

ning the shades of expression upon the countenance of his neighbor the grizzly bear, boasts to the more fortunate city-dweller about the things that his hairy substitute for a friend can do—what an eye he has for a hive of wild bees or an empty sardine-tin—how he seems to come to conclusions that almost make sense—so we, whose back porch is perhaps at the mercy of a Chinese soya-bean farmer educated at an inland mission school, feel a gentle, silly pride in his specious friendship, his obvious home-made platitudes, his manifestations of an almost human intelligence. But why should we make allowances with one hand, so to speak, and write about the Inscrutable Philosophy of the Subtle Oriental with the other?

At a Chinese theatre the other day, my docile China-drugged mind encouraged the performance with unspoken back-patting condescension. "Really, that's almost touching, if only the bereaved widow would speak in a natural voice. . . . Listen, that little flute almost played something musical for a minute. . . . That climax would have been almost dramatic if the actor hadn't stopped in the middle to wipe his neck with a wet towel. . . . That funny man would be almost amusing, surely, if the gong-players didn't drown all his remarks. . . . This play, if it had ended half an hour ago when all the principal characters died, would have been almost. . . .

And then suddenly my spiritual tongue was loosened. "No—no—NO—It's *not* subtle—not even *almost* subtle. . . . Judged by any adult standard, it's absolutely bad—childish—a third rate charade. . . . Why should the Chinese, who claim such superiority of tastes, evolve the only stage in the civilized world on which actors need not act, or playwrights produce original dramatic dramas—a stage which avoids both realism and illusion? There is nothing good in this play—(a play stamped by generations of Chinese connoisseurs as artistically acceptable)—except the clothes, which expressionless actors, like mannequins, display deliberately, back view, front view, and profile view. Why must we judge by lower standards than our own in a Chinese theatre? Why should the Chinese claim artistic equality—or even superiority—and at the same time support a theatre that would be a disgrace to Central African Bongo-bongoes? The truth is that, whatever may have been the case in the past, the Chinese are now no longer creative artists, philosophers, or thinkers at all; they are craftsmen, and second-rate at that. As regards "the Orient" we have got into an unreasoning and silly habit of reverence. The Chinese are one of the most prosaic peoples in the world and have least to teach us—just as the grizzly bear is the least witty substitute for a human friend ever discovered.

Alas, if circumstances oblige us to live alone among chickadees or Chinese bureaucrats, with the growing of spinach or the making of money for a mental occupation, and the Chinese theatre or the developing of Nature snapshots for our only recreation, may we not be frank about the thing and admit that we are bored? May we not confess that we never get an opportunity to say anything we mean in an understanding ear, or to hear anything that excites in us a more intelligent emotion than money-making ardor or journalist's curiosity? Is it too much to ask, at least, that we analyze our own actual experiences in solitude before we write about Fellowship with the Divine in the Great Outdoors, or about the Mystic Orient, shot with the glances of Dark Almond Eyes that See Beyond Human Wisdom?

STELLA BENSON.

Henry A. Beers (1847-1926)

(Continued from page 129)

ture got good advice for he was too human to make even poetry sacrosanct, yet was given a love of the subject matter of his profession that was worth a thousand hints on marketing.

In his last days he was reading Clarendon's history of the Civil War in England and "The Mauve Decade" of his sometime student, Thomas Beer, approving both, criticizing both, savoring both. If he gave a peep into culture to a philistine generation, hurrying past him in the endeavor to get on, it was because this omnivorous scholar was culture in its only seminal form—not knowledge, nor rhetoric, nor the dogmatic repetition of platitudes, but an indefatigable love of good experience. For one learns best from those who love good things and are themselves lovable.

The BOWLING GREEN

Translations from the Chinese

PROGRAM NOTE FOR A COSMIC MELODRAMA

THE CREATOR requests the audience
Not to divulge the solution
Of the mystery of which the action is
founded.

