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Science Mines the Ocean

Tons of Gold, Sunken Treasure, Rich Minerals, Huge Food Stores, and Lakes of Oil Challenge Man—Nep- tune Beckons Hardy Venturers to the Greatest Test of Human Ingenuity in the World's History.

By EDGAR C. WHEELER.

Five-sevenths of the world's surface has never been explored. Hidden millions of mysteries have beckoned to man for centuries from this vast area covered by the waters of the oceans.

Now, however, spirited venturers in the fields of science are reading the secrets of the sea. They are finding, not only new methods of locating sunken treasure, but also how to prospect for new resources that can be turned to the use of mankind.

One scientist says he has found a way to sift pure gold from the salt waters. As an eager prospector would search among quartz hills, this scientist—Prof. Fritz Haber, of the University of Berlin—literally is following veins of gold, silver, and other precious metals running thru the oceans. And in this venture he is enlisting the cooperation of the U. S. Bureau of Fisheries.

Gold! Thousands of millions of tons of it carried in the foaming surf that pounds the beach; tossed about in mountainous waves of mid-ocean; hidden in miles of watery depths. No such staggering dream of wealth ever lured the hardy adventurers who staked their lives in the reckless gamble for fortune in the California hills or down the Yukon. It seems unreal, fantastic.

It has been found that water from the Atlantic Ocean contains from .015 to .267 part of gold to each million parts of liquid. Water from certain parts of the ocean contains nearly twice as much gold as the lowest grade land gold deposits profitable to operate.

Captain F. B. Bassett, hydrographer of the U. S. Navy, is authority for the recent statement that billions of tons of gold are dissolved in ocean waters in a concentration of from half a grain to one grain to every ton of water. This represents about \$10 worth of gold in every 250 to 500 tons of ocean waters.

Will the day come when we shall see great ocean mines where men will dip into miles of sea and extract from vast volumes of its waters the gold it conceals?

No one can answer these questions with certainty to-day. Nevertheless, Professor Haber's claims give us some inkling of the fascinating chances of fortune in store for the modern prospector who, dies down into mysteries of the unknown deep.

The vast expanses of water are saturated with valuable salts and minerals. And they literally are swarming with living things, both plants and animals, far outnumbering the life of the land. Lying beneath these myriad forms of life are great mountain ranges, volcanoes, valleys, and plains that form the floor of the sea. Strewn over this uneven floor, buried in shifting sands and held in the slime of dead things from above, are countless carcasses of wrecked ships that have gone to their doom laden with rich cargoes.

Constantly of these immense possibilities, Uncle Sam's Navy is embarking on a far-reaching program of ocean research. As a first step, the U. S. S. Rainbow is being fitted out for an expedition to the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea. The announced purposes are to chart the ocean floor and to discover and develop for immediate use some of the sea's hidden resources.

One of the most fascinating efforts of the expedition is toward the location of oil fields in the vast realm under the great blanket of water. The navy already has located and charted places in the Gulf of Mexico where oil spots constantly appear. With the oil fields of the land nearing exhaustion, the economic importance of such a potential discovery is obvious.

Scientists have determined by study of land oil fields that the presence of fossils of small shell-like animals, called "foraminifera," is a highly accurate indication of oil-bearing strata. The Rainbow is equipped to study the geological formation of the sea bottom and to bring up samples of the fossils below the bottom at spots indicated on the charts.

The resources sought by the Rainbow include, beside oil and the myriad living things, vast stores of inorganic matter—salts, minerals, chem-

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ical elements. Whether the extraction of gold from ocean water, by Professor Haber's process ever will prove commercially practical, there is no question that the sea is a tremendous potential commercial source of common salt, potassium, magnesium, and calcium salts, iodine, and bromine.

At this moment one of the strangest ships afloat, the Ethyl, is mining the ocean for bromine, an element used in medicine, in photography, and in the manufacture of motor fuel. The Ethyl pumps aboard 7000 gallons of sea water a minute, and from each 1700 gallons is extracted one pound of bromine. Other ships, it is reported, will be equipped similarly to mine this valuable element.

Truly, there are fortunes locked in Neptune's vaults and the number of modern prospectors of the sea is increasing daily. Probably never before in history was there a "gold rush" so feverish as that which now is luring adventure-loving men away from solid ground.

Fortunes are gambled and lives are risked in hazardous attempts to retrieve millions in gold and jewels from the hulks of sunken ships. Wealthy men are spending other fortunes equipping expeditions to study the teeming sea life and the luxuriant vegetation miles below the sea's surface. Still others are searching the waters of the Mediterranean for the riches of cities that we engulfed centuries ago.

Marvelous diving chambers have been devised to permit men to work and explore freely under the tremendous pressure in the deep caverns of the ocean. Undersea cameras now are available to record ocean wonders. Ingenious depth-finding apparatus is giving us accurate contour maps of the floor of the ocean. Radio is being employed in attempts to reveal the spots where sunken treasures are hidden.

With these elaborate tools, the ocean prospector is finding his field almost limitless. Just remember that five-sevenths of the earth is covered by the oceans and in the oceans are 362 millions of cubic miles of water!

In sunken ships alone fabulous rewards beckon the fortune-hunter. Recent inventions made this form of prospecting something more than a wild guess and a perilous lunge. Armored diving-suits and working chambers are making it possible to go down far beyond the 200-foot depth, formerly the limit of human endurance.

Improved deep-sea pumping apparatus also is making it possible to remove tons of sand with which Neptune holds many a treasure hulk in tight grip, and to wash this sand for bits of precious metal, such as miners wash the sands of streams for grains of gold.

