

avoiding a tendency to over-abstraction which is apt to show itself in this type of work. The way the material is arranged also tends to emphasize the geometry—as each new principle is developed its use is illustrated by one or more applications to geometric problems, and in most cases some additional exercises are provided for the reader.

In his preface the author states that the book was written to provide the reader with the background necessary for the study of the deeper parts of algebraic geometry, especially the theory of surfaces. This requirement is perhaps a little vague, as the word “deep” may mean different things to different people, but by almost any criterion it may be said to have been well carried out. As noted above, the book contains a minimum of algebraic complications, and it certainly gives a good account of the basic notions of the subject. There are a few additional topics which the reviewer would have liked to see discussed, particularly the algebraic function field associated with an irreducible variety and its invariance under birational transformations. This is closely related to the notion of a general point and could easily have been introduced in Chapter 4. However, this is merely a detail; on the whole, we believe that the author has made a very good selection of the material at hand.

Technically the book lives up to the high standard we have been led to expect of its author and publisher. A few misprints and incorrect statements were noticed, but these are all of a trivial nature and can easily be detected and corrected by any conscientious reader. Probably the most serious defect is the lack of an index; this is particularly to be deplored in a book which is to serve as an introduction to a relatively unfamiliar branch of mathematics.

We recommend this book to the attention of every mathematician who is interested in either algebra or geometry, and particularly to those who believe that algebraic geometry is still a backward and unrigorous branch of mathematics. They will find here a clear, systematic exposition of an important new mathematical development, one which will undoubtedly have great influence in enlarging the interest in this fascinating field.

R. J. WALKER

*The Decline of Mechanism in Modern Physics.* By A. d'Abro. New York, Van Nostrand, 1939. 10+982 pp.

The author of this book is already known as a successful popular writer on science (cf. this Bulletin, vol. 34 (1928), p. 789, for review by T. C. Benton of *The Evolution of Scientific Thought from Newton to Einstein*, Boni and Liveright, 1927).