

THE VIRGINIA TEACHER

Published monthly, except August and September, by the State Teachers College at Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Entered as second-class matter March 13, 1920, at the postoffice at Harrisonburg, Virginia, under the act of March 3, 1879.



CONRAD T. LOGAN, *Editor*
HENRY A. CONVERSE, *Business Manager*
CLYDE P. SHORTS, *Circulation Manager*

ADVISORY BOARD

KATHERINE M. ANTHONY
FRED C. MABEE
BESSIE J. LANIER

Manuscripts offered for publication from those interested in our state educational problems should be addressed to the editor of THE VIRGINIA TEACHER, State Teachers College, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

EDUCATIONAL COMMENT

PLAY DAYS AND HOLIDAYS

As the end of the school year approaches many modern parents find themselves looking forward to the long weeks of leisure with some trepidation, for they realize that the old adage about Satan and idle hands is quite as true today as in olden times when our grandmothers cross-stitched it upon samplers.

For as cities have grown and city living conditions have spread, parents are finding that the wholesome use of leisure presents a problem. Most of the old after-school tasks have disappeared and play space in even our smaller towns grows less and less as traffic grows in the streets and new buildings spring up on vacant lots.

Parents are discovering that play is one of the great human needs, for physicians have added recreation to the list of health essentials. Proper food, rest and sunshine, necessary as they are, are not quite enough, it seems, for either children or grown-ups. Educators tell us that such important lessons as sportsmanship, self-control, and social co-operation are best learned upon the playground, while psychiatrists urge outdoor play as the remedy for overstrained nerves.

Most towns now have school playgrounds and gymnasiums and the newer city parks are being planned as play parks. But all too often those play sports mean sports for only a few of our children. School football or baseball squads and track teams need the lion's share of the playing space if they are to develop skill that will triumph over all rivals. So the playing fields are cleared of all but "championship material!"

The youngsters who are not notable players are relegated to the side lines where they may learn to know all the technical "ins and outs" of the game but never know the joyous activity which lifts the player above all thoughts of self-consciousness, and out of the dull routine of everyday life.

But communities today all over the country are studying their recreational facilities as never before. In many of these, through the co-operation of such organizations as the American Child Health Association, the Playground and Recreation Association of America, and the Women's Division of the National Amateur Athletic Federation, the idea of Play Days to replace "one-team" games is being developed as the best method for getting children "off the bleachers and into the game." And the Play Day idea has fresh impetus this year in the slogan adopted for May Day, Child Health Day: "Make May Day Play Day—Youth is the Strength of America: Make American Youth Strong!"

But just how does a Play Day differ from a championship game or track meet? Wouldn't better playgrounds and more teams accomplish the same purpose? The whole crux of the matter lies not in the fact that large groups play together, but rather that Play Day teams are made up of an equal number of children from each participating school and that the emphasis is placed upon the joy of playing rather than the triumph of victory. Larger groups, it is true, play, and they play in a greater variety of sports but it is the change in the spirit of the thing that really matters. No

longer need children, in a community where Play Days are the rule, feel timid about taking up space on the tennis courts even if they are not "championship material,"—for the "game's the thing!" Develop outdoor hobbies for the child and the child's leisure problem is partially, at least, solved, for while passive entertainment may easily degenerate into "time-killing," recreation means activity and wholesome activity means mental, physical, and spiritual growth.

SCIENTISTS TO EXPLORE SOUTH AFRICAN FOSSIL BEDS

Forerunners of the University of Chicago's annual research migration, two paleontologists, Dr. Alferd S. Romer and Paul C. Miller, left Chicago April 1 on a nine-month expedition into South Africa, in an effort to forge more strongly one of the weaker links in the known chain of animal evolution. Attempting to clear up certain obscure points in the structural process by which mammals first appeared in a world dominated by reptiles, about 200 million years ago, they will explore a thousand-mile stretch of Upper Permian and Triassic strata in the Karroo Desert.

Beds rich in fossils of extinct types intermediate between reptiles and mammals, known to exist in Cape Colony, Orange Free State, and the Transvaal, have never been systematically exploited, though the species are satisfactorily preserved no where else in the world. Miller, regarded by his colleagues as the most painstaking "scientific digger" in the country, will bring his twenty years of experience to the delicate task of recovering specimens.

"The university already has in its museum the finest collection of late amphibian and early reptile fossils available anywhere, representing the period when life first crawled out of the water," said Professor Romer. "But the evolutionary story temporarily tapers off in America at this point with the 'playing out' of the strata, and the

next chapter seems to be best told in the Karroo Desert. In outlining the important steps by which animal life developed warm-blooded creatures with hair replacing scales and with dentition and skeletal structure altered; with legs drawn up under the belly rather than sprawled at the sides; and with the mothers bearing and nursing their young rather than laying eggs, there remains much to be done."

Another University of Chicago research worker, Miss Dena Shapiro, twenty-one-year-old graduate student in anthropology, left recently for Palestine to spend a year gathering material for a Doctor of Philosophy thesis on the ethnology of the Holy Land. Because Jerusalem and its environs have become the center for an influx of mixed racial and cultural strains during the past eight years, largely due to the Zionist movement, University anthropologists believe that the district provides a rare opportunity for a study of what happens when established groups with varying cultures come in contact with one another and exchange ideas and customs.

