

on light and the eye, on how the eye is used in seeing, on the experience of sight, on action, and on memory. C. S. M.

The "J.R.B." Patent Adjustable Curve Ruler. (London: W. H. Harling.) Price 7s. 6d., 10s., and 12s. 6d.

DRAUGHTSMEN and students of engineering will find this curve ruler a useful addition to their stock of instruments. The instrument consists of a transparent strip of celluloid, which may be bent to fit any given curve, or to pass through a series of plotted points. The strip is clamped to two slotted brass bars, one of the clamps forming a swivel, which may be locked at any horizontal angle. The slotted bars may be clamped in any position and at any angle to a slotted wooden bar, which holds the whole appliance. Two other slotted brass bars may be clamped to the wooden bar in any position, and have hooks formed at the outer ends; these assist in bending the celluloid strip into the proposed curve, and give steadiness to the strip. Two celluloid strips are supplied, one about 0.05 and the other about 0.1 inch in thickness.

We have tested the appliance in drawing several curves, such as a curve to fit four points plotted at random, and the curves of a beam when loaded in various ways, and find that the maker's claims are justified. Curves of large or small radii of curvature are easily produced, and these are even and regular; the appliance is adjusted very simply, and retains the shape when once set, so that a curve may be duplicated many times.

*Post Mortems and Morbid Anatomy.* By Dr. Theodore Shennan. Pp. xv+496. (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1912.) Price 18s. net.

DR. SHENNAN is to be congratulated on having written a treatise that gives a full and lucid account of the whole art of performing necropsies; of studying scientifically the evidences of disease in the organs and tissues of the body, so far as these can be investigated in the post-mortem room; and of making permanent preparations of the material so obtained, either for investigation in the laboratory or for demonstration purposes in museums.

There is, perhaps, no branch of the work of the practising medical man for which such a guide-book is so urgently needed; and this work is sure to prove most helpful not only to the practitioner who is called upon to do autopsies, but also to the student who is acquiring a practical knowledge of pathology.

Though lacking originality, either in treatment or in matter, it is probably the most complete and well-balanced text-book in English dealing with practical pathology.

The illustrations are for the most part successful reproductions of photographs taken by the author and Mr. Norman; but some few of them (e.g., Fig. 79) might with advantage have been replaced by drawings.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts intended for this or any other part of NATURE. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

Forced Vibrations.

WITH regard to the subject of "Forced Vibrations" dealt with by Prof. Perry in his letter in NATURE of June 27 (p. 424), Prof. E. H. Barton, of Nottingham, puts the matter very clearly on p. 150 of his "Text-book of Sound," 1908, where he states:—"The frequency of the impressed force to make the amplitude a maximum is lower than that natural to the system with friction, while the frequency of the impressed force to make the kinetic energy a maximum is above that natural to the system with friction, and equals that if friction be absent." "Moreover, the squares of these three frequencies form an arithmetical progression whose common difference is proportional to the square of the damping coefficient."

I think Prof. Perry means to convey that these slight eccentricities from syntonism may be negligible in acoustical investigations (owing to their being well within the liminal region of physiological audition), but may rise to values at which they can be no longer neglected in other branches of interest, such as the æther-acoustics of radio-telegraphy, &c.

Prof. Perry would be doing real service by furnishing a non-mathematical explanation of these eccentricities; the graphical demonstration is a somewhat lengthy process.

JOHN L. DUNK.

July 1.

Mendel and Nägeli.

MR. L. DONCASTER has recently given one explanation of the strange neglect of Nägeli to appreciate the results of Mendel. Perhaps the following footnote from Eimer's "Organic Evolution" (tr. J. T. Cunningham, 1890), p. 53, may supply another:—"Nägeli in the introduction to his book speaks very severely of those who without any justification undertake to express opinions upon the origin and evolution of organisms. He claims this right exclusively for physiologists, and counts among the non-physiologists both Darwin and Haeckel. Against such a close corporation I protest."

The "book" referred to seems to be the "Mechanische-physiologische Abstammungslehre," published in 1884, and Mendel, who, if I remember rightly, was a professor of physics, is not likely to have fared better than Darwin or Haeckel, except for his then obscurity, at the hands of his distinguished correspondent. The treatment of Fleeming Jenkin's criticisms by Darwin himself forms a pleasing contrast to this misplaced pontificality.

H. H. O'FARRELL.

The Avenue, Kew Gardens, July 1.

CONGRESS OF UNIVERSITIES OF THE EMPIRE.

IN an article which appeared in our issue of June 13 it was stated that fifty-four universities would send delegates to this Congress. The nascent university of Calgary was subsequently excluded from the official list, on the ground that for the present it proposes to confine its degrees to agriculture. It is not difficult to imagine the Secretary's feelings when he found that with the