

OUR BOOK SHELF.

Riding and Driving. (American Sportsman's Library.) By E. L. Anderson and P. Collier. Pp. xiii+441; illustrated. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1905.) Price 8s. 6d. net.

IN almost all books on subjects connected with animals there is a growing tendency at the present day to introduce something concerning the natural history of the species under consideration. Too often in this country such remarks betray an insufficient knowledge of zoological science on the part of the writer, but this failing is seldom noticeable in American works. In the present volume, truth to say, there is some matter for criticism in Mr. Collier's remarks on the origin of the horse on p. 169, more especially in regard to the sense given to that much abused word "prehistoric." On the other hand, the author furnishes some very interesting information with regard to the early history of the European horse in America. In the first place he refuses to credit the theory that the horses seen by Cabot in La Plata in 1530 were indigenous. Secondly, he shows that the horses which have run wild in Mexico and South America are the descendants of Spanish barbs, and therefore of the same blood as the English thoroughbred. This is very important in view of a fact recently communicated to the present writer by Mr. Yearsley, the well known surgeon, namely, that an Argentine horse living some years ago had a functional "larmier," or tear-gland, on each side of the face.

To review the work before us from its own special point of view would obviously be out of place in this Journal, and it must therefore suffice to say that it appears, so far as we are capable of judging, to maintain the high standard of excellence set in the earlier volumes of the same series. Riding falls to the lot of the first-named of the two authors, while Mr. Collier is responsible for the section on driving. The numerous reproductions from photographs are almost life-like in their sharpness and definition, although it must be confessed that some of them do not convey by any means a pleasing idea of the manners and disposition of the American saddle-horse.

R. L.

Der Oeschinensee im Berner Oberland. By Max Groll. Pp. vi+78; illustrated. (Bern: Haller'sche Buchdruckerei, 1904.)

THIS pamphlet, an extract from the nineteenth volume of the Berne Geographical Society, is the result of a careful study of the Oeschinensee at intervals from 1901 to 1903. Nestling at the foot of the limestone precipices of the Blumlisalp group, about 5200 feet above sea-level, and reflecting like a mirror the snows of their highest peaks, its romantic beauty makes it a favourite resort of visitors to Kandersteg, on the northern side of the Gemmi Pass.

Herr Max Groll's memoir is a valuable contribution to physical geography. After some preliminary information about the position and surroundings of the lake, which lies roughly along the strike of Eocene and Cretaceous limestones, and about other matters of a topographical character, he describes its banks and basin, its dimensions and contents, its variations in level, the transparency, colour, and temperature of its waters, the amount of mud yearly deposited, and adds a note on the literature.

Of these topics, the form of its basin is, perhaps, of most general interest, and of that Herr Groll gives

an excellent map and sections plotted from numerous soundings. Its dimensions, of course, vary somewhat with the season, the greatest length and breadth (in summer) being 1750 and 950 metres, when its greatest depth is 56.6 metres; in winter it is about 200 metres less one way and 100 metres the other, and shallower by 15 metres. Under the former conditions its cubical content is estimated to be forty million metres. Its bed deepens at first rather rapidly, a circular diagram of the progressive depth reminding us of an ordinary dinner plate. The ring in which the drop is from 0 to 50 metres is barely an inch wide; the radius of the remainder, which nowhere attains 57 metres, is almost an inch and a half, or, on a rough estimate, about half the lake bed is not less than 50 metres deep. The shallowing is rather more gentle on the western than on the eastern or Blumlisalp side. Near the middle part of this, the 50-metre contour comes rather near the cliffs, those less than 30 metres being closely crowded. This would be yet more conspicuous but for a fan of débris at the south-east angle. The lake, in fact, lies in a kind of corrie at the head of a mountain glen, and it is held up by a natural dam which has been formed by bergfalls from the rocky spurs about a mile below the cliffs at its head. Thus its history is to a considerable extent parallel with that of the Lago d'Alleghe, near Caprile, in the Dolomites.

Manual of the Trees of North America (exclusive of Mexico). By C. S. Sargent. Pp. xxiii+826. (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1905.) Price 6 dollars.

THE manual under notice embodies the most recent, exhaustive, and detailed account of the trees of North America (exclusive of Mexico). It cannot fail to be of the greatest value to students of botany and forestry, as it brings into available form all the information concerning the trees of North America which has been gathered at the Arnold Arboretum during the last thirty years. As the author points out in the preface, there is probably no other region of equal extent where the indigenous trees are so well known as those of North America, but in spite of this fact much investigation yet remains to be done as regards their sylvicultural requirements, and also the diseases to which they may be liable.

The object of this volume is to stimulate further inquiry into the cultivation requirements and diseases of forest trees. The classification adopted is that of Engler and Prantl's "Die natürlichen Pflanzenfamilien." At the beginning of the book a synopsis of the families of the plants described is given. This is followed by a very useful analytical key to the families based on the arrangement and character of the leaves, which will enable the student readily to determine the family to which any North American tree belongs. In the text a full description of each family is given, and also a conspectus of the genera based on their more salient and easily made out contrasting differences. Under each genus a similar conspectus of the species is given by which the exact name of the tree may be finally determined.

The frontispiece consists of a map of North America showing the eight principal regions of arborescent vegetation, each of which is indicated by a letter, and in the conspectus above referred to a letter occurs after the name of each species, thus indicating the region in which the tree grows. This is a further aid in determining any given species provided the region from which it comes is already known.

A valuable feature of the book is the numerous illustrations, which number between six and seven hundred, from drawings by Mr. Faxon.