

course groundless. As a matter of fact, the present writer read Professor Ely's book with more than usual care, not only because it dealt with a question in which he feels a deep personal interest, but because of its general attractiveness of style. When, therefore Professor Ely denies that his reviewer read the book, he evidently is writing in a Pickwickian sense—or else he must mean that his reviewer did not read the book with the author's eyes, which is not beyond the bounds of possibility.

Professor Ely's attention is called to the fact that it is not usually considered candid to eliminate from a quotation any word or clause that distinctly modifies its import. When, therefore, his reviewer wrote, that "while not over-clear on this point, yet he [Professor Ely] seems to uphold the extremists in their contention that all the evils of the present state of society are due to private property and the lack of proper co-operation in production and distribution," he expressed an opinion which the freedom of the press will probably permit him to continue to hold. Professor Ely should have read and quoted it in full. Professor Ely dissents from that opinion, but his reviewer repeats it just as it was first stated. An honest difference of opinion is often serviceable rather than otherwise.

As a further instance of what his reviewer intended by the modest statement that Professor Ely seemed to him to have "committed the not uncommon scientific error of reading his theory into the facts, instead of deducing it from them," may be cited Professor Ely's majestic waving away of one or two well-known facts regarding workmen without grievances striking because of the interference of some walking delegate or other, with some rather eloquent references to a knowledge of human nature.

In fact, it is altogether to be regretted that Professor Ely should consider one of the most favorable notices of his book, that has appeared in any journal of authority, to be 'grossly careless.' Such an attitude seems to ascribe, perhaps, more honor than is their due, to the reviewers for the *Nation*, and for that organ of the socialistic party of which Professor Ely speaks. So we feel doubtful as to just what opinion Professor Ely entertains regarding his book. The general tone of his communication to *Science* would seem to indicate that all criticism of the book, to be just, must be laudatory: the 'grossly careless' phrase inclines us to the belief that the reviewers of the *Nation* and of the organ of the socialistic labor party may have most accurately reflected the judgment of the author. In either case, the present writer must crave Professor Ely's permission to disagree with him.

The published expression of the train of ethical thought to which the same notice of Professor Ely's book gave rise in the mind of 'One of the agitators,' at least calls for the recognition of the honor done your reviewer in coupling his humble initials with the great name of Aristotle. N. M. B.

A manual of lithology.

A critic should carefully inform himself concerning the contents of a book before he attempts to review it, and should criticise the stand-point taken, or adapt his review to that stand-point. This is my excuse for noticing the prodigious mauling of so small a corpse as my 'Lithology.' It is allowable to object to the plane from which a subject is viewed;

but, if it be premised that a certain method is to be followed, a criticism of the faults imposed by that method show that the critic failed to familiarize himself with the necessary facts. Had he acquired such a familiarity, he would have seen that it was designed, not for specialists, but for the very classes to whom he says it may be of value; that a knowledge of mineralogy was presupposed (see preface), and that the treatment of that science was in the shape of a brief review of a few of the more common minerals; that the discarding of the microscope swept away all facts dependent upon that instrument for verification, required the use of old-fashioned terms existing before that instrument changed the nomenclature, and opened the doors for many 'blunders' as viewed by the microscopist. While it may be debated whether it be worth while to attempt to impart so brief an idea of the commoner rocks, it is a fact that such a method has been employed here for a score of years in the regular technical and scientific courses, and that the work is to be covered in twenty exercises. Looking at the criticism from this stand-point, it has overshot its mark, and shows that the writer has mistaken the book for a pretentious claimant for recognition on the score of novelty or advanced method of treatment, while, in fact, it is designed for those who would acquire, in the shortest possible time, an idea of the rocks most commonly met with in the field.

EDWARD H. WILLIAMS, JR.

Bethlehem, Penn., Oct. 30.

The abuse of dispensaries.

Your editorial on 'The abuse of dispensaries' (*Science*, viii. 380) gives occasion to call attention to the charity organization societies and their function. Such societies exist in the cities you mention, at least in London, Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. These societies are clearing-houses of information in relation to the people who beg or accept gratuitous relief. They keep registries, both alphabetic and geographic (at least, this is the case in New York and in Washington), of such persons, and make it their business to ascertain the condition and needs of all persons about whom inquiry is properly made. The principle upon which they work is the following: every church, institution, or person dispensing relief is invited to report to the society the name and residence of and pertinent information about persons aided; they are advised to dispense no relief before ascertaining from the society what it already knows about these persons. If report is made that relief has been extended to any person who is known by the society to be receiving aid from other sources, all parties giving aid are informed of the duplication. If it is known that any person is not receiving adequate relief, the society directs the attention of some appropriate relief-giving agency to the need, or directs the needy to the appropriate agency. This is the application of scientific methods to the solution of the social problems of pauperism and fraudulent and unnecessary solicitation of alms, and is destined to succeed. The dispensaries could well afford, as could all other relief-giving agencies, to apply a large percentage of their funds to the support of the charity organization societies, for the sake of the economy which would therefrom result in their other expenditures.

B: PICKMAN MANN.

Washington, D.C., Oct. 29.