

## First Glances at New Books

THE AMERICAN INDIANS AND THEIR MUSIC—Frances Densmore—*Woman's Press* (\$2). Miss Densmore explains Indian ways and customs, so that the red men become everyday human beings. About half of the little book is devoted to Indian music, a subject which the author has studied among many tribes, and about which she writes most entertainingly.

Science News-Letter, January 22, 1927

THE MIND OF A GORILLA (Genetic Psychology Monographs)—Robert M. Yerkes—*Clark University* (\$3). Credit for making the first psychological study of a gorilla goes to Dr. Yerkes, who presents in this monograph the results of six weeks of experimenting with a five-year-old child gorilla, named Congo. Dr. Yerkes' report will be welcomed by all who are interested in the minds of apes, primitive human beings, or civilized man of today.

Science News-Letter, January 22, 1927

EDUCATION FOR ADULTS AND OTHER ESSAYS—Frederick Paul Keppel—*Columbia University Press*. Some of the most recent trends in higher education are discussed in the four readable essays which make up this little book.

Science News-Letter, January 22, 1927

THE ANATOMY OF SCIENCE—Gilbert Newton Lewis—*Yale University Press* (\$3). These Silliman Memorial lectures, delivered in the fall, will prove stimulating to the intelligent layman who is anxious to keep in touch with the current trends of the "new physics." And several chapters are on the specialist's "must" reading list.

Science News-Letter, January 22, 1927

CHEMISTRY APPLIED TO HOME AND COMMUNITY—Pauline G. Berry—*Lippincott*. The world explained to second year college students, from cosmetics to ceramics. A new edition of a textbook especially adapted to domestic science courses in chemistry.

Science News-Letter, January 22, 1927

INVESTIGATIONS ON THE THEORY OF THE BROWNIAN MOVEMENT—Albert Einstein—*Dutton* (\$1.75). An early and important, though little known, work by the distinguished author of the theory of relativity. Some knowledge of the principles of thermodynamics is presupposed of the reader.

Science News-Letter, January 22, 1927

## A Fable

Quotation from FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF PHYSICS. By Paul R. Heyl. Baltimore; Williams & Wilkins.

Once upon a time there was a prisoner. His crime must have been great, for he was confined in a cell without windows, where the darkness was relieved only by a faint light that came through a panel of some translucent material in a door in the eastern wall of the cell. The other three walls contained doors also, each different in form from the rest. The door of the south was hot to the touch, and warmed the cell by its radiation. The door of the west contained an always closed wicket with a shelf before it. The prisoner had learned that if (and only if) when he lay down to rest this shelf was duly swept and prepared, would he find upon it when he awoke in the morning his daily material necessities. But the door of the north was most wonderful, for about it a bluish glow played, and from it crackling sparks darted forth to meet the approach of an incautious hand.

How long the prisoner had been in this place he knew not. All his memory was of this cell. He spent much of his time in work, for in the years of his stay he had fashioned a set of rude tools from the debris that littered the floor of his cell. Day after day he would spend at his bench, making keys; for this was his hope—that he might some day make a key to fit one of the locks in the doors of his cell. He would spend weeks over a single key, only to find it useless; then he would throw it upon a pile which already contained many such discarded keys, and set to work patiently upon another.

One night, fatigued, disappointed and discouraged he lay stretched upon the floor of his cell in slumber. And in his sleep he had a dream; for it seemed that there was in his cell an angel who took from his girdle a key of strange and yet simple form, to which all the four locks yielded. And the prisoner saw in his dream that the four doors were bound together without by a great chain, reaching from door to door, and encircling the cell, so that unless all the doors were opened all must remain closed. And as the prisoner tried in his dream to see what lay beyond he awoke, to find the doors closed as he had always known them.

Then the prisoner turned to his bench and began shaping a key after the fashion of that which he had seen in the hand of the angel. He had

(Just turn the page)

## X-Rayed Seeds Help Crops

X-ray treatment of seeds, hithert regarded as invariably harmful in its effects, is now declared beneficial by Dr. M. Jacobson, a plant physiologist of Camden, N. J., who claims that he has obtained greatly increased yields from seeds subjected to mild doses of "soft" X-rays. The difficulty with the earlier experiments, he states, has been that the rays were used in the harmful "hard" wavelengths, or that the exposure was continued too long.

In one series of experiments which he reports, potted plants grown from rayed seeds grew faster and more vigorously than those grown from unrayed seeds, they flowered and fruited from one to three weeks earlier, and their yield was from 15 to 170 per cent greater, the fruits being always more numerous and often larger individually.

Seeds were not the only things that benefited by X-ray treatment, Dr. Jacobson says. Potatoes raised from treated tubers gave, in three separate field tests, increases in crops of 35, 107 and 170 per cent over plantings of untreated tubers. Further tests showed that light has an unfavorable effect on X-rayed tubers and bulbs, which the experimenter states should be protected from the sun after raying if large increases in yield are to be obtained. Time, however, seems to have little effect in diminishing the effect of the raying, for seeds and potato tubers kept for as much as three months after treatment yielded almost as well as did those planted immediately after exposure to the rays.

Science News-Letter, January 22, 1927

## Immune Mice Get Cancer

The theory of hereditary immunity to cancer has received a jolt from experiments conducted by E. Elizabeth Jones of the Cancer Commission of Harvard University. She has produced cancer in mice in which immunity to the dreaded plague has been developed by special breeding. The supposedly immune mice were inoculated with a cancer of the carcinoma type and bits of sterilized flannel were introduced as an irritating agent. Though the number of cases in which the cancer "took" was small it is nevertheless apparent that in the non-susceptible strains of mice as bred in the laboratory immunity to cancer is not absolute.

Science News-Letter, January 22, 1927

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### A Fable

(Continued from Page 61)

had but fleeting glimpse of it, and had caught but the general plan; the details had escaped him. Finally it was finished, and with a trembling hand he tried the key in the eastern door.

The key turned, although with difficulty. At one point he had to put forth all his strength to make it pass one of the wards of the lock; yet it passed, and the bolt yielded. With a shout of joy the prisoner pushed the door outward.

It opened but the merest crack, and a blinding light filled the cell. The prisoner shut his dazzled eyes and felt through the crack with his fingers. His dream was true; there was the chain which prevented it from opening farther. Greatly excited, he withdrew the key and hastened to the door of the south; but here the key would turn but part way, try as he would; so back to his bench went the prisoner, and worked away patiently at the key.

Days of work and trial followed before the key would turn in the south door; yet it finally turned, and the door yielded enough to show the binding chain as with the other.

Then the prisoner looked from the key in his hand to the door of the north, where the blue flame played and the sparks crackled, and he looked round his cell; and he said to himself: "I have never known any abode but this; haply I am not fit for another." Yet he tried the key in the door of the north. Part way it turned, and then would go no farther; so back to his bench again went the prisoner, and filed away patiently at the key.

And lo! as he worked, through the partly opened eastern door there shone upon him a beam of the outer glory; and his heart was glad, and he sang as he shaped the key.

Science News-Letter, January 22, 1927

Statistics indicate that heart disease increased during 1926.

The smaller of Mars' two moons is only seven miles in diameter.

A Frenchman has devised an automobile to burn wood instead of gasoline.

Barnacles that infest ships are marine animals belonging to the crab family.

The flint mining industry of Europe is traced back at least as far as the late Stone Age.

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