



The Skis Do Not Prevent Accurate Sharp-shooting.

## Norway's Soldiers on Skis Advance, Retreat and Execute All Sorts of War-Like Manoeuvres at a Speed of 30 Miles an Hour

MOUNTED on skis, the Norwegian infantry travel thirty miles an hour—twice as fast as the fastest cavalry in the world. This great rate of speed is possible only where there is a slight grade, but even on level ground the ski-men can cover from fifteen to twenty miles an hour.

The skis used by the Norwegian soldiers consist of flat pieces of wood eight to twelve feet long and four and a half to six inches broad, which are strapped to the feet, and as full of mischief as any inanimate object could be.

It is no easy task to go at railway speed with a rifle and full marching kit on your back, though there is a guiding pole to help out. But the Norwegian infantryman, trained from childhood in the use of skis, is quite at home and makes light of his burden. He is taught woodmanship and can glide in and out of the trees without a crackle or sound to betray his whereabouts.

When marching orders are sounded the leader swings out and keeps up a hot pace. Once in sight of a supposed enemy, a pile of snow is quickly scooped up, and ensconced behind this simple but effective protection, the ski-men can take pot shots with their Krag-Jorgensen rifles at the foe.

It is easy to see what an enormous advantage the ski-men would have over a heavily burdened force laboring through the impenetrable snow. The political map of Europe might have borne a different aspect had Napoleon's veterans been similarly equipped in the retreat from Moscow.

In Holland the infantry use skates on ice, but this limits them to the track of the canals, and even on ice

The Ski Men's Camp During Winter Manoeuvres.



Norwegian Soldiers Crossing a Pass on Skis.

they do not make the speed that the Norwegians make on skis. There is no regular army in Norway, but a national militia, in which service is universal and compulsory. Every male is liable to be called upon as soon as he reaches the age of eighteen. He serves forty-eight days in the training school and twenty-four days with his corps in his first year, and then twenty-four days in his second, third and seventh years, serving

Behind Mounds of Snow, the Norwegian Soldiers Are Poor Targets for Their Enemies.

twelve years in all in the line. He then serves eight years in the Landvar, or semi-reserve, and is in the real reserve or Landstorm up to the age of fifty. The army has a war footing of 80,000, and with the

Landvar, a total fighting strength of 110,000 trained men.

Although the feats of the Norwegian ski-men seem wonderful to the uninitiated, they create no particular attention in Norway, where every-

body skis. There they start when they are infants and keep it up through life. It is the one sport in which rich and poor alike can indulge, for there is no expense attached to it. Home-made skis are just as effective as the most expensive ones procurable. King Haakon and Queen Maud are both followers of the sport, but they derive no more pleasure from it than the Norwegian small boy does on his skis made out of barrel staves.

Skiing must not be confused with snowshoeing, a sport which has long been popular in Canada and the Northwest, and at which our North-western Indians are adepts. The

snowshoe is a tennis-racket-like affair, and the feet are lifted from the ground in transit. But the ski is simply a narrow strip of wood, pointed and curved up at the end. The under surface is flat, but sometimes has a groove running from end to end.

In the great ski-jumping competition at Holmenkollen, Norway, every year, thousands compete, and some remarkable jumps have been recorded.

Jumps of seventy-eight and ninety feet are now looked upon as ordinary feats, and many of the experts have jumped over one hundred feet

Norwegian Infantry Skis Stacked in Camp.

in space. The significance of these figures may be appreciated when it is remembered that the record for the running broad jump is less than twenty-five feet. The Norwegian record for ski-jumping is forty-two metres, or nearly a hundred and thirty-eight feet.

The Norwegian Ski Men Putting On Their Skis. They Can Make Thirty Miles an Hour On a Down Grade.

The ability to make these astounding jumps on skis is of the greatest importance to the Norwegian soldiers when on scouting duty. Otherwise impassable gulches are thus easily passed over and rivers not sufficiently frozen to sustain the weight of marching soldiers are overcome in a similar manner.

How the Norwegian soldiers appear on their wonder-working skis is shown in the illustrations. In the recent winter manoeuvres in which ten thousand infantrymen participated the value of skis as an adjunct in warfare was clearly demonstrated.

Over roads piled so high with snow that cavalry would have been unable to make any progress whatever, the infantrymen mounted on their skis covered from twenty to thirty miles an hour without mishap of any kind.

Of course, it would not be practicable in most instances for the artillery with their heavy guns to follow the infantry over the snow-chad roads and passes, but for scouting the ski-jumping soldiers would be extremely valuable in the northern countries. In Russia, the soldiers often make use of snow shoes. In Canada, too, snow shoes have been utilized to some extent by the military. But neither the Russians nor the Canadians have yet the efficiency of the Norwegian Ski-men.

