

little trouble to understand the facts, this startling lesson should surely gain a respectful hearing for those who deprecate the repetition in the matter of the Pamirs of the same policy which has been so disastrous and so costly a little further west. We are not of those, if there be such, who strive to make a difficulty for Mr. GLADSTONE'S Government out of this Pamir business. It is much too serious for that. Nor are we of those who, on the other hand, would magnify the immediate seriousness of the position. For the past few days there has been an obvious tendency on the part of Russian organs and those influenced by Russia to minimize the situation as far as possible. Colonel YANOFF'S expedition is one of pure exploration; indeed, it is so peaceful that the Chinese were asked not to send any troops in the same direction lest there should be trouble in this scientific trip. (The Russians are really a great nation; it would be impossible to imagine anything more childlike and bland than this appeal on the part of BILL SIKES to Bow Street not to send any troublesome officers to a particular district on a given night, lest his experiments in the arts of window-opening should be misunderstood.) The most satisfactory explanations will be forthcoming to Lord ROSEBERRY. The brush at Somatash was a mere matter of a score or so of men on each side, and the Afghan commander was stupid. It is true that the tribes are very anxious that Russia should annex them, that they do not like the Chinese, that they are afraid of the Afghans, that they think (another stroke of Russian humour, with that touch of truth about it which makes it bitter) that England will "only hold them for a time, and then give them up." But all this is accidental and parenthetical, and if the old Bokhara and Khokand claims are dwelt upon, that is parenthetical and accidental too. The general attitude of Russian handlers of the question is that of the amiable family dentist in his appeals to youth. It will be nothing; it will soon be over; in fact, he only wants to look at the part that is out of order, and has not the slightest idea of any unpleasant operation.

It is not very probable that Lord ROSEBERRY, at any rate, will be taken in by these little wiles; but it is less improbable that he may be compelled, either by the influence of his colleagues or by the more subtle and stronger influence which leads all men to patch things up instead of going to the root of them, to accept any apologies and explanations that may be made, to leave it to the Indian Government to smooth down the AMEER, to shut his eyes to the unpleasant synchronism of these renewed Russian explorations with the advent of his own party to power in England on the one side, and with a spirit of revolt in Afghanistan proper on the other. If he does this, he will commit a very great blunder and let slip a remarkable opportunity. Nothing, it may be confidently said, will put an end to these jars and frights but a proper delimitation of the Pamir district on the line of the Ak-Su at southernmost. And the most honeyed demonstrations of the purely scientific character of the surveying parties ought not to deceive a diplomatic child. It is in the highest degree probable that the Russians do not want at this moment to occupy or annex the Pamirs. For occupation, indeed, they are very unsuitable. In great part they are uninhabited and uninhabitable, though they are visited occasionally for pasturing purposes by nomad tribes. What is really important to Russia is to discover and accurately fix the roads across them, the facilities for subsisting troops, the possibilities of transporting stores, provisions, munitions of war. This can be done as well by exploring expeditions as by regular occupation, while the expeditions afford a good opportunity of conciliating such inhabitants as there are. And all this can have only one object. The trade across the

Pamirs is insignificant, and such as it is, the Russians want rather to hinder than to foster it. It is not generally believed that England has any violent desire to invade Russian Turkestan. *Manet sors tertia*, and it would be an insult even to a Gladstonian intelligence to particularize what that *sors tertia* is.

