

By Sea to Siberia

Much has been written about the sea route to Siberia and its practicability for profitable commerce between the Western business world of Europe and the vast plains of Russia, across the borders of Asia, which are now being developed. Their wants, like their settlers, are growing rapidly; and there is the wherewithal of exchange, for the country has great natural wealth, the upper reaches of the Yenisei watering some of the richest and most inaccessible wheat lands of the world.

It has been left for the English steam barkentine Nimrod, of Antarctic exploration renown, to prove by doing it that the thing can be done. Under command of Capt. G. Valentine Webster—a young officer of brilliant record on land and sea, decorated for war service in Egypt and South Africa, a pioneer navigator in out of the way waters, besides having been twenty-eight times around the world—the Nimrod with an experimental cargo, mostly salt, tea and rice, left Liverpool in the beginning of July, passed the North Cape and steamed east through ice strewn waters into the Kara Sea and thence into the Yenisei where she transhipped her cargo into river steamers which distributed it in August in the markets of Central Siberia.

Varied by remarkable incidents as the voyage was, the real surprise lies in the treatment that befell Capt. Webster himself at the hands of the Russian officials. Toward an officer who had contravened no kind of regulation, indeed whose voyage had been encouraged by the Russians, the behavior of the Vice-Governor of the Yeniseisk territory and his military success in getting redress from the heads of the Government is hard to understand.

Capt. Webster has been able to get through to St. Petersburg, where he is engaged with some likelihood of success in getting redress from the heads of the Government for the conduct of the officials in the Yenisei. Fortunately he has a vigorous physique, and as he recounted his voyage and experiences to the Sun correspondent he seemed well able to take care of himself. Apparently the Vice-Governor thought so too, when at Krasnoyarsk he sent three officers and some soldiers to hold him in arrest.

The Nimrod left England in the first week of July. "It was not till leaving Hammerfest," said Capt. Webster, "that we came on the first notable incident of the voyage. While rounding the North Cape we ran into a terrific gale. The engines broke down and for some time we were in great fear of losing the ship on the rocky islands that project north."

"But once we had rounded the cape we squared yards and flew before the gale, making Novaia Zemlia in six days from Hammerfest. Landing on the island I discovered a magnificent land locked harbor, far surpassing that of Sydney or Buenos Ayres. The combined fleets of England and Germany could find room for anchorage."

"I have since my return been informed that petroleum is known to exist close to this harbor. This was discovered by V. Russanoff and Baron Tiesenhausen. I met these gentlemen while shooting on Novaia Zemlia, and from their great anxiety in trying to persuade me that I was at least a hundred miles further south than I thought I became suspicious at the time that they must have discovered mines of some sort."

"Leaving Novaia Zemlia I headed the Nimrod through the Kara Straits; but encountered very large and extensive ice floes. The Nimrod had to make a southerly course hugging the shores of Wyghat Island to avoid ice which is very thick in the deeper waters."

"Two days later while crossing the Kara Sea we encountered many icebergs which had been brought down by the strong northerly winds that had been blowing for some time. On the third day the Nimrod was seized hard and fast in the ice, where she remained for some days. At last we succeeded in getting her through by ramming the ice in the weaker channels."

"Making the coast of the Yalmal Peninsula, I anchored the Nimrod twelve miles from shore, finding it dangerous to bring her closer owing to the shallow waters. The charts I had showed seven fathoms, but on sounding we found it varied from two and a half to three. I went ashore in a ship's boat, but even a small boat could get no nearer than half a mile from shore. We waded to dry land, but it was excruciatingly painful in the ice cold water."

"On the peninsula I saw many signs of Samoyedes having been there, but we could not find any human beings. We found a native temple in the form of some forty poles upright in the ground. On each was the head of a polar bear. This belief is that the more polar bears they sacrifice to their god the better pleased he will be."

"Coming back to the boat we were horrified to find that she had broken loose and drifted out to sea. We lighted fires and fired our rifles to attract the ship's attention. We succeeded about 3 o'clock the following morning when a boat was sent and rescued us in a famished state."

"Ice floes again crowded on us as we neared the Yenisei Gulf. The Nimrod again became fast. On the second day a huge iceberg bore upon us, forcing its way due north through the ice floe. It looked as if the berg would charge the Nimrod, but luckily it passed us some twenty yards off. Had it touched us it would have crumpled us up like a paper box."

