

Today's Geography



AFGHANISTAN ONCE MORE FEARS BEAR'S PAW

The collapse of czarism in Russia was hailed with acclaim in Afghanistan as freeing her from an influence that often has been embarrassing. But the menace of the bear's paw is renewed with the threatened incursions of the Bolsheviks.

To the stranger the Afghan displays a sort of specious and deceptive oriental courtesy. In fact, a national proverb is that "The man who shuts his door to a stranger is no Afghan." But the stranger also would do well to know a saying current among the Hindoos: "God shield you from vengeance of the elephant, the cobra and the Afghan." For many strangers have found that, upon provocation, to which the Afghan is extremely sensitive, his disposition is vengeful, cruel and crafty. His desire for pillage, theft and deception also is apt to get the best of him.

Your Afghan is a swarthy, swaggering, proud, but withal prepossessing sort of man, every inch the warrior while he keeps his turban on, but giving a faint suggestion of a bearded jurist of old English days when he removes it to disclose a head shaven from forehead to crown, with curly ringlets falling about his shoulders from the unshaven portions.

Occasionally the men are fair, as are most of the women, whose hair in two plaits with colored tassels at the end, conceivably might call to mind an American musical comedy chorus prepared to sing "School Days," were it not for their flowing oriental robes.

Afghan women, like Turkish women, are secluded, but they are considerably more adventurous than their Turkish sisters, hence scandal is not infrequent even in a land where a man may have as many wives as he can support.

By Habibullah's father, Abdur Rahman, also were enacted measures of national defense singularly in keeping with occidental schemes for conscription. He made the boast that he could throw a hundred thousand men into action in a week to defend one of his provinces, and said his entire domain could raise a million fighting men to defend her soil. Nor did he stop at the prediction. He worked out a system by which each man in every eight would alternate in taking military instruction. One had to be very young, or very decrepit, to escape the army's draft, for the service ages were from sixteen to seventy.

So far as barring private munition makers is concerned, Abdur Rahman, long before his death in 1901, might have subscribed to the principle, discussed during the peace conference at Paris, for he had his own factories at his capital, Kabul. There are said to have been produced a dozen or more rifles and thousands of cartridges a day, and several guns a week.

ONCE EXILED FAMILY OF BRAZIL NOW HONORED

The visit of Secretary of State Coby to Rio de Janeiro, and recent press dispatches stating that President Pessoa of Brazil has signed a decree revoking the edict which banished former Emperor Dom Pedro II and all his relatives, arouse interest in the history of these "United States of South America."

Harriet Chalmers Adams, writing to the National Geographic Society, says:

"There is a movement under way to build a national pantheon in Rio de Janeiro and bring to it, at the time of the 1922 centenary, the remains of Brazil's historical personages, including Joao VI, Pedro I, Pedro II and his consort. To this the Portuguese government will probably consent, and it is to be hoped that Princess Isabel, too, will agree. Dom Pedro II should return with honor to the land of his birth. The difficulty hitherto lay in the fact that neither the princess nor her sons were permitted to enter the Republic of Brazil and could no longer visit the family tomb.

"Dom Pedro II died in Paris in 1891. Princess Isabel, who married the French Comte d'Eu, still lives in France. In 1908 her elder son renounced his claim to the throne of Brazil in favor of his brother Dom Luiz, whose little son, born in 1909, is Pedro III.

"When in Lisbon I visited the Pantheon, where the rulers of Portugal lie. Exiled from his country, Dom Pedro II also found a resting place in the land of his forefathers. I was most unfavorably impressed with this Pantheon. It altogether lacks the beauty and dignity of the royal mausoleum of the Escorial in Spain. For the payment of a small fee, the custodian permits you to climb a ladder and gaze at the embalmed body of the last emperor of Brazil. This seems most unfitting.

"Dom Pedro II is Brazil's biggest name. He it was who led his country into the brotherhood of great nations. With him wisdom and kindness were pre-eminent. Every inch an emperor, he yet was accessible to the poorest of his subjects.

"There is much in the city where he lived for so many years still closely associated with his rule, which ended only the other day, as we count history—1889. In the coat-of-arms of the house of Braganza, still to be seen on many of the buildings; in such street names as Marquez de Sao Vicente, Baroa de Petropolis, Visconde de Maranguape, and in the titled Brazilians one still meets in the country, we realize that not many years ago Rio de Janeiro was the abode of royalty.

"Closely associated with imperial rule in its decline was the emperor's daughter, Dona Isabel. While princess regent, during one of her father's visits to Europe in search of health, she signed the most vital decree ever issued in the country. I saw the original document in the Hall of Archives, and the pen, set with diamonds and emeralds, with which the princess signed it, the decree of May 13, 1888, which liberated 1,500,000 slaves.

