

spondences are almost in a minority when compared with the discrepancies. More serious is *Hydropotes* on p. 139 against *Hydrelaphus* on p. 296. But the culmination is reached when we find, pp. 115-6, *Otocyon* twice identified with the Cape hunting-dog, and, p. 313, the giant *Armadillo* miscalled the giant *Kangaroo*!

With regard to the authors' view on nomenclature, which we venture to regard, with certain curious exceptions, as somewhat old-fashioned, it is not our intention to offer any general criticism on this occasion. We may, however, point out that in rejecting the earlier *Mazama* in favour of the later *Cariacus* for the name of the American deer, they are led into a difficulty when they come to sub-genera; *Dorcelaphus* (a sub-genus) antedating *Cariacus* (the genus)! Moreover, whereas they term the guemals *Xenelaphus* on p. 297, the same animals are designated *Furcifer* on p. 78.

With the statement that the chapter on marine regions is a new feature in books of this nature, and that those by Dr. Sclater on the distribution of the various mammalian families and genera will be found of the greatest value to students, the latter half of the book must be dismissed without further notice.

A large number of figures, for the most part specially prepared for it, illustrate the volume; and to the excellence of these we are glad to be able to testify. The maps, too, which are numerous, are all that can be desired to illustrate the text. And here it may be mentioned that in the majority of instances the sub-regions are well determined, and their distinctive faunas well described. The portion of the work relating to these must, indeed, claim a high value for students. We cannot, however, but regret that the authors have not seen their way to follow Mr. W. T. Blanford in the recognition of a Tibetan sub-region, the animals of that area being of so remarkably isolated a type.

Throughout the foregoing criticisms it will be noticed that we have studiously avoided bringing forward our own views, and have been content to call attention to the discrepancies and misstatements in those of the authors. Had the authors taken more pains in bringing their subject up to date, and did they possess (if we may say so) the all-round knowledge necessary to the proper fulfilment of their task, the volume, as an expression of what we regard as somewhat old-fashioned views, might have been worthy of higher commendation than we can venture to bestow.

R. L.

ANTIQUITIES FROM BENIN.

Antiquities from the City of Benin, &c., in the British Museum. By C. H. Read and O. M. Dalton. Pp. 61 + Plates 32. (London: British Museum, 1899.)

THE real interest in the finding of the Benin bronze castings centres in the fact that a negro people seem at one time to have been able to produce bronze work showing great skill in manufacture, coupled with indications of a considerable amount of knowledge of art. The question how the craft was learned immediately suggests itself. Messrs. Read and Dalton appear (p. 16) to accept the statement of the natives (p. 6) that it was introduced by the Portuguese, but further on (p. 19)

they acknowledge that it is "not easy to solve how far Europe is responsible for the art of metal casting in West Africa." From what may be called internal evidence, we may reasonably suppose that some of the best castings date back to the end of the fifteenth or the beginning of the sixteenth century. If the Portuguese introduced the art we should expect that some specimens of Portuguese work of that date, and of equal merit, should be found in our museums. So far no such evidence is forthcoming. There is, however, no reason why the art should not have been in existence before the arrival of the Portuguese amongst the Bini in the same way as the domestic architecture in Benin and the surrounding country is most probably indigenous, or in the same way as the decorative art of the Ashantis is indigenous in so far as our knowledge goes. In all probability, the solution of the question will be found to lie in the fact that the existence of the art antedates the arrival of the Portuguese, who, however, may have given it considerable impetus. Yet it must not be taken for granted that the Portuguese were the only people who influenced the art, for there is plenty of evidence pointing to other influences, and we can rest assured that, amongst a people so fond of trade as the African negroes, trade objects would be numerous, and these would leave their impress behind them. For instance, an almost exact copy of a spiral bracelet from Benin was brought many years ago from Tunis, and is now in the Blackmore Museum, while its prototype is to be found at the present day on the banks of the Upper Congo.

From a time shortly subsequent to the arrival at the British Museum of the large collection of these bronze castings, the authorities prohibited any student from taking notes, on the plea that they intended to publish a work on the collection. The work is now before us. It consists of an historical introduction with a descriptive summary, for purposes of comparison, of the Yoruba gods taken from Burton instead of from Ellis's later and more comprehensive account, a chapter each on the ivory work, the metal work, the early Europeans, and on dress, ornament and weapons, as exemplified by the specimens in the collection. The illustrations are fair, but some—as, for instance, those of the ivory tusks and a king's or chief's helmet—are reproduced on too small a scale to be of much assistance to the student. It is to be regretted that the authors have limited themselves to deal solely with the specimens in the British Museum collection. The museum possesses a unique collection of the bronze castings used as historical or decorative plates on the pillars of the king's compounds, but it possesses very few of the numerous domestic and other utensils, many likewise unique, which have from time to time been on sale in London. In other words, the collection is not a representative one, as is, for instance, that of General Pitt-Rivers at Farnham. The opportunity for a comparative study of the objects *inter se* is impossible, and the student will therefore have to go to other museums to complete his studies. However, even restricted as the work is in its scope, the monograph will always be found useful, and the authors are to be congratulated on a good piece of work.

H. LING ROTH.