

TABLOID BOOK REVIEW

Microbe Hunters, by Paul de Kruif. New York; Harcourt, Brace and Company, \$3.50.

Dr. de Kruif has written a book that is so different from other popular science literature that it stands alone on a shelf. What Monsieur Maurois has done for Shelley in his "Ariel", what Miss Barrington has done for Byron in her "Glorious Apollo", what Mr. Strachey has done for Victoria, he has done for a dozen bacteriologists. By dramatizing their achievements, by putting their thoughts into monolog, by cutting out the unessential details of their lives and the technicalities of their methods, he has made them live again, and given the reader an unforgettable familiarity with them. He has avoided the common failing of biographers, that of being overawed by the great men of whom they write. He treats his heroes with a light touch never attempting to conceal their faults and frailties, wasting no time in empty eulogies, yet somehow they stand out all the greater from being handled as human beings, instead of pedestaled as demigods.

We know them all whether we were acquainted with them before or not. Pasteur we all know because he has been fortunate in his biographers. Metchnikoff also because he has been his own spokesman in his once popular book, "The Prolongation of Life." But Leeuwenhook has been to most of us merely a name, vaguely associated with microscopy, while Spallanzani has not even been a name. The author must have done a lot of digging into dusty volumes and dull reports to have got out his facts, yet his writing shows no trace of the digging, dust and dulness, but reads like a newspaper "story".

EDWIN E. SLOSSON

The largest motor-ship in the world, carrying 1,800 passengers, has just been built in England.

Ordinary black photographs can be transformed into sepia pictures by chemically combining them with sulphur.

More than 90 pounds of sugar is a year's ration for the average person in the United States.

Motor alcohol will not mix with motor grades of gasoline unless the alcohol is free from water.

Sirius, the Dog Star, has a satellite so heavy that it weighs 25 tons to the pint.
