

A large proportion of the material in this book can be found in many theoretical organic chemistry books, and in view of the comparatively high price of the volume it might be advisable to have restricted such matter and to have dealt more with the technical application of the solvents. Some typographical errors and a fair number of obscure or slightly inaccurate statements occur, but in spite of these and the author's disclaimer to literary style in dealing with technical data, the book is exceptionally well written. It collects together a large amount of useful information on a special type of organic substances, and it should be of great use not only to the technical man but also to the organic chemist generally.

J. REILLY.

*Castles.* By Sir Charles Oman. Pp. xii + 232 + 100 plates. (London: Great Western Railway, Paddington, 1926.) 5s. net.

To the two delightful volumes, "Cathedrals" and "Abbeys," the Great Western Railway has now added a third dealing with the castles on or accessible from its system. Eighty castles in the south and south-west of England and in Wales are here described in full and illustrated by many photographic plates of great beauty and a number of equally pleasing sketches in the text. All the castles with the exception of six have been carefully inspected by the author, while his son was responsible for about half the illustrations. In addition to the description of each building and the notes on its history, Sir Charles Oman has provided an introduction in which he gives the history of the castle, royal and baronial, in England, and sketches its development as well as the development in methods of attack which took place *pari passu*—a subject on which so distinguished an authority on military history is peculiarly competent to speak. Sir Charles discusses at some length what constitutes a castle, and finally defines it as a military structure used for residential purposes which is a unit as itself. It is interesting to note that the author attributes the fact that castle building virtually ceased in the fourteenth century, not so much to the development of artillery, though that was no doubt a contributory cause, as to the realisation by that time that war in the open had come to be the only form of decisive action, and it was consequently more effective to spend money on the maintenance of men-at-arms rather than in buildings.

*The Chemical Analysis of Foods: a Practical Treatise on the Examination of Foodstuffs and the Detection of Adulterants.* By Dr. H. E. Cox. Pp. vii + 323. (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1925.) 18s. net.

THE aim of the author has been to write a text-book of food analysis for the general requirements of chemists who have no special experience in the analysis of foods. On the whole he has produced a compact and readable volume which contains a large amount of useful information. In eleven chapters the subjects dealt with include carbohydrates, baking-powder, fruits, tea, coffee, cocoa, mustard, pepper, wines and other alcoholic liquors, flesh foods, milk and related products, and various oils. In an appendix the Public Health (Preservatives, etc.) Regulations of 1925 are given.

Methods are often too briefly described to be of real value to the inexperienced, and the details given are

not always strictly accurate. In some cases definite alterations in standard existing procedure is indicated without comment or reference to original sources. The expert analyst is certain to be disappointed in many sections of the book, for in several instances where information is required, even on common controversial problems, little help is given. There is possibly some justification for this, as the author indicates that he is not writing for the specialist, and has endeavoured only to present the elements of the subject. The book is therefore more useful in initial training than as an aid in discussing special isolated points. In a second edition with a fair amount of revision and correction a very useful text-book should result.

*Economic Geography of South America.* By Prof. R. H. Whitbeck. Pp. vii + 430. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc.; London: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., Ltd., 1926.) 17s. 6d. net.

THERE has long been need for a text-book on South American economic geography, since much that has been written on this subject is not free from bias and is far from trustworthy. In this volume, Prof. Whitbeck, who has the necessary qualification of personal experience of South America and a wide outlook, has largely supplied the want. The physical background is merely sketched and there is little explanation of climatic processes. These are the weak sides of the book. But the economic problems are ably handled, and the human element, which is of great significance, is kept well in the foreground. States are selected as geographical entities, but within the larger States natural regions are recognised. National boundaries, traditions, and even prejudice, play too important a part in the economic life of any State to be neglected, as must happen if natural or geographical regions are chosen as the larger units for treatment. The Falkland Islands may be of small importance, but they merit more than one casual reference, at least if the book is to be used in Great Britain. There are admirable illustrations and sketch-maps and copious bibliographies, while the text shows a pleasing absence of New World phraseology.

*The Human Body.* By Dr. Marie Carmichael Stopes. Pp. v + 224 + 7 plates. (London: The Gill Publishing Co., Ltd., 1926.) 6s. 6d. net.

FEW will venture to deny that some elementary knowledge of the structure and working of the human body should be included in the education of every child. To further that object, Dr. Marie Stopes offers this book to adolescents and to all who missed this knowledge when they were young. In general, it is eminently suitable for the purpose; it is simple in expression, clear and accurate in detail, and easily readable by any youth of average intelligence. There are, however, certain features of anatomy and physiology which cannot adequately be explained in print; they are best left to the tact and common sense of the parent or guardian, and their omission from this book would certainly have increased its sphere of use, to those, at least, who are passing from childhood to youth. The only other criticism we have to offer is that technical terms, such as 'omos,' 'lumbus' and 'natis,' are unnecessary even in the diagrams of a book intended for lay readers.