

In the preface of the present part, the origin of the series to which it belongs is thus related:—

“The need for new and revised descriptive works had, for some years before 1881, been felt and discussed amongst naturalists in India, but the attention of the Government was, I believe, first called to the matter by a memorial dated September 15 of that year, prepared by Mr. P. L. Sclater, the well-known Secretary of the Zoological Society, signed by Mr. Charles Darwin, Sir J. Hooker, Prof. Huxley, Sir J. Lubbock, Prof. W. H. Flower, and by Mr. Sclater himself, and presented to the Secretary of State for India. This memorial recommended the preparation of a series of hand-books of Indian zoology, and my appointment as editor. It is scarcely necessary to add that to the recommendation of men so highly respected and well known in the world of science, the publication of the present ‘Fauna of British India’ is greatly due, and that Mr. Sclater is entitled to the thanks of all interested in the zoology of India for the important part he took in the transaction.”

We are also glad to learn from the same source that the series of works on the fauna of British India will not be confined to the Vertebrata, the preparation of three volumes on Moths by Mr. G. F. Hampson having been commenced. We trust that these will be followed by others dealing with those groups of which sufficient material is available, and for which authors may be forthcoming capable of treating them in a manner worthy to be placed by the side of those already issued.

The second part of the Mammalia contains the orders Chiroptera, Rodentia, Ungulata, Cetacea, Sirenia, and Edentata. It is fully equal to its predecessor in careful selection of the material which is most likely to be useful and attractive to those readers for whom the work is chiefly intended. The descriptions, geographical distribution, and accounts of the habits of the various species can be thoroughly relied upon. Nomenclature is always a thorny subject in zoology, and though Mr. Blanford is usually most careful and judicious in his work in this department, we cannot agree with him in substituting the specific name of *maximus* for the time-honoured and universally used *Elephas indicus*. The inconvenience of changing the name by which such a familiar animal is designated in thousands of books and museums, is so great that it can only be justified by some more imperious necessity than appears to exist in the present case. That *maximus* was applied by Linnæus to both the then known species, and that it is incorrect and misleading (the other existing, and many of the extinct, species being as large as, or larger than, the Indian elephant) are sufficient reasons, in our judgment, for leaving the name in the oblivion in which it has slept for nearly a century. Moreover, if *indicus* be rejected, the claims of Blumenbach's *asiaticus* cannot be overlooked.

The illustrations of the present part are far superior to those of the former one, and show a marked advance in the art of process-printing directly from the artists' drawings, without the intervention of the wood-cutter. Many of those by Mr. P. Smit, though printed from blocks in the text, have all the softness and delicacy of the finest specimens of lithography, and add greatly to the attractiveness of this valuable work.

W. H. F.

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OUR BOOK SHELF.

Tanganyika: Eleven Years in Central Africa. By Edward Coode Hore, Master Mariner. (London: Edward Stanford, 1892.)

MR. HORE was for eleven years a member of the Central African Mission established at Lake Tanganyika by the London Missionary Society, his special task being to undertake all the work that could be most effectually accomplished by one who had the knowledge and experience of a master mariner. In the present book he gives an account of his labours. The narrative contains many elements of interest, and will be read with pleasure by all who like to think of devoted courage in the service of great moral ideas. Mr. Hore became very familiar with Lake Tanganyika, which he surveyed in the first instance on board a native boat. Afterwards the British supporters of the mission enabled him to build two vessels in which he had opportunities of doing his work in a style worthy of its magnitude and importance. Of the physical characteristics of the lake and the surrounding regions he gives an unpretending but sound and sometimes picturesque account. He has also much to say about the natives, whose confidence and good-will he seems to have had a rare power of winning. He has a very favourable opinion of their capacities, and knows of no good reason why they should ever be treated by Europeans otherwise than with kindness and patience.

Beginner's Guide to Photography. By a Fellow of the Chemical Society. (London: Perken, Son, and Raymond, 1892.)

THIS very cheap and useful little guide has now reached its fourth edition. The reader is led through all the phases of manipulation that at first sight seem so bewildering, but which with clear explanations are soon rendered more simple and eventually mastered. All questions relating to “How to buy a Camera, and how to use it,” may be said to be here fully answered, and by following the instructions an amateur may be saved from much disappointment and expense. The explanations throughout the book are both clear and explicit, and the omission of such technicalities as might confuse rather than enlighten a reader will be found distinctly advantageous.

Quain's Elements of Anatomy. Edited by E. A. Schäfer, F.R.S., and G. D. Thane. In Three Vols. Vol. II., Part 2. By Prof. Thane. Tenth Edition. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1892.)

IT is necessary here only to record the fact that the publishers have issued the second part of the second volume of this magnificent edition of Quain's standard work. The editor is Prof. Thane, and the subjects dealt with are arthrology, myology, and angiology. There are no fewer than 255 illustrations, many of which are coloured.

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.]

The Zebra's Stripes.

ALMOST every writer who treats of the colours of animals refers to Galton's observations that in the bright starlight of an African night zebras are practically invisible even at a short distance; but there can be no doubt that their peculiar striped appearance is also of great protective value in broad daylight. On a recent zebra hunt near Cradock, in which I took part, several members of our party commented on the difficulties of seeing