

# Herat, the Gate of India, Pearl of Khorassan.

HERAT is the home of the great Indo-Persian bugaboo. At some such time as the present, when England has her hands particularly full in a faraway country, some inconsiderate person—generally a military man with more titles than brains—springs the bugaboo aforesaid and raises a hue and cry about the Great White Bear marching into the neutral territory of Afghanistan.

There are but two roads through the high passes of the Hindu-Kush mountains, and herein lies the importance of Herat, the "Gate of India," for this strategically located city in the fertile valley long known as the "granary of Asia" absolutely controls them both. It offers an admirable base of operations against Russo-Turcoman territory and all northeast Persia for the British in India; but Russia, also, by seizing Herat with troops she has massed on the border, only two days' march away, could force the mountain passes and have the choice of two lines of advance into the territory of India, which has long tempted the czars.

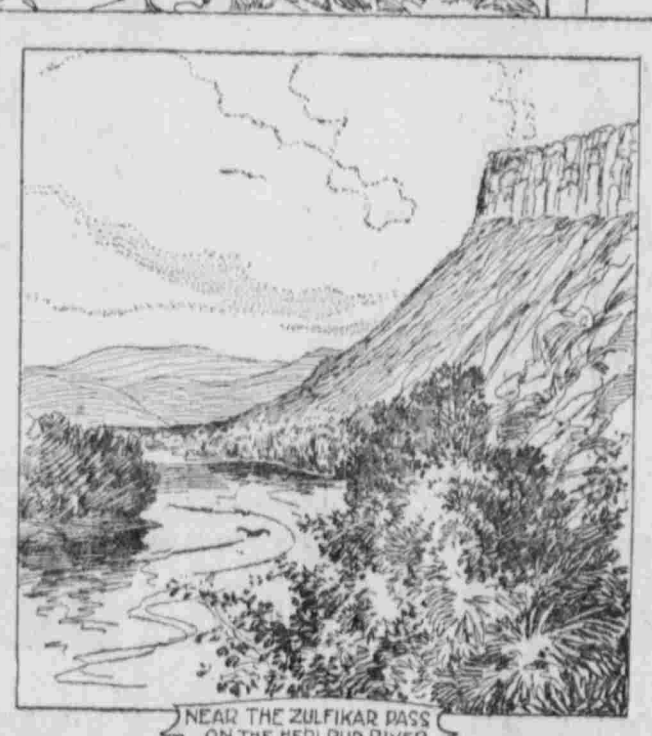
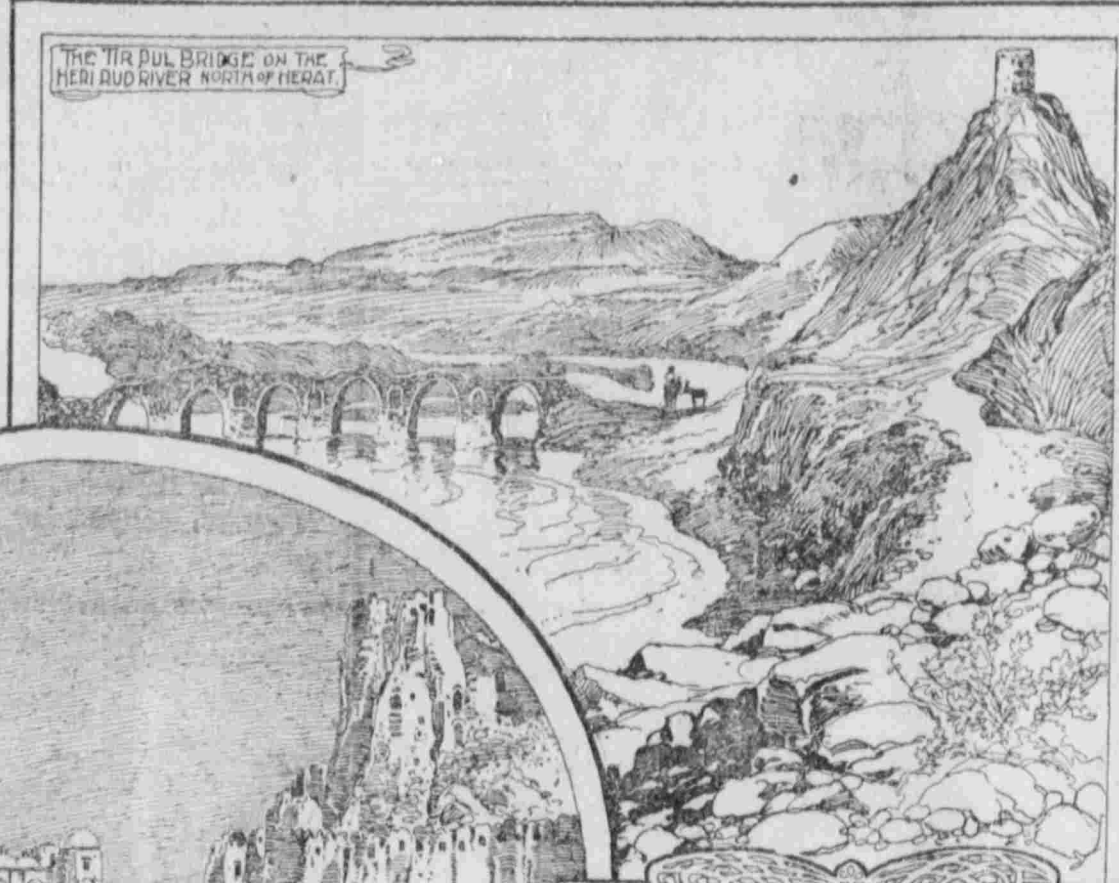
Going toward and into Persia is a

