Book Reviews

Fundamentals of earth science. Henry Dewey Thompson. New York-London: D. Appleton-Century, 1947. Pp. xiii + 461. (Illustrated.) $3.75.

In the preface it is stated that the book is written with a twofold purpose. The first objective, according to the author is "to present a well-balanced, one semester survey of earth science which will give the college student who takes only one course a rather complete elementary picture of the earth." The second objective is "to provide a basic text for beginning students in either geology or geography." Dr. Thompson has achieved both purposes admirably.

The student who does not go on for additional work in these fields will benefit culturally by acquiring an intelligent appreciation of scenery and a knowledge of the physical environment in which he lives. The student who desires to dig deeper into geology and geography has a good foundation upon which to build.

The author of any survey text is faced with the problem of how much material he can include and still keep the volume to a size that can be covered in one semester of study. The material covered is extensive, carefully selected, and includes all branches of earth science. About 25 pages are devoted to historical geology. Generally, the material is presented with thoroughness. In the opinion of the reviewer, however, the role of chemical weathering in semiarid and arid regions does not receive enough emphasis, and the part played by chemical weathering in *exfoliation* should be mentioned. For teaching purposes it would be of greater service if the cloud families were included.

Although the reproduction of several of the illustrations is not very clear, the book is amply illustrated and the author is to be commended for his explanation and use of aerial photographs. The choice of words, the clarity, and the ease with which the book can be read are outstanding features.

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Quantitative clinical chemistry: interpretations. (Vol. I.) (2nd ed.) John P. Peters and Donald D. Van Slyke. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1946. Pp. vii + 1041. (Illustrated.) $7.00.

The first edition of this text by these two outstanding authorities in the fields of clinical chemistry and clinical medicine quickly gained recognition as the authoritative work in this field. The chemical and physiological facts and their interpretation in disease were presented on the basis of an exhaustive review of the literature, with citation of references. In the 15 years which have elapsed since the first edition so many advances have been made that the authors felt it necessary to rewrite, not re-edit, the first edition.

In Volume I of this second edition the material presented in the first half of the original volume on interpretations has been reclassified and expanded to about double the original size. The new Volume I consists of four parts, Energy Metabolism Carbohydrates, Lipids, and Protein Metabolism, presented in 13 chapters. Two of the chapters under lipids are new, viz., steroid hormones and fat-soluble vitamins.

The authors have done an excellent job of reviewing the enormous literature (4,600 references) and presenting the pertinent facts in logical order. Furthermore, the style is such that the experimental data covering the important observations are connected to make easy and stimulating reading. The material has been presented critically on the basis of the authors' intimate and expert knowledge of the field. If the reader should disagree with interpretations or desire fuller information, the unusually complete bibliography will enable him to consult the original papers. The text is unusually free from typographical and other errors. It should be available to all students and teachers of biochemistry and is an essential reference book for clinical chemists and up-to-date internists and pediatricians.

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Essentials of endocrinology. (2nd ed.) Arthur Grollman. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1947. Pp. xxiii + 644. (Illustrated.) $10.00.

The decline of interest in endocrine research caused by the late war would seem to create a propitious moment for the crystallization of available information in the form of a book such as that being reviewed. However, the wide ramifications of endocrinology and the many fields of basic science which it involves make the writing of such a book by a single individual a tremendous task indeed.

In this attempt, the anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, and pathology of the ductless glands are discussed as well as endocrine diseases and their treatment. The application of the findings of basic endocrine research to clinical medicine is viewed with a refreshing conservatism. Portions dealing with clinical problems and pathology are well illustrated. Less can be said for some of the illustrative material dealing with the anatomy of the glands. Inaccurate or illogical statements, although occasionally found, seem to be remarkably few in number. Generalizations drawn from scattered research findings in such an immature field are certain to find ready opposition. This is true of many of the author's statements. If intended for use as a text, reorganization of some of the material to give greater conciseness of presentation would be desirable.

This book is the best of its kind available. Whatever major criticism might be raised against it would arise largely from the problems faced by any one individual who seeks to master all phases of endocrinology so that he may acquire sufficient background to authoritatively select and present information with the proper perspective.

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