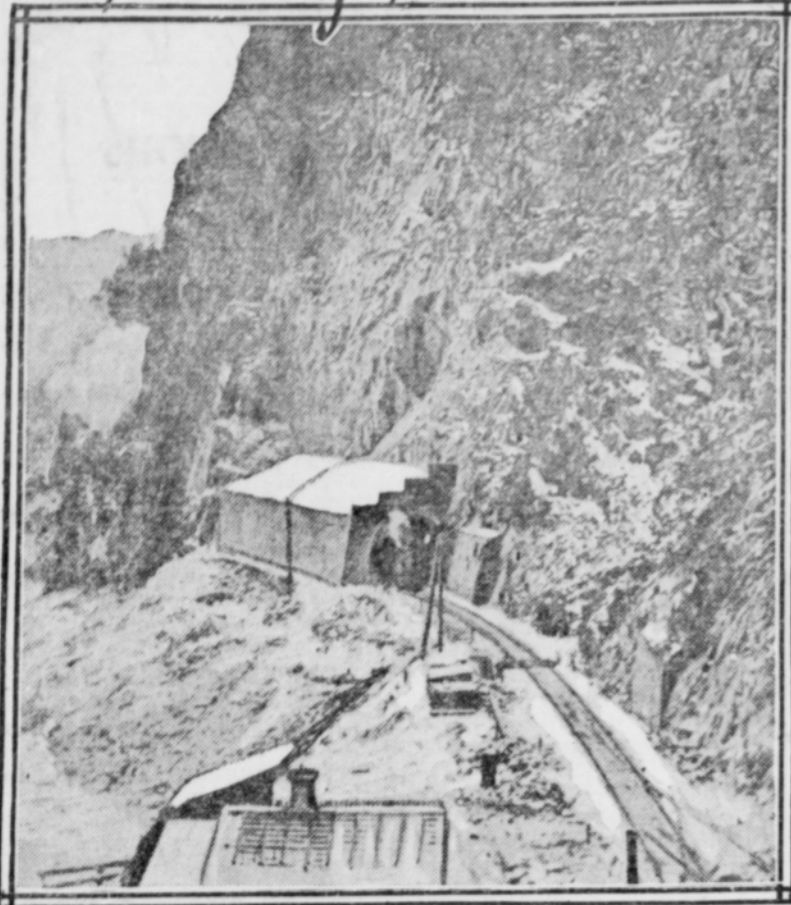


# Through Siberia



Trans-Siberian Railway Along Cliffs of Lake Baikal.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

WHEN the Trans-Siberian railway and its feeder lines farther west are functioning for travelers few more interesting journeys may be made than across Russia and into the heart of Siberia. A hundred miles beyond the Volga, blue heights appear on the eastern horizon, and the train quickly enters the foothills of the Ural range, their gently rounded slopes descending into charming valleys, pasture alternating with open woods which distantly suggest those of the "parks" of Colorado—woods not thick, because the climate is dry, but scattered in picturesque clumps over hill and dale.

As the line pierces deeper into the mountains, the gorges are narrower and are filled with a denser forest, out of which bare summits rise to heights of three or four thousand feet. It is a lonely land, with few and small villages, but it is rich in gold and silver, copper, coal, and platinum—from here came in pre-war days nearly all of the world's supply of that metal—with an extraordinary variety of rare and valuable stones.

The train takes about seven hours to traverse this picturesque region, stopping here and there at a busy mining town, and passing an obelisk which, at the summit level, marks the frontier of Europe and Asia. Thereafter it emerges suddenly (for the Asiatic slope is shorter and steeper than the European) on the boundless plains of Siberia, here bare and almost waterless as are those of Arizona, but drier.

But presently one comes, at the thriving town of Omsk, which was in 1918 the headquarters of Admiral Kolchak in his campaign against the Bolsheviks, to the first of the four great Siberian rivers, the Irtysh, which, having risen far away to the south in the hills of western Mongolia, is here on its northern path to join the Obi and send its waters into the Arctic sea.

## Scenery East of the Obi.

To the Obi itself, an even fuller stream, one comes in eight hours more, and sees a flotilla of steamers moored to its bank. From this point onward the country is rougher and thinly inhabited, for much of the land is the sort of forest swamp which the people call taiga.

