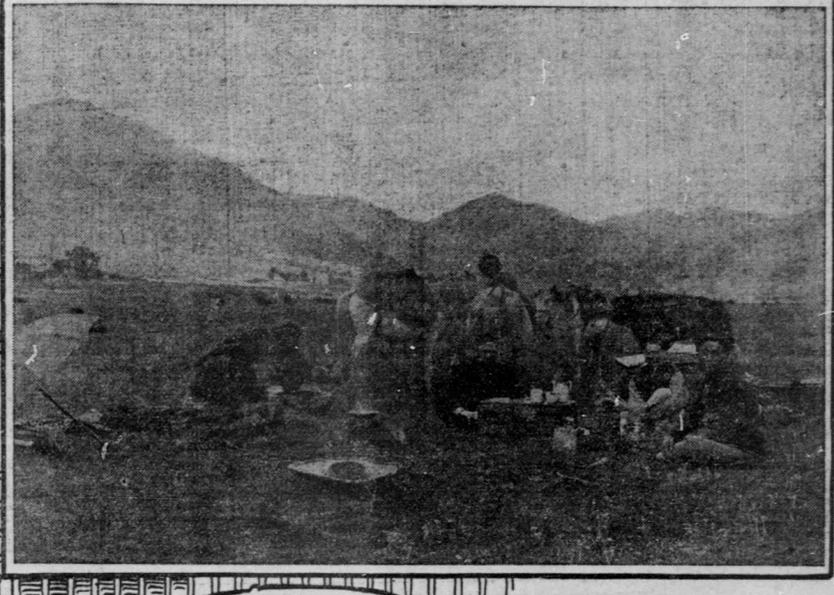


WASHINGTONIAN FACES GHASTLY DEATH IN WILD TIBET

ACROSS TRACKLESS WASTES.
Travelers who brave the dangers of cold and exposure in Tibet.

NOMADS OF CENTRAL ASIA.
Camp of the Kirghiz, who rescued Mr. Crosby and his party from death.



PILGRIMS TO HOLY MECCA.

Chinese Mohammedans crossing the Tibetan Plateau on long journey.

BRAVED EXPOSURE AND DANGER.

Oscar T. Crosby, of Washington, who penetrated far into mysterious land of Tibet.

Oscar T. Crosby, Explorer and Clubman, After Many Adventures, Rescued From Starvation by Nomads of the Plateau.

C LIMBING ice-bound peaks that rear their heads 18,500 feet above the level of the sea; scrambling in mountain torrents, where chilly waters swept men and horses from their feet; enduring for months a temperature that frequently fell to 25 degrees below zero, and encamped in an arid and desolate waste, exhausted, unable to travel further, with provisions nearly gone and viewing what seemed to be starvation's inevitable approach.

These are some of the experiences that befell Oscar T. Crosby, Washington society and club man, explorer in many countries, in many climes, a geographer whose contributions to science have given him a recognized rank and a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and the National Geographic Society, in an exploring expedition on the Tibetan plateau, from which he has just returned.

When one sits in the wide hall that forms the entrance to Mr. Crosby's suburban home at Cleveland Park, and talks with this modest gentleman, it requires a mental effort to picture him, forsaking all the things of taste and comfort that surround him, for the uncertainty and hardships of a Tibetan winter. But the effort passes as the conversation proceeds. One begins to understand—and under the glow of his interest, even to appreciate—something of Mr. Crosby's enthusiasm for his historical and geographical research, and to know that, given this incentive, he would stop at no honorable effort to add to his store of information.

It was not his first trip of like character. Something more than three years ago he explored the Abyssinian plateau, forming the acquaintance of

King Menelik and gaining a knowledge of that section of Africa and its people that few white men possess. Valuable results followed that trip; geography learned of new places and archaeology and the kindred sciences gathered a new inspiration. Mr. Crosby's own rewards were the satisfaction he derives from such unusual journeys and a fellowship in the Royal Geographical Society. With these he was well content.

