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## Correspondence and Papers on Persia

<b>Holding Institution</b>	British Library: India Office Records and Private Papers
<b>Reference</b>	Mss Eur F111/58
<b>Date(s)</b>	Jul 1876-Jul 1892 (CE, Gregorian)
<b>Written in</b>	English in Latin
<b>Extent and Format</b>	1 file (64 folios)
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### About this record

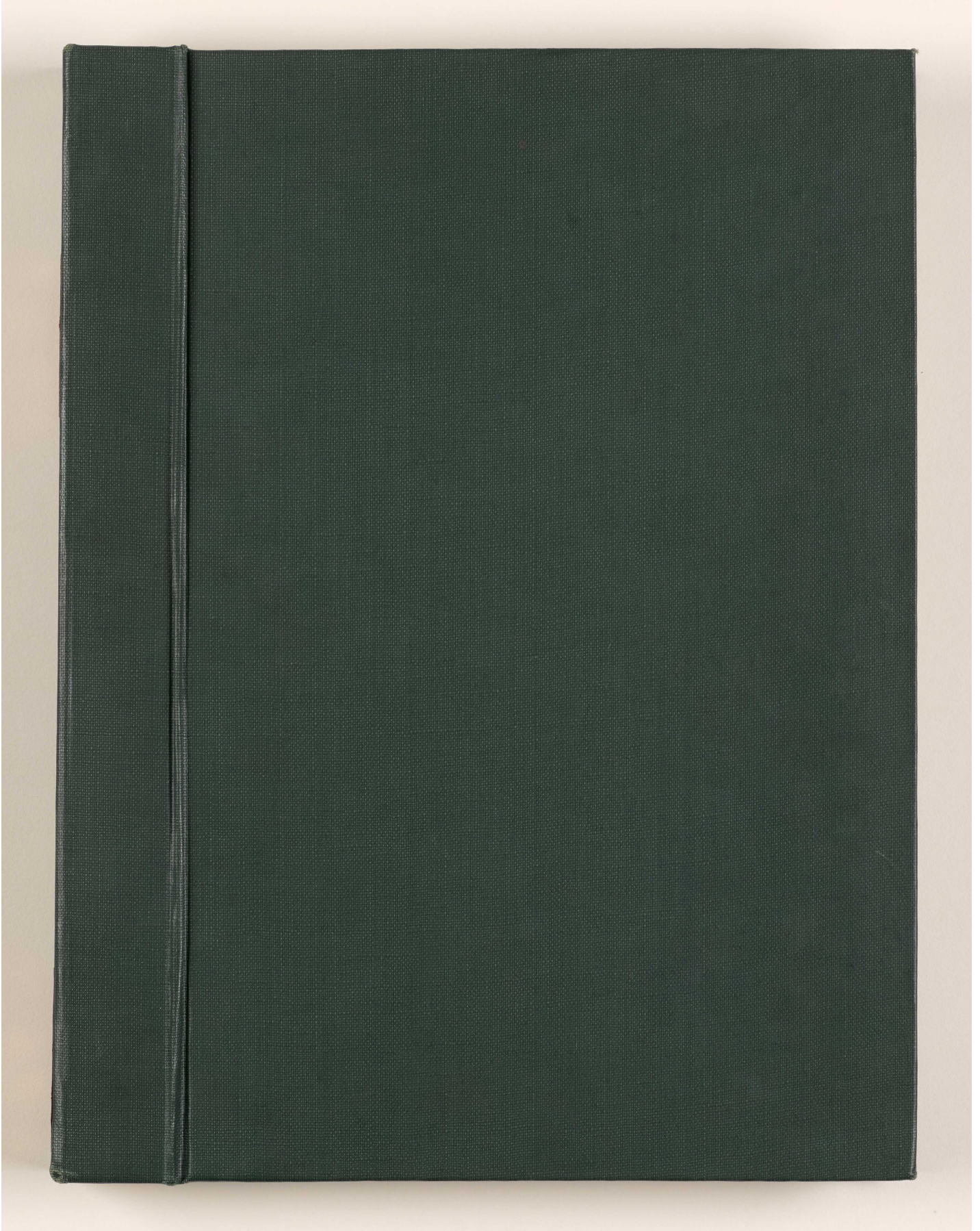
This file is comprised of notes, reports, memoranda, and correspondence received and compiled by George Nathaniel Curzon, on the subject of Persia. The file is largely concerned with possible routes for a proposed overland telegraph line between India and Europe.

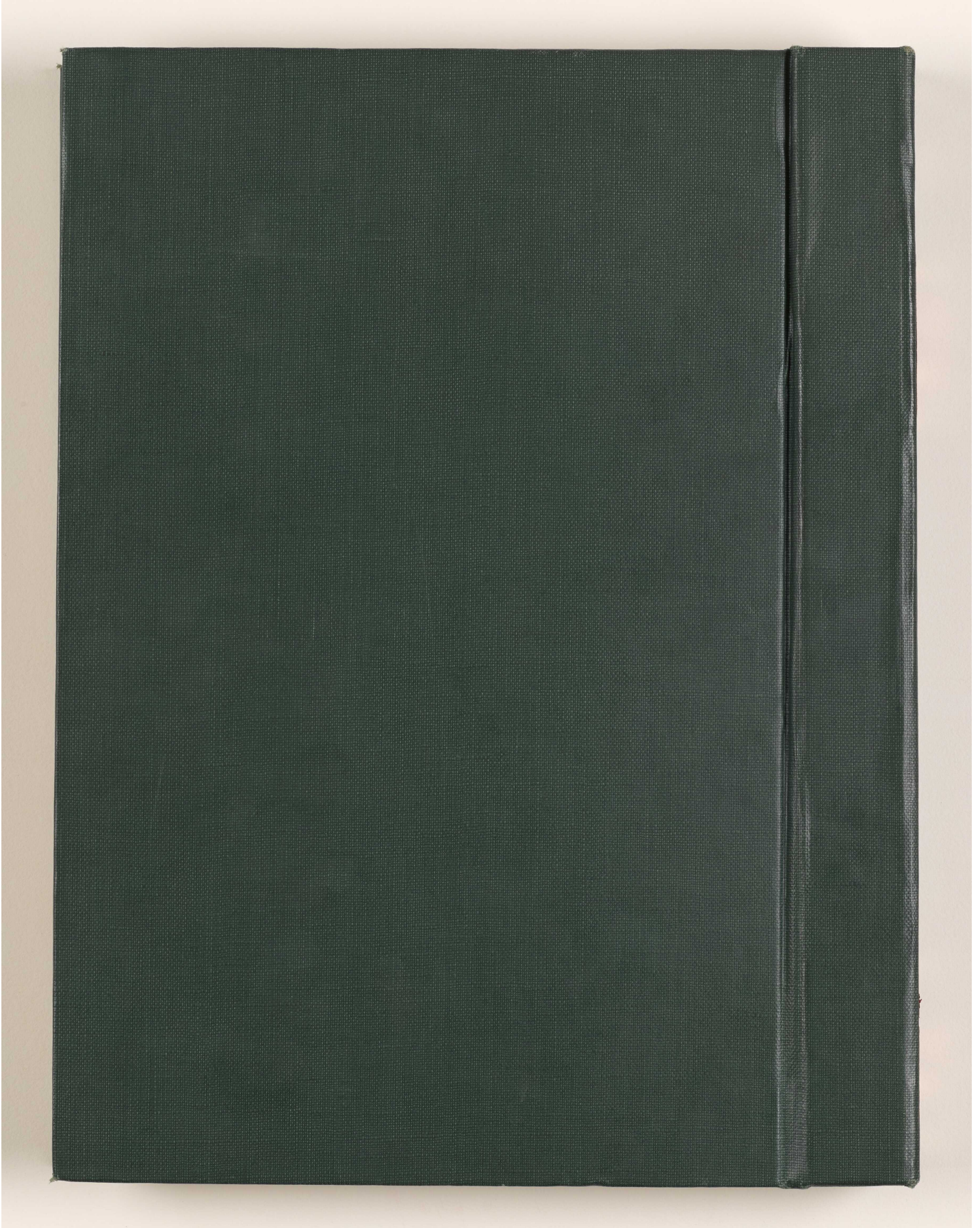
Also discussed is Russia's interest in Persia, in some handwritten notes (author unknown) entitled 'The Antidote to Russian Advance Toward Persia and Herat'.

Notable correspondents include Arthur James Balfour (Lord Balfour), Prime Minister Robert Arthur Talbot Gascoyne-Cecil (Lord Salisbury), and Charles Edward Pitman, Superintendent of Government Telegraphs, Bombay Division.

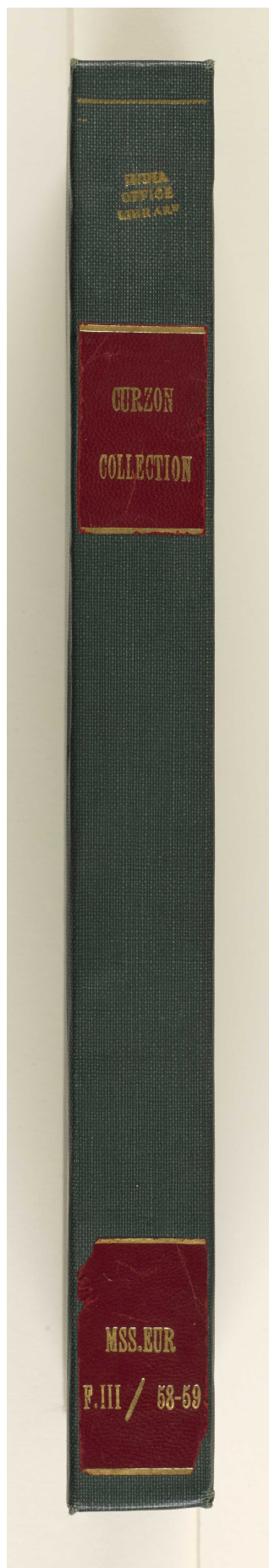
In addition to correspondence, notes and reports, the file contains seven photograph negatives (ff 30-36), which may have originated from Curzon's travels in Persia. Three of the negatives are blank; the remaining four show images of figures, and in one negative, a landscape, although none of the images is very clear.

Although the date range covers 1876-1892, most of the material dates from 1890-1891.





Correspondence and Papers on Persia [spine] (3/107)



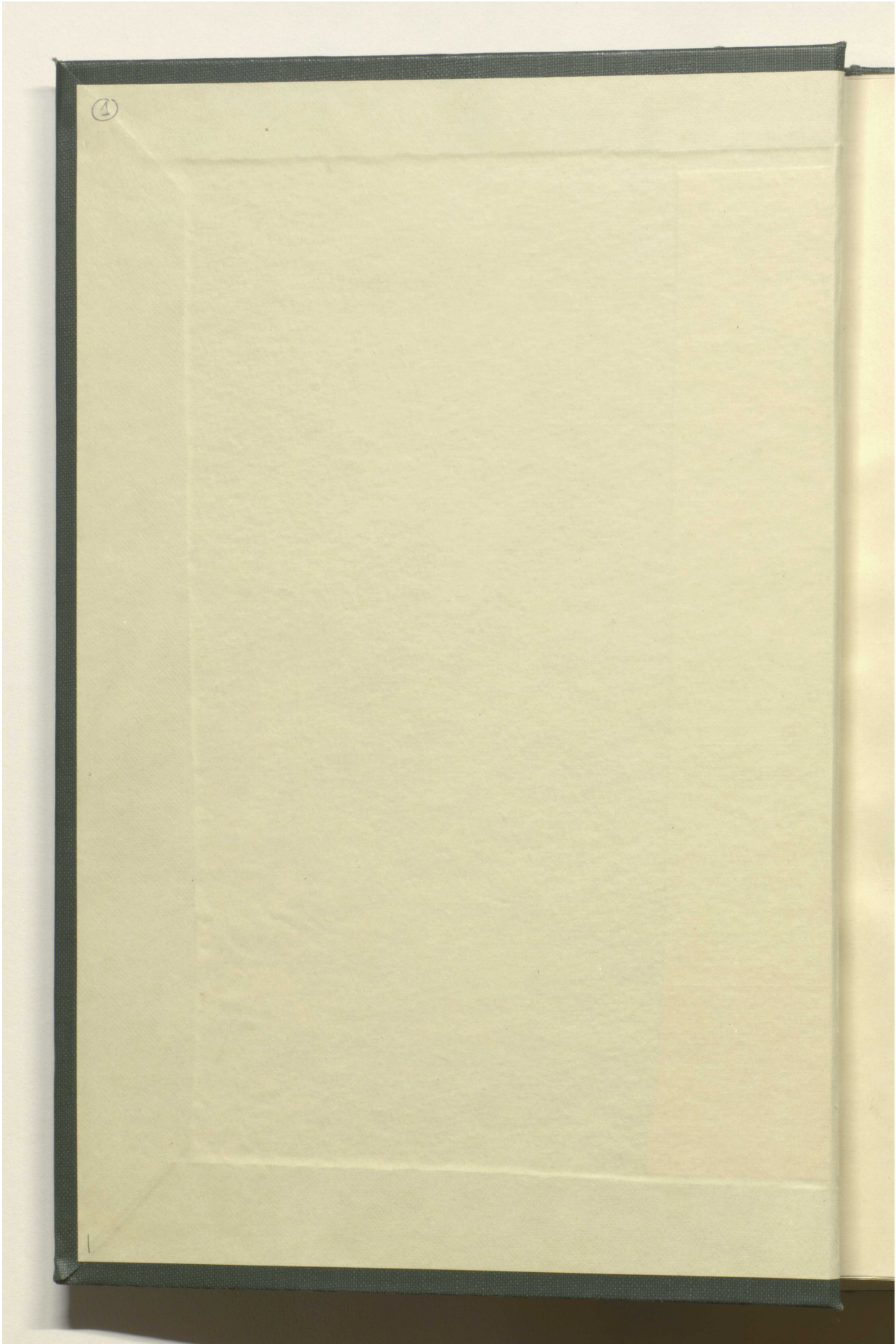
Correspondence and Papers on Persia [edge] (4/107)



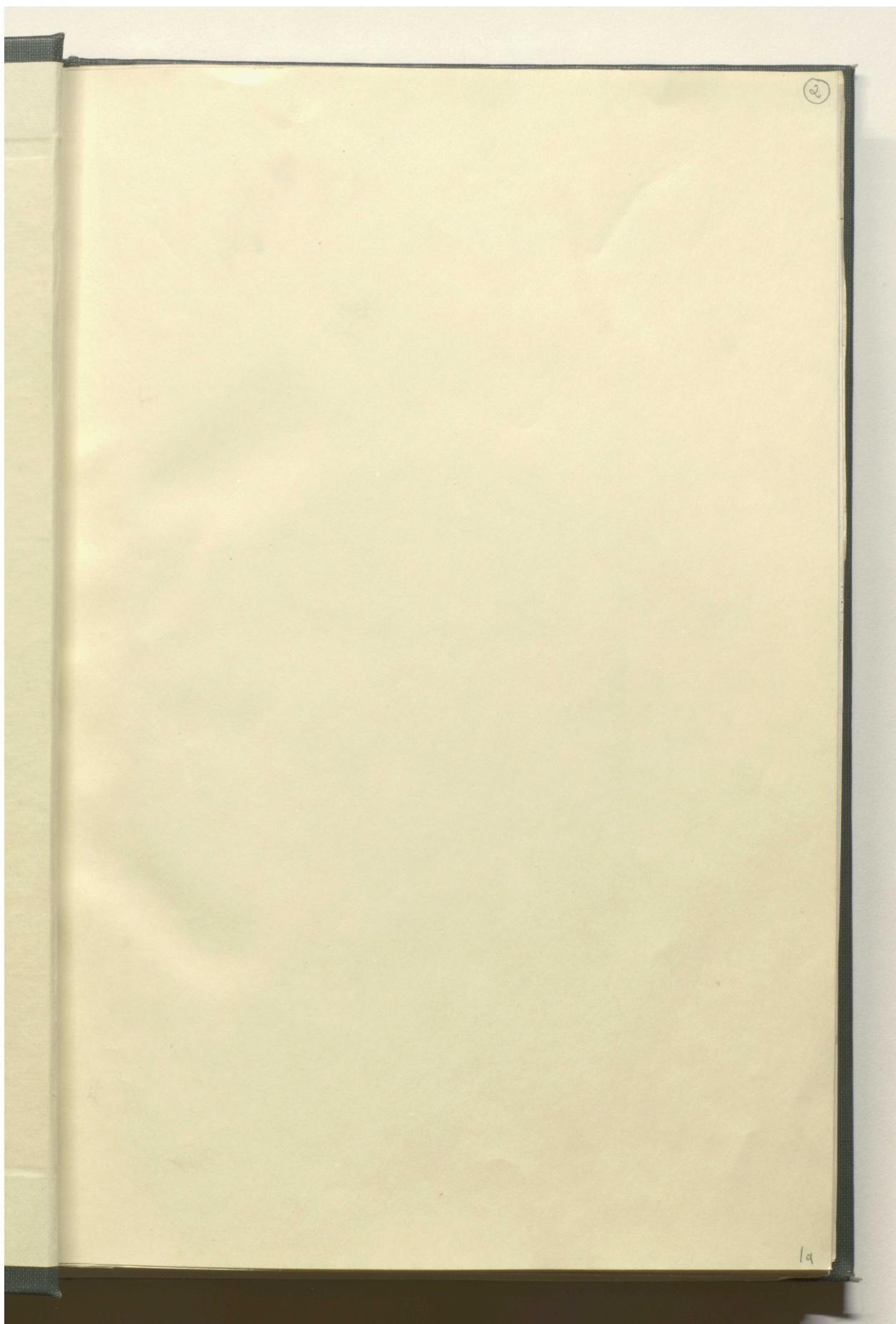


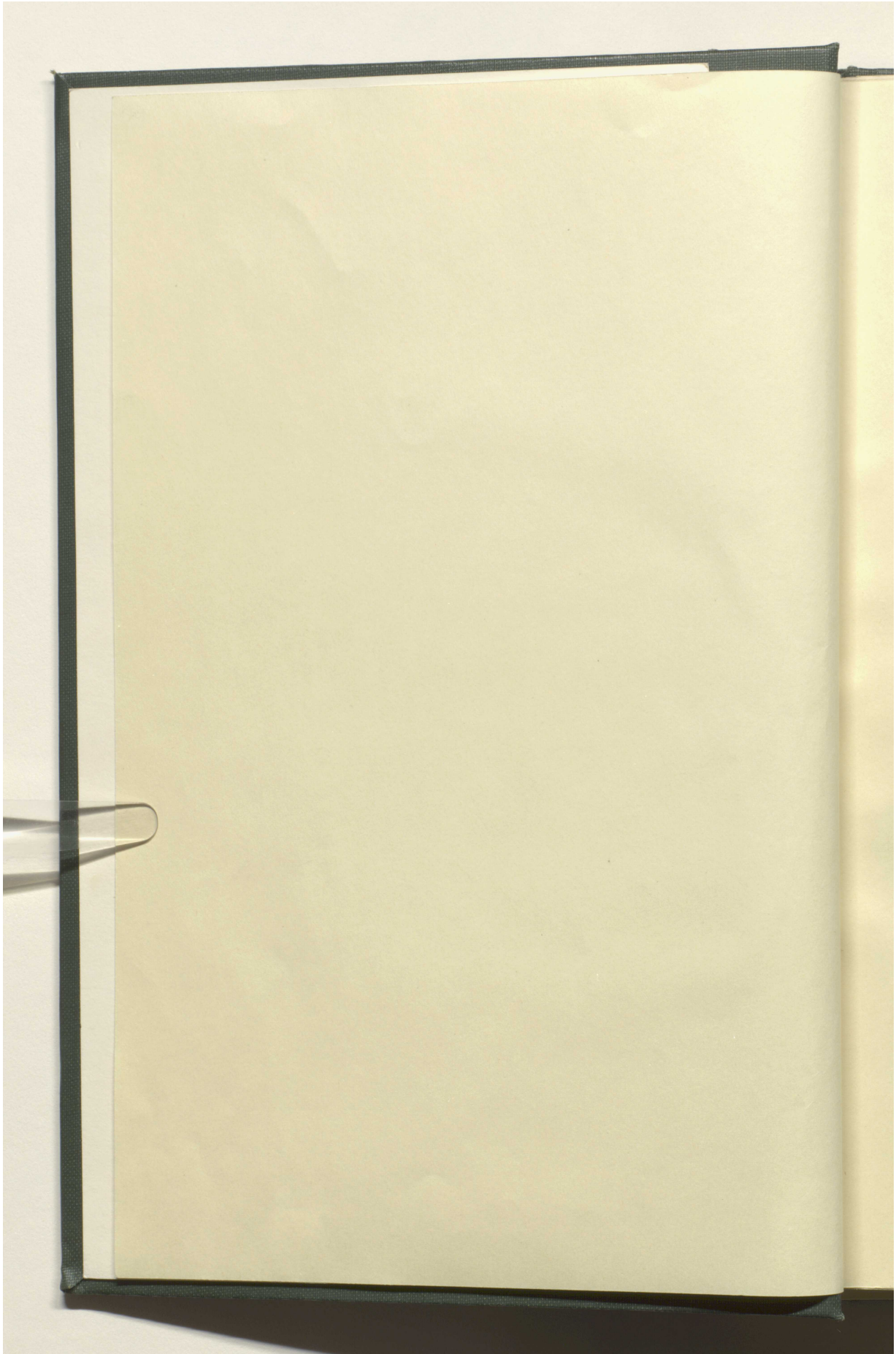
Correspondence and Papers on Persia [tail] (6/107)



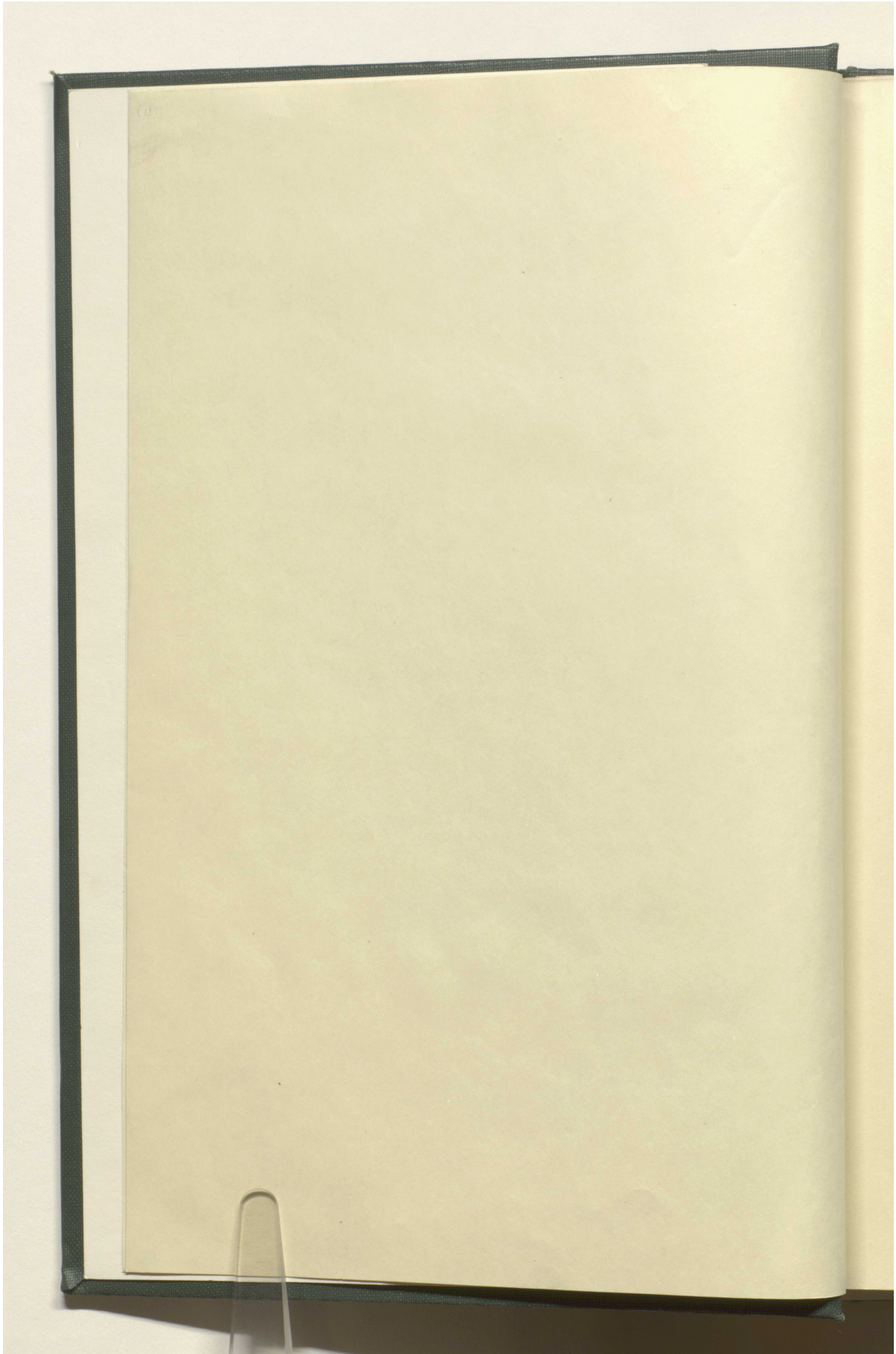


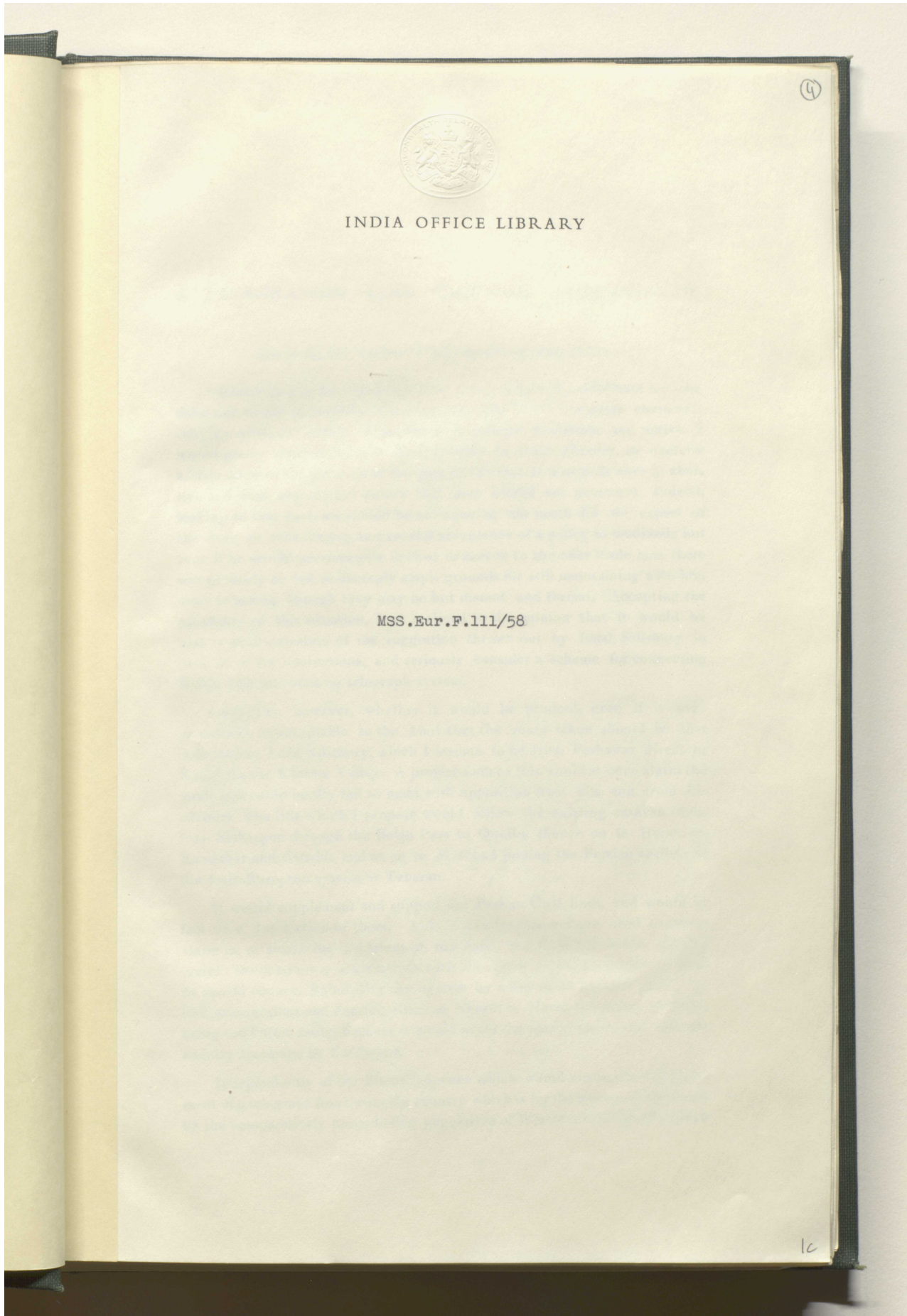


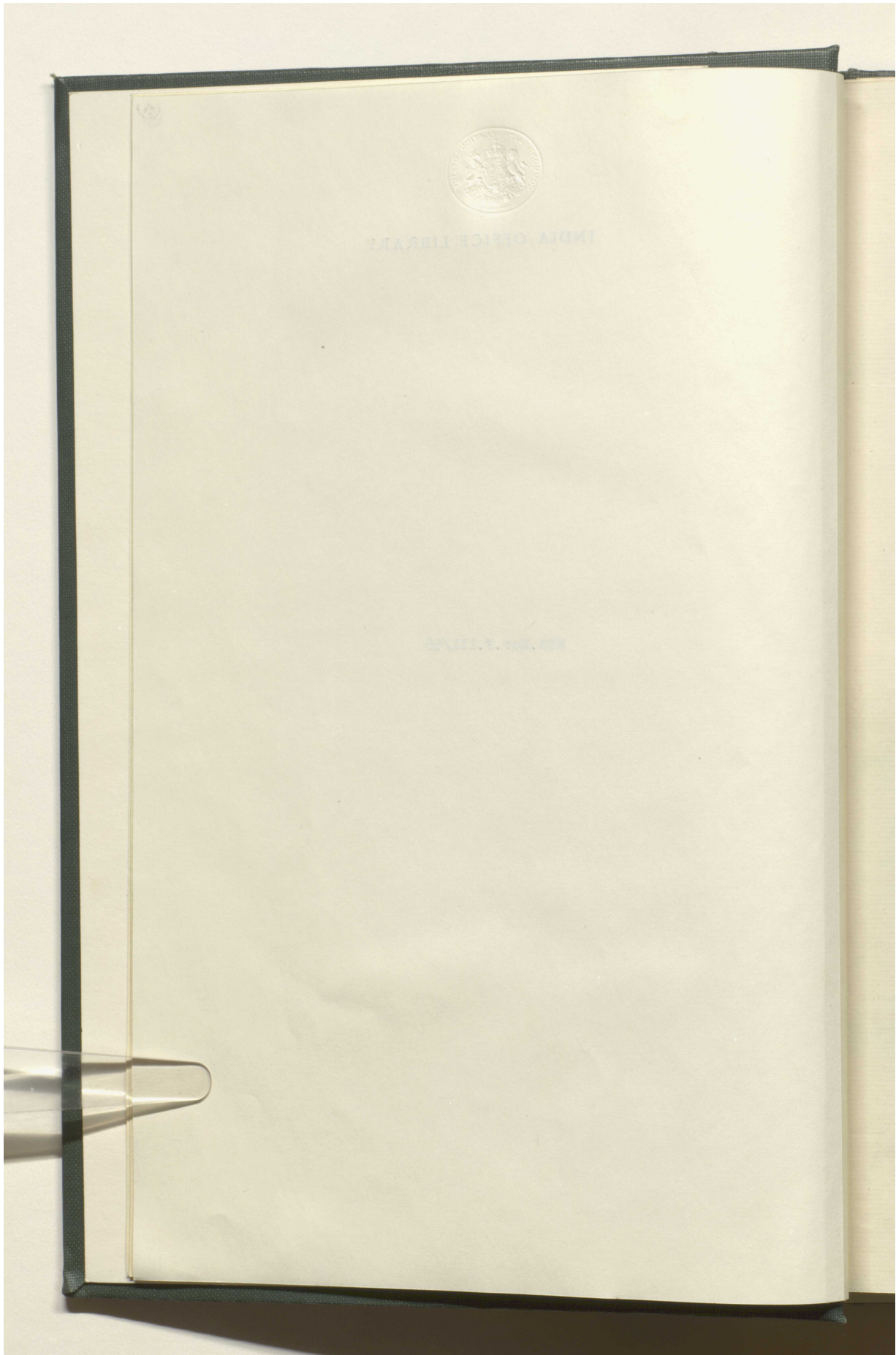












Correspondence and Papers on Persia [5r] (14/107)

MSS Eur. F. 111/58 ⑤

FF. 1-46

A TELEGRAPHIC LINE THROUGH AFGHANISTAN.

