will be shortly cleared up by the Japan Branch of the Asiatic Society.

I now turn to Dr. Chalmers. The exhaustive comparison which he demands is already published. The Japan Branch, which is much more accommodating to my whims than its cumbrous and snail-like *confrère* of Shanghai, has secured the morsel, and I am already spoiling for the fights which are to come from the Japan quarter of the globe.

Corean next demands my attention; and Mr. James Scott, the ablest of Corean scholars, is already moving uneasily about in Söul wondering what will be my *dictum* on his coming work, the proofs of which he jealously 'surrepts' from my gaze. I may inform Corean scholars, however, that Mr. Scott's work will be a very honourable monument of patient study, and patriotic Scotchmen should unloose their usually tight purse-strings and put in their subscriptions without loss of time.

E. H. PARKER.

NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS

AND LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

Journal Ch. Br. R. A. S. for the year 1884 (sic). New Series, Vol. XIX, Part II. Shanghai, 1886.

The contents of this number of the Northern Royal Asiatic Society's Journal are made up of an essay by Mr. C. Imbault-Huart on the life and works of Yüan Tseu-ts'ai and by an essay on the Serica of Ptolemy from the pen of Mr. T. W. Kingsmill.

Mr. Imbault-Huart's paper, written in French, goes virtually over the same ground which is covered by the work of the same author published under the same title in the course of last year. It is, however, a valuable addition; as the published volume could not give the Chinese characters here partially supplied. We venture, nevertheless, to express our regret that this valuable article has not been published in the Society's Journal in an English dress If it was worth reading before the Society and worth publishing in its Journal, it surely was also worth translating.

As to Mr. Kingsmill's article, it is interesting reading and deals with an interesting subject. It is also enriched with a sketch map of Central Asia, shewing the localities which Ptolemy is supposed to have assigned to Serica and Scythia. Mr. Kingsmill complains at the outset that 'we still find Chinese students writing of the Hiung-nu as Huns, of the Yueh-ti as Getae or Massagetae, of the Tahia as Dahae etc.' We confess we belong in a certain sense ourselves to this class of benighted scholars, but the reason, why we have not yet been able to see things in Mr. Kingsmill's light, is not far to seek. The fact is we are not satisfied as to the reliability of his quotations and translations, let alone his arguments and conclusions. A single illustration will suffice to indicate what we mean. After bringing forward this complaint and stating that it is not sufficient to consult Chinese writings only, but that it is necessary also to consult Greek and Latin and other writers, Mr. Kingsmill proceeds to quote Ptolemy, but does it as follows. 'His 6th Book, in the 15th and 16th chapters, treats of Scythia without the Imaus and of Sêrica. *I shall give a literal translation of what he has to say* (the Italics are ours).

Scythia beyond Imaus is bounded on the West by inner Scythia and the Sacae along *the whole diversion of the mountains towards the north; on the North by the unknown* land; on the East by Sêrica along a straight line the extremities of which are situated respectively in E. Long. 150° N. Lat. 63° and Long. 160° Lat. 35°; on the South by part of India beyond the Ganges along a parallel line joining the aforesaid extremities.' If the foregoing sentence is, as it claims to be *a literal translation* from Ptolemy, we give it up, and all we have to say then is that Mr. Kingsmill ought to explain, if he can, how Ptolemy, 1800 years ago, came *to know* of the Longitude of Greenwich, or state where, in the above quotation, Ptolemy ends and Kingsmill begins.

E. J. E.

華洋合歷便覽 or *Chronology and the Construction of the Calendar*, with special regard to the Chinese computation of time compared with the European. By Dr. H. Fritsche, Director Emeritus of the Imp. Russian Observatory at Peking. St. Petersburg, 1886.

