

ROW ABOARD SHIP AS DR. COOK ARRIVES

Passengers All But Come to
Blows Over Him as the Liner
Sails Up to Her Pier.

CANNED INTERVIEW READY

Cook Says His "Confession" Takes
Up Every Point of Polar Dispute
—Women Champion Him.

Dr. Frederick A. Cook, hailed a little more than a year ago as the discoverer of the north pole, and known more recently since his exposure for his "confession" in a magazine serial that maybe he didn't discover it, arrived last night on the North German Lloyd liner George Washington from a year of expatriation. He brought in an interview already canned, but being unable to shut off questioners with that, consented to answer a few queries just the same.

The doctor's arrival was chiefly notable for a row over him among the passengers. Between Quarantine and the pier in Hoboken the whole Cook controversy was on again, just as hot as it was a year ago. In twenty minutes the scene in the ship's drawing room was so promising of at least half a dozen fist fights that the oldest and most biased ship news reporter hugged himself with delight at the prospect.

Men called each other liars to their faces, shook their fingers under each other's noses, and broke friendships which seven days on the ocean in hourly contact had served to cement. Women stood on chairs and joined vociferously in the arguments shouted by the men on both sides of the question of whether or not Dr. Cook had reached the pole, and whether or not he had been ostracized on his "return from Elba." The ship news men didn't start the row. It had evidently been brewing all the way over, but the reporters did touch the match it needed.

A Healthy Confessor.

The reporters, a dozen of them, started to look for Dr. Cook a minute after the revenue cutter ran alongside the George Washington at Quarantine, finding him mingling with the company in the drawing room. Minus his beard, but looking like a health advertisement or a physical culture demonstrator, he gayly waved the reporters aside while he held a hurried conversation with a representative of Hampton's Magazine, which is publishing his "confessions." Saying he would receive the reporters in half an hour, he hurried away to a private room with his publisher.

The reporters eagerly seized the opportunity to ask other passengers about Dr. Cook's reception and his movements on the ship coming over. The first man seen, W. C. Sprague, tall and thin, with a spike of brown beard shot with gray on his chin, asserted with emphasis that Dr. Cook had not been ostracized at all, but cordially received everywhere. He said he had joined in the games and made himself extremely agreeable.

While Mr. Sprague was reeling this off, up walked a tall, dark man, with a monocle stuck in his eye. He refused to give his name, but his fellow-passengers said he was P. R. Chance of Paris. He said:

"Never mind my name, and say I'm from South Africa. But," he added, "you are reporters, aren't you? Well, you ought to be policemen, to arrest this man Cook. He stole Peary's honors from him."

Ostracized, He Said.

"Coming over, the passengers haven't had a thing to do with Cook. Many of them would not even speak to him, and there's hardly a decent man on the ship that has associated with him."

"Who are you?" demanded Sprague, who hails from Detroit. "I have never seen you a single time coming over. You have been sick all the time and haven't been out of your stateroom. You were never in the smoking room when Dr. Cook was there, and don't know anything about how he was treated."

It turned out later that Mr. Chance, as he was called, had kept to his room pretty closely, but he was pugnacious to the last, following the reporters all over the room, and denouncing Cook at every turn.

"I am a friend of Peary's," he said, explaining that he wasn't a personal friend, but simply indignant at the way Peary had been treated in some quarters.

"I'll bet that fellow," said he in a high voice, referring to Sprague, "is a press agent of Cook's."

Siding with this man, and quite as beligerent, though more dignified and much older, was W. J. Harkness, a prosperous business man of Rochester, N. Y. He said Dr. Cook had been avoided by the other passengers. He had not been included in their sports, he said, and if he were a man of sensitive feelings he must have felt that the people with whom he was traveling had no more interest in him than idle curiosity about one who had been a central figure in all the newspapers of the world for a year or more and was just emerging from hiding.

"Mr. Sprague says he was everywhere warmly welcomed," said the reporters, and Mr. Sprague was right on the spot to back up what he said.

A Warm Exchange.

"What that man says isn't so," said Harkness. Then he turned to Sprague, shaking his finger in his face, adding, "You know it isn't so. No gentlemen have been his companions."

"It is so," said Sprague. "I have been with him much myself."

"I said 'gentlemen,'" retorted the dignified Mr. Harkness, and added, glaring at Sprague, with his finger under his nose:

"What you say about Cook is false, and you know it is false!"

