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Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (Apr., 1909), pp. 435-436

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1777215>

Accessed: 25-06-2016 22:32 UTC

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III. SCIENTIFIC RESULTS OF DR. SVEN HEDIN'S EXPEDITION.

By Lord CURZON of KEDLESTON, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E.

I HAVE been asked to say something about the scientific results of Dr. Sven Hedin's latest and greatest journey. I have great pleasure in doing so. I only regret that I did not enjoy the opportunity of giving to Dr. Hedin greater official advantages and encouragement than he received in the earlier stages of his journey—as I had promised to do had I remained longer in India. There is one feat of Tibetan exploration still unachieved, of which I should like him to have carried off the laurels. On the other hand, the disheartening circumstances in which he started were in reality the cause of some of his greatest achievements in his latest journey, and thus “it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good.”

I venture to place Dr. Hedin's discoveries, which are, I think, the most remarkable in his long and unequalled career of exploration, in three categories of merit. The highest ambition of a geographer is to add to the sum total of human knowledge by filling a blank space on the map, or erasing some speculative error that may hitherto have disfigured it. First, accordingly, I should be disposed to place his filling up of that great “white patch” of 65,000 square miles, between the Tsang-po and the Central Tibetan plateau, stretching from Gartok on the west to Shigatse on the east, and containing the hitherto unknown Tibetan provinces of Bongba and Chokchu.

Alongside of this great discovery I would place the tracing for hundreds of miles and the assurance of a definite orographical existence to the mighty mountain palisade or series of palisades to which he has, in my opinion very appropriately, given the title of the Trans-Himalaya. This range has been surmised to exist in its entire length for many years; it has been crossed at its extremities by Littleddale and by native surveyors. But it was reserved for Dr. Hedin to trace it on the spot and to place it upon the map in its long, unbroken, and massive significance—its peaks a little less high than the Himalayas, but its passes much higher, its normal width nearly 100 miles, its total length at least 1000 miles, nor improbably, if its extremities could be followed, nearly twice as much. It is no mean addition to human knowledge that we should realize the assured existence of one of the greatest mountain masses in the world. As regards the name which Dr. Hedin has given to it, I will only say that the desiderata for the title of a new and momentous geographical discovery appear to be these: (1) that the name should if possible be given by the principal (Dr. Hedin would not say himself that he was the sole, or even the first) discoverer; (2) that it should not be unpronounceable, unwriteable, over-recondite, or obscure; (3) that it should if possible possess some descriptive value; and (4) that it should not violate any acknowledged canons of geographical nomenclature. The name Trans-Himalaya combines all these advantages, and it has a direct Central Asian analogy in the Trans-Alai which is a range of mountains, standing in the same relation to the Alai, that Trans-Himalaya will do to Himalaya. I am not in the least impressed by the fact that the name was once given to another range, where its unsuitability secured its early extinction. Any attempts to substitute another title on the present occasion will, in my opinion, be foredoomed to failure.

Second in order of importance, I would place the discovery of the true source of the Indus. There can be no doubt that Dr. Hedin is the first European traveller who has traced the main branch of this mighty river to its glacial origin. Native wisdom is by no means to be despised in such matters, and the Tibetan title of Singi-ka-bap shows that local information, based on the experience of centuries, is in accord with Dr. Hedin's thrilling discovery.

Third, I should be inclined to place what I would call the determination, rather, perhaps, than the discovery, of the true sources of the Brahmaputra and the Sutlej. When a traveller visits or ascertains or sees something which no one has visited, ascertained, or seen, or perhaps even suspected before, he discovers. When he pursues earlier investigations a few stages further, on lines already followed and accepted but not carried to their logical or geographical conclusion, he determines. Thus Livingstone determined the central course of the Zambesi, but he discovered the Victoria falls.

The range of Dr. Hedin's achievements in this wonderful journey is a fitting crown (unless he has yet further ambitions) to the triumphs that have won for him the first place among living Asiatic explorers. I would only add that when disputes are raised, either as to the facts of discoveries so important, or as to the inferences to be drawn from them, I think that it argues some presumption to reject the judgment of the man who narrates what he has seen with his own eyes and done with his own hands—more particularly if he possesses the unequalled record and the unique intellectual and scientific equipment of Dr. Hedin.

IV. WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT FROM DR. SVEN HEDIN.

By Colonel Sir T. H. HOLDICH, K.C.M.G., K.C.I.E.

THE great traveller, Dr. Sven Hedin, has spoken from the London stage and passed on to repeat to wondering audiences the story of his marvellous adventures elsewhere. His amazing energy and determination (before which the hedge set up between India and Tibet by the Indian Government was but an obstacle of straw), his indefatigable patience and keen powers of observation, his fluency of speech, and the charm of his personality win him applause and admiration wherever he goes, and the congratulations of his friends surround him like incense. It is too soon to expect that we should learn even a tithe of the mass of interesting facts that must result from such wide extended research and such intimate association with the natives of Tibet. There is hardly a branch of science to which Sven Hedin is not capable of adding new and valuable information, but it must be years before he can collate and sift his facts and observations so as to place before the public even an epitome of the scientific results of his self-imposed mission. It is not, however, with the general character of his observations in the many branches of science to which he has devoted his attention that I wish to deal at present. I am but taking count of what has fallen from his lips in explanation of his position of a geographer, and in matters geographical we have, at any rate, a certain slight foundation on which to base an elementary criticism—if not of his results, at least of his methods of attaining those results. There was much point in the concluding remarks of his address at Queen's Hall, when he thanked Lord Morley for the legislation which prevented any interference with his work whilst filling up what he called the white space in the map of Tibet. But for that determined attitude of the Government of India on the subject of crossing the Tibetan border, it might well have happened (as Dr. Sven Hedin suggested) that we should by this time have secured a scientifically constructed geographical map of all that "white" space, and the question naturally arises, What shall we get from Sven Hedin?

In these later days, when the white spaces of Asia are so restricted and there is little or nothing left to "discover," it cannot be too strongly insisted on that satisfactory geographical map-making must necessarily be based on two scientific functions, *i.e.* triangulation, which means the accurate fixing by observation and