Our Richmond Correspondence.

RICHMOND, Va., Oct. 31, 1856.

The Agricultural Fair—The Dust, the Ladies, the Beaus—Governor Wise's Address at the Fair of the Mechanics' Institute—Political Rallies—Rush of the Visiters to Prepare for the Election, &c.

The attendance at the fair ground for the past two days exceeded anything heretofore witnessed in this State. Each arrival of the cars up to Thursday evening, brought new accessions to the immense multitude already present. The weather was as favorable for such an exhibition as could be desired; the only drawback in this respect being the circulation of an undue quantity of dust on yesterday, very much to the inconvenience of the ladies and the injury of handsome bonnets and rich dresses, which were displayed in gay profusion. A light fall of rain last night, however, effectually checked this annoyance, and to-day they were out, basking in the genial sun, evidently elated at the agreeable prospect of a brilliant display unmarred by these little inconveniences.

The beaus, too, were no less pleased with this favorable change, as was visible from the number present, and the taste and care evinced in all their appointments, particularly in the way of dress. All seemed happy and gay, under the inspiration of the many agreeable influences which the day and the surrounding scene were so well calculated to produce.

The great rendezvous point for both sexes was a large tent, situated about the centre of the fair ground, and lined all round with several tiers of seats for the accommodation of such as sought rest after the fatigue of a long walk through the grounds. Here, on an elevated platform, the Armory Band of this city was located, playing at quick intervals the choicest selection of lively airs. All that was interesting in the shape of pretty forms, rich dresses, enchanting looks, moustached wags and chivalrous, dignified bearing, was concentrated here. It was, in fact, the great centre for display, presenting a scene of rare brilliancy, much taste and more vanity.

The horse lot, on yesterday as well as to day, was the scene of much activity and life. Pacing matches were gotten up at intervals of half or three-quarters of an hour, and in each instance the competitors seemed very fairly matched. Horses with jockeys and some with light buggies took the track in turn, thus keeping up an almost uninterrupted scene of pacing from morning till the close of each day's exhibition. The spectacle was exceedingly interesting, and proved a very general source of attraction.

There were some specimens of fat cattle on exhibition which might stand to compare favorably with any of that class in the country. The number of this grade exhibited was about fourteen, their average weight being about twenty-five hundred pounds each. They were raised in the counties of Washington and Pulaski, both remarkable as furnishing the best beef sold at our markets, or in fact, in the Baltimore markets. Most, if not all of them, were bought up by our butchers. They were exhibited by William and James Cloyd, of Pulaski county, Mr. James Walker, of Augusta county, and Messrs. William and James Syars, of Washington county. I was informed that two of them sold at $350. It is probable that all will be sold, and at some sacrifice, the owners being unwilling to incur the expense or trouble of bringing them back.

To-day the sale of sheep was somewhat brisk, though the specimens offered, except in a few instances, were by no means fit for market. They were exhibited more with reference to the peculiar quality of their wool than as fat specimens. Those on exhibition consisted chiefly of the cotswool, South down, and long wool grades. There were a few specimens of the Spanish merino grade, which seemed to be much admired.

The exhibition in the cow department was limited, there being not probably more than a dozen of a superior quality on the ground. The best specimen exhibited was bought for $125, and save in the good show which she made as a milker there was nothing in her appearance to commend her. She was of rather diminutive size, and ill formed.

There were some good specimens of fat hogs, of a medium size, which seemed to be on active demand. They brought fair prices, which, with the premiums awarded, will amply repay the trouble and expense of their transportation.

There was an immense variety in the poultry department. An almost infinite number of Chinese geese, Muscovy and common ducks, chickens of every variety and size, with fancy turkeys of every hue and color, on exhibition. All or nearly being offered for sale. Our folks here will grow fat upon fowl for some time to come.

Ten o'clock to-day was fixed for the announcement of the premiums, but the lists not being fully complete that ceremony was dispensed with. They will, however, be published in the morning papers. The Secretary of the Agricultural Society informed me that the aggregate amount awarded for premiums was about $4,000—the number on the list not exceeding four hundred and thirty. The number proposed to be given was six hundred and twenty-eight, leaving one hundred and ninety-eight for which there was no competition.

Ex President Tyler was expected to deliver the valedictory, but failed to come on account of indisposition. This part of the ceremony was dispensed with in consequence.

In accordance with the arrangements laid down in the programme, the fair closed at 3 o'clock P. M., to day, and then followed a general rush, and active preparations on the part of exhibitors to remove whatever belonged to them from the ground. It was a busy week with all classes of our citizens, especially business men, who have reaped a rich harvests during the progress of the fair. I am informed that the receipts at the Exchange Hotel, of which Mr. John P. Ballard is the proprietor, amounted to $3,000 a day for the past five days. The business houses of every class have done well in proportion. Indeed, there are few classes of our citizens who have not benefitted more or less by this exhibition, and hence it is their duty as no doubt they will make it, to sustain this enterprise.

