
Review: African Minerals

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ASIA.

INDIA.

'Cities of India.' By G. W. Forrest, C.I.E. Westminster: Constable. 1903.

In a fascinating series of sketches of the historic cities of India, Mr. Forrest has skilfully woven together the descriptive and historical material at his disposal, the former acquired at first hand during his journeys from end to end of our vast dependency, the latter derived from his unrivalled knowledge both of the official records formerly under his care, and of the writings of early travellers and historians. He is successful in recalling the old-time atmosphere of the events of which he writes, and takes his readers back with equal ease to the days of the Hindu dynasties of Ahmedabad and Jeypore, the Mogul rulers of Delhi and Agra, the early English enterprises at Surat, Bombay, and Madras, the somewhat later episodes at Cuddalore and Calcutta, and the Mutiny drama at Lucknow and Cawnpore. An instructive feature is the attention bestowed on the influence which geographical position and environment has exercised on the rise and fortunes of the cities. The arrangement is more or less topographical, corresponding as far as may be with an imaginary tour through the length and breadth of the country, and the book should thus prove a useful companion to the traveller who visits the historic sites of the Indian Empire. It is abundantly provided with illustrations of the cities, their architectural wonders, and other objects of interest.

AFRICA.

BRITISH EAST AFRICA.

'With Macdonald in Uganda.' By Major Herbert H. Austin. London: Arnold. 1903.

Major Austin's narrative of his latest exploring journeys in South Africa, noticed a few months back in the *Journal*, has been quickly followed by a second volume, recounting the earlier events connected with Colonel Macdonald's expedition, in which, as is well known, Major Austin took a prominent part. The complicated history of the Sudanese mutiny—the greatest danger, perhaps, to which British influence in Eastern Central Africa has yet been exposed—has never yet been the subject of a full and connected narrative, and the present volume is therefore to be welcomed as giving, not only an account of the occurrences in which its author took part personally, but also (though in less detail) of the part played by the other members of the expedition and Protectorate officials, during those critical months. It may thus serve to remove various misconceptions which have been current respecting these events. It has also an interest from a more strictly geographical point of view, especially with regard to the explorations carried out by Colonel Macdonald and his coadjutors in the then little-known districts between Lake Rudolf and the Nile. Major Austin pays a warm tribute to his leader, to whose fertility of resource, great knowledge of the country, and personal influence with the Waganda, the final success of the operations was, he considers, entirely due.

AFRICAN MINERALS.

'Les Richesses Minérales de l'Afrique.' Par L. de Launay. Paris: Ch. Béranger, 1903.

This book is to be welcomed as the first serious attempt to deal with the mineral resources of Africa in a comprehensive and systematic manner. Its appearance is very opportune at a time when the air is full of projects, well or ill founded, for the exploitation of these resources, and it is particularly valuable from

the unbiased standpoint of the author—Professor at the ‘École supérieure des Mines’—who treats of the questions under consideration from the point of view of sober science, and is fully conscious of the reserve with which current statements as to African mineral wealth must be received. From a practical point of view, the book supplies a useful summary of our present knowledge respecting African minerals, each of which, from gold to coal and petroleum, is dealt with in turn, while the final chapters discuss the various regions in Africa from the point of view of the collective mineral deposits. The book has, however, a further, more theoretical, interest. The author has previously, in various writings, put forward his views as to the importance of the notion of *depth* in dealing with metalliferous deposits, and he now uses the facts observable in Africa as object lessons, illustrating the principles which he considers involved. He holds that the variation in the character of mineral veins according to the depth below the surface is of two distinct kinds, which have hitherto been too much confused. In the first place, there are differences due to the variations of temperature, pressure, etc., at different depths at the time of the original formation of the veins; and in the second, subsequent metamorphism will have operated in the neighbourhood of the surface, which will then be, in the majority of cases, totally different from the original surface which existed at the time when the veins were formed. It is generally impossible to study such variations as we proceed downwards in any one locality, but the writer points out that, as the amount of erosion has differed enormously in different areas, we can arrive at certain conclusions by comparing the character of the mineral deposits in two regions, in one of which a vastly greater amount of material has been removed from the surface than in the other. The African continent supplies an excellent field for such studies, by reason of the strong contrast displayed between the ancient mass which occupies its main bulk and the Tertiary zone of the north, while the subject has more than a theoretic interest, by reason of its obvious practical bearing. The introductory chapter contains also a useful general sketch of African geology as we now know it.

GERMAN SOUTH-WEST AFRICA.

‘Deutsch-Südwest Afrika.’ Von Prof. Dr. Karl Dove. Berlin: Süsserott. 1903.

This little handbook, which forms vol. v. of Süsserott’s ‘Kolonialbibliothek,’ gives, for its size, the most lucid and systematic description of German South-West Africa that has yet appeared, the author being, both by his personal acquaintance with the country and by his careful study of the existing literature, particularly well qualified to write such a work. After a preliminary sketch of the history of the territory, Dr. Dove treats in turn of the broad physical features, the mineral resources, the climate, flora and fauna, and inhabitants, both native and European. In describing the surface features he divides the area into four natural regions, each of which has a distinct individuality. The first of these, the coast strip, though generally bare and arid, and showing but small variations of relief, differs considerably in its surface, sand being by no means universally present; it is, however, still but imperfectly known, especially in the south. The second, in the north and north-east (Ambo Land, etc.), is a remarkably uniform plateau with an average altitude of 3000 to 3300 feet, extending from the Kunene to the Okavango. This altitude is not great enough to admit of European settlement, but the district may serve for plantation purposes. The third region—Herero Land—the most important from the point of view of European enterprise, comprises three orographic subdivisions, the terrace lands of the north-west, the plains of the north-east, and the southern districts with the best-developed relief of the whole territory. The