

An Hour with the Editor

THE EARTH

XVIII.

Africa is naturally almost an island, and since the Suez Canal was dug, it is actually one. Naturally the continent is connected with Asia by a low reef of sandstone, but the major part of the Isthmus is composed of sands that has drifted in from the deserts. The contour of the continent is remarkably regular, a notable feature being the absence of any large projecting peninsulas, wherein it differs greatly from both Europe and Asia, and very materially resembles South America. Structurally Africa consists of two great plateaus separated by a relatively low-lying region. At the north the Atlas Mountains border the great plateau of the Sahara. These mountains are not very high, and the Sahara plateau is in many cases below the level of the sea. The popular idea of the Sahara is quite erroneous. Its area is about 3,450,000 square miles, and it was formerly supposed that all this vast extent of country consisted of shifting sands. Indeed of very recent years, when the proposal was made to cut a canal by which the waters of the Atlantic could be let in to fill up the desert, the general idea seemed to be that the greater part of the region would be filled with water, thereby creating a vast inland sea. But the Sahara is quite other than a great depression of shifting sands. There are vast tracts to which this description applies; there are others that are simply bare expanses of rock; but there are also hills and mountains of considerable altitude, and between these are valleys that are very fertile and produce crops of grain as well as of tropical fruits. Even yet the real nature of the Sahara is not fully known, for exploration has for the most part been confined to the outer fringe of it. Several expeditions have traversed it from north to south, but none has made the journey across it from west to east, or vice versa, and there are doubtless many valleys and oases, which no white man has ever visited. Under many parts of the desert water is found at no great depth, and very large areas might easily be made cultivable by irrigation from artesian wells, as is now the case in Algeria.

South of the Northern plateau is a region, lying somewhat lower than the average height of the Sahara, but not as low as the Nile region, that is known as the Sudan. It extends transversely across the continent for perhaps four thousand miles. This region receives copious precipitation from the moisture-laden winds which sweep over it from the Indian Ocean. Here are rivers and lakes, and it is here that the Congo takes its source. Nowhere in the world is the growth of vegetation as great as here, not even in the region drained by the Amazon. The forests are of vast extent and so dense that the Sun never penetrates their branches, beneath which there is what is almost perennial twilight.

South of the Sudan the great Southern plateau begins. Towards the northeast this plateau rises into peaks, which form the mountains of Abyssinia, and these send out spurs to the north between the Nile and the Red Sea, and nearly to the shores of the Mediterranean. The northern two-thirds of this plateau is a region with abundant rainfall, and here are found great lakes such as Tanganyika and the Nyanzas. Towards the south is a desert tract known as the Kharah, but as compared with the Sahara it is not extensive.

The maps of Africa in use fifty years ago showed a continuous mountain chain extending nearly all the way across Africa from west to east, and about ten degrees north of the Equator. There is no such range, its existence having been assumed from several prominent peaks near the headwaters of the Nile. Some of these rise to a height of more than 18,000 feet, and the supposition that they formed the eastern portion of a great mountain chain was a very reasonable one, especially as transverse chains are found in Europe and Asia. Down the eastern side of Africa, but for the most part at some distance from the coast, are detached mountains, which, as they approach the south, form themselves into a more or less continuous chain, which in Natal and Cape Colony attain in places an altitude of upwards of 10,000 feet. Speaking of the continent as a whole, one writer says it seems to be encompassed by mountains, but what seem to be such are only the escarpments of the great plateau.

SCOTTISH HISTORY

Mary Stewart, Queen of Scots, was less than a week old when she succeeded her father, James V., to the throne of Scotland. Her name is very frequently written Marie Stuart, but this is only its French form, Marie being the equivalent of Mary, and there being no "w" in French. The news of her birth was brought to her father when he was on his death-bed. His thoughts seemed to go back to the marriage of his ancestor with the daughter of Robert Bruce, for he exclaimed: "The devil go with it! It came with a woman, and it will go with a woman." Mary's mother was Mary of Lorraine, daughter of the Duke of Guise. She is known in history as Mary of Guise. Mary Stewart's father was son of Margaret, daughter of Henry VII. of England and sister of Henry VIII. James V. of Scotland was thus nephew of Henry VIII. and cousin of Elizabeth of England. Mary Stewart was therefore Elizabeth's first cousin once removed. Henry VIII. died leaving one son, Edward, and two daughters, Mary and Elizabeth. The right of succession to the crown of England during the lifetime of Henry VIII. was therefore as follows: Edward, Mary, Elizabeth and

