tīṣu tēma
ṣupramma
ana bēl ṣē-BAR
tēmi ana bēl
 (ṣē-BAR erased)
lutér

it be, the report
 send then
 to the lord (possessor) of the barley
 that my report to the lord
 ("of the barley" erased)
 I may despatch.

Free rendering :—"Thus saith thy father : Give attention—let not thy face be turned aside—and send the report, if it be ready, to the owner of the barley, that I may despatch my (own) report to the lord" (for "my lord", i.e. the king, the scribe having erased the word for "barley", but forgotten to alter the construct case *bēl* into the prepositional case *bēli*).

Dr. Radau has presented us with a most interesting picture of Babylonian life at a little-known period, and again made Assyriologists his debtor. He fully comes up to the promise shown in his *Early Babylonian History*, published eight years ago, and much excellent work may be expected from his pen. The editor, Professor Hilprecht, has collected around him a little band of really competent men.

T. G. PINCHES.

TWENTIETH CENTURY IMPRESSIONS OF BRITISH MALAYA : ITS HISTORY, PEOPLE, COMMERCE, INDUSTRIES, AND RESOURCES. Editor in Chief, ARNOLD WRIGHT (London); Assistant Editor, H. A. CARTWRIGHT (Singapore). London, etc.: Lloyd's Greater Britain Publishing Company, Ltd., 1908.

To say that this work exemplifies most precisely the old Greek proverb about books that are big, might savour of unkindly criticism ; but the volume runs to 960 pages quarto and turns the scale at 10 lb. avoirdupois ; and really it would have lost nothing in value by being reduced to half its unwieldy bulk. It is of a highly composite order of architecture, a work of many hands, and of many

varying degrees of quality. In fact, like the curate's egg at the bishop's breakfast table, it may be fairly summed up as being "good in parts".

The preface essays to disarm criticism by frank confession. The fact is that the greater part of the work, some 60 per cent. of the whole, consists (if I may briefly so describe it) of a glorified and sumptuously illustrated Who's Who and Business Directory of British Malaya (a convenient though unofficial term, covering the Straits Settlements and the part of the Malay Peninsula which is under British protection). The publishers suggest that this mode of book-making was inevitable on financial grounds, as the cost of production had to be met "in part by revenue from the insertion of commercial photographs". They add that this principle is adopted by the highest class of newspapers and magazines all over the world. Of course these things are largely a matter of taste, and therefore difficult to discuss satisfactorily, but I cannot help pointing out that in the better class of newspapers and magazines (to say nothing of books) a pretty clear line is drawn between advertisements and other matter; the former have their separate corners to which they are relegated. In the work now before me they are all over the place; it is simply interlarded with them; and they are not put in advertisement form, to be skipped by the experienced reader, but in the shape of descriptive puffs and personalia of a peculiarly irritating type. So far as the latter items are concerned, one must, I suppose, assume that they suit the taste of the local worthies, who are variously described therein as "an up-to-date young man", "an ardent motorist and, socially . . . a charming man to meet", "the head of an old . . . shire family", and the like. The number of "keen", "prominent", and "all-round" sportsmen described (and in some cases portrayed) in this work must seem phenomenal to anyone who does not happen to know that for a considerable

number of years (but now, alas ! no more) the civil service of some of the Protected Native States of the Peninsula was recruited in the main with an eye to the cricketering averages and other sporting antecedents of the candidates for admission. One civil servant is stated to have "taken the greatest interest in the development of the districts in which he has been posted", and as if this were something quite extraordinary and exceptional the proposition is supported by the following convincing piece of evidence : "for instance, he was one of those chiefly instrumental in designing and laying out the public gardens in" a certain locality which needs no gratuitous advertisement here. Whether this gentleman did or did not write or subedit this entry, I have no means of knowing : in any event he may feel assured of the sympathy of every reader possessed of a sense of humour.