On each side of the railway track the woods have been cut back to leave an open space of 50 to 100 yards wide, so that sparks or coals from the locomotive will not start a conflagration. This open, wide grassy belt is in summer covered with a luxuriant growth of tall flowers on each side of the line, giving the effect of what gardeners call a "herbaceous border," with the railroad track for the gravel walk between the two flower beds.

Behind stand the pines, with their tall, straight, reddish trunks, contorted boughs, and dark-green foliage, beautiful as are those of the Scottish Highlands.

After many hours' journey through this delightful parterre, the traveler sees beneath him in a valley, 300 feet deep, the grandest of all the Siberian rivers, the Yenisei, with the city of Krasnoyarsk lying on the slope between the station and the stream.

Thirty hours more bring the traveler to the fourth river at Irkutsk, that capital of eastern Siberia for which the contending Bolshevik and anti-Bolshevik armies fought so long in 1917 and 1918. It is the Angara, bearing down a tremendous torrent of clear green water from Lake Baikal, which the train reaches before long.

## Around Lake Baikal.

Lake Baikal is one of the great inland seas of the world, nearly as long as Lake Superior, though not so wide, for in clear weather the eye can reach from the one shore to the other. It fills a bowl-shaped depression 400 miles long, between high mountains dipping steeply into its waters; and on its coasts there are only wood-cutters and fishermen, with a few hunters.

Till long past the middle of last century, some while before the Trans-

continental railroad was built, there was no way from the west into the lands of the Amur river and Manchuria except by a ferry across the lake of some twenty or more miles in the summer, or by sledging over its icy floor in winter, and the travelers of those days loved to describe the midnight drive under a brilliant moon.

Now the line runs for many miles along its southern shore on a shelf cut out of the steep mountain side, high above the waves, with frequent tunnels through projecting cliffs.

So much for the western portion of the Transcontinental railway, the one great factor in the social and economic life of Siberia which those who wish to understand the country must keep always in mind.

Now let us turn to western Siberia in particular, and to the Altai mountains.

Altai is the name given to the southwestern part of a great mountain mass which divides the lowlands of Siberia from the plateau of central Asia, sending forth on one side the great rivers that flow north to the Arctic ocean, and on the other, the southern and drier side of the range, smaller streams that lose themselves in the lakes or marshes of Mongolia.

Most of this vast mountain land is unexplored, and only a small part has been surveyed for the purpose of locating the mineral wealth it is believed to contain. From the very beginning of history all these regions north and east of the Black sea and the Caspian had remained unvisited and unknown from the days of Homer down to those of Marco Polo.

In the fifth century Attila led his Hunnish hordes across Germany into Italy and Gaul, followed by Avars and Bulgarians and Magyars, and in the thirteenth century there came the tremendous invasion of the Mongols under Genghis Khan.

## To the Altai Mountains.

A logical point of departure for the mountains is the town of Novo Nikolaevsk, a mushroom growth of the years since the opening of the Transcontinental line, for it stands at the meeting point of two great lines of trade—that of the Obi, which brought down the minerals and the grain and the butter from the south, and that of the railway which carried these products eastward to Irkutsk and beyond to the Pacific, westward to Russia and Germany. It reminds one of the new cities in the newest parts of America, with its big warehouses rising fast; along half-finished roadways, while the untouched prairie, dotted here and there with scrub birches, lay just outside the houses.

From Novo Nikolaevsk one journeys southward 200 miles to Rilsk, formerly a place of some importance, to which all the butter coming from the vast pastures which lie all round was brought, and to which lumber from the vast mountain forests beyond was floated down the River Biya, which, joined a few miles lower down by the River Katun, issuing from the Altai, forms the Obi. It lies at the edge of the steppe, here rising nearly 200 feet above the stream.

From Rilsk one must travel to the mountains by horse-drawn conveyance over roads none too good. The first day's journey is over the rolling grassy steppe; the second brings one into soft valleys between the lower hills, valleys filled with flowers of many brilliant hues, such as one might find on the lower slopes of the Alps in July, for here the snow does not melt away till May.

The way is not without its difficulties. These are rocky tracks along the crumbling edges of deep ravines, and there are swamps where stones hidden in the mud sometimes all but capsize the luckless vehicle into the water.

All these and many other drawbacks to an Altai journey are outweighed by the views one gets from the heights, as well as by the wild charm of the woods and the sparkling torrents that foam down the gorges.

