

admirable journal"—a compliment which ought perhaps to secure a benevolent review, but needless to say we shall not let it induce us to depart from our habitual detachment.

Mr. Blayre was for many years Registrar in a well-known university, and had certain manuscripts confided to him by more or less scientific members of the staff on the understanding that they should remain *in retentis*, as who should say, unless events occurred which rendered their publication desirable. In no case, however, were they to be published in the lifetime of the depositors, to whom the documentation served as a sort of Freudian relief. Now there is no doubt that the publication clears up many puzzling events, such as the ghastly damage that followed the acceptance of the so-called "purple sapphire" by the Mineralogical Museum, the mystery of Prof. Markwand's death, and the tragic case of Austin Black, who, if anyone, must be credited with laying the foundations of psychobiology.

To clear up these and other obscurities, more familiar to the older than to the younger readers of NATURE, has seemed to Mr. Blayre sufficient warrant for publishing the deposited documents. He does not seem to be aware, however, that the Professor of Biology, the present reviewer, is still alive, and by no means so sure as he once was of Mr. Blayre's fiducial discretion. His feeling of relief when he found that his own document had been suppressed by the publishers enables him to sympathise at least with the relatives of the deceased gentlemen whose confidences are now blazoned abroad. It is true that names are sometimes suppressed or modified in the book, but in these days, when the study of the history of science is rife, it seems a cruelly thin disguise to refer to a professor by a pseudonym and then proceed to mention one of his well-known discoveries.

Apart from our own survival, which rather condemns the book, apart, also, from the editor's hurry to disclose the confidences of well-known men of science, we would protest against the somewhat amateurish editing. "Science" was never Mr. Blayre's *métier*, and we see that in his editing. When, for example, was Prof. Tyndall knighted, and how could there possibly be a monkey, even a small monkey, inside a bunch of bananas? Even the date of the preface is wrong; and *Lingulella* figuring as a Lamellibranch (!) is a very dead fly in the ointment. Would it not have been wiser to have submitted the papers for editorial purposes to the present heads of the various departments concerned, and to have

issued them as a volume of "University Studies"?

At the same time, many will be grateful to Mr. Blayre for publishing these papers with their poignant personalities and astonishing intimacies. They have made many obscure things clear, and they show us how human men of science are after all. But it is strange to read nowadays of the timidity with which the Professors of Botany and Zoology regarded the development of the cosmic dust, which is now a common item in the cinematographic repertory.

THE PROFESSOR OF BIOLOGY.

Our Bookshelf.

The Breeding and Feeding of Farm Stock.
By J. Wilson. Pp. vii+152. (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1921.) 6s. net.

THIS work attempts to treat of a vast subject within a hundred and fifty pages of medium size and type, and there is no preface or preliminary word denoting that the talented author asks for that indulgence which may be claimed by a purely elementary treatise. So ambitious an endeavour courts criticism, and, in this case, no student of the subject could say that it is undeserved. Even in such a hurried summary a few words might have been spared to warn the tyro when the text was meant to be dogmatic and when the author was merely drawing upon a well-trained imagination. Perhaps the best example of such a caution being needed is to be found on p. 26. Here a truly skilful flight of fancy reads as if there were some scientific evidence to support the writer's faith in his own imagery. The harmful effect of the lack of necessary explanations may be found in sentences which can be described, read as they stand, only as the travesty of truth: e.g. we read on p. 65: "Sometimes a breed is recommended because it can live on little food, but, if a breed or an individual cow lives upon little food, then neither the breed nor the cow is a good milker."

Besides such inexactitudes, there are many omissions of reference to work throwing light on problems discussed. Nevertheless the book contains much that is interesting and instructive, and some matter that is inspiring. While it cannot be wished that the present work may be republished in its present epitomised form, it is to be hoped that the author will become more ambitious and give his readers, in a larger volume, or in several, the elaborated results of his study of this very important subject. K. J. J. M.

John Dalton. By L. J. Neville-Polley. (Pioneers of Progress. Men of Science.) Pp. 63. (London: S.P.C.K.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1920.) 2s.

WITHIN the last ten years chemistry has completely emancipated itself from a type of metaphysical obscurantism which seems to be invading