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ST. JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1913.

IS IT WORTH THE RISK?

"Human lives are nothing, if by soiling forth we can add one iota to the 'sum of human knowledge,'" said Sir Ernest Shackleton at a farewell gathering in New York when reaffirming his intention of leading another expedition into the South Polar regions. He maintains there is "still work to be done." Doubtless this argument will appeal to scientists, but to the world in general, with the tragic fate of Captain Scott and his companions fresh in mind, it will have but little weight.

The goal has been won. The Pole has been discovered by Captain Amundsen, and there appears much reason in his contention that further South Polar expeditions will realize little that can be made directly of material benefit.

In a recent interview Captain Amundsen gave some instructive details in support of this view. "There is no 'life at the South Pole,'" he said, "no 'kind of life, in air or water or on land. There is a great continent covered by ice and snow. Animal life, so far as was observed, does not extend beyond the Barrier, which is '700 miles distant from the Pole.' His expedition found bare spaces on the land and collected geological specimens, but there was nothing to show that the South Pole region held treasures which would interest civilization. No traces of gold, silver, copper or iron were in evidence.

Referring to the report that coal was found in abundance, he stated that he was not responsible for the statement that there are in that region some of the largest coal deposits ever discovered and he did not express a hope that they would soon be developed.

"But even if there are in the South Polar region very large deposits of 'coal and of precious metals,'" he added, "they will simply be something to 'sigh over—they are inaccessible. Minerals cannot live there and even if they could live and could work mines, no one would be the better off, as there would be no way to get the products 'out to a point where commerce could reach them. The lowest temperature we found at or around the South Pole was 75 degrees below zero. Fahrenheit. The highest velocity of wind was 20 meters a second. It is a region of storms."

Sir Ernest Shackleton expressed the hope that if he and his companions were lost they would have done their work well enough to deserve of their people the admiration and affection accorded by the world to Capt. Scott. There will be no two opinions on that point, but in view of the store of scientific knowledge which Captain Scott's records will disclose and by the data secured by Captain Amundsen the question may well be asked: Is another expedition worth the risk?

SEEKING THE PERFECT ROAD

Some reference was made in these columns recently to the experiments which are being conducted at Sidcup in Kent, England, in quest of a perfect road. A mile and a half of road, subject to the heaviest traffic out of London, was divided into twenty-three sections and a different material laid on each section. It is of interest to note that the City of New York is trying a similar experiment which will result in showing what kind of street pavement is best suited to municipal traffic.

On a single stretch of Second Avenue twenty-two different kinds of pavement have been put down. A record will be kept of each type with respect to wearing qualities, smoothness under use, slipperiness in wet weather and the effect of heat and cold upon it.

The varieties of pavement under test include: Hardwood from Australia, sandstone from New York State, pine blocks from the Carolinas, granite from Massachusetts, asphalt from Trinidad and rock asphalt from the mines at Ragusa, Sicily. The pavement will be permanent. As Second Avenue is subjected to much heavy traffic, the test will be a severe one for all the materials used.

The method pursued in New York closely follows the English experiment, and provides further evidence that this is a practical way by which to determine the best material. Many cities and towns in the United States are watching the outcome with keen interest. The Worcester Gazette in commenting on the experiment maintains that "the results of the test will afford Worcester and other cities in the East an inoperative means of getting some valuable information with respect to the best materials to use in paving work."

The St. John City Council might, with advantage, procure a copy of the report, which will, no doubt, be published in New York, giving the engineer's verdict on the experiment.

LANGUAGE AND EMPIRE.

In a plea for the institution of a National Language League to protect and foster the "neglected" English tongue the Berlin correspondent of the London Daily Graphic gives some instructive particulars of what Germany is doing to protect the German language from "neologisms" and foreign corruptions.

It appears that for the past twenty-eight years the Germans have had an institution which protects and redeems the national language. This is the "Deutsche Sprachverein"—the German Language League. It was founded in 1885 by the art historian, the late Herman Riegel, and within two years it had ninety branches and 6,000 members; and when it celebrated its silver jubilee in 1910 it had 324 branches and more than 30,000 members, among them being nearly all the most distinguished men of Germany. It has branches in every continent and in most countries, and among the Germans of London alone it has 600 adherents.

The German Language League has two functions. One is to keep the language pure, to expel neologisms, that is new words, mostly of Latin origin, and to replace them by German words. This task is easy, because German lends itself to the making of expressive compounds out of pure Teutonic roots.

