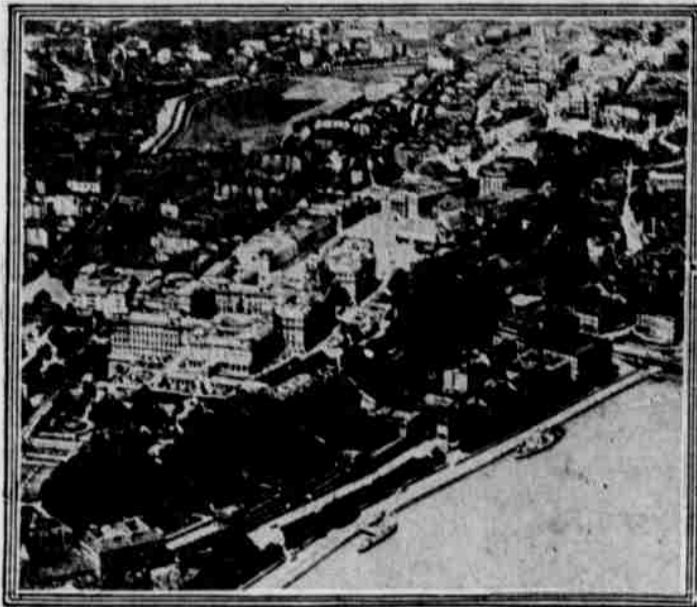


The Blue Danube



Aerial View of Budapest in the Danube.

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

EUROPE'S "temporary Ice Age"—the most severe winter that has been known for many decades—gave the role of destroyer to the stream that is normally the Beautiful Blue Danube. The stream was frozen so solidly that ice dams were formed, imprisoning millions of cubic feet of water. When milder weather caused a break in the ice barriers, the resulting flood damaged hundreds of the river boats that had been imprisoned in the ice.

Economically the Danube is to the land-locked nations of Europe what the Mediterranean is to the countries of southern Europe. Once the Northern frontier of the Roman empire; later the path for conquering hordes of Huns, Slavs and Magyars; now the commercial Main street of Central Europe, the Danube may claim to be the most important river of Europe, though it is exceeded by the Volga in length.

Human activity attains extremes along the Danube's course even more marked than the contrasts along business Broadway, N. Y. Its waters see the revels and destination of Vienna and flow by flat rocks on which Hungarian women pound their clothes with wooden mallets and bear them away in tubs on their heads. They pass mills like those of Minneapolis, bear vessels like those on the Hudson, and turn the wheels of boat-borne water wheels to which peasants bring grain in primitive ox carts with even the wheels kept in place by wooden pins.

The river halves Budapest and courses by busy Belgrade where it receives the waters of the Save. It carries barges on which families live as they do on canal boats. Grim castles, great estates, and tiny cottages stand along its banks.

Scientifically the Danube possesses variety almost as infinite. Rising in the Black forest, some of its waters seep through underground fissures to a stream of the Rhine basin. Sometimes it is pressed between high hills. Smaller craft appear on its waters in Bavaria. In Austria it splits into many arms and forms a whirlpool. In Hungary plains it sprawls wide, receiving many important branches, remnant of a prehistoric inland sea. It resumes a wild, torrential aspect again when it pierces the Kazan defile and the Iron gates. It receives nearly as many tributaries as there are days in the year, and drains an area almost equivalent to that of Egypt.

Along the steep right bank of the Kazan defile can be traced a road built by Trajan early in the Second century. Not until recently has the construction of a modern road made the defile passable upon either bank.

Recognition of the international importance of the Danube was attested by placing it under a commission in 1856, and further provisions regarding it are contained in subsequent treaties, including that of Versailles in 1919.

The Scenic Glories.

The scenic glories of the Danube are chiefly to be seen along the upper reaches of the river; but the broad highway of the lower reaches is economically of more interest, because of the traffic it carries.

Below Giurgevo, Rumania, and Rutschuk, Bulgaria, the Danube widens to about three miles from bank to bank. Giurgevo, a point of great strategic importance, is accessible by river steamers at high water and has an auxiliary port about two miles further down stream.

The lower Danube has a very slight fall, only 120 feet in the last 600 miles of its length, but because of the great volume of water, increased as it goes on by the Alt, the Argesch, the Jalomitz, the Serech, and the Pruth, as well as smaller streams, it flows with great force. The Bulgarian banks are high; the Rumanian shore is low and flat and often overflows.