By this time their voices, raised to a high pitch, had attracted practically every one in the room to a circle about the men, and it looked for a minute as if Sprague and Harkness would come to blows. They had become so angry as their dispute progressed that some of the more timid ones began shouting, "Remember there are women present." The man called Chance was much excited and slapped on his hat.

"Take off that hat where ladies are, you man who said Cook wasn't a gentleman," shouted several, including some women, and with a rather sickly smile, he removed his offending headpiece. From the very start the women passen-

gers had taken a lively interest in the renewal of the row which dates back something more than fifteen months, and their voices, pitched at a high key, were heard in the violent discussion. In almost every instance the women were on Dr. Cook's side. It was said that Dr. Cook had been particularly courteous to some of them and even playful with the children on board.

He cheerfully posed for kodak pictures several times at the request of some of his fair fellow-voyagers, and one little girl, Cecil Clark, daughter of E. B. Clark, used to sit on his knee frequently, and he would tell her ghost stories and the awful phantoms which appear over the horizon in the icebound North. And so the women came to be his loyal supporters.

Women Liked Him.

"Dr. Cook had been a perfect gentleman, modest and agreeable," all the women said who said anything at all, and it was noticed that among the few who came to Dr. Cook just before the passengers went ashore to say good-bye were several women. One of them, who announced that she was on the vaudeville stage, was anxious for the reporters to have her name.

The controversy about Dr. Cook had been checked when the ship finally was warped into her slip and the gangways were swung out. About that time the smiling explorer himself, ignorant of all the strife which had been surging about his name, appeared, bearing an interview for every paper, and followed closely by the magazine agent.

Would Dr. Cook consent to be photographed? He would, and every one went on deck and watched the taking of a flashlight. This photograph will reveal, the passengers say, quite a different-looking man from the one who left Bremen seven days ago. Dr. Cook had a close-cropped Van Dyck beard and long, unkempt hair when he boarded the ship, but that evening he had his face shaved, except for his mustache, and his hair closely trimmed. His name did not appear on the first passenger list, and none of the passengers had any idea he was aboard until the second list, printed on the ship after she sailed, appeared containing the name of "Herr Dr. Frederick A. Cook."

It was left for a girl passenger to draw from him a confession of his identity.

"Are you Dr. Cook?" she asked archly at his elbow on the second day out.

"Yes, I am," he replied with a pleasant smile.

"Are you the Dr. Cook who went to the North Pole?" she asked again in blissful ignorance of the "confessions" published on this side of the water.

"I suppose I am," the Doctor replied.

The Canned Interview.

This is Dr. Cook's canned interview which he handed out when the reporters crowded about him:

"I have no statement to make other than that which I have carefully prepared and which is now being published in Hampton's Magazine. Any interview I might give would necessarily be fragmentary, and doubtless misleading also, so I shall not now give out any interviews, and any purporting to come from me will not be authorized. I spent weeks carefully preparing my story, and I have frankly said in it all that there is to say. Every charge against me is taken up and answered in its proper place in my narrative.

"Where I have been and what I have been doing during the past thirteen months, since I left the United States in November, 1909, is fully set forth in my story. I will say, however, that I was in the United States less than a month ago. I arrived in Quebec on Oct. 29, went to Troy, N. Y.; then to Newburg and Poughkeepsie. I was in the two last-named cities about three weeks, writing, revising, and correcting proofs on my story. I registered under an assumed name because I was very busy—too busy to receive my many personal friends or newspaper men. No other precautions were taken to keep my presence concealed. I stopped at leading hotels and took an automobile ride each pleasant day. I was at the Palatine Hotel in Newburg most of the time. I left Poughkeepsie on the night of Nov. 22, and went directly to Halifax, where I sailed for Europe by the same steamship line, on the same steamer, and just a year from the time I sailed from the same port when I left America in 1909.

"I do not know what my plans for the future will be. I have no plans whatever for going on the lecture platform. I have not returned to America with the intention of making money out of my Arctic experiences. Money did not prompt the writing of my story, as I have seen suggested in certain newspapers. As I have said, I have come back solely for the purpose of rehabilitating myself and my family by setting matters right with my countrymen."

Fencing Off Questions.

But the reporters, not satisfied with a typewritten interview, fired question after question at him. Some of these he answered, but in reply to most of them he said:

"Read my forthcoming articles in the magazine. They are all answered there at length and with care."

