

Oklahoma Books and Writers

Guidebook for social change

No. 8 in Series I of Cooperative Books, published in Norman under the editorship of Winifred Johnston, '24, is *THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL SOCIETY, Directions in Midst of Change*, by Dr. Charles M. Perry.

The author, head of the philosophy department in the University of Oklahoma, endeavors to set up philosophical standards that can be used to measure the successes (and failures) of democracy—which can aid in achieving the full potentialities of this form of society.

Of particular interest to University alumni who have an intellectual interest in the problems of education is the chapter on "Higher Education: Its Ends and Means."

It is perhaps unfair to quote parts of Dr. Perry's book without giving his supporting arguments, but it may be said in general that he condemns the modern university's obsession with material progress in the sense of piling up great accumulations of data and securing voluminous publication.

This obsession, he contends, leads to an anti-intellectual attitude among both faculties and students.

"On many campuses the man who insists on thinking is thought queer and is pointed at knowingly as he goes down the street. Furthermore, the students are often so trained in taking factual notes that they do not know what thinking is and are afraid to take courses that have the evil reputation of requiring thought."

Dr. Perry deplors the resultant tendency for professional work to be highly specialized and divorced from any creative artistry or social thinking.

He presents a plan for a vital kind of higher education, a kind that would coordinate the University with the whole life of the region that is being served.

Dr. Perry is past president of the Oklahoma Academy of Science, and is now president of the University of Oklahoma chapter of the Association of University Professors and of the Southwestern Philosophical Conference.

The Multidimensional Society is highly recommended for those persons who are inclined to shake their heads and cry in despair. "What's the world coming to?" Because this book offers a realistic concept of a constantly changing society—and offers suggestions as to how we might best go about making desirable adjustments in the complicated relationships that cannot be avoided.

THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL SOCIETY, Directions in Midst of Change, by Charles M. Perry, Cooperative Books, Norman, 1940. Fifty cents.

MORE and more persons from the United States have visited Mexico in recent years. Some are good observers; a few even come back and report intelligently what they have seen. But very few indeed take time to think about what they have learned.

The Mexican Earth, published March 22 by Doubleday, Doran & Company, proves that Todd Downing, '24, '28ma, not only has thoroughly steeped himself in Mexican history and legend and folklore—but has also devoted much thought to his subject.

The result is a unique book that is neither biography, history, travel book, nor philosophy, but has some of the best elements of them all. It is, essentially, an interpretation of the national character of Mexico.

It is apparent that Mr. Downing, who was an instructor in Spanish in the University of Oklahoma until he retired to Atoka to write detective novels with Mexican backgrounds, has a deep love and understanding of Mexico. At the same time, he is able to write about the country and its people dispassionately for the reason that he has thought carefully about what he wants to say. His opinions are based on a vast knowledge of his subject, which keeps him from jumping at conclusions in the heedless way of those who have acquired superficial knowledge.

This reviewer confesses a weakness for reading jacket blurbs on books. Often the blurbs, if divested of some of the more extravagant adjectives, actually give an effective summary of what the book is all about.

The jacket on *The Mexican Earth* mentions "Mexico's strange, brilliant and compelling story," and after reading the book, one is inclined to say that those adjectives are none too strong.

The book is really quite full of solid information about Mexico and its people, but the facts, as such, are unobtrusive in the rich pageantry of Mexico's eventful history and spectacular heroes and villains, and the curious overtones of comedy and tragedy that help make up the unique character of the nation.

Mr. Downing's detective novels—*Death Under the Moonflower*, *Night Over Mexico*, *The Last Trumpet*, *The Case of the Unconquered Sisters*, *Murder on the Tropic*, *Vultures in the Sky*, *The Cat Screams*, and *Murder on Tour*—have established him as a writer of fiction.

This new book should add greatly to his stature as a serious writer and as an authority on Mexico.

The Mexican Earth, by Todd Downing, Doubleday, Doran & Company, New York, \$3.00.

