

The Yearbook of the Universities of the Commonwealth, 1954

Edited by Dr. J. F. Foster. (Thirty-first issue.) Pp. lviii+1916. (London: Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth, 1954.) 63s.

ONCE again the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth has produced its "Yearbook". This year's edition is more than a hundred pages longer than the last one, but remains at the same price.

The only additional complete entry for an institution this year is the Nova Scotia Agricultural College; but mention is made of the establishment in July 1953 of a second university in East Pakistan, the University of Rajshahi, and of Rhodesia University College, Salisbury, and it is hoped to have full entries for these in next year's edition. Of the other new material, the introduction for the universities in Australia has been specially rewritten by the Secretary of the Australian Vice-Chancellor's Committee, and a fuller statement is included of the history and functions of the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth. In addition, an attempt has been made for the first time this year to give for each university and university college in the United Kingdom a short statistical note of the numbers of its students who come from other countries.

Besides the various national sections with the staff lists for each of their university institutions, the usual host of information is to be found in the nine appendixes. The alphabetical list of names contains more than thirty thousand entries. Once again the important point must be emphasized that this book records all the university institutions of the British Commonwealth and not merely those—the majority, in fact—that are members of the Association of Universities of the British Commonwealth. Indeed, in one of the appendixes are the respective lists for the universities in the Republic of Ireland. The point is well made in the preface that, although this book is not international in the comprehensive world-wide sense, it covers such a large part of the globe and includes such a diversity of countries and races that it must surely rank as one of the leading international works of reference about universities.

Vulkanismus und andere Tiefenkräfte der Erde

Von Carl Chr. Beringer. (Kosmos Bändchen No. 200.) Pp. 64. (Stuttgart: Kosmos-Gesellschaft der Naturfreunde, 1953.) n.p.

THIS booklet is one of a series designed to make a popular appeal to various subjects in science and natural history. The title is somewhat misleading, since the first fifty-two of its sixty-four pages are devoted entirely to a condensed account of the main modern volcanic eruptions, their types and distribution. It is well illustrated with plates and diagrams, though the map of the world (frontispiece) oddly omits the British Isles. The phenomena of fissure-eruptions, plateau-basalts and pillow-lavas receive but scant attention, and the relationship of the acid or basic composition of the lavas to the types of eruption is not made clear.

The second part of the book, which attempts to deal with the other deep-seated agencies in the earth's crust in a dozen pages, not unnaturally fails. It includes a short description of bathyliths, the hypothesis of shells surrounding a nickel-iron core and a note on supposed convection currents within

it; the barest mention of continental drift, radio-activity, geosynclines, orogeny and earthquakes; and expresses the belief that volcanic activity is steadily waning through the passage of geological time.

The bibliography contains a list of seventeen authors, seven of them in the nineteenth century from 1808 upwards; the only reference in English is dated 1825. Surely in 1953 a representative and up-to-date conspectus of the principal literature could have been included?

The booklet is well printed in Roman characters, on paper which seems equally suitable for text and plates. It would serve its purpose far better were the title restricted to vulcanology with more generous treatment, while discarding the unsatisfactory tail-piece. This could well be developed into a companion volume on geophysics and dynamics.

D. W. BISHOPP

From an Antique Land

Ancient and Modern in the Middle East. By Dr. Julian Huxley. Pp. 310+49 plates. (London: Max Parrish and Co., Ltd., 1954.) 25s. net.

THIS is a delightful book and as a record of travel in the post-war Middle East is outstanding in its merits. The author, travelling on the affairs of Unesco, visited and recorded his impressions of nearly every place of importance which is readily accessible. Even places with which a reader is perhaps very familiar assume a new interest when viewed through the author's inquiring eyes; and almost equally so when seen through the lens of his camera. The photographic illustrations, many of them in colour, are superb, and we can only regret that there are not more of them.

In his introduction, the author modestly claims that even after his wide and hurried travels and his study of the works of authorities, his knowledge remains "extremely scrappy". If this is so, his marshalling and analysis of his scrappy knowledge is most satisfactory; and his chapter on the birth of civilization is, in the writer's view, masterly. It is only when we read an essay such as this that we can fully realize the vast accumulation of historical fact that has been laid bare by the archæologist during the past half-century.

To any prospective traveller in the Middle East countries, this book should prove invaluable reading prior to his journey; and even more interesting entertainment on his return.

W. B. EMERY

Metallurgical Abstracts

(General and Non-Ferrous). Edited by N. B. Vaughan. Vol. 18, 1950-51 (New Series). Pp. viii+925. (London: Institute of Metals, 1951.)

THIS volume for 1950-51 of "Metallurgical Abstracts" maintains the high standard set by the Institute of Metals and should be invaluable to all metallurgists. The writing is in general clear and good; but more concise phrasing would result in a saving of several lines per page without any loss of subject-matter, and would avoid the necessity of unpleasing abbreviations, such as 'temp.' for temperature, which spoil the appearance of the volume. It may be suggested that, in view of the knowledge of English in so many countries, the abstracts would be of more value if a greater proportion of the space were given to the more important papers in the obscurer languages.

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