Here a fallacy may lurk, for if "a sensibility as yet unknown to us" is conjectured as conveying cognition to the subconscious whence it obscurely wriggles into the conscious mind, could the unknown sensibility not be as easily conjectured to appeal direct to the conscious mind? If cryptæsthesia is a "sixth sense," as M. Richet suggests, may it not be a sense capable of appreciating directly some physical property of the hidden object? This appears to be Prof. Richet's own view if we translate rightly his letter in NATURE for Dec. 18 (p. 876) on the explanation of "spiritualistic" phenomena:

"The hypothesis of unknown *vibrations* seems to me preferable. After all, why not suppose that reality emits vibrations? Do we not know of innumerable powerful vibrations such as electric and magnetic waves which are only revealed by special detectors and would pass unperceived without the use of these detectors?"

Thus Prof. Richet seems to countenance the idea which occurred to us, before his letter appeared, in reading Sir William Barrett's book, that the *malaise* of cryptæsthesia may be akin to that experienced by some people in thundery weather, which can reasonably be attributed to the action on the nervous system of the electric waves announced by wireless 'atmospherics' in advance of thunderstorms. Investigation must prove whether this is so, or if the recognised senses may in some people attain a state of hyperæsthesia and become capable of acting much more powerfully than under usual conditions. May not some people have a sense of smell (if it is smell) as highly developed as that of the dog which perceives in the dark outside a house the room in which his master is; or a sense of hearing or touch as fine as that of the bat, if that animal indeed navigates dark winding caverns by means of a natural power of echo-sounding?

It may be the prejudice of the student of measurable and calculable things which makes the hypothesis of cognition through the unconscious mind repugnant as an instrument of scientific research, or it may be ignorance of psychological methods which makes us incapable of being convinced by the arguments, while accepting the facts, brought forward in this book. Whether his explanation is right or wrong, Sir William Barrett deserves to be held in grateful memory for accumulating by his enthusiastic labour such a rich store of obscure facts. It is to be hoped that the book will inspire some open-minded investigator versed in physiology and adequately instructed in physics and psychology to make an exhaustive experimental study of the mechanics of the divining-rod and the concurrent physical and mental state of the dowser, with the sole object of seeing how it is done. Observers who take up the subject determined to prove that the whole thing is a piece of humbug, can of course discover nothing.

HUGH ROBERT MILL.

## Our Bookshelf.

*The Subject Index to Periodicals, 1922.* Issued by the Library Association. *K: Science and Technology.* Pp. 136. (London: Grafton and Co., 1926.) 21*s.* net.

WE welcome the appearance of this new part of the "Subject Index to Periodicals" dealing with periodical literature relating to science and technology published in the year 1922. The delay in issuing the volume, however, is very regrettable, the more so since there appears to be little improvement in this respect as successive volumes are produced. The interval of from four to five years which has to be made good by the user of the "Index" to bring his search up-to-date means a serious addition to his labours, and from the point of view of the publishers must undoubtedly tend to hinder an expansion of the subscription list to a degree commensurate with the value of the work offered. Since the interval is now so large, we are inclined to think, provided, of course, that the necessity of bridging the gap as soon as possible be kept steadily in view, that it would be better for the editors to proceed at once with the work on last year's journals so that this could be issued during the current year, and the annual volume thereafter be kept close on the heels of the material covered.

Apart from this, the present volume worthily maintains the reputation of former issues. Some 250 journals are indexed, and the entries are allotted to a very large number of headings covering a wide field, and arranged, as usual, in alphabetical order. Some readers may perhaps derive amusement from the juxtaposition of such headings as *Omnibuses* and *Onions*, but there is no doubt that an index of this description provides for much quicker reference than one arranged on any other system, and when the choice of headings, the allotment of the different entries, and the provision of cross-references, are carried out as carefully as they are in these excellent volumes of the Library Association, there is room only for satisfaction. The inclusion of a list and particulars of the journals indexed would be a great convenience.

*Agricultural Research in 1925.* Pp. vii+174. (London: Royal Agricultural Society of England, 1926.) 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

THE scope and purpose of this work is sufficiently explained by the following extract from the preface: "There is need for a new publication