

given rise. The description of this principle as "the latest fashionable craze in science" is rather cutting, but as the book is well written and easily read, we can imagine that it will increase rather than lessen the general interest in the work of those eminent theoretical physicists. That the more extravagant conclusions resulting from the extreme adaptations of the principle should be held up to ridicule is quite wholesome, as it reveals the weak points in the argument and prevents the unwary from carrying it too far.

After all, "relativity" is only one among many possible interpretations of the result of a more or less isolated experiment. It asserts that no electrical or optical experiments can ever reveal absolute motion, or show any variation in the velocity of light. It is Einstein's merit to have pointed out the alarming consequences which would result from these two simple propositions. Our notions of time and space become almost interchangeable, and the "present moment" becomes meaningless without considerable restriction so soon as relative motion is involved.

Leo Gilbert burlesques these innovations with much humour and ingenuity, and will no doubt largely prevent them being taken too seriously. Since Einstein himself has practically abandoned the principle of the apparent constancy of the velocity of light in all circumstances, and even his mathematical methods have failed to deal with accelerated motion, there is little left of the imposing mathematical superstructure, and what "craze" there was has given way before a sober appreciation of an interesting speculation on its merits. While enjoying the fun of the satire, we cannot say that the author is at all fortunate where he endeavours to furnish an alternative explanation.

*Gipsy Coppersmiths in Liverpool and Birkenhead.*

By Andreas (Mui Shuko). Pp. vi+66+plates. (Liverpool: H. Young and Sons, 1913.) Price 1s. net.

THIS book is a collection of newspaper articles describing the manners and adventures of a band of gypsy coppersmiths, which appeared in Liverpool and Birkenhead in 1912. The writer would have been better advised not to reprint his material in this fragmentary form, but to take the opportunity of preparing a connected narrative. These people were commonly known in this country as Hungarians, but they were really cosmopolitan nomads from Eastern Europe. They settled in Liverpool, where they claimed superiority over the local gypsies, and, though they were lavishly supplied with money and jewelry, professed to make their living by repairing copper cauldrons. They can scarcely be described as attractive. They were most unwilling to give estimates of the cost of work entrusted to them. Like all Orientals they loved bargaining, made preposterous demands of payment for work entrusted to them, refused to be bound by any contract, and tried to enforce their claims by bullying and that form of coercion known to Hindus as "sitting *dharna*." They

were shameless beggars, and one of their boys stole the ring of their English friend, and flourished it in his face as they departed by train *en route* to Buenos Ayres. In spite of all this, they had a remarkable sense of personal dignity, and their kindness to one of their boys stricken with epilepsy, for whose treatment sorcery combined with the best medical advice was used, was remarkable. On the whole, we can readily imagine that the people of Liverpool easily reconciled themselves to the departure of their visitors.

*Prehistoric Times: as Illustrated by Ancient Remains and the Manners and Customs of Modern Savages.* By the late Rt. Hon. Lord Avebury. Seventh edition, thoroughly revised and entirely reset. Pp. iii+623. (London: Williams and Norgate, 1913.) Price 10s. 6d. net.

THIS, the seventh edition, "entirely reset," was revised by Lord Avebury only a few months before his lamented death. The author was a pioneer in the popularisation of the study of archæology. It is pleasant to be reminded: "This (the Drift period) I have proposed to call the 'Palæolithic' Period," and "For this (the Stone Age) period I have suggested the term 'Neolithic.'" The present edition is specially enriched with coloured illustrations of Palæolithic paintings. For the wide range of its information, and the fairness with which divergent views are discussed, the book well deserves the improved lease of life now given to it as a popular text-book of archæology. Its defects are those of its class. For certain reasons, one had been led to expect that in this edition the author would have set a fashion in works of the kind in including a summary of the astronomical evidence which is but rarely detached from archæological objects. The Stonehenge evidence, it is true, is now too well impressed on the popular mind to be overlooked (pp. 133-4), but it is severely isolated. It is in the interests of young readers or teachers of this text-book that one points to the latter half of the following passage as a questionable statement. "In this country we still habitually call the megalithic monuments 'Druidical,' but it is hardly necessary to mention that there is really no sufficient reason for connecting them with Druidical worship" (p. 126). JOHN GRIFFITH.

*A Text-book of Organic Chemistry.* By Prof. A. F. Hollemann. Edited by Dr. A. J. Walker, assisted by Dr. O. E. Mott. Fourth English edition, partly re-written. Pp. xviii+621. (New York: John Wiley and Sons; London: Chapman and Hall, Ltd., 1914.) Price 10s. 6d. net.

THE first English edition of this work was reviewed in NATURE on June 18, 1903 (vol. lxxviii., p. 149). One of the chief characteristics of the present issue is the additional space allotted to the applications in organic chemistry of physico-chemical methods. The section on tautomerism has been re-written, and the chapters on the benzene derivatives have been re-arranged.