VICTORIA LAND VISITED.

TALK WITH THE MAN WHO IS JUST BACK FROM ANTARCTICA.

Mr. Borchgrevink Believes the Southern Continent May Be Reached in Almost Any Year—His Plans for Scientific Work There—Probability That an Expedition Will Soon Be Sent.

The geographers who gathered in London from all over the world for the sixth International Geographical Congress enjoyed a treat that had not been expected, writes a correspondent. I never saw so absorbed an audience on a geographical occasion as that which listened to the young Norwegian, C. E. Borchgrevink, as he told the story of his visit last winter (the antarctic summer) to the shores of Victoria Land. Ross discovered it fifty-four years ago, only a little while after Victoria ascended the British throne, and no later explorers have visited its ice-covered coasts till Borchgrevink and his comrades saw them nine months ago. The modest young man who, all unnoticed, was taken to a seat on the platform, had not been announced in the general programme. Few knew his name. The fact was, he had arrived in London after the Congress opened and was at once taken in hand as a prime attraction.

BORCHGREVINK'S ROUTE.

I shall not recapitulate here the features of Borchgrevink's graphic address, of which the cable gave a summary at the time. It will suffice to say that the steamer Antarctic left Melbourne in September last year for a whaling cruise in the Southern seas, and that Mr Borchgrevink, who was desirous of making a scientific visit in those latitudes was able to take passage only by shipping as a common seaman. The ice conditions permitted the party to penetrate clear to Victoria Land, and they spent eight days (January 18-26, this year) along that coast. In a talk which several gentlemen had with Mr. Borchgrevink a little later he gave us some further information and opinions of interest. The explorer is about 30 years old, has had considerable scientific training is of medium height and athletic build, and has the light hair and the clear white and rosy complexion of his Northern race. His expressed desire to lead an exploring expedition to Victoria Land was received with cheers by the Congress. In answer to our questions Mr. Borchgrevink said:

"Commercially, our voyage was not a success. We hoped to get oil and perhaps whalebone, but we found no whalebone whales and our quest for oil did not meet with even fair success. The Antarctic has not been sent back for next season, and I do not think she would have been even if Capt. Svend Foyn, who so bravely sent his steamer out on this experimental voyage, had lived. Other vessels have had no better success. The four vessels from Dundee in 1892 failed to reap a profitable harvest, and so did the Norwegians in 1892-94. We can hardly regard the commercial value of antarctic work as wholly disproved by the results of the past three years, but the outcome thus far is not encouraging, and whalers and sealers, for the present at least have abandoned the field.

"The geographical results have been extremely important as proving that research can be carried on with no more dangers and difficulty than in the arctic regions. None of the vessels that, since 1892, have gone to South Polar waters has had exploration particularly in view, but Capt. Larsen has considerably extended the known coast line of Graham Land, and, without any special difficulty, we penetrated almost as far south as has ever been reached. I believe that, as a rule, the coast of Victoria Land may be reached in any antarctic summer, and there stretches away, in all probability, a land of continental extent that invites research.

FIRST ON THE MAINLAND.

"Only three parties have ever set foot on land within the Antarctic Circle. Ross and d'Urville, before us, alone landed within that area. We were the first to set foot on the mainland of Victoria Land. Many people seem to have the incorrect impression that a wall of ice surrounds Victoria Land, forbidding the idea of landing in the country. I am sure a careful reading of James Ross' voyage would give no such erroneous idea. I am confident that there are quite a number of places where a landing may be made, and we succeeded in easily landing on a peninsula jutting out from Cape Adare and gently sloping to the sea. Not far away, Ross landed on one of the Possession Islands and on Franklin Island.

