

Index Biologorum.

Index Biologorum: Investigatores, Laboratoria, Periodica. Edidit G. Chr. Hirsch. Editio Prima. Pp. iv + 545. (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1928.) 27 gold marks.

THE "Zoologisches Adressbuch" issued by Friedländer for the Zoological Society of Germany was an invaluable work, but even its second edition, issued in 1911, has long been out-of-date. The present work, compiled by Dr. Hirsch of Utrecht, would be welcome if it did no more than take the place of that. It does more: it comprehends all biologists, "omnes investigatores, qui vitæ naturam ab omni parte indagant." The lines of investigation are now so many and so diverse that there is danger of hedges growing up between them. Many workers fortunately insist on breaking through the hedges, and it is to help them to clasp hands with their fellow-workers on the other side that this directory has been produced. It is not a guide only to some 14,000 individuals and their subjects of study, but refers also under the heading "Laboratoria" to more than 6000 institutions where biological studies are carried on. At the end is a list of periodicals, but since these number only 357, it is so manifestly incomplete that it is scarcely worth while to notice such omissions as *NATURE* and the *Annals and Magazine of Natural History*.

Dr. Hirsch tells us that the preparation of this work has taken him a year and a half, and that 14,000 hours have been spent on it by himself and his assistants; 30,000 letters have been dispatched to all parts of the globe. When one examines the work itself one can only marvel that it did not take longer. If the work is not complete the fault probably lies less with the compiler than with those who failed to answer his inquiries. A remarkable confirmation of this supposition is furnished by the entries relating to individual members of the staff of the Natural History Museum. While all the scientific workers of the Botanical and Geological Departments (including Mr. "Rams Bottom") find a place, there are numerous omissions from the zoologists, and the Entomological Department appears to be represented only by its past and present keepers. The same applies to the workers of the Imperial Bureau of Entomology. The names are more completely given in the entries under "Laboratoria." We decline to blame Dr. Hirsch for these omissions. Some people, it is well known, from a feeling of either superiority or modesty, or probably out of mere laziness, will not send the details that are asked for by compilers of works like

this. They should not allow their own self-importance to have any say in the matter. The book is to be of use to their colleagues if not to themselves, and their refusal to take the small amount of trouble concerned will in the end react to their own disadvantage.

Fortunately, omissions of the kind just mentioned seem to be rare. Such errors as we have noticed, apart from occasional misprints, are due to the changes that have occurred since the information was collected. They will doubtless be corrected in the new editions that are promised; but we must all help by sending such corrections to Dr. Hirsch. Thus can we best show our gratitude to him and to his publisher.

Our Bookshelf.

A Guide to the Literature of Chemistry. By E. J. Crane and Prof. Austin M. Patterson. Pp. ix + 438. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1927.) 25s. net.

ANY means of simplifying the essential and ever-recurrent business of "finding it in the literature" is certain to receive a warm welcome from chemists, more particularly if the simplification is accompanied by assistance in ensuring the exhaustiveness of the process. Useful introductory monographs on such lines have, of course, been published—those, for example, by Dr. F. A. Mason, and by Marion E. Sparks—but it has been left to the present and a former editor of the American abstract journal *Chemical Abstracts* to discuss and analyse the sources of chemical information in a really detailed manner.

Those who have had experience in securing exact and complete information on any chemical subject, whether academic or industrial, will be the first to utter a word of gratitude to the authors for having produced so informative a volume; by those it will be constantly referred to as an *aide-mémoire*. The reviewer would recommend that any chemist who for the first time proposes to conduct a careful literature search should commence with an equally careful study of this book. It is, somewhat naturally, American in its features. Since the authors' claim to speak with authority is based—very securely based—on their experience in presenting the cream of the world's chemical literature in a form acceptable to American chemists, it would be strange indeed if their own journal and their own resources were not made to supply paint for their picture. Nevertheless, they insist that the literature of chemistry is international, and they have clearly endeavoured to present a well-ordered view of the whole landscape.

There are eight chapters, in which are discussed the problem and its objectives, books, periodicals, patents, other sources of information, indexes, libraries, and procedure; in addition, the eight appendices (which occupy nearly half of the book)