Silistria, the "fortress of the Danube" since Roman times, though of less military importance than Galatz, is the next place of interest below Rutschuk. A Roman relic, "Trajan's Wall," may be seen from the river below Silistria, and forty miles from that city there is a railroad bridge over two and a half miles long and the only one below Belgrade, connecting Bucharest and the Black sea port of Constantza. This is one of the most remarkable examples of the kind of en-

gineering and was built at a cost of \$7,000,000.

Hirsova and Gura-Jamolitz are the next places of importance. The river at Hirsova broadens like a sea with many islands. The town with its fortified castle is prettily situated on a hilltop above the surrounding flats.

Important River Port.

The more important of the river's ports are next approached. Braila, unlovely and monotonous of aspect, is, however, the chief Rumanian port of entry, before the war a town of over 50,000 inhabitants and a center of the grain and timber trades. Between Braila and Galatz are the ruins of an ancient bridge said to have been built by Darius the Great.

The latter city, about ten miles below Braila, is a very thriving port. Vessels of 4,000 tons can come up the river to the point, Between Galatz and the confluence with the Pruth the Danube makes its turn to the east. On its left bank lies Bessarabia, formerly Russian territory, but annexed during the World war by Rumania. After sprawling in a great angle around the barrier of Dobrudja, the so-called blue Danube drops its load of mud and sand gathered from eight nations of Europe in a large delta at the western end of the Black sea. This delta takes the form of a huge, equilateral triangle 50 miles long on each side.

Of all the varieties of earth surface, deltas rank high as the most useless to civilization. Mountains are admired for their inspiration, deserts hold rare beauty for those who seek it, but few people go to a delta even to hunt ducks if they can help it. The Danube's delta is particularly unattractive since the peasants have not been able to adapt it to agriculture, as sugar-cane planters have large parts of the Mississippi delta. Some deltas, such as those of the Amazon and the Yangtze, consist of large islands surrounded by considerable water; but the Danube's waters run through a vast swamp which was almost a complete barrier to navigation before the European commission of the Danube took a hand.

In country that is neither land nor water, the reeds and willows take command and do not catch malaria. Deprived of timber the peasant fishermen put the reeds to many uses. Willows are used for basket making and for fish weirs. A plumed reed is cut for fuel and still another kind is woven into mats or used as thatch. Those who are irritated at fishing restrictions in the United States can appreciate what a fisherman's paradise they live in by comparison. The Rumanian government considers fishing a government monopoly, and every commercial catch must be brought to a government customs house to be auctioned off.

By the construction of levees and piers, the European commission of the Danube has opened a channel to Galatz, the Rumanian naval port, capable of receiving shipping up to 4,000 tons. The traffic in and out the river amounts to more than 5,000,000 tons annually.

Elephants Make Good and Faithful Servants

Elephant labor is both satisfactory and economical, according to members of a Harvard expedition to the Belgian Congo. The big fellows make wonderful servants, and after doing a day's work equivalent to that of a tractor he gathers his food free of cost in the forest, where it grows wild while the gasoline "feed" of tractors is expensive in the Congo.

African elephants long had a reputation for incurable ferocity, and the accomplishment of the Belgians in learning how to domesticate them is new. The successful training is due to catching the elephants young. Numbers of them have been given to settlers for farm work.

Horticultural Marvel

Luther Burbank, famous American horticulturist, was born on March 7, 1849, at Lancaster, Mass. Burbank was always devoted to the study of nature. He originated many new forms of apples, prunes, berries, nuts and vegetables.

Gypsy Philosophy

There is no more dangerous sickness than sadness.—American Magazine.

FLASH

By GEORGE MARSH

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FLASH: The Lead Dog

SYNOPSIS

Up the wild waters of the unknown Yellow-Leg, on a winter's hunt, journey Brock McCain and Gaspard Lacroix, his French-Cree comrade, with Flash, Brock's pup 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. While out alone Gaspard is shot from ambush by an Indian and kills his would-be slayer. While out on his trap lines Brock is caught in a heavy snow storm. He is lost and his food gives out. His hopes are raised when he discovers a moose trail. He kills a moose and finds Gaspard's trail. Gaspard finds another Indian trailing him and wounds him.

CHAPTER IX—Continued

Then the youth drew his skinning knife. His glittering eyes drew close to the ash-gray face of the man who lay by the fire under the blankets. "Were you here—last long snows—in this country?" he asked, hoarse with passion.

