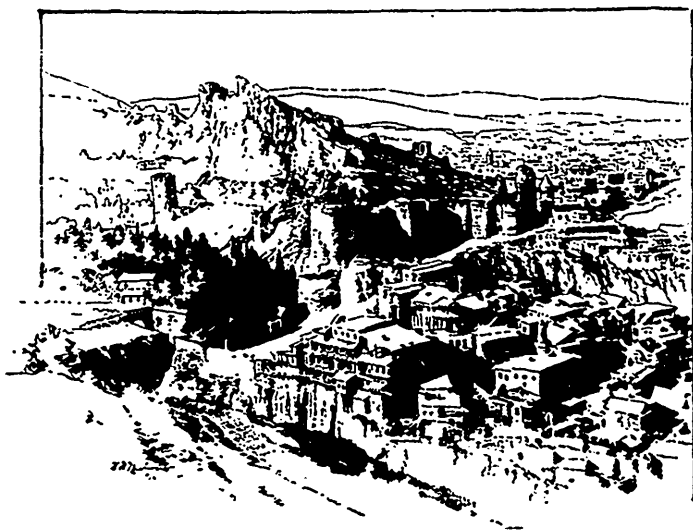


THE COSSACKS.



THE OLD CITADEL AT TIFLIS.—A COSSACK STRONGHOLD.



IT is interesting to note how within a few months the world has turned to the study of Japanese and Russian affairs. The boom of a cannon, the bursting of a shell in the far-off Eastern seas, and immediately the short-story writer has a tale of Russian life or one from the Sunrise Land. The journalist, the historian, the poet, each is ransacking his brains and his bookshelves for the wherewithal to satisfy a public eager to learn.

Not the least interesting of the peoples of Russia are those known as Cossacks.

Says a writer in *The Christian Herald*: What the Rough Riders are to the American army the Cossack is to Russia, but in a much larger degree. The personal escort of the Czar is supplied from a Cos-

sack regiment. The world has never seen a finer body of light cavalry, and the Russian military authorities have allowed the hardy horsemen of the Steppes to retain something of their own method of warfare, and to grant them a set of regulations distinct from those of the rest of the army.

The services the Cossacks have done to the Russian Empire are historic. It was they who conquered Siberia under the leadership of the valiant Yermak. It was they who defied the Turk, and, without artillery, captured the fortress of Asov. To them is entrusted the most difficult of all tasks, that of guarding the ever-growing frontiers against resentful neighbours. Recent travellers have described the Cossack outposts on the borders of Manchuria perched in almost inaccessible wilds, showing that the old duty has been assigned to this race of frontiersmen.