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The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER.

SESENHEIM, THE HOME OF GOETHE'S FRIEDERIKE.
(See pages 25-35.)

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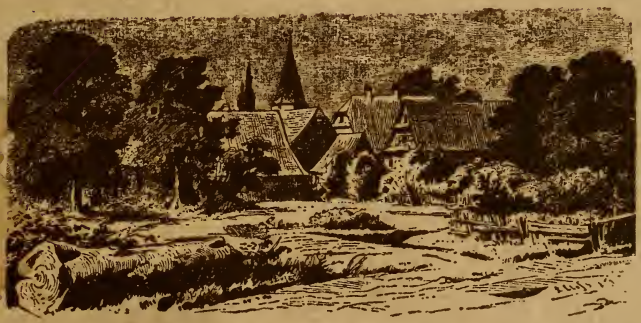

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VOL. XXVI. (No. 1.) JANUARY, 1912. NO. 668

CONTENTS:

A CHINESE MADONNA.

Reproduced by the courtesy of the Field Columbian Museum, Chicago

Frontispiece to The Open Court.

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THE CHINESE MADONNA IN THE FIELD MUSEUM.

BY BERTHOLD LAUFER.

WHEN I was traveling through China in search of relics of the past, I was always on the lookout for an opportunity to discover ancient remains of Christianity. In 1901, I had the good fortune in Peking to come upon two scrolls painted in watercolors originating from the Jesuit school of artists engaged in the court-studios of the emperors K'ang-hi and K'ien-lung during the eighteenth century. Both represent madonnas with a background of palace buildings in Italian Renaissance style. Both these pictures, with a number of others, are published in a paper by the present writer entitled "Christian Art in China" (*Mitteilungen des Seminars für orientalische Sprachen*, Berlin, 1910).

The beginnings of Christian painting in China coincide with the arrival of the great Jesuit missionary, Matteo Ricci, in 1583, who deeply impressed the minds of the Chinese with wood-engravings brought from his home in Italy. The Chinese art-historians themselves connect with his name the introduction of the European method of perspective drawing and date from his time the foreign influence exerted on indigenous art. We know that one famous artist at the close of the Ming period, and a contemporary of Ricci, Tung K'i-ch'ang or Hüan-Tsai (1555-1636), was indebted to the Jesuits for a number of European subjects which he copied with his brush and left to us in a remarkable album.

Early in 1910, I was surprised to find in the mansion of an official in Si-ngan fu a Christian madonna holding a child in her arms. It was painted in the Chinese style of watercolors on a large paper scroll (measuring 1.20×0.55 m.) and is reproduced

as the frontispiece of this issue. The most striking feature of this representation is that, while the Virgin evidently betrays her European origin, the child is conceived of as a Chinese boy with a small tuft of hair on his head, clad in a red coat with green collar and holding in his left hand a Chinese book with brown wrapper on which is pasted a paper slip for the title of the work. From this we may infer that the artist was not one of the foreign Jesuits, but some Chinese painter.

The madonna, exhibiting a Byzantine style, if I am not mistaken, is limned in a light-yellowish brown set off from the darker brown of the background, the nimbus and the bodice being dark-red in color. Her pallium is flowing down in many elegant folds, without covering her feet. The face is somewhat schematic, but the hands are admirably treated. When I was shown this painting, my first impression was that it also had emanated from the school of the eighteenth century Jesuit painters headed by Joseph Castiglione and Jean-Denis Attiret. But several Chinese experts living in Si-ngan fu came forward to inform me that this picture could not come down from the K'ien-lung epoch (1736-1795), but could only be a production of the later Ming period (sixteenth century). Their verdict was judiciously based on a technical feature. Chinese scrolls are usually mounted on silk, two broad rectangular pieces framing the picture on the upper and lower borders, and two narrow oblong strips surrounding the lateral margins. The textures of these silks under the Ming and previous dynasties were distinctly different from those woven under the present Manchu dynasty, and an experienced connoisseur can make a clear distinction between the productions of the two periods. This diversity holds good also for the silks on which the paintings are made, so that a Ming picture on silk can always be told from one of a later date. However, it is customary to remount pictures because the ancient silk mountings decay rapidly. Thus the painting of the madonna had been mounted anew about a year before I received it; but the art-experts who rendered me this service assured me that they had seen it in its original state, that the silk on which it had been mounted was the characteristic product of the Ming period, and that accordingly the work itself belonged to that time. There was no reason to discountenance this judgment. The men whom I consulted were not concerned in the transaction and were old friends of mine of many years' standing who know that I am only a seeker for truth, without any inclination to make things older than they are. Nevertheless, I made a search for any scraps that might have been left of the

former silk mounting but—as any one familiar with Chinese conditions may anticipate—without success. Such remains wander into the waste-basket of oblivion, instead of being preserved as relics. Collectors of ancient scrolls may draw a lesson from this case. They should see to it that if any are remounted some samples of the old textile should be preserved which may eventually serve as important documentary evidence in making out the period of the picture in question.

I then took my madonna over to the mission of the Franciscans in Si-ngan fu of whose hospitality I retain the most pleasant remembrances. The bishop, Monseigneur Gabriel Maurice, a man of as noble and fine a character as of wide scholarship, expressed his admiration for this picture, saying that he had never seen a similar one during his lifelong residence in the city. He also summoned the Chinese fathers to view this singular discovery, and amazement and joy were reflected in their keen intelligent eyes. I asked them what they thought of it, without telling them of my experience reported above. They arrived at the conclusion that it was executed by a Chinese, not a European artist, in the Wan-li period (1573-1620) of the Ming dynasty. On inquiry whether it would not be possible to connect the work with the Jesuits of the eighteenth century, they raised a lively protest against such a theory, and asserted that the style and coloration of the painting would decidedly refer to the end of the Ming period, while the madonnas of the later Jesuit school bear an entirely different character. This judgment is deserving of due consideration, and is in fact justified by a comparison of the present madonna with those collected by me formerly which are attributed to the eighteenth century.

There now remained another mystery to be solved in this painting. In the left lower corner there is a white spot (it shows but faintly in our reproduction) containing two Chinese characters which read T'ang-yin. T'ang-yin or T'ang Po-hu is the name of an artist whom the Chinese regard as the foremost master of the Ming epoch. He was a contemporary of Raphael and lived from 1470 to 1523. As I succeeded in gathering five of his original works and more than a dozen copies made after his paintings, I am able to form an idea of his style and handwriting. His signature and mode of writing are so characteristic that on this evidence alone I should not hesitate for a moment to pronounce the verdict that the signature on this painting, which really attempts to imitate the artist's hand, is a downright forgery. Further inspection disclosed the fact that another signature or seal must have previously occu-

pied this place, but it was subsequently erased, as is plainly visible from the white spot, to give place to T'ang-yin's name.

To settle this question at the outset, it is manifest that T'ang-yin cannot have painted this or any similar Christian madonna, since in his time there was no trace of Christianity in that country. Otherwise we must have recourse to an artificially constructed theory that, for instance, the Franciscans of the Mongol or Yüan period under the distinguished Johannes de Monte Corvino (1247-1328) may have left behind a painting of the madonna which might have survived the ravages of time until the Ming dynasty and then have fallen by chance into the hands of T'ang-yin to serve as a model for the present work. There would be no convincing force, or but little, in such a hypothetical speculation, against which the forgery of the signature would seriously militate. Notwithstanding, there is a certain indefinable something in the chiaroscuro of this painting that reminds me of the color style of T'ang-yin, and this may have induced some one to introduce his name. This explanation of course is not sufficient to reveal the psychological motive prompting the act of forgery, but it only accounts to some degree for the forger's choice of T'ang-yin's name rather than another one.

I discussed these observations with my Chinese friends, and they perfectly concurred with me in the same opinion. I then consulted the official in whose family the picture had been kept. He agreed with me in looking upon the signature as of a later date, but was unable to furnish any explanation as to how it had been brought about. He assured me that it had been handed down in his family for at least five or six generations which would carry us back to the middle of the eighteenth century, and that the signature of T'ang-yin, according to his family traditions, had always been there, and must have been added at least before the time when it came into the possession of his family. He was not a Christian himself, but appreciated the picture merely for its artistic merits. How well tradition is preserved among the Chinese, is brought out by the fact that in Si-ngan fu all concerned were aware of the representation being the *T'ien-chu shêng mu*, "the Holy Mother of the Heavenly Lord." The latter term has been chosen by the Catholics as the Chinese designation of God. It is therefore out of the question to presume that the Chinese could have ever mistaken this subject for a native deity, say, e. g., the goddess of mercy, Kuan-yin. Moreover, this means that the perpetrator of the forgery had not had in his mind any expectation of material gain. He could not have made this picture a T'ang-yin in the hope of passing it off as such and realizing

on it the price due to a T'ang-yin, since nobody with ordinary common sense would have fallen a victim to such an error. Indeed the price which I was asked to give for it was so low that it would not even secure a tolerably good modern copy of a T'ang-yin, and the broker who had transacted the business between the official and myself, knew me too well to venture to insist for a moment on this dubious authenticity; in fact, he did not dare to speak of it nor to contradict me when I branded the signature as a counterfeit. I merely mention these facts to dispel the impression possibly conveyed to uncharitable critics of mine, that I had become the victim of a mystification and this fraud had been committed for my own benefit.

The net result of my investigation which I think it is fair to accept is that this makeshift was conceived long ago, and, as I presume, for reasons to be given presently, in the period of Yung-chêng (1723-1735), the successor of K'ang-hi. In searching for a plausible reason, we must exclude any personal selfish motives on the part of him who brought about the alteration of the signature. We must keep in mind that Christian pictures have suffered a curious fate in China, that most of them have been annihilated in Christian persecutions and anti-foreign uprisings, and that only a few have survived. In describing one of the madonnas of the eighteenth century, I called attention to the fact that portions of that painting had been cut out by a vandal hand and subsequently supplemented; thus, the head of that madonna with her Chinese features is inserted as a later addition. I am now inclined to think that this is not an act of vandalism, but was done intentionally by the owner as a measure of precaution to insure protection for his property. An infuriated anti-Christian vandal would have mercilessly destroyed the entire scroll and not taken the trouble to remove carefully only the head of the madonna. The original head was in all probability one of European design and was replaced by one with a Chinese countenance to save the picture from destruction or its Christian Chinese owner from detection or persecution, since he was then enabled to point out that the figure was merely intended for a Chinese woman.

I believe that the former owner of our madonna was piously actuated by a similar motive. The far-reaching persecution of the Catholic faith under the emperor Yung-chêng is well known. Let us suppose that the original legend under the picture would have referred to the subject, giving a title like "The Holy Mother" or "The Heavenly Lord," as Matteo Ricci had headed the wood-engraving of the madonna *Nuestra Señora de l'Antigua* in the cathe-

dral of Seville which I formerly published. Then the owner was justified at the time of the great anti-missionary movement in fearing lest this testimony plainly confessing Catholicism might betray him, or, if he was not baptized himself, might lead to an anathema of the picture which for some reason was dear to him. So he had recourse to this subterfuge, eradicated the suspicious title, and not unwittily substituted the magic name of T'ang-yin for whom all Chinese evince such a deep reverence that it acted sufficiently as a protecting talisman. And it is due to this wonder only that the painting has been preserved to the present day.

Perhaps the name of a painter living at the end of the sixteenth century was originally written there, but such a name was treacherous too, as the Wan-li period was too well known in the memories of all people as the time of the first Catholic propaganda. But T'ang-yin had lived far beyond that period and could not be suspected of being a Catholic or having indulged in the art of the foreigners. Thus his distinguished name was in every respect a charm and amulet which saved the life of this memorable painting. It is the only painted madonna extant of the early period of Christian art in China, and as a venerable relic of the past takes the foremost rank among the Christian works produced by the Chinese. It was presumably painted after the model of a picture brought to China by Matteo Ricci himself.

THE SCHOLAR'S FOUR SEASONS.

Translated from the original of Weng Sen in the "Lute of the Little Learning"
BY JAMES BLACK.

Spring.

THE sunlight glistens on the wall, the brook goes murmuring by,
And o'er the earth that Spring has touched the scented zephyrs fly.
Our friends, the birds, are twittering now on all the tree-tops near,
And on the surface of the pool the tinted flowerets rear.
Oh, who could miss the magic of such music and such light!
But ever in conning o'er his books the scholar takes delight.
The scholar cons his books with joy, a joy that has no bound,
Like the glory of the green that grows in the meadows all around.

Summer.

The bamboo boughs now press the eaves: there's mulberry everywhere,
And through the gloom of the student's room glitter the sunbeams rare.
All day on the neighboring trees we hear the shrill cicada's cry,
And the shade of the night sees a flicker of light from the firefly fluttering by.
As I lay by the window I dreamed a dream, that the Pearly Emperor came
To greet the scholar who rose to greet him first of the honored name.
The scholar cons his books with joy, a joy he only knows
In whose heart is the song of the jasper lute when the fragrant zephyr blows.

Autumn.

Last night I heard a rustling when the leaves began to fall,
A crackling in the branches, and the cricket's parting call.
The voices of the forest came full blast upon the ear,
Like ten thousand flutes all piping that the autumn winds were here.
Beneath the genial sky no more we con the favorite page.
Back to the study's calm retreat we now attend the sage.
The scholar cons his books with joy. For his spirit can mount on high
To follow the path of the wandering moon across the frosty sky.

Winter.

The plants are gone, the springs are dry, the river-bank is bare,
And I have changed, as all must change, around the rolling year.
The lamp that dangles on its cord throws shadows on the wall.
Full half the night I read. Outside, the unceasing snowflakes fall.
But the cheerful water boils within. The pleasant fire ascends.
And ever to more congenial task the scholar joyfully bends.
The scholar cons his books with joy. What else of equal worth?
Not even the flower-like flakes that fly half way 'tween heaven and earth.

