

Kurds, Good and Bad



A Kurd of the Turkey-Persia Border.

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

THE Kurds, who have revolted along the Turkish-Persian border and against whom large Turkish forces have been operating near famous Mount Ararat, have been fighting periodically against the established states of Asia Minor for thousands of years. Always their favorite method of strife has been guerrilla warfare. They have been historic marauders, but perhaps they have every reason, so far as environment is concerned, to lead such lives. State after state has struck against them with forces more powerful than any they could raise.

The days of Assyrian power in Mesopotamia seem pretty far back toward the beginnings of history. Records of that empire show that time and again its soldiers were sent into the rough country around the headwaters of the great rivers to subdue the mountaineers—ancestors of the Kurds—who harried Assyria's outlying settlements. These same mountaineers fought the Armenians when the latter came into the region between 1000 and 800 B. C.

When Xenophon retreated from Asia Minor in 401 B. C. the Kurds (then called the Carduchi) attacked his 10,000 Greeks, rolling great stones down on them from cliffs and mountains. They fought continually against the Bagdad empires. Since the Turks rose to power in Asia Minor the Kurds have fought them repeatedly; in fact, the Kurds never established any considerable measure of control over these fierce, freedom-loving highlanders.

Since the World War the European territory of Turkey has been negligible. The country has consisted almost solely of the big, fat peninsula lying between the Black sea on the north and the eastern arm of the Mediterranean on the south, and an extension to the east about as broad as the Asia Minor peninsula, reaching roughly half way from the Black sea to the Caspian. The southern half of this eastern extension—the southeastern corner of present Turkey—is what is loosely called Kurdistan. The other half of the eastern extension, immediately north of Kurdistan, was once Turkish Armenia.

Kurdish Sphere is Large.

Now that tens of thousands of the Armenian residents have been driven across the Russian border, while other tens of thousands have perished, the region hardly deserves the old name. The Kurdish population was always high in Turkish Armenia; now it is proportionately much greater. The whole eastern end of present Turkey, constituting almost a third of the territory of the country, therefore, may roughly be considered the Kurdish sphere of influence. It is in the northeast corner of Turkey that the Kurds have recently been most active.

Geographic and political and economic complications aplenty are found in this region. On the east Kurdistan touches Persia, and the people for a considerable distance into that country are Kurds, too. Indeed, Kurdish people inhabit the entire Zagros mountain range which extends from Turkey for 600 miles to the southeast, forming the boundary between Persia and Iraq.

The Kurds belong to the Iranian branch of the white race. Because of the open-air lives which they live, most of them have harsh features. The great majority are nominally Mohammedans.

The plateau region lying partly in old Armenia, partly in Kurdistan, where many of the most warlike Kurds live, presents a good example of the effects on man of a mixture of rugged uplands and fertile valleys. Limestone mountains and recently extinct volcanoes occupy the upper levels. Lower are magnificent canyons cut by the Tigris and Euphrates headstreams, and numerous broad, basin-shaped valleys whose floors are fertile plains. The ancestors of the Kurds were washed from many of these desirable

lowlands by the Armenian invader and from others by the later arriving Turks.

Some Recent Revolts.

Even the fairly recent regime of Kemal Pasha has had several Kurdish revolts on its hands. There was a sporadic uprising in 1920; and in 1922 the tribesmen made an unsuccessful effort to set up their own government. The scrapping of the caliphate at Constantinople aroused them and nearly every change in old Moslem customs has irritated them. Revolt after revolt has been quelled but as soon as the Kurd replenishes his forces and supplies, he is ready to attack again.

The Kurd farmers of the Iraq plains are more prosperous than the tribesmen of the hill country. Travelers climb the trails of Kurdistan for miles without seeing a village. When one does appear, it is usually situated in a well protected spot. Houses are placed without regard to building line and a bird's-eye view of a village reveals a jumble of mud and stone structures.

The peasant's house is a one-room structure which might be mistaken for a stable. The tribesmen reserves one side of his abode for his animals while his family occupies the other side. Kurds sit on the floor when they rest or eat, therefore they do not need tables or chairs.

