WILEY

Review

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Source: *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (Sep., 1921), pp. 228-230

Published by: geographicalj

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1780493>

Accessed: 27-06-2016 10:40 UTC

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REVIEWS

EUROPE

On Alpine Heights and British Craggs.— George D. Abraham. London : Methuen & Co., 1919. Size 9 × 5½. Pp. x. and 308. *Illustrations.* Price 10s. 6d. *net.*

MR. ABRAHAM has set himself a difficult task in writing a book of climbing reminiscences. It is hard to keep the reader's attention fixed on chimneys, faces, pitches, and courses even with the conventional Alpine comic relief. Moreover, the thrills and perils of mountain gymnastics have been pretty thoroughly exploited. In 'Alpine Heights and British Craggs' the reader can take his fill of them. The author may be considered one of the foremost exponents of up-to-date rock climbing. He writes of climbing in the Swiss Alps, the Dolomites, and the British Isles. The mountaineer may perhaps wonder how far the modern rock-climber oversteps the limits of justifiable risk. Indeed, the new rock school seem to have created a new danger for mountaineers—that of falling off the mountain. The very existence of such a danger was denied by the optimists of the days of the mountaineering Badminton. According to their theory a good climber, as long as he was careful, could never fall. It is true that bits of the mountain might fall on him, but it was his business to avoid the places where such things could happen. Nowadays rock specialists by their extraordinary agility and daring contrive to reach situations from which they can only extricate themselves with the help of more good luck than they can reasonably count upon. At least it would appear so, judging from some of the incidents described.

As is usual in books by this author, the photographs are excellent.

Russia in the Eighties.— John F. Baddeley. London : Longmans. 1921. Pp. 482. *Portrait and Sketch-maps.* 30s. *net.*

Mr. Baddeley places opposite his title-page, not his own portrait, as most writers of autobiography would, but that of Count Schouvaloff, sometime Russian Ambassador in London, the life-long friend who obtained for him, at the early age of twenty-five, the responsible post of correspondent of the *Standard* at Petersburg. The years he spent there (1879–1888) were eventful, and he was an intelligent observer as well as a *persona grata* at all the Embassies. In that decade Imperial Russia reached the zenith of her greatness as a European and Asiatic power. Her formidable position prompted the constitution of the Triple Alliance, and in consequence her own *Entente* with France—the grouping of the Powers which subsisted at the opening of the war of 1914. The author's scenes show the busy workings of diplomacy, the now vanished pomps of the Winter Palace, and the pleasant outings for sport, whether bear and wolf hunting in the forests or trout fishing in the Finland waters. Alongside of the gay life of the capital marched the sombre spectre of Nihilism, at one time flashing into light with the murder of Alexander II., and at all times mining underground in preparation for the explosion of after-days. It is well that this chapter of Russian history should be recorded : it supplies materials for estimating the value of Imperialism—had it only been wise—in the case of such a people as the Russians are ; and it is fortunate that it should have been written for us by so competent a hand. A. G.

The Treaty Settlement of Europe : Some Geographic and Ethnographic Aspects.— H. J. Fleure. London : Humphrey Milford (Oxford University Press). 1921. Pp. 83. Price 2s. 6d. *net.*

The changes made by the recent treaties in the map of Europe have been so vast that it is eminently desirable that they should be discussed as fully as

possible, from many points of view and by many different persons. Unfortunately, however, the conditions which exist in the printing trade at present, combined with the attitude (and the income) of the book-buying public, render this comprehensive treatment very difficult. The form in which Prof. Fleure's pamphlet is issued is an illustration of these difficulties. It belongs to a series, called *The World of To-day*, which may be regarded as the equivalent of those dealing similarly with important subjects which were being placed on the market in some numbers in the period just prior to the war. Economic factors are exerting their influence not only in the greatly increased price at which such volumes are now issued, but also on their contents and format. As compared with the 50,000 words which were a common limit of size in earlier series, we have here about 30,000 words. Further, the paper covers make careful study and preservation difficult, and the sketch-maps, many of which are of great interest so far as conception goes, are so badly reproduced as to be in cases all but illegible. The last fact is especially important, in view of the small size of the book, for it means that details omitted from the text cannot be represented on the maps. Since, again, the general plan of the book involves the setting forth of the main outlines of the territorial changes, while its author has also much that is fresh and suggestive to say on the broad aspects of the various treaties, we have necessarily excessive compression, with the result that attractive trains of thought cannot be fully worked out.

