

Review: Dutch Borneo

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ASIA.

A WOMAN'S WORK AMONG THE SARTS.

'In Russian Turkestan.' By Annette M. B. Meakin. London: George Allen. 1903. Pp. xvi., 316. With a Map.

Miss Meakin's travels, of which this book is the outcome, took her to Tashkent, to Kokand, Margelan and Andijan, to Bokhara and Samarkand, to Merv and Askhabad. She sets forth her impressions simply, with a slight historical preface, and confines herself almost wholly to the inhabitants of Russian Turkestan and their circumstances, touching but lightly on the physical geography of her route. She has chapters on native industries—irrigation and cultivation, cotton and silk production; on means of travel, religion, and the common mode of native life; and it is in one department of the last subject that her work is of the highest value. She is indebted to the Russian authorities, from the Tsar himself downwards, for extraordinary facilities in the way of travelling, of the provision of interpreters, and so forth. She has made use of her opportunities to give a detailed and vivid picture of the curious conditions under which the Sart woman passes her life, from childhood, through early wifehood, to old age. The value of this part of her book is sufficiently expressed in the sentence, "Gentle male reader! you shall now come with me in spirit, where, in the flesh, you will never be permitted to enter . . . to the only place where a respectable Sart woman may be seen without a veil—her home." This would seem to be the best mission a woman traveller can take upon herself—to bring herself into touch with her native sisters in whatever land she may be, and, by becoming thoroughly intimate with them, to produce work of which a man must always be in a greater or less degree incapable.

The illustrations, from admirable photographs, resemble the subject-matter in generally displaying native life. The map is merely an incomplete diagram of the authoress's route.

O. J. R. H.

DUTCH BORNEO.

'Bijdragen tot de Geographie van Borneo's Wester-Afdeeling.' Door J. J. K. Enthoven, Chef van den topographischen dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. 2 vols. Leiden: E. J. Brill. 1903.

The western department of Dutch Borneo consists almost entirely of the basin of the great Kapuas river, which has an area of about 37,000 square miles, or nearly that of Scotland and Wales combined. Through this the Kapuas flows for a distance of 710 miles, descending rapidly from the mountains, and then making its way slowly to the sea, for the plain of the upper Kapuas has an altitude of only 160 feet. More than other parts of Dutch Borneo, the western department has attracted travellers and scientific explorers, and in quite recent years Prof. Molengraaff and Dr. Nieuwenhuis have visited many of the remote districts, and added much to our knowledge of the geology and ethnology of the territory (see *Geo. Jour.*, vol. xviii. p. 295). Heer Enthoven has therefore been able to collect sufficient material for a general description of the department, and, of course, his position enables him to obtain the fullest information possible, both by his own observation and from the reports of his subordinates, explorers, and natives. The work is very full, and is systematically written. Each of the six districts is geographically described, and its natural resources commented on; the tribes are enumerated, and their manner of life, occupations, and social condition are portrayed, and their political relations, both to the native rajahs and the Dutch Government, are dealt with. Naturally, political and economic questions are

of especial interest to the author. As an official, he regards the country as a source of material wealth, and the people as agents by whom this wealth may be exploited for their own material and moral benefit. At present the outlook is not promising, and Heer Enthoven remarks that the picture he has drawn is not rose-coloured. One great difficulty that has to be overcome is the want of satisfactory means of communication. The Kapuas and its tributaries are all blocked by rapids, and in their lower courses are subject to floods in the rainy season, which often ruin large areas of cultivated land, while in the dry season the water is too low for easy navigation. Roads do not exist, and immeasurable tracts of low marshy country require draining to render them productive. A very large amount of capital would be needed to open up the country and improve its agricultural capabilities, but Heer Enthoven believes that the outlay would be profitable. A still more serious want is population. The native inhabitants are relatively few, and their spirit has been crushed by the oppression of the Malay princes, many of whom have become impoverished, and can contribute nothing to the development of the country. Something has, indeed, been accomplished by the Dutch administration; the savage Dyaks have been to a great degree humanized; the exactions of the Malay princes have been restricted; and the people are becoming more and more conscious of the advantages they derive from the government. The paucity of the population might, Heer Enthoven suggests, be remedied by importing Javanese, who often leave their crowded country, travelling even as far as Surinam.

SAKHALIN.

'In the Uttermost East.' By Charles H. Hawes. With Illustrations and Maps. London and New York: Harper Brothers. 1903. Pp. xxx., 478.

This charming book is mainly an account of investigations among the natives and convicts of the island of Sakhalin, but it also contains notes of travel in Korea, Manchuria, and Siberia. No Englishman has hitherto explored the northern part of the Sakhalin upland, and there exists but little in our language about the primitive Gilyaks and Orochons of this great island and of the neighbouring mainland. Mr. Hawes, believing that with the expansion of the penal settlements and the future development of the resources of Sakhalin, the decay of the native must follow, made it his special object to record the aboriginal custom and myth, literature and religion, before they perished. In the course of the narrative many notes are given upon the fauna and flora of the island. As to the state of the penal administration and of the exile settlers, the author reminds us that Sakhalin is the colony to which Russia's worst criminals are despatched, that it is over 6700 miles from St. Petersburg, and that in the last twenty years improvements have taken place even here; but when all is said, it remains true that the Island of the Black River still lags, as in the past, many years behind the average penal settlement on the mainland. In chapter vi. is given a short sketch of the history and general features of Sakhalin. The rest of the book, including the notes on Korea and Manchuria, is mainly personal narrative, in which trivial incidents of ordinary travel are used to illustrate the daily life, manners, and customs, both of native and white man, in this part of the world. In certain chapters (*e.g. In the Bay of Ni*, where he tells the story of the Gilyak bear-fête) Mr. Hawes traverses much the same ground as M. Labbé, in his study of Sakhalin. The main interest of the present volume certainly lies in its pictures of the primitive, now decaying, tribes of Sakhalin; but the author's account of his journey across Manchuria, and so home to Europe by the Siberian railway, is good reading likewise. A delightful humour and an admirable collection of folk-stories will not perhaps impair the