

SENTINEL

A Climb Up Mount Ararat.
Archibald C. Coolidge, in the "New York Nation."

In history and in legend, since the Flood, Ararat has been one of the most famous mountains in the world, of which the ancients believed it to be the centre. Its reputation for inaccessibility rather surprises one, for it does not—at least seen from the northern side—look as sharp as the Matterhorn, or, though it is in reality, as lofty as Mont Blanc, perhaps because of the much greater height of the snowline in summer. The finest view I obtained of it was from the road above Erivan. Immediately at one's feet lies the city, with all its Oriental picturesqueness of mud houses peeping out of masses of rich gardens; beyond it stretches some thirty miles of plain, broken up by patches of trees, and from this foreground the huge mountain towers up in the air, a great dark cone tipped with the whitest snow. On one side it is connected with a low, bleak range; on the other, or rather part of Ararat itself, is Little Ararat, dwarfed by its brother, and free from snow in midsummer, yet a sharp, stately cone, rising to nearly thirteen thousand feet above the sea-level. In the saddle between the two, at a camp called Sadar Bulakh, about three hundred soldiers are stationed during the summer to escape the heat of the land below and to keep in some sort of order the bands of wandering Kurds.

We proceed slowly enough, with very frequent rests, the delay coming from the guide, who early became exhausted and complained of age and illness. At about half past four we reached a spot where there was a general desire to camp. The Kurds naturally wanted to stop as soon as possible, the soldiers thought it would be cold higher up, and the guide was tired out. On the other hand, it seemed absurd to halt when there was still so much daylight, and when it was desirable to get well ahead for the morrow. As a means of cutting short discussion, I started on, followed with more or less willingness by the rest of the troop; and though we did not go much further, even a little was a decided gain. The place where we did camp was respectfully smooth, and the night, owing to the fortunate absence of the wind, was not as cold as we had supposed it would be. The party, therefore, slept well; only the guide tossed and tumbled about, groaning with fever, and keeping me, his next neighbor, uncomfortably awake. Luckily I had quinine with me, and, after filling him up with it, told him next day to remain behind with the Kurds and with one soldier, also fever stricken.

We did not get away until 5 a. m., but then moved steadily on, at last, keeping on the ledge of rocks that borders the snow, and stopping with increasing frequency only from fatigue and want of breath. To a veteran Alpine climber it might perhaps have been child's play; there was nothing perilous, nothing really difficult about it; it was only a persistent scramble upwards. To a tourist of sedentary habits it was, at least, exhausting, as the way was very steep, and the rarefied air made one lose one's breath easily, besides causing headache. Spiked shoes and a good alpenstock, instead of a birch stick with a sharpened end, would have been a considerable help. On we pushed, every man for himself, wasting our strength in amateur fashion, but making such continuous progress that, in just about four hours and a half, the first three of us, not many minutes apart, reached the summit, which consists of two cones one a few feet higher than the other, and by ten o'clock all fourteen were assembled on the top of the snow.

There are two ways in which one can take the view that spread below us, for we were fortunate in our weather, and had time enough to get a good look before a cloud closed in on us. One can survey the empires of Russia with its great present and future, Turkey and Persia with their great pasts; one can repeat that the thin stream beneath is the ancient Araxes, one can think of the exploits of famous conquerors, the cradles of former civilizations, and of Noah's Ark—the scene is one that appeals strongly to the imagination. From what we might call the photographer's standpoint, it is less satisfactory. On every side lie unlovely plains, relieved only occasionally by a little water or a patch of green; beyond them are high, dull mountains, all with the same barren, scorched look save for a few distant snow peaks. Perhaps at a season or on a day when there is no heat mist dimming the landscape, the prospect may be more attractive. Somehow, with all its historical associations, it did not tempt me to linger very long in the glare, but made me willing to join the soldiers in partaking of refreshments, or investigating the box with the names of previous visitors.

And yet, though the view left only a blurred outline in the memory, that outline is something I shall never forget or cease being pleased to own. The return was easy enough. Three thousand or so feet can be covered in a twinkling by coasting down a great snowfield, and, even if one is more cautious, he can descend rapidly through loose stones, though there is a very uncomfortable chance (as it takes nothing to set a lot in motion) of sending them flying at any time on to the men under you. Before sunset the last of the party was again at Sadar Bulakh. Here there had been quite a little excitement, for much of our progress, including the reaching of the summit, had been followed through field glasses, and shots fired from the top had been distinctly heard; thus we had eye and ear witnesses of our success. Many were the toasts drunk that night. On the whole, it seems to me that the most notable result of

our climb is that it must provoke others. No one, even in the vicinity, can now maintain that the mountain is inaccessible or nearly so. Of course, like other such places, it is dangerous to get lost on in a storm (a man died in that way last summer), and accidents can happen anywhere; but there are countless less celebrated, as cents harder in every way. Some day, then, in the future, we may expect to see numerous alpenstocks marked, among other names, with "Mt. Ararat."

