

REVIEWS

THE BIG STICK

THE DWELLER ON THE THRESHOLD. ROBERT HICHENS. Methuen. 6s.

Mr Hichens once wrote "Flames." This was a pretty powerful book. To-day (tempted, as I suppose, by a heavy bribe, for he is an artist in his way) he gives us this book with a title borrowed, not from Lytton, whom he has obviously not read, but from some eighteenth-hand source, and contents borrowed from his own "Flames." Hence a tedious novel,

dull novel,	unconvincing novel,
stupid novel,	futile novel,
pseudo-occult novel,	banal novel,
pot-boiling novel,	senseless novel,
tired novel,	ground-out novel,
pointless novel,	unreal novel,
fatuous novel,	sorry novel,

etc., etc., etc.

The above method of filling space I took from Rabelais. Mr Hichens' method is just as obvious. PANURGE.

MYSTICISM. EVELYN UNDERHILL. Methuen. 15s. net.

This lengthy treatise upon the simplest of subjects is more free from pedantry and theological bias than was perhaps to be expected. It is very complete in its way as regards Christian mysticism ; but the attempt to restrict the term mysticism to Christian mysticism must fail. It is indeed self-destructive. To exclude the authors of the Bhagavadgita, the Voice of the Silence, Konx Om Pax, and the Tao Teh King is to exclude by implication St Teresa. To deny Crowley is to deny Christ. Similarly, the attempt to define Magic in terms contrary to its tradition, is sectarian folly. I may disagree with Huxley, but I shall not confute him by saying that he was a bigoted opponent of Evolution.

Roosevelt, in calling Thomas Paine a dirty little Atheist, when he was demonstrably a clean tall Deist, established only the record for falsehood. Mr

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(or Mrs or Miss?) Evelyn Underhill does the same thing when he abuses the Magi by attributing to them the doctrines and practices of sorcerers. And we think that his sense of awe misleads him in one respect. The Buddha, the Christ, and He whom some of us know as Frater Perdurabo, were all men before they became lost in the Infinity of what some call the One, others the All, others the Naught; and their documents are accessible. These documents are of immeasurably greater value than the lesser writings of the mediæval saints. In fact, this word mediæval is of use to us in describing Evelyn Underhill's state of mind. He, she, or it is rather narrow, vastly learned and curiously ignorant, capable of seeing far from within, utterly incapable of seeing an inch from without, a bit of a heresy-hunter and so on. It is clear that the mystic vision even is not his, or how could he remain sectarian? Had he only enough imagination to think of the earth as seen from Cor Scorpionis, all such diatribes would seem infinitely petty. We may splutter about with our little verbal fireworks, as I am doing now; but to take it seriously! "There's nothing serious in mortality;" God is All in All. The Universe is but a mote playing in that sunbeam; why bother to fill 600 dull pages? Nothing is worth writing but literature. Art is the expression of divine Truth; Mr Underhill, being no artist, expresses only human error.

CANDLESTICK.

DEATH. HEREWARD CARRINGTON and JOHN R. MEADER. Wm. Rider & Son. 8s. 6d. net.

A most interesting and fairly able book. Mr Carrington's hysteria is thoroughly diluted by Mr Meader, or else he has taken a little nourishment and feels better. The Vitality book was the scream of a schoolgirl.

The "theories" of these writers are, however, too comic to discuss seriously. One believes in "Life," a mystical entity flowing through one like a grease-spot through a greenback; the other believes that Death is caused by a man's hypnotising himself into the belief that it must come!

Big as is the present volume, it is necessarily far from complete. Yet I am compelled to admit much against my will that he makes out a very strong case for the persistence of personality after death, and its manifestation through certain mediums. Yet I think that the "coincidence" argument is a little better than is supposed.

The point is that the failures are unrecorded. Take "pure chance" roulette for example. Scientifically, any given run (say 500 on the red) is no more and no less remarkable than any other given run, say R B B R R B B B R R B B B B, etc., to 500 coups. But the one is acclaimed as a miracle, the other goes unremarked.

