

### The Infinite in Giordano Bruno

By Sidney Greenberg. With a translation of his Dialogue, Concerning the Cause Principle, and One. Pp. ix+203. (New York: King's Crown Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1950.) 20s. net.

THIS erudite contribution to our knowledge of the works of Bruno the Nolan is one of the latest examples of the value of the policy adopted by the King's Crown Press in making specialist studies available to scholars at a very reasonable cost. The volume divides naturally into two—the place of the infinite in Giordano's system, and a translation of the "De la Causa" into English. (Incidentally, there seems to be a comma missing from the title-page, which makes the full, and very noble, phraseology read rather oddly.)

Broadly, these massive writings are, as the author states, the outcome of Bruno's striving to "comprehend the Universe". At the same time, allowing for the tensions inseparable from the onset of humanist philosophies, it is not surprising that much heat was generated *en route*, and that only comparatively recently has this one-time Dominican monk come into his own. We are beginning to realize more explicitly nowadays that the *ordo essendi* is seldom the *ordo cognoscendi*. Meanwhile, Dr. S. Greenberg's reference to Gilson (p. 15) gains added weight if the original setting is consulted. For there, 'good' is contrasted with 'Being': a limitation is implicit in the former, but not in the latter, which is why the Greek 'infinity' was always coupled with imperfection.

English-speaking students will be grateful for being enabled to follow Bruno's great work of 1584 the more readily, and thus to appreciate some of the qualities of that tempestuous intellect.

F. I. G. RAWLINS

### Die botanische Buchillustration

Ihre Geschichte und Bibliographie. Von Claus Nissen. Band 1: Geschichte, Lieferung 1. Pp. vii+80. Band 2: Bibliographie, Lieferung 1. Pp. vii+80. (Stuttgart: Hiersemann Verlagsgesellschaft m.b.H., 1951.) n.p.

IN the drawing and painting of plants—especially of flowers—art and science meet, sometimes overlap and occasionally combine. The diversity and beauty of form and colour to be found in the plant kingdom attract the artist, while the botanist often finds accurate representation in black-and-white or in colour more valuable as a record of his studies than verbal description. The best botanical artists have combined in their work the feeling of beauty with the accuracy of detail demanded by the man of science. Lately, there has been an increased interest in the history of botanical illustration, an interest apparently not confined to Great Britain.

It is impossible fully to judge the value of C. Nissen's work from Part 1 of Volume 1 and Part 1 of Volume 2. The first volume is to deal with the history of the subject. Its first part contains a brief introduction dealing with some aspects of technique and consideration of botanical illustration in ancient times, the Middle Ages, the period of early printing, the Renaissance, and the Baroque Period (in part). The second volume is, in the first part, strictly bibliographical (authors *A* to *He*). Since there is at present no scheme of contents, it would be unfair to criticize the scope and arrangement of the work from the two parts. There appear, however, to be a

number of surprising omissions. Thus, under William Curtis one would expect to find some information about the *Botanical Magazine*. Again, under H. N. Dixon there is no mention of the third (1924) edition of "The Student's Handbook of British Mosses".

The many references provided in both parts should be of considerable interest and use to all who study the history of botany. It is to be hoped that a good index will be provided. W. B. TURRILL

### Fourier Methods

By Prof. Philip Franklin. Pp. x+289. (London: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., Ltd., 1949.) 34s.

PROF. PHILIP FRANKLIN surveys a wide field, interpreting the phrase of his title as covering any method which analyses or synthesizes a function by means of periodic components. He is writing for the technologist, and illustrates plentifully from the field of mathematical physics, but is content to quote the fundamental theorems of pure mathematics which he requires. References to the mathematical theory and for further reading are given.

The first chapter deals with the elements of the theory of complex numbers, with applications to impedances. The second chapter describes the Fourier series and the Fourier integral, including a summary of twelve-ordinate harmonic analysis, the third studies partial differential equations, and the fourth boundary value problems, particularly those arising in heat conduction and in transmission lines. In the last chapter the Laplace transform is briefly described and applied to problems of electric circuits and transmission lines. There is a full supply of worked examples, and an excellent collection of elementary exercises for the reader, with answers.

The treatment is clear, but since so much is dealt with in a comparatively small book, it is never profound. The book would thus serve to introduce the young student to a wide field of knowledge, without requiring anything more than a grasp of elementary calculus as a prerequisite. But it is only an introduction, and the suggestions for further reading should be taken seriously.

### The Life of a University

By Basil Cottle and J. W. Sherborne. (Published for the University of Bristol.) Pp. vi+116 (50 plates). (Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, Ltd., 1951.) Paper, 6s. net; cloth, 10s. 6d. net.

THIS brochure is a well-written sketch of the growth and organization of the University of Bristol and some institutions connected with the University. There are some fine illustrations; but the title of the book is not happily chosen. Rather less than half of the book is occupied by a short history of the University, the remainder sketching the organization and present activities. It is thus less an account of the life of a university than of its growth and structure, being purely descriptive. Although entirely different in form, it covers essentially the same ground as the pamphlet "An Introduction to a University" put out by the University of Birmingham, but is scarcely so well designed as the latter pamphlet to guide those who are facing a decision as to whether to enter a university at all. The "Life of a University" appears to be designed, on the contrary, for past or present members of the University of Bristol itself, whether students or staff, and to them it may be further commended for the excellence of its general production.