

From isolated details scattered among the works of numerous authors, Dr. Schmidt has endeavoured to build up a picture of the trade that was done in these materials, the extent to which they were used, and the routes by which they reached the various markets. He makes one realise that it was so considerable, and the traders so numerous, that thousands of years ago there were streets mainly occupied by their shops, and one can imagine one sees the buyers congregating there and comparing the wares offered.

To accomplish this has been a task of no inconsiderable magnitude, as any teacher can testify who has attempted to compile for his students a concise but intelligible history of drugs. To any one fairly conversant with German, the work is so fascinating that it can be read again and again. It contains a bibliography, and in addition there are numerous references in the text; it is full of most interesting details and is a valuable addition to the literature of pharmacognosy.

*Qualitative Analyse und ihre wissenschaftliche Begründung.* Von Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Böttger. Vierte bis siebente umgearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage. Pp. xvi + 644. (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1925.) 19 gold marks.

ON reading this valuable work one is impressed by the fact that although the experimental data underlying qualitative analysis have changed but little, their interpretation has in many respects been revolutionised: the applications of the law of mass action and of the ionic theory of solution have brought order into the chaos and transformed what was once little more than a handicraft into a consistent and coherent science. Nearly twelve years have passed since the third edition of Böttger's work was noticed in these columns (December 18, 1913); the new edition is a very worthy successor to the old and gives a good idea of the advances that have been made in the interval. The first and more difficult part, dealing with the theoretical foundations, is particularly well done; the language is clear and simple, and the experimental illustrations are well chosen. Modern views on valency and molecular structure are treated at length, and there is an interesting section on electrolytes and Werner's theory.

In the experimental part are to be found many reactions of recent discovery, some of which are sufficiently specific to be used as tests without recourse to separation. The treatment generally is very full, and microchemical reactions have not been neglected. Books of this type are very few in these days of costly printing, and the appearance of the new and enlarged "Böttger" will be welcomed by all who are interested in this very old but still very fundamental branch of chemistry.

*British Birds.* Written and illustrated by Archibald Thorburn. In 4 vols. Vol. 1. New edition. Pp. xii + 176 + 48 plates. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1925.) 16s. net.

WE have received the first of the projected four volumes of a smaller and less costly edition of Mr. Thorburn's "British Birds," a book first issued on a sumptuous scale in 1915 and now out of print in its original form. The coloured plates, a new series, are again the principal feature, for Mr. Thorburn has a well-earned reputation

as an ornithological artist. They are usually clear and accurate, often beautiful, and on the whole well reproduced; a few, however, are noticeably less successful than the others. The text is undistinguished, consisting of very brief summaries of the usual text-book information plus a few comments, frequently in the form of quotations, upon habits or special points. This is unfortunate, for it is difficult to see what function a still rather expensive book giving so little information can fulfil.

One feels that the book should either have been brought within smaller compass altogether or have been expanded considerably in dealing with the more important birds. Either of these courses could have been followed had Mr. Thorburn been less subject to the fetish of that arbitrary category known as "the British list." Thus, no less than seven kinds of wheat-ear are each given a page, and all but two of them a place in the plates, whereas only one species is anything more than a very rare accidental wanderer to Britain. In a popular work there would be every advantage in dismissing accidental rarities with a bare mention. The confusion that there has been in ornithological nomenclature is to be regretted, but it does not help matters, now that some uniformity is being reached by general agreement, to find an author harking back for his standard to a work which was published in the previous century.

*A Monograph of the Mycetozoa: a Descriptive Catalogue of the Species in the Herbarium of the British Museum.*

By Arthur Lister. Third edition, revised by Gulielma Lister. Pp. xxxii + 296 + 223 plates. (London: British Museum (Natural History), 1925.) 31s. 6d.

A THIRD edition of the monograph of the Mycetozoa by Arthur Lister has been prepared by Miss G. Lister and issued by the Trustees of the British Museum. Few groups of organisms have been so well catered for in the way of an accurate and well-illustrated systematic monograph: and the appearance of a third edition tells at once of the attractiveness of the organisms themselves and of the interest stimulated in any group when a sound treatise is available.

Biologists may have imagined that the Mycetozoa were fairly thoroughly known when the second edition, published in 1911 (which also introduced a revised nomenclature in accordance with the International Rules), included all additions to date. It is surprising, therefore, to note that no less than three additional genera, 46 species, and some 50 additional varieties, are incorporated in the present volume. The results of recent biological research are also included.

The work of revision having been in the experienced and accomplished hands of Miss Lister gives assurance that the new edition is of the same standard of excellence as its predecessor.

*Faune de France. 8: Diptères; Tipulidæ.* Par C. Pierre. (Fédération Française des Sociétés de Sciences Naturelles: Office Central de Faunistique.) Pp. 159. (Paris: Paul Lechevalier, 1924.) 25 francs.

THE present instalment of this useful series deals with the crane flies. Since the work is primarily intended for the identification of the adult insects, there is only a short account of their biology and metamorphoses.