NOVEMBER 1955

FOUNDERING THEORY—“The size and peculiar shape of the Pacific trenches stir our sense of wonder. What implacable forces could have caused such large-scale distortions of the sea floor? And what is the significance of the fact that they lie along the Pacific ‘ring of fire’—the zone of active volcanoes that encircles the vast ocean? Speculating from what we know, we may imagine that forces deep within the earth cause a Foundering of the sea floor, forming a V-shaped trench. The depth stabilizes at about 35,000 feet, but crustal material, including sediments, may continue to be dragged downward into the earth. This is suggested by the fact that the deepest trenches contain virtually no sediments, although they are natural sediment traps.”

NOVEMBER 1905

WIND POWER—“For several years the Danish government has experimented with windmills, to ascertain the relative amount of electrical power that can be generated. In this country similar experimental tests have been tried, and although the instances are not numerous, the data furnished indicate a useful future for this form of prime mover. This is particularly true of the agricultural regions of the West, where innumerable windmills have been constructed in the past ten years for irrigating purposes.”

THE CARIBS—“The Indian [see photograph] stands in such fear of the Venezuelan and his government that he frequently prefers to follow the smaller waterways of the Guiana region or take overland trips through the virgin forest rather than use the broad highway of the Orinoco River that is his rightful heritage from countless ancestors. This disappearance of the Indian has greatly impeded the gathering of rubber, tonca beans, and other natural products. Since immigration is not encouraged and continuous revolutions have scattered or killed the settlers of European and mixed descent, it would seem that the country is steadily retrograding.”

TORPEDO MISS—“The Whitehead torpedo has exercised a greater controlling influence upon naval construction and tactics than perhaps any other single weapon of naval warfare. However, it cannot be denied that the torpedo has, at times, been greatly overrated. Indeed, the experience of the recent war seems to prove that only under exceptional and very favorable conditions can the torpedo get in its blow. In the fleet engagements on the high seas it seems to have exercised very little, if any, influence upon battle formations. Consequently, we think it unlikely that torpedo tubes will be fitted into future warships.”

NOVEMBER 1855

YELLOW FEVER—“At a recent meeting of the New York Academy of Medicine, Dr. Stowe, a distinguished surgeon of New Orleans, gave some valuable information respecting the terrible disease of yellow fever. In his opinion, it is the same everywhere, unmodified by topographical causes or changes of climate. Many attempts have been made to discover its cause, but, like cholera, it escapes observation. Warm climate is essential. Moisture seems not essential. New Orleans has daily showers at certain seasons, yet without disease. This year it was very dry, and the sugar cane died for want of moisture, and all were suffocated by dust when the disease first appeared.”

TALBOT’S SUCCESS—“Photography is the general name now applied to sun painting on paper and glass, as being different from the daguerreotype, which is produced on metallic plates. The inventor of photographs is Fox Talbot, of England, who secured patents in Britain and America, but has thrown them open to the public. Photography is destined apparently to supersede the art of Daguerre. In France, the splendid display of photographs in the Great Exhibition of Industry, and the limited number of pictures on metallic plates, affords conclusive proof that, with the French artists, the daguerreotype is becoming obsolete.”