

A Mysterious Continent.

Facts and Surmises About the Antarctic Region
—A Part of the Earth Which Is Practically
Unknown—Shut Out from the World by a
Great Wall of Ice and Covered With a
Blanket of Steam.

That a "lost land" which there are reasons to believe is inhabited exists at the present time near the South Pole is a conviction entertained by many students.

Penned in by a vast ring of icy mountains, whose northern slopes, washed by the oceans, perpetually freeze, but whose southern slopes are forever melting under the influence of steam and rain, a whole race whose existence is unsuspected, may have worked out its destiny.

Towns and villages may exist close to the South Pole inhabited by people of queer stature and color, whose world is bounded by a wall of ice.

Warm waters, a heavy, steamy atmosphere, the absence of wind, may have made these people small and delicate, but refined and intelligent. Or, upon the other hand, they may be still in a savage state, waging war among each other, and giants in stature.

Only exploration and discovery will clear up such mysteries, but these are some of the possibilities of the near future.

Very little is known about the South Pole, as explorers have hitherto devoted almost their exclusive attention to the Arctic. Following Columbus and the early voyagers across the Atlantic, who strove to find a northwest passage to the Indies, nearly all Governmental work in the way of exploration has been devoted to the North Pole, even since the northwest passage has been a practicable commercial waterway.

As a result of this, public attention has been drawn away from the South Pole. We now know with a fair degree of accuracy the topography and general characteristics of the northern crown of the earth.

This, perhaps, is one reason why geographers assembling in London in a general convention devote long and serious thought and discussion to the South Pole, which has thus for the first time received attention from the learned geographers of the world. Of late years, moreover, a quiet curiosity has been indulged in by geographers among themselves of the curious and significant features of the South Polar continent, and reports of voyagers from the earliest times have been compiled bearing upon the subject.

From this it appears that centuries ago there was quite as much curiosity about the South Pole as about the North Pole, and that the early voyagers took every opportunity of making observations as to its characteristics. The theory, however, that men are actually living at the South Pole, that a vast continent, perhaps inhabited by a civilized and hitherto unknown race of people, covers that part of the earth—has only recently begun to receive serious consideration. In what are popularly supposed to be vast frozen wastes, but which there is every reason now to believe are fertile valleys, with a warm, if not a tropical, climate, there may be a race of men, absolutely new, living their life in ignorance of the rest of the world, and following primitive customs which have come down from the remotest times.

Who knows, but that this cup-like, windless, genial continent, surrounded by an impenetrable wall of ice and having in its interior hot lakes whose lowest levels reach to volcanic regions of the earth, may have a race of men, strange flora and fauna and animal and vegetable life such as we have never known before?

Fanned in by an icy barrier which is three hundred feet high, there is known to be a vast continent thousands of miles in extent, wholly unlike the surroundings of the North Pole, which are largely water, and is known to surround the South Pole in nearly a solid mass.

But there are no mountains. It is this absence of mountains in the vast South Polar continent, and the fact that it is the most significant fact in support of the theory that it is inhabited. Were it level and as cold as the North Pole, it could be seen stretching as far as the eye could reach in white and frozen solitude, with huge bergs rearing their summits and accumulations of snow from countless ages, making points which would reflect the light and catch the eye.

Such, however, is not the case with this unknown and mysterious land now awaiting its Columbus. Behind the icy barrier which hitherto has shut out the world it falls away rapidly, and no man has yet gone to the top and looked over. Attempts have been made to scale this wall of ice, but they were not undertaken seriously, and were only for the work and backed by some Government which sent men-of-war or regular exploring vessels to the scene.

Now, however, the time has come when geographers assembled at London have considered the problem, it is likely that attention will be called to the peculiar difficulties of the work, and that the mystery of this unknown land will become more fascinating than that which has drawn so many explorers to the Arctic. Among the geographers are many who say the work will not be nearly as arduous or dangerous as that of exploring in the Arctic, for the reason that as soon as the icy wall is passed the difficulties before the explorers will rapidly disappear as they descend the southern slope into the warm and genial climate which is there believed to exist.

