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Review: Mrs. Cornish's Travels

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from the dark lines of the spectrum thrown on the screen, what are the elements in the heavenly bodies which revolve through billions of miles; (2) "the well-known superstition of the European physicists that the order of the Universe can only be explained by Newton's law.

"Geography is neither more nor less than a *description* of the Earth; not of the whole Earth, but of its *habitable* surface. Geography is the science of the present state of the Earth; explanation is a matter for history and the exact sciences.

"Geographers are interested only in the present picture and in the economic and historical advantages and disadvantages belonging to it. Their interest can go no further. The eternal search for the principle of evolution is therefore unnecessary, and is not the task of geographers.

"No matter if the simple description of geological facts and events appears deadening to the dilettante, such, nevertheless, remains the principal task of geography.

"The geographer will never explain reasons and changes without the help of other sciences; and it is not his business to do so. It is sufficient if he points out the geographical circumstances; the explanations he may leave to others.

"It is not to be denied that the geographer must estimate the degrees of culture and include them in his picture of humanity; but he must draw no deductions from that."

The contents, which are of varied interest, show, amongst others, the following headings: Fatalism in the Past; Fatalism in Modern Times; Natural Science Fatalism; Fatalism in Physical Geography (Mackinder and his Fallacies); Fatalism in Anthropogeography (Herbertson and company, a monophysitical, anthropogeographical concern).

It is extremely difficult to understand what the author's conception of geography really is, so confused is the book and so full of contradictions. Moreover, as one reads page upon page of language which is, to say the least, surprising as coming from a professorial pen, it is difficult to remain serious. The attitude of Prof. Czirbusz to geography is emphatically not to be taken as typical of Hungarian geographers in general, and this work, emanating from the University of Budapest, will come as a great surprise to those who do not know its author.

MRS. CORNISH'S TRAVELS.

'The Travels of Ellen Cornish.' By Vaughan Cornish. London: Ham-Smith. 1913. Pp. xvi., 293. *Maps and Illustrations.* 12s. 6d.

This volume has been written as a memorial to Mrs. Cornish, who died in 1911, to the regret of many who shared her interests in geographical research. The reader will learn from these pages the extent to which she inspired her husband in his well-known work upon the various phenomena of waves, and also in his observations upon the Panama canal works. These interests of hers were based on a profound appreciation of scenic beauty; it clearly appears in the present narrative that she possessed the gift of a mind sensitized to the record of things seen during her travels, and that they remained with her as precious memories. The book deals with journeys which she and Dr. Vaughan Cornish made between 1903 and 1910, when their occupations, as he says, "were more varied, and the incidents had more of human interest" than during previous travels. They ranged widely—from England to Japan, from Japan to the Falls of Niagara, to Panama, and to Jamaica. This memorial is written very simply and with restraint, and it makes the closer appeal for that.

Dr. Cornish's description of the Falls makes no less attractive reading for those who have visited them than for those who require to be saved "from the confused notion so commonly entertained of what 'Niagara' is." The physical character of the falls is set forth (with the aid of a map and photographs) in terms devoid of technicality, yet revealing the results of scientific observation; the author naturally found especial interest in the course and forms of the falling water, and more particularly in its behaviour in the rapids. These were closely investigated; the results, descriptive of the movement of the waters and the types of waves remarked, are dealt with here at some length, and it may be added that the author has somewhat elaborated his view of the cause of the notable "cross-stream travelling waves" in the Middle Rapid. Whirling bodies of water, upwelling and sinking one alongside the other, preserving their individuality as they travel through the quieter waters of the Lower Rapid and even lower still, are forcibly described and form a phenomenon not generally appreciated and full of interest.

The Panama Canal works were visited in 1907, 1908, and 1910. Mrs. Cornish had several relatives of distinction as engineers; her interest in engineering work was beyond the common in her sex, and she clearly instilled it into Dr. Cornish. For we find here a pretty close description of the works and their administration, having regard to the space at command; the two chapters devoted to this subject deal rather with the observations made during the visits than with any speculation or geographical theorizing as to the future of the canal and its effects.

The experiences of Dr. and Mrs. Cornish during the Jamaica earthquake of 1907 are well known to readers of the *Journal*, and the brave act of Mrs. Cornish in protecting her husband is not to be forgotten. Having escaped the peril, they were impelled to make a full investigation of its causes, and this was carried on during a visit as lately as 1910. Dr. Cornish assigns to the causative disturbance a superficial, not a subterranean, position. He believes that the earthquake "could have been produced by the redistribution of load by the existing rivers flowing in their present courses." He indicates two areas, northern and southern, where the tremors originated, and supposes "a disturbance of pre-existing equilibrium by this modern redistribution of load, that the southern tremors came from subsidence with fracture near the mouth of the Hope river, and that the northern tremors were produced by elevation with fracture near the Gaps." This theory is, of course, definitely associated with the author's work on waves, and it is interesting to observe that it was suggested to him by his study of landslides on the banks of the Panama canal, in which he was able to observe what may be termed a type-movement by which gravity reduces "the slope of materials not under stress, but standing too steeply for their weight, cohesion, and internal friction." The adaptation of this theory to the physical condition of the island of Jamaica cannot be quoted here, but reference may be made to the conclusion that if equilibrium was restored at the time of the earthquake, no such serious visitation should afflict the island for a long time, as suitable conditions must, at worst, be slow of reproduction.

The maps illustrating this volume are good, and most of the photographic reproductions are successful.