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THE LATEST BRITISH NAVAL FAILURE.

A strange fatality seems to attend the vessels of the English navy. For more than two years past accidents and blunders have occurred so repeatedly in the finest and presumably best built ships that the conclusion appears imminent that the superior skill of English ship constructors, engineers, and seamen is fast leaving them.

But the hugest blunder of all, if we may credit Mr. E. J. Reed, the late chief constructor of the navy, has been perpetrated in the designing of the famous Inflexible, supposed to be the most powerful vessel of all the English ironclads. She is built on the citadel principle; that is to say, she has a heavily plated central portion wherein are guns, machinery, and magazines. Before and abaft this strong portion the ends are unarmored, it being considered that even if such portions are destroyed in action the fighting capacity of the ship will be none the less.

GLIMPSSES OF ATLANTIS.

The sedimentary rocks of our Atlantic States aggregate a thickness of nearly 45,000 feet. The manner in which the sand, gravel, mud, and so on, which formed these rocks, was distributed over the bed of the sea which rolled where our continent now lies, proves beyond a doubt that they came from the north and east.

It is not to be imagined that the ante-American sea was 45,000 feet deep. When the earlier palæozoic strata were forming the water was evidently shallow, and in some parts broken by islands. From time to time the sea was deepened by the sinking of its floor; and as the successive strata were laid down the subsidences for the most part more than kept pace with the thickening deposits.

While the new America was thus forming the ancient Atlantis was no doubt sinking as well as washing away. When its final disappearance occurred remains to be determined; quite recently, however, two or three lines of scientific research seem to converge in support of the truth of the ancient story, long considered mythical, in regard to the geologically recent occurrence of that remarkable catastrophe.

Since the exploration of the North Atlantic sea bottom for telegraphic purposes proved that no elevations or depressions inconsistent with the safe laying of cables were to be found between Newfoundland and Ireland, it has been popularly taught that the Atlantic lies in a vast trough with a comparatively regular bottom. A wider range of soundings made by the American ship Dolphin, the German frigate Gazelle, the British ships Hydra and Porcupine, and more recently by the Challenger, quite overthrows the popular idea, proving the Atlantic bed to be rather a double trough, the deeper depressions separated by a mountainous ridge of great altitude running north and south, almost midway between the existing continent.

of the equator in the Azore Islands, and further south in St. Paul's Rocks, the Islands of Ascension, Tristan d'Acunha, etc. On the other side of the ridge the water deepens, the bottom presenting a surface diversified by hills and valleys, such as could be carved out only when the sea bed existed as dry land.

From the soundings made and collated by the officers of the Challenger expedition, a chart has been prepared, showing by soundings, first, the Atlantic areas having a depth of over 2,000 fathoms, and second, the areas ranging between 1,000 and 2,000 fathoms: the narrower areas having a depth of less than a thousand fathoms, showing white. By far the greater portion of the sea bed south of 50 N. L. exceeds the depth of 2,000 fathoms. The area of medium depth covers the northern sea down to an irregular line between Newfoundland and England. Thence a narrow isthmus (beginning about 52° N. L., and 30° W. Long. from Greenwich) connects the northern table land with what has been denominated the Dolphin Ridge—a seal-shaped area with its head to the north and its tail joining (at about 15° N. L. and 45° W. L.) another ridge called the Connecting Ridge.

Here unquestionably we have the backbone of the ancient Atlantic continent; and in a recent lecture in London one of the Challenger staff has reviewed the evidence of soundings touching the general contour of the "lost Atlantis." Its valleys and hills are not such as could be formed by any natural irregularity in the deposition of sediments, nor by submarine elevations; they have been carved by agencies acting above the water level. Along the ridge there are four points which remain unsubmerged—the Azores, St. Paul's Rocks, Ascension, and Tristan d'Acunha. In the deeper basins, the Bermudas, Fernando de Noronha, Trinidad, and St. Helena rise to the surface, in some instances not far distant from depths exceeding 3,000 fathoms.

Thus deep sea exploration confirms the report of geology that Atlantis really existed; and palæontology also bears witness to the same great fact. Still more, it testifies that the final disappearance of the buried ridge did not occur until comparatively recent times. The evidence on this point was reviewed some eight years ago by Professor Unger, who had been led to believe that a land connection must have existed between Europe and America, as late as the tertiary period, by a comparison of the recent and fossil floras of the two continents.

With such support the traditions of the ancient world, on both sides of the Atlantic, begin to read like something more than empty myths. The Egyptian priests, it is more than likely, were reciting veritable history when they told Solon about the islands of continental magnitude that formerly existed in the outer sea beyond the pillars of Hercules, but had sunk beneath the waters.

The story of the sinking of Atlantis during a time of floods and earthquakes was preserved with even greater fulness of detail on the American continent, if there is any truth in the representations of Brasceur de Bourbourg. That student of Central American monuments and traditions asserts that not only was the story of the submergence of a great country to the eastward widely spread among the natives and frequently referred to in their writings, but that seasons of humiliation and prayer were observed in commemoration of such disasters—both princes and people humbling themselves before their divinity and praying that the calamities which had overtaken their ancestors might never be repeated.

To the evidence of tradition de Bourbourg adds that of language. The words Atlas and Atlantic, he says, have no satisfactory etymology in any language of the Old World. On the other hand, the radicle atl is characteristic of the