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expedition, for the extremely valuable mapwork he executed. In your names I return thanks to Mr. Yorke, Mr. Myres, and Lieut. Green.

MR. YORKE'S MAP.—The map of the valley of the Upper Euphrates has been constructed by Mr. F. W. Green. The bearings were taken by prismatic compass, distances estimated by time, and the heights above the sea-level obtained by aneroid. Some of the detail has been added from Captain Maunsell's Survey, 1892, and other sources.

DE MORGAN'S "MISSION SCIENTIFIQUE" TO PERSIA.

By Major-Gen. Sir F. GOLDSMID, C.B., K.C.S.I.

WE have now before us the second volume of the 'Études Géographiques,' or results of the scientific mission to Persia, conducted by M. J. de Morgan, of which the first part was noticed in the *Journal* for August, 1895. The large amount of information which it contains, original and compiled, renders it a valuable reference to those who seek a closer acquaintance with the tracts in North-Western and Western Persia; but it can hardly be said to open out any great extent of new country. Notes of available bibliography—almost identical with those to be found in Curzon's 'Persia'—disclose at once to us how many older travellers have helped to a due appreciation of that portion of Kurdistan which tacitly admits, if it does not openly proclaim, the sovereignty of the Shah; and it is equally evident that a like attention has been given to non-Kurdish districts.

The geographical limits of the country under exploration are shown under nine heads: (1) The Kurdistan of Mukri; (2) the Kurdistan of Sehna; (3) the Kurdistan of Kirmanshahan; (4) the Province of Hamadan; (5) Malayer and Burujird; (6) Northern Luristan; (7) the Pusht-i-Kuh; (8) Susiana; and (9) the Persian Gulf. For each of these there are subdivisions discussing respectively physical geography, climate, flora and fauna, and population; while for the greater number separate treatment is accorded to towns, villages, and monuments, mineral riches, as also commerce, agriculture, and local industries. Under the Pusht-i-Kuh, or "back of the hill," special notice is taken of ruins. On the other hand, there is no mention made of towns or villages for the Persian Gulf.

M. de Morgan's 'Kurdistan de Moukri,' with which his volume opens, is a comprehensive chapter relating to the country traversed by Mr. Walter Harris, some five years later than the French writer, and described by sketch-map and letterpress in our *Journal* for November last. The actual route taken by the two explorers was not always

* Twenty-two out of the twenty-three books of reference on Persian Kurdistan, for instance, are the same, and placed in precisely the same order, as those noted by Mr. Curzon.

identical, for Mr. Harris, on leaving Suj-bulak, abandoned the caravan-road for a straight cut across the mountains, so as to visit the Kurds in their summer quarters; but they seem to have been on one and the same track again at Sardasht, Bana (or Bahireh), and Sakiz. Independently of questions of hydrography, orography, and geology, separately grouped, the chapter is rich in illustrative detail, and the author has much to say on the character, language, and customs of the people, which comes under the head of light as well as instructive reading. This description of a marriage at Namashir, in the Balmik district, may be thus rendered in English:

"The bride lived with her parents in a neighbouring village; she had been purchased for the modest sum of twenty *tumáns* (say £8½ to £9½) by an inhabitant of the village in which we were encamped. About five o'clock in the afternoon—when the religious part of the ceremony had been performed—she arrived on horseback, escorted by her own country-folk, and bringing upon a beast of burden two boxes, painted in red, containing her wearing apparel. As soon as the small caravan came in sight, there was a general discharge of firearms; and directly she arrived and had alighted, the bride was conducted to the house of her lord, and the female villagers crowded around her. Much and loud talk ensued among men and women gathered together; then three large coal fires were lighted, and dancing began. The men and women danced in separate groups, holding one another by the waist, whirling round the fires, and adapting their steps to the time of the songs sung by a man placed in the foremost rank of the males, and a woman occupying a like position among the females. The song was slow, with a measured fall, in a monotonous air, often broken in upon by the bursts of laughter of the whole assembly."

