

The Loneliest Spot on Earth

HERE are some pictures of what has been called the loneliest spot on earth, the island of Tristan d'Acunha, a desolate rock in the South Atlantic. To the eighty white people who live there it is their world. They are almost utterly cut off from their kind. To them railroad and telegraph, electric lights and all the inventions of the last half century are but a name.

Once a year or so they may get news of the outer world from some sailing ship or a man-of-war of the British South African squadron. A thousand miles of the Atlantic separates them from Africa's most southerly extremity on the one hand, while 1,200 miles in the other direction South America ends abruptly in stormy Cape Horn.

The islanders depend very largely upon potatoes, but these often fail, owing to bad winds that blight the crop. In one season nearly 60 of their cattle died of starvation, owing to lack of forage in allowing the land to be overstocked.

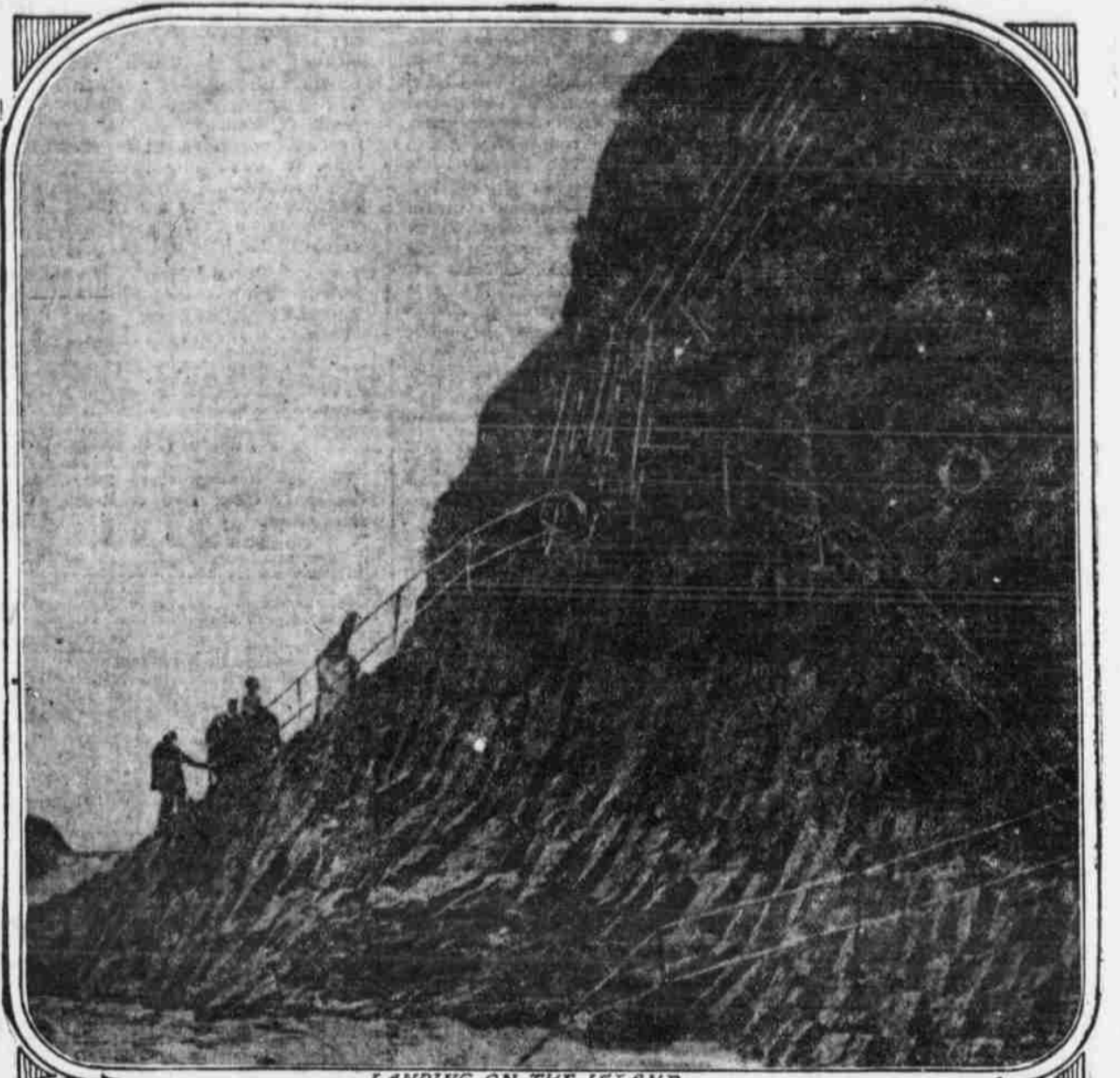
The population remains practically stationary, between seventy-five and eighty souls. Two recent additions have been made in the form of a couple of Italians, shipwrecked sailors who have married island women. One of these castaways, Andrea Repetto, is the only man in Tristan who can both read and write; he was a petty officer in the Italian navy.

