

OUR SENSE OF SPACE.

Experiments With Infants to Show That It Is Innate. There are many optical illusions which show that our perception of distance, height and space are acquired rather than instinctive, and in the domain of psychological physiology one of the standing controversies touches this point.

A person blind from birth who has learned to distinguish triangles, squares, circles and objects of other forms by touch is not able immediately after the acquisition of sight to distinguish these familiar objects by sight alone.

In the course of the debate that raged in Germany some experiments were made with babies. It appeared that in babies what must be described for want of a better term as a sense of space seems to exist. The infant was held in the arms of the experimenters for about a minute, at the end of which interval the child was permitted to drop upon its bed.

From these experiments it has been inferred that there must exist a sense of space almost from infancy. What is the dread of falling but a manifestation of an innate sense of space?—London Post.

Traced by a Thermometer.

One night many years ago Dr. White-law was walking along with the messenger when he was set upon and knocked down in a lonely part of the road. His pockets were rifled, and he was left lying on the road with a fracture of the fibula. One of the articles stolen was a clinical thermometer with which he had that evening taken the temperature of a patient suffering from enteric fever.

Shell Sculptors. The workman manipulated the comb of pale, translucent tortoise shell like putty, molding the top with his fingers into small balls. "You thought we carved shell, hey?" he said, with an Italian accent. "No, no. We heat it up and mold it. We are shell sculptors."

He took three pieces of shell from a pot of steaming water and laid them very carefully, one on top of the other, in a press.

"Shell is like glue," he said. "These three pieces will weld together, and not a sign of a seam will show. Sometimes we weld nine, four, twenty pieces together. I learned my trade in Naples. I don't want to boast, but we Neapolitans are the best workers in shell and coral that there are in the world."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

Her Transformation.

Irene was a little street wail. A kind hearted woman called her into her home one day, gave her a bath, brushed her hair and arranged it becomingly, trying it with a clean pretty ribbon, then stepped back to view the result. A friend who was present remarked that there was such a change one would scarcely know that it was the same child. "But my name's Irene yet, ain't it?"—Delineator.

Mr. O'Donnell and the Hour.

An excellent bull was perpetrated in the house of common one morning at half past 1 o'clock. Mr. O'Donnell was the author. He rose suddenly to his feet and cut into the debate with, "At this late hour of the morning, Mr. Speaker—"

"Early hour you mean," from the Government benches. "Well, Mr. Speaker," he continued, "at this early hour of the following day."

True Enough.

Irritated Citizen—Aren't you ashamed of yourself, going about with that street organ and leading such a lazy life? Street Organist—Lazy life? Why sir, life with me is one long daily grind.—Echo.

He Lived Well.

He—Yes, he lives on the fat of the land. She—What is he? He—An anti-fat medicine manufacturer.—Comic Cats.

Life's a reckoning we cannot make twice over. You cannot mend a wrong subtraction by doing your addition right.—George Eliot.

TRAVELERS' TALES.

The Blunders in Books That Describe Foreign Countries.

A lively article on the amusing mistakes to be found in books appears in the London Academy. The author in referring to the blunders often made in books that describe foreign countries notes that a traveler's ignorance of the manners and customs of strange peoples or deliberate imposition by his informants are both supposed to have given a somewhat fabulous character to some parts of the writings of Herodotus. He quotes these lines, which he found written on his desk when he was attending lectures at Oxford:

Herodotus, Herodotus. You could not spell, you ancient cuss. The priests in Egypt gannomed you. It was not very hard to do. But don't you think you'll gammon us. Herodotus, Herodotus.

The author adds: "The second line is presumably a reference to the spelling of Ionic Greek. What follows alludes to the story of the Nile issuing from between the mountains Crophi and Mophi. In justice, however, to the historians we must remember that recent investigations have discovered that many of his narratives once regarded as mythical have been found to have some foundation in fact."

