

IN the LEBANON



Scene in the Lebanon Country.

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

INTO the Lebanon, the great mountain famous for its cedars, one may have his choice of travel by rail, or by foot and saddle along the poorer roads and trails. The railway leads from Beirut over a pass in the mountains to Damascus. It is a narrow gauge rack-and-pinion system, and crosses the mountains at an elevation of 4,880 feet above sea level. Few have any idea that hidden away among the mountains are sights and scenes to excite the admiration of even the most disinterested; but, in order to see them, the comfort of the train has to be left and a number of miles covered in the saddle.

The railroad, built by the French, at times runs through some very fine scenery, and the entire journey of 90 miles is a constant panorama of mountain, forest, or plain.

At different points scattered in the mountains are to be found groups of cedar trees which until recent years suffered so severely at the hands of the natives that they were fast disappearing; but lately they have been protected. The largest group of these ancient and interesting trees is to be found at Beshreh. Here on an elevation are about 400 trees, the highest of which does not exceed 80 feet, while some are from 30 to 40 feet in circumference. By reason of heavy snows these trees can only be reached during the months of summer and early autumn when crowds of natives make merry under the pleasant shade afforded by the spreading branches of these monarchs of the mountains.

Were a visit made to the homes of these mountain people, there would be much of interest, for the raising of the silkworm and the subsequent silk harvest gives occupation to the majority of the men and women in the many villages.

Fattening the Sheep.

In every home throughout the mountains may be seen women and girls compelling an already too satisfied sheep to swallow a little more of the green food that has been gathered off the hill sides or purchased from some nearby garden or mulberry plantation.

This pet lamb, subject to frequent bathings, is being fattened to provide savory dishes through the long and severe winter that faces the native. During the month of November the fatted sheep is killed and cut up into mince-meat and melted in its own fat, to be used as a relish and sauce with the boiled rice or wheat that forms the staple dish of these hardy people.

Should occasion require, the fatted sheep may be killed to provide a feast for some unusual event, and in this custom there may be a perpetuation of the "fatted calf" of the Gospel. Hours are spent by the women and girls coaxing food down the throats of these overfed sheep, and toward the close of their existence they are so fat that they are unable to stand.

In some parts of the Lebanon the earth lends itself to the art of making pottery, and thousands of the natives get a livelihood by the manufacture of all kinds of earthenware vessels.

The Lebanon contains natural beauties and wonders that equal if not surpass those of other lands. There is a remarkable natural bridge that has a span of 125 feet with a river 75 feet beneath it. This bridge has been formed by the running of the waters of centuries from the melting snows on Jebel Senain, which rears its head 5,000 feet above sea level and is "mon arch of all it surveys" in the Lebanon. Over the bridge is a constant stream of traffic, for it is one of the main roads through the mountains. The native has no eye for its wonder, and the traveler from the West rarely crosses it.

Lots of Springs and Cascades.

Another charm of the Lebanon is the abundance of cold, clear spring water. One is led to wonder why the Creator has been so lavish with the life-giving fluid in the Lebanon, while lands nearby languish for want of it. Everywhere cascades, streams, springs, and waterfalls abound, sometimes to such an extent as to cause serious alarm and danger to the native and his property, but the finest fall of water in the mountains is to be seen at Akfa, far away in the east, and re-

quiring a long ride in order to reach it.

Out from a huge cavern high up in the cliffs rushes a strong flow of water, which comes tumbling down over the rocks into the valley below, in its course forming one of the finest waterfalls to be seen in all the Orient. In a land where water is so precious, it is no wonder that crowds of people resort there for many weeks during the long, hot months of summer. It may be interesting to those versed in mythology to know that this waterfall and spring are connected with the myth of Venus and Adonis, and on a spot not far away are the remains of the temple to Venus which was destroyed by the emperor Constantine because of the indecencies practiced there.

In ascending the Lebanon range on foot a good starting point is the town of Tripoli on the shore of the Mediterranean. The road strikes through a valley to Bsherreh, where one may spend the night, following the right-hand side of the Wadi Kadisha (Sacred Valley). The scenery is most striking. The entire hill sides are carefully terraced and planted with vines, from which in the autumn hang clusters of ripe fruit, unprotected except by a low stone wall.

As one ascends he continually passes beautifully located villages, most of the houses being of a modern type, large and with bright red imported tiled roofs, while a few are of old style, with low, flat roofs, consisting generally of two or three rooms built in a row, with a porch of pointed arches running the full length and surrounded by gardens of mulberry trees, with the leaves of which the silkworms are fed.