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Now in the millions of séances of the last sixty years the "evidential" records can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

And it is not antecedently so very improbable that pure chance might dictate correct answers in so small a proportion of cases.

Further, the spiritists have thrown upon science the task of proving a universal negative.

If Sir Oliver Lodge, or Professor Munsterberg, or Lord Cholly Cauliflower, or Mr Upthe Pole comes to me with a tale of unicorns in Piccadilly, I merely humour him. Munsterberg, at least, might be dangerous.

But I should not investigate his statement, and I certainly should not claim to be able to disprove it on *à priori* grounds.

Even in the evidential cases, there is so much room for a mixture of fraud, telepathy, chance, and hysteria, and humanity is so clever at stopping chinks with putty and then leaving the door open, that we must continue to suspend judgment.

An amusing case occurred some years ago at Cambridge. I offered to reproduce roughly the performance of the Zancigs (which was then puzzling the foolish in London) without preparation. A stranger to me offered to act as my "medium."

The conditions were these. The ten small cards of a suit were laid on the floor; one was to be touched in the medium's absence and in my presence. The medium was to return and say which it was. The rest of the company were to prevent us from communicating if they could.

Well, they tried everything. In a minute's interview I arranged a button-touching code with my medium, and as each new restriction was put on me I managed to invent a new code. Shifting my pipe, coughing, arranging books, winking, altering the position of my fingers, etc., etc., all were provided against. Then I obtained a confederate. Ultimately the grand sceptic of all devised the following test just as I had passed the note to my medium, "If I can't manage any of the old ways, I'll try and write down the number and put it on the mantelpiece."

And this was the test.

The medium was to be taken from Whewell's Court (where we were) over to the Great Court of Trinity—well out of all hearing. I was to be left alone with the sceptic, who by this time suspected everybody of being a confederate. He was to touch the card in my presence and then take me away in the opposite direction. The medium was then (at a given time) to return, and tell the card. Now it happened that in the course of general argument about fairness, which I encouraged to enable myself to plot unnoticed in the confusion of talk, that I had stipulated for my sceptic to write down the number that he had

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touched, to avoid dispute. This he agreed to; he was allowed to hide it as he chose.

I gave up all hope but in bringing off the 9 to 1 chance of my medium's being right. The sceptic kept both eyes on me all the time; if I stirred a finger, he was up in arms. I did keep my back to the mantelpiece, but there was no way of writing down the number.

But it was just at that point that my sceptic's magnificent brain broke down. He had correctly argued everything so far; but then his brain said, "It is important that Crowley shall not know where I hide the paper with the number on it: I must hide it somewhere where he cannot see."

So instead of slipping it into one of the hundreds of books on the shelves, he hid it behind my back, *i.e.* on the mantelpiece, where it was duly found!

I must tell just one other story to the point. It throws possibly some light on one or two of the "miracles" which Blavatzky performed in order to disgust the more foolish of her followers.

In June 1906 I was at Margate (God help me!), and asked my friend J—— to lend me his copy of Abramelin.

"Sorry!" said he. "I lent it to So-and-so, and it has not been returned."

He forgot this conversation: I remembered it.

Staying at his house six months later, I was alone one morning and found the book, which he "knew for a fact" to be in London sixty miles away. It was hidden by the panel of a glass-fronted bookcase.

I hid it in the stuffing of a music-stool, led the conversation at lunch-time to "apports," got my host to suggest my doing this very thing which he was sure I could not do, and, in the evening, did it.

If I had been a cheat, could I have produced better evidence? My host would have sworn that the book was in London in a house unknown to me, whose occupants were unknown to me. He is a man of science and of most accurate and balanced judgment. One little lapse of memory: he forgot that he had told me that the book was not in his shelves; another little lapse of memory: he forgot where the book was; and there is your miracle!

Now for my constructive policy. I suggest that a "spirit" be cultivated on the lines laid down by Eliphaz Levi, "Dogma and Ritual," Cap. XIII., so that he may manifest more wholly. Then let him dictate to two or three segregated mediums a long passage, or a long set of meaningless figures, and get so high a degree of agreement that hardly any doubt remains.

