Review

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ASIA

Modern Japan.— **W. M. McGovern.** London: T. Fisher Unwin. 1920. 15s. *net*.

In a preface Sir E. Denison Ross claims for Dr. McGovern a familiarity with Japanese modes of thought which has been gained by few Englishmen—a claim which lends weight to Dr. McGovern's main thesis, that modern Japan has been and is being organized by a small group of bureaucrats whose aim and methods possess a striking similarity with those with which the Prussian has made us painfully familiar. The parallels are important: a patriotism based upon a complete and sometimes non-logical veneration of the Emperor; military success comparable with that of Prussia before 1875; a feeling of constraint within the existing political boundaries and a demand for a place in the sun; an efficient internal and external administration of the country's affairs on paternal lines; and, finally, China as the counterpart of Eastern and Central Europe lying ripe for exploitation. Dr. McGovern's chapter headings in Part III.: The Administrative System, Aspects of Modern Japan, Militaristic Nationalism, Efficient Bureaucracy, Imperial Socialism, tell their own story. In Japan a man's career depends almost entirely upon his successes, or failures, at school; the bureaucracy leads, and drags the people after it, it has absolute political control, has a free hand commercially, and is successful. The results of this centralized efficiency are becoming daily more manifest in all departments of industrial life.

For the geographer this book is an illustration of a somewhat rare condition, man transcending the limitations of his material environment.

B. C. W.

AFRICA

Cotton in British West Africa.— **N. M. Penzer.** London: Federation of British Industries. 1920. 5s. *net*; *sewed*, 2s. 6d. *net*.

Mr. Penzer has given us a concentrated but valuable summary of the factors which control the efforts of the British Cotton Growing Association, efforts which have led to success in Nigeria but to comparative failure elsewhere. Not the least valuable portion of the memorandum is the bibliography, with about 300 entries, of books, etc., dealing with cotton and published between 1881 and 1920.

B. C. W.

Initia Amharica: an Introduction to Spoken Amharic.— **Charles Hubert Armbruster, M.A.** Part III. Amharic-English Vocabulary with Phrases. Vol. I. H-S. Cambridge University Press. 1920. 84s. *net*.

For one of the Powers most interested in Abyssinia, Great Britain had, until Mr. Armbruster began to publish his books on the language, played an insignificant part in the scientific and linguistic studies of that country. Isenberg's 'Dictionary of the Amharic Language' (London, 1841) is so inferior to those of Guidi and D'Abbadie that the English student was obliged to prosecute his studies through the medium of the Italian or French tongue. Mr. Armbruster's vocabulary,* which does not suffer in comparison with that of Guidi, and is far superior to any other similar work, now relieves him of that necessity, and removes from Great Britain the stigma of philological apathy with regard to Abyssinia. It is a most valuable work, and bears the impress of a wide erudition, meticulous accuracy, and painstaking research. The

* Part I. of the series, 'Grammar,' appeared in 1908; Part II., 'English-Amharic Vocabulary,' in 1910.

author in a preface deals with the difficulties which confronted him in the arrangement of his work, and though in a few details the scheme adopted may not seem to the beginner to be the most simple, it is in every case based upon etymological grounds which cannot be controverted. The book has, as the author explains, outgrown the dimensions originally assigned to it, and is perhaps better adapted to the bookshelf of the professor than to the necessarily limited library of the traveller, especially when one considers that the volume under review deals with only about one-quarter of the alphabet. The beginner is apt to be appalled by the apparently complicated system of phonetic spelling, but if he attempts for himself to devise a more simple one, he will realize the difficulty of the task, while the few unambitious handbooks on the language which have been produced, in their absolute failure to indicate correct pronunciation, show that attempts at undue simplification only produce confusion. Again, the beginner, for whom Mr. Arbuster's series is designed, will soon realize that the profusion of derivative forms, which may at first seem confusing, could not be dispensed with without assuming him to have a far wider knowledge of the formation of the language than he is likely to possess. It is probable that the expansion of British enterprise in Abyssinia will increase the demand for books of this nature, whose production will then cease to be unremunerative. In that event, it is to be hoped that the author may see his way to producing another edition of this valuable work in which the omission of some of his copious etymological notes, and a reduction in the size of the type and thickness of the paper used, may bring the book more within the scope of a traveller's library. Mr. Ambruster is himself no less a traveller than a scholar, but when confronted with the alternatives of producing a comprehensive lexicon or an abridged and readily portable vocabulary, he undoubtedly chose wisely. His achievement is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that, concurrently with the production of his lexicon, he has been engaged in official duties of an exacting nature.

L. F. T. A.

By Nile and Tigris.— Sir E. A. Wallis Budge. 2 vols. *Illustr.* London : Murray & Co. 1920. £3 3s. *net.*

This is a very interesting book, and were it not published in so bulky and expensive a form would no doubt appeal to a large circle of readers. It is an account by the Keeper of the Egyptian and Assyrian Antiquities in the British Museum of his numerous missions to Egypt and Mesopotamia, in search of antiquities for the National Collections. His travels took him to many interesting places, and brought him in contact with many distinguished, learned, curious, and amusing people. His tact, patience, and courage in carrying out the work on which he was sent are beyond praise. He writes in a clear and unadorned style, and his references to his finds of rare manuscripts and invaluable antiquities can be understood by any intelligent person.

He prefaces the account of his travels with a few personalia, explaining how he came to devote himself to the studies and work in which he has played so distinguished a part. He was fortunate enough to come early under the influence of that great scholar and antiquarian, Dr. Birch, of whom he gives a graphic and interesting account. Through Birch he was brought in contact with many distinguished orientalisists—as George Smith, Rawlinson, and Layard. He says much about Prof. Wright, who aided and encouraged him in the study of oriental languages. There is an entertaining description of the learned professor, and, it should not be omitted, of his parrot !