

moneychangers. But—and this is the main thing—the style as a whole has much of nobility and force,—a biblical style with abounding colour added. There are tiny pictures full of beauty:

*The morn spread forth the golded tresses of the sun, and lo, a star still rested upon a cloud bar. And Jerusalem slept. The temples stood whited, and the market's place shewed emptied. Upon the temple's pool the morn-sky shewed, and doves bathed within the waters at its edge.*

Or of astonishing realism, as in this sketch of evening in Jerusalem:

*And night came upon the land, and tarried long within the day's hour. And when the light had come out from 'neath the dark mists, the city's ways showed empty, and waters stood pooled within the stone's opes. The market's men came then, their mantles wet, and their legs stained of dust's wet. And camels dripped, and packs, skin-covered, shed drops o'er their sides. And babes came unto the door's ope and peered without and held their hands that they wet within the mist that fell. And smoke came from out the opes and hung close unto the street's way, and men coughed. And asses backed their ears that the wet go not within, and shook their sides.*

The Oriental detail of the narrative is amazingly lavish and vivid throughout, and its general accuracy I, who am ignorant, am not disposed to question.

In its larger aspects, the story is of broad scope, and of solid structure, exception being taken to the inordinate length of many of the dialogues which have a merely cumulative value, and often fairly overweight and smother the action. This is true particularly of the earlier portions of the narrative; toward the close the method is far more rapid, and for the mortal reader, more effective. The substance of the tale need not be rehearsed here. It is built upon a striking conception which makes one of the thieves on the cross a son of the Emperor Tiberius by a Greek slave girl. Cast aside by Rome, she bears her accursed son near Bethlehem at the time of Jesus'

birth,—a spirit of hate, representing the sins of ancient humanity which Christ, the spirit of love, is to expiate and, in the end, to drive from the world. By means of this conception Rome, the incarnation of wrong, is made a living actor in the Christ-story. The chapter describing the crucifixion—a chapter of five thousand words which Mr. Yost says was dictated in a single evening—is a composition of appalling force and vividness, and an interpretation upon a high and sincere plane. I, for one, own myself converted by this story from a mood of languid curiosity about an odd “psychic” phenomenon, to a state of lively interest in the future published work of the powerful writer who, whether in or out of the flesh, goes by the name and speaks with the voice of “Patience Worth.”

*H. W. Boynton.*

## II. “THE SORRY TALE” TO A PSYCHOANALYST

To a psychoanalyst the books of “Patience Worth” would appeal merely as the automatic activities of the Unconscious of the person who has found a ouija board to be the easiest method of bringing them into consciousness. The well-known manifestations of the Unconscious are quite analogous in every way to the mental activities of the transcriber of this remarkable book. The split-off personalities, which, apart from the main conscious one, are found frequently to exist parallel with it, may well express themselves in literary or any other artistic form. A reader of the Bible and of early Christian history could easily have objectified in this manner the results of an imaginative dwelling on the sights, sounds, smells (very noticeable are the smells in *Patience Worth*, though rare in general), and on the emotions aroused by the recurrence of thoughts concerning the happenings of those times.

Two main characteristics, common enough to all normal humans, but appearing in this book in a slightly abnormal degree, are those traits studied

by psychoanalysis which are called the "mother imago" and "masochism." The first, representing an undue influence of the mother as an element in the family group, especially in children who have no knowledge of who their fathers are, and who consequently are obliged to devote to their mothers most of their thoughts concerning parentage, is seen in the character of Hate. This child, due to his fatherlessness, accepts *in toto* the implication of his name, bestowed by his vengeful mother. Another famous fatherless child is Leonardo da Vinci, the results of whose illegitimacy on his life and his art have been so penetratingly revealed by Sigmund Freud. By constant communing with the mother who has been wronged such a child absorbs her feelings of resentment and has his whole world coloured for him by this kind of phantasying. And as in Leonardo's case it works both in the Unconscious and in the consciousness of the boy. The same would be true, *mutatis mutandis*, of a girl if she did not know who her mother was and was brought up by her father alone, who constantly reverted to the faithlessness of her mother.

The masochistic trend, manifested in the descriptions of the long drouth and of the crucifixion of Christ which terminates the story, is a trait of character which sees and emphasises the savage cruelty of mankind, prolonging the miseries, for instance, of those who suffered crucifixion. A Swiss clergyman and psychoanalyst, O. Pfister, has shown the mental forces at work in the quasi-religious writings of Count Zinzendorf concerning the wounds of Christ.

There is much of literary interest in *The Sorry Tale*, but much more which is reiterated monotonously, even apart from the impossible grammar and curious interchange of parts of speech and inconsistencies in usage (e.g., "shall have" and "shall to have" in the same sentence). One wonders, too, if "Thou winds . . . bear thou to me of her voice" could ever have been used at the time of Patience Worth's alleged mundane existence.

