

First Glances at New Books

INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL TABLES: VOL. III—Edward W. Washburn—*McGraw-Hill* (\$12). In this, the third to appear of the four volumes that will complete this epoch-marking work, are included such tables as those of compressibility of liquids, densities of organic and inorganic solutions, vapor pressures, solubility of gases, boiling point elevations, and miscibility of liquids with three components. As with its two predecessors, one cannot turn its pages without admiration for the years of labor that have already been placed on it by the staff in Washington, as well as the corps of contributors throughout the world.

Physics

Science News-Letter, March 31, 1928

TWENTIETH NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WEIGHTS AND MEASURES—*Government Printing Office* (\$.45). The full report of the conference held last year at the Bureau of Standards on a subject that affects us all.

Physics

Science News-Letter, March 31, 1928

GENERATOR FOR AUDIO CURRENTS OF ADJUSTABLE FREQUENCY WITH PIEZO-ELECTRIC STABILIZATION—August Hund—*Government Printing Office* (\$.10). In this new Bureau of Standards scientific paper is described a beat frequency generator for producing practically sinusoidal audio currents.

Physics

Science News-Letter, March 31, 1928

ALADDIN, U. S. A.—Ernest Greenwood—*Harper* (\$2.50). A popular account of the physics, engineering and economics behind the organizations that make it possible to touch a button in our homes and have light, heat, cold, power or any of the other things that electricity brings us. Thomas A. Edison contributes a brief introduction.

Electricity

Science News-Letter, March 31, 1928

A CENTURY OF INDUSTRIAL PROGRESS—Thirty contributors—*Double-day, Doran* (\$5.00). As a means of commemorating a hundred years of existence, the American Institute of the City of New York has published this story of America's commerce, edited by Frederic William Wile and written by industrial leaders such as Willys, Mitchell, Straus, Schwab, Green, Hurley, Hays and others. It is worthy of a place on both your reading table and reference shelf.

Commerce

Science News-Letter, March 31, 1928

March Pneumonia

Hygiene

March has the highest pneumonia death rate of any month in the year. Frequently more than one-seventh of the annual pneumonia mortality occurs in this single month, according to statistics of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company.

A cold climate where the average humidity is not high appears to operate in favor of low mortality, a condition illustrated by the very low pneumonia rate for the western provinces of Canada. Oregon and Washington, also, have fewer pneumonia deaths than average while Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey, in approximately the same latitude, consistently register some of the highest rates of all the states.

Science News-Letter, March 31, 1928

Mexican Quake in Pacific

Seismology

The earthquake which was felt in a large part of Mexico during the night of Wednesday, March 21, was of unusual severity, and only the fact that it was centered in the Pacific Ocean, a hundred miles or so off the Mexican coast, prevented it from doing great damage, the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey announced, after a study of seismograph records gathered by Science Service.

The epicenter, or point of greatest motion of the temblor, the earthquake experts determined, was at 14 degrees north latitude and 95 degrees west longitude, and it happened at 11 hours 16 minutes and 39 seconds p. m., Eastern Standard Time.

Through Science Service, eighteen seismograph stations reported records of the quake, which, in the opinion of Commander N. H. Heck, of the Coast and Geodetic Survey, is a record for the number of stations reporting a single quake. These were at the Samoa Observatory, Apia; Univ. of Calif., Berkeley; Harvard Univ., Cambridge; Univ. of Virginia, Charlottesville; the Weather Bureau, Chicago; Regis College, Denver; the Survey's station at Honolulu; Manila Observatory, Philippine Islands; Loyola Univ., New Orleans; Fordham Univ., New York City; Dominion Obs., Ottawa; St. Louis Univ., St. Louis; Stations of the Survey at San Juan, P. R., Sitka, Alaska, and Tucson, Ariz.; The Meteorological Obs., Victoria, B. C.; and the Bureau of Standards and Georgetown University, Washington, D. C.

Science News-Letter, March 31, 1928

NATURE RAMBLINGS

BY FRANK THONE

Natural History



Trailing Arbutus

"My love's an arbutus," sang the Irish bard many years ago, and if the object of his adoration was a lady of sensibility (which doubtless was the case) she must have been highly pleased at the fragrance of the compliment. And even though our American arbutus is only a little plant that lives humbly close to the ground, instead of a graceful tree like the Irish species, American girls of the present generation might well be flattered if they could get their swains to sing the same words. Only the tune somehow doesn't go well on a saxophone or a ukulele.

Of all our brave array of flowers that bloom in the early spring, the trailing arbutus easily carries off the prize. Not only can it compete with the best of them in beauty of form and color, with its clusters of white and pink stars nestled down among the brown-green leaves that have sturdily withstood the winter, but it breathes a perfume that none of the other spring flowers can even feebly imitate, and which surpasses, in the judgment of many persons with discriminating nostrils, even the proud roses of the full summer-tide and the golden jasmine of the South.

Unluckily for the arbutus, its beauty surpasses its ability to defend itself, and the flower is in danger of being killed to the last sprig by lovers who can conceive of appreciation only in terms of possession. Predatory hands that gather the arbutus for the market are especially destructive, for they take all they can find and rip the plants up by the roots, careless that they are leaving a sore place on the hillside to fester over with weeds, spoiling it even for future depredations by themselves. One who really loves flowers would no more think of buying a bunch of arbutus than he would of purchasing a dead humming-bird.

Science News-Letter, March 31, 1928