

THE BOOK PAGE

History records no more remarkable transformation than the throwing off by Japan of her ancient Oriental civilization and the ready adoption of the systems of thought and world-views which rule the most progressive Western nations. By a few rapid strides the Sunrise Kingdom has reached a place among the great nations of the earth, to share with them the burden of responsibility for the lawless and backward peoples. To explain this marvellous development is the task undertaken by Sidney L. Gulick, M.A., Missionary of the American Board in Japan, in his **Evolution of the Japanese, Social and Psychic** (Fleming H. Revell Company, Toronto, 457 pages, \$2.00 net.) Mr. Gulick is a trained observer of wide experience, and a master of the literary craft. But the outstanding feature of his work is the philosophic power with which he combines facts and grasps underlying principles. One of the most striking chapters is that on "Essential Characteristics of the Orient." The statement of Professor Le Bon, that "each race possesses a constitution as unvarying as its anatomical constitution" is denied, and it is maintained that the differences between the Japanese (and other Oriental nations) and the peoples of the Occident are due to their peculiar social institutions, customs, and habits of thought. Let the social surroundings of the Japanese be changed by intimate intercourse with Western countries and these differences will disappear. The student of sociology will read this book with interest, to get at the facts mar-

shalled with great skill in support of this view, while the ordinary reader will find a vast amount of information given in a most interesting form on things Japanese.

A traveller with a sense of humor can hardly fail to be an agreeable companion, especially when the journeyings are amongst the vivacious, fun-loving and fun-making natives of Central Africa. Add to this that the writer has eyes that see quickly and keenly, who writes as he would talk, and who, withal, is a man of strong and lofty purpose and was first in a new field, and you have the secret of the uncommon interest of **Pioneering in Central Africa**, by Samuel P. Verner (Presbyterian Committee of Publication, Richmond, Va., 600 pages, with illustrations and maps, \$1.75 postpaid). Mr. Verner's pioneer work was done in the heart of the continent, the southern centre of the Congo Free State. The chief Ndombé was a prince among men in stature, in manner, and in thought for his people. The whole tribal life is made vivid; there is a chapter of rare interest on the Pygmies; Mr. Verner was close neighbor to them for two years; not to speak of abundant adventures. The writer gives full credit to "traders, scientists and government officials" for their share in the march of progress on those remote frontiers—his book contains much interesting material on geographical, climatic and economic conditions—but he frankly places the "Christian religion as the foremost force in the development of civilization." We could wish **Pioneering in Central Africa** a host of readers.

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