

Will Amundsen Discover the Lost Arctic Continent?



The Aurora Borealis, Sketched from a Camp of the Last Peary Expedition—a Mystery Whose Answer May Be Found in the Lost Continent



A Scientific Reconstruction of the "Neanderthal Man."



Captain Roald Amundsen on Board the "Maud," with One of His Little Eskimo Protéges.

What Science Hopes to Discover in the Mysterious Land Between Us and the Pole, That Has Been Locked Away for Ages by Cold and Storm and Frozen Ocean

LOCKED in by age-old ice fields and gignatic frozen bergs somewhere between Alaska and Siberia and the North Pole is a lost continent.

It is the one remaining place on earth about which the world of today knows nothing—except that it exists. Yet of all places on earth there is none upon which the mind of science dwells with such eager curiosity, or whose exploration may mean so much to man's knowledge of his own history.

For on that lost continent, there is good reason for belief, there are still living forms of life, both animal and vegetable, which have been wiped out for ages in all other parts of the earth. In its hidden valleys, protected by towering mountains and volcanic warmth, the dinosaurs, those monster lizards of a million years ago, may dwell. The mastodon and the hairy mammoth may walk with ponderous tread the floors of its

forests; the pterodactyl, the enormous flying lizard, whose memory still comes down to us in the legends of dragons, may still beat the air with its bat-like wings.

And in some such hidden and protected valley the creature that bridged the gap between the ape-like forms and man, the "missing link" itself, may still be alive. Or, at least, relics of him may still exist in such numbers and forms as to settle forever the question of our evolution.

It may be, too, that on this lost continent are the ruins and remains of a forgotten civilization to which old Egypt's most ancient cities are nothing but babies. Remnants of the races that built them may still be alive among them. Almost certainly there are descendants of a great expedition of Norsemen who journeyed west some seven hundred years ago, found the lost continent and were trapped there.

All these things may be, and science believes that many of them are. It is sure that, at the least, the lost land hides profitable trades in gold and gems and minerals of all kinds. There is evidence that radium-bearing ores in vast quantities exist—and if this can be found and utilized the whole problem and power may be solved for the world.

When Captain Roald Amundsen, the discoverer of the South Pole, starts off this Fall with the expedition that was delayed last month by the accident to his aeroplane, the first step toward discovering and opening up the lost continent will be taken. It was indeed the primary cause of the expedition, but Amundsen was drawn away from his purpose by the dramatic and spectacular idea of racing over the Pole in his plane instead of using it to observe the mysterious land. Now, it is reported by those close to him, he has gone firmly back to his first idea, and so the finding of the lost Arctic continent again becomes a probability.

The lost land cannot be less than a half million square miles in extent, and is perhaps more than a million. Its existence is proven not only by the legends of natives and tales of explorers who have seen it from a distance and were beaten back by ice and cold and storm. Its verity has been scientifically determined by careful studies of the movements of polar tides, currents and ice drifts, and from these the United States Hydrographic Office has been able to place on its charts the land's approximate location.

The nearest approach is by way of Bering Strait, and this is the direction which Amundsen will take. He will drive his ship, "The Maud," into the ice floes which circle the shores of the polar continent and allow himself to drift, for years if necessary, until he is closest to those shores. Then he will arise in his all-metal plane and soar over the mysterious land, landing for closer observations of what he sees, like the eagle, high up in the air.

We know that the whole Arctic region once had a tropical climate, and that the animals, trees and plants of the tropics once flourished there. The Pole, now frozen, basked under a fervent sun.

In Greenland, which is to a large extent in the same latitude as the unexplored land, vast remains of tropical life have been discovered. There are fossil remains of palms and bread fruit trees in Greenland, and also of tigers, camels, rhinoceroses, mastodons, elephants and other animals of the tropical zone.

In that period all the lands within the compass of the Arctic Circle were warm of climate and clad with a luxuriant verdure. Then a great change occurred, due, perhaps, to a shifting of the earth's axis, and cold descended on the polar regions. Vast quantities of ice were formed and flowed down from the poles toward the south. A series of glacial periods then extended over the temperate regions, and to some extent over the tropical regions of the earth.

