denly supposed to understand logarithms or trigonometry or infinite series, or infinite continued fractions. There are a few incorrect assertions, some disconcerting typographical errors, and a few places where the author misapplies the simplest mathematical terms, such as *equation* or *identity*.

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**Neutron Cross Sections.** Donald J. Hughes. Pergamon, London and New York, 1957. x + 182 pp. Illus. $5.

*Neutron Cross-Sections,* by D. J. Hughes, is a monograph devoted to assisting people who do not have training in nuclear theory and who must use cross sections. As director of the neutron cross-sections compilation work at Brookhaven Laboratory, Hughes was in an excellent position to judge what terms caused nonphysicists the most trouble. The first chapter of the book is devoted to introducing the reader to the language of neutron physics by use of the terms in context; this monograph is not a dictionary.

The second chapter is devoted to the nomenclature employed by theoretical physicists in developing models to explain and correlate the experimental data. This chapter is a very nice demonstration of Hughes' ability as a writer to cover a complex subject concisely and simply.

In the last four chapters Hughes acquaints the reader with some of the details of specialized areas of neutron physics.

Those working in the fields of differential cross sections and inelastic scattering cross sections will probably regret that the author does not make a greater effort to clarify terminology in these areas.

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**Natural Magick.** A volume in *The Collector's Series in Science.* John Baptista Porta. Derek J. Price, Ed. Basic Books, New York, 1957. ix + 419 pp. Illus. $7.50.

To penetrate the mystery of the rise of "modern science" in the 16th and 17th centuries, it is not enough to know something of Copernicus, Galileo, and the other giants. The republication of Porta's book (edition of 1658)—long a guarded treasure of the rare-book rooms of libraries—offers a pleasant and profitable tour through what the editor calls the "plain-lands" of early science, from which these giants sprang. This work is typical of a vast forgotten literature, best described in modern terminology as popular encyclopedias of the arts and sciences. Porta was no hack writer, however, but a competent, if not a profound, natural philosopher whose contributions to science were not insignificant. He was instrumental in founding the first modern "academy of science" (the Accademia Secretorum Naturae), and its proceedings are reflected in the present book.

The volume is attractively bound and boxed. The reproduction of the archaic type face of the original is a questionable advantage, but no great obstacle to the enjoyment of what may best serve as a sort of scientists's bedside book. According to his mood, the reader can sample the science and lore of magnetism before Gilbert or of optics before the telescope and microscope; or he can peruse relatively lucid accounts of the transmutation of metals or of the "new" fad in chemistry—distillation. In a lighter mood, he can discover how women were beautified in these centuries, or how secret communications were accomplished. Anyone interested in the history of science, or in history at all, can find profit and enjoyment in this book.

ROBERT MULTHAUF

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**Reptiles Round the World.** A simplified natural history of the snakes, lizards, turtles, and crocodilians. Clifford H. Pope. Knopf, New York, 1957. xv + 204 pp. Illus. $3.50.

The author, well-known for previous herpetological works, both technical and semipopular, has prepared this new book with the younger generation in mind—the boys and girls whose interest in nature is beginning to be centered on a particular branch of natural history.

The professional scientist always faces a serious task in undertaking a book of this kind. Almost never is there a question of knowledge of the subject; the problem is one of presenting the subject in abbreviated and simplified form, yet in so well-balanced and attractive a manner as to encourage the young reader into expanding his field observations and studies. In this respect Pope has succeeded admirably. The book is interesting and instructive, and the facts regarding the several groups of reptiles are presented in the orderly manner so necessary for supplying the young reader with a basic understanding of the extent of the several groups and the subdivisions within them. Technical terms are largely avoided, as are the restrictions of taxonomy, since discussions are seldom carried below the generic level.

The subject is treated from two major viewpoints: first, there are chapters on the different features of reptile life, such as locomotion, food, reproduction, size, growth, enemies, and habits; these are followed by a survey of the distribution, by continents, of each major group. The discussions are illustrated by many attractive sketches by Helen Damrosch Tee-Van.

This book can be recommended as a foundation upon which the budding herpetologist can build his further studies. Among other sound advice, it even contains a word of caution to the youngster of exhibitionist tendencies who aspires to make a career of handling snakes before shocked but fascinated audiences (mostly female). The museums and zoos requiring herpetological curators are too few to supply a livelihood for more than a fraction of these aspirants; besides which, the duties of herpetological curators almost never involve such spectacular but nonscientific exploits.

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## New Books

*The Frogfishes of the Family Antennariidae.* No. 3383, Proceedings of the U.S. National Museum, vol. 107. Leonard P. Schultz. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1957. 58 pp.

*Discovery.* No. 2, 1957. University of Melbourne. Melbourne University Press, Carlton, N.3, Victoria, 1957. 96 pp. 2s. 6d.

*International Sanitary Regulations.* Adopted by the Fourth World Health Assembly in 1951 and amended by the eighth and nine assemblies in 1955 and 1956. Annotated edition. World Health Organization, Geneva, 1957 (order from Columbia University Press, New York). 127 pp. $1.

*Four Basic Aspects of Preventive Psychiatry.* Report of the First Institute on Preventive Psychiatry held at the State University of Iowa, 3 Apr. 1957. Ralph H. Ojemann, Ed. State University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1957. 122 pp. $2.

*The Biology and Systematics of the Pinfish, Lagodon Rhomboides (Linnaeus).* Bulletin of the Florida State Museum, Biological Science, vol. 2, No. 6. David K. Caldwell. University of Florida, Gainesville, 1957. 98 pp. $1.25.

*Handbuch der Physik.* vol. XVI, *Electric Fields and Waves.* S. Flügge, Ed. Springer, Berlin, 1958. 760 pp. DM. 158.

*Metabolism of the Nervous System.* Derek Richter. Pergamon Press, New York and London, 1957. 613 pp. $16.

*Queues, Inventories and Maintenance.* The analysis of operational systems with variable demand and supply. Philip M. Morse. Wiley, New York; Chapman and Hall, London, 1958. 211 pp. $6.50.