

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES.

Mr. Last's Expedition.—We have just received a letter from Mr. Last, informing us of his arrival at the junction of the Rovuma and Lujenda on the 16th of November. He has been able to take several observations to fix the position of this important point; provisionally he gives it as $38^{\circ} 1' 52.5''$ E. long. and $11^{\circ} 25' 20''$ S. lat. He intended to start the following day for Blantyre via Mtarika's, to verify his watches, and thence proceed to the Namuli Hills.

Bishop Smythies' Walk from the River Shiré to Newala on the Rovuma.—A little pamphlet has been printed at the Universities' Mission Press, at Zanzibar, on a very interesting journey made by Bishop Smythies between the 10th of September and the 24th of October, 1885, from Matope on the Upper Shiré to Newala on the Rovuma, a distance of 450 miles. On leaving Matope, he travelled for a few miles along the left bank of the Shiré, and then struck across for the northern shore of Lake Kilwa. This he traced in its whole extent, from west to east, before he turned north and examined Lakes Chiuta and Amaramba throughout their entire length. He was thus able to complete and verify Mr. O'Neill's sketch survey of the remarkable watershed between Lake Kilwa and the Rovuma basin. As the Bishop observes in a MS. postscript which has been communicated to us, the only apparent differences between his and Mr. O'Neill's observations arise from the different routes taken; for instance, the short river connecting Lakes Chiuta and Amaramba (both now proved to belong to the basin of the Rovuma, and not to that of Lake Kilwa) which Mr. O'Neill, travelling at a distance from its west bank, heard called the Msambiti, the Bishop, keeping close to its eastern bank, heard spoken of only as the Lujenda. Amaramba he looked upon as a wide expansion of the Lujenda rather than as a lake; on the other hand, Chiuta seemed to him to deserve the title of lake; although shallow and swampy in the dry season, it presents a not inconsiderable lake-like expanse in the rains.

The Yáru-Sanpo River of Southern Tibet announced as proved to be the principal Source of the Brahmaputra River and not of the Irawadi.—The *Times* of the 25th of January contains the following telegram, dated Calcutta, January 24th: "The *Calcutta Englishman* states that Mr. Needham, of the Assam Police, and Captain Molesworth, of the Bengal Staff Corps, who left Sadiya on December 12th for Rima in Tibet, have returned to Dibrugarh. They reached Rima, but were unable to enter the place, owing to the hostility of the Tibetans. Having followed the course of the Brahmaputra the whole way from Sadiya to Rima they are able to state authoritatively that the river corresponding in size to the Sanpo, as described by the explorer A—K, falls into it; and that

the identity of the Sanpo with the Deshong may be deemed to be finally settled."—The telegram is not correctly worded; the river seen by M. Needham and Captain Molesworth at Rima (or Roema) must have been not the Sanpo, but the Zayal Chu, the two principal affluents of which, one from the east, the other from the north, were traversed for their entire length by the explorer A—K, as already explained by General Walker ('Proceedings,' 1885, pp. 75 and 327). General Walker pointed out that as the Zayal Chu was known to flow into the Brahmaputra, it could not join the Yáru-Sanpo river of Tibet and flow into the Irawadi, as maintained so long and so stoutly by Mr. Robert Gordon; the identity of the Yáru-Sanpo river with the Dihong (not Deshong) which joins the Brahmaputra river a little below Sadiya, must thus be held conclusively established.

Coasting Journey along Southern Arabia.—An interesting account of a tour made in December 1884, by Colonel S. B. Miles, our Political Agent at Muscat along the southern coast of Arabia in H.M.S. *Dragon*, has been recently published by that officer in his report to the Government of India. The object of the tour was to distribute rewards to some of the chiefs for their kindness to the shipwrecked seamen of the steamship *Airy*, which had run aground near Cape Fartak, when bound to Port Said from Bombay. Kesheen was the first place visited by the *Dragon*, and the Sultan stated that the whole Mahra tribe were his subjects, at that his rule extended along the coast from Mesenaat to Ras Thabit Ali. Sihan, the next place touched at, is a long straggling town, larger and more thriving than Kesheen, with a population of about 2000. It exports frankincense, salt fish, barle sardine oil, and shark fins. One of the headmen near Cape Fartak proved to have been rewarded on a previous occasion for having succoured a British crew, that the *Knight of the Bath*, in June 1883. He said this had raised him from a poor fisherman to the position of a merchant and headman of his village, and the incident and example have had a good effect, the affair having spread far and wide along the coast. At Damkot, in the Bay of El Kamar, none of the natives had even seen a steamer before, though one decrepit old man remembered the boats of the *Palinuro* which surveyed the coast of Arabia under Captain Haines from 1833 to 1838. Sallala, reached on the 19th of December, is one of the five maritime towns of the district of Dhofar, one of the most fertile and favoured districts on the southern coast of Arabia. The chequered history of Dhofar shows that it has ever been a coveted possession. Extensive ruins of towns and forts scattered over its surface are an attestation of a former populousness and importance. The soil of the plain is light and rich, and excellent water is found everywhere at a few feet from the surface. Cotton, jowari, pulse, lucerne, and coco-nuts are grown, but to a limited extent only. The exports are chiefly frankincense, ghee, hides and skin wax, &c., brought down from the hills by the Gara Bedouins, besides cotton sardine oil, and shark fins. The imports are rice, grain, sugar, dates, cotton cloth and oil, and amount to about 50,000 dollars annually, the trade being mainly in the hands of Khoja merchants, who are agents for houses in Bombay and Macaulay. The Samban hills are known to be rich in balsamic, rubber-producing and other useful trees, but they have never been properly explored. The rubber tree grows to a height of 15 or 20 feet, but it has not yet become an article of trade. One of the tribes in this locality, called Garas, is an interesting and peculiar race. They are taller and of a different physique from all the Arab-speaking tribes of Yemen.