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The National Geographic Society and Its Magazine

With 24 Illustrations

GILBERT GROSVENOR

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To carry out the purposes for which it was founded forty-eight 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.

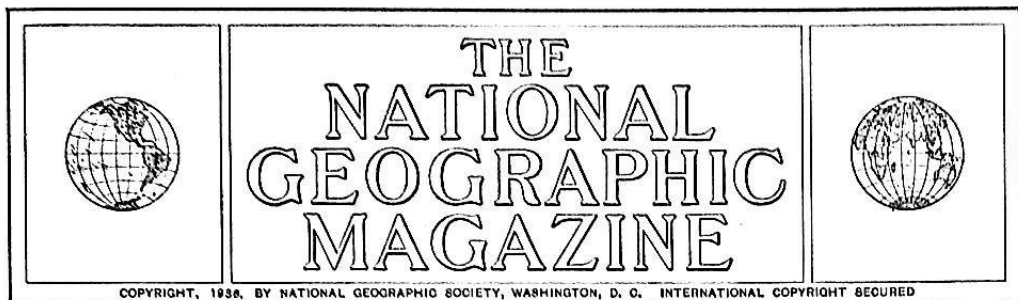
At an expense of over \$50,000 The Society sent a notable series of expeditions into Peru to investigate the traces of the Inca race. Their discoveries form a large share of our knowledge of a civilization waning when Pizarro first set foot in Peru.

The Society also had the honor of subscribing a substantial sum to the expedition of Admiral Peary, who discovered the North Pole, and contributed \$75,000 to Admiral Byrd's Antarctic Expeditions.

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's notable expeditions to New Mexico have pushed back the historic horizons of the southwestern United States to a period nearly eight centuries before Columbus crossed the Atlantic. By dating the ruins of the vast communal dwellings in that region, The Society's researches have solved secrets that have puzzled historians for three hundred years. The Society is sponsoring an ornithological survey of Venezuela.

On November 11, 1935, in a flight sponsored jointly by the National Geographic Society and the U. S. Army Air Corps, the world's largest balloon, *Explorer II*, ascended to an officially recognized altitude record of 72,395 feet. Capt. Albert W. Stevens and Capt. Orvil A. Anderson took aloft in the gondola nearly a ton of scientific instruments, which obtained results of extraordinary value.



WITH THE NOMADS OF CENTRAL ASIA

A Summer's Sojourn in the Tekes Valley, Plateau Paradise of Mongol and Turkic Tribes

BY EDWARD MURRAY

With Illustrations from Photographs by the Author

BEYOND Bukhara and Samarkand lies Tashkent; and from Tashkent eastward stretches an ancient silk caravan road to Cathay. It winds across steppes, mountains, and the Chino-Russian boundary until it runs past the glamorous Central Asian metropolis of Kuldja (or Ningyuan) in Sinkiang, whose bazaar is a riot of color and whose community is an amazing mixture of tongues.*

Here, in the winter, old-style Russians in gay troikas race to and from all-night parties; solemn processions of Mongol lamas parade through the streets on horseback; and long-robed Chinese and Turki merchants shout and gesticulate in the crowded market places.

In summer lumbering oxcarts replace racing troikas and, from the streets which have become dust ponds, clouds of fine sand swirl aloft to hover over the city like a pall. Then life in Kuldja becomes unbearable and the populace, by horse, wagon, and on foot, packs off for the mountains.

And so it was that, after spending seven winter and spring months in the snows and dust of Kuldja, I found myself in mid-June two days by horse south of the city, half

lost in the mountains and searching for the famous Tekes Valley.

My trail was winding up the bottom of a deep ravine. The steep slopes were bare of trees, but covered with an unbelievably rank growth of grass and weeds. This vegetation formed walls of the narrow trail, cutting off my view of everything save a thin band of sky above and a short patch of trail before and behind.

Suddenly a horseman emerged from the overgrowth onto the trail in front of me. I recognized him as a Kalmuck, a nomad from one of the Central Asian tribes of Mongols; his dark skin, high cheekbones, and brimless, domed felt hat made that certain. Apparently he had been watching me from some vantage point and was accosting me for a purpose.

SILENCE PRECEDES A NOMAD GREETING

We rode up the trail for a short distance without speaking. Among nomads silence is a prelude to greeting. It is a fine point in their social etiquette, so I always let the natives make the advances.

"Where are you going?" As he turned back in his saddle to speak to me, his expression was decidedly unfriendly.

"To the Tekes Valley," I replied.

"What is your business in the Tekes?"

"I visit Sayjan Beg, the chieftain of the Kirghiz."

* See "Russia's Orphan Races: Picturesque Peoples Who Cluster on the Southeastern Borderland of the Vast Slav Dominions," by Maynard Owen Williams, NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, October, 1918.