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Review: An Englishman in the Lake Rudolf Region

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idea of inexorable barrenness which we are accustomed to associate with that appellation. Even in Air, M. Foureau found that desert conditions prevailed, for during his long halt at Agadez he was able to establish the fact that that country has no regular rainy season, but that the occasional storms merely cause irregular and local downpours. In Kanem, the same aridity was again *en évidence* in the immediate neighbourhood of Lake Chad, though before this an improvement of conditions had been observed. Of the scanty population of the desert, as well as of the more important agglomerations collected at such centres as Agadez and Zinder, we likewise learn much that is interesting. Those old bugbears of explorers, the Tuareg, were found to deserve no better character than has been hitherto ascribed to them, and more than once the traveller expresses the opinion that no reliance can be placed on their good faith, the friends of one day becoming the assassins of the next. Of the great admixture of blood in the more southern representatives of the race many indications were noticed, some of the men being entirely black, though without the typical negro features. Among the women a pure negro element was fairly common, including representatives of the most diverse stocks. An interesting instance of yearly tribal migrations is given in the northward and southward movements of the Kel Ui between Air and Damerghu, which, though combined with trading operations, is much more than a mere caravan march. Of the possibilities which lie before the regions traversed, M. Foureau speaks briefly in a final chapter. He urges the importance of studying the mineral resources of the Sahara, as these alone can furnish a product of value. Meanwhile efforts should be made to introduce French manufactures, for which purpose the establishment of a regular caravan service is of importance. The necessary security will be easily obtained through the domination, from Zinder, of Damerghu, on which Air depends almost entirely for its food supplies. A trans-Saharan railway, though commercially it could promise little return for the outlay, is regarded as of importance from an imperial point of view.

Nothing has yet been said of the part of the book dealing with the regions of Lake Chad and the Shari—not that this is by any means an unimportant section, but M. Foureau's work has lain so long in the Sahara, which has been *par excellence* the scene of his triumphs as a pioneer, that the chief interest of the work is naturally engrossed by the earlier and more extensive portion. Nor has anything been said of the incessant hardships and dangers entailed by the journey, though the extent of these can be fully judged from the unvarnished narrative of the explorer. Some idea of the difficulties to be overcome is given by the fact that out of the thousand camels with which the caravan set out from Wargla, but two survived to reach the southern borders of Air.

AN ENGLISHMAN IN THE LAKE RUDOLF REGION.*

The account presented to the Society in 1900 by the late Captain Wellby on his journey in the regions south of Abyssinia was necessarily confined to a brief outline, and the full narrative of the journey, published since its author's regretted death in South Africa, will therefore be welcomed by all students of African geography. The book is remarkable for the straightforward simplicity of its style, which suits well with the personal nature of the narrative, and occasionally recalls the simple but effective narratives of the early days of travel. As regards its external form, the book suffers somewhat from the use of one of the heavy

* 'Twixt Sirdar and Menelik.' By the late Captain M. S. Wellby. London and New York: Harper, 1901.

papers so much in vogue at the present day, but for this the author can hardly have been responsible.

The early portion of the book deals with matters purely Abyssinian, but though lacking the geographical interest of the later parts, is useful as giving a vivid picture of Abyssinian life and the present political and military organization of the empire, as to which not much has yet been written in English. As is well known, Captain Wellby was an enthusiastic admirer of Menelik, and his verdict regarding the Abyssinians as a whole is decidedly favourable. From the point of view of novelty, the interest heightens with the plunge into the obscurely known regions south of the Hawash, and is maintained throughout the journey by the east and south of Lake Rudolf, and across the unknown interval between the lake and the Sobat. We are sometimes tempted to wish for fuller descriptions of the physical features of the country, especially in such regions as the fairyland of lake and mountain west of Lake Abai, or the water-parting between Rudolf and the Nile. Here the traveller was in entirely new ground, as is well shown in the surprising friendliness, with few exceptions, of the native tribes, and the unwonted tameness of the wild animals—elephants, giraffes, etc., allowing the traveller to approach quite near without showing the least timidity. It is pleasant to find that in these cases Captain Wellby resisted the temptation of a shot, except when food was really needed by his men. Physically this country seems to consist of arid plains traversed by dry watercourses, with occasional ranges of mountains. The search for water was an ever-present accompaniment of the daily marches, but though on one occasion the caravan was in some danger through failing to find a supply, it is said to be generally present at a slight depth below the surface. The natives fully appreciate the value of water in this parched land, and Captain Wellby thinks that they must at times suffer severely from its want.

As regards the tribes of the country passed through, and their mutual affinities, ethnologists will be somewhat tantalized by the absence of more definite information, which, however, is not to be wondered at if we remember that the expedition had no interpreter during the passage of the caravan through the country of the Turkana, Tamata, Boma, and other tribes west of Rudolf, intercourse being carried on largely by means of signs. That Captain Wellby succeeded as he did in passing through the territory of so many different races almost without a hostile encounter says much for his tact and sympathetic attitude in his intercourse with the natives—qualities for which he deserves to rank high in the roll of African explorers.

MOROCCO.*

Of the three separate volumes which, though each is complete in itself, are to make up the monumental monograph on Morocco to which Mr. Meakin has devoted years of persevering research, the second is the one with which we are more particularly concerned, as dealing with the geography of the country as at present known. The first volume of the series, which appeared some two years ago, formed the most complete history yet written of the internal development of the Moorish empire and its relations with the outside world; while the third, the appearance of which is promised at an early date, will deal very completely with the social and religious life of the people, and the different ethnological types present in the country. Mr. Meakin writes in a forcible and unconventional style, and as he has been at immense pains to make his information as complete as possible, both by

* 'The Land of the Moors: A Comprehensive Description.' By Budgett Meakin. London: Sonnenschein. 1901.