

PORTLAND READERS

Have Taken A Most Serious Turn of Mind

Philosophy and Science Have Replaced Light Fiction in the Reading Public's Heart, So Library Review Reveals

PORTLAND'S reading public has gone in for philosophy, the drama and science.

Fiction is neglected for the heavy works of such thinkers as Bergson and Goddard.

A review of the records at the public library discloses the fact that our romancers, for the moment, have been thrust in the background. The public mind seems to have taken a trend toward deeper things than light fiction, for the greatest demand is for Bergson's books entitled "Creative Evolution." The title might signify this work to be on the same parallel with Darwin, but such is not the case. Darwin was a materialist, while Bergson is a philosopher, who goes farther back into the formation of life than did ever his illustrious predecessor. Where Darwin stated facts as he saw them, Bergson portrays their practicability. Strange, isn't it, that the majority of readers should prefer a book of this nature, just at the time when the bacilli of Spring fever and baseball are most abundant?

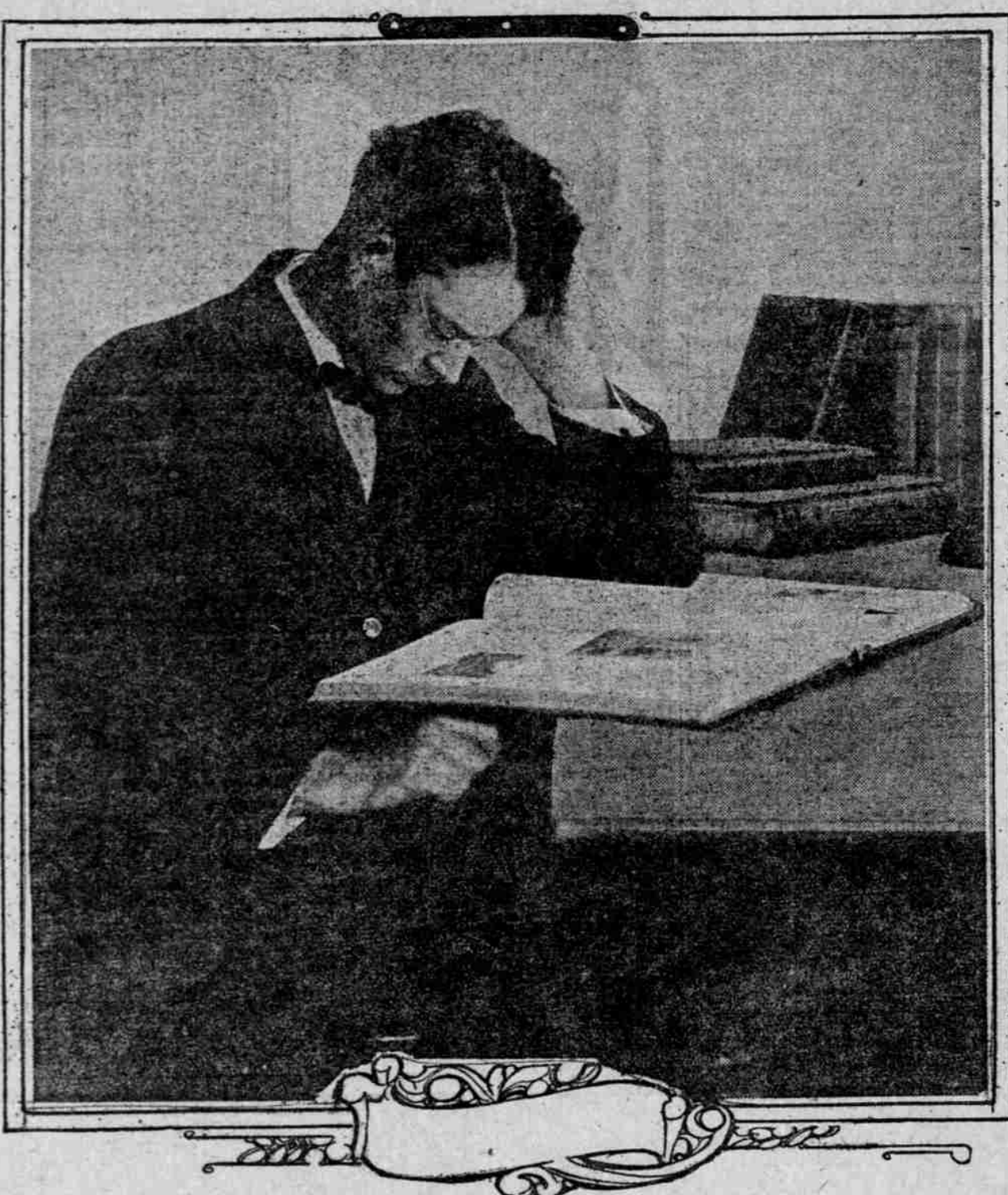
Perhaps we have a pretty sound, thinking public, after all.

