

REVIEW.

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We are in receipt of "The Snakes of Ceylon" by Col. F. Wall, C.M.G., I.M.S., a fair sized volume of 581 pages. As a popular account of the snakes of the Island with its voluminous notes upon the feeding, breeding, and other habits of the species found there, it is a valuable and interesting work. The author has drawn freely from his own large experience, and has spared no pains to make the life history of each species as complete as possible.

A full account is also given of the poisonous forms, and the symptoms, diagnosis and treatment of the various types of snake poison are discussed at length. In this respect the work should be valuable to the medical practitioners, not only of Ceylon, but of all India as well, for in the matter of poisonous snakes the two countries have much in common.

An attempt has been made to supply the amateur with a ready method of identification, but we doubt if any system can produce reliable results without far greater study than the average man is prepared to give.

On turning to the more scientific side of the book, however, we are disappointed. A list of synonyms accompanies each species, but without the authors names or references attached it is of little value. Nor do we think that Col. Wall's changes in nomenclature will meet with general approval. In his treatment of the sea-snakes in particular there is much ground for discussion.

Nor, lastly, can we agree with Col. Wall, not alone among authors in this respect, when, having accepted the correctness of a name he refrains from using it on the grounds that the one now in use has grown familiar and is best retained. Science is for all time, and the sentimental considerations of a passing generation should not be allowed to affect our views and obscure the truth.