THE MOROCCO OF THE FUTURE AS MR. PERDICARIS PICTURES IT

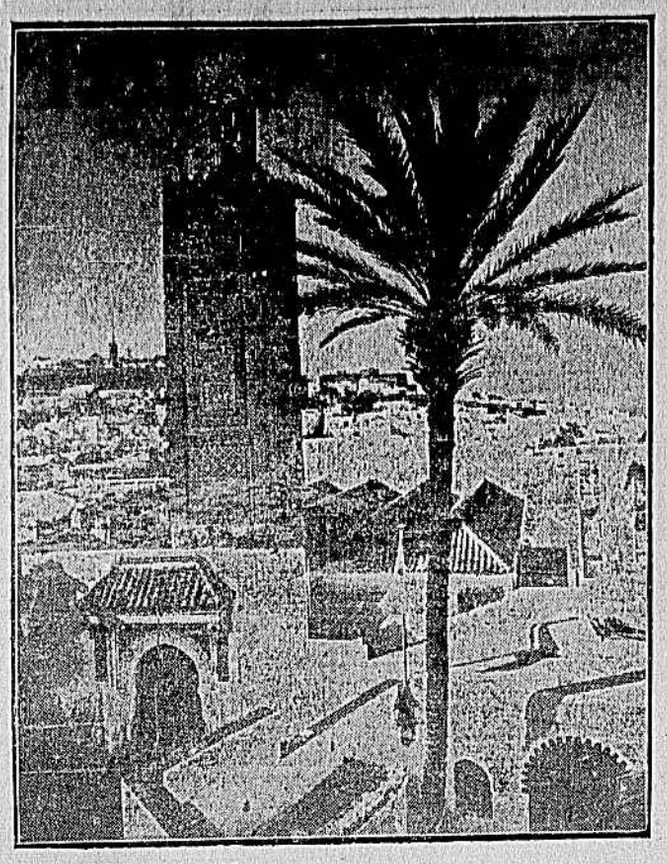
Describes the Striking Changes Which May Take Place by Algeciras Conference.

THE "SICK MAN" OF AFRICA

The International Bank, and How It Will Work—Oldest Mohammedans of the World.

By Frank G. Carpenter.

WASHINGTON, D. C., August 11.—I had a chat last night with Mr. Ion Perdicaris about the present condition of affairs in Morocco. Mr. Perdicaris will be remembered as the rich American who was kidnaped by Raisuli while at his country residence, five miles from Tangier. The brigands carried him into the mountains and kept him there for six weeks until the Sultan sent the $70,000 which was demanded as a ransom. This captivity was injurious to Mr. Perdicaris's health, and it almost ruined the health of his wife. Upon his release he left Morocco for Europe and then came to the United States. He has spent the past winter in Washington endeavoring to regain his strength, and it was in his apartments in Stoneleigh Court that I met him.



TANGIER IN 1906.

Backed by the Powers.

Said Mr. Perdicaris:

"In a nutshell, the effect of the international conference at Algeciras has been to put Morocco, to some extent, under the jurisdiction of the great powers of Europe. The several nations have agreed that the integrity of the Sultan is to be maintained, and that from now on there is to be equal trade for every one in Morocco.

"A national bank has been opened in Tangier to finance the obligations of the Sultan. This bank is so constituted that every nation which took part in the conference has a share in it. France has two shares, and the syndicate which placed the first loan of $10,000,000 with the Sultan some time ago has a like number. Altogether there are fifteen shares, which means that it will require the vote of eight shares, or a majority of the stock, to sanction the placing of any loan, mortgage, or other obligation. In other words, his majesty cannot incur any such debts without a majority of the nations agree. The capital of the bank is to be not less than 15,000,000 francs, and it cannot be more than 20,000,000.

Morocco Not Safe.

"In addition to this," continued Mr. Perdicaris, "the conference provided that there may be a tax on the buildings in the towns and cities throughout the Empire, and also that from 2,000 to 2,500 policemen are to be assigned to the eight coast towns, and that they shall be commanded by sixteen or seventeen French or Spanish officers."

"Will that make Morocco safe for foreigners?"

"I think not," replied Mr. Perdicaris. "Before I was captured by Raisuli I thought the Berbers of the mountains had only old flint lock guns and that they could do nothing in competition with our foreign soldiers, who are armed with modern rifles. When I was taken into the mountains it was by men who had the best of our improved weapons, and in the region where I was imprisoned there were more than five thousand soldiers equipped with modern guns. Against a force like that the whole twenty-five hundred policemen would be of little effect, and, if they were scattered among eight towns, hundreds of miles apart, one can easily see that they would be inadequate to any kind of protection. The number of foreign officers is too small, and it is a question whether they can control the native troops. Indeed, I should not advise foreigners to attempt to travel through the interior of Morocco."

The Situation in Tangiers.