As a sample of the more definitely commercial items in this very mixed farrago, I may instance the description (adorned with three illustrations) of a chemist's shop, prefaced by the startlingly original dictum that "it is of particular importance in a tropical climate that there should be opportunities for purchasing medicines and drugs of the highest quality"; while an entry relating to a firm of auctioneers begins, very appropriately, "'Going, going, gone !' cries the auctioneer as his hammer falls," and so forth. I am pleased to see that my old Chinese tailor and grocer have each secured a comfortable niche in this British Malayan Valhalla, and sincerely hope that they did not pay an exorbitant price for the privilege. If anyone wants to see pictures of some hundreds of shops, offices, godowns, factories, plantations, private houses, and so on, both interiors and exteriors, with vignettes, cartes de visite, and groups, as the case may be, of their respective owners, their wives and families, managers, assistants, and staff, European, Chinese, and others, he will find in this work precisely what he

requires. Other people may possibly consider this kind of thing, when it is spread over several hundred pages, a trifle monotonous and commonplace. But that is a matter of individual preference, which it would be hopeless to expect to see reduced to any general rule, so I refrain from obtruding my own views.

One unfortunate consequence of the composite character of the book is that in a number of cases the same subject is treated twice over. Thus the information contained in p. 198 seq. more or less overlaps that of p. 213 seq.; Malacca lace is twice described, once on p. 239 (where we are told that it was introduced by the Portuguese some two (*sic*) centuries ago), and again on p. 838 (where it is stated to be unknown whether the art was introduced by the Portuguese or Dutch or was indigenous); Malacca baskets are discussed on pp. 235–6 and p. 838; Malay tin toys on p. 241 and p. 874; while municipalities and local government are handled in a more or less fragmentary way on pp. 39, 211, 605 seq., 738 seq., and 840 seq. On p. 750 and p. 796 respectively appear two biographies of the late Dr. N. B. Dennys, expressed in almost identical terms and evidently both based on the same draft. We are told that every article in the book has been either contributed by an expert on the particular subject “or written up by a trained journalist from carefully sifted information”. It is sometimes rather difficult to make out where the expert leaves off and the journalist begins; but so far as accuracy is concerned, neither set of contributors appears to be impeccable. Even the personal paragraphs do not seem to have been very carefully sub-edited; e.g., we are told that a certain official “has seen close upon thirty years’ service”, and in the next sentence that he came out in 1889 (which latter statement, I happen to know, is correct); while a personal entry on p. 855 contains a hopeless jumble of mutually inconsistent dates.

There are plenty of inaccuracies in other parts of the work. For instance, on p. 597 "the old Dutch fort" at Pinang is referred to: need I observe that the Dutch never set foot in Pinang, let alone had a fort there? On p. 198 we are told that the Asiatics in British Malaya, other than Chinese and Malays, "can scarcely be said . . . to have any social life at all," being mere "hewers of wood and drawers of water". Indeed! What about the wealthy Armenians, Parsees, Arabs, and Bombay Muhammadans settled in the Straits Settlements? On p. 202 we are informed that there is "little material difference in the style of dress worn" by Straits-born and China-born Chinese women respectively. One has, however, only to look through the illustrations in the book in order to see that the Straits-born Chinese woman usually wears a dress based on Malay models, including the sarong and kabaya, and differing entirely from the coat and trousers of the genuine Chinese female costume. This latter is commonly worn in the Straits Settlements by China-born women, though a few of them sometimes fall into line with the local custom and adopt the other. On p. 587 there is some nonsense about the supposed significance of the names "Pulo Brani" and "Blakang Mati", in relation to the fact that these two places are fortified. As a matter of fact the names existed long before the fortifications were dreamt of; and the explanations given of them, though superficially plausible, are certainly quite wrong. (The right ones will be found in *Journ. Straits Branch RAS.*, No. 20, p. 78.) On p. 847 incidental mention is made of "Mr. (now Sir William) Maxwell": this distinguished Malay scholar and able administrator died some ten years ago while Governor of the Gold Coast Colony. On p. 282 there is a reference to "the late Sir Cecil C. Smith, G.C.M.G.", who is, happily, still amongst the living.