The advantage which it leaves to the agricultural and mechanical interests is considerable. It proves a source of profit and enlightenment to all; and even now, short as the time is, since this enterprise has been set on foot, its good effects are visible in the improved system of farming introduced under the auspices of the society. The operations of the farmer are materially facilitated and enlarged by the adoption of the several new inventions, which, before the organization of this society, and previous to the holding of these annual exhibitions, were entirely unknown. Information of their practical utility, derived from personal observation and experimental knowledge through the aid of these exhibitions, convinced them of their great advantage in point of economy, and the consequence now is a general application of the various principles introduced into the system of farming hitherto pursued.

Governor Wise delivered an address last night at the fair of the Mechanics' Institute. He was listened to by not less than three thousand persons. He was announced to have spoken there on Tuesday night last, but failed to do so on account of slight indisposition. The announcement brought thousands to the hall of the Institute, thereby adding very materially to the receipts at the door. His presence last night produced a still better effect, for the announcement of the Governor's intention to speak being made through the *Enquirer* of yesterday morning, there was no longer any apprehension of disappointment, and accordingly crowds assembled to hear him. His address was chiefly on the progress and utility of the mechanical arts. It was one of pre-eminent ability.

The democrats will have a grand rally to-night at the Odd Fellows' Hall, where, it is announced, Thomas H. Bocock, Judge Caskie, R. A. Pryor, and others will speak.

The Know Nothings are also to assemble in the City Hall, to hear addresses from Mr. Imboden, of Stanunton, who was a delegate from this state to the Philadelphia Convention that nominated Fillmore, and Oliver P. Baldwin, the representative of this city in the State Senate and editor of the Richmond *Dispatch*. Both parties are actively at work, yet, I imagine, the Know Nothings, notwithstanding this show of confidence, have a full conviction of the utter hopelessness of their cause. It is well, however, to keep the party in play that they may not sink into utter insignificancy. There are minor contests, in view of which it is necessary to preserve some organization. Their present efforts, I presume, have regard solely to that object.

The rush of persons from the city by this evening's trains was immense. No sooner did the fair close than they commenced preparations for their departure, being eager to get to their homes in time for the election. The leading party journals here were cautious in apprizing them of the necessity of their being at their post on the day of election, and they evidently took the hint, for short as the time was from the closing of the fair to the starting hours for the several trains leaving the city, fully one half the number of visiters had left. To-morrow evening will find the city resumed to its wonted quiet and composure, a transition not to be desired by our business men.

Numerous depredations have been committed upon the pockets of the visiters, and strange that not one of the rascals engaged in this infamous practice has been detected.

Our San Francisco Correspondence.

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 6, 1856.

The Vigilance Committee in Abeyance, Not Disbanded—Its intention to be About on Election Day—The Governor and the Committee—The State Proclamation Still in Force—Outrage on a Presbyterian Clergyman for Condemning the Acts of the Committee—Unpopularity of General Wool—Necessity of Defining the Position of the Major General Commanding the Federal Forces in California—Commercial Affairs, &c., &c.

Some time since it was announced that the Vigilance Committee had disbanded. One familiar with the word, as interpreted by Walker or Webster, would say that they had dissolved, broken up their organization, had been released from pledges and oaths which men had taken when they became members of the Committee, and that all vestige and trace of the whole concern, as an organized body, had been obliterated and forgotten. But such is far from the case. What is meant by "disbanded" in the vocabulary of the Committee, is simply this: That for want of material to work upon—from the burden of expense entailed upon them daily during its continuance—from some fear of consequences (which they affect so much to despise,) by its prolonged existence, and from the apprehension of possible difficulty with the chief and governing physical element in the constitution of the Committee (the Germans and French,) and also from the absolute ruin, pecuniary and otherwise, which threatened every interest in the country if every department of the government were to be longer managed by a mob, no matter how systematic its proceedings might be, it was deemed best to suspend active operations, and to dispense with regular daily guards and with night patrols. But as to any real disbandment, no such thing has taken place; no such thing is contemplated; and so their presses here openly avow and declare. They announce daily and hourly that their organization is as efficient to-day as when they hung Casey and Cora, and as when they arrested Terry; and that a single tap of their bell will bring together in the streets their armed legions, as powerful for good or evil as ever. They go still further, and declare that they intend, if any occasion in their opinion requires it, to again assume the rule of the city, and sit in judgment upon life, liberty and reputation, as heretofore. They do not even stop at this. They assert their determination to superintend the coming State and Presidential elections, and to see that justice is done. They do not, to be sure, intend to interfere with the elective franchise, or to curtail the independence of freemen. They abhor too much any such restriction on the immunities of voters, and will therefore abstain from infringing on their rights. It is their desire to have it understood, however—to use an expressive phrase—they will be about on the day of election, and people must take heed as to their acts on that occasion—the most sacred, and which ought to be the freest of all extraneous influences in the eyes of every intelligent, patriotic and right-thinking American. This is the Vigilance Committee of San Francisco, and, as they claim, of the State, as disbanded. It may be said, however, that the more reflecting portions of the Committee, small though such may be, (and it probably amounts to one in a hundred of the whole body,) are satisfied that their doings have inflicted lasting injury on California; and whatever may have been the seeming necessity for its existence, it has thrown a blight upon the character, reputation and prosperity of the State, both in the Atlantic States and in Europe, which long years will not efface, and therefore, if they have the least regard for the vital interests of the country, they will be slow to give another tap to their ominous bell.

