AFGHANISTAN AND THE AFGHANS: BEING A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY, AND ACCOUNT OF ITS PEOPLE, WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PRESENT CRISIS AND WAR WITH THE AMIR SHER ALI KHAN

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649039050

Afghanistan and the Afghans: Being a Brief Review of the History of the Country, and Account of Its People, with a Special Reference to the Present Crisis and War with the Amir Sher Ali Khan by H. W. Bellew

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

www.triestepublishing.com

H. W. BELLEW

AFGHANISTAN AND THE AFGHANS: BEING A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY, AND ACCOUNT OF ITS PEOPLE, WITH A SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE PRESENT CRISIS AND WAR WITH THE AMIR SHER ALI KHAN

Trieste

Afghanistan and the Afghans:

BEING A

BRIEF REVIEW OF THE HISTORY OF THE COUNTRY,
AND ACCOUNT OF ITS PEOPLE,

WITH A

SPECIAL REFERENCE

TO

THE PRESENT CRISIS AND WAR WITH THE
AMIR SHER ALI KHAN.

By H. W. BELLEW, C.S.I.

Author of "Journal of a Mission to Kandahar in 1857-8;" "The Indus to the Tigris;" "Kashmir and Kashghar;" "Dictionary and Grammar of the Pushtoo Language;" "History of the Yusufzeis," &c.

London:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.
1879.

PREFACE.

The final rupture between our Government and the Amir of Kabul, which has been impending at any time during the past four or five years—and which assumed a more threatening aspect after his contemptuous treatment of the Viceroy's polite invitation to the Imperial Assemblage at Delhi, by which act he signalized himself as the only independent ruler in diplomatic relations with the Government of India who refused to be represented at that august ceremony—has all of a sudden been brought prominently before the British people by the warlike action of Government

to resent the premeditated and unprovoked insult of a spoiled and petted barbarian neighbour who has mistaken conciliation for fear, and forbearance for weakness. And the circumstance has naturally led to the public discussion of the causes which have brought about this crisis in the relations heretofore subsisting between that Ruler and ourselves.

In the course of this discussion, as it is represented in the periodicals of the day by the utterances of those who are the guides of public opinion at home, one sees the subject treated piecemeal from different points of view, based upon an isolated occurrence, according to the information and bias of the author or speaker, but nowhere with a comprehensive grasp of the whole case; thus leaving the people to form their opinions upon incomplete premises.

Convinced as I am of the very great importance to our national interests of the thorough comprehension by the nation of the character of our previous relations, and of the nature of our final rupture with the Amir of Kabul, and assured as I am of our power to safeguard our own rights over the whole country which we have assisted him to hold as the frontier province of our own Empire in India, I have ventured to put together for submission to the consideration and inquiry of the nation a very brief account of the country and people ruled by the Amir with whom we are now at war.

The account is in the form of a connected summary of the principal events in the history of the country from the time it came into existence as an independent state, to the time of Sher Ali's defiance, and the march of our troops into his

territory; and it concludes with a short account of the main divisions of the country and the several races inhabiting it.

I have attempted to show from its past history, and the heterogeneous character of its population, how utterly unable the country is to maintain its independence as a friendly neighbour without our support, especially in face of the aggressive and disturbing policy pursued by Russia in Central Asia. For we must not lose sight of the fact that Russia is more than ever active in this quarter, and, despite the most solemn and reassuring promises made at St. Petersburg, does not for a moment cease from intrigue and aggression at Tashkand.

It is not a trivial occurrence that Russian officers should, by the Amir's order, find a welcome all over the country, and a Russian

Mission be entertained with unwonted distinction and hospitality at the capital for days before we in India became aware of even their intention to enter the country—an act in direct violation of the solemn pledges of the Russian Government to the contrary. And it becomes a decidedly serious occurrence when, with this friendly treatment offered to the stranger, we, the friends and neighbours of the Amir, and the benefactors to his dynasty, should be jealously excluded, and when our Government asks for the reception of its own Mission, the British Envoy should be threatened with violence, and unceremoniously repelled.

I have attempted to show that with Russia on the border—especially since this infringement of her engagements—the time has come when we can no longer trust to