

**Russia's Great Petroleum Town.**

Tiflis is midway on the railway that cuts the Caucasus in its whole width, and puts the two seas in communication—the port of Batoum on the Black Sea with that of Bakou on the Caspian. As we leave the capital in the latter direction, the eye is at first ravished and then desolated by the changing aspects of the land. The track follows the Kour, which rolls its broad sheet of water majestically through wild forests and rich, tilled soil, while two chains of snowy ridges stretch away out of sight in the distance—the Caucasus to the left, the mountains of Armenia to the right. Soon we leave the river, which goes to join the Araxes towards the south; the plain gets broader and barer; tall cages built of planks perched on four tree trunks rise in the midst of the rich fields like watch-towers. The inhabitants of the villages, who are all Tatars in this region, take refuge at night in these aerial nests; the marshy land is so unhealthy that it is dangerous to sleep there. In spite of these precautions, the peasants whom we see are devoured by fever; their emaciated visages remind us of those of the inhabitants of the Roman Campagna. After leaving Hadji-Caboul, the station in Moorish style wears a new line branches off—"the Teheran line," I am told by the engineers who are building it, and who hope to carry it into the very heart of Persia—we enter an African landscape, sad and luminous. The mountain chains become lower; they are now simply cliffs of gilded sandstone festooning against a crude blue sky. At their feet, the desert, a sandy expanse, covered here and there with a rose carpet of flowering tamarisks. Herds of camels browse on these shrubs, under the guard of a half-naked shepherd, motionless as a bronze statue. The fantastic silhouettes of these animals are increased in size and changed in form by the effect of the mirage, which displays before our eyes, in the ardent haze of the horizon, lakes and forests. From time to time we meet a petroleum train, composed of cistern trucks in the form of cylinders surmounted by a funnel with a short, thick neck. When you see them approaching from a distance you might mistake them for a procession of mastodons, vying in shapeliness with the trains of camels which they pass. The sun burns in space. Yonder a green hand glitters beneath its rays; it is the Caspian. We turn around a hill; and behold! on the western shore, in this primitive landscape, which seems like a corner of Arabia Petraea, a monstrous city rises before our eyes. As it once more the effect of mirage, this town of diabolical aspect, enveloped in a cloud of smoke traversed by running tongues of flame, as it were Sodom fortified by the demons in its girdle of cast-iron towers? I can find but one word to depict exactly the first impression that it gives: it is a town of gasometers. There are no houses—the houses are relegated further away on the right, in the old Persian city—nothing but iron cylinders and pipes and chimneys, scattered in disorder from the hills down to the beach. This is doubtless the fearful model of what manufacturing towns will all be in the twentieth century. Meanwhile, for the moment, this one is unique in the world; it is Bakou—the "town of fire," as the natives call it; the petroleum town, where everything is devoted and subordinated to the worship of the local god.

The bed of the Caspian Sea rests upon a second subterranean sea, which spreads its floods of naphtha under the whole basin. On the eastern shore the building of the Samar-cand Railway led to the discovery of immense beds of mineral oil. On the western shore, from the most remote ages, the magi used to adore the fire springing from the earth at the very spot where its last worshippers prostrate themselves at the present day. But, after having long adored it, impious men began to profit by it commercially. In the thirteenth century the famous traveller Marco Polo mentions "on the northern side a great spring whence flows a liquid like oil. It is no good for eating, but it is useful for burning and for all other purposes; and so the neighboring nations come to get their provision of it, and fill many vessels without the ever-flowing spring appearing to be diminished in any manner." The real practical working of these oil springs dates back only a dozen years. At the present day it yields 2,000,000 kilogrammes of kerosene per annum, and disputes the markets of Europe against the products of Kentucky and Pennsylvania. The yield might be increased tenfold, for the existing wells give on an average 40,000 kilogrammes a day, and in order to find new ones it suffices to bore the ground, so saturated is the whole soil with petroleum. C. Marvin (*The Petroleum Industry in Southern Russia*) compares the Aspheron peninsula to a sponge plunged in mineral oil. The soil is continually vomiting forth the liquid lava that torments its entrails, either in the form of mud volcanoes or natural springs. These springs overflow in streams so abundant that it is hopeless to store their contents for want of reservoirs; often they catch fire and burn for weeks; the air, impregnated with naphtha vapors, is then aglow all round Bakou.—From "Through the Caucasus," in *Harper's Magazine* for June.