## A NIGHT IN THE DESERT - By Sven Hedin, Swedish Explorer

SHAH SEVAR, "the riding king," chief of a warlike tribe in Western Baluchistan, is sitting one evening smoking his pipe at the campfire in front of his black tent, which has been pitched near a tamarisk. The tale teller has grown silent.

From out of the darkness of the night appear two men dressed in white with white turbans. They tie the dromedaries and prostrate themselves in front of Shah Sevar, who bids them rise and help themselves to tea from the big iron pot. In a moment everything is full of life. More men come up to the fire, all carrying long muskets, lances, swords and poniards. Several of them are leading dromedaries.

Now fourteen men are seated around the flaming fire. It is strangely silent in this circle and Shah Sevar's face is stern and inscrutable. At last he asks:

"Is everything ready?"

"Yes," comes the answer from everywhere.

"Is the powderhorn full, and lead in the bags?"

"Yes."

"Have the waterskins been filled?"

"Yes."

"Have you provisions in your pockets?"

"Yes. Dates, sour cheese and bread for four days."

"I told you the day before yesterday our goal this time is Bam. Bam is a very populous village. If we are discovered too early, the fight will be hot. We must sneak up to it like the jackals of the desert. The distance is five hundred kilometres, four days' ride."

Shah Sevar sits for a while staring into the flames, then he asks:

"Are the dshambas fresh?"

"Yes."

"And have we ten extra dromedaries for the booty?"

"Yes."

"He arises and all the men follow his example. Their fierce faces are glowing, red like copper, in the firelight. They are not thieves; theft is contemptible, but plunder and robbery are manly occupations and a man's fame grows the more slaves he takes. "Sit up," the chief commands in a low voice. Muskets are thrown across the shoulders and clash against the belt with its powderhorn, leather pouch with bullets, flint, steel and tinder.

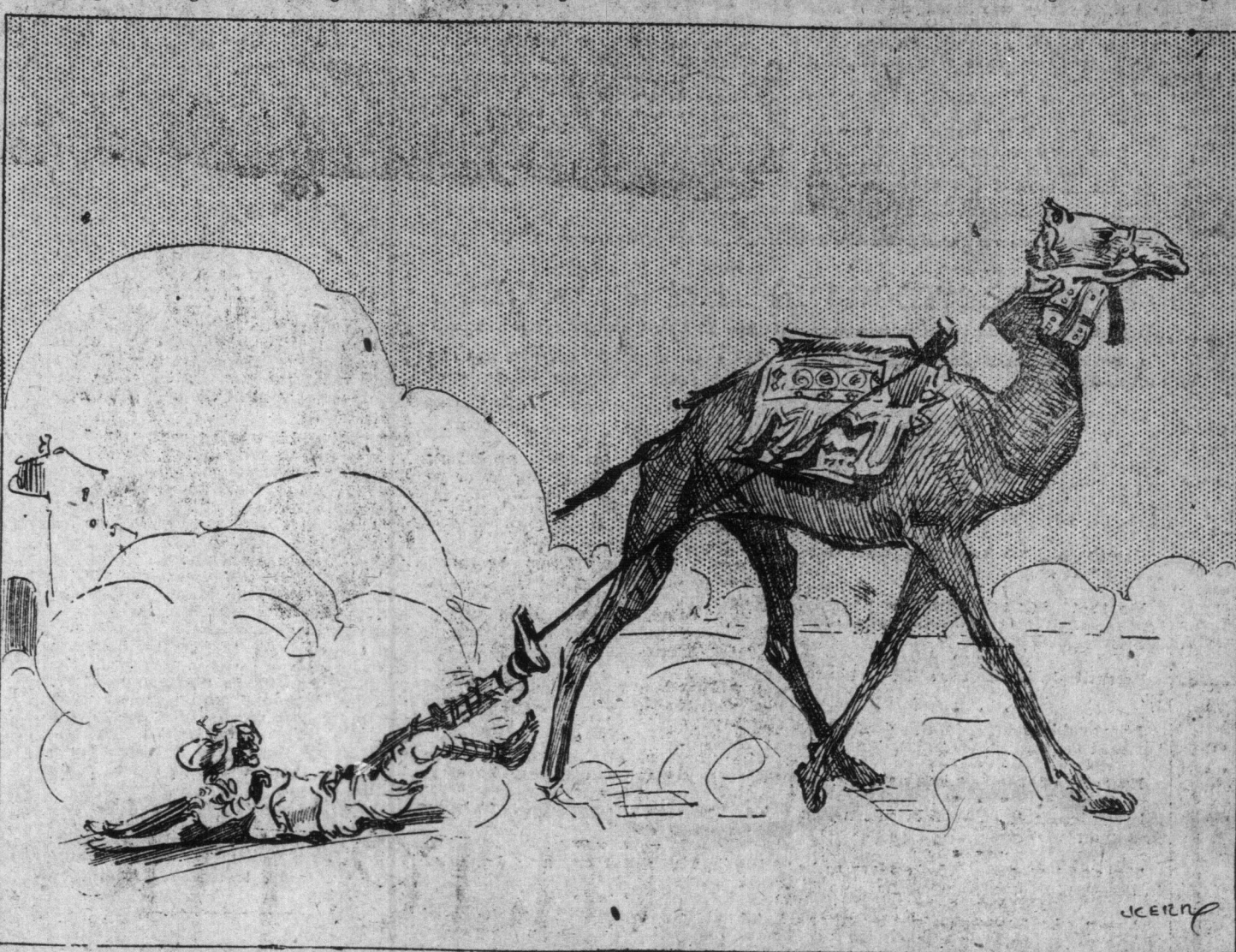
"In the name of Allah," Shah Sevar cries, and the little crowd trots away into the night. They follow a well known trail, gained by the stars. Dawn comes, the sun rises and the shadows of the dromedaries fall on the firm yellow sand in which nothing grows. Not a word was spoken during the night. When the first 120 kilometres have been covered, the chief says: "We will stop at the hot springs."