Immediately following Bergson comes the drama, both English and American, with no special author as a favorite. Various treatises on this subject are being studied, mostly by women, in order that they may listen with keener intelligence to Doctor Burton, the famous lecturer, when he arrives here in June. The dramatists who are really in heaviest demand are Pinero, Massfield, Shaw and Bennett, although the list of playwrights Doctor Burton intends discussing upon contains the names of Fitch, Thomas, Mackaye, Phillips and Sheldon, who heretofore have not been placed in the same class as their older and more famous contemporaries. Also there are two plays, namely, "Riders of the Sea" and "In the Shadow of the Glen," written by James Synge, being called for strictly on their own merits, regardless of the influence Doctor Burton's coming may have.

Next in line of demand is Goddard's scientific treatise of eugenics, entitled "The Kallikak Family," while fourth on the list is a book on religion, dealing with the times of Christ, written by Mr. White and entitled "Call of the Carpenter." A close second to "Call of the Carpenter" comes various books of an instructive character pertaining to folk dancing.

And we now arrive at the fiction booth. John Fox with his "Heart of the Hills" is in the lead, while Mary Johnston's "Crescent Spring" follows closely. "The Return of Peter Krimm," a novelized drama by David Belasco, is third on the list. Then we have a vivid, realistic narrative called "Judgment House," from the pen of Gilbert Parker. "Marriage," an H. G. Wells story that has received considerable advertising and some gentle criticism since its appearance, is last of a list of five stories whose demand amounts to anything at all.

Poetry is on the decline, as usual.



There being no call for any works except those of Kipling, Milton, Longfellow, Goethe, the stars of yesterday, we haven't the time for them now, so engrossed have we become in advanced philosophy and science.

There is nothing doing in the arena, and it worth anybody's time to read it. Ex-Ambassador Bryce's "South American" alone holds up the dignity of the travel section of the library. It is meeting with considerable popularity, and several Yiddish books have been added.

Several Yiddish books have been added to the list of foreign reading and these are going rapidly. The only demand for history is from the schools.

There is considerable call for instructive reading, relative to the culture of flowers, for the Portland Floral Society has offered an aggregate sum of \$1000 to be divided in prizes for the most artistic and beautiful houses, made up by the use of flowers. The contest is causing keen interest, as is shown by the way flower culture books are going. Also books that offer good suggestions concerning the growth and care of vegetables are asked for.

Dog Express Brings Letters From North

WHEN you receive a letter from the Far North do you ever pause to think what the delivery of that letter means? We who live within the sound of the clanging street-car, the flashing locomotive, and the postman's whistle, usually regard the receipt of such a little parcel as a prosaic thing. But in its very essence there is a story that abounds with the romance, adventure, and daring of the desolate North.

In Alaska you will find few railroad tracks, but in the far-away places in the wilds there are men—men who have mothers and wives, and friends in the midst of civilization. And when these men write letters home, or for purposes of business, and when there are no railroads, or the railroads are blocked by the elements, some means of carrying mail or freight to the larger cities, where it may be hurried on, must be found. The stories of the mail carriers of the frozen countries are unexcelled in their element of stoical courage.

In the accompanying illustration is shown an unusual method of transportation some times necessary in Alaska. The miniature handcar with its sacks of mail, its draw of eight dogs, and its engineer, who walks, is called the "Little Creek Express." This curious train runs to Nome. It is a vivid picture of the difficulties that the railroads in Alaska must face.

Violent rains and great thaws sweep away the ballast and leave the track undulating and unstable. Perhaps the washout occurs miles from any point at which section men can be summoned.

Though traffic may not be great, the delivery of mail and supplies cannot be indefinitely delayed. And when the railroads in Alaska face a problem like that, he turns back to the old method—dogs, and what little freight there is can be hurried to its destination.

Manners Make the Man

A pleasing manner is an important essential to success in any business. A gentle, courteous manner will win recognition anywhere. So much depends upon first impressions, and these are favorable or unfavorable according to whether a man is polite and courteous or brusque and nervous in bearing.

