

POLAR EXPLORATION.

Professor Nordenskiöld's Special History of Twenty Years' Work.

His Personal Efforts, Patronage, Endurance and Successes.

Travel Toward the Great Ice Basin of the North.

GEOGRAPHICAL AND BOTANICAL OBSERVATIONS.

A Scientist's Struggles Against Accumulated Difficulties.

MR. OSCAR DICKSON'S LETTER TO THE HERALD.

The New Highway Between Europe and the Russian Asiatic Empire.

St. Petersburg, Nov. 28, 1875. To James Gordon Bennett, Esq., Proprietor of the New York Herald.

DEAR SIR—During the last twenty years a number of expeditions have been sent from Sweden to the Arctic sea for the purpose of investigating the natural history and geology of the Polar basin, and for penetrating, if possible, into a region hitherto unknown.

HISTORY OF THE DIFFERENT EXPEDITIONS. The first two of these expeditions were despatched in 1828 and 1829, under the command of M. Otto Torell, and were equipped partly by him and partly by the Swedish government. Up to that time the flora and fauna and the geology of Spitzbergen were almost unknown; but through the researches of a number of specialists (Blomstrand, Malmgren, Nordenskiöld, Düner, &c.), who accompanied the expedition, the natural history of Spitzbergen, an island which stretches from 76½ to 81 degrees north latitude, at once became very well known.

SEVERAL LARGE METEORITES WERE DISCOVERED at Oviak, on Disco, the largest of which weighs 50,000 pounds and ten times surpasses the celebrated Pallas meteorite in St. Petersburg. It is the largest mass of cosmic iron yet found on earth, but with the means then at my command it was impossible to bring these meteorites to Sweden.

It was accordingly necessary to send for this purpose a new expedition to Greenland, consisting of two ships, which, under the command of Baron Von Otter and a numerous scientific staff, started for Greenland in the following year (1873). The brilliant manner in which Baron Von Otter executed the difficult task of transporting these meteorites is well known, as well as the lively controversy in the scientific world about their origin which took place after their arrival in Europe.

As this survey could not be finished in that year (1874), the Swedish government, at the instance of the Academy of Sciences at Stockholm, sent out in 1874 another expedition under my command, which for that purpose visited, besides other places, the Storöförd on the east side of Spitzbergen. During this expedition also our former zoological and botanical researches were continued, and many important additions to the knowledge of the geology and geography of Spitzbergen were made.

showing that in early geological periods even the Polar regions were inhabited by animals whose nearest relations are at present confined to the tropics, and King Karl's Land, on the east of Spitzbergen, which was formerly known only through the reports of walrus hunters, was seen for the first time.

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ly necessary to have some other means than men for the transport of food, for which purpose dogs had before that time always been employed by Polar expeditions. Before setting out on the main expedition it was, therefore, necessary to go to Greenland to buy dogs and to study their employment as draught animals.

With this end in view I went, in 1870, with a small expedition to the Danish colonies of Greenland; but I returned with the conviction that dogs would not well answer the purpose; in the first place, because it was impossible to get a sufficient number from one or two colonies, and if the dogs had been collected from several different settlements it would have been impossible to exclude the very infectious and fatal diseases which are peculiar to the dogs of that country, and which, when once introduced, would have soon spread through the whole pack; and, secondly, because a dog cannot transport food for itself for more than thirty days, which makes it impossible to employ dogs for a long distance in sledges where there is no chance for them of hunting on the journey. This negative result of the Greenland expedition was richly counterbalanced by its important scientific results, of which space will only permit me to mention

of Greenland, undertaken by me and our celebrated botanist, Dr. Berger, which first gave us a real idea, founded on actual observation, of the aspect of our globe during the glacial period. During this trip the immense crevices with which the ice was intersected so frightened our Esquimaux followers that they soon left us and obliged us to continue our journey alone.

The discovery of a large number of fossil plants, of great importance for the knowledge of the old climates during the different geological periods of the globe, showing that, for example, during the upper cretaceous age, figs, magnolias and other sub-tropical plants abounded in these now icebound regions, which, at a yet earlier period (lower cretaceous) were covered by a totally different tropical vegetation of conifers and ferns. The collection of fossil plants brought by us to Sweden is also of great and special interest for a knowledge of the fossil flora of the United States.

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new small species which, although first discovered in these remote regions, will probably be found on the surface of glaciers in other parts of the world.

Fourth—Besides this, a very important geological collection was made, especially containing fossilized plants, which give us a very complete idea of the climates during former geological epochs, showing, for example, that the theory lately embraced by many eminent scientific authorities—namely, that hot and cold climates have often alternated on the surface of the earth—is not founded on real observation; on the contrary, all the fossils found by us in the Arctic regions show that until the commencement of the cretaceous period a tropical climate prevailed from the Equator to the Pole, and that after that time the climate only became colder by degrees until the glacial period.

