

as a distinguished *savant* would have scorned to supply, while it is quite in accordance with Columbus's own geographical ideas derived from the antiquated "Imago Mundi" of Cardinal d'Ailly. The letter was probably fabricated by the family of Columbus after his death to disprove the rumour that he owed his success, not to his studies in cosmography, but to some information about unknown islands privately obtained. The true glory of Columbus is that he found what he went out to find—a New World. J. L. E. D.

### Our Bookshelf.

*Electricity: Its Production and Applications.* By Reg. E. Neale. (Pitman's Common Commodities and Industries.) Pp. viii+136. (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., n.d.) Price 2s. 6d. net.

THE author addresses himself to the general reader who desires to understand something of the way in which electricity is produced and is utilised in present-day industries. The generation, distribution, and storage of electric power are first explained briefly, and then the author passes on to deal successively with lighting, heating, electric driving of machinery, traction, haulage, etc. Further chapters skim lightly over the leading features of electrochemistry, electrometallurgy, electric welding and cutting, telegraphy and telephony, and medical applications. So large a field can be covered in a little volume like this only by limitation to the barest essentials, but it is remarkable how complete and accurate is the information given. The reader is, however, hurried on unpleasantly fast, and is never allowed to pause where his interest is aroused. We are not as a rule over-fond of "tabloid" education, but the ubiquitous use of electricity in industry and daily life makes it desirable for everyone to know something of its nature and scope. It will be an advantage to many to have at their disposal so well compiled a summary of the subject rather than to rely on the loose statements too often made in conversation and in the non-technical Press.

*The Nature-study of Plants in Theory and Practice for the Hobby-Botanist.* By T. A. Dymes. Pp. xviii+173. (London: S.P.C.K.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920.) Price 6s. net.

THE first part of this book is devoted to an explanation of the meaning of the phenomena of plant life and its interdependent functions. Wherever possible, comparisons are drawn with human life, and, in consequence, chapters are given curious titles, such as "Marriage" and "Settling Down for Life." The second portion of the book is a detailed account of the life-history of the Herb Robert and its relatives. Tables are appended showing the separation of the sexes in time, the mode of pollination, and the method of seed dispersal of British species of

Cranesbills and Storksills. The book should be a stimulus to intelligent and intensive Nature-study.

*Eugenics, Civics, and Ethics: A Lecture delivered to the Summer School of Eugenics, Civics, and Ethics on August 8, 1919, in the Arts School, Cambridge.* By Sir Charles Walston (Waldstein). Pp. 56. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1920.) Price 4s. net.

A STRONG plea is made in this lecture for the organisation and development of the study of ethics, or, as the author prefers to call it, ethology. The interdependence of eugenics and civics, and the foundation of both in ethics, are discussed, and warning is given against striving to produce the perfect physical specimen of man without due consideration of character and mental attributes. Towards the end of the lecture the progressive nature of ethical codes is made clear, and great stress is laid on the importance of the establishment of our ideal of the perfect man and the teaching of such practical ethics in both schools and homes.

*A Second Book of School Celebrations.* By Dr. F. H. Hayward. Pp. 133. (London: P. S. King and Son, Ltd., 1920.) Price 5s. net.

"A FIRST BOOK OF SCHOOL CELEBRATIONS" was reviewed in NATURE for August 5. The new volume contains a further series of celebrations dealing with the military conflicts in Palestine, toleration, Alfred the Great, Pasteur and Lister, Sir Philip Sidney, G. F. Watts, Empire Day, political parties, school leaving day, work, and five of a new type, termed by the author "homage celebrations," which deal with the artist, the martyr, the musician, Ireland, and Poland.

*Stories for the Nature Hour.* Compiled by Ada M. Skinner and Eleanor L. Skinner. Pp. 253. (London: George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 1920.) Price 5s. net.

A NUMBER of short stories from the pens of many authors have been collected in this volume. Hans Andersen, Ruskin, and Charles Lamb are represented, and the compilers themselves have supplied eight legends. The book should be useful to the teacher giving lessons on natural history subjects to small children, and should also make interesting reading for older children.

*A Manual of Elementary Zoology.* By L. A. Borradaile. Third edition. Pp. xviii+616+xxi plates. (London: Henry Frowde, and Hodder and Stoughton, 1920.) Price 18s.

THE last edition of this work was reviewed in NATURE for April 3, 1919. The only important change made in the new edition is the inclusion of twenty-one large plates, most of which are particularly valuable for laboratory work. Plate xii, showing various breeds of British sheep, is crude, and seems unworthy of a place in a book which is otherwise remarkable for its clear diagrams and realistic illustrations.