

how can men of ability and education be expected to present themselves as candidates for the posts, when there are so many much more remunerative ways in which they may get a larger competency?

If we look round at our public institutions we find that the machinery of those which prove themselves to be the most successful is that in which a single officer has the control, he being frequently re-elected, and responsible only to a body which criticise all his actions, and to which he refers all serious questions of finance and management. Inefficiency on the part of the officer under this arrangement allows of his replacement without difficulty, at the same time that he is continually kept up to his work by the superior governing body, who find it a much easier task to detect faults than they would to remedy them themselves.

The case of the Australian Museum is somewhat peculiar. That institution seems to be in the hands of a few collectors of the old school, who treat it as a plaything of their own, rather than a public institution, supported by public funds. They have a curator, Mr. Gerrard Krefft, of whose very high scientific position in the mother country they cannot be fully aware, or they would be more liberal to him, and give him more opportunities for the employment of his abilities. The naturalist who on seeing the curious new mud-fish from Queensland was enabled to say from a superficial examination, that it "is allied to *Lepidosiren*, and is *Ceratodus*"—a statement which Dr. Günther's superb monograph on that fish so strongly substantiates—and who has done such excellent work with regard to the Marsupialia, both recent and extinct, deserves greater opportunities than he evidently possesses under the tender mercies of amateur trustees, especially when they include among their numbers men such as a Mr. Macleay, who has thought it worth his while to refer to this journal in terms which clearly indicate either that he has never heard of it or of the Royal Commission whose recommendations we reproduced, or that he has not the least sympathy with the subjects of which it treats; the latter of which tendencies must make him quite unsuitable for the position which we regret to see he holds as one of the governing body.

The complaint of Mr. Cooper, who applied for a select committee to inquire into and report upon the condition and system of management of the museum, was that—

"As a rule a body of trustees was not the proper body to manage such institutions. Persons who were unpaid and irresponsible did not take that interest in the institution they ought to do, and would not devote their time to it. The Government found the whole of the money to pay the cost of the institution, and surely they ought to have a voice in its management. In asking for the committee, he had not the slightest desire to censure the trustees. He believed they did the best they could, but many of them could not devote the time that was necessary."

In the discussion which followed it was shown that on all occasions it is difficult to get a quorum, except on an occasion like that in which it was proposed to employ the museum-building as a ball-room during the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh to Sydney, when of the twenty members of the committee, the ten official were in favour of its employment as such, in opposition to those who sat by election.

A committee was finally appointed to consider the question of appointing a permanent officer, and if they then conclude their deliberations by placing Mr. Krefft in a position worthy of his scientific attainments, they will confer as great a benefit on zoology generally, as they will show a power of appreciating worth, independent of petty party-spirit.

RIBOT'S "ENGLISH PSYCHOLOGY"

English Psychology. Translated from the French of Th. Ribot. (Henry S. King and Co.)

SEEMING that the doctrines of the English school of Experimental Psychology are "unknown, or very nearly unknown, in France," M. Ribot has certainly done a very useful work in giving to the French people an analysis of the conclusions in mental science arrived at by Hartley, James Mill, Herbert Spencer, A. Bain, G. H. Lewes, Samuel Bailey, John Stuart Mill. The most substantial objection that could be urged against such an undertaking is the difficulty of doing satisfactorily the thing attempted. In no department of knowledge claiming the name of Science is there so little settled doctrine; indeed, Mr. Lewes has just told us in his "Problems of Life and Mind" that there is still wanting the materials for its construction as a science; nor is there in any science so little agreement among the authorities, or so great probability that honest application may be rewarded with an entire misapprehension of their meaning. The book before us is of course M. Ribot's answer to this objection; and we are bound to say that, considering the special difficulty of the task, and remembering the object he had in view, it is a very worthy and valuable performance. While there is probably not one of the writers whom he has undertaken to expound who would not object to his rendering of one or other of their opinions, all must, we think, agree in regarding M. Ribot as a highly appreciative student, and must feel grateful to him for this attempt to spread their opinions. Indeed to us M. Ribot seems rather to err in the direction of wishing to present in the most favourable light, and to make the most of, the views of each writer in turn.

Partly, perhaps, to this same amiable disposition may be referred the impression of greater agreement among the authorities given by a perusal of M. Ribot's pages than by a study of the authors themselves. Mr. Herbert Spencer is, and with all justice, placed at the head of our psychologists; and Prof. Bain is made to differ from him in no essential particular—an interpretation which we are inclined to believe would be accepted much more willingly by Prof. Bain himself, who now recognises the doctrine of inheritance, and would fain have it understood that his disagreements with Mr. Spencer on some other points "are more apparent than real," than by his less clear-sighted disciples. The account of Prof. Bain's theory of the *supposed* acquisition of voluntary power opens with a statement that here we have "the idea of progress, evolution, and development." But the instructed student in these matters must know that the growth of voluntary power that Prof. Bain would explain is not the evolution of Mr. Spencer; it is, on the contrary, a description of the manner in which, according to his imagination, each individual acquires those

powers which, according to the doctrine of evolution, they do not acquire, but inherit. For the benefit of those who would now save this theory by maintaining that it meant or means something that was never intended, we would quote the example given in illustration by M. Ribot:—"Few of our necessities are so pressing as thirst; nevertheless an animal does not distinguish at first that the water in the pond can appease it; it is only later in his wanderings that he comes to apply his tongue to the surface of the water (happy accident) and to feel the relief which it affords, and thus to learn what he ought to will." Few of the poor animals, we fear, would ever reach maturity if they had not more of instinct than Prof. Bain would here allow them. Yet what Prof. Bain has written about instinct he claims, and M. Ribot thinks "justly, as one of the most original portions of his work." Unfortunately for the fame of this celebrated psychologist, it appears from the progress of research that exactly in those departments where he has been most original have his conceptions been least in accordance with the order of Nature.

