

fountainsprings of human conflict and disharmony. This book is indeed a great achievement not only as a biography of a man consistently mishandled in the past but also as an approach to biographical writing in general. It is not meant to be an exhaustive or definitive study, but it presents an excellent overview of all the acts in the rich Galileo drama.

The Watershed is a reprint of the section on Kepler in Koestler's larger *Sleepwalkers*, which appeared in 1959. It is the liveliest, most scholarly, and best part of that excellent work, and it may well go down in history as the keenest pioneering achievement in depth analysis of a scientific genius, as well as of the nature of progress in science. By utilizing his great gifts as literary master and his powers of insight into the recesses of the human mind in the throes of conflicting beliefs and loyalties, Koestler succeeds in laying the foundation for a new psychology of science, fashioning it into a discipline that combines dissection of the personality of the scientist, the culture of the time, as well as the salient ideas seeking to enter the web of prevailing beliefs, and the diverse interplay of all these factors. The result of this technique is tremendous in its power, and the light it sheds proved to be so brilliant that many pedants in the field were blinded by its glare.

The Watershed makes most fascinating reading. Koestler shows such vast knowledge of the subject, both historically and scientifically, that one doubts whether much can be added. The reader will never forget the other-worldly charm of Kepler, the depths of his feverish brainstorm, the scope of his creativity, and finally the element of historical irrationality in scientific progress, which irritated so many of Koestler's critics, and the bewildering cross-currents of thought that shaped the womb of the scientific revolution. This is a great book, a landmark in biography which no student of science or history can afford to postpone reading.

By comparison with these two biographies, Jaffe's book on Michelson seems run-of-the-mill. It is, however, an honest and thorough account of the life and work of a great physicist; it is well written, readable, and free from biographitis, if one may so describe the needless hawking which often afflicts worshipping biographers.

The reprinting of Tyndall's work on

Faraday is a happy symptom of the revival of interest in the full scope of the history of science. As Faraday's associate and successor to the superintendency of the Royal Institution of London, Tyndall discusses primarily Faraday's vast and basic contributions to science in his unique manner, famed for lucidity. His few anecdotes of his personal relations with Faraday help considerably to enliven the portrait of this key figure in modern physics.

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Sahara, Desert of Destiny. Georg Gerster. Translated by Stewart Thomson. Coward-McCann, New York, 1961. xi + 302 pp. Illus. + maps. \$5.

Gerster's *Sahara* is a prize package of its kind. An awesome mass of factual information, sparingly sprinkled with misinformation, is presented so skillfully that the book is as enjoyable to read as a good novel. Unfortunately, in the sections dealing with prehistory and native customs, fact is mixed indiscriminately with fantasy. Specialists will heave many a weary sigh as they encounter tediously obsolete and confused theories concerning rock paintings and camels, the Hyksos and the Garamantes, the feudal matriarchal free-loving Tuareg and such. Arabic words often defeat the author utterly. For example, *Sah'ra* does not mean "mouse-coloured" but "a desert habitable in spots," a *Gandourah* by definition cannot have a hood, and *Davel Askri* is certainly a strange rendering of *Dar el Askri*. Curious factual errors occasionally creep in too. It is stated that "the early palaeolithic" only "goes back some eight to fifteen thousand years" although "the Early Stone Age" may go back "hundreds of thousands"; Rene Caillié (misspelled Caillé as usual) is said to have been "the first European to reach Timbuctoo"; and so on.

But all of this is relatively unimportant. The immediate future of the Sahara is a matter of rapidly increasing urgency because of the major roles that Moslem Africa and the Mediterranean are beginning to play in the struggle for survival of the West. In this context Gerster shines as a singularly penetrating political and economic analyst.

Water is, of course, the main thing in the Sahara. Obviously even the most primitive native communities cannot live without it, while oil drilling installations consume such enormous quantities that they depend on the discovery of new and practically inexhaustible reservoirs of water. This situation poses a whole series of problems which are clearly explained and discussed most entertainingly.

The bulk of Gerster's book is devoted to the consideration of these and other natural resources. Search, discovery, and exploitation are described minutely and as painstakingly evaluated, all in an easy-flowing style that makes them fascinating. And if the author hasn't heard that the discovery of diamonds near Silet was a hoax, it hardly matters.

Gerster goes on to discuss the impact of modern industrial expansion on native institutions. He closes with a searching and impartial examination of the perilous problems of a near future in which conflicting forces of political aspirations and economic necessity will become increasingly difficult to reconcile.

For students of political science, economics, and human and industrial geography, this book is a real goldmine. Nor can any reader, regardless of prejudice, help but be lost in admiration for the author's forthright and yet charitable objectivity. *Sahara* is a really valuable and palatable contribution in the critical fields of international and inter-religious political economy.

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Aedes Aegypti (L.), the Yellow Fever Mosquito. Its life history, bionomics, and structure. Sir S. Rickard Christophers. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1960. xii + 739 pp. Illus. \$14.50.

The yellow fever mosquito, *Aedes aegypti*, is one of the insects most widely known to science. It is not only an easily used laboratory animal, but its great significance in past and present public health problems is undisputed. Sir Rickard Christophers' book comprises, under one set of covers, the most exhaustive treatment of any one insect species ever published, and its subject matter is especially appropriate.