

HOME AND SCHOOL.

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Russian Tartars.

It was the first Napoleon who said "If you scratch a Russian you will find a Tartar beneath." The meaning of that is that beneath the superficial veneer of artificial civilization of the Russians lies deeply embedded the savage barbarism of their rude Hunnic ancestry. In the monaced conflict between the English and Russians any information about these warlike people, who form so large a part of Russia's military force, will be of special interest to the readers of HOME AND SCHOOL.

The word *Tatar* is of Chinese origin, and was first applied to those Mongolian tribes who on their swift horses descended from the highlands of Central Asia into the Chinese lowlands, robbing and plundering. When adopted by the Europeans, the word was changed into *Tartar*, with an allusion to the classical Tartarus, and it was applied to all those tribes and races which Genghis Khan had brought under his sway and led into Europe, including not only Mongolian, but also Tungusian and Turkish races. At present the name is used in a wider sense, comprising all the various tribes and races inhabiting the plateaus of Central and Northern Asia, and not belonging to the Aryan family.

One of the curious customs of the Tartars is represented in our engraving, showing a very singular marriage ceremonial.

The young maiden dressed in a bridal costume mounts a fleet horse, taking on her lap a lamb, and setting off at full gallop, is followed by her admirers, her object being to prevent any except the one she prefers from snatching the lamb from her lap, as whoever does this is entitled to become her husband.

"Why is Squire Danforth like necessity?" was the student's conundrum concerning a member of the bar, whose pleas in court were often a source of amusement for the ignorance they betrayed. "Because he knows no law," was the answer which none thought of guessing.

England's Difficulties.

THE Soudan problem, indeed, is one of the gravest with which an English minister has ever had to deal. A war with brave and barbarous Arab tribes, who must be sought by the English forces across arid deserts and in remote African fortresses, is one from which little power or glory can be gained; yet it must be exceedingly expensive both in money and in the lives of soldiers.

But perplexing as this war is, it is far from being the only difficulty with which England has to deal. The Empire of Victoria seems fairly overwhelmed with perplexities, crowding upon it from many directions.

thick walls thirty feet high. A small force could hold Herat indefinitely against a large army. It guards all the valleys leading into western Turkestan. So important, indeed, is this fortress of Herat, that it is known as the 'gate of India.'

If the Russians, as they apparently intend to do, take possession of Herat, they would thereby offer a distinct menace and peril to the English dominion of India. They would be in a position to attack India itself when they saw a favourable occasion for so doing. A railway from the Caspian to Herat would transport troops from that sea to the fortress in forty-eight hours.

largely increased in the House of Commons.

As if these perplexities were not enough, the English authorities live in constant suspense lest further dynamite plots should wreak destruction upon life and property. Royal personages and ministers of state are guarded at every step by detectives, and no one knows when or where a fresh explosion will take place.

But England has great heads and brave hearts to labour in the service of her safety and power; and the clouds which lower, dense and heavy, over the throne of the queen may in due time lift, and leave her realm as secure as before.—*Youth's Companion*.



SEEKING TO WIN A WIFE IN TARTARY.

Perhaps the most serious of these—even more serious than the Soudan problem—is the advance of Russia towards India. Within a few weeks Russian troops have advanced on the borders of Afghanistan, until they are said to be within forty miles of Herat.

Herat is perhaps the most formidable fortress of Central Asia. It lies within the frontiers of Afghanistan, close to the line both of lower Turkestan and of Persia. It commands the great highway which leads from the Caspian Sea to the borders of India.

It is most strongly fortified by ramparts of artificial hills ninety feet high, which are themselves crowned with

It is no wonder, then, that the English are most anxiously watching the movements of the Russians, as they approach nearer and nearer to this great military stronghold, and apprehending the time when they will menace British territory from its very frontier.

Ireland is still a sore trial and trouble to England. The concessions made to her have not resulted in producing contentment and loyalty. The agitation for home rule goes on, and will become more than ever persistent in the next Parliament, when the number of Irish Nationalists, whom Mr. Parnell leads, will probably be

emy's force as well. He received from the "Celestial Emperor" the highest honour ever granted to a foreigner, the gift of "a yellow riding jacket to be worn on his person, and a peacock's feather to be carried in his cap." This made him a great mandarin, and one of the emperor's sacred body-guard.

Notwithstanding these distinguished honours, he returned to England and settled down to a quiet life at Gravesend, as commanding officer of the Royal Engineers. And it is of this quiet life that we wish to speak; for here also the hero spirit shone out brightly, though under quite different circumstances.

A Boy's Hero.

BY M. V. M.

YEARS ago, if you had been at Gravesend, England, you might often have seen the words, "God bless the Kernel," in staring chalk letters, on the fences. They were written by poor boys, who looked up to the "kernel" as a great hero, and the boys were right. He was and is a hero, and to-day all the world knows it.

"Chinese" Gordon won name and fame in China, whither he was sent to put down the Tai-Ping rebellion. This he accomplished in the most masterly manner, winning the respect and affection not only of his own men, but of great numbers of the en-