Review

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bold enough to point out an exception, every one suddenly realizes that he knows of exceptions too, with the possible result that the theory is discredited as hastily and uncritically as it had been accepted. Something like this stage may be approaching in the case of the rift-valley theory, and Prof. Gregory has therefore very wisely brought together in this book a great mass of detailed evidence, both from his own observations and from the voluminous literature of the subject, on the existence and nature of the African rift-valleys. He has produced an immense number of facts that are at least consistent with the rift-valley theory; but it may be doubted if its opponents will be convinced. There is one crucial test—the finding under the valley floor of some formation, say, the Duruma sandstone, which unquestionably antedates the valley itself, and is either known to occur high up on the riven plateau, or is of later date than rocks in that position. No such formation has been found: the rift-valleys are floored either by lake deposits, obviously younger than the valley itself, or by lavas which might have been poured out over plateau and valley alike. Some of Prof. Gregory's geological sections (Figs. 20 and 21, for instance) look absolutely conclusive, until we ask how far they represent ascertained fact, and how far inference with the rift-valley theory as major premiss. Then we realize that, for instance, the four successive lavas below the alluvium of Lake Magadi have not been proved by a boring.

After making full allowance for all these matters of doubt, we must say that the rift-valley theory does appear to explain the physiography of East Africa better than any other, though it need not necessarily apply to all the features which are referred to it. Because Tanganyika is best explained as a rift-valley, we need not conclude that the Red Sea must be another.

Apart from the discussion of the main theory, this work contains much valuable information on East Africa, partly new and partly brought together for the first time from widely scattered sources. The author now considers that the tectonic and volcanic history of the rift-valleys goes back much farther in time than he originally thought, and makes out a good, though not conclusive, case for the oldest (Kapitian) lavas being contemporaneous with the Deccan "traps." He does not, however, offer any explanation of the fact that the African lavas are of the alkali or "Atlantic" type, while the Indian lavas are of the sub-alkali or "Pacific" type.

Interesting information is given on prehistoric remains and various matters of practical interest such as mineral resources and water-supply. The story of the edible cave-earth which is scented from afar by donkeys that have never tasted it before, reads like an Arabian Nights version of a salt-lick, and though the soda-value of this earth is verified by chemical analysis, the scenting of sodium silicate is a marvel unexplained.

Altogether the book forms an indispensable addition to the literature of East Africa.

A. M. D.

AMERICA

Californian Trails: The Story of the Californian Missions.— Trowbridge Hall. New York: Macmillan & Co. 1920. 26s. *net*.

We have here an interesting account of the inception and subsequent development of the early Spanish Mission to the "Pacific Slope." No pretence is made to any original research, for the result of which the writer very properly refers his readers to the more elaborate works of Bancroft, Hittell, and Engelhardt. Mr. Hall simply chronicles in a pleasant way the result of an extended motor trip among what still remains of the older mission churches

and monastic establishments north of the Mexican frontier, of which he visited in all over thirty.

The province gradually occupied by these pioneers was that comparatively narrow strip of country between the Californian mountains and the sea. It was of alluvial origin, very fertile, not intersected by any large rivers, and of ready access from the sea, conditions which much facilitated at a later date the construction of one main central and northern road. This enabled the mission stations as they were gradually built to be easily connected together. California was not always the land of gardens and grain-growing it is now. It was undoubtedly the rude efforts of these missionary priests that first opened up its native wealth, and, when the gold rush of 1849 came, afforded to the miners the means both of support and inter-communication. The author has some good notices of the scenery he travelled through, and says much of the beauty of the road between the mission house of San Buena Ventura and Santa Barbara. It is no doubt in part to the purity of the atmosphere that we owe the excellence of the photographs with which the itinerary is illustrated. They give an excellent notion of the architecture of these old churches and stations, with their large patios, towers, and belfries, their ancient orange and olive trees. In the inner life of these patient and earnest men there is much that we cannot but contemplate with respectful admiration.

A. L. F.

POLAR REGIONS

The Great White South.— H. G. Ponting. London: Duckworth & Co. 1921. *Illustrations and Sketch-map.* 30s.

Mr. Ponting's book deals with the main events of Captain Scott's last expedition; it contains no fresh matter, however, and as the author does not appear to have ventured more than a few miles from the hut at Cape Evans, sledging experiences are notably absent. The illustrations, most of which have already appeared in 'Scott's Last Expedition,' are excellent, and set a very high standard for future camera work in the Antarctic. Mr. Ponting, indeed, would have done more towards sealing his reputation as an artist had he suppressed the letterpress entirely and supplied us instead with a portfolio of his photographic work, suitably reproduced.

GENERAL

Geography, Physical, Economic, Regional.— J. F. Chamberlain. Pp. xviii., 512. London: J. B. Lippincott Co. 1921. *Illustrations and Maps.* 15s. net.

Although this volume is one of Lippincott's School text series, we gather from the preface that it is intended also to interest the general reader. It is essentially a study of economic geography in its widest sense, and although the author claims that physical geography is presented as a necessary foundation the physical basis is very slight, especially in regard to land forms and weathering agencies. Thus the physical treatment of rivers covers barely six pages, and that of mountains considerably less. The term "icefoot" for the front of a glacier is not a happy choice, and while it may be of interest it scarcely has geographical value to state that "woollen stockings drawn over one's shoes prevent slipping" (on glaciers). The chapters on the distribution of crops, forest product, animals, and minerals are good, but curiously enough there is no mention of whaling. The last hundred pages are devoted to a regional treatment of the United States and overseas American possessions, in which chief emphasis is again laid on the economic side. The author succeeds in