

Books of Special Interest

A New Utopia

MAN'S WORLD. By CHARLOTTE HALDANE. London. Chatto & Windus. 1926.

Reviewed by ERNEST SUTHERLAND BATES

THE announcement of a new Utopia will perhaps not arouse any overwhelming enthusiasm in the majority of readers. But this Utopia has points of real novelty: in the first place, it is not written by H. G. Wells; in the second place, it describes a scheme of society which—or something like it—may probably come into existence within the next thousand years or so. Starting from the inextinguishable premise that political power in the modern world is ultimately dependent upon modern science, although the scientists themselves have up to date been content to remain the slaves of industry, Mrs. Haldane imagines them to be roused to political self-consciousness through the work of a great leader; another World War, which leaves the power of destruction in their hands, gives them their chance; a scientific autocracy, centralized in the metropolitan cities of "Nucleus" and "Centrosome," obtains control of the political fortunes of the whole white race.

What happens to the rest of the world we are not told; strips of artificial and impassable desert, constantly guarded, protect the chosen whites from possible incursions by the Black or Yellow Oxen of inferior races. Safe from outside interference, society is reorganized on a thoroughly scientific basis. Every trace of democracy is done away with; the rule of the expert is established in all branches of government and industry; education becomes entirely materialistic; religion disappears; the individual and the family are absorbed in the community. Determination of sex has been discovered, and every month the government allots the number of males and females to be conceived in each locality. Women are divided into two classes: those who enter the career of "vocational motherhood," who alone are permitted to bear children, and the "neuters" who are "immunized" medically and are free to devote

themselves to professional careers or to become licensed courtesans in charge of love-making and all the other arts, "entertainers" as they are called with at least a better right than those extraordinarily boresome individuals who at present bear the title.

Into this model world is born Christopher, a belated romanticist and mystic, who fights ineffectively against the standardization all about him and at last, utterly defeated, sails away on his aeroplane into the void. Another prospective rebel, a woman who declines to choose between vocational motherhood and neuterhood, finds that through personal influence with the authorities she can avoid the issue, and her rebellion ignominiously collapses. Scientific stabilization has the last word, as far as Mrs. Haldane is concerned. A little further progress and this society will have attained its goal in the completely unconscious life of a well-ordered human ant-hill. And then, the disconsolate reader may reflect, an eruption of the barbarians from beyond the impassable deserts may sweep these intolerable Nucleusians and Centrosomites from the earth, and enter upon the path of scientific progress in their turn.

Psychical Research

PSYCHICAL RESEARCH, SCIENCE AND RELIGION. By STANLEY DE BRATH. New York: George H. Doran. 1926. \$2.50.

SCIENTIFIC HUMANISM. By LOTHROP STODDARD. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1926. \$2.

Reviewed by WOODBRIDGE RILEY
Vassar College

ONE curious effect of the literature of psychical research is that the more one reads it the less convincing it seems. Considering the fact that the brain is necessary for thought, that matter and mind are somehow connected, there is nothing inherently improbable in telepathy or thought transference. But when the so-called evidences are presented conviction does not follow. Coincidence, association of ideas, community of interests and the like tend to

explain away one of the very fundamentals of the psychic researcher. The author here refers to the classics of the "metapsychic," the latter being the official term adopted to designate all investigation outside normal psychology. But readings of books like Frederick Meyer's "Human Personality and the Survival of Bodily Death" and the voluminous "Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research" makes one more and more sceptical. The climax is reached in referring to Alfred Russel Wallace's "My Life." Wallace, co-discoverer with Darwin of the principle of natural selection, was a great scientist, but that did not prevent his having a water-tight compartment in his brain in which were stored his "Spiritualistic Experiences in England and America." A rereading of these experiences leads one to the conclusions of the committee recently investigating the "Margery" case in Boston. The verdict was "not proven" on the part of the scientists concerned, and "trickery" on the part of the magician Houdini who claimed that he could produce all the phenomena by sleight of hand and his "magic" cabinet. Such phenomena are the same old stock in trade which Wallace considered proofs of "survival," namely materializations of living forms, some of which are personal; hyper-physical photographs of deceased persons; written messages on the photographic plate and otherwise; personal and impersonal predictions; messages automatically written purporting to be from such persons, and visions of the dying.

Now Stanley De Brath calls these "facts" which have been severally and definitely substantiated from the scientific standpoint. The same claims were made a generation ago in the palmy days of Spiritualism, but the Seybert Commission on Spiritualism of the University of Pennsylvania came to similar negative conclusions as to the actuality of these phenomena. Indeed some of the scientists concerned learned how to reproduce mind readings, table tippings and materialization as skilfully as the followers of the spirit-rapping Fox Sisters. The only difference is that this generation has new names for the old ways of thinking. Mind reading, or lucidity, is called cryptesthesia, table tipping, or mechanical action at a distance is telekinesis, and materialization calls in ectoplasm, or the "formation of divers objects, which in most cases seem to emerge from a human body and take on the semblance of material realities—clothing, veils, and living bodies."

