

though somewhat rare, feature is the provision of an index of the principal theorems. This should prove a great advantage to the research student.

*Cours d'analyse.* (*Cours de l'École polytechnique.*)  
Par Prof. Paul Lévy. Tome I. Pp. viii + 376.  
(Paris: Gauthier-Villars et Cie, 1930.) 120 francs.

THIS treatise is based primarily upon the course of analysis given by the author at l'École Polytechnique. It is divided into seven sections, each embracing from three to five chapters. The text covers the usual topics discussed in a modern study of continuous functions, namely, differential and integral calculus, theory of multiple integrals, geometrical applications of the calculus, and some elementary theory of differential equations.

Prof. Lévy has rightly insisted that the fundamental idea underlying an intelligent study of functions is the notion of growth in the value of a function and not mere formal calculus. The complete course is well planned and lucidly written, but the bulkiness of the volume renders it a little inconvenient to handle.

### Miscellany.

*The Drift of Civilization.* By the Contributors to the fiftieth Anniversary Number of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, including Charles G. Abbot, Richard E. Byrd, Albert Einstein, Guglielmo Ferrero, Sir Philip Gibbs, Maxim Gorky, Rudolf Maria Holzapfel, the Very Rev. Dean Inge, Count Hermann Keyserling, J. B. S. Haldane, Paul de Kruif, Stephen Leacock, Martin A. Nexö, Michael Pupin, James H. Robinson, Bertrand Russell, H. G. Wells. Pp. 254. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1930.) 7s. 6d. net.

Most thinking people at the present time busy themselves more with questions of the future than of the past. A popular series on 'To-day and To-morrow' sells its ten thousands, while manuals of history are left to the few. The volume before us, however, will not attain great success, nor is it of much value, because it is a collection of scraps, not co-ordinated in any way and not throwing any clear light on the question which its title suggests. There is a confused flicker like the varied lights of cars and bicycles and lorries on a wet road in the dark. But it is difficult to tell where they are all going, and some of them are obviously going in opposite directions. The communist Nexö, for example, tells us that food must be found for the starving proletariat, while J. B. S. Haldane remarks on the "general prosperity which has nearly banished underfeeding as a cause of ill-health". Both statements no doubt are true in their different connexions and with different applications. The reader is therefore left to find out for himself what is the general drift of civilisation from the disconnected views of the various eminent and interesting persons who have been got together by an enterprising American newspaper. It need scarcely be said that they all have a vivid vision of something, but in each case it is

just the one thing that happens to interest the particular writer, and none of them has written at sufficient length even to develop his own thesis to a general conclusion.

One can therefore only sum up impressions and temperaments, and this would lead on the whole to an optimist view in a limited field. Great things are ahead of us: great things mainly in the realm of science, power over Nature, and increased enjoyment for the masses. None of the writers speaks of any growth in spiritual depth or beauty, or of any spread of peace and quiet happiness in the world. The only one who deals at all with this side of the future—the Dean of St. Paul's—looks for another form of Protestantism as the religion of the future. The men of science, as one might expect, are the most definite and constructive; for the rest, the book ends, as it began, with a note of interrogation. F. S. M.

*British Museum (Natural History), Cromwell Road, London, S.W.: General Library. Place-numbers of the Societies and other Corporate Bodies issuing Serial Publications, and of the Independent Periodical Publications, with Alphabetical Indexes.* Second edition. Pp. v + 175. (London: British Museum (Natural History), 1930.) 5s.

SHELF lists of libraries possess a peculiar fascination for bibliographers, for the shelf list is the true catalogue of a collection. If its entries are sufficiently full, the student commands with its aid a complete bird's-eye view of a collection with a definite guide to the location of each unit. It represents all that an atlas is to the geographer or a directory to the local resident.

The present list, however, is not altogether a shelf list, though it closely resembles the shelf list type. It shows the order in which independent periodicals and institutions publishing one or more serial publications are arranged on the shelves with their distinctive call-numbers. Thus S 2418 = The United States Department of Agriculture, and S 2426 = The Smithsonian Institution. The information given, it will be noted, does not tell us whether the library possesses complete sets of the serial publications of the above bodies, or merely a selection of their publications relating more or less to natural science. The list is arranged upon geographical principles, the periodical publications of a region being grouped under the names of towns. The geographical arrangement has some administrative advantages, but for a research department classification by subjects is to be preferred.

The library appears to possess a fairly complete collection of the publications of British local natural history societies, but in specific branches of natural science, for example, botany, entomology, fish and fish culture, etc., it is singularly weak. One judges that the library serials are recruited mainly by exchange or gift, and that adequate funds for the purchase of serials are not available. If this is the case, it is to be hoped that the library will receive in future more generous treatment. Some of the deficiencies in its serial collection might be made good by judicious exchange with other