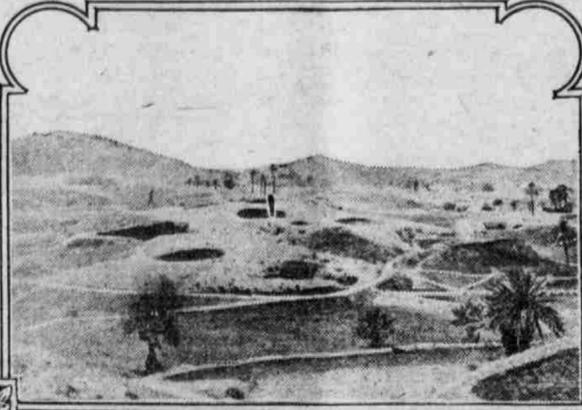


# Airship Startles African Cave Dwellers



DOULRAT, A VILLAGE OF CLIMBING TROGLODYTES



ALL THAT CAN BE SEEN OF TROGLODYTE VILLAGE OF MATMATA

**A**VIATION has another feat to its credit. Flying high over the deserts of northern Africa, a dirigible balloon, one of the newest of the wonderful inventions of man, has just afforded another ultra-modern contrivance—the camera—its first chance to snap a group of dwellings as old in style as any that man ever built for himself.

It was the Italian dirigible balloon "P 2" that accomplished the feat and gave the Italian invaders of Tripoli additional reason for patting themselves on the back and feeling like the vanguard of progress. While the balloon hovered high over the arid waste that lies back of the Mediterranean coast of northern Africa, the photographer trained his camera on a lot of holes in the desert—apparently burrowed by animals. Instead of being that, however, they were all that was visible of villages teeming with human beings, of troglodyte villages, whose inhabitants dig deep into the earth to find a home just as their forefathers did thousands of years ago, when the dirigible balloon and the camera and the Italian nation were things undreamed of.

This unique picture of underground dwellings taken from a point far up in the air by the latest European visitor to the cave-dwellers has aroused renewed interest in these African troglodytes, whom only a few travelers have ever beheld.

This most recent visitor sojourned among the cave-dwellers of Matmata, back of the Mediterranean coast of Tunisia, and from these struck still further inland to the places where the "climbing troglodytes" dwell and the nomads of the desert store their grain and other valuables in storerooms which, though built above the ground, are fashioned exactly like the underground homes of their neighbors, thus leading scientists to believe that their ancestors burrowed into the ground.

Curious, indeed, are the tales brought back by this latest adventurer into the land of the troglodytes. When he approached the underground dwellings of Matmata all the women whom he encountered ran away, covering their faces as they went. He was taken into homes deep down in the earth, yet furnished with carpets hanging from the earthen walls, with modern tables and benches.

But those who went before him have given us more minute details as to this extraordinary people. In 1911 an American, pointed out on every side as the first of his race to venture into the Matmata region and the desert spaces hidden behind it, sojourned for some time with the kaid, or chieftain, of Matmata, traveled with guides provided by this local potentate far into the hinterland and gathered the materials for a long account of his wanderings, to say nothing of a splendid series of pictures. Previous to this visit the troglodytes had entertained two French archaeologists and, still earlier—far back in the nineties, when they were scarcely known at all to the outside world—they opened their curious abodes to Brun, a Danish explorer, who also lived with the kaid of his day and gave an interesting account of what he saw.

Frank Edward Johnson is the man who can lay claim to being the only American who has lived among the cave-dwellers of northern Africa. While he was in Tripoli some years ago he became quite chummy with the kaid of Matmata, an intelligent native, whom the French masters of the land had appointed to rule over an inland tribe. This native later became kaid of Matmata and, happening to read in some American magazine an article by Mr. Johnson on troglodytes, he wrote to the author at his home in Norwich, Conn., that he would improve his knowledge of the subject by paying his old friend a visit. "I am a troglodyte myself," the writer of the letter remarked. So Mr. Johnson left his Connecticut home, sailed across the sea to Tunis, transferred to a small coasting steamboat, which landed him at the desert port of Gabes, and after a wearisome journey over the sands, found himself within view of the village of Matmata. Or rather, he didn't find himself within view of it. It was there, but he couldn't see it.

