

ally started against British rule in India, it has assumed the form of a cleverly devised conspiracy against the progress of Western civilization. Ghandi's declarations that Western education had produced slave mentality amongst the Indian peoples, and his appeals to Indians to turn their back upon everything that was Western and to renounce the study of such sciences as geography, history, and chemistry, and his statements that hospitals and railways are breeders of sin, have filled the minds of thoughtful Americans with feelings of disgust, if not of contempt.

As for Mr. Montagu's reforms, the anti-British elements have left no stone unturned to represent them as being a sham and a fraud unworthy of Great Britain to give and India to receive; but the thoughtful sections of the American people are watching the new Constitution of India with the keenest interest. Men like ex-President William H. Taft have not hesitated to declare it as a piece of consummate statesmanship. The manner in which the reforms have been worked in India, the splendid co-operation between non-official and official members of Indian legislatures, the keen anxiety manifested by high British officials to do even a little wrong to themselves that the greatest good to the greatest number of the people of India may accrue by official self-abnegation, and the superb loyalty with which the rank and file of the British civil servants have worked to make the reforms a success, have produced a splendid impression among the thinking sections of the American people.

The appointment of one of England's wisest and noblest sons as the Viceroy of India has deepened that favourable impression, for Lord Reading has left in America a name second only to that of Lord Bryce, and the American people have not hesitated to declare that if the educated people of India refuse to note the advice, guidance, and sympathy Lord Reading has proffered, they are not worthy to enjoy the high destiny which the King in Parliament has declared to be their portion.

AN INTERVIEW WITH KING FAISAL OF IRAQ

BY CAPTAIN A. H. ROBERTS
(*Late Political Officer in Iraq*)

WHEN the Amir Faisal, son of King Hussain of Hedjaz, arrived in Basrah as the accredited candidate for the rulership of Mesopotamia, there was not much enthusiasm felt there for his cause. Even before Turkey entered the war, Basrah people considered that the progress of their wilayat (province) was retarded by its connection with the central government, and there was a movement on foot to break away from the rest of the Iraq and form it into a separate state under a ruler chosen from among the leading local Arab families.

The Turkish Government became aware of the plot and sent one of their best administrators to Basrah to investigate. Their agent met his death by assassination just when he had succeeded in his search and had the proofs in his hands.

The spirit of Basrah is the same to-day, and it will take much of the tact and charm that King Faisal admittedly possesses, and some years of equitable government, to reconcile its inhabitants to their new lot.

Basrah people have benefited to a much greater degree than the rest of the Iraq from our occupation of the country, and they consider—rightly or wrongly remains to be seen—that they would be better off as a separate state under British protection than as a part of the new Iraq Government.

The above is intended to show one of the obstacles the Amir has to overcome in his endeavour to set up a new State. It is characteristic of the Amir that in spite of that feeling he made friends wherever he went in Basrah, and created a good impression in the community by his frank and open manner and well-chosen speech. He met with the same success in the Shia strongholds of Nejef and Kerbela, which he visited on his way to Baghdad.

The Amir should have arrived in Baghdad at 7 a.m. on June 29, but a breakdown on the line delayed the train. There is a story connected with the accident that is worth

relating here as an instance of the mentality of the present-day Baghdadi. The breakdown itself was simple enough. A violent sandstorm had taken place the day before and completely blocked the line thirty miles south of Baghdad at a place named Khan Aswad. The station-master wired to Baghdad for assistance. The telegraph messenger, in delivering the copies of the telegram to the officials concerned, left that of the executive engineer to the last, and before delivering it, paid a visit to the servant of another official. He there got into trouble, was arrested by the police, and taken to the lock-up. He forgot to mention that he had the undelivered telegram in his pocket, and it was overlooked by the police, with the result that no assistance was sent to clear the line in time, and the Amir and his suite were obliged to spend a hot summer's day in a stuffy railway carriage.

Baghdad West station is situated, as its name indicates, on the western side. It is about a thousand yards from the town and river, near the terminus of the Baghdad line built by the Germans. The Amir arrived there at 6 p.m. apparently none the worse for his adventure. He was met at the station by H.E. the High Commissioner, Sir Percy Cox, the Commander-in-Chief, General Haldane, a number of Government officials, and all the leading notables of Baghdad. A guard of honour of the Royal Berkshire Regiment was drawn up on the platform. The road leading to the station was lined with Arab Mounted Levies and Boy Scouts.

