

THE QUEST OF THE POLE

It's not a new idea, this proposition of reaching the North Pole through the air. The thought first came to S. A. Andree, a Swedish aeronaut, in 1895. Andree that year built a balloon for his projected trip to "the top of the world," but at the eleventh hour decided that the aircraft was not suited for that trip, and began to construct a larger bag.

Two years later, on July 11, 1897, Andree and his balloon sailed toward the frozen North from Spitzbergen. Late that evening he dropped a message to the effect that he was on his way. That was the last heard of him. The aeronaut and his gas bag disappeared in the insatiable maw of the Arctic, which for more than two thousand years has been exacting a heavy toll in the lives of men who have defied it in their quest for its secrets.

Plans have been made by the Germans to rediscover the North Pole with the aid of a Zeppelin. Propositions have been advanced to explore the Arctic regions with the help of airplanes. But the forthcoming trip of the navy aviators finds the mysterious reaches which Peary conquered still unvisited by aircraft of any type. Before them lies a glory second only to that which came to Peary.

The lure of the Arctic—the call of the frozen North—have drawn many a daring navigator to his death. The ancients always wondered—what lies there to the north? Homer conceived a northland divided into two great sections—one where it always was night and another where night never came. The popular conception of the North among the Greeks of the pre-Christian era was a land where men lived in peace and plenty, where the sun never set.

That the old Greeks were not far from the truth was pointed out only several years ago by Vilhjalmer Stefansson, the Arctic explorer, who in his book "The Friendly North" tears away some of the veils of mystery and clouds of misunderstanding about the Arctic lands. According to Stefansson, the vast empire of the ice king is a land of promise and plenty, with mineral resources unmatched anywhere else—a land with pleasant summers and none too dreary winters, of dazzling days and alluring nights.

Stefansson has been fortunate. He has seen the Far North smile. He has seen a friendly Arctic. But most of his predecessors met a deadly, treacherous Far North—a relentless, unconquerable Arctic which killed with a chill even as Moloch killed with his fire. They have met a land which blinded with snow glare, a land which demanded everything and gave nothing—a defiant vastness of ice and glaciers into which they had to bring their own food or perish. And perish many of them did.

Tis a remarkable thing, this lure of the Arctic. It is as powerful now as it was before Peary attained his goal fourteen years ago. Men always seek the seemingly unattainable. Men always strive to conquer nature and her allies. Since Eve bit into the apple, the quest of the absolute and the unquenchable desire for the forbidden have been strong in the minds of humans. Navigators, adventurers, scientists, sportsmen—men sick of the plaudits of civilization and men thirsting for the plaudits of men—men of all nations—have been fighting their way into the playground of the frost furies and great have been their successes. But many have been the failures.

The sagas of the Arctic are full of tragedies such as that which befel Sir John Franklin, the English explorer who sailed away into the North in 1846 and never was seen or heard from again. While Sir John failed his expedition gave the greatest impetus to Arctic exploration and led to the greatest advances towards the goal which was to succumb to Peary's indomitable courage. It was the ill-fated Franklin expedition which developed interest in the quest of the Pole in the United States and in 1850 led to the sailing of the Greely expedition.

Ship after ship was sent to the relief of Franklin. Franklin never was found, but the searchers discovered new lands up there, new seas, new bays, new races of men, animals hitherto unknown. Sir James Ross, who commanded the first Franklin relief expedition, discovered the Arctic Highlanders, a race of Farthest North Eskimos. Stefansson came back with stories of the blonde Eskimo, a new race which fought the dangers of the North valiantly, but succumbed to common measles without even a chance for life. A strange land, this Arctic empire!

The dramatic tale of the fight for the Pole stretches over a period of 2234 years. Even as far back as 35 B.C. the ancients reached out for the secrets of the Northland. In that year Pytheas, a Greek, sailed from Massalia, now Marseilles, and got as far as the north of Norway. "There is a land called Thule up there, with ice and strange men and peculiar ani-

mals," wrote Pytheas when he came back.

This brave Greek from Massalia, in the modern vernacular, "started something." In 825 A. D., according to the monk Dicuil, a body of Irish monks set sail for unknown lands in the North and discovered Iceland.

