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## Entre Nous.

### A Wanderer's Way.

Canon Raven is wrong. 'This book ought not to have been published: that is what the reviewers will say.' We do not say it. For this is not a book about books. It is his own experience. *A Wanderer's Way* (Martin Hopkinson; 7s. 6d. net) explains how 'a young man of the twentieth century came to certain experiences and certain convictions.' It is Canon Raven's account of the religion of his infancy, schooldays, and Cambridge life, and of the crucial event which happened just after he left there. It was a difficult book to write. 'No one likes to give himself away.' It is utterly sincere, and almost painstakingly accurate in its statements and memories. It was difficult to write, and yet in another way it was easy. For it is spontaneous. 'You feel about Jesus just as you do about your birds,' a friend said to him.

The first chapter deals with his infancy and school-days. The son of a barrister, Charles Raven went to a day school at ten. At thirteen he left home in London, and was plunged into a public school. His account of it is one of the most suggestive parts of the book. There are data in abundance here for those who concern themselves with the religious training of the young. 'The schools stood for manliness and good form: they had to deal with boys in the mass, and could only turn them out to a pattern. So they adopted an easy routine. Health was important: give the boys cricket and football, and plenty of it. Discipline must be maintained: see that everyone does the same thing at the same time, and fill up the timetable. Emotion is dangerous and un-English: discourage all friendships, especially between boys of different ages. Religion is an adjunct to morality: keep sentiment out of it: don't be dogmatic—we have Jews and Nonconformists to consider: character is what matters, and character depends upon a sense of duty: love—well, that may come later, when you get married and have boys of your own; at present, and like marriage, three-quarters of it is just beastliness. This was actually said by a housemaster to one of his boys in my time at school: and the master was a parson and father of a family.' The system was definitely sub-Christian. 'Religion never came my way,' he says. 'As a treble I sang in the choir, enjoyed the chapel services, and listened to the sermons, but without understanding. We learned our scripture lessons: "names of Jewish kings" were more

familiar to me then than now. And in the Sixth there was an hour a week with St. Paul, and "Sunday Questions" of fearsome difficulty to be searched out in the library. The result was a rather intimate knowledge of the Greek of the Epistles; a close acquaintance with the use of prophecy in the early Church and with the identity of Silas and Luke; and a general conviction that the New Testament was a strange enigma, rather ungrammatical, crude in style, archaic in ideas, totally irrelevant to the twentieth century. My headmaster was writing a book on the Christian Prophets, and took us into bypaths of scholarship: he never read the Gospels with us, or if he did the memory of it has departed: I think they were studied in English lower down in the school, and we were supposed to have done them. Only one member of the staff ever mentioned religion to me unofficially or gave me the least impression that it mattered to him: and my chance of appreciating him was spoiled by a colleague who remarked in my hearing: "P. is always digging up his boys' souls to see how they smell"!'

Canon Raven has something constructive to suggest. He not only knows the defects of his own training, he knows houses in public schools 'where the master has ventured not to repress but to sublimate; and in them the standard of scholarship, of athletics, and of morals has risen rapidly and beyond belief. The thing can be done.'

What does he suggest? First, since at thirteen or thereabouts a boy wants a hero, let him find the human Jesus. 'Drop metaphysics: the time for them is not yet. Don't identify Jesus with God; for as yet God means the mystery, and if Jesus is God He too becomes mysterious and unearthly and remote and mythical. Give him Jesus as you give him Moses or David, Pericles or Scipio or Napoleon, but as the greatest character in history, the supreme figure in the life of mankind. And show him by your whole attitude that Jesus is real, that you are enthusiastic in your admiration and proud of your loyalty, and that the study of Him not only supplies a perfect example for us to imitate and a perfect friend for us to know, but helps us to make sense of the world.'

