WILEY

Review: The Malay Peninsula

Author(s): C. O. Blagden

Review by: C. O. Blagden

Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 28, No. 3 (Sep., 1906), pp. 283-285

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1776736>

Accessed: 26-06-2016 20:17 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Wiley, The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to The Geographical Journal

Damergu, which not only supplies its own comparatively dense population, but is also the granary of Aïr, and even sends grain to Ghat. Millet and sorghum are cultivated over a large portion of the surface, and where pools of water occur cotton is planted. The above two cereals form the chief crops in Bornu also, and though a little wheat and barley is grown, it is not important. Date palms are cultivated in the more favourable spots, and round Zinder yield two crops a year. Near Chad the baobab, which becomes important on the great savanas of the Shari plateau, first appears, though here only a dwarf species.

INHABITANTS.

M. Foureau gives a minute account of all he has observed and gathered with regard to the people of the Sahara, but his remarks are, as he says, more of the nature of detached notes than a connected story. It is difficult, therefore, to single out any particular points in these interesting descriptions, but they illustrate clearly the fact that, though a certain difficulty of living will induce energy and enterprise, and have a beneficial effect on character, there is a line beyond which the struggle for existence is too hard to allow any such development. This is the conditions of the Tuaregs of the north—a life of misery and frequent and always possible starvation; at the best a diet of milk and such grasses as exist in the sand, as well as a state of constant "offence and defence" as regards other groups of people. But in Aïr the richer vegetation, allowing the keeping of cows and some horses (as well as goats and camels), and the possibility of a small amount of cultivation, added to the nearness of the grain market of Damergu, make life a better thing, and there is some definite organization. A regular "transhumance" takes place between Aïr and Damergu, which takes on something of commercial character. The Tuaregs move south from Aïr for the dry season in June and July, taking with them the salt from Bilma which they have collected for the purpose, for distribution in the Sudan, and bringing back on their return for the wet season to Aïr in November, the wheat, rice, and other commodities of the south.

Reviewing the possibilities of development in the Sahara, M. Foureau gives a decided opinion that very little more can be done, even in the south, in the way of agriculture. The yield of the crops could doubtless be increased in Damergou, but millet and sorghum are the only grains that can be grown, and these will not bear long transportation, and therefore a surplus production beyond the needs of the inhabitants would be of no use. But in the development of its mineral potentialities may lie a rich future for the desert, and M. Foureau considers it quite worth while for France to undertake the work of systematic prospecting.

REVIEWS.

ASIA.

THE MALAY PENINSULA.

'Die Inlandstämme der Malayischen Halbinsel.' Von Dr. Rudolf Martin. Jena: G. Fischer. 1905.

THIS monumental work marks, or perhaps one should say makes, an epoch in the study of the subject to which it is devoted. What has hitherto been written about the wild tribes of the Malay Peninsula amounts, indeed, to a considerable bulk; but most of it lies scattered through the back numbers of various periodical publications

and in casual notices contained in books of travel, and the like, so that it is not easily accessible. Here we have the first attempt ever made to put together in monograph form an adequate account of these races, based partly on a critical survey of the older authorities, partly on the writer's own observations made during a journey specially undertaken for that purpose.

The point of view is in the main anthropological, and a large part of the work consists of a detailed analysis and comparison of measurements made upon the bodies of representative individuals and the rather limited number of skulls and skeletons available. But this is by no means all; the technically anthropological part is preceded by a section dealing briefly with the geography, geology, climatology, flora, fauna, prehistoric remains, and historic development of the peninsula (this last being traced in outline from the earliest times to the present day). The progress of exploration and research in relation to these tribes is then reviewed in detail, the various names under which they have been known are discussed, and the geographical distribution of the tribes is explained. Though here and there subject to correction in matters of secondary importance, this part of the work has been very well done, and displays exceptional mastery of the subject. It has evidently involved a vast amount of research, for the authorities referred to are very numerous, and often of a very special and out-of-the-way character.

