

*Air Ministry: Meteorological Office. British Rainfall, 1931: the Seventy-first Annual Volume of the British Rainfall Organization. Report on the Distribution of Rain in Space and Time over the British Isles during the Year 1931 as recorded by over 5,000 Observers in Great Britain and Ireland.* (M.O. 345.) Issued by the Authority of the Meteorological Committee. Pp. xxi + 306. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1932.) 15s. net.

FOR the British Isles as a whole the rainfall of 1931 was 109 per cent of the average, the year being the ninth in succession with a general fall in excess. Over the country as a whole the rainfall of 1931 was less than that of 1930 but greater than that of 1929. In spite of the wet summer some places in south-east England had less than the average annual fall, and so did the north-west of Scotland where summer was dry, but a wet area with more than 130 per cent embraced the north English Midlands.

As in 1930, and, indeed, every year, there were some notable downpours which, however, were unusually frequent. These included the severe thunderstorms of May 27 in south-west England and south Wales, the widespread intense rains of June 14, the day of the Birmingham tornado and of a destructive cloudburst near Bootle in Cumberland, the long succession of torrential rains in August amongst which was the thunderstorm that on August 8 deluged Boston in Lincolnshire with 6 in. of rain, the Whitby floods of September 4 which were comparable with those in the same district on July 20 in the previous year, and finally the heavy falls in the west of November 3 when 7 in. fell at Treacastle.

Special articles discuss long rainfall records and the effects of unsuitable sites for rain and evaporation gauges. L. C. W. B.

(1) *Post-Primary Science.* By W. F. F. Shearcroft. Book 2: Second Year's Course. Pp. 234. (London, Bombay and Sydney: George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 1931.) 2s. 6d.

(2) *Practical Science for Seniors.* By G. W. Manfield. Book 1. Pp. 96. 1s. 4d. Book 2. Pp. 128. 1s. 6d. Book 3. Pp. 160. 2s. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1932.)

(1) This book is arranged in a somewhat unusual manner. It is divided into sections instead of the customary chapters, though more than one section is taken to deal with each branch of physics. Exercises alternate with the text in each section. They are printed in heavier type than the text, which is unfortunate as one is accustomed to associate heavy type with important information. The contents of the present volume include sections on gases, the atmosphere and atmospheric pressure, expansion of gases, liquids and solids, elementary mechanics, heat and elementary biology.

(2) These three booklets describe experiments in those branches of physics which have an impor-

tant bearing on everyday life. Whenever possible, home-made apparatus of a simple nature is used. Instructions accompanied by clear illustrations make the assembly of the necessary apparatus an easy matter. Those pieces of apparatus which cannot conveniently be made at home are given with their approximate cost in a useful list at the beginning of each booklet. Short notes on the experiments are given at the end of each lesson. Book 1 contains experiments in elementary mechanics, on air, water and heat. Book 2 gives further experiments in mechanics and also experiments on air-pressure, water-pressure, light, magnetism and frictional electricity. Book 3 is devoted entirely to experiments in electricity. They are handy little books dealing with practical work only.

*Winter Nights Entertainments: a Book of Pastimes for Everybody.* By R. M. Abraham. Pp. ix + 186. (London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1932.) 5s. net.

MR. R. M. ABRAHAM has brought together a very large number of examples, with illustrations, of card games and tricks, paper folding, coin and match tricks, string figures and tricks, knots and splices, games for the agile, toys, problems, etc., which will amuse those of all ages who like mental and digital dexterity to while away tedious hours of convalescence.

The making of string figures by primitive peoples is very widely spread and, as the author notes, it has engaged the attention of many field-workers. One would have thought that the author would have taken this opportunity to point out their real interest and to indicate where other examples may be found; instead of this he gives no references, though he has gleaned string figures mainly from Kathleen Haddon's (Mrs. Rishbeth) books. The process of making these has been modified in most cases, usually a new title has been substituted, and the localities have been omitted. For example: The tern is called the flying bird; the Apache door, the hurdle; the well, the fruit blossom; a temporary grass hut, is turned upside down to represent a parachute; the fly, crushing the cocoanut (*sic*)—a difficult feat!; the butterfly, the snail; the porker (described by Prof. Compton), the galloper (horse). Certainly the author has played tricks on the original discoverers of these string figures and on his unsuspecting readers. A. C. H.

*Imperial College of Science and Technology: Huxley Memorial Lectures, 1925-1932.* Pp. iii + 12 + 30 + 38 + 27 + 16 + 21 + 28. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1932.) 2s. 6d. net.

THE seven memorial lectures on different aspects of Huxley's life and work which are here collected give a very readable and impressive picture of the influence which T. H. Huxley still exerts in the field of science. It may be true that, as Aldous Huxley remarks in correcting G. K. Chesterton,