Books

The Air We Breathe

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Charles C. Thomas, Publisher . . $14.00

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This book is the record of a symposium held at the University of California Medical Center in San Francisco last year. The book is divided into five sections which cover phases of the air pollution problem: The "normal" atmosphere and its variations; the air pollution problem of industry; urban living and air pollution – smog and fog; specific problems (such as the effects of dust on the human lung); and factors in the study and origin of lung cancer.

I had the pleasure of attending this symposium and my impression was that the organizers succeeded in making this event most pleasant. Top men in the various fields covering the impact of changes in our environment presented factual material, while at the same time these summaries were made palatable by the injection of personal views and historical details, which are not to be found in the garden variety of books on air pollution.

From A to Z

The discussion ranged from a lecture on the composition and origin of our atmosphere by Dr. Harold Urey, to the hot subject of the effect of cigarette smoking on longevity, and the controversial use of artificial ionization in ventilation or air conditioning. The problems of automobiles and smog, radioactive pollution, city planning, and other impacts of environment on our lives are briefly but intelligently covered in this record of the proceedings.

The symposium has been clearly written and is readily understandable by the educated layman. Its refreshing approach and the inclusion of partially corrected discussions adds to the value of the book and it makes clear to the reader the proper principles of how to live with and use our natural resources in the best way possible.