And then when the heroism of Jesus has made itself felt, let the hero be revealed as the poet. 'Nearly all boys keep a sense of the sacredness of beauty, of the fascination of nature, of the presence hidden in sea and sky. They are thrilled by the poetry of the Sermon on the Mount, even if they

cannot understand its paradoxes. They appreciate the parables of seed-corn, and springing grain, and the finding of a heavenly meaning in simple things : for to them also come at times glimpses of an inward and spiritual grace and the conviction that the universe itself is bursting with a secret of good news.'

After this there comes the initiation into the meaning of the Kingdom of God. For Canon Raven does not underrate the herd instinct. 'The herd instinct has its way with us for a few years.' But he sees a danger in making use of this instinct by putting the church first and basing Christianity upon membership of a guild or attendance at a children's eucharist. For in the crisis of adolescence the desire to run with the crowd passes. The boy must find his hero first. 'If a boy has not found his hero, and suddenly outgrows his habit of attachment to a group, he will ask himself what all these kids are playing at. In the crisis of adolescence he, and his hero, must be alone.' The herd instinct will come into its own in the conception of the Kingdom of God. But, he says, let the Kingdom be presented in terms rather of the world's need than of the claims of the church. 'Make the demand large : most boys reject the church because its claims on them seem small and cheap. State the situation clearly, proving that the call to service is obvious and world-wide. Give the youngsters their right to dream, and show them the romance that is even now being enacted in the slums of England or the riversides of West Africa. And let Jesus have His honour as the great pioneer, the great crusader, the great missionary.'

'Jesus and the world-wide kingdom, hero-worship and the passion for adventure, it is sad to have gone through six years at school and never to have had a glimpse of them ; six years, and never to have studied St. Mark or to have heard of Mackay and Hannington. Christian missionaries, doctors and teachers were working miracles in Nigeria and Ashanti, in Zanzibar and Uganda while I was at school : we were told all about the generals and the skirmishes in the Boer War ; of that other campaign never a word.'

At Cambridge after taking a first in one Tripos, Canon Raven proceeded to a second Tripos. The essay that he wrote for it was on 'The Bearing of the Logos Doctrine upon Modern Theories of the Person of Christ,' and for this he got a star. It is well in reading this book, especially in reading his account of the decisive event of his life, not to lose sight of the type of mind we are dealing with.

Cambridge was behind him, and for a short time he had been acting as assistant secretary for secondary education under the Liverpool Town Council, and in his spare time doing boys' club work. 'My friend at Stoke was ill : there was a bank holiday and I could visit him. That day was decisive. He was not alone. Since I had seen him, he had found Jesus, and the effect of the discovery was manifest. His whole direction and outlook were altered under the new influence ; there was joy and quiet confidence in his face, purpose in his life, sympathy and strength in all his actions. Jesus was alive and present to my friend as He had been to the eleven in the upper room. He was alive and present to me. I had studied the evidence for the resurrection with an unbeliever's critical scrutiny, and had been persuaded of its validity but not of its consequents. Now I knew. It was not a dream for Saul of Tarsus, nor for a multitude of disciples through the ages. It was no longer a dream for me : for here was the reality of it.' Christ is recognized personally and objectively present. 'To have known God vaguely but very really in nature and humanity, and then to discover Him translated into a human comrade, is to find awe quickened into devotion, and reverence into love.' For the examination of his experience in detail the reader must get the book.

#### Arise and build.

'And yet you must not mind me saying that the Temple that your generation is raising does look somehow small and mean and even poky. No doubt Carlyle declared that "It is better to build a dog hutch than to dream of building a palace." Not surely, if what you are building is for God. And your designs seem less than adequate by far. It does look as if there were something lop-sided, something missing, something wrong. What is it that you have left out ? The Court of the Gentiles ? Ah ! you have made that a spacious place ; and it was never busier, with all this bustle of social amelioration and reform, this buzzing and this clamour. The Court of the Women ? You are taking down the barrier, I see, that used to keep them shut up by themselves, are giving them full access to God's service in the world. The Court of the Men ? Yes, here it is. Yet there is something missing. Why, where is the Veil ? And where the Holiest of All ? And where a place in your religion for hush and quiet and God's presence—for devotion and stillness and prayer ? Have you made no provisions for these in your plans ? Is your design that of a fussy little chapel, a rather grimy brick

