Tissue culture is evidently a jealous mistress: Is it very unkind to suggest she is now a little past her prime?

Fischer's book does not claim to be a treatise, and it has not the fullness of documentation of a review. It is to be regarded as a series of essays by one of the great masters of tissue-culture technique on the problems most relevant to general biology. Fischer describes the sigmoid growth-curve of the culture, its limiting size, shape-regulation, and power of true reconstitutive regeneration. In these respects it reproduces the properties of the intact organism in miniature and accessible form, for a culture is indeed an organism, and no mere assemblage of individual cells. All biologists should read Chapters 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8, in which the relevance of tissue culture to general biology is made admirably clear. The later chapters are of more technical interest; one gives 'stop-press news' about the nature of 'embryo-extract'. The translation, by a Danish colleague, is grammatical but not always idiomatic.

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particular emphasis is laid on the interaction between the individual components of society and their place in the structure of the social and territorial groups. Much of the material dealt with is more complicated than most rural communities might be expected to show, an instance being that of the *kō* or co-operative credit clubs which combine the function of a co-operative credit bank with that of a lottery. This is no more a feature of a primitive society than Japanese painting or ceramics, and the description of this village community throws a fresh light on Japanese culture. A contrast to it is to be found in the religious observances of the village, the most important part of which seems to consist in a series of ritual observances closely bound up with the phases of the moon, and likewise in the seasonal occupations of the life of an agricultural village.

The author's general method of approach, which is in the most modern style of social anthropology, recalls a remark of Disraeli's somewhere to the effect that ultimately "it is private life that governs the world".

J. H. HUTTON

8/6 RURAL LIFE IN JAPAN

A Japanese Village: Suye Mura

By John F. Embree. (International Library of Sociology and Social Reconstruction.) Pp. xx+268+32 plates. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd., 1946.) 48s. net.

SOCIAL anthropology seems at present to be entering a state of transition from the study of purely primitive societies to that of the extremely complex societies which make up the civilized world. The technique developed in the study of primitives will clearly need modification if it is to serve the study of civilized communities.

Dr. Embree's "Japanese Village" is an excellent example of the way in which social anthropology is developing to-day. The author has selected a village to suit his purpose, a village that is small enough for him to deal with the whole population, ordinary enough not to differ in any striking particular from the general run of villages, a rice-growing village neither very rich nor very poor. This he has studied in detail. After briefly sketching in the general historical background, the author describes in the three succeeding chapters the organisation and population of the village as a co-operative agricultural unit; the individual household with its relationships, its daily life and its festivities; the various forms of co-operative activity undertaken by the village in routine, such as road-making, bridge-building or house-building, in emergency, in co-operative credit societies, or on the more social occasions of festivals and gift exchanges. These chapters are followed by three more dealing with social classes and associations, social sanctions and avoidances, with the life-history of the individual, and with religion and superstition, including a calendar of monthly observances. The last chapter deals with observable change at present taking place. Appendixes are added on the economic basis of village life, and on household expenses, and specimens of talks and lectures given at village meetings are included. There are a bibliography and index and sixteen pages of good photographs, while the text contains the necessary figures and maps.

It will be seen that the life of an inhabitant of Suye Mura is described in most of its aspects; but

9/6 GAME ANIMALS OF BRITAIN

British Game

By Brian Vesey-Fitzgerald. (The New Naturalist Series.) Pp. xv+240+72 plates. (London and Glasgow: Wm. Collins, Sons and Co., Ltd., 1946.) 16s. net.

IN this latest volume of the "New Naturalist" series Mr. Vesey-Fitzgerald sets forth to tell the general reader about the mammals and birds of the British Isles that are commonly called 'game'. The book is produced in the same handsome style as its predecessors and is illustrated by a number of excellent photographs, also by colour reproductions of old sporting prints, etc. The author's remarks on the history of game preservation in Britain are interesting. First he points out the probability that the Romans reared pheasants in England; but he also tells us that he cannot find any reference to a gamekeeper earlier than 1814, little more than one hundred and thirty years ago. As a fact, game preservation in the sense of the protection of pheasants, partridges and grouse for sporting purposes is a comparatively recent development in the life of the well-to-do countryman. Game preservation as regards the King's deer and so on was, on the contrary, much to the fore in the Middle Ages, when game laws and penalties were stringent. Game in some sense or other has long been an important factor in the country life of the British Isles.

The author is not content to deal merely with the game birds, those mentioned above and the capercaillie, black grouse, ptarmigan, red-legged partridge and quail, but writes entertainingly of wildfowl, that is, swans, geese and ducks, of the waders, including woodcock and snipe. Part 4 deals with "ground game and various", and part 5 with our three species of deer, while part 6 is devoted to the preservation of game. Among the illustrations to the ground game section is a photograph by Mr. G. B. Keary of a mountain hare in its form in the snow, which is a really remarkable snapshot.

It is somewhat ironical that an animal which provides perhaps more sport than any other British creature, namely, the fox, is always classed as vermin,