

▶▶ What's the Use of Explorers? ◀◀

An Editorial by Isaiah Bowman

A MAN with a new idea can always be proved to be wrong. He has no experience (with the idea) behind him and the advocates of an old idea can always cite precedent. This has led to the wide use of the phrase "those most competent to judge," a phrase not "time-honored" but time-dishonored. For by those most competent to judge the critic really means those most likely to oppose. The liberals of today are the conservatives of tomorrow. The only permanent thing in the world is change.

I put these remarks at the head of a note on modern exploration because we get nowhere in understanding the Magellans of our day unless we admit at the beginning that their plans are often illogical and indefensible and that explorers as a class are crazy. They are as ill-balanced as poets and painters and their dreams are no more measurable in terms of dollars. Why do I love deserts? I don't know and I want no psychoanalyst to tell me! A business man once said to me: "You say that a sounding 500 miles northwest of Point Barrow would be extremely valuable; but I'm a business man, just what would you say that sounding is worth?" I answered at random: "The price of an airplane." It is amusing to recall that Wilkins made the flight to the desired spot, took a sounding in 10 minutes with an echo depth-finding device, and lost his airplane. The depth was 17,100 feet, the deepest sounding yet made in the Arctic! I should add that the business man (a native of Detroit) was satisfied with the bargain. But that was an accident in a sense: if the depth had been 10 foot, it would have been still more thrilling to science!

Every layman asks the explorer, "What's it worth?" as if the answer were a thing of real importance to any man worth his salt in science! It is sufficient for the explorer that there is an unknown land or sea or ocean of air ahead of him. His values of life are set in terms of curiosity. If gray dawn "finds his camp fires gleaming in the rain," it is not because he prefers to sleep in wet blankets. If he can be the first to see and report, he's happy to pay a price deemed foolish by the stay-at-home. We don't really know what anything is worth when we find it: we know only that everything we have found has been put to use, either to hard practical use or for the advancement of idealistic purpose.

We speak of the stirring times of Columbus and Drake. Do you realize that *this* generation, not that of the Age of Discovery, is the last to follow the exploration of a continent? Was it any more exciting for de Gama to round the Cape of Good Hope than it will be for Mawson to see what's on the other side of Enderby Land when he takes Scott's old ship the *Discovery* out to the Antarctic next year? Six thousand miles of the coast of the Antarctic continent have never been charted, indeed have never been seen. The air-

plane will trace out that coast in our day, take soundings along its shallow-water border, possibly reveal mineral wealth, disclose new whaling grounds, and start international discussion of ownership.

Almost every week I receive a radio dispatch from my friend Commander Byrd: four of the latest refer to the echo depth-soundings between New Zealand and Little America, to the preparation of sledge teams and airplane for the trail to the South Pole, to the magnetic variations over the Rockefeller Range, and to the templates made for him by the American Geographical Society for use on his naval charts. Think what it would have meant in Columbus's day to have had radio reports from him as he crossed the "Sea of Darkness" and made his first landfall in the Bahamas! We are a privileged generation—among the most privileged of any time—for we can follow these history-making expeditions from *day to day* upon any sea they raise their sail or over any land they fly their planes. Yet we still ask, as if any meaning lay behind our idiotic words, "What's it worth?"

Modern exploration is not confined to uncharted coasts or to the land behind the ranges. At the moment that we discover a new idea some part of our world is made new. When drought-resistant strains of wheat were discovered by the plant explorer a vast realm of semi-arid land in America was rediscovered in terms of wheat. Scientific exploration takes the known lands and seas and tries out by endless experiment one new idea after the other. A thing that is new in thought is just as new as newly found territory. To dispel ignorance and fear is to make a new world out of an old one. Witness the cotton growing in Nigeria by a people once so afflicted by superstition that life was a nightmare of dread. As man explores his own mind he makes discoveries one by one that enable him to look out upon a new world. If all the lands and seas were known, he could still rediscover the earth through the new ideas that he plays upon it. This would hardly have been a conquerable earth if man had not engaged to conquer it by endless experiment, region by region, idea by idea, thus expanding, enriching, and adapting his life.

The pioneer areas of the world offer scope for a host of instruments of power. They are great laboratories of experiment, of struggle and conquest. They represent the second stage of exploration. The first is delineation and description, the satisfaction of curiosity, the thrusting aside of the veil that has hung for ages over the unknown. But there could be no second stage but for the curiosity seekers. You must spy out the land before you can appraise it or go up to possess it. Let's say no longer of exploration: "What's it worth?" Rather we must hurry to find out what the earth contains and how we may extend our conquest of it or adaptation to it or frustration of it.

Where is Mankind Going?

