

Khyber Pass



Stretch of the Famous Khyber Pass.

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

WITH the King of Afghanistan dethroned and the country in turmoil, the Khyber Pass, which connects Afghanistan and India, is again the object of British vigilance.

Located as it is, in the northwest corner of India and at the head of the "Broad Road" or "Main Street" of the "Jipling's lama and his youthful disciple "Kim," the Khyber Pass is the key to the back door of India. It is one of the few breaks in that encircling wall of mountains and deserts which has been the main ally of the British in protecting their hard-won domains from the inroads of the independent and lawless tribes of the North and the West.

The seeker of romance, of contrasts, and of danger might well end his journey here. As one writer says, "There is perhaps no other mountain passway in the world so historic as this, so filled with the ghosts of armies, so thoroughly soaked with romance and battle and blood." Many centuries before the rise of the motor truck, its canyon-like walls reverberated to the shouts of Alexander and his Greeks. It has known in turn the exultant cries of the Moguls, the Afghans and the pioneer English. For more than thirty centuries the Khyber Pass has been a great floodgate, through which, in turn, peoples have poured in search of conquest, adventure and trade.

The very name of the Khyber Pass is romantic. To see it on the semi-weekly convey day is to be transported back through the ages to the time when three wise men, garbed in voluminous mantles like those the Afghans wear, swayed back and forth to the slow stride of their desert mounts, while following the Star.

Out in the dry plain below the southern mouth of the Pass is the mud fort of Jamrud, its flat surroundings cluttered with tents and adobe huts. High on a plateau near the Afghan end is Landiotal, a lonely camp held by the guards of the gates of India. Twin roads, an aerial cableway, the slender life lines of the military telephone, and lately a short stretch of light railway—these are the only signs during most of the week to indicate that trade here runs the gamut between threatening hills harboring lawless spirits who consider a hair-trigger gun the best defender of life and liberty, and most effective in the pursuit of somebody's happiness.

Half way through, almost hidden in a depression which is mortal dull in winter and a place of intolerable heat in summer, is a cluster of tents, mingled with lines of tethered animals, known as All Masjid.

A Fiery Furnace.
In winter the Khyber is more like the Near East than India, but in summer the gash in the livid hills is a fiery furnace and a living hell. Then the shaggy Bactrian camels are not seen and winter's flowing robes are cast aside, revealing hard chests weathered brown by sun and wind. At All Masjid a breeze would be god-sent. The atmosphere shimmers in heat waves like the surface of a boiling cauldron.

Here the two caravans meet at sundown, the one to hasten southward toward the Kabul Bazaar in Peshawar, the other to finish before nightfall the most dangerous section of its long trail to the Hindu Kush or the noisy khans of Bokhara.

When the rough-coated Bactrians, whose home stretches along the high plateau of Asia from Iran to the Gobi supplement the ugly but hardier cousins of the lowland deserts, the narrow funnel of the Khyber seems clogged with masses of dark-brown camel hair; but, dusting along beside the road reserved for caravans, hugging the new highway which has been constructed for their benefit or hooding over culverts bridging bone dry waterways, there roids a covey of military motors.

Although the entire Pass is in British territory, safe conduct is offered on only two days in the week. At dawn Tuesdays and Fridays merchants and their caravans assemble at each end of the Pass and there is a great hurry and scramble to get through before sunset. On these two days troops occupy the hilltop block-houses and are stationed along the road to protect the caravans from snipers and highwaymen. By herding all the traffic into two weekly passages, too, there is the added safety of numbers. At All Masjid the two

streams of traffic meet at midday, thus the highway in either direction can be devoted to one-way traffic. On other days the road is deserted.

The Government of Afghanistan has maintained its "Absolutely Forbidden to Cross This Border Into Afghan Territory" sign, for many decades, but there have been many "one-foot" visitors to Afghanistan (that is, tourists who step over the border so they can have something out of the ordinary to tell the folks back home).

Some of the wild land beyond the Pass in Afghanistan is exceedingly beautiful, resembling, according to the few Europeans who have seen it, the famous Vale of Kashmir, the land of Lalla Rookh. Areas around the headwaters of the Kabul river, the most important river in the kingdom, have not been explored by Europeans since the days when Alexander made his way to India.

More interesting than the scenery of the Pass are the Afridis, the untamed tribesmen who live in the vicinity of the passes between their country and India. They are powerful, independent, treacherous and ferocious. Hiding in the seams of the hills they once picked off with their trusty muskets travelers on the road below. Many punitive expeditions were sent against them, expeditions which were as unfruitful as the Moroccan campaigns long were against the Rifis.

