

there are two divergent views on a subject, he usually adopts the old traditional view without telling us why he rejects the new researches.

It certainly was an excellent idea to devote chapters to psychology, the social sciences and philosophy, but philosophy should have been treated in the beginning, not at the end, or, better still, it should have permeated the whole book.

The chapters on technology are very welcome also, but they make you realize that history of technology without economic history is a dead skeleton.

I always feel depressed after reading such a book. A political history, a history of literature or history of art of such composition and standard would be inconceivable to-day. While it is history of science, it is accepted and will probably find a market. It shows that, in spite of all efforts, we are still in the very beginning.

A history of science is still wanted. Professor Wolf's book is not a history, I repeat it. It is at best what Professor L. N. G. Filon, F.R.S., calls it on the jacket, "a mine of useful, yet delightful information."

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#### OUR ENEMY, THE TERMITE

*Our Enemy, the Termite.* By THOMAS ELLIOT SNYDER. 8vo, pp. xii plus 196. Frontispiece, 9 plates, 55 text illustrations. Comstock Publishing Company, 1935. \$3.00.

I BELIEVE that there is no one in America who could write a better book on the termites than Dr. Snyder. He has worked on the general subject for twenty-six years and, after an excellent training at Columbia and the Yale Forest School, he has been spending his time with striking success as an investigator in the branch of forest insects in the U. S. Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine. He has traveled widely, has made many important scientific discoveries, and has, unlike many scientific men, kept the public needs constantly in view. He has also, again unlike many men of science, learned to write in a very attractive and understandable way. All this makes possible this very interesting and much-needed book.

SCIENCE of March 30, 1934, printed on pages 296 and 297 a review of mine of the big book just then published by the University of California under the chief editorship of C. A. Kofoed, on "Termites and Termite Control." And in this laudatory review I called especial attention to the fact that it was a most worthy object-lesson as a *cooperative* effort, containing chapters by no less than thirty-three authors treating of the different aspects of the economic termite problem. In that truly great book, Dr. Snyder's name

occurs as the writer of four chapters and he has published many government bulletins and shorter papers on different sides of the subject. I am very thankful that with all his knowledge—taxonomic, biologic and economic—he has put down in this useful volume, and before it is too late, just what we all want to know and should know.

Man, perhaps the most disturbing ecologic factor in the biologic history of the world, seems, in his rapid advance, apparently to have brought about a situation that has changed a useful group into a destructive one, and the economic side of the termite question has become very important. Almost every one knows about termites now, and recently we may almost say that there has been a termite scare. Just how far this has been due to the exploitation of "Termite Destroyers" I don't know, but conservative scientific men like Dr. Snyder are inclined to think that some exaggeration has been produced in the popular mind. In fact the outlook is by no means so bad as it might be, or as some would wish us to think it. As the author tells us, "With modern stone and steel construction in cities, and more durable foundations for frame buildings, there should be a decrease of termite damage to the woodwork of dwellings."

The book is not only scientifically sound, but it is eminently practical. It lacks the philosophical speculation with which Maeterlinck and many other writers have clothed the termite idea and that of social insects in general, but it devotes many pages to control methods and shows in a vivid way why building and loan associations, insurance companies and banks have been really forced to cooperate in the urging of revised building codes. It is encouraging to know that these revised building codes have been adopted during recent years by many towns and cities, and are now enforced.

But possibly what I have written has placed too much weight on the practical side of the book to please those who think of termites only as wonderful and very mysterious creatures. I hope not, for there are chapters that deal intimately with life histories, social organizations, geographical distribution, guests or inquilines, the disturbance of the balance of nature by man, and so on. And actually the subject of control takes up less than half. And then there is a good glossary and a competent index and the make-up is excellent, and the many illustrations are very apt.

I will not attempt to describe further what is in this admirable treatise. To even enumerate the headings of the chapters would take too much space. But it is a most timely book and it is a most important book. It answers conclusively the questions that many thousands of people wish to ask. No better authority on this subject than this volume can be consulted.

L. O. HOWARD