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Entre Nous.

A Specialist's Reminiscences.

Dr. Greville Macdonald is well known to the reading world by the biography which he wrote of his father, George Macdonald. Dr. Macdonald was for many years an eminent Nose and Throat Specialist in Harley Street. In spite of the fact that he was afflicted throughout his working life with incurable deafness, he carried on for many years a very large practice. He has now retired at the age of sixty-eight, and has found time to write his reminiscences. They have been published by Messrs. Allen & Unwin (*Reminiscences of a Specialist*; 16s. net). He depends to some extent on the letters which he wrote to his mother from quite early days, until her death in 1904. But his own memory for detail is extraordinary, and he has perhaps almost too much facility with his pen. He writes at considerable length on various distinguished men and women with whom he came in contact. There is, for example, a long chapter on Lord Lister and a full description of his method of operating; there is an account of all the circumstances of John Ruskin's divorce and the strange romance of Rose La Touche; and the tragedy of the distinguished surgeon Morell Mackenzie, who returned to England after his treatment of the Crown Prince Frederick to be knighted by Queen Victoria, but to find his splendid practice as a Throat Specialist gone. It was an advertisement for a house-surgeon to a throat hospital in London at a salary of £100 a year which gave Dr. Macdonald the chance of his life and brought him into touch with Morell Mackenzie. When the latter came back from Germany we are told he 'became less friendly, making it impossible for me to explain my rapid popularity; my brougham and pair, and my tastefully furnished house in his own street.'

The influence of Octavia Hill on him is interestingly described, and some quotations which specially impressed him are given. For example, what she wrote to a Quaker friend in 1874: 'You and I know that it matters little if we have to be the out-of-sight piers driven deep in the marsh, on which the visible ones are carried that support the bridge. We do not mind if hereafter people forget that there are any low down at all; if some have to be used up in trying experiments before the best way of building the bridge is discovered. . . . The bridge is what we care for, and not our place in it.'

There are some delightful descriptions of the beauties of Nature as we see them reflected in the sensitive and receptive mind of the writer. 'This afternoon the weather cleared and we got the loveliest sight I have ever seen. Beauty perfectly unattainable! For if you get to that majestic, silent peak of the Matterhorn, silvered and radiant with snow and sun, against the eternal blue, miles and æons away, isolated in its grandeur from all the strivings of its Creator against the one Enemy Death; if at last you should reach it, all would be cold and heartless, bitter winds beating you to death. This perfection of Beauty would hold you to its heart and freeze the life out of you with its lovely arms. . . . A little before my visit to Switzerland, my father had gone there for the first time in his life. In his novel, *Wilfrid Cumbermede*, he relates, in words truer than any I could find, an experience almost identical with this, my arrestment by the Matterhorn's beauty. Ruskin, too, in his *Præterita*, tells of a similar revelation in his own youth: and I do not doubt that some such uplifting has been experienced by multitudes as a kind of *conversion*, even though the faculty of subjective vision must differ strangely in degree. "The fool sees not the same tree that the wise man sees," says William Blake; and nothing better instances it than this Alpine revelation. It lifted me out of my cubbish youth; and the memory of its magic has never left me: not even when my energies became almost absorbed in winning the world and chancing the loss.'

Let us finish with a quotation from an early letter to his father. It is dated December 6th, 1878.

'. . . Thank you for your letter about speaking the truth. I always try—I *think* I do—to be truthful. All the same I tell a great many petty lies, *e.g.* things that mean one thing to myself though another to other people. But I do not think lightly of it. Where I am more often wrong is in tacitly pretending I hear things which I do not, especially jokes and good stories, the *point* of which I always miss; but, seeing every one laugh, I laugh too, for the sake of not *looking* a fool. My respect for the world's opinion is my greatest stumbling-block, I fear. . . .'

Thoroughness.

