Book Reviews

Perceptive, Revealing, Urbane Commentary

American Architecture and Other Writings. The writings of Montgomery Schuyler. William H. Jordy and Ralph Coe, Eds. Harvard University Press (Belknap Press), Cambridge, Mass., 1961. xxvii + 664 pp. Illus. $12.50 (2 volumes).

It is said that modern nations do not deserve their great men. The aphorism rests on the evidence of the unnecessary obstacles such men encounter in their progress. One might add that the United States does not deserve its good writers. They are too much taken for granted, too little heeded, and too quickly forgotten. That a pair of critics such as John Jay Chapman and Montgomery Schuyler should have lived and done what they did between 1890 and 1910 and be virtually unknown today, despite the praise of other good men then and now, is disheartening.

To take Schuyler alone, Lewis Mumford and Frank Lloyd Wright have both said that he was a great judge of architecture in general and of modern American architecture in particular. Schuyler was the first to see what the 20th century was making of the 19th century legacy of ideas. He was the first to train an architectural eye upon the building done by the new engineers. He was, with Ruskin and Viollet-le-Duc, one of the few critics of architecture who have brought general culture to bear on the assessment of brick, mortar, stone, and steel. And when I say writer, I imply that Schuyler could express himself with lucidity and force as well as with high technical competence. Listen to him, an early and fervent admirer of Brooklyn Bridge, criticizing a feature of the towers which support the cables:

"The flatness of the top alone conceals instead of expressing the structure. It is of the first practical necessity that the great cables should move freely in their saddles, so as always to keep the pressure upon the piers directly vertical, and very ingenious appliances have been employed to attain this end, and to avoid chafing the cables. But the design of the piers themselves tells us absolutely nothing of all this. The cable simply disappears on one side and reappears on the other, as if it were two separate cables, one on each side, instead of one continuous chain. . . . The architecture of the crowning member of the tower has nothing whatever to do with the purpose for which the structure exists. Is it not perfectly evident that an architectural expression of this mechanical arrangement would require that the line of the summit, instead of this meaningless flat coping, should, to begin with, be a crest of roof, its double slope following the line of the cable which it shelters? Here the very channel through which the cable runs is not designed, but is a mere hole occurring casually, and not by premeditation, in the midst of the mouldings which form the cornice of the tower. This is architectural barbarism."

The words in this and the rest of Schuyler's writings possess the very virtue he is preaching: they express the functioning of a mind. Whether or not we agree with its judgment, it compels our own to think and opens our eyes to see. It is this mark of difference from the affected jargon of all but two or three of our contemporary interpreters that makes one deplore the oblivion we carelessly allow to overtake writers such as Montgomery Schuyler.

It may of course be said that recognition has come at last, in these two well-printed and pleasantly illustrated volumes issued by the Harvard University Press. I hope it may prove so, but I wonder if the form and presentation given these writings are equal to the task. The editors are earnest and able, but I could wish that they had fashioned both a more emphatic introduction and better proportioned contents. We are given copious essays on Eidlitz and not enough (relatively) about Sullivan and Wright and the Chicago Fair. I am thinking of the need, not so much to represent Schuyler's work as it occupied his contemporaries, but to reinsert him into the stream of 20th-century thought. What was wanted was a first, decisive anthology; what we have been given is the admirable materials for making one of our own.

Schuyler's orbit was wide because he wrote at a time of artistic indecision—the Gothic and Romanesque revivals, the strivings with new materials, the awakening sense of a mass civilization, the fear of artistic disorder, pulled great talents this way and that. It was precisely Schuyler's merit that he grasped the essentials and repeatedly drew the lesson of what was done and not done. His errors, his attachment to a moral vocabulary we no longer use, the singular lack of judgment he showed in not surviving until 1962 when, thanks to scholarship, all is known in correct perspective, hardly needed to be pointed out. I take comfort in the fact that he, a writer for the New York *World* and *Harper's Weekly*, gravitated toward *The Architectural Record* and filled it with essays one can reread today. Through his eyes one can see again the rising architecture of the robber barons and the muck-rakers, and can discern the outlines of the modern city from which, today's architects will proudly tell you, all the architecture has blown away.

Feeling as I do the importance of Schuyler's contribution to this change, I am not altogether happy about the editors' notes and comments in the present volumes. They have done a great deal of hard factual research and I do not worry about a few slips, such as the one which turns a Keats sonnet into an ode. I refer rather to the patronizing tone adopted toward Ruskin, Viollet-le-Duc, and others, no less than toward Schuyler. The editors do not seem to appreciate how rare it is for any critic to see what is new and to enunciate a few original ideas clearly. Montgomery Schuyler was a much more remarkable man than they suppose when they say that he was "too eclectically journalistic" to become—

somebody else. He had the power (in the words he used of another) to see "how masses can be molded so as to be made to speak." That is enough. The editors have no proper occasion to complain that he "realized only a portion of his talents." Of how many men can more be truthfully said? The editors admit that Schuyler has left us "an extensive body of architectural criticism which constitutes the most perceptive, most revealing, and most urbane commentary on American architecture. . . . " They call this "a prodigious accomplishment." I agree, and suggest that we waste no time wondering what the man would have achieved if his work had not been "a hobby instead of a vocation." The time should be spent in reading and pondering his words, for our instruction and delight.