"How about Tangier?"

"It was at my country home within five miles of Tangier that I was captured. I had nineteen servants with me at my house and considered myself perfectly safe. The truth is that a radical change over that of the past has taken place in Tangier, caused by the Anglo-French agreement of 1904.

"A few years ago we considered Gibraltar our chief defense, knowing that we could call for the English troops to come over in case of an outbreak and have a strong force land within a few hours. This is prevented now by that agreement. You may remember how it arose. The French, who had hampered the English in the administration of Egypt, made an agreement to give them a free hand there, if they, in return, would allow France to have a free hand in Morocco. Great Britain then said that France ought to assist in the administrative, economic, financial and military reforms in Morocco, and practically agreed to keep her hands off. After that she would not have dared to send troops across from Gibraltar, for the French would have considered such an act of violation of the spirit of the agreement and might have resisted it. When I returned from my captivity, I saw the Governor of Gibraltar, Sir George White, and he told me he would have been powerless to have defended Tangier in case of assault. You may have also noticed that the English government recently sent work to the Gibraltar officers that they must be careful in going about Tangier and must not risk making expeditions of any kind into the interior of Morocco."

"What has been the position of France in regard to Morocco?"

"It has for years been looking upon it with greedy eyes, and that not only as a commercial, but as a military proposition. Among the best of the French soldiers are the Berbers of Algeria. There are many of the same race in Morocco, and if France could control that country as it does Algeria and Hunisia, it could add at least one hundred thousand Berber soldiers to its army. That is a strong incentive for a nation situated as the French are."

"What plans had they made to get that control?"

"Their scheme was to avail themselves of the Sultan's absolute necessity for money. They intended to proffer loans, and in connection therewith to secure a lien upon, first, the custom houses; secondly, the foreign relations, and thirdly, the entire administrative mechanism of the government. In order to secure those results, some display of military force might have been necessary, but M. Delcasse, the author of the scheme, was not able to command the support of the Chamber of Deputies, and it temporarily failed.

"Then the other nations objected and we had the Algeciras conference."

"But did not France loan some money to the Sultan?"

"Not as a government, but a loan was made with the support of the government and in a way it was partly a government scheme. The money was furnished by the Banque de Paris a des Pays Bas. At the time it was given the Sultan was attempting to put down a pretender to the throne, Jilala el Zarhouni, who falsely claimed to be his brother. His majesty lacked money to pay his troops and he had to repress that rebellion or lose his throne. He thereupon borrowed 50,000,000 francs, or about $10,000,000, of the bank I have mentioned at 5 per cent. interest and secured this by a mortgage of the custom receipts of the port towns. That money was quickly spent, and the Sultan was about to borrow more, giving additional concessions, when he was prevented by the notables of his own country, who warned him that such an action might cost him his throne and his life. You see the Moroccans are very independent. They did not want their country mortgaged to Europe, and a state near akin to anarchy was the result. It was only a little after this that my capture took place.

IAN H. PERDICARIS.

Where Germany Came In.

"About this time Germany came into the field," continued Mr. Perdicaris. "The world thought that the reason for its entrance was the fear that the foreign trade of Morocco might be captured by France. This may have been one incentive, but the real milk in the cocoanut was the extraordinary military possibilities of Morocco. The Germans had learned the plans of the French and they did not propose to have a hundred thousand extra troops added to the French army. They feared a possible European war at some time in the future in which those Berber troops might turn the scale and cause Germany the loss of the Rhine. The Kaiser is a great commercial drummer, as far as his country is concerned, but he is a great soldier as well, and he appreciated the military situation when he objected to the annexation of Morocco to France."

"When did Kaiser Wilhelm realize that situation, Mr. Perdicaris?"

"No one knows outside himself and his counsellors. Indeed, he never intimated that such a situation existed, but he probably became aware of it through the Paris newspapers. When the Anglo-French agreement was published the French editors began to crow over the possibilities of the future. They pointed out the enormous strength that their army would have by the addition of Morocco, and ventured that with England now at her back, France had a fair show in a new struggle with Germany. There is no doubt but that the Kaiser was alarmed, for we know he sent his agent, Count Tattenbach, to Fez to say that a German banking institution would loan money to the Sultan. He hoped in this way to offset the French and acquire merit himself. Later on the Kaiser stopped at Tangier on his way through the Strait of Gibraltar, and then made the statement that he would hold Morocco to its treaty stipulations with Germany. This prevented any further progress in the French scheme, and eventually led to the conference."

Politics Make Strange Bedfellows.

"How did the nations stand, at the conference?" I asked.

