

Compare the Values

Spend five dollars for a couple of good dinners. (You can get a good dinner for \$2.50—in some places). By the morning after it might just as well have been codfish cakes and green peas.

Spend five dollars for a book. You have a permanent mental asset; one which you can lend to your friends, if you like to take chances.

Spend five dollars for a couple of theater tickets. (The front row in the balcony is good enough). You get, at best, a thrill, a few hours' entertainment, some esthetic satisfaction.

Spend five dollars for a book. You get several hours' initial entertainment and you can go back again and again; rather more esthetic satisfaction, not to mention utility in the way of added knowledge.

Yet five dollars is a cheap dinner or a cheap theater and seems like an awful price to pay for a book! Something ought to be done about this.

Here is a book which will be appreciated by anyone who can read—or for that matter by anyone who can look at pictures.

Fogs and Clouds

By W. J. Humphreys, U. S. Weather Bureau. A nice blending of art and science. Nearly a hundred cloud photographs—the finest collection between covers—makes this a picture gallery of the nearer heavens. And the text provides an index for the recognition of cloud forms and signs of weather, besides being richly informative as to what takes place in the skies above.

And It's only Four Dollars

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Who Said That First?

General Science

D. F. FRASER-HARRIS in *Coloured Thinking* (Brentano's):

It is also satisfactory to know, if possible, the exact date in the history of a science when a new term was introduced. For instance, the every-day word "electricity" was made up by William Gilbert, a physician and naturalist, about 1600. He derived the term from the Greek word for "amber." Or, again, how few of us know that the term "energy" in the modern sense of "capacity for doing work" was introduced as recently as 1807 by the great mathematical physicist, Thomas Young, M. D.

Let us begin with the word "gas," a word as widely used as any small word in English. It is a word without any derivation at all, it has no "root," it came from nothing other than the brain of a Belgian chemist, Jean Baptiste van Helmont, about 1630. He needed a word to express the invisible volatile substances which were neither solids nor liquids that he constantly encountered in his chemical investigations. There was no pre-existing word to designate such substances, and so van Helmont coined the word "gas"—a word without descent—a veritable etymological Melchisedek.

As a matter of fact, he coined two words at the same time—"gas" and "blas." Blas was his term for the other invisible principle, the principle of life; but whereas today we could give van Helmont (if he returned to earth) many litres of many kinds of gases, we could not materialize for him the smallest quantity of blas, for gas once the concept is now a substance, but blas the concept is the concept still.

Speaking of gases, oxygen is the one with which we are most familiar: we can carry it about compressed in cylinders, take it under the ocean or soar with it into the clouds. But it, too, was once just a concept in the mind of the great French chemist, Lavoisier, who about 1722 called it "oxy" "gine" or "the producer of acid" from a rather mistaken conception of its properties.

Our own Priestley was the first person to isolate the gas, but he named it still more unsatisfactorily "dephlogisticated air," after Stahl the German's erroneous theory of matter and heat.

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