

considered individually, may be found more highly developed in lower species. For the better understanding and for the more thorough investigation of such living processes, recourse must be had to animals in which the particular mechanism under consideration is most highly typified. It is just here that the Cambridge series of Monographs on Comparative Physiology brings the student or worker in physiology into touch with the evolution, the variety, and what might perhaps be regarded by him as the exaggeration of normal human processes.

(1) The heart is the organ which has always attracted the attention of human beings from the remotest ages, and it is fitting that a volume should be devoted to this organ, giving in this case some qualitative and many quantitative characteristics of species differing widely in their normal activities.

(2) The discovery of internal secretions is so recent and so largely based on a study of the higher vertebrates, that a volume putting forward the present state of knowledge regarding the invertebrates as well is useful not only in making possible wider generalisations, but also in providing new material of a simpler type for further investigation.

(3) The volume on ciliary movement deals with a subject which, in virtue of its complete overshadowing by muscular movement, is only very briefly referred to in text-books on human physiology; its study is best carried out in those organisms depending wholly on ciliary movement for locomotion, muscular movement being non-existent; only in this way can the various hydrodynamical problems be investigated.

All three volumes present the matter in a readable manner with well-chosen diagrams, and will prove of interest to the student of general physiology as well as to the physiological investigator.

(1) *In the Beginning: the Origin of Civilisation.* By Prof. G. Elliot Smith. (The Beginning of Things Series.) Pp. vi+90. (London: Gerald Howe, Ltd., 1928.) 2s. 6d. net

(2) *The Origins of Agriculture.* By Harold Peake. (Benn's Sixpenny Library, No. 6.) Pp. 78. (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd., 1928.) 6d.

(1) PROF. ELLIOT SMITH'S little book, though not the first in order of publication, is the introductory volume in the series "The Beginning of Things." In his prefatory remarks he explains that the object of the series is the publication of a number of volumes, each dealing with some aspect of culture from a common point of view. What this point of view is, it is the purpose of the introductory volume to demonstrate.

Here we have Prof. Elliot Smith at his best. So far as the theoretical side goes, he has given us no more lucid and logically argued statement of the case for his views on the diffusion of culture and its origin in Egypt. Although he is careful to point out that the pursuit of any single line of investigation such as the origin of agriculture or of metal working leads to disaster, virtually his case rests upon the first cultivation of barley in Egypt.

(2) Mr. Peake, in his brilliant little study of the origin of agriculture, of which the size and the popular form of publication are no criterion of the importance, is directly at odds with Prof. Elliot Smith. He has collected carefully all the evidence bearing upon the origin of the different kinds of grain. After a judicial survey, his conclusion is on the whole against Egypt and turns rather to northern Syria. Apart from this question, Mr. Peake's book gives an admirably reasoned account of the prehistoric conditions of life in which agriculture must have originated.

*Where are the Dead?* Pp. ix+136+xi. (London, Toronto, Melbourne and Sydney: Cassell and Co., Ltd., 1928.) 3s. 6d. net.

THIS volume comprises a collection of articles by a wide variety of writers upon the subject of human immortality, contributed to the *Daily News*. Undoubtedly the most interesting of these to students of science will be the contributions of Sir Arthur Keith and Prof. Julian Huxley, since these contain a concise and clear statement of views widely held in scientific circles. It is probable that the importance for religion of either positive or negative views on this subject has been exaggerated.

Sir Arthur Keith rightly says that "If the spirit of truth is the kernel of religion, then men of science are truly religious beings." He might have added that absorption in disinterested research is one of the modern spiritual equivalents for religious asceticism. At the same time, students of science should not overlook the significance of a point of view such as that expressed with great ability in the contribution by Mr. Hugh Walpole, which strikes us as in some ways the best thing in the book. Whilst the others, orthodox and unorthodox alike, are all more or less obsessed with the distinction between body and mind (even when they reduce these to common terms), Mr. Walpole sees that the only important distinction is that between the elements in our experience which are exactly measurable, and those which are not. The important thing about man is not that he has, or has not, a 'soul,' but that "out of such a midget there have proceeded the spiritual greatness of Hamlet, the magnificence of the Fifth Symphony, the glorious simplicity of St. Francis. . . ." J. C. H.

*Factors affecting the Distribution of Electrolytes, Water, and Gases in the Animal Body: Lectures delivered at Rutgers University under the Luther Laflin Kellogg Foundation.* By Dr. Donald D. Van Slyke. (Monographs on Experimental Biology.) Pp. vii+62. (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Co., n.d.) 10s. 6d. net.

THE title of this little monograph may alarm those who are not gifted with a taste for mathematics, but its perusal leaves only a feeling of admiration for the manner in which the author has presented his subject. An examination of the degree to which the distribution of electrolytes, water, and gases in the body obeys the laws of physics and chemistry necessitates the use of a certain amount of mathematics, but the presentation is so clear