



An Hour with the Editor



THE POLAR REGIONS

Several requests have come to the Colonist for an article, and one for a series of articles on the North Pole. In endeavoring to comply as far as possible with these requests, some things will have to be stated that have already been referred to on this page, and some other things that are elementary will have to be discussed, but the conversations one hears nowadays convey the impression that the popular conception of the Polar Regions is exceedingly indefinite.

If one could get far enough away from the earth at the North Pole to see the earth as far south as the Arctic Circle the impression that would be created in a general way would be of a great ice-covered ocean surrounded by land. If we begin on the western coast of Norway and following the Arctic Circle eastward around the globe we will find that for about half the distance it passes over land, except where it crosses the White Sea and one or two indentations of the Siberian coast line. At about 180 degrees from the starting point, or half-way round the world, Behring Strait would be reached, but this waterway is so narrow that it would hardly be noticed. Then for 40 degrees further the Circle would be over land, then it would cross Fox Channel to Baffin Land, then Davis Strait to Greenland; then across Greenland to the Atlantic Ocean, where it would lie across 42 degrees of water with Iceland just on the line. In other words, the Arctic Circle is about 300 degrees on land and 60 degrees on water. Degrees of longitude are meant. These of course vary in length proportionately to their distance from the Equator. On the other hand if one could get in a similar position above the South Pole, he would appear to be above a great mass of land, almost completely surrounded by water. Not more than 50 degrees of the Antarctic Circle are across land, and even there it is very close to the water.

Lieutenant Shackleton discovered great mountain ranges near the South Pole; apparently there are no such ranges near the North Pole or anywhere in North Polar regions, although there are Eskimo stories to the effect that high mountains can under favorable atmospheric conditions be seen north of the northern continental shore line of Canada. Thus the North Polar region appears to be a great though not deep depression, while the South Polar region seems to be chiefly a large and in some places lofty elevation. Greenland and the islands of the Canadian archipelago, which extend northward a long distance, or within six or seven degrees of the North Pole, find their complement in great water stretches that extend towards the South Pole. Speaking generally the hemisphere north of the Equator is a land hemisphere enclosing a polar basin of water, and the hemisphere south of the Equator a water hemisphere enclosing a polar land area. Owing to the difference in elevation the temperature at the South Pole is colder than at the North Pole, and owing to the facts above mentioned explorers at the South can map the region with an approach to accuracy, for the land marks are permanent, whereas at the North the region seems to be covered for the most part with ice, which moves more or less slowly. It may be interesting to add that the longest nearly continuous land line that can be drawn from North to South would start on Grant Land, which is west of Greenland and extends to about 84 degrees north and across the Canadian Archipelago, thence through North and South America and thence to Graham Land, which probably extends to the South Pole. A line from the North Pole to the South Pole would in round numbers be, on the route to be followed in such a case, about 9,000 miles long, all of which except about 700 miles would be on land.

There is probably a vast deal more ice in the South Polar region than in the North Polar. It is estimated that the South Polar ice-cap is thousands of feet in thickness. North Polar ice is comparatively thin. Sir George Nares invented the term "palaeocrystic" to describe the ice north of Greenland, by which he meant that it was of very ancient origin. The greatest amount of ice in the Arctic is found north of America, and it is due in large measure to the vast quantities of first water discharged in the Arctic Ocean by the Northern Canadian rivers.

There do not appear to be any traditions relative to the South Polar region; at least none are generally known. On the other hand, there are many which seem to relate to the North Pole. The best collection of these was made by Dr. Warren, at one time president of the University of Boston, who claimed to have demonstrated a number of exceedingly interesting propositions. Starting from the premise that, if the earth was once in a nebulous condition and became exceedingly hot in the process of solidification, as would necessarily be the case, he pointed out that the region around the Poles must have passed through every stage of temperature from extreme heat to the present cold. He argued that in the gradual process of cooling through which the earth has passed, the temperature at the Poles would diminish more rapidly than at the Equator. Consequently the earth would become fitted for life at the Poles sooner than anywhere else. Consequently also at a time when the circum-Polar region was first habitable, the Equatorial regions would be very hot. He collated all the traditions relating to the great mountain, which dominated the world, the Mount Meru of Indian and Chinese tradition, the Mount Olympus of the Greeks, the Mount

