

suites as a name for this important fact, whose defining properties are clear and accessible.

Finally, three considerations counsel against the attempt to limit the meaning of masking to a central phenomenon: (1) The term is too widely current to allow such arbitrary restriction to gain acceptance. (2) In most cases of observed masking in the various sense departments we are still ignorant of the physiological mechanisms underlying the phenomenon. (3) In some cases (as in audition) masking has both peripheral³ and central causes, and it is quite possible that occurrences at intervening synaptic junctions provide additional causal factors.

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A COMPREHENSIVE MORPHOLOGY OF SPHENODON

A SMALL group of New Zealand morphologists, headed by Dr. W. P. Gowland, of the anatomy de-

partment of the University of Otago, Dunedin, has undertaken the laudable project of completing, as far as possible, our knowledge of the morphology of Sphenodon.

Interest in this important reptile, now facing rapid extinction, has been so widespread that no one individual is in convenient position to collate the scattered literature and decide, single-handed, what needs most to be done in further research upon this form.

Dr. Gowland will therefore welcome suggestions from zoologists who are better aware of lacunae in their special anatomical and histological fields which investigations on this "living fossil" may fill. It is expected that the necessary specimens will be obtainable through the New Zealand government, which for some time has exercised a rigid protection of the species in an attempt, now apparently vain, to preserve it.

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SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

BIOCHEMISTRY

A Text-Book of Biochemistry. Edited by BENJAMIN HARROW and CARL P. SHERWIN. Published by W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1935; 797 pages.

ADVANCED students of biochemistry will welcome this volume. It marks a new departure from the conventional form of text-book in this branch of science in that thirty authors, English and American, have collaborated in its production. Monographic in style, each chapter is a comprehensive review by an investigator actively contributing to the field which he is discussing. The presentation of biochemistry from so many different angles and the emphasis on recent developments is most stimulating to the research worker and graduate student. It is a type of text which may prove less adaptable to the needs of the unoriented beginner, since it does not show the unified development of the science as a whole nor the historical background of the earlier books. The range of subjects is sufficiently broad to permit a selection of suitable material for the usual medical school course which follows no single text.

One is impressed throughout the book with the broad growth and rapid assimilation in the past few years of chemical knowledge in the various biological fields. Three new subjects are introduced in the form of chapters on the living cell, on the biochemistry of bacteria, yeasts and molds, and on immunochemistry. About one third of the volume is devoted to a full

description of the organic and physical chemistry of the carbohydrates, fats and nitrogenous compounds, and the balance to their functions and metabolism in the body. The importance of the recently established structural formulae and of new synthetic compounds is well stressed in the chapters on the sterols and related compounds, the vitamins, the animal pigments and the hormones. Although some of the sections seem to be too short to allow an adequate discussion of the material, notably those on nutrition, digestion, mineral metabolism, bone and functions of water, some of the longer chapters, such as the vitamins and carbohydrate metabolism, deserve mention for their clarity and completeness. In most cases the argument is well fortified by citations of original publications, and the bibliography of some 1,500 articles assures its place as a reference book.

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SEED SCIENCE

Seed Science for Japanese Agriculturists, Horticulturists, and Foresters. By MANTARŌ KONDŌ, director of the Ōhara Institute, Kurashiki, Japan. Yōkendō and Co., Tokyo. Vol. I, 1933, 469 pp., 43 illustrations. Yen 4.80. Vol. II, 1934, 835 pp., 358 illustrations. Yen 9.00.

It may seem presumptuous for one who is ignorant of the significance of a single ideograph to attempt a review of a work in the Japanese language, but the

³ H. Davis, *Jour. Acoust. Soc. Amer.*, 6: 207, 1935.