

considerations before describing the uses of the various devices used in practice. The diagrams given are very clear, all unnecessary details being omitted, and so the student will have little difficulty in seeing how an automatic system works.

Manual systems in the past have given satisfaction, but there are several advantages in connexion with automatic systems which make them more desirable. For example, connexions can be completed more quickly and can be released instantaneously. Errors due to incorrectly hearing a number are eliminated. There is a large saving in operators' salaries. A twenty-four hours' service can be given in every exchange, and so a large number of small exchanges can economically replace a large exchange. In countries where several languages are spoken, a call may be completed with equal facility whatever language the subscriber speaks. As for many years to come automatic and manual exchanges must exist side by side, the author devotes a chapter to explaining how they can be interconnected. We recommend this book to all readers who want to get an elementary knowledge of the working of an automatic system.

*Some Famous Medical Trials.* By Dr. Leonard A. Parry. Pp. x+326. (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1927.) 10s. 6d. net.

THIS entertaining work contains an account, from the time of Elizabeth to the present day, of thirty odd trials in which medical men figured, usually as defendants. The cases, which, as the author acknowledges in the preface, have not been arranged in any particular order, either chronological or alphabetical, have, with two exceptions from France and the United States respectively, been taken from the criminal annals of Great Britain. Ten cases in which the medical man was brought to trial for treason or other political offences contain nothing of scientific interest, and the same may be said of the crimes of violence, libel, and poisoning. The most instructive cases are those dealing with poisoning, the drugs chosen by the doctors for their victims being arsenic, aconite, hyosine, strychnine, and morphia. Among these may be cited the first case of poisoning by morphia, in which the evidence of Orfila, the celebrated Parisian toxicologist, was the cause of bringing the poisoner, Dr. Edmé Castaing, to the guillotine. Mention may also be made of an interesting chapter on the 'resurrection men,' dealing with the events which gave rise to the amendment of the law with regard to the supply of bodies for anatomical schools and the passing of the Anatomy Act.

*Roman Britain.* By Gordon Home. (Benn's Sixpenny Library, No. 4.) Pp. 80. (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1927.) 6d.

MR. GORDON HOME'S account of "Roman Britain" in Messrs. Benn's attractive little "Sixpenny Library" is a model of concise popularisation. Apart from the many difficulties and obscurities which are involved in the study of the period of Roman occupation in Britain, the necessary concentration on technical details in the reports of

excavations, and the lack of a comprehensive historical background, have militated against popular interest in this important element in the composition of the cultures of Britain. This is notwithstanding the fact that discoveries relating to the Roman occupation are more frequent and usually tell more than those of any other period of the early history of Great Britain. Mr. Home has provided exactly the background that is needed to promote such an interest. He tells a clear consecutive story in which, without shirking difficulties, he has given a reasonable interpretation, while avoiding controversial details which might confuse his readers as well as be irrelevant to his main purpose. The stress he lays on purely British culture and its gradual interpenetration by Roman influence, as well as the view taken of the state of the country at the close of the occupation, are useful correctives of popular misconception.

*Adventures of Exploration, Book 6: North America.*

By Sir John Scott Keltie and Samuel Carter Gilmour. Pp. iv+228. (London: George Philip and Son, Ltd.; Liverpool: Philip, Son and Nephew, Ltd., n.d.) 2s. 6d.

THE volume on North America, which is slightly larger than the earlier volumes, completes this admirable series. Some fifteen notable journeys have been retold without the omission of any important facts and illustrated by carefully chosen pictures from many sources. Each tale has a small sketch map to itself, which are excellent examples of clear maps, with no more names than are needed to follow the text. The voyage of Jacques Cartier begins the book, which goes on to tell among others of Champlain, La Salle, Hudson, Hearne, Mackenzie, Lewes and Clark, Franklin, Peary, Erichsen and Mikkelsen. It is not a complete history of North American exploration, and is not intended to be such, but it is an admirable sketch of the chief stages in the story, and is bound to quicken interest in geography.

*The Diary of Henry Teonge, Chaplain on Board H.M.'s Ships Assistance, Bristol, and Royal Oak, 1675-1679.* Transcribed from the original manuscript and edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by G. E. Manwaring. (The Broadway Travellers.) Pp. x+318+8 plates. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1927.) 12s. 6d. net.

WHEN Teonge's diary was first published in 1825, some doubt was cast on its authenticity. The disappearance of the manuscript made it difficult to answer the criticisms, but its rediscovery has now set all doubts at rest. The present edition has been produced from the original manuscript with modernised spelling and a number of notes. The author served as a chaplain in the Mediterranean. In addition to a vivid picture of life in the Navy in the seventeenth century, there are interesting accounts of inland journeys in Syria and Palestine. The book is beautifully produced and illustrated with a few contemporary drawings and engravings, but a track chart might well have been added.