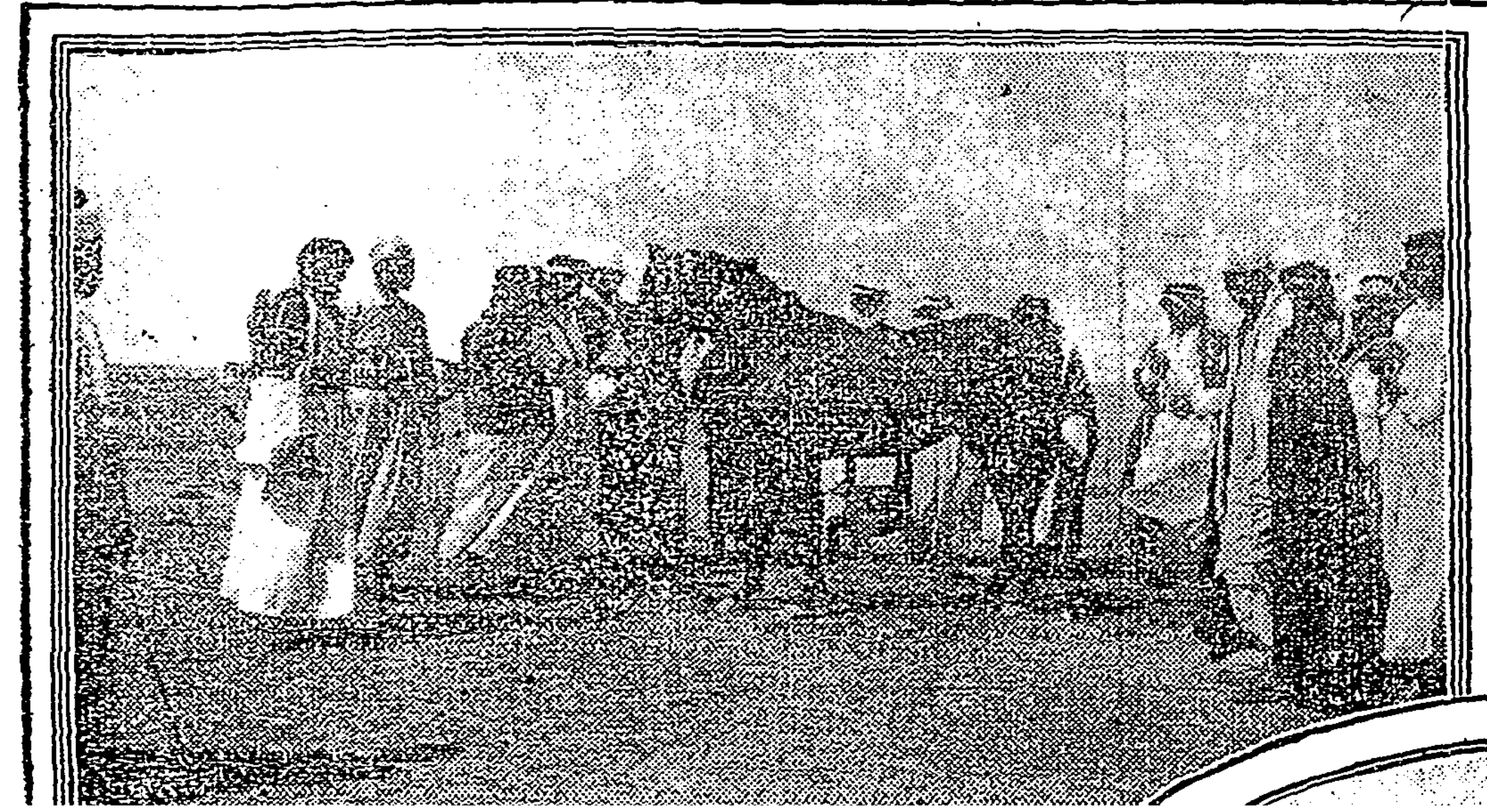