King Faisal has been busy from the moment he arrived in the Iraq preparing the minds of the many different communities to accept him as their king. It has been no easy task, for he was unknown to the people, who, for the most part, resented having thrust upon them a son of the King of Mecca, to whom they owed no allegiance.

He received me, as usual, very cordially, and on learning that I was leaving Baghdad for home, entered at once into the object of my visit, which was to obtain his views on the situation of the country and his plans for its future under his rule.

King Faisal was dressed in the picturesque robes and headdress of his countrymen. In stature he is well above the average, and slim in build. He has a long face, prominent nose, greyish eyes, and a small, well-trimmed brown beard. He is endowed with extraordinary personal charm, and his earnest manner and quick alert gestures impress one favourably. He is an early riser, and, like

most Orientals, gets through the important work of the day during the cool hours of the morning. It speaks well for his character that he has been able to put aside the traditional evasiveness of his race, and acquired a European sense of the value of prompt action and punctuality. He came to the point without any preamble. We spoke in Arabic.

The Amir started by recounting his impressions of the country as he found it. I put them in his own words: "I am profoundly disappointed in my expectations as to the state of the country, especially in regard to agricultural progress, education, and construction, both public and private. I was surprised to find that no progress had been made in agriculture since the Arab invasion, and that the magnificent irrigation works that then existed had disappeared, leaving hardly a trace of their former greatness.

"I had no idea that the mass of the population was illiterate to such an extent that it was difficult to find enough suitable men to occupy the subordinate posts in Government offices, and that men of technical ability were practically non-existent.

"I was not prepared to find that the whole of the Iraq to-day could not boast of a single public building or construction of Arab design and make, and that the descendants of the Persians and others who had made the buildings that were once the glory of ancient Baghdad had lost the cunning of their forefathers through lack of encouragement and demand upon their rich resources of talent.

"I foresee that much money and labour is required to repair the waste of energy and material of those lost centuries. I hope to establish a firm government under the tutelage of the British nation, to which I look as a child to its mother. I fully realize that without British aid it will be impossible for the Iraq to make even the first step towards regeneration. If that assistance is withheld, the country will inevitably fall a prey to internal dissensions, and Baghdad and Basrah, as well as the smaller provincial towns, will again have to throw up fortifications to protect them from marauding tribes. I am of opinion that without help from some Power strong enough to protect us from outside enemies and to aid us financially the Iraq must inevitably fall into a state lower than any that has yet befallen it in the whole of its chequered history. But I feel assured of your support, which will suffice to keep out exterior enemies. I am confident in our ability to raise a

local army, sufficient in strength and quality to compel unruly tribesmen to respect the Central Government, and anticipate no serious trouble from that quarter. Once an Arab government, holding the confidence of the country, is firmly established, industry and commerce will revive. There is much money in the country, especially in Baghdad and Basrah. Hundreds of local tradesmen who now hide their money will put it into circulation once the future of the country is guaranteed.

"With regard to improvements in education, I think we can do no better than follow the course laid down by you, which has already produced such good effects.

"In order to advance agriculture, irrigation schemes on a very large scale, necessitating a considerable outlay of money, are necessary. I am confident of being able to procure money for that purpose, and make an early start with some of the excellent projects already planned.

"The development of construction is dependent upon the material prosperity of the country. It can be greatly accelerated by the cheapening of building material, and with that in view it is intended to hasten the construction of the railway line already mapped out from Baghdad to the Mediterranean Sea. I place this railway in the first line of our projects for restoring the Iraq to its former greatness. Pending completion of the railway, we mean to have a road constructed along the route of the proposed line, and open up communications at once with the sea by means of motor transport. There are certain difficulties to be met with, such as water provision and the security of the road from Beduin raiders, but we do not consider them to be in any way insurmountable. We shall find means to bring the Beduin tribes of the desert to understand that their co-operation in such a scheme will be of benefit to them."

