

clarity of reproduction by this method, however, seems worth the extra time and effort involved.

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IN SCIENCE for December 31, Professor Sebastian Albrecht, of Dudley University, Albany, calls attention to the calligraphic reproduction of tables in Volumes IV and V of the Transactions of the Astronomical Observatory of Yale University. Some years ago during a strike of printers in the east, a number of publications depended entirely upon the typewriter and photoengraver for the preparation of their matter.

Professor Albrecht makes reference to irregularity of impressions. The electric typewriter obviates this phase, as the several models now on the market do not depend upon the touch of the fingers for impact with the paper, but have a uniform stroke, and the intensity of the impression can be regulated.

The communication refers to typing with an ordinary typewriter ribbon. During the newspaper strike in the east when copy was prepared for zinc etchings, the publishers used carbon paper made up in narrow strips the same width as the standard typewriter ribbon for the machines used, and substituted these for the ribbon. In this way a sharp impression was secured—cleaner than the impression of the type through an inked ribbon.

OTTO KNEY

THE FRENCH SOCIETY FOR BIOGEOGRAPHY

AT the time when the Société de Biogéographie enters into the fourth year of its existence, we draw the attention to this association which includes naturalists on all specialties: botanists, biologists, ethnologists, geologists and zoologists whose aim is to study in common the distribution of all beings over the surface of the globe, to specify the conditions of such distribution and to investigate into the determination of consequences of the formation of the flora and fauna both living and fossil.

The society holds every month a sitting, the order of the day of which having been settled beforehand affords useful and interesting discussions on the different subjects in hand. Besides it institutes at fixed intervals deep investigations on a subject selected among those which most deservedly engross the minds of biogeographers and whose solutions require the concurrence of all the disciplines represented; thus it is that thanks to the initiative of the society, a series of memoirs bound in a volume of 250 pages has lately been devoted to the "Histoire du Peuplement de la Corse" and that it is preparing just now a new volume on "Le Peuplement des Montagnes."

The number of members of the society (the seat of which is in Paris, 61 rue de Buffon) is limited; but it is possible to procure its reports (*Compte Rendu Sommaire des Séances de la Société de Biogéographie*) by subscription.

LOUIS FAGE

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THE JOURNAL OF GENERAL PHYSIOLOGY

THE relation of publication to the advance of science is not open to debate, and because of the rôle which publication plays scientists are concerned in having available a suitable outlet in which to report their work, whether this be in a journal owned by a society, by an individual or endowed. Where but one journal exists in a special field of science, it becomes much more important that its editorial policies be such as to encourage the submission of the best work and that those responsible for its conduct obtain and hold the respect of workers in that field.

The Journal of General Physiology occupies a unique position, in that it offers the only outlet in America for papers in this field, and in the last analysis its policies are determined by a group virtually independent in many respects. Many engaged in research in general physiology feel that as now managed the *Journal* is not serving the science adequately. The usual courtesies of correspondence are frequently neglected, the receipt of manuscript is not promptly acknowledged, it is customary to print dates of acceptance rather than dates of receipt of manuscript, thereby depriving authors of some weeks or months of priority for new work, and in one case on record not only did the *Journal* decline to reply to any letters of inquiry concerning a manuscript but without having indicated whether or not it was acceptable, declined to return it until it was demanded by a legal representative. While this is an extreme case, the experience of several would indicate that if the *Journal of General Physiology* is to perform its functions properly, the procedures of its board should be revised, and steps taken to establish and maintain the editorial ethics which in general are accepted in the offices of scientific publications.

This matter is brought to the attention of physiologists generally as a constructive criticism and with a view ultimately to draft suggestions which it is believed those responsible for the *Journal of General Physiology* will duly consider because of their established interest in the science.

MATILDA MOLDENHAUER BROOKS

WASHINGTON, D. C.

