

with the absurd idea that a historical work should be an encyclopædia and mention everything, but quite seriously and with a sincere desire to have his considered judgment, if he would give it. Two contrasted cases, nearly contemporary, will make the point clear. L. Cornelius Sulla, "an aristocrat of fine culture and licentious manners", whose calculated butcheries came to nothing, receives three pages. Archimedes, one of the greatest and most constructive minds who ever lived, is not mentioned at all. Nor indeed are most of the men of similar type throughout the story.

Our object here, however, is not to set up a series of such unprofitable, almost inconceivable, comparisons. There is a much more substantial question involved to which Mr. Fisher himself alludes in his preface. He there says, with modest pathos, that he is not one of those "wiser and more learned" than himself who can discern in history "a plot or rhythm", and that for him there is "only one emergency following another, and that the ground gained by one generation may be lost by the next". Surely it is just here that the growth of organized knowledge comes in to supplement, correct and give a background to the political story with its inevitable breaks and contretemps. For knowledge grows and works, no doubt with temporary lapses, but never with any permanent loss of what has been secured. Nor is organized knowledge a separate thing which

can be left alone by the political historian to be treated by others. It enters intimately, continuously and with increasing dominance into the ordering of the life of the people, which we all agree is the main subject of history.

One consideration alone is sufficient to prove this in relation to the subject of Mr. Fisher's book. At the best period of the Roman Empire in Europe there was, it has been estimated, a population of some 70 million persons in the area, largely enslaved. There are now more than 400 millions, leading on the whole a peaceful and industrious life and all free—at least from legal slavery. It is the greatest and the most beneficent revolution which the world has seen and must be regarded as the goal of any history of Europe. Many causes have led the way. Better political organization is no doubt a large factor, and moral advance assisted by the Christian church and doctrine. But some of us hold that the organized knowledge of Nature, applied to industry, should have a leading place among the causes, and we look anxiously in any account offered to us for some recognition and analysis of this factor. It is not only essential to the understanding of the past, but it also gives to those disturbed by present events (among whom Mr. Fisher includes himself) a better standing towards the future. Here is the plot and the rhythm, and it is sadly to seek in this otherwise magnificent achievement. F. S. MARVIN.

Anthropology as it is

The Economics of Primitive Peoples

By Dr. Stephan Viljoen. Pp. 282. (London: P. S. King and Son, Ltd., 1936.) 12s. 6d. net.

WHEN first we set eyes on Negroes or Chinese men, their faces seem all alike. So do the minds of all non-Europeans. To the anthropologist, all men outside the trousered world are of one mental hue, called primitive. Since they are all one kind, what is true of one tribe can unhesitatingly be applied to all the rest from the North Cape to Cape Horn. If one is crassly conservative, all are (p. 30); if marriage is an extremely loose bond, say in Tahiti, it must be so in the Solomons; a place has been found where a woman's ambition is satisfied with presenting a son to her husband, so this is characteristic of all 'primitive' women.

Those who have had first-hand experience will demur at such generalizations and challenge the statements that lack of food leads to war (p. 75), that the arts and crafts are held in contempt by the men (p. 84), that primitives like to carry their

most precious possessions on their person (p. 233). He is sure to know at least one tribe that does not conform, and perhaps a great number. But it would not be fair to hold the author responsible for the initial fallacy and its inevitable consequences. He has not undertaken to speak from experience, but only to mirror faithfully the views generally accepted, or at least discussed, in anthropological departments, not on economics alone, but also on a large number of subjects slenderly connected, such as couvade, human sacrifice, birth rites, metal working, etc. This is a work that is needed, especially by students.

For this task, the author is well fitted. Free from sectarian prejudice, or even from very decided opinions of his own, he can be content to record impartially the views of the recognized authorities. Sensible when critical, widely tolerant and eclectic, he has selected his materials well, put them together lucidly, and produced a very readable manual of anthropology as it is in 1936.

A. M. HOCART.