

As the author admits, many of the so-called species and even the subgenera of *Calamites* are of little or no scientific value; but the reader has placed before him in a convenient and accessible form abundant information from a scattered literature, from which he can form his own opinion as to the value of supposed specific differences, and is enabled to obtain a comprehensive view of the genus as a whole and of its geographical distribution.

A. C. SEWARD.

#### EARLY EGYPTIANS AND ANCIENT CIVILISATION.

*The Ancient Egyptians and their Influence upon the Civilisation of Europe.* By Prof. G. Elliot Smith, F.R.S. (Harper's Library of Living Thought.) Pp. xvi+188. (London and New York: Harper Brothers, 1911.) Price 2s. 6d. net.

WE think that "The Early Egyptians and their Influence on Ancient Civilisation" would have been a better title for Dr. Elliot Smith's little book than that which he has actually chosen, "The Ancient Egyptians and their Influence upon the Civilisation of Europe"; for Dr. Smith deals only with the most ancient, the earliest Egyptians, and he traces their influence not only upon the civilisation of Europe, but also, and in the first place, upon that of northern Africa and western Asia. We may say at once that Dr. Smith is less happy in his essay to trace this influence than when he is simply analysing the ethnic constituents of the race which exercised it. In dealing with the complicated question of possible early Egyptian influence upon the surrounding peoples, with regard to which our information is of the scantiest and most nebulous character, he is straying rather off his own ground, whereas in dealing with the early Egyptians themselves he is not only upon his own ground, but upon ground which he himself has made. To read him on this subject is indeed to be enlightened, and every historian must read with attention the remarkable conclusions to which he has been led by his experience in the dissection of mummies (gained in the course of his medical work at Cairo) in connection with the severely scientific archaeological work of Dr. Reisner and his assistants at Nag' ed-Deir and in Lower Nubia.

His discovery that a more northern race infiltrated into Egypt, probably from Syria, from the time of the earliest dynasties, and gradually modified the Egyptian "dynastic" type from the beginning, is very illuminating, as it explains the occurrence in Egypt, and more especially in northern Egypt, of the "stumpy," stout, rounder-faced type which we see in the portrait-statues of the pyramid-builders, so different from the lank-faced prehistoric Nilote of predynastic times. Dr. Elliot Smith's arguments are based chiefly upon craniological considerations. Those who recall Prof. Flinders Petrie's incisive criticism of the argument from craniology in his essay, "Migrations," some years ago, may perhaps be a little sceptical of all Dr. Smith's conclusions, yet it must be said that his arguments are reasoned, and his conclusions consistent with themselves and with archæo-

logical results. The ancient portraits of the two races agree with the skulls. We may, with him, regard the "predynastic" Egyptian as the true Nilote, akin to the desert tribes of Beja and Bisharin, to the Galla and Somali, and perhaps to the Arabs, while the new "dynastic" type of the north was probably akin to the high-nosed, round-headed stock of western Asia, which von Luschan calls "Armenoid," because the Armenians are the best representatives of it.

The high-nosed Semites of Asia may be a mixture of this stock with the true Arabians of the south, but if the Sumerians of Babylonia are representatives of the southern race, which spread from the Upper Nile to the delta of the Euphrates, and even to India, as Dr. Smith seems to hold, how does he explain their remarkably high noses? I would suggest that they may have been "Armenoids," not southerners, who conquered the original southerners (Semites), to be themselves in turn conquered by the Semites who had imbibed Sumerian civilisation. There are facts which point to the existence of a pre-Sumerian Semitic population in Babylonia. On this view the Semitic speech will belong to the southerners, the true Arabians, and, if so, the very ancient Semitic elements in the Egyptian language and culture will belong to the predynastic people, not to the northerners. But this conclusion conflicts with the fact that the most Semitic cults of Egypt, as, for instance, that of Ra, the sun-god of Heliopolis, belong to the north; the southern cults are the least Semitic, and the predynastic culture of the chalcolithic age is by no means "Semitic" in appearance.

This is a problem raised by Dr. Elliot Smith's book, and it is one of great interest and importance. Less important seems his view that the impulse to megalithic building in northern Africa and western Europe was given by the influence of the great stone buildings of early Egypt. Here it is difficult to follow him, and he seems to exaggerate the extent of the early influence of Egypt on the development of the surrounding civilisations. One is by no means inclined yet to attribute the whole development of early European culture to Egypt; there are many conflicting facts which have to be taken into consideration. It is by no means certain that Dr. Reisner's view that the early Egyptians were the inventors of copper-working is correct. Dr. Smith thinks the fact proved; others may doubt it. We should like to hear the views of Prof. Petrie, Dr. Gowland, and Prof. J. L. Myres on the point. Dr. Smith is dogmatic, of course; how is it possible to be otherwise in a little book of less than two hundred small pages? Were one to give all one's arguments *pro* and *con* in respect to so nebulous a subject as this, one would write volumes. And in a review it is impossible to argue at all on the doubtful points. One can only say that these, while important, are by no means many, for Dr. Smith has told us much that seems incontrovertible, and his book is one of the most important recent contributions to Egyptian archæology. Again, one can only regret its title, which does not explain the book properly.

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