GOETHE'S RELATION TO WOMEN.

BY THE EDITOR.

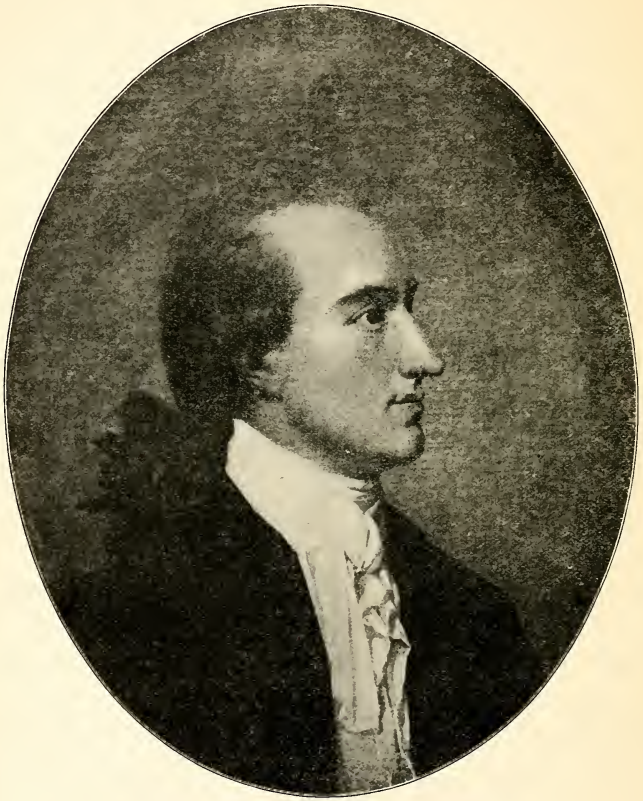
WHEN reading any biography of Goethe we are apt to receive a wrong impression of his personality. We become acquainted with a number of interesting people whom he meets in different places, and among them many attractive women. We are told of his literary labors and bear in mind his rapidly spreading fame. Thus his life seems to be a series of pleasures and triumphs while the quiet and concentrated work in which he was usually engaged is scarcely considered. His labors were almost playfully performed and his very recreations entered into them as part of his experiences which made him pause. His very sentiments are the material of his work, for, says he, "God made me say what in my heart I feel." Thus the seriousness of his life does not appear to a superficial observer, and yet those judge Goethe wrongly who would look upon his life as a mere series of flirtations, of lucky incidents and undeserved successes of all kinds. He himself relates his life in a charming style which renders every insignificant detail interesting, but all those pleasant events are drawn upon a somber background which the less noticed it is serves to render the more fascinating the figures that appear upon it.

Goethe's was a serious constitution, and the joyous events of his life are more incidental than the reader of "Truth and Fiction" might think. He was the butt of much envy and hostility in his lifetime, and above all his relations to women have been severely censured, but they were much purer and more innocent than is commonly assumed. We must remember that all the denunciations hurled against him by his critics are based upon his own story. There are no accusations coming from those whom he is assumed to have wronged.

* * *

When we wish to understand the part which women play in

Goethe's life we ought to speak first of all of the poet's relations with his mother. He knew very well what he owed to his father and what to his mother, tersely and poetically expressed in the lines:



GOETHE IN HIS THIRTIETH YEAR.
Painted by G. O. May, 1779.

"From father my inheritance
Is stature and conduct steady.
From mother I have my love of romance
And a tongue that's ever ready."

Goethe owed to his mother his poetic genius, his talent for story telling, and his buoyancy of spirit.

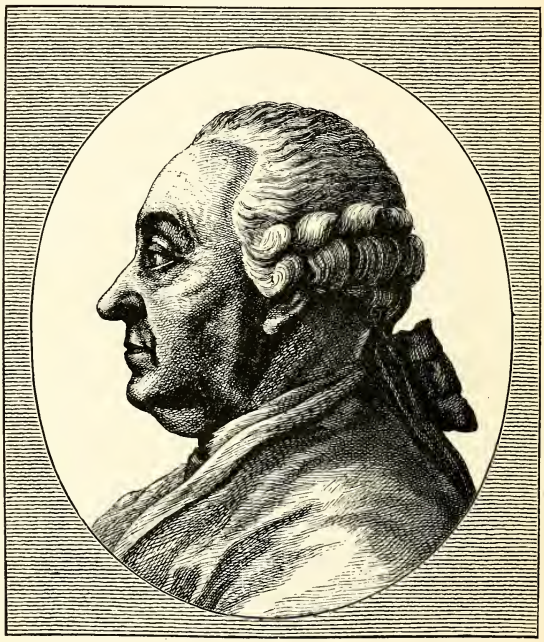
Frau Aja, as Goethe's mother was called by her son, was much younger than her husband, and we know that their marriage was not a love match. She was only seventeen and a half years old when on August 1748 she joined her life to that of the Counselor

GOETHE'S MOTHER, CALLED FRAU RATH, OR FRAU AJA.
After a picture in the possession of Solomon Hirzel. Original portraits of the Frau Rath are very rare.

Johann Caspar Goethe who was her senior by nineteen years. The warmth of the young wife's heart did not find the response she sought in the care of her sober and paternal mate, and so she lavished upon her son all the sentiment and fervor of which her soul was capable. Of six children she lost four[1] in early childhood, and

[1] Hermann Jacob, born in November, 1752, died in January, 1759; Catharina Elisabeth, born in September, 1754, died in December, 1755; Johanna Maria, born in March, 1757, died in August, 1759; and Georg Adolf, born in June, 1760, died in February, 1761.

only two, Wolfgang and Cornelia, survived. These sad bereavements only served to intensify her love for her two remaining children. Others might have succumbed to the gloom of melancholy, or their disposition would have soured, not so Frau Aja. With all the tenderness of a young woman's affection she clung to her children,



GOETHE'S FATHER.

After a copper engraving in Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente* (1777). The explanatory text reads: "Here is a pretty good likeness of the excellent, skilful, order-loving, discreet and clever executive man, who, however, made no pretense to a spark of poetic genius,—the father of the great man."

especially to her spritely boy, and she not only shared his joys when a child but also the unreserved confidence of the youth and the man. With him she renewed her girlhood days more as her son's companion in his sometimes giddy pranks then as his educator and parent. "My Wolfgang and I," she used to say, "always clung close together, because we were young together."

THE GOETHE FAMILY OF FRANKFORT.*

It was painted in 1762 by the Darmstadt artist J. C. Seekatz for 60 gulden.

* After the death of Goethe's mother this picture came into the possession of Bettina von Arnim who left it to her son-in-law, Hermann Grimm. Goethe kept two of the artist's sketches of this picture in his collection. It is one of these which is here reproduced. The oil painting differs slightly.

Frau Aja surrounded her son with her motherly love, removing from his life even in later years everything that could worry him or cause him solicitude. For instance it is not commonly known how

THE ROOM OF FRAU RATH GOETHE.
After a drawing by E. Büchner.

much she did for him in pecuniary sacrifices at the time when her illustrious son was well able to take care of his own accounts. During the Napoleonic war Frankfort had to pay a heavy contribution,

and Goethe, owning some property there though not being a citizen of the free city, was directly affected. His mother paid every penny of his share without ever referring to her son, simply to spare him the worry of making these increased payments. There is preserved in Weimar, a little sheet containing a few figures in Frau Aja's own handwriting which tell us how much the poet's mother still cared for the comfort of her son, and continued to spoil him with her motherly love. They read as follows:

1778.	700
1782.	888
1782.	1000
1785.	1000
1794.	1000
1801.	1000
	f. 5588
	600
	f. 6188

The sum of 6188 florins is more than twenty-five hundred dollars.

* * *

It is true that Goethe's poetic nature needed the stimulation of a woman's interest, but his relations to his women friends were not frivolous. He was not unprincipled, but he dreaded the indissoluble bond of marriage, and he carefully avoided giving any woman just cause to make a claim on his constancy. He himself expressed this sentiment in a humorous poem entitled *Vorschlag zur Güte* which might be translated simply "Proposal" or "For Consideration." It reads in an English translation thus:

He:
"So well thou pleasest me, my dear,
That as we are together here
I'd never like to part;
'Twould suit us both, sweet heart."

She:
"As I please you, so you please me,
Our love is mutual you see.
Let's marry, and change rings,
Nor worry about other things."

He:
"We marry! The word makes me feel blue,
I feel at once like leaving you."

She:

"Why hesitate? For then of course
If it won't work, we'll try divorce."

Being fearful that he might marry some one who would become a hindrance to him in his poetic work, Goethe was careful not to be carried away by passion, and he expresses this principle in another poem entitled *Wahrer Genuss,* i. e., "True Enjoyment," where he says:

"And shall thee tie no holy bondage,
Oh youth, practice control of thee.
Thus mayest thou preserve thy freedom,
Nor yet without attachment be."

We have reason to believe that Goethe's relations with women were dominated by this maxim, and in more advanced years when his fame had made him more attractive he fortified himself against temptations and all advances made by the fair sex, in the following rhyme:

"Only this time be not caught as yet,
And a hundred times you escape the net."

* * *

Goethe's first love was of a very harmless character. It was in the year 1764 when he was a mere boy of fifteen, and his adored one, Gretchen, was a few years his senior, probably seventeen or eighteen years old,—a good-natured girl whom the vicissitudes of life had rendered both modest and pensive, so as to impress the bold stripling with the dignity of a pure soul. For instance once when she had rebuked him for entering into the silly jokes of his friends he was so infatuated with the lovely girl that he wanted to embrace her, but she stood aloof. "Don't kiss me," said she, "that is vulgar; but love me if you can."

Gretchen seems to have been an orphan, presumably the daughter of an inn-keeper at Offenbach, and was brought up in the house of relatives. Her family name is not known. The young Goethe became acquainted at her home with a man whom he recommended to his father for a position, and when the youth's protegé turned out to be a scoundrel, an investigation ensued in which Gretchen spoke of the young Wolfgang as a "boy," which offended him greatly. The following comment in "Truth and Fiction" describes Goethe's sentiments at the disillusionment of his first affection. Having related the result of the investigation as told by his tutor, he continues:

"At last I could contain myself no longer, and asked what had become of Gretchen, for whom I, once for all, confessed the strongest attachment. My friend shook his head and smiled. 'Set your mind at rest,' replied he, 'that girl has passed her examination very well, and has borne honorable testimony to that effect. They could discover nothing in her but what was good and amiable. She even won the favor of those who questioned her, and who could not refuse to grant her desire to remove from the city. Even what she has confessed regarding you, my friend, does her honor. I have read her deposition in the secret reports myself, and have seen her signature.'—'That signature!' exclaimed I, 'which makes me so happy and so miserable. What has she confessed, then? What has she signed?' My friend hesitated to reply, but the cheerfulness of his face showed me that he concealed nothing dangerous. 'If you must know, then,' replied he at last, 'when she was asked about you, and her intercourse with you, she said quite frankly, "I cannot deny that I have seen him often and with pleasure; but I have always treated him as a child, and my affection for him was truly that of a sister. In many cases I have given him good advice and, instead of instigating him to any equivocal action, I have hindered him from taking part in wanton tricks, which might have brought him into trouble."'

"My friend still went on making Gretchen speak like a governess; but for some time I had ceased to listen to him. I was terribly affronted that she had set me down in the reports as a child, and I at once believed myself cured of all passion for her. I even hastily assured my friend that all was now over. I also spoke no more of her, named her no more; but I could not leave off the bad habit of thinking about her, and of recalling her face, her air, her demeanor, though now, to be sure, all appeared to me in quite another light. I felt it intolerable that a girl, at the most only a couple of years older than I, should regard me as a child: while I had imagined that I passed with her for a very sensible and clever youth."

A reminiscence of Gretchen is preserved in Goethe's *Faust* in so far as the heroine bears her name.

* * *

Goethe's relation to his sister might well serve all brothers as a model. We cannot characterize her better than in his own words:

"She was tall, well and delicately formed, and had something naturally dignified in her demeanor, which melted away into pleasing mildness. The lineaments of her face, neither striking nor

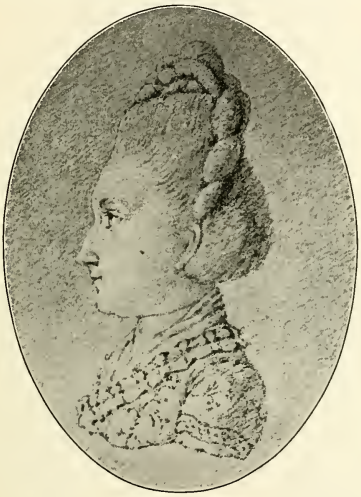
beautiful, indicated a character which was not, nor ever could be, in union with itself. Her eyes were not the finest I have ever seen, but the deepest, behind which you expected the most; and when

GRETCHEN.
By Kaulbach.

they expressed any affection, any love, their brilliancy was unequalled. And yet, properly speaking, this expression was not tender, like that which comes from the heart carrying with it at the

same time something of longing and desire. This expression came from the soul; it was full and rich and seemed as if it would only give without needing to receive.

"But what disfigured her face in a peculiar manner so that she would often appear positively ugly, was the fashion of those times, which not only bared the forehead, but, either accidentally or on purpose, did everything apparently or really to enlarge it. Now, as she had the most feminine, most perfect arched forehead, and, moreover, a pair of strong black eyebrows and prominent eyes, these circumstances occasioned a contrast, which, if it did not repel



THE POET'S SISTER.

Drawn by Goethe, presumably in 1770. From the portfolio *Juvenilia.*

every stranger at the first glance, at least did not attract him. She felt it at an early age; and this feeling became constantly the more painful to her, the farther she advanced into the years when both sexes find an innocent pleasure in being mutually agreeable.