Acting on the principle that a thief catch on a thief, however, the British have been more successful. The daring plan was conceived of training and arming the wild tribesmen of the Pass into a protective body. The "Khyber Rifles," composed entirely of Afridi tribesmen under English officers, has become a famous and successful British colonial military organization.

The Pass the Key to India.
"The Man Who Was" pictured the Khyber as the key to India. Whether it be the military or political key today is a question. But the Khyber on convey day does give a key to understanding why it is that the anthropological museum which we know as India still deludes the world with visions of untold wealth instead of unspendable misery.

The camel is the reason. The heavy duty engine conceals its romance in firebox and boilers; but the zoological caricature called the camel is a relief map of romance.

When anyone mentions cost per ton-mile, this beast turns up his disdainful nose. No cheap bulk freights for him! Silks, spices, jewels, priceless stuffs of soft pashmina or stiff cloth of gold—these are his cargoes! Who ever saw romance in lentils or block tin? Alchemists do not dream of pig iron. Rich cargoes spell romance. And the camel, ugly drudge that he is, excludes cheap freight as easily as a white-stockinged footman excludes the proletariat.

Peshawar, largest Indian town near the portals of the Khyber, like many another city in India, is a combination of native community and cantonment—the former closely packed and interesting, the latter widely sprawling and as dead as the desert. Visitor or as the outside of an exclusive club.

There is tennis on excellent courts, sensational polo by military men mounted on splendid ponies, with white-legged grooms lined up behind the goals, and the side lines a sandwich of attractive Europeans wedged in between the less attractive and more interesting natives, to whom polo seems aristocratic and exotic, although this most ancient of hockey games came overland from Persia through Turkestan hundreds of years ago and was played in India long before the English, smashing the Spanish Armada which barred the water gate to the opulent East, gave impetus to imperialism by founding the East India company.

The cantonment is the place where the visitor sleeps and eats, and where he obtains permission to traverse the gash in the barren hills through which the Central Asian commerce ebbs and flows. But for interest he drives or better, plods along the two mile dusty road which leads to the native city, composed, like its Central Asian counterparts, of mud walls and mud houses, with an added story, which is often nothing more than a wattle fence plastered with mud, on the roof. Here live the women folk, and thither the natives climb when the hot breathlessness of the dark rooms below drives them to a summer refuge beneath the stars.

FLASH

By
GEORGE MARSH

: The Lead Dog :

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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 puppy and their dog team. 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. 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. Gaspard finds him and the two start out on Brock's trap line. They kill enough deer and caribou to supply them with meat until spring.

CHAPTER X

The Stalk of the Dead

The day following, as the vanished sun rimmed indigo ridges with red and gold, tinting the white reaches of lake and muskeg with rose, the dogs were stopped a mile back of the main camp.

"We tak' no chance, dese day. Dose peop' not ambush us eef Gaspard Lacroix can help. I go an' have a look."

"Right enough! But im going, too."

The hunters wired the team to trees, then, separated by a hundred yards to block a possible surprise from hidden enemies, started a complete circle of the camp to cut any approaching trails. They had nearly completed their circuit, and were close to the decoy trail, made weeks before by Gaspard, when the halfbreed, who was ahead, walked swiftly forward and stopping, bent over the snow; then raised his hand and beckoned to Brock.

"One passed here and did not return," muttered Lacroix. "He wait for us."

First, the two, again widely separated, cautiously completed the circuit. No strange trail led from the camp. He was there. Hidden in some thicket of young spruce, near the tent, lay a Cree with a cocked rifle, waiting.

The forest was purple with dusk as the two friends agreed on a line of action and started their stalk. He had hidden himself in this cold enemy—to shoot them in the snow. Merciless as a lynx watching a rabbit run, he was waiting for their return from their trap-lines. They would show him equal mercy.

"Why not get Yellow-eye and Flash? They'll smell him out," Brock suggested.

"No!" had been Gaspard's decisive answer. "Een de dark, de dog weel yelp and warn heem, and he get away. Eef dey jump beem he might shoot or cut one wid de knife. I hunt dat Cree."

So they started, a hundred yards apart, to follow the trap-line in to the camp, for the one in ambush would fire, now, to shoot by the light of the fire of the returned hunters and would lie close in.

Fifty yards from the camp the moving shadows faded into black patches of scrub. An hour passed and the forest floor beneath the spruce was hanked with blackness. Then from a great naked poplar beside the decoy trail floated the "Who, hoo—hoo—hoo, whoo—hoo!" of the horned owl.

