

BOOK REVIEWS

SYNTHETISCHE METHODEN DER ORGANISCHEN CHEMIE.
W. Theilheimer. Repertorium 3. Pp. viii + 412. Basel and New York:
S. Karger, 1949. 40 Swiss Francs.

The third volume of this excellent literature summary has now appeared, and, as foreshadowed in the preface to Volume II, covers the years 1946-1947 (with a supplement to 1948) mainly from the point of view of American literature. It contains references and abstracts of 771 reactions, and the index, which covers Volumes I and II in addition, can be used adequately without reference to the classification system. As the literature of Organic Chemistry is somewhat voluminous, gaps inevitably arise in any compilation, but the reviewer was surprised that he has been unable to find any reference, either in the present volume or the previous one, to the elegant method of alkali metal—liquid ammonia—alcohol reduction introduced by A. J. Birch in 1944. Omissions, however, are few, and the general standard is excellent. Although in German, the knowledge of the language required for such abstracts is small, and as the majority of papers are of English-speaking origin there would appear, from the point of view of English-speaking users, to be little case for translating this volume. The binding and the layout is extremely good, and—a point which makes for ease of reference—each particular reaction is outlined in formulæ: a feature unhappily absent from many books.

DAVID W. MATHIESON.

THE MAMMALIAN ADRENAL GLAND, by G. H. Bourne. Pp. 214
+ Bibliography + Index and 15 special plates. Oxford University Press
(Geoffrey Cumberledge), London, 1949, 30s. 0d.

It is amazing that so much can be written about such a small part of the mammalian anatomy, but when one considers that this book contains descriptions of the adrenal glands of more than 250 species, of which more than half are described for the first time, one realises what a fine achievement this volume represents. From the rat and mouse to the whale, giraffe or elephant, the descriptions are compact and well covered. The author is an expert in histology and this aspect of the account has taken a prominent place, as has also the embryological side. The book really is a record of work done by the author while he was a research student in the University of Western Australia. The constant reminder of the dual origin of the mammalian adrenal body is given by the description of the presence of accessory adrenal tissue scattered through the body cavity of the majority of mammals. The author himself states that he has found these additional adrenal bodies with cortex and medulla in one type of Australian cat. Variability of the medulla appears to be no less than that of the cortex of different mammals. Body weight/adrenal weight ratios were not possible for all species of mammals examined, and this is certainly a disadvantage. One cannot criticise such a fine thesis in any stern manner, but the reviewer would like to make three points: (1) the historical section ends, rather abruptly, about 1941; (2) more stress should have been laid on the pioneer work of Elliott (1904-5) and also on the preparation of cortical extracts; and (3) no reference has been made to the presence of noradrenaline in the medulla. The volume will be always a masterpiece for specialised reference.

G. B. WEST.