previously. The lecture form is very apparent in the arrangement and in the approach to the reader. A certain compartmentalism is characteristic of this approach. It is difficult to see, however, that this method can be improved upon when the limits of the space are considered.

The chapter headings give, as in all good lectures, the key to the matter to be examined and the sub-headings form a valuable supplement. The topics are bacteria, fungi and, to a lesser degree, viruses. The influence of micro-organisms in the air, water, sewage and the earth is carefully examined, but not in such detail as would deter the lay reader. Health and disease of plants, animals, and human beings are related to these organisms but only in association with other relevant factors, the whole being based firmly on the preliminary biology discussed in the early chapters.

Dr. Blair does not seek to avoid controversial matters, especially where he feels that micro-biology has something decisive to say. The refreshing vigour with which he deals with the pasteurisation of milk and the ritualists of compost is as trenchant as any scientist could desire. He has something worthwhile to say about sewage-disposal, immunisation, the control of the sale of cooked food and the food-value of ice-cream. He is at pains to point out that micro-biology gives increased control of many processes vital to our affairs. And he never makes claims that cannot be amply substantiated. Occasionally we come across a most arresting phrase . . . . "All agriculture is artificial. Our domesticated plants are freaks and prodigies" . . . . "From the time that *Phytophtheria infestans* wrote its name across the potato fields of Europe" . . . . "We seem to know more about fighting disease than about good health." Generally, however, Blair is in the scientific tradition of a plain thing said in a plain way.

It is a pity that this plainness does not always extend to the arrangement. The setting out on page 72 is poor in that the heading "Viruses" is not well displayed, the illustrations between pages 64 and 65 are too small, and obscure what they are intended to clarify. The remaining illustrations are very good indeed, clearly figured, of ample size and not too full of detail.

The last chapter is very clearly an afterthought and takes the form of an outline of micro-biological laboratory work for post-primary teachers. This will fill a long-felt want and no teacher, struggling with the general science syllabus, can afford to ignore the valuable material so systematically presented. Similarly, a really keen gardener will find Chapters 8-10 provide a very interesting scientific background to the pests with which he is so unwillingly familiar. He'll find sound advice too.

There is a pleasantly local flavour about many of the examples chosen to illustrate the scientific matters involved. Meat pies from Auckland, the milk supply of Christchurch, and typhoid fever at Kaikoura among them.

It is to be hoped that Dr. Blair may be considering a longer book, containing a smaller selection of topics treated more fully and more connectedly. It should be important to the non-scientific reader.

—J.D.M.