

First Glances at New Books

MOLE PHILOSOPHY AND OTHER ESSAYS—Cassius J. Keyser—*Dutton* (\$3). Thirty-one brief essays by the distinguished mathematician of Columbia, written, as he says in his preface, "to purge what I sometimes find it convenient to call my mind of certain precipitates of experience and meditation." Some are serious, some are light, but all are stimulating and deserve careful reading.

Science News-Letter, May 28, 1927

PIONEERS OF SCIENCE—Sir Oliver Lodge—*Macmillan* (\$2.50). A new printing, "with corrections," of this now classic work on the history of astronomy. It is unfortunate that its value has not been further augmented by the substitution of modern photographs for some of the old drawings of comets and nebulae. Also, it seems rather strange to read that Halley's comet "will be back again in 1911."

Science News-Letter, May 28, 1927

CREATIVE KNOWLEDGE—Sir William Bragg—*Harper* (\$3.50). The story of man's achievement in science as exemplified by the trades of the sailor, the smith, the weaver, the dyer, the potter and the miner. An excellent book to reveal to the mechanic, the tradesman or the housewife the scientific foundations of their occupations.

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LIFE OF PLANTS—Sir Frederick Keeble—*Oxford*. A compact and well-presented text, getting plant physiology (with a healthy ecological slant) at the level where it will do the undergraduate student the most good. Illustrated with text figures.

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CREATION—E. T. Brewster—*Bobbs-Merrill* (\$3.50). A popular account of various non-evolutionary theories, designed to companion the evolutionary history contained in Osborn's *From the Greeks to Darwin*. Treats outmoded views with sympathy rather than scorn, which is a most refreshing thing in these contentious days.

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THE STREAM OF LIFE—J. S. Huxley—*Harpers* (\$1). The indefatigable Huxley boils down into 63 small 12mo pages an adequate presentation of the essentials of heredity and evolution.

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THE GEOGRAPHY OF WITCHCRAFT—Montague Summers—*The History of Civilization*, edited by C. K. Ogden and Harry Elmer Barnes—*Knopf* (\$7.50). It is a curious illustration of the trend of our times toward a revival of belief in witchcraft that the editors of a series heralded as the most modern and comprehensive of histories should have assigned this subject to an author who credits in large part the confessions elicited at the trials of witches and warlocks. The Rev. Alphonsus Joseph-Mary Augustus Montague Summers, an Oxford M.A., believes in the actuality of the witches' Sabbath, the compact with Satan, levitation, evil influences at a distance, familiar spirits in the form of animals, demoniac possession, exorcism, and the like. Witchcraft he regards as a kind of cult, allied to heresy and acting through alliance with the Evil One. Mediumship is its modern form.

But regardless of the personal point of view of the author, these two volumes, "The History of Demonology and Witchcraft" and "The Geography of Witchcraft," are very valuable on account of their wide scope, immense erudition, and abundant quotations and citations of the original sources; over 1,200 large pages of substantial historical material, yet so well written that its load of learning is carried with ease. Nowhere else can the reader get so detailed and vivid a picture of the Black Arts in all ages, as he can from these contemporary accounts. The new volume is of special interest since it contains a chapter, 100 pages, on witchcraft in New England. The author says of the Salem trials:

"They had obviously been present more than once at the witch sacrament, and assisted at the Sabbath orgy. That a coven of witches did indeed exist in Salem is proved beyond all question, and it is, I think, equally certain that George Burroughs was the grandmaster, Bridget Bishop and Martha Carrier, high officials. Whether any other of those whom justice seized and hanged upon the accusation of the afflicted children were members of the coven seems wholly uncertain. We have not sufficient evidence to decide. On the other hand, it is plain that the majority at least of those who were executed died upon a false charge."

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Making Of A Specialist

Quotation from **INTEGRITY IN EDUCATION AND OTHER PAPERS**—George Norlin—*Macmillan*.

Every gain of civilization has been purchased at a price. There was a wholeness of life in primitive society, when a man found his own food, made his own clothing, and built his own shelter, which is forever gone. Now it takes a village of men to make a Ford car. It takes a hundred men to make a Douglas shoe; it takes fifty men to make a cake of Ivory soap; it even takes more than fifty of us to make a college graduate, and even then, so unrelated are the fragments of which he is composed, we cannot guarantee that he will float.

The universities have themselves been caught up in the coil of the machine; yielding to the pressure of the times, they have unwittingly aided and abetted the disintegration, the fragmentation of human life; they have turned out specialists with narrow interests; they have turned out mechanics and technicians without vision; they have turned out bolts and cogs and rivets for the machine; they have in some places succumbed to the popular demand and become places of apprenticeship for jobs; they have in many cases become, as the president of the largest university in America so eloquently complained a few months ago, places where men and women may learn a hundred ways of making a living without being required to share in any common or fundamental body of knowledge which might make living together itself a thing to be desired. . . . In fact, the student in our colleges finds it hardly possible to get a liberal education in that sense of the term.

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BOTANY

Young Pines Saved

The pine forests of the future will not perish in infancy if the recent research efforts of J. Stewart Wiant, of the New York State College of Agriculture, are put to practical use. Hitherto there has always been a heavy mortality in pine plants started from seed in forest nurseries. The tender young plants are easily killed by parasitic soil fungi. Dr. Wiant finds that soil treatment with several chemicals, especially with some recently discovered chlorophenol mercury compounds, destroys these parasites and permits the baby pines to develop until they are strong enough to be secure against these enemies.

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