ington, where Mr. Gavett saw it, it must have been nearly 2,500 miles long.

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MONKEYS AS COCONUT PICKERS

E. W. GUDGER has recently called attention in SCIENCE to the use of monkeys as coconut pickers. The Malays and Bataks of Sumatra very commonly use monkeys in this way. The current English name there for the monkeys, *Macacus Nemestrinus,* is "coconut-monkey." The work of picking the nuts is performed in a way essentially the same as that described by Shelford and quoted by Gudger.

These monkeys not only work, but have a considerable commercial value as laborers. The price of a trained coconut monkey ranges from about $8.00 to $20.00; a price far above that put upon other common sorts of monkeys which are kept only as pets.

Coconut monkeys grow to a considerable size, and are very strong. They are also, usually savage, and will inflict a nasty bite whenever they have a chance.

CARL D. LA RUE
KISARAN, ASAHAN, SUMATRA

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Vital Statistics: An Introduction to the Science of Demography. By GEORGE CHANDLER WHIPPLE. New York, John Wiley and Sons. 1919. Pp. 517. $4.00 net.

Vital statistics have developed slowly in the United States. In spite of much progress in recent years, official records, including federal, state and municipal, still lack much in extent of the field covered and in detail of treatment. A nation-wide registration area for the recording and analysis of the elementary vital phenomena of birth and death is still unattained. A number of states and many of our cities of good size and of undoubted prosperity and economic development make no serious effort to collect the facts of their vital resources. It is no wonder then that we, in America, have lacked adequate text-books and competent teachers for the instruction of those interested in the science of vital statistics. Physicians who would profit most from knowledge of the subject receive virtually no instruction in this science. Health officers, in like manner, have only, within the last few years, awakened to the value of vital statistics as a mechanism in their work and only a few are competent to use it effectively.

Professor Whipple's book will, therefore, help to fill a long felt want. It is, frankly, a book for health officers. It is not intended for advanced students as a contribution to the method of statistics. It is rather a guide to those who would be familiar with the simplest methods as applied to the public health field. Only Dr. Newsholme's volume on vital statistics (now out of print) has been available for English readers during the last three decades. The present book, perhaps altogether more attractive in its mode of approach, will now serve American students and will present recent, often current, data concerning their own country.

The book may be divided into two parts; the first covers the technique of practical statistics, the second discusses the phases of vital phenomena of populations. The appendices give a rather incomplete bibliography, the model law for reporting diseases, births and deaths and logarithms of numbers up to 10,000.

The first section, pages one to ninety-nine, is a useful first aid to the student of the methods of crude statistical description. The usual devices and methods are described clearly and even pleasingly. This is obviously Professor Whipple's *forte.* He, as a sanitary engineer, has given proper place in his own writings to the graphic methods and to other attractive means of clear presentation of statistical materials. The student will, however, unless he carries his studies much further than the text, find himself only at the threshold of statistical method after he has covered this first part. Perhaps this is all that is intended by the author, who assumes no special mathematical skill or equipment on the part of his students. This section would ordinarily have given the greatest