

valuer appraised the treasures in this one room at considerably over £100,000. One great distinguishing feature was the number of each kind of printed rarity it contained. For example, one block book glorifies a library. Here were to be seen about fifteen, including the dated 1423 St. Christopher print, which, had it come to auction, might have brought thousands of pounds. Five Caxtons would make the reputation of any great public library; here were fifty-seven, four of them unique. Most libraries are content with one or two Wynkyn de Wordes, Pynsons, etc.; here were whole shelves filled with fine copies. In this room also were to be seen such bibliographical trifles as Tyndall's Pentateuch, 1534, and the only perfect copy known of Coverdale's 1537 Bible, the quarto edition. The collection of early Latin and German Bibles contains splendid copies of all the rarest editions. Some years ago Mr. Quaritch gave nearly £5,000 for a copy of the Mentz Psalter. At Althorp could be seen fine copies of both first and second editions, and a splendid copy of the third edition, printed, unlike the others, on paper. The mere enumeration of first editions of the classics on vellum, of the Aldines, of the English Bibles, of the folio Shakespeares, etc., would fill columns.

It is not to be wondered at that when it became known that Lord Spencer had concluded that he could no longer afford to indulge in the luxury of a library representing a value of about a million dollars, much anxiety was felt as to its fate. Fears were entertained that some American, with one of the long purses for which our neighbours are becoming so famous, would fasten upon the treasure and bring it across the Atlantic, in the wake of the many precious volumes which have of late years been brought westward. It was, therefore, with a feeling of relief that it was learned that the purchaser was an English lady, Mrs. Rylands, widow of the late John Rylands, who had been one of the merchant princes of Manchester. Relief was no doubt succeeded in many minds by pleasure and admiration when it became known further that the library had been bought as part of a large scheme in furtherance of which this liberal-minded lady had already expended within a few years a hundred thousand dollars, that scheme being to found a great library for presentation to the city of Manchester. It may interest some of our readers who are familiar with the state of things in English society to learn that the lady who had the taste to appreciate and the wealth to purchase the richest literary possession in England, a possession which Earl Spencer thought himself unable longer to afford, is described as a staunch Nonconformist. A question of more practical interest must await its answer in the future—the question, namely, whether the munificent donor designs that Manchester shall retain this great literary monopoly, or whether it may not be deemed more useful for the citizens, as well as more in accordance with the fitness of things, that some of those rare volumes which are so many times reduplicated in this collection should be distributed among the destitute in both hemispheres. The money which they would bring would go far to supply the Manchester library with copies of all the modern books worth having in Christendom.

THE SITUATION IN THE EAST.

THE situation in India at the present moment is most critical, and it is difficult to see how its outcome can be anything except war. The position of the Government of India in regard to it is perplexing in the extreme. On the one hand it is confronted by a rebellion in Afghanistan, which at any moment may terminate in the overthrow of the reigning Amir. On the other hand it has to deal with the veiled, but none the less active, aggression of Russia in the Pamirs. In the present article we propose to explain briefly the causes and probable results of the disturbances in Afghanistan, and the meaning and aims of Russian activity on the Kashmir frontier.

The kingdom of Afghanistan is in no sense a homogeneous one. It consists of a number of wild and lawless tribes which acknowledge under certain explorations the suzerainty of the ruler of Kabul, which more often than not are engaged in hostilities amongst themselves, and which can only be induced to act in concert when their independence is threatened by a common foe. Living as they do amidst sterile mountains and rocky fastnesses, interspersed here and there with fertile valleys, they are a race of hardy mountaineers, possessing in many respects the characteristics of the ancient Scottish Highlanders. Their character is a strange mixture of bravery and of ferocity, of treachery and of fanaticism. Holding human life in no regard, and firmly confident in the future awaiting every true believer of the prophet, they are as callous in taking the lives of others as they are careless in the sacrifice of their own. In summer they live amongst the mountains and pasture the cattle, in winter and spring they descend to the valleys and cultivate their fields. Their wealth consists chiefly of herds of camels, of

