Taking the whole symposium as a unit, we have here a vast store of material from which the superfluous has been eliminated. The book is packed with facts, based on wide research, and presents a clear and straightforward picture of its subject. But it must be admitted that many details are not new and have appeared in other forms in the English language. On the other hand, there is no other publication in the field that can boast of such a convenient compilation in one volume.

In spite of its excellency of approach and treatment, the publication has one serious defect. The collaborating authorities are or have been either state ministers of agriculture or officials high in the national agricultural administration. Their official connections were probably the reason for their failure to treat adequately the chapters dealing with the participation of peasants in politics. For example, there is not even a mention of Stambuliski in connection with Bulgaria, and the whole subject of the Agrarian party in that country is disposed of in 19 lines.

A minor criticism can be directed against the many misspellings. Thus on page 136 "Bradlik" should be spelled "Brdlik" and "Vozenilek" substituted for "Vozeneilez." But in spite of its defects the work provides an illuminating prelude to any study of the Central Europe of today.

JOSEPH S. ROUCEK

MODERN AND ANCIENT ARABIA


HANS HELFRITZ. Chicago der Wüste. 176 pp.; map, ills. Reimar Hobbing, Berlin, 1932. 9 x 6½ inches.


H. ST. J. B. PHILBY. The Empty Quarter; Being a Description of the Great South Desert of Arabia Known as Rub' al Khali. xxiv and 432 pp.; maps, ills., index. Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1933. $4.00. 9 x 6 inches.

In "Ha'dramaut" Mr. van der Meulen, formerly chargé d'affaires for the Netherlands at Jidda, entertainingly narrates a six weeks' journey in southern Arabia in the spring of 1931 in company with Dr. von Wissmann as cartographer (see also D. van der Meulen: Into Burning Hadramaut. Natl. Geogr. Mag., Vol. 62, 1932, pp. 387-429). Von Wissmann, whose interpretation of the physical geography of Arabia has already been noted in these columns (Geogr. Rev., Vol. 23, 1933, p. 332), contributes "the first map [1 : 250,000] of Ha'dramaut, based on measurements and surveying." (It may be noted parenthetically that the earliest Occidental traveler's journey in Ha'dramaut of which we have a record was that of the Portuguese Jesuit, Pero Paez, in 1590. See A. Kammerer: Le plus ancien voyage d'un occidental en Hadramaout (1590) . . . . Bull. Soc. Royale de Géogr. d'Égypte, Vol. 18, 1933, pp. 143-167.)

The interior of Ha'dramaut is a land of high plateaus, which attain a maximum elevation of 7088 feet. Horizontal strata of sedimentary rocks are capped by limestones over wide areas. The upland surfaces, known as djīl, are desolate to an extreme, but, as in northern Arizona and New Mexico, the plateaus are dissected by ramifying, steep-walled canyons, on whose floors the settlements lie. The towns are compactly constructed. Most of the houses, typical of the distinctive architecture of southern Arabia, rise to heights of four or five stories, and some of the palaces are even loftier, reaching heights of ten to fourteen stories. Hans Helfritz,
a young German who visited Ḥaḍramaut shortly after the journey of Van der Meulen and Wissmann, likens the town of Shibām, with its towering buildings, to a "Chicago of the Desert." Helfritz's volume is essentially a collection of photographs of rare distinction. Some of these illustrate the remarkable architecture of the Ḥaḍramaut towns; others are striking "close-up" portraits of typical townsfolk and Bedouins. In 1933 Helfritz made a notable trip from Wādī Ḥaḍramaut across the fringes of the desert to Saʿīn in Yemen (Petermanns Mitteilungen, Vol. 79, 1933, p. 307).

Until Van der Meulen's expedition the interior of Ḥaḍramaut could still be classed among the least-known settled regions of Arabia. The visits of earlier Europeans number hardly more than half a dozen. This neglect, resulting in part from the fanaticism of the people and in part from the divided authority of their rulers, seems doubly remarkable when we consider that, of all peoples of Arabia save the Meccans, the Ḥaḍrami are probably the most prosperous and maintain the closest contact with the outside world. They have emigrated in large numbers to the East Indies, where some of them have amassed fortunes. A Ḥaḍrami of high rank is, or has been, owner of the Grand Hôtel de l'Europe in Singapore. Many of the emigrants return to their native canyons to live at ease and in comparative luxury during their declining years. Here they have built handsome palaces amidst well kept gardens. At Shibām and Terim swimming pools have been constructed, one fed by water pumped from 45 feet below the surface by a Deutz motor. Automobiles belonging to the wealthy sayyids, or descendants of the Prophet, are a common sight not only in the coast town of Makalla but also in the isolated oases of the Wādī Ḥaḍramaut. At the time of Van der Meulen's visit an automobile road was under construction connecting Terim with the port of esh-Shīr. To maintain friendly relations an agreement was concluded with the Bedouins whereby the road is to be used for passenger traffic only, all freight to be carried by the camels of the nomads.

