

electromagnetic radiation, and sound through the atmosphere is another topic, and there is a very useful chapter on devices for exploring the atmosphere. In places, the writing leaves something to be desired; for example, meteors are defined as "extraterrestrial matter which have penetrated far enough into the earth's atmosphere to become embroiled in a violent reaction with it".

S. K. RUNCORN

A Bibliographical Index of the British Flora

Including Floras, Herbals, Periodicals, Societies and References relating to the Identification, Distribution and Occurrence of Phanerogams, Vascular Cryptogams and Charophytes in the British Isles. Compiled by N. Douglas Simpson. Pp. xix+429. (Bournemouth: N. Douglas Simpson, 3 Cavendish Road, 1960.) n.p.

THIS is an ambitious effort to index references concerning the identification, history and geographical range of the flowering plants, vascular cryptogams and charophytes in the British Isles, including Ireland. It also attempts to provide information on plant-lore, local names, poisonous plants and weeds. To accomplish thoroughly such a task would be a prodigious undertaking requiring detailed scrutiny of the vast literature in which records may be expected. It is not surprising, therefore, that the present work is admittedly incomplete, with many publications of local societies and other sources entirely unexamined. The format of the book is unnecessarily elaborate, with the entries, many of them of trivial scientific significance, arranged in a complicated and indeed irksome sequence. Any attempt to give a complete list of species records under the various counties would be a colossal and forbidding task for any individual, and in this volume it seems ill-advised and redundant to include quite an arbitrary selection of such records. The work is undoubtedly the product of great industry and within its limits will certainly be a useful adjunct in the study of the British flora.

G. TAYLOR

Founders of British Science

John Wilkins—Robert Boyle—John Ray—Christopher Wren—Robert Hooke—Isaac Newton. By J. G. Crowther. Pp. ix+296+10 plates. (London: The Cresset Press, 1960.) 35s. net.

IT is greatly to be hoped that no one will be misled by the title of this book: it is neither an attempt to establish an exclusively 'British science' on the model of the 'Aryan science' of the 'thirties, nor dogmatically to exclude other claimants to the title of its 'founders'. Mr. Crowther's preliminary chapter emphasizes the importance of Gilbert, Napier, Harriot, and Harvey in the 'gestatory period' of British science; indeed, as scientists, all four of these men might be held to be of greater stature than Wilkins. But 'science' for Mr. Crowther, as he has made abundantly clear in earlier writings, is no isolated activity to be followed at the beck of individual whim and genius, but is 'wholly' effective only when the course of its progress is in harmony with social needs. To illustrate this anew, he has examined with great thoroughness the contemporary sources which shed light not only on the scientific achievements of the six well-chosen 'founders' of 'organized' British science, but also on their social circumstances, aspirations, frustrations, and insight into contemporary needs. In a wide-ranging survey of such a

controversial question it is inevitable that the account of the facts, and even more of some of the inferences drawn from the facts, will not pass unchallenged; in pressing the argument too hard, the author is sometimes even landed in inconsistency. Also the 'close naked style', which would have pleased his hero, Wilkins, makes some of Mr. Crowther's statements appear more dogmatic than he perhaps intended. But the great virtue of his book is that, apart from its assemblage of a great deal of significant but widely scattered information, it is provocative in the best sense. It is not necessary to go the whole way with Mr. Crowther to welcome his presentation of the thesis that scientists no longer (if they ever did) pass their lives in some empyrean realm in selfless dedication to the pursuit of ultimate truth.

W. P. D. WIGHTMAN

Food Chemistry

By Prof. Lillian Hoagland Meyer. (Reinhold Organic Chemistry and Biochemistry Text-book Series.) Pp. xiv+395. (New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1960.) 65s. net.

PROF. MEYER states in her preface that the aim of her book is to provide a unified picture of foods from a chemical point of view. To this end the emphasis is on the composition of foods and the changes that occur when they are subjected to processing. The book is intended for students who have been trained in organic chemistry, but some chemical background is provided to clarify details of methods of analysis and identification. The book is descriptive rather than didactic in relation to practical work in food chemistry and is not therefore suitable as a laboratory manual. It does, however, provide a readable survey of the nature of fat, carbohydrate and protein components of common foods with additional chapters on flavour and aroma, on meat and meat products, vegetables and fruits, milk and milk products and on cereals. An appendix gives an account of food additives permitted by the most recent lists of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

A. M. COPPING

Sampling Inspection Tables

Single and Double Sampling. By Harold F. Dodge and Harry G. Romig. Second edition, revised and expanded. (Wiley Publications in Applied Statistics.) Pp. xi+224. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1959.) 64s. net.

SINCE the first edition of this book appeared in 1944 it has been one of the most useful sets of tables for scientific sampling inspection. This new edition, on a much larger page, has grown almost out of recognition, mainly because of the addition of a set of diagrams of operating characteristic curves. The four chapters which precede the tables are themselves a valuable introduction to the theory and method of sampling inspection. After these one finds the curves and sampling tables for specified lot tolerance per cent defective and average outgoing quality limit, both for single and for double sampling plans. There is also (an unusual feature in tabular material) a useful index. This is an essential book for the serious student and the factory operator, written with the authority of long experience in teaching and practical application.

M. G. KENDALL