

If the World Went Dry? What?

Scientist Tells How We Might Walk to Europe—or Might Not.

By Garrett P. Serviss

HERE is an odd question which has a certain geographical interest and which leads to unusual thoughts: "If a genius could find a way to evaporate all the water from the ocean, could one walk to Europe?"

The doubt underlying the question seems to be based on the supposition that the ocean's bottom would be found impracticable for locomotion. As a matter of fact, the bottom of the Atlantic between the United States and Europe consists mainly of a slightly undulating plain, which would offer no topographical difficulties for road making except along the edges of the continental shelves. The submerged fringes, only 100 miles or so in breadth, which border the continents and slope very gradually downward, within their outer border is reached the descent sometimes becomes steep.

For instance, in going eastward from New York the water deepens very gradually for about 100 miles to a maximum of something like 500 feet, and then the bottom begins to descend rapidly, sinking in the course of the next 10 miles to 3000 or 4000 feet.

DESCENT IS ABRUPT

Thus the descent almost abruptly changes from five feet in a mile to 300 or 400 feet in a mile. After that there is still a descent, but more gradual, upon the whole, though, no doubt, with steep places, to a depth of between 15,000 and 17,000 feet in the center of the "western valley" or "trench" of the North Atlantic ocean.

This valley, sinking more than three miles below the level of the ocean shores, is irregular in breadth, but averages about 500 miles. On its eastern side it slopes upward until it attains the level of the "Central Ridge," which is covered by water averaging only 6000 feet in depth. This is a remarkably level surface, which has been called the "Telegraph Plateau," being crossed by the principal cable lines. It continues to within some 500 miles of the continental shelf of Europe, where the water again deepens to an average of over 14,000 feet.

There are places along the outer edge of the European shelf where the pitch becomes very steep, as, for instance, to the west of Brest, where the slope is as much as 30 to 40 degrees. On the steep slope, the ascent or descent would be about 3300 feet in a mile, and there are very few mountain peaks which have as steep an angle as that.

LIKE CONCRETE FLOOR

Of course, immediately after the ocean was dried up the bare bottom would be impassable on account of the mud, which is generated deep. But after a sufficient time this would harden and the passage could be made on what, in many places, might resemble a friable concrete floor.

In this dried carpet of the Atlantic would be found many interesting things and some of tragic interest. All the secrets of the sea, which so many centuries would be revealed to persistent search. The lost ships are there, sunk in the mud, consisting principally of the shells of minute or microscopic organisms. The lost treasures would be there, except so far as they might have been dissolved by the water and re-deposited in another form during its evaporation.

The clues to many an unsolved mystery would be there, if only they could be interpreted, which so many centuries would probably be easy enough. The whole mystery of the animal life of the ocean would be thrown open to investigation. If the "sea serpents" and his haunting form would be found somewhere, exposed to the de-mythifying sunbeams, his enigmas laid bare.

NEW CREATURES THERE

A thousand forms of creatures never seen or dreamed of by man might be displayed before his astonished gaze. The keys to geology and paleontology might be discovered by experts and scientific men descending into the vast abyss of the emptied ocean, measured from whose greatest depths New York would seem to stand in an upper world, above the clouds which would float at and often far below the former level on which ships sailed.

From the bottom of the great "Nares Deep," 70 miles north of Porto Rico, a bottom which it might not be easy to attain, the "Waters of India" would tower like mighty mountains, and peaks only 7000 feet above the old sea level would raise their tremendous heads a mile higher than the present elevation of Mount Everest.

PRESSURE WOULD INCREASE

One most astonishing effect which might, after all, make the exploration almost impossible, would be the great increase in atmospheric pressure at the bottom of a depression two or three miles deep. The air would be so dense there and the temperature perhaps so high as to be humanly unbearable.

At the same time, since all the oceans would be drained if the Atlantic were the atmospheric pressure over the continents would drop to the rarity found on lofty mountain tops and the huge oceanic basins would be like tremendous cauldrons of clouds, for the greater part of the atmospheric condensation of water vapor would take place at a point below the present sea level.