Future patrons
Will more greatly relish the denouement
If kept in suspense
Till the final curtain.

THOUGHTS IN THE GULF STREAM

Who has described the wave
Crisping oblique from *Caronia's* bow
In clear summer midnight?
Brighter than snow the crumble, the running curl-
ing crumble
Flung by her wedgy stem:
Then a hollow, a lovely bending hollow,
Which swells up to a spread, an outward comb of
breaker
Drawing veins and stripings
After it through the black:
And the little phosphor-sparkle,
The seethe along her side,
All this has never been properly described
Because no passenger ever sees it.
With detached and watchful mind.
None of them
In clear summer midnight
Ever sees it alone.

ANXIETY

It worries me
To hear people cough late at night
For then I know they are lying awake
And probably thinking
And it troubles me to think about people thinking
Alone, in bed, at night.

NONE OF MY BUSINESS

I saw a satisfied bee
Blissfully asleep in a hollyhock flower.
I tickled him with a straw
To see if he would wake,
And then I was ashamed
Realizing how gravely I had been infected
By your American passion for interfering
In other people's affairs.
No harm was done, however—
He only grumbled affectionately
And turned over on the other side.

EJACULATION OF MRS. LAUREL

Once I had to live in the same house
With a man who was getting ready to write a hand-
some poem;
Since when
I am through with Literature.

SUMMER SCHOOL

What is the difference,
Inquired a young student,
Between an Author and a Writer?
An Author
Is a writer who is dead.

DISTRIBUTION OF CREDIT

It is certainly true
(Admitted the Old Mandarin)
That a great proportion of meritorious poetry
Was inspired by beautiful women,
But it would never have been actually written
Without black coffee.

SPRETAEQUE INJURIA FORMAE

When I was young
I wearied myself tramping through famous museums
To admire the old Greek statues.
Now I am connoisseur with less fatigue—
I joined an American beach club.

STUDIES IN SOCIOLOGY

A plumber gets \$14 a day;
And the highbrow magazines
Pay \$14 for a sonnet
But I deduce no doctrine

From these statistics.

I will add however

That the plumber will not work without his Helper

Who gets \$6 a day

For handing him his tools.

AN EPISCOPAL HEART

In the Bermuda yacht-race
Was an amateur skipper
Who could not credit the calculus of his navigator.
Pointing vaguely southeast, he insisted
That he knew by some inward sureness
Bermuda was Over There.
Late at night, while the navigator slept,
He surreptitiously altered the course.
He knew, he just knew,
Bermuda was Over There.
Well, he was wrong:
They overshot their mark by many leagues
And lost the race.
His crew will not forgive him
And he will never be a navigator
But I think of the stout fellow with affection—
What a Bishop he would have made.

MATIN AU LUXEMBOURG

Oh Medici Fountain,
Sombre in your aisle of leaves, where confused
shadow
Aggravates young artists;
Where Sorbonne students read intermittently
And trysting lovers
Sorrow about many things—
In your dusky basin the Parisian sparrows
More hygienic than most natives of the Quarter
Begin the day with a bath.

DREGS

Last precious aroma
Of our trip to France
The orange savor of the bottle of Cointreau.
We finished it promptly
Before the frost came
For you know what it says on the label:—
Le froid trouble le Cointreau Triple-Sec.

SEPTEMBER

Now comes the glow and glamour of the year:
Autumn, autumn, season of soft wisdom
When I see destiny in a realtor's notice—
ESTATE OF FRANK A. MUNSEY
325 ACRES
WILL DIVIDE
And even the beauty of a field of goldenrod
Is something to be sneezed at.

SEIZURE

Sometimes I pray, in seizures of supplication,
Give me, Oh Buddha,
The virtue of Carl Sandburg's fishmonger
Who had, if you remember the poem,
"The face of a man terribly glad to be selling fish."