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Classic Studies

Genetics and Evolution: Selected Papers of A. H. Sturtevant. E. B. Lewis, Ed. Freeman, San Francisco, Calif., 1961. x + 334 pp. Illus. + tables. $7.50.

Some may be surprised to find that a chronological compilation of one investigator's scientific papers can be a very effective way of instilling in the reader a sense of the excitement of discovery, a realization of the implications of this discovery, and an appreciation of the importance of these implications for broad scientific problems. Lewis's selection succeeds in doing this to a remarkable degree. Let me give but one of several possible examples. Here are gathered together the papers that (i) established the linear order of genes in the chromosome—1913; (ii) described genetic factors which reduce the amount of crossing over in particular regions of the chromosome—1917; (iii) showed these factors to be associated with chromosomal inversions—1921; (iv) described how these inversions are used as powerful analytical tools for studying the chromosome mechanics of meiosis in *Drosophila*—1936; (v) pointed out the usefulness of inversions in forming the basis of an objective evolutionary phylogeny—1936; and (vi) provided a theoretical basis for the balanced polymorphism of inversions—1938. This is fascinating reading for geneticists and other biologists as well.

Drosophila geneticists will be particularly pleased, because here between two covers lies much of our heritage of genetic methods of analysis and their application to such diverse areas of biology as animal behavior, developmental biology, chromosome mechanics, the basis of sexuality, speciation, and evolution. This heritage is so rich that a few microbial geneticists may be surprised to find the techniques they use regularly have their basis in schemes employed by Sturtevant. One gets the sobering sense of historical perspective in remembering that in 1923 Sturtevant and Morgan first used very closely linked marker genes to learn whether intra-allelic "mutations" were associated with crossing over—in this case, reversions of Bar. This volume will also serve to remind us that in 1926 Sturtevant performed a complementation test and, being unable to perform a recombination test, realized the importance of keeping these two operational genetic units separate. When he crossed the scarlet mutant of *Drosophila melanogaster* with the "scarlet" mutant of *D. simulans* and observed the scarlet phenotype in the sterile hybrid, he did not call them allelic genes, since recombination analysis could not be accomplished, but rather he proposed the term *corresponding genes*. If he had coined a more euphonious term like "correspon," one wonders if this important concept would have been remembered by more geneticists during the ensuing 30 years.

Sturtevant's papers are of more than historical interest; they formed not only the basis for broad areas of past research, but several initiated research activity being conducted at the present. The 33 papers reprinted here were selected by Lewis and assembled as a tribute to Professor Sturtevant by his colleagues and students on the occasion of his 70th birthday. Sturtevant added explanatory notes at the end of articles in which, for example, current nomenclature differs from that used in the original article, or when further work clarified a point under discussion.

At the end of the volume there is a complete list of Sturtevant's publications that will serve to show the scope of biological subjects on which Sturtevant has published. Since Lewis selected only papers dealing with fundamental genetics and evolution, the complete list reminds us that Sturtevant is one of the world authorities on the taxonomy of acalypterate flies, an avid student of the genetics of iris, and a superb naturalist. Perhaps it would have been appropriate to include his interesting paper on field and experimental studies on "social parasitism" among two species of ants belonging to different genera.

Alexander Weinstein once defined a "classic" paper as one that was often referred to but never read. With the publication of this book, there will be no excuse for having this definition apply to the truly classic studies of Sturtevant.

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Skeleton in the Laboratory

The Human Skeleton in Forensic Medicine. W. M. Krogman. Thomas, Springfield, Ill., 1961. xxvi + 337 pp. Illus. $14.

This lively book provides the opportunity for law enforcement agencies of the world to acquaint themselves with "what the bones tell and how they tell it." Anatomists and physical anthropologists also will find it informative, and it can be recommended to writers of detective fiction. In this book are brought together from the literature tables and figures pertinent to an attempt to establish the age, sex, racial category, stature, and personal identity of an unidentified skeleton, or of any part of it (except the teeth). The interesting text includes interpretation of the statistics, with sufficient anecdotal material recounted in the first person to arouse in the reader an enthusiasm for dry bones.

Krogman's view that a background in comparative osteology, human osteology, craniometry, and racial morphology is an essential qualification for the specialist is well taken. To one so qualified, the extensive reference material collated here will be fully appreciated; it can best serve as a guide to the study of the subject, as well as a stimulus for its further development.

Throughout the book one is reminded of the variability among skeletons and warned against expecting the condition of a single unknown to fit the mean of a series for, as is so aptly stated,