The Committee and their presses are very indignant that the Governor should not withdraw his proclamation, which declares the country in a state of insurrection; and they threaten all manner of bloody deeds, and all sorts of destruction, if by reason of the existence of that proclamation, on the day of election the Supreme Court of the State, if the code was made for their adjudication, were to determine that no valid election could take place in a country declared by the executive—which right is given in express terms to that officer by the constitution of California—to be in a state of insurrection. It is really a strange idea, in the face of the fact that the Committee, by its own public and repeated declarations made here every day, although for the moment inactive, is still an organized body, and can, at an hour's notice, be marshalled in full force, that the Governor is in error in continuing in force his proclamation, and that unless he withdraw it, blood and revolution are to ensue. These are habitual threats, repeated day after day, and week after week. What the Governor's views on the subject are is not known; but it may reasonably be supposed he will be regulated in his course by the Committee itself, which avows that it has still a systematic existence, and is publishing at the present moment, through its Secretary, in the journals of this city, a notice to all members to come forward and receive their certificates of membership. No later than yesterday a fresh manifesto made its appearance, signed by the same individual and of the same official character, giving in full the names of the banished and those who refused to leave at their orders, and who still are in the State; thus showing to the people of the East that there has been no dissolution or disbandment of their organization. The arms of the State seized on the waters of the bay are still retained by them; and to a demand by the proper officers for their restoration, a peremptory negative has been returned. And yet the Governor is to be immolated if he does not withdraw his proclamation. If he does it, under such a condition of things, he is indeed beyond resurrection.

Your correspondent may, and probably will, give you in detail the history of the rise, progress and decline of the Vigilance Committee, and endeavor to explain to the people on the Atlantic side of the continent what it is to be supposed is not yet satisfactorily comprehended by them—why it is, and how it is, that such an organization, apparently embracing the mass of the population of a great American city, could have been created and continued so long in existence, exercising absolute power over life and liberty, unless society by its vices and its crimes had become resolved into its original elements, and that each man had a personal consciousness that life and property were absolutely without protection. This is a prevalent idea out of California, and it is the only rational explanation that can be given for the rise and prolonged existence of the Vigilance Committee, presuming there is the same amount of intelligence, discernment, personal self-respect, and a high and solemn appreciation of what is right here as in a city of the same population in one of the old States. Here is precisely the error with people remote from our city. When the truth is known, as it will be unfolded hereafter, it will be seen the whole foundation upon which the Vigilance Committee and its supporters rely for its justification fails to the ground, and that the constant assertions that the great body of the people in San Francisco and in the interior of the State are with the Committee, and that therefore they are right, is, when analyzed, not as reliable a test of the entire correctness and justice of certain proceedings as would be the case if endorsed by an equal number of people in one of the old cautious and time honored commonwealths of the Atlantic. The foregoing will, perhaps, give an inkling of what is meant, and at some future time another letter on this branch of the question will make it entirely transparent, so that he who runs may read.

But another thing. Have the Committee done any good, any real service? Crime to-day is as prevalent in San Francisco and in the State as at any period in the last two years. That as many thefts, as many murders, as many assaults with deadly weapons, and as numerous breaches of the laws made for the protection of society, are committed now as during the time spoken of, any man of candor, acquainted with the facts, will admit. Then the interrogatory will be pertinent, what have the Committee accomplished? Nothing, beyond making California a by-word and a reproach for years throughout the civilized world, and of hastening the pecuniary ruin and bankruptcy of leading members of the Committee itself.

