

AMERICAN, FIRST WOMAN TO CROSS ANDES, BRAVES JUNGLE ARMED WITH POLICE WHISTLE

Miss MacGregor Is Back From Jaunt Through Wilds Not Thought Possible

WANDERLUST CALLED HER IN FAR PERU

Fight With Jaguar Only One Thrill on Trip Filled With Hazards

OVER the heights of the treacherous Andes in seventeen days. Along trails less than a foot wide, hanging on sheer walls of rock, slipping abysses deeper than eye could penetrate.

Through tropical jungle, matted together like the damp, hot hair of some colossal giant—hiding place for mad jaguars and slithering poisonous snakes.

Through underbrush, riotously, morbidly beautiful, death-laden with mysterious miasmas and wasting fever.

Among polygamous tribes, which deal in an extensive white-slave traffic—which snatch up white girls from the borderlands and carry them off to a tragic oblivion in the depths of their strange country.

All these serve to suggest the recent experiences of Miss Katharine MacGregor, of Waupaca, Wis., and former student of journalism at Columbia University.

Miss MacGregor arrived in New York last week—the first white woman to conquer the Andes. She crossed them within two days of the fifteen-day masculine record.

She avoided all the devastating fevers with only two grains of quinine.

And her only weapon against the wild beasts and reptiles and the savage tribesmen was a policeman's whistle!

Too Dangerous, Was Warning of U. S. Consul

Chiefly because no woman—no white woman—had ever got across them.

But the American consul in Lima was averse to her making the trip.

"It means death to a woman," he explained. "It's bad enough for a man. The country is heavy with fevers and full of tigers—that's what they call the jaguars there—and wild men who seize white women and wife them or sell them."

"Besides that," he continued, "the trail simply bristles with danger; in some places it's only a foot wide; in some places the mule has to slip down an angle of 45 degrees, and if the beast slips too much, he falls, thousands of feet to inevitable death. You can't possibly make that trip!"

And the Governor of Peru said the same thing.

"Who's going to be your guide?" was his contribution. "Who can you trust for that important job? The Indians are just as likely to hand you over to the women-selling Iquitos—or do worse themselves."

But Miss MacGregor had made up her mind to that trip, and nothing could change it. The American consul

"I mean to get about to see things,"



"They said I couldn't go—so I went"



"The mother jaguar scared me a little"

Miss Katharine MacGregor



"I want new experiences"

to know things," she cried; and she doubtless will get about. At any rate, she has begun well.

It was about the first of last March that Miss MacGregor began her trip.

"I flew from Key West to Havana. I didn't have very much money, so I did some research work for a commercial house there. Then I crossed to Panama, went through the canal and down to Ecuador. Here I looked about a bit, made a few friends and by steamboat followed south to Lima, Peru. I found the country very beautiful, but I wasn't so much interested in the country thereabouts. I wanted to make the Andes."

And, she added, smiling: "Perhaps,

throw up his hands in despair; the Governor of Peru, quite resigned, gave her a letter of introduction, in which he had little faith, to whomsoever it might concern. And then both of them scouted about for a suitable guide for this stubborn young lady.

And they finally rounded up a guide. "He was a disinherited English Lord's son or something like that," said Miss MacGregor. "He'd been trying to lose his identity for the last thirteen years in the tropics. He gave me his name—I don't know whether he was lying or not—it may have been the wrong name. But I called him 'Buffalo Bill' for short."

"The Consul and the Governor assured me that he was trustworthy, and he was. It took five weeks' waiting in Lima to find me that guide—but it was worth the waiting."

"This one we fell off was about a foot wide. Of course, we moved along in single file. The lead mule—there is always a lead mule which is supposed to have better judgment than the other mules—seemed to be going along nicely, although we noticed evidences of a recent avalanche. But when we came to a turn the lead mule walked straight into the straight edge of his trail. He backed up suddenly and unexpectedly, and backed into the next mule, which backed into Pleiades. And Pleiades was pushed off the trail."

"We went into the air, Pleiades and I did. Buffalo Bill said we made three complete turns before we hit a soft part of the debris of the avalanche. And I must say it was soft. I looked a sight, and I wasn't hurt a bit. And we fell thirty feet."

"With difficulty I climbed up the thirty feet back to the trail again. We had to pull poor Pleiades up with ropes."

"Mule Pack Made Good Time Despite Handicaps"

For seven days the party rode their mules. The lead mule—to carry three meters a day, of course—was a fine animal. On the trail they camped when and where they could. Sometimes they stopped at a tambo—a kind of hotel—which progressive natives have erected in the past few years. These hotels consist of a few poles for walls and a thick grass roof.

"We used to put up our cots, cover them and ourselves with mullerite—that's a sort of netting—and sleep till morning. Often enough we had to camp where we happened to be."

"Perhaps the most wearing portion of the trip was centered in the mud."

"The earth there is a red clay, and the constant rain and the dew soaked into that red clay till it got soupy. We soon were coated with mud; it got into our ears, our eyes, literally we ate mud. The mules would plow through it slowly, lifting with grave deliberation first one foot, then the other. They sank to their chests often enough, and the muscular energy expended in sinking in and then pulling out their tired legs is inconceivable."

