

view. The treasuries may be empty, but the policy of the Empire, viz., its steady expansion, is never allowed to flag for want of funds. If British enterprise is proud of the Canadian-Pacific Railway, Russia has double reason to be proud of those railways which link St. Petersburg and Moscow with the Pamirs and the shores of the Pacific. The honour of crying "One better" to the Russian achievement is apparently reserved for Mr. Cecil Rhodes. The wealthiest empire of the world, Great Britain, with its dependency of "Ind," is guided in its expenditure by other principles, and sets aside, on the plea of paucity of funds, measures of frontier defence, territorial aggrandizement, and colonial and commercial enterprise which, from an Imperial point of view, it would seem needful to undertake without delay. Little Englanders may clamour and protest, but empires will expand. The press of India has of late developed a strong taint of "little Englandism." The origin of this development is to be sought in the unsatisfactory issue of the several frontier expeditions which the Government of India undertook in 1897. The heavy sacrifice of blood and money, contrasted with the worthless results achieved, was made so manifest that public opinion could not blind itself to the obvious conclusion that those "punitive" expeditions were in no way profitable. Even so popular a man as Lord Roberts, whom the Ministry in power put up in the House of Lords to defend the forward policy, failed to carry conviction to the hearts of Indian editors. Nevertheless, the Indian editor did not hit the right nail on the head. The mistake which the Government of India had made was in allowing itself to be drawn into futile forays, instead of nursing its strength in troops and money for the purpose of establishing its authority on those parts of the frontier which are threatened by a really dangerous opponent. The Pathan tribes are *une quantité négligeable*. Sir R. May and General Ellis might have spared India a Tirah expedition by one prompt move at the first. "Trounce them whenever they touch you" should be the motto, otherwise ignore or boycott them.

It is some fifty years or more since Englishmen began to look forward to the day when a railway would connect India with Europe ; forty years ago the Euphrates Valley Railway looked feasible enough. Now the project of an Indo-Mediterranean or Indo-European line bristles with obstacles. A century ago Great Britain supported the Sultan of Turkey in establishing his authority in Turkish Arabia ;* and forty-five years ago she spent millions to protect the Ottoman Empire against Russia. Now all is changed. England is in no mood to help the Turk, and the feeling is reciprocated. In the intervening years since the Crimean War, France, Russia, and Germany have all been busy in Syria ; busy in acquiring influence there, and in constructing railways. German enterprise in particular has been most active in making a railway from Scutari to Angora, a line which will be undoubtedly extended to Kaiserich, and thence onward to the Euphrates Valley. It is but a revival, in a modified form, of the Chesney project which Lord Palmerston rejected in 1856 in deference to French susceptibilities. Such a line will naturally form a junction with the Beyrout-Damascus-Palmyra Railway ; and in this joint line we may possibly find the solution of the long-talked-of Euphrates Valley scheme. Another prospective solution of it lies in the continuation of the Russian Railway system in the Caucasus south-eastward through Tabriz, Teheran, and Ispahan to the Persian Gulf. This line, if constructed (as the St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Daily Mail* stated recently it would be by a Russian syndicate before 1901, in which year the Russian right of veto on the construction of railways in Persia by foreign Powers lapses), would most probably meet the projected Trans-Caspian-Persian-Gulf line at or near Kirman. The mountain ranges of S.E. Persia mean difficult and costly engineering. In 1898 the Vienna correspondent of the *Times* sprung on the public the rumour of the grant of a concession to a combined

* Mr. T. C. Plowden (then Resident at Baghdad, now at Hyderabad, Deccan), in *Fortnightly Review*, 1884.

British, Russian, French, and Belgian syndicate for a railway from Tripoli (north of Beyrout) to Koweit on the Persian Gulf. The rumour remains a rumour. It is most unlikely that, in view of the friendship existing between the Emperor William II. and the Sultan, any such concession would be made to a syndicate on which Germany is not represented. Some ten years or so ago Germany took small interest in Baghdad. Later on she sent a private agent there, and a year or two afterwards nominated that agent Consul. Germany is now a factor that must be taken into account in all that affects Turkish Arabia, and her Consul was of opinion some years back that British interests there needed more careful watching than they received. Since the Crimean days Russia's frontiers have been pushed southward, and her ambitions and intrigues still more so. Even the Emir of Nejd is not beyond the reach of her emissaries. It is through, or just to the north of, the territory of Nejd that the Trans-Arabian Railway from Suez to Koweit, which Mr. Black first proposed and others have since advocated, would pass. To say much about such a line, in the existing state of our knowledge of the country, and in the uncertainty which must attend any scheme in a land the future of which cannot possibly be foretold, is unnecessary; but bearing in mind that it will traverse a barren, unproductive tract, that it will have as a rival the Euphrates Valley Railway already described as likely to be constructed under German auspices, and that, in the event of its being debarred from rounding the northern end of the Persian Gulf, and being brought into direct junction viâ Persia and Baluchistan with the Indian railway system, it would have to terminate at Koweit or some other point on the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf, and thence connect with Karachi by a service of steamers—bearing all this in mind, we say the prospect of a Trans-Arabian railway ever being constructed is at present seemingly remote. The time no doubt will come when again (as a century ago) the Sultan will be unable