In fixing the line of delimitation we do not know that it would be wise to insist on quite so much as Professor VAMBÉRY thinks desirable. One plan in these matters—the favourite one with all barbarian, and some civilized, nations, and an especially favourite one with Russia—is to clamour for more than you are prepared to take, under the impression that you will at least get what you really want. The other, and more dignified, plan is to say, "I am not going to haggle or chaffer; this is my minimum-maximum, and you must take it or leave it." On this latter plan we are not sure that it would be possible to stickle for at least great part of Roshan, one of the small khanates now threatened by the Russians. For much of it, if not the whole, lies on the Russian side of that branch of the Oxus head-waters which naturally and reasonably carries on the delimitation—already more or less accepted—to the Chinese border. But for everything south of that branch it seems desirable to insist absolutely that it shall be recognized as Afghan or Chinese property as against the Russians, and then to effect an amicable arrangement between Cabul and Peking. With Shignan, with the Alichur, the Great and the Little Pamirs, and with all the other districts south of the Ak-Su, Russia should have nothing whatever to do; while, as for allowing her troops to wander south of the Panja into Wakhan, still more over the Hindu Koosh to Yaghistan and Chitral, "No! not for an hour" is the only answer possible to a tolerably informed statesman. And, above all, the attempts of the Russians to serve themselves heirs to Khokand or Bokhara should be treated with civil indifference, and a request to come to something rather more actual. Not in the least that, in this order of claims, the balance goes against us. If title-deeds can be spoken of in these shadowy regions, it is pretty exact to say that those of China are the strongest by antiquity and by her comparatively recent subjugation of the temporarily rebellious sultanate of Kashgar; that those of Afghanistan come next as regards recent military preponderance and actual possession for some considerable time past; and that those of Bokhara or Khokand are the most indirect, the most shadowy, and the most impossible to justify by evidence of actual seisin. We could be quite contented to meet the Russians on this ground; but, as everybody knows, the question is not really on this ground at all. It is a question of arranging a boundary, north of which Russia may, and south of which she may not, annex, make roads, arrange garrisons, compile magazines, and otherwise pursue her perfectly well-known, but diplomatically never-mentioned, object. The southmost boundary that is at all safe, by the concurrent or harmonized testimony of military and geographical experts, is that branch of the Upper Oxus system which coincides most nearly with the parallel of 38°. And to this line Lord ROSEBERRY, if he is wise, will stick; and will not rest till he gets it settled.

#### THE PAGAN REVIEW.

THE *Pagan Review* is the last new periodical. A certain canniness presides over the *Pagan Review*, which requests "subscriptions in advance," and a certain honesty may be admired, as the *Pagan Review*, if it dies very young, will remit "unexhausted subscriptions." It will publish nothing save by writers who, theoretically or practically, have identified, or are identifying, themselves with "the younger men."

Copies may be procured from Mr. W. H. BROOKS, Backs Green, Rudgwick, Sussex, a county celebrated as the birthplace of SHELLEY. The Review announces itself as "frankly pagan," and its conductors probably do not know what paganism was. For paganism did not stand in a false following of Mr. THOMAS HARDY, and Mr. GEORGE MEREDITH, and M. PAUL VERLAINE, but in a traditional body of ancient usages, and in a poetry not accessible to aspiring but uneducated intellects. Real paganism to the modern Neo-Pagan would have seemed Tory in politics, bald in art, and unadventurous in morals. The Neo-Pagan is a revival of the young man whom ARISTOPHANES particularly detested. If the New Pagan had any knowledge of the old paganism he would choose for himself some other nickname. The New Pagan, even in his "Foreword," splits his infinitives, and aspires "to really withdraw from life the approved veils of convention." This fresh *Pagan Review*, of course, has a rallying cry—"Art for Art's sake." Very well, but let it be Art! The silly exhibitions of adjectives which do duty as prose in the *Pagan Review* are not "Art," they are gabble. First, in "The Black Madonna" we are presented with some allegorical nonsense by Mr. FANSHAWE. The scene is apparently laid in the Soudan. A chief named BIHR is crucified after vapouring in a dialogue with the Black Madonna. The Black Madonna "was ASHTAROTH of old," *u.s.w.* BIHR cannot even speak grammar. He says, "Thou—*thou*, will I worship." Mr. FANSHAWE, the author, is young enough, we hope, to have received a School Board education; but it avails him not, unless paganism be a conscious revolt against the English language. BIHR would have been birched, not crucified. What befalls Mr. FANSHAWE, if still at school, when he writes *Tu adorabo*? Meanwhile he "ruffles the opaline flood into a flying foam of pink" with the best of them.

*The Black Madonna.*  
What would'st thou?

*Bihr.*  
Thou!

This is worse than the famous proposal of the young English officer to the Spanish lady:—

*Lui.*  
Voulez-vous?

*Elle.*  
Quoi?

