work on tests of flying ability. Burtt, Troland and Miles were working at Cambridge in the spring and summer of 1917, and the work of Captain Henmon at Kelly Field No. 2 in the spring of 1918 was contemporaneous with and under the same authorization as that of Professor Stratton. A prophesy based upon Captain Henmon's results was of notable influence in leading the director of military aeronautics to authorize tests of ability to learn to fly in connection with the regular work of the examining boards. E. L. THORNDIKE

TEACHERS COLLEGE,
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

TO THE EDITOR OF SCIENCE: Professor Thorndike has called my attention to the fact that in my article on psychological research for aviators in SCIENCE of January 24, I made no reference to the work of Burtt, Troland and Miles, and the work of Henmon, which was reported in relatively full detail in Thorndike's article in the preceding (January 17) number of SCIENCE. A footnote referring to Thorndike's report should have been inserted in my article to prevent the supposition that I was covering the work of all investigators. No detailed information concerning the work of Burtt, Troland and Miles was given me until Thorndike's address appeared, hence I should not attempt to describe it. The work started by Stratton, and subsequently developed by Stratton and Henmon, should, as I stated in my article, be reported by Stratton.

I may add that important work in aviation was done by a number of psychologists not mentioned by either Thorndike or myself: Maxfield for instance conducted a valuable piece of research which was, I believe, reported to the psychology committee.

I trust it will be understood that my report was not intended as a comprehensive account of all work in aviation by psychologists, and that if I am able, later, to give a full account of all work done under my control, I shall not attempt to relate the activities of other psychologists except in so far as those activities had direct effects in facilitating or interfering with my own work. KNIGHT DUNLAP

QUOTATIONS

THE HISTORY OF INFLUENZA

ALTHOUGH the term influenza was not formally adopted by the Royal College of Physicians of London till 1782, the disease was known to Hippocrates and other ancient physicians, and a formidable list of epidemics in various parts of the world between the years 1173 and 1875 is given by Hirsch in his "Handbook of Geographical and Historical Pathology." Records of outbreaks in this country between 1510 and 1837 were collected by Theophilus Thompson and published by the Sydenham Society in 1852; they were brought down to 1891 by E. Symes Thompson. Many physicians, among them such men as Sydenham (1675), Huxham of Plymouth (1729), Arbuthnot (1732), Sir George Baker (1762), and John Fothergill (1775) had written about the disease from the clinical point of view, but Immanuel Kant, who, like Bacon, took all learning for his province and was specially interested in medicine, was one of the first to direct attention to its epidemiology. Towards the end of the eighteenth century influenza swept over nearly the whole world. It reached Siberia and Russia, China and India, in the autumn of 1781, and in the following December and February it invaded successively Finland, Germany, Denmark, Sweden, England, Scotland, the Netherlands, France, Italy, and Spain. Kant, in a "Notice to Physicians" published in the lay press of Königsberg on April 18, 1782, considered the disease in its relation to physical geography. He expressed the opinion that it was spread not only by atmospheric conditions but by infection conveyed by insects. The paths of communication between Europe and other parts of the world by sea and by caravan were, he thought, the means of conveyance of many diseases, and he found reason to believe that the Russian trade route to China by land had brought several kinds of harmful insects from the farthest East. The epidemic of 1781–82 spread along the Baltic coast till it reached Königsberg; thence it travelled to Danzig and Prussia. Kant's interest in influenza is shown

by the frequency with which he refers to the subject. With the object of procuring further information he sent his "notice" to Russia, and from Baron von Asch, surgeon in the Russian army, he learned that in January, February, and March, 1782, a disease described as "febris catarrhalis epidemica benigna" prevailed in the Russian capital. It originated in eastern Siberia, on the Chinese frontier, and spread through the whole of Russia. —*The British Medical Journal.*

SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

A Text-book of Precious Stones. By FRANK B. WADE, B.S. Published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1918. 8vo, pp. xiii + 318. Illustrated.

Those who are familiar with the work on "Diamonds" by the same author will find the present book characterized by similarly attractive features. The style is clear and precise and readability and practicality are afforded by examples drawn from the writer's own experience.

The book will appeal to the amateur rather than the professional student, but this is probably the intention of the author. His experience as a teacher has doubtless aided him in presenting the subject in a systematic and easily assimilable manner. The physical properties of gems are treated under the various subdivisions of refraction, absorption and dichroism, specific gravity, luster, hardness, and color, each to the extent of one or more chapters, and numerous practical details are given in the chapters on testing, cutting, occurrence and imitation of gems. The chapter on "tariff laws" affords useful information not readily found elsewhere and the bibliography of the subject of gems is the most complete and satisfactory for the purposes of the general reader that the reviewer remembers to have seen. The book is not extensively illustrated, a few text figures from line drawings comprising all the pictures that are provided.

Besides its usefulness for general reading, the title of the book and its systematic plan suggest that it could be employed for more formal instruction. The wide distribution of gems in Nature and their possession in some form in almost every home, make it probable that they could be used more extensively than is now the case as a basis for school study.

The reviewer finds little to criticize adversely in the book beyond the occasional use of the term "gemology." While this term might be generally understood to refer to the science of of gems, it is incorrectly formed for this purpose and in reality has quite a different meaning. The Greeks seem to have had no single term for distinguishing objects used for the purposes for which we use gems, but indicated things of value by the adjective τίνιος. Prefixing this adjective to λίθος, stone, the term *tiniolithology* can be obtained, which is at least a word properly formed to indicate the science of gems.

OLIVER C. FARRINGTON
FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

SPECIAL ARTICLES

PINK ROOT OF ONIONS

IN 1915 Professor F. W. Mally called the writer's attention to a very serious disease of onions in Webb County, Texas, and locally known as pink root. Investigations were begun on this disease with Professor Mally, who cooperated in the field experiments and offered valuable assistance in many ways. A search in literature showed that there were no records that could be found, where mention was made of this new plant trouble. From conversation with Professor Mally I was told that Professor W. M. Gilbert, of the United States Department of Agriculture, had at one time worked on this disease and also published an account of the same. However, a letter received from Professor Gilbert dated May 15, 1918, says as follows: "So far as I know there are no publications on this disease, as I did not do enough work on it to secure results for publication and have not had the opportunity to study it very recently." The writer was the first to report on this disease in 1917.[1]

[1] Taubenhaus, J. J., "Pink Root, a New Disease of Onions in Texas," Phytopath. 7: 59, 1917 (abstract).