

ing has caused it to be forgotten that for successful work in chemistry it is essential that the investigator be a highly skilled manipulator. It is too often found that the best student in the examination room is all but worthless when set to perform even the simplest piece of experimental work; good workers can only be trained by the most careful and thorough grounding in making pure chemical preparations and by being taught to appreciate the importance and necessity of even the minutest details in the process. As a glance at the modern chemical literature shows, it is precisely this attention to detail which is so conspicuous a feature in some of the best work.

We fear that the book under notice would not lead the student to attach importance either to accuracy of method or to thoroughness of detail; it seems a pity even that it should have been found worth while to translate it and so add another to the legion of text-books.

*Metaphysik in der Psychiatrie.* By Dr. P. Kronthal. Pp. 92. (Jena: Gustav Fischer, 1905.) Price 2.50 marks.

THIS costly little work is written to ventilate a grievance. It would appear that certain authorities on mental diseases, including Kräpelin and Binswanger, employ in their works such terms as association, apperception, power of imagination, anger, and the like. These, according to our author, are metaphysical terms, and must be carefully excluded from *Psychiatrie*, which is a purely natural science. New sciences spring up like mushrooms nowadays, and it is a misfortune that those who specialise in one, or seek to exploit it, so rarely know with precision what is being done in others, even when these are most closely akin to their own darling pursuit. We fear that this writer hardly understands that the terms which he criticises are used every day in psychology with a minimum of metaphysical reference, and that he is almost bound, before he proceeds a step, to show due cause why the terminology of *Psychiatrie* should differ seriously from that accepted by ordinary psychology. In spite of his parade of footnotes and his references to such grand conceptions as that of *Allbeseeltheit*, it may be doubted if this writer is competent to discuss so general a question. At any rate, his present work does not impress one as being well arranged, clear, or convincing.

*A Text-book of Physiological Chemistry.* By Charles E. Simon. Second edition. Pp. xx+500. (London: J. and A. Churchill, 1905.) Price 15s. net.

ALTHOUGH Dr. Simon's book has reached a second edition, it is one which has been hitherto unknown on this side of the Atlantic. Dr. Simon's name is not associated with any researches in physiological chemistry, and there is nothing strikingly new or original in his book, either as regards subject-matter or arrangement. The work has, however, many excellent features. It is clearly written, and is free from inaccuracies; the sections dealing with the proteids and their cleavage products are especially good, and fully abreast of the recent advances which have been made in this important and interesting branch of the subject.

The author is conversant with chemical technique, and his descriptions of analytical processes are specially lucid. It is evident that he is a careful student of chemico-physiological literature, and more especially with that part of it which originates in Germany. This is frequently seen in the nomenclature he adopts. Thus he speaks of casein and paracasein instead of caseinogen and casein respectively as employed in most English books. Occasionally the adherence to German terms leads to

confusion; for instance, the two German words *Eiweisskörper* and *Albumine* are both translated as albumins.

The work is primarily intended for students, and therefore references to literature are omitted. A desire to keep the book within a moderate compass has no doubt induced the author to leave out a consideration of many subjects which might well have been expected to find a place in it. Thus we find no reference to the important subject of immunity and its side issues, like the precipitin test for blood. The numerous investigations now in progress on the velocity of ferment action are passed over in silence. Physical chemistry has during the last decade made great progress, and many and important are its applications to physiology. Such questions as absorption, secretion, osmosis, gaseous exchanges, and electrical conductivity have all been made clearer by the work of the physical chemist; but there is no reference to any of such investigations.

The strangest and most important omissions, however, are the absence of any account of general metabolism, animal heat, and respiration.

Turning to the title-page, one searches in vain for the words vol. i., for the omitted material would easily fill a second volume of the same size. One cannot help thinking that, interesting and instructive as the book undoubtedly is, it cannot be expected to take its place as a favourite until the deficiencies alluded to are rectified.

*Astronomy for Amateurs.* By Camille Flammarion.

Translated by Frances A. Welby. Pp. 340. (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1905.) Price 6s.

MUCH that is interesting to amateur astronomers may be found in this volume. The descriptions are often discursive, but the matter is there, and in a readable form providing the reader's leisure is not too limited.

After a general exhortation to his readers to study and contemplate the marvels of the sky, the author proceeds to a study of the constellations, the stars themselves, the sun, and then the planets. Next follows a chapter on comets, containing some interesting facts concerning the ancient ideas of these "glittering, swift-footed heralds of Immensity," and a brief account of comets in general and of a few in particular. Shooting stars are then dealt with, and in chapters viii., ix., and x. the earth, the moon, and eclipses are severally discussed. In chapter xi. the more elementary methods of determining stellar distances and masses are described, whilst the next, and last, chapter is devoted to a discussion of life universal and eternal. The book contains eighty-four illustrations—the relevance of some of which is open to question—and it will be read with both interest and profit by those whose previous acquaintance with astronomical truths has been slight.

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts intended for this or any other part of NATURE. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

#### Scientific Correspondence of the late Sir George Stokes.

ARRANGEMENTS are in progress for the publication of a selection from Sir George Stokes's scientific correspondence. The letters addressed to him, which are now in my custody, show that there must be many from him to others, of permanent scientific value, to which I have not access. I shall therefore be glad if owners of letters of substantial scientific interest will entrust them to me, to be treated with care and ultimately returned. J. LARMOR.

St. John's College, Cambridge, May 8.