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Review: North Africa

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The once mysterious Budduma islanders of Lake Chad are depicted to us by a remarkable series of illustrations, and proved to be very Nilotic in physical type. A good deal of information, photographic and literary, is also given about another very little-known people, the Tubu of the regions north-east of Lake Chad. Bornu and the interesting negroid Arabs of the Lake Chad region are depicted as they have never been before, and so are the Tawareq and their Crusaders' armour. So, too, is much of the big game—Sassaby antelopes (it is not quite correct to call them hartebeests), water-buck, rhinoceroses (this is the first time the rhinoceros has been recorded *scientifically* from West Central Africa), giraffes, lions, hippos, the okapi, chimpanzee, and cheetah; besides the native breed of dogs (particularly interesting), domestic sheep, goats, and the afore-mentioned oxen. The tropical forests of the Mubangi basin, the acacias, papyrus, and reeds of Lake Chad, the lake-like width of the Mubangi river, the ugly monotony of the Shari plains, the park-like country between the Niger and the Benue, and the extraordinary villages of the Murchison mountains (built round great natural monuments of bare rock); all these constitute such a faithful yet diversified picture of the very heart of Africa, its men, beasts, mountains, rivers, lakes, marshes, and towns, as has rarely, if ever, been put before the stay-at-home public by any previous writer.

There are a few trifling errors in the spelling of native names (in the south more particularly), but it would be ungenerous to make any trivial criticisms.

In conclusion, I should like to draw attention to the remarkable exploration of the island of Fernando Pô made by Captain Boyd Alexander several years ago, and to the fact that he noticed a great physical resemblance between the Bube natives of that island and the Munshi tribe of the river Benue. I have recently noted a certain linguistic connection between the Bube and the semi-Bantu tribes to the north-east of the Cross river, which brings us very near to the land of the Michi, or Munshi. It is curious that, although this warlike cannibal tribe has been known to explorers since the late fifties, no traveller has as yet recorded its language. The vocabulary taken down by Koelle in 1851, at Sierra Leone, from a supposed Munshi (Tiw) slave, shows this language to be semi-Bantu in character.

The letterpress of Captain Boyd Alexander's book is on a par with its illustrations.

H. H. JOHNSTON.

NORTH AFRICA.

'Stanford's Compendium of Geography and Travel' (new issue). Africa. Vol. 1, North Africa. By A. H. Keane, LL.D., F.R.G.S. *Maps and Illustrations*. Second edition, revised. London: Edward Stanford. 1907. Price 15s. net.

This edition of Prof. Keane's volume on North Africa in 'Stanford's Compendium of Geography,' is intended for the student who seeks to possess in a convenient form the results of the additions made to geographical knowledge in that part of the world in the last twelve years, together with a summary of recent political and economic developments. The general character and high standard of the work is well known, and the first edition was a worthy contribution to a better understanding of many obscure and difficult problems. This new edition is a revision; the work has not been re-written, and while much has been added to bring the narrative "up-to-date," there are a few points open to criticism. This is especially the case with regard to British West Africa. Thus on p. 247, we read that the Gold Coast "is barred by the humiliating Anglo-French Treaty of August, 1889, from spreading inland beyond the 9th degree of north latitude"—whereas in fact it extends, in virtue of the 1898 Convention, to 11° N. lat. Then no hint is given of the recent gold-mining operations in the Gold Coast and Ashanti, while Kumasi is said (p. 381) to be "a large place with a reputed population of

70,000 to 100,000," whereas the true figure in December, 1906, was 6280, and, even including suburbs, did not exceed 20,000. Again, Lagos is credited with a population of 75,000, which is about 25,000 too many: it might have been pointed out that it is now capital of Southern Nigeria. Six lines are devoted to the work of the Royal Niger Company, and that without a mention of Sir George Goldie. Are not such phrases as "the still almost unknown region which is enclosed by the great northern bend of the Niger" (p. 267) and "Kasala, capital of the rich province of Taka" (p. 618), uncorrected survivals from the first edition? It is, however, an unthankful task to pursue these omissions and misstatements. The new issue retains all the wealth of ethnographic lore contained in the first edition, while the purely geographical pages have been, as a rule, adequately revised. The book is specially valuable as tracing the interrelation between the physical features of a country, the character of its inhabitants, and its economic development.

F. R. C.

AUSTRALASIA AND PACIFIC ISLANDS.

HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF AUSTRALASIA.

'A Historical Geography of the British Colonies.' Edited by Sir Charles Lucas. Vol. 6, Australasia in two parts. By J. D. Rogers. Pp. 440, 9 maps. Oxford: 1907. Price 7s. 6d.

Into a volume of 440 pages Mr. J. D. Rogers has compressed a most instructive sketch of the political history and a summary of the geography of Australasia, under which term he includes, not only Australia and New Zealand, but most of the islands of the south-western Pacific. The volume is divided into two parts, of which the first (of 308 pages) deals with history, and the second (of 132 pages) with descriptive geography. The limits of space presented the author with the alternative of recounting only a few main events and stages, or of giving short reference to many. He has chosen the latter course, and deals so briefly with each episode that the volume is, for its size, a remarkably complete *précis* of Australian history. The book is saved from the dullness which usually accompanies such compression by its humour, its selection of graphic incidents, and a pithy and picturesque literary style. Thus the author remarks that the settlers of Otago and Christchurch were the only Australasians who were driven to colonization "bent on going to heaven in their own way without interruption" (p. 141), and gives a sarcastic sketch of Dr. Lang and his "indignation at the tardiness with which statesmen gave effect to what he and Providence had predetermined." The work shows on every page evidence of detailed research and reference to first-hand authorities. There are abundant quotations from the Colonial Hansards, and what is of even more value in this case, many references to early British official records, which are less accessible in Australia, where they are of most interest. The richness in reference to little-known official literature is the distinctive feature of this volume, which gives the book an authority and an interest out of all proportion to its size.

The main subject-matter is political history, but the author never writes as a partisan. He reminds us that the Australian wool trade grew from 1819 to 1844 with the help of a preferential tariff from Great Britain; and he adds that the effect of the abolition of this preference "cannot be traced with certainty by statisticians" (p. 90). The author writes with warm sympathy with his subject; he helps to repel the prejudice based on the introduction of the convicts by reference to the official statistics of their crimes; "more than half were criminals of the mildest type" (p. 53), and "many of the convicts of 1788 were not what we should call criminals" (p. 104). He quotes Leslie's statement that the twenty-two convicts