"To nobody can his own form be repugnant. The ugliest, as well as the most beautiful, has a right to enjoy his own presence; and as favor beautifies, and every one regards himself in the looking glass with favor, it may be asserted that every one must see himself with complacency, even if he would struggle against the feeling. Yet my sister had such a decided foundation of good sense, that she

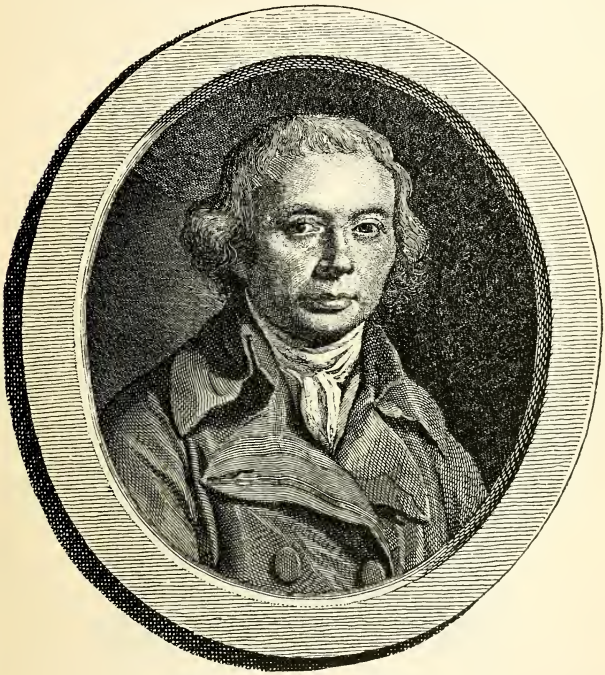
could not possibly be blind or silly in this respect. On the contrary she perhaps knew more clearly than she ought, that she stood far behind her female playfellows in external beauty, without feeling

CORNELIA, GOETHE'S SISTER.

consoled by the fact that she infinitely surpassed them in internal advantages.

"If a woman can find compensation for the want of beauty, she

richly found it in the unbounded confidence, the regard and love, which all her female friends bore to her; whether they were older or younger, all cherished the same sentiments. A very pleasant society had collected around her. Young men were not wanting who knew how to insinuate themselves into it and nearly every girl found



JOHANN GEORG SCHLOSSER.*
Goethe's brother-in-law. After a medallion by Becker.

an admirer; she alone had remained without a partner. While, indeed, her exterior was in some measure repulsive, the mind that gleamed through it was also more repelling than attractive; for the presence of dignity puts a restraint upon others. She felt this sen-

*Born 1739 at Frankfort. He was a lawyer who served as private secretary to the Duke of Württemberg. In 1773 he accepted a position as a state counselor of Baden at Carlsruhe, and after an appointment as Oberamtmann at Emmendingen, he returned to Carlsruhe in 1787 as director of the ducal court and retired in 1794. He died at Frankfort in 1799.

sibly; she made no attempt to conceal it from me, and her love was directed to me with so much greater force. The case was singular enough. As confidants to whom one reveals a love-affair actually by genuine sympathy become lovers also, nay, grow into rivals, and at last, perchance, transfer the passion to themselves, so it was with us two. For, when my connection with Gretchen was torn asunder, my sister consoled me the more earnestly, because she secretly felt the satisfaction of having got rid of a rival; and I,

CHARITAS MEIXNER.
After an oil painting.

too, could not but feel a quiet, half-mischievous pleasure, when she did me the justice to assure me that I was the only one who truly loved, understood, and esteemed her."

In November, 1773, Cornelia was married to Schlosser, and the newly married couple left for Strassburg. Her marriage was not fortunate and she sought refuge in her brother's friendship, but he could offer no help. She died prematurely in Emmendingen in 1777.

One of Cornelia's friends was Charitas Meixner, a young girl born in 1750 at Worms. While Goethe studied in Leipsic he devoted some passing attention to her, as appears from his correspondence with her cousin, a young Mr. Trap. We know too little about her to form an adequate idea of her character and the influence she might have had on the young poet. She afterwards married a merchant of Worms by the name of Schuler, and died at the age of twenty-seven years.

* * *

At Frankfort Cornelia was visited by some friends who played a part in her brother's life. They were Frau Betty Jacobi, the wife of Fritz Jacobi, and Johanna Fahlmer, a younger sister of Fritz

BETTY JACOBI, NÉE VON CLERMONT.

JOHANNA FAHLMER IN OLD AGE.

Jacobi's mother, with her niece, Fritz Jacobi's half-sister Lolo. Fräulein Fahlmer was a daughter of her father's second wife and considerably younger than her nephews. Being Jacobi's aunt she was called "Auntie" (*Tantchen*) even as a young girl, and in Goethe's letters she always figured as Auntie Fahlmer. These three young women contributed not a little to cement a friendship between Goethe and Fritz Jacobi which in spite of profound difference of religious conviction lasted to the end of their lives. The maiden name of Helene Elisabeth Jacobi (called Betty) was Von Clermont. She was born October 5, 1743, and died prematurely on February 9, 1784. She was of Dutch nationality and was married in 1764 to Fritz Jacobi. Her visit to Frankfort falls in the year 1773. Goethe was very fond of her and describes her in "Truth and Fiction" as

genuinely Dutch in her appearance, "without a trace of sentimentality in her feeling, true, cheerful in speech, a splendid Dutch woman, who without any trace of sensuality reminds one of the plump type of Rubens's women."

Auntie Fahlmer was born June 16, 1744, at Düsseldorf and died October 31, 1821, in her native city. She visited Frankfort during the summer of 1772 and the spring of 1774. She was a friend of both Wolfgang and Cornelia Goethe and became more

KITTY SCHÖNKOPF.

and more attached to the latter after her marriage and during the years 1773-1777 she carried on a lively correspondence with Goethe. Somewhat more than a year after Cornelia's death, June 8, 1777, she became the wife of the widower Johann Georg Schlosser. The only procurable picture of her is a portrait made at an advanced age.

* * *

Kitty Schönkopf, the "Aennchen" of Goethe's autobiography,

was a pretty and attractive girl, but being the daughter of the proprietor of a restaurant where Goethe took his dinners during the summer of 1766, she was not of a distinguished family. Their courtship was much disturbed by jealously and whims which finally led to a rupture. The main cause of the trouble seems to have been the restless character of the young poet who felt that his interest would not be lasting, and who was almost afraid to tie himself to her forever by marriage. Kitty was married in 1770 to Dr. Karl Kanne, later vice-mayor of Leipsic.

This flirtation at Leipsic (in 1766) with "Aennchen" was of a transient nature and did not leave a deep impression on the poet's heart. So we may regard his romance with Friederike Brion of Sesenheim as the first true love affair of his life.

At Strassburg Goethe had taken dancing lessons at the house of a French dancing master, whose two daughters were in love with the young poet, and one day the older one, jealous of her sister, kissed him and solemnly cursed the woman who would be the first to kiss him again. The scene is dramatically told in Goethe's autobiography, and the unhappy victim of this curse was to be Friederike.

* * *

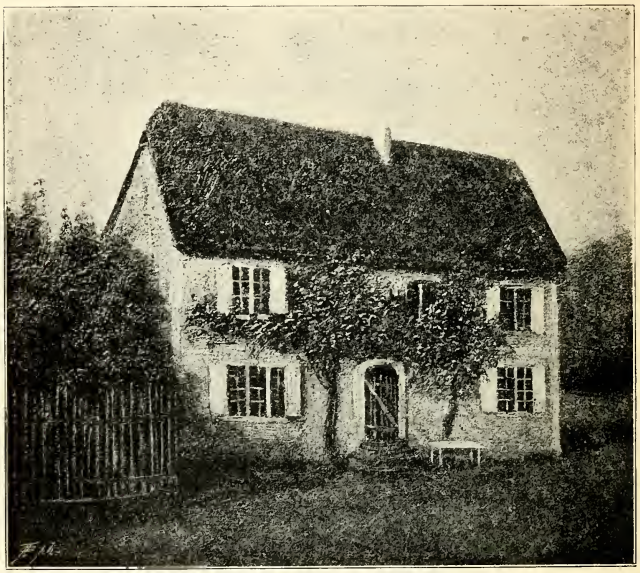
A student by the name of Wieland introduced Goethe to the Brion family. The father, a Huguenot of French extraction, was a Protestant clergyman at Sesenheim, a village about twenty miles from Strassburg. He had six children; one of his daughters was married while the two youngest lived at home. The name of the elder of these two was Maria Salome, and Friederike, the youngest daughter of the Brion family (born April 19, 1752), was just nineteen years of age, with blue questioning eyes and a most alluring smile, not exactly beautiful but very pretty, and unusually responsive. No wonder that the young poet's heart was at once aflame. The time was spent in lively conversation on Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* and other literary topics, in moonlight promenades, dances and rural frolics, until Goethe was so thrilled with youth and love that forgetful of the French damsel's curse he yielded to the temptation and pressed a kiss upon her yielding lips.

Can we doubt that the lines of his poem "To the Moon" have reference to Friederike's love when he says:

"Once that prize did I possess
Which I yearn for yet,
And alas! to my distress,
Never can forget."—Tr. by P. C.

[Ich besass es doch einmal,
Was so köstlich ist!
Dass man doch zu seiner Qual
Nimmer es vergisst!]

No wonder that Goethe never forgot this idyllic courtship and that the remembrance of it seemed to gain in power with his advancing age. George Henry Lewes, on his visit to Weimar met some persons then living who had known the great poet personally. He says with reference to Friederike: "The secretary to whom this episode was dictated, told me how much affected Goethe seemed to be as these scenes revisited his memory. Walking up and down the



FRIEDERIKE'S HOME, THE PARSONAGE AT SESENHEIM.
After an oil painting formerly in the possession of A. Störber, now in the Freie Deutsche Hochstift at Frankfort on the Main.

room, with his hands behind him, he often stopped his walk, and paused in the dictation; then after a long silence, followed by a deep sigh, he continued the narrative in a lower tone."

It is to be regretted that we have no portrait of Friederike which can be considered as unequivocally authentic. Among the papers of the poet Lenz, however, a pencil drawing has been found which represents a youthful girl in Alsacian costume who may very probably be this much wooed daughter of the Sesenheim parson. There

KAULBACH'S BRION FAMILY.

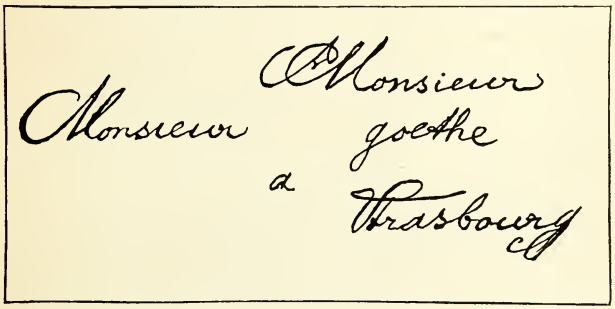
Friederike is reading *The Vicar of Wakefield,* to the characters of which story Goethe compared the inmates of the Sesenheim parsonage.

is a great probability that such is the case but we have no positive evidence. The handwriting of Friederike, however, is still pre-

FALK'S FRIEDERIKE PORTRAIT.
Found among Lenz's papers.

served, and we reproduce here one of the best known specimens of it from an envelope addressed to Goethe.

There are many readers of Goethe's autobiography who become so charmed with the loveliness of Friederike that they cannot forgive the poet for not having married her. Some have gone so far as to attack him most violently and censure him for a breach of faith. They forget that their accusations are based on evidence furnished exclusively by the accused person himself. That Goethe had never a harsh word for her certainly does not speak against him, and we must assume that there were weighty reasons which led to a rupture. In fact he accuses himself, not at all considering himself blameless although he felt that he could not have acted differently. We will quote the most important passage on the subject from his autobiography. When he wrote her that he would have to leave she answered in a most touching way. Goethe says:



FRIEDERIKE'S AUTOGRAPH.

"Friederike's answer to my farewell letter rent my heart. It was the same hand, the same tone of thought, the same feeling which was formed for me and by me. I now for the first time felt the loss which she suffered, and saw no means to supply it or even alleviate it. I was always conscious that I missed her; and, what was worst of all, I could not forgive myself for my own misfortune. Gretchen had been taken away from me; Annette had left me; now, for the first time, I was the guilty one. I had wounded her lovely heart to its very depths; and the period of a gloomy repentance, with the absence of the refreshing love to which I had grown accustomed, was most agonizing, nay, intolerable."

Further on Goethe continues:

"At the time when I was pained by my grief at Friederike's situation, I again sought aid from poetry after my old fashion.

I again continued my wonted poetical confession in order that by this self-tormenting penance I might be worthy absolution in my own eyes. The two Marias in 'Götz von Berlichingen' and 'Clavigo,' and the two bad characters who act the parts of their lovers, may have been the results of such penitent reflections."

When Goethe speaks of first love as the only true love he apparently has reference to his love for Friederike, not to his prior and more boyish flirtations with Gretchen and Annette Schönkopf; and this explains why he cherished this episode of his life with such tenderness. Goethe says:

"The first love, it is rightly said, is the only one; for in the second, and by the second, the highest sense of love is already lost. The conception of the eternal and infinite which elevates and supports it is destroyed; and it appears transient like everything else that recurs."