sheep and of cattle, and to dispose of them they will often penetrate as far north as Bombay and Madras. In stature the Pathans excel the ordinary European, and, as a rule, their bodies are lithe and active. Inured as they are to hardship, and accustomed as they are to the use of arms, the Afghans have ever proved themselves to be a brave and formidable enemy. In the olden days before the introduction of breech-loading rifles, and when the matchlock of the Afghan and the Brown Bess of the British soldier were much on a par, it was only by superior discipline and organization that the British were able to emerge victorious from their wars with Afghanistan. It is obvious that a kingdom composed of so many discordant elements and peopled by so brave and warlike a race can only be governed by a ruler of great strength and resolution. Such a ruler is Abdul Rahman, the present Amir of Afghanistan. Possessed of an indomitable will, sagacious, progressive and unscrupulous, Abdul Rahman rules his people with a rod of iron. Judged from a western standpoint he is bloodthirsty, revengeful and rapacious, but according to the standard prevailing in the East he is a wise and beneficent prince. Intolerant of opposition, and suspicious alike of friend and of foe, the severity of his rule has at times driven many of his subjects to rebel, but hitherto those rebellions have been quelled in the most summary and relentless manner. Fire and horrid mutilation and death have been meted out with incredible swiftness and uncompromising ferocity to the rebels, and yet in the ordinary administration of his country Abdul Rahman has in many respects proved himself a just and capable ruler. Sitting at the gate of the city he is ever ready to hear the cry of the fatherless and oppressed, and woe betide a judge or a governor convicted of injustice or peculation. Like Haroun al Raschid he wanders amongst his people in disguise, and in person detects abuses and hears outcries on his own policy. In addition he has established a postal service throughout Afghanistan, and in Kabul, under European supervision, he has founded a factory for the manufacture of arms, of cannon and of ammunition. Unfortunately, with the consolidation of his power, has grown a desire for the extension of his territory, and it is partly on account of this ambition that the existing rebellion is due. One of the most important and powerful tribes which for years past has acknowledged the suzerainty of the Amir is that of the Hazaras. Not content, however, with receiving an annual tribute from them, the Amir last year determined to impose additional taxes on them, and with a view to the collection of these he quartered a portion of his army amongst them, but the exactions and brutality of the Afghan soldiery, aided by the machinations of Russian agents, at last drove the Hazaras into revolt. Whilst endeavouring to repress this rebellion the Afghan forces, under the command of General Gholam Hyder, were brought into collision with the Mahmunds, a tribe which claim to form part of Bajawr, an independent state lying between the frontier of Afghanistan and of India. Umra Khan, the ruler of Bajawr, then proceeded to the assistance of the Mahmunds and managed to inflict a severe defeat on Gholam Hyder. This action has given the Amir the pretext for which he has long been seeking, and he has now declared his intention of conquering Bajawr and annexing it. Since, however, the viceroyalty of Lord Dufferin, it has been the policy of the Indian Government to guarantee the independence of the frontier tribe, so that they may remain as a buffer between India and Afghanistan, and in view of Abdul Rahman's contemplated action, he has been warned that the Indian Government would not tolerate the absorption of Bajawr into the Afghan kingdom. To this intimation the Amir replied that he was an independent sovereign, and that he would do as he pleased. Lord Lansdowne then offered to send a British mission to Kabul under Lord Roberts to discuss the situation, but the Amir has replied that until the Hazara rebellion is repressed he cannot receive it. With this answer the Government of India are apparently satisfied, but when the Hazara rebellion is over they will undoubtedly insist that the relations of Afghanistan to India and the policy of the Indian Government on the north-west frontier shall be exhaustively discussed and clearly defined.

Simultaneously with the rebellion in Northern Afghanistan, the Russians have been displaying great activity in North-Western Afghanistan where a raid was recently made by a Russian officer on Fald Nao, and we learn from Gilgit that another Russian party under the command of Colonel Yanoff, who last year expelled the English officers from the Pamir plateau, has again appeared in that region. Of the designs of Russia there can be no doubt. Since the reign of Peter the Great the acquisition of Constantinople and the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire has been the constant policy of every succeeding Tsar. Against this policy England has ever resolutely set her face, and the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire has become to be regarded as an integral part of English policy in the East. Early in this century Russian statesmen began to realize that the only valuable point which England possessed in the East was India, and ever since, slowly but relentlessly, Russia has been extending her frontiers until now Afghanistan alone lies between them and the frontiers of India.

