

REVIEWS

BOOKS

Barley and Soldiers, by Ashihei Hino, translated by Lewis Bush. (Tokyo, Kenkyusha, 1939, 207 pp. Yen 2.00)

Mud and Soldiers, by Ashihei Hino, translated by Lewis Bush. (Tokyo, Kenkyusha, 1939, 160 pp. Yen 1.20)

Sea and Soldiers, by Ashihei Hino, translated by Lewis Bush. (Tokyo, Kenkyusha, 1940, 172 pp. Yen 1.50)

The Soldier's Log: 10,000 Miles of Battle, by Masaru Taniguchi, translated by R. Toombs Fincher and Yoshi Okada. (Kanda, Tokyo, Hokuseido, 1940, 176 pp. Yen 2.00)

Niku-Dan (Menschenopfer), Diary of a Japanese Officer During the Siege and Assault of Port Arthur, by Tadayoshi Sakurai, Captain in the Imperial Japanese Army, translated into German by A. Schinzinger, illustrated and with one map. (Tokyo Nippon, 1940, Sekai-koron-Sha, second edition, 226 pp. Yen 2.50)

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Australien (Kontinent der Gegensaetze), by Wilhelm Nowack. (Leipzig, Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, 1938)

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The three books by Hino have already been reviewed in detail in the article on "Japanese War Literature" published in this issue. In all of Hino's books not only do we hear the stirring language of a poet who, at the same time, is heart and soul a soldier, but from every line breathes the spirit of a man, who, in the midst of utmost devotion to his duty, never loses his love for the everyday things that surround him. As paradoxical as it may sound in the case of a war book, the power of these books lies not so much in the topical description of the victorious advance of the Japanese forces in China as in the insight and awe with which the author regards the forces of nature, animal or man, friend or foe. Through his special gift of combining reality and ideas, the books of Ashihei Hino will also find recognition outside of the Japanese sphere as documents of the *Yamato damashi*.

Masaru Taniguchi's book, *The Soldier's Log*, is the diary of a Japanese private who took part in the fighting along the Peking-Hankow railway, the landing in Hangchow Bay, the march on Nanking and on into North China. In contrast to the contemplative and

almost lyrical style of Hino's books, *The Soldier's Log* is written solely in a realistic, not to say coarse manner. While Hino has put down the impressions of an individual, though surrounded by the companionship of soldiers, Taniguchi has made the comradeship of three men the center of his novel. This friendship, forged in the fire of machine guns, is the mirror in which the author shows the reader the events during the 10,000 miles of battle. In this companionship, the hardships and rigors of the advance are borne with robust humor. On the other hand the longing for home is easily given vent to by overwhelming feelings, even by tears. Yet in hours of great decision all this disappears in soldierly determination and self-control. Then only *Yamato damashi* speaks, which demands from the Japanese, wherever he may be, that he should sacrifice himself for emperor and fatherland.

This feeling becomes most obvious in Tadayoshi Sakurai's "Diary of a Japanese Officer During the Siege and Assault of Port Arthur." This is indicated even by the title of the book—*Niku-Dan*, which we can only express with "human sacrifice." With a gift for dramatic description, the author takes the reader from the days of mobilization in the Russo-Japanese War to the landing in Liaotung. The bloody battles for the three mountains Waitou-shan, Taipo-shan, and Taku-shan surrounding the fortress increase in violence up to the heroic moment of the fall of Port Arthur, thought to be the "strongest fortress east of Suez and the terrible basis for Russian aggression in the Far East."

How did Japan gain her tremendous victory? This is the question which the author touches upon in the preface to his book. The answer is left to the reader. He will be able to give it upon reading the book, which does not pretend to be a historical work but only the memoirs and experiences of a Japanese army captain. *Yamato damashi* speaks between the lines, the spirit of self-sacrifice for emperor and fatherland, the fate of the true old warrior who goes out to die in battle and never to return. A striking example of this spirit was given to the world when, at the death of the Japanese Emperor Mutshuhido Tenno in 1912, the old commander of the victorious troops of Port Arthur, Count Nogi, and his wife voluntarily followed their imperial master into death as a sign and expression of their loyalty.

In all five books the reader is offered good translations of Japanese war literature which

merit attention not only for their subject matter but also for their literary value. Above all they give the non-Japanese reader some insight into Japanese psychology.

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Many books have been written about Australia, essays full of figures indicating the rapid economic development of that country, books praising the scenic beauty of the fifth continent, describing its zoological and botanical curiosities, the character and habits of its people. The book on Australia by Wilhelm Nowack, however, might be called a life history from the distant past of the "*terra incognita*" with all its lights and shadows up to the present day.

In a lively introduction the author transports the reader into the atmosphere of the first adventurous voyages of discovery of the Spaniards and Portuguese, the Dutch and the British. The actual hour of birth struck for Australia when Captain Cook reached the fifth continent in 1770. England was not satisfied with having made a contribution towards the maps of the world. She turned the dreamland of many centuries into a penitentiary for her criminals. With the clarity of a moving picture, the strange history of the colonization of this continent passes before the eyes of the reader. It is a long and arduous road from the time of colonists in chains to that of free immigrants.

Wheat and wool are the great milestones in the description of the life of this country. They gave the impetus to her rapid economic development. The author distinguishes three steps within this development: the first based on the drive for self-maintenance of the colony during the slow but steady economic development up to the middle of the last century. The second is introduced by the gold discoveries of the fifties, through which more people came to Australia in half a century than had come there in the preceding two hundred years. The third step begins in the eighties and nineties and is marked by the advent of modern engineering.

A chapter on "Political Forces" throws light on the party structure of the commonwealth, where the Labor Party determines the course,

"no matter whether it directs the ship from the helm or from the bridge." This chapter is probably the most revealing one for the uninitiated reader. Beside the "White Australia" policy it characterizes the population policy of the country, which in its last analysis can be traced to the wage policy of the Australian laborer. This is a point on which the author expresses sharp criticism. In the past and present solution of the question of population policy he sees a weakness for the future development of Australia as the independent center of the Australasian world.

The Australia of today arises before the eyes of the reader, but there remains the question why the author, who deals with all other vital topics including social and sociological relations within the country, is silent concerning the people of Australia. We miss the spirit of the "Aussie" in his book. His work would have really been better rounded off if, instead of 21 pages dealing with a rather superficial description of New Zealand, he had included a characterization of the Australian as an individual within the community.

A short survey on Australia in the war of 1914 to 1918 shows the social, economic, and military position of the country at that time. With 68% of all front line soldiers it had the highest losses of all countries engaged in the Great War. In his survey the author also touches briefly on the military preparations during the years before the outbreak of the present war. He mentions rearmament plans for navy and air force, government plans for the provision of necessary war supplies by the country's own industry, and, on the other hand, the rejection of universal conscription and the introduction of a volunteer militia.

Of course, September 1939 has brought a change in the two last-mentioned points, just as much of the contents of the book has become obsolete through the events of the last few weeks. That does not, however, change the fact that the book not only gives an excellent description of the inward and outward growth of Australia, but is at the same time a kind of eye opener regarding the special and exposed position of the country in the present Pacific war.—R.