The book begins with two historical articles, the first

dealing with the colony of the Straits Settlements and the second with the native states of the Peninsula. This division has the disadvantage that it involves a good deal of repetition, especially as the first article is not treated chronologically, but takes Singapore (the youngest, but now the most important of the three settlements) first, then Pinang, and lastly Malacca. Thus we get two accounts of the Java expedition (1811), in one of which (p. 18) it is stated that ninety transport ships were used to convey the troops, while the other (p. 57) puts the number at over a hundred. We have two statements about the question of the Perak succession (1871-4), one written apparently by the editor and wrong (p. 98), and the other giving the correct pedigree of the claimants (p. 113), though here by some oversight the name of the then reigning chief is omitted. This last account occurs in the work of Mr. Wilkinson, who is responsible for a considerable section of the article on the history of the Malay States. This section is really the work of an expert, and (though one may differ from it on a few points of detail) it is, like his too much abridged article on Malay Literature, a scholarly production and a real advance on previous writings on the subject. Mr. Wilkinson adopts (pp. 81-2 and 230) the rectified chronology of Malay mediæval history, which puts the destruction of the old Singapore by the Javanese somewhere about the year 1377 A.D. and the foundation of Malacca a short time afterwards. The editor, however, in his account on p. 27 and other writers on pp. 219 and 599 respectively revive the old myth about the founding of Singapore in 1160 A.D. (though the editor meets modern research half-way by giving 1377 A.D. as the date of its fall!), but he himself on p. 65 and another contributor on p. 219 revert to the old exploded date 1252 A.D. for the fall of Singapore and the foundation of Malacca. It does not, perhaps, matter very much in a book of this sort

which chronology is adopted, but it would have been better to stick to one theory throughout.

To speak frankly, though his historical account of the early days of the colony is evidently based on considerable research and makes very interesting reading, the editor, albeit "a trained journalist", does not strike one as an exact or scholarly writer. He speaks of the population of Junk Ceylon as being Malay (p. 49), whereas it is Siamese and Chinese; quotes Sir Stamford Raffles as using (for Malay?) the words *tani mati* (p. 19), which (though Raffles was not the consummate Malay scholar some of his latter-day worshippers seem to imagine) I cannot persuade myself that he used; writes Beng Kanlu (p. 17) for Běngka Ulu (i.e. Bencoolen); speaks of the Sungei River (p. 98), which is sheer nonsense, as *sungai* merely means "river" (perhaps it is a blunder for the Linggi River); of Lingore (p. 58) for Ligore (i.e. Ligor, or Lěgor); of Binnas (p. 77) for Binuas (i.e. Orang Běnua); of moose deer (p. 66) for mouse deer; of Raffles as "Colonial Secretary" (p. 56) of Pinang, when it was an Indian Presidency town; of Sir Edmond Stanley, K.T. (p. 53), though the good man was not a Scotch nobleman, but the first Recorder of Pinang and a simple Knight bachelor. He refers (p. 39) to the question of establishing telegraphs in Singapore (in 1827-9) as if it had related to electric telegraphy. He says that the Sějarah Mělayu (the well-known Malay historical work) was produced at Goa (p. 27), whereas the Sějarah Mělayu itself says that it was undertaken by way of counterblast to a book hailing from that place. On p. 60 he speaks of an arrangement made with the Raja of Sělangor, under which "a considerable amount of tin was brought down to the coast by way of the Muda river". But that river is more than 100 miles away from the nearest part of Sělangor, and was never under that Raja's jurisdiction. On p. 43 he informs us that by a contract made between the P. & O. Company and the

Government in 1845 "the company contracted to convey the mails from Ceylon to Pinang in forty-five hours, and from thence to Singapore in forty-eight hours"! What this means I do not profess to know; but as the journey from Colombo to Pinang by modern steamers takes about four days, there is plainly some mistake here. In several places (e.g. p. 114) the editor has changed Mr. Wilkinson's mention of Lingga (which, as the name of an island that was the residence of the Johor Sultans, is right) to Linggi (the name of a river on the Malacca border, which in this context is wrong). A little knowledge is proverbially dangerous. I leave a number of other slips unnoticed; the above are merely representative specimens.

