

Converts from Islam in Java

The magazine called *De Opwekker*, published in Java, contains exceedingly interesting material from month to month. In a recent issue we find statistics of the number of Christians and baptisms for the year 1928. It is astonishing to learn that there are more than a million indigenous Christians (Protestant) in the Dutch East Indies. The most fruitful work during recent years has been among the Battaks in Sumatra, and among the people of the Island of Nias, but it is Java that is of special interest to our readers, as the population of Java is principally Mohammedan.

Society	Total Christians	Increase	Missionaries	Native Workers
In West-Java (N. Z. V.)	4210	217	11	19
In Mid-Java (G. K.)	7585	707	8	83
(D. Z. V.)	1630	125	5	17
(Sal. Z.)	3230	241	11	28
In East-Java (N. Z. G.)	18574	1517	11	31
(I. C.)	5159	291	2	11
	40388	3098		

"A Preface to Morals"—A Moslem View

We think it will interest our readers who know this book, to read a review given from the standpoint of the liberal Moslem. This is what Mohammed Aslam, B. A. (Cambridge) says of it in *The Sunrise* (Qadian):

A PREFACE TO MORALS. By Walter Lippman. The Macmillan Co., New York. 348 pp. \$2.50.

"The problem that Mr. Lippman has set himself to solve in this book is the problem of those sceptical, un-adjusted, and un-oriented individuals who have lost faith in religion but who are anxious to save their moral instincts from decay. The problem is no doubt a very real one. Though religion, or certain forms of it, have been grounded in superstition, everybody will agree that religion has served and continues to serve to preserve our faith in moral values and to sustain the conviction that life is worth living and its ideals worth striving for. But now with the decay of religious faith occasioned by the extension of the intellectual realm of man, the decay of all that religion stood for and helped to preserve is equally threatened. The many men and women all over the world who regret the loss of their faith in religion, but who regret the loss of their faith in morality even more, are the people who have called forth this bracing intellectual effort on the part of Mr. Lippman. What he sets out to show accordingly is that morality can still be grounded in a satisfactory view of the world and that reasonable men and women can still have cause to carry on this moral struggle.

What measure of success the book is likely to have still remains to be seen. It may be read widely indeed, but will it help to relieve the vagueness and uncertainty of those who want something to stand on, to feel secure in the conviction that the moral struggle is worth while?

One of the cardinal points overlooked in the book is that man in practical life is an extremely suggestible creature and that this suggestibility may operate both positively and negatively in respect of a given ideal. It may rouse human beings to active imitation of the pre-

sented ideal, or it may turn them away from entertaining the ideal as at all worth contemplating. One of the reasons for the decay of religion and the concomitant decay of morality in the civilized world is that the Christian churches have no historic personality—a human personality that is to say—who should embody in a perfect, yet a convincing manner the ideals which human nature cherishes and which it considers worth living for. Jesus the centre of western religion is revealed in the available records of his life, as only a partial embodiment of human ideals. A good character, no doubt, but one which fails to exhibit the perfection of which the multifarious capacities of man are capable. It is certain that philosophy cannot save morality. If it could, our civilization would have solved its moral problems long ago. Only religion can. And religion itself would fail to do so except in so far as it can offer a human exemplar who embraces in his perfection one and all the different sides of human nature; who towers above all others yet strikes everybody as his own kith and kin—only such a religion can save morality.

Nowhere but in the person of the Holy Founder of Islam do we have a historic and human example of this ideal character.

Objectives in Western Arabia

In the April Number of the MOSLEM WORLD, Dr. Dame gives us a picture of the goal and difficulties of the work on the Persian Gulf coast of Arabia. This fascinating article mentions the western coast line as being still without a representative of the Gospel. It is.

On the Persian Gulf there are several centres, and while missionaries there agree that the occupation is inadequate, at any rate there is a living message going out to hundreds of Arabs every month. During a recent visit to some of those stations, one marveled that there could be any occupation, and even more at the strong, glowing message of life that was being given forth by doctor and *pādre*.

But in Northwestern Arabia the situation is different. Shortly after the British occupation, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, which had been for a quarter of a century in Palestine, was able to send missionaries to southern Transjordan. Stations were opened—important in themselves, but perhaps even more important as they enabled the missionaries to form contacts with the interior. It was hoped at that time that the line might be continued on to the south and into the East—to Hejaz and to Nejd. This has not yet been possible.

Literature has been sent in, and contacts formed with those Arabs who live in and about the centres of population in both these countries, but we have never been able to locate a missionary anywhere beyond the borders of Transjordan.

As we look around us we cannot see that we are nearer to occupying Northwestern Arabia than we were in 1925, yet we are really five years nearer, for Arabia must eventually be occupied—it is one of those nations to which “this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached for a witness.” And as we mark time on the border we look forward to that day—may it not be far distant—when we shall meet the missionaries from the Persian Gulf somewhere in Central Arabia.

Jerusalem.

