

tures of a happy home and world-wide reputation, while we are conscious of a genuine admiration for the firm resolve to "make the most of his time" and to keep perpetually before him the remembrance of "how injurious megalomania may be for a student."

H. H.

Illustriertes Handbuch der Laubholzkunde. By C. K. Schneider. Pts. iii. and v. (Jena; Gustav Fischer, 1906.) Price 4 marks each.

THE general plan of this handbook on trees cultivated in Europe was explained in the notice of the first two parts that appeared in NATURE, November 24, 1904. The third part was issued early last year, and the fifth part—somewhat enlarged—completes the first volume.

The third part contains the final portion of the Berberidaceæ, the orders Menispermaceæ to Crassulaceæ, and part of the Saxifragaceæ, the largest genera being Berberis, Mahonia, Magnolia, and Ribes. The Drupaceæ and Pomaceæ, generally regarded as suborders of the Rosaceæ, here treated as orders, form the subject of the fifth part. Prunus, Padus, Pyrus, Sorbus, and Cratægus are large and difficult genera.

It becomes more apparent that Dr. Schneider favours subdivision, for, in addition to the suborders mentioned, subgenera such as Chænomelei are raised to generic rank, and some of the species would certainly be regarded by other authorities as varieties; also it is noticeable that the author does not confine himself to trees in cultivation. The book thus becomes more of a dictionary and less of a practical manual; but due credit must be given to the author for the enormous amount of energy expended, and for the searching and critical investigation of specimens that has been accomplished. The advantage of the rules laid down at Vienna last year becomes evident from the list of changes noted in the supplement.

Old-fashioned Flowers and other Open-air Essays. By Maurice Maeterlinck. Translated by A. Teixeira de Mattos. With illustrations by G. S. Elgood. Pp. vii+115. (London: George Allen, 1906.) Price 3s. 6d. net.

PUBLISHERS have to cater for readers of various tastes, and so we suppose there are some to whom the present little book will appeal. For ourselves we can but wonder that anybody thought it worth translating. The text is mostly purely rhapsodical, reminding us of Ruskin at his worst. There is very little said about flowers as flowers, and the moral and philosophical reflections present no striking novelty. The illustrations are attractive but over-coloured, and probably do not do justice to the artist's original drawings.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

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The January Meteors.

THE January meteors are seldom visible in England under favourable aspects, the weather being often adverse at this season. Moonlight will partly veil the display in 1907, and the best times to look for it will be on the evenings of January 3 and 4 during the two or three hours preceding moonrise.

The shower is sometimes as rich as an ordinary return of Perseids, and it always furnishes some bright, long

meteors of an unusually conspicuous character. We have gathered a large number of double observations of Perseids and Leonids, and know their average heights very well, but very few real paths of the January Boëtids (or Quadrantids) have ever been computed. It is desirable, therefore, that observers who are fortunate enough to notice any members of the latter shower should record their apparent paths with the greatest accuracy which the circumstances allow, with the view of finding their heights and radiant.

The position of the radiant point has been already well determined at $230^{\circ}+53^{\circ}$, and it is not probable that we shall ascertain it more precisely until photography can effectively take the place of the eye in meteoric observation.

W. F. DENNING.

Stereoscopic Lantern Slides.

PROBABLY many people who have taken interest in stereoscopic photography at one time or another have regretted that there should be no simple means for showing the effect to a large audience.

As a matter of fact, this can be done very easily in either of two ways. A stereoscopic lantern slide is first made by photographing an ordinary stereoscopic pair of pictures. This pair of pictures is then projected upon the screen with an ordinary lantern. The stereoscopic effect is obtained by using either a mirror stereoscope or a prism stereoscope. The former consists of two small pieces of mirror held one in front of each eye. The observer has the screen, not in front of him, but on one side, say about 60° from the direction in which he is facing.

In each mirror the pair of pictures is seen, and by tilting one mirror with respect to the other, so that the two outside images are superposed, the picture suddenly leaps into relief. Of course, if the wrong pair be superposed the familiar inverted relief will appear. It is easy to mount the mirrors in a sort of spectacle frame, one of them being fixed and the other capable of rotation about a vertical axis.

It would not be difficult to explain to an audience of average intelligence the method of using such spectacles; the spectacles could be made at a very small cost, and the beauty of the effect would appeal to many.

Cases frequently arise in university lectures in which a stereoscopic presentation of slides would greatly simplify explanations, e.g. in biology.

The other method is to use a single small achromatic prism, which is held in front of one eye, the refracting angle being vertical and directed towards the other eye. Of course, prisms of different angles are required for different distances, but a single prism can be made to suffice for a large range by twisting it about a vertical axis, without greatly impairing the "stereoscopiaism."

At first sight one might think that the effect could only be seen by observers situate in or near a plane bisecting the screen at right angles, but this is not the case. Indeed, anyone who has worked with stereoscopic photographs must have been struck with the ease with which the eyes will adjust themselves to pictures which are not correctly aligned, and experiment also shows that the two pictures need not be of the same size.

G. A. SHAKESPEAR.

The University, Birmingham. December 17.

Emerald Green Sky Colour.

WHILE on a short stay at St. Moritz I was much struck by the peculiar colour of the sky on the evening of December 10. It had been threatening snow most of the day, and a few flakes fell during the afternoon, the sky being overcast. At about 3.30 p.m. to 4 p.m. the sky cleared over the mountains towards the east, and revealed, instead of the usual blue, a fairly large expanse of vivid emerald green. None of us had ever seen it before, so that we all stopped. I should be much pleased if any of the readers of NATURE could give me some idea of the cause of this unusual phenomenon.

J. W. NOBLE.

Kurhaus Lenzerheide, St. Moritz, December 18.