

paper and printing are in their way admirable, but the thickness of the former does not make for portability. The custom of arranging Latin and English names under separate indices should be prohibited. It is a time-honoured survival in some Floras, but a constant source of annoyance to their users. Whether the 120 coloured plates of Alpine plants scattered through these pages will prove acceptable to purchasers of the work, we cannot say. A very large number of them are to be found in Wooster's "Alpine Plants," published a quarter of a century ago, though we have searched in vain for any indication of this fact. Then, too, some trouble was taken in the printing, and the result was not unpleasing. In Mr. Bennett's "Flora," these old plates have been mutilated, as will be obvious to any one who cares to compare the two works. In these days of modern methods and high-priced books we expect an advance, not a retrogression. We have said sufficient to show that the ideal Alpine Flora still remains to be produced. Our own view is that it should be somewhat on the lines of Hooker's "Student's Flora of the British Islands," with a separate volume of woodcuts similar to those of the well-known "Companion" to Bentham's "Handbook." If coloured plates are wanted, a draftsman of high artistic capacity and requisite botanical knowledge must be employed, whilst the printing must be of the very best. Nor would the public which travels in the Alps, and collects and examines the flowers growing there, be backward in its recognition of such a work.

First Stage Mechanics of Fluids. (The Organised Science Series.) By Prof. G. H. Bryan, Sc.D., F.R.S., and F. Rosenberg, M.A. Pp. vi + 208. (London: W. B. Clive, 1897.)

IN the pages of this book the authors have brought material together to cover that part of the subject of mechanics which is required by the Science and Art Department in the elementary examination. There are also chapters devoted to that portion of dynamics which is required by the corresponding syllabus in the mechanics of solids. The twenty-three chapters which fulfil the above-mentioned requirements are so arranged as to form an excellent elementary treatise, and also a good introduction to those who wish to make a further study of the subject. The style of treatment is similar to that adopted in other books of this series. The authors advocate strongly the importance of each student working out examples by himself, and with this idea have inserted numerous solved and unsolved problems. They have also kept down the number of formulæ, in order that the reader shall attack problems from first principles, and not trust to his memory; for those formulæ which have been inserted, proofs have been added. Numerous typical illustrations and figures are inserted in the text, thus rendering it still more serviceable to the young beginner.

Illustrative Cloud Forms. By C. D. Sigsbee. (Washington: U.S. Hydrographic Office, 1897.)

IN this book we have a collection of coloured plates, sixteen in number, illustrative of the different typical forms which clouds assume under various conditions. The classification, nomenclature, and descriptive text are derived from the "International Cloud Atlas" (Paris, 1896), but the plates are from the original paintings made for the Hydrographic Office by Mr. Rudolf Cronau. In addition to the ten standard types which are included in the classification, six further plates are devoted to illustrating certain modifications of these, such as fracto-stratus, fracto-cumulus, mamato-cumulus, &c. Each plate embraces the horizon and sufficient extension of view, so that the observer can obtain a good idea of cloud perspective. The paintings themselves have been made as accurately

and as true to nature as possible, and photographs, printed exemplars, together with the artist's personal observations and knowledge of clouds, have all been brought to bear on them. Great pains have been taken by the Hydrographic Office to ensure a faithful reproduction of the originals, and we can safely say that the observer has here before him a most excellent guide for the classification of clouds, which branch of meteorology is becoming every year of more importance as a means of forecasting the weather.

Among British Birds in their Nesting Haunts, illustrated by the Camera. By Oswin A. J. Lee. Part iv. (Edinburgh: David Douglas.)

THE first three parts of this work were noticed in these pages a few weeks ago (May 13, p. 26); the photographic reproductions in the present part are as attractive as those which preceded them, and will interest every student of bird life. There are ten large plates showing the nests of the Woodcock, Oyster-catcher (two plates), Tree Pipit, Reed Bunting, Ringed Plover (two plates), Little Tern (two plates), and Jackdaw. Brief notes upon the birds and their nesting haunts accompany each plate.

More brilliant photographic pictures of the nests of birds have never been published than those which now bear testimony to Mr. Lee's skill with the camera. The work in which the pictures appear is already known to most ornithologists, and it will long receive a full measure of admiration.

The Indigenous Drugs of India; Short Descriptive Notices of the Principal Medicinal Products met with in British India. By Kanny Lall Dey, Rai Bahadur, C.I.E. Second edition. Pp. 387. (Calcutta: Thacker, Spink, and Co.)

A WORK like the present, which is intended to promote the extension of our knowledge of Indian drugs, is much to be welcomed. Indian *Materia Medica* presents a wide field of research for the botanist, chemist, and pharmacologist. Dr. Lall Dey's book is a useful epitome of the characters and uses of Indian indigenous drugs, and contains a great deal of valuable information. It will form an excellent introduction to larger works on the subject, such as Dymock's "Pharmacographia Indica," and Watt's well-known Dictionary.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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The Storm in Essex on June 24.

I AM doubtful if an English thunderstorm has ever assumed the proportions that one reached here on Thursday last. Although there is nothing new under the sun, yet there is a good deal new to each individual, and the following facts were not looked on as possibilities by me before I witnessed them on that day.

The 24th was an intensely hot day, and after much distant thunder the storm broke on us about 2.45 p.m. (while hay-making was in full swing) from the north-west. After about ten minutes of the heaviest rain, hail began to fall, and soon a terrific hurricane, accompanied by hailstones larger than hens' eggs (mixed in with others of all sizes downwards), came on and lasted for five minutes, during which most of the damage was done. After this the storm gradually abated, and in something over half-an-hour had passed away. The scene was quite unique and winter-like. The ground was quite white, and in many places the hail had drifted to a foot deep, and every ditch and depression in the ground was full of water and hail. Every