"I was impressed with the accuracy of Ross' data and descriptions. His charting of the coast was excellent, and the geographical positions he gave to his discoveries were accurate, as far as we could determine. We met with just the same reception that he did when we landed on one of the Possession Islands, where, fifty-four years ago he raised the British flag. You may remember that he said myriads of penguins covered the ground and opposed the landing of his party, rushing at them and picking at them with their sharp beaks and crying or shrieking in loud, coarse notes. They also fiercely attacked us as we pulled our boat up on the shore. I had to use my stick in self-defense, and their screams so filled the air that I had to shout when I told the men that we were the second party to set foot on the island. Ross also spoke of the deep beds of guano, the deposits of ages, on this little island. We found these beds to be of unusual depth, and I have brought home a specimen for analysis.

"Next to our reaching Victoria Land at all, I think the most significant result of our voyage was that we found vegetation on a cape of this island which Ross did not name, and to which I gave the name of Cape Ferdinand von Mueller. Not a trace of vegetable life—not even a lichen nor a piece of seaweed—had, up to our voyage, been found on lands within the antarctic circle. About 500 miles north of our landing place, on Cockburn Island, Sir Joseph Hooker found some twenty flowerless species, two of them seaweed. It has since been supposed that Cockburn Island was about the southern limit of terrestrial vegetation, but 500 miles south I found on the rocks, both of the Island and of Cape Adare, a cellular and flowerless plant which I believe to be a lichen. I have yet had no opportunity to have it examined."

AN INTERESTING DISCOVERY.

The geographers who heard the explorer tell of this discovery regarded it as of the greatest interest. From what is known of the meteorology of the antarctic regions it is thought probable that the evaporation may equal or exceed the precipitation in regions nearer the south pole, and that, if more southern latitudes are ever attained, a little vegetable life may be found, or at least the conditions may be favorable for the discovery of fossil fauna and the study of geological facts.

"My plan would be," continued Mr. Borchgrevink, "to make Cape Adare the headquarters of a scientific expedition. The party might spend the winter there in safety and comfort. In this neighborhood a great many of the phenomena requiring investigation may be studied to advantage. There are twenty glaciers within easy reach of the cape. One of them seems to contain strata of lava between thick layers of snow. A volcano, which has recently been active, is near by. Cape Adare itself rises to a height of 3779 feet above the sea and is a most favorable position for meteorological observations. The irregularity of our compasses off Coulman Island seems to indicate there are secrets there of scientific value. As for biological research, the sea teems with life and so do the lands, and it will be remarkable if in the vast area believed to be covered by the Victoria continent hitherto unknown animal life should not be discovered.

"As for the inland work, I should be glad to lead a party into the interior of Victoria Land. I believe that it would be comparatively easy to get into the interior, on the ice cap, from the neighborhood of Coulman Island. My plan would be to travel both with the Scandinavian ski and the Canadian snowshoes, differing conditions of the snow making one or the other more useful. I should expect to carry our equipment and supplies for several months' work on sledges drawn by dog teams. It is probable that I should have to travel only about 160 miles, nearly due east, to reach the southern magnetic pole. There is little doubt that the pole will be found on the continent itself. Its exact position should be located in addition to extending researches as far to the south as possible."

A JUROR'S DIARY.

Things Kept Getting Worse Every Day of the Trial.

The following record of a juryman's experience was made by a carpenter of more than average intelligence:

The first day he was impressed with the magnitude of the case and the sadness of the prisoner. He did not sleep the first night, for the reason that four men occupied one room. The air was bad, and two men snored loudly. The second day he tried to remember all that the witnesses said, and its bearing on the case, and at night was very weary and went to bed early, but was awakened and disturbed by the other jurors The third day his head ached, and he could with difficulty follow the testimony. His appetite was poor and he was drowsy. The fourth day he was astonished to hear the opposing evidence; statements which had been made by apparently honest men were affirmed to be false. He was shocked, and his first impressions and personal interest were disturbed. His head ached, and he felt weak and nervous; his appetite and sleep were broken. The fifth day he gave up all efforts to follow the testimony or to understand what was said. He felt stupid and exceedingly tired. The other jurors began to complain of the food and the sleeping rooms, and had several quarrels with each other on religious and political matters. Foolish stories were told and card playing and personal boasting filled up the evenings. They all manifested disgust at the trial, and longed for the end, and declared they would never be caught in a similar case. On the sixth day the case was closed. The arguments of the attorneys and the judge's charge seemed very dull and wearisome. He felt sick, looked forward to a release, and his interest in the case had died out. He could not understand why so much was said that was contradictory, and why the judge should not tell them the real facts of the case. In the jury room no discussion took place: each one voted "guilty" or "not guilty," and when they found the majority was "guilty" most of them followed the majority. Two of the minority became angry and refused to vote for over a day, except in favor of the prisoner. They gave no reasons for their belief, only saying that they were right and the rest of the jury was wrong. Finally, one of these men was accused of having some personal object in voting for the prisoner, and after a short altercation he changed and the other man followed him and the verdict "guilty" was agreed upon.