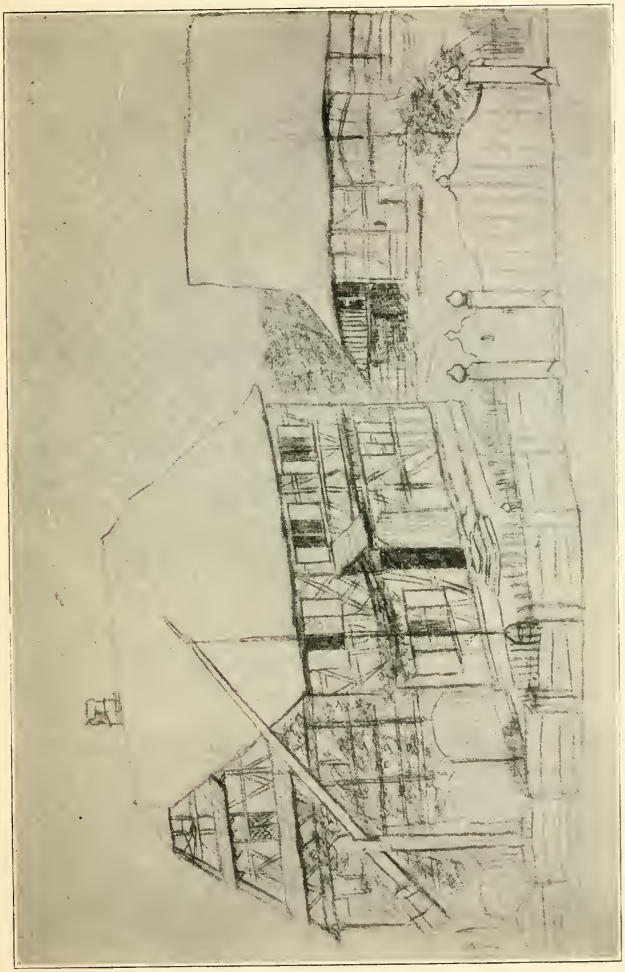
The correspondence between Goethe and Friederike has been destroyed, which fact proves that both parties shunned publicity. However, Goethe remembered Friederike's love, and set up for her an everlasting monument in the story of his Sesenheim romance, while ever afterward he carefully endeavored to crowd out from his mind all memories that would disfigure these recollections so dear to him. In Goethe's autobiography Friederike appears of such natural and lovely charm that her personality remained one of the favorite women characters of German literature. She died April 3, 1813, at the house of her sister, Frau Pfarrer Marx at Meissenheim, and on her tombstone two simple lines are inscribed:

"Ein Strahl der Dichtersonne fiel auf sie,
So hell dass er Unsterblichkeit ihr lieh."

[Upon her fell a ray of poesy,
So bright that she gained immortality.]

Goethe's description of Friederike has made Sesenheim a place of pilgrimage to lovers of German literature, and the first distinguished visitor of the old Brion parsonage was the poet Ludwig Tieck in the summer of 1822, but he expressed his disappointment by saying that in a certain sense he "repented having visited Sesenheim." He adds, "'repented' is not the word, but an unpoetic sadness fills me to find that everything there is so different from the picture my imagination formed according to the incomparable description of our poet."

In the autumn of the same year (1822) Professor Naeke, of Bonn, visited Sesenheim and was greatly disillusioned at the report



THE PARSONAGE AT SESENHEIM.

After a drawing by Goethe. In the original, the words "Brion Pfarrer" can still be read on the left gate post.

of Pastor Schweppenhäuser, the successor of Friederike's father in that rural parsonage. The real Friederike was somewhat different from the poetical figure of Goethe's autobiography. Naeke wrote down his impressions under the title of "A Pilgrimage to Sesenheim," and having stated the result of his investigations concludes his report with an expression of satisfaction that she had no reason to reproach Goethe for her misfortunes. Naeke's "Pilgrimage to Sesenheim" remained unprinted until 1840, when it was published by Varnhagen von Ense, but a copy of the manuscript had been sent to Goethe at the time, and he made the following comment which appears to be all he ever cared to say on the subject:[2]

SESENHEIM.

"In order to give brief expression to my thoughts about the news from Sesenheim I shall make use of a symbol of general physics derived more particularly, however, from entoptics; I shall speak here of repeated reflections of light.

"1. A youthful blessed delusion (*Wahnleben*) unconsciously reflects itself forcibly in the young man.

"2. The image long cherished, and probably revived, surges ever to and fro, gracious and lovely, before his inner vision for many years.

"3. Tenderly received in early years and long retained, finally in vivid remembrance it is given external expression and is once more reflected.

[2] This short article is inscribed *Wiederholte Spiegelungen* (i. e., "repeated or continued mirrorings"), and is registered under that title in the index of any edition of Goethe's complete works. It was published first in his posthumous works 1833, Vol. IX, and is contained in his complete works as No. 117 in the volume entitled *Aufsätze zur Literatur.*

"4. This image radiates in all directions into the world, and a fine, noble heart may be charmed by this appearance as if it were the reality, and receives from it a deep impression.

"5. From this is developed an inclination to actualize all that may still be conjured up out of the past.

"6. The longing grows, and that it may be gratified it becomes indispensably necessary to return once more to the spot in order to make his own the vicinity at least.

"7. Here by happy chance is found on the commemorated spot a sympathetic and well-informed man upon whom the image has likewise been impressed.

"8. Now in the locality which had been in some respects desolated, it becomes possible to restore a true image, to construct a second presence from the wrecks of truth and tradition, and to love Friederike in her entire lovableness of yore.

"9. Thus in spite of all earthly intervention she can again be once more reflected in the soul of her old lover, and charmingly revive in him a pure, noble and living presence.

"When we consider that repeated moral mirrorings not only vividly revive the past but even ascend to a higher life, then we think of the entoptic phenomena which likewise do not fade from mirror to mirror but are kindled all the more. Thus we shall obtain a symbol of what has often been repeated in the history of the arts and sciences, of the church and even of the political world, and is still repeated every day.

"January 31, 1823."

We can now understand the lines in Goethe's ode "To the Moon," when the poet sighs:

"Flow along, dear river, flow;	[Fliesse, fliesse, lieber Fluss;
Joy for aye is sped.	Nimmer werd ich froh.
Glee and kisses even so,	So verrauschte Scherz und Kuss,
Yea, and troth have fled."	Und die Treue so.]

Historical investigations have led to a bitter discussion, the extremes of which are represented on the one side by I. Froitzheim,[3] on the other by Düntzer, Erich Schmidt, Bielowski, etc. Although an idealist would be naturally inclined to take Düntzer's view of the case, we can not ignore Goethe's own statements which, though very guardedly, concede the reliability of Naeke's information. We

[3] In protest against the exaggerated glorification of Friederike by certain hero-worshipers, Dr. I. Froitzheim followed up the scent of Professor Naeke and published the result of his investigations under the title, *Friederike von Sesenheim nach geschichtlichen Quellen* (Gotha, F. A. Perthes, 1893).

GOETHE PARTING FROM FRIEDERIKE.
By Eugen Klimsch.

know further that Friederike was engaged for some time to Jacob Michael Reinhold Lenz, one of the minor German poets and a personal friend of Goethe, but that he too found cause to break off the engagement.

It is impossible to deny the pertinence of these and other facts, but on the other hand we need not (as does Froitzheim) begrudge to Friederike the honor of the inscription of her tombstone. Friederike was human, perhaps too human, but her foible was the same as Goethe's. The suffering she endured for her fault was sufficient atonement. We must remember that even the severest critics of her character grant that she was full of grace and loveliness, not a striking beauty but of rare charm, capable of intense devotion, charitable, self-sacrificing and thirsting for love. Even when her youth was gone she could fascinate men of talent and set their hearts aflame with passion. There is no need to require her to be a saint, and we might as well repeat of her the words of Christ, "Her sins which are many are forgiven, for she loved much."

[TO BE CONCLUDED.]

THE PERIL OF THE CHRISTMAS LEGEND.

BY GEORGE HOLLEY GILBERT.

A HISTORICAL character has a right to be historically understood. No one, not even his most intimate friend, can be held blameless who hides one iota of fact with a veil of romance. This is especially true in the case of those historical characters who founded the great religions of mankind. What concerns us so intimately and comprehensively as our religious faith ought, for the sake of our manhood, to have a basis not of fancy but of fact.

Among the great prophets of earth no one is better entitled to an absolutely impartial historical portrayal than is Jesus. He concealed nothing, he misinterpreted nothing, and he laid down his life to seal the truth of his words. He taught with unparalleled power the duty of reality, of sincerity, of truthfulness before God and man. Nothing stirred his indignation so deeply as sham and quackery in religion. It is peculiarly fitting, therefore, that the followers of Jesus should tell the truth about him, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. Not only is this demanded by proper respect for the character of Jesus, it is also urgently demanded by regard for the true welfare of his millions of followers. Whatever doctrine or rite obscures the historical truth about him is in so far unworthy to be called Christian.

Now the Christmas legend is such a doctrine. It obscures the truth. Children who hear this legend read as history grow up with a fundamentally wrong conception of Jesus. We say "fundamentally" wrong, not *totally* wrong, without any truth whatsoever. That Jesus was of humble parentage and sprang from the Galilean village of Nazareth there is no reason to doubt; but these elements are quite inconspicuous in the story of his origin. What stands in the foreground is a series of supernatural events which absorb the reader's attention and determine his conception of Jesus. Of this series the first event, which makes all the subsequent ones easy of

belief, is that Jesus had no human father, but, like many of the Greek and Roman heroes, was sprung from an earthly mother who had conceived in a supernatural manner. He was begotten of God.

It is not the purpose of the present article to give the grounds on which one is constrained to regard this as a legend, but only to set forth the serious peril that is wrapped up in it.

The Christian religion differs notably from other great religions in this respect that the teaching of Jesus is perfectly illustrated by his own character and life. To speak in a paradox, he was himself the first Christian. It was his aim to show men the way to the Father, to show by word and example what it is to be and to live as a child of God. He did not give himself to his followers as an object of worship, but as a prophet of the true worship of God. It was only as men lost sight of the teaching of the Master in word and in life that they began to regard him as an object of worship by the side of God. In the light of the oldest sources, in the light of all the well-attested words of Jesus, we cannot doubt that this rendering to him of divine worship on the part of his followers would have been regarded by him with unspeakable sorrow and profound abhorrence. As one who himself worshiped God, he could only have regarded this attitude of his followers as idolatrous.

Now the Christmas legend taken as history renders it impossible to regard Jesus as the ideal of Christian manhood. It clearly vitiates his humanity, and thus undermines the significance of his temptation and of all his struggle to be a perfect exponent of the will of God. The Christmas legend makes Jesus a *tertium quid*. He is not a purely human son of his mother nor a purely divine son of his alleged Father. He cannot possibly become the ideal man for he has not sprung out of the common human soil. His achievement of character can never be held up as an unmixed encouragement to struggling human spirits because his antecedents were radically unlike those of all truly human spirits. His belief in the fatherhood of God is not proof that men and women can attain that belief, for men and women, first and last, are sprung from human fathers, but he, according to the legend, was not.

The Christmas legend in making Jesus a *tertium quid* strips him at once and forever of all possible significance as an example. It takes him out of the ranks of struggling humanity, and sets him on a *niveau* remote and strange, where he has as companions no one of his mother's race but only the unreal beings of pagan legend,

as Perseus and Hercules, or historical characters like Alexander and Augustus who have been sublimated into the realm of legend.

Thus by the Christmas legend Jesus is wounded in the house of his friends. His influence with his own people, the Jews, was seriously crippled by his death as a malefactor, but this was of small account as compared with the injury done to his name by representing him as a demi-god. Doubtless this injury was less in ancient times than it is at present, for when men scarcely discriminated between the historical and the legendary it did not matter so much that legends were woven around the historical Jesus, especially as they were inspired by love and a sincere desire to honor his name. It may be that the Christmas legend even furthered the acceptance of the new religion among the Greeks and Romans in the age when it originated; but if so, this acceptance was dearly bought. It has always been easy to find acceptance for a Christianity that is sufficiently adulterated to suit the fancy or gratify the desires and lusts of men. But for the modern world in which there is a growing sense of the sacredness of God's laws and the sacredness of truth, associated with an immeasurable increase of knowledge of his laws both physical and spiritual—for this world, we say, the legendary elements that early found their way into the canonical Gospels are a stumbling-block and a snare. Some men, offended by these legendary accretions, cast the entire Gospel overboard, and commiserate the intellectual immaturity of the church. Others accept the legendary elements as actual history and thus help to perpetuate, in the twentieth century, conceptions of God and man which are Greek rather than Jewish and which are hostile to the essence of the Gospel. A few are learning to discriminate between the legendary and the historical.

But this is not all. The peril contained in the Christmas story is not exhausted when we say that this story conveys a fundamentally wrong conception of Jesus. Intimately associated with this are two other features of the subject which are no less practical in character.

In the first place, the Christmas legend introduces into the Gospel a conception of God which can not now maintain itself. It represents him as arbitrarily breaking in upon his own established order of working. For tens of thousands of years he had been developing the human race from within. He had by slow degrees brought it up to the first rude beginnings of civilization, then onward through many centuries until man had gained the heights of knowledge and power which we see in the ancient Egyptian and Assyrian empires. Above the level of the cave-dwellers there had

arisen a Cheops and a Nebuchadnezzar, a David and a Julius Cæsar. Out of a race in whom was only a vague and dread awe of the unseen forces of nature there had been developed an Abraham who was called the friend of God and a Socrates who stepped fearlessly forth into the unknown, trusting in the gods and his own good conscience. But there is no reason apparent why the method and means of progress which had obtained in the rise from the cave-dweller to Abraham and Socrates were not adequate to the rise from Socrates and Abraham to Jesus of Nazareth. According to the words of Jesus himself he was a prophet of the Most High, and his teaching differs from that of an Isaiah and Jeremiah as the work of a supreme master from that of his pupils.

What occasion therefore was there to depart from that method of progress under which man had risen out of the darkness and mire of the savage into the light and nobility of a Plato and an Epictetus, a Joseph and a Samuel? Had God known of a better way by which humanity could attain such purity and strength as we see in Jesus than the way he had pursued with his children for thousands of years, then he must have adopted that better way. Why the painful struggle of humanity through untold millennia to climb part way up the mount of goodness and divine knowledge if it was the purpose of God to carry the race by a single miraculous bound from the half-way point to the summit?

No, the Christmas legend makes God a God of confusion. He is not the God whose unchanging counsels we see in human history and throughout the well-ordered system of the universe.

