

## BOOK REVIEWS

SHILLING, CHARLES WESLEY: *Atomic Energy Encyclopedia in the Life Sciences* (Philadelphia-London: W. B. Saunders Company, 1964)

Charles Wesley Shilling, M.D., D.Sc. is the Editor and Principal Contributor to this book. He was assisted by Mirian Teed Shilling, M.A. and an Advisory Committee composed of eight eminent scientists. Of the eight persons listed, three are physicians. In addition, a considerable number of physicians contributed material related to their special field of interest. The volume was prepared under the auspices of the Division of Technical Information of the United States Atomic Energy Commission.

This book, *The Atomic Energy Encyclopedia*, is a unique arrangement of a tremendous amount of information related to the total subject of nuclear energy. It is somewhat less comprehensive than an orthodox encyclopedia but a great deal more detailed than a dictionary, although it fills some of the latter functions. Actually it is best described as a source book, a description which exactly fits its contents.

A reviewer cannot report on this book after the method used for a general text-book or a monograph. The book is best reviewed from the viewpoint of its construction. The material is arranged on the basis of fifteen broad topics identified as radiation physics, elements and radioisotopes, radiation biology, genetic effects, somatic effects, health physics and therapy, radiation accidents, uses of radioisotopes, means of protection, contaminations, waste disposal, instrumentation used in detection, the principles of accelerators and nuclear reactors, atomic weapons and organizational matters.

Within these fifteen broad topics, some 1200 individual items are selected and arranged in alphabetical order. The topics cover very nearly every concept and application of isotopes and radioactivity that would be of likely interest to a clinician, biologist or laboratory worker. An important feature of the book for a physician is that it is not heavily charged with mathematics.

The writing is lucid, easily read and well illustrated. A useful feature of the format is an index which appears in the front of the book and serves both as an outline of the subject matter and an index thereof.

Discussion of subjects is sufficiently complete to satisfy the purposes for which the book was written. Not many books of this kind have appeared in the American literature on this subject. Although it has its more technical moments, this book is not designed primarily for research reference or as a text for one who seeks a highly specialized treatise on the facts and principles of nuclear energy. For the practising physician, biologist or laboratory technologist the book has great value and is highly recommended. *Atomic Energy Encyclopedia in the Life Sciences* is exceptionally well done.

THAD P. SEARS. M.D.