

Sahara as a whole lies below sea-level, it may be worth while briefly to explain what it was he really thought of doing.

Some sixty miles south of Biskra, the most fashionable resort in the Algerian Sahara, there is a deep depression two hundred and fifty miles long, partly occupied by three salt lakes of the kind so common over the whole dried-up Saharan area. These three lakes, shrunken remnants of much larger sheets, lie below the level of the Mediterranean, but they are separated from it, and from one another, by upland ranges which rise considerably above the sea line. What M. Roudaire proposed to do was to cut canals through these three barriers, and flood the basins of the salt lakes. The result would have been, not as is commonly said to submerge Sahara, nor even to form anything worth seriously describing as 'an inland sea,' but to substitute three larger salt lakes for the existing three smaller ones. The area so flooded, however, would bear to the whole area of Sahara something like the same proportion that Windsor Park bears to the entire surface of England. This is the true truth about that stupendous undertaking, which is to create a new Mediterranean in the midst of the Dark Continent, and to modify the climate of Northern Europe to something like the condition of the Glacial Epoch. A new Dead Sea would be much nearer the mark, and the only way Northern Europe would feel the change, if it felt it at all, would be in a slight fall in the price of dates in the wholesale market.

No, Sahara as a whole is *not* below sea-level; it is *not* the dry bed of a recent ocean; and it is *not* as flat as the proverbial pancake all over. Part of it, indeed, is very mountainous, and all of it is more or less varied in level. The Upper Sahara consists of a rocky plateau, rising at times into considerable peaks; the Lower, to which it