



THRILLING SCENE IN THE POLAR REGIONS.

PREFACE.

AMERICA'S gallant sons have wrung nature's last great secret from its hiding place 'neath towering cliffs and bergs of eternal ice. Since time began these zero-begotten peaks have stood like sentinels of stone across the snow-strewn pathway to the North. Their frowning sides, their towering heights and the wind-swept plains they looked upon are strewn with martyrs' bones.

Wrapped in majestic might, their pinnacles glittering in the midnight sun and swept by the blood-congealing blasts of eternal winter, have pointed out a too often futile warning to the sons of men. To disobey was death.

In their dread shadow countless of earth's hardest and bravest souls have weakened, cast one last long look toward the beloved Southland that gave them birth and have laid their weary bones in unmarked graves, with naught but nature's marble mantle for a winding sheet and no requiem Mass save the mournful howl of the chilling blast as it wound their snowy shroud.

They dared the North! They faced its wrath and fell. Yet so long as hearts shall reverence deeds that thrill the soul, that long the fame of the Arctic's Martyrs shall linger lovingly upon the lips of man. They failed; they died beside their unfinished task; the ice-bound secret of the centuries still remained the mystery of yore—and yet their names are writ across the heavens in letters of imperishable fire. They died 'mid failure, but nations yet unborn shall stir their sons to noble deeds by the merest mention of their names.

If immortal fame rewards self-sacrificing unsuccess, what higher prize can history hold for him who fought and won?

Frederick A. Cook and Robert E. Peary need no tribute here. They brushed aside the centuries-old veil that had masked the Northern Pole. A bare recital of their deeds would thrill the coldest heart, yet enshrined amid the rounded phrases of earth's most gifted word painter the story of their achievement still would be but a weak and puny tribute. They have won places in the front ranks of the immortals, but to do a hundredth part of justice to the daring deeds of the two Americans who nailed the Stars and Stripes to the Pole and flung the folds of the Banner of Freedom to the Arctic blasts would be a fitting task for the skill of a Shakespeare, the oratory of a Cicero and the vivid vocabulary of an immortal Dante.

The blood-congealing blasts from earth's apex failed to daunt, much less to halt them; the pangs of starvation but whetted their appetites for more and greater sufferings.

On and on they stumbled and struggled and strove, amid the darkness of the desolate and pathless Arctic wastes. Now they were blinded by the driving snow; now stung by the needles of the sleet, till the very air seemed one vast hive of angry hornets. Now their hearts' blood was turned to stone by the icy blasts and brain and brawn almost ceased to battle against the elements. Yet on they went, until at last they stood where every road leads South.

What then? Their eyes were turned on icy bergs man never saw before; beneath their feet were Arctic snows, for ages undefiled.

This was their sole reward. No treasure trove; no precious gems; no wealth of shining ore; no golden nugget lured them there. No jewel gave them even paltry pay for victory. Then what?

Who shall say? Fame! It after all is but a bauble. Patriotism! A million men have died on battle-fields, have yielded up their lives to home, and yet are lost to fame.

Then what? They ascribe it, those whose eyes have rested on the Arctic ice to "the lure of witching snows." Perhaps.

Yet there is a strange twist in human psychology that urges man to despise any danger; do any deed; dare any death, when victory means leadership; when success means primacy among his fellows. It is world-wide and ages-old. Perhaps Cook felt it; perhaps Peary felt it, just as the martyrs over whose bones they travelled to the Pole must have felt it, and felt it in vain. Perhaps that is all. But it is enough.

The discovery of the Pole may add few pages to the compendium of useful human knowledge, but its recital must furnish to those who will come after us an example of unceasing and unconquerable endeavor, and tell to generations yet unborn that we, of this the twentieth century, possessed men of the spirit that tempted the great Genoese navigator across the western waters, and gave America to the world.

I shall not attempt a eulogy here. Their own modest recital of actual experiences and accomplishments must tell their tale and write their fame. But the one who can read their thrilling recital, who can hear their sufferings, who can see their deeds and not have his pulses quicken and his heart's blood tingle, is not worthy of the name of man.

The fame of Cook and Peary is secure. Jealousy cannot shake it. Envy cannot blemish it. Malice cannot besmirch it. Until this old globe, weary and wan, finally shall stagger in the path it started eons ago and plunge into the parent sun, man will still be paying tribute to the three great discoverers of historic times, Christopher Columbus, Frederick A. Cook, and Robert E. Peary.