She Did Not Purchase.

Woman—Have you any stove-lifters?

Hardware Clerk—We have stove lid lifters, madame. I presume that is what you mean.

Woman (defiantly)—I mean stove-lifters.

Clerk (patronizingly)—A stove-lifter would be something to lift up a stove. A jack-screw, for instance.

Woman (angrily)—Have you any jack-screws?

Clerk (surprised)—Y-e-s, madame, I believe so, in the basement.

Woman (meditatively)—Are they silver plated?

Clerk (dumbfounded)—No, madame.

Woman (triumphantly)—Then I don't want any. I wouldn't be seen putting up a stove with a jack-screw that wasn't silver plated. I'll go deal at some store where they have a better class of custom, and keep aristocratic goods. Good-morning.

That Terrible Boy.

Awful child—Mamma said you were pretty old.

Visitor—Well?

Awful child—You're old but not pretty.

The Useful Clock.

How time goes! he said as the clock struck eleven.

It's the only thing that does go, she answered wearily and he took the hint.

ABOUT THE ROTHSCHILDS.

THE MOST IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE GREAT HOUSE.

The Fortune, Personal Traits and Opinions of Baron Alphonse—Lives in the Finest Residence in Paris—An Instance of Their Power—His Views on Labor.

Baron Alphonse de Rothschild, chief of the family in France, is sixty-five years old. He is commander of the leigons of honor, member of the institute and regent of the Bank of France. He married the daughter of Baron Lionel de Rothschild, of London and lives in the finest residence in Paris, at the corner of the Rue Saint-Florentin and Place de la Concorde—a house once the residence of the Czar Alexander I.

Baron Alphonse is the most important member of the great banking house of Rothschild. His influence predominates over the branch houses of his firm in London, Vienna and Frankfort.

He enjoys almost unequalled prominence not only in business, but also in the social, world of Paris. He is to be met in all the most exclusive salons of the Faubourg St. Germain, while the greatest names in France figure on the visiting list of his wife at her magnificent Chateau de Ferriers and at her Rue Saint Florentin palace.

The latter formerly belonged to the great Prince Talleyrand, and is filled with art treasures. Most of these are exhibited in such a manner that by the touching of a spring they disappear into iron safes concealed in the walls. The valuable pictures in the same way, turn on a pivot and disappear from view. This precaution, which bears a flavor of Monte Cristo, was devised by the Baron after a great Commune insurrection of 1871.

A FINANCIAL COLOSSUS.

The united properties of the Rothschilds—and their properties must be considered as united from their peculiar family and business relations—pass even beyond the millions. In the last twelve years they have loaned to certain European governments nearly $450,000,000. Their lordly power is shown in a modern instance. In 1866 the Prussian Government demanded and indemnity of $25,000,000 from the city of Frankfort. The head of the Rothschild house in that city sent word to Count Bismark that if an attempt was made to force the levy he would break every bank in Berlin, and Bismarck was forced to give way. The enormous wealth of the Rothschilds is doubly remarkable from the fact the family was totally unknown a century ago.