It is a widely-accepted opinion that Russia has no real hankering wish of wresting India from us, but it is certain that the desire to be in such a position as to be able to seriously menace our continuance there in case she for

political reasons finds it expedient, exists. Hitherto the various invasions of India have been made through Afghanistan and generally through the Khyber and Kuram passes, but with a hostile Afghanistan to first of all subdue and our strong strategic position on the North-West Indian frontier to be reckoned with, it is absolutely necessary that Russia should obtain a base in Afghanistan itself. Such a base is Herat, and this hitherto has been the objective point of all Russian movements in Central Asia. Latterly, however, the Russian military authorities have appeared to think that a route through Turkestan, Gilgit, and the valley of Kadrium offers many advantages over the Herat route, and it is in order to test the value of this idea that another Russian exploring party is now on the Pamir Plateau. The Pamirs are "the roof of the world" as they are called in the figurative language of the East, and a belt of debateable ground. From this region radiate the three great mountain systems of the Himalayas, the Hindu Koosh and the Kuen Lun. The presence of Russia in this plateau is strongly resented not only by us but by all the Afghans and the Chinese, both of whom claim sovereignty over certain portions of it. If, therefore, the Russians continue to encroach on the Pamirs it is not impossible that they may find themselves in conflict not only with us, but also with the Government of China and Afghanistan.

The eventful result of the present rebellion in Afghanistan it is difficult to foresee. If the Amir succeeds in crushing it he may endeavour to annex Bajawr and Atnan, and so bring himself into collision with the Government of India. If he himself is defeated the tribes of Afghanistan will fall a prey to anarchy and internecine warfare, and this would afford a colourable pretext for Russian intervention and their seizure of Herat. At no period of the Eastern question has there existed a greater need for the presence of a strong and united Ministry at the head of English affairs. Any signs of weakness or of wavering will cause incalculable damage to our prestige in the East. It is significant that the increased activity of Russia on the Pamirs is synchronous with the return of Mr. Gladstone to power, and it is with feelings of apprehension and dismay that anyone conversant with the present situation in India can view the advent to power of a statesman responsible for the death of Gordon, for the abandonment of the Soudan, for the conclusion of a dishonourable peace with the Boers, and for the introduction of a measure which, if carried, will lead to the partition of the British Empire.

E. H. BERNARD.

THE ART OF FICTION.

OF the many strange books that have lately been thrust upon us, surely one of the strangest is Mr. Daniel Greenleaf Thompson's "The Philosophy of Fiction." What a boundless topic! For fiction, it may reasonably be presumed, comprises the limitless field of all human thought and action—and even of super-human thought and action. And what an inexhaustible treatment of this topic! For the philosophy of fiction, it may as reasonably be presumed, means the full exposition of the scope and purport of fiction. Nor does Mr. Thompson's Table of Contents narrow this view. He discusses in all seriousness "The Office of Fiction"; "The Scientific, Moral, and Aesthetic Values of Fiction"; "The Exhibition," in the heartless language of the Pharmacopoeia, "of Power, Suffering, Love, and Social Life" in Fiction; "The General Subject Reviewed"; "Art, Morals and Science"; nor does even this exhaust his list. However, it is not a book to rouse our surprise. It has many analogues. The *New Review* last year regaled us with what now goes by the name of a "Symposium" on "The Science of Fiction" in which the interlocutors were no less famous writers than Messrs. Paul Bourget, Walter Besant, and Thomas Hardy. And as if the Philosophy and the Science were not enough, there has been published lately a translation from Schopenhauer with the title "The Art of Literature." Nor has the craze stopped here. As if to get at the very kernel of the secret of the writer of fiction, we have been treated by Mr. Archer to a whole book on "How to Write a Good Play," and by the *Idler* to three articles by Messrs. Walter Besant, James Payn, and W. Clark Russell respectively on "My First Book." With this plethora of philosophic, scientific, and artistic disquisition, with this abstract reasoning and this concrete exemplification, surely would-be producers of fiction need be at no loss either for choice of subject or for manner of treatment. When the recognized romancers of the day undertake to set down in cold type the secrets of their art, we shall begin to think that that art is not so occult a one after all, and that the estimation in which hitherto the world has held its master-craftsmen has been misplaced.

But here, quite unbidden, there will occur to some less credulous minds the thought that, despite all this analysis and communicativeness, fiction is perhaps after all an art, the secret of which it is not quite so easy either to analyse or to communicate; that there is a radical difference between those arts which are called "economic" and those which are called "fine"; and that whereas an apprenticeship will initiate a person into the one, not even a life's study will perfect a person in the other, should certain capabilities happen to be wanting. Or does the world really believe that Art is a thing really teachable, and shall we soon have works on "How to Paint a Masterpiece," "A Royal Road to Epics," "Easy Lessons in Oratorio"?