

BOOK REVIEW

Insects, a Guide to Familiar American Insects. H. S. Zim and C. Cottam. New York, Simon & Schuster, 1956. Pp. 160. \$1.00.

One of the avowed aims of our society is to encourage amateur entomology. Members who are asked to suggest a book for beginners need look no further than this really pocket-sized Golden Nature Guide. The authors are the ubiquitous Dr. H. S. Zim, Professor of Education at the University of Illinois, and Dr. Clarence Cottam, Director of the Welder Wildlife Foundation, Formerly Assistant Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The all-important illustrations are by James Gordon Irving. These are all in color, mostly showing food plants or other background. It is surprising that the book is not better known for this is the revised second edition; the first edition appeared in 1951.

To save space there is no table of contents, but there is an index. The book opens with directions and a short descriptive key to 15 orders with typical specimens illustrated. Then comes a 10-page outline, giving one or 2 paragraphs each on: what insects are; insect relatives; numbers; insects and man; insects in their place;

control; family tree; structure; when and where to look; and how to set about collecting and studying. Later 2 pages of text describe and distinguish between butterflies and moths. These pages are enlivened by marginal and text pictures. Most of the 225 species on 135 pages have their ranges shown on small maps, covering North America from just south of the Mexican border to about 200 miles into Canada. Naturally, the species include some not found in Canada, nevertheless all the insects are common but showy or striking in some way. Scientific names of all the species illustrated, are given in a second index by page numbers. There is also an annotated list of 6 books to cover the next stage of study or inquiry. These are: *Comstock, J. H., An Introduction to Entomology*; *Jaques, H. E., How to know the Insects*; *Klots, A. B., A Field Guide to the Butterflies*; *Lutz, F. E., Field Book of Insects*; *Swain, R., The Insect Guide*; and *Urquhart, F. A., Introducing the Insect*.

In sum, this little book is a miracle of compression. For price, coverage, and sheer attractiveness it has no peer.

—H. R. MacCarthy.