Great is the excitement when a sail is sighted by the islanders. They get ready fresh provisions and vegetables, which they hope to barter for clothes and all kinds of unexpected novelties. But even when a vessel puts into the little bay, which is the harbor of the island, the weather is so un-

pleasant, and one of these falls from the lower cliffs in a beautiful cascade. The remains of a fort can be seen, a relic of Napoleon's exile. For while he was confined on St. Helena the British government deemed it advisable to garrison Tristan d'Acunha with troops from Cape Colony.

The Tristanians have no precise form of government, although John Swain, the oldest inhabitant, is recognized as king and legal head of the community. He is also chief justice and referee in all disputes that may arise. Marriages and baptisms are performed by the captains of visiting men-of-war. The islanders have intermarried for several generations, with conspicuous bad results in the children of today.

Round about this rock and extending for some miles out into the Atlantic there is a curious and treacherous growth of gigantic seaweed, or kelp. This reaches to



LANDING ON THE ISLAND.



VILLAGE STREET OF TRISTAN D'ACUNHA.

than Tristan d'Acunha. Yet only last year one of the community who visited the Cape grew homesick and went back in the boat that conveyed the new chaplain and his wife to the island.

For many years Mr. Dodgson, a brother of "Lewis Carroll" of "Alice in Wonderland" fame, acted as chaplain on the rock and strove to teach the men and women how to read and write. It was a pretty hopeless task, for they have the minds of children, except when it comes to driving a bargain, and how to do that they seem to know by instinct.

Last year Rev. J. C. Harrow and his wife volunteered to go out to the island. The couple landed on Palm Sunday in a furious storm. They and their belongings were literally hurled on a beach eight miles east of the settlement.

They were received by the whole island population. The inhabitants set apart two huts as church and schoolhouse, and Mrs. Lucy Green, an old widow, turned herself out of her own home that the newcomers from "the world" might have somewhere to lay their heads. Moreover, the seventeen families agreed to take turns in supplying the Harrows with meat, milk, potatoes and firewood, as well as fish, butter and eggs when such luxuries were available.

certain that it must be kept ready for instant departure.

The settlement proper is built on a bold bluff on the northwest side of the rock. The rest of the island rises sheer and inaccessible in colossal cliffs from the stormy Atlantic. Practically all the male population goes forth when a rare visiting ship puts in, and they do a thriving trade in mutton, butter, milk and albatross skins.

Each householder keeps cattle, sheep, and pigs; but all attempts to cultivate wheat or grain of any kind have failed, owing to the swarms of rats that infest the rock. Last year the British man-of-war Odin called at Tristan with mails and supplies, which were promptly got ashore at the landing place, hauled up on the beach and then taken off to the different cottages by the solitary and primitive bullock wagon that acts as mail coach and parcel delivery.

Fresh milk is the strongest beverage to be obtained in Tristan. There is excellent sport in the vast swarms of aquatic birds that make their homes on the cliffs. Among these are magnificent albatrosses, many of them measuring nearly thirteen feet from wing to wing. The land birds of Tristan are very few and rare.