The second function is to foster the use of German; and generally to work for its extension and glory. The League has its own journals. It has published lists of German equivalents for nearly all the foreign words at present in use in all domains—in trade, politics, art, religion, science and sport. When equivalents are hard to find, it offers prizes for the best; and it encourages various effective methods of propaganda.

The question suggests itself to the Graphic's correspondent: Does not England want a National Language League even more than Germany? The answer is, he maintains, Yes, and also No. To prevail against the corruption of her language England needs a league less than Germany needs hers. A mixed language like English can assimilate neologisms which are needed, and which convey new ideas, without being itself corrupted; whereas in German all new words of other than German origin are ugly excrescences.

"Englishmen," he adds, "it must be remembered, do not take kindly to foreign words. Here they are far ahead of Germans, to whom the foreign origin of a word is itself proof of distinction. An English Language League which merely fought against the misused 'French' of fashion journals and of inferior novel-writers would not have enough to do."

Touching upon the broader Imperial aspect of the question the Graphic's correspondent grows more interesting. He contends that England, far more than Germany, needs a Language League for the fostering and spreading of the national tongue. "If ever a people," he writes, "by virtue of geographical distribution and political organization, needed to care for its language, it is the English. English is the greatest international language in the world. As an international commercial language it is beaten by German in Central Europe, North-Eastern Europe and Northern Asia; but elsewhere it is supreme.

"In the new British Imperialism the English language at present plays no conscious part. That is not as it ought to be. The language is the bond of unity accepted by all; and it exists independently of all the political and economical bonds, upon which Englishmen will never agree. The Empire may pull along with or without Preference and with or without Federation, but not without a common language."

The suggestions of this correspondent may at first sight appear fanciful and impracticable, yet we have the evidence that the Germans have taken steps to protect their national language. There is much truth in his conclusions. "The aim of an English Language League," he adds, "would not be to act as censor and pedant, or to check the free development of a tongue which must undergo change all the more certainly because of the heterogeneous influences necessarily at work in an Empire spread over five continents. The aim would be to foster the idea of the English language as a great Imperial asset, as the ultimate bond of unity in the Empire; and at the same time to take measures for its extension in foreign countries for purposes of international communication."

CO-OPERATION IN FARMING.

A large American delegation on which each state of the Union will be represented by at least two members, will go to Ireland and perhaps to continental Europe next summer to study methods of co-operative farming.

Commenting on the advantages which should follow, the Hamilton Herald points out that in Ireland the principle of co-operation has been applied to agriculture with wonderful success. It has not only produced very gratifying material results in the way of increased prosperity in many districts, but has made the peasant-farmers more industrious, thrifty, self-reliant and self-respecting. Combined with new land laws which are gradually transferring the ownership of land from the landlords to the cultivators, co-operation is making a new Ireland of the Green Isle.

But before Sir Horace Plunkett began his beneficent task of inducing the small Irish farmers to co-operate in the production and marketing of their crops and dairy products, Denmark had already demonstrated the advantages of the system. In that small country, the principle is put into operation more generally and more thoroughly and systematically than anywhere else. Most of the agricultural operations in Denmark are carried on co-operatively; and the results prove the worth of the system. Danish farm and dairy products command the highest prices in the British market, and the condition of the Danish farmers averages higher, probably than that of the farmers of any other country.

The Dominion Government are directing more attention to agriculture and spending more money in its promotion than have any of their predecessors, and it is natural to expect that Mr. Burrell, who is "making good" as Minister of Agriculture, will not lose sight of the great advantages of co-operative farming. The Herald suggests that it might be well to imitate the example of the States, and send a deputation of practical farmers to Europe to study the subject and get first-hand information.

CURRENT COMMENT

The Unanswerable Argument.

(Montreal Herald.)

Colonel McLean, of Queens and Sunbury, has taken in the House practically the same position as The Herald in regard to the naval defence question. He pleads for unanimity of action at this time, as the country's permanent policy is not in issue. He argues that there can be no question of tribute, or of a cash contribution, when we are to build the ships and lend them to the Admiralty. He is anxious that something be done, effectively and quickly, in earnest of our intention to assist in the defence of the Empire, and he holds that the Canadian Dreadnoughts must simply be held in trust until recalled to form part of the Canadian navy.

The Continuous Performance.

(Troy Record.)

The little Latin-American States which they have done well if they compass a revolution lasting two or three days must look with envy upon the friends over in Mexico. There insurrection of the violent type is a continuous performance, and probably will continue to be until the rich ranches no longer are able to furnish rich stealings for the disturbers.

"Free Trade" in Britain.

(Vancouver NewsAdvertiser.)

