CHAPTER XI
THE THEORY OF A BUFFER STATE


The possibility of an attempt on the part of Russia to invade India has been recognised by those responsible for the administration of that empire since the early years of the present century, when rumours of the schemes of the Emperor Paul and Napoleon reached England. The subject was discussed with varying interest at different periods, according to the relations existing between Russia and England, and every Governor-General and every Viceroy has in turn added to the precautions which have been taken with a view to rendering the success of such an venture the more unlikely.

The events of the first Afghan War served to draw the attention of the British Government to the importance of maintaining a friendly understanding with the ruler of Kabul, and the contemporaneous activity exhibited by Russia in Central Asia added to the apprehensions of our statesmen. The expedition conducted with such disastrous result by Perovski had served to open the eyes of British statesmen; and the information received from its agents in Afghanistan by the Government of India of the offers of arms and support made by