

Reports of the Progress of Applied Chemistry

Issued by the Society of Chemical Industry. Vol. 20, 1935. Pp. 819. (London: Society of Chemical Industry, 1936.) 12s. 6d. (to members, 7s. 6d.).

To maintain a really adequate private library is unfortunately beyond the means of many chemists, who depend for their guidance to progress in their science on a carefully selected collection of monographs, summaries and abstracts. Among these signposts none is better known or more appreciated than this series of annual publications which, together with the series of reports on pure chemistry published by the Chemical Society, afford a very comprehensive survey extending to some of the farthest boundaries of the field. The success of such a survey depends in no small measure on the degree to which the contributors, forty-two in number, succeed in presenting a connected story rather than a mere collection of relevant abstracts, and there is evidence of considerable attention having been paid to this fact. On the other hand, a report is not an essay, and it is the business of the reporter to give chapter and verse for his statements, so that the harvest of references to original papers and their abstracts is as rich as ever.

The elimination of the report on explosives (which is dealt with every alternate year) has not appreciably diminished the size of the book, which comprises twenty-five reports on as many sections of applied chemistry under the editorship of Mr. T. F. Burton, editor of *British Chemical Abstracts* and of the *Transactions of the Society of Chemical Industry*. New reporters are Dr. D. Burton on leather and glue, Mr. W. A. Damon on acids, alkalis, salts, etc., Mr. C. Jepson on sanitation and water purification, and Messrs. H. A. Turner and W. F. A. Ermen on bleaching, dyeing, printing and finishing. To those also whose interest in applied chemistry is secondary to that in some other branch of learning this report can be recommended as a trustworthy guide. A. A. E.

Chronic Nasal Sinusitis and its Relation to Mental Disorder :

an Applied Pathology of Abnormal Conditions of the Nasal Sinuses found in Mental Hospital Patients. By F. A. Pickworth. Pp. xii + 156 + 5 plates. (London: H. K. Lewis and Co., Ltd., 1935.) 16s. net.

As a presentation of the relation of sinusitis to the occurrence of mental disorder, this book is not convincing. If the author would only give us reliable control figures we might listen, but until we know what proportion of patients in general hospitals have sinusitis, as judged by the same standards, we shall not be convinced. We take serious objection to the statement that "Hysteria should be treated as a medical disease due to minute focal brain lesions, and not due solely to the imagination". The prevalence of agglutinins to organisms of the typhoid-dysentery-foodpoisoning group amongst mental hospital admissions probably corresponds to their occurrence amongst the general population of a large city like Birmingham. The percentage in admissions from rural areas is very small.

Mules and Men

By Zora Neale Hurston. Pp. 343. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd., 1936.) 12s. 6d. net.

WHILE the reader of this book may not feel constrained to endorse fully the publisher's exuberant statement that it is the most wonderful collection of folk-lore in the world, it will be admitted that it is a remarkable production, which gives an illuminating view of negro society in the southern United States. The book, indeed, is noteworthy because it is a record of negro mentality by one of themselves, who is also a trained anthropologist. Miss Hurston, who is a pupil of Prof. Franz Boas of Columbia University, after graduation elected to take up negro folk-lore as a subject of research, and chose her own home town in Florida as the starting point of her investigation. The narrative of her experiences in search of material is rich in vivid detail and characteristic touches, interspersed with sermons, songs, music and stories, in which humour, religion and unconscious irreverence are closely interwoven.

In the second part of her book Miss Hurston records her further experience when seeking initiation into the mysteries of voodoo in New Orleans. She became the acolyte or associate of a number of the leading exponents of this form of magical belief, some of whom claimed to be relatives of, or to have been associated with, the notorious Marie Leveau, well known as a voodoo priestess in New Orleans at the close of the last century. Miss Hurston has made an interesting record of her various initiations, which will be of value to students of this ritual. A note of the author's own emotional reactions would have been of considerable interest.

Lake Tana and the Blue Nile :

an Abyssinian Quest. By Major R. E. Cheesman. Pp. xiv + 400 + 25 plates. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1936.) 18s. net.

WHEN Major Cheesman entered upon his duties as H.B.M. Consul in north-west Abyssinia, he found that no large-scale maps of the Abyssinian portion of the Blue Nile were available. He was also informed that the course of the Blue Nile was the only part of Africa remaining which offered opportunity for pioneer exploration. During his nine years' residence in the country, he took full advantage of the opportunity and of the permission given him to explore. In this volume he gives his readers a record of his journeys. Not only is his account of special interest at the moment, but it is also of permanent scientific value as the story of the first visit of a European to the islands of Lake Tana and of the first journey to be made down the Nile through unexplored country to the point reached by previous explorers, who had entered Abyssinia by way of the Sudan.

Major Cheesman, already well known to students of geographical literature as a traveller in unexplored parts of Arabia, has made a notable addition to recent work dealing with a country but little known until the march of events brought it into the limelight. The narrative is illustrated by a series of excellent and illuminating photographs.