VACCINATION AND SMALL-POX IN BAVARIA.—Considerable interest attaches to any information from Bavaria on the subject of vaccination, from its having been one of the earliest countries to adopt the practice and from the thoroughness with which it has in recent years been carried out there. The vaccination of infants was introduced into Bavaria as far back as 1807, though it was not actually insisted upon until the child reached its third year. Even then a certain number escaped for one reason or another, but at six years of age a second line of defence was erected, because at that age school attendance is compulsory and every child on entering school is bound to produce its vaccination certificate. The result of this generally effective system of primary vaccination was well illustrated in the great pandemic of small pox which attacked Europe in 1870-73. In 1870 there were 30,742 cases of small pox in Bavaria, of which 29,429, or 95 per cent, were in vaccinated people. This at first sight appears to be a heavy indictment against vaccination, and has been used by anti-vaccinationists as such. But this assumption is entirely negated when we learn that of the 5,070 deaths from the disease, only 137 were between the ages of two to five, and only 48 between six and ten—the period of highest protection; while 3,970 of them were over twenty years of age. These figures show in the clearest way that the mortality which increased steadily from eleven to sixty years of age was the result of the gradual weakening of the protection given in infancy. Further corroboration of the value of vaccination is derived from the experience of the Bavarian army, into which revaccination was introduced in 1843. From this date until 1870 only six deaths from small-pox occurred in it, while from 1828 to 1836 there had been 52 deaths. In 1874 Bavaria came under the operation of the general law of revaccination, which was applicable to the whole German empire, and the most recent results of that law are recorded in the consular report on Bavaria for 1897-98, presented to Parliament in July last. In this report the vaccination statistics for 1897 show that out of 164,800 children born, 159,942 were vaccinated for the first time, and 147,714 of them successfully. Of the 13,858 children who were not subjected to vaccination, only 1,050 evaded the law purposely; the remainder were excused on medical grounds, or were absent from home or not traced. Of the 124,777 persons liable to be vaccinated for the second time, 120,573 were successfully vaccinated, and only 235 evaded the law wilfully. With such effective vaccination as this, we are not surprised to be told that during 1896 only one case of small-pox occurred in the whole of Bavaria.—*British Medical Journal*.

HISTORY OF PLAGUE.—The first historical mention of plague is of an outbreak in Lybia, in the third century before Christ. Again we read of bubonic plague in the great plague of Justinian in 542 A. D. In the fourteenth century the "black death" appeared in southern Italy, 1346-47, and spread over Europe, reaching England in 1348, where it appears to have remained for five or six years. A second epidemic occurred in 1361, and third in 1368. In the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries outbreaks in Great Britain are recorded. The great plague of London in 1665, in which seventy thousand persons died, was the last English epidemic of plague. Plague occurred frequently in European countries up to 1841. In Russia it is epidemic, sometimes of a mild type, but more often virulent. In India plague has probably existed since 1815, from time to time in a sporadic form and under various names in various parts of the country, with no reliable information as to the mode of origin. In the autumn of 1896 a severe outbreak occurred in Bombay, which was preceded by an epidemic among rats of a fatal but hitherto unknown disease.—*Nineteenth Century*.

NEW FRUIT TREE.—A new fruit tree is described by Andree in the *Revue Horticole*. The name of the plant is *Eriofa sellowiana*. It is indigenous in La Plata, South America, but also thrives in Southern France. The tree which blossomed and bore fruit in Andree's garden attained a height of 3½ metres, and had the form of a shrub. The fruit is an oblong, egg shaped berry, four to six centimetres long and three to five centimetres wide, retaining its color even in the ripest condition. The meat of the fruit is firm, of white color and sweet taste, containing much juice, and giving off an extremely agreeable and penetrating odor. The flavor is said to remind one of the pineapple.

PAPER UNDERCLOTHING.—The ever inventive Japanese are now making underclothing of their finely crimped or grained paper. It is very tough, and at the same time very flexible. The paper is not sized, and is not impermeable, and when it has been wetted it is difficult to tear. One might imagine that a paper shirt would feel somewhat stiff and uncomfortable, but it seems that this is not so, and that after it has been worn an hour or two it no more interferes with the transpiration of the body than would one of cotton or linen.



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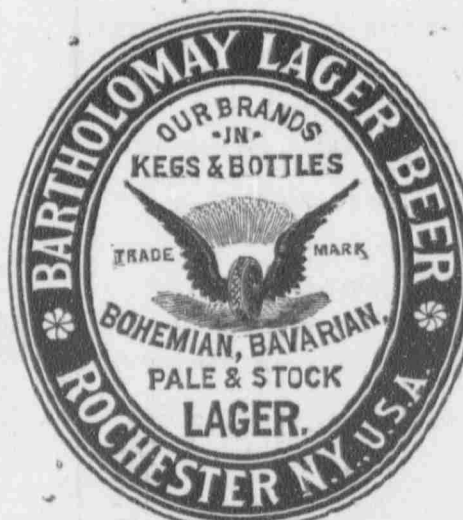
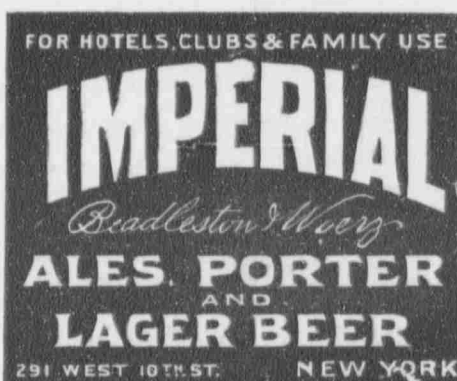
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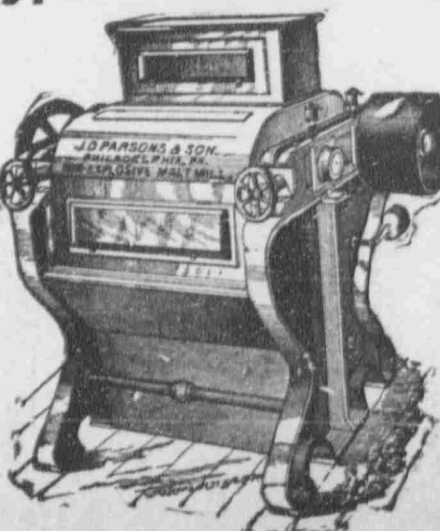
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