

upon them as if he liked them. A special feature is made of the treatment of the "laws of momentum," which replace Newton's laws of motion. This treatment is as follows:—After a cursory reference to mass on p. 2, two chapters are devoted to kinematics. In chap. iii., p. 57, momentum is defined. Then the "first law" appears (p. 58):—

"In any body or system, the total momentum remains constant unless the body or system is acted upon by some external force. . . ."

"The first law introduces a new term, viz. force, which may, for the present, be defined thus:—

"Force is that which produces or tends to produce a change of momentum.

"The law is the result of observation."

We prefer Newton, but it is only fair to recognise that "laws" are always a difficulty in elementary mechanics, and on the whole we are inclined to recommend the book. H. B. H.

### Our Bookshelf.

*Animal Life in South Africa.* By S. H. Skaife. With an introduction by Prof. F. Clarke. Pp. x+281. (Cape Town: T. Maskew Miller; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1920.) 15s. net.

THIS book is intended to help teachers and pupils in South Africa to get to know some of the common animals of every grade. It is clearly written and abundantly illustrated with simple "thumbnail" sketches, many of which will enable the student to identify what he has seen. More critical sifting of the illustrations would have eliminated a number—e.g. that of *Apus*—which blur the total impression. It is almost impossible, except for men like Huxley, gifted with an unusual educational sense, to write a book useful for teachers and pupils alike, and though Mr. Skaife has done well, he sometimes falls between two stools—being sometimes too simple, sometimes a little difficult. There are also various statements requiring reconsideration, we think; thus we do not believe that the liver-fluke feeds partly on bile, and we are sure that a sea-urchin's teeth do not work up and down in their sheaths. But these are small matters; we mention them only as instances of a kind of defect that might easily be remedied, for the book as a whole is sound and careful, and it will be of great service. The chapters on insects, spiders, scorpions, and ticks are particularly good. We are interested to read that *Peripatus* may be fed on raw minced liver. "A female with twenty to thirty young ones clustering around her like chicks round a hen make a very pretty family party." Two educational remarks seem called for: (1) It is very doubtful whether we are warranted in using a word like "ugly" for such animals as the fishing-frog or *Galeodes*—it seems like undoing one of

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the endeavours of Nature-study, which is to show that no wholesome free-living wild creature can be called common or unclean. (2) Is there not more than once—e.g. in regard to flat worms and gapes-worms—a distinct and deplorable tendency to bowdlerise the elementary facts of sex? Because we appreciate Mr. Skaife's good workmanship, we would ask him to reconsider these points. The book appears to be extraordinarily dear.

*Anniversaries and Other Poems.* By Leonard Huxley. Pp. x+82. (London: John Murray, 1920.) 5s. net.

A BOOK of dignified and melodious poems, in which it is interesting to observe the natural history touches—the child's poetic vision is compared to that of some under-water larval creature, glimpsing the sky, seeing "crooked tops to the tall, straight trees"; the full waves of the floral tide in a southern April, breaking on the hill "with white narcissus for their foam," are contrasted with the shyer coming in the north, with "less of fire and more of dew," and yet with its own exuberance, for

bluebells thick in budding woods  
Stretch pool on pool from tree to tree,  
All heaven in their dew-drenched floods  
Of blue that mock your Midland sea.

Mr. Leonard Huxley is a lover of Nature, both of the great appeals and of the tiniest things that pass from sense to soul, from Nature's heart to man's. Common things are dear to him in themselves, not merely as emblems. Of the speed-well, "blue flower of happy name," he writes:—

It buds on every fallow swell,  
And the bright wish it bids me frame  
Fills earth as music fills a shell.

Nature may or may not be fathomable, but surely it is still unfathomed, and we are among the heretics who think that of some of its depths not reached by the scientific dredge we get an inkling by the medium of disciplined feeling. Mr. Huxley makes his contribution, a perfectly clear-eyed one, and we do not agree more than a very little with the mood of the last poem, "The Land of Might-Have-Been," "portioned with felicity" though that mood be. The author has gone much further than that.

*Mechanism, Life, and Personality: An Examination of the Mechanistic Theory of Life and Mind.* By Dr. J. S. Haldane. Second edition. Pp. vii+152. (London: John Murray, 1921.) 6s. net.

THE new edition of Dr. Haldane's little work is substantially the same, so far as subject-matter is concerned, as the first edition, which was reviewed in *NATURE* for October 22, 1914. It is in the fourth lecture, on personality, that the main changes have been made. The whole chapter has been recast, and some additional matter inserted with the object of bringing home to the reader more certainly the meaning of this admittedly difficult subject.