

First Glances at New Books

MIRRORS OF THE YEAR, A National Review of Outstanding Figures, Trends and Events of 1926-27—Edited by Grant Overton—*Stokes* (\$4). In this book, which represents a "new idea," the amazing and entertaining American scene is mirrored from many angles by as many specialists. Grantland Rice discusses the sport world of 1926, Kathleen Norris reflects on the existence of an institution known as the American home, Clarence Darrow calmly views the crime alarmists, Carl Hovey acts as correspondent from the Hollywood front, Mark Sullivan reviews 1926 politics, and so on through eighteen chapters. The chapter on the achievements of science in 1926 is by Science Service.

Science News-Letter, April 16, 1927

MAKERS OF SCIENCE: ELECTRICITY AND MAGNETISM—D. M. Turner—*Oxford* (\$2.50). The second work to appear in this interesting and valuable series. Traces electrical development from the Greeks to J. J. Thomson, Millikan and Moseley.

Science News-Letter, April 16, 1927

HISTORY OF THE SCIENCES IN GRECO-ROMAN ANTIQUITY—Arnold Reymond—*Dutton* (\$2.50). Philosophy and literature have claimed for too long the exclusive possession of ancient Greece and Italy; here is a book, translated from the French of a Swiss professor of philosophy by Ruth Gheury de Bray, that is an illuminating study of the exact sciences of the ancient world.

Science News-Letter, April 16, 1927

GENIUS, SOME REVALUATIONS—Arthur C. Jacobson—*Greenberg* (\$2.50). Mechanisms by which creative genius is set free are described. Dr. Jacobson supports his theory of genius by many illustrations from life, and the book is a worth while addition to the literature on this highly controversial subject.

Science News-Letter, April 16, 1927

MARVELS OF MODERN MECHANICS—Harold T. Wilkins—*Dutton* (\$3). A popular account of modern inventions, particularly British ones.

Science News-Letter, April 16, 1927

NEW ASPECTS OF POLITICS—Charles E. Merriam—*University of Chicago* (\$2.50). An account of the effects of the sciences on political thinking.

Science News-Letter, April 16, 1927

PSYCHOLOGY

The Bright Child

Quotation from MENTAL AND PHYSICAL TRAITS OF A THOUSAND GIFTED CHILDREN, Lewis M. Terman and others. Stanford University Press.

In a majority of cases the superiority of the gifted child is evidenced at a very early age. Among the most commonly mentioned indications are intellectual curiosity, wealth of miscellaneous information, and desire to learn to read. . . . As would be expected, the interests of gifted children reflect in many ways their intellectual superiority. The school subjects which they like best are for the most part the subjects which unselected children find the most difficult. The vocations which they prefer rank fairly high in the occupational hierarchy with respect to the intellectual demands they make.

The reading of gifted children surpasses that of unselected children both in quantity and quality. The typical gifted child of seven years reads more books than the unselected child reads at any age up to fifteen years. Gifted children have more than the usual interest in books of science, history, biography, travel, and informational fiction, and less in books of adventure, mystery, and emotional fiction.

The common opinion that intellectually superior children are characterized by a deficiency of play interests has been shown to be wholly unfounded. . . . The typical gifted child of nine years has a larger body of definite knowledge about plays and games than the average child of twelve years. If he devotes somewhat fewer hours per week to play activities it is because his play interests must compete with a wealth of other interests which are no less compelling.

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Helium gas, so important to airships, was found on the sun 28 years before it was found on the earth.

A railroad gate, such as protects railroad crossings, has been placed on a busy street near a public school in Evanston, Illinois.

If dams are built along the Congo River, as planned, ocean steamers will be able to follow the river into the heart of Africa.

A new kind of paper which has antiseptic properties and is suitable for special wrapping purposes has been developed in France.

PHYSIOLOGY

Speech Ills Cause Flunking

Glib and clear cut speech is not a parlor accomplishment, but an everyday necessity for college girls, judging by a speech census taken among students at Mt. Holyoke College.

The investigation has revealed that half of the students who have entered the college in the past four years have been somewhat imperfect in speech. Sixteen per cent. were so obviously defective that it was necessary for them to take corrective work in speech-training during the freshman year.

The list of students handicapped by poor speech included a large proportion of those who failed in their courses. One explanation offered for this is that there is a close connection between the ability to speak clearly and accurately and the ability to read rapidly. The student who reads slowly and inaccurately is unable to do the same amount of work as the more skillful reader.

The percentage of defective speech for the general population is believed to be considerably higher than among college students. Teachers making the speech census told the students that good speech is an economic as well as a social asset. The college can assist the student to improve his or her personality in this respect; but the easiest time for the formation of correct speech habits is when a child is learning to talk, they were told.

Science News-Letter, April 16, 1927

CHEMISTRY

American Methanol

Methanol, the synthetic chemical replica of wood alcohol which for the past two or three years has figured largely in chemical imports from Germany, is now to be manufactured in America by a new and wholly American process, it is announced by E. I. du Pont de Nemours and Company. Two years of intensive research were required for the development of the new process, but officials of the company are now satisfied that it is commercially practicable, and a plant for large-quantity production has been constructed at Belle, near Charleston, W. Va., by a company affiliated with the du Pont interests. Future construction already planned is expected to take care of the entire American demand for methanol.

The process involves the use of carbon monoxide and hydrogen at high temperature and under great pressure.

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