One of their mottoes is, "Gold never repeats what it sees," and another, "A man will not tell what he has not heard," but some idea of their riches can be had from the fact that since 1815 they have raised for Great Britain alone more than $1,000,000,000; for Austria, $250,000,000; for Prussia, $200,000,000; for France, $400,000,000; for Italy, nearly $300,000,000; for Russia, $125,000,000; for Brazil, from $60,000,000 to $70,000,000, and they took through the Belmont-Morgan syndicate about $15,000,000 of the issue of United States bonds last February.

THERE ARE ELEVEN BARONS.

The present members of the great house of Rothschild number no fewer than eleven barons. Lord Nathaniel de Rothschild and Barons Alfred and Leopold are located at Paris. Barons Alphonse, Gustave, Edward, Adolph and James in Paris, Baron Nathaniel Mayer in Vienna and Baron William in Frankfort.

Barons Leopold and Alphonse are the owners of the celebrated Rothschild racing stables, and their colors—dark blue, with a yellow cap—have been seen in the front of many a memorable equine contest.

During the past season their famous stable and celebrated horse farm have been managed by an American, who has just signed a contract to remain in the employ of the Rothschilds during the next ten years.

Baron Alphonse is strong-willed and dictatorial, and of less charitable disposition than his famous brothers and cousins, who are always the foremost in all good works. There is little sentiment in the head of the Paris firm. A correspondent in Paris, after an interview with the Baron in 1892, on the question of salvation, thus summarized the Baron's ideas and way of telling them:

"I do not believe in the so-called labor movement," Baron Rothschild continued. "I am confident that the workingmen, generally speaking, are satisfied with their condition, and have neither cause nor desire to complain. They are, I am convinced, indifferent to Socialism. To be sure, some agitators make plenty of noise, but that amounts to nothing; they do not influence the honest and reasonable workingmen.

HIS VIEWS ON LABOR.

"In considering the so-called labor movement it is necessary, however, to distinguish sharply good from bad workmen. Only the idle good-for-nothings desire the eight-hour day. Serious men, fathers of families, work as long as they think necessary for their own and their children's needs. There is much loose talk nowadays about the danger of so much capital in the hands of a few men. This is all rubbish. Some men are richer; others are poorer. To-morrow this is all changed by vicissitudes which nobody can control. It is the money which circulates that fructifies, and money circulates with the same risk to all. It is money which one lends in confidence for so-called good things which does not always turn out to be good. All that applies to the great as well as the small ventures.

"Frighten and threaten capital and it vanishes. Capital is like water. Grasp it violently and it slips through your fingers; treat it gently, dig a canal in which to lead it, and it runs wherever you will. Capital is a country's fortune. It represents the energy, intelligence, thrift and labor of the people. Capital is labor. Apart from unhappy exceptions, which seem to be unavoidable, each shares in the people's capital according to his intelligence, energy and work accomplished. If a workman be discontented with his share he may strike.

"It is unjust to compare a man with capital and intelligence, organizing facilities, invention and knowledge with any gross, brutal workman, who applies to his work only the unintelligent work on his hands."

THE NATIVES OF SIKKIM.

A Queer People Who Borrow Their Religion and Dress from Thibet.

Although the border land in which the commission is engaged at its work of marking out the boundary line between Sikkim and Thibet is from its great altitude quite uninhabited, and beyond the magnificent scenery absolutely devoid of anything to see, the same can not be said for the country passed through en route; for the road taken to reach the frontier lay through some of the most populous districts, and past several of the "monasteries" which are here such a feature of interest to every traveler. Sikkim borrowed its religion, as it has its customs, manners, dress and ruling family from Thibet, which country the simple inhabitants look up to as the center of intellect and fashion, as well as the source of learning and the traditions on which their religon of Dukpa Buddhism is founded. Several of the monasteries are network of carved human bones, and these, with the wonderful cymbals, bells and other instruments they carry in their hands, rather spoil the effect of their beautiful silks, which would show to more advantage without any addition.

