

# UNDER THE OCEAN

Changes in the Sea Floor From Shore to Shore.

## THE BIG MID-ATLANTIC RIDGE.

It Starts at Iceland and Bisects the Ocean Down Almost to Cape Horn. In Places It Rises Above the Surface, Forming Groups of Islands.

A sketch of the "landscape" of the ocean bed is given by Dr. A. E. Shipley in an article in the Edinburgh Review.

"The passengers and the crew of a liner racing over the surface of the Atlantic are apt to imagine that under them is a vast layer of water of varying depth sparsely inhabited by a few fish. As a matter of fact, the whole of this great ocean is teeming with life. If instead of taking ship we could take to the water and walk across the bed of the Atlantic to America, starting from the shores of western Europe, we should in effect be traveling through a succession of new countries. Not only would the surrounding physical conditions vary as we advanced, but the animal and plant life would vary in correlation with the altering physical conditions.

"Walking farther and farther toward the depths of the Atlantic, we should soon lose all sight of the algae, and the shallow water fish—the plaice and sole, whiting, skates, dogfish and others and cod—would give way to the mackerel and the hake. The sea floor would gradually change from rock or gravel or stones to sands and ultimately to mud or ooze of various tints, their original colors often modified by the action of the decomposition of organic particles in them and on them. All these finer deposits are derived from the neighboring land and are blown seaward by offshore winds or washed down by rains and streams and carried out to the sea by rivers.

"The distance to which fine matter in suspension may be carried is very great. The Konga is said to carry its characteristic mud as far out to sea as 600 miles, and the Ganges and the Indus as far as 1,000 miles.

"Except in the neighborhood of such great rivers a subaqueous traveler would soon pass beyond what Sir John Murray has called the 'mud line,' a line that limits the terrigenous deposits everywhere surrounding dry land. Having reached this limit, we must proceed warily, for at the mud line, at an average depth of a hundred fathoms, we shall find ourselves at the edge of the continental shelf, that rim which extends seaward to a varying distance from all land areas, the rim on which Great Britain rests. Beyond lies the continental slope, a precipice more or less abrupt and more or less high, descending by steep declines or terraced cliffs until depths of 2,000 fathoms are reached.

"The Atlantic, compared with the other great oceans, has an unusually large area of comparatively shallow water. Of its total area 27.5 per cent is covered by water less than 1,000 fathoms deep; 18 per cent lies between 1,000 and 2,000 fathoms and 47 per cent between 2,000 and 3,000 fathoms; the remaining 7.5 per cent is still deeper.

"At the foot of the continental slope lies an illimitable plain of a uniform dull, grayish buff color, flat and featureless as the desert, and only diversified by an occasional as yet uncovered rock or wreck or the straight line of a recently laid cable. This plain continues with scarcely a change in scenery or in level until we approach the great mid-Atlantic ridge. As Bruce has shown, this ridge, which roughly bisects the Atlantic, extends from Iceland as far south as fifty-three degrees of south latitude, with a slight and quite inexplicable break just under the equator. The ridge runs almost parallel with the eastern contour of North and South America, which in turn, as the ordinary map will show, roughly corresponds with the western contour of Europe and Africa. From time to time the ridge rises above the surface of the water, as in the Azores group, St. Paul's rocks, Ascension, Tristan da Cunha and Gough Island.

"Having ascended the eastern and descended the western slope of this mid-Atlantic ridge, we should again traverse plains of grayish ooze far more extensive than any level land tract known to geographers, and as we approached the American coast we should gradually pass through, in reverse order, the zones of life traversed when leaving Europe. On the eastern coast of America the slope is much more gradual than on the western coast of southern Europe and Africa."

**A Queer Legal Precedent.**  
Mr. Justice Holmes has the reputation of citing more peculiar cases from the old lawbooks than any other member of the supreme court. He dug up one recently to the amusement of his associates, when it was contended in a libel suit that the declaration was insufficient because the offenses were not stated properly.