**Submarine Naval Manœuvres.**

The first of a series of experiments with the much talked of Goubet torpedo boat have taken place in Cherbourg Harbor. There were two seamen upon the boat, which was made to sink at the exact spot fixed upon. After some preliminary manœuvres the boat stopped before five ordinary torpedo boats placed side by side in the Commercial Dock. It then passed under them and rose to the surface. The first submer-sion lasted just three quarters of an hour. The second series of experiments took place in the presence of a large and enthusiastic crowd. Five buoys were floating in different parts of the Commercial Dock.—A Corrigan screw was then flung out from the end of a raft, when the Goubet sank, cutting the cable of the first buoy and engaging the screw. Then, changing its direction, the Goubet made for the other buoys, and successfully cut the lines of each one. After cutting the second cable the two men composing the crew sent out from the boat an empty egg containing a despatch. Some of the cables were cut while the Goubet boat was making full speed. Before rising to the surface the crew placed a floating buoy weighing two English hundred-weights under the raft. The experiment concluded with the rising of the screw, which had been fixed in position by a bar of iron parallel to its axis. The second experiment lasted two hours.

**Dickens Hunting Names.**

*Macmillan's Magazine*: Till he had fixed upon his title Charles Dickens could not get seriously to work. He was in Genoa in 1844, and had a Christmas story to write. He had never been, he said, so staggered upon the threshold before. The subject was there, but he had not found a title for it, nor the machinery to work it with. "Sitting down one morning resolute for work, though against the grain, his hand being out and everything inviting to idleness, such a peal of chimes arose from the city as he found 'maddening.' All Genoa lay beneath him, and up from it, with some sudden set of the wind, came in one fell sound the clang and clash of all its steeples, pouring into his ears again and again, in a tuneless, grating, discordant, jarring, hideous vibration that made his ideas 'spin round and round till they lost themselves in a whirl of vexation and giddiness and dropped down dead." A couple of days later he wrote to Forster a letter of one sentence, "We have heard the chimes at midnight, Master Shallow." A few days later he writes again: "It is a great thing to have my title and see my way how to work the bells. Let them clash upon me now from all the churches and convents of Genoa. I see nothing but the old London belfry I have set them in. In my mind's eye, Horatio." Thus it was always with Dickens when setting about a new novel. Dependence, doubts, difficulties, and endless experimenting, suggesting, sifting, rejecting of titles. Then, of a sudden, a title found, and he was off on the composition of the book. Never were the preliminary throws more protracted than with "David Copperfield." Towards the end of 1848 he was making holiday at Broadstairs, his mind running on a subject. "I have not," he writes from there "Seen Fancy write With pencil of light On the blotter so solid commanding the sea—but I shouldn't wonder if she were to do it one of these days. Dim visions of divers things are floating around me. I must go to work head foremost when I get home." Home he goes, yet gets no further. In February, 1849, he is in Brighton. "A sea-fog-to-day, but yesterday inexpressibly delicious. My mind running like a high sea on names—not satisfied yet, though." On Feb. 23 he found titles of some sort, to wit: "Mag's Diversions, Being the Personal History of Mr. Thomas Mag the Younger, of Blunderstone House." Then came a series of variations in the expository part of the title. Blunderstone House after a time becoming the Copperfield House. Then came "The Personal History of Mr. David Copperfield the Younger and His Aunt Margaret." On Feb. 26 he sent Forster a list of six names, which may be found set out at length—at great length—in the *Life*. Forster and Dickens' children finally determined his choice among the six, and the title once settled all is plain sailing. He went through this elaborate process with most of his titles. There were a dozen tentative titles for "Bleak House," most of them leading off with Tom-All-Alone's, and fourteen for "Hard Times." It was the same with "A Tale of Two Cities."

**Inland Navigation.**

The Russians have launched a steamboat on one of those unfortunate rivers that have no outlet. This is the Murghab River in Central Asia, whose waters, in the old days before Merv went to seed and its great irrigation works were destroyed, used to give such fertility and beauty to that famous oasis. The Murghab, like some rivers in our Great Basin and in Africa, starts out very bravely from its mountain sources, but it wanders off into the wastes of the Kara-Kum Desert, losing volume as it goes, and finally disappears entirely. The first steamer to vex its waters plies between the various river settlements in the oasis, and its appearance is the signal for complete suspension of business while everybody rushes to the river bank to see the new wonder. In a British shipyard gunboats are now building which are now to bear rival flags and watch one another jealously. Two of them were ordered by the British Government and two others by Portugal, and they are all destined for the Zambesi and Shire Rivers. It is hoped that no occasion will arise for them to pepper one another, though they are certainly not expected to cooperate. It is only nine years since the first steamer made its appearance on the upper Congo, and yet to-day, although they had to be carried for 235 miles on the backs of men, twenty-three steam vessels travel many hundreds of miles up and down the upper Congo and its tributaries, and five others are building for the same service. Eleven of these steamers are owned by trading companies, although Stanley said the upper Congo would not be worth a sixpence for trade until the railroad was built around the cat-nacts. No feature of recent progress in the newer parts of the world is more remarkable than this rapid development of steam river navigation.

