

Secret History of Arabian War

I HAVE been reading references to the war in Arabia between the King of the Hejaz—gladiator of the Foreign Office—and the Emir of Nejd—of the India Office—with great interest, since the whole history of the quarrel is before me, and I have wondered how long it would be before the curious ineptitude of policy displayed by his Majesty's Government in permitting this fight would come out in the press.

The King of the Hejaz was invited by us to join the side of the Allies in 1916, and his troops and resources and influence played a part in Allenby's two campaigns against the Turks. His effort in the war exhausted his country, and the nature of the peace settlement—which may be unsatisfactory to the Arabs—has prevented the diversion of forces to defend the Eastern frontier of the Hejaz against the desert.

The Emir of the Desert is Abd al Aziz Ibn Saoud, the strongest personality of the princes of Arabia. He regained the throne of his ancestors some years ago by his own efforts, and has since greatly extended his dominions by becoming at once a political and a religious leader. The ascetic tribes of the desert are always looking for a new creed, and the stern puritanism with which the Wahabi name was associated appealed to the most energetic of them.

They joined his banner in large numbers, reverence him as their Imam, and profess obedience to any order he gives. He sends out quantities of paid missionaries, and has lately been making converts among the hill tribes south of Mecca.

The King of the Hejaz looks on the spread of the new movement with alarm. To the "Brethren"—the name of the devoted in the new sect—he is the great unbeliever, as the chief supporter of the old "High" party among the Moslems, the warden of the twin shrines of Mecca and Medina, and the senior descendant of the Prophet.

The Brethren will not admit to their houses travelers from the Hejaz unless they first wash themselves and leave off their contaminated clothes, and a precept in their creed allows them to kill or enslave Moslems who do not join their sect and abandon tobacco, silk, and precious metals as ornaments.

The Wahabi threat to the Hejaz began in 1917, but was stayed off till the end of 1918. King Hussein overestimated his strength and sent against our advice—a column of irregular camel corps against the advance party of the Brethren, who had converted and occupied the village of Khurma, once in the King's hands. The camel corps went unwillingly, since their relatives were in the Wahabi ranks, and almost without fighting gave up their guns and dispersed.

The King was now seriously alarmed, and called his second son, Emir Abdullah, to take command of the expedition against Khurma. Abdullah marched out with a column of 250 Mesopotamian infantry, volunteers for the Arab army, and some camel corps. The British officers on the spot opposed his going, and he was accompanied, of the foreign military missions in Arabia, only by a French Moslem officer. He won some preliminary successes, but was finally surprised asleep in camp one night, and fled with his mounted men, leaving his 250 infantry behind him, with his guns and machine-guns.

The Wahabis took no prisoners, as usual. The British Government was now as alarmed as the King of the Hejaz at the apparently imminent fall of Mecca, and made hasty arrangements for the evacuation by sea of the 8,000 British-Indian residents of Mecca. Meanwhile officers were sent out by airplane from England to Egypt to try to persuade the combatants to make peace.

In my opinion Mecca could only be made safe from Nejd by garrisoning its eastern frontier by a regular division. The job was offered to the Government of Fesul in Damascus. Fesul refused, as I knew he would. He had offered to do it when in London at the end of 1918, and had asked for tanks and armored cars for the purpose. There had ensued the usual three-part comedy—the Foreign Office pressing, the War Office wavering, the India Office opposing. Eventually the War Office agreed to supply tanks only to one side—that of Mecca.

They began to want their armored cars in Ireland and Egypt—and after six months' correspondence they offered their tanks too late for Fesul's convenience.

The present policy is to try to reconcile the two rulers—a temporary measure, which will not stop a new religion any more than would the delimiting of a frontier by a mixed commission. These outbreaks of puritanism in the desert happen every hundred years or so, by a kind of biological law, and die away after their success, as this one will die away. Unfortunately, sometimes, Moslem opinion demands that their death be hurried, and then a costly expedition, like that of the Egyptian Government a hundred years ago, becomes necessary.

The European Powers, that seem to act as midwives to the new movements of Asia, will be hard put to it to meet such a crisis to-day—unless, of course, they show greater adroitness than they have shown in the last two years and adopt an obvious procedure, urged upon them from several directions, but involving that most difficult thing: Agreement between three Governmental departments.—Col. T. E. Lawrence, in the Toronto Mail and Empire.

From Nothing to Millions.
Aluminum consumed in the United States during a recent year amounted to 79,123,000 pounds. The production in 1884 was 150 pounds.

First Tenement Up in 1883.
The first tenement house in New York city was built in 1833. It was a four-story building and stood in what is now Corlears park.

CATARAQUI SCHOOL FAIR

There Was a Very Fine Display of Vegetables.
Cataraqui, Sept. 18.—A very successful school fair was held yesterday afternoon. The display of vegetables, cookery, writing, etc., was very fine. Woodbine school received first prize for marching and singing. Kepler second prize, and Cataraqui third. The rural school fair is a good thing for the children and should be well supported by the adults. And now for Bushell's big fair.

Mrs. John Simpson, who has been spending the summer here, has returned to her home in London. W. Edwards and H. Cooke, have returned to the Agricultural College at Guelph. Mrs. Knowles, one time a resident of this place, died at the home of her daughter, Mrs. (Rev.) L. M. England, at Hudson, near Montreal. The body was brought here for burial on Thursday last. The young people enjoyed a corn roast at the home of Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Curran last night. Toasted marsh-mallows, roasted corn, pie, etc., made a delicious bill of fare, while games and music made the evening all too short.

A bad automobile accident occurred here on Thursday night. A car ran into the ditch, broke off a good sized post, and then caught fire. Two men were slightly hurt and another seriously injured. All three were rushed off to Kingston hospital. The car is a complete wreck. Miss Besse Edwards has resumed her studies at Albert College. Harry Rees, Vancouver, is visiting his sister, Mrs. P. Ward at Hearshfield. His mother, Mrs. H. Rees, who has been here for the summer, will return to the west with him. George Nicol is one of the adventurous ones who had a trip in the airship. Mr. Nicol enjoyed the experience very much. Born, to Mr. and Mrs. Melville Binnington, Brookside Farm, twins, a boy and girl.

What Timothy Was Doing.
Little Timothy went to visit his Aunt Elvira, a dignified and severe woman who owned a parrot. One morning, coming unexpectedly upon Timothy and the bird, she was horribly shocked to hear the little boy using some profane words. "Why, Timothy," cried the old lady, "I do believe you're trying to teach my parrot to swear." "Oh, no, I'm not, auntie," the boy replied, "I'm just telling it what it musn't say."

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