The pinched face nodded.

"There was a man—from the south—ambushed, in the month of the melting snow. Is he alive?"

In the eyes of the Indian fear gave way to a look of bewilderment, of agony, as he gasped: "I am very sick."

"You saw this hunter?" pressed the inexorable son of Pierre Lacroix.

The Indian feebly nodded.

"Is he alive?"

There was no answer. Gaspard glanced at the distorted face, bloodless, still; then fumbled under the Indian's capote for the heart beat. There was none.

Rising, the baffled son of Pierre Lacroix shook his fists at the insensate spruce. In his heart was no pity for this man at his feet, who had tracked him that day to shoot him through the back. These men had taken from him the father he loved—were ruthlessly hunting down Brock and himself. At that moment, his missing partner might lie somewhere, stiff in the snow, as this assassin lay here, at his feet.

It was war to the death, now, between Gaspard Lacroix and the men who had taken from him father and his friend. Through the winter he would hunt them as one hunts the wolverine who robs the trappers. Before the March crust they would learn that on their trails followed a tracker merciless as the carcajou, untiring as the timber wolf. The war was on!

Leaving the body of the Cree to the toothed and clawed mercies of the wood-folk, who would shortly find it under the heap of snow with which Gaspard covered it, he continued on his wide circle north of the big lake. Heartside with thoughts of his missing partner, he approached the camp. Eighteen days now, he thought. With the country full of game Brock couldn't have starved, even if lost. And if lost, in time he was bound to find the lakes or the river. No, they had taken or killed him—the friend he loved.

The dogs, ravenous with hunger greeted him with a chorus of yelps. Then he saw, standing in the snow, Brock's trapping sled. His heart bounded. Brock was safe—had come home! Brock was alive—his partner—was alive!

"Kekway!" he shouted in his joy, running to the tent. "Ha! You Brock!" But the tent was empty. He had gone again! Where?

Circling the camp, Gaspard found his own trail of three days before, followed by the well-known tracks of Brock's wider web.

"By Gar! He go to find Gaspard!" cried the excited hunter. Then, in his emotion, he hugged each of the clamoring huskies.

With Brock alive, the situation was changed. He now had some one to live for—to take care of. His promise to Angus McCain, made at Hungry House, to bring Brock back, bound him. He could not ask his partner to go north with him and throw his life away in a mad attempt at vengeance. He would stay with Brock and trap while the fur was prime, then in March, he would journey north in search of his foes. If he failed to return, Brock could take the dogs and run the river to the sea, alone, and carry to Hungry House a fur-pack that would pull the eyes out of the furter's head.

Late in the afternoon of the second day, as Gaspard followed Silt-Ear pulling the hind-quarters of a caribou in over the ice-hard trail leading to the camp, Flash met them with an extravagant welcome.

"Hello, you man-killer! What d'you mean by leaving just as I totter back after starving out in the bush?"

The lean face of Gaspard shone with his joy at seeing his friend.

"You ole Brock! You geeve me some bad day, Brock!" he cried, pounding the shoulder of the stalwart white boy, as he wrung his hand. "I hunt an' hunt for your trail—"

"But tell me," Brock interrupted. "You were followed, and you waited for him. But how did you know he was on your trail?"

"I feel dat dey were after me, dat morning. And you saw beem?"

"Yes, I wanted to be sure he didn't get you and leave on your shoes, so I looked at the body. Did you learn anything?"

"No, de Cree have seen my fader—he know; but he was weak an' nevaire tell how my fader die."

"Too bad! I'm mighty sorry, partner." Brock rested a mittened hand on the shoulder of his friend, whose dark features pictured the bitterness of his disappointment.

Then over a supper of caribou steaks and tea, Brock told his story.

"Nevaire travel een a norder agaln," commented the bush-wise Gaspard. "Wait for de sun; den you don' get lost."

"By gar, dat Flash ees smart dog!" cried the half-breed, when Brock told of missing the moose. "De wolf hamstring caribou; but bull-moose, in de deep snow ees ver' strong. Dat ees cross dog, dat Flash!"

"His heart's all iron, and the way he traveled on an empty stomach was a caution. He hadn't eaten for days when he tackled that moose. Gaspard, if anything happened to that pup, I'd want to quit."