*Minute by Sir Andrew Clarke written in July 1876:—*

“Concurring in the measures now being adopted to substitute for the fitful and torpid correlations that have since the Kabul Campaign characterised our attitude towards Afghanistan an alliance consistent and active, I would prefer, even should the Amir's reply be unsatisfactory, to exercise a little more of the patience of the past rather than to accept at once as abortive and final any partial failure that may attend our overtures. Indeed, looking to that past, we should be anticipating too much did we expect of the Amir an unhesitating and cordial acceptance of a policy so modified; but even if he should peremptorily decline to accede to the offer made him, there will probably be left in his reply ample grounds for still maintaining with him some relations, though they may be but distant and formal. Accepting the possibility of this situation, I am inclined to the opinion that it would be wise to avail ourselves of the suggestion thrown out by Lord Salisbury in para. 40 of his instructions, and seriously consider a scheme for connecting Kabul with our existing telegraph system.

I question, however, whether it would be prudent, even if it were practicable or acceptable to the Amir that the route taken should be that indicated by Lord Salisbury, which I assume to be from Peshawar direct to Kabul *via* the Kurram Valley. A project such as this would at once alarm the Amir and could hardly fail to meet with opposition from him and from his advisers. The line which I propose would follow the existing caravan route from Shikarpur through the Bolan Pass to Quetta, thence on to Herat *via* Kandahar and Girishk, and so on to Mashhad joining the Persian section of the Indo-European system at Teheran.

It would supplement and support our Persian Gulf lines, and would in fact be a duplication of them. And as such its *raison d'etre* need cause no alarm to, or awake the suspicions of, the Amir, and in fact it would afford a pretext for continuing negotiations with him, for it might be suggested that he should connect Kabul with the system by a line to be worked under his own management and control, either at Ghazni or Herat, the latter, perhaps, being the better route, because it would avoid the heavy snows and difficult country traversed by the former.

Independently of the direct influence which would ensue, the establishment of a telegraph line through a country which is for the most part inhabited by the comparatively peace-loving population of Western Afghanistan, which

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Correspondence and Papers on Persia [5v] (15/107)

would be strengthened against the more warlike mountain class in the north-east, the political and strategic value of such means of communication is at once apparent.

For the construction and maintenance of this line from Mashhad, indeed from Herat to Teheran and from Shikarpur to Quetta, no difficulty, political or other, need be anticipated, for the former section is within Persian territory, and would consequently be merely an extension of our existing system, whilst the latter section falls within the jurisdiction of the Khan of Khelat, who doubtless would be shrewd enough to see in it an additional means for the consolidation of his own authority over his turbulent sirdars. The central links of the line, passing as they do through Afghanistan, should be prominently placed before the Amir as being specially needed in the interests of trade and commerce; and it may be confidently hoped that his support would be enlisted. Should it turn out otherwise, his refusal will emphatically prove that no circumstances can arise under which we may rely upon him. The length of the line might be some 1,500 miles; its first outlay would thus probably not exceed . . . , and its working and maintenance would certainly be at any rate far less than would be the annual charges of the often suggested British military outposts, whilst the actual value of these latter would eventually be insignificant compared with the results which must follow on the establishment of this telegraphic communication.

Mashhad  
Telegraph  
to  
Indus  
Persian

Mss Eur F111  
58.



6

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Correspondence and Papers on Persia [6v] (17/107)

would be strengthened against the more warlike mountain class in the north-east, the political and strategic value of such means of communication is at once apparent.

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7

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Independently of the direct influence which would ensue, the establishment of a telegraph line through a country which is for the most part inhabited by the comparatively peace-loving population of Western Afghanistan, which

Correspondence and Papers on Persia [7v] (19/107)

would be strengthened against the more warlike mountain class in the north-east, the political and strategic value of such means of communication is at once apparent.

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25 Aug. 1885-⑦

*Proposal for an Overland Line of Telegraph from  
India to Europe through Central Asia.*

*Extract from the Proceedings of the Society of Telegraph  
Engineers and of Electricians at a Meeting held on May  
26th, 1881, at the Institution of Civil Engineers,  
25, Great George Street, Westminster.*

*Professor G. C. Foster, F. R. S., President, in the Chair.*

*Remarks by Mr. C. E. Pitman, C. I. E., Superintendent in  
charge of the Telegraph Operations in Beluchistan and  
Southern Afghanistan in 1876-1879.*

"It is a matter of deep regret to me that, owing to the evacuation of Kandahar, the line thither should recently have been pulled down. It now only reaches to Chaman, 77 miles east of Kandahar, and about 63 miles west of Quetta.

"I regret its demolition all the more, because I think it will again be required, and that we shall have to go back to Kandahar before very long. (*Loud applause*). Having gone back there, it will be necessary to establish a political agent at Herat, but this will not be done unless we have a telegraph there, and there is no reason whatever why a telegraph line should not be laid between Kandahar and Herat.

"Having got a line to Herat, you are only 220 miles from Meshed, to which point the Persian Government have a telegraph at this moment.

"To Teheran there is an excellent first-class line from Europe, and with very little outlay the existing line between Teheran and Meshed might be put into good working order and be maintained without difficulty.

"If the Persian Government can maintain a line between Teheran and Meshed, I do not see why a line should not be maintained for the comparatively short distance of 220 miles between Herat and Meshed.

"If the Turkomans can be held in check and prevented damaging the line on one section, can they not be checked on the other? The total length of line required to connect the Indian and Persian Telegraph systems is about 600 miles, *viz*: 375 miles from Kandahar to Herat, and 220 miles from Herat to Meshed; and this link would complete a land line of Telegraph between India and England.

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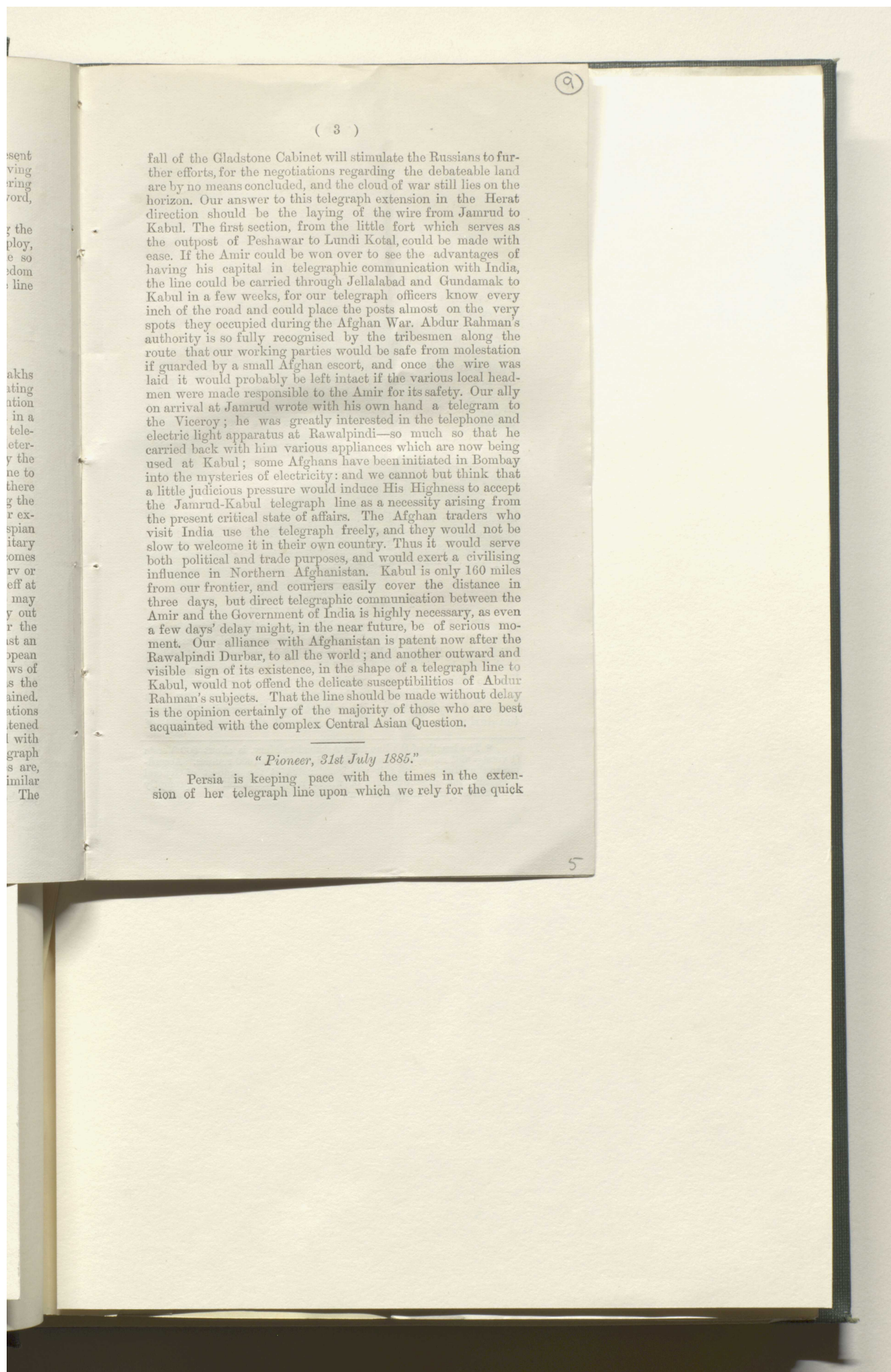
( 2 )

"The existence of such a line would enable the present rates to be reduced very considerably, and, instead of having the present high charge (not unnecessarily high considering the cost of cables) of something like five shillings per word, we should have a rate of perhaps one shilling per word.

"By taking the chiefs of the native tribes inhabiting the districts through which the line would pass into our employ, and making them responsible for the line, as was done so successfully in Beluchistan and Southern Afghanistan, freedom from malicious interference would be obtained, and the line would be kept up without much danger or difficulty."

*Pioneer, 25th June 1885.*

The completion of the Telegraph line linking Sarakhs with the Caspian shows that Russia is steadily consolidating her military power on the Herat border. She has no intention of retiring, even though the boundary question is still in a fluid state; and the energy with which she is carrying the telegraph to her advanced posts is a significant sign of her determination to push the advantages so kindly granted by the Gladstone-Granville Ministry to the furthest point. The line to Merv is by this time probably in working order also, for there are no great physical difficulties to be overcome in placing the poles and wire in position across the steppe. The further extension to Charjui on the Oxus will connect the Trans-Caspian Province with Russian Turkistan direct, and combined military movements can then readily be arranged when the time comes for a further move southwards. General Komaroff at Merv or Sarakhs will be able to "talk" with General Tcherniaeff at Samarkand, or wherever his head-quarters for the nonce may be, and these enterprising officers may arrange to carry out their bold schemes without their messages coming under the eyes of high officials in Russia itself. In operations against an uncivilised enemy it is of the first importance for European Generals to receive with the greatest expedition all news of movements along the line, and it is by such agencies as the telegraph and heliograph that this end can best be gained. Surprises must be guarded against, sudden offensive operations arranged, troops be rapidly concentrated upon threatened points; and it is only when the head-quarters are linked with the other chief points by wire or the mirrors of the heliograph that success can be assured. From Sarakhs light field lines are, we doubt not, being laid to Pul-i-Khatun and Zolfikar, similar steps being taken from the Merv direction to Pul-i-Khisti. The



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fall of the Gladstone Cabinet will stimulate the Russians to further efforts, for the negotiations regarding the debatable land are by no means concluded, and the cloud of war still lies on the horizon. Our answer to this telegraph extension in the Herat direction should be the laying of the wire from Jamrud to Kabul. The first section, from the little fort which serves as the outpost of Peshawar to Lundi Kotal, could be made with ease. If the Amir could be won over to see the advantages of having his capital in telegraphic communication with India, the line could be carried through Jellalabad and Gundamak to Kabul in a few weeks, for our telegraph officers know every inch of the road and could place the posts almost on the very spots they occupied during the Afghan War. Abdur Rahman's authority is so fully recognised by the tribesmen along the route that our working parties would be safe from molestation if guarded by a small Afghan escort, and once the wire was laid it would probably be left intact if the various local headmen were made responsible to the Amir for its safety. Our ally on arrival at Jamrud wrote with his own hand a telegram to the Viceroy; he was greatly interested in the telephone and electric light apparatus at Rawalpindi—so much so that he carried back with him various appliances which are now being used at Kabul; some Afghans have been initiated in Bombay into the mysteries of electricity: and we cannot but think that a little judicious pressure would induce His Highness to accept the Jamrud-Kabul telegraph line as a necessity arising from the present critical state of affairs. The Afghan traders who visit India use the telegraph freely, and they would not be slow to welcome it in their own country. Thus it would serve both political and trade purposes, and would exert a civilising influence in Northern Afghanistan. Kabul is only 160 miles from our frontier, and couriers easily cover the distance in three days, but direct telegraphic communication between the Amir and the Government of India is highly necessary, as even a few days' delay might, in the near future, be of serious moment. Our alliance with Afghanistan is patent now after the Rawalpindi Durbar, to all the world; and another outward and visible sign of its existence, in the shape of a telegraph line to Kabul, would not offend the delicate susceptibilities of Abdur Rahman's subjects. That the line should be made without delay is the opinion certainly of the majority of those who are best acquainted with the complex Central Asian Question.

*"Pioneer, 31st July 1885."*

Persia is keeping pace with the times in the extension of her telegraph line upon which we rely for the quick

( 4 )

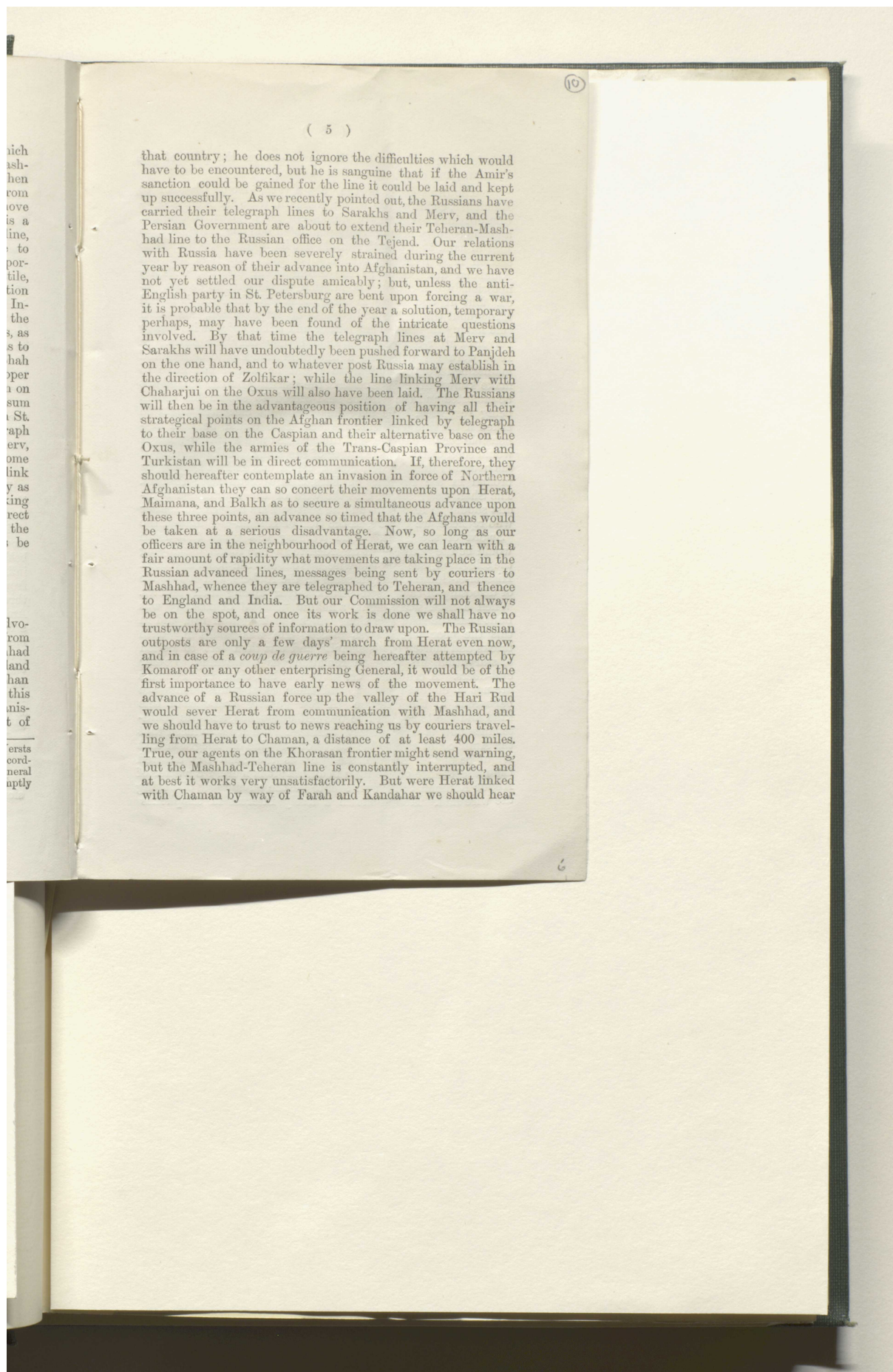
transmission of news from that interesting region in which Russian policy has been so active of late. The Teheran-Mashhad State line is to be extended to Sarakhs forthwith, when it will be doubtless linked on to the new Russian\* line from Askabad to General Komaroff's head-quarters. This is a move in the right direction; but what is immediately wanted is a thorough overhauling of the existing Teheran-Mashhad line, which is in a very bad state and is consequently liable to frequent interruptions. This line would be of the first importance to us in case of war, if Persia were not openly hostile, and even now it is the only direct channel of communication between the Boundary Commission and the English and Indian Governments. It broke down just about the time of the Panjdeh affair, and the effect might have been most serious, as the authorities were left in the dark for several days as to what was occurring north of the Paropamisus. If the Shah has not revenue enough to put this State telegraph into proper working order England might offer to do the work for him on easy terms: the money would be well spent even if the sum amounted to a lakh of rupees. A *Times* telegram from St. Petersburg states that the Russians have opened telegraph offices at Kariband (on the Tejend), Rukhuabad, and Merv, and their line\* to Sarakhs has been in working order for some time past. They never sit idle after their advances, but link their out-posts with head-quarters by telegraph as quickly as the wire can be laid. They are doubtless by this time making another line to Chaharjui on the Oxus, so as to have direct communication between their garrison in Turkistan and the troops at Merv, Sarakhs, and Askabad. They will thus be prepared for all contingencies.

*Pioneer, 3rd August 1885.*

The letter which we publish in another column advocating the extension of our Indian telegraph lines from Chaman, on the west slope of the Khojak Amran, to Mashhad and Sarakhs *via* Kandahar and Herat, so as to give an overland line to Europe, is one which will, we hope, gain more than passing notice. The writer has had wide experience in this matter of laying and maintaining telegraph lines in Afghanistan during our temporary occupation of the greater part of

\* The length of the line from Askabad to Merv, is about 500 Versts (1 verst = 661 miles) and it was estimated to cost 100,000 roubles. According to the Russian press it was constructed at the request of General Komaroff, the urgent nature of whose recommendation was promptly recognized by the Minister of War.





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that country; he does not ignore the difficulties which would have to be encountered, but he is sanguine that if the Amir's sanction could be gained for the line it could be laid and kept up successfully. As we recently pointed out, the Russians have carried their telegraph lines to Sarakhs and Merv, and the Persian Government are about to extend their Teheran-Mashhad line to the Russian office on the Tejed. Our relations with Russia have been severely strained during the current year by reason of their advance into Afghanistan, and we have not yet settled our dispute amicably; but, unless the anti-English party in St. Petersburg are bent upon forcing a war, it is probable that by the end of the year a solution, temporary perhaps, may have been found of the intricate questions involved. By that time the telegraph lines at Merv and Sarakhs will have undoubtedly been pushed forward to Panjdeh on the one hand, and to whatever post Russia may establish in the direction of Zolfikar; while the line linking Merv with Chaharjui on the Oxus will also have been laid. The Russians will then be in the advantageous position of having all their strategical points on the Afghan frontier linked by telegraph to their base on the Caspian and their alternative base on the Oxus, while the armies of the Trans-Caspian Province and Turkistan will be in direct communication. If, therefore, they should hereafter contemplate an invasion in force of Northern Afghanistan they can so concert their movements upon Herat, Maimana, and Balkh as to secure a simultaneous advance upon these three points, an advance so timed that the Afghans would be taken at a serious disadvantage. Now, so long as our officers are in the neighbourhood of Herat, we can learn with a fair amount of rapidity what movements are taking place in the Russian advanced lines, messages being sent by couriers to Mashhad, whence they are telegraphed to Teheran, and thence to England and India. But our Commission will not always be on the spot, and once its work is done we shall have no trustworthy sources of information to draw upon. The Russian outposts are only a few days' march from Herat even now, and in case of a *coup de guerre* being hereafter attempted by Komaroff or any other enterprising General, it would be of the first importance to have early news of the movement. The advance of a Russian force up the valley of the Hari Rud would sever Herat from communication with Mashhad, and we should have to trust to news reaching us by couriers travelling from Herat to Chaman, a distance of at least 400 miles. True, our agents on the Khorasan frontier might send warning, but the Mashhad-Teheran line is constantly interrupted, and at best it works very unsatisfactorily. But were Herat linked with Chaman by way of Farah and Kandahar we should hear

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( 6 )

in a few hours of any hostile movement on the part of the Russians, and could take action at once.

The first link in the chain, *viz.*, from Chaman to Kandahar, could be laid within a month, were the Amir's sanction obtained. There are absolutely no physical difficulties, and the country is so sparsely populated and the tribes are so well in hand that the wire would not be interfered with. The section most likely to give trouble would be that between Kandahar and Farah, as the Zaminlawar district, with its notoriously evil-disposed population, would have to be traversed. But if one thing is clear, it is that the Amir is feared throughout the length and breadth of Afghanistan, his stern rule having inspired every Sirdar and tribal chief with a holy horror of after-consequences should they defy his authority. If it were his will that a telegraph line should be laid and maintained from Kandahar to Herat he would but have to make known his command that the working parties should not be molested and the wire be held sacred to ensure his orders being respected. We may imagine what measures would be taken if the line were cut: the local tribe would be held responsible for the damage, and their ruined and smoking villages would soon testify to the anger of the Amir. Take the case of the overland line through Persia, which was at first frequently broken in the Province of Fars, then overrun with robbers. The Shah was resolved that the wire of the mysterious *bijli-dak* should be respected, and he sent to Fars a stern old soldier who rejoiced, we believe, in the title of Hissam-el-Sultanat, the "Sword of the State." Due warning was given that death would be the punishment awarded to anyone found destroying the telegraph, but still the wire was cut and the posts uprooted. Hissam-el-Sultanat caught some of the robbers, and his mode of disposing of them soon struck terror among their fellows. When a man was caught, a hollow pedestal of masonry was built near the road-side along which the telegraph ran, and in this the poor wretch was placed. He was "built in" with bricks and mortar to his armpits, and was then left to perish of starvation, his skeleton remaining as a warning to other evil-doers. A cruel measure no doubt; but, then, the Persians are not a civilised nation, and their usual punishments are barbarous in the extreme. A few ghastly examples of this kind and the telegraph line was left untouched, and its maintenance now is a very easy business. We are convinced that the Amir could ensure the safety of any line of telegraph that might be put in Afghanistan, just as the Shah has ensured the maintenance of the lines in Persia; it is merely a matter of Abdur Rahman being won over to see the advantages of having the wire laid. He has shown a lively interest in telephones

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and the electric light, and as he becomes more familiar with the appliances of civilisation he may accept the inevitable with a good grace and let our telegraph officers set to work. We have already strongly advocated a line to Kabul, but our ally objects to his capital being linked with Jamrud, as he is of a sensitive disposition. But he surely cannot raise senseless objections say to an experimental line from Chaman to Kandahar. If this were laid the extension northwards to Herat would follow in natural course, and then the Russians would not have every advantage on their side, excellent as are the strategical positions which they have occupied north of Herat. The commercial advantages which would follow upon the laying of this line are fully detailed by our correspondent CHE SARA SARA, whose letter we have already referred to, and we refer our readers to them. General Annenkoff's plan for a railway from Quetta to Askabad has no present chance of being accepted—it would cost many millions, and the international questions are very formidable; but this overland telegraph line is a smaller affair, and it might well be pressed upon Abdur Rahman's attention. It is merely a question of time when such a line shall be laid. It would be better perhaps to begin it before the map of Central Asia is re-made; we may need it sadly when the signal is given for the war that will decide the fate of Afghanistan.

*Pioneer, 5th August 1885.*

AN OVERLAND TELEGRAPH LINE TO EUROPE.

TO THE EDITOR.

SIR,—In a recent issue you drew attention to the necessity for extending the telegraph system to Kabul, and stated that a line thither could be constructed in a few weeks, but you say nothing regarding its maintenance. During the late Afghan War the line of telegraph up up the Khyber Pass was, if I remember right, cut some 150\* times, and from 50 to 60 miles of wire carried away; and even at the present time, with the tribes of the Pass more or less favourably disposed towards us, it is only reasonable to expect that considerable

\* The actual figures are :—

Wire cut. 98 times in the first portion of the campaign and 50 times in the second.

Wire stolen. 60 miles in the first portion of the campaign and 57 miles in the second.

C. E. P.

Correspondence and Papers on Persia [11v] (27/107)

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damage would be done. A Pathan takes as naturally to mischief as a duck to water, and few things offer a more tempting mark than a telegraph insulator. Wire is valued for making slugs, ramrods, and rests for jezails; wooden posts have before now served as fuel, and hollow iron posts for irrigation aqueducts; so that the chance of a line standing any time would be very doubtful, unless extraordinary measures were adopted for its protection. It is too much to suppose the Government of India could undertake such serious responsibility, and the arrangement for maintaining the line beyond Lundi Kotal would have to be left to the officials of the Amir; but between Lundi Kotal and Jamrud a line erected in the vicinity of the road could be protected by the guards who convoy kafilas and travellers. In the event of any wilful damage to the line the perpetrators would have to be severely dealt with—a few stern examples—and then it would be seen that interference with the telegraph was unprofitable and unadvisable. During the Afghan War little or nothing was done on the Khyber side to punish persons concerned in damaging the telegraph, and the telegraph officers on the Khyber route had the mortification of seeing their work destroyed over and over again without any attempt being made to punish the guilty parties.

The knowledge of the country, if the Government decided to lay the wire to Kabul now, acquired during the war would be invaluable, and an adequately protected party would soon get through the work of construction. The signallers at Kabul and any intermediate stations, such as Jellalabad and Lundi Kotal, should be Sunni Mahomedans, and the establishment for the maintenance of the line should be recruited from the tribes along the road. Both classes of men would have to be trained in India. The value of a telegraph to Kabul would, from a military and political point of view, be enormous; the line would also have a certain commercial value. This cannot, however, be estimated at a high figure, the line being a short one and incapable of being extended; for the day for a telegraph into Afghan Turkistan has hardly arrived, and moreover the difficulties of maintenance in that region would, in the winter months, be almost insurmountable.

Further south, however, there is a route along which a telegraph could be easily constructed and as easily maintained, and one which, sooner or later, will see an overland railway and telegraph to Europe. At the present moment the Indian telegraph ends at the Khojak Amran range, but a few years ago it reached as far as Kandahar, to which place the country is as well known to telegraph officers as the Khyber route. This

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line, which runs through Quetta to Jacobabad and Sukkur, was never subjected to any serious damage, for in its earliest days, whenever it was tampered with, such punitive measures were adopted by the British authorities in Beluchistan and Southern Afghanistan as effectually put a stop to any further mischief. The line to Kandahar carried a very large amount of private traffic, and the wool traders of Kandahar soon learnt the value of the *bijli dak*. Similarly, when the telegraph was first opened to Quetta, the horse-dealers of the Peshin Valley used it extensively for obtaining remittances from their agents in India. This method of transmitting money cost them ten per cent, but as they explained the money came in a few hours, there was no chance of losing it in transit through the Bolan Pass, and the use of the wire gave them a firm hold on their representatives and enabled them to learn how their affairs were getting on. We many assume, then, that the people of the country would use the telegraph, if again erected to Kandahar; and when completed to Herat, a paltry two hundred miles of line would be all that is necessary to make a connection with the Russian line at Sarakhs, and we may be pretty sure that this distance will be very considerably reduced before long if England does not act a little more vigorously. If a line to Kabul be considered necessary and practicable, surely there is even more reason for a line to Kandahar and Herat. Not only is that line of country a great trade route, but it is from the former city that we must look for information of the utmost value as to what is occurring on the Russo-Afghan frontier; and we must not lose sight of the fact that every mile of telegraph constructed in the direction of Herat brings us so much nearer the completion of an overland telegraph through Central Assia. From Quetta to Herat, a distance of about 500 miles, there are no physical difficulties of any importance—the country is open, the climate dry, and what rivers exist present no serious obstacle.

Man would be the worst enemy of the line, but with line-guards selected from the people of the country, and the headmen of the district held responsible for damage, the line would, after the novelty of it had passed away, cease to be molested. The hearty co-operation of the Amir's officials would of course be indispensable, and if Abdur Rahman be a sincere friend and true ally he should have no hesitation in aiding us to the full extent of his power to carry out a work that would prove of the utmost advantage to his country. Having once extended the telegraph to Herat, there would be no difficulty in joining the Persian system at Mashhad or that of the Russian at Sarakhs, the distance from Herat to each of

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these places being about 200 miles. From England to Teheran there is an excellent international line of telegraph, and from Teheran to Mashhad there is a line belonging to and worked by the Persian Government. It would require considerable repairs to make it a first-class line; but there would be no difficulty in effecting them, and were this country and England to contribute to the cost of extending this line to the Afghan frontier at Kuhsan the Persians could not well object to complete so valuable a link. From Herat to Kuhsan, a distance of 60 or 70 miles, the line could be laid without difficulty, and at the latter point the Indian system of telegraphs would end.

