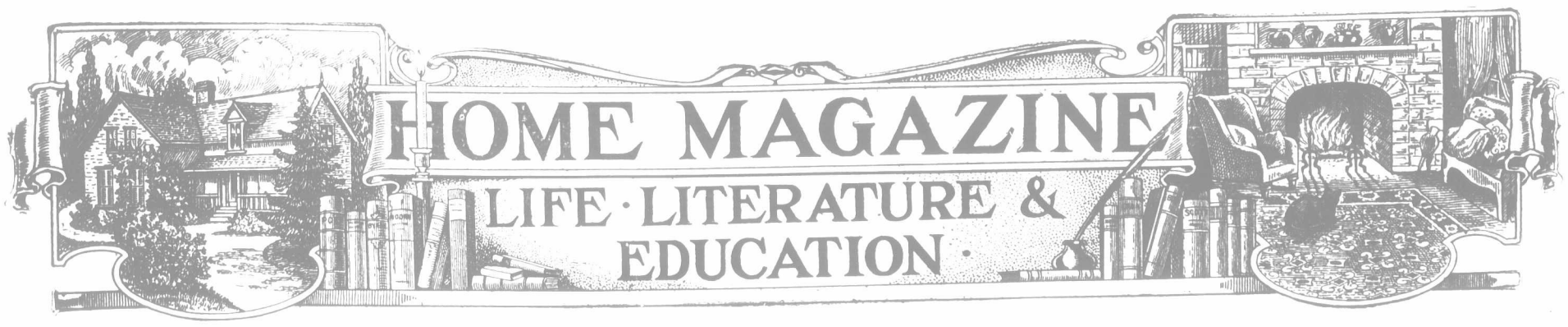

Who found the North Pole—Cook or Peary? At date of writing popular interest in the squabble still threatens to submerge present interest in the real importance of the discovery itself, and newspaper writers are still rejoicing in a juicy subject for big head-lines and flourish of capitals. So far the Royal Geographical Society of London has espoused Peary's cause, wiring him congratulations, with never a word to Cook. The Royal Geographical Society of Denmark, on the other hand, have pinned their confidence to the latter, and have presented him with the gold medal of their organization. In the meantime, both have landed in America, Cook in New York and Peary in Cape Breton, and each has been met by a concourse of admirers and supporters.

In the midst of all the wrangle and adulation and vituperation, it may, perhaps, occur to some temperate mind to believe it not impossible that each of these men may have reached the long-sought goal. Mayhap a philosopher here or there may even be questioning what difference it really makes as to which of them has reached it first. In either case, seemingly insuperable difficulties have been overcome. In either case the same persistence and courage and daring have been necessary, the same credit due.

Doubtless it would be a fine thing for a man to be able to say that he was the first—the very first—to attain the North Pole, yet in the pages of history the names of these men, should their claims be substantiated, must live together. The remarkable coincidence that two explorers should reach the "Big Nail" within a few months of each other must ensure that, and add an additional spice to the record of the doings that must mark the year 1909 as a second annus mirabilis in the history of the world.

Regrettable as the controversy is, however, the prudently inclined are hugging to themselves a substantial grain of comfort, viz., that the chief participants in it are fellow countrymen. Otherwise there might have been reason to fear the bugbear commonly and vaguely and ominously designated "complications."

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An esteemed contemporary, in a comparison of British and German industrial conditions, notes, whether correctly or not, that Germany is better conditioned industrially than Britain, the German laborers being better housed and more skilled. "There is inveterate stolidity and immobility among the agricultural laborers in Britain," the comment runs. "The man with the hoe has continued to be the man with the hoe, and nothing more. . . What Great Britain needs just now, more than anything else, if she is to escape the doom of the unfit to survive, is industrial efficiency and technical training." British Nation, on the other hand, descries a forward movement among the masses, and the miasma of decay among the aristocracy. "But it is easy to see," it argues, "that, on the whole, the main body of the British people has effected a more significant improvement than the classes familiarly known as 'their betters.' The aristocracy has declined, rather than advanced, and the sons and grandsons of our 'captains of industry' are by no means as good as their fathers. How much of the pessimism which Lord Curzon rebukes is the fruit of mere idleness and over-pleasuring, of life ended for serious pursuits in the fifties, or never begun on lines which the rational intelligence of man can approve; of vulgar contempt for trade; of incapacity even to make money; or to force any kind of meaning out of the riddle of the world?"

