

is fundamentally the aim of Abetti. Commencing from what he calls "Primeval Times," he tells the fascinating story of ancient astronomical achievement, until he arrives at that most glorious period of Brahe, Kepler, Galileo and Newton. Thereafter is the history of modern astronomy.

Astronomical history is so vast a subject that it would be impossible to cover every detail in 328 pages, but there is no doubt that Abetti has recorded the essential things in a very able manner. As an Italian astrophysicist of high international repute, it is but natural that he makes a little stress, although not obtrusively, on Italian astronomy. For this we should be grateful, for we know that when he tells us of the experience of looking through Galileo's own telescopes, he is speaking with authority. Whatever may be lacking in his history is more than balanced by the recording of material not found in other books.

Although it would seem that little has been lost in the translation from the Italian, there are a few occasions when the style does not seem to flow freely for easy reading. On the other hand, much is often gained from a direct relating of facts, rather than any flowery embellishments.

Students of astronomy will find the work of more than passing value for the short biographies of many of the famous astronomers. In this respect the book is a *multum in parvo* reference work. Many items in the development of the science, which are not well known, make their appearance in these life histories. One also feels that Abetti is a very kindly man. Incidents which have included the fiercest emotions of the human spirit are dealt with in mellow style.

It is no criticism of the author to say that the story of present-day astronomy is presented sketchily. If anyone can give a complete picture it is difficult to say, but he has given an indication of modern and future trends by outlining the organisation of the International Astronomical Union.

In this particular edition, the reader will appreciate the wonderful plates of photographs taken with the largest instruments, although they do not have any direct relation to the text. Printing and production of the whole work are excellent.

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