Cesàro summability (C, k) with $k<\frac{1}{2}$, which is only briefly referred to by Hobson.

In 1908, Barnes gave an alternative to Hobson's definition, using a contour of integration parallel to the imaginary axis and a gamma-function integrand. Dr. Robin refers to this and also to Barnes's penetrating study of asymptotic expansions. But since Barnes's work has never been published in full, and since he claimed that his methods diminish the labour to about one-third of that required on Hobson's approach, it would be interesting to see what, for example, the first section of Dr. Robin's book would look like if written out on Barnes's lines. This, however, would in no way detract from the value of the present volume as an admirable work of reference.

T. A. A. Broadbent

AVIAN FOLKLORE

The Folklore of Birds

An Enquiry into the Origin and Distribution of some Magico-Religious Traditions. By Edward A. Armstrong. (The New Naturalist: a Survey of British Natural History.) Pp. xvi+272+33 plates. (London: William Collins, Sons and Co., Ltd., 1958.) 30*s*. net.

BIRDS have always fascinated humanity. Only of recent years has proper attention been paid to the importance of folklore for the study of history and of the way people thought in the past. It is only just in time. Folktales and folklore were seldom written down but were passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. Nowadays the spread of so-called civilization has meant that, except here and there in outlying districts, everything has been forgotten. Recently there has been a move to collect what has survived and to examine at the same time the folk legends of modern primitive peoples. Fortunately, although not written down, pictures recalling the folklore have often been used as decorative motifs in peasant crafts, and a close study of these has helped to elucidate the underlying legends. Of course, not every figure of a bird either in prehistoric times or at a later period illustrates some myth or legend. Indeed, I doubt whether the bird-sign on the top of a staff which can be seen in the Under Cave at Lascaux in connexion with the happy looking rhinoceros walking away from the disembowelled bison nearby is anything but the sign manual of some hunter concerned with the painting of the scene. This may well have been made for some definite purpose, though not necessarily to illustrate what we should to-day call folklore. Whether one can talk about folklore as such in palæolithic times one may be allowed to doubt, but in the later periods there is often documentary evidence which explains some of the art.

Edward A. Armstrong is well known as a naturalist. He has written much on bird life, and his book, "The Wren", is deservedly popular. In the present volume he starts with early times and continues with chapters devoted to various species of birds which figure especially in folklore tales. Thus we find chapters on the goose, the red-throated diver, the raven, the green woodpecker, the eagle, the wren, and a number of song birds. Each chapter describes some of the legends attached to the particular bird or group of birds. There is also an account of the beliefs which have grown up in various places, that the dead return as birds; for example, the story of the fisherman seeking his dead brother who had foretold that he would return as a gannet after death and would be recognizable by his black armsleeves. The author has thrown out his net widely. In time he ranges from prehistoric to recent periods, and geographically from Hudson's Bay to Zimbabwe in Rhodesia. There are numerous and delightful illustrations, some line blocks, some in half-tone and one in colour. The book as a whole is a scholarly account of the subject and a great deal of material has been collected. It also makes good reading. Archæologically and anthropologically it is a work which the purchaser will find well worth possessing.

M. C. Burkitt

RESEARCH ON HORMONES

Recent Progress in Hormone Research, Vol. 14

Proceedings of the Laurentian Hormone Conference 1957. Edited by Gregory Pincus. Pp. vi+582. (New York: Academic Press, Inc.; London: Academic Books, Ltd., 1958.) 13.50 dollars.

THE fourteen articles contained in this volume record the contributions and discussions at the 1957 meeting of the Laurentian Hormone Conference. Hormones are chemically diversified and include among their number proteins, polypeptides, steroids, and catechol amines. Their biological effects embrace practically all vital processes, while their applications to medicine include both psychiatry and general medicine. It is therefore inevitable that the good endocrinologist must keep in touch with many different sorts of research, and books like this one assist him to remain in contact with aspects of the subject which otherwise might be difficult to follow.

The first section of the book, devoted to a series of four papers on "Hormone Structure and Function," well illustrates how often small changes in chemical structure can profoundly alter biological activity. The actions considered in this section range from the inhibition or facilitation of the growth of tumours to the regulation of electrolyte metabolism. The next section, dealing with "Hormones in Growth and Development," contains three papers and is largely directed towards hormonal influences on protein and fat synthesis and catabolism. It includes a discussion of the effects of hormones in cattle production, and in mammary development and function. The third section is concerned with "Reproduction", and from this section can be seen how developmental abnormalities can profoundly influence the secretion of hormones and how in their turn the activity of hormones can play a part in sex development. The section on "Hormones and Metabolism" includes a discussion on the effect of hormones on lipoprotein and connective tissue metabolism. Finally, a section on "Neurohumors" includes a discussion of adrenaline, noradrenaline and their striking influence on many different processes.

The book includes discussions on subjects which embrace specialized organic chemistry, tumour growth, cattle raising, sex pathology, atherosclerosis, anxiety neuroses, and senescence. Hormones link the tesserae of this fascinating mosaic and it is perhaps not to be wondered at that the variety of subject and diversity of activity in the field of endocrinology continue to challenge many active minds.

F. G. Young