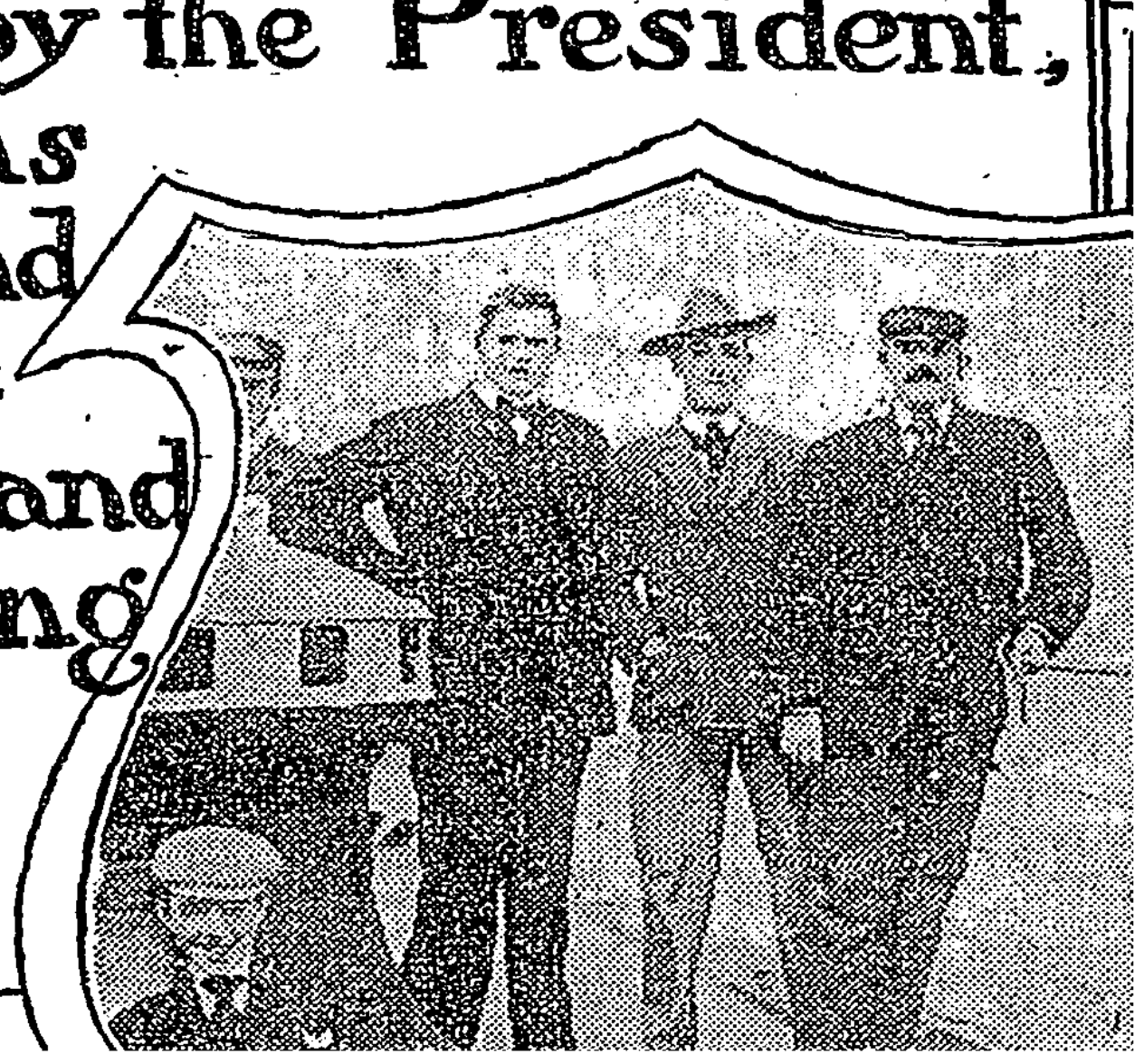