The statement that there is a warm climate in this remote part of the earth is no wild theory. On the contrary, it has been entertained for many years by men who have studied the subject, and this belief rests upon very strong foundations. Macellan, Frobenius, Dampier and other explorers and discoverers who were among the first to see the Antarctic continent, reported that it was perpetually surrounded by a peculiar cloudy vapor.

Ordinarily a vaporous cloud hanging motionless in the sky would not be expected to be met with in this part of the earth, and if once seen it would be only reasonable to expect it to soon blow away. Frobenius on his first voyage saw this strange vaporous cloud hanging motionless in the sky over the Antarctic continent, and he marvelled at its apparent fixity.

It was when he passed again, however, that this strange body, still motionless in the sky, caused him to suspect the presence of volcanoes. All subsequent voyagers between latitudes 40 and 70 noticed this strange vaporous covering to the South Polar continent.

No such permanent cloud of steam could perpetually hang over the South Polar continent if it were swept by winds and gales, as are the adjoining

lands and seas. It is, therefore, regarded as certain that the cup-like continent behind the vast wall of ice is practically windless. The ice wall protects it from the fierce gales that sweep the Southern Atlantic, while the wind may move in the higher altitudes, the lower levels of this cup-like continent are calm and quiet.

But scientists who have studied this problem have now reached a conclusion, based on what is known of this little known land, which makes it extremely probable that in addition to having no wind, it has living men and women, flowers, who trees, birds and animals. The mystery of the perpetual cloud of steam is explained as the result of volcanic heat.

There are active volcanoes within the Arctic Circle, showing that the fires of the earth come as close to the surface at the poles as at the equator. These active volcanoes do not emit steam so much as smoke.

The vast permanent cloud hanging over the Antarctic continent has been determined to be steam and not smoke. It has also been settled that there is no smoke in this atmosphere, as there certainly would be if the cloud were the product of an active volcano. The reasonable explanation of the cloud of steam, therefore, is that it is produced by volcanic fires beneath bodies of water, some of which is kept in a boiling state.

The cup-like interior of the Antarctic continent would make the existence of a lake in its center almost certain. Through the mouth of a submarine volcano the waters of such a lake would easily reach down to the hidden fires in the interior of the earth, which would keep such waters in a perpetual boiling state.

Boiling water of this kind, ascending to a higher level, might easily keep in a perpetually heated state a very large body of water, extending many hundreds or even thousands of miles.

Such, briefly, is the theory now entertained by geographers to account for the strange blanket of steam which permeates the overhanging walls of the Antarctic continent. There is no other way to account for it than on the ground of volcanic fires acting upon water.

One of the adjacent waters of the Atlantic or Pacific is of such temperature as would produce perpetual clouds in this region like those which almost always are to be found on the Banks of Newfoundland. The appearance of toberness in the interior of the Antarctic continent, moreover, is taken as further proof of this contention.

The whole continent, extending over many thousands of miles, is believed to be pervaded and influenced by this thin, watery vapor, which forms a permanent covering and melts the snow and tempers the climate. It is upon these grounds that the hypothesis, which is the only plausible explanation of the observed phenomena, it follows in the minds of the scientists who have been considering the subject, that the whole interior of the cup-like Antarctic continent must be of a genial, if not a tropical, climate, approaching to arctic conditions as the great ice wall is approached.

Regardless of warm and mild, such a continent would grow all kinds of verdure, and human and animal life must needs abound. Upon every other part of the earth having these natural conditions human life has always been found.

The law of nature provides that conditions like these produce human life as certainly as they produce vegetation and animal life. A mild and genial climate, perpetually warmed by a steamy vapor, produces a rank vegetable growth as certainly as the latter produces an animal and insect growth.

