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## Miscellaneous.

### THE GERMAN NORTH POLE EXPEDITION.

BERLIN, March 3.

The English have sent their lamented Franklin, the United States their celebrated Kane to the Arctic regions, and now the Germans are on the alert to send Captain Werner to the North Pole and to explore this "terra incognita" of our globe.

When about a year ago several English naval officers proposed a new expedition to those distant regions by the old route between Greenland and America, Dr. Petermann, the renowned chief of Perthe's Geographical Institute in Gotha, wrote a letter to the London Geographical Society, proposing another route over Spitzbergen, which promises a result by far more favorable than the old voyages.

Two corvettes, Meteor and Drache, have been built at the royal wharf of Danzig, and their splendid engines furnished by the English foundry of Penn & Son. They will leave their armament in Danzig, will receive improved sailing apparatus, and comfortable cabins on their decks. The crews have been greatly strengthened by massive iron armor. The crew will be formed by volunteers of the royal and of the commercial navy of Hamburg. In order to provide them with a large supply of coal, several proper arrangements on board of the ships have been introduced.

Captain Werner, by telegraphic dispatch, has been summoned to Berlin, to report in person to the King on all the details of the expedition. As soon as he will have returned to Hamburg, both corvettes will immediately steam from Danzig to Hamburg, and if unforeseen circumstance will not delay their departure, the captain thinks to sail in the beginning of April.

The plan he thinks to pursue, accordingly to the instructions of Petermann, is the following: He will not spend his time, like Franklin and Kane, by sojourning in the Arctic regions, but will sail at once for Spitzbergen, where there are found large mines of good coal, and after having obtained a new supply thereof, he will start without delay for the North Pole itself.

The advantages derived from the success of this enterprise, are both of a scientific and commercial interest. In Petermann's plan the revival of the German whale fishery is strongly accentuated, besides pointing to another mine of wealth, which lies hidden in the northern latitudes. These are the stores of ivory, the gigantic teeth of the mammoth elephants, which on the borders of Siberia, hidden in snow and ice, have been preserved for future generations.

Petermann says:—"It is well known, that in the northern parts of Siberia, but especially on the coasts of the Northern Ocean and its islands, as well as on those of New Siberia, hence just on the route of the proposed expedition, there are found immense masses of those gigantic animals, some even entirely complete with their—, and skin and hair still fully and well preserved. Some

localities seem to consist of nothing but bones and ivory, and form the richest and most important, nay to all appearance inexhaustible ivory strata of the world.

But, besides this zoological problem, a purely geographical one expects its solution from this proposed expedition. Dr. Petermann, after having instituted a comparison of all the existing data regarding land and water in the neighborhood of the North Pole, is of the opinion that Greenland is an immense island, extending as far as the Behring Straits.

After he had published the first draft of his hypothetical figure of Greenland, he received, to his surprise, a letter from a German astronomer, who by means of observation of the variation of the earth's centre of gravity, had attained exactly the same result.—[Correspondence of the Cincinnati Gazette.]

### VICTORIA FALLS ON THE ZAMBESI.

The following description of the Falls on the Zambesi river in the interior of Africa is from Dr. Livingstone's new book:

"The Victoria Falls on the Zambesi river are among the most remarkable curiosities in the interior of Africa. For several miles above the cataract the river is smooth and tranquil, flowing by lovely islands thickly covered with tropical vegetation. Lofly palm trees, with the fruit in golden clusters, grow abundantly upon the banks. Many flowers peep out near the water's edge. But these charming islands are soon succeeded by dangerous rapids. It is only when the river is very low that they can be passed in safety. Elephants and hippopotamuses are often swept over the falls, and of course, smashed to pulp.

