QUOTATIONS

"NATURE" AND THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

THE idea of a weekly journal of science began in 1868 with discussions between Sir Norman Lockyer, the astronomer and spectroscopist, and his friends, among whom were Alexander Macmillan. Lockyer was assured of the support of T. H. Huxley, Tyndall and practically all the other leading workers in science of the time. Alexander Macmillan enlisted the support of Sir Joseph Hooker and other of his scientific friends; but much of the initial success was due to Alexander Macmillan himself, of whom Sir Norman Lockyer once wrote:

> It was in consequence of his sympathy and enthusiastic assistance that the journal started. He was unwavering in his support of the belief that British science would be advanced by a periodical devoted to its interest. . . . It was the hope that a more favorable condition for the advancement of science might be thereby secured that led Mr. Alexander Macmillan to enter warmly into the establishment of *Nature* in 1869.

In this connection we might quote part of a letter written by Alexander Macmillan to Sir William Thomson (afterwards Lord Kelvin):

> Lockyer is going to start a weekly Journal of Science, which we are to publish. It is meant to be popular in part, but also sound, and part devoted specifically to scientific men and their intercourse with each other. Huxley, Balfour Stewart, Wilkinson, Tyndall, Roscoe and almost every one who is about London have given him their names, and he very greatly wishes yours, as among those who promise support. May I tell him you consent?

The launching of *Nature* is chronicled in a letter to the Glasgow bookseller, MacLehose, written on November 3, 1869:

> *Nature* is to be published on Thursday in London at 2.30. . . . Lockyer was peremptory that our publication day should indicate the point to which our information is brought up. The fallacy of a Saturday publication with a Thursday actual information he does not think right. . . . We start with 18 pp. of advertisements. . . . I think it will look nice.

In the complete context of this letter it is worth noting that Sir Norman Lockyer had an absolutely free hand in reviewing books published by the firm of Macmillan itself, and never hesitated to criticize them adversely if he thought they deserved it. This absolute and complete freedom of policy has been extended to the editors of *Nature* from that day to this.

In 1919, Sir Richard Gregory succeeded Sir Norman Lockyer in the editorial chair of *Nature*. During his long period of editorship the journal made considerable progress, and its influence in the world of science has gradually become stronger and more secure. To-day it is the leading journal of science. In 1938, Sir Richard Gregory was succeeded jointly by A. J. V. Gale and L. J. F. Brimble. The extent to which *Nature* has now grown, not only in scientific but also sociological influence, must be left to the opinion of its readers.

One thing, however, we think that readers of *Nature* should know is the great debt which they owe to the publishers. *Nature* was initially launched and is still being published almost solely for the advancement of science, in spite of the fact that it is privately owned by a business firm. The present editors feel impelled to put on record their gratitude to the present directors of the House of Macmillan for the entirely free hand given them in guiding the policy of *Nature* and in deciding what shall and what shall not be published. To-day, as much as ever, if *Nature* feels that in the interests of science and culture, any book, whether published by Macmillans or not, should receive adverse criticism, then it gets it. If *Nature* desires to follow a certain policy where science is concerned, whether it be against or in support of other authorities, even the Government, then her policy is pursued relentlessly, yet, we hope, with tolerance. The directors never interfere with policy. Rather do they encourage the journal in all manner of ways, some of which have not received the recognition in the past that they deserved. In fact, it is quite possible that had the former directors not been prepared in the interests of scientific development to publish *Nature* for several decades at a financial loss, *Nature,* as we now know it, might not be in existence.

To-day, financial problems do not exist, and the considerable help given during the present very difficult times (especially of paper shortage and other exigencies of war) by the directors and their staffs certainly relieve the present editors of a considerable amount of care, and thus contribute in no small way towards the advancement of science in general and the success of *Nature* in particular.—*Nature.*

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

ZOOLOGY

Osteology and Myology of the California River Otter. By EDNA M. FISCHER. Stanford University Press. 1942. 66 pp. 37 figures. $1.50.

