Ice That Drives Strong Men Mad

The roof of the world is permanently clad in ice. The Ice Cap of Greenland, in places 9,000 feet thick, covers a bigger area than Western Europe and is continually spewing glaciers into the frozen sea—icebergs by the thousand. Spitzbergen and the waters of Arctic Siberia add to this profusion of ice, much of which drifts into the North Atlantic.

Mid-October sees an icy pulp forming on the fjords of Northern Siberia. Then, suddenly, the mercury drops to 70 below and—bang!—an icy covering is whisked across the ocean. It thickens every second until, in half an hour, it is a foot deep. Where currents are strong, the movement of the water defeats the cold. But not for long. The channels of open water formed by the currents gradually narrow and disappear.

Roar Like 1,000 Guns

Inside 12 hours, the ice is four feet thick. And when the tide begins to rise, a roar like a thousand guns booms across the Arctic. Such, at least, is the case in the New Siberian Islands, off Northern Siberia. Here the tide rises and falls as much as 40 feet, and when it rises after the "freeze-up" the world seems to go mad.

The sea presses beneath the ice which resists at first—then suddenly gives way. With a tremendous thunderclap, the air compressed between the sea and its icy crust bursts out, flinging into the air blocks of ice the ize of a house. Jets of sea water follow the escaping air, pouring across the surface of the ice, adding feet to its thickness.

Once again, the tide falls and rises. As it drops, the ice is left suspended across the fjords until, unable to support itself, it crashes into the sea which, exposed to the air, freezes again—the old ice and the new forming a contorted mass perhaps 20 feet thick. Then the tide begins to rise again, pressing upwards harder and harder until once again it bursts through, flinging immense blocks of ice on to the shore with the uproar of a volcanic eruption.

"I've seen men go mad at such times," says Jan Wetzel, a trader who lives in the New Sigerians. "Seen them run along the shore waving their arms and yelling with fear until they fall from exhaustion."

For seven months the sun is but a memory. But with the return of spring, its warmth melts the ice sufficiently for tide, current and wind to break it up.

Late last century, explorers decided that the currents that carry the floes of Siberia, Spitzbergen and Greenland into the North Atlantic could be used to carry a ship very close to the Pole. The American explorer, Commander G. de Long, was the first to test this theory. For two years, his ship, the Jeanette, drifted towards the North Pole, at times with pack-ice piled against her to the level of the decks. But the pack crushed her, leaving her crew to die on the frozen sea 150 miles from the New Siberian Islands.

But the icy fate of the Jeannette did not dissuade others from following in her track. In 1894 the Norwegian, Nansen, allowed his ship, the Fram, to be frozen-in not far from where the Jeannette had perished.

Day after day, the Fram drifted towards the North Pole. When she had reached the most northerly limit of the current, Nansen lowered sledges and dogs on to the floes and set out with a companion, Johanssen. He was a brave man. He knew he could not hope to find his ship again, for she was drifting in an unknown direction. He knew he would have to make his way to land as best he could.

Ships Lifted Forty Feet

When finally forced to turn back, he headed for Franz Josef Island, a sledge-journey which only one of his huskies survived. There, he and his companion also would have died if they had not met members of a British expedition. Back in Norway again, Nansen learned that the Fram had survived. She was lucky, for the power of the floes is such that they have lifted a ship 40 feet out of the water.

Such was the experience of the Intrepid, one of the ships that searched for Sir John Franklin's Erebus and Terror. The ice, converging on her hull, piled beneath her until she was 39 feet "above sea level." Huge loose blocks toppled to her decks. Her crew thought the end had come—when the pressure suddenly relaxed and the ice fell away, all but two pillars, one under her bow, the other under the stern.

Then her skipper, Capt. Cator, did something that no seaman had done before—or will do again. Swinging over his ship's side, he walked the length of the ship under the keel. Ten minutes later, he clambered aboard again to report that she had suffered little damage, just before the two ice pillars collapsed and the ship fell into her natural element!

Every Man Perished

The Erebus and the Terror (in which Franklin tried to find the North-West Passage) had sides 17 inches thick. Even so, when ice trapped them in a fjord in the extreme north of Canada, it crushed them. Every man on board—there were 105—perished, but the two ships were yet to make another journey. When ultimately the ice broke up, it carried them nearly 3,000 miles along the north coast of Canada, down into the North Atlantic. There they were seen by the company of the Renovation, heeled over on the pack ice, their sides gaping.

Similar tales have come out of the Arctic during recent years.

The Russians lost six ships in six months before the last war. A Norwegian sealer, caught in the spitzbergen floes, was carried right round the island before, after 10 months in the grip of the pack, she foundered with all hands. Last spring, six sealers were crushed while sealing off Labrador, Newfoundland and Greenland.

During one period of 10 years, 70 ships—Russian, Norwegian, Canadian, American—were destroyed in the grind of pack-ice or in collision with 'bergs.