In the indiscriminate proscription for expression of opinion that formed and still forms a part of the means by which the Committee attempts to sustain itself, we have a striking instance in the treatment received by the Rev. Dr. Scott. Dr. Scott is a man well known as a preacher of great eloquence and learning. He was induced to come here from New Orleans, where he was engaged for a number of years in the ministry, and earned, deservedly, a reputation as a pulpit orator second to none in the United States. His lectures and sermons are unsurpassed in power and logic, and every Sabbath are listened to by one of the largest and most select congregations in San Francisco. In fact, to strangers and residents his church forms a point of attraction where all frequent to be instructed and edified. His opinions on any subject are regarded with great respect, and in the many discourses delivered by him during the late outbreak, he never failed to urge the importance of stability in the laws and veneration of the constitution. Nothing less could be expected from one brought up as he has been. Educated by Gen. Jackson, he imbibed that great man's ideas of government, and holds to the importance of discountenancing anarchy and preserving order. Exclusively sustained by wealthy merchants, it was supposed, from his peculiar position, he would not have ventured to do otherwise than add his endorsement to the promoters of the wild scenes of popular commotion that have disgraced California and the nation during the *régime* of vigilantism. So placed, Dr. Scott, with a resolution commendable, wrote a letter to the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*, the denomination to which he belongs, defining the position occupied by him here. From what precedes, it will at once be understood he disapproves of the Committee, and can see no reason or excuse for the revolutionary proceedings that have taken place. The communication was drawn from him by statements published in a religious paper of this city, that distinguished itself during the reign of terror by hounding on the mob to greater violence and the shedding of more blood. The doctor's arguments are pointed and forcible, and meet, without evasion, the issue raised. Rebellion has no apologist in him, and he declares in terms of condemnation his opposition to its lifting its hideous head in California. Evils, however great, can be remedied in a constitutional manner, and if unfaithful officers encumber the public service there are sufficient means within the law to correct the mischiefs. It only required citizens to be in a small measure more vigilant in attending to the polls on election day, and all would be conducted properly, and no room left for fraud. For telling undeniable truths like these, Doctor Scott is now charged with being the friend of the most degraded, and having done his utmost to injure the interests of his congregation, who, it must be borne in mind, are mainly merchants. He is informed, through the press, "he has run the length of his tether," and that he has not the power "to control his passions or hide his malice," and is finally informed, if he does not like the change that has taken place he has to look to those he defends for his means of living. All this, and much more, scurrility is thrown at the Doctor. Every means of persecution will be practised towards him, and there is no reason to doubt he will be forced to abandon his charge if the bigotry and intolerance of those who claim possession of all the virtue in the country are allowed to have control. Yesterday morning a very gross outrage was perpetrated in an attempt to cast odium on Doctor Scott. An effigy was hung upon the church of which he is pastor, where it remained several hours before daybreak. Considering it was the Sabbath, and the character of the edifice desecrated, the whole proceeding reflects the deepest disgrace on the city. It is not possible any member of the congregation could be concerned in an act so flagitious, but that it demonstrates the rancor of the Vigilants towards those who differ with them is put beyond question. The tendency of the press of this city to licentiousness has been forcibly exemplified in the case of Doctor Scott, as well as during the last five months. It has vilified him to an extraordinary degree. The following remarks of Goldsmith on the subject have peculiar fitness for its condition at the present time. "I have always considered the press the protector of our freedom, as a watchful guardian, capable of uniting the weak against the encroachments of power. But of late the press has turned from defending public interests to making inroads upon private life; from combatting the strong to overwhelming the feeble."

General Wool's letter has attracted very little notice. If it was intended to controvert Gov. Johnson's statements in the official correspondence published by request of Congress, it did not alter the opinion of a single person. It virtually admitted a promise was made by him, but in terms that a Philadelphia lawyer might, with ingenuity, have backed out of. It might also have been well for the General to bear in mind recrimination is not argument. Allowance may be made for the continual expressions of dissatisfaction his official conduct since he has been on this coast has elicited. The latest of these we have from Oregon. It was rumored about a month since that Gen Harney was coming out to take command of this division, and when the news reached north the entire country was in a blaze of rejoicement. Bonfires, meetings and celebrations became the order of the day, and from the reports that reach here it would appear the General's removal was considered in that quarter in the same light a national benefit ought to be received. There is, however, a serious question involved in the action of the President, disposing of the application for aid, and to California one of the greatest importance. It required no great discernment to see in the future a state of things that may arise in this State, which would require decided and instant action to suppress attempts at revolution. Active co-operation between the general and State authorities might be imperative to save the State from separating from the Union. Respect for the law is at a very low point, and the value of our connection with the Atlantic States esteemed lightly. It is, as usual, a favorite topic to enlarge on the neglect we are treated with, and how much better off we would be to go it alone in the family of nationalities. There is no use in concealing the existence of this sentiment. It is widespread, and recent events have taught the holders of these opinions how easy it is to set at naught all authority. Removed a vast distance from the seat of the central government, an insurrection would ripen into a complete revolution before we could communicate and have assistance from the United States. Therefore, if this practise is in future to be carried out, momentous consequences may follow from its strict observance. It will not be contended if in case of invasion it would be the duty of officers in command to await instructions from Washington before attempting to drive the enemies from our shores. And yet the same section of the constitution that provides for protection against invasion, also guarantees the suppression of domestic violence. It ought to be known that California is settled by people from every clime, with different feelings and habits, and is far from being either American in sentiment or character. Foreign capital works our mines, erects our buildings and controls our trade. Foreigners who have never set foot in our Eastern States form the main portion of our residents, and with them, it cannot be too well understood, very little veneration is entertained for the Union. Some measures are called for to extinguish this disloyal feeling, and preparations to meet it promptly when it presumes to show itself in arms at any future time. It is a subject worthy the profound consideration of the rulers of the Union. The danger is now no larger than a man's hand, but it will certainly develope itself into the magnitude of a thunder cloud. For this reason it would be well the astute and learned Attorney General should again look over his law books in search of some precedent for the commander of the federal forces to be ready to act in case of emergency.