Within the next 10 years it is predicted, more wealth will be recovered

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from sunken ships than in all the preceding ages in the world's history.

Perhaps the achievement that did as much as anything to encourage the present stampede of ocean prospectors was the spectacular success of divers in recovering the \$30,000,000 cargo of gold from the wreck of the Laurentic, sunk by a submarine off the coast of Ireland in 1917. Other ships of comparatively recent sinking have given up much of their treasure because scuba has found ways to reach depths never before attempted. Thousands more await the salvager.

Along our own Atlantic Coast lie at least a dozen of these wrecks with strong-rooms full of gold waiting the first comers. At this moment four young Americans are exploring what is probably the richest of these prizes—the wreck of the Ward liner Merida, sunk in collision off the Virginia capes in 1911 with gold, silver, copper and jewels worth \$2,000,000 to \$5,000,000. Dragging mile-long iron sweeps along the floor of the ocean, the trawlers Foam and Spray located this prize several months ago. And now, using the most modern of armored undersea apparatus, divers are at work to recover the treasure.

Yet tremendous as is sunken wealth, it is actually small compared with the enormous natural resources of the sea in animal and vegetable life and in minerals. Scientists have counted more than 19,000 different varieties of fishes, some of which, like the menhaden and herring, are caught by the millions each year. Every year we haul millions of dollars' worth of products from the sea—foods, oils, fertilizers, pearls, leather, shells, glue. We have barely touched its natural riches, and we have just begun to discover its hidden wonders, packed in layers upon layers, one farm and feeding ground above another, each level with its own forms of plant and animal life. The immensity of such a vast storehouse staggers our imaginations.

Here again is a compelling challenge. And the challenge is being accepted by science in a manner which, for dramatic episodes and thrilling adventures, rivals any of the gripping tales of fiction. The most fascinating figure in this new drama is William Beebe, curator of ornithology of the New York Zoological Society. In previous issues of Popular Science Monthly you have read of his wonderful explorations on barren Galapagos Island—the "world's end"—and of his voyage of discovery into the Sargasso Sea, that ocean wilderness in the Atlantic. Now, having fished from the depths amazing creatures home to report his than on the continent. After all is found and to prepare for new adventures.

And for picturesque setting and lively romance, the new adventure promises to surpass anything in deep-sea mining. This is indicated in the recent announcement that Harrison Williams, New York financier, has purchased the palatial million-dollar yacht Vanadis (to be renamed the Warrior) and is transforming her into a wide-cruising laboratory from which scientists will plumb the undersea for fresh wonders.

Truly the sea still remains the great frontier of the world. On earth the spots that remain undiscovered can be counted on one hand. But the ocean is still mostly mystery—deep, dark, wonderful, rich.

**Tuberculin Cures Gout and Rheumatism**

Dr. Gustav Paul, Head of Vienna Institute, Announces Important Discovery.

VIENNA, Sept. 6.—After experiments extending over a period of four years, Dr. Gustav Paul, Director of the National Vaccination Institution of Vienna, announced in a report to the Medical Society yesterday that he was able to say that through cutaneous injections of tuberculin he had achieved remarkable success in the cure of every form of rheumatism and gout.

So convinced is he of the method, that he declared that while he could not imagine a world without tuberculosis he could foresee a future without rheumatism.

The assembled doctors listened attentively as Dr. Paul explained the composition of the tuberculin and told how he had treated six hundred cases. Dr. Paul assured his audience that it was immaterial whether the use was made of Dr. Koch's old tuberculin, with the graduated addition of tuber-

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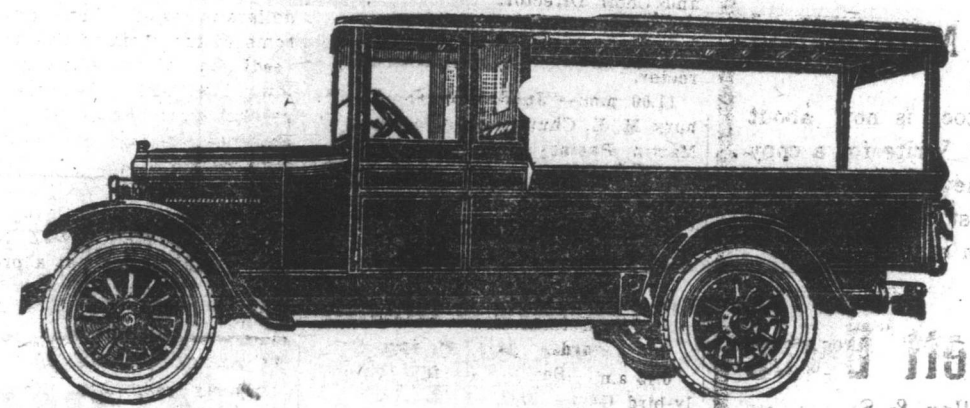
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**The Return Of The Prodigal.**



By CY HUNGERFORD

**More Drinking of Methylated Spirits**

The number of convictions from the drinking of methylated spirits is steadily increasing. The 1924 license statistics for England and Wales show that in 1921 the total number of convictions was 331; last year it reached 693. These figures are most significant.

Of this latter figure 346 offenders were men and 347 women. Among men the habit is increasing, as in 1921 the proportion was 117 men and 214 women.

The total number of convictions from drunkenness in England and Wales in 1924 was 79,632, as compared with 77,683 for 1923, an increase of 1,948, or 2.6 per cent.

Don't Say Paper, Say the Evening Telegram.