HOMER DAVENPORT'S EXPEDITION INTO THE ARABIAN DESERT



Arab sheikhs bidding goodbye to the greatest stallion in the country.

Armed with letter by the President, three big Americans penetrate the Sand Wastes, fraternize with the Bedouins, and bring home a string of Fleet Arab Steeds



The three giants

Hachem Bey, Sheykh of Sheyhs riding his best war mare, mounted on Davenport's western saddle

Homer Davenport has recently returned from Turkey, where he was sent by the Woman's Home Companion to write and illustrate a series of articles on the Arabian horse and his history. The illustrations published on this page are used by permission of the Woman's Home Companion.

"Up, lad; thews that lie and lumber
Sunlit pallets never thrive;
Morns abed and daylight slumber
Were not meant for men alive.
Clay lies still, but blood's a rover;
Breath's a ware that will not keep.
Up, lad; when the journey's over
There'll be time enough to sleep."

E. A. HOUSEMAN.

Desert camp near the Euphrates.

THIS being the story of how three North American giants invaded the Arabian desert alone and extended the right hand of fellowship to Akmut Hafiz, the oracle of all the Arabs, it is worth while to note the spirit as well as the facts of their adventure.

In the world at large they do not wear their hearts on their sleeves, and so are known usually as Charles A. Moore, Jr., six foot three; John H. Thompson, Jr., six foot two and a half; and Homer Davenport, six foot one; but thanks to the great Allah of the desert, who in his mercy has spared them from the jaws of the hyena, and the great wisdom of Akmut Hafiz, the seer of the Bedouins, there is a fullness of knowledge in them now that passeth the understanding of the brotherhood of townsmen.

They left New York on July 5, and those who knew anything about the Oriental moods of the sun wondered, for even the Arab prays to the east as the burning sun sinks behind him in the west. But what's a warning to a man "just aching to be a hero"? The last words are quoted, as they should be, for they express the principle of the whole trip, and they were uttered by the oldest of the three.

By the time they reached Constantinople to one another they were Arthur and Jack and Homer—whatever else they were or had been or were to be was as absurd as any Turkish spy they might meet.

What Columbus had done in 1492 gave them an assurance in strange lands that even the Sultan himself appreciated when the State Department at Washington had pointed it out to him. No ordinary pioneers were these three giants from the red man's country, for in the inside pocket of his reefer Homer Davenport carried a small bit of white pasteboard requesting the utmost consideration for himself and his friends in the name of the great white chief, Theodore Roosevelt.

When later this same scrap of writing was put into the hands of Sheykh Hashim Bey, Chief of the Bedouins, in the filthy, pestilential little town of Aleppo, he held it in his trembling hands, and looking up to the sky, murmured a non-political prayer of Mohammed's, and then bowed his head in reverence over the little document.

The start for the desert from Constantinople was delayed, for it was necessary to secure permission from the Sultan to purchase some Arab horses from the Anaza tribes in the desert, which Homer Davenport, the horseman of the party, declared to be the object of their journey thither. It was here that one of the three, being enamored of the frisky Turks, formed such close fellowship with two native boys that the remaining two christened one All Bey and the other Oyster Bey.

Perhaps the same Arab blood that is in men of many races, that sends them wandering about the earth, was in the hearts of these two, and they regretted this affinity of one of them for Turkish kind. It was not until after they had left Constantinople and all her luxuries behind that Homer, scenting approach to the desert, unfolded this theory to the others, for though born in Oregon, he declared himself by temperament an Arab, and, taking joy in the belief, announced that there were other Bedouin souls among his friends in America.

To be sure, this was before they had spent the three or four days and nights of horror between Scandaroon and Aleppo, an experience which almost eclipsed all practical zeal, to say nothing of the poetic enthusiasm of the trip. An officious Turkish spy undertook to question their passports, and temporarily took their guns away. Pending an official adjustment of their difficulty, they were obliged to camp by the wayside, tormented by overgrown vermin, with insufficient food, surrounded by faces of alien beings speechless and mysteriously menacing to them. An interpreter only seemed to emphasize their complete remoteness from the world as they knew it.

