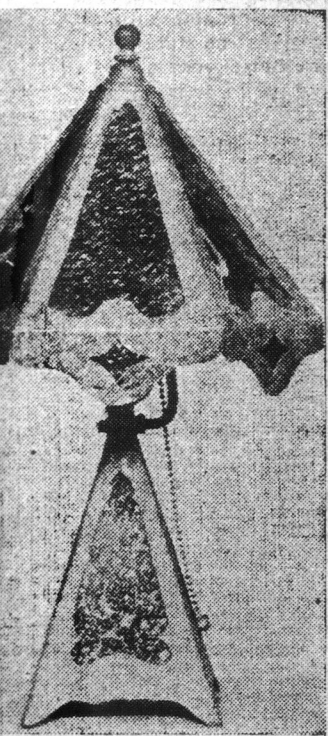


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MODERN CHRISTIANITY

Somewhere once wrote something which he entitled "If Christ Came to Chicago." The title was more valuable than what followed it, for it contained an exceedingly important suggestion. It suggests an inquiry as to what Christianity ought to be in order to accomplish what it ought to accomplish in this twentieth century after the birth of its Founder. No sane man questions the soundness, the wisdom and the sufficiency of the teachings of Jesus. Even those who deny His divinity and class Him among the great teachers of humanity, such as Zoroaster, Buddha, Confucius and others, never hesitate to admit that His teachings are better than theirs and present a working system of religion, that if employed honestly and in the simple form in which it was laid down, would produce better results than any other system. In other words, it is not necessary to argue to convince even an infidel that the teachings of Jesus are the best within the reach of humanity. And so, in approaching the consideration of Christianity in its relations to the people of Christendom in the Twentieth Century, we may assume that, as originally delivered by its Founder, it calls for neither apology nor explanation, but will be conceded at once by every one, whose opinion is worth anything at all, to be sufficient to meet the wants of mankind as a guide to right living and the best development of social conditions.

But some may ask, If this is true, why is not Christianity accomplishing more, why is it that after nearly twenty centuries, during which it has been preached and believed, is there so much wickedness and unhappiness in so-called Christian countries? Before attempting to answer this question it may be well to inquire for a little while into what the fruits of Christianity really have been. The races, which it has especially affected are those that occupied Europe at the beginning of the Christian era. Something has been done in the way of evangelizing the other races, but when the most that can be claimed in that way is compared with what has not been accomplished, the fruits of foreign missions may be left out of consideration for the purposes of this inquiry. What, then, was the condition of the European peoples two thousand years ago? Rome had reached a stage in its progress, when its material glory was all manner of rottenness. The nation, which was apparently able to dictate to the world, was honeycombed with physical, intellectual and moral decay. There is no need to particularize; one simple fact is sufficient and that is that the marvelous fabric of human wisdom known as the Roman Empire fell into ruins chiefly because of its inherent weakness. The nation was not fit to endure and so it perished. We know very little of the people whom the Romans called barbarians, but if we may judge of what they were two thousand years ago by what they were some centuries later when they appeared in the full light of history, their condition must have been one under which brute force was paramount. It is true that we find traces in our Teutonic ancestors, as far back as we can learn anything of them, of many of the most valuable institutions of the present day. It is true that these people had ideas of rough justice, self-government and personal liberty, but the sword was ever in their hands and their only creed was that of force. The history of the early part of the Christian Era is full of stories of cities pillaged, of thousands of innocent men, women and children massacred, of cruelty in its direst forms. It was to such a Europe as this that Christianity was preached. The people to whom it was taught in the first place refused to accept it, and so the Apostles turned their backs upon the Jews and sought to win over the Gentiles to the standard of the Cross. The work was a tremendous one, as we will realize if we reflect upon what had to be overcome. The instincts, ideas, beliefs and traditions that develop in races during uncounted centuries, cannot be eradicated in a month, a year or even in many generations. The Indians of North America have been in contact with Europeans for four centuries and while many of them have assumed the customs of the white race, the pure-blooded red man has not ceased to be essentially an Indian in his heart of hearts. But we need not go outside of our own nationality to establish this persistency of racial characteristics. The English, the Scots and the Irish have dwelt in the British Isles in touch with each other for a thousand years. Constant contact has doubtless rubbed off some of the sharper angles in their makeup; but the difference between them is hardly less marked in the days of Edward VII. than it was when Edward I. sat upon the throne. It was absolutely hopeless to pour Romans, Greeks, Goths, Huns, Vandals, Saxons, Danes, Franks, and all the rest of the medley of races, which occupied Europe two thousand years ago, in the mold of Christianity and turn out a uniform product. The Golden Rule is the best possible law of living; but when you think of the difficulty you experience in impressing it upon the little chap, who calls you father or mother, perhaps you will be less surprised at the manner in which it was received by the people of high Roman society, whose greatest pleasure was a fight to the death between gladiators, or upon the Hun warriors who amused themselves, when they captured, a town by tossing babies in the air and catching them on their spears. The simple truths of Christianity are difficult enough for us to appreciate today. How much more difficult, then, must they have been to the Romans, who on the one hand were imbued with the grossest materialism and on the other were interested in an absurd mythology,