This is a lithographed edition of lectures which Dr. Fritsche originally gave to the students of the Peking College, but which will prove a welcome boon to all students of Chinese. The subjects the book deals with are the Chinese measures and methods of computing *time, the solar day, the week, the month*, the year, the solar and lunar cycles, the Julian period, the Chinese year, Chinese and European chronological dates, the Calendars of the most important nations, formulae for the calculation of the rising and setting of sun, moon, planets and fixed stars, and finally eclipses of the moon and the sun. Appended to these treatises are two series of tables, one giving an Anglo-Chinese Calendar for the period commencing with 1624 A.D. and closing with A.D. 1921, and the other giving a chronological table of the successive Chinese Emperors and *Dynasties from 2852 B.C. down to A.D.* 1875. To pronounce on the scientific value of most of the foregoing treatises is entirely beyond our powers, but we have no doubt that these articles will afford much light to the patient student of Chinese astronomy. As regards the Calendar which occupies a considerable portion of the book we have no hesitation in saying that it will supersede all the existing Calendars and form the basis of *future publications on the subject.* This Calendar is of most practical utility, especially at this moment when Anglo-Chinese Calendars are in a great state of confusion. Since Loureiro's Calendar (1776-1876) was continued by Mayers (1860-1869) and Mayers' Calendar (subsequently brought down to 1879) was continued by Playfair (1880-1891), most Sinologists have been using this series of Calendars with perfect reliance upon their accuracy. Of late years, however, there have been marked discrepancies between the Calendars issued by the Astronomical Board in Peking (and with frequent errors reprinted in the Provinces) and the Calendar of Mr. Playfair. Contracts and Government regulations have been made in Hongkong fixing (in Chinese terms) certain dates in advance for important purposes on the basis of Playfair's Calendar, and again and again inconvenient discrepancies have turned up between the Calendar dates as observed by the Chinese people and the dates fixed by Playfair's Calendar. It will be practically useful, under these circumstances, if we note here the corrections which Dr. Fritsche, a professional astronomer, enables us, by his tables, to make in the tables of Mr. Playfair. Dr. Fritsche, referring (p. 52) to a certain error in the Wan-nien-shu says, 'this error of the Wan-nien-shu has been transferred to the *Anglo-Chinese Calendar from* 1880 A. D. to 1891 A. D. by G. M. Playfair, Esq., wherein, therefore, all dates after January 26th 1884 A. D. are wrong.' But having, for practical purposes, compared Playfair's and Fritsche's tables throughout, we find there are other discrepancies. Those

of our readers who are in the habit of constantly referring to Playfair's Calendar, will find it usefnl to note the following deviations from Fritsche's calculations, which, for the purpose of this argument, we assume to be correct.

Playfair gives to the 10th moon of 1882 thirty days (instead of 29) and consequently places the 1st day of the 11th moon on 11th December (instead of 10th). Again, he gives to the 11th moon 29 days (instead of 30), whereby he coincides with Fritsche again on 9th January 1883. But giving to the 12th moon of 1883 a day less than Fritsche, he deviates from him from after 27th January 1884, from which date Playfair's Calendar is ahead by one day of Fritsche's dates all through 1884, 1885, and down to 27 October 1886. In giving to the 9th moon of 1886 the full number of 30 days (instead of Fritsche's 29), Playfair coincides again with Fritsche in giving the 27th October 1886 as the equivalent of the 1st day of the 10th moon. But on 1st November a new deviation commences. Playfair gives, by an evident error, the 1st Nov. 1886 as the date corresponding to the 7th (instead of 6th) day of the 10th moon. This error continues to the end of the year 1886 and throughout 1887, Playfair being always 1 day ahead of the true date. In 1888 he commences a further deviation by giving to the 1st moon only 29 days (instead of Fritsche's 30). Hence Playfair is, from after 11th March 1888, two days ahead of Fritsche's dates, who places the 1st day of the 2nd moon on 13th March 1888. This discrepancy of two days continues until 9th April, 1888, when, through giving to the 2nd moon thirty days (instead of Fritsche's 29), Playfair keeps thenceforth only one day ahead of Fritsche's dates. However, on 8th June 1888 a further deviation occurs, Playfair giving to the 4th moon twenty-nine days (Fritsche 30), and consequently Playfair thenceforth keeps two days ahead of Fritsche until 9th July, when, through giving to the 5th moon thirty days (instead of Fritsche's 29), he starts only one day ahead. On 5th October 1888, having given to the 8th moon thirty days (Fritsche 29), Playfair coincides again with Fritsche. But on 3rd November Playfair again starts ahead by one day and continues thus until 30th May 1889, when he takes the lead by two days and keeps thus going ahead until 28th June 1889 when the difference is reduced to one day. By a further discrepancy, Playfair coincides again with Fritsche on 21th October 1889, but on 22nd November he starts ahead again by one day. Again he agrees with Fritsche on 22nd December 1889, and keeps straight until 20th January 1890, but then he runs ahead by one day all through the year until 12th November 1890, when harmony is restored. But on 11th December 1890 Playfair again pushes ahead one day and on 5th January 1891 he increases his lead by another day. Thus he keeps two days ahead until 5th July 1891 when he reduces the difference by one day. On 3rd August 1891, however, he again speeds ahead by two days and, reducing this difference to one day on 2nd September 1891, he keeps cheerfully ahead of Fritsche's time by one day until the end of his book.

