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Explorations in Bolivia: Discussion

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found. I should also like to say that the interior of South America calls aloud for scientific exploration.

And when I say "the interior" I do not mean pottering about the Andean slopes, where a debased type of savage is sufficiently tame to have adopted some of the vices of civilization, or the more or less comfortable navigation of rivers, but thorough exploration of those forest regions in the heart of the continent which are still marked "unexplored." The difficulties I have sketched refer to such parts, and here also lies the solution of interesting problems. The old recognized transcontinental highways of trade can be traversed with certain discomfort, and incidents possibly interesting but utterly barren of important result.

It is my regret that difficulties with peons and their hopeless cowardice has prevented me doing more, such, for instance, as returning, as I wished to do this past year, from the source of the Verde by the Parecis hills due east.

It is singular that this continent has been so long neglected, unless exploration is, as some one has suggested, a matter of fashion. Here, however, in these days of luxurious equipment and perfection of organization, the explorer of unmapped corners must return to pioneer methods, and be content with his hammock and his rifle and what a kindly Providence will send him for food. I hope it will be for Englishmen, the race after all most appreciated in South America, to follow their traditions and show the way.

The PRESIDENT (before the paper): Major Fawcett, the lecturer for to-night, was an officer of the R.A., who, both during his service in the army and since his retirement, has done excellent work in surveying. His first expedition was to Morocco in the year 1902, and some account of his expeditions appeared in our *Journal*. But his most important exploratory work was his last expedition, which he is going to describe to-night, an expedition in which he undertook the delimitation of the boundary between Bolivia and Brazil on behalf of the Bolivian Government. Certain short accounts of this work have appeared from time to time in our *Journal*, but I think to-night's paper is the first complete history of his exploration which has yet been given to us. As a Society, we are proud of Major Fawcett, for he went through the course of instruction in surveying at Savile Row, and took our Diploma. We may therefore, I think, look upon him not only as a distinguished explorer, but as one of our pupils.

Colonel PEDRO SUAREZ: In the first place, allow me to thank Dr. Keltie for having recommended Major Fawcett to me in 1906, as he has done a large amount of useful work for Bolivia, and he has done it in such a manner that it has not only been accepted by my Government, but also by the Brazilian Government, which says a great deal in his favour. Major Fawcett has told you a great deal about the wild animals and insects he has met with during his explorations in some of the more outlandish places he has passed through, but I can assure you that the towns are not so bad as you may imagine from what he has said. It is quite true that there is a great number of insects and wild animals, but in regard to the savages, they are greatly reduced in number now. With regard to the question of food

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supplies, I may say that my Government has always provided plenty of provisions for the different expeditions, and on the last occasion I doubled the list of provisions that Major Fawcett and Mr. Fisher requested me to order for them. The difficulty has been in obtaining sufficient animals to transport goods for the very long journey they had to undertake, and the proof that they had a sufficient supply of food is, that when they returned to Matto Grosso they presented the Brazilian Commission with what remained. As Major Fawcett has informed you, undoubtedly Bolivia is the land of the future, as it is progressing rapidly with the new railways that are now under construction, with English capital. My Government is so well satisfied with the work performed by Major Fawcett and Mr. Fisher, that I have been instructed to engage two more English officers and six non-commissioned officers for the frontier work. I am sorry not to see here to-night the old familiar face of the late Colonel Church, who took such an interest in all the Latin American countries, and who knew more about Bolivia than any Bolivian, but I am pleased to see here some others who have been there; for example, Sir Martin Conway, who has climbed the highest mountain, and who can undoubtedly tell you something about La Paz and other towns in Bolivia. I must conclude now by thanking Major Fawcett for the interesting paper he has read about my country.

Sir MARTIN CONWAY: I am thankful to say I have not been in the parts of Bolivia described here to-night. I think it is not difficult for us now to explain how it comes about that the forest region of the Amazon should be the last portion of the world remaining to be explored. You must be careful not to conclude that all Bolivia is a land of this description, as it were a portion of the Tertiary world surviving into our own day. These gigantic reptiles, all this strange life, of which we have been told, seem to belong to a past geological period. The unknown has an immense attraction for every one, and especially for adventurous souls, so that perhaps what we have heard, for all its horrors, may act as a kind of challenge to some to go forth and discover. Certainly, for the naturalist this region must be intensely interesting. I prefer the higher lands. Bolivia possesses the remarkable quality that it contains regions of almost every kind. There is, I think, no country in the world where you have, within a territory only five times as big as the United Kingdom, not only this remarkable rich forest district, low-lying, tropical, and, almost within view of it, mountains, 21,000 and 22,000 feet in height, covered with great glaciers and perpetual snow; but besides snow-mountains and tropical forests Bolivia has regions of utter desert, and out of them strange volcanic, extinct volcanic, mountains rise, their flanks displaying all kinds of coloured rocks, and around their bases great dried-up lakes, now represented by expanses of white salts spread abroad over vast areas. All this part of the country resembles a portion of the surface of the moon. In Bolivia you have also fertile regions something like the Italian lakes or the West Indies, rich beautiful regions filling the belt between the high snows and the forest swamps. This is a region of undulating hills, fertile, beautiful in form, a region as fair, as lovely, as any on the face of the Earth. Well, you may imagine that in a country like this, so varied in its surface and so enormously rich in its undeveloped resources, a country, moreover, inhabited by a brave people—a people (I refer not, of course, to the forest folk, of whom we should like to hear a great deal more, but I refer to the population of the higher regions) in whose veins flows the blood of the best families of Andalusia and of the governing caste of the Incas. They are, moreover, an imaginative race also, and intellectually well endowed, for whom a great future undoubtedly waits. About such a country and such a people, it is, I think, quite certain that there will be a story hereafter to tell.

