parative study of myths current among American Indians and in the interpretation of them.

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The Genus Phoradendron. By WILLIAM TRELEASE, Professor of Botany in the University of Illinois. Published by the University. Octavo, pp. 224, pls. 245. Price, paper, $2.00; cloth, $2.50.

It is fortunate for botanists that the author of this excellent treatise has made so thorough a revision of the genus *Phoradendron* instead of being content with merely attempting to straighten out the tangle existing in regard to the group of related forms hitherto known as *Phoradendron flavescens,* as he first contemplated. The author notes that Engelmann has shown too great a conservatism in his published studies of the various forms of species of the genus, by later withdrawing segregates of *P. flavescens* that he formerly had recognized, and that in continuing the work of Engelmann, also being influenced by his views, Torrey allowed a number of forms which he had designated as new species to lie unpublished in the Torrey herbarium. The author in addition to making a critical study of the abundant data and material of North American species collected by Engelmann, Torrey and others in the great herbaria of this country, visited those of Europe and extended the investigation to the collection of West Indian and South American species by Urban, Martins and others. This has enabled him to make a careful comparison of numerous types and variants of species of the genus, and to more carefully discriminate between varieties and species. He recognizes 262 differentiable forms, most of which he has classified as species. In this matter he apparently does not share the conservatism of Engelmann and Torrey. Of the species he now recognizes, 154 are listed from North America and 124 from South America. The genus is separated into two primary groups, the Boreales and the Æquatoriales, plants of the former are constantly without, and the latter constantly with cataphyls on their foliage shoots. Both groups contain species destitute of expanded foliage, which are well represented by *Phoradendron juniperinum* in the southwestern United States. All of our species belong to the Boreales, those of Mexico and Central America to both primary groups, and those of the West Indies and South America wholly to the Æquatoriales. These primary groups are each divided and then subdivided, making finally in all groups 55 minor subdivisions.

The book contains 224 pages of descriptive matter including very good and usable keys; these are supplemented by indexes of collectors, occurrence, and names. The illustrations, 245 full sized plates, are indeed works of art but are also true to nature. Few books of this class are so fully and beautifully illustrated. GEORGE G. HEDGCOCK

MECHANICAL PROPERTIES OF WOOD DETERMINED

A NUMBER of fundamental laws governing the properties of wood, such as those covering the relations between strength and specific gravity, and between strength and moisture content, are laid down in a bulletin just issued by the Department of Agriculture. In this publication are presented the results of about 130,000 strength tests, probably the largest single series ever run on one material, made by the Forest Products Laboratory of the Forest Service on 126 species of American woods. The laws derived from the tests cover the general relations existing between mechanical and physical properties of each species, and also the general relations existing between these properties irrespective of species.

The results ought to prove of great value wherever knowledge of the properties of wood is essential. They have, for example, made possible the preparation of accurate tables showing all the needed strength properties for the woods used in airplanes. With these as a basis, specifications can be drawn up to eliminate all material that does not meet the exacting requirements of this highly specialized use.