

version that stirred up the Western World, the first edition." He also points out that although "the battle for evolution is won" and that although Darwin was clearly wrong in some of his discussions and confused in others, the book "deserves to be studied by every educated person." In fact, he goes on to say, "the non-biologist might find Darwin's account easier to read and more convincing than the treatment given to evolution in a modern biology text . . ." Certainly the *Origin* belongs in every high school library, and if the library doesn't have one or is considering a new one, this edition can be highly recommended, for a study of Mayr's introduction makes the subsequent reading of the book immensely more profitable.

Charles B. Heiser  
Department of Botany  
Indiana University

A SHORT HISTORY OF BIOLOGY, Isaac Asimov, 182 pp., \$3.95, The Natural History Press (Doubleday and Company, Inc.), New York, 1964.

One of the major shortcomings in the background of many biology teachers is the lack of exposure to the *functional* history of biology. Most teachers' knowledge of biological history is limited to the bits and snatches which are included in the treatment of various subjects in standard biology textbooks. Those who attempt to remedy their deficiencies in this area often find the standard references to be very ponderous documents with an abundance of detail from which it is difficult for the non-specialist to separate the "forest from the trees." The present volume fills a real void in that it combines an accurate treatment with Mr. Asimov's well known, highly readable writing style. In a book so short, an obvious difficulty lies in determining a basis for content selection. Although there are notable absences among the people and events described, the reader carries away with him a good appreciation of the flow of biological history.

The present book, although not a substitute for a good comprehensive history of biology, provides a good introduction to the subject for the busy reader and a delightful reading experience

Ernest Burkman  
Department of Science Education  
Florida State University

CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN SPENCER FULLERTON BAIRD AND LOUIS AGASSIZ—TWO PIONEER AMERICAN NATURALISTS, Elmer Charles Herber, Ed., 237 pp., \$5.00, Smithsonian Institution, Connecticut Printers, Inc., Hartford, Connecticut, 1963.

Some biologists with dominant interests in biochemistry, biophysics, DNA, RNA, the ge-

netic code, molecular biology and related fields may lack the interest to read 297 letters, even though written by two great American naturalists, Louis Agassiz and Spencer Fullerton Baird, between 1847 and 1873. On the other hand, those interested in the early history of the development of biology in the U.S.A. and in great personalities as revealed by their correspondence will find the letters informative, some even entertaining.

Agassiz was born in Switzerland in 1807 and migrated to the U.S. in 1846. He became a popular teacher and lecturer and an enthusiastic researcher. Baird was born in 1823, studied at Dickinson College where he later taught until he joined the staff of the Smithsonian Institution in 1850. Both men were ardent collectors and students of nature from childhood.

In a brief review of these letters only a few interesting facts may be mentioned. By necessity others are omitted.

The early letters were more friendly. Later as differences of opinion developed on scientific questions letters became more formal, some even critical, especially by Agassiz. Throughout, however, the letters demonstrate a spirit of cooperation with respect to collections of plants and animals and publications.

How did these busy men find time to write so many letters in long hand? What would we do today without the help of secretaries and equipment to expedite our work?

Strange as it may seem, the word "evolution" is not found in any of the letters, even though most of them were written after Darwin's "Origin of Species." Agassiz never accepted the theory of "Natural Selection."

An incident of interest and somewhat amusing is the libel suit brought by J. T. Foster against Agassiz for criticizing Foster's "Complete Geological Chart." The judge, however, had the wisdom to dismiss the case.

The reader may wonder why the author did not include a picture of Baird. There are two of Agassiz.

Fernandus Payne  
Department of Zoology  
Indiana University

ANTOINE LAVOISIER, Rebecca B. Marcus, 179 pp., \$2.95, Franklin Watts, Inc., 575 Lexington Avenue, New York 22, 1964.

To us at this time, the science of chemistry, both applied and fundamental, governs practically all of our economics and our very lives. Without this science our civilization would be, no doubt, where it was, back at the time our country was founded. We would not have our "wonder drugs," our metals and our control of diseases were it not for a new and exact line of chemical thought brought about through the