



# The Volunteer Review

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### NEWS OF THE WEEK.

English advices are of a momentous character; a contest appears to be inevitable with Russia, in relation to her advances in Asia; and the Gladstone Ministry have the supreme satisfaction of knowing, that they have trailed the honor of their country in the dust to no purpose. If honest men had held the helm of affairs when Russia made her insolent demand for the abrogation of the Treaty of Paris in 1870, they would have answered it by open defiance. But with men like Gladstone, and Grenville at the head of affairs, the folly of concession will be made manifest in more cases than this.

Meantime the *Ministerial* and *Manchester* press are busy telling the world how the action of Great Britain is sustained by Turkey, Italy, Austria, and other third class powers. Not a word is said in reference to the action of the *Kaiser*, nor of our dearly beloved cousins over the lines. Both those parties will stand by and see fair play, and probably take up the conqueror.

Under date of 26th January, we have the following from London:—

There is much uneasiness in consequence of the English note to Russia, regarding the disputed boundary question in Central Asia. In the settlement of the relations between the two powers a year ago on the Forsyth understanding, England only required Russia to abstain from the invasion of Afghanistan, but the boundary of that territory was left undefined. The present note declares that the northern boundary of Afghanistan commences at the Lake of Sri Koil in the Parnie Steppe, thence follows the Oxus to Kadajh Saloh, and from that point westward to the Persian frontier. The note states that England informed the Emir of Afghanistan that he may fight the Russians if they crossed this line.

The Russian reply declares that the desire of Russia is to maintain good relations with England, but it refuses to accept the indicated boundary, because it includes countries which never belonged to Afghanistan, but were always independent. Russia's ob-

ject in taking Khiva is apparently to establish depots and hold and occupy the whole valley of the Oxus. England draws this line to interfere with Russia's purpose and to enable the former power the better to hold the Hindoo Kush as a line of defence when the day of fighting comes.

T. Mitchell, Assistant Secretary of the British Legation at St. Peterburg, has just left London for that city, bearing important despatches to Lord Loftus British Ambassador.

A Lahore newspaper states that Sir Dair Abdul Rahmar, under Russian instigation, captured Fort Hissar, a dependency at Cobal, and sent the Governor of the place, a prisoner of the Russians. Hissar is a good starting point for the Russians in any movement they may contemplate against Afghanistan, Turkistan. The same authority states that Sirdair Mahomet Khan has made a successful attack on Sterabat in Cobal. The Governor of that city was likewise captured and delivered to the Russians.

The Australian Government have accepted the proposition of the Imperial authorities for continuing the Colonial Postal Service between Point de Galle (Ceylon) and Melbourne and Sydney.

The British Government have notified the several Colonial Governors of its willingness to undertake the entire transportation of the mails from England to Ceylon, leaving the colonies free to make their own arrangements for the rest of the service. Toward the latter they also offer to contribute a subsidy of £40,000 annually, besides granting every reasonable facility for the establishment of a fortnightly mail. This will virtually make Melbourne the terminal port of the steamers. No serious opposition to the scheme is looked for from South Australia, Tasmania or New Zealand, for though the last named colony avinces what the *Argus* designates "a sort of sentimental preference" for a California mail service, yet the superiority of the old route, via Suez, both as regards celerity and regularity of transit, is so generally recognised that all important correspondence between New Zealand and Europe is uniformly forwarded via Melbourne.

As a postal route, the *Argus* adds, the Suez line is without a competitor; and freely admitting all that can be said in favor of establishing a line of powerful steamers via the Cape, and of maintaining regular communication with the Pacific coast of North America, nature and the great channels marked out by modern commerce have combined to indicate the track as the one along which both our electric intelligence and the tides of our correspondence must run for all time to come. The course of post between England and Australia via Suez, has been reduced to forty-two days while on the other hand, whether, under the most favorable circumstances, the run from Melbourne to London, via San Francisco, can be made in less than fifty days remains to be demonstrated.

One of the most remarkable telegraphic triumphs of the age has just been achieved by the recently constructed cable to Australia. Intelligence of Gen. Grant's re-election on the 5th reached Melbourne, via London, on the 6th and was published in the *Argus* of the 7th.

The International Exhibition was formally opened at Melbourne by the Governor on the 6th. Among the distinguished visitors on the occasion were their Serene Highnesses the Prince Augustus and Philip of Saxo-Cobourg.

The new Theatre Royal, Melbourne, was opened with appropriate ceremonies on the 6th.

It is rumoured that the differences between Great Britain and Russia, on the Khivan question, instead of being in a fair way for a naturally satisfactory adjustment are increasing; and that France, Austria, Italy, Turkey, Denmark and Sweden have determined to support the British Government in the position assumed.

The disturbances among the artillery men at Tarragonte have been renewed. The Government threatens to treat the malcontents with rigour.

Petitions to the Cortes for the abolition of slavery, continue to come in from all parts of the kingdom.