

the Society worked on with encouraging results, till in 1882 it came to the conclusion that "the lack of men fitted for the peculiar work, the trying climate of the Amazon, the great distance from the sea and from any civilized centre, and above all, the difficulty of supervision by the Bishop, appeared to render the working of the mission impracticable," and so the effort was relinquished. The simple forest children were left to live and die, having no hope and without God in the world, and for all they can tell Jesus has never come to save His people from their sins.

Outside the Fuegian, Paraguayan and Chili missions, no work for Christ is to-day being done among South America's five million aborigines. One Gospel has been translated into the Quichua language, which three millions of them speak. But no one is teaching them to read it, and no one illustrating its good news by tongue and life. Into the Guarani, spoken by the unreached Indians of Paraguay, only the sermon on the mount has been translated.

The work is very much crippled by lack of workers. Good, earnest, consecrated men are needed, and means with which to send them out. Love shows itself in giving; if we cannot give ourselves, let us give of that which God has entrusted to us for the furthering of His kingdom and let us pray that of those who have already consecrated themselves to the work of a foreign missionary, some may be led to make South America the field of their action, and that their efforts may be bountifully blessed.

Africa as a Mission Field.

(Use Map of Africa while reading.)

IT is difficult for the mind to form a correct idea of the vast size of the great tropical continent which has until quite recently been almost an unknown land to the civilized nations. So great is its extent that, notwithstanding that the equator passes almost directly through its centre, much of its territory lies in the more temperate latitudes to the north and south of the tropics. In actual size, this continent is a little less than five thousand miles in its greatest measurements from north to south, while its extreme width is almost as great, being about four thousand five hundred miles. Its superficial area is as great as that of Europe and North America combined, about twelve millions of square miles.

Africa is by no means what many of our old geographies used to represent it, a vast stretch of uninhabited desert, bounded towards the coast line by comparatively small states, which are settled and governed by the various European powers. Recent explorations have shown that a very large portion of the interior consists of exceedingly fertile lands—sometimes extending in wide, luxuriant plateaux; sometimes stretching away in richly-wooded or grass-covered, undulated hills and valleys, rendered more valuable by the lakes and large navigable rivers flowing through—and everywhere thickly populated by some one or other of the numerous tribes of dark-skinned children of the soil.

From various estimates, the number of these natives cannot be much less than one hundred and seventy millions. Although they are subdivided into over five hundred tribes, each with its own language or dialect, they seem to be simply offshoots of some five or six distinct divisions, of which each has its own distinguishing peculiarities, which clearly show them to be different. To localize these divisions in a general way: The Berbers and negroes may be said to belong to the north and west; the

great Bantu, or Kaffir-Zulu division, to the central part, from east to west, and reaching well to the south; while the Hottentots and Bushmen are found more towards the south.

The dialects or languages—as many almost as the tribes—although differing much, yet have so many points of resemblance that they are believed to be all derived from one common source. Having learned one language, therefore, the others are not so difficult of acquirement for the foreigner.

The low, fever-laden districts, which prevail to such a large extent around the coast of Africa, and which extend inland for from fifty to one hundred and fifty miles, have given rise to the belief that its climate is, almost without exception, fatal to Europeans and Americans. The error of this has been clearly shown by the explorers of recent years, as well as by the experience of those who have been residing in the more healthy districts for a great many years; and it is now well known that the climate of these vast fertile regions of the interior is one of the finest in the world. In some districts the variations of temperature are less extreme than in Ontario, the thermometer in these districts rarely being above 97° or below 40°.

Now that it is becoming better known, Africa is attracting the attention of the civilized and commercial world in a most significant manner. Already people are hurrying from England, the United States, Canada, and other older-settled countries to the rich gold fields and diamond regions of South Africa; while the productive soil of Gazarland and Matabeleland, and the wide, fertile stretches of country lying contiguous to the *six thousand miles* of navigable waters of the great Upper Congo with its tributaries, give unmistakable evidence as to its value from a producing and industrial standpoint.

From a strategic point of view, the importance of at once occupying for Christ a land with such great natural advantages, and which is now being so rapidly sought by the commercial and industrial classes, cannot be over-estimated. But this motive, great as it is, is insignificant, in view of the fact of the *present existence* of those millions of souls who are now reaching out for the light, and to whom our Saviour and Master has bidden us carry the message of His love.

Upwards of forty societies, representing the various branches of the Christian Church, are now working in this great country, telling the "old story" in the different ways directed by Divine wisdom and loving ingenuity. Some few of these have been in operation for nearly a century, but most of them are of much later origin. Their stations—especially the older ones—are located principally near the coast; but in recent years advances towards the interior have been made from various starting-points on the east, south and west coasts; these are being pushed inland as rapidly as means will allow.

There are now about twelve hundred missionaries at work in Africa, and, with the blessing of God upon their efforts, about *one million* of the people are living in Christian communities. But what an utterly inadequate force is this to meet the spiritual needs of the people of a continent! Only *one messenger* of Jesus to tell the story of salvation to *one hundred and fifty thousand* persons!

Dear Christian reader and fellow-worker for the Master, we ask that you will add your prayers with ours that our Father will put it into the hearts of His people to speedily advance His work in Africa by whatever means lie in their power.

H. C. WRINCH.