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ASIA.

SYRIAN SKETCHES.

'The Desert and the Sown.' By Gertrude Lowthian Bell. London: Wm. Heinemann. 1907. *Price 16s. net.*

This volume appeals primarily to the human and the antiquarian instincts. Most travellers have suffered at times from their inability to converse easily with the inhabitants of the region they were traversing. Miss Gertrude Bell has the rare qualification of being fluent both in Persian and Arabic. Besides a keen enjoyment of travel, she has a very thorough sympathy with oriental modes of life, thought, and speech. She has, further, a talent for reproducing with convincing and dramatic effect her conversations with her hosts or companions of the road. Consequently, the reader, before he finishes her volume, will know more about Syrian character, the life of the desert and the mountain, than he might gather from half a dozen ordinary travellers' diaries. There may not be much new geography, in the strict sense of the word, in her pages, but they contain most graphic landscapes—pictures of a Syrian spring, its frosts and flowers, of the wide cornlands of the Hauran, the lava labyrinths that have flowed from the dead volcanoes of the Jebel Druz, and the bleak uplands of the valley of the upper Orontes. Miss Bell's Syrian travels extended from Jerusalem to Alexandretta, and led her through many wild districts and to not a few unvisited or little-known sites.

Crossing the Jordan, she journeyed first round the eastern slopes of the Jebel Hauran. In this region, on the edge of the desert, the ancient feud between Druse and Arab runs its perpetual course. Flocks and herds, as in the days of Job, are swept off by Arab marauders; the mountain villagers plan a foray of revenge. The author gives a most picturesque description of how at Salkhad, the old fortress that looks out east over the unbroken plain and the paved Roman highway to the Euphrates, she found herself joining in a moonlight dance of Druzes preliminary to one of these forays.

From Damascus, where Miss Bell saw much of Eastern life, she went north past Baalbek to Homs, Aleppo, and Antioch, visiting on the way many of the wonderful ruins of Roman cities, Christian fifth and sixth century churches, and crusaders' castles, that are scattered over northern Syria, silent witnesses to the extent of ancient civilization and of Mohammedan destruction. Her pages may inform the general reader, to whom the works of De Vogüé and later explorers, German and American, are unknown, of the existence of a classical church architecture, dating from at least A.D. 372, based on the use of the arch, and anticipating in many of its features the Western Romanesque. It was largely employed for domestic as well as for ecclesiastical uses. Combining Roman strength in construction with oriental delicacy in detail, and showing great power of adaptation, it has a dignity and charm which photographs fail adequately to convey. Its full development was cut short by the Arab invasion while it was still a living art, and its relics, scattered over desert lands, impress the traveller with a sense of the impermanence of empires and even of civilization itself.

Miss Bell has added to the catalogue of ancient sites and copied fresh inscriptions. But it is as a living picture of the present state of Syria and a fascinating glimpse into the mind of the East that her book will be most widely read and valued.

The illustrations are numerous and good. In a few instances, however, they seem to have been chosen on the principle "when you have not what you want, use what you have;" and there is consequently a divergence between them and the letterpress. Thus the beautiful temples of Kunawat on the western slope of the

Jebel Druz, visited by Miss Bell in a previous journey, but not described here, are largely depicted. A map which combines much recent topographical work adds value to the volume, which has also a good index. Need its paper have been so heavy and glossy?
D. W. F.

EARLY CARTOGRAPHY OF THE EAST.

'Studi Italiani di Filologia Indo-Iranica diretti da Francesco L. Pullé.' Anno 5, vol. 5. La Cartografia antica dell' India. Parte II. Il Medio-evo Europeo e il Primo Rinascimento. Firenze: 1905. *Atlas, separate. Price 20s.*

Another instalment of this useful work is cordially to be welcomed. The geographical knowledge of the Middle Ages, especially in relation to India, is here treated in considerable detail, mainly from the cartographical point of view; and illustrations (of somewhat unequal degrees of merit) are given of portions of many of the chief mediæval maps, from the eighth century onwards. The clarified reproductions of the Orient from the *De Statu Saracenorum* of William of Tripoli, from the *Laurentian Portolano* or *Atlante Mediceo*, from the Turin and British Museum *Beatus* maps, from the Paris manuscript of Lambert of St. Omer, and from Henry of Mainz ("Enrico da Magonza"), are deserving of special notice; so is the representation of Dante's conception of the same regions, and the whole treatment of the Catalan Atlas of 1375, especially in comparison with the Catalan maps of Florence and Modena. On the other hand, the treatment of the Albi, Cotton, St. Sever, and Hereford maps, of Guido's design of 1119, and of the Wolfenbüttel manuscript of Lambert of St. Omer (see pp. 8, 11, 18, 22, 39, and *Tavola D*) is not equally successful. Will Count Pullé allow me to beg him, in a second edition, to give references to the manuscript authorities, especially the manuscript designs, here chiefly utilized? Thus on p. 14, 'Il Paradiso al posto dell' India nel cod. del Museo Britannico,' needs supplementing by the proper reference—*Additional MSS., 11,695, fols. 39 v.-40 r.* Again, may I draw his attention to the erroneous spelling, as in Konrad Miller, of *Beaven* for *Bevan*, the vicar of Hay, whose study, conjointly with Phillot, on the Hereford map, has been of service to so many students (see p. 38)? The author will doubtless wish to harmonize the forms *Oderico* and *Odorico* on pp. 52, 53, as they both refer to one and the same Friar Odoric of Pordenone. *Rubrouck*, rather than *Ruysbroek* (p. 47) is surely the proper local form of Rubruquis' name—as the great traveller's origin is pretty certainly not Brabantine, but from the modern French Department of the Nord, and from *Rubrouck*, in the neighbourhood of Hazebrouck.

I cannot follow the author in his *double* Genoese expedition, in connection with the Vivaldi family, of 1281 and 1291 (p. 65), depending as it does upon the full acceptance and stern pressing of every detail in the late and rather doubtful fifteenth-century authority Antoniotto Uso di Mare, who may easily be reconciled with the primary and contemporary witnesses by the admission of some slight inaccuracies. Citations of English should be carefully revised, to avoid passages such as "*Thirt* edition . . . with a *memory* of H. Yule" (p. 112). And would it not be better to quote Luke Wadding's *Annales Minorum* by its proper Latin title, rather than as if it were an Italian work (*Annali dei Minoriti*, p. 93); not to convert the *Fontes Rerum Bohemicarum* into *Fontes Rerum Bohemorum* (p. 94); and to give, for the Catalan Atlas of 1375, its proper numbering in the Bibliothèque Nationale—*Armoire X., No. 11, Espagnol 30*—rather than its place in Morel Fatio's Catalogue (p. 110)? Lastly, I may remark that the oldest mediæval map is not that in the St. Gall Isidore of about 680–700 (p. 5), but is the mosaic design of about 550, portraying parts of Palestine and Egypt with such surprising accuracy, rediscovered in 1896 at Madaba, in Moab.

C. R. B.