

Book review

Inorganic Chemistry of vitamin B₁₂; by J.M. Pratt. Academic Press, London and New York, 1972, £6.00 net.

The elucidation of the structure of vitamin B₁₂ and more particularly of its so-called co-enzyme has catalysed research in many scientific disciplines. One of the areas of intensive study has been organometallic chemistry, where the implications of a naturally occurring compound containing a cobalt-carbon bond have resulted in much work on the cobalt corrinoids as well as cobalt complexes of other ligands. The title of the book limits the scope of the review to aspects of the subject which are of special interest to organometallic chemists and other aspects of considerable topical interest, such as the chemistry underlying the total synthesis of vitamin B₁₂ (even reactions involving the metal in certain of the intermediates) are barely mentioned and the extensive studies of the mode of action of the vitamin are dismissed in a very brief chapter. On the main theme, however, the coverage (up to the end of 1969 with a short appendix referring to a few more recent publications) is extensive and the literature dealt with in detail. The preliminary general section includes a section on nomenclature and in a few respects, Dr. Pratt has modified the international recommendations in the interests of clarity. The remaining sections deal with physical properties, equilibria and chemical reactions of a variety of cobalt corrinoids, areas where the author and his colleagues have made many significant contributions.

The book is clearly mainly for the organometallic specialist, is written in an easily readable style and is comprehensive up to the time of completion of the manuscript. It is recommended as a convenient guide to the extensive and often confusing literature on this fascinating group of compounds.

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