

First Glances at New Books

OEUVRES DE PASTEUR—Edited by Dr. Pasteur Vallery-Radot—*Masson et Cie., Paris*. I. Dissymétrie moléculaire, 11s. 8d.; II. Fermentations et générations dites spontanées, 15s.; III. Etudes sur le vinaigre et sur le vin, £1 10d.; IV. Etude sur la maladie des vers à soie, £1 3s. 4d.; V. Etudes sur la bière, in press; VI. Maladies virulentes, virus-vaccins et prophylaxie de la rage, in preparation; VII. Mélange scientifiques et littéraires, in preparation.

Voilà! The testament of the New Dispensation in medicine and sanitary methods, in almost the whole of biology and in wide stretches of chemistry, all codexed with scholarly and beautiful accuracy, and put into print as only a high-grade French publishing firm can do a piece of work when they have their whole heart in it. Dr. Vallery-Radot has performed a great service to science in thus assembling the works of the great leaders in modern biology before they have become too scattered, and possibly clouded by the publication of inauthentic versions. He has scrupulously adhered to the best original texts, and has taken cognizance of variations already in existence in special notes.

By the simple fact of its existence, this edition imperatively demands a place in every scientific library. And the price is so low—only about \$16 at current exchange rates, for the four volumes thus far out—that even small libraries can afford to purchase it.

Science News-Letter, March 19, 1927

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL AND ITS FELLOWS AND PARTIAL LIST OF PAPERS HAVING THEIR ORIGIN IN THE ACTIVITIES OF ITS COMMITTEES TO JANUARY 1, 1926—*National Research Council* (75 cents). A first bibliography of the results of the most important undertakings in national scientific organization.

Science News-Letter, March 19, 1927

A SHORT OUTLINE OF COMPARATIVE PSYCHOLOGY—C. J. Warden—*Norton* (\$1). Beginning with man's ideas about animals back in dim prehistoric ages, Dr. Warden traces the story of what philosophers and scientists have believed and discovered about animal psychology, down to the present day school of experimentalists. A compact and simply written resume of a subject that has baffled and fascinated thinkers from ancient times.

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ASTRONOMY: A Revision of Young's Manual of Astronomy; Vol. 1, The Solar System; Vol. 2, Astrophysics and Stellar Astronomy—H. N. Russell, R. S. Dugan and John Q. Stewart—*Ginn* (\$2.48 per volume). It isn't often that a scientist welcomes the appearance of a new text-book in his subject as a source of information for himself as well as means of presenting the latest facts to his classes. Young's "Manual of Astronomy" was the standard text book for many years; in this revision by Dr. Russell and his colleagues, it has been completely brought up to date, so as to include the very latest results in astronomical research. Dr. Russell himself has been one of the leaders in many of the advances of the science described in the second volume. He has made it more than a text-book, for here is brand new material that has scarcely yet found its way into the scientific press, yet it is set forth with a simplicity which makes it the best general book on astronomy now in print.

Science News-Letter, March 19, 1927

CATALOGUE OF THE EDWARD E. AYER ORNITHOLOGICAL LIBRARY, 2 vols.—John Todd Zimmer—*Field Museum of Natural History*. An annotated list of one of the most important libraries in its field in America, done in most painstaking and scholarly fashion. It should prove very useful to ornithological students.

Science News-Letter, March 19, 1927

THE NEED OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH IN THE FISHING INDUSTRIES—Maurice Holland—*National Research Council* (15 cents). Calls attention to the anomaly of a wealth of fundamental science available for the use of the fisheries industries, with almost no development of a technology for its application.

Science News-Letter, March 19, 1927

CHEMISTRY—M. H. Kessel—*Globe Book Co.* (\$.67). First aid to high school students preparing for elementary chemistry examinations.

Science News-Letter, March 19, 1927

A NATURALIST'S PILGRIMAGE—Richard Kearton—*Houghton Mifflin*. The autobiography of a British traveling and lecturing naturalist.

Science News-Letter, March 19, 1927

TIGER TRAILS IN SOUTHERN ASIA—Richard L. Sutton—*Mosby* (\$2.25). A hunting excursion in Indo-China pleasantly and entertainingly described.

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METEOROLOGY

The Iceless Arctic

Quotation from CLIMATE THROUGH THE AGES. C. E. P. Brooks. Coleman.

It is possible that the Arctic Ocean again became free of ice during historic times, from about the fifth to the tenth or eleventh centuries of the Christian era. O. Pettersson makes out a good case for the absence of sea ice in the East Greenland Current during the latter part of this period. His map of the old Norse sailing routes shows a track direct from Iceland to the east coast of Greenland in latitude 66° N., then down the coast to Cape Farewell, and up the west coast. According to the documentary evidence which he adduces, this route was followed until nearly A. D. 1200 and for most of the period *there is no mention of ice* in any of the numerous descriptions. From Greenland the Norsemen sailed to Wineland (on the coast of North America), and again there is no mention of ice. Further, it has recently been shown quite conclusively that during the early stages of the history of the "Eastern Settlement" near Cape Farewell in Greenland, the climatic conditions were much more favorable than at present. The soil is now frozen hard throughout the year, but in those days it was not frozen, and the coffins in the burial ground were penetrated by a thick mass of plant roots, indicating a mean temperature above freezing point. This is very striking; Pettersson's own inference is that the ice did not then come so far south as it does now, and it seems probable that the Arctic Ocean was, if not ice-free, at least in the intermediate or "semi-glacial" condition, in which a small cap formed in winter but disappeared completely in summer.

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PHYSICS

Iridium Hardest Metal

Iridium, a metallic element in the same chemical group as platinum, and often used as the tip for fountain pens, is the hardest pure metal, according to tests recently made by A. Mallock, and announced in the scientific magazine *Nature*. Molybdenum is the next hardest, with tungsten third. Nickel is the hardest of the common metals as it ranks fifth, the rare metal rhodium coming in fourth. These refer only to pure metallic elements, for some alloys, such as steel with a high percentage of carbon, rank higher than any.

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