

**Physical Organic Chemistry.** *Jack Hine.* McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York. 1956. xiv+497 pp. \$9.00.

This book is organized into four parts: basic principles (92 pages), polar reactions (283 pages), free radical reactions (75 pages), and four-center type reactions (28 pages). Thus, the book attempts to cover in its 465 pages of text, the modern explanations for the behavior of organic chemical substances. In this, it is probably more successful than any other recent book on this subject. The book is quite capably written and approaches many of the topics from a critical point of view. The organization and readability are good and references to the original literature are numerous. Very few errors in text or typography were spotted by this reviewer. The main criticism that can be leveled at this book is one which would be expected for a work with this wide a field of subject matter and brevity in physical size—that criticism is that in many places the treatment is quite superficial. However, this criticism does not greatly affect the wide use this book will find as a textbook in graduate organic chemistry courses and as a reference. This excellent book can be recommended as a good addition to any chemist's library.

WILLIAM N. WHITE.

**General Botany.** *W. T. Taylor and R. J. Weber.* D. Van Nostrand Co., Inc., Princeton, N. J. 1956. vii+376 pp. \$5.75.

The book, according to the authors, was designed for use in an introductory, one-semester course embodying a physiological approach to the study of plants. It seems doubtful that these objectives were attained. Some botanists will feel that the level of presentation of some subjects is rather advanced. Basically the organization of the book seems to be taxonomic with well over one-half the text pages devoted to anatomy and morphology, especially of the lower groups. Emphasis seems to be on details and unnecessary terminology rather than on basic concepts and an understanding of the interrelationships of heredity, environment, processes, structure, and reproduction. Chapter subjects often seem to be treated as entities with a lack of continuity from one to the next. The illustrations are quite good but most of them are drawings.

R. A. POPHAM.

**Present-Day Psychology.** *A. A. Roback,* Ed. New York: Philosophical Library, Inc. 1955. xiv+995 pp. \$12.00.

This book is offered as the most comprehensive survey of contemporary psychology available in English today. That it ranges far in its coverage of psychological topics cannot be denied; whether it is representative of what is being done is something else again. American behaviorists will thus be amused to find that conditioning and related theories have no place in such a collection, even though a chapter is given to a survey of histories of psychology. Topics with the best empirical foundations come off second best; Harry Stack Sullivan seems to require almost twice as much discussion as the whole field of sensory processes. There are, of course, ample resumés of progress in these areas, and hence little harm is done so long as the volume stays out of the hands of the unwitting. To them, it would give a grossly false impression of the psychological status quo.

What can we expect of an expert who is asked to review the major facets of a field in the space of a few short pages? This is the dilemma for any encyclopaedist, and the success of his work depends upon his skill in defining the task. If the discussions are to warrant the attention of a specialist, they are at best annotated bibliographies. This result is admirably achieved by several of the book's contributors, and their papers make it well worth owning. As we might expect, however, there is substantial qualitative variation. *Present-day Psychology* will not be remembered as a milestone in the literature, but it is a useful guide, and particularly so as an introduction to ways of thinking that are somewhat uncommon in this country.

DONALD R. MEYER.

**Classics of Biology.** *August Pi Suñer.* Translated from the Spanish by *Charles M. Stern.* Philosophical Library, Inc. New York. 1955. x+337 pp. \$7.50.

This book is a review of selected controversies of historical interest to the biologist and others interested in the development of scientific ideas. However, it is much more than a list of names and dates. It is not only a chronology of ideas, but also an interpretation of those ideas. While we must recognize that there is much to be learned from the errors of our predecessors, fortunately this book indulges in a minimum of dwelling on the mistakes of early workers.

Throughout the book there is repeated emphasis on the relationship between cause and effect; between form and function. Also recurrent are the ideas that the whole is more than the sum of its parts, and that there is a purpose to life, but each individual is only incidental to that purpose. Some interpretations are surprisingly non-mechanistic in view of the author's background in physiology. One might criticize the author's choice of certain words, e.g. ". . . the microgamete . . . seeks out . . . the macrogamete." There are, also, many long, complex sentences in which ideas are difficult to follow. There is much in the book that will be of value to the teacher and the serious student in elucidating the historical development of ideas.

ROBERT M. CROWELL.