"My interest in these matters is historical and geographical," said Mr. Crosby, to the reporter for The Sunday Times, with whom he discussed his latest venture. "It is my hope some day to do some historical work, and to the execution of that I hold in contemplation I regard first-hand knowledge of these Central Asia countries as necessary, or at least largely helpful and important. Without such knowledge it is difficult to understand those great movements of early times, scattered and sporadic, perhaps, disjointed and unconnected, but which have resulted in what is now modern Europe.

"To white men this country is practically an unknown land. I hoped to be able to fill up the matter of the northwestern corner of Tibet, and, despite the partial failure of the trip and the misfortunes that obliged us to abandon some of our ambitions, we did succeed in making some contributions of this character.

Land of Perpetual Snow.
"This region of perpetual snow is known as the Aksai Chin or White Desert, and the extreme cold and lofty altitudes and difficulty of travel, combined with Tibetan exclusiveness, have in the past prevented its exploration.

We found that the movement of the mountain chains, marked on the maps as north and south, is really east and west. We discovered two large lakes, hitherto unknown, and located the headwaters of the Karakash River, which runs for 300 miles into the Taklamakan Desert. We were able to supply other missing information as to this cluster of mountain ranges, that marks the northern boundary of Tibet. So that, after all, our hardships were not altogether in vain."

It was just about a year ago that Mr. Crosby left Washington, and he sailed from New York for London in May of 1903. He traveled by rail to St. Petersburg, and thence to the terminus of the Trans-Vasplian Railway, at Andijan. During the journey he met Capt. Fernand Angineur, an officer of the French army, who was traveling in the Caucasus. They were thrown together on the train, and Mr. Crosby revealed the project he had in mind. It appealed with powerful effect to the romantic temperament and scientific eagerness of the Frenchman, and at his suggestion Mr. Crosby accepted him as a companion.

High Hope Marked Start.
But it was high and glorious then and the start was made. Through Russian Turkestan to Kashgar, in Chinese Turkestan, the trip was made with a hired caravan. Here were noticed everywhere the evidences of Russian activity. Gangs of workmen were busily employed in laying a line of telegraph from Andijan across the frontier in Kashgar, penetrating 125 miles or more of Chinese territory. The line was designed to connect various military posts in the two Turkestans, and by this time is probably completed.

Even in Chinese Turkestan Russian influence was obviously paramount. At Kashgar the Russian officials are dominant in power, and a "legation guard"

of fifty Cossacks is maintained. Everywhere the Russian officers were most courteous and helpful, aiding in every way in speeding the expedition on and providing for the purchase of supplies. Through Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan, Turkestan cities all at an altitude of about 4,200 feet above sea level, the travelers passed hurriedly, and at Polu, a village at the foot of the Tibetan plateau, the permanent caravan was organized.

"Up to this time," said Mr. Crosby, "all had been relatively easy sailing, though our road could not have been described, by those with a bigoted regard for the truth, as a 'primrose way.' But at Polu our troubles began.

"Our party consisted of sixteen horses and six men, one of whom was to act as guide. We had a slender store of provisions, consisting for the most part of canned goods, bread, and tea. An auxiliary donkey caravan, that was to follow us up the steep ascent of the mountain range that we faced, carried grain for the horses, and was to return when the ascent had been completed and we stood on the plateau.

"The ascent, which was up the steep gorge of a mountain torrent, was of unparalleled difficulty. We were burdened with horses and supplies, the latter necessarily heavy and cumbersome, the former required by the difficulty of breathing in the high altitudes, which would have rendered anything like reasonable progress on foot an impossibility. We passed the auxiliary caravan as we went up, and reached the top after arduous labors.