But, once more, the Christmas legend not only brings discord into God's harmony, but it is also practically objectionable because it introduces an element of vagueness and unreality into the very fountain of our religion.

From the record of his public ministry it is clear that Jesus was no friend of vagueness in morals and religion. He saw clearly, and wished his disciples to see as he saw. God was neither unreal nor vague to him, and his vision of man's mission in the world was just as clear as his vision of God. The Christian faith and the Christian life when oriented by the faith and life of Jesus are definite and positive. Their dominant note is reality. But in this respect the Christmas legend is not in accord with the historical Jesus. When we go back from the story of his life, which story makes us feel that he is one with us, flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, and when we see him through the shimmering veil of the story of his birth, then he escapes from us into the realm of the

unintelligible and the unreal. We can no longer see into his heart, or believe that he knows by experience how it seems to face temptation and to lift up a prayer to the unseen Father. We can not come near to him: he is vague and unreal. We can not conceive of a being who was born of a mother like ours but whose paternity was not of earth.

But if the Christmas legend thus brings an element of vagueness and unreality into our thought of the founder of Christianity, it is quite obvious that it infects Christianity throughout its length and breadth with poison of unreality and vagueness. What colors the fountain colors the stream. If Jesus himself is unreal, then his life is unreal, and his relation to God is tinged with unreality. But if his own religion is somewhat unreal, shall the religion of his followers, if they are indeed his *followers,* escape the taint of unreality?

It is doubtless a serious matter to bring a sweeping accusation against an important section in two of our oldest Christian documents, but it is not half so serious as to believe an untruth. The question is, shall we deal fairly with Jesus? Shall we judge him in the light of his own words and life, or by the fancies of early disciples?

Books have recently appeared which seek to show that Jesus never lived. Would such books have been written had not the church long read as history certain parts of the Gospel which are now recognized as legendary, and had it not in other ways obscured the historical Jesus? We may freely say that the Jesus of these legendary sections never did exist. We may say that the Jesus as portrayed in the great mass of Christmas poetry from Ephraim of Edessa down to the magazine poems of the present year never lived. We may also say that Jesus as analyzed and presented to faith by the Greek theologians of the early church never existed. But who can seriously question that back of the Sermon on the Mount there was a prophet unapproached in the purity and power of his teaching, that underneath the Christian movement of the first century there was a great personality who profoundly stirred the hearts and minds of men, and that the early Christian consciousness of the nearness and goodness of God and the early Christian eagerness to spend and be spent in the service of mankind resulted from contact with some one to whom the nearness and goodness of God were absolute verities and in whom the spirit of service was a consuming passion?

The historical Jesus can never accomplish his mission in the earth while the church persists in hiding him under the veil of legend. Let his birth be rescued from the realm of fiction and be made as

real as the boat in which he once slept on the Lake of Galilee. Let it be understood in harmony with his life and in harmony with the working of God throughout history and throughout the universe. If we thereby lose a legend of the second or third Christian generation, we shall gain what is more beautiful, the simple truth that Jesus, the supreme prophet and revealer of God, sprang out of the common soil of humanity.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CHRIST-IDEAL.

BY THE EDITOR.

DR. George Holley Gilbert contributes to this number of *The Open Court* an article on "The Peril in the Christmas Legend," which may be regarded as reflecting the spirit of the Arian sect and, in modern days, of the Unitarians who prefer the straight historical truth and insist on the human character of Jesus, believing that mankind does not stand in need of myth. Thus they construct a human Saviour in place of the supernatural Christ, or in other words they prefer to let Christ be an ideal man, whose divinity differs practically not at all from the divine sonship of any human being. The present article, however, is more than a mere repetition of the old Arian controversy. It is a straw in the wind which indicates that religious thought has entered into a new phase, and this is especially true if we consider the prominence of the author in theological circles.

The importance of Dr. Gilbert's position is set in a clearer light by the article of Mr. Amos Kidder Fiske on "The Mythical Element in Christianity." Though these writers differ in details they agree on the main point in attributing the origin of Christianity to a personal Jesus.

Dr. Gilbert can not be called one of the higher critics; nor is he famous as an original investigator among New Testament scholars, but he probably represents the congregational life better than most other theologians. He echoes the belief of the pews more than that of the pulpit, not of the pews indifferent to theological questions but of the thoughtful man who watches the controversies concerning biblical problems with intense interest, and honestly aspires to form an independent opinion as to the truth. Thus it appears that he is perhaps more representative of modern Christianity than either extreme, the independent church-goer who allows himself to be called a Christian from sheer habit and tradition, and the learned theologian, such as Wellhausen or Harnack. In him pulsates

the religious life of Christianity, and he is a true combination of both common sense and faith in the essential truths of the Christian doctrines as they are still held among educated men as instanced by Mr. Fiske.

Dr. Gilbert wants to know the historical truth about Jesus, and he has come to the conclusion that Jesus is historical and that the gist of his doctrine is found in the Gospels. He believes "that Jesus was of humble parentage and sprang from the Galilean village of Nazareth," but this remains rather indifferent. Of greater, indeed of paramount importance, is it that Jesus was the "first Christian." He regrets that the historical Jesus has been obscured by legendary accretions in which the supernatural plays a conspicuous part. Of this Jesus of the legends, of which the Christmas story is perhaps the most typical instance, Dr. Gilbert goes so far as to say that he, this mythical personage of miraculous events, "never lived." He further adds: "We may also say that Jesus as analyzed and presented to faith by the Greek theologians of the early church never existed, but," adds Dr. Gilbert, "who can seriously question that back of the Sermon on the Mount there was a prophet unapproached in the purity and power of his teaching, that underneath the Christian movement of the first century there was a great personality who profoundly stirred the hearts and minds of men, and that the early Christian consciousness of the nearness and goodness of God and the early Christian eagerness to spend and to be spent in the service of mankind resulted from contact with some one to whom the nearness and goodness of God were absolute verities and in whom the spirit of service was a consuming passion?"

Here Dr. Gilbert has proposed the vital argument of the liberal Christian view of the present day. This same thought is uppermost in the minds of all those who are opposed to supernaturalism and insist that the divinity of Christ is merely his ideal humanity. This class of religious thinkers has always been in the minority. The large masses revel in supernaturalism and gladly accept a literal belief in myth or what stands for myth, mysticism and the poetical representation of the religious movements that determine man's life. The student of history, the scientific theologian and the philosopher study the facts of the religious development of mankind; they analyze the myth and trace its development from former myths. With regard to Christian legend they have come to the conclusion that the Christ-ideal has been inherited from pagan prototypes, that it existed before Jesus. When Jesus, the Nazarene, became recognized in a narrow circle of the Nazarene sect as the Messiah, the idea that he

was the Christ took hold of Paul. Paul, like other teachers of his time, as for instance Apollos, possessed the ideal of a Christ whom he with other Jews identified with the Jewish Messiah. The ideal existed first and it gained concreteness by being attributed to Jesus.[1]

Paul's conversion means that he identified Jesus the Nazarene with this traditional ideal of Christ, the Lord, and his preaching found a ready aceptance because mankind at that time was prepared for it. Paul only put in the keystone by rendering the vague Christ-ideal definite and allowing it to concentrate around a human personality. He made the Christ-ideal historical, or at least he gave it such a shape that the people to whom he preached could form a clear idea of the Christ as a human being who had actually lived, had died, and had risen from the dead, in a similar way as so many pagan saviours, Osiris, Baal, Marduk, Dionysus, Heracles and Zeus himself, have done according to pagan mythology in pre-Christian times.

Paul's contemporary, the preacher Apollos, knew all about the Lord, viz., the Christ, but, says Paul, he did not yet know that the Lord was Jesus of Nazareth.

The formation of the legendary Christ was the result of the natural tendency of mankind to construct an ideal. Whatever may have been true of the life of Jesus became indifferent, the features of the Christ-ideal were superadded to the traditional story of the Carpenter's Son, and it seems to be impossible now to analyze the two elements and show what belongs to the original fact and what is legendary.

It appears that the supernatural features added to the simple story of the life of Jesus became naturally the most important portion of the Gospels. They were insisted upon with greater vigor than the historical facts, and here we may say that the historicity of these features of which Dr. Gilbert speaks is more subject to doubt than of others.

There have been critics (among whom I will mention first of all Prof. William Benjamin Smith, of Tulane University, and his German follower, Prof. Arthur Drews) who deny the historical Jesus altogether and bring forth weighty arguments in favor of the mythical character of the Gospels without leaving any historical residuum.[2] In my opinion Christianity would not suffer if this were true, because the main element of Christianity is the very feature which makes Dr. Gilbert believe that there was such a powerful

[1] Acts xvii. 24 ff.

[2] See W. B. Smith, *Der vorchristliche Jesus,* and A. Drews, *The Christ Myth.*

personality as Jesus. But these very doctrines incorporated in the Sermon on the Mount and other noble sayings, have been derived from a source which Wellhausen called "Q," the initial of the German word *Quelle,* and this mysterious source "Q" does not appear to have contained any reference to the life of Jesus, to his personality or to the very characteristic surroundings and facts of his or any saviour's individual existence. It seems to have been a collection of religious contemplations, and from it the Gospel writers have derived the grand world-conception of a noble ethics. This very feature in combination with the spirit of the Fourth Gospel has assured the final victory of Christianity over its rival religions, such as Mithraism and the reformed paganism of Julian, surnamed the Apostate, or any other faith, such as the religion of Mani which grew up almost simultaneously with the Christian era. We have no evidence whatever that the Sermon on the Mount and other sayings of Jesus derived from the source "Q" should really be attributed to Jesus, and if he really used them the greater probability would be that he adopted them and made these religious sentiments his own.

We know now that the Gospels and other books of the New Testament contain many portions which are, perhaps literally, traditions that have come down to us from the first century, and we believe that exactly those passages which contradict the Christian spirit of later centuries are most assuredly genuine. It is very probable that the extreme Judaism of Jesus is historical, for pagan Christianity would not have invented that. But the typically Christian passages, the nobility of Christian ethics, as for instance the Sermon on the Mount, have been added to the New Testament by the Christian church as the need arose among its members not to be inferior in ethical ideas to rival religions. Think of it, that the grand words of Christ at the cross, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do," do not appear in the New Testament before the ninth century; and we cannot doubt that they were inserted by some thoughtful scribe who did not want to let Christ be surpassed in nobility by Socrates who died without any animosity against his enemies.

Incidentally I ought to add here that these superadditions and later insertions should not be denounced as corruptions of the text. Even the mythical features have been superadded in good faith and with the best intentions. It is noticeable that even to-day theological scholars use the argument that the personality of Jesus must have been such or such, because (they argue) that corresponds best with

the noble sane mind of the carpenter's son of Galilee. Arguments of this kind are common among fairly good theological scholars. Neither is this uncritical method of constructing history according to the ideals we have in our own heart foreign to the biographers of the great heroes of history. Man naturally argues from the ideas he has of the subject in which he is interested. This being true in the secular field, we need not be surprised that it is true even to a greater extent in the field of religion.

And now in conclusion we wish to emphasize that Jesus as the Saviour and the Christ was not merely an historical personality, he was a superpersonality; and superpersonalities are formed naturally in the course of historical developments and become potent factors in determining the character of all the generations in whom they become a living presence. We shall never philosophically and scientifically understand the significance, the potency and also the concrete and definite actuality of Christ until we have understood the nature of superpersonalities.[3]

The story of Heracles was certainly a myth, but the Heracles ideal was a potent factor in Greece which accomplished much in shaping the convictions and aspirations of Grecian youths, and in the same sense Christ is an actuality in the Christian church; he is a superpersonal presence in the minds of his followers, more important than any historical person, Jesus, or Paul or any apostle and all the saints.

The Heracles ideal exercised a great moral influence upon ancient Greece and has produced many inspiring and noble sentiments among which the best known is that much quoted verse,

τῆς δ' ἀρετῆς ἱδρῶτα θεοὶ προπάροιθεν ἔθηκαν
ἀθάνατοι μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτήν.

"Truly 'tis sweat the Olympian gods have placed before virtue;
Long is the path that leads to its height and full of exertion."

There is no need of assuming that there must be the personality of a great teacher or a real Heracles behind such sentiments. Like many other wise saws it is the product of the collective wisdom of the ages. It is not the visions of the believers in Christ which have produced the belief in the resurrection of Jesus, as Mr. Fiske believes, but *vice versa* the belief in the resurrection of the Lord has given rise to the Easter story. The world-conception of a worldwide religion was worked out with the beginning of the

[3] This subject has been treated in the writer's little book entitled *Personality*. See especially the chapter on "Superpersonality."

Christian era when all the nations from the Pillars of Hercules to the frontiers of the Persian realm were united into one great empire, and this new cosmopolitan faith with its pretty definite saviour-ideal clustered round the figure of Jesus. This resulted in Christianity which was consummated through the missionary labors of St. Paul. If instead of Christianity some other religion, whether Mithraism, an idealized paganism or any other faith, had gained the upper hand, its doctrines would read very much like the Christian creeds.

The influence of Christianity and the significance of the personality of Jesus is much obscured by the wrong attitude which is commonly taken by theologians of many different creeds, mainly by the old orthodox but it is also greatly misunderstood by the liberals, especially by the Unitarians, by the radicals and the infidels. The orthodox generally cling with a nervous anxiety to a belief in the personality of Jesus because they fear that if certain parts of the gospel story or even the entire fabric could be proved to be an historical fiction, the foundation of their faith and their ideals would be gone. On the other hand radicals and unbelievers also think that the cause of Christianity will be lost as soon as the New Testament stories can be proved to be unhistorical or even if they are merely dubitable or incredible. A philosophical analysis of the nature of superpersonality promises the possibility of a compromise between the most radical unbelief and the traditional orthodoxy. It is true that the similarity of Christianity to non-Christian religions will have to be accepted, but this does not mean that Christianity ought to be considered as low as the pagan religions; on the contrary it would raise the various pagan views more or less to the dignity of the Christian conception.

