

## CARPET MAKING IN KHORASAN.

Mr. Ney Elias, our Consul-General at Meshed, in a recent report, makes some interesting remarks on the carpet industry of Khorasan. He says that carpets are made all over the province, but the localities where they are specially produced are Meshed, Birjand, and Turshiz. All Khorasan carpets are "piled" carpets, or "kali," a word that is not applicable to any other kind of floorcloth. The different kinds are known sometimes by the different patterns and colours of which they are composed, but usually only by the names of the places where they are produced, such as Kaini, Meshedi, Baluchi, Turshizi. Those of particular localities have always some distinction or superiority over those of other places, and the carpet industry is in a more flourishing condition in some places than in others. Though they are woven all over Khorasan, not only in the towns and villages, but also in the tents of the nomad tribes, a large proportion are made for the use of the people themselves and not for trade. At present carpets of fine quality are manufactured for trade in the two districts of Kain and Turshiz, but good carpets are also made in Meshed. For about ten years past traders have been in the habit of giving instructions to weavers on the subject of carpets to be exported to foreign countries, and these are said to fetch better prices. In Kain the authorities and leading men are fond of carpets, and as they themselves give instruction to the weavers a fine class, with good patterns and colours is turned out. All the different classes of carpets are made in varying sizes. Large ones measure up to 40ft. by 15 2/3ft., and small ones from 5ft. by 2ft. up to 6 2/3ft. by 3 1/3ft. A good quality of carpets measuring 10ft. by 3 1/3ft., and even smaller, are woven by the nomads, and especially by the Baluchis. All indigenous dyes used in the manufacture of carpets are obtained from vegetables. Aniline dyes imported from Europe were used formerly in Meshed, but were discontinued when it was found that the carpets containing them did not sell well. Carpets of inferior quality made at Birjand contain aniline, but those of better quality which are made to order do not. All parts of Khorasan where carpets are made produce wool, but in places such as Meshed, Turshiz, and Kain, where they are made for trade, a portion of the wool required is obtained from the neighbouring districts. There is not much difference in the quality of the wool produced by the different districts of Khorasan, but that of the Baluch tribes is said to be the best. The reasons given for this superiority are that most of their sheep are white, and that the Baluchis wash their wool better than other tribes. But Khorasan carpets are not made entirely from wool. The wool is of wool, while the warp is cotton. The pile is entirely of wool, because wool is more durable than any other material. In ancient times silk was occasionally used for the pile, and even now carpets can be made with a silk pile if specially ordered. The looms used for weaving in towns are always put up indoors; those in the country sometimes indoors and sometimes out of doors. But carpets of the better quality even in the country are usually made indoors to save them from the dust. The weavers in the towns are entirely men and boys, those in the country usually women. As far as is known there is no difference in the methods pursued by the ancient and modern weavers, and, although old carpets are occasionally seen of superior quality to any of modern production, there appears to be no "lost art."

## FUTURE OF BRITISH GUIANA.

In a report which Lord Gormanston, Governor of British Guiana, has forwarded to the Colonial Office, there are some observations by the acting assistant Government secretary, Mr. Douglas Young, as to the future of the colony, which are of unusual interest. Mr. Young states that a general review of the finances of the colony, extending over the past ten years, leads one to the conclusion that, though no material headway has been made, there are evidences that the colony is now slowly recovering from the depression which commenced to be apparent soon after the beginning of the decade. This recovery is due to an improvement in the sugar market, and also to the increased output of gold. Taking the value of the colony's prosperity, it is satisfactory to note that these were higher during the last quarter of 1891 and the first quarter of 1892 than the value of the imports of the colony for a similar period for many a year gone by. When the depression in the sugar industry was at its lowest, the gold industry came to the rescue of the colony, and now both industries are improving, the one slowly but steadily, the other by leaps and bounds. Many schemes for opening up the country, having for their aim the development of the gold-mining resources of the colony by the establishment of railways and steam communication with the interior, are now under consideration. The history of their success or failure will form a subject for future report. The immediate future of the colony is not hard to foretell; judging from the returns it is not impossible, Mr. Young thinks, that the goldfields of British Guiana will equal, if not surpass, those of California and Australia. There are indications, he says, that the colony contains the riches of a California and a Kimberley combined. That miners and capitalists will be attracted from all parts of the world there is but little doubt; many have already arrived, having heard rumours of British Guiana's hidden wealth. But it is to the sugar industry in the past that the colony owes what measure of prosperity it has attained, and though it is to gold that the sensational results predicted are to be looked for, yet in the end the cultivator of the soil will resume his sway and wield the baton of destiny. But of the more remote future it is, in Mr. Young's opinion, harder to speak, and the history of other countries and regions inhabited by English-speaking races, or colonised by British enterprise, affords no guide. British Guiana is unique amongst British possessions. It is a great tropical region, inhabited not like India by the countless millions of an ancient population, but, with the exception of a narrow alluvial fringe along its seaboard, only by the remnants of a few scattered tribes. It is not like Australia or Canada, whose climate and resources afford all that an Englishman needs to sustain inherent national and racial qualities. It is simply at present a "great lone land," whose forests are as pathless and gloomy as those of darkest Africa, whose soil teems with gold and natural riches, but where the climate is treacherous to the stranger, and where the seeker after wealth is as likely to find a grave as a fortune. Whether these forests will ever be cleared away, whether towns and cities will ever spring up on the magnificent rivers by which the country is intersected, is a problem of the future, which the future alone can solve.

