Our Bookshelf.

Allen's Commercial Organic Analysis. Vol. 8: *Glucosides, Non-Glucosidal Bitter Principles, Enzymes, Putrefaction Bases, Animal Bases, Animal Acids, the Cyanogen Compounds, the Proteins the Digestion Products of Proteins.* By the Editor and the following Contributors: Julius Grant, G. Barger, K. G. Falk, Philip B. Hawk and O. Bergeim, G. H. Buchanan, S. B. Schryver and H. W. Buston. Editor: Dr. C. Ainsworth Mitchell. Fifth edition, revised and partly rewritten. Pp. x+761. (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1930.) 30*s*.

NEARLY twenty years have elapsed since the issue of the corresponding volume in the fourth edition of "Allen's Commercial Organic Analysis". Probably in no field of analytical work have more changes taken place during this period than in the subject matter under review, and particularly in the sections on nitrogenous constituents of animal and plant materials. The present volume is, therefore, practically a new book. The general subject is considered in a series of well-written monographs by specialists in their respective subjects, and the high standard of the previous volumes has been maintained.

As pointed out by the editor, there must of necessity be a certain amount of overlapping in an exhaustive work of this type written by a large number of experts. Thus, enzymes are considered in their relation to glucosides and elsewhere in the book from a different aspect, namely, in their connexion with the hydrolytic dissociation of proteins. On the whole, however, the book gains by such repetition, since the subject matter is considered by each specialist from a different aspect. Again, in a consideration of the subject matter of 'animal bases', certain related compounds have been discussed already in previous volumes (pyridine derivatives, mononamines, etc.), while some related compounds are reviewed in the section on 'putrefaction bases'. In this section, therefore, the author has been able to omit these from his review. Even with these omissions this section on 'animal bases' extends to more than 180 pages, and constitutes a very complete thesis in itself, on this difficult subject. The sections in the present volume on the analysis of proteins and on the digestive products of the proteins are the last contributions of the late Dr. S. B. Schryver to this branch of chemistry. It is of interest to note that it is intended to include a tenth volume in this series which will include recent advances and also a complete index to the whole series.

J. REILLY.

Gestalt Psychology. By Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Köhler. Pp. xi+312. (London: G. Bell and Sons, Ltd., 1930.) 15*s*. net.

THE author in his preface apologises for his difficulty in presenting *Gestalt* psychology in a foreign language; one may say at the outset that his English is much better than that of many writers to whom it is the mother-tongue. The author also points out that the subject matter as presented resembles a promising start rather than a complete achievement. It is a pity that this useful point of view is not maintained as the tone of the actual exposition, for that appears to be rather unnecessarily controversial and dogmatic.

To express the *Gestalt* theory in a few words is impossible. It arose primarily out of the experimental study of space perception, and the results of this study led to dissatisfaction with the prevailing theories and the formulation of what is known as the *Gestalt* theory. The word *Gestalt* has too much significance, unfortunately, in the German language, and its English equivalent too little. It is used to mean 'form' or 'shape', but also a state or process, or a segregated whole; and the theory is applied to most of the phenomena of sense perception, and then to processes of thought. The author discusses the properties of organised wholes, behaviour, association, reproduction, and insight, from this point of view. The varieties of directed attitude are held to be due, not to instincts or pre-existing drives, but to the actual situation. In experimentation the Gestaltists have done excellent work, and their challenge has been a useful stimulus, but a book of this size ought not to omit such contemporary work as that of Prof. Spearman.

The hypotheses put forward involve both physiology and physics, and the truth cannot be estimated yet. "All experienced order in space and time is a true representation of a corresponding order in the underlying dynamical context of physiological process." We do not know. Although there are constant references to the experimental data, yet few details are here given. Less repetition and fewer analogies from physics would have added considerably to the value of this nevertheless important communication.

The Aquatic (Naiad) Stage of the British Dragonflies (Paraneuroptera). By William John Lucas. (Ray Society Volume No. 117, for the Year 1930.) Pp. xii+132+35 plates. (London: Dulau and Co., Ltd., 1930.) 25*s*.

IN this work the author describes and figures the last immature instar in each of the forty-two species of dragonflies found in Great Britain. Since the whole of the early life of these insects is passed in water, and lasts on an average about two years, it is not surprising that the complete biology of very few of the species has been followed. There is consequently a large field open for the enthusiastic naturalist to explore as regards these insects. In the introduction to this volume the general structural details of the immature stages of dragonflies are explained, and with this information the reader is enabled to pass on to the diagnostic keys to the nymphs or naiads, as they are variously termed, arranged in families, genera, and species. The use of these keys will enable any given example to be traced down, and this preliminary determination can then be confirmed by reference to the detailed specific descriptions given in the general text.

© 1931 Nature Publishing Group