Referring to criticisms that had lately appeared in the French Press, the Amir authorized me to state that his policy is to work in complete harmony with French interests wherever they affect him, that he is, and always has been, a friend of France. It grieves him to see that he is misunderstood, but he is determined that, whatever happens, nothing shall ever make him commit an act of violence against that great nation.

The Amir was proclaimed King on August 23 with the almost unanimous approval of the nation. Although he would never have been elected without our support, it is only fair to say that he has scored a great personal success,

and has already gone a long way towards convincing the nation that he is worthy of its confidence. A marked change has already been produced in Basrah by the public speeches made by King Faisal in Baghdad soon after his arrival there. His utterances were characterized by a spirit of liberality, breadth of view, and religious tolerance that was particularly pleasing to the people of that town. For there is no town in the whole East where religious differences are so little in evidence as Basrah. There Christians, Jews, and Mohammedans fraternize together freely in the business, public, and social life of the town, and all sects take an equal part in the administration of it. All the business-men of the city, without distinction of class or religion, congregate together in the great central square every evening at sundown to drink coffee and discuss the affairs of the day, and the dominant note is an intense local patriotism.

The King's speeches show him to be animated with an ardent and sincere desire to restore the Iraq to its former glory. He appealed to all classes of the community to sink their differences of race and religion and think of themselves as Iraqis first. He asked them all to join with him in working for the welfare of the new state. He promised that the future government should be democratic in every sense of the word, and that hard work and ability would be the only roads to recognition and advancement. He said that having thrown off the yoke of the oppressor, all the people of the Iraq were now anxious to see their country independent and free to work out their national ideals. He promised them complete independence, security, and perfect freedom, and to every community, however small, full encouragement and help to develop on its own lines, provided they coincided with the welfare of the Iraq as a nation.

In a speech he delivered at the Chaldean Church, Baghdad, he asked for the confidence of that community in the following words, which are quoted from the *Times of Mesopotamia* of August 5, 1921: "Allow me to say this: For 700 years the Iraq has been under foreign rule, changing from one despotism to another, until it has reached its present condition. For every 200 years of past misrule, give me one year; come to me at the end of four years and I will give you an account of my stewardship." These were strong words, but I firmly believe that if he lives he is capable of carrying them out, provided the British Government stands firm as his supporter.

For it must be understood that neither Faisal nor any candidate would stand a chance of being nominated King of Iraq without our support.

What we should now avoid at all costs is a further change of policy. The Arab cannot by nature think in the abstract; he is a child in that respect, and people who have dealings with him must be mindful of that fact if they wish to gain his confidence. Speeches and promises do not move him. He bases his judgment purely upon acts. We have now an opportunity of regaining his lost confidence in us. We had the complete confidence of the Arabs of Mesopotamia up to the date of the Armistice. If we had then done what we are now doing, that is, set up a government in accordance with our declared principle of self-determination, compatible with the economical condition of the country, and giving full play to national aspirations, there would, perhaps, not have been a revolution in Iraq.

We alienated the Arabs of the river area by not giving to those Iraqians who were qualified by past experience, and entitled by the positions they had held in the former administration of the country, to hold important posts, a place in our administration; and, in many cases, raising men who had held inferior posts, or none, in the Turkish Administration to positions of confidence and trust.

The excuse put forward that we did not know what the future state of the country was to be, that we had to wait for the verdict of the Peace Conference before we could set up a local government of any form, was untenable from their point of view, because they considered that there was much more justification for putting up a provisional government in the form of a Council made up of representatives of the people than there was for setting up an expensive administration on a financial scale that the country could not support.

There were many men in Mesopotamia who had held important offices under the Turkish Administration, and were well fitted and disposed to work under us. These men saw their places being filled by an ever-increasing number of young officers, among whom were men who, although picked out for their good qualities, lacked administrative experience, knowledge of the language, people, and country. It was inevitable that such officers, through inexperience, should be at the mercy of sycophants, who made it impossible for honest men to get a hearing, with the result that free expression of opinion through proper channels was, in their districts, almost entirely suppressed.

