

wrack behind for the common materialist to play with. That pious unbeliever, Dr. Johnson, has had much credit for the kick at a stone with which he refuted Berkeley. But science to-day, consciously or unconsciously, is giving Berkeley an unexpected revenge. The material world is vanishing under our feet; and the only reality left to us, fundamentally, is a spiritual reality. It is in this direction that all the works of Sir Oliver Lodge are pointing.

It is a mistake to regard his "Man and the Universe," or his "Making of Man," or his "Ether and Reality" as merely popular expositions of subjects that he—and other contemporary men of science—have dealt with more completely in their own technical and more obscure language elsewhere. These lucid volumes are in fact attempts at a summing up; attempts to get at the core of the whole matter; attempts to deliver, in the great lucid generalisations at which all science and philosophy aim, the universal truths underlying all the particular discoveries of our time. He is thus doing for our age what the great Greek philosophers did for theirs; and it is at least possible that his works will be read for the same reason when all the more technical volumes of modern science have been superseded. For he points to a future correlation of science, philosophy and religion with an earnestness of purpose and a sincerity of conviction that place him among the prophets of our time; and he does this with a range of knowledge that cannot of course silence the cheap impertinences of folly and ignorance (even Newton was unable to do that), but is quite unmatched in the scientific literature of our age. His answer to the crude materialism of Hæckel—in such naïve works as "The Riddle of the Universe"—was lucid enough; but to any man who knows the difference between obscurity and depth, it was one of the subtlest and most overwhelming replies ever made by a scientific philosopher to a pseudo-scientist. Of his attempts to pierce through the darkest veil of all I can say nothing except that his open-minded research has nothing in common with the unscientific credulity of lesser men that has made the subject so difficult to approach. But before we turn a deaf ear to this true pioneer of

science we should read again the great chapter on "Natural Supernaturalism" in "Sartor Resartus": "Ghosts! There are nigh a thousand million walking the earth openly at noontide; some half hundred have vanished from it, some half hundred have arisen in it, ere thy watch ticks once . . . we are, in very deed, ghosts! These limbs are dust and shadow; a shadow-system gathered round our Me; wherein through some moments or years the Divine essence is to be revealed in the flesh." Is it folly to treat these things as a reality? Is it folly to ask "whence" and "whither"? Sir Oliver Lodge is pointing at least to something like the belief of the greatest religious thought in a communion beyond this world. There is a profound hypocrisy in much of the modern "belief" that pretends to rise superior to reality, in art and religion, and prefers to blow dream-bubbles. Modern science may be driving the hamadryad from the tree; but it will yet lead the world back to the Eternal Power in whom we live and move and have our being.

Some of Sir Oliver Lodge's experiments may have been as fruitless as Darwin's attempts to discover sensibility to sound in plants by having a 'cello played to them in his garden. But only the fool will scoff at the thousand experiments that must fail before the one that may succeed. One of the greatest men of science in this or any age did recently silence such a scoffer, in the midst of his bland assumptions that nothing could ever be discovered of the realms beyond the shadow-system, by Sir Oliver Lodge or anyone else. The scoffer had been boasting of his "agnosticism," and it was with a certain grim irony that the greatest living astronomer turned to him and struck him dumb with the single quiet remark: "*Don't be too sure.*"

Whatever the results of those experiments may be, the fact remains that by his great practical achievements in other fields, as well as by his lucid exposition of his philosophy, Sir Oliver Lodge is one of those presidents of the Royal Society who will be a shining name for posterity; and that he will be remembered as one of the few men who, in a very dark period of transition, had a clear vision of the light beyond it.

## OUR IMMORTAL JANE.\*

BY MARY WEBB (Mrs. H. B. L. Webb).

