

Yet Mr. Bliss noted with interest, when he was in Shanghai that these symbols could be understood by people who spoke any of the different languages of China and neighbouring countries.

Chinese poems written 2500 years ago can still be read and enjoyed, whereas the verses Chaucer wrote in the fourteenth century have already become double-Dutch to most English readers.

The great thing, in Mr. Bliss' view, was to simplify the Chinese system, to pare it down scientifically until it had reached the limit of simplicity.

He has aimed, he says, at making his pictorial language as coldly scientific as chemistry, or arithmetic with Arabic numerals.

Mr. Bliss does more than try to teach you to communicate with foreigners in a handy code. He gives much space in his book to trying to teach you how to think logically, and how to use words precisely.

Many words, he points out seem to tell you something but this might be true for one person and false for another person.

For instance, one man might say a certain thing was "beautiful," but another man (equally sincerely) might say the same thing was "ugly."

Words like beautiful and ugly are opinion-words, not precise descriptions. And Mr. Bliss calls opinion-words (which, as you know, are often "fightin' words"), "human evaluations."

You'd be surprised how many words belong to that class. But Mr. Bliss teaches you to spot them.

Metaphors, like "ship of the desert" for the meaning of "camel" are nonsensical when written in a picture writing. Other metaphors don't seem so nonsensical, yet they can be used to put over any fraud, like "Germans, wake up! (said millions of time to people who were wide awake). With anyone trained in Semantography such metaphors are easily spotted and marked.

Mr. Bliss distrusts metaphors profoundly. They, he considers, together with meaningless abstractions, have created half the dissasters in the world.

Hitler propped up his regime almost entirely with meaningless, resounding phrases. Those of his minions who shut the victims in gas chambers were sustained in self-righteousness because he told them it was "necessary in a higher sense"—whatever that might mean.

Translated into pictorial language, says Mr. Bliss, the slogans of dictators and rabble-rousers would create only hearty laughter, because everyone would see at once they were meaningless.

Will an international language of picture-writing work?

Experience proves that it will, Mr. Bliss says. The whole world, for example, uses uniform signs in mathematics. Signs used in chemistry, physics, geometry, electrical work, radio, are international.

Men at sea use one international code of signals, which they can read in their own tongue whether they're Chinese, Greeks, or Britons. Music in all civilised countries has the same system of notation. All Semantography needs, says Mr. Bliss, is a start.

If you are interested to know

more about Semantography, write to

THE INSTITUTE FOR SEMANTOGRAPHY

5 Maroubra Bay Road, Pagewood, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.

For the letter to you, please include the necessary stamp (of your country).

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Here's a new World Writing

A condensed article by

James Walton (Kenneth Wilkinson)

Reprinted from the

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● This is a story about an unusual inventor.

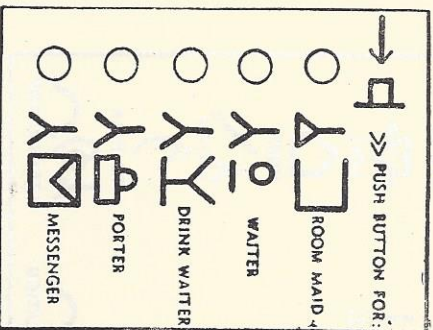
His invention is a system of "picture-writing" meant to break down language barriers. With it, he says, an Australian and a Chinese (for example) could exchange ideas without needing to learn a word of each other's language.

Bertrand Russell, the British philosopher and mathematician, talked with him in Sydney recently and wrote to him afterwards, "I think very highly of it . . . Any man or men who will spend the money necessary to get your work printed, will, in my opinion, be performing an important service to mankind."

John Metcalfe, Principal Librarian of the Public Library of New South Wales, has recommended the work for public and university reference libraries throughout the world.

Charles K. Bliss, an industrial research chemist who lives at Pagewood (Sydney), is the inventor of the new "language."

You'll find a sample of it on this page.