"This is more than can be said of most medieval travelers' tales. Some, however, admit of explanation, as, for instance, Othello's account of 'men whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders.' Raleigh is convinced that the wonder is true, because every child in the provinces of Arromania and Camuri affirms the same. The origin of the belief in such prodigies has been found in the account given by Olearius of the Samojeds of northern Muscovy, whose garments are made like those that are called cosaque, open only at the necks. When the cold is extraordinary they put their cosques over their heads and let the sleeves hang down, their faces being not to be seen but at the cleft which is at the neck. Whence some have taken occasion to write that in these northern countries there are people without heads, having their faces in their breasts."

FREAK CATALOGUING.

British Museum Has a System That Few Can Fathom.

It may seem ungrateful in an old reader who has reaped so many benefits from the great library in Bloomsbury to find fault with the arrangements, and if I stood alone in this complaint I would retain my isolation; but the grievance is ventilated by many.

In the first place, I and J are treated as the same letter, as U and V are. That was all right when the catalogue was begun and was in manuscript, but now that printing has superseded handwriting the obsolete fashion of cataloguing Jones and Ives under the same letter or Vale and Uwin as having the same initial might be discontinued and the modern usage adopted.

In the second place, anonymous works are catalogued according to a bewildering system, the object of which seems to be to hide the identity of the work.

Take the case of the valuable little book with the following title: "An Account of the Origin of Steamboats, in Spain, Great Britain and America and of Their Introduction and Employment Upon the River Thames Between London and Gravesend to the Present Time"—i. e., 1831. One would think that it would be catalogued under "Steamboats," that being the main subject, but no—it is catalogued under "Spain." I am told the rule is to take the first proper name.

That rule, however, is not applied in the next case. A well written little book published in 1907 is entitled "Devon, the Shire of the Sea Kings." "Devon" would seem to be the natural heading, but no—in the catalogue it will be found under "Great Western Railway."—London Notes and Queries.

Broke the Combination.

The father of Judge W. H. Wadhams had a chicken coop and a dog, and a stable hand. It began to look to Mr. Wadhams as though some one had discovered the combination. So he kept the coop and the stable hand, but he got a new dog. Next day the bent old negro who groomed the Wadhams horses came to him.

"You lost your affection for me, boss?" he asked.

"No, Scipio," said Mr. Wadhams. "I like you as well as ever."

"Then," asked Scipio peevishly, "w'yn't you tie old Rover in de chicken coop stid of dat new dog?"—Argonaut.

Psalms Not Barred.

The other evening Miss Y., a maiden lady of uncertain years, suspecting the cook was entertaining her beau down stairs, called Martha and inquired whether she did not hear some one talking with her.

"Oh, no, ma'am," cried the quick witted Martha. "It was only me singing a psalm."

"Very good," returned Miss Y. significantly. "You may amuse yourself with psalms, but let's have no hims."

The Bland One.

Lady.—What! You've just come out of prison! I wonder you are not ashamed to own it! Ne'er-do-well—I don't own it, lady—wish I did. I was only a lodger.—New York Journal.

Lively Lazaruses.

Started Visitor—Gracious! What's that? Must be an earthquake! The plaster is falling too! Mild Mater—Oh, no! It's just the boys. Two of them are sick in bed today.—Puck.

A UNIQUE EXPERIMENT.

Boiling and Freezing Water at the Same Time.

The possibility of boiling and freezing water at the same time in the laboratory is one of the most interesting developments of modern science. The temperature at which water boils depends simply on the air pressure above its surface at the time. If there is high pressure the water has to be made a good deal hotter to boil than at low pressure.

On mountains where the air pressure is a good deal lower than at sea level water boils easily at low temperature. In cooking vegetables that require a certain degree of heat and where the water boils before that degree is reached the vegetables will not get done. They consequently have to be put into a closed boiler so that the generated steam will create enough pressure for the water to boil at or beyond the required temperature. In the experimental proof of this fact water is placed in a vessel and the air exhausted from above the surface of the water. As the process of pumping goes on the water will violently boil, the steam congealing on the sides of the exhaust vessel. If the pumping is continued long enough and the outside is cooled below the freezing point of water the water will continue to boil and bubble till it is frozen into a snowy mass of ice.