There is very little activity in our markets. Trade has not revived from the severe shock received during the existence of the Vigilance Committee. Frequent failures, principally small retailers and jobbers, tend to impair credit. Our insolvent law offers wonderful facilities to get rid of liabilities, and, under it, we have three or four weekly seeking to have its benefit. The state of the financial market is, perhaps, the most anomalous of any portion of our social machinery. We export an amount of gold exceeding one half the products of the other States of the Union, sent to foreign markets. With such an immense yield of specie it would reasonably be expected the article was plenty, and, in case of necessity, to be procured at reasonable rates of interest. The reverse is true. To the brokers and bankers of this city the use of the commodity brings 18 to 72 per cent per annum, according to the security offered. Even at these rates it is not always easy to procure loans. The cause is apparent. The great moving power of all business—confidence—is wanting in California. No man, be he merchant or member of the professions, could raise a dollar on his word or standing. The security must be on real estate or goods stored in warehouses. And when this happens it as invariably follows that the bond is foreclosed and the mortgaged property sold to satisfy the claim. Such is California credit at home, and the principal cause is, as stated, the want of reliance in the integrity or solvency of our business men.

Mr. Weller arrived by the last steamer, and has been confined to his room by illness contracted two or three days before reaching here. He was welcomed by a large number of friends, who consider, as well as the great bulk of our people, his Senatorial career highly creditable to himself, and governed by the one idea of serving California truly and well.

We have in our harbor two English men-of-war—the Monarch, eighty guns, and the Brisk, steam corvette. The French brig-of-war Alcibiades is also lying here.

RAILROAD CASE DECIDED.—A Board of Referees, consisting of Judge Gilchrist, of the United States Court of Claims, Hon. A. S. Woods, late Chief Justice, and Hon. Ira A. Eastman, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of New Hampshire, decided two cases at Concord on Thursday, wherein the Boston and Maine Railroad sought to recover of the Concord road, and Boston, Concord and Montreal Railroad, either or both, about $7,000 damages, costs and interest, caused by an injury to one Emil Crockett, a boy five years of age, who came from Sanborton N. H., on a ticket to Lawrence, and then passed on to the Maine road as a passenger to Bradford, Mass., on which route he received the injury. The defence of the Concord road was that they sold no ticket in the case. That of the Boston, Concord and Montreal—1st, that at the time there existed no contract of indemnity between the corporations; 2d, had there been a contract, the adult in the party had tickets to Lawrence *only*, and *on passing that point* became plaintiff's passenger; 3d, that the boy injured passed over the road without payment of fare—as a dead head—and each road was therefore responsible on its own iron. The referees decided in favor of the defendants in both cases.

AFFAIRS IN EUROPE.

The Quarrel of England with Persia.

(From the London Post, Oct. 16.)

The last mail which left for India carried with it an expression of surprise that the announcement of an impending war with Persia should have excited so little interest in England—"should have fallen stillborn," to quote the exact words employed, "upon the English public." But this is hardly a fair statement of the case. The British public, remembering the calamities of the Affghan war, remembering the enormous sacrifice of blood and treasure—and, what is of more importance, of national honor—on that occasion, cannot view with indifference the preparations for an expedition of an almost kindred character. The reasons why the English press has not been stirred up, like the Indian press, to a sudden burst of indignation at the prospect of such a prodigal wasting of our resources, are—that it is probably better acquainted with the merits of the question at issue, with the dangers that threaten us on the one side, and our means of averting them on the other; above all, that the intelligence from Bombay has not taken the public in this country by surprise, but has been practically expected ever since Mr. Vernon Smith towards the close of the session, declared in his place in Parliament that the Persians could not be allowed to occupy Herat in direct violation of their engagement to the British government. So long, moreover, as there was a reasonable hope of a pacific solution, it was the duty of the press to maintain silence, lest by prematurely touching upon tender points, it might increase the difficulties of the situation. But matters would seem recently to have become really critical; we may be plunged in actual war at any moment by the slightest indiscretion on the part of our commanders, or even by the natural and necessary course of events; and it is now, therefore, equally the duty of the press to furnish the public, as far as it is able, with a statement of the grounds of quarrel, and of the important interests at stake.

It is then, at the outset, a matter of sincere congratulation that for the present we are quit of the miserable Mrs. Hashem affair. Mr. Murray may have had a right, according to usage, to depute Mr. Hashem as the Minister's agent to Shiraz, though the appointment is not provided for by treaty; he may have also had the right, according to usage, to insist on the release of Mrs. Hashem from imprisonment, as the wife of a *protegé* of the mission, though the lady was of the blood royal of Persia, and sister to a wife of the Shah; but few will be hardy enough to maintain that the negation of such rights by the Persian government required to be avenged by a declaration of war. If it had been judged necessary to resent the discourteous conduct of the Shah in these points, and to repel the imputation of improper motives to our representative for his interest in the Princess's behalf, the withdrawal of our mission from the court, and the suspension of all diplomatic relations, would have amply testified to our offended dignity. No British Minister could have come down to the house and announced that, on such a pretext, he had sent an army to invade Persia, regardless of the financial distress to which such a step must lead in India, and of the political complications which it might entail in Europe.

