

have prepared a serious case for materialist science, in spite of the difficulties of experimenting with transfinite numbers, non-Archimedean geometries and many-valued logics. Prof. H. Levy has hinted at such an interpretation in a chapter of "The Universe of Science". A parallel method was also suggested in an article on "Numbers and Numero-

logy" in NATURE of January 20, 1934, p. 80, in which the attempt was made to raise to a higher level the whole problem of the relations of thought and number. Until we are given such an interpretation, it is difficult to acknowledge, as we are invited to do by the publishers of this work, that "materialist science at last has its Jeans". T. G.

Prof. Hans Molisch's Recollections

Erinnerungen und Welteindrücke eines Naturforschers

Von Hans Molisch. Pp. xii + 232. (Wien und Leipzig: Emil Haim und Co., 1934.) 10.80 gold marks.

IN this autobiography, written at the instigation of his friends and pupils, Hans Molisch gives us his recollections of a busy and not uneventful life devoted to the pursuit of science. His researches, particularly those into the micro-chemistry of plants, are well known in Great Britain, but with his personality we are less familiar. His biographical recollections will therefore do something towards our enlightenment.

Born in 1856 at Brünn, now famous as the seat of Gregor Mendel's epoch-making experiments, Molisch learnt, as a boy, in his father's nursery gardens, the methods of cultivating plants, which stood him in good stead when he became a plant physiologist. His training for this career he acquired at the University of Vienna under Julius Wiesner, whose assistant he afterwards became. His first professorial appointment was at the Technical College in Graz, and later he was promoted to the botanical chair in the German University of that town. He has a good deal of interest to tell us of the staff and the students of this university and something too of the ill-feeling which existed between the Czechs and the German students.

In 1897, aided by funds from the Academy of Sciences in Vienna, Molisch undertook a journey

round the world, working for some time at the botanical gardens at Buitenzorg. Of his travels, as well as his work, he gives us an interesting account.

On the retirement of Wiesner in 1909, Molisch was appointed professor of plant physiology in Vienna, where he remained until his own retirement in 1928. Here he continued his micro-chemical investigations, but found his activities somewhat cramped by the absence of experimental grounds. In 1914 he visited England and only just escaped being interned on his return through France. While still holding his professorial chair in Vienna, he was invited to become for two years the director of the New Botanical Department of the Tôhoku Imperial University at Sendai, and on this occasion made his second journey round the world. He tells us a good deal about his stay and his work in Japan, though of course less fully than in the book he published in 1926.

After his retirement from the professorship at Vienna, he was invited to lecture and work at the Bose Institute in Calcutta, and the account of his work there will be read with interest. Molisch's account of the conditions in India and its people is worth perusal.

The author concludes his book, which contains his portrait and a number of other illustrations, with some reflections on 'life', stating his opinion that living matter has never arisen from lifeless inorganic matter, and his belief that the origin of life is at the present moment and perhaps will always remain insoluble—a riddle of the universe.

The Biology of Flowers

By W. O. James and A. R. Clapham. Pp. viii + 116 + 41 plates. (Oxford: Clarendon Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1935.) 8s. 6d. net.

THIS unusual book should prove valuable in inspiring enthusiasm for what is so often made a very dull branch of botany to the average student. Each flower is carefully described in readable language, so that, once having worked through the book, the

student can turn to his more compact Flora well armed and ready to follow floral taxonomy with interest. The diagrams are singularly attractive, but there seems no excuse for their being reproduced on such a large scale, since most of them are either floral diagrams or halves of flowers. Nearly all could have been reduced to a quarter of their present size, without detracting from their usefulness; thus reducing considerably the size and possibly the price of the book.