While heartily congratulating the Bibliothèque Nationale on this noble acquisition, and M. Blochet on the successful accomplishment of his most valuable and scholarly work (which contains, besides the necessary indexes of titles and names, twelve fine fac-similes of pages from some of the most interesting MSS.), may we be permitted to express the hope that ere long the publication of complete catalogues of the Persian and Turkish MSS. by the Administration of that great and liberal Library will lay us under a still deeper obligation?

E. G. B.

DIE ALTE LANDSCHAFT BABYLONIEN NACH DEN ARABISCHEN GEOGRAPHEN. Von Dr. M. STRECK. (Leiden: Brill, 1900.)

This, when finished, will be a most valuable work, for, in the convenient form of a summary (the authorities being indicated in the footnotes), Dr. Streck here translates all the information contained in the numerous texts of the Arab geographers concerning Babylonia or 'Irāk, the capital province of the Moslem Empire during Abbasid times. The prior third of the work is now issued, and Dr. Streck may be congratulated for his industry in thus expanding into a volume his prize essay, to which had been awarded the first place on the list for 1896-1897 by the Faculty of Philosophy in the Leipsic University.

In chapter i Dr. Streck starts with an enumeration of the frontiers of 'Irāk, and then passes on to describe the system of canals running between the Euphrates and Tigris. Next follows (pp. 47-171, namely, to the close of the present instalment) a careful summary of what the earlier Arab geographers have written on the subject of the topography of Baghdad. The basis of all the above—alike of the canal system and of the Baghdad topography—rests primarily on the authority of Ibn Serapion, for without his minute description of the watercourses no map of Lower Mesopotamia or plan of Baghdad could be drawn up, based merely on what has come down to us in the writings of Ya'kūbī, Khaṭīb, and

Yāḳūt. It would be easy for anyone who has worked over the same ground as is now so studiously examined by Dr. Streck to criticize minor details in his summary, but to do so would be hardly fair, and, indeed, could serve no useful purpose. It is, however, to be regretted that Dr. Streck did not work out his own plan of mediæval Baghdad. He has had the misfortune to reproduce the one published with the text of Ibn Serapion in the April number of this Journal for 1895, then admittedly given only as a *sketch*, and which in the number for October, 1899, was cancelled in favour of plans drawn up from fuller knowledge. Now, though his preface is dated September, 1900, Dr. Streck states that he had not yet seen our Journal for the previous year (he writes that in the Munich Library it “noch nicht eingelaufen war”); to which we may be permitted the observation that it is surely curious how Dr. Streck, with later authorities under his eyes, should not have seen occasion to make some change for the better in a sketch-plan published five years ago, which a further reference to Yāḳūt and other authorities dealing with the remaining parts of ‘Irāk ought to have shown him to have been inexact.

It is greatly to be hoped that the two thirds remaining to be published of this work will soon be given to the public, and with a complete index. The foreign plan of publishing a volume piecemeal, or in sections, is certainly not one that recommends itself to readers; though doubtless to a writer who is anxious to lay his work before fellow scholars without delay, it presents some advantages. Too often, however, we are left with a *Theil I* for all comfort, as, for example, in a work referred to by Dr. Streck, namely, *Irān in Mittelalter* by Paul Schwartz, of which the first part—and this appeared in 1896—has to the present day remained an unfinished morsel.

G. LE STRANGE.