Several springs have their source on the lofty mountain that forms the apex of the

surface in nearly 150 feet of water, and forms a trap for small vessels, being a Sea of Sargasso in miniature.

The island waters swarm with fish, and any kind of bait from salt pork to a bit of bread will suffice to take any quantity of a fish the Tristanians call the live finger. There is also a kind of bass weighing from ten to sixty pounds.

The Tristanians do not taste bread for seven or eight months out of the twelve, and have to subsist on a slight variation of meat and potato diet. It is easy to imagine how they appreciate a few sacks of flour or meal brought by the warship, or by some casual trader blown far out of his path.

And yet these islanders are a singularly healthy people. The climate is very regular and moist, never very hot in summer, or very cloudy in winter. All the English fruit trees will grow in Tristan, though the fruit lacks flavor. Periodically plants and trees are taken out to be planted there experimentally, for there is little timber on Tristan at present.

An extensive guano deposit was recently found on a little rock not far away, known as Inaccessible Island. The Cape Government sent for a specimen of the guano, and a regular trade may be opened up, thus bringing the loneliest people in the world a little nearer to civilization.

Campagna of Rome

(Continued from Page One.)

loan which repays well the least toll of the farmer, and yet although it is sufficiently extensive to afford pasturage for millions of cattle and grain fields for a continent only a small portion of it is under cultivation. It is divided into large farms owned by a few wealthy proprietors, generally noble families, who lease them on fixed rents to farmers known as Mercanti di Campagna, men of large fortune, who almost form a corporate body and exercise a monopoly.

The Mercanti find it more profitable to use the land for pasture and prefer to breed horses and raise cattle instead of reclaiming the land and cultivating it. The Italian tax laws make this the more profitable course.

An attempt was made to remedy the evil by means of a special law which the government expected to have very beneficial results. Every owner of land in the Campagna was obliged by this law to put his land under cultivation within a specified term under the penalty but of confiscation, but of expropriation by the government.

The law was disobeyed wholesale and the government had to start expropriating the land. Many owners were only too willing to find a good purchaser for their barren property. They had the law on their side, the value of the land had to be appraised favorably to the owners, and the result was that the government suddenly realized that gradually all the Campagna was being bought by the state at a very high price, while the owners were making money hand over fist. The law is now in abeyance, and the Campagna is still in its original condition, unreclaimed and barren.

It is significant to note that the church, which is held accountable for the malaria in the Campagna, has done more on a small scale than the government. The Trappist fathers have reclaimed several thousand acres of land in a district which was considered the most pestiferous in the Campagna, the Tre Fontane, where St. Paul was beheaded. By dint of hard toil and the planting of eucalyptus trees they have succeeded in combatting malaria more effectively than by the laws and free distribution of quinine undertaken by the government.

Everything drags on in the old rut in the Campagna. Improvements are spoken

of, discussed and sometimes attempted, but all to no avail. The Campagna today is the same as in the times of the papal rule.

Half hearted attempts at drainage have failed, and the rain water stagnates and breeds malaria as of yore. A new theory has been found to account for the malaria and one learns that mosquitoes and not mephitic vapors propagate it, but all the mosquito netting that has been put up and all the quinine that has been distributed have not prevented the permanent invasions of fever.

If mortality has decreased, the population of the Campagna is not increasing; hence the condition of the land is the same, and every year there are fresh graves to attest that the malaria still lurks among the wild beauty of this land of ruins and sunshine, over the flat, long plain bounded by blue hills and the blue Mediterranean.

Day after day the sun rises and basks over the Campagna, toward twilight it is transfigured in a blaze of color; later a gray veil is drawn over the plain, the Campagna is swallowed in darkness and chilled with damp and creeping winds. Then it is dark, mysterious and melancholy, and it has all the sadness of a huge cemetery.

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Recent Progress in Field of Electricity

Telephone Systems Abroad.