James V. James having died during the lifetime of Henry, his daughter Mary Stewart took her place in the succession, and was therefore entitled to the throne in the event of Edward, Mary and Elizabeth dying without issue. Edward and Mary were children of Catherine of Aragon; Elizabeth was the daughter of Anne Boleyn. The validity of the divorce of Henry from Catherine was disputed by the Roman Catholic authorities, who therefore held his marriage to Anne Boleyn as illegal, and regarded Elizabeth as illegitimate. Consequently, from the standpoint of the Roman authorities, when Mary of England died without children, Mary of Scotland was entitled to the crown. This state of facts must be kept in mind by those who seek to understand the subsequent relations between Elizabeth and Mary. In the event of Elizabeth's death without children, if Mary had survived her, she would have become Queen of England as well as of Scotland, as her son James VI. of Scotland subsequently did.

Before she was a year old, the Earl of Arran, who was regent of Scotland, promised Mary's hand in marriage to Edward, Prince of Wales and son of Henry VIII. To this the Scottish Parliament raised strenuous objections, and in consequence Henry attempted to enforce by arms what he could not accomplish by means of the proposed matrimonial alliance, namely, the union of the two kingdoms. His forces were successful in the field, but the indomitable resolution of the Scottish people was not to be broken even by a severe defeat in battle. Mary was secreted on an island in the Lake of Monteith, and in her sixth year she was taken thence to France, having been promised in marriage to the Dauphin. She remained under the protection of Henry II. of France until she married the Dauphin in her sixteenth year. Meanwhile her mother, Mary of Guise, had assumed the regency in the place of the Earl of Arran. She was a woman of more than ordinary intellectual capacity, and under happier circumstances might have proved a successful ruler. But she had unwise advisers in her brothers, the Princes of Lorraine, and her own bitter hatred of the Protestants caused her to exhibit a lack of faith towards them, which prevented the establishment of anything like a united Scotland. As the blood of the Guises flows in the veins of the British Royal House, it may be interesting to mention that this family was one of the most distinguished in Europe at the close of the Middle Ages. They were the Lords of Lorraine, that Rhenish province, which France lost to Germany during the great war of forty years ago. The family first appears in history about the year 850, when the Emperor Lotharius I. died and divided his realm between his two sons, one of whom became King of Lorraine. Claude de Lorraine, Francois de Lorraine, Henry I. and Henry II. of Lorraine were the most distinguished members of the family. They were men of intense pride of race, and animated by almost boundless ambition. Francois was the chief adviser of Mary of Guise. He aimed at establishing himself first among the sovereigns of Europe, although he himself was not above the rank of duke. Mary Stewart was to be the means by which he was to accomplish this result. As Queen of France she was expected to influence her husband, who was both mentally and physically a weakling, to place himself in the hands of her powerful and aggressive uncle; as Queen of Scotland she would bring that kingdom into the proposed union; as next to Elizabeth in succession to the crown of England, and its rightful queen, if the illegality of the marriage of Anne Boleyn could be established, she would be able to add that realm to her domain. It will thus be seen that the position of Mary, while her husband, the Dauphin, afterwards Francis II., lived, was unique. If a son should be born to her, he might become king of three kingdoms, and she herself might sway the destinies of them in her lifetime. Unfortunately for the success of his plans, Francis II. died after a very brief reign, and Mary, finding herself exceedingly unpopular in France, returned to Scotland to pursue her unhappy career in her own land. Francois de Lorraine also left the French court, and by a strange irony of fate, this distinguished and able man, whose sister was the champion of the Roman Catholic faith in Scotland, next appears in history as the leader of the Huguenots.

