

First Glances at New Books

MODERN ASTRONOMY—Hector MacPherson—*Oxford University Press, American Branch* (\$2). A lucid account of the rise and progress of the science, and recent enough to include some of the latest discoveries.

Science News-Letter, April 2, 1927

WHITHER DEMOCRACY?—N. J. Lennes—*Harper* (\$3). The author advances the thesis that "In proportion as the ideals of democracy are realized in practice, in that proportion does society tend to become divided into occupational classes with hereditary membership."

Science News-Letter, April 2, 1927

WAYS OF LIVING—Edited by J. Arthur Thomson—*Doran* (\$1.50). The genial and ever-readable Thomson has called in a group of his fellow biologists in Britain, who also know how to write good English and avoid sounding like schoolmasters, and they have together produced this excellent little book on the house-keeping method of various classes of plants and animals.

Science News-Letter, April 2, 1927

A DISCUSSION AND BIBLIOGRAPHY OF PHILIPPINE FLOWERING PLANTS—Elmer D. Merrill—*Bureau of Science, Manila*. Exceedingly useful to students of tropical botany.

Science News-Letter, April 2, 1927

TREES OF NEW YORK STATE, NATIVE AND NATURALIZED—H. P. Brown—*New York State College of Forestry*. A clearly written and well illustrated manual of the trees and larger shrubs of New York. In addition to the systematic treatment, the book contains ecological notes and two glossaries.

Science News-Letter, April 2, 1927

GAMES AND SPORTS IN BRITISH SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES—Howard J. Savage—*Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching: Bulletin No. 18*. In these days of bewildering, and, many believe, ominous rapidity in the growth of American school and college athletics, when stadia are the biggest things on the campus and coaches outrank deans on the payroll, the cry is often heard, "They order these things better in Britain." This report is going to be read with a great deal of attention in hundreds of institutions of learning-plus-athletics.

Science News-Letter, April 2, 1927

ENTOMOLOGY

The Termite Soviet

Translated from *LA VIE DES TERMITES*.—Maurice Materlinck, a new French book.

It is disquieting to discover that whenever Nature gives a seemingly intelligent being the social instinct for amplifying and organizing the communal life which starts with the family and the relation of mother to child, this leads, as the association becomes perfected, to a regime more and more severe, to a discipline, to constraints, to a tyranny more and more intolerant and intolerable, to the life of the shop, the barracks and the galleys, without leisure, without relaxation, utilizing pitilessly even to exhaustion, even to death, all the powers of its slaves, exacting the sacrifice and unhappiness of all without profit, culminating at length in prolonging, renewing and multiplying to the horizon of the centuries a sort of communal despair. It would seem that these insect cities, which began so long before ours, were intended to give us a caricature, a parody of the anticipated paradises toward which most civilized peoples are now tending, and to inform us most emphatically that happiness is not Nature's aim.

For millions of years now the termites have been climbing towards an ideal which they seem almost to have attained. What will happen when they have completely realized it? Will they be happier, will they at length leave their prison? It is not probable, for their civilization, instead of expanding towards the open day, has retired underground as it became perfected. They had wings; they no longer have them. They had eyes; they have renounced them. They had sex; they have sacrificed it.

The gods of communism have become insatiable Molochs. The more they are given the more they demand. They cease their exactions only when the individual is annihilated and the depths of his misery have been sounded.

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A Chicago radio station has a concert grand piano especially built to sound well over the radio.

The famous chief Powhatan was about 60 years old when Captain John Smith visited his tribe in 1607.

Over 80 million sewing needles were made in the United States in 1925, latest census figures show.

VULCANOLOGY

Volcanic Kettle Seethes

Volcanic activity of more than unusual intensity has been noted recently by Dr. T. A. Jaggar, government volcanologist, at Halemaumau pit, the liveliest spot in the crater of Kilauea, the world's largest living volcano.

"There was a fresh reddening of the whole northwest wall of the pit where a large shell of the wall had fallen," says Dr. Jaggar. "The debris slopes below were seen to be covered with reddish rocks and dust, and the dusting of the bottom of the pit extended clear across to the south taluses. Most of this had been accompanied by small slides from the decomposed rock of the northwest wall. But there had been at least one big avalanche, which had carried away the greater part of a pronounced bench at the west end of the big intrusive sill which forms the lower part of the northeastern wall. The dusting of the bottom of the pit was further evidence of a big avalanche, and the middle talus of the northeast wall showed more fresh debris. The yellowing of the southern solfataras continued to be conspicuous."

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EVOLUTION

Evolution Fights Postponed

South Carolina's anti-evolution bill, which has been in committee since its introduction on January 18, has been reported to the house, without recommendation. There is little chance of its being discussed or acted on at the present session, it is believed. The author of the measure, Rep. W. P. Mason, stated that his purpose at this time was limited to getting the bill on the calendar so as to continue it until next session.

The Alabama Legislature, which has likewise had an anti-evolution bill in committee since January 12, has adjourned until June 7. There is at the present time nothing to indicate how the bill will be reported to the house at that time.

Delaware also had a bill, of which nothing had been heard, until a short time before the end of the legislative session. Then sifting committees of the house and senate, acting independently, both included it in a large batch of "nuisance legislation" recommended to be dropped without consideration. This recommendation was unanimously accepted by both houses.

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Alaska has 500,000 reindeer, 400 times as many as five years ago.