

mere "feverish colds"; yet all such cases would have to be isolated in view of a threatened epidemic.

The extracts from the various Sanitary Acts appended to these papers form a very convenient work of reference for those interested in the subject, while the counsel's opinion on the powers of sanitary authorities as to influenza leave us very much where we were before. Dr. Sisley has, however, done valuable service in calling public attention to the inadequacy of our existing sanitary laws as a means of checking the spread of such a disease as influenza, and many will cordially indorse his opinion that "much improvement in this respect is not to be hoped for until the sanitary service is consolidated, and becomes one fold under one shepherd—a Minister of Public Health."

OUR BOOK SHELF.

Anthropogeographie. Zweiter Theil. "Die Geographische Verbreitung des Menschen." Von Friedrich Ratzel. (Stuttgart: J. Engelhorn, 1891.)

THE first part of this work was published about nine years ago, and is still highly valued by all who care to study geography and anthropology from strictly scientific points of view. The present volume will also be found worthy of the author's reputation as one of the foremost authorities on all questions relating to the connection between man and the physical conditions by which he is surrounded. In the first part Dr. Ratzel deals with the habitable part of the globe, tracing the process by which man has taken possession of it, indicating the development of his ideas regarding it, and noting the characteristics of its northern and southern borderlands and of its vacant spaces. The second part he devotes to various aspects of statistics, discussing, among other things, the relations between density of population and degrees of civilization. In the third part are considered the traces and works of man on the surface of the globe—a subject which leads the author to treat of cities and their importance as historical centres, of ruins, roads and other means of communication between communities, and geographical names. The fourth and last part relates mainly to ethnographical questions, including questions as to the diffusion of ethnographical characteristics, and the origin of ethnographical affinities. The work is not only full of thought and learning, but has the advantage of being written in a fresh, clear, and vigorous style.

Within an Hour of London Town: Among Wild Birds and their Haunts. By "A Son of the Marshes." Edited by J. A. Owen. (Edinburgh and London: W. Blackwood and Sons, 1892.)

"A SON OF THE MARSHES" is now so well known that any new book by him is sure to find readers and admirers. He does not, of course, make important contributions to science. His writings merely record the impressions produced upon him by various aspects of nature in which he happens to be especially interested. But his impressions are so thoroughly true, and are presented in so vivid a style, that they may always be studied with pleasure. Even his talk about very common things has a certain charm, for he observes them accurately, and brings out by skilful touches their relations to other things that are not quite so intimately known. The present volume has all the characteristics of his previous books, and should do a good deal to foster in the mind of "the general reader" a liking for some of the more attractive facts and ideas of natural history.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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Exchange of Professorial Duties.

THE proposal of my friend Prof. Anderson Stuart, explained in the subjoined letter, seems to me one which may very probably commend itself to the professors and governing bodies of some of our Universities and University Colleges; and I therefore venture to ask for its publication in NATURE. By correspondence twelve months in advance, such an exchange as is here suggested could be arranged (with the assent of Senate, Council, or other authority), and would undoubtedly, where practicable, be of very great interest and advantage, not only to the teachers concerned, but also, in no less degree, to their classes.

E. RAY LANKESTER.

Oxford.

Shepherd's Hotel, Cairo, February 13, 1892.

DEAR PROFESSOR RAY LANKESTER,—In conversations with teachers in Europe during my two visits (1890-91, 1891-92) they have again and again said how much they would like to visit the colonies for pleasure, health, or the opportunity of study, as the case might be; but of course they could not, being bound by their duties. On the other hand, the benefit to the colonial teacher of a periodical visit to the older centres of learning has all along been recognized.

Soon after my return to Sydney in March 1891, it occurred to me that it would be easy to secure at once a visit of a European teacher to the colonies and of a colonial teacher to Europe by a temporary exchange of duties. Every now and again it happens that a teacher must provide for the duties of his office by a substitute, as is done by the colonial teacher when absent on leave, and by the European teacher most frequently, perhaps, when ill. Why, then, should not two teachers in a subject, who could trust each other, agree to apply for leave of absence, each proposing the other as his substitute for the time specified? I cannot see that any governing body could reasonably object to the proposal, and so the arrangement would be concluded.

Immediately on my return to Europe in October last I spoke of the matter, and amongst others to yourself; and since then I have discussed it with many friends, one of whom referred to it approvingly at a recent meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute. The project becomes the more feasible the more one studies the details of carrying it out. Practically one's attention is confined to America and Australasia. A study of the periods of the University terms, and of the steamship time-tables, shows that it is feasible for the latter, which is by far the more distant—about five weeks.

Of the pleasures of the voyage, and of the advantages to be derived by the residence in the other land, I need not speak, for each may form his own estimate of these; but that "there is something in" the thing I am persuaded, and I should be glad of your help in ascertaining what that something may be.

I am, dear Professor Ray Lankester,

Yours faithfully,

T. P. ANDERSON STUART,
Professor of Physiology, University of Sydney.

Magnetic Storms.

EXACTLY twenty-seven days from the magnetic storm and splendid aurora of February 13-14, which has already been mentioned in NATURE, there was on March 12 another very fine aurora in the United States and Canada, and it also was accompanied by a powerful magnetic storm. This correspondence to the time of a synodic revolution of the sun, to which attention has been called by the writer many times within a few years past, is interesting, showing as it does that the motion of rotation is concerned to an important extent in the recurrence of magnetic storms and their accompanying auroras. The evidence is accumulating constantly showing that solar disturbances have their maximum effect upon terrestrial magnetism when at the eastern limb and at or near the latitude of the plane of the earth's orbit. If the great sun-spot to which the aurora of