Red Letter Days From Mao to Ati

Where the Price of Gas Runs a Race With the Rising Thermometer

Even the Thirty Years' War, so the historians tell us, ended eventually, and there's a seven-year limit on the itch, they say. But in the meantime you've got to keep on scratching.

It was this kind of blind optimism that kept Jim and me plugging away day after day and week after week until the miles ahd stretched into the thousands, the time had lengthened into months, and our beards grew down to our chests. But if it took a year, this attempt to cross Africa on motorcycles, we were sure we'd still be the first. In all the ages of the Dark Continent nothing on wheels had ever passed that way before so there was really no hurry. But one doesn't want to spend one's life, or lose it either, fighting the bush and sand in Africa.

We had finally reached Mao, northeast of Africa's lake of mystery, Chad, over a camel trail that had only once before felt the roll of a wheel of any kind. Three years before, a French military expedition with army tanks, caterpillar wheels, machine guns, and a young army of mechanics and helpers, after many months of preparation had finally reached this same French fort at Mao. But here they turned south, put the devil and the desert behind them and retreated to the firmer ground and better roads in the region south of Chad.

We could do that, too, for one way and another Jim and I had come thus far with our little one-lunged motorbikes and the prospect of better roads to the south wasa welcome one indeed. We could follow the example and the trail of the retreating caterpillar tanks or we could—at least Jim thought we could—strike straight on east across the edge of the Sahara Desert where nothing on wheels had ever been before. Here at Mao we must decide.

At Mao, Jim decided, we would go straight east to the Red Sea. It was only a couple of thousand miles. We had 3 gallons of gasoline which the French government had furnished for us at Mao at cost, only $3.60 per gallon. This seems high in a country where common labor is worth only one or two nickels a day. We could have bought us each a plump young wife for less than the cost of one five-gallon tin of gas. It hardly seemed fair to the women, or to us. Of course it was mostly transportation charges. In addition to the long ocean voyage to Africa, the gasoline had been carried seventeen days on a river boat through the Congo jungle and forty-five days on camels to reach us in that lonely corner of the Sahara.

Money we spent on gasoline we saved on board and room and on our own camel baggage transport. The best and most board I ever had in my life was given us without even the asking at every one of the isolated French forts that fringed the edge of the Great Desert and which marked our trail to the Red Sea. And in between the forts, with two million square miles of desert to choose from, there was no one to charge us rent. As for our baggage transport, it was cheaper than having the outfit of camels presented to us. From Rig-Rig to Ati we had four men, five camels and one horse, and the total charge for six days, going and returning, was 126 francs or $6.30 for the whole caravan. I've paid that much in Iowa to get pulled out of one mud hole.

From Mao to the edge of the Nile Valley it was all very much the same. A thousand miles of caravan trail and every mile a fight. Sometimes we'd work all day and make twenty miles and sometimes if we were lucky we'd make eighty. Those were long days too. We traveled light, all our baggage, gasoline, spare parts, and food, except the absolute bare necessities followed us on our little camel caravan. We'd struggle on ahead to the next French fort along our route and there sit down to rest and eat and argue prohibition with the French officers until our camels would catch up two or three days later. Then we'd get a fresh bunch of camels, load them up and start out again for the next fort, usually 100 or 200 miles away. Altogether we used this camel transport for at least 2,000 miles of bad going. That made slow travel.

In between forts the semi-desert lands on the edge of the great Sahara were mostly a monotony of broad sandy plains. These miles and miles of rolling land with low hills always to be climbed or skirted around were sometimes broken by a higher range of deep, soft dunes that broke out hearts as well. Occasionally we'd chug down into a cuvette, a wide flat basin that drained hundreds of square miles of surrounding hinterland. In any other country these cuvettes would have been lakes but here they were simply moist places with a high enough water table underground so that sometimes wells were dug and some green stuff could be grown.

Thus it went for days and weeks and months. Broad plains and deep, soft sand. Rolling hills and sand. High, steep dunes and sand. Sometimes a scattering woody bush. Sometimes a narea of high bunch grass so high we'd have to stop and stand up on our luggage carrier occasionally to get our bearings, the clumps so thick we couldn't dodge them and could only rack ourselves to pieces going over the tops.

There came the evening we found the Glovers. This English explorer and his wife had ventured into far away Tibesti in the hearts of the Sahara in search of the white unicorn and had been reported robbed and slain by the murderous Bedouins, who still raid caravans and steal slaves in that unpoliced desert. We chugged up to a mud rest house on the edge of a cuvette at the end of one terrific day and found the Glovers' camels. Mrs. Glover was the only white woman we saw in two months of travel and our American accent was the nearest approach to English the Glovers had heard for several months.

