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THE PERSIAN CRISIS. HISTORY OF THE REVOLUTION.

Mohammed Ali Shah, the Persian ruler who has been forced to abdicate by the triumph of the Nationalist leaders, came to the throne in February 1907, just after his father Muzaffer-ed-Din had granted a constitution to Persia. The National Assembly—or Mejlis—proved much too liberal a body for the new Shah, and the following eighteen months were a time of constant friction between Parliament and the reactionary Court party. In December 1907, the Shah made his first attempt to destroy the Constitution by force of arms. The attempt was unsuccessful, but in June of last year he successfully carried through his second coup d'état. Seizing the opportunity afforded by a violent quarrel with the Mejlis, he ordered his Cossacks to attack the Parliament buildings and disperse the assembly. For reasons which have yet to be explained, little or no resistance was offered in Teheran itself, and the Nationalist leaders were imprisoned or exiled. The city of Tabriz, however, which is the capital of the province of Azerbaijan, and perhaps the most important town in Persia, openly rebelled. Under the leadership of Sattar Khan, the inhabitants drove out the Royalist governor and fortified the town. The Shah thereupon despatched his uncle, the Ained-Dowleh, to reduce the rebellious city. But Ained-Dowleh's so-called army deserted en masse to the revolutionists, and the Shah was obliged to fall back on Kurdish tribes whom he induced by promises of heavy pay to serve him. Tabriz, however—in spite of starvation—held out until the beginning of April this year. By that time matters were so desperate within the city, and the Shah's supporters outside so little to be trusted with the lives of Europeans, that the Russian Government despatched a force under General Snarsky to raise the siege. Since the Russian occupation at the end of April the inhabitants have been disarmed, and Tabriz has ceased to count for anything in the constitutional struggle.

Meanwhile in Teheran the Russian and British representatives had been urging upon the Shah the necessity of pacifying the country by restoring the Constitution. This he promised again and again to do, but on every possible occasion broke his word. At length when the Shah realised that Russian troops had actually invaded Persia he made a formal restoration of the Constitution and appointed a so-called Liberal Cabinet. The Nationalists, however, with good reason declined to accept his protestations of sincerity, and the two Nationalist leaders, the Sardar-i-Assad and the Sipahdar, closed upon Teheran from the south and the north and finally, as we previously reported, entered the city and thereby brought about the abdication of the Shah, which was announced from the Russian Embassy at the close of last week as soon as the late ruler had taken refuge under the Russian and British flags. The Sardar-i-Assad, whose family name is Haji Ali Kuli Khan, is the brother of the present *Ilkhani* or Chieftain of the Bakhtiari, a people who inhabit a mountainous district in the south-west of Persia. Ali Kuli Khan is described as the diplomatist of his tribe and has lived for the greater part of his life in Teheran as the representative of the Bakhtiari at the Shah's Court. He has travelled in Europe and speaks French fluently. When his brother the *Ilkhani* rebelled against the Shah early in January the Sardar-i-Assad was in Europe, and so late as the middle of last January was staying in London. He returned to Persia, however, by way of Bombay and the Gulf and joined his brother in April at

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Ispahan. On June 17th he set out at the head of the Bakhtiari forces for Teheran. The change of the ruler's title from Shah to Sultan is proof positive that now the Nationalist leaders have gained the day, they are determined to keep their monarch's power within defined limits. The new Sultan if he is to enjoy a smooth reign will have to steer between the Scylla of extreme Nationalism and the Charybdis of reaction. His every move will be closely watched by both parties, and a false step in either direction may bring his career to a swift close. As the Nationalists have demonstrated that the balance of power lies, temporarily at least, within their hands, the young Sultan will be well-advised to study their wishes more considerably than those of the practically impotent reactionary party. It is to be hoped that the new order of things will mean a resumption of commercial and industrial activity in the country, and the safety of the large European element whose lives have been in extreme peril on more than one occasion during the course of the revolution.

Teheran, July 19.

