

Supplement to NATURE

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Our Bookshelf.

Man in the Past.

Les origines de l'humanité. Par Prof. René Verneau. (Bibliothèque générale illustrée, 1.) Pp. 80+59 planches. (Paris: F. Rieder et Cie, 1926.) 15 francs.

To summarise adequately and in popular language the present position of our knowledge of the origin and development of mankind in a compass of less than eighty pages of not very small type, is a feat which is possible only to a master of his subject with a gift of lucid exposition such as Prof. Verneau. In this little book the uninstructed reader will find all that is essential for a thorough understanding of the elements of his subject and the bearing upon it of the geological and palæontological evidence. Nor has the author hesitated to deal with matters on which the views of experts differ. Even such questions as the antiquity of the Calaveras skull and the theories of Ameghino on the antiquity of man in South America are briefly discussed and the points at issue set forth. On the question of Neanderthal man, Prof. Verneau gives a succinct and carefully argued summary of the evidence upon which is based his own view that Neanderthal man is not an aberrant and extinct form, but stands in the direct line of descent as evidenced by atavistic types such as the Australian. Prof. Verneau's exposition is greatly helped by a very full series of remarkably well produced illustrations which alone would make this little book a possession to be desired by any archæologist.

Prehistoric and Roman Wales. By Dr. R. E. M. Wheeler. Pp. 229. (Oxford: Clarendon Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1925.) 18s. net.

WALES is a country, which presents many difficulties and many pitfalls to the student of prehistory. The evidence is often scanty and sometimes, when considered in relation to the succession of cultural periods elsewhere, entirely lacking; and both in its character and in its distribution it is frequently puzzling to interpret. In the present volume, Dr. Wheeler has essayed to weave a connected story out of this material and, within the limitations imposed by the nature of his data, he has been eminently successful. His views are sane and cautious, but at the same time inspired with an imagination which is kept under careful restraint by a keen appreciation of how far his facts are capable of carrying the proof of any suggested conclusions. As an example may be cited the skilful use of probable climatic and geographical conditions in explaining the character and distribution of the palæolithic implement in Wales, the emergence of the area as a meeting place of culture from east and west, and its final transformation into a true frontier province under the Empire. His word of caution in regard to the,

perhaps, too exuberant plotting of prehistoric trade routes is timely as well as characteristic. Amid so much that is excellent, a special commendation of the valuable summary and analysis of our present knowledge of Roman Wales may not be out of place.

Mystery Cities: Exploration and Adventure in Lubaantun. By Thomas Gann. Pp. 252+32 plates. (London: Gerald Duckworth and Co., Ltd., 1925.) 21s. net.

DR. GANN is well known as an explorer in the realms of Central American archæology, and needs no introduction. Those who have read his "In an Unknown Land" can have no doubt of his ability to describe his adventures in pursuit of scientific data with a graphic power and a humour which endear him to the hearts of his readers, while giving a sufficient account of his results to make his book of permanent value as a record. He here describes his journey of the season 1924-25 in British Honduras, first to explore mounds at Xunantunich and afterwards to Lubaantun, where he joined Lady Brown and Mr. Mitchell-Hedges, his fellow-concessionaires, and continued the work of a preceding preliminary reconnaissance.

One of the results of the journey, as is well known, was the discovery of the remarkable amphitheatre which has no parallel in the whole area once occupied by the Maya. It provided seating accommodation for at least 5000 people "or at a pinch possibly 10,000," and measures approximately 350 feet from east to west by 300 feet from north to south, the greater part of the space being taken up by seating and standing accommodation for the spectators of whatever was taking place in the arena. There is a pathetic interest in turning from Dr. Gann's description of the monuments of the ancient Maya to his account of their degenerate descendants of to-day, to whom he does more than justice.

Aspects of Psychology.

(1) *Education as the Psychologist Sees It.* By Prof. W. B. Pillsbury. Pp. ix+342. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925.) 8s. 6d. net.

(2) *Old and New Viewpoints in Psychology.* By Prof. Knight Dunlap. Pp. 166. (London: Henry Kimpton, 1925.) 10s. 6d. net.

(1) PROF. PILLSBURY aims at presenting a concise summary of the problems of the teacher as they appear to the psychologist. The first part deals with the statistical side of psychological research and the nature of intelligence. Then follows an account of the general psychological processes and laws helpful to the teacher, namely, instinct, habit, attention, reasoning. A chapter is devoted to feeling and emotion in relation to discipline. At the end of each chapter is a list of questions.