Our present quarrel rests on no such flimsy grounds. We are preparing for war because Persia has violated an express engagement, into which she entered with us in the year 1853, and because that violation is held to inflict on us a very serious political injury. The value of Herat, considered as the key of India, which, in the event of a war, will be the turning point of all argument on the subject, is a separate question, that may be conveniently reserved for discussion on a future occasion. Suffice it, for the moment, to say that the paramount importance of Herat is a standard article of faith with all Eastern diplomatists. From its geographical position, as the half-way house between Russia and India—from the extraordinary productiveness of the valley in which the town is situated—from the facilities which the local features afford for converting the place into a stronghold as formidable to our northwest frontier as Sebastopol was to Constantinople—it has been judged of the first necessity to preserve the independence of the Principality—to prevent it, at any rate, from falling under the rule of Persia, and being thus liable, in due course, to be transferred to Russian occupancy.

It was to carry out this preventive policy—Herat being at that time besieged by the Shah—that the army of the Indus was assembled in 1838, and that, at the same time, we occupied the Island of Karak, in the Persian Gulf; and after a three years' suspension of relations, it was only when Persia had evacuated Ghorian, and had withdrawn her last man from the Herat territory, that, in 1841, we at length consented to replace our mission at the Court of the Shah. So long as Yar Mahomed ruled in Herat, though he coquetted vigorously with Persia, there was no occasion on our part for giving further interference; but it was different when the old Vizier died, in 1852, and left the government in the hands of his dissolute and incapable son. This unworthy prince, Said Mahomed Khan by name, assailed by treason within the walls and repeatedly threatened by the Candahar forces from without, voluntarily threw himself into the arms of Persia, and offered to place the Shah in possession of the town. Under such circumstances, to save Herat, in spite of itself, seemed all but hopeless; still, however, the attempt was made, and although Said Mahomed's offer had been accepted under the pressure of the threatened rupture of the British alliance, the Shah, at the last moment, consented to sign a convention with Colonel Shiel, binding Persia not to send any military forces to Herat unless the place were directly attacked by foreign enemies and assistance were demanded from Teheran. It is this convention which is so often spoken of as the treaty of 1853. The terms were not altogether satisfactory to us, but they were the best we were able to obtain at the time, and they furnish a sufficient justification for the expedition we are now organizing.

Events followed each other in rapid succession. Herat continued from that time forward closely leagued with Persia. Said Mahomed Khan sent his turbulent nobles as hostages to Teheran, arranging with the Shah's officers—who formed their escort—that they should be poisoned on the road, which was accordingly done. In return, the Herat government adopted all the outward formula of dependence upon Persia and Kohendil Khan, of Candahar, unwilling to come into collision with Persia, to which Power he always professed the utmost deference, desisted from any further attacks on a chief who called himself the Shah's vassal. Persia, in the meantime, was vacillating between the British and Russian alliance, doubtful whether by joining Turkey and England in an invasion of Georgia, she should aim at the recovery of her alienated provinces beyond the Arras; or whether, by throwing her weight into the Russian scale, she should rather seek to indulge her natural instinct of aggrandisement to the eastward. Accident appears to have decided her. Three events occurred, almost simultaneously, which inclined the balance against us. 1. A revolution broke out at Herat; Said Mahomed Khan was murdered, and Shahzada Yussouf, of the old Suddezye royal family, and grandson of Hajee Firoz, who had long been a refugee in Persia, was invited to assume the government. 2. Kohendil Khan, the old chief of Candahar, also died, and Dost Mahomed Khan, who had lately entered into alliance with the British government, came down and occupied the country, to the prejudice of the deceased Sirdar's immediate relatives. 3. Mr. Murray, in consequence of the Mirza Hashem affair, hauled down his flag, and placed the Persian and British governments in a state of *quasi* hostility with each other. Under the influence of the feelings excited by these events, the Shah's prudence appears to have deserted him, and he threw down the gauntlet to England by despatching a military force to Herat.

