

munity. These problems are not confined to one country, and the Association of Scientific Workers welcomes the formation of a brother organization in America.

On behalf of the Association of Scientific Workers I would like to express the hope that you will receive great support from all scientific workers in America, and to wish you success in carrying out your policy.

At present the headquarters of the association is in Philadelphia, and we would be glad to receive inquiries from scientists in centers where there is not yet a local branch.

DONALD HORTON,
Corresponding Secretary

PHILADELPHIA, PA.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

CHARLES DARWIN

Charles Darwin. A Portrait. By GEOFFREY WEST. New Haven; Yale University Press. 1938. Pp. 359.

I TOOK UP this volume with a feeling of prejudice; how could such an author, even after some years of diligent compilation, be in a position to appreciate Darwin's scientific work? Turning over some of the pages I found passages which confirmed my fears, and debated with myself whether to return the book to the editor unreviewed. Nevertheless, when I settled down to read the book page by page I had to admit that the recorded facts concerning Darwin had been collected with the utmost diligence, arranged with great care and set forth in a manner which made the book easy and profitable to read. With a reasonable amount of revision or expurgation, which I presume the author would not permit, the book might be described as a very satisfactory and illuminating biography. One can easily imagine the other side of the argument. It might well appear that after all a scientific worker who has grown up and lived in the Darwinian tradition was himself incapacitated for forming an impartial judgment. Morley, in writing the life of Gladstone, said that people would probably accuse him of partiality. He said that he would be sorry to be thought lacking in this quality; and one who is indebted to Darwin's influence in so many ways that it has formed a kind of atmosphere in which he has lived, cannot regard the matter with cold objectivity, or even wish to do so. It must be said of Mr. West, that throughout he regards his hero with respect and even affection, and shows little of the cheap cynicism which afflicts many biographers. He discusses the various personal and scientific matters, as they come up, with a lucidity which I fear few professional scientific workers could attain, and no one can read all this without profit. The available record as it stands probably does not do justice to the maturity of Darwin's mind when he sailed on the "Beagle." Having visited regions in South America which he described, I have been amazed at the accuracy and sagacity of his observations. I do not know who, to-day, could take such a comprehensive and understanding view of nature in a remote country visited

for the first time. So again, his one important contribution to taxonomy, his monograph of the living and fossil barnacles, has stood the test of time as few such works have. This is the testimony of Pilsbry, the principal living authority on these animals. West's final chapter is headed "The Fragmentary Man," and he reaches the conclusion that "Darwin was incomplete and Darwinism accordingly inadequate as a philosophy by which men may live." I should put it differently. Darwinism is dynamic, and is not to be thought of as the basis of a static philosophy, nor does it pretend to deal with all aspects of reality. Since Darwin's time many important discoveries have been made, and were he living to-day, he would be the first to take account of them. The artist completes a work, and no one dares tamper with it; the scientific man, in contrast, is always on the road, never at the journey's end. In that sense all scientific work is fragmentary and incomplete, but this should not imply reproach. Considering his physical disabilities, and the limits of even the greatest human mind, Darwin was marvelous in his power of comprehending the larger aspects of nature, and the details of many matters. If he neglected subjects which we deem important we have no more right to complain than we should in the case of a noted pianist who did not play the flute.

The cry "back to Darwin" may have vitality to-day, as an encouragement to broader training and wider views, rather than the narrow specialization which is fostered by our educational methods. In this case, in spite of Mr. West's conception of Darwin as a "fragmentary man," I believe that his book will teach a different lesson, and may be read with profit as a stimulus to constructive thought and work.

T. D. A. COCKERELL

CONVERGENCE

A Text-book of Convergence. By W. L. FERRAR. Oxford University Press, 1938. viii + 192 pp. Price, \$3.50.

As the title indicates, this book is a *text* on the theory of series. In the opinion of the reviewer it is clearly and carefully written, in a pleasant style, with good (albeit conventional) choice of material.

The subject-matter includes preliminary definitions