

**England's Dances**

Folk-Dancing To-day and Yesterday. By Douglas Kennedy. Pp. 158+16 plates. (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1949.) 7s. 6d. net.

MR. DOUGLAS KENNEDY is the director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, and as such knows his subject. He has written a delightful little book of some 158 pages with twenty illustrations and two distribution maps. Dancing throughout the ages has been for humanity a psychological release and has been continually used in ritual, both religious and otherwise. Shortly after the first use of mustard gas in the First World War, an American hospital unit took over a complete British tented hospital in Rouen. The strain of the personnel was very great; but it was completely relieved by the introduction of dances. Dancing was the channel for release of the overwrought emotion.

A popular study of English folk-dances and their origin and distribution should be seriously welcomed and should command attention, even from those who are not particularly interested in dancing itself. Following a short introduction by Dr. Vaughan Williams, Mr. Kennedy starts by giving an account of the discovery and revival of a number of ancient folk-dances up and down the countryside. There follows a brief study of the primitive dance and its importance in man's psychological make-up. "The primitive dancer engaged in communicating his vitality by leaps and stamps is himself brought under the spell of rhythm and loses his own self-conscious identity. He becomes, in fact, possessed and ceases to be himself, and the ritual that enwraps him turns him into an actor."

Two seasons of the year were notably connected with special dances—the mid-winter and early spring. The former is associated particularly with the sword dance, the latter with athletic dances performed by young men. "The young men leap and stamp—their rhythmical actions are emphasized by the sound of bells and by the fluttering ribbons. The whole effect, even to the most sceptic observer, is one of tremendous vitality." The connexion between the energy of the world awakening after the winter rest and the energy of the young men is obvious.

It is impossible in a short note to describe in detail this little volume, packed full as it is of factual matter; but I should like to stress, what Mr. Kennedy has well brought out, that the English folk-dances had a meaning—they were, and should still be, the expression of something fundamental to human nature.

M. C. BURKITT

**Grundriss der allgemeinen Zoologie**

Von Alfred Kühn. Zehnte verbesserte Auflage. Pp. vii+281. (Stuttgart: Georg Thieme, 1949.) 18 D. marks.

THE tenth edition of Dr. A. Kühn's outlines of general zoology has been much altered, both as regards text and illustrations, since the first issue in 1922. It is a bold attempt to give students, especially medical students, some idea of the more general aspects of zoology, in order to stimulate their interest and to stress the importance of special branches of the subject, such as experimental embryology, parasitology and the philosophical conclusions arising from the study of animal life.

A third of the book is devoted to a survey of the animal kingdom, providing the necessary basis for the comparative chapters which follow. Physiology,

cell division, maturation, the Mendelian and chromosome theories of heredity, the organisation centre and the development of the animal body are soundly treated. The conditions of animal life in aquatic and aerial media, parasitism and symbiosis are briefly dealt with, and the book ends with a chapter on the species problem, a short and almost wholly German bibliography, and an index. The text is a reliable commentary on modern zoological science. It is surprising to find that the elephant is given 150–200 years of life (p. 247), since all authentic records estimate it at seventy years.

The illustrations are clear and well chosen, especially some of the schematic diagrams and the series of skeletal comparisons. The paper on which they are printed, however, is not very good, and they show through the pages with a peculiar yellowish tinge. Fig. 124a is printed upside down. The book can be recommended as a short survey of the various fields of zoology to-day.

**A Textbook of Systematic Botany**

By Dr. Deane B. Swingle. (McGraw-Hill Publications in the Botanical Sciences.) Third edition. Pp. xv+343. (London: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., Ltd., 1946.) 30s.

ALL those concerned with the teaching and learning of systematic botany in Britain will welcome the appearance of a third edition of Prof. Swingle's well-known text-book, especially as in recent years interest in taxonomy at our universities has considerably increased. "Most of the chapters have been thoroughly revised and amplified, some almost entirely rewritten, and a new one has been added on methods of identification." This revision includes an elementary introduction to the new 'experimental method' in taxonomy and references to literature where further study can be made. The field covered by Prof. Swingle is comprehensive, but it is to be regretted that, even in an avowedly elementary text-book, no room is found for a hint of the difficulties involved in regarding a 'natural' classification as identical with a 'phylogenetic' one. Some warning to students that the subject is not so simple as it seems should surely be given, and some direction as to where the considerable discussions that have taken place on the philosophical background of the problem can be found. J. S. L. G.

**Kinetics of Chemical Change in Solution**

By Prof. Edward S. Amis. Pp. ix+332. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1949.) 25s. net.

IN the reviewer's opinion this is a very successful book. It presents the basic material in a really adequate way and contains a large amount of information. Special attention is given to the theory of electrolytes and dielectrics. The modern treatment of reaction-rates is fully developed, and cases of real practical importance are chosen for consideration. The mathematical treatment is often full; but in many cases steps are passed over without adequate indication that anything is missing, and the volume contains a surprising number of misprints in the formulæ and equations which may cause trouble to students. The topics include photochemistry and catalysis. The literature references are very full, and adequate attention is given to non-American sources, which puts the book in a class of its own. It can be cordially recommended.

J. R. P.