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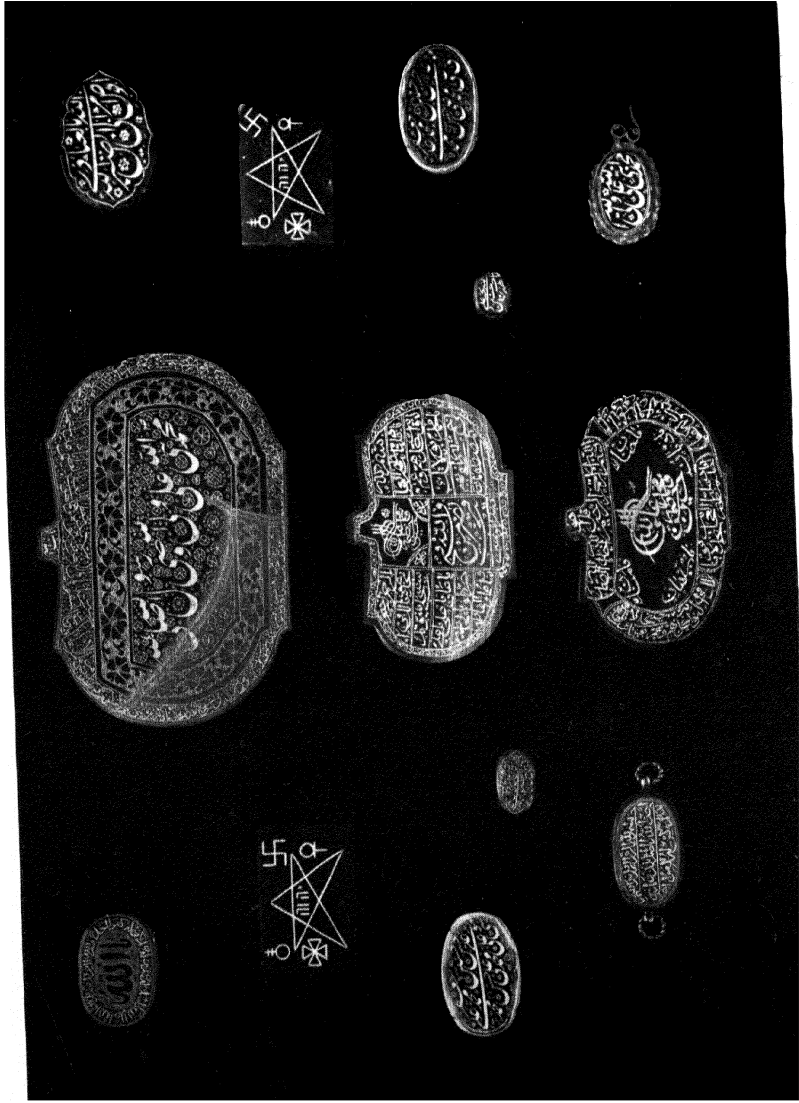
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REVIEWS, NOTES, NEWS.

Few Englishmen had so intimate a knowledge of China as Professor **W. E. Soothill**, who died at Oxford recently, after a long illness. He was 74, and lived among the Chinese as a missionary for a quarter of a century.

He was amused at many popular misconceptions, most of all at the belief that the Chinese are deeply mysterious. He attached no importance whatever to their inscrutable expressions, for he always found them to be like ordinary Englishmen.

Nor did he find any evidence that their ancient civilisation was superior to ours, as is so often contended. He did not think that China ever had better foundations for philosophy and science than the West.

Born in Halifax, Professor Soothill went out to China in 1882 as a Methodist missionary at Wenchow, and in his great work of establishing churches, a hospital, a college and schools he was helped remarkably by his wife, who died four years ago.

Some years after his return to England he was appointed Professor of Chinese at Oxford University, and in many other capacities he was active. During the war he was director of the religious work of the Y.M.C.A.

A member of the Royal Asiatic Society, he was also a Crown representative on the governing body of the School of Oriental Studies. He wrote several books on China.

