

Science Writing Ancient

Caesar, Homer and Chaucer were among the world's first science writers

► MORE THAN 3,000 years before Christ, an anonymous Egyptian physician wrote:

"If thou examinest a man having a break in the column of his nose, thou shouldst cleanse it for him with two plugs of linen. Thou shouldst apply for him stiff rolls of linen by which his nose is held fast. Thou shouldst treat him afterwards with lint, every day until he recovers."

In ancient Greece, Homer gave some poetic instructions on how to forge a stout shield.

Science writing, sometimes thought of as a modern phenomenon goes back at least 5,000 years, according to Jackson E. Morris in "Principles of Scientific and Technical Writing," just pub-

lished by the McGraw-Hill Book Company.

The first true scientific writer, defined by Mr. Morris as a scientist writing for other scientists, was Aristotle, whose well-researched "Parts of Animals" contains a few early observations on flight dynamics.

The ancient Romans excelled as technical writers (engineers writing for engineers). Julius Caesar himself put down a very workman-like description of how to build a floating military bridge in 10 days and Lucretius (98-

55 B.C.) wrote poetry about atomic theory.

The English entered the picture in the Middle Ages. Geoffrey Chaucer wrote an excellent equipment handbook on an early type of sextant, although he is better known for "The Canterbury Tales."

With the public interest aroused by Sir Isaac Newton's experiments, the forerunners of today's journalistic science writers took pen in hand to popularize science for the layman.

America's pioneer technical writer was Cotton Mather, who wrote extensively on native animals, plants and diseases; that is, Mr. Morris noted, when he was not hunting witches.

Mr. Morris, an aerospace researcher at North American Aviation and spare-time poet, has been teaching for University of California Engineering Extension in the Los Angeles area during the past 10 years.

TECHNOLOGY

Newest COMSAT Will Link Two-Thirds of World

► A NEW communications satellite, first in a new generation of bigger and more powerful satellites, will be launched from Cape Kennedy.

The new spacecraft is one of four being built for the Communications Satellite Corporation by Hughes Aircraft Company, Los Angeles, to provide a two-ocean system of satellites that will link two-thirds of the world by television and telephone and will provide high quality voice communications for the Apollo astronauts.

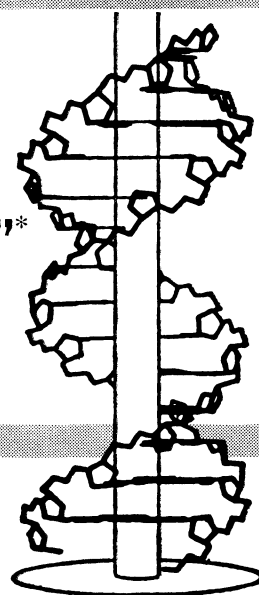
Two of the satellites are to be launched, one in late October and the other in mid-November, with the remaining two serving as standbys. The satellites will be placed in synchronous orbits so that they appear to hover motionless overhead, one above the Atlantic near the coast of Africa and the other over the mid-Pacific.

The new satellites will have more than twice the transmitter power of Early Bird, the world's first commercial communications satellite launched in April 1965.

They will supplement Early Bird's trans-Atlantic communications capacity and will provide commercial trans-Pacific satellite communications for the first time. A portion of each satellite's capacity will be used by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to form a reliable worldwide communications link between the Apollo space capsule and the manned space flight center in Houston, Texas.

Satellite communications with astronauts will be continuous via various stations throughout the world.

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—ERNEST BOREK, author of *The Code of Life* and *The Atoms Within Us*.

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