We cannot always judge a man by what he says or does, but the way in which he says or does a certain thing will prove the best index to his character.

A pleasant, courteous bearing will help a man to success in business where a boorish, impatient manner will turn away customers. The brusque man may be as well meaning as his more affable rival, but people have not the time nor inclination to read out what is beneath the rude exterior; they prefer to patronize the man who makes it plain that it is a pleasure to serve; that the world is a mighty pleasant place, and that he is glad to be alive.

If you are not the possessor of a pleasant manner, start in to acquire it. You will find it an immense help in making a success of anything you undertake.

The enthusiast—That is the "Spring Song." Can't you feel it?

The Philistine—You beat it. You can almost see the boys knocking flies and booting grounders on some little Southern jay-town diamond, can't you?

FIRING MISS COHEN

A Potash and Perlmuter Story by MONTAGUE GLASS

"THERE'S no use talking, Abe," Morris Perlmuter declared to his partner, Abe Potash, as they sat in the sample-room of their spacious cloak and suit establishment, "we got a system of bookkeeping that would disgrace a peanut-stand. Here's a statement from the Hamsuckett Mills, and it shows a debit balance of \$1150 what we owe them. Miss Cohen's figures are \$1142."

"That's in our favor already," Abe replied. "The Hamsuckett people must be wrong, Mawruss."

"No, they ain't, Abe," Morris said. "It's Miss Cohen's mistake. 'When it's in our favor, Mawruss, it ain't no mistake.'"

"It's a mistake, anyhow, no matter in whose favor it is," said Morris. "Miss Cohen's footing was wrong. She gets careless every day."

"I'm surprised to hear you that you should talk that way, Mawruss," Abe rejoined. "Miss Cohen's been with us for two years, and we ain't lost nothing by her neither. You know as well as I do, Mawruss, her uncle, Max Cohen, is a good customer of ours. Only last week he bought of us a big bill of goods, Mawruss."

"Just the same, Abe," Morris went on, "if we get a bright young man in there, instead of Miss Cohen, it would be a big improvement. We ought to get some one in there what can manage a double entry, and can run a card-index for our credits."

Abe puffed vigorously at his cigar. "I suppose, Mawruss, if we got a card-index and we sell a crook a bill of goods," he commented, "and the crook busts up on us, Mawruss, that card-index is going to stop him from sticking us—what? Well, Mawruss, if you want to put in a young feller and fire Miss Cohen, go ahead—I'm satisfied."

As if to clinch the matter before his partner could retract this somewhat grudging consent, Morris Perlmuter stalked out of the sample-room and made resolutely for the glass-enclosed office, where Miss Cohen was busy writing in a ledger. She looked up as he entered, and surveyed him calmly with her large black eyes.

"Oh, Mr. Perlmuter!" she said when he came within ear-shot. "Uncle Max was round to the house last night, and he wants you should duplicate them forty-two-two in his last order and ship at once."

Morris stopped short. This was something he had not foreseen, and all his well-formulated plans for the firing of Miss Cohen were shattered at once.

"Oh!" he said lamely. "Thank you, Miss Cohen; I'll make a memorandum of it."

He went over to the commercial agency book and scanned three or four pages with an unseeing eye. Then he repeated to the sample-room, where Abe was finishing his cigar.

"Well, Mawruss," said Abe, his face wreathed in a malicious grin, "you made a quick job of it."

Morris scowled.

"I ain't spoken to her yet," he grunted. "I got a little gumption, Abe—a

little consideration and common sense. I don't throw out my dirty water until I get in clean."

Abe puffed slowly before replying. "I seen some people, Mawruss," he said, "what sometimes throws out perfectly clean water, and gets some dirty water in exchange, Mawruss." He threw away the stump of his cigar. "Sometimes, Mawruss," he concluded solemnly, "they gets a good, big house, Mawruss, where they least expects it."

II.

The Felsilver, city salesman for the Hamsuckett Mills—Goldner & Plotkins, proprietors—was obviously his own idea of a well-dressed man. His shirts and waistcoats represented a taste as original as it was not subdued; but it was in the selection of his neckties that he really excelled. Abe and Morris fairly blinked as they surveyed his latest acquisition in cravats when he entered the door of their store that afternoon, smiling a pleasant greeting at his prospective customers.

