

OIL WELLS OF BAKU

Big Industry That Standard
Successfully Competes With.

SHRINE OF FIRE WORSHIP

Four Bright Flames Around Which
Temple Was Built.

REFINERY NOW IS ON SITE

Nobel Brothers of Sweden Develop-
ed Business—Many Inde-
pendent Owners.

BY WILLIAM E. CURTIS.
Special Correspondence of The Star and the
Chicago Record-Herald.

BAKU, Russia, June 12, 1910.
In ancient times for thousands of years,
no one knows how long, the Persians
used to come up to the shores of the Cas-
pian sea where the city of Baku now
stands and scrape off the ground the
seepage from the springs of oil that
were found near the water.

They used these scrapings for lubri-
cating purposes, for fuel, for light, for
healing wounds and for various other
useful purposes, and exercised much in-
genuity in cleaning and applying them.

At some remote date—it may have been
as far back as the time of Daniel the
prophet—the fire worshippers, the follow-
ers of Zoroaster, found here several oil
springs on fire. The naphtha must have
caught fire by accident. They considered
it a miracle, and through many centu-
ries made pilgrimages to worship and
adore the flames.

Ultimately they built a temple, a square
structure of brick with a dome and four
chimneys, through which in some in-
genious manner they conducted the nat-
ural gas which exhaled from the naphtha
springs, and thus were able to maintain
four bright flames. The temple was in
the center of a large courtyard inclosed
by a high wall, in which were rooms for
the accommodation of pilgrims.

The gateway was monumental. Above it
rose a square tower about fifty feet
in height.

At the four corners were chimneys,
through which the gas was conducted in
the same manner as at the temple, and
in the inclosure. The light could be seen
for many miles in every direction. They
called it "The Shrine of Grace."

Refinery Replaces Temple.

This temple stood at the village of
Sourakhany, about ten miles from Baku.
The site is now occupied by the refinery
of the Kokovov Oil Company. It was torn
down about 1880. For a century or two
before that date pilgrims came all the
way from India and the Parsee mer-
chants of Bombay, famous for their
riches and enterprise, furnished the
money to maintain the fire and enter-
tain the pilgrims.

The Parsees are the descendants of fire
worshippers who were driven from Per-
sia in the middle ages by Mohammedan
persecution. They retain some of the
customs and forms of worship of their
Persian ancestors.

Why the temple was abandoned and the
lights were allowed to go out I have not
been able to ascertain. The only rea-
sonable explanation is that after the
part of the world was wrested from Per-
sia by the Russians something must
have happened or the poor Parsees may
have been introduced which made it dif-
ficult or impossible to continue the cere-
monials and maintain the pilgrimages.

However, that may be, the Parsees
the forms of worship and the nationality of
the worshippers were gradually changed,
until now Russians and Armenians adore
the oil for the money it brings instead
of for its symbolical significance.

Development of Industry.

The development of the petroleum in-
dustry was slow and began late. The in-
habitants of the old Persian city of Baku
utilized the oil for light and fuel and gas
and burned it in stoves.

Then a Russian named Kokreff and an
Armenian named Mirsoeff obtained a con-
cession from the Russian government to
operate wells and refine the product. They
had a monopoly for twenty years, but did
a small business, producing an insignif-
icant quantity and a poor quality of burn-
ing fluid compared with the product of
the present day.

In 1876 the concession was revoked and
there was a rush of prospectors and spec-
ulators to this territory. Everybody who
could raise enough money to drive a well
did so, until today, within a radius of ten
miles from the city of Baku, are seven
hundred and thirty-six wells producing
more or less oil and belonging to almost
as many people.

The largest number are on a peninsula
extending into the Caspian sea called
Apocheron, between six and eight miles
north of the city, with about one-third as
many at a place called Bibi-Eybat, about
three miles south.

There are over one hundred independent
companies. Only twenty-five are doing a
refining business. Of these only eight
have sufficient capital to conduct their
operations upon a paying basis.