LIMITATIONS OF SCIENCE

Dr. Eicholtz, writing to the Scientific American, says, "Many people are surprised when they are told that it is impossible in some cases to detect adulteration of food, and can scarcely believe that science is still so impotent." He goes on to explain that it is impossible to determine the composition of albumen, to distinguish between all the fatty acids and fruit juices. He says some substances are sold as wine which contain not a drop of grape juice, and yet defy detection by chemistry. Nevertheless, a great deal has been learned and certain natural processes have been found to be invariable, so that laws of action can be laid down with certainty. Mankind knows very much more about the nature of things and the laws governing them than was known a century ago, but there seems yet to be a universe of knowledge into which no entrance can be found. For example, no one knows what is the active principle in radium; neither does anyone know the nature of the medium whereby light and wireless electricity are carried. About things that are superficial much is known. Library shelves are full of books about them. Not that everything in the

books is right, for very much of it is wrong. No theory in regard to matter is sacred to the man in the laboratory. A theory may be invented to explain a single phenomenon, or one may be evolved from a number of phenomena; but the true investigator does not consider himself bound by either. He accepts them as working hypotheses, but he never hesitates to recognize when they break down. There can be no "last word" in science. Nothing whatever is known for which some other than the accepted explanation may not one day be found to be possible. For example, there are different theories as to electricity, and they all are to a certain extent working hypotheses; that is to say, they will do to go by until something better is demonstrated; but no one pretends to know what electricity is, or to be certain how it is transmitted.

It is well to bear these things in mind in these days of materialism, when there is a very prevalent, though vague, belief that Science has dethroned Religion, and that the latter has taken refuge in churches, monasteries, and the like, to prevent its entire extinction. There is no foundation for any such claim. If Religion consists in the acceptance of certain statements of facts in human history, as they were believed to be true by people a long time ago, who have been shown to be wrong about almost everything else, then doubtless Science can demolish it. But it is not Religion to believe that Satan in the form of a serpent talked to Eve, or that Methuselah lived to be nearly a thousand years old. Such things as these may be refuted over and over again, but the refutation leaves real Religion untouched. An attempt was made on this page last week to show the origin of Religion. Perhaps some people did not agree with it, for the reason that they have always thought of Religion as something based upon the Bible. But it is the other way about. The Bible is based upon Religion, in the sense that it purports to give in the Old Testament the religious history of a nation, and in the New Testament an account of that kind of religion, which we call Christianity. Christianity is not founded upon the New Testament; for it existed before the New Testament was written. Monotheism existed before the Old Testament was written, as appears abundantly from the contents of that Book. There may be things in the Bible that cannot be reconciled with the accepted demonstrations of Science, but this does not in the least touch the reality of Religion, or the truth of Christianity.

But same may ask of what use the Bible is, if any of its statements have been or are likely to be upset by scientific discovery. The answer seems to be that it is exceedingly useful for what it purports to be, namely, the evolution of the religious life of a people and the history of the foundation of Christianity together with the personal experiences and thoughts of individuals. Without the Bible as a guide, it is more than doubtful if humanity would have achieved anything like the progress towards the betterment of the nature and conditions of individuals that has been attained. The part which the Bible has played in this respect cannot be measured. Other books have been held sacred by other peoples, but they appeal to the intellect rather than to the soul. In the Buddhist writings we find the highest ethics, but they are stated in a manner that is coldly philosophical. They do not appeal to the heart as the Bible does. Therefore the fact, that at its present stage of development Science is not in accord in many respects with the Bible, does not lessen the value of the Book.

Science, that is physical science, could not discover religion, but that does not prove religion to be a myth. When a chemist comes out of his laboratory and says he has found God, we will all unite in setting him down as a presumptuous fool. Why should we hesitate to believe in God, then, because chemists have not found Him? The conclusion is that no one should permit his belief in God or his acceptance of Religion to be weakened because Science, working in its own narrow sphere, has found neither.

Stories of the Classics

(N. de Bertrand Luyin)

I.

History is silent as to the life of this, the greatest poet of antiquity, the poet, whom, it may be said, has been the inspiration of the best and noblest literature of later Europe. When and where Homer lived is a mystery. So many contradictory accounts have come down to us, that no credence can be given to any of them.

Seven cities claimed the mighty Homer dead, Through which the living Homer begged his bread.

