

set-back through the occurrence of the war, but useful lessons have been learned and many subjects have come forward or called for increased attention. The cultivation of cotton has been shown to be successful and profitable in Nigeria, in the northern provinces great progress has been made in perfecting a cotton originally grown from "American Upland" seed, while the southern provinces have produced increasing quantities of an improved native cotton of the type of "Middling American." The products of the oil palm and especially the kernel of the nut have been in increased demand for edible purposes, but improved methods of extraction are still awaited, and the successful cultivation of the oil palm in the Dutch East Indies and British Malaya threatens to rival the industry in West Africa. Successful plantations of Para rubber have been established in Nigeria and in the Gold Coast, and the latter has become the chief cocoa producer of the world. The extension and improvement of the Agricultural Departments will be a factor in developing the possibilities of the various territories in West Africa for which Great Britain is now responsible. The handbook will serve as a guide to all who seek information on the agricultural and forest products of British West Africa.

*Memoirs of the Geological Survey. Special Reports on the Mineral Resources of Great Britain.* Vol. 2: Barytes and Witherite. By G. V. Wilson, T. Eastwood, R. W. Pocock, D. A. Wray, and T. Robertson. With contributions by H. G. Dines. Third edition. Pp. iv + 119 + 6 plates. (Southampton: Ordnance Survey Office; London: E. Stanford, Ltd., 1922.) 3s. net.

THE issue of a third edition of this memoir shows public appreciation of the economic work of the Geological Survey; the revision has involved further visits to all the principal mines, and the records of output include those of very recent years. A brief sketch of the characters of the two minerals concerned and of their uses precedes the detailed account of the mines. Photographs of crystals, and some account of the relation of barytes to metallic sulphides in the field, might have added interest to this section; but the cost of the memoir to the public has no doubt been carefully considered. The graphic tables showing the total output go back only to 1890. It would be of interest to trace the quick response of the Derbyshire miners to the demand that arose in 1856. The earliest date mentioned on p. 64 is 1892; but in 1857, two years after the industrial development of barytes lodes was started in the county of Cork, Derbyshire produced as much as 9000 tons. The thoroughness of the memoir as a record of present-day mining is shown by the descriptions of methods of treatment of the ore at various places, and of means of transport.

G. A. J. C.

*The Edge of the Jungle.* By William Beebe. Pp. 237. (London: H. F. and G. Witherby, 1922.) 12s. 6d. net.

MR. BEEBE has a graphic pen. His account of the life of bird, beast, and insect as seen from a small clearing on the edge of the British Guiana forest gives a vivid and kaleidoscopic impression of teeming life. His capacity for close and careful observation and his

artistic power of selecting just the right details, combine to convey to the reader a feast of tropical colour, sound, and scent. It is impossible not to follow his account of, say, the happenings in the "army ants' home town" with an interest as tense as though he described the fortunes of human individuals. The transformation of "Guinevere" from a tadpole into a tree-frog holds the reader entranced. Mr. Beebe does not confine his attention entirely to his clearing; while on a visit to the gardens at Georgetown he was fortunate enough to see a group of manatees of which he records his impressions for the benefit of his readers. Incidentally he raises an interesting question as to the origin of flower growing for non-utilitarian purposes, which may suggest to the anthropologist a new field in which to view the influence of magic.

*Land Drainage.* By W. L. Powers and T. A. H. Teeter. Pp. ix + 290. (New York: J. Wiley and Sons, Inc.; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1922.) 13s. 6d. net.

LAND drainage occupies a large and important place in American agriculture, and the volume under notice is evidence of its prominence. It deals mainly with conditions in the Corn Belt and Western States, and is intended as a practical handbook from which may be obtained the most important details of procedure in the construction of drainage works. As these operations vary according to the nature of the land—reclaiming a marsh presents different problems from the draining of irrigated land which has begun to show signs of alkali—the authors have supplemented their general discussion by detailed descriptions of actual installations. These accounts include the balance-sheets of the operation, which show that in most of the schemes the increased crops have paid for the outlay in a short time. Particular interest attaches to the section dealing with drainage laws, and the manner in which the cost and the benefits of a proposed scheme for a district are divided among the farmers. The concluding chapter is devoted to the care and use of surveying implements, and a useful appendix of laboratory exercises is provided, in which the main principles of drainage are illustrated. B. A. K.

*Homework and Hobby Horses.* Edited by H. Caldwell Cook. (Perse Playbooks, No. VI.) Pp. xii + 58. (London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., n.d.) 3s. 6d. net.

THE Perse Playbooks are by now sufficiently well known to educationists. This little volume—the sixth of the series—embodies a selection of poems, ballads, and carols which have been produced, with one exception, by boys of the Perse School as a part of the system of the play-method of teaching English composition. The authors are all under fourteen, and the facility of the verse and, generally, its smoothness suggest that the statement that English verse composition has no terrors for, at any rate, some of the boys, is well founded. Some of the compositions are avowedly parodies, others are obviously derivative, but many show a poetic feeling which is surprising, as well as a considerable command of an appropriate vocabulary. The incongruous, the mark of the unpractised versifier, is commendably absent. It is interesting to note that of the various classes of poems, the carols are by far the most successful.