The large distribution of the interests is,
however, demoralizing. It has been a bad
thing for the town and the industry and
for everybody concerned, because when-
ever any large enterprise was undertaken
cut-throat competition has been used to
interrupt and embarrass it.

As one gentleman expressed it, it would
have been to the advantage of everybody
concerned if the Nobel company had been
produced at Baku had been allowed to run
into the sea.

Three Big Concerns.

There are three large companies, the
largest belonging to the family of the late
Alfred Nobel, the Swedish philanthropist,
who founded the Nobel Institute at Stock-
holm and endowed it with funds from
which the prizes for Nobel come. The
prizes for peace, science and literature are annually
paid.

Col. Roosevelt, you will remember, went
to Christiania the other day to receive the
Nobel prize for peace which was awarded
him two years ago because of his success
in reconciling Russia and Japan and put-
ting an end to the recent war.

Albert Nobel himself was largely inter-
ested in the development of the Baku oil
industry at the beginning, but about the
year 1877 he withdrew and his brothers
Ludwig and Robert Nobel came to the
work. They turned their holdings over
to a stock company many years ago.

Emmanuel Nobel, a son of Ludwig,
now holds the controlling interest in the
company. He is the Rockefeller of Rus-
sian petroleum and is estimated to be
worth \$60,000,000.

Although a Swede by birth and an-
cestry, he is a Russian subject, maintains
a splendid palace in St. Petersburg and
has a villa with a large park in the
Crimea, where he goes for the summer.

Rich Armenian Mantashoff.

The next richest man is an Armenian
named Mantashoff, who still lives in
Baku and looks after his interests. There
is also a Tartar gentleman who has made
millions in the Baku field and is spending
a part of his income in the erection of
a splendid building for a college in the city
of Baku.

The institution will be provided with
an endowment sufficient to maintain a
competent faculty and pay for the free
education of a certain number of young
men of Tartar families forever. It will
be altogether the most imposing building
in Baku when it is finished and it stands
upon the principal street.

The second largest company is controlled
by a French syndicate organized by the
Rothschilds twenty-two years ago. The
third in importance is owned by local
Armenians.

These three companies practically con-
trol the refining and shipping of the oil
from Baku, considering the area of the oil fields,

Store Closes Daily at 5 P.M.

Saturdays 6 P.M.

Parker, Bridget & Co.'s

ANNUAL MIDSUMMER

CLEARANCE SALE

COMMENCES TODAY.

INVOLVING EVERY SUIT OF CLOTHES IN THE HOUSE

(Excepting Full Dress and Tuxedos).

The response today to yesterday's announcement is nothing more than we expected. Hundreds of Washington's smart dressers await this Annual Midsummer Event to lay in an advance supply of clothing and furnishings, knowing full well that P.-B. styles of this season will be worn next season. While the profits have been clipped off for the sake of immediate clearance, we are just as happy to greet and to serve those who care to profit by the season's inevitable product—the "final clean-up" preparatory to the ushering in of a new season with new merchandise.

The original tags remain on every garment. Nothing held in reserve. No suits sent on approval. But please bear in mind that we refuse to allow any suit to leave the store that is not perfect in every detail.

Men's and Young Men's Suits.

All produced for the current season. Fancy and plain fabrics—two and three piece styles for men and young men of all sizes and ages and tastes.

\$12 2 and 3 Piece Suits Reduced to	\$9.00
\$15 2 and 3 Piece Suits Reduced to	\$10.75
\$18 2 and 3 Piece Suits Reduced to	\$13.25
\$20 2 and 3 Piece Suits Reduced to	\$14.25
\$25 2 and 3 Piece Suits Reduced to	\$18.75
\$30 2 and 3 Piece Suits Reduced to	\$21.75
\$35 2 and 3 Piece Suits Reduced to	\$25.25

Clearance Sale of Boys' Clothes and Furnishings.

Suits in all styles, sizes and fabrics, including our entire line of Russian and Sailor Blouse Suits in blue and fancy effects; also Double-breasted Knickerbocker Suits in fancy worsteds, cassimeres and chevots.

