

# BOOK REVIEWS

Books in the principal European and the Indian classical languages are reviewed in THE MODERN REVIEW. But reviews of all books sent cannot be guaranteed. Newspapers, periodicals, school and college text-books, pamphlets, reprints of magazine articles, addresses, etc., are not noticed. The receipt of books received for review cannot be acknowledged, nor can any enquiries relating thereto answered. No criticism of book-reviews and notices is published.—Editor, THE MODERN REVIEW.

## ENGLISH

**FALL OF THE MUGHAL EMPIRE.** *By Sir Jadunath Sarkar. Vol. I, 1739-1754. M. C. Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta. Rs. 5.*

That Sir Jadunath Sarkar is fully qualified to write the history of any period of the Mughal Empire in India does not require to be pointed out afresh. In two volumes, of which the work under notice is the first, he has attempted to tell the story of the fall of the Mughal Empire from the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739 to the British conquest of Delhi and keepership of the puppet but still legitimate Padishah in 1803, and his attempt has been entirely successful. The work is written in a simple and attractive style, and the interest of the story is throughout sustained. Prof. Sarkar is the first historian to attempt to synthesize the Persian, Marathi, English, French, Hindi, Rajasthani and Sanskrit sources relating to this period of Indian history, which preceded the British period. He is right in holding that this "our immediate historic past, while it resembles a tragedy in its course, is no less potent than a true tragedy to purge the soul by exciting pity and horror. Nor is it wanting in the deepest instruction for the present. The headlong decay of the age-old Muslim rule in India and the utter failure of the last Hindu attempt at empire-building by the new-sprung Marathas, are intimately linked together, and must be studied with accuracy of detail as to facts and penetrating analysis as to causes, if we wish to find out the true solutions of the problems of modern India and avoid the pitfalls of the past."

The paper, printing and binding of the book are excellent.

**EVERYMAN'S DIARY, GHOSH'S DIARY (ENGLISH)** in three styles and sizes, and **GHOSH'S DIARY (BENGALI)**, for 1933. These are all published by M. C. Sarkar and Sons, Calcutta. They are neatly printed on good writing paper and, besides serving the purposes of diaries, contain much useful information.

**BEHULA, AN INDIAN MYTH.** *By Mrs. Sukhalata Rao. Illustrated with twelve water-colours by the authoress, reproduced in colours. With an Introduction by Rabindranath Tagore. Published by Karunabindu Biswas for U. Roy & Sons, 117-1 Bowbazar Street, Calcutta.*

The subject-matter of this book has been taken from Bengali books on Behula and the snake-goddess Manasa. It is well written and very neatly printed on good thick paper. The pictures by the authoress have been finely reproduced. As regards the story, Rabindranath Tagore writes in his introduction :

"Mrs. Sukhalata Rao has caught in the web of her story the spirit of the village epic of Bengal, Behula, which has sprung from the heart of our people and has lived in oral traditions and folk-lore, sung and performed by the local operative troupes of this province. It gives us the picture of the ideal wife, her heroic sacrifice and conjures the atmosphere of home life in its humble majesty, touching simple hearts with the beauty and depth of its sentiments.

"I feel sure that this English version of the story will find a large and appreciative audience."

**HINDUSTAN YEAR BOOK, 1933.** *By S. C. Sarkar. M. C. Sarkar and Sons, 15, College Square, Calcutta.*

This book of 171 pages is a "yearly hand-book of facts, information and statistics, etc., of India and the world," published for the first time. It is accurate, generally speaking. But there may be a few inaccuracies here and there. For instance, on page 11 Muslims are said to number 209,020,000 in the world, but on page 13 the total Muhammadan population of the world is given as 259,333,000.

**THE TIMES OF INDIA ANNUAL, 1933.** *Price Rs. 2.*

It contains many stories and articles, and pictures in colours and monochrome. It is an interesting annual. The paper and printing are good. We note that Sir Harcourt Butler, with his "vast" experience of India, in describing the *Ram-lila* at Allahabad



writes : "Finally came Rama and Lakshmi gloriously appalled in green, yellow and red..."

The reader must not suppose that by Lakshmi the writer means Sita, who is worshipped by Hindus as an incarnation of the goddess Lakshmi. For, a few lines below the above-quoted sentence come the words, "then various canopies ending up with one for Sita, wife of Rama, sitting under an asokh (*sic*) tree." It would, of course, be quite easy to suppose that that humble scapegoat, the printer's devil, has substituted "Lakshmi" for "Lakshman." But it is equally likely that the great Sir Harcourt himself is responsible for the laughable mistake.

#### BARODA ADMINISTRATION REPORT, 1930-31.

As interesting and informative, with its coloured map and coloured and black and white charts and graphs in addition to the text, as the reports for previous years. Strong cloth-binding.