But the occurrence of the glacial period was not as severe in some regions as in others. Climate has

never followed latitude exactly. There are valleys in Alaska which enjoy a warm climate during a large part of the year. The island of Iceland, which touches the Arctic Circle, has a very pleasant, warm climate in Summer, and is a healthy place of residence all the year round. Europeans are flocking to it as a Summer resort in increasing numbers every year.

There is good reason to believe that the lost Arctic Continent may possess extensive valleys and areas which enjoy a relatively moderate climate. Protection by favorably situated mountain ranges, preventing the flow of ice and glaciers from the north, would conduce to this condition. The existence of volcanoes, which are common in Alaska, might also help to maintain a fertile soil and warm climate in certain parts of the Arctic Continent.

It is significant that scientists have recently found a vast extinct volcanic crater of Ngomo in South Africa, which was inhabited by tropical animals at the time the glacial period prevailed in the surrounding country. The fossil bones have shown that these animals sought a refuge here from the surrounding cold and found it, for they continued to live here for hundreds of thousand years. It is suggested by geographers that somewhat similar conditions may have preserved both animals and men within the heart of the Arctic Continent.

Peary, the discoverer of the North Pole, tells a most interesting experience along exactly these lines. He once climbed, he says, an enormous ice barrier in an unexplored part of northern Greenland.

When he reached the top he looked down through thousands of feet into a fertile, almost semi-tropical valley!

There were trees, luxuriant vegetation and meadows and open spaces all spangled and covered with flowers. Through his glasses he could see great herds of animals roving about and feeding. All around Peary was a desolation of ice, with zero temperature, yet far beneath him, in a protected, deep and enormous valley, there were teeming life and warmth and everything necessary to existence. Peary would have liked to explore it, of course, but the descent was impossible. The plans of his expedition soon took him away, and he never returned to the place.

An aeroplane could have made the descent and explored the mysteries of this lost Greenland valley, whose latitude was no nearer to the Pole than the lower section of the lost continent.

There is a very interesting possibility that the gigantic hairy mammoth still survives in the sheltered fastnesses of the Arctic Continent. We must bear in mind the unquestioned fact that the mammoths, down to comparatively recent times, roamed in vast herds in what is now the Arctic portion of Siberia. The mammoth is a huge species of elephant, an animal which now only exists naturally in the tropics.

In Siberia mammoths have been dug out of the earth, with all their flesh on their bones, in such good condition that it could be eaten; with their eyes intact and with undigested food still in their stomachs. Such discoveries have been made at Khabarovsk and other places in Siberia. For years many scientists argued that mammoths must still be living somewhere in Siberia, but this idea is now nearly abandoned.

It seems that these mammoths were rather delicate animals, and that a general fall in temperature, accompanied by heavy snowfalls and the formation of vast morasses, caused them to perish suddenly at about



Diagrammatic Map Showing the Location of the Lost Continent, Amundsen's Proposed Route, and How His Aeroplane Will Leave the "Maud" and Circle Over the Mysterious Continent. At the Right is Shown the Probable Course of the Ancient Norse Expedition, Which Sought and Probably Found the Lost Land and Whose Survivors May Still Be Living There.



A Hairy Mammoth Trapped by Primitive Man. A European Artist's Conception of One of the Struggles of Early Humanity Against Gigantic Beasts—a Struggle Which Amundsen May Still Find Going On in the Polar Sea.

the same time. Presumably the same type of mammoth existed on the Arctic Continent at the same time as in Siberia. If they found refuge in the former place within warm and sheltered valleys, is it not reasonable to suppose that these monstrous creatures are flourishing there still?

If the mammoths still exist, it is also probable that the other extinct animals which flourished at the same time survive with them in their hidden retreat. Therefore we should expect to find the hairy mammoth accompanied by the woolly rhinoceros, the sabre-toothed tiger, the cave-lion, the cave-bear, the cave-hyena, the aurochs and many extinct monkeys in the Arctic Continent.

Science has already discovered many links in the chain of evolution, including the Pithecanthropus Erectus, or ape-man of Java; the Neanderthal man; the Piltdown man, the Galley Hill man, the Broke