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A second volume will deal with the "mental culture" of these interesting Hamitic tribes.

The interest of Mr. Bent's book on Abyssinia is archæological and historical rather than geographical. Accompanied by his adventurous wife, Mr. Bent in the course of four months succeeded in taking impressions from a number of highly interesting Himyanitic and Ethiopian inscriptions.* More it was impossible to do, owing to the disturbed state of the country, which necessitated a precipitous retreat. At Axum Mr. Bent succeeded in obtaining perfect squeezes of four inscriptions previously only imperfectly known to us through Salt, Rüppell, and d'Abbadie; at Yeha, a site of ruins to the north-east of Adowa, he obtained small Sabæan inscriptions, dating back, according to Professor D. H. Müller, to the seventh or eighth century before Christ, and proving the place to have been known as Awa; and on the Kohaito Plateau, to the south of Halai, he examined the ruins of what he supposes to have been the ancient Koloe. He very plausibly suggests that a huge reservoir at that place represents Ptolemy's lake Coloe, which is usually identified with lake Tsana.

THE SPELLING OF EGYPTIAN NAMES.†

By LIEUT.-COLONEL J. C. DALTON, R.A.

WE have received a copy of the rules, as above, which have been prepared in the War Office at Cairo, and issued to the Egyptian army in the form of a pamphlet, which is prefaced by a memorandum dated March 1, 1894, and signed by Colonel H. M. L. Rundle, R.A., Adjutant-General. This memorandum states that, "in order to reduce the confusion existing with regard to the transliteration into English of native names of places and persons, and to ensure an uniform system of orthography in the various sections of the ministry of war, the following rules and a tentative index have been drawn out. These rules will be taken into use and carefully adhered to in all official documents, orders, maps, reports, etc., from this date."

We must congratulate the Egyptian War Office, and all those who recognize and advocate the necessity of having a uniform system for the orthography of native names, upon the important step thus taken in Egypt. There is no doubt that much confusion has existed owing to the diversity, or rather the absence, of systems for spelling native names which has hitherto obtained in that country, due mainly to the fact that until comparatively recently there has been a jumble of

* 'The Sacred City of the Ethiopians,' by J. T. Bent. London (Longmans), 1893.

† 'Rules of Orthography for Native Names of Persons and Places.' Cairo War Office Printing Press, 1894.

French, English, and other spelling which was most perplexing and undesirable.

It is very satisfactory to the Royal Geographical Society to find that the compiler of the rules just adopted in Egypt has accepted, practically in their entirety, the system initiated by that Society so far back as 1878, and elaborated in 1885. This system has for several years been in use by the Hydrographic Department of the Admiralty in their charts, etc., and by the Intelligence Division of the British War Office in all their maps, and no doubt this fact has served to familiarize the Egyptian nation, and the army in particular, with the system of orthography which has now been made law.

The very few points of difference between the rules we are now reviewing and those from which they are taken are trifling, and chiefly consist in the elimination from the latter of certain letters and sounds which do not exist in the Arabic language, such as the *c* and the *ch*. But the Egyptian rules also omit the *sh*, and this we cannot account for, as the sound is so common in Arabic. We notice also a few of what are probably only printer's errors, such as the remarks with reference to the letters *J* and *K*. As regards the former we presume that for *ds* we should read *dj*, as the latter is a rendering of *j*, which is not unfrequently met with on maps, e.g. *Djebel* instead of *Jebel*. Under *K*, the Egyptian rule lays down that the English *k* should *never* be put for the hard *c*. Probably the word *never* should here be read as *always*. The examples to the different rules have very wisely been culled mainly from local names; they are carefully chosen, and serve their purpose admirably.

But what is perhaps the most valuable part of the pamphlet is the tentative index, which contains a large number of Egyptian names, given in the Arabic character with their English transliteration. Nothing could have been devised which could better prove the utility and value of the rules than this index, and in Col. Rundle's memorandum he directs that "any queries as to the correct transliteration of words not included in the tentative index should be addressed to the Director of Military Intelligence." By this means an authoritative transliteration of all Egyptian native names will henceforth be laid down, and no other fancy rendering will be considered official.

When we add that the Director of Military Intelligence is Major F. R. Wingate, D.S.O., R.A., who is not only an accomplished Arabic scholar, but an author of no mean repute and a recognized authority on Egyptian matters, we feel sure that the difficult task of making a liberal and at the same time a simple transliteration of Egyptian names could not have been entrusted into better hands.

What seems to us a most important feature of the case is that the compiler of the rules which have been adopted for Egypt has not allowed himself to be led away by the temptation to further elaborate

them, so as to meet the special conditions of the language immediately concerned to a greater extent than can be done by a set of rules which are made for *general utility*. We are quite aware that there are certain sounds which, to the perfectly trained ear of the Arabic scholar, cannot be rendered in an altogether satisfactory way by any system which is intended to apply to more than one language. But if every linguistic expert were to insist upon a system which would meet his particular case only, uniformity and simplicity would go to the wall, and confusion would be worse confounded.

As is well known, the United States Government have adopted the rules as drawn up by the Royal Geographical Society, and have made them law, and if other countries which have to deal with native names (and amongst these the British Colonies occupy a prominent position) will only tackle this knotty problem in as frank and liberal a spirit as the U.S.A. and Egypt have done, those who have at heart a uniform system of orthography for such names may well cherish the hope that they are at last beginning to see light where all not so long since was very dark.

A DECADE OF PROGRESS IN INDIA.*

By C. E. D. BLACK.

It was a happy idea which led the President, as far back as 1872, to remodel the statutory annual statement exhibiting the moral and material progress of India. Up to that date the reports had consisted of little beyond a brief and too often a bare record of the year's work. But Mr. Markham recognized the fact that for English readers some previous history of the various branches of Indian administration was required, to say nothing of the glaring need of literary research and skill in the utilization of materials. The result was a Blue Book which for general interest and importance was altogether a new departure in official literature. The India Office, recognizing in like measure the advantage of issuing at intervals statements of this character, embracing a rather wider field of treatment, took the opportunity in 1883, ten years after the appearance of Mr. Markham's report, to commission Mr. J. S. Cotton to prepare a similar statement for the preceding decade. The present volume, which is the third of the decennial series, is from the pen of Mr. J. A. Baines, C.S.I., of the Bombay Civil Service, whose interesting monograph on the Census of India was lately reviewed in our columns.

The author has done justice to the varied and extended scope of his present work. He has followed the general lines of Mr. Cotton's report,

* The Third Decennial Report, exhibiting the moral and material progress and condition of India during 1891-92 and the nine preceding years. Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1894.