

syllable) are frankly impossible. To neglect the established "rules of the game" in this matter is merely to encourage anarchy. "Anlage" should be accented on the first syllable.

The preparation of a dictionary of so many different sciences and subsiences is a formidable undertaking for two authors; the writers have, however, attained a considerable measure of success.

*The Evolution of a Coast-line: Barrow to Aberystwyth and the Isle of Man, with Notes on Lost Towns, Submarine Discoveries, etc.* By W. Ashton. Pp. xvi+302. (London: Edward Stanford, Ltd.; Southport: W. Ashton and Sons, Ltd., 1920.) Price 10s. net.

THE author gathers every possible kind of evidence to prove that there has been a widespread downward tendency in the land levels of the western coast of Britain, which has continued from a beginning, one gathers, after Neolithic times. He has read widely and with profit, though not always with discrimination, but his book will be of value to students, especially if they also have Sinel's "Geology of Jersey" to consult alongside it. The coast is considered section by section with, frequently, a popular geological introduction. The author works out a conjectural map of some ancient coast-lines, such as that of Cardigan Bay, which he suggests was once all lowland, and the land of the famous story of the Lowland Hundred or Cantref y Gwaelod retold by T. L. Peacock in "The Misfortunes of Elphin." In this he is almost certainly right in the main, though some of the scraps of evidence quoted are conjectural, and it is doubtful whether enough is allowed, either in this section or in others, for the consolidation, with the lapse of time, of the boulder clay which formed the main part of the lost lowlands. It is rightly stated that there has been distinct loss of land within historic times, but protection at the public expense is difficult, because the public does not appropriate land gained from the sea, and this, in the last thirty-five years, has been more than seven times the land lost. Even on the west coast gains have counterbalanced losses. The reproductions of old maps and prints are a valuable feature of the book.

*Has the North Pole been Discovered?* By Thomas F. Hall. Pp. 539+maps, charts, etc. (Toronto: Richard G. Badger.) Price 2.50 dollars.

THE Peary-Cook question still arouses controversy in the United States, and the author of the book before us, a former captain in the American Merchant Service and a past member of the Nebraska Legislature, has elaborately cross-examined the various narratives by Peary and his colleagues. He concludes that there is no conclusive evidence that either of the two claimants reached the North Pole. He states that he began his investigation with full faith in Peary; if so, his feelings have been so

strongly roused that his statement is marked by the appearance of bitter personal bias. He maintains that the speeds claimed by Peary in his last marches are impossible, that Peary's photographs are shown by incompletely obliterated shadows not to have been taken in the latitudes claimed, and that Peary's different narratives are inconsistent and contradicted on essential questions by those of his negro companion, Henson. The author also claims that recent ascents of Mount McKinley show that Cook must have achieved the ascent of that mountain.

Whether the author's criticisms of Peary are fundamental, or based merely on honest errors in the narratives, on inconsistencies due to haste in publication, and on photographs which were prepared as book illustrations, and not as evidence, will doubtless be ultimately settled by the opinion of competent and impartial American geographers.

*The Mystery of Life as Interpreted by Science.* By R. D. Taylor. Pp. 176. (London and Felling-on-Tyne: The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd., 1919.) Price 3s. 6d. net.

MOST readers of NATURE seek enlightenment on "The Mystery of Life as Interpreted by Science"; but whether they will find it in the little book which Mr. R. D. Taylor presents under this title is open to question. All life is psychic in its essential being, and every atom is "a psychic" endowed with super-consciousness defined as native cognition, determinative and directive, inbred in the structure of every atomic centre. This super-consciousness is the law of its being. In accordance with this law every atom radiates attractional emanations into the related atom of next lower radial potency, and coincidentally receives radiations from the next higher. The "radial-attractional law of gravitation," which is not only the act of tending towards a centre, but is also coincidentally the act of developing towards a source (and thus includes all human aspirations), is the theme of a book the metaphysical implications of which call for no further notice here.

*Directions for a Practical Course in Chemical Physiology.* By Dr. W. Cramer. Fourth edition. Pp. viii+137. (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1920.) Price 4s. 6d. net.

In the present edition of this laboratory manual the arrangement and method of treatment adopted in previous editions have been retained, while the subject-matter is also largely the same as that in the edition reviewed in NATURE of March 25, 1915. Two additions have been made—a simple experimental arrangement for demonstrating cell-respiration, which was devised by Dr. Drew, is described, and a section has been added on the balance between acids and bases in the organism. In the latter a brief account is given of the elementary facts of the physical chemistry of acids and bases, and simple experiments by which they can be verified are described.