

## CITY OF SHIA MOSLEM.

## Nedjiff the Mecca of One Sect of the Mohammedans.

Mystic, buried in the exclusive sands of the desert, almost unknown by the white man, the Arab city of Nedjiff, mecca of the Shia Mohammedans, born of and for a religion, contains within its walls of sundried brick a treasure house rich beyond fable, into which a stream of gold and jewels has poured for centuries, and over the looting of which many an empire-building soldier has sweetened his dreams while sleeping on the battlefields of India and elsewhere in Asia. Nedjiff has become hostile land, and the wonderful mosque of gold and precious stones is exposed as a possible objective of invaders. Frederick Simpich, one of the few white men of any race to have made a visit to hidden Nedjiff, has transmitted an account of this strangest of cities to the National Geographical society. He writes:

"It is five days by mule or camel caravan from Bagdad to Nedjiff, and in the eventful centuries since the Shias founded Nedjiff—on the spot where a nephew of the Prophet Mohammed was slain—it is estimated that over 25,000,000 Moslems have made the pilgrimage to this mysterious desert city of golden domes, fabulous treasures, and weird rites. Thousands of devotees from the Shia hordes of India, Persia and South Russia flock through Bagdad each year, bringing with them their mummified dead, salted and dried—for burial in the holy ground about the mystic city."

Each member of the Shia sect must make the pilgrimage to this holiest of his shrines, the city toward which throughout life he bows in worship, the unnatural city bound up in the desert's spell, into which the treasures of all his fellows in faith are flowing for their spiritual welfare. Each member of the Shia sect expects to be buried in the sacred earth without the city's walls, where millions upon millions of past Shias have turned the sands to clay. This enormous graveyard about the city is not the least part of its weird fascination. The desert trail to the sacred city is empty, barren and dead. It is an unattractive trail whose silence is only broken by fanatic pilgrims and by caravans transporting corpses to the Shia Mecca of the dead. Of the city, Mr. Simpich says:

"Nedjiff is a freak city. Not a green thing—a plant, shrub, or tree—lives within its dry, hot limits. It is built on a high plain of soft sandstone. The narrow, crooked streets, in many places mere passages 3 or 4 feet wide, wind like jungle paths. One of the strange features of this strange city is its cellars. In summer the fierce heat drives the panting people deep down into the earth, like rats in a hole. Beneath every house is a cellar, burrowed mine-like to amazing depths: one I explored reached an astoundingly low level, being more than 100 feet below the street. Down into these damp, dark holes the Shias flee when the scorching desert air sizzles above and imported German thermometers stand at 130 Fahrenheit. Some of the cellars are arranged in a tier of cells or rooms, one below the other; the upper room is used in the first hot months, the family going lower down as the heat increases. Many of these cellars are connected by underground corridors, and the criminals, who swarm in Nedjiff, easily elude capture by passing through these tunnels from house to house."

The mosque, Mr. Simpich describes as covered with great gold tile which run to its very base. For ages, he says, the rich of Shia faith have made precious presents to this temple until its vaults are bursting with pent-up treasure. The city has no industry, no commerce—nothing that is apart from its religious purpose. It supports itself upon the money of the pilgrims, lodges them, feeds them, robs them, sells them prayer-brick made from the graveyard clay, and even marries them for the period of their visit to perenial brides, brides kept in stock, who legally have many husbands in their lives. As a war significance of this city, the explorer tells:

"A British Indian army officer told me that the looting of the Nedjiff mosque was a favorite dream of the soldiers in the middle-east, who looked forward to the day when war may sweep an army of invasion into Nedjiff."

## What He Prayed For.

"Bobby, I suppose you say your prayers every night."

"Yes'm."

"And what are the things you pray for?"

"Mostly that pop won't find out what I've been doin' through the day."—Boston Transcript.

## No Limit.

Mrs. Newlywed—I want a cook, but she must be capable.

Head of the Employment Agency—Madam, I have several on my books capable of anything.—Judge.

## BROUGHTON IS BACK.

## Former Atlanta Pastor Goes to Knoxville.

Knoxville, Tenn., Feb. 4.—Dr. Len G. Broughton, formerly of Atlanta, who yesterday resigned the pastorate of Christ church, London, Eng., has accepted a call to the pastorate of the First Baptist church here. His acceptance came by cable today.

## Half a Year of World War.

Six months after the outbreak of the world war the outstanding fact was that peace seemed as distant, almost more distant than it did in September. Yet if the close of the conflict remained still a subject for speculation, it was now plain that the issue had been determined in September and that all that had happened since the battle of the Marne had in fact been the natural consequence of one more decisive battle of the world. On fields and hills but little distant from the plain where Roman civilization turned back Attila, the German bid for world supremacy, the kaiser's chance to play Napoleon were abolished.

In the opening month of the war there was a chance, a real chance that Germany might destroy France before Russia was up, force Russia to make terms before England was ready and then, master of the continent as the France of Napoleon, renew the duel with the British empire that France had abandoned precisely a century before. After the battle of the Marne the chance had vanished. Week by week, month by month, Russian, British, French military power, developed. On January 20 Germany held less of France than on September 1; instead of a 100,000 British troops, the advance guard of a fresh million were already in Flanders; French troops were breaking out in Alsace.

In the period between the battle of the Marne and January, 1915, Germany had made three great campaigns. On the Yser the very flower of her troops had gone down under the eyes of the kaiser in a frantic attempt to gain the French coast cities, to grasp the eastern shore of the Straits of Dover, to get within reach of the hated Englishman's home. A first attempt to seize Warsaw, to crush Russia, France being indestructible, had failed before the Polish capital. A second offensive into Poland, after great victories and terrible losses had come to a halt before the Bzura.

