

sistencies in the limitation of the regions, because we believe that the latest and fullest data relating to the regions in question clearly indicate that it is not a matter of opinion.

The Atlas as a whole is a most laborious and careful compilation, and we do not doubt that it will meet with the favour it deserves. The second sheet of maps illustrates the areas of certain important natural orders and genera; the third, the horizontal zones of vegetation of the world; the fourth, the flora of Europe; the fifth, the floras of Europe and Asia; the sixth, the floras of Africa and Australia; the seventh, the floras of America; and the last represents the areas of plants cultivated for their economic products.

It would be easy enough to find fault with some of the details of the limitation of Dr. Drude's sub-regions, those of tropical Africa and Eastern Asia for example, though it would not always be so easy to suggest more satisfactory ones; but we prefer judging the work by its merits rather than by its real or assumed defects.

This Atlas, it should be added, is a cartographical development of Dr. Drude's "Florenreiche der Erde," which appeared in 1884, and formed the *Ergänzungsheft* 74 to *Petermann's Geographische Mittheilungen*; that is to say, it is a development so far as the maps are concerned, but the explanatory letterpress has been reduced to four pages folio. The maps, sixteen in number, are admirably executed, and exceedingly elaborate; indeed, the only fault we find in them is an excess of detail, with perhaps too little explanatory text for beginners.

As the author very truly observes, the material available for such a work is now almost inexhaustible, and the task of selecting from it for the purposes in view was no easy one. He brings into contrast the position of botanical geography in 1848, when the first edition of Berghaus's "Physical Atlas" was published, and there was nothing approaching a complete flora of any of the larger areas outside of Europe in existence. Even in 1855, when De Candolle gave to the world his now classical work, "Géographie Botanique Raisonnée," he could only deal with fragments of floras. Now, though it may safely be asserted that future discoveries can in no way affect the main theories of distribution based upon what is already known, very much remains to be done in fossil botany before we shall be able to trace in detail the early migrations of plants. Therefore the only thing that can be successfully accomplished yet is to work out more completely the present distribution of plants, which is practically all that Wallace has done for animals. But he deals specially with the quality and probable origin of the zoology of his regions; and it is just this aspect of botanical geography that awaits further development.

#### OUR BOOK SHELF.

*Tenants of an Old Farm.* By Henry C. McCook, D.D. (London; Hodder and Stoughton, 1888.)

THE object of this book is to present "a series of exact truths from natural history in a popular form." The author's original intention was to write a number of essays upon insect life, and particularly upon the life of ants and spiders, which he has especially studied. Friends, however, persuaded him to give the essays a colloquial form, so that they might appeal to as wide a circle of readers

as possible. We are not sure that the change was in all respects an improvement, for, as Dr. McCook says, "the truths of Nature are attractive enough in themselves, and need not the seasoning of fiction." The book is very popular in the United States, and there can be little doubt that it will also be appreciated on this side of the Atlantic. The author is a keen and accurate observer of Nature, and his enthusiasm for his subject is so steadily maintained that it cannot but exert some influence on the minds of young students. For the present edition a brief introduction has been written by Sir John Lubbock, who bears cordial testimony to the fidelity and skill with which Dr. McCook has carried on his researches. The work is remarkably well illustrated.

*Digging, Squatting, and Pioneering Life in the Northern Territory of South Australia.* By Mrs. Dominic D. Daly. (London: Sampson Low, 1887.)

THIS is an interesting account of a part of South Australia which is sure to become more and more important. The writer spent three years—from 1870 to 1873—in the Northern Territory, and by far the best chapters are those in which she records her own experiences. The history of the district during the last fourteen years has, however, been carefully compiled from the most trustworthy sources. She has, of course, a good deal to say about the natives, her accounts of whom are freshly and brightly written. Mrs. Daly is of opinion that, so far as the treatment of the aborigines is concerned, only one rule holds good—"firmness accompanied by kindness, fair play, and an honest payment for work done." If they make themselves disagreeable, they must be kept "in their proper place," "for," she says, "when a native shows signs of sulkiness and defiance, it is perfectly certain some mischief is brewing."

*Photography Simplified.* (London: Mawson and Swan, 1887.)

THIS is a third edition, considerably revised and enlarged, of an elementary and practical treatise, intended chiefly for amateurs and those about to become acquainted with the subject. The earlier chapters deal with the purchasing of apparatus, followed by the various processes of taking the negative, developing, printing, &c., and are written in a very plain and intelligent way. The book concludes with an appendix containing additional useful formulæ, together with a set of labels for the photographic laboratory.

#### 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.]

#### An Explanation explained.

I AM glad to find that Dr. Guppy has at last enabled us to get to the bottom—I cannot say to the foundation—of the story which was related by the Duke of Argyll on November 17 in last year, to the discredit of Prof. Bonney and the authorities of the Geological Society. It is now admitted that the paper, said to have been "offered to," and "refused by," the Society, never came before the President and Council in any form whatever; and that in fact the paper was not only never presented, but was never even written!

Dr. Guppy's references to myself are capable of the simplest explanation. During the whole time that he was absent in the Solomon Islands, I was in the habit of receiving specimens