

REVIEWS

unusual information, woven about a week's holiday spent by the children at or in connection with the Natural History Museum, and interspersed with other attractive additions, like the bus ride across London, the method of judging the childrens' essays, and the new variation of *Consequences*, called *Doctor and Patient*. I suppose it was inevitable that the evolution theory should be taken for granted by the authoress; yet it is, perhaps, a pity that the *Origin of Species* should be presented to children so categorically, especially now that authoritative scientists have questioned its truth. However, it is a book that children will love, and the only real hesitation parents and others will have in giving it to children arises from the certainty that they will be badgered by the recipients to be taken to this unexpectedly fascinating Museum.

Next in order of merit, in my opinion, comes the book on English Wild Animals. While its style and approach are different from (and not so attractive as) the Museum book, it presents the same wealth of interesting material. It is written by an animal lover; but it is possible that the author does not understand children quite as well as he understands animals; I suspect they will think he is writing down to them, especially in the speeches of the various quadrupeds. The illustrations, by Doris Fairfax-Blakeborough, are excellent.

The third volume is of a more straightforward descriptive character. In style, it will probably appeal least of the three. The mythology of trees, in the *Chapter of Surprises*, rather detracts from than adds to the value of the book for children. I found myself in frank agreement with the author when I read, at the beginning of the succeeding chapter, the following words: "We have been talking so long about the legends of trees that I think it will be rather a nice change to turn to some facts." The facts themselves are most interesting and informative, and it is indeed "just the book for those who love trees distantly, but would like to know them better." The photographic illustrations, black and white as well as coloured, add considerably to the value of a valuable book.

HILARY J. CARPENTER, O.P.

A HISTORY OF EUROPE. Vol. II: Renaissance, Reformation, Reason. By the Rt. Hon. H. A. L. Fisher. (Eyre & Spottiswoode; 18/-.)

The second volume of Mr. Fisher's history of Europe presents us with a clear picture of the non-stop variety show of civilized humanity from the Renaissance to the end of the "Ancient regime." On reading it, it appears obvious at once that the author is now dealing with a period more familiar and better suited for treatment according to his conception of history, so that the high

standard of the preceding volume is surpassed in this one. Epigrams make the pages of this work a truly pyrotechnic display, and but for the too often used appellative "laborious" the use of adjectives in the short sketches of the various characters is good. The picture of European history given in this volume illustrates the truth that, fundamentally, this world is ruled by stupidity, and that knowledge of history, or to put it into plainer language, past experience, cannot prevent the continual repetition of the same mistakes. Perhaps "stupidity triumphant" would be a very apt label to any book of general history. The hostile-agnostic attitude towards religion which pervades Volume I is to be found again here side by side with the author's strong Whig prejudices.

This volume opens with the Renaissance. It seems a pity that while treating of this most important period the author has not availed himself of the latest and very important contributions on the subject, a fact shown not only by the chapter itself but also by the bibliography at the end of it. So, for instance, the numerous contributions towards a clearer conception of the Renaissance by the late Professor Burdach are neglected in favour of the more picturesque and out-of-date works of Burkhardt and John Addington Symonds, while the very important contributions to the understanding of the Renaissance in Northern Europe by Huizinga and Cartellieri are also passed over. Although this work is by no means free from inexactitudes, some instances of which have appeared in other reviews, the number of them is very much smaller than that of the preceding volume. It would be most desirable however that both volumes should be carefully revised before a new edition of them is issued. Like its elder brother, this volume makes very attractive reading, and a careful study of it should prove very useful to the politician as well as to the historian and the layman. Small incidents provoked great changes. They were sparks which, though harmless *per se*, were capable of producing a serious explosion in a room filled with gas, and Mr. Fisher is a master in finding the causes that produced the gas. Experience of these two volumes makes us look forward eagerly to the third and final volume.

ROBERTO WEISS.

SAINT PETER CANISIUS, S.J., 1521-1597. By James Brodrick, S.J. (Sheed & Ward; 25/-.)

Fr. Brodrick, in an over-modest preface, apologetically thanks publishers and printers for "shouldering a monstrous burden." Yet they may well be proud to give to the world this specimen of model hagiography. "This is not everybody's book," he says. The reviewer, at any rate, has seldom been more thrilled by a biography.

True, the author had much to lighten his task. "No saint in the