

Farmer's Joy ^{5/6}

By John Read. Pp. xi+274. (London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1949.) 12s. 6d. net.

SO long ago as 1910 the present professor of chemistry in the University of St. Andrews founded a pioneer group of rustic players to stage his Somerset dialect plays in the villages of the West Country. These plays had grown out of the author's upbringing on the borderland of Somerset and Dorset and, in "Farmer's Joy", he has gone back to a district with which he is historically and genetically linked to produce a book which is in the best traditions of all the writers who have enriched the literature of England with their tales of the West Country told in dialect.

Most of the material on which the book is based was collected by the author at the beginning of the century. It tells of "country folk, simple but shrewd, as fond of gossip as they are of fun and cider. It mingles old customs, strange beliefs, local habits, quaint folk-songs and stories of all kinds in rich profusion". The book seeks to preserve for later generations a flavour of a Wessex which faced life leisurely and which is tending to disappear under the impact of modern conditions.

Some of the stories which Prof. Read relates are well known to West countrymen and are hallowed on convivial occasions. Others are original and have been assiduously collected from those whom they actually concerned or from their acquaintances. What may surprise the 'foreigner' is that all the stories and incidents have actually occurred and could be substantiated. Some of these stories have already appeared in various journals; but in bringing them together and in adding to them, Farmer Wookey (or Prof. Read) has done yeoman service to English dialect and West Country humour. These the stranger may better understand by referring to the admirable glossary, the remarks on the dialect and the author's notes. T. H. H.

International Year-Book of the World Power Conference

No. 4: Data on Resources and Annual Statistics for 1936-1946. Edited, with Introductory and Explanatory Texts, by Frederick Brown. Pp. 212. (London: World Power Conference, 1948.) 45s. net.

THIS fourth year-book, produced with aid of a grant from Unesco, covers the disturbed period of the Second World War when comparisons between countries in respect of output became increasingly difficult, by reason of both the scarcity of information and widespread territorial changes. The successive tables are concerned mainly with fuels and other sources of power. Table 2, concerned with resources of solid fuels, is little changed from that of Year-Book No. 3, except in the important cases of Canada and China, the estimates for which are heavily reduced. In respect of coal output, the lengthening lead of the United States (more than 800 million tons annually) and the difficulty of the British fields in maintaining production at little more than 200 millions have been confirmed by the Second World War. In water-power, the recently increased capacity of Sweden is remarkable, even in a world of vigorous hydro-electric development. The most serious gaps in the tables are left by the absence of figures concerning U.S.S.R. output; in petroleum production, for example, there are no figures later than for the year 1936. By following the practice of

placing the Soviet Union, as a whole, for statistical purposes, within Europe, the fact that its mineral wealth is preponderantly within Asia is, unfortunately, concealed. W. FITZGERALD

Visual Education Film Strips

An Introduction to Fungi, Part 1. By Rodney F. Cosser. Pp. 12+Film Strip. An Introduction to Fungi, Part 2. By Rodney F. Cosser. Pp. 12+Film Strip. Autumn Fruits (Poisonous). By Rodney F. Cosser. Pp. 12+Film Strip. Autumn Fruits (Non-Poisonous). By Rodney F. Cosser. Pp. 12+Film Strip. (London: Daily Mail School-Aid Department, n.d.) 21s. each.

ALL these strips will form a very useful addition to any school library. The subjects are admirably photographed and the colour reproduction (Dufay-chrome) is both life-like and attractive. In fact, the inexpensive film projector can be used very effectively with these strips. It may be a technical disadvantage of this particular colour process that the manufacturers are unable to include numbers to indicate frames, or titles to indicate specimens. This, however, is to a large extent counter-balanced by the notes accompanying each strip, which include monochrome reproductions of all the frames.

In "Introduction to Fungi", Parts 1 and 2, the viewer may experience some difficulty in gauging the sizes of the specimens. It might have been a good idea to introduce some common object in certain of the frames against which relative sizes could have been assessed.

The notes provided with all four film strips are good. They are perhaps too full in that they may induce some teachers to neglect further sources of information. Film strips of this kind are extremely useful for stimulating initial interest. We should like to see the Daily Mail produce further film strips with the main intention of saving teaching time and doing for the teacher what the average illustrated text-book cannot do.

Process and Physical Metallurgy

By Dr. James E. Garside. Pp. xix+499. (London: Charles Griffin and Co., Ltd., 1949.) 40s. net.

THIS is an amazing book. In just under five hundred pages of well-printed and illustrated text the author has covered a very large field of metallurgy, including fuel, refractories and moulding sands.

As the book is written primarily for engineers, detailed accounts of extraction processes have wisely been avoided. Fabrication, heat-treatment, pyrometry and the properties and uses of alloys, both ferrous and non-ferrous, have been most ably dealt with. The chapter on the technique of the metallographic microscope, which includes a brief but excellent description of the electron-microscope, is extremely well written, as are the chapters on the constitution of alloys and the metallic state.

The whole outlook of the book is thoroughly modern, and in his brief treatment of so much subject-matter the author has given just enough and not too much. It is, in fact, an extremely good example of how clarity can be gained by brevity and by reference to some excellent diagrams.

The book is to be thoroughly recommended, not only to engineers but also to metallurgists requiring a refresher course, while the layman can gain a very excellent insight into the fascinating subject of metallurgy by perusing its pages. J. H. ANDREW