

is a matter of great importance from national, economic, and æsthetic points of view, yet this phase of forest utility is only too often ignored. In a short but interesting chapter the author has succeeded in summarising the main facts and focussing them in an admirably lucid manner.

In the succeeding chapter the forest regions of France and the important tree species are described. An interesting review is given of the area, topography, and prevailing climatic conditions of France, and striking illustrations are given of the recent wonderful development of the natural resources of the country in hydraulic power. Further on are presented the forest statistical data, which bring out many points of absorbing interest. One striking fact is that the number of small forest owners is incredibly large. The small owner of less than 25 acres of forest is greatly in the majority, but the proportion of sawn timber to fuel wood in State-owned or technically managed forests is much more advantageous than in those privately owned.

The natural and artificial regeneration of forests, as practised in France, is well worth the close attention of students of silviculture. An excellent account is also given of the control by afforestation of mountain torrents and lowland floods, which in the past have caused privation and ruin to thousands of the population, and untold loss to the nation.

The author also gives a most interesting account—historical, statistical, and technical—of the wonderful forests of the Landes. The almost magical transformation of a barren, fever-stricken waste of something like two million acres into a healthy and prosperous revenue-yielding territory, to the enormous advantage of France and every individual Frenchman, was a marvellous achievement. The State, as the author puts it, “blazed the trail,” the good lead was followed by the “communes,” and private effort did the rest. Much useful information is given concerning French Government regulations and working plans, the features of French national forest administration, and private forestry in France.

An interesting account is given of the activities of the Forest Engineers in France. The vital importance of timber in modern warfare is shown in many ways, and it is safe to conclude that without the well-planned forests and timber resources of France “the war might have been a draw or a defeat instead of a victory.”

A number of interesting appendices are added which deal with specific forestry subjects, including an exhaustive list of French forestry literature, and there is a good index. The book is well illustrated with photographs and diagrams.

Our Bookshelf.

Official Statistics. By Prof. A. L. Bowley. (The World of To-day.) Pp. 63. (London: Humphrey Milford: Oxford University Press, 1921.) 2s. 6d.

A LITTLE book on statistics by so well-known an authority as Prof. Bowley is sure of a welcome from the educated public. In these times, when copious reports are issued by many Government departments, it is not only interesting, but also necessary, to appreciate fully the significance and limitations of official statistics. This is admittedly difficult, and it is with the view of steering the uninitiated through the mass of detail which necessarily obscures the real value of statistical information that Prof. Bowley has written this little book. A brief account is given of the more important reports and papers published officially in recent years containing statistics of general interest. The use of reports is illustrated by collecting details scattered throughout such a volume as the Report on Pauperism and retabulating them so as to show how the various tables are connected. In all cases exact references have been given to the original documents. The scope of the volume is well indicated by the chapter headings, four in number: population; industry, trade, and prices; income and wages; and social conditions.

A Laboratory Manual of Organic Chemistry for Medical Students. By Prof. M. Steel. Second edition. Pp. xi+284. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1920.) 9s. 6d. net.

A CHAPTER on colloids which contains some interesting experiments forms the principal addition to this edition. Many careless expressions have been overlooked: “fused” copper sulphate and “fused” calcium oxide are not common reagents, and “hygroscopic” (p. 32) appears instead of “hygroscopic.” Moreover, some of the directions for experiments do not seem to be based on trials, e.g. the preparation of acetylene would be dangerous if carried out as described on pp. 19–20, for air could not be displaced from the apparatus under the conditions named; also the directions given for the preparation of colloidal platinum on p. 220 do not seem correct—it would be difficult to pass a current of 10 amperes through distilled water by applying only 40 volts.

Ammonia and the Nitrides: With Special Reference to their Synthesis. By Dr. E. B. Maxted. Pp. viii+116. (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1921.) 7s. 6d. net.

THIS small volume contains an account of laboratory investigations of the nitrides of the elements. No mention is, however, made of the very important industrial applications of the results except in the case of the Serpek process, which is not in use in the form described by the author. “Deville,” on p. 37, should be “Regnault.”