

its existence as a product of putrefaction has been suspected; and Brieger speaks of the "*muscarin äuliche Wirkung*" of an alkaloid isolated by him, but is not satisfied of its identity, as this alkaloid is not included in the list of those discovered and recorded by him.

The case I have here reported is, moreover, doubtless the only one yet investigated wherein muscarine, heretofore known only as a vegetable alkaloid, has been found as a decomposition-product in a food the consumption of which has resulted in death, attended by the well-known symptoms of muscarine-poisoning. The facts observed and here recorded seem to present one more illustration of the intimacy existing between the composition and decomposition of animal and vegetable organisms, and furnish an additional proof of the interest and importance of this new field of investigation. Interest in the researches made in this new domain must be proportional to their importance, capable as they are of developing facts of so universal significance, and dealing with transformations occurring not only in the food we may eat, but in any animal body as well, and demanding new methods of lego-chemical investigation.

During the past year I have continued the investigation begun the previous season, and am now able to report the repeated isolation of muscarine as a product of the putrefaction of the food from the eating of which the four people at Chitose died, and, moreover, have been so fortunate as to discover two new and heretofore unknown ptomaines. One of these was obtained from the original ether extract; but, though their character has been carefully studied, I prefer to reserve opinion as to identification.

Discussion of the scientific interest and value of these facts is here out of place; but their practical value is, however, of widespread importance and applicability, both from sanitary and legal points of view. We are forced to recognize the danger of eating either animal or vegetable food after decomposition has begun, since this process may result in the development of deadly poisonous alkaloids resembling in physiological properties, strychnine, morphine, brucine, and other of the most powerful poisonous alkaloids hitherto known only as products of vegetable growth. Many diseases of a cholera-like character, perhaps even this most dreaded malady itself, may result from the consumption of food in which the process of putrefaction has begun. From a legal standpoint, chemists, physicians, and jurists are now compelled to recognize the possibility that many supposed cases of criminal poisoning are in reality the result of ptomaine-formation, either in food or in the decomposing body after death.

BOOK-REVIEWS.

Fundamental Problems. By DR. PAUL CARUS. Chicago, Open Court Publ. Co. 12°. \$1.

THE author of this work is the editor of the *Open Court*, a paper professing to teach a new religion, and most of the chapters of which the book consists have already appeared in the columns of that paper. The object of the book is to set forth the philosophy of Dr. Carus, which, we suppose, must be taken as the basis of that improved religion which the *Open Court* was founded to teach. One merit the work certainly has: it is, except in the ethical part, plainly written, and leaves no doubt as to what the author's philosophy is. It is a crude and crass materialism. Indeed, we have never seen a work in which the materialistic view was presented in so extreme a form as in this of Dr. Carus. Thus, in discussing the origin of feeling, he says, "We must expect the solution of this problem from biological investigations. . . . The conditions of feeling must exist in the inorganic matter of our world, and the appearance of the phenomena of sensation will be found to depend upon a special form in which the molecules of protoplasm combine and disintegrate" (pp. 10-11). And elsewhere he says that "it is not improbable that feeling will be demonstrated as a special kind of reflex action in organized substance" (p. 185). "The ego . . . is the result of the innumerable and complicated nerve organisms in our body" (p. 214). And then, as if these assertions were not sufficient, Dr. Carus declares "it is undeniable that immaterial realities cannot exist. The thing exists by its being material" (p.

86). He ridicules the idea of a First Cause, even when conceived as the Unknowable, and calls it a chimerical nonentity. God is variously spoken of as the All-existence and as the order of the world. The doctor's ethical theory is confused and inconsistent. He rejects utilitarianism, and at first adopts Kant's view that the moral law is purely formal, without any reference to ends; yet again he says that man is moral "by observing and conforming to the cosmical order of nature;" and both these views are supplemented by the theory that morality consists in living for the ideal, though what the ideal is we are nowhere informed. Such are Dr. Carus's views; and we are constrained to say that we do not think they will revolutionize either philosophy or religion.

Hygiene of the Nursery. By LOUIS STARR. 2d ed. Philadelphia, Blakiston. 12°. \$1.

WHEN the first edition of this manual appeared, we said, that, of the many books which have been published on this subject, this was by far the best. This, the second edition, is, by virtue of a thorough revision and numerous additions, superior to the first. It has our hearty commendation.

Statics for Beginners. By JOHN GREAVES. London and New York, Macmillan. 16°. 90 cents.

THIS work on "Statics for Beginners," by John Greaves, fellow and mathematical lecturer of Christ College, Cambridge, England, assumes no knowledge beyond "Euclid," Books 1-6, and elementary algebra, with a few propositions in trigonometry. Collections of easy examples are inserted after the more important propositions, while examples of greater difficulty are given at the ends of the chapters.

AMONG THE PUBLISHERS.

MESSRS. GINN & Co. announce as in preparation "Practical Latin Composition," by W. C. Collar, A.M., head master of the Roxbury Latin School, Boston, and author of "The Beginner's Latin Book" and "Collar's Eysenbach." This book embodies a method that has been followed by the author for many years with the most satisfactory results. A brief explanation of the method will show how rational it is, how well it accords with the principles of language-teaching now most approved, and how simple and effectual an aid it should prove to a real understanding of Latin. The book consists of three classes of exercises, all based on selections from the Latin authors usually read in schools. The first exercise of each group contains easy sentences to be turned into Latin orally, — sentences involving the use of words, idioms, and constructions of the Latin text assigned for study in preparation. The second exercise consists of a short passage of continuous English to be written out in Latin, based on the same Latin text as the preceding. The third exercise, which may be omitted at the teacher's option, contains questions in Latin, to be answered in Latin, on the subject-matter of the original, but not introducing either words or grammatical principles that are unfamiliar. Notes and occasional grammatical references accompany the exercises.

— "From Nineveh to the Lake; the Deluged Valley of the Conemaugh; Scenes Afoot," is announced by Alex. Y. Lee, architect and civil engineer, 96 4th Avenue, Pittsburgh, Penn. This is an extended bird's-eye view of the valley of the Conemaugh, Johnstown, and the lake, finely lithographed and drawn from personal sketches, and based upon surveys of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

— Roberts Brothers have just ready, in their series of Balzac's works, "Seraphita," which is the completing volume of Balzac's three philosophical novels, of which "The Magic Skin" and "Louis Lambert" have already been issued by this house. Many critics have so little understood the real meaning of "Louis Lambert" and "Seraphita," that they have wondered why the author gave them a place in the *Comédie Humaine*, which, nevertheless, without them, would be a temple without a pediment, as M. Taine very clearly saw and said. Mr. George F. Parsons takes advantage of Miss Wormeley's translation to state and prove and elucidate this truth in an introduction, and all serious readers who follow it throughout will never regret that they have thus prepared themselves to understand Balzac's work.