Review

Author(s): L. F. I. A.

Review by: L. F. I. A.

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of much of their original supply, decreased in area. Some, like Lake Chad, are rapidly drying up, while others have completely disappeared. Thus, not only were certain areas robbed of life-giving streams which once flowed through them, but, the atmosphere over the interior of the continent being no longer supplied with moisture from the vanished lakes, the rainfall decreased and is still progressively decreasing. In this way, according to Prof. Schwarz, the desiccation of Africa is mainly due to the results of headstream erosion.

Prof. Schwarz suggests a simple remedy. Close the breaches in the coastal rampart by weirs, he says, and much water now flowing uselessly to the sea will once more be turned towards the interior, again bringing into being the great lakes essential to an adequate rainfall over the areas which have been, or are rapidly being, converted into deserts. Applying this principle to South Africa, he proposes to construct weirs on the Kunene and Chobe rivers. By this means 20,000 square miles of waste country will be flooded, and sufficient moisture added to the atmosphere of South Africa to restore its failing rainfall.

In its magnitude and simplicity of conception this scheme must command respect. To inquire fully into its merits and demerits is beyond the scope of a short review, and to attempt to accept or condemn it without long and serious consideration would be an impertinence. Prof. Schwarz, however, would be the first to admit that its every detail should be submitted to a microscopic examination. As practical experiment on a small scale with a view to testing its value is not feasible, the necessity for the most searching theoretical criticism is all the greater. One feels that Prof. Schwarz under cross-examination might be able to make out a stronger case for his scheme than he has presented in his book, which is perhaps more remarkable for enthusiasm than for close and impartial analysis. That one is irresistibly impelled to hope that he will do so is a proof that the book succeeds in its avowed object, which is to arouse general interest in his scheme. In the first place, it is most desirable that Prof. Schwarz's assumptions as to the effects of his proposed weirs upon the courses of the rivers concerned should be checked by an accurate survey, many of the levels quoted in his book being admittedly open to doubt. Secondly, the question of the effect which the proposed lakes would exercise upon climate and rainfall should be thoroughly ventilated by our most eminent climatologists.* For it should be noted that the chief feature of the scheme is that use will be made of the natural water supply not so much for irrigation, though this is incidental, as for the improvement of the rainfall of the whole of South Africa.

That the book is hardly likely to prove remunerative is probably the reason of several defects in its production, the most irritating of which is the lack of clarity in the maps and sketches with which it is illustrated. This, however, is a very minor point, and will doubtless be remedied as the scheme matures. Prof. Schwarz possesses a breadth of conception and sincerity of purpose which must make even the most sceptical of his readers hope that he will prove his case and eventually convert his magnificent vision into concrete achievement.

L. F. I. A.

The Glamour of Prospecting.— Lieut. Fred C. Cornell. London: T. Fisher Unwin. [1920.] Pp. 334. *Map and Illustrations.* 21s. net.

Mr. Cornell in his preface disclaims any pretension to having written a handbook for prospectors; he would also presumably deny having had any idea

* Since the above was written, Prof. Schwarz's proposals have been put forward and discussed at an Afternoon Meeting of the Society.

of contributing seriously to geographical knowledge by it. His book, however, is of the type which enables the reader possessed of a little imagination to visualize the strange lands where the pioneer still finds scope for his energies, and to clothe with living flesh and blood the dry bones presented to us by the cartographer.

Mr. Cornell describes with unflagging zest a series of prospecting trips into the little-known and inhospitable regions of Gordonia and what was till recently German South-West Africa, and his adventures make excellent reading. Above all, one is struck by the indomitable pluck and perseverance which repeated disappointments and hardships seem only to render more buoyant. The author has no story of rich finds with which to excite our cupidity; on the other hand, when he is not being seasick in an open boat on the South Atlantic, he is usually in imminent danger of death from thirst. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, he fully justifies the title he has chosen, for if the glamour he portrays be insufficient to lure the middle-aged from the alleged comforts of civilization, his book is at least one which should, in kindness, be withheld from well-regulated youth which has been doomed by parental caution to an office existence. There are authors, unhappily numerous, who seem to visit foreign lands in search of "atmosphere" much as one goes to a stationer's for a bottle of ink, and who return to daub it over the written page with distressing results. It is a relief to turn from such as these to Mr. Cornell. The latter has so effectively absorbed the atmosphere of his surroundings that the sea fogs of Port Nolloth and the blinding glare of the salt pans are radiated from his pages without the slightest perceptible effort of style; and if by chance the jolting of his trek-wagon has split an infinitive or two, the illusion is all the more complete.

The scene of most of the trips described lies, as has already been said, in or on the borders of the old German colony of South-West Africa, just before the war. The author's observations on German methods and manners are interesting, and the picture he gives of the German post on the Orange River complete with its fifty lifebelts is typical of Teutonic attention to detail. The contrast in frontier methods is again instanced when the author, wishing to telegraph to Cape Town, is obliged to cross over into German territory to find a telegraph office. The description of Prussian officers baiting a wretched little Jew saloon-keeper, and blatantly toasting "Der Tag," is a familiar picture in a new setting. Altogether there is much that is interesting in Mr. Cornell's book, and, in spite of his disclaimer, much that is instructive, but what more than anything else will attract most readers, is the undefeated *joie de vivre* of the author, and the light-hearted and unstrained way in which he communicates it to his public.

L. F. I. A.

MATHEMATICAL AND PHYSICAL GEOGRAPHY

Map-reading made Easy.— **Captain C. C. Esson and G. S. Philip.** Crown Quarto, 9½ × 7½. Cloth boards. London: G. Philip & Son, Ltd. [1920.] Price 3s. 6d. net.

The war has shown clearly the importance of a practical knowledge of maps and map-reading, and several books have been published in this country on the subject during the last few years. The above is particularly clearly written and does not assume any previous knowledge of the subject. It is well illustrated with good diagrams and plans, and the authors have attempted, with fair success, to explain the reasons for the rules they give, not contenting themselves with merely stating them, as is frequently the case with such books.

The ground covered is much the same as in most elementary books of the