Again, by connecting Herat with the Russian line at Sarakhs or Panjdeh, to which place it will most assuredly soon extend, a most valuable alternative route would be obtained. Starting from the Indus an overland telegraph would run thus:—Sukkur to Sibi, whence there would be two lines one *via* the Bolan Pass, the other up the Hurnai route to Quetta; from Quetta a single line, about 40 miles long, would bring us to Gulistan Karez. From this point two separate lines should be taken over the Khojak range, one by the pass of that name, the other by the Gwaja; these two lines would meet again somewhere on the Kadanai plain and pass on through Kandahar, Giriskh, and Farah to Herat. From Herat the southern line would run through Kuhsan, Mashhad, Nishapur, Sabzawar, Teheran, and Julfa to Tiflis, and thence to Odessa, Berlin, and London, while the northerly route would be through Sarakhs, Askabad, and Baku to Tiflis, whence the above-mentioned route to Europe would be followed. The one weak spot in such a scheme, and one that by the way exists even now on what is known as the Indo-European route, is that a portion of the line common to both routes passes through Georgia, and would, in the event of war with Russia, be liable to be closed. We should not, however, be in a chronic state of war with that Power, and so long as there is peace between the two countries so long would communication be maintained. But to avoid all possibility of a breakdown at a critical time, Turkey should be encouraged and assisted to improve her telegraph which runs from Constantinople through Diarbekir and meets the Persian line running westward from Teheran. If this were done there ought to be almost uninterrupted overland communication between India and Europe. The wear and tear of such an overland line would not be great, and repairs could always be readily effected. Setting aside its military and political value, such a line would be of the utmost benefit to the commercial world, as it would enable the Indian

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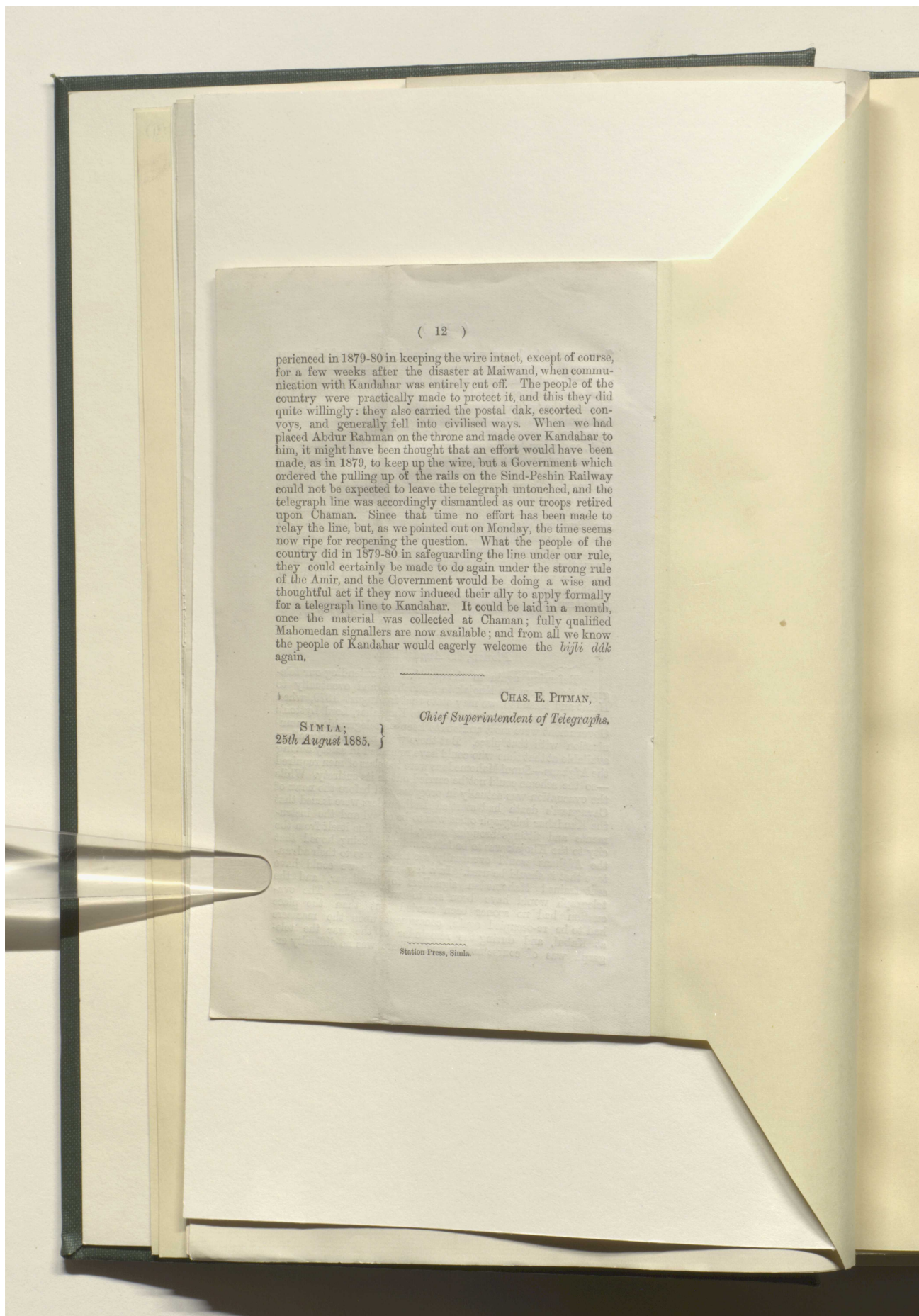
Government to lower very considerably the cost of telegrams between this country and Europe. The present rate is Rs. 2-12 per word, and if this were reduced to twelve annas, the line now advocated and the Indo-European line would obtain the whole of the traffic between India and Europe, as the Cable Companies could not work at so low a rate. Their original outlay on cables was enormous, the cost of maintenance is very high, and when breaks occur communication is sometimes not restored for weeks; whereas on a land line the expenses of all kinds are comparatively small, and interruptions are rarely prolonged. There would be no greater difficulty in the present day in constructing and maintaining a telegraph from Quetta to Mashhad than there was in constructing and maintaining the Bushire-Teheran line when it was first put up. As was to be expected, the line was often wilfully damaged, but by degrees the people became accustomed to it, and moreover learnt that it could not be injured with impunity; and there is no reason why the people of Southern Afghanistan should not in the same way be made to respect a telegraph line through their territory.

CHE SARA SARA.

*Pioneer, 6th August 1885.*

Referring again to the question of extending our telegraph lines from the Khojak to Kandahar, and eventually to Herat and Mashhad, we may state that in August 1879, when our troops were about to evacuate Kandahar, Lord Lytton's Government were most anxious to keep up telegraphic communication with that place. But there were no native signallers available at that time who could have remained in safety among the Afghans—Sunni Mahomedans were the class of men required—so the scheme could not be carried out in its entirety. While the evacuation was actually in progress, and before the news of Cavagnari's death had startled India, orders were issued that the Kandahar telegraph office was to be closed and the instruments and fittings brought away, but the line itself from the city to the Khojak was to be left standing, it being hoped that the Afghans would eventually see that it was to their advantage that it should be used. In a few months we could have sent trained Mahomedan signallers to Kandahar, and the telegraph would have been set to work again. The evacuation had no sooner been carried out than the place had to be re-occupied again, consequent upon the massacre at Kabul, and during the remainder of the war the telegraph was of course maintained. There was no difficulty ex-

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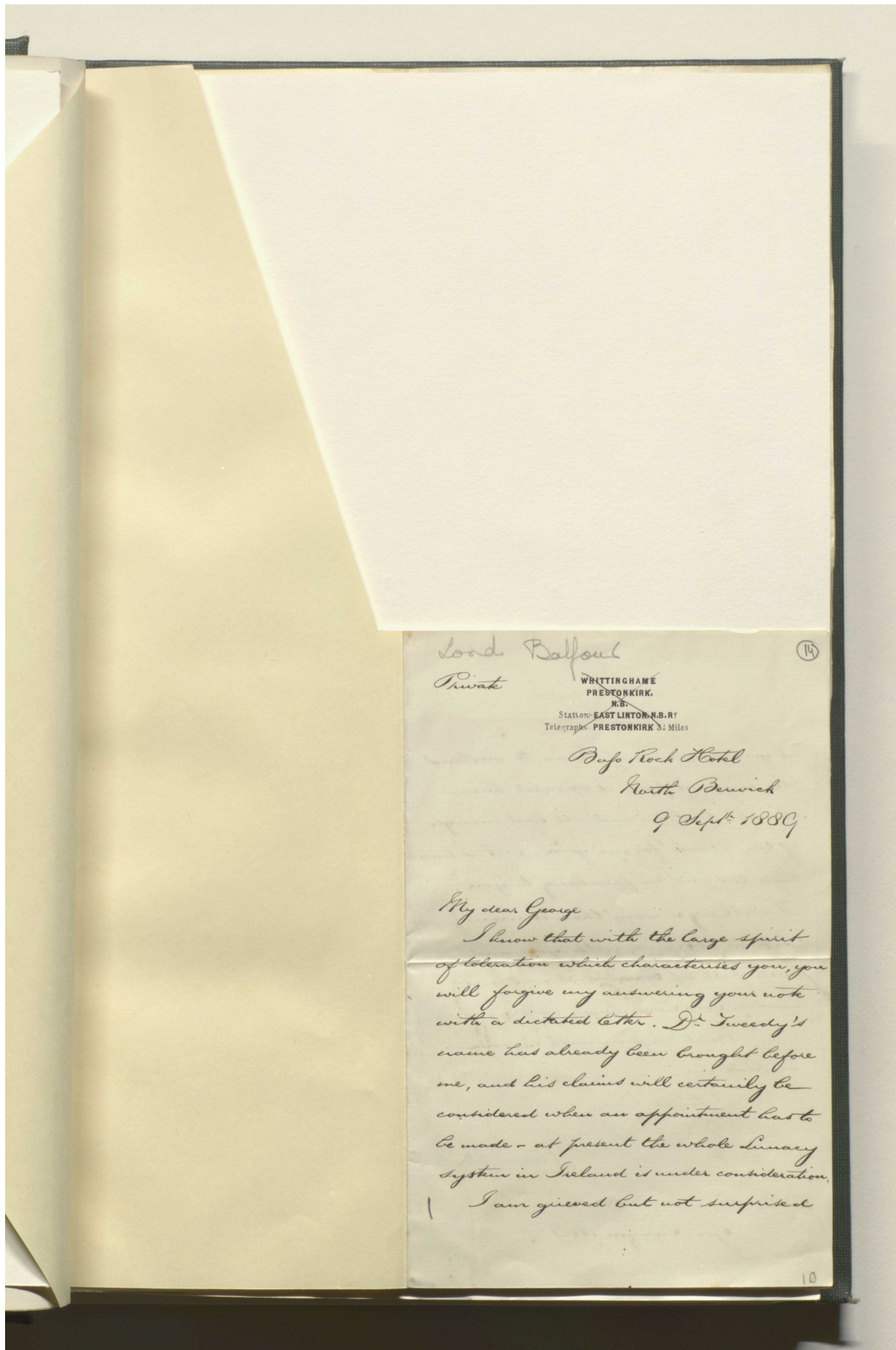
perienced in 1879-80 in keeping the wire intact, except of course, for a few weeks after the disaster at Maiwand, when communication with Kandahar was entirely cut off. The people of the country were practically made to protect it, and this they did quite willingly: they also carried the postal dak, escorted convoys, and generally fell into civilised ways. When we had placed Abdur Rahman on the throne and made over Kandahar to him, it might have been thought that an effort would have been made, as in 1879, to keep up the wire, but a Government which ordered the pulling up of the rails on the Sind-Peshin Railway could not be expected to leave the telegraph untouched, and the telegraph line was accordingly dismantled as our troops retired upon Chaman. Since that time no effort has been made to relay the line, but, as we pointed out on Monday, the time seems now ripe for reopening the question. What the people of the country did in 1879-80 in safeguarding the line under our rule, they could certainly be made to do again under the strong rule of the Amir, and the Government would be doing a wise and thoughtful act if they now induced their ally to apply formally for a telegraph line to Kandahar. It could be laid in a month, once the material was collected at Chaman; fully qualified Mahomedan signallers are now available; and from all we know the people of Kandahar would eagerly welcome the *bijli dak* again.

CHAS. E. PITMAN,

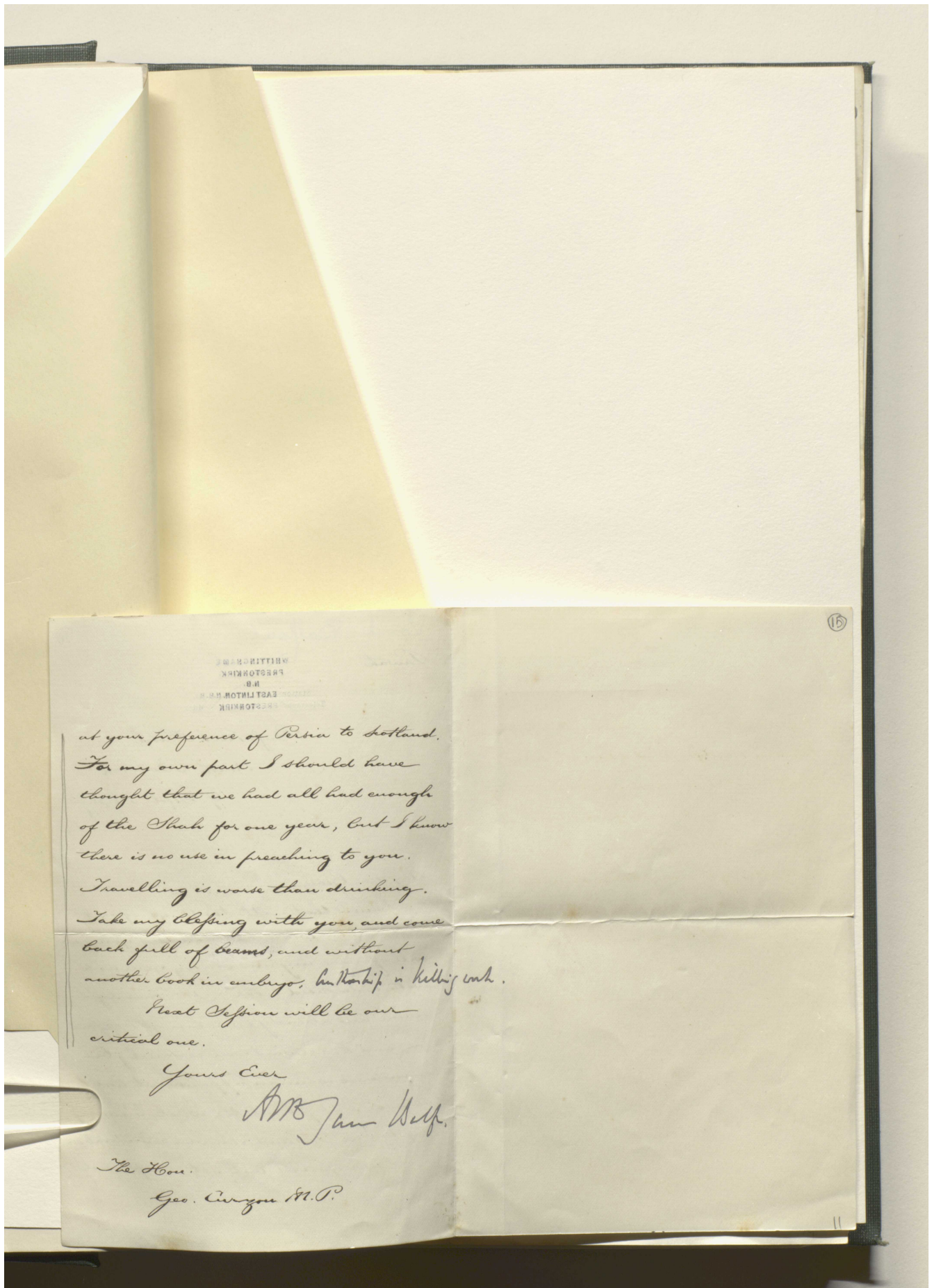
*Chief Superintendent of Telegraphs.*

SIMLA; }  
25th August 1885. }

Station Press, Simla.







at your preference of Persia to Scotland.  
For my own part I should have  
thought that we had all had enough  
of the Shah for one year, but I know  
there is no use in preaching to you.

Travelling is worse than drinking.

Take my blessing with you, and come  
back full of beams, and without  
another book in embryo, but with a  
little in the way of killing work.

Great Britain will be our  
critical one.

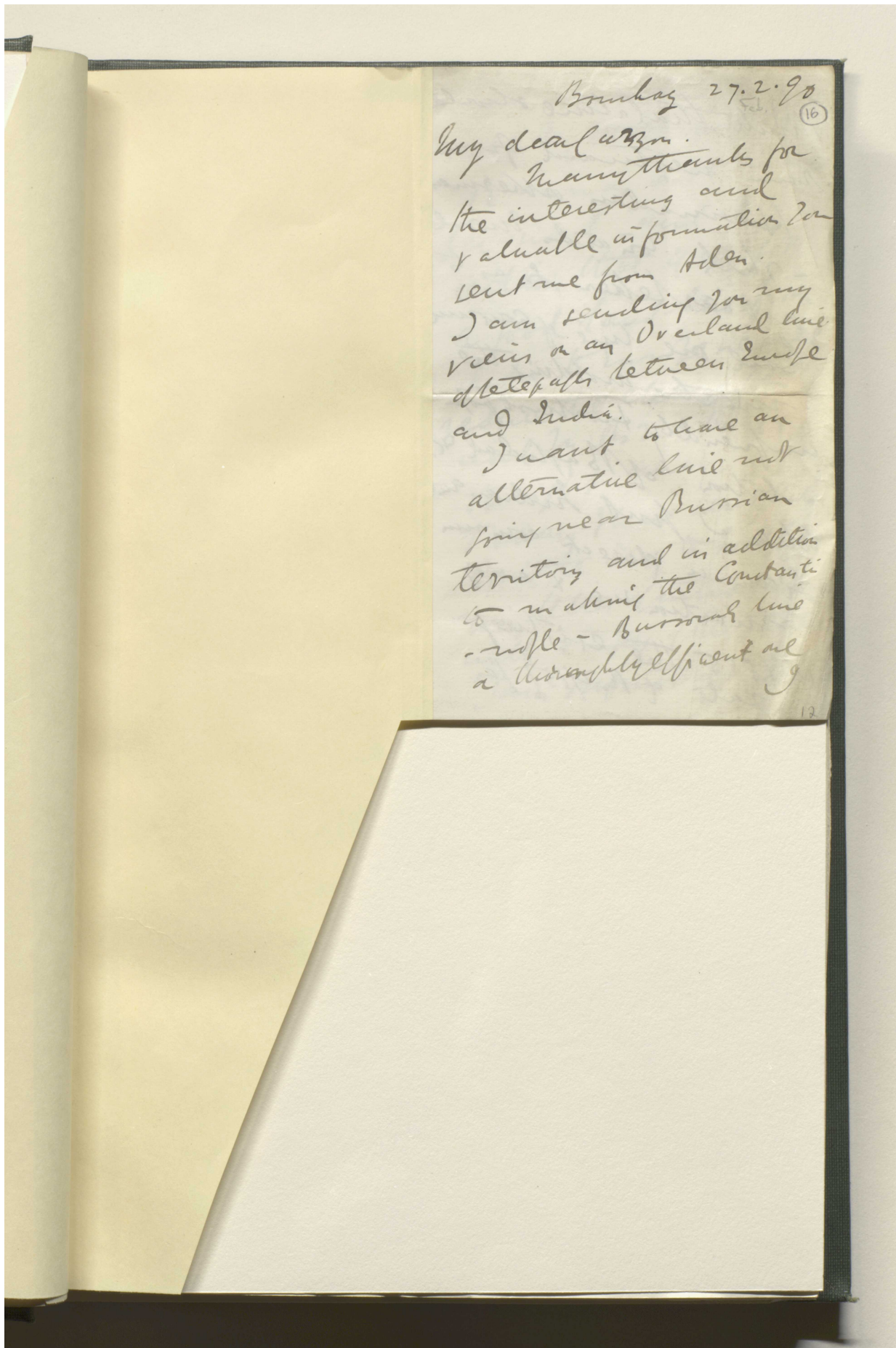
Yours Ever

Amos Jan Welf.

The Hon.

Geo. Curzon M.P.



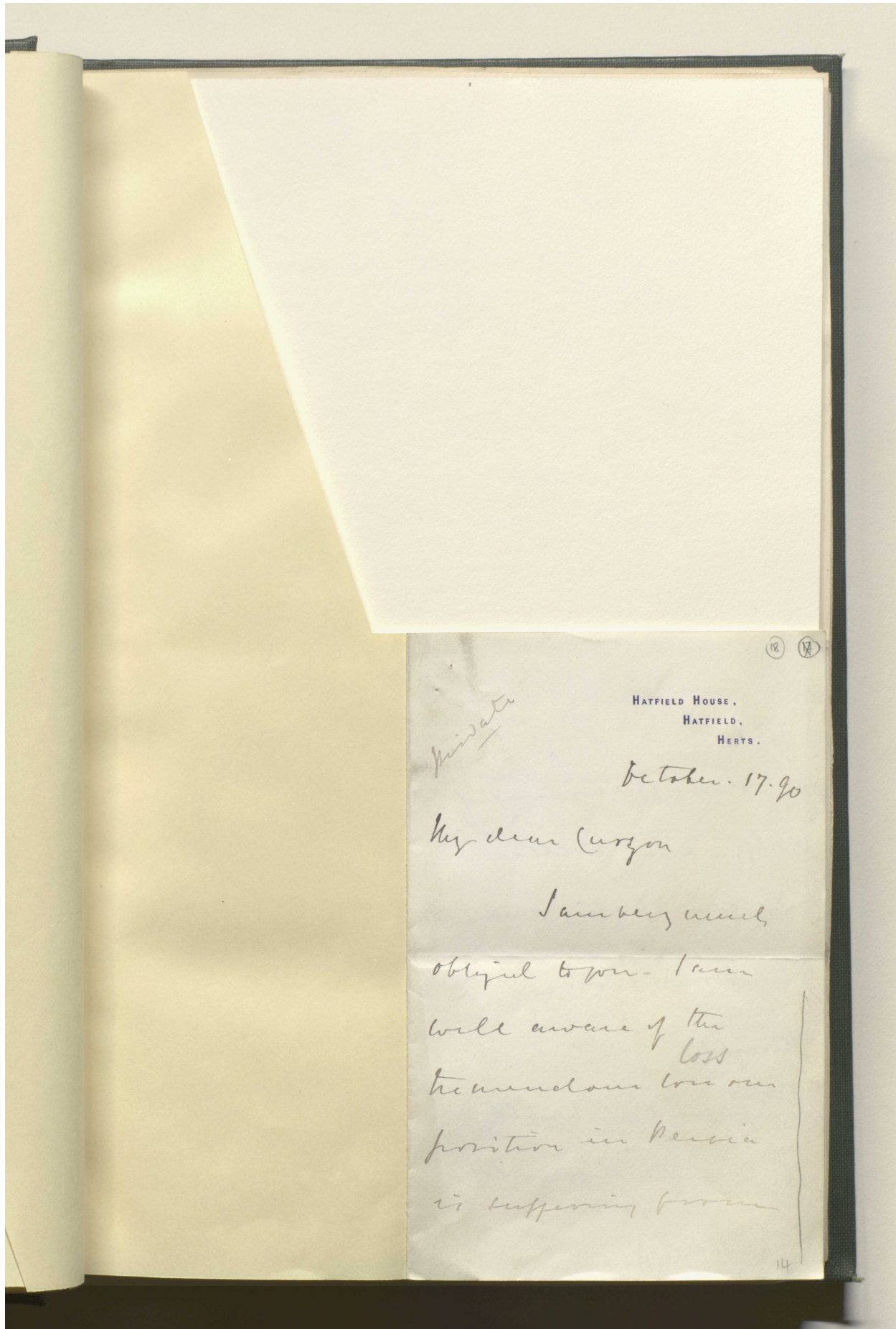


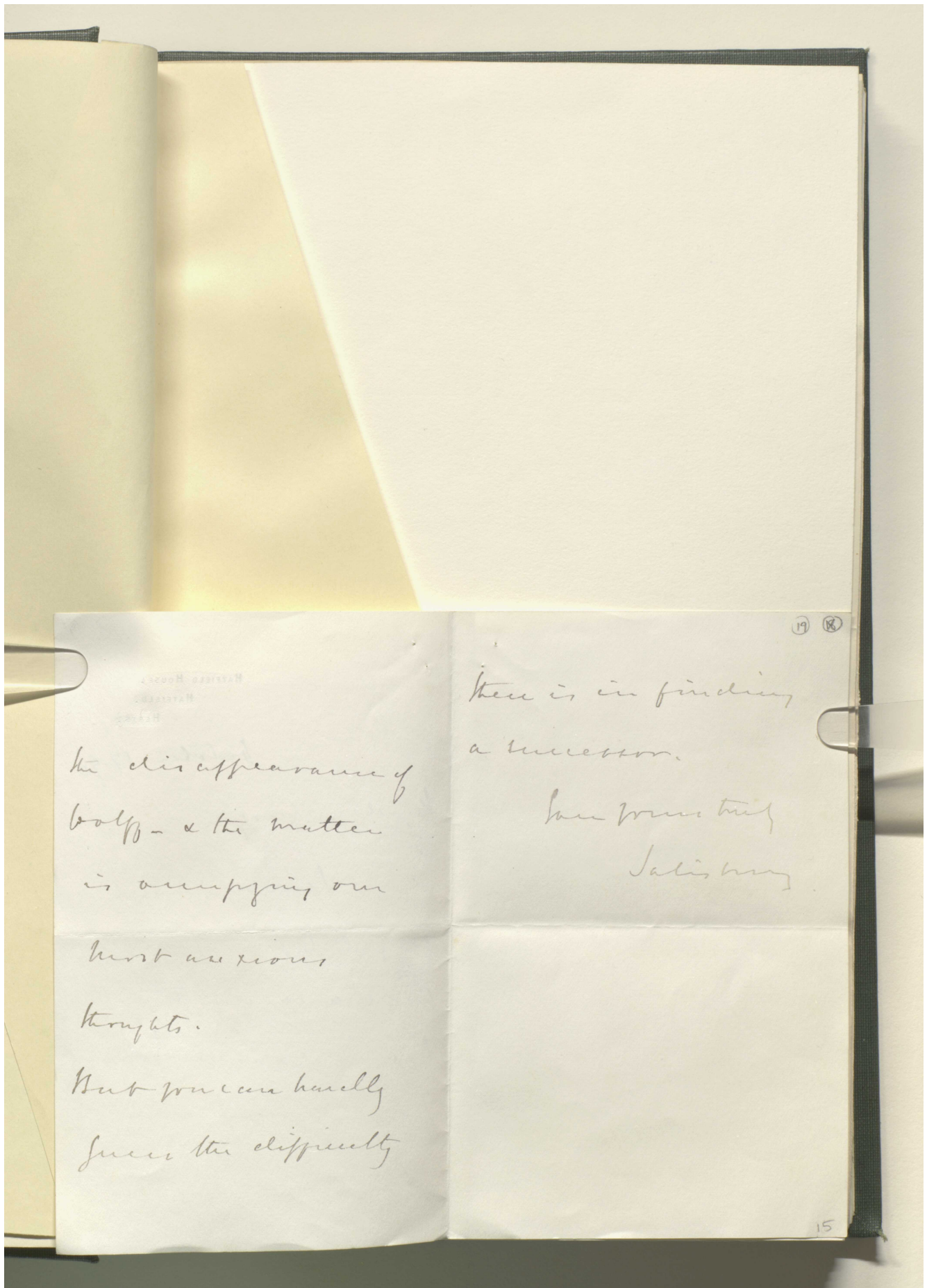
Bombay 27.2.90 (16)  
My dear Wm.  
Many thanks for  
the interesting and  
valuable information you  
sent me from Aden.  
I am sending you my  
views on an Overland line  
of telegraphs between Europe  
and India.  
I want to have an  
alternative line not  
going near Russian  
territory and in addition  
to making the Constantinople -  
Russe - Bussard line  
a thoroughly efficient one

think that a line should  
run westward from  
Hamadan otherwise  
- that towards Mosul  
a direct line so as to  
have one line of commu-  
- nication avoiding the  
unfriendly Turkish pos-  
- sition of Baghdad &c.  
When I put India and  
Siam in direct commu-  
- nication via Faray  
in 1885 the existing  
rate of Rs 2/157 per

word was reduced at  
once by that route to <sup>(17)</sup>  
12 annas or 15 annas  
per word and it is  
certain that if we got  
a good land line from  
India to Europe we could  
reduce the charge per  
word by Rs 2 or Rs 2/4  
straight away.  
Today I have sent the  
Private Secy to hand over  
your letter of introduction  
with a copy of the petition  
I am submitting. I am

also sending you copies  
of this petition and if you  
can interest his Lordship  
in my behalf I shall  
be extremely obliged.  
The release of the Bombay  
Defense Corps on the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
June and we shall have  
Turret Ships and torpedo  
boats without men and  
forts without a proper  
or complete armament.  
My wife joins with me  
in kindest regards  
Yours sincerely  
Chas Stewart









BOMBAY, 2nd January, 1890.

MY DEAR MR. HENNIKER-HEATON,

The little pamphlet I gave you the other day *re* an overland line of telegraph between India and Europe will acquaint you with the views I held and made public more than four years ago.

Not only do I adhere to the opinions I then expressed, but I am more than ever convinced—

- (I) of the necessity for such a line ;
- (II.) the possibility of constructing it at a remunerative rate ; and
- (III.) the possibility of maintaining it without serious difficulty and for a reasonable amount.

As regards (I), the lines of telegraphic communication between Europe and India ; at the present time there are the cables of the Eastern Telegraph Company to Alexandria, an overland line thence to Suez, whence a couple of cables run to Aden and Bombay.

Another route from the East of Europe passes through the Caucasus, *via* Tiflis to Tabriz and Teheran ; thence southward through Ispahan and Shiraz to Bushire, where the Indian Government cable to Kurrachee is joined.

From Bushire a cable runs to Fao at the head of the Persian Gulf, and from that place to Constantinople there is a Turkish line of telegraph running through Busrah, Baghdad, Mosul, Diarbekir and Angora.

A fourth line of communication between Europe and India is the very roundabout and expensive route known as the "Amoor." This line runs through Russia and Siberia to Vladivostock, and is connected with India by a series of cables.

Now all cables are more liable to *serious* damage than land lines. Their original cost is great, their maintenance costly, and when interrupted it frequently happens that communication is not restored for a considerable time.

In time of war an enemy would certainly endeavour to cut them notwithstanding any convention to the contrary, and not only this, but in the case of the Eastern Telegraph Company's land line across Egypt—a country where we most assuredly would be attacked—it would be liable to constant interruption ; so that altogether this route is a very insecure one, and it should not be forgotten that the many coral reefs of the Red Sea are a constant source of danger to the cables in those waters and that they have at times been interrupted for a considerable period.

The Persian Gulf route is equally exposed to accidental and intentional injury, and as for the existing line through Turkey in Asia it may be dis-

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missed with the remark that its condition is so inefficient, that although the rates are somewhat less than those prevailing on the Red Sea and Persian Gulf lines, its share of the overland traffic is only a little more than one per cent., the rest being divided between the two administrations just mentioned.

The Amoor route I have already described as circuitous and expensive.

For all practical purposes we may then assume that there are only two good lines of communication between India and Europe, and I would ask you to bear in mind, that not only have these routes been subjected to serious interruption, but they have, even within the last few years, been interrupted simultaneously.

Now in order to provide an alternative route that shall be direct, efficient and inexpensive, the following lines of communication suggest themselves to me:—

- (1) A deep sea cable subsidized by the English Government from Vancouver to, say, Shanghai, or better still, to Hongkong.
- (2) An overland line of telegraph through Southern Afghanistan to join the Indian system, terminating at Chaman and the Russian system, which has been extended to near Penjdah.
- (3) The construction of a first class line of telegraph from Fao to Constantinople, the line from the former place to Kurrachee being multiplied.
- (4) Another route suggested by Sir Henry Mance, late Electrician of the Indo-European Telegraph Department, is to lay some 1,700 miles of cable from Loanda, a station of the West African Cable Company, to Port Nolloth in the Cape Colony, through which a land line would connect with the existing cable to Zanzibar and Aden.

This route, like the Amoor, would be circuitous and costly.

Route No. 1 would be a very heavy undertaking, and I much doubt if the English Government, bearing in mind their experience of the first Red Sea Cable, would be prepared to subsidize such a line, and without a subsidy I doubt whether any private company would at present undertake the work.

As regards route No. 3—such a line as that recommended would have to be not only constructed but maintained by Europeans.

There are no physical difficulties, and the route would be a most valuable alternative one, as well as a route that would have the very great advantage of not passing through Russian territory.

If I remember rightly England has, under the treaty of Berlin or under a convention with Turkey which was the outcome of that treaty, very great power in the way of internal reforms in Armenia and Asiatic Turkey, and I believe that with our representatives at the more important towns through which the line would pass and the subordinate staff and workmen recruited locally, the line would easily be maintained in a state of high efficiency.

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No. 2 is the route of all others that I favour from a commercial point of view, and I believe that the Russian and Indian Railway and Telegraph systems are as surely fated to meet and amalgamate as two drops of quicksilver in the same saucer.

From Chaman at the foot of the Khojak-Amran Range to Kandahar is a distance of some 70 miles; from Khandahar to Herat is a distance of 375 miles, and once at Herat the Russian telegraph lines would be no great distance away. I may mention here that I would make Herat a junction office, whence one line would strike off to the north and join the Russian system, following their Trans-Caspian Railway to its terminus near Krasnorodsk, thence by cable to Baku or Petrovsk (the former south and the latter north of the Caucasus Range) and thence, *vid* Tiflis to Odessa, Warsaw, Berlin and London. This would be the line from Baku, while that from Petrovsk would take a more northerly route, passing probably through Astrakhan, Rostoff, Charkoff and Kieff to Berlin and thence to London.