"From observations taken I found that there was a surface current of trackish water

flowing from north to south with the wind, while there was a deep undercurrent of ice cold water flowing from south to north. I further found that there exists a magnetic ridge which made our compasses useless."

"Rounding White Island in a fog we ran hard and fast on an uncharted low lying island. We had some difficulty in getting afloat but managed later by avoiding the larger ice floes and forcing our way through the weaker channels to enter the mouth of the Kenisei. Here again the ice was very heavy, and for some days we were bound fast again. One night when making the rounds of the ship I saw a polar bear majestically stalking the ship. I shot him from my cabin door."

"On August 16 we entered Dickson's Harbor but owing to faulty charts of the harbor the Nimrod grounded badly as we were entering. Thousands of reindeer were seen scampering along the shores, and I found a depot of coal that had been placed there for a Russian Arctic expedition."

"We began to make our way up the river. Sighting a hut on shore we landed in a ship's boat. But the people flew and hid themselves on our approach. When we did get in touch with them later it appeared that they thought we were Japanese and were frightened. When they learned we were English they were most friendly and entertained us hospitably on raw fish, caviar and vodka."

"We had no pilot and had to keep a boat ahead of the ship taking soundings, as sand banks were numerous and hidden. Finding it impossible to reach Tudinka owing to sand banks I turned the Nimrod back and anchored off Golchackka. Next day two river steamers of the Government fleet with barges appeared. Into these I transhipped the Nimrod's cargo. I should say from what I saw here that great praise is due to the Russian Red Cross Society for the noble way in which the women of this corps work among the revolting and diseased Yuraks."

"As there were no Government officials to be met within that part of the country and the Nimrod's return voyage would be comparatively easy, I decided to send her back to London and to proceed myself with the cargo to Krasnoyarsk, a distance of 2,000 miles."

It is here that Capt. Webster's extraordinary treatment at the hands of the Russian authorities begins.

"On my arrival at Tudinka," he says, "I was astonished to learn that a gendarmerie officer had been there from Turukhansk intending to seize the Nimrod on her arrival. He even arranged for arming all the sailors on the steamer on which he came down the river in the event of our resisting. This report was confirmed when I reached Turukhansk by Mr. Vlassoff, inspector of the Nicolaievsky Observatory."

"When I asked for my letters I was at first told there were none, but next day a gendarmerie officer handed me a bundle of letters all of which he had previously opened. When I reached Krasnoyarsk I found that all my letters had been intercepted. As my passport was among them I was still breaking the laws of Russia by travelling 2,000 miles into the interior without a pass."

"Through the British Vice-Consul I reported the matter to the police. While they seemed satisfied with the explanation they yet issued prompt orders for my arrest; and on my return to the hotel I was arrested by three officers and six soldiers, who went to my room and took all my papers and private letters from England. I had only been married a month before starting on the voyage."

"I could get no satisfactory answer for my extraordinary reception. The only explanation was that as he had not been personally informed of my intended voyage to Yenisei his officials naturally thought that my mission could only have one object in view, to begin the capture of Siberia. I did at last get a wire through to the British Embassy in St. Petersburg, asking for a passport to be sent. After its arrival the Vice-Governor gave me a permit to go. But I had been held for weeks a most strict prisoner."

"Here are some of the proceedings of the officials. As Krasnoyarsk the customs officers who had come there to inspect my cargo demanded and insisted on my paying their traveling and hotel expenses, besides numerous telegrams and replies to and from headquarters, as they themselves could not head what duty should be charged on the merchandise. I have still the receipts for these telegrams."

"When I told this to the head of the Treasury here in St. Petersburg he was dumfounded. Not only was no such charge legal, but it was absolutely blackmail. In spite of the extraordinary insults poured on me while held a prisoner the Vice-Governor at our last interview said he hoped that I would forget the unpleasant part and come again with two ships next year."

Of course the Nimrod's papers were in complete order when she left Liverpool, and she had acquittances from the Russian Consul there. The business world is watching to see what will be done with the officials, who are responsible for the evident intention to seize the Nimrod herself as if she were an enemy or a pirate.

