

Short Notices

Science Museum, South Kensington. *Handbook of the Collections illustrating Electrical Engineering. 2: Radio Communication.* By W. T. O'Dea. Part 1: *History and Development.* Pp. 95+35 plates. (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1934.) 2s. 6d. net.

THE objects of the Science Museum at South Kensington, with its collections and science library, are to assist in the study of scientific and technical development, and to illustrate the applications of physical science to technical industry. For the guidance of students and others visiting the Museum, a series of handbooks is in existence, illustrating the various collections exhibited. The book under review is one of those dealing with the electrical engineering collections. It is, however, by no means a mere descriptive catalogue of what may be seen at the Museum. It is rather a concise and well-presented history of the development of radio communication from the earliest discoveries of Hertzian waves up to the present-day achievements of telegraphy, telephony, broadcasting and television.

The value of the work is considerably enhanced by the large number of photographs which illustrate the progress made in the plant and apparatus used for radio communication purposes. Many of these items are quite obsolete, and the preservation of a knowledge of them, partly by exhibits in the Museum and partly by the illustrations in this work, is a valuable undertaking. Of the few points in the book which call for criticism, one will be mentioned here. Insufficient recognition appears to have been given to the very valuable technical work carried out during recent years by members of the staff of the British Post Office, which has been very largely responsible for the development of radio-telephonic communication to its present world-wide standard.

Although technicalities have been reduced to the minimum, some knowledge of the technique of the subject is desirable on the part of the reader. To the student, in particular, the book will provide a valuable historical supplement to his more detailed textbooks.

Soil Analysis: a Handbook of Physical and Chemical Methods. By C. Harold Wright. Pp. viii+236. (London: Thomas Murby and Co.; New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., 1934.) 12s. 6d. net.

THE number of analyses conducted every day on soils must be very large, yet apart from Gedroiz's and Lemmerman's works in Russian or German, and Wiley's "Agricultural Analysis", vol. 1, there was until now no textbook on the subject. Most workers have had to get their information from sections in general textbooks or in the "Chemists' Year-Book", or from the original literature. In the inevitable phrase, then, Wright's "Soil Analysis" supplies a long-felt want. Moreover, it does so exceedingly well. Without being cumbrous, it is comprehensive; and—a matter of particular importance in a subject

where methods are revised and new conceptions are introduced as rapidly as in soil science—it is right up to date.

There is a full array of chemical determinations, including those, such as ammonia and nitrate, useful to the microbiologist. In addition, the book describes methods of determining physical constants, and making physico-chemical measurements, paying particular attention to soil reaction and base exchange. In footnotes and in tables of factors the author brings his own experience to the aid of workers who may be using a method for the first time. The number of illustrations might usefully have been increased, but the book is well produced and commendably free from errors.

Textbook of Abnormal Psychology. By Roy M. Dorcus and Prof. G. Wilson Shaffer. Pp. xiii+389. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1934.) 16s. net.

THIS is a most instructive and valuable work. It is written by two psychologists who bring to their work a critical faculty and logical training that one does not always find in books dealing with abnormal, or for that matter normal, psychology.

When viewed from a medical point of view, however, there is a superficiality and vagueness which leaves a feeling of uneasiness. The statement that . . . "Swingle and Pffifner . . . have discovered an aqueous extract of the adrenal cortex which has proved astonishingly valuable in the treatment of cats . . ." may sound thrilling, but what *were* the cats suffering from? We would have liked to see some discussion of the relationship between the adrenal glands and emotion.

The writers might have emphasised that in true paranoia there is an absence of hallucinations, and that mental deterioration does not occur. The adjective corresponding to paranoia is paranoiac, not paranoid. Despite shortcomings which can all be corrected in the next edition, the book is on the right lines, and we welcome it.

Soviet Russia fights Neurosis. By Dr. Frankwood E. Williams. Pp. xix+251. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1934.) 8s. 6d. net.

DR. FRANKWOOD WILLIAMS went to the U.S.S.R. as a psychiatrist to see for himself the state of affairs. He found many strange and inexplicable conditions and views. Possibly the position is best summed up in the reply to a criticism of his; instead of answering the criticism the reply was evasive and turned at once to 'Yes, but have you seen the museum of the Revolution, the park of Culture and rest, a factory, a public kitchen?' The planning is all there but the execution is another matter; the Russian citizen seems to blind himself to those things he does not wish to see. Is not the U.S.S.R. suffering from a mass obsessional neurosis?