normal auricles. They conclude that contraction does begin in the region of the sino-auricular node about midway between the cephalic and caudal ends, that there are no special inter- or intra-auricular conduction pathways, and that the inter-auricular septum is an integral part of the auricles. They offer evidence to confirm the view that the contraction wave spreads in a fashion that reaches points equidistant from the site of origin at the same time and that it dies out when it can travel no further.

Experiments are then described from which they conclude that extrasystoles and paroxysmal tachycardia arise from a single ectopic focus, and that the contraction wave spreads in the same fashion as it does in normal sinus rhythm. The same arrhythmias are studied in man, and the authors decide that they do not differ from the experimentally induced arrhythmias in dogs. The argument is then carried to auricular flutter and fibrillation, and from their experimental evidence and studies in man they conclude that these arrhythmias also arise from a single ectopic focus and that a "circus movement" is not present.

The pharmacology of quinidine and digitalis and the treatment of the various auricular arrhythmias are discussed. The final chapter brings together the authors' evidence as to the unitary nature of the auricular arrhythmias.

The book is well put together, and the illustrations are both profuse and excellent. It presents an important conception of the nature of the auricular arrhythmias, and the evidence adduced in its favor is indeed weighty. Cardiologists should be familiar with the authors' views from previous publications. This book brings them together in a single volume which is worth while to physicians in general because of its clinical features, and because of the clarity and logical development of the views presented. The evidence presented certainly reopens the question as to the existence of circus movements in auricular flutter and fibrillation. At the moment, the book would have lost nothing had the discussion of the Wolff-Parkinson-White syndrome been omitted.

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The Ocean River: The Story of the Gulf Stream. Henry Chapin and F. G. Walton Smith. New York: Scribner's, 1952. 325 pp. Illus. $3.50.

It has been difficult for this reviewer to keep clearly in mind just what authors Chapin and Smith mean by the Ocean River. At times they appear to mean what oceanographers call the Gulf Stream system—that narrow, intense ocean current extending from the Straits of Florida into the North Atlantic east of the Grand Banks. At other times the entire North Atlantic Ocean is included, and the reader unexpectedly finds himself in the Caribbean or the North Sea. Indeed, there is a great deal of rambling in this book, and unfortunately most of it is only incidental to the Gulf Stream.

The first three chapters are a sketchy summary of historical geology. The entire fourth chapter is an account of the myth of Atlantis, partly drawn from the writings of Ignatius Donnelly, a pre-Velikovsky congressman from Minnesota, who, suffering from intellectual indigestion in the Library of Congress, wrote voluminously on other startling subjects, such as the Baconian controversy. All this, of course, has nothing to do with the Gulf Stream.

Chapters five and six bring us from the Phoenicians, through Leif Ericson, to the Franklin chart of 1770.

It is only in the last half of chapter seven that the reader will find several pages (140–47) that give any account of the results of the past 20 years of scientific work on the physical oceanography of the Gulf Stream. The scientific reader will be disappointed to find that there are no figures showing the thermal structure across the stream, that there are no velocity profiles, that there is no discussion of the water masses involved. It is this exceptionally scanty and superficial treatment of the modern knowledge of the structure of the Gulf Stream that detracts so much from the value of the book to a scientific reader. There are many exciting and intensely interesting problems concerning the Gulf Stream being uncovered today. For example, we are just beginning to make measurements of velocity as a function of depth in the parts of the stream in deep water; we are just now beginning to formulate dynamical laws for the current and its meanders; and we are in the progress of developing new strategies of exploration. But none of these things finds a place in *The Ocean River.*

Chapter eight deals with winds; chapter nine with fishes. The remaining five chapters are concerned with Spanish conquistadors, pirates, New England merchant trade, the Banks cod fisheries, etc., ending with a sociological essay on the Atlantic and Western man.

It is the unreserved opinion of this reviewer that *The Ocean River* is too diffusely written to be of any interest to the scientific reader. It is a pity that someone does not translate into English a really good book on the Atlantic Ocean: Gerhard Schott's *Geographie des Atlantischen Ozeans.*

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Scientific Book Register

Food Science: A Symposium on Quality & Preservation of Foods. E. C. Bate-Smith and T. N. Morris, Eds. New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1952. 319 pp. Illus. $8.00.

Synthetic Methods of Organic Chemistry: An Annual Survey, Vol. 6. W. Theilheimer. Basel: S. Karger, 1952; U. S. distrib., Interscience, New York. 401 pp. $12.90.

The Origin and History of the British Fauna. Bryan P. Beirne. London: Methuen, 1952. 164 pp. Illus. 18s.

Functional Endocrinology from Birth through Adolescence. Nathan B. Talbot *et al.* Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1952. (Published for the Commonwealth Fund.) 638 pp. $10.00.