

and one cannot certainly infer what the message is. The scene is Limbo. The spirit of the earthbound stranger holds converse with the illustrious shades—Democritus, Aristippus, Alcibiades, Socrates and the rest—who manage to retain a stronger personal identity than even Mr. Broad's 'psychic factor' would explain; and much of their discourse is at variance with the 'Life of Reason.' For there, at all events, Mr. Santayana has declared himself on the side of reason, has shown how, from the raw material of human character, its diversity of impulse and of passion, reason has to create some kind of harmony; but here the issue is less certain.

Of all the shades, Democritus is endowed with the greatest power and energy of conviction; and he, as frank materialist, is clear enough that the life of reason is largely illusion, and that "the chief and most lasting illusion of the mind is the illusion of its own importance." True, the illusion is necessary and in its way beneficent; for the state of wisdom is "an evanescent madness when the dream still continues, but no longer deceives." Even Democritus, however, can scarce tell whether it is more important that the dream should continue or that it should not deceive. On one side, the practical business of life requires its endurance, since only so can we forbear the bewilderment of ultimate inquiry, and like Protagoras take the way of establishing, by the support of tradition and experience, a valid conventional distinction between sane beliefs and mad. Yet, when the deepest challenge comes, Democritus is impelled to the vow, "I will dismiss and expel every remnant of illusion, even in myself, in order that nothing of me may remain save the atoms that compose me"—truth before aught else. So, too, in a not dissimilar ethical discussion, the dialectic of Socrates can overthrow the vaguely emotional democratic theory of the stranger; but makes less headway against the stranger's version of the teaching of his prophet of human love and gentleness.

There is no finality here: no set conclusion, but a lively and sensitive handling of the issues, and a breathless brilliance of fine debate. H. J. W. H.

An Introduction to Historical Geology: with Special Reference to North America. By Prof. William J. Miller. Second edition. Pp. xvi + 399. (London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1925.) 13s. 6d. net.

PROF. MILLER'S "Introduction to Historical Geology" is not quite so successful as his "Physical Geology," recently reviewed in these columns. The fundamental principles of stratigraphy and the organic inferences are carefully dealt with, and the book contains very useful summaries of Palæozoic and Mesozoic life-forms. Indeed, throughout the book the palæontology is well done. But physical history is especially emphasised, and yet here the treatment follows the conventional lines of older text-books and fails to include the results of much modern work. In dealing with geological time the author is particularly old-fashioned. He writes, "the Cambrian period represents a long time, the best estimates ranging from 2,000,000 to 3,000,000 years. . . . Though the succeeding periods were by no means equal in duration, the best estimates would make no one of them less than 1,000,000 years long."

The term 'best' evidently applies to the old estimates of Walcott, and implies ignorance of, or indifference to, the magnificent work of Barrell in this field. More attention might also have been devoted to the palæographical researches of Schuchert, which reveal at least eighteen great marine transgressions over the North American continent. The book is well printed and illustrated, but reveals no originality of either point of view or treatment.

Sahara. By Angus Buchanan. Pp. xv + 301 + 78 plates. (London: John Murray, 1926.) 21s. net.

CAPT. BUCHANAN has added to his previous works on Africa another valuable book in which he shows his power of descriptive writing and his insight into the native mind. His journey on this occasion was across the Sahara from Kano by way of Ahaggar to Touggourt and Algiers. The main objects of his journey were to secure cinematograph films and make studies in natural history. Happily he avoids the monotonous iteration of daily marches and incidents of camp life, and succeeds in giving a series of vivid pictures of the Sahara, its animal life and its people. While the interest is mainly in natural history, there is a great deal of geographical value in the book. In fact, few volumes give better impressions of the vastness and solitude of the desert. It is a pity that the small map is wholly inadequate for a book of this importance.

Nature, Thought and Personal Experience. By Dr. W. Tudor Jones. Pp. xii + 182. (London: Williams and Norgate, Ltd., 1926.) 7s. 6d. net.

DR. TUDOR JONES has consciously or unconsciously come under the influence of the new doctrine which is being preached in science under the descriptive title emergence. The theory of emergent evolution is an attempt to interpret the process of the cosmos as a succession of 'levels,' each level being characterised by new properties which, though the outcome of the conditions of the previous level, could not be predicted from it. With his well-known zeal for the recognition of moral and religious values, Dr. Tudor Jones applies this as a rationale of the relation of Nature and thought in personal experience. Though dealing with values, he never loses touch with the actualities of positive science.

My Flight to the Cape and Back. By Alan J. Cobham. Pp. vi + 70. (London: A. and C. Black, Ltd., 1926.) 1s. 6d. net.

THIS small volume is a modestly told record of the great achievement of Mr. A. J. Cobham in flying from London to Cape Town and back last year. It was not a hurried flight, as lengthy halts were made at several places on the route via Italy, Greece, Egypt, the Nile, the Lake Plateau and Bulawayo, but it was most successful and singularly free from mishap. The reader may regret the lack of adventure, for Mr. Cobham does not even embroider his story, and makes slight of every incident. But the absence of sensation is a tribute to the skill of the pilot and the worth of his machine. There are several interesting aerial photographs.