

First Glances at New Books

OUR FACE FROM FISH TO MAN—W. K. Gregory—*Putnam* (\$4.50). A brilliant popular exposition of the evolution of the human countenance, by one of the best-known of American paleontologists. The history of each feature, each bone, is traced, as well as the story of the face as a whole; and as the story grows one sits amazed at the beauty of the anatomical counter-point that has been written into the physiognomic symphony of even the plainest-featured among us.

Evolution
Science News-Letter, April 6, 1929

ESTADO ACTUAL DE LOS PRINCIPALES EDIFICIOS ARQUEOLOGICOS DE MEXICO—Secretaria de Education Publica—*Talleres Graficos de la Nacion*. A valuable summary of the present state of excavation and general knowledge concerning about thirty of Mexico's archæological sites. The chapters are by various well-known Mexican archæologists, and the illustrations are numerous and well chosen. A splendid map of several hundred sites where antiquities are known is a useful feature of the publication.

Archæology
Science News-Letter, April 6, 1929

EN LOS CONFINES DE LA SELVA LACANDONA—Enrique Juan Palacios—*Talleres Graficos de la Nacion*. Report of explorations by Mexican scientists, in 1926, in a jungle area of Mexico, where cities of the Old Maya Empire once stood. The expedition was particularly concerned with agricultural problems, such as the locust plagues that swarm over Mexican farm lands, but in this publication by a government archæologist emphasis is placed on the archæological discoveries, which were of exceptional importance and interest. The discovery of the ruined Maya city known as Santa Elena is described. Encounters with the little-known Lacandon Indians were another outstanding feature of the expedition.

Exploration—Archæology
Science News-Letter, April 6, 1929

INTRODUCTORY THEORETICAL CHEMISTRY—G. H. Cartledge—*Ginn* (\$3.60). A concise text presenting the nub of a difficult subject. This will be a good book for the advanced student in chemistry who has begun to become a trifle bewildered; it will get his compass straight again.

Chemistry
Science News-Letter, April 6, 1929

THE "SOUL" OF THE PRIMITIVE—Lucien Levy-Bruhl—*Macmillan* (\$5). The theme is primitive man's beliefs about life, death, and his own relation to the world. Since man in such a stage of development is not given to rationalizing nor to introspection, the task of reproducing his point of view is difficult, but when handled by this French philosopher the result is thought-provoking and reasonably convincing. It is generally considered that civilized man has come to look upon himself as an individual sharply silhouetted against the world, whereas in earlier stages of progress men feel themselves closer akin to their surroundings and to the social group. This difference is carried into many ramifications by the philosopher with illustrations taken from tribes all over the world. The translation is by Lilian A. Clare.

Ethnology—Philosophy
Science News-Letter, April 6, 1929

THE EARLIER INHABITANTS OF LONDON—F. G. Parsons—*Cecil Palmer, London* (10s 6d). The story of the people of London, strictly speaking, would begin about the time of the Roman conquest, but this author carries his account back to the Stone Age and the Bronze Age men and women who were the forerunners of the Londoners. The book ends with the period of the Danes. Since the subject of the early inhabitants of Britain is so blurred by controversy, many readers will welcome this organization of present knowledge by one of the well-known British anthropologists.

Anthropology
Science News-Letter, April 6, 1929

ANIMAL MYSTERIES—E. G. Boulenger—*Macaulay* (\$3). Queer animals of all kinds, both real and imaginary—echidnas, tapirs, St. Peter's fish, sea serpents—passed in review by a good naturalist who knows how to chat so that people will listen to him.

Natural History
Science News-Letter, April 6, 1929

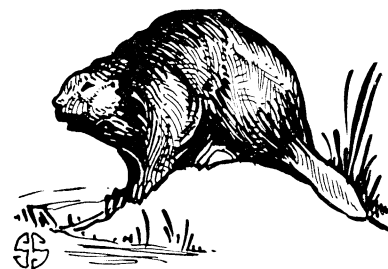
WHO'S WHO AMONG THE MICROBES—W. H. Park and Anna W. Williams—*Century* (\$3). An informal but comprehensive presentation of microbiology by two well-known public health workers. This book will be interesting to many a lay reader, and it can also be used to good advantage as a supplementary text in elementary bacteriology courses.

Microbiology
Science News-Letter, April 6, 1929

NATURE RAMBLINGS

By FRANK THONE

Natural History



Beaver Ways

Up in the North Woods, where there are still sheets of ice floating on their ponds, the beavers are beginning to come out of their dome-shaped houses of sticks to take a look about. They won't stay abroad, very much, until it gets a little warmer, and the new shoots of willow and poplar and alder around the pond margins are green and inviting; but they have been caged up all winter, with only stored twigs to gnaw, and a chance to get a breath of fresh air and a swim, even in cold water, is most welcome.

Then, too, the dams need inspecting, especially if freshets have brought down any debris to lodge against them. As soon as it is warm enough to make good, workable mud for plastering purposes all hands will have to turn out for some busy nights of hydraulic engineering and timber-snagging. Repairs must be made not only on the big dam that confines the protecting pond, but on the smaller subsidiary dams below it as well. These latter are important, because they take some of the strain off the main structure by backing up against its base and thereby balancing the pressure.

In the days of the early settlements beavers were plentiful everywhere; the "Beaver Creek" found in almost every township testifies to their great number and wide distribution. But their valuable fur caused their virtual extermination, and they survive now only in the deep woods of sparsely settled regions. That they can "come back" if given sufficient protection is shown in some of our national parks, where hunting of all kinds is prohibited. Here beavers have become so abundant that they are almost an embarrassment.

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