

*A Monograph of the British Orthoptera.* By W. J. Lucas. Pp. xii+264+xxv plates. (London: The Ray Society, 1920.) Price 25s. net.

WE heartily welcome the appearance of this useful work, for there is no doubt that a complete monograph, on any order of insects, is a great stimulus to its further study in the country concerned. Our British Orthoptera have been rather neglected in the past, but Mr. Lucas's papers, which have regularly appeared in the entomological magazines, have done good service in awakening an interest in our native species. No one, therefore, is better qualified than he is to write a Ray Society volume on the order. The book is strong on the biological side, habits, times of appearance, and distribution being adequately treated, and many interesting facts are thus collected together. We should have liked to see a fuller account of the structure of Orthoptera and some remarks on their internal organisation, but recognise that the author probably has had to limit his pages very considerably owing to the expense of publication. The earwigs are regarded as a sub-order rather than as constituting a separate order: out of twelve families only one—the Ectobiidæ—contains indigenous species. The crickets are represented by four species, including the remarkable and seldom observed mole cricket (*Gryllo-talpa*). Only nine species of long-horned grasshoppers are known with certainty to be natives, though possibly *Phaneroptera falcata* may eventually prove to be indigenous. There seems to be but a single record of a Locustid from Scotland and, in fact, our scanty British fauna compares very unfavourably with the 160 Western European representatives of the Locustodea. Of the short-horned grasshoppers, Mr. Lucas recognises eleven species, but none are migratory locusts. The twenty-five plates illustrating the work are on the whole adequate, though we fear Nos. 7, 14, and 19 have reproduced the objects concerned on too small a scale to be of very much service. These can scarcely fail to be a source of disappointment to the author, who is an expert in the art of delineation.

A. D. I.

*Grain and Chaff from an English Manor.* By A. H. Savory. Pp. viii+311. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1920.) Price 21s. net.

THE village described is Aldington, in the Vale of Evesham, situated at the foot of the Cotswold Hills, and the author sets out his recollections of the people and the village life as he has known them during his residence. It is not a survey in the ordinary sense; it is rather a record of the trivial features of everyday life during the past thirty years in the village, which will no doubt prove of interest to readers who enjoy reading about country matters. The details of the farming are not described, and although figures are sometimes mentioned in connection with prices, there are no dates to give precision or to allow of any check. The book is concerned almost wholly with the village inhabitants, and its interest is literary rather than scientific.

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## Letters to the Editor.

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### The British Association.

WE are hoping to reply in due course to the criticisms which have been made in the columns of NATURE on the present position of the British Association, but in order to do so with proper effect we are inviting from various presidents and secretaries of Sections an expression of their own views of the correspondence. We hope that it may be possible to summarise these views for the benefit of your readers without undue pressure of space. Meanwhile, it may be of interest to give at full length the following remarks from the president of Section A. It should be remembered that these were not written for publication, but, as above stated, for our consideration along with other similar documents, and publication *in extenso* has been permitted by Prof. Eddington only at our special request.

H. H. TURNER.

JOHN L. MYRES.

New College, Oxford, October 10.

It is important not to confuse two distinct aims: (1) to make the proceedings less specialised, and (2) to make them more popular. I believe that in practice these two aims are often found even to be opposed. The committee of Section A has often arranged joint discussions with other Sections—a typical way of broadening our proceedings—but not in the least with the idea of attracting the public. I think the idea was that, by bringing together a number of experts with different points of view, a discussion would result which would advance science, but would necessarily be rather beyond the comprehension of most of us.

(1) I am all in favour of avoiding specialisation. The meeting of the British Association is a unique occasion in the year, and is wasted if the programme is on the same lines as those of the specialised societies which meet frequently. I would, however, deprecate the idea that the chief means of accomplishing this must necessarily be by joint meetings of Sections; this may be encouraged in moderation, especially between those Sections which (some of us think) might well never have separated. Where, as in Section A, we have a wide range of subjects the adherents of which do not usually meet together during the year, there is less need to join other Sections, and there would often be difficulty in finding a large enough room.

The drawback to a joint discussion is the multiplicity of speakers and the absence of a unifying purpose; that is how those to which I have listened strike me. If, for example, Section A should decide to give some time next year to aviation problems, I think it would be more profitable, not to arrange a joint meeting with the Engineering Section, but to invite an expert (an engineer, perhaps) to set the problems before Section A in a non-technical way. No doubt other engineers will come to hear him and make remarks on his paper; but he will have had a definite task before him to make the problems and results clear to astronomers, mathematicians, geophysicists, etc., not to argue with other experts about stalling angles and other mysterious technicalities. An illustration of this was provided this year when Prof.