This fact is also made use of in taking a rough test of the height of a mountain. Ordinarily at sea level where the pressure is about thirty inches of mercury water boils at 212 degrees F. Now, if it is noticed that at a certain place it boils at a few degrees lower the height of that place can be easily ascertained by comparison with a table made out for this purpose. In general for every degree the boiling takes place under 212 a height of about 500 feet is counted.

Of course these principles do not apply to water alone, but are characteristic of all liquids.—New York Tribune.

FISH LOCOMOTION.

The Nature and Functions of the So Called Air Bladders.

Leaning over the parapet of some old stone breakwater or pier head and watching the fish playing about in the clear green depths below, perhaps the last thought which is likely to occur to any of us is that we are looking on at a really astonishing thing. That a fish is able to propel itself through the water in any desired direction is in no way surprising, but that it can change its level at will, rising or falling without the use of its fins, and instantly assuming a horizontal or vertical position, according to the mood or need of the moment, is a fact that a little reflection will soon develop into a primitive wonder.

For it is clear that the fish must be able at will to vary its weight in relation to the water it displaces. When it sinks to the bottom it must have suddenly rendered itself heavier than the medium it inhabits; each time it rises the tail points like a released cork head first, tail pointing almost vertically downward, it must not only have transformed itself into something lighter than the water, but must have become lighter in its fore parts than in its tail.

The mystery, for such it undoubtedly is on a casual survey, says the London Chronicle, resolves itself immediately we come to study the nature and functions of the so called air bladder in fishes. By this contrivance all these intricate movements of the fish are brought about.

The bladder, however, contains not air, as is commonly supposed, but gas, which is discharged or regenerated by certain organs of the fish, according to whether upward or downward movement is necessary; also either the whole length of the bladder or only its front or rear portion can be inflated. Thus the fish is able to swim level or by altering its center of gravity, to raise or lower either head or tail at will.

Singular Services of Sheep.

In the northern part of India sheep are put to a use unthought of in European or American countries. They are made to serve as beasts of burden. The mountain paths along the foothills of the Himalayas are so precipitous that the sheep, more sure footed than larger beasts, are preferred as burden carriers. The load for each sheep is from sixteen to twenty pounds. The sheep are driven from village to village, with the wool still growing, and in each town the farmer shears as much wool as he can sell there and loads the sheep with the grain which he receives in exchange. After the flock has been sheared he turns it homeward, each sheep having on its back a small bag containing the purchased grain.

Economy.

Mrs. Blockley—John, do you know that Royal Worcester vase I bought yesterday for £5? Well, they reduced them to £3 this morning. Mr. Blockley—Then you lost £2 by not waiting until this morning. Mrs. Blockley—No, only £1. I went down today and bought another for £3, making two of them average £4 each.—London Fun.

Bobby's Questions.

Small Bobby—Papa, why can a man run faster than a boy? Papa—Because he is bigger, my boy. Small Bobby (after pondering for a few moments)—Well, if that's the reason, why don't the hind wheels of a wagon run faster than the front wheels?—Chicago News.

If you wish to reach the highest, begin at the lowest.—Syrus.

A SCOTTISH LEGEND.

The Story of the Knight With the White Feather.

TWO COURAGEOUS WARRIORS.

Heroic Alexander Hume and His Still More Heroic Fellow Soldier and Protector—The Sad Sequel to the Battle That Was Lost.

