Review: Mesopotamia

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excellent guide, in which particular attention is paid to mountaineers and to the interests of the growing number who visit the district for winter sports, while on the other hand the ordinary summer tourist will find all the information he needs. The maps, from the establishments of Kümmerly & Frey at Berne and Wagner of Zürich, are decidedly above the average. The historical matter is safe in the hands of the Rev. W. A. B. Coolidge.

ASIA.

ASIA MINOR.

'Meine Vorderasien Expedition, 1906 und 1907.' By Hugo Grothe and others. Vol. 1. Die Fachwissenschaftliche Ergebnisse. Leipzig: Hiersemann. 1911.

This is the first instalment of Dr. Hugo Grothe's report on the scientific expedition which was despatched in 1906, under Imperial auspices, to Asia Minor, Syria, Mesopotamia and West Persia. It was, we believe, not unconnected with the preliminary survey for the continuation of the Baghdad railway; and we can only say, as we have often said before, that we wish the British Government or those in our own high places would recognize equally the claims of science when such opportunities occur. The present volume is only to a very small extent geographical. The palæozoology of the Anti-Taurus and eastern Taurus, the archæology of the same regions and of southern and western Cappadocia, and the ethnology and sociology of the Yezidis of the Sinjar and Sheikh Adi districts, occupy nine-tenths of the text and all the plates; and geography proper is limited to a short study of Comana in Cappadocia by Dr. Grothe himself. But there is a good deal else which has indirect bearing on geographical problems, notably in the articles on *Kunsthistorik* by Prof. Josef Strzygowski and on the small finds (Hittite pottery, etc.) by Dr. L. Curtius. Dr. Grothe did a little excavation of tumuli near Zeresek and Albistan and found a number of new inscriptions, mainly Greek, elsewhere, besides some extremely interesting pottery. The succeeding volumes will be awaited with much interest by archæologists and students of ancient geography, as well as by geologists.

D. G. H.

MESOPOTAMIA.

'The Irrigation of Mesopotamia.' By Sir W. Willcocks, K.C.M.G., F.R.G.S. With 81 Plans. London: E. & F. N. Spon. 1911.

For the past three years Sir William Willcocks and his staff of surveyors have been engaged in studying the flood-plains of the Tigris and the Euphrates with a view to formulating a scheme by which this region may, at least in part, be restored to the fertility which it is said to have enjoyed in ancient times. In the present work he sets forth his proposals, which entail a total cost of some fifteen millions of Turkish pounds for irrigation works, and nearly fourteen millions for agricultural works. For this amount and a maintenance charge of £T.443,000 per annum, it is estimated that 1,410,000 hectares can be effectively reclaimed and irrigated. Naturally this report and the portfolio of plans which accompanies it are mainly concerned with the engineering questions involved, but much of geographical interest is contained in its pages. A fuller description of the great flood-plain of Mesopotamia and its characteristics would have been a valuable addition as forming a background against which the projected improvements might be pictured, but doubtless the author will supply this when addressing the Society on the irrigation of the Euphrates valley at no distant date. The tract of country which is concerned extends from Beled and Ramadi, where the Tigris and Euphrates respectively pass from

their valleys into the wide plain, through 600 kilometres of alluvial plain to the head of the Persian gulf, and is at its widest about 240 kilometres from side to side; its slope, too, is very low, since in the last 400 kilometres it falls only 18 metres. No triangulated survey of so large an area was practicable within the time available, so tacheometric traverses were run in conjunction with a plane-table survey, as well as level traverses by means of levels furnished with stadia wires. In such methods traverse errors of about 1 in 300 were incurred. Thus the plans are compiled from a large series of such traverses without being controlled by astronomically or trigonometrically fixed positions. A very large amount of levelling was carried out, which we may assume was of a good accuracy, being required for irrigation projects, though the accuracy demanded is not stated. The mean sea-level as determined from observations taken at the head of Khor Abdullah, about 25 kilometres south of Baera, on January 11 and 12, 1909, is used as the datum and the zero of the river gauge at Baghdad was found to be at 28.06 metres. From these observations cross sections and longitudinal sections have been drawn, showing the character of the great plain which is watered by the Tigris and Euphrates in their annual floods in April and May. Supplied as they are by the melting snows of the Armenian highlands, their floods come down into Mesopotamia early in the year, and are past before the heat of summer has fully set in, thus creating a different series of conditions to those which occur in Egypt, where the flood begins to decrease just before the autumn sowing. Five years' gauge readings at Baghdad show the Tigris to begin its rise in November, to reach a maximum in April, and to fall rapidly from the middle of May. Two years' observations of the Euphrates at Hitt show a similar *regimen* for this river. The range is about 4 metres for the latter and about 5 for the former river. The rising stage is characterized by rapid oscillations of level due to the comparative proximity of the mountain ranges, and as a result these flood waters carry a heavy load of suspended matter, which for the Tigris in flood was found on one occasion to amount to 7550 parts per million, or about four times that which is carried by the Nile in flood. Other measurements gave for the Tigris and Euphrates 1913 and 284 parts per million, but the dates are not stated. About seventy discharges of the two rivers and their branches were made from which a provisional table of discharges is calculated, which shows the Tigris to carry from 800 cubic metres per second in October to 3000 in April, and the Euphrates from 400 to 2750 in the same months. Taking this table, we obtain a total volume discharged in a year of 372,254 million cubic metres for the Tigris, and 346,594 million for the Euphrates. Thus this report marks a very important advance in our knowledge of the *regimen* of these rivers, and the true form and character of the alluvial plain which they and their tributaries have deposited. It is to be hoped that Sir William Willcocks will go further in this direction and supplement the information which he has collected in Mesopotamia by all that is available in the higher reaches of the river, furnish geographers with a full account of the hydrography of these rivers to which the present report is so important a contribution. The plans, upwards of eighty in number, have been excellently reproduced by the Survey Department of Egypt, but a caution should be given that many having been reduced to half or two-fifths of the original scale, their present scales as figured on them do not agree with those stated in the list of plans given in the report and in the portfolio. Fifteen appendices supplement the report by details of the meteorological observations, soil and water analyses, and reports on machinery, material, labour, etc., as well as details of estimates for the cost of works.

