

previous large number. Statics occupy the first eight chapters, then follow three chapters on motion, two chapters on work and friction, a chapter on the dynamics of rigid bodies, and another on impacts.

The book differs somewhat from most of the text-books on applied mechanics for engineers produced in this country; had it been published in Great Britain it would probably have been called "Applied Mathematics for Engineers." The treatment of the principles of mechanics is exceptionally good, and we can confidently commend the book to any engineering student who wishes to understand more thoroughly many matters which receive but little attention in most of our own text-books. With the omission of some of the more mathematical sections, which could be read profitably by engineering students later in their course, the book would prove very useful to students who desire to attain the standard of the intermediate examinations of the universities. There is a capital section on moments and products of inertia, containing matter for which the engineering student has generally to search in books containing little else of interest to him; the practical examples given in this section are good.

*The British Journal Photographic Almanac and Photographer's Daily Companion*, 1916. Edited by G. E. Brown. 55th issue. (London: H. Greenwood and Co., Ltd.) Price 1s. net.

ALL those who are practically interested in photography look forward to the appearance of the "B. J. Almanac," and in spite of the stress of circumstances they will not be disappointed. Although there are fewer new things to chronicle for last year, the general features of the volume are much as usual. The editor's special contribution is a long article on printing processes. These "practical notes" will be much appreciated. The "Epitome of Progress" section preserves its usual character, but the section usually devoted to a review of the novelties introduced by the trade during the past year is replaced by a survey of the resources of Great Britain and certain well-known firms of Entente nationality in the production of the requisites for photography. This shows that in several important respects we are rendering ourselves independent of German supplies.

*An Introductory Course of Practical Magnetism and Electricity*. By Dr. J. R. Ashworth. Third Edition. Pp. xvii+96. (London: Whittaker and Co., 1915.) Price 2s. net.

THE laboratory course described in this book is divided into thirty sections, and can be worked through in the course of a winter session. The present edition of the book is substantially the same as the previous issues, though some additions have been made. Sections have been introduced on the measurement of the internal resistance of a cell and the effect of joining cells in series and in parallel, and upon the use of the Wheatstone bridge for the comparison of resistances.

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### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR.

[The Editor does not hold himself responsible for opinions expressed by his correspondents. Neither can he undertake to return, or to correspond with the writers of, rejected manuscripts intended for this or any other part of NATURE. No notice is taken of anonymous communications.]

#### Exploration in South-West Africa.

PROF. H. H. W. PEARSON, of Cape Town, has just conducted an exploring expedition through part of the recently conquered "South-West." The expedition, which is expected to yield important economic as well as scientific results, started with the express approval of General Botha, and, like Prof. Pearson's previous journeys through the less explored parts of South Africa, was promoted by the Percy-Sladen Memorial Trust. I have just received the following letter, and I am sure many readers of NATURE will be glad to learn from it that Prof. Pearson has returned safely from his interesting and successful trek.

W. A. HERDMAN.

University of Liverpool, February 18.

CAPE TOWN,

January 28, 1916.

DEAR PROF. HERDMAN,

Just a line to tell you that the journey is accomplished with results which I hope will prove to be quite successful. I learned just what I wanted to learn and a good deal more besides. The route was a particularly interesting one; it showed me more of the transition zone between the littoral desert and the plateau than I had expected, and it gave me a good insight into the relations between the Damaraland and Namaqualand floras. It has connected up the results of my previous journeys, and I can now tackle my general summary much more satisfactorily than I could have done before.

The journey itself was in some respects the most difficult I have ever done. Along the edge of the desert the road disappeared entirely, and we got entangled in the ravines of a peculiarly awkward range of mountains. On December 31 we spent five hours in advancing considerably less than a mile. Both the wagons broke down, one of them twice within half an hour and in a vital part. But for the extraordinary skill of the two Hottentot drivers we should never have got them both through. Darkness found us in a dangerous river-bed, in which, in defiance of all the laws of good trekking, we had to spend the night—and a sleepless one so far as I was concerned. However, the new year was kinder, and although we broke down again in later stages of the journey, I had the satisfaction of taking everything safely into Windhoek except two of my thirty donkeys. One of these died on the road; the other I left in a weak condition with one of our military outposts, and it eventually recovered. Our troubles were due primarily to a bad mistake in the German maps, and to the fact that for 120 miles the country was absolutely without inhabitants, white or black. . . .

I passed through the semi-independent territory of the Bastard Hottentots. No German dare venture into it, but when these people found I was English they could not do enough for me. The chief sent his son with me for thirty miles to make sure that I regained the trunk road lost through the mistake mentioned above. They and all the natives throughout the country are profoundly thankful that the German régime is over—and they have good reason to be.

H. H. W. PEARSON.