Or if anybody wants a really high evidential proof, let him get the proof of Fermat's Last Theorem, which Fermat died without revealing, and which the united efforts of mathematicians have hitherto failed to discover.

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

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THE PORCH. Vol. I., No. 8. 3d. J. M. WATKINS. THE MIRROR OF SIMPLE SOULS.

Of all this admirable series this is the best. Such prose I have rarely found in all my reading. I am beggared of wit to review it; but I implore all who seek the pure Light mirrored in flawless imagery to obtain it.

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

THE APOCALYPSE UNSEALED. *Being an Esoteric Interpretation* of THE INITIATION OF IOANNES. By JAMES M. PRYSE. New York: John M. Pryse, 9-15 Murray Street, 1910. London: J. M. Watkins. 8s. 6d. net.

It is possible to write upon this book in a freer manner, without offence, than upon any other book in the Canon of Scripture, for there is no other book which has caused so much disquiet to theologians, in all ages, as has the "Revelation of St John the Divine," and it is but in comparatively recent times that it has been generally accepted as Canonical, and this even by those who admit that they do not understand it; and to such as these the "Apocalypse Unsealed" will be a veritable "Revelation" indeed. Mr James M. Pryse accepts it unreservedly as the work of the Apostle John, but we ought to mention that there is a long string of authorities against this view. Dionysius, who was surnamed the Great, of Alexandria, was a pupil of Origen, and he of Clement of Alexandria, all catechists of the *Arcane Discipline* which taught a Christianised version of the older Gnosis, which Clement and others had brought into the Church from the older secret, or occult, societies of which they were, or had been members. This Dionysius makes a certain John the Presbyter, as of note in Asia Minor in the 1st century, and distinct from the Apostle, to be the author of the book. Presbyter Cajus, or Gaius, of Rome, and the Alogi, attributed it to Cerinthus, a Gnostic of the independent sect of these, and Eusebius quotes both Dionysius and these Alogi; Nicephorus Callistus uses the same as saying that some who had preceded them had manipulated the book in such way, in every chapter, that the original could not be recognised. This may be an exaggeration, but amongst the eminent critics who have denied the authenticity of the book may be mentioned these, and what else can we expect when none to the present time could understand it? Against it are De Wett, Bleek, Ewald, Credner, Schott, Lücke, Neander, Michaelis, who treat the style as utterly foreign to that of John the Apostle. The first-named observes that "Revelation" is characterised by strong Hebraisms, ruggedness, and exhibits the absence of pure Greek words, whilst in the Gospel of John is to be found a calm, deep feeling, but in the Apocalypse we have great creative power of fancy;—the two minds are at variance with each other. St Jerome had an

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exalted opinion of the book, and says that it has much of mystery therein; possibly he saw it with the same eyes as Mr Pryse. Even both Luther and Erasmus were doubtful as to its acceptance. The "Encyclopædia Britannica" argues that its allusions are of the 4th or 5th century. It may be mentioned here, that Dom John Chapman, D.O.S., has made an examination of the question this year, and argues, with doubtful success, that John the Presbyter and John the Apostle were the same person, and accepts both the Gospel and the Apocalypse as the works of the Apostle John, and accounts for the difference in style as that of the amanuensis whom the Apostle John employed.

Two noticeable, but irreconcilable, attempts have in recent years been made to interpret the book, theologically and historically. The learned Dr E. V. Kenealy made sense out of it, but overdid the subject. He believed it to represent the Apocalyptic church of Adam, and found in its addresses to the "Seven Churches" the existence of a great Asian hierarchy of the seven temples of the "twenty-four Ancients," and further, in its various characters, the acts of the twelve divine incarnations, or messengers, who follow each other at periods of 600 years, as taught in regard to the manifestations of Vishnu.