As to the personality of Jesus, the question for Christian faith is not whether there lived in Palestine 1900 years ago a Jew by that name who actually did what the Gospels report of Jesus, but whether or not the superpersonality of Jesus Christ, such as has risen in the minds of the Mediterranean people and has been transferred to Northern Europe, is or is not a good and true exposition of the eternal ideals of mankind; and further whether or not this superpersonality is the right guide in life. From this point of view new vistas open to Christianity, and the Christian churches may build higher upon the old traditions, on the ground of this greater liberty. Without destroying their historic past they may grow beyond the narrowness of medieval Christianity and even of the more progressive Christianity of the Reformation.

THE MYTHICAL ELEMENT IN CHRISTIANITY.

BY AMOS KIDDER FISKE.

THE ancient world was a world of myth and miracle. We have been wont to speak of "hoar antiquity" as if the age of the world, instead of its infancy, were in the distant past and wisdom had been with those of "old time." In the ancient days men thought and imagined, dreamed dreams and saw visions; but they knew little of the universe, and reason had to work with a small store of real fact and actual truth. The infancy of the race was long, its youth of slow growth, its maturity gradual, and only now is it ripening in knowledge and thought, with its old age still in the distant future.

To the ancients at the dawn of history, and for thousands of years, the earth was a flat expanse of unknown bounds, with the universe above and about it. It was believed to be encircled by water, with a dark underworld beneath, but how sustained from unimaginable depths it was beyond the mind of man to conceive, except that some living power, some mighty and tireless deity, or some monster must hold it in place. Above it was spread the arched firmament of stars in which the sun, moon and planets moved in their various courses. Above and beyond that might be realms which the imagination could people with supernal beings and endow with a life free from the vicissitudes of earth.

Of the origin of the world and its inhabitants there was no knowledge and could be no science. Of the powers and operations of nature there was no understanding. The searchings of the imagination were the only resource for the explanation of things, and the appeal to it stimulated its activity. What it had sought out was accepted and believed as truth. That the result was wonderful and marvelous, or in the light of modern knowledge full of childish fancies, did not make it incredible then. From the lips of sages

of the time or mystic dreamers it was taken as divine truth, not to be disputed without sacrilege.

At the beginning of man's "strange eventful history," amid the first gleams of civilization in the valleys of the Nile and the Euphrates, men began to think out the source and origin of what they saw and felt, and to create unseen divinities, sometimes making them visible in dreams or trances or to gifted seers. By these divinities all things could be explained, and their activity need not submit to human limitations or accord with the experiences of men. So a world of myth and miracle was created by the mind of man, to grow and change with the generations, to vary among the nations and become the heritage of the race until science could be born, knowledge should take the place of superstition, and the old order be dispelled.

A great revolution in the thoughts of mankind was wrought by the peculiar genius of the people who gave themselves the name of Israel, and who derived their origin from the land of the Chaldees in the East and found their discipline in servitude in Egypt and in the struggle to possess a land for themselves, in which they triumphed over resistance and fought their way to power in the midst of enemies. They acquired much of the learning of Egypt and of the lore of Babylon, and were far from being isolated from such knowledge of nature and of man as was then extant. Their keen intellect rejected most of the heritage of myth, already two or three thousand years old, but from it they culled material for an advanced mythology of their own. Theirs was simplified, clarified and rationalized in comparison with that of older times and other races. But their explanation of the origin of the earth and the heavens, of man and of the races of men, was as truly mythical as that of the "heathen" whom they scorned, and the deity of their conception was a creature of imagination, which grew and developed with their experience as a struggling congeries of tribes and clans, as a united nation and a divided kingdom, and as victims of ruthless conquest and vassals of an alien power.

There was an intellectual force, an ethical sense and a religious spirit in Israel which raised it high above the nations of the earlier times; but its "Yahveh" was a mythical deity, clothed with the highest attributes of which its wisest men could conceive. They believed in him and in the laws, the threats and promises which their imagination attributed to him, and they deemed all their history to be his work, in spite of its doleful results in a material sense. From Judaism Christianity inherited a strain of myth, but more

from other sources. Judaism itself had been modified by Persian influence. From that source came the idea of a dual power in the universe, a power of good and a power of evil, contending over the destiny of man, whose soul was apart from the physical life and immortal. Thence came the conception of angels dwelling in the heavens and demons peopling the air. Later the Hellenic influence invaded the minds of the heirs of Israel and the people who were mingled with them, and while they rejected the polytheism of Greece, they did not escape some of its implications. They were affected by its philosophy and allured by the airs of Elysium and the gloom of Hades. The life of man was no longer confined to the earth, and final retribution was not of this world.

It was an essential part of the later mythology of Israel that its God was yet to make his people triumph and rule the earth by subjugating to them all other nations, destroying such as would not submit to his will and establishing an everlasting kingdom with a restoration of the revered house of David under the guidance of the almighty ruler of the heavens himself. Much mysticism was mingled with the hope of the coming of this Messiah, or anointed one, and there were those who thought of the destruction of this earth and its inhabitants and the transfer of the sifted and purified remnant of the chosen people to the realm above the starry firmament. Men looked for a sweeping away of all the wicked and a new Jerusalem that should be the center of a glorified kingdom of Zion.

Palestine had fallen under the Roman power and was pervaded with the atmosphere of myth, mingled from various sources, when the spirit of another revolution in men's thoughts was evoked by the humble teacher of Nazareth, to whom the founding of Christianity is commonly ascribed. He founded no institution, prescribed no system of belief, established no form of worship or manner of observance. He taught a simple doctrine of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, a simple ethics of purity and righteousness of conduct, a simple religion of love of God and man and faith in the love of God for man, as the inspiration to right living. He sowed the seed of what he called the rule of God, or the "kingdom of heaven," trusting that it would germinate and grow and spread for the regenerating of humanity; but of the actual course of its development he had no conception. His teaching ran so counter to that of the prevailing religion of his day and of his own people that it excited the wrath, the hatred and the fear of its priests, and they thought to suppress it by compassing his death as a heretic and a dangerous innovator.

That was not exceptional in human history. What was exceptional was the life and character of the man and the vitality of his teaching; but that alone did not account for what followed. Neither was the effect upon men's minds of the cruel and ignominious sacrifice of such a teacher enough to explain it. What led to the long train of consequences was not his life, his teaching or his death, but the belief which almost immediately arose that he did not remain dead, that he came to life, left his sepulcher, appeared to his disciples and departed to a realm of bliss above the sky, whence he would return to save his faithful followers from an impending destruction of the wicked world. Here was where the myth-making spirit naturally and inevitably began its work in founding and developing Christianity as a religious system, and it has never lost its hold.

How the belief in the resurrection, or reanimation, of the body of Jesus first sprang up, the evidence is too confused and conflicting to enable us to know; but it was probably from visions of his appearance to one or another of his disciples, or a company of them in their overwrought state of mind and emotion in the days immediately following his death. Our earliest witness is Paul, who never saw him in his life or in his death, who knew little of his teaching, and was an ardent persecutor of his first followers, seeking to extinguish the rising faith that menaced the established religion. Paul, according to his own testimony, was given to visions and revelations of the spirit, as many with his ardent temperament and morbid nervous system had been before, have been since and still are; and in the excitement of his journey of persecution to Damascus, "breathing threatenings and slaughter," he believed that Jesus appeared to him in a blinding light and spoke to him in a voice of stern rebuke. This was not an experience different in kind from what has many times occurred, however we may interpret it.

We have no first-hand account of this incident from Paul himself. He merely referred, in arguing for belief in the resurrection of the dead in one of his letters, to the appearance of Jesus after his burial to Cephas, to the twelve, to above five hundred brethren at once, to James, to all the apostles, and "last of all as to one born out of due time," to himself. In what form or manner he does not say, and it was many years after his own death that the compiler of material relating to the "acts of the apostles" undertook to describe the incident with miraculous accompaniments. The same writer represents Paul on two different occasions as telling of it

in a slightly different version. Whatever the value of this evidence may be, there is nothing to indicate that the apostle to the Gentiles regarded these appearances as anything but visions. He is made to speak of that to himself as a "heavenly vision." But such visions were to him genuine revelations, like that of the man in a dream calling him to "Come over into Macedonia and help us."

This belief in the resurrection having come to prevail and having been made the basis of Paul's doctrine of salvation from the coming destruction, the gospel writers after his time felt bound to give some account of the way in which it happened. These accounts are so inconsistent with each other, so literal and materialistic in their conception of a dead body restored to life, and so contrary to all reasonable probability, not to say physical possibility, that they are obviously products of the imagination in the effort to explain something devoutly believed as a fact, but unknown in its circumstances.

But the important thing for our purpose is not the accounts of a physical rising of the dead body or the visionary appearance of a departed personality, one of which is incredible and the other a common but subjective phenomenon; but the belief in the resurrection which prevailed when Christian doctrine was forming and when the dogmas of the early church were shaped as the basis of a tenacious system of religious faith. That belief wrought in a soil prolific of myth and in an atmosphere congenial to confidence in the miraculous, and it not only inspired the preaching and sustained the toil and suffering of Paul, but it had a controlling influence upon the writing of the gospels, which came after his time.

So imperfect is the record and so inconsistent are the several accounts that we can have no accurate knowledge of what Jesus did or said; but we get a general impression of his life and character and of the essentials of his teaching that bears the sanction of truth in itself. There is a picture that passes invention and prevails over perversion. It has a distinctness and a light of its own which the cloud of subsequent interpretation and gloss cannot obscure when we fix our vision steadfastly upon the original portraiture. There is no reason to doubt that, as the gentle and inspiring teacher of Nazareth went about in Galilee with his little company of humble disciples, ministering to the sick, comforting the afflicted, appealing to the sinful, preaching love to God and man and proclaiming a coming kingdom when righteousness and purity would reign, wonderful cures and conversions took place, which were multiplied and magnified by the many tongues of rumor and distorted in tradition.

He probably accepted the common belief of the time that maladies affecting the nerves and the mind were due to possession by demons, which could be "cast out." It is certain that those who afterward set down the reports of his cures had that belief. There was, no doubt, much faith healing, much change of mental attitude with marvelous physical effect, and much exaltation of spirit among the simple people in the course of his ministrations, which gave rise to more stories of miracles than were preserved. He may himself have believed in a divine power working through him, for it was a common belief with prophets and preachers; but we may be sure that it was no more supernatural in his case than in others, and stories which told of the suspension of natural laws and the doing of the physically impossible were inventions or perversions, as they have been in many other instances, ancient and modern. There is evidence in the simple accounts of what are called the "Synoptic Gospels" that he deprecated the bruiting abroad of these wonders, which appealed to superstition and not to reason, and denounced those who sought for miraculous "signs" as evidence of his right to speak with authority.

Did he ever believe himself to be, in any sense, the promised Messiah, or Christ, or make any of the pretensions imputed to him at the later time when doctrines were propagated which made myth of his birth and his death and built a structure of faith upon belief in the resurrection and ascent into the heavens of his body, reanimated by the spirit that left it on the cross? When the belief that he had risen was spread abroad and had taken hold upon the ardent souls of certain of his disciples who regarded the new gospel as for the Jews alone, there was an eager searching of the scriptures to account for the dreadful fate that had befallen one upon whom they had looked as a greater than John the Baptist or any of the prophets of Israel in the days of its triumphs and its calamities. It was then, and not till then, that evidence was found which was sufficient to convince an uncritical generation that his life and his suffering and death had been prefigured in all the scriptures, that he was in truth that promised "Son of man" who was to rescue his people, establish an everlasting kingdom and reign in peace over the saints.

When this conception of the Messiah seized upon the active brain of Paul, after the dazzling vision and the celestial voice on the road to Damascus, if these were, as related, the cause of his sudden conversion, it became the germ of a new theology in which the "son of man" was to become the "son of God" in a peculiar sense.

The self-appointed apostle to the Gentiles lived and wrought apart from the disciples at Jerusalem. He was unfamiliar with the life, character and teachings of Jesus, but was learned in the scriptures and an acute thinker in the manner of his race and time. The all-sufficient fact to him was the resurrection and the assurance it gave of victory over death for all who would believe. He expected the end of all earthly things before his generation had passed away, the appearing of "the Lord" in the clouds of heaven, the awakening of them that slept by the sounding of a trumpet, the transformation of those who were still in the flesh, and the gathering of the saints in a realm of bliss.

Paul built his theology upon a mythical Adam in whose sin all were made subject to death, a mythical Abraham to whom the promise of blessing to all nations through his "seed" was made, a mythical interpretation of the old law under which all were bound until the time of release should come, and a mythical release from the law by the crucifixion of the Nazarene as a sacrifice and a ransom for all. His doctrine was developed and disseminated in his preaching, in letters to his congregations of Gentile converts, and in other letters written in his name. This, with the teaching of other apostles, had much influence upon the writing of the first three gospels. During the period when "the Lord's coming" was expected no attempt was made at a systematic account of the life and death of Jesus. Only scattered and imperfect records of his sayings were kept. Many of these must have been lost and others misinterpreted and perverted, while events floated in memory and became traditions.

The evangelists wrote in the belief that had grown up in their time, not only in the resurrection of Jesus, but in his Messiahship, which was supposed to make him of necessity a descendant of David. A single doubtful passage in the introductory part of what is considered on the whole to be a genuine epistle of Paul, speaks of him as "born of the seed of David according to the flesh," and "declared to be the son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection of the dead." In two of the gospels were included obviously mythical accounts of the birth, quite inconsistent and irreconcilable with each other. Two equally inconsistent genealogies were devised. The descent from David and the conception by a virgin mother were products of imagination working upon scriptural suggestion, when the necessity was felt of supporting a new doctrine of the Messiah, so shaped as to fit one who was in fact as far removed as possible from the old conception of the promised

Prince of Peace and ruler of the nations. Passages of scripture were torn from their context, perverted from their natural meaning and application, and subjected to strained interpretation, to sustain that doctrine, and the gospel narratives were made to conform to it in a crude and uncritical fashion, either by the original writers or in subsequent revisions. By no rational process can there be extracted from a critical study of the documents any ground for believing that Jesus ever announced himself or regarded himself as a promised or predestined Messiah of his people or of the world, and the presumption is not in keeping with the character portrayed in his genuine utterances and real acts.

