

QUOTATIONS

ACADEMIC CONTROL IN GERMANY

THE German university world has been stirred to its depths by the sudden creation of a fourth professorship of economics at the University of Berlin, and the immediate appointment to it of a young teacher at the University of Kiel. For years past the three professorships of economics at Berlin have been held by Professors Wagner, Schmoller, and Sering—men of world-wide reputation, who have been assisted by four or five “extraordinary” professors and a swarm of docents. There was, therefore, not the slightest necessity, from the teaching point of view, of creating a new professorship. But early in this month the university authorities were astounded to receive from the Ministry of Education the notice that a new chair had been founded, and that Professor Ludwig Bernhard, thirty-two years of age, had been appointed to it. The ministry explained that, owing to certain circumstances requiring haste, there had been no time to sound the university authorities, as was the invariable custom; nor had it either consulted or received permission of the Prussian Diet, but had used for this purpose certain emergency funds given to it for an entirely different purpose. The real reason, it appears, is that Professor Bernhard has published a study of the Poles in Prussia which supported the government in its anti-Polish crusade. Having received a call from a South German university, he was about to accept it and give up his Polish studies. Merely that he might continue them, he was given a full professorship in the foremost German university. Naturally, the world of scholars is up in arms at this use of a great institution for purely political purposes.¹—*New York Evening Post*.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Un problème de l'évolution. La théorie de la récapitulation des formes ancestrales au cours de développement embryonnaire.

¹The philosophical faculty at Berlin has voted that, while it has no personal objection to Pro-

(Loi biogénétique fondamentale de Haeckel.)

Par L. VIALLETON. Montpellier, Coulet et Fils. 8vo. 1908.

This volume is a characteristic French production in that it gives with rare skill a comprehensive and clear summary of a complex scientific problem. To the American reader it will seem strange that no mention is made of Louis Agassiz, the most celebrated of all the defenders of the theory of recapitulation; and it is to be regretted that the article by Adam Sedgwick, “On the Law of Development, known as ‘Von Baer’s Law,’” which was published in the *Quarterly Journal of Microscopical Science*, 1894, should have remained unknown to the author. None the less, the work is very excellent of its kind. It is based upon a series of lectures delivered a year ago before the students of philosophy at Montpellier. The author gives an introduction and historical review, which deals with Meckel, his predecessors and followers, a résumé which biologists will surely welcome. He then passes in a series of chapters, IV.-VIII., to the presentation and discussion of the evidence in the structure and development of vertebrates, for and against the theory of recapitulation. This is certainly very well done; the selection of examples is apt, and they are laid before the reader in such a way that he is brought gradually to a clear understanding of the necessary limitations which must be put upon the law of recapitulation. These chapters deserve especially to be recommended to the attention of teachers and students of general biology.

The last chapter is devoted to presenting the ideas of Oskar Hertwig, and is essentially a critical analysis of Hertwig’s essay in the concluding volume of his “Handbook of Comparative Embryology.” Here, I think, the author is somewhat at fault in attributing so much originality to Hertwig. For many years embryologists have been familiar not only with the law of recapitulation, but with the fessor Bernhard, it does not approve his appointment, owing to the fact it was not consulted. Thereupon Professor Bernhard declined the offer of the ministry of education.—Ed.

limitations which must be put upon it. Thus, in my own "Laboratory Text-book of Embryology," published in 1903, pp. 41-43, is given a brief outline of the subject. It seemed to me then that the general opinion was well established, although at that time no single comprehensive essay had been written upon the subject. Hertwig's essay is most creditable, but most of the views he presents were certainly current among embryologists before he wrote. This emphasis of the importance of Hertwig's essay is a most amiable failure, and we may welcome a fresh example of international scientific courtesy, but a critic may be pardoned if he notes that that courtesy is somewhat exaggerated in its expression.

In conclusion, one may recommend Professor Vialleton's work to American readers very cordially. It is a sensible, competent and interesting presentation of a great biological problem, and unquestionably the best we have had.

CHARLES S. MINOT

The Common Sense of the Milk Question.
By JOHN SPARGO.

This book is a layman's endeavor to provide for the average intelligent citizen a popular, easily understandable statement of the politico-social aspects of the milk problem. This being the case, it is unfortunate that the author has emphasized so strongly his opinion as to the cause of the decline of breast feeding and that he has so severely arraigned the public authorities for their supposed crimes of omission and commission with reference to the milk supply. The average reader will be too apt to accept the author's opinions without looking beyond them to determine the sufficiency or the insufficiency of the evidence upon which they are based.

It may be true, as Mr. Spargo holds, that physical disability on the part of the mother is responsible for the larger part of the cases of bottle feeding, but there is a very respectable opinion to the contrary. And so long as the question can not be answered with reasonable certainty and unanimity by the body of men

best able to speak—the medical profession—it might have been better for a lay writer not to declare quite so positively concerning it. For many a mother may find in his teachings the very excuse she is longing for to justify her conscience in submitting her baby to the dangers of bottle feeding. Even admitting, however, that the decline of breast feeding is due to increasing frequency of physical incapacity on the part of the mother, it is not necessary to attribute the increase to racial degeneration; inadequacy of lacteal function in the individual, when it occurs, seems much more likely to be as yet the immediate result of the disuse of the mammary glands during the long period that now commonly ensues after their full anatomical development and before they are called into use, the result of late marriage and postponed child-bearing, rather than the result of racial deterioration.

Mr. Spargo should have submitted evidence to show "the dishonest connection between the manufacturers (of infants' artificial foods) and the health bureaus of the country" or else should have omitted the allegation of its existence. The records of births on file in the health offices of this country are commonly public records, and it bespeaks neither dishonesty nor graft on the part of the health officer if he refrains from denying to the citizen his right of access to such records, even though such a citizen be in the service of a manufacturer of one of the tabooed foods and desires to abstract for advertising purposes the names and addresses of the mothers of children recently born. The allegation, too, that "our civic authorities stand in the position of murderers and accessories to the murder of thousands of infants every year" is ill-advised, since it is not true. It seems remarkable that one who is endeavoring so earnestly as is Mr. Spargo to improve the milk supply should have overlooked the fact that the accomplishment of that end can not be furthered by holding up to public contumely officials who, as a class, are quite as sincere in their desire and quite as earnest in their effort to accomplish that result as is Mr.