to enforce his authority in Turkish Arabia. England will not then use her power, as she did on the first occasion, to re-establish the Sultan's authority, but to secure to herself some recompense for the years during which she has maintained law and order in Turkish and Persian waters, and along the Turkish and Persian coasts. This work she has done single-handed—as absolutely single-handed as she was in 1882 when she quelled rebellion in Egypt. France, thwarted on the Nile, has now sought to embarrass us at Muscat. French diplomatic methods in these days bear a marked resemblance to those which we have long recognised as characteristic of her ally Russia. France, in intriguing in the Persian Gulf, is probably only acting as Russia's cat's-paw, a rôle which the Franco-Russian *entente* imposes on her. Russia herself has no old-standing rights in these waters; but she means to have a port there. Every year she draws nearer to the object she has in view. She never loses a pretext. The recent bombardment of Lingah by the Darya-begi might almost have given Russian agents their opening for interposition. It will come sooner or later. In our future political action in the Persian Gulf, we will have to reckon with Russia. If England wants a railway from India through Southern Persia to the Medjterranean, the Government of the Czar desires a port on the Persian Gulf, and a railway or railways to it. On these points the two Powers must come to an understanding, unless one or the other, or both, prefer war. A few years ago the present Viceroy in India wrote thus: "England does not demand that the Gulf should be a *mare clausum* against foreign trade. But at least she must and does claim . . . that no hostile political influence shall introduce its discordant features upon the scene." The political influences are now there—French, German, and Russian. France has a coaling station, Germany undoubtedly meditates an Angora-Baghdad - Koweit Railway, while Russia projects two railways to, and seeks a port on, the Gulf. Whether these rival political influences lead to war or compromise, we can

at least lose nothing by being in force on the spot, and that we shall not be until we have made our military strength in Western Baluchistan on a par with that naval predominance which we possess on the Persian Gulf. Had Sir Robert Sandeman lived, that military strength would have now been a reality, not an aspiration. It was his aim to extend British influence to the Persian border, and Lord Curzon, in his "Persia," has declared his acquiescence in that policy. He has now the best of opportunities for repairing the neglect of the past. A worthless Mir at Kelat, and the impending rivalry of other European Powers in and around the Persian Gulf, are arguments that will convince all but the "Little Englander."

That our influence in S.E. Persia is not such as it should be may be gathered from the very meagre satisfaction which we obtained for the murder of Mr. Greaves two years ago. The British Resident at Bushire, supported by our naval forces in the Gulf, did all he could to avenge the dastardly outrage, but the Persian authorities and troops made a mere show of assisting him. Had we at that time had an adequate force stationed in S.W. Baluchistan, either Mr. Greaves' murder would not have occurred, or our troops would have made escape for his murderers much more difficult. Similarly the attack on Captain Burn and the rebellion of Baluch Khan* would probably not have taken place. Had Sir Robert Sandeman lived, we fully believe that he would have induced the Government of India to locate at Kej, or Panjgur or some other suitable place for a military station, a body of troops sufficient to overawe the local tribes and their chiefs. Since Sir Robert Sandeman's death, British influence in Mekran has been allowed to slumber. The Political Officer of the district resides at Karachi, and visits his charge once a year with an escort behind him. He is being continually changed, and ap-

* Aply suppressed by Colonel Mayne. The Government still declines to grant the frontier medal for this well-conducted and successful little expedition.

parently anyone is good enough for the post. On several occasions a Telegraph or Survey official has been directed to assume political charge of the vast tract extending from Sonmiani and Las Beila to the frontier of Persia. It is not by means and men and measures such as these that British interests and prestige will be maintained in this great stretch of territory; nor is it thus that we shall place ourselves in a position to cope with Russia's ambitions. In 1893, when at Sir James Browne's instance the Government of India disposed Mir Khudadad Khan of Kelat, a valuable opportunity was lost of substituting an efficient British for an effete Brahmin rule. Since then, and more especially during the last two years, an unusual recurrence of rebellious outbreaks and murderous outrages has indicated that Baluchistan is not in a satisfactory state. The new Mir, Mahmud Khan, has proved incompetent. His misgovernment and want of influence with his people would now justify the Government of India in curtailing the limits of his rule, and in establishing British authority certainly in all the outlying frontier and coast districts of the Province of Baluchistan.

While enumerating the various schemes for an Indo-European railway, we do not overlook the one which, *primâ facie*, presents the earliest prospect of linking Europe with India. We refer to the Merv-Herat-Chaman line. Mr. J. M. Maclean, M.P., and other public speakers and writers, have advocated the junction of Chuman by rail with Shaikh Jowain. Those who know "the Frontier" more intimately generally oppose it. The force of juxtaposition, however, is hard to resist. It is but 600 miles from Shaikh Jowain to Chaman. From Angora to Karachi is a distance of 2,500 miles, more than half of which is desert. There are those who argue that if England and Russia agree to link up their termini, the Amir of Afghanistan must and will acquiesce. They are possibly reckoning without their host. The Amir Abdurrahman Khan is an astute and stubborn man, and very