
Review

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previously studied scientifically. The author's interests are, however, many sided, and the account of the Ghimirra (as he calls them) occupies but a fourth part of his volume. Readers of the paper Dr. Montandon contributed to this *Journal* (vol. 40, pp. 372 *seq.*) will be acquainted with the main outlines of his expedition and the considerable amount of geographical work he accomplished. In his book we have the details filled in and much new matter added. He is to be praised for the critical apparatus he has provided. Besides the map showing the geographical results of his mission (a reproduction of the map given in this *Journal*), sketch-maps exhibit the various ethnic elements and languages spoken in the Abyssinian empire and also the religions of the peoples. Another map gives the itineraries of the explorers of south-west Abyssinia from 1843 onward, and there is a "profil du massif éthiopien" from the Hawash to the Akobo, in which by a clever contrivance we get at a glance the character of the country (altitude, rainfall, etc.) as it varies from zone to zone, together with the type of inhabitants, their language, religion, and social state.

The general reader may find of most interest the information concerning the condition of Abyssinia and the sketches of the principal personages in the empire, the analysis of the prospects of commerce, and the accounts of political intrigues. It is, in fact, a book full of varied entertainment; a veritable medley, as is natural when one deals with Abyssinia. But the information is so well arranged that with the help of the table of contents the reader can turn at once to the particular subject which mainly attracts him. The book should be consulted by all students of Abyssinian affairs.

F. R. C.

ZUBEIR PASHA.

'Black Ivory and White; or, The Story of El Zubeir Pasha, Slaver and Sultan, as told by himself.' Translated and put on record by H. C. Jackson. Oxford: B. H. Blackwell. 1913. 2s. 6d. *net*.

This autobiography of the great ivory merchant of the Bahr el Ghazal throws considerable light on the history of the Egyptian Sudan, especially the conquest of Dar Fur, with regard to which the Egyptian official accounts have deprived Zubeir of the credit which was undoubtedly his. Zubeir early penetrated to the Nyam-Nyam country. Mr. Jackson dates this in 1859; but it was probably two or three years later, as the return journey was made in 1863. Mr. Jackson also antedates by a year Zubeir's journey to Cairo (p. 79). Such errors might, perhaps, have been avoided had he given us Zubeir's own Moham-medan dates. Of course, much of what Zubeir says must be taken with reserve,

F. A. E.

THE LANGUAGES OF WEST AFRICA.

'The Languages of West Africa.' By F. W. H. Migeod. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. London: 1911-1913. 2 vols., each, 12s. 6d. *net*.

Mr. Migeod's work is of permanent value, and it will be very long before our general knowledge of West Africa comes up to its level, but it is not easy in the pages of a geographical magazine to treat at any great length linguistic material of this variety and importance. The book, of course, has geographical value, because the distribution of languages is a necessary part of geographical study. Mr. Migeod, an official of the Gold Coast Colony, first went to Africa in 1898, to the lower Niger. Soon afterwards he was appointed to the Gold Coast, and began his language studies with the acquisition of Hausa, but in 1908 published an excellent study of the Mende language of north-east Sierra Leone and north-west Liberia, with some references to Vai, an allied speech of western Liberia.

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In the work under review he discusses in a lucid and analytical manner a great many of the West African tongues, beginning with Songhai and Hausa, and ending with the Bube of Fernando Po. His range extends to the Kanuri of Bornu, to Fula, and to the Bambara of Senegal. Curiously enough, the only speech of which he does not seem to have grasped the real features, is the Bube of Fernando Po, which is emphatically a Bantu language, though it contains a very interesting semi-Bantu element, related to that in the languages of Western Cameroons on the Bantu borderline. His comparisons of this speech with that of the Gold Coast tongues are a little misleading. His best work is done in connection with the Mandingo family of languages and the three great language groups of the Gold Coast and northern territories (the Mossi region). He gives a good bibliography and makes many references to preceding authorities, not excepting the remarkable work (as it has proved to be) of M. Maurice Delafosse. Altogether, I consider Mr. Migeod's book to be one of such permanent value to students in that field of ever-growing interest—the Negro languages of Africa—that the belated appearance of this review may only serve to call renewed attention to an interesting and clearly written book, a book which may even possess a general ethnological interest as well as occupying a special position in philology.

H. H. J.

PEMBA ISLAND.

‘Pemba: the Spice Island of Zanzibar.’ By Captain J. E. E. Craster, R.E. London: Fisher Unwin. 1913. *Illustrations*. Price 12s. 6d. net.

The author undertook the survey of this island for the Government. The first outlook was discouraging. From the lighthouse on the north-west coast nothing was distinguishable but a dark undulating sea of treetops. On getting to work it was found very difficult to measure a base-line, but this was eventually completed along the coral beach, which was covered in places by several feet of water. The survey was eventually carried out with marked success in spite of the obstacles presented by the physical character of the country and the opposition of the natives. There were no main ridges which could be followed, but numerous deep valleys and ravines full of bush, which proved quite impassable on parts of the east coast. On the west side the mangrove swamps were difficult to cross and infested by noxious flies. The climate was generally hot, damp, and malarial. In order to expose a beacon to view a thick jungle of tall trees, mostly great acacias woven together into a solid mass by creepers and rubber vines, had to be cut down with the axe. The natives, in their precautions against witchcraft, added to the difficulties of the expedition by stealing the white cotton cloth used to mark the beacons.

AMERICA.

THE FAR NORTH OF CANADA.

‘My Life with the Eskimo.’ By Vilhjálmur Stefánsson. London: Macmillan & Co 1913. *Maps and Illustrations*. 17s. net.

Mr. Stefánsson was already an experienced Arctic traveller when he started on his 1910–1912 expedition. His main purpose was to investigate the practically unknown region east of Cape Bathurst; the south-western portion of Victoria island was also visited. Various geographical discoveries, confirmations, and rectifications were made, and to Dr. R. M. Anderson, a trained naturalist, who joined the expedition, are due numerous observations on the zoology of