Professor Robert E. Park of the Department of Sociology is beginning a year of research work and observation in the Orient. He has been invited to study the reconstruction problem in China. En route he will lecture before the Pacific Scientific Conference at Java in May on "The Marginal Man."

MANY HIGH-SCHOOL GRADUATES CONTINUE STUDIES

Approximately 48.3 per cent of the 40,000 graduates of Pennsylvania high schools for the school year 1927-28 are continuing their education, according to announcement of the State department of public instruction. Of this number, about 26.8 per cent have entered higher institutions, 12.9 per cent are in teacher-training schools, 4 per cent in nurse-training schools, 3.6 per cent have entered commercial schools, and 1 per cent are taking post-graduate courses in the high

schools. It is estimated that 8.5 per cent of the class of 1928 have remained at home, and no record is given for 8.9 per cent of those graduating. The remainder are engaged in commercial pursuits, agriculture, factory work, trade, or other occupations. The number of graduates of public high schools in Pennsylvania has more than doubled during the past eight years, increasing from 18,796 in 1920 to approximately 40,000 in 1928.

THE READING TABLE

PRACTICAL MATHEMATICS FOR HOME STUDY. By Claude Irwin Palmer. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company.

Indeed an old book, but ever new to new needs—Mathematics as a tool is placed foremost in this most commendable volume. Its very beginning is devoted to simple arithmetic, a regular grade subject, but who has a comprehensive knowledge of the real sharp-cutting tool of arithmetic? Well, read and study Palmer.

This fine pocket edition of practical mathematics delves deep, yet not confoundingly into mathematics, geometry, algebra, trigonometry, and logarithms, and last but not least in importance, tables.

To laymen, business men, tradesmen, students, expert craftsmen, teachers, and mathematicians, this handbook should be readily accessible, and it could be made a source of ready information in several mathematical fields. Teachers of branches of mathematics and allied subjects will appreciate this book in their private library.

H. G. PICKETT

EMINENT CHEMISTS OF OUR TIME (Second Edition). By Benjamin Harrow. New York City: Van Nostrand Company. 1927.

This interesting and instructive work first appeared in two volumes, but now, in a much enlarged edition, it contains both the "life" and "works" of eleven foremost and illustrious chemists of our generation.

The book opens with Perkins, who at the tender age of 17 planted the corner stone of our coal-dye industry, not only as a theoretical possibility, but as a practical and industrial probability.

In the past year the reviewer has not read *any* book that required more resolution to lay aside at 2 a. m. than Harrow's more-interesting-than-modern-fiction volume.

To read the first part, the biographies, is to be entertained and inspired; to pursue the second part is to plunge into a study and an appreciation of the marvels of advancement in modern chemistry.

H. G. PICKETT

A FIRST COURSE IN PHYSICS FOR COLLEGES. By Millikan, Gale, and Edwards. New York: Ginn and Company.

In this comprehensive text we have the combined efforts of three teachers of physics from three

widely varying sections of the United States. Pasadena, California; Chicago; and Durham, N. C., are the cities from which the co-authors hail. It is a good text and an excellent reference book, and the reviewer is happy to have such a valuable book at his arm's length in the preparation of lectures to present to girl students in a high class pedagogical institution. These girls, by requirement or election, take the first college course in physics. A copy for ready reference will be of great value to teachers of high school physics. That is a sincere recommendation.

H. G. PICKETT

THE KEY TO CULTURE. By Joseph McCabe. Girard, Kansas: Haldeman-Julius Publications.

These little booklets of Joseph McCabe's are of real value to those who find themselves possessed of a degree from a reputable institution of learning, without one single tittle of directed thought in science, and also to those who believe themselves to have an insight into all true thought and rational philosophy. This criticism does not purpose to place McCabe upon a pinnacle erected to scientific knowledge, but its aim is to place before the reader a brief review of some books of this series that McCabe has written. To be mild, the author is a most well-read man. He has been numbered (and should still be) among the advancing educators and progressive thinkers of our time. To date he is accredited with forty short volumes in this scientific series under the title of *The Key to Culture*, and these little booklets cost the reader but five cents a volume. They are written primarily for the layman in science, but to one who appreciates the well-instilled scientific attitude of the author, these little sketches of science are well worth the price and many fold the time spent in reading and digesting the numerous suggestions of original thought contained therein.

In some cases, even the liberal reviewer is astonished at the heterodox views disclosed. But is not the grain worth its salvaging from the husk?

H. G. PICKETT

PHYSICS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS. By A. A. Knowlton. New York: McGraw Hill Company, Inc.

There are textbooks in physics available today that would place the average teacher of physics, whatever environment or status of teaching he may be in, at a loss. But it is not so much the textbook that fills the course with real and up-to-date vitality as the background the instructor has of the subject. Prof. Knowlton frankly states in the preface that he has found himself in quite a radical change of environment; that is, having taught in a technical, or engineering school, for twelve years, he finds himself in a typical liberal arts school. He attempts to present the subject of physics in this new text from a cultural, and as he says a "humanistic," standpoint rather than from a purely technical point of view. However, if one carefully reads and concentrates on this new text, the conclusion will be that the technical and scientific value is not lost, but is really presented in a manner most artistic and thereby enhancing the delight in the teaching of physics with a well-defined background.

H. G. PICKETT