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***The Lascarids of Nicaea.* By Alice Gardner, 1 vol. 8vo. Pp. 312. London: Methuen and Co. 7s.6d.net.**

A. J. B. G.

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SHORT NOTICES

La Science Française. 2 vols. 8vo.
Larousse, Paris.

THE French Ministry of Education having been invited to the Universal Exhibition held at San Francisco in 1915 sent there a library of books relating to all kinds of sciences and dating from the sixteenth century onwards. The catalogue contains what is considered as the most representative works of French science in all branches, and is now published with a notice for each section which sums up the historical development of every branch; there are altogether thirty-three different sections, the first volume being especially devoted to pure science, the second to literature, history, and philology.

The great fact which strikes one at a first perusal is that the French have acted as pioneers in nearly all branches of modern science. M. Lucian Poincaré, in his general introduction, may well write that 'the very fountain-head from which fresh streams of human knowledge have sprung forth has often the name of a great Frenchman attached to it.' If we inquire why and how it is so, he will tell us that it is because 'in every domain, whether scientific or not, France has been the most revolutionary of nations.' But as has been rightly observed, revolution would have no meaning in a country of revolutionary unanimity; revolution in a French mind often means reaction, and always comes from an indefatigable curiosity, a happy audacity of questioning everything afresh, and making a clean sweep of all that is convention, artifice, or tradition. In no branch does this appear more clearly than in philosophy, as M. Bergson easily shows in his short and yet very comprehensive account. The *tabula rasa*, it is well known, is the very starting-point of Descartes, the father of modern European philosophy; but all the great initiators, at different periods, partake of the same spirit: Rousseau, Comte, Claude Bernard. Again, if such revolutionary tendencies do not, however, imply the dangers which they might involve, the French

thinkers owe it to the fact that they unite philosophy to concrete science; they want indeed to assure themselves that they do not indulge in a mere play of ideas. Another feature just as remarkable is the constant introspection which accompanies their researches and makes of them, not vaporous *abstracteurs de quintessence*, but great psychologists and moralists.

These characteristics of the genius of France become manifest in all branches of science; but another point will also detain the attention of the reader: he will see that in many branches, and especially in historical and linguistic sciences, the studious collection of facts, commonly attributed to modern Germany, was first practised in France during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: good workmen, more or less renowned, from Scaliger to Dom Mabillon and the Benedictines, had thus paved the way to modern researches. True, the heritage sometimes was abandoned by the French; others have seized on it. However, during the last century a revival in such studies took place; let it be our confident hope that everywhere the rank to which French genius has been shown to have a right will not be lost again, and the qualities of clearness, concreteness, and humanity, which this genius can impart to studies which otherwise may seem to some overdry or futile, will all turn to the benefit of the world.

L. C.

The Lascarids of Nicaea. By ALICE GARDNER. 1 vol. 8vo. Pp. 312.
London: Methuen and Co. 7s.6d.net.

MISS GARDNER has availed herself of all the new material that the labour of many scholars in the last generation has made accessible to write the history of the Lascarid dynasty. The introductory chapters tell concisely the familiar story of the diversion of the Fourth Crusade to the overthrow of the Empire at Constantinople. Then in 200 pages a clear way is found

through the half-century of intrigue, diplomacy, and war, during which the Lascarid family reigning at Nicaea maintained itself against the efforts of Turks, Latins, and rival Greeks. Every student will be grateful to Miss Gardner for the light she throws on these dark places of history. The concluding chapter describes the art and literature of the Nicene Empire and the importance of the work done by its statesmen and scholars in 'keeping alive the fire of Hellenic culture till the world in general was ripe to receive its genial and reviving influences.'

A. J. B. G.

Scrivener's Greek Testament. Cheaper Students' Edition. 2s. 6d. net.

THIS is a reprint of the fourth edition (1906) revised and corrected by Professor Eb. Nestle. Printed on thin paper and bound in limp cloth, it can be carried comfortably in the pocket.

Ancient Times: A History of the Early World. By J. H. BREASTED, Professor in the University of Chicago. 1 vol. 8vo. Pp. 742. Numerous maps and illustrations. Ginn and Co. 6s. 6d. net.

THIS text-book of ancient history, intended for use in secondary schools, differs in several ways from most of its kind. It covers the whole ground of ancient history from the dawn of civilisation to the fall of the Roman Empire, giving about 200 pages to the history of the peoples of the East, 260 to that of the Greeks, and 230 to that of the Romans; it deals less with political events and much more with social life, industry, commerce, religion, and culture; and it has an unusual wealth of pictorial illustration, each picture being accompanied by a valuable explanatory note.

Only experiment can show whether Professor Breasted has escaped the common error of attempting too much in so small a space, but the book is attractive and deserves to be tried by those who have found the present text-books unsatisfactory.

A. J. B. G.

The Civilisation of Babylonia and Assyria.

By MORRIS JASTROW, Professor in the University of Pennsylvania. 1 vol. Royal 8vo. Pp. 515. Map. 164 illustrations. Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1915. 25s. net.

THIS volume is intended to give 'the larger public' a general view of the civilisation of Babylonia and Assyria. The first two chapters tell the story of the excavations and of the deciphering of the cuneiform inscriptions. The third chapter narrates the history of the Oriental States from the beginning to their conquest by Cyrus. The remaining five chapters describe their religions, temples, lands, commerce, art, and literature.

Professor Jastrow has made a wise selection of material, and he writes interestingly from a fulness of knowledge. The numerous photographic reproductions and the translations from the tablets are a valuable addition to a useful book.

The price of the book will put it beyond the reach of many general readers, but schools and colleges would do well to place a copy in their libraries. It is difficult to imagine a more attractive introduction not only to the study of Oriental history, but also to the methods by which the nineteenth century recovered what had so long been buried and forgotten. A pocket edition of this book would be a welcome gift to many soldiers of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force.

A. J. B. G.

Flosculi Rossallenses. Pp. viii + 256. Cambridge: University Press. 7s. 6d. net.

THOUGH no doubt it is true enough that the refinements of Greek and Latin composition are for the few, and that the time which used to be devoted to it in past generations was largely wasted, the classical scholar who has had the training and has profited by it will heartily welcome this volume. It contains versions of all sorts; Latin and Greek prose and verse of every conceivable metre—all of a high level of merit.