WHAT strikes one at once in a study of European telephone systems, says the Philadelphia Record, is the way the telephone service is co-ordinated with the telegraph and the mail. In France and Belgium, for example, telephone subscribers can telephone their telegrams free. In England, also, one can send telegrams free over the telephones, and for 6 cents a message can be telephoned to be written down at the other end and sent out by messenger like a telegram. Messages are also telephoned to a subscriber free. Such is the condition of affairs in a nation where the telephone as well as the telegraph are as much public property as the postoffice.

In Germany it costs 25 cents a cent for each word to telephone a message, telephone a telegram, or telephone a letter. You go to your telephone and tell the clerk at the other end what you want to say in your message or letter and he writes it down and sends it by messenger or posts it for you.

Since for comparison it is only fair to put alongside of one another publicly owned and privately owned systems operated by the same type of people, representing the same type of progressiveness, Europe furnishes enough of both conditions to admit the conclusions. It is found there that publicly operated telephone systems are much superior to privately owned; and in the nationally owned systems of Sweden and Switzerland are furnished examples of a service inferior to none the world over.

It is not surprising, with the lower cost that a larger use of the telephone is secured under public ownership. In addition to lower rates is fuller co-ordination. In towns like Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Stockholm, Paris, London, Glasgow and other cities, the number of subscribers has increased amazingly since the absorption of the telephone lines by the respective municipalities.

By recent data, the heart of New York City claimed 25 telephones per 1,000 inhabitants; New York City as a whole, 20; Boston 15; Cleveland, 10; Indianapolis, 8; Richmond, 6; Philadelphia, 5; Washington, 4; all under private management; while as examples of publicly-owned systems, Zurich has 40 subscribers per 1,000; Trondheim, 40; Stockholm, 40, and Berlin (larger than Philadelphia in population) 30—a fact to be noted in comparison arising out of the condition that the larger the population the less subscribers per 1,000 inhabitants.

As a rule, the employees of publicly-owned telephone systems get higher wages than those in privately-owned, the stations for comparison being European. Again, the public exchanges in Holland, France and England are more progressive than the private exchanges in the same localities. The telephone inventor in America finds that companies do not tolerate change, and do not want competition. For instance, the automatic switchboard does away with

the necessity of telephone operators, making the connections between any two subscribers in four seconds by automatic mechanism, the smoothness and certainty of this being unequalled. This would reduce the cost to 10 per line per year; and yet American companies will not suspect their present system because of the initial cost. Europe as well as Canada, uses the automatic switchboard.

Glasgow is always an interesting case of how a people may do things for itself in a whole-hearted manner; and the telephone system which the city operates is no exception. Under private ownership the cost to each subscriber was £10, or \$50 a year. This, among other things, was a cause of complaint; and finally, in July, 1905, the corporation of Glasgow began to construct its own system, and in March, 1906, opened exchanges with 1,000 subscribers, the rates being £5 per annum flat, and £3 per annum for party-wire (two and three) service. Since then the exchange has grown with great rapidity, and to-day has 5,000 lines in operation.

The Glasgow corporation lines extend to the neighboring towns and villages within the licensed Glasgow telephone area, which comprises 145 square miles. Orders of new subscribers come at the rate of ten a day, and the service is considered fine. After paying the postoffice royalties, interest and sinking fund, and carrying forward to the next year, the proportion of prepaid rentals proper to that year showed a surplus of \$5,000, which was clear pocket-money for the municipality.

Electrifying Steam Roads in Chicago.

Mayor Buss's letter to the city council advocating the substitution of electricity for steam locomotives on railroads within Chicago has brought to the front a very important question, says the Chicago News. Switch engines, suburban train engines and through train engines on the terminals in its greatest of railroad centers pour forth soft-coal smoke day and night to the discomfort of the citizens and to the loss of the railroad companies. This railroad-smoke nuisance is unnecessary, as engineers have proved who have applied electricity to steam roads successfully in other parts of this country and in Switzerland, Italy and Sweden.