The Manassa Mauler Shows 'Em How—Jack Dempsey, former world's heavyweight boxing champion, is keenly interested in all welfare work. During his recent visit to Toronto he called at Variety Village, vocational training school for crippled children. The School is operated by the Toronto Variety Club; the work is one of the activities of the Ontario Society for Crippled Children which is conducting it annual Easter Seals campaign for funds March 13-April 9. The boys with Dempsey are, from left: Wilfred Dombroskie, Renfrew; Bob Kennedy, Toronto; Donald Brennan, Ottawa and Donald Orr, Sault Ste. Marie. Donations may be sent to Timmy, Toronto.

Wayward "Oscar" -- Aircraft worker, Bruce Kierman, 20, is the holder of an "Oscar," but he didn't win it for acting. Kierman found the coveted statuette about nine years ago. Despite demands of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to surrender the statuette, Kierman held onto it, and every year around Academy Award time he wonders who lost or threw away his "Oscar."

Life Amongst A Million Seals

Charles Mulvey, a Canadian ex-barrister who has travelled widely in North West Canada recently gave a BBC talk on his experiences on the Pribolofs, a group of islands in the far North Pacific. These islands are the only mating grounds of the great fur bearing seal herd. They are almost fogbound in summer and one morning as Mulvey groped along the bare, boulder strewn shore he heard a deep-throated roar and through the fog saw a giant seal, six feet long and weighing about seven hundred pounds, lumbering by. From a safe distance he watched the great creature swing his head to and fro, growling and snarling vindictively and threatening any nearby seals. In the second week of May hundreds of bull seals come to the islands and each adopts a territory which becomes his harem during the mating season. The best positions, nearest to the water, are the property of the fiercest fighters and when the fog lifted, Mulvey watched many of these awesome territorial battles. A seal would take up a position, another would fancy it and charge with a roaring challenge, to be met by the first seal with teeth bared and powerful neck thrust out. Mulvey described these fights as the most vicious he had ever seen and at times he turned away in horror praying that something might intervene to stop them. But the end comes only with complete victory for the stronger seal.

During the battle period the females have been coming from the South Pacific, where they bask happily during the winter. In May they feel an irrestible urge to go back to mate on the islands where they were born. The sea is dotted for miles with their heads as these lovely little seals, only two and a half to three feet long and weighing about eighty pounds, come gently to what Mulvey described as "two months of the most hellish form of domesticity that the female of any species has ever experienced." As the females swim in the bulls are ranged along the shore to meet them, cooing to attract them. A female approaches the bull of her choice and is picked up as though she were a kitten and carried to the harem. She is left there while her husband goes to collect other wives, for although the young bull seal takes only one or two, the mature bull may take a hundred. Bull seals attain maturity at seven but mate from the age of four, when they develop a mane of light yellowish hair. For the two and a half months of mating season they never eat and seldom sleep. They spend their entire time in their harems and when they leave the islands are emaciated wrecks, compared with the lusty giants they were in mid-May. Young bachelor seals live away from the harems and cautiously make their way to the sea through special lanes between them, for trespassers are torn to pieces. Mulvey spent a great deal of time in these neutral lanes, studying the seals and watching the mothers caring for their babies, for within a very short time of landing the females give birth to the young conceived in the previous year. He watched the young bachelors playing together in the sea with an amiability that leaves them when they become mature and grow into "thugs, wife-beaters and all round domestic tyrants."

These seals' pelts are unlike any others and are thick, soft and lustrous with great commercial value. In the middle of the last century, when the herd numbered between three and five million, the seals were slaughtered with hidous ferocity and in fifty years their numbers were reduced to about two hundred and fifty thousand. Now the islands are controlled by the United States, coastguard cutters escort the herd on migration and when it is in residence patrol the surrounding waters. No one is allowed to land on the islands without permission from Washington and no ships are permitted to call. Only a certain number of seals are killed each year and these are all three year old bachelors, for old bulls' skins are scarred by fighting and females are kept for breeding.

Industry

A woman visiting Norway was amazed at the enormous rocks in the valley where she was staying.

"Wherever do they all come from?" she asked a local inhabitant.

"The glacier brought them down," he explained.

"But where's the glacier?"

"Gone back for more rocks," was the reply.

Table Manners In The Middle Ages

Forks were unknown until the time of Elizabeth and even then were regarded as foreign and effeminate. . . . The problem of washing up was largely solved by having no plates. Instead, a thick slice (a tranche) of bread was laid before each guest. On this the meat was placed and the gravy soaked down into the bread. The charitable, and the well-fed took care to leave at least a little of this bread at the end of the meal. It was then scrambled for by the scullions and what they did not eat was given to the poor at the gate. . . .

The medieval cook had quite an array of tools. As early as the second half of the twelfth century we find Alexander Neckham, enumerating, in addition to pots with their trivets or tripods and their pot-sticks and pot-hooks, a mortar and pestle, a frying pan, a grid-iron, a posnet or saucepan, a saucer (that is a vessel for mixing sauce), a hand-mill, a pepper-mill, and an instrument for producing breadcrumbs. He also mentions a special table for chopping and mixing herbs and vegetables. It is plain that even at this remote period the culinary art was capable of many elaborations. . . .

