

love bird-life better than mutton will probably hope not.

The natural food of this extraordinary parrot consists of fruits, roots, honey, worms, insects, and grubs. It is gifted with an inordinate curiosity, and seems ever ready to experiment and investigate novelties. Mr. Marriner believes that this inquiring spirit is responsible for its predilection for fresh meat; that it first began by experimenting with sheepskins and dead carcasses, and later on took to killing on its own account. The idea that the kidneys are its especial tit-bits seems to be based entirely upon the fact that the sheep is generally attacked in their neighbourhood; this, however, is the only part upon which the kea can maintain a footing while the sheep is racing about and trying to throw off its torturer. The cruelty of the whole proceeding is horrible in the extreme, and the annual loss to the run-holders is estimated by the author at 5 per cent. of the flocks. The birds appear to enjoy their sport exceedingly, but they have not yet learnt wisdom, and fall an easy prey to the avenger. When the kea hunter has exhausted his cartridges, he sometimes, we are told, allows the birds to see him disappear behind an overhanging ledge of rock. Their curiosity induces them to try and find out what has become of him, and one by one they walk to the edge and look over, only to be knocked on the head by his stick. If so, why waste cartridges? Perhaps there is not always a suitable rock handy.

The book is brightly written, and contains some good illustrations, and we recommend it to all lovers of nature. Considering its size, however, the price seems to be rather high. A. D.

(1) *How to Study the Stars*. By L. Rudaux; translated by Dr. A. H. Keane. Pp. 360. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1909.) Price 5s. net.

(2) *How to Identify the Stars*. By Dr. Willis I. Millham. Pp. v+38+plates. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1909.) Price 3s. net.

(1) BOTH the means and methods of observation dealt with in this book are eminently practical, being founded for the greater part on the progressive astronomical equipment of the author and the methods which, in actual use, he has found effective. The needs of the amateur are all along kept in mind. The interested and intelligent user of a pair of opera glasses is led to make for himself apparatus more ambitious. As the possessor of a telescope he is shown practical, and often home-made, mountings for the smaller sizes, while for the amateur of means, to whom a medium-sized equatorial reflector or refractor is possible, the question of a suitable house for his instrument is dealt with. Here the varied experience of the author is called in, the important question of cost not being forgotten.

Part ii. is concerned mainly with methods of observation and results. The study of sun, moon, and planets is undertaken, often with apparatus by no means extravagant, and the kind of results which may be expected are indicated, by reference to the author's own work, and by actual photographs reproduced.

For the purpose of progressively instructing amateur astronomers, the book should prove successful. The translation seems, on the whole, well done, and a readable work has been produced.

(2) The title of this book suggests at once its elementary nature. The appeal both of the text and the charts is to beginners in astronomy. The thirty-eight pages of letterpress deal in a sketchy way with such subjects as the history of the constellations, stellar magnitudes, and colours and methods of study. So many subjects in so few pages obviously precludes any

fulness of treatment. The "history" consists chiefly of a list of constellation names, with genitives and meanings, together with the names of their proposers, and the section devoted to "star colours" occupies less than a page. The list of the twenty brightest stars, giving magnitudes and colours, is useful, while the division of the eighty-eight constellations into four distinctive groups should prove helpful in memorising.

Four small charts, showing the stars visible at convenient hours during the various months of the year, and twenty-four constellation tracings are appended.

An excellent feature of the publication is the list, at the end of each section, of books and papers suggested for further study.

The general method followed and material presented is stated to be essentially the same as that used in the course on descriptive astronomy in Williams College. Within its limitations the work is accurate and serviceable, and may be recommended as a convenient epitome of the subject.

*Scientific Nutrition Simplified*. By Goodwin Brown. With a Supplementary Chapter by Dr. J. Sven. Pp. xi+271. (London: William Heinemann, 1909.) Price 2s. 6d. net.

THIS little book is one of the simple-life series. It puts in popular language the information for the practical application of the principles of nutrition advanced by Mr. Horace Fletcher and Prof. Chittenden. The main principle involved is the reduction of the protein intake to about half the amount usually accepted by physiologists as the normal. In reviews of similar books which the present writer has contributed to NATURE during the last few years, it has been pointed out that the Chittenden régime is not free from danger, and it is unnecessary to traverse the same ground again. The general tenor of the present work contrasts very forcibly with the scientific exposition of the subject in the work of Max Rubner recently reviewed (November 4, p. 2). The enthusiast sees only the *pros* and does not pause to consider the *cons*, in a subject which really bristles with difficulties. No one wishes to advocate over-eating, but to preach a doctrine of under-feeding as a permanent and universal practice is a very different thing from the temperance and moderation which is the ideal. The majority of physiologists have condemned the Chittenden diet as insufficient, and those with knowledge are more likely to be correct than the faddists, even if they can count one or two disciples drawn from the scientific world in their ranks.

A great point is made in the present work of Mr. Fletcher's advocacy of thorough mastication. Nobody denies the importance of the saliva and of the process of chewing, but to advocate the supreme importance of the least important of the digestive juices, and to elevate the action of the jaws into what seems to be regarded almost as a religious exercise, is not only unscientific, but ridiculous. W. D. H.

*A Barometer Manual for the Use of Seamen; with an Appendix on the Thermometer, Hygrometer, and Hydrometer*. Issued by the authority of the Meteorological Committee. Sixth edition, extensively revised. Pp. 67. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1909.) Price 3d.

ALTHOUGH chiefly intended for the use of seamen, this manual will be found of much service by anyone desirous of obtaining accurate information relating to the use of the barometer, and its connection with weather conditions and storms experienced in all parts of the globe. It is a revised edition of the Barometer Manual prepared by the late Admiral FitzRoy, formerly chief of the Meteorological Department of the Board