## THE LAST WHITE RHINOCEROS.

Among the disappearing mammals of this earth of ours, the white rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros simus*), the mightiest quadruped save one—the elephant—that now exists, has in the eyes of naturalists and hunters of late years taken a very prominent place. It is only some eighty years since that Dr. Burchell, one of the earliest and best of the band of ardent naturalists who have exploited Southern Africa, first discovered and made known this gigantic creature. In Burchell's time, *rhinoceros simus* was found grazing everywhere in a peaceful abundance on the plains of South Bechuanaland and beyond; and yet at this moment (says the *Globe*) it seems to be an undoubted, if melancholy, fact that in all Africa only some five or six specimens now remain of the thousands that roamed like mighty horned pigs between the Orange and Zambesi Rivers. The tide of civilisation is sweeping surely enough many of the rarer and most interesting forms of nature clean from the face of the earth. The Quagga (*Equus quagga*) has vanished completely; the bison of North America, which a score of years back might be counted by hundreds of thousands, has all but become extinct; and now the white rhinoceros may be counted upon the fingers of one's hands, and will beyond all doubt (for nothing now can save it from white or native hunters) within the next two years make positively "its last appearance" upon African or any other soil. These are melancholy facts too easily accounted for by the opening up of new countries and the too ardent quest of hunters—many of them mere slaughtering for the pitiful reward of meat and skins—and the ever-increasing destructiveness and distribution of modern arms of precision.

The white rhinoceros, which by the way is not white at all, but only a few shades paler than its cousin the slate-coloured "black" rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros bicornis*), was easily distinguished by hunters by its square mouth, immensely long forehorn, abnormally large head, and gigantic bulk. In size it often stood more than 6ft. at the shoulder, with a length from snout to tail of 16ft., and as its bulk was fully proportioned to these immense measurements, it is small wonder that even the mighty African elephant himself gained little by comparison. Indeed the length and bulk of the white rhinoceros gave him, in the eyes of most hunters, the most commanding presence. Unlike the black or prehensile-lipped rhinoceros, which plucks most of its sustenance from the bushes and shrubbery so plentiful in the African interior, its white rival fed exclusively on grass, for the procuring of which its square mouth was manifestly exactly fitted. Even dimmer of sight than *Rhinoceros bicornis*—a by no means sharp-eyed animal—the white rhinoceros was often much impeded in its direct vision by the long fore horn, which more often than not was carried not uprightly, but horizontally, and well forward, immediately in the line of sight. The head was held low, almost touching the ground, and, if with calf, the cow rhinoceros kept her unwieldy baby just in front of her snout (especially in time of flight or danger), directing its course in the most marvellous manner, even at full gallop, by a dexterous yet tender application of her long horn. The white rhinoceros, like others of its kind, often slept heavily in the heat of the day, and many a goodly specimen has been slain easily and without danger while thus enjoying its siesta. If the wind was kept in the right quarter the monster was easily approached even when awake; and so soon as firearms were introduced among the Bechuanas and other native tribes its downfall quickly began.

Every hunter, Dutch, English, or native, "went for" the poor sluggish beast; at desert pools, where in time of drought vast quantities of game from an immense area were collected 30 or 40 years since, six or eight were occasionally slain in one night's shooting, and so the work of extinction had gone merrily forward. The hump of the great creature baked in its skin in a hole in the ground was esteemed one of their highest luxuries by all hunters; the thick hide was always worth a pound or two for making into *gamboks* (Colonial whips), the most punishing of all urging implements, whether for oxen or horses; while the horn was in constant demand, either as a curiosity for Europeans, a handle for the native battle-axe, or, in the case of abnormally long specimens, as the prized staff or knob-tierie of some dark-skinned local potentate. The longest horn known in European collections appears to be one in the possession of the Natural History Museum, measuring 54in. It is pretty certain, however, that in the old days even greater measurements were known, and it is more than probable that in half forgotten private collections, and possibly here and there in the kraals of remote South African chiefs, horns of even greater length still exist.

