

seeks to show that collectors, far from being responsible for the extermination of species, may be regarded as bird protectionists. Collectors, however, like bird protection, are of two kinds, discriminate and indiscriminate. The latter type unfortunately exists, and no defence which Mr. Loyd brings forward can absolve him from the charges laid against him. It is against this type that the energies of writers and bird protection societies are directed.

Chemical Synthesis: Studies in the Investigation of Natural Organic Products. By Dr. Harry Hepworth. (Manuals of Pure and Applied Chemistry.) Pp. xx + 243. (London, Glasgow and Bombay: Blackie and Son, Ltd., 1924.) 20s. net.

NOT so very long ago authors of text-books on organic chemistry were in the habit of relegating their remarks on alkaloids, glucosides, tannins, and other natural products to the last few pages of their works, and these were not taken very seriously by either teachers or students. In the last twenty years or so all that has been changed, and there are now monographs in most languages on the more important of these products, and the larger text-books also devote some attention to them. Though information on such subjects is therefore more accessible than it was, Dr. Hepworth has rendered a conspicuous service to chemists by bringing together a summary of what is now known about natural pigments, carbohydrates, tannins, oils and fats, terpenes, polypeptides, simple natural bases and alkaloids. By restricting his attention to the analytical and synthetical reactions, which have been most useful in elucidating the structure of the more important members of each group, he has been able to produce a readable account of the present position of the chemistry of these substances and an indication of the lines on which progress is still being made. There are slips here and there; for example, it is no longer correct to say that carene does not occur in Nature, and that sylvestrene is present in Indian turpentine oil. Atropine, hyoscyamine, pseudohyoscyamine, and hyoscyne are not all isomers of the formula $C_{17}H_{33}NO_3$, and the formula $C_{17}H_{21}NO_2$ does not represent scopolamine; but on the whole the book is remarkably accurate and up-to-date. It is also well produced, and graphic formulæ are supplied wherever they are useful. T. A. H.

Histoire des sciences exactes et naturelles dans l'antiquité gréco-romaine: exposé sommaire des écoles et des principes. Par Prof. Arnold Reymond. Pp. viii + 238. (Paris: Albert Blanchard, 1924.) 12 francs.

PROF. ARNOLD REYMOND has for many years given a course of lectures on the history of science at the University of Neuchâtel. This course is attended by students in the Faculty of Letters as well as by those in the Faculty of Science, a practice which is worthy of the notice of university authorities in Great Britain and elsewhere. The present book represents that part of the course which deals with the development of mathematics, the natural sciences, and medicine in Greco-Roman antiquity. It is very well written, and shows that its author has not only a complete command of his subject, but also a ready appreciation of the requirements and mental equipment of his audiences. Whilst avoiding a parade of learning, Prof. Reymond gives full references to his authorities for any statement of

importance, and the book will thus appeal to all students of the history of science, especially those whose main interests do not lie in this particular field.

It is of course very difficult to deal adequately with such a large subject in the space of 230 pages, and detail has had to be cut down to a minimum. Nevertheless, Prof. Reymond has contrived to be readable, and as a bird's-eye view of the scientific knowledge of the ancient world his book may be heartily recommended. The increasing interest in the history of science which is manifesting itself in Great Britain suggests that an English translation might be well worth publishing. No other book of the size treats the subject with the same skill. E. J. H.

Patents: Invention and Method. By Harold E. Potts. Pp. viii + 160. (London: The Open Court Co., 1924.) 3s. 6d. net.

In this little book the author has collected a number of papers that he has published dealing with certain philosophical aspects of patent law and practice. Each of the six papers is presented as an application of scientific method and reasoning to the solution of patent problems, or as an attempt at the correlation of patent law with other more systematised branches of learning. This being so, it is not easy to understand why the paper on language and style should have been included, or, for that matter, that discussing the logical problem of definition. Of the first paper, too, the most that can be said is that it affords an ingenious exercise in the use of mathematical symbols. It is when he comes to discuss prediction and invention in chemistry and the influence of patent law on the evolution of research that the author is most interesting and instructive, though his remarks in the latter connexion on the subject of generalisation must be regarded rather as the personal opinion of a well-known patent agent than as an exposition of the accepted practice in this matter. The remaining paper dealing with the principles of scientific method can be commended to inventor and practitioner alike. E. J.

Rivers and Lakes: the Story of their Development. By Martin A. C. Hinton. (Nature Lover's Series.) Pp. x + 182. (London: The Sheldon Press; New York and Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1924.) 6s. net.

THE greater part of this book treats of the work of rivers, while a few chapters are added on the origin of lake basins. Much condensation was clearly necessary to compress so vast a subject into less than two hundred small pages, but Mr. Hinton has done his work well and produced a book that is not only readable but, in spite of being strictly popular, is also accurate and full. It was obviously impossible to discuss fully the topic of ice erosion and ice protection, but the main aspects of the problem are indicated, though it would have been well to refer the reader to some of the recent papers on the glaciology of the Antarctic, where ice action on a large scale is discussed. To describe a glacier as "simply a frozen mountain stream," is not very happy, even if the following paragraphs amplify and extend the statement. The volume fully maintains the high standard of the series to which it belongs, but seventeen diagrams is a small allowance for a popular book of this scope.