"Imagine arriving at a town of 5,000

inhabitants and not seeing a house—only a picturesque mosque built since the French occupation," he said, in an article which he wrote for the National Geographic Magazine after his return to the United States.

When he finally looked groundward and located the village, he slipped and stumbled down the sides of a huge hole dug in the ground, and found that it was a courtyard of his friend, the kaid, from which other openings led into living rooms and store rooms. Every house in Matmata is built in just this way—one large hole, left uncovered, for a courtyard, and everything else leading out of it deep into the earth.

The big holes vary in depth and width, averaging about nine yards deep and fifteen yards in circumference. In the middle of each courtyard is a square masonry trough which pipes rainwater into a large cistern. This is a most important home adjunct, as water is very scarce. Every drop of rain is carefully preserved—so carefully that the unfortunate horses, goats, sheep, and donkeys belonging to the natives are watered only once in twenty-four hours.

The kaid's dwelling is a superior sort of place with its entrance walls whitewashed and several articles of European furniture disposed about the various holes that serve as rooms. Another high-class dwelling of this underground village is that of Sheikh Ferdjani, who courteously invited Mr. Johnson to pick his way down the steep walls of the "courtyard" and pay him a visit. He describes the visit thus:

"A young man burned a handful of dried esparto grass, which flamed up brightly and showed us the steps and turns down the tunnel. I almost fell over a donkey eating its hay. Great eyes glared at me from out of the blackness. On coming into the large round courtyard one would think the sheik the father of at least twelve infants, for children from two to ten years old are curiously watching us. They are very fond of bonbons and soups. Whatever money one gives the sheik is divided among the children."

He met the sheik's beautiful little six-year-old daughter, who liked to be photographed with her playmate, little Ayesha, and her little brothers. After gratifying this taste for her a door of palm leaf boards was pushed aside and the American was ushered into the sheik's private room—or rather cave—cut out of the solid rock. In it was an old wooden chest, many guns, and a bedstead hewn out of rock, but provided with comfortable-looking native mattresses filled with wool and with native blankets. There was also an oil lamp made just like those the Greeks and Romans used.

The kaid of Matmata was very polite to Mr. Johnson. Whenever the latter traveled about in the neighborhood to look up other burrowing communities he was provided with knives, spoons, forks, and napkins by his hospitable host. He protested against this vehemently, as he was quite willing to "rough it," but the men accompanying him had received iron-clad instructions and refused to deviate from them the least bit.

Under such auspices the American had ample opportunity to study the customs of the country, and he has much that is interesting to say about them. Of the kaid's village he writes:

"Matmata has its special code of etiquette. Never approach near enough to another man's dwelling to look down into the great circular courtyard and see his women. It is not only bad form, but it is dangerous. Each dwelling has a number of white Kabyle dogs that keep a constant watch, and on your approach would fly out at you and like to tear you into pieces. Never enter a passageway to a dwelling without sending in a small boy or girl to let the women know that you are coming in."

From Matmata the American traveler went inland to Medenine, a town of most singular appearance, composed of thousands of "rhoras," or cave-shaped dwellings, built above ground, and piled up on top of each other. The only way to reach the upper ones is by means of projecting stones worn smooth by long centuries of use. The inhabitants leap from one to another of these with the agility of monkeys, but to a stranger the upper layers of houses are practically

inaccessible. It is of Medenine that a French traveler said that its style of architecture is due to the fact that the forefathers of its present inhabitants were cave-dwellers and beneath to their descendants their ideas of home-building, which the descendants proceeded to carry out, omitting only the mere detail of burrowing into the ground.

Medenine is only partly inhabited. Most of the houses are used for storing grain by the tribesmen of the neighboring desert. It is a silent, melancholy place, like a graveyard out in the desert.

Beyond it are numerous villages peopled by what are known as "climbing troglodytes"—cave-dwellers who dig into hillsides. They have a partiality for the most inaccessible eminences. "As soon as I saw a particularly steep crag, a veritable eagle's nest, I felt sure that it was honey-combed with troglodytes' homes," wrote one French explorer, "and it usually was." The reason is that the French have only recently been able to introduce order and safeguard life in the sandy stretches where the cave-dwellers live. Before the advent of French rule the district was the scene of continual and sanguinary faction fights between the various tribes, of sudden raids by the nomads of the Sahara, who desolated any village that they caught unprepared, massacred its fighting men and carried the rest away to slavery.

