

Among the later writers whose works show marked evidence of this influence Professor Loria mentions Copernicus, whose indebtedness to Aristarchus is well known; Snell, who was called "Eratosthenes Batavus"; Descartes, who built on the work of Apollonius, but developed a new method; Chasles and Steiner, who were deeply indebted to Pappus and his predecessors; the mathematicians of the seventeenth century who owed so much to Eudoxus and Archimedes; and the arithmeticians and algebraists who were inspired by the work of Diophantus. The list could, of course, be greatly extended, but not readily in a work of this nature.

That a publication of this size should give an exhaustive treatment of any special topic is not to be expected. What the book pretends to be is a popular presentation of the chief features of Greek mathematics, and this it is.

DAVID EUGENE SMITH

*The Chequered Career of Ferdinand Rudolph Hassler, First Superintendent of the United States Coast Survey.* By Florian Cajori. Boston, The Christopher Publishing House, 1929. 245 pp.

This book provides a vivid and interesting account of the life and work of the founder of the U. S. Coast Survey. Professor Cajori follows Hassler's steps from his birth in Switzerland in 1770 through his early geodetic operations to his migration to America in 1805, professorship at West Point in 1807-1809, at Union College 1810-1811, in Europe purchasing scientific instruments for the United States Government 1811-1815, initiating the Coast Survey in 1816-1818, surveying the northeastern boundary line in 1818-1819, engaging in various occupations in 1820-1830, and finally in Government employ, as Superintendent of Weights and Measures and director of the Coast Survey, the crowning work of his life, from 1830 to his death in 1843.

Hassler's experiences form an instructive example of the tribulations and ill-success that often attend a man of pure science who lacks the practical experience and tact to accomplish results in the world of affairs which his ability and originality would otherwise certainly bring to fruition; and on the other hand, these same experiences illustrate the shortsightedness of the "practical" men of affairs, who also failed to accomplish as much as they would have done, particularly in the early years of the Coast Survey, had they possessed the imagination to overlook the oddities and short-comings of this man who although living in a different world could have done his part in bridging the gulf between, had he received sympathetic assistance.

It is a pity that the usefulness of this interesting little volume should be marred by its unsatisfactory outward form. Paper and type are inferior, there are numerous misprints (on p. 97, l. 6 from the bottom, "Madison" should be "Monroe", an editorial error) and the arrangement of chapters and paragraphs leaves much to be desired. In translations from the German, Teutonic idioms have been permitted to creep in, as on pp. 21, 22, 29. But after all, these are external matters; the book is an interesting and useful addition to our knowledge of American science and American life a hundred years ago.

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