Zion of the Hebrews, and others, and showed the remarkable similarity of them all. In Hindu mythology, Mount Meru stood at the centre of the earth and around it the sun, moon and stars revolved. The Parsee traditions say that Meru was the original home of the race, which we call Aryan, and was a paradise. The fact that the several nations of antiquity located this mountain, which was the home of the gods, in their own territory raises no difficulty. Any one at all familiar with the mythology of the North American Indians knows that they locate the various incidents in their own immediate vicinity. Thus the Indians of the Olympic Peninsula assign the great tragedy, which overwhelmed mankind, to a valley in the Olympic Mountains; the Snoqualmie Indians say it took place in the valley of that river; the Millicutes say it took place on the St. John river in New Brunswick; the Indians, whose story Longfellow has preserved in "Hiawatha," say it occurred at the headwaters of the Mississippi. So with the Deluge traditions, each race that has preserved it localizes it. One can hardly believe that an intelligent people like the Greeks would suppose a minor elevation like Mount Olympus to be the home of the gods. Therefore, argues Dr. Warren, the local mountains, referred to as the home of the gods, simply represent the great original mountain, which dominated the land in which the human race first dwelt. This mountain was the earliest home of the race, and upon it mankind made greater progress than in regions further south, which became habitable only at a later date. The present condition of the world shows that a higher civilization is reached in temperate than in equatorial regions, and, indeed, in Africa, under the Equator itself, we find the lowest type of humanity in the dwarf races. The inhabitants of the regions south of the World-Mountain, or, in other words, the people who lived outside of Eden, in what the Book of Genesis calls the Land of Nod, would look upon the dwellers upon the Mountain as superior beings. Here we get a possible explanation of the reference in the Fifth Chapter of Genesis to the Sons of God and the daughters of men. The former found the latter fair to look upon, just as the people of temperate climes become enamored of the languishing beauty of the daughters of warmer climes. Hence also we see how the people of the extra-Edenic region, knowing of the existence of the superior race on the one side, and of the intense equatorial heat on the other, might in later days, when the Great Catastrophe came, evolve a myth of a heaven peopled by gods above them and an inferno of heat and demons beneath them.

Upon such a world there fell the Great Catastrophe, under whose shadow we live to-day, and the recollection of which finds a place in the mythology of nearly all mankind. What was this catastrophe? Mythology suggests that it was the sinking of the great Polar Mountain into the sea, an event followed by a period of intense cold, before which the few survivors fled southward to a warmer climate, carrying with them little except the traditions of the vanished era. In process of time these traditions would be greatly distorted and become mere myths. Earthly potentates would become gods; stories of intermarriages would supply a vast fund of mythological anecdotes, and in time the tales would be assigned to nearby localities. We shall see in a subsequent article what light geology casts upon the possibility of this being true.

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

One of the oddest things in everyday life is the current notion that a man, who is unable to keep control of his appetites and passions, is a much stronger individual mentally than one who takes a contrary course. A city minister, addressing the City Council recently, spoke of "weak-minded parsons." As he was one of the class, whom he thus described, the presumption is that he spoke sarcastically; but the fact that such a sarcasm should be employed shows the currency of the idea above referred to. It is not a particularly difficult thing to give rein to one's desires; it is often very difficult to avoid doing so. Of course when men reach middle age, and have their characters formed, no special effort is needed to live an orderly, temperate life; but great strength of character is needed to avoid excesses in youth, which may lead to very serious consequences in after life. Some people, in fact, if one may judge from what is said upon the streets, we might say, very many people, think that those who abstain from such practices as promiscuous drinking, gambling and other pursuits not regarded as moral, are of an inferior type, as though the best development of mankind consisted in the practice of habits that tend towards disaster if carried to excess. Frequently men speak of "church people" as though to be associated with a church and to profess openly a belief in God and Christianity constituted an infallible sign of mental weakness. There never was a greater mistake. The young fellow, who practises a robust Christianity, is a far stronger type than one who yields to various forms of dissipation, and his course calls for infinitely more true manliness.

