

lariales, more than a hundred hosts are listed for *Helicobasidium purpureum* or its sterile *Rhizoctonia*-form. In the Aphyllophorales, *Corticium solani* is fully treated, but the group *Stereum* is relatively briefly dealt with, as are also many of the parasites of standing timber. Two species of *Polyporus*, *P. sulphureus* and *P. coffeae*, are described, other common polyporous species being hidden under such unfamiliar names as *Melanopus*, *Phaeolus*, *Leptoporus*, *Xanthochrous*, etc. In the Agaricales, *Armillaria mellea* is fully described. The detailed treatment given to selected parasites in the Fungi Imperfecti will be greatly welcomed by all.

A bibliography of more than five thousand titles and a double-column index of seventy-five pages are appended. The volumes (bound in most austere fashion in stiff paper, with uncut sheets) are prefaced by a note written by Prof. Roger Heim, who pays Dr. Viennot-Bourgin a well-deserved tribute for an excellent and comprehensive work, with which the reviewer agrees. S. G. JONES

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PHILOSOPHY FOR LAY FOLK

Plato's Life and Thought, with a translation of the Seventh Letter

By R. S. Bluck. Pp. 200. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1949.) 8s. 6d. net.

Philosophy for Pleasure

By Hector Hawton. Pp. x+214. (London: Watts and Co. Ltd., 1949.) 10s. 6d. net.

Foundations of Philosophy

By T. V. Fleming. Pp. x+210. (Sydney and London: Shakespeare Head Press Pty., Ltd., 1949.) 15s.

THE amateur is a little out of fashion just now; nevertheless, he is by definition a lover, and therefore presumably entitled to occupy a niche in the ever-growing edifice of philosophy. These three books differ both in the subject-matter which they present and in the method of presenting it. But it is legitimate to group them together because they all profess to be readable guides to great matters, for the benefit of the non-expert.

Mr. R. S. Bluck's little volume is the most serious and scholarly of the three; he handles the familiar theme of Plato's life with a certain indefinable freshness which will attract people and retain their attention. The atmosphere of the Academy—so far as it is possible to recapture it and to inhale its essence at this time of day—is exceptionally well portrayed, and with it the master's predilection for the study of factual truth, as achieved by the method of dialectic. The main item, however, is the translation of Plato's "Seventh Letter". The author offers this important piece of work of his own, with careful notes where he diverges appreciably from the Oxford text of Burnet. Alone among authorities, Prof. Cherniss rejects this Letter, as he does Letter 1, in company with practically all the chief commentators.

The attractive small book by Mr. Hector Hawton is quite openly an attempt to make people like philosophy, and absorb a considerable dose of historical and epistemological learning with a minimum output of tears. Indeed, the author seems to have achieved his object, well and truly. Examples are the chapters dealing with the revolt against metaphysics and the return of this discipline. There are one or two blemishes, where sweeping short statements might suggest that the writer too readily dis-

misses views he happens to dislike; but a careful reading goes some way towards maintaining confidence in the general impartiality of approach. There are several very telling remarks, for example, "Logic does not reveal new facts. Hegel thought it did..."; and this is part of a chapter giving an excellent account of the new logic, the essence of the propositional calculus, and the algebra of relations. At the end is a useful glossary, not always completely watertight, but once again encouraging to those out to enjoy themselves.

With the third book, that by Fr. T. V. Fleming, we are on rather different ground. The author, almost deliberately it would seem, gets started on the wrong foot by calling his book "Foundations of Philosophy" and yet, on his own showing, submitting a very able account of the *philosophia perennis* with just a few extracts from other systems thrown in. This unfortunate lack of balance is accentuated by the way in which the ethical issues are presented. They invite the critics to dismiss them as special pleading. In addition, the writer's habit of quoting short sentences, completely out of their context, by well-known authorities, and then saying in effect "Q.E.D.", adds to the general sense of discomfort. All this is a pity, for Fr. Fleming is obviously a very capable expositor, and much of what he discusses is of interest. A much wider view, and a much broader base, for "Foundations" are prerequisites if this manual is to command the respect one would wish it to enjoy. F. I. G. RAWLINS

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MATHEMATICS FOR ELECTRICAL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENGINEERS

Complements de mathématiques à l'usage des ingénieurs de l'électrotechnique et des télécommunications

Par Prof. André Angot. (Collection technique du C.N.E.T.) Pp. vii+660. (Paris: Éditions de la Revue d'Optique, 1949.) n.p.

AT present there is often very imperfect collaboration between the pure mathematician interested in such subjects as matrices, tensors and rigorous analysis of functions of the complex variable on one hand, and on the other the practical man who has a sort of intuitive instinct for finding out the causes of failure in radio or mechanical apparatus, but is likely to regard advanced pure mathematics as a kind of black magic.

In fact, if the mathematician and the practical man could only find a common language, there is a vast territory in which it could be used with mutual advantage. Col. André Angot's book provides both such a common language and a map of the outstanding features of the territory. The pure mathematician is shown the relevance to electrical and telecommunication technique of the abstruse processes with which he is familiar, while at the same time the practical man is shown the fundamental basis of familiar practical results. Rigour has been deliberately sacrificed in order to get within one volume information hitherto scattered in many different books and periodicals, in several languages. Nevertheless, all the subjects covered are discussed *ab initio*. Important results are stated and their sequence is indicated. Proofs are often summarized