

Students appear to be now fairly well agreed about the order in which the glyphs are to be read, and on the identification of the signs representing days, months, and some of the other divisions of time ; but there still remains for consideration a large number of glyphs to which the most varied and contradictory interpretations have been given.

The most essential qualification for a student of Maya inscriptions is without doubt a thorough knowledge of the Maya language as it is now spoken in Yucatan. Dr. Brinton, who is a distinguished philologist, has doubtless learnt all that imperfect dictionaries and grammars can teach him, and on that account alone would hold a foremost position in the investigation. But the only way to acquire the special knowledge which is now so much needed is a prolonged residence in Yucatan itself, which can be reached in five days from New York ; and it would be good news should we hear that Dr. Brinton has used his great influence in persuading some of the well-endowed universities or colleges in America to establish travelling scholarships for the study of native American languages, and had placed the Maya language first on the list.

OUR BOOK SHELF.

Harrow Butterflies and Moths. Vol. i. By J. L. Bonhote, M.B.O.U., and Hon. N. C. Rothschild, F.E.S., F.Z.S. 8vo. Pp. xi. and 95. Plate. (Harrow : Wilbee, 1895.)

AT the present day, natural history receives considerable encouragement at our larger public schools and colleges, many of which now boast a Natural History Society of their own, and publish a journal of their own. The naturalists of Harrow School have struck out a bolder path, and have begun to issue a series of manuals of their local fauna, of which this is the second, the first, by Mr. Barrett-Hamilton, having been devoted to the birds of Harrow.

The volume before us includes the *Macro-Lepidoptera* to the end of the *Noctua*, and is illustrated by a useful plate presented by the Hon. Walter Rothschild, representing the antennæ of the three British species of *Ino*, the neuraton of *Papilio machaon*, and the egg, larva, and pupa of *Vanessa cardui*. The second volume will include the remainder of the *Macro-Lepidoptera*, and the *Pterophoridae*. South has been followed for Latin names, and Newman for English names, and the indefinite term "variety" has been very properly abandoned.

The district included comprises, roughly speaking, a radius of about five miles from Harrow Hill, and incorporates the notes of a considerable number of observers, the majority being connected with Harrow School. It consists mainly of a record of localities, times of appearance, and habits, with occasional notes on species not found in the district, or on aberrations.

As a record of the present fauna of a restricted locality, this little book will be of permanent value, in view of the changes which are always taking place in the appearance, disappearance, and variation in distribution and abundance of individual species. One or two species which we should hardly have expected to meet with are included in the list, such as *Lycena coryden*, but we are surprised to miss not only such species as *Aporia crataegi* (which was common round London at the beginning of the century, though probably no Harrow records were kept so far back), but to find no *Fritillaries* recorded, except *Argynnis selene*, *euphrosyne*, *paphia* and *Melitæa aurinia*. The fondness of *Vanessa atalanta*

for fruit is noticed ; and we may remark that *V. antiopa* also shares this habit with its congener.

Altogether, we have to congratulate the authors and the Harrow School Scientific Society on having produced a very creditable little book, and we hope that it will serve as an incentive to the members of other School Scientific Societies to go and do likewise. W. F. K.

Hand-list of Herbaceous Plants Cultivated in the Royal Gardens, Kew. (Sold at the Royal Gardens, Kew.)

ABOUT a quarter of a century ago, the border-flowers in which our grandsires delighted were all but pushed out of existence by "bedding plants" and ribbon-borders of glaring hue. Nurserymen who had good stocks of the older favourites found them unsaleable, and discarded them accordingly. Then came a change, largely owing to the influence exerted by Mr. Robinson's publications. "Herbaceous" and "Alpine" plants were once more received into favour, and are probably more numerous and more extensively cultivated than ever they were. Kew, as usual, has been responsive to popular demands. In times well within the memory of the present generation, the plants we speak of were grown there, as in other botanic gardens, in ugly gridiron-like beds, an arrangement which might have been suitable for strictly botanical purposes, but which was as unattractive as possible.

To obviate this, and to allow of the plants growing in the most natural way possible, the new rockery was formed, mainly, we believe, after the plans of Mr. Dyer. At any rate, it now forms one of the most attractive features in the garden, and with the frames and "Alpine House," serves excellently to illustrate this class of plants.

A proper catalogue, of course, became necessary, for, unfortunately, the names and descriptions in the most popular books on the subject, are not to be depended upon. The present publication is an alphabetical list, the only information given in addition to the names, being a mention of the botanist responsible for the name, and a general indication of the native country of the plant.

The names of the botanical authorities are given in the contracted form adopted in scientific works ; but in a list of this character, which is mainly intended for unscientific readers, the names should either be given in full, or an explanation of the abbreviations supplied.

No fewer than 6000 species, it appears, are now grown at Kew, including, we see, as many as a hundred species of *Carex*.

A Manual of Book-keeping. By J. Thornton. Pp. 527. (London : Macmillan and Co., 1895.)

THE late Prof. Cayley is quoted by the author to have said of book-keeping, "It is only its extreme simplicity which prevents it being as interesting as it otherwise would be." But what was simplicity to the master of pure mathematics is very far from being so to the average shopkeeper, as witness the testimonies of Official Receivers in Bankruptcy. As Mr. Thornton points out, a general opinion among uneducated tradesmen is that book-keeping was invented to conceal the facts ; and therefore they think the least they know about it the higher is their code of commercial ethics. This book will undoubtedly assist in removing such mistaken opinions ; it is the clearest exposition of the principles and practice of book-keeping that we have yet seen, and the most original in design. The science and art of the subject are dealt with simply ; the matter is arranged in an admirable manner ; and by subordinating details to principles, the author has made his book worthy of the attention of all students who wish to acquire a sound and scientific knowledge of book-keeping.