Some commentaries claim that the Iliad and Odyssey are the works of two entirely different writers, and cite many discrepancies to prove their theory. But it can make little difference to us today whether these great poems emanated from one source or more; it is with the result itself with which we care to concern ourselves. Homer has made us familiar with the noblest characters of history, the deeds of which he sang thrill us to the heart's

core, in their grandeur and self-sacrifice, the selflessness of their courage. If the pride with which he vests his heroes is arrogant, it fits the times. If some of their other qualities seem to us short of praiseworthy, we must bear in mind that we are not supposed to scan the morals of that heroic period too narrowly. Custom made the laws, and murder and theft were no crime, the cardinal virtues were faithfulness to one's pledged word, honor to one's parents, and hospitality to the stranger and the suppliant. The pride born of such virtues at all events could not be ignoble.

All the fairy stories that we loved, years ago, and that our children ask us to read to them now, have for their heroes and heroines princes and princesses, for most of them can be traced for the germ of their thought back to those old days when the titles of king and prince were as common as the prefix of honorable today. Each tribe had its separate king, and his children were princes and princesses. But the life of these royal personages differed very little from those of the peasants about them. Lovely princesses—for in the stories they were always lovely—took their pitchers to the well and washed the family raiment in the waters of the brook, much as the peasants in many parts of the world do today, their naked feet aiding their hands in the task. As for the kings and princes, they tended the flocks and the herds, and one can imagine many a pretty royal love-story of shepherd princes taking their sheep and goats to drink at the spring, and seeing lovely princesses ankle-deep in the stream, the green trees and vines about the water making a charming frame for rosy, unconscious beauty.

So it was in the days of the Greek and the Trojan. Homer has given us intimate glimpses of the life of the people. For instance, we learn that cattle was the standard of value, and coinage a thing unknown. The least valuable of female slaves was worth three or four cattle, and the comeliest and most useful would bring in exchange forty or fifty head. Oxen and mules were used for plowing, but horses were never employed in menial labor. The fighting men were moderate eaters and drinkers, confining themselves chiefly to the consumption of bread and roast meat, and wine diluted with water. They were timid sailors and hugged the coast in their travels by water, going by easy stages and always laying by in rough weather.

As to the mythology of the early Greeks, they worshipped or sacrificed to Zeus, as the supreme god, "father of all gods." The dwelling place of the gods was Olympus, and the gods themselves had the same characteristics as human beings. Zeus, as well as all the lesser deities, had wives both human and divine, who bore him a numerous progeny. The following legend regarding Demeter is among the prettiest of Grecian mythology:

Demeter is described by Homer as the goddess of the cornfields, and she had a daughter by Zeus, whom she called Persephone. One day while Persephone and her companion nymphs were gathering flowers in a meadow, Hades, ruler of the underworld, suddenly appeared, and carried Persephone away in his arms, in spite of her struggles and her pleadings to her father for aid. Demeter, missing her daughter, but ignorant of her fate, sought for her nine days and nights. Through information furnished her by Helios, she at length learned of the unhappy girl's fate, and that Zeus had given his consent to the abduction. Broken-hearted she renounced the companionship of the gods, and her home in Olympus, and descended to earth to fast and to mourn.

She came to Aelsee, governed by the prince Kelcos, and her beautiful form shrunken, her cheeks white and hollow with fasting, her eyes gaunt from weeping, sat down by a well to rest. Kelco's daughters came with their brass pails to draw water, and meeting Demeter were sympathetic and curious, whereupon the goddess told them that she had escaped from a band of pirates and besought them to give her employment. The young girls led Demeter home and persuaded their mother to allow her to nurse the little baby that had recently been born, Demophoon, Kelco's only son.

And Demeter proved a marvellous nurse, for under her ministrations the young child grew in strength and beauty, until he was the admiration of all who beheld him. Demeter gave him no food, but anointed him daily with ambrosia, and at night bathed him in fire. One night the child's mother, Metabeura, spied upon the heavenly nurse, and seeing Demophoon in the flames, screamed and swooned, alarming the whole household, who came running hither. When she recovered, she declared to them what she had seen, clasping her baby to her breast, and gazing with accusing eyes at the nurse. Whereupon Demeter, aroused and indignant, assumed her goddess form, and transcendently beautiful, her body diffusing a dazzling glow of light, she told the weeping mother that she had by her curiosity sacrificed her son. That had Demeter been permitted to continue her secret ministrations, Demophoon would have become a god. As it was, he would be distinguished by great honors, but immortality should not be his.

