

was planned "to include leading students of genetics, ecology, anthropology and paleontology", as indeed most such conferences are nowadays, and the list of contributors makes impressive reading, especially on the genetical side. The meetings were opened by Mayr with a salutatory paper, "Where are we?" which deserves to be widely read for the emphasis it places on the value of evolutionary biology in contrast to the more fashionable molecular biology of to-day. The final paper by Stebbins provides an excellent summary and commentary on the proceedings and emphasises a number of important matters on which we are still largely ignorant, especially the evolution of genes themselves and the relation of their structures to their actions. The twenty-four papers which came in between, range widely from genes and polygenic systems, through polymorphism within species and cytoplasmic differences between them, genetic systems and ecotypic differentiation, to the fossil record, sense organs and the nature of human differences.

There is a wealth of information to be gained from this volume, and some new ideas, or at least novel and more extended treatments of ideas. The genetical aspect is well to the fore, as would indeed be expected; but not all the contributions are basically genetical in their interest: some do little more than pay lip-service to the significance of the genotype and others barely do even this. The volume will be of interest to many besides geneticists. It is indeed to be welcomed as an addition to the library of evolution and among the many (and it must be said, often disappointing) volumes that mark the spate of centenary meetings it will rank high. Among the volumes of the Cold Spring Harbor Symposia, however, I am not sure that it will rank so high. Over the years these symposia have come to set a very exacting standard and, as we have had occasion to learn, a Darwin celebration does not necessarily produce the most outstanding of writing on evolution

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ASPECTS OF THE ORIGIN OF LIFE. Ed. by M. Florin. London, New York, Paris, Los Angeles: Pergamon Press. 1960. Pp. 213. 30s

Here are 20 articles selected from a symposium on the origin of life held at Moscow in 1959. The authors are Russian, American, British and Japanese and their fields of enquiry are astrophysics, geophysics, fossil chemistry, physical chemistry and biochemistry. The editor claims, not unreasonably, that recent developments in space flight have taken this subject from a region of the purest speculation to one of practical importance. It is still a region which makes little use of genetic data, Pauling and Calvin coming closest to our interests. Bernal's paper is illustrated with admirable diagrams and many papers have extensive bibliographies. C. D. D.

MAN AND HIS ANCESTRY. By Alan Houghton Brodrick. London: Hutchinson. 1960. Pp. 256. 4 text figs. & 16 plates. 35s.

This book is a non-technical account of the fossil evidence of the history of man up to the Mesolithic period. There is much gossipy detail about each discovery and even one or two quaint sallies into genetics: "There is only one race of men, the human race" (p. 29). References, numbering 300, are an odd compilation. C. D. D.