## Improved Uniform International Sunday School Lesson

(By REV. F. B. FITZWATER, D.D., Dean of Day and Evening Schools, Moody Bible Institute of Chicago.)  
(© 1924, Western Newspaper Union.)

### Lesson for December 12

#### THE BOY SAMUEL

LESSON TEXT—1 Sam. 3:10, 15-19.  
GOLDEN TEXT—Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.  
PRIMARY TOPIC—The Boy Samuel.  
JUNIOR TOPIC—God Calls the Boy Samuel.  
INTERMEDIATE AND SENIOR TOPIC—The Boyhood of a Great Leader.  
YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULT TOPIC—Hearing and Heeding God's Voice.

In order to grasp the story of Samuel's boyhood life, a survey should be made of 1 Samuel, ch. 1-3.

I. Samuel Given in Answer to Prayer (1 Sam. 1:19, 20).

The name Samuel means "asked of God." He was given to Hannah in answer to her prayers. In connection with her asking this gift from God, she vowed to give him to God. He was to be therefore a Nazirite all the days of his life.

II. Samuel Given to the Lord (1 Sam. 1:24-28).

For a time he was cared for by his mother in the home. The best nurse and teacher for a child is its mother. According to her vow when she asked the Lord for this child, at an early age she took him to the sanctuary and gave him over to the charge of Eli, the priest, to minister in the sanctuary.

III. Features of Israel's History in This Period (2:12-36).

1. The demoralized priesthood.  
(1) They were actuated by greed (2:12-17).

It was God's will that those who ministered at the altar should live of the things of the altar, but they broke through the divine regulations touching this matter, even to securing their selfish ends by force.

(2) Gross immorality (2:22).

The courts of God's house were thus polluted. The condition of the nation was most appalling: Degradation and ruin follow rapidly when God's ministers are under the sway of lust and greed.

2. An alienated people (2:30-32).

Their sins separated them from God. God's holiness is such that those who practice sin are alienated from Him.

3. The cessation of divine revelation (3:1).

The Word of God was precious in those days. "There was no open vision." This shows that God was silent. The message from the Lord was more a memory than a present experience. The same thing in principle is true of the individual life today. Some who once enjoyed fellowship with God no longer hear His voice speaking to them.

IV. God Called Samuel (3:2-10).

In striking contrast with the degeneracy of the nation, we have before us the beautiful life of Samuel. Dwelling within the sacred courts and ministering before the Lord with Eli is the innocent Samuel who is become the savior of his people. In Samuel we have a striking pattern of child religion. The Lord gave him in answer to Hannah's prayer. From his birth he was dedicated to the Lord. While quite young his mother took him to the sanctuary of the Lord where he served and slept. Two traits in Samuel's character stand out in this call, namely, his cheerful obedience to the Lord's call and his surrendered will. He expressed his willingness before he knew what was required. He did not inquire what was wanted and then let his obedience depend upon its suiting him. We should believe that the Lord knows what is best and he willing to yield glad obedience to His commands.

V. Samuel's First Prophetic Message (3:11-15).

Up to this time Samuel obeyed the one who was over him, but the time had now come when he must directly hear and obey the Lord. The first message entrusted to him was a most terrible one. To deliver it was a most trying task. He hesitated to tell it to Eli, but when pressed by him he manifested the true courage which was lying back of his fear. It must have been a bitter experience to Eli to see Samuel recognized and himself passed by, but he was submissive. He knew that the slight was just. He could not fail to interpret it thus in view of the appearance of the man of God to him (2:27-36). This fearful visitation upon Eli's house was due to the sins of his sons. He was held accountable for not restraining them.

VI. Samuel Established in the Prophetic Office (3:19-21).

"And Samuel grew and the Lord was with him and did not none of His words fall to the ground and all Israel from Dan even to Beersheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord."

#### Supreme Blessedness

As long as we remain the ultimate owners and disposers of our goods we miss the supreme blessedness of life.—F. B. Meyer, D. D.

#### Obedience

Obedience to God's command is the gateway to high experience and large blessing.—Christian Monitor.

#### Life

Life is a constant want, therefore it should be a constant prayer.

## Children Making Washington Streets Safer



Adelaide Beard, one of the little "officers" of the police squad of the Weightman public school in Washington, is shown holding a truck back while the children of the school make a safe crossing. The "officers" wear badges in order to identify themselves to the children.