When the revolution broke out there were no Arabs in the administration occupying positions that would qualify them to proffer advice. It was the men who might have occupied such positions who fomented the troubles and eventually brought about the revolution which cost us such an enormous amount in lives, money, and prestige.

The wells of speech lie deep down in the heart. Sympathy alone will attract confidence. You cannot know a people until you know that people's language. To learn it is to acquire a new soul, for it is to see all things from a different view-point, and the more different the language, the more different the point of view.

All our administrators should always remember the above in their dealings with eastern races. The Arab in particular is quick to respond to sympathy and confidence, especially from Englishmen in whom he has learnt to trust. On the other hand, he is quick to recognize the man who is out to outwit him, and will either retire completely, or use flattery and deceit to gain his ends, according to his individual temperament. That is the type of man we have to deal with in Mesopotamia. It will take much to regain his trust in us, but it can be done by supporting the present Iraq State as we have promised.

None is better fitted to represent us in Mesopotamia than the present High Commissioner, who, as far as he is himself concerned, has the entire confidence of every man in that country. "Kaks," as the Arabs call him, is known and revered in every household.

THE NEW FRENCH COLONIAL GOVERNMENT BILL

BY ROGER DE BELLEVAL

ON April 12, 1921, M. Albert Sarraut, Minister for the Colonies, presented to the Chamber of Deputies the draft of a Bill to establish a general programme of policy for the French Colonies. This project has entailed considerable labour. It lays down the essential principles of French Colonial policy, establishes a precise and detailed inventory of the resources of France beyond the seas, and outlines the measures which it is proposed to adopt and the works which it is necessary to undertake in order to mobilize the resources of the French Colonies. The preamble of the Bill which sets out the motives of the project is of very great importance, because it constitutes as it were a Magna Charta for the French Colonies, and defines in a clear and precise manner the policy which France intends to follow with regard to her overseas possessions. After the period of conquest, it declares, there follows the period of development for the occupied regions. "The hour has come when it has become necessary to substitute a general and precise policy for ill-defined and isolated measures." There has been enough of uncertainty and confusion in the process of developing the French Colonies ; it is expedient to-day that we should unravel the tangled skein of complicated principles and set up a programme which will serve as a guide and direction for future development. This is an important duty for France, and, paradoxical though it may seem, victorious France of to-day must now make an effort by no means less vigorous than that undertaken by the defeated France

1889 (Vol. XVIII.) Hultzsch drew attention to the great Kashmiri historical work, Kalhana's "Rajatarangini," which Stein subsequently made his own.

In the first year of the joint editorship, Sir George Grierson appeared as a writer for the first time with a summary of the "Alhakhand" as the commencement of many papers on Indian literature. He was followed in the next year, 1886 (Vol. XV.), by Lady Grierson with her "English-Gipsy Index," followed in her turn in this study by her husband on "Indian Gipsies" in 1887 (Vol. XVI.) and later. This made her the second lady contributor, Mrs. F. A. Steel being the first, but in the same volume Mrs. J. K. Kabraji (Putlibai Wadia) was the first non-European lady contributor with her "Western Indian Folk-Tales." The courageous Ramabai (R. D. M.) was the second in a like capacity. In 1887 Mr. J. Hinton Knowles's "Kashmiri Tales" appeared, which afterwards became a book, while in 1889 (Vol. XVIII.) Taw Sein Ko started on his important Burmese folklore series. In another direction Colonel Jacob, in 1886, initiated his studies in Hindu philosophy, while Numismatics were well represented by Stein, Rodgers, Fleet, and Kielhorn.

The work of these seven years might well be further dilated upon, so as to bring to light again well-known names of the past, if space allowed, but it is now necessary to pass on to the story of the next twenty, when the responsibility fell upon myself alone, both as editor and proprietor, from 1892 to 1911 inclusive.

¶*To be continued.*)

THE ASIATIC REVIEW

OCTOBER, 1922

MESOPOTAMIA: THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

BY SIR ARNOLD T. WILSON,

K.C.I.E., C.S.I., C.M.G.

(Formerly Acting Civilian Commissioner in Mesopotamia)

FOR the past two years we have been accustomed to read in daily newspapers "powerful articles" calling upon us to drive from office a Government which, amongst other things, insists on remaining in Mesopotamia.

