

FIRST GLANCES AT NEW BOOKS

THE CIPHER OF ROGER BACON—William Romaine Newbold—*Univ. of Penna.* (\$4). "MICHITON OLADABAS MULTOS TE TCCR CERC PORTAS." This was the inscription at the end of a cipher manuscript found in a European castle, and which gave Professor Newbold a clue from which he began to decipher it, soon showing that the author was Roger Bacon, thirteenth century English monk and author of the *Opus Majus*. Prof. Newbold worked on the problem until his death, and in the present posthumous work, edited by his colleague, Prof. Roland G. Kent, he tells what he read in the manuscript, and passes on his methods to others who may tackle it. Among the many startling conclusions drawn are that Bacon had a compound microscope and understood the mechanism of fertilization of the ovum, and that he had a telescope more than 300 years before Galileo, with which he observed a spiral nebulae in Virgo. The history of the manuscript and the methods of decipherment make a really thrilling tale

General Science
Science News-Letter, May 12, 1928

THE OPUS MAJUS OF ROGER BACON—Robert Belle Burke—*Univ. of Penna.* (\$10). Considering the remarkable knowledge displayed in this famous work by the thirteenth century friar, Roger Bacon, it is rather strange that it has never before been translated into English. However, Prof. Burke has now performed that task, and in the pages of these two volumes the modern reader can find the first plea for experimental science and the famous passage that inspired Columbus to sail westward for India. Mathematics, philosophy, optics, the causes of error—all these are treated in surprisingly modern fashion, and in his translation Prof. Burke has admirably succeeded in following the spirit of the original.

General Science
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BOSTON THROUGH THE AGES—Irving B. Crosby—*Marshall Jones Co.* (\$2). This geological story of the city in which so much scientific progress has been made will interest every visitor who has time to prowl around the rocks, shore lines, and other ancient evidences of pre-Mayflower times.

Geology
Science News-Letter, May 12, 1928

PRE-HISTORY CHART—A. E. Jenks—*Nystrom*. If you have waded through geology books and volumes on ancient man to make certain the order of prehistoric cultures, or how the ice sheets fitted in with man's development, or the types of stone, bronze, and iron articles made by men in the prehistoric ages—if you have, you will be interested in this colored wall chart that Prof. Jenks, of the University of Minnesota, has designed. The pictures of the types of artifacts of each culture are particularly interesting, because of their large size and the ease with which they may be studied in comparison with one another. The only missing link in this very useful display is a table of dates, but in view of the disagreements on this score, perhaps the anthropologist is justified in merely indicating duration of time by the comparative length of lines on his chart.

Anthropology
Science News-Letter, May 12, 1928

PSYCHOLOGY, ITS FACTS AND PRINCIPLES—H. L. Hollingsworth—*Appleton* (\$3). This text will appeal to teachers, students, and general readers in search of a comprehensive psychology that deals with mental processes and leaves nerves and sense organs to another volume. The author does not champion any one of the current brands of psychology. Where there is a diversity of opinion, as in the case of the feelings and emotions, he cites theories and discusses them. The set of projects and exercises to fit each chapter is a valuable feature of the work.

Psychology
Science News-Letter, May 12, 1928

FLATLAND—A Square—*Little, Brown* (\$1.50). A new edition of this famous work by the Reverend Doctor Edwin A. Abbott, which, when it first appeared forty years ago, suggested some of the paradoxes of hyper-dimensional geometry that have now become familiar with the popularity of relativity.

Mathematics
Science News-Letter, May 12, 1928

A HISTORY OF RAILWAYS IN IRELAND—J. C. Conroy—*Longmans*. A book which covers the whole history of the Irish railway system from the beginning to the present, and which constitutes the initial volume in a series on Irish economic history.

Economics
Science News-Letter, May 12, 1928

PHYSICS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS—A. A. Knowlton—*McGraw-Hill* (\$3.75). Here is a college physics text that is really *different*. Departing from the time-honored division of such a book into formal sections on Mechanics, Light, Heat, etc., the author has chosen to treat the body of physics as a whole. He endeavors to humanize the book by seeking to provide an answer to the "Why should I study physics?" of the student who is not taking it as a preliminary to a technical course. The incorporation into the work of elementary discussions of relativity, the quantum theory, and other aspects of the "new physics" serves to make it representative of present-day physical thought.

Physics
Science News-Letter, May 12, 1928

ELEMENTS OF OPTICS—Joseph Valasek—*McGraw-Hill* (\$2). An elementary text-book that takes full advantage of the many interesting things in optical science. Intended for college students, so knowledge of mechanics, and a little mathematics, is assumed.

Physics
Science News-Letter, May 12, 1928

THE CHEMISTRY OF LEATHER MANUFACTURE—John Arthur Wilson—*Chemical Catalog* (\$10). This book brings the assistance of modern chemical and micrological science to the assistance of one of the oldest, and therefore one of the most empirically conducted, of the arts. It belongs on the reference shelves not only of chemical laboratories and technological schools, but on the desks of all really properly equipped directors of large tanning and leatherworking plants.

Chemical Technology
Science News-Letter, May 12, 1928

SELECTIVE FERTILIZATION—Donald Forsha Jones—*University of Chicago Press* (\$2). This small book sets forth the results of a series of important researches on the cross-pollination of plants. It will be needed as a reference by all plant breeders.

Botany
Science News-Letter, May 12, 1928

THE ELEMENTS OF ECONOMIC GEOLOGY—J. W. Gregory—*Dutton* (\$3.25). A compact and well-gotten-up textbook.

Geology
Science News-Letter, May 12, 1928