An Introduction to Contemporary German Philosophy

By Dr. W. Brock. Pp. xx + 144. (Cambridge : At the University Press, 1935.) 6*s*. net.

THE study of German thought, which has been so popular in Great Britain, has been encouraged lately by the introduction of German philosophy as an optional subject in the syllabus of a first degree in German in the University of London. The interest taken by this University in German studies is further exemplified by its invitation to Dr. Brock to give a course of lectures on German contemporary thought. The book under notice is a direct result of this invitation.

German humanism and the development of the separate sciences are considered to be the background of contemporary German philosophy. Two new philosophical movements have asserted themselves since Hegel : the first covers the numerous attempts towards a philosophical synthesis of scientific results, and the second concerns epistemological inquiries. Then Nietzsche and Kierkegaard have cast their shadow over subsequent thinkers as well as over their contemporaries. These Dr. Brock considers in turn with an objective though sympathetic mind. But their conflicting conclusions leave still undecided the position of philosophy among the determining factors in human life. It would have been interesting to analyse the intellectual factors which have brought German thought to that peculiar position in which it has to renounce its very freedom of action and expression. T. G.

Kursus der Kristallometrie

Von Prof. Dr. Victor Goldschmidt. Aus dem Nachlass herausgegeben von Dr. Hans Himmel und Dr. Karl Müller. Pp. viii + 167. (Berlin : Gebrüder Borntraeger, 1934.) 10 gold marks.

THIS is essentially a practical guide to crystal measurement, drawing and calculation based on the established methods of the Victor Goldschmidt school of crystallography.

Following the general introduction, which deals with the various methods of projection, single-circle goniometry, illustrated mainly by the Penfield contact goniometer, is simply described and two examples are given. This section occupies six pages.

The remainder of the book is devoted to two-circle goniometry and is divided into two parts. Part 1, which provides an admirable introduction to the methods, deals with the two-circle contact goniometer designed by the author. The procedure involved in crystal measurement, drawing and calculation together with the preparation of crystal models is fully discussed and examples from each of the six systems are given in full. Part 2 illustrates the use of the two-circle reflection goniometer and provides examples of more advanced studies of simple and twinned crystals.

This posthumous work of the late Prof. V. Goldschmidt bears the characteristic marks of care and attention to detail which all his work illustrated, and is a very complete and lucid guide to the crystallographic methods evolved in great part by the author.

Die Fermente und ihre Wirkungen

Von Prof. Dr. Carl Oppenheimer. Supplement, Lief. 4 (Band 1, Specieller Teil : Haupt-Teil 9–12). Pp. 481–640. (Den Haag : W. Junk, 1936.) 28*s*.

THE fourth part of this work has appeared with commendable punctuality. It deals with the polyases, which are the enzymes which split the complex carbohydrates, the nucleases, the amidases and the first sections of the proteases.

Now that we possess at least an approximate knowledge of the structure of the more complex carbohydrates, it should be possible to make progress also in regard to the enzymes which attack them : for example, the increasing study of the polyfructoses, of which there are apparently several besides inulin, may teach something about inulase. The same applies to such enzymes as lichenase, chitinase, cytase and pectinase, and this section, which gives also a brief indication of the latest views in regard to the structural formulæ of these polysaccharides, will be found to be stimulating.

Recent work has more or less cleared up the structure of the nucleic acids : their appropriate enzymes either convert the acids into nucleotides or these latter into nucleosides and phosphoric acid, or effect the final degradation of the nucleosides into a base and a sugar : there is still much to learn about these and the way in which they work.

The amidases are those enzymes which break the bond between carbon and nitrogen as, for example, in adenine and guanine. They include arginase, of which a good deal is known, also those enzymes which hydrolyze acid amides and lastly urease.

The protein section is of an introductory character.

Grundlagen der Quantenmechanik

Von Dr. H. Dänzer. (Wissenschaftliche Forschungsberichte : Naturwissenschaftliche Reihe, herausgegeben von Dr. Raphael Ed. Liesegang, Band 35.) Pp. xi + 163. (Dresden und Leipzig : Theodor Steinkopff, 1935.) 12 gold marks.

THIS brief but excellent introduction to quantum mechanics is likely to appeal much more to the mathematician than to the experimental physicist, for, as its title suggests, it deals rather with the fundamental ideas than with the applications of wave-mechanics to special problems. The treatment really assumes that the reader possesses a fairly good knowledge of mathematics, and the book should find a welcome from teachers of mathematical physics.

La spectroscopie appliquée

Par P. Swings. (Bibliothèque scientifique belge.) Pp. 188. (Paris : Hermann et Cie., 1935.) 15 francs.

ALL who are interested in the teaching or practice of spectroscopy will find this well-written and informative little volume of interest. In particular, the common errors which are encountered in connexion with spectroscope adjustments are discussed in some detail. The advantages and disadvantages of the various sources of light are also well considered, and it is clear that the author has made a profound study of the contemporary literature of the subject.