The other line from Herat I would take to the Perso-Afghan Frontier at Kuhsan and thence to Meshed, whence there is a line, which I believe was specially repaired at the time of the Afghan Boundary Commission, to Teheran, at which place the existing trunk-line between Europe and India would be joined.

Since my pamphlet on an "Overland Line through Quetta, Kandahar and Herat" was written in August 1885, a broad gauge (5'6") line of railway and several telegraph wires have been carried up to the Khojak-Amran Range and will eventually terminate at Chaman on the Kandahar side of the hills. Thence to Herat there are no physical difficulties to a telegraph engineer and a substantial telegraph line could be easily and rapidly constructed. Iron posts could be railed on the one side to Quetta and on the other to Merv, or whatever point on the Trans-Caspian Railway is the most convenient, and the cost of such a line would not be abnormally high—local transport, almost all of which would be done by camels, would be the highest item.

I now come to the possibility and cost of maintenance, and I think I may safely say that with the support of the ruler of the country, the presence of British representatives at Kandahar and Herat, the employment of local labour and the payment of a small subsidy to local chiefs, the line, after the people of the country had become accustomed to it, would not be seriously molested.

Surely if the Persian Government can maintain its lines along the Turkoman Frontier we can do so in Southern Afghanistan.

The gap between the Indian and Russian outposts has considerably decreased since I last wrote on this subject, and the presence of Europeans on each side of Afghanistan may not unreasonably be expected to have a civilising and pacifying effect on the people of that country, as the presence

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of the English in Northern Beluchistan during the last thirteen years has had on that hitherto wild and turbulent country.

The Bolan Pass is now as safe as many a London thoroughfare and caravans now pass with safety through that portion of the once dreaded and inaccessible Khyber Pass which has been brought under British influence.

I would ask you to remember that when Southern Afghanistan was invaded by a British force in 1878-79, a line of telegraph was erected to Kandahar, and through the greater part of the latter year it was guarded from injury by the Afghans themselves.

What we did then, when we were at war with the ruler of the country, could, I maintain, be done again, and done more readily and easily when in the country as friends and allies of the Amir.

The cost of up-keep of such a line would not be great. There is plenty of room for it without interfering to any great extent with the Eastern Telegraph Company's Red Sea Cables, and I am of opinion that if the Indian Government could work such a line at the rate of two annas per word to Herat, it should be possible to come to an agreement with Persia and the European Powers to carry messages onwards for six annas a word *or less*. This would mean an eight (8) anna or a shilling a word rate at the current rate of exchange, from India to England. The value of such a line as an alternative route would be enormous and the gain to the press and the mercantile community equally great.

In fact so great would be the advantages and so small the difficulties of construction and maintenance, that I cannot but think if the case were properly put before the Chambers of Commerce at Home, the money for the undertaking would speedily be forthcoming. Among the objections that have been raised to such a line are, difficulty of construction and maintenance, liability to interruption in case of war, and the impossibility of the Afghans ever tolerating Europeans (who differing from them in religion, are looked upon as Kafirs or infidels, whom it is meritorious to kill). The first objection I think I have already disposed of; of the second I say that if this idea is to be accepted as a reason for not putting adjacent countries into railway and telegraphic communication with one another, why then, in order to be consistent, France and Germany, Germany and Russia, Russia and Turkey, Italy and France should henceforth sever the lines of railway and telegraph now connecting them.

I admit that in time of war the railways and telegraphs between belligerent nations are certain to be interrupted but only for a time, and when once peace has been restored these communications are restored also.

As regards the presence of Europeans in Afghanistan being distasteful to the inhabitants of the country, I admit it was so once to a prohibitive extent,

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but I would ask you to look at the way the Afghan Boundary Commission was received and treated only a few years ago, and that Europeans, *e. g.*, Captain Griesbach and Mr. Pyne have since been employed in the service of the Amir at Kabul itself—the former as geologist, and the latter as practical engineer.

I do not believe that English officers employed in Southern Afghanistan, with the sanction and support of the Amir and his lieutenants, would be subjected to greater danger or fanaticism than officers employed in the Punjab Frontier when we first occupied that portion of the country. To such a scheme as I am advocating there would naturally be determined opposition by the Cable Companies, but I maintain there is room for all, and not only this, but that the heavily pressed Indian Government should avail itself of every opportunity of increasing its revenue, and this, an overland line of telegraph should do.

Cheapen rates judiciously, whether postal, railway, or telegraph, and you get an increased traffic and an increased revenue. I have not been able in the very short space of time at my disposal to go into details of cost of construction and maintenance, nor have I been able to lay my hands on calculations made some years ago, but my experience of telegraph work in Eastern countries, and my personal knowledge of Beluchistan and Afghanistan, convince me of the possibility of carrying out successfully such an undertaking.

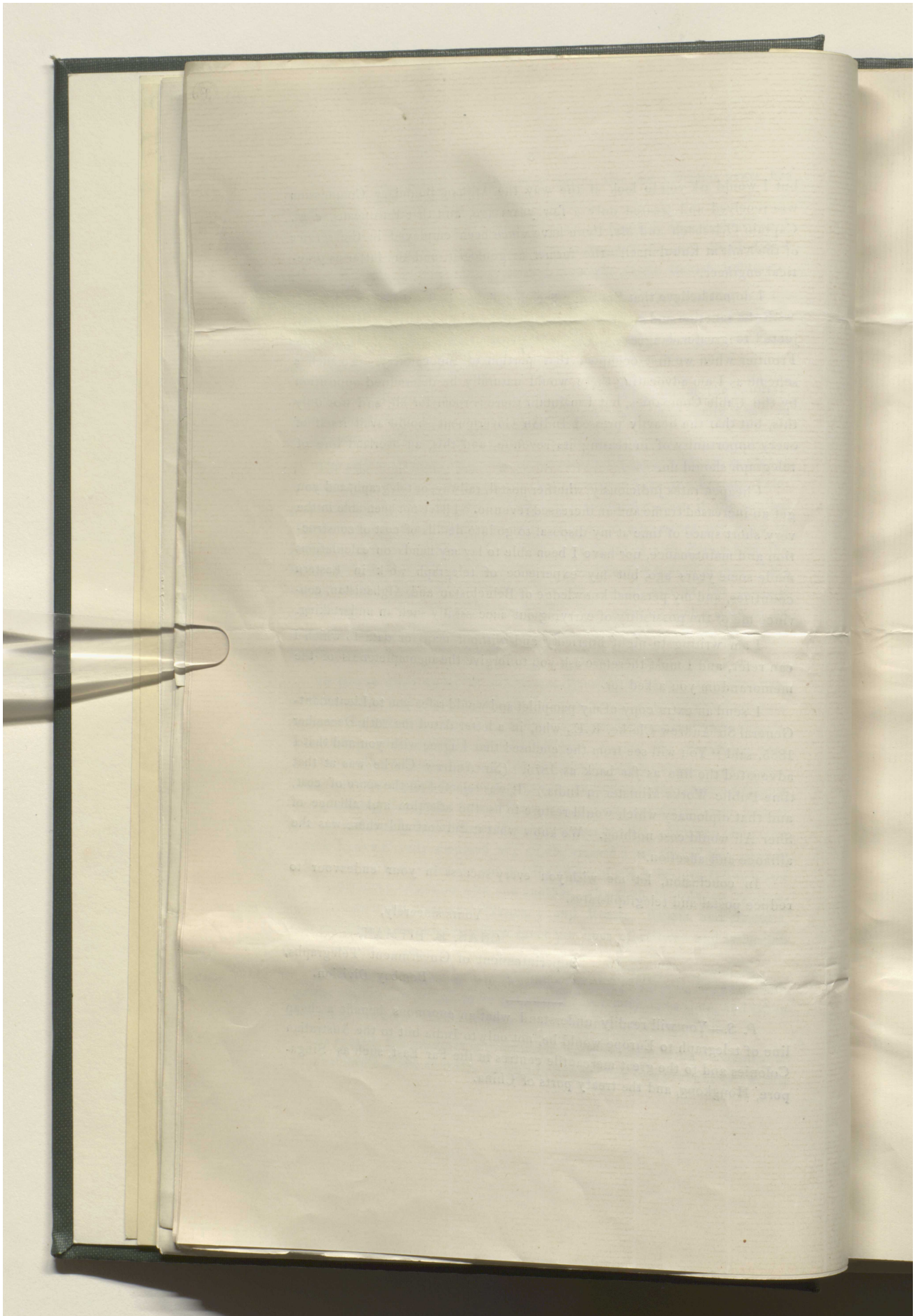
I am writing to-night hurriedly and without maps or data to which I can refer, and I must therefore ask you to forgive the incompleteness of the memorandum you asked for.

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In time of war an enemy would certainly endeavour to cut them notwithstanding any convention to the contrary, and not only this, but in the case of the Eastern Telegraph Company's land line across Egypt—a country where we most assuredly would be attacked—it would be liable to constant interruption ; so that altogether this route is a very insecure one, and it should not be forgotten that the many coral reefs of the Red Sea are a constant source of danger to the cables in those waters and that they have at times been interrupted for a considerable period.

The Persian Gulf route is equally exposed to accidental and intentional injury, and as for the existing line through Turkey in Asia it may be dis-

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I now come to the possibility and cost of maintenance, and I think I may safely say that with the support of the ruler of the country, the presence of British representatives at Kandahar and Herat, the employment of local labour and the payment of a small subsidy to local chiefs, the line, after the people of the country had become accustomed to it, would not be seriously molested.

Surely if the Persian Government can maintain its lines along the Turkoman Frontier we can do so in Southern Afghanistan.

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Correspondence and Papers on Persia [24v] (49/107)

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The Bolan Pass is now as safe as many a London thoroughfare and caravans now pass with safety through that portion of the once dreaded and inaccessible Khyber Pass which has been brought under British influence.

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Correspondence and Papers on Persia [25r] (50/107)

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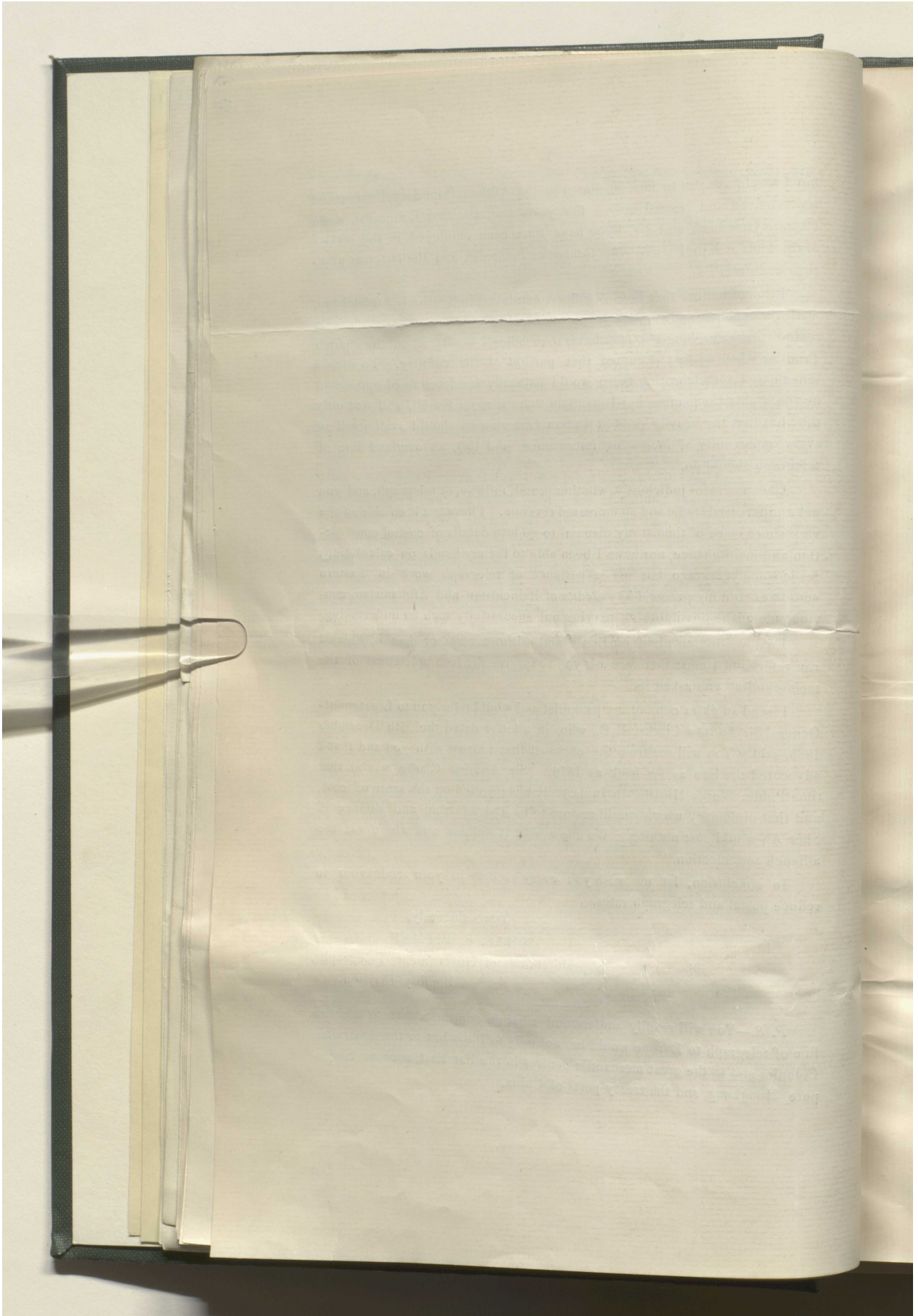
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Correspondence and Papers on Persia [26v] (53/107)

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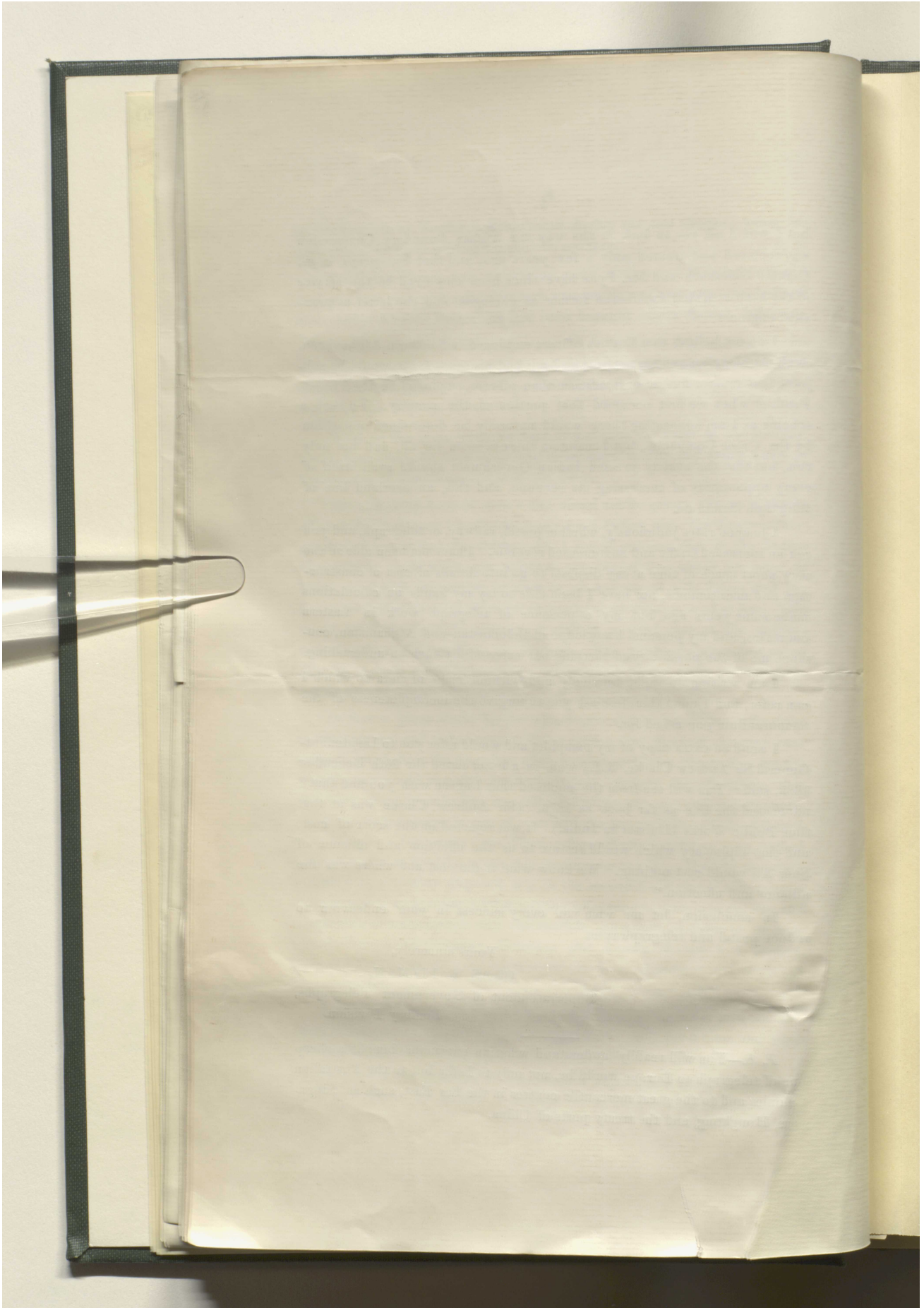
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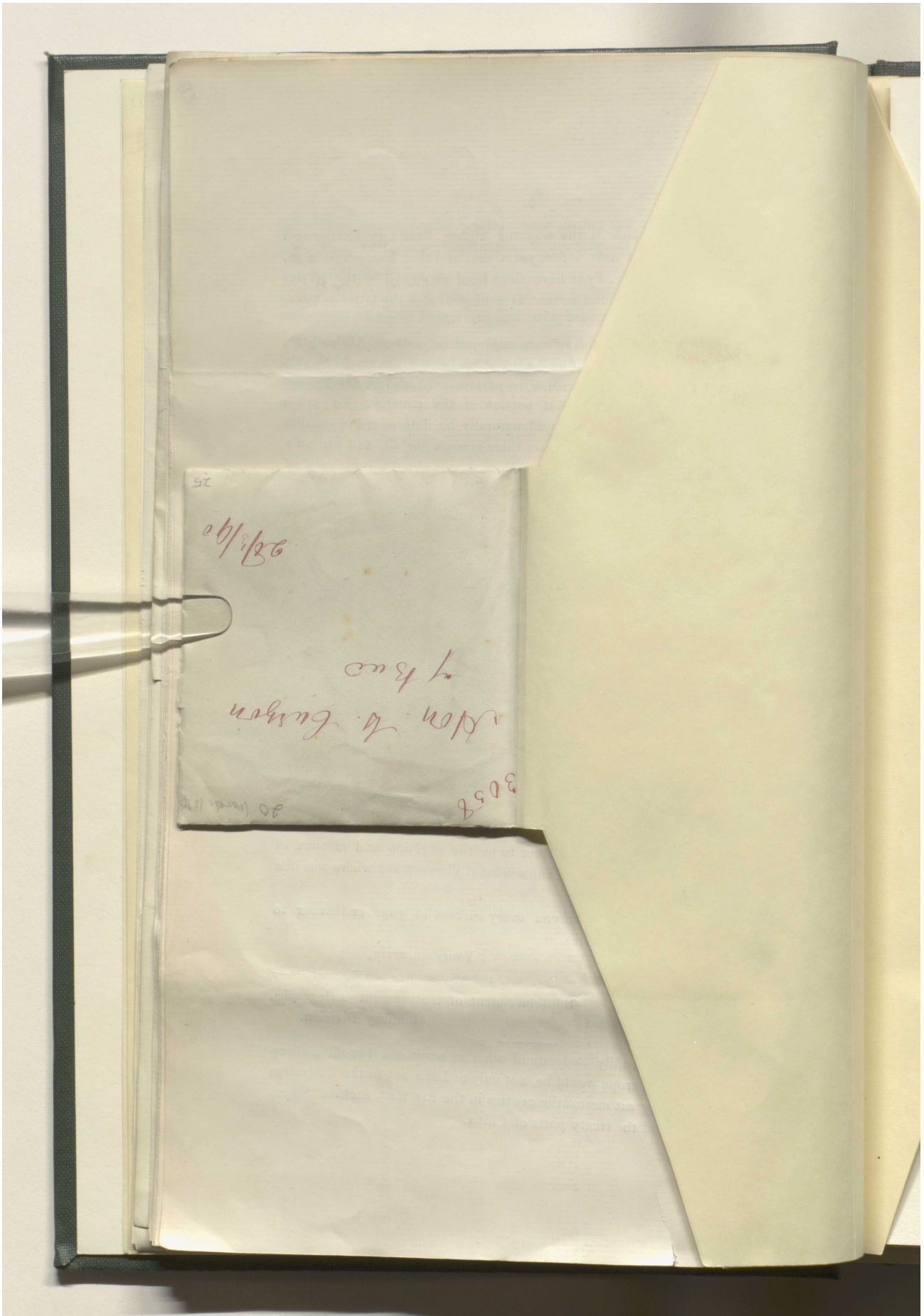
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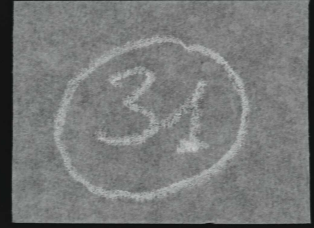
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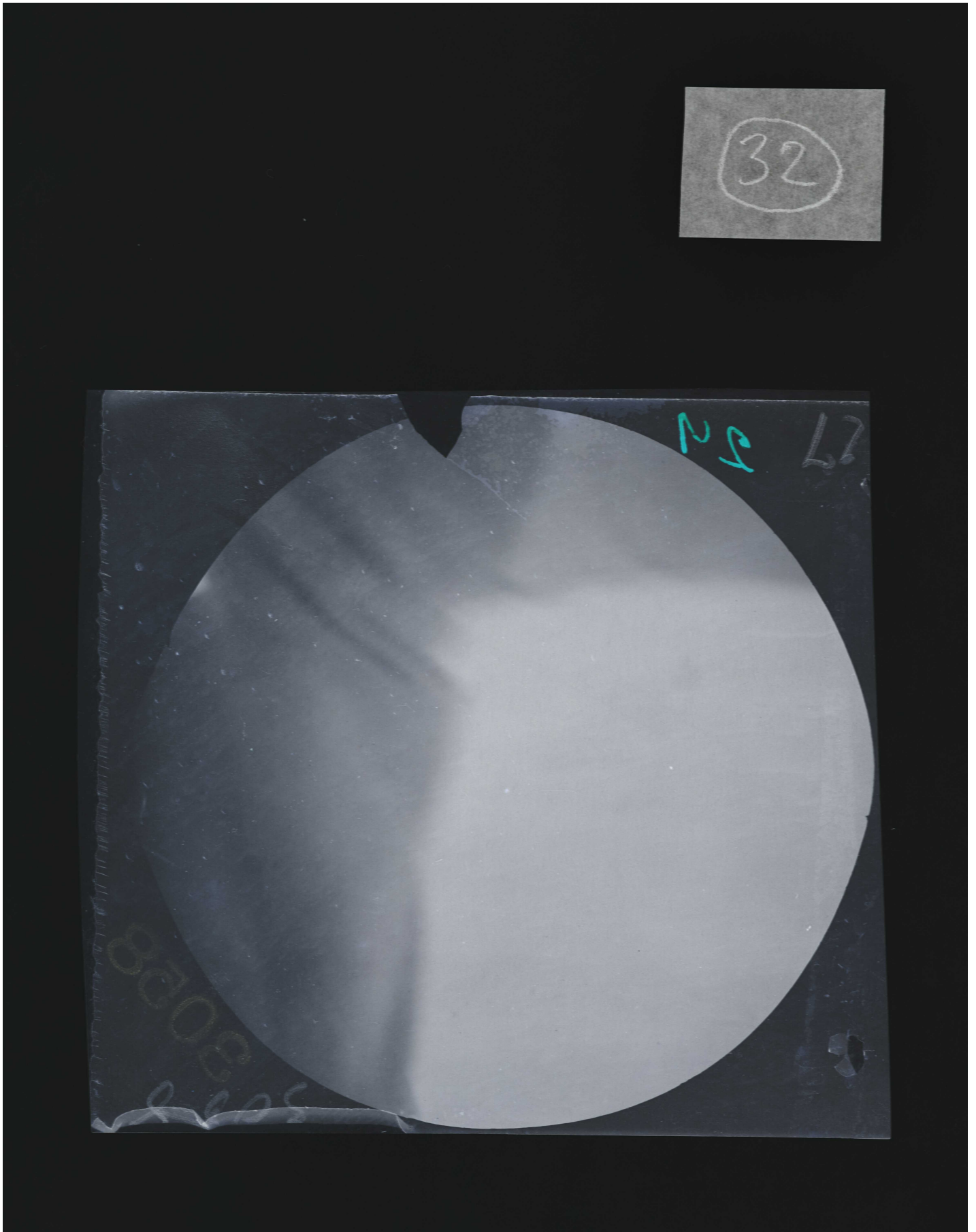


