

spiritualizing life, letting light into the mind, inspiring and feeding the higher forces of human nature. In this view, the reading-book becomes vastly more than a mere drill-book in elocution; and it becomes of the greatest consequence that it should be rigorously shut up to the best, and not made the idle vehicle of the second best. It must never be forgotten that the days of a child's life are precious: it has no choice within the walls of the school-room. In its hours for reading it must take what we give it. Be sure that the standard which we set in our school reading-books will inevitably affect its choice of reading out of school; that the conceptions which it forms of literature and the ideal life will be noble or ignoble, according as we use our opportunities. It is for us to say whether the American child shall be brought up to have its rightful share in the great inheritance of America."

In the second essay, after pointing out the desirability of teaching nursery classics in school, the author says (p. 41), "The drawback to the use of these nursery classics in the school-room has been in the absence of versions which are intelligible to children of the proper age, reading by themselves. The makers of the graded reading-books have expended all their ingenuity in *grading* the ascent. They have been so concerned about the gradual enlargement of their vocabularies, that they have paid slight attention to the ideas which the words were intended to convey. But just this gradation may be secured through the use of these stories, and it only needs that they should be written out in a form as simple, especially as regards the order of words, as that which obtains in the reading-books of equivalent grade." And this fine passage serves more purposes than one to show why American classics should be read in school: "The common-school system is the one vast organization of the country, elastic, adapted in minor details to local needs, but swayed by one general plan; feeling the force of educated public sentiment, and manipulated by the free, intelligent association of teachers and superintendents. This organization affords the most admirable means for the cultivation and strengthening of the sentiment of patriotism, and it avails itself of it in many ways." We are perfectly safe in taking Mr. Scudder for our guide in the matter of literature in the schools.

*Children's Stories of the Great Scientists.* By HENRIETTA CHRISTIAN WRIGHT. New York, Scribner. 8°. \$1.25.

THE present volume, which is accompanied by eight good engravings, — portraits of some scientists, — describes the life and work of a number of the most energetic and successful workers in natural science, the author's object being evidently to bring out the lesson taught by their lives, more than to state the results of each one's labor; at least, such we should consider the prime object of biographies of scientists intended for children. In some instances the author has well succeeded in bringing out the instructive part of the lives of these men, and these we consider the best stories contained in the book; but in others a mere compilation of events and discoveries is given, while the character and importance of the man cannot be understood from the description. Among this latter class is, for instance, the chapter on Alexander von Humboldt. Many of the discoveries of physicists as described in the book will hardly be intelligible to children, as they deal with the most difficult problems of science. As an introduction into the history of natural science, the book has, however, a certain merit. The seventeen men whose lives and works are described are the most prominent of the last centuries; and whenever the author pays attention to their struggles and sufferings for the sake of their science, as is done in many cases, the descriptions are suggestive and instructive to the child.

*Our Celestial Home.* By J. G. PORTER. New York, A. D. F. Randolph & Co. 16°. \$1.

THIS book is written by an astronomer, and is an attempt to prove that heaven is somewhere in the stellar universe, though the author is careful not to say where. He contends, that, according to the Bible, heaven is a material place, and not merely a happy state of existence, and must therefore be somewhere in the universe that we see around us. He gives a chapter to the subject of the immensity of the universe as made known by the telescope, and then considers the question of its stability. Science, he thinks, has

shown the universe to be stable as to motion, but speaks with some hesitation with regard to the forces of heat and light. The earth, he intimates, may one day be destroyed by conflagration caused by collision with some swarm of meteors, thus fulfilling the prediction of scripture. Professor Porter is wholly uncritical in his religious views; for he believes not only in the future destruction of the earth, but also in the literal resurrection of the body, in the doctrine that death is the result of Adam's fall, and much else that liberal Christians of the present day have discarded. Indeed, his book is neither religious nor scientific in the higher sense of these terms, and is not likely to make any impression on intelligent minds.

*Soaps and Candles.* Ed. by J. CAMERON. Philadelphia, Blakiston. 12°. \$2.25.

THIS little book is one of a series of technical handbooks, of which those already published are on 'Brewing, Distilling, and Wine-Manufacture;' 'Bleaching, Dyeing, and Calico Printing;' 'Acetic Acid and Vinegar, Ammonia and Alum;' and 'Oils and Varnishes.' As in the preceding numbers of the series, the articles in 'Cooley's Cyclopædia' have formed the nucleus to which material has been added from various scattered sources. It is assumed that the reader has some knowledge of chemistry.

*Examples in Physics.* By D. E. JONES. London and New York, Macmillan. 16°. 90 cents.

As the author well remarks, "it is quite common to find students who have a correct knowledge of the general principles of physics, and can apply it intelligently in making a physical measurement, but who are yet unable to solve an easy problem or to calculate the results of their experimental work." Every one who has been brought face to face with some numerical example in the course of his study of physics has had cause to regret that he has not had more practice in such work, and it is just this opportunity for practice that 'Examples in Physics' is intended to supply in its more than one thousand problems.

#### NOTES AND NEWS.

THE National Geographic Society signalized the beginning of the second year of its successful work by publishing almost simultaneously with its first meeting of the season Vol. I., No. 1, of *The National Geographic Magazine*. In outward appearance it is as attractive as its contents are creditable to the society, by which it is not only edited, but written. Its outward covering is of the, at present, fashionable brick-color, upon which is printed in plain type the title of the magazine, the seal of the society, and the place of publication. The paper is of good quality, and the typography clean and sharp, so the page is easily read. But the contents are most deserving of praise. Besides the opening announcement, introductory address by the president, proceedings of the National Geographic Society, and facts relating to it, there are six carefully prepared articles. Their titles are, 'Geographic Methods in Geologic Investigation,' by William M. Davis; 'Classification of Geographic Forms by Genesis,' by W. J. McGee; 'The Great Storm of March 11 to 14, 1888,' — two articles, the first a brief one, by Gen. A. W. Greely, and the second a very elaborate study of its entire history, by Everett Hayden. The latter paper is illustrated by six carefully prepared colored charts, upon which is shown graphically almost every known fact relating to this great storm. This paper, with the charts, has also been reprinted in a pamphlet. The two remaining papers are, 'The Survey of the Coast,' by Herbert G. Ogden; and 'The Survey and Map of Massachusetts,' by Henry Gannett. In the introductory announcement the editors say: "The National Geographic Society has been organized 'to increase and diffuse geographic knowledge,' and the publication of a magazine has been determined upon as one means of accomplishing these purposes. It will contain memoirs, essays, notes, correspondence, reviews, etc., relating to geographic matters. As it is not intended to be simply the organ of the society, its pages will be open to all persons interested in geography, in the hope that it may become a channel of intercommunication, stimulate geographic investigation, and prove an acceptable medium for the publication of results. The magazine is to be edited by the society. At present it will be