



North and East Africa

Travel and Sport in Africa by A. E. Pease

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defence of the missionaries—at the risk of his own life—might certainly lead some to reconsider their verdict respecting the Chinese. Food for reflection is also supplied by the description of Sian (Singan-fu), which is said to have “no haunts of crime and human degradation,” nor “any rendezvous of gilded vice and dissipation;” and by the remark of an old Mohammedan tea-merchant, who, after expressing his willingness to see the Christians overthrow the idols, added, “the only trouble is, if Sian were a Christian city it would be as bad as Shanghai.”

Mr. Nichols paid a visit to the celebrated Nestorian tablet in Sian, which does not seem to have been seen by any recent travellers, and which stands at present amidst a heap of ruins, protected neither from vandals nor from the elements. Photographs of the monument are given.

SIBERIA.

‘Das russische Kustengebiet in Ostasien.’ (Primorskaja Oblastj.) Von C. von Zepelin. Berlin: Mittler & Son. 1902.

The fact that so much of the existing literature on Eastern Siberia is in Russian gives a value, beyond that which attaches to most compilations, to this concise summary of our knowledge about that region. A sketch is given of its history and surface features, but the bulk of the work is devoted rather to the economic aspects of the country. The writer has a high opinion of the resources of the Eastern Coast region, though he allows that their development will be a matter of time. The political position of Russia in the Pacific is, he thinks, assured by the opening of the Siberian railway.

AFRICA.

NORTH AND EAST AFRICA.

‘Travel and Sport in Africa.’ By A. E. Pease. 3 vols. London: Humphreys. 1902.

On viewing the imposing form and sumptuous get-up of these volumes, it is impossible to avoid regret that the amount of solid scientific matter contained in them can hardly claim to be commensurate with the outside appearance. A large proportion of the volumes is taken up with sporting or other incidents of travel, and while the former will no doubt appeal to a certain class of readers, serious students will be tempted to wish that the solid material had been more carefully sifted out for their use from the general mass. Many of the illustrations with which the work is so lavishly provided are instructive, and some (particularly in the case of the photogravures) are of real merit, though the same can hardly be said of many of the text illustrations. Still, even in its more trivial side, the work has a value from the picture it presents of the state of the countries traversed when the recent advance of European influence was only just beginning, while a particularly pleasing feature is the author’s sympathetic attitude towards the native races, and his evident desire to further the good repute of his country among them.

The arrangement of the work is chronological, the author’s various expeditions being described in the order in which they were undertaken, which involves some amount of see-saw between different parts of the continent. The bulk of vol. i. treats of journeys in Algeria, during which the interesting Aures group of mountains was visited. The rest of the volume and the first part of vol. ii. takes us to Somaliland, this section opening with a general account of the people, their country, and its animal and vegetable productions. Mr. Pease’s routes in Somaliland led through some little-known country, and this part of the work possesses, perhaps, the greatest original value. The latter part of vol. ii. brings us to the

Algerian Sahara, where the oases of Ghardaya, Gerrara, and Wargla were visited, and as recent literature on this region is almost entirely French, the views and impressions of an English traveller are of considerable value. Vol. iii. deals with Abyssinia, into which, however, the author and his party did not penetrate further than Adis Ababa and Lake Zwai. Mr. Pease was struck by the absence of all appearance of a town at the capital, the native huts being widely scattered over the valley. He is evidently by no means so enthusiastic an admirer of the Abyssinians as some recent travellers. In each section of the work lists of animals, birds, and plants are given, but with respect to the last, it is to be regretted that in few cases have botanical determinations been possible. Short historical summaries are here and there inserted, and will no doubt be of use to the general reader. The maps, prepared at Stanford's establishment, deserve a special word of praise.

ITALY AND ABYSSINIA.

'The Campaign of Adowa and the Rise of Menelik.' By G. F. H. Berkeley.
Westminster: Constable. 1902.

It may seem at first sight that the interest in the events which finally freed Abyssinia from the threats of an Italian protectorate is hardly fresh enough to warrant the publication of an English narrative of the campaign, now become a matter of history merely. The lessons of the campaign are, however, not without importance for the future, owing to the undoubted influence on the fate of the surrounding European territories, which the rise of a powerful military empire under Menelik must exercise, whether or no the anticipations will be realized of those who see in the Abyssinian empire a source of danger to her European neighbours. Mr. Berkeley's account of the campaign embodies a large amount of material which has not been generally available to English readers, both with respect to the actual campaign and the events which led up to it, and may be recommended as a trustworthy guide to those who wish to gain a comprehensive view of the events described.

EGYPT.

'Egypt painted and described by R. Talbot Kelly.' London: A. & C. Black. 1902.

Mr. Kelly's pleasantly written descriptions of Egyptian life and scenery will bring the general characteristics of the country before the minds of stay-at-home readers with peculiar vividness. But it is the thoroughly artistic coloured illustrations which are the special attraction in the book, and which will probably be somewhat of the nature of a revelation to those not familiar with the scenes themselves. So much of the charm of Eastern scenery depends on the colouring that photographs, however excellent, can convey but a slight idea of the reality. Vivid as are the colours employed by the artist, they are so harmoniously blended that harsh and startling effects are altogether avoided. Much as he is inclined to regret the modern vulgarization of things Egyptian, which seems to have brought a subtle change over the spirit of the scene, Mr. Kelly is enthusiastic in his praises of the natural beauties which remain, and of the interest attaching to a study of native life where comparatively uncontaminated by the new influences. The pictures of Nile and desert scenery, in their ever-changing aspects, are drawn with particular vividness, but the author's descriptions all manifest the true feeling of the artist, and among the many charming sketches, that of the changing aspects of nature on the banks of one of the smaller and more secluded canals, is perhaps as attractive as any. More practical questions are now and then touched upon, and the remarks on such subjects as the recent experiments at