"The decree of 1888, which freed all slaves, was immensely unpopular with many of the country's leading men, who claimed the princess regent had been unduly influenced by her clerical advisers. This was one of the reasons for the fall of the empire, although that event may be largely attributed to discontent all over the country, owing to the centralization of power in the capital."

DO FISHES TALK?

Do fishes talk? Recent speculation about a monkey language gives rise to this even more startling theory, hinted at by Dr. Alexander Graham Bell, in a communication to the National Geographic Society.

"Talk," of course, is used in the sense of communication; a meaning which is not extreme since we daily speak of "talking" over the telephone, the instrument of Doctor Bell's invention, though the "voice" that is heard is not that of the speaker, but a mechanical reproduction of his utterance.

"Did you ever put your head under water and chuck two stones together to see what the sound is like?" Doctor Bell writes. "If you have never done that, try it, and you'll get a new sensation. I did it once, and it sounded as if a man were hammering for all he was worth at my very ear.

"I then took two tiny little pebbles and tapped them together quite lightly under water, and it sounded like a man knocking at the door. It was rather startling to hear such a loud noise from such a slight cause.

"Reflecting upon various experiments, the thought occurred to me: If two little stones tapped together can be heard under water, why, every tiny lobster that snaps his claws must make an audible click. I wonder if there are creatures in the water that signal to one another by sound.

"Well, I had occasion to try it once. Bathing in the Grand river in Ontario a great many years ago, I put my head very gently under water and listened, and, sure enough, 'tick, tick,' came a sound like a grasshopper's chirrup, and a little while after that a chirrup on the other side. There were creatures under the water that were calling to one another.

"I don't know whether all fish make sounds or not, but there are some fish that certainly do. The drumfish on our coast drums away in the water so loudly that you can hear him while you are walking on the shore.

"It is also a significant fact that all fish have ears. Why should they have ears if there is nothing for them to hear?

"Of this we may be certain—that there is a whole world of sound beneath the waves waiting to be explored.

"Three-quarters of the earth's surface is under water and has not yet been explored, at least to any great degree."

RATS: A COSTLY PEST

As carriers of the dread bubonic plague rats are a menace, but that is only one form of their costly and dangerous depredations.

"Rats are practically omnivorous, and their depredations cover a wide range," writes Edward W. Nelson in a communication to the National Geographic Society.

"They dig up newly planted grain, destroy it while growing, and also when in the shock, stack, crib, granary, mill, elevator, warehouse, wharf, and ship's hold, as well as in the bin and feed trough. They eat fruits, vegetables and meats in the market, destroying at the same time by pollution far more than is consumed.

"They destroy enormous numbers of eggs and poultry, as well as the eggs and young of song and game birds. In addition, they invade store and warehouses and destroy groceries of every description, as well as furs, laces, silks, carpets and leather goods.

"They cause many disastrous fires by gnawing matches, by gnawing through lead pipe near gas meters, or by cutting the insulation from electric wires in order to secure material for nests and by gathering oil-soaked rags and other inflammable material in their nests; flood houses by gnawing through lead water pipes; ruin artificial ponds and embankments by burrowing, and damage foundations, floors, doors and furnishings of dwellings.

"As disease carriers they also cause enormous commercial losses, especially through the introduction of bubonic plague and the resulting suspension of commerce. With the introduction of plague they become directly responsible for business disaster as well as for an appalling mortality.

"Much of the greater part of losses from these pests is in foodstuffs,

which, as already indicated, are destroyed at every stage from the time the seed is planted until they are ready for human consumption.

"Investigation some years ago indicated that the direct annual losses sustained in the United States were about \$200,000,000, with a great additional sum in indirect losses, including the effect on the public health and commerce from the diseases carried by rats, and the necessary expenditures in combating them. Assuming, roughly speaking, that as estimated the rat population in the United States is 50,000,000 for the cities and 150,000,000 for the rural districts, it will require the destruction of property by each rat of only a little more than one-fourth of a cent a day to make the aggregate sum estimated as destroyed by these pests yearly in this country."

CRIMEA: THE RIVIERA OF RUSSIA

A proposal that Great Britain and the United States shall co-operate in caring for the Russian refugees from the Crimea agitates world sympathy to a land which has already known suffering.

Hanging down into the Black sea like a butcher's cleaver, with its handle pointed east and the near corner of the blade joined to the mainland of Russia, the Crimea, where it was first planned to exile the abdicating czar, is about as near to being an island as a peninsula well can be, even though a very narrow strait is the only water that lies between it and a second connection with the mainland. On the one side, to the west, lies the Perekop Gulf, and to the east, shut out from the Black sea by the handle of the cleaver, is the Sea of Azov.