No specimen of this vast quadruped has ever been brought alive to Europe. No complete skin or skeleton even has ever reached any museum or collection. There are one or two skulls in English museums, and a stuffed head in the Capetown

museum—from the last white rhinoceros slain nearly ten years since by the great hunter Mr. F. C. Selous. Mr. Selous himself has been trying for years to obtain a complete specimen for the Natural History Museum, but without success. The range of *Rhinoceros simus*, like many other South African animals, was curiously limited, and extended only over the countries between the Orange and Zambesi rivers. During the last four years it has been generally supposed that the animal had become completely extirpated. But Mr. Selous, writing from Capetown, states that five or six specimens have quite lately been discovered in a remote corner of Mashonaland, near the Zambesi. One of these has been shot by English hunters, and it is believed that the skin and skeleton have been preserved, and are on their way down country. In the interests of science it is to be hoped that this news is true, and that the authorities of the Natural Museum may be able to secure these poor but deeply interesting mementoes of one of the last specimens of the mightiest terrestrial mammal, save one, that the historic world has ever seen.

## ADVENTURES OF A NECROMANCER.

The Chevalier Hermann contributes some interesting stories of his life to the *North American Review*. He says—It is certain that every prestidigitator since the world first knew of necromancy has met with accidents, and although I have been singularly lucky in this direction I was fooled once, and in a very peculiar way. I paid a visit to the Paris Bourse before the asphaltum pavement had been put down around the square upon which that great monetary institution stands. The square was then paved with a regular block pavement, which, owing to the great travel, was frequently out of repair. While inside the edifice I had seen the stockbrokers and heard them howl in their frenzy of speculation and my mind had wandered off in altogether a different direction after I got out and stood on the broad granite steps of the temple of Mammon with a few of the stockbrokers, friends of mine, who had gathered around me and asked me to "do something." A gang of workmen stood directly before us, and one of the stockbrokers said, "Why don't you play a trick on them?" I thought I would. I walked down the broad stairs among the paviors and extracted from under one of the cobble stones a 100f. gold coin, which is about the size of one of our double eagles. Instead of being amazed the pavior looked at me and said, "Motte," meaning half. There was a law, at least at that time, in France, that the finder should have half of anything found. I naturally did not want to give up half, and I thought it would be a good thing to find another coin, so as at least to show the fellow that it was a trick, and straightway I put my hand down again and brought out a 5f. piece. The pavior looked at me again, his face wreathed in smiles this time, and once more he said, "Half, which would be 52 1/2f., rather a good day's earnings. Well, as I did not seem willing to give up half, as he wanted, he began to talk loud. I then changed my tactics, explaining to him that it was a trick; and to illustrate it I picked up a 5 centime coin of the reign of Louis Philippe (an old pocket piece which I happened to have with me), but even this failed to satisfy the workman and his wild gesticulations and loud talk having collected more than 500 or 600 people around us, I thought it best to compromise with him. But no, he would listen to no compromise; he clung to his rights tenaciously, and I was compelled to give him half not alone of the 100f. piece, but of the 5f. piece as well, and then he insisted upon having even half of the 10-sou piece. It takes either a very stupid fool or an exceedingly clever man to get ahead of a prestidigitator, and of the two I am inclined to believe that the fool is by far the more dangerous.