## Lodi Treasure Myth Exploded

### Secret Passage in Palace Reveals Skeleton, but Gold Is Missing.

Rome.—When one mentions Lodi, this prosperous city of Lombardy, one thinks of fine Parmesan cheese, for many experts insist that the very finest is made in this district. But now Lodi is connected with hidden treasure, and the legend of a golden stag buried under its foundation when the ancient city was attacked by the Milanese prior to 1158, when Emperor Frederick took it under his protection and a new city was built five miles from the destroyed town.

It was about a month ago that the people of Lodi were aroused from their everyday stolidity by the rumor that a treasure had been found under the ancient palace of the Sommariva. In former years, whenever there was any digging in the vicinity of the Laus Pompea, gold coins were found, and workmen often showed their finds secretly to their friends. But the present discovery was on a far greater scale, it was said. It was supposed that a golden stag, golden helmets and shields, with other equally rare treasures, had been found.

The Sommariva owned their palace from 1221, when they were leaders of the popular party and enemies of the Orvenighi, who headed the nobles. The Sommariva were Ghibelline and the others Guelph, and there was continual fighting. The Podesta made peace by exiling the Orvenighi, and the Sommariva became lords of the town.

#### Palace Ceded to Ghisi.

The family held the palace until 50 years ago, keeping it in its original form until the time of Napoleon, when the head of the family was a general in the Austrian army. Napoleon stormed the bridge in 1796. After the return of the general from the war he had the palace reconstructed, but left the old foundations as they were, as well as the fireplace. He died in Vienna and his successors remained in possession until the head of the family, Marchese Emilio di Salerno, moved to Milan. He ceded the palace to the Ghisi family. It still retains much of the old building, and in order to keep it in touch with the traditions of ancient Lodi neither steam heat nor an elevator has been installed.

Some weeks ago during a cold spell the wife of the owner, Ghisi, called an old servant and told her to light the fire in the ancient fireplace, at the back of which was an old coat of arms. Sticks and logs were being put into place when one of them hit the coat of arms, and as if by magic it sprang open, leaving a gaping hole.

The servant screamed and her mistress rushed in to see what had happened. She saw a huge opening in the back of the fireplace. Her son with friends decided to explore. With torches and rope they entered, one by

one, and found a winding staircase leading to the lower level, a distance of 18 feet down. It was necessary to take sticks, as the lower cavern was full of snakes, which had evidently been there for many years. On all sides were ancient walls with fragments of sculpture; on the floor were golden coins and a human skeleton.

#### Pit Believed Bottomless.

As night had fallen and they did not wish to alarm the people in the section of the palace where a convent of English nuns has its school, they postponed further search until daylight. The skeleton was taken to a sanitary office in order that they might examine it carefully and learn to what period it belonged. From the lower cavern the search continued down a walled passage under other passages. The search has been delayed, as it is necessary to get permission for the examination of other properties under which the passage runs.

Old inhabitants remember that in the gardens of the Sommariva palace there was a big hole which was supposed to be bottomless. The legend surrounding this was so impressive that it was considered necessary to cover up the aperture so that no accidents should occur. It is thought this was connected with the fireplace in the library, and was a secret entrance for those who did not wish to be seen entering the house. Those were troublesome times, and men found it necessary to surround their movements with a great deal of mystery.

Ghisi, the owner of the palace, has thrown light on the discovery by admitting that his father, after he had bought the house, was very much interested in the legends in the books in the library. He studied there often, and discussed with his son the possibility of finding the hidden treasure. One day when he was sitting in the library near the fireplace he inadvertently knocked against the wall and found that it sounded hollow. With a sharp instrument he pried into the wall, and succeeded in finding a secret hiding place. In this repository was a box, which he opened. Inside was a document in which the secret of the hidden golden stag was told.

#### Kept the Secret.

There was a coat of arms with a head of the golden stag, and underneath was the same coat of arms that was in the fireplace, while below was a cabalistic sign with two crossed bones and four circles containing the legend, "Ab igne per infera ad lucem." The father kept the secret of this document to himself. Possibly he feared ridicule if he started searching for the treasure, or possibly he could not understand the hidden directions. When he was on his death bed he called his son and handed him the box with the secret document, telling him all he knew of the treasure supposed to be hidden under the palace. This inscription has now been deciphered to mean: from the fireplace, ab igne; to

## CALLS DAUGHTER DIVORCE HOSTAGE; WINS HER CASE

Mother Says Child Was Held by Father to Force Her to Free Him.

