

ideas, is now being carried on—the results of which will form the basis of future communications.

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QUOTATIONS

BUSINESS MEN WHO WANT THE METRIC SYSTEM

NOTHING gives so much hope that the metric system will some day be adopted in America as the work now being done in its behalf by the National Wholesale Grocers' Association. It is their type of support which alone can clinch the case in favor of the simpler standard. The theorists have done their best. They have proved conclusively what saving in time and labor, what gain in foreign trade, would follow upon the adoption of the metric system. Meanwhile, however, the country has been generally given to understand that practical men opposed the change, that they thought it would involve, while it was being made, insuperable difficulties to trade and manufacture. The wholesale grocers are practical men. In countless daily transactions their business would be directly affected by the change; they would have to undergo whatever hardships may accompany the shift in all its early days. And yet the grocers say they want the metric system.

Nor are the grocers content with wanting. They are also doing all they can to hasten the system's adoption, and in the measures they are taking, the country can see what ways may be followed in order to prepare for the change and make it, when it comes, less difficult. In pursuance of a report submitted by a special committee to the convention in Boston, every wholesale grocer is urged to print on the labels of all canned and boxed good not only the weight in English pounds and ounces, but also the metric equivalent. This custom will have two values. It will help to educate the American people in the metric system, and it will begin at once to reap the benefits for American goods abroad, especially in the South American countries, which a general adoption of the metric system promises. Furthermore, the grocers are preparing for their membership

complete and easily used tables of equivalents, and are doing their utmost to show how the first year or two of the change might be rendered less difficult by their use.

Psychologically, also, the study which these practical men are making has its value to help explain why the American passion for liberty has never extended to open revolt against slavery to the old English tables. They show that children everywhere are being given a distaste for the metric system by the way it is presented to them in their study of arithmetic. Since the schoolbooks necessarily present it in relation to its equivalents in English weights and measures, it means no more for them than a new instrument of mental torture. Learned for itself alone, it would offer no more difficulty than the American money system gives the boy who learns it in a day, and almost without trying. Harnessed to the old English equivalents, its true simplicity is not revealed. From this poor start in school days, the American public appears to continue in amazing ignorance of the metric system's real value.

Very few men know, says the report to the grocers, what time it would save in commercial arithmetic and very few know the increasing pressure for its adoption brought by the needs of trade with countries which have it. If this be so, then the grocers' committee's proposal, that to their practical efforts there should be added an organization exclusively designed to educate the public on this subject, ought surely to be furthered.—*The Boston Transcript*.

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Who is Insane? By STEPHEN SMITH, A.M., M.D., LL.D. The Macmillan Co., 1916.

Not the least remarkable thing about this very readable book is the fact that its author is a nonagenarian. Dr. Smith was the state commissioner in lunacy of New York from 1882 to 1888, and the present work largely embodies his observations during those years, together with the deductions of his long experience concerning the big questions of the prevention and treatment of mental disease.

The word of criticism which might be offered

that some of the clinical cases cited for illustration contain insufficient data to make them entirely convincing, loses some of its force perhaps, when it is recalled that the book is intended primarily for popular instruction, and to that end lapses naturally into the anecdotal style.

The author is delightful in his incorrigible optimism as to the hopefulness of treatment of insanity, crime and feeble-mindedness under more rational conditions of organization and classification, and by more scientific methods than have hitherto existed. The general treatment of insanity he considers under three periods corresponding to the three tenses. The past was the period of mechanical restraint. The present is the period of custodial care. The future will be the period, let us hope, of curative treatment. The present, with all its humanitarian ideals and active therapeutic efforts is still the period of custodial care. We must perhaps admit it.

But the author looks ahead to the time when the state hospitals shall no longer be in the main simply repositories for the mentally infirm. He suggests that these institutions should comprise five definitely organized departments: (1) research, (2) curative, (3) industrial, (4) custodial, (5) hospital. The research and curative departments he would have under one administration consisting of an alienist, a physiologist, a pathologist, and a psychologist, together with field-workers and such other assistants as might be required. The plan as outlined is admirable, and already partially operative in many institutions. But Dr. Smith's forecast culminates in an ultra-optimism. "Might not the per cent. of 'discharged as cured' from our asylums be raised from twenty-five or thirty-three per cent. to eighty or ninety per cent., if all the resources of science, art and humanity were brought into requisition immediately on admission of each person legally committed as insane?" In the author's discussion it might seem that the environmental factors, important as they are unquestionably, are stressed too much, or rather that the endogenic factors are insufficiently stressed.

Excellent is the author's insistence upon the value of the work-cure in mental disease, and of the work-habit as prophylaxis, maintained onward into old age. "Retirement from business at this period, to enjoy the fruits of a life of toil, is to turn one's face towards the cemetery to which he will hasten with ever quickening step."

The nonagenarian physician evidently practices his own gospel, for now at ninety-three comes from his pen a book full of valuable and interesting material and fruitful suggestion, reflecting the youthful spirit of hopefulness and progress, rather than the retrospective sadness of a less efficient old age.

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Beekeeping. By E. F. PHILLIPS, Ph.D. Rural Science Series. New York, Macmillan & Co. Pp. xxii + 457. 190 figs. Price \$2.00.

We are living in an age of applied science; but the student of animal behavior is perhaps little concerned with the possible application of his branch of scientific inquiry. On this account the author's fundamental conception and mode of treatment are of particular interest. Beekeeping is applied animal behavior. As the author suggests, the well-informed beekeeper probably has a wider and more accurate knowledge concerning bees than have many students of animal behavior concerning the species with which they work. The successful beekeeper is, as we are told, the man "who has a knowledge of the activities of bees, whereby he can interpret what he sees in the hives from day to day, and who can mould the instincts of the bees to his convenience and profit." In this volume, therefore, the bee is treated as a living animal and special stress is laid upon its behavior and physiology in so far as investigations have thrown light upon these processes.

The United States Department of Agriculture is singularly fortunate in having as its chief expert in bee culture one so well fitted by the character of his training as Dr. Phillips, who has approached, from the standpoint indicated above, a subject which is perhaps more liable than most branches of agri-