

ner of Jesus of Nazareth—not as God, but emphatically as the Saviour of the world. Synchronously with these two “testimonies,” appeared the arch-Pagan, George Moore, who in a long book full of sacrilege, nevertheless showed that he, too, was captured by the spell of Jesus Christ; had become obsessed by the greatest character in all history. The Hound of Heaven is after big game these days, and is successfully disturbing the converts where the most resourceful foxes had made their nests.

William Archer, like Lord Morley, is an orthodox, stout-hearted, uncompromising agnostic. I admire the serene austerity of such a mind, knowing that it is inspired by two of the noblest passions—love of truth and love of mankind. If I did not find it more reasonable to believe in Christianity than to reject it, I would go over to the high and dry, simon-pure agnostics, and not take refuge in any invisible god-ghost who was just the coinage of my brain. As a rule—Lord Morley and Mr. Archer are exceptions—no persons are more credulous than those who refuse to believe in Christianity; a fresh instance of which is seen in the author of *God the Invisible King*. He is not only the author of the book, but of the Thing. Mr. Archer, in attacking Mr. Wells, makes many palpable hits; and I, who agree with neither of them, find the fight highly entertaining. One remark made by the critic goes to the root of the matter. “It is not quite clear why Mr. Wells should accept so large a part of the Christian ethic and yet refuse to identify his Invisible King with Christ.” Mr. Wells will convert no agnostics; and as for me, why on earth or in heaven should I go a-hunting for an Invisible King when I have a better One Who was Visible?

I have heard Mr. Archer’s book described as cynically and ironically humorous. I do not find it so. It has flashes of wit and humour, but it is a noble-minded book, coming from a noble-minded man. Nor is his attitude toward Mr. Wells coldly unsympathetic. Mr.

Archer knows that the only way to read *God the Invisible King* is with deep sympathy for the author’s idealism. The restless, bustling man seems for the moment to have found peace of mind. The only thing I fear for him is his cocksureness. The powerful and splendid novel was called *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*; the treatise on theology might be called *Mr. Britling Sees Through It*. Mr. Wells has once more disproved Maeterlinck’s statement that the dog is the only creature that has found his God. And Mr. Wells’s God bears such numerous and striking resemblances to Jesus of Nazareth that he may ultimately come to see that the One whom he worships was declared unto us a long time ago by St. Paul. It is vain for him to kick against the pricks.

Mr. Archer has performed some valuable services in this little book. He has once more shown us his own clear, honest mind—and I salute him! He has shown us that Mr. Wells’s scheme is nothing but a crude form of pragmatism; and pragmatism, under its very terms, is without absolute value, of no importance except to him who believes in it. It will never overcome the world. And finally, Mr. Archer has shown, perhaps unconsciously, that if you really want to worship God—which he does not—it is better to worship a Person than to worship an insubstantial, baseless fabric of your own social ideas.

William Lyon Phelps.

II

MICHAEL MONAHAN’S “NEW ADVENTURES”*

Michael Monahan ends *New Adventures* with, “I trust the valiant reader who has come so far with me may reckon not vainly that he has gleaned a few grains of wheat by the way, now that we have reached the end.” Undoubtedly there are grains of wheat scattered through the forty-five essays which the book contains, but there is a deal of

**New Adventures*. By Michael Monahan. New York: George H. Doran Company.

tares that now and again appears so dominating that it rather overshadows the wheat. Mr. Monahan possesses the sometimes envious quality of putting his reader out of patience owing to convictions he often arrives at, especially in those essays which treat of sex. Was it not Nietzsche who declared, "Convictions are prisons?" Mr. Monahan has actually built up dungeons about himself on more than one topic that he has not sufficiently explored or traversed in an inauspicious manner. Arguing from false premises is the most common fault of the essayist, and why should an essayist argue anyway? Mr. Monahan need not, for he possesses a ripe and mellow style, not too unctuous, and an apt humour that frequently lights up his pages to the great enjoyment of the reader. One suspects that the matter in *New Adventures* originally saw the light in some of the author's little magazines, *The Phoenix*, for instance, and therefore the fact that they treat of all sorts of subjects in an unrelated manner, from Balzac's love-affairs to Bermuda and the lure of the circus, is understandable.

One might ignore the author's paragraphs about sex were they not so frequent and conspicuous. His maudlin sentimentalities about the little white feet on Broadway, his excessive interest in Karin Michaelis—a nine-days' wonder who faded out of the inconstant mind of the world some years ago, his dredgings into the illicit love-affairs of Balzac, and especially the uncalled-for chapter entitled *False Youth*, form too prominent a bulk of the total content of *New Adventures* to be wholly passed over. *False Youth* is inexcusable, for it is, in effect, a warning to all husbands to watch their wives when they reach a certain age. This application of the Dangerous Age in promiscuous fashion to all mankind is less vulgar than silly and far-fetched.

