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Portraits from memory. Recollections of a zoologist.

Author(s) : [GOLDSCHMIDT, R. B.](#)

Book : [Portraits from memory. Recollections of a zoologist.](#) 1956 pp.ix + 181 pp.

Abstract : Richard B. Goldschmidt is one of the few survivors of the culture represented by Germany at the end of the nineteenth century and this portrait of it will serve to evoke an impression of that world to generations of scientists not even experienced its flavour. Graphic pictures are conjured up of some scientific men of history: Haeckel, the ardent apostle of Darwinism on the Continent of Europe, picturesque figures such as Kuno Fischer who recited the whole of *Faust* at his lectures "apparently incidentally", Otto Bütschli, the father of cytology.

observer of mitosis and the process of fertilization, the vain Wilhelm Roux, the
Hertwig who did the first systematic experiments on fertilization and cleavage
urchins, Theodor Boveri who first elucidated the movements of the chromo-
somes and their significance in heredity, Fritz Schandinn, discoverer of the spirochete
Karl Belar who lost his life in the early thirties because he mixed his enthusiasm
for cytology with a passion for reckless motoring, and a host of other interesting
figures. One of these is P. Kammerer with his "proofs" of the inheritance of
characters, who receives very short shrift and is classed with the "remarkable
to-understand group of big fakers" which includes the authors of the Vermorel
of the Piltown man.

Many interesting sidelights are thrown on the customs of the world described
learn that the few female students were mostly Russians, that the author was
reprimanded for late arrival on coming to the laboratory at eight in the morning
complete academic freedom prevailed in the universities, where "there was
administration to invent orgies of red tape with three thousand blanks in all
rainbow to be constantly filled, filed, and forgotten. There were no committees
except the academic senate. There were no secretaries, typewriters, stencil
reports, except the annual budget-making, and the bookkeeping was of the
primitive, household type". On the other hand the bureaucracy in the Imperial
Office was much more reminiscent of our own day and Ladislaus von Prohászka
required to return the empty boxes of his cover glasses from the Dalmatian
in order to get supplies of new ones!

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