The incident related in two of the gospels as occurring at Cæsarea Philippi and in the third as following the miraculous feeding near Bethsaida—with no designation of place or time but with wholly different accompaniments from those at Cæsarea—was undoubtedly evolved from the desire to make him a witness to that Messiahship in which the writers devoutly believed. The apocalyptic utterances attributed to him in quite different forms in the three gospels could hardly have been preserved through the interval between his journey to Jerusalem and the appearance of these writings. They do not agree in the three versions, they are not in keeping with the tone of his previous sayings, and they have every appearance of excerpts or imitations from apocalyptic writings that came after the destruction of Jerusalem, to the incidents of which there are distinct allusions. The reasonable conclusion is that the teacher of Nazareth never thought of himself as the Messiah. By the time the fourth gospel was written, toward the middle of the second century, the conception of the "Christ" had undergone a decided change, and the narratives of the life and death, of the miraculous "signs" and the resurrection, were transformed to sustain a new doctrine.

The tendency to mythicize the life and death of Jesus in adapting them to support doctrines evolved by the first apostles and developed by the "fathers of the church," was displayed in flagrant form in the "apocryphal" gospels of the second and third centuries, which, with all their crudity and incredibility, were long accepted by many as confirmatory of the writings finally canonized as sacred truth. While the process of conversion to Christianity was going on, mainly outside of the old Jewish domain and in "heathen lands," with centers at Antioch, Ephesus and Smyrna in Asia, at Corinth, Philippi and Rome in Europe, and at Alexandria and Carthage in Africa, while belief was going through many phases and fighting

its way through varied heresies to orthodoxy, down to the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine and the coagulation of doctrines into dogma at the Council of Nicæa, the apologetic and polemic genius of that long period worked in the soil and atmosphere of old mythologies. It had been no uncommon thing to attribute the remarkable qualities of men who excited wonder by their teachings or their exploits to a divine paternity or to deify them after their death. Fictitious and miraculous achievements were readily credited to them after they were gone and were as readily accepted. Mystical blending of the divine and human or the union of more than one personality in the same being was not a matter to perplex belief.

In that age, in the lands in which Christianity was planted and fostered, there was little understanding of nature and no knowledge of the laws of its working, and the mind of man had long been accustomed to attribute to supernatural forces, which were more or less clearly personified, whatever it saw or felt which it did not understand. Traditions and philosophies saturated with mythical conceptions, pervaded the intellectual atmosphere, and those who thought could not free themselves from their influence. It is no wonder that mythical elements entered into the dogmas of Christianity, as these were settled in the early centuries, in such measure as to constitute their chief substance and almost to cause the simple teachings of Jesus and his real character and relation to mankind to be lost sight of.

Perhaps in the mental and spiritual soil and climate of the place and time the new combination of theology, Christology and soteriology was necessary to the early growth of a religion that was to spread and exert a dominating power in human history, but that does not prevent it from being largely the offspring of myth. It was wrought out of the consciousness and the introspection of gifted and earnest men, in fierce conflict with those who would destroy a faith that they deemed necessary to their own salvation and the regeneration of the world, and they did "most potently and powerfully believe" what they taught. In all their subtle lucubration, their keen ratiocination from premises that had only a mythical basis, they never did really lose sight of the essential object of those simple teachings, those kindly ministrations, that pure character, of the lowly Nazarene. That was, after all, the leaven that saved the church through its struggles with paganism and atheism, for in the midst of cruelty, oppression and corruption in those early centuries love of truth and purity, self-sacrifice and devotion

to the good of others, the real Christian virtues, were cherished and inculcated. They had their source in the life and teachings of Jesus and their support in the consecrated dogmas of a church that could not be held together without such artificial devices of cohesion.

The mythical element did not cease to ferment in the growth of Christianity after it became established as the religion of the civilized western world. Much of it had been solidified in dogmas which were deemed of such divine authority, were so sanctified and consecrated, that they could not be, must not be, changed or tampered with. But it continued to work new accretions upon the body of faith, and the middle ages of European history are redolent of myth and miracle within the purlieus of the church, some of which would vie in crude and gross quality with the ancient mythologies, while lacking their poetic glamor.

The old cosmogony had not been discarded. Out of the Sheol of the Hebrews, the Hades of the Greeks, the figurative Gehenna of the gospels and the lake of fire of the apocalypse, the hell of eternal torment beneath the earth was devised by a lurid imagination. The Satan, the adversary of man and God, compounded of Ahriman and Beelzebub, became the mediæval devil, and the demons that peopled the air in ancient times were converted into his imps. Above the sky, the ancient abode of Yahveh and his angels, the counterpart of Olympus and Elysium, was established a realm of celestial light and joy for the final abode of the blessed saints, with a mystical passage through the unknown for a toilsome journey of those who might yet be saved after death by the saying of prayers and masses. Worship was enriched with the cult of virgin mother and of glorified saints, and the arts of painting, sculpture, architecture and music were lavished upon a worship more varied and ornate than that of ancient Greece, and far from the simplicity of Galilee.

Dante embodied much of this sanctified mythology in immortal verse and the artists of the Renaissance helped to give it perpetuity. The protestant revolt but half won emancipation from its power, and Milton and other imaginative writers of his own and a later day made their contributions to the durability of the residue. The mythical element, undergoing variation from time to time, has held its place in Christianity down to the age of science and rational philosophy, until it has become a gross anachronism. It is preserved in antiquated dogmas, in creeds and forms of worship, in observances that have no vital relation to the life or the destiny of

man. What was once the strength of the church is becoming its weakness and loosening its hold upon the conduct of human society, because it is out of harmony with what is now known by the learned, thought by the wise, and vaguely apprehended by the simple.

Religion is necessary to the progress and elevation of mankind, to salvation from degenerating tendencies. Its best embodiment is still in Christianity, at least for those to whom that is a legitimate heritage. Is it not time to divorce it from old mythologies and bring it into harmony with the science and knowledge and the conclusions of reason in these modern times? There is nothing in their lessons that can supersede the ethical or the religious teaching of that "divinely gifted man" of Galilee, who planted the minute seed of the "rule of God" and infused into the gross lump of humanity the leaven of his own lofty intuition. No doubt there is need of appeal to emotion and sentiment, as well as acceptance of knowledge and submission to reason, and there is helpfulness to higher character and better conduct in the uplifting influence of an esthetic worship. But why cling to old dogmas which the intelligence of the time can no longer accept with unquestioning faith, and which reason boldly rejects?

Doctors of divinity who are really learned and thoughtful are fain to accept the conclusions of science and to admit that the creation of worlds and races and the development and progress of mankind have been a process of evolution, but they strive to effect a compromise with old beliefs and reconcile these with the conclusions of science and with the principles of philosophy which those conclusions dictate. It is a vain and futile striving. Why not discard the heritage of old mythologies and reconcile religion with science by accepting the best knowledge attainable and following the guidance of the most enlightened reason, as the "men of light and leading" in the past have done in their own day? Why not accept the demonstration that Adam and the garden of Eden, Abraham as the father of nations, and the anointed one who was to make Israel triumph over the world, were myths and not a sound basis for theological beliefs in this day and generation? Why not allow to the ancient Hebrew genius the rights of imagination and invention, concede its subjection to limitations of human capacity, acknowledge the defects and imperfections of its productions, and judge its work by an honest criticism, instead of persisting in a divine infallibility for it or even a special supervision of divine care not vouchsafed to the rest of human history and achievement? Why

not recognize the liability to error of those who made the first records, so obviously defective, of the doings and sayings of the "good master" who came out of Nazareth, so obscure to the eyes of the world in his life, so humiliated and outraged in his death, so glorified in the resurrection, not of his body, but of the memory of his life and the vitality of his words? Why not consider the makers of doctrines and framers of dogmas in the early centuries of the Christian era as fallible men, doing their best according to their lights, but subject to the effects of their mental inheritance and the influence of their environment, and not building for all time?

The Christian church is a product of evolution and the elements have been in unwonted ferment in the last fifty years. It cannot stop advancing if it would continue to live and maintain its hold upon the living and the coming generations. It must discard ancient conceptions which the revelations of the present time discredit, and accept those which its knowledge and wisdom will sustain. It must purge itself of decadent mythism by inoculation with a sound philosophy, admittedly not perfect, but progressive and tending evermore toward perfection, though that goal may not be reached in this world. Its God must be the divine power of the universe as it is now known, and not the deity of Israel's narrow history or of the struggle of Jew or primitive Christian with the desperate force of decaying heathen empires. Its conceptions of life and death and eternity must be derived from revelations of the present and not divinations of ancient times. Science and philosophy based upon science are lighting up a common sense among the peoples that is fatal to superstition, and to that the teachers of religion must appeal if they would renew their power over the conduct of men.

The exercise of that power is needed as much as ever. There was never greater need of work for the salvation of men; but it is not salvation from an impending destruction of the world, or from a terrible retribution in another world. It is salvation in this world from the consequences of degenerating tendencies in human nature. There is yet no higher truth than that preached by those sages of Israel who made wickedness synonymous with folly and righteousness identical with wisdom. Nothing is more foolish from the point of view of mere self-interest than vice and crime or evil habits, and nothing is wiser or more satisfying to man in this world than upright character and righteous conduct; and men may well be taught if they are right in this life they will be safe for any life to come. For that teaching there is no need of mythical dog-

mas or appeals to superstitious hopes and fears; but there is need of the acceptance of the best knowledge and soundest reasoning, and an appeal to the common sense of the human mind.

Christianity needs to recover a language which the common people will understand and hear gladly. If the church is really intent upon saving men, in the sense in which they most need salvation, it must get down among them and come close to them, giving attention to those that need a physician rather than those who can take care of themselves. Its work must be less for the esthetic gratification of "members" who pay for pews, subscribe to charities, wear fine raiment and behave in decorous fashion, and more for the correction of evil practices and the rescue of those who are going down or are kept from rising by the forces of degeneracy. In short, it must get back with greater earnestness and zeal to those immortal and immortalizing teachings of Jesus of Nazareth and away from the deadening dogmas of the Christ of ecumenical councils.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN MISSING LINK.

BY ALBERT J. EDMUNDS.

In *The Monist* for January, 1912, I have shown that Luke's account of the Lord's three temptations agrees more closely with the non-theistic and geographically remoter Buddhist than with the theistic and neighboring Mazdean. This can hardly mean aught else than literary dependence. But how? No Greek Sūtra has ever been discovered, and moreover, the three temptations are not all together in the Buddhist Canon, one of them, viz., the temptation to commit suicide, being in the Decease Book of the Long Collection; the other two, viz., temptations to assume empire and transmute matter, being in the Devil Class (or Book of Temptations) of the Classified Collection.

But we know from Chinese Buddhist literature that in the early centuries of the Christian era there were lives of Buddha and all sorts of manuals and books of extracts or selections. Now, I have asked Professor Anesaki of Tokyo to examine some of these and report whether there does not exist a little collection of temptations wherein all three come together, as in Luke and Matthew.

Should there be such a book in Chinese, it existed before in Sanskrit or Pāli (for most, if not all, of these Chinese primitive Buddhist books are translations). And if it existed before in a Hindu language, it was probably translated into the languages of other Buddhist countries. Thus we know from M. Aurel Stein's monumental work on *Ancient Khotan* (Oxford, 1907) that in Chinese Turkestan, between the third and eighth centuries, there were Buddhist books in at least two forgotten languages. Now, the Buddhists had migrated to Khotan from their older habitats in Bactria, Kashmir and the Panjāb, where they had been settled since Asoka's inscriptions, B. C. 250. In Bactria, where Greek rulers had reigned for two centuries, the Buddhists could not have carried on any propaganda without translations. And if they could translate into the insignificant dialects of Turkestan, they would certainly do so into so illustrious a language as Greek. China, being civilized and conservative, has kept her early translations; but Bactria, having been swept by Scythian and Arab, by Mongol and Afghan, has lost hers, just as Turkestan has done. If we were to dig into Balkh, as we are digging into Khotan, we might find a canonical Sūtra translated into Greek.

Although we have not yet found a Greek Sūtra, yet we have coins in Greek and Pāli; and Professor Cumont, when recently in Philadelphia, informed me of an Ephesian inscription which mentioned the Hindu calendar (κατα τηω 'Ινδων).

As I have pointed out in *Buddhist and Christian Gospels* (4th ed., Vol. I, p. 155) the Greek empire is said to have been converted to Buddhism by the recitation of a Sūtra on Buddha's omniscience—a Sūtra still extant in the Pāli of the Numerical Collection, Book of Fours. Could we but find this Sūtra in Greek among the ruins in Afghanistan, and especially if we could find a Book of Temptations containing the three aforesaid, the importance of the discovery for the history of religion would be incalculable.

Will not Dr. Stein persuade the Anglo-Indian Government to use its good offices with the Ameer of Afghanistan to make this discovery possible?

NORENDRO NATH SEN, A LEADER OF INDIAN THOUGT.

