

ence can alone show how far he has succeeded. We should doubt the efficacy of his instrument ourselves, and we certainly cannot indorse his belief that, "however scrupulous the draughtsman may be, however unbiassed he intends to be, errors may creep in, and therefore photo-micrography . . . comes in to insure complete veracity with a saving of labour."

Woodcuts are given of some few of the accessories enumerated. Chief among them is a very monotonous array of scalpels and probes, which form the frontispiece. Strange to say, the author makes not the least mention of most of those in his text, despite a reference in the index. It is clear, however, from the context, that they are to be regarded as aids to the study of insect anatomy: we have here a superfluity, for choice among the knives represented would be so embarrassing that, by the time the operator made up his mind, the subject itself would be far advanced towards decomposition. The introduction of curved scissors is no less to be deprecated. Apparatus and accessories have a fascination for most people, but the best work has always been done with the simplest tools. It must never be forgotten that it is the head at the one end, and not the mechanical aid at the other, which does the real work.

We would take exception to the introduction of the words "mountant," "semi-hard," and one or two others which might be named. The statement that the mites are "almost the smallest class of created beings" falls very unhappily from a pure microscopist, while the definition given of the Foraminifera needs modification.

We are pleased to note that the author has been mindful of the charms of the tow-net—perhaps the most important instrument in the future of marine zoology. If Mr. White's work be divested of its bugs' heads, and other similar objects which are the mainstay of those for whom he writes, there remains a solid substratum which far excels in merit that of many more pretentious works on the subject.

OUR BOOK SHELF.

A Manual of the Geology of India. Part IV. Mineralogy. By F. R. Mallet. Published by order of the Indian Government. (London: Trübner and Co., 1887.)

WHILE the third volume of this work possessed a certain interest for the statesman and the capitalist, including as it did descriptions of the minerals of economic value, the present one will only claim the attention of scientific readers. It may be a matter of surprise that nearly all that is certainly known about the minerals of India should be capable of compression into less than two hundred pages. But, as the author points out, excavations for mining or other purposes have not, as a rule, been superintended by men possessing the knowledge requisite to enable them to record facts of scientific importance; further, there is no demand for non-economic minerals, and consequently no mercenary incentive to collect specimens.

In looking over the book we are at once struck with the meagre character of much of the information given. Numbers of questions occur which we should like to see settled, but which are unanswerable in the present state of our knowledge, or rather ignorance, of Indian mineralogy. But our author is certainly not to blame for this. He has made the most of the scanty materials at his command, and the result is a valuable contribution to mineralogical science, which will serve as a basis for

a future work on the subject worthy of our Indian Empire. The classification adopted is that of Dana, as given in his "System of Mineralogy."

In the collection of materials for the book which we hope will grow out of this, English residents and educated natives might do science much service. The study of mineralogy was extensively pursued in England until displaced by the more attractive subject of stratigraphy, but as India presents such a vast field there is no reason why the subject should not become popular again. Workers in this department will find Mr. Mallet's book of the greatest service.

Through the Yang-tse Gorges. By A. J. Little, F.R.G.S. (London: Sampson Low, 1888.)

MR. LITTLE recently undertook a two months' journey from Shanghai, the metropolis of the Chinese coast, to Chung-King, the commercial metropolis of Western China. The present volume consists of the journal kept during his travels, and an admirable journal it is, full of the results of careful and minute observation, and written in a fresh, lively, and entertaining style. Few travellers, with the exception of "the ubiquitous missionary," have ascended to the highest navigable point of the Yang-tse, the only road of intercommunication between the eastern and western districts of the Chinese Empire. Most readers, therefore, will find in this book much that is new to them about the Chinese people and their country. There are many vivid descriptions of the varied scenery through which Mr. Little passed, and his notes on industries, social customs, and popular religious ideas are invariably interesting and suggestive. Upon the whole, he has no very exalted opinion of the intellectual and moral qualities of the Chinese, and he is not disposed to believe that the empire, under the influence of Western ideas, is about to enter upon a new and momentous stage of political and social development. Everywhere he found the bureaucracy intensely conservative, and bitterly prejudiced against foreigners. They are willing enough to adopt superior mechanical appliances, so far as implements of war are concerned; but in all other matters they prefer to move along the old lines, which, having been good enough for their forefathers, must, they think, be good enough for themselves.

Home Experiments in Science. By T.O'Conor Sloane, Ph.D. (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, and Rivington, 1888.)

THE author of this work has produced a very readable and useful book for those who wish to employ their leisure hours in gaining knowledge and information about the elementary parts of the various branches of science. The volume consists of a collection of experiments that can be easily performed with home-made apparatus; good detailed instruction as to the necessary mechanical operations is given, together with ninety-seven woodcuts of the experiments and the apparatus employed. The branches of science included in these experiments are mechanics, general and molecular physics; the chapter on soap-bubbles contains some very interesting experiments about them; and the concluding chapter consists of hints to those who are about to begin scientific lecturing.

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 intended for this or any other part of NATURE. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

Prof. Rosenbusch's Work on Petrology.

OF the great value of Prof. Rosenbusch's work on petrology, so excellently reviewed by Dr. Hatch, to which your corre-