H. G. L.

'Stalks in the Himalaya.' By E. P. Stebbing. (London: Lane. 1912. Pp. xxviii., 321. *Illustrations*. 12s. 6d.) A series of highly interesting sporting experiences. They are set out on scientific lines, as the author deals successively with the goral, stags, bears, and many other game animals of the Himalayas and Central Asia. He has much to tell of their habits, and an extremely appreciative eye for scenery. The book is illustrated by photographs and by lively pen-and-ink sketches of the various animals.

'India: its Administration and Progress.' By Sir J. Strachey. (London: Macmillan. 4th edit. Pp. xxiv., 557. *Map*. 10s.) But for three short chapters of a general introductory and geographical character, this book consists of a detailed survey of the methods of Indian administration. It is generally acknowledged to be within its compass the first authority on the subject, and being so, calls for frequent revision. This it has received, in the present edition, at the capable hands of Sir T. W. Holderness.

'Handbook for Travellers in India, Burma, and Ceylon.' (London: Murray. 1911. 8th edit. Pp. cxvi., 530. *Maps and Illustrations*. 20s.) This edition appears at an appropriate time, and has been amply revised under the editorship of Mr. H. C. Fanshawe, who had charge of two previous editions. The physical, climatic, economic and other maps and the numerous plans are excellent, and these also have been amended and received additions as necessary.

'The Old "Country Trade" of the East Indies.' By Comm. W. H. Coates. (London: Imray, Laurie. 1911. Pp. xiv., 205. *Map and Illustrations*. 3s. 6d. net.) The curious term which appears in the title of this book is of unknown origin, but has been long applied to Indian shipping trade within the Indian seas and as far as East Africa and China. This book contains an interesting record of it, from the earliest down to modern times. The shipbuilding industry is the subject of an illuminating chapter, and the student of trade routes, ancient and modern, will find useful material in the book. Some misprints call for correction.

'Village Folk-Tales of Ceylon.' By H. Parker. (London: Luzac. 1910. Vol. 1, pp. vii., 396. 12s.) The collection of these folk-tales, many curious and of interest as bearing close relationship to stories prevalent in far distant lands, affords opportunity for a valuable introduction on native life and customs.

'Sixty Years: Travel [Life] and Adventure in the Far East.' By J. D. Ross. (London: Hutchinson. 1911. Two vols.: xv., 354; xi., 411. *Map and Illustrations*. 24s. net.) This is a curious work, cast in the form of fiction, reading (at least in parts) like a book of adventure for boys, yet dealing with facts and real people, and with events of no distant past date. It deals, as the writer says, with "a society of which no description yet exists," and there is no denying its interest. The central figure in the narrative is an ex-captain, the scenes of whose venturesome career were set in the seas of China and the Malay archipelago. The title, as quoted above, indicates a variation between cover and title-page.

'The Story of Korea.' By J. H. Longford. (London: Fisher Unwin. 1911. Pp. vii., 400. *Maps and Illustrations*. 10s. 6d.) A somewhat scanty geographical survey introduces us to a history of the "Land of Morning Calm"—a history which singularly belies that picturesque name—from the earliest legendary times to the recent annexation by Japan. This event provided an obvious stopping-place for a written history and makes the appearance of one welcome, for the country has been a pivot, not only the home of politics of Far Eastern powers, but also of European relations with those powers for very many years, and the story was worth writing while its climax is still fresh in memory.