

Science and the Planned State

By John R. Baker. Pp. xvi+102. (London: George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1945.) 7s. 6d. net.

THIS volume purports to give a careful analysis and criticism of the totalitarian view of science. Considering first the proposition that science exists only to serve the material wants of man, upon which he suggests that the whole of the totalitarian view of science is based, Dr. J. R. Baker proceeds to discuss the 'freedoms' which best serve the cause of discovery. He then deals briefly with science under totalitarianism, but more particularly with science in the U.S.S.R., the deficiencies of Soviet science and the genetics controversy, and in his last chapter on the duties of scientific men to society endeavours to indicate some of the ways in which they may use their special talents for the benefit of others. As in his book, "The Scientific Life", Dr. Baker insists on the importance of the element of chance in scientific discovery and the encouragement of the amateur. In dealing with such a topical subject, it would be strange if Dr. Baker had not something pertinent and suggestive to say, and this fresh plea for the preservation of freedom of inquiry, for valid argument and insistence on the cultural value of science is to be welcomed.

None the less, this is scarcely a book which will add to Dr. Baker's reputation. It cannot be claimed that he brings to his task the objectivity that should characterize the scientific man. He consistently fails to distinguish between the planning of discovery, which is manifestly absurd, and planning the general manner in which available scientific resources should be used. Dr. Baker is inclined not to see the facts that are uncomfortable or disconcerting for his theory, and the real contribution of his book to the debate on the planning of science is slight, however unexceptionally it maintains that science does not exist solely to serve man's material needs, that a thorough-going scheme for the central planning of research would gravely damage science or that totalitarianism is the form of government least in accord with scientific principles. Nor does Dr. Baker strengthen his argument when, for example, he quotes A. Szent-Györgyi second-hand from the *World Digest*, or the Archbishop of Canterbury from the *Sunday Express*. Finally, the numbering of the references in alphabetical sequence at the end of the volume, even though it has the authority of Royal Society practice in biological papers, instead of in numerical sequence as they occur, cannot be allowed to pass without protest from at least one reader.

Metallography of Magnesium and its Alloys

A translation from the German by the Technical Staffs of F. A. Hughes and Co., Ltd., and Magnesium Elektron, Ltd., of "Metallographie des Magnesiums und seiner technischen Legierungen", by Walter Bulian and Eberhard Fahrenhorst. Pp. xi+117. (London: F. A. Hughes and Co., Ltd., 1944.) 15s.

MESSRS. F. A. Hughes and Co. and Magnesium Elektron, Ltd., have already placed the metallurgical world deeply in their debt by their excellent translation of Beck's "Technology of Magnesium and its Alloys". They have now increased that debt by translating another German book dealing with a much narrower part of the magnesium field: Bulian and Fahrenhorst's "Metallographie des Magnesiums und seiner technischen Legierungen". In one respect

this translation differs from that of the earlier book, a very valuable feature of which was that footnotes, correcting errors of statement, important omissions or biased points of view, were freely added to the text. Perhaps it is a pity that this has not been done in the translation under review; but it must be admitted that such notes are not nearly so needed in a book like the present one, which is written around a series of photographs, whereas in Beck's book the personal opinion and bias of the writer had much more play.

The book commences with a chapter on polishing and etching technique and then reproduces 215 photomicrographs and 10 macrographs, which by their high level of excellence confirm the value of the technique described. They are well selected to illustrate the different types of structures which are described in the text. A useful bibliography brings to a close this book, which can be confidently recommended to all who have to deal with the microscopic examination of magnesium alloys.

Through My Garden Gate

By Newman Flower. Pp. v+94. (London, Toronto, Sydney and Melbourne: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1945.) 5s. net.

THIS is a delightful book, well worthy of notice in a scientific journal, because the man of science, like all other sensible men, may know the simple pleasure of working in and enjoying his garden. The book is a collection of garden observations, "thoughts and philosophy by a keen amateur gardener of many years standing". He describes "the garden of a thousand joys", which, he says, is the only name for the garden which is loved by the person who works in it. He does not write for the wealthy person who owns a garden in which the work is done by aged menials, nor for a gardening mechanic who merely makes a garden. He writes for those for whom a garden means what it means for him—a beloved place where one toils and plants one's thoughts. His book is one which can be picked up at any time, for through its pages runs a warm and a highly intelligent love for the things of the garden.

The Statesman's Year Book

Statistical and Historical Annual of the States of the World for the Year 1945. Edited by Dr. M. Epstein. Eighty-second annual publication, revised after Official Returns. Pp. xxxvi+1479. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1945.) 30s. net.

THIS indispensable annual again makes its regular appearance with revision up to the end of the first quarter of the year. The end of the War in Europe came too late for inclusion in the historical summaries and so, for the last time, Germany appears in her pre-war state and with her Nazi leaders. Revision in war-time is far from easy, for many States have published no statistical returns of production and trade. Wherever possible, however, recent figures in many parts of the Empire and in the United States have been included. The invaluable bibliographies attached to each section have been thoroughly revised and in some cases extended. This is specially noteworthy in regard to the United States. Two coloured maps show respectively the Russo-Finnish boundary of the armistice of 1944 and world airways for international transport. The volume retains its usual size and compact form.