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TIME MYSTERIES

SOME RIDDLES IN LIFE THAT HAVE NEVER BEEN SOLVED.

Lands and Peoples That Are Supposed to Have Disappeared—The Legend of the Lost Atlantis—The Ancient Pygmies of Tennessee.

The public appetite craves nothing so much as a riddle, a secret to guess, but nowadays every man's life is so bare, so exploited, and we live so much out of doors from the cradle to the grave that very few facts or fancies can be kept hidden. There were, however, certain mysteries which during the last century the American public pondered and worried over which are yet unsolved and, except by a few old people, are almost forgotten.

One of these, perhaps the oldest, is the question whether beneath the Atlantic not far from the Bahamas there is a sunken continent known to the Greeks as the lost Atlantis. It was still talked of familiarly in the first half of the last century. Seafaring men declared that when the water was calm and clear they had caught glimpses of ancient cities beneath, with their glittering roofs and spires, and that in certain conditions of the atmosphere the tolling of the bells could be distinctly heard. Treatises were written by learned professors to prove the probability of the legend, and other treatises, as learned and vehement, to flout and jeer at it as an idle fable.

Certain fads and jetsams, which was washed ashore after heavy storms on the coasts of Georgia and Florida—logs of strange woods unknown to this generation, coins, bits of carved marble and beaten brass—was ascribed to the long dead workmen of Atlantis.

The lost colony is now known only as the subject of an ancient fable, but years ago it was by most educated people believed to be an actual fact.

Another much discussed mystery then was what had become of the colony of civilized people who at the time of the settlement of the country lived on the western coast of Greenland.

That country is, as you will see by a glance at the map, shaped something like the half of an egg, cut lengthwise, the flat side upon the earth, the point to the south. The rounded center is a heap of impenetrable ice mountains. As the centuries go by enormous bodies of ice slip from it into the sea and, breaking off, drift slowly down along our coasts. These are the icebergs of the Atlantic ocean. Now, along the narrow slip of habitable land which edges Greenland on this side, tradition says, once dwelt a civilized people who, both in knowledge and the habits of life, were far in advance of the Laplanders.

They were well known to the early Danish navigators, who made frequent mention of them in their logs and reports. The question yet unanswered is, Where are they now? Tradition among the Laplanders reports that the whole colony two centuries ago emigrated in a body to the eastern coast of Greenland, attempting to cross the hitherto impenetrable masses of ice in the center. No tidings ever have come back from them. Some of the scientific men who accompanied the Hayes expedition made this question a matter of special study. They reported that a doubt could hardly exist that these people did once inhabit that part of the coast and that they now had utterly vanished. If they had been swept away by a pestilence their household belongings at least would be left to tell of them, but not a shard of pottery, not a single grave, remains to show that they ever lived. It was supposed by the Danish missionaries that they had perished in the ranges of ice mountains, but among the Laplanders there were traditions that they had safely reached the western coast and settled there, now forming a civilized community, wholly isolated from the rest of the world. One of Nansen's voyages was, in fact, directed to that coast in the hope of finding this colony. He was not able to reach the northern part of the coast, and the mystery is therefore yet unsolved.

Another problem which perplexed the last generation was the long extinct pygmy race which centuries ago undoubtedly inhabited the Tennessee mountains. Legends among the Indians told of such a tribe of dwarfs, who were supposed to be of more intelligence than the red men. But these legends were very hazy. A burying ground, however, actually was discovered in the early part of the last century in which all of the skeletons were of pygmy proportions. Some of them were carried away to college museums. But as far as I know no scientific inquiry has ever been directed to this question.

Another curious matter which caused much speculation in the early part of the last century was the fate of the colony of French emigrants who fled to this country in the eighteenth century and took refuge in the northern part of Alabama. Like those Frenchmen who found safety in Delaware, they were for the most part of noble blood. Marquises and counts earned their living in Wilmington as dancing masters and even chefs, and their descendants live there still.

But the poor gentfolk who went penniless to Alabama to escape the guillotine penetrated the wilderness and made up a colony of vine growers, farmers, etc. They worked helplessly awhile, starved and then melted away mysteriously. Whether they returned, to ungrateful France or died in their exile nobody knows. It was a romantic, tragical question which much interested the last generation and is now forgotten. But it is still unanswered.—New York Herald.

