

current along the nerve, which may be for a distance so great as 2 cm. This is claimed as another source of error which workers with nerve-muscle preparations of only European magnitude cannot avoid. In the array of careful experiments described in detail with their protocols are some in which the conditions simulated those of earlier workers, who of necessity have used smaller animals than the Japanese toad. Then the results agree, until, altering conditions and avoiding the error of diffusion in narcotisation and of escape of current, as is possible with the great length of nerve, it is shown that no interpretation involving decrement of the impulse can be permitted. On other aspects of the passage of the impulse in nerve there is no wide disagreement with previous observers.

There are many small printing errors. On p. 79, "entangled" for "disentangled" or "untangled" is probably the worst. The book deserves an index.

These small failings will not detract from the far-reaching possibilities of Genichi Kato's work and inspiration.

### Our Bookshelf.

*The Fight for Everest: 1924.* By Lieut. Col. E. F. Norton and other Members of the Expedition. Pp. xi + 372 + 32 plates + 2 maps. (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1925.) 25s. net.

It would indeed be a strange personality which would not be stirred by this thrilling account, ending, alas, in tragedy, of the third expedition towards the summit of Mount Everest. The first in 1921 was in fact no more than a reconnaissance, the second in 1922 is described as "The assault," while we may well hope that the 1924 volume now published under the title of the "Fight for Everest" will be itself succeeded by the final volume, the "Attainment."

The introduction by Sir Francis Younghusband should persuade even the most cold-blooded reader of the value of such an effort. Most of the members of the expedition contribute a chapter or more: commencing with "The Start" by General Bruce, soon to be invalidated back to the base and to be succeeded in command by Colonel Norton, there follow in succession (an enumeration of the chapter sub-titles tells the story), the march across Tibet, the Rongbuk Glacier, the North Col, Norton and Somervell's attempt, Mallory and Irvine's attempt, the return to Base Camp.

Mallory's letters, too, are fascinating reading, giving a glimpse of that enthusiasm which carried him and Irvine to their last final climb. The actual cause of their deaths will always remain a mystery. Did they reach the summit and fail to find their camp again or did they meet with an accident? We sympathise with the relatives and friends of those who died, a sympathy mingled with pride that Britain can still produce these men.

Second only to the last climb are those of Norton

and Somervell and of Odell; a height of 28,000 feet seems well within the reach of such men, while it seems only a few years ago that a climb to 24,000 feet was considered an impossibility.

Part III. deals with the scientific results, the physiological effects, and the use of oxygen, as well as the natural history, geology and glaciology and photography, each of which are well treated.

Although newspaper articles and the well-known cinema, the "Epic of Everest," have familiarised us with most of the details of the expedition, this volume forms a valuable permanent record, well illustrated as it is with an exceptionally artistic map.

*Landmarks in the Struggle between Science and Religion.*

By Prof. James Y. Simpson. Pp. xiv + 288. (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1925.) 7s. 6d. net.

ONE may surmise that in writing this book Prof. Simpson had in mind the religious layman rather than the scientific man, who will, we fear, find the discussions of early theology, especially in the first half of the book, somewhat wearisome. Prof. Simpson covers a very wide field, in theology, pre-history, science and philosophy. His book is erudite and well documented, and indicates a remarkably wide acquaintance with many extremely diverse branches of knowledge. There is, however, a certain disjointedness in the treatment of his almost superabundant historical material, which does not make for easy reading, nor is his central theme of the struggle between science and religion developed in any sustained and systematic way.

This said by way of criticism, we must remark on the competence and open-mindedness of the author's handling of a difficult and controversial subject. His attitude is that of a deeply religious man who is not afraid to accept all the well-substantiated results of science, and is able to harmonise them with his own beliefs. His position is that "Science describes, the philosophy of science explains, and religion interprets; and description, explanation, and interpretation are alike elements in the process of man's mental and spiritual adjustment or adaptation to the Universe. Each is necessary, the one to the other, and must enter into any intelligent understanding of the world as a whole. Science leaves us with descriptions which philosophy explains in terms of a phenomenal dynamic Universe; religion interprets the whole most satisfactorily, after an examination of all other interpretations, as the self-expression or unfolding of the activity of a creative God" (pp. 270-71).

We take it that science has no real quarrel with religion, as a certain attitude to the universe, but only with the accretions of dogmatic theology. That science had a hard fight to free itself from the trammels of theological and other dogmatic thought is made abundantly clear in Prof. Simpson's book, and vigilance is still necessary to preserve this hard-won freedom. But it is well to remember that the scientific man must beware of dogmatism also in his own sphere; he must continually test and criticise accepted theories lest they become dead and traditional; and he must guard against the danger of erecting a convenient method of science into a philosophy of life. E. S. R.