"On reaching the falls, a spectacle of indescribable magnificence was presented to the travelers. The cataract is formed by a crack across the river, the bed of the Zambesi at that place. The lips of the crack are still quite sharp, except about three feet of the edge over which the river rolls. The walls go sheer down from the lips without any projecting crag. The cleft is in length a few yards more than the breadth of the Zambesi, which was found to be by measurement a little over 1,860 yards, but this number was retained to mark the year in which the falls were for the first time carefully examined. The width at the narrowest point was found to be 80 yards, and at its broadest somewhat more. Into this chasm of twice the depth of Niagara Falls, the river, a full mile wide, rolls with a deafening roar. The body of water rolls clear over quite unbroken, but after a descent of ten or more feet, the mass suddenly becomes like a huge sheet of driven snow. Pieces of water leap from it in the form of comets with tails streaming behind, till the whole snowy sheet is changed into myriads of rushing, leaping, aqueous comets. The amount of water is probably exceeded by Niagara, though not in the months when the Zambesi is in flood. This vast body of water necessarily incloses in its descent a large volume of air which, forced into an unknown depth, rebounds and rushes up loaded with vapor to form three or even six columns as of steam, visible at the distance of 21 miles.

CAVES IN FIFESHIRE SCOTLAND.—At a recent meeting of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, Professor J. Y. Simpson gave an account of the visits paid by him last summer, along with other eminent Scottish antiquaries, to the caves on the coast of Fifeshire, at East Wemyss. There were, he said, eight or nine of these caves, and on the walls of most of them they had found sculptured symbols almost identical with those found upon the sculptured stones of Scotland. These sculptured stones were found along the east coast, running northwards from Fife, only two having been discovered south of the Forth. They were for the most part monoliths, and the symbols had hitherto been supposed to possess a sepulchral character, an idea which was not, he thought, consistent with the circumstances that the very

same emblems were now found inside these caves, which were the abode of man in his archaic condition. In these caves they found representations of the elephant, the horse, the dog, with collar round his neck, exactly like those found in the sculptured stones. They had also the bear, the deer, the swan, the peacock, the fish, the serpent; also the comb and mirror, the horseshoe, etc. They had in some cases the symbols of Christianity. Some marks were evidently pre-Roman, while the series continued down to the time of Christianity. The cave sculptures, he had no doubt, were coeval with the monoliths. They found crosses on them in considerable numbers, sometimes the cross standing on a tripod; and in one case they had the cross and tripod inverted. For himself, he had come to no conclusion as to what was the purpose of these carvings, for he thought their supposed sepulchral character was taken away by the position in which they were found. As Dr. Michell had found, there were even yet families in Scotland who lived in caves, on the Galloway coast, and they had recently had the description of the district of Charteris, in France, where about 150,000 people still live in caves. No doubt caves formed a very good shelter for man in his rude state—much better perhaps, than anything he could construct for himself. In some of these caves had been found the stone weapons in use before man had metallic tools to work with, and at the time when animals which now had no existence were walking over France and England in great abundance.—[Chambers's Journal.]

COURT ETIQUETTE IN AFRICA.—On entering a village of the Manganja, we proceeded, as all strangers do, at once to the Boalo; mats of split reeds of bamboo were usually spread for us to set on. Our guides then told the men who might be there who we were, whence we had come, whither we wanted to go, and what were our objects. This information was duly carried to the chief, who, if a sensible man, came at once; but if he happened to be timid and suspicious waited until he had used divination, and his warriors had time to come in from outlying hamlets. When he makes his appearance, all the people begin to clap their hands in unison, and continued doing so till he sits down opposite to us. His counselors take their places beside him. He makes a remark or two, and is then silent for a few seconds. Our guides then sit down in front of the chief and his counselors, and both parties lean forward, looking earnestly at each other; the chief repeats a word such as "Ambuiatu" (our Father, or master), or "moio" (life), and all clap their hands. Another word is followed by two claps, a third by still more clapping, when each touches the ground with both hands placed together. Then all rise, and lean forward with measured clap, and sit down again with clap, clap, clap, fainter and still fainter, till the last dies away, or is brought to an end by a smart loud clap from the chief. They keep preface time in this species of court etiquette. Our guides now tell the chief, often in blank verse, all they have already told his people, with the addition, perhaps, of their own suspicions of the visitors. He asks some questions, and then converses with us through the guides. Direct communication between the chief and the head of the stranger party is not customary. In approaching, they often ask who is the spokesman, and the spokesman of the chief addresses the person indicated exclusively. There is no lack of punctilious good manners. The accustomed presents are exchanged with civil ceremoniousness, until our men, wearied and hungry, call out, "English do not buy slaves; they buy food," and then the people bring meal, maize, fowls, batatas, yams, beans, and beer, for sale.—[Livingstone.]

