

upon the style of his predecessor in this field by expressing the doubt that many readers ever progress beyond the mere statements of the latter's propositions.

Mascheroni seems to have sought to write a practical treatise, one that could be used by artisans. M. Quemper de Lanascot, however, gives us a work intended primarily for geometers, a treatise in pure mathematics and interesting chiefly to those who study the science for its own sake. As Professor Bricard remarks in his preface: "A mon avis, la Géométrie du Compas doit se défendre comme se défendent les neuf dixièmes des mathématiques pures: elle porte témoignage de l'ingéniosité humaine."

Aside from the mere constructions, ingenious as they often are, the reader will find in "Livre III" a treatment of the application of inversion to the geometry of the compasses, and also a note on the *Géométrie Élémentaire du Compas* which M. Cousinery published in 1851, shortly before his death.

DAVID EUGENE SMITH

*Der Gegenstand der Mathematik im Lichte ihrer Entwicklung.* By H. Wieleitner. Leipzig and Berlin, Teubner, 1925. 61 pp.

This little volume constitutes volume 50 of the well known *Mathematisch-Physikalische Bibliothek* which has been published since 1912 under the general editorial direction of W. Lietzmann and A. Witting. The subtitles are as follows: Allgemeines über die Mathematik und ihre Entwicklung, Die Geometrie der Griechen, Die Algebra, Die moderne Geometrie, Die höhere Analysis, and Mathematik und Wirklichkeit. The booklet is very readable and contains brief accounts of various fundamental developments of mathematics, including some of the most recent ones. While historical questions receive relatively much attention the author aims also to elucidate a number of the most general mathematical principles by means of elementary illustrations, and thus to serve as a guide to those who desire to secure some insight into what is most important in the extensive field of mathematical developments.

The author begins by comparing mathematics with an extensive country which no single man is able to explore completely, and hence all are naturally glad to hear the reports of those who have explored various parts thereof. He then gives a brief sketch of the contributions made by various ancient peoples, stating in particular, on page 5, that we do not need to consider the contribution made by the Chinese notwithstanding the established fact that they influenced the development of mathematics in India, since only a few onesided orientalists believe now that the latter influenced materially the development of Greek mathematics. As regards the origin of our common number symbols, as well as in other respects, our author expresses the most modern views, and hence the booklet is well adapted to serve those who seek to keep in touch with new developments relating to elementary mathematics and to deepen their insight into the most popular aspects thereof.

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