

OUR BOOK SHELF.

A History of British Mammals. By G. E. H. Barrett-Hamilton. Part i., October. Pp. xvi+88. (London: Gurney and Jackson, 1910.) Price 2s. 6d. net.

A THOROUGHLY up-to-date and scientific account of the mammals of the British Isles, written in such a style that it may be acceptable to the field-naturalist as well as to the specialist, has long been a desideratum. So far as it is possible to judge from the first part this want promises to be supplied, at all events, from the scientific aspect, by Major Barrett-Hamilton's work, which is to be published in twenty-four monthly parts, so arranged as, when complete, to form three volumes, of which the first is to be devoted to the bats, while the third is to include the whales and dolphins, with an appendix on extinct and domesticated species. Whether the work will appeal with equal strength to that section of the general public interested in natural history remains to be seen. A distinctly popular element is, however, supplied by the twenty-seven coloured plates, reproduced from sketches made for the work by that accomplished artist-naturalist, Mr. E. A. Wilson. The plate in the present part is a group of dormice in a sloe-bush, which we hope will prove the least successful of the series, as the two uppermost figures are scarcely satisfactory, while the eyes of all the individuals appear too small and lacking in prominence.

Except for an instalment of the introduction to the Chiroptera and the general account of the family Vespertilionidæ, the present part is devoted to the noctule and Leisler's bat, each of which has an appalling list of synonyms. The only fault we have to find with these lists is that, beyond a statement on an earlier page (6) to the effect that the generic term *Nyctalus* was applied to the group by Dr. K. Andersen in 1908, there is no clue to the authority for the names *Nyctalus noctula* and *N. leisleri*. It is true that these names do not actually appear in Dr. Andersen's paper in the "Annals" for the year cited, but reference to that paper ought certainly to have been made in the lists. The work has our best wishes for success.

R. L.

Bacteriology for Nurses. By Isabel McIsaac. Pp. xii+179. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1909.) Price 5s. net.

WHILE agreeing with the proposition that the nurse should have a clear and definite knowledge of the principles of the germ theory of infective diseases, we doubt if this book will really aid her to attain this end. It is too much an elementary text-book of bacteriology, and does not contain sufficient of the practical application of bacteriological principles in the every-day routine of the nurse's work. The greater part of the book is occupied by descriptions of the causative organisms of the various infective diseases, but far too little is said about the why and the wherefore of surgical cleanliness and the means of attaining it, and the methods of preventing the spread of infection in the ward and household. Thus the section on sterilisation and the use of disinfectants occupies a bare nine pages, and the principles of antiseptic and aseptic surgery are almost omitted, yet these subjects constitute almost the beginning and the end of the surgical nurse's work. In the section on malaria, while the importance of protection from mosquitoes as a preventive is fully recognised and the "screening" of houses recommended, not one word is said of the mosquito net, which may often be the only means available for carrying out any form of "screening."

These instances of omissions might be multiplied.

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While, therefore, the book may prove a readable elementary text-book of pathogenic bacteriology for the general public, including the nurse, we cannot but regard it as lacking in many of the bacteriological details which are so essential to the intelligent work of the nurse for whom it is avowedly written.

R. T. H.

The Inherent Law of Life: A New Theory of Life and of Disease. By Dr. Franz Kleinschrod. Translated from the German and edited by Louise C. Appel. Pp. vii+214. (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1910.) Price 3s. 6d. net.

DR. KLEINSCHROD is a vitalist of the order of his celebrated countryman, Dr. Hans Driesch. He holds that life is not explicable from a mechanistic point of view. It has its own laws, beyond all physical and chemical formulæ. Moreover, as we know life better—at closer quarters, so to speak—than inorganic nature, it is absurd to explain the former by the latter. "All our ideas of nature are obtained directly from the law of life; are vitalisms, as Prof. Lipps, the psychologist, so aptly terms them. Force, energy, gravitation, pressure, &c., are ideas derived from life and transferred to the lifeless world." It is more sensible to interpret the inanimate from the standpoint of the living than conversely.

Disease and healing are, equally, life-processes. A true remedy is a remedy which calls forth the healing processes, and does not merely suppress symptoms, as in the application of ice to inflamed parts. The thing to do is to stimulate function. Digitalis does not increase cardiac strength; it merely whips up the action, and uses up life-force too fast. Graduated exercises really strengthen the heart. Similarly with other pathological conditions. Less drugging, more "nature-cure."

There is much that is debatable in this book, but it is certainly suggestive. On its practical side it is in accord with the trend of modern practice, and the author sensibly admits the *auxiliary* uses of surgery and drugs, thus steering clear of the extremes into which some nature-cure propagandists are apt to rush.

Philosophies. By Prof. Ronald Ross, F.R.S., C.B. Pp. viii+56. (London: John Murray, 1910.) Price 1s. net.

THE title of this brochure is rather unhappily chosen, for, coupled with the author's scientific and academic distinctions, it may give an untrue impression. As a matter of fact, the book is a collection of short poems, written in the leisure time of a busy and useful career. All are tuneful and satisfying to the ear, and many have the genuine inspiration which distinguishes poetry from mere verse—e.g. the "Vision of Nescience," and many a line in the longer poem, "In Exile." Prof. Ross is, of course, best known by his researches on malarial fever, and his discovery of the part played by mosquitoes in carrying infection. The results of his work are world-wide. It seems probable that, largely in consequence of his discoveries, many uninhabitable districts may be rendered fairly healthy; this is already being done in parts of Brazil. The following couple of verses, written at Bangalore, admirably portray the pity in a noble worker's mind, and the pathos of suffering humanity. The title is "Indian Fevers."

"In this, O Nature, yield I pray to me.
I pace and pace, and think and think, and take
The fever'd hands, and note down all I see,
That some dim distant light may haply break.
The painful faces ask, can we not cure?
We answer, No, not yet; we seek the laws.
O God, reveal thro' all this thing obscure
The unseen, small, but million-murdering cause."