The Lamas themselves, when in their ordinary every-day garb, are dressed in plain red woolen robes, which, with their shaven head, gives them an ascetic if not poor appearance, so that when they put on for some great festival some of the wonderful robes and headdresses with which each monastery is stored they are hardly recognizable. Some of the dresses then worn are of most beautifully worked silk, and nearly all are of the same material, but in addition to and over that they hang most curious aprons of a comparatively rich for such a very poor and sparsely populated mountainous country as Sikkim is, in ornaments and instruments of worship. They comprise beside charm boxes and pendants and innumerable varieties of figures of Buddah, vessels like our teapots for filling sacred receptacles on the altar with water, and curious forms of headdress invariably having as secondary ornaments small metal skulls. In addition to all these, skulls of some particularly venerated Lamas richly set in silver, or thigh bones of the same, also richly ornamented, and which they use as trumpets, are objects that they hold in particular esteem.

The gala dress and ornaments of the women are best understood by the accompanying portrait of the Rani, the wife of the present Rajah. Her wonderful tiara, a smaller kind of which is worn on state occasions by all the better class of women, is made up of coarse turquoises, large stones of coral, agate and a species of cornelians, with very poor kinds of seed pearl, all worked on a frame covered in red cloth. The great ear-rings, turquoises set in gold or silver, are exactly similar to those, poorer in kind, worn by every woman, whatever her station, throughout Sikkim, and the same may be said for the strings of coral and amber round her neck. Very few, if any, of them, however, wear the same silk dress, which, with every one of the ornaments, has its value enhanced by the fact of its having come from sacred Thibet, the land they held in so much veneration, the Rani herself in this case being also a born Thibetan.

ALASKAN BOUNDARY.

Importance of Great Britain's Claim—Great Advantage to Canada.

A despatch from Baltimore, Md., says:—The Rev. Father Barnum, who has recently returned from the interior of Alaska, where he spent four years of missionary work among the natives, gives to the Associated Press, an interesting interview regarding the Alaska boundary dispute between the United States and Great Britain. "The claim made by the British Government at the instance of the Canadians," says he, "embraces a valuable strip of land, a portion of which is the key to a vast extent of the interior of Alaska, possessing rich mineral resources. Another portion would give them control of some of the fine natural harbours, and in a third place they would gain one of the most magnificent scenic regions in the world, Glacier bay, which is now beginning to be visited by thousands of tourists all over the world during the winter months. Although the immense value of this land cannot be accurately determined, a knowledge of its geographical position on the coast shows that great commercial advantages should accrue in the future from its possession by this country. It is a long

NARROW SLICE,

running the whole length of the narrow, irregular district of Alaska that is nearest to this country, most temperate in climate, and the only part of the territory that is settled by any considerable number of white men. One important effect of Great Britain's claims, if they should be allowed, would be that Great Britain would have control of a route which is the key to the gold fields in the north-east corner of Alaska. These fields pan out about $100,000 each year, but it has been stated that there are rich prospects there yet unworked as well as other mineral resources which when they become well known will cause considerable immigration there. The best route into the interior is from the head of Lynn canal, by an overland route of 27 miles, to one of the lakes at the head of the Yukon river in British territory, and thence by boat down the Yukon to the gold territory in Alaska. It is the only route in which abrupt mountains do not obstruct the way, and should a railroad ever be built into the interior it is probably the only route which it could follow. Lynn canal has several good natural harbours within the strip claimed by Great Britain, and it is safe to say that the Canadians would soon control the whole trade into the interior if Great Britain gains her point."

FORTUNES BY DISCOVERIES.

Many Important Inventions Brought About by Accident.

Quicksilver was discovered by a lucky chance. A cooper, in Carniola, having on evening placed a new tub under a dropping spring, in order to try if it would hold water, when he came in the morning found it so heavy that he could hardly move it. At first he thought that the tub was bewitched, but at last perceiving a shining fluid at the bottom, he went to Laubach and showed it to an apothecary, who immediately dismissed him with a small gratuity, bidding him bring some more of the same stuf whenever he could meet with it. This the poor cooper frequently did, being highly pleased with his good fortune; till, at length, the affair being made public, several persons formed themselves into a society, in order to search further into the quicksilver deposits thus so unexpectedly discovered, and which were destined to become the richest of their kind in Europe.