IT must be, to most of us, a keen regret that we can never meet Jane Austen, except in a problematical heaven. And what would the angels think of that trenchant wit, that ladylike Falstaffianism? For she had a kind of elfin ribaldry. Would she sit at the Celestial Banquet as she did at the Hampshire tea-parties, with a perfectly solemn face and an infinitely amused mind? There, where the hymn depressingly says, "no sabbath is o'er," would she inaugurate with some officiating angel the kind of cat-and-mouse game which she played with Mr. Collins, following his foibles with unescapable keenness and gentle ridicule through the æons of eternity? Humorists are kittle cattle, and Jane Austen is our greatest woman humorist—if not our only one. The Brontës had surprisingly

little humour, and George Eliot's was of the obvious rural type. Mrs. Poyser is funny, the Tulliver aunts are quaint, but they do not satisfy; they have not the subtle completeness of Jane Austen's people. What is there about Mr. Collins or Mrs. Allen that we do not know? Mrs. Poyser comes on to the stage and says her say, but Mr. Collins is with us like a familiar friend. It would have been impossible for Charlotte Brontë, who had humour, while Emily seems to have had none, to create Mr. Collins, though she knew the country cleric well. She was too heavily shrouded by the Tragic Muse. What impish things Jane Austen would have done with some of her people! In no sense a poet, she has almost a horror of the deeper things of life. She is reassuringly mundane. To read her is like turning home in darkness, leaving the planetary systems wheeling on unknown ways, finding fire and

\* "The Novels of Jane Austen." In 5 volumes. Illustrated. 25s. (Oxford University Press.)



**Jane Austen.**

After John Zoffany, R.A.  
In the possession of Admiral Sir Ernest Rice, K.C.B.

candles alight, curtains drawn and supper ready. When we are afraid, after excursions into mystery with the poets, Jane Austen will comfort us. What has Miss Bates to do with death and judgment? Does she want to be in tune with the infinite? She does not. She wants to put on her best gown and go to supper at the Woodhouses'. She wants, if she can circumvent her host, to have a really *good* supper. If everybody kept in this key, how few suicides there would be!

It is one of the most precious things about Jane Austen that she maintains absolute normality and yet is never dull, because, although choosing to remain on the surface, she is an excellent diver. She knows Miss Bates as her Maker does. Many writers of comedies of manners keep to the surface because they cannot dive. They know the outside only of their people, therefore one is bored in a moment. What a pity none of the Miss Bateses in real life knew that they were being so deeply understood! Or did they possibly feel it dimly, blossoming in Jane's human, tonic atmosphere? So by poetic justice she would have her reward, though hidden by the cloudy years from her equals—Meredith and Dickens, Chaucer and Shakespeare, who would no doubt have Bowdlerised his conversation before such a virginal boon-companion. Her rapier wit would have delighted them all, though Dickens's humour is of a different quality, less subtle, less tart, apt, when he allows sentiment to supervene, to be a little mushy, like over-ripe melons. Jane has the stimulus of pickled damsons, which require a certain awareness, while you could eat melon in your sleep.

Though she was lonely—as the great always are—yet she really possessed her chosen souls, who flowered for her, petal by petal, in their shrewdness or inanity, while Jane observed (with pleasure) that Mr. Bennet would never stop teasing his wife until he himself stopped, and (with glee) that if you looked into the furthest recesses of Miss Bates's soul, there was nothing else there at all but the single desire to go to the Woodhouses' and have as good a meal as might be.

What Miss Austen, beneath her perfectly correct manner, thought of the God Who created so many faces, so many minds, and all with no more in their souls than Miss Bates had, one is afraid to imagine. But if the essence of creative reward is to be appreciated, the Almighty received it in full measure from Jane Austen. Not the finest shade of His tender or cynical humour escaped her, and she was equal to the puzzles He set her. She knew exactly what Lady Bertram would say on a hot summer day: "It was as much as I could bear. Sitting and calling to Pug, and keeping him from the flower-beds was almost too much for me." She knows what Mr. Bennet will say when, for the third time in a few weeks, a suitor has come for one of his daughters.

Mr. Bennet, retreating to his library, quite exhausted with the incursions of Eros, remarks,

"If any young men come for Mary or Kitty, send them in, for I am quite at leisure."

And on another occasion she gets this whimsical gentleman's manner to perfection. He has been teasing his family by refusing to call on Mr. Bingley. Mrs. Bennet is exasperated and scolds the unfortunate Kitty for coughing, because she dare not scold Mr. Bennet. Whereat Mr. Bennet, in his inimitable way, divulges the fact that he *has* called on Mr. Bingley, and adds,



**Jane Austen,**  
1775-1817.



as he leaves the room, "fatigued with the raptures of his wife,"

"Now, Kitty, you may cough as much as you chuse."

And what other writer but Jane Austen would give so sincerely the thought of Elizabeth when her lover returned after she believed him lost to her? Paling, glowing, she yet curbs her mind—demure, shrewd, unconquered.

