

The prompt mention in our list of "Books of the Week" will be considered by us an equivalent to their publication for all volumes received. The interests of our readers will guide us in the selection of works for further notice.

MORSE'S JAPANESE HOMES.*

ONE of the pleasing characteristics of what, in the absence of a better term, may be called the modern temperament, is the generous interest felt in everything that concerns the life of men. It is, let us give our age the credit of believing, not an empty or selfish curiosity, but a genuine feeling for humanity. Something is due to the impulse to scientific study which has been drawn to anthropology as a field which may be expected to yield philosophy important returns. Something is due to the revived art feeling which has tired of the narrow limitations of conventional life. Religious motive has deepened and broadened the interest which others have felt, while in all, the widening of human sympathies has developed a more practical recognition of human brotherhood and a disposition to recognize the claim even of the simplest, most barbarous and remote people to a share in the moral solidarity and unity of the race.

The fruits of this broadened sentiment are various, abundant, and constantly increasing in number and value. One of the most delightful studies of this kind is that on "Japanese Homes and their Surroundings," by Mr. Director Morse, of the Peabody Academy of Science, a superb volume, published in all the pomp of paper, type, and illustration, for which the bookmakers of this age have established their reputation. It also shows in its execution that combination of scientific knowledge with an attractive and popular style which is also characteristic of the epoch whose particular pride is that works of this nature can count on finding readers everywhere among the people at large.

The merely curious reader will find rich and copious entertainment in Mr. Morse's volume. Its sumptuous page, enriched with illustrations which serve the purpose both of diagrams and of pictorial embellishments, together with the unfailing interest of the text, will not fail to fascinate and satisfy him. If his mind is bent on more serious researches into sociology, the book will serve him even better; and it is in this character that we wish to call attention to it in our columns.

Viewed in this sociological light, the book goes on the sound assumption that the homes of a people are a trustworthy indication of what they are themselves. Mr. Morse has done his work on the fullest recognition of this principle, and carried it out so as to give the most satisfactory exhibition of the domestic arrangements which lie nearest to the ordinary needs of man, and can be relied on to convey sure and accurate information of his condition as a social, moral, and intellectual being.

Turning to the work itself, we find it arranged in a thoroughly intelligent and systematic order. First, we have the Japanese homes massed in towns, presented in groups, so as to show their relations to each other, and their adaptation to physical surroundings and conditions. Then we see them in smaller groups formed by several adjacent dwellings, or by the combined structures to serve the various purposes of one domestic establishment.

In the following chapters the author enters into the details of domestic construction. He shows us the tools of the carpenter, their methods of using them, and builds up the house part by part, omitting little or nothing, so that we can even form a fair conception of the principle which controls the form as well as of the methods of construction. The characteristic feature of Japanese, Siamese, and Chinese houses has always been said to be the roof; and this is treated in this volume with great fullness and particularity. The difference between city and country houses is pointed out, and the method pursued in preparing the

* JAPANESE HOMES AND THEIR SURROUNDINGS. EDWARD B. MORSE, Director of the Peabody Academy of Science, Late Professor of Zoölogy in the University of Tokio, Japan, etc. With illustrations by the author. Boston: Ticknor & Co. 1896. Royal 8vo, pp. xxxiii 872. With Index. \$5.00.

foundations and giving them a secure and suitable connection with the ground.

Passing to the interiors, the subject is treated with a delightful particularity which omits nothing, and at the same time enables us to see just what the life must be which requires these appliances, and to which they are invented to minister. The ground plans are drawn, the doors are figured, and the way they open is indicated. We see the mats in position, the screens, curtains, windows, furnishings, and even understand at a glance how the decorations are applied. The different parts of the same house are described, and of houses for different classes of people. We see the guest rooms in great variety, the tea-rooms—that characteristic feature of the Japanese dwelling—the kitchens, stairways, fire-places, bathing rooms, balconies, verandas, halls, entrances, gateways, and fences.

The most telling details are introduced, such as the implements of wood in domestic service and in the kitchens. Considerable space is devoted to lamps for the house and grounds.

The close relation of lamps to civilization, and the modifying influence which every considerable improvement in their construction has had on the artificial as distinguished from the natural barbaric condition of man, has been often noticed. Mr. Morse enables us to reach definite conclusions on this point as to Japan, and see how far the civilization of the country, before it was seriously affected by European ideas, had advanced toward providing a secure basis for prolonging the day by artificial illumination.

Among the most effective illustrations of the work is a case of shelves for holding shoes, and another for kitchen implements, together with the drawings of bath rooms, etc.

Passing from the interior to the open vicinity, we have detailed descriptions of the grounds, gardens, inclosures, the stone lanterns, garden houses, bridges, flower pots, dwarf trees, garden vines, wells and water supply.

All this comes before us in the freshest manner, with the authority of a writer trained for his work, and from one who has collected his material on the ground in prolonged studies, with the very best means at his command, and with everything he wished to examine generously opened to him.

Taken in connection with Professor Griffith's "Mikado," and with Professor Rein's "Japan Travels and Researches," which must be relied on for the larger external facts, the industry and the political history, this volume by Mr. Morse supplies the last requirement for a complete *apparatus criticus* on Japan. As for the publishers, their part could not be done better.