

in body and mind and to remain free from disease. . . . Successful work on the part of many boys and girls is dependent upon this desire becoming strong enough to rule the body." So it is not surprising to read as an exercise to be set to pupils: "Notice what effects tobacco, alcohol, opium, etc., have upon those who use them." But another, "Observe whether tea and coffee affect the health and 'temper' of parents," makes one wonder whether tactless observation might not have even more effect than the stimulants!

Where it follows lines which are already becoming conventional in America the book is good; in the more novel parts it is even better.

*A Geographical Bibliography of British Ornithology from the Earliest Times to the End of 1918.* By W. H. Mullens, H. Kirke Swann, and Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain. Part 1. Pp. 96. (London: Witherby and Co., 1919.) Price 6s. net.

MESSRS. MULLENS AND SWANN have already made ornithologists their debtors by compiling a "Geographical Bibliography of British Ornithology" (completed in 1917). Of this the present work is a supplement or continuation, the books and articles being now arranged under counties. The Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain has shared the labour. The aim of the authors has been to give an account, as complete as possible, of the literature and records relating to the avifauna of each county. This will be of great value to local workers, and there is good sense in Gilbert White's remark, quoted on the title-page: "Men that undertake only one district are much more likely to advance natural knowledge than those that grasp at more than they can possibly be acquainted with; every kingdom, every province, should have its own *monographer*." The labour of making this bibliography must have been very great; it has extended over six years, and has meant the consultation and analysis of a huge mass of literature. There are to be six parts, and those which have appeared represent arduous and useful work well executed.

*The Philosophy of Conflict: and Other Essays in War-Time.* By Havelock Ellis. Second series. Pp. 299. (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1919.) Price 6s. 6d. net.

MR. ELLIS is likely to find readers for this collection of essays. His social studies turn on sex-problems, often shrewdly handled. His literary and anthropological studies are dominated by his sense of the picturesque. He is arrested by the picture-making metaphors of Conrad, and by the picturesque theories of Sollas in prehistoric anthropology. In his essays in this last group he reminds us of his own portrait of Jung, wandering "with random, untrained steps, throwing out brilliant suggestions here and there." But in the essay in which this portrait occurs he is on his own ground, and justifiably dwells on his part in introducing to English readers the picturesque psychology of Freud.

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## Letters to the Editor.

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### The Cost of Scientific Publications.

MAY I add a word to this most interesting discussion from the point of view of the society with which I am most concerned?

The London Mathematical Society was founded by De Morgan and others in 1865, and has steadily improved its position until it is admittedly the leading mathematical society in the country. It is a comparatively small society, and its activities are almost entirely concentrated on the publication of its Proceedings, to which purpose practically its whole income is devoted. It has no paid staff of any kind.

Before the war the society was able to publish annually about 500 pages of original research, at a cost of some 300*l.* to 350*l.* Now a volume of 400 pages only, costs some 600*l.*, and such slight increase of income as there has been is entirely insufficient to meet the new situation. Most of the members are life-compounders, and it is exceedingly difficult to raise the membership beyond a certain point; it was 290 in 1918, and is now about 340. A committee is considering what is possible in the way of economy or increase of charges, but every increase of charges makes it harder to secure new members, and the only substantial economy possible lies in a further limitation of output.

If the society is to maintain the position won by years of effort before the war, it must at all costs keep up both the quality and the size of its Proceedings. In particular it must continue to attract the best work of young mathematicians; and it cannot do this if it has to hamper them at every turn by incessant demands for condensation. A considerable part of the volumes must always be occupied by the work of men of established reputation, and if they are to be further curtailed it is the younger men who will in the first instance be likely to suffer.

The society has during the last year been able to obtain some aid from the fund under the control of the Royal Society, but it is plain that the demands on the fund are likely to multiply, and all possible pressure should be brought to bear on the proper authorities to augment it.

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New College, Oxford, May 15.

IN the leading article in NATURE of May 6 on the cost of scientific publications, reference is made to the critical financial position of those of our scientific societies which have no popular means of adding to their income. The position is serious. The scientific worker, upon whom, to a great extent, a scientific society depends for maintenance, is rarely in a position to add to his financial obligations, and the interested person from whom the society also receives considerable support is often in a similar position. If a society is to be efficient, the library must be kept up, the standard of publications be maintained, and its salaried staff receive at least a living wage. How is this to be done? Apart from external aid, there are only two ways—by exercise of rigid economy, and by increased contributions from the members. It is not economy to starve the library, and economy in publication must be employed with