The heraldic arms of the Scotch town of Selkirk show a woman seated on a tomb, on which is also placed the Scottish lion. The legend told about the arms is this: King James IV., of Scotland, who was about to invade England, needed recruits for his enterprise. The town clerk of Selkirk, William Brydone, tried his best to aid his king by persuading his fellow countrymen to enlist in the royal cause. So earnest was he that he is said to have moved over a hundred lusty Scots to join his standard. Among these was one of the name of Alexander Hume. This man was a shoemaker of the town of Selkirk. He was strong, stalwart, bold and an excellent workman. Brydone was very glad to welcome him, as he reckoned him quite the best man of the hundred, and his comrades, who were also brave men and true, cheered him as he appeared among them, such confidence had they in his wisdom, prudence, valor and strength.

Hume's wife, Margaret, was a fine young woman and very fond and proud of her brave, strong husband. Now, Margaret did not at all like this proposed invasion of England. She felt that it would mean great trouble to the Scotch people, who would certainly be vanquished by their strong enemy, and she thought came to her that her own brave husband might perhaps lose his life in the struggle. She therefore used all her best efforts to keep him at home. She pleaded in vain. Alexander was firm. At last she held up to his face their little five-months-old daughter and asked who would look after the child if he should die and who would keep her from misery and misfortune.

Hume loved his wife and child, and these appeals brought the tears to his eyes, but they did not break down his resolution, which he had girt about him as armor. Nothing could move him to become untrue to his king and country.

Finding that no entreaties could move him, Margaret at last gave way to anger and told him that his eager desire to be thought the bravest man of Selkirk would not supply the child he was bound to work for with a bite of bread. She said even more than this. Her tones grew higher, and one word led to another, as you know it will, until the couple parted in anger, he to the field of battle and she to remain at home.

Alexander had not gone far before it flashed across the mind of his wife that perhaps she might never see him alive again. Unable to control herself, she flung the child into its crib and rushed out of the house. She must see her husband again and get from him one parting glance or word of reconciliation. She hurried through the town, she sought everywhere for him, but he was nowhere to be seen. He had gone off with his comrades. The poor wife wept bitterly. Her grief was deep.

Hume and his fellows were soon engaged in battle. It displayed the greatest bravery. Wherever he went numbers of the enemy fell. In every direction upon the field of battle he was seen. His companions kept well up to him, and in particular one man who had lately joined the party. This man fought with a courage equal to that of Hume himself, keeping continually beside him and defending him in many perils. Once when an Englishman from behind drew very near to the Scot this soldier struck the cowardly fellow to the earth just as he was inserting his spear between the clasps of Hume's armor. Hume called to the brave fellow and demanded his name, even in the midst of the fight, but the stranger said that that was no matter.

This generous soldier wore a leath-er jacket and an iron helmet, in which there was placed a small white feather. Wherever Hume fought on the battlefield there might be seen beside him the iron helmet and the white feather.

At last the battle ended in defeat for the Scotch, who scattered in all directions. Hume, who, with other soldiers, was obliged to lie concealed in the forest for some time, took the first opportunity of inquiring after his faithful attendant. But all his inquiries were without avail. He could not trace him. Nothing could he learn of him but that he had disappeared when the fight was over.

Alexander Hume hurried to his cottage. He was anxious to see again his beloved wife and bestow upon her the kiss of reconciliation. When he reached it he listened at the door, and his heart beat fast. He had kind words to say to her from whom he had parted in anger, and his deep wounds needed dressing. He lifted the latch and walked in. All was still. No wife came to meet him; no child's cry met his ear. On looking round the room he saw seated in an armchair the knight who had fought so bravely beside him in the battle, wearing the same leather jacket, iron helmet and white feather. That person was Margaret Hume. She was dead and clasped in her dead arms the little child.

Be conciliatory and considerate if you hope to win conciliation and consideration.—Ward.

A MISTAKE IN BUYING SHOES.

Retail shoe men in order to get their shoes when they want them, and get them as they want them, must buy six months in advance of a season. It is very hard to tell just what is wanted in styles as the styles of shoes change very quickly. I for one, made a mistake this season; purchased too many lace shoes.

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Do not put it off until the best are all picked out, come at once, or you will be sorry for it later.

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