"Let me first see," says Elizabeth, "how he behaves; it will then be early enough for expectation."

Elizabeth and her father are never just people in a book. They and Mr. Woodhouse were probably Jane's favourite characters, though Mr. Woodhouse should possibly be classed with the more laughable people—Mrs. Norris, Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Jennings and the unsurpassable Miss Bates. Only Mr. Bennet and Elizabeth and a few more are honoured by serious treatment. To Mr. Bennet she bequeathed one of her own most individual gifts, that of being at once quiet and deadly. No doubt Jane "suffered fools" in daily life with as imperturbable a manner as Mr. Bennet, of whose behaviour in family squabbles his wife's diatribes give a vivid picture. His ways, his tricks of speech, how familiar they are, like those of a loved father! For Mr. Bennet, for all his irony, is intensely lovable, and is loved by his creator, who revels in shutting him into his study, no doubt with some choice tobacco, away from the vortex of the household. If there is one thing Jane detests more than hypocrisy, it is "busyness." She heaps more derision on a fusser like Mrs. Norris than on anyone except a Mr. Collins or a Sir John Middleton, who was "loud in his praise of every song, and as loud in his conversation while every song lasted"; who also, when asked to describe his friend, could only reiterate, "He had the nicest little black bitch of a pointer I ever saw."

Stupidity she cannot tolerate.

"Mary wished to say something very sensible, but knew not how."

"His talents could not have recommended him at any time."

"Can he be a sensible man, sir?" asks Elizabeth of her father.

"No, my dear; I think not. I have great hopes of finding him quite the reverse. I am impatient to see him."

But we have strayed from Mr. Woodhouse, the melancholy hypochondriac, whose daughter "hoped, by the help of backgammon, to get her father tolerably through the evening." Mr. Woodhouse's firm conviction is that "the sooner every party breaks up, the better." Nobody, after all, thinks Mr. Woodhouse, should take anything but gruel for supper. If they *must*, then let it be "one of our *small* eggs . . . a *little* bit of tart—a *very* little bit, I do not advise the custard."

Mr. Woodhouse's dining-room and parlour are among the best of Jane Austen's interiors, in describing and implying which she has few equals. She was not fond of nature. The mute but intense passion of the Brontës for their sombre hills was unknown to her. She regarded picnics as "parties to eat cold ham and chicken out of doors." And though she allowed her heroine "the exquisite enjoyment of air on the summits," it was only in order that Marianne might sprain her ankle and be carried

home with the utmost gentlemanliness by Willoughby. When she says "it was moonlight, so everybody was full of engagements," she probably means simply that the roads being what they were, people could only go about in moonlight. She had the circumscribed outlook of her time, and while Turner would have left her cold, a pleasant interior could rouse her to enthusiasm, as in the description of Barton Cottage, of which Mrs. Dashwood's only criticism was: "I could wish the stairs were handsome."

In domesticities and social revelries she excels. How she can thrill us when, having got the ideal young gentleman and the perfect young lady into a comfortable drawing-room, she says, "The instrument was unlocked."

If she said, "The mastiff was unchained," it could not imply more devastating consequences to the young gentleman, for it means that the young lady is going to sing; she might even accompany herself on the harp. Then there were stately revels in the Pump Room, formal calls, complicated dinners of many courses at the ungodly hour of five. These people were unaffectedly interested in their dinner. In a cookery book, published in 1808, are to be seen plans of the various courses at a formal dinner. Each course consisted of twenty-five dishes, and in one course were included pheasant, smelts, collared pork, lampreys, roast hare, "moonshine pudding," veal and "globes of gold web with mottoes in them."

No doubt Jane knew these mottoes and enjoyed them and the solemnly splendid dishes. This type of life may partly account for the solidarity of her work. She has stamina. Independent, robust, she expresses feminine intuitions with masculine brevity. Her girls are real, for all their primness. So are her men, in spite of their curious clothes. Her d'Arcy and Elizabeth, sparring, are like Beatrice and Benedick. For those finding life terrible, Jane Austen is salvation. Death waits, eternity presses in. We weep and are afraid. Have we not wandered far in the dark night? Have we not lost our loves?

What does she do? She lights the candles and sets out her rich dishes of wit and humour.

"Don't cry!" she says. "Don't let Emily Brontë sing:

"Cold in the earth, and the deep snow piled above thee."