It is upon these grounds that the interior of the vast Antarctic continent is believed to harbor a race of men whose existence has hitherto been unsuspected, and whose condition is not yet known. They may or may not be far advanced in the way of civilization.

But those who have considered the problem believe that such a race, living in a mild and genial climate, where every variety of heat and cold is to be found within a short distance, must have reached a considerable degree of civilization. One scientist asserts that the inhabitants of the Antarctic continent pursue the chase and the hunt for their livelihood, have villages upon the gentle slopes of their cup-like continent, and possibly a capital city.

This blanket of steam never has been observed to extend beyond or even up to the ice wall, but showers of rain are recorded as falling around the edge, while the interior retained its steamy, vapory covering as before. Every climate that is known to man would be found in the interior of such a continent as this, from the tropical to the frigid, and all within a comparatively restricted area.

What are the inhabitants like? That is a question that many scientists have studied over, and which may be answered in the near future. People living in a natural Turkish bath of this kind could exhibit all the characteristics of paraboloid men.

They would be light of skin, perhaps pink, have straw-colored hair, and probably blue eyes. The chances are that they would be small and delicate of feature. Here may live the race of pink men mentioned in the old chronicles, and here, probably, may be found some of those natural phenomena which so astonished Sir John Mandeville when he heard of them—stones that floated, men with blue hair, women with three legs, and other marvels. A steamy climate, however, would not preclude the possibility of their having clothing.

But a few miles away from the warm atmosphere of the lower levels, and upon the high slopes of this cup-like continent, could be found a chilly atmosphere and hardy animals. It is believed probable that these slopes, however, would be free from the interior, are inhabited by the fighting men of the unknown and mysterious continent, now coming forward in the world of discovery, and that those living lower down may dwell in caves, on isolated cliffs, and in other places

of security from their brawnier neighbors.

The hunt and the chase only would draw them to the icy slopes, where animals of arctic varieties would naturally be found, while the more numerous and the more numerous would be the animals of the warm and steamy lake, enjoying its warmth and the society of the women and children, but laying themselves open at all times to attacks from the harder mountain.

These suppositions—for thus far nothing is known about the country—are in accord with the laws of nature and the known conditions of the mysterious Antarctic continent. No doubt it is entertained that if the cup-like interior is really warmed by steam, as there is now every reason to believe, then human life of a superlatively high order will be found there, and with animals of the warm and steamy lake, which will not unlikely produce strange and hitherto unsuspected forms.—New York World.

CANDLES FROM THE OCEAN.

A Great Run of Fish That Yield a Steady Light.

Frazer River people, as well as the natives of Alaska, are going to be last supplied with artificial light for some time to come, and the electric light industry at Sitka has received a severe blow, while the gas works at Anchorage are threatened with ruinous insolvency, says the New York World.

All this has come about through a remarkable run of fish which has occurred along the coast of British Columbia and Alaska since the first of the month. They were not ordinary fish, but natural candles, which have been found swimming in the Pacific Ocean in immense shoals. A dispatch from Vancouver says that while fishing for cod, it was more profitable than gold mining. One catch that was made beat all previous records. A gentleman residing in the appropriate name of Finlayson, says that while fishing for cod, he caught a shoal of these natural candles, which are called by the natives eulachons, and he sold them for \$17.50 at the market price of 25 cents a bucket. When candles are being hauled out of the water, they burn for an hour or more before they splutter out as well go out of the business, and as a result the Standard Oil Company on the Pacific coast has been driven from the market by the eulachon.

