

First Glances at New Books

INTEGRITY IN EDUCATION AND OTHER PAPERS—George Norlin—*Macmillan* (\$2). Twelve thoughtful essays, ranging in subject from Greek philosophers and poets to the modern educational—and philosophical—problem, to specialize or not to specialize.

Science News-Letter, February 19, 1927

HOW TO WRITE A THESIS—Ward G. Reeder—*Public School Publishing Co.* (\$.90). The prospective Ph.D. who feels like a pioneer in a strange country when he plans and writes and publishes his thesis will find this little book a practical guide at every step. For more experienced scientists and educators who are beginning to contract the habit of writing theses, the book still contains much useful material, such as specimen pages showing arrangement of charts and statistics and suggestions regarding publication.

Science News-Letter, February 19, 1927

THE PLATOON SCHOOL—Edited by Alice Barrows—*The National Association for the Study of the Platoon or Work-Study-Play School Organization*. A new quarterly magazine designed as a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas for the workers with this new type of school organization.

Science News-Letter, February 19, 1927

THE RELATION OF BIRDS TO WOODLOTS IN NEW YORK STATE—W. L. McAtee—*New York State College of Forestry*. This publication, which appears as Vol. 4, No. 1, of the Roosevelt Wild Life Bulletin series, is much more than a mere series of economic notes on the importance of birds to domestic forestry. It gives concise and interesting summaries of habits and is illustrated with many half-tones and four colored plates.

Science News-Letter, February 19, 1927

BIRDS OF CENTRAL NEW YORK MARSHES—Aretas A. Saunders—*New York College of Forestry, Syracuse*. A thorough-going piece of natural history work. An especially interesting feature is the appended series of rapid little outline sketches showing birds in characteristic acts or attitudes. There are two fine color plates by E. J. Sawyer.

Science News-Letter, February 19, 1927

The distant planet Neptune is so surrounded by dense clouds that its surface appearance is a mystery.

PSYCHOLOGY

Young Geniuses

Quotation from **THE EARLY MENTAL TRAITS OF THREE HUNDRED GENIUSES**. Catharine Morris Cox. Stanford University Press.

That all equally intelligent children do not as adults achieve equal eminence is in part accounted for by our last conclusion: youths who achieve eminence are characterized not only by high intellectual traits, but also by persistence of motive and effort, confidence in their abilities, and great strength or force of character . . . The superior youths considered in the present study pursued high ideals, developed significant interests, and created new expressions of scientific and philosophical thought before they had reached the age of manhood. Schelling had outlined his philosophy at 20, Hume had defined his views before he was 25, Milton at 21 wrote an ode pronounced by an eminent critic to be perhaps the most beautiful in the English language. Peel at 24 was Chief Secretary for Ireland, Raphael at 21 painted the *Granduca Madonna*, Beethoven at 18 was appointed Chamber Musician to his princely ruler, Newton had unfolded his doctrine of light and colors before he was 20, Bacon wrote his *Temporis Partus Maximus* before the age of 20. Montesquieu had sketched his *Spirit of Laws* at an equally early age, and Jenner, when he was still younger, contemplated the possibility of removing from among the list of human diseases one of the most deadly scourges of the race. Achievements like these are not the accidents of a day. They are the natural outgrowth in individuals of superior general powers of persistent interest and great zeal combined with rare special talents.

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ZOOLOGY

Four-legged Chickens Studied

Chickens with two wings and four legs and even with four wings and four legs, and a duckling equally strangely constituted have been the subjects of studies by Dr. F. E. Chidester, of West Virginia University. He found freakish external features of the birds to be coupled with odd internal structures. Four kidneys were found in some of the birds, double cloacæ in all of them, and frequent variations in some of the digestive tubes. The gizzard, however remained single, nor was there any evidence of duplicity in the heart or respiratory apparatus.

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Sad Fate of Youthful Sponge

(Tune: John Brown's Body)

There was a little blastula no bigger than a germ,
Who performed invagination in his mother's mesoderm,
And soon his nascent cilia with joy began to squirm
In ecstasy supreme.

CHORUS

Oh, the joys of locomotion
Down within the depths of ocean,
Oh to feel the deep commotion
Within each blastomere!

No protozoan can ever guess the pleasure he did feel,
As he felt within his ectoderm a growing gastrocele,
With joy and pride his polar cells began at length to reel
In foolish self-content.

His gastrocele was filled with pride that comes before a fall,
And he felt his mother's ectoderm to be extremely small,
So he freed himself from all restraint by rupturing the wall
And floated out to sea.

But oh, alas for youthful pride as upward he did soar,
He caught a tuft of spiculae upon his blastopore,
And trying hard to get it off, his ectoderm he tore—
A great—big—ugly—rent.

"Oh mother dear," he cried in grief,
"come quickly now and try
To heal my little ectoderm, or else I'll have to die!"
But his mother dear was sessile and could only sit and cry
From her excurrent pore.

Now every night his little ghost within the deep is found,
Lamenting to the annelids that burrow in the ground;
The hydroids wave their tentacles and shudder at the sound
Of this familiar strain—

—From Songs of the M. B. L., Woods Hole.

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AGRICULTURE

Grains Increase Yield

Well bred wheat as well as pedigreed stock is making its value apparent to the farmers of North America. Eighty million more bushels a year come from the great wheat belt of Canada alone since farmers have taken to planting an improved variety of essential grain, Dr. R. J. Garber of West Virginia University declares. More than ten million acres of spring wheat in the United States are likewise planted with this variety. A considerable increase in the yield of oats per acre has been brought about as well by developing new varieties, particularly in Iowa.

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