

References to music-hall and other songs are very often helpful in dating a catch-phrase, and might be recorded more often than they are. 'By Jingo', 'twiggy-vous', 'not for Joseph' and 'Jim Crow' are relevant instances.

The article *s.v.* 'non me' elucidates the phrase by a reference to Queen Caroline's trial "whereat the Italian witnesses said *non mi ricordo* (I don't remember) to every important question". The reports of the trial put this phrase constantly on the lips of one witness only, Theodore Majocchi, who was flustered by Brougham's cross-examination. The point is a minute one, but dictionaries and dictionary-makers specialize in such matters.

The editor's learned note on "all my eye and

Betty Martin" might well be enriched by de Morgan's adaptation of the phrase ("all ocular and Elizabethan"); the delightful military slang of "guessing-stick" for "slide-rule" is overlooked; and Mr. Justice Hawkins appears under a novel title and name as "Judge Sir Frederic Hawkins."

These are, however, trivialities; and no one can use extensively Mr. Partridge's work without feeling that it is in the ranks of the great books. It naturally owes much to its predecessors, but much has been added, and many errors corrected. Its genial scholarship classes it with Grose. It supplants Farmer and Henley, and the philologist, psychologist and sociologist will find in it an inexhaustible quarry of raw material.

ALAN FERGUSON.

A Catalogue of the Steroids

The Chemistry of the Steroids

By Harry Sobotka. Pp. xiii+634. (London: Baillière, Tindall and Cox, 1938.) 38s.

THE effort directed towards steroid chemistry in all its guises since, and as a consequence of, the introduction of the Rosenheim-King formula in 1932, has led to a rapid multiplication of the steroids, so much so that there are now described in the literature nearly five thousand interrelated derivatives of *cyclopentenophenanthrene*. The main purpose of "The Chemistry of the Steroids" is to present a systematic classification of the more important of these derivatives recorded before January 1, 1937, together with their physical constants and references to the original literature. The classification is extremely successful, for by the introduction of an ingenious system of arrangement based upon the number of ethenoid linkages, hydroxyl, carbonyl and carboxyl groups, the matter has been rendered easily accessible. In presenting this catalogue the author has considerably lightened the task of approach to the steroid literature.

The catalogue occupies nearly five hundred pages, the first part of the book (161 pages) being devoted to a descriptive account of steroid chemistry. The early chapters deal with history, methods and results of structural investigation. A very welcome chapter is concerned with choleic acids and other molecular compounds of steroids. Another on steric considerations has the unavoidable disadvantage, common to reviews of rapidly moving and incomplete fields of endeavour, that several important memoirs have appeared since

the manuscript was completed. A chapter on physical properties gives a summary of crystallographic data and a table of ultra-violet absorption spectra. It is rather unfortunate that in this table only the maxima and not the corresponding intensities are quoted. The book concludes with a collection of some four hundred formulæ which serves as a companion to the catalogue and to the text, and to which reference is freely made in both. Various errors which have been detected in proof reading have not been adjusted in the diagrams, but are carefully recorded in the legends.

The general impression gained by a perusal of this text is that a task, characterized by its multiplicity of detail, has been faithfully accomplished, that here is a text which will be welcomed by those directly concerned with steroid chemistry, and will supplement the recognized catalogue of organic chemistry.

The book has given birth to the word 'sterid', which in the opinion of the reviewer is ill-advised, to say the least. According to the author, it is "meant to comprise sterols and steroids, *i.e.*, sterol-like substances." The word 'steroid' introduced by Callow and Young has been defined as a "generic name for the group of compounds comprising the sterols, bile acids, heart poisons, saponins, and sex hormones", and though this definition requires modification, the usefulness of the term was immediately recognized and adopted by most investigators. The term 'steroids' includes the sterols, so we greet 'sterid' coldly as befits 'jargonese'; all this apart, 'sterid' is devoid of the euphony of 'steroid'.

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