The writers of these articles, discordantly, but with an insistence and with a wealth of captions which obscure rather than reveal to the public the true issues, assert, amongst other things :

1. That we cannot afford to bear the financial burden involved by the Mandate, amounting to eight million sterling annually, with a prospect of reduction to, say, four millions.

2. That we cannot afford in any case to bear the cost of future military and other expenditure in which we shall be involved if we accept the Mandate.

3. That the people of Mesopotamia do not want us, that this fact exonerates us from the charge of breaking faith with them, as any agreements which we may have concluded during or since 1915 were in substance, if not in form, bilateral, and implied the active consent and co-operation of the inhabitants of the countries whose future was at issue.

4. That we should therefore abandon all interest in, or responsibility for, the internal affairs of Mesopotamia and

Arabia, and *a fortiori* of Turkey in Asia, and permit the various races concerned to work out their own salvation, even though this should involve prolonged anarchy, such as they have not known for the past three centuries.

5. That His Majesty's Government were, and are still, influenced in their policy in the Middle East by the existence of oil deposits near Mosul, of unknown extent and value.

Now, no one who has personal knowledge of the trend of the Middle Eastern policy of the Allies since 1915 will be disposed to deny that errors of policy, of direction, and of execution have been committed at Headquarters in Whitehall and in the Quai d'Orsay, and on the spot in Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Arabia during the past seven years.

Students of our Middle Eastern policies may well doubt, in the light of actual happenings, whether the "men on the spot" were better qualified to forecast the future and to guide British policy than the permanent officials and politicians at home.

But they may also reflect that, wretched as His Majesty's Government is, and always has been, in the eyes of its masters, the British public, an impartial observer would probably agree that it is the most stable and, as regards external affairs, the best organized Government in the world, and realizing, as since the Great War we all do, with what little wisdom the world is governed, they may be disposed to agree with the Duke of Wellington, who wrote from Spain in 1811:

"I acknowledge that I was much concerned to find that persons whose opinions were likely to have great weight in England have delivered erroneous opinions, as I thought, respecting affairs in this country, and I prized their judgments so highly, at the same time that I was certain of the error of the opinion which they had delivered, that I was induced to attribute their conduct to the excess of the spirit of the Party."

But politicians and business-men, who jointly carry on

their shoulders the heavy responsibility of deciding in what channels abroad the nation's commercial activities can most wisely be directed, in order that our export trade—without which we must perish—may again be restored to its former volume, recognize that an unwise restriction of our liabilities abroad may be as calamitous in its results to British commerce as would be a decision on the part of a progressive wholesale export firm to close all foreign agencies which did not show an immediate cash profit.

The question at issue is, it is submitted, not whether we can afford to stay in Mesopotamia, but whether we can afford to go. What would be involved as far as can be seen by our departure from the Iraq? This has not, as far as I know, been publicly discussed by any of the advocates of immediate evacuation.

It is not probable that the present Arab Government, consisting of King Faisal and a Grand Council, would long survive the withdrawal of British assistance; and it is improbable that it would be succeeded by a stable central Government at Baghdad. At first a number of unstable organizations would be evolved, with centres perhaps at Basrah, Baghdad, and Mosul, with varying boundaries, and mutually hostile, but not really under the control of any single chief or organized council. Like Ishmael, his prototype, the desert Arab would remain as always with his hand against every man; the Kurds would obey none and plunder all.

Commerce, the life-blood of the East not less than of the West, would languish still further; and the people who within ten years have spurned the Turks and acclaimed the English, whom in turn they have been induced by a political gang to spurn in favour of an Arab Government, of whom it seems they are now tiring, would demand, in the absence of any practicable alternative, the return of the Turks.

And the Turks would return, for they have a traditional ability to rule alien races of their own faith, which is

excelled, and has indeed been attempted, by no other race; and though their methods are the antithesis of all that we hold right, they continued until 1914 to hold together an Asiatic Empire second in size only to that of Great Britain, in face of the organized competition and the vast resources of all the Great Powers, with only occasional secessions, such as Cyprus, Egypt, and Tripoli, and continued to govern with the consent of the majority of their subjects, where these were Muhammadans.

