



A satire on an incident in the 'Great Game'

MORGAN, Matthew Somerville.  
 Peace!!! A Legacy of the Late Government.

London, 1885. Wood engraving. Sheet 545 x 370mm.

£320

The British Lion and the Russian Bear, both in infantry uniforms, jostle each other over a map showing Afghanistan and Turkistan. It is a satire on the 'Panjdeh Incident' of 1885, an attempt by the Russians to seize territory from Afghanistan, an official British Protected State since the Treaty of Gandamak of 1879, immediately prior to planned Anglo-Russian negotiations over fixing the borders of the two countries. On the 30th March Russia attacked an Afghan fort called Ak-Tepe, killing 900 Afghans. The news reached Prime Minister William Gladstone on the 7th April, and preparations were made for war. However Tsar Alexander III offered talks and, with an Afghan Amir who did not want to see the western powers at war in his country, a deal was reached, in which Russia retained some new territory. In June 1885 Gladstone's government fell (caused by the disaster at Khartoum) and was replaced by the Conservatives, led by Lord Salisbury. St. Stephen's Review, also conservative, here portrays the peace as a climb-down (Britain certainly didn't fulfil its Gandamak obligations), putting the blame squarely on the ousted Liberals. The artist, Matt Morgan (1839-90), was the magazine's chief political cartoonist from January to August 1885.



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