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REVIEWS.

EUROPE.

NORTHERN SWEDEN.

'Norrländ.' *Naturbeskrifning* af A. O. Högbom. Almqvist & Wiksells Bogtryckeri: Uppsala and Stockholm. 1906. Pp. 412. *Maps and Illustrations.*

THE northern districts of Sweden, known collectively by the name of Norrländ, extend along the Gulf of Bothnia from the Dal river south of Gefle, northwards to the Finnish boundary at the Torne river, and inland to the mountain backbone of the peninsula on the Norwegian frontier. With an area of more than 100,000 square miles, they form nearly three-fifths of the Swedish territory, but at present they are sparsely populated, and are chiefly noted for their rich iron-mines in Norrbotten, at Gellivare, Kirunavara, and Luossavara. Information about the physical features, economic resources, etc., of Norrländ is to be found only in scattered articles and publications not readily accessible to those who have most need of it, and therefore it was proposed some years ago by Dr. Franz Kempe that a series of handbooks should be compiled, and with his assistance and support this project is now being carried out under the supervision of Prof. Högbom. The present volume, the first of the series, contains a general survey of the geology, climate, fauna and flora of Norrländ, drawn from works of the author himself and those of other specialists, lists of which are given at the end of each section. Norrländ trends from south-west to north-east, and its geology and configuration correspond to this direction. Archæan rocks, chiefly granite and gneiss, with large areas of porphyry, porphyritic schists, clay slates, and mica-schists, stretch far inland from the Gulf of Bothnia. West of these is a small zone of Silurian rocks, while the mountain axis of the peninsula is composed of rocks partly pre-Cambrian (Seve group) and partly of Silurian age (the Köli group), the latter, however, differing so much in appearance and character from the rocks of the Silurian zone already mentioned that they have been marked on the geological map by a special colour. When the country emerged from the sea at the end of the Silurian period, its surface in all probability sloped gradually towards the south-east in the direction of the existing river-valleys. The erosion of these valleys was probably commenced when the surface rose far above the tops of the present mountains. A striking proof of this is the occurrence of transverse valleys where the rivers have cut through rocks offering greater resistance to denudation. In some cases the breaches are incomplete, the stream having been unable to excavate its bed as rapidly as the ground behind it was lowered by denudation. The deposits of loose detritus date from the last stage of the Glacial period or later times, all earlier accumulations having been swept away by the ice-sheet. Glacial detritus is widely distributed, and moorland occupies about 30 per cent. of the total area, while marine deposits indicate a transgression of the sea up to 900 feet in some parts. Lakes are numerous, and occupy about 6 per cent. of the total area. Most of them, including Hornafvan, the largest and deepest of all (725 feet), have been formed by damming, though the deepest parts may in some cases lie in rock basins. A large reserve of motor force is stored up in falls, including the Krångede falls on the Indals river, with about 60,000 horse-power, and the Harsprång on the Luleå, with 46,000. Prof. Högbom also discusses the flora, in the distribution of which the most marked line is the upper limit of conifers running at heights of 1400 to 2600 feet above sea-level, above which the birch region extends to a vertical height of 165 to 650 feet; and he also points out several anomalies of distribution which are still not thoroughly explained. Similar difficulties also occur with regard to the fauna. The peculiarities of the

water-fauna are common to the Baltic basin, the relict fauna of which has been often discussed. It is interesting to learn that a skeleton of a Greenland seal has lately been found near Sundsvall under circumstances which prove this animal to have existed in the Gulf of Bothnia during the Littorina period.

The foregoing brief notes will serve to show how wide a range of subjects is dealt with in Prof. Högbom's work, which is accompanied by geological, hypso-metrical, and other maps, and numerous illustrations. For those who wish to study any particular subjects in greater detail the bibliographical lists will be a valuable guide.

AFRICA.

ABYSSINIAN HISTORY.

'*Rerum Æthiopicarum Scriptores occidentales inediti a sæculo xvi. ad xix. curante C. Beccari S.I.*' Vols. 2 and 3, "P. Petri Pæz S.I. *Historia Æthiopiæ*," Liber i. et ii., and iii. et iv. *Plates*. Vol. 4, "P. Emmanuelis Barradas S.I. *Tractatus Tres historico-geographici*." Romæ: C. de Luigi. 1905-1906. *Price 20s. 8d. each vol.*

There is a notice of Father Beccari's introductory volume in this *Journal* for August, 1904. Volumes 2, 3, and 4, which have appeared since, contain the works of Peter Pæz and of Barradas; they amply fulfil the hope of important additions to historical geography. Pæz's manuscripts have been utilized by later writers, who have extracted his valuable remarks on the expedition of Christovão da Gama, but the modest words in which he records his culminating feat, the discovery of the sources of the Blue Nile, must always retain their interest. With his words and Bruce's before us, we can see the character of the latter's attack. There is no space to expose the whole of Bruce's misstatements. Suffice it to say that Pæz makes no mention of a mountain full of water, out of which Bruce makes such dreary fun; that he does not mention a place called Sabala, as Bruce says, but one called Çabalâ, which word differs little from Bruce's Sacala; and that where Pæz estimates a certain object as an "espingarda" shot distance, Bruce has no authority for translating it a "cannon shot," or for referring to it later as "a league," or "the largest range of a shell shot from a mortar," because "espingarda" is a matchlock—the weapon of an infantry man. No excuse can avail Bruce, for he says he had consulted two manuscripts, and that he had with him on the spot a copy from one of Pæz's accounts. Pæz was born in 1564, and was in India in 1588 when first detailed to accompany Antonio Monserrate to Abyssinia. Their attempt to reach that country failed, and they had to spend long years of captivity in Arabia, chiefly in Sana and Mocha, before they again saw Goa in 1596. Their mention of the coffee they drank in Arabia is the earliest notice of it by a European traveller in that country. It was not till 1603, and then alone, that Pæz succeeded in reaching Abyssinia; he spent the rest of his life, till his death in 1622, in travelling from one end of it to the other. Omitting his refutation of the errors of Urreta, a writer on Abyssinia long since forgotten, and his dissertations on dogmatic theology, there is a residue of very great value. He was a man of considerable ability, who utilized his Arabian captivity to learn Arabic and Hebrew, and who, judging from his translations of chronicles, acquired Amharic or Geez in Abyssinia. Where his religious training does not interfere, he is a cool and sagacious observer. He is told in Arabia that the Arabs had seen his companion Monserrate floating in the air on the level with the treetops while he prayed. This is retailed; but when he is told in Abyssinia that vultures throw stones at their pursuers, he watches the birds as they are driven out of the royal camp by the pages, and reaches the rational explanation that the birds do not throw stones, but that if they step on a loose one they may kick it back as they run. His account of the unsuccessful attempt of