RAINY EVENING

I lay on my couch with a book on religions
And hearkened the pouring rain.
Tumult of the rain, sound of comfort and cleansing,
That makes me one with all process and chemistry
of earth:
Even death will seem fair enough
If I can die while it's raining. . . .
Then I came to a chapter about Buddha
And I sprang up, full of ambition,
And wrote these verses—
Buddha always excites me.

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY.

Mr. Barnaby Williams, who has traveled all over the world giving recitals from the works of Dickens, writing to *John O'London's Weekly* of Dickens as Britain's Ambassador, says:

"There is, however, a serious situation arising which bids fair to undo all the good abroad which his writings have hitherto achieved. I refer to the filming of his novels. English, Dutch, and American companies have produced Dickens films which are too often inaccurate. Herein lies a danger. The films influence so extensive a public in all countries of the world that misrepresentation by them of an acknowledged writer tends to discourage thousands of potential admirers from reading his books. With Dickens's works there is no excuse for such inaccuracies; the filming of them should be a mere matter of following directions in the text."

Books of Special Interest

On Optics

HELMHOLTZ'S TREATISE ON PHYSIOLOGICAL OPTICS. English Translation from the Third German Edition. Edited by JAMES P. C. SOUTHALL. Volume II, "The Sensations of Vision," 1924. Volume III, "The Perceptions of Vision," 1925. Optical Society of America. \$7.

Reviewed by M. R. NEIFELD

SINCE the days when Helmholtz first published his encyclopedic volumes on optics, the science of psychology has come forward to take its rightful place among the fields of research. Like the other long recognized sciences it has defined the type of phenomena with which it is concerned, and it has developed the methods and the tools of research necessary for adequate handling of that portion of the totality of possible knowledge which it has taken as its own.

If Helmholtz were now publishing his work for the first time, it is certain that he would not (at least for the second volume) be content with "Physiological Optics" for a title. This volume very properly bears the sub-title "The Sensations of Vision." The 480 pages of text (which include the various appendices) treat material that is discussed—in the barest outlines, to be sure—in the section on vision in any of the good modern psychological manuals or texts. It would have been much better (as was pointed out in a review of the first volume in these pages) if Helmholtz had called his treatise "Psychological Optics." The interest of the pure physicist ceases just at the point where it becomes proper to speak about "sensations of vision." The physicist as such is interested primarily in the physical wave lengths of light, but the moment these have stimulated the eye and have been converted by the "transformer mechanism" of the retina into the messages that the cerebral cortex interprets as sensations of color, he has lost the phenomena with which he, as a physicist, is qualified to deal. To be sure, there are the frontiers of science—the no-man's land

of research worker—where the hard and fast boundary lines of the elementary texts disappear, and into which all sciences send their exploring parties. Substantial gains are made not by mere appropriation or annexation of unclaimed territory, but by methodical advance and consolidations of minor gains with existing systems of organized knowledge. The physicists would have been spared many unpleasant experiences and naïve errors if they had recognized—as Helmholtz himself did—that sensations are properly the study of the psychologists. Unfortunately, the disciples have seen less clearly than the master, and have failed to recognize and allow for the importance of the psychological point of view.

Some of the material in the second volume has naturally been supplanted by the results of more recent research, but a surprisingly large portion of it still remains of immediate value to scientists. Particularly so, because of the inclusion of three notes especially prepared for the English translation by Professor v. Kries on Normal and Anomalous Color Systems, and on Theories of Vision, and by the addition of a partial bibliography of works relating to the sensations of vision which have appeared in the interval since the publication of the third German edition in 1911. This makes available in one volume the most comprehensive survey of the whole subject to be found anywhere. But of even greater importance in modernizing the volume is the inclusion at the end of a chapter on "The Nature of the Color Sensations," by Christine Ladd-Franklin.