The tribal chief or headman fares better. He has a house for his family and a guest house where he lives and entertains guests. He is offended if a traveler does not stay with him. Once the traveler has stopped, he must remain for dinner. The food is placed on the floor in the center of the diners. Should a guest stretch his legs toward another person, convey food to his mouth with his left hand, or fondle the dog, his host is offended. No knives and forks are to be found in the Kurd silver chest but if a guest has difficulty in feeding himself with his hands, a spoon will be handed to him. Few meals are served that do not include mast (curdled milk) the favorite dish of the Kurd. A little water mixed with the mast makes mastma, the Kurd "national" drink. The tribesmen like vegetables but seldom serve meat.

They Buy Their Wives.

Under Moslem law, the Kurd may take four wives. Wives are bought, so the peasant usually has only one. The chiefs take the full quota. Wives are priced according to their rank. The tribesman can get a wife in exchange for a pony or goat, or one may cost the equivalent of \$2500. This wedding entails a season of merry-making in which the whole tribe joins, but it takes less than a minute to dissolve a union. The man simply says "I divorce you" three times and the parties are free.

To the foreigner, the Kurds seem to know little else than the "art" of high-way robbery. Many of the mountain tribesmen are adept thieves, but in the hills as well as the plains, many Kurds earn honest livings by farming and cattle raising. Kurds are pastoral people, seldom moving from their villages except to migrate to higher altitudes during the summer for new pasturage.

In spite of exciting events in the fighting history of the Kurds, the tribesmen were almost unknown outside the Near East before the World War. When a delegation of Kurds appeared at the peace conference in 1919 newspaper men did not know who the sunburnt tribesmen might be. When their identity was revealed the Kurds went on the front pages and frequently have been there since.

The presence of Kurds in the Mosul region of what is now northern Iraq was a hard diplomatic problem for the treaty drafters to solve after the World War. Except in Mosul City, the population of this region is almost solidly Kurdish. It is the odor and power of petroleum that in some ways dominate all else in this region. What promises to become one of the major oil fields of the world centers about Mosul.

CAP AND BELLS



WELL, THAT'S PERFECT

"Yes," said the man in the ancient overcoat with bulging pockets, "Bill and me are in partnership, but we don't carry the same goods."
"Explain yourself," said a friend.
"Well, Bill goes around sellin' a stove polish that leaves a stain on the fingers, and I go around next day with the only soap that will take it off."

HER TRUE LOVE



She—I love overpowering men.
He—How many have you overpowered?

Some Hope

In case you had
is a born poet
Do not be sad,
He may outgrow it.

Too Late

She wanted to be in the beauty chorus, so she wrote an application enclosed her photograph, and was asked to come for an interview. Imagine her surprise when she was told by the manager that she was too late.
"Is the position filled, then?" she asked.
"No," replied the manager. "I meant that you should have come when you had your photograph taken."

He'll Tell 'em

Employer—I understand, Thompson, that the men have all struck.
Thompson—Yes, sir.
"But what for?"
"Well, we dunno yet, sir. The gentleman from London isn't come down to tell us."—London Public Opinion.

She Knew Him

Doctor—For greater security madam, do you wish to have your husband X-rayed?
"Thank you! For some time past I've seen through him without such difficulty."

It Had to Come Out

"Tell me, Mrs. Jones, what do you really think of Mrs. Smith?"
Mrs. Jones (very confidentially)—Why, you know Mrs. Brown I never talk about anybody, but I really feel sorry for her husband.

NOT A COW-DOG



First Neighbor—"Why didn't your dog run that cow out of your garden then?" Second Neighbor—"Beneath his dignity—he's a bulldog, you know."

He Takes the Count

Some wives may count
Their husbands' calories,
but they all count
Their husbands' salaries!

"Marry Gold"

Longwee—I do you believe in such sentiment as saying it with flowers?
Severew—No. A man can't be too careful. When old Mrs. Bullion was ill I sent her a bunch of marigolds, and she took it for a proposal.

Saved Something

Judge—You say you carried a loaded revolver and yet let the thief take everything off you?
Mr. Pin—Yes, he took everything but the revolver. He didn't find that.

Columnization

"What's your boy Josh doing?"
"He's working as a columnist," answered Farmer Centosell.
"Up a paper?"
"No. In an office. He adds up one column of figures after another."

Perfect Harmony

"Is your husband musical?" asked the visitor.
"Not a bit," replied the Lostess, adding with a smile, "but I have taught him to play second fiddle perfectly."

PARADE

by Evelyn Campbell

(Copyright by Evelyn Campbell.)
WNU Service

THE STORY

Linda Haverhill's father, ne'er-do-well, dies when she is seventeen, leaving her to face the world with little money or prospects.