Chicago.—Obvious excitement on the part of Mrs. Alice G. Agard, 3740 Pine Grove avenue, when she appeared to Superior Judge Joseph Sabath for a divorce, aroused the judge's interest. He questioned her and she said her five-year-old daughter, Johanna, had been held hostage a year and a half by her husband, Nelson Agard, wealthy publisher, to force her to get a divorce.

Judge Sabath immediately ordered the child brought into court and the mother and little girl met for the first time in 18 months. Mrs. Agard clasped her daughter in her arms and both wept joyfully.

Even though she had reclaimed the girl, she elected to obtain a divorce, anyway, and resumed her testimony,

charging cruelty. She was granted a decree.

Mrs. Agard said that early in the summer of 1925 she was living at the Buena Terrace hotel. She testified that her husband, then a magazine publisher in Chicago, now living in South Haven, Mich., kidnaped the child, who was playing in the hotel lobby. Then, according to her story, Mrs. Agard received this message, through an attorney: "You may have your child back when you obtain a divorce."

Later Mrs. Agard made an appointment to meet her husband in Boston in an attempt to get possession of the child, but he failed to appear, she said.

Finally, despairing of obtaining custody of her child in any other manner, she filed suit for divorce.

"But I wouldn't have him as a husband now," she declared. "I've got my child back and that's all I want."

## Coffee-Drinking King

### Uneasy After 62 Cups

Fergus Falls, Minn.—A new version of "uneasy lies the head that wears the crown" came into existence in the case of Gust Comstock, world's champion coffee drinker.

After sipping sixty-two cups of coffee in twelve hours he could not sleep. Comstock, who drinks an average of twenty cups a day, and who sleeps like the proverbial top ordinarily, reverted to his usual form after a period of restlessness.

His performance, marked by the tripling of marks set by eleven contestants, resulted in the breaking of his own record of fifty-six cups, established at Hibbing two years ago.

Comstock's pride was aroused when he was presented with a belt, studded with sixty-two coffee beans, each representing a cup in the world's championship mark. In the evening he was an honor guest at an American Legion banquet.

The champion, who is employed as a porter at a local barber shop, plans to "rest up" before taking on any challengers.

the subterranean, per infera ad lucem; which means to enter back of the fireplace, descend below and continue until you reach the light, which is the exit into the garden.

It is necessary, as these walls are a historical monument, to undertake the search together with a government employee sent by the department of excavation. As the family is certain that apart from the few golden coins there is no other treasure, it has decided to leave the passage open, and live in the tradition that a treasure was once hidden underneath.

## Lincoln's Rail Partner,

### 106, Survives 5 Wives

Dallas, Texas.—Henry Plumer, 106-year-old father of 34 children, rail-splitter with Abraham Lincoln, is now alone in his vine-shaded cottage in Dallas, ever since the death of his fifth wife.

His father, now 133 years old, was still enjoying life in Georgetown, D. C., when Henry last heard from him two months ago. His mother lived to be 73 years old. Henry himself was one of 29 children. Two brothers, Jim and Tom Plumer, returned to Africa in one of the ships that carried slaves to their original home soon after the close of the war between the states. Both are in their nineties and still living.

Henry has survived all of his five wives, his fifth one having died 17 years ago in Dallas at the age of 53. Of Henry's 34 children, 21 are living, the oldest being Nick, 84 years old, and in Los Angeles, and the youngest a married daughter, 33 years old, who lives in Dallas. Eighteen of them were born in Dallas, but in the approximate three dozen offspring there are no sets of twins or triplets.

## Nine Wives Widows

### as Hubby Succumbs

New York.—Nine wives were bereaved when their collective husband, John Lawrence Leclair, died in Clinton prison, Dannemora, where he was serving a sentence of five years for bigamy and two years for perjury.

His recorded wives were: Frances, of Ogdensburg, N. Y.; Rena, of Port Chester; Anna, of New York; Dora, of Syracuse; Virginia, of Fitchburg, Mass.; Maude of Lake George, N. Y.; Maude of Gloucester; Bertha of Poughkeepsie, N. Y., and Flora, of Cohoes, N. Y.

Bertha Haze of Poughkeepsie caused Leclair's arrest.

The Chinese used floor coverings, made of felted wool, before the Eighth century.