

A SERIOUS omission in Dr. Bates' article on "The Criticism of Scientific Books" (SCIENCE, 115, 407 [1952]) is the important contribution of libraries to the publicizing of books.

Although approving Dr. Bates' suggestion that a journal such as SCIENCE should develop its book reviewing department to a greater extent, I feel that a better answer to the problem of keeping informed of new publications in science and other fields of knowledge is by continued use of the library. One visit by a general or specialized reader to a progressive public, university, or special library will convince him that libraries are no longer keepers of books, but rather promoters of books. Such a visit will very likely provide the book itself, many reviews of the book, and other material on the same subject.

I believe, also, that Dr. Bates is overly harsh in his opinion of the quality of book reviews. At least one

exception to his statement that "all books on science get about the same treatment . . ." is the title *The Atom at Work*, by Jacob Sacks. This volume was selected by R. R. Hawkins, head, Science and Technology Department, New York Public Library, as one of the 100 essential technical books of 1950-51 (*Library J.*, 76, 811 [1951]).

Nine reviews of this book were written by science librarians, scientists, and a science editor, as well as an unsigned review appearing in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Certainly this is excellent coverage of a good book by a variety of qualified reviewers. Not one of the nine reviews mentioned "faulty documentation," "misprints," or "howlers." One review mentioned the index—not as "inadequate" but as "good."

JOHN P. BINNINGTON

Research Library, Brookhaven National Laboratory
Upton, New York



Book Reviews

King Solomon's Ring: New Light on Animal Ways.

Konrad Z. Lorenz; trans. from the German by Marjorie Kerr Wilson. New York: Crowell, 1952. 202 pp. \$3.50.

Only rarely does one encounter a book such as this. Konrad Lorenz is one of the world's outstanding naturalists, and here we have evidence that he is also an excellent narrator. Other men have learned to know certain species of animals as well as Lorenz knows his jackdaws, graylag geese, or ravens—you can find their reports in various technical journals—but the fact that Lorenz is a missionary of natural history sets him apart. He likes animals for what they are and he candidly states that this book is aimed at leading others to learn to like them.

With infinite patience, Lorenz has "kept" colonies of free-flying birds, an aquarium housing water shrews, and numerous other animals. His observations have been keen, and his descriptions comprehensive. He has successfully resisted the many temptations to anthropomorphize and yet he makes the reader aware of the mental and physical individuality of his subjects. After reading the chapter recording his 25 years with "The Perennial Retainers"—his jackdaws—you feel that you know them, as individuals and as a species.

There are times when Dr. Lorenz seems to generalize somewhat more than he should. His dismissal of the golden eagle as an "extremely stupid" creature, apparently on the basis of a single imperial eagle which he bought from a wandering menagerie, seems overly harsh. Certainly he demonstrates individual differences among other groups that he studied. These are but minor lapses, however.

In a way, this is a book of instruction. Dr. Lorenz lectures us, subtly, on morals, on pity, on laughter, all

with animals as examples. His chapters on "Animals as a Nuisance," "Poor Fish," "Laughing at Animals," "Pitying Animals," and "Buying Animals" are all directed toward improving our relations with animals and, indirectly, with our fellow-men.

The title, based on the charming bit of folklore which supposed that Solomon talked to the animals, may result in some loss of readership, since it is rather abstruse. On the other hand, it may gain converts, since this is a book that, once picked up, is difficult to put down.

Julian Huxley's foreword is excellent, as might be expected. Marjorie Kerr Wilson's translation is smooth and unobtrusive. The illustrative sketches, which apparently are the author's, are both amusing and enlightening. I recommend the book to everyone.

D. M. HATFIELD

2614 Etna Street, Berkeley, California

Miscellaneous Physical and Chemical Techniques of the Los Alamos Project: Experimental Techniques. Alvin C. Graves and Darol K. Froman, Eds. New York-London: McGraw-Hill, 1952. 323 pp. \$4.00.

The third volume from Division 5 (Los Alamos) in the National Nuclear Energy series is a collection of miscellaneous physical and chemical techniques used in the early phases of the atomic energy project and originally collected as a laboratory manual for new personnel on the project. It was written by a group of 18 authors. The contents should be of especial interest to those working in nuclear physics with high energy machines: cyclotrons, van de Graaf generators, etc.

To give an idea of the scope of the book it is necessary to outline the contents of the six chapters. The