Another important discovery is recorded to have resulted from the unintentional application of intense heat. Charles Goodyear had for years experimented in vain, hoping to deprive India rubber of its susceptibility to the action of heat and cold. Conversing with a friend on the subject, he emphasized an assertion by throwing a piece of sulphured rubber across the room. It lighted upon the stove, and when he picked it up a few days afterwards he found

THE INTENSE HEAT

to which it had been subjected had conferred upon the India rubber just the quality he had so long strived to impart to it.

The idea of using gas as being lighter than air for balloons is said to have been suggested to Jacques Montgolfier by a work of Priestley's. It is also narrated that one day, while boiling water in a coffee pot, the top of which was covered with paper folded in a spherical form, Montgolfier saw the paper swell and rise, and that hence he took the idea of a light machine made buoyant by inflation, and traversing the air. After some experiments, Montgolfier and his brother made a successful ascent at Versailles in the presence of the Royal family and numerous spectators.

Another important discovery was made by purely accidental circumstances. Cornelius Drebbel placed in his window some extracts of cochineal, with which he intended to fill a thermometer; into this some aqua-regia dropped from a broken vial standing just above it, and Drebbel's purple liquid was converted into a beautiful scarlet one. How this came to pass puzzled him not a little, but he ascertained that the aqua-regia had dissolved some of the tin of the window frame on its way to the cochineal. Telling this to his son-in-law, Kuffelar, a dyer, at Leyden, the latter turned the information to such good account that "Kuffelar's colour," as it was called, proved

A LITTLE GOLD MINE

to its godfather.

One of the principal causes of prosperity of the Staffordshire, (Eng.) pottery manufacture was the discovery of a cheap durable glaze, applicable alike to brown ware and white ware, and greatly increasing their usefulness by making the surface impervious to water. The discovery, according to Shaw, the historian of that county, was due purely to accident.

At Stanley farm, situated a few miles from Burslem (now the very centre of the potteries district), a maid servant was one day heating a strong solution of common salt, to be used in curing pork. During her temporary absence from the kitchen the liquid boiled over. Being in an unglazed earthen vessel, the solution spreading over the outside, producing a chemical action which she little understood, and which did not compensate her for the scolding she received.

Some of the elements of the liquid combined with some of those of the highly heated brown clay surface to produce a vitreous coating of enamel, which did not peel off when the vessel was cold. The humble brown ware vessel acquired historical celebrity. A Burslem potter, learning what had taken place, saw that glazed ware might possibly hit the taste of the public; he introduced the system of glazing by means of common salt, a system at once cheap, easy, and durable; and Staffordshire has made many a million sterling by the discovery.

Stub Ends of Thought.

No man is a hero to his valet, any more than no woman is an angel to her maid.

Wedded bliss consists largely of two people getting used to each other.

Women change their minds quickly on the principle that large bodies move slowly.

Religion with too many people is the church they belong to.

Children, as a rule, are rank materialists—the more you give them, the better they like you.

It's a mean husband whose heart isn't softened by a good dinner.

Love makes courtship; law makes marriage.

When a man goes to lying for profit, he is beyond reformation.

The more scandal is spread out, the thicker it gets.

We smile with the heart and laugh with the lips.

Nice Distinction.

Caution and cowardice sometimes run pretty closely together; but they are always distinguishable, nevertheless. Even a child can generally see a difference, as in the following case mentioned by an exchange:

Teacher——Johnny, can you define for us the difference between "caution" and "cowardice?"

Johnny——Yessum. When you're scart to go out on a boat an' stay at home for fear it'll sink, and the boat comes in all right, its "cowardice."

Teacher——Well?

Johnny——And if you're scart and stay home, and the boat does sink, then it's "caution."