Therefore the natives tunneled and scooped out every peak they could find and stationed sentinels on the top most vantage points that the ap-

proach of the enemy might be signaled in good season.

One of the most striking of these eyries is Doulat—"a beehive mountain perched high over a deep ravine." It consists of countless caves and niches, dug in tiers along the mountain side, and surmounted by a "ksar" or citadel, now in ruins. "A huge, human anthill," the American traveler calls it.

Among the cave-dwellers of northern Africa is a sprinkling of Jews, who do most of the business in the underground villages. In their hands is an extensive wine trade, for, though the cave-men, like other Mohammedans, are supposed not to drink the juice of the grape, they are lax in their observance of this rule laid down by the Prophet.

The people of Matmata and the rest of the troglodyte villages are miserably poor. This is true to such an extent among some of them that they look forward with joy to a flight of locusts, since by capturing plenty of these pests they can be assured of having something to eat for quite a while.

Strange as it may seem to one of the Western race, imbued with certain set ideas about the East, those who have traveled among the troglodytes assert that their women, instead of being oppressed as inferior beings by the men, possess great influence in the community. They do a good deal of the burden-carrying, to be sure, but this is because they pride themselves on their strength and insist on exerting it. Many have fine figures, clean-cut features and beautiful eyes.

## GREAT MEN IN COMMON CLAY

Models by G. A. BEATY

Words by GENE MORGAN



ORVILLE WRIGHT.

The critics called him crazy when he said he would dare to take a little flyer and navigate the air, they laughed when constant mishaps to all his craft occurred, and chortled when he hollered some day he'd be a bird. But all things have a climax, he kept on sawing wood and cutting aerial dipoles and finally made good. His freak machines went soaring athwart the skyline clear, no more was heard the horse-laugh, the hoot and mocking jeer. The critics crowded round him and thumped him on the back, each one said he had praised him when, everything looked black. And now he takes it easy and lets the others fly, he sells to aviators and sees them sailing by. The dollars pour in swiftly, he bears an honored name, and thus rests well contented with fortune and with fame. Old Earth now suits him plenty, he scorns the dizzy flight, the hero bunk looks phony to Mr. Orville Wright.

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## BOYS' CORN CONTEST

MANY NEBRASKA BOYS COMPETED IN 1912.

\$700 IN PRIZES TO BE GIVEN

Winners in County Contests Will Compete for Prizes in State Contest.

Lincoln.—\$709.00 in prizes will be offered for the largest yields of good quality corn grown by Nebraska boys under the following conditions and rules. The prizes are offered by the South Omaha Stock Yards company of South Omaha, Neb., through the Department of Agricultural Extension of the University of Nebraska, at Lincoln.

### COUNTY CONTEST.

The following prizes are offered in each county where a county contest is held under the direction of the county superintendent:

First Prize—\$10 in cash.  
Second Prize—\$5 in cash.  
Third Prize—\$3 in cash.

### STATE CONTEST.

The winners at the County Contests will compete for the State prizes. The Eastern division is composed of all counties east of a line drawn straight south from the western boundary of Knox county. The Western Division is composed of all counties west of this line.

### Eastern Division.

First Prize, \$50 in cash.  
Second Prize—\$25 in cash.  
Third Prize—\$10 in cash.  
Five Fourth Prizes of \$5 each; \$25 in cash.  
Ten Fifth Prizes of \$2 each; \$20 in cash.

### Western Division.

First Prize—\$50 in cash.  
Second Prize—\$25 in cash.  
Third Prize—\$10 in cash.  
Five Fourth Prizes of \$5 each; \$25 in cash.  
Ten Fifth Prizes of \$2 each; \$20 in cash.

### Rules.

1. Boy must be between 10 and 21 years of age.
2. All work must be done by the boy.
3. Acre must be measured, husked and weighed in presence of two disinterested freeholders, selected by the County Superintendent and State Department of Agricultural Extension. When the corn is harvested an affidavit must be sent to Huldah Peterson, University Farm, Lincoln, Neb., and a copy to the County Superintendent.
4. A complete record must be submitted on blanks furnished.
5. Yields must be given in pounds per acre as per instructions sent out by State Department of Agricultural Extension.
6. Prizes will be awarded on following basis: Yield, 80%. Quality, 20%.
7. Ten ears of the corn must be exhibited at the County Contest, and at the State Contest.
8. In counties where no County Contest is held, growers are eligible to state prizes, but not to county prizes.
9. Entry is free, but boy must be an active member of the Nebraska Boys' club. Write Huldah Peterson, University Farm, for particulars. There is no membership fee.
10. Do not wait to organize a club in your locality now; arrangements for a local club in your community will be made later. Send your name at once. This enters you for the contest. Then go to work and win the prize.

