

KNOWLEDGE AND BELIEF

We can naturally only pass judgment on the sensations which we ourselves experience. However, anatomy informs us of the presence in the bodies of many animals of other senses than those we are familiar with. Thus fishes and other lower aquatic vertebrates have peculiar sensilla in the skin which are in connection with special sense-nerves. On the right and left sides of the fish's body there is a long canal, branching into a number of smaller canals at the head. In this "mucous canal" there are nerves with numerous branches, the terminations of which are connected with peculiar nerve-aggregates. This extensive epidermic sense-organ probably serves for the perception of changes in the pressure, or in other properties, of the water. Some groups are distinguished by the possession of other peculiar sensilla, the meaning of which is still unknown to us.

But it is already clear from the above facts that our human sense-activity is limited, not only in quantity, but in quality also. We can thus only perceive with our senses, especially with the eye and the sense of touch, a part of the qualities of the objects in our environment. And even this partial perception is incomplete, in the sense that our organs are imperfect, and our sensory nerves, acting as interpreters, communicate to the brain only a translation of the impressions received.

However, this acknowledged imperfection of our senses should not prevent us from recognizing their instruments, and especially the eye, to be organs of the highest type; together with the thought-organs in the brain, they are nature's most valuable gift to man. Very truly does Albrecht Rau say: "All science is sensitive knowledge in the ultimate analysis; it does