is a despot here and flatters himself that he is absolutely independent, yet he cannot conduct negotiations with any foreign power except through the viceroy of India.

As to Herat itself, it is somewhat disappointing at first glance, for its streets are narrow, crooked and disgustingly

its caravansaries, and the palace of the khan. But, having seen these, you have by no means seen all, for the real greatness of the city lies in its prestige derived from antiquity. An ancient historian said of it, "Herat has been 50 times taken, 50 times destroyed and 50 times triumphantly rebuilt." It was in

The walls of Herat are broken and crumbling, but are still capable of defense against the native tribes, though the strongest guarantee of protection lies in England's backing, which was emphasized in the delimitation of the frontier 15 years ago, when our commissioners insisted upon fixing the



val and beautiful valley 300 miles in length, filled with fields and vineyards, irrigated by rippling rivulets. So healthful is the region of which this city is the center that, according to the Persian proverb, "man would be immortal were the land of Ispahan, the air of Herat and the water of Khiva all to be found in the same spot."

As the chief station, then, on the way from India into Persia this fact alone will show why Herat is continually popping up, like an oriental jack in the box, whenever a warcloud settles over the Afghanistan frontier. I would not wish to imply that my countrymen at home in England overrate the importance of the Afghan question; but it is a bit absurd for them to buzz about like a swarm of angry bees whenever the Russian bear comes nosing about their hive.

For it is our hive now since Lord Roberts and Stewart pacified the country, subsidized the ameer and made his business Abduraman Khan a "G. C. S. I." You in America may assume that there is no virtue in empty decorations; but they have great weight with the ameer, and, though he

filthy and its inhabitants brutal and sullen. Its chief public buildings are the citadel, which has withstood many a siege; its oriental bazaars, four in number, which run from its four gates a thousand yards in length; its mosque,

existence in the early years of the Christian era, in the thirteenth century was destroyed by the terrible Genghis Khan, in 1380 was taken by Tamerlane and in the sixteenth century by the Persians.

pillar at the Zulfikar pass, which can be held by a handful of men against the advances of any army Russia can send in an attempt to force it.

Though the English invaded this country 62 years ago, they have alternately fought and retreated; while the Russians, on the contrary, have battled their way to the frontier, and wherever they have set their flag they have held up to it. This has had its effect upon the wild and lawless natives, who respect only force and who mistakenly believe that there is greater assurance for their future in Russian than in British protection.

H. IMRAY STEDMAN.  
Herat, Afghanistan.

## M. SAMUEL LEON, A BOER ALLY.

Although the Boers had defeated the British on several occasions before the opening of the present war, yet the general opinion was that they owed their victories to advantage of position. They always fought behind cover when possible, were neither good at making or withstanding a charge and had shown



