

About Books and Bookmen

DID JAPAN DEMAND N. AUSTRALIA?

GERMAN'S ASSERTION.

"Der Unvollendete Kontinent" ("The Unfinished Continent") is the title of a book written by a German, Dr. Colin Ross, who has travelled in almost every part of the world, and who, last year, spent some time in various parts of Australia, after which he wrote the book mentioned above. It contains much useful information, quite a lot of which is even not known to the average Australian, and it particularly stresses the barrenness, in the sense of population, of Australia.

"The six million people, who today live there, could at least be increased to 60 million, and according to other estimates even to 100, or 120 million people," he says.

He pays a compliment to the Australian wharf laborers, of whom he had heard the "most dreadful" thing, owing to the great strikes which raged for some time along the Australian waterfront a couple of years ago.

"Their impression, after all, was not a dangerous one, more like well-to-do heads of families," he declares.

"These sedate men commenced their work with a surprising calmness and composure. The unloading of a ship is usually a matter accompanied with much noise and shrieking. But here hardly a loud word could be heard."

The author gives some splendid accounts of his experiences during a sandstorm or two in Central Australia.

He severely criticises the policy of spending huge sums of money on Canberra, and "the land without servants" but only from a European point of view; he talks rather inconsequently about "Zwanzig Mark Stundenlohn" (20s per hour for wages), and singles out the dangerous work on the Sydney Harbor bridge for it, and also gives advice unnecessarily how the settlers should work their holdings.

Apart from these matters, however, his book should attract attention.

Describing the search for oil in Queensland, he says, according to the report of the "Elboff," the German geologists, who investigated the matter, "there is no hope of finding oil in the Roma district in commercial quantities," and he refers to the activities of companies continuing in the fruitless search: "One could not advise the shares to sink into the bottomless sea. They had to be sold fast. Of one company it was said that it still continued to work after the drill had struck granite, until the expert in charge of the bore had declared that he would not participate any longer in the swindle, and stopped work."

Amongst his numerous subjects is a good description of the Australian aboriginal and his corroborations.

Probably one of the most important

statements contained in the "Unvollendete Kontinent" refers to the "yellow danger." Dr. Ross says: "Since I know from an authoritative source a matter which is completely unknown to the public, namely that Japan demanded the whole of North Australia in case she assisted at the Dardanelles. I have changed my mind concerning this danger." He previously believed that the Australian fear of Japan was nothing more than a myth. He says: "Certainly, Australia is far away from Japan. But where shall the latter go with her human overflow of two and one half million births? The Japanese will not go to Hokkaido and Sakhalin, because it is too cold for him there. In Manchuria the commercial competition of the Chinese beats him. The Philippine and Sunda Islands are already almost overcrowded, apart from the fact that they cannot be got very easily. The United States are blocked. Australia remains."

(Our copy came from F. A. Brockhaus, Leipzig, and was in German. It contained 104 very good photographs, and also a map of Australia. We do not know whether an English translation is as yet available).