journeys of Marco Polo and the tragic struggles to conquer Everest, there are a dozen stories of adventure and daring, not merely to lay bare the secrets of Nature, but to inquire into the habits and the life of man. De Lesseps in Siberia, Manning at Lhasa, Layard in Persia, Garnier on the Mekong, Burnaby at Khiva, and Doughty in Arabia, these are some of the adventurous travels sketched lightly and interestingly in this book. Useful sketch maps, recalling in their style and ornament the old maps of travel, make the narratives of special value and justify the authors' hope that these "supplementary readers" will quicken interest in geography by stories of adventurous travel. The selection has been well made, and the narratives not only afford an idea of some of the main steps by which knowledge has been gained, both of the world as a whole and of the separate continents other than Europe, but show also how many place names owe their origin to explorers, and recall incidents of exploration.

A Brief History of Civilization. By John S. Hoyland. Pp. 288. (London: Oxford University Press, 1925.) 3s. 6d. net.

WE ought to welcome the efforts, which are now becoming so frequent, to present the history of mankind as one, a progressive thing, culminating in a unity of which the League of Nations is the symbol and organ. Mr. Hoyland's little book is the best we have seen at the size and price, and it is published by the Oxford Press, which is distinguishing itself for works tending in that direction. Kant's prediction of the course of history-writing, made in 1782, is beginning to be realised in our day; that part and type of history is being most studied and commemorated which tends to the general good of mankind. Mr. Hoyland is possessed by this idea, and consequently gives us an appreciative account of China and a full, though discriminating, judgment of the contributions of Greece and Rome. There is also more, though not so adequate, allusion to the rôle of science in history than would be found in most books of earlier date.

The less effective part of the book is the last third, where the facts are so multitudinous as to occasion more compression and generalisation, and we think the general treatment suffers by the emphasis on the evils of nationalism and the discussion of problems raised by the growth of internationalism. It is really better, from the author's own point of view, to describe sympathetically what the various nations have done towards the common end than to dilate on the underlying problem. In practice this means more space *all through* to the triumphs of science, invention, and various forms of international association, rather than relegating all these topics together to one concluding chapter. But the book on the whole is sound and useful, and a great advance on anything of the kind yet attempted, and it is admirably illustrated and produced.

F. S. MARVIN.

Essentials of Scientific Method. By Prof. A. Wolf. Pp. 160. (London: G. Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1925.) 5s. 6d. net.

PROF. WOLF'S delightful book should be in the hands of every teacher of science. It is written with an admirable lucidity, and treats its subject in such a plain and

straightforward way that no previous knowledge of logic or psychology is necessary for its comprehension. Most science teachers are interested in the philosophy of scientific method, but comparatively few have the leisure to make a thorough study of it. To the busy majority Dr. Wolf's book will prove of great interest and value, and for the others it will provide a convenient epitome.

The author does not go deeply into the fundamental question whether the world which science describes is a world of reality, and in this he is wise. He confines himself to a description of the methods actually employed by science to obtain those results which are familiar to every one. His treatment of "Order in Nature and Laws of Nature" is a particularly skilful exhibition of skating upon thin ice, but there can be little criticism of the position he adopts. "On the whole," he says, "experience has shown that there is some order in nature, even if nature be not orderly through and through." We cannot agree with him, however, when he says (p. 126) that it is not very likely that Boyle's Law and similar generalisations would be assumed to hold good of newly discovered substances without experimental verification. E. J. H.

La matiere vivante: organisations et différenciations, origines de la vie, colloïdes et mitochondries. Par Prof. J. Kunstler et F. Prévost. Pp. 253. (Paris: Masson et Cie, 1924.) 18 francs.

THIS rather curious booklet contains an exposition of the authors' views on the structure of protoplasm. Their main contention is that the structural organisation of protoplasm is as important for the processes of life as is its chemical composition. With this few would disagree, especially after the remarkable experiments of Warburg and others upon the rôle of structure in such fundamental activities as respiration.

The book, however, is uncritical and one-sided. All sorts of structures are lumped together, and the work of others is very unequally treated. Little attention is paid to the views of such authorities as E. B. Wilson, R. Chambers, and others, that the visible structure of protoplasm may readily change in accordance with change of physiological state, nor is there any proper discussion of modern work on micro-dissection or physiological cytology.

The work will be of some interest to the specialist, but can scarcely be recommended to the general biological reader.

The Annual Register: a Review of Public Events at Home and Abroad for the Year 1924. Edited by Dr. M. Epstein. (New Series.) Pp. xv+326+171. (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1925.) 30s. net.

THIS admirable survey of the year's history is planned on the lines which have been long familiar. An account of British history, followed by foreign and imperial history arranged under the headings of the various states, occupies two-thirds of the volume. Then come a tabular chronology of events, a survey of literature, art, music, science, law and finance, and obituary notices of the year. These surveys are necessarily very condensed, but lack neither lucidity nor critical estimates of the field of survey. Some of the more important treaties and agreements of the year are printed in full.