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Review: India

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## REVIEWS.

## ASIA.

## INDIA.

'The Native Races of the British Empire: Northern India.' By W. Crooke. London: Constable. 1907. *Price 6s. net.*

'The Khasis,' by Major P. R. T. Gurdon, Indian Army. London: David Nutt. 1907. *Price 7s. 6d. net.*

The days are happily past when to the British subaltern every native of India was a "nigger." At least those subalterns whose business it is to deal with native troops are required to know something of the origin and idiosyncrasies of the men they command, and very excellent little handbooks describing the various classes of fighting troops which make up the Indian Army are published by authority and pressed upon their attention. The result is that they do know something of their men, and that military interest in Northern Indian ethnography has been greatly stimulated. The pity is that no sufficient authority exists which might insist on similar studies on the part of those in England whose business it is to intermeddle with Indian affairs and hamper the progress of Indian administration.

In Mr. Crooke's volume, at any rate, they have a book which supplies a handy reference for all the more important conditions, ethnographical and social, of Indian humanity. It is a useful book of reference even for those who know India well, and for those who wish to acquire an elementary knowledge of Indian conditions of life it is invaluable. Its elementary character is a necessity induced by its brevity. On the whole, the author has collected a large store of useful facts into a small compass, and he has marshalled his facts in an interesting and most readable manner, but still the information given must be regarded as superficial; and the criticism must be added that some of the latest additions to ethnographical literature in India have apparently not been consulted. The census reports are, rightly, the author's chief sources of information, but such valuable works as those lately published on the fighting races of India, or Mr. Dane's pamphlet on the tribes of Baluchistan, to say nothing of Indian Survey reports, do not appear in the bibliography. Nor can we agree that within the narrow limits of a book of 262 pages the relative importance of the many nationalities with which the book concerns itself has been fairly preserved.

A great deal is written—and it is most interesting—about the Dravidian tribes, and the family of Gonds looms quite large in the book. Even so, not even the Gonds are fully described, for the subdivision of the family which occupies the Godavari basin and includes such sections as the Kois and Gotturs is omitted. It is true that so little has been done towards elucidating new facts and features in the ethnography of these strange people that the author has to go back to the days of Glasford for his authority. On the other hand, the Gurkhas occupy but a page or two at most, and of the many varied Baluch tribes there is hardly a sketch. The influence of Arab immigration and invasion on the ethnography of North-Western India, as well as of the Afghan element within the limits of the Indian peninsula, occupies no space at all.

The later chapters of the book are all excellent, and should help greatly to dissipate the many crude notions which exist, even amongst educated people, of the relative social status of the various castes, and give, at the same time, a good general idea of the life-conditions of the people. The illustrations are good, but not always quite apropos to the text. Why, for instance, should the Bhotiya of the

Himalayas appear amongst the Rajputs? But when all is said that might be said in criticism, there is no doubt that this is a book of great educational value.

In connection with the above we may notice a book written by Major P. Gurdon, of the Indian Army, on the Khasis—the tribes of the Khasia hills in Eastern India. The Khasis have attracted ample attention from Mr. Crooke in the book referred to above, although in economic importance amongst Indian peoples they are practically insignificant.

Major Gurdon is dealing with a subject which has evidently been a life-study with him. Since the days when Woodthorpe (one of whose sketches, by the way, is amongst the book illustrations) made the first systematic surveys of the Khasia and Garo hills, no one has given us so interesting a view of this strange wild country and the yet stranger people who inhabit it. For the Kasi race is a race apart; isolated in the midst of a surrounding Tibeto-Burman population; and it presents certain remarkable features in language and institutions which have attracted the attention of comparative philologists and ethnologists for some years. Sir Charles Lyall's introduction to the book sets out the present position of scientific inquiry respecting the Khasis, whilst the book itself is an epitome of their mode of life, customs, and superstitions with a very fair series of coloured illustrations showing the eccentricities of Khasi costume.

The fault of the book is the system of arrangement, which smacks too much of a Government report. There is no personal narrative—nothing of the excitement of adventure—in the book; and yet no man could have lived amongst these people, studying their ways, collecting their folklore, and fathering their interests with the Government of India, without encountering many incidents full of the romance of untutored nature—incidents such as leave delightful memories of strange personal experience, to be recalled tenderly in the after-days of life's eventide.

T. H. HOLDICH.

## AFRICA.

### MADAGASCAR.

*Madagascar: Studien, Schilderungen und Erlebnisse.* By Haupt Graf zu Pappenheim. With 102 Illustrations and 6 Maps. Berlin: Dietrich Reimer (Ernst Vohsen). 1906.

Haupt Graf zu Pappenheim's 'Madagascar' is the outcome of three years' (June, 1902, to May, 1905) residence in that island, during which time the count made a close and sympathetic study of its peoples and institutions. He went out as the agent of an English shipping syndicate; later on he prospected for gold on his own account; and afterwards acted as leader of a large French party engaged in the south of the island. He did a good deal of topographical work in the province of Farafangana, and finally returned home, his work having been stopped by a native rising, and his health having suffered from the "murderous" climate, though by far the greater part of the island enjoys a climate suitable for Europeans. The first seven chapters (pp. 1-105) are a kind of encyclopædic survey of the country; the rest of the volume (pp. 106-356) is a lively record in journal form of the author's experiences and observations in his voyages round the coast and journeys through the south-east and east central provinces of the island. Possessing a mind quick to appreciate the humorous side of things, the lighter incidents of travel are by no means neglected. At the same time the writer manages to convey much solid information—largely on the economic condition of the land—in readable form. This is notably the case in the narrative part of the volume; the information in the opening chapters is clear, precise, and concise. Sections are devoted to history, physical features, climate, health, and mining, and special attention is paid to ethnology. The family life, religion, language, music, and culture generally of