With an area matching that of New Hampshire, a population equal to that of New Hampshire and Vermont together, and a climate that borrows good features from Florida and southern California, and had ones from many places, the Crimea is one of the most fascinating bits of territory between Portugal and Cochin China. Its population is a congress of races, its industries range from the growing of subtropical fruits and the housing of Russia's elite as they flee from the cold, to the herding of sheep and the growing of grains. It is a place of many-sided activities.

As the men of wealth of America have their winter homes in Florida and those of western Europe have theirs along the Riviera, the people of Russia have their country seats in the Crimea. And beautiful places they are, for in Russia the rich are very rich. The height of the social season is from the middle of August to the first of November.

The peninsula is occupied by 855,000 people, according to the last census, mostly Turkish-speaking Tartars, with a scattering of Russians, Greeks, Germans and Jews. Cleanliness and morality are said to be proverbial traits of the Crimean Tartars, who have been undergoing the influence of Russification for several generations. They have taken up vine culture, fruit growing, and kindred occupations with a zeal seldom equaled east of the Aegean.

The novels of Tolstoy give a graphic picture of the Crimean war from the Russian viewpoint—depicting the miseries of the march, the anguish of the life in the casemates, and the nerve-destroying ordeal of manning the lines under shellfire, there to await the night attack that might or might not come. It was in this war that Florence Nightingale rendered service as a nurse that made her name a synonym of ministering angel on the world's battlefields. Then men knew nothing of the cause of cholera and such diseases, and the soldiers died like flies.

It is estimated that 50,000 British soldiers lie buried in the cemetery outside of Sebastopol. Before the present war this vast city of the dead was watched over by a German who could speak no English, but who was proud of his privilege of guarding the ashes of those who fell at Balaclava and Inkermann.

When Stephen Graham visited the cemetery the old keeper told him they had 35 varieties of oleander in the cemetery.

Manuscripts Strangely Recovered.

Some valuable manuscripts went down in a torpedoed ship during the war. How they were recovered has been told by the Rev. J. Alston at Surbiton, England. Preaching at St. Matthew's church on behalf of the British and Foreign Bible society, he said the late Archdeacon Dennis, a missionary in South Nigeria, spent several years in compiling a dictionary and grammar of the Ibo language, comprising six distinct dialects, to enable the Bible to be printed and circulated among the native tribes. When on his way to England his vessel was torpedoed, and he lost his life. Some months later his manuscripts were found in a crevice of the rocks on the Welsh coast, where they had been washed up by the sea. They are now awaiting publication.

Hurray for Cow.

Father had returned from a political convention and presented each of his three youngsters with a badge bearing a likeness of a candidate and his name. The two older children were able to read, so ran out of the house cheering for the man whose name appeared on their badge. Maurice was too young to read, but seeing the seal of Indiana on his badge (which is a buffalo bounding over the plain) he shouted, "Hurray for this darn cow!"

Funeral of British Officers Killed in Dublin



The fifteen English officers who were murdered in Dublin on "Red Sunday," were buried with full military honors in London, while thousands lined the curbs as the cortege passed. The photograph shows the procession passing the cenotaph in Whitehall, erected to the memory of the British soldiers who died in the war.

School Children Raise Prize Bulb Plants



Silver and bronze medals were awarded in the public schools of New York to students who raised the finest specimens of bulb plants in the school contest in which 2,500 children took part. The mayor's committee of women made the awards after a tour of the city's schools.

Group of Blue Law Crusaders



More drastic prohibition laws and the strict observance of the Sabbath, are two of the reform topics discussed by the blue law crusaders attending the twenty-sixth anniversary of the international reform bureau in Washington. Those in the picture are, from left to right (top row), State Representative Thomas H. Harrison of Georgia; Bishop J. W. Hamilton of Washington, D. C.; Dr. Mitchell Carroll, and Father Eugene A. Hannan, rector of St. Mark's church, Washington; (bottom row), Representative W. D. Upshaw, Georgia; Mrs. Ella Hoole, recent New York senatorial candidate, and Dr. Wilbur F. Crafts, superintendent of the bureau.

CROSSED OCEAN ALONE



John W. Carter, three, who traveled alone on the liner Haverford from Liverpool to Philadelphia, to return to his father, Prof. John S. Carter of Old Forge, Pa., whom he had not seen for 18 months. The boy's mother was taken ill in England and sent little John home alone. Instead of being seasick, he proved his ability as a sailor by "eating a dinner at almost every table in the dining saloon, so that none of his friends would feel slighted," the stewardess reported.

MAY BE MADE A MARSHAL



General Lyautey, who, according to reports from Paris, will be made a marshal of France as a reward for his work in bringing about the pacification of Morocco. General Lyautey has been commander of the French forces in Morocco for several years.

Burning of Liverpool Warehouses



The first picture to reach this country of the fires which practically destroyed 48 cotton warehouses and many other buildings in Liverpool, England. The fires are thought to have been the work of Sinn Fein incendiaries.