Book Reviews

Evolution: the Ages and Tomorrow. G. Murray McKinley. Ronald Press, New York, 1956. 275 pp. $4.

To generalize from one's professional experience holds a fascination for reflective men. In recent years, biologically grounded philosophies or philosophically grounded biologies have been written by many men, including Maritain and Bertalanffy, whose viewpoints are rather orthodox; Simpson and Haldane, whose viewpoints are materialistic; and Sinnott, who has followed a *via media.* G. Murray McKinley has now attempted to explore the philosophical consequences of evolution.

Chapters 1–6 summarize the mechanics of evolution and its historical course; chapters 7–12 are concerned with comparative psychology and sociology; and chapters 13–17 explore specific evolutionary-biological-sociological problems confronting man, and the entire thesis of the book is here summed up.

In brief, McKinley's thesis is "that very definitely there is purpose in the universe . . . there is but one over-all trend and direction to all phenomena—that of the eternal striving of cosmic energy toward greater conscious understanding." However, *purpose,* as here used, is not Divine purpose; it is simply a basic property of "mind-matter-energy." ". . . the carbon atom . . . is capable of forming exceedingly complex substances . . . we are assigning purpose to this atom when we review its behavior. . . ." Perhaps so, but this does so much violence to the usual definition that one wonders whether a construct based upon it can be other than misleading.

Biological data are presented so scantily and inaccurately that they are uninstructive to biologists and uninterpretable to others. The entire phylogenetic record, both plant and animal, is summarized in 12 pages—little wonder that it is superficial. On page 49, we are told that "Man is a worm with accessories," while on page 50 the author concedes that the echinoderm theory of chordate origin is better founded. Population geneticists will be surprised to learn on page 42 that "Very small populations endanger the organism . . . due to the purely random nature of the mutant changes . . . ," while ". . . a group must be large enough to show gene drift by differential reproduction."

Those who are already in agreement with McKinley will find his book an interesting confirmation of their views, although they may be irritated by the numerous errors and logical gaps. Those who disagree with him are unlikely to be convinced.

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Dermatology. Donald M. Pillsbury, Walter B. Shelley, and Albert M. Kligman. Saunders, Philadelphia, 1956. 1331 pp. Illus. $20.

This first edition is a cooperative appraisal of knowledge in the field of cutaneous medicine by members of one of the outstanding university departments of dermatology. Inasmuch as I was an undergraduate medical student in the University of Pennsylvania and later received my graduate training in the specialty at the Graduate School of Medicine of the same university, I am one of many who have been looking forward to this crystallization of the experience of the department of dermatology of that institution.

The first of the five general sections of the book covers fundamental principles in diseases of the skin; it is unusually well done and in itself makes the purchase of the volume a worth-while investment. The section is composed of a series of 13 superbly summarized essays on the basic sciences pertaining to dermatology. Of these, the chapters on keratinization, hair, skin glands, corium and subcutaneous tissue, and the fundamentals of cutaneous mycology and microbiology are outstanding.

The chapter on hereditary skin disorders begins with a useful 13-page outline of the fundamentals of inheritance. Equally worth while is the chapter on psychosomatic skin diseases, or psychocutaneous medicine—an important and difficult portion of the specialty.

The chapter on industrial dermatoses, a field in which I devoted full time to research and investigation before the onset of World War II, is well written. It has been kept within space limitations by restricting it to a discussion of sources and a review of the industries in which occupational skin diseases most often occur.

Throughout the book, the authors have questioned the extent to which many widely held tenets of dermatology are sustained by experimental evidence; they have made a definite effort to weigh and evaluate the accumulated literature and to reach a decision on the validity of the often loosely reasoned acceptance of causal relationships in affairs of the skin.

In view of the meager time allotted to dermatology in the curriculums of most medical schools, Pillsbury, Shelley, and Kligman have wisely devoted more emphasis to their presentation of the basic science aspects of cutaneous medicine, although clinical detail has not been slighted. For this reason, the volume should prove to be especially useful as a textbook in schools where attempts are now being made to add cutaneous physiology and pathology to the subjects taught in the preclinical years.

The authors have maintained a high standard in their selection of illustrations and have drawn mainly on cases handled at the University of Pennsylvania during the last decade. The volume has a sturdy binding—an essential feature in a book that weighs 6½ pounds. The textbook ably fulfills the writers' aim to "keep in mind constantly the viewpoint of students and physicians who have had little or no experience with skin diseases and whose preclinical training has not included any acquaintance with the fundamental aspects of skin physiology."

This book contains 1117 illustrations.

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Treatise on Inorganic Chemistry. vol. II, *Sub-Groups of the Periodic Table and General Topics.* H. Remy. Translated by J. S. Anderson. J. Kleinberg, Ed. Elsevier, Amsterdam–Princeton, N.J., 1956. 800 pp. Illus. $17.75.

This textbook, constituting volume II of Remy's *Treatise on Inorganic Chemistry,* is a translation based essentially on the seventh and eighth German editions, with new material added on chemical bonds, radioactivity, nuclear chemistry, and the transuranic elements. The first German edition appeared in 1931.

Volume II contains 19 chapters, an appendix, a name index, and a subject index. It is confined to the subgroups of the Periodic System and to general topics. The chapters are headed as follows: metals and intermetallic phases; third subgroup, scandium, yttrium, lanthanum,