

New Books

Jacob Berzelius. *Reiseerinnerungen aus Deutschland*. Verlag Chemie, Weinheim, 1948. 72 pp. DM 2.—

Verlag Chemie has edited a volume in order to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Berzelius' death. The intention of the book is not to enter into the details of Berzelius' scientific work, which is only indicated now and then, but rather to give a picture of his personality, from his own words and from the impression he made on others.

The first part contains extracts from Berzelius' letters and from his diary notes from his seven journeys to and through Germany between the years 1819 and 1845. The second part is taken from Wöhler's *Jugenderinnerungen eines Chemikers*; it is the well-known description of Wöhler's visit to Berzelius in 1823—1824.

The text has been ably compiled, translated and commented on by Dr Gisbert Klingelmann. A few Swedish names, like Uddevalia and Nykyrba, appear in unusual forms, which are easily recognized by a Swedish reader and do not disturb a foreign eye. The book, which has by the way a very handy size, can be recommended to anyone who would like to know something about Jöns Jacob Berzelius as a charming personality, and not only as a famous scientist. *Lars Gunnar Sillén*

Otto Hahn. *Künstliche neue Elemente. Vom Unwägbaren zum Wägbaren*.

Verlag Chemie, Weinheim, 1948. 51 pp. DM 2.50

For a long time German scientists have had no, or very limited, access to the scientific literature of the Western countries. When Otto Hahn, on May 9th, 1947, gave a lecture on artificial new elements to the *Gesellschaft deutscher Chemiker* in Mühlheim, he could assume that his audience had a good scientific background dating from before 1939 but no previous knowledge of the details of recent Western scientific work on the subject. Just for this reason the present book, which is founded on this lecture, may also prove of considerable value to scientists other than Germans who want a short, intelligent, and thorough account, without too much of the sugar and whipped cream of popularisation.

The lecture begins with a few pages on nuclear reactions, followed by the history of uranium fission and the principles of the U reactors and the A bombs. Then for each of the new elements 43 Tc, 61 Pm, 85 At, 87 Fr, 93 Np, 94 Pu, 95 Am, and 96 Cm there follows a list of the different ways of preparation, the chemical and radioactive properties, and a discussion of the amounts available. (But should not technetium be spelt with a *t*?) German scientific work from the forties has naturally also been included. Even the radioactively $4n + 1$ (Np)-series is recorded, which had scarcely been released for publication at the date of the lecture.

Lars Gunnar Sillén