The account given by Dr. M. M. Brooks of her unfortunate experience with a paper sent to me for the *Journal of General Physiology* is in its main fea-

tures correct. I wish to make it clear that for the mislaying of the manuscript, and for the consequent delay in ultimately returning it, responsibility rests upon me. It suffices to indicate my responsibility for it, and to offer the apology hereby made for its happening.

W. J. CROZIER

In connection with the letter of Mrs. Brooks the following statement may be of interest.

The practice of printing the date of acceptance of manuscripts came about because in many cases papers had to be returned to the authors with the suggestion that certain alterations were desirable. It often happened that considerable time elapsed before they came back and were finally accepted. If in these cases the date were given when the paper was first received, it might appear that the delay in publication was entirely the fault of the *Journal* unless perhaps the true explanation were surmised in which case it is possible that it might be embarrassing to the author of the paper. The present practice avoids these difficulties and has elicited expressions of approval from many of our contributors: in fact the first criticism we have heard is contained in the letter of Mrs. Brooks. When MS has been accepted without revision, the aim has been to make the interval between the date of receipt and the date of acceptance as short as possible.

It may be added that the editors intend in all cases to acknowledge manuscripts promptly and to report as soon as possible upon their availability. It may happen that they need time to examine papers critically or it may be desirable to obtain the opinion of others. Delay is sometimes due to the absence of the editors and the necessity of forwarding MSS: this is especially the case during the summer. That delays of this sort are not serious is shown by the fact that during the last twelve months, for example, the average time elapsing between receiving a paper and sending it to press is about one month (it requires about two months to go through the press).

The editors desire to thank the contributors to the journal for their loyal cooperation in endeavoring to maintain a high standard. They will greatly appreciate suggestions by private correspondence with the object of increasing its usefulness.

THE EDITORS OF THE JOURNAL OF
GENERAL PHYSIOLOGY

THE ELDEN PUEBLO

REFERRING to Professor Colton's note in *SCIENCE* of February 4, I regret exceedingly that, through inadvertence, I neglected to state in my paper before the National Academy that Professor Colton had already

mentioned the existence of "Elden Pueblo" in a manuscript now awaiting publication by the Bureau of American Ethnology. I desire to give every credit to him for his reconnoissance of the region. In saying that the ruin was "practically unknown to any scientific man," I meant simply that no thorough excavation of the ruin had ever been attempted and naturally, therefore, its exact nature, dimensions and significance could not be known.

Regarding the use of the name "Elden Pueblo," inasmuch as this is the first ruin in the immediate neighborhood of Elden Mesa to be excavated and made available to tourists and students, and as that Mesa is a most conspicuous object in the surrounding landscape, I think that the appropriateness will not be questioned. As the other ruins which Professor Colton mentions are opened up and studied, equally appropriate names can surely be applied to them.

Although Professor Colton spoke to me of the site of Elden Pueblo in connection with numerous other sites in the Flagstaff region, I must say that it was due more to the efforts of Mr. J. C. Clarke, of Flagstaff that I undertook the excavation of this particular ruin. At no time in the course of the work was Professor Colton's measured plan used. Professor Colton aided my assistants to measure off the site of the ruin and a plan was made on which the walls were drawn in as excavated.

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SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

Astronomy. BY JOHN CHARLES DUNCAN. xiii + 384 pp. 64 plates and numerous figures in the text. Harper & Brothers, N. Y., 1926. Price, \$4.00.

SHORTLY after a copy of Duncan's "Astronomy" had been received from the publishers and while it was lying on my table awaiting examination, a student in the beginning course picked up the book and ran through the pages. His comments were, "Why don't we use this book in class? It actually seems to teach itself." A careful examination of the book has only served to convince the writer of the soundness of that student's judgment.

On the title page we find the simple statement, "A text-book"; and the book is all that and more. The liberal use of boldface type and excellent line drawings throughout the text certainly make it a manual of instruction. In addition to these features we find many splendidly executed reproductions of astronomical photographs which, together with much of the text written in a fascinating style, are sure to make the book one of interest and value to the general