It is clear to those who have been watching the trend of the times overseas that the great middle-class is slowly but surely marching to its own. On the day upon which John Burns entered the Cabinet that was apparent, even to the aforetime skeptic, and since then, the growing influence of the Laborites in the British Parliament has been a factor to be reckoned with. At the same time, it is also true that, among the laborers there has been too much of the "man-with-the-hoe" element, a description which anyone who has ever seen a print of Millet's "Man With the Hoe," or read Edwin Markham's poem on the same, must fully appreciate. An all-too-general intemperance has most ostensibly contributed much to this condition, but there have been other influences which will take more than mere technical training to eradicate. It is very common to hear Old Country folk who have set up their homes in Canada say that they will not go back because the poor are "kept down in the Old Country." These naturalized Canadians have got a whiff of the bracing air of democracy in their nostrils. They have learned to feel themselves people of as much consequence as the next, and they realize that there is a chance for their children to become among the highest in the land. Such a consciousness puts life and spirit into any man, and until old conditions and ideals have been so changed in England as to make similar opportunities possible within her borders, there is little hope that the laborer may readily become anything more than "the man with the hoe," however the middle-class, the next stratum, may advance.

To be a man, not merely a laborer, putting in as little work for as much money as he can get, the man with the hoe, or, otherwise, must have the consciousness of his manhood. He must realize that he is not merely a machine; and to reach such a realization, he must feel that he is on some sort of footing of equality with his fellow men. He must know that education, mental advancement, recognition, are his and his children's, for the effort, and possibly the felicity of living on his own bit of land, and hewing out his own independent home. With such a possibility, he is likely to reach out for technical education, wherever he can get it, instead of waiting to have it thrust upon him, an operation more than likely to be received with indifference and its unsatisfactory results.

In a well-directed democracy surely lies the guarantee of a greater industrial efficiency and a greater contentment for Great Britain, rather than in mere technical training, which, admirable in itself, to be truly effective, needs the motive spirit behind it, rather than the compelling influence from above. In the contentment, the efficiency, the inspiration, that can come only from a wise democracy, must surely lie that fidelity, that elevation of the people at large, which can alone insure any land from the doom of the unfit.

If readers of "The Farmer's Advocate and Home Magazine" would appreciate the problems and possibilities of Great Britain in East Africa, let them peruse "My African Journey," by Right Hon. Winston Churchill, a bright and informing book of travel. He discerns in the Kingdom of Uganda undreamed-of resources awaiting development, the greatest of all those vast regions. This word of counsel he adds: "It is no use trying to lay hold of tropical Africa with naked fingers. Civilization must be armed with machinery if she is to subdue these wild regions to her authority: Iron roads, not jogging porters; tireless engines, not weary men; cheap power, not cheap labor; steam and skill, not sweat and fumbling; there lies the only way to tame the jungle—more jungles than one."

People, Books and Doings.

The enormous sale of his book, "Three Men in a Boat," is a constant source of surprise to Jerome K. Jerome. "I have written books that appeared to me more clever," he says, "books that have appeared to me more humorous. But it is as the author of 'Three Men in a Boat (to Say Nothing of the Dog)' that the public persists in remembering me." One million copies of the book have been sold in the United States alone, although Jerome has reaped no pecuniary benefit therefrom, owing to the fact that the book was published before the Copyright Convention. It has also been translated into every European language; also into some of those of Asia.

"The Hermit of Rotheneuf," or Abbe Fourre, to call him by his real name, has his home near St. Malo, where he has sculptured the rocks for miles around. On all sides are standing or reclining figures, some of them isolated, others in groups.

