authors' skill; however, these shortcomings will not detract from its principal worth—that of providing the reader with an authoritative, refreshing, and admirable summary of man's knowledge on the venomous reptiles.

F.E.R.
(from: *BioScience*)

HOREN, W. P. (Department of Epidemiology and International Health, University of California School of Medicine, San Francisco, Calif.). Ligature-incision-suction compared with amputation in the treatment of rabbits inoculated with crotalid venoms. *Am. J. Trop. Med. Hyg.* **18**, 305, 1969.

THIS is a rather confusing article which appears to have been written without particular insight into the present status of the chemistry or pharmacology of *Crotalus* venoms. It reports on a variation of often repeated experimental studies that will no doubt reign further confusion on the first aid treatment for rattlesnake bites. Now that the cryotherapists appear to have reversed ship (see *Texas Med.* **66**, 42, 1970) it is difficult to believe that someone has gone astern again and advocates the heating of the area of envenomation. I am sure those whose task it is to treat clinical cases of snakebite will find it difficult to accept the author's rather precarious conclusions, and they would be more inclined to agree with him that his findings 'related to heat invite speculation'.

This type of naively controlled experiment again points out the care one must take in applying data on experimental animals, even when the parameters can be vigorously controlled, to clinical problems. The hundreds of 'cures' for snakebite in experimental animals described in the literature do not seem to have a parallel application in humans.

J.A.E.

MARETIĆ, Z. and LEBEZ, D. (Medicinski Centar, Pula, Yugoslavia). *Lycosa tarentula* in fact and fiction. *Bull. Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle* **41**, 260, 1969.

THIS is a very interesting and informative paper on the complex of 'tarantism'. The authors include some notes on experiments with the venom of *L. tarentula*.

F.E.R

International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna, 1970 (Proceedings of a Panel, Bangkok, 19–22 May, 1969). *Radiation Sensitivity of Toxins and Animal Poisons*. New York: UNIPUB, Inc., 120 pp., 1970.

THIS PAPER bound book contains the manuscripts, and certain conclusions and recommendations, presented at an International Atomic Energy Agency meeting in Bangkok, 19–22 May, 1969. Six of the papers deal specifically with snake venoms. They range in content from the effects of radiation on venoms and antisera to the labeling of snake venoms with radioactive isotopes.

Although much of the material of the volume may be known to those who have followed the problem of the radiation sensitivity of venoms during the past decade, the book serves the purpose of putting together the important papers on this subject in a handy booklet form. It should be of particular interest to those contemplating the use of radioactive isotopes in their venom work or in producing antivenins or toxoids.

The book can be purchased through IAE Sales Agents and booksellers in all member countries of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

F.E.R.

MATTHEW, H. and LAWSON, A. A. H. (Regional Poisoning Treatment Centre, Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, Scotland). *Treatment of Common Acute Poisonings*, Edinburgh and London: E. & S. Livingstone, 160 pp., 1970.

THIS IS a handy reference work written for the practicing physician faced with the problem of acute poisoning. Although it is primarily intended for the practitioner in Great Britain, the presentation, in most cases, will be of interest to physicians practicing in any part of the world. Some problems of poisoning, which might be more common in the United States or India, etc., are relatively uncommon in the British Isles, and *vice versa*, but in general the scope is practical.

As the name implies, the emphasis is on treatment. The mechanisms and modes of actions for the various poisons are not given and the clinical features of the various disease states are brief and might have been better presented if the development of the clinical course had been placed in a time sequence form.

There is a section on poisonous plants and one on snakebite. Under the topic of snakebite one reads that, "the effects of the *Viper berus* bite are less dangerous than the use of the so-called specific antivenom. This therefore should *not* be used." This questionable advice and its consequences is and has been difficult to evaluate, since accurate figures on bites by the adder in Great Britain are not recorded, nor have knowledgeable opinions been expressed on the incidence. One can only say from a review of the literature that there has been a number of deaths from adder bites in England and Scotland, and that in most of these cases antivenom has not been used.

In spite of these minor criticisms, the book would be highly recommendable to the practicing toxicologist.

F.E.R.

PASTER, Z. and ABBOTT, B. C. (Department of Biological Sciences, Allan Hancock Foundation, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California). Gibberellic acid: A growth factor in the unicellular alga *Gymnodinium breve*. *Science* **169**, 600, 1970.

GIBBERELLIC acid stimulates growth in the unicellular alga *Gymnodinium breve* (dinoflagellate). The maximum effect was obtained with 10^{-7} molar gibberellic acid, whereas concentrations greater than 5×10^{-7} mole per l. were inhibitory. The effect of the compound is observed as a marked shortening of the lag period, which is normally 6 to 8 days after innoculation.

(Authors' abstract).

MACCONNELL, J. G., BLUM, M. S. and FALES, H. M. (Department of Entomology, University of Georgia, Athens; and Molecular Disease Branch, National Heart Institute, Bethesda, Maryland). Alkaloid from fire ant venom: Identification and synthesis. *Science* **168**, 840, 1970.

AN ALKALOID, trans-2-methyl-6-*n*-undercylpiperidine (aolenopsin A), has been isolated from the venom of the fire ant *Solenopsis saevissima*. The structure has been confirmed by an unambiguous synthesis.

(Authors' abstract).