that on the reactions in the electric furnace, by Mr. F. T. Sisco, and another dealing with the general physico-chemical aspect of steel-making, by Mr. A. L. Feild, are well deserving of mention. To all those interested in any degree in the chemistry of the manufacture of steel, the volume is of the utmost importance and will be read with the greatest interest. F. C. T.

Science: an Introductory Textbook. By E. J. Holmyard. Pp. x+230. (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons, Ltd., 1926.) 4*s*.

MR. HOLMYARD is well known as one of the most active and vigorous exponents of the humanistic school of science teaching, and his viewpoint finds complete expression in this very entertaining and instructive volume. We could wish for nothing better than that the scoffer at the 'romance of science' should read it. For our part we found ourselves compelled to complete a first reading in one sitting. Mr. Holmyard's style is peculiarly happy and easy, and one feels that he thoroughly enjoyed his task. His object is to present science as a whole to the young beginner. He refuses to admit of barriers as between one branch of the subject and another, and in this he is right. Further, he has shown how it can be done. He enlists to his purpose the framework of the past—the Aristotelian scheme of the four 'elements' of air, water, earth, and fire, and after a historical introduction he deals with these one by one, and makes each the theme for a series of facts and phenomena of Nature. So we find simply and naturally interlocked a number of important and fundamental principles usually detached into separate 'subject' volumes. Finally, passing from the inanimate to the animate, the author presents a brief but interesting account of the phenomenon of life.

Naturally there is a serious danger of 'overdoing it,' but Mr. Holmyard has wisely preferred the errors of omission to those of commission. At the same time, we feel that the book would have been greatly strengthened by some short account of the astronomical scheme of the universe. In our view a general survey of science, even for the young beginner, definitely requires this, and its place is as pertinently at the beginning as is the study of life at the end.

The production by the publishers is, with the exception of some rather crude 'portraits,' very well done, and we have nothing but praise for a book that will commend itself to all interested in the teaching of science. I. B. H.

Life of Plants. By Sir Frederick Keeble. (Clarendon Science Series.) Pp. xii+256. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926.) 5*s*. net.

AN initial embarrassment that confronts one who would become acquainted with the present achievements and aims of botanical science is the large number of books dealing with plants from which a choice may be made. The subject has been approached from so many points of view that curiosity is aroused as to wherein any new volume can differ from its predecessors.

Those who are conversant with the writings of Sir Frederick Keeble—who have read his fascinating "Plant Animals," for example—will not be surprised to find that the present book *is* different from those we already know. Excellent as many of the latter are in providing detailed and accurate information about plants, carefully and clearly though some of them are written, we have met with no book which succeeds in conveying to the same degree as does the present small volume the all-pervading importance of plants in the scheme of living things, or the wonder and romance of their activities.

The information is there also—the amount that has been packed into 250 pages is indeed astonishing—but the reader is given the impression of being led into a new country by roads which permit of ever more and more extensive views, the facts and arguments which border the road and define its direction never being allowed to grow into a hedge tall or dense enough to oppress the traveller or to obscure the surrounding prospect. Therein, perhaps, lies the one danger. The reader may be so enthralled by the scenery around him that he may be tempted to give insufficient attention to the details of the foreground. This omission can be made good, however, when the journey is repeated, as no doubt it will be more than once.

Few are the books which can justly claim to have completely fulfilled their author's hopes: fewer still those in which this or that modification would not seem an improvement to some reader. No doubt some will say that a rather disproportionate amount of space is given to Mendelism, or that the contrast between sporophyte and gametophyte phases, with the dominance of the latter in some groups of plants, has been insufficiently emphasised. Exception may also be taken by some to the wholehearted acceptance of hormones to explain the sensitive reactions of plants. Such, however, are but minor matters and do not affect the picture as a whole, which is surprisingly complete in view of the size of the canvass.

In the preface, the author pleads that we should judge leniently his failure to accomplish the task he set himself. If he has not succeeded in satisfying himself, he has earned the gratitude of his readers by giving them a delightful and stimulating book.

Comparative Philosophy. By Paul Masson-Oursel. (International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method.) Pp. vi+212. (London: Kegan Paul and Co. Ltd.; New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co. Inc., 1926.) 10*s*. 6*d*. net.

"COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY," by M. Masson-Oursel, gives the impression of a compilation. There is an introduction by Dr. Crookshank, a notice that Part II. has been translated by V. C. C. Collum, and a dedication to M. Lévy-Bruhl, whether by author or translator or editor does not appear. The book itself deals largely in generalities and is interspersed by a long table of comparative chronology and various bibliographies. There is nothing peculiarly original or even striking in the actual matter of the book, and now and then we come on fairly long quotations from the Greek which are left untranslated, although the book is scarcely designed to appeal only to scholars.