The most interesting chapter of the five which make up the book is undoubtedly the first, entitled "A Short Survey of European Life," and it is here that the want of room to develop a thesis adequately is most felt. Space only permits us to say that Prof. Fleure distinguishes as "Europe of the Sea" the area west of a zone stretching from the Gulf of Danzig to Bukovina and the Carpathians; and apart from the swamps in this belt, he lays emphasis on the eastern limit of the beech, and the limit of the sway of the Catholic Church, as indications that it forms a frontier zone. Within the region of "Europe of the Sea," as thus defined, he regards the Rhine-Danube line—that is, the limits of the area administered by Imperial Rome—as forming another frontier belt, to the west of which the idea of the nation-state developed. In Eastern or Interior Europe, in his opinion, the idea of the sovereign nation-state did not come into existence till the progress of industrialism had rendered it largely out of date. The book should certainly be read by all interested in the wider problems of European and world politics in their geographical bearings, and will prove invaluable to teachers and students.

There are a certain number of misprints, mostly of a minor kind; but Bolzano for Bolzano (p. 69) should be noted for a future edition, since the name is still relatively unfamiliar here as replacing the familiar Bozen.

Belgium.— **Emile Cammaerts.** London: Fisher Unwin. 1921. *With 35 Illustrations and 9 Maps.* Pp. 357, including Index. Price 12s. 6d.

Monsieur Cammaerts warns his readers that his 'Belgium,' in the *Story of the Nations* series, is neither a series of essays nor a systematic text-book, but rather the story—in chronological order—of important events in Belgian history which illustrate characteristic features of Belgian civilization and development. This is only part of the truth; for the book is not only written with a distinction which makes it worth reading as literature, but is also of extraordinary interest to geographers, especially in the earlier chapters. In fact, the first half is a most admirable analysis of the fate and function of an area that is naturally a "Buffer" belt.

This is the essential theme, illustrated from every epoch and every aspect

of Belgian history since Roman times ; and the author justifies his claim that Belgium at every epoch has expressed with almost unique fidelity the civilization of that epoch—imperialism in the ninth century, communalism in the thirteenth, centralization in the fifteenth (under princes who, though foreigners, were so much inspired by interest in Belgium that they may fairly be called natives), industrialism, reaching out to colonization, in the nineteenth.

Behind this power to interpret the spirit of the age, M. Cammaerts sees the influence of environment, race, and speech, with their triple dualities—dualities which, so far from hindering, helped her to play her great part between East and West, North and South. The story begins with Rome, building round the edge of the Silva Carbonaria, "the Coal Wood," the great longitudinal road—much older, therefore, than its mediæval name, "Road of Bonnelant," suggests—crossing at right angles river after river that flowed from south to north, and so deciding the position of the Norse camps where the rivers were bridged at the head of navigation, *e.g.* Louvain and Maestricht. The Roman Church worked with the rivers, latitudinally, rather than with the road, longitudinally. Its aim—maintained for 800 years, and nobly revived by Cardinal Mercier—was to unite the two races ; its ecclesiastical boundaries never ran east-and-west, and entirely ignored the language line, linking in one community and creed, "Walas" and "Dietschen." It was precisely because he was so typically Belgian in these respects that Godfrey was chosen by the polyglot Crusaders as their chief. Under the same environment Charlemagne had made Aix his pivot, and Charles V. made Brussels his pivot ; and Belgian princes were all normally interested in peace, and so exercised a sobering influence between France and England or Germany, a Count of Hainault even refusing passage through his territory to the armies of Frederick Barbarossa when seeking the same advantage as the Germans sought in 1914.

Of course, the shield has two sides, even if the conditions essentially responsible for periodic ruin made also for the parallel restoration. The factors that favoured the Communes, with a minimum of political obstacle and a maximum of economic advantage, in substituting their economic subdivisions for the political subdivisions of Feudalism, were extremely unfavourable to any strong centralization or the unification of the nation under a national prince ; and they made possible the iniquitous decrees of Vienna, which "suited every nation concerned except those most concerned—the Belgians." M. Cammaerts exercises great restraint and courtesy in all references to Holland, but no amount of courtesy can ignore the fundamental injustice of a settlement which deprived Belgium of all the advantages of her great superiority in population, and saddled her with half of the terrific national debt of Holland. Indeed, the book adds to its literary distinction an admirable object-lesson in the blending of patriotic enthusiasm with scholarly restraint and impartiality.

L. W. LYDE.

ASIA

In *Farthest Burma*.— Captain F. Kingdon Ward. London : Seeley, Service & Co. 1921. Pp. 312. *Sketch-maps and Illustrations*. 25s.

It is a fortunate circumstance that the wealth and variety of the flora of Western China should of late years have attracted several English botanists to that region, for in their zeal for botanical discoveries they have been able to explore much new ground and to add considerably to our knowledge of the geography and ethnology of this most fascinating borderland.

Captain Kingdon Ward has already given us in 'The Land of the Blue