Science.


This contribution to hunting lore and natural history is by the last of the big-game hunters of South Africa. It is an attractively written narrative of the adventures of three men. Thirty years ago, spent mostly in the regions south of the Zambesi. The author has published a "tourist's" guide, in which he heartily supports, from his point of view, the author's views on the theory of.....
consists chiefly of reprints of the year's most important scientific memoirs. Charles A. Parsons's essay on "The Steam Turbine on Land and Sea," is a popular historical sketch. Frank J. Heider's "Problems and Preservation of Mechanical Composition in Printing," which follows it. Professor Turpin's account of the electrophotograph, while technical, is a very clear, brief statement of the mechanism of this remarkable Hungarian invention. Frank J. Heider describes a few of the more important of the electrical Novelties. Another contribution of merit is James Reiley's "Structure of Lippmann Holograms," the latter an investigation of interference phenomena. The contributions on zoology and antropology are the most extensive, including a summary of Gustave Loiseau's exhaustive study of the famous, English, and Dutch Zoological Gardens; and J. D. Gill's "Systematic Zoology: Its Progress and Purpose"; and Prof. Theobald's sketch of "The Mediterranean Peoples." Dr. E. Baelz's "Prehistoric Japan," should be of more detailed examination of the types and geographical distribution of the fire piston; and other papers. The volume closes with Camille Matignon's intimate sketch of Marcelin Berthelot and Edward L. Greene's memorial address on Linnaeus.

The "Infantilism" of C. A. Herter (The Macmillan Co.) is a highly specialized little treatise on a curious and hitherto unknown or imperfectly recognized disease of childhood in which growth is retarded and disturbances of digestion are conspicuous. It has been possible to show that this condition depends on the presence of bacteria more or less characteristic of infancy and on the deficient development of other bacteria characteristic of older persons. Dr. Herter's discussion of the question is interesting, and his proposals concerning a rational therapy are full of promise.

Dr. Woods Hutchinson's volume, "Instinct and Health" (Dodd, Mead & Co.), is made up of sixteen chapters on various topics related to the conduct of life. All of them have been seen in magazines or reviews of the last two or three years, and doubtless many of their readers will be glad to have them in a collected form; others may perhaps find the collection just a little cloying. The writer has a ready pen and without hesitation handles large problems in a light and easy fashion as though their solution were merely a playful exercise of his intelligence, thought, or memory. In the very first pages, but hobbing up at short intervals all through the book, seems to be that the human machine has been some twelve or thirteen million years in the making, is pretty well made, and having an extraordinary power of adjustment may be permitted to run itself.

Dr. Hutchinson recognizes, however, that some guidance is necessary and gives considerable advice, often rather indefinite and vague, but on the whole sound. Unfortunately, there is a tendency to overlook what care has been done for the machine and to dispose serious investigation of the conditions under which the machine works best. The teaching is largely by iteration and assertion with no marked fondness for careful argument or exact demonstration, and yet the principle sought, is a rather high one. It seems to prove helpful to many, particularly among those to whom the literature of breakfast foods is precious, and who, in general, are keenly interested in diets.

Among the new works published by R. Oldenburg, Berlin, two by Friedrich Ratzel command attention. One is a selection in two volumes under the title, "Kleine Schriften," edited by Hans Holmolt; the other is a little book, "Uber Natursicherung." Ratzel's contributions to ethnography and physical geography have been distinguished by an artistic handling of the material quite rare in works of science.

Oliver Wulcct Gibbs, chemist and physicist, Rumford professor emeritus at Harvard, died at Newport, R. I., December 9. He was born in this city February 21, 1822, the second son of George Gibbs, an eminent mineralogist. The boy was, besides, brought under the influence of quite another section of the intellectual world, by close family relationships with the Channings. He was graduated from Columbia College in 1841, and thereupon entered the laboratory of Dr. Robert Hare in Philadelphia. Subsequently, he enrolled himself as a student in the New York College of Physicians and Surgeons; but after receiving the degree of M.D. in 1845 he went to Berlin to devote himself to chemistry under the great analyst, Heinrich Rose, then at the acme of his fame. He simultaneously studied mineralogy under the guidance of Ramsmoeller. Subsequently, he was led by the rising star of Liebig to Giessen, there to bend his attention to the analytical work which was just beginning to crystallize in urea and uric acid; and then, as Victor Reaguel was engaged in those determinations which have never yet been superseded, the young student betook himself to Paris. In 1849 he was appointed professor of chemistry in the Free Academy, since united with the College of the City of New York. He was already becoming distinguished in his profession; and when, in 1853, Dr. James Reynolds retired from the chair of chemistry in Columbia, Gibbs was regarded as his natural successor. But to the Board of Trustees of that day, under the presidency of Curley King, the idea of appointing a Unitarian to teach chemistry in Columbia was quite too shocking to be entertained; and Dr. Gibbs continued his work in the Free Academy for another ten years. In 1863, on the resignation of Eben N. Horace, who had been in charge of the chemical laboratory of the College School at Harvard, Dr. Gibbs succeeded to the position, and became Rumford professor. His success there is shown by the great attention the contributions from that laboratory everywhere attracted, and still more positively by the number of Gibbs's students who have become distinguished scientific leaders. He made important investigations in light and heat, but his greatest triumphs were in inorganic chemistry, where he opened up new realms, so to say, particularly in reference to complex inorganic bases and acids. His work on the platinum metals is also important. He was author of numerous articles and contributions to scientific journals, as well as to the Nation; and he was a member of many scientific societies, American and foreign. Gibbs was not only eminent as a scientist, but he was noted for his high standard of great public spirit. During the war of the rebellion, he served upon the Executive Committee of the Sanitary Commission—no body more actively. In order to aid and supplement that work, he thought it best that the earnest supporters of the Confederacy should be able to reside one another daily in a club. To that end, he called a meeting in 1863, which resolved itself into the Union League Club.

From Berlin comes the report of the death, in his seventy-eighth year, of Hugo Hertzler, former professor of mathematics at the Technische Hochschule. He was the author of "Die geometrischen Grundprinzipien der Perspektive" and "Flusse und Logarithmetafeln.

Charles Babbage, a well-known French horticulturist, and head of Ballet Freres at Troyes, has died at the age of seventy-nine. He wrote a number of books, notably "Les Bouches poires," besides contributing to French and English journals.

Drama.

 Henrik Ibsen: The Man and His Plays.

By Montrose J. Moses, New York: Mitchell Kennerly. $1.50 net.

This is a comprehensive summary of a considerable body of literature on Ibsen, which will be very useful to those junior students of the Norwegian dramatist who have neither time nor opportunity to consult the original authorities. It contains a sufficiently full sketch of his life; detailed, if not always clear, synopses of his plays; a variety of selected comment and interpretation, mostly of a highly laudatory description; and a liberal proportion of the author's individual views, which, though sometimes extravagant in their enthusiasm, often evince strong common sense and a power of discrimination never found in the fanatical worshipper. Like many other disciples of Ibsen, Mr. Moses is prone to exaggerate both the achievements and the influence of the master, but he does recognize some of his limitations. Thus he insists upon the imaginative qualities of Ibsen's earlier plays and points out his persistent failure, especially in the days of his youthful iconoclasm, to realize that the world he satirized acted upon theories which might be worthy of consideration, even when they differed from his own. The reappearance of identical motives and personages, under slightly changed conditions, in successive plays. Mr. Moses accepts as an indication that Ibsen's power of dramatic invention was restricted. He notes also that Italy never inspired him as it did Byron, Keats, or Shelley. It is, indeed, a curious fact that the first fruit of his southern travel was "Brand," than nothing