Mr. W. S. BARCLAY : Major Fawcett's lecture referred to the extraordinary progress that has been made in South America during the last decade. There are certain things that we all recognize, and that is one of them. South America is furnishing to-day a very large proportion of the foodstuffs and raw materials which we require in Europe. Argentina exports more cereals than Canada. Three-quarters of the world's coffee and half of the world's rubber still comes from Brazil. We have heard of the depletion of forests. The largest, densest, and most valuable forests in the world cover over a million square miles in the Amazon and Alto Parana basins. Meanwhile, South America manufactures very little. I know of no instance so striking as the town of Buenos Aires, which, apart from foodstuffs, practically lives on imports. This is also largely the case in Peru, Brazil, and Bolivia. Countries in these conditions, supplying food and raw materials, and absorbing manufactures, are bound to receive great attention from European nations.

On the North American continent settlement began on the Atlantic coast, and it spread west to the Pacific, across the inland plains and over the Rockies. In South America the nations early planted themselves on both coasts. Thus, while in North America the trend of railways and lines of communication has been from east to west, in South America the tendency has been from either coast inland. That tendency, due to competition among nations occupying the coast-line, has been very much hastened of late years. Four lines are to-day converging towards the region which Major Fawcett has shown us to-night. In the south railroads are stretching up from Argentina. Within twelve months we shall have through rail communication between Ascension and Buenos Aires. In the north the most important strategical line on the South American continent, the Madeira-Mamore railway, will be completed within three years. This line will handle the traffic between the upper and lower Amazon basins. From the east comes the São Paulo-Corumbá line, across Brazil. Already they are building a bridge over the Alto Paraná river, while the Corumbá section has been completed and will be opened next September. And westward, Major Fawcett has told us that a railway connecting the plateaux to the lowlands of Bolivia is almost inevitable.

Thus we see four lines all converging upon this district, the very heart of South America. The methods by which they advance are perhaps not all that geographers could wish. The gentlemen who build them might with advantage study more of the country before they start construction. When Colonel Church projected the building of the Madeira Falls railway, he roughly surveyed the whole of the upper basin of the Madeira, as far as its water-parting with the Paraguay river. As a consequence his deductions, made forty years ago, still hold good to-day. I would ask any one familiar with railway enterprise in South America to say if it is not true that millions of money have been wasted for want of adequate survey and mapping beforehand, of which the total cost would have been very small, and the benefits incalculable. I would suggest that the board of every South American railway make it a *sine quâ non* that their general managers on the spot should also be Fellows of the Royal Geographical Society.

When one talks of lines of communication, the problem bound up with it is the development of the country. It is no good building a railway if you have got nothing to haul on it. In colonizing these hinterlands it is best to tackle the open prairie before the forest country, and anybody who settles in pampa land ought to take with him as many cattle as he can and a box of matches. By burning the long grass and rushes constantly an enormous number of insect pests are destroyed, while the cattle-tracks form little paths which help swamp-water to drain off.

One final point. Most of the transport lines in South America are altogether too modest. They hide their lights under a bushel. Not only do they descry all knowledge of each other's time-tables; they do not appear to know that any competing line even exists. Now, it does not cost very much to get up a little book to tell about yourself to interested people; it is not much trouble, if you have drawn a map, to send it to the Royal Geographical Society. But South American railway, telegraph, and steamship lines never dream of doing either. I suggest that they co-operate with the public more in this and other matters. If we could go to some agency and book an inclusive passage through South America at an inclusive price, so as to be sure of returning at a given date, it would be a great step gained. Co-operation, publicity, and enterprise are what is wanted, and with these the next ten years should see an enormous advance in South American travel.

Sir THOMAS HOLDICH: My experience in South America and in boundary delimitation never took me as far as Bolivia, and after hearing Major Fawcett's description of that charming country, I can only say, with Sir Martin Conway, how glad I am I was not there. It is on an occasion like this that we miss the voice of our great South American expert, Colonel Church, who has passed from us. He had always something interesting to say, and something new, but he never told us of such remarkable experiences as those which Major Fawcett has described to-night, and I was not prepared to hear anything like so much of the extraordinary difficulties of dealing with boundary demarcation in Bolivia, after my own experiences further south. I think that this Society may take to itself very great credit for having turned out a surveyor of Major Fawcett's capability. If we can only succeed in putting a few more men like Major Fawcett into the field (as he himself proposes), I think that our geographical school may well say that it justifies its existence.

The PRESIDENT: Geographers have on several occasions expressed surprise that these interior wild regions of South America have not been more thoroughly explored. Major Fawcett has expressed that opinion, but I think he has given better than any one else the reasons why travellers have not more frequently pushed into the interior. The obvious reasons are the discomfort, the difficulties, and the dangers of such journeys, for the picture he has drawn us has been a picture of famine and death, with a background of insect bites. The work he has so well described to us has been an admirable bit of work. Major Fawcett will, I am sure, never get over his love for exploring, and he is, in fact, about to set forth for South America once again. He will go forth with the most hearty good wishes of every one in this room, and of the Society which I have the honour to represent.

PROGRESS OF SURVEY IN THE ANGLO-EGYPTIAN SUDAN.*

By Captain HUGH D. PEARSON, R.E., Director of Sudan Surveys.

WHEN the campaign of 1896-98 was entered upon, we possessed, thanks to explorers from nearly every nation in Europe, a rough general knowledge of practically the whole of what is now known as the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

* For much of the matter in the early part of this article I am indebted to old reports written by Colonel Talbot.