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Books about Science

Publishers' Weekly brings the information that 20,234 new books were published in the United States in 1965. Of these, 1850 were in the science category, 942 were in technology, 2372 were in sociology and economics, and 582 were in psychology and philosophy.

Chiefly from the science category, but from other groups as well, the AAAS publication *Science Books* is now reviewing and rating about 900 books a year that appear to be of general or library interest. There is a welcome trend in books of this kind: the quality seems to be improving. Fewer appear to have been produced by an author who simply went to the library, borrowed from some older works, and whipped up a new volume in time for the Christmas trade. In recent years the university presses have shown an increasing interest in this area of publication. The sponsors of the improved science courses for high school students have brought out some excellent books for collateral reading or to extend the student's range. Other good series are being produced under other auspices. More science books for general audiences are being written by well-trained science writers and professional scientists, and some of their works are getting wide acclaim. Sidney Chapman received an Edison Foundation Book Award in 1960 for his *IGY: Year of Discovery*. One of four contenders for the 1965 National Book Award in the "science, philosophy, and religion" class is *Science and Ethical Values* by Bentley Glass. Other recent examples are René Dubos' *The Unseen World* and Theodosius Dobzhansky's *Heredity and the Nature of Man*, both originally prepared as AAAS Holiday Science Lectures.

On 25 February the AAAS entered this field of publication with the appearance of Joseph R. Caldwell's *New Roads to Yesterday—Essays in Archaeology*, published by Basic Books. The volume consists of a selection of papers, reviewed and brought up to date, which originally appeared as lead articles in recent volumes of *Science*.

A quarter of a century ago, Doubleday Doran and Company produced an earlier series of volumes selected and prepared by the AAAS. First in the series was H. H. Newman's *Multiple Human Births*. The price of \$2.50 now seems unbelievably low, and the old advertisements seem, in 1966, a bit florid: "In his accounts of the first meeting of twenty pairs of identical twins separated from infancy, Dr. Newman often strikes the profoundest chords of human emotion, chords sometimes gloriously joyous and sometimes tragically pathetic," or, "More interesting than fiction . . . Dr. Newman's book is one of almost universal appeal."

Strange Malady—the Story of Allergy and Alcohol Explored followed in the series, but they apparently fell short of attaining "almost universal appeal," for Doubleday Doran turned down the fourth and fifth manuscripts. However, Macmillan Company brought out the sixth, Mark Graubard's *Man's Food: Its Rhyme or Reason*, and W. W. Norton published the final one, W. B. Cannon's *The Way of an Investigator*. Paper shortages and the preoccupation of scientists with wartime responsibilities then brought the series to an end.

There is a useful place for such volumes. The serious reader—young student or interested adult—appreciates the opportunity to read a book by an author who knows his field thoroughly. If the author has developed a clear and interesting style, the reader can learn much, and learn it with pleasure. Both readers and fellow scientists are indebted to the authors who write such books.

—DAEL WOLFLE