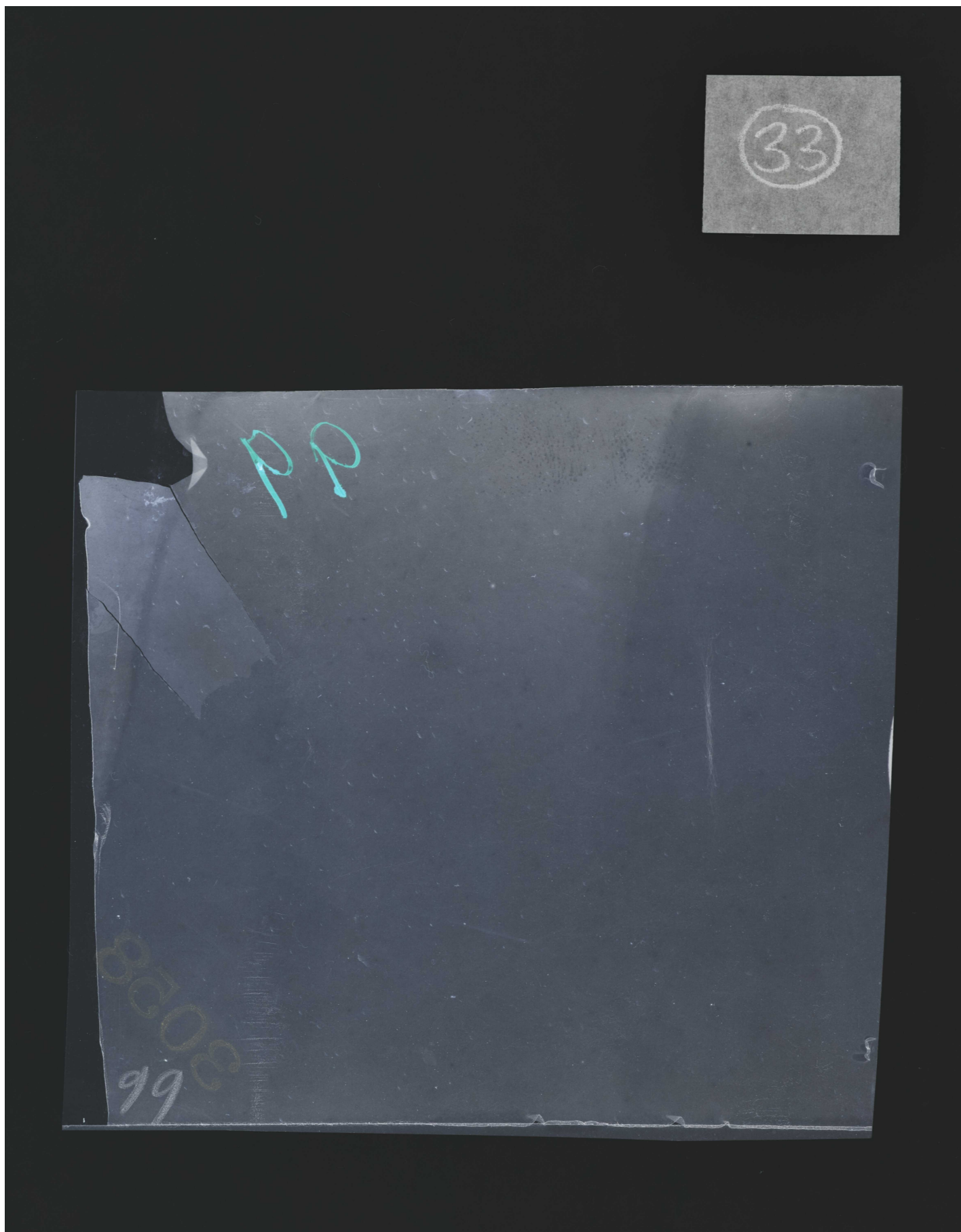






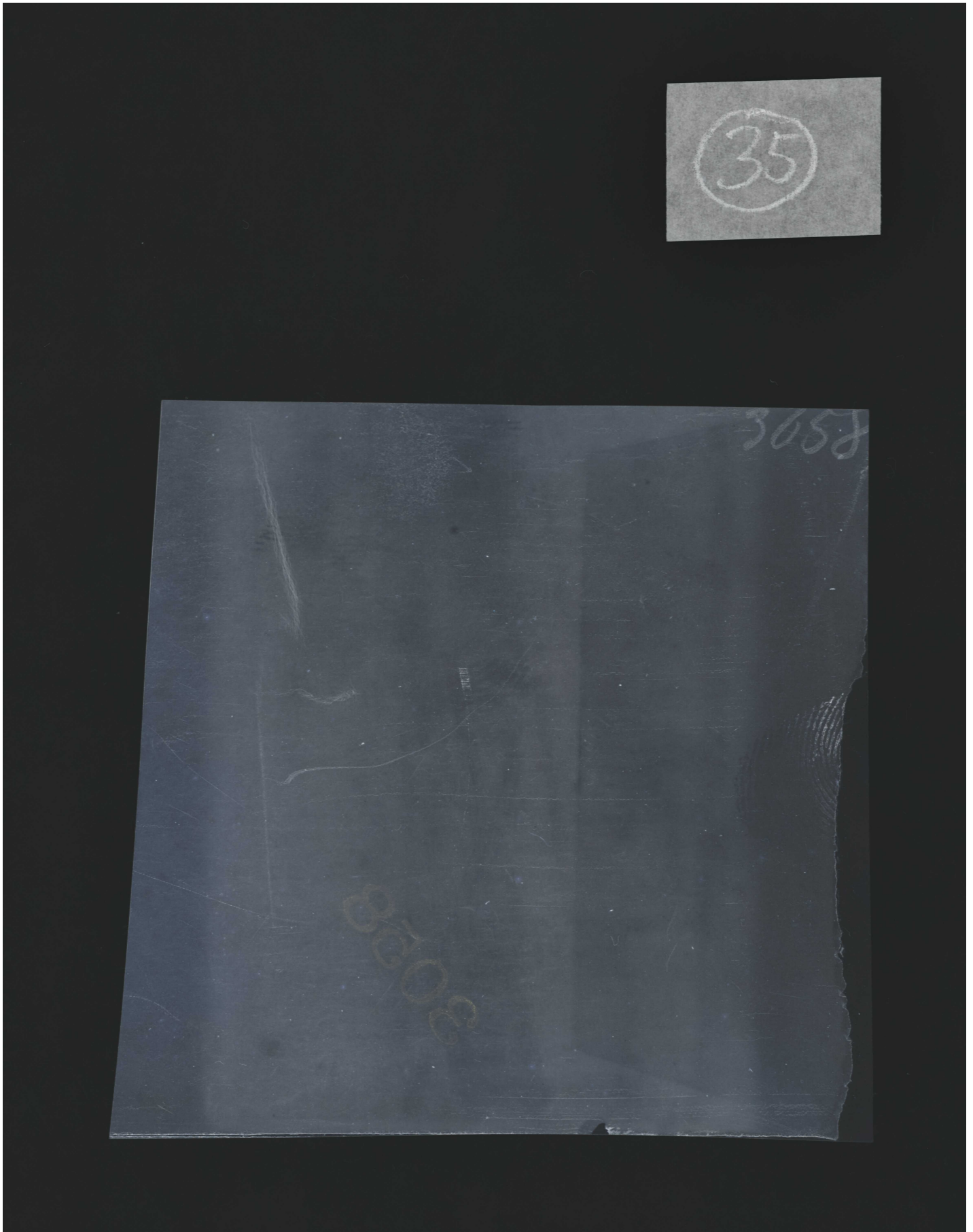


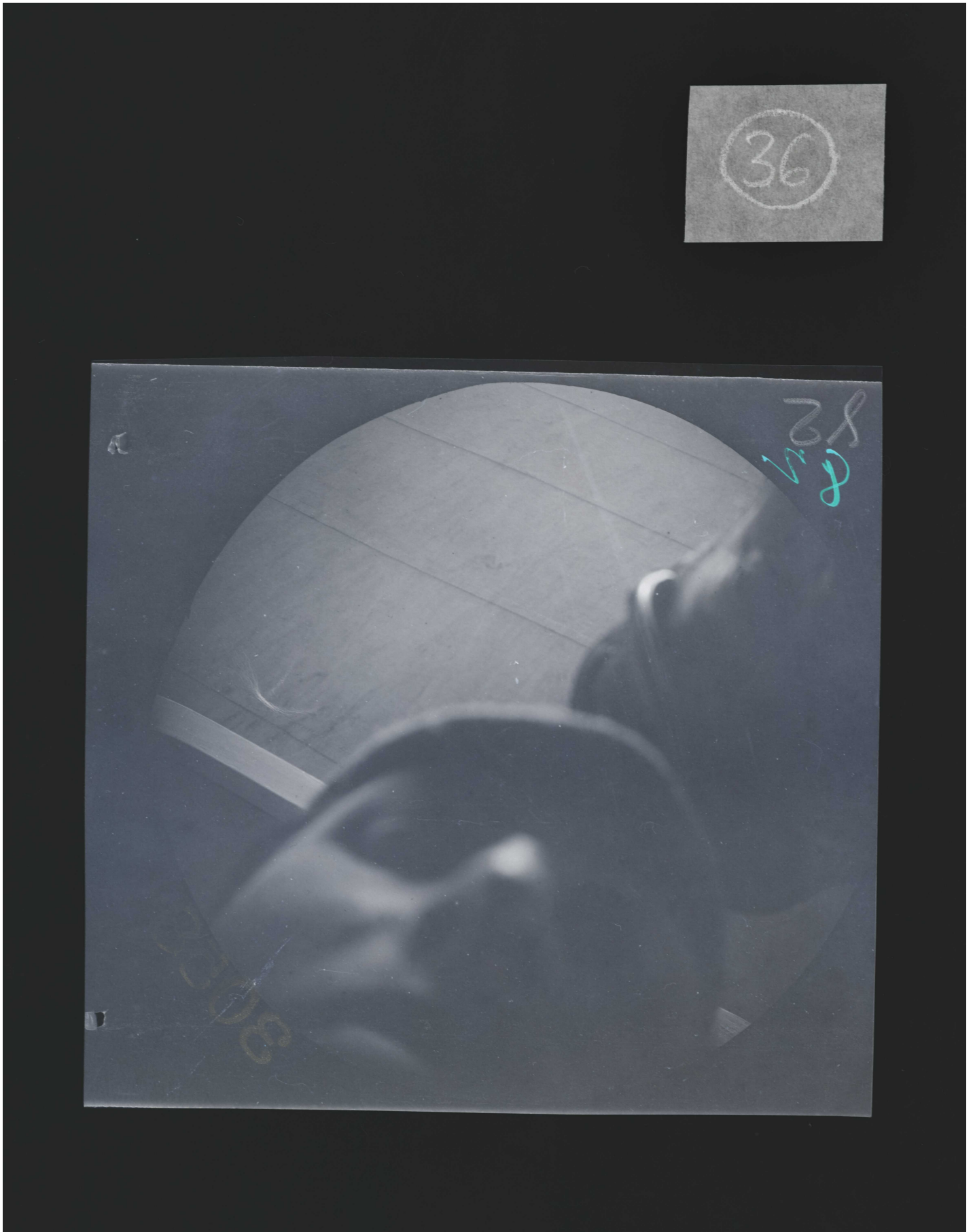


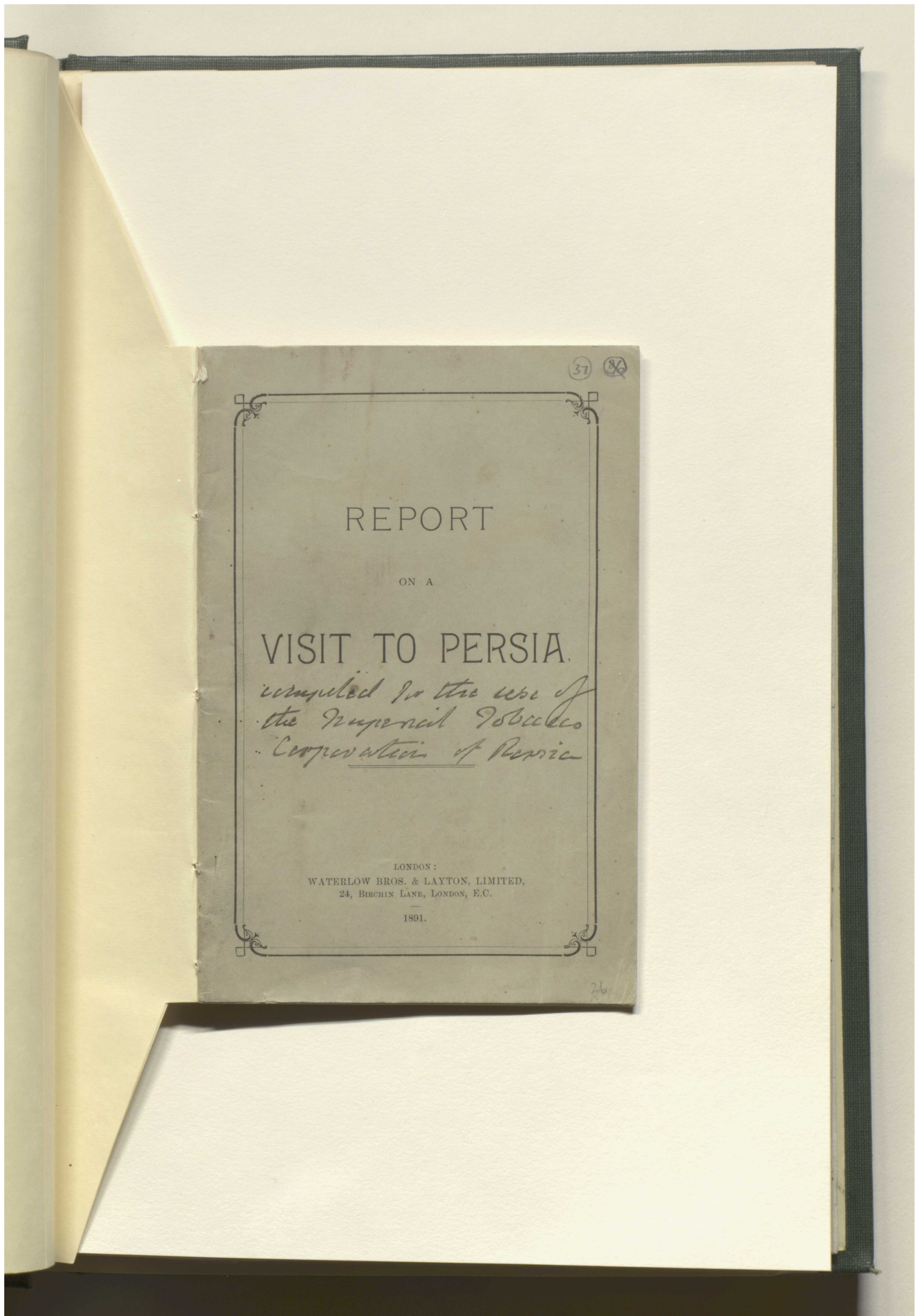


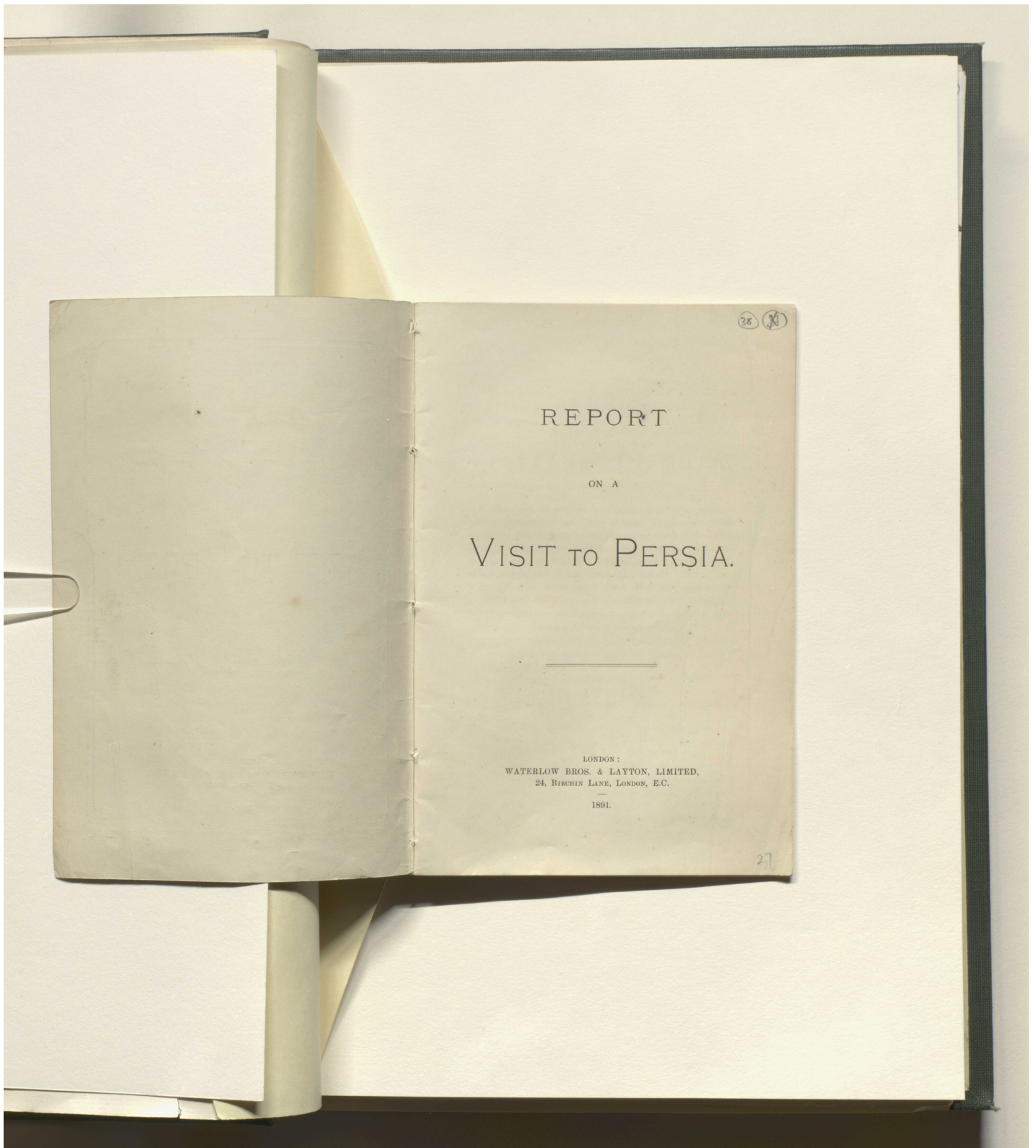












REPORT  
ON A  
VISIT TO PERSIA.

1. The regions defined politically under the comprehensive designation of "The Persian Empire" may be separated geographically and ethnographically into three great Divisions, which differ entirely from one another as to their physical attributes and the character and origin of the populations found residing in them.

(1) The Northern portion, bordering upon the Russian frontier, and including the following Provinces:—

Azərbayjan.	Mazandaran.
Gilan.	Khorassan.

(2) The Central and Eastern portion, including the Provinces of—

Teheran.	Kerman.
Ispahan.	Laristan.
Farsistan.	

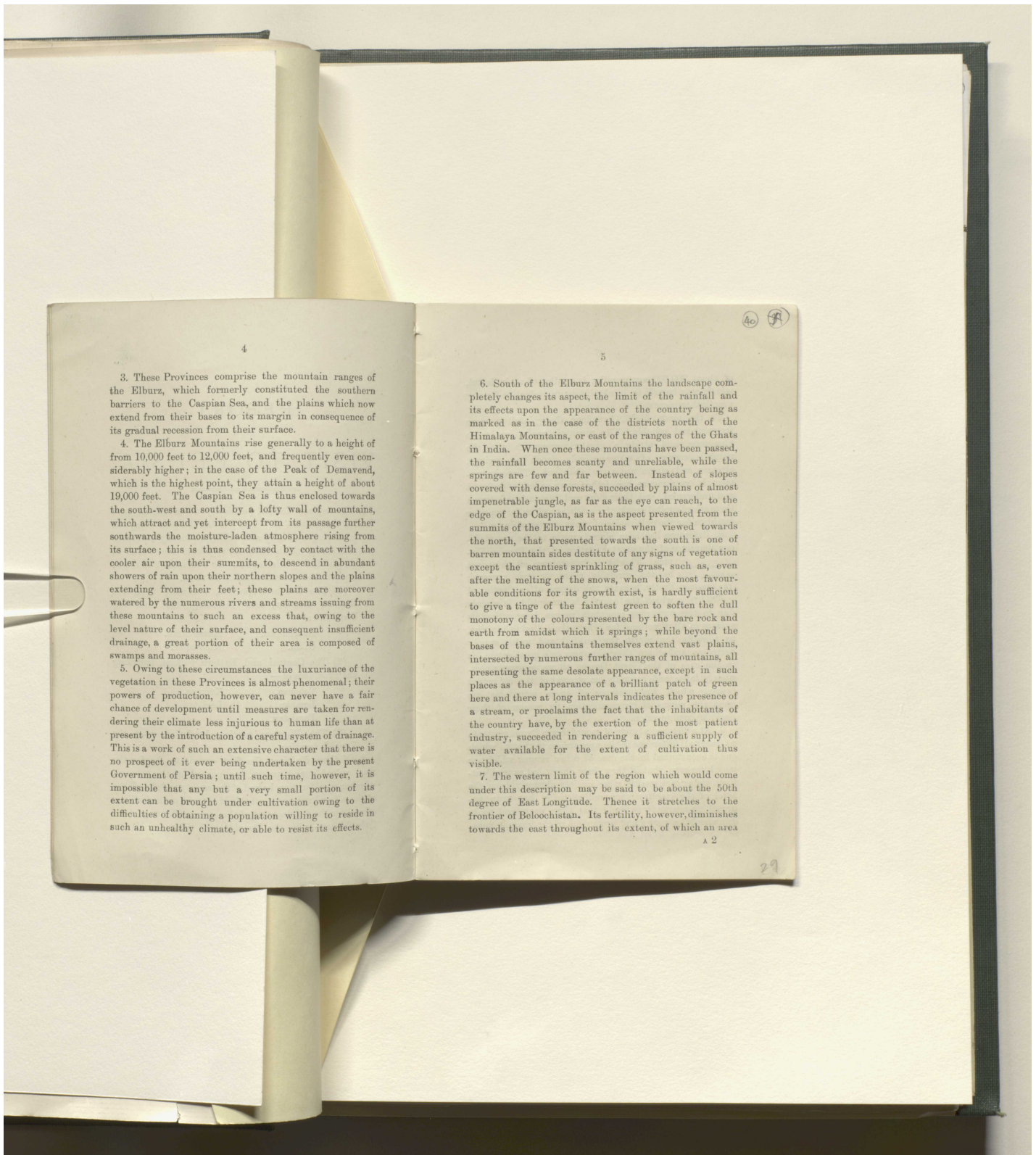
(3) The Western portion, bordering upon the Turkish frontier.

2. Of these divisions the first constitutes by far the most valuable and productive portion of the country, whether consideration be had of the variety and abundance of the natural resources contained therein, or the facilities offered for the development of the same. This is particularly the case with the Provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran.

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3. These Provinces comprise the mountain ranges of the Elburz, which formerly constituted the southern barriers to the Caspian Sea, and the plains which now extend from their bases to its margin in consequence of its gradual recession from their surface.

4. The Elburz Mountains rise generally to a height of from 10,000 feet to 12,000 feet, and frequently even considerably higher; in the case of the Peak of Demavend, which is the highest point, they attain a height of about 19,000 feet. The Caspian Sea is thus enclosed towards the south-west and south by a lofty wall of mountains, which attract and yet intercept from its passage further southwards the moisture-laden atmosphere rising from its surface; this is thus condensed by contact with the cooler air upon their summits, to descend in abundant showers of rain upon their northern slopes and the plains extending from their feet; these plains are moreover watered by the numerous rivers and streams issuing from these mountains to such an excess that, owing to the level nature of their surface, and consequent insufficient drainage, a great portion of their area is composed of swamps and morasses.

5. Owing to these circumstances the luxuriance of the vegetation in these Provinces is almost phenomenal; their powers of production, however, can never have a fair chance of development until measures are taken for rendering their climate less injurious to human life than at present by the introduction of a careful system of drainage. This is a work of such an extensive character that there is no prospect of it ever being undertaken by the present Government of Persia; until such time, however, it is impossible that any but a very small portion of its extent can be brought under cultivation owing to the difficulties of obtaining a population willing to reside in such an unhealthy climate, or able to resist its effects.

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6. South of the Elburz Mountains the landscape completely changes its aspect, the limit of the rainfall and its effects upon the appearance of the country being as marked as in the case of the districts north of the Himalaya Mountains, or east of the ranges of the Ghats in India. When once these mountains have been passed, the rainfall becomes scanty and unreliable, while the springs are few and far between. Instead of slopes covered with dense forests, succeeded by plains of almost impenetrable jungle, as far as the eye can reach, to the edge of the Caspian, as is the aspect presented from the summits of the Elburz Mountains when viewed towards the north, that presented towards the south is one of barren mountain sides destitute of any signs of vegetation except the scantiest sprinkling of grass, such as, even after the melting of the snows, when the most favourable conditions for its growth exist, is hardly sufficient to give a tinge of the faintest green to soften the dull monotony of the colours presented by the bare rock and earth from amidst which it springs; while beyond the bases of the mountains themselves extend vast plains, intersected by numerous further ranges of mountains, all presenting the same desolate appearance, except in such places as the appearance of a brilliant patch of green here and there at long intervals indicates the presence of a stream, or proclaims the fact that the inhabitants of the country have, by the exertion of the most patient industry, succeeded in rendering a sufficient supply of water available for the extent of cultivation thus visible.

7. The western limit of the region which would come under this description may be said to be about the 50th degree of East Longitude. Thence it stretches to the frontier of Beloochistan. Its fertility, however, diminishes towards the east throughout its extent, of which an area

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of about 200,000 square miles is swallowed up in desert, which may be said to be absolutely unproductive for any practical purposes.

To the west of this boundary the rainfall is more frequent and reliable. The mountain ranges are more numerous, and attain a greater average height; the natural sources of water supply, such as springs, streams, and rivers are more abundant. These mountains, in consequence, are clothed more or less with forest and underwood, and their sides and the valleys between them afford capital grazing for cattle, as well as far superior facilities for the cultivation of every species of crops.

8. Reference has been already made to the mountainous character of the greater portion of the Persian Empire. This is a circumstance which cannot be too carefully noted for two reasons; firstly, because the degree of cultivation of which the country is susceptible is mainly due to the numerous mountain ranges intersecting its surface in all directions, for where these diminish in size, as towards the south, the rainfall and water supply decreases, and where they disappear to a great extent, as in the case of the Great Desert, all water supply completely fails; and, secondly, on account of the important bearing which the presence of these mountains has upon the means of communication by reason of their peculiar configuration.

9. At a distance a range of mountains in Persia presents no marked difference in its appearance to that to which one is accustomed in the case of other ranges which one may have seen, that is, they shew sharp and rugged outlines, rising apparently more or less abruptly from the level of the country surrounding them, but upon approaching nearer it is found that these peaks and rocks compose but a very small proportion of the general eleva-

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tion which is formed mainly by an extensive and unbroken rising of the surface of the ground, constituting, as it were, a gigantic mound, from the summit of which rise the actual mountains themselves, and even then not abruptly, but gradually, the ridges being separated by great broad, level plains, which rise in comparatively easy gradients to the bases of the highest peaks.

10. The appearance produced is as though there had been a gradual upheaval of the ground to a considerable height when the upper portions of the rising ground, being unable to bear any longer the pressure from below, had given way, and the strata of the rock had burst through into their present position on the summits of these gigantic mounds, from which they rise abruptly in lofty ridges and peaks of perfectly naked rock. Many of these attain a height of 10,000 to 12,000 feet.

11. The whole of the region extending from the Elburz Mountains to the Persian Gulf, may be described as a vast table-land of an altitude in the lower depressions existing on its surface, of about 2,000 feet to 3,000 feet. From this plateau rise, as has been said, numberless mountain ranges, so that the main portion for practical purposes of its more level surface, consists of the more or less extensive plains or valleys which lie between these ranges. It will thus be understood that the greater part of the region is very irregular in its configuration, such a thing as a piece of absolutely level ground being of very rare occurrence, even at a distance from the actual bases of the mountains themselves.

12. It will be noted that in speaking of the valleys intervening between the mountain ranges, I have said that the main portion of the surface of the country consists of these, with the reservation for practical purposes, for as a matter of fact the main portion of the

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level surface of the plateau is composed of the Great Salt Desert, which extends over an area of not less than 60,000 to 80,000 square miles, and is absolutely incapable of supporting any form of life.

Besides this Great Desert the surface of the country is dotted with comparatively small patches of desert of the same description known locally by the term Kavir, which range from about 2,000 to 15,000 or 20,000 square miles in extent, so that the total area of desert in the Persian Empire could not be estimated at less than about 200,000 square miles, which, as has been said, consist of a soil and geological formation which renders the support of any sort of life upon it an absolute impossibility, except for the period of a few of the winter months, when the nomad tribes take their flocks to graze upon the sparse vegetation which appears in portions of it; but even this is the case only in the neighbourhood of the scanty wells which are found along the few routes by which it is traversed.

13. The only portions of these valleys and plains which are susceptible of cultivation, are those which are watered by natural streams or by Kanats, and along the borders of these all the villages are found clustered, for the amount of land in Persia which is cultivated, otherwise than with the aid of irrigation, may be described as almost inappreciable, the rainfall being, as has been said, very unreliable in most parts.

The valleys and plains themselves vary in height, that in which the city of Ispahan is situated, being about 5,000 feet above the sea level, while the one surrounding the city of Kashan, half-way between Ispahan and Teheran, does not attain 3,000 feet.

14. It must not be understood that the whole of the extent covered by such of these valleys as have a supply

*Limited nature of water supply and difficulties of making use of it.* of water available is by any means cultivated, or indeed susceptible of cultivation under the most favourable circumstances, for owing to various reasons, the area over which the supply of water can be made use of does not usually extend beyond a comparatively slight distance from the banks of the stream or river which is its source, varying from a few hundred yards to several miles.

In the case of the plain near Ispahan, which I am told is a favourable instance to quote, as it is traversed by a river of considerable volume, namely, the Zindelo Rud, the area of cultivation extends to a distance of about 10 to 15 miles from its banks towards the north; beyond this it is succeeded by miles and miles of absolute desert, while towards the south the waters of the river are rendered unavailable, being confined by rising ground and hills.

15. In addition to the villages, situated under such exceptionally favourable circumstances, there are numerous isolated ones, scattered over the broad valleys, upon the mountain sides, and along their bases, and the plains beyond, which are irrigated by "Kanats," for it should be observed that the extent of land cultivated from rivers and streams bears but a small proportion to the whole, this is owing, not only to the paucity of such natural sources of water supply, but to the fact, which has been already alluded to, that in consequence of the irregularity of the ground through which they flow, and the velocity of their streams, but a small proportion of the volume of water contained in their channels is capable of being made use of for purposes of irrigation.

16. No greater difficulties to be encountered in the prosecution of all operations of agriculture in this part of "Kanats," the country could be found than in the existence of the "Kanats," or subterranean water channels referred to.

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These are constructed by digging a well in some spot along the sides, or at the base of the mountain ranges, where the drainage from its surface is likely to be accumulated, or where a spring is likely to exist, for upon what principle these wells are dug, or how their particular position is decided upon, it is difficult to make out; there is, however, no doubt that the greatest skill and ingenuity is exercised in their selection.

This well being completed, and a satisfactory supply of water being found there, another is dug at a distance in the direction in which it is desired that the water should flow, and a channel is scooped out underground, connecting the two, and laid at an inclination specially designed for the length of the intended watercourse, and the contour of the ground which it is intended to traverse, and this process is continued for miles till the water is conducted to the extent of land for the irrigation of which it is required, as frequently between the source and the supply this channel has to be conducted across low ground, through high ground, and round the margin of hills; it is apparent what a degree of laborious care and ingenuity is required for their successful completion. These Kanats are of every degree of capacity, from that containing a volume of water, sufficient only to irrigate a few acres, to that enough to satisfy the requirements of a large village; in the case of the larger villages and towns, however, the water supply necessary for these is obtained by the construction of numerous Kanats, converging upon their sites, from various spots in the neighbouring hills or rising ground.

17. The peculiar formation of the mountains, which, as has been described, consist of vast extents of gradually rising ground crowned only with rocks and peaks, lends itself, as may be imagined, most favourably to the establishment of villages in such places as water is obtainable

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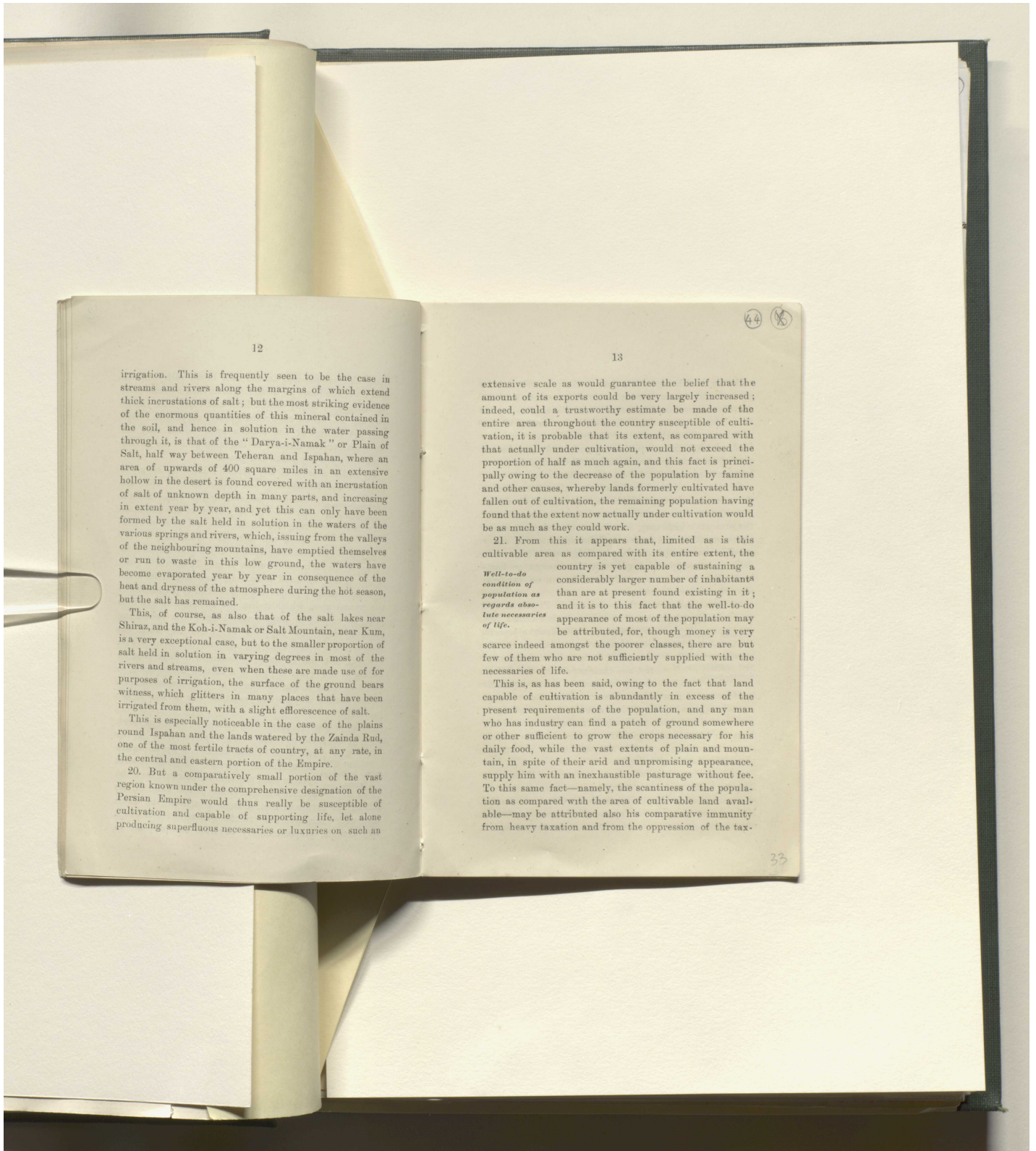
along their slopes and in the vast broad valleys which lead up to the bases of these ridges at their summits, and these are accordingly dotted here and there with village sites and patches of cultivated ground varying in extent with the volume of the Kanats upon which they are dependent, or the number of the same which can be concentrated upon any particular place.

18. In the absence of any reliable rainfall the supply of water in the Kanats depends almost entirely upon the fall of snow during the winter months on the higher portion of the mountain ranges from the sides and bases of which these are derived. This fall is very heavy, as a rule attaining a depth of many feet upon their summits, where in consequence it may be seen still lying as late as the middle of June. In the course of its melting a considerable proportion is absorbed by the surface of the ground upon which it lies, the mountain ranges thus come to constitute huge natural reservoirs containing generally sufficient supplies of water to keep the Kanats filled throughout the summer months. When, however, the fall of snow is deficient, a corresponding failure of the water supply is a natural consequence, so much so, that if the deficiency be very considerable, a serious famine may be the result, as was the case in the year 1872.

There is another point which must be borne in mind, namely, that small as is the water supply, compared to the vast area of the country, a by no means inconsiderable portion of the natural springs pass, previous to their exit from the surface through strata of soil more or less salt in the nature of their composition, owing to which their waters are, according to the quantity of salt which they contain, proportionately unsuited for purposes of

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irrigation. This is frequently seen to be the case in streams and rivers along the margins of which extend thick incrustations of salt; but the most striking evidence of the enormous quantities of this mineral contained in the soil, and hence in solution in the water passing through it, is that of the "Darya-i-Namak" or Plain of Salt, half way between Teheran and Ispahan, where an area of upwards of 400 square miles in an extensive hollow in the desert is found covered with an incrustation of salt of unknown depth in many parts, and increasing in extent year by year, and yet this can only have been formed by the salt held in solution in the waters of the various springs and rivers, which, issuing from the valleys of the neighbouring mountains, have emptied themselves or run to waste in this low ground, the waters have become evaporated year by year in consequence of the heat and dryness of the atmosphere during the hot season, but the salt has remained.

This, of course, as also that of the salt lakes near Shiraz, and the Koh-i-Namak or Salt Mountain, near Kum, is a very exceptional case, but to the smaller proportion of salt held in solution in varying degrees in most of the rivers and streams, even when these are made use of for purposes of irrigation, the surface of the ground bears witness, which glitters in many places that have been irrigated from them, with a slight efflorescence of salt.

This is especially noticeable in the case of the plains round Ispahan and the lands watered by the Zainda Rud, one of the most fertile tracts of country, at any rate, in the central and eastern portion of the Empire.

