

Raum oder Zahl?

Von Cl. H. Tietjen. (Schule im Aufbau aus völkischer Wirklichkeit, herausgegeben von Cl. H. Tietjen, Band 6.) Pp. 51+4 plates. (Leipzig: Friedrich Brandstetter, 1936.) 1.59 gold marks.

SPACE or number? Is the infant intelligence to be inclined towards mathematics by curiosity about shapes and patterns, or do we perceive that there are as many oranges as apples before we recognize a common quality of roundness? Artificial questions, we may think, but at least we take for granted that they are questions for the psychologist. It seems that we are wrong. According to a work which claims the support of the German Ministry of Education, they are questions of immense importance, and questions for the ethnologist and the politician. Fortunately the answers in Germany at least are perfectly definite, for the alternative, space or number, is the same as the alternative, German or Jew.

The Nordic race has a native feeling for space, which it is the duty of every teacher to foster, and German children, from their earliest years, must be protected from the logic which curses the mathematics of the Latin and Semitic peoples. Even the application of numbers to geometry is a danger, for we cannot report the direction of approach of hostile aircraft in terms of Cartesian co-ordinates, and the only hope of safety for a nation to-day is that every member of it should be a competent military observer. It is true that even altazimuth observations are a kind of measurement; fortunately their use is not a development from analytical geometry or a debt to Asia, for it is implicit in the most rudimentary astronomy, and it is intuitively certain that the regular movements of the heavenly bodies were studied and understood by the German inhabitants of the north of Europe long before the rise of Chaldaean civilization. So now we know. E. H. N.

Faune de France

31: Homoptères auchénorhynques, 1 (Typhlocybidæ). Par Prof. H. Ribaut. (Fédération française des Sociétés de Sciences naturelles: Office centrale de Faunistique.) Pp. 230. (Paris: Paul Lechevalier et fils, 1936.) 60 francs.

THE advent of the present part of the "Faune de France" series will be welcomed by all students of Hemiptera. It deals with leaf-hoppers of the group Typhlocybidæ, which are often difficult to identify, and much confusion has existed with regard to certain of its members. Although more usually classified as a group of the Jassidæ, M. Ribaut separates the Typhlocybidæ from the latter on venational characters. Revision of the British species has long been needed and the appearance of this volume will prove a valuable aid to their identification since almost all of them are represented in the French fauna. Twelve new species and several new varieties are described, some also being recorded from England, and are consequently not yet recorded in any English work.

It may be mentioned that certain species (from England, Germany, etc.), which are not at present known from France, are also included in view of the probability of their subsequent discovery. Extensive use is made of the genitalia, which afford essential specific characters. The need for accurate illustrations of these parts is fully appreciated and well catered for; no amount of descriptive text alone can convey the same clear impressions of the structural complexity involved. It is hoped that M. Ribaut will see his way to provide the companion volume on the Jassidæ at a not very distant date.

The Torch-Bearers

By Alfred Noyes. Pp. vii+422. (London: Sheed and Ward, 1937.) 7s. 6d. net.

THE man of science, though he must be full of imagination and insight as the veriest poet, has rarely become known as a writer of verse; and strangely enough, when he has shown a flair for poetry, it has not generally been inspired by the subject of his own studies. The poet, so far as he has touched upon natural science, has been content to let his muse play upon the phenomena of Nature, the sun, the stars, the clouds, the trees, the woodlands and their inhabitants. To Mr. Alfred Noyes belongs the credit of seeing in the wonders of scientific achievement a theme which can stir the soul with deep emotion, and in the workers who have dedicated themselves to the pursuit of science a band of torch-bearers, handing on the flame of knowledge through the ages. His trilogy appeared originally in three parts, which were reviewed appreciatively in these columns as they appeared (NATURE, May 20, 1922, July 18, 1925, and March 7, 1931). The issue of the three parts in a single volume, at a very modest price, will be much appreciated.

Aristotle's Physics

A revised Text, with Introduction and Commentary, by W. D. Ross. Pp. xii+750. (Oxford: Clarendon Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1936.) 36s. net.

THIS scholarly work has been received by students and specialists alike as an invaluable addition to Aristotelian literature. The Introduction and Commentary are masterpieces of their kind and help considerably the understanding of a natural philosophy which does not correspond with modern views, but which inspired scientific thought until the advent of Galilean mechanics. The physics of Aristotle, however, have more than a historical value: they help to form a more accurate view of the whole Aristotelian synthesis, and of the scientific problems which were discussed in classical antiquity. Further, its philosophical foundations could still be used to-day; have we not heard scientific workers heralding a return to Aristotelianism in natural philosophy? The printers have taken considerable care in producing a Greek text as faultless as possible, and have thus secured a share in the praise which the book rightly deserves. T. G.