Effects of the Deserts.
"I have never been able to explain to my own satisfaction the reasons for this desertion. Whether the men had become discouraged by the difficulties of the ascent or had been instructed to desert by the Bey of Polu

whose reception of us had not been altogether cheerful or encouraging, I do not know. At any rate, they were gone, and a large part of the grain for our horses with them.

"We were somewhat discouraged, but determined to keep on toward Rudak, a village in Tibet, where we might replenish our stores and then make for Lhasa, the Tibetan capital. I never had hope that it would be permitted to enter 'The Forbidden City,' but I thought I would approach it as nearly as possible and gain all the information I might on the way. This, however, was another of my dreams, destined to be frosted by the cold of those icy solitudes.

"Two days later befell the next of our misfortunes. Former experiences had instilled into me a deep distrust of native guides in the known countries, and as an extra precaution I had tied Mohammed to the leg of one of our other men, when we encamped for the night. When we awoke it was to find he had slipped his halter and disappeared—to return no more.

"There we were, then, in the midst of an unknown country, bare of vegetation, short of supplies and with the thermometer, always hovering around zero, making nightly descents to 25 degrees below. It would have been the part of prudence to go back to Polu, but our men who had gone back after the grain had encountered a heavy snowstorm, and we concluded it would be as dangerous to return as to go on. In the matter of danger it was an admirable instance of the difference 'twixt tweedledum and tweedledee. We went on.

Lost in the Desert.
"I had lost my chronometer and nautical almanac and for this reason was not able to take observations and so determine our position. I had the vaguest idea only of where we were and of the direction in which was Rudak. The cold was excruciating. For more than fifty days on the trip we were not able to change our clothes or to remove even the least garment of the envelope of sheepskin in which

we were clad. Before that I had no conception of how very dirty it is possible for a man to become.

"There was practically no fuel. As our horses died from cold and exposure we used the straw with which the pack saddles were stuffed and occasionally we would find patches of some mountain herb, with thick fibrous roots. With such makeshifts we found it possible to boil water for our tea and to heat the cans of tinned meat. That was all; there was nothing even approaching a fire about which we might have warmed ourselves."

Here Mr. Crosby stopped long enough to stir into renewed and cheery activity the fire of logs that blazed upon his own hearth and to look about the room in which he sat with his interviewer. The contrast must have afforded a new enjoyment of the sweet delights of home.

New Guide Makes Mistake.

"Well, we went on," he continued, after a moment. "Where we were the Aksai Chin was traversed by two mountain ranges and we were making our way down the valley, in the effort to reach either Rudak or a place on the map called Lanak, which one of our men had visited once before. This fellow said he thought he could recognize certain peaks that pointed the way, and at his instance we plunged into the labyrinth of mountains, many of the passes 18,000 feet and more above the level of the sea.

"Finally our new guide had to confess that he had no idea where we were; that the familiar landmarks he had thought he remembered vanished with our closer approach and he was at sea.

"At that time six of our sixteen horses were dead and all the rest were weakened. To add to our difficulties Captain Angineur was suffering dreadfully with sciatica and could scarcely move. It was, indeed, only by the most heroic efforts that he managed to get along at all. We threw away a portion of our belongings, everything, in fact, we could possibly spare, and pressed on, determined to make one more effort, as a united caravan, to reach Rudak or Lanak.

When Hope Had Fled.

"The effort was in vain, for at the end of two days we found ourselves in a worse condition than ever. I stopped the caravan with only a bushel of grain left, and but two horses able to travel. We pitched our little tent, and sent the two best men, with the two horses and the bushel of grain, in search of help. Then we sat down to wait.

"The suspense of that waiting was terrible. Angineur's sufferings were intense, and our provisions were gradually giving out. He and I divided each day a can of sardines and another of some Russian tinned goods we had with us. It was never possible to say, without opening them, what these latter contained. I shall never forget the ghastly humor that overcame me when I opened one can and found cabbage.

