

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

SONNIGE WELTEN. Ostasiatische Reise-Skizzen. By *Emil and Lenore Selenka*. Wiesbaden: C. W. Kreidel. 1905.

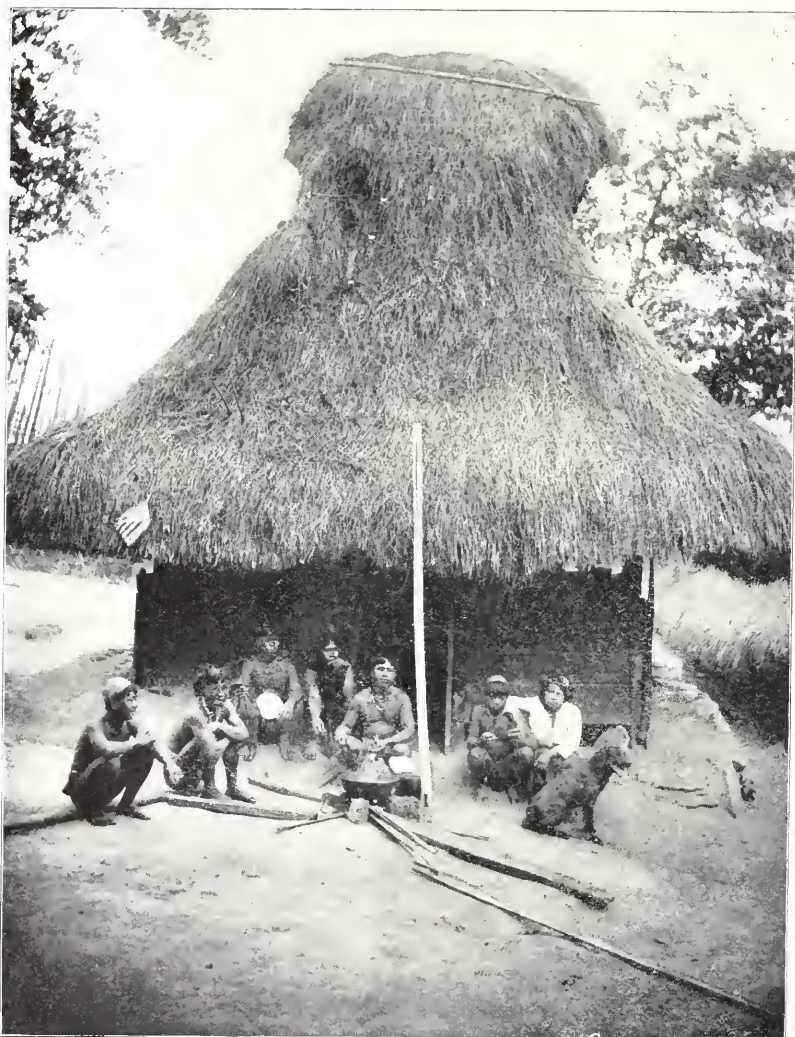
The late Prof. Emil Selenka of Munich was a naturalist by profession. He has done creditable work in biology and zoology, and his name has a



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good ring among his colleagues. Nevertheless, his preferences do not lie in his specialty; he felt himself most at home in another field. His whole temperament was so artistic, that, in spite of his scientific education, he

wrote books which possess an idiosyncrasy of their own, being anthropological in their main character, interspersed with art and philosophy. The most important of his books which he published in company with his gifted wife, Frau Lenore Selenka, is a stately volume entitled *Sonnige Welten*,



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being a description of, or rather reminiscences of his sojourn in, Borneo, Java, Sumatra, East India, Ceylon, and Japan. The book is profusely illustrated and of an artistic makeup. The author's philosophical inclinations appear in the dedication of the work, which is inscribed to the "Atman."

DER GEIST DES CHRISTENTUMS. By *Josef Kohler*. Berlin: C. A. Schwetschke & Sohn, 1904. Pp. 66.

Members of the University of Chicago will remember Prof. Josef Kohler, an eminent jurist of the University of Berlin, who was among the seven German guests last year and was conspicuous through the beautiful formation of his thoughtful head, surrounded by a halo of long white hair. All those who listened to his discourse had good reason to admire not only his juridical knowledge, but also the exact information he possessed of American conditions. The present booklet which lies before us shows that Professor Kohler is not only lawyer but also a philosopher, and his philosophy is of a broad religious nature. The work before us, a mere pamphlet of sixty-six pages, proves that Professor Kohler has been thinking much and deeply about the problems of life, and his religious conviction which he characterises as "the spirit of Christianity" is broader than Christianity as commonly understood. It incorporates also the *Bhagavadgita*, Lao-Tze's *Tao Teh King*, the Christian mystics, especially the sermons of Eckehart and Tauler. He declares that in the veneration of All-being lies the true greatness of the present time.