'When I was nine, my father gave me a box of tools, and a little bench with an adorable vice that squeaked vilely but never held. They gave me infinite happiness, but only until, all too soon, the plane notched and blocked itself; the gouge, my

favourite because it made boats, became hopelessly jagged; the oil-stone refused the work of a grindstone; and the saw, blunted by alien nails, demanded too much of my slack muscles. One recompense was an admonishment from my father over an attempt at box-making; and I have never forgotten it: "If ever you do anything badly and content yourself with saying, 'Oh, that'll *have* to do!' then you may be sure it *won't do at all*!" It represented well a stoic quality in his own creed: "God," he once said, "is not hard to please, but it is impossible to satisfy Him."'[1]

Decorations of Solomon's Temple.

The greatest of the discoveries reported in the last *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund* was a beautiful series of ivories which were found close to the spot where Ahab's 'house of ivory' must have stood. 'The style and subjects of the ivories suggest an immediate comparison with the decorations of the temple of Solomon. Figures borrowed from the Egyptian pantheon naturally would be ignored by Biblical writers, but most of our other subjects are mentioned not once but several times in the chapters devoted to Solomon's works (1 Kings vi.–x.). The "lions, oxen and cherubim," the "cherubim, lions, and palm trees," the "lions on the steps of the great throne of ivory," the "oxen beneath the laver," the "nets of checker work," the "wreaths of chain work," the "lily work on the chapiters," to all these we can find parallels; the pomegranates only are wanting at present. And such a verse as that about the doors of the temple—"he carved thereon cherubim and palm trees and open flowers; and he overlaid them with gold fitted upon the graven work" (1 Kings vi. 35)—describes not only the subjects but the treatment we have studied on the ivories. "Ivory work overlaid with sapphire" (Song of Songs vi. 14) no longer seems an extravagant picture of the body of the beloved, and the spirit of our ivories is the same spirit which is reflected in the forty-fifth Psalm.'

Power Within.

The notes of the addresses at the 1932 Keswick Convention have been published by Messrs. Pickering & Inglis—*The Keswick Convention*, 1932 (2s. 6d. net). The speakers whose names appear most frequently are Bishop Taylor Smith, the late Rev. W. Y. Fullerton, Dr. S. D. Gordon, and the Rev. John Macbeath. Bishop Taylor Smith has a number of illustrations, and we quote one on 'Power Within.' 'Visiting Holland some little time ago this was brought home to me. As I walked by one of their canals, I saw a windmill, but there was no wind that day, and, consequently, the sails were silent. And I remarked to a young officer who was walking with me, "What an illustration of the saints of the Old Testament, waiting for the power to make them live to some purpose." Then we drew near to the windmill, and we heard a strange sound. "Let us go in," I said, and going inside I found there was a motor. The owner had placed within the mill a motor, so that when the wind was not blowing without, he had the power within, so that it would pump and send the water to his field and to every part of the farm. And as we had noticed the power without, so we noticed the power within: and we strengthened each other in the Lord as we marked the illustration by the way.'

[1] Greville Macdonald, *Reminiscences of a Specialist*, 30.

Will Life be worth Living in a World at Peace?

Religion in Life is a new American Christian Quarterly, published by the Abingdon Press. The 'Winter Number, 1933,' has a stimulating article by the former editor of 'The Times,' Henry Wickham Steed, on 'Do We Care for Peace?' In it he says: 'Some months ago, one of the elder boys in an ancient English Public School put to me a searching question. It was: "If war can be got rid of, will life be worth living in a world at peace?" On the spur of the moment I answered: "Since the attempt to get rid of war is the most revolutionary thing men have ever tried to do, the adventure of building up or creating an active state of peace in a world beyond war would be thrilling. We cannot even get rid of war without changing so many of our notions and habits that our particular way of life would go to pieces unless a better way could be found. The search for this better way would tax our hearts and minds to the utmost. It would give us fuller openings for heroism and self-sacrifice than war has ever offered. It would become a constant fight against evils which men have hitherto thought unconquerable. Compared with the bad old business of killing, which has now become a sort of scientific, anonymous mass murder, it would be a glorious enterprise."

'My answer seemed to kindle the imagination of the questioner and his schoolmates. On reflection, I realized its inadequacy. In truth, we have thought so little about peace that few, if any, of us are yet able to conceive, even dimly, what peace might be.

