

Short Reviews

Before and After Socrates. By Prof. F. M. Cornford. Pp. x + 113. (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1932.) 4s. 6d. net.

THE elementary character of these lectures scarcely veils the scholarly and human vision of Greek philosophy, hinted at by Prof. Cornford. Taking Socrates as the central figure of Greek philosophy, he describes how the early Ionian science failed to satisfy him, and how the systems of Plato and Aristotle attempt to carry into the interpretations of the world the consequences of Socrates' discovery. The reading of Prof. Cornford's book adds to one's conviction that the fundamental problems of knowledge, as treated by the Greeks, bear a strange resemblance to the major preoccupations of to-day's thinkers.

T. G.

The Electrical Age: being Further Everyday Marvels of Science. By V. H. L. Searle. Pp. 229 + 3 plates. (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1932.) 10s. 6d. net.

THE variety of content of this book will appeal to those who are interested in the application of electrical science to everyday life. Mathematical methods are avoided in order to help the general reader, but the author writes with care for detail as he deals with such diverse subjects as a Sprengel pump, the measurement of time, of high and low temperatures, and the manufacture of gramophone records. The volume provides, in a very readable form, scientific descriptions of many electrical devices, with non-technical statement of underlying principles.

Archaic Tracts round Cambridge. By Alfred Watkins. Pp. 61. (London: Simpkin Marshall, Ltd., 1932.) 3s. 6d.

MR. WATKINS applies his well-known theory of the sighting relation of prehistoric roads and trackways to mounds, earthworks, churches (as marking older sites), cross-roads, etc., to the Cambridge district. This is the result of a flying visit and most of the work has been done 'on the map'. The author has elaborated a further theory that roads were aligned in reference to cardinal points. The theory is also worked out here for some of his surveys in Herefordshire. Mr. Watkins's work is stimulating, though opinion may differ as to its interpretation.

Practical Physics. By William R. Bower in collaboration with Prof. J. Satterly. Third edition (revised and enlarged). Pp. viii + 492. (London: University Tutorial Press, Ltd., 1932.) 7s. 6d.

THAT a third edition of this well-known book is called for is clear evidence that it meets a real need in a satisfactory manner, and no one concerned with the teaching or supervision of practical physics will need informing as to its quality. Opportunity has been taken thoroughly to revise the book and bring it into line with modern

teaching and examination requirements, increasing its value by the inclusion of new experiments and descriptions of current laboratory practice and apparatus.

Das Vorwort zur Drogenkunde des Bērūnī. Eingeleitet, übersetzt und erläutert von Max Meyerhof. (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte der Naturwissenschaften und der Medizin, Band 3, Heft 3.) Pp. 52 + 18. (Berlin: Julius Springer, 1932.) 7.80 gold marks.

THIS is a very welcome critical translation of the famous "Kitab-i-saidana", referred to for the first time by H. Beveridge in 1902, which exists only in the Persian translation of Abu Bakr. It gives a mass of useful information about certain drugs and chemicals used in the early Middle Ages, and contains precious indications about the corresponding Greek renderings of these substances.

Handbuch der anorganischen Chemie. Herausgegeben von Prof. Dr. R. Abegg, Dr. Fr. Auerbach und Prof. Dr. I. Koppel. In 4 Bänden. Band 4, Abteilung 3, Teil 2B, Lief. 2: *Komplexe Cyanide des Eisens.* Pp. Bxvii + Bxx + B465-B674. (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1932.) 24 gold marks.

A DETAILED account of the complex cyanides of iron, with a bibliography which includes 1,360 references. The frontispiece is a reproduction of early references to Prussian blue by an anonymous writer in 1710, by Woodward and by Brown in the *Philosophical Transactions* of 1724 and by Stahl in 1731.

The Philosophy of a Scientific Man. By Paul R. Heyl. Pp. 182. (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1933.) 1.50 dollars.

THIS book, which makes delightful reading, could not pretend to contain anything new. It is an act of faith of a scientific man, an act of faith in the purposiveness of the universe and in the power of our reason to apprehend the vague outlines of the reality in which we are embedded. In spite of some hasty generalisations and technical inaccuracies, it should be considered as a valuable testimony at a time when it is still fashionable in certain quarters to disclaim any value for the transcendental concepts of philosophy.

Vox Naturae. By Edwyn Terbea. Pp. 191. (London: Arthur H. Stockwell, Ltd., n.d.) 6s. net.

INDEPENDENT thinkers need every encouragement when they realise the difficulties of the problems of knowledge and conduct, and the relative value of their contributions to their clarification. Mr. Terbea's philosophical outlook will thus appeal to many, in so far as he treats most issues with common-sense and conviction, using as explanatory principles the interfusion of primal, sexual and intellectual urges.

T. G.