Review: Surveying

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GENERAL.

SURVEYING.

'Topographie Pratique de Reconnaissance et d'Exploration.' By E. de Larminat.
2nd edit. Paris: Henri Charles-Lavauzelle, 10, Rue Danton, Boulevard
Saint Germain 118.

In this book M. de Larminat attempts the difficult task of supplying technical information in popular form. The publication of a second edition shows that his efforts have been appreciated. His preface dedicates his book to officers of the French army serving in the colonies; and he appeals to them to fill in their spare time by taking up sketching as a profitable and fascinating pursuit. Away with the notion, says he, that topography is solely a matter for experts. Every officer is equipped with sufficient elementary knowledge of the subject to be able to do most useful work, if given some practical hints—and here they are. Radiating encouragement by his own evident enthusiasm for the work, and banishing dulness by a charming style, M. de Larminat lures his disciples on to the heavier matters of understanding by a preliminary discourse on the correspondences between geological structure and topographical form. Then follow chapters dealing with compass sketching, triangulation, and field astronomy.

Generally speaking, the methods adopted are similar to those given in English and American text-books, with special reference to the patterns of French instruments. Calculation is as far as possible reduced to a minimum by the use of graphic method diagrams. Of the instruments dealt with, the compass and theodolite do not appear to be such good patterns as ours, nor is the plane-table given, perhaps, the attention it merits. The use of inaccurate instruments obliges the author to deal at length with methods of adjusting closing errors; and a fair criticism may be made that the labour so involved would be better devoted to obtaining more accurate work in the first instance. It must, however, be allowed that beginners are less likely to take up a study as a recreation which at first sight appears laborious; whereas, once committed to it, the interest excited will carry them through equal labours later on.

There is much of interest in this book; but on the whole, English officers and travellers with opportunities for topographical work before them, are already adequately equipped with handbooks in the present military text-books on the subject and the 'Hints to Travellers.'

Perhaps, however, there is an opening for a popular exposition of those same methods written with a view to attract recruits, a book where the asperities of scientific language are softened by a chatty style, and a pervading sympathy with a beginner's difficulties. To wield at once the wands of science and literary art is a *tour de force*; and those who aspire to do this cannot do better than study this work by M. de Larminat.

E. P. B.

A NEW TEXT-BOOK.

'The Oxford Geographies.' Vol. iii., Senior. By A. J. and F. D. Herbertson.
Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1907. Pp. viii. + 363. *With maps and diagrams.*
Price 2s. 6d.

As the first two volumes of this capital series were reviewed at some length in the May issue of the *Journal*, a brief notice of the third and last book will suffice to indicate its position in the triple scheme. The first book was mainly descriptive, the second more definitely causal in its treatment of the different regions of the globe; this combines both systems, with a very strong emphasis on the second. The idea is to carry school geography up to a point at which university work may