The first real Arctic expedition came about the year 870, and is told about by King Alfred in his translation of Orosius. The Norwegian Ottar, a seaman brave and bold, went forth into Arctic, and on his return recounted his adventures and discoveries to Alfred. Ottar rounded North Cape, sailed up the Murman coast and discovered the White Sea. Ottar had no steamship, no ice breakers, no pemmican, no gum drops. A hardy Norseman was Ottar.

In 1070, while William and his Normans were at war with the English after the battle of Hastings, the Norsemen already were trying hard to subjugate the Arctic. Adam of Bremen sets down in his writings that the Norse King Harold Haardraade made a trip into the unknown spaces and saw many strange sights.

The Lorelei of the Far North has sent out her bewitching and deathly call to the adventurers of all nations. The chart of Arctic explorations lists Italians and Portuguese, Dutch and Germans, Greek and Americans. The first Portuguese to make the jaunt into the fountainhead of chills was Vasqueanes Cortes-Real, whose advance really was phenomenal.

It is very likely that Cortes-Real reached Hudson Strait. He sailed "twenty leagues into it," according to the writings of the time, "without all impediments of ice; but their victuals failing them, they returned back agayne with joy." Many an expedition after years and many found that they found its victuals failing it in could not "return back agayne with joy."

As early as 1858 the story of Arctic exploration turns up the forerunner of Dr. Cook, the self-appointed "discoverer" of the North Pole, whose tale startled the world in 1909, just before Peary got to the top of the earth. In 1858 Nicolò Zeno of Venice announced the discovery of what he called Frisland, a mythical Arctic country. Zeno got up elaborate maps of this fake empire and fooled many wise navigators, who followed the spurious charts and believed that they had discovered the land which Zeno had located by the mental and absent treatment method.

Martin Frobisher, the English navigator, whose heroism has left its imprint on this continent, reached Baffin Land. Nine years later John Davis, the most scientific seaman of that day, sailed away on the first of three voyages into the Arctic. After Frobisher and Davis came Britons and Scandinavians aplenty, all determined to reach farther into this mystic land.

Those were the days of heroic adventure and great discoveries and explorations. The nations of Europe were reaching out for new lands to claim, new people to conquer, and even the icy North was not beyond their desires—and their avarice, too. For it was spread about Europe that the Arctic country was full of gold.

In 1819 the modern era of Arctic discovery and exploration was ushered in with the first of Parry's three voyages. That same year his friend, Captain Franklin, started for the North by a different route. But the Pole could not be conquered.

In 1846 came the first great expedition, one of the most famous of all the Arctic voyages and the most tragic in the history of the quest of the Pole. Sir John Franklin sailed the Advance and the Resolute, Lieut. de Haven, Lieut. Griffith and Dr. E. K. Kane as a relief expedition.

American expeditions came thick and fast after that. Dr. Kane sailed in 1853. Dr. I. I. Hayes in 1860. Charles Hall in 1860 and Lieut. Schwanke of the U. S. Army in 1879. The Schwanke expedition was an official relief party of the United States Government, for the search for Franklin still was being conducted.

In 1879, James Gordon Bennett, owner of the New York Herald, outfitted the schooner, Jeanette, under Lieut. De Long, and sent her on her ill-fated voyage. She was manned by men from the United States Navy. The Jeanette was crushed in the ice floes and most of her crew, including De Long, were lost.

The year 1882 saw an international conference which established Arctic stations for observations. In July 1886, Lieut. Robert E. Peary sailed on his first voyage into the Arctic zone. In 1888, Dr. Nansen sailed toward the Pole, but never reached it. Dr. Nansen lived to return and tell the tale. He conceived the idea that if a ship were allowed to drift off there in the North it would drift over the Pole. So in 1893 he started on his courageous and valuable drift in the Fram, in which he made discoveries of high scientific value.

In 1900 the Abruzzi expedition with Captain Cagni at the head in place of the Duke, who had been frost bitten, reached beyond 86 degrees north latitude, and in 1901 Dr. Roald Amundsen set out for the pole. Still the goal could not be reached. Men said that it never would be attained.

"One-half the world doesn't know why the other half fights."