NATIONAL PECULIARITIES.—Edmund About says: At the age of twenty-five, an American has tried a dozen ways of life, made four fortunes, a bankruptcy, and two campaigns, pleaded a cause, preached a religion, killed six men with a revolver, enfranchised a negro and conquered an island. An En-

glishman has passed two examinations, been attached to an Embassy, founded a counting-house, converted a Catholic, made the tour of the world, and read the complete works of Sir Walter Scott. A Frenchman has rhymed a tragedy, written in two journals, received three sword-wounds, attempted two suicides, troubled the peace of fourteen husbands, and changed his political opinions nineteen times over. A German has scarred the faces of fourteen of his intimate friends, swallowed sixty tons of beer and the philosophy of Hegel, sung eleven thousand couplets, compromised a maid servant, smoked a million of pipes, and been concerned in two revolutions. The Roman prince has done nothing, learned nothing, suffered nothing. The grate of a cloister is thrown open, a young girl with no more experience than himself is led forth, and these two innocents proceed to kneel before a priest, who licences them to begin a fresh stock of innocents.

ITALY.—The latest English papers contain the following extract of a dispatch addressed by Mr. Odo Russell to the Earl of Clarendon, dated Rome, February 8, 1866:

"Travellers visiting the Pope's dominions should be very careful not to bring forbidden books or Colt's revolvers with them, the custom house officers having strict orders to confiscate them, and it is not always possible to recover them after the owners have left the Roman States.

"Forbidden books are those condemned by the congregation of the index, books on religion or morality in general, political and philosophical works of every description, and more especially Italian religious tracts published in London. But, above all, travellers should be careful not to bring English, Italian or other Bibles with them, the Bible being prohibited."

BEAUTIFUL CUSTOMS.—In the mountains of Tyrol it is the custom of the women and children to come out when it is bed-time, and sing their national song until they hear their husbands, fathers and brothers answer them from the hills on their return home. On the shores of the Adriatic such a custom prevails. There the wives of the fishermen come down about sunset and sing a melody. After singing the first stanza they listen awhile for an answering melody from off the water, and continue to sing and listen till the well-known voice comes borne on the waters, telling that the loved one is almost home. How sweet to the weary fisherman, as the shadows gather around him, must be the songs of the loved ones at home, that sing to cheer him, and how they must strengthen and tighten the links that bind together these humble dwellers by the sea! Truly it is among the lowly in this life that we find some of the most beautiful customs in practice.

THE POISONOUS CHARACTER OF THE COBRA DI CAPELLO.—Not long ago a man too tipsy to be cautious, was poking up with a stick the cobra di capello in one of the cages in the serpent room at the Zoological Gardens; the serpent darted and touched the man who died in exactly ten minutes. The wound was on the nose, and was such as might have been made by the touch of a needle. The snake was killed—why I know not—and Mr. Frank Buckland, the naturalist, who has charge in the Gardens, was dissecting its body. While doing so he felt a strange sensation coming over him and he went out of doors and talked to a workman near by, and asking him to drag him to a chemist shop, and beat him to death rather than let him fall asleep. They did pummel him mercilessly and dragged him to an apothecary shop, where he gasped out "Ammonia!" They plied him with ammonia and water and he recovered. He does not know how the poison was communicated, but thinks he might have cleaned a finger nail with a knife he had used in dissection.—[London Letter.]

THE spotted fever is raging in the lower part of Crawford and the upper end of Lawrence counties, Ill., and several deaths have occurred.