

In the larger of his two new books he discusses in a fresh and interesting way the origin of civilisation and the history of its development in Egypt, Crete, Sumer, and Mesopotamia, with brief but illuminating sketches of the origins in Persia, India, and China, and many apt illustrations, culled from other places, of the factors involved in the process of invention of arts and customs.

The smaller book is concerned mainly with the remains of extinct types of man—a subject with which Mr. Mackenzie is not so familiar—but it also presents a clear sketch of the field covered by the larger work.

Both books include accounts of the most recent discoveries, and reveal a nicely balanced perspective in the view they present of the whole field of inquiry. What lends a particular charm to Mr. Mackenzie's work is the series of scraps of apt corroborative evidence which he collects from unexpected places and weaves into his lucid and entertaining narrative. For example, he has been able to discover several important references, ancient and modern, to that too much neglected region, the Wadi Alaqi in Nubia, which in all probability was the first place in the world's history where metals were worked. The ancient mines of gold and copper ore are said in one of Mr. Mackenzie's quotations to cover an area of one hundred square miles.

These books are so excellent and useful that they are sure to run into new editions. Hence it seems to be worth while to direct attention to some of the statements that need modification. Rhodesian man did not have "a more highly developed brain" than Neanderthal man ("Foot-prints," p. 51); nor is it accurate to say that Piltown man had a head such as is described on p. 14, or is "nearer to the modern man species than was the Neanderthal" (p. 168); it was Dr. Lawrence Balls, and not Mr. Lucas (p. 177), who identified the botanical material from mummies; the late Prof. Montelius was a Swede, and not a Frenchman (p. xviii), and Mr. Charles R. Knight did not visit the Rancho-la-Brea pits or see the material collected there (p. 24). In the larger book the statement that "the maximum date for the dawn of the Palæolithic Age is 125,000 B.C." calls for correction; and in both works a source of confusion would be avoided if the word "neolithic" were omitted altogether.

In spite of these lapses, the books are perhaps the best introductions to their respective subjects at present available.

No. 3050, VOL. 121]

Our Bookshelf.

A Handbook of the Birds of Eastern China (Chihli, Shantung, Kiangsu, Anhwei, Kiangsi, Chekiang, Fohkien and Kwangtung Provinces). By J. D. D. La Touche. Part 4 (containing Families Ploceidæ, Fringillidæ, Bombycillidæ, and Hirundinidæ). Pp. 293-398 + plates 10-13. (London: Taylor and Francis, 1927.) 7s. 6d. net.

THE present part of Mr. La Touche's "Birds of Eastern China" contains the Families Ploceidæ, Fringillidæ, Bombycillidæ, and Hirundinidæ, the sequence adopted by the author being the same as that in the new edition of "The Avifauna of India." The present part nearly concludes the true passerine birds, and we understand that Part V. will include the remaining Passeres and, we hope, the Pico-Passerres, containing the Woodpeckers, Barbets, and other forms very richly represented in China.

Of the true finches, the author includes twenty-six species and sub-species, whilst of buntings there are no fewer than thirty. We must note that in the centre of the genus *Emberiza*, the author has evidently, by mistake, interpolated the two genera, *Passerina* and *Calcarius*. It is true that many systematists lump all three genera under *Emberiza*; even those who do, however, usually place these two genera either at the end or at the beginning of the group. In dealing with the Fringillidæ, we are struck by the remarkable knowledge displayed by the author of the habits and nidification of so many of its members, a fact that adds very greatly to the interest of the work. We notice that Mr. La Touche still includes the sparrows with the finches, and we are inclined to agree with him that, so far as our present knowledge goes, it is impossible to divide them, although, as Sushkin has pointed out, the sparrows have many characters which seem to ally them to the Ploceidæ or Weaver-birds.

The present part is fully up to the standard set by the author in the first three parts, and we anticipate with pleasure an early issue of the fifth part. The photographs at the end of the book are not only beautiful in themselves but also undoubtedly are a great help in assisting one to understand the country on which the book is written. The map included is merely the previous map issued, in which certain corrections have been made.

Synthetische und isolierte Riechstoffe und ihre Herstellung. Von Dr. Rudolf Knoll. (Monographien über chemisch-technische Fabrikationsmethoden, herausgegeben von L. Max Wohlgemuth, Band 10.) Zweite, vollständig neu bearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage, von Alfred Wagner. Pp. viii + 257. (Halle a. Saale: Wilhelm Knapp, 1928.) 14-50 gold marks.

In the new edition of this book the author has maintained the general plan of the original, but the process of revision has necessarily entailed a considerable expansion of certain sections. The descriptions of apparatus and plant used in iso-