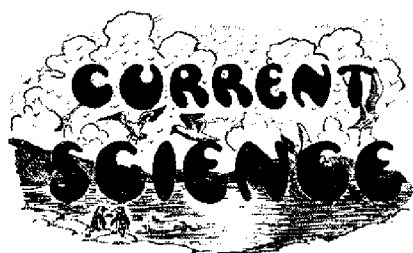


are endless debates, while people continue to die of hunger, disease and poverty. This is not to undermine the importance of environmental and human safety. Let us restate the issues. Tremendous amount of genetic engineering is going on in nature and there is lateral transfer of genes. These, however, take place in the time-frame of decades and centuries. It is not realistic to expect results on environmental impact of GM crops from a few trials. GM crop is a drop in the ocean. Resistance to *Bt*-gene will develop in insects in the field. It is a matter of time. This need not be projected as a Frankenstein monster. After all, we are living with drug-resistant

malaria, tuberculosis and cancer. Alternate strategies are always worked upon and this is true with the *Bt*-gene as well. Realistically, we should utilize *Bt*-cotton and derive maximum benefit during its useful period, while developing strategies to face resistance as and when it develops. Human safety to exposure of new genes is an important consideration. There is ample literature that *Bt*-gene is safe for humans. Any other GM crop can easily undergo human/cattle health safety trial. The so-called single window clearance for regulatory approvals is still not in place. Every new technology has a certain risk and in India, one wants to escape taking

a decision in the garb of abundant caution. Even if large-scale *Bt*-cotton trials in the private sector are approved today, it will take a minimum of two years for commercialization and China would be at least six years ahead of us. All the hype on biotechnology in the country should give place to actual execution on the ground in terms of hard-core research and its exploitation in terms of products for our societal good and/or global leadership.

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The Austrian 'Anschluss' and Science in India

The recent change in sovereignty in Austria has necessitated the immediate emigration of a substantial number of prominent scientists, which include two Nobel Laureates, Professors Hess and Lœwi. These migrations afford an opportunity for other countries, endowed with vision and foresight, to extend their hospitality to these men and enrich the country's scientific talent by 'transfusion of new blood'. England, with its high traditions for intellectual freedom, has always been the first to take advantage of such situations and we know

that the best of the Jewish scientists who had to leave Germany 5 years ago were quickly absorbed by Britain. America too has been equally generous and farsighted; but India at that time lost a great opportunity. Now that a similar situation has arisen, it is suggested that India should take advantage of it.

M.S.

Biology for Senior Schools – Book I.

By M. R. Lambert. (Macmillan & Co., Ltd., London), 1937, pp. 158. Price: Rs 1-10-0 or 2sh. 9d.

With the realization of the fact that the essentials of Biology form an integral part of the training of every child, a large number of books have come to be written for the use and guidance of children. The book under review intended for an eleven-year-old child is the first of a series of three and the portions included in it are expected to be covered in a year. A refreshingly novel method of introducing the subject is used, the child being asked in the first few pages to make the acquaintance of a

familiar plant and an animal. The examples chosen, the dog and the buttercup are essentially those with which the English child is more familiar and the author, instead of plunging directly into technical lore regarding the differences between plants and animals in the first chapter of the book as is common in most books on Biology, gently takes the child through everything that a plant or an animal does and finally reveals to the eager mind the important characters of the two groups of living beings. This essential fact of good teaching – from the familiar to the unfamiliar – is seen throughout the book and is the outcome of the experience of an actual teacher, which the author is. The introduction of a few simple but highly convincing experiments help to sustain the interest of the child throughout. The examples of the plants and animals chosen are such as to make the book useful to English children and it leaves behind a desire for a similar book for use in Indian schools.

B.R.S.