

*Colloid Chemistry: Theoretical and Applied.* By Selected International Contributors. Collected and edited by Jerome Alexander. Vol. 1: Theory and Methods. Pp. 974. (New York: The Chemical Catalog Co., Inc., 1926.) 14.50 dollars.

MR. ALEXANDER, with the aid of sixty contributors of a dozen different nationalities, has made a gallant attempt to produce a comprehensive treatise on colloid chemistry in English. His success may be measured by the mass of useful material which is here presented, though the arrangement does not always make it readily available. The more general papers, for example, Harkins on surface energy, Hardy on lubrication, Freundlich on adsorption, Gibbs on aerosols, and Hatschek on viscosity, are models which might with advantage have been followed by some of the less eminent authors. The detailed discussion of any particular piece of experimental work is only permissible in a book of this kind when some very general principle is thereby illustrated, and on these grounds some half-dozen of the papers here printed should be relegated to the ordinary journals; their inclusion tends to produce the atmosphere of a *Festschrift*. Again, the actual matter of some of the articles is already available elsewhere; for example, that of Millikan on measuring the electrons, and the unduly long account given by Von Weimarn of his theory of the colloidal state. It is to be hoped that in the two volumes to follow the editor will be less merciful, even though his contributors write without hope of reward.

The ingenuity with which this mosaic of essays covers the field of theory and method is remarkable, but it is curious to find that the fundamental process of dialysis receives only a casual mention in two places. Recent developments in the use of electrodialysis are also neglected. No pains have been spared to provide adequate bibliographies, diagrams, and indexes, and with some patience in use this volume will form a valuable addition to the shelves of the colloid chemist.

P. C. L. THORNE.

*Pflanzen als Gesteinsbildner.* Von Julius Pia. Pp. viii + 355. (Berlin: Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1926.) 19.50 gold marks.

THIS book, which is founded in part on lectures delivered at the University of Vienna, aims at providing a comprehensive treatise on plants as rock-builders. It is intended both for geologists and botanists, but the whole mode of treatment is botanical rather than geological. The account of the Bacteria and Algæ, with which the book opens, will be useful to many students, though the amount of botanical detail included seems scarcely relevant to the main purpose of the book. Indeed, before the Cormophyta are reached, the reader can scarcely fail to become aware of a certain lack of proportion in the scheme of the work; nearly half the volume is devoted to the Bacteria and Algæ, while about the same amount of space is deemed sufficient for the higher plants from Bryophyta to Angiosperms. Even within the latter section of the book, the space assigned to different topics seems to have been allotted with little regard to their relative importance. Less than a dozen pages, for example, are assigned to the Coal-measure flora, whereas more

than forty are devoted to marsh and moorland plants of the present day, which are included on the strength of their function as peat-formers.

The book is lavishly illustrated, the figures being mostly taken from well-known sources, which are cited. It may seem ungrateful to quarrel with such a wealth of excellent drawings in a book which has, to a certain extent, a popular aim, but one cannot but regret the space consumed by figures of some fifty flowering plants of the present day. The student, whether of geology or botany, would willingly have dispensed with some of these pretty pictures in favour of fuller bibliographies, especially in connexion with the chapter dealing with coal and its origin.

*The Psychology of Social Institutions.* By Prof. C. H. Judd. Pp. ix + 346. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1926.) 8s. 6d. net.

“THE purpose of this book is to concentrate attention on the fact that social influences are of the highest importance in determining the character of human thought and conduct.” To instincts and other inborn traits the author attributes little importance. This point of view now meets with widespread approval, and it is not proposed to quarrel with it here. There can be little doubt that the older social psychology, founding itself upon observation of the individual, over-emphasised the rôle of the so-called instincts of gregariousness and acquisition and the like. Whatever may have been the case with regard to the origin of institutions in respect to the part played by instinct, there is no question but that the vast accumulation represented in our social heritage now predominates in determining social conduct in general. Prof. Judd's book is to be welcomed in that it provides for the student an examination of certain social institutions at some length, during the course of which this point of view is kept continuously to the fore. But it cannot be said that the book contributes anything definite towards the solution of the numerous problems connected with the whole subject. It may be replied that this was not its purpose, and if this is so, then it has certainly fulfilled its limited object in driving home this one important lesson. A. M. C.-S.

*British Birds.* Written and Illustrated by Archibald Thorburn. New edition. In 4 vols. Vol. 3. Pp. x + 168 + 48 plates. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1926.) 16s. net.

THE third of the four volumes of Mr. Thorburn's new book on “British Birds” has now appeared, and fully comes up to the standard of its predecessors. It contains a further series of coloured plates of high merit, although a few, such as that of the lapwing, are decidedly less happy than the majority. We are glad to see that the female plumage is portrayed in very many cases, as is certainly necessary with such birds as ducks and game-birds, two of the principal groups dealt with on this occasion. Both sexes of the ptarmigan are shown in each of their three seasonal plumages. We could wish, however, that the nestlings also had more often been included in the plates, as has here been so successfully done in the case of the ringed and golden plovers.