

European settlers. Another,¹ recently advanced, is that the rivers which have their origin in the humid, wooded tops of the higher areas erode away the margins of the rain-collecting highlands in their descent towards lower and more arid levels, and gradually diminish as they destroy their rain-collecting areas.

The chief lakes of the basin in the Durango district are:—Laguna de Tlahualila, which receives no streams of any size; Laguna del Muerto or Mayran, which receives the waters of the River Nazas; and Laguna Parras, into which flows the Aguanaval. These all lie comparatively close together, and none of them has an outlet. The fact that there exist in the River Nazas species of fish which occur also in the Rio Grande is further proof of the former existence of a connection between these inland basins and the Rio Grande.

The same conditions continue northward into Chihuahua, New Mexico, and Western Texas, which receive the drainage of the plateau of the Sierra Madre. The lakes in this area are comparatively small. The two principal ones are Laguna de Guzman, into which flows the River San Miguel, and Laguna de Santa Maria, into which drains the river of the same name.

In Central America lakes without outlet are common in the limestone region of Northern Guatemala, the largest being Lake Peten, and in the rainy season many shallow temporary lakes (*akalches*) are formed in the hollows of the same region. Numerous lagoons of brackish water lie along both coasts.

This concludes our survey of the lakes situated in the inland drainage areas or desert regions of the Northern Hemisphere. When we turn to the similar areas of the Southern Hemisphere we find that, because of the less developed land-masses, these areas are—excepting Australia—very limited in extent when compared with their northern analogues.

SOUTHERN
HEMISPHERE.

Australia.

Australia may be described as a plateau fringed by well-watered coasts, with a depressed, and for the most part arid, interior. Nearly two-thirds of the inland drainage area of Australia, which is estimated by Murray at 1,556,000 square miles (see fig. 67), is occupied by the Great Austral Plain, flanked on every side by mountains and tablelands, and sloping more or less gradually to a central depressed lake region. The plain is subdivided by undulating downs, or flat-topped hills, with here and there some scattered mountain groups. Where the rainfall is not all absorbed by the soil or lost through evaporation, the depressions are occupied by saline² lakes.

¹ R. T. Hill, "Characteristics of some Mexican Mining Regions," *Engineering and Mining Journal* (New York), vol. lxxxiv. p. 633, 1907.

² See second footnote on p. 515.