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TO carry out the purposes for which it was founded forty-one years ago the National Geographic Society publishes this Magazine monthly. All receipts are invested in the Magazine itself or expended directly to promote geographic knowledge.

ARTICLES and photographs are desired. For material which the Magazine can use, generous remuneration is made. Contributions should be accompanied by addressed return envelope and postage.

IMMEDIATELY after the terrific eruption of the world's largest crater, Mt. Katmai, in Alaska, a National Geographic Society expedition was sent to make observations of this remarkable phenomenon. Four expeditions have followed and the extraordinary scientific data resulting given to the world. In this vicinity an eighth wonder of the world was discovered and explored—"The Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes," a vast area of steaming, spouting fissures. As a result of The Society's discoveries this area has been created a National Monument by proclamation of the President of the United States.

AT an expense of over \$50,000 The Society sent a notable series of expeditions into Peru to investigate the traces of the Inca race. Their

discoveries form a large share of our knowledge of a civilization waning when Pizarro first set foot in Peru.

THE Society also had the honor of subscribing a substantial sum to the expedition of Admiral Peary, who discovered the North Pole, and has contributed \$25,000 to Commander Byrd's Antarctic Expedition.

NOT long ago The Society granted \$25,000, and in addition \$75,000 was given by individual members to the Government when the congressional appropriation for the purpose was insufficient, and the finest of the giant sequoia trees of California were thereby saved for the American people.

THE Society has conducted extensive excavations at Pueblo Bonito, New Mexico, where prehistoric peoples lived in vast communal dwellings before the days of Columbus; it is sponsoring an ornithological survey of Venezuela, and is maintaining an important photographic and botanical expedition in Yunnan Province, China.

TO further the study of solar radiation in relation to long range weather forecastings, The Society has appropriated \$65,000 to enable the Smithsonian Institution to establish a station for five years on Mt. Brukkaros, in Southwest Africa.

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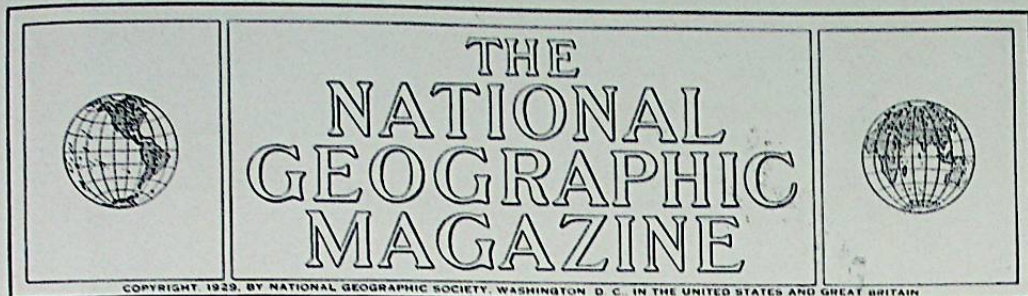
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THE DESERT ROAD TO TURKESTAN

Twentieth Century Travel Through Innermost Asia, Along
Caravan Trails Over Which Oriental Commerce
Was Once Borne from China to the
Medieval Western World

BY OWEN LATTIMORE

With Illustrations from Photographs by the Author

THE caravan routes which link the far interior of China with western Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan, the heart of Asia, penetrate regions less known and more remote from our modern civilization than almost any other quarter of the world. Yet they have an ancient and eventful history of their own—a history of the travels of Marco Polo 650 years ago*; a history of caravans bearing the silks of China toward the Mediterranean and the provinces of the Roman Empire, and bringing back to China the artistic and cultural influences of Greece, Persia, and India; a history of the wars and migrations of nomad Huns, Turks, Tatars, and Mongols.

During 1926 and 1927, after I had been in China nearly seven years, I traversed the whole sweep of these countries between China and India, traveling along the ancient routes in the ancient manner. Starting from Peking (now Peiping), I went up to Kweihwating, near the end of the railway which reaches up toward the southern frontiers of Mongolia (see map, page 664), and after months in the bor-

der country journeyed through the length of Mongolia by caravan and entered Chinese Turkestan.

At Kweihwating I learned from caravan traders a little of the unknown ways I was to pursue. Two great routes lead from China into central Asia: one from central China up through the provinces of Shensi and Kansu to the edge of the western Gobi Desert, and then across into Chinese Turkestan without touching Mongolia; the other from northern China up into northern Mongolia, and then westward to Chinese Turkestan.

I DECIDE TO FOLLOW THE DESERT ROAD

I could not follow the first route, because of banditry, civil war, and anti-foreign feeling. Nor could I follow the second, because in recent years the tribes of Outer Mongolia, largely under Russian influence, have succeeded in breaking away from China, and will not allow caravans to traverse their country.

Thus I was led to the new and unknown route, the Desert Road to Turkestan. Opened up by trading caravans, to avoid the hostilities of both China and Outer Mongolia, it runs through Inner Mongolia, which is nominally under Chinese

*See "The World's Greatest Overland Explorer," by J. R. Hildebrand, in the NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE for November, 1928.