

*Handbook for Prospectors.* By M. W. von Bernewitz. Pp. ix + 319. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc.; London: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., Ltd., 1926.) 15s. net.

It may be very gravely doubted whether it is possible to write a handbook for prospectors which is of any use to the men for whom it is intended. Modern prospecting expeditions, equipped and sent out by important syndicates, are usually under the charge of trained mining geologists, who require no information upon elementary crystallography or geology. On the other hand, the rough practical prospector, who has in the past been responsible for the discovery of many of the world's most important mineral deposits, neither knows nor cares, nor wants to know anything about the "dodecahedron of the isometric system"; his phraseology is of quite another type. It is difficult to imagine what kind of a prospector would be benefited in the slightest degree by such drawings as the author's Fig. 28, which shows a hand drill and hammer; it surely ought to be obvious that a man who does not know what these are had better leave prospecting alone; incidentally, it is probably impossible to imagine a hammer shaft worse shaped than that shown in the figure in question; it is quite certain that no practical prospector would ever attempt to use such an obviously futile appliance. Again, the detailed instructions given for such things as tying packs and arranging and priming a dynamite cartridge are surely unnecessary and can never be learnt from books. It would also be interesting to know how many prospectors the author thinks would be benefited by his table of the atomic weights of the elements as determined by the International Committee. There may be one or two things in the book, particularly in the first twenty-three pages, which may be of use to the prospector; the remainder would probably be useless to him even if he could understand it.

*Monograph of the Sea Snakes (Hydrophiidae).* By Malcolm Smith. Pp. xviii + 130 + 2 plates. (London: British Museum (Natural History), 1926.) 10s.

THIS work in its scope and arrangement follows the lines of the British Museum Catalogues; the greater part of the text is purely systematic in nature, but the author's views on the relationships of the group and some notes on habits are included in the introduction. The list of references under each specific heading is not supposed to be exhaustive, but an attempt has been made to include all those of any importance from which the student may obtain any additional information he may require. The book will be welcomed by all systematic herpetologists as the first complete account of the Sea-snakes since the publication of Boulenger's "Catalogue of Snakes" (1896); based on the largest collection of these animals that has yet been brought together, the author's views carry weight and conviction. The most important proposed change is the recognition of two sub-families, the Laticaudinae of Australian origin and the

Hydrophiinae of Indo-Malayan seas; these two sub-families are established chiefly on osteological features of the skull and are regarded as two separate evolutionary lines. The author's conception of the genera agrees closely with that of Boulenger, but he finds that many of the species recognised by the latter are untenable; the names used are for the first time brought into line with the International Rules of Zoological Nomenclature.

*The Theory of Equations and the Complex Variable.* By Prof. Rai Charan Biswas. Pp. viii + 269. (Calcutta: Chatterjee, Chatterjee and Co., Ltd., 1926.) 3.8 rupees.

THIS volume contains an introduction to the theory of algebraic equations as the subject was known to mathematicians of half a century ago. It gives the usual theory of cubic and biquadratic equations, Fourier's and Sturm's methods of separating the real roots, also chapters on symmetric functions of the roots, determinants, and elimination. The only methods of numerical solution considered are those of Newton, Lagrange (by continued fractions), and Horner. Great advances in this branch of the subject have been made in the last twenty years, so the book is distinctly out-of-date on the numerical side. Its only novel feature lies in the inclusion of the equations satisfied by the sum and difference of two roots of an equation.

The author gives an account of the geometrical representation of complex numbers, with some applications to the theory of equations. Cauchy's method of locating the complex roots of an equation is explained, but the book is in no sense an introduction to the theory of a complex variable. Many of the problems are interesting, and none of them involves much theoretical difficulty.

W. E. H. B.

*The Mind and the Film* and *Treatise on the Psychological Factors of the Film.* By Gerard Fort Buckle. Pp. xiv + 119. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1926.) 5s. net.

IN "The Mind and the Film" the advance in technique in cinematography is related to the way in which a 'story' should be presented so as to secure its full psychological effect. The 'story' itself, the mode of its expression, and its angle of conception and balance, are considered in the first part of this little book; while the second part is devoted to a brief but practical discussion of the uses of photographic 'aids to the mind.' Suggestive hints, linked up with more or less obvious physiological and psychological principles, are given to the producers of films throughout; and the ordinary reader who enjoys the 'pictures' will find not a little interest in reading of the devices by which his understanding is helped, and his emotions stirred, while he follows them. The book is written in non-technical language so far as psychology is concerned, but abounds in the somewhat uncouth vocabulary of the motion picture camera.