Then, in 1906, we have a book of the astronomer, Nicholas Marazoff, verified by the astronomers Ramin and Lanin, who attempt an astrological view, grounded on the state of the heavens at Patmos on the 30th September 395, at 5 o'clock at night. Jupiter—the white horse—was then in Sagittarius; whilst Saturn—the pale horse—was in Scorpio; the sun in Virgo, and the moon under her feet. John Chrysostom was then in Patmos, and immediately after 395 was called to Rome to become a presbyter; but Rome finding that the "Second Coming" did not take place, it is argued that he was deprived and banished as a "false prophet." Against this we have the fact that Chrysostom does not mention the book, but the date assigned agrees with criticisms as the book now stands.

We must defer to the superior knowledge of this modern "Unveiler," though personally I am inclined to accept the views of those early Fathers who assign the authorship to Cerinthus, and also the later German critics, who believe that the first three chapters and the last have been added by a later hand, and other portions altered to agree with the Scriptures held to be orthodox. Of course this, if it were so, does not effect in any way the views of Mr Pryse, but rather strengthens them, as I look upon the imagery of the book as essentially that of the earlier and pre-Christian Gnostics. Though we may not have absolute proof of the great antiquity of the Gnosis, such as Mr Pryse unveils, yet it is clearly Aryan, dating from the time of Momu—the thinker; then again the development of the Kundalini—serpent fire—world's mother, also termed rousing the Brahm—is said to be shown as issuing from the foreheads of early

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Egyptian kings; Apollonius of Tyana, a contemporary of our Jesus, visited the Gymnosophists of the Upper Nile, but said that they were not equal to those of India. The British Druids must have had a knowledge of the "Serpent fire" in their secret instruction, or why exclaim, "I am a serpent." The Mythraic Mysteries, and all the Eranoi Societies, were equally protected by the laws of Solon seven centuries B.C., and Mr Pryse observes that only once does the word Halleluiah occur in the Bible, yet we know that it formed the close of a chant in the "Rites of Purification" in a call to the slain god for deliverance, in pre-Christian centuries, and further there are Mythraic traces in Revelation. We also know from a large mass of inscriptions found in recent times, that the early Christians made use of the very ancient societies, and by that course spread their doctrine. Before the issue of the "Unsealing," the same translator published the "Magical Message of Iôannes," a translation of great value which receives much additional light from the later work, and the more so as it supplies, in a knowledge of Hermetic Greek, much meaning which escapes us in the authorised version.

In the "Unsealing," Mr Pryse goes solid for the book, the whole book, and nothing but the book, as the veritable work of the Apostle John, hence the clergy may extend a welcome hand to it. He quite believes it is a work of the Apostle John, and defends the style; amongst these there are some doubtless who are narrow-minded, but here, and still more prominently in America, there are broad-minded clergy who will welcome the Unsealing.

The Freemasons too in their higher grades, which have more or less reached us through the Rosicrucians, have very strong allusions to the Apocalypse, and may profit by it, and this refers to several systems practised throughout the world. Thus the Order of Hérédom (Harodim) Rosy Cross, which has an unchanged Ritual from 1740, at least, draws upon Dionysius the Areopagite, a disciple of St Paul, and it has also a rhythmical description of the New Jerusalem. Again, two entire degrees of the Scottish Rite of 33° are drawn from the Apocalypse, and certainly entered the Rite before 1758, and seem as if they were drawn bodily from the Rosicrucian Militia of the Cross: I allude to the 17° Knight of the East and West, and the 19° of Grand Pontiff, which treat upon the Heavenly Jerusalem, and the opening scene of the Revelations. It was rather a pity that when the late Albert Pike was revising the Rituals, he did not consolidate the Rite by changing the places of the 17° with the 20°, which latter treats of Zerubbabel. His predecessor Morin, in 1767, did a like thing by the Amalgamation of Prince Adept, which he had in his patent of 1762, with Knight of the Sun, and supplying the blank thus created with Patriarch Noachite. There is also the Royal Oriental Order of the Sat Bhai which was founded 1743-5, by a Brahmin Pundit at Prag, for certain Anglo-Indian officers, and which is now well established in America.