"Eleven days had passed and we had about abandoned hope. The provisions would last only four or five days longer, even with the greatest economy consistent with the preservation of life. For myself I had determined to end it all with my revolver, and I am convinced Angineur shared my intention. We thought the end had come. For thirty days we had seen no human being, save the members of our own party. We were almost certain the men we had sent out had succumbed to cold and starvation and were dead.

The Day of the Rescue.

"Then came the day of our rescue. By a miracle of good luck the men, after traveling 150 miles, had found a band of wandering Kirghiz, the nomads of Central Asia, and with some of this band hurried back to our assistance. They came with camels and a sheep and other things for our comfort. I never met a more kindly and hospitable people; I never met men or women I was more glad to see.

"Well, that was the end of our desperate straits, though not of our perils and hardships. There were mountains still to climb, some of them more dif-

ficult than any we had seen in the past, and great wastes of a barren country still to traverse. But we never thought of our hardships, so great was our thankfulness and relief. We finally reached the known country, and brought up at Ladak, formerly the capital of Western Tibet, but now under the dominion of the Maharajah of Kashmir.

"From Ladak we crossed over the Himalayas to Rawal Pindi, where we struck the railway, five months after the departure of the caravan from Andijan, in Russian Turkestan."

The Pilgrims to Mecca.

After the meeting with the Kirghiz the party began to run across occasional travelers, some of the nomadic tribes of their rescuers and others native inhabitants of Tibet. Occasionally, too, other travelers were encountered. Among the last were a Chinese merchant and his wife, both Mohammedans from Manchuria, and then engaged in making the holy pilgrimage to Mecca.

"They were mounted on the little mountain ponies," said Mr. Crosby, "and had been already more than three months on their way. The end of their pilgrimage was at least five months ahead, but they were not discouraged, and went confidently and bravely on, the wife no less enthused than her husband, though she perhaps thought she was barred from the delights of Paradise, an entrance into which the man was to make certain by his pious zeal. We furnished them directions for their journey and all the help we could give—and they passed out of our sight across the snows.

"We met with nothing but kindness wherever we went. The savagery and hostility to strangers of the Tibetan people exists almost entirely in the imagination of novelists and unfriendly political writers. True, they do not desire the Western civilization and they resent the intrusion of white men in their domestic affairs. They are satisfied with their lot—even if the rest of the world is not—and desire nothing better.

Chinese Influence Exclusive.

"As a matter of fact the exclusiveness is more Chinese than Tibetan, for the Chinese exercise a wide influence in the country. They feel the intrusion of foreigners into China has not been altogether happy in its results, and the tales the Chinese envoys and other representatives have told have alarmed the timid Tibetans and made them pitifully anxious to avoid the same fate.

"I have never felt there existed any real danger to England's sway in India from a Russian descent across the Tibetan plateau, but it is not the Tibetan army, but its climate and structural peculiarities that would prevent it. My own experience has convinced me that no army of men, unaccustomed to living in the high altitudes of the plateau, could be maintained in that region. They could not live and certainly they could not march or cool. The difficulties of transport are perfectly insuperable.

"As the expedition of Colonel Younghusband has demonstrated, it is much easier to get into Tibet from India than from Russia, and it has also shown what weak resistance the soldiers of the Grand Llama are able to offer any modern and well-disciplined force. Armed with matchlocks, swords and knives, and similar weapons of medieval warfare, they are as helpless as so many children with toy guns. They can be shot down in heaps, as Younghusband has also conclusively shown.

"A Russian staff officer of my acquaintance, who seems to speak with the utmost frankness, assured me his country had no designs upon Tibet. The same officer assumed that Russia would extend and rivet her influence over all Turkestan, and this seems indicated by the logic of the situation and recent events. But its climate will save Tibet—even from the ruthless paw of the bear."

Trophies of His Travels.

Many are the trophies of his travels that Mr. Crosby has brought back to Washington. The most valuable are fragments of ancient manuscripts, found

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