W. F. SMALLEY.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Literary History of the Arabs. By Reynold A. Nicholson, M.A., Litt. D., F.B.A. Cambridge University Press, London, 1930. pp. xxxi, 506. 21s. net.

A Literary History of the Arabs by the Sir Thomas Adams Professor of Arabic and Fellow of Trinity College in the University of Cambridge, "celebrates its majority" by appearing in a second edition, dedicated to Professor A. A. Bevan, after having been reissued without alteration twice since 1907. The new edition has allowed the author to remove several mistakes from the original text and make other corrections and additions in an appendix as well as to bring his bibliography up to date.

The book is an introduction to the history of Arabian political, intellectual and religious ideas and events for young students of Arabic. There are sixteen pages of Introduction, ten chapters of Literary History, six pages of Appendix, a Bibliography of 128 European works, and a splendid Index. Three chapters deal with pre-Islamic Arabia, and the rest bring the story to the time of the first Wahhabi Reformation. The work does not claim to do equal justice to the whole field of Arabic literature, and omits the modern period entirely. It "is a sketch of ideas in their historical development rather than a record of authors, books and dates," and the aim is "to set forth what the Arabs believed rather than to examine whether or no they were justified in believing it."

Orientalists have devoted much time and labor to the collection, translation and appraisal of Arabic literature. Their task has been immensely facilitated by the work of Eastern authors, who have preserved the source material and have criticized after their own fashion what they collected. It is a commonplace of Islamics that traditions are unreliable, that history has been written to suit doctrine, that the literary sciences have been devoted to the service of a sacro-sanct Koran. Western scholarship has accepted some results of Eastern literary and historical research and gone beyond in others. Until a complete and balanced survey of Arabic literature, the historical genuineness, literary excellence and vital influence of the authors and their works appears, Professor Nicholson's book will remain the best volume in this field. It is as interesting as it is indispensable to its special class of readers.

EDWIN E. CALVERLEY.

Around the Coasts of Arabia. By Ameen Rihani. Constable, London. pp. XI and 364, 32 plates. 21s.

This is a book of travel and a distinctly disappointing one. From it we learn that an imaginative writer can see lovely color effects in the Red Sea, and that Hussein and his sons are tiresome and futile persons. The reader also learns, what apparently the author never has, that the whole game of politics in Arabia is a kaleidoscopic shifting of incidental trifles. The significant currents run underneath.

A flippant superficiality mars some really fine descriptive passages, and a disjointed fragmentation makes almost useless the very considerable information that in one place or another the book contains. The narrative would gain enormously in unity and coherence by a frank discussion of the purpose and results of these wanderings, even though later developments have shown the enterprise to have been as visionary as Ford's peace ship.

The book is tinged with an unreasonable dislike for the British, as on page 258, where they are stated to have slaves in their entourage, a statement which is utterly false, and on page 22, where the author complains that they failed to redeem their promise to help the Arabs achieve unity. It would be equally intelligent to criticize the Japanese for failing to achieve the union of the Catholic and the Christian Reformed churches in America.

The Orientalist whose interests have centered in Arabia will find this book of value. It contains a good deal of real, even though superficial, information. The general reader will get little out of it. If he buys it, he will not read it through.

P. W. HARRISON.

Music in Ancient Arabia and Spain; being *La Musica de las Cantigas*. By Julian Ribera. Translated and abridged by Eleanor Hague and Marion Leffingwell. H. Milford, Oxford University Press, London; Stanford University Press, 1929. pp. 283. \$7.50.

This volume is a translation. A notice of the original Spanish work appeared in our Quarterly. Although the Spanish text has been condensed, the work is in every sense complete, and is perhaps the fullest and best account of music in Arabia and Spain. The translator's Foreword gives the summary of a volume that will prove of the deepest interest to all who love Oriental music. "The first two chapters are introductory in character, and review previous publications in the field of Oriental music. Chapters iii, iv, v, and vi begin the historical portion, and cover the territory of western Asia, from the death of Mohammed to the decadence of the art, during the ninth and tenth centuries. Chapters vii and viii deal with the technical side of music during that period. Chapters ix, x, xi, and xii treat the subject of Arabic music in Spain and its evolution there. Chapter xiii describes the earliest known Spanish music that was written in easily understood notation, that of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and shows that this as a rule followed the classic Arabic models.

"The remainder of the book outlines Senor Ribera's method of attacking the problem of still more ancient songs, *Las Cantigas*, which because of their notation had always been supposed to be Gregorian music. His knowledge of Arabic models of the best period showed him that these songs fitted the Arabic patterns and in their turn became the models of much later music and verse. The whole book reveals sources of information hitherto unavailable, and puts many facts of musical history in a new light."

A large selection of Arabic rhythms is given in notation at the end, and the index is complete. Z.

Turkey and Syria Reborn. By Harold Armstrong. The Bodley Head Co., London. 15s.

In the publisher's advertisement of this book by Captain Armstrong it is described as "a dramatic narrative of many months of travel and