

**THE SENTINEL**

**Dr. Sven Heden's Adventures.**  
 Dr. Sven Heden, the Swedish explorer, relates his adventures in *McClure's Magazine*. The scene of the events narrated is in Central Asia, in the Takla Makan Desert:—  
 I started from Kashgar on February 17, 1895, with four Turkish servants and eight fine camels. I wanted to cross from the Yarkand Darya River to the Khotan Darya River, over the Takla Makan Desert. I wanted to explore this desert, which nobody had ever done. There were many legends anent it among the inhabitants on its confines—stories of ancient towns buried in the sand; and I wanted to learn if there was any foundation for these stories. I entered the desert on April 10. We had water for twenty-five days with us, carried in iron tanks on the backs of the camels. It was all sand—moving dunes of sand. The days were very hot, the nights were bitterly cold. The air was full of dust. We crossed the first half of the desert in thirteen days, and came to a region where there were some hills and small fresh water lakes. Here I bade my men fill the cisterns with fresh water for ten days. We then proceeded, all going well. On the second day after we had left the lakes, I looked at the cisterns and found that water for four days only had been taken! I thought we could reach the Khotan Darya in six days, one of my servants told me that in three days' march from where we were we should find a place where we could dig for water. I believed him, and we went on.  
 We found no water, and two days after our supply was exhausted. The camels got ill; we lost three camels before May 1. On May 1 the men began to sicken. I was so thirsty that I drank a glass of the vile Chinese spirit. It made me very ill. We only proceeded four kilometres that day—early in the morning. My men were all weeping and clamoring to Allah. They said they could go no farther; they said they wanted to die. I made them put up the tent, and then we all undressed and lay down naked in the tent. During that day we killed our last sheep, and drank its blood. We all thought to die. I thought I would do my best to go as far as possible. That is the difference between a European and an Oriental; a European thinks that a life is not so easily taken away; an Oriental is a fatalist, and will not fight for its preservation. In the evening of May Day we were all mad with raging thirst. When night fell we walked on. Two of the men could not move. They were dying. So we had to leave them. I said to them, "Wait a little here, sleep a little, and then follow us."  
 I had to abandon much of my luggage—5,000 kronors worth—for the camels were too weak. But I took my most important instruments with me, all my Chinese silver, my maps, and my notes. That night another camel died. I was ahead, carrying a torch to lead the way. In the night a third man gave in, and lay down in the sand, and motioned to me to leave him to die. Then I abandoned everything—silver, maps, and note books—and took only what I could carry: two chronometers, a box of matches, ten cigarettes, and a compass. The last of the men followed. We went east. The man carried a spade and an iron pot. The spade was to dig for water; the iron pot held clotted blood, foul and putrid, which we staggered on, through the moving dunes of sand, till the morning of the second of May.  
 When the sun rose we dug out holes in the sand, which was cold from the frost of the night, and undressed and lay down naked. With our clothes and the spade we made a little tent, which gave us just enough shelter for our heads. We lay there for ten hours. At night fall we staggered on again, still toward the east. We advanced all the night of the second, and the morning of the third of May. On this morning, as we were stumbling along, Kasim suddenly gripped my shoulder and pointed east. He could not speak. I could see nothing. At last he whispered "Tamarisk!" So we walked on, and after a while I saw a green thing on the horizon.  
 We reached it at last, but we could not dig. It was all sand, yards deep. But we thanked God, and munched the green foliage; and all that day we lay naked in its shadow. At nightfall I dressed, and bade Kasim follow. He lay where he was, and said not a word. I left him and went east. I went on till one in the morning. Then I came to another tamarisk, and as the night was bitterly cold, I collected the fallen branches and made a fire. In the night my companion came up. He had seen my fire. He did not speak. I did not speak. We had no interest to talk. It was impossible to do so, for our mouths were as dry as our skins. That night we walked on for several hours, and so on till the sun grew hot on May 4, when we again lay down naked on the sand. On the night of May 4 we advanced crawling on all fours, and resting every ten yards or so. I meant to save my life. I felt all along that my life could not be thrown away like that.  
 A last we saw a black line on the horizon, very dark and very thin, and we understood that it must be the forest of Khotan Darya. We rested the forest by the time the sun grew hot. It was very deep and very dense, a black forest of very old trees. We saw the tracks of wild beasts. All that day we lay naked in the shade of the trees. There was no sign of water anywhere. In the evening I dressed, and told Kasim to arise. He could not move. He was going mad. He looked fearful, lying flat on his back, with his arms stretched out, naked, with staring eyes and open mouth. I went on. The forest was very dense and the night black, black. I had eaten nothing for ten days; I had drunk nothing for nine. I crossed the forest

