
Review

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The Lake of Geneva.— Sir Frederick Treves, Bart., G.C.V.O., C.B., LL.D., Sergeant-Surgeon to his Majesty the King. *With a Map and 100 Illustrations from Photographs by the Author.* London: Cassell & Co. 1922. 25s. net.

This attractive volume contains relatively little for the geographer. In Sir F. Treves' pages and pictures landscape serves chiefly as a background to the human homes and interests it frames. He gives us here the fruits of an industrious holiday, spent partly in visiting and photographing the prim little towns or picturesque chateaux that cluster along the shores of Lake Leman, partly in picking up among the handbooks in the library of the Baths of Evian scraps of local story and legend. It would have been well had he been content to make full use of the material thus acquired. But his leisure, or his energy, has led him to attempt to link with it a topographic description of Geneva, and to dip into the numerous volumes dealing with the great names connected with the town for scattered anecdotes. These occupy a disproportionate space, yet neither is complete. In his walk through Geneva he passes by the finest house in the town, the De Saussure mansion in the Rue de la Cité, where Napoleon lodged in 1800, and the old buildings of the Collège, and he makes no mention of the Academy which attracted so many of our countrymen in the years before the French Revolution. The list of celebrities is sadly incomplete, and in that, oddly enough, on the medical and scientific side he omits the great doctor of the eighteenth century, Tronchin de Saussure and De Candolle. Nor have these personal sketches been united by any historical framework. The reader looks in vain for any outline of the story of Geneva. He will learn nothing here of its religious struggles and its political disorders, of its singular and precarious position as an outpost of republicanism, wedged between France and Savoy, and dependent for its existence on the support of three of the Swiss cantons. Sir Frederick tells, it is true, the story of the famous Escalade at some length, but it is as an unconnected episode.

It is not our business here to do more than point out the shortcomings indicated. This volume will interest and attract travellers mainly as a sumptuous guidebook. The charming collection of photographs will suggest objects for their excursions to visitors to Geneva or Evian; the romantic tales or legends the author recounts connected with the castles and shrines round the lake may help to pass their evenings; his vivid descriptions of the beautiful country on the Savoy shore will bring back pleasant memories of an unspoilt and homely region. Much of the volume is fragmentary, discursive, desultory, but it is never dull. It should help to draw attention to an aspect of alpine scenery that has of late years fallen into undeserved neglect, the sunny lowlands and foothills dotted with tiny towns that have lost little of their antique character and bucolic charm. How many of our countrymen have visited Gruyères, where the cheeses come from, a hill town surrounded by a battlemented wall "within which the houses are herded like white sheep in a pen," beneath a massive castle, the whole looking like a town in a story-book or in an Albert Dürer engraving?

D. W. F.

ASIA

Michael D. Volonakis: The Island of Rhodes and her Eleven Sisters. London: Macmillan & Co. 1922. Pp. xxv. + 438. 40s. net.

This is a rambling, unmethodical, unscientific, sometimes inaccurate, generally interesting and charming account of Rhodes and the other islands which make up the group commonly called the Dodecanese, taken from Turkey

by the Italians in 1912 and still (in spite of more than one treaty) occupied by them. The greater part of the book is taken up by a history of the islands—that is, practically, a history of Rhodes; and this is well done, except that hardly any attempt is made to describe the general conditions of the world of which Rhodes was a part at the different periods; so that such a period as, for example, that of the Byzantine Empire, when the islands had no independent history, is very inadequately done. This is a serious fault in a book which is obviously intended for non-specialists. Thus the author implies (pp. 97–8) that the islands were equal and willing allies of Athens in the Delian Confederacy; and no explanation is given why Rhodes opposed Philip of Macedon and, with equal patriotism, supported Alexander; nor of the presence of the Rhodian admiral Memnon in the Persian fleet which opposed the latter. The best chapter of the book is perhaps that on the Knights of St. John, where a detailed account is given of the two principal sieges of Rhodes by the Turks; though here again, what we should most have liked to see, an account of the relations of the Knights with the islanders, what each party thought of the other, is absent. The chapter on the prehistoric period might almost have been written by Diodorus (a writer M. Volonakis is fond of quoting).

Equally unscientific, and, it must in fairness be said, without any pretensions to scientific value, are the chapters on geography, geological formation, climate, and flora and fauna, etc. The following quotation from the chapter on climate is a not untypical specimen of much in the book:

“Hippocrates, the father of medicine and an illustrious son of the Dodecanese, said that the cities that faced towards the east were the most favoured climatically. This statement is fully borne out in the Dodecanese, where the climate is not only delightful, but is generally recognized as being the finest in the whole Mediterranean.