**All Men,**

young, old, or middle-aged, who find themselves nervous, weak and exhausted, who are broken down from excess or overwork, resulting in many of the following symptoms: Mental depression, premature old age, loss of vitality, loss of memory, bad dreams, dimness of sight, palpitation of the heart, emissions, lack of energy, pain in the kidneys, headache, pimples on the face or body, itching or peculiar sensation about the scrotum, wasting of the organs, dizziness, specks before the eyes, twitching of the muscles, eye lids and elsewhere, bashfulness, deposits in the urine, loss of will power, tenderness of the scalp and spine, weak and flabby muscles, desire to sleep, failure to be rested by sleep, constipation, dullness of hearing, loss of voice, desire for solitude, excitability of temper, sunken eyes surrounded with LEADEN CIRCLE, oily looking skin, etc., are all symptoms of nervous debility that lead to insanity and death unless cured. The spring or vital force having lost its tension every function wanes in consequence. Those who through abuse committed in ignorance may be permanently cured. Send your address for book on all diseases peculiar to man. Address M. V. LUBON, 50 Front St. E., Toronto, Ont. Books sent free sealed. Heart disease, the symptoms of which are faint spells, purple lips, numbness, palpitation, skip beats, hot flashes, rush of blood to the head, dull pain in the heart with beats strong, rapid and irregular, the second heart beat quicker than the first, pain about the breast bone, etc., can positively be cured. No cure, no pay. Send for book. Address M. V. LUBON, 50 Front Street East, Toronto, Ont.

**Numbers and Numbers.**

"Hello, Charlie! I understand you have moved."  
"Yes; I've gone to the West End."  
"How do you like it?"  
"Very well, so far. The society may not be so exorbitantly high-toned, but I like the number of the house better."  
"Why, what has that got to do with it?"  
"Well, you see, the old place was 178, and some nights, along about 13 or 14 o'clock, when I came home, I used to get tangled somehow and come on to that number at the wrong end. I knew enough to know 871 wasn't the right figure, and then I'd get on a car and ride back a mile, hunting for 178. My present number is 303, and as long as I can see anything at all, I can't see that number for anything else but 303, whichever way I come at it. *Tumblez vous?*"  
The other man tumbled.

**THE BANK OF TORONTO.**

The thirty-fourth annual general meeting of this institution was held at its Banking House in Toronto on Wednesday, 18th June, 1890. The report briefly referred to the unfavorable condition of trade and agriculture during the last year and the Banking legislation of the past session of the Dominion Parliament. The net profits of the year, amounting to \$281,845.68, have enabled the Directors to pay dividends at the rate of ten per cent. per annum, and to add \$100,000 to the Rest. The Rest Account now amounts to \$1,500,000, a sum equal to 75 per cent. of the capital. The figures of the Report give the results of the year's operations, and also show the position of the Bank as on 31st May last.

**Statement of Profit and Loss Account.**

The net profits of the year, after deducting interest due depositors, allowing rebate on current notes discounted, and providing for all bad and doubtful debts, have amounted to the sum of..... \$281,845 68  
Add balance from last year..... 41,962 90  
..... \$323,808 67

This sum has been appropriated as follows:  
Dividend No. 67, 5%..... \$100,000 00  
Dividend No. 68, 5%..... 100,000 00  
..... \$200,000 00  
Added to Rest Account \$100,000 00  
Carried forward to next year..... 23,808 67  
..... \$323,808 67

**General Statement, 31st May, 1890.**

**LIABILITIES.**  
Notes in circulation..... \$1,261,539 00  
Bills discounted..... 6,376,959 94  
Dividends payable 1st June..... 100,117 00  
Balance due to other banks..... 28,007 30  
Total liabilities to the public..... \$7,776,614 24  
Capital paid up..... \$2,000,000 00  
Other Banks' balances..... 1,500,000 00  
Rebate and in respect..... 124,464 00  
Profits carried forward..... 23,808 67  
Total surplus..... \$3,648,272 67  
..... \$11,424,886 91

**ASSETS.**  
Gold and Silver Coin and Dominion Notes..... \$839,969 85  
Notes and Cheques on other Banks, balances due from other banks and other assets immediately available..... 566,135 87  
Total Assets immediately available..... \$1,406,105 72  
Loans and bills discounted..... 8,491,727 56  
Real estate and mortgages..... 7,453 03  
Bank premises..... 120,000 00  
..... \$11,424,886 91

The report was adopted, and general satisfaction was expressed with the progress of the Bank. The former Board of Directors was re-elected, and at their subsequent meeting George Gooderham, Esq., was elected President, and W. H. Beatty, Esq., Vice-President.

An Englishman was shot dead at Genoa on Monday by a sentry for not replying to a challenge. A. P. 508.

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