"The horse is a very noble quadruped, but when he is angry he will not do so. He is ridden on the spinal cord by the bridle, and sadly the driver places his boots on the stirrups and divides his lower limbs across the saddle and drives his animal to the meadow."

"He has a long mouth and his head is attached to the trunk by a long protuberance called the neck. He has four legs, two are in the front side, and two are afterwards. These are the weapons on which he runs, and also defends himself by extending those in the rear in a parallel direction towards his foe, but this he does only when in a vexatious mood."

"His footing is generally grasses and grains. He is also useful to take on his back a man or woman as well as some cargo. He has power to run as fast as he could. He has got no sleep at night time, and always stands at night time, and always standing awoken."

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138

In 1898 Peary began the series of systematic serious efforts which, at the end of twenty-three years of hardship and heroism brought him to the Pole. Lord Northcliffe presented to the Arctic in a previous expedition. Peary persisted. The voyage in the Windward failed, but the expedition in the Roosevelt brought success in 1909.

The North Pole has been reached by water. Peary found that the top of the world was a vast ice field and that there was no land there. Now the Shenandoah will seek to conquer this task by air. And perhaps the men of the Shenandoah will find what Peary did not find—a great continent beyond the peak of Asia.

BOMBAY BOY DESCRIBES HORSE IN WEIRD ESSAY

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The death of the French engineer, M. Alexandre Eiffel, recalls that his name is inseparably connected with the tower in Paris which he erected to a height of 984 feet. There is no other structure anywhere which stands so high, be it pyramid, dome, skyscraper or obelisk. The tower was erected 35 years ago. It is now used as a wireless station, but it was built originally to help M. Eiffel in his engineering experiments. In the realm of research work M. Eiffel accomplished a great deal, and this was particularly true in his study of aerodynamics. He conducted wind-tunnel experiments and investigated the theory of plane surfaces and of propellers. He became a force behind the development of the aeroplane, although not widely or popularly recognized as such. In the early days of aeroplane evolution he collaborated with Belriot, the Voison brothers, Mr. Handley Page and the Wright brothers. As an engineer he was famous all over the world, although the Eiffel Tower, which has brought his name within the knowledge of so many, is frequently regarded in a spirit of frivolity.

Man is made of dust; and if he doesn't remain dry in this moral age, his name is mud.

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Among suggestions affecting a reduction in taxation is that of Sir Joseph Flavelle who proposes that the Dominion Income tax should be cut in two. He says there are many enterprising men now refraining from going into new ventures by reason of the excessive income tax they must bear in each new enterprise they undertake. "Stagnation," says Sir Joseph, "is threatened unless a new system of taxation is devised." It is a sign of coming relief in terms of reduced taxation. Governments must ultimately realize that nothing will contribute more to prosperity than a lessening of the financial burden which the people have to bear in order that they may be governed the way they are.

*When the natives in the Arctic see Uncle Sam's big dirigible balloon floating over their heads on its way to the North Pole they may wonder who taught whales how to fly.

A Philadelphia dentist has been appointed surgeon-dentist to the Prince of Wales. H.R.H. may experience the sensation of being "crowned" long before his coronation.

An American scientific expedition purposes visiting Palestine to locate the sites of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, now below waters of the Red Sea. Zoar, the city toward which Lot and his wife were fleeing when the wife disregarded the command not to look back and was turned into a pillar of salt, is believed to be located in the same region. There is a high rock there now which Arabs point out as "Lot's wife." It is heavily encrusted with salt, as is practically everything in that region. "The Biblical version of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was literally true," according to Dr. Kyle, who has explored the scene.

Recent naval manoeuvres by two opposing fleets of the United States navy are reported to have demonstrated the possibility of an enemy fleet seizing the Panama Canal. The feat could not be accomplished, however, without fighting to the last ditch.

The sophomore students of Oberlin College display remarkable self-denial and devotion to duty by pledging themselves to let nothing interfere with the stern task of concentrating on mid-year examinations. Students of both sexes announce that they will dispense with all frivolities during that period. The boys will not shave, the girls will not use cosmetics. Shiny noses and House of David beards are defied to do their worst.



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