They had been entirely out of any food for weeks except what they could kill or purchase from the natives. Happily our own camels with our provisions had kept up with us that day and so we broke out some cans of Scotch oatmeal, Australian butter, American mixed fruit, Portuguese sardines and English biscuits and let their African cook fix up a real meal. Then Mr. Glover, who was the photographer with the first motor expedition from Capetown to Cairo several years ago told of death-dry days in Tibesti, seven days between water holes, of their brush with the robbers who had attacked but had been driven away by the Glovers and their cameleers, of the mythical white unicorn he had been sent to find and found, of 2,000 natives clamoring for the meat of an elephant he had shot in the region south of Chad, and of the fortitude of his little 95 pound wife who had made the whole trek with him and looked even then fit enough to lick any other part of Africa yet unlicked.

There came another red letter day, when I broke two bones in my good right foot. A concealed stump was hidden in the sand just high enough to catch the toe of my shoe and just strong enough to bend the iron foot rest on my motorcycle entirely out of shape, even though my foot, cushioned in between, broke the force of the blow. Fortunately, we were about 800 miles from the nearest doctor and there was no way for him to travel but by camel. Since we could have no doctor I didn't know until two months later that anything was broken and so we kept on going. A black "medicine man" tied up my foot, Jim jammed the pedal back into place and we were off again.

There came the evening when we camped in a mud rest house beside the caravan trail and asked the village chief for water. He sent two women to the well which at that season of the year was two miles from the village. When they finally appeared, each with a three-gallon pot of water on her head, we gave them a franc (five cents) each and put the water on to boil. An hour later fourteen naked black savages filed in through the compound gate and each face was grinning under a big pot of water. They set their water pots down in a circle around our fire, bowed themselves to the sand before us and held out their hands for their franc. We had made the common American mistake of being too liberal with our money when the women brought the first two pots and were expected to pay for that error now. Instead, we graciously presented each black business man with his own clay pot and bade him run along.

There came the hot afternoon when we chugged across the sandy parade grounds and stopped before the gates of the big French fort at Ati, while the Commandant and all his officers rubbed their eyes and wondered. They hadn't been told we were coming and the sight of two motorcyclists in their military dooryard where nothing on wheels had ever been before was a colonial French frontier, stepped forward to parley-vous with the strange invaders on wheels. We looked tough enough, dirty, unshaven and disreputable. I don't blame him for his caution, especially since we had dropped from those desert skies entirely unannounced.

"Bon jour, mon Capitaine," I greeted him warmly. I don't know we were unexcepted and had anticipated the same warm welcome we'd received at all the other French forts. My friendly greeting didn't help matters any; it only showed him that we weren't French. Probably English. And the French and English as neighboring colonizers aren't any too friendly. "Nous sommes ici, Lafayette," I grinned this further bid for welcome.

"Qui sont vous?" demanded the Commandant without even offering to shake hands. And when a Frenchman doesn't seize every oportunity to shake hands there is something wrong indeed. That finally woke me to the situation and I babbled a half-dozen paragraphs of French out of which he got the idea that we were driving motorcycles across Africa and, more important still, that we were Americans. Then we were welcomed indeed. The colored soldiers broke ranks and stacked their guns, greeted him warmly. I didn't know hands and the Commandant kissed us on both grimy cheeks and ordered the post pig to be killed toute-de-suite.

There came the never-to-be-forgotten day when the cuvettes were so large and frequent that we made 100 miles in one day—the first time for two months. We stopped that night in the French fort at Oum Hadjir and heard the lions roar just outside the gate. "They only came to drink from the oasis lake," explained the Lieutenant in command. "They can't get inside the fort."

I have slept to the music of many a coyote chorus the Klondike symphony put on nightly by those great malamute dogs in the Canadian Northwest has been as pleasant to me as the sleep from which they've waked me. But the roaring of a lion just outside one's gate is a faunaphone lullaby that one cannot forget.

The Art of Anecdote

We have masters of anecdote amongst us still—though to my loss I am less in the way of hearing the political or quasi-political variety. Mr. Pett Ridge is an unrivalled and inexhaustible store of the humours of Cockneydom; and Mr. Seymour Hicks's reminiscences—slightly tinged, perhaps, by the glow of imagination and rounded by an artist's hand—of theatrical and club life are in their own vein supreme. And our after-dinner speakers have been, of recent years, reinforced and variegated by the advent of women in that new capacity—among so many other new and more important capacities. Women speakers do not indeed add much in the way of anecdote; when one comes to think of it, it is, for some reason or other, a rare thing to hear a woman tell an anecdote, but they bring their own qualities into service. Being fundamentally serious, as they prove by the earnestness which they devote to unimportant matters—nothing is a trifle to true woman—they took to political speaking sooner and more readily than to the lighter kind, and in my earlier days seemed inclined to overrate the solemnity of occasions which in their true nature were not at all solemn. They were apt to strike the note of emotion too soon—it should come, if at all, at the end, not at the ebginning of the speech—and too often; they had not learnt that emotion must be deftly and lightly introduced into an atmosphere. . . . Things are different now; the lesson has been learnt. To cite only one name—and I cite it with the more pleasure because it affords an opportunity to pay homageto a great artist in another sphere—few male speakers of to-day could afford to "give points" to Dame Madge Kendal over a dinner table.—Anthony Hope, in "Memories and Notes."

