

racés decidedly more prone, and the Slavs most liable of all. A more detailed examination, however, shows that, within each country, both the frequency and the nature of the crimes are far more closely related to historical, social, and economic differences than to racial: thus in remote agrarian districts, where material and cultural poverty prevails, crimes against property as well as persons are comparatively common, regardless of racial or national differences; again, in countries where until recently semi-feudal conditions obtained, and particularly where the tradition of private vendetta has survived, homicide is by no means infrequent. The Jewish record for theft, for sexual misdemeanours, and for every type of serious aggressive crime, is everywhere remarkably favourable; on the other hand, commercial crimes are about half as common again among Jews as among other inhabitants of the same country in question. Yet once again these differences are chiefly due to records from urban and commercial areas; and, when local variations are more closely studied, it appears that the offences of the Jews show a marked inclination towards those typical of the areas in which the different Jewish communities are found.

Among immigrants to the United States, the figures for different nationalities at first sight show a general correspondence with those reported from their respective home countries. But this holds true only of the first generation or two: thus, among children of Italian parents who were themselves both born in America, the figures drop practically to the level of native Americans. For Negroes the proportions are nearly three or four times as high as they are for whites; yet, as Dr. Bongér shows by detailed quotation, most American criminologists are agreed that the social and economic conditions under which the Negroes live go far to offer an explanation of the facts observed.

From these and other statistical data, Dr. Bongér finally concludes that differences in racial intelligence and temperament cannot be wholly excluded; but he considers that their influence is remote, indirect, and "sorely exaggerated". Crime, as such, is not inheritable. But there is reason for believing that it "proceeds from instincts common to all men", and that different races may inherit those instincts with differing intensity. Accordingly, although such minor differences in instinctive propensities "have in themselves no necessary connection with crime, still, in certain social circumstances", he holds, "they might impart a stronger anti-social bias to certain members of the population".

CYRIL BURT.

FAT METABOLISM

The Metabolism of Fat

(Monographs on Biological Subjects.) By Dr. Ida Smedley-Maclean. Pp. vi+104. (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1943.) 5s. net.

THERE is a considerable lack of comprehensive up-to-date monographs on biochemical topics, and especially on fat metabolism. The present book was intended to fill this gap in the field of fat biochemistry and to provide students, especially those with little or no previous knowledge of the subject, with a short account of the present-day knowledge on fat metabolism. The author deals briefly in seven chapters with the synthesis of fatty

acids, the constitution and the role of the unsaturated fatty acids in the organism, the oxidation of fatty acids *in vitro* and *in vivo*, the constitution of lipoids and the transport of fatty acids in the animal body. A list of references and a short subject index conclude the book.

The author was aware of the impossibility of giving a complete survey of the field in so short a space, and has succeeded in many respects in giving a clear picture of the broad outlines of our knowledge on the subject. In a number of instances, however, the highly controversial and far from complete picture of fat metabolism is over-simplified and the gaps in our knowledge are filled with a disproportionately long account of current theories. Thus, for example, the views on the possible mechanism of fatty acid synthesis are expounded at some length, which no doubt gives the reader a simple view of the subject, but one little supported by experimental evidence. Also the treatment of the subject of oxidation of fatty acids does not give a balanced view of the experimental evidence and the numerous theories. In the chapter on fat transport in the animal body considerable stress is laid on the theory of Verzar, although many of his results have not been confirmed by other workers.

There are a few errors in chemical formulæ (pp. 78, 79) and in the indexing of references.

A. KLEINZELLER.

ELECTRONIC THEORY IN CHEMISTRY

Electronic Theory and Chemical Reactions

An Elementary Treatment. By R. W. Stott. Pp. viii+112. (London, New York and Toronto: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1943.) 6s. net.

IN the last two decades, the interpretation of reaction mechanism from the point of view of the electronic theory of valency has advanced apace, and the rapid growth of the original literature on the subject has made it difficult for those not primarily engaged in its furtherance to keep abreast of the developments. To some extent this difficulty has recently been met by the appearance of a number of summarizing articles and a few books. In the booklet under review we have the latest addition to this collection.

In six short chapters entitled "Inorganic Compounds", "Organic Acids and Reactive Hydrogen Atoms", "The Mechanisms of Certain Types of Reactions of Organic Compounds", "The Structure of Benzene and other Aromatic Compounds", "Substitution in the Benzene Nucleus", and "Some Uses of Radio-active and other Isotopes", the author attempts to give a brief sketch of the theory of chemical reactions. This is a formidable task, but, though the treatment is in parts somewhat over-simplified, and is not free from errors, the book will undoubtedly be found useful as an elementary introduction to the subject. It is intended mainly for the use of first-year students, for others who have but limited time for reading, and, possibly, for advanced sixth-form pupils. In his preface the author writes: "If this book stimulates interest in what is an attractive subject, and encourages further reading and investigation, it will have fulfilled the purpose for which it has been written". It is the reviewer's opinion that the book will achieve this object.

E. D. HUGHES.