria combined, added something to her trade, and brought her armies to the base of the lofty mountains in the eastern part of Afghanistan, and only 300 miles from the north-west provinces of India.

The second movement began in 1879. Its starting-point was the eastern shore of the Caspian (about a thousand miles south of Orenburg), where Russia had gained a foothold ten years before. It has progressed, with extraordinary rapidity, eastward through Turkmenia, or the country of the nomad Turkomen, lying between Persia and the desert on the north. It reached Merv, six

hundred miles from the Caspian, in 1884; and this year it was nearing Herat, when the English took alarm, and endeavored to fix a limit by marking the boundary of Afghanistan as the line which could not be crossed except as an act of war.

These two movements have therefore attained their full development; and the object of them is accomplished, for Russia is now practically on the borders of India, ready to strike a vigorous blow whenever the moment seems propitious. She has a line of railway and steamboat all the way from St. Petersburg and Moscow to a short distance behind her advance post at Panj Deh; and she can move half a million men against Herat with far more ease and safety than she moved them into Turkey in 1877. And from Herat there are no physical obstacles to prevent a march on India; for, according to Mr. Marvin, one can drive a coach and four all the way.

This is in brief the situation of affairs to-day, as delineated with the utmost lucidity in Mr. Marvin's excellent little book. He accuses Russia of bad faith in her movements: so have France and other nations accused England in the past, until 'perfidious Albion' has come to be a by-word. Such accusations, and the arguments in support of them, count for little with disinterested spectators. What they desire to know are accomplished facts, and it is in the presentation of these that the merit of this book consists. Few people, even among those who have tried to follow this trans-Caspian movement, have realized what it has already accomplished, and how pregnant it is with great events for the near future. What was scouted in parliament only four years ago as an idle dream, is to-day a reality, an existing state of affairs. It finds the English unprepared, undecided, bewildered, as to their proper course. In front of them is a nation which they have succeeded in converting into their inveterate enemy, patient, crafty, determined, with a clear understanding of its own intentions, and a willingness to make any sacrifices in support of them. If England will agree with her about the Bosphorus, Russia will be at peace, and even retire from central Asia: if not, a terrible war must ensue, not necessarily now, but in the near future,—a war in which all the advantages of position will be on the side of Russia. The probable result of such a war is a matter of the widest speculation, and no one can foretell it. It is enough now to know and understand the existing state of affairs, and this Mr. Marvin has enabled us to do.