

to the betterment of human society. Dr. Fasten treats his subject matter briefly in a rare and brilliant manner, using some 140 diagrams and photographs to simplify his deductions. No unnecessary technicalities are presented, thus giving the book a very readable style for the average elementary student.

STEPHEN W. ROBERTS

PALMER, RICHARD. *Living Things an Introduction to Biology*. London, England: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., Museum Street. 1937. 400 pp.

"Living Things" is a type of book a professional man likes to keep in his library, not as another reference or textbook (it is both of these) but merely to browse through for a new idea, a different approach or for casual reading. It was written to meet the requirements of "certain examination syllabuses including the Matriculation Examinations of the English Universities and the Central Welsh Board." Due to its Continental makeup I would not consider it as a competitor of American biology textbooks at the Secondary level.

Its approach is acceptable. Starting with man the known it proceeds to the theoretical and the speculative aspects of biology. The first of the two main divisions is titled "How Living Things Work." Dealing with stereotyped material ordinarily contained in textbooks, however, the treatment is interestingly different. Part two deals with "The Diversity of Living Things" in which Dr. Palmer explains the groups of plants and animals. In this connection an interesting sidelight is revealed in the appendix—Outline Classification of Living Things. This contains four kingdoms of living things—the Filter Passing Viruses, Bacteria, Plants, and Animals. Certain contemporary American authorities would not agree with the first or even the second classification division. This new view makes the book distinctive and is

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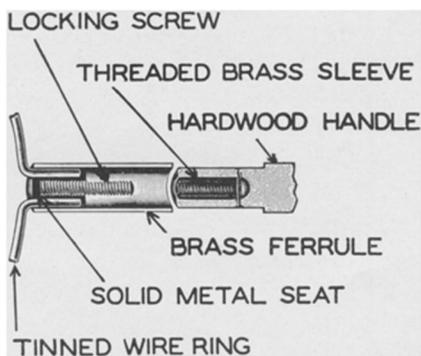
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apparent also in a number of other instances throughout.

If a biological principle can be best illustrated by physical or chemical approaches he employs this means. This practice is an inherent weakness among American authors. For example, an entire page is devoted to the mechanics of blood pressure in the various aspects illustrated by physical laws; explaining there is great pressure in the arteries and slight in the veins; together with reasons. An American author would explain that the blood is forced through the arteries by cardiac action, returned through the veins by a sympathetic action of the vein by the artery and by muscular action and let it go at that. The chemistry of foods is another good example; there is more detail in the chemistry of food than is found in a modern chemistry text for secondary schools. My personal opinion is that texts of the future are going to trend more toward this "unification of the sciences treatment."

Only an English author would open the discussion of cells with the speculative statement, "Your body contains, it is said, about one thousand billion cells." Illustrations, of course, are apropos to the region; there are used "humble bee," "water weed" for aquatic plant and others. Certain topics receive more treatment, as "cranial nerve," "oogenesis," "blind spot" and others. The strong point in my estimation is its generous sprinkling of psychological experiments and the psychological point of view which unfortunately are avoided or intentionally neglected in most American texts.

The mechanics of the book are inferior, the binding poor and paper low grade. However, the delivery price to me last summer after a seven weeks' wait for my order was nominal, less than two dollars.

## ADVENTURES WITH LIVING THINGS . . . By

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There are no halftones but the line drawings are good. Educationally the book is below par compared with American texts. It is built on a chapter basis, which is not a criticism at points, but the amount of enrichment material we feel essential is lacking. It is truly an experimental treatment; by that I mean there are many experiments at frequent intervals throughout the work. These experiments are interesting in that they are used to prove a point in a different light that we are accustomed to.

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