

We must admit, frankly, before beginning to write of this little volume, that it assumes a *courageous*, as well as a *spiritual* attitude towards some of the most important religious problems that are agitating the minds of so many thoughtful people to-day. But we venture to think that many valuable "suggestions" are to be found in its pages that may prove a spiritual tonic, or, to borrow a phrase from the writer himself, "a battery for recharging the will" of those who read and meditate upon its contents.

Technical churchmen, who ardently believe that Theology (which seems now-a-day the accepted word for Dogma) is the garment of Truth, may dislike the tone of this book, for Mr. le Gallienne rejoices that we have at last "accomplished the inestimable separation of theology and religion," and, thwarted by this brave phrase, will turn away from its pages feeling sure that they will not care for the rest of its contents, but if they persevere they may find something to reward them in the chapters on the "Relative Spirit" and "Essential Christianity," even if they cannot entirely agree with the writer's deductions.

In the chapter on the "Mystery of Pain," he tells us that we "contemplate pain too much in the bulk, and forget that there are happy people in Whitechapel, and fine days even at Manchester (which has the heaviest rain-fall on the weather-map), and that much of our pity 'is of the same kind as that which pities a shoe-black for going bare-footed when he would not wear a pair of boots if you were to buy them for him.'" This chapter should be of especial interest to Nurses for he dwells much on the discipline of pain, and aptly quotes "George Meredith's" famous apothegm, that "there is nothing that the body suffers that the soul may not profit by." He ends this chapter with his conviction on the subject of modern pessimism, which, he thinks, means two things, "cowardice and selfishness"; and he further says, that:—

"No observing man will deny that this is, comparatively, an age of cowardice, at any rate it is an age of anæsthetics . . . and we may well pray for the spirit of our brave forefathers, who went to battle with stouter hearts, than we take to the dentist."

In the next chapter on "The Will," he writes, that the question, What have we to live for?—like every other question that teases the mind of man—has its *raison d'être* entirely in that primitive egotism which makes man the measure of the Universe, and he thinks that:—

"When we no longer stand in the centre of things, but humbly take our place in that vast circumference whose unknown centre is God, we shall see with different eyes. . . . I shall count it enough explanation of the life of man to say that it exists 'to the praise and glory of God.'"

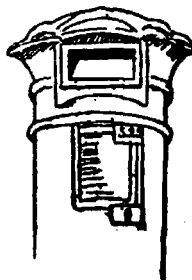
The Chapter on the "Hereafter" is full of strong insinuations "that our desire for *personal* immortality springs from conceit and egotism. He also thinks that we exaggerate its value to us here; and that some of us, if we were wise, might welcome "a general return to the melting-pot in the hope of a better start next time."

But the crucial chapter of the whole book is that on "Essential Christianity," and here it is best to let the writer speak in his own words. He says:—

"Organised Christianity has probably done more to

retard the ideals that were its Founder's than any other agency in the world. Moral teaching without spiritual significance is of little force. . . . We have been told that the world has tried the Gospel of Christ and found it wanting. To that the answer is simple: the world has never tried the Gospel of Christ, and in this nineteenth century of the so called Christian era, it has as yet to begin"; . . . "If the Christian era has exemplified but little the Christian ideal, it has, by its mistakes, proved the truth of that ideal."

Space fails us to dwell longer on this little volume. We hope, however, we have said enough to induce our readers to peruse it for themselves. They will, whatever their private beliefs may be, find (to quote the opinion of one of our leading daily papers) "It is the most significant book of its kind which has been published during recent years."



Letters to the Editor.

(Notes, Queries, &c.)

Whilst cordially inviting communications upon all subjects for these columns, we wish it to be distinctly understood that we do not IN ANY WAY hold ourselves responsible for the opinions expressed by our correspondents.

RECREATION.

To the Editor of "The Nursing Record."

MADAM,—I think some Nurses would be rather glad if the subject of Recreation for Nurses might be ventilated. By recreation, I do not only mean amusement; but intellectual recreation as well. No one but a Nurse who is compelled to do it, can realize how hard it is to give up all the old pursuits, whether music, painting, reading, or study of one kind or another, simply because she cannot keep up anything, her time being either entirely occupied with her patients, or else spent in taking her necessary walk or sleep. It would be so refreshing sometimes to go to a lecture, even if it were only about a mummy, in order to get a change of idea; but lectures (except medical ones) are not timed for Nurses to attend. Then again, how seldom people with spare tickets for a concert, or better still an oratorio, think of sending them to a Hospital, that a music-loving Nurse may have a treat. Theatre tickets, too, are eagerly welcomed. Books also, *sensible* books; dear me! how glad we should be of them; not put in a reading room at the west end of a town, while we live in the east end; but in our own Hospital, or "Home." Yellow backs are delightful in holiday time, but more readable books for every day life are badly wanted within reach. Nurses are condemned to such a "groove" life, and struggle as they may, it is difficult to get out of it. People seem to think they can talk nothing but "shop," and talk it to them accordingly, while the Nurse all the while is longing to hear of some new book, or of some new interest that belongs to the world in general. Some, of course, prefer their groove; but many heartily dislike the cramped ideas the living in it entails. Let the former class stay where they like; but the latter may surely creep out now and then and be none the worse Nurses if only outside folks would offer a friendly hand.—I am, yours truly,

L. B., Cambridge.

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