

since the incidental expenses of printing and postage are being met independently.

ISIDORE LEVITT,  
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.      *Secretary*

## QUOTATIONS

### THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION

THE meeting of the British Association at Hull ended yesterday. It will be remembered chiefly by Sir Charles Sherrington's presidential address, on which discussion did not cease during the week, nor is it more likely to die down when science and philosophy have had time to study the full text. So far as it was a positive statement it was definitely on the materialistic as opposed to the vitalistic interpretation of Nature. It explained the increasing number of mechanisms in the body of men and animals which are now understood, and definitely referred these to the order of chemistry and physics instead of to vague non-material principles. So far, its assault was limited to fashionable doctrines within the sphere of science, and should disturb only those who trace purpose and consciousness back to *animaleulæ*, or attribute a *psyche* to the cells of the liver. With regard to the mind itself no positive statement of a materialistic interpretation was made; on the contrary, Sir Charles Sherrington, with a deliberateness perhaps in itself suggestive, reiterated our complete failure to interpret mind in terms of matter. But the president traced the relations between the evolution of the nervous system and the rise of mind in the animal kingdom with meticulous care, and insisted so coldly but so minutely on the correspondences between what he stated to be mechanism and what all regard as mind that it is at least open to read intention into his argument. No one can doubt but that the British Association, through its president, has fulfilled one of its highest functions this year. It has set men thinking and talking on one of the more fundamental problems that excite the human intelligence.

Otherwise the meeting at Hull was useful rather than distinguished. There were many solid papers, some valuable discussions, and no more than the customary number of attempts to reach the public ear by the methods of exag-

geration, or of insistence on the dramatic side of a communication. The debate on nitrogen was a sound and instructive contribution to one of the branches of applied science most vital to the safety and the prosperity of nations. The coming together of zoologists, government officials, fishery experts and members of the fishing industry did much to enlighten both science and industry. We admit with pleasure that since we and others called attention to the diffuse and overloaded nature of the program of meetings of the association, the organization has been notably improved, especially with regard to the arrangement of joint discussions, in which two or more sections take part. Our special correspondents, however, inform us that there were still at the Hull meeting many cases of several papers or discussions of wide interest set down for the same day and hour. Unfortunately, moreover, not a few of the speakers and readers of papers had rudimentary ideas on public speaking, and attempted to cover far too much ground in the time allotted to them, or overloaded their contributions with unnecessary introductory matter. Science should not disdain the art of presentation.—The London Times.

## SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

*Respiration.* By J. S. HALDANE, M. D., LL. D., F. R. S., Fellow of New College, Oxford; Hon. Professor, Birmingham University. Yale University Press, 1922. 427 pp., 104 figures, and an appendix of analytical methods.

THIS volume contains the Silliman Memorial lectures at Yale University for 1915, revised so as to bring the presentation of the material up to the date of publication. It is a monograph covering the field of respiration: a field which, largely as the result of the work of Haldane and his collaborators, has assumed outstanding importance in recent years, and promises further important developments in the near future in theoretical knowledge and in practical applications to clinical medicine and industrial hygiene.

In brief, this book is the carefully revised and coordinated presentation, while the author is at the acme of his productive powers, of