Our author endeavoured to obtain some specimens of the words, as strung together for a vocal accompaniment to the dancing on these festal occasions. But, although he was able to collect a certain number, he could not find any that would bear translation. While allowing a high importance to Mukri literature, he regrets that the equivocal taste of its songs and stories is fatal to their publicity in Europe. To the above extract in reference to a wedding, let us add another which relates to a funeral—

"During our stay at the village of Passawa, among the Mamishes, a native of the place, through some unexplained visitation, ceased to show any signs of life. Instantly the air was filled with the lamentations of the whole neighbourhood; the men cried in moderation, but the women and children yelled and shrieked in despair. Although the wretched man thus mourned for was not actually dead, it was not long before he was found to be so in every respect.

"Half an hour after the news of his supposed decease was spread abroad in the village, the male inhabitants took the body to a stream, and, having stripped it of clothes, were about to wash it, when the corpse revived and began to struggle. 'He is possessed with the devil!' they exclaimed; and, struck by a vigorous blow at the back of the head, the victim fell stiff, now no more to rise again. The arrangements for his burial having been completed, the business of the hour was resumed, and the body borne to the cemetery; the whole village followed, weeping and vociferating, as if the practically murdered man had been an object of adoration

to all his fellows. When the grave was closed, the female mourners came and encircled it, continuing their cries and wailings. Then, at a given signal, they suddenly became silent, to resume shortly, in unanimity of cadence, their moan of despair, *wai, wai, wai, wai, wai, wai*, and so on for about an hour. During this time the men, who had accomplished their funeral task, were seated, smoking their *khalians* and discussing their private affairs."

M. de Morgan alludes to the practice of despatching invalids who had grown unconscious as common throughout Kurdistan, and not infrequent in Persia generally. Sometimes, he affirms, the supposed dead man only revives when he has been deposited under the earth. Should his voice at such time be heard, it is said that a great calamity has come upon the country, and every one seeks to escape from the presence, as it were, of an exorcised demon, throwing over the body the largest available stone. Stoning for adultery is mentioned as a national law, but not often put into practice, owing, on the one hand, to the few cases which present themselves, and, on the other, to the difficulty of finding four witnesses to give evidence, a lesser number being insufficient for conviction.

Among the ancient customs of Mukri may also be mentioned the festival of the "sham governor," celebrated at Suj-Bulak in the spring of every year, which is thus described :

"The townspeople appoint a governor (*Amir*), who for three days exercises control, and abandons himself to the eccentricities of the occasion. As soon as this official is installed, he selects his ministers, secretaries, and *Farrash-bashi* (head servant), chooses his body-guard, and proceeds in state, followed by the whole population, to announce to the real governor that he has been deprived of office.

"This festival has often been productive of trouble, for the inhabitants of Suj-Bulak have taken advantage of the occasion to belabour the actual Amir with blows. So that now the sham ruler is always accompanied by soldiers and a government delegate, whose duty it is to prevent the joke being carried too far. For three days the mock rule continues. The governor decides the most absurd cases, and punishes the assumed culprits; but as, in the exaction of penalty inflicted, the dinar ($\frac{1}{100}$ part of a kran) counts for the kran, a fine of one hundred *tumans* (or 10×100 krans) is, in reality, that of one kran only. Thus payment is readily made and amusement afforded. The whole procedure is, practically, the 'Carnival of Mukri.'"

There are some noteworthy observations on the mineral riches of the Kurdistan of Kirmanshahan which may be commended to the attention of present and future explorers. Not only do they possess a general interest for the geographical world, but they indicate the existence of a special field of investigation, to turn which to good account no serious effort seems yet to have been made. We are reminded that marble, such as utilized in the wonderful sculptures at Besitun and Tak-i-Bustan, is still abundant in the locality of these monuments. Moreover, the perfect quality of the plaster procurable from the gypsum—the presence of which in the Zohal district and neighbourhood has been certified by

Loftus and others—is cited to show how natural gifts are suffered to lie profitless by a community, whether the governors or the governed, who prefer conventional dwelling-places of bad brick which entail little labour, to solid and durable houses involving abnormal effort. Above all, the reader is enjoined to give heed to the possibilities of a vast and profitable trade in petroleum, of which the aspect of this part of the country amply warrants the anticipation. Our author is of opinion that what he designates a *bande petrolifère*, stretching out in a south-westerly direction from Kerkuk, in Turkish Arabia, to the Persian "Pusht-i-Kuh," may be found the most important source of wealth throughout the whole region. The proximity of Baghdad and the advantages which it offers as a port of embarkation are pointed out, and it is argued that while the naphthas of Baku must pass through the Suez Canal to reach India, those of Zohab might be despatched thither in a direct line that would be of inestimable value in competition. This question is discussed with much useful and careful detail.