A GENERAL ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THEIR GREAT VALUE. The great favor with which these and other scientific results were accepted in Sweden consoled us for the failure of the attempts to penetrate far into the north; and on the very day that I returned

A NEW EXPEDITION TO THE ARCTIC REGIONS was planned, the means for which was again furnished by Mr. Oscar Dickson. Thitherto most of our expeditions had examined Spitzbergen and the adjacent seas, and the nature, flora, fauna and geology of these parts of the icy uninhabited Arctic regions are now much better known than those of many old European countries. It was therefore determined not to return to Spitzbergen, but to extend our scientific researches to Nova Zembla, a country which had hitherto been but slightly explored, especially as to its eastern shores, and to the adjacent Kara Sea.

For ten years the Kara Sea has been regarded as entirely inaccessible, and almost all the expeditions formerly sent there have been obliged to return before reaching it. But when the fishing at Spitzbergen began to diminish, and the Norwegian walrus hunters were forced to seek fresh places for their trade, they went to Nova Zembla, first to its western shores and afterward, when the walrus and seals were frightened from there, to the Kara Sea; and their experience soon showed that during certain seasons this sea was not so inaccessible as was generally believed. On the contrary, it seemed probable that the Kara Sea, whose icy masses had hitherto formed an insurmountable obstacle to all previous attempts to reach the mouths of the large Siberian rivers, might at certain seasons be completely open. Besides, the fauna and flora of the Kara Sea were entirely unknown. These considerations determined

which was to go at the commencement of June from Tromsø to Nova Zembla and to spend the summer there in scientific researches, being accompanied for this purpose by four learned Swedes—viz., Drs. Kjellman and Löndström, botanists, and Drs. Theel and Stuksberg, zoologists—and then to make an attempt later in the season to penetrate into the Kara Sea, and, if possible, to reach the mouth of the Yenisei or of the Ob, whence I, with a part of the expedition, would return by way of Siberia after having sent my ships back to Norway. I was able to follow this plan almost exactly, as I have had the honor of giving to the readers of your influential journal (the HERALD) an account of its most interesting phases.

A LETTER FROM MR. OSCAR DICKSON—THE GRAND AND NEW HIGHWAY BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE RUSSIAN ASIATIC EMPIRE. GÖTTENBERG, Nov. 26, 1875. To James Gordon Bennett, Esq., Proprietor of the New York Herald.

DEAR SIR—The interest evinced by so eminent a patron of geographical research as yourself for my expedition to the Yenisei under Professor Nordenskiöld, is highly flattering, and I shall gladly avail of your kind offer to receive further communications of interest that may be sent me by the Professor. I have lately forwarded one such letter to Captain Allan Young, which, he no doubt, has handed to you.

Dr. Petermann, in his Mittheilungen, part 21, calculates the watersheds of the Ob and Yenisei to enclose 103,500 German square miles, while all the countries of Europe, Russia excepted, contain only 81,623 German square miles. From this statement an opinion may be formed of the great consequences likely to result from the highway now opened up between Europe and the Russian Asiatic Empire. I am, sir, with greatest regards, yours very sincerely,

OSCAR DICKSON.

THE LATE DR. ANDERSON. TRIBUTE TO HIS MEMORY BY THE BOARD OF MANAGERS OF THE NEW YORK CATHOLIC PROTECTORY.

In many circles of New York society in which devotion to the amelioration of the less favored classes of the community is a constant object and study, the memory of the late Dr. Henry James Anderson has been recently honored with marks of esteem for the services rendered among them during his lifetime.

The deceased gentleman's natural kindness of disposition and unselfish desire to labor for the good of others connected him in this city with several works of charity, the most notable of which was his connection with the Board of Managers of the New York Catholic Protectors. His labors were especially zealous, and as a tribute to his memory on their part the board of that institution met a few days since and passed the following resolutions:

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions and preamble be engraved, signed by the President and said special committee, and that the same be prepared and sent to the allied family of the deceased.

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THE HEBREW FAIR.

SUCCESSFUL PROGRESS OF THE CHARITABLE UNDERTAKING—THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE FAIR AND THE OBJECT TO BE ACCOMPLISHED—CREDITABLE FINANCIAL RESULTS.

Whoever is interested in procuring relief for the needy may study with profit, not unmixed with pleasure, the methods in which effective use at the Hebrew Charity Fair, now in progress at Gilmore's Garden. There the thoughtful will find interesting subjects for study and the charitable may have the amplest opportunities to exercise their generosity. The plan of this fair does not differ notably from ordinary events of the kind. Its arrangement is more elaborate, however—possibly there is more untried success as a result. Since its opening on the evening of the 9th inst., the receipts have reached the splendid figure of \$100,000.