All three agree that this was the most discouraging period of their adventure, with the exception, perhaps, of their failure to get a snapshot of the Sultan in Constantinople, whom they saw at close range, and whom Homer Davenport described as resembling a cross between Senator Dingley and Mr. Oscar Straus.

No photograph of the Sultan has ever been seen, the one that usually passes for him being that of his brother.

Finally the overzealous Turkish spy, having been properly rebuked by his Government, returned the arms he had detained, and the three Americans reached Aleppo, where there was a Syrian hotel.

This place, situated on the edge of the desert of Arabia, had no Board of Health, and the consequences of this oversight were almost unprintable. The streets were so narrow that when camels met it was impossible to pass, and one of the other had to back up to the nearest corner. Many dogs were everywhere, and every native had the Aleppo "but-

ton" on the side of his face, a scar that marked a sore.

It was here that the actual perplexities of the proposed journey into the desert occurred.

To strike out into the Bedouin country without a guide was impossible, and even then the danger of going without an escort of soldiers was freely described to the Americans.

It has been the custom of foreign Governments to buy horses from the Arabs in the desert, but these expeditions were always conducted with the aid of soldiers.

From the first, however, Homer Davenport objected to this, trusting to his faith in the American methods of arbitration—and Theodore Roosevelt.

While visiting the bazaars, where some purchases were made, the Arab from Oregon was always on the lookout for his kinsmen, the true Arabs of the desert. He was able to pick these out from the other Orientals by the wild daring of their countenances, by a certain distinction of manner and bearing.

One of these, whom he approached by chance in the street, informed him of Akmut Hafiz, the diplomat of the desert, and told him also that Hashim Bey, the Chief of the great Anaza tribe, was then in Aleppo.

"Show him to me!" said the man from Oregon, and they went at once to the house of the wise man, whom every Bedouin knows and respects.

He lived very modestly for his distinguished celebrity in a native house, where the horses were stabled in the parlor, and the living room was upstairs. This room in which the oracle of the Bedouin tribe received Homer Davenport and his companions was a large apartment, with red plush divans edging its walls. The surprising thing about it to the Americans were the guns and arms to be seen lying about in a country where arms are forbidden to any one but the soldiers.

After a little while Akmut Hafiz appeared. With stately dignity he walked slowly into the room. According to Arab custom, he bowed low to the floor, and then stepping forward gave each one a hearty handshake.

If Grover Cleveland were to put on the Bedouin costume he would look exactly like Akmut Hafiz, the intermediary between Sheykh Hashim Bey, Chief of the Anazas, and the Turkish Government.

Although, to the Americans, Hafiz seemed to be a born diplomat, in reality he had undergone a severe training as chief of the camel compound, an enclosure where caravans, arriving or going, were compelled to stay in their passage out or into the desert. This was a large open square, where more or less fighting took place, and it was the duty of its keeper to maintain peace and order without soldiery or police assistance.

For thirty years Hafiz had accomplished this task, and as Hashim Bey was known to refer his political difficulties to his judgment, so the Turkish Government relied upon him to assuage the temper of the warring Bedouins. A trifling tax on camels was his principal income.

It did not take the man from Oregon long to perceive the excellent qualities of the excellent Hafiz as an intermediary for his own diplomatic mission, and he set about winning the old man's confidence as deliberately as he would play a hand at poker. The great International ace, Theodore Roosevelt, was laid on the table and swept every trick.

Hafiz, the great, the trustworthy, the wise, consented to go with the three big men from North America into the desert he had not visited for thirty years and see that they secured the finest Arab horses at reasonable prices.

As soon as a suitable suite of attendants could be obtained they left Aleppo, and from that time till they returned there, three weeks later, the Arabian desert was a place of Oriental splendor and mystery, though seen through scorched eyeballs, for whether by the great red glare of the sun they saw, or by the monster moon of tropical heat, there was always the fever to excite the brain, and running through the whole adventurous dream the maddening sound of cool fresh running water.