Dr. Ladd-Franklin is the originator of the Ladd-Franklin color theory to which the English physicist, Peddie, in a review of "Physiological Optics" in *Nature*, gives the high praise of saying that it "may prove to be the actual state of things." Coming from a physicist this is rare praise, indeed, and considering that the editor of the English translation is himself also a physicist, the inclusion of the discussion by Mrs. Franklin in the volume, would indicate that the physicists are coming to see,

what the leading psychologists have recognized, that her synthesis of the facts gives the only valid explanation of the complex phenomena of color vision.

She points out that the Helmholtz theory is not a theory at all, but merely a statement of the fact that all the colors of the spectrum can be matched by physical mixtures of red, green, and blue lights—that the stimuli for the one hundred and sixty discriminable color tones of the spectrum can be secured by the appropriate mixtures of only three wave lengths. The sensations that result are, however, five in number, and not three, for yellow and white are just as good psychological elements as are red, green, and blue. Furthermore, besides recognizing the existence of only three out of the five light sensations (black, the non-light sensation, is accounted for independently in most theories), the Helmholtz explanation overlooks the grouping of yellow and blue, and of red and green into "disappearing" color-pairs. It offers no explanation of why there are blue-green and blue-red sensations but no red-green or yellow-blue sensations.

Prior to the enunciation of the Ladd-Franklin theory, Schultze and Parinand had established the remarkable fact of the double structure and the double function of the retina (rods and cones). It was known that rod-vision is white vision, and that cone vision is chromatic vision, and also that the yellow-blue chromatic pair preceded the red-green pair. The outermost region of the retina is sensitive to white only, the middle region to yellow-blue as well, and only the foveal region is sensitive to red-green. It is also in this order inverted that the colors are lost in cases of diseases of the eye such as tobacco amblyopia and progressive atrophy of the optic nerve. It is the rods that alone function in the twilight vision, and this accounts for our inability to see colors in the dark.

Later the acute researches of Ramon y Cajal were to prove unqualifiedly that the cones are anatomically nothing but more highly developed or evolved rods. When Weigert discovered that a specific light-sensitive substance (such as is present in the rods and cones) need not show color to the human eye, Hecht followed with proof that save for a "molecular rearrangement" the same substance is present in the cones as in the rods. These discoveries form the perfect groundwork upon which are built the explanation of the psychological considerations of color vision offered by the Ladd-Franklin theory.

It should be mentioned in closing that this work of Helmholtz can be obtained from the secretary of the Optical Society, Professor Richtmyer of Cornell University.

Air Travel

THE FIRST WORLD FLIGHT; as Related by LIEUTENANTS SMITH, NELSON, WADE, ARNOLD, HARDING, and OGDEN to LOWELL THOMAS. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1926.

THE airplane which has brought so much that is new into war and commerce, has added a new element to exploration as well, for air travel over routes that have never been traversed by that means before combines the most rapid motion known to man with thrills and hazards, and perhaps hardships, quite equal to any that come to voyagers on foot, by pack train, or by canoe. Five chapters in this book and five weeks in actual time of the flight suffice to take the world flyers from Tokio through China, Indo-China, Siam, and Burma to Calcutta. On the way there had been adventure and misadventure culminating in a forced landing on an Indo-Chinese river, such as might have occupied for many months a traveler by more prosaic conveyances.

It is a fine story of a fine undertaking, this story told by young men who accepted it all in the day's work, and who related each experience as simply and as straightforwardly as they had met each obstacle that arose. Each of the six has his part in the telling, and in the chronicler selected to assemble the parts into a consistent whole flyers, publishers, and readers alike, have been fortunate. Taking the assignment on only after the flight was completed, and receiving discontinuous scraps of narrative as he must have done, Lowell Thomas, already famous as the historian of Colonel Lawrence's exploits in Arabia, and more recently through his own travels in Afghanistan, has been wonderfully successful in creating a smoothly flowing sequence and in so unifying the style and endowing the story with literary polish as to make it a real pleasure to read on its own account.



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