"Not *long* living, but *right* living; not death, but the manner of it, are important. Above all, let us be well-bred."

She herself died with serene courage, and so lived that "no one could be often in her company without feeling a strong desire for her friendship." Sweet-voiced, delicate of complexion, slender—she must have been very charming. Perhaps no eight words could express her so well as those on the facsimile title page:

" 'SENSE AND SENSIBILITY.' "

"A NOVEL.

"BY A LADY."

The publishers are to be congratulated on the helpful notes, good print and delightful illustrations. The only criticism is that the paper is too good, refusing ingress to its firmly welded pages until after a long struggle with the aching wrist of the eager reader.

# THE BOOKMAN PRIZE COMPETITIONS.

FEBRUARY, 1927.

*Answers to these Competitions (each on a separate sheet bearing the name and address of the sender) should be forwarded not later than the 14th of the month to*

"The Prize Page," THE BOOKMAN, Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd., Warwick Square, London, E.C.4.

*Colonial and foreign readers please note that Competitions II, IV and V are the same each month, and that Competition I will be for the best original lyric until three months' notice of a change has been given.*

SPECIAL NOTICE.—Competitors must please keep copies of their MSS.; the Editor cannot undertake to return them.

I.—A PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA is offered for the best original lyric.

II.—A PRIZE OF HALF A GUINEA is offered for the best quotation from English verse applicable to any review or the name of any author or book appearing in this number of THE BOOKMAN. Preference will be given to quotations of a humorous nature.

III.—A PRIZE OF THREE NEW BOOKS is offered for the best short quotation from English Literature, in prose or verse, applicable to an attack of Influenza.

IV.—A PRIZE OF HALF A GUINEA is offered for the best review, in not more than one hundred words, of any recently published book. Competitors should give the names of Authors and Publishers at head of review.

V.—A copy of THE BOOKMAN will be sent *post free* for twelve months to the sender of the best suggestion for THE BOOKMAN Competitions. The Editor reserves the right to use any suggestions submitted.

We also select for printing :

BLUE AND GOLD.

Blue hills, blue skies, blue seas—  
Sweet in my sight are these ;  
But over all else I prize  
Blue eyes.

Gold dawn, gold eve, gold Fall—  
These do my soul enthrall ;  
Yet do I deem more fair—  
Gold hair.

Memories deep I hold  
Of blue eyes and curls gold—  
Of joy, all joys above—  
Your love.

(Liam P. Clancy, 26, Parliament Hill, N.W.3.)

We also select for special commendation the lyrics by J. Kilmeny Keith (Westcliff-on-Sea), Ivan Adair

## RESULTS OF COMPETITIONS FOR JANUARY.

I.—THE PRIZE for the best original lyric is divided and HALF A GUINEA each awarded to Anthony Gilbert, 6, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, W.C.2, and T. Culshaw, Mawdesley, near Ormskirk, Lancs, for the following :

### STREETS.

Bond Street is a lady fine, decked in silk and lace,  
Regent Street's a trollop with the paint upon her face,  
Mayfair's full of shiny hats and dames of high degree,  
But Fleet Street is a gentleman and he's the man for me.

Fleet Street knows a song or two and sings 'em with a will,  
Fleet Street has a tavern where a man may drink his fill,  
He has heard a merry yarn—who cares if it be true ?—  
Fleet Street's heart is full of faiths that he will share with you.

He has tasted poverty, hunger and distress,  
Many aching wounds are hid beneath his shabby dress,  
Gallant is his company with Shakespeare at their head,  
Sowing seeds of Beauty that shall bloom when they are dead.

City roads are paved with gold—but smoky is the air ;  
Rich and proud is Kensington, aloof stands Berkeley Square,  
Where lords and ladies simper in a world beyond our ken ;  
But Fleet Street is a jolly chap who knows the hearts of men.

ANTHONY GILBERT.

### DEAR EYES.

Dear eyes, dear eyes that look at me  
So full of love, so tenderly !  
My heart (it once was mine) now lies  
Lost in the deep wells of those eyes.

My hopes—and they were winged with fire—  
Lie prone beside my tuneless lyre ;  
My soul beside those wells must lie,  
And drink its fill, or thirsting die.

T. CULSHAW.



John Barrymore as Hamlet.

"From Confessions of an Actor." By John Barrymore (Robert Holden).  
Reviewed in this Number.