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BOOK REVIEWS

THE ANAEROBIC BACTERIA AND THEIR ACTIVITIES IN NATURE AND DISEASE. (A subject Bibliography in Two Volumes). Elizabeth McCoy and L. S. McClung. University of California Press, Berkeley, and Cambridge University Press, London (1939) Vol. I, 295 pp.; Vol. II, 602 pp. \$10.00

It is obviously impossible to review a bibliography; one can only describe its contents and form, and one who has for more than a quarter of a century attempted to keep abreast of the developments in the field of anaerobic bacteriology can only sit back and gaze in wonder at the accomplishment here represented as a result of five years' intermittent work. For these two volumes comprise approximately 120,000 entries of about 10,500 original journal articles, monographs, and other published reports. Even so, the authors do not claim that it is complete.

Volume I is a chronological index of authors beginning with the year 1816 and ending with the year 1938, thus covering a period of 122 years. It is interesting to note that the earliest references, prior to the actual discovery of anaerobic bacteria by Pasteur in 1861, were all to clinical descriptions of tetanus, botulism, and gaseous gangrene. This volume also contains a subject index outline with page references to Volume II as well as a valuable list of abbreviations used in citing periodical references.

Volume II is arranged by subjects, the main headings being habitat, culture methods, morphology, metabolism, products of metabolism, physiology, serological studies, disease relations, classifications, and special lists. These main headings are subdivided into sub-headings under each of which the references are listed chronologically. Each reference gives the author's name, his initials, the journal, volume, inclusive paging, and year, but not the title. It is therefore necessary to refer back to the appropriate year in Volume I to find the title. This makes the use of the bibliography a little cumbersome but avoids the increased bulk and expensive printing of a second volume large enough to include the titles. One wonders indeed why a second volume was needed at all because a good subject index with numbers keyed to the references listed in Volume I would have made Volume II entirely superfluous. Volume II does, in fact, contain a good index, except that names of species are not included, but this is easily permitted by the fact that they are listed alphabetically in the section on classification.

Since the authors have promised supplementary editions to index the literature accumulating after 1937, and have invited criticisms of the form and use of the present volumes, they may be induced to consider some of the above suggestions. In the meantime, all workers in the field of anaerobic bacteriology will be grateful for the excellent beginning here made.

The mechanical labor of printing and binding has been well done.

(Ivan C. Hall)