Many times, in fact, he took refuge in what is yet to be published in his serial, notably when asked what Capt. Loose and Dunkle were doing at the Hotel Gramatan in Bronxville while he was there supposedly getting his records in shape for submission to the University of Copenhagen.

"I have told all about Capt. Loose in the magazine," he replied, "and can say nothing now."

He said he was certainly going to answer Prof. Herschel C. Parker's charge that he didn't get to the top of Mount McKinley. Prof. Parker in proof of the charge displayed a photograph of a peak twenty miles from the base of Mount McKinley and only 5,000 feet high as identical with that which Dr. Cook pictures in his book as the mountain itself.

"I shall give out a statement free of charge to the newspapers next Monday at the Waldorf in answer to Prof. Parker," said Dr. Cook. What tack he would take he would not say. Prof. Parker was Dr. Cook's companion on the trip when Dr. Cook said he reached the summit of Mount McKinley, but before that event Prof. Parker and the rest of the party, except one guide, had turned back.

"Well, did you climb to the top of Mount McKinley," the reporters asked, "or is there room for doubt on that score as on the north pole discovery?"

Scaled Mount McKinley—He Says.

"No room for doubt this time," he replied. "I got to the top of that mountain all right."

He was asked if he believed Capt. Peary had reached the pole.

"He says he did; you had better ask him," was the reply. Pressed for further answer, he said he had always been ready to take Capt. Peary at his word, but he added that it would always be impossible to tell with absolute accuracy whether or not one was at the pole. His attitude now is that he did reach the pole, though admitting there is room for doubt and mistake.

"I still believe I reached the pole," he said, "though I am not sure I did."

"Don't you think it would have been more becoming to have submitted your present statement to the University of Copenhagen than to a magazine?" he was asked.

To this he replied, with some deliberation:

"The University of Copenhagen is not a magazine. I wanted my statement more widely known than a university Faculty could make it."

Asked if he had any more expeditions in mind or if there were any more distant parts of the world which he was yearning to reach, as he suggests in his "confessions," he said:

"I am through with exploration. I have had enough. I am here to settle down as an American citizen."

Posted on Polar News.

He said that the wireless had brought on board the news published in THE TIMES ten days or more ago that Capt. "Bob" Bartlett and Harry Whitney were preparing for an American expedition to the south pole. He was greatly interested in the undertaking, he said, but had no idea of joining the expedition. But he is keeping up with polar expedition news, for when some one reminded him that Capt. Scott is already leading an English expedition toward the south pole, he said:

"Not only so, but there are two other parties in the field; one led by Capt.

Amundsen and one sent out by the Germanse."

Some one asked him if he would challenge Peary to a debate.

"Certainly not," said he. "Impossible!"

"Why impossible," he was asked.

"Why, it is not my way," he said.

"You say in your magazine article," he was reminded, "that you had the most perfect set of instruments for locating your position that could be bought, and yet you say you are not a navigator."

"No, I am not a navigator," was the reply, "but I can handle instruments, and I had instruments as I said I had. They are cached at Etah."

He was asked if he had any plans to bring back these instruments and the records at Etah, as well as Ah-we-lah and E-Took-i-shuk, the Eskimo boys who, he says, went with him to the pole.

"That will come out later," he replied.

"I must say nothing more about it now."

Worried Aboard Ship.

Dr. Cook said in conclusion, as he bowed and backed away, that Mrs. Cook was still in Europe, where his two daughters are at school, and that he came alone to face his countrymen and live down the impression that he was a faker. He said he never expected to return to Europe to live, but that New York was his home, and here he would remain. He was not sure he would return to the practice of medicine.

In spite of his bold front, Dr. Cook, other passengers said, was worried and uncertain how he would be received on the ship. They relate this incident to prove this:

"The first night out after his identity had been established," said one, "Dr. Cook was in the smoking room playing cards with some of the passengers, and drinks were brought in. Dr. Cook was plainly nervous, fearing some one would refuse to drink with him, and so with uncommon tact and foresight he proposed that all should drink to the Stars and Stripes.

"Of course," continued this narrator, "no one could refuse to do this, and the ice had been broken."

Dr. Cook was met at the pier by Mr. Young, one of his publishers, and his brother, the Brooklyn milk dealer, and the three were driven to the Waldorf-Astoria, where Dr. Cook will stay for the present.