

he will miss two most valuable sources of help for his lectures. The first was written in 1868, and instantly achieved a most remarkable popularity, being translated into French, German, Russian, Swedish, Italian, and Japanese, besides being revised and adapted for English readers by Church; the second appeared two years later, and was almost equally successful. Neither book is ever likely to get out of date, because each deals so fully with the fundamental experiments carried out by men who were laying the foundation of what has since become a great subject.

The book before us gives an account of the life of the writer of these books, and incidentally throws much interesting light on the opening chapters of the history of agricultural chemistry. Samuel William Johnson was born in 1831 at Kingsboro, in what was then the new country of Northern New York State. In 1849 he had saved enough to justify his entering Yale to study chemistry under Prof. J. P. Norton; from the outset he took a special interest in agricultural chemistry. Four years later (in 1853) he went to Leipzig to work under Erdmann, and then in 1854 to Munich to study under Liebig. He then came to England for a short time to study gas analysis at the Owens College, Manchester. On his return to New Haven he did a good deal of missionary work among farmers to demonstrate the enormous value of chemistry to the agriculturist, and became appointed chemist to the Connecticut State Agricultural Society in 1857. After eighteen years of work, the first agricultural experiment station in the States was founded; in the spring of 1875 the Legislature of Connecticut State passed a measure securing 700 dollars a quarter for two years for the maintenance of a laboratory placed at their disposal by the University at Middletown.

The history of these pioneer days is well told in Johnson's letters, and they make very interesting reading. The editor is to be congratulated on the way the material has been collected and arranged.

E. J. RUSSELL.

*The Cancer Problem: a Statistical Study.* By C. E. Green. Third edition. Pp. 98+plates. (Edinburgh and London: William Green and Sons, 1914.) Price 5s. net.

THIS book belongs to the all too numerous class of harmful publications on the subject of cancer. The author frankly states he is not a qualified medical man, but this fact will have little weight with the lay public. The sub-title, "A Statistical Study," conveys an entirely erroneous impression as to the scope of the book. It is in reality a plea for the infective nature of cancer, and of the active intervention of coal-smoke as an augments of the frequency of the disease. The alleged parasite is likened to the well-known *Plasmodiophora brassicae*, which causes finger and toe disease or club-root in turnips and cabbages. This vegetable parasite is not "almost unknown to pathologists," but has had its alleged claims to resemble a supposed cancer parasite discussed *ad nauseam* by pathologists and botanists of the

highest repute. The author argues that coal-smoke manures the soil for this "cancer parasite."

The error of likening cancer to finger and toe disease has been often exposed. As for statistics, none are contributed by the author. His figures state the number of deaths from cancer as a percentage of deaths from *all* causes, and he marvels that 1 in 7 is from cancer in the Strand district, but only 1 in 54 in Stepney. This statement is illuminated by photographs of the roofs of these two districts. No mention is made of Charing Cross Hospital being situated in the Strand district.

The statements as to the cure of cancer are deserving of severe condemnation. Only the harm the book may do has justified any notice being taken of it. It is with regret that the reviewer feels obliged to judge thus harshly what the perusal of the book proves has been a labour of love, carried out with the best intentions; but the pursuit of a hobby ought not to be encouraged to the public danger.

E. J. B.

*The Socialized Conscience.* By Prof. J. H. Coffin. Pp. viii+247. (Baltimore: Warwick and York, 1913.) Price 1.25 dollars.

PROF. COFFIN'S purpose in this interesting book is to suggest, using modern psychological and sociological terms, a moral criterion by means of which the different types of moral situations may be met with consistency by ordinary human beings. He applies the criterion to a great variety of questions, including personal relationships, educational agencies, the State and the Church. His chapters are stimulating and thought-impelling.

*Descriptions of Land: a Text-book for Survey Students.* By R. W. Cautley. Pp. ix+89. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913.) Price 4s. 6d. net.

ALL students of surveying in Canada before securing official recognition are required to pass an examination on "descriptions of land," which is one branch of conveyancing. Many lawyers in all countries are ignorant of the elementary principles of surveying, and few surveyors are able to understand the intricacies of a complicated title. Mr. Cautley has written on the subject in a way which should be useful, not only to students of surveying, but also to acting lawyers and surveyors everywhere.

*Elementary Commercial Geography.* By Dr. H. R. Mill. Revised by Fawcett Allen. Pp. xii+215. (Cambridge University Press, 1914.) Price 1s. 6d. net.

DR. MILL'S primer of commercial geography was published first in 1888, and is well known to all teachers of the subject. It is sufficient to say of the latest edition that it has been revised thoroughly by the aid of the latest official publications, and is enlarged by additions to part i., and by more detailed descriptions of countries which have shown recent commercial development.