

whisperings and program-rustlings of those about me become sharply evident and very distracting.

What the true explanation for all this may be I can not presume to state, but it has seemed reasonable to me to believe that heavy vibrations occurring in force and in more or less regular succession or practical continuity tend to jar the stiffened transmission mechanism into a vibration or state of sensitivity of its own, when it is able to pick up and conduct those lesser vibrations of a higher pitch which alone would be quite incapable of activating it. Conversely, where the auditory receptor mechanism itself is involved in injury, such phenomena could hardly be expected to occur.

Doubtless pretty much all of what I record is commonplace enough in the appropriate literature and certainly in the experience of those similarly afflicted, but the flat statement by one of your correspondents that reports of this type are fallacious and the uncertainty evident in some of the replies thereto induce me to offer these few notes of a directly empirical nature with an apology for the unavoidable personal element.

B.

### ON STUDENT MISINFORMATION

IN connection with the examples of student misinformation in SCIENCE for December 19, 1924, some experiences of my own may be of interest. The perpetrators in each case were college graduates.

In discussing an old case in which the report said, "*Plea son assault demesne*," I asked a student, "What does that plea mean?" He looked at it and replied, "I did not look up that Latin phrase." When I asked, "Are you sure it is Latin," he answered, after another look, "I did not look up that Anglo-Saxon phrase."

A type of case often referred to considers how far one who stands in no relation to another may be bound legally in an emergency to act as a good Samaritan. After these cases had been discussed repeatedly, a student came to me with his note book and explained that in reviewing he found many references to the "good Sarmatian cases"—would I be good enough to tell him what these "good Sarmatian cases" were?

Another much discussed case involved an agreement to build a silo. As to this a student wrote: "I do not know what a silo is—but I will assume it is some kind of barn."

So long as "making acquaintances," and "contacts," and extra-curriculum "activities" are the realities of student life, and the work of lecture room and laboratory is a mere ritual—in the words of Terence

Mulvaney "an impartinint and shuparfluous necisity"—we must continue to expect these things.

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IN regard to the discussion in your recent issues on student "howlers," is it not well to remember that a course in science or any other subject is a game between the students and the instructor? It is an unfair game also, for the instructor makes the rules, plays on one side and then acts as referee, umpire and score-keeper. Naturally, students feel somewhat at a disadvantage, and we can hardly expect them to take a vital interest, nor should we expect that they will refrain from devious practices to beat a game rigged against them. These comments apply equally whether the lecture or laboratory system is used. To the student the excessive authority and arbitrary power of the teacher seems a bar to ordinary intercourse or common interest. If the teacher is interested in a subject, that subject is *ipso facto* abhorrent to the student. Successful teaching is a matter of personality by which the teacher overcomes with the force of his enthusiasm and mental energy the natural disadvantages of his position. Successful teachers tend to overemphasize the particular devices, stratagems and systems by which they have at various times stimulated real thought in reluctant minds. The unsuccessful also rely on some system or systems as if they were fetiches by which the spirit of scholarship might be invoked. Yet, if we will honestly review our recollections of our own teachers, we will realize that those who taught us most were those whose personalities were to us the most impressive. The great teachers need no system; the others should be eclectic, for they can make up for deficiencies in personality by the use of many devices and by an occasional change of pace.

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### ANTHROPOLOGICAL STUDIES ON THE NATIVES OF THE YENISEI RIVER

PROFESSOR VASSILIJ IVANOVICH ANUČIN, of the University of Kazan, Russia, writes as follows:

During my 1905-1909 expedition to the Yenisei Ostiaks I gathered immense scientific material, which so far I have not been able to publish or even fully prepare for publication, due to our financial conditions. The material is partly linguistic, partly ethnological. The people studied are disappearing. In 1907 they still numbered 900 individuals; in 1923 there remained less than 100. Moreover, I have recently learned that this remnant has now practically lost its special ethnic character. I am the only one who has thoroughly studied them and espe-