

FIRST GLANCES AT NEW BOOKS

COLUMBUS—Marius André. Tr. by Elöise Parkhurst Huguenin—*Knopf*. Here is a Columbus after a modern pattern of biography, in which the pedestal of a hero is contemptuously kicked away and mud is slung plentifully at the shattered remains. It is a Columbus with a rare poetic imagination, but a Columbus who lets that imagination run riot to fantasies which he reports as sober facts; an ignorant Columbus who clings to antiquated notions of geography and cannot even use a navigator's instruments to locate on a map the lands he discovers. Following the contradictory records and legends of Columbus' career, the biographer enjoys dark suspicions at practically every turn and cheerfully believes, and sets down as fact, the worst explanations that can be thought of. One achievement is chalked up to the credit of the admiral of the ocean sea: he "discovered man in a state of nature. That is Columbus' own and great discovery."

Biography
Science News-Letter, June 2, 1928

THE RÔLE OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY Martha Ornstein—*Univ. of Chicago* (\$3). With great and fundamental scientific discoveries that came with the seventeenth century, it can justly be called one of the greatest of centuries. In this posthumous work, Mrs. Broffenbrenner (née Ornstein) tells not only of the founding of the Accademia del Cimento in Florence, first organized scientific academy, the Accademia dei Lincei in Rome, the Royal Society in London, the Académie des Sciences in Paris, and various others, not so well known, in Germany. She also takes up the rôle of the individual scientist, scientific journals and science in the universities of the period. Complete index and bibliography materially enhance the book's usefulness.

General Science
Science News-Letter, June 2, 1928

GARDEN CINDERELLAS—Helen M. Fox—*Macmillan* (\$5). A well-gotten-up treatise on the cultivation and care of lilies, with a good deal of useful information on their botany and history, well illustrated. It will be especially useful to the home flower grower, and must also be given a place on the reference shelves of the commercial grower and the botanical classroom.

Botany
Science News-Letter, June 2, 1928

THE MODERN CAT—Georgia Stickland Gates—*Macmillan* (\$2). For those who like cats, Dr. Gates' book, devoted to the mind and manners of the cat, will be of especial interest. Here are many enlightening ideas and reports of experiments showing how puss uses her eyes and ears, and how her IQ ranks with that of other animals. Aside from its entertaining readable quality, the book is written as an introduction to comparative psychology, and so comprehensive a survey of what is known about the psychology of one animal should give the student a good basis for studying the animal mind.

Animal Psychology
Science News-Letter, June 2, 1928

HOW WE INHERIT—Edgar Altenberg—*Holt* (\$3). A closely written and coherent presentation of the main facts of genetics.

Heredity
Science News-Letter, June 2, 1928

THE GEOGRAPHY OF THE POLAR REGIONS—Otto Nordenskjöld and Ludwig Mecking—*American Geographical Society*. A book of timely interest and permanent value, a rare combination. Just what is needed as background to the understanding of the recent flights of Byrd, Wilkins and Amundsen over the North Pole and the prospective flight of Byrd over the South Pole. A thorough and authoritative description of the Arctic and Antarctic regions, past and present, by Professor Nordenskjöld of the University of Gothenburg and Professor Mecking of the University of Münster.

Geography
Science News-Letter, June 2, 1928

THE STAR PEOPLE—Gaylord Johnson—*Macmillan* (\$1.50). A reissue of a very useful book for teaching astronomy to young children.

Astronomy
Science News-Letter, June 2, 1928

PRINCIPLES OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY—Edmund S. Conklin—*Holt*. The problem of what to put first is an important one in introducing students to abnormal psychology, and this point has been given special consideration by the author, in arrangement of material. Psychoses and neuroses take up a comparatively small proportion of the book, so that there is room for chapters on shell shock, spiritistic phenomena, abnormalities of sleep and other topics often crowded out of texts dealing more closely with mental disease.

Psychology
Science News-Letter, June 2, 1928

NATURE RAMBLINGS

By FRANK THONE

Natural History



Cats

No one who keeps a cat, or whose neighbors keep cats, has any right to put up a bird house or do anything else that will attract feathered visitors. For that merely provides Puss with fresh meat to be had for easier-than-usual hunting.

It is idle to assert, "But *my* cat would never kill a bird. Why, she won't even look at one!" Perhaps she won't—while you are watching. But at night, or when you are away from the house for an hour—

The point is, cats are not really tame animals. Their zoological name, *Felis domestica*, is really a misnomer, for they have never been domesticated as dogs have been domesticated. They merely consent to accept quarters in one's house and food from one's pantry, but they yield none of their ancient rights to go where they please and to kill and eat what they will. If they restrain themselves at all it is because they know they are being watched, and will be interrupted and perhaps punished if they pounce on a bird. Once the supervision has been removed they let their own natures have sway.

At the present time, when many fledglings are learning to fly, and hence must spend some hours helpless on the ground, it is especially bad to have cats around. The young birds have neither their parents' powers of flight nor their experience at detecting enemies, and so fall more easily into the claws of cats.

This is no indictment of cats as such. Cats are cats, and their nature is cat-nature, that is to say, the nature of beasts of prey. They have been used to getting their living by claws and teeth for many thousands of years, and a few centuries of semi-civilization have not changed them. They may be expected to react toward edible birds in only one way. Therefore, if you would keep cats and also keep birds, you must be sure to keep the two separately.