With such success what need is there to consider any other system of relief, especially when the cost of a charitable enterprise of such magnitude will not exceed the amount of the receipts? These are the financial results, but who shall calculate the amusement afforded? The visitor who goes to the Hebrew Fair intending to bestow his mite in aid of the suffering and distressed who are in his charge, instead of being confronted with painful pictures finds something entertaining on every side. Amid a blaze of beauty he moves to enjoyable music, feasting his eyes on things useful and ornamental, prettily arranged at myriad booths tended by Israel's fairest daughters in their most captivating moods. It is any wonder, then, that there is heard of the attractions of the fair that the claims of its clients upon public charity? Certainly not; the average contributor would have to be more or less than human if he were not more concerned for the moment about the pretty girls who ask his contribution than the sufferers to whose benefit it is applied. This is a feature of all our fairs, and in this respect we may be said to differ from other people whose charity, we are told, often lessens in proportion to the distance at which they are removed from their objects. A story is told of a French lady of rank who visited a neighboring convent on a winter day and found that the poor monks had no wood, but must rely upon their fervor and prayers for warmth. On returning home she was greatly pained at their condition, and while some logs were being placed on her own fire she ordered her steward to send wood immediately to the convent. Moving closer to the fire she had for, gotten the cold when the steward returned to inquire how many loads of wood he should send.

"Oh, you may wait," she said, indifferently, "the weather now is much milder."

THE HOSPITAL. Doubtless there are many visitors to all our fairs who would never have troubled themselves to ascertain whether the institutions in whose aid they are established were really deserving, if those who plead for them were less attractive. But the merits of such an institution as the Mount Sinai Hospital, for whose benefit the Hebrew Fair is being conducted, cannot be so easily recognized. It is a noble charity, so broad in its scope as to embrace all sects and nationalities, although the members of the Hebrew faith are foremost in its support and management.

The hospital is situated at the corner of Lexington and Madison streets, and has a comfortable and well-ventilated accommodation of some 300 inmates. It was last benefited, as in the present manner, in December, 1870, when, for the joint aid of itself and the Hebrew Hospital, which is situated in the City of New York, the Regiment Armory, which netted \$150,000. In the same month the Catholic fair for the benefit of the Mount Sinai Hospital, which netted \$150,000, was held. The Hebrew fair, which is now being held for the benefit of the Mount Sinai Hospital, is a noble charity, so broad in its scope as to embrace all sects and nationalities, although the members of the Hebrew faith are foremost in its support and management.

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Rachel Haas, Theresa Werthelmer, Gertrude Stettelheimer, Minnie Fisher, Katie Smith, Emma May, Georgia Rosenfeld and Annie Hirschhorn. These are a few of the prominent stands, and there are many others of equal interest to the majority of the visitors.

There is, in addition, a restaurant, with Miss Levi Saxe and Mrs. L. Minzeheimer in charge, assisted by a captivating volunteer corps of lady waitresses. At four o'clock every Friday afternoon the fair has closed, not to open again until half-past six o'clock on Saturday evening, which is usually an extremely busy night. The following are the receipts daily thus far:—December 9, \$40,000; 10, \$41,000; 11, \$42,000; 12, \$43,000; 13, \$44,000; 14, \$45,000; 15, \$46,000; 16, \$47,000; 17, \$48,000; 18, \$49,000; 19, \$50,000. Total, \$1,000,000. And still they are not done.

FINE ARTS. GOSSIP AMONG THE STUDIOS AND ART GALLERIES—A LIFE-SIZE PORTRAIT OF HENRY M. STANLEY, THE HERALD EXPLORER.

R. Ortiz, a Spanish artist, who has been but a few months in this country, will, about December 21, place on exhibition at his studio, No. 23 Union square, a portrait of Henry M. Stanley, the HERALD African explorer. The figure is full length and life size, and represents Stanley standing in the dress worn by him while travelling in Africa—Prussian trowsers of gray linen, white coat, pantaloons of heavy blue flannel and boots reaching above the knees. The figure is posed in an easy, careless attitude. Stanley holds his rifle in a manner which gives the idea of support, though it does not touch the ground. The face is browned from long exposure to the fierce rays of the sun and has an expression of great firmness and self-reliance, but without a particle of conceit. The artist has placed an open landscape beyond the figure, suggesting an irregular rocky plain, but it is not carried into detail from fear of detracting from the interest in the figure. The color is generally cold, almost purple in tone, but in the face is some of the rich color of the Spanish school of Velasquez and Murillo, the flesh tints being indistinctly seen through the skin.

Mr. Ortiz has several Spanish scenes in his studio. His figures are full of spirited drawing and brilliant color. They represent dark-eyed beauties with the national head-dress of lace, college students singing in the streets, matadors preparing for a bull fight and a miniature bull fight, in which schoolboys take characters of both men and animals. Mr. Ortiz is a valuable acquisition as a figure painter to New York.

Robert E. Minor is at work on a landscape, a piece of powerful work. The scene is a mill stream in Littlefield, Conn. A wooded bank lines the shore, and the water dashes furiously around a bend in the river and over the rocky bed, forming the foreground of the picture. This work promises to be one of the strongest landscapes ever painted in this city. Two other large landscapes painted by this artist are destined for the Centennial. One is a daybreak over a scene where grand old oaks are seen with their roots immersed in the water, which is gradually killing them, as it has some of their companions. The companion is the hour after sunset, as Byron says:—

When the last sunshine of evening day  
In summer's hours is dimmed,  
The local interest of this picture consists in its being in the vicinity of the battle field of Sedan; but that is lost in the poetic feeling which pervades the picture, giving it high rank as a work of art.

The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts will, about New Year's, open that portion of their new building on Broad street, Philadelphia