

Brahmaputra; the Great and Little Irawadi, forming the two upper branches of the main Burmese artery, are carried through the unexplored Pomi country as far as 32° N.; while the Lu-Kiang (Salwen) and Lantsan-Kiang (Me-Khong) are both traced still higher to 34° N. 92° E. within a short distance of the Murui-ussu (Yangtze-kiang) valley. Thus the basins of five of the great Asiatic streams are crowded at one point into a narrow space of less than 280 miles, where the several water partings are formed merely by a series of lofty ridges following in rapid succession between Sechuen and East Assam. Such a hydrographic disposition is of course elsewhere absolutely unparalleled, and is altogether of such a phenomenal character that it can hardly be finally accepted until the main rivers are actually traced to their respective sources.

The jealousy with which the Tibetan frontier is everywhere guarded Herr Kreitner is disposed to attribute rather to the Lbassa than to the Peking authorities. The Chinese government is represented as possessing very little practical power in Tibet, which is gradually becoming a sort of fee simple of the Sacerdotal class. The Dalai-lama himself is a mere puppet in the hands of this priestly caste, which has set up no less than 103 living Buddhas altogether, and which now embraces two-thirds of the population of Tibet, grinding the rest to dust, and living in opulence, idleness, and profligacy on the contributions of the countless devotees who periodically visit the vast monastic establishments overshadowing the land. The whole trade of the country is monopolised by the llamas, "who buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market," and whose efforts are steadily directed against the intrusion of all foreign competition. These llamas are the greatest curse that ever afflicted an ignorant and superstitious people, plundering and oppressing them in their combined capacity of sorcerers, priests, traders, money-lenders, serf-owners, and landed proprietors. "No Tibetan peasant claims as his own the land he tills, or the house he builds. All is held at the will of the llamas, who eject him whenever he dares to brave their displeasure. And in the power, rapacity, and boundless authority of these priests must be sought the impassable barriers which have hitherto encircled the whole land. By them is Tibet closed to the outer world, and by them will it long remain hermetically sealed" (p. 855).

The work is abundantly illustrated by original woodcuts, which, if not always remarkable for artistic merit, are at least always to the point. It is also unfortunately disfigured by several mis-statements and inaccuracies, some of which are quite unaccountable. Thus the length of the Suez Canal is given at 80 instead of 100 English miles. The Wahhabis are brought to the west of Mecca, where they have never been seen since their overthrow by the Egyptians in 1819. Harakiri and other customs, legally abolished since the Revolution of 1868, would appear to be still practised in Japan. The Shogun is still the "Tykun," while the Mikado, representing the oldest monarchy in the world, is said to have sprung "from the Kubo (Shogun) dynasty, founded in 1603"! Shintoism is described in one place as "a Buddhist sect," and in another, although rightly called the original national religion, it is wrongly said to be now mostly superseded by Buddhism and the Confucian moral

system. The upper course of the Yangtze-Kiang, we are told, is called the "Murui-ussu" by the Tibetans, who certainly do not speak Mongolian. The Tibetans themselves are stated to be called "Si-fan" by the Chinese, and at p. 831 the extraordinary statement is made that Tibet "ist leblo auf Thierwelt," the very opposite being notoriously the case.

A. H. KEANE

#### OUR BOOK SHELF

*Die Insekten nach ihren Schaden und Nutzen.* Von Prof. Dr. E. Taschenberg. Mit 70 Abbildungen. Pp. 1-300, 8vo. (Leipzig: G. Freytag, 1882.)

THIS forms the fourth volume of a German series of popular works issued under the title "Das Wissen der Gegenwart." It consists of an examination of certain insects injurious, or otherwise, in field, garden, and forest. The author is a man of scientific training, and as a specialist has acquired that practice of accuracy of statement that necessarily results from the education of a specialist. Much of the contents will prove useful to Englishmen who can read German; a portion, however, concerns insects that happily do not occur with us. The figures are mostly very good, many are excellent a few are indifferent. We recognise most of them as reproductions, or reductions, from varied sources. The "Colorado Beetle" is introduced, and appears somewhat strangely out of place in a work that almost exclusively concerns German insects. Possibly the opportunity for indulging in a little satire (p. 124) may form sufficient excuse. But the author aims his satire at the wrong butt. He alludes to newspaper reports as to Colorado beetles having been sent over by Irish Americans, in order to spite "Englanders," but omits to suggest that the "scare" existed long before these newspaper reports.

*Out in the Open. A Budget of Scraps of Natural History gathered in New Zealand.* By T. H. Potts, F.L.S. (Christ Church, 1882.)

THIS little volume contains a reprint of a number of interesting papers contributed by the author from time to time to the *New Zealand Country Journal*. These chiefly relate to the ferns and birds of the country, but comprise also an account of a visit in 1878 to Hikurangi, where the Maoris were seen at home. In another paper a good account of the Kia (*Nestor notabilis*) is given. It would seem that it does not do much damage to the flocks of sheep except during periods of severe snow, when the parrots are deprived of their usual food. The work is evidently the result of a good deal of intelligent observation carried on over a number of years.

*Catalogue of Mammalia in the Indian Museum, Calcutta.* By John Anderson, M.D., F.R.S. Part I. (Calcutta: printed by order of the Trustees, 1881.)

THIS part contains the Primates, Prosimidæ, Chiroptera, and Insectivora of the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Till 1865 this Museum was the property of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, and a catalogue of the mammalia therein was drawn up in 1863 by the late Edward Blyth, so well known to all Indian naturalists of that period. The collection has increased enormously since, from in 1863 150 species of the four orders catalogued by Dr. Anderson to 252 at present existing in the Museum of these same orders. Extensive and important details are given about many of the more remarkable species, especially the Primates. The synonymic lists seem well worked out, and this part will have a value for the working naturalists far beyond that of a mere catalogue. We trust the second part will soon be published, and we congratulate the Trustees on the excellent work done by their superintendent.