Such are the vagaries of our Calendars. We have lost our faith in the correctness of Playfair's time tables, we doubt the infallibility of Fritsche's tables, and wonder if the Calendar will ever be reformed.

E. J. E.

公餘瑣談 *Leçons Progressives* pour l'étude du Chinois parlé et écrit. Cent chapitres on les usages de la Chine sont sommairement décrits par le lettré Yü Kuan de l'Inspectorat Général des Douanes, a Pékin. Par A. Mouillesaux de Bernières, Directeur des Douanes, Secrétaire-Chinois a l'Inspectorat Général. Péking, 1886.

Those who have experienced how dull and thorny is the path of knowledge in Chinese, will be prepared to welcome a work like this, which, without pretending to have

discovered a royal road claiming to make a mastery of the Chinese language easy, removes numberless difficulties step by step and cheers the learner by leading him on from simple words and brief sentences, in pleasant and entertaining conversation, to complex sentences, and introduces him, almost unconsciously, into the mysteries of the collocation of Chinese characters as used in the higher conversational style and in the written language. M. de Bernières furnishes here a *gradus ad Parnassum*, not in the dull and stiff manner of Ollendorff and his imitators, nor in the professional and technical style of Prém are or Julien and other philological grammarians, but in a thoroughly business-like and yet pleasant manner he provides an immense variety of material for study in the form of really progressive lessons. Each lesson is headed by a number of Chinese characters, briefly explained in English and French. Next, these characters are woven into subjects of conversation embracing an immense variety of topics, and these conversational sentences, in their structure likewise progressive, are given in Chinese on one side, and in English and French in parallel columns on the other side. Finally a number of essays on various subjects is added to show the varieties of the written style. About two or three thousand of the most useful characters are put before the student in perhaps as interesting a manner as it is possible. The characters appear to be carefully indexed and numbered so that, if the student at any time should meet with a character whose use he has forgotten, he can at once put his finger upon the sentence in which it occurs. Moreover while thus the beginner is pursuing the study of the character, he is acquiring at the same time much interesting knowledge of Chinese customs and literature which will stand him in good stead in conversation.

M. de Bernières gives credit on the title page to the help of the Chinese teacher who furnished part of the materials of the book, and in the Preface he expresses himself indebted also to Mr. J. L. Chalmers who revised the proof sheets of the work.

E. J. E.

Journal, Peking Oriental Society, Vol. I. Nos. 1—3, Peking, 1885.

We heartily welcome the appearance of our newborn Contemporary in the arena of Sinology, and wish this Society permanent success. The opening number is certainly one of good promise.

Dr. Edkins' paper on 'Allusions to China in Pliny's Natural History' is a most painstaking and exhaustive account of the knowledge of *Serica* which Pliny (who died A. D. 79) had gathered, partly from Ptolemy, partly from Mela's map, which Dr. Edkins reproduces from Murray's Encyclopaedia and which dates from A. D. 60, partly from Amometus, but most especially from accounts derived from the members of an embassy sent from Ceylon to Rome during the reign of Claudius (A. D. 41 to 54). Dr. Edkins deals with his materials so fully that the reader is enabled to form his own opinion. The principal points at issue are these. Pliny reports that beyond the Hemodi mountains live the Serae who have red hair and blue eyes and carry on a large trade with Ceylon in silks and iron etc. Dr. Edkins, who takes it for granted that the terms Serica and Seres refer to China and the Chinese, pleads that Pliny supposed China to be situated N. of India, that for Hemodi we can (by the usual letter changes) read Himalaya, and that the red-haired and blue-eyed Chinese traders were the members of some race in the Turkish provinces which had about that time been conquered by the Chinese. Now we venture to question the assumption that the term Serica means China. Dr. Edkins himself admits that 'where Pliny gives geographical information on China proper,' he mentions names which 'not being Chinese we cannot satisfactorily identify with those we have in Chinese history.' He also labours hard to prove that the iron

