

Two very useful features of the book are a series of problems on which the student may exercise his skill, and a list of clearly phrased definitions of terms used in acoustics, together with an expression of the units in which the quantitative magnitudes concerned are measured. We may not always agree with the author's usage; in particular we note that he is not a member of that guild of stern logicians which insists that a sensation loudness can not be made the subject of measurement. But there is no denying the value of such a list, and it is greatly to be desired that other authors should adopt this very useful practice.

A. F.

*Classical Descriptions of Disease: with Biographical Sketches of the Authors.* By Prof. Ralph H. Major. Pp. xxvii + 630. (London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox, 1932.) 30s. net.

THIS fine volume, the composition of which was inspired by Long's "Selected Readings in Pathology" (see NATURE for March 29, 1930, p. 488), contains the original descriptions of various diseases, translated when necessary into English, from classical antiquity down to the present day. After an introduction containing passages from Hippocrates, the work consists of ten parts devoted respectively to classical descriptions of infectious diseases, diseases of metabolism, lead poisoning, diseases of the circulatory system, diseases of the blood, kidney diseases, respiratory diseases, deficiency diseases, allergic diseases and diseases of the digestive system. A short biographical notice is prefixed to each writer's account of the disease.

The extracts are not confined to the works of dead writers but include passages from the works of Charles Nicolle and his collaborators on the transmission of typhus by the louse, of Banting on the internal secretion of the pancreas, of Pierre Marie on acromegaly, of Leo Buerger on thrombo-angitis obliterans and of Herrick on sickle-cell anaemia.

Dr. Major is to be congratulated not only on his selection but also on his excellent translation of a considerable number of the descriptions of disease by foreign writers. The work will be of special value to the large number of readers who take an interest in the history of science, medical and otherwise, but have not the time or the means to consult the original volumes, many of which are difficult of access. The text is liberally interspersed with portraits, facsimile pages and other illustrations.

*The Causes of Accidents: Three Lectures on Recent Research into the Causes of Accidents given at the Royal Society of Arts under the Heath Clark Bequest to the National Institute of Industrial Psychology.* By Eric Farmer. Pp. vii + 88. (London: Sir Isaac Pitman and Sons, Ltd., 1932.) 3s. 6d. net.

IN this important little book Mr. Eric Farmer examines critically all the alleged causes of accidents and concludes that, even allowing for chance and for biased liability as factors, there are some

people who are inherently more liable to accidents than others. As the people with a high accident rate also tend to have a high sickness rate and to be less efficient, he thinks that these are the people who find modern industrial conditions too great a strain. Accident-prone people should, if possible, be employed in occupations where there is little risk. For this to be effective, careful and detailed records of accidents in various occupations are needed and further research along the lines already started by Mr. Farmer into those personal factors which, the evidence shows, play such an important part.

*Physik: ein Lehrbuch für Studierende an den Universitäten und technischen Hochschulen.* Von Prof. Wilhelm H. Westphal. Dritte Auflage. Pp. xvi + 596. (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1933.) 19.80 gold marks.

THIS edition is an enlargement of the second, while less important matter has been omitted or compressed. The electrostatic and electromagnetic systems of units are retained, the change to international units having been considered and rejected.

It is a very useful book but somewhat uneven in treatment. For example, thermoelectricity, electrolysis and geometrical optics are less fully treated than electromagnetics, interference and wave theory.

Some parts are very elementary while the more advanced parts such as quantum theory, wave mechanics, etc., are only given in outline. Between these extremes the matter is very good.

*The ABC of Chemistry.* By J. G. Crowther. Pp. xi + 248. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd., 1932.) 4s. 6d. net.

THIS interesting and well-written little book offers a readable summary of some of the broad principles of biochemistry and of the contribution of chemistry to modern civilisation, as is indicated by such chapter headings as "The Breath of Life", "Food", "Vitamins", "Soap", "Dyes" and "Metallurgy". It is accurate in general; but the original synthesis of alcohol is wrongly ascribed to Berthelot, and such obvious misrenderings as "Wolbe", "Erlich", and "Sully" appear in text and index alike. A very generous view is taken of Mayow's contribution to chemistry. The implication (p. 81) that chemical symbols are synonymous with 'jargon' is supererogatory, as is also the prefatory suggestion that teachers of chemistry do not need to make their subject attractive.

*Principles of Pharmacy.* By Henry B. Mackie. Pp. xi + 281. (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1932.) 10s. 6d.

THIS is a sound and comprehensive manual which will be found very useful by students of pharmacy. Its scope is indicated by the titles of the main sections: solution, disperse systems, change of state, extraction, enzymes, sterilisation. The book is well illustrated, contains many practical directions, and is provided with a useful bibliography.