GERMANY'S AERIAL GUARD

Within the next year or two Germany's frontiers will be guarded by an unbroken chain of aerial sentinels, writes the Berlin correspondent of the London Standard. The German War Office, which ever since the advent

of the aeroplane, has devoted consistent and careful study to the utilization of the new arm, has decided that, beginning with the eastern and western borders, every fortified point on the country's frontiers shall be provided with its own detachment of aerial scouts, who, soaring aloft, will keep constant guard over the nation's outposts.

To this end the military aviation corps, now centred at Dohberitz, is at the beginning of next year to be decentralized and stationed in detachments at every strategic point. Special sheds, accommodating six to twelve aeroplanes, in accordance with the importance of the position, will be erected and provided with a permanent staff of certified military pilots and observers. In addition to this every important naval harbor and coast town is to be provided with a specially large detachment, which, constantly hovering above the coast and flying out to sea, will render invaluable aid as aerial watchdogs. This disposition, in case of war, will have a double advantage, for while the aerial scouts will be able to give early warning of an enemy's approach upon a strategic position, there will always be at hand a means of counteracting any attempt of an enemy to destroy fortifications from above by means of his own flying machines.

The cost of providing the sheds and other equipment is estimated, for the first year, at £450,000, and this amount will be asked for in the military budget which is to come before the new Reichstag. The military flying schools at Dohberitz will continue to be the training ground for young officers detailed for aerial work, who immediately on making themselves efficient as airmen will be despatched with their machines to their future posts on the frontier. At the present moment Germany has over 70 fully certificated military aerial pilots.

THE ROAD BUILDER

Nature to him had lent
In meek abandonment
Her Titan powers, and loosed her wonted
Laws;
His clock-timed lightnings clove the lonely
hills
Close on the echoes of his clinking drills,
And when the mountain's breast
His mimic earthquake plowed, in wondrous
pause
One leap below the crest,
He fixt in stable rest
The granite avalanche; and there his ringing
Steel ribands wind, and mile-long cargoes
ride,
And little children singing
Go by, where once young eagles yellow-eyed
Screamed from their eyries clinging.

He seemed to us the Spirit of Today
Exultingly incarnate; even his play
Sat on him tense as sunlight on a sword;
No soft Delilah-dream
With white arms clinging clogged his soul's
endeavor,
Nor for worlds that seem,
But worlds that are, we thought his strength
was poured
As if the Now and Here meant All Forever.
Not his the backward glance of sad-eyed seer,
But front of pioneer,
Head up, eyes kindling, face to face with
life,
And high heart leaping with the joy of
strife—
Poets for song, and priests for prayers and
creeds,
But to us watching here,
Song, prayers and life, love, all he wrought in
deeds.

But blind, blind hearts still are we at the
best!
We had not guessed
What thoughts far-ranging hived in that keen
brain;
Sometimes a little wonder,
We hid our praises under,
Sometimes his whirling words smote us in
vain,
And to his shining look
Turned we bewildered by the thing he
spoke—
"John was a Voice," he laughed once, "I,
a hand
Cast up the King's highway across the land,
Or ere He comes again."

"Nay, man, What King?" we cried him. "All
for gold
Your labors manifold;
The fields, the mines, to mart,
The world to fetch and carry—this your part."
And smiling still above his figured chart
He bent him as of old.

But that wild night he died,
Watching his couch beside,
Faint and afar we heard a sudden rolling
Of giant wheels, and great bells booming,
tolling
Till the air trembled, and the solid ground;
It grew, it thundered past,
Whelming all senses in the sense of sound,
And, hushing wonder to an awe profound,
Away in distance and to silence drew;
And faint and far across horizons vast
A long, low whistle blew,
And our road builder, when
That mighty passing ceased, had ceased from
men.

Earth-man we thought him once, with chain
and rod—
That night, that way, a prophet went to God.
—By William Hervey Woods

LONDON TODAY

The late Lord Goschen once avowed that he was consumed by a passion for statistics,

New Guinea Discoveries

From the tropical wilds of the southern hinterland of New Guinea there comes in a message to the Royal Geographical Society the news of the discovery of a warlike tribe, armed with shields, tomahawks and eight-foot lances. The message contains one of the most thrilling accounts of adventure and peril in the search for knowledge that the later annals of exploration in the unknown places of the earth afford.