*Lui.*  
Moi!

*Elle.*  
Oui!

Why should "copy" of this kind be called "Art"? It is not pagan. The Greeks knew their own language, if they knew no other.

Mr. GEORGE GASCOIGNE cries, in italics, "*Lift, lift thine eyes to mine who loves so wildly, madly*"—it is the Pagan printers who print so madly, wildly. Then Mr. DREEME obliges with a narrative, "The Pagans." The hero is a Mr. TRAQUAIR, apparently, and he has an affair with a Frenchwoman, and her brother, who for some family reason does not kick him, disapproves thereof; but this exciting romance is *To be continued*, and, for obvious Scotch reasons, we do not criticize unfinished work. The "Rape of the Sabines" is finished, and it is to this effect:—

Two Italians stab two other Italians, who, it must be confessed, "richly deserve it." The story is told in the overloaded style which distinguishes new pagan from ancient pagan literature. The tendency to cloud over the matter with layer upon layer of heavy cloying adjectives marks the work of most modern pagans

who write about Italy. The same fault pervades a sketch called "The Oread." An Oread, who has access to mountains, runs away from a deerstalker while he is clothed, but runs to meet him when he strips for a swim. He was a fortunate youth; he got his stag, and he secured, apparently, the affections of his Oread. We do not know whether we are expected to be shocked. A fragment of a poem on "Dionysus in India" is pretty and pleasing, if it contains no very unusual promise. From the advertisements it appears that the authors of these pieces propose to offer them to the world, with other performances, in books. Thus almost all the work is, in a sense, half-done work. The critical remarks by the editor show that he is not so young but that he can admire, not only Mr. HARDY and Mr. MEREDITH, but also the Laureate and Mr. STEVENSON. We never despair of any one who believes in Lord TENNYSON, and it is pleasant to find that *les jeunes* are still capable of enjoying the author of *Treasure Island*. A scornful remark on the *Naulakha* suggests that Mr. KIPLING is one of *les jeunes*, but that he does not swagger on the strength of his youth. The *Naulakha* is not his best work; but if all these young men pile up adjectives till they are grey, it is unlikely that their combined efforts will be worth one page of Mr. KIPLING, who is not pagan.

It is always worth while to look over the short-lived periodicals of youth; occasionally there is a gem in the waste-paper basket. In this case the gem is still to be waited for in hope. *Les jeunes* should not make it their chief aim to shock Mrs. GRUNDY. That is like the conduct of small boys, *les plus jeunes encore*, whose ambition is content with scrawling naughty words on the walls. The Pagans are really not very shocking in this Review, except to the shade of PRISCIAN now and then. If their periodical fails, it will not be because they are young, but because they are dull; not because they are shocking, but because they are stupid. Youth, which has usually nothing to say, is justly anxious to say it well. But the art of writing well is not the trick of laying on adjectives with a palette-knife. That is an illusion which most writers have to outgrow. There can be no better cure for the errors of Neo-paganism than a study of the old pagans, HOMER, SOPHOCLES, VIRGIL. They, not M. PAUL VERLAINE, not even Mr. GEORGE MEREDITH, not even "BEAUDELAIRE" (as the *Pagan Review* calls that author, who himself smote the Neo-Pagans in a memorable essay) are the guides to follow.

#### SWAZILAND.

THE Swaziland question has, as was to be expected, come to the front again, and some anxiety on the subject is excusable, now that the Colonial Office is in the hands of Lord RIPON—hands that have seldom been busy except to do England damage. It is understood that Sir HENRY LOCH is coming to England this autumn to discuss with the home authorities the questions now at issue between the Cape Government and the Transvaal, and of these Swaziland is one of the most important. It is unfortunate that more than one feature of recent events in South Africa has led the average Englishman—always too glad of any pretext for not concerning himself about foreign or colonial affairs—to shuffle off South African questions as matters of private *tripotage*, where every arguer on every side has an axe to grind, a concession to urge, an open or hidden interest of some kind to further. To speak the honest truth, there is a good deal of this; though, if there were a great deal more than there is, it would be no excuse, and much less than no reason, for indifference. And another evil result of it is that the few persons at