

The broad-area charts do not discriminate brightness; the white dots are all about the same size. While the detailed charts faithfully allow for the brightness of individual stars, the lines joining them fluctuate greatly in intensity: here bold, there detectable only under special illumination. Another difficulty is that the beginning observer, living at a certain latitude, can nowhere find in the atlas specific instructions on where in the sky to look for a given object at the time and date he wants to look. Although the topical summaries are factual and instructive, they occur in random order. Here and there they are blemished by an error of fact or a misleading statement. I cannot agree, for example, that Mizar and Alcor "can be separated only by persons with very keen eyesight." The abbreviated summaries will have fulfilled an important function if, as the author hopes, they "induce beginners to read other works that are more complete and more learned."

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**Algeria.** The realities. Germaine Tillion. Translated from the French by Ronald Matthews. Knopf, New York, 1958. viii + 115 pp. \$2.50.

This concise, clear, devastating account of the impasse in French-Algerian relationships is the type of political essay that informs without overwhelming the reader with detail. Germaine Tillion is an ethnographer who did extensive field work in Algeria in the 1930's, was chief of a Resistance network from 1940 to 1942, spent three years in prison, and returned to Algeria in 1954 to restudy the people of the Aurès Mountains, the scene of her previous ethnological work. The combination of deep feeling and scientific objectivity with which the book is written was primarily generated by her recognition of the marked change for the worse among the rural people of Algeria between 1940 and 1954, in spite of the enormous economic effort that France had made to better their condition.

Miss Tillion cuts straight through the prevailing optimism—symbolized by "Point 4" in the United States—that it will be a relatively simple matter, involving some technical *expertise* and a small amount of easily found capital, to bring the underdeveloped countries up to a "developed" standard. She highlights, in the concrete knowledgeable discussion of one country, the danger that economists have been stressing for some time—that the gap between the early-industrialized and the not-yet-industrialized countries will be steadily widening, despite all the effort made to close it.

No one has stated more unequivocally

the problem of what an unindustrialized country needs in the way of immediate, full-scale construction of all of the facilities in which it pays no one to invest—schools, universities, health services, roads—in order to accomplish an immediate across-the-board transformation of the entire social system. After reading this account, no literate person can take any comfort whatsoever in the statistics of number of schools started or roads under way in the undeveloped countries of the world.

The closing section of the book deals with some of the simple political realities which are likely to be forgotten in planning, chief among them being the fact that Algeria today depends, for the merest inadequate subsistence, upon the right of unskilled Algerian laborers to work in France and bring or send their wages home—a completely politically based economy. One sees, simultaneously, Algeria as a model for the world situation in which various orders of benevolently designated activity (United Nations, "Point 4," development schemes of the various metropolitan powers, schemes for loans from the great powers to the small) are involved, and Algeria as a particular situation which must be dealt with in terms of special historical detail. The emphasis is on responsibility and possible courses of action. No time is wasted on recriminations. No time is wasted on a display of erudition. There is not an unnecessary phrase in the book. A reader who knows nothing about North Africa or mid-20th-century technical assistance can get—in a couple of hours—a satisfying grasp of both the ethical and the economic essentials.

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**Introduction to Biostatistics.** Huldah Bancroft. Hoeber-Harper, New York, 1957. x + 210 pp. Illus. \$5.75.

Quantitative methods continue to replace qualitative evaluation even in medical research. Diagnosis and therapy are increasingly based more on a rigorous biometric analysis of clinical, biochemical, and pharmacological data of numerous cases than on the result of the findings in individual cases. Although the indispensable tools for handling numerous observations on many individuals are the methods of statistical analysis, medical students as well as practicing physicians usually have very little statistical training and thus lack the ability to ascertain the validity of the increasing amounts of statistical inferences they encounter in the medical literature. To fill this vacuum Huldah Bancroft, pro-

fessor of biostatistics at Tulane University School of Medicine, New Orleans, La., has written a very readable textbook on the use of statistics in medicine, showing how to arrive at, as well as interpret, statistical data.

The book presents the usual course of statistical thinking (though in a very condensed form), with samples drawn from the medical practice. It starts with the frequency distribution and centering constants and goes as far as chi-square tests and correlation analysis. Most useful will be the chapter on quantitative methods of bioassay. However, it is regrettable that the author felt compelled to presuppose no more mathematical knowledge on the part of the reader than high-school algebra, which necessarily restricts her capacity to convey a better understanding of the logical basis of statistical theory, which is based upon concepts of probability. It is to be hoped that the coming generation of physicians will feel high-school algebra inadequate for a full understanding of biological phenomena and will acquire the tools essential for comprehending a universe of enormous variability.

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**Actions chimiques et biologiques des radiations.** Les peroxydes organiques en radiobiologie. R. Latarjet. Masson, Paris, 1958. 156 pp. Illus. Cloth, F. 3600; paper, F. 2800.

This little book presents a series of papers delivered at a symposium at the Radium Institute in Paris in January 1957. The participants were from France, England, and the Low Countries; their presentations, published in either French or English as originally presented, provoked considerable discussion, which has been admirably integrated and which makes fascinating reading.

There is little doubt that organic peroxides are now accepted as playing a major role in the radiation problem. The symposium participants were not of a mind, however, about what fraction of the role to assign to (i) the formation of peroxide directly in the gene substance, (ii) the formation of peroxides of lipids and other substances which then interact with the genetic components, and (iii) the peroxidation of the cell catalysts involved in maintaining and reproducing the genetic material. They gave no attention to the modification of building blocks about to be incorporated into the genetic system.

One gathers that the adherents of the target hypothesis are in a compromising mood and are willing to extend the borders at least slightly beyond the general understanding of the original con-