

facial pair of nerves" are not so called because they arise by three pairs of roots, but because they send three main branches to different parts of the face. We doubt "ammon" having anything to do with "amnos—a lamb." It is an old classical word for one of the foetal membranes, as may be seen by reference to a lexicon. Lastly, we may remark that "hernia" is very imperfectly, not to say incorrectly, described by Mr. Dunman.

It would not be difficult to pick more holes in Mr. Dunman's volume—which, however, in spite of some defects, will be serviceable to the persons for whose aid it is designed.

*The Native Flowers and Ferns of the United States.* By Thomas Meehan. Illustrated by Chromolithographs. Issued by Subscription. (Boston: L. Prang and Co., 1878.)

THIS book is intended to be "an anthology in the truest sense of the word," and aims at culling the most beautiful, interesting, and important from the vast number of plants found in the enormous region ruled by President Hayes. Further, it is not merely scientific; a familiar treatment is adopted so that the cultivator and mere lover of flowers may derive both profit and instruction. The first parts which we have received lead us to think that the editor has hit upon a good working way of carrying out his intentions. The text is very readable, the printing is most excellent, and the name of Prang as publisher tells those who know that the chromolithographic part cannot be excelled.

*Magnetism and Electricity for Schools and Science Classes.* By George Porter. (Belfast: William Mullan and Son, 1878.)

So many school manuals of Electricity and Magnetism have appeared during the last ten years, particularly since the establishment of the South Kensington Science Examinations, that one is led to question the advisability of adding to their number. The existing manuals are, as a rule, as complete and comprehensive as works of their size and price can be, and until new facts are discovered, or new methods of treating old facts are in vogue, we do not see the necessity of multiplying such text-books. The work before us does not present any special feature. It is suitable for low Forms in a Public School, and for the elementary examination in Electricity at South Kensington. It is cheap and sufficiently illustrated, but occasionally insufficiently explicit for young boys. The chapter on Terrestrial Magnetism might with advantage be somewhat enlarged, and would be distinctly improved by the addition of one or two simple figures.

*La Revue Magnétique, Organe du Cercle Electro-magnétique de Paris.* Rédacteur-en-Chef, H. Durville. Nos. 1, 5, 6. (Paris, 1878.)

WE have received the above three numbers, the first of which was published on April 16. Acting upon the saying *ex pede Herculem*, we give an extract or two from the "A nos lecteurs." "Il ne faut pas considérer le magnétisme comme une panacée universelle; mais son emploi peut rendre d'immenses services à l'humanité. Sans remplacer complètement la médecine, il peut la seconder puissamment, dans les maladies même les plus désespérées. Quand il sera bien compris de tous, dans la plupart des cas le père de famille deviendra le meilleur médecin de ses enfants; le frère traitera son frère; l'amî, son ami; et tous travailleront alors au progrès de tous. En publiant la *Revue Magnétique*, nous avons l'intention de rallier tous les éléments qui divergent encore autour de la doctrine; d'affermir celle-ci sur une base inébranlable, et de découvrir les secrets les plus cachés de la nature pour les utiliser au profit de l'humanité. . . . Nous ne reculerons devant aucun sacrifice; nous répondrons à

toutes les objections qui nous seront posées, et nous insérerons avec empressement les articles qui nous seront adressés. Flétrissant de toutes nos forces le charlatanisme partout où nous le rencontrerons; combattant les abus de toutes nos forces, nous enseignerons le MAGNÉTISME comme une œuvre de science et de charité." These are fine professions. There are articles on magnetism and somnambulism, an unpublished manuscript of Mesmer, and other short notes. A paper by the Editor, entitled, "Les Nombres considérés dans leurs rapports avec les Sciences occultes et les différents Cultes," runs through all the numbers, and contains much curious matter, which, from the style in places, reminds us of the brochures we have noticed in these columns from the pen of the Comte L. Hugo. To an outsider the journal appears strange; it carries on its face a good motto from Bossuet: "La Vérité est un bien commun; quiconque la possède la doit à ses frères."

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

[The Editor urgently requests correspondents to keep their letters as short as possible. The pressure on his space is so great that it is impossible otherwise to ensure the appearance even of communications containing interesting and novel facts.]

#### The Zoological Record

DR. HOEK'S complaint in NATURE, vol. xviii, p. 569, that not much care had been taken in the record as to zoological papers published in the Netherlands in 1875 and 1876, doubtless appears well grounded to himself from his locally restricted view, but, when analysed, is scarcely of sufficient importance to call for more than an expression of regret that a certain percentage of omission and error must inevitably occur in any large undertaking. No one of the recorders fancies that his work is complete, and the omissions of any one year are constantly supplemented in the following volumes, our best thanks being given to those who will take the trouble to put us right.

The copy of Dr. Hoek's paper, "Die Zoologie in den Niederlanden," sent for our guidance, was duly received after the usual delays, and I beg to thank him publicly for his forethought and kindness in presenting it. It bore the date 1877, and, if it had contained matter to be recorded, would be included in the volume for that year now being compiled. But, being bibliographical only, its use is as an index to the different recorders. It contains notices of eighty-seven papers, on no particular branch of zoology, and referring to no particular locality, but merely published in the Netherlands in 1875 and 1876. Of these eighty-seven papers, I find only seventeen not given in the records for those years; and, as no less than ten of these were published in the latter year, the delay of one volume only is caused by the omission. One of the seventeen (by Benjamins) is purely histological, and not in our scope; four others (by De Man and Winkler) are palæontological, and two at least of the rest are of the most unimportant nature (by De Graaf and Everts). The remainder are one in Mammalia (but more correctly to be referred to Vermes), one in Pisces, two in Mollusca, one in Insecta (Lepidoptera), and five in Crustacea, so that the charge of want of care, when shared by the recorders of these divisions, appears founded upon a very slight basis.

A certain querulousness in Dr. Hoek's last sentence is probably to be attributed to the incompleteness in the record of Crustacea, the five omissa in which are unfortunately all his own papers. (I observe that four papers of Dr. Hoek's on Crustacea are included in the records for 1875 and 1876, though apparently not the same as these.) Dr. von Martens, the recorder of that division, would, however, be the first to deplore this, and to feel the loss to himself as a worker; and his reputation for accuracy and fidelity is too great to suffer from this *lapsus*.

It may be mentioned, also, that two of the omissa are contained in Academical Inaugural Dissertations (which it is needless to explain are practically never published); and that another of them is published in the papers of the Zeeuwisch Society of Sciences (Middelburg), which, to say the least, are not in the hands of every working naturalist in this country.

October 1

E. C. RYE