has shed a light on current ideas as to the existence of periodicity in various phenomena which may have the effect of clearing up many doubtful points in sunspot and other periods.

All these matters are here set forth. While giving in each case a concise story in which references to the original sources form a conspicuous element, Miss Clerke has at the same time made the volume eminently readable. It constitutes a valuable complement to her well-known work on the history of astronomy.   ERNEST W. BROWN.

Opinions et Curiosités touchant la Mathématique. (*Deuxième Série.*) Par GEORGES MAUPIN. Paris, C. Naud, 1902. 332 pp.

THE first volume of the Opinions et Curiosités appeared in 1898, and was reviewed in the BULLETIN, Volume 6 (1900), page 255. The present volume is made up of two parts. The first contains miscellaneous extracts from works mainly of the sixteenth and the seventeenth century, touching such subjects as the rotundity of the earth, the number of chemical elements, the nature of comets, the figure of the moon, ancient navigation, the capacity of Noah's ark, origin of the notion of the infinite, the squaring of the circle, etc.

The second part, covering 162 pages, is given up to biographical notes on Simon Stevin and Albert Girard, and to extracts from the Oeuvres Mathématiques of Stevin, edited by Girard and printed in 1634. The great historical importance of Stevin's book, as well as its rarity, justify this course. We find here quotations giving Stevin's argument " que l'unité est nombre," which are of value in tracing the development of the number concept. Several extracts exhibit Stevin's notation in decimal fractions and other parts of arithmetic. His great independence of thought is shown in his protest against calling incommensurable numbers like $\sqrt{8}$ "absurds, irrationels, irréguliers, inexplicables, sourds, etc." A number of physical and mechanical subjects are also touched upon, notably those relating to the tides, the formation of rain, the size of the earth, the center of gravity, the equilibrium of bodies.

The two parts of Maupin's book, taken together, make an interesting and entertaining volume. It is of value in exhibiting vividly certain stages in the progress of thought. It is good supplementary reading in a course on the history of mathematics and of physical science.