"Besides that, hardly ever was the trail clear of underbrush. The vegetation grows so quickly and so densely that it was necessary for our muleteers to cut our way through with machetes—a long knife used by the Indians for that purpose."

"We never saw many of the natives, but we knew they watched us constantly. And that's an uncanny fact about that country; the underbrush, silent as death sometimes, sometimes wild with the shrieks of brilliant colored birds, is full of brilliant, spying eyes. The naked natives peered through the thickets at us, and we could only sense them. It's the sort of thing that tests your nerves."

"The road was only wide enough for a small car," said Miss MacGregor, "and it was a one-way thoroughfare. Two cars couldn't have passed each other without throwing one down over the cliff to the bottom thousands of feet below."

"From Heavy Snowstorm to Jungle Sultriness"

"Within six hours we traveled from a raging snowstorm at 12,000 feet to 8,000 feet, where we found ourselves in the midst of the densest tropical growth. At La Merced we began our real trip."

"The seven-day trip took them to the headwaters of a stream called Pichis—about thirty miles from the headwaters of the Amazon. It was during the seven days."

"One day, going as slowly as we were," said Miss MacGregor, "I counted twenty streams that we crossed—streams



Miss MacGregor and her pack mule tumbled over cliff, but were unhurt after thirty-foot fall

Besides Buffalo Bill and Miss MacGregor, the party included mules for each, one muleteer mounted, one afoot and seven pack animals.

"You come to depend a great deal on the mules," Miss MacGregor explained. "Your life is really at your mule's mercy. My own I grew to feel a deal of affection for. I called him Pleiades because he was such a strange collection of things. He had one ear shorter than the other; he had an unwarranted combination of resourcefulness, courage, stupidity, cowardice, awkwardness and grace that was altogether appalling."

"But they are extraordinary beasts, mules are. They cling to the sides of sheer cliffs like flies on the ceiling; they slide down descents that make you dizzy—you shut your eyes and open them when you come to level again. And it is worth your life to look over the far side of your mules—because then you look into depths unimaginable."

"Once Pleiades and I fell off one of these narrow trails. Don't misunderstand me. If such a trail is two feet wide it seems like a broad pavement. More than likely it is less than a foot wide."

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of all sizes. When they were wide and deep we rode the swimming miles over. When they were small we waded them. Once we waded under a waterfall. The trail led that way and we had to follow it. The water dashed over us, and if it were possible to be soaking wet more than was already were it was only a waterfall like that which could possibly make us so.

"These streams were full of crocodiles and alligators. Afraid? No, not so much. Because I found out that these ferocious-looking things are really more likely to run away than attack you. We simply had to take the chance. Guns are no protection. If you can hit a crocodile in the eye, you only irritate him—and you can't kill him by trying to shoot through his thick hide—bullets won't pierce it."

The party took a canoe for two days on the Pichis River. The canoe was a dugout, a native boat roughly hewn out of a tree trunk. Three semi-civilized natives—which means they had acquired modesty and wore an abbreviated kind of clothes—paddled the canoe."

Miss MacGregor's party met more of the Indians during this stage of the trip. In no case did they seem unfriendly. The muleteer-interpreter arranged that. He pointed out to the Indians that these were "good white people" and the natives who dared approach them gazed at them in open-mouthed wonder.

For many this was the first white woman they had seen. For many of them Miss MacGregor represented an especially desirable kind of jewel, which they wished to seize and hide away in the unfathomable depths of their wilderness.

Grin Answers Question "Weren't You Afraid?"

"Weren't you afraid?" Miss MacGregor was asked. And her pretty face broke into a grin.

"Not much—you see, I had a letter from the Governor of Peru." It was the effective manner, again, of modestly craning any conversation over the question of courage.

The canoe carried them through the territory of the Iquitos, who are known especially to desire white women. The chiefs sidnap them and they disappear forever.

"Their method is not known," explained Miss MacGregor. "One hears of their activities only by rumor. It may be that a party in which there is a white woman approaches the borderland. Suddenly the woman disappears, while later a rumor filters through to the frontiers that some Iquitos were seen wearing a bit of garment known to have belonged to the kidnapped woman."

"These rumors that come down to the cities come so deviously and so terribly. One can never understand how they do it, and with a speed that tantalizes. Some of the women are killed; others are sold."

Indian Chiefs Have Real Jungle Harems

"The natives are not monogamous. The chief may have a harem with from three to eight wives. And it is quite a triumph for him, if he can, add a white woman to his household."

Although the Iquitos, Miss MacGregor said, never troubled her, it was a jaguar did.

And today one of her trophies is that jaguar's skin.

The day she met the jaguar she had wandered away from her party. This time a rifle was added to her police whistle as her armament. She was out hunting, and crawling through the underbrush she saw a jaguar. She caught sight of me but just up and fled.

