

has, with full justice to all, sung the praise of the present and the immediate past.

But praise for achievement is due not only to the distinguished vice-chancellors and their academic colleagues, but also to those high-minded and far-seeing laymen who have given such ungrudging and helpful service in high administrative and advisory capacity; the functions and purpose, therefore, of all in the hierarchy, from chancellor, through pro-chancellor to members of council and their committees, are set out and particular personalities singled out for special mention. The reader will note with interest, perhaps, that even in the short space of fifty years the outlook and methods of these public-spirited men—often the sons of fathers who have similarly served—have changed in evolutionary manner from the firm, though kindly, autocracy of the past to the gentler advisory guidance of the present.

Many of the illustrations have been charmingly executed by Maurice de Sausmerez, head of one of the youngest University Departments, that of Fine Art; the printing, photographic reproductions and binding are quite impeccable, and the whole effect is most pleasing.

In short, this is a most interesting book, full of information about the University, historically, geographically, architecturally, numerically and financially, but nevertheless it is full also of the human and personal side of a great and continuing endeavour; it will stand as a lasting and authoritative summary of the early life of the rapidly evolving University of Leeds.

R. WHIDDINGTON

## FLOWERS AND FUNGI

### Wild Flowers

Botanising in Britain. By Dr. John Gilmour and Dr. Max Walters. (The New Naturalist: a Survey of British Natural History.) Pp. xiv + 242 + 56 plates. (London: William Collins, Sons and Co., Ltd., 1954.) 25s. net.

### Mushrooms and Toadstools

A Study of the Activities of Fungi. By Dr. John Ramsbottom. (The New Naturalist: a Survey of British Natural History.) Pp. xiv + 306 + 71 plates. (London: William Collins, Sons and Co., Ltd., 1953.) 30s. net.

IT is said that every age has its book, and the book of the present age would almost seem to be a natural history book, so many are these and so insatiable the demand for them. Why this should be opens up a most interesting field for speculation, and many explanations are offered. Some think that it merely expresses the swing of the pendulum in the fashion in books; but it seems unlikely that this can be the whole story, and many prefer to think that it betokens something more than this and, especially, a growing realization that we have wandered too far from the simple and beautiful, and are now seeking, with no little nostalgia, to recapture something that is escaping us.

Whatever the truth may be, there is now an immense array of books dealing with nature study in Great Britain. They are of all sorts and sizes; but their general level is high, and in none of them more so than in the volumes of Collins's "New Naturalist Series". The list of titles here is now impressive; but that

there are springs still unexhausted is well shown by two recent (though long adumbrated) additions to it, "Wild Flowers" by John Gilmour and Max Walters (No. 5) and "Mushrooms and Toadstools" by John Ramsbottom (No. 7), both of which fully maintain the standard set by their predecessors. The former is, essentially, a rather new treatment of a theme which never seems to tire, and perhaps the best compliment that can be paid to its authors, who write most pleasantly, is to say that they have succeeded in making something of their own that is distinctive. Incidentally, it should be noted with reference to p. 29 that ancient *Nelumbo* fruits from Manchuria were germinated in Britain almost thirty years ago (see *J. Bot.*, 1926). The latter book is, as essentially, a rich mine of information, both scientific and curious, about a narrower field, which, like some of the plants it contains, is something of an acquired taste, and here again the author has succeeded admirably in his task.

Indeed, if criticism is called for at all it is to be directed, in both cases, at matters of policy rather than content. "Wild Flowers" makes necessary, yet again, the strictures which have so often been passed on the inappropriate use of colour photographs in books of this kind. Surely so reputable a book should not suggest to the botanical tyro that birds-foot trefoil (Plate 12*b*) has large entire leaves, or that betony (Plate 2*b*), which is one of the strongest-hued plants in the flora, is one of the least convincing. All this, moreover, amid some very lovely black-and-white pictures. In "Mushrooms and Toadstools", where the subject eminently suits them, colour photographs are a success, and indeed may steal more of the author's thunder than they warrant; but here an unnecessary weakness is the inclusion of a chapter on penicillin, which, though vastly interesting, does not fall within the title of the book, and seems to have been put in more to tickle the public fancy than for any better reason. Nevertheless, both these books are notable additions to the literature of our countryside and remind us, once again, of the real truth in Stephen Leacock's words:

"Surely no nobler theme the poet chants  
Than the soft science of the blooming plants".

RONALD GOOD

## CHEMICAL ANALYSIS OF INDUSTRIAL SOLVENTS

### Chemical Analysis of Industrial Solvents

By Dr. Morris B. Jacobs and Dr. Leopold Scheffan. (Chemical Analysis Series, Vol. 7.) Pp. xxii + 501. (New York and London: Interscience Publishers, Inc., 1953.) 10 dollars.

THIS book, the seventh volume in a series on chemical analysis, is a collection of methods used in the examination of solvents. The text can be divided into four sections: sampling and general physical and chemical methods; physiological effects of solvents and vapours; methods for the analysis of solvent mixtures; and the testing and determination of solvents in specific groups.

The general methods are comprehensive and include details of the determinations of specific gravity, viscosity, flash point, boiling range, acidity and iodine value, to name a few at random. The authors