

WILEY



Review: The Niger

Author(s): C. R. B.

Review by: C. R. B.

Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 22, No. 3 (Sep., 1903), p. 320

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1775200>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 06:35 UTC

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at

<http://about.jstor.org/terms>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Wiley, The Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers) are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to The Geographical Journal

calling into being as an independent sovereignty. But like all the apologists, and not a few even of the critics, of the state's policy, he seems to overlook an important consideration, viz. that the claim of the state to nearly a million square miles of territory, including some of the most fertile and densely peopled regions of Africa, could never have been allowed by the European Powers, several of whom had prior interests in the region, except on the consideration of the philanthropic and international character of the enterprise; and that this fact places the state in an entirely special position among the ranks of sovereign powers.

As is but natural considering the standpoint of the writer, the part played by King Leopold in the modern awakening of Africa is greatly magnified. Many will, however, think that, if the merit belongs in reality to any one man, that man can be no other than David Livingstone.

THE NIGER.

'Le Niger: Voie ouverte à notre Empire Africain.' Par Capitaine Lenfant. Paris Hachette. 1903. Pp. vii., 252.

The primary object of Captain Lenfant's work, and of the record of that work which the present volume contains, is to show that the rapids of the lower Niger can be ascended or descended with sufficient ease and frequency for the purpose of maintaining constant communication by water between the upper river and the sea. In this enterprise the pioneers had been Lieut. Hourst and Captain Toutée, of whom the former had denied, and the latter had stoutly affirmed, the normal practicability of this fluvial route between Bussa and Say. Lenfant's experience fully confirmed the optimistic views of Toutée.

On February 21, 1901, a fleet of twenty boats under his command, plentifully stocked with supplies of all kinds, began the ascent of the Niger at its mouth, and on May 25 that same fleet, uninjured and with all its stores, arrived at Say; on May 29 it reached Niané, the Niger terminus of the direct route from Zinder and Lake Chad. On this voyage the two enclaves leased to France upon the lower Niger in the treaty of 1898—the "Enclave Toutée" in the Delta, on the Forcados channel, and the "Enclave d'Arenberg," just below the last rapids, and opposite Bajibo—were visited and used as bases of supply and reinforcement. Captain Lenfant makes an elaborate study of the hydrography of the Niger basin, the causes and extent of the annual floods, and the differences between the upper, middle, and lower river; for these three sections he uses the well-known terms of Joliba, Issa-ber, and Kwarra respectively. While naturally proud of his achievement, and an ardent exponent of this line of communication between the sea and the inner regions of the French empire in North-West Africa, the author does not conceal his conviction that the projected railway from the Dahome coast to Say (already completed as far as Abome) is the only satisfactory and final solution of the problem, the only adequate link between the middle Niger countries and the French African littoral. In the future of cotton-culture in the Western Sudan Captain Lenfant is a confident believer, and he devotes some of his most suggestive pages to an explanation of the best methods to be taken for ensuring the proper development of native industry. Miss Kingsley was fond of saying that the remarkable African dominion built up by the Third Republic had, along with many merits, one chief defect—a lack of commercial intelligence. But of late there have been many signs—and this book is one of them—that Frenchmen are awakening to the commercial possibilities of "France noire." C. R. B.