

to them; and I have called down the wrath of the inhabitants upon my head by discharging my gun at them. They fly away for miles along the coast, keeping themselves carefully separated from the wilder sea-birds, and invariably return to their domicile at a certain hour in the evening." — (*The Mero oasts*, i. 159.)

Can any of your readers state to what species of duck reference is here made? and are any similar facts regarding domesticated or semi-domesticated ducks on record?

F. H. STORER.

POOLE'S NEW INDEX.

An index to periodical literature. By William Frederick Poole, LL.D. 3d edition, brought down to January, 1882, with the assistance, as associate editor, of William I. Fletcher, and the co-operation of the American library association and the Library association of the United Kingdom. Boston: J. R. Osgood & Co., 1882. 1442 p. Large 8vo.

THE appearance of a new edition of Poole's Index to periodical literature is not only an event of literary importance, but a matter of some moment to science as well. In recent times, literature and science have grown so close together that the student of one cannot well ignore the other; and a glance at the work before us will show how impossible it is to draw between them any sharp dividing-line. Of course it was not the purpose of the editor to index the periodicals of a purely technical kind; but popular science seems to have been included in his plan. Accordingly we find such journals as Silliman's, *Nature*, the *American naturalist*, the *Popular science monthly*, the *Anthropological review*, the *Journal of the Franklin institute*, the *Mathematical monthly*, *Van Nostrand's engineering magazine*, the *Edinburgh philosophical journal*, etc., exhaustively treated. Others of equal importance are omitted; but enough are included to make the volume one of real value to every worker in science, whether he be mathematician, astronomer, physicist, chemist, naturalist, geologist, or engineer. The sins of omission count for nothing when balanced against the solid merits of the enterprise. The arrangement of the work is entirely by topics; and its extensiveness may be illustrated by the fact, that between the titles 'electric animals' and 'electrotype,' there are over two hundred and fifty distinct headings, and a large number of sub-entries besides. Many of the titles represent work by the most eminent electricians of the century.

To the student of science the volume, apart from its references to scientific journals, has two points of special interest. First, it contains what is wholly wanting in catalogues of scientific memoirs; namely, abundant material

concerning the personality of scientific men. If one wishes to study the life and influence of Faraday, Humboldt, Agassiz, or Henry, here he will find references to a multitude of papers; such as biographical notices, obituaries, criticisms, sketches, and so on. In nearly every magazine, whether monthly or quarterly, matter of this kind is to be found; and Poole's Index gives us a systematic key to the entire mass of it. The saving of time to the student can hardly be estimated, and the value of the material thus rendered available is by no means small. Whatever great work a master in science may have done, we can better appreciate it if we know something of himself and his environment. Whenever, in studying a mooted question, we try to assign weight to differing authorities, it is worth while to get at some knowledge as to the personal equation of the men. This is particularly true with regard to the bitterer controversies.

The second point of interest above referred to is the evidence which the Index offers as to the extraordinary influence which science exerts, even upon journals which are ostensibly quite outside of its own domain. Every one of the leading magazines is subject to this influence. We find symptoms of it in the scientific references scattered through literary, philosophical, and political essays, and in the host of papers in which science is sought to be popularized. Even poetry, which some critics assert is independent of and above science, is getting to be full of scientific allusions. Many of the popular essays upon scientific themes have solid and permanent value, and yet they are not recorded in such catalogues as that of the Royal society. Only in this volume can we get readily on the track of them; and here we find the names of Herschel, Tyndall, Huxley, Faraday, Helmholtz, Agassiz, and many others, to whom science seemed a matter of human interest, rather than a secret chamber to be entered only by the initiated. Some of the papers here cited contain the first germs of great ideas; others represent the earnest efforts of discoverers to bring their work before the wider public; still others are pleasant summaries of recent scientific advance arranged by appreciative teachers. Whatever a truly competent investigator has to say is likely to be worth hearing; and even his colleagues may gain a clearer conception of his thought by listening to his attempts at popular simplification. Mr. Poole and his associates deserve the hearty thanks of all workers in science for the service he has done their cause.