It has come to be generally accepted by engineers that electricity ultimately will take the place of steam as the motive power on all railroads. The success of the New York Central railroad in applying electricity to its lines near and within the terminals in its greatest of railroad centers is a fact to be noted in comparison arising out of the condition that the larger the population the less subscribers per 1,000 inhabitants.

cuts down the cost of operation.

W. J. Wilgus, vice president of the New York Central, who proposed and carried out the work of applying electricity to the New York terminals of that road, says that the electric motor engines now used by the steam engines. In a recent article in the Engineering Magazine a competent engineer estimated the saving from operating a line with electricity at 25 per cent. This did not take into account the increase in earnings made possible by running suburban trains more frequently than they are run at present. Two distinguished engineers, in a joint paper read recently before the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, estimated that if all the railroads in the United States had been run by electricity in 1905 the total cost of their operation would have been reduced \$26,000,000. They advocated the immediate substitution of electrical power, however, only in the large urban centers where frequent train service is demanded.

These expressions of opinion indicate the practicality of using electricity on railroads in Chicago. The city council wisely

concurred in Mayor Buss's suggestion that the local transportation committee take up the subject. The sooner a full investigation is made of conditions in the city the sooner a comprehensive plan to overcome the difficulties in the way of banishing steam locomotives can be formulated.

Rules for "Hello Girls."

Telephone girls in Brooklyn are instructed, under a new set of rules, to look pleasant and answer all calls in honeyed tones and phrases. Some of the "musts" in the propaganda are:

Operators will hereafter positively refrain from discussing office matters on the streets, in public conveyances, or in their homes.

Operators are hereby directed when answering subscribers to speak in a pleasant tone of voice. No deviation from this rule will be tolerated.

Operators, when requesting patrons to put money in the slot, must positively employ the expression "please."

Operators on duty are strictly enjoined from discussing personal matters with other operators, especially idle gossip.

Prattle of the Younsters

Mamma—Did you have a nice time at the picnic, Gerald?
Small Gerald—Not very. I didn't get enough ice cream and cake to make me sick.

"Dear Lord," prayed 5-year-old Annette one evening before retiring, "please make a good little girl out of me, and if at first you don't succeed, try, try again."

Doctor—I am afraid you have eaten too much cake and candy, Marie. Let me see your tongue.

Small Marie—Oh, you can look at it, but it won't tell.

"Papa, will you please tell me something bigger?"
"What is it, my son?"
"Do they arm the cavalry with horse-pistols?"

"I just wish I was bigger," said mischievous Willie Smart.

"Indeed?" asked his mother. "How much bigger?"
"Oh! Just big enough to do all the things I get blamed for doing now."

Dolly—Are you a doctor what brings us our new baby?
Doctor Pullen—Yes, my little dear.

Dolly—Well, you stop it. Every time a new one comes pop has to sail another dog, an' we only got one pup left.

Tommy was stubborn and his teacher was having a hard time explaining a small point in the geography lesson.
"Tommy," teacher began, "you can learn

this if you make up your mind. It's not one bit smart to appear dull, I know," she continued coaxingly, "that you are just as bright as any boy in the class. Remember, Tommy, where there's a will there's a way."

Little Annie (suddenly)—I shouldn't think the garbage man's wife was very happy, mamma.

Mamma (surprised)—Why not, dear?
Little Annie—Because he's so often in the dumps.

A Washington divine tells a story of a certain clergyman's family in which it was the custom that each of his children repeat a Bible verse at the beginning of every meal in place of the more general formula of grace before meat.

One day one of his little girls had been found out in some small sin, and had been sentenced to a much curtailed dinner, to be eaten at a table quite by herself, that her contaminating presence should be set apart from the others. When the family was seated around the dining room table the usual little ceremonial was performed, and when her brothers and sisters had each repeated the text her father called upon her, sitting solitary at a wee table at the other side of the room. At first she demurred on the family circle she saw no reason for joining the family devotion. Her father insisted, she remaining silent a moment thinking; then spoke out clearly. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies,"—Washington Star.