

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Aus meinem Lieben. Von Emil Fischer. Verlag von Julius Springer, Berlin. 201 pages. 3 figs. Price \$2 (about).

Fischer wrote this biographical sketch while recuperating from the "flu." "Geschrieben in dem Unglücksjahre 1918," he writes; and this sentence gives us an idea of what Germany's downfall meant to Germany's greatest chemist. The sketch is an incomplete autobiography; he died in the midst of writing it; but it gives us a very intimate and, to me, fascinating picture of one of the great ones in our field. Not much is said of the chemistry of the sugars, fats and purines, but very much is said of the laboratories in which the chemistry of these substances was elucidated, and very much more is said of the men, aside from Fischer, who were active in these laboratories. With this book in our hands we need not cross the ocean to know all about Munich, Strassburg, Erlangen, Würzburg and Berlin. Noteworthy pen pictures of Fischer's intimates, such as Baeyer and Victor Meyer, are also given us.

Two paragraphs in the book that are of peculiar interest to Americans must receive comment here. We shall make a free translation of both these paragraphs:

"One day an American professor of physiology made his appearance. A rich man had entrusted some money to him with the object of founding a university in Worcester, U. S. A. The professor had the rather romantic notion of filling an entire ship with European professors, assistants, apparatus, chemicals, etc., and bringing the ship and baggage to America. He opened his conversation with me by asking me whether I would be willing to accompany him to America, there to become one of the professors at the new institution. I was too amazed to reply, and thought the whole thing a huge joke until he very carefully and very earnestly outlined his entire plan to me. He proved to be a worthy gentleman, and had much of interest to tell me.

"Soon after this an American lady, 'Miss Helene Abott,' appeared on the scene. A personal attendant who accompanied her proved to be a negress. The lady wanted to enroll as a student, and was quite astounded to find that women were not admitted to the courses. I

showed her around the laboratory and introduced her to the younger men, Knorr, Wislicenus and Tafel. Her intelligent comment showed that she possessed a sound theoretical background. After her departure the discussion arose among us as to whether we ought to approach the university senate so as to get the necessary permission to allow the girl to work in the laboratory. One or two individuals were very much for her, but it did seem to the rest that the introduction of the female element into the laboratory would disturb the otherwise harmonious surroundings. Since the majority ruled against her, I wrote her to that effect. Her letter in reply was courteous, but it did not lack energy. She commented rather severely upon the backwardness of Germany in preventing women from getting a higher education."

The book is a treasure "for those who like that kind of thing." Can he call himself a chemist who does not?

BENJAMIN HARROW

NOTES ON METEOROLOGY AND CLIMATOLOGY

A NEW AEROLOGICAL SUMMARY

For many years, the free air has been recognized as the abode of many interesting phenomena, and much information has been gained concerning the distribution of the meteorological elements above the earth's surface. But, in the United States, with the two exceptions of the Blue Hill Observatory, associated with Harvard College, and the Mount Weather Observatory, maintained for about seven years by the United States Weather Bureau, there had been only sporadic efforts at upper-air investigation previous to the World War.

Free-air data stand in close relation to aeronautical activities, but their usefulness is by no means so restricted. The relation between surface weather and conditions in the free air is one that is coming to be recognized by the weather forecaster to an increasing degree, although the lack of aerological stations is a serious obstacle to a comprehensive correlative knowledge of these conditions. It is necessary, therefore, to extend, as rapidly as possible, the network of aerological stations in the