

competition announced by the "Society for the Prevention of Blindness in London," and to which the prize of 80*l.* offered by the Society was awarded. The book may be described as containing a succinct exposition of the chief causes of blindness, and an endeavour to render them intelligible to non-medical readers; the object being to obtain the cooperation of the public in the removal of these causes, in so far as that desirable end may be attained by improved hygiene, and by a better knowledge of the most favourable conditions of ocular work.

The causes of blindness which may fairly be said to be thus remediable, even including under blindness high degrees of defective vision, are two in number—namely, the purulent ophthalmia of new-born infants, and the progressive short-sight which is not uncommon in schools. The former is a disease which might frequently be prevented, which is always curable if treated in good time, but which, if neglected, is almost certain to destroy the sight; and to neglect of its early stages among the poor, and in remote country districts, probably four-fifths of the blindness which occurs among children in this country may be ascribed. Several months ago the Ophthalmological Society of the United Kingdom, moved thereto by Dr. McKeown of Belfast, sent a deputation to the Home Secretary to call the attention of the Government to the dangerous character and the easy curability of this affection, and to urge that steps should be taken, through the instrumentality of the Registrars of Births, to diffuse a more general knowledge of the importance of early treatment. Partly through the opposition of the Registrar-General, the deputation met with no encouragement; and the information given by Dr. Fuchs is therefore as opportune as it is valuable, and might with great advantage be communicated to the poor by clergymen, schoolmasters, and others. It may be said, however, that many of his recommendations apply chiefly to countries in which the employment of midwives is more general than in England.

The progressive short-sight of the educational period is a matter which has lately attracted much notice in all civilised countries, and Dr. Fuchs has nothing to say concerning it which is original. He presents, nevertheless, a brief and convenient summary of the facts, and a good description of the methods of school lighting and fitting which are most to be commended. This part of his volume may be studied with great advantage by any teachers and managers to whom the more systematic treatises upon the subject are either unknown or inaccessible. The book contains one serious error, which, in the English version, has been slightly modified by a mistranslation. Dr. Dudgeon writes, with reference to the provision for instruction about eye diseases in the medical schools of Great Britain and Ireland—"There are eye departments in all the large hospitals, but as a rule no regular lectures on ophthalmology are delivered." The word rendered "ophthalmology" is in the original not "*ophthalmologie*," but "*augenheilkunde*," and the correct translation would be "the treatment of diseases of the eyes." On this subject, that is to say, upon so much of ophthalmology as has any direct bearing upon the duties of the medical practitioner, systematic lectures are delivered in every medical school in the United Kingdom; and it is difficult to believe that

the translator could have been unacquainted with the fact. "Ophthalmology," of course, takes a much wider range, and embraces branches of optics and of physiology with which the practitioner, unless a specialist in eye disease, has neither time nor reason to concern himself.

OUR BOOK SHELF

Among the Rocks round Glasgow: A Series of Excursion-Sketches and other Papers. By Dugald Bell. Second Edition. (Glasgow: Maclehose, 1885.)

THIS volume furnishes a good example of what a busy man can do in his few intervals of leisure. The volume is mainly based on notes of excursions kept by the author while acting as secretary to the Glasgow Geological Society. It affords a fairly accurate idea of the geological structure of the country round about Glasgow, and of the principal features of interest which the rocks of the district present. The excursions extend as far as Stirling, take in the course of the Clyde and not a few districts on its banks. Many of the papers are pleasant reading; and even geological specialists may find something in the pages to interest and inform.

Three Martyrs of Science of the Nineteenth Century. Studies from the Lives of Livingstone, Gordon, and Patterson. By the Author of "Chronicles of the Schönberg-Cotta Family." (London: S.P.C.K., 1885.)

THE author of this volume tells the story of these three remarkable lives very pleasantly and instructively, more, however, from the religious than the scientific standpoint. A very fair account is given of the work accomplished by Livingstone in Africa, though the author does not seem to be quite aware of the value of the geographical work accomplished by Gordon on the Upper Nile.

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 insure the appearance even of communications containing interesting and novel facts.]

Upper Wind Currents over the Equator

THE importance of an accurate knowledge of the general circulation of the atmosphere over the equator is so obvious and so little known that the following observations, taken on a voyage from Aden to Australia in February, 1885, will be of interest:—

Over the north-east monsoon, north of the line, the surface wind was east-north-east, while the low clouds came from due east. No high cirrus was ever seen.

In 2° N. lat. the surface wind lowest clouds came from N.N.E., the next layer of cirro-stratus from E. rather fast, while the highest cirri drove very slowly from E.S.E.

In about 1° S. lat. the surface came from N.W. (the N.W. monsoon), small flecks of low cloud from N.E., while some high cirri moved from E. at a moderate rate.

In 5° S. lat. the surface wind still blew from N.W., the lowest cumulus moved from N.N.W., the next layer of cirro-stratus from N., while a still higher layer of cirrus came slowly from E. or E.S.E.

In 10° S. lat. the surface wind came still from N.W., and the clouds at moderate altitude from S.E.

In the "Doldrums," which we only reached in 13° S. lat., the surface wind was from S. and the clouds from S.E.

After we entered the S.E. trade, while the wind came from S.E., the clouds drove from S., and when about 25° S. lat. the trade drew into E.; the clouds came from S.E.

The relation of upper to surface winds in the N.E. monsoon is just what might have been expected; but the discovery of an