

First Glances at New Books

STORIES IN STONE—Willis T. Lee—*Van Nostrand*. (\$3). Tourists by train or auto to our national parks and mountains will find in this volume a non-technical account of the millions of years of history lying back of such scenery. The book is enlivened by personal incidents of geological exploration by the author, who died just as the book was about to appear.

Science News-Letter, December 11, 1926

A DOCTOR'S MEMORIES—Victor C. Vaughan—*Bobbs-Merrill*. (\$5). Those who know Dr. Vaughan necessarily love and appreciate him. His autobiography, telling of one of America's most useful and eventful lives, gives an opportunity for others to meet and know him.

Science News-Letter, December 11, 1926

A BIPOLAR THEORY OF LIVING PROCESSES—George W. Crile—*Macmillan*. (\$5). Dr. Crile has reached the conclusion through years of research that life and death is a matter of electricity. His thrilling, clear, but necessarily technical story leads to a premise which would bridge the gap between the living and the non-living and suggests a physical line of ascent from atom to man.

Science News-Letter, December 11, 1926

THE PROBLEM OF PHYSICO-CHEMICAL PERIODICITY—E. S. Hedges and J. E. Myers—*Longmans, Green*. (\$2.75). Rhythmic pulsation or intermittency is more common in biology than chemistry, but this critical summary shows that it plays a part in the non-living world as well.

Science News-Letter, December 11, 1926

SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGY—Géza Róheim—*Boni & Liveright*. This is an attempt to decipher man's past from man's present by following up the clues supplied by the psycho-analysis of contemporary human material, using Australian totemism as the examples.

Science News-Letter, December 11, 1926

THE EARLY MENTAL TRAITS OF THREE HUNDRED GENIUSES—Genetic Studies of Genius, Vol. II—Catharine M. Cox—*Stanford University Press*. (\$5). The intelligence and mental character of 300 of the world's geniuses in childhood are here appraised by historiometry; and a valuable collection of data, shedding light on the early signs of great ability, is the result.

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BOTANY

Books on Botany

OUTLINE OF PLANT GEOGRAPHY—D. H. Campbell—*Macmillan*. PLANTS AND MAN—F. O. Bower—*Macmillan*. THE FAMILIES OF FLOWERING PLANTS. I. DICOTYLEDONS—J. Hutchinson—*Macmillan*. A DICTIONARY OF THE FLOWERING PLANTS AND FERNS—J. C. Willis—*Macmillan*. TREES IN WINTER—A. F. Blakeslee and C. D. Jarvis—*Macmillan*. FLORIDA WILD FLOWERS—Mary F. Baker—*Macmillan*.

This is a really remarkable collection of books on one subject for a single publisher to bring out in a year, the more so since every one of them represents a definite contribution to the field. Teachers of ecology, plant geography and taxonomy, for instance, will give a most hearty welcome to Campbell's compact and up to date "Outline," because they have hitherto had to depend almost wholly on massive works like Schimper which even in translation are somewhat tough mouthfuls for university students. "Plants and Man," though Scottish-written, does not need to be exclusively Scottish-read, for it reaches out into all the world for its materials, and is presented in an admirably simple and clear style.

Dr. Hutchinson's book has already stirred up much conversation among the professional taxonomists, who agree that their branch of the science is in confusion, but who disagree on almost everything else about it. Dr. Hutchinson's views may or may not ultimately prevail, but at any rate they render good service now by giving a point of departure for discussion. The book completes a task begun over twenty years ago by A. B. Rendle, who worked over the gymnosperms and monocotyledons.

Dr. Willis' book is a new edition of a work that has been a standby among botanists since 1897; this revision will be welcomed as its predecessors were. "Trees in Winter" is another well-established favorite, both with the profession and among the well-informed laity, which now comes to the point of re-printing. Miss Baker's Floridian flora is something more than a local book, now that everybody who owns a flivver and a campstove can go south for the winter. The author makes a happy combination of brief popular discussions with concise technical synopses, and she includes a large number of good photographs.

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The Parthenon, built as a temple to Athena at Athens, was used as a church early in the Christian era.

PSYCHOLOGY

Cave Man Art

Quotation from MEASUREMENT OF INTELLIGENCE BY DRAWINGS. Florence L. Goodenough. World Book Company.

The literature of children's drawings abounds in comparisons between the drawings of modern children and those made by prehistoric man or by primitive races of the present day.

It is obvious that no really valid comparison can be made between the paper and pencil drawings of the modern child and those which prehistoric man smeared on rock walls with a finger dipped in wet clay, or carved out by means of a piece of flint. Moreover, we have no way of knowing what purpose these prehistoric drawings were intended to serve. A carefully executed piece of work which is intended to be an accurate representation of a given object is a very different thing from the hasty sketches which are frequently made by way of giving point to an idea or merely for amusement. We have no reason for believing that the specimens of prehistoric art which have chanced to be preserved are, in all cases, the best which prehistoric man produced, and there is still less ground for the assumption that he could have done no better if he had been provided with the tools which are at the disposal of the modern child. When, in addition to these factors, we consider the unknown but probably very great influence that is exerted upon the drawings of present-day children by the pictures found everywhere in their environment, the uncertain ground which underlies even the most tentative comparison between work done under such widely disparate circumstances becomes evident.

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PHYSICS

Light—\$50,000,000 An Ounce

Quotation from THE UNIVERSE OF STARS. Chapter "Weighing Light" by Edward S. King, Harvard College Observatory. Mr. King is an astronomer at the Harvard Observatory.

If light responds to gravitation, it may be regarded as having real weight. Shall we buy light by the pound or by the ounce, and at what price? If the weight of light is proportional to its mass, an ounce will be enormously expensive, as measured by the cost of light furnished by gas and electric light companies. On that basis, an ounce of light would cost \$50,000,000, and yet the sun showers down on us daily 160 tons of this precious stuff. Some day we may learn how to store up the golden flood of sunlight.

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