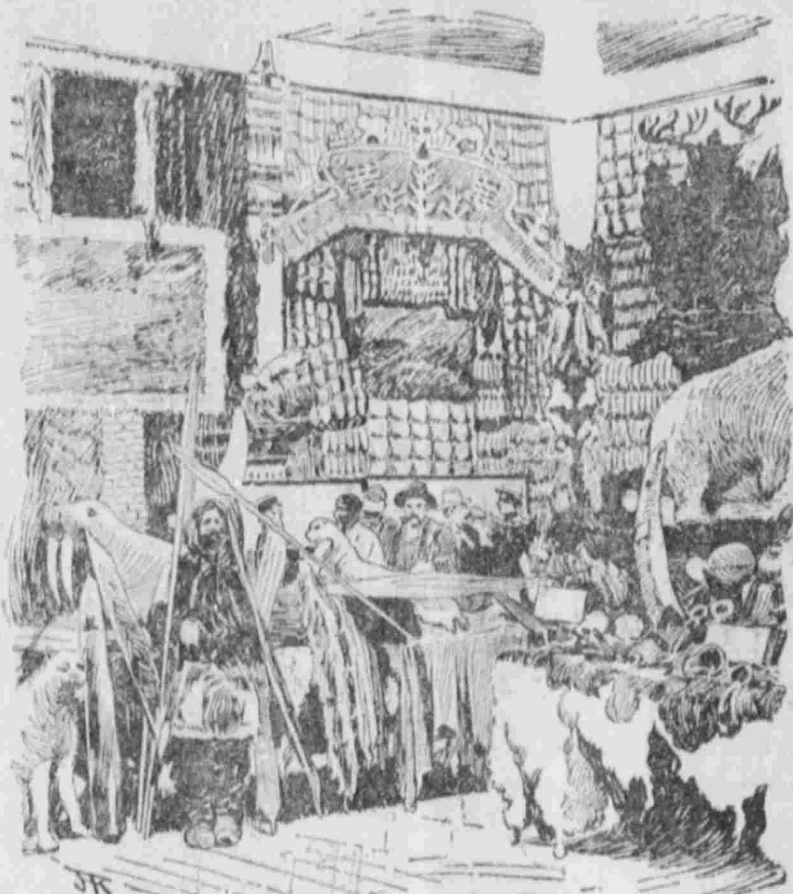
no great proficiency at artillery practice. What, then, was the astonishment of the English during the earlier period of the present war to find that the Boer guns were served with great accuracy and outtraced their own?

The secret was that Gern Paul had been very busy during the years elapsing between Majuba Hill and the last outbreak in bringing into his country the latest and best artillery available, together with trained artificers to teach the Boers how to manage it.

Among the artificers who volunteered to serve with the Boers were French, German, Dutch and Russian officers, and one of the most useful was M. Leon, of whom it was said that he "was a lion (Leon) by name and a lion by nature."

The Prince of Wales once rode and won a horse race. This event took place in Ireland nearly 40 years ago.

## THE VAST RESOURCES OF NORTH SIBERIA.



If one would obtain a conception of Russia's greatness at a glance, writes a recent visitor to Paris, he should visit the imposing structure of the Russo-Asiatic section, situated upon the brow of the Trocadere, which recalls in its general outlines the famous Kremlin of Moscow. It was opened to the public on the 18th of April last under the auspices of President Loubet and will be a revelation. It affords an idea of the immense resources of the northern empire which could hardly be gained from handbooks or consular reports. The central Asian hall, with its blue and yellow things, its heavy draperies, its painted panelings, giving different views of Turcoman life, and its rich variety of textile goods, vegetable and mineral products and artistic curios, is worth half a day's visit by itself.

Grave, turbaned Asiatics and transcaucasian Cossacks in tall fur hats, moving silently amid the throng, add to the local color, while in the adjoining courtyard the band plays Russian and oriental airs. This central Asian hall, indeed, sums up the full extent of Russia's marvelous progress in the heart of Asia since Skobelev stormed Yoo-tepe and Annenkoff constructed the Transiberian railroad. In another apartment devoted to the extreme north the walls are lined with rare furs, such as the sable and blue and silver fox. The shelves hold stuffed Arctic birds and beasts and lay figures of Eskimos, Tamoyedes, Kamchatkans—in fact, every dweller in glacial climes between the north Atlantic and the Bering sea.

## AN ELECTRIC SUSPENSION RAILWAY.



The town of Barmen, in Prussia, has, or, rather, soon is to have, one of the most unique and interesting railways in the world. It is a single overhead railway system, as the accompanying illustration shows, and is the first of its kind to be built for the conveyance of passengers.

The road commences at Barmen-Ritterhausen and follows the river Kupper through the thickly populated cities of Barmen and Elberfeld. Beyond Elberfeld the line extends toward the west as far as Vohwinkel, leaving the river at Sonnborn and running over the public highway to Vohwinkel. All gradients and curves are so arranged as to avoid a decrease of speed in the main lines. The iron framework over the river is supported by buttress piers of ironwork inclined toward each other; but in the public highways the structure is supported by vertical iron columns, which require no more space than lantern posts.