Again, the hunting call of the winged assassin of the night broke the tense silence. Shortly, the answering voice of its mate drifted over the frozen spear heads of the black spruce. For a space, the frosted stars glittered above a soundless forest, then, again, the muffled threat to the little people of the snows waked the flitter night.

Shortly, like a ghost, a blur of black crossed the snow of an open space, blue in the starlight, to dissolve in the blackness of a thicket.

"See anything?"
"No," came the whisper. "I hunt every place near de camp. We get de dog. Dey weel fin' heem."
"You bet they will! If he's still here."

Stealing back to where the impatient dogs chafed and whined at their trees at being thus deserted without food, Gaspard and Brock, each taking two on leash, returned to the hunt.

With repeated pats and whispered commands, "Go get 'em, Flash! Get 'em, Kena!" Brock released the straining huskies, who sensed that something was wrong—some animal near the camp they should hunt down in the blackness.

Mad with excitement the two huskies faded into the gloom, yelping at each plunge in the deep snow. Behind them stole Brock McCain, his knife loose in its sheath, his blue fingers gripping his cocked rifle. Beyond the camp, to the east, the thick yelp of Yellow-Eye mingled with the higher voice of Silt-Ear as Gaspard set them into the mark to hunt down the lurking enemy, and the forest was shortly a bellman as the excited dogs thrashed

through the deep snow yelping as they ran.

For a space, from the direction of the yelping, Brock knew that the dogs were beating aimlessly back and forth over a wide area; then the familiar snarl and fighting roar of Flash, not a hundred yards away, started his blood with a leap.

"Flash's got him!"
From three directions the growls of Flash had drawn the separated huskies through the murk of the spruce, yelping as they ran. Then as the floundering Brock neared the spot where his dog was blindly fighting to the death against steel and lead, from the blackness the great husky bellowed forth his pean of victory.

Reaching his dog with a few strides Brock fingered the trigger of his gun, thrust forward at a black mass in the snow.

"Flash! You got . . . By the Northern Lights—the bear trap!"

Brock struck a match. With leg gripped by the footed trails of the bear trap, set in the decoy trail, lay the crumpled body of a Cree. Knotted in death, the frost-blackened face grimaced horribly as sightless eyes stared out at the boy who bent over it.

"So we've frozen our hands to stalk a dead man!" muttered Brock with a shiver of mingled pity and loathing, as he thrust his blue fingers inside his coat beneath the armpits to revive circulation, for the night was growing bitter. Then the excited huskies, followed closely by Gaspard, reached the trapped assassin.

"Ah-hah!" exclaimed the surprised halfbreed. "I pass not fifty yards from here when I circle de camp, but nevair look for de trap."

"He must have been caught yesterday," said Brock. "In forty before, he'd freeze in a few minutes. Well, this camp is getting too hot for us. We've got to move."

The body was that of a short, middle-aged Cree. The gun which was cocked, was a 30-30 Winchester, commonly used in the country, but when Gaspard drew the knife from the breast-embroidered sheath, he gave an exclamation of surprise. "By gar," he gasped, "My father's knife!"

"What? You're sure? You recognize it?"

"Yes; it ees de handle—dis cut here! And de same notch cen de blade. He clipped eet on a stone."

For an interval, the kneeling figure of the son of Pierre Lacroix set as stiff as the frozen murderer, anchored to the inexorable vise of steel jaws. Then the small eyes glittered as they met his friend's sympathetic gaze.

"I go nord an' learn from dese peop' een de moon de de crust."

"Yes, old partner, we'll go north when the snow grows hard for good sledding. Now, come, let's feed the dogs and our own empty stomachs."

So returning to the camp, the friends left the thing in the snow that had come to destroy them—shoot them down ruthlessly from ambush. To Gaspard, these murderers of the father he had loved were so much vermin. Because they desired the Yellow-Leg country for their own they had wiped out Pierre Lacroix as one crushes the blackfly on one's face, and now would deal likewise with Brock and him. In to the mouths on the headwaters he had become a fatalist. Never again did he hope to see the Starving river and the people at Hungry House. Some day before the wedges of the returning geese crossed the sky, he would go to join his father—some day, the Cree wolves of these white traders would take toll of Gaspard Lacroix for the men who had so mysteriously disappeared.

The following morning they piled down the spring with a spruce sapling, freeing the jaws of the bear trap, and buried the Cree in the snow.
(TO BE CONTINUED.)

