This book will appeal to researchers in this field as well as to the general audience of physicists and mathematicians seeking assurance that supermanifolds are mathematically respectable objects rather than formal tricks with "anticommuting numbers."

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## **Adaptations**

The Colonisation of Land. Origins and Adaptations of Terrestrial Animals. Colin Little. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1984. viii, 290 pp., illus. \$99.50.

Study of the adaptations of terrestrial groups of animals and plants and their origins from aquatic stocks has long been a classic example of the confluence of different biological disciplines, particularly physiology and biochemistry, functional morphology, and paleontology. Among animal groups, the origin of terrestrial vertebrates and the apparently related question of the history of movement from salt water to freshwater in primitive gnathtostome fishes have been an especially rich vein for workers such as Baldwin, Berrill, Romer, and Watson, and among invertebrates the mollusks and arthropods have received considerable attention. In recent years, however, notwithstanding an excellent volume edited by Panchen, the subject as a whole has received less attention, perhaps in part owing to the decline of comparative approaches to organ-level physiology.

Little, who is an authority on molluskan osmoregulation, has now produced the first really thorough review of the relevant characteristics of the various animal groups that have colonized the land environment, including taxa from flatworms to vertebrates. It is a long and careful literature review with a single concluding synthetic section. Little emphasizes the common problems faced by invaders from the water: osmoregulation and nitrogen excretion, respiration, behavior, and sensory adaptions, reproduction, and (to a lesser extent) biomechanics in the absence of a strongly supporting fluid medium. He gives an interesting counterpoint to the discussion in a treatment of the filter or plankton feeders, larger forms with hydrostatic skeletons, and most notably the echinoderms and cephalopod mollusks that have never managed to invade land. He delves into the relative success of different groups, measured by species diversity or biomass. And he also takes up the collateral question of the problems faced by terrestrial groups in reinvading fresh or salt water.

All of this is familiar in parts, but Little's review is more than a convenient summary. The broad range of data that he covers turns out no longer to support the easy generalizations that have long dominated this field of work. One view that needs to be revised is the simple scenario for the relationship between environment and the pattern of nitrogen excretion that predicts excretion of ammonia in the water and urea or uric acid on land. In oligochaetes, for example, "The ratio of urea to ammonia changes with nutritional state, but is probably more related to the control of acid-base balance than to availability of water." Also, with respect to respiration Little notes a fact of which biologists have become increasingly aware—that elimination of carbon dioxide is a more complex problem than uptake of oxygen. But most important of all, he demonstrates that it is no longer sufficient to consider the various subjects of classical physiology in isolation from each other. This fine review clears the way for future biologists who will take up this fascinating subject in the light of modern advances and produce the next generation of generalizations.

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The Plutonium Business and the Spread of the

(Continued on page 573)