Omitting the lapses, such as the aforementioned subjects which George Jean Nathan could handle with Gallic *esprit* and about as much value, and the ba-

nalities and frayed truisms that occasionally pop their smirking faces up, there is much to give genuine pleasure in *New Adventures*. For the most part the essays on *Manahatta* are pregnant with suggestion of both prevailing and vanished atmospheres in New York. Michael Monahan loves the Big City and he views it through a golden glow of appreciation. When a man reaches fifty years the city of his youth takes on a magical colour through the idealising vista of Time. Even for the author ghosts walk the streets as any who read the essay named for that species of supernatural visitant may learn. Only Michael Monahan's ghosts are real people, mere shells of spirits that once roused him to joy and laughter. Which brings us to the suggestive quality of his work.

We find him a lover of mankind except for a slightly jaundiced view of women. He has found Life good in the main, for it has brought him many things. He sighs occasionally, for he suffers as all sensitive spirits do; the nostalgia for youth will not forsake him. His suggestion that life has never brought him friends may be taken as a passing mood, for he refers to more than one person in a loving manner.

Two sketches in the book deserve special attention, *Nocturne* and *Yearnings*. They cannot be called short stories, although the first-named by a stretch of the imagination may be so catalogued. *Nocturne* I consider the best thing in the book. It is just a sketch of a middle-aged husband and wife dreaming before the fire. The old dictum that "we bring our children into the world and they drive us out of it" receives a vivid, though rather sentimental, expression. Things like this were written back in the 1890's. *Yearning* is, for the most part, the rather amusing letter of a great author to a feminine admirer. It presents the old plea, Let me love you at a distance and the ideal will remain unspoiled.

The critical articles scattered throughout the book do not appeal to me as pos-

sessing any intrinsic value, although the measure of Balzac is taken with some erudition. They are in all cases appreciations and not in reality criticism at all. James Whitcomb Riley and Richard Le Gallienne are among those treated. Mr. Monahan goes on at some length to state how nice they are and purrs about them contentedly. The homely talent of Riley and the lyric quality of Richard Le Gallienne's verse are well known, so much so that chapters of unrestricted laudation cannot either help or injure their fame.

New Adventures finds its chief value in its mellow style and smoothly flowing presentation of the moods of a sensitive and partly dreaming man. Sometimes introspective, often pregnant with thought of social importance, they succeed by their variety.

Herbert S. Gorman.

III

WOLF VON SCHIERBRAND'S "AUSTRIA-HUNGARY"*

The Dual Monarchy of Austria-Hungary, a factor always of delightful or embarrassing uncertainty to those who play the game of "high" politics in Europe, has in this World-War been assigned, possibly unconsciously, to the ungrateful rôle of the unimportant person who makes the opening speeches in a play, and who then retires, once the audience is seated, in favour of the actors of the leading parts. And yet this unfortunate player usually is obliged to remain until the last curtain falls and to keep occupied without getting much attention from the other side of the footlights. The immediate and direct cause of the explosion, long awaited by those who read history and economics with intelligence, is almost forgotten now. We Americans particularly are so apt to forget what has happened yesterday or the day before and have a happy faculty of pouncing judgment-wise on any event with no hindering sense of its relation

to what went before. But there may be some of us who are really interested in the most westerly of Europe's great Eastern problems, that queer seething cauldron, of Balkan and "South-the-Danube" peoples, of which Austria-Hungary is the most coherent expression. To those this stately, painstaking volume will come very welcome, for it gives a vast deal of information, and information, furthermore, which aims to be correct and is quite free from the intentional bias actuating most "war books" on either side. In fact, the writer begins his labour by disclaiming any desire to send out a "war book," and his short remarks on the subject of this sort of literature are justified. His work and the years of study that preceded it were begun before the cloud had settled, and it was an accident of fate that kept him at the heart of the trouble once the storm came on. And yet, naturally, subsequent events have made the book of greater value, and particularly of greater value to those who are trying to get a true line on what has happened, and what is happening, that they may more intelligently await what will happen.

We have the poet's word for it that "East is East and West is West, and never the Twain shall meet." And yet in one of the distinctly European countries, the chief city of which has been for years a second Paris of gay modern life and a second Paris in vanity-creation to deck Europe's daughters, East and West have met and mingled in a way that finally threw the last spark into a powder magazine. Twenty different nationalities, belonging to three or four of the great races, twenty different nationalities, many with an old culture and each with its separate literary tongue, acknowledge a more or less shaky allegiance to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, or rather to the Hapsburg family as Emperors of Austria and Kings of Hungary. Eight of these twenty tongues are recognised official languages and official documents for general consumption, such as paper money for instance, and must have the important notices printed in these

*Austria-Hungary, the Polyglot Empire. By Wolf von Schierbrand. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company.