We know only that peace would not tolerate such a spectacle as we have witnessed during the past few years, when some regions of the world have been stifling in unsaleable abundance whilst others have been starving in the direst penury. Peace would not leave control of the sources of material wealth in private hands merely for private gain, but, while safeguarding individual freedom to the fullest extent compatible with social discipline, would look upon political citizenship and economic citizenship as interchangeable terms.'

Loyalty.

In *The Guardian* (January 6, 1933) there is a full and appreciative review of the biography of the late Bishop of Kensington—John Primatt Maud. The initials of the reviewer only are given—M.C. 'I would add a personal experience of my own,' he says, 'to show the loyalty with which the bishop stood by his friends. A blunder had been made in a report of a speech he had delivered at a public meeting, in which he criticized a certain attitude of the Press; and at once the whole weight of the popular Press was thrown at his head. If either of us was to blame, it was myself. Yet I shall never forget how he put his hand on my shoulder and said—with that mixture of strength and sympathy that so few can claim as their own—"Look here, my dear man, we're in this together, and we'll see it through together. My shoulders are broad enough to carry this—and a good deal more!"'

'Fiction.'

A correspondent who signs himself 'Anglo-Irishman' has sent the following letter to *The Guardian*, and it appears in their issue of December 23, 1932. Comment would appear to be unnecessary. 'Sir,—Your readers may be amused by a story which is the result of the present Free State duties on imports from the United Kingdom. If it is not true it is *ben trovato*. An Englishman wished to send some religious publications to a friend in the Free State. He dispatched them without attempting to pay duty, as he understood that religious literature was admitted free. To his surprise the parcel was held up as being dutiable. He complained over the telephone that he had in front of him a schedule of duties which expressly exempted religious literature. "But this literature," was the answer, "is not accepted as religious. It is Protestant literature." "To what class then," he inquired, "does it belong?" The reply to that was, "It is classed as fiction."'

'The Speaker's Bible.'

The latest volume of *The Speaker's Bible* deals with the Book of Psalms. It begins with Ps 104 and completes the book. Although review copies have only just been sent out, one review has appeared—in 'The Methodist Recorder.' The reviewer is Professor W. F. Howard, and this is what he says:

'The Rev. E. Hastings has edited and published, from The Speaker's Bible Office, Aberdeen (9s. 6d.), the fourth volume dealing with the Psalms in this well-known series. Beginning with Psalm civ. it carries us to the end of the Psalter. The scope and method of this series is too well known to call for detailed description. There is very much to be said in favour of this treatment of a book so directly devotional as the Book of Psalms. Anything that will encourage the devout and intelligent study of the Praises of Israel is of unquestionable advantage to the Christian Church. We are sure that many a class-leader would find inspiration in the study of this volume while preparing for the weekly meeting. As usual, we are struck by the wide range of quotation. The scholar's heart will be cheered by finding Gressmann cited, as well as Cheyne. The lover of literature will rejoice to meet with passages from Shakespeare, Tennyson, Shelley, Ruskin, R. L. S., Coleridge, Bacon, to name but a few out of many great writers. If Browning makes his contribution, so also does Mrs. Barclay, Fosdick, and Glover. R. F. Horton and W. T. Grenfell appear, and Robertson Nicoll and R. W. Dale do not prevent the appearance of Methodist preachers such as W. L. Watkinson, F. W. Macdonald, H. Maldwyn Hughes, and C. Ryder Smith. Indeed, it would be impossible to give any indication of the catholicity shown in the illustrative quotations. The popular volumes of sermons of our own time are well represented by such names as G. H. Morrison and J. M. E. Ross, A. J. Gossip and F. W. Boreham. Journalism is laid under tribute, and we find the "Methodist Recorder" and "The Guardian," Dean Inge, and Mr. A. J. Russell. In fact, though the Psalms give us the texts for our devotional meditations, we are in no danger of forgetting that they are universal in their message, and that they sound the depths of human experience in the world of our own day. Rightly used, this book will be a means of blessing to multitudes.'

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