To any one who has attended the ordinary commercial séance mind reading appears to be that kind of psychological "fishing" which Professor Joseph Jastrow has so well described in his "Fact and Fable in Psychology." So with phenomena of telekinesis, from those of the discredited Madame Blavatsky to the unverified reports of the Irish investigator, Professor Crawford. But ectoplasm,—is that metapsychic, or simply the clever ejection of some organic secretion or flimsy material like a bit of tulle? The photographs here submitted awaken immediate doubt. The frontispiece of an ectoplasmic face is apparently that of a staring French doll; the ectoplasmic cloud looks as if the plate had been light struck, the portrait of Dr. Geley (deceased) resembles a double exposure. Indeed, as an amateur photographer recently remarked, there are at least two dozen ways in which "spirit" photographs can be faked.

In contrast with this book which becomes less convincing the more details are added Lothrop Stoddard's work is of so loose a texture, and so full of logical gaps that it carries no conviction at all. For a medley of trite phrases, rhetorical questions and commonplace quotations read this passage: "A new age is at hand. Its dawning lights the sky. What is that new age to be? Will it witness a fresh flowering of the human spirit?—a great advance along the path of progress? Or will the rose tints of dawn be overcast by clouds heralding a day of storm and stress and closing in the night of another Dark Age?" Such are the queries, it is explained, which today stir forward-looking minds, but to them the author gives no answer except pages of references to recent works like Wiggam's "New Decalogue of Science," Robinson's "Mind in the Making," Fielding's "The Cave Man Within Us," and Schiller's "Tantalus, or the Future of Man." We are grateful for this reading list but it seems to throw little light on "The Perilous Present," "The Split in the Camp of Progress," "The Heart and Head Quarrel," to mention only a few acts in what might be called the Follies of 1925 on the stage of Scientific Humanism. To judge from equally high sounding titles of his other books this writer is a perfect impresario of vague generalizations.



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Foreign Literature

Werfel Among the Saints

PAULUS UNTER DEN JUDEN VON FRANZ WERFEL. Vienna: Paul Szolnay. 1926.

Reviewed by PIERRE LOVING

IF Bernard Shaw ever writes the legend of Jesus in dramatic form, as he is rumored to be doing at present, he will, one hazards, make it viable to his own public, a public that is at once sophisticated and simple, by a leaven of humor, wit, reason, and satire. He will intermix timeliness and abolish the strangeness which invariably accompanies distance by holding in solution as it were history itself. The solution may in the end be so powerful that as we have seen in a number of Shaw's plays, it will destroy the core of the legend, giving us back chiefly a certain unfading truth about ourselves.

Now Franz Werfel in writing "Paul Among the Jews" has severely avoided almost all of these elements and for a good reason. He wished, evidently, to produce a sort of cultural drama which, when read or played, would be as beautifully simple as an unwritten chapter out of the Acts. He sought, in addition, to portray through Saul of Tarsus, Gamaliel, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Chanan, the rebellious son of the High Priest, Marullus, the Procurator, Frisius, Simon Peter, James, the Sanhedrin—all historical characters—a crucial moment in the history of Judaism and so in the course of the world. His concern mainly was to create drama and he knew that drama lay in making these persons simple and human.

But the drama was in effect already created, prepared for his hand. He has neither arbitrarily juggled fact nor tortured or invented situations. Neither have spurious glamour and a false romantic appeal, which distance lends, been used by the dramatist, and if the people live it is because, despite the remoteness of the dramatic incident, the speech they employ, the sadness of a passing culture and religion, are brought poignantly close to us. It is no mean achievement, for one thing, to have used history as a tool and to have purposed that tool—shaped, warped, and refined in the first place by the historian's mind—for the destruction of its own edge, historical bias itself. Werfel is interested in men as men, whatever the web of circumstance in which they happen to be caught. Shaw in *Saint Joan* makes us sense and touch at every moment of the play, the historical process, the give-and-take of all sorts of interpretations that centre in Joan, so that in the consciousness of the audience it is always the various interpretations that are warring against each other, really precipitating the dramatic conflict. This is not Werfel's way.

As the author says in his after-word, the emergence of the religious hero is always enshrouded in deep myth. The myth will be indifferent to historical fact or will use it to its own ends, coloring it, transmuting it, especially endowing it with the quality of mystery and paradox. There are far more precise facts available about Pontius Pilate than about Jesus. In the minds of men, singularly in the minds of the early Christians, the sharply-outlined facts grew dimmer and dimmer and strangely ambiguous. Not only do the versions of the Apostles differ one from the other but St. Paul's view of the message of Jesus becomes finally no longer a cult of Judaism, as it was until then in the minds of Peter and James, but a new concept—Christianity.

