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GEOLOGY AND THE WORLD AT LARGE[1]

I HAVE no new discovery to announce nor shall I follow the precedent of reviewing the history of geology in part or in whole. Rather I shall ask you to step out of the procession and with me watch it go by. In brief, we shall try to see ourselves as others see us. Frankly, the picture is not flattering. To the world at large geology has taken a back seat. She has lost prestige as compared with other subjects of human thought, and is serving neither herself nor the world as she can and ought. I believe the situation is a challenge to geologists to take stock of where they stand and to again get into the procession in a place commensurate with the large human interest of the subject they represent.

For the past eight years my associations have been mainly and very close with men outside the profession—bankers, merchants, lawyers, judges, manufacturers, bakers, butchers and candlestick-makers. Hundreds of these men call me by my first name and have told me how much they don't know about geology and why.

I live in a town where most of the leading men of all professions are conservative, in theology and otherwise. I do not think that they differ greatly from the leading business and professional men of other towns, and I feel that these men would be vastly enriched in their thinking by a clear knowledge of the larger findings of science in general and of geology in particular.

How many members of your home chamber of commerce or your Rotary or Kiwanis or other service clubs, for example, have any clear idea of geologic time, a conception in which years and centuries sink into insignificance that puts human history in its proper setting, or of the vast geologic changes the earth's surface has undergone or of the story of life's marvelous unfolding up the geologic ages as read in the rocks? My own conclusion is that not one in ten of the big men of my town, the men who own the big stores or manufacturing plants, who dominate its politics, who in a large measure have built and made the town what it is, have more than the vaguest idea

[1] Address of the vice-president and chairman of Section G—Geology, American Association for the Advancement of Science, Nashville, December, 1927.

NEW SCIENTIFIC BOOKS

The Oxford University Press, American Branch, New York

The Electronic Theory of Valency. Nevil V. Sidgwick. pp. xii + 310. $5.00.

This book aims at giving a general account of the principles of valency and molecular constitution, founded on the Rutherford-Bohr atom.

Qualitative Analysis. W. F. F. Shearcroft. 71 pp. $0.35.

Particular attention has been paid to the theory underlying qualitative analysis, and the student is given a reason for every operation outlined.

Harper & Brothers, New York

The Science of Health and Disease. Howard W. Haggard. pp. xii + 538. $4.00.

A physiological text-book, but it also extends over the whole field of modern medicine. The nature of health and the chief causes and processes of disease are described. For the student and the general reader.

The Draughtsman Publishing Company, London

An Outline of Stellar Astronomy. Peter Doig. 183 pp. $2.00, post free.

The main features are outlined of the present state of knowledge of the constitution, dimensions, motions and distribution in space of the stars and nebulae. Since books on astronomy quickly become out of date, the author has appended bibliographical notes indicating where will be reported the results of future investigations.