

## Short Reviews

## Anthropology

*At Home with the Savage.* By J. H. Driberg. Pp. x+267+16 plates. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1932.) 7s. 6d. net.

MR. DRIBERG'S "At Home with the Savage" is a remarkable book. It has an attractive title, it is popular in aim, and it contains nothing that the person of average intelligence should not be able to understand. Yet it is a book which has a very real significance from the point of view of science. Although the author expressly denies it the character of a textbook, it does, as a matter of fact, restate the subject matter of social anthropology from the point of view of the group of workers who study the activities of man as a member of a society in accordance with principles and methods which have come to be known as 'functional' anthropology.

A new orientation is given to the study of the peoples of the simpler cultures in which attention is diverted from questions of the origin or form of institutions and directed to consideration of how they actually work and what is their meaning and significance in a given environment. This concentration of anthropological studies on function was the subject of Prof. Radcliffe Brown's presidential address to the Anthropological Section of the British Association at its meeting last year, and has been demonstrated by Prof. Malinowski in a number of special studies; but Mr. Driberg's book is the first systematic statement of it as a whole on popular lines.

Its concrete treatment of the subject by the citation of a wealth of instances should convince the public for whom it is intended of the practical value of anthropological studies in the administration of the affairs of the native peoples of our dependencies. For this is a moral which the author never fails to point by pushing home the lesson of how difficulties may arise in these matters through the conflict of ideas as between ruler and ruled, and how they have, or might have, been avoided by a knowledge of anthropology.

It would perhaps be out of place in this notice to quarrel with Mr. Driberg for dismissing summarily branches of anthropology and methods of study other than those of his own school; yet perhaps even in support of his own point of view there might be something to say on the other side.

*Tribes of the Niger Delta: their Religions and Customs.* By Dr. P. Amaury Talbot. Pp. xi + 350 + 40 plates. (London: The Sheldon Press; New York and Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1932.) 18s.

IN this volume Dr. Talbot describes the peoples of the Degama Division of Nigeria, who, broadly, fall into two groups—the Ibo people of the north, representing the southern-most extension of that

great race, and the Ijaw, who occupy the swampy area intersected by innumerable streams along practically the whole coastal fringe, over a range of 250 miles. According to tradition, which Dr. Talbot apparently sees no reason to set aside, the whole of the latter area is sinking.

Be that as it may, the character of the environment has impressed itself very strongly on the culture of the Ijaw, which in many respects is of a markedly primitive character. One branch lives entirely by fishing and trading. These are the Kalabari, who at one time attained domination over the whole area owing to their proximity to the European slaver settlements. They now have practically a monopoly in the provision of dried fish, virtually a necessity in the dietary of the tribes. Another direction in which the influence of the environment is to be seen in a marked degree is the prominence of the water spirits in the religion of the Ijaw. The contrast with the culture of the Ibo is marked, though it is evident that there has been borrowing on the part of the latter. In his description of the customs and beliefs of the two groups, Dr. Talbot so far as possible has made use of evidence given by his native informants in practically their own words. Frequently it has been derived from his court records. This gives it an added value, especially in its revelation of the working of the native mind.

The photographs, as is usual in Dr. Talbot's books, are numerous and excellent, the subjects being chosen with a wise discrimination.

## Biology

*Handbuch der Pflanzenanalyse.* Herausgegeben von G. Klein. Band 1: *Allgemeine Methoden der Pflanzenanalyse.* Bearbeitet von R. Brieger, F. Feigl, P. Hirsch, E. Keyssner, G. Klein, H. Kleinmann, G. Kögel, H. Lieb, H. Linser, J. Matula, L. Michælis, C. Weygand. Pp. xii + 627. (Wien und Berlin: Julius Springer, 1931.) 69 gold marks.

THE principal distinctive feature of this work is its breadth of outlook. While books on biochemical method normally give in detail the methods required for the estimation of particular substances in a plant tissue, this, while not neglecting such details, is principally concerned with the general analysis of a plant tissue or a substance, and more particularly with the principles governing the choice of methods and the principles involved in their application. Even a person moderately well acquainted with biochemistry will receive something of a shock on realising from a book of this type the extraordinary range of methods now available as aids in analysis of one form or another. Ultra-filtration and ultra-microscopy may give valuable information; fluorescence and photochemistry are also called upon for assistance and there are useful chapters on micro-methods and