

*Plant Distribution in the Aberystwyth District: including Plynlimon and Cader Idris.* By Prof. Lily Newton. Pp. 50+8 plates. (Aberystwyth: The Cambrian News, n.d.) n.p.

THE scope of this book is to give a readable ecological account of a district which, as Prof. Salter rightly remarks in his preface, has been much neglected by botanists. Accounts of the physical features and geology of the district, and a brief section devoted to the ecological study of plant distribution, precede descriptions of the various types of maritime, lowland and upland vegetation of the area bounded by Aberayron and Tregaron on the south and Plynlimon and the Barmouth estuary and Cader Idris on the east and north. Descriptions of the submerged forests of Cardigan Bay and of the old lead-mining areas and their ecological significance are included and a comparison given of the two mountains, of which Cader Idris is the more varied and floristically richer.

Quantitative data as to plant frequencies and soil and light conditions are excluded from the treatment of the plant associations, and both English and Latin names are given for the species cited. Too brief a section dealing with factors influencing distribution emphasises the relation between altitude and plant distribution, but scarcely does justice to the rôle of soil factors. The book should be useful as a general ecological survey of the district and as a basis for more detailed investigation of its constituent plant associations.

*The Cultivated Conifers in North America: comprising the Pine Family and the Taxads. Successor to The Cultivated Evergreens.* By L. H. Bailey. Pp. ix+404+48 plates. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1933.) 37s. 6d. net.

ALTHOUGH this book deals very largely with the conifers that can be grown out of doors in North America, the information it contains will be found to be useful to people in other countries also. Moreover, the range of conditions existing in North America is such that the majority of conifers from other regions thrive in one or another part of the continent; therefore comparatively few kinds are omitted.

The work is divided into two parts; the first is devoted to systematic descriptions of the genera and species hardy in North America, and the second to the cultivation of conifers for decorative purposes. A very useful feature of the first part will be found in the very good keys to species that accompany the descriptions of the larger genera. The second part of the book deals with cultivation, propagation, the selection of kinds for different positions, pests and diseases. Amongst name alterations, the name of the Douglas fir has been changed back to *Pseudotsuga Douglasii* from *P. taxifolia* without explanation. If such a change were necessary, a reason should have been given. Presumably *P. taxifolia* is regarded as a homonym.

*Elementary Statistical Methods.* By Dr. E. C. Rhodes. (London School of Economics and Political Science: Studies in Statistics and Scientific Method, No. 1.) Pp. v+243. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1933.) 7s. 6d. net.

IF this first volume of a new series of studies gives a true indication, the series is designed to introduce statistics to a public for which no language can be too elementary, no remark too obvious, no emphasis too crude. The attempt is significant, for stability of democratic government may well depend on the possibility of such an introduction, and when the experiment is made in the popular press, the journalist will be fortunate in having an authoritative model. Dr. Rhodes describes excellently the precautions with which the raw material of a statistical inquiry should be compiled, the nature of simple and weighted averages, the meanings of median and quartile and of deviation and dispersion, the use of graphs, and the analysis of time series by means of a moving average. There is a wealth of numerical and graphical illustration, but the index does not conform to any reasonable standard. E. H. N.

*Broadcasting.* By Hilda Matheson. (The Home University Library of Modern Knowledge, No. 168.) Pp. 256. (London: Thornton Butterworth, Ltd., 1933.) 2s. 6d. net.

THIS book is written by an author fully conversant with the subject. That radio communication is not unmixed good is generally admitted, and that its possibilities have as yet only partially materialised is patent to all who have watched its development. Anything that tends to bring about *rapprochement* between the nations is welcome. The suggestion offered, that radio in the home may increase the sum of laziness, must be noted, but this may be more than balanced by the broadening outlook of rural communities. Finally, it may be quoted, that "Broadcasting will only mechanise men, if it becomes the tool of a mechanistic State". P. L. M.

*100,000 Whys: a Trip around the Room.* By M. Ilin. Translated by Beatrice Kinkead. Pp. 138. (London: George Routledge and Sons, Ltd., 1933.) 3s. 6d. net.

THOSE best know how little they know, who are credited with knowing everything; and it may be that M. Ilin's small guide to general knowledge will serve in lessening to a slight degree the load of ignorance which so many carry. "Knowledge comes, but Wisdom lingers", so that even when our learning is the greater, by reason of the assimilated contents of this book, our wisdom may be not one whit increased. Both text and illustrations are likely to appeal most to the immature section of the general public to whom M. Ilin offers his book. The translation merits full praise.