

QUEER LAKE GEORGE

IT WAS LOST TO SIGHT FOR YEARS, BUT APPEARED AGAIN.

Cattle Pastured in Its Bed, But the Day Came When the Settlers Had to Leave Before the Rising Waters—Game, Birds, and Fish—Has No Outlet Except by Evaporation.

Lake George, the largest lake of New South Wales, Australia, has no outlet, except evaporation. For a series of years, the brooks that tumble down the mountains which edge the lake may steadily contribute to it a larger quantity of water than is evaporated from its surface. Then the lake steadily rises. The water pushes north and south until the lake is twenty-one miles, or more in length with a width of seven or eight miles.

For another series of years the waters brought by the brooks may be steadily smaller than the quantity evaporated. Then the lake begins to fall, shrinking in a few years to half its former dimensions, this process going on sometimes till Lake George entirely disappears except for a few water holes in the lowest part during 1801 extending north and south for twenty-one miles with a depth of twelve feet.

Since in the last century thousands of sheep and cattle were pastured on large areas now covered with water. They were the most numerous representatives there of the larger forms of animal life just as fish and water fowl are to-day.

The cabins of the stock raisers or squatters, as they are called, were scattered over the meadows. Vegetables were raised and patches of wheat. So little was known of Lake George in those days that the herders really had a feeling of security and permanency, but the day came when the rising waters swished around the cabins, drowned some of the stock and drove the squatters to the highlands.

Everybody knows now that the bed of Lake George offers a very uncertain tenure to settlers. When it comes into view again perhaps no attempt will be made to utilize it on so large a scale as was done in the 30s and 40s of the last century.

The lake, which is about 150 miles southwest of Sydney, near the south end of the Blue Mountains, was for many years almost inaccessible among the wilds that hem it in, but now a branch of the railroad between Sydney and Melbourne skirts its eastern shore. Many sportsmen alight at the neighboring station for a season of fishing or shooting.

The incredible number of ducks, swans, pelicans and other water fowl makes the lake one of the finest shooting resorts in New South Wales. The birds have few such opportunities in the almost lawless continent and they make the most of this basin when it is worthy to be called a lake. At an elevation of over 2,200 feet, not many lakes outside of Africa and inner Asia are so high above the sea.

The lake lies at the lower end of a basin so walled in by mountains and hills that the drainage into it has no chance to escape to the sea. It was long before this fact was discovered. Some early miners showed Lake George as the probable source of a small river known on the coast, but a careful survey finally revealed the fact that not a drop of water escapes from the basin except to the clouds.

The native blacks have always regarded it with superstitious dread. When they piloted the first exploring party to the lake in 1820 (the first reports of its existence came from the blacks in 1818) a splendid sheet of water was found. The whites were first perplexed and then amused by the stories the natives told them. One old woman said she had seen a time when there was no lake, but many trees were growing over the place now covered with water; others reported that sometimes the lakes disappeared and a number of little ponds occupied its place; still others affirmed that all of the water sometimes sank through the bottom and nothing was to be seen but dry land.

Blacks, who feared the lake and usually avoided it. Eighteen years elapsed after the white settlers became acquainted with the lake before its waters entirely disappeared. In 1838 and 1839 the surface of the lake bed was dry and firm.

The period between 1838 and 1851 was the heyday of the pastoral industry in the lake bed. The lake bed was divided into thousands of acres being devoted to grazing. Cart roads connecting the ranches extended across the bottom in all directions.

In these fourteen years the lake was not entirely dry excepting in 1850 and 1851, and in a few years a few water holes and swamps were found on the lower levels. The lake retains all the mineral substances brought to it by the brooks that wear away the granite and other rocks of the mountains. When the lake is shallow or nearly dry, the swamps and ponds, its waters are not potable. The only drawback of which the herders complained was that they had to haul water from the foot of the mountains to their cabins, the contents of the water holes being too salty for use long when the basin is filled the water is only slightly brackish and may be used for many purposes.

It was a strange sight to see rich meadows stretching away where only a water expanse had been visible a few years before. The herders kept changing from year to year as the waters advanced or receded. The mountain flocks greatly increased their contribution of water about 1850. When one-sixth of the bottom became covered, and two years later Lake George was a mere eighth of its present size and eleven feet deep. A little water spread over the bed was enough to spoil the grazing. The herders then retired to the hills and the meadows that were turning into bogs. They sought higher and drier grounds, till finally they were driven out of the basin entirely.