Six months after war had begun Germany was still faced by three great nations, their military force wholly unshaken, their armies still gaining in numbers, their deficiencies in artillery, in machinery all but made good. Such advantage as her preparedness had given her, the credit balance in her favor, was now exhausted.

In the same period her Austrian ally had three times been beaten almost to her knees by Russian victories, was now facing an invasion across the Carpathians into Hungary. Twice, too, the Hapsburg emperor had seen splendid armies ignominiously routed, destroyed by the hated Serbs, who in their turn were preparing to flow over the Danube into Hungary.

Around the world the German hopes had equally proven vain. The Turk had suffered disaster, the holy war had fallen to empty nothing, the South African revolution had flickered out as an abortive revolt, with no other permanent consequence than to insure the loss of German Southwest Africa. In Asia her colony had disappeared into Japanese hands, in the Pacific her islands were lost irrevocably, in Africa her remaining colonies were being slowly but steadily consumed by her enemies as one eats an artichoke, leaf by leaf.

To balance this, Germans could still point to conquered lands and provinces. In Poland, in Flanders, in Champagne her lines held, her counter-attacks regained the lost trenches regularly. In Alsace, along the Aisne, in Artois and Belgium, Anglo-French attacks, ambitious offensive, were speedily beaten down. East and west Germany was still a match for her enemies, but east and west the moment for victory had passed, irrevocably passed, east and west German operations more and more tended toward the defensive. What Gettysburg had been to the South, the Marne was now proving to have been to Germany. Nowhere in January was there the slightest sign of new promise for German victory and what was true in January had been true in the earlier months.

Half a year of war had given history one more decisive battle, for Europe conceivably the greatest in permanent meaning since Waterloo. In that battle it had been decided that Europe should still be European and not Prussian. At the Marne, France had saved herself and Europe; after the Marne the problem was how long it would take Europe to conquer Germany, and in January it was unmistakable that as yet Europe had

made no progress.

Early in the war Lord Kitchener had said that the struggle might last three years. What seemed a mere rough estimate becomes far more significant examined by the few statistics yet available which show the wastage of war.

Thus it seems fair to estimate that Germany has now in the field 3,000,000 men. France 2,000,000, Austria 1,000,000, Russia 2,000,000, England at no distant date will have 1,000,000 on the continent. Serbia and Belgium may be reckoned to have 250,000.

Now as far as Russia is concerned her supply of men is for any ordinary calculation inexhaustible. That she can keep her European force at 3,000,000 for three years, despite battle losses is hardly debatable. As to England, her ability to maintain an army of 1,000,000 on the continent indefinitely and despite losses is equally to be accepted. It is different with France. Her available military population may be reckoned at 4,000,000. Of this she has already lost 1,000,000 by death, capture, disease or wounds. Half of this number may be reckoned as permanently lost. At this rate, France will be reduced at the opening of the third year of the war to 2,000,000. With her allies she will then have 6,000,000 men. But her losses in this year cannot be made good, save by the new class coming to the colors in 1917 and levies from her colonies.

Now Germany may be reckoned to have had 6,000,000 men available for service in July, 1914; 600,000 more will be supplied by the combined classes of 1916 and 1917. German losses in the first six months may be estimated at 1,800,000. At this rate, 1,800,000 will be removed permanently from the German lines in each of the first two years of war. Thus, at the opening of the third, Germany will still have 3,000,000 men to draw on. But her losses thereafter will be definite, because she will have exhausted her reserve. As to Austria, she has lost more than 1,000,000 already in her many disasters. She may still have 1,000,000 in the field, but a year hence, two years hence, she can hope for no more and her resources, too, will be completely exhausted.

Thus as the third year of the war opens not more than 4,000,000 Austro-Germans, the last line, will confront 6,000,000 Russians, British and French, helped by some hundreds of thousands of Slavs and Belgians, behind whom will stand Russian and British reserves of at least 4,000,000. This means, with every discount for the roughness of the estimate, that sometime in the third year, while Russian and Britain are still able to keep their armies at their present point, Austro-German forces will begin to decline rapidly and a tremendous advantage of numbers will belong to the enemies of Germany. Such is the statement of what may be called the mathematics of murder.—From "Half a Year of World War," by Frank H. Simonds, in the American Review of Reviews for February.

## ASYLUM INVESTIGATION.

(Continued from page 2, column 4.)

side, but there is need for a new building for convalescent women. A part of this building could be used as a sewing room for the women. Here the women would engage, under the direction of a competent teacher, in diversional occupations. Play as well as work would be made an important part of their hospital life. In this building most of the things could be made for the patients, and all of the repair work on the clothing done, and a great many things especially interesting and attractive to women would be carried on in this building.

## Nurses' Home.

"The Dix cottage, which is a frame building, and is now used for the convalescent women, would make an ideal nurses' home. At the present time there is practically no satisfactory accommodations for the nurses, some of them sleeping in the wards with the patients, while others have rooms on the top floor of the new building, which is an attic that has been converted into sleeping quarters. So much for the general arrangement of the present buildings.

"In addition to the improvements already suggested there should be erected a central kitchen and congregating dining rooms. The present system of numerous kitchens and dining rooms is unsatisfactory in every way, and there should be an up-to-date laundry. The present building could be utilized by enlarging it somewhat and installing modern equipment. A central heating plant would also be necessary and this would probably be the most expensive item in the entire plan of reconstruction.

"A number of small buildings about the place would naturally be done away with in the general cleanup. A new ice house, a new bakery, refrigerating plant, etc., will all be included in the plans for the central kitchen."

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