20. But a comparatively small portion of the vast region known under the comprehensive designation of the Persian Empire would thus really be susceptible of cultivation and capable of supporting life, let alone producing superfluous necessaries or luxuries on such an

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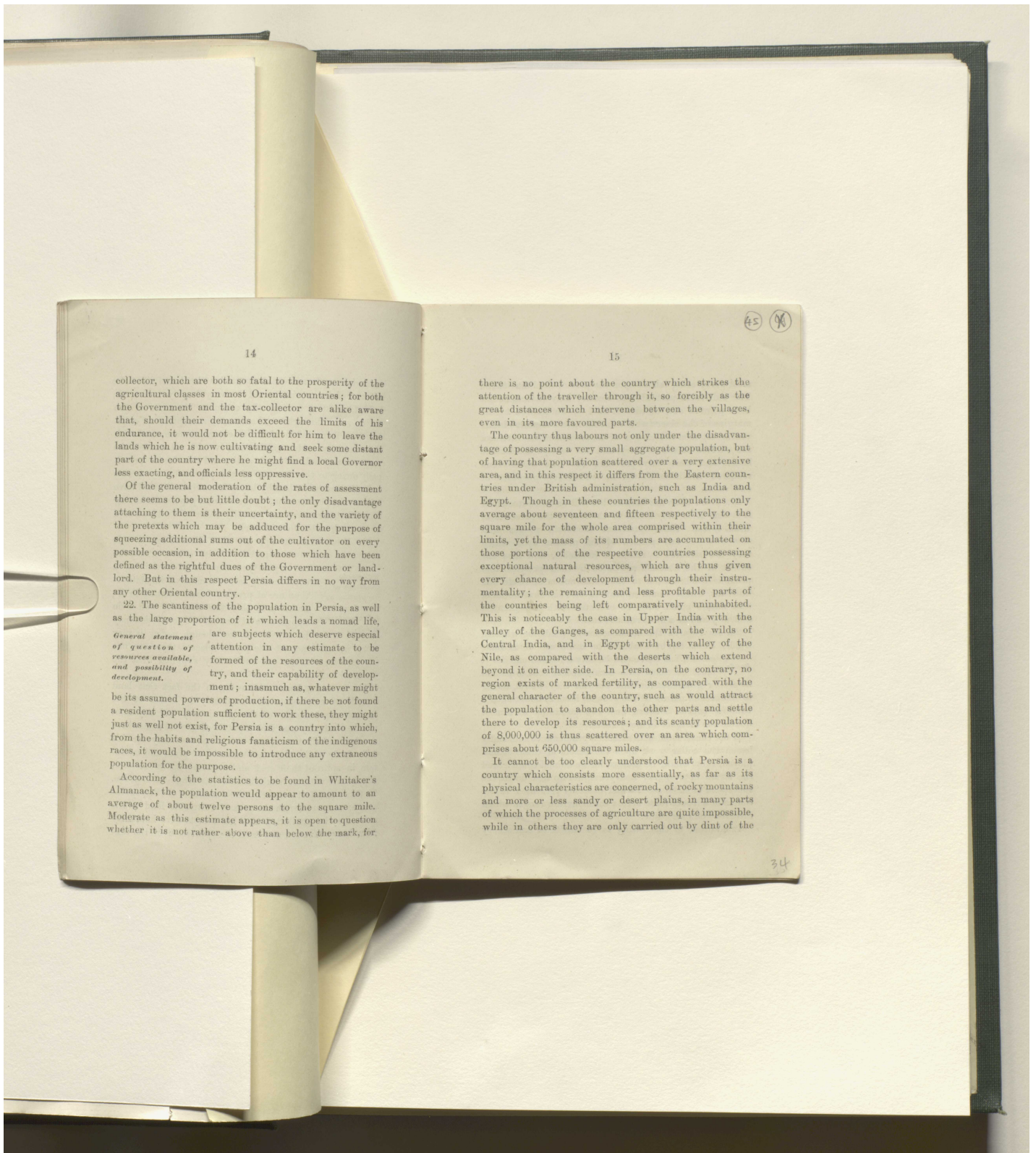
extensive scale as would guarantee the belief that the amount of its exports could be very largely increased; indeed, could a trustworthy estimate be made of the entire area throughout the country susceptible of cultivation, it is probable that its extent, as compared with that actually under cultivation, would not exceed the proportion of half as much again, and this fact is principally owing to the decrease of the population by famine and other causes, whereby lands formerly cultivated have fallen out of cultivation, the remaining population having found that the extent now actually under cultivation would be as much as they could work.

21. From this it appears that, limited as is this cultivable area as compared with its entire extent, the country is yet capable of sustaining a considerably larger number of inhabitants than are at present found existing in it; and it is to this fact that the well-to-do appearance of most of the population may be attributed, for, though money is very scarce indeed amongst the poorer classes, there are but few of them who are not sufficiently supplied with the necessaries of life.

This is, as has been said, owing to the fact that land capable of cultivation is abundantly in excess of the present requirements of the population, and any man who has industry can find a patch of ground somewhere or other sufficient to grow the crops necessary for his daily food, while the vast extents of plain and mountain, in spite of their arid and unpromising appearance, supply him with an inexhaustible pasturage without fee. To this same fact—namely, the scantiness of the population as compared with the area of cultivable land available—may be attributed also his comparative immunity from heavy taxation and from the oppression of the tax-

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collector, which are both so fatal to the prosperity of the agricultural classes in most Oriental countries; for both the Government and the tax-collector are alike aware that, should their demands exceed the limits of his endurance, it would not be difficult for him to leave the lands which he is now cultivating and seek some distant part of the country where he might find a local Governor less exacting, and officials less oppressive.

Of the general moderation of the rates of assessment there seems to be but little doubt; the only disadvantage attaching to them is their uncertainty, and the variety of the pretexts which may be adduced for the purpose of squeezing additional sums out of the cultivator on every possible occasion, in addition to those which have been defined as the rightful dues of the Government or landlord. But in this respect Persia differs in no way from any other Oriental country.

22. The scantiness of the population in Persia, as well as the large proportion of it which leads a nomad life, are subjects which deserve especial attention in any estimate to be formed of the resources of the country, and their capability of development; inasmuch as, whatever might be its assumed powers of production, if there be not found a resident population sufficient to work these, they might just as well not exist, for Persia is a country into which, from the habits and religious fanaticism of the indigenous races, it would be impossible to introduce any extraneous population for the purpose.

According to the statistics to be found in Whitaker's Almanack, the population would appear to amount to an average of about twelve persons to the square mile. Moderate as this estimate appears, it is open to question whether it is not rather above than below the mark, for

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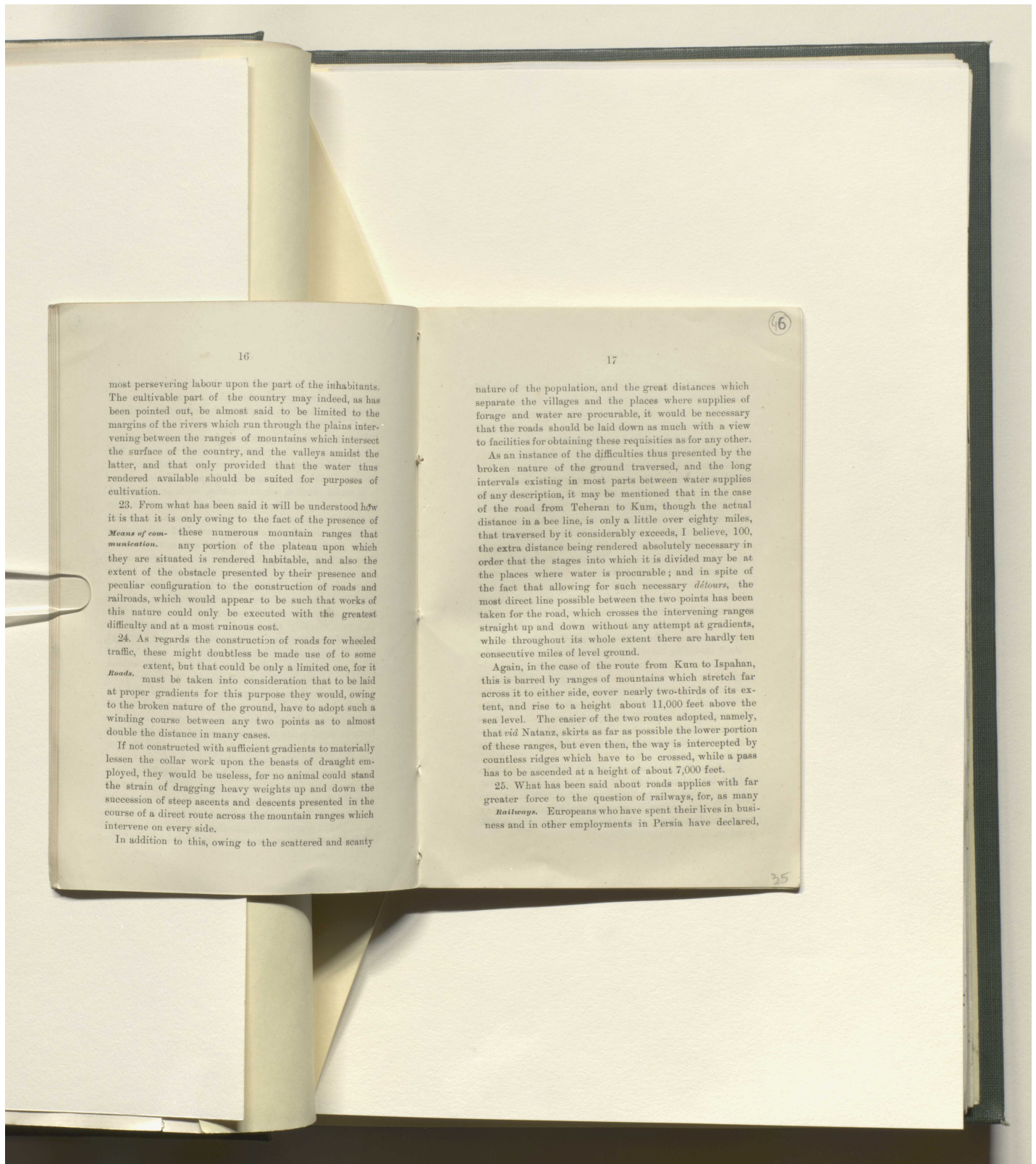
there is no point about the country which strikes the attention of the traveller through it, so forcibly as the great distances which intervene between the villages, even in its more favoured parts.

The country thus labours not only under the disadvantage of possessing a very small aggregate population, but of having that population scattered over a very extensive area, and in this respect it differs from the Eastern countries under British administration, such as India and Egypt. Though in these countries the populations only average about seventeen and fifteen respectively to the square mile for the whole area comprised within their limits, yet the mass of its numbers are accumulated on those portions of the respective countries possessing exceptional natural resources, which are thus given every chance of development through their instrumentality; the remaining and less profitable parts of the countries being left comparatively uninhabited. This is noticeably the case in Upper India with the valley of the Ganges, as compared with the wilds of Central India, and in Egypt with the valley of the Nile, as compared with the deserts which extend beyond it on either side. In Persia, on the contrary, no region exists of marked fertility, as compared with the general character of the country, such as would attract the population to abandon the other parts and settle there to develop its resources; and its scanty population of 8,000,000 is thus scattered over an area which comprises about 650,000 square miles.

It cannot be too clearly understood that Persia is a country which consists more essentially, as far as its physical characteristics are concerned, of rocky mountains and more or less sandy or desert plains, in many parts of which the processes of agriculture are quite impossible, while in others they are only carried out by dint of the

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most persevering labour upon the part of the inhabitants. The cultivable part of the country may indeed, as has been pointed out, be almost said to be limited to the margins of the rivers which run through the plains intervening between the ranges of mountains which intersect the surface of the country, and the valleys amidst the latter, and that only provided that the water thus rendered available should be suited for purposes of cultivation.

23. From what has been said it will be understood how it is that it is only owing to the fact of the presence of *Means of communication* these numerous mountain ranges that any portion of the plateau upon which they are situated is rendered habitable, and also the extent of the obstacle presented by their presence and peculiar configuration to the construction of roads and railroads, which would appear to be such that works of this nature could only be executed with the greatest difficulty and at a most ruinous cost.

24. As regards the construction of roads for wheeled traffic, these might doubtless be made use of to some extent, but that could be only a limited one, for it must be taken into consideration that to be laid at proper gradients for this purpose they would, owing to the broken nature of the ground, have to adopt such a winding course between any two points as to almost double the distance in many cases.

If not constructed with sufficient gradients to materially lessen the collar work upon the beasts of draught employed, they would be useless, for no animal could stand the strain of dragging heavy weights up and down the succession of steep ascents and descents presented in the course of a direct route across the mountain ranges which intervene on every side.

In addition to this, owing to the scattered and scanty

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nature of the population, and the great distances which separate the villages and the places where supplies of forage and water are procurable, it would be necessary that the roads should be laid down as much with a view to facilities for obtaining these requisities as for any other.

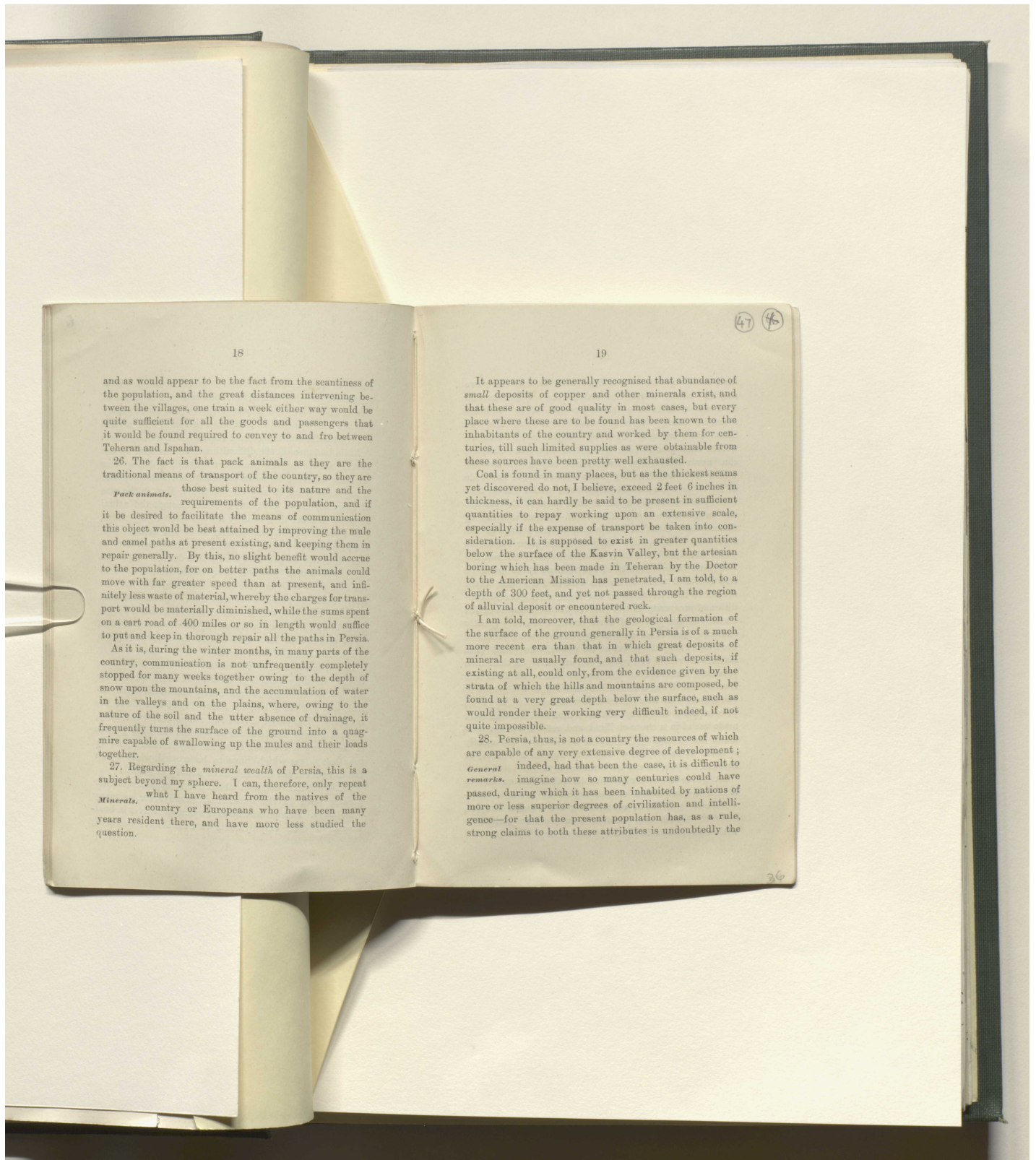
As an instance of the difficulties thus presented by the broken nature of the ground traversed, and the long intervals existing in most parts between water supplies of any description, it may be mentioned that in the case of the road from Teheran to Kum, though the actual distance in a bee line, is only a little over eighty miles, that traversed by it considerably exceeds, I believe, 100, the extra distance being rendered absolutely necessary in order that the stages into which it is divided may be at the places where water is procurable; and in spite of the fact that allowing for such necessary *détours*, the most direct line possible between the two points has been taken for the road, which crosses the intervening ranges straight up and down without any attempt at gradients, while throughout its whole extent there are hardly ten consecutive miles of level ground.

Again, in the case of the route from Kum to Ispahan, this is barred by ranges of mountains which stretch far across it to either side, cover nearly two-thirds of its extent, and rise to a height about 11,000 feet above the sea level. The easier of the two routes adopted, namely, that *via* Natanz, skirts as far as possible the lower portion of these ranges, but even then, the way is intercepted by countless ridges which have to be crossed, while a pass has to be ascended at a height of about 7,000 feet.

25. What has been said about roads applies with far greater force to the question of railways, for, as many *Railways*. Europeans who have spent their lives in business and in other employments in Persia have declared,

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and as would appear to be the fact from the scantiness of the population, and the great distances intervening between the villages, one train a week either way would be quite sufficient for all the goods and passengers that it would be found required to convey to and fro between Teheran and Ispahan.

26. The fact is that pack animals as they are the traditional means of transport of the country, so they are

*Pack animals.* those best suited to its nature and the requirements of the population, and if it be desired to facilitate the means of communication this object would be best attained by improving the mule and camel paths at present existing, and keeping them in repair generally. By this, no slight benefit would accrue to the population, for on better paths the animals could move with far greater speed than at present, and infinitely less waste of material, whereby the charges for transport would be materially diminished, while the sums spent on a cart road of 400 miles or so in length would suffice to put and keep in thorough repair all the paths in Persia.

As it is, during the winter months, in many parts of the country, communication is not unfrequently completely stopped for many weeks together owing to the depth of snow upon the mountains, and the accumulation of water in the valleys and on the plains, where, owing to the nature of the soil and the utter absence of drainage, it frequently turns the surface of the ground into a quagmire capable of swallowing up the mules and their loads together.

27. Regarding the *mineral wealth* of Persia, this is a subject beyond my sphere. I can, therefore, only repeat what I have heard from the natives of the country or Europeans who have been many years resident there, and have more less studied the question.

*Minerals.*

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It appears to be generally recognised that abundance of *small* deposits of copper and other minerals exist, and that these are of good quality in most cases, but every place where these are to be found has been known to the inhabitants of the country and worked by them for centuries, till such limited supplies as were obtainable from these sources have been pretty well exhausted.

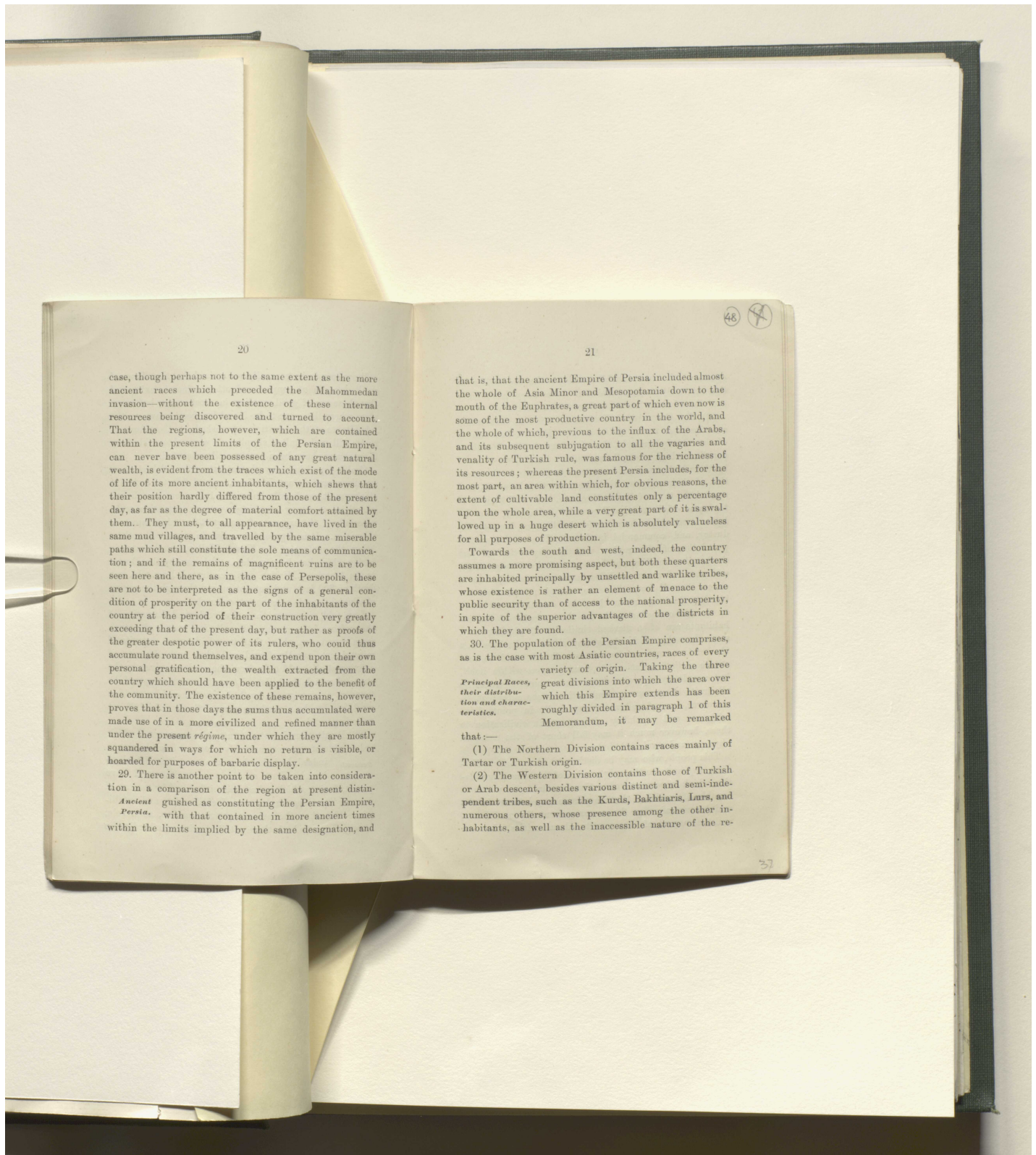
Coal is found in many places, but as the thickest seams yet discovered do not, I believe, exceed 2 feet 6 inches in thickness, it can hardly be said to be present in sufficient quantities to repay working upon an extensive scale, especially if the expense of transport be taken into consideration. It is supposed to exist in greater quantities below the surface of the Kasvin Valley, but the artesian boring which has been made in Teheran by the Doctor to the American Mission has penetrated, I am told, to a depth of 300 feet, and yet not passed through the region of alluvial deposit or encountered rock.

I am told, moreover, that the geological formation of the surface of the ground generally in Persia is of a much more recent era than that in which great deposits of mineral are usually found, and that such deposits, if existing at all, could only, from the evidence given by the strata of which the hills and mountains are composed, be found at a very great depth below the surface, such as would render their working very difficult indeed, if not quite impossible.

28. Persia, thus, is not a country the resources of which are capable of any very extensive degree of development; *General* indeed, had that been the case, it is difficult to *remarks.* imagine how so many centuries could have passed, during which it has been inhabited by nations of more or less superior degrees of civilization and intelligence—for that the present population has, as a rule, strong claims to both these attributes is undoubtedly the

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case, though perhaps not to the same extent as the more ancient races which preceded the Mahomedan invasion—without the existence of these internal resources being discovered and turned to account. That the regions, however, which are contained within the present limits of the Persian Empire, can never have been possessed of any great natural wealth, is evident from the traces which exist of the mode of life of its more ancient inhabitants, which shews that their position hardly differed from those of the present day, as far as the degree of material comfort attained by them. They must, to all appearance, have lived in the same mud villages, and travelled by the same miserable paths which still constitute the sole means of communication; and if the remains of magnificent ruins are to be seen here and there, as in the case of Persepolis, these are not to be interpreted as the signs of a general condition of prosperity on the part of the inhabitants of the country at the period of their construction very greatly exceeding that of the present day, but rather as proofs of the greater despotic power of its rulers, who could thus accumulate round themselves, and expend upon their own personal gratification, the wealth extracted from the country which should have been applied to the benefit of the community. The existence of these remains, however, proves that in those days the sums thus accumulated were made use of in a more civilized and refined manner than under the present régime, under which they are mostly squandered in ways for which no return is visible, or hoarded for purposes of barbaric display.

29. There is another point to be taken into consideration in a comparison of the region at present distinguished as constituting the Persian Empire, *Ancient Persia*, with that contained in more ancient times within the limits implied by the same designation, and

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that is, that the ancient Empire of Persia included almost the whole of Asia Minor and Mesopotamia down to the mouth of the Euphrates, a great part of which even now is some of the most productive country in the world, and the whole of which, previous to the influx of the Arabs, and its subsequent subjugation to all the vagaries and venality of Turkish rule, was famous for the richness of its resources; whereas the present Persia includes, for the most part, an area within which, for obvious reasons, the extent of cultivable land constitutes only a percentage upon the whole area, while a very great part of it is swallowed up in a huge desert which is absolutely valueless for all purposes of production.

Towards the south and west, indeed, the country assumes a more promising aspect, but both these quarters are inhabited principally by unsettled and warlike tribes, whose existence is rather an element of menace to the public security than of access to the national prosperity, in spite of the superior advantages of the districts in which they are found.

30. The population of the Persian Empire comprises, as is the case with most Asiatic countries, races of every variety of origin. Taking the three great divisions into which the area over which this Empire extends has been roughly divided in paragraph 1 of this Memorandum, it may be remarked

that:—

(1) The Northern Division contains races mainly of Tartar or Turkish origin.

(2) The Western Division contains those of Turkish or Arab descent, besides various distinct and semi-independent tribes, such as the Kurds, Bakhtiaris, Lurs, and numerous others, whose presence among the other inhabitants, as well as the inaccessible nature of the re-

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cesses which they inhabit amongst the mountains in this extremely broken portion of the country, has mainly contributed to its lawless and unsettled condition.

(3) The Central and Eastern Division is that which contains most traces of the ancient Persian inhabitants of the country, namely, the "Guebbers, or Fire Worshipers," of which a small community have been allowed by their Mahomedan conquerors to remain in the practice of their religion, their headquarters being in and around the town of Yezd; these are, as is well known, of the same origin as the Parsees of India, and, like the latter have a high character for intelligence, honesty, industry, and commercial instincts. The entire settled population of this region, with the exception of the Arab tribes residing on the coasts of the Persian Gulf, and scattered about in different parts, is doubtless more or less derived from this race, though mixed with the blood of the invaders, to whom they owe their conversion to the Mahomedan faith, for the majority of the inhabitants are of a marked similarity of physiognomy, so much so that it is almost impossible to distinguish a Gueber from any one else. It may thus be said to constitute a distinct nationality, homogeneous within itself, but completely separated from the surrounding races by all traits of appearance and national character; it is, moreover, one of undoubted superiority in point of intelligence and capability of progress in civilization to these, however much it may fall short of the same in physique and manly attributes.

This people, who may be distinguished as the true Persians, appear to be the only portion of the general population which is possessed of national instincts, or which is capable of realizing that they have any interest in the maintenance of order, the encouragement of peaceful arts, and the support of the constituted authorities, whatever

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their failings may be; and it is owing to these qualities that, in spite of their deficiencies as regards military instincts, they have been able, by combination and diplomacy and the exercise of their superior intelligence, to keep under control the other more warlike but less civilized and united races.

31. The settled population of this region, however, by no means constitutes its sole inhabitants, for various portions of it are the abodes of races more or less nomadic in their habits, and, as such, almost unconquerably wild in their nature, and very insusceptible to all civilizing influences. Such are the Bakhtiariis who inhabit the mountain districts west of Ispahan; the Kashkais, who are found in the neighbourhood of Shiraz, and the Arab tribes who haunt the desert. These live habitually in a state of semi-defiance of all constituted authority, as do numerous other tribes of a similar description living in other parts of the Empire, the whole being distinguished collectively from the settled population by the title of "Ilyats," or "The Tribes," though this term has come to be applied more especially to the wandering tribes of the desert and its neighbourhood.

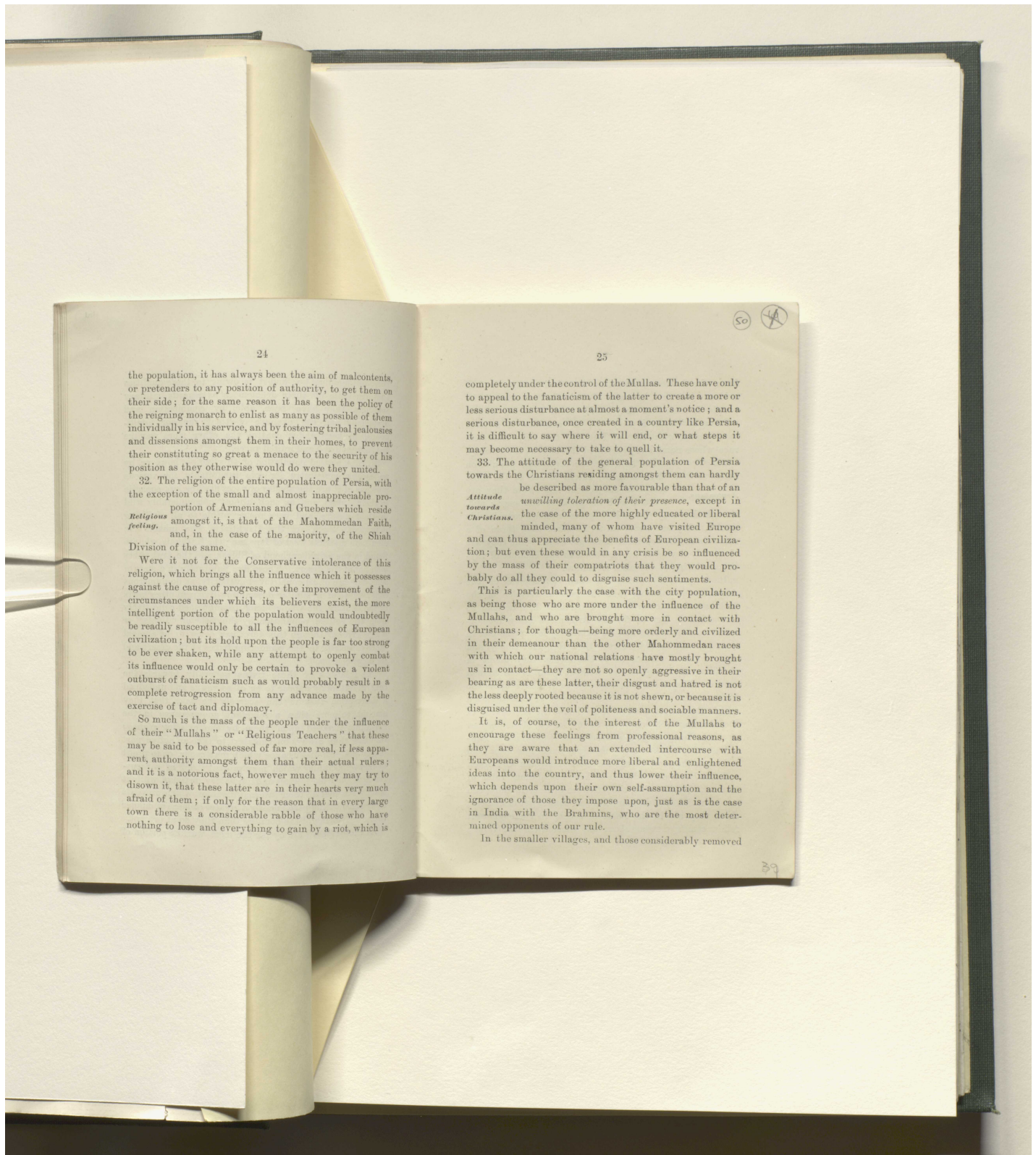
The relations of these tribes generally towards the central authority appear to be of so vague and undefined a description that it can scarcely be said that they amount to more than a reluctant acquiescence in the restraints imposed upon them by the existing régime; they are thus always on the alert to take an active part in any political disturbance which may occur, or to profit by any opportunity which may present itself of a recurrence to their old lawless and predatory instincts, while it is only the fact of their internal disunion which prevents their constituting permanently a greater element of danger to the well-being of the country than they do at present.