Learn to Walk

In learning to walk correctly people often concentrate on the placing of the foot on the ground with no regard to the part the rest of the body plays in their progression, whereas if the co-ordination of the body is understood, the correct placement of the foot comes as the natural result of finishing a movement which actually starts in the spine. It would seem that the very commonness of walking would insure its proper performance, instead of which the very opposite is the case. The majority of people rarely ask themselves how they walk; they simply take it fro granted that they know how to walk. But when they begin to analyze walking from the standpoint of correct balance and transference of weight, it is found to demand such fine co-ordination that it becomes a basis for nearly all subsequent motions.

CHAMPION LOG ROLLER

Wilbur Marx, 17, Eau Claire, Wis., won the world's championship log rolling tourney at Washburn.

Open to the Light of Day

A French term, sometimes misunderstood, is the descriptive "a jour," as applied to fabrics, embroidery and trimmings. The literal translation is "to the daylight" and so used, the term furnishes an artistic way of designating the open-work idea, whether expressed in the form of fabric or its decoration. Many of the newest materials are now advertised as "a jour," and are to be used over contrasting linings to give full value to the open-work design. Georgette a jour is in this category. French model hats are also featured with felt in a jour designs and these open-work effects are in evidence on the cuffs of modish gloves, a contrasting color of lining showing through the perforations.

In some English dictionaries the French word "jour" appears with the definition of a perforation or eyelet in design, and, in lacework this word is a synonym for mesh. Eyelet embroidery, therefore, is "embroidery a jour," provided the eyelet feature is the prominent part of the design.

Do Unto Others—

Paying your bills promptly is one of the best ways to follow the Golden Rule.

First—in fairness to the merchant or professional man who has invested cash and time in the merchandise or service you have received, you should reciprocate the favor of credit by taking care of your obligations in reasonable time.

Your merchant or professional man does not require security. He demands no interest—yet he is actually loaning you cash.

Second—in fairness to your own good name and reputation, your bills should be paid on time.

You are granted credit according to your past record. Your character is the basis for confidence in your ability to pay.

Do your part. Pay your bills promptly. If you can't pay all at once, pay half or whatever you can and see to it that your creditor knows you are playing the game square.

In China every soldier takes his wife to war with him. It may be a government plan to keep the boys in a fighting mood.

I am merciful with almost any one except a perjurer.—Judge Julian W. Mack.

A Reverend Gentleman Roused

(By Rev. John Brown,* as quoted in the Melita (Manitoba) New Era)

You insect pests; you villain rife;
Assassins ceaseless in the strife,
Your noses pierce me like a knife,
You dread mosquitos,
On all the joys of rural life
You set your vetoes.

Respect you've none for man or beast,
When hunger calls you to a feast
You never hesitate the least,
But drive your stings
In landlord, pedlar, pauper, priest,
Or even kings.

You stewing, longleg'd, flying leaches,
What demon is't you manners teaches,
Your every nose my vitals reaches,
Through coat and vest,
I doubt if en'en my leathern breeches
Would you resist.

My very life blood you would steal,
Your bites like cankery thorns I feel;
In scratching oft the skin I peel,
Plain truth to speak.
So punctured, sore from head to heel,
I swear in Greek.

E'en while asunder words I tear,
To weave them into verse with care,
Like asps your buzzing in my hair,
My beard and neck;
A poet's efforts, humble, rare,
You often check.

A youthful pair by love oppressed;
The holy flame beats in their breast.
What wretches to disturb their rest,
In hall or bower;
And poison what had else been blest,
Their hallowed hour.

With ruby lips and liquid eyes,
A cherub in her cradle lies,
Yet, heedless of an infant's cries
You quench your thirst.
Like bottles filled with wine you rose,
Filled like to burst.

In dreams what sights my fancy sees—
Great vampire bats and vulture fleas,
Like humming birds that fit at ease
'Mong vines and roses;
And huge inverted bumble bees,
With red hot noses.

If on the road to walk or drive,
The hum of wings is like a hive.
Device! There's none that men devise
That safety brings;
In truth, I'm nearly flayed alive,
Pierced by your stings.