It is evident that here is a portion of the Lebanon from which the emigration has not only been large, but also successful. It shows also how the money gathered in America is brought back here to be enjoyed. The glowing accounts of business success brought back from America enkindle in the young people of this region the ambition to repeat the experiences of their elders.

"American Villages."

To those who have seen the miserable surroundings of some Syrians in their colonies in the large cities of America where they are huddled together in crowded rooms in dilapidated houses, gathering their money by peddling for large profits and spending very little, their stories of their success and importance when there does not greatly appeal.

However, the natives look up to them as merchant princes, and their small fortunes avail here for much display. These "American villages" in the Lebanon, as they are sometimes called, are almost bewitching when viewed from a distance, but a nearer inspection brings disillusion. While the houses are comparatively clean, the streets are dirty and disorderly.

From Ain Sindiani the mountain slopes grow very steep and the carriage road winds up in short turns, so that short cuts are resorted to by pedestrians and animals.

During autumn, the valleys are obscured by a haze caused by the heat of the day evaporating the moisture below, but in the cool of the evening by twilight, climbing the mountains quite a distance above Bsherreh, one comes on to a never-to-be-forgotten view. Here nature seems to have carved out a huge amphitheater, terraced above terrace, the upper one being that whereon the majestic cedars stand. Below in the bottom of the valley, is a deep ravine, rock-bound by high precipitous cliffs of gray limestone.

Bsherreh is on the edge of a great cliff almost at the head of the valley, but a little to the left, as one looks down toward the sea, its water supply is an ice-cold stream flowing down from the region of almost perpetual snow.

If one leaves Bsherreh at dawn and makes all possible haste, he will reach the cedars just as the sun lifts its first rays through the thick foliage—a sight calculated to make any heart beat faster. The grove numbers about 400 trees. With the exception of a few stragglers, the grove is inclosed by a neat stone wall to protect the smaller trees from goats. In the center is a small Maronite chapel.

FLASH THE LEAD DOG

By GEORGE MARSH

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SYNOPSIS

Up the wild waters of the unknown Yellow-Leg on a winter's hunt, journey Brock McCain and Gaspard Lecroix, his French-Cree comrade, with Flash, Brock's puppy and their dog team. Brock's father had warned him of the danger of his trip. After several battles with the stormy waters they arrive at a fork in the Yellow-Leg. Brock is severely injured in making a portage and Flash leads Gaspard to the unconscious youth. The trappers race desperately to reach their destination before winter sets in. Flash engages in a desperate fight with a wolf and kills him. Gaspard tells Brock of his determination to find out who killed his father. Tracks are discovered and the two boys separate for scouting purposes. Brock is jumped by two Indians and a white man and knocked unconscious. He is held prisoner. Gaspard rescues him while his captors sleep. Gaspard believes these men killed his father and is prevented from killing them by Brock.

CHAPTER VI—Continued

Then, after a meal of frozen white fish, they tied Kona and Yellow-Eye in their hiding places of young spruce, and left on the fifty-mile circuit of their trap-lines.

Later in the day, as Gaspard was following a line of mink and otter traps, he stopped on the wind-blown ice of a long dead water for a short rest and a smoke. Since he had crossed the telltale footprints in the snow—the familiar trail of his father's dog with the mutilated foot, traveling with a wolf—he had needed no further proof that Pierre Lecroix had reached this lake country for which he had started.

The men who had attacked Brock could tell why his father did not return the previous March to those who had waited in vain for the yelps of his team at the Starving river camp. Why had he weakened, he asked himself, when Brock had held him back from knifing these men where they lay? They had shown Pierre Lecroix no mercy; murdered him in his sleep or shot him from ambush; given him no chance, for otherwise the rifle and knife of Pierre Lecroix would have taken bloody toll. Wiped out in his prime by these cut-throats from the North who had taken free country for their own! Left in the snow some where in these hills, for the foxes and ravens to gnaw and pick—Pierre Lecroix, the father he had loved.

So ran the bitter thoughts of the youth as he smoked.

December came and the long snows slowly tightened their grip on forest and muskeg. December, with its late and bitter dawns, breaking across the east, while the spruce snapped with the frost and the riven ice of the lakes boomed its muffled salute to the coming day.

And now that Flash had become harness wise and amenable to the laws of trace and trail, Brock sometimes hitched him as rear dog in the team and, with Yellow-Eye in the lead and Kona between them, drove them over his line of traps while Gaspard used Silt-Ear. For the raw Flash needed the training with the team.

Already he had reached the height and bulk of the doughty king-dog of the Hungry House huskies, and Brock instinctively shivered at the thought of what a battle between the two great beasts would mean. For the puppy, although not as yet full grown, would never again allow the king-dog to assert his sovereignty, as of old but would battle for his independence of all control around the camp, as he had fought the timber wolf.

