

text-books, most of which are good but some of which are sadly out of date. The laboratory exercises partially cover the conventional elementary ground, but are inferior to those of Miss Brown and of other authors. Unfortunately the book is marred by slovenly English, colloquial expressions and typographical errors.

FREDERIC S. LEE.

Physiology, illustrated by Experiment. By BUEL P. COLTON. Boston, D. C. Heath & Co. 1900. Pp. xiii + 386.

This book is intended as a 'Briefer Course' of Mr. Colton's 'Physiology, Experimental and Descriptive.' As an elementary text-book for secondary schools it can be recommended. It contains an unusually large amount of matter, concisely, briefly, and upon the whole attractively presented. It is preeminently physiological and hygienic as distinguished from anatomical. Its language is not overburdened with technicalities. Its directions for practical work are limited, but this is excusable in view of the many satisfactory laboratory books now in existence. Most of its figures and diagrams are excellent.

The treatment of the subject of alcohol, while fairly moderate as compared with that of some writers of text-books, is somewhat intemperate in its use of adjectives. At the beginning of the chapter devoted to this subject the bald statement is made that 'alcohol is not a food.' At the close of the chapter it is allowed, on the authority of well-known quoted writers, that 'technically it may be called a food.'

FREDERIC S. LEE.

FOLK-LORE IN BORNEO.

DR. WILLIAM HENRY FURNESS 3d, had privately printed an attractive little volume called 'Folk-lore in Borneo: A Sketch,' in which is given a brief report of an ethnological field that has acquired a new interest because of the recent discoveries made in the group of islands to which Borneo belongs. The influence of a tropical environment is noted by the author in the Kayan myth of creation, which he narrates as a 'purely Bornean' product, and contrasts it with the Dyak account of the genesis of the race, wherein he discerns Malay influence.

Among the interesting pages of the book are those which tell of head-hunting, 'the one ruling passion of the people.' The tradition of its origin is given, and the author thoughtfully remarks: "It is not unfair to infer from this tradition that they have a crude, germinal sense of the barbarity of their actions, in so far as they think it necessary to invent an excuse to palliate that savage love of trophy-hunting which seems inborn in mankind." And he points out how the native beliefs concerning the five peculiar regions in 'the land of departed spirits' tends to conserve the practice of the head-hunting 'rite.' Among the many interesting subjects touched upon are the connection between the Pleiades and agriculture; the omen birds and the devices the people practice to avert bad luck; the function of fire as a 'go-between of man and the birds'; and the glimpses of a river cult among these natives. The illustrations really illustrate the text; they are admirably selected, and the pictures of old and young, men and women, inspire confidence as types, as they are without exaggerated peculiarities. The book is a welcome addition to the literature of folk-lore.

A. C. F.

DISCUSSION AND CORRESPONDENCE.

NEWSPAPER SCIENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: I have had so much satisfaction in the review and criticism recently published in SCIENCE, of Mr. Tesla's magazine article on 'Human Energy' that I cannot avoid making public acknowledgment of my appreciation of its justice and timeliness, especially the latter. Is it not the imperative duty of men of science to do what the author of this review has done, more frequently than they have during the past ten years?

Within this decade there has been an enormous decrease in the cost of publication and especially in the expense of illustration, and this has brought about a deluge of reading matter of such infinite variety and general worthlessness that the formation of a society for its systematic suppression is worthy of serious consideration. With the daily newspapers it has been distinctly an era of sensationalism.

A reporter for a daily paper recently de-

clared that he was required by his chief to 'furnish at least two sensations a week.' Nearly all the more respectable and conservative magazines have yielded somewhat to this demand. The general reading public has recognized in an indistinct and uncertain way that much that is wonderful in this 'wonderful century' is due to scientific discovery, and it is apparently hungry for easy exposition of scientific work. It seems to like, at any rate it is largely fed upon, science of the 'head-line' variety, and those who can furnish this sort are in great demand. Unfortunately there are a few men, fortunately not many, who have done and are doing really excellent scientific work who are ready to cater to this morbid appetite, and there are many others, merely 'hack' writers with neither knowledge or reputation, who find it easy to imitate them. The result tends to dull the scientific sense and corrupt the judgment of the great majority of readers. What we see in print concerning what we do not understand we almost invariably accept as true unless it violently opposes our prejudices or accepted theories, and the general public, therefore, is in a very receptive mood towards announcements of scientific discoveries and accomplishments. That this is taken advantage of to reach the purse of the public no one can deny, and it is impossible not to find certain very respectable and otherwise conservative journals largely responsible for losses of thousands of dollars by comparatively poor people through stock subscriptions in schemes believed to be backed by scientific men. It is no valid defense to say that the editors of these journals were imposed upon, for if they were they need not have been. Other journals, including some daily papers, know very well how to avoid such imposition and have the courage to do it. It appears to be accepted as a fundamental principle of what is called 'journalism' in these days that any one who is gifted with a little facility in writing, a far-reaching imagination and a conscience without elastic limit may be properly 'assigned' to prepare an article on any subject whatever, and thus we are treated to weekly or monthly essays by one author covering, in fact sometimes rather more than covering, in a few months the whole area

of human knowledge. Perhaps they, too, have their orders to produce a given number of 'sensations' in a given time.

Among many other evils growing out of what may be called 'Newspaper Science' not the least is the manufacturing and maintaining of false reputations. The constant appearance of a name in connection with the development of a given art, science, discovery or invention makes an impression which it is difficult to destroy, and this is true even among the most intelligent classes. To find who is really and truly eminent in any field of human activity one must go to the specialists in that field. The popular verdict is more than likely to be wrong because it is based on fictitious, newspaper-created renown. Is there not, indeed, some danger that in spite of the carefully selected and altogether able jury, the newly created roll of American honor may, in certain cases and for the lack of this appeal to specialists, become a Hall of Notoriety rather than Fame? The selection of S. F. B. Morse for a place therein must have been due to the general belief among the jurors that he was the inventor of the electro-magnetic telegraph. Yet it was long since proved beyond dispute that his share in that invention was among the least of the many who contributed to make the telegraph possible, and that he justly deserves only a relatively very small share of the honor belonging thereto.

T. C. M.

THE DATE OF PUBLICATION OF BREWSTER'S
AMERICAN EDITION OF THE EDINBURGH
ENCYCLOPÆDIA.

IN commenting on a recent paper by Mr. J. A. G. Rehn (*Amer. Nat.*, XXIV., p. 575), Dr. J. A. Allen states (*Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.*, XIII., p. 186) that the reference to "Brewster's American Edition, Edinburgh Encyclopædia, Vol. XII., Part II., p. 505, 1819," given by Mr. Rehn, "is erroneous as to date, and misleading as to the title of the work cited."

There is nothing whatever in Mr. Rehn's statement to warrant the idea that he had taken the reference at second hand, as Dr. Allen seems to have inferred, and as a matter of fact his reference is perfectly correct.

As Dr. Allen's positive statement that the