Since 1849 the lake has never been wholly dry. It varies now in size sometimes being only eight to ten miles long and four to six feet deep, and then swelling again to its largest proportions. At times one may drive on dry land across a part of the lake where a few years later there are ten or twelve feet of water. For nine years after 1855 a farmer used the narrow, northern part of the lake as a cattle run, cultivating the same time about ten acres of wheat a year. Fifteen feet of water covered this part of the lake in 1876. When Lake George is at its fullest it receives, which happens for years at a time, the usual rate of fall is about twenty inches a year. On the other hand, when the water receipts exceed the evaporation the rise in level is likely to be much more rapid. Large floods pouring so great a volume of water into the lake in a short time that years are required to evaporate it.

About the middle of the last century a wealthy herder filled a water cart with Murray cod and placed them in water holes in the nearly deserted bed of Lake George. The ponds did not thrive, but the red mullet thrived rapidly, making the lake one of the best fishing resorts of Australia. The lake has been quite dry since the fish were introduced, the myriads of cod being all derived from the original stock. "There has given me a South Land, give me also springs of water," was the expressive petition on the title page of one of the first books written about Australia. Most of the continent is very thirsty.

The prevailing trade winds drench the eastern mountains with the moisture they bring, and provide abundant water for the narrow strips of fertile land between the great hills and the Pacific. But west of the mountains the winds bring nearly dry air, scanty rain to the grassy slopes which very gradually merge into the parched desert still further west, where the parched wastes extend to the sea. The lake has been swallowed up and left no trace.

The little basin of Lake George lies deep in the heart of a vast mountain and grassy lands right on the verge of residential habitation; this accounts for the vagaries of the lake. Sometimes it disappears and is replaced by a great despatch, impressing a large volume of water in the basin. These are the pelting days of the lake, when it is long and wide with a wealth of water fowl and fish. But Lake George is not a very graphic recorder of rainfall conditions. Floods of some importance scarcely seem to make any impression upon its water level. The skies may be rainless for many months before it is really apparent that the surface is falling. But the scene when the dried bed is exposed with hordes and flocks tells the story of long years of almost barren skies.

Effects of Pepper.
A writer on foods declares that pepper is a vegetable poison, a stimulant, but in no sense a food; a substance poisonous by the vital organs and therefore to be thrown out of the vital domain.

Red or black pepper is a prolific cause of enlargement of the blood vessels and ultimately of disease of the heart. Its immediate effect is to create increased action, not only of the capillaries, causing temporary congestion and even inflammation of the mucous surfaces, but also of the organs which secrete the digestive fluids. Its ultimate effect is to weaken and deaden these organs by repeated stimulation to abnormal action. It also impairs or destroys the nerves of taste in the mouth, together with the gastric or other nerves which aid in the process of digestion.

When these are weakened by stimulants, the functions themselves are necessarily impaired, and confirmed dyspepsia, with its attendant train of bad symptoms, brings up the rear.

Why the Villain Protested.
"Ala-a-a," growled the heavy villain, scowling savagely at the footlights, "I have her in me power at last. Ah-a-a-a!"

This was the cue for the heroine to enter and give a start of horrified surprise at discovering him with the history of her past life in his hands. But she did not enter.

"Ala-a-a," repeated the villain once more, while he looked anxiously off stage. Still no heroine.

"Ala-a-a!" At this point the stage manager slipped into the wings and hoarsely whispered: "You'll have to ala-a-a four or five times more, Bill. The star has mislaid her shoe horn and ain't dressed in time to go on yet."—Baltimore American.

Browning's Courtesy.
On one occasion Robert Browning's son had hired a room in a neighboring house in order to exhibit his pictures there, and during the temporary absence of the artist Mr. Browning was doing the honors to a room full of fashionable friends.

He was standing near the door when an unannounced visitor made her appearance, and of course he shook hands with her, greeting her as he had the other arrivals. "Oh, best yet," she exclaimed. "But, please, Mr. Browning, Mr. Barrett asked me to come."

"And I am very glad to see you," returned Mr. Browning, with ready courtesy. "Take my arm, and I will show you on."

