

The Continent Without a Flag

Geography

By EDWIN E. SLOSSON

Commander Byrd in his article on "Polar Exploration by Airplane" in the papers on "Problems of Polar Research" published by the American Geographical Society states:

"It would seem inadvisable to make long flights in the Antarctic, it being more practicable, if possible of accomplishment, to advance by bases—say, one base every 200 miles. That would decrease the hazard. In view of the absence of life in the interior of the Antarctic Continent, it would be impossible to live off the country, and, in case of a forced landing 500 miles or more from the base, it probably would be likewise impossible for two or three men to pull on a sledge enough food and other equipment necessary to get back safely."

So far there have been no violent territorial disputes over the last unsettled continent, Antarctica. No wars have been fought over it, or on

A Modern Air Castle

Aviation

The arrival of the *Graf Zeppelin*, first of the argosy of trans-Atlantic air liners that will dot the skies of the future, has shown one advantage of this means of travel—namely, speed. But the beauties of an aerial voyage are something new—something of which previous ages have never dreamed.

When a steamer arrives in New York harbor in the fog there is not much of interest for the passengers to see. When the air voyager arrives, however, he may be greeted by some such sight as that on our cover—where the tip of the Gothic tower of the Woolworth Building, highest in the world, projects upwards through the mist. As other buildings of the future equal, or even surpass this in height, the traveller will gaze on a veritable fairyland, a city of castles in the air. And then, such new devices of radio and neon light as are forecast in the article on the opposite page will permit a safe landing regardless of fog or mist. Another milestone in human progress will then have been left behind.

Science News-Letter, October 20, 1928

The British battleship *Courageous* has been turned into an airplane carrier, after \$10,000,000 worth of remodeling.

A method of making artificial pearls by lining glass balls with iridescent fish scales was invented by a Frenchman about 1680.

it, although there may be in the future. The boundaries of national claims are undefined because moving ice-sheets carry away cairns and the blizzards blow down flagpoles as rapidly as they can be raised. The British claim the lion's share of the continent in the two quadrants which they designate the Ross Dependency and the Falkland Island Dependency. The French government in 1924 officially claimed a larger sector lying south of Australia, known as Adelie Land, on the ground of its having been discovered by D'Urville in 1840, but the French claim has not been conceded by England or at least not by Australia.

If we wanted to enter this South Sea land-grabbing game we could claim a larger region, overlapping

the French claim, known as Wilkes Land because Lieutenant Wilkes, later an Admiral of the American Navy, outlined the continental margin for 1800 miles, between 95 and 160 degrees east longitude. But our government has officially disclaimed any intention of asserting sovereignty over Wilkes Land, for Secretary of State Hughes stated in 1924:

"It is the opinion of the Department that the discovery of lands unknown to civilization, even when coupled with a formal taking of possession, does not support a valid claim of sovereignty unless the discovery is followed by an actual settlement of the discovered country. In the absence of an act of Congress assertative in a domestic sense of dominion over Wilkes Land this Department would be reluctant to declare that the United States possessed a right of sovereignty over that territory."

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