

Our Bookshelf.

The North American Species of Drosophila. By A. H. Sturtevant. (Publication No. 301.) Pp. iv+150+3 plates. (Washington: The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1921.)

A SYSTEMATIC account of the North American species of *Drosophila* and related genera, which includes many new species from collections made in various parts of the continent, will be found in this volume. One of the chief features of interest in such a monograph lies in a comparison of the systematic differences distinguishing species with those distinguishing mutants. In the latter part of the work this subject is discussed. The species of *Drosophila*, although often closely alike in appearance, so that only intensive study has succeeded in separating them, are extraordinarily difficult to cross. This applies not only to those having different chromosome groups, which no one has yet succeeded in crossing, but also to those in which the chromosomes are alike.

Dr. Sturtevant points out that both species and mutants may differ from each other in such features as eye-colour, wing-shape, abdominal pattern, and size and shape of eyes; but in studying specific differences it is "often necessary to examine minute characters, such as wing-vein indices or the relative sizes of certain bristles, that are seldom examined in material bred for genetic purposes." Many of the mutant characters are, however, similar to those observed between species. The general impression is received that specific differences and mutations may both be found in practically any character studied. The species usually differ slightly in innumerable characters, while mutants often differ strikingly in a few. This does not indicate that specific and mutational characters are different in kind, but that only the smaller mutations, by upsetting less the economy of the species, usually survive as specific differences.

R. R. G.

Introduction to General Chemistry. By Prof. H. Copaux. Translated by Dr. H. Leffmann. Pp. x+195. (Philadelphia: P. Blakiston's Son and Co., 1920.) 2.00 dollars net.

IN its translation into "standard English" (*vide* preface) Prof. Copaux's excellent little book has suffered considerably. It may be that "chlorin," "sulfur dioxid," and "do not have" are "standard" English, but in many cases the translator does not appear to have understood what he was doing, and the result (*e.g.* p. 55) is quite unintelligible. There are numerous minor inaccuracies in translation, and others are added in the footnotes contributed by the translator. Through someone's lack of care, several dropped letters have been passed unnoticed. It is regrettable that before sending the book to the printers the translator did not submit his manuscript to someone with a knowledge of physical chemistry. In this way some serious errors might have been avoided. "Wolcott Gibbs" on p. 139 should be "Willard Gibbs."

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A Last Diary. By W. N. P. Barbellion. With a preface by A. J. Cummings. Pp. xviii+148. (London: Chatto and Windus, 1920.) 6s. net.

To speak frankly, we prefer Bruce Cummings to Barbellion—that is to say, the man as he appeared to others rather than as he chose to appear to himself. This diary, no less than the former, contains some brilliant bits of writing, but its mixture of slang and literariness, of wit and self-exposure, grows wearisome. In style and in substance Mr. Arthur Cummings's account of his brother is more pleasing. Barbellion's life was a tragedy, but he succeeded, apparently with intention, in depicting it so as to arouse irritation instead of sympathy. One longs to pity him, but that is the last thing he will permit. As a psychological document, however, the book is profoundly interesting, and for the humanist it is redeemed by the gradually touched-in portrait of simple, lovable old Nanny.

Impressions and Comments. Second series. 1914-20. By Havelock Ellis. Pp. 248. (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1921.) 12s.

It is a pleasure, and in these days a relief, to turn to diarial musings distinguished by sanity, simplicity, and sobriety of statement. Mr. Havelock Ellis may hold strong views, he may deal boldly with dangerous subjects, but he expresses himself so calmly, so frankly, and with an undercurrent of such delicate humour that it were surely impossible to take offence. Unkind fortune had not hitherto distributed the books of Mr. Ellis to this reviewer, who therefore was unprepared for the discovery that one of whose work in other directions he knew was also among the most delightful writers of our day.

Here is no room to quote, though one can scarcely refrain in the face of that exquisite "Christmas Day, 1919." Nor is this the place to challenge an occasional argument; yet in suggesting that familiarity made the ancient Greek insensitive to the charm of the Athenian atmosphere Mr. Ellis has surely forgotten the famous phrase of Euripides: ἀεὶ διὰ λαμπροτάτου βαίνοντες ἀβρῶς αἰθέρος.

That which gives a poignant and peculiar quality to the book is the clear-eyed realisation of approaching departure. We seem to see an honoured worker, resting from his labours on the deck of a vessel that bears him over calm waters to a serene sunset. He looks forward and backward with equal mind, and ever and anon pens some brief message of wisdom or good cheer for those whom he is leaving on the shore.

Diseases of the Ear. By Dr. Philip D. Kerrison. Second edition, revised and enlarged. Pp. xxi+596+vi plates. (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1921.) 35s. net.

THIS is one of the best works on diseases of the ear that have been published for a long time. It is very full and comprehensive, and is written with lucidity and even literary charm. It cannot be too highly praised and recommended.