

the progress of science is the most obvious and measurable thing in history, those, like Prof. Teggart, who would build their faith on the 'possibility' of progress in general, must turn to the annals of systematic and objective thought.

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### Our Bookshelf.

*Essex: an Outline Scientific Survey; including Geology, Botany and Zoology.* By Members of the Essex Field Club and others. Prepared on the Occasion of the Congress of the South-Eastern Union of Scientific Societies at Colchester. Edited by G. E. Hutchings. Pp. 133+4 plates. (Colchester: Benham and Co., Ltd., 1926.) 3s. net.

THIS "Outline Scientific Survey," published in connexion with the recent Congress of the South-Eastern Union of Scientific Societies, at Colchester, should prove of wide and permanent interest. Consisting of a series of articles by well-known field naturalists, it provides a detailed account of past researches into the geology, botany, entomology, ornithology, crustacea, etc., of Essex, summarising the great volume of work accomplished by the Essex Field Club during the forty-six years since the club was founded, and work done by earlier Essex naturalists.

Covering a wide field, the articles are necessarily condensed, and will appeal to scientific workers rather than to the general public. The value of this survey is enhanced by the bibliographical notes appended to each article, and by the geological sketch map of the county. A useful index of the survey is also provided.

Owing to limitations of time and space, omissions could scarcely be avoided. One finds in the survey no mention of the mammals, reptiles, and fishes of Essex. These have been fully dealt with by the late Dr. Laver, past president of the Essex Field Club, in a special memoir published by the Club, and also in a report upon Essex and Kent sea fishes, compiled by the late Mr. E. A. Fitch, also a past president of the Essex Field Club, collaborating with the late Dr. Murie, published by the Essex and Kent Sea Fishery Board. Another special memoir of the Essex Field Club deserved attention, namely, the very complete report upon the Essex earthquake, by Meldola and White; and it is surprising to find no reference to the historic and world-renowned 'native oyster'—a variety of the oyster confined to the estuary of the Thames. The oyster fisheries of Essex have certainly been protected for more than seven centuries, probably for more than a thousand years, and possibly from Roman times. As the partridge and pheasant, similarly protected, are always included in British bird lists, we should have expected the Thames Estuary variety of oyster to figure in a scientific survey of Essex. An exhaustive account of this fishery by a member of the Essex Field Club appears in the Essex "Victoria History," and later a pamphlet was published, compiled by the late Dr. Laver, who took a keen interest in this fishery. The small but interesting pyrites industry formerly on the Essex coast, an account of which (by a member of the Club) is included in the Essex "Victoria History," also deserved mention: These omissions could be remedied, in later editions or reprints of the survey, by a brief editorial note.

*Monumenta Medica.* Under the General Editorship of Henry E. Sigerist. 3: *The Earliest Printed Literature on Syphilis; being Ten Tractates from the Years, 1495-1498.* In complete Facsimile, with an Introduction and other accessory material by Karl Sudhoff, adapted by Charles Singer. Pp. xlviii+352. (London: D. Stanton, 90 North Road, N.6; Florence: R. Lier and Co., 1925.) n.p.

OWING to rearrangements, incorporations, and other changes, this beautifully printed and illustrated work, which forms the third volume in the series of "Monumenta Medica," of which the second was reviewed by us some months previously (*NATURE*, December 5, 1925, p. 811), is, as Dr. Singer remarks in the preface, almost a new work rather than a translation. The writers whose works are reproduced in facsimile are Konrad Schelling of Heidelberg, physician to Philip, Elector to the Palatinate and friend of the humanist Jakob Wimpfeling, Joseph Grünpeck of Burckhausen, himself a sufferer from the disease, Niccolo Leonicensis of Vicenza, whose pamphlet was published by the great humanist printer Aldus Manutius at Venice, Hans Widmann of Tübingen, Caspare Torrella of Valencia, who was physician to Pope Alexander VI. and treated his son Cesar Borgia for syphilis, Corradino Gilino, who recommended the heroic treatment of application of a red-hot iron to the head for curing the salivation caused by mercurial inunctions, Bartholomæus Steber of Vienna, Natali Montesauero of Verona, the first to describe clearly the ostesopic pains of syphilis, and Antonio Scanaroli of Modena. Their contributions to the history of syphilis, while none of them is without considerable interest, are of very unequal value. With the exception of Grünpeck's pamphlet entitled "Ein Hübscher Tractat von dem Ursprung des bösen Franzos," all the tracts are written in Latin.

Prof. Sudhoff regards the work of Torella entitled "Tractatus cum consiliis contra pudendagram seu morbum gallicum," as the most valuable of all the tracts, inasmuch as it is the least prejudiced, the freshest, and the least academic. Perhaps the next most interesting pamphlet in this collection is that entitled "De pustulis et morbo qui vulgo mal de franzos appellatur" by Hans Widmann, who distinguishes the French disease from leprosy, holds the breath of the sufferers to be contagious, and regards the rashes and, above all, the affection of the mouth, as characteristic of the disease.

As Prof. Sudhoff points out in his foreword, the works reproduced will prove of interest not only to epidemiologists and medical historians, but also to students of the history of culture and the art of printing.

*Dialogues in Limbo.* By George Santayana. Pp. vii+193. (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1925.) 10s. 6d. net.

THE dialogue form enjoys a mild vogue among American philosophers, and it is hard to imagine any more brilliant exponent of it than Mr. Santayana. It expresses admirably the subtle irony of his delicately perceptive intelligence. Of the literary success of his experiment there is no question. Yet interpretation is hard, for, as in all living discussion, the emphasis shifts