

"Origin of Exogamy" has hitherto been printed. The reader will find during the course of his perusal of this volume that he is already familiar with a large number of the facts, and will be inclined to wonder why they are reproduced here without reference to the works in which they have already been printed; but it must be remembered that the works of W. R. Smith, Frazer and others have been published since the death of M'Lennan, and to add references of this kind was clearly outside the duties of the editors. Again, some of his views are given more fully, and others are disproved by an overwhelming mass of evidence in the splendid publications of the American Bureau of Ethnography which the Government of the United States have issued during the last fifteen years; but we cannot blame the editor for being silent on these points. M'Lennan began to work and to collect materials when the study of comparative ethnography was in its infancy, and he endeavoured to study everything for himself and at first hand. As other workers entered the field, and studied to specialise their knowledge, his task became greater and greater, until at length he was unable to cope with it; still in many respects his work is thorough, and even when his impressions and deductions from facts are wrong, they bear an honesty about them which is lacking in the work of more modern investigators. In a book dealing with so many peoples and countries it would be easy to pick holes and to raise an argument with tolerable frequency; and although we do not propose to do either the one or the other, still we must protest against the quotation on p. 520. Here it is gravely stated that the Zodiac was known in Egypt as early as B.C. 5800, but there is no evidence whatever extant on which to found such a decision; the home of the Zodiac was the country lying to the north-east of the Arabian Peninsula, and though it may have been known to both the Semitic and non-Semitic inhabitants of this region at such an early period, there is no proof that it was. Finally, we cannot help regretting that Mr. M'Lennan's "Studies" are without an index, for, in our opinion, one-half of their usefulness and value is lost thereby.

#### OUR BOOK SHELF.

*Ferrets, their Management in Health and Disease; with Remarks on their Legal Status.* By Nicholas Everitt. 12mo, pp. xv + 209. Illustrated. (London: A. and C. Black, 1897.)

PROBABLY many of our readers who have not been brought up in the country would be shy of handling a ferret; but if they attend carefully to the directions given in this little volume, they may set aside their fears for the future. Admirable instructions are also given as to the management of these animals in health and in sickness, and likewise how to use them in the field; while a *résumé* of the legal status of ferrets will probably be useful to many. So far, indeed, as the breeding and management of these little mustelines are concerned, we may say, to use an expression of the author, that "what he does not know is not worth knowing."

Unfortunately, in common with many writers of works of a similar kind, the author has thought it necessary to give a preliminary chapter on the natural history of the ferret. Here he is in hopeless confusion. Although he describes the ferret as a species of *Mustela*, he says that it belongs to the genus *Putorius*; and further informs us

that it is a natural species, whose native home is Africa. He also states that the beech, or stone marten, is a British species, and makes several remarkable assertions concerning other members of the group. The author may be reminded that there are writers on natural history since Buffon; and should the work reach a second edition, he would do well to engage the services of a competent naturalist to rewrite the first chapter. R. L.

*Catalogue of the African Plants collected by Dr. F. Welwitsch in 1853-61. Part i. Dicotyledons.* By W. P. Hiern. Pp. xxvi + 336. (London: Printed by order of the Trustees of the British Museum, 1896.)

DR. WELWITSCH, although an Austrian by birth, occupied the position of curator of the Lisbon Botanic Garden and Museum, when he was selected, in 1851, by the King of Portugal as naturalist to an expedition for exploring the Portuguese possessions on the West Coast of Africa. Between this date and 1861, he made very large collections, chiefly of plants. Although Dr. Welwitsch died in 1872, his collections have till recently remained unedited, partly owing to a dispute as to their ownership between his Trustees and the Portuguese Government, which ended in the Court of Chancery, partly owing to the difficulty in finding a compiler and editor. This office was finally placed, by the Trustees of the British Museum, as far as the flowering plants are concerned, in the very competent hands of Mr. W. P. Hiern, who has now brought out the first part, comprising the natural orders of Dicotyledons from Ranunculaceæ to Rhizophoraceæ. The work has been one of great labour, a large number of new species and some new genera being described; and we may congratulate the systematic botanist on so important an addition to our knowledge of the flora of Tropical Africa. A. W. B.

*Pioneers of Evolution from Thales to Huxley; with an Intermediate Chapter on the Causes of Arrest of the Movement.* By Edward Clodd. Pp. x + 250. (London: Grant Richards, 1897.)

MR. CLODD has produced an interesting book, in which is told "the story of the origin of the Evolution idea in Ionia, and, after long arrest, of the revival of that idea in modern times, when its profound and permanent influence on thought in all directions, and, therefore, on human relations and conduct, is apparent." The volume is divided into four parts, which deal successively with the Pioneers of Evolution from Thales to Lucretius, the Arrest of Inquiry, the Renaissance of Science, and Modern Evolution. It should be read by the great body of science students in our University Colleges and technical schools, who, too often, in following special branches of science, lose sight of the great generalisations which have, during the latter part of this century, so completely altered the complexion and tendency of ideas on every subject of thought.

The author sketches the chief results which have come from the recognition of the principles of evolution, not only in biological provinces, but in all departments of human knowledge; and he has, in so doing, produced an attractive and wonderfully clear little volume.

It may be worth while to point out that the statement that nebulae are "masses of glowing hydrogen and nitrogen gases" (p. 164) needs correction; for nitrogen, as a nebular constituent, is now relegated to the limbo of departed ideas. Mr. Clodd should have verified his statement by himself taking the advice which he offers Lord Salisbury on p. 165. The reference to "the complex jelly-like *protoplasm*, or, as some call it, *nuclein* or *nucleoplasm*" (p. 103), also needs to be made accurate, for in its present form it will give readers the idea that the three words we have italicised are synonymous. The book contains good portraits of Darwin, Russel Wallace, Herbert Spencer, and Huxley.