

goes, down to the earlier half of the second millennium B.C. With commendable honesty, but also doubtless with results which will prove disconcerting to the novice in these studies, Mr. Carleton adds an appendix on the material in the tablets of Mari, discovered after the main body of his narrative was completed, and it was too late to make any drastic revision. Hence the chapters dealing with Hammurabi and the Babylonian dynastic history, at least in their chronology and its implications, must, he points out, be set aside as superseded.

A valuable feature of the book is an excellent summary of the evidence relating to the civilization of the Indus valley and discoveries at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, a subject on which too little provision has hitherto been made for the interests of the uninitiated.

If Mr. Carleton's narrative, excellent as it is, is open to criticism, it is due to the fact that it follows closely the tradition of earlier writers in devoting a preponderating attention to the personalities and achievements of the rulers, and to dynastic history, whereas recent studies have tended to show that the vital importance of Mesopotamia in the history of civilization lies in its contribution to the development of culture, rather than as a series of phases of 'history' in the narrower sense generally adopted.

#### Monographie des Betsileo (Madagascar)

Par H.-M. Dubois. (Université de Paris: Travaux et Mémoires de l'Institut d'Ethnologie, Tome 34.) Pp. xviii + 1510 + 10 plates. (Paris: Institut d'Ethnologie, 1938.) 275 francs.

**M**DUBOIS' monumental study of the Betsileo of Madagascar, running to more than fifteen hundred pages, is the product of thirty years' patient and careful observation conducted while the author was resident among them. Not only is it encyclopædic in scope, but also it may be regarded, as one critic has said, as indeed definitive.

M. Dubois has divided his work into four parts. In the first part he describes the geographical setting and considers racial history. In the second he deals with the individual, his life and the family and social environment in which it is passed. In the third he describes religious belief; and in the fourth art, language and literature.

In his discussion of general conclusions, M. Dubois makes no claim to have solved finally the problem of origins. His racial analysis of the population of Madagascar distinguishes four racial groups or influxes—Negrillo, Negro, Negroid and Indonesian. The Betsileo are to be assigned to the Negroid; but there is in them a strong strain of the earlier Negro and Negrillo stocks. Their economy is one of rice cultivation combined with cattle raising. Descent is patrilineal; and the sense of family solidarity is strong, centring in the cult of the ancestors as the founders of the family group. In essentials, however, the religious beliefs are fundamentally a doctrine analogous to the *mana* of the Pacific, demonstrated most emphatically in their taboo practices and their relations to chiefs.

#### African Genesis

By Leo Frobenius and Douglas C. Fox. Pp. 265. (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1938.) 12s. 6d. net.

**T**HIS volume contains a number of legends and folk-tales selected from the collections made by Dr. Leo Frobenius among the various peoples he has visited in his numerous expeditions in Africa for the purpose of studying prehistoric rock-engravings and paintings. Hence in geographical distribution they cover a wide field, ranging from North Africa to Southern Rhodesia, and ethnically include Kabyle, the Sudanese tribes, Hausa and in the south Wahunga and Bathonga. Most, but not quite all, have been selected for the light they may throw on the meaning and purpose of the rock-drawings and paintings. Thus in the Kabyle creation legends, the parts played by bull and ram explain the prominence of these animals in the art, while the raised arms of a human figure before the bull in a certain drawing is a sign of adoration, and not of panic as has been thought. It is interesting to find what would appear to be a trace of the influence of Egyptian royal marriage custom in these legends.

The stories are sufficiently varied in style and subject to please all tastes, and their literary merits on the whole are high. The Kabyle tale of the jackal and lambs, with the substitution of jackal for wolf, is identical with that in Grimm. "The Old Woman", a tale told by the Hausas, is a piece of stark realism; but the legends of the Sudanese, especially "Gasera's Lute" of the Soninke, and "Blue Blood" of the Fulbe have the epic quality of European medieval romance.

The illustrations are drawn from the rock art and there is a praiseworthy liberality in the matter of sketch maps. The translation is excellent.

## BIOLOGY

#### Flora of Assam

Vol. 3: Caprifoliaceæ to Plantaginaceæ. By U. N. Kanjilal, A. Las, P. C. Kanjilal and R. N. De. (Published under the authority of the Government of Assam.) Pp. x + 578. (Shillong: Forest Office, 1939.) 12 rupees.

**I**NDIA has need of provincial or regional floras, and the present volume is a welcome addition to the few existing ones. This is the third volume comprising the Gamopetalæ in the sequence of the "Genera Plantarum"; the previous volumes appeared during 1934-38.

The work has been carried out by four forest officers (the senior of whom was the author of "Forest Flora of the Jaunsar, etc., Forest Divisions", who died some years ago), under considerable difficulties as they have access neither to a good herbarium nor to an adequate library. This handicap becomes evident when one turns to nomenclature. The position is explained by the chief editor in the introduction. In some cases modern ideas have been adopted, in others the older authors have been followed. This will be confusing to users who cannot