

Short Reviews

Adult Education in Practice. Edited by Robert Peers. Pp. xiv + 301. (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1934.) 7s. 6d. net.

THIS book is a rather idealistic survey of the progress and practice of adult education in Great Britain. It is written by a number of heads of university extra-mural departments, all of whom have played a leading part in the national development of the movement and possess first-hand knowledge of its several aspects. As a description of the ideals, nature and activities of the movement, of the types of students involved, of the methods of teaching and of the qualities desirable or necessary in extra-mural teachers, the book is extremely interesting. It can be read with value not only by lecturers and tutors taking an active share in adult teaching but also by many academic professors, who often have little idea and less experience of adult education, and who sometimes show what can only be regarded as intolerance and a certain intellectual snobbery concerning it. Much academic teaching would be vastly improved if some of the pedagogic methods and ideals herein discussed were more widely realised.

Ideals and enthusiasm, however, are not enough, and the book would have been more valuable had it been more critical. The adult education movement has had a long and chequered career, and much progress has been made, especially since the War. The facts, however, that this progress has not been even more rapid and extensive and that many fields of knowledge, especially science, are still almost absent from the purview of the movement, suggest the existence of fundamental lacks and defects which need to be recognised and dealt with.

The last third of the book consists of various appendixes which bring together in convenient form various official regulations and prospectuses and useful lists of addresses and references concerning adult education.

W. B. B.

A Textbook of General Botany: for Colleges and Universities. By Prof. Richard M. Holman and Prof. Wilfred W. Robbins. Third edition. Pp. xv + 626. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1934.) 25s. net.

AN appendix of books for collateral reading makes this a good textbook for students reading for a general degree in the subject. The book itself is well written, with a good choice of subject matter. It is profusely illustrated, with splendid diagrams and photographs. Though written by American teachers for American students, the material for study is very general, and the types are those usually accepted for all students. A list of reference books is, of course, essential to students, but that given in this volume has a distinctly American character, which is a pity, since the book itself might be thoroughly recommended to British students, too. For a book of more than six hundred pages, with a wealth of illustrations, the price is reasonable.

Elementary Engineering Thermodynamics. By Prof. Theodore H. Taft. Pp. v + 229. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1933.) 16s. 6d. net.

THIS book deals briefly with the fundamental principles of thermodynamics and their applications to some of the more common problems in mechanical engineering. The subject matter includes work on the general properties of gases and vapours; the flow of fluids through nozzles; elementary consideration of the steam turbine and reciprocating engine; refrigeration; fuels and combustion.

Although the author has presented nothing that is new, he has certainly made clear many points not easily understood by the student beginning this subject. The diagrams provided contribute largely to the utility of the work, and several problems have been fully worked out as illustrations of some of the more important and often less-understood principles. The book can be recommended to students reading for degrees and wishing to supplement their lecture course.

Traffic and Trunking Principles in Automatic Telephony. By G. S. Berkeley. Pp. xi + 241. (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1934.) 10s. 6d. net.

THE object of this book is to bridge the gap between theory and practice. To students and engineers of telephony it can be commended. The growth of automatic telephony has been marvellously rapid, and few outside the Post Office are aware of the numerous problems that had to be satisfactorily solved before progress could be made. Questions are often set on this subject in technical examination papers, and examples with answers are given at the end of the chapters. 'Trunking' in telephony means that branch of the subject that is concerned with the provision and arrangement of the plant required to carry the traffic with a specified grade of service. In the second edition, it would be useful if the author utilised some of the theorems given in the theory of statistics to 'holding time', 'traffic flow' and 'busy hour' problems.

Logic in Practice. By Prof. L. Susan Stebbing. (Methuen's Monographs on Philosophy and Psychology.) Pp. ix + 113. (London: Methuen and Co., Ltd., 1934.) 2s. 6d. net.

THIS very able little book goes a long way to prove that logic is a human science, and not merely a more or less coherent collection of dry and irrelevant dogmas. The grounds of our beliefs, the purpose of thinking, the importance of form, and the fundamental principles of deduction and induction are analysed and explained in a way that should make their understanding easy and interesting. What adds to the value of Dr. Stebbing's book is the choice of the examples, which should make nonsense of the frequent reproach that formal logic is an idle game.

T. G.