

personal knowledge. He indicates that there are variations in mental ability in savage communities, but he has not tried to describe the intellectual type of mind; but it is probably true to say that the savage is more disposed to the concrete than we are, though this does not exclude abstract thought and speculation. "Does it matter to us, however, how the savage thinks or behaves? . . . Only by a true appreciation of primitive ideas, only when we know how they think and why they behave as they do, can we govern them to their best advantage and our own. . . . The savage as he really is is not an academic problem, but a very concrete and urgent reality." Everyone who has any dealings with Africans, or indeed with any other primitive peoples, should buy this suggestive and practical little book. A. C. H.

*Logarithmica Britannica: being a Standard Table of Logarithms to Twenty Decimal Places.* By Dr. Alexander John Thompson. Part 4: *Numbers 40,000 to 50,000.* (Tracts for Computers, No. 16.) Issued by the Biometric Laboratory, University of London, to commemorate the Tercentenary of Henry Briggs' publication of the "Arithmetica Logarithmica, 1624". Pp. vi + 100. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1929.) 15s. net.

PART IV. of this monumental work, the third to be published, gives the logarithms of numbers between 40,000 and 50,000. These were obtained by adding the logarithm of 0.5 to the logarithms of all the even numbers between 80,000 and 100,000 which have already appeared in Parts VIII. and IX. The present part contains an analysis of the errors for the numbers between 90,000 and 100,000 in Briggs' "Arithmetica Logarithmica" published in 1624. It is interesting to note that nearly all the errors are in the last places of the logarithms. An inspection of the analysis shows that the first group of six figures in Briggs's 15-place logarithms contains errors in 9 instances, the second group of five figures in 3 instances, the remaining errors being in the last group of four figures.

The printing and arrangement continue to deserve the highest praise. L. M. M.-T.

*Taxation in the Modern State.* By Prof. Alzada Comstock. (Longmans' Economic Series.) Pp. viii + 240. (New York, London and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1929.) 10s. 6d. net.

THERE is probably no subject more appealing to men than one which affects their pockets; the eternal ego is the centre of attraction, and consequently Dr. Comstock's book will create a responsive echo. In most countries taxation is now a very different matter from the levies made by way of Customs and Excise from early times down to a period not really remote, but seemingly far distant on account of the world upheaval. This has entailed a complicated and scientific readjustment of burdens, variously met by various nations. Adam Smith formulated four rules of taxation: Ability to pay, certainty of incidence, convenience in form,

and economy in levy. The burden upon the public is heavy (nowhere so heavy as in Great Britain); Germany has issued from the fiscal turmoil in better condition than the other countries, but this was due to the confiscation of capital during lifetime, whereas elsewhere (particularly in England) such confiscation is reserved until death supervenes, and hence income suffers. Passing over Adolph Wagner's socio-political theory, attention may be directed to Prof. Pigou's view that 'ability to pay' has been to-day converted into 'sacrifice', though without 'equality of sacrifice'; progressive income taxation, however, seems to connote the idea of parity. P. L. M.

*Auguste Comte, Thinker and Lover.* By Jane M. Style. Pp. v + 206 + 1 plate. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd., 1928.) 5s. net.

POSITIVISM has been defined as the "system of philosophy which limits itself to the study of phenomena and the laws which regulate them". Comte, who built up this system, declared that the knowledge of phenomena is relative, not absolute; he anticipated Einstein by a century in the promulgation of the doctrine of relativity; "Tout est relatif; voilà la seule chose absolue". The great French philosopher, the founder of the science of sociology, was one who practised even whilst he preached, and he had the good fortune to be widely appreciated during his lifetime, which is not invariably the experience of pioneers. He (like Cæsar, Gregory, and Omar Khayyám) also had views as to the reform of the calendar. In Comte's case it may truly be said that the good he did survived him, though it is the fashion of the day to consider him a 'back number'; or shall we say, a backwater? He proved, in his own life, how "That men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things". The biographer has evidently regarded her labour as one of love; and though her sentences are too often breathless and some of her sentiments more than disputable, yet her book is eminently readable and will attract wide attention.

*The Principles of Systematic Entomology.* By Prof. G. F. Ferris. (Stanford University Publications, University Series: Biological Sciences, Vol. 5, No. 3.) Pp. 169. (Stanford University, Calif.: Stanford University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1928.) 12s. 6d. net.

WE can commend this book to systematists in general, and to entomologists in particular. It discusses in a critical way existing methods of systematic entomology with suggestions for their improvement. The importance of taxonomy to-day can scarcely be overrated, and it is imperative that if work of this character is to stand the test of time, and not merely add to existing confusion, new species should be accurately and sufficiently diagnosed and, furthermore, adequately illustrated. As Dr. Ferris remarks—to add to the number of named species has too often assumed an undue degree of importance: too often it has nothing to do with any actual increase in knowledge; and too