Chasing the Fox.
A fox had pressed by the Warwickshire hounds, in England, dashed into a back kitchen at Nalley Hall, the seat of the Marquis of Hertford, where a woman was washing clothes. Seizing a place of concealment, the animal sprang upon the furnace and dived into the almost boiling soapuds, from which, however, he was quickly driven again and was then captured.—London Telegraph.

A Financial Puzzle.
Here is a problem in finance which we submit to those of our readers who are always inclined for an argument on the money question: A banker sauntering home saw a fellow going to the bank. Of course he picked it up and took the number in order to find the owner. While at home his wife remarked that the butcher had sent in a bill for meat amounting to £5. The only way he had with him was the money he had found, which he gave her, and she paid the butcher. The butcher paid it to a farmer for a calf, and the farmer paid it to the merchant, who in turn paid it to the washerwoman, and she, owing the banker a note of £5, went to the banker and paid her note. The banker recognized the note as the one he had found and which up to that time had settled £25 of debt. On a more careful consideration he found the note counterfeit.

Now, will some of our financial friends tell us what has been lost in this transaction and by whom, if anybody?—London Telegraph.

English Oaks.
The old parliamentary oak in Clipse park, England, is believed to be 1,500 years old. The tallest oak in that country, called the "Duke's Walking Stick," is higher than the spire of Westminster abbey, and the largest is the "Crowthorne," which now measures seventy-eight feet in circumference and at one time with its branches covered more than an acre of space.

Appetite of "Amber" Plug.
Smug Tobacco will burn 75 miles. "At it!" So the tag.

I have come to the city with my son, who is about to enter the law school. The first thing is to find him a boarding place. Do you know a place you can recommend?

Well, I don't hear the law school. But I like a good place near the medical school.

Indeed? Then I'll have him study medicine.

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Broker—Is was trusted and he'll be tried, if we're only fortunate enough to cash him.

Use Dr. Hamilton's Pills for Biliousness.

Artist—Have you been to sit to Mr. Jones yet?

Model—Well, I've been to see him, but directly I got into his studio, he said, you've got a head like a Botticelli. I don't know what a Botticelli is, but I didn't go there to be called names so I come away!

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Laxative Balm. Genuine Tablets cure a cold in one day, no cure, no pay. Price 25 cents.

Mother—You must put your dolls away today. It's Sunday.

Little Girl—Oh, but mother, that's all right. We're playing at Sunday School.

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Vicar's Daughter—And so you're crying because, you brother Tommy's got the measles?

Maud Emity—Yes, Miss. Tommy, 'e 'as all the lark! Last year 'e 'ad scarlet fever an' three luvly months in the 'ospital, an' now 'e's gone there for anuvver good time, an' I never nuffink, not even mumps!

Teacher—Can you tell me what a secret is?

Boy, (sauceing his reason)—Yes. What my father says his sausages of.

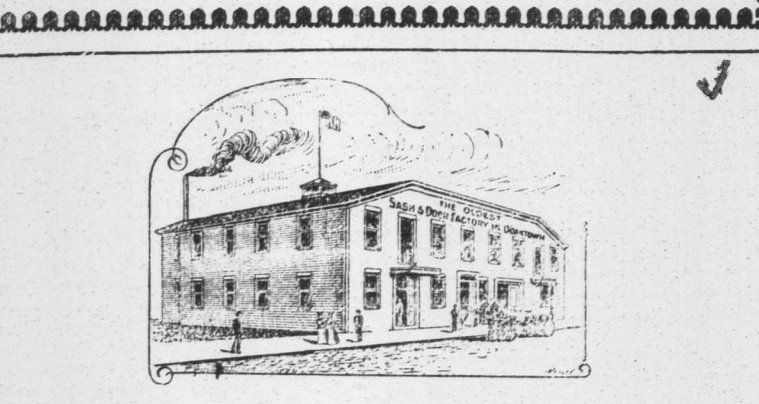
Assessors' Notice.

The undersigned and next of kin of the said deceased, do hereby give notice that the said deceased has died intestate, and that the said undersigned are the persons entitled to administer the estate of the said deceased.

PROBATE COURT.
In the PROBATE COURT of the County of New York, in and for the City and County of New York.

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