These pomps were naturally confined to the houses of the aristocracy, but the burghers who grew wealthy towards the end of the medieval period, if they lacked something of knightly ceremony, certainly knew how to furnish their tables. In the **Cent nouvelles Nouvelles** (which may be taken to reflect manners common to both England and France) we read of the widow of a merchant setting before a single guest a dinner consisting of soup, bacon, tripe, and a roasted ox-tongue, followed by a piece of salt beef and some choice mutton. As her guest devoured all these she called for a ham, and when this had vanished, for cheese and a dish of tarts and apples. To our modern "rationed" appetites this would seem to constitute a very handsome repast.

It was customary to wash before beginning a meal, and favoured guests had a ewer of water, a bowl, and a towel brought to them by two servants. Less important people were expected to wash before sitting down and for this purpose lavours or lavatories were provided sometimes in the hall itself, sometimes outside. A few of these lavatories have survived in the cloisters of cathedrals. When the guests were seated the servants spread cloths over the tables, placed on them the salt-cellars and, in later times, the knives. Spoons were also provided when the nature of the food seemed to render them necessary.

One very curious feature of medieval table-manners is mentioned so often in the metrical romances that there can be little doubt of its being a universal custom. Guests were seated at the tables in pairs with only one plate between them out of which they were both expected to eat. . . . The placing of guests must also have offered considerable opportunity for the exercise of tact by the lady of the house.—From "The Character of England," edited by Ernest Barker.

All From Seaweed

From the days when it was discovered that iodine could be extracted from burnt seaweed, scientists have been putting this humble plant under a thousand and one tests to find out what other uses it has for mankind.

Latest discovery is of tremendous benefit—that a soluble wool can be made from seaweed for use in dentistry. Haemorrhage after an extraction was one of those things you hoped you never had; but this new soluble wool has virtually overcome the possibility of this.

The inventive genius behind this discovery is Frank Bonnisken, who is still trying to find other applications for seaweed. "I want to concentrate on bloodless surgery," he says.

He has been at the seaweed game for twenty years, and in that time he has converted seaweed into hair-cream as well as into ice-cream powder. Aritifical wool has also been made from the plant; silk has been copied, and to-day you may have your food wrapper in a certain type of transparent wrapping paper that originally was a green, blistery plant at the bottom of the sea.

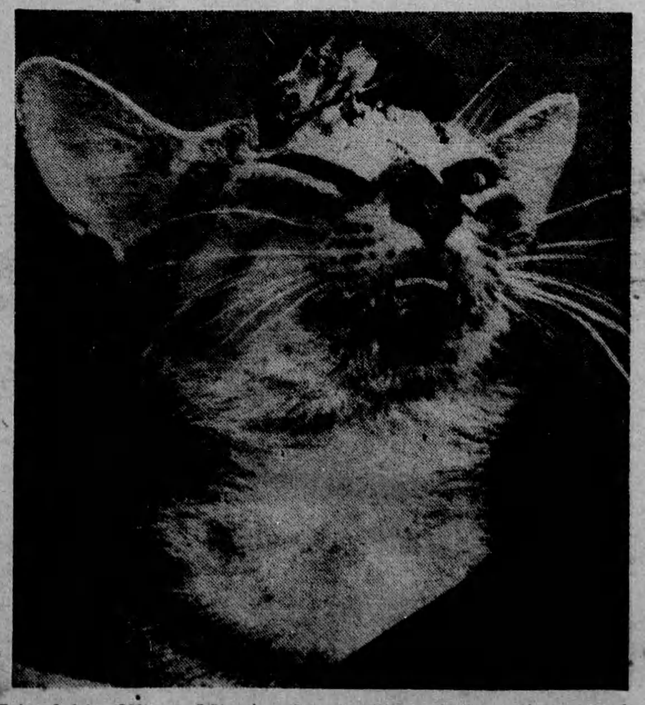
Couldn't Be Heaven

The sick man had been delirious with fever for days, but now he regained consciousness and became aware of his comfortable bed and the gentle assurance of cool, loving hands. "Where am I?" he asked weakly. "In Heaven "

"No, dear," said his wife soothingly, "I'm still with you."

Belgium's Ruler? — Prince Baudouin, 19, above, son of King Leopold III, would become king of Belgum if the suggestion of former Premier Paul-Henri Spaak, leader of the powerful Socialist Party, is followed. Spaak urged the king in an open letter to turn over the throne to the prince to restore order and unity. Acting Premier Gaston Eyskens, Social Christians' leader, reportedly favors the plan.

Royal Snack Bar—To aid her family's fading fortunes, Lady Lees (pouring), wife of Sir John Lees, third baronet, of Poole, England, has opened this snack bar outside the lodge gates at her South Lytchett Manor home. The customer is Lady Lees' daughter-in-law, Mrs. Faith Lee. Financial stress also forced the family to move into a cottage on the grounds and rent the manor house as a school.



Friendship Wins—Minnie the mother cat who lives at the railroad yards, evidently triumphed over her baser instincts in adopting this fearless mouse into her household. Shortly after Minnie gave birth to a litter of kittens, the wee mouse turned up and made itself at home.

JITTER — **By Arthur Pointer**