

In the chapter on the classification of stars according to their spectra, both Vogel's and Secchi's classifications are given. Now, Prof. Young admits that these are based on the "doubtful assumption" that stars like Sirius and Vega are the hottest, and he further remarks that it is possible for a red star to be younger than a white one. It scarcely seems consistent, therefore, to omit the new classification suggested by Mr. Lockyer, which is the only one that takes into account the probability of there being bodies with increasing as well as with decreasing temperatures. The latter classification is certainly a very new one, but other parts of the book show that Prof. Young must have been acquainted with it.

One remark of Prof. Young's is worth quoting. After stating that there are two Observatories established solely for the study of solar physics (Potsdam and Meudon), he remarks with characteristic straightforwardness that "There ought to be one in this country (America)."

We know of no other book which is so comprehensive and at the same time so well adapted for the use of those who aim at something more than a mere smattering of astronomical knowledge. For the benefit of those whose time may be too limited to take up everything in the book, those parts which may be most conveniently omitted are printed in small type. The language is clear, and to simplify matters there are over two hundred excellent illustrations. Further, as might be expected from the fact that Prof. Young *teaches* astronomy, the book is not diluted with irrelevant matter. A. F.

#### AN INDEX-CATALOGUE.

*The Index-Catalogue to the Library of the Surgeon-General's Office, United States Army.* Vol. IX. Medicine (Popular)—Nywelt. Pp. 1054. (Washington: Government Printing Press, 1888.)

THE progress of this *magnum opus* seems irresistible. Year by year the volumes reach us with a regularity that implies strength, and a completeness that indicates a more than mechanical accuracy of work. It still remains, so far as we know, unique among printed catalogues in classifying under subject-headings, such as Mercury, Milk, Neuralgia, &c., not only the books, but also the whole of the signed medical articles in the 3500 periodicals which form the medical press of the world, from Pekin to Paris, from Newfoundland to Uruguay. The newspaper articles are still, as they have always been, collected under the subject-title only, and not under the name of the writer also; for, if the latter cross-cataloguing had been adopted, we should have had more than 300,000 cross-entries, which would have necessitated already two more volumes at least as large as the present; but those articles or essays which the authors have thought it worth while to reprint all come under their names as pamphlets, and this is no inconsiderable number.

This volume includes some names which are embarrassingly popular among medical writers. It needs a clear head to deal with a catalogue of the works of 206 authors of the name of Meyer; but when the librarian comes to Müller, he finds 343 different authors awaiting him with much more voluminous works, and he must be thankful for the great variety of Christian names, and that not more than seven besides the great physiologist

contented themselves with the plain Johannes. When we notice that the librarian of the most complete professional library in England has not to do with more than eighteen and thirty-seven authors with these surnames respectively, we can form some rough comparison of their relative completeness; and the student must become aware of what a debt he owes to his Transatlantic *confrère*, who has undertaken and carried through the task of collecting and cataloguing the works of the 494 other medical authors of the same names.

In the first forty-six pages of this volume, the immense collection of facts which had been so well grouped in Vol. VIII. under Medicine, is concluded; and the two longest articles left us are those on the Nervous System, and—perhaps not unnaturally—on New York. That on the Nerves and Nervous System (103 pp.) is one of the most valuable to the student, as such a very large proportion of that rapidly-growing part of medical knowledge is embodied not in books so much as in journalistic and pamphlet literature. The strength of the historic feeling still affecting Mr. John S. Billings and his fellow-workers is shown in the great collection of sixteenth and seventeenth century literature that is to be found under such a heading as Medicine (Popular), and many others. It is very rare nowadays to find in a newly-formed collection, dating from about a quarter of a century ago, any such tendency to accumulate the materials for those great works on the history of disease which we are leaving our successors to write. That is a point towards which the strong modern development of historic research, the earnest inquiry into the origin of species of disease is gradually leading us, but even the great work of Hirsch has left us much to learn and teach, a great field for genius in tracing correctly the broad generalizations in the evolution of the morbid tendencies of men. We are a little surprised to notice the complete absence of the works of Conyers Middleton, which contributed considerably to the understanding of Roman medicine; but we have been much more surprised at the almost unimpeachable way the Index-Catalogue has stood firm in our tests on minute points of very trifling general interest.

Now that these first nine volumes have covered the ground as far as the end of the letter N, it is not unlikely that the work may be finished in five more volumes, and that at Christmas 1893 the enthusiastic student of medicine may be able to possess himself of a work not much smaller than the latest edition of the "Encyclopædia Britannica," containing a catalogue of some 150,000 medical authors, and the titles of about 600,000 of their books, pamphlets, and articles that have been got together in a generation, mainly by the untiring energy of Mr. John S. Billings. A. T. MYERS.

#### OUR BOOK SHELF.

*The Anatomy of Megascolides australis (the Giant Earthworm of Gippsland).* By W. B. Spencer. Transactions of the Royal Society of Victoria, Vol. I. Part 1, pp. 1-60, 6 Plates. (Melbourne: Stillwell and Co., 1888.)

THE Royal Society of Victoria, which has hitherto issued only an *octavo* volume of Proceedings each year, will in future publish also Transactions in *quarto*. The present memoir is the first part of this new series; the