

The work as a whole is not, however, free from faults, some of which are glaring and could easily have been avoided. It is not surprising to find confusion in such terms as "typhus" and "typhoid" and it would be, perhaps, wiser in an English edition to avoid the use of the term "spotted fever". The word "virus" also connotes nowadays a recognised group of infective agents rather than a general term, and should not be used in connexion with such diseases as syphilis. These faults are not really important. Much more serious, however, is the inescapable conviction that reference to foreign published work, particularly English and American, is to a very great extent absent. It may be that the authors had not ready access to these publications, although it is difficult to believe that the absence of the Kahn test from the discussion on the serological diagnosis of syphilis can be put down to this. It should, beyond question, have found a place alongside the Meinicke and Sachs-Georgi methods. There is also a tendency to refer to the work of investigators throughout the text while omitting it from the list of references. The value of these volumes as a work of reference has to some extent suffered by such omissions.

As a general rule, whilst the authors are progressing along the older and better beaten paths of bacteriology, there is a surety of treatment and a careful discrimination in the selection of available material. The case of the filterable viruses, however, is not so happy. There it is essential to move with the times, and this has not been done. Certain filterable viruses, such as louping ill and Rift Valley fever, have been missed completely. Admittedly, to be quite up to date in a large published work is difficult, so rapid is the progress in this highly important field. In dealing with the question of psittacosis, reference to work so recent as 1934 is found, and a quite useful account of the disease is given. It is a mistake to dismiss the problem of prophylactic measures in the control of yellow fever without mention of the promising results of vaccination. The cultivation of filterable viruses is now an accomplished fact, and several investigators have made convincing claims for its practical importance in smallpox vaccination.

A true indication of the nature of the filterable viruses has not been given in these volumes by reason of omission of more recent work along this line. On this point, reference is made to the experiments of Frosch and Dahmen with foot-and-mouth disease, whereas no mention is made of the very important work of the Maitlands and of Hecke. Nor is it a good reflection of generally accepted opinion to find on page 523 of vol. 2 the statement that the Borrel bodies in fowl-pox are "specific products of reaction of the tissues".

These are but a few instances, and no doubt in future editions the treatment of the filterable viruses will follow more closely recent developments and so reach the same high standard which for the most part characterises the rest of the work.

The translation, which must have been an arduous task, has been admirably done.

Les plantes alimentaires chez tous les peuples et a travers les âges :

Histoire, utilisation, culture. Par Prof. D. Bois. Vol. 3 : Plantes a epices, a aromates, a condiments. (Encyclopédie biologique, Vol. 7.) Pp. iii+289. (Paris : Paul Lechevalier, 1934.) 50 francs.

THIS part of the "Encyclopédie biologique" deals primarily with spices but contains, in addition, useful information on a number of economic plants yielding edible products that may not be generally regarded as spices.

The first half of the volume deals with the true spices, and the early pages are devoted to an interesting historical account of the spice trade, the early days of which were so filled with romance. The more important spices such as pepper, nutmeg, cloves, cinnamon, ginger, chillies and vanilla are dealt with in detail, while those of more limited consumption such as turmeric, Guinea grains and star-anise receive more summary treatment. In addition to a description of the spice and the plant yielding it, information is given regarding areas of production, cultural requirements and practice, yields, uses and common names in various languages.

In the section devoted to condiments there are good accounts of mustard, horse-radish and the various representatives of the families Umbelliferae, Compositae and Labiatae that fall under this category. Brief accounts of edible oil- and sugar-yielding plants are given at the end of the volume. Their inclusion in a volume devoted to spices and condiments is perhaps somewhat surprising.

Structure et propriétés des noyaux atomiques :

Rapports et discussions du Septième Conseil de Physique tenu a Bruxelles du 22 au 29 Octobre 1933 sous les auspices de l'Institut International de Physique Solvay. Pp. xxv+365. (Paris : Gauthier-Villars, 1934.) 75 francs.

THE report on the seventh Solvay Conference (1933) at Brussels contains papers by Cockcroft, Chadwick, the Joliot, Dirac, Gamow, Heisenberg, with discussions by a galaxy of notable physicists on the structure of atomic nuclei, neutron, positron, neutrino and the 'materialisation' of gamma rays. The report adopts and recommends the notation ${}^4_2\text{He}$, ${}^{226}_{88}\text{Ra}$, and so forth, rather than ${}^4\text{He}_2$, ${}^{226}\text{Ra}_{88}$. . . , a change which the chemist would approve. In these days of rapid development of atomic physics, it would be a great boon to receive these reports within a few weeks of each conference, and to find them with their edges cut.