Is there any practicable alternative to their return? It is conceivable, of course, that were His Majesty King Faisal forced by sickness or by his own inclinations to abandon the rôle which has been imposed on him (and which he has filled so creditably), that Mesopotamia could for some years be governed by a High Commissioner with the assistance of a Grand Council. This solution, which was favoured soon after the Armistice by large sections of responsible Arab opinion in Mesopotamia, was then regarded by His Majesty's Government as being inconsistent with the terms of the Mandate; and it was, moreover, rejected in 1920 by the politically-minded classes in the large towns—Basrah always excepted—as involving a degree of foreign control which was inconsistent with the due attainment of Arab aims.

It might have acted for a limited period of years had it been adopted in 1919. It would not succeed now; we cannot retrace our steps. In any case, it would require more troops than this country is able or willing to supply. Another member of the Sharifian dynasty might possibly accept office, and would doubtless be asked to do so by His Majesty's Government; but it is unlikely that he would for long endure the climatic severities and cultural peculiarities of Baghdad, which are dissimilar to those of Syria or the Hejaz; and unless His Majesty's Government are prepared to administer the country directly, as they did for a period before and after the Armistice, they must, I think, be prepared to see the Turks return.

What would be the effect of their return ? Mesopotamia is a country of minorities. There are more Jews in Baghdad than in the whole of Palestine. There are more Christians in Baghdad and Mosul than in Syria; and the French Government, which has so long interested itself in the welfare of Christian communities in Turkey (other than Greeks), would scarcely be entirely indifferent to their fate, whilst it can scarcely be supposed that they will prosper in the event of the return of the Turk triumphant from the defeat of Christian powers on the Mediterranean coast of Turkey in Asia. The return of the Turk to Mesopotamia would probably synchronize roughly with his return to Syria, in which case the abandonment of the Mandate of Palestine would only be a matter of time, and the position of Great Britain on the Suez Canal gravely imperilled. This is no mere flight of fancy; it is the universal testimony of experienced travellers in Trans-Jordania and Palestine during the past few months that public opinion in both areas, but especially the former, is deeply moved by the grant of the Rutenberg Concession, which covers parts of Trans-Jordania as well as of Palestine, and by misapprehensions as to the extent of the Mandate. Bloodshed seems inevitable if any attempt is made to give effect to the schemes of Mr. Rutenberg so far as they affect Trans-Jordania.

Nor is the position in Central Arabia more promising. The abandonment in Mesopotamia of the Mandate by Great Britain would be the signal for further acts of aggression on the part of the Wahabis against the Euphrates' towns, which are defenceless against an invasion from the desert. So long as we have a force at Baghdad, Najaf, and Karbala, they will not be seriously attacked.

The Arab Government cannot defend them. A Turkish Government could and would, for though there is little love lost between Sunni and Shiah, sectarian leaders in these towns have not failed in recent years to keep in touch with the Turks, although during the War they took a leading

part in inciting the Arabs to eject all Turkish officials from the Euphrates region.

What would be the effect of the return of the Turk on British interests? That is the question we may fairly ask ourselves even in these days of altruism in high places, for self-interest on the broadest lines must still remain the only safe guide in international affairs. We may reasonably claim that we know what is good for ourselves, but we are on less safe ground when we attempt to regulate our conduct by what we believe to be good for others. Existing British commercial interests in the strictest and most limited sense would not, I believe, in the long run seriously suffer. British traders have learnt during the past two or three centuries how to conduct their business all over the world without Government support, and have relied upon the honesty of their methods and the independence of the political aims of their own Government to gain the confidence of the rulers of countries in which they work, and have not been unsuccessful. To quote the representative of the Honourable East India Company at Basrah, writing in the early part of the seventeenth century "to his loving friends" at Bombay (I quote from memory): "As for the Turks, wretches though they be, good policy demands that we maintain an appearance of friendship with them, and as we are, so we hope to continue."