The cars are suspended on two rotary bogies. Each truck or bogie has two axles, between which an electric motor of 34 horsepower, at 100 volts, is arranged. The frame surrounds the rail carrier in such a manner that the wheels cannot rise from the rails and the cars cannot slip off in case a fitting break or there is some other mishap. The current is fed by a contact shoe from a rail.

The speed will be regulated in the same manner as in electric street cars. The traveling speed is supposed to be 25 miles per hour. It takes only from 10 to 15 seconds to start, so that, in spite of the 18 stations of the road, an average speed of 18 1/2 miles per hour will be maintained. Each car holds 50 passengers and is divided into first and second class and smoking compartments. The number of cars in the make up of a train is not limited, but at first each train will consist of one or two cars only, although the station platforms are so arranged that a four car train can receive and unload passengers. The speed of the trains is not dependent on the number of cars, as each car has its own motor.

## AN AFRICAN MUSICIAN.

West Africa has not given many great musical composers to the world. A dusky skinned musician from that part of the world, however, has just been astounding London with his musical genius.



This African composer is known by the Anglo-Saxon name of Coleridge Taylor. He is still a young man, is highly educated and has become quite Europeanized. He has published and performed several compositions, his latest success being a suite entitled "Hawatha." The recent performance of this suite at Albert hall in London created a stir in the English musical world.

"Gnat fever" is the new scientific name for malaria, since it has been shown that it is through mosquitoes that the disease is conveyed to human beings.

## A TRAVANCORE IDOL.



The small province of Travancore, in the southern corner of India, is one of the most picturesque districts to be found in all the picturesque east. It is here that Froese Loti, the well known French writer, has been living for some time studying the habits and customs of the natives. These natives are a very strange people, chiefly Hindus in religion, one of the most remarkable features of their society being the principle of female inheritance which exists in their country. There it is the daughter and not the son who succeeds to the property of the parent. It is an odd arrangement, but seems to work very satisfactorily. The accompanying illustration shows the procession of a Brahman idol through the streets of the decayed old town of Travancore.

## A RESULT OF SIEGE DIET.

When the long beleaguered town of Ladysmith was finally relieved, the population of that place were a rather gaunt and woe-begone looking lot. Among those who shared the trials and dangers and hardships of the siege were several officers from H. M. S. Terrible.

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ble, who had gone to the assistance of the garrison with their ingeniously mounted naval guns. The accompanying picture is from a snap shot of one of the officers of the Terrible taken just after the relief. When the siege began, this officer was a robust and rugged enough looking lieutenant, but, as the picture shows, a slim diet and plenty of hard work were not conducive to adipose tissue.

## "SONG OF HIAWATHA."

Trips representative of the Ojibway chief who is said to have related to Longfellow the legend upon which his "Song of Hiawatha" is founded recently visited the poet's daughter at the old Longfellow house in Cambridge, Mass.

## "A SIMILAR INSTANCE."

Two ministers met; one was liberally educated, the education of the other was very limited. The latter said to the former, "Well, I s'pose you've been to college and got learnin'?"

"Yes," he replied, "I received a variety of education."

"Well," said the other, "I thank the Lord that he opened my mouth without hearing."

"Yes," was the reply. "We read of a similar instance in Balaam's time."

