

last ten years, the reviewer has been frequently struck with the lucidity and ease shown by the writers in explaining even the most technical parts of mathematical and physical problems. Is it impossible to do this in the English language? And if not, why are such summaries so rarely seen? Or, if published, why do they seem to be heavy and unattractive? Surely it cannot be the fault of the language when we have before our eyes such a master of scientific style as Huxley. Perhaps there is something to be learned from France amongst the methods which she uses in teaching her sons to write their mother tongue.

ERNEST W. BROWN.

Astronomical and Historical Chronology. By W. L. JORDAN.
London, Longmans, Green & Co. 8vo. 70 pp.

THE object of this little book will be sufficiently gathered from the author's statement on page 9: "My argument shows that through a misunderstanding on the part of comparatively modern historians they treated as 1 B. C. the year which, when the era was first established, was called 1 A. D. by those who used ordinal, and the year 0 by those who used cardinal numbers; and that the manner in which the centuries are considered to be divided is therefore erroneous." The question is discussed historically and much space is given to an examination of the authorities. Mr. Jordan comes to the conclusion that if the year 0 be inserted, January 1, 1900 is the beginning of the new century as decreed by the English Prayer Book and the German emperor; but that with the 'vulgar' chronology, which makes 1 B. C. immediately precede 1 A. D., the new century began a year later. The author's physical ideas seem somewhat vague: he alludes (page 33) "to the absence of any common measure between days and years as being due to the fact that the motions which they respectively measure are due to the action of two independent forces—the sun's and the earth's revolving force—etc." But perhaps this is unfair: he has written an essay on the action of astral gravitation in natural phenomena.

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NOTES.

AT the meeting of the London mathematical society held on January 11 the following papers were read: By Mr. J. W. NICHOLSON "On the diffraction of sound by large cylinders"; by