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## "THE TOWN OF FIRE"

BAKU, THE RUSSIAN CITY ON THE CASPIAN SEA.

Place of Diabolical Aspect, Enveloped in Smoke Traversed by Tongues of Flame—Spirits of Oil so Abundant it is Impossible to Store Their Overflow.

Tiflis is midway on the railway that cut the Caucasus in its whole width and puts the two seas in communication—the port of Batoum on the Black sea with that of Baku on the Caspian. As we leave the capital in the latter direction, says Viscount Eugene Melchior de Vogue in Harper's Magazine, the eye is at first ravished and then desolated by the changing aspects of the land. The track of water the Kour, which rolls its broad sheet of water majestically through wild forests and rich, tilled soil, with 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 toward the south; the plain gets broader and barer. tall cages built of planks perched on four tree-trunks rise in the midst of the rice-fields like watch-towers. The inhabitants of the villages, who are all Tartars 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 where 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, and behold luminous. The mountain chains behind and luminous. The mountain chains behind and luminous.

come 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 arid 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 shapelessness with the trains of camels which they pass. The sun burns in space. You der a green band glitters beneath its rays: it is the Caspian. We turn around a hill, and behold! on this western shore, in this primitive landscape, which seems like a corner of Arabia Petraea, a monstrous city rises before our eyes. It is 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; 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 farther 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 be in the twentieth century. Meanwhile for the moment, this one is unique in the world; it is Baku—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 Sumarand 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 make profit by it commercially. In the thirteenth century the famous traveler Marco Polo mentioned "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 kilograms 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 kilograms 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 Apsheron 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 of natural springs. The 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 Baku.

A Unique Calculation.  
The writer is the owner of a curious little book published by Gasper Schott in 1577, entitled, "Magia Universalis Naturae et Artis," wherein the author, among many other odd things, attempts mathematical calculation of the number of "graces and glories." According to his computation there are exactly 115,792,884,287,16,195,423,570,985,008,687,907,883,209,084,065,640,564,039,457,584,097,913,129,639,436, which will surely be enough to go around and have plenty of grace and glory left. In proof that his calculation is accurate he says that the sum represented by the above figures is the two hundred and fifty-sixth power of the number two. What the number two and its two hundred and fifty-sixth power has to do with grace and glory he does not say. Others have attempted to solve the problem by transposing in every possible way the letters in the well-known question: "Thy graces, O Virgin, are told where the stars of heaven are numbered."—St. Louis Republic.

Waller—What's the news, Riser?  
Riser—Great news. Won a dollar on a ball-game bet from Fuller to-day.  
Waller—That's good. How is that stock you bought last week. Still going up?  
Riser—Oh, I forgot about that. I sold it to-day and made \$5,000 on it.—Jester.

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## THE FAKIR'S CURSE.

A Prophecy of Evil That Came True With Crushing Effect.

James Mass, the traveller, tells this story: "It was about 5 o'clock in the evening, and Col. Yeager and I sat on the veranda of the Viculiah Hotel in Bombay, and on the edge of the native city, which is called Viculiah, and not Bombay. The Colonel is dead; all that he once owned and loved is gone. He was expecting his wife and daughter, who had been out to England on a year's visit, and the vessel was to arrive at Calcutta next day, while we were going to get the bungalow ready to receive them. The Colonel was in the best of spirits. He joked and laughed and told old stories of love and war; how he was nearly captured and murdered by the renowned Nana-Said at Comoro; of his vast poppy plantations and the revenue he derived from the opium he distilled every year. Finally we started to walk to where we had our horses stabled, and then for a canter over the beautiful roads to the bungalow fifteen miles away. We had to go through a kaidessope that native city is! The burra-wallah water carrier, wearing nothing but a breech cloth, and the male body servant, with his red turban and long white jackets. Jews from Palestine, Parses, or fire worshippers, who travelled 3,000 miles over desert and mountain from Persia and carried their sacred fires, all picturesque, all in white, bordered with red or other bright colors.

