

valves. A technique of shifting the tube sideways has been developed for finding the depth of flaws. Intensive development has been made in portable X-ray apparatus so that the tube can be taken to the job, such as aircraft propellers, instead of vice versa.

The author concludes with a short discourse on the use of motion pictures for recording engineering work, for instructing operatives in correct technique, and in the kinds of commercial publicity required in the modern world. Throughout the text the author invariably supplements his observations with concrete suggestions for practical procedure in photographic development, lighting conditions, and the selection of photographic plates and films. Each chapter contains references to suitable publications and suggests particular applications of the available apparatus described. Much of the technique has been evolved or perfected during the War, but there remains, of course, much further information to be disclosed.

L. E. C. HUGHES.

Sociology and Social Reconstruction" edited by Dr. Karl Mannheim. The book stirs a crowd of reflexions in the mind of one who has followed the relevant literature. Long ago, Abraham Lincoln said to his fellow countrymen: "I look for a time when money will cease to be the master and become the servant of humanity". For years his words fell on deaf ears in his own country and in others, but we have reached a time when, at least as regards the children, money has become the servant, not the master. The Myrdals hold that in a truly democratic society all sections of the people should have easy access to information about birth-control, in order that undesired and undesirable births should be reduced; that we cannot accept a way of things whereby the poor and ignorant maintain the stock of the population; that we must direct our attention to the abolition of both poverty and ignorance, the very factors which have for a long time stimulated a high birth-rate.

T. RAYMONT.

## THE MENACE OF DECLINING POPULATION

### Nation and Family

The Swedish Experiment in Democratic Family and Population Policy. By Alva Myrdal. Pp. xiv+445. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., 1945.) 21s. net.

IN commending this important book to the attention of readers in all countries that call themselves democratic, the editor and publishers point out, quite rightly, that the "problems of population and family are very much alive in British discussion to-day". From a long list of authoritative workers in this field it may be sufficient for us to mention Carr-Saunders, Enid Charles, D. V. Glass, the late Beatrice Webb and R. and K. Titmuss, whose clear and comprehensive little book, "Parents Revolt", gives an admirable summary which he that runs may read.

In Sweden, where the pre-war birth-rate closely resembled that of England, interest in questions of population had been steadily increasing when, in 1934, Prof. G. Myrdal and his wife Alva Myrdal published "Crisis in the Population Question", a book which had a sale rivalling that of a popular novel. A Royal Commission was appointed to make detailed investigations and to report. Many of its recommendations were soon passed into law during a session of the Swedish Parliament, since known as the "Mothers and Babies" Parliament.

Now comes this extensive and thorough scientific treatise entitled "Nation and Family", written by Alva Myrdal. The author discusses the import of population figures in their bearing on economics, productivity, and the well-known gradual change to an 'age-ing' community, with its growing proportion of old folks and its dwindling proportion of little folks. She proceeds to set forth in general terms of political ends and means a programme for the adjustment of a nation's life to that of its families. The latter part of the book includes an account of welfare reforms in Sweden, and a discussion of birth-control, of housing, of social insurance, of education, of provisions for child-birth, and of the 'place of women' and the structure of the modern family.

So much for this very important book, an entirely worthy addition to the "International Library of

## ESSAYS ON BIOLOGY

### New Biology

Edited by M. L. Johnson and Michael Abercrombie. 1. Pp. 118+8 plates. (Harmondsworth and New York: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1945.) 9d.

THIS book consists of seven articles all written by well-known authorities in their respective fields and dealing with a variety of biological subjects. According to the preface they are intended for the general reader who has had some preliminary training in biology, and it is suggested that they may be interesting and useful to teachers of science in schools.

It may be said that all the articles are well written and the subject-matter well and clearly presented, but it is doubtful whether some of the more difficult subjects such as "The Function of the Central Nervous System" by Dr. J. Z. Young, or "The Anatomical Basis of Sensory Experience" by Prof. Le Gros Clark would really serve as an aid to non-specialist teachers in schools.

Other essays such as "The Potato: Master or Servant" by Dr. Salaman, "The Measurement of Human Survival" by Prof. L. Hogben and "Malaria Mosquitos and Man" by Dr. M. N. Johnson might well be appreciated by the general reader, for they require less biological background.

The lack of continuity and relationship between the subjects covered by these essays is a disadvantage, and one feels that a long introductory training is necessary before some of the material can be assimilated.

Whether the references to various specialist scientific journals would be profitable to those who only have a slight acquaintance with biological work is doubtful.

It is stated in the preface that this little book may be the first of a series. If so, it is to be hoped that the future volumes will be constructed on more fundamental lines and deal with subjects which are well within the range of "an audience already possessing some scientific knowledge whether through self-education or through school or University instruction". The realm of the biological sciences is so vast that there can be no difficulty in choosing subjects, which, while of fundamental importance and interest, can still be understood by those who have not had an extensive training in lecture room and laboratory.