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Review: The Eastern Pyrenees

Author(s): I. Assada

Review by: I. Assada

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We learn that at the end of 1910 motors representing 475,000 horse-power were installed in this region of the French Alps, and that projects in hand or under consideration may raise this total before long to somewhere near 1,500,000 h.-p.

In the south-western district the systematic survey on modern lines is naturally not so far advanced, since its inauguration on an adequate scale is more recent. An additional interest is, however, introduced by the fact that, chiefly because of the area exposed to danger from inundations, observations of one sort or another with a view chiefly to flood prediction have been made for a long time, and it is possible to utilize a good deal of the older data. M. Tavernier summarizes the historical papers of Angot with regard to the meteorological observations, and gives an account of hydrographical material collected after 1856, in consequence of a letter by the Emperor Napoleon III., urging the need of taking steps to prevent recurrence of the disasters of that period. Except that the work of levelling and preparing profiles is deferred, the general methods now adopted are the same as in the Alpine region, and the reports published (bringing the work up to December 31, 1910) give the areas of the basins under examination, and a large number of gaugings. Short notes and papers of a technical character are included in the body of the reports; amongst them one comparing the general *régime* of the Pyrenean district with that of the Alps and contrasting the relative importance of the regulating action of glaciers and lakes in the two cases. This last question raises many points of extreme interest to the student of physical geography, but the full discussion of the problems suggested, and indeed of the whole subject viewed in its more scientific aspects, must await the accumulation of rainfall data by the improved network of stations which is being organized.

In a concluding summary of the report on the south-western district, M. Tavernier points out how the epoch-making discovery of a means of transmitting energy in the form of electricity has brought the examination of water resources into new prominence. The old problems of water supply and of protection from damage by flood were, and are, important in certain districts. But the demand for cheap electrical energy, "a, dans tous les pays civilisés, suscité la création de vastes enquêtes et de puissants services d'Etats chargés d'étudier, au point de vue le plus général, le régime des eaux courantes." M. Tavernier instances the United States, Italy, Switzerland, Bavaria, and Austria. We note one interesting omission from the list of "pays civilisés." When our day comes we may at least have the satisfaction of knowing that, thanks to private enterprise, the organization of rainfall stations will not be found wanting.

H. N. D.

REVIEWS.

EUROPE.

THE EASTERN PYRENEES.

'Les Pyrénées Méditerranéennes: Etude de Géographie biologique.' By Maximilien Sorre. Paris: Colin. 1913. *Map and Illustrations.* 12 fr.

By "Mediterranean Pyrenees" the author (whose previous contributions to the human geography of the Mediterranean region have from time to time been noticed in the *Journal*) understands the eastern extremity of the Pyrenees, beginning with Andorra, together with the sum-total of the lower mountains, hills, and plains which form their pendant to the north and south. It is a complex of small regions arranged symmetrically on both sides of the frontier, each possessing a distinct individuality, and designated by names which have been in use since the remoter Middle Ages ("Roussillon," "Capcir," and the like). The

northern limit of the area studied corresponds with a linguistic frontier, that of the Catalan tongue; the southern is a climatic and vegetational limit, marking off a humid region characterized by the high development of foliage trees.

The larger part of the work is devoted to "modes of life." M. Sorre shows how the forms of life vary according to the proportion in which they combine the influences of the two worlds here in contact—the Mediterranean and the Mountain. Mediterranean modes of life are met with in the plain and in the lower hills (represented in the former by the irrigation system of Roussillon, the *vegas* of the Seu d'Urgel, and in the latter by the sub-Pyrenean agricultural valleys and the cork-oak region of the Gavarra hills). The Mountain has evolved a mode of life of its own by varying combinations of agriculture and pastoral industry in accordance with varieties of relief. The book includes some interesting details on the secluded state of Andorra. I. ASSADA.

ASIA.

THE HEART OF ASIA.

'Unknown Mongolia: a record of travel and exploration in North-West Mongolia and Dzungaria.' By Douglas Carruthers. 2 vols. London: Hutchinson & Co. 1913. *Maps and Illustrations*. Price 28s. net.

In the present day an increasingly high standard is expected of explorers both in their work and in the books they write describing their work. They must have a good training for exploration, and be able to present their results in a readable form for the public. Mr. Carruthers has fully come up to this standard. In view of the fact that the detailed scientific results will be published separately, his book might possibly have been more acceptable to the general public if it had been more condensed, for people nowadays have so many books even of travel alone to read. But we can well understand that when a traveller has worked as hard as Mr. Carruthers did to get his information he does not like to leave a single item unmentioned.

It is certainly remarkable that a portion of Asia, presenting so much of interest politically, historically, and geographically, should have been so little explored, even by Russians, so that in the basin of the upper Yenisei, in north-west Mongolia, and in parts of Dzungaria, Mr. Carruthers found a virgin field for exploration. And the country proved to be not barren and worthless as so much else of Mongolia, but in many parts covered with forests, interspersed with lakes, and watered by great rivers; and in other parts furnishing rich grazing lands which might in future become one of the best cattle-rearing regions in the world. It proves, in fact, to be a land of great possibilities. And this is, perhaps, not altogether to be wondered at, considering that from here sprung the Mongols who gave a dynasty to China, founded an empire in India, and overran half Europe; the Turks who now rule at Constantinople and once ruled nearly up to Vienna; the Finns of Russia, and the Magyars of Hungary. And with Russia moving and China awakening, this part of Mongolia, so long now dormant, will certainly come into life again.

The labours of Mr. Carruthers and his companions, Mr. Price and Mr. Miller, were certainly well timed. They were also very thorough. Mr. Carruthers describes the zest with which he carried on his survey work, and the difficulties he had to overcome. In the upper Yenisei basin it was often hard to find whether a stream flowed to China or to Siberia. And he had to search diligently among a maze of bogs and lakelets for a water-parting. Often important peaks were hidden in mist. And the vastness of the unexplored area to be mapped was both oppressing and stimulating to the explorer.