

# BOYS AND GIRLS

## Opportunities for Young Explorers.

(By Sir Clements Markham, K.C.B., president of the Royal Geographical Society of London.)

When the world was young there was an endless field for exploration, as strange countries and peoples lay in every direction. Then the thrill of delight which comes of first seeing unheard-of landscapes and people could easily be attained. One envies the joy of those young Nasamonians, of whom the Father of History tells us—Herodotus heard their story from some Greeks of Cyrene, whose authority was the King of the Oasis of Ammon:—

The five gallant youths were sons of the chief people among the Nasamonian tribe, which dwelt on the shore of the Greater Syrtis, a gulf of the Mediterranean. To the south of their home was the trackless desert, and the young men longed to cross it, and learn what countries and peoples were on the other side. The young explorers must have made intelligent preparations, for they successfully traversed the desert, came to the fertile country and the towns of the negroes, saw the great river Niger and its crocodiles, and returned home in safety. They were the first of a long and glorious roll of explorers who have prepared for their work with care, performed it with resolution, and been rewarded by success and a happy return.

The race of Nasamonians will, I trust, never be extinct. It is certainly in full vigor now. Stupendous as is the work of discovery achieved since the days of Herodotus, much remains to be done, and youths abound, of various nationalities, who are as zealous as the young dwellers by the Greater Syrtis. Let me give two instances of their spirit:

Some sixteen years ago a boy at school in Stockholm early displayed the geographical instinct with which some boys are born, but which will bring them nowhere unless they diligently cultivate it. Young Sven Hedin cultivated his gift with the utmost perseverance from the age of fifteen. He made himself acquainted with the labors of every explorer whose narrative was within his reach. As regards the Arctic regions, he drew beautifully executed little maps to illustrate each expedition, showing the tracks of the exploring ships, from Cabot and Cortereal to Payer and Nordenskiöld.

Soon his skill and geographical knowledge began to be appreciated, and his help was sought by men of science. But it was not until he had served this long apprenticeship to his favorite pursuit that Sven Hedin thought himself fit to undertake the work of an explorer, selecting Central Asia for the field of his labors. Yet he was still very young; only in his twenty-second year.

After eight years he returned with a rich harvest of valuable results. He travelled over Persia, Bokhara, the Pamirs and eastern Turkestan. He ascended the famous mountain of Mustaghata for twenty thousand feet, and has carefully mapped its glaciers. After suffering terrible privations, and losing two of his four men and all his animals but one in the maze of sand-dunes, he was the first to cross the awful Taklamakan desert, between the rivers Yarkand and Khotan.

He discovered and examined an ancient city which had been buried under the sands for centuries, and had again emerged into the light of day.

He explored a previously unknown part of the lofty plateau of Tibet, for two months not meeting a single human being in those icy solitudes of the Tsaidam. He was afterward exposed to the attacks of Tangut robbers. Finally, he solved the geographical problems connected with Lob Nor.

When he reached Peking, he brought home



DR. SVEN HEDIN.

large collections, valuable maps and drawings, much new geographical information, and an intensely interesting narrative as the results of his arduous exploring labors, yet he was barely thirty years of age.

### A YOUNG EXPLORER IN AFRICA.

Another recent example of the prowess of a modern Nasamonian may be taken from the continent of Africa. Young Henry Sheppard Hart Cavendish landed at Berbera when he had not yet completed his twentieth year. He travelled over the wild country of the Somalis until he reached the banks of the river Jub, a very long and most difficult journey. He made his way across the mountains into the interior. He overcame all obstacles. He was the first to explore the western side of the great Lake Rudolf. He collected information respecting



H. S. H. CAVENDISH.

the unknown country between that lake and the White Nile, and he made his way across the vast region between Lake Rudolf and Mombasa.

He completed this exploring journey with a success which proves that he possesses not only courage of a high order, but judgment and power of influencing his followers, which are qualifications not often met with in so young a man. For he was but a few

months more than twenty-one years old when he returned not long ago.

The aspiration for geographical fame is a very noble one, and resolute action on it is calculated to satisfy youthful cravings for distinction. A young explorer can realize, and often more than realize, the day-dreams of his boyhood, open up new fields for the enterprise of others, and add to the store of human knowledge. So that when he returns home he will receive the applause not only of his countrymen, but of the great scientific brotherhood throughout the world. If it is the lot of the explorer to fall before his work is done, to find a glorious end in the midst of his discoveries, there can be no more heroic death.

Humanely glorious, men will weep for him  
When many a guilty martial fame is dim.  
He ploughed the deep to bind no captive's chain,  
Pursued no rapine—strew'd no deck with slain,  
And save that in the deep himself lies low  
This hero pluck'd no wreath from human woe.

This was the poet Campbell's tribute to La Perouse, the accomplished French navigator and discoverer.

A boy who feels within him the geographical instinct should follow the example of Sven Hedin, and devote some of his spare time to the study of the best books of travel, and the construction of maps to illustrate the routes of travellers, as well as the tracks of celebrated navigators. It is also very desirable that young aspirants should become familiar with the manipulation of such instruments as the sextant and theodolite, and their adjustments. For there is a knack in the use of instruments which can only be thoroughly acquired early in life.

An intending explorer should have a scientific training, and be able to observe and collect with knowledge and intelligence. When he has selected the region to which he intends to devote his attention, he should not start on his expedition until he has made himself well acquainted with the work of all his predecessors who have traversed it, if it is not wholly new, or who have been near if it is unknown. This is of the utmost importance.

He should allow nothing to escape him. Many a mistake is avoided, much labor is often saved, when the traveller possesses this needful information.

With such training, and with a special knowledge of the region to be explored, acquired by diligent and exhaustive research, the traveller goes forth as a knight fully armed. He takes his place as one of those pioneers of civilization to whom the world owes so much, fully capable of performing, with thoroughness and efficiency, the duty he has undertaken.

The ideal traveller should be patient and long-suffering, as well as firm and courageous. There can be no more glorious boast than that of the late Joseph Thomson, the African traveller, who could truly say that, in all his numerous journeys among savage and often hostile tribes, he never spilt one drop of native blood.

The young explorer may find no one absolutely perfect type among his predecessors, but he should set before him, for emulation, the learning of one, the discernment of another, the forbearance of a third; the courage and determination, love of adventure, and devotion to the cause of geography, of all.

Many people suppose the whole world, except only the extreme Arctic and Antarctic