"It's an awful thing, that sun, a great red ball of fire that seems to be there only to torture you, to drive you mad," said Homer Davenport, recalling the memory of it all as a nightmare without valor.

"I often wondered, when we were well in the desert, how I could have been such a fool as to sit on my porch at home and deliberately plan this expedition. Poor Arthur, who is a giant in size and nerve, agreed with me that if he ever got back to his place in Greenwich, Conn., he would never, never leave it again. No man can realize what a precious thing is water till he has been three weeks in the desert drinking dirty tepid stuff as if it were fit to drink. And then that solemn loneliness of three white men surrounded by strange races, strange sounds, and no one, nothing that understood us."

The only American they met was a woman missionary, who was tolerably happy because she was



AKMUT HAFIZ. Drawn for The New York Times by Homer Davenport.

returning home. They did not see the tribe of Arabs whose souls she had been industriously converting, but they must have been a hardy tribe, for it was their custom to cut the tender skin of their babies and rub salt into the wounds, that they might begin life with befitting hardihood.

But in the midst of the tragedy there was some light, some insurmountably amusing incidents.

There was the man with the spurs.

This man ate, drank, and slept in his spurs, but never actually used them except to crack hard-boiled eggs. And there was the amazing sarcasm and wit of Akmut Hafiz, equal to any white man's sense of humor. And, too, there was the iron col, on which Arthur tried to sleep every night, but never could, because it invariably broke through with him and left him chiefly prone upon the sands of the desert. The daily repairs to this cot was one of the relaxations.

The various imaginative attempts of an Oriental cook to prepare canned beans also had its measure of genial surprise, and then there was the constant trade winds, night and day, blown hot as if straight from the sun, that registered 135 degrees by day and played a silent hoax by dropping 40 degrees at night to make it seem cold enough for blankets.

There was no discernible trail through this desert, but the wise Akmut Hafiz, noblest Bedouin of them all, knew every grain of sand, and led the first Americans across the wastes straight to the great camp of the mighty Anazas.

It was a vast canvas city of 10,000 tents, with 40,000 camels, horses, and men to ride them. There were no women that the Americans saw, perhaps one or two, who instead of using the delicate paints of modern society merely stained their lips an azure blue. This was also done to the favorite mares.

Upon approaching this the largest Bedouin camp of the desert, Akmut Hafiz became suddenly young

and vigorous. Rising in his saddle, almost standing erect in his stirrups, he shouted exultantly, "Anaza!"

Homer Davenport, exhausted and dazed by the terrific heat, by the deadly scorched air of the place, turned listlessly in the direction where Hafiz pointed. Again the Bedouin shouted, louder this time, "Anaza!"

"Then I saw," says Davenport, "in the dim light of the horizon what looked to me at first like a low range of hills on the horizon, which gradually resolved itself into a city of tents, into living statues of stoic camels, and everywhere something close to the ground that seemed to me most like stuffed eagles, but which turned out to be falcons tethered for the night."

They were received with true grandeur of Arab ceremony, for it seems there is no white man of the vast civilized races that can compare in dignity, grace, and majesty of manner to the Arab of the desert. Particularly were the Bedouins flattered that these Americans had come to meet them without soldiers and no doubt the presence of Akmut Hafiz gave distinction to the party.

"It was like a dream come true," said Homer Davenport. "I turned to Arthur and asked him if I was awake, if this great picture was real. From the time I was old enough to read I had thought and wondered about all this, and here I was, a man passed forty, come into the dream-world of my youth. In an instant I realized that these were my people, that I was a Bedouin, born in Oregon, but heir to the desert. Something of the sort I said to these people: I told them that I was an Arab too, had always been one, and would always remain one. Akmut Hafiz at once enrolled me as one of them, saying that until then there had always been a Bedouin missing, and that now, for the first time, their counsel was complete."