

OUR BOOKSHELF.

Science Française—Scolastique Allemande. Par Prof. G. Papillault. Pp. iv+154. (Paris: Librairie Felix Alcan, 1917.) Price 2.50 fr.

THIS volume is one of the well-known series "Bibliothèque de Philosophie contemporaine," and the author is professor of sociology at the School of Anthropology of Paris. There has been a great mass of literature that is inspired by a form of patriotism, published in France and over here, on the defects of German character and the incompetence of the Germans in science, so that it is a relief to have the author's assurance (p. 3) that this is not the case with his book. His object is to estimate scientifically the value of German thought as shown in its principal philosophical systems and in its most evident general tendencies. The methods used are two: one is to regard a philosophy as an effect of psycho-social causes, and the other is to regard it as a cause. It is impossible not to feel that regarding Kant or Hegel or Nietzsche as a cause of the ideals of the State current in Germany is somewhat of the nature of wisdom—if it is wisdom—after the event. In this book it is Kant who comes in for blame.

The second part of the book deals with the sophisms made by the rational instincts, chiefly of Germans, and the third part is a comparison of the great philosophical systems with scientific and sophistical methods. German thought is, we hear, "scholastic" and "sterile"; certain rather inferior Germans used to say very much the same thing about what was too subtle for them.

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The Chemists' Year Book, 1917. Edited by F. W. Attack, assisted by L. Whinyates. In 2 vols. Pp. 1030. (London and Manchester: Sherratt and Hughes, 1917.) Price 10s. 6d. net.

THE general character of the contents of these excellent volumes was described in the review of the 1916 issue published in NATURE for June 15 last (vol. xcvi., p. 320). In the present edition, in addition to general revision, the sections on gas analysis, sulphuric acid, oils and fats, fuels and illuminants, and photography have been thoroughly revised; and that on textile fibres has been rewritten. New sections have been added on the analysis of essential oils, the efficiency of boiler plant, cement, and paints and pigments. It is hoped in next year's issue of the Year Book to include articles on ceramics, lubricants, and metallurgy and metallography, which had unavoidably to be held over this year.

The thorough editorial work has well maintained the trustworthiness and up-to-date character of this comprehensive compilation.

X-rays. By Dr. G. W. C. Kaye. Second edition. Pp. xxii+285. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1917.) Price 9s. net.

THE first edition of Dr. Kaye's book was reviewed in the issue of NATURE for March 25, 1915

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(vol. xcv., p. 87); and it will be enough to say of the new edition that, so far as his military duties have permitted, the author, who now ranks as a captain in the Royal Engineers (T.), has thoroughly revised the text and incorporated all important original work published up to June of last year. An additional chapter on X-ray equipment and technique by Mr. W. F. Higgins has been incorporated.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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Classical Education and Modern Needs.

IN his reply to Mr. Livingstone's letter in NATURE of May 10 Mr. Wells makes a point which classical apologists, especially those who have not had experience in teaching boys, seem incapable of grasping. Mr. Livingstone, on his own showing, would seem to have fallen into a like error. For more than twenty years it has been my lot to teach science to boys, most of whom are graded on their proficiency in linguistic studies, chiefly Latin and Greek. Experience has convinced me that it is a fundamental mistake to suppose that boys even of fifteen or sixteen show marked taste or ability for science or mechanics as opposed to linguistics, or *vice versa*. Those that do are the exceptions that prove the rule.

The boys who are best at classics are also best at science. It is a question of general ability and nothing more. The fallacy that success in, or aptitude for, science denotes the possession of a special kind of intelligence, rarely forthcoming, but always clearly marked at an early age where it does exist, needs uprooting now and for ever; its prevalence is widespread, and the mischief it has done is great.

Every intelligent boy must be given equal opportunities in science and languages in the widest sense of the word, until he is old enough to show which line of study he can most profitably follow. Until this is done, and while only those boys who show a want of literary faculties are encouraged to "take up science," so long will the best brains of our rising generation be imperfectly trained, and the potentialities of the nation towards achievement in science stunted and handicapped.

M. D. HILL.

Eton College, Windsor, May 13.

Aeroplanes and Atmospheric Gustiness.

THE invitation of Prof. McAdie to readers of NATURE (April 12, p. 125), to offer suggestions on the above subject, is one to which I, for one, am very glad indeed to respond, although I may not be able to add much of value to what has already been said in previous writings regarding gusts.

It is a common matter of agreement, I think, that the gust condition is associated, not with mere velocity of the air—which is already identified with the idea of wind—but with *changing* velocity of the air. The simplest record of that, and so, on this view, of the gust, seems to be the instantaneous acceleration of the air, moment after moment. Accordingly I would suggest that continuous observatory records of gustiness might already be obtained, by first obtaining ordinary anemograph records of the wind, with time scales open enough to show distinctly whole seconds; and by then graphically differentiating such records