As the "Ilyats" are by far the most warlike portion of

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the population, it has always been the aim of malcontents, or pretenders to any position of authority, to get them on their side; for the same reason it has been the policy of the reigning monarch to enlist as many as possible of them individually in his service, and by fostering tribal jealousies and dissensions amongst them in their homes, to prevent their constituting so great a menace to the security of his position as they otherwise would do were they united.

32. The religion of the entire population of Persia, with the exception of the small and almost inappreciable proportion of Armenians and Guebers which reside amongst it, is that of the Mahommedan Faith, and, in the case of the majority, of the Shiah Division of the same.

Were it not for the Conservative intolerance of this religion, which brings all the influence which it possesses against the cause of progress, or the improvement of the circumstances under which its believers exist, the more intelligent portion of the population would undoubtedly be readily susceptible to all the influences of European civilization; but its hold upon the people is far too strong to be ever shaken, while any attempt to openly combat its influence would only be certain to provoke a violent outburst of fanaticism such as would probably result in a complete retrogression from any advance made by the exercise of tact and diplomacy.

So much is the mass of the people under the influence of their "Mullahs" or "Religious Teachers" that these may be said to be possessed of far more real, if less apparent, authority amongst them than their actual rulers; and it is a notorious fact, however much they may try to disown it, that these latter are in their hearts very much afraid of them; if only for the reason that in every large town there is a considerable rabble of those who have nothing to lose and everything to gain by a riot, which is

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completely under the control of the Mullahs. These have only to appeal to the fanaticism of the latter to create a more or less serious disturbance at almost a moment's notice; and a serious disturbance, once created in a country like Persia, it is difficult to say where it will end, or what steps it may become necessary to take to quell it.

33. The attitude of the general population of Persia towards the Christians residing amongst them can hardly be described as more favourable than that of an *Attitude towards Christians.* *unwilling toleration of their presence,* except in the case of the more highly educated or liberal minded, many of whom have visited Europe and can thus appreciate the benefits of European civilization; but even these would in any crisis be so influenced by the mass of their compatriots that they would probably do all they could to disguise such sentiments.

This is particularly the case with the city population, as being those who are more under the influence of the Mullahs, and who are brought more in contact with Christians; for though—being more orderly and civilized in their demeanour than the other Mahommedan races with which our national relations have mostly brought us in contact—they are not so openly aggressive in their bearing as are these latter, their disgust and hatred is not the less deeply rooted because it is not shewn, or because it is disguised under the veil of politeness and sociable manners.

It is, of course, to the interest of the Mullahs to encourage these feelings from professional reasons, as they are aware that an extended intercourse with Europeans would introduce more liberal and enlightened ideas into the country, and thus lower their influence, which depends upon their own self-assumption and the ignorance of those they impose upon, just as is the case in India with the Brahmins, who are the most determined opponents of our rule.

In the smaller villages, and those considerably removed

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from the beaten track, this fanatical feeling is less evident; but then in many of these the ignorance of the people is such that they hardly seem to know what a "Feringhi" is, or if they do, to consider it a term synonymous with that of Russian, the only European race whose name has penetrated throughout the country.

34. The position held by the Armenian population amongst their Mahommedan rulers is one of the most complete subjection. As a rule they are treated with the greatest contempt; and, though they may rise to high posts or amass considerable wealth, they are never on terms other than those of a subordinate or dependent amongst them, while they are absolutely devoid of any influence in the conduct of anything relating to the national affairs.

It is probably owing to their experience of the Armenian population, that the general aversion of the Mahommedan towards the Christians has become so intensified in Persia, for the Armenians are a race devoted to commerce, and of extremely low principles in their prosecution of business—their thirst for money, and utter want of scruple as to the means they adopt in obtaining it, being almost without parallel in human nature. They have thus been able to retaliate upon the Mahommedans, for the scanty respect or consideration which they meet with at their hands in the course of their business relations with them; for the Mahommedan of rank, being mostly a careless or improvident individual, with but little ready money at hand, has been glad to borrow the same of the despised Armenian Christian, and this has been readily lent him at fabulous rates of interest. Besides this, the latter are dealers in European goods, which the ordinary Persian cannot get elsewhere; these they are in the habit of selling to their ignorant fellow countrymen at about ten times their real value;

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the consequence of these transactions, as may be imagined, is not conducive to the encouragement of kindly feelings between the two races.

35. As has been said, the division of the Mahommedan faith dominant in Persia, and recognised by the State, *Sunnis and Shiabs.* is that of the "Shiah Sect." It is difficult for Europeans of the present day to understand what an important point this is for attention, for in Mahommedan countries the matter of religion is one which enters into every minutest question of private or public life; so much so, that it is absolutely impossible for the inhabitants to conceive the less important part which it plays in the general relations of individuals, or in national politics amongst European races.

As is well known, the two great divisions of the Mahommedan faith, are those of the "Sunnis," and the "Shiabs," and it is astonishing to observe how intense appears to be the hatred existing between these conflicting sects; for great as may be the aversion of the fanatical members of either towards a Christian, it in no way exceeds that which they entertain towards their co-religionists of the rival sect.

Though the Shiah sect of the Mahommedan faith is the prevalent religion in the Persian Empire, several of the races contained within its limits are followers of the rival sect of the "Sunnis," especially those of Turkish or Arabic origin; there is thus a further element of incohesion introduced into the relations of the various tribes composing its population towards the representative administration of the country.

The fact of the division of those professing the Mahommedan faith into these two great religious factions is a point which has always been recognised as an important one to be taken into consideration in any review or estimate of the political condition of Mahommedan

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populations wherever found, and of their relations towards one another; the Turks, for instance, being "Sunnis," and the Persians "Shiahs," any cordial understanding between these two Powers would be almost impossible.

36. The Government of Persia, like that of most Asiatic countries, is despotic in its nature; the will of the

Sovereign, or of the Deputy appointed by him, is the only law that is recognised, and from this there is no appeal. The consequence is that the administration is to the last degree venal and corrupt, while the only course which is open to the people to obtain any redress, in case of their position becoming absolutely intolerable by the oppressions of those placed over them, is that of open insurrection, and an attack upon the life of the offending official.

The position of an Asiatic official is so insecure, being, as he is as a rule, dependent entirely upon the whims and caprices of a Sovereign, whose favour may be said to depend exclusively upon the amount of money paid to him under the pretext of revenue or openly as bribes, and who is in no way to be conciliated by careful administration or a consideration for the well being of his subjects, that from the highest to the lowest every member of the official hierarchy is, from the necessities of his position, even if it were not from his own natural inclinations, a being who only looks upon his term of office as a period in which to accumulate by hook or by crook the greatest amount of money possible, the only check to his rapacity being the limits of endurance of the population placed under his charge.

In Persia this is more markedly the case than elsewhere, inasmuch as the cupidity of the Shah himself is beyond all expression; it is thus almost beyond the bounds of possibility that, were they even so inclined, a

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more generous spirit could animate any of his officers; and, were the position of himself and the ruling element as strong in fact as it is in theory, the position of the general population would indeed be an unfortunate one. Happily, however, for the people, the position alike of the Shah himself as regards his deputies, as of these latter with reference to those over whom they rule, is far from being so secure or free from all cause of anxiety as to admit of either giving free vent to his inclinations. This is owing to the following reasons:—

(1) The immense area over which the population is scattered, and the extreme slowness of the means of communication between the capital and the various outlying portions of the Empire

(2) The variety of the nationalities constituting this population, and the utter lack of cohesion amongst the same.

(3) The weakness of the military forces and the extreme inefficiency of such as exist.

Owing to the great distances intervening between the capital and the seats of the Provincial Governments, and the difficulty of communication with the same, the Governor of a Province in Persia occupies the position rather of a tributary chief than that of a local deputy, responsible to the Central Authority for his conduct of the duties entrusted to him.

The Province assigned to the rule of such may be said to be handed over to him to deal with absolutely at his own discretion, subject to the payment of an annual tribute, and, so long as this does not fail in amount or in regularity of payment, the only features of his administration which would earn the disfavour or suspicion of the Central Authority would be the fact of his becoming too popular amongst the local population, or strengthening his military position beyond its lowest possible



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requirements (for in Persia every Province is obliged to have a military force of its own in order to maintain order amongst the various semi-independent tribes, and to protect the Governor), either of which circumstances would be considered to constitute a menace to the existing régime.

As instances of the distances to be travelled, and the delay that would have to be incurred in sending troops from the capital to repress any serious local disturbance, it may be observed that Meshed is distant about 500 miles by road from Teheran; that it would take a traveller, marching by regular stages, nearly a month to traverse the distance; and that supplies of provisions and water are so scanty along the route that any considerable body of men could not move by it without previous arrangement; the same may be said of Tubbas Kerman, and other outlying districts, but to a greater extent, the distances being longer, and the intervening country equally, if not more, destitute of supplies.

The relative positions of the Central Authority, the Governors, and the populations over which they rule, may appear a peculiar state of things to a European; but in Persia, as has been explained, no national feeling of any kind exists, still less such as would correspond in any way to the loyalty of a European people towards its sovereign.

The dynasties which have successively ruled over the Persian Empire have never had any claim upon the affections of their subjects, as being in their origin of royal or even noble descent; on the contrary, for as far back as the history of the country extends, since its conversion to Mahomedanism their founders have been mere adventurers, who by skilfully availing themselves of the opportunities which presented themselves, have risen to positions of favour under the existing monarch.

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and finally made use of the power and influence thus acquired to oust their patrons and usurp their places; this is a fact so well recognised that for the too-powerful Minister or Provincial Governor there is no alternative but the scaffold or open rebellion.

The present dynasty—namely, that of the Kajars—has only existed since the close of the eighteenth century, and has been marked beyond that of all its predecessors by its illiberal policy and want of enterprise in matters affecting the public welfare. It is to these facts that the weakness of its military position may be attributed, for the strength of the country in this respect depends, as has been pointed out, on:—

(a) The organized troops, a far greater number of which would under other circumstances be maintained by the Provincial Governments.

(b) The "Ilyats" or semi-independent warlike tribes, whose good feeling has been alienated from the ruling dynasty by its general ill-faith and injudicious policy towards them.

In spite, however, of this unsatisfactory state of affairs there never was an era probably in the history of the country when such general order existed throughout its extent, and there are few portions of the Empire which the traveller may not visit without incurring the slightest risk of injury; this is owing to the extreme severity of the punishment inflicted upon robbers, and the general recognition, as is the case with all semi-civilized Asiatic communities, of the justice of the same, for the feeling in favour of the necessity of such precautions for the security of the life and property of individuals is so strong in such cases, that what would appear to Europeans the most cruel modes of punishment excite no comment or sign of disapprobation amongst the population. Lastly, but by no means leastly, the order which is thus

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visible is due more than anything else to the tact and ability of the Amin-ul-Sultanat, or Prime Minister, whose diplomatic talent is the main support of the existing Government.

37. It is much to be regretted that the many misconceptions regarding the country of Persia should have been allowed to exist in the minds of the European

*Effect of misconceptions regarding country.*

public without any attempt at removal on the part of those better acquainted with the facts of the case, for their results can in no way contribute in the long run to the benefit of the country itself, or, in the case of our own country, to the extension of our national influence therein, for the consequence has been that there has been an influx into Persia of European adventurers whose only object has been to obtain from the Government privileges which they could forthwith part for for cash to European speculators, while the Shah himself has been tempted to introduce a system of indiscriminate granting of concessions for monopolies—a method of replenishing his private purse on the part of the monarch of an Oriental country, the demoralising influences of which upon himself, and the disastrous effects upon his subjects have been too strikingly visible in the case of Egypt, which is a far richer country than Persia, not to make every genuine well-wisher of the latter most anxious not to see a repetition of such an experience on its part.

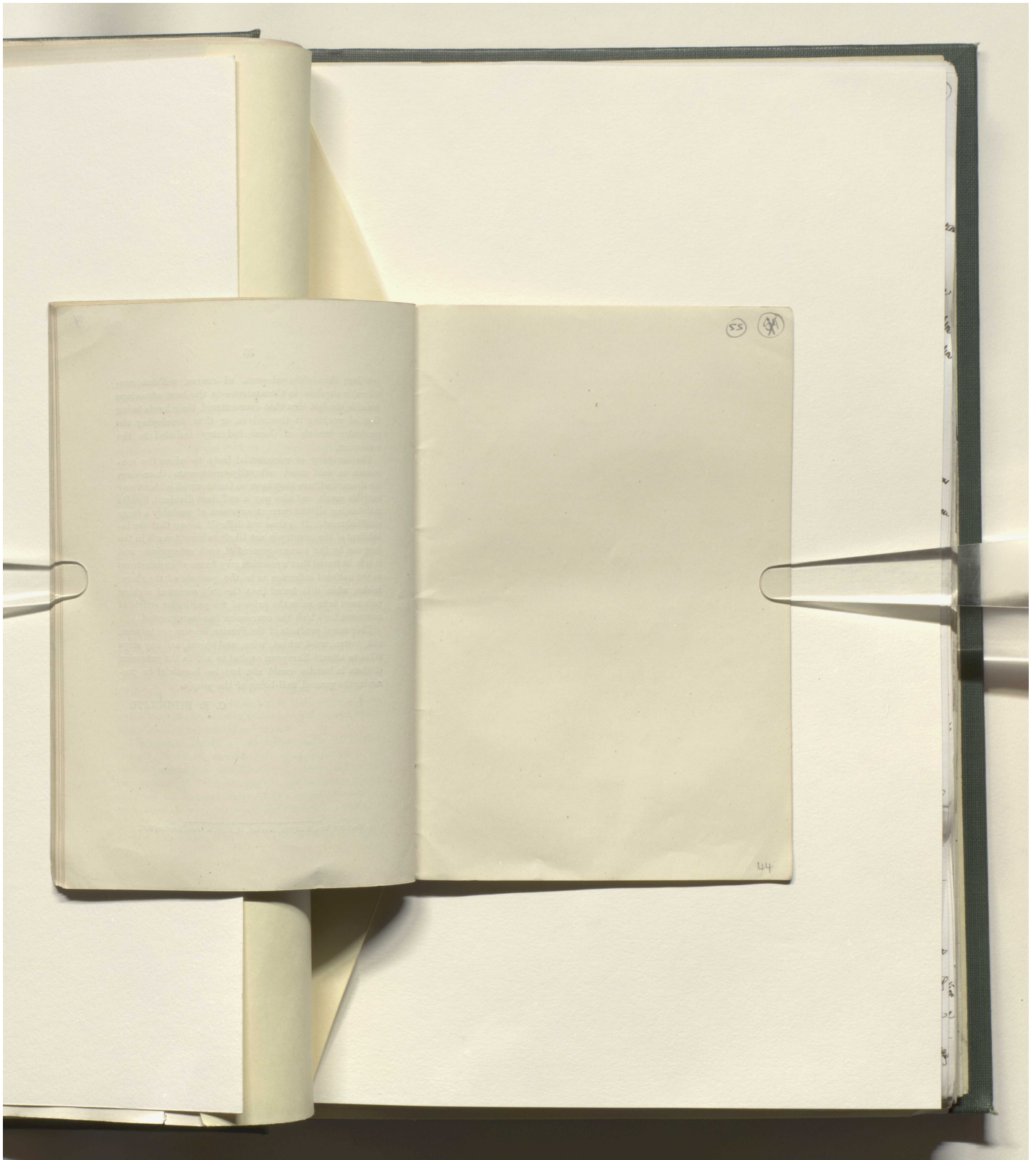
The trade of Persia is, and always must be, limited, though doubtless capable of some extension; but such a good object would rather be forwarded by the introduction of European capital for the promotion on open and unprivileged terms of the special branches of produce or industry for which the country is suited than by the granting of concessions of various natures to private individuals, whose first idea is to dispose of the

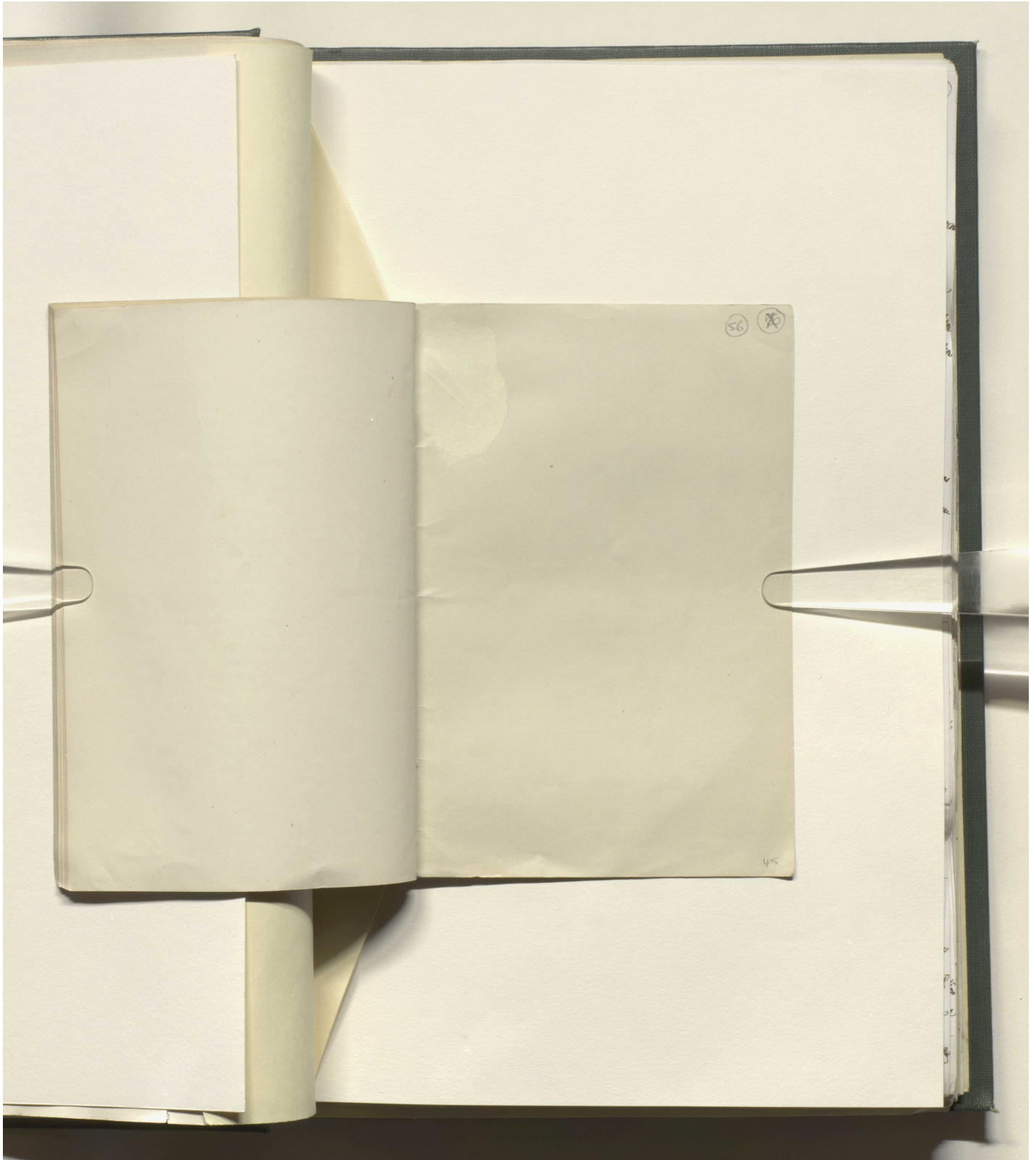
privilege thus obtained—not, of course, without considerable expense to themselves—to the best advantage possible, the last idea that ever entered their heads being that of working it themselves, or thus developing the particular branch of local industry included in the concession.

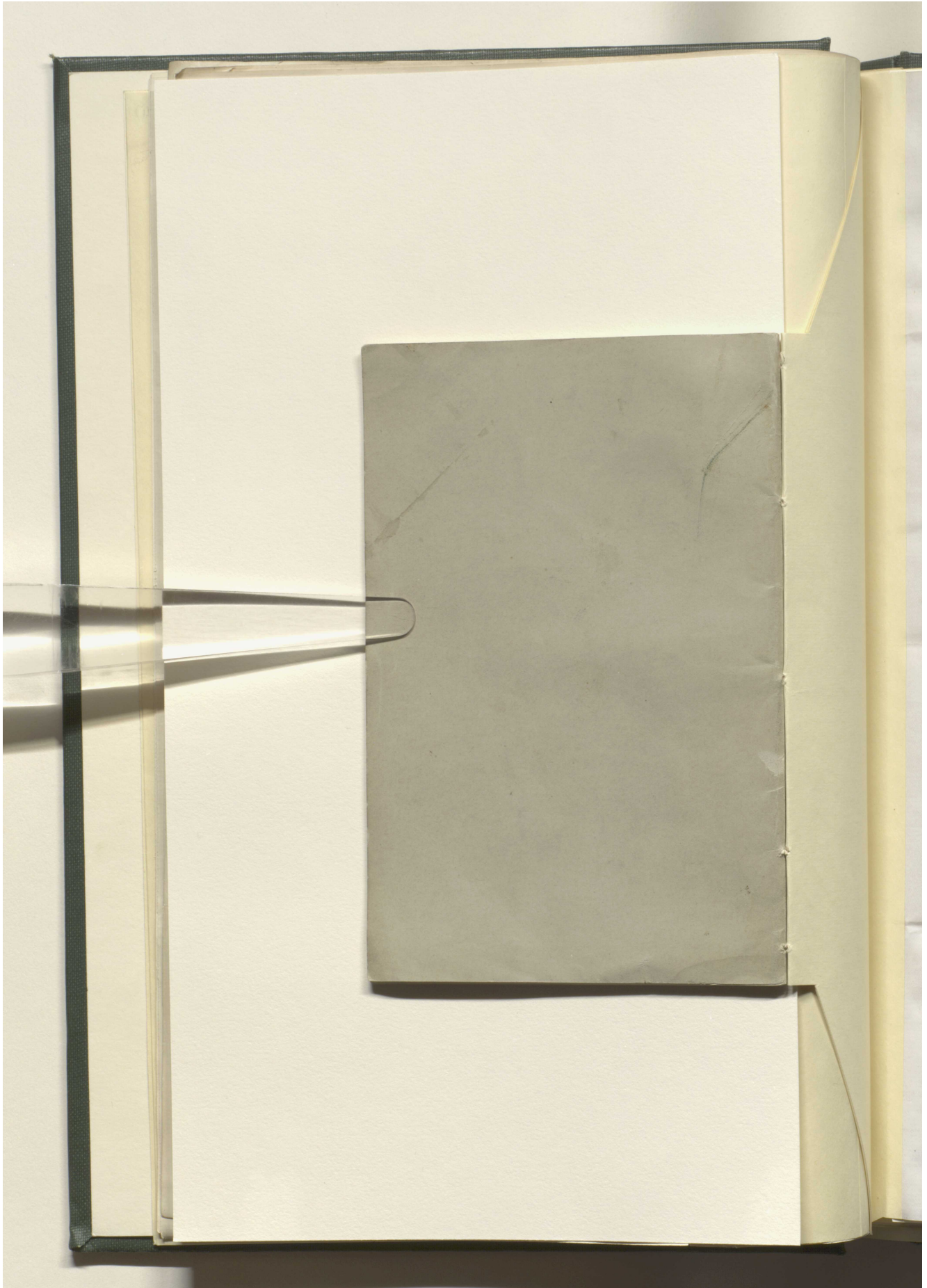
The company or commercial body to whom the concession is sold must naturally recuperate themselves for the expenditure they have so far incurred without any tangible result, and also pay a sufficient dividend, besides maintaining all the current expenses of probably a large establishment. It is thus not difficult to see that the inhabitant of the country is not likely to benefit much in the long run by the encouragement of such enterprises; and it is to be feared that a reaction may ensue alike disastrous to the national influence as to the pockets of the shareholder, when it is found that the only means of making ends meet is to raise the price of the particular article of commerce for which the concession has been granted.

The natural products of the Persian Empire are tobacco, silk, cotton, wool, wheat, wine, and opium, and any steps taken to attract European capital to aid in the extension of these industries could not but be beneficial in promoting the general well-being of the people.

C. E. BIDDULPH.









Oct 1891

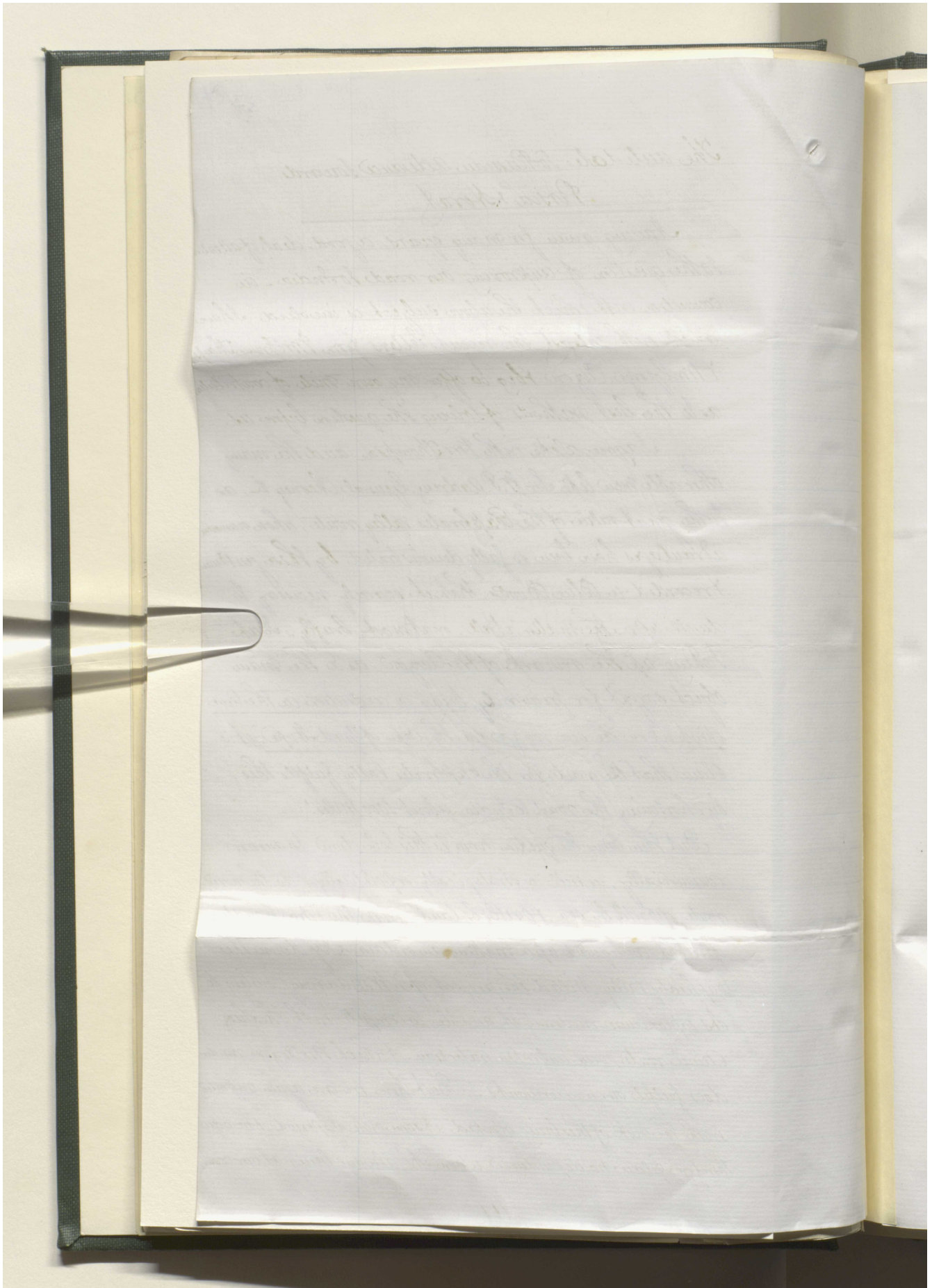
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The antidote to Russian Advance toward  
Persia & Korea.

Having given for many years, a good deal of attention to the question of improving our road to India - in connection with which the above subject is involved. I have read with interest the recent letters from Mr. James Thompson & Mr. George Curzon & beg to offer my own mite of contribution as to the best methods of solving the question before us.

I agree alike with Mr. Thompson, and the many other able men like Sir W. P. Andrew, General Chesney &c, as to the great value of the Euphrates valley route, whose numerous advantages have been so fully demonstrated by these gentlemen & recorded in Blue Books, that it scarcely necessary to dwell upon the matter at all, or at most, briefly. But taking up the remark of Mr. Curzon, as to the main object sought for primarily, being a reduction in the time spent upon the sea voyage via the Cape of Good Hope, it is plain that the route for the Euphrates valley fulfils this, by shortening the road to India about 1000 miles!

But then comes the question how is this to be done, so as to be commercially, as well as strategically, or politically - as the river route of course by sea, & partly by land, with the extra hauling of freight consequent upon making an ordinary Ry down the Euphrates valley, killed the project of Sir W. P. Andrew, owing to its expense rendering it unable to compete with the Suez Canal route, - an unbroken waterway - which Mr. Curzon considers does fulfil our requirements. But here we are again confronted with the risk of this being blocked at some critical period, & we can therefore place no dependence upon its always being at our command.



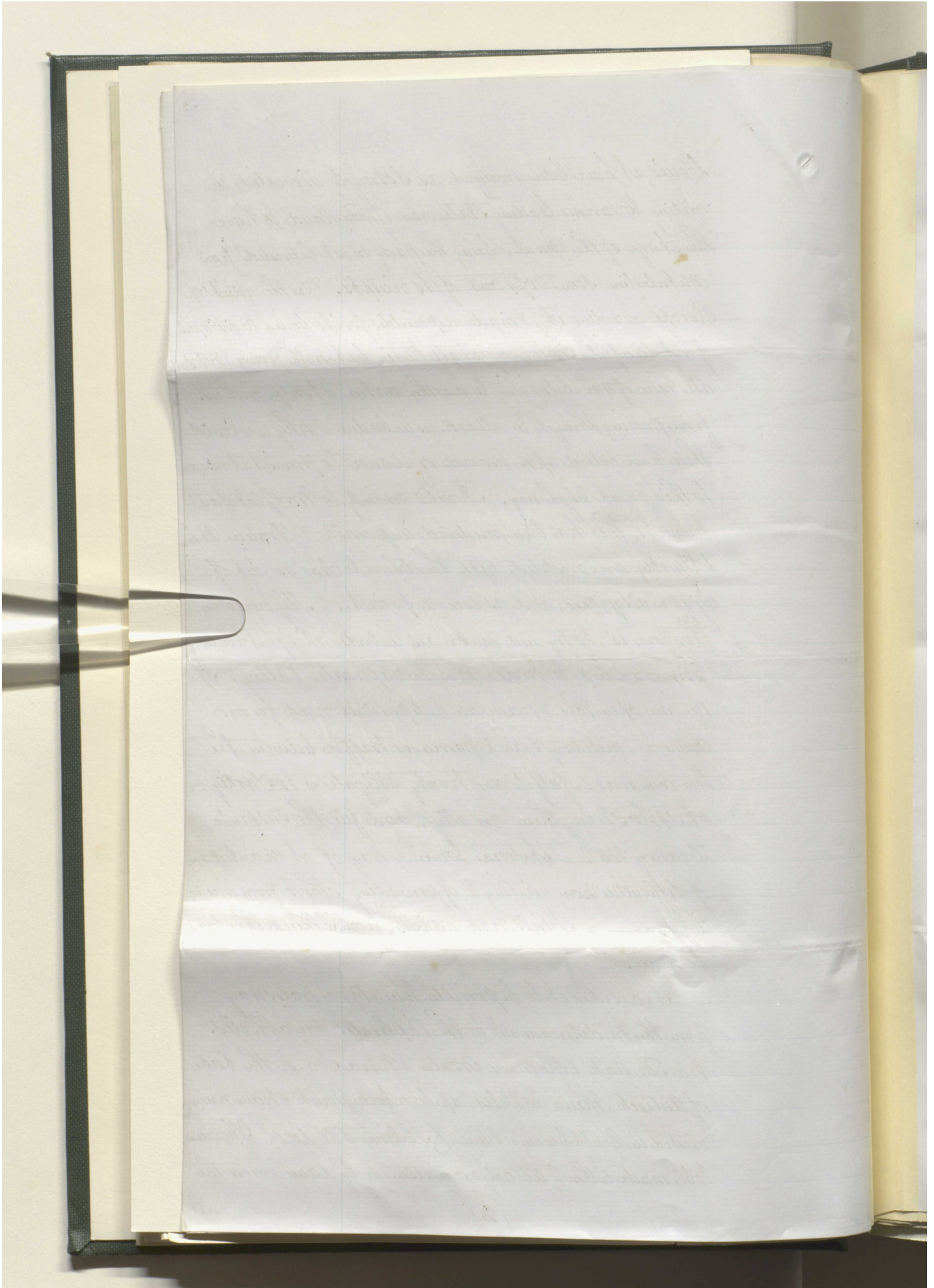
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could it have been arranged as I strongly advocated in  
writing to various leading Statesmen, for England to have  
the charge of the Canal. (being the party most interested from  
contributing some 80 per cent of its receipts.) & as the agent of  
Europe guarding it, & made responsible for its being kept open  
for peaceful commerce at all times. but with power to stop  
all men of war. belonging to another nation at strife with us.  
from passing through to attack us in India. Why we could  
then have relied upon our own vigilance to prevent damage  
to this great high-way. Thanks mainly to Mr Gladstone  
however, this has been rendered impossible. & France, Russia  
& Turkey are credited with the desire to clear us out of  
Egypt altogether, and as soon as possible. My own view  
therefore is, to try and make an unbroken shipping route  
from England to India via the Euphrates Valley. If  
we can open this. & secure an independent road for our  
commerce & military & civil passenger traffic between the  
two countries — fulfil our treaty obligations to Turkey.  
& help to strengthen our ally. and fill the Sultan's  
Treasury too — it seems to me a way of at once dispelling  
of difficulties now existing & of preventing others from arising  
in future. I will now explain how I think this may  
be done.