of Shansi found its way at that time through Central Asia to the Pundjab and thence to Ceylon. But the greatest puzzle is the allegation of the Singhalese ambassadors that the *Seres* with whom their country traded 'exceeded ordinary men in height and had red hair, and blue eyes.' Some years ago we asked, in the *China Review*, the question how it was that on ancient Chinese vases, where scenes are depicted from what appears to be ancient Chinese history, the principal figures are depicted with red hair. We never received a reply to this query. We are inclined to think that Serica was simply a vague term, which did not necessarily include China nor countries under Chinese rule but was simply used as a conventional term for an unknown quantity of races settled somewhere in Central Asia.

Dr. Bushell's papers on 'Ancient Roman coins from Shansi' (in No. 2) and on 'Chinese porcelain before the present dynasty' (in No. 3), as also two historical papers, one by Dr. Martin, entitled 'a Discourse on the study of Chinese History,' and the other, from the pen of Mr. C. Arendt, entitled 'Remarks on the History and Historians of China,' are full of interest and will commend themselves to the students of the respective branches of Sinology.

E. J. E.

An English-Cantonese Vocabulary, containing common words and phrases, printed without the Chinese characters or tonic marks, the sounds of the Chinese words being represented by an English spelling as far as practicable. By J. Dyer Ball, M.R.A.S. etc. of Her Majesty's Civil Service, Hongkong, Author of 'Easy Sentences in the Hakka Dialect with a Vocabulary,' 'Cantonese made easy,' 'the Cantonese-made-easy Vocabulary' etc. Hongkong, 1886. All rights reserved.

The title page of this pamphlet, which consists of 23 octavo pages, gives a good deal of information and relieves us of part of our duty. In the Preface the Author states that 'the man or woman who intends to make the acquisition of Cantonese a serious study, has nothing to do with this little pamphlet.' The pamphlet is published for the benefit of tourists or residents who have no time to master the intricacies of the Cantonese dialect, and who are deterred from the task when they take up other books on the subject bristling with tonic and other diacritical marks. Mr. Ball labours therefore here, as in his other pamphlets, to make an intrinsically difficult subject easy. We think the book has its merits by its extreme simplicity and by the judicious selection of a stock of the most ordinary and popular words and phrases. The spelling is at first sight rather peculiar but may prove handy enough for the purposes stated if the reader has once become accustomed to its apparent oddity. The following specimens will illustrate the system adopted by Mr. Ball. Piece, *fahiee*. Clothes, *ye*. Crab, *hahiee*. Small orange, *cut tsiee*. Miss Tuck, *tuck kwoo nöng*. There are unfortunately sundry misprints which disfigure the pamphlet, as for instance in the following phrases *tahiee tsahn* (dinner) and *chahiee* (police) the aspirate (otherwise frequently marked) is omitted, and in the phrase *hahm ye lahn* (auction) the word *lahn* was probably meant for *lahng*, and *ye* for *yeh*, or else we have to assume that the symbol *ye* represents two sounds differing as widely as 衣 and 夜 (see under clothes and auction).

E. J. E.

A Swatow Index to the Syllabic Dictionary of Chinese by S. Wells Williams LL.D. and to the Dictionary of the Vernacular of Amoy, by Carstairs Douglas, M.A., LL.D. By John C. Gibson, M.A. Swatow, 1886.

This is an Index giving the Chinese characters of Dr. Williams' Syllabic Dictionaries side by side with the Romanized sounds under which any of these characters may be found either in the Syllabic Dictionary or in

Dr. Douglas' Amoy Dictionary. The book is conveniently arranged and well printed and will no doubt prove very useful to the students of both the Swatow and Amoy dialects.

E. J. E.

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