



ALBERT EINSTEIN,
The World's Greatest Living Scientist.

THE little turret of the tenement house in Berlin in which Einstein lives rises somewhat above the gray sea of houses. When this turret was built it was intended only as an ornament and had no definite purpose. Its two little rooms, which are of puritanical simplicity, permit complete privacy and, therefore, independence. In these rooms no visitors are received. Einstein rarely has anybody else here but his assistants and his secretary. This room is a place of labour.

The scholar is seated in an old armchair, his dreamy glance goes far beyond the small room. On his knee rests a pad; his hand holds a pen; a clean, fine handwriting such as is characteristic of mathematicians covers the paper with formulae and equations. Suddenly his hand comes to rest; his eye seeks the far away. Deep in thought, the scientist strides up and down the small room. This is his method of working. He discusses the mathematical execution of his ideas with his assistants; he

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expresses his hope and scepticism about the latest thoughts. Then, together, they check up on the mathematical processes.

Einstein's hair is grey, only his little moustache is black. And yet this man is barely fifty years of age. But his face shows all the traces of the intense, intellectual labour of decades. The handwriting of intellect makes deep and indelible marks on human faces. His face is pale and has the indoor complexion of a man who lives in the big city. But in summer Einstein gives himself up to nature. He goes on long walks or goes sailing on the Havel and its lakes. Then, there returns to this face, colour and freshness which were consumed by the winter before.

In his little study he works beneath the pictures of three thinkers of whom he is especially fond, Faraday, Maxwell and Schopenhauer. The simplicity of the room is repeated in his clothing. He prefers to wear a simple woollen pullover, and in the summer time a sport suit. Nothing is more foreign to him than elegance or ceremonial garb. In this he agrees with Spinoza, who refused a new coat with these words, "Will that make me a different man? It would be a bad situation if the bag were better than the meat that's in it." And so it frequently happens that Einstein appears at some occasion in an impossible get-up, that he delivers his lectures in the university in a sport suit and sandals, or that he appears in high society in a business suit. When he was about to deliver lectures at Oslo under particularly formal circumstances, it was discovered at the last moment that he did not have a full dress suit. What next? Einstein responds to such worries with hearty, boyish laughter. He calmly put on his usual suit and said, "I will simply fasten a tag on it with this notice: *'This suit has just been brushed.'*"

All the ceremonies of high society appear very ridiculous to him. The value of a human being is not expressed in such outward things. Social forms are like false faces which people put on to cover up their true ones. Furthermore, the elegance and dignity of these forms often express pride and to a man with the human emotions of

An Intimate Portrait of the Great Scientist

By ANTON REISNER

Einstein nothing is more painful and distasteful than the arrogance of wealth and position. His character is generally so sincere and simple that words or gestures of this kind can offend him to such an extent that he breaks off all relations with the people in question.

He dislikes most those distinctions which transplant him to an atmosphere of wealth and social superiority. On his journey to New York a cabin de luxe had been reserved for him on the steamer, providing quarters of a comfort and convenience far different from that of all the other passengers on the ship. It had been hoped that Einstein would be pleased. But not at all; he rebelled against this special privilege, against the luxury and against the riches, against his isolation from his fellow passengers. He declared furiously that he would rather travel steerage than in this luxurious apartment. He quieted down somewhat, only when it was pointed out to him that the company had desired to please him and that his refusal might give offence.

In spite of all this, he is fond of social life, but it must be a spiritual exchange, of true human communion, of questions and answers between beings who understand each other. Although Einstein does not evaluate social virtues highly, and although he detests nothing more than conventional conversation, he is, nevertheless, a companion of very great charm in the more spiritual sense of the word. In his conversation he is anything but a scientific expert, but he does take for granted, in the case of men, some intellectual attainments, in order to make possible any kind of contact—even though it be only an evening's conversation. In women he appreciates most highly: naturalness, lack of self-consciousness, the intelligence of their intuitive beings. And he enjoys all these things tremendously.

His discussions with scientists and with men of intellect in general usually tend towards philosophy. Einstein himself possesses comprehensive philosophical training. He has read the most important works of classical philosophy, and in his hours of leisure he returns gladly

to Plato, Hume and Schopenhauer. But frequently he directs his mocking words against the too formalistic philosophy which followed Kant. He is not at all a positivist, although this philosophical tendency is especially frequent among natural scientists. Einstein's own work is speculative in its character, but he has to smile at the everlasting observation and investigation of concepts which correspond to no reality. Thus, he frequently criticises theoretical investigations which take place in a vacuum and seem not at all inviting to the exact nature of science.

Following Einstein's natural universality, his interests are not limited to science. In literature he admires especially the creators of form and great characterisation. He considers Shakespeare's mighty work, as great in its characterisation as in its poetic form, the high point of the world's literature. He is, furthermore, an admirer of the at present unfashionable Schiller. Drama appeals to him, since it is closest to human life. Lyric and epic forms are foreign to him. Tolstoi and Dostoiowski attract him with their profound Eastern mysticism, and he is also amused by the sceptical laughter of Anatole France and Bernard Shaw. Gerhart Hauptmann is for him the most profound of contemporary German poets. In no other contemporary does Einstein find a poetic world of human beings, of real flesh and bone of such profound social feelings, to compare with Hauptmann's. Hauptmann's personality is like his work. Association and conversation between Hauptmann and Einstein are, therefore, a source of joy for both. Though the abstract, thoughtful work of the one differs profoundly from the emotional, vivid work of the other, the human characteristics of the poet and the thinker are yet alike. Both are human beings of the highest type, closely related natures opposed to everything artificial and formal in life. Einstein and Shaw feel a similar mutual understanding: in this instance, both men are united by their sceptical humour and their social attitude.