“**Durūs fi'l-lughat al-'Ibriyyah.**” By **Menahem Naor**. Jerusalem, 1935. Dr. Menahem Naor's well-known “*Praktisches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache*” has here been adapted for Arabic-speaking students. That a need for such a book should have arisen testifies to the rapid progress which the Hebrew language has made in Palestine. Just as the Jewish student finds a knowledge of Hebrew most helpful and illuminating in his study of Arabic, an Arab student will find a knowledge of his own language invaluable in learning Hebrew. The hope may also be expressed that the cultural relations between these two great members of the Semitic family may be improved by a mutual understanding of each other's language and literature. For there is no more potent instrument of good will between nations than a knowledge of each other's culture and traditions.

While the rules and explanations could do with a good deal more expansion, the exercises deserve nothing but praise. They are interesting,

lively and varied; and they have the great merit of ceaseless and unrelenting repetition—the only way of mastering a language.

We notice one mistake in the Arabic introduction, which should be corrected in future editions. Not *all* Semitic languages read from right to left, the exceptions being Accadian and Ethiopic.

“**Introduction to Semitic Comparative Linguistics.**” By **Louis H. Gray**. Columbia University Press. Professor Gray has sought in this book to apply the principles of Indo-European linguistics to Semitic languages. By dint of much compression he has been able to cover this enormous field in the space of some 120 pages (excluding the bibliography and indexes). The merit of this book lies in its many stimulating suggestions and in the author’s capacity for independent thinking in a subject of such vast range and great difficulty. Unfortunately, Semitic philology has not yet reached the same degree of certitude and definiteness as the Indo-European group of languages. One must, therefore, walk warily in dealing with the former group. Professor Gray’s evocation of a Proto-Semitic language, which he includes in his comparative tables, is hardly likely to command the unqualified approval of Semitologists. In our present state of knowledge, Proto-Semitic must still remain a shadowy simulacrum. We hope that Professor Gray, having given us an outline of the subject, will now proceed to a larger work, which will contain the reasoned arguments for his many interesting and stimulating theories.

“**Dara Shikoh.**” By **Kalika-Ranjan Qanungo**, M.A., Ph.D., Reader in History, University of Dacca. With a foreword by **Dr. R. C. Majumdar**. There is no more romantic or interesting figure among the later Mughal Princes than Dara Shikoh, the favourite son and heir of Shah Jahan; and it is somewhat strange that no one has hitherto attempted his biography in English.

Dr. Qanungo has evidently taken great trouble over his book, the first part of which is concerned with Dara’s life, while the second will contain his literary and political correspondence, with extracts from his translation of the Upanishads—the greatest of his numerous literary achievements.

Dr. Qanungo has a clear narrative style, and he does not allow the intensely dramatic life of his subject to deflect him from his historical purpose. In his account, for instance, of Dara’s brutal murder by Aurangzeb’s orders, he is inclined to disbelieve some of the details given by Manucci, such as the story of the severed head being sent to Shah Jahan.

A great part of the book is rightly taken up with Dara’s spiritual life and intellectual pursuits. The obvious comparison with Akbar is examined, and the author—correctly, we think—observes that in spite of a common leaning towards speculative thought, their mental traits were in sharp contrast. Their aims were, however, similar, and though Dara’s character hardly fitted him for difficult reconciliations, he was “the central figure of a great movement for the adoption of Islam to the spiritual traditions of India”—a movement which, incidentally, is still perceptible.

“**Book of Ram. The Bible of India.**” By **Mahatma Tulsidas**. Rendered into English by **Hari Prasad Shastri**. Luzac and Co., London, 1935. Mr. Shastri, in estimating the position of Tulsidas’s “*Rāmāyaṇa*” in Hindu literature, invites us to picture what it would mean to Christendom if Shakespeare had composed a book of “flawless historic and ethical teachings, confirmed to be the life story and direct utterance of Jesus Christ.” The parallel is a striking one, and explains the peculiar veneration in which the

epic is held among the Hindus, learned and unlearned alike, of Northern India—a veneration based both on the story and the poetry. To know something of both is essential to an understanding of the soul of Hinduism, and it is surprising that the poem is not better known to English readers, in spite of the fact that it has been translated. Its immense length is, of course, the reason, though this difficulty has been partly overcome by Dr. Mac Fie.

Mr. Shastri's little book confines itself to extracts containing the ethical and philosophical teachings, with an introduction and explanatory notes. The translations are clear and idiomatic, and the book is admirably printed and produced.

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