

### The Naming of the Telescope

By Edward Rosen. Pp. xvi + 110 + 5 plates. (New York: Henry Schuman, 1947.) 2.50 dollars.

DR. E. ROSEN has written a remarkably lively little book, the conclusion of which is that the term "telescope" was originally devised by John Demisiani of Cephalonia, and made public by Frederick Cesi at the banquet given in honour of Galileo on April 14, 1611. The circumstances may seem to the man of science of to-day to be too minute to warrant the publication of a book; but we must welcome here what the history of science so notably lacks, namely, a painstaking and detailed inquiry into a doubtful point concerning which both contemporaries and historians are at variance. The book scarcely needs to justify itself by its subject-matter, for such is the gusto of its author that the reader is infected by that strange passion that keeps sensible men out of bed after midnight to read detective stories.

The book is accurate and scholarly as well as lively, though the reviewer confesses a shudder at the statement that Frederick Cesi, Theophilus Müller and Henry Corvinus "hiked from the castle of the illustrious marquis at St. Polo to lofty Mt. Gennaro". Let us have a translation either into English or American, not a macaronic of the two, as inappropriate as the vision which it conjures up of Cesi in short pants.

The last section of the book glances at a few of the terms other than *telescopium* used for this instrument; such a study might, indeed, have been carried further, and would have revealed some interesting usages. Thus, Henry More speaks of a "Galileo's tube", and Henry Vaughan gives two other synonyms in a well-known verse, which affords one of the few examples of successful scientific simile:

Either disperse these mists, which blot and fill  
My perspective still as they pass;  
Or else remove me hence unto that hill,  
Where I shall need no glass.

F. SHERWOOD TAYLOR

### Reagents for Qualitative Inorganic Analysis

Editors: P. E. Wenger and R. Duckert; Joint-Authors: C. J. Van Nieuwenburg and J. Gillis. (Second Report of the International Committee on New Analytical Reactions and Reagents of the International Union of Chemistry.) Pp. xxii + 379. (New York and Amsterdam: Elsevier Publishing Co., Inc.; London: Cleaver-Hume Press, Ltd., 1948.) 39s. 6d.

REAGENTS for the identification of inorganic radicals have been proposed in profusion; on the other hand, published descriptions often lack information on their limitations. The International Committee on New Analytical Reactions and Reagents of the International Union of Chemistry, in its report of 1938, made a selection of reagents for study to which have been added any offering promise that appeared afterwards. Despite the difficulties of the times, the Committee was ready in 1943 to consider publication, but it was not until 1945 that the "Deuxième Rapport" appeared; some additions, in particular a selection of photomicrographs, have been made for the present English text.

Only reagents commonly available or readily prepared have been considered; in the latter case, brief preparative details are given. Where there are very

many possibilities for any one ion, about half a dozen have been chosen. The general arrangement is simple: first, a statement of the mechanism of reaction (if known or presumed), then details of the test (which may be under the microscope, on spot-plate, on paper or in test-tube, micro- or macro-), and, finally, limitations of sensitivity and selectivity. These last are the most important features of the work, for it is essential to know if and how the presence of other substances affect the delicacy of a test. Group separations are described separately.

Here, then, we have an unbiased and critical selection and survey of a large number of qualitative reactions; the value of this work needs no stressing. The style of production is generous by our standards; an extensive bibliography is included. Very occasionally, phraseology is rather quaint, but not so as to obscure the meaning. B. A. E.

### New Song in a Strange Land

By Esther Warner. Pp. xi + 302. (London: Victor Gollancz, Ltd., 1949.) 16s. net.

THE strange land which inspired this new song is Liberia, but anyone who reads this book to find out something about that country is unlikely to be much wiser by the time he has finished than when he began. Nearly all Mrs. Warner has to say has already been said about every other part of the west coast of Africa, from Dakar to the Cameroons. It is not a new song, but the old, old story, told for American readers. But one can forgive Mrs. Warner a lot, for she writes in the main about simple, ordinary folk who she clearly came to love, and although her rendering of the song is so melodramatic as to be almost nauseous in parts, it is redeemed by this obvious sympathy—but only just. Of the true Americo-Liberians, Mrs. Warner has little to say; but one is left with the impression that if one wishes to seek for exploitation and oppression on the west coast of Africa to-day, the most likely place to find it is not in the territories of the European Colonial powers but in this free republic administered by America's god-children. One or two of Jo Dendel's woodcuts are pleasing; the rest are so trifling that it is difficult to see why they were included.

J. O. FIELD

### The Harold Whitaker Collection of County Atlases, Road-Books and Maps presented to the University of Leeds

A Catalogue by Dr. Harold Whitaker. Pp. 143. (Leeds: Brotherton Library, The University, 1947.) 10s. 6d.

THIS catalogue of the private collection of Dr. Harold Whitaker is invaluable not only as a model of its kind—in which it follows the methods already adopted by the author in his similar works on Yorkshire, Lancashire and Cheshire—but also as illustrating the development of cartography, more particularly in England, from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. It records some maps not already noticed in standard works, includes one item not previously known, and has, in addition to the main catalogue, brief appendixes on road books, maps of Yorkshire and general atlases. There are a number of black-and-white illustrations. Dr. Whitaker has generously given the whole collection to the University of Leeds, the librarian of which contributes an introduction to this excellent work.

J. N. L. B.