
Review

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Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (Sep., 1916), pp. 265-266

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1779878>

Accessed: 22-06-2016 08:07 UTC

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history of the different states, and to accounts of their rulers. The journeys were for the most part along the beaten track, and the chief interest of the book lies in its fresh and vivid descriptions of the places and people, and the first-hand accounts of many of the personalities who have figured recently on the Balkan stage. There are numerous photographs, many of them very attractive, and a map, but no index.

Mrs. Gordon entered Rumania from the south, travelling from Sofia to Ruschuk, across the Danube to Giurgevo, and so to Bucharest. She was much struck with the marked contrast in appearance, customs, and modes of life between the Rumanians and the Bulgars and Serbs, and her account of the agrarian problem in Rumania, and of the contrast between the life of luxury led by the great landowners and the poverty of the peasants, is instructive, though perhaps unduly optimistic as regards the effect of recent legislation. But, as already suggested, the chief value of the book lies in its presentation of human life in the peninsula by a sympathetic and interested observer, who had special opportunities in her free access to diplomatic and political circles, and took full advantage of these opportunities.

M. I. N.

ASIA.

From the Persian Gulf to Ararat. An Expedition through Mesopotamia and Kurdistan.— G. E. Hubbard, Secretary of Delimitation Commission. Pp. viii. and 273. Edinburgh and London: Blackwood & Sons. 1916. *Illustrations.* 10s. 6d. net.

This book describes the journey of the Turco-Persian Boundary Commission, which in the spring and summer of 1914 travelled (generally by little-known ways over desert and mountain) from Mohammereh to Azerbaijan. The author, who was Secretary of the British Delegation to the Commission, has not made it his aim to give a close study either of political problems or of geographical and topographical facts. As he says in his preface, "The substance of the book consists of little more than a record of personal experiences and impressions of the tribes and countries through which we passed." Taken as such, the book is good reading. The description of the "Land of Elam" (chaps. iv. and v.) gives an excellent general picture (especially interesting at the moment) of the deserts of Southern Arabistan, of the marshes of the Khor-el-Azem with their reed-enclosed waterways, and of the great empty plains which lie between the Tigris and the Pusht-i-Kuh. After a visit to the pleasant oases of Bedrai and Mendeli, and a glance at Baghdad, the reader is taken through the Turco-Persian borderlands of Kurdistan, where the well-watered valleys with their vines and orchards, walnuts and mulberries, the rugged mountains and execrable "roads," are agreeably sketched. The incidents of the journey are told in an entertaining manner, and meetings with tribesmen, townsmen and vagabonds, sheikhs and aghas, and, last but not least, with the Wali of Pusht-i-kuh himself, provide some amusing and occasionally instructive anecdotes. At the end of August 1914, when the Commission had almost finished its labours, Mr. Hubbard had the misfortune to be wounded—apparently rather seriously—in an attack by Kurds.

Besides what the author describes as the "substance" of the book, a few fragments of history are scattered about it for the benefit of the "general reader." By far the most interesting of these excursions into history is to be found in the first chapter, which gives in outline the story of the Turco-Persian Boundary Question, and the attempts to settle it made by Russia and England

between 1842 and 1913. The behaviour of Turkey and Persia in this matter affords an admirable instance of Oriental diplomacy, and the part played by Russia and England appears to have been on the whole one of the more creditable incidents of Occidental policy in Asia. Enlightening though disheartening is the anecdote of the two sets of maps made respectively by the British and Russian delegations to the first Commission of 1848-1852. When these maps came to be compared in 1865 (the Crimean War being partly responsible for the delay), in eight out of seventeen sheets no less than 4000 discrepancies were discovered. Nevertheless, the surveyors "by some surprising feat of cartography so manipulated the two versions as to produce a single copy, known henceforth by the euphemistic title of the *Carte Identique*." There was naturally much to be done by the surveyors of the last Commission.

This book also contains a chapter in which the now familiar story of British interests in Lower Mesopotamia is told once again, and another on the Kurdish race, which is mainly put together out of Soane, Ross, and Fraser, with a few of the author's experiences thrown in. In the last chapter accounts are quoted of the massacres perpetrated by Turks and Kurds on the Nestorian Christian population of Urmia and the surrounding country in the winter of 1914-15.

There are about sixty photographs in the book, the best being those which illustrate the marches through Kurdistan.

C. G. S.

AFRICA.

The German African Empire.— **Albert F. Calvert.** London: T. Werner Laurie, Ltd. 1916. Pp. xxix., 335. *Illustrations and Maps.* 6s. net.

A general preface is followed by sections on each of Germany's former African colonies. The book is too limited in scope to be a satisfying account of German rule in Africa. It is mainly a record of economic conditions and results. Each section is a useful collection of facts drawn from official and other publications. There are signs among the statistics of careless revision, and there is no index. The numerous illustrations include some coloured plates. The maps are small sketch-maps, showing a good selection of place-names and distinguishing military stations.

AMERICA.

Descripción geográfica de la Real Audiencia de Quito que escribió Don Dionisio de Alsedo y Herrera.— The Hispanic Society of America. Madrid: 1915. Pp. xxxv and 100. *Title, Map, and Index.*

By the courtesy of the Hispanic Society of America a copy of this, its latest publication (of which only 450 copies are printed), has been added to the library. The author's title begins: *Plano geografico y hidrografico del Distrito de la Real Audiencia de Quito* . . . , and comprises more than a hundred words. The work is admirably edited, and besides 110 explanatory notes appended to the text, Don C. A. González Palencia contributes an illuminating Introduction which includes some notice of Alsedo's life and career, as well as many interesting particulars of his writings. These deserve to be better known to English historiographers than heretofore. Only two MSS. of this work are known to exist; both are signed by the author, and dated 1766. They are in the *Biblioteca Nacional* at Madrid. Alsedo, who was born in Madrid in 1690, spent nearly forty years in South America, where he was Governor of the Realm of Quito from 1728 to 1737, and afterwards filled the corresponding office at Panama for six years. Evidently a man of many parts, he seems to