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The great gold mines of the Rand district in South Africa are said to have reached the limit of their development, and the output is beginning to decline.

A wind turbine, mounted on a steel tower, is in successful operation in England, supplying a farm house with light and power. It may not be long before all farm houses can be so supplied.

The United States and Chile have agreed to refer a long-standing dispute to King Edward as arbitrator. The dispute involves certain mining rights in Chile.

The dryness of the South African climate is favorable to the growth of maize, and that country will shortly take its place as one of the leading grain exporting lands of the world.

The street railway fare in some parts of England is now only a farthing; and the farthing coin, which had almost gone out of use, will thus become current again.

The Danish scientists, to whom Dr. Frederick A. Cook, the American explorer, at length submitted his supposed proofs of his discovery of the North Pole, have decided that Dr. Cook has failed to prove his claim. In the meantime, the National Geographical Society of the United States has decided that Commander Robert E. Peary has given satisfactory proofs that he has reached that spot, and he is triumphantly hailed as the discoverer of the North Pole, while Dr. Cook is denounced as an imposter.

How Dr. Cook's description of the place happens to agree so well with Commander Peary's is something yet to be explained. Captain Amundsen, who was well acquainted with Dr. Cook, says that if he is a swindler, he must have changed his character in the past ten years. Whether either of the hardy explorers really reached the Pole is a matter of little consequence, as they took no scientist with them to bring back records worth the risk.

The Royal Society and the Royal Geographical Society will contribute funds for Captain Scott's Antarctic expedition. Conditions at the South Pole, as found by Sir Ernest Shackleton, are more favorable to scientific exploration than at the North Pole; as there is a land surface there, instead of a frozen sea.

Next to the reported discovery of the North Pole, the greatest event in polar exploration last year was Lieutenant (now Sir Ernest) Shackleton's unsuccessful attempt to reach the South Pole, an account of which has just been published in book form. On the 9th of January, when within a little more than a hundred miles of the Pole, they were obliged to turn back for want of food, and face the dangers and hardships of the long return journey. They were then on a plateau over ten thousand feet high—the

highest in the world—and they judged that the Pole itself lies somewhere on this plain. Several chains of mountains were found; and on the plateau there were traces of coal. The book is full of interesting descriptions and illustrations, and includes an account of the ascent of Mount Erebus by some of the members of the party, and the valuable scientific results of the expedition.

The Celtic Association, a union of Irish, Scotch, Welch, Breton, Manx and Cornish folk who are interested in the language and history of the ancient race, will hold a congress and exhibition at Brussels this year, which promises to be an important meeting. Excavations at Tara, the ancient capital of the Irish kings, will by that time probably have brought to light many relics of the early days.

Neon, a newly discovered gas in our atmosphere, is thought to be the cause of the aurora borealis.

Schools have been established in every part of the Chinese Empire, under teachers who have studied in Japan, Europe or America. Popular education is a strong feature of the new movement in China. Among the latest reforms proposed by the Prince Regent is said to be the adoption of European costume and the abolition of the queue.

A Tennessee inventor claims to have solved the secret of perpetual motion. An English inventor, though he does not make this claim, has constructed a machine that works in an exhausted glass tube, under the influence of a fraction of a grain of radium, which, it is calculated, will continue to give out sufficient energy to keep the machine in motion for ten thousand years.

It is expected that by a new electrolytic process iron objects can be made by iron taken directly from the ore bed, without mining.

Much of the illuminating power used in lighting our dwellings is wasted by the use of wall coverings that absorb light. Someone has figured out that the people of the United States waste millions of dollars a year in this way. A clean yellow painted wall is found to have the greatest reflecting power.

It is believed that trawl fishing in deep waters would be profitable, and that some species of fish not now used for food might be taken in that way. The Norwegian government has sent a steamer to engage in deep-sea exploration from the Canary Islands to the Faroes with this matter in view.

The success of turbine steamers is assured. Japan has now the fastest steamship on the Pacific. It uses turbine engines and oil fuel, and has a speed of twenty-three knots an hour.