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in reaching Malta. It is a pity that there is no direct steamer from Marseilles to Valletta. The British Government is understood to be rearranging the Malta mail service (which it is said to subsidise to the extent of £5000 per annum), and might take the opportunity of improving the communication between Britain and Malta, and of not leaving it entirely in the hands of foreigners.

The beginning of May is probably the best time to visit Malta, for the fine weather has then set in, and the Mediterranean is usually smooth. During the winter of 1905 and the spring of 1906 broken weather was widely experienced along the Mediterranean coasts, much rain falling in Sicily and Tunisia, and Malta being constantly swept by wind and rain. The weather of Malta at the beginning of last May resembled that of the finest English summer, with a strong sun and yet a fresh atmosphere, and with a temperature ranging daily from 65° to 70° Fahrenheit in the shade.

THE AREA OF UNKNOWN ANTARCTIC REGIONS COMPARED WITH AUSTRALIA, UNKNOWN ARCTIC REGIONS, AND BRITISH ISLES.

By WILLIAM S. BRUCE, F.R.S.E.

(*With Map.*)

THE accompanying map has been constructed to show graphically what an immense area still exists in the South Polar regions which is absolutely and entirely unknown. This is brought out by a comparison with the size of well-known land masses. The construction has been as follows. A tracing of the unknown Antarctic area was made from a large globe; that portion of the globe, on account of its size, being practically flat. Australia and the unknown North Polar area, and the British Isles, were similarly treated. These tracings having been obtained, the one was superimposed upon the other, giving the diagram now published.

By this means several striking facts are brought out. The Antarctic Continent is found by planimeter measurements to occupy the immense area of 5,470,000 square miles, an area almost equal to that of Europe and Australia put together. Thus the size of the seven different continental masses is in the following order:—

1. Asia,	. . . . .	17,250,000 sq. miles.
2. Africa,	. . . . .	11,520,000 „
3. North America,	. . . . .	7,729,000 „
4. South and Central America,	. . . . .	7,128,000 „
5. Antarctica,	. . . . .	5,470,000 „
6. Europe,	. . . . .	3,750,000 „
7. Australia,	. . . . .	2,947,000 „

The map also brings out some very interesting relationships. The fact, for instance, that Australia can be easily included within the

Antarctic land area, and yet, that an amount of land equal to the area of the Australian continent still exists almost entirely south of the Antarctic circle. It is interesting to note also that the area of the unknown North Polar regions is easily included within that of Australia. Indeed, it is less than half that of Australia, and a quarter of that of Antarctica. In addition to this enormous South Polar land mass, the interior of which is practically unknown, there exists a great unknown area of sea almost equal to the entire unknown surface of the globe round about the North Pole. An interesting comparison is also made by placing a map of the British Isles at the South Pole, to show how diminutive our native land is compared to these vast unknown regions of the globe both in the north and in the south. There is also a further comparison, the dotted outline, representing the unknown North Polar regions is, longitude for longitude, the same as the unknown Antarctic area upon which it is superimposed. It is, in fact, as if on a transparent globe the unknown Arctic area were seen through the unknown Antarctic area; by this means we see that the region most explored in the far south, viz., that on each side of the 180th meridian, is exactly the counterpart of the least explored region in the north. The following list is also useful, showing the exact proportion in square miles of the unknown area of the north and south, and of the proportion of land and water.

<i>Antarctic Regions</i> —Unknown land,	.	.	5,470,000 sq. miles.
Unknown sea,	.	.	850,000 „
<i>Arctic Regions</i> — Unknown sea,	.	.	1,330,000 „

Thus we see that, though the unknown sea area in the Antarctic is small in comparison to the unknown land area, yet that unknown sea area is three-quarters the size of the unknown North Polar surface. Add to this the fact that, even over the so-called known regions of the sea south of 40° South, that practically nothing is known below the surface, except in those small portions traversed by the *Challenger*, *Valdivia*, *Belgica*, and *Scotia*, and we have an obviously enormous amount of work yet to be done in oceanographical science in the far south.

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