Review

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Russian Empire from Finland to the Chukchi peninsula of Siberia. Some of the information might with advantage have been revised, and surely the author's geographical wits have been wandering when he advises the reader, in order to appreciate the size of Siberia, to choose a map of the World on Mercator's projection ; and when he expresses the belief that the construction of the map of the lighthouses and beacons on the coast of Finland "must have entailed years of research."

Mr. Coxwell's book is the narrative of a journey in 1915 from Archangel to the Crimea and the Caucasus, and then back by the Volga to Petrograd and Finland. Such a journey in war-time with the author's scanty knowledge of Russian, on which he frequently insists, led to many difficult situations, but an admirable persistence carried him through on all occasions. The book smacks rather of the guide-book at times, but it succeeds in giving some vivid pictures of Russian life and scenery without being a volume of permanent value.

R. N. R. B.

Berlin and its Region (Sociological Society : Cities Committee).— H. J. Fleure, D.Sc. London and Manchester : Sherratt & Hughes. 1916. Pp. 15. *Sketch-maps.*

The subject of this paper by Dr. Fleure of Aberystwyth is geographical, but its nature is no doubt largely explained by the fact that it was contributed as a basis for discussion to the Sociological Society. It is unquestionably a weakness of geography that it attempts to estimate influences that cannot be measured. It is a weakness that geographers should always keep in mind, feeling that they are on surest ground when they are dealing with influences most nearly capable of measurement. The sociological point of view is perhaps apt to tempt one to venture on very sweeping generalizations, which, when they have geographical subjects, are liable to become the opprobrium of geography. The steppes and deserts of Western Asia "are the lands of Wandering where people so characteristically laid up treasure in heaven, having small occasion to do so on earth." "The Prussian creation has the forest between it and the spirituality of the East, and 'to this day the sky-line of Berlin is more unbroken by church-towers than that of almost any other city.' It was naked materialism that expressed itself here with the strength of 'not a giant but an athlete.'" Whose are the words that Dr. Fleure quotes is not made quite clear, though we are led to infer that they are those of Lord Acton. In any case Dr. Fleure adopts them. And we are entitled to ask him not only whether no religion preaching the renunciation of treasure on earth arose in a region entirely different from "the lands of Wandering," but also whether "the East" includes China, and whether China has ever been credited with a high degree of spirituality. We have equally questionable pronouncements with regard to race. At the bottom of p. 6 we have a reference to the "small capacity for peaceful assimilation" as apparently a characteristic that has always marked "the Teutonic warrior-aristocracy." It is difficult at any time to tell the characteristic traits of any people apart from the conditions in which they are living at the time, and what evidence is there of national traits remaining the same generation after generation? Some tell us that there was a time when England really was "merry England," but it is long since it would occur to any one to give it that appellation. And as for the Germans, Naumann in his 'Mitteleuropa' (p. 84) speaks of a time when they had an admirable gift of assimilation in virtue of "their natural joyousness, bluntness (*Derbheit*) and childlike disposition." Is this historically true or not? The present reviewer

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does not know, and cannot tell how to find out. But can Dr. Fleure show that it is not true?

All that may seem remote from what Dr. Fleure calls the problem of Berlin, but it is on such generalities that he lays a great deal of stress in his treatment of that problem. And when he comes down to what is more strictly geographical his treatment of that problem, though including points worthy of attention, seems inadequate. It is illustrated by two maps, but a third map is sorely needed to bring out an important consideration on which Hahn, rightly as it seems to the present reviewer, insists. One of these maps illustrates what Dr. Fleure says is sometimes called the Fall-line, but surely very inappropriately if we are to string, as he does, Cologne, Hanover, Magdeburg, Leipzig, Dresden and Breslau all alike on that fall-line, and yet not Berlin. Letting that pass, however, we may note that Dr. Fleure has a paragraph headed, "The Impossibility of a Fall-line Capital in Germany," even though Magdeburg, in spite of its being situated a good way to the north of the zone "where rivers emerge from their valleys on to the plain's broad expanse," is included among the fall-line cities. The present reviewer, on the contrary, believes that if geography alone had determined the position of Germany's capital, that capital would have been Magdeburg, and he agrees with Lyde "in thinking that, in this case, ecclesiastical connections were a drawback."

The other map is one, after K. Keilhack, showing the moraines and troughs of the North German plain, and is instructive as showing the natural east-west route in which Berlin lies, and where its importance (even at this day) is increased by navigable rivers and their artificial connections.

And now as to the third map, which, it has been stated, Hahn's treatment of the subject suggests as lacking. We must here descend to the most prosaic geography. In explaining the situation and importance of towns so far as geography alone can give that explanation—and in the case of capitals, and especially capitals of great states, it never can—two things have to be considered: first, the local circumstances that served to determine the precise situation of the town; and, second, the wider relations that give importance to that situation. Both these questions are adequately answered in a page or two by Hahn in his "Die Städte der norddeutschen Tiefebene" (pp. 108-9 of vol. 1 of the *Forschungen zur deutschen Landes- und Volkshunde*). The precise spot on which Berlin began to grow up was that on the right bank of the Spree where the island of Kölln divided the river and greatly facilitated its crossing. As bringing about wide relations for this crossing-point Hahn, in addition to the advantages of situation pointed out by Dr. Fleure, emphasizes the fact that the geographical conditions made this point by far the most convenient crossing-place for all the traffic of this region going from the south and south-west to the north and north-east. This would have been clearly brought out by another map showing the very intricate hydrography to the north of the Havel.

G. G. C.

ASIA.

Palestine. The Rebirth of an Ancient People.— **Albert M. Hyamson.** London: Sidgwick & Jackson. 1917. Pp. xiv. and 292. *Illustrations.* 10s. 6d. *net.*

"The number of books on Palestine is," as this author remarks, "legion," but most repeat the same facts in varying words, and few indeed have anything new to tell. Most books on the Holy Land are concerned "entirely with the past"; this one concerns itself with the future of Palestine in relation to the Jewish race. All, whether Jews or Gentiles, practical politicians or idealists,