

The inner peace that comes with the quiet contemplation of a beach on a still, calm morning, or the feeling of exhilaration that comes from riding a great wave in a small boat, is more reward than most men ever know.

To Bascom every wave is a "masterpiece of originality. It will ever be so," he says. "Go and see."

P. C. FRALEY

Phoenixville, Pennsylvania

A Popular Synthesis

Geography of Japan. Ryuziro Isida. Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai, Tokyo, Japan, 1961 (available from East West Center Press, Honolulu). xiv + 124 pp. Illus. Paper, \$3.50.

The aim of modern geography is to interpret the spatial characteristics of phenomena on the earth's surface. Three questions—*Where* are things located, *why* are they so located, and what is the *significance* of spatial patterns—are central to geography's wide range of investigations. This volume is intended as such a general introductory interpretation of Japan. Although considerable work has been done on Japan by American geographers since World War II, most of these researchers do not handle with ease the great mass of geographic literature being turned out in the Japanese language. Actually Japanese geographers are writing relatively more on the geography of Japan than American geographers are on the geography of the United States. Some indications of the range of literature can be seen by examining the very brief list of references at the end of the volume.

The idea of a Japanese geographer bringing together in English a geographic interpretation of Japan, which has been synthesized from writings in the Japanese language, is a good one. At this point, however, the old question always has to be raised, "at what kind of an audience should the volume be aimed"? Clearly this book is written for the intelligent layman who is interested in the world about him. It will not be very illuminating to the professional geographer who specializes in Japan or to others who have a substantial competence in Japanese problems. The volume is a general description of Japan's geography; it leaves out the great wealth of material relative to

local or regional problems and interpretations. A brief introduction to the ties of history and geography is followed by sections on the physical setting, population and settlement, resources and industries, and socioeconomic reality.

Maps are generously used, but most of them are of extremely small scale and are not too well reproduced. Some 50 excellent photographs will contribute much to the ordinary reader's impression of Japan.

The book is one of nine volumes published to date by Kokusai Bunka Shinkokai (The Society for International Cultural Relations) and aimed at presenting the life and culture of Japan to the general reader. Other volumes in the series deal with anthropology, history, religion, folklore, and similar topics.

JOHN H. THOMPSON

Department of Geography,
Syracuse University

British Atlas

The Atlas of Britain and Northern Ireland. Planned and directed by D. P. Bickmore and M. A. Shaw. Oxford University Press, New York, 1963. xii + 222 pp. Maps. \$100.

For many countries the possession of a national atlas has become a mark of prestige, and nearly 50 countries have begun the publication of such a work, using public money as well as national resources to do so. *The Atlas of Britain*, in its size, in the scope of its coverage, and in the clarity and at times the beauty of its presentation, puts other such atlases to shame. Yet, in the strict sense, it is not a national atlas. It has been prepared privately and is published commercially.

It presents, as it claims, "a cross-section through the middle of the twentieth century." It illustrates, in 200 pages of maps, not merely the unchanging physical basis of Britain's national life, the geology and relief, the climate, the nature of the surrounding seas, the discharge of the rivers, the soils, and the natural vegetation, but also the distribution of population and of age groups in the population, recent changes in these age groups, and mortality rates, as well as the distribution of agricultural production, industry, and transportation facilities.

Most of the maps are on a scale of 1:2,000,000, so that the area of Great Britain and Northern Ireland can be shown on a single page of the atlas. In addition, the relief, vegetation, and solid and drift geology of the whole area are shown on a series of maps (on a scale of 1:1,000,000) that are well laid out for purposes of comparison. The maps themselves represent not merely compilations based on published statistical data, for their construction has involved extensive research by a highly qualified team of experts. The presentation of this data is ingenious to a degree; one could quote many examples of the authors' skill and ingenuity, but the map which shows the size and the number of agricultural holdings, with its subtle use of color to portray very complex data, is a masterpiece that must add a new perspective to any discussion of Britain's agriculture. Should you want to know where winter vegetables are grown or which soils yield potatoes most heavily, or should you desire to test the hypotheses about the contrasting agriculture of western and eastern Britain, the data is all here.

The maps of mineral production have rarely, if ever, been equalled in an atlas. Each coalfield is shown, and every coal mine, with its average depth and thickness of seam; the output per manshift is marked. Geological sections allow the reader, or the browser, to relate these data to the history of the coalfields and to draw his own conclusions about the problems faced by the older and shallower mines. My only regret is that those who compiled this map did not differentiate between mines recently opened by the National Coal Board and the older mines that owe their origin to private enterprise.

The same kind of detail characterizes the maps of all other branches of industry—the production and distribution of coal gas and electric power, of fertilizers and agricultural machinery, of carpet and hosiery manufacture and those of printing, sugar refining, and quarrying, as well as of the more obvious branches of industry which one expects to be illustrated in a work such as this. Most are printed in a wide and pleasing range of color on base maps that show relief by means of a faint hill-shading and built-up areas by a pale gray shading. The resulting maps upset many of the stereotypes, current in textbooks, regarding the distribution of industrial activity.