

section on agriculture is one of the best in the book, but even here there are many signs of the effort which has been exerted in writing short popular descriptions.

It is to be feared that the book will fall between two stools. It is too dry and unattractive for the ordinary traveller, whilst the serious student will not find it satisfactory.

Dr. Willis would have been better advised had he devoted himself to preparing a more serious work, or, if time did not permit of this, to producing a new edition of Sir Emerson Tennent's standard treatise. The present work is not likely to add to his reputation.

*The Royal Gardens, Kew.* From photographs taken by permission. By E. J. Wallis, with descriptive notes by H. Spooner. Pp. 64. (London: E. J. Wallis, 42 Gloucester Road, Kew Gardens, n.d.) Price 1s. net.

It is difficult to realise that the modern development of Kew Gardens as a public institution only dates back to the middle of the last century, when Sir William Hooker initiated the extensions and improvements that have been continued by his successors in office. Increased travelling facilities in recent years have largely augmented the number of visitors to Kew, and consequently there is certain to be a large demand for a popular account of the gardens that will serve as a memento of what must often be memorable visits. The illustrations provided by Mr. Wallis depict exteriors and general views, selected spots in various houses, and a few specimen plants. The photographs of the tropical water-lilies and of the Yulan, *Magnolia conspicua*, are especially pleasing, also of the delicate flowers *Cypripedium glaucophyllum* and *Peristeria elata*. Mr. H. Spooner has contributed the text, in which strangers will find a useful guide round the houses and to the choice specimens, as well as brief descriptions of the more regular and conspicuous tenants.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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##### The Ciliated "Urns" of the Sipunculids.

In the winter of 1871-2 I studied the richly corpusculated perivisceral fluid of *Sipunculus nudus* at Naples. I was with Anton Dohrn, who was making arrangements for the building of his celebrated laboratory. That remarkable marine zoologist Krohn, who in 1851 had described the ciliated "urns" (Töpfchen) of the body-fluid of *Sipunculus* as parasites, was there, and spent an evening with us. I described the ciliated urns briefly in the *Annals and Mag. of Nat. Hist.*, vol. xi. (fourth series), 1873, p. 89, and pointed out their mode of origin. I say, "Further, I have found out the source of the 'Töpfchen.' They are to be observed in great numbers attached within the curious pair of tubes or vessels formed by duplicatures of the peritoneal membrane, which lie on each side of the oesophagus." I then give a wood-cut figure of the attached "urns" with long stalks, and state that "they develop as buttons on the cellular surface," and that "they become detached and swim off into the fluid."

This statement was erroneously quoted nearly thirty years after its publication, in the first instance by Cuenot, who said that I stated that the urns were developed on the outside of the oesophageal tubes, whereas I had italicised my statement as above to the effect that they are developed on the inside of those tubes.

The matter is not one of great importance, but it is not agreeable to see a statement repeated to the effect that one said just the opposite of what one did say. This repetition of an error is made by Dr. Selensky, of St.

Petersburg, in the *Zeitschr. f. wiss. Zoologie*, Bd. xc., p. 558. He apparently has not consulted my paper, but, although he does not say so, has taken his information from Cuenot, to whom, erroneously, he attributes the first correct observation as to the place and mode of origin of the ciliated urns of the Sipunculids, an observation published by me now thirty-five years ago. I wish clearly to state that I am quite sure that neither Prof. Cuenot nor Dr. Selensky had any notion that they were not quoting me correctly. I should have let the matter pass altogether had there not been lately an attempt to revive the notion that these curious freely swimming corpuscles with their crown of cilia are parasites. I disposed of that hypothesis when I observed in 1871-2, and figured in 1873, their mode of growth.

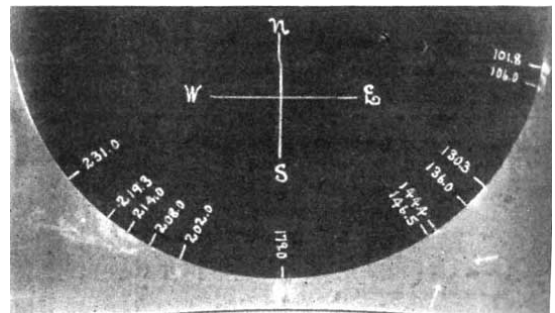
E. RAY LANKESTER.

29 Thurloe Place, S.W., July 30.

##### Prominence and Coronal Structure.

COMMUNICATIONS by Dr. Lockyer and by Mr. Buss have appeared in recent numbers of NATURE (April 2, June 18, and June 25) under the above heading. In the last-mentioned number Dr. Lockyer quotes a portion of a letter which I wrote to him following the publication of his original paper, showing the triple-arch prominence. I examined my plates under very unfavourable illumination, and wrote that no prominence of unusual form was discernible in the position which he gave. More careful examination shows a faint, detached, V-shaped cloud attaining an elevation of 67,000 miles, as probably the last remnant of the prominence, at considerable elevation. The accompanying figure will show this faint cloud at 146°5.

I regret that Dr. Lockyer did not quote my letter further, for I wrote that I had so often seen a promin-



ence, risen to considerable height, topple back into the sun, thus making an arch, that it seemed unwarrantable to assume another explanation for their formation without positive knowledge that the earlier stages of development were contrary to this usual performance. Fortunately, Mr. Buss had earlier observations of this prominence, and these showed the arches to have had the usual origin.

Concerning the prominence in the south-western quadrant, Fig. 2 of Dr. Lockyer's letter, for which he suggests the possibility of false orientation on my print, the present figure shows that the orientation was correct. The part of the prominence corresponding to the prominence at 218° shown on the negatives of Dr. Lockyer and of Prof. Hale is easily recognised at 219°3. The long arm springing for position-angle 208° is apparently a new development.

PHILIP FOX.

Yerkes Observatory, July 18.

##### Fossil Aphididae from Florissant, Colorado.

THE plant-lice of the Miocene shales at Florissant, Colorado, have been described at length by Scudder in his great work on Tertiary insects (1890). He was able to recognise no fewer than fifteen genera and thirty species. All the genera were considered to be extinct, and although they included both Aphidinae and Schizoneurinae, they were found to differ from the modern representatives of these subfamilies in an important character running throughout the series—the length and slenderness of the marginal or stigmatic cell. In this they also differ from