"Well, in turning a corner in Viculiah we found a crowd being harangued by one of the best known fakirs in India. I had heard him spoken of as one who could put a blight upon you. People called him Sadi-Said, Sadi, upon you. Col. Yeager pushed through the crowd to within a few feet of the fakir, to whom he said something in Hindostanee. It seemed to enrage Sadi, who jumped from his little platform in front of Yeager, saying: "Englishman, be careful, or blight may fall upon you and yours. Tread not upon the smallest thing Buddha has created, or it may turn and sting you."

"Before I could stop him the Colonel had cut the fakir across the face, and with an oath had shouted: "Out of the way, you Hindoo pig!"  
"The fakir with blazing eyes said: "Englishman, you will not meet your wife. You will not meet your child. Your plantations will be devastated; your craven heart will wither within you. You will die."

"The fakir's words were prophetic. I felt it then, and I also think the Colonel did. We reached the bungalow, and were soon in bed. How I slept that night I don't know. The words, "Englishman, beware," were continuously raging in my ear. Next morning I went into the breakfast room, and I shuddered when I think of it. The Colonel was there walking up and down with a telegram in his hand, his face drawn, and he looking twenty years older than he did the night before. With tears in his eyes he handed me this message: "Steamship Flagg went ashore at the mouth of the Hoogly. Your wife and child drowned." I have never seen the Colonel since, but I have watched his career. His poppy crop was a failure that year and it ruined him, his bungalow was burned by either accident or design, and Yeager died within a twelve month of a broken heart."—Phila. Inquirer.

## BRUSH YOUR HAIR, GIRLS.

If You Want to Get a Gloss on it—How to Remove Moles.  
Brush and brush your hair, if you want to get that lovely gloss that society girls are so eager for. Give your hair 200 strokes every night before jumping into bed.  
Don't be afraid of brushing it too much. The more you brush the more gloss you get. If your eyebrows are thin brush those too. If your eye brows are thin brush them with a tiny brush, and if they don't curve to suit you, get a tiny comb and train them in whichever direction you wish them to go. Brushing keeps them in good shape, and it is so much easier to brush than to trim them. Besides if you do not understand how to trim them properly, you are apt to look funny until they grow out again.  
If you wish to keep away wrinkles, sleep on your back. I know you will have had dreams if you do so, but I had rather put up with the dreams than the wrinkles.  
Hadn't you?  
Sleeping on your side causes wrinkles under the eye.  
Be sure to both wash and wipe your face toward your nose, for the nose never wrinkles. By wiping toward it you will prevent those little wrinkles near the ear which are so plainly seen.  
When you smile, do it with the eyes and mouth, and not with the face.  
Laughing makes wrinkles, but keep on laughing, only don't do it with the face.  
I have just taken four moles from my face, and it is very badly done. You can do it yourself, it is very careful; for it burns, but... Get five cents worth of muriatic acid and three times a day, touch the mole with a toothpick dipped into the acid. It will come off in about a week, leaving a red spot on the face. Leave that spot alone and it will heal by itself.  
They say "moles is a sign of beauty," but I prefer the beauty without the moles.—Boston Globe.

## SPOTLETS.

A choir girl was forced by the other girls to give up her sweetheart. She was the victim of in-choir-ry.  
The fact that Camben is now "wet" is of no interest to the Weather Bureau. A "wet" town is not a meteorological item.  
Kemmler may be bored to death by being sentenced so often.  
In Saint Paul the waiters have won their fight. They were good stayers as well as waiters.  
Porcupine has been inhabited from distilling the Gospel to the Crows. This, not without cause.  
"A switch is matter," said the boy;  
"It guides my acts, I find."  
"This thus a force my folks employ  
Of matter over mind."  
—Washington Post.

"The talk of the Day" is humorous in one of the New York dailies, but the talk of the Day in Morocco is not always humorous.  
"A Trust in Nitro-Glycerine" looks like a blind confidence.  
She Agreed with Him.  
Emerson Waldo (of Boston)—I do despise petty personal remarks. There are so many lofty and elevating subjects on which cultured minds may converse—literature, art, science, and the broad field of metaphysics. Don't you agree with me, Miss Platte?  
Miss Platte (of Omaha)—You bet I do, Mr. Waldo. But do look at Mrs. Laker over there; she walks as if she had corns.—Light.