affair plastered with notices of endless breathless agencies, a homely, busy little place, with swing-doors always swinging, with the click of billiard-balls in its back settlements, and a smell of stale tea meeting everywhere? Or is it a cathedral, with its stillness and its space, its quiet and its sense of the infinities? There is something lacking at this end! Where is the Holy Place?'<sup>1</sup>

#### Fireflies.

My words that are slight

may lightly dance upon time's waves  
when my works heavy with import have  
gone down.

These, Rabindranath Tagore's own words, may well introduce the collection of his sayings which has just been published by Messrs. Macmillan in most attractive form. The volume, with black boards and white decorations, contains about two hundred and seventy sayings, each with a page to itself, and each page decorated with black-and-white conventional designs. The title is *Fireflies* (6s. net). These words of wisdom in their delightful setting would make a charming gift. We have culled a few of the sayings:

'Let me light my lamp,'  
says the star,  
'And never debate  
if it will help to remove the darkness.'

\* \* \*

The world knows that the few  
are more than the many.

\* \* \*

Bigotry tries to keep truth safe in its hand with  
a grip that kills it.

Wishing to hearten a timid lamp great night lights  
all her stars.

\* \* \*

My flower, seek not thy paradise in a fool's button-  
hole.

\* \* \*

The spirit of death is one,  
the spirit of life is many.  
When God is dead religion becomes one.

\* \* \*

Love's gift cannot be given,  
it waits to be accepted.

'If I save my life, I lose it.'

'On the wall of the university main building [of Assiut, seat of the Governor of Upper Egypt] is a photograph of a typical Egyptian youth. "Why that unathletic-looking figure?" I asked. "That boy was son of our Mayor and a Mohammedan. He came to the college as a student a few years ago," said the President. "One day while walking on the dam he saw a beggar woman carrying a baby girl. After they passed him, he heard a cry of distress. It seems that the exhausted mother had put the baby in its basket on the parapet while she rested. The baby had rolled over and fallen thirty feet into the boiling cataract below. The young Egyptian instantly ran back, tore off his coat and fez, leapt on to the parapet, and dived to his death in his attempt to save the girl baby of the despised beggar class. He would have succeeded, as they saw him grab the child, but they were both entangled in some large fishing hooks and lines set in the river below." They showed me his notebook, and in it he had written, "Jesus said we must lay down our lives for others." We hope to see a statue of Sir Galahad grace the quadrangle in honour of that courageous young man with the same words under it that are engraved on a similar memorial in Ottawa: "If I save my life, I lose it"—for to us his deed evidenced the real Christianity.'<sup>2</sup>

#### The Courage of Christ.

'As we passed out through Solomon's Porch, thousands of fanatical religionists were pouring in to prayer. Some still looked askance and bitterly at the infidel walking in their sacred place. The sight of that crowd made one realize the marvellous courage of a lonely Galilean Carpenter, who dared single-handed to upset the tables of the money-changers of the great men of the city and equally fanatical religionists of His day, and calmly to take the consequences. That courage, at least, no man has ever improved upon.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> W. T. Grenfell, *Labrador looks at the Orient*, 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* 76.

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Printed by MORRISON & GIBB LIMITED, Tanfield Works,  
and Published by T. & T. CLARK, 38 George Street,  
Edinburgh. It is requested that all literary communications be addressed to THE EDITOR, Kings Gate, Aberdeen, Scotland.

<sup>1</sup> A. J. Gossip, *The Hero in thy Soul*, 62 (T. & T. Clark; 7s. net). For review, see next month's issue.