I consider it to be possible to make a waterway  
from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates. by a Canal  
via Suediah & the ruins of the Tarsa Soo. to the lake  
of Antioch. thence to Belis, up to which point steam navigation  
existed in Genl Chesney's time. & I believe still does. The canal  
to be made either by actual excavation, or by dams across the

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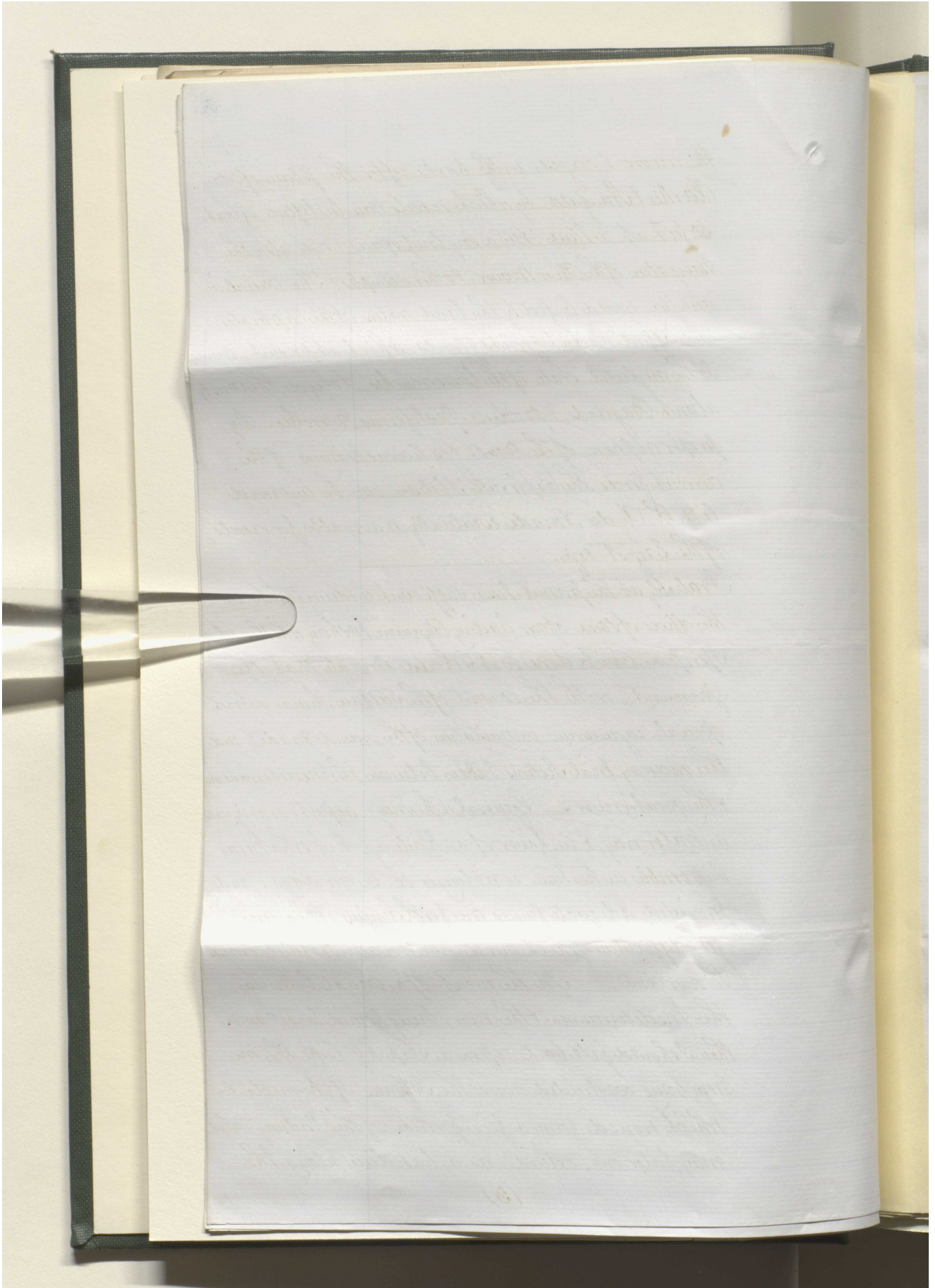
(59) (X)

the rivers & gorges, with locks after the plan of say  
Clarke & Haugfeld, by which vessels can be lifted afoat  
50 feet at a time, & in a very brief space. (vide also the  
navigation of the River Meaur. & three examples) The canal in  
question would be fed by the head waters of the Euphrates  
and afford a vent for its floods, which at present, owing  
to the neglected state of the lower reaches, deluge the country  
about Bagdad, & produce pestiferous marshes. By  
proper regulation of the banks, & judicious training of the  
current forces, the Euphrates I believe, can be improved  
like the Clyde, & made eventually navigable for vessels  
of the largest size.

Probably, at the present time, sufficient evidence exists in  
the offices of some of our leading Engineers, to show whether what  
I propose, can be done, but I should advocate that the  
Government, with the consent of the Sultan, have a fresh  
special, engineering examination of the ground made, and  
the necessary trial sections taken between the Mediterranean  
& the great river. General Chesney's report was against  
a water way, & in favor of a Railway, but what was  
impossible in his time is no longer so, in our days, and  
provided adequate funds are forthcoming, there are  
few difficulties which our Engineers cannot find means  
to overcome. In the event of a canal between  
the Mediterranean & the river, being found too expensive  
then I should fall back upon a Ship Ry like the one  
now being constructed across the Atanus of Chignecto, &  
which would form a first portion of the Railway, which  
may, later on, extend, as a base line along the

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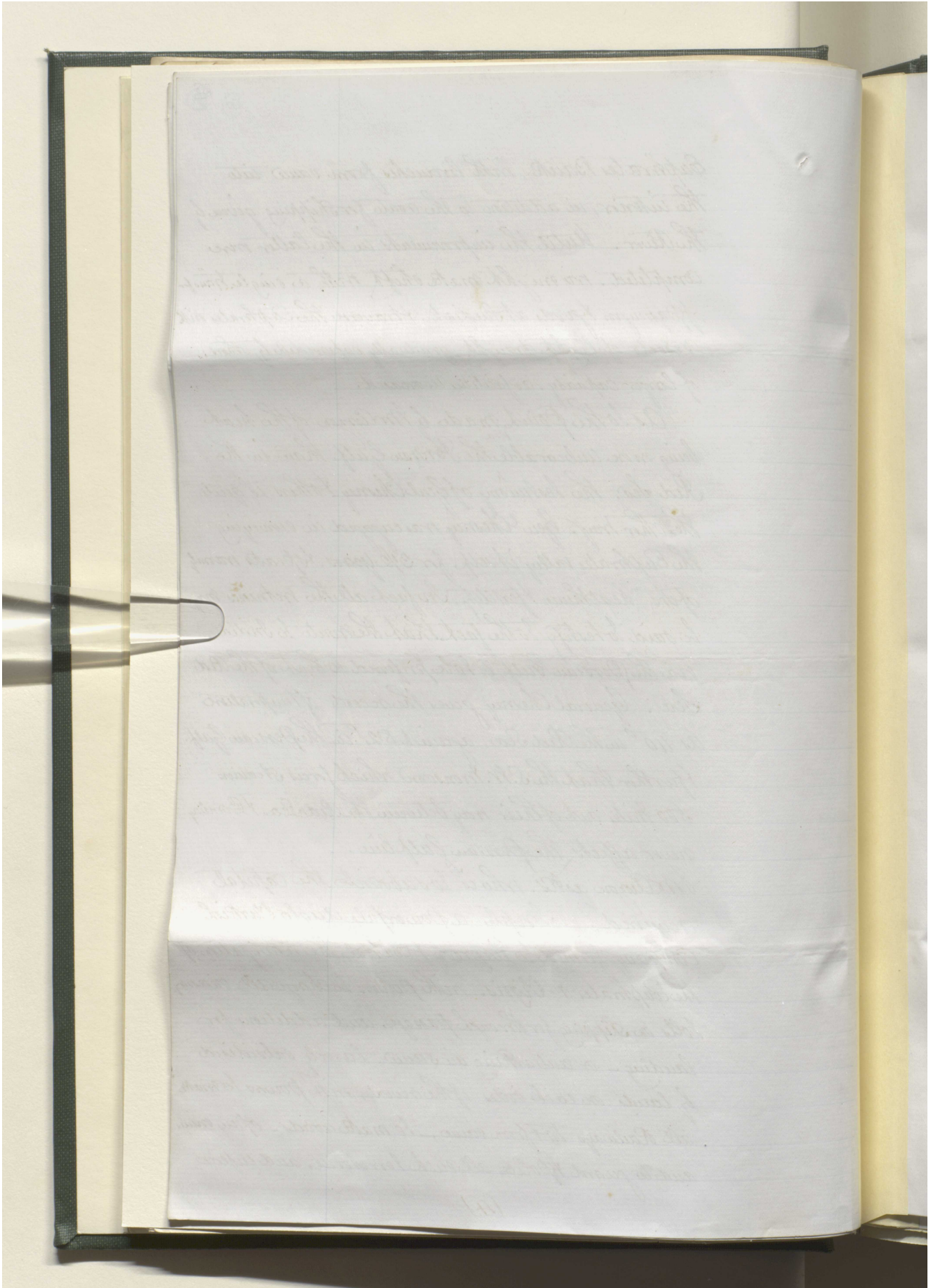


(60) (58)

Euphrates Bank, with branches from same into the interior, in addition to the route for shipping given by the River. Until the improvements in the latter were completed, we might make shift with a single transfer of Darius's goods at Suediah, & traverse the Euphrates with vessels of light draught, gradually superseded by others of longer capacity, as facilities increased.

As to the proof made by Mr Conger of the heat being more unbearable <sup>via</sup> the Persian Gulf than in the Red Sea, the testimony of Gen Chesney & others is quite the other way. Gen Chesney was engaged in surveying the Euphrates valley itself for 3 1/2 years. & speaks warmly of its healthiness & fertility. In fact all the pretences may be said to testify to the fact that the route to India via the Persian Gulf is to be preferred to that of the Red Sea. General Chesney gives the winds of temperature as 110° in the Red Sea, against 82° in the Persian Gulf. & further that the S.W. Monsoon which forces Steamers 500 miles out of their way between the Red Sea & Bombay never affects the Persian Gulf line.

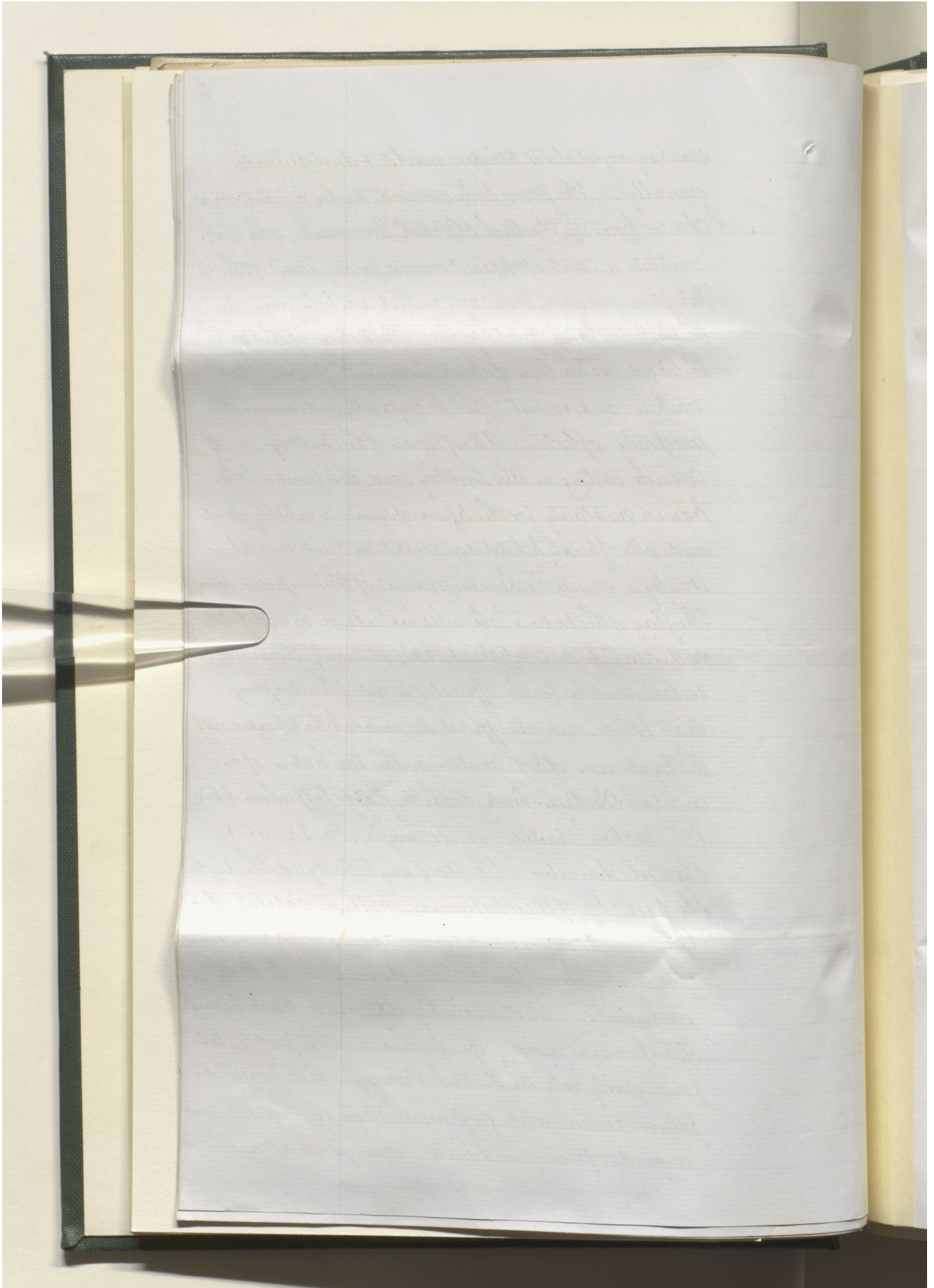
Mr Conger asks, who is to subscribe the capital required? I reply a powerful Anglo Turkish Company, formed to improve & control the navigation of the Euphrates & Tigris, with powers to charge all necessary tolls on shipping for through passage, and additions for landing - or embarking in same, largely subsidised by lands on each side of the river, with powers to make all Railways to & from same - to make roads - open mines and to guard & police all such territories, and enforce





(61) (62)

sanitary regulations & improvements & develop Trade  
generally. The Powers to be exercised under a joint royal  
Charter from the Turkish & British Governments. Who shall  
constitute a Court of appeal & redress for any abuse of the  
Privileges granted to the Coy. & which are to be given in  
the first instance for 5 years. The policy of the Coy to  
be based on the lines of strict justice to the people of both  
countries, and earnest effort to improve, and secure the  
prosperity of both. All officials of the Company, and  
Colonists settling in their territory, and their families to be  
trained militarily for the defence of said, as in Switzerland  
and all officials to hold equal military rank in each  
country, & service to be in presence of their respective sovereigns.  
The flag of the Company to be a blue sack on a red field  
with Crescent on Staff head. & a judiciously combined  
suitable uniform for its officials & troops. The Company  
seal to be, and all official documents to be stamped with  
the Royal arms of both countries on the two halves of a  
circular Turkish shield, with the flag & staff shown behind  
the motto "United" on its margin. in English &  
Turkish Characters. The Company to be styled "The Anglo  
Turkish Coy. of Mesopotamia, with a capital of  
£2,000,000. Interest at 4 per cent, and  
1 per cent reserve fund. to be guaranteed by both  
governments. A special Royalty (in acknowledgment  
of the Privileges given) of 1 per cent on net profits, to be  
paid yearly into the Turkish Treasury. All present &  
future taxation alike for general Ottoman revenue, and  
on goods, passengers & Trade. consequent upon the

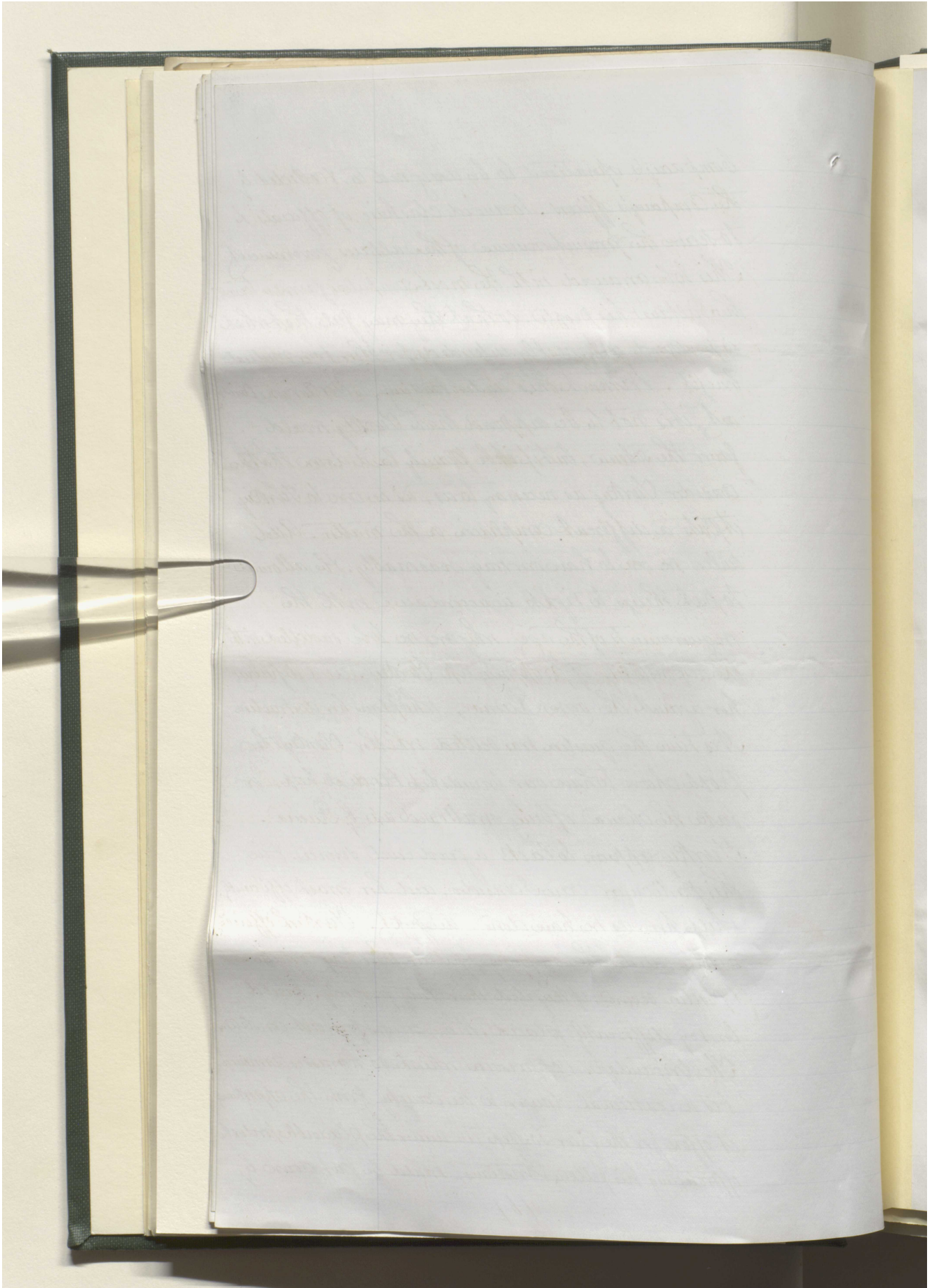


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Company's operations to be assigned to, & collected by  
the Company's officers. To avoid clashing of officials &  
to secure the present revenue of the Sultan's government  
This to be arranged with the most scrupulous fairness towards  
the Sultan & his people. so that they may feel that what  
is proposed is honestly intended for their & our mutual  
benefit. Without this understanding, as Mr Aragon points  
out, it is not to be supposed that Turkey would  
favor the scheme, but if it be plainly laid down that we  
consider Turkey as necessary to us, as we are to Turkey  
it puts a different complexion on the matter. And  
unless we are to have our way reasonably, & be allowed  
to put things to rights in accordance with the  
requirements of the age, why are we to be saddled with  
the responsibility of propping up Turkey, and defending  
her against the ogre Russia, who plans her destruction  
We have the question now settled whether Turkey & her  
people choose to have our friendship & cordial help, or  
take the chance of being swallowed up by Russia.  
Turkey appears to lack a good civil service. & in  
this particular case I consider, aid her most efficiently.  
I help her, as we have done, in Egypt. Turkish officials  
acting under the Company, feeling their pay certain  
& position secure, if they did their duty properly, would  
be very differently placed. than under present conditions  
The brigandage, & oppression which so harasses Armenia  
& is a continual danger to the country, from the opportunity  
it offers for the Zar to step in under the plausible pretext  
of protecting his fellow Christians - would be put down by

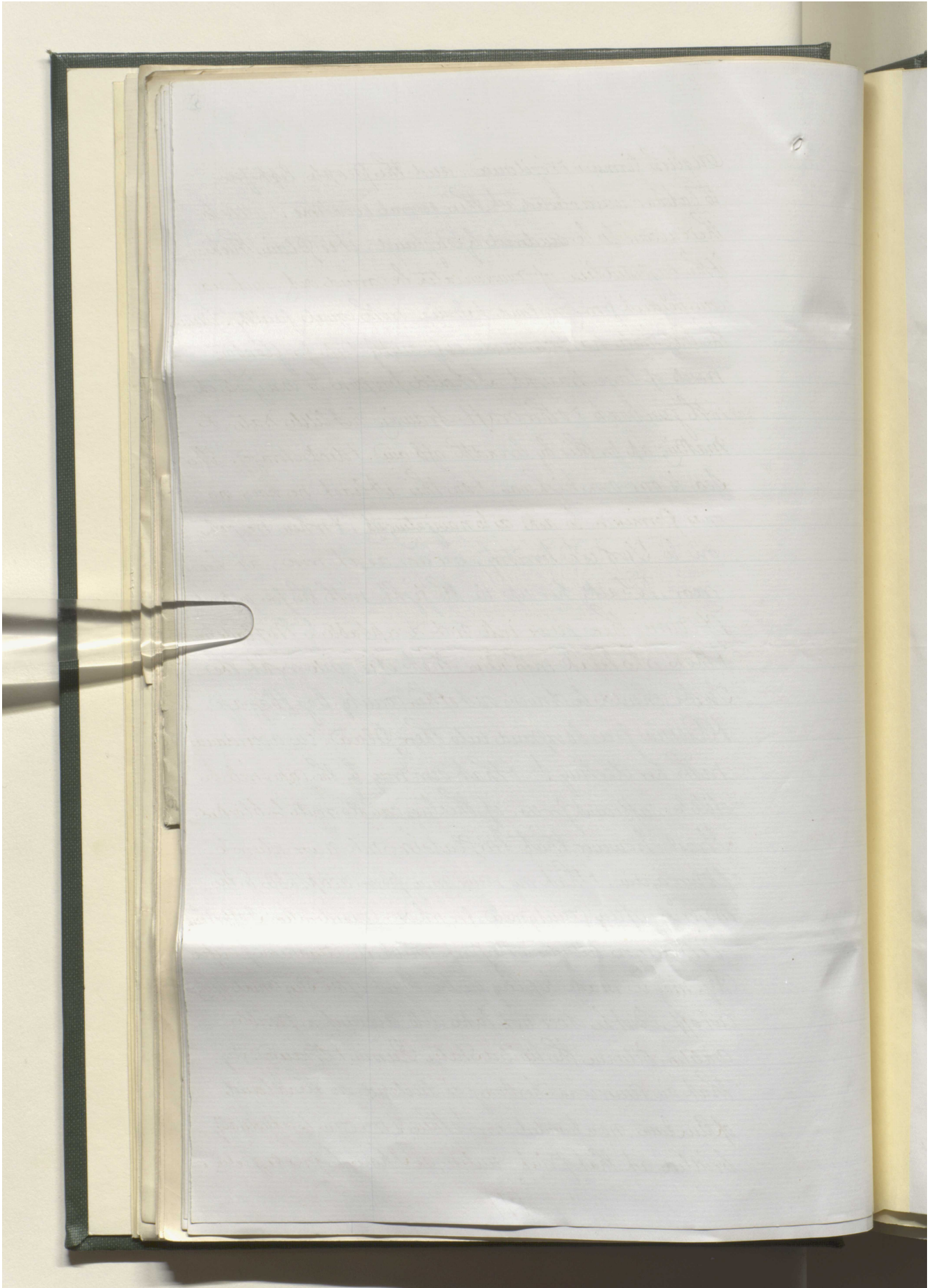
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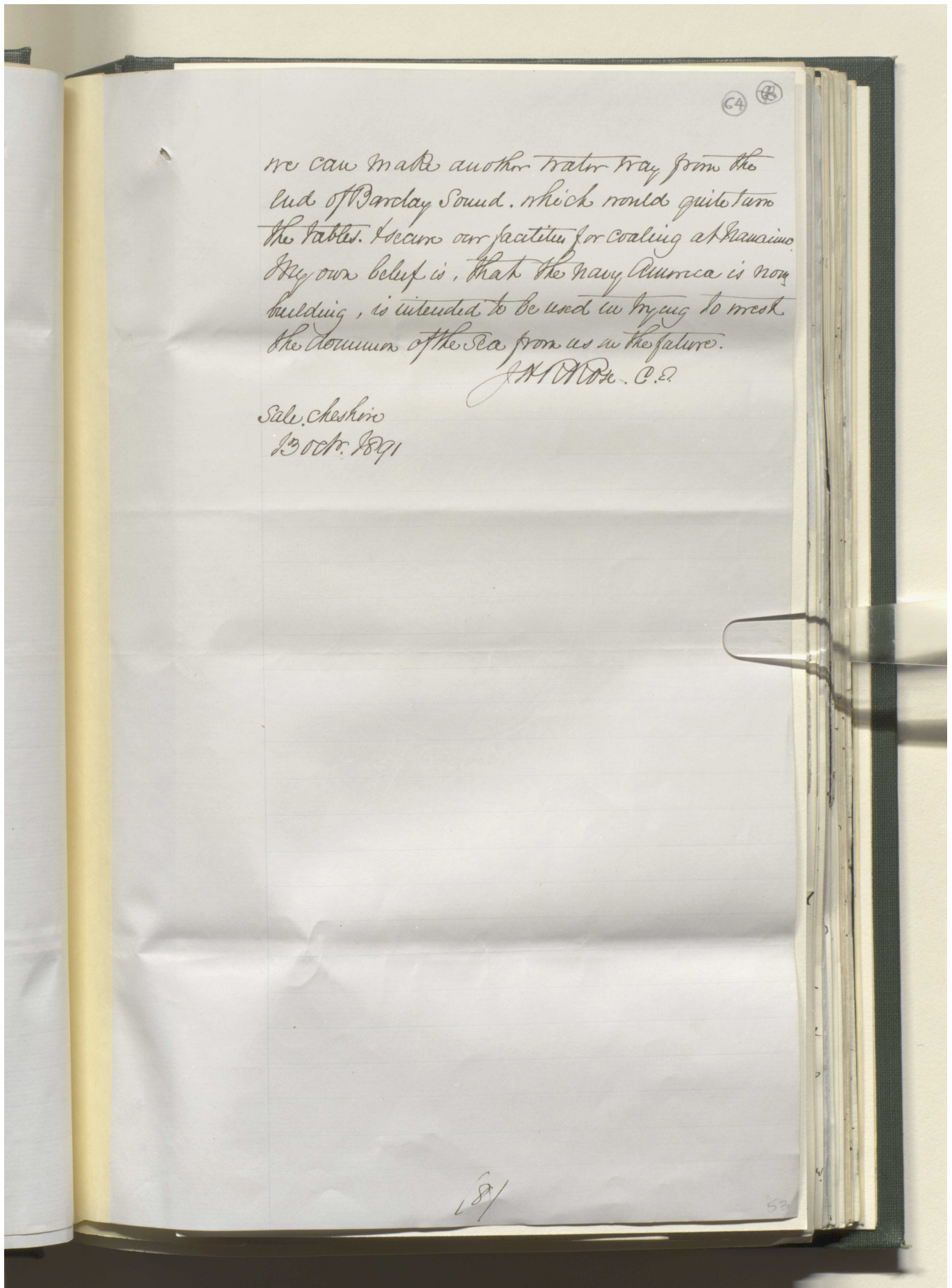
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63 64

English firmness & vigilance. and the people left free  
to labour unmolested, at their several vocations. As to  
the success to be secured by England. it is plain that  
if the suggested line of communication be carried out. such a  
can be cut from England to India with equal facility. Since  
the Suez strait has been made sufficiently deep for floating  
vessels of large draught. I should propose to navigate it  
with gunboats & other craft drawing but little water. &  
making up for this by breadth of beam. & deck storage. The  
sea is our own highway. For this at least we have no  
one's permission to ask as to navigating it. & when we get  
on to Turkish territory, we are, as it were, at her  
rear. To attack her up in the fight with the foe in front.  
Of course these views will not be acceptable to Mr Gladstone  
& those who think with him, that it is quite right the  
Turks should be driven out of their country. bag & baggage.  
& Russia free to expand into their plain. in accordance  
with her destiny! & that our way by the Cape will be  
still be sufficient for us. if the Suez canal route be blocked.  
I trust however that Mr Gladstone will never return to  
power again. & that my views may prove acceptable to the  
majority of my countrymen, for whose consideration I offer them.  
Mr Mayne alludes to the port which the Canadian Pacific  
Co. may be made to play in the event of the Suez canal being  
cut off. But he does not take into account a possible  
coalition between the United States, Russia & France. say  
that an American shipping is developed on the coast  
of the sea, now handed over to them & we can be effectually  
bridled at that point. unless, as I have before suggested,





64 (B)  
we can make another water way from the  
end of Barclay Sound. which would quite turn  
the tables. I learn our facilities for coaling at Haunimo.  
My own belief is, that the Navy Alumna is now  
building, is intended to be used in trying to reach  
the Dominion of the Sea from us in the future.

J. M. D. C. E.

Sule. Cheshiro  
13 Oct. 1891

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XXVIII . 85 . The Northern Casp & Black Seas.  
R. N. Cust. 289 - 307

(94) on the Map of an (unmarked) railway  
Comm. with India) see Tughlugh Route  
of JB Fell. 307-299

E. V. R. in Journal of Socy Asi

(1) Hyde Clarke Railways to India  
Turkey. See B: 1878. vol xxvii. p 41  
+ historical account bibliography

(2) W. P. Andrews. Dec 20. 1880  
E. V. Route to India

(3) B. Haughton The Best route for a line of  
rails to India. April 9. 1880

In the Scotch Geog. Mag 1871

