

BOOK NOTES

MENCIUS

Translated by Leonard A. Lyall, formerly of the Chinese Maritime Customs. New York. Longman, Green & Company.

Times of stress always bring out the true quality of a people. Thoughtful students will learn much by the study of those men who achieved greatness in the perilous times of their day. This is as true of our own present as in the days of Mencius, one of the most brilliant scholars of the Chinese people who lived shortly after the time of Confucius. The latter who upheld the instincts of loyalty to the king and Mencius who held to the rights of the people.

Mencius was born in 372 B. C. in a small town in the south-west province of Shantung. He was a member of the Meng, a powerful family in the time of Confucius, (551-479 B. C.). Mencius' mother is a famous woman in Chinese story and under her upbringing, Mencius grew up to be a great scholar.

The time of Mencius was a period of internal strife and of great mental ferment. The breaking down of the old régime made men question the old assumptions and adopt the unorthodox opinions. Mencius attacked the new philosophy and declared it was the philosophy of the pigsty. He defended the doctrines of Confucius, but while Confucius spoke most of the duty of a liege to his lord, Mencius spoke more of the duty of a king to his people.

Mencius did not originate the doctrines he proclaimed. They are found scattered here and there through the older Chinese literature, but he collected and focused them on the times of internal strife. He was a master of debate and brought out his point with great clearness. He had a great command of language and a style of unsurpassed beauty and in all important matters, he held unflinchingly to his principles.

Awakening Japan: The Diary of a German Doctor, Erwin Baelz. Edited by his son, Toku Baelz. Translated from the German by Eden and Cedar Paul, New York, The Viking Press.

Baelz was one of the outstanding figures in the able group of foreigners gathered together at the University of Tokyo to help in the making of the New Japan. His Memoirs and Journals are a living mirror of Japan in the ferment of her awakening in the years 1876-1912.

Today, when the Western world is in the throes of a crisis, it is important to learn what were the forces that enabled Japan to achieve so remarkable a development. In little more than a generation, Japan has emerged from the Middle Ages and has wrested for herself an incontestable position—alone among Asiatic states—as a great power, both by land and sea. Historically considered, that is a very remarkable phenomena as well as an important one. It is by no means clearly understood in the west. Anything that can throw light on it must surely be of value, since understanding must, of necessity, precede peace.

The Japanese God-idea as identified in the Emperor Mutsuhito, known posthumously as Keiji-Tenno, may contain the key to Japan's entry on the stage of world-wide history.

Personality Maladjustments and Mental Hygiene. By J. E. Wallace Wallin. New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1935. Pp. xii + 511.

After defining the concepts of mental health and mental hygiene this book sets forth the objectives and the elements of the mental-hygiene program and indicates the types of children with which such a program is concerned; by the liberal use of case histories it then exhibits the symptoms of personality maladjustment; finally it expounds specific types of faulty methods of solving life's problems and puts forward a number of helpful preventive and remedial suggestions. Though designed especially for psychologists, educators, counselors, and mental-hygiene workers, it is not without important bearings upon ethics and the problems of social morality.

Why Democracy? A Study in the Philosophy of the State. By Jay William Hudson. New York, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1936. Pp. xvi + 246.

In subjecting the concept of political democracy to an ethical evaluation, as he does in this essay, Professor Hudson carefully scrutinizes the numerous arguments that have been directed against it from the time of Plato to our own day. These, however, he finds inconclusive inasmuch as they seem either to condemn democracy *merely* because it falls short of perfection, or are equally or even more applicable to any form of government, or refer to faults clearly remediable or not belonging to democracy as such or fail to balance obvious defects with important values. Political democracy, he concludes, is not simply a logical corollary of human rights (of which he offers a significant and somewhat novel classification) but is itself a right—the right, namely, of determining the guarantees of rights. Moreover, he finds, political democracy is measurably practical and is, in spite of deficiencies, actually inevitable. Nevertheless he is convinced that the “future of democracy absolutely depends upon . . . enlightened understanding and conviction” as to its ethical motives. Towards the realization of this end he may be said here to have made a very real contribution.

Problems of Conduct. Second revised edition. By Durant Drake, with six concluding chapters by Raymond Holdsworth Finlay. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1935. Pp xvii + 520.

Presenting ethics as “essentially an attempt to solve the urgent and unescapable problems of actual living” Professor Drake’s *Problems of Conduct*, first published in 1914, won a distinct place for itself, particularly as a textbook for college classes. Though touching but slightly the issues of abstract ethical theory and of philosophy, it presented vividly the more pressing moral problems of contemporary life (both private and public) and it suggested lines of their solution. When well along with the task of revising this book, Drake passed away. Very successfully, however, his undertaking was brought to completion by Mr. Finlay in chapters dealing with political and ecclesiastical morality and with the problem of the future of civilization.

An Introduction to Contemporary German Philosophy. By Werner Brock. Cambridge, University Press, 1935. Pp. xx + 144.

That isolation and insulation should be as prevalent among philosophical groups as they are is as surprising as it is regrettable. This book, growing out of lectures delivered at London University, is therefore to be heartily welcomed, even though it so restricts its scope as to omit accounts of such important thinkers as Brentano and L. Nelson, and all but incidental references to Simmel, Scheler, N. Hartmann and Cassirer. Informingly, though cursorily, it sets forth, in its three chapters, the doctrines particularly of Husserl, Dilthey, and Weber; Nietzsche and Kierkegaard; Jaspers and Heidegger. Bibliographies are appended.

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William Torrey Harris

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TEACHER, lecturer, a leader of the St. Louis Movement in Philosophy, one of the founders of the famous Concord School of Philosophy, Publisher and Editor of the Journal of Speculative Philosophy, a Director and President of the National Education Association, United States Commissioner of Education 1889-1906. Decorated by foreign governments and granted honorary degrees by leading American universities.

THE ONE HUNDRETH anniversary of the birth of Dr. Harris was celebrated at the 36th Annual Meeting of the Western Division of the American Philosophical Association at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri, where Dr. Harris began his great career as educator and philosopher. A special Harris Memorial Committee planned this celebration and secured the cooperation of a number of philosophers who presented papers dealing with various aspects of the philosophy of Dr. Harris.

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The book has as a frontispiece a reproduction of the painting of Dr. Harris which hangs in the Commissioner's room of the U. S. Office of Education, Washington, D. C.

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