

## LUSO-INDIA

THE BOOK OF DUARTE BARBOSA. Vol. I. (Hakluyt Society.)  
HISTORY OF THE PORTUGUESE IN BENGAL. By J. J. A. Campos.  
(Calcutta and London, Butterworth & Co. 6 rupees 8 annas.)

"WHAT the Devil brought you here?" exclaimed an astonished Moorman. It was at Calicut in the year 1498, and he had encountered a Portugee. "We have come for Christians and spices," the Portugee said, and his reply was not less impressive because he happened to be a convict. He had just rounded the Cape of Good Hope with Vasco da Gama—the first to strike India from the south-west, and to bring to it new ideals and activities. From the Moorman's point of view the Devil had indeed brought him, an apparition most disquieting for Islam. Thanks to the Mameluke Kingdom in Egypt and to the powers of the Turks and the Persians in Asia, India had seemed blocked against Christian enterprise, yet here were the Portuguese, already so troublesome elsewhere, sailing out of the unknown seas to it, convicts and all. The Moorman felt exactly as we do to-day, when Bolshevism threatens India through Afghanistan. The ocean had failed him, as the mountains us. He realized with disgust that God's barriers are inadequate, and that India is the perquisite of no one creed or trade.

In a few years the search for Christians and spices was in full swing. The former were not difficult to find, as long as the Portuguese, anticipating advanced modern missionaries, believed that Hinduism was a debased form of Christianity, and derived the Trimurti from the Trinity. Trade was secured by counter-attacking Islam from the south: victories in the Red Sea crushed the naval power of Egypt, and the capture of Ormus secured the Persian Gulf. It was then that Duarte Barbosa lived, the Portuguese official whose book the Hakluyt Society is now translating. He went to India in the first rush of excitement, and his account of the country is extraordinarily vivid and fresh. He saw umbrellas that opened and shut, and women hanging on hooks. In the peninsula of Gujarat he observed the habits of the Jains, and in the south the phallic worship of Siva. Some of the customs that he describes—e.g. Sutte—are extinct, but others, like the chewing of betel, still continue. His account of betel is worth quoting—it gives some idea of his accuracy:

The betel is as broad as the leaf of the plantain herb and like it in shape. It grows on an ivy-like tree, and also climbs over other trees, which are enveloped in it. It yields no fruit, but only a very aromatic leaf, which throughout India is habitually chewed by both men and women, night and day, in public places and roads by day and in bed by night, so that their chewing thereof has no pause. This leaf is mixed with a small fruit (seed) called *areca*, and before eating it they cover it with moistened lime (made from mussel and cockle shells), and having wrapped up these two things with the betel leaf, they chew it, swallowing the juice only. It makes the mouth red and the teeth black.

No one could describe betel like this who had not chewed it personally, and it is here that Barbosa has an advantage over our own officials to-day. They never chew betel—it would not be *pukka*—and to tell them that one has chewed it oneself requires moral courage. They are in India not to live but to rule, and in consequence their experiences are curtailed, and their powers of observation atrophied, whereas Barbosa, less conscious of his destiny, could share the life of the people. The Portuguese (as Mr. Campos points out in his painstaking monograph on Bengal) had, indeed, little "egotism of race," and readily consorted with the indigenes. Most of the Eurasian population of to-day descends from them, and the Goanese waiters on a P. and O., all so black and so similar, but all Roman Catholics, are the results of the enterprise that began in 1498.

With Ormus and Goa as two pillars of their power and Malacca as the third, the Portuguese ran up a vast but temporary Empire, which trimmed the Indian coast and even extended to China. It stood so long as they commanded the seas, and so long as India did not gather herself together, and shake the intruders off her hide. The seas were lost to the Dutch and the English at the beginning of the seventeenth century; India gathered herself together under the Moguls. Under the double attack the Portuguese Empire fell, having flourished for scarcely a century, and leaving behind it an impression that is rather difficult to analyse. It is not heroic, despite the epic of Camoens. But it showed Europe how the farther East might be exploited, and how, by circumnavigating the barrier of Islam, new markets might open for the missionary and the trader. The other nations learned the lesson, we most fully of all, and our Raj to-day is an immense expansion of the principle of trading-ports introduced by Albuquerque.  
E. M. F.

## THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

A HISTORY OF ENGLISH PHILOSOPHY. By W. R. Sorley, Litt.D.  
(Cambridge University Press. 20s. net.)

IT is a rare pleasure to sit down to a book saying: "This thing wanted doing, and this is the man who was wanted to do it." It is rarer still to rise from the reading with both thoughts unrevised. How, then, are we to explain a certain sense of dissatisfaction after the perusal of the work before us, though in the main we have nothing but admiration for its execution? Probably only on the ground that a history of philosophy, if it is indeed a history, and no excuse for original philosophizing, is to be classed not among readable books, but among those "biblia abiblia" books of reference.

Professor Sorley in his preface recognizes the dilemma that the standpoint must be adopted either of the historian or of the philosophers themselves: "The former method concentrates upon the essential, but it is liable to miss historical proportion by stressing certain features and overlooking others. The latter keeps in close touch with the documents, but care is needed to prevent the meaning of the whole from being obscured by details." It is, then, with his eyes open to all its difficulties that he chooses the second alternative.

To a great extent the aridity of histories of philosophy is common to the histories of other theoretic activities—of science, of literature, of art. All such histories are valueless to one who has not already an acquaintance with the science, the literature, the art which they epitomize; while to one who has such an acquaintance they are apt to seem tediously brief. In all these realms the only satisfactory history is the monograph. Why this should be less strikingly true of history pure and simple, the history of political and social changes (though even here there is no such good reading as biographies), it is hard to say. A lively account of men's aims and actions, success or failure, and of the happiness or misery which they entailed, may make us long to have shared their experiences, but is at least the best we can attain. Such contemplation is at all events something other, and in its way not less valuable, than the practical life itself. But a relation, as distinct from a thoroughgoing criticism, of men's artistic creations or intellectual opinions seems valueless except as an index, a fleshless skeleton, of those beliefs and creations themselves. The historian, who must be something of an artist, can recreate for us the activities and the emotions which compose the practical lives of men. Only in the very works of the poets and thinkers can we recreate or live over again their artistic and intellectual activities;