Why are things wrong? Some may say that things are wrong which we are commanded by the Deity not to do, or omissions to do what He has commanded. This is not a very satisfactory answer, and would not convince any one, who questioned the existence of a Deity or was disposed to doubt the possibility of

His giving commandments to men. There is another answer. Speaking of the origin of ethics in a previous article, the suggestion was made that the difference between right and wrong would naturally arise out of our duties to each other. What is the object of life? Unless it is the best development of ourselves as individuals and of the community of which we form a part, it is difficult to suggest any respect in which we are different from the brute creation. If this is correct, then what tends to prevent it is wrong. Human society is founded upon the family relation; therefore acts hostile to the best development of the family relation are wrong. Habits calculated to impair men mentally or physically are wrong. It was not necessary for any Commandments to be given on Mount Sinai or anywhere else to make these things wrong. It is not difficult to suggest circumstances under which the making of a bet is of itself not wrong; it is easier to suggest circumstances under which it would be very wrong. There is no doubt whatever that on the whole betting does harm. Therefore the man who refuses to bet, because he believes betting is a bad thing for a community, is certainly not displaying weakness of character, but possibly quite the reverse. So with other habits that could be specified. Abstinence from them on principle may exhibit strength of purpose, and probably does in the great majority of cases.

Just one more suggestion. Let us suppose that all men practised to excess the habits which some men practise to excess. How long would society exist under such circumstances? How long would civilization be preserved? How long would the family relation be maintained? How long would material progress be possible? There can be no doubt what the answer to these questions must be, and in view of it we may well ask if it will be seriously contended that those things which are more and preserve all we value most highly are indicative of weakness, and those which tend to destroy the best achievement of the race prove strength of character. If the latter proposition be true, then the human race is preserved by its weakness, and the doctrine of the survival of the fittest becomes absurd.

LODI

The career of Napoleon Bonaparte forms so large a part of European history that, in telling the story of famous battles, it is necessary to speak of several in which he took part. As in the previous articles of this series, the details of the conflicts will not be given at any length. At this day people are not so much concerned with the manner in which armies were handled or the deeds of personal prowess accomplished by individuals, but rather with the causes and consequences of the battles. The fight at Lodi was a brilliant affair, not comparable in respect to the number of men engaged with some of Napoleon's later battles, but it is notable for two reasons. One of them is that it gained for France the possession of Lombardy, and the other is that it was the beginning of Napoleon's meteoric career—a battle wherein he displayed qualities of personal courage, quickness of decision and impetuous action, which won for him the unbounded admiration of the French people, and made his subsequent achievements possible. The battle of Lodi was fought on May 10, 1796, and the opponents of the French were the Austrians. Napoleon was at this time not quite twenty-seven years of age.

Consequent upon the Revolution, and through the influence of William Pitt, a powerful coalition was formed against France. The powers acting in harmony were England, Prussia, Russia, Austria, Spain and Portugal. To this the answer of France was to raise an army of 300,000 men. In February, 1793, France declared war against England, and the allies began active operations on the French frontier. English troops did not participate in it, but England paid the expenses of most of the Continental powers. It was in this series of campaigns that the French hussars captured the Dutch fleet at the Texel. The vessels were held fast in the ice and the cavalry charged across it and captured the ships. All France was fired with the utmost enthusiasm on learning of this remarkable and unprecedented achievement. At the close of 1794 all the powers withdrew from the coalition except Austria, and in the following year internal peace having been established in France, the Directory resolved upon a great campaign against Austria. Three armies were despatched with orders to make their way to Vienna. One of them was commanded by Jourdan, another by Moreau and the third by Napoleon. The latter was given charge of the operations in Italy, where a desultory campaign had been carried on for two years under Scherer. He began operations with astonishing rapidity. Lodi was the first of a series of remarkable victories, and in the course of a few weeks he was supreme in Northern Italy. He then advanced with the utmost haste, hoping to effect a junction with Moreau in Bavaria. The Austrian resistance was stubborn. Moreau and Jourdan were repulsed, and Napoleon was compelled to confine his operations to Italy, where he met with complete success, eventually capturing Mantua and forcing the surrender of the great Austrian General Wurmser. These achievements, in the face of the failure of the other leaders, led the people of France to look upon him as their one successful commander, and thereafter his will became practically the law of the country. In the following year he resumed his attack upon Austria, and his