TRAVANCORE ADMINISTRATION REPORT, 1930-31. Coloured map, and many charts and graphs. An interesting and informative hand-book, bringing out the progressive character of the State.

BARODA CENSUS REPORT, 1931. *Part I—Report.* By Satya Vrata Mukerjee.

BHAVNAGAR CENSUS REPORT, 1931. *Part I—Report: Part II—Imperial and States Tables.* By Ramanlal K. Trivedi.

These volumes of the Census of India, 1931, which are the first to reach our hands, are those of two Indian States. They are both elaborate and worthily produced, and will have to be consulted occasionally for years. We congratulate the governments of these States and Messrs. Mukerjee and Trivedi on being among the first in the field without sacrificing the authoritative character of the reports.

THE HISTORICAL INSCRIPTIONS OF SOUTHERN INDIA (collected till 1923) and *Outlines of Political History.* By Robert Sewell, Author of "A Forgotten Empire"; and *Edited for the University of Madras* by S. Krishnaswamy Aiyangar, M. A., Hon. Ph. D. Published, under orders of Government, by the University of Madras. Price Rs. 10 inland, 1 guinea foreign. With a map of South India.

This book is the last work of the late Mr. Sewell, who was an authority on historical chronology. It takes into account all the important historical inscriptions, published up to 1923, bearing on the history of South India. It is a more or less exhaustive digest of these documents so far as they are of any historical or chronological value. We have in the body of the work a reliable chronological basis, and on that basis a considered abstract of historical matter contained in the inscriptions of South India. Mr. Sewell has brought his vast reading to bear upon the work and thrown important light upon various points. It will prove very useful to all students of South Indian history.

MAHATMA GANDHI: SKETCHES IN PEN, PENCIL AND BRUSH. By Kanu Desai, with an *Essay by Father Verrier Elwin.* D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., Bombay.

The first edition of this excellent work was noticed in the last March number of this *Review*. Nothing more need be added to the praise bestowed on this work in that notice.

PORTFOLIO OF WATER-COLOURS. By Kanu Desai. D. B. Taraporevala Sons & Co., Bombay.

Mr. Kanu Desai's work as an artist is familiar to readers of this *Review*. They will find in the pictures reproduced in this portfolio much from which they can derive pleasure and profit.

REALM OF LIGHT. By Nicholas Roerich. New Era Library. Roerich Museum Press, New York. Price Three Dollars. With the "Roerich Banners of Peace" in colours.

Nicholas Roerich is an artist of great distinction, and an archaeologist, scientist, philosophic thinker, cultural leader and traveller to boot. He is a leading exponent of the movement for international unity through culture. The message contained in this book may well be summed up in the following words of his:

"You shall know that in that country, where Knowledge and Beauty will be revered, there will be peace. Let all ministers of war not be offended if they have to concede their priority to the ministers of public education. In spite of all homunculi who spy from their holes, you shall fulfil your duties of great Culture and you shall be fortified by the realization that only homunculi will remain as your enemies. Nothing can be nobler than to have the homunculi as your enemy. Nothing can be purer and more elevating than the striving for the future country of Great Culture."

RED RUSSIA. By Theodor Seibert. Translated by Eden and Cedar Paul. George Allen and Unwin Ltd., London. 15s. net.

For an indefinite period the Soviet Russian system will probably control a quarter of the world, will strongly influence another quarter, and will perhaps be a thorn on the side of the remaining half. Hence, it is necessary to have reliable information relating to this country. Much information of this description is contained in this book. The author is a practised journalist and can hold the reader's attention. He spent four years in Russia as representative of three important German newspapers. Speaking Russian fluently, he was not under the necessity of hearing through the ears of interpreters, who might or might not be trustworthy. He travelled widely, and he had no axe to grind, being neither socialist nor anti-socialist, neither Marxian, nor anti-Marxian—but a shrewd observer, both independent and critical. His summing up is against the Bolshevik system, especially as it has developed since Lenin died and Stalin rose to power; but he holds that in many respects Bolshevism has transformed Russia more effectively and more speedily than any other influence could have done; and he has much that is of profound interest to say about the relations between Soviet Russia and the western world.

REVIEW OF RURAL WELFARE ACTIVITIES IN INDIA, 1932. By C. F. Strickland, C. I. E. With a preface by Sir Francis Younghusband and a foreword by Lady Irwin. Oxford University Press. London. Price Re. 1.

It is a booklet of 58 pages of small size. It professes to describe what Government, Christian missionary bodies, and indigenous non-official agencies are doing to promote the welfare of Indian villagers. Though it cannot be said that the account is certainly unbiassed throughout—Rabindranath Tagore has shown in the last issue of this *Review* that it i