

The Antarctic Regions in General

Further discoveries will be considered in later chapters on the separate quadrants.

THE CONTINENT OF ANTARCTICA

Among the distinguished scientists who have attempted, on relatively scanty data, to theoretically outline geographically the extended land areas of the antarctic regions, Sir John Murray, of the *Challenger* expedition, was the most advanced and definite. Basing his theory on a study of sediments from the southern seas, he outlined a southern continent, which he christened Antarctica. Although some scientists believe that the continent is divided into two great ice-capped lands, most attentive and authoritative students accept Murray's conclusion.

Extended explorations by Bruce, Charcot, Davis, Drygalski, Gerlache, Mawson, Nordenskiöld, Scott, Shackleton and others have contributed such wealth of data as makes it possible to give a general outline of the continent of Antarctica. It is in several respects the most remarkable of the continents, in its towering mass, its geological history, its unique isolation, its climatic conditions, its physical features and its scantiness of life forms.

Its area is estimated at 5,122,000 square miles. Its average elevation is nearly six thousand feet, double that of any other continent. The south-polar plateau approaches eleven thousand feet above the sea, and its great mountain ranges rise

