

BOOKS OF THE DAY.

Reviews and Literary Notes

THE PACIFIC PROBLEM.

"Sea-Power in the Pacific" by Stewart C. Bywater; published by Messrs. Longmans and Co., Ltd.; a recent addition to the Brisbane School of Arts Library.

Mr. Bywater, an associate of the Institute of Naval Architects, here presents the fruits of a study of the American-Japanese naval problem. At the present moment when the Washington Conference on disarmament is meeting perusal of such a book is eminently useful. Before the author proceeds to a discussion of the purely naval questions of the Pacific he reviews the questions at issue between Japan and the United States. In these days it is taken for granted that the probable storm centre of the world has been transferred from West to East—into the Pacific, and Mr. Bywater works on that hypothesis. The development, the administration, the personnel, and the material of the navies of the States and Japan all are thoroughly examined. Next the question of strategy in the Pacific is dealt with in detail, and in the concluding chapters Mr. Bywater suggests possible features of a naval war in the Pacific between Japan and the United States, and the political and economic factors working for and against such a war. "Both in Japan and the United States," says the author, "there appear to exist parties who believe that war is the only solvent of the differences which have grown up between the two nations during the last twenty years, and a certain section of the Press in both countries has lately indulged in language suggestive of a common desire to apply this drastic remedy without further delay. People who hold such views, be they American or Japanese, will find no encouragement in the ensuing pages." We are rather disconcerted to find in the first chapter on "The Gravitation from West to East" that "on the basis of modern armoured vessels completed, building and authorized, the British navy has already declined to second rank." This statement leads to a comparison between the British and American battle fleets as they will exist in 1924. That comparison again is disturbing. But it is not so much with the British fleet that Mr. Bywater is concerned as with the Japanese and United States fleets, and what they may be called upon to do in the near future.

The unfriendliness between Japan and the States is traced back to the time when the States annexed Hawaii. Why Japan should have viewed that annexation "with marked disfavour" it is not easy to say, but proof is supplied that Japan felt very keenly on the "thrusting forward of American influence right across the Pacific." Emphasis is laid on the former close friendship between the two countries and to the recognition by Japan that she owed her admission into the comity of civilised nations and her subsequent rise to prosperity and power mainly to the United States. The questions at issue between the two countries are clearly set forth. That of Japanese immigration into the Western States of the Union is regarded as undoubtedly "the most serious of the differences which have marred American-Japanese relations in recent years and the one moreover that would seem least susceptible of an amicable solution." Yet even this great controversy bids fair in the author's opinion to be overshadowed by the question of Japanese policy in China. The author admits that "American interests in the Celestial

Empire having increased very substantially in the last 20 years, the maintenance of the 'open door' has become an issue of capital importance to the United States." And he proceeds: "Unlike the immigration dispute in California, this has been regarded from the first as a question that touches the interests of the American nation as a whole. The enormous possibilities that China offers as a field for economic development make a strong appeal to the American imagination, and of late years both Government and people have watched with growing alarm and resentment the efforts of Japan to establish political and commercial supremacy in that quarter. In Manchuria particularly, the present situation contains elements that augur none too well for the future peace of the world." There is more than a suggestion in this book that the real rulers of Japan, fearing that the people may brood too much over domestic grievances, will give them war as a patriotic expedient.

In 1916 the United States adopted by far the greatest naval programme in the history of the republic, and Mr. Bywater sets out to correct certain misunderstandings which that programme caused in Britain. Apparently the suggestion that the United States' Navy of the future must be the strongest in the world is of very recent origin—going no further back than ex-President Wilson's visit to Paris. But it is interesting to learn that the huge American warships now building were authorized at a period when Germany was regarded as the most probable enemy. In describing the men and material of the United States navy, the author says that the American naval officer of to-day is "zealous, hard-working, and scientific to his finger tips," and that "the curriculum at the Annapolis Naval Academy is extraordinarily comprehensive and severe, rivaling in this respect the course at the German naval colleges before the war." The Japanese navy, admittedly, has received generous treatment from the Diet, and naturally one asks what is the reason for the construction and maintenance of so large a navy. Mr. Bywater gives this answer: "Japan may urge that her insular position and consequent dependence on the freedom of sea communications renders a powerful navy indispensable to her safety and welfare; but since it is unquestionably the case that the growth of her naval power has coincided with the prosecution of vast schemes of territorial penetration in China, foreigners may be forgiven if they have come to look upon the Navy of Japan as the

shield behind which she hopes to see her influence all-powerful in the Far East. Even in Japan itself there is no longer any attempt to dissociate the Navy from the Government's cherished scheme of gaining complete political and economic control over China. The Japan Year Book admits that the object of expanding naval armaments is primarily to guard our interests in Manchuria and China." In effect, therefore, Japan wishes to make herself so strong that no foreign power will venture to oppose her in China and the ultimate aim of her naval policy is thus seen to be offensive rather than defensive." The author has no hesitation in saying that the rapid growth of Japanese naval power was the chief reason that impelled the United States Government in 1913 to transfer the strongest half of its fleet to the Pacific. The Panama Canal, of course, is now the pivot of naval strategy so far as America is concerned, and the safety of the canal is the condition precedent to successful operations whether offensive or defensive against an Asiatic foe." The im-

portance of the occupation of Guam to the States is emphasized in the chapter on "Strategy in the Pacific." At first sight it might seem that all the advantages of a war in the Pacific lie with Japan. She could swoop down upon the Philippines and capture them before an adequate American force could arrive to resist her. But even with the loss of the Philippines all hope would not be abandoned by the States—provided that Guam were safe. "With Guam and the Philippines in enemy hands, the problems confronting the United States would become well-nigh insolvable." But it is not solely a question of naval safety. The political and economic factors are of even more importance, and the author comes to the conclusion that though at first Japan might be successful against the States in a naval war in the Pacific, these factors in the end would be all against her, so that she "has everything to lose and nothing to gain by a policy of aggressiveness."