M. Ribot's most serious labour seems to have been in bringing together, in a more or less connected form, the psychology which has hitherto been scattered through the writings of Mr. George Henry Lewes. This original thinker and highly suggestive writer is the only one of our psychologists whose work may not be regarded as finished. The volume recently published ("Problems of Life and Mind") does not supply material for an estimate of the work on which he has long been engaged. But while continuing to agree with Mr. Spencer much more than any other of the authorities, Mr. Lewes encourages his readers to hope for important and permanent additions to mental philosophy; and to put the prospects of the work at the lowest, he will certainly compel the school to which he belongs to gravely reconsider some of their fundamental positions.

When in his conclusion M. Ribot attempts to bring forward the points on which the writers are agreed, the "fundamental propositions" to which he reduces them are unsatisfactory in two ways. Many of them are so vague in expression as not to exclude rival theories; while others have a sufficient amount of precision to make them flat contradictions of the clearly expressed and reiterated opinions of some of the authorities. We are, for example, not surprised to hear a disciple of Mr. Mill and Prof. Bain express his astonishment that his masters should have fathered on them the realism they have so vigorously opposed. M. Ribot's words are explicit:—"Outside of us, and independently of our perceptions, there exists a material world which condemns idealism. It is conformable to the data of the sciences to believe that this material world, taken in itself, does not resemble the perceptions of it which we have; this condemns vulgar realism." It surely says little for idealism that M. Ribot, after studying and expounding the arguments in its favour, should thus end with making our idealists agree with that very realism which Prof. Bain has described as unworthy the name of Philosophy.

After recognising the shortcomings referred to, it remains to be repeated that the author deserves the thanks of everyone interested in the spread of mental science in France. But we are unable to find any reason for the book having been translated into English. No English

student ought to go to M. Ribot for the opinions of Mr. Mill or Mr. Spencer. Should any not already familiar with the topics discussed attempt to read the work, they will frequently be much perplexed by the exceeding carelessness of the translation. If they are amused to read that "*melodies* are described in pathological treatises," they may be a little puzzled to make out how "all Science is *contradicted* by the double action of analysis and synthesis," or in what sense "so long as the living being has no consciousness he leads a purely psychological life." And we would hint to any innocent young persons disposed to pin their faith to Locke, that they may be in some danger of being misunderstood should they follow the uniform usage of the translator and describe themselves as "*sensualists*." DOUGLAS A. SPALDING

OUR BOOK SHELF

Africa: Geographical Exploration and Christian Enterprise. By A. Guar Forbes. (London: Sampson Low and Co. 1874.)

WE can recommend this moderate-sized volume as an interesting popular *résumé* of the progress of discovery in Africa from the earliest time to the present day. The author writes mainly from the point of view of missionary enterprise, but seems to have read with diligence and intelligence the greater part of the literature of modern African travel, with which his book is mostly concerned, and has made therefrom a creditable compilation showing the progress of discovery from Bruce downwards. The first chapter gives a brief account of the topography, climate, and productions of Africa; and the accompanying pretty clear map shows the route of the leading explorers. We notice one or two signs of carelessness or haste; for example, on p. 4, Mr. Forbes states that "the most westerly point is Cabo Verde, in long. 51° 25' E., lat. 10° 25' N., the distance between the two points being about the same as its length." Again, at p. 115, "Sahara Desert" ought surely to be "Kalahari Desert."

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

Ocean Circulation.—Dr. Carpenter and Mr. Croll

IN the interests of Science, of scientific discussions, and of scientific men let me be allowed to protest very earnestly against the manner in which Dr. Carpenter has thought fit to reply in your columns to the defence which Mr. Croll made against the representation of his views, given in *NATURE*, vol. ix. p. 423. I take much interest in the subject under discussion—the great fundamental cause of the distribution of heat over the globe, and am most anxious to arrive at the true solution of the problem—a result, however, which will be indefinitely postponed if such letters as that of Dr. Carpenter in *NATURE*, vol. x. p. 62, are to become common.

Mr. Croll, discarding unimportant details, asked attention to one or two cardinal "misapprehensions" on which Dr. Carpenter had been proceeding. But the Doctor, instead of plainly grappling with these alleged "misapprehensions," runs off to call attention to a footnote of another paper of Mr. Croll's, brings forward some statement of Mr. Croll's views about the relative saltiness of different portions of the ocean (about which, however, not a single word is said in the letter that has called forth Dr. Carpenter's reply), and concludes by another *argumentum ad hominem*, of which I am sure every reader of his papers must now be weary.

Now I strongly object to have dust thrown in my eyes in this way. Dr. Carpenter does not attempt to deal with any one of the cardinal and crucial arguments in Mr. Croll's letter. He raises a cloud about "averages," repeats his joke about ten children to every marriage, and with other irrelevant matter, including an introduction of the Astronomer Royal