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Author(s): L. C.-M.

Review by: L. C.-M.

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swamps, low forests, fertile meadows, and snow-capped mountains, whose estuaries penetrated further inland than now; while on its plains and in its woods roamed many creatures which are strange to its present fauna. Man was not long in beginning "intentionally and unintentionally, directly and indirectly, to transform and supplant both the animal and vegetable life," through his domestication of many species of the indigenous wild mammals and various kinds of birds; through his protection of other species to supply his needs, to promote sport, or for æsthetic or superstitious reasons, as well as through his introduction of alien creatures from other lands. Dr. Ritchie traces in chapters full of original deductions—with all of which some of his readers may not entirely agree—and with a wealth of learning, the complex interaction of these factors in "changing the old Order of Nature." The indirect influence of man on Nature has been "more far-reaching and ultimately more effective in altering the aspect of the countries and of the faunas he has invaded," and from a geographical point of view no influence has been more potent in changing the physical features of Scotland than the removal of the forests intentionally or by the "act of God," the draining of the swamps, and the cultivation of the land. Dr. Ritchie discusses the resultant effects of these factors on the climate, in causing landslides, and the denudation of the hills down to the bare rock, and the greater excavating power of the rains and the torrent-made streams in winter, which carry away the soil to extend seaward the river plains and the boundaries of the shore.

This in brief is the story Dr. Ritchie expounds for his readers in this most interesting volume, handsomely produced and lavishly illustrated by maps, photographs, original drawings, and very apt and charming quotations from almost forgotten Scottish authors of bygone days. His book will be read with pleasure by many who are neither professed geographers nor biologists.

H. O. F.

The Blue Guides. Belgium and the Western Front.— Edited by F. Muirhead. London: Macmillan & Co. 1920. Pp. 368 + lxxx. *Sixty Maps and Plans.* 15s. net.

This is the third of the new Blue Guides, and maintains the high level of achievement of the earlier volumes. It must have been a difficult task to write a guide to a country undergoing such rapid transitions as are now the fate of Belgium and north-eastern France. Yet even in matters of practical detail the guide is very helpful. The introductory chapters include articles by M. J. Mesnil on Art in Belgium, and by Major-General Sir Frederick Maurice on the British Campaigns in the West. Under every place details are given of its history during the war. Nine sectional maps, contoured and coloured, cover the whole of the British Western Front. They are reproduced from the maps of the Geographical Section General Staff, and are on a half-inch scale. The numerous town plans are very clear, but a few, in this copy at least, have been marred by being folded in a damp state, which has resulted in mutual transference of the black print between opposing faces. This volume, like its predecessors in the series, is a marvel of cheapness.

Il Traforo del Monte Bianco ed i grandi Problemi Nazionali ed Internazionali di Traffico.— Maggiore Silvio Govi. *Con 11 carte a colori fuori testo e 15 illustrazioni.* Milano: Casa Editrice Libreria Luigi Trevisini. [1920.]

The absence of a second Alpine tunnel connecting Italy with France was one of the serious problems of the war, especially after Caporetto. Even with

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the improvements carried out on the Mont Cenis line, the means of communication between the two countries proved wholly inadequate. While Lombardy is served by the Simplon and the St. Gothard, and there are four great trunk-lines leading to the Veneto as it is to-day, Piedmont still depends altogether on the Mont Cenis. A new Alpine tunnel is always a political and international question. Thus Bismarck's weight was thrown into the scale in favour of the St. Gothard in opposition to France. But France's turn has come at last, and the new route should obviously link the Val d'Aosta with the valleys of the Arc and the Durance. To effect this connection there are at least three sets of projected tunnels, under the Little St. Bernard, the Great St. Bernard, and Mont Blanc respectively. Apart from technical questions, the Little St. Bernard tunnel would tap the same regions as the Mont Cenis, with which it would therefore compete, and similarly the Great St. Bernard would prove a dangerous rival to the Simplon, and would be vigorously opposed by Switzerland in consequence.

There remains the Mont Blanc tunnel. This would not compete directly with any other. Indeed, it would take the Adriatic traffic from France, leaving western traffic to the Mont Cenis. In fact, it would feed the proposed Italian-Balkan line which will provide a through route between London—Paris—Mont Blanc—Milan—Brindisi—Vallona—Salonika—Constantinople—Baghdad—and India and the East generally. Maggiore Govi considers, of course, that the Channel Tunnel is bound to come. This new Balkan line is, he holds, nearer realization than is generally supposed. Signor Buonomo's plans have been approved and work has actually been begun in the Vojusa valley.

The Mont Blanc tunnel would connect Courmayeur with Chamonix. In fact, De Saussure proposed such a tunnel for foot-passengers and carriages towards the end of the eighteenth century, and the scheme had many supporters as against the Simplon route. Maggiore Govi goes into the technical side of the question in the greatest detail. Quite apart from its main purpose, his valuable book gives a broad comprehensive survey of the whole question of Italian post-war communication problems. L. C.-M.

ASIA

A Lady Doctor in Bakhtiariand.— The late Elizabeth N. MacBean Ross. Edited by J. N. Macbean Ross. London: Leonard Parsons. 1921. Pp. viii. and 160. *Portrait and Sketch-map.* 7s. 6d. net.

This little book of only 160 pages possesses a permanent value. The writer lived as a doctor among the Bakhtiari, winning the confidence of the *Khans* and their wives through her medical skill and knowledge of Persian, with the result that she gives us first-hand information as to the life, the point of view, and the changing conditions among these virile, if unstable, tribesmen. Until the middle of the nineteenth century the entire population was nomadic, grazing their flocks in the plains of Arabistan during the winter and seeking the elevated valleys of the mountains during the summer. About 1850, the *Khans* began to construct castles, and now there is a large settled population, grouped round the residences of the chiefs. From these strongholds, the neighbouring country is dominated and the peasants are ground down cruelly. The term Bakhtiari, according to the author, is generally reserved for the ruling family and their retainers, the peasantry being termed Lur. The bad old order of tyrannical barons is, however, likely to change, for the *Khans*, who posed as champions of the Constitution and of liberty, cannot indefinitely keep their subjects in a state of serfdom. To take another chapter, Dr. Ross writes strongly in favour of