"I thought the dead tiger was the mother tiger and began to play with the cub. And while I was knowing them about—and they enjoyed it—the mother stalked through the brush. She fixed me with her eyes. I was terribly frightened. There wasn't any time to spare. I grabbed my rifle and fired. I killed her."

At Iquitos, Miss MacGregor had just about completed her trip across the Andes. Iquitos used to be the headquarters for the rubber industry. Now it is said to deal only in the vast white-slave trade.

"The natives are rather an unhealthy looking lot," said Miss MacGregor. "They all have that malarial look—worn, peaked and thin. Some of them wear clothes—specialists those who have come in touch with a the

English Exile Was Her Guide Despite Warnings of Officials Against Journey

NEAR DEATH BY FALL OF PACK MULE

Stodgy Wisconsin Town Has Lost Its Attractions for This Girl

whites, but most of them wear nothing. The little children look fat enough. I saw one little child who was very fat and shy. I learned that she was thirteen years old—and a widow!

Have Real Sex Equality? Women Do Hard Work

"Socially they do not have very complex conventions. The women work about as much as the men."

From the village of the Iquitos Miss MacGregor took a launch. She went down the Amazon to Para.

"There was little excitement during that portion of the trip—excepting one thing." She paused, and then said sternly: "If I ever get down there again I'm first going to learn how to take care of a camera and how to use one. I took many pictures, but the climate, the ever-rising humidity, most of my films. To top that, I had to get what films I had developed quickly, just as soon as I left the islands. And the natives who developed them ruined those which might have been fairly good."

"But this accident on the Amazon! We carried some carbide in a box, carried it all over our peculiar trip. We managed to keep it dry up until the time we got in that boat on the Amazon. It rained throughout the whole trip—so that the carbide box was quite another feat itself."

"It rained, too, while we were on the Amazon. Our Amazon guide was sitting on the box of carbide. He wore a poncho, which draped over him and the box. The poncho was completely covered him and the box up. Well, the rain rained, and it was all we could do to keep the boat from filling up. The water rose higher and higher, and suddenly we saw that our guide was swelling up like a balloon. Then there was an explosion and our guide was thrown into the air about three feet. The water in some manner had generated a gas when it penetrated into the box of carbide."

"Our guide was more frightened than anything else. The box of carbide was ruined."

On August 1 Miss MacGregor arrived at Para, and from there she went to New York City, where she is now trying to acclimate herself to the life of a busy city again.

The main portion of her journey covered about 500 miles, her line across the South American continent stretched some 2,000 miles. Her time spent in the tropics amounted to about seven months, wandering in South America, about five.

Mystery of the Andes Still Has Its Fascination

"I come back with a fascinating impression of the mystery of the place. You somehow know that the brush is alive with activity, but you rarely see it. You know that eyes are peering out at you, but you rarely see them. The snakes that slide along the ground are so like the texture of the ground itself, so like the grasses they glide through, that your eye doesn't distinguish them. There are all varieties of snakes there, from the coral to the cobra, but they lurk in their own peculiar fastnesses."

"The natives themselves are alive about you like that. They see you. Word of your arrival and passage through their country speeds ahead of you by way of unknown means of communication among the Indians. But you rarely see them. When you do, they stand silent about you—almost fearful of you. And yet, you can never be certain they are friendly or not."

Miss MacGregor is so pretty—like other girls—once she is in her "civilian clothes," as she calls them—that it is difficult for one to appreciate her long, thin, and dangerous life. It seems so necessary for her to live to be happy. One expects rather to hear stories, such as come from her lips, out of the mouths of heavily mustachioed and deeply lined and broad-nosed men. It is a little startling—this contrast—because it is so unusual.

One expects women these days to excel in sports—swimming, rowing, in business—but it is more trouble, or not so necessary for her to live to be happy. One expects rather to hear stories, such as come from her lips, out of the mouths of heavily mustachioed and deeply lined and broad-nosed men. It is a little startling—this contrast—because it is so unusual.

"I don't know just why I like to wander about." She tries with her hesitancy to explain just why she's a gypsy. Perhaps, it all comes down to a corollary reason—she doesn't know why. It is more trouble, or not so necessary for her to live to be happy. One expects rather to hear stories, such as come from her lips, out of the mouths of heavily mustachioed and deeply lined and broad-nosed men. It is a little startling—this contrast—because it is so unusual.

"I want to be noticed—I want to live through new experiences—and just because I happen to be a woman is no reason why I shouldn't."

And who's their to gainway her? Some day her pleasant voice will doubtless brighten up a pleasant home. Some day she may have gay children at her knee. It isn't the most unusual ultimate appeal for women.

And K she does—just think of the joy of those children! There won't be tame good night stories about Drer Rabbit and Red Fox—there will be thrilling yarns about their mother who killed her jaguar, how she fell from a high cliff, how she penetrated regions where no white woman had ever before gone, how she took—

But why go on speculating. Suffice it to say that now Miss MacGregor is enjoying her thrills as much as any childer she may have will. And what better life is there than one which is a joy to live, one which is a joy to tell and one which is a joy for others to hear?

Gipsy, perhaps, she is—so honey a one as the little minister's Babbe said—and twice as kind.