Amid the problems treated in the Kirmanshahan chapter, M. de Morgan discusses the better means of developing traffic between the tablelands of Persia and the Persian Gulf, but he himself supports the ambitious proposal of connecting Tehran by rail with Baghdad. His opinion on the feasibility of this connection is, no doubt, worthy of attention. Moreover, Constantinople to Baghdad, and Baghdad to Tehran, are combinations not only desirable, but likely, as main lines of railway in the future. One stated objection to the fulfilment of his project, in the fact that the city of the khalifs is out of Persia, he considers unimportant, because of the good understanding (*très bonnes relations*) which exists between Shah and Sultan. But we are rather inclined to accept his view on other grounds. Throughout the length of the Turko-Persian frontier, the hostility between the Sunni and Shiah on either side is proverbial; nor is this feeling less marked between Kirmanshah and Baghdad than elsewhere. Some years ago, when the Turkish iron poles of the Indo-European telegraph were about to join the Persian wooden poles across a tract of disputed territory, so great was the international jealousy, and fear of ceding a yard of doubtful land, that proceedings were summarily stopped. Her Majesty's Resident and Consul-General at Baghdad fortunately hit upon the happy expedient of using iron and wooden poles alternately over the whole tract under litigation, or the junction of the wires might have remained a *fait non-accompl*i to the present day.

Space will not admit of extracts from other than the two first chapters, but all are worth reading and remembering, in connection with the geographical study of the western side of Persia. Illustrations abound in this handsome volume: these are, for the most part, good and helpful to the due comprehension of the text; some are especially attractive and artistic. Had we to select the more excellent, we might

point to the Lake Gohar, situated in the narrow valley south of Ushtaran Kuh, in Northern Luristan, and three of the many views of the Ushtaran Kuh itself. The Tang-Azna, in the country of the Lurs of Sagwand, is a charming photograph.

SOME BOOKS ON EAST AND SOUTH AFRICA.

THE first book on our list* supplies a welcome exception to the general applicability of the statement, so often made, that the work of British explorers falls far short of that of the Germans in permanent scientific value. In this respect it may rank with the best German publications that have appeared in recent years. Although primarily a geologist, Dr. Gregory has given much attention to other branches of natural science, and his conclusions with regard to the various scientific questions touched upon are the result of long and careful study. The plan of his book is that followed by many German writers, the account of the journey itself being followed by chapters dealing with the various scientific aspects of the country.

The general results of Dr. Gregory's journey were fully given in the series of articles published in the *Journal* in 1894 (vol. iv.). The most striking features of the country dealt with are the Great Rift Valley, which gives the book its name, and Mount Kenya, on which so much new light was thrown by the journey. To non-geologists the term "rift valley" may be apt to suggest an exaggerated idea of depth and narrowness, the height of the walls being after all very slight compared with the width of the floor. It would not be easy, however, to suggest a better. Dr. Gregory followed its eastern side through two degrees of latitude, besides crossing its floor near Lake Baringo. The illustration at p. 94 gives a good idea of the level nature of the floor and the sudden rise of the bounding walls.† It may be remarked that the results of Dr. Donaldson Smith's journey hardly bear out the idea of its prolongation as a marked line of depression north-east of Lake Rudolf, while it is not quite clear, from the allusion to Lake Nyasa as in the *eastern* branch of the valley, whether the author rejects the notion that the western trough is indicated south of Tanganyika by the furrow of the Songwe and Saisi valleys.

The account of Dr. Gregory's adventures in the romantic region of snow-fields and glaciers around the central peak of Kenya is of extreme interest, and will, it is to be hoped, induce others to follow in his steps. Kenya appeals more to the imagination than Kilimanjaro, whose

* 'The Great Rift Valley.' By J. W. Gregory. London: Murray. 1896.

† The illustration (after Giraud) intended to show the steep sides of the narrow type of lakes, is accidentally referred to Tanganyika instead of Nyasa. Another slip is the statement that only one of the lakes has an outlet to the sea.