\$5.00 Suits Reduced to.....	\$3.33	\$10.00 Suits Reduced to.....	\$6.66
\$6.00 Suits Reduced to.....	\$4.00	\$12.50 Suits Reduced to.....	\$8.34
\$7.50 Suits Reduced to.....	\$5.00	\$15.00 Suits Reduced to.....	\$10.00
\$8.50 Suits Reduced to.....	\$5.66	50c Blouses to clear at.....	.39c

All Children's Straw Hats at 1/3 Off.

Boys' Underwear.

Regular 25c Balbriggan Underwear; small sizes only 19c

"Porosknit" and Nainsook Underwear. Special.... 25c

BOYS' SOCKS; 25c qualities. To clear at..... 19c

Boys' Furnishings.

Khaki Knickers. 75c values at..... 50c

Youths' Neglige Shirts, in white and colors (also shirts with

soft collars attached), 75c and \$1.00.

Odd Knickerbocker Pants in Fancy Effects.

\$1.25 and \$1.50 values..... 98c

\$1.75 and \$2.00 values..... \$1.48

Haberdashery at Clearance Prices.

\$1.00 and \$1.50 Neglige Shirts at 85c

In plaited and plain bosoms; coat style; cuffs attached; sizes 14 to 17. These are NOT Shirts bought for special sale purposes, but are our regular \$1.00 and \$1.50 stock and represent 85c the season's most desirable patterns. Clearance price

Genuine Soisette (Soft) Shirts,

In Fancy Self Striped and Figured Effects,

\$2.00 and \$2.50 Values for \$1.50

Sizes 14 to 16, in white, champagne and cream, with silk-finish self stripes and figures; made in the very best manner for high-class trade. They have the soft Byron double cuffs. \$1.50

By far the most popular summer shirt of the season. Tomorrow.....

Any Belt in the House, 50c.

Values from \$1.00 to \$2.50; all sizes and leathers 50c

75c Collarless Night Shirts at 50c

Plain white, soft and light, with neat, fancy trimming; cut full and long—the best 75c Night Shirt we have ever carried. While they last, tomorrow 50c

All 50c Wash Ties, 25c

And this means all the newest effects of the season. Your choice, tomorrow 25c

Clearance of Entire Stock of Straw Hats, Panamas and Bankoks.

\$5.00 Straws \$3.33	\$2.00 Straws \$1.33
\$4.00 Straws \$2.67	\$10.00 Bankoks . . \$6.67
\$3.00 Straws \$2.00	\$6.00 Bankoks . . \$4.00

All Panamas 1/3 Off.

Clearance of "Teck" Shoes.

All \$5.00 Oxfords Now \$3.95

In gun, metal, tan and patent colt.

Broken Lots and Sizes of

\$5.00, \$4.00 and \$3.50 "Teck" Oxfords, \$2.95

All leathers, tomorrow.....

Head-to-Foot Outfitters for
Gentlemen and Their Sons.

Parker, Bridget & Co.

"Ninth and the Avenue."

much larger than in any part of the
United States.

Greatest Oil Field.

Baku produces more oil than any other
single field. Last year its total product
was 55,863,504 barrels. Grosny, the
neighboring district, produced 6,516,627
barrels, making the total from the Cas-
pian 62,380,131 barrels, as compared with
179,562,479 barrels produced in the United
States.

Oklahoma is the largest producer of
any held in the United States, and the to-
tal for 1908, which are the latest figures
I can get here, produces 45,709,705 bar-
rels. California came second with 44,-
554,737 barrels; Illinois, 33,665,108 barrels;
Texas, 11,298,464 barrels; Ohio, 10,884,-
797 barrels; Pennsylvania, 9,424,823 bar-

rels; West Virginia, 9,523,176 barrels;
Louisiana, 4,131,173 barrels; Indiana,
3,285,629 barrels; Kansas, 1,801,781 bar-
rels, and New York, 1,180,123 barrels.

