

weed floss has proven a superior substitute for kapok and cork as an insulation material and for buoyancy in life preservers and aviators clothing. Milkweed floss is resistant to mildew, vermin, and to water because of its unwettable character and waxy coating. Perfection of liquid fertilizers for rapid results in increasing crop production and output per acre are important not only for the war effort but in permanent agriculture. These are but a few illustrations of new uses of biological subject matter which are essential in war.

OSCAR RIDDLE (for the Committee),
Carnegie Institution,
Cold Spring Harbor, New York

A LETTER FROM AUSTRALIA

Dear Mr. Houdek:

Enclosed find check for next year's membership. The decimal system will be a pleasant change after working with pounds, shillings and pence over here. Found the article on war chemicals especially interesting since it's a subject close to us.

Been seeing some strange flora and fauna here. . . . They have an overgrown kingfisher here . . . when it isn't making a racket the ravens and magpies are. . . . Ibis, parrots, cockatoos, emus and lyrebirds are also found. . . . One soldier caught a five-foot lizard with about three-inch claws, another had a possum, still others had a parrot, koala and wallaby. The koala is said to have scratched its captor.

They have some fine museums here. Also several good nature magazines are published. Read a good article about "Splash," a pet platypus. These monotremes are quite rare here though. I've seen only a stuffed one. I've seen wombats, dingos (the "wild dog"), poisonous snakes, and many kinds of ants. The last named are quite numerous and some make large dwellings. These may be ten- or twelve-foot circular mounds, four- or five-foot columnar clay houses with three-foot circular bases, or eighteen-inch spheres of clay nestled in the notches of trees about fifteen feet up. . . . The country swarms with rabbits. The natives use ferrets to get them. We caught some by running them down and/or digging them out. That's probably why they call Aussie soldiers diggers. . . .

Please give my regards to Dr. Colin when you see him. Also please check my address.
Sincerely yours,
MORRISON BUDNER.

BY THE WAY

NOW IS THE TIME to get your classes interested in building and repairing bird houses. Don't paint them up brightly—leave them looking weathered and "natural."

THE EARLY MIGRATING BIRDS are already with us. Bird calendars and all kinds of bird records should be started this month.

DON'T NEGLECT THE SCHOOL GARDEN this year. It needs only some concerted effort to make it one of the most popular and profitable of biology projects. It is an excellent device for getting community cooperation in school affairs. This type of work has values that parents and patrons of the school can readily see.

FROG EGGS are already ready for collection in the more southerly parts of the country. Bring a few into the laboratory or classroom and watch their development. Keep them in a fairly large volume of water, in good light but not in direct sunlight for any length of time. At first the young tadpoles feed on the "jelly" in which the eggs are encased; when they begin to swim about they need to be fed green algae such as *Spirogyra* or other similar types. In the northern states eggs may be collected throughout April and May.

Books

DAHLBERG, GUNNAR. *Race, Reason and Rubbish, A Primer of Race Biology.* Columbia University Press, New York. 240 pp. illus. 1942. \$2.25.

The first half of this little book consists of a brief discussion of the principles of heredity, illustrated by cases from plants and animals. The second half is an elementary treatment of some of the statistical consequences of Mendelian heredity in the human species, concluding with an essay on race. It is written for the general reader and is not designed as a text. There are no chapter headings or subheads, no problems, and no index.

In the opinion of the reviewer the first part would have been much strengthened by an elimination of some of the topics having no direct bearing on racial problems in man, such as asexual reproduction, gynandromorphism, intersexuality in *Lymantria*, polyploidy, and translocations, and an extension

of the discussion of principles that are directly applicable to human beings.

In the second part the author emphasizes the necessity of a careful biometrical analysis of a human population before eugenic applications are attempted. He points out the incompleteness of our knowledge of racial differences in man, and draws the general conclusion (with which most persons who are willing to look scientifically at the question will agree) that racial differences in mental characteristics have not been clearly demonstrated, and that in view of the enormous variability in mental traits within each racial group we ought to judge people as individuals rather than as representatives of a group.

Several errors have been noted: for example, on pages 120, 121, and 206 the word "pupil" is used in connection with eye-color, when "iris" obviously is meant; on pages 142 and 144 there are errors in numerical calculations. The type is clear and legible but some of the half-tones are not well reproduced.

The book is interestingly written. It contains the sort of sound information and conservative opinion that should have wide circulation in a modern world.

EDWARD C. COLIN,
Chicago Teachers College,
Chicago, Illinois

WATERS, EUGENE A. *A Study of the Application of An Educational Theory to Science Instruction*, Teachers College Contribution to Education, No. 864. 1942. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University.

This book is an effort to present specific techniques to assist teachers of science to apply newer educational theories, namely: (1) What should govern the selection of knowledge and subject matter in a course? (2) Should pupils' choices and judgments play a part in the selection of the contents of a course? (3) Should all pupils be required to cover the same ground? Forty-five tenth-grade pupils, in two sections, in General Science, were tried out for 22 weeks on the bases that: (1) pupils should select such problems as seem worthy of their efforts and interests, (2) classroom procedures should be built around pupils' concepts of their own experiences, (3) there should be no fixed amount of ground to be covered, (4) the value of methods of procedure should be stressed rather than subject matter.

The groups chose, by majority vote, to study electricity at first. By the end of the 8th week their subject matter spread from the construction of burglar alarms to electric door chimes. At the end of 22 weeks their

subject matter had spread from sulphides of metals, physiology of plant growth, human reproduction to cosmetics and milk testing.

The experiment was well done and well reported. The book is stimulating and convincing in general, but open to argument in places. It should be read by every teacher of General Science.

GUY F. WILLIAMS

HUNTER, GEORGE. *Life Science*. American Book Company, New York. 803 pp. 1941. \$1.56.

Mechanical Make-up: This book is a large one, $7 \times 9\frac{1}{4}$ by $1\frac{3}{8}$ inches, bound in rust-colored cloth, the front cover made interesting by a simple illustration of the southern flight of wild geese over a corn field at sunset. The paper is of good quality and the print clear. Illustrations are photos and line drawings of exceptional quality and include some half tones on hydroponics and plant nutrition. There are several modern multi-colored illustrations.

One disadvantage of this book is its size, which is incompatible with a health book for better posture, since the average child assumes a load of books to carry and a bad posture simultaneously.

A feature which will recommend itself to our "funnies"-minded young will be the clever and apropos cartoons scattered throughout the textual material.

Literary Style: Many interesting stories, expanding the understanding of the subject are found in this text. Some examples are the pollination of the Yucca, discovery of the Ancon breed of sheep, the navel orange, the fossil camels, and the accidental discovery of the parathyroid's action. These flashes of detail vitalize the necessary factual statements in a biology course and will secure interest and retention on the part of the student.

For the most part the book is comprehensible to the age level for which it is intended. The style is clear with the sentences moving along evenly. The vocabulary is generally suited to high school students, though such words as "involucere" and certain of the words used in the terminology of heredity might perhaps have been omitted.

Paragraph headings such as "How The Eyes Do Their Work," "What To Do About Deafness," and "Why The Patent Medicine Industry Has Flourished," speak to the student in a way that he will respond.

Subject Matter: At no time in world history have we felt a greater need for thinking citizens, for wise parents, for competent wage earners, and for a recognition of what good health contributes in the attainment of each of these. This author devotes some thirty-six