

HOW THE WAR WAS BROUGHT ON.

From the Dublin Freeman's Journal. Those who are curious to know or to be reminded how the invasion of Afghanistan was brought about will find a good deal of information on the subject in a volume which Messrs. Chatto & Windus have just published. The book is entitled "Causes of the Afghan War," and is a selection of State papers, with a connecting narrative and comment. We cannot speak too highly of the discretion that is shown in the selection of the papers, or of the ability and fairness that have produced the narrative and the comment. The object of the publication is to help people to comprehend the steps by which they have been involved in the war, and the grounds which Ministers assign for the war. The work is the result of the labors of the sub-committee that was appointed last November by Lord Lawrence's Afghan Committee to prepare an abstract of the papers on Afghan and Central Asia affairs that were about to be presented to Parliament. Most of the members of the sub-committee were men of extensive Indian experience, and they gave to the private publication the benefit of their experience. The publication begins with the first treaty between the late Ameer's father, Dost Mahomed, and the late East India Company, in 1855, which was negotiated by Lord Lawrence as British Commissioner, when Lord Dalhousie was Governor-General of India. We have then in succession the continuation of the Lawrence policy for about ten years; then the "Forward Policy," which was initiated in 1865 by Henry Rawlinson, and which was reinforced and made real in the recess of 1878 by the publication in the Times of Sir Bartle Frere's unlucky memorandum. This last is believed to be the representation which made such an impression on Lord Beaconsfield, and, in fact, brought on the invasion of the then friendly and unoffending territory. It is worth remembering that Sir Bartle never had any connection with Afghanistan. He had been Commissioner and resident at Sindh, and was for a couple of years a member of the Government of India, and with this amount of local knowledge the Premier considered him an adequate authority for undertaking a war. The volume traces on the events of the Umbrella and Simla Conferences, and marks how the "new policy" was resisted by several Viceroy, and at last enforced by a new Viceroy. It then rehearses the official misinformation and misreporting of the Peshawar Conference, and then the war. It reviews the whole position, military and political, in a clear and able summary of three pages. The second part tells of the seizure of Quetta in 1876 as a preliminary to future movements. This, too, was a favorite scheme of Sir Bartle's, and it is needless to say that although the occupation was formally inside of the letter of the treaty with Beloochistan, it gave grievous offence and distrust to the Afghans. The third part of the book gives a very clear resume of the relations of England and Russia in Central Asia, which in themselves constitute no unimportant part of modern history. It is, moreover, a page of history which cannot be quoted with any unmixt pride by lovers of England. The book condemns, and is written to condemn, the Ministry for the war; but its authority rests not on its design but on its quotations. The Tories, whose feet are swift to shed blood have every reason to admire and envy the good fortune that enabled Sir Bartle Frere to plunge the country into two discredit, unjust and costly wars in the course of a few months; and the Jingoists who swear that Lord Beaconsfield is the most original and self-standing of statesmen, may reconcile with their theory as best they can, his lordship's submission to the inspiration and ascendancy of Sir Bartle. It has been for the nation a most disastrous co-partnership.

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