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Blank Space on the Map of the World

(Continued from Seventh Page.)

still in operation along the gigantic mole which has been piled west of the chain of lakes? Though several explorers have crossed this region their traverses are mere threads of travel and disclose but little of its character.

Nor must we forget that the great lakes of Africa also offer tempting objects for intelligent research. We have no idea as yet of the nature of their beds, or of their depth, or of their fauna and their outlines have been but imperfectly sketched. Yet these lakes cover about 75,000 square miles of inner Africa. Moreover, it is really time that some explorer should come forward with the determination to ascertain the altitude of the Victoria Nyanza or Tanganika by the theodolite and spirit level, previous to making a trustworthy survey of these lakes.

Unvisited South American Tracts.
The president of the Royal Geographical society has lately said that South America contained a larger unexplored area than Africa. Though the statement should not be taken too literally it is certainly true that there are considerable areas awaiting exploration. West and northwestern Brazil contains several parts as little known to the European world as the darkest parts of Africa. The debatable territory between Ecuador and southeastern Colombia, parts of Guzeo and La Paz in Bolivia; the Peruvian Andes, the upper basin of the Pliomayo and an extensive portion of Patagonia are regions of promise. A great part of the Andean Cordillera is completely unknown, both as to its topography and its geology.

The secrets of the plains of Argentina, of its renowned pampas and of the Patagonian tableland are still waiting solution. The fauna of the Andean lakes is still a mystery, those who are engaged in the study of the past history of mankind would find an ample harvest in those South American mountains and, finally, those who should investigate the economic value of the physical conditions of that country would be well compensated for their labors of exploration there.

In Old Asia.
Of late since Colonel Prejvalsky's explorations in mid-Asia the world has been interested in the exploits of explorers like those of Younghusband, James Rockhill, Littledale and Sven Hedin, who have found something new even in that old continent. The twentieth century will not find Central Asia so difficult of access as it was during the nineteenth.

The great Siberian railway will afford many a starting place for explorations to the south and the fifth part of the Asiatic continent which lies between Lake Baikal and the Himalaya range furnishes a very large field for them. Sven Hedin has made a brilliant record in traversing the heart of Asia and it would be singular if his successful exploration should not stimulate others to emulate his hardihood and daring. Thibet has long withstood the attempts of travelers to penetrate it for a systematic survey. Our knowledge of the country, though, on the whole has mainly been gained furtively and by snatches of short rushes, resembling somewhat the manner in which Europeans during the early part of this century endeavored to reach the interior of Africa. Malaria and savage man opposed them everywhere just as the jealousy of the Chinese and superstitious ignorance of the Thibetans oppose modern travelers. Perseverance will conquer in the end and both Thibet and China will have to yield. Arabia and Persia await the Wallins, Pargraves, Burtons and Doughtys of the future, wise and tactful travelers accomplished in the languages of Oman and Ajim, learned in Oriental history and saturated with eastern lore. The mission of such will be to resurrect the dead past, delve among old ruins, revive the forgotten histories and forecast the methods by which those venerable races may be brought into touch and communion with the busy world which abhors exclusiveness.

Australian Possibilities.
There are many tracts in Australia still unknown, but those may safely be left for the Australians, who have shown themselves peculiarly qualified in every way to solve all geographical questions affecting their interests.

In this necessarily brief sketch of the explorations yet to be accomplished by the bold spirits of the coming century it must not be imagined that I have included all the tasks that must engage explorers. Hundreds upon hundreds will find ample work in correcting, revising and refining the hasty work performed by pioneers in Africa, America, Asia and Australia, until the highest point of accuracy and precision has been attained. There are signs that the world is getting impatient with sloven and inexact work and expect superior merits in the explorers in the future. This is but natural, after being satisfied with novelties, and another reason is perhaps that the increase in the number of geographical societies has been so great that the geographical public has become more learned and fastidious in its tastes and requires the best that can be obtained. As the societies are so willing to coach intending explorers and prepare them for their tasks, I have no doubt that such men as they need will be forthcoming and as amply endowed with physical powers and mental fitness as any who ever ventured into the hitherto unknown.

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