

Penguins

THE growing interest in the Antarctic has brought into prominence most of the more interesting of the comparatively few animal species that inhabit that desolate end of the world. Among mammals, whales and sea elephants have held the front of the stage; among birds it has been albatrosses and penguins.

The penguins are among the most interesting of all the folk in feathers. They have been "fishers on the wave" for so long that they have totally lost the power of flight, and now use their plumeless wings only as swimming flippers, like those of the seal or whale. This matter of having front-end propellers gives them a tremendous advantage when swimming under water in pursuit of fish, which form their chief food.

They are also distinguished in being about the only creatures in the world, apart from man, who habitually go about in a completely upright position. Other two-legged creatures, in especial other birds, still hold their bodies more or less horizontally, presumably a reminiscence of an original quadruped habit.

This erect habit, coupled with the shortness of their legs, compels them to a very short-strided, waddling, often hopping gait, which looks very comical to our superior human eyes. It must look all right to the penguins, however, for they have never been seen laughing at each other. In fact, they are about the most sober, humorless birds in the world. Their affairs are conducted with the utmost seriousness; in their meticulous dress of black and white they look for all the world like so many little Old-World town councillors.

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## BOTANY

## Paschal Flowers Blossom On Prairies of the West

See Front Cover

EASTER-TIDE is remembered in America by two names, one of a place, the other of a flower. When the youth-seeking Ponce de Leon sighted the coast of the New World it was on Easter morning, and accordingly he named the place he had found "Pascua Florida," or Flowery Easter. We have dropped the noun and kept the adjective, as Florida.

When the French *voyageurs* pushed out into the western prairie country they found many strange and beautiful flowers, but none lovelier than the blue chalices that opened up in countless clumps and clusters among the new grass during the fortnight before and after the Paschal feast. So they named them "Easter flowers," and the pious early French "Pasque" has remained to us as a part of the rights of the Louisiana Purchase.

The Pasque flower is strictly a western spring blossom. Its chief range is over the wide plains of the Platte and the upper Missouri, and it climbs the western mountains as high as the

plateau of Yellowstone Park. Eastwardly it crosses Minnesota and Iowa, and its easternmost outpost, so far as known, lies on the windswept prairie hills that overlook the Apple river in northern Illinois.

The Pasque flower belongs to the anemone family, which is a very appropriately named flower group. For the word "anemone" is apparently derived from the Greek root meaning "wind," and most anemones are bravers of the wind, displaying their bright blossoms in the open when most other spring flowers hide timidly in the woods. The hairiness of the Pasque flower, which extends even to its bright cup, is an index to this habit, for hairiness is a frequent mark of plants that live in the open and have to fight evaporation every hour of their lives.

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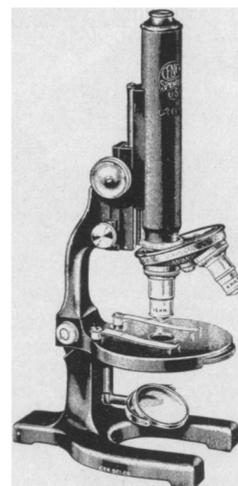
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