

Lord Lister, his Life and Doctrine

By Douglas Guthrie. Pp. viii+128+21 plates. (Edinburgh: E. and S. Livingstone, Ltd., 1949.) 15s. net.

THE serious student of Lister's life and work has abundant sources of information available in such books as Sir Rickman Godlee's standard "Life of Lister" (1917, revised edition 1924), Sir William Cheyne's "Lister and his Achievements" (1925), the "Lister Centenary Exhibition Handbook" of the Wellcome Historical Medical Museum (1927), H. C. Cameron's "Joseph Lister: the Friend of Man" (1948), and Lister's "Collected Papers" (1909). Some of these, and other classical biographies, are out of print and not easy to obtain. The medical student, the medical practitioner and the layman will be grateful to Dr. Douglas Guthrie, lecturer on the history of medicine in the University of Edinburgh, for providing them with a small, readable, attractively produced, modestly priced and up-to-date addition to the literature.

To the medical historian the most valuable feature of this book will be the inclusion of autograph letters in the possession of the University of Edinburgh and of the Royal College of Surgeons of England, published here for the first time, particularly one letter in which Lister suggested that *Penicillium* might influence the growth and activity of bacteria. The story of this is told in the *Annals of the Royal College of Surgeons of England* (6, 140; February 1950), with comments by Sir Alexander Fleming.

The author's excursions into contemporary history, medical and general, and his pleasing pen-portraits of such men as James Syme will be welcomed by the reader, who will also appreciate the conveniently short sections and the copious subheadings. "1914" on p. v should read "1917", and "1886" on p. 62 "1868".

W. R. BERT

An Annotated Checklist of the Birds of Malaya

An Annotated List of the Birds occurring, or known to have occurred, in the Territories of the Federation of Malaya and the Colony of Singapore. By C. A. Gibson-Hill. (Bulletin of the Raffles Museum, Singapore, No. 20.) Pp. 299. (Singapore: Raffles Museum, 1949.) 5 dollars; 12s.

THIS present volume is the fourth hand-list of Malayan birds published in the course of the past forty years. The two first were published by H. C. Robinson in 1907 and 1910, and in 1925 F. N. Chasen brought out his "Handlist of the Malaysian Birds", the last including Borneo and Sumatra, etc. This new volume differs considerably from its predecessors and should be very useful to the increasing numbers of bird students in the Peninsula. The area covered does not extend beyond the northern boundary of the Federated States, whereas in the former volumes part of Peninsular Siam as far as the Isthmus of Kra was included. This change the author considered necessary because there was not sufficient information available on the different species in the area between these two boundaries.

The distribution is given in some detail, and in the short paragraph under each species the author has added brief notes on the type of country inhabited, status within the area, whether the nest is known, and the reason for adding or omitting certain species or races. Mr. C. A. Gibson-Hill is to be congratulated on the way he has prepared the list, and, considering that he only joined the Singapore Museum in 1946,

this is a remarkable piece of work. In his treatment of some species or races he is not always very happy, but it must be remembered that he has had to depend to a great extent on the views of others.

The spelling of the English names does not follow the usual custom, and may be an attempt at Basic English; but, possibly because I am old-fashioned, I prefer the spelling used by Chasen. It is to be hoped that the author, in spite of the present warfare in the country, is collecting material for a handbook of the birds of the Malay Peninsula. Robinson's volumes are too large and unwieldy, and unfortunately he was no field naturalist so that details of habits and breeding, etc., are lacking in his books.

N. B. KINNEAR

Metallurgical Abstracts (General and Non-Ferrous)

Editor: Lieut.-Colonel S. C. Guillan; Assistant Editor, Major W. G. Askew. Vol. 15, 1948. Pp. viii+750. (London: Institute of Metals, 1948.) £3.

THE outstanding characteristic of these abstracts of the Institute of Metals is their unvarying excellence. The ground covered may be realized from the facts that there are 624 pages—with probably something of the order of six abstracts per page—and that the subject index extends to more than seventy pages. The papers dealt with are adequately and expertly summarized, and there is no difficulty in getting a detailed idea of the ground covered and the sort of results obtained.

Perhaps one of the most surprising features of the volume is the range of publication examined; not only are the outstanding scientific journals included in the reviews, but also a very large number of others, the very names of which will be unknown to many. The care with which overseas literature has been examined appears to be as adequate as that of British publications. In addition to the formal abstracts, there are reviews of books dealing directly or indirectly with the interests of the Institute, and a bibliography of books, specifications, reviews, etc., which covers a wide field. Within the limits of the Institute's sphere, it is difficult to believe that a more adequate abstracting service could be provided.

F. C. T.

Foundations of Modern Physics

By Prof. Thomas B. Brown. Second edition. Pp. xvi+391. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1949.) 30s. net.

IT is natural that in a book which covers a wide field, including electronics, nuclear physics and the theory of elementary particles, major revisions and additions were necessary in preparing a second edition of Brown's "Physics", the first edition of which appeared in 1940. An introduction and epilogue have been added in which the objectives and philosophy of the book are explained. The emphasis throughout is upon the experimental aspect and upon the evidence which these experiments give in support of the theories whereby the results are interpreted and explained.

The book is intended for the non-specialist and should stimulate his interest for further reading and study. To help him, every chapter concludes with a list of carefully selected references divided into two groups consisting of less and more advanced texts. The book is excellently produced with numerous clear diagrams and interesting photographs. It should be in every university library and in many school sixth-form libraries. S. WEINTROUB