Simple Combination Helps Weak Eyes

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IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMER TIME - - - By Temple



"MAMMA, mamma; I wanna drink." The child will not be denied. Might as well get up and get the little one a drink—not one only, either—but as many as she wants, and when she wants them, whether it be the late hours of the night or the early hours of the morning. Mothers and fathers know that—and so do the kiddies. And no less will the child be denied frequent indulgences at the fountains down town. You'd think their little "tanks" would burst, but they don't somehow, and Artist Temple has pictured a little one after quaffing at the fountain of youth, in the park, or a Benson "Iron Mike," in less poetic speech, perhaps, for the "steenth time on an afternoon's round of shopping with the "gown-ups."

Drink hearty, little one. It's the only drink the Creator himself made for any of us.



THE end of a perfect day? We'll say it is, for the children, at least, off to dreamland and visions of the fun they've been having at a picnic party somewhere, and for the mother, too. Tired though she may be, to the point of exhausted body and nerves, her pleasure is in the satisfaction of knowing that the youngsters have enjoyed themselves, and that their young legs have the strength to carry them where their hearts will. Maybe the chap with the glasses isn't especially tickled with the score of the day's game, but we can't win all the time, and there are more days coming. And the gentleman with the bunch of wild flowers, who is he? Not the father of the sleeping beauties, perhaps, but at least he shows enough kindly interest in them to be the father of a couple like them, at any rate.

S. R. JR.

"Blue Laws" Are Again Recalled

In Olden Days They Used to Regulate the Cut of Your Hair.

IT IS rather interesting just at this time to look at some of the prohibitory laws that were in force in this country during Colonial days. The people of New Haven, Conn., prior to their incorporation with the Saybrook and Hartford colonies, were subject to the following: (As the substance only is given, in the transcription, the language necessarily is modernized.)

No Quaker or dissenter from the established worship of the Dominions shall be allowed to vote for the election of magistrates, or any officer.

No food or lodging shall be afforded to a Quaker or other heretic.

No one shall run on the Sabbath day, or walk in his garden, or elsewhere, except reverently to and from meeting.

No one shall travel, cook victuals, make beds, sweep house, cut hair or shave on the Sabbath day.

No woman shall kiss her child on the Sabbath day, or fasting day. The Sabbath shall begin at sunset on Saturday.

Whoever brings cards or dice into this dominion shall pay a fine.

Whoever wears clothes trimmed with gold, silver or bones, above two shillings by the yard, shall be presented by the grand jurors, and the selectmen shall tax the offender.

No one shall read common prayer, keep Christmas or saint days, make mince pies, dance, play cards or play on any instrument of music, except the drum and Jew's harp.

Married persons must live together, or be imprisoned. Every male shall have his hair cut round, according to his cap.

A Petition Give me a good digestion, Lord. And also something to digest; But when or how I'll something eat, I leave to Thee, who knowest best.

Give me a healthy body, Lord. Give me the sense to keep it so. Also best me not breed children. Whatever work I have to do.

Give me a healthy mind, good Lord. That finds the good that doth seem slight. But seeks a way to put it right.

Give me a point of view, good Lord. Let me know what it is and why. Don't let me worry overmuch About the thing that's known as "L."

Give me a sense of humor, Lord. Give me the power to see a joke. To get some happiness from life. And pass it on to other folk.

Why Fear Lightning? Many persons are afraid of lightning. It is a foolish fear, for the score is many thousands to one hit. About 1500 persons are struck by lightning in the United States in a year, and of these only one out of three is killed. The Kaiser's Big Bertha was much more deadly, and Paris considered it a joke.

Calendar May Another Romance of the Air Be Changed Later

Take Care, Old Top; Take Care Later

New Association Would Add "Liberty Month" and Make All Months Uniform.

INCORPORATED under the laws of Minnesota is the American Equal Month Calendar association, made up of 50 lawyers, bankers and business men, who have set out in an effort to make a calendar that will be the same for every year.

Briefly, it is to have each month consist of four weeks; that is, 28 days. This will give one additional month besides the 12 we now have, which it is proposed to call the month of "Liberty."

