

OUR BOOK SHELF.

The Civilization of Sweden in Heathen Times. By Oscar Montelius, Ph.D. Translated from the Second Swedish Edition, by the Rev. F. H. Woods, B.D. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1888.)

EVERYONE who knows anything of archæology is aware that a book on the subject by Dr. Montelius is sure to be worth reading. The work translated by Mr. Woods ranks among the best existing summaries of the antiquities of particular countries. The author begins with the Stone age, and passes on, through the Bronze period, to the various stages of the Iron era. For some reasons it might perhaps have been better if he had reversed the order, taking first a group of antiquities the date of which can be approximately fixed, and working his way back to more remote times. This plan has been adopted, with excellent results, by Mr. Anderson, in his study of Scottish antiquities, and by Dr. Lindenschmidt in the work he is writing on the antiquities of Germany. The method chosen by Dr. Montelius is, however, favourable to clear, popular exposition, and he has made excellent use of the opportunities it has provided for him in this direction. He has a dread of far-fetched, fanciful explanations, and, at every stage of the story he has to tell, is careful to show that his statements are in strict accordance with facts. His account of the Bronze age is particularly interesting, but all that is essential to the comprehension of the remains of the Stone and Iron ages in Sweden he also presents with remarkable conciseness and lucidity. The second Swedish edition, of which the present volume is a translation, was published in 1878. Many additions were made by the author to a German translation, which appeared in 1885; and these additions, with others specially provided for the English rendering, have been incorporated by Mr. Woods in his interesting volume. Mr. Woods has done full justice to the original by his vigorous and lucid style, and the notes he has added—especially those relating to the “*Corpus Poeticum Boreale*,” edited by Dr. Vigfusson and Mr. F. York Powell—will be welcome to all serious students of archæology. The work, we may add, is well printed, and the value of the text is greatly increased by a large number of admirable illustrations.

The “Indispensable” Hand-book to the Optical Lantern. Compiled and Edited by W. D. Welford and Henry Sturmev. (London: Iliffe and Son, 1888.)

THIS is mainly a catalogue of lanterns, accessories, and slides, one section of the book being devoted to each. Each section commences with brief general remarks, and is followed by a price list of the various pieces of apparatus concerned, as manufactured by different firms. The details of each piece of apparatus are described, and in some cases special remarks are made. All the important makers are represented, and their full addresses are given.

The classified descriptive catalogue of the various sets of slides in the market will perhaps be the most useful part of the book, seeing that the possessor of a lantern is likely to be most interested in determining what he shall exhibit. This catalogue is such that one can immediately ascertain full particulars relating to any set of slides, without waiting to see them before purchasing.

The illustrations which crowd the book are of a very high class, notwithstanding the fact that most of them are used for advertising purposes by the firms whose productions they represent.

To anyone about to purchase a lantern, or anything concerned with one, the book is fully entitled to its claim to be indispensable. We can further confidently say that it will interest and prove useful to each one of the ever-increasing number of persons who use the lantern either for purposes of instruction or entertainment.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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Alpine Haze.

QUESTIONS of nomenclature are of some importance, and of some difficulty, in subjects not thoroughly investigated. M. Antoine d’Abbadie’s last letter (*NATURE*, January 10, p. 247) is so interesting, and, from the linguistic and bibliographical points of view, so exhaustive, that it is with reluctance that I point out why my opinion slightly differs from his on nomenclature, having already indicated a difference of opinion as to the physical nature of the phenomenon itself. I gave, as a matter of course as well as of courtesy, the title of “Alpine Haze” to my last communication, out of deference to Prof. Tyndall, and shall continue to do so until I know Prof. Tyndall’s final opinion, but deference to the highest authority cannot alter my belief that this title is not a fortunate one—a belief confirmed by Antoine d’Abbadie’s own evidence. Ludolf’s definition is good, but what I required was a simple English term for the use of non-scientific observers, and of some careful scientific observers like Dr. Burder. “Dry haze” (together with the specific term, of which it is the translation) begs a more serious question than is begged by “dust haze.”

I am also inclined to think that the un-scientific English “dry haze” may be unfortunately applied to the ordinary haze of comparatively dry weather which Dr. Burder describes. There is, I suppose, little doubt that this latter common haze is composed principally of water-particles (usually with some admixture of smoke and dust), *pace* all the hygrometers in the world. It does not differ from mist, and does not differ from fog, except in amount.

W. CLEMENT LEV.

A Remarkable Rime.

DURING cold fogs the accumulation of ice on the branches of trees due to the contact of water particles with solid substances, frequently causes damage to timber in the Continental forests: not often, I think, in this country. No snow has fallen here until to-day since October 2, 1888, but anticyclonic frost has been on several occasions accompanied by fogs of unusual density. During the frost of last week, ice-crystals of about 2 inches in length, at first very hard and adhesive, were formed on the windward (south-south-west) side of all exposed objects, but particularly on metal, even at no greater height than 3 or 4 feet above the earth’s surface. This is a common sight on the higher hills even in the British Isles, but at this altitude (460 feet above mean sea-level) appears to be rare. The result has been great injury to timber, and a great “wind-fall,” without much wind, to the tenant-farmers. Of deciduous trees, the ash seems to have suffered the most, while little damage, so far as I have observed, has been received by the ornamental conifers which usually suffer so much from snow. It is impossible to estimate, with much approach to accuracy, the amount of moisture drawn from the atmosphere in this rime, but during the thaw we measured $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches of ice-crystals on the ground on the leeward side of a rather spare elm-tree 39 feet in height, while the boughs above this surface, on the leeward side, still retained their exquisite robe of rime.

ANNIE LEV.

Ashby Parva, Lutterworth, January 12.

Mass and Inertia.

MR. WORTHINGTON is rather unkind in blaming the chemists for perhaps somewhat pedantically doing that which is right, while he encourages his new friends the engineers in continuing to do that which is wrong.

If he could point to a handy and permanent force, independent both of age and position, which could be boxed up in small compass and handed down to posterity with perfect security against alteration, and with complete certainty of precise accuracy in Auckland, or wherever the future capital of the race may be, there might be something to say for his proposal to adopt force as one of the fundamental units instead of MASS. Otherwise, there is practically nothing to be said for it.