When they reach there they fill the waterskins and let the dromedaries drink. Then they withdraw into the hills close by

and rest during the hot hours of the day. They never rest at springs where they might meet other people.

At dusk they are once more in the saddles. They are riding faster now than the night before and in the morning they stop at a salt spring. During the third night the dromedaries begin to

be to be seen here, not even a lonely raven or vulture, which might warn the inhabitants of Bam of the approaching danger. Without a moment's rest they travel all day. The riders are as silent as the desert itself; the only noise is the labored breathing of the dromedaries and the sound of their feet against the hard ground.



"His Left Foot Is Caught in the Stirrup, His Head Is Trailing in the Dust."

breathe more heavily and, when the sun rises, their lips are covered with white foam. They are not tired, only angry and out of breath, but onward they have to trot always toward the West, raising great clouds of gray dust.

At last they are out of the desert and, with furious speed, they race across the ground that is white with alkali. No living being

When the sun sets they still have twenty kilometres to cover.

Then Shah Sevar stops his dromedaries, and, as if he feared that his voice might be heard in Bam, he whispers: "Halt!" A soft whistling and the animals bend their knees and lay down. The men jump from their saddles and tie the front legs of the beasts together with short ropes that they may not run away and betray the

plan. All are dead tired and stretch themselves out on the ground. Some of the men slept, while excitement kept others awake. Four sentries keep a sharp lookout. The town of Bam is not in sight, but the hills at the foot of which it lies are plainly visible. If night were only here now!

The day has been calm and sultry. Now comes a faint breeze from the north and Shah Sevar smiles. An eastern wind would have forced him and his men to make a detour, that the watchful dogs of the village might not scent them too soon. It is 9 o'clock. In an hour all Bam will be asleep. The men have finished their meal and put the remaining dates, cheese and bread back into their pockets. "Do you want us to empty the waterbags to lighten the dromedaries for the attack?" a man asks.

"No," replies Shah Sevar, "perhaps we shall not have time to fill them again when we retreat."

"The hour has come," he says, "arms ready!" The men sit up and ride slowly toward the village. "I will ride faster only when I discover anything suspicious, and then you will follow me. Three men with the extra dromedaries remain a little behind."

Like falcons the riders stare toward their goal. It is still five kilometres away, but their sharp eyes even now distinguish the trees in the gardens of Bam. They draw closer. Suddenly a dog barks and all others follow. They have scented the dromedaries.

"Forward!" the Shah cries. The dromedaries race along; they know the game and need no spurting on. Their necks are almost parallel with the ground and the white foam flies from their mouths. The dogs bark more furiously than ever; some of them run out to meet the attack. The robbers reach the village gate. The air is rent with cries of despair; the sleeping people are aroused; women and children flee to the hills. There is no time to organize a defense; there is no leader and the attack has come too suddenly. Like scared chickens the miserable inhabitants rush hither and thither and the robbers fall upon them. Shah Sevar directs the attack sitting high up on his dromedary. The others jump off and overpower three men, twelve women and six children, who are tied and placed under guard of two Beluchis while the others search the nearest houses. Their booty is two young men, who fight desperately; two bags of grain and some silver.

"How many slaves?" roars Shah Sevar.

"Twenty-three," comes the answer.

"That is enough. Pack up."

The slaves and booty are tied to the backs of the extra dromedaries.

"Hurry, hurry," cries the chief. "The same way back." There is some confusion. The ropes of some of the dromedaries have become tangled. The chief's eyes have discovered a crowd of armed men coming up. Three shots ring out and Shah Sevar falls backward in his saddle. His dromedary is scared and starts to run toward the desert. His left foot is caught in the stirrup, his head is trailing in the dust, which stanches the blood from a wound in his forehead.

Then the foot slips out of the stirrup, and "the riding king" finds a dead body at the gate of Bam.