It is a story of rivers that mysteriously disappear, of fever-laden swamps, of heavy rains and dangerous rapids, brushes with natives, and a constant war with Nature in her most savage moods. The account was sent by Mr. Donald Mackay, who financed what is known as the Mackay-Little expedition. With him were Mr. William S. Little, who has plunged into the unknown wilds of this great and romantic island of the Papuans, on more than one occasion; Mr. Pratt, the surveyor, and Mr. Eichhorn, a collector. Trouble was met at the outset in the work of assembling the necessary stores and porters, but these initial difficulties, like many of a much more serious kind afterwards, were at last overcome, and on July 31, 1908, the stores were sent to the Purari by sea, while the porters, having been carried to the mainland in whale-boats, set out for the meeting-place over the land route along the coast. They were accompanied part of the way by Mr. Bell, a resident magistrate. For the first two days from Yule Island progress was fairly easy, but after that the party had to pass through low and swampy country, covered with stunted trees and mangroves. As they moved westward the native dress grew "smaller by degrees and beautifully less," and the people appeared to be of a lower type than those they had met with farther east.

Manifold Difficulties

The journey by land was, to say the least, not a pleasure trip, but when they embarked on the government whale-boats and canoes at the limit of the Purari delta-water difficulty after difficulty dogged their movements, and every force of native and nature seemed to conspire against them. The delta lands are low and swampy, and the banks thickly screened by mangroves, pandanus, sago palms, and nipa palms. Soaked to the skin by heavy tropical rains, making small and arduous headway against powerful currents, threatened with disaster in passing through the rapids, their plight was not a happy one, but the intrepid explorers forged on. To add to their troubles, the natives were not disposed to be friendly, and communications were with difficulty established.

Sir W. Macgregor's turning-point was, however, reached at length, and here, at Biroe, a base camp was set up. A short halt was made in preparation for the continuation of the travel by land, and the porters were kept busy in making sago, of which there was a plentiful supply. The country ahead was not inviting. It was limestone in character, and

certainly he often handled them in a very masterly fashion. But surely even his consuming passion might well have been sated for a while by a study of the formidable volume of "London Statistics, 1910-11," which has been just issued by the London County Council.

What we call London is controlled by a large number of several and distinct jurisdictions, and these several jurisdictions cover areas widely differing in extent and often overlapping in a most bewildering manner as may be seen from the map of some of the many Londons which is prefixed as a frontispiece to the volume. "These jurisdictions," writes Sir Laurence Gomme, the learned and accomplished Clerk of the London County Council, in his instructive preface to "Stanford's Atlas of the County of London," published this year, "are of a most conflicting and puzzling character, and have arisen during the long period before 1888, when London was growing to its greatness without being endowed with any municipal government." Thus when we speak of London, we may be speaking of the City of London, with its area of 1.1 square miles and its dwindling population; or we may be speaking of what is known as Greater London, which is continuous with the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Police, and has an area of 692.9 square miles and a population constantly increasing and rapidly expanding towards its outer boundaries; or we may be speaking of half a dozen or more other jurisdictions controlled for certain specific purposes by different authorities and varying greatly in outline and extent. Thus there is the Administrative County of London, the special sphere of the jurisdiction of the County Council, with its area, exclusive of the city, of 115.8 square miles. Even this city is not quite autonomous and self-contained, for the two temples claim to be autonomous within it. Nor, again, is the County Council autonomous within its area, for the city stands within it. Its own boundaries, moreover, attest the amazing growth of London, even since 1888, when they were originally determined. They stop short at the line of the River Lea, and, with one or two insignificant exceptions, at the northern bank of the Thames eastward of the mouth of the Lea. At every point, except one to the eastward, they are far within the police boundaries of Greater London, occupying with the city only 116.9 square miles out of its total of 692.9 square miles. Or, again, there is the area of Water London, which is the most irregular of all, containing 537.4 square miles, being an aggregate of the areas formerly occupied by the several water companies now

Mr. Little and Mr. Pratt, who reconnoitred the ground, found that streams had a habit of suddenly diving underground. Not far from the camp they came across a precipitous gorge—which they named Hathor Gorge—that effectually stopped any advance in that direction. They, therefore, retraced their steps, and tried to cross to the south side of the river. Again they were checked, for the passage was by no means plain. Rafts were tried, and failed, and it was only after much thought and labor that the problem was solved by making special canoes, in which the party successfully crossed.

