other aspects of seventeenth-century culture. It is not Prof. Nef's object to look to contemporary science, religion or sesthetics for an explanation of the industrial developments of that and the following centuries. The most characteristic and the most centuries. attractive feature of the book is its endeavour to treat the civilization of the age as one; and to distribute the stress evenly between the various human activities and attitudes which went to make the culture of Europe in its last pre-industrial phase. If some of these activities and attitudes happened to be interrelated—as in Prof. Nef's showing some of them certainly were-this does not by itself provide an explanation of economic growth or of the Industrial Revolution.

Indeed, one of the most striking uniformities emerging from Prof. Nef's story fits very inconveniently into the chronology of economic development. It is impossible to read the book and compare the dates in its different chapters without noticing how closely synchronized in time were the main phases of scientific, moral and æsthetic evolution in the seventeenth century, and how different in all these respects was the second half of the century from its opening decades and from the sixteenth century. There was some contrast also in the economic sphere, but curiously enough the seventeenth century differed from the sixteenth mainly in having failed to sustain the earlier pace of economic and technical change.

'COMPREHENSIVE' INORGANIC CHEMISTRY

Comprehensive Inorganic Chemistry

Comprehensive inorganic Chemistry By Prof. M. Cannon Sneed and Prof. Robert C. Brasted. Vol. 5: Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Arsenic, Antimony, and Bismuth. By Harry H. Sisler. Nonaqueous Chemistry. By Alfred R. Pray. Pp. x+214. 37s. 6d. net. Vol. 6: The Alkali Metals. By John F. Suttle. Hydrogen and Its Isotopes. By Robert C. Brasted. Pp. viii+234. 45s. (Prince-ton, N.J.: D. Van Nostrand Company Inc.; London: D. Van Nostrand Company Ltd. 1957.) D. Van Nostrand Company, Ltd., 1957.)

The four parts into which these two statisfac-divided are individually moderately satisfac-**`HE** four parts into which these two volumes are tory. They are all primarily descriptive. As in previous volumes the authors sometimes attempt a thorough survey of a topic, and sometimes put all the emphasis on recent advances ; nevertheless, there is usually a reasonably good balance.

Perhaps the least satisfactory is the chapter on non-aqueous solvents. Here a more fundamental approach would have been an advantage. As it is, a few solvents are selected for descriptive treatment, and for other solvents the reader is referred to other parts of the series. Valuable comparisons are thereby lost. Moreover, in one case at least (nitric acid) the reader may be disappointed when he does refer elsewhere. It may also be noted that alcohol and acetone are not considered at all; this cannot be because they are organic compounds, since acetic acid is included.

Even if these four parts pass muster in general, there are a number of unsatisfactory points of detail. There is, for example, a short section in Vol. 5 on the not very important isotopes of nitrogen, yet the only mention of phosphorus-32 is in a table of isotopes. The numerical data in Table 2.3 of Vol. 6 do not tally

with those in Table 2.10. Liquid ammonia as a solvent is treated at some length in no fewer than three of the four parts, and there is considerable overlap in the information provided. In the discussion on acetic acid as a solvent, space is found for the irrelevant fact that wine vinegar has been made in Orleans for centuries. A minor curiosity is the use of the word 'molety' for the species H_3O^+ and NH_4^+ —'entity' is presumably intended; and something has gone wrong with the contents page of Vol. 6.

Some of these criticisms should clearly be laid at the editors' rather than the authors' door. Editorial policy appears indeed to be lacking in definition. The preface, which sets out to state the policy, proves on examination to be a confusing document. For example, the series is not to be "an encyclopedic work", yet it is to be "a ready reference" and it is to be "comprehensive". But what is the difference between an encyclopædia and a comprehensive reference work ? And what are we to expect of a reference work that warns us that "terms are used with or without definition", and that "many inorganic compounds are not mentioned at all"?

Such editorial vagueness has made the series consistent and uneven. Thus in "The Alkali inconsistent and uneven. Metals" there are no fewer than 164 diagrams, of which the great majority are phase-rule diagrams. In the volume on the nitrogen family the shapes of several dozen molecules are indicated. If these were constant features of all the volumes, one could rely on them and make use of them; but they are not.

Is it too late to hope that the editors will come to a clear decision what to include and what to omit in the remaining volumes of the series ?

TROPICAL MEDICINE

Lehrbuch der Tropenkrankheiten

Herausgegeben von Prof. Ernst Georg Nauck. Unter Mitarbeit von G. Fuhrmann, H. Knüttgen, H. Lippelt, W. Minning, W. Mohr, H. Mühlpfordt, E. Reichenow, H. Vogel, A. Westphal und F. Weyer. Pp. viii+432. (Stuttgart : Georg Thieme Verlag, 1956.) 64 D.M.

NEW manual of tropical diseases in the compass A of only 432 pages, clearly printed on semi-glossy paper with numerous illustrations, is a welcome addition to the literature; when it is under the editorship of Prof. Nauck and written in collaboration with well-known members of the Hamburg Tropical Institute, it is indeed an event. The book will doubtless be used as their chief text-book by members of the classes attending the courses at the Institute ; it will also form a handy book of reference for anyone wanting to obtain easily information on tropical medicine. This is because it is up to date, accurate and arranged so clearly that even a reader not very familiar with the language can quickly find the knowledge he wants. Nauck states in the introduction that the book is not intended solely for their own students but for all doctors actually working in the tropics.

The text opens with a useful summary of the part played by arthropods in tropical diseases and provides a few diagnostic keys, which will enable the student to get started on this important aspect of the subject.