The eulachon, which belongs to the smelt family, have been long fashionable among the natives of Alaska. They are largely composed of fat men, and are used as candles during the long winter. After the Alaskan has had his dinner he takes out a dried fish, sticks his tail in a crack at the table and touches the shore of his nose. Then the fish burns with a bright and steady glimmer. Thus Alaskan poets never burn the midnight oil, for his literary labors are illuminated by a eulachon. An unusual large eulachon was caught at Sitka, and it was proposed to ship them to different points as an experiment. This will jeopardize the oil monopoly all along the Pacific coast. Another advantage about these candles is that if they are not available as candles they may be eaten, and they also make an excellent substitute for cod-liver oil. They are so full of fat as to be used as a candle by the natives of Alaska who recognize them as "water-candles." They are as large as an enormous deep-sea salmon, but with weaker dentition and smaller scales, and they are as fat as butter. They are a dusky coloration, grayish in the springtime, and these fish are to be met with along the whole northwest coast of America, and they ascend all the rivers north of the Columbia. The natives of British Columbia use it as a candle by inserting it in the pith of a rush or a strip of bark as a wick. It would only be a matter of time before the natives of Alaska would use it to complete the happiness of the Alaskan Indians and the destruction of the oil monopoly in our arctic provinces. The supply of eulachons is said to be in the spring, and it is said that the Indians for several years, unless they take to eating them.

The law of nature provides that conditions like these produce human life as certainly as they produce vegetation and animal life. A mild and genial climate, perpetually warmed by a steamy vapor, produces a rank vegetable growth as certainly as the latter produces an animal and insect growth. It is upon these grounds that the interior of the vast Antarctic continent is believed to harbor a race of men whose existence has hitherto been unsuspected, and whose condition is not yet known. They may or may not be far advanced in the way of civilization.

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Can Sail the Air.

Aerial Navigation Seems to be Solved.

A Balloon That Can Be Steered at Will.

Tests Made Above the Crowded Streets of New York.

New York, Aug. 8.—Aerial navigation in a true sense of the term seems to be an accomplished fact—navigation in which the navigator determines his route both as to altitude and direction. On Saturday thousands upon thousands of people in New York, Brooklyn and vicinity were treated to the hitherto unseen spectacle of a man sailing high above their heads and moving in any desired direction. It was a reporter of the New York World, who made the trip in the airship designed under the auspices of that paper by Prof. Carl Myers, at his famous "Balloon Farm," near Herkimer, N. Y., and was not the first successful trial of the invention. Previous tests had been made in the country near where the ship was built. The trip taken Saturday was one of some miles length, and although a stiff wind was blowing no difficulty was experienced in tacking against it, and making the air ship return to a point almost directly above the ground from which it started.

Prof. Myers has been a student of aeronautics for many years and has made hundreds of successful ascensions. He is also the proprietor of the largest balloon manufacturing plant in the world and one of the most scientific in his profession. The balloon which he used in this case is constructed on purely scientific principles, being shaped like a lemon, with a very stiff wind blowing no difficulty was experienced in tacking against it, and making the air ship return to a point almost directly above the ground from which it started.

It was then a comparatively easy task to arrange some method for propelling the contrivance through the air, and according to the plan suggested the plan almost immediately suggested itself to him of connecting a system of ordinary bicycle pedals, with a rotary propelling sail. Thus, by simply pedaling the pedals with the feet, the rotary sail was driven rapidly around exactly like the propeller of a steamship. In this manner he was enabled to impart to the structure a forward motion, and to steer it in any desired direction. The experiment was a success, for it was essential to have sufficient control over the balloon to keep its head pointed toward the wind.

After the usual tests had been made, the professor found that every purpose was satisfactorily answered by a pair of long planes, constructed of a triangular-shaped piece of canvas spread out along the sides of the balloon. These aeroplanes are so arranged that they extend outward on either side of the operator and may be handled with great ease. They possess valuable properties. For example, if it is desired to have the balloon ascend it is merely necessary to incline the planes so that the forward ends or points are slightly elevated. The effect is immediate, and almost magical, the balloon instantly taking a jump upward.

If the operator wishes to descend the planes are turned in the opposite direction, that is, downward, and the huge airship immediately begins to descend. In case it is advisable to turn around one of the aeroplanes is turned so that its surface is parallel with the horizon. The wind then striking the other plane swerves the balloon around as though on a pivot.

