

*The Proteins, Chemistry, Biological Activity, and Methods*, edited by HANS NEURATH AND KENNETH BAILEY, Vol. I, Part A, Academic Press Inc., Publishers, New York, 1953. 548 pages. Price \$ 12.00.

For several years no comprehensive treatise on the proteins has been published, notwithstanding, or perhaps, *mirabile dictu*, just because of the very rapid progress in this extensive field of research. During this time the specialist has been very well aided through numerous reviews of specialized subjects in various series of "Advances", above all the "Advances of Protein Chemistry", which we also owe to the unsurpassed enterprising spirit of the Publishers of the book under review.

As stated by the Editors in their Preface this treatise on proteins has still another aim than to provide the research worker with data and results, *viz.* "to present a comprehensive, integrated account of the chemical, physical and biological properties of the proteins, for the benefit of the advanced student and all those workers trained in different disciplines who are entering this field in fairly large numbers". For obvious reasons no individual author, however gifted, can dispose of the knowledge and the leisure to write more than a superficial survey of the whole field of the proteins. Therefore also in this case the course has been followed of bringing together a team of specialists for the production of comprehensive treatises. In these cases there is always a latent danger that, as a consequence of insufficient consciousness of the necessity of a truly elementary character of the introductions, the individual chapters are only comprehensible for the fellow-specialists. I believe that it largely depends upon the Editors' awareness of this danger whether it is avoided or not. They, as well as the authors of this treatise, must be congratulated with the result obtained in this respect. Everybody with a good general basic knowledge of chemistry and physics will be able to study these chapters with much profit. The authors will guide those persons entering the field in the choice of the best methods to be used, they will make them aware of the pitfalls threatening them in discussing their results, and they show them what has been achieved and what is the task of the future.

It seems hardly necessary to remark that a treatise of this scope (it will appear in four Parts) is almost equally useful to the specialists in the various branches of protein chemistry. Regardless of the fact that it is always interesting and stimulating to be informed of the views and criticisms of one's fellow-specialists, they will certainly draw much profit from the compilations of experimental facts presented, where possible, in tables and figures with complete references to the original papers.

The chapters of this Part have been written by JOHN FULLER TAYLOR (The Isolation of Proteins), P. DESNUELLE (The General Chemistry of Amino Acids and Peptides), G. R. TRISTRAM (The Amino Acid Composition of Proteins), BARBARA W. LOW (The Structure and Configuration of Amino Acids, Peptides and Proteins), PAUL DOTY AND E. PETER GEIDUSCHEK (Optical Properties of Proteins) and ROBERT A. ALBERTY (Electrochemical Properties of the Proteins and Amino Acids).

H. G. K. WESTENBRINK (Utrecht)

*The Road to Abundance*, by JACOB ROSIN AND MAX EASTMAN, McGraw Hill Publishing Company, Inc., New York, Toronto and London, 1953, x and 166 pages, 28s.

To scientists queried by non-scientists about the sense of chemistry or the role of chemistry being of signal importance even more so than politics, economy, or other aspects of human society, this book will help toward the answer. To quote the jacket, it "is the authoritative answer of modern chemistry to those calamity howlers who think our planet is being plundered and that the human race faces a bleak future because of the exhaustion of our natural resources".

Written by a research chemist (J.R.) and a writer (M.E.), the book consists of three parts. Part One, "Freedom from the Plant" and Part Two, "Freedom from the Mine", describe how chemistry, with the help of physics, can save our civilization if at any time the supplies from natural sources might run short. In Part Three, "Chemistry and Civilization", the development of a "chemistic society" is outlined further.

The book is meant to help in breaking the vicious circle of this chemistic society being impossible until scientists think along chemistic lines, and such scientists not being produced by a nonchemistic society. The reviewer doubts whether this philanthropic pessimism is fully justified. Nevertheless, its existence in the authors' minds can be put on record with gratitude, since a charming book results from their apprehension for the future of human welfare.

W. GAARD (Amsterdam)