RECORD OF POLAR ACHIEVEMENTS.

COMMANDER.	DATE.	N. LAT.	LONG.	LOCALITY.
John Davis . . .	June 30, 1587	73.12	56 W.	W. Greenland
William Parents. .	July 14, 1594	77.20	62 E.	Near Cape Nassau, N. Z.
J. C. Ryp and Jacob Heemskerck (Bar- ents).	June 19, 1596	79.49	12 E.	North Spitzbergen
Henry Hudson . .	July 13, 1607	80.23	10 E.	E. Spitzbergen Sea
William Baffin . .	July 4, 1616	77.45	72 W.	Smith Sound
J. W. Phipps . . .	July 27, 1773	80.48	20 E.	E. Spitzbergen Sea
William Scoresby .	May 24, 1806	81.30	10 E.	E. Spitzbergen Sea
Sir John Franklin .	1819	—		Arctic Ocean
W. E. Parry . . .	May 23, 1827	82.45	20 E.	E. Spitzbergen Sea
E. A. Inglefield . .	Aug. 27, 1852	78.28	74 W.	Smith Sound
E. K. Kane . . .	June 24, 1854	80.10	67 W.	Cape Constitution, Greenland
I. I. Hayes . . .	May 19, 1861	80.11	70 W.	Grinnell Land
Nordenskiold & Otter	Sept. 19, 1868	81.42	18 E.	E. Spitzbergen Sea
C. F. Hall	Aug. 30, 1871	82.11	61 W.	Frozen Sea
Yeyprecht & Payer	April 13, 1874	82.05	60 E.	Franz Josef Land
G. S. Nares . . .	Sept. 25, 1875	82.48	65 W.	Grinnell Land
G. S. Nares . . .	May 12, 1876	83.20	65 W.	Frozen Sea
A. W. Greely . . .	May 13, 1882	83.24	41 W.	New land north of Greenland
F. Nansen	April 7, 1895	86.04	96 E.	Arctic Ocean
R. E. Peary . . .	May 16, 1900	83.50	34 W.	Arctic Ocean north of Hazen Land
Duke of the Abruzzi	April 25, 1901	86.34	65 E.	Arctic Ocean
R. E. Peary . . .	April 21, 1902	84.17	70 W.	Arctic Ocean
R. E. Peary . . .	April 21, 1906	87.06	50 W.	Arctic Ocean
Frederick A. Cook	April 21, 1908	90		THE POLE
R. E. Peary . . .	April 6, 1909	90		THE POLE

INTRODUCTION.

ON the sixth day of September, 1909, five days to the hour, almost to the minute, after Frederick A. Cook, an American, had electrified the world with the announcement that he, first of all the sons of men, had penetrated the icy recesses of the Arctic and had planted the Stars and Stripes at the North Pole, came an almost equally startling cablegram from Commander Robert E. Peary, U. S. Navy. It announced that he, too, had flung the Banner of Freedom to the Polar breezes and had attained the goal for which hundreds of men had died during the past five centuries.

Nothing could have been more startling. At the very moment when Peary's announcement reached the world, his successful rival was being feted in the Old World capital of the Norseman as the peerless hero of the age.

And well he deserved all the honors heaped upon him, for he reached the North Pole on April 21, 1908, while Peary did not stand upon the earth's apex until April 8, 1909, almost a year later.

People who know the Arctic and Commander Robert Edwin Peary, say that without a doubt during the preceding month or six weeks the dome of the world, up in the narrowing circles, had been a race course, of which the low hanging polar sun had marked the start and the first slender tips of telegraph wires in the northernmost frontier of civilization, the goal.

Down the swelling curve of the earth's shoulder had hastened the two racers for the prize of the world's admiration. Dr. Frederick A. Cook, perhaps unconscious that his rival behind him was pressing him so close, and Commander Peary no doubt fully aware that there was a man somewhere ahead of him who was going to put in a claim to the pole's discovery and receive the fruits of praise. Dr. Cook won the dash for civilization by just five days. At Lerwick in the Shetland Islands he found the coveted cable end, and through it caught the world's attention. Peary started his message