But, as the year consists of 365 days (roughly speaking) this leaves one day extra. They call that New Year's day, which is a holiday anyway, and they do not include it in any week or month.

CHANGE OFTEN PROPOSED

Such a change has been talked of for 25 years. The calendar is now cumbersome and inconvenient, say members of the new association, who promise that it can easily be made so simple and convenient that printed calendars would soon be unknown. Only three simple changes need be made. They are as follows:

First, make New Year's day an independent legal holiday. Have it fall between the last day of December and the first day of January, but do not include it in any week or month.

Second, provide another independent legal holiday for leapyear. Have it fall between the last day of one month and the first day of the next. Do not include it in any week or month.

Third, divide the remaining 364 days into 12 months of exactly four weeks each, making Monday the first day of every month and Saturday the last work day of every month. Thus, in every month:

Monday, 1st, 8th, 15th and 22d.
Tuesday, 3d, 10th, 17th, 24d.
Wednesday, 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th.
Thursday, 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th.

ONE DAY, SAME DAY, ALWAYS

All other holidays and anniversaries would always fall on the same day of the week. A promissory note given for any number of weeks, months and years would always come due on the same day of the week if it was given. The saving of time and effort in making calculations for the future would be beyond comprehension.

Neither the number nor the length of our present months is now governed by changes of the moon, nor by any of nature's laws, hence they can be changed as we see fit.

While making the change, Good Friday and Easter Sunday would be placed on certain fixed dates. The placing of these on fixed dates was seriously considered when our present calendar was adopted.

Fears Come True

"I had a fear and it came upon me," said an ancient philosopher. A Pittsburg citizen who had always been afraid he would be run over and killed by a motor car. Had he worried less and run faster or slower he might still be living to run another day.

New Jersey Man Solves (?) Question

A man in New Jersey with a head of nerve says he has solved the home help problem. He would have every woman cut her hair short like a man's, having figured it out that in a lifetime a woman consumes 12,700 hours, or one and a half years, in fixing her hair. It is his opinion that if this "hair time" could be made available for other purposes it would solve the hired girl problem in every household. He winds up his statement in this reckless manner: "Sometimes, sometimes, we shall distinguish essentials from non-essentials, maybe!"

Predicts One Day Trip 'Round World

Before many years it is going to be possible to travel around the world in one day in an airplane, in machines that will travel 800 miles an hour. The prediction is made in London by General Seely. It could be done in the latitude of London, he says, in less time, but at the equator, the longest way around, it would take a day. By flying from east to west and starting at noon with a plane of that speed, an airman could have daylight with him all the way round. It won't be so many years, perhaps, when crossing the ocean by steamer will seem as antiquated as traveling by stage coach seems now.

Oddities of Our Language

A foreigner visitor, looking at a picture of a number of vessels, said: "See what a flock of ships." He was told that a number of ships assembled together was not called a "flock," but a "fleet." For his further guidance in mastering our language, it could have been explained that a flock of girls is called a bevy; that a bevy of wolves is called a pack; that a pack of thieves is called a gang; that a gang of angles is called a host; that a host of porpoises is called a shoal; that a shoal of cattle is called a herd; a herd of children is called a troop; a troop of partridges is a covey; a covey of beauties, a galaxy; a galaxy of ruffians a horde; a horde of rubbish, a heap; a heap of oxen, a drove; a drove of blackguards, a mob; a mob of whales, a school; a school of boys, a congregation; and a congregation of engineers, a corps.

To Detect Guilt

It was at one time, and still may be, a common practice in many parts of India to compel persons suspected of crimes to chew dry rice in the presence of the officers of the law. Curious as it may appear, such is the intense influence of fear on the salivary glands that if they are guilty, there is no secretion of saliva in the mouth and chewing is impossible. Such culprits generally confess without any further efforts. On the contrary, a consciousness of innocence allows a proper flow of fluid for softening the rice.

herring, expressed a wish for an onion to eat it with, whereupon a companion, spying what he supposed was an onion lying on a table in an open cabin, said: "There's one, take it. The owner won't care." The man took the onion and the owner, coming up just in time to see the last piece going down the sailor's maw, fell dead in a fit.

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