A delegation recently waited upon the Imperial Government and asked for the removal of the customs duties on tea, sugar, coffee and other foods. Ministers told the delegates that it could not be done, as the Government needed the revenue. It would appear that the delegates represented people foolish enough to take seriously the Liberal denunciation of food duties.

National Insurance.

(Ottawa Journal.)

Preparation for war is not war, and until some such consummation as a world peace agreement looms up, the military and naval outfit of a rich people should not be looked upon as a burden any more than a prosperous business man looks upon insurance as a burden. It is simply a natural business expense; and the bigger the business the more reliable and complete the insurance should be.

The Playground Movement.

(Ottawa Citizen.)

There is ample evidence that the claim of the Ottawa children for public playgrounds is being more and more widely recognized throughout the city, judging from the favorable comments everywhere heard concerning the formation of the Ottawa Playgrounds' Association, which meets next Thursday night for organization.

No Remedy.

(Buffalo Express.)

Mayor Gaynor's solution of the graft evil in New York is contained in a bill that has been sent to Albany, providing for the creation of a new department, independent of the police, to have supervision over saloons, gambling houses and houses of ill fame. This would be merely enlarging on the idea of the strong-arm squad, which developed Becker.

Piping Oil in Palestine.

(Springfield Republican.)

The completion of the pipe line from Jaffa to Jerusalem will make the Holy City the chief oil distributing centre of that region, and the caravans of camels laden with cans of American petroleum will no longer figure in photographs. The line is established by the Vacuum Oil Company of Rochester, N. Y.

THE POET'S CORNER

THE EMPIRE BUILDERS.

Quoted by Col. H. M. McLean, M. P. in his speech in the Naval Debate.

It's well to boast of the Empire, and brag of Britain's might,
It's well to sing of her soldiers or hurry them into the fight,
It's well to raise your anthem for the King upon his throne,
While you leave your Mother Country to bear the load alone.

Many the winds that rise and fall to the flag that ye call your own,
And ye walk secure to the ends of the earth wherever that flag is known;
Safe as a child in its mother's arms ye come and go at will,
And ye take it all for granted, and your mother pays the bill.

Never a wave that beats your shores but knows her floating steel,
Never a sand in your harbor fronts but knows her iron keel,
Never a child in your inland towns but knows of her hearts of oak,
And the breath that you breathe as the air of God is thick with her sulphur smoke.

Dreaming your dreams and visions—making your dreams come true—
Offering not of your substance, offering words in vain,
Large in your little dealings, small in your great affairs,
Proud of the land that bore you, but blind to the load she bears.

—Robert J. C. Stead.

IN THE WOODS IN WINTER.

My cheeks are bare to the stinging sleet,
The wind is howling through the wood;
The crusted leaves crouch 'neath my feet;
The year is young and life is good.

The path I follow winds along
Where ardent birds have ceased to strive
To fill the forest aisles with song,
But it is good to be alive.

I laugh at those who fare afar
In search of warmth to stay till
Where pale, anemic people are
And hunger's an elusive thing.

The crusted leaves crouch 'neath my feet,
The year is young, the future bright;
My cheeks are stung by driven sleet
And live a strong man's appetite.

—From the Chicago Record-Herald.

SAY SOMETHING GOOD.

Begin the day where'er your way
By saying something worth the while.
A simple word is always heard
With pleasure if you pause to smile.

A heart that's drear may take its cheer
When skies are dull and tasks are grave
From what you say along the way
And profit by the hope you gave.

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The sheep are scattered far and wide,
The night, black night, is coming nigh;
The sheep wagon is warm inside—
The cookstove's sizzling sparks on high.

So bunch 'em, boy—that's right, you're hep—
Go round 'em, Shep.
The shadders fall, like blobs of ink;
The wind from off the hills is cold;
We're near the bed ground now, I think,
And soon our couch will be enrolled;

We'll have 'em bunched, and then we'll sup;
Go round 'em, pup!

The day's been long, old pal o' mine;
The work's been hard you've had to do;
But I ain't never heard a whine
A-comin' from the likes of you;
So hold 'em close—you've got the pep—
Go round 'em, Shep.

The "John D." of Germany.
(Hartford Times.)
Germany is to have a petroleum monopoly, with 52 per cent. of the shares of the new company in control of the Imperial Government. In other words, the Kaiser is to be as big an oil magnate in his own country as John D. Rockefeller has ever been alleged to be in the United States.

Why Walk?

(Toronto Star.)

And when those suffragets reach Washington and see Woodrow Wilson, he will probably ask them if they didn't know they could have come by train.

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Hon. Mr. Murray

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Hon. Mr. Wilson

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sale of properties be

of St. John.

Hon. Mr. Grimme

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