But whilst "British trade," in the narrowest sense of the term, would continue whatever form of Government existed in Mesopotamia, provided it was reasonably stable, so long as we have goods to sell and can sell them as cheap, or cheaper, than other nations, the greater work of developing the natural resources of the Iraq would come to a standstill immediately we abandoned our political responsibilities there. And it is in work of this kind that the West can do most to help the East: our title to advise and guide Eastern races in matters scientific is not yet disputed. Western political and economic theory is discredited, but Western science is in high esteem. It is universally agreed

that the political progress of the country is limited, amongst other things, by the educational standard of the people at large, which cannot be raised except, *pari passu*, with the standard of living ; and there is good reason to think that, unless the latent resources of the country are developed, no great change can take place in the standard of living nor in the total population, which now stands at the low figure of two and three-quarter millions, less than twenty to the square mile.

These latent resources are mainly agricultural, and can be developed by local enterprise, aided by foreign capital, foreign machinery, and foreign scientists. At the International Cotton Congress at Stockholm, three months ago, a speaker claimed that Iraq could produce a million bales of cotton of long staple, equal to best Egyptian, annually, under a proper system of irrigation. There is every reason to think that this is not an exaggerated estimate, and the world needs cotton.

Other staples, such as dates, wheat, barley, skins, wool, etc., can be produced in far larger quantities and of better quality than at present, if science be brought to the aid of the tiller of the soil, as it is beginning to be under the present regime by an Agricultural Department staffed by wise and patient enthusiasts. Oil there is in unknown quantity and of unknown quality, some 300 miles from the sea, but it will be years before it will be a source of profit to anyone owing to difficulties of exploitation, for, as far ahead as it is possible to look, agriculture must be the main source of wealth, and irrigation the principal instrument of the agriculturist ; thus alone can the barren wastes of Mesopotamia, which obsess our publicists, in their Fleet Street offices, as grievously as they obsessed our soldiers in 1916, be made to support life and an organized Government.

But "British interests" and "British commercial interests" are not synonymous terms, though the former includes the latter. His Majesty's Government have to

consider the effect of their policy upon other nations, signatories to the Treaty of Versailles and to the unratified Treaty of Sèvres. To abandon our Mandate in Mesopotamia will mean that the French must abandon theirs in Syria. It will probably mean the disappearance of the kingdom of the Hejaz. We have in the past prided ourselves—not, perhaps, with very good reason—on having kept our word as a nation, although in international political circles the spirit of compromise and of readiness to bow to force, whether exercised by majorities or minorities, which informs our Press, our Parliament, and our political leaders, has given us the reputation abroad embodied in the phrase “Perfide Albion.”

The word “prestige” has been much misused in the past, but it exists nevertheless. Our prestige is the good name and reputation of Great Britain, and, by an association of ideas, of Britons all over the world. It is our greatest asset, the priceless inheritance of every subject of His Majesty King George V. who travels abroad. Let us not lightly endanger it. “A good life hath few days,” saith Ecclesiasticus, “but a good name endureth for ever.”

It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss the bearing on current events of our past or present actions in Mesopotamia, nor is it intended to discuss possible alternative forms of government. But on the general question it may be remarked that in the writer's view the real issue under the Mandatory system is the nature of the sovereign powers to be exercised by the ruler in Mandated territory. The fact is that the Treaty of Versailles involves a fresh conception of sovereignty. Either a country must be independent, in which case there is no question of a Mandate, although it may voluntarily accept assistance (*cf.* Persia), or it is not independent, although it may enjoy a high degree of autonomy. The very word sovereignty is in these days somewhat out of date, as it connotes so many grades of autonomy within the British Empire. Under Article 22 of the League of Nations the Mandatory power undertakes

responsibility for the well-being and development of the people in respect of which it accepts a Mandate, and the people in this state are described as under tutelage. This involves the ultimate exercise of authority by the Mandatory Power. The requirements of the Mandatory system are thus inconsistent with the Anglo-French Declaration of November, 1918, and with our previous undertakings to the Arabs, and involve us in diplomatic insincerities which it is not possible for us to explain away. The tribes and cultivators in Mesopotamia are still our friends in that they trust us rather than the rulers of their own race, and desire that we should remain and exercise some degree of supervision over them. A popular poem advocating Arab independence, widely circulated in Baghdad during 1920, contained the remarkable but true statement that the tribes and cultivators loved the British, and if anything was to be done in the way of revolution, it must be done by townspeople who enjoyed a monopoly of proper patriotic spirit.