The entire face of the cliff seems alive with saints, devils and fantastic animals, says The Wide World Magazine. Though you may not notice all at first glance, you quickly discover that there is hardly a square yard of rock that has not been carved to resemble some human or animal form.

The natural irregularity of the surface of the rocks has been utilized by the sculptor in a most clever manner. Here he has seen a suggestion for a head; there a long granite boulder that could be converted into a couchant saint, with a long beard and a curious headdress; and there, again, a series of irregularly-shaped rocks that wanted little change to turn them into a family group—that of a fisherman of Rotheneuf, his wife and their five children, one of whom is lying on its mother's lap.

You will notice, too, that a fish bearing a certain resemblance to a shark appears beneath the rock on which the fisherman is sitting, and that by the position of its snout it would seem to be about to devour the whole family. The religious element in the Abbe Fourre's compositions is strong, as would be expected.

There are saints and angels innumerable, two or three altars, and at least one representation of the Almighty. The Abbe has by no means limited himself to church and Biblical subjects. Sometimes he has taken his inspiration from local history. One of the most ambitious compositions represents scenes in the lives of the lords of Rotheneuf.

Notes on the Introduction of Steam Navigation.

[From an old "Journal of the Board of Arts and Manufactures for U. C.," dated 1862.]

Mr. Dyer stated, at a recent meeting of the Institution of Civil Engineers, that this subject, being of great importance, had engaged many able pens in tracing the origin of the several inventions and experiments that preceded the final triumph of steam power over that of wind for navigating ships; each writer claiming the honor of priority for his own country. It may be useful to state the order in which and the parties by whom the principal attempts were made to realize that object. Several letters lately appeared in the Times, and were thence transferred to the pages of the Engineer, giving a graphic account of the "first steamer in English waters, the Margery, built at Dumbarton by the late William Denny, for William Anderson, of Glasgow, and passed through the canal to the Forth, and thence to the Thames, where she arrived on the 23rd January, 1815." On the authority of Mr. Anderson, then, this date is fixed when the first steamboat was seen on English waters. The first steamboat, the Claremont, was started as a regular packet on the Hudson River in the spring of 1807; so that the first steamer seen on the American waters was fifty-five years ago, a lapse of time that should now insure a calm view of the steps that led to this first actual success in steam navigation. It will be shown that, by a long course of persevering labors, the honor of that success must be conceded to Robert Fulton, by whom it was achieved. Whilst admitting the merits of other ingenious men long engaged in the same pursuit, it is clearly proved that, either from good fortune or by the exercise of superior judgment and skill, the race was won by eight years' priority of steam navigation, by Fulton, on the Hudson River. In 1793, Mr. Fulton sent his plan for a steamboat to Lord Stanhope, who approved of and thanked him for the communication. Shortly after Fulton went to Paris, and made experiments on the French waters, with the chain floats, the duck's-foot paddles, the screw or smoke-jack propellers, and with the paddle wheels, to which latter he gave the preference, and constructed a boat with them in 1803, which was the model adopted in building the Claremont in 1806. Mr. Dyer has sailed in the Claremont, and remembers the sensation created by her appearance, and the high admiration bestowed on the author of so great an enterprise. That sensation in 1807 was precisely the same as the Margery created among the vessels on the Thames in 1815. All attempts at steam navigation were fruitless before the invention of Mr. Watt's steam engine, his engine being the first that could be usefully applied to rotative machines on land, and, therefore, for propelling ships. The principal claims put forth by other inventors of steamboats are the following: In France, the Marquis de Jauffroy constructed a steamboat at Lyons in 1782, "with paddle-wheels," but that this boat did not succeed is obvious, because she was not heard of until 1816, when the first Fulton boat was started to run on the Seine. In 1783, Daniel Bernoulli proposed a plan which consisted of forcing water through a tube, out at the stern of the boat. This scheme has been tried many times since, but fails on account of the defective principle of applying the force. Endless chains, with float propellers, have been many times tried, and have failed on the same ground. In 1795 Lord Stanhope made experiments with a boat on the Thames,