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Mémoire sur les Dunes de Gascogne.— Edouard Harlé et Jacques Harlé.
Paris: Imprimerie National. 1920. Pp. 145, 10 *Photographic Plates*,
51 *Text-figures*.

This interesting monograph deals very fully with the sand-dunes of the Landes. They fall into two categories: *continental* (i.e. inland) and *maritime*, the latter being again divided into *ancient* and *modern*. The inland dunes are scattered hills, lying principally to the south of a line from Arcachon to Casteljaloux. They are considered to date from the Quaternary Steppe period, and were fixed in prehistoric times by dense vegetation, which produced a ferruginous sub-surface layer known as *allios*. Later climatic changes led to incipient destruction by the wind, with formation of hollows called *caoudeyres* (caldrons) and the production of a parabolic form. During the last sixty years they have been planted with pine trees. The ancient maritime dunes have been covered with vegetation since time immemorial; they are so closely crowded that groups of parabolic dunes are combined into a rake-like form (*en rateau*). The modern maritime dunes, on the other hand, were bare until Brémontier and his successors planted them with pines from 1787 onwards; an accepted view that their bareness resulted from fires during the barbarian invasions is controverted. There are discussions of the mechanics of dune-formation, and many other matters of interest in this valuable memoir.

A. M. D.

ASIA

Serindia: Detailed Report of Explorations in Central Asia and Westernmost China. Carried out and described under the orders of H.M. Indian Government by **Aurel Stein**. 5 volumes. Vols. 1 to 3, text (pp. 1580); vol. 4, 175 Plates; vol. 5, 94 Maps. Oxford: Clarendon Press. 1921. Size 13½ × 10. Price £12 12s. net.

It is impossible to do more in a short notice than to indicate briefly some of the main features of the monumental work by Sir Aurel Stein which has been issued by the Clarendon Press, Oxford, under the title 'Serindia.' Serindia (a designation which appears to be of French origin) is the regional name adopted for that much of Asia which lies between the Pamirs and the Pacific watershed, and it includes most of the scenes of Sir Aurel's unwearied researches during his three journeys extending over intermittent periods between 1900 and 1915. It is the results of these three journeys undertaken in geographical, archæological, and historical interests which are now given to the world in due scientific form, and which, supported by the collaboration of many of the leading scientists of the day, form a brilliant and lasting record of achievement.

Commencing with an exhaustive study of the routes between Buddhist Asia centering in Kashgar and the ancient Gandhara (Swat) which were followed by Chinese pilgrims as they journeyed India-wards in search of "the law," the author identifies each step from Turkestan to northern India with such convincing evidence as to leave nothing to be desired except that either he or some other equally gifted explorer should hereafter investigate those other pilgrim routes which touch Balkh, Haibak, Bamian, and Kabul, and which are at present barred to the explorer by Afghan prejudice. But the chief interest of this great work does not lie amidst the spurs of the Hindu Kush or even in the marvellous recovery of Buddhist records innumerable from the long-buried shrines and temples of the Takla Makan, deeply interesting as these undoubtedly are, but in the researches farther east. We may note, however, that as regards this region of Chinese Turkestan Sir Aurel does not fully agree

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