Symbols for a hotel room.

Bliss calls it Semantography, because it contains also a simple Semantics (theory of meaning).

Bliss maintains that the peoples of this planet don't like to learn foreign languages, including Esperanto.

His picturegraphs are only a written "language". A Frenchman would read them in French, a German in German, a Malaysian in Malay. But the meaning would be the same for all three.

Mr. Bliss has spent seven years setting down his system in a three-volume book, titled *100 Symbol Elements to overcome Babel in Reading, Writing and Thought*. There are only a hundred copies of the book, which he produced from typed stencils.

His language-building has the ingenuity of a piece of skilled engineering.

He draws a little symbolic picture of the object or action referred to, and draws it in the fewest possible lines.

"Earth" is one horizontal stroke. "Man" looks like an upright human being with legs. "House" is the combination of the symbols for earth, walls and roof (see drawings).

"Mind" is the top half of a circle, symbolising the outline of the skull which houses the brain.

"Emotion" is the conventionalised outline of a heart.

There are only a hundred of these elementary symbols in Mr. Bliss' vocabulary.

From these he works up to more complex ideas by combining them in groups.

OPEN	CLOSED	ENTRANCE	EXIT
START	DEPARTURE	APPROACH	ARRIVAL
WATER	RAIN	STEAM	STREAM
EMOTION	HAPPINESS	SADNESS	LOVE
EARTH	WALL	ROOF	HOUSE
PEN	TO PEN, WRITE	MAN	WRITER
MOUTH	TO SPEAK	EAR	TO HEAR
LANGUAGE	BRIDGE	TRANSLATION	TRANSLATOR

These examples show the ingenuity with which the inventor has developed his symbols.

A flag planted on a strip of earth symbolises that this territory belongs to a "state" and this is symbolised in the following picturegraphs.

Earth	Flag	State	Man	Citizen

Add to the symbol for "citizen" two multiplication marks (symbolising "many, many") and you have the word for "nation". Literally, this means, "many, many humans on a territory over which a specific flag is flying."

Put a little circle in one corner of the flag, to make it a simplified Chinese flag, and you have "the Chinese nation."

When dealing with specialised subjects, Mr. Bliss brings extra pictures into being. The outline of an envelope means "a letter."

But general readers who happened to take up the study of the picture-language would not be at liberty to invent new word symbols for themselves.

They should soon create a Babel of Symbols. Mr. Bliss has organised the Institute for Semantography to make rulings on the matter.

No idea is too complex for Mr. Bliss to tackle.

Bertrand Russell challenged him to express the word "God" in picture-writing.

He responded by drawing a simplified eye inside an equal-sided triangle.

God, Creator	Nature, Creation

"It is an age-old symbol," he says, "displayed on temples, churches, and synagogues for thousands of years. The eye symbolises the all-seeing, all knowing Creator. Of all miracles, the eye is the most miraculous. It enables man to fathom the universe, and reach the farthest stars."

If you are an atheist, and do not like the idea of a personal Creator, take the eye away. Then the remaining enigmatic triangle means "nature," a meaning, not less miraculous and mysterious.

Geometrical figures and especially the equal-sided triangle (which is the most simple and most harmonious figure) have been regarded by ancient and modern philosophers and mathematicians as symbols of the divine simplicity and harmony of the universe.

This word-building is a little like pidgin-English—a suggestion which Mr. Bliss takes up at once. He intends pressing his picture-language on the notice of the Government, he says, as it would be ideal for instructing the natives of New Guinea.

All the different tribes, who cannot now understand one another's speech, could acquire a common basis of culture in the new sign-language.

Any Australian who knows the word-scheme could communicate with them at once.

Mr. Bliss got the basic idea for his new language through studying the system of "ideographs" or pictorial symbols which make up the written language of China.

The Chinese system is cumbersome. Its pictorial symbols need a great many strokes of the pen, and a Chinese typewriter has 1500 different keys.