Ask an explorer—whether of the uncharted regions of the world or of the unknown structure of the atom—what his researches are worth, what they mean practically to "the man in the street," and his answer is likely to be spirited. Such is the comment of Dr. Isaiah Bowman, Director of the American Geographical Society and author of "The New World," on the question of the utility of such modern exploration as Commander Byrd's expedition to the Antarctic. The contributors to this weekly editorial page constitute a list of authoritative witnesses to the progress of life in many fields of activity and thought. The next contributor will be Dr. Morris Fishbein, editor of the Journal of the American Medical Association

The Conquest of Kansas

The Story of Carry Nation

By HERBERT ASBURY

THE ATTENTION of the outside world was concentrated upon Wichita and Topeka, during the early days of Carry Nation's campaign, but these cities, and the few others which she had honored with her personal solicitude, were not the only Kansas communities wherein the liquor interests suffered from the wave of destructive fury that followed the invasion of the Hotel Carey in Wichita. The entire state blazed spectacularly with prohibitionary fervor, and from Holton in the North to Arkansas City in the South, excited men and women armed themselves and marched singing and praying against the saloon. In Danville, a small village in Harper county, Mrs. Mary Sheriff, tall, lean-faced and of Irish descent, arose to dispute Carry Nation's supremacy and to belittle her exploits. Mrs. Sheriff was somewhat mollified by her appointment as chief lieutenant of the National Hatchet Brigade, but during the month and more that she flashed back and forth in Southern Kansas, leaving devastated joints in her wake, she frequently expressed resentment at the publicity which attended Carry Nation's every movement while her own considerable accomplishments were but briefly chronicled. Moreover, she insisted that not only was she the greater smasher, but that she originated the idea of wrecking saloons; and that Carry Nation had appropriated it without giving due credit.

"I am the original smasher," she declared. "I am sent from God to do this work, and not from Mrs. Nation. I will do more smashing than Mrs. Nation has done, and I will not talk so much about it. I intend to raid every saloon in Southern Kansas, and that will be enough for one woman to do."

As a matter of fact, neither originated the idea. Saloons were smashed with hatchets in the United States as early as 1856, when a band of three hundred women wrecked thirteen bar-rooms in Rockport, Mass.

Mrs. Sheriff wrecked a joint in Danville a few days after Carry Nation had arrived in Wichita, and then announced that she would lead a company

The commander of the legions that routed the rum-sellers of Topeka, as described in the preceding issue, celebrated her great personal triumph in jail. But she could afford to rest for a time. The crash of her hatchet was rousing the country. In many sections women appeared as rivals or emulators. And, finally, Kansas had a prohibition law that satisfied prohibitionists

of fifty women, to be called the Flying Squadron of Jesus, on a smashing tour of the counties which lay near the borders of Oklahoma and Indian Territory. She proposed, indeed, to invade Barber County, and even to assail Medicine Lodge itself, for joints were reputed to have reopened there soon after Carry Nation had been called to a larger field.

ONLY A HALF DOZEN followers were in her train when she left Danville, but local women re-enforced the squadron, and raids were successfully undertaken in Attica and half a dozen other hamlets. On the morning of January 30, 1901, Mrs. Sheriff marched into Anthony, a town of about 2,000 population some sixty miles southwest of Wichita, and harangued the temperance workers at a great mass meeting. Soon thereafter she sallied forth, carrying a heavy pick-ax musket-wise across her shoulder, and followed by five men and fourteen veiled women, all heavily armed with hatchets, hammers, axes, and crowbars. Henley's drug store, which was suspected of being very lax in its prescription requirements, quickly fell before their onslaught; and after wrecking the establishment, they forced their way into a nearby saloon, where they smashed the mirror, the bar, the cash register and the refrigerator, but overlooked seven cases of whisky which the frightened proprietor had concealed in the cellar. The crusaders then beleaguered the Klondike Bar, but found the doors and windows barricaded and a bartender, named James, on guard with a huge revolver. The fortifications were soon demolished with axes and hatchets, and Mrs. Sheriff led the Flying Squadron into the saloon, where she attacked the bartender while her followers fell upon the fixtures and kegs of beer and whisky. James yelled

threats and fired several times into the ceiling, but his hostile demonstrations only increased Mrs. Sheriff's exasperation, and she pursued him about the large room earnestly striving to sink her pick-ax into his skull. But finally, wearying of this sport and eager to be at the work of destruction, she smote

him with a beer bottle, whereupon he dropped his weapon and scuttled wildly through the doorway and down the street. The joint was then wrecked.

In Elk County, a few miles northeast of Arkansas City, appeared another indefatigable foe of rum—Mrs. Myra McHenry, a mighty smasher who was destined to rival Carry Nation in variety of exploit and excel her in suffering, for she endured pain and imprisonment not only for the prohibition movement but for the cause of women suffrage as well. During the next few years she was arrested forty-one times, assaulted twice by bartenders and seriously injured, rotten-egged by furious mobs in four towns, and four times was placed on trial to determine her sanity. Each time, however, she was adjudged to be in possession of all her mental faculties. Her distaste for constituted authority, and especially for judges and jailers, was quite as pronounced as that of Carry Nation, and whatever prison she was confined in was always in an uproar, for she was an obstreperous and troublesome prisoner. Once in Arkansas City, when a judge threatened to fine her twenty-five dollars for contempt of court, she laughed loudly and said:

"Better make it fifty, my lad!"

"Fifty it is," said the judge, "and thirty days, besides."

She went to jail singing and praying. And so long as she was his guest, the jailer knew neither peace nor quiet. But flesh and blood could stand just so much. On the twentieth day of her sentence, Mrs. McHenry awoke to find her cell door wide open, and the inner and outer gates likewise. She hallooed without result, and then carefully searched the building but found no living soul save three other prisoners who had been locked in a single cell. The jailer and his staff had disappeared. But the keys to the cell blocks and to