Austria is the second producer of the
countries in Europe, and reports 12,612,-
205 barrels for 1908. Roumania comes
next, with 8,252,157 barrels, and Germany
1,608,273 barrels.

From these figures you will see that the
industry at Baku is important. The
Russian government derives a revenue of
between \$50,000,000 and \$75,000,000 a year
by taxing it. There is a direct tax upon
the producers, an additional tax of 80
cents upon every good, which is eight
gallons, produced, besides the income
from the sale of stamps required on con-
tracts, bills of lading and all other com-
mercial paper.

The little city of Baku, with 117,000 in-
habitants, mostly Persians, Armenians

and Tartars, is the fourth source of revenue
for the Russian treasury.

"The Dark City."

Most of the refineries, especially those
of the Nobel and French companies, are
located at what is called in Russian
Tchorny Gorod, or "The Dark City,"
which is connected with Baku by street
car lines. The Nobel company has pro-
vided homes for its officers and employees
at the "White City," a mile or two away
—Bely Gorod, as it is called in Russian.

The Dark City consists of a large num-
ber of refineries surrounded by high
walls, the streets being occupied by rail-
way tracks mostly covered with tank
cars, and the gutters on both sides are
filled with a network of pipes tapping a
myriad of tanks and conducting the oil

between the wells and the refineries and
the reservoirs where it is stored for ship-
ment.

The Dark City is located upon the shore
of the Caspian sea, where extensive
docks have been built and pumps pro-
vided for filling tank boats which carry
oil up the Volga river into the interior
of Russia as far as Moscow, via Astrak-
han, where it flows into the Caspian.

The Nobel Refinery.

Mr. Norman, an English engineer, who
formerly lived in Chicago and spent sev-
eral years in the employ of the Standard
Oil Company, showed me around the No-
bel refineries and told me an interesting
story of the development of the industry
here.

"Naphtha Springs, as they were called,
have been known here for ages," said Mr.

Norman. "The fire worshippers came a
thousand miles for thousands of years to
worship them until the Russians con-
quered the territory."

"In the 60s a steamship company on the
Caspian sea undertook to collect oil by
scraping the surface of the ground, and
it carried it to other ports. It was also
shipped into the interior by camel car-
avans."

"Then two gentlemen, a Russian and an
Armenian, obtained a concession to work
the deposit, and had a monopoly until
1876, when the Nobel brothers of Sweden—
Alfred, Ludwig and Robert—came down,
put their brains at work, built refineries
and have been here ever since. They now
practically control the industry, employ-
ing about ten thousand people, and have
refineries and machine shops covering an
area of one and a half square miles."

"Arthur Lessner, also a Swede, is gen-
eral manager. The company is a stock
concern organized under the Russian laws
and its shares are dealt in regularly on
all the stock exchanges of Europe."

"There are eighteen pipe lines between
the wells and the works," said Mr. Nor-
man, "which were built by the Nobels
about thirty years ago. Until then the
oil was carried on the backs of camels
and in caravans."

"The common labor is performed by
Persians, who are paid from thirty-five
to fifty cents a day, American money,
and the skilled labor is Armenian, which
is paid from sixty to seventy-five cents
a day. The Nobel Company has provid-
ed neat and comfortable tenement houses
for the employees at the White city, with
clubhouses, hospitals and other humane
provisions."

Mr. Norman says the industry is not
prosperous, that the Standard Oil Com-

pany is driving the Baku product out of
Europe, and that Russia is now prac-
tically the only market the Baku manu-
facturers are able to control."

A new oil field has been found within
the last year or so near the town of
Malkop, in the northern foot hills of the
Caucasus range of mountains, and there
has been a good deal of excitement in
consequence. Very little is known about
conditions there, however, and the condi-
tion of the market, because of the ag-
gressive policy of the Standard Oil Com-
pany, is not encouraging for its develop-
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here admits, can produce a better quality
of refined petroleum as well as lubricat-
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them at a less price in every market in
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