

to be interested in one or more of these excellent reports, the diversity in length of which varies far more than their merits. The report on plant and machinery is usually the least meritorious, mainly because sketches and diagrams are always omitted. This year the reporter has succeeded in infusing some life into the subject, although in doing so he has had to go a little outside his proper ambit. Among the subjects of up-to-date and general interest treated in the other reports are: low-temperature carbonisation, nitrogen-fixation (discussed by four writers), insecticides (a new and valuable feature), vitamins, preservatives in food-stuffs, and cinematography. Misspelt words are rather more numerous than one would expect in a work of this standing (*e.g.* "contributions" in lieu of "contributors" on the page facing the Contents, "molton," p. 57, "ashphalt," p. 99, "naphthalene," p. 108); the use or non-use of hyphens is somewhat erratic (*e.g.* "cheap zinc blende acid," p. 180); and future issues might well include a list of the full titles of the journals referred to in the text, as some of them are little known and difficult to obtain.

*Thamyris: or, Is there a Future for Poetry?* By R. C. Trevelyan. (To-day and To-morrow Series.) Pp. v + 89. (London: Kegan Paul and Co., Ltd.; New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., n.d.) 2s. 6d.

MR. TREVELYAN has written a careful and penetrating study of the present position of poetry, and of its possible—he is too hesitant to justify the word probable—development in the future. Superficially, the prospect is not hopeful. The dissociation of poetry from music and intonation, and the fact that poetry uttered to-day is spoken, not sung, coupled with the further fact that it is usually not uttered at all but silently read, cannot but have the effect of impairing the force of its emotional and purely sensuous appeal. The growth of the scientific habit of mind, expressing itself in prose as its appropriate medium, and the competition of the cinemas and broadcasting, are further influences tending to the supersession of poetry as the normal method of emotional communication between man and man.

At the same time, Mr. Trevelyan contends, poetry fulfils a function, which, so long as the heart of man remains fundamentally unchanged, will lead him still to find the satisfaction of certain ideal and imaginative needs in poetry, whatever may happen to his head. As opposed to prose, which depends for its significance primarily upon the intellectual content of the matter communicated, the value of poetry resides in the beauty of the medium itself, so that if poetry were proscribed by Act of Parliament, we should find ourselves trying to make shift with a clumsy substitute for it in the form of rhythmical prose.

The danger to poetry, which, driven off the popular stage by music, hurry, and the cinema, is forced to make its appeal to the cultured and leisured few, is that it should become precious and obscure, seeking in far-fetched allusiveness and merely verbal nicety to compensate for its divorce from the flowing stream of popular life. This danger, already manifest to-day, is likely to grow in the future, unless poets can find a new source of inspiration in the changing needs and interests of the time and the new aspects of the world revealed by modern science.

*Industrial Poisons in the United States.* By Prof. Alice Hamilton. Pp. x + 590. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925.) 21s. net.

DR. HAMILTON writes with the authority which comes from great experience of diseases arising from the manufacture and use of poisonous substances, and it is satisfactory to learn from her that, on the whole, the incidence of such diseases is diminishing.

More than one-third of the book is devoted to lead poisoning; a good account is given of the industrial processes in which this hazard is experienced, the toxic symptoms are fully discussed, and the numerous controversial points are stated fairly and reasonably. The other inorganic poisons are dealt with similarly, and it is interesting to note that most of the modern industries have brought in their train new problems of this kind. Thus the alloys required for special steels have introduced manganese and vanadium poisoning, and the Mond nickel process has led to poisoning cases with nickel carbonyl.

Both in Great Britain and the United States the development of the fine chemical industry has brought the industrial physician into contact with new problems due to the toxicity of raw materials and intermediates used in producing dyes and explosives, and if the chemist is to help him in solving these, it is important that they should understand each other. Dr. Hamilton, unlike many of her medical colleagues, is reasonably familiar with chemical processes; rarely does she fail to use the tribal language of the chemist accurately, and she always translates factory slang into English. Even the academic chemist can, therefore, read this work with pleasure and profit, and if he is inclined to assist in biological and pathological investigations, he will find many problems suggested to him in its pages.

The author refers so constantly to European, and especially to British literature on this subject, that the book might well have been called "Industrial Poisons" without the geographical limitation implied in its present title. The one exceptional substance is "wood spirit," which is probably an industrial poison only in the United States, and that for peculiar and well-understood reasons.

T. A. H.

*Ionisation et résonance des gaz et des vapeurs.* Par Dr. Léon Bloch. (Recueil des Conférences-Rapports de documentation sur la Physique. Vol. 11, 2<sup>e</sup> Série. Édité par la Société *Journal de Physique*.) Pp. 223. (Paris: Les Presses universitaires de France, 1925.) 25 francs.

IN FEW subjects is the difficulty of interpretation of the experimental evidence greater than in that which deals with the resonance and ionisation potentials of gases. It is, however, of such importance to the theory of atomic structure that a clear and critical survey of its present stage of development is to be welcomed. Such an account is to be found in the volume under notice. Prof. Bloch is well aware of the many pitfalls which beset the path of the experimenter and of the danger of too much speculation on too slender an experimental basis. He insists, again and again, on the fact that, without spectroscopic confirmation, the interpretation of the electrical measurements must always be somewhat uncertain.

The early chapters deal with the experimental