

REVIEWS AND NOTICES OF BOOKS.

TRAVELS AND DISCOVERIES IN NORTH AND CENTRAL AFRICA IN THE YEARS 1849—1855; by HENRY BARTH, Ph. D., D.C.L.,—in three volumes, vol. 1. New York: Harper and Brothers. Montreal: B. Dawson. pp. 657.

Africa is the only great field of exploration left to modern travellers. Its vast interior attracts the unwearied footstep of European enquiry, and the present time will probably mark a great era of advancement in knowledge regarding the population, geography, and products of the African Continent. The explorations of the Missionary Livingstone in the South have won for him an enviable fame; and we begin to wax a little impatient at the delay of the authorized narrative he has promised to give to the world. Dr. Barth is a German, but was employed by the British Government, in conjunction with a Mr. Richardson and a Dr. Ornberg, (also a German,) on an expedition to Central Africa. The object of the expedition was to obtain protection for British commerce from the native rulers, and to press on those princes the abolition of the slave trade. The English edition of Dr. Barth's narrative is to appear in five volumes. The American reprint (which in its external appearance reflects great credit on the press of Messrs. Harper and Brothers,) is announced to form three volumes, of which the first is now before us. Very few Germans can write English with such purity as Dr. Barth has done, yet his style often lacks vivacity, and a reader whose tastes are formed on the popular light literature of the age would probably find this volume a little tedious. Nevertheless it is full of valuable information. The Geographer will find observations of importance made with great care over a tract of country extending twenty-four degrees from east to west, in the broadest part of Africa. The Ethnographer will meet with not a little fresh information concerning the African tribes and nations. The Naturalist will be pleased with our author's minute description of tropical scenes and products;—the commercial man with his account of new markets and articles of trade;—while every Christian mind will feel an interest in the author's account of the conflict between Islamism and Paganism in the interior of Africa, and in the intelligence obtained by Dr. Barth on the painful subjects of slave-hunting and the slave trade.

Starting from Tripoli in the North, the travellers proceeded through the settlements of the Arab and the Berber—the poor remnants of what were great empires in the middle ages—into a country dotted with splendid ruins from the period of the Roman dominion. Making their way through the wild roving hordes of the Tawarek, they rested at the city of Agades. Thereafter the members of the expedition separated, and Mr. Richardson, succumbing to the fatigue and exposure of the journey, died near Kukuwa, among the Negroes. Dr. Barth gives an interesting account of Kanò, the great industrial emporium of Central Africa. The Kanawa (people of Kanò) have in general become Mohammedans, but Pagan rites are still performed throughout the Province, and in all Negroland. The population of the town is rated at 30,000, including 4000 slaves. The cotton cloth woven and dyed there is sold over a wide extent of country. Dr. Barth describes at length the local sources of wealth, and the infamous domestic slave trade.

We presume that the next volume will favor us with an account of the famous city of Timbuctu, and of the branches of the great river Niger, which furnishes so magnificent a water course into the very heart of Western Africa.

The conversations on religion which our traveller reports do not give evidence on his part of any very high Christian intelligence or fidelity. But, as a book of travels and discoveries, his narrative well deserves to be read by all who take an interest in the Negro and Negroland.