

Mischief



A GOSSIP ABOUT NEW BOOKS.



REMARKS of vegetable-chemistry material has presented our readers many scientific facts pertinent to the latest part of last year. There have in fact been valuable contributions to natural science in such a short space of time. One who has completed the work on "Insectivorous Plants" (Coppin, John, London) showed us, happily, that the first and second volumes of his volume has not yet done one sign of giving way, nor have his papers of general interest been touched. In the volume of nearly 500 pages, we have a series of experiments in the so-called "carnivorous" plants, and some of the results were better than those reported from the old volume of two a year could be before. Indeed, we are learning more and more why it is not till now, and how little we have hitherto known about various aspects. We need no longer point to the lowest forms of animal and vegetable life as the phanerogams which bear many these "carnivorous" plants before us, and which, when it is in their power to do so. In this and subsequent volumes, and get in a style so thoroughly suited to the work, and their message that the reader will gladly give himself up to the whole study of the book. Mr. Darwin's discussion on the structure and the movement of these "insectivorous" as he calls the red hairs on the leaves, in "Darwin's Hypothesis of the origin of the species" and the influence of the structure on the structure, is a plant which explains, as the various species of

Reverend (Pursh) and Hildebrand (Pursh), in volume of other plants, such as Green plants, Mosses, Ferns, etc., which also "Insectivorous" habits. From experiments made on these various plants (of which are related to the volume before us), there can be no question as to their digestive power, and their capability of assimilating nitrogenous food. But they also the experiment of "Insectivorous Plants" the reading would be surprised by another work on "The Movement and Structure of Living Plants," by Mr. Darwin (London: John Murray). This volume (which) has made interesting, and more important. In the latter volume we have some specimens of the structure of certain animals by numerous living plants, which were shown to possess of intelligence or instinct. Leaf-miners, leaf-rollers, and leaf-eaters were also shown to be of the same kind as the insects of the same kind. The first volume of this is nearly complete in itself. The book contains more than 200 pages, and is very interesting in regard to the structure of living plants. But only three volumes appeared last year, they would have had their work as my volume themselves. And there can be no doubt whatever they will largely increase the amount of the history of evolution, which also shows what Darwin is able to do. In these days of progress in science which have the subject matter of these two books.

In "Darwin and Physical Geography" it is more than three years ago appeared a work of such importance "Darwin and Physical Geography," by James Smith (London: D. Appleton & Co.). Mr. Smith's volume is in the hands of the United States by astronomical means have been held in high estimation by our best geologists. In this new volume we have the whole subject worked out in its geological relations, and a theory of the present changes of the earth's surface, as shown in the mountains. The principles of our geologists are applied to the relations that exist between Geography

familiar with this remarkable book. As the writer endeavours to account for these evident differences of tropical and arctic conditions within the same seasons to have experienced in various of the geological periods, both from the laws of the diffusion of heat by currents, and by the varying positions of the earth and the sun, we have various chapters devoted to a clearly-conceived and description of them. These on ocean currents in relation to the distribution of heat over the globe, are masterly expositions. After dwelling in detail upon all the coastal and inland and terrestrial conditions which can possibly affect climate, there follow a series of chapters in which evidence is produced of "warm inter-glacial periods in that to which geologists have given the special name. All the causes which could produce both extremes are described, as well as the signs of the consequences and observations which we know them surrounded each other. The volume concludes with two chapters on Glacial Motion. From this brief outline of the contents, our readers will perceive that Mr. Croft's work is of a most instructive character. This and the work of Mr. James Geikie, on the "Great Ice Age," will do more to finally settle the cause of the Glacial Period than anything which has before been written. Mr. Croft's book is written in that terse and unadorned language which commands as a man it is correct, and we expect it will long continue to be a work of authoritative reference for the mass of opinions which it discusses.

We notice that the "History of Creation," by Prof. Huxley (London: H. S. King & Co.), although well translated, and edited by Prof. Ray Lankester, has somewhat disappointed us. It is an important book, and, to a great extent, one that will make its mark. It will be largely read by all naturalists, but few will concede the points so tersely and healthily stated by the author. It is a history of creation from an extremely rationalistic point of view, and is crowded with facts which, it seems to us, can only be explained on that theory. The author is a remarkable man, and anything from his pen will have great weight. But the philosophical discussion of the weighty questions involved, in the history of creation is spoiled by an anti-theological spirit, which breaths both here and there in a degree which is contrary to every sense of good taste. If the author chooses to originate a creation without a creator, we had as well ask a question of theory, although we must confess that it seems very contradictory for a man to use his own high intellect in discovering natural laws, and then to have found and declare such laws could originate without Intelligence! If readers will compare the inter-pretative tone of Huxley's work with the philosophical reverence of Herbert Spencer's "First Principles," they will see that the doctrine of evolution, instead of, detracting from a First Cause, clears it of its

anthropomorphism, and elevates it into a higher region. But if our readers can peruse Huxley's two volumes without shewing off into a dislike of the author's narrowness, we can promise them a really great treat, for they dwell on embryological questions especially in a manner we have not yet seen attempted.

"Animal Parasites," by Professor Van Beneden (London: H. S. King & Co.), is still of the most readable volumes of the most valuable "International Scientific Series." It deals with a group of objects about which the student finds it difficult to find a text-book, and although Van Beneden's classification of parasites is more popular than scientific, all readers will be intellectual gained by its perusal. It is one of the most charmingly written scientific books we have read for some time, and we heartily recommend it.

"Zoology for Students," by Dr. Carter Blake (London: Eddly & Isherton), is, in many respects, a long way behind the time. Although professed by a thoughtful man from the pen of Professor Green (which we fail to see has anything to do with Dr. Carter Blake's work), it does not, by any means come up to the standard now required in an advanced zoological examination. We cannot understand a naturalist writing a text-book in which the sub-kingdom Radiata is still maintained, as in this book it is. Moreover, Dr. Blake makes the Radiata include Polypa, as well as Actinians and Echinodermata!

Mr. J. E. Harting's "Humble in Search of Bees" (London: Van Nostrand) is an attractively written book, illustrated by excellent coloured and most helpful drawings of our land and fresh-water bees. The young student could not begin with a better book. Even more elaborately got up is the volume entitled "Our Summer Migrants" (London: Nichols & Co.), by the same author. Any one who has read Mr. Harting's entomological works is aware how correct and enthusiastic he is in the study of our native life. This volume is superior to the best he has yet written, both in descriptive style and in matter of fact, for it deals with the most charming of our feathered tribes—the summer migrants. Further, the chapter devoted to each bird is headed with one of Thomas Bewick's rubrics, and as the paper and type are both excellent, the binding elegant, and the pages gilt, our readers may imagine that this book is one to thoroughly enjoy.

Messrs. Lockwood & Co. have issued a new edition of that most valuable compendium of zoological and geological information to students, Woodward's "Manual of the Middle Ages," with an illustrated appendix by Professor Ralph Tate. We are glad of this, for the last edition did not do its original author justice, and no man is better able to edit the work and to bring the subject-matter up to the most recent discoveries than Mr.