In "Paulus Unter den Juden" Werfel isolates arrestingly that point in time—a turning-point in civilization—when St. Paul, sensing the narrowness, literalness, and inadequacy of the law, especially in the light of the appearance of Jesus, envisages the future, his own future, and the long destined procession of the message and significance of Jesus Christ. The author manages to relieve high drama because his aim was primarily to create character at war with itself, at war with the minor cults and schools and parties, with the Roman Empire overshadowing all. And yet it must have been the very form of the Roman Empire that infected Paul with the notion of subduing the cities and peoples of the earth with a spiritual idea.

In the Rabbi Gamaliel, Paul's master, Werfel has portrayed one of his finest figures. It is with him, his beloved master, that Paul wrestles in an alcove of the temple for the sake of Jesus of Nazareth. He almost convinces the noble Gamaliel, Patriarch of Jerusalem, for the brand of Judaism practised by this nephew of Hillel

—supposed to have been the teacher of Jesus—is close to later Christianity, tinged with Hellenism. The climactic scene takes place on the Day of Atonement. Marullus, the Procurator, having put down a Jewish insurrection, enters the temple. He reads a message from Caesar to the effect that the ensigns of the Roman Empire shall be hung in the temple and the bust of Caesar shall be placed near the altar, for Caligula is also a god. This portends the ruin of Israel. Paul, who is held for the exorcision of his devils, is set free and Rabbi Gamaliel, unable to bear the violation of the temple, kills himself, thus, ironically enough, desecrating the House of God which he tried to shield. Judaism is sick and the breath of decay is upon its limbs.

"Paulus Unter den Juden" is at bottom a play about Jews written by a Jew. Every aspect of Judaism, ancient and modern, is touched on in the course of the play, now in a neat epigram, now in a moving scene. Above all, the self-betrayal of Israel is painted, the hatred that reigns between Jew and Jew, the narrowness, the beauty, and grandeur of the stark, unbending reverence for the Mosaic Law. Marullus is endowed with an insight into the character of the Jews he has to deal with, that is both rare and unerring. He says in one place that if any one can destroy the temple and the Law, the Jews will vanish from the face of the earth. In another place he says: "How they hate us! And they hate each other just as much—and no Jew believes in another Jew." Now Marullus, being a politician who mixed with place-men rather than large forces, was incapable of seeing that any root emotion such as love or hate, if strong enough, can breed its own posterity. The temple has been razed and the Law is of small effect and yet the Jews survive. They are still "the people of the book." Marullus did not count, moreover, upon Paul. Paul, as much as any other single item in history, is responsible for that survival. "There is only one sect," Werfel makes Marullus say, "which believes in a crucified Jew. But because they believe in another Jew, they are Jews no longer and cast out."

The weakness of the play lies perhaps in its epigrams for such, conceived by a man living in 1926 and presumably spoken by a man in 40 A.D., are of the nature of easy devices, what the French call *raccourci*, and when they deal with prophecy rather lacking in imagination. But Werfel has lavished his richest gifts on the portrayal of character, even the least of them. We never challenge their reality, so charged are they with dimension, with a body of true responses and feeling. In the end, however, we come to realize that the dramatic incident is foreign to us, and its value chiefly historical.

Franz Werfel has recreated both the situation and the characters, and the characters alone remain alive and moving. Both elements are given about the same amount of emphasis. You might duplicate the leading characters in the Prague ghetto, say, but you could not duplicate the crucial situation. The drama of losing Judaism and triumphant Christianity, at the one instant in its career when it really triumphed, has lost a good deal of point for us because, rather trivially, we are debating Fundamentalism, Evolution, and Glands. We are not concerned with the birth of a great mystic hero.

The letters of Emperor Francis Joseph I, selected from the secret archives at Vienna and edited by Dr. Otto Ernst, are soon to be published in English translation. They illuminate the political activities of his reign as well as the personality of the ruler.

M. J. Kessel, whose last novel "L'Equipage," was a notable success, has published a new book, "Les Captifs" (Nouvelle Revue Française). The captives are the consumptive patients in a great international sanatorium in Switzerland, where all the unfortunate inmates are rich and mostly doomed. The hero is a Parisian man of affairs, of the type that frequents the "American Bars," and has an "amie." He spends his health recklessly and is suddenly informed by his doctor that he must go away for a cure, or perish. The tale deals with his intrigue with another patient, like himself not very ill, an attractive woman who succumbs to his attentions and tries suicide when he abandons her, and with his final devotion to a poor little girl patient who is nobody and comes from nowhere, but who exercises a spiritual influence upon him before she dies. Readable, sometimes touching, the book certainly is.

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