WILD MEN OF AUSTRALIA.

An Aboriginal Dwelling and a Sweet but Uninviting Dish.

An explorer in the wilds of northern Australia writes: "While at work one day Mr. Hingston found an aboriginal dwelling which revealed evidences of architectural design seldom displayed by Australian aborigines. It was evidently a main camping depot, oval in shape, about sixteen feet long and fourteen feet high. It was built of layers of straw intermixed with a good stiff clay. Small openings as windows were numerous all round the sides. The door was the only drawback. This was a mere burrow hole about one foot from the ground, and one was compelled to crawl in on all fours to enter this primitive type of mansion. When we cleared the river we anchored at Maria Island. Seeing some of the blacks on the beach we went to interview them. They were apparently frightened, however, and abandoned the canoes on which they were at work and cleared into the bush. Care was taken not to interfere with their possessions, and pipes and tobacco were left where the natives could find them. Rambling about we came upon an open space of considerable extent marked out in large squares with stone, on which were planted, three to five feet high, five or six hollow posts, which were stuffed full of human bones. All the posts were painted red. We doubtless had stumbled upon a sacred spot. There were some nice skulls, but not a thing was interfered with.

"A few miles up the river we struck a big camp of natives, but they cleared into the bush as soon as they caught sight of us. We waited some time at the camp, and the blacks returned, satisfied that we did not intend mischief. The usual presents of tobacco and pipes were given, and they were received with the greatest satisfaction. Indeed, we became perfect friends for the time being. To seal the friendship, or, perchance, it may have been the native fashion of 'looking toward you,' a great buck came to me with a woollen vessel shaped like a canoe in his hand and full of honey. I noticed on the top a ball of grass. The chap held the honey to me, but I shook my head, so he took the ball of grass, whisked it about in the sirup and popped it into his mouth. After sucking it dry he put it back into the honey, and when nicely soaked offered it to me again. He evidently wished me to follow his example, but I passed. There was a fine ignama on the fire, just nicely cooked. This I did try, and it was really good—just like chicken."

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

It isn't a bit cooler to be on the shady side of life.

Every man likes to learn, but no man likes to be taught.

To be a man is to be the worry of some woman; to be a woman is to be the worry of some man.

Before doing anything as a result of enthusiasm or excitement, see if your enthusiasm or excitement will not wear off.

Every man flatters himself that he will finally whip his enemy and that he will give him a good one when he gets at him.

It is said charity begins at home. As a matter of fact, there is a good deal of complaint because charity does not begin at home.

When a man gets married he is apt to think everybody should give him a present, but how he hates to give wedding presents when his friends get married!—Atchison Globe.

Strength of Muscles.
You must, some time, try to open the shell of a fresh water mussel or a sea clam. You will find one the size of your hand has great strength, although both his muscles may not be larger than those of one of your fingers. I have often seen a boy pick up a mussel and insert his fingers before the shell was quite closed, thinking he would open it again. Few boys can succeed. They usually have hard pulling to get their fingers free. A big mussel can bite hard. Were it not that the edge of the shell, in big specimens, is smooth and thick, a boy might get his fingers cut to the bone.—St. Nicholas.

A Wasp and a Fly.
An observer tells this: "I was once an interested spectator of a short struggle between a wasp and one of those large flies like a bee with a big flat head. The pair were on the ground, and I watched while the wasp, after probably stinging the fly, deliberately severed the head from the body and then, finding it still too heavy a burden, cut off the tail end of the fly and flew off with the trunk without waiting to perform its toilet. The whole operation took about five minutes, and from the masterly manner the wasp set to work he was evidently a practiced hand."

Moliere's Births and Deaths.
There are two tablets in Paris informing the sightseer that he is passing the house where Moliere was born. One is in the Rue du Pont Neuf; the other at the corner of the Rue Saurval, where it meets the Rue St. Honoré. One inscription says that Moliere was born in 1620 and the other in 1622. Some time ago there were two houses in which Moliere was said to have died.

A Trick of Luck.
"Luck never manages things just right," said the irritable man who dislikes music. "It might just as well have been the other way round, but it wasn't."

"What is the trouble now?"
"My daughter who plays the piano has a sore throat, and the one who sings has a sore finger."

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Iowa Homestead	1.00	1.25
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