The lean features of the other lighted in understanding. It was Brock McCain's way, to love his friend, his dog, with all the capacity of his big heart. There were no reservations in Brock.

Hitching the dogs to the long, hauling sled which had come on the canoe load all the way from Hungry House, with Flash in the rear, behind Silt-Ear, to separate him from the leader, Yellow-Eye, the boys started next day over Brock's trap-line trail, buried under the new snow. Gaspard led the team, tramping the new snow down to the ice-hard trail beneath, now frozen solid to the ground by the constant traveling of Brock and Flash with the trapping sled.

With the tangible warnings Gaspard and Brock already had had, to attempt to finish the winter on Yellow-Leg lakes meant a life of constant vigilance. Once their enemies from the north worked south of the big lake and found the trap-line trails, they might be ambushed or taken in their sleep, for the dogs could be poisoned or shot. But never, for an instant, did the two hunters consider a retreat. The heart of Gaspard Lacroix knew but one desire—desire for knowledge of how his father died and for vengeance on those responsible for his death. And little as Brock relished the idea of leaving his bones in the wilderness of the Yellow-Leg, his loyalty to his friend and his fighting spirit admitted no thought of avoiding what the long snows held for them. Already they had given the strangers good proof of what man hunters might expect in the forests of the south. Two had gone out, never to return. And later, on the March crust, when the going was good, the hunted ones would turn hunters. So ran the thoughts of the friends as they made camp on the eve of the hunt on the big barren.

Under stars still bright in a purple sky, Brock and Gaspard cooked breakfast. Leaving the whimpering dogs—begging to be taken—wired to trees, the partners snowshoed to the flank of the barren and waited for dawn. Two days before, Gaspard had counted a hundred caribou, but now, as the blue east grayed, an' the frosty stars paled and faded, they wondered whether ghostly patrols of the phantom wanderers of the north were out there in the shadows digging with round-toed hoofs for the reindeer moss of the barren.

At last the bitter dawn slashed through the ashen east with rose and pearl and amber slits of light.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

"Sea Serpent" Myth

The comparative safety and comfort of the modern ocean vessel may be blamed for the disappearance of the sea serpent, in the opinion of Austin H. Clark of the Smithsonian Institution. The tales of marvelous and fearful sea monsters all belong to the days when sailing the seas was highly dangerous and the large fish could come uncomfortably close to the ship's passengers. A man on the dry, secure deck of the modern vessel lacks the stimulus to his imagination that would make him see queer creatures in the sea, although occasionally even now tales are told in all sincerity of sea serpents being seen.—Exchange

Wine Brought Out Wit

of Master of Melody

Brahms, the great musical composer, was not a cheerful person. He was invariably somber. When more cheerful than usual he would sing such songs as "The Grave is My Joy." He was, however, a great lover of a glass of good wine, had a certain sense of humor, and enjoyed a joke—neither against his friend or against himself. Once when he was the guest of a rich merchant, who knew the master's weak spot, the latter fetched several bottles of very old and good wine from his cellar. Filling the glasses, he handed one to Brahms, at the same time bowing reverently and saying: "Master, this is the Brahms among my wines." The composer sipped the wine, evidently with satisfaction, then tasted it again, and emptied his glass.

"Yes," he said, with a contented smile, "not bad, not bad at all, but, my dear friend, I should be delighted if you would let me also make the acquaintance of your wine Beethoven."

Color Keeps Steel Cool

That color may be employed indirectly to increase the strength of some structures is the interesting conclusion suggested by a series of experiments by an English authority, says Popular Mechanics Magazine. He has found that a certain shade of blue diminishes the effect of the sun's rays on steel and preserves a more even temperature. Since extreme heating and cooling may tend to weaken a structure, under certain conditions, the proper color might insure longer life and greater strength. Physicians long have recognized the importance of the right color in hospitals and sickrooms and in the home, the use of color in decorations is being studied more carefully.

Paris Artists in Want

Paris has too many artists, and as a result there is overproduction and misery. Thus declared Louis Forest in commenting on the suicide recently of a well-known French sculptor who had won the Prix de Rome, but could not make a living. Forest pointed out that there are 40,000 painters, as well as many other artists, in Paris. Even the open-air exhibitions of pictures, which are sometimes called "crust of bread" exhibitions, often fail to bring in the crust.

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Forgotten Art

"So Helene is playing the shy, demure young thing now?"

"Yes, and her grandmother's trying to teach her to blush."

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