If on my couch to sleep I lie,
Like swarming bees you 'round me fly;
I twist, I turn, exhausted, sigh;
I groan, I yawn,
And often never close an eye
Till morning dawn.

O! would some gifted druggist wise
Some method of relief devise—
A monument of costly size
Would bear his name,
And nations, yet unborn, would rise
To spread his fame.

But, meanwhile, let each man and sire,
Each matron, maid and man on hire,
With nets and screens and smudging fire
Maintain the strife;
Nor from the battle once retire
Or vain is life.

We dread the mud, the cold, the rain,
The blizzard winds that sweep the plain;
But all of these I do maintain
Will ne'er defeat us
Equal to this horrid train
Of dread mosquitoes.

(*Rev. Mr. Brown was a pioneer missionary of Manitoba, and in the old days when his verses were written, and to which they refer, the mosquito pest was a serious handicap—whether because there were more of the insects, or the protective measures availabl to human kind were less effective, no one can say. Let none think, at any rate, that the reverend gentleman has departed from Christian reticence without due provocation.—Ed. Winnipeg Mirror.)

Thought

Thought is the labor of intelligence, reverie is its voluptuousness. To replace thought by reverie is to confound poison with nourishment.

Tapping Canada's Resources

After three centuries of development in Canada, the mineral resources of the vast Dominion are still awaiting the hand of the promoter. Gold, silver, nickel, copper, graphite and other deposits are being found in quantities which indicate that the potentialities of sections once regarded as almost a barren waste are almost limitless.

In the region forming a Y-shape, with its base resting in southern Ontario and the angles swinging northwestward into Manitoba and esstward to Labrador, the terrain is dotted with mineral wealth, the full extent of which has not yet been determined. American and Canadian capital is uniting on a broad scale to develop the wealth of this land, and potential water supply in unlimited volume makes feasible broad-scale operations at relatively low cost to the promoters.

In the Lake St. John district, lying north of Quebec, model towns, enormous hydroelectric developments and rail and water terminals are proceeding apace. Newsprint paper is being produced on a scale which makes possible the supplying of all American newspapers, and the transportation of this by rail is a source of increasing profit to the Canadian railroads. Fast and regular schedules enable the great dailies in cities south of the border to keep on hand only a relatively small amount of paper.

Great corporations are investing huge sums in the development of the recently discovered resources of Canada. The International Paper Company, with its plants throughout the eastern provinces; the Aluminum Company of America, which is taking advantage of the hydroelectric supply to establish a plant for the manufacture of aluminum in northern Quebec, to which point its ships bring bauxite (the principal ingredient) direct from South America; the Harry Payne Whitney mining developments in the Flin Flon field of Manitoba are among a few of the companies which are spending millions of dollars in the Dominion of Canada.

With a plentiful labor supply, which is stable because it is composed largely of residents who are local or for whom model towns are being constructed; with cheap water supply to drive the machinery; with deep-water navigation to many points and adequate rail transport to those removed from the eastern rivers, Canada is entering an area of manufacturing and industry which may well bring it to the forefront in supplying finished commodities to the world.

That her start in industrial activities has come at this time, after other nations have been in the field for a century or more, is not a disadvantage, for the Canadian possesses a degree of optimism concerning the possibilities of his land which can readily surmount all obstacles. Canada's progress in a relatively new field for her seems assured, for capital does not freely flow into untried and highly speculative investments.—Editorial, Christian Science Monitor.

"Sleep-walking is an affliction from which high-steppers suffer most."

Pact Regarded As Only A Beginning

Bolton C. Waller, winner of the Filene peace prize "The Kellogg pact is welcomed as the most sweeping declaration yet made of the will to get rid of war. It is particularly welcomed as being initiated by the United States, and showing a fresh determination of the strongest country to unite with others for that object. But the pact must be the beginning, not the end. It must be rendered effective, both by a reduction of those armaments which are unnecessary if the pact is a reality, and by a far more comprehensive system than yet exists for the peaceful settlement of disputes. The peoples of the world must see to it that this declaration on paper becomes a real factor in determining the national policies."

Of what I have written I say in the words which Patrick Henry made famous: "If that be treason, make the most of it."—Nicholas Murray Butler.

I should be sorry, very sorry indeed, if almost all the books written to-day did not perish.—George Moor

Caterpillar Tractor Handles Famous Lifeboat

LIFEBOAT AT NEWBURG, ABERDEENSHIRE, AND GALLANT CREW WAS HONORED BY PRINCE OF WALES

The Coxswain, ninth from right, John Innes, and fourth figure from right, James Innes, are father and brother, respectively, of J. M. Innes, Toronto, who is leaving this week for Scotland. The crew was decorated for valor in rescuing the crew of a trawler, Imperial Prince. Cockswain Innes has held the position for 47 years. In the last 20 years his boat has saved 80 persons.