Never did either partner approach the camp without great caution whether the dogs had been left as a guard or taken to the traps. With enemies such as they had met, wintering to the north, and the memory of Pierre Lecroix constantly in their minds, their life when at camp was one of constant vigilance.

Then after two weeks of constant toil, which had netted the wily Gus and many a prime, black mink and otter pelt, three lynx, a fisher, and to the delight of both trappers, the first silver-gray, fox of the winter, the half-breed announced as they sat in the snug tent heated by the roaring stove, one evening over their supper: "Tomorrow take a beag swing oval nord. I want to look for trail since de las' snows."

"You don't want me to go, too?" frowned the disappointed Brock.

"No, I weel travel hard an' camp at de outlet."

But I hate to have you tekle it alone. If they ambushed you, what would I do?"

"Walt two-free day den tak de dog an' start for home."

Brock's round face flamed with anger. "You think I'd do that?" he demanded.

"You think I wouldn't hunt for you as you did for me, and try to get the people who had jumped my partner?"

Gaspard's lean face softened as he shrugged his shoulders. "You are young, Brock, and have families," he objected. "I have no one left now, no fader, no moder."

"But you have young brothers." "They are safe wid my uncle."

"You promise you won't do any-

thing wud? I want to be with you when we meet these people again—and I want Flash and Yellow-Eye Golly! I'd like to send those dogs into that gang—what?"

So the late December dawn of the following morning discovered a wiry half-breed, caribou capote sashed tightly to his body, swinging tirelessly over the snow, as he approached the upper end of the big lake. Bobbing up and down as he strode, and slung from the sash, hung a long skinning knife in its leather sheath. One mittened hand of the traveler carried his rifle, cased in skin to protect bore and action from snow. Around the middle of the rifle barrel where the naked steel, in extreme cold, would suck the skin from the bare fingers of the left hand, was wound a thin strip of rawhide. In the same manner, the trigger-guard and lever handle were wound to protect the right hand.

On he traveled through the short hours of the day until he neared the lower end of the lake and turned south to cross the outlet. Then, as the hunter headed south for the outlet through the spruce already darkening with shadow, a rifle roared in the silent forest. Stumbling forward, the ambushed hunter stopped, swayed for an instant on his feet, both hands clutching his gun, then reeling, fell to the snow. Again the silence of the spruce, shot with the shadows of the creeping night, lay unbroken.

Minutes passed. Then the profound stillness was marred by the muffled fall of snow from a young spruce twenty yards from the dark shape which lay as in the sleep of death.



"I Teach You Man-Killers Some Tricks Before de Snow Melt."

From behind the spruce two bendlike eyes in a hooded face furtively watched the thing in the snow. Shortly, a hunched figure stole swiftly from the tree. Within three yards of the body in the snow the stalker stopped abruptly, to finger the action of his gun as he peered sharply at his victim. Satisfied, he moved forward, and with a grunt kicked the body on the snow with the bow of his shoe.

At the movement, sinewy fingers clamped like a vise on the shoe, jerking it forward. The knees of the man pulled off balance, were struck by a lunging body, and the Indian toppled with a shriek of terror, as the cut-throat Gaspard fell on him.

Then, an arm lifted and fell, lifted and fell. The stillness of the dusk-filled spruce was startled by a stifled cry—a gasp. Again the arm rose and fell.

Silence returned to the gloom of the forest.

Gaspard Lecroix rose from the body of the Indian, sinewy fingers still gripping his knife, to listen. Then he turned to the man who had fired on him from ambush. The Indian was dead.

"You shoot me from de bush, eh? The infuriated Lecroix muttered, as he cleaned the knife-blade with snow and picked up his gun and mittens. "I teach you man-killers some trick before de snow melt."

Then, as he stood for an instant, looking down on the gray face distorted in death, sorry that he had not taken the Cree prisoner to learn the fate of his father something wet ran down his cheek. Slipping his hand from its mitten, Gaspard touched his face to find his fingers smeared with blood.

"Ah-hah!" he muttered, following the furrow across his cheek. "He come ver' close sendin' Brock home widout bees partner." Then the boy hurried on through the gathering dusk to the outlet and the camp-ground in the swamp where he had left cut wood for a fire.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Police Whistles Whisper

Police whistles that "whisper" across a large city are being supplied to policemen throughout France. The notes are so high pitched that the human ear cannot detect them until they are picked up by microphones skillfully camouflaged at many points in the city. A policeman equipped with one of these whistles can summon aid to the scene of the crime without alarming the suspects. The "soundless" whistle can also be used to send Morse code signals. In Germany similar whistles summon police dogs that can hear notes mute to human ears.

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