

## The BLACK MAN'S Vast and MYSTERIOUS CONTINENT



**A**FRICA. Six thousand years ago Africa was the home of the most civilized nation of the world, yet to-day we may say that the civilization of Africa has just begun. The work of the ancient Egyptians, great as it appears, was a mere scratch on the surface of the vast African continent. Farther west Phœnician traders settled and laid the foundation of Carthage, which for a time challenged the supremacy of Rome. But only a few ruins of the Carthaginians are left to mark the scene of their flourishing culture.

One after another Greeks, Romans, Vandals, and Arabs occupied the Mediterranean fringe of the "Dark Continent." Great cities were built, prosperous states grew up, arts and letters flourished, Christianity was established and then succeeded by Mohammedanism. But none of these peoples ever measured its strength against the mysterious forces of the interior, or reached beyond a narrow strip along the northern sea. The roots of civilization remained planted in Europe and Asia. The faces of the settlers were always turned northward, while a hundred miles to the south the silent wilderness of desert or jungle watched night and day, ready to swallow up their work the instant their vigilance was relaxed.

Picture this immense territory lying at Europe's door for thousands of years, but always keeping its secret, hiding its treasures and its

*Extent.*—From Cape Blanc (37° 21' N.) to Cape Agulhas (34° 51' S.); and from Cape Verde (17° 23' W.) to Cape Guardafui (51° 21' E.). Length, 5,000 miles; breadth, 4,600 miles; area, 11,262,000 square miles.

*Population.*—150,000,000 blacks, 20,000,000 light races.

*Sahara Desert.*—Area, 3,500,000 square miles, the largest desert in the world.

*Chief Rivers.*—Nile (4,000 miles); Congo (about 2,800 miles)—greatest volume of water of any river in the world except the Amazon; Niger (3,500 miles); Zambesi (1,800 miles).

*Highest Mountain.*—Kilimanjaro (19,720 feet above the sea).

*Largest Lake.*—Victoria Nyanza (230 miles long), next to Lake Superior the largest in the world.

*Greatest Cataract.*—Victoria Falls on Zambesi River, 400 feet high and one mile wide.

millions of inhabitants. Reports of giant apes and dwarf peoples came out of the interior by means of rare Arab caravans. A few adventurers landed on the west coast seeking ivory and slaves, and others traded for gold on the eastern shores. Bold navigators touched now and then at southern points on the way to India. But of the vast interior nothing was surely known. America was discovered, colonized, conquered, and civilized, while Africa remained a mysterious land. Australia opened its doors to the white man, while the Congo forests still barred his way. Explorers came ever nearer to the North and the South Poles, before they had succeeded in tracing the full course of the Equator across the tangled forest interior of Africa.

The story of how the dark veil which had hung almost undisturbed for ages was suddenly torn aside in a brief twenty-five years is one of the most romantic pages in the history of civilization. But before we consider that adventurous period, we must see why it was that Africa remained so long impenetrable.

Turn to the map of Africa as we know it to-day. From the tip of Cape Blanc in the Mediterranean to Cape Agulhas at the extreme south, the continent measures 5,000 miles. From Cape Verde in the west to Cape Guardafui in the east, the width is 4,600 miles. Between these four points lies a territory of 11,262,000 square miles, three times as large as Europe, nearly one and