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The idea that Revelation is a book of Initiation is not altogether new to Freemasons, as the late Dr Geo. Oliver elaborated that view at considerable length, but Mr Pryse's view is quite a different sort of Initiation; it is the development of the semi-miraculous powers of the Gnosis of Clement, Origen, and the early Christian Church, the birth of the divine three principles, the Crestos, in the human soul. The key to this "Unsealing" is the text itself, in which is found the Nos. 333, 444, 666, 777, 888, 999, 1000, as applied to the seven principal *chakras* of the human body, as taught by Greek Yogis. Apart altogether from the possession of a reliable literal translation of the book, there are seventy-five pages upon the development of the *Kundalini*, and each subject is followed in the text by a commentary in application. Mr Pryse expresses the view that the book is necessarily incomprehensible to the conventional theologian, yet easily comprehended by the esoteric Initiate, *i.e.* by him who possesses the Gnosis, and that the drama is perfect in all its parts. I may add that most of this class of Initiative books had a double interpretation, and hence that the same may be equally found in the Apocalypse, but into this Mr Pryse does not enter.

JOHN YARKER.

Mr Pryse has undoubtedly found the key of the Apocalypse, and many of his interpretations are profound and accurate. But he is afflicted by sexual mania to an extent positively shocking, and does not understand the harmony of the principles. Adeptship is balanced growth, not lopping. A rose dies if you remove the root and stalk, Mr Pryse!

He is unfortunately a poor scholar, and has developed the American literary sense to an incredible point. He translates *ἀκρασία*, "impotence, lack of control," as "sensuality," *ἀγγελος* as "divinity," and gives us "saucers" for "vials"!

Unfortunately, too, he has studied Eastern Mysticism at second-hand, through Theosophical spectacles. Nor has he kept even to Blavatsky the genius, but relied upon her commentators, who had neither her learning nor her experience.

But he has the key, and it opens the way for a real study of "St John" by a person of greater ability.

It is a very remarkable fact, however, that Akrasia (333) and Akolasia (333) should so accurately describe Choronzon (333). No higher test of the truth of "The Vision and the Voice" could be desired.

Again, 666 is Ἡ Φρην, not the Lower Mind, as Mr Pryse unhellenically says, but Tiphereth, the Lion that lieth down with the Lamb. Nor, by the way, is Iacchos a phallic God except as Ὁ Νικων himself is phallic, and has his mystic

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name written upon that organ, according to Mr Pryse! Iacchus=IAO=Jehovah, and concentrates I.N.R.I.

We recommend the book for its suggestion and insight ; it is one of the best of the kind. NICK LAMB.

SALAMAN ET ABSAL, POÈME ALLÉGORIQUE PERSAN DE DJAMI. Traduit par AUGUSTE BRICTEUX, Ph.D., Litt.D., etc. etc., avec une Introduction sur le Mysticisme persan, etc. Bruxelles, 10 rue de la Tribune (Librairie Ch. Carrington). 10 *francs*.

A magnificent volume without and within. This, with the single exception of the "Bagh-i-muattar" (Probsthain & Co., 1910, 3 *gs.*, and therefore difficult of access), is the greatest of Persian mystic treatises, though it is rather elementary. But we can recommend no better volume for those who know but a little. Dr Bricteux has no experience of mysticism, and so makes mistakes. This was to be expected, but I am surprised at the scholar's error of asserting that the Hindu system lacks the method of love. As ninety-five Hindus practise Bhakti-Yoga for five that practise any other kind, we advise Dr Bricteux to be more careful. But this is a small blemish on a very fine essay. ABHAVANANDA.

RUBAIYAT D'OMAR KHÁYYÁMI. Mis en Rimes françaises par JULES DE BARTHOLD. Bruxelles, 10 rue de la Tribune (Librairie Ch. Carrington). 5 *francs*.

Since the "loathsome and abominable" disclosures with regard to Edward Fitzgerald and "Posh," I suppose every decent Englishman has burnt his copy of the Quatrains. It is consequently very pleasant to find a new translation, accurately representing the original, in beautiful and lucid French. The verses flow with the sound of wine poured in a thirsty country. We can recommend this book to all lovers of whom the *Daily Telegraph* would call "the astronomer-poet of Persia," and then "the tent-maker of Naishapur." A. L.

