First Glances at New Books

SEASHORE ANIMALS OF THE PACIFIC COAST—Myrtle E. Johnson and Harry J. Snook—*Macmillan* ($7.50). For years students, teachers and the army of informal nature-observers wandering on the seashore in the Pacific Coast states have very acutely felt the lack of a good and really complete book that would describe and picture the things they see among the rocks and on the sand. That long want is now filled and more than filled, for the authors of the present volume leave little to be said, short of the heavy monographs of the professional library. They describe well, and illustrate even better. The 658 pages of the book contain an even 700 figures, many of them most beautifully done in colors. The appropriateness of the dedication to Dr. William E. Ritter will need no explanation to any one who has ever had to do with Pacific Coast marine zoology.

Science News-Letter, September 24, 1927

THE NATURE OF THE WORLD AND OF MAN—Edited by H. H. Newman —*Univ. of Chicago Press* ($5). A revised edition within a year from first publication is an indication that a book is either very bad or very good. In this case the revision is needed because the book is very good and has already proved so serviceable in giving a clear and competent statement of the present knowledge in the sciences. The editors promise frequent revisions in the future whenever needed to keep up with the rapid advance of science.

Science News-Letter, September 24, 1927

THE EARLY HISTORY OF MAN—Henry Field—*Field Museum of Natural History* (25c). A well gotten up, beautifully illustrated popular pamphlet on the always fascinating subject of paleolithic man and his art.

Science News-Letter, September 24, 1927

THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE, 1927—*British Association for Advancement of Science, London* (6s.). This annual volume contains the presidential addresses delivered before the recent meeting at Leeds. It is therefore a review of the present state of science.

Science News-Letter, September 24, 1927

MAN AND WOMAN—Havelock Ellis—*Black, London* (10s. 6d.). The sixth edition of a well-known study of the ways in which men and women differ.

Science News-Letter, September 24, 1927

ARCHÆOLOGY

Largest Petroglyph

What is described as the largest specimen of petroglyph, or Indian rock carving, in Canada has just been reported to the Archæological Office of the Canadian National Museum. This carving is said to be 250 feet long and is located near Yale, B. C.

According to the reports, it is carved on a vertical face of reddish rock, sheltered by an overhanging ledge. It is about half a mile south of the eastern end of the Alexander Bridge on the Caribou Highway, and near the Canadian National Railway. A trout fishing trail from which it can probably be seen runs up in its direction.

Previously, the largest known rock carving was located on the west side of a seventy-foot canyon about one mile south of Mackenzie Highway, in the "Norway of Canada" near Bella Coola, B. C. If the 250-foot carving is verified, efforts will probably be made to have the region set aside as a national monument.

Science News-Letter, September 24, 1927

METEOROLOGY

Winds Not Prophetic

If the old idea that the severity of a winter can be forecast by the direction of the winds at the autumnal equinox was ever true any place, it has certainly not been exemplified in Philadelphia in the last twenty years. This is shown by a study made by George S. Bliss, in charge of the Philadelphia Weather Bureau.

Mr. Bliss has consulted his records to find which way the wind was blowing at the exact moment that the sun was at the autumnal equinox, or directly over the equator, since 1907.

The coldest winter which Philadelphia experienced was that of 1917, when the mean temperature was 32.5 degrees Fahrenheit, and 36.9 inches of snow fell. This was preceded by northeast wind at the equinox. But the warmest winter, that of 1920, with a mean temperature of 41.5 degrees, and only 11.3 inches of snow, was also preceded by northeast winds at the equinox. The second warmest winter of the period, that in 1912, with 41.1 degrees and 9.2 inches of snow followed easterly equinoctial winds. So did the second coldest winter, that of 1911, which had a mean temperature of 34.3 degrees and 22.5 inches of snow.

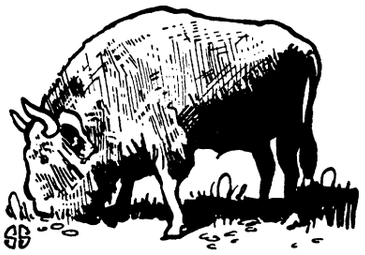
The other winters of the period followed winds from various directions, scattered at random.

Science News-Letter, September 24, 1927

BIOLOGY

NATURE RAMBLINGS

By FRANK THONE



Wisent

We are much accustomed to speak of the American buffalo, or bison, in a lowered, sad tone of voice, with a shaking of the head as over a great tragedy. Tragic their fate has been, to be sure, but it is as nothing compared with that of their almost unknown, and now almost extinct, European kindred animal, the wisent.

According to Dr. Theodor Ahrens, well-known German naturalist, there were, before the war, some 1650 specimens of this great beast left in existence. Of these about 800 were on a preserve in Lithuania, belonging to the Czar. About 700 more were in the Kuban region of the Caucasus, property of the Russian Crown. There was a smaller herd of about 70 in upper Silesia, then Prussian, and a scattering of some 75 more in zoological gardens and private estates.

At the end of the war, in 1918, the Lithuanian herd had ceased to exist. Of the Caucasian herd, according to reports of the Soviet authorities, about 25 are left. The 70 in Silesia have been reduced to three. It is doubtful whether as many as 100 still live.

Lately a movement has been started throughout northern and western Europe to save the remnant of this once widespread species. The last census available lists 69 specimens definitely known to be in existence. Of these 33 were cows. Some of the breeding stock has had to be excluded from the register, however, because it has been discovered that they have some hybrid blood in them. Efforts are being made to reproduce the pure-blooded stock as rapidly as good management will permit, and the calves are given the most scrupulous care.

The situation is unquestionably serious; but when it is remembered that the Yellowstone Park herd of bison started a generation ago with less than 30 animals and now has a count of over 800, there is reason to hope that this ancient and interesting species may be saved from extinction.

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