CHAPTER II—Continued

And Linda, seated opposite, forced herself to look back. She had seen him before. He was her father's best and oldest friend, but then her vision had been childish and distorted by sweets and French dolls. She saw him now as a man, but she conquered what she saw.

"It was private," she explained, "by the whole occurrence had been managed by the reluctant Mrs. Ralston. He nodded. His small eyes, abnormally intelligent, saw through everything at once—Cousin Amy's engagements and the impracticality of death at such a time.

"And now, my dear," he said, after all the meaningless words had been spoken, "what can I do for you?"

The little eyes, searching out the sweet, cold lines of her body under the narrow black frock, said she could have anything she wanted of him. He had refused to lend Jim Haverhill money, but that was another matter—no sending good dollars down a greased incline. Jim Haverhill's daughter was an investment—virgin soil that could not suspect its own return.

But Linda smiled a faint rejection. She had not come to borrow. From her black handbag she took a sheet of stiff papers, and before they were unfolded he caught the familiar glint of gold leaf and purple—a hint of flaming scarlet.

"My father left no money," she said slowly, "but there are a great many of these certificates. If you will tell me how to sell them—"

The senator was not a humorous man, but he almost smiled at that. Sell them? But he put out his cushioned paw and took the papers, managing to touch her fingertip.

"Of course, my child," he wheezed, "pretty little girls must have money."

Then he asked her what she was going to do, and Linda for the first time looked childish and bewildered. Do? She stammered out that she supposed she would live with Cousin Amy and some day would marry, blushing hatefully as she said it.

"Ah!" exclaimed the senator delightedly, rolling his tongue. "Marry! That shouldn't be difficult, my dear, with your attractions." He was on familiar ground now, and edged his great chair closer to hers.

Linda got up quickly. "Please sell the stock for me," she pleaded, and suddenly her voice dropped away and she was a child, young and afraid.

The senator was touched. "Too young to have planned anything," he thought. "There isn't any man yet—just silly talk. She can have all the money she wants—for a year or two."

The first week of following September did not find Linda in the city again. At that uncomfortable period of the year she would be with the Italians at their Long Island place or with some other distant relative who had a twinge of conscience and a spasmodic desire to do something for the family orphan.

She was not unhappy, because she was not penniless. The stocks owned by poor Jim occasionally surprised every one by exhibiting a stir of life. Something would be sold; something would pay an infinitesimal dividend, and Linda would have enough to pay her dressmaker's bill or the expenses of a cabin across. She saw Converse occasionally, and he always urged her to have a good time and spend what she wanted; he would chalk it up against her account, he promised with a fat laugh. She got over some of her repulsion, but that was because he was wary. He knew that any female thing would be appalled by him until his wings were broken.

Cousin Amy spoke to her husband about the senator. "He is enormously rich. He has never been married, and it is very strange that he should manage so well with all that worthless paper poor Jim left."

He agreed. He was darn glad he hadn't been expected to handle the stuff, but it was too bad taste to discuss, even for them, and the subject was quickly abso.

Linda met Courtney Roth at Coronado. He had run out there to see what it was like, he said, for Europe wasn't what it used to be, but he didn't like California either he told Linda, ten minutes after they met. There was nothing to California but pavement, a vulgar climate, and picture postcard scenery.

Her attention was claimed. "What is 'a vulgar climate'?" she asked laughing.

"Weather that has no reserves," he answered instantly. "Perpetually smiling skies are like a woman who laughs because she has no sense."

She did not like the way he said that. There was something cold and bitter in his voice. Men did not usually speak so to her of her own sex. She was both piqued and interested.

"You mean you like to go about with raincoats and rugs?"

He nodded. "Possibly. But I like uncertainty. I like to see the sun

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"Evil Spirit" Kills Seven
Superstition has gripped the people of Allum Kara Hissar, in Central Anatolia, following the deaths of seven Turkish women in a ravine. The side of the ravine caved in burying the unfortunates under tons of stone and earth. They were part of a party who were collecting lime to beautify the walls of their homes in preparation of the festival of Kourban Bairam, and as similar accidents happened in 1896 and 1923, the villagers are convinced that an evil spirit dwells in the ravine and at times demands women as victims to appease its anger.

Independent

Employer—"Are you a married man?"
Sambo (applicant for job)—
"Naw, sah—Ah makes mah own hvin."



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