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issue is available at
call number LH 1 .06S6 in
Bizzell Memorial Library.

Sooner writers

Writing Magazine Fiction, by Walter S. Campbell (Stanley Vestal), of the University English faculty, is scheduled for publication May 24 by Doubleday, Doran & Company. The publishers describe it as "at last a sensible, non-academic book on how to write and market magazine fiction."

Mr. Campbell's students in creative writing have proved by their success that his methods are sound. Helene Carpenter, of Norman, was author of a short story in last month's *Cosmopolitan* that ran between stories by Mary Roberts Rinehart and Peter B. Kyne. The story, "Picket Line Bum," contains local color reminiscent of the O. U. campus. . . Other students of Mr. Campbell's courses have sold about 150 manuscripts altogether. For the second consecutive year, a story by Mr. Campbell has been selected for publication in the anthology *Best Short Stories for Boys and Girls. . . Ararat*, by Elgin Groseclose, '20, published by Carrick & Evans, has been chosen for one of the four annual awards made by the American Booksellers' Association. The book was designated for the "Booksellers' Discovery" Award, meaning that the men who sell books believe this volume has not had the sale its real worth entitles it to. . . *Cherokee Cavaliers*, by E. E. Dale, '11, and Gaston Litton, '34lib.sci, published by the University of Oklahoma Press, headed the first of the 1940 monthly selections of the New York Trade Book Clinic. Six books are chosen each month for their excellence in typographic design and manufacture. . . Almost simultaneously, word was received in Norman that *Cherokee Cavaliers* had been chosen for recommendation by the Book-of-the-Month Club.

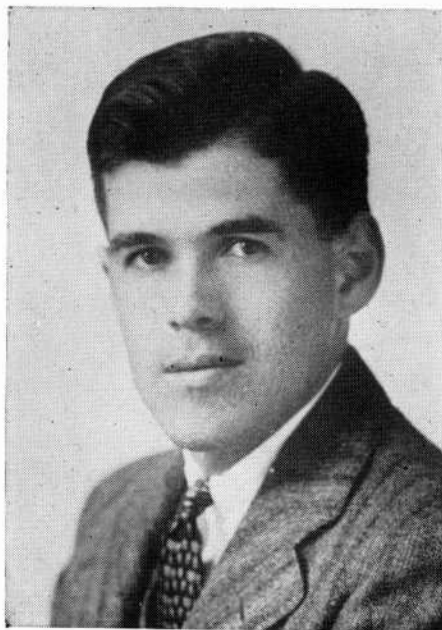
. . . A series of books on occupational guidance by Dr. F. Lyman Tibbitts, '16, '19ma, special instructor in extension education at the University, is being published by the Harlow Publishing Company of Oklahoma City as a result of the favorable reception given a preliminary mimeographed edition. . . A philosophical novel by Dr. Gustav Mueller, associate professor of philosophy, has been accepted for publication by the Prairie Press, Muscatine, Iowa.

. . . A new book by Miss Margaret Stephenson, counselor of women at the University of Oklahoma, and Ruth Millett, newspaper columnist, was published last month. Entitled *Is Your Face Red*, it is designed to teach manners to small children.



Queen of independents

Jeanette Smith, of Tulsa was acclaimed last month as sweetheart of the Independent Men's Association. The selection was made by ballot at an I. M. A. dance.



Announcing

a book that captures the unique and changeless spirit of Mexico in terms of national character and history—by

TODD DOWNING

—former faculty member of the University of Oklahoma, who knows Mexico from years of first-hand experience. Beginning with pre-Aztec days and continuing down through the Spanish conquest, through Maximilian's empire and the revolution, to the present *ejido* system of Cardenas, Todd Downing reveals the highlights of history, the bypaths of legend and folklore, and the whole brilliance, color, and variety of Mexican life. A book every Oklahoman will enjoy. *With line drawings by Howard Willard.*

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THE MEXICAN EARTH

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