

VOLUME XXXVI

NUMBER TWO

THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE

AUGUST, 1919

CONTENTS

The Geography of Games

J. R. HILDEBRAND

61 Illustrations

Weavers of the World

Exploring the Glories of the Firmament

21 Illustrations

WILLIAM JOSEPH SHOWALTER

Between Massacres in Van

3 Illustrations

MAYNARD OWEN WILLIAMS

PUBLISHED BY THE
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC SOCIETY
HUBBARD MEMORIAL HALL
WASHINGTON, D.C.

\$2.50 A YEAR

COPYRIGHT, 1919

wonderful aggregations of gas or microscopic dust. Look on a winter's night at Orion. Between Betelguese and Rigel is his belt, and suspended from this belt his sword. The central star of this sword appears to the naked eye as merely a fuzzy little fellow that might be passed over without thought.

THE INUTTERABLE GREATNESS OF THE
NEBULÆ

But train a big telescope on it and instead you see the most magnificent nebula in the heavens. Its diameter is thought to be twenty million times as great as that of our sun. Even if its density were as much more attenuated than air, as air is lighter than lead, it would still be, according to figures suggested by Professor Moulton, as much heavier than the sun as the great Pyramid of Cheops is heavier than one-tenth of an avoirdupois grain (see page 175).

Of such attenuated material as this are worlds called into being under laws made in the beginning. How many worlds have met, and are meeting, the description, "the earth was without form and void"! And from such new-born worlds, with their blazing white light, of which Rigel is a type, down through the bluish white of which Sirius is a representative, and then through the yellow, like our sun and Procyon and Arcturus,

to the red ones, like 19 Piscum, and again to those that are black and eclipse their brighter neighbors in the variable stars, we run the gamut of star life, with here mewling infancy, there gay youth, elsewhere sturdy manhood and ripe age. And in the end come dead suns, derelicts in the ocean of space.

When the sweet singer of Israel sang that "the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork," he had never seen more than five thousand stars. With the latest Mount Wilson reflector three hundred million will write themselves upon the photographic plate.

IN DAVID'S TIME AND OURS

What in David's time and with the naked eye were only gems to render a sky more beautiful and wondrous for mundane dwellers, are revealed, through such powerful instruments, as worlds and systems, immeasurably distant the one from the other, but each and all actuated by laws so all-pervading that they apply alike to infinitesimal and to infinite, so enduring that they survive all wreck and change, so powerful that all things created are controlled by them, and yet simple enough that with patient endeavor the astronomer and the chemist and the physicist are learning their principles one by one.

BETWEEN MASSACRES IN VAN

BY MAYNARD OWEN WILLIAMS

THE scene is Van, historic capital of Armenia, whose antiquity is proven by the inscriptions of the conquering kings of many tribes carved in Castle Rock.

Tragedy is depicted in each ruined home, but the background is one of striking charm. To the left, or southwest, there lies the majestic line of snow mountains which separate Armenia from the Tigris Valley.

Before us are the peculiarly lovely waters of the lake of Van, with Nimrud's cratered peak showing hazily forty miles away. A little to the north, one sees the

graceful cone of Sipan, where the ark of Noah first sought rest, only to have this hoary-headed mountain resign its fame to mightier Ararat, still farther north.

To the right—a ribbon of dark brown across the snow expanse—there runs the road of the retreats, the way that leads to the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

My part has been building barracks out of fire-scarred mud shells, where once choice carpets and silk hangings gave a touch of Oriental luxury to a city of beautiful homes and green gardens, and providing work through which proud women could earn bread.



PART OF THE BOYISH COMPANY OF VOLUNTEERS WHO TRAMPED FROM ARTEMID
TO VAN: ARMENIA

Through winter snows they came to petition the Armenian Governor for real guns with which to defend their homes. The oldest of these boys was twelve. They were self-trained and set out on their six-mile tramp without the permission or knowledge of their guardians in Artemid.

In one huge house carpenters are fashioning windows and doors to make more habitable the hovels where the people herd. And tons of matted wool are there being cleaned, carded, and spun for clothing to protect weakened womanhood from piercing cold.

American charity is at work where misery is anesthetised by hope for future

peace, where barefoot children, trudging through the crunching snow, smile as they swing small blackened pails in which they hope to get some watery soup to soften the black bread on which their lives depend.

The Governor and I are closest friends. When he was young he ran an elevator in Boston and learned his English from

the kindly people whom he served. Now his is the task of husbanding this pitiful group of Armenians until victory shall come to the Allied arms and liberty to the land he loves.

As we returned one day from our tasks to the modest mud house which was the humble home of government, we were confronted by a grotesque group of tiny lads whose ages ran from eight to twelve.

The Governor saluted the small, but dignified, commander gravely and asked:

"What can the Governor do for these loyal citizens?"

"We have come to exchange these wooden guns which we have made for real guns. We want to protect our country."

"We have great need for all our guns, my men," said the Governor. "We only issue rifles to those who can drill."

The reply was immediate:

"We can drill, sir!"

The busy man's eyes twinkled a little at this delay, but he said:

"Let me see what you can do."

The 12-year-old leader gave a sharp command, and 28 wooden guns, carved from light boards, came to the snowy street with a thud.

Up they came again to "present arms," back to "right shoulder arms," and then to "charge bayonets." Not a smile showed on the youthful faces.

Then the untanned skin moccasins shuffled back and forth in fours and around to "company front"—just such play at soldiering as makes us smile



TWO PRIVATES IN THE ARTEMID ARMY OF SMALL BOYS

proudly, but with a little catch at the throat, whenever we see this youthful imitation of a world at war.

But most of *these* small lads had a murdered father or a suicide mother, hounded to her death by Kurdish fiends, as his background.

The Governor was deeply moved.

"Where are your homes?" he asked, expecting that they came from some near section of the city.

"We come from Artemid, sir!" was the challenging reply, mentioning a lake-side village six miles distant on the road to the Turkish lines.

The day before there had been a heavy snow and the afternoon shadows were already lengthening. Even a strong man



THE COMMANDANT OF VAN, SON OF ONE OF ARMENIA'S POETS, PRESENTING A WOODEN SWORD TO THE CAPTAIN OF THE GROUP FROM ARTEMID

would have difficulty in reaching Artemid that night.

So Governor Hambartsumiantz called in the youthful commandant and myself to a council, which resulted in the issue of an army ration of black bread, tea, and sugar to the boys, while a room was provided for them in the headquarters of the city troops. Still the lads said they would not return to their homes unless they were given guns.

Relief work is not a matter of stomachs alone, but of morale. So in the morning my head carpenter set to work on the choicest board we could find, and while he was fashioning it into a blade with all the curves of Saladin's sword, the boyish company inspected the varied industries which American relief had established, and each received a pair of heavy woolen socks.

Then the lads drew up at attention on the flat mud roof of our premises.

There the young commandant, son of one of Armenia's famous poets, grace-

fully presented the 12-year-old captain with a saber, whose wooden fabric could not conceal the lines which were smilingly, yet tearfully, worked into it by the master carpenter, who entered with all his heart into this simple commission of love.

"This time we can only give your leader a sword," said the Governor, who had left an important conference to wish these lads farewell.

"But I wish you to keep up your discipline and training, for the time may come when we shall need your aid. Hold your command in readiness, Captain, for your country may call on you."

"We shall be ready, sir!" said the proud possessor of the new sword.

Then he turned to his motley gang: "Right shoulder arms! Column right, march!" And the volunteer army of Artemid started proudly on their long tramp to the village through which, a month later, the Turkish hordes passed on their way to massacre in Van.