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Review: The Red Sea Coast

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valuable animals, the Masina wool-bearing sheep and the horse, are introductions from Asia. They thrive; another alien, American cotton, does not. There is, however, an assured future for the indigenous cotton-plant. The industries are of little importance, and the absence of coal will tend to keep back certain enterprises. Though gold is abundant, it is not being worked on a large scale, nor is it likely to be for years to come.

An immense development of agriculture is foreshadowed in schemes to regulate the flood-waters of the middle Niger. In the "central delta" of the river, as the author calls the region of lakes and waterways above Timbuktu, an area equal to one-sixth of the cultivable land of Egypt could, at comparatively little cost, be placed under irrigation. What the Nile has done for Egypt, the Niger may, some day, do for this country. Much larger irrigation works are possible, but they are not at present required. The study of the *régime* of the Niger is particularly interesting; it includes that of its lower waters.

The very numerous and excellent photographs illustrate all aspects of the country, its peoples, and products.

F. R. C.

#### THE RED SEA COAST.

'Desert and Water Gardens of the Red Sea.' By Cyril Crossland. Cambridge: University Press. 1913. *Sketch-maps and Illustrations.* Price 10s. 6d.

Mr. Cyril Crossland is marine biologist to the Sudan Government, and has for some years been in charge of their pearl-shell fisheries. In connection with these he has travelled up and down the coast, visiting the reefs. His head station is at Dongonab, a bay about 100 miles north of Port Sudan. Here he leads an isolated existence in charge of numerous pearling vessels and a village of sailors—a father to his people, but himself absolutely divorced from social intercourse with his own race. In vivid chapters he tells us of his people, their daily life, their social conditions, their religious observances and superstitions, their work, and their marital affairs. There is a simplicity in it all. The facts are facts culled by a keen observer, one who knows of what he writes and never writes to make a book. Dongonab is a poor, barren place, indeed, but its people are typical of many a Red sea settlement. They will charm the reader as through weary years they have beguiled the author. The photographs of them at work and play are a credit to both author and publisher.

The coastal plain is a desert, but it has an ever-changing beauty of its own in sunshine and storm, in that wonderful clear air through which the light and shade on the precipices and rugged peaks of its mountain backing, 80 miles away, are clearly visible. Yet a single rainstorm brings out what to the resident seems an amazing wealth of life. It is really meagre, a striking contrast to the gardens of the sea coral beds fringing the shores, and a barrier of reefs broken by innumerable channels of vivid blue. Few waters have such an extravagance of life, algæ, many with skeletons of dense lime, coral, zoophytes, and innumerable wandering beasts of every lowly kind. The attached forms are builders of reefs, and the piling up of their remains, which results in these, is lightly sketched. Many shore reefs owe their whole breadth to this upbuilding, but others have been broadened by the eating of the waves into the older elevated limestones which fringe the coasts.

The author is tempted for a few pages to go into the vexed question of the formation of different kinds of reefs, and his last chapter is a serious contribution to that question and to that of the making of the Red sea. He regards the latter as a rift, and he traces three successive series of barrier reefs, two of which

have subsequently by elevation been added to the land. To the reviewer these elevated barriers seem scarcely comparable to the existing barrier system, which has some parts with remarkably deep water (over 100 fathoms) between them and the mainland. There is not enough evidence of the supposed faulting, especially of the faulting which is presumed to have formed harbours and other fissures in the coast.

Yet, while different authorities will disagree with different points, all will find abundant food for thought. Best of all, we are able heartily to congratulate the author on demonstrating by his simple language and illustrations how a vexed scientific question may be made clear even to the most unscientific reader.

J. STANLEY GARDINER.

#### THE TRIPOLI ENTERPRISE.

'Italy in North Africa.' By W. K. McClure. London: Constable & Co. 1913.  
10s. 6d. *net*.

The conquest of Tripoli by Italy is an event that must ever loom large in the history of the Mediterranean, especially with the added interest of its forming a resumption rather than an annexation of territory, as indicated by the wealth of Roman remains still to be seen in the country. Mr. McClure's judiciously compiled volume is sure to arouse general interest in a region whose past history shows it, in the opinion of some, to be one of the great possibilities. Near Ajilat the ruins of Sabratha include an amphitheatre that held ten thousand spectators, and at Lebda the remains of Leptis Magna recall the memory of Septimus Severus, who, though born so near the southern rim of the known world, ended his life at York, nearly 2000 miles to the north, but still within the limits of the empire he had ruled. In Roman times the Tripolitan coast strip and the Cyrenaican plateau must have been veritable gardens, and the remains of aqueducts, reservoirs, statuary, Roman coins and pottery, mosaic pavements, and vaulted tombs bear eloquent witness to a civilization which, though the task will be arduous, may well flourish anew.

The author's sojourn in Tripoli covered some four or five months in 1911-12, during which period he wrote for the *Times*, and rendered careful service in personally investigating operations and localities figuring prominently in the course of the expedition. The first chapter, "A Retrospect," is also useful, for, although mainly political, it supplies a temperately written review of the great international events and developments, from 1838 when Mazzini claimed northern Africa for an Italy that was not yet in being, to the Italian declaration of war in September, 1911. While the bulk of the work partakes of the narrative character, the concluding chapters, viz. "The Italian Army at work," "Italian, Arab, and Turk," "The Future of the new Colonies," and "Italy and the Powers," cast valuable light on side issues which must be of importance for the future of the country. The numerous photographs are varied and interesting and clearly printed, while the three large maps are reproduced from maps compiled by the military authorities in Tripolitania during the war.

'Winning a Primitive People.' By Donald Fraser. (London: Seeley, Service. 1914. Pp. 320. *Map and Illustrations*. 5s.) This book deals with missionary work among the Ngoni tribe and the Senga and Tumbuka peoples of Central Africa. It is a valuable volume of its type, the author possessing a profound acquaintance with the manners and customs of the natives with whom he has come in contact, and placing on record here very full accounts of them, not only in regard to their attitude towards Christian teaching, but also in their untaught condition. A map (as to which it may be observed that it is unsafe