The third section of the book deals, under the name of "Ergologie," with the mode of life of these aborigines. Their dwellings, clothing and ornaments, food-supply, methods of hunting, tools and utensils, decorative art, social organization, habits and customs, religious beliefs and superstitions receive detailed and critical treatment. There is also a short chapter on their languages. Particularly good is the account of their decorative art, a subject which has hitherto been much misunderstood. A previous explorer, misled apparently by his own preconceptions and his inadequate knowledge of the vernacular, had evolved a most elaborate symbolic explanation of the designs with which these simple savages decorate their various utensils; the author of the work now under review does good service in showing the baselessness of the whole theory. The fact is that these tribes are amongst the most primitive specimens of the human race. Living as they do in a country of thick and almost impenetrable forests (a circumstance to which, without doubt, they owe their survival, in spite of the stronger races that surround them), they are still, for the most part, in what may be called the Bamboo Age. Most of their utensils are made (and very ingeniously made) from this and other trees. Such pottery and metal tools as they possess have been acquired by barter from surrounding races of higher development, and, although neolithic tools have been found in the peninsula in considerable numbers, it is very doubtful whether they were made or even used by the ancestors of these wild tribes. Their whole social organization and mode of life testify to their simplicity of character—a simplicity which is accompanied by honesty, gentleness, and a high standard of morality in general, that have called forth the sympathetic comments of every European traveller who has come into contact with them.

The work closes with a chapter summarizing the conclusions at which the author arrives. Briefly, there are three distinct types among the aborigines here dealt with. In the north of the peninsula the woolly-haired Negritos, in the south a straight-haired type representing a primitive Malayan race, and, most important of all, in the centre a wavy-haired race bearing a considerable resemblance to the Veddas of Ceylon, the Toálas of Celebes, and a number of more or less uncivilized tribes in Central and Eastern Indo-China. In most of the extensive literature relating to the subject, these types have hitherto been hopelessly jumbled up together; even the most recent works, *e.g.* Annandale and Robinson's 'Fasciculi

Malayenses' (not to mention popular works such as 'Living Races of Mankind'), fail to distinguish the wavy-haired type from the other two, or treat it as a cross between the Negrito and some other race. It is the peculiar merit of the present work that it definitely establishes the independent existence of this type, and foreshadows the probability that it may eventually be linked up with other dispersed fragments of a similar type in India and Ceylon, Indo-China, and the Eastern Archipelago.

There are still plenty of knotty points left to unravel. How is it, for instance, that the Negritos and the wavy-haired Sakai (or Sënoi, as the author prefers to call them), though distinct races inhabiting different but adjoining districts, nevertheless speak dialects of a common tongue, and one that has its nearest allies right in the heart of Southern Indo-China? The author does not profess to deal with the linguistic problems which these tribes present, and some of his "ergological" conclusions may require to be reconsidered in the light of the linguistic evidence. For instance, his contention that the primitive agriculture practised by some of these tribes has been borrowed from their Malay neighbours, cannot be reconciled with the fact that some of the words relating thereto are of undoubtedly Indo-Chinese affinity.

The book contains a very full bibliography, and, though it has no index, the want of one is to some extent made good by a very detailed table of contents. The illustrations, nearly all from the author's own photographs, are numerous and of really superlative excellence; and altogether the book is a first-rate piece of work.

C. O. BLAGDEN.

AUSTRALASIA.

CENTRAL AUSTRALIA.

'The Dead Heart of Australia.' A journey around Lake Eyre in the summer of 1901-1902, with some account of the Lake Eyre basin and the flowing wells of Central Australia. By J. W. Gregory, F.R.S., D.Sc., Professor of Geology in the University of Glasgow. *With Maps and Illustrations.* London: John Murray. 1906.

A new book by the author of the 'Great Rift Valley' will be opened with pleasurable expectation as certain to be interesting and suggestive. Prof. Gregory's present volume is an account of a recent expedition in a region far from his previous successful explorations in East Africa. It deals with a journey, conducted with characteristic ardour, into Central Australia to the region round Lake Eyre, during the hot season of 1901-02—a very difficult period of the year for exploration, but the only one the members had free from University engagements. The expedition was undertaken in company with Mr. Grayson, Prof. Gregory's assistant, and several students of geology of Melbourne University (in which at that time the author held the chair of Geology), in the hope that it would be the first of a series for the study of South-Eastern Australia. We may trust that, although Dr. Gregory has been translated to the University of Glasgow, the projected expeditions may not be discontinued, but that his successors may from time to time have to present us with as successful a record of work as is the book now under notice.

It was the narration of the native legend of the Kadimakara, told to our impressionable author by Dr. Howitt, the distinguished Australian anthropologist, that fired his spirit and was the direct cause of the expedition. These Kadimakara were strange monsters which once on a time lived on the roof of vegetation upholding the sky which then covered Central Australia. The sweet scent of the earth and its pastures would often tempt them down from their bowery home, till on an evil day it befell that their retreat was cut off by the destruction of the