Saturday's ascent was made in Brooklyn. Several times immediately after the start, and when the operator had risen a distance of about a thousand feet he returned to the neighborhood of the place where the ascent was made. The ascent was made on the New York atmosphere about the foot of East Sixtieth street, and then made his way along until he was about half-way between the East River and Central Park. This course was kept up until he arrived at One Hundred and Twenty-eighth street, east side, when he shifted about, and once more made for Brooklyn. In order to prove that the ship can be made to tack against the wind. After making temporary excursions on either side, he sailed over to Winchester street, and after some maneuvering a safe landing was made on an open field about one mile east of Yonkers.

The operator is able to maintain a stationary position against a strong wind, but to keep from being carried south directly into it. The inventor believes that this difficulty can be overcome by the use of a light storage battery for power. But in its present shape it can tack against the wind, which is the best that sailing vessels can do in the water. There can be no doubt that this is the first really successful contrivance for the navigation of the air ever invented.

QUEEN'S OLDEST SUBJECT.

Bale and Hearty at 103—Reads French and Italian Classics Daily.

Who the Queen's oldest subject is it would be difficult to say. One of the oldest is Margaret Ann Neve, who lives in the Island of Guernsey, and who has attained the age of 103. A relative who contributes an account of the veteran to the Leisure Hour tells that she was born on May 18, 1792, and every day goes through more than half her age. She has traveled a good deal in her time, and her last journey was undertaken when she was 82. She then went to Craoow, in Poland, to see Kosciuszko's monument, and also to Russia. On a long journey to Poland her only companion was a sister, who was then 89 years of age.

When visited recently Mrs. Neve was found in the garden weeding and pulling up buttercups, a task at which she continued for an hour and a half. After gardening she generally goes indoors and reads for an hour and a half. History as a rule, often in French or Italian, both of which languages she knows as well as English. Milton and Dante have been, and still are, her favorite books. Sometimes she enjoys a little German or Spanish, and she reads her Greek Testament frequently. After dinner, at 2 o'clock, when she eats much the same as others do, she has a nap till 4 o'clock; and then she talks and knits and has her tea. About 5 o'clock she retires to rest. She reads family prayers every morning and evening; and when the light is good in the morning she reads without glasses of any sort.

Once a week Mrs. Neve has a luncheon party, and one of her favorite

guests is her great-nephew, not quite 3 years old, and rather more than 100 years younger than herself. She walks about the house and grounds entirely by herself, and not long ago went up a step-ladder into a loft to look for something she wanted and to see what was there. She frequently goes out to the meadow to see the cows, and calls them all by their names and feeds them out of her hand. Quite recently a photograph of this interesting old lady was sent to be shown to the Queen, who asked if she might keep the likeness as that of one of her oldest subjects.

THE LITTLE GIRL.

Whose Power of Observation Was Very Embarrassing.

A handsome young woman with a beautiful little girl of four years sat in a crowded Market street car yesterday.

"You've got on mamma's dress, haven't you, Aunt Alice?" remarked the child.

Aunt Alice flushed and called attention to a balloon man on the corner.

"Yes, the last time mamma went that dress down town she bought me a balloon. Will you buy me one, Aunt Alice?"

"Yes, if you'll be good."

"Oh, I'll be good. Do you like mamma's hat? It makes you look awful pretty, Aunt Alice."

"There, be a good girl. See that woman out there want to carry it any longer, 'cause I couldn't carry it and a balloon, too. Haven't you got any best dress of your own, Aunt Alice?"

Aunt Alice yanked the little girl out of the car by the arm, and the chances are that she got no balloon.—San Francisco Post.

"Will you buy me a balloon, then?"

"Yes."

"And I can carry it?"

"Yes."

"All right. Then take mamma's parasol. I don't want to carry it any longer, 'cause I couldn't carry it and a balloon, too. Haven't you got any best dress of your own, Aunt Alice?"

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