To propitiate the angry goddess, a temple was built for her in Aelsee, and here she secreted herself. For a whole year there were neither fruit nor flowers in the world, and the human race must have died had Zeus not prevailed upon Hades to return Persephone to her mother. When this latter fact was accomplished, Demeter called forth the seed out of the ground, the refreshing showers came, there

was sunshine all day long, and the earth was gay with beauty.

But before Persephone had left the underworld, Hades had given her a grain of pomegranate to eat, and she was forced by this to return to him once every year. Thus were Hades and Demeter both satisfied, and peace ruled in earth and heaven.

(To Be Continued)

JOKES

Jokes were first imported to this country several hundred years ago from Egypt, Babylon and Assyria, and have since then grown and multiplied. They are in extensive use in all parts of the country and as an antidote for thought are indispensable at all dinner parties.

There were originally twenty-five jokes, but when this country was formed they added a constitution, which increased the number to twenty-six. These jokes have married and intermarried among themselves and their children travel from press to press.

Frequently in one week a joke will travel from New York to San Francisco.

The joke is no respecter of persons. Shameless and unconcerned, he tells the story of his life over and over again. Outside of the ballot-box he is the greatest repeater that we have.

Jokes are of three kinds—plain, illustrated and pointless. Frequently they are all three.

No joke is without honor, except in its own country. Jokes form one of our staples and employ an army of workers who toil night and day to turn out the often neatly finished product. The importation of jokes while considerable is not as great as it might be, as the flavor is lost in transit.

Jokes are used in the household as an anti-septic. As scene-breakers they have no equal.—Life.

RED-HOT PLAYS

"It is a tremendous undertaking to get a new play accepted and produced," once said the late Clyde Fitch to a friend. "So many are written, and so few ever see the light of day. An English playwright with a gift of humorous exaggeration illustrated this fact to me once. He told me how he submitted a play to a celebrated actor, and how in the course of the conversation the actor remarked:

"Don't you think it is growing chilly in this room?"

"Yes, it is, rather," the young playwright admitted.

"Then the actor rang a bell and a servant forthwith appeared.

"James," said the actor, "this room is rather cold. You may put three more manuscripts on the fire!"—Lippincott's.

IS IT ANY WONDER?

"Him wuzza tootest itsie-bitsie pecious lovie lamb, And him des a sweetest pittie-ittie singie, yes, him am, Wis 'im tunnin' itsie footse, an' him sayin' 'Goo-goo-goo!' Him wuz him muzzer's ownest lambie boysie cootie-coo!!!"

To this the baby listens by the hour and day and week— And yet his mother wonders why he doesn't learn to speak!

—Ladies' Home Journal.

A HORSE FOR A THAT

"Well," reluctantly admitted the hard-pressed Yorkshire horse dealer in the witness box, "I'll admit the animal was blind o' one eye, an' I won't deny he'd springhalt in his off hind leg, an' I'm not saying—seeing the two vets has sworn to it—that he wasn't spavined, an' I'd a sort of suspicion myself that he was a roarer; but he was a gr-r-and hoss!"—Tit-Bits.

ANY ONE WOULD DO

A few days after Nat Goodwin's last marriage William Collier, the actor, met him and said: "Well, Nat, I see you've married again?" "Yes," replied Goodwin. "Good!" replied Collier. "By the way, Nat, I wish you'd invite me to one of your weddings some time, won't you?"—Ladies' Home Journal.

THE AGE LIMIT

Ellen Terry, the actress, was one day talking about the many women who asked her to help them get on the stage, when she said: "Every woman under thirty imagines that she is an actress. And every actress believes that she is under thirty."—Ladies' Home Journal.

BASEMENT WAS VACANT

"Did you say you were a month in your last place?"

"Yes, madam—a week with the family on the top floor, a week with the lady on the third floor, a week on the second and a week on the ground floor."—Meggendorfer Blaetter.

PHILOLOGICAL

Maud—The girls are daify about our youngest bishop. Beatrix—Is it his mitre or his motor?