## THE MEHTAR OF CHITRAL AND HIS SUITE.

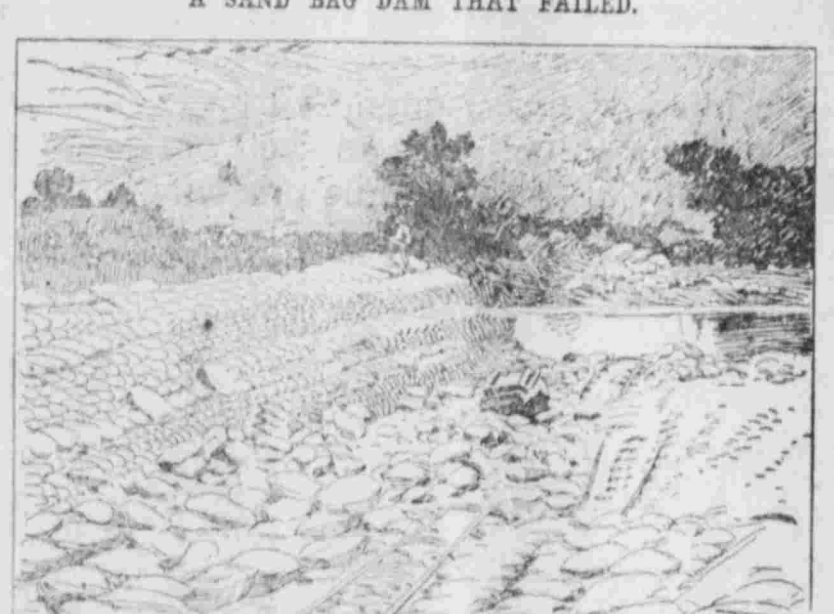


One of the most important strategic positions on the Russo-Indian frontier lies on the road from the Indus to Chitral, where the British have erected a fort to command the territory. Until quite recently Chitral was a small dependency of Kashmir, but by the treaty with Afghanistan in 1892 the British secured its allegiance as one of the dependencies of the Indian empire. It had long been a coveted possession for the English, since all their military authorities had insisted upon its strategic importance, because of its proximity to one of the easiest passes over the formidable Hindu Kush mountains, which here rise to an elevation of over 12,000 feet.

Its isolation may be inferred from the fact that it was first visited by Europeans less than 20 years ago, and yet, from the costumes of the mehtar or native ruler and his suit, who are at present honored guests of the Indian government, it may be seen that their status in civilization is not very low. When the British agent who was sent to Chitral in 1895 to settle some bloody disputes between members of the different clans arrived there, he was at once besieged, and it became necessary to fit out a strong military force to relieve him and his party.

Following its time honored custom in India of allowing the native chiefs to retain at least a nominal independence and authority, the British government has kept the mehtar in power, controlled, however, by an English resident and garrisons at three locations.

## A SAND BAG DAM THAT FAILED.



While the world was momentarily expecting the fall of Ladysmith we were startled with news of a radical departure in the conducting of sieges about to be initiated by the Boers. It was, in short, nothing less than the flooding of the valley in which the beleaguered city lay by the very simple process of damming the river that flowed into it. The plan indeed appeared so simple and so probably effective that the fate of the hapless besieged was regarded as sealed. But as time passed the subject faded from the public mind. Now, however, long after the city has been relieved, for thousands of sand bags have been discovered piled up in position, and with many other thousands ready at hand, with only a comparatively narrow gap between the two vast accumulations which could be readily filled.

Sand bags have been often used in constructing fortifications and have been shown to have strong resisting power to shot and shell, but in this instance, while equally effective as a barrier for the river, their work would have done what the Boer bombardment utterly failed to do—that is, rout the British from their earthworks and bombproofs.

## INTERESTING AND PERTINENT.

Senator Depew is objecting to the practice of their professions, contributions to magazines and other literary efforts. He says that three-fourths of the editors have no income beyond their salaries and what they can gain in addition by limited opportunities from

their public duties for the practice of their professions, contributions to magazines and other literary efforts. Edward Hooper, a professional diver, has made a record in his line of business. Off the coast of South Africa he descended to the wreck of the ship Cape

Horn and there remained at one submergence for 42 minutes at a depth of over 200 feet. At this point the pressure is 33 1/2 pounds to the square inch, and no other person, it is asserted, has been able to remain below this depth.

There is a large cat "farm"—"ranch" would hardly be the proper term—in Lincoln county, Or., and the residents

in the vicinity have obtained the consent of the postoffice department to the christening of their postoffice by the name of Angora. The first postmaster of Angora, singularly enough, is Thomas Tom.

Lobsters are so scarce along the New England coast that the imports of the live shellfish from the Canadian mari-

time provinces promise to be larger than ever for this fiscal year and in value will probably constitute at least a sixth of all the goods shipped from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to the American market. The imported lobsters enter duty free, but nevertheless command high prices. There has just been brought to light

near the Ocklocknee river, 14 miles west of Tallahassee, Fla., what is believed by experts to be one of the most wonderful pure veins of fulgur earth ever discovered in any country. It is said to yield at the expenditure of very little labor immense quantities of fulgur earth which stands the 100 test—that is to say, there is no waste. Near-

ly all mines of the kind contain, besides the valuable commodity, rock, flint, gravel, sand, etc., but this is absolutely free of all such substances. It is estimated that during the past 14 months upward of 10,000 wolves have been killed in Wyoming in addition to mountain lions, wildcats, lynxes, bears and coyotes.