

knowledge and requiring us to modify our description of the world! Although the mystery of the Poles is still unrevealed, Nansen has at least made his astonishing journey from shore to shore of ice-capped Greenland. In the interior of Asia, the "Eternal Sanctuary," where dwells the divine Dalai-Lama, has since Hue's visit been closed to profane Europeans; nevertheless, every year sees the circle of itineraries narrowed round about the sacred spot.

In the "Dark Continent," the problems of the Nile, of the Zambesi, Congo, and Niger have all been solved. Everywhere the network of travels covers the planet with its ever-contracting meshes. A systematic exploration has even been begun of the underground world, of the caves and katabothras of Greece, the subterranean pits and channels of Vaucluse and the Causses. The chart of the marine depths, with their temperatures, living organisms, and geological deposits, is progressing, like that of the continents, towards completion. As knowledge increases, man, so to say, becomes daily transformed to a new life.

At the same time distant lands are constantly drawn closer together. The Atlantic, a broad expanse for Norse Vikings and Genoese mariners, has become, in the language of modern seafarers, a mere "ditch" traversed in a hundred hours. Every year diminishes the time taken to make the tour of the world, which for certain "globe-trotters" has become a caprice of the moment. So bounded are now the confines of the planet, that it everywhere benefits by the same industrial appliances; that, thanks to a continuous network of postal and telegraphic services, it has been enriched by a nervous system for the interchange of thought; that it demands a common meridian and a common hour, while on all sides appear the inventors of a universal language. Despite the rancours fostered by war, despite hereditary hatreds, all mankind is becoming one. Whether our origin be one or manifold, this unity grows apace, daily assumes more of a quickening reality.

In the presence of this world, which is modified from day to day, and whose changes I can follow only from a distance, I have nevertheless endeavoured clearly to realise the lands described, as if I had them actually under my very eyes, and to study their inhabitants as if I had mingled in their society. I have striven to live my pictures, revealing the characteristic features of each region, portraying the peculiar genius of each human group. Everywhere, I may say, I have felt at home, in my native land, amid my brother men. I am not conscious of having