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THE TRAIL TO THE SKIES

(Concluded from page 8.)

day. Now it was always night. His only danger lay in recent windfalls strewn into it, but he kept well to mid-stream, where such possibilities were less. With all the grace and skill of the old days he squatted in the stern, guiding the fragile craft that swept downward and onward like a thing possessed of life.

The river grew broader, more swift of current. Tributaries swelled its head of water. Past heavily-wooded shores it swept for hours. In late afternoon it carried the canoe and its lone passenger into a wild, barren country—lifeless, ghostly wastes where scraggly rocks reared their hostile heights to either side.

The stream grew tumultuous in a gorge. Old Machova stiffened at his paddle as a distant boom of thunder reached his ears, now rising, now falling, now fading almost to nothingness, but ever increasing in volume after succeeding intermissions. He was in the rapids. Foaming, swirling, lashing waters raced with him. But their mood sang no angry, threatening song to him. Their mood was his mood. How well he knew all their hidden dangers! Times innumerable he had flung defiance at their worst. To-day they were his brothers. He joined in their paeans. Wild things ashore stared in fascinated wonder as he passed. But old Machova saw not material things. He saw only smiling joyous faces from the long ago, heard only the songs of joy and triumph about him.

The thunders ahead boomed louder and louder, merged into a mighty roar. The waters suddenly grew velvet-smooth, but swifter and swifter. The canoe fairly hissed through space.

Old Machova saw not the ascending clouds of vapor ahead, where the rainbow played in the dying rays of the sun. He saw only the Mist Maiden that haunts that rainbow with arms outstretched to receive him.

The canoe was poised for one instant out over the brink of the cataract, which drowned all semblance of the old warrior's last triumphant whoop, then it descended the chasm like a sliver of light and all was as it was before.

Back at the reservation next day the agent remembered his promise to the old Indian. Before he sealed up the letter that carried it he scanned the odd-looking diagram on the birch bark quizzically. "I'd give two cents to know what that fool picture means," he pondered. "Oh well, might as well send it anyway, even if the censor does throw it away. Likely as not it's only a touch for more tobacco."

But over in France, back in rest, a dusky-skinned Canadian private started as he opened the letter and took the film of bark from it.

"What 'smatter, Pete?" asked a discerning white comrade. "Get any bad news?"

The Indian soldier turned away to hide the moisture in his eyes.

"Yes," he said. "Old Man Owl—father—gone up the trail of the skies."

RUSSIA THO' DEAD YET SPEAKETH

(Concluded from page 16.)

against it. And this is precisely the claim definitely made by Lloyd-George and General Maurice. If the Allies can play the first card in the west, and compel a great battle there at two or three points, it will be greatly to their advantage to do so. But Germany is hardly likely to choose the western line, and to throw herself with an inferior force against impregnable fortifications.

This is the view taken by Lazare Weiller, who writes in the Paris L'Homme Libre, and who has won much distinction as a war critic. He says that the war must, of course, be ultimately won or lost in the west, but that the time has not yet come for the final struggle. He says that there is no longer any secret about Germany's intention to bring an offensive in the east, because this is the ground that must be cleared up before anything can be done elsewhere. Germany must get her hands free here as a preliminary to whatever she may intend to do anywhere else. Whatever the ultimate outcome may be so far as the west is concerned, it is of preeminent importance to her to be the "man in possession" in the Balkans and in Asia Minor. The whole Mittel Europa scheme hangs upon this, and she is certainly not dominant in the Balkans with an Allied army at Saloniki. If she could overrun Greece, the great Balkan corridor would be hers, and her resulting control of the eastern Mediterranean would loosen the hold of the British upon Palestine, Mesopotamia, and the Bagdad Railroad.

Germany, we may be sure, is look-

ing to essentials. She has an almost pathetic veneration for the map, or professes to have. And the map is not a satisfactory one so long as her Mittel Europa chain is broken, or at least threatened, in the Balkans, so long as the end of the chain at Bagdad and the Persian Gulf is actually in British hands.

This, of course, is the main explanation of Germany's unwillingness to say anything definite about Belgium. She does not wish to renounce a card until she knows its precise value for trading purposes. Had she made herself secure in Poland and Lithuania it would have been another matter. If she were safe in the Balkans it would be another matter. But she has been disappointed, at least for the present, in Russia; the Balkan link is so precarious that she can hardly be said to possess it at all; while the terminal links at Bagdad have actually been lost. If she could sweep over Greece it would put a very different complexion on the situation. Belgium would not then be necessary as a trading card, and she need do no more than trade off Belgium in return for a guaranty of repose in the Balkans. If Germany could establish herself unchallenged in the Balkans she would have won the war. The possibility of a victory here, where resistance is at its minimum and where a victory is so entirely feasible, must certainly prove more tempting than an assault upon western lines, where victory is nearly impossible, and where anything short of an absolute triumph would produce nothing except new mountains of dead men.