

CORRESPONDENCE.

1. THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF AFRICA.

December 5th, 1887.

SIR,—In the last issue of the Journal, I announced the forthcoming publication, by the Roman Catholic Missionaries of Senegambia, of a Dictionary of the Susu language. I was then unaware of the fact that this book had already been published two years ago, and I have only just found it out from a German Catalogue of second-hand books. The *Dictionnaire français-soso et soso-français*, to which are prefixed a grammatical sketch and a collection of common phrases, will prove a very valuable Handbook of this language, which is spoken along the coast between the Rio-Nuñez and Sierra-Leone. The author is the Rev. P. RAIMBAULT, and the work, though printed in Paris, has been issued by the *Mission du Rio-Pongo, Vicariat apostolique de Sierra-Leone*, 1885.

What the said Missionaries were going to publish was really a practical Grammar of the Bambara language, which has now been issued (*Eléments de la Grammaire Bambara*, etc. 1 vol. 16mo. vii. and 218 pp., *Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil*, 1887). It contains numerous exercises with lists of words, and it is followed by some texts with a Bambara-French Dictionary: this is the most complete and elaborate work ever published on that interesting language.

I must also quote here a little work, issued by the same Missionaries in 1880, which is not noticed in Cust's *Modern Languages of Africa*, and which would prove very useful to Englishmen, because it contains an English translation of all words and sentences; its title is (in French and in English) as follows: *Guide of the Con-*

versation in four languages, ENGLISH-WOLOF-FRENCH-SARAR, 1 vol. 32mo. 329 pp., Saint-Joseph de Ngasobil, 1880.

CAPT. T. G. DE GUIRAUDON.

The Secretary of the Royal Asiatic Society.

2. NOTES ON AFRICAN PHILOLOGY.

December 20th, 1887.

SIR,—Amongst the Notes contributed by the Hon. Sec. to the last issue of the Journal, I read as follows :

“*Vocabularies of the Hadendoa and Beni Amír.*— . . . The Hadendoa is a Dialect of the Bishári language, of the Hamitic group (see page 126 of Cust’s Modern Languages of Africa, 1883). The Bani Amír are wrongly entered as a Dialect of the same language, but the Vocabulary shows that the language is Semitic, and akin to the Tigré of Abyssinia.”

So, if I understand rightly, we are told by Dr. Cust himself that he has been wrong in entering the Beni Amír as a Dialect of the Bishári language: we shall see hereafter that this statement should really be understood in a way quite different from that suggested by the phrase quoted above.

I must observe, in the first place, that *Bani Amír*, or, more correctly, *Beni Amer*, is a plural ethnic tribal name (Hebrew *Amrim*), meaning “Sons of Amer,” and I fail to understand how the “Sons of Amer” could be styled a Dialect. We could not say that the Dutchmen are a Dialect. With regard to these Beni Amer, as the Vocabulary alluded to has not yet been published, I must postpone my opinion on the question whether the language is Hamitic or Semitic. But both suppositions are possible: for some of the Beni Amer, who are of Tigréan descent, have preserved their original Semitic dialect, while the rest of them now speak a Hamitic dialect (see W. Munzinger’s *Ostafrikanische Studien* and *Vocabulaire de la langue Tigré*). Therefore, if Dr. Cust confesses himself wrong in entering the Beni Amer as a dialect of the Bishari language, he would have rightly corrected himself by entering their name as that of a tribe speaking partly a dialect of