THE ATHENAEUM

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GEOPHraphical Notes.

The Admiralty has placed an unwonted activity, or, rather, an .activity on the Nile into Lake Albert Nyanza, which part of the river has been traversed by Col. Gordon in his little steamer, the Keddie, and some further information of particular interest to collectors is already on the way from Cairo. It appears that the lake really begins at a distance of only twenty miles southeast of Appudo (near the first rapids). From that point the river widens out, and the current becomes very slow—not more than half a mile an hour. The banks are low and bordered with heath and grass. Further on thousands of islands, covered with peepers, dot the surface of the waters, and the real junction of river and lake is very difficult to ascertain. The country on the western side is densely populated, and the natives seem well disposed.

Mr. A. H. Everett has resigned his appointment to serve the service of the Rajah of Sarawak, and is about to start in a three-years' expedition to the Philippine Islands. The Fauna of this group of islands is almost unknown, or has never been properly studied. Mr. Steere, the American naturalist, is the first man who has made any important additions to our knowledge of the natural history of these islands. He has already returned from a voyage in these seas, and as the result of a very cursory examination has added no less than 500 species to the Malay Peninsula, and has made a large number of new birds. Many of these have been published in the Transactions in due course. Mr. Everett is to explore the southern islands, and will begin with the large island of Borneo.

Here Edward Moir, who is travelling on behalf of the German African Association, reached St. Paul's Island on the 18th of August. He has been by this, no doubt, reached Malauny, from which place he proposes to push to the north. Nothing has been heard yet from Dr. Foggie, who may probably have succeeded in reaching the capital of the Matua Yang. Another German traveller, Dr. Erwin von Baur, has been met by a caravan, near Ghat. He intends to explore the Tuareg countries.

Mr. Walter Besant writes:—"A statement in the 'Geographical Notes' of last week's Athenæum, that the American which has failed, which the surveys that they undertake, is incorrect, and unfair to one, at least, of the officers employed by the American Exploring Society. Four weeks ago I was in New York, and was permitted by the kindness of Dr. Hitchcock, President of the American Society, to see the whole of Lieut. Stier's survey work in Moab. It is laid down, with the bill shading, on a single sheet about the size of one of Lieut. Conner's sheets of Western Palestine. The map drawing appeared to my unprofessional eye very good. There will be before long an opportunity of seeing this piece of American geographical work, for Dr. Hitchcock is about to print a tracing made for the English Committee. I was also shown Mr. Selah Merrill's route maps together with his report of the explorations. Mr. Merrill has yet been issued of the second expedition under Col. Lane, but your readers, who have read Mr. Merrill's interesting letters on Transjordanic Lands, in your columns, will be glad to learn that he will probably remain in the country." The following letter explains itself:—"I am sorry to see, from your notice of Mr. Herbert's work on 'Garden and Egypt,' that you are one of a large section of the community who believe that 'the success of the rival route (to India) by Egypt' has led to the neglect of our prospects of success. It is very important that the public mind should be disabused of such an idea at the present crisis, and I feel sure you will allow me to express briefly, and therefore imperfectly, the reasons why. In the first place, the two schemes never were 'rival.' General Cheshnut, the leader of the Euphrates expedition, is the actual one of the two, and we are not the other. The fact is that England should have two means of communication with India, instead of one, which may be closed by accident or otherwise. Success on the Euphrates and Turkey in Asia is to the East of Persia, and to India. Whenever, as on the present occasion, war in Russia and Turkey in Europe, the former power pushes forward her Trans-Caucasian army to threaten Turkey on the one side, or India on the other, by the nearest road of access to the latter countries. Turkey and England united on the 'Great River,' could, with the aid of Kurds and Persians, at once out-rank any such movement. The strategic importance of this valley is such, that even now, in case of a general war, England would have to occupy the mouths of the river. Yet the rendering the whole line available to commerce, civilization, and the protection of Turkey and India, would not have cost more in force than the Crimean and Abyssinian. The opening of railway communication through, from Belgrade to Bussora or Basra, would also do more in time to pacify the countries of Asia, to complete the Russian conquest of Persia and India, than all the efforts of diplomacy. I do not expect to live to see so great a result as the above, under which is included the entire South Sea; but I am certain that the present Sultan is in favour of some such a scheme; but I feel perfectly certain that it will one day be carried out—at all events in part—if not in toto. This is the irresistible force of the natural advantages presented by this great valley to commerce, civilization, and military conquests, as to the irresistible force of the little-known and disputed period of history, when the Prior of Croato, Don Antonio, was a pretender to the throne, after the death of the Cardinal-Dom Henrique."

