

dysentery and inflammation of the eyes are also endemic. He had found it impossible to reach Unyoro, where Emin Bey and Dr. Junker are still located, through Uganda, owing to the hostile attitude of the Kabakas, the murderers of Bishop Hannington and his party, who threaten him with a similar fate should he attempt to cross their country. He intended therefore to set out on the 10th January in an easterly direction to Kavirondo, and thence try to reach the Egyptian Equatorial provinces; making a wide detour in order to give Uganda as wide a berth as possible. He had decided to hasten his departure in consequence of an expected attack upon Kagehi by the marauding Waganda. Dr. Fischer had written to Mr. Mackay, the English missionary in Uganda, requesting him to let Dr. Junker know that he was attempting to reach him by the above-mentioned route. Dr. Fischer himself expresses his doubts as to the success of the expedition, as, among other difficulties, his stock of goods, already very much impoverished, had been selected in the first instance in view of the Uganda route, where pieces of cloth are chiefly preferred, whereas in the districts through which he has now determined to travel, copper wire and beads are most esteemed by the natives.

The Island of Jerba in the Syrtis Minor.—A recent number of the Consular Reports contains an account of Consul-General Playfair's Tour in Tunis, in October and November 1885, illustrated by three maps. It includes descriptions of the various places visited, their history, trade, European population, &c. Consul Playfair visited Tunis, Kelebia, Susa, Monastir, Mahadia, Sfax, the most important city in the Regency next to Tunis, and Gabes. From here he crossed the Syrtis Minor, or Gulf of Gabes, to the island of Jerba, a distance of 36 miles. The population of Jerba numbers 35,000 souls, 360 of whom are Europeans, and of these latter 300 are Maltese. There are no towns, properly so called, in the island, but numerous collections of houses and gardens, of which the following are the most important:—Houmt Es-Sook, the capital; Midoun and Cedrien, about 18 miles to the south-east of it; Houmt Ajim, on the south-west coast in the Western Straits, between it and the mainland; Gallala, on the south of the island, celebrated for its pottery; Cedoniksh, on the way from the capital to El-Kantara. The principal manufactures are bornouses and coloured blankets. Fish are plentiful on the coast, and a considerable trade is carried on in sponges. The most remarkable feature of Jerba is the great bight, or inland sea, which separates it from the mainland. This forms a large lake of irregular shape, the greatest length is about 10 miles, and the greatest breadth about eight miles. It communicates with the Syrtis Minor to the west by means of a narrow strait about one mile and a half broad, and with the sea to the east by a longer and broader one, the narrowest part of which is nearly two miles. Many important Roman remains exist in the island. Colonel Playfair left Jerba on the 28th of October, and returned to

the Goletta, the port of Tunis; whence he visited Porto Farina and Bizerta, thus ending the tour.

Assassination of another French Traveller in the Sahara.—Telegrams received by the Geographical Society of Paris announce the death of Lieutenant Palat while travelling in the north of the Sahara. The unfortunate traveller, who was charged by the Government of Algiers with a mission to cross the desert and reach Timbuktu, left Algiers in October 1885. After surmounting considerable difficulties, he arrived at Tuat, but was assassinated by his guides at a point about two days' march from In-Salah, in the country of the Tuaregs, not far from the spot where the ill-fated Flatters mission was massacred some three or four years ago. The hope was expressed that the French Government would now be aroused to send an expedition against the powerful and fanatical tribe of the Senussis, in order that a recurrence of these outrages may be prevented.

Identity of the Mean Sea-level at the opposite ends of the Canals of Suez and Panamá.—A few months ago General J. T. Walker* obtained the following information on this disputed subject from the engineer of the Suez Canal, through Major-General Sir John Stokes: "1. The annual mean level of the Mediterranean at Port Said, is the same as the annual mean level of the Red Sea at Suez. 2. According to the observations of the Panamá Canal Company, there is no difference of moment between the levels of the Atlantic at Colon, and of the Pacific at Panamá."

Finland.—We learn that Dr. Hult, Professor of Botany at the University of Helsingfors, is about to establish a station during the summer vacation in Finland for the study of the physical geography of the country. The spot chosen is in the vicinity of the Svartå ironworks at the south-eastern end of Lake Lojo, in Nyland, and is peculiarly favourable for the objects of the undertaking. The following are announced as the special points to which attention will be directed:—(1) The fluvial system of the country; (2) the post-glacial earth formations, as indicating the displacements of the shore-line, and as throwing light on climatic changes; (3) the stratification series in the peat-bogs; (4) the spread of wild vegetation into new districts; (5) the present state of "the colonies" of the wild-growing oak in Finland. Dr. Hult is to be congratulated on his enterprise, as it is expected that it will result in the solution of many questions of the physical geography of Finland, and also in the preparation of a good geological map of the country.

* General Walker applied for this information in consequence of the identity of levels having been questioned during the discussion which followed the reading of Major Baird's paper on the "Spirit-levelling Operations of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India," at the Aberdeen meeting of the British Association. *Vide* 'Supplementary Papers R. G. S.,' vol. i. p. 631.