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part, edited by Dr. Bunge, is given to the description of the extremely interesting journey itself, and is full of interesting details relative to the flora and fauna of the country, the extension of forests and of ever-frozen soil, as well as the life of the Yakutes.

THE PORTUGUESE EMPIRE IN THE EAST.*

HAVING regard, on the one hand, to the peculiar interest attaching to the rapid rise to supreme power in the East of a nation possessed of such limited resources as Portugal, and on the other to the number of contemporary historians of that nation who wrote voluminous accounts of the doings of their countrymen, it is certainly surprising that so little should hitherto have been done to bring before English readers a connected account of the steps by which such vast results were attained. One of those historians, it is true, found an English translator two centuries ago; but in the case of the other and more standard writers, the voluminous nature of their works apparently proved a deterrent. It is, therefore, matter for satisfaction that Mr. Danvers should have followed up his official researches into the records—both English and Portuguese—relating to India and the East, by bringing together from such records, as well as from the above-mentioned sources, an account of “the principal events connected with the rise of the Portuguese nation, and with the development and decline of their Eastern Empire.” The history of a period so extended—for, while directing his chief attention to the more stirring events of early conquest and international rivalry, the author traces the fortunes of the Portuguese possessions down to the present day—cannot, of course, be treated of exhaustively, even in the two thick octavo volumes now before us, but the connected view here presented cannot fail to be useful to all students of European enterprise in the East.

It is possible here to touch on a few only of the most interesting and eventful periods of the history, passing over the first opening up of intercourse with the East under Vasco da Gama and his immediate successors as more familiar to English readers than the history of its subsequent development, to which the ambitious schemes of the great Albuquerque contributed so largely. Mr. Danvers helps us to trace the influence, not entirely beneficial, of the policy of this great man on the future of the Portuguese power. Whilst others aimed merely at the opening of trade relations with the various Eastern nations, he sought to emulate Alexander the Great by the establishment of a vast territorial dominion, such as could not fail to overtax the resources of so small a country as Portugal. His zeal in this direction may be judged from the fact that of the three great Eastern emporia of commerce, whose traffic made so

* ‘The Portuguese in Asia.’ By F. C. Danvers. London: W. H. Allen. 1894.

much impression on mediæval travellers like Abd-er-Razzak, Varthema, and others, he had at the time of his death already subjugated two, Malacca and Ormuz, and was contemplating the completion of Portuguese ascendancy by the reduction of the third, Aden. According to his 'Commentaries,'* he had brought completely under his influence all the countries from Ormuz to Cape Comorin, while eastwards as far as China all the kings were in friendly relations with him.

From a geographical point of view, perhaps the greatest interest of the book lies in the facilities afforded for tracing the course of events by which, in the space of little over half a century, the coasts and seas of the whole of Eastern Asia, including the islands of the archipelago, were definitely made known to Europe. In so doing, we are struck by the quiet way in which such vast additions to the knowledge of the world were made, the history of actual discovery being not bound up with the names of great captains, such as those whose exploits in the New World were so fully chronicled by historians. This is due, no doubt, partly to the fact that accounts of the far East had already been given, however vaguely, by the mediæval travellers, and partly to the different political relations which prevailed, these being confined chiefly to the establishment of trade, or at most the erection of forts, along the coasts. Of the first expeditions to the Moluccas under Antonio de Abreu (1511), to China under Fernão Perez de Andrade (1516), and to Japan under Antonio de Mota (1542), we have to be content with very meagre details, and as a rule the individual voyages were on too small a scale and of too short duration to rank with those of the great navigators of the world. Those of Mendez Pinto, which, as regards their extent at least, might form an exception, are only incidentally referred to in the book.

The principal scene of the events treated of is of course India and the neighbouring countries, and here the reader may follow in detail the various wars with native rulers by which the Portuguese power was established on the West Coast; the operations in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, with varying success, against the Turks, Arabs, and Persians; the part taken by the Portuguese in the native wars in Ceylon; their rivalry with the English and Dutch, and expulsion by the latter from Ceylon and the Archipelago; their struggle with the Mahratta power, and the decline of their influence on the Bombay coast, with a corresponding increase of that of the English; and the final decay of their power, due to a variety of causes, but principally to the exhaustion of revenue by misappropriation of funds, to the decline of trade owing to bad fiscal policy, and to the ill effects of the establishment of the Spanish dominion over Portugal.

The book is illustrated by reproductions of old maps, portraits, and views of places, and a copious index is added, the value of which is,

* An English version of which has been published by the Hakluyt Society.

however, lessened by the fact that under the main headings the separate entries are arranged, not chronologically, but alphabetically, the order thus depending merely on the chance form of words employed. This is especially to be regretted in a work covering such a wide extent, both of time and place, in which the details referring to any one person or region are necessarily scattered far and wide amidst the general mass.

THE GALÁPAGOS ISLANDS.*

By Dr. WOLF.

THE position of the Galápagos is very isolated. They lie at a distance of 600 nautical miles from the South American continent, and 3000 miles from the nearest Polynesian Islands, the Mendoza Archipelago; and since at the time of their discovery by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century they were uninhabited, and owing to their general barren and stony character did not invite settlement, while up to the present day they have remained off the great trade-routes of the world, they have always attracted little attention. It was only in 1832 that the Republic of Ecuador took formal possession of them. Peru once or twice showed a disposition to annex them, and the United States attempted to acquire them by purchase, but still Ecuador remained in the end in undisturbed possession of them. Only within the last fifteen or twenty years, since the cutting through of the Central-American isthmus was set on foot, has the general interest been more directed to this archipelago, for it will lie on the main route from Panama to Polynesia and Australia, and form a most favourable point for the establishment of a coaling-station. Ecuador has likewise recognized the importance of the islands for the future, and has, since 1885, named a governor and other officials for them, although only one island is inhabited, and that by only two hundred persons. The islands were made known to science by Darwin during the voyage of the *Beagle*.

The group is scattered over a water-area of over 23,000 square miles, and yet the total land surface amounts to only 2870, of which 1650 fall to the largest island, Albemarle. Altogether there are thirteen islands, exclusive of the many small islets and rocks. The geological and topographical character of the islands is exceedingly plain and simple. They form one of the best examples of formation by volcanic action pure and simple, through the piling up of eruptive matter. Nowhere is an old non-volcanic formation to be seen, and nowhere is the simple geological structure disturbed by extensive displacements or dislocations, while even the surface has lost hardly anything of its original form by erosion. Both an older and a more recent period of eruption are to be observed. During the former the outbreak took place beneath the sea, and must have yielded an enormous mass of material, forming the basis on which the more recent sub-aerial peaks were raised above the exceedingly deep sea-bottom. Petrographically, the old volcanic products are distinguished by the presence of Palagonite and other stratified tuffs with the character of sandstone, whilst the more recent consist entirely of vast streams and layers of lava, almost devoid of tuffs.

The old tuff formation occurs nowhere in extended masses, but appears only sporadically in the form of horseshoe craters in the lowest parts of the islands, or

* Paper read at the Berlin Geographical Society, April 6, 1895.