

attempt an explanation of the prefix until they reach chapter xxv.; even then they are not in a position to give any explanation which would be recognised as valid by any serious student of chemistry. Here again the lack of logical sequence might have been avoided by describing the gas as "carbonic anhydride"; even "carbonic acid gas" would be an improvement on "carbon dioxide" under the conditions imposed by the elementary character of the course.

(5) The American book on "Elementary Applied Chemistry" bears many signs of its country of origin, including a brief introduction written in the style of a "display advertisement." On the very first page of the book the student is required to make a note of his first chemical experiment as follows:

Copy and sign the following statement:
I hereby certify that a mixture called Tonsillitis Specific and examined by me contains
Name

Date

The mixture is one of sulphur and sugar, to be prepared *ad hoc* by the instructor. English readers may derive from this book considerable amusement and at the same time obtain a number of useful hints as to the possibility of introducing to youthful students the chief tests used in examining water, milk, baking-powder, &c.

(6) The Italian volume is a translation of the well-known American text-book, and will therefore not be likely to circulate in this country. It is well printed and is presented in an attractive form.

T. M. L.

OUR BOOKSHELF.

The Theory of Evolution in the Light of Facts.

By Karl Frank, S.J. With a chapter on Ant Guests and Termite Guests, by P. E. Wasmann. Translated from the German by C. T. Drury. Pp. xii + 241. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., Ltd., 1913.) Price 5s. net.

THE object of this book, as stated in its preface, is to substitute "pure postulates" for those which are referred to as "postulates of the theory of evolution," put forward by "many students of nature at the present day." As examples of these precious *pure postulates* we may cite the following: (a) The oldest known fossils represent the beginnings of life on the globe (p. 22). (b) The absence of *all* the intermediate forms between great groups indicates a "transformation and alteration of form rather than an actual higher evolution" (p. 76). (c) "We are not justified in bringing animals, like mammalia, birds, fishes and worms, into genetic connection with plants, like trees, ferns, and mosses" (p. 108). (This, we are told in the preface, is the *chief postulate*.)

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(d) Explanation of the origin of life is essential to any theory of evolution (pp. 83-108).

Starting from these "postulates," there is no difficulty in forecasting the author's conclusions. Indeed, but for the fact that some recent researches are referred to in order that they may be tortured into support of the author's views, we might imagine that we were reading one of the reviews of the "Origin of Species" written fifty years ago; and this idea would be confirmed as we come upon contemptuous and vituperative references to Darwin, Haeckel, and other men of science. Not having seen the German original of the book, we cannot say whether the inaccuracies, which abound in every part of it, are due to the author or the translator. Within the compass of a dozen lines we find "Quartary," "Mussel Chalk," "Dyas (Perm.)=Permian Limestone and Old Red Sandstone," and "Algonkium=pre-Cambrian." Nor are we impressed, as we wade through misconceptions, misstatements, and misspellings, by the fact that the book bears the *Imprimatur* of Johannes J. Glennon, Archbishop of St. Ludovici.

The Story of a Hare. By J. C. Tregarthen. Pp. xi + 199 + plates. (London: John Murray, 1912.) Price 6s. net.

In this life-story of a hare the author has successfully combined narrative with instruction. Most books on natural history for general readers are too informative and lack the living feeling which always commands a wide appeal. This touch, which makes the whole world kin, is largely a thing of sympathy, and no book on the life of a wild animal can be successful without it. Mr. Tregarthen possesses that attribute and has therefore written a book which will be appreciated by all lovers of wild animals and observers of their habits. He describes the life of a hare from birth to death from the point of view of the animal itself, and amid the scenes of a century ago. We have thus an account of the hare's habits and its struggles for existence in an attractive setting. The author has insight as well as sympathy, and his book should interest many readers.

Les Progrès Récents de l'Astronomie. By Prof. Paul Stroobant. Pp. 173. (Brussels: Hayez, Rue de Louvain, 112, 1912.)

PROF. STROOBANT'S annual *résumé* of the advances made in astronomy during the previous year is becoming a work of increasing usefulness to the astronomical reader; a wide range of subjects is treated concisely and with a discerning appreciation of relative importance. As usual, the review of 1911 is not restricted to observations only, but includes the recent advances in theory, such, for example, as Miller's and Störmer's papers on the mechanics of the corona and Birkeland's suggestions as to the formation of sun-spots. Tables of new variable stars (148), minor planets (now totalling 732) and new spectroscopic binaries (94), and several fine plates, add considerably to the value of the work.

W. E. R.