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Review: The Masai

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occupation, evidently of great antiquity, have been found widely distributed, and it is concluded that a correlation of these physical and human events may be obtained through a continuance of the investigation, and that archaeological excavations will throw light on the origin of Western and Eastern civilizations.

The above brief sketch of the work and records of the party under Mr. Pumpelly will suffice to bring to notice a remarkable advance in the scientific treatment of the physico-geographical problems of a country. However virgin a field of research Turkestan may be, one cannot but be greatly impressed by the mass of new information collected and recorded by the present expedition in the making of what is claimed to be but a preliminary reconnaissance of the country. If so much has been done by systematic and scientific observation in journeys of such short duration, we are indeed justified in expecting important results from further and prolonged exploration conducted under the same scientific system. It is, however, only reasonable to expect that some at least of the conclusions now formulated will be modified by further research.

The geographical world will look with interest for the records of further work by these same authors, and it is greatly to be hoped that other geographical communities may be tempted to conduct physico-geographical research on the advanced scientific principles adopted by the Carnegie Institute.

A. H. M.

AFRICA.

THE MASAI.

'The Masai: their Language and Folklore.' By A. C. Hollis, with introduction by Sir Charles Eliot. Oxford: 1905.

None of the Central African peoples revealed to the outer world during the latter half of the nineteenth century have received more careful and adequate treatment than the Masai nomads, whose outstanding physical and mental characters, social and military institutions, religious notions and traditions could not fail from the first to attract the attention of anthropological students. The graphic picture presented by Joseph Thomson's 'Masailand' has been greatly enlarged by Merker's 'Die Masai,' lately noticed in the *Journal*, and is now all but completed by the present work, the value of which is not a little enhanced by Sir Charles Eliot's comprehensive survey of the whole field. This is all the more timely since the people themselves are, under various adverse circumstances—rinderpest, small-pox, famine—steadily declining, their numbers having in recent years fallen from perhaps 50,000 to scarcely more than 12,000 in the British section of their former domain. It was, in fact, this threatened extinction or fusion of the race in the surrounding Bantu populations that inspired the present work, in which Mr. Hollis has sought, before it was too late, to give a full account of the language, "the customs and beliefs of this interesting people, all given in the words of the relaters themselves." The result is most satisfactory, and Sir Charles Eliot is fully justified in declaring that the book is one of the most valuable contributions yet made to the anthropology and philology of British East Africa.

Sir H. Johnston's suggestion that the Masai are an early blend of Nilotic Negroes and Galla and Somali Hamites is here accepted as probably correct. This view at once explains the curious intermingling of Negro and Caucasian physical characters that has been noticed by all observers, and at the same time accounts for the peculiar structure of the Masai language, whose affinities are here shown to be with the Bari, the Latuka, and other Nilotic tongues, and not at all with

the Hamitic family. The inference is obvious that the substratum is negro, while in the process of somatic fusion there has been no linguistic fusion, but one of the two rival languages has simply perished, in accordance with the principle always insisted on by me that, while all races normally intermingle, there is no true linguistic miscegenation ('Ethnology,' ch. ix.).

In his treatment of the Masai language, Mr. Hollis has adopted a highly practical method, by which the laws regulating the formative and other structural elements are stated in the fewest possible words, and then illustrated by copious examples. The rigid and unnatural distinction drawn in most grammars between accident and syntax is thus got rid of with excellent results, and without any sacrifice of clearness. Since the sentence, and not the word, is the true unit of speech (Sayce), it must be obvious that this is the real scientific method, and the student will be all the more grateful to Mr. Hollis for having extended it to the whole of the volume. The numerous Masai texts, comprising cosmic myths, moral and religious tales, folklore stories, proverbs, riddles with their answers, and the like, are generally given with interlinear verbatim translations, and then followed by free English versions, so that this second and larger section of the volume serves as a continuous application of the grammatical rules occupying the first part. Some of the tales and wise saws bespeak a people gifted with a fair share of natural intelligence, and far from destitute of a measure of moral sense fully adequate to the maintenance of their by no means primitive social conditions. Thus "the night has ears" = our "walls have ears;" "the charcoal laughs at the ashes" = "hodie mihi cras tibi," or "your turn next;" "the arrows come by the hind-leg," *i.e.* if arrows come, there are foes behind them, = "no smoke without fire;" "we begin foolishly and end wisely" = "experientia docet." And here is just one riddle—What escapes the prairie fire? The bare spot (where no grass grows).

A. H. KEANE.

THE WESTERN SUDAN AND NIGERIA.

'A Tropical Dependency: An Outline of the Ancient History of the Western Soudan, with an Account of the Modern Settlement of Northern Nigeria.' By Flora L. Shaw (Lady Lugard). London: Nisbet. 1905. Pp. viii. + 508.

Miss Shaw, now Lady Lugard, will long be remembered as the brilliant correspondent of the *Times* on Colonial affairs. To the composition of this more solid piece of work she has brought to bear the same remarkable qualities—thorough grasp of the subject, clearness of exposition, and an easy fluent style—which made her Articles such pleasant and instructive reading. To these has here been added an unwearied industry in the collection and discriminating study of the copious materials which had to be consulted in the preparation of the present work, which covers an immensely wide field, far wider even than might be gathered from its rather full explanatory sub-title. This will at once be seen when it is stated that the 'Outline' is by no means confined to the 'Western Soudan,' but ranges over the whole of North-West Africa and Spain, thus enabling the gifted writer to deal intelligently with the manifold relations which Arabs, Berbers, and Europeans have had with the Negro and Negroid peoples between the Atlantic and Lake Chad throughout the historic period. It is a tremendous programme, and the wonder is that the author did not break down under the weight of her self-imposed burden. Within the elastic framework of this kaleidoscopic picture are comprised such varied and often obscure topics as the spread of Islam throughout North Africa and Iberia; Arab and Berber political and cultural supremacy in Spain; the successive rise and fall of the strictly Sudanese empires of Ghana, Melle, the Songhay, Hausas, Fulahs, Kanembu, and Kanuri (Bornuans); possible early