One hundred and twenty-five Nebraska boys between the ages of ten and twenty-one entered the Acre Corn Growing Contest in 1912. Forty-seven of this number completed the contest and sent in their affidavits of yield at the end of the year.

The yields ranged from ten bushels to one hundred and nine bushels per acre. The average yield made by the boys completing the contest was fifty-eight bushels per acre. The average made by the twelve boys winning prizes in the Western Division was fifty-seven bushels per acre, and by the twelve boys in the Eastern Division, eighty bushels per acre.

From information furnished by the boys we find that eight grew corn on ground which had been in some leguminous crop for one or more years previous to the contest. They secured an average yield of seventy-seven bushels per acre. Thirteen of the boys applied manure in the spring of 1912 and secured an average yield of sixty bushels per acre. This makes a total of twenty-one boys growing their corn either after a legume or on ground to which manure had been applied, securing an average yield of sixty-six bushels per acre. Twenty-six boys did not apply manure and the land they used for their corn had not the advantage of a leguminous crop in previous years. Their average yield was fifty-one bushels per acre, or fifteen bushels per acre less than was secured by the boys using farm manure or ground previously seeded to some leguminous crop, such as alfalfa or clover.

The department will conduct another contest during 1913. Seven hundred dollars in prizes will be offered by the Union Stock Yards company of South Omaha.

The ONCOOKER  
S. E. KISER

The EXTENT of HIS KNOWLEDGE



He doesn't know that Homer ever sang a thrilling song.

He doesn't know who won at Waterloo; He doesn't know that Caesar ever swayed a cheering throng.

Or what it was that Guy Fawkes tried to do; But he can tell you quickly, if you have the wish to know, Who have led the leagues in battling for a dozen years or so.

He doesn't know an adverb from a pronoun or a noun, He mixes up his tenses when he speaks; He doesn't know who Byron was or that he won renown,

Or what range has the highest mountain peaks; But he can give you quickly and without a moment's thought All the details of the battles that old John L. ever fought.

He couldn't name a dozen of this country's presidents,

He doesn't know who lost at Bunker Hill;

Once he saw displayed a copy of "Poor Richard" for ten cents,

And he bought it, but regret is with him still,

"For," he says, "I looked all 'round it and dere's nuttin' dere at all

Like dere is in Spaldin's guide book with its records of baseball."

Wholly Unnecessary.



"I wish" said the guest, "to leave a call for 6:30, I've got to catch a train."

"It won't be necessary to call you," replied the night clerk. "The man in the room next to yours has asthma so badly that he makes a noise like a steam siren."

Suggestion Concerning William.

"Our son William has succeeded in writing the Declaration of Independence on a postal card."

"He must be a wonder. Why don't you let the furnace fire go out some day for the purpose of learning whether he will be able to start it again?"

Anxious That She Should Know.

"Just think, papa," said little Albert, "a hundred years from now people may be celebrating your birthday."

"Here, my child, is a dime. Run and tell your mother that."

Proof of Fraud.

"You were born in the sign of Sagittarius," began the astrologer.

"Stop right there," exclaimed Mrs. Newrich. "You're a fraud. I wasn't born where you say I was. I was born in Keokuk."

A Sign.

When a woman can meet one of her husband's former sweethearts and treat her courteously or kindly it is a sign that the former sweetheart has either grown very stout or has faded terribly.

Not to Be Held Back.

"Ah," he declared, "you are as beautiful as a dream."

"Do you really think so?" she asked.

"Of course I do."

"Then I shall insist on going upon the stage."

A Word to the Unwise.

The man who believes his friends will support him in his adversity can keep from having his faith shattered by not becoming the possessor of an adversity.

The Stage.

All the world's a stage, and everybody is trying to write for it.

S. E. Kiser.