

*Ultra-violet Rays in the Treatment and Cure of Disease.* By Percy Hall. With introductions by Sir Henry Gauvain and Leonard E. Hill. Third Edition. Pp. xviii + 236. (London: William Heinemann (Medical Books), Ltd., 1927.) 12s. 6d. net.

Books which are read by medical readers often leave a good deal to be desired when regarded from the scientific point of view, and this is so in the book in question. A large amount of information on the types of lamps suitable for ultra-violet treatment is collected together, but a practitioner wants more than this; he naturally looks for information on the difficult subject of dosage, and the author might well try to give more definite information here.

The author is apparently under the impression that from the tungsten arc, rays are emitted which cannot be detected by any modern spectroscope or other instrument. Few physicists will agree with him, and still less with his assumption that the ultra-violet rays of the fifth octave (beyond the visible) are not less, but more, penetrating than those of the first octave. Perhaps some revision of an assumption contrary to all experimental facts *may appear in a book which in many respects serves the purpose for which it has been written.*

*An Elementary Text-book of General Microbiology.* By Prof. Ward Giltner. Pp. xvi + 471. (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1928.) 15s. net.

As its title states, this book is devoted to a general discussion of the science which the author curiously renames "Microbiology," insisting that this word means "the biology of the small forms of life," whereas "Microbiology," in his opinion, only stands for "small biology"!

Written in a clear and interesting manner, the book deals with the lower forms of life represented by the yeasts, moulds, protozoa, bacteria, and ultramicroscopic viruses, describes their biology, their intentional and unintentional participation in various branches of industry (dairy products, preserved foods, fermentations, etc.), their occurrence and significance in air, water, soil, and sewage, and their association with disease in the animal and plant world.

In no way a textbook for those specialising in any of these subjects, it gives a survey of the whole field in a manner that is readable, complete, and concise. The terminology is that adopted by Bergey and a certain section of American bacteriologists. H. S.

#### Miscellany.

*Inventions and Patents: their Development and Promotion.* By Milton Wright. Pp. vii + 225. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc.; London: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., Ltd., 1927.) 12s. 6d. net.

From the days of Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-Cain people have been engaged in producing articles, both useful and ornamental—articles of necessity and luxury; and we are all (with rare exceptions) interested directly and indirectly in inventions, either as inventors or as benefiting by the ingenu-

ity of others. Where the present is in advance of the past is in the protection afforded to those who desire to receive for a period the pecuniary reward attaching to their inventive powers. Naturally, the patent laws of different countries exhibit certain variations, but there is more than a mere family likeness pertaining to them in common. Mr. Milton Wright, in his book on "Inventions and Patents" writes as an American under the U.S.A. law, but his book is both interesting and valuable to citizens of other States. It may be added that one chapter is devoted to the rights as existent in the various countries. He quotes the saying of an inventor, adapted from a dictum of Thomas Edison's, that a successful invention is 2 per cent inspiration and 98 per cent perspiration, which crystallises the view that genius unallied to industry cannot hope to succeed. Of the twenty-three chapters, those containing "Don'ts" and answers to questions are not the least interesting; but from cover to cover the book merits careful reading and a place on one's bookshelf for the purposes of handy reference. P. L. M.

*The Romance of English Trading.* By S. A. Williams. Pp. 211. (London: University of London Press, Ltd., 1928.) 2s. 9d.

THIS volume tells how the people of Great Britain, from the Middle Ages to the present day, have obtained the necessaries of life. Chapters are devoted to fairs and markets; the rise of sea-trading; the great trading companies; roads and canals; and trading in the railway age. The text affords evidence of wide and recent reading, careful sifting of what has been gleaned; and attractive presentation of the subject-matter. The illustrations are well chosen. The author is the principal of a day continuation school, but the book will appeal to a wider public than that for which it was obviously written.

In a new edition it might be emphasised that the right to hold a market was a privilege obtained from an overlord and jealously guarded. More stress might be laid on the gild system and the fact that the merchant gild antedated the craft gild. The constitution of the joint-stock company of the eighteenth century as compared with that of to-day should be made clearer. The very small tonnage of early merchant vessels is not brought out as it should be. H. W. D.

*Pioneers of Invention.* By William and Stella Nida. (Harrap's Readers of To-day.) Pp. 189. (London, Bombay, and Sydney: George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 1927.) 1s. 6d.

THE attempt to cover the story of invention in applied science, as is done in this volume, within the compass of 188 pages, is almost bound to fail, unless made by one who is expert in each separate invention. The severe condensation necessary leads either to a bald catalogue of facts or, if the attempt is made to be interesting, then to generalisations that are too sweeping, or to emphasis on the striking rather than the important, or even to statements that are actually misleading. As an