

# STUART X—THE GREAT UNKNOWN

*An Unofficial Adviser to the Universe in General*

**H**ENRY CLIFFORD STUART, who calls himself Stuart X, was sometime United States Consul-General in Guatemala City, and is now a resident of Washington, D.C. The editors of the United States have been wondering a good deal about this same Stuart X. A hundred or so of them get a letter from him every day; letters dealing with everything under the sun, from the whiskers of Presidential candidates to the love-affairs of Gabriele d'Annunzio. These letters are written in what anyone else would call *vers libre*, or in a strange nervous prose—in either case amazingly individual.

**H**IS point of view may be rudely described as that of an inspired baby. The language in which he clothes his thoughts is partly like that of William Blake and partly like that of Friedrich Nietzsche. There is also in him more than a trace of Thomas Carlyle, because of the violence of his expressions, and of his trick of considering the anatomical structure of words while he is in the act of using them. He sometimes gets his derivations all wrong; but what does he care? It all depends—as Humpty-Dumpty pointed out to Alice—on who is to be the Master. Stuart X never leaves the matter in a moment's doubt; if a word won't at first behave, he whips it till it does. If he gets annoyed about "law," he spells it L-AWE, with italics in queer and unexpected places.

All this sort of thing destroys the peace of mind of editors, which is what Stuart X wants to do.



FRANK A. ERING  
STUART X

**H**ERE is some of his sound philosophy:

#### THE TRUTH

Do not say—"THIS is the TRUTH"

But—So it seems—to me  
—to be  
—as I  
—now  
—see  
—the part  
—I think I see.

He apparently has no idea that Pyrrho said

the same thing about 3,000 years ago, by replying "Perhaps"—the irritating person—to every question.

**A**ND here are two paragraphs from a recent letter of his which emphasize the highly original slant of the man's mind: "The gentlest man I ever knew—killed seven Chinamen—with a shovel."

"Another gentle and child-like nature—one of the early California miners, whose only weapon was an elongated revolver—ran an entire military company out of a Guatemala town because their Captain had insulted his, the miner's, WIFE. And he held the town, too, until they sent a regiment from the Capital of Guatemala. But he did not "apologize." The American Minister had to do that, for him. What a profession!"

**S**TUART X is publishing a couple of hundred of his letters, poems, and miscellaneous papers, in book form. No book of recent years has been more formless or uninventive in structure. It is merely a personality, in print; a man's character on paper. "A Prophet in His Own Country," he has called the book, and, as he has made a careful study of the idiosyncrasies of every man, woman and thing on our planet between the ages of nine and ninety, and has written him, her, or it a series of letters about the psychophysiology of the *infrasubsuper - sinetenus - proetpraconsciousness—with italics*—it will not be his fault if he does not sell at least one copy.

## A DRAMATIC CAREER IN MODERNIST ART

BY MAX EASTMAN

**B**ECKWEIZER grew tired of copying on paper, in those fine lines and placid shadings which he had so painfully learned to make perfect, the exact perspectives of external reality. He threw his crayons in the corner and tore off his velvet studio coat.

"Pearl," he said, "I'm done with this. I'm going in for a taste of real life!"

The lady who had so long filled the role of model for those impeccable drawings of his, was startled. Her attitude was disturbed by an emotion.

"Don't be alarmed," he cried, "just hold that position!"

He tightened his belt and tore off a half of his shirt-sleeve. He wanted free play. He jacked up his easel a bit, seized a new crayon, and began dashing off some very vigorous and alarming black lines on the canvas. Before long he had drawn a vividly irregular picture of a superbly regular female startled into awkwardness by an emotion. It was a peculiar picture, and the artist had so much excitement and fun doing it that he never again found the time for one of those impeccable drawings. He became an impressionist.

**T**HE impressions which he derived from this faithful female, however, around whose placid proportions he might be said to have moulded his academic reputation, soon ceased to be lively enough for his new genius. He courted visual impressions from all kinds

of models. He even drew pictures of the way people looked in the street, people who were not at all prepared to take their place in a picture. He acquired a reputation as a very daring young artist. But he was not satisfied. Some strange force was urging him from within.

"This is not real life," he said to himself. "Life is creative."

He turned, almost savagely, to his most recent model—a little Hawaiian lady from a cabaret, who had lately been furnishing him impressions at a very modest rate.

"Here, what do I owe you?" he cried. "Get out! I am done with it. I can see forms that surpass the mechanical limitations of physiology. I can see forms that surpass forms."

**H**E assaulted with wild energy a new canvas, and the little Hawaiian belle was glad to dress very hastily, and make her exit, with relief.

Beckweizer then became a futurist. His drawings and some paintings and sculpture that he made were widely commented upon. Critics noted that although he distorted the human figure in many ways, he never hit upon any of the monstrosities that Nature has standardized. His art was more purely creative than that. He was a part of the élan of Nature itself; he was a part of real life.

But still he was not satisfied. He found that in his work he was continually plagued with recollections of the figures of his models. He was not creating, he was merely remem-

bering and reproducing with variations. He fought battles against his memory. Particularly the large eyes and shapely form of the impeccable Pearl would entice him back to the contemptible trick of representation. He confided to himself that one of his most celebrated futurisms, "The Lady, Beckoning," was only this same Pearl with a triangular spine and another lady's face attached to her left shoulder—sideways. No, this was not life.

"Life," he cried, "is feeling. Pure feeling expressed in color, to the eye—as music expresses it, in harmonies, to the ear."

**H**E was alone in his studio now, but he continued to talk to himself. "Those geometric forms inevitably arise from the juxtaposition of color-emotions. Cubes are no more the essence of the cubist's art than keyboards are the essence of piano-music. The essence of their art is the creation of pure feeling in color. That is life."

And so, in his solitude, and with a degree of self-discipline that no one who glanced casually at those conglomerations of shapes and colors would ever attribute to him, he became an accomplished and unqualified cubist. There was no trace of representation in anything that he made—not any more than there is in linoleum.

"This at last," he said, "is the glowing heart of reality and life."

But there was still an urge within him that he could not name (*Continued on page 98*)