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The product of an agreeably dotty cleric named Edwin Abbott Abbott and first published in 1884, Flatland distills all that the Victorian era knew of higher mathematics--and then some--into a witty, complex novel of ideas.

Ian Stewart, the author of the equally witty sequel, Flatterland--which adds to Abbott's store of science the key discoveries made since--does a superb job of explaining the original book's enigmas, allusions, ironies, implausibilities, and what Douglas Hofstadter would call "metamagical themas." Among other things, Stewart comments on Abbott's comments on such things as the nature/nurture controversy, the fourth dimension and beyond, the role of multidimensional spaces in economic systems, infinite series and perfect squares, celestial mechanics, and other matters close to the hearts of cosmologists and science buffs alike.

Stewart's notes make an entertaining and learned addition to an already classic bit of writing--one that has never been out of print since its first publication. For both devoted Abbott fans and newcomers to his work, this is the edition to have. --Gregory McNamee --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.