The Language of Taxonomy. An application of symbolic logic to the study of classificatory systems. John R. Gregg. Columbia Univ. Press, New York, 1954. ix + 70 pp. Illus. $2.50.

Taxonomy is the study of kinds of organisms. One of the procedures used in dealing with kinds is classification. Recent advances in genetics and the rise of the science of ecology have resulted in a current interest in taxonomy on a much broader plane than was historically the case. With this increased interest has come a series of new difficulties caused by the use of certain words of inexact meaning or varying implication. Attempts at definition have not clarified the situation; indeed, in some cases they have further confused it.

John Gregg's book is an attempt to develop a language for use in metataxonomy—the study of statements about taxonomy—by introducing the concepts of set-theory, which is one of the symbolic methods of formal logic. These concepts seem suited to the study of classifications, where they can emphasize the distinctions between kinds, classes of kinds, and categories of classes. Failure to distinguish these has been the cause of much semantic difficulty, with resultant confusion of thinking.

In order to show the application of set-theory to metataxonomy, Gregg has developed the appropriate set-theory concepts in the early chapters. Thus, an interested student will find the book self sufficient although highly technical. It concludes with the presentation of a problem for further study—the complications introduced by category overlapping (class A includes only one order, b, and therefore A and b are identical groups and the categories are overlapping). This difficulty appears to be a result of certain short cuts commonly used in writing down classifications. If it can be shown that the difficulty is not real, then further development of this language will be facilitated, and solution of some of the practical problems of taxonomic language may be undertaken.

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Recent Progress in Hormone Research. vol. X. Proceedings of the Laurentian Hormone Conference. Gregory Pincus, Ed. Academic Press, New York, 1954. 511 pp. Illus. $9.80.

This volume contains the proceedings of the tenth annual meeting of the Laurentian Hormone Conference, which took place in September 1953, at Mont Tremblant, Quebec. Six major topics are reviewed, namely: (i) nervous system, hormone interrelationships (R. W. Porter, H. Hoagland, D. M. Woodbury); (ii) thyroid hormone physiology and biochemistry (J. Gross, R. Pitt-Rivers, H. A. Lardy, G. F. Maley); (iii) comparative endocrinology (D. Bodenstein, E. Scharrer, B. Scharrer); (iv) protein hormones (R. G. Romans, E. E. Hays, W. F. White); (v) the role of hormones in blood and blood-forming organs (H. S. Kaplan, C. S. Nagareda, M. B. Brown, A. S. Gordon); (vi) aspects of clinical endocrinology (B. Zondek, R. Luft, B. Sjögren, D. Ikkos, H. Ljunggren, H. Tarukoski, J. W. Conn, S. S. Fajans, L. H. Louis, H. S. Seltzer, H. D. Kaine).

Endocrinologists throughout the world are particularly indebted to Gregory Pincus for the thoughtful preparation, both of the conferences themselves and of the printed proceedings, which make the former more generally available. It is a particularly attractive feature of these proceedings that they contain not only the formal papers (presented by the authors listed here) but also transcripts of the informal discussions made by various other participants following each presentation.

It would, of course, be impossible to give anything like a summary of such a complex symposium, but since all the speakers are eminently competent authorities in their respective fields, there can be no doubt about the value of this volume. The type, illustrations, and binding are excellent, and the book is supplied with carefully prepared indexes of authors and subjects.

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Traité de Génétique. Ph. L'Héritier, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1954. *Le mécanisme de l'Hérédité. Génétique formelle,* Tome I, 343 pp. Illus. F. 1500; *La Génétique des Populations,* Tome II, 173 pp. Illus. F. 900.

The publication of a new textbook of genetics in the French language is a matter of more than ordinary interest, since, in the opinion of many who are in a good position to judge, the lack of adequate textbooks has been a real handicap to the teaching of genetics in France. L'Héritier's *Traité de Génétique* will undoubtedly go a long way toward filling this vacuum and will give welcome support to the general awakening of interest in genetics that has been evident in France since the war.

Traité de Génétique is projected in three volumes of which two have now been published. The third volume, dealing with physiological genetics, is in preparation. Volume I is concerned with the formal aspects of chromosomal inheritance. It is an exposition of classical genetics that is almost unique in its purity of approach. The author's aim, judging from the result, is to present the principles of genetics and the evidence on which they are based in their most logical and economical form. We find no chapters on derivative aspects of genetics, such as medicolegal applications, clinical heredity, sociologic implications, and similar topics that have been found useful in bolstering up the sagging attention of premedical students. The examples, chosen for their soundness as evidence, rather than on the basis of their exotic value, are drawn almost entirely from the literature of the well-studied genetic organisms, especially *Drosophila.* In