

The Shah and His Three Wives.

They are in a scrape just now in London, for which even the most rabid of anglophobists may well spare some pity. Everybody knows that this highly estimable but somewhat eccentric gentleman, Nash-ed Din, the King of Kings, Cornucopia of Delights, Commander of the Faithful, and all the rest of it, has arrived in England with all his diamonds, sapphires, shawls and feathers, and that it is important to send him back home in the best of humor and spirits. In fact, the importance of this, as a matter of national policy, can hardly be over-estimated. Ever since General Outram gave the Persians such a drubbing at Kooshab and Mohammerah, sixteen years ago—a time which must have revived disagreeable recollections, the experience of Xerxes, Mardonies and other worthies of the olden days—there has been an uneasy feeling among the children of Zoroaster which it is of infinite moment to Great Britain to allay and remove. Especially at this moment, when the lances of the Czar are piercing the heart of Central Asia, and the "Korakush" either flies over Khiva or is very seriously meant to fly there, is it essential for England, for the sake of her Indian Empire, to be on the best terms with the Shah and his people. Now to assure this would seem the easiest thing in the world. The sources of pleasure and conciliation are many, and they are close at hand. There is unlimited honor and hospitality, and Windsor Castle, and the Crystal Palace, and Balmoral, and the Isle of Wight, and a feast of turbot in the city, and of whitebait at Greenwich, and a dash at deer-stalking in the Highlands, and plenty of nice little Armstrong guns and breech-loading rifles, to be sent as presents, by way of Good Hope, to check the hordes of Muscovy when, in the early future, they descend from vanquished Khiva. But still is London perplexed and unhappy, for there is a dark cloud overhanging all these joys, a cloud which has no silver lining.

The dismal truth is that the Shah, having apparently no faithful Glaifer or Mesroul to advise him to the contrary, has brought to England three wives, and the insoluble problem, the maddening difficulty, is to determine which of the three is to be asked to court, and treated as his Majesty's consort. A breach of etiquette would be a mortal affront, and to invite all three is out of the question. Polygamy, of course, cannot be recognized or encouraged at the Court of Victoria, and to ask the Commander of the Faithful to nominate a favorite in his triple partnership might be mischievous in Persia, as well as offensive to his Majesty. Never were the Magnates of the Bed Chamber or Gold Sticks in Waiting so sorely put to their trumps as by this unforeseen emergency. The situation to this much-married potentate himself has doubtless seemed a matter of course. Very likely he thinks that, since the sovereign of Britain is a female, he could not please her better, or pay a higher compliment, than by bringing with him as large a detachment of feminine royalty as possible. The practical advantage, too, of leaving fewer of his spouses behind him to squabble at Teheran, has doubtless not been unthought of by the Shah, who is said to have a good fund of common sense. But whatever the ideas of his Gorgeous Majesty on the subject, those of his hosts are eclipsed with dismay. Hardly anything else for the moment is talked of. The "Claimant," the campaign in Khiva, the resignation of Thiers, the bitter need of paying the Alabama claims, the new season of opera, are all banished for the nonce in favor of this knotty question from the Orient. The hilarity of the London season is checked and subdued, and even the mirth of Punch has taken a lachrymose flavor. Never was a foreign monarch more eagerly and curiously expected in England than was the successor of Haroun and Mahmoud; and never was the luckless recipient of a white elephant in Siam more perplexed than the English, now that—with his three wives—they have got him.—*New York Times.*

Spain is meditating the last desperate step of a bankrupt nation, the issuing of a forced paper currency. The new ministry will have to assume the obnoxious task of raising money in this way.