Needless to say, the historian-editor (loyally backed up therein by most of the contributors) echoes the oft-repeated self-glorification of the work of British development in British Malaya. Enjoying a unique position on the great ocean trade-routes, possessing the richest tin formation in the world, and having ready access to an abundant supply of Chinese cheap labour, these dependencies have indeed made wonderfully rapid material progress, but the continual blowing of the local trumpet becomes wearisome in the end. All the grasshoppers are eagles and all the worms have become dragons, as the Malay saying is. The editor has also fallen in with the local fashion of abusing the Indian Government and its servants. For instance (p. 36), he speaks, with what I can only style gratuitous impertinence, of "the characteristic hatred of the Anglo-Indian official of a free press". The East India Company certainly made some grievous mistakes in its management of these settlements in former days; and its policy was not always as straightforward as could have been desired. But when all is said, the fact remains (and is mentioned repeatedly in this book) that the Company nursed and fostered these settlements at great expense to itself during the period of their precarious infancy; and a little political

gratitude on their part would not be amiss. But that is a somewhat rare kind of tribute from the present to the past.

What, however, particularly calls for criticism is the unhistorical attitude of the historian-editor in condemning root and branch everyone who ventured to differ from the great Raffles' policy in founding Singapore. One should judge people by the circumstances of their own times, not by subsequent events; and the truth is that the founding of Singapore, however much it has contributed to the wealth of nations and the progress of mankind, was in itself a piece of decidedly sharp practice. There is no other word for it: here are the facts. Raffles had obtained from the Governor General (probably after much pleading) a special commission to look out for a trading station to the south-east of Malacca, in view of the latter place having to be retroceded to the Dutch. The Governor General, very properly, had expressly laid it down as a condition that nothing should be done which might involve a dispute with the Netherlands authorities (p. 25). In spite of this proviso Raffles landed at Singapore, an island forming part of the old Johor kingdom, and made arrangements for the establishment of a British settlement there. Now before the great war the Dutch had had treaty relations with the Johor kingdom, which had been under their protection for a considerable period, and of course they had renewed these relations after the general clearing-up consequent on the Treaty of Vienna had restored to them, broadly speaking, the *status quo ante bellum* in the Eastern Archipelago. Naturally, therefore, they at once protested against the cession and claimed the Johor kingdom as a vassal state under the overlordship of the Netherlands. Thus Raffles' action raised the very question which he had been told that "it would not be consistent with the policy and views of the Governor General in Council to raise".

So much for Raffles' compliance with the instructions

under which he professed to be acting. But there was a further complication behind. In the preceding year (1818) the East India Company, by the agency of Major Farquhar (at that time Resident of Malacca), had made a regular signed and sealed treaty with the reigning Sultan of the Johor kingdom, one Těngku 'Abdurrahmān. This chief was, however, a friend of the Dutch, as Raffles well knew (p. 26), and as he was aware that it was hopeless to try to get him to cede Singapore to the Company, Raffles determined upon the ingenious scheme of manufacturing a puppet king who would be more compliant. So he sent for 'Abdurrahmān's brother Těngku Husain and proclaimed him Sultan, in order that he might join with the Těmėnggong (the local subordinate chief residing at Singapore) in "making a title", as the lawyers would express it, for the required cession! It is true that Husain was the elder brother, but he was in fact a private person, a mere "man of straw", whereas 'Abdurrahmān had been installed some years previously as the reigning Sultan. The Company, having acknowledged him as such by its own treaty with him, was obviously estopped from denying his title, even if it had had any sort of jurisdiction to interfere with the Johor succession at all (which was not the case). One can imagine what a pretty story this made when it was discussed by the authorities in Calcutta and London, to say nothing of the Hague. Yet our historian-editor can see no excuse for Raffles' opponents and critics, but "prejudice and stupidity" (p. 26), "petty spite" (p. 28), and ignorance (p. 31); and because the Pinang officials, probably foreseeing that Singapore in British hands would cut out the older settlement and injure the Pinang merchants, had the courage to protest against these proceedings, he styles them "narrow-minded bureaucrats" (p. 28).

It is plain that on the ordinary principles of international law Raffles' conduct cannot be justified. Nor

would that great man, I imagine, have troubled thus to justify it to himself. The mainspring of his actions was hatred of the Dutch rule in the East; any stick was good enough to beat that dog with; and considering the circumstances of the time, it must in fairness be said that there was much excuse for his point of view. But that is no reason why we should not have the history of these events written fairly and without prejudice in this twentieth century of ours.