Professor Kohler believes in Christianity, but his Christianity is pantheistic and embraces the Brahmanism of India as well as all similar religious and philosophical movements. He sees in the incarnation of God a mystery which has conquered theism and transfigured it into a higher pantheism. What a poetry lies in the idea that the deity surrenders its transcendence and assumes human form, and this has become an historical fact, the popularity and significance of which take hold of our imagination with overawing grandeur. This is the noble poetry of Christianity and the infinite source of its artistic creativeness which never runs dry (p. 31-32.) The essence of Christianity can, according to Professor Kohler, not be found in the synoptic Gospels, but in the Gospel according to John whose beautiful introduction proposes the idea of the *logos* in which the deepest secret of Indian philosophy finds expression, and this secret, (it is the leading thought of all philosophy in India,) this truth so great that it overwhelms us with awe, was adopted by Christianity when the Fourth Gospel was attributed to the favorite disciple of Christ, St. John, and when the *logos* personality characterised in this book was identified with the historical Jesus (p. 33).

The path to truth, Professor Kohler says, is steep, and the aim can be reached only by wending one's way in many zigzag directions. When we look down upon one part of the way from a sharp corner we believe to see rationalised plains on the one side and deserts on the other. On such spots the average man halts and the half-educated expresses his rationalistic views of dogmas. Here the wiseacre atheist finds satisfaction and believes he has reached his aim, but he who rises higher and acquires the truly philosophical conception will soon arrive at another turn of the road which will show him the former path from a higher standpoint. Such is the evolution of the true thinker. It begins with the poetry of faith which allegorises philosophy. It then breaks the frame of the picture but will finally lead to the original conception which, however, is deepened, because now it is understood in its essential significance.

The booklet concludes with four poems entitled: "World Riddle," "The

Me and the Not Me," "Vedanta Doubts," and another entitled as the first one "World Riddle."

Miss Muriel Strode's booklet *My Little Book of Prayer* is greatly appreciated in both orthodox and heterodox circles. It is wholesome reading and will prove a spiritual tonic of great efficacy. Its originality consists mainly in finding the right tone and leading religious sentiment in the right direction. A clergyman friend of mine, to whom I had sent a copy, writes as follows: "It is certainly a store house of riches. Each saying finds my heart echoing and re-echoing its pleading, and to each one I say, 'That I believe.' A man came into my room the day I received the book. He was in trouble, and happened to pick up the book; and the pages opened and he read: 'I do not bemoan misfortune. To me there is no misfortune. I welcome whatever comes; I go out gladly to meet it.' He turned to me and said: 'The question I came to speak to you about is settled. That book settled it.' So you see the book has begun its missionary work already. I do appreciate it so much for it has done me good, and I doubly appreciate the thoughtfulness on your part to send it to me."

Moncure Daniel Conway has published his *Autobiography, Memoires, and Experiences* in two stately volumes (Houghton, Mifflin & Co., \$6.00 net per set), an ingenious *causerie* in which this versatile author tells his experiences from his childhood, the development of his convictions from orthodox Christianity to liberalism, beginning with anti-slavery times down to the present day, his numerous encounters with prominent and great men, and almost every page of this voluminous work is aglow with life and interest. It is as if we enjoyed a personal interview with the man who wrote it. Moncure D. Conway is sufficiently well known to our readers by his many contributions to *The Open Court*, so that we need not praise his accomplishments as a writer and story-teller, but we may say that the autobiographic style in which the author reflects his own personality in the events which he mentions shows Mr. Conway at his best, and so we do not doubt that whoever should devote a few hours of leisure to his book, will not close it without the satisfaction of having made the acquaintance of an interesting and highly cultured man.

Prof. Clemens Alexander Winkler of Freiberg, Saxony, one of the leading chemists and best known as the discoverer of the new element germanium, passed away on October 8, 1904. Popular articles of his falling within the lines of his specialty appeared some time ago in *The Open Court*, and in addition he has shown considerable interest in the solutions of the religious as well as psychological problems offered in our columns. There is but one voice that chemistry has lost one of its most brilliant representatives, indeed one who in his specialty has been unexcelled. An article by Th. Döring, entitled "Zur Erinnerung an Clemens Winkler," which has appeared in the latest number of the *Zeitschrift für angewandte Chemie* (1905, No. 1, pp. 1-7) contains perhaps the most thorough appreciation of the detail work of his several discoveries and accomplishments.