

OUR BOOK SHELF.

Eton Nature Study and Observational Lessons. Part I. By M. D. Hill and W. M. Webb. Pp. x + 155. (London: Duckworth and Co., 1903.) Price 3s. 6d. net.

THERE is no doubt that nature-study ought to take an important place in education, but, if it is to be of use, it must be set about in the right way. If the boy is merely told certain wonderful facts, he swallows them as a whale swallows small fry, and waits open-mouthed for more. They are soon forgotten, he acquires no good mental habit, and the net result is very small.

The authors of this book have adopted a different plan. The boy has presented to him some natural object, such as a plum, a seed-pod, a sea-anemone, a crab, a sycamore leaf, mould, a mushroom, a blind-worm, a hedgehog, a bulb, a log of wood, a branch, a growing bud, a seedling, a leaf. On these he writes notes, which are partly answers to definite questions put to him and partly other observations which he makes unaided. He is being trained to observe for himself. The variety of subjects over which the book ranges is an excellent feature. Besides those already mentioned, there is the sun; by means of a simple piece of apparatus he sets about observing its apparent movements.

If the book ended with these observational lessons it would be very defective. A boy is by instinct a hunter. It is the hunting instinct that leads him to chase a butterfly, and he impales it lovingly on a pin and sets it and preserves it rather as a trophy than as a specimen from which something is to be learnt. The thing is to guide this hunting and collecting instinct. An attempt at this is made by means of the suggested outdoor studies which are interspersed among the observational lessons. For example, a little information is given about the dispersal of seeds by means of the plant's own catapults, or by the help of the wind or of animals. Fired by this knowledge the young naturalist (or rather boy that is to be converted into a naturalist) is to go out and collect illustrations of these various methods. He is also taught how to make a sundial, on the understanding that he is to set to work to make one for himself. He is encouraged to keep an aquarium (salt-water or fresh-water), to study clouds and spiders' webs, to collect and identify leaves in autumn, to make observations on fungi, British mammals, domestic mammals, to make a bird calendar, to inspect the bark of trees and the characters of timber. Rocks and fossils are not left out. Certainly it is his own fault if he becomes a narrow specialist before he is out of his teens.

The observational lessons will benefit all who are privileged to be taught in this way. The suggested studies will be helpful to those who have more than the average keenness. Summing up, we may describe it as a book that will teach the teacher how to set about his work, and that will thus be highly useful. The illustrations, with the exception of the one on p. 91, are good and really illustrative.

Camera-Kunst. Eine internationale Sammlung von Kunst-Photographien der Neuzeit. Unter Mitwirkung von Fritz Loescher. Herausgegeben von Ernst Juhl. Pp. viii + 107. (Berlin: Gustav Schmidt, 1903.) Price 4s. 6d. net.

IN these 107 pages the compilers have brought together a series of essays which gives the reader a good idea of the camera art as practised in various countries. The idea in this work has been to request some photographers, well known in their own countries, to contribute each a chapter dealing with the present state of

photography in their respective countries from the point of view of art, and the result is an interesting set of opinions. Those who have written for this volume are Ernst Juhl, Hamburg; Edward J. Steichen, New York; Fritz Loescher, Berlin; Robert Domachy, Paris; Otto Scharf, Krefeld; Alfred Stieglitz, New York; Dr. Adolf Thiele, Kappel-Chemnitz; W. Bandelow, Krackow; and J. C. Warburg, London. With the increasing development of art-photography such a book as the one before us will undoubtedly be of interest to the widest circle of photographers whether amateur or professional. Not only are the opinions of each contributor given in words, but in every case a series of excellent illustrations is added showing the various styles and types of pictures of well-known photographers. Thus, to take the case only of those exhibiting the British types, we have examples of the work of Warburg, Horsley-Hinton, W. A. Stewart, Page Croft, Archibald Cochrane, Craig Annan and Alexander Keighly.

Enough perhaps has been said to acquaint the reader with the kind of book he has here to deal with. When it is mentioned that the get-up of the book is, on the whole, excellent, although attention may be drawn to some of the illustrations which are somewhat spoilt by the printing on the back, photographic readers will be sure to find it a valuable addition to their literature.

The Arcadian Calendar. By E. D. Cuming and J. A. Shepherd. Pp. xii + 215; illustrated. (London: G. Newnes, Ltd., 1903.) Price 6s. net.

FROM the humorous character of the illustrations it would be quite reasonable to suppose that in this entertaining little volume natural history subjects were discussed from the comic point of view; and, indeed, this was the opinion entertained by the present writer when these essays appeared in their original form as articles in the *Strand Magazine*. No greater mistake could be made; for, as a matter of fact, the observations on the habits and mode of life of the beasts, birds, fishes and invertebrates of the British islands recorded in its pages are remarkable for their accuracy as well as for their general interest. Mr. Cuming, the author of the letterpress, is, we believe, chiefly known to the public as a writer on sporting subjects; but he is evidently a keen and appreciative observer of animated nature, and he has our best congratulations on his appearance in a new rôle.

As its title implies, the work treats of the ways of animals at different seasons of the year; and in the section devoted to the winter months we find collected certain observations which, to ourselves, at any rate, are new. For instance, the fact that both birds and mammals may, in exceptional circumstances, become frozen to the ice on which they are resting is not mentioned in any natural history work with which we are acquainted; while the observations on the reason why many birds roost in company, if not novel, are at least interesting. Neither must we omit to refer to the author's explanation of the present relative scarcity of swallows and martins in this country; this scarcity being attributed partly to the numbers and aggressive habits of the British sparrow, and partly to the slaughter of swallows, as an article of food, by the inhabitants of southern Europe.

As to the illustrations, which are exceedingly clever and excellent of their kind, it is probable that they appeal more closely to the popular taste than they do to our own. Conjointly, the author and the artist have succeeded in producing a dainty and attractive volume, which ought to command a large sale as a gift-book.

R. L.