Here is a brief description of this animal in preparation for a comparative study of the sea otter. It is an offset publication and excellently done.

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker. Research Report Num-

ber 1 of the National Audubon Society, New York. 111 pp. 20 plates. 22 figures. 1942. $2.50.

We find here an interesting account of the ecology and natural history of a bird threatened with extinction. It is by a graduate student and represents an effort to devise means for the preservation of the species. It is very full and detailed and ends with a series of recommendations to improve the conditions under which the bird will have to live.

The Oceanic Tintinnoina of the Plankton Gathered during the Last Cruise of the Carnegie. By ARTHUR SHAKLETON CAMPBELL. Carnegie Institution of Washington Publication 537. 163 pp. 128 figures. 1942. $1.50.

This is an extended account of a group of ciliate Protozoa, including discussions of 13 subfamilies, 44 genera and 311 species. Of these there are 3 new subfamilies, 2 new genera and 14 new species. They were collected at 160 stations on the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. Four general regions are recognized.

The Heterodontid Sharks: Their Natural History and the External Development of Heterodontis japonicus Based on Notes and Drawings by Bashford Dean. By BERTRAM G. SMITH. The Bashford Dean Memorial Volume Archaic Fishes. New York. 649–770 pp. 7 plates. 70 text figures. 1942. $5.00.

In this volume is found some of the results reached by Dean in his studies of these fish. There is first a comparison of the various species, followed by an account of habits and development. Only a small part of the work is by Dean. The drawings are attributed to him, although it is stated that some of them were done by Yatsu. While it is evidently desirable to retain Dean's connection with this work it is perhaps unfortunate that the material could not be treated unreservedly. Still, it is a useful piece of work well presented, and it is only to be regretted that Dean's original idea of comparison could not be fully carried out.

The Copepods of the Plankton Gathered during the Last Cruise of the Carnegie. By CHARLES B. WILSON. Carnegie Institution of Washington Publication 536. 237 pp. 1942. $2.50.

There are given here the results of an extensive series of collections, made at three levels of the ocean and at 162 stations. A long line of species is studied in their relation to temperature, salinity, hydrogen ion concentration and light. There is first listed the species at each individual station, followed by a detailed consideration of each species. From these we learn that the Pacific plankton is much the richer. Also that in distribution there is horizontally no uniformity and that vertically the species are stratified. According to temperature the concentration was greater at the lower, cooler levels. Salinity and hydrogen ion concentration have little effect on distribution of animals. On the other hand light is a direct cause of vertical stratification.

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CHEMICAL AND PHARMACEUTICAL COMPOUNDS

Preparacion de Productos Quimicos y Quimico-Farmaceuticos. By C. A. ROJAHN and F. GIRAL. 2 volumes. 1002 pp. Published by Editorial Atlante, Mexico, D. F., Mexico.

DR. C. A. ROJAHN, director of the School of Pharmacy and of the Institute of Food Chemistry in the University of Halle, had published in German reviews of pharmacy and pharmaceutical chemistry for some years a series of articles on the preparation of chemical and pharmaceutical compounds. These articles were completed and published in book form in 1937. Dr. F. Giral, a young Spanish professor of organic chemistry, now residing in Mexico, has translated the original German book into Spanish and increased its value by adding to it 120 compounds, among which are some war gases, lead tetraethylate, sulfanilamide and prontosil, ergosterine, nicotinic acid and digitoxin. The book describes the preparation of 718 compounds, of which 217 are inorganic and 501 organic. It includes the most important industrial and pharmaceutical chemicals and among them the most important aliphatic, aromatic, hydroaromatic, heterocyclic compounds, dyes, alkaloids and glycosides. The author gives for each compound the following details: formula and molecular weight, raw materials and equipment necessary for its preparation, method, chemical reactions involved, yield, properties, assay and bibliography. The methods of preparation are described in such a way that they can be very easily followed by the student. The style is certainly not meant for the highly specialized chemist.

The book is essentially practical and will be found useful by students of chemistry and pharmaceutical chemistry and by the pharmaceutical concerns of the Latin American countries.

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