Special mention must be made of a very interesting and beautifully illustrated article by Mr. L. Wray on Native Arts and Handicrafts, and a very sympathetic notice of the Malays of British Malaya by Mr. B. O. Stoney. The latter article, however, is disfigured by some amazing nonsense at the beginning (p. 222), such as the idle speculation (reproduced from Sir Frank Swettenham's "British Malaya") that the Malays are "the descendants of people who crossed from the South of India to Sumatra" (which is somewhat as if one were to suggest that the English people came over from Rome with St. Augustine), that they settled in the Peninsula "about a thousand years ago" (far too early a date, though Mr. Wilkinson's "A.D. 1400" (p. 78) is certainly too late), and that Java and Celebes "fell an easy prey" to the Malay colonists. Of course, this last is a case of the usual muddling-up of Malays with Indonesians generally: neither Java nor Celebes ever fell a prey to the Malays; indeed, it was rather the other way about. Elsewhere (p. 225), Mr. Stoney speaks, somewhat quaintly, of a Muhammadan elder "christening" a Malay infant! Still, his paper, taken as a whole, is well written, and indicates that he knows and appreciates the Malay people.

In this respect it is a pleasing contrast to many other parts of the work. For instance, Mrs. R. Sanderson, who contributes an article on the Population of Malaya, talks (p. 217) of Malay wives being "entirely subservient"

and of "little brides of [*sic*] eleven years old", whereas everyone who has any knowledge of Malay life is aware that marriage among that people hardly ever takes place until well after the age of puberty, and that the wife enjoys a position of very considerable independence and influence in the household. The same writer talks vaguely of the religion of the Malays being "mingled with ancient Dyak superstitions", which is about as accurate as if one were to say that the religion of the Irish peasant is mingled with old Slavonic superstitions. Further on she implies that according to Malay ideas women "have no souls and therefore no future existence", being unaware, apparently, that on every Friday in every mosque prayers are appointed to be said for all Muslim men and women, departed as well as living. That is a detail which this obviously superficial writer may perhaps be excused for being ignorant of; but when she writes (p. 215) that the Malay "has no kind of garden, seldom even a cleared space, except a plot for drying clothes", and that he "is content with a paddy-field for his rice and a few pisang-trees", one can only wonder where she gathered her information. Remembering, as I do, the fine orchards of the Malay peasantry in the villages around Malacca, with their wealth of durians, rambutans, mangosteens, dukus, and many other kinds of fruit-trees, to say nothing of the inevitable cocoanut, areca, and kabong palms, I can only infer that this lady has never visited a typical Malay village with her eyes open. Her article, however, teems with all sorts of slipshod and uncritical statements. For instance, speaking presumably of the Malay Peninsula, she tells us (p. 217) that "Arab merchants, if we can believe their ancient records, were the first discoverers of these shores. Accounts by the early explorers are preserved inscribed in Sanskrit". As if the early Arab traders wrote Sanskrit! Needless to say, the earliest inscriptions extant are Indian (one

of them is figured on p. 78), and the Arabs did not arrive till some centuries later. Again, we are told (p. 218) of the "Battas" (i.e. Bataks) that "their women have several husbands", a statement for which (if it implies polyandry) I can discover no foundation. Regarding the Sakais, an uncivilized race of the Peninsula, we are informed (p. 217) that "they have no religion, but have an instinctive worship of Nature and the Unknown Creator", neither of which mutually inconsistent propositions is correct. On p. 213 this lady assures us that in British Malaya public notices are often put up "in Chinese, Arabic, and Tamil", because "the Arabic characters are familiar [*sic*] to numerous differing languages and dialects". It is scarcely necessary to remark that in actual fact the Arabic language is never used in British Malaya for purposes of public notification; and that the notices that do appear in the Arabic character are drawn up in that script, simply because they are in the Malay language, which has been commonly written in that script for the last five centuries or so. There is no valid reason why even a "popular" book should not be accurate in regard to such simple matters of fact.

