

policy of *laissez faire* could say with some truth that such action was a direct encouragement to successful rebellion, that British approval of an Afghan chieftain's claims swung automatically with the gale of superior force like the vane of a weather-cock, and that no ruler of Afghanistan could set much store by a recognition which was transferred so lightly from one rival to another.

Meanwhile Russia spreading southwards from central Asia was tending to converge on the northern frontiers of Afghanistan, though her outposts were as yet far distant. About 1864 her forces moving westward from Vernoe and eastward from Perovsk brought her into contact with Khokand, Bokhara, and Khiva, the three great Muhammadan khanates between the Caspian Sea and western China. The absorption of these weak and disorderly states into the then colossal fabric of the Russian Empire was obviously a mere matter of time, but the movement only became marked towards the end of Lawrence's period of office. Tashkend, a city of over 70,000 inhabitants, was annexed in 1865; General Kaufmann was appointed Governor-General of Turkestan in 1867; Samarkand, part of Bokhara, fell in 1868.

Upon this event Sir John Lawrence urged the home government to come to some definite agreement with Russia as to a line of demarcation between the spheres of influence of the two empires. If only that were done, he professed little fear from Russian expansion, to which he felt that Great Britain had, least of all nations, any right to object; rather she might frankly welcome Russia's civilizing influence on the central Asian peoples. Nor did he stand alone in this opinion; Sir Herbert Edwardes the great frontier official wrote, 'Can any one say that to substitute Russian rule for the anarchy of Khiva, the dark tyranny of Bokhara and the nomad barbarism of Khokand would be anything but a gain to mankind?' Indeed no open objection was ever made