crawling on all fours, tottering from tree to tree. I carried the haft of the spade as a crutch. At last I came to an open place. The forest ended like a devastated plain. This was a river bed, the bed of the Khotan Darya. It was quite dry.  
 I went on. I meant to live. I would find water. I was very weak, but I crawled on all fours, and at last I crossed the river bed. It was three kilometres wide. Then, as I reached the right bank of the river, I heard the sound of a duck lifting and the noise of splashing water. I crawled in that direction, and found a large pool of clear fresh water. I thanked God first, and then I felt my pulse. I wanted to see the effect that drinking would have on it. It was at forty-eight. Then I drank. I drank fearfully. I had a little tin with me. It had contained chocolates, but I had thrown these away as I could swallow nothing. The tin I had kept. I had felt sure, all the time, that I should find water, and that I should use that tin as a drinking cup. I drank and drank. It was a most lovely feeling. I felt my blood liquefying. I began to run in my veins; my pores opened. My pulse went up at once to fifty-three. I felt quite fresh and living.  
 Then I remembered Kasim. So I took off my Swedish boots and filled them with water, and hooked them by the tags over the ends of my spade haft, and retraced my steps. I could walk now. But it was so dark when I reached the forest that I could not find the track. I shouted "Kazim! Kazim!" but he did not answer, and I thought he was dead. Then I made a fire in the forest—for fear of tigers—a huge fire, a splendid illumination, lighting up the mysterious darknesses of these primeval forests. It gave me very great pleasure to see this fire. At sunrise I searched for Kasim and found him. I called him. He lifted his head a little. "Water!" I cried. He shook his head. "I want to die," I shook the boots near his head so that the water splashed. Then he rose like a wild beast, and flung himself on the water vessels and drained them one after another to the last drop. Then he fell back and would not move, though I asked him to come with me to the pool and bathe. So I left him and went on. I took a bath, and then made for the south, down the river bed.  
 I walked on for three days, and did not see a living soul all the time, and lived on grass and leaves, and tadpoles when I could catch them. On the fourth day I fell in with some shepherds with great flocks. They had never seen a European before. They were very frightened at my appearance, especially at my black spectacles, and they fled to the forest. I called to them in their own language. Then they came out and asked me what I wanted. They were good to me and gave me some milk and bread. I stopped some days with them, and heard from two merchants who arrived that at two days' ride from there they had seen a man and a white camel lying in the river bed. They had spoken to him, but he had cried only, "Water! water!" They had given him drink and food. I recognized that this was Islam Bai. I sent a shepherd to fetch him, and in a few days Islam arrived with Kasim and the camel. He had saved all my money, some instruments, and my maps and notes. I felt quite rich.  
 Having recovered his strength, Dr. Heden set out once more into the desert, and after a seven days' march came upon the ruins of one of the old Buddhist towns, and a week later upon the ruins of another: "I consider this one of the most interesting discoveries ever made. It was certainly the most curious thing that occurred to me during my four years' journey. No traveller ever expected to find anything here, and it was given to me to discover the traces of Buddhist civilization in a Mahomedan land—towns where, from appearances, the civilization must have been very far advanced.  
 How a REBELLIOUS PRISONER WAS TAMED.—Some years ago a man was confined for life in a French prison. He was violent at times, and at others so sullen that the warders were all afraid of him. One day it was seen that Jose was less frowning than usual, and at times he almost had a smile on his face; he was watching something hidden in his breast. The warders did not feel comfortable; they must find out what he was doing. Two of them suddenly seized him from behind, and after binding him began to search his person. What did they find? Something that astonished them very much. It was not a weapon, as they feared, but a fine large rat. On this discovery poor Jose quite broke down, fell on his knees in an agony of fear, crying out: "Oh, don't kill him! Beat me if you like; chain me; but if I may not keep him, let my poor rat go free!" The stern guards were moved to pity at this strange sight, and instead of hurting the rat they let it drop to the floor and disappear. Then Jose rose and sullenly began to work. In the course of a few days, while the convicts were at work moving wood in the yard, Jose felt something tickle his cheek. He turned quickly round, and gave a shout of joy. There, seated on his shoulder, was the only friend he had in the world, his rat, who had found him out and come creeping up to his face. With eager hands he put it in his breast as before, and turning to the head gaoler, said: "Sir, if you will only let me keep this rat I solemnly promise to submit to you in every way and never to disobey you again!" The permission was given, and the man, with a happy smile, continued his work. From that day the dreaded convict was a new being; he became the best conducted man in the prison, while his great strength and energy were both used to help the gaoler. The rat was never away from him; it shared his meals, slept in his bed, and his master made little toys of bone which he sold in order to buy goodies for his pet.



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