"That would be difficult to say if one considered the matter from a newspaper point of view only. The reports presented the situation far different from what it really was, and it is interesting to look behind the scenes and see how matters really stood. In the first place, France had Spain and Italy as her friends. The Spanish were pro-French because they had an understanding with France that any gain she might make in Morocco was not to interfere with Spain's historic rights there. The French had the support of Italy because the Italians are among their chief customers, and also because the two countries are closely associated in business enterprises of many kinds. Italy also hopes to acquire Tripoli through the aid of France. She failed, as you know, to gain Abyssina as a colonial possession, and her territory on the African continent is small. Tripoli lies just over the way, and while not of great material value, the Italians look upon it with hungry eyes."

"How did the English stand there?"

"[illegible] the Portuguese bonds are largely held in Great Britain, and if the English should foreclose Portugal might be bankrupt.

"By Belgium and Holland because they are closely associated with England in business, and also because they want to retard any advances by Germany, fearing that Germany, on some pretext, may at some time take possession of their territories and annex them to the German Empire."

"How about Russia?"

"She was too much engaged with her troubles at home and her war in the Far East to take a great part in the conference, but she voted with France, much to the disgust of the Germans, who had hoped she would be with them. As a result of that move the Kaiser had no help but from Austria."

"Where did the United States come in?"

"It took the part of a peacemaker rather than anything else, and stood only for equal rights for all nations as to the foreign trade in Morocco."

The Sultan of Morocco vs. the Sultan of Turkey.

"How does this conference leave Morocco?"

"It seems to me that it puts her in much the position that Turkey holds today on account of the jealousies of the nations. The Sultan of Morocco will be strong in the same way.

"No one nation will be permitted by the others to do any great thing in controlling, exploiting or developing his country, and such developments, if they take place, will be largely on the part of individuals. The Sultan will now get money from the bank, and he will perhaps introduce reforms of one kind or another in the way of taxation."

"How about the people of Morocco; will they allow foreigners to build railroads?"

"Yes, I think so, if the roads can be built without endangering the loss of independence. Many of the Moroccans want to see the country developed. They realize that railroads will bring in money, and men like Raisuli would welcome such institutions because they will make peace more stable and the people better off. I look for the Germans to organize syndicates to introduce modern improvements. I also expect to see them pushing their trade more than any other nation."

"Are the Moors anxious to have an increase of foreign trade?"

"Yes, indeed," replied Mr. Perdicaris. "They are now dependent upon outside countries for almost all their manufactured goods. In the past they had many industries. They reared silkworms and made most beautiful cloths of gold thread and embroidery. They also did weaving of other kinds. They had their own designs and their stuffs were considered especially beautiful. Then the European factories copied the Moroccan patterns and made cloth of the same character out of cheaper stuffs and undersold the native goods in the domestic markets. As a result, the beautiful old cloths are passing away, and the people are changing to farmers and shepherds. The most of the manufactured articles come from abroad, and the people rely upon their cattle, sheep, fruit and farm products to pay for them."

"What does the foreign commerce amount to?"

"It is now only about $11,000,000 a year, but it might be considerably increased. The exports are about $5,000,000, and they consist of beans, skins, hides, fruits, olive oils and woods. The country is pastoral, and hides in large quantities are at times shipped to the United States. Many of our American shoes are made of Moroccan goat skin, and our books are bound in Morocco kid. Just now, however, there is a radical falling off in such exports to the United States, because the agents who are shipping hides and skins from Morocco have loaded them with dirt to make them weigh more and bring higher prices."

"What are the imports of Morocco?"

"They amount, all told, to about $6,000,000 a year," said Mr. Perdicaris, "consisting chiefly of cotton, sugar and tea, with some cannon, firearms and a little machinery."

About the Berbers.

"Is there any probability that the Berbers may join together and establish an independent government?"

"I think not. They are brave and they love independence, but they are so cut up by feuds that it will be impossible for them to combine in any great revolution. These people live largely in the mountains, their villages being scattered along the slopes and through the valleys of the Atlas. One village will have a feud with another village, and its people will shoot each other upon sight, and in a battle will fight to the death. While I was with Raisuli I saw a village burning, and was told that it was the work of a neighboring village, whose inhabitants had swooped down and killed the citizens as the result of a feud."

"Tell me something about your captivity with these people."

"I have done that for the public in my several lectures, and I do not know that I can say anything new. My capture occurred at my summer home near Tangier, and I was taken on horseback about fifty miles away into the mountains.

"I underwent many hardships, and the suspense was a terrible strain upon my family and upon me, but, thanks to the efforts of the President and our government, I was released, the sultan paying the ransom demanded."

"Do you expect to get any indemnity for the injury to your health and property owing to your captivity or the raids of Raisuli?"

"Most certainly not," replied Mr. Perdicaris. "I am too much concerned over the trouble and expense that the sultan has been put to on my account and too grateful for the prompt intervention of the United States government to think of troubling either one or the other with any demands of mine. I have, moreover, the friendliest of feelings toward Morocco and her people and desire nothing so much as their welfare and improvement."

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