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SHORT REVIEWS

ANTHROPOLOGY AND ARCHÆOLOGY

The Discovery of Man

The Story of the Inquiry into Human Origins. By Stanley Casson. Pp. 340+16 plates. (London: Hamish Hamilton, Ltd., 1939.) 12s. 6d. net.

IT is remarkable, but none the less true, as Mr. Casson points out, that in the order of the development of the sciences man comes last to the most fascinating study of all—the study of himself. It is further notable that the study of man, affording so many avenues of approach, has so frequently, but no doubt inevitably, advanced by the investigation of what may be regarded as side issues. This appears here in the author's references to early developments in ancient and classical Greece, where, for example, the collection of ethnographical and geographical data was an outcome of the needs of navigation and commerce; and if history as conceived in the theory of Herodotus demanded a basis of ethnography, Thucydides turned no less to a line of investigation which was in effect archæological research.

Mr. Casson's entertaining and informative narrative follows the development of the various branches of anthropological inquiry through classical and mediæval times and the Renaissance down to modern times. His wide acquaintance with the less-known paths of classical and post-classical literature has enabled him to record much that will be both new and of value to those who are interested in the earlier phases of scientific modes of thought. Coming to modern times, as an archæologist who himself has worked in the field, he is able to survey the record of workers in the various regions of the Mediterranean and the Near and Middle East with a firm grasp of the trend of discovery as a whole, and at the same time a just appreciation of the contribution of each individual investigator in the major fields of discovery.

On the ethnographical side, and in what is now termed cultural anthropology, Mr. Casson is not, it must be admitted, equally well equipped, nor in consequence is his record so complete, especially

when he deals with the descriptive and comparative studies in religion and law of English and French writers of the late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries and the French compendia of races of the early eighteenth century, which led up to Montesquieu.

Escape with me! an Oriental Sketch-Book

By Osbert Sitwell. Pp. xv+340+16 plates. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1940.) 12s. 6d. net.

IT is always of interest to the archæologist to note the reactions of others to the material in which he himself works. If they have the trained eye of the observer of men and cities, a sense of æsthetic values, combined with a gift of literary expression, he may hope to recapture from their observations something of the nature of the general complex of the culture as a whole which it is his purpose to recover from the evidence of the past, but which his preoccupation with details of research too often precludes him from viewing in true perspective. No one assuredly who desires a scientifically accurate account of Angkor or Peking would consult Mr. Sitwell's "Escape with Me" as a first-hand authority, yet from his vivid pen pictures of the line, mass and colour of the great complex of temple monuments at Angkor and his obvious sympathy with Eastern modes of life and thought, especially as lived in Peking, it is possible that the reader may attain a truer understanding than from more solid treatises in the archæological or historical sense.

It must not be imagined, however, that Mr. Sitwell's book, frankly escapist, is the fruit of hurried impression. Some months were spent by him in Peking, his contacts with the Chinese were as intimate as the circumstances allowed; and he made full use of Bodde's translation of "Annual Customs and Festivals of Peking" and Arlington and Lewisohn's "In Search of Old Peking", with results no less pleasing to the reader than gratifying to himself. Thereby in effect he was led to a judgment of Chinese culture and character in relation to current events or which there is much to be said.