Two Guides to Ceylon

The Book of Ceylon by Henry W. Cave; Ceylon: A Handbook for the Resident and the Traveller by J. C. Willis

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in opposite directions. Major Lennox Conyngham's pendulum observations have confirmed the existence of this dense mass, originally suggested by the known deviations of the plumb-line.

To the map-maker the question of how best to show mountain ranges where great differences of height occur, is one of the utmost importance. Perhaps a solution of this problem is to be found in the employment of the layer system of representing heights by different colour tints. If the colour scale be suitably selected, this method can be made to give most effective results. It also has the advantage of leaving nothing to the imagination of the draftsman.

Part III. is devoted to a detailed description of the rivers of the Himalaya and Tibet, with, in many instances, an historical sketch of their exploration. This is interesting as showing the curious mistakes made by early explorers, as in the case of the source of the Ganges. But such mistakes are perhaps excusable when one considers the hopeless entanglement these mountains must have presented to the traveller before the days of maps. One thing strikes the reader that, notwithstanding the area already mapped and explored, there still remain large tracts the topography of which is uncertain. There is yet work here for the Survey of India, and for the enterprising traveller.

Many of the Himalayan rivers have such steep gradients that there must be immense water power, comparatively close to the densely populated plains of India. These still await investigation with a view to determining how far they could be used for the transmission of electrical power for economic purposes. This is a matter in which the Government of India might, with advantage, follow the example of the United States, where natural sources of power are officially investigated.

Systematic measurements have recently been begun, at the request of the International Committee for the Study of Glaciers, by the Geological Survey of several glaciers in different districts, to determine glacial movements of advance and retreat. Marks have been laid down, plans made, and photographs taken of the state of affairs at the date of observation. It is hoped that travellers and sportsmen visiting the glaciers will assist in this work. Information on the subject can be obtained from the Director, Geological Survey, Calcutta.

We must refer the student who wishes to study this interesting area to the papers themselves. An immense amount of literature has been consulted in their preparation. They are profusely illustrated by charts and plans. The papers are published by order of the Indian Government.

H. L. C.

TWO GUIDES TO CEYLON.

'The Book of Ceylon.' By Henry W. Cave. London: Cassell. 1908. Pp. xiv. and 664. *Maps and Illustrations.* Price 12s. net.

'Ceylon: A Handbook for the Resident and the Traveller.' By J. C. Willis. Colombo: Colombo Apothecaries Co.; London: Dulau. 1907. Pp. x. (unnumbered), 247, and iv. *Maps and Illustrations.*

Each of these books is of a character which should ensure a welcome from geographers, and particularly from those interested in the geography of the Empire, for there are not too many such works on its component parts. Mr. Cave's name is already well known in connection with books concerning the island from particular points of view. In 'Golden Tips' he dealt mainly with the tea industry; in 'The Ruined Cities of Ceylon' with a very different subject; in fact, his varied interests prove him to be well equipped for the production of such a work

on the island as that now before us—"an account of its varied attractions for the visitor and tourist," to quote the sub-title. The reader will find that he is first introduced to the geography, climate, and history of Ceylon in general terms, and the system of government is briefly touched upon. He is then led through the island in various directions, the railway lines providing the groundwork for the routes. The descriptions of every site and scene of interest are clear and concise, while avoiding that concentration in style typical of the ordinary guide-book, which makes against literary pretensions. Marginal headings afford a running analysis of the paragraphs. This is a useful feature; but the index does not appear to be satisfactory; at any rate, there is a certain number of entries in it of that usual but valueless type which does not represent a subject which a reader could be expected to look up. There is a short but valuable appendix of information necessary to visitors. But perhaps the most notable feature of the book is the vast number of photographic illustrations. These interleave every page of text, and are often very beautiful, and always finely reproduced, though a few suffer from being reduced too small for their subjects. There is one other objection to them: the heavy paper on which they must be printed makes the book irksome to hold.

Mr. Willis's book would be that chosen, of the two, as an introduction to a serious geographical study of Ceylon. In style and arrangement it is laid out on somewhat more formal lines, the whole work being divided by subjects, not "according to itineraries." The first part deals with geology and geography, products, climate, zoology, botany, agriculture, and forests (on which the author, as director of the royal botanical garden at Peradeniya, writes with more than usual authority). We have next history, ethnology, and archæology, then a descriptive section, including an alphabetical gazetteer of chief towns, villages, etc., excellently carried out in a small compass, a section on sport, and a miscellaneous section, including a glossary and bibliography. This brief synopsis shows the book to be a true work of general reference for Ceylon, and, being fairly mapped and illustrated, it could hardly be improved upon in design.

AFRICA.

CYRENAICA.

'Cirene e Cartagini.' By G. de Martino. *Illustrated.* Pp. 193. Bologna: Zanichelli. 1908. *Price 6s.*

If this prettily illustrated book cannot be said to add much to our geographical knowledge, it is welcome for more than one reason. It gives an *interim* report on the actual political state of the strangely inaccessible Cyrenaic region, and throws a good deal of light on the policy by which Italy, the most interested of the European powers, proposes to reduce that inaccessibility. It therefore bears directly on the future of geographical exploration in a hardly known corner of Africa. Signor de Martino, a senator of the Kingdom of Italy and president of the Italian Colonial Institute, made his way from Derna to Bengazi by the usual overland route, with a *détour* from Guba to Marsa Susa. He was wise to enter at the back door, so to speak, for, had he gone round to the front, *i.e.* to Bengazi, he would almost certainly have got no further inland. Even as it was he had to use guile, and pose as a travelling buyer of skins—the trade of his two companions, Italian residents at Derna. It would have been better had he prepared himself for the trip by getting up the literature of previous travel—he shows either very inaccurate knowledge or no knowledge at all of his immediate European predecessors—but he could use his eyes, and he looked sanely and thoroughly at what he saw. It would seem as if Ottoman rule in Cyrenaica had experienced somewhat of a set back of late. Signor