So far, all that has been stated is matter of public notoriety; but there is a secret history attached to all political transactions of any moment, and the secret history of this Herat expedition, the results of which we cannot yet foresee, is variously related. According to one party, Persia, under the guise of neutrality, was playing a double game throughout the war—affecting sympathy with the allies, while, in reality, she sided with Russia; and the understanding, it is further stated, was so complete between the two governments, that, at the commencement of the present year, a combined plan had been agreed on for operations to the eastward, the arrangement being that an army of 50,000 Russians should be carried across the Caspian from Astracan to Astreabad, to be joined in Khorasskhan by a Persian force of equal strength, and the united armies to be subsequently employed against Herat and Candahar, or, if fortune favored them, against India itself. Those who believe in this gigantic scheme regard, of course, the series of affronts of which Mr. Murray had to complain as intentially offered, with a view of compelling him to break off relations; and they further explain the movement against Herat as a part of the original project, the main features of which miscarried owing to the unexpected conclusion of a peace. There are others who would ascribe all our embarrassments in Persia—those affecting the position of our Minister, as well as the more serious question of Herat—to the advice of a friendly Power—that Power having, as it were, a prescriptive right to contest our influence at Teheran, since our rivalry dates from the days of Malcolm and Gardanne. There is, perhaps, some truth in the proposed league between Russia and Persia; there may be also some truth in the statements regarding the jealousy of the French; but the real source of Persian hostility to us, in the present instance, is to be sought in the promptings of the Shah's own heart, and in the traditional feelings of his government. Persia has coveted Herat intensely ever since she was baffled of her prey in 1838. With Shahzada Yussouf, a Persian refugee and pensioner, in possession of the place, she imagined it would fall into her hands without a struggle. She was, besides, both alarmed and offended at Dost Mahomed's advance upon Candahar—alarmed, because he was apparently urged on by England, and might be expected, if successful, to extend his conquests to Herat; and offended, because Kohendil Khan's family were supposed to be under the special protection of the Shah, who had granted them an asylum during the British occupation of Affghanistan: and their summary ejection from their country thus nearly touched the honor of the "King of Kings."

But the Shah, even at the last moment, made an effort to keep on the shady side of the law. Desirous if possible to obtain possession of Herat, drive back the tide of Cabool invasion, and recover Candahar for Kohendil's family, without provoking the armed interference of England, he publi-hed, before despatching the troops, a manifesto in the Teheran *Gazette*, in which he repudiated all feeling of hostility to England, represented Mr. Murray's retirement as a mere personal misunderstanding, and explained the Herat movement as an expedition undertaken at the urgent entreaty of Shahzada Yussouf, in order to save the place from the threatened attack of Dost Mahomed's forces from the eastward. The object of this manifesto, which bears strong marks of European manipulation, was, of course, to bring the immediate operation in which the Persian troops were engaged within the range of Colonel Sheils' reserved condition; and it is not improbable, as the intention was simultaneously announced of despatching another body of 20,000 men to Candahar, to reinstate Kohendil Khan's son in the government, that the Persians, with their fatal fondness for verbal quibbles, may have also supposed the omission of the name of Candahar in the convention of 1853 to preclude the British government from interfering on behalf of Dost Mahomed.

As to the subsequent march of events we have no very certain intelligence. Shahzada Yussouf, preferring the Kujurs to his blood enemies, the Baruckzyes is supposed to have rather favored the Persian cause. Sano Khan, at any rate, who commanded an advanced detachment, was, by consent of the Governor, admitted into the town; but when Sultan Murad Mirza, at the head of the reserved army of the Persians, approached, the Heratees determined on resistance. Sano Khan was ejected; Shahzada Yussouf was deposed and murdered (?), and Esau Khan, an Alekozye chief of some note, though not immediately connected with Yar Mahomed's family, was elected in his place. The siege has been continued for the last four or five months with varying success. The Affghans who went out to meet the Persians were cut up at Ghorian, but they subsequently repulsed the besiegers in several attempts at assault, and even made successful sorties, blowing up the Persian magazines, and destroying their supplies. According to the last accounts, the Heratees were in great distress for want of ammunition and provisions. They have made unsuccessful appeals for relief both to Dost Mahomed Khan, at Candahar, and to the British Chief Commissioner in Scinde; and it is probable that, ere this, they have capitulated. Nothing, indeed, but the dissensions between Sultan Murad Mirza and Sano Khan, which have paralysed the Persian movements, could have led to the siege being already so protracted; and if the place be ultimately saved, it will be the most miraculous escape in history.