It is a far cry from this Arabia of today to the Arabia of the late Professor Dougherty's book. Cuneiform inscriptions make frequent mention of conflicts between the Babylonian and Assyrian kings and the powerful rulers of a region known as the Sealand. From the time of Sargon of Agade (twenty-sixth century before Christ) until the conquest by the Persians (539 B.C.) "the Sealand had to be reckoned with, at least periodically, in Babylonian and Assyrian affairs." The Chaldean (or Neo-Babylonian) empire, which destroyed the power of Assyria toward the end of the seventh century, was apparently of Sealand origin. The orthodox view among Assyriologists has been that the Sealand was a small strip of country comprising the marshes around the head of the Persian Gulf. Dougherty argues that a much larger area must be postulated adequately to account for the continued strength that the Sealanders manifested throughout two millenniums. He presents a new thesis—that the Sealand included not only the vicinity of the Persian Gulf but also a large part of northern Arabia. In support of this he brings together scattered historical evidence supplemented by geographical evidence to the effect that northern Arabia in early historical times was a better watered and more productive country than is now the case and that the Persian Gulf may have extended into this region. However we may regard the historical argument, some of the geographical evidence certainly seems a little strained. The finding by Philby of Jurassic marine fossils can have no real bearing on the case, nor does the fact that Doughty, Philby, and other travelers liken the sand dunes of the deserts to waves of the sea seem to support in any substantial way the argument that Arabia may have been called "Sealand." Professor Dougherty was an adherent of Caetani's view that "considerable variation in climate has been a definite factor in the history of Arabia." This may be true, but the opinion has not gone unchallenged, notably by Musil, to whose discussion of the subject Dougherty makes no reference (Alois Musil: The Alleged Desiccation of Arabia and the Islamic Movement, in his "Northern Nejd," Amer. Geogr. Soc. Oriental Explorations and Studies No. 5, New York, 1928, pp. 304–319).
In "The Empty Quarter" H. St. J. B. Philby tells the story of his great expedition through the northern part of Rub' al-Khali in 1932. This has already been commented on in the Geographical Review (Vol. 23, 1933, pp. 332–333). The volume includes notes by members of the staff of the British Museum and others on the geological and biological collections made in the course of the journey. Perhaps the most striking single discovery was that of fragments of silica glass in unprecedentedly large quantities about the meteorite craters of Wabar. This glass was produced by the fusion of desert sand resulting from heat generated by the impact of the falling meteoritic masses.

THE GEOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

THE GEOGRAPHY OF CHINA


"China's Geographic Foundations" is a sincere and useful contribution to geographical literature. Its author has lived a number of years in China and has traveled through most parts of the country. He has acquired a genuine feeling for the quality and continuity of its life: "a long moving picture . . . . The Chinese landscape is vast in time as well as in area . . . . More human beings have probably lived on the plains of China than on any similar area on Earth. Literally trillions of men and women have made their contribution to the contour of hill and valley and to the pattern of the fields. The very dust is alive with their heritage." The chapter on "The Geographical Landscape," from which this quotation is taken, and five other general chapters provide an introduction to the main body of the book—the description of the fifteen regions into which Dr. Cressey divides the country. Among outstanding features are the illustrations: 197 numbered figures, the greater number photographs well selected and well reproduced, and a physiographic diagram in color on a scale of 1:12,120,000. There are 36 tables, including a valuable statistical summary with data worked out by geographical regions. Use has been made of recent work in many fields—C. F. Shaw's work on soils, J. Lossing Buck's studies in agricultural economics, the mineral researches of the Geological Survey of China, the meteorological studies of Coching Chu and Father E. Gherzi, for instance. The chapter on topography is somewhat perfunctory; the section on the mechanics of China's climate contains that unfortunate expression of the "partial vacuum"; there is a perhaps inevitable tendency to the encyclopedic; but the volume as a whole is praiseworthy in its conception and execution.

"The Ordos Desert of Inner Mongolia" deals monographically with a part of one of the fifteen regions (the Central Asiatic Steppes and Deserts). The area, nearly the size of New England, is enclosed between the Great Wall and the great bend of the Yellow River. It is, perhaps, specially interesting on the human side as a borderland of Chinese agricultural penetration, and Dr. Cressey has a good deal to say on the "Sons of Han in the Land of Grass." The entire Mongolian borderland is an area of precarious agriculture. Irrigation can modify but one of the unfavorable factors of the environment, and on un-irrigated fields harvests are conditioned upon favorable precipitation. Except for the districts along the Hwang Ho, the agricultural possibilities of the region are rigorously limited." The caption of one of the