

The Philosophy of the Enlightenment

By Ernst Cassirer. Translated by Fritz C. A. Koelln and James P. Pettegrove. Pp. xiii+366. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press; London: Oxford University Press, 1951.) 40s. net.

THIS is a translation of Prof. Ernst Cassirer's "Die Philosophie der Aufklärung" (1932). It is very welcome, and the Princeton University Press has produced a result in keeping with a great theme. The first three chapters give the 'feel' of the Enlightenment, whereas the rest offer more specific information. The appropriate headings comprise religion; the conquest of the historical world; law, State and society; fundamental problems of aesthetics. In all this the reader is confronted by the age of reason, an age bubbling with enthusiasm and seemingly indifferent to the existence of any situation incapable of a purely rational solution. Yet historically it was the heir apparent rather than the heir presumptive (for those having eyes to see) of the Renaissance and the Reformation.

To French clarity of thought, the pedigree must have seemed wholly adequate; to British minds, less shaken by the Reformation, its appeal was perhaps more formative than doctrinal. But in any event, philosophy had come back, true to type, as a way of life, self-liberated from the academic prison. It was to swell over everything, conquering and to conquer. The epoch cannot, however, be described as basically irreligious (as Prof. Cassirer says, undiluted scepticism could never have achieved so much); rather was the tendency one towards transcendentalism, especially in Germany. The paradox of the Enlightenment remains—its rejection of much of the past, coupled with the remarkable stability of a subsequent system founded essentially upon the outcome of a series of severe, and often painful, operations.

F. I. G. RAWLINS

Medieval Logic

An Outline of its Development from 1250 to c. 1400. By Philotheus Boehner. Pp. xvii+130. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1952.) 12s. 6d. net.

THE author of this valuable historical study modestly claims that he is pointing to a gap in our common knowledge, not filling it; but, in fact, he does a good deal more. His aim is to show two things: that the traditional logic of the text-books, including those of the neo-scholastics, contains no more than part of the medieval logic; and that twentieth-century symbolic logic is a development on the same lines as the part that has been missed out, and in no sense in opposition to medieval ideas as some of its exponents have imagined. It was Kant, not the medievals, who alleged that logic had sprung perfect and fully armed from the brain of Aristotle, as Athena from the head of Zeus. Their view, Father Boehner claims, was that Aristotle had devised the "Ars Vetus" and that they were devising the "Ars Nova", continuing, developing and completing what he had successfully begun. The difficulty for the student of the present day is that so much of the work of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is inaccessible; some of it exists only in the form of a single manuscript.

The medieval thinkers developed a theory of 'supposition', of what terms stand for and what substitutions can be made, and also a theory of 'consequences', of the relation 'if—then'. William of Ockham, it appears, used the notion of 'material

implication', commonly believed to be the invention of Lord Russell. Most of their ideas go easily and very conveniently into modern notation. Father Boehner makes a useful comment on this point. "Modern logic has made a decided step forward in assuming only a few constants which serve the purpose of bringing about an extremely simplified language. With these constants, their definitions and the rules governing their use, the scholastic theory of supposition has disappeared. It has vanished, however, at the cost of creating a new terminology foreign to that of any ordinary language. Though the language of logic has gained in clarity and precision, it has not been without a price."

A. D. R.

Practical Chemistry for Schools and Intermediate Students

By J. W. Davis. Pp. xxiv+315. (London: John Murray (Publishers), Ltd., 1952.) 15s. 6d.

THIS book describes more than a sufficient number of chemistry experiments to meet the requirements of the General Certificate of Education of both the Ordinary and Advanced level. Much of the material is off the beaten track, for the author, Mr. J. W. Davis, is known among teachers for his resourcefulness and his novel ideas. Mr. Davis dispenses with chapters and divides his matter into sections, to which he devotes the following number of pages: general chemistry, 71; qualitative analysis, 29; volumetric analysis, 68; preparations (organic and inorganic), 108; and miscellaneous, 33. The last section should be especially interesting to teachers; it contains notes on such matters as the running of a laboratory, the care of apparatus and the uses of various appliances. The full course of volumetric analysis runs mostly on customary lines but includes a few novelties. The scheme of qualitative analysis, framed for mixtures containing one metal per group, exhibits no unusual features. It is in the preparations and in the many informative experiments illustrative of fundamental principles that one meets the author's skill and originality. Herein Mr. Davis displays a rare aptitude for modifying classical experiments and familiar techniques and devising new ones with economy of time and apparatus. His book can be confidently recommended.

Joy and Verity, other Poems and a Poetic Drama

By Dr. Marie C. Stopes. Pp. 126. (London: Hogarth Press, 1952.) 6s. net.

THIS is the latest volume of a series of poetical works by Dr. Marie Stopes that began to appear in 1939. They are interesting in that love is treated passionately from a feminine point of view, and that the author does not hesitate to touch the themes of science with emotion and with imagination.

The outstanding poem in the volume is the title poem of forty-one stanzas, "Joy and Verity", which contains the distillation of a whole philosophy of life.

Personally, I enjoyed the poetic drama "Antigone Awakened". The matter is interesting—the theme of Sophocles' play with another ending. The spoken words of the actors and the chorus run easily and leave a feeling of freshness and of music.

Dr. Marie Stopes has always been a crusader. One gets more than a hint that the reforming spirit is now turning its attention to the breaking down of the inhibitions of scientists.

F. K.