MAURICE MAETERLINCK. Par GÉRARD HARVEY. Bruxelles, Ch. Carrington. 2.50 *francs*.

I hope I shall find a Gérard Harvey at the Day of Judgment. There is none of that nasty carping spirit which spoils so many sunny natures. When the great Maurice dines alone, it is his almost monachal asceticism ; when he has company, it is his genial bonhomie. He smokes—how brave of him ; but of course it is denicotinised tobacco—how prudent of him ! He sometimes sleeps alone—the modern Galahad ; and sometimes with somebody else—"even his

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Heinesque moods are steeled through with a strong man's virility." In short, Dr Pangloss was indeed the greatest of philosophers—until Gérard Harvey wiped the floor with him.

A. L.

THE LIMIT. By ADA LEVERSON. 6s.

Mrs Leverson is easily the daintiest and wittiest of our younger feminine writers; but she does well to call her latest masterpiece "the limit." Mrs Leverson offers us a picture of an aged, wrinkled, and bedizened Jewess with false hair and teeth, painted and whitewashed with kohl, rouge, and chalk, until there seems hardly any woman there at all. Yet not content with addiction to indiscriminate adultery and morphine, she finds pleasure in seducing young men and picking their pockets.

Fie! you can surely show us a prettier picture than that. Why not return to your earlier manner? Not necessarily the manner of "An Idyll in Bloomsbury," but you might advantageously find material in Brixton or in Bayswater.

FELIX.

THE SOUL OF THE MOOR. William Rider & Son. 2s. net.

"Success meant life! Failure—worse than death, for there would be the everlasting self-reproach! Dare I attempt the experiment?"

This sounds familiar, but, if memory serves me right, Mr Dion Clayton Calthorpe's drama continues in this strain,—“He carefully surveyed his ashen face in the tiny glass suspended over his washhand stand, then, with hasty, trembling fingers, he dipped his leaky shaving-brush into the icy water, and proceeded, at the ghastly hour of 6 a.m., TO SHAVE!”

Perhaps the fact that "My wife was very ill" accounts for the variation.

Mr Stratford D. Jolly is much too busy a man to devote much time to the "Serious study of the occult," and it is a pity he should have spent so much time upon the forty-five chapters which comprise this work, instead of upon some other subjects with which he might be more conversant.

In short, it is a flabby, gentlemanly book, which should find a ready sale among the more "goody" portion of Suburbia, the only place where the Hero could be appreciated!

Despite the author's obvious endeavour, there is absolutely nothing immoral in this book, and I can recommend it to great-grandchildren as a suitable Christmas present for their grandmother's aunt.

My congratulations to the illustrator for so thoroughly seizing the spirit of the book.

BUNCO

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CHRONICLES OF PHARMACY. By A. C. WOOTTON. Macmillan & Co. 2 vols.
21s.

The title of this work justifies itself as the reader reaches the end of the second volume. To the pharmacist it is an extremely useful book, and in a great many instances furnishes information of an interesting character, which the busy man would have difficulty in finding in pharmaceutical history. To the student of the occult it ought to appeal strongly, as the author gives a long list of drugs used in religious ceremonies in different ages, and although the present century is so much in advance, we find that the incenses and sweet odours used in ceremonial magic to-day are the same as those used in Egypt, in the worship of Isis, and in the services held in the Temple of Solomon. Mention is also made of the preparations made by the ancient alchemists which were thought to have magic power. Short biographical sketches of some of the old masters of pharmacy appear, but after Liebig we have no special mention of the pharmacists of the last century.

A interesting chapter on Poisons in History, introducing the stories of poisoners and the drugs employed, furnishes material for the budding novelist, to whom in fact the whole of this excellent work may be recommended. To the occult reader the concluding chapter on names and symbols would be of considerable service, and might be useful for reference.

The book, which is published in two volumes, is profusely illustrated, and well printed and bound. Had the author not been known as the popular editor of a pharmaceutical newspaper and an authority on all matters connecting with pharmacy, "The Chronicles" would have proved an excellent monument to his memory; unfortunately Mr Wootton died before his book left the publisher's hands.

E. WHINERAY, M.P.S.