The Journal of the Institute of Metals

Vol. 69, 1943. Edited by N. B. Vaughan. Pp. xxxvi+526+41 plates. (London: Institute of Metals, 1943.) n.p.

THE "Journal of the Institute of Metals" has acquired a very high reputation as a medium for the publication of the results of research upon the alloys of the non-ferrous metals. Despite the distractions of war, this reputation is thoroughly maintained in the volume under review. Starting off with a joint discussion with the Institute of Physics on the application of X-ray methods in the investigation of the equilibrium diagrams of metals, it contains some two dozen other papers on corrosion and surface protection, the structure of rolled aluminium and brass, spectrographic analysis, electron diffraction—the thirty-third May Lecture by Sir George Thomson—a thermodynamic study of the ageing of the copper-aluminium alloys by Prof. S. T. Konobeevski, of Moscow, together with many papers on the metallography of the light alloys of aluminium and magnesium.

It should by now be unnecessary to stress the fact that the high standard of the Institute's papers remains unaffected. Considering the difficulties of the times, this volume is a most creditable achievement, on which everyone concerned, and not least the editor, Mr. N. B. Vaughan, is to be highly congratulated. F. C. THOMPSON.

The Chemistry of Life

An Easy Outline of Biochemistry. By Dr. J. S. D. Bacon. (Thinker's Library, No. 103.) Pp. ix+118. (London: Watts and Co., Ltd., 1944.) 2*s.* 6*d.* net.

IT is a difficult task to write a book about a technical subject in non-technical language without floundering hopelessly in a mass of words. The author has overcome this by simply explaining these technical terms when they must be mentioned. The underlying idea is that biochemistry is the understanding and interpretation of living processes on the basis of chemical transformations which are capable of precise measurements. Recent methods used as tools by the biochemist, such as ultra-centrifugation, dialysis, electron microscopy, labelling with isotopes and respiration methods, are described. Mention is made of enzymes, hormones, evocators, genes, chemotherapy, viruses and bacteriophage. A useful feature is a glossary of technical terms, although it is doubtful whether understanding, for example, of the terms 'crystalloid' and 'purine' is increased by defining them respectively as "soluble substances of low molecular weight" and "a class of organic substances containing nitrogen with a characteristic molecular structure". T. F. DIXON.

Gérmen e Cultura

Por Prof. A. A. Mendes Corrêa. Pp. viii+234. (Pôrto: Instituto de Antropologia da Universidade do Pôrto, 1944.) n.p.

THE author would be the last person to claim that this volume contained new and important information. His aim has been rather to sit back and survey a number of problems and to give us his ideas generally: the articles included are, as it were, conversation pieces, some being on subjects of universal interest, others on matters of more particular importance to the Portuguese themselves and to their offspring in the New World. Such a series of conversation pieces, when composed by a scholar and humanist like the Director of the Institute of Anthropology of the University of Oporto, are always worth reading, and they will be found to be a useful antidote to the procession of single-track ideas generated by the overpowering pressure of the War. Portugal, it must always be remembered, is one of the few countries of Europe that has remained at peace.

The articles included in this volume are on various subjects and of different lengths. Most of them were delivered in the first instance as addresses to meetings of learned societies held in Portugal during the last few years. The title of the book is taken from that of one of the articles. Others deal with prehistory and history in Portugal, with the ethnology of Brazil, with the science of population, with methods of combating degenerative factors present in the Portuguese people, with half-breeds, with rhythm and culture, with the passage to sovereignty from bondage, etc. It is all somewhat general and philosophic, but none the less pleasant for that; a book well worth perusal by the fireside. M. C. BURKITT.

The Blood Pressure and its Disorders, including Angina Pectoris

By Dr. John Plesch. Pp. viii+149+5 plates. (London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox, 1944.) 15*s.* net.

DR. PLESCH divides his book into three parts. Part 1 contains a description of the principles and construction of an instrument which records the pressure changes within the brachial artery when this vessel is subjected to compression. The variations in the records obtained in different cardiac and peripheral vascular diseases are discussed. There is much useful clinical and physiological information in this part of the book, but the arrangement of the material makes it difficult to discover. As an additional instrument in the armamentarium of the cardiologist it is of considerable value, but it does not replace familiar and well-tried methods of diagnosis.

Part 2 is devoted to a discussion of the venous pressure and its variations in health and disease. This discussion covers a wide range and again contains many observations and hypotheses of interest to both clinician and physiologist.

Part 3 takes up the special condition known as angina pectoris, and discusses its pathology, physiology and treatment.

The book suffers much from the absence of a bibliography. Various authors are quoted in the text, but no references are given to their publications. The work of American and British investigators in the field of cardiology and vascular physiology receives scant attention.

Metallurgical Abstracts (General and Non-Ferrous)

Vol. 10, 1943 (New Series). Edited by N. B. Vaughan. Pp. xii+523. (London: Institute of Metals, 1943.) n.p.

THE "Metallurgical Abstracts" of work which comes within its own sphere is by no means the least valuable part of the activities of the Institute of Metals. The subject index alone of the volume under review extends to thirty-eight double-column pages, an indication in itself of the thoroughness with which the work is done. It will suffice for all those who have known this series of abstracts in the past to say that the latest addition is in every way up to the usual standard.