An interest in plants is a natural one. Plants are everywhere about us, and are useful in many and exceedingly important ways. The botanical teaching of the last ten or fifteen years has been missing its opportunity to serve and take advantage of this interest, by busying itself too exclusively with plants which most people never see except in the class room, and in which they have no practical interest.

The old course of study made better use in many respects of one term than the newer course has done of a year. It left much to be desired and the newer course made up its shortcomings; but it did this at too great an expense when it threw away the familiarity with the different kinds of common flowering plants, and the excursions, and the love of the woods which the students gained in old-time classes. There are hopeful signs of a backward swing of the pendulum. And it is well that this come before field botany is quite forgotten.

E. B. Copeland

INDOOR HUMIDITY

To the Editor of Science: Notwithstanding the conclusions reached in Dr. Ingersoll's interesting letter on this topic, something may perhaps be said in favor of a humidity considerably higher than 40 per cent., and nearer the 66 or 70 per cent. favored by "most authorities."

The writer has made experiments similar to those of Dr. Ingersoll, but with the following differences: gallons evaporated per day, 18 to 20, instead of 25 or more; volume of house actually served by the hot and humid air supply, 17,000 instead of 20,000 cubic feet; humidity maintained with comfort, over 60 per cent., instead of 40 per cent. Another important factor, and there are yet more, is that of house temperature. Unfortunately, Dr. Ingersoll has omitted any mention of this; but, judging from common American practise, one may, perhaps, assume a day temperature of 70°. Now in a Scots household, such as the writer's, a temperature nearer 60° is thought more comfortable, and was that aimed at in our experiments. And herein enters the most interesting feature of the case, that the weight of water present per cubic foot, and hence the possible amount of dew deposit, is approximately the same with 40 per cent. saturation at 70° as with 60 per cent. saturation at 60°! Thus, after all, those at least of the authorities that are European may not be so far wrong in their estimate, and, truly, one does like to say a little, if only occasionally, in favor of the authorities.

The writer would agree most heartily with Dr. Ingersoll in the statement that any serious effort to raise the indoor humidity is very well worth while.

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SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

The Purchasing Power of Money; Its Determination and Relation to Credit, Interest and Crises. By Irving Fisher, assisted by Harry G. Brown. New York, The Macmillan Company. 1911. Pp. xxii + 505.

Although Irving Fisher is a good propagandist and can use arguments which appeal to the man in the street, his reasoning is based upon critical, logical, scientific analysis. One of the propositions which he has recently been actively promoting is international monetary reform looking toward the elimination or restriction of those disastrously wide variations in prices which may be due to the irregularities of the world's gold production. The principles upon which his suggestions for regulating the general price level are based are expounded in his "Purchasing Power of Money." An early proficiency in mathematics and interest in the mathematical theory of prices has led him naturally to a quantitative or quantity theory of money which he builds up with a deep knowledge and appreciation of scientific method. This attitude is a justification for Science to show an interest in his work which it could hardly exhibit in the case of ordinary studies in economics.