He presented so brilliant a picture that Miss Cohen was drawn from her desk in the glass-enclosed office toward the trio in the sample-room as inevitably as the moth to the candle flame. She took up some cutting slips from a table, by way of excuse for her intrusion, but the blush and smile with which she acknowledged Ike's rather perfunctory nod betrayed her. Abe was fingering the Hamsuckett swatches, but Miss Cohen's embarrassment did not escape Morris Perlmuter. He marked it with an inward start, and immediately conceived a brilliant idea.

"Ike," he said, when Abe had completed the giving of a small order and had left them alone together, "a young feller like you ought to get married."

Ike was non-committal. "Sure, Mawruss," he replied. "Every young feller ought to get married."

"I'm glad you look at it so sensible, Ike," Morris went on, "getting married right, Ike, has been the making of many a young feller. Where'd you suppose Goldner & Plotkin would be today if they hadn't got married right? They'd be selling goods for somebody else, Ike. But Goldner, he married Bella Fraginaky, with a couple of thousand dollars maybe, and Plotkin, he goes to work and gets Garfunkel's sister—she was pretty old, Ike; but if she ain't got a fine complexion, Ike, she got a couple of thousand dollars, too, ain't it? Well, Plotkin with his two thousand and Goldner with his two thousand, they start in together as new beginners. They gets the selling agency for the Hamsuckett people, and then they makes big money and buys them out. Today Goldner & Plotkin is rich men, and all because they got married right."

Felsilver listened with parted lips. "And now, Ike," Morris continued, the good seed sown, "we talked enough, ain't it? Come on to the office. I want to show you some of our mistakes in the Hamsuckett statement."

He conducted Ike to the glass-enclosed office, where Miss Cohen bent low over her ledger. The blush with which she greeted him was not returned.

(Continued on Page 7.)

STRANGE HUMAN ANT HILLS FOUND IN OLD TUNISIA.



ONE of the least known parts of the world, in Southern Tunisia, was visited recently by Dr. Frank Edward Johnson, a scientist and explorer of high reputation. He found there a number of mountains, mostly sharp peaks, which are inhabited by ant people.

That is to say, these mountains are so honeycombed with caves dug out of their sides as to resemble gigantic anthills. In the caves dwell thousands of human beings. They and their ancestors have lived thus, apparently, for many thousands of years. And on the summit of each mountain is a strong fort, built of a primitive sort of concrete, for defensive purposes.

Such a human ant hill is the town of Douirat. It has a population of 1000 or more, but there are no houses. Caves, in tiers above tiers, afford dwelling accommodations to the inhabitants, and in that intensely hot and dry climate they are a rather comfortable style of domicile, being cool. The rocky formation of the mountain is quite soft, so as to be easily excavated. Some of the caves are used for storage purposes, and others are connected by tunnels, with subterranean stairs for horses and other domestic animals.

It should be understood that all of

the region here described is desert, with here and there an oasis, where there happen to be springs. For water supply the chief reliance is upon semi-occasional rains, every possible drop being caught and conducted by troughs into cisterns for storage. The people are partial nomads, traveling long distances with their goats and sheep in search of pasture. The caves they occupy average about 30 feet in depth, 9 feet in width, and 7 feet in height—the only light coming from the doorway.

One realizes, then, that such a hill as that of Douirat, placed as it is with a multitude of caverns and connecting tunnels, bears no inadequate likeness to an anthill enormously magnified. On its summit is an ancient citadel, or fortress, which has doubtless withstood many a siege, though at the present time it is in ruins. The reason for its ruinous condition is simply that the French (to whose territory in Northern Africa Tunisia belongs) have by force of arms, and likewise by gentle methods, pacified the country, where formerly there was continual warfare.

These human anthills, undoubtedly, were originally occupied for the sake of their natural strength and defensibility against enemies. Assault upon armed men hiding in caves and tunnels in the bowels of a mountain is not easily practicable from a military

standpoint. But the situation is such that the defenders, if overcome, had always the last resort of retreating to the fortress on the summit, which was incidentally a huge storehouse, where in large quantities of food supplies provided against just such an emergency.

Accordingly, in this strange part of the world the traveler discovers, scattered over the landscape, mountains which have been inhabited and fortified by the ant people ever since the days of the Pharaohs, and probably for a much longer period. One of the most interesting of them is the top of a great sugarloaf-shaped hill, with the point off. It is called Ghourmesa, and occupies a situation so wild and difficult of access as to be well-nigh impregnable. Another is Chinihi, where in front of many of the caves are courtyards and small buildings of masonry. Odd though it may appear, this town has a great reputation for cookery, and one of its most famous "chefs" was summoned to Rome a few years ago and made chief pastry cook to Pope Leo XIII.