The British government cannot be accused of precipitancy in dealing with the Persian difficulty. Although the manifesto above alluded to was published in Teheran in February, it was not until July, after negotiations had been carried on for several months through Constantinople, that Ministers took up the question in earnest. An ultimatum, it is understood, was then sent to the Shah, requiring him, whatever might have happened in the interim, to withdraw his forces from Herat and retire within the Persian frontier, or to prepare for war with England; and instructions, it is shown by the recent overland advices, must have been at the same time forwarded to India to organize a powerful expedition and hold it ready for service in the Persian Gulf as soon as the monsoon was over and the great heats of the Gulf had moderated. The Shah's answer to the ultimatum, which has lately arrived, is said to be conceived in the same spirit as the manifesto. He will withdraw his forces from Herat if we will undertake to compel Dost Mahomed Khan to retire to Cabool, leaving Candahar in the possession of Kohendil's family; and as an answer of this evasive nature is equivalent to a refusal, we should be authorized to declare war at once; but there is still a channel open for negotiation. Terrackh Khan, who was deputed from Teheran to Constantinople to arrange the mission affair, before our ultimatum reached the Persian court, has since, it is said received plenary powers to discuss, and, if possible, to adjust the Herat question also; and although no great hopes are entertained of a pacific settlement through this officer's means, (since there is in fact no ground for negotiation, the question of peace or of war depending on a simple "yea" or "nay,") still it would be inconsistent with diplomatic usage to commence hostilities before receiving the proffered explanations. There is only one point against which we ought most especially to guard, and that is, the indefinite prolongation of a state of suspense. There is, in reality, very little room for diplomatic argument; and the assertion by Persia of counter rights is altogether fictitious. Persia is bound by a special convention with us not to send troops to Herat, unless the place be attacked and her assistance be demanded. The place has not been attacked—has not even been threatened with attack; and, so far from Persian assistance being demanded, the Heratees have been fighting sword in hand, *pro aris et focis*, against the invader for the last four months. Persia is therefore acting in flagrant violation of her engagement to us; but there is no similar promise of forbearance upon our part. We are under no engagement to Persia to maintain Kohendil Khan's family in power, or to prevent Dost Mahomed Khan from occupying Candahar. We might even ourselves march an army to that city from Scinde, without giving Persia any diplomatic right to complain of our advance. If, therefore, as is reputed, Terrackh Khan's instructions are to continue to ventilate the Candahar question, and if defeated at Constantinople, to transfer the arena of discussion to Paris, and eventually to London, we may be sure that the object is merely to gain time, Persia being sufficiently quick sighted to perceive that we cannot maintain in a state of preparation the expeditionary force for an indefinite period at Bombay, and that, if even we enter the Gulf, disembark our troops, and occupy Karak and Bushire, Persia in the meantime retaining occupation of Herat, the advantage is all upon the side of the Shah.

It would be well, accordingly at this early stage of the affair, not only to prepare our troops, but to make up our minds as to future operations. We must remember, in the first place, as a fixed principle, rising far above the passing considerations of the moment, that it cannot be to our advantage to weaken or dismember Persia. Whatever be the disposition to us of the reigning monarch and his Ministers, the integrity of the country is essential to our political system. Persia, indeed, is geographically placed as a "bufler" between the West and East, and upon its continuing to occupy its present place in the map of Asia depends our prospect of preventing collision between the forces of Russia and our Indian empire. With this paramount consideration before us, it will be seen that a war with Persia requires the most delicate handling. It should be our care to exert just a sufficient amount of pressure to effect our object, and not one iota more. On a previous occasion Persia yielded to a demonstration of the most paltry proportions; but, with experienced European advisers at his elbow, the Shah is not likely again to give way to mere intimidiation. We must be prepared, then, in the present instance, not merely to make a descent on the sea coast, but, if need should be, to operate also in the interior, and this is far more serious matter than may at first sight apper.

Persia as a military power is contemptible. Single-handed, she would be unable to cope in the field with three or four good Indian brigades—and, in the present state of Russian exhaustion, single-handed she would most assuredly be—but she has other means of defence besides her armies. Her sea coast is girt by a range of mountains which are all but impassable. The low country would not afford supplies or carriage sufficient for a single regiment. Everything must be brought from a distance; provisions from Bakrein, Muscat and Bombay; camels, horses and mules from Turkish Arabia and Kurdistan; the time and expense required to complete the commissariat being thus beyond all computation, and indefinitely increasing the difficulties of the enterprise. Such difficulties are noticed, not in order to deter the authorities from the further prosecution of the expedition, or in any doubt of its practicability—for British enterprise and the unlimited resources at our command may be relied on to overcome all impediments—but rather to show that we are prepared for all exigencies, and that, if there are any difficulties that cannot be directly surmounted, means, at any rate, may be found for eluding them. Should it, for instance, be found in the sequel absolutely necessary to advance into the interior and threaten one of the great capitals, Ispahan, or Teheran itself, it may be considered whether, in order to obtain the command of an easier entrance into the country, as well as for the convenience of obtaining carriage and supplies, it may not be advisable, by ascending the Tigris in a steam flotilla, to transfer the base of operations from Bushire to Bagdad, although we may thereby compromise the neutrality of Turkey, and thus enlarge the sphere of contest.

Or there are other means of pressure, of an entirely different nature, to which we may resort in case of need, less difficult and, perhaps, even more effective than the employment of the Bombay expeditionary force. As the present quarrel is in a great measure owing to the personal feelings of the Shah and his Prime Minister, and is not approved of by the nation at large, which still looks with gratitude to England's undeviating support for the last fifty years, it may, perhaps, be considered allowable to bring forward a rival competitor for the throne; and should this extreme course be unwillingly forced on us, it so happens that there is the most favorable instrument we could possibly desire ready prepared to our hand. If, indeed, Abbas Mirza, next brother to the King, and the favorite son of Mahomed Shah, who is now residing under our protection at Bagdad, were proposed to the nation, backed by the presence of our troops at Bushire, and by our public declaration in his favor, there is every probability that he would be placed on the throne by a bloodless revolution, and would remain forever our firm and faithful friend; or if, having obtained full justice from the present Shah, we desired at any stage of the proceedings to stop