

recognizing any of the Kaffrarian species; and perhaps at some future time Mr. Sim, who was trained at Kew, will extend his area so as to cover the whole colony, for which the total number of ferns known is between 130 and 140.

J. G. BAKER.

Rider Papers on Euclid. Books I.-II. By Rupert Deakin, M.A. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1891.)

THIS little book consists of a series of graduated riders so arranged that the beginner may be able to thoroughly understand and grasp the principal propositions of the first two books of Euclid. One of the chief errors that the author endeavours to avoid is the great stress teachers lay on some of the propositions, which are treated as most important, while others are more or less overlooked.

The method he adopts is to treat each proposition first as a rider, and by giving the enunciation and drawing the figure, see if any of the class can show how it is proved. By this means the subject can be made interesting, as beginners can then look upon each rather as a puzzle than as a stiff piece of work.

The two books are divided into nine parts, each part consisting of six papers, and the riders in each paper, with the exception, of course, of the first, deal with all the preceding propositions. The student is advised in the first six papers only to draw the figures, in order to accustom himself to one of the chief difficulties which, as the author says, "experience shows me that all students feel more or less in solving riders."

At the end are printed the enunciations of the propositions of the two books, followed by several papers set at various examinations. Altogether, teachers will find this an admirable help for classes in which the subject is being treated for the first time.

Die Krystallanalyse oder die chemische Analyse durch Beobachtung der Krystallbildung mit Hilfe des Mikroskops mit theilweiser Benutzung seines Buches über Molekularphysik. Bearbeitet von Dr. O. Lehmann. (Leipzig: Engelmann, 1891.)

WE have so recently noticed at length the splendid work of Dr. O. Lehmann on "Molecular Physics" (see NATURE, vol. xlii. p. 1) that it is only necessary in this place to call attention to this pamphlet of 82 pages, illustrated by 73 woodcuts, in which the author gives the necessary directions for the work of micro-chemical analysis. The instruments used and methods employed are concisely stated, and all the essential details of the operations are supplied to the chemist in this little handbook. Dr. Lehmann claims, not unjustly, that the methods of micro-chemical analysis must play the same part in the laboratory of the organic chemist as spectral analysis does in the laboratory of the inorganic chemist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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The University of London.

MY friend, Mr. Thiselton Dyer, invites me, by his references to what I have written on this subject, to a discussion in your columns. I am very unwilling to accept the invitation, because I have already and often stated my views, and because I see by the length of Mr. Dyer's letter that I may be led into an interminable labyrinth of side-issues. The official report in which are published the minutes of the evidence given before the Royal Commission which sat on this subject in the year 1888, contains a more lengthy discussion of the subject by myself and others than it is possible to carry through in the columns of NATURE; and I could wish that for once those interested in a subject

would rescue from proverbial oblivion the pages of careful statement entombed in a Blue-book. Since, however, my friend trails his coat, it would be doing violence to my old-established regard for him to refuse to tread on it—just a little.

The question raised by Mr. Dyer seems to be, why should not the examining board in Burlington Gardens undergo certain reforms and continue to be the so-called University of London? It has done good service to education, he says, and with the removal of more than half its members and their replacement by gentlemen who either really know or really care about University education it might do more. If it were, he suggests, to rise superior to all its most solemn obligations and falsify the pledges of its founders by undertaking to teach as well as to examine, it would really be as much of a "teaching University" as is either Oxford or Cambridge, and its non-collegiate supporters from all parts of Britain might enjoy the spectacle of the mother-college (University College) from which this examining board took birth, abandoning in favour of Burlington Gardens those traditions of scientific research which have made the College in some measure a realization of Fichte's ideal.

[Mr. Dyer seems to have forgotten the facts when he contends that such teaching as Fichte sketched in his plan for the University of Berlin, cannot be carried on in the same institution or by the same men who administer the teaching required by a University student at the commencement of his career. Fichte's plan was carried out in the University of Berlin, and has been followed by every other University in Germany. The very questions which we are now debating were debated in the early years of this century in Germany, and the Jesuits' plan of education by examination was rejected. University College was founded (except so far as it was a private enterprise) on the lines of a German University, and only required the *prestige* and independence conferred by the power of granting University degrees to enable it to fulfil in London Fichte's ideal. Its professors have never been (as Mr. Dyer well knows) mere instructors for examination purposes. The researches of Graham, Williamson, Sharpey, and of Michael Foster, Sanderson, Schäfer, Kennedy, and many others have been carried on in its laboratories. The proposal to detach such work from the London Colleges, and to associate it with the examining board in Burlington Gardens, on the ground that it is inconsistent with the teaching of University undergraduates, appears to me to involve an erroneous conception of what University education and University organization should be. This by way of parenthesis.]

The point which I wish to insist on is that, excepting the proposal to undertake higher professorial teaching, I have no objection whatever to the reforms of the examining body in Burlington Gardens advocated by Mr. Dyer.

What I desire (and I merely use the first person singular for the purpose of discussion, and not because I stand alone in my wishes, or undervalue the support of others) is that, without any interference with the Burlington Gardens board, the privilege of granting degrees should be conferred by the Crown upon a combined Senate consisting of the Professors of University and King's Colleges (the authority of the councils of the two Colleges being duly guarded).

The fact that Burlington Gardens are in London and that University and King's College are also in London, as well as the talk about a teaching University "in and for" London, have very little bearing upon the question as to whether it is or is not desirable to grant University privileges to the two Colleges. There is population enough and accommodation enough for a dozen Universities within the metropolitan area. As far as I am able to judge as to the principles which should guide the Crown in bestowing the privilege of incorporation as a University, the only questions to be asked are: "Does the body which asks for this privilege consist of learned men whose work will be facilitated by the granting to them of this ancient and honourable position? Do they give guarantees of material support, and of a public demand for their teaching, which will enable them to discharge the functions of a University with dignity and efficiency, now and hereafter? Will the concession to them of this privilege tend directly or indirectly or both to the public welfare?" I cannot imagine that anyone will undertake to give a negative response to these questions in reference to the combined Colleges, University and King's. Certain it is that during the acute discussion which has been carried on for the last four or five years, no one has ventured to do so. What has happened is simply this, that persons connected with Burlington Gardens have opposed the bestowal of University powers on the two Colleges,