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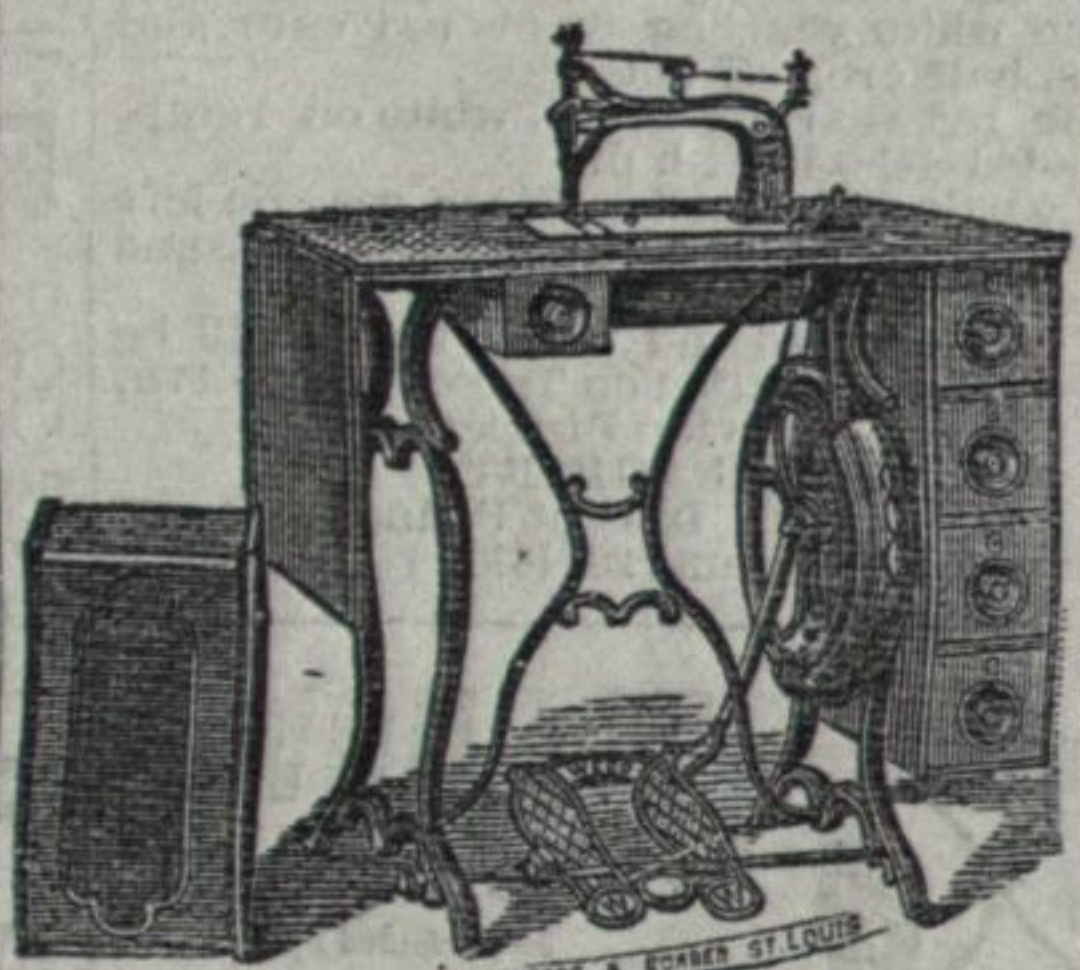
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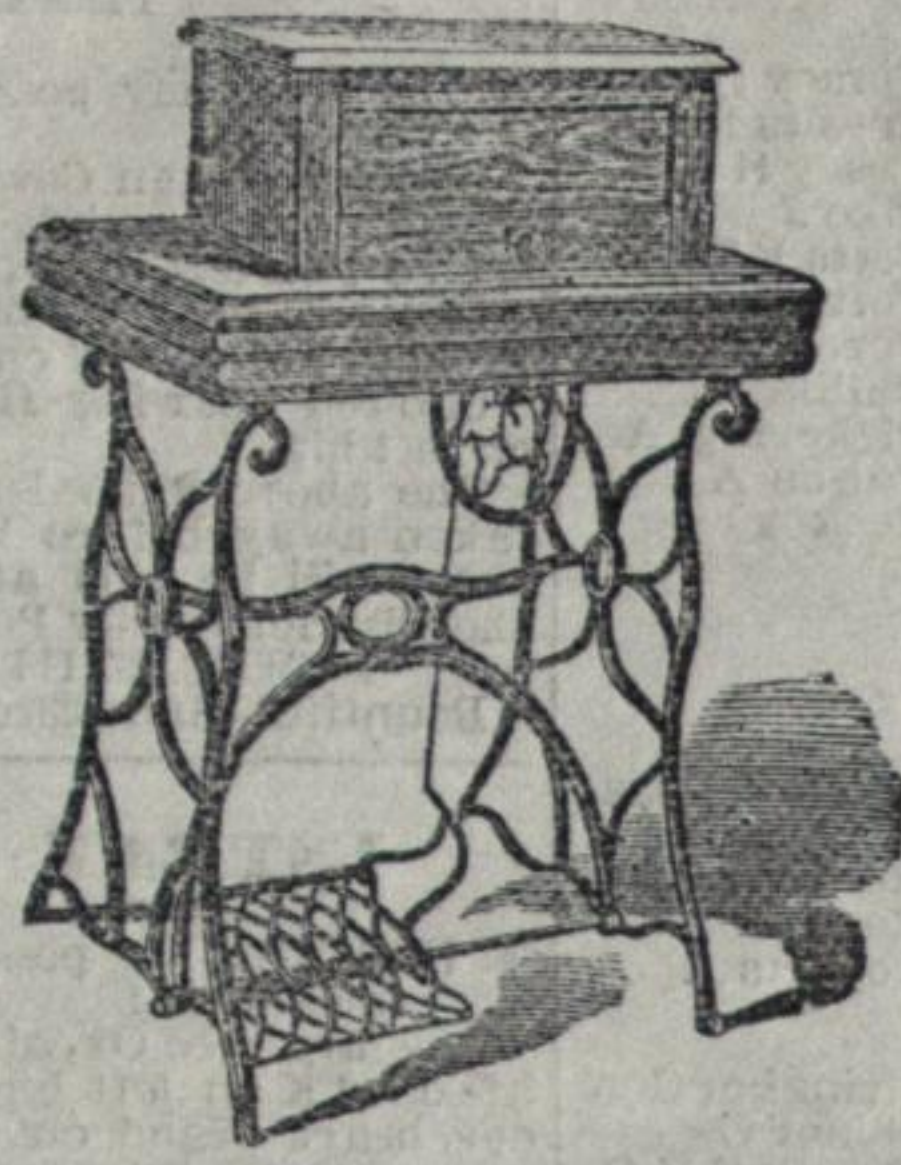
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