New Light Shed Upon Origin of Languages

It is now suggested that the student of language must look for origins in Africa. Doctor Marr, of the Russian Academy of Science, has announced that from the early Stone age, when peoples of African type picturesquely dotted the European fringe of the Mediterranean, language has been brought down with the retention of some of the Hottentot elements and words. The Hottentot language was a highly sophisticated speech, instead of a crude and primitive one, although, perhaps, not as formidable as the agglutinative Tagalog of the Philippines. Hottentot seems likely now to charm etymologists away from the progenitor tongue of the Teuton and from Sanscrit. It may make the Scythian plain but tarrying spots for speech, rather than the homeland of modern related languages.

Guess Again

"Baying movement follows in the early nervousness," That sounds like a stock market note, but it merely refers to the fellow who finally has made up his mind to play the ring—New Orleans Times-Picayune.

Ancient Warehouse

At Norrlingen is a structure dating from the Thirteenth century which is designated "the oldest warehouse in Germany."

Four Claim Possession of Pen Lincoln Used

The recent sale at the auction of a pen purported to be the implement used by President Lincoln when he signed the emancipation proclamation has brought to light three other pens for which the same honor is claimed. One is owned by Mrs. Stuart Pritchard of Battle Creek, Mich. Another was sold in Philadelphia a few years ago. The third one, recently offered for sale, is backed by the affidavit of Louis Bergdorf, who was a White House messenger at the time, and he says he held the precious document while the President signed it, and a week later he was given the pen and the table upon which the signing was done by the President. The western pen exists somewhere in the western part of this country. The Philadelphia pen referred to above is said to have been given by Charles A. Sumner of Lincoln's cabinet to James Wormley, a Negro who owned and operated the Wormley hotel in Washington years ago. The history of the Pritchard pen seems to be just as authentic as the others, but Mr. Lincoln could not have made use of more than one pen, and which is the right one is an open question.

If you wish beautiful clear white clothes, use Russ Ball Blue. Large package at Grocers.—Adv.

Talks Without Tongue

John L. Nichols, a winter visitor at Los Angeles, has not had a tongue for sixteen years, but he proved to be one of the most fluent speakers heard by the Toastmasters' club there. Surgical removal of his tongue was necessary in 1912 and eight weeks later he began gradually to develop the power of speech. There are only fourteen of the twenty-six letters in the alphabet that can be pronounced without the aid of the tongue, Nichols says. The other twelve he sounds by blowing or whistling. Once he talked to 300 men at a convention for two hours and a stenographer taking down the speech misunderstood only one word.

Magazine in Arabic

Publishing of an educational magazine in the Arabic language has been inaugurated by the American university at Cairo, Egypt. It is said to be the first magazine in the Arabic language devoted entirely to the general discussion of modern education and the adaptation of progressive principles to the educational problems of the Near East.—School Life.

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"My mother took the 'Prescription' during middle life and was never down in bed a day during the whole time."—Mrs. M. E. Kennedy, 45 E. Ash St., Portland, Ore.

Those True Stories

Maxwell Bodenheim, the poet, sitting in the lounge of the Ritz, laid down with a laugh one of the new type of magazines, the true story type, which contains nothing but authentic personal confessions of the most extraordinary kind.

"This magazine," he said, "reminds me of an anecdote."

"Father," a young man said—his father had caught him in the act—"father, I cannot tell a lie."

"Aha! My father replied. 'Then it's no wonder the true story magazines send back all your MSS.'"

Submarine City

Photographers are making pictures of the submerged city of Jamestown, once the capital of Nevis, an Island in the West Indies. The remains of the city may be seen near the shore, beneath the level of the sea. Jamestown, on April 30, 1659, was visited by an earthquake, and the town slipped into the sea, carrying with it all its riches and a population estimated at 14,000.

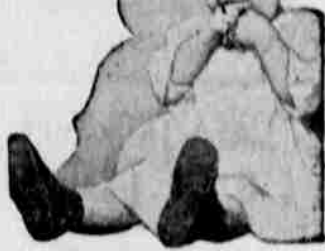
Light Diet

Romantic Young Thing—When I come out onto the front piazza after dinner and gaze at the moonlit sea, I feel too full for words.

Practical Youth—You wouldn't feel like that if you stayed at our boarder house.—Vancouver Province.

A cunning woman confides in few persons; a wise woman in none.

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Story in a Few Words

In speaking of his American romance, Count Boni de Castellani said with a rueful smile:
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