

facilitera la diffusion de la notion des actions diastases, dans le domaine pratique."

The author fulfils the promise of his preface in giving a clear though brief exposition of the action of enzymes or *diastases*, special attention being directed to the experimental methods employed in the study of this subject and in their application to the brewery and the distillery.

The errors in spelling are numerous, and should be revised in a subsequent edition. Schunck appears as Schmuk; Marshall Ward figures as two persons, Marshall and Word; Croft Hill's individuality is also lost as Crop and Hill; O'Sullivan loses the O' and Lindner is spelt Linter, whilst the English name Heron and the German, Geduld, are converted into the French Héron and Gédulte.

Erythrozyme is written erythrozine, racemosus is spelt racinosus, penicillium appears as penicellium and octosporus as octopodus.

An index would be a valuable addition. J. B. C.

*Mongolia and the Mongols: Results of an Expedition to Mongolia in the Years 1892 and 1893.* By A. Pozdnéeff. Vol. ii, 8vo. Pp. 516. Numerous photo-engravings (Russian, 1900).

THIS is the second of a series of volumes on Mongolia and its inhabitants which are being prepared by Dr. A. Pozdnéeff, and it contains the traveller's diaries during the second year of his journey, when South-eastern and Eastern Mongolia were visited. Starting from Peking, Dr. Pozdnéeff went to Kalgan—the centre and depot for Russian trade with China—and thence to Kuku-khoto, or Gui-hua-chen, the next important commercial centre of Southern Mongolia. Returning to Kalgan, he visited that portion of Mongolia which lies on the eastern slopes of the Great Khingan—namely, the towns Fen-nin-sian and Zhe-ho, or Chen-de-fu, whence he went to Dolon-nor (Lama-miao). All these places are well known long since, but, speaking currently Mongolian, Dr. Pozdnéeff has learned much more about the trade in these towns than other travellers had before him, and having, moreover, in his capacity of learned Mongolist a free access to the Lamaite monasteries, he was enabled to collect a great amount of information about the inner life of Mongolia, various questions of worship, and especially about the antiquities preserved in the monasteries. Proceeding from Dolon-nor northwards and north-westwards, towards the Kerulen River, he visited the ruins of Kai-pin-fu—the thirteenth century capital of Khubilai-khan—and obtained there full casts and photographs of an interesting inscription dating from the fourteenth century. Another very interesting Tibetan and Mongolian inscription, dating from 1626, was copied in the same way at Tsagan-suburga, on the Shara-muren River. It may now be taken that this much-controversed spot was one of the five Lao or Kidan capitals—Lin-han-fu.

The remarks of the diary on the way across the Gobi are especially interesting, in that they give the exact limits between the Gobi proper and the zone of land which lies on the western slopes of the Great Khingan. This limit corresponds with a line which may be drawn on the Russian General Staff Map through the spots where the rivers shown on this map as flowing from the Khingan end in small lakes or marshes as they enter the Gobi. M. Pozdnéeff, who crossed the Gobi in June, fully confirms the view upon this region which begins now to prevail, namely, that it is not a desert, but a dry, rolling prairie. In fact, it has the same physical aspects as the dry "rolling prairies" of Canada at the approach of the Rocky Mountains.

The volume gains very much from the excellent photo-engravings with which it is illustrated. They give a good idea of the physical characters of these portions of Mongolia. P. K.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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### Gothic Vestiges in Central Asia.

I AM in thorough accord with the main principles indicated in Dr. A. C. Haddon's communication, which appeared in NATURE, vol. lxiii. p. 309 (January 24), more especially as to the eastern extension of a fair dolichocephalic race or races, at least as far east as the north-western frontiers of China. It has, however, always struck me, as a student of the ethnology of these districts, that sufficient attention has not been given to the geographical changes that have certainly occurred throughout the whole of Central Asia, and without which it appears impossible to understand such writers as Herodotus, Arrian and Ammianus Marcellinus. I claim no new discovery in suggesting, with Colonel Tchaikofsky (quoted by Schuyler, vol. i. p. 53), that during the Classical period the rivers Chu and Sary-su, instead of losing their waters in desert lakes, united at Perovsk with the Jaxartes, and flowed along the deserted bed, now known as the Jany Darya, joining finally the old Oxus and making their way along what is still known as the "Ancient Bed" of the Amu Darya to the Caspian. We thus arrive at a satisfactory explanation of the crossing of the "Araxes" by Cyrus, and his description of the homeland of the Massagetæ, whom we are then justified in associating ethnologically with the Getæ or Goths of other authors. This would throw light also on the position of Arrian's Alexandria Eschate, which I would identify with the modern Jizakh. This was situated on the Tanais, which seems to have been an overflow channel of the upper Jaxartes, leaving the main river at the bend below Khojend and flowing past Jizakh into the Taz Khane, whence it found its way into the Jany Darya.

We thus also get a satisfactory position for the Issedones, also a Gothic tribe ("West-Saetons"), east of whom were the Asii, Asiani or Pasiani, the Wusuns of the Chinese, who are described as "having blue (or green<sup>1</sup>) eyes, red beards and monkey-like faces"—alluding to their faces covered with tawny hair.

When, however, Dr. Haddon comes to his Chinese authorities several inaccuracies appear in his account. As Dr. Haddon himself is, apparently, not a student of that language, he has naturally been dependent on others, and the second-hand information with which he has been supplied is in the last degree misleading. He speaks, for instance, of the "Ssé or Sek (who are identified with the Sacæ)." I have a fair first-hand acquaintance with the older Chinese writers, and find myself unable to place these tribes. There were, at the period of which he speaks, Shuks, or rather Pa-shuks, in Szechwen; but there is no reason to connect them with any external tribe, nor have we a suggestion that they have ever migrated. There was a country—not a people—called Su-li, but the phonetic element here is Sulak, and we must identify the district with the Surak of the Bundahish, the country about the lower Jaxartes. The later writers, it is true, talk of a kingdom—not a people—called by Matwanlin Sse; but it is, apparently, the modern Sarakhs. The classical Sacæ, Scyths and Dahæ seem to be variations of the one word, and may be connected with the Tochari of Strabo the Tahia of the Chinese. I am, however, doubtful of Scyth or Sacæ being used by the Greeks in any sense as an ethnographic term; rather it applies to their stage of civilisation. We learn very little of these Tokhars from Chinese sources, but from Strabo we gather that they, in conjunction with the Wusuns and the Sakarauli (possibly the inhabitants of the Sarik-kol Pamir), bore down on Bactria and put an end to the Greek line of kings. About the same time the Yueh-ti, driven from their homes by the Hiung Nu (Turks), arrived in the country, and the two peoples seem to have more or less coalesced, and we find them a few years later living in apparent harmony, but occupying each its own side of the Oxus, the Yueh-ti apparently being the predominant race, or at least supplying the royal race. This is very different from the account given by his supposed authorities to Dr. Haddon. I have had the misfortune to have met with M. Drouin before, but now become acquainted with

<sup>1</sup> T'sing, the word used, means the colour of deep, pure water—grey, blue or green.