outposts advanced to within an easy distance of Vienna. Then the Emperor in panic sued for peace, which Napoleon, absolutely without any authority, granted, and this young soldier of twenty-eight was in a position to dictate to the cabinets of Continental Europe. Even Pitt felt the situation to be embarrassing, and he made serious proposals for peace. These, though advantageous to France, were refused by the Directory, which was imbued with the idea of converting all Europe into a republic. There remained only one enemy, whom France feared, and that was England. Napoleon was now fairly started upon his splendid scheme of universal dominion, but how it was checked will have to be told in another article. In the year 1798, so favorable had the course of events been, that he seemed justified in anticipating unlimited triumph. In that year he resolved to crush England.

REIGNING HOUSES

The reigning family of Sweden is of modern origin. The present King is great-grandson of Charles XIV John, who previous to his elevation to the throne was Jean Baptiste Jules Bernadotte, one of Napoleon's marshals. Bernadotte was born in 1764 and was son of a French lawyer. He served with distinction under Napoleon, taking a conspicuous part at Austerlitz and Wagram, but he never was a favorite of the Emperor who appeared to be jealous of him. He was chosen Crown Prince of Sweden in 1810 by the Diet of that country, the reigning King having been childless. The only conditions attached to his election were that he should be baptized a Protestant, which was done, and he then took the names Charles John. His official title is as above given. By intermarriage with royal and princely houses the Bernadottes have become almost pure Tuetonic in blood.

The reigning family of Denmark is also a late comer into the circle of royalties. Christian IX, father of the present King, was appointed to the succession of the crown in 1852 by the Treaty of London. He was son of Duke William of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg and the Princess Louise of Hesse-Cassel. The Princess Louise was from the ancient royal house of Denmark, which came to the throne in 1448. The reigning families of Greece and Norway are of the Danish house, the King of Greece being a brother of the King of Denmark and the King of Norway being his son.

The reigning family of the Netherlands (Holland) is of the House of Orange. It is descended from a German Count Walram, who lived in the Eleventh Century. One of the Count's descendants married the sister of the childless Prince of Orange, and the title of prince passed to his descendants. One of them married the daughter of James II of England, and reigned in that country with his wife after the expulsion of James. The Netherlands was a republic, but the House of Orange attained great influence, its head was declared Stadtholder and the office was made hereditary. The royal title was not conferred upon them until 1815.

Belgium was declared a hereditary monarchy in 1831, when it was separated from the Netherlands. Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg was chosen King. The Saxe-Coburg princes have already been referred to in connection with the Prince Consort of England.

One of the most remarkable of all the reigning houses of Europe was the Bourbons, although none of its representatives now occupies a throne. This family is descended from Hugh Capet, who was elected King of France in 987. The name comes from a castle situated near the centre of France. The Bourbons gave Kings to Navarre, France, Spain and Naples, besides attaining to many dukedoms and countships. The Legitimists in France look upon the present representative of one of the branches of the family as their lawful sovereign.

The Birth of the Nations

XXXVL
(N. de Bertrand Lugrin)

THE SWISS

There is an old French saying relative to the Swiss, which in itself is the highest meed of praise, "Le Suisse est le Sapin sort freres." In the old days the tree furnished them entirely with their fuel, material for all their building, and from its fibres they manufactured many necessary articles, in fact the peasants depended upon it for a living, but apart from its commercial value, they have always revered the tree for the qualities it seems to them to stand for, integrity, indomitable strength, and a nameless courage. So, inspired by the example of their tree, they have tried to live their lives accordingly, and the world is their judge of how well or how ill they have succeeded. We know that the Swiss soldiers have a name for unequalled valour, and that in the past, some of the most brilliant battles have been won largely through their instrumentality. We know, too, that their country, socially and politically, is the admiration of all, and its institutions worthy of wide emulation. There is not anywhere a more picturesque or a more industrious class than the peasants of Switzerland, and their many-characteristic customs appeal to

our sense of the fitness of things, for they exactly suit the quaintness of their environment and the natural loveliness of the surroundings. For instance a recent traveller related the manner in which she was greeted in each village where she stopped while on her walking tour, when the peasants came out to meet her with garlands of flowers, which they hung about her, making her welcome with the sweetest courtesy. An innate sense of delicacy and refinement seems to belong to the very humblest of them and a sojourn among them is full of delightful novelty. The brightest side of the picture is naturally shown to the visitor, and it is a very bright and beautiful side. When we read the history of this "great little" country we are not surprised at its results in the producing of the fine race of men and women of modern Switzerland.

