

refrain from any criticism on the plates, save that the figures are for the most part of necessity from the originals in Van Voorst's well-known series.

Handbook of Jamaica, 1885-86. (London: Stanford.)

THIS is one of the most comprehensive books of the kind that has come under our notice. Everything connected with this interesting colony finds a place in it. The history of the island, for instance, and the geographical description of it might be read with advantage by the most general reader. Of special interest to scientific readers is the full account of the public gardens and plantations, now under the efficient control of Mr. Morris, whose reports we have noticed from time to time as they were published. In the "Handbook," however, a history of the department since 1774 is given; and it is curious to notice the influence it has had on the prosperity of the island. Except pimento, "that child of nature," and a few others of comparatively little value, most of the staple products of Jamaica are derived from exotics or plants introduced from other parts of the globe. Thus the sugar-cane, in its several varieties, coffee, the mango, logwood, cinnamon, the bamboo, mulberry, mimosa, camphor, clove and pepper plants, and many other products of great commercial importance to the island, were unknown a century and a half ago. The manner in which they were brought in is given from historical sources. Thus, that most important industry, cinchona-planting, was only introduced in 1861, on the recommendation of the late Sir William Hooker; the first seeds were planted in the Botanic Gardens, and the first plants reared and distributed from there. In 1884 73,533 lbs. of cinchona bark, valued at 16,327*l.*, were exported from Jamaica. Many other examples of the great economical benefits of these Botanic Gardens on Jamaica might be selected from the interesting historical account of them given in this handbook. The sketch of the Jamaica Institute is also of much interest.

Syllabus of a Course of Lectures on Physiology, delivered at Guy's Hospital. By Dr. P. H. Pye-Smith. (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1885.)

THIS volume consists of the outlines of lectures given from time to time by the author at Guy's. The author, in publishing it, aims at giving the student a help to systematic reading and self-examination, as also to recall to all who take an interest in physiology, the chief facts of this important subject.

Consisting, as it does, of the heads and indications of subjects, this work is one that naturally cannot, in the ordinary sense of the term, be read through, nor will it serve in any way to cram a student for an examination; but we have kept it by us, and from time to time returned to its pages with ever-increasing interest. Though long past the period of life usually described as the "student stage," the ideas presented to us in this book, whether concerning facts, theories, or the deeply-interesting history of the subject, have compelled us to become students again, and we feel it a duty to urge our younger brethren, who are engaged in their first studies of physiology, to consult this little volume, as it is meant to be consulted; and if there be in them the smallest measure of an aspiration for a knowledge of a science as important as it is fascinating; if they be earnest, honest students, they will thank us for calling their attention to a volume which, in a small space, compasses so vast a subject.

Nature and Her Servants; or, Sketches of the Animal Kingdom. By Theodore Wood. (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1886.)

THIS is a well-intentioned little work, illustrated by a set of, for the most part, unobjectionable woodcuts. It is intended for the young, and so scientific terms have been almost wholly discarded. The author states very cor-

rectly, that in order to impress a fact upon the mind of a child, that fact must be presented in an interesting and attractive manner, and it is presumably bearing this in mind that he has selected the title to his volume, for children soon learn to know all that is attractive and interesting in the conception of a servant, and the child that reads the introductory chapter to these sketches of the animal kingdom will have this subject brought before him in full detail. But as the thinking child reads on, will his tender mind not be frightened at the notion so forcibly dwelt upon by Mr. Wood, that this serving Nature means that the strong servants should kill and swallow the weak; that while by one law of "Mistress Nature" the servants are to increase and multiply, by another law of the same Dame the feeble and the little ones are destroyed by the strong and the big, and that it is thus that these servants, now become foes, "fulfil their trust." The young inquirer who reads this on the first page may find it hard to agree with the statement on the last page, that "Nature is a good mistress, and provides her servants with all that they may require."

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.]

The Whole Duty of a Chemist

I HAVE read with much interest your article on "The Whole Duty of a Chemist." To me it appears perfectly clear that he who does good work in professional science and is paid highly for it, is accorded less honour than he who does equally good work in original scientific research and receives no personal payment, because the former receives a pecuniary reward for his labour whilst the latter does not; the least honour is given where there is the least self-sacrifice. The man who does original research with the ultimate object of securing remunerative scientific employment, works with a less unselfish motive and object than he who does such research from a pure love of truth and a desire to benefit mankind. But whilst the pursuit of new knowledge has always been considered a nobler occupation than the pursuit of money, most scientific investigators do some remunerative work, and workers in both departments are necessary for the general welfare.

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The Recent Star-Shower

LA pluie extraordinaire des étoiles filantes du 27 Novembre, 1872, s'est renouvelée cette année le même jour et à peu près avec la même intensité. D'après les télégrammes et les relations que nous avons reçus en grand nombre jusqu'à présent, il résulte que le phénomène en question a été remarqué dans toute l'Italie depuis les Alpes jusqu'à l'extrémité de la Sicile, et qu'il se produisit partout sous les mêmes formes. Il commença à la tombée du jour. A Tarente, à 5 heures du soir, les étoiles jaillissaient et filaient en lignes si compactes qu'elles perçaient de temps en temps l'obscurité déjà avancée de la nuit. A Palerme quelques-uns de nos anciens élèves ingénieurs comptèrent 4600 météores de 5h. 15m. à 6h. 30m. A cette heure la pluie météorique se manifestait en plusieurs autres endroits avec une abondance tout à fait surprenante.

Dans notre Observatoire on commença à explorer le ciel à 6h. du soir (temps moyen de Rome). Nous avons suivi la même méthode que je suivis en 1872; les observations actuelles peuvent en conséquence être comparables avec celles d'alors. Comme j'eus déjà plusieurs fois l'occasion d'exposer cette méthode je crois à propos de l'omettre ici. Je me bornerai à rapporter les résultats obtenus de 15 en 15 minutes; et afin de mieux éclaircir ma