It is reported from Ardebil that an artillery engagement has occurred there between Government troops and revolutionaries which caused but slight damage to the town; but that the Government troops as well as the revolutionaries were going through the streets plundering and burning. The Russian Consul had therefore warned his countrymen to bring their valuables to the Consulate and to hoist the Russian flag on their houses.

Reuter reports that difficulties have arisen as to the disarming of the Silkhori soldiers, some of whom are quartered in Zergendeh, a place that is under the jurisdiction of the Russian Embassy. It is said that the Nationalists have requested the Embassy to allow them to deal with these men, who are a constant menace to public order.

The appointments of Mustaf el Mamelik as Minister of Finance, and of Firman Firma as Minister of Justice, have been announced.

THE BALKAN QUESTION.

London, July 19.

In reply to a question asked in the House of Commons today, whether the proposal to hold an international Congress with regard to various points of the Balkan problem had been definitively abandoned, a representative of the Government said the proposal had not been abandoned, but the critical questions of the Balkan problem were being settled in an amicable sense; negotiations were still in progress on one or two points of minor importance connected with Article 29 of the Berlin Treaty.

EIGHT BRITISH DREADNOUGHTS IN ONE YEAR.

London, July 20.

The Government has decided, according to reports in several journals this morning, to commence the construction of the four extra battleships of the Dreadnought type during the current financial year. This means that altogether eight such vessels will be put in hand for the British Navy between April 1st 1909 and April 1st 1910.

DEATH OF DON CARLOS.

From Rome comes news of the death of Prince Charles of Bourbon, pretender to the Spanish throne, following on a stroke. The death took place at an hotel in Varese, where the prince was sojourning with his family. The body was laid out in a chamber, for conveyance to Trieste. Two Catholic sisters performed the death watch. The Courts of Vienna and Madrid were at once advised by telegraph of the prince's decease. The funeral is fixed for today at Trieste.

Don Carlos was in his 61st year. Since the autumn of 1868 he represented the Carlist movement under the title of Duke of Madrid. He has lived abroad ever since the abortive rebellion in Spain from 1873 to 1876, when he made a bid for the throne and assumed the title of King Charles VII. His first wife, née the Duchess of Parma, bore him a son who was acclaimed as Heir Apparent, but who died in 1893 at the age of 23. His second wife is still living, and was formerly Princess de Rohan.

His daughters were anything but a joy to Don Carlos. One of them, the Princess Elvira, eloped with the Italian artist Signor Folchi with whom she lived for several years, in spite of the protests of her family. A son and two twin daughters were the result of this irregular union. The second daughter, Princess Alice, left her husband, Prince of Schönburg-Waldburg, and fled with an infantry officer, by whom she had a child. The third daughter of Don Carlos, Princess Massimo, created a very painful sensation in Rome some years ago by attempting to commit suicide by drowning in the river Tiber.

FRIENDLY RIVALRY IN AERONAUTICS.

Metz, July 19.

The brothers Kapferer, the pilots of the "Ville de Nancy," have arrived here, visited the "Zeppelin's" shed by permission of the military authorities, witnessed an ascent of the airship and admired its handiness and capabilities, and finally proposed a meeting of the "Zeppelin" and "Ville de Nancy" on the frontier.

Aix-la-Chapelle, July 19.

Professor Reiss of the Technical High School has made two flights with a kite of his own designing. The first flight was a complete success; in the second a steel tube was bent.

CROSS-CHANNEL FLYING.

Paris, July 20.

M. Bleuriot, the aviator, announces this morning that he will make an attempt on Thursday or Friday of this week to cross the English Channel on his aeroplane.

Calais, July 19.

Mr. Latham has informed a reporter that he was obliged by the failure of his motor to descend by a skimming flight to the surface of the sea 11½ miles from the French coast. His aeroplane was floating on the water, and he was seated in his place at the tiller when the French destroyer "Hapon" came up. The apparatus was damaged while being hoisted on board the tug.

THE "METEOR" TO RACE AT COWES.

Cowes, July 19.

The Kaiser's new yacht "Meteor" has been entered for all the races during the Cowes Week.