The earliest information we have regarding the Swiss people tells us that the country was inhabited primarily by two races, the Helvetii and the Rhaeti. The Helvetii are supposed to have been a branch of the great Celtic family. Their government was probably that common among the early people, namely tribal, the tribesmen forming a number of communities consisting of a head, his kinsmen, slaves and other retainers. As the primitive political institutions of these early races have been dealt with at length in these pages it will be unnecessary to go again into detail.

The early history shows the country to have been the scene of constant invasions. Augustus, the Roman Emperor, first entered Switzerland and subdued the inhabitants. After him the Germans made great inroads, the Alamanni taking possession of the land east of the Aar, while the Burgundians settled in western parts. The Franks were the next conquering invaders, and following them came a fierce Teutonic tribe called the Ostrogoths, who made however little headway as the Franks proved more than their equal in warfare and for some years ruled the country and its diversified population ably and well.

About the fifth century Christianity was introduced among the Burgundians who were speedily converted. The new faith was not accepted by the Alamanni, however, until nearly two centuries later, when their conversion was brought about by the famous little band of monks who had begun their missionary work under Saint Columba, and who were so energetic and zealous in the cause they advocated that they were soon successful in convincing the Alamanni of the falseness of their pagan gods, and instilling into their minds a profound respect for Christianity.

From this period we will pass over the intervening centuries to 1264 when the rule of the Hapsburg counts began and became for Switzerland a very burdensome and tyrannical despotism. Goaded to rebellion the people began their noteworthy struggle for independence, and on August 1, 1291, the men of the Forest Cantons, Uri Schewyz and Unterwalden formed an "Everlasting League" for the purpose of defending themselves against their oppressors. It is to this period that the famous story of William Tell belongs. The Austrian bailiffs abused their offices to work hardships upon the peasants, and to commit many atrocities. One version of the story tells us that it was a ridiculous custom of one Gessler to demand homage paid to a hat of which he had placed upon a pole and carried by one of his servants before him. Tell, having some self-respect, refused to take any notice of the hat, and Gessler immediately made him a prisoner and would have dealt out the maximum punishment only that Tell's friends were so many he was afraid to go to such an extreme at once. He therefore offered him a chance for his life, and we all know what a chance it was and the pretty story the poet has made of the incident. Another account, however, relates that Tell, having been stirred up to a state of righteous indignation upon learning of the bailiff's evil deeds, excited his friends to take a stand against him. The latter learning of Tell's doings, seized and bound him, and was proceeding to take him by boat to his castle on the Lake of Lucerne, when a terrible storm arose, the boat became unmanageable, and William Tell, renowned for his enormous strength and his skill as a sailor, was released from his bonds upon condition that he would take them safely to land. He was as good as his word; but when he had steered the boat to a shelf of rock and all were on shore, he immediately shot the bailiff with an arrow from his crossbow, and then went back to Uri. Once among his friends again he incited them to open rebellion and the great battle of Morgarten was the result in which the Swiss were successful.

Wars with Austria followed in all of which the men of the evergrowing "Everlasting League" were gloriously triumphant. In the last year of the fifteenth century, Maximilian I was defeated in six engagements when he endeavored once more to bring Switzerland under the jurisdiction of the Holy Roman Empire. After this final victory began the true independence of the country.

MORE IMPORTANT

Old Gent—Why are you biting that sixpence I gave you?
Newsboy—To make sure it's not a bad one.

Old Gent—Don't you know that money swarms with microbes? Aren't you afraid of getting a bad mouth?
Newsboy—No, sir; not so much as I am of getting a bad tanner.

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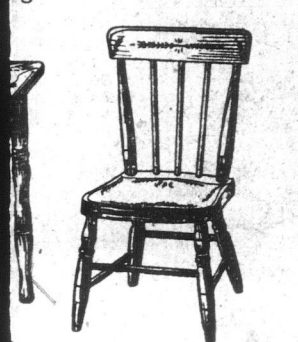
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