“But, of the twelve islands, Rhodes and Cos have been the two most frequently selected for praise, and chosen as places for residence by persons well known in history.

“Thus the Prince of Physicians, Asclepius, whom Pluto accused of having reduced the population of Hades by his medical skill (Diodorus, iv. 71, 2), advised his sons and their descendants to pass their summers in Cos, an advice apparently also followed by prominent Alexandrians, as we find their names, as well as that of the ruling family of Ptolemies, amongst the visitors to the islands.”

In the chapter on literature we read:

“There are many other pursuits and studies, such as astronomy, agriculture, cooking, grammar, etc., to which the Dodecanese made contributions, but unfortunately in the course of time the names of most of the authors, as also their writings, have been lost to us.”

When Antigonos tried to force the Rhodians into alliance with him against Egypt, he sent an ultimatum forbidding further commerce with that country, and committed an act of war by seizing ships already on their way. In striving to remain at peace, “the people of Rhodes exceeded the limits of normal diplomacy; they voted to Antigonos and Demetrius decrees of honour, raising up statues to immortalize the kings and appease their wrath.”

It will be clear where the charm of this book lies—in its pleasant bias, in the obvious sincerity and simple mindedness of its author, his evident attachment to these islands, which have preserved their Hellenism more pure perhaps than has any other part of Greece, and where, thanks to their privileged position under the Turks, ancient political institutions, such as yearly elected magistrates

and assemblies of the whole body of citizens, and ancient seafaring habits, can—in spite of the Italians—still be observed. At the same time it must be emphasized that the book embodies a great deal of useful and not easily accessible information; it is also excellently illustrated. There is a remarkable drawing of “the famous Colossus of Rhodes,” in cloth and all, bestriding the harbour.

A. W. G.

On Secret Patrol in High Asia.— **Captain L. V. S. Blacker.** London: John Murray. 1922. Pp. xiv. and 302. *Maps and Illustrations.* 18s. net.

To those who like reading a thrilling account of a journey across unknown parts of High Asia, Captain Blacker's book will appeal with great force. He was in distant Chinese Turkestan when news was received of an enemy party that was travelling into Chinese Turkestan. It was believed to include Germans, and in any case was bent on mischief. A tiny force of that famous body, the Guides, together with some local Hunza levies, took up the pursuit. Was ever any chase so difficult? That is hard to say, but Blacker and his men risked starvation and also the equally deadly cold, in addition to any ambush that the enemy might well have laid for them. The chase started in Sarikol, the lower valley of the Tagdumbash Pamir, and lay approximately eastwards across the precipices of the Raskam country that serves as a bone of contention between the Chinese and the Kanjutis of Hunza who cultivate patches of land in this almost inaccessible country. It was wonderful how the pursuers chanced to find supplies time and again, when they were feeling very hungry indeed, and the thrill of running down their quarry at a serai in Yarkand, where they burst in upon the Afghans and captured them all, was an experience hardly to be surpassed, for man is first and foremost a hunter. The Guides have certainly gained fresh laurels by the feat that is here described.

From Chinese Turkestan to Russian Turkestan is a long step when the journey has to be made *viâ* Gilgit and Baluchistan, but the same gallant little band re-appears at Meshed and then at Merv. Actually, thanks to their activities, considerable additions were made to our knowledge of Northern Khurasan in the shape of many thousand square miles of survey, and we also learn something of the splendid deeds of the little British force that fought so gallantly to keep the Bolsheviks from joining hands with the Turks and their German masters. The book conveys the lesson that Indian troops will do everything that any troops in the world can do under officers whom they know. We also realize once more how much Indian surveyors have increased our knowledge of the unknown lands which surround the great Indian Empire. The book is well provided with maps, and the illustrations are good.

P. M. SYKES.

An Administrator in the Making.— **James Saumarez Mann, 1893-1920.** Edited by his Father. London: Longmans. 1921. Pp. 330. *Map and Illustrations.* 15s. net.

This volume consists almost entirely of Captain Mann's own letters written during and after the war, from training camps in England, from France, and from Mesopotamia, where he was killed by a sniper's bullet at the beginning of the siege of Kufa, during the Arab rising of 1920. He went to Mesopotamia in July 1919 as editor of the *Baghdad Times*, but instead of taking up that post he became an assistant political officer at Umm al Ba'rur, near Najaf, the Shia Holy City, and the greater part of the letters are written from that place. Mann acquired an influence over the Arabs of his district which, considering his youth and short experience of the country, was remarkable. His energy,