
Invertebrate Fossils. *Raymond C. Moore, Cecil J. Lalicker, and Alfred G. Fischer.* McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York. 1952. xii+766 pp. \$12.00.

In the field of Invertebrate Paleontology, the teacher is faced with something of a dilemma when it comes to the choice of a text. Few texts are available to him and all of them are more than 15 years old. It is rather remarkable that the last two decades have produced so few texts in the field of paleontology whereas other branches of science seem to suffer from a plethora of them. It would be curious to examine the reasons for such a lack of manuals; one suspects that the prospective author starts out with good intentions, begins to gather information, outlines his chapters, and then gets down to the business of putting flesh and muscle on the bare skeleton. Perhaps it is at this point that he realizes the enormous amount of material which he must incorporate into his text, the variety of publications in all living languages which must be considered in order to have an up-to-date treatment of the subject. Then too, unless he is himself an artist of no mean ability, the illustration of a text of this sort presents him with other difficulties. It may be at this point that our hypothetical author throws up his hands in despair and abandons his project.

It is refreshing to find, therefore, that in spite of difficulties, in spite of the enormous amount of work involved, Professor Moore and his colleagues have persevered to the end and completed a task of such monumental proportions. The result is a complete, clear, yet concise treatment of a subject which is of interest not only to paleontologists themselves but to all geologists, zoologists, geneticists, and students of evolution.

Some of the difficult groups of fossils on which much research has been done in the last quarter century receive adequate treatment for the first time in a book intended for the beginning student. Picking a few at random, the Pleosponges, Conularids, Tintinnids, and Graptolites are here discussed in the light of recent work. This may not be a world-shaking event, yet the interpretation of these organisms in the past has led to several erroneous conclusions concerning not only paleontology but also evolution, paleoecology, and the geologic age of certain living groups of invertebrates. Their treatment in this text will be a revelation to those whose acquaintance with invertebrate paleontology dates back 15 or even 10 years.

From the standpoint of the teacher, this book has many advantages. Its organization is simple, yet clear and logical; the illustrations, all line-drawings, are worth many pages of text; the references at the end of each chapter, both plentiful and up-to-date, provide a veritable mine of auxiliary information.

From the standpoint of the student—and the term is here taken in the broader sense—it will have a usefulness which will persist long after the period of formal classroom acquaintance with it. It is a book which the field geologist, the teacher, and the amateur will turn to again and again for enlightenment and guidance.

A. LA ROCQUE.