

Sex

By Dr. B. P. Wiesner. (Home University Library of Modern Knowledge, No. 180.) Pp. 256. (London: Thornton Butterworth, Ltd., 1936.) 2s. 6d. net.

It is not surprising to find that this book departs in some ways from the tradition set by others on scientific subjects in this well-known series. In the first place, the subject itself is not restricted by the formal confines of academic curricula, and Dr. Wiesner has had to draw on such diverse branches of knowledge as physiology, anatomy, endocrinology, genetics, general biology and psychology. In so doing, the author has revealed a second feature of his departure from Home University Library orthodoxy, by showing himself an original thinker and by asking the lay reader to consider hypotheses, to weigh evidence and, in short, to puzzle things out for himself, instead of merely accepting *ex cathedra* statements about scientifically established 'facts'.

The nature of Dr. Wiesner's subject has doubtless in part dictated his technique of exposition, but a reading of this concise survey suggests that temperamental influences may also have played their part. However that may be, he has produced a book that is packed with information and interest; this may make it less easy reading for the layman than the conventional popular exposition of a technical subject, but will give it a special appeal to the scientific worker.

Apart from a few minor oversights in typography and phraseology, the actual presentation of Dr. Wiesner's matter calls for little criticism, for it lacks neither clearness nor elegance—if, indeed, any distinction whatever is to be made between the two. The drawings and diagrams add to the general lucidity of exposition. To the technician, the most controversial, and therefore the most attractive, part of the book will probably be the discussions on the relation between sexuality and reproduction (especially Chapter v) and on the evolution of sexuality.

A. L. B.

Tables annuelles de constantes et données numériques de chimie, physique, biologie et technologie

(Annual Tables of Constants and Numerical Data; Chemical, Physical, Biological and Technological). Données numériques sur le pouvoir rotatoire (Numerical Data on Rotatory Power). Par Prof. E. Darmais. Années 1931 à 1934. Pp. 68. (Paris: Gauthier-Villars; New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1936.)

THIS is a collection of data obtained on optical rotatory power between 1931 and 1934, and is an advance paper from vol. 11 of the well-known "Tables annuelles". The matter is grouped in seven sections: specific rotatory powers; influence of temperature, concentration and solvent; rotatory dispersion; resolution of racemic compounds; mutarotation; effect of additions; and general theories. Of these the largest section is that on rotatory dispersion, which occupies more than half the volume. Among the interesting results recorded in this section one may note in passing the work of Lowry

and Gore on the vapour of camphor and camphorquinone, and that of Levene on a number of aliphatic compounds in which the rotatory dispersion is followed through an absorption band. Section 4 includes a number of resolutions of theoretical interest such as Mann's purely inorganic compound $\text{Na}[\text{Rh}(\text{SO}_2\text{N}_2\text{H}_2)_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$, and on the organic side Pope and Whitworth's resolution of *spiro*-5:5-dihydantoin and Backer and Schurink's work on *spiro*-heptane dicarboxylic acid.

The numerous workers in the field of optical activity will be grateful to Prof. Darmais for this valuable summary of recent work.

Technische Kunstgriffe bei physikalischen Untersuchungen

Von Prof. Dr. Ernst von Angerer. (Sammlung Vieweg: Tagesfragen aus den Gebieten der Naturwissenschaften und der Technik, Heft 71.) Dritte Auflage. Pp. ix+201. (Braunschweig: Friedr. Vieweg und Sohn, 1936.) 9.80 gold marks.

PROF. VON ANGERER was entrusted with the preparation of the volume on experimental technique for the Wien-Harms "Handbuch der Experimentalphysik", and the present publication represents the third edition of his "Kunstgriffe", so that it must from the outset command attention. Indeed, it is a most interesting little book in which every experimenter is bound to find something which will appeal to him personally.

It is obvious that the author has taken considerable pains to keep himself thoroughly up to date with modern advances in laboratory arts and technique, and it is clear, too, that in many instances he has tested them for himself. Omissions, so far as the reviewer has been able to judge, are very few, although it is surprising that no mention is made of Hulett's method of purifying mercury, and also to find that two constant-temperature baths instead of three are shown in thermo-couple diagrams. However, such details detract but little from the excellence of the work as a whole, and it can be heartily commended.

L. F. B.

Experimentelle Grundlagen der Wellenmechanik

Von Dr. S. Flügge und Dr. A. Krebs. (Wissenschaftliche Forschungsberichte: Naturwissenschaftliche Reihe, herausgegeben von Dr. Raphael Ed. Liesegang, Band 38.) Pp. x+236. (Dresden und Leipzig: Theodor Steinkopff, 1936.) 16 gold marks.

THE collaboration of a theoretical physicist with a colleague who is an experimenter naturally results in a book of wide appeal, even if both authors feel it necessary to deal with many important branches of modern physics in a small space. It provides a ready guide for readers who wish to know the present state of wave mechanics theory, its experimental basis, and how far the theory is able to provide new and more adequate explanations for the results of fundamental experiments. It is an interesting compilation. The reviewer, however, would scarcely term Schopper's experiment for the direct measurement of e , a method for finding e/m .