
Review: Siberian Ethnology

Author(s): D. C.

Review by: D. C.

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during the latter period on stored water; and the non-use of timber in their architecture. Chapter III. deals with roads, particularly with the Darb el-Shur, once a main track from Jerusalem and Hebron to Egypt. Chapter IV. touches ancient topography at several points, and particularly, the Kadesh-Barnea problem; but, on the whole, the authors keep off vexed questions of Old Testament identifications. The superficial characteristics of the land are very intimately described, and the causes of them are not forgotten. On the whole this is, by a good deal, the best account of the north-eastern Sinai desert, the Negeb, that we have, not excepting Palmer's; and it is quite evident that the contribution made by the Royal Geographical Society towards the expenses incurred by the Palestine Exploration Fund in sending out Messrs. Woolley and Lawrence was very well applied. Their unusual familiarity with Arabs and Arabic has enabled them to say the final word on a good many points, despite the shortness of their stay.

D. G. H.

JOTTINGS FROM THE NEAR EAST.

'A Pilgrim's Scrip.' By R. Campbell Thompson. London: Lane. 1915.
Pp. xii., 345. *Map and Illustrations.* 12s. 6d.

The field-work of antiquaries in the Near East may now at any moment acquire a new political importance. It is unnecessary to remind regular readers of this *Journal* that their contributions to topographical and geographical knowledge in this field have been of great importance. This general narrative of Mr. Campbell Thompson's journeying in Asia Minor, Syria, and Africa therefore appears opportunely for reasons not connected solely with the author's own special interests. His book touches upon five distinct areas. In Asia Minor his map shows a journey between Angora and Eregli, on which he saw the Kizil Irmak at a part where, he tells us, "the actual course for 20 miles or so was [previous to his journey] represented by a dotted line on accurate maps." * He has a number of striking photographs of the river. The second area of his travels extend from Aleppo and Damascus over a large part of the middle Euphrates and Tigris, and into Persia at Kermanshah and Behistun. His book also deals with a journey south-eastward, from Suez into the Sinaitic peninsula, and he carries us to Tripoli and to the Sudan. Here there are fields of much varied interest which the writer has examined with a true geographical eye, and often furnishes contrasts and comparisons that help to make clear his word-pictures to the mind of the reader. We may take as example, at random, his reflections on passing from Mesopotamia to Persia, and noting how the one differs from the other, and the predominant influence of change of climate upon the differences. Instances need not be multiplied, nor is this the place to discuss the results of his antiquarian researches, which indeed is not the purpose of the volume, for this is rather in the nature of a literary ramble, of much more substantial value than many of its type. Some readers may find that the author's strongly individual style necessitates the acquirement of a taste for it.

SIBERIAN ETHNOLOGY.

'Aboriginal Siberia.' A Study in Social Anthropology. M. A. Czaplicka. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1914. 14s. net.

Miss Czaplicka was happy in her decision to prepare us for the results of her own studies amongst the aboriginal tribes of northern Siberia, by supplying

* This journey was described by Mr. Thompson in the *Journal* for June, 1911, with map.

in advance a careful *résumé* of the sum total of knowledge concerning their social anthropology. It is this type of research work that is so worthy of praise. A glance through the bibliography will persuade even the most critical that the book is an ambitious one. It aims at being a handbook—of a very detailed and exhaustive nature—formed from the vast mass of material gathered by a host of students of varied nationality. The amount of attention that these remote tribes of Northern Asia have come in for is exceptional; but it happens that the records are, for the most part, hidden in a language which is unfortunately seldom known outside Russia.

By unravelling the tangled skein of a million valuable facts recorded in inaccessible Russian works, this volume creates a reliable foundation for future study. We are introduced to the tireless investigations and valued opinions of many investigators, carefully selected and put together by a trained anthropologist, who intends to supplement her work of compilation and criticism by original researches of her own amongst the primitive inhabitants of the “taiga” and the “tundra.”

The attempt to put this on record has been made only just in time; it appears that some of the tribes are doomed to extinction, while others are becoming so contaminated by Russian influence that much of their original character is being quickly lost for ever. Some have actually already lost much of their aboriginal culture, which in itself forms such valuable data for the anthropologist. The chapters group themselves principally under the headings of Sociology and Religion; there are also chapters devoted to geography, ethnology, and one on “Arctic Hysteria.” No less than eight out of the fifteen chapters find themselves under the section “Religion,” which shows how large a part it plays in the lives of primitive people. The importance of a thorough acquaintance with that side of their life is obvious, for it is no exaggeration to say that the religious and social lives of such people are practically one. Closely connected with their religious rites is the strange phenomenon termed “Arctic Hysteria,” a weakness to which all the northern tribes are liable. In many cases the hysteria only takes the form of “inspiration;” it is then highly esteemed, for the best Shaman priests are those who possess most fully this hereditary, hysterical nature. But there is another form which the natives themselves recognize as “symptomatic of disease.” The Shaman priest, who gains credit by his proneness to inspiration, has to lose office if he develops the nervous ailment which assumes the character of “*ämürakh*,” or “imitative mania.” The tabulating of evidence, so difficult to come by as this must be, will prove invaluable to students of pathology.

The classification of the ethnic groups is simplified by applying the term “Palæo-Siberian” to the most ancient stock of Siberian aborigines,—the earliest comers no matter where they come from; while “Neo-Siberian” is given to those later immigrants, of Central Asian origin, who were formerly styled Ural-Altaians.

The bulk of the book is given up to a record of the observations made by the principal investigators of the social organization, customs, religious ideas, and rites of tribes who are, so to speak, “the modern representatives of the age of the Reindeer,” and who only just hold their own in a struggle for existence which is exceptionally severe.

D. C.

AFRICA.

‘Through Central Africa from East to West.’ By Cherry Kearton and James Barnes. (London: Cassell & Co. 1915. Pp. xviii., 283. *Map and Illustrations*. 21s. net.) This brightly written and profusely illustrated account of a journey from Mombasa to the mouth of the Congo is the outcome of a