A start had not long been made, however, before another set-back was experienced, and the party retreated once more. This time it was fever, Mr. Mackay suffering from severe attacks. Added to this, Mr. Little found that the river split into two branches, and here again the explorers were unable to follow either stream, because these flowed underground for considerable distances. Lack of water intensified the sufferings of the party, and hostile tribes continually menaced them. Fortunately they were soon relieved of these attentions by the simple expedient of firing over the heads of their assailants.

The Natives

Faced with almost insuperable difficulties, with fever and water-famine, and hostile tribes, and no prospect of success in any attempt to push further south, it is not surprising that the explorers at this point decided to return. On their way back they met with a more friendly reception from the natives in the upper part of the valley, but when they reached the navigable part of the Purari they found it swollen by heavy rains. Canoes, however, were made, and the party descended to the mouth of the river, and so back to the more civilized region of the coast.

Mr. Mackay describes the natives as physically of a fine type, with well-developed limbs and chests. Their average height, he states, is probably about 5ft. 11in., and their color differs from that of the Delta natives. The men fit a small cylinder through the nose, from each end of which a thin spine of bone extends some inches. They wear arrow-proof bark belts, and while some use a bunch of leaves in place of a loin cloth, others wear cloth made of the inner bark of the paper-mulberry. As ornaments they have earrings, armlets, and necklaces, and in some cases suspend from their necks objects like a human hand or jaw. They use stone tomahawks, and bows and arrows bone-pointed and barbed for war. For shooting pigs the point is a flat piece of bamboo nine inches long and half an inch broad in the middle. Farther west the Piau warriors, who opposed the travelers, carried big bark shields, and lances of palmwood, about eight feet long, pointed with a leg-bone of the cassowary, probably used for stabbing. Similar weapons had not been seen before by the explorers.

superseded by the Metropolitan Water Board. It extends far beyond Greater London in some directions, as, for example, at Ware, Romford, and Sevenoaks and falls well within it in others, especially on the west and at some points in the north, where it is so arbitrary as to exclude Finchley and to include Hendon and Willesden. Of some of the other Londons we may mention the Metropolitan Main Drainage Area, with its 143.7 square miles; Parliamentary London, with its 117.9 square miles; Ecclesiastical London, with its 120.6 square miles of separate parishes; the London Postal District, with its 224.4 square miles; and the London Telephone Area, with its 62.7 square miles. But even so the enumeration is by no means exhaustive.

Perhaps nothing is more remarkable in all these multifarious statistics than the proof they offer of the growing tendency of the population of London to migrate from the centre towards the circumference. The population of the City of London was 37,702 in 1891. It is now only 19,657. In nearly all the metropolitan boroughs included within the Administrative County of London there has been a decrease, larger and smaller, so that whereas the total population of this area increased in 1891-1901 by 7.3 per cent, it has decreased in 1901-1911 by 3 per cent. On the other hand, the population in those parts of the adjoining counties which are included in Greater London has increased by 10.2 per cent, and in the narrower area which is known as "Extra-London" it has increased by 33.5 per cent. Another striking sign of the same tendency is the enormous increase of passenger traffic in Greater London. In 1881 the number of passengers carried within this area by railway, tram and omnibus was 269,662,649, and the number of journeys per head was 56.6. In 1909 the number of passengers carried was 1,408,883,518, and the number of journeys per head was 189.6. As the estimated population of Greater London only increased from 4,766,661 in 1881 to 7,429,740 in 1909—a sufficiently large increase in itself, but not in itself sufficient to explain the figures—the explanation clearly is that whereas the population of 1881 was, especially in the outlying districts, largely a stationary population, that of 1909 has become in still larger measure a population which oscillates daily between the centre and the circumference.—London Times.

Inquiring Visitor—Yesterday you appeared as a fire-eater—today you are an Eskimo swallowing raw frozen fish.

"Yes, my doctor ordered a change of diet.—Meggendoffer Blaetter.

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