

GLANCES AT NEW BOOKS

PREHISTORIC MAN—George Grant MacCurdy—*American Library Association*—(\$35). This is one of the very convenient guides to recent books known as the "Reading With a Purpose" series, but it is much more than a mere booklet. It gives in the small bulk of 26 pages a swift and readable survey of what has been found out of the history of the human race for a million years. Those of us who have been mixed up on the order and differences of Moustertian, Aurignacian, Neanderthal, Cro-Magnon, Eolithic, Neolithic, have here a chance to straighten them all out in a few minutes.

Anthropology
Science News-Letter, September 22, 1928

A FIRST COURSE IN PHYSICS FOR COLLEGES—R. A. Millikan, H. G. Gale and C. W. Edwards—*Ginn* (\$3.72.) Though two of the authors have been known for other physics texts that are among the very best of their kind, this is an entirely new work. Unlike its predecessors, it is intended to cover a course in college of a full year. Prof. Millikan and Prof. Gale have themselves been closely identified with so many of the recent advances in physics that their names are a guarantee of authority.

Physics
Science News-Letter, September 22, 1928

FIELD BOOK OF COMMON FERNS—Herbert Durand—*Putnam's* (\$2.50). This is a compact, pocket-size manual giving clear descriptions of fifty common fern species of eastern North America, illustrated with clean-cut line drawings and with good photographs showing the ferns in their native habitats.

Botany
Science News-Letter, September 22, 1928

STUDIES ON SCURVY—Arthur W. Meyer and Lewis M. McCormick—*Stanford University Press*—(\$1.50). Studies made on scurvy in guinea pigs at the Stanford University Medical School are reported, with illustrative plates. The studies covered symptomatology, gross and minute morphology and blood characteristics of the guinea pig in experimental scurvy.

Experimental Medicine
Science News-Letter, September 22, 1928

WATER PURIFICATION—Joseph W. Ellms—*McGraw-Hill*. The second edition of this valuable and thorough discussion of water purification includes advances during the past ten years.

Sanitation
Science News-Letter, September 22, 1928

To A Triceratops

Paleontology

By RICHARD ASHMAN

What lack of pulchritude was yours?
What sheer reptilian homeliness?
Your fossil corpse alone endures,
But it sufficiently assures
Your utter want of comeliness.

An uncouth beast of modern fauna,
Your kith and kin connection,
The fatuous and vain iguana,
Spends hours above a stream, upon a
Limb, admiring his reflection.

Of you, old Tops, no one can claim
Your complex was Narcissine.
You had a decent sense of shame;
Perhaps too much, and thus it came
About you're not for this scene.

When you beheld that frightful face,
And figure, huge and hideous,
As mirrored at some watering place,
The shock applied the coup de grâce
To you, far too fastidious.

Science News-Letter, September 22, 1928

Babies Take Mental Test

Psychology

The young mother's conviction that baby shows intelligence when he puts a pink celluloid ring into his mouth, or when he solemnly says, "Ooh!" is quite justified, for this is just the sort of mental alertness test that psychologists are giving to infants.

A test intended to measure the mental development of babies from one month of age up to one year has been developed by H. E. Linfert and H. M. Hierholtzer, of the Catholic University of America. To find out what the average baby can do at different ages, the psychologists first tested normal babies with a large number of situations.

At one month of age, almost two-thirds of the babies would grasp a bright pink ring placed at their finger tips. By four months, 98 per cent. of the babies responded to this test of their mental alertness. None of the one-month-old babies tried to put the pink ring into its mouth. At two months, 2 per cent. of the babies had already discovered that this would be a good idea, and at four months of age, 30 per cent. of the babies knew that putting the pink ring into their mouths was a pleasant amusement.

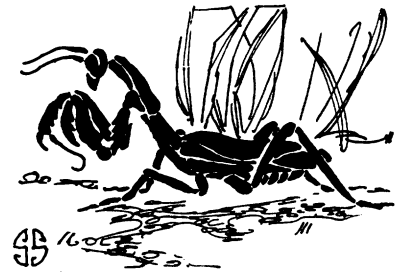
Because of the rapid mental progress of babies, two separate sets of tests were necessary. One set measures babies up to four months, and another set measures babies from six to twelve months.

Science News-Letter, September 22, 1928

NATURE RAMBLINGS

By FRANK THONE

Natural History



Praying Mantis

Mantis religiosa is the scientific name that has been given to one of the most common species of these weird insects. Proving that entomologists no less than ordinary citizens can be taken in by appearances. For this pious-appearing creature of the summer woods, with its forelegs folded before its face as if in the most devout prayer, is in reality a ravening lion going about seeking what it may devour. The popular title should be changed by one letter, and then it would be correct: preying mantis.

The mantis is one of the most insatiable of all the hunting ogres of the insect world. If you happen to catch one, you can study her ways for yourself. Put her in a wire cage with a few grasshoppers or other fair-sized insects. It will be only a minute or two before she will be holding one of the unlucky hoppers between those pious-looking forearms of hers, while her fierce little conical head chews away at his vitals.

The feminine pronoun has been used here advisedly, for it is ten to one that your captive will be a female. Male mantises don't live long. Among us mortals, a young man about to be married is much pursued by insurance salesmen; but if there were insurance companies in the insect world a young mantis about to mate would be rated as a rather worse risk than a worker in a dynamite factory. For the moment the mating has been accomplished, the female mantis calmly turns her head over her shoulder and begins to eat her spouse. Having made her family biologically possible, he is also drafted for the task of making it physiologically possible. There is no waste in the household management of Mrs. Mantis.

Science News-Letter, September 22, 1928