Quite as interesting as these honeycombed mountain peaks are certain towns of the same region, but in the plains beneath, which may be said to consist of habitations built in imitation of caves. When constructed singly they have the form of half-cylinders with the convex side up, but commonly

they are superposed to a height of four or five stories. Many of these curious structures are storehouses, while others are for domestic purposes. There are no stairs inside or outside, but the inhabitants go up or down the fronts with ease, ascending or descending by the help of projecting stones, which have been worn smooth by centuries of use.

Sailnet, the Roman historian, who wrote about 60 B. C., in giving an account of his travels in Northern Africa, spoke of coming to a strange country where "the people dwell in curious abodes resembling overturned boats." Evidently it was to these very folk—that their ancestors, that is to say—that he referred. The houses in question are composed of cement and pebbles. There is nothing like them to be seen anywhere else in the world, and it is not unreasonable to imagine that their ancient occupants were the original inventors of concrete for building construction.

Dr. Johnson says that there are perhaps 50,000 of these people in the plains of Southern Tunisia. One of their towns, which he visited, is called Medenine. Another, known as Mismetur, is of the same general description, and its women are famous for their beauty. Like the mountain villages, each of these centers of population has a combined storehouse and fort for purposes of defense.

The people, whether of the mountains

or of the plains, are an Arab race, known as Berbers. In former days their tribes were continually at war, each village being at daggers drawn even with its nearest neighbors. But most dreaded of all were the robber Teuara, ravagers of the desert, who, swooping down on their racing camels when least expected, were accustomed to carry off food supplies and portable property, together with the good-looking young women, and to murder everybody else, including children.

This sort of thing is not permitted any longer, however, thanks to the interference of the French, who, as one means of pacifying the country, have established a great semi-weekly market on a convenient and inviting oasis, to which the people come from great distances to buy and to sell. It is today the principal meeting place of all the Berbers of Tunisia, and there the members of tribes which have been for many centuries at swords' points make friendship with one another. It is a practical application of the principle that hostility nearly always arises from lack of acquaintance.

Necessarily the natives must be exposed to attack by Teuara were those who inhabited certain subterranean villages, wherein pits, or holes in the ground, toward the place of mountain caves or boat-shaped houses. One such place,

called Matmata, is 30 miles south of Gabes, a French garrison town on the African side of the Mediterranean. It has a population of 5000, and there is not a house in sight, all of the dwellings being underground.

Resort is had to this method of domed construction not for defense, but to escape the tropical sun and to obtain shelter from sandstorms. The average pit is described by Dr. Johnson as 30 feet deep and 15 feet in diameter. It forms a circular courtyard open to the sky and surrounded by caves which are dug out of the sides for living rooms and storehouses. Quarters are similarly provided for sheep, goats and donkeys. The every-day work of the household is done in the courtyard, in the middle of which is a cistern for rainwater. That part of the world is almost rainless, but when it does rain it comes down in torrents, and every drop is preserved.

Each such dwelling is entered from without by a tunnel, slanting down to the courtyard—the opening of the tunnel being at a little distance. Furniture, such as tables and beds, are usually cut out of the soft rock—a simple and inexpensive way of providing it. The walls of the rooms are whitewashed. There are mattresses stuffed with wool, and rugs and blankets of native manufacture.

Etiquette, says Dr. Johnson, forbids

a man to approach any other man's hole near enough to look down and see his women. Usually the head of the household has several wives (the number depending upon his means), and there are always a few fierce dogs on hand. When a man wants a wife, he buys her from her parents with a certain number of goats and lambs and staked quantities of olive oil, barley and wheat. The price of a bride is definitely fixed by custom; but a woman who is blind in one eye or otherwise defective comes cheaper. The groom is expected to give to his prospective father-in-law a new fez and a pair of yellow leather slippers. He receives with the girl a dowry of about \$3—half down, and the other half payable at the end of a year.

Such pit villages are much more defensible against an enemy than might be supposed. There are similar subterranean towns in Asia Minor and history records an assault upon one of them, in comparatively recent times, by an Egyptian army. The inhabitants sought refuge in the underground rooms, rolling huge stones against the entrances, so that the invaders were unable to force their way in. When the latter lowered buckets into the cisterns to get water, the ropes were cut. The upshot of the affair was that the foe were compelled to withdraw, death from thirst being the alternative.

RENE BACHE.