

DESERET EVENING NEWS.

Wednesday, January 20, 1909.

WALDO: THE NORTHERN POLAR CONTINENT.

Dreams of the Arctic Explorers realized.

(Communicated exclusively to the Republic.)

INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT.

In presenting to the world an account of a northern arctic continent, I cannot better explain the manner in which I became acquainted with the discovery than by introducing the following copy of a letter, which I have dispatched to Professor Gerok, of the University of Bonn, in the scientific service of which institution I am occupied. I claim no credit for the discovery, but consider myself fortunate in being allowed to make it public. I think I have rightly considered the acquisition personally mine, because it does not come within the scope of the scientific mission to Alaska with which I am charged; and I have chosen to publish it first in this country since I have felt that it would be most widely and most rapidly diffused. The translation has been made as literal as is consistent with rendering it intelligible, and the only additions made to it are the headings to distinguish the different topics. I am certain that the importance of the disclosure made will be readily appreciated by intelligent readers, and more especially by all men of science, and I therefore submit the document without comment upon the interest and value it has in my mind.

NEW YORK, December, 1898.

LETTER TO PROFESSOR GEROK.

NEW YORK, N. Y., Dec. 20, 1898.

Prof. Isidor Gerok, University of Bonn, Germany: Dear Sir,—My preliminary report upon the discovery of the new United States territory of Alaska I dispatched to you by the last Bremen steamer. I trust it will prove satisfactory. My reason for remaining behind a few months in this city, will I hope be held sufficient, when I assure you that the special cause of my detention will not delay the writing out in full of the abundant notes I have taken, nor the proper preparation of the specimens for the university cabinet, which are numerous and valuable, and many of them wholly novel. I have the best assistance in both these duties, and confidently expect to present myself to you in March with my work completed, and its results in good condition for your inspection.

I must beg you to consider confidential the disclosure I am about to make as to the matter that has induced me to remain here for the winter, since I wish nothing published in relation to it until I am ready to make a full announcement. The facts I will state as briefly as possible.

While at Kodiak Island, off the south coast of the promontory of Alaska, whence I wrote you, I made the acquaintance of the widow of a German hunter named Zockler, who, after she came to understand my character and business in the country, confided to me that she had come into possession of a MS., that she believed to be important, written in a language unknown to her, and which had been entrusted to her by a stranger when at the point of death, under a solemn promise that she would keep it until she could find some man of education who would undertake to decipher and publish it to the world. I could make nothing of the document, after several examinations, as the characters imperfectly written with a lead pencil, were entirely unknown to me. But, at the earnest solicitation of the woman, who seemed to feel its custody to be a burden, and to harbor some superstitious notion in respect to it, I consented to take it with me, and to use every means to acquire a knowledge of its contents. The widow Zockler's account, which I have no reason to distrust, is that the man who gave her the MS. drifted into a boat some three years before. He was nearly famished when she took him from the boat, with the assistance of a neighbor, and carried him to her hut, and was only so far recovered by the stimulants she administered as to utter the injunction in regard to the MS., when he sank back and expired. Madame Zockler seemed to feel the fulfillment of the dying wish of her unknown countryman, revealed to her in such peculiar circumstances, to be essential to the peace of his soul.

It was not till I reached New York, in July, that I found time to look at the manuscript, and might not have done so then had it not turned it over while taking some specimens from my large chest to show to a scientific visitor; and as I lifted the bundle of MS., which was closely written upon the unused spaces of leaves from a ship's log and other odd scraps of paper, a small sheet, dropped from it, more freshly written than the rest, which I saw was in very fair German, though somewhat misspelled and evidently written by an illiterate person. After my visitor had left I returned at once to this scrap, which I found to my delight furnished a key to the whole MS. The MS. was written in a crude but compact and comprehensive stenography, devised by the author. The German note also gave me the astounding information that the writer was a sailor, lost from a ship in the Northern ocean near Spitzbergen, and that he had drifted to an arctic continent, or island, which he found inhabited by a peculiar race of men, and had remained there some ten years, until weary of a meagre and monotonous life, and pining for home, he had boldly put out upon the North sea again in the same ill-fated boat in which he had reached the polar country. How long he had drifted or by what currents and winds his frail vessel had been brought around through the narrow Straits which separate the eastern and western continents, unfortunately he did not live to tell. This is the more to be regretted, as his memoranda are very defective, and doubtless a scientific questioner might have obtained from him many important facts that he did not think it worth while to record. That he survived, however, long enough to reach the outskirts of civilization, and was able to confide the brief account of his remarkable adventures and discoveries to safe hands, is matter for wonder and gratitude. To be the medium for making these interesting discoveries of another known to the scientific world I count great honor and good fortune; and I feel confident that under the stimulus to discovery thus furnished to arctic explorers, the statements of this MS. will soon be verified, and a new and most unique country be made ac-

possible to scientific research. So greatly interested have I become in the subject while laboriously translating the sailor's MS. into German, and aiding Mr. Brown, my capable American assistant, in rendering it into English, that I have fully determined to resign my connection with the university and embark with the next arctic expedition from Bremen, if I can induce Professor Petersmann, its conductor to accept my services. Or I should prefer to join his expedition as the representative of our university, if this can be arranged. I have scarcely a doubt that I shall be able, at the end of three or four years, to give to the world an accurate and complete account of the Polar continent, of which we for the first time obtain a glimpse in the document I have the good fortune to possess.

The MS. is nearly translated, and the translation will be printed in a few weeks. I shall take pleasure in sending copies to you. The German copy I shall transmit or carry for publication at Bonn.

With many good wishes for Madame Gerok and your fair daughter, whom I regret that I shall not meet at Christmas, I remain your friend and pupil.

ADOLPH BERTFRIED.

(To be continued.)

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