

The bibliography of 85 titles includes some interesting items which have been overlooked in earlier works of this sort but fails to include some works discussed in the text. Some of the citations are incomplete.

The author's purpose has been satisfactorily accomplished, and Spanish-speaking people should find the book an interesting introduction to both ancient and current thought about this fascinating subject. Students of the history of maize will find the book indispensable for the addition which it makes to our knowledge of the old literature.

PAUL WEATHERWAX

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**Science in Schools.** Proceedings of a conference under the auspices of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Held on April 17 and 18, 1958, at the Royal Geographical Society. W. H. Perkins, Ed. Butterworths, London, 1958. 150 pp. 15s.

The decorative design on the cover of this attractive little book provides a good indication of the content. It reads:

"Learning before luxury? Should schools receive a better share of the scientists who are graduating today? Science as an also-ran in girls' grammar schools? 'Just one period a week of nature study' for primary school science? How are we spending now . . . how much . . . how quickly should we expand?"

"These and other topical questions on science education were discussed by certain leading industrialists, scientists and educationalists of our day at the April 1958 British Association Meeting. The papers now appear in eminently readable book-form. They will be of interest to all who believe that the development of science and technology cannot take place without a much bolder programme of rapid educational advance than any which has yet been promulgated."

The problems discussed by the speakers—Sir Ben Lockspeiser, Sir Solly Zuckerman, Sir Eric James, H. F. Boulind, M. G. Bennett, Dame Kathleen Lonsdale, Sir Raymond Priestly, and others—were, of course, the problems of British schools. But the discussion applies almost equally well to American schools, for problems concerning the education of future scientists and engineers and the education in science of students who will follow other career lines are much the same on both sides of the Atlantic.

*Science in Schools* offers a brief, thoughtful, well-integrated, and beautifully written discussion of those problems and of how, at least in part, they might be met.

DAEL WOLFLE

AAAS

**Coral Island, Portrait of an Atoll.** Mars-ton Bates and Donald P. Abbott. Scribner's, New York, 1958. 254 pp. Illus. \$4.95.

*Coral Island* is an interesting and factual account of the inhabitants, natural history, and surface structure of Ifaluk Atoll, a half-square-mile of land in the Caroline Islands of the tropical Western Pacific. A team of investigators under the auspices of the Pacific Science Board and the Office of Naval Research spent from June to November studying the plants, animals, supply of fresh water, cultivated foods and reefs of the area in relation to the economy and daily life of the Ifalukians. The authors give a detailed description of the people and their economy, based on the things they use from land and sea. A slight surplus of essential resources was found, except for fish, which were somewhat overexploited in the lagoon.

The research team lived as self-supporting and generous guests of the Ifalukians, some of whom became close friends of the scientists. The whole atmosphere was one of cooperation on a basis of social equality. This book is filled with intimate details of the personality of the Ifalukians and of their way of life, which, with respect to housing and to clothing (or lack of it), is ideally suited to climatic and personal needs. For them, however, flies, mosquitoes, and infections present especially difficult problems.

This book makes fascinating reading for anyone interested in people and natural history.

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**Safety Techniques for Radioactive Tracers.** J. C. Bournsnel. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1958. 68 pp. \$1.75.

The "poisonous" character of radioactive substances is well proven today. The normal human being has a natural radium content of about  $10^{-10}$  g of radium-226 in his body, and the maximum permissible amount of this element for the entire body is  $10^{-7}$  g. The maximum permissible concentrations of radium in air and in water are  $8 \times 10^{-12}$   $\mu\text{C}/\text{ml}$  air and  $4 \times 10^{-8}$   $\mu\text{C}/\text{ml}$  water, respectively. Still lower permissible concentrations for the entire body are given for the heavier elements.

Thus it becomes evident that radioisotopes have to be handled with special care and with strict observation of certain safety techniques. This little booklet gives a compendious survey of the basic techniques, in the first six chapters. In

a seventh chapter the facts are summarized under the headings "Do not" and "Do." A bibliography of selected references, from which some of the data presented have been taken, is a welcome guide for the reader interested in details. The booklet will be of value to the student and to those engaged in practical isotope work.

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**Nicolaus Steno and His Indice.** (Acta Historica Scientiarum Naturalium et Medicinalium, Edit. Bibliotheca Universitatis Hauniensis, vol. 15). Gustav Scherz, Ed. Munksgaard, Copenhagen. Denmark, 1958. 314 pp. Illus. Kr. 32.

Nicolaus Steno or, in the Danish vernacular, Niels Stensen (1638–1686), has gradually come to be recognized as one of the outstanding figures in the history of natural science. Despite the great tribute paid to Steno in Thomas Henry Huxley's address to the British Association in 1881, he had been so far forgotten that little more could be said of him in the standard histories of science and of medicine than that he discovered the parotid duct and turned theologian. Yet here is one who had discovered the Graafian follicle before de Graaf, Peyer's patches in the intestine before Peyer, and the tetralogy of Fallot before Fallot; was an exceptional comparative anatomist and zoologist; and, above all, was the father of modern geology, paleontology, and crystallography. The high position of Steno has become abundantly clear with the publication of his works, letters, and manuscripts. In 1910, Vilhelm Maar edited Steno's *Opera philosophica*; Knud Larsen and Gustav Scherz brought out, in 1941–1947, his *Opera Theologica*; then came the two massive folio volumes of his *Epistolae*, in 1952, edited by Gustav Scherz, who, in 1956, published a full-scale study, *Vom Wege Niels Stensens*.

The present work consists of a series of essays—five in English, two in German, one in French—which present an appreciation of Steno's life, scientific achievements, and influence. Added to these are Steno's *Index*, or catalog of his natural-history collection, and several hitherto unpublished documents. The volume is an important one, especially for the general reader who wishes to acquaint himself with this universal mind, which played an exceptional role in the development of modern science.

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