In 1853, when this country was engaged in its great conflict, I happened to be in Constantinople and the Sultan offered me the sum of \$5000 in good Turkish gold, which I finally made up my mind to accept. Towards evening a gorgeously-uniformed escort came to my hotel, and I was driven to one of the great palaces overlooking the Golden Horn. It was April, and one of those lovely evenings that one sees in the Orient, as one looks across the beautiful waters that divide Europe from Asia. I was brought into a room, and in a few seconds all my handsomely-uniformed escort vanished. The scene around me, however, was so beautiful that I scarcely noticed their absence, until two Turks, each 6ft. high, and dressed in the garb of the primitive Arabs, stood before me. One carried a chibouk beautifully scented with rose water, while the other had in his hand a little gold salver, upon which were bits of charcoal ignited, a gold coffee-pot, and a tiny cup or saucer. The Turk carrying the pipe moved slowly from side to side, and I saw that the bowl of it was filled with golden coloured tobacco. The whole room was perfumed by the smell of it, and such an aroma I knew could only come from the leaf grown on Mount Athos, the purest and most fragrant tobacco in the world. All this, of course, was very beautiful to me, and I felt that I could really enjoy a whiff of the tobacco, but, at the same time, a lingering suspicion came into my head that there might be just a little bit of opium or some such drug in my pipe, and that instead of doing a little sleight of hand for the Sultan the Sultan was going to do a little sleight of hand with me. Sultans have been known to amuse themselves in that way. My mouth really, as I have said, watered at a puff of the golden weed, and the pipe looking tempting, with its amber tip and its bowl beautifully carved with Arabic designs, I made a kind of gesticulations to the pipe bearer that did not want to smoke. He pushed the pipe, however, upon me, being extremely polite all the while, but still acting with a persistency that showed me I had to do something. After I had taken one puff, which I thought sufficient, the other Turk handed me from the golden salver a very fine porcelain cup filled with ebony black Mocha coffee. The tobacco was delicious, the coffee tempting, but for some reason my heart beat against my ribs, and the suspicion darted through my mind that I was about being drugged. Quietly as I thought I took the cup in one hand, the pipe another, then presto! change! both vanished through the air, and two small snakes appeared in my hand. The look of amazement and astonishment that settled on the faces of the two Arabs was indescribable. They looked up at the ceiling, magnificently painted by some celebrated French artist; they looked at the rug, which was thick and of the finest Orient, then they looked at me with even more astonishment; then they salaamed before me as they would have done before their ruler, and both of them got out of the way about as quickly as I had made the pipe and the cup of coffee disappear. While I was laughing inwardly at their speedy disappearance one of the chamberlains entered and gave me to understand in French that I was to appear before his august sovereign. He led the way to a magnificent hall, gloriously decorated with all the emblems of Orientalism, and I was shown to a raised platform covered with red carpets and hung around with damask draperies. The room was one of those open rooms that are so well-known in Turkey, in which there are no doors, but great circular arches on all sides hung over with silken curtains. The first thing I did when I got on the platform was, naturally, to look for my audience; but only one person sat in the middle of the room—an elderly, portly gentleman with a nicely-trimmed black beard and a red fez. I at once recognised his august Majesty—the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire, and he, in return with a twinkle of his coal black, brilliant eye, gave me a sign of recognition, which I supposed was a signal for me to proceed. From every arch and opening in the walls, however, came faint whisperings, which intuitively told me that while my audience in the front consisted of only one, there were a number concealed behind every bit of silk and every pillar. I afterwards found that I had appeared before over 100 persons, including the entire harem; and I may well say I did not like it. There is a magnetism that a large and enthusiastic audience fills me with. Everything goes smoother under such conditions while to have a secret audience watching me, a only one man in the front, makes me ill at ease. I was a very young man, and it was my first appearance before so powerful a potentate. I went through a number of experiments, which seem to please the Sultan very much. He paid much attention to me and was as anxious as a small boy, and I could see in the twinkling of an eye that he was trying to fathom the mystery of my black art. He failed, however, and before I left Stamboul I was commanded to appear before him on his pretty yacht, which usually takes him every pleasant evening from Constantinople to the opposite shore of Asia. On this magnificent pleasure vessel I also had an experience. During the passage we became more familiar, and was brought into close contact with the Sultan, and noticed that he had a most magnificent watch which he consulted and handled as if it were an apple of his eye. This, of course, was a great thing for me, for as I was performing before him personally it was not etiquette to take anything from the audience. I therefore asked him to let me out his watch and show it to me, which he did. I then said, "Will your Imperial Majesty allow me to throw the watch overboard?" He laughed at first, but a second afterwards his face darkened, and he looked just a little bit as if he were offended with me for making the request. "If," said I, "I do not return the watch to you exactly as you gave it to me, you can put me in irons for the rest of my life if you want to." A peculiar angry look that for a second had come over his face vanished, and while all of his attendants stared at me, and expected the Sultan to have arrested at once, he seemed to take it seriously and I have no doubt that if I had not returned the watch I would have been put in irons. The Sultan, however, was a brave man and, a looking me straight in the eye with a piercing glance for a second, handed the watch to me. I threw it into the rippling waves of the Bosphorus. The yacht careened over, for every individual from the cabin boy on the fore-castle to the Sultan himself astern, rushed to the side to look overboard after the watch. I felt that if anything went wrong with this trick I certainly should be put in irons; but I called for a fish line, and instead of showing my anxiety, at once proceeded to do a little fishing, while every eye looked at me, not so much with astonishment as with pure disbelief in my ability to recover the watch, which was not only one of the things of the world the Sultan liked, but was worth great deal more than any watch I myself ever seen. My fishing, however, happened to be prosperous, for in a few minutes I drew up a fish shimmer and landed him safely on deck. I brought before the Sultan, took out my pocket-knife, ripped open the fish, and presented the watch to his Majesty in, of course, the same condition in which it was when he handed it to me. Turks, as a rule, are not very demonstrative, and I found in my life that to make a Turk laugh heartily is impossible. They smile, look pleased, and with their daintily pointed nails pick their beards, but this occasion every Turk, from the Sultan and blue-blooded pashas to the sailors in the fore-castle, sent up one howl of delight that floated over the beautiful Golden Horn and reflected from the hills of Asia. You may guess how I felt, and I was very much pleased with my success for the whole entertainment was a great success. These are a few of the many stories the Chevalier tells, but are fair samples of his entertaining and

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