"That leads me to recall a case in the old books," said the justice, "where an indictment set forth that the accused struck a man on the head, splitting the skull until a portion fell down on either shoulder, and the court held the indictment defective because it did not state that the man was killed."

The justice observed that it was a hair splitting decision and he didn't intend it as a pun, either.—New York Times.

# UNCLE SAM'S MEN EASY FOR SHARKS

Money Lenders Near Capitol Charge Excessive Interest.

## CLERKS ARE EXTRAVAGANT.

Aggregate Loans Estimated at \$500,000, and the Average Interest 150 Per Cent, or \$750,000—Law of Congress Evaded by Money Lenders Moving Across Potomac to Virginia.

Washington.—Of all the shady interests which are carried on by government employees in every department the "loan shark" evil is said to be the worst. For years department heads and bureau chiefs have failed to stamp out the class of men who carry on the business among their associates of lending small sums at excessively large rates of interest.

In the office of the United States attorney for the District of Columbia are filed at the present time no less than fifty distinct charges of "loan sharking," the offenders including professional money lenders. In a preliminary statement recently given out Assistant District Attorney Given said that no less than 1,000 complaints of violation of the loan shark law have been received from persons who requested that their names be not made public.

A little over a year ago congress enacted a drastic law against "loan sharking." The interest rates which had formerly ranged from 60 per cent to 300 per cent a year, were cut to 1 per cent a month. For a time it was believed that the business in Washington was dead. Then the money lenders put their heads together and several of the professionals who maintained offices in the downtown section of the city tried the first evasion of the law.

It is about twelve city blocks from the western edge of the downtown district to the Virginia side of the Potomac river. Within fifteen feet of the high water mark on the Virginia side of the river two or three of the lenders built offices and hung out three balls. An interurban electric line gave easy access to and from the city. Signs giving notice of the change of location were displayed before their downtown Washington offices and several other shops bore signs of a change of residence to Alexandria, Va., five miles down the Potomac.

Thus by co-operation among the money lenders the entire professional "loan shark" business of Washington was moved to Virginia, with the exception of the "amateur" money lenders in the government departments. This, the police found, is the thing that the district attorney's office is determined to stamp out.

It is said that a negro messenger in the treasury department accumulated over \$50,000 during his thirty-five years of service through loaning small sums at excessive rates of interest.

One of the money lenders established between his Washington office and his office on the Virginia shore a half hour automobile livery service for clients in downtown Washington, across Potomac park and the Highway bridge into Virginia. It proved too expensive, however.

Washington, filled with residents whose homes are elsewhere, has probably the most apathetic civic conscience in the world. Its population is nearly as cosmopolitan as that of Atlantic City, and there is a spirit of rivalry as to dress and "front" in the very municipal atmosphere. A man with a government position has a prestige in his home community that few other positions of employment confer. The incumbent thinks he must live up to it by aping the dress and manners of the idle rich. The messenger with a salary of \$600 or \$700 a year aims to dress like his superior, the clerk. He does not want the public to think he is a mere messenger. The clerk would be a division chief, and he aspires to dress the part. He goes the messenger one better by allowing himself to be drawn into the ultra atmosphere of petty social affairs in Washington, which rarely get him anywhere. The division chief likes to be mistaken for an assistant secretary. And thus the merry game goes on.

## HEARS LAST RITES BY PHONE.

Telephone Enables Dying Man to Attend Wife's Funeral.

Paterson, N. J. — Ex-Judge James Inglis, confined to his bed by pneumonia, heard by telephone the funeral services conducted over the body of his wife in the parlor below.

A bell-like transmitter was installed in the parlor, and wires led upstairs to the room where Judge Inglis lay. When the Rev. Davis Stewart Hamilton, rector of St. Paul's Episcopal church, began the service a receiver was lifted to Judge Inglis' ear and was kept there until the last word was spoken.

## Operate For Old Dog Bite.

New York.—Physicians have found it necessary to operate on Miss Ella F. Holly for an infection of the left leg caused by a dog bite fourteen years ago. She has undergone twelve operations. It is believed the last will cure her, as two inches of the diseased bone were removed.

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