

of movement "round the middle," Aristotle has just mentioned (293 a 28 ff.) an argument for it which we know, on the authority of Theophrastus, to be Platonic. It follows, therefore, that Plato is included among the "many others" who seem to agree with the Pythagoreans in denying that the earth is "at the middle," and that Aristotle was well aware that the theories Plato ascribes to Timaeus are not necessarily Plato's own theories, as has erroneously been assumed by almost all expositors of Platonism.

A. E. T.

A Rock-Desert.

Ministry of Finance, Egypt. Petroleum Research.

Bulletin No. 10. *Topography and Geology of Northern Sinai*. Part 6, Session 1919-1920. By F. W. Moon and H. Sadek. Pp. vii + 154 + 51 plates. (Cairo: Government Publications Office, 1921.) P.T. 50.

IT is no disparagement to the scientific observations recorded in this volume if we notice its handsome mode of production at the outset. In printing, illustration, and the inclusion of coloured sections, it will bear comparison with the work of any Geological Survey in the world. Two coloured maps on the scale of 1:250,000 are folded in a pocket at the end, and these are mounted on linen, a feature almost unique in official publication.

The researches that are placed in this permanent form before the public could not have been undertaken by private enterprise. Their object is to furnish a basis on which exploration may go forward in search of petroleum in Sinai, guided by the stratigraphy of a difficult and arid region. The oil-indications occur in Upper Cretaceous strata, mainly in the Cenomanian series, and any local concentration that may be found will depend on these beds as the primary sources of supply. Two places where the conditions seem favourable have been recommended to the Egyptian Government as sites for boring (p. 142). The clean exposures of rock-edges allow the geologist to read the structure of this desert country, as he can among the splendid folds of the Lange Bergen or in the high plateaus of Arizona. The features of a rock-desert are admirably pictured in photograph No. 12, where something is seen of the most notable structural feature of the region, the Cretaceous beds being strongly folded as they are traced downwards, while the conformable Eocene above them is almost undisturbed. The dome-structure sought for by oil-prospectors is thus present in the areas where beds older than the Santonian are exposed, but is scarcely to be traced in higher series. The authors, after a useful historical review (p. 37), advise the abandonment of the term Nubian Sandstone as indicating a stratigraphical horizon.

A thin band of potassium salt has been found under Gebel Sinn Bisher, a place where old workings, probably for rock-salt, may be traced. We may note the spelling Gebel, for Jebel, now adopted in Egyptian memoirs, which will commend itself equally to English-speaking folk. We congratulate Messrs. Moon and Sadek on carrying out this fine piece of mapping in a country where "life is, at its best, a very hard one," and where the Arab natives speak, quite happily, of their "homes" in caves cut in the mountain sides.

G. A. J. C.

Our Bookshelf.

La Géographie de l'Histoire : Géographie de la Paix et de la Guerre sur Terre et sur Mer. Par Jean Brunhes et Camille Vallaux. Pp. vi + 716. (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1921.) 40 frs. net.

Two distinguished French geographers have collaborated in producing a volume on the relations of geography and history, which is really a treatise on political geography. Rather more than half the volume is concerned with the principles of the subject, and the remainder with their application to current political and social problems, arising out of the redistribution of territory and alterations in frontiers after the war.

Beginning with the thesis that man is the chief geographical agent, since he can more effectively modify the surface of the earth than the physical agencies at work, the authors consider the distribution of man. Regions of dense population may be either zones of passive concentration where conditions favour increase in numbers but do not demand any great degree of effort in order to find nutriment, and zones of active concentration where man, reacting against conditions not wholly favourable, triumphs by the exercise of effort. In the first category are regions of high temperature with considerable atmospheric humidity and abundant surface water, like the Chinese river valleys or the Nile delta. In the second category are oceanic borderlands and islands in temperate regions where conditions entail some struggle against sea and climate but are not unpropitious. In this category also are the areas where temperate forest has to be cleared and where coalfields are exploited.

From these "facts of fixation" the authors pass to "facts of movement" and discuss the influences behind migration and human movements. Some of the most important chapters in the book are those which deal with the growth and stability of states and the positions favourable to sites of capital cities. In struggle, though not necessarily war, the authors see one of the essentials for the healthy life of a state. Struggle means growth, but a state of political and social equilibrium means stagnation and decay. We have no space to do justice to this volume, and have indicated only a few of the ideas it contains. Every step in the authors' arguments is abundantly illustrated by concrete examples. The only drawback to the book is its lack of lucidity in places. The style at times is more ponderous than one would expect from French writers. There are black and white maps and full indices.