

*The Cyanide Process.* By Alfred S. Miller. Second edition, revised and enlarged. Pp. viii+95; with 29 illustrations. (New York: John Wiley and Sons; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1906.)

THIS little book may be of value in giving general ideas on the cyanide process to those who know nothing about the subject. The possessor of the book may be put in a position to understand what is meant by the various phrases with regard to cyaniding that appear in the technical Press. It is, however, the least practical of manuals, and its statements, sometimes self-contradictory and sometimes mistaken, must be accepted loosely and generally without too close examination. This is the worst that can be said of it, and if it is read cursorily there is no reason for the reader to be misled. On the contrary, he may be enabled to converse intelligently on the subject.

*Highways and Byways in Berkshire.* By James Edmund Vincent. With illustrations by Frederick L. Griggs. Pp. xiii+430. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1906.) Price 6s.

ALL readers who are familiar with this attractive series will welcome the most recent addition to it. The style of production, the illustrations and the spirit of the author will together ensure the volume a wide popularity. Mr. Vincent is never dull, and every aspect of the country side with which he is dealing—be it historical, geological, or sociological—is made to contribute something of interest. The book will certainly serve as an invaluable companion to the reader who decides to explore Berkshire for himself, telling him what spots to seek diligently and indicating the districts that may be treated lightly. The indolent man, who eschews travel as troublesome, will be able, without leaving his armchair by the fire, now that he can have the assistance of Messrs. Vincent and Griggs, thoroughly to enjoy Berkshire scenes, make the acquaintance of Berkshire men and women, and learn the importance of the county in English history.

#### LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

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#### Geological Survey of Canada.

As one deeply interested in the success of the Geological Survey of Canada, I cannot but regret the letters which have appeared in NATURE concerning the appointment of Mr. Low to the directorship of the survey. As a result of these letters misapprehensions will certainly remain in the minds of the readers of NATURE concerning this appointment, which it would be impossible to dispel without a detailed statement of the full facts of the case. There are, however, two statements contained in the letter which appeared in the number of NATURE dated July 12 (vol. lxxiv., p. 245) which reflect directly on Mr. Low's character and standing, and which, in common justice to that gentleman, should not be allowed to pass unchallenged.

The first of these statements is that "party politics and not geology have been in question in regard to Mr. Low's appointment," and the second is that "Mr. Low is quite unknown in the geological world."

With regard to the first of these statements, I may say that when the Canadian Government—for reasons which it is not my purpose here to discuss—decided that they would not appoint Dr. Bell director of the Geological Survey of Canada, they proceeded to select, quite irrespective of all considerations of party politics, the best man who was available in Canada to fill that position. They accordingly offered the position in question in

succession to two geologists holding chairs in leading Canadian universities. Both these gentlemen, however, preferred to retain their university connection, and declined the position. The Government then decided to promote Mr. Low, who was one of the senior field geologists on the Canadian Survey, to the position of director.

Mr. Low received his geological training at McGill University, taking at the time of his graduation honours in geology. He received his geological instruction from Sir William Dawson. After graduation he was at once appointed to a position on the Geological Survey of Canada, and was assigned the task of mapping various areas of the pre-Cambrian rocks of the northern portion of the Dominion of Canada. The work which he carried out in the region of the great lake Mistassini is well known, and he was subsequently sent by Dr. G. M. Dawson to undertake the exploration of that great tract of north-eastern Canada which comprises the Labrador peninsula. While others lost their lives in endeavouring to penetrate into the interior of this great unknown land, Mr. Low traversed it repeatedly from north to south and from east to west, and embodied the results of his work in a series of valuable reports on the geography, geology, and mineral resources of this great region, the final report being accompanied by a large four-sheet map of the whole region showing its geological structure along the various lines of traverse. We owe to Mr. Low practically everything that we know with regard to this great tract of country. His observations on the surface features of this region, which was one of the chief centres of ice dispersion in the Glacial period, are of great importance in connection with our studies of glacial geology.

On the completion of this work in the Labrador peninsula Mr. Low spent a year and a half in the investigation of the iron-ore resources of the region about the southern portion of Hudson's Bay, and more especially on the islands in the Bay, where great bodies of low-grade iron ore occur.

Still later, when the Dominion Government decided to take formal possession of the Hudson Bay region and the islands of the Arctic archipelago, they selected Mr. Low to take charge of the expedition which they sent to the north for that purpose. Mr. Low accordingly, in charge of the ship *Neptune*, pushed his way far north through the Arctic archipelago to the Arctic Sea, taking formal possession of the various Arctic islands in a cruise which lasted for sixteen months, and was accomplished to the satisfaction of the Government in every respect.

For these various northern explorations Mr. Low received the Gill award from the Royal Geographical Society.

The reason that Mr. Low's name is not more widely known in Europe is due chiefly to the fact that his contributions to the various geological magazines and transactions have been comparatively few in number, the results of his work being published chiefly in reports, both voluminous and valuable, which were made to the Geological Survey of Canada, and which are to be found in their annual volumes. These naturally are read chiefly by those particularly interested in the geology of Canada, and consequently do not reach a wide circle of readers.

Mr. Low also, it may be mentioned, is a Fellow of the Geological Society of America, a body composed solely of professional geologists, and one basing its election to fellowship solely on valuable contributions to geological science.

The above facts, I think, afford an adequate answer to the statement that Mr. Low is "quite unknown in the geological world."

In conclusion, it may be safely stated that in appointing Mr. Low to the directorship of the Geological Survey of Canada the Dominion Government has secured the services of a gentleman who has not only a sound geological training and an extensive experience in field geology, but also a gentleman of initiative and administrative ability, in the prime of life, and one whose appointment has been well received both by the geologists of the Dominion and by the representatives of the mining interests with which our Geological Survey is so closely identified.

FRANK D. ADAMS.

McGill University, Montreal, October 31.