

borax, sodium salicylate, and saltpetre. Even the fresh foods that reach the consumer un-killed and un-defiled, pass through the kitchen, and are there deprived of their living properties, and worked up into appetising dishes. "Hunger is the best sauce," but the life that is forced upon civilised races deprives them of this relish. To make matters worse, sugar (sweetmeats and chocolates) are eaten in great quantity. The consequence is that the digestive system fails; constipation and intestinal stagnation occur; the over-filled stomach and intestines drop and become kinked; their stagnant contents decompose and poison the system. Not only the stomach and intestines, but also every tissue of the body is poisoned and loses its power of resistance. Sooner or later a stage is reached when some part gives way, when we have another case of gastric ulcer or appendicitis, and the surgeon is called in to remove the part that has "rotted." If the surgeon is an observer, he notices that the rot is general and is not confined to the appendix, gall bladder, or gastric ulcer which he is removing.

A person whose tissues are in this state is certainly on the road to cancer, and little lasting good can come of an attempt to cure him by local radiation. He must "clean himself up"; then Nature will have a chance to aid him in his fight for life. The great good that may come from the experimental researches described in this book is that it may teach us Nature's method of ridding itself of morbid growths. The new edition is of immense interest to all who are engaged in the study of tumour growth.

Our Bookshelf.

A Practical Handbook of British Birds. Edited by H. F. Witherby. 2 vols. Vol. 1. Pp. 532+xvi. Vol. 2. Pp. 960+xii. (London: H. F. and G. Witherby, 1919-1924.) 4l. 10s. net.

THIS important work, which has been appearing in parts since 1919, is now complete, and the corrections and additions in the last part bring the whole up-to-date. The bound book is available in alternative forms, and of these the thin paper edition makes two volumes of little more than pocket size. It is thus a handbook in a real sense, but at the same time the quality of its contents fully entitles it to a worthy place on the library shelf with larger works of reference.

The object aimed at has been to give in a small space and in systematic form all the most important information about the external characters of British birds, their distribution and migration, their breeding habits, nests and eggs, their song and their food. This has been very successfully achieved by the authors responsible for the various subjects. The numerous illustrations, many of them in colour, are admirable from the point of view of practical utility as aids to identification. There are also useful key tables to the

distinguishing characters of the different systematic groups.

The book is, however, more than a carefully compiled and well edited work of reference. It represents, indeed, much original investigation, the results of which are presented for the first time. This refers particularly to the descriptions of plumage, most of them by the editor himself, which constitute the most important part of the work. These descriptions have been based upon new examinations of large series of specimens, including those in the British Museum and in Lord Rothschild's large collection, and they take full account of all differences of sex and age and of all seasonal changes: the different geographical races or sub-species are separately treated. The method is consistently followed in this respect, and in a few cases, from their nature unimportant in British ornithology, a phase is frankly mentioned as "not examined." A great labour has obviously been performed, and as a result we have much valuable information not previously available, and a high trustworthy standard throughout.

The treatment of the other subjects is less detailed but quite adequate for the purpose, the limits observed being those proper to a condensed work of reference. The contributors, other than the editor, are Dr. Ernst Hartert, Miss A. C. Jackson (Mrs. Meinertzhagen), the Rev. F. C. R. Jourdain, Mr. C. Oldham, and Dr. N. F. Ticehurst.

This "Practical Handbook," then, in addition to containing important new contributions to ornithology, seems to us to be the most useful systematic text-book of British birds that can be placed in the hands of the serious student of the subject. It undoubtedly takes its place as a standard work.

The Year-Book of the Scientific and Learned Societies of Great Britain and Ireland: a Record of the Work done in Science, Literature, and Art during the Session 1922-1923 by numerous Societies and Government Institutions. Compiled from Official Sources. Fortieth Annual Issue. Pp. vii+389. (London: C. Griffin and Co., Ltd., 1923.) 15s. net.

WE are glad to be able to extend a welcome once more to this valuable handbook, which has now reached its fortieth anniversary. The publishers are to be congratulated on the courage and persistence with which they have issued year by year a volume so useful to all who would keep in touch with scientific developments and at the same time a book necessarily of limited circulation. The volume is divided into the customary fourteen sections, in each of which related societies are grouped. The classification this implies is a difficult problem, but we have little fault to find with the present arrangement; the Institute of Physics would appear more appropriately in the section given to astronomy, mathematics, and physics than in its present place under "Science Generally." The very full index, however, will generally obviate any difficulty which may arise in this way.

For those who are not familiar with the handbook, it is desirable to say that it gives full particulars of the scientific and learned societies of the British Isles, their officers, addresses, meetings, conditions of membership, publications, and, in many cases, the titles of the papers presented and lectures during the year