

absolutely rainless in many localities and one of the driest months on record for the British Isles as a whole. The cold and cheerless summer was the fourth summer in succession of that nature. In spite of the large number of thunderstorms, especially in May and June, there were few days with heavy falls of rain.

A special article is given showing a comparison of the fluctuations experienced at two standard stations—Oxford, fairly central in England, and Glenquoich in the western Highlands of Scotland—and maps are given showing the results of these statistical investigations, considering also their relation to other places in western Europe. A classified list appears of the papers published in "British Rainfall" in the last twenty-five years. A summary is also given of some experiments on the shielding of rain-gauges made at Valencia Observatory in Ireland. The question of over-exposure is discussed as well as insufficient exposure. The effect of wind conditions is considered upon the catches in recording gauges.

*Post-Prandial Proceedings of the Cavendish Society.*  
Sixth edition. Pp. 37. (Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes, 1926.) 2s. net.

THIS collection of verses began with a few songs written for 'community singing' at the annual dinners of the research students of the Cavendish Laboratory. The first collection was privately printed in 1904, and similar editions with new songs added appeared in 1906, 1907, and 1911. Some of these were of a purely ephemeral interest and were omitted in the first published edition of 1920. The present edition was published in connexion with the dinner held in celebration of the seventieth birthday of Sir J. J. Thomson. Several of the songs are tributes to him, including a "Biographical Sketch," which gives a versified account of his career up to date. The author of this, as of most of the best songs in the volume, shelters himself modestly behind the initials "A. A. R." The 'J. J.' songs reveal the extraordinarily happy personal relations which have always bound the research students to their professor, while the songs in honour of Sir Ernest Rutherford are sufficient evidence that the old tradition is being carried on. The remaining songs deal with important branches of modern physics from the electromagnetic theory to the quantum theory. All old Cavendish students will welcome the appearance of this new edition, which is greatly improved in form, and a much wider public will find it both interesting and entertaining.

A. W.

*Animals Looking into the Future.* By Prof. W. A. Kepner. Pp. xi + 197. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925.) 7s. 6d. net.

THE author aims, in this book, to demonstrate that in all animals, from the lowliest protozoa to man, prescience is a marked characteristic, and one that fundamentally distinguishes the organic from the inorganic world. Both mice and men have plans, and from a brief consideration of the habits and organisation of certain colonial and solitary

insects, and of the structure and physiology of more lowly animals like Hydra, Microstoma, and even the protozoa, the author seeks to emphasise this point of view. Even plants look into the future. It is true that a distinction is made between the conscious prescience of man and the instinctive prescience of insects or Hydra. The author, however, in his enthusiasm for the text of his sermon, has imparted too anthropomorphic a bias to his presentation. "Therefore, in the formation of nematocysts by the interstitial cells of Hydra we see these living units sacrificing themselves in a prescient manner with reference to the welfare of the individual polyp." This quotation, which gives an idea of the author's thesis, may easily suggest conscious thought to the layman, and it is for the layman that this book is written. It is a little dangerous to attempt the popular exposition of biological phenomena in language which may convey an erroneous interpretation to the lay mind.

*Contributions to the Art and Science of Otolology. Lectures and Papers by Richard Lake, 1892-1925.*  
Pp. vi + 255. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1926.) 15s. net.

THIS book consists of a collection of the author's more important contributions to current medical literature extending over a period of thirty-three years. It comprises within the limits of 255 pages fifty separate items, made up of case records, clinical lectures, addresses to medical societies, and articles, more or less controversial, on current otological topics. It is the index of an industrious and intellectually active professional career, which may well be a source of legitimate satisfaction to the author, and of interest to his colleagues and to the students who have received their training at his hands. There is not much in it that is of general scientific value at the present day. So far as the scientific side of his subject is concerned, we may cite some careful observations on tuning-fork tests of hearing in various forms of deafness. The author lays emphasis on common sources of error arising from the personal factor in examiner and examinee. No doubt in the near future our estimate of the value and significance of the various methods of testing hearing will have to be recast in view of the recent introduction of more absolute methods of audiometry.

*Biochemie des Menschen und der Tiere seit 1914.*  
Bearbeitet von Dr. Felix Haurowitz. (Wissenschaftliche Forschungsberichte, Naturwissenschaftliche Reihe, Band 12.) Pp. xii + 148. (Dresden und Leipzig: Theodor Steinkopff, 1925.) 7 gold marks.

THIS little volume gives, in a handy form, short reviews of a wide selection of biochemical subjects: each is accompanied by a large number of references to the literature, which appear to have been well selected. The arrangement follows that usual in text-books of biochemistry and physiology. The volume should be of use to those who wish to look up recent work on a specified subject without the necessity of referring to the original papers.