But Einstein's greatest love is music, especially classical music.

Here profundity and significance of experience are joined with beautiful form, and such a union, to Einstein, means the greatest human blessing. The human will to live as it is experienced hourly in great and small things has been raised by means of music to an absolute force which in turn absorbs every experience and dissolves it into a transcendent, beautiful reality. The school of German music from Bach to Beethoven and Mozart best manifests for Einstein the essence of music. It does not follow that he is dogmatic and despises other musical personalities and tendencies. He loves old Italian music, he also loves the German romanticists, but the peak of musical achievement is, in his opinion, this triple constellation. On one occasion when he had to answer a questionnaire about Bach he said briefly: "In reference to Bach's life work: hearing, playing, love, revering, and—keeping one's mouth shut!"

He himself is a proficient violinist. Hardly a day passes that he does not pick up his violin and, usually accompanied by distinguished pianists, plays sonatas and concertos. He is also fond of Chamber music and joins prominent professional musicians in trios or quartets. At such times he is completely carried away into the realm of music; he combines so much reverie and forgetfulness of the world with efficient technique that nothing can distract his attention. He gladly consents to play at charity concerts, though two considerations make him hesitate. In the first place, he does not like to compete publicly with professional artists, since in his artistic modesty he considers himself only an amateur; and, in the second place, he fears he might hurt professional musicians who secure all the advantages of a public appearance by participating in charity concerts. Years ago it happened that a musical critic wrote after such an event: "Einstein's playing is excellent, but he does not deserve world fame since there are many other violinists just as good." The critic had never heard of Einstein, the physicist. Very recently, when Einstein again placed himself and

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his instrument in the service of charity, a wit remarked that Fritz Kreisler would have to deliver lectures on physics since Einstein was so busy with his concerts.

Einstein habitually improvises on the piano. His charming improvisations are reminiscent of Mozart, but he breaks off as soon as a stranger enters the room. This music is a private matter to Einstein and is intended for no strange ear. It means only relaxation after labour, or a period of recreation or inspiration before new work.

Very little of the outside world penetrates this quiet. The quiet forms the best part of the recreation afforded by this summer cottage. Einstein has refused to have a telephone installed, but this precaution is perhaps of doubtful value. Inasmuch as it is impossible for visitors from Berlin to announce themselves by telephone, they often appear without previous warning, and usually with wishes that demand time and exertion. With a sigh Einstein owns that there is no place in the world where he can be absolutely safe from such invasions.

His favourite and most joyful recreation is sailing. On the occasion of his fiftieth birthday, several friends united to present him with a new sailboat complying throughout with his own specifications and wishes. A few minutes' distance from the house is a shipyard near which his boat, built of solid mahogany, lies at anchor. Einstein is not interested in any endurance tests or speed records. He is interested in daydreams. He enjoys the distant views, the light, the colours, the quiet shores and the soothing, gliding motion of the boat which is steered by a slight motion of the rudder. All this

creates within him a joyous feeling of freedom. His scientific thinking, which never leaves him even on the water, takes on the nature of a daydream. Theoretical thinking is rich in imagination; without imagination no reality is realised. While his hand grasps the rudder, Einstein takes delight in explaining to his companions his latest scientific ideas, and in the summery atmosphere the abstract thought processes become so permeated with the processes of the scientist's deepest emotion that one realises the unity in him of a free existence and ever dominating work. He handles the boat with the skill and fearlessness of a boy. He raises the sails himself, climbs the mast in order to straighten out ropes and lines, and works poles and hooks to set the ship adrift from the shore. The joy of this activity is reflected in his face, in his words, in his happy laughter.

Frequently, he is recognised on the water. Other boats approach his. The passengers stare curiously at him and sometimes focus their cameras at his head already photographed countless times. That frequently spoils his good disposition which he, nevertheless, recovers very quickly. A few grumbling words about the intrusion of these people from Berlin—and then his old cheerfulness returns.

He is very popular in the village. The villagers became acquainted early with the impressive face and the long, gray hair. Usually, when Einstein goes walking through the village and the woods, he is dressed in a simple, white linen suit and does not wear a hat. The natives, especially the children, greet him as one of their own. That pleases him and he returns their greetings heartily.

The proximity of nature fills him with happiness. Though he loves the metropolis and admires its industry, though he is carried away by a vitality and modernness

which no other European city possesses, he is hardly a city dweller. The facades of the big buildings cover up so much human need: a race of poor and rich slaves who are chained to their labour; labour which has for its object almost exclusively the satisfaction of material wants. In nature all this disappears. Each house is surrounded by light, air and vegetation, and the human being joins nature's great innocence. Einstein's childhood experiences of nature, which have influenced his whole development, are recalled in his maturity. He takes a deep and childlike delight in the beauty of the landscape and enjoys sharing this feeling with other people. Thus he likes to escort his visitors to those places in Caputh which possess a special charm, and he is as happy as a child when the others, too, admire their scenic beauties.

This life close to nature strikes a balance with the realm of pure reason. For Einstein the two are closely related: the miracle of mind is manifest in nature; the miracle of nature is manifest in a superior intellect. In this conviction, Einstein attains the pantheism of Spinoza. He, himself, remarked on one occasion: "My concept of God is an emotional conviction of a superior intellect manifested in the material world." But he is not concerned with dogmas, with interpretations, but only with a humility towards the forces of nature and of reason. Humility is Einstein's religion. It consists of a childlike admiration of a superior mind "which is manifest in the little our reason grasps of reality." Out of this conviction arises his social morality which is not divine command, but human need.

Thus he is to-day at the high-water mark of his life, his work and his fame. He is one with all the miracles of existence and intellectual creation.

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