

His adventures among the denizens of the seas during his migratory periods, his impressions of the beauty of form and colour, the phenomena of symbiosis, commensalism and parasitism, the phosphorescence of the deep sea animals, the bizarre form of others and the art of protective resemblance are made the means of introducing the reader to a survey of the whole field of marine life, pelagic, littoral and deep sea. Sturly, under the guidance of a hoary, wise, old Echinus, sets out to probe the mystery and meaning of life, and the steady development of his education to a realisation of that inexorable law of Nature, reproduction of the kind, forms the real theme of the book.

The bitterness produced by the results of his search are removed by the advent of death when a voice from another world soothes his last hours in this, by a promise of a reincarnation and a fuller life in the next. Thus does Sturly solve the meaning of life. We can forgive the author a few minor zoological errors such as the occurrence of *Convoluta* at 100 fm., the presence of *Melia tessellata* in the Mediterranean, and the description of a copepod as a wood-louse, in the real charm and simplicity of his allegory. The book was worth translating, and Mr. Aldington has done his work well in face of the many technical difficulties involved in finding the right English equivalent for the many unusual names of animals in the original. The book should stir the reader to a desire for an extended knowledge of marine life.

*British Museum (Natural History). Fossil Insects, No. 1: The British Liassic Dragon-flies (Odonata).* By Dr. R. J. Tillyard. Pp. 40+5 plates. *Fossil Insects, No. 2: Insects from the Coal Measures of Commentry.* By Dr. Herbert Bolton. Pp. 56+3 plates. (London: British Museum (Natural History), 1925.) 5s. each.

THESE memoirs mark a new departure in the publications of the British Museum. Instead of waiting for the time when it would be possible to issue a descriptive catalogue of the entire collection of fossil insects, it has been decided to publish shorter memoirs on portions of the collection whenever specialists can be found to undertake the work. The first two memoirs of the series are written by palæontologists not officially connected with the Museum.

The dragon-flies described by Dr. Tillyard are from the Lias of Leicestershire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, and Gloucestershire—mainly from the "Insect Limestone" of Lower Liassic or perhaps in part of Rhætic age. The larger number of the specimens were collected by the late Rev. P. B. Brodie. Nearly all the species belong to the sub-order Anisozygoptera, which at the present day is represented by a single genus with two species, one found in Japan, the other in the Himalayas.

The Coal Measures of Commentry in the central plateau of France have yielded an abundant and varied insect fauna, ranging from primitive forms to specialised types regarded as the forerunners of dragon-flies. Nearly all possessed a great span of wing relatively to the size of the body. It is pointed out that only very rarely are two or more insect wings alike in venation—an indication perhaps of rapid evolution in Carboniferous times. Both memoirs are well illustrated with plates and text-figures.

*Perseus: or, Of Dragons.* By H. F. Scott Stokes. (To-day and To-morrow Series.) Pp. 80. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd., 1924.) 2s. 6d. net.

To any who wish to read pleasurably of dragons, this book may be commended. The author ranges with a gossiping humour from Glastonbury to ancient Egypt, devoting some attention to Perseus, St. George, the dragons of Rhodes and Bologna, and other dragons of modern Europe by the way. He begins with a chapter on the characteristics of dragons, touches upon the folklore themes which occur in dragon stories, such as the supernatural birth, the life-token, the magic weapon, and the rescued maiden, and concludes with a summary of Elliot Smith's theories of the diffusion of culture from a common origin. Incidentally to his reference to the theory that the dragon is a folk-memory of antediluvian monsters, notwithstanding the chronological discrepancy, it may be mentioned that it has been suggested in all seriousness to the present writer that the long-necked dance masks shown in Capt. Hurley's recent film "Pearls and Savages" is a reminiscence of the plesiosaurus!

*Leaves from a Naturalist's Diary: with Notes on What to Look for Month by Month.* By A. R. Horwood. Pp. 192+4 plates. (London, Calcutta and Sydney: G. G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 1924.) 3s. 6d. net.

MR. HORWOOD has written a nature study book in the form of a calendar. Interesting or salient points in Nature's yearly cycle are dealt with month by month in separate chapters, and at the end of each chapter is a list of the more important and commoner animals and plants to be found in suitable places during that month. This is the most valuable part of the book, and Mr. Horwood has in some cases given his mere list an ecological value by specifying the kind of habitat in which to look for the species listed. Such lists cannot be expected to be complete, but as a guide to the Nature lover they are useful and should also serve as a basis for a diary in which actual records and other data can be kept by observers. This brief survey of the pageant of Nature for a year is pleasantly written in simple and easy language, and illustrated by four photographs and many quite life-like sketches of typical animals and plants.

*The Travel Diary of a Philosopher.* By Count Hermann Keyserling. Translated by J. Holroyd Reece. Vol. 1. Pp. viii+336. Vol. 2. Pp. 405. (London: Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 1925.) 36s. net.

COUNT KEYSERLING'S reflections on the various modes in which human speculative thought has found expression, and his study of the distinctive character which climate and the aspect of Nature in the different countries of the world has impressed on man's religious and ethical feelings, can now be read by the English student in an excellent translation. The book is delightful to read, on account of the extraordinary power of the author to project himself sympathetically into the most opposite modes of thought. The publication of the original work was interrupted by the War, and that disastrous upheaval, with its outburst of hatreds, casts its shadow over a philosophy conceived in the spirit of peace on earth among men of goodwill.