Review: The Western Sudan

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a far more convenient form than Paget's book, besides possessing the advantage of being brought up to date.

BURMA.

'Une Colonie modèle. La Birmanie sous le Régime britannique.' Par Joseph Dautremer. Paris: Guilmoto. 1912. 6 *francs*.

Technically, of course, Burma is not a colony, but a province of the Indian Empire, and geographically it can hardly be regarded even as a part of Hindostan. Nevertheless it has for years been considered by Anglo-Indians as quite a show specimen of successful administration, and the extent to which its resources have been drained for contributions to the so-called Imperial requirements of the Government of India has earned for Burma the *sobriquet* of the "milch cow of British India." It is flattering to our national vanity, no doubt, to find these fruits of our rule held up for general admiration, but, candidly, the compliment is well deserved, and M. Dautremer's experience as French consul for four years at Rangoon has officially qualified him to deal with the varied aspects of Burmese administration, while his former works, 'L'Empire Japonais et sa vie Economique,' and 'La Grande Artère de la China: le Yang-tseu,' have proved him to be an Oriental writer of experience and accuracy. The present work is dedicated to Sir Harvey Adamson, to whom the author expresses his indebtedness for all the latest statistics and other information which enables the book to be regarded as an exhaustive provincial monograph, well worthy, in our opinion, of translation into our own tongue, for the benefit of British readers interested in Eastern India.

'The Chinese.' By John Stewart Thompson. (London: T. Werner Laurie. *Not dated*. Pp. vi., 440. *Maps and Illustrations*. 12s. 6d.) The first ninety-six pages of this work consists of pleasantly written impressions of the colonies of Hong-Kong and Macao; the rest is a rather discursive attempt to survey Chinese national life under various aspects. The book thus falls into two parts. The former of these is easy reading and informative; one feels, however, that the latter portion is rather too ambitious, while the personal note which lends interest to the former is almost entirely absent. The illustrations are of uniform excellence, but in most cases have no relation to the text.

AFRICA.

THE WESTERN SUDAN.

'Notes on some Languages of Western Sudan' . . . By P. Askell Benton, B.A. Henry Frowde, London, New York, etc. 1912. 7s. 6d. *net*.

As the full title of this book states, Mr. Askell Benton, who is Assistant Resident of the province of Bornu, Nigeria, prints for the first time twenty-four vocabularies made by Dr. Barth during his famous journey in the Western Sudan some sixty years since. Mr. Benton is himself a student of West African languages, and he gives us as the result of his own investigations valuable notes (with vocabulary) on Bolanchi, the tongue (allied to but distinct from Hausa) spoken by the Borlawa of the Fika district, Bornu. He has also drawn up some tentative notes on Budduma, the language of the Lake Chad islanders, giving with it most of the information available concerning those people, who—secure in their island homes—maintained their independence against the forces of Bornu and Wadai (Kanem). These linguistic researches of Mr. Benton are valuable, but they have not the importance of his discovery of Barth's unpublished

vocabularies. Dated Kuka, October 10, 1852, Barth sent them to England in the hope of immediate publication, but they got pigeon-holed in the Public Record Office among the Foreign Office correspondence relating to Tripoli, where Mr. Benton had the satisfaction of discovering them. Other unpublished vocabularies of Barth and some made by Nachtigal are, we are informed, in the possession of Herr Rudolf Prietze, a nephew of Nachtigal, and it is hoped that he will shortly let them see the light. In a country like Nigeria, where such a multiplicity of languages and idioms are spoken, it will be a great advantage to officials and travellers to be able to study Barth's vocabularies. Their value to the student need not be emphasized.

The interest of Mr. Benton's book is not wholly philological. To many readers its attraction will consist in the extracts given from correspondence relating to expeditions of Richardson, Barth, Overweg, and Vogel, much of it now printed for the first time. With marked perseverance and enthusiasm the author has searched out from the Public Record Office, from the archives of our own Society, and from other sources, many missing links in the story of the great Central African expedition of the fifties. The reader is assumed to have a general knowledge of and an interest in the doings of Barth and his companions. This granted, he will find the missing links in the story now supplied by Mr. Benton of very great interest. We see once again the Tripoli consulate when it was the starting-point for all travellers to the central and western Sudan; we get an insight into the characters of Richardson, Barth, and Overweg not previously attainable, and note how strenuously the Shehu of Bornu sought to open up relations with England. Light is thrown too on the irritation and suspicion produced by the fact that Barth, Overweg, and Vogel, though acting for Great Britain, were all German savants; in short, the human side of a great achievement is clearly brought out. Both Richardson and Barth stand the test of this examination well; we close the book liking them all the better because we have seen them in their private life and letters.

In form the book is but a collection of notes and documents; there is no clear separation of the philological and narrative parts. It is a quarry to which the historian will go for material. For having made this material accessible our thanks are due to Mr. Benton. His official position in Nigeria, the zeal he has shown in making himself acquainted with the history, the peoples, and the languages of Bornu, enable him to illumine these sixty-year-old stories by the light of recent events. One feels, too, that under the guidance of such officials as Mr. Hewby, the Resident of Bornu, and Mr. Benton, that ancient country has a better chance of attaining true prosperity than it had under the Shakh Amr, "the resplendent among the magnanimous, the most Precious, the Light of his people, the Glory of the empire," with whom Barth concluded his treaty in 1852.

F. R. C.

THE CONGO ROUTE TO LAKE CHAD.

'De Bordeaux au Tchad par Brazzaville.' Paris: Société française d'imprimerie et de librairie. 1911.

Captain Deschamps here recounts at length his experiences of 1907 in travelling from Bordeaux to Lake Chad. The route followed was naturally round about, being by way of the Canaries and the usual stopping-places along the west coast of Africa as far as the mouth of the Congo, where the steamer ascended the great river to Boma. On reaching Brazzaville, Captain Deschamps and his companion embarked in one of the smaller steamers of the *Compagnie des Messageries Fluviales du Congo* as far as Fort de Possel, on the Ubangi river.