We have not yet discovered any means of enabling the tribes and cultivators in Mesopotamia to make their voices heard in an orderly manner. The Electoral law which was promised some years ago has not yet seen the light. If a system could be devised which would make it possible for the population outside the towns to exercise that influence in public affairs to which they are entitled by their enormous numerical preponderance and by the great proportion of revenue they contribute, there would be great hopes for the future prosperity of the country; but the sooner the Mandate disappears and is replaced by a treaty assigning for a period of years the relations which are to exist between the British and the people of that country the better it will be for all concerned.

Such a course will involve international difficulties, of course, as we hold our position in Mesopotamia by virtue of the Mandate which we have accepted; but the matter is in reality one of form rather than one of substance, and it should not be impossible to find some such solution.

There is another consideration of a general nature which we should do well to bear in mind. Everywhere in Europe, as pointed out by that excellent periodical the *New Statesman*, and indeed in Asia, we see gangs defying Governments, and Governments apparently incapable of suppressing them. A gang is always the enemy of the State, even if its original object is a perfectly proper one. The Bolsheviks began as a gang, though they at present claim to be a Government. The Facisti in Italy and the adherents of Gandhi in India are gangs, and there are gangs in Mesopotamia; and these gangs, although confessedly a minority, do not shrink from bloodshed or worse in order that their will, rather than the will of the nation, may prevail. The Arab dislikes gangs of idealists as much as he dislikes gangs of criminals, and there is no reason to believe that he will for long tolerate the existence of gangs, whether they pose as rebels or as monarchists, when they begin to interfere with his personal liberty.

To abandon Mesopotamia will be to surrender to a gang, and will make us less able to resist pressure in other parts of the world. We have spent, the papers tell us, 350,000,000 pounds in Mesopotamia. We may not hope to recover a fraction of this sum from the country. It was a part, and a small part, of our contribution to the Great War. We have sown there the seeds of personal liberty and of progress; we have inspired hopes amongst peoples who still look to us, with all our faults, with confidence. Let us not lightly abandon our efforts, nor be too ready to count the cost in terms of money, lest we lose what every businessman knows to be more valuable than money—namely, credit, or, in other words, our good name. As Francis Bacon says in his essay "On Plantations":

"It is the sinfulness thing in the world to forsake or destitute a plantation once in forwardness; for, beside the dishonour, it is the guiltiness of blood of many commiserable persons."

THE GREEK DEFEAT AND BRITISH POLICY

BY SIR ABBAS ALI BAIG, K.C.I.E., C.S.I., LL.D.

THE sword of Mustapha Kemal has cut the Gordian knot in Asia Minor, and the splendid opportunity which was within the grasp of British statesmanship of re-establishing friendly relations between Great Britain and Islam has been thrown away. The last effort of Fethy Bey, the Angora representative, to approach Downing Street met with a curt rebuff. Whatever faith Muslim India had in the sincerity of a desire on the part of the British Cabinet to bring about an equitable solution of the complications in the Near East was largely destroyed by the Prime Minister's pro-Greek speech in the House of Commons on August 4. That impolitic utterance showed that the high-sounding British pledges of 1918, which in some measure were embodied in the barren resolutions of the Paris Conference of March last under French persuasion, were not only to remain unbacked by any effective action, but were to be reversed in the direction of further incitements to the Greeks to tighten their grip on Turkish homelands. A little over a week after this fresh provocation to the Ottoman Nationalists the Angora Council of War decided not to delay the offensive, which has swiftly demonstrated to the world that the Prime Minister's glowing picture of Greek prowess, which aspired to the crowning of Constantine in the Mosque of St. Sophia, was delusive. The victories of the Turks, which within a fortnight after the first onslaught on August 26, have either completely shattered or captured the Greek army, except the Third Army Corps, and have swept its remnants out of Asia Minor, fully justify the view of Marshal Foch and Sir Henry Wilson, whose expert advice was set aside by the Supreme Council to gratify the vaulting ambition of M. Venizelos to possess "Naboth's Vineyard" as a step towards the realization of his grandiose scheme