The article on the Press is written by an expert who is himself a journalist. The consequence is that while he gives us a very readable account of the various English newspapers that now exist or have flourished in the past, both in the colony and the native states, as well as a good deal of pleasant personal gossip about their proprietors, editors, etc., he does not say a word about the more permanent productions of the local printing-presses. For instance, Logan's valuable *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, which did so much in the middle of the last century to arouse scientific interest in this part of the world, is passed over in silence, and so is the *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, which for the last thirty years has worthily filled its place. As for the local

newspapers appearing in Oriental languages, we are told (p. 253) that "they seldom discuss matters of public interest", which I take to be an inverted way of saying that their contents do not interest the average European. In point of fact, some of the Malay newspapers frequently contain matter well worth reading (I cannot say whether this also applies to the Chinese and Tamil ones), and it is rather curious that there should be no mention in this article of the strongly Pan-Islamic tone which in recent years has (unfortunately) begun to make itself felt in Malay journalism. Its influence amongst the Muhammadan population of the Peninsula is considerable and increasing; it should be watched, rather than passed over in contemptuous indifference or ignorance.

The legal expert (or is it a journalist again?), though his article on Constitution and Law is a useful summary, fails to perceive (or at any rate to point out) the fundamental difference between the system of law of the Straits Settlements (which is based on English law and equity) and the legal system which prevailed in the Mofussil in India and was based on native law and custom. Unaware, apparently, that the latter principle had been applied for generations by the Dutch in their insular possessions (and also, though somewhat crudely no doubt, by the British in Pinang before it was raised to the rank of an Indian Presidency town), he makes a foolish gibe (p. 121) about "a free application of the Mosaic law" being in those early days "considered adequate to meet such cases as came up for adjudication". As if the only two legal systems in the world were English law and the Mosaic code! Most unfortunately for the development of a suitable system of law applicable to local conditions, such an attitude has been only too common amongst the legislators and judges of the Straits Settlements; but one does not often see it expressed with such unconscious simplicity. The section on Religion affords an apt parallel.

Here we have a lot of interesting particulars about the local activities of the Church of England, the Church of Rome, the American Methodist Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church, the Bible Society, and the Young Men's and Young Women's Christian Associations. A few columns on Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism (in which the somewhat arid and uninspiring system of Confucius is exalted at the expense of the other two) are cast into a sort of appendix. Would anyone suppose that the religion of the vast majority of the natives of the country is Muhammadanism? It is not so much as mentioned in the whole article (though two illustrations of mosques are appended).

In dealing with a huge, monumental work like this, one is perforce reduced to the necessity of merely taking samples; considerations of space and time make it impossible to go thoroughly into every section and weigh each sentence in the balance. There are a number of other articles besides those already mentioned: descriptions of various localities, their public buildings, clubs, institutions, etc., articles on such more or less official subjects as finance, harbours, police, education, railways, public works, military forces, and the like, and others on such matters as forests, botany, agriculture, rubber (to which last over 150 pages are devoted), mining, geology, fauna, sport: in short *de omnibus rebus et quibusdam aliis*. I cannot claim to have read through them all, but must in fairness say that I have found in them much readable and informing matter. The book is very strong on the commercial and industrial side of the topics which it discusses. In this respect it faithfully represents the most prominent aspect of life in that part of the world, where dollars, tin, and, of late, rubber are practically the life's blood of the community, or at least of its pushful and "progressive" sections. The Malays, the true natives of the country, live their quiet lives apart from all this

turmoil in little backwaters of their own. To them this work hardly does justice, though they are, after all, the permanent native background, whereas the alien elements, European, Chinese, and Indian, etc., are a set of kaleidoscopic, ever-changing, and more or less transitory figures. There is another type of existence in British Malaya besides the struggle for wealth which is so well illustrated in this up-to-date record; and those who have been in touch with it consider it by far the more interesting of the two. But that, again, is a matter of individual preference which cannot well be discussed here.

I have said something about the subjects of some of the illustrations in this book, but I must add that I have never seen a work so lavishly illustrated. The illustrations, some thousands in number, are almost all from photographs, and their technical excellence deserves the highest praise. Many of them are quite beautiful, both as regards subjects and execution, and nearly all give a lifelike idea of what they profess to represent. It may be worth while to draw the attention of specialists to a hitherto undeciphered inscription, apparently in an Indian script, figured (on rather too small a scale) on p. 79. It is to be regretted that the index is, for a book of reference of this size, quite inadequate. The map of the Malay Peninsula facing the title-page is, to speak frankly, a very poor thing of its kind. The work is admirably printed (though in rather small type) on heavily glazed paper, with much gilding and other adornments. It is a pity that it is not, as a whole, a really scholarly production.

C. O. BLAGDEN.