

a frequently encountered human factor, and it may be a hard one to eliminate. Next, the editor may regard a certain topic well enough covered in one or two articles not to plan for a separate heading, since neither size nor space is unlimited. The editor, no doubt, has to curb many an author who understandably might be carried away with enthusiasm for his own subject. But on the whole the space allotment seems fair, with precision and compactness the general rule. Since judgment is difficult, here are some examples: Carbon dating, $3\frac{1}{4}$ columns; coloration of animals, 13 (this includes three columns of various chemical formulas); endocrine system, 9; plastid, $3\frac{1}{3}$; pineal, 1; endogenous rhythms, 2; photoperiodism (plant), $3\frac{1}{2}$; genetic drift, 2; salt marsh, 2; primates, 9; population genetics, 9 (including all major equations).

While the idea of including biographical sketches is a valuable and pleasant diversion in a volume of this kind, the inclusion of such names as Agnes Arber, but not C. B. Bridges or E. B. Wilson, presents a problem. Moreover, many of the historical sketches are quite superficial and faulty. Entirely false and even expendable is the paragraph on Giodanao Bruno; Wöhler did not synthesize urea but found it in the reaction system; Johannes Müller's somewhat flippant biographical sketch lacks the spirit of that great man.

However, all factors considered, the verdict remains as originally stated. The volume is an excellent pioneering venture of immense value to every teacher and student of biology. It is thorough, authoritative, up to date, and it is exceptionally strong in reporting the latest researches in most fields of biology. It is beautifully illustrated, well cross-referenced and indexed (with minor lapses here and there which should be corrected in revision) and with more-than-hoped-for coverage. The style is so lucid that any alert high school student can consult most entries with profit. Such a student may find quite a few wholly incomprehensible because they presuppose considerable knowledge of chemistry, physics, and mathematics. But these provide references to fuller texts; besides, if he goes so far as to seek out these references, he may be able to plough through with some profit. Even the hard ones give him the opportunity to do so.

And all this in one volume—and at a relatively tolerable price for such an enterprise.

Two Congos

Congo. Background of conflict. Alan P. Merriam. Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill., 1961. xiii + 368 pp. Illus. \$6.

Alan Merriam, an anthropologist at Northwestern University, has been in the Belgian Congo for extensive research visits on two occasions: in the early 1950's, when the Congo was still regarded by many as the "model colony," and in 1959 and 1960, during the transition to independence and, as it turned out, chaos. From this personal background and from a wealth of detailed information garnered from many diverse sources, he has written a book which, though focused on events that have not yet run their full course, provides an overview valuable not only for an understanding of what the Congo is like now but also for an understanding of the kind of stage upon which future events will unfold.

The volume begins with a short introduction that considers historical, geographic, and ethnographic matters and then turns directly to Belgian colonial policy whose guiding principle of paternalism, with the usual colonial components of cupidity intricately interwoven with a measure of sincere but prideful and insensitive idealism, serves to explain much of the background out of which later events grew, swiftly, disastrously, and yet, as Merriam makes clear, not really inevitably. One of the most interesting chapters describes, in concretely human terms, how independence came to two "Congos" (all too often only one or the other is talked about in isolation): the Congo of the interior (in this case, the village in which Merriam resided during most of his field research) and the Congo of the urban center (Stanleyville being the example used). After these descriptions, the detailed, more purely political narrative of parties, leaders, negotiations, and the vicissitudes of pre- and post-independence politics becomes more understandable to the reader, more consistent in its apparent lack of logic. Merriam has happily chosen to present many of these facts in the framework of a calendar of specific events. With the feeling of immediacy that it gives, this calendar will remain invaluable in any future discussion of the series of Congolese debacles, for already the accidental is too often forgotten and the small but crucial event tends to disappear as sweeping mytholo-

gies, always so appealing in their simplicity, begin to take shape. There is a sobering aspect to this retrospective view; if the Congolese villager and townsman are found to have been unrealistic in their expectations, so are many of the supposedly more sophisticated analysts—on one side, the Belgians and the apologists of the "perfect colony" who were blind to the dynamics of a continent which they forgot existed at all; and those on the other side who, fascinated with general trends, impatiently ignored the role of the unique and concrete fact and hailed the hasty Belgian capitulation as a show of political realism.

Mercifully, the reports from the Congo have left the front page in recent weeks. It would, however, be unforgivable for us to slip once again into forgetting that the Congo exists. This book will amply prepare the reader to avoid this error; and it will prepare him not only to expect more news but also to understand the news better when it does come.

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California Flora

Flora of the Santa Cruz Mountains of California. A manual of the vascular plants. John Hunter Thomas. Stanford University Press, Stanford, Calif., 1961. viii + 434 pp. Illus. \$8.50.

The Santa Cruz Mountains of California form the backbone of the peninsula west of San Francisco Bay and north of Monterey Bay. Although the range is only about 50 miles long and 2000 feet high, the flora is rich and varied. The mountains dip down into the ocean on the west, and the flora is coastal. Above the beaches and cliffs are extensive areas of redwood forest (Pacific Forest). This vegetation type occurs also in the more moist canyons on the east slope of the range, but most of the drier inland side is covered by California Chaparral. The inland foothills are California Oak Woodland. Thus the flora of the Santa Cruz Mountains includes a high percentage of the species occurring in the lowlands of northern California.

The text includes distributional notes, keys to the families, genera, and species, some synonymy, and intro-