Book Notices

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Philosophy

A mathematician presents a philosophy which challenges the authority of mathematics. Naturally, he relies on a set of axioms as a foundation. However, not all of the axioms are easily grasped. In fact, the general reader will no doubt find the book vague and difficult reading and quit it even before reaching the third chapter where the 38 axioms are stated.

The fundamental criterion of truth set up is the understanding of the individual concerned. Thus "a statement may be true for one person, yet ambiguous, meaningless, or even false for another..." depending on their relative understandings and viewpoints. "Truth develops only with a developing viewpoint." A consistent viewpoint, together with a view, makes a concept. A concept is eternal, i.e., truth is absolute and never changes, yet it is dependent on the viewpoint.

The challenge to mathematics concerns the use of abstract symbols without regard to whether or not they have physical significance. Symbols for which one cannot develop a concept can have nothing to do with truth as this philosophy defines it.—Elton F. Paddock.


Counting Alpha and Beta Particles

The counting of charged particles is perhaps the most important single technique in the problems of nuclear physics. In the monograph "Electrical Counting," the author, W. B. Lewis, considers the methods developed to date in a rather complete fashion. A few pages at the beginning are devoted to the subject of ionizing chambers and are then followed by a well-written summary of the limitations of amplifiers. The bulk of the little book deals with the design of amplifiers and is not much different from the material that may be found in texts on radio. Unfortunately for American readers, the tubes mentioned are foreign. It would be a good idea if British and American authors gave the number of tubes with similar characteristics. Special attention at the end of the book is given to circuits for Geiger-Muller counters, the theory of random distributions, coincidence counting, and the use of counters with screens for making energy determinations.

The book is well printed, but the paper is of wartime quality.—J. B. Green.

"Electrical Counting," W. B. Lewis. Cambridge University Press. 144 pages. $2.50.