If the book is the creation of Mrs. Curran's Unconscious, as the most modern psychology would naturally infer it to be, one regrets that there is not more in it of the highly poetical language such as occurs here and there. I instance: "And the Day drank from out the Night's chalice, and drained the star wine, and the cheek of morn burned with its gold" (which is worthy of comparison at least with the Elizabethan dramatists: "Night like a masque has entered Heaven's great hall, with thousand torches ushering the way"); and the poetic indirection of: "And when the white skins passed, lo, would the flesh o'er their knuckles whiten and their lips firm."

Our wishes to behold the miraculous, which would be gratified if this book could be proved to be the communication of a disembodied spirit, are very natural wishes, springing from a desire to be ourselves omnipotent and to annihilate, still more than we have, the limitations of time and space. But I think that modern mental science, whose conservativeness has combated even the deductions of psychoanalysis concerning the working of the unconscious mind, can find ample explanation both for the appearance of this book and for the desire for the bit of omnipotence which its issuance demonstrates. We do not need to suppose that it is the utterance of the spirit of a lady who lived a couple of hundred years ago, if we can show that it is merely the utterance of the Unconscious of a lady living at the present time. Only a thorough psychoanalysis of the medium will be able to show this, and, without such analytic study of the person who held the ouija board, all scientific measures will not be taken, and therefore the spiritistic claims of the book will not be proved.

If, for instance, it could be shown by means of a psychoanalytic study of Mrs. Curran herself, that all the language, the images, the motives and the trends shown in *The Sorry Tale* were a part of her unconscious mental life, and it is quite possible that such is the

case, it would be wholly adequate as an explanation of the motives and means shown in the production of the manuscript. Until this most modern of scientific instruments of precision, psychoanalysis, is tried on the communicator of the story, and has failed, it will be impossible to say with the fullest amount of truth of which we are capable, that the book is not the outward manifestation of the working of the contemporary lady's unconscious mental activities.

There are many compositions of greater or less literary merit which have been produced by persons in a dream state and have not been considered to have value as evidence for spiritism, and I do not see any reason to posit a spiritistic origin for the present production just because it is longer than some others. The psychical research societies have not categorically done so for the elaborate automatic writings of a contemporary Englishwoman, Mrs. Verrall, some of which are in Latin and others in Greek. Psychoanalysis would in all probability be able to reduce to known natural causes what in "Patience Worth" seems supernatural. Whether it was able to do so or not, spiritism is no more final an explanation for the present phenomena than it was the final result of chemistry to say that air is an irreducible element.

*Wilfrid Lay.*

### III. MR. POLLY BEING A BISHOP\*

Our last glimpse of Mr. Britling, it will be recalled, showed him musing earnestly upon his surprising discovery of God, and suddenly perceiving that his supreme duty was to pass that discovery along: "Of course I must write about Him. I must tell all my world of Him," he cries. "And before the coming of the true King, the inevitable King, the King who is present whenever just men foregather, this blood-stained rubbish of the ancient world, these puny kings and tawdry emperors, these wily politicians and artful lawyers, these men who claim and grab and trick and com-

pel, these war makers and oppressors, will presently shrivel and pass—like paper thrust into a flame." We do not doubt the honest ardour of the transformed and exultant Britling, who is, of course, Mr. Wells's idea of Mr. Wells to date. It is no small thing to have invented a working God; and the inventor's generosity in giving his formula to the world is discounted by no fears of the patent office. He is as sure that he has found the one new thing as that he has found the one true thing. The world must not lack it a moment longer. Therefore, with *Mr. Britling* still best-selling at a great rate, came the vigorous "follow-up" of *God the Invisible King*. Vigorous rather than illuminating, since Mr. Wells's new God too plainly sorts himself as merely the latest of the Wellsian nostrums. Only the other day our prophet owned allegiance, with Benham in *The Research Magnificent*, to another "King Invisible, Lord of Truth and Sane Loyalty," head of the sublime band of natural aristocrats whom he then foresaw as rulers of the world. That monarch, with his established régime, possessed elements at least of authority and consistency such as his supplanter strangely lacks. Mr. Wells attributes militancy to his God, but leaves him nothing to fight with. In effect He appears the kindly well-wisher, the indulgent confidant, of a race which is to go ahead very much as it pleases, every man for himself and the devil, or the Teuton, take the hindmost.

How feeble and fruitless this conception is Mr. Wells has now taken pains to enforce by example. To the above-quoted list of doomed tyrants and charlatans *The Soul of a Bishop* adds the clergy—any clergy which professes any sort of creed or joint belief. They, too, must shrivel and pass, with all that system of organised religion which they represent. And for the simon-pure clergyman, the straight goods, the whole thing in a nutshell—whom but a bishop might fairly be chosen by any open-minded investigator? Here, at all events, is our Bishop of Princhester: let

\*The Soul of a Bishop. By H. G. Wells. New York: The Macmillan Company.