

women are taking in the useful work of the world. Parents will find helpful guidance here as to the education of their daughters and the opportunities available for them to obtain remunerative labour later in life. The volume should be in the hands of every woman worker.

"The Writers' and Artists' Year Book," in addition to being a handy index to periodical literature, places at the disposal of writers, artists and photographers useful guidance in the matter of disposing of their work satisfactorily.

*The Beginner in Poultry. The Zest and the Profit in Poultry Growing.* By C. S. Valentine. Pp. x + 450. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1912.) Price 6s. 6d. net.

By the time the "beginner" has read this book he might well think himself something more than a beginner. The keynote of the work is sympathy, and once possessing that, it is hard indeed if one cannot make a success of any hobby in live stock. Naturally, the suggestions as to management are more suited to the States than to this country, but the reader who wishes to take a broad view of aviculture, and is already conversant with the ins and outs of the daily routine, will find much food for reflection by a careful study of many of the chapters. We would specially commend to the powers that be section 22 on poultry schools. When one knows of the hard struggle for existence some of our educational work has had, and the scant support our own Board of Agriculture can offer, it makes one feel somewhat envious of the magnificent grants that are so freely available on the other side. The writer of this notice has had the good fortune to take part in some of the courses alluded to, and knows that such experts as are engaged at Cornell and Corvallis, &c., are past masters in the poultry world, and heartily endorses much of what the book says on this question.

The work contains some 450 pages, and is profusely illustrated, though several of the reproductions are not quite up to the high standard one usually sees in the American Press. Perhaps the author's other book, "How to Keep Hens at a Profit," should be read first. The present volume is rather for the library or student; it does not cater for the exhibitor. Its value is rather to the thinker, and he who thinks is he who rules.

*The Montessori System in Theory and Practice.* By Dr. Theodate L. Smith. Pp. vii + 78. (New York and London: Harper Brothers, 1912.) Price 2s. 6d. net.

In the review of Madame Montessori's recent book describing her method of scientific pedagogy as applied to child education in "The Children's Houses," published in NATURE on September 26 last (vol. xc., p. 99), some account was given of the system. It is sufficient to say of Dr. Smith's little volume that it provides a convenient introduction to the methods advocated by Madame Montessori, and some reports of American experience of their adoption.

NO. 2253, VOL. 90]

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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### British Forestry and the Development Commission.

It is more than two years since the Development Commission obtained its fine grant of 500,000*l.* yearly for five years. There have been Parliamentary grants in addition; thus 900,000*l.* was available the first year. Said *The Times*: "The Development Fund is a remarkable departure from the *laissez-faire* policy which has so long dominated the proceedings of British Governments." It was early announced that one of the chief objects of the Development Commission was British forestry, including the purchase and planting of land. One small piece of poor ground in Scotland represents all the land that has yet been acquired in Britain; and foresters are beginning to inquire if we have really broken away from the bad traditions of the past. British forestry has never had such an opportunity as this half-million grant. Will anything practical be done before it is too late and the grant come to an end, because nothing practical has been achieved? It is true that there have been useful educational grants; and promises of loans for forestry, on liberal terms, to "local authorities or other responsible bodies": but this, without State forestry, is putting the cart before the horse. As is well known, the communal forests on the Continent carry a class of forest inferior to the State forests, and they are only kept up to this standard by either State supervision or their management by State forest officers, combined with the stiffening effect of the better managed State forests in their midst.

For fifty years British State forestry has been standing still. Excellent schemes have been prepared. There have been innumerable Parliamentary Committees and reports! Three quite good British schools of forestry training have been established, and, alas! abolished, in spite of the excellent training they were giving. There remains now but one State forest school, the useful institution for instructing woodmen in the Forest of Dean. In the successive abandonment of these Government forest schools we see the want of a permanent forest authority to defend them against the vacillations of political control.

The onus of this failure in forestry—and forestry is perhaps the greatest of the modern arts—lies in the hesitancy of the Britisher to accept State forestry. It is tolerably certain that no material progress in British forestry will ever be made without State forestry, which is the kernel and *noth* of the whole business. There are two reasons why we must accept State forestry. Only the State can obtain money at a low enough rate of interest ( $2\frac{1}{2}$  or 3 per cent.) to make forestry pay in this climate of low sun-power. Only the State has the "unending life," viz. a life long enough for successful forest management. A private owner cannot be expected to plant trees for the public good with only the prospect of an uncertain 2 or 3 per cent., going to his son, his grandson, or even his great-grandson. Further, forestry, like so many other industries, must be done on a large scale to yield good returns.

Most of the opposition to State forests is no doubt due to ignorance of what they are. To the uninitiated they may look much like the wild forest that, in parts of the world, has to be largely cut down to make