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BOOKS

SPIDER, EGG AND MICROCOSM

by Eugene Kinkead
 Alfred A. Knopf, N.Y. \$4

SUBTITLED "Three Men and Three Worlds of Science," this book brings together three Profiles originally published in *The New Yorker*. The three men are Dr. Alexander Petrunkevitch, Dr. Alexis Romanoff and Dr. Roman Vishniac; their fields of science, respectively, are arachnology, embryology and microbiology.

Dr. Petrunkevitch, a retired Yale professor of zoology, has spent most of his life collecting and studying spiders; Dr. Romanoff, professor of chemical embryology at Cornell, has put in more than a quarter of a century of constant study of birds' eggs; Dr. Vishniac's consuming interest is in studying and photographing microscopic life.

These are more than colorful portraits of three dedicated men; they are introductions to three generally unfamiliar fields of science — and they are absorbing reading.

FRONTIERS OF ASTRONOMY

by Fred Hoyle
 Harper & Brothers, N.Y. \$5

FRED HOYLE, one of Britain's most famous young astronomers, is known both for his bold research theories, and for his popular writings on astronomy and physics. A fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, and professor of mathematics at Cambridge University in England, he has just arrived at Caltech as a lecturer in theoretical cosmology for the next four months.

Applying a combination of modern mathematics and physics to astronomical theories, Hoyle comes up with a shower of ideas. His theme in this book, however, is clearly stated: "the great stage where the Universe acts out its play is one on which the twin roles of coincidence and chance have scarcely any entry. From the vast expanding system of galaxies down to the humblest planet, and to the creatures who live on it, there seems to be a strongly forged chain of cause and effect."

Astronomers are, as a rule, a conservative lot, and many of them don't agree with Hoyle's theories, but he believes obviously that a bold approach to the mysteries of the Universe is far better than a cautious one.

Although most of the book can be enjoyed by the layman, knowledge of nuclear physics and mathematics will prove helpful in understanding some of the more technical chapters. Certainly, *Frontiers of Astronomy* is a creditable successor to Hoyle's first book, *The Nature of the Universe* (*E & S*—June, 1951.)

GUIDED TOUR OF CAMPUS HUMOR

by Max Shulman
 Hanover House, Garden City, N.Y. \$2.95

Reviewed by Russ Hunter
 Co-editor of *Farrago**

SOME THINGS strike you as uproarious when you read them. In my life I've stumbled on just a few pieces intended to be funny that left me terribly tickled. I can recall a comic book, when very young; *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, the first time I saw it; and now, parts of Shulman's *Guided Tour*.

Max Shulman, author of some very funny books of his own (*Sleep Till Noon*, *The Feather Merchants*, etc.) has turned editor to cull the best from 65 college humor magazines printed over the last 50 years. The prime reason for laying out your \$2.95 for this 50-year slumgullion is to get the short, unclassifiable humorous essays and narratives that are the highest end and the main justification of a campus rag. These little scraps won't ever see the light of day anywhere else. They are on touchy subjects, or they are too topical or too closely connected to the life they are concerned with.

The rest of the book—the jokes, the sly verse, all the miscellaneous fodder of the standard campus humor magazine—is all right for the kiddies who are going through it for the first time. But the over-15 set will not only have "heard this one before"—they will have just read it again in last month's *Reader's Digest*.

The *Guided Tour* is not built for a long session of churning through page after page. Rather, it should be dabbled in so as not to fatigue the funny bone. It's a choice item for plugging up short squiggles of time like those spent in waiting for your wench to put that last touch on her face.

* Caltech's undergraduate literary and humor magazine.