

THE SIDNEY AND ISLANDS REVIEW

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EDITOR.

SIDNEY'S PROGRESS

The past few days, may be taken, as marking an epoch, in the growth and development of Sidney. It has been marked by the acquisition of two of the greatest needs of a modern town, and these two are, water, and light. Last Saturday the clear bright light, first shed its brilliant beams abroad and it is only a matter of a little adjustment until nearly every house in the town, is fitted with the modern illuminant. At present only a few meters have been available and they are all in use. More will arrive in a few days, if indeed they are not here before this in print, and then the installation will be complete. A great many houses, business places as well as private residences, have been fitted with the necessary wiring and they only await the arrival of the meters, to put the old fashioned kerosene lamp away into the store room.

The water has been turned into the pipes of the new system and is now available to all who may choose to connect their houses to it.

Wednesday of this week saw the opening of the new electric railway line, connecting Sidney with Victoria, and if perhaps Sidney itself is not connected, the service is so close to its gates as to be readily available. Meanwhile arrangements are in progress to bring the car actually into Sidney and it will not be many weeks before residents on Beacon Avenue are able to board the cars at their very doors.

The installation of the new railway opening up, as it does, severe competition with the old steam line, has acted as a powerful incentive to that road to get up and shake itself and open its sleepy old eyes, to the disgraceful state, into which its service has been allowed to fall, and the public may expect to see very rapid progress in the completion of such betterments as will render it more comfortable to travel on and more in accordance with modern ideas of locomotion.

Sidney may well be proud of these achievements, but there are many others great and small, to which allusion has been made in previous issues of this paper. Among the greater ones, the most urgent is a drainage scheme and this is closely followed by the necessity of a concrete or stone breakwater, which will at once make a safe and permanent wharf and also provide a shelter for the smaller craft of those visitors, who so often come to us from the neighboring islands, and who would come so much oftener and remain so much longer if this provision for the safety of their boats was made.

A perusal of the report of last Tuesday's meeting of the Board of Trade will show the great range of subjects dealt with by the Board and afford a measure of its great usefulness to the public of Sidney.

UNEXPLORED COUNTRY

The terrible fate of Captain Scott and his brave companions, whose memories will remain for ever green, though their bodies lie amid frozen whiteness, reminds us of the many unexplored territories which have yet to receive the impress of a human foot, and, doubtless, their toll of heroic victims.

On a rough estimate, about seven millions of square miles, or one-eighth of the total land surface of the world, are waiting to be discovered. Some 200,000 square miles of this lie in the Arctic regions of the North, but among the frozen tracts that form "Antarctica" in the South, where Scott and his gallant followers were penetrating, nearly 3,000,000 square miles are relegated to the sole use of whales, seals, penquins, petrels and other animal and

bird inhabitants of frozen homes.

It is true that human habitations could never be formed in such climes as these, but the scientific world is ever eager for the discoveries of explorers, and even among uninhabited districts their work is never wasted.

In Arabia there exists a tract of unexplored country nearly five times as large as Great Britain. It stretches from Mekka almost to the southeast coast, and is called Dahkna, or "The Dwelling of the Void." Probably no more desolate waste is to be found on the globe, for not a single river is estimated to flow throughout its entire 400,000 square miles. Imagine Germany and France combined, without river or stream, and you will gain some idea of the parched condition of Dahkna.

The Sahara is a blissful retreat by comparison.

Some authorities state that the whole desert is not worth the price of a good Malacca cane. Others give credence to the legend that treasures and hidden cities lie in the heart of the sands.

Of quite a different character are the enormous mountain-fastnesses of South America, which lie along the Upper Amazon and in the districts of Columbia and Peru. The celebrated treasure of Cuzco lies secreted among the Peruvian heights. Impenetrable forests, mountain jungles, and innumerable fever-spreading rivers hold the most intrepid adventurers at bay, to say nothing of carnivorous ants, malignant snakes, water-moccasins, and those most deadly of serpents, anacondas. During recent years over a dozen expeditions have been either wholly or partially wiped out in their efforts to wrestle with these regions.

Although the famous El Dorado which set the sixteenth century ablaze has never been unearthed, the country generally might fittingly be called El Dorado, from the rich minerals and priceless stones emanating therefrom.

Strange, wild-eyed men descend occasionally from the mountains, bringing wonderful fragments with them. But they refuse to act as guides to those who would accompany them back.

It is curious to realize that vast portions of our own Empire have never been seen by British eyes or the eyes of any white men. Nearly a quarter of Australia is still unexplored, mainly in the west, where the population averages only one person in about every twenty square miles. According to this basis, England's total population would work out at 2,500, and the Isle of Wight's at 7½.

New Guinea has baffled countless expeditions, though many are still trying to fight their way inland from the coast. Despite the fact that the interior of this island is practically a geographical blank, it is neatly divided on the maps between Britain, Germany and Holland. Among its products are birds of paradise, spices and cannibals.

Another particularly interesting district which has so far defied civilization lies secreted among the Himalaya Mountains. Rumor accounts that it is presided over by women, who are responsible for such rude laws as are necessary even in a lawless district, manage the affairs of state, and live in a luxury of inverted Mormonism by possessing four or five husbands apiece.

To the hill-men are relegated all the rough tasks and menial labors. "Mere man" is of small account beside these Himalayan amazons. But we may assume that, in due season, the men will rise to claim their vote.

The foregoing selection does not exhaust by any means the list of geographical blanks waiting to be filled. Before the Atlas Complete can lie on our shelves we must penetrate the darker haunts of Borneo, Arctic Canada, the Congo basin, the seven-hundred mile mountain range that stretches from Der Fur into the heart of Sahara, and numerous other spaces.

The regular service of the B. C. Electric Railway commenced yesterday, trains running on a three hour schedule.

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