

will attract the reader, who will be interested and instructed while reading the book. It will be a useful and necessary companion to Oliver's book "New Zealand Birds" which we reviewed last year. At the end of the book is a description of the eggs of the eighteen species of which the life histories have been described.

Handbuch der Vererbungswissenschaft. Herausgegeben von E. Baur und M. Hartmann. Lief. 15 (Bd. 3, L): *Entstehung der Kulturpflanzen.* Von E. Schiemann. Pp. ix+377. (Berlin: Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1932.) 50 gold marks.

THIS textbook endeavours to present a comprehensive review of the origin of cultivated plants, considered from the historical and biological points of view. The preliminary general discussion deals with our historical knowledge of the various crops, after which comparative morphology, geographical distribution and genetics are considered in their relation to crop plants. The range of the inquiry is wide, embracing in addition morphology, physiology and problems of variability. Where a crop plant occurs in both wild and cultivated forms, it is pointed out that its origin is usually to be sought where the wild type occurs.

Individual crops receive separate treatment, most of the common agricultural plants such as cereals, potatoes, Leguminosæ, etc., and a few of the more important horticultural crops as tomatoes, fruit, grapes, etc., being discussed in detail. A full bibliography of some twelve hundred titles, and tables giving a general summary of the main results, round up a most useful work of reference.

The Gestalt Theory and the Problem of Configuration. By Bruno Petermann. Translated by Meyer Fortes. (International Library of Psychology, Philosophy and Scientific Method.) Pp. xi+344. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd., 1932.) 15s. net.

AMONG the psychological theories, the doctrine of *Gestalt* or 'configurationism' has won general attention only recently, though it grew contemporaneously with behaviourism. Its importance, however, is none the less very great in so far as it furnishes an alternative approach to the psycho-physiological problem of human and animal behaviour. The general conception of 'configurationism' is to stress organised wholes as they occur in experience and in performance rather than their elements, as does the older psychology. This method makes possible an alternative treatment of behaviour, of perception and even of learning, though the results obtained in this respect are not yet final. The particular value of the book under review is that it not only explains the aims, method and results of the *Gestalt* theory, but that it also makes a searching criticism of this doctrine, indicating at the same time the conditions for its future progress.

T. G.

Organic Syntheses: an Annual Publication of Satisfactory Methods for the Preparation of Organic Chemicals. Frank C. Whitmore, Editor-in-Chief. Vol. 12. Pp. vii+96. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1932.) 10s. 6d. net.

THE latest volume of this series contains details of the preparation of thirty useful substances. Among them are *p*-chlorobenzaldehyde, *p*-tolualdehyde, desyl chloride, succinic anhydride, mercury di- β -naphthyl, and diethyl zinc. The preparation of 2,4-dinitrobenzaldehyde (a reagent of value for characterising amines and substances with a reactive methylene group) is a particularly interesting process, depending upon the reaction between *p*-nitrosodimethylaniline and 2,4-dinitrotoluene, whereby the methyl group of the latter substance is eventually transformed into an aldehyde group, leaving *p*-aminodimethylaniline as a by-product.

This issue is the third volume not embraced in the recent collective work, and it is therefore useful that the index to vol. 12 has been extended to cover the contents of vols. 10 and 11 also.

J. R.

L'Année psychologique. Publiée par Prof. Henri Piéron. Année 32 (1931). Vol. 1. Pp. xx+480. Vol. 2. Pp. 481-949. (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1932.) 120 francs.

As usual, this yearly publication contains some very important original essays and a mass of reviews (1,670 in number) of the current literature of psychology. It will suffice to mention some of the subjects treated: chromatic sensation (Piéron), mental work without movements (Foucault), nervous rhythms and relaxation oscillations (Fessard), complexity of consecutive visual impressions (Durey), appreciation of time in the white mouse (Ruch). At the end of this work there is an appeal by Prof. Spearman, to the effect that psychologists should agree once for all about the conditions and interpretations of certain experiments, on the lines followed by physicists.

A French-English Vocabulary in Geology and Physical Geography. By G. M. Davies. Pp. ix+140. (London: Thomas Murby and Co.; New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1932.) 6s. net.

THIS vocabulary contains between four and five thousand words. Most of them are either technical terms or words in common use which have special technical or colloquial meanings. The inclusion of the English equivalents of a number of unfamiliar place names adds to the usefulness of the vocabulary. An appendix contains a comparative table of English and Continental stratigraphical terms. The lack of such a glossary as this, devoted especially to geology and its allied sciences, has long been apparent. It should prove invaluable to many English readers of French works on geology and geography.