"WILLIAM FRANCIS AINSWORTH."

Our Lisbon Correspondent writes:—"The Government has received official intimation of the existence of the Dutch archives of many precious and meddlesome documents relative to the Portuguese colonies, past and present, in Africa, Brazil, coast of Malabar, and Coromandel. These are documents relative to the little-known and disputed period of history, when the Prior of Croato, Don Antonio, was a pretender to the throne, after the death of the Cardinal-Dom Henrique."

THE CASTLELLAN OF JURKOVAC.

Trieste, October 16, 1796.

AMONG the many strangers that hurry through Trieste, a Peruvian, who may take an interest in the Castelliere, or proto-historic dwelling places of the Kistenens and the peninsula of Istria. My friend, Dr. (L.L.D.) Antonio Guerrini, at Socopol, had the kindness to show me a few of these most interesting sites, lying within a few yards of the Nabreza Station, where the Sidi Bahar, or Great Southern, branches off to Italy. Its sunburnt-shaped outline, with a bush-grown rock protruding from the centre, and the debris of fawn-coloured mammoth limestones disposed in a manner the most suggestive of a very ancient approach, attracted every observing eye; and yet, curious to say, it is not noticed either in the list or in the map of the site in the report, and was described to me by him who did much to illustrate the remains of his fatherland.

The traveller had better take a carriage at Trieste and drive (an hour and a half) to Nabreza (the Roman Aurisina)—the village, not the station—where he will find the innkeeper, Giuseppe Tane, an adequate guide. On the slope he will note that the diameter of the saucer's base is about 150 feet, whilst the oval inner encloses 33 feet from north to south and 46 east to west. (Chadwick, in his account, gives the stones which represent the outer wall, he will pick up fragments of broken pottery, thicker, coarser, and heavier than the usual yield of such places. I have collected about half-a-dozen different types, and Col. A. Lane Fox is preparing to have them analysed. The interior has evidently been dug over, but there is still plenty of pottery left, intended probably to separate the cattle from their owners. The characteristic black earth, the decay of animal remains, and a small quantity of flint, have been removed or buried by the furious Boka which swept the whole out of the territory of the Castelli. I have not had the opportunity to examine the bones found, but I hope to do so. I hope to publish a translation of some passages in the Latin, or Gothic, and some poems by the learned professor, W. Urban, and to introduce this charmingly savage side of the old Genoese dynasty."

Yours faithfully,

W. B. Finlay.

Scriba of the Athenæum.

A NEW Natural History, under the direction of Professor P. Martin Duncan, F.R.S., E.G.S., and Mr. Lewis, is now nearly ready for publication, and will be shortly issued in serial form by Messrs. Carnell and Co. London. The work is at present a connection, which the editor has already arranged for contributions to the work, are Messrs. H. W. Bates, F.R.G.S., W. S. Gray, F.S.A., W. F. B. Davis, F.R.S., Prof. F. R. P. Brooks, H. C. Gorst, F.R.S., Prof. T. Rupert Jones, F.R.S., Mr. R. Macalister, F.R.S., Dr. Murie, F.L.S., Prof. W. K. Fitch, F.R.S., Messrs. H. G. Stanley, E.G.S., R. Border Sharpe, F.S.A., and H. Woodward, F.R.S.

UNder the auspices of the Traders' Guild of Learning and the National Health Society, Prof. Coefield is to deliver a course of twenty lectures on the Laws of Health, on Saturdays, commencing November 11, at 8:30 p.m. Thanks to a most gen-