It is with regret that we chronicle the death of Norendro Nath Sen, of Calcutta, the father of Indo-English journalism and for fifty years editor of *The Indian Mirror.* This paper began as a fortnightly but was soon changed into a weekly and then a daily. Norendro Nath was born in 1843 and attended the Hindu College for a time and took up the study of law, but most of his active life was spent in the management of the *Mirror,* through which he exercised wide influence for the sanest and best in religion, culture, and politics. As evidence of the catholicity of his spirit we note in his obituary in the *Mirror* that among a number of other organizations he was president of the Indian Association, the Bengal Theosophical Society, the Brahma Samsad, the Bengal Social Reform Association and the literary section of the Mahabodhi Society. He was a personal and highly esteemed friend of Miss A. Christina Albers with whom our readers are acquainted.

We cannot do better than imitate the *Mirror* in quoting a selection from Norendro Nath's own editorial on the occasion of the recent jubilee celebration of *The Indian Mirror.* This expression of his social and political creed will show better than any words of our own the loss India suffers in his death.

"We are happy in claiming the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Parsi, the Jain, the Mohammedan, the Christian, the Jew—all as our brethren. We consider the union of East and West as the best means of promoting the happiness of the human race. We are proud of our citizenship of the British Empire, and we are firmly convinced of the Heaven-sent mission of the British in India. We rejoice in our union with England—with her teaching, her traditions, and her sublime humanity. We cherish the profound belief that true ideals of nationalism must be based on moral righteousness. We regard moderation and loyalty as the principal asset of public life. We attach the greatest importance to the removal of social evils, and to the elevation of womanhood and the depressed classes, as being essential to national progress. Above all, we firmly hold that it is righteousness on the part of both the rulers and the ruled that can save India in prosperity and can save her in adversity."

BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTES.

THE UNEXPLORED SELF. An Introduction to Christian Doctrine for Teachers and Students. By *George R. Montgomery, Ph. D.* New York: Putnam, 1910. Pp. 249. Price $1.25 net.

From a speculative turn of mind, yet inclined towards indifference and

even agnosticism, the author was led to make his life work the propaganda of the significance of things as the foundation of a satisfactory system of life as a result of a two months' horseback journey in the land of caravans. Most of the time was spent in philosophical discussions, and the conclusions reached by Dr. Montgomery were not due to the influence of his companion "who was thoroughly familiar with the philosophies and had every idea labeled by a school and a sub-school," but to the development of his own position under the pressure of argument and counter-argument influenced by the observation of missionary stations whose members were actively engaged in doing something, while the travelers, from their previous way of looking at the world, were only talking about it.

The book is addressed mainly to teachers with a view to giving them a positive religious foundation which should be the working principle expressed or unexpressed of all the instruction they impart. It takes the value of the individual as its point of departure and by a constant return to the facts of life is able to state the doctrines of Christianity not as dogmas but as matters of direct importance and belief. The style is simple, almost epigrammatic. The method perhaps may best be illustrated by reference to his chapter on "The Divine Incarnation" where he brings out very clearly that an artist's success is not in reproducing nature but in the portrayal of his own personality; and as a poet allows an insight into his own soul and the poetic impulse is imparted by the inspiration of poetic ideals, so Christ depended on the transformed lives of his disciples to continue his own incarnation of the divine.... The master is little revealed in his biography. He is more fully revealed in his works, in his productions....It is therefore the Christ of the world's experience and of the individual experience even more than the Jesus of the Gospels that portrays the image of the heavenly. *p*

The Rubaiyat of Mirza Mem'n. Chicago: Shepard, 1901.

A thing of beauty, this volume is evidently intended to delight and not to inform. No author's name appears upon the title page, but as it is faced by a portrait bearing the signature of "John Zimmermann" we are driven to the conclusion that he is either the author or the patron saint of the book. It is composed of one hundred and thirty-one quatrains in the meter made familiar to all by Fitzgerald, and an "Explanatory Note" gives credit to McCarthy's translation for the source of thirty-seven of them, but we are not told whence the rest are derived, nor in what Mirza-Mem'n differs from Omar Khayyam. The verses are set in Old English type and the pages are bordered in dainty designs of grapes, roses, lotus-flowers and tulips. The Oriental landscapes and ruins among the illustrative plates are beautiful, and their value is not greatly diminished by an occasional gray-bearded sage, but the few attempts to introduce feminine grace into the scene are unfortunate. The book is bound in purple and gild, and makes a beautiful gift book. *p*

The Eternity of Matter. By *Lockhart Brooks Farrar.* Paxton, Illinois: N. E. Stevens & Son, 1910. Pp. 389. Price $2.00.

This work was published when the author was 87 year old, and is selected from a mass of written thoughts and investigations which have filled

many years of Dr. Farrar's life. In his secondary title he calls the book "A Series of Discussions Affirming the Eternity of Matter as a Primal Postulate," and something of the argument by which he has reached his conclusion may be deduced from the last paragraph of his preface, which reads as follows:

"Jesus, and Paul, and Mrs. Eddy, have evidently not enunciated the principles which underlay the operative facts of the world. The 1000 acre corn fields out west are not produced by prayer, but have to be patiently and laboriously planted and cultivated, or a crop is not realized. If Mrs. Eddy has perceptibly increased human longevity by her persuasion of people that they are neither sick nor in pain, then if they don't die, what an advantage she must be to insurance companies. The book that she so much reveres says: It is appointed unto man once to die. And it can hardly de denied that the ordinary way of death is by a longer or shorter period of sickness." ρ

President M. Woolsey Stryker, of Hamilton College, New York, who in his literary labors has repeatedly shown a special gift of poetical conception, sends us with reference to Dr. Pick's article "*Dies Irae*" five different translations of this famous medieval dirge made by himself. All are elegantly printed together with the original on a large sheet of thick cream colored paper. Dr. Stryker has also written a Latin parody on *Dies Irae* which he calls the *Dies Lucis,* thus giving a bright and hopeful turn to the expectation of the judgment. This is published in a miscellaneous collection modestly entitled "Attempts in Verse." ρ

The Indian Research Society (represented in the Occident by Messrs. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Company, of London) has published a study in comparative mythology, entitled "The Eagle and the Captive Sun" by Jnanendralal Majumdar. The author's purpose is to give a comprehensive study of the legend of the Eagle as it appears in the different branches of Aryan mythology. The result of his studies as here presented tends to prove three things: (1) That the legend of the eagle is a common heirloom of all branches of Aryan mythology; (2) that the eagle of the legend was originally only the constellation of Aquila; (3) that the legend contains references to this constellation which were true at least 6000 years ago in an Arctic Home. In the author's opinion this legend was one of the universal solar myths. ρ

Addison Ballard, D.D., the author of *From Talk to Text* and *Through the Sieve,* has now published a book *From Text to Talk* which will prove useful to clergymen in preparing their sermons. The present book is practically a new edition of his former book *Through the Sieve* which is, as we are informed, "now wholly and permanently out of print," and it seems as if the present work had superseded it. The book contains 43 scripture texts, each accompanied by an analysis such as will be useful for a pulpiteer as a guidance to suggest a line of thought and may be used by almost any one whatever sect or denomination he may belong to. κ

PRESS NOTES—Continued

Roman Catholic Ecclesiastical Review, Philadelphia:

"Whoso would form a true idea of the religious conditions into which Christianity entered as the leaven into the mass, must study the agencies not simply domestic, but particularly foreign, and especially Oriental, that gradually transformed and prepared Roman society for effective reception of the Gospel. As an aid to such study there will probably be found no better manual than the one here introduced. Professor Cumont is best known through his great work, *Texts et monuments figures relatifs aux Mysteres de Mithra* (2 vols., 1896 and 1899)—an original and exhaustive collection of sources. His *Religions Orientales dans le Paganisme Romain,* which is here presented in English translation, while more discursive is no less original and hardly less thorough than its predecessor. Those who have made no study of the development of Roman religious life onward to the close of the third century are apt to think of it as a bewildering maze of superstitious idolatry and moral corruption. This, however, would be far from the truth. As Professor Cumont aptly says, "From coarse fetichism and savage superstitions the learned priests of the Asiatic cults had gradually produced a complete system of metaphysics and eschatology. The religious conceptions and practices that were most influential in thus purifying Roman paganism and thereby preparing "the road for Christ upon His way," as Prudentius happily puts it, came chiefly from Asia Minor, Egypt, Syria especially, and Persia.

"M. Cumont describes these transforming agencies in their native homes and in their actual working under their Italian surroundings. His picture is vivid, lifelike, and the beholder has his confidence in its truthfulness confirmed by the author's constant reference to the original sources whence his figures are drawn.

"In recommending Professor Cumont's work to the attention of students, not only of religious but likewise of ecclesiastical history and theology, the reviewer would suggest as collateral reading the highly illuminating essays by C. C. Martindale, S. J., in the second volume of the series, *The History of Religions,* edited by him (London, the Catholic Truth Society, St. Louis, Mo., B. Herder); also the first volume of Professor Dufourcq's *L'Avenir du Christianisme* (Paris, Bloud et Cie). Both these authors pay a merited tribute to M. Cumont, to whom they are much indebted.

"A word should be said in conclusion in praise of the excellent translation. One seldom meets with a version in which so few of the original's idioms are suffered to enter.

"The book is materially made up in the becoming style for which the publishers are noted."

Congregationalist, Boston:

"* * * To the student of church history these lectures are of peculiar interest, because they not only show the atmosphere in which Christianity grew to its strength, but also the reasons for its corruption by inclusion of methods and practices dear to the popular heart. Professor Cumont

PRESS NOTES—Continued

has kept the lectures free from technical language, thus broadening their appeal. He shows in a striking way how the Oriental faiths broke up the soil and sowed new desires and needs in the hearts of men which only the faith of Christ could satisfy. The book must broaden the conception of his own faith for every reader."

The Christian Register, Boston:

"During the last fifty years there has been a steady progress from the beginnings when a suspicion was aroused that Christian forms and symbols were often only pagan forms and symbols transformed and dedicated to new and nobler meanings. Since exploration and exposition in the east of the Jordan have brought to light so many wonderful things, the suspicion of Oriental influence has expanded into full knowledge. This volume is a rich mine of facts illustrating the origin of many elements of Roman paganism and suggesting also an explanation of some of the mysteries of the Christian Religion."

The Continent, Chicago:

"Mr. Showerman in his introduction to this book makes us acquainted with the career and qualities of its remarkable author, now fast taking rank among the very foremost of our authorities on the study of comparative religion. And what he says of the learning and ability of M. Cumont is abundantly borne out by the substance of the volume which follows. It is a strictly scientific book on a historic phase of the general subject of comparative religion. In the struggle which ensued upon the meeting together at Rome of the various claimants for universal supremacy in the sphere of religion, Christianity ultimately triumphed. It is an interesting question, therefore, to the Christian of the present day to know that M. Cumont writes from a point of view sympathetic to the Christian faith. It is a work of the highest value which no student of the philosophy of religion can afford to neglect."

The Expository Times, London:

"Dr. Paul Carus has had a translation made of Professor Cumont's standard work on *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism.* In addition to these lectures the volume contains sixty pages of notes. These notes are really of greater value to the advanced student than the work itself. But the work itself is very pleasant to read, and it seems to have been admirably translated."

The American Hebrew:

"It is extraordinary the amount of intellectual activity that is being devoted to the study of ancient religions outside of Judaism and Christianity. The movement initiated by the late Prof. Max Mueller and entitled by him *"The Study of Comparative Religions,"* has created a whole literature dealing with the aspirations towards the ideal in ancient times.

"In discussing the origins of Christianity earlier inquirers were content to derive the divergent elements in Christianity as contrasted with Judaism to mere antagonism to Jewish thought. But recent in-

Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism

PRESS NOTES—Continued

quirers into the pagan world have been struck by the general state of preparation for Christianity in other oriental creeds which had found their way to Rome besides that of the Jews. In particular, the spread in the second century of the cult of Mithra has been shown to have been a formidable rival to Christianity and to have had many elements resembling its more popular features. The savant who first drew the attention of the learned world to this phenomenon is M. Cumont, a Belgian professor who has collected together all the material relating to the cult of Mithra, and has now extended his survey over the whole problem in his recent work, "*The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism,*" a translation of which has just been issued. This deals with the various religions current in Asia-Minor, Syria, Persia and Egypt during the first two centuries insofar as they may have affected the progress of Christianity by preparing the popular mind for the more mystical and democratic forms of religion. M. Cumont has few occasions to deal with Jews or Judaism, but draws attention to the influence of Parseeism on the Jews which is now recognized on all hands, and has occasional references to the spread of Jews in Asia Minor as affecting that amalgam of Judaism, Orientalism and Romanism which ultimately took form as Catholic Christianity. He has, however, a learned note in which he seeks to prove that the idea of God as a "Spring of Life" was derived from Egypt. He also seeks to take the conception of the grave as "An Eternal Home" from the same source though the expression is found in Sirach. Even more curiously, he finds the etymological origin of our modern term "refreshment" from the Egyptian theological writ that their dead might find a cool resting place."

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Such a study of the most fundamental and difficult of biological problems could not fail to be of the greatest interest to all students of science. To discover the essential nature of living matter Biology needs the help of Physics and Chemistry. Therefore the translator has gladly consented to prepare for publication this translation first made for his own satisfaction. It has been revised by the author.

University of Chicago, 1911.

BASIL HARVEY.

"Some deny flatly the possibility of ever arriving at an understanding of the nature of life. But if we ask ourselves in what this understanding of the nature of life could consist, from the point of view of positive philosophy, we have no difficulty in recognizing that such an understanding must be reduced to comparing vital phenomena with some physico-chemical model already known, suitably modified by the particular special conditions imposed upon it so that just these special conditions shall determine the differences which exist between this vital phenomenon and the phenomenon of the inorganic world most closely related to it. If this be so, it is then the duty of science emphatically to reject such a denial of scientific thought as would be constituted by the renunciation of the quest of this understanding. Whether one clearly recognizes it or not, it is just this search for the nature of the vital principle which properly constitutes the principal object and the final goal of all biologic study in general."—*E. Rignano, in "Acquired Characters," p. 334.*

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Table of Contents of *The Buddhist Review*, July, August, September, 1911

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