or to the Scandinavians with their weird myths and the strange superstitions born of darkness and tempests? The wonder is not that these people did not become followers of Jesus Christ in spirit as well as in name, but that Christianity did not lose all semblance of its original form by reason of the many and varied influences surrounding its development.

No one will deny that Christendom today is something vastly better than Europe of the First Century, and if we say that this change is due primarily to Christianity, we need not fear successful contradiction. It is true that no one can say with certainty what might have taken place in Europe if the people had not accepted Christianity and given its teachers a free hand; but when we consider what the effect upon their progress the religions of other races have had, we need not hesitate to ascribe the progress of Christendom to the influence of the Christian religion. Hence before we complain that Christianity has failed to do the work for which it was designed, we ought to endeavor to grasp some just conception of what it has accomplished.

But in the very nature of things this great force has not had a free course in the past, and so difficult is it for men to shake themselves free from the shackles which tradition has placed upon them that Christianity in some respects remains mediaeval until this day. Its teachers tell us the same things that are needed to appeal to the minds of the Romans and the superstitions of the Barbarians. They ignore the effects of their own teachings; they refuse to recognize that the gospel, whose ministers they aim to be, has greatly changed the mental attitude of Christendom. No one pleads for new truths; for indeed there are no new truths, but what many plead for is the old truths freed from the incrustations of ecclesiasticism. And this it seems ought to constitute modern Christianity. The following extract is from a paper published in the Arena:

"It is generally admitted that whatever good there is in the world today is to a great extent due to Christian influences. Few men or women can be classed as irreligious. Nearly all are believers in a Supreme Being, and nearly all of them are inclined to do what is right and just if conditions allow them to act according to their free will. Very few people have anything against Christianity as taught by Christ; but churchianity, that version which favors all the interests which are against them, does not appeal to the respect or favor of the working classes.

"If the churches wish to draw the masses to them, they must show themselves to be their friends and benefactors. They must, loose from Mammon, business and politics, adhere closer to Christ's teachings, and take up the cause of the downtrodden and the oppressed. They must help to improve the material condition of the working-classes, so that every family may be housed under conditions favorable to health, decency, and morality, and be able, by their own labor, to live above misery and poverty. Under such conditions, it should not be difficult for Christian workers to bring nearly all of them to be strong adherents of Christianity."

There are other things than these to be said in this connection, and they may be spoken of at another time. Christianity is yet a tremendous power in the world and it can easily be made infinitely more potent, not only by directing its energies along the lines referred to in the above extract, but by utilizing the agency of Faith to its fullest extent.

FORCE.

The power which that vital force, which was referred to in our last article as the will, exerts over the will of others, and perhaps over the inanimate nature, is regarded as one of the greatest of mysteries. As a matter of fact, no mystery can be greater than any other mystery. We do not know why a stone released from the hand falls to the ground; we do not know why an acorn produces an oak; nor why a prism of glass divides a ray of light into colors that are always in the same order; nor why one speaker can thrill an audience by words, which, spoken by another, would be only empty sound; nor why, when the Divine Man said "Lazarus, come forth!" the dead man heard and obeyed. One of these things may seem more mysterious than another; but it is only more unusual. There may be a plane of existence whereon the operations of the law of gravitation will seem more mysterious than the operation of the laws of faith. Therefore we may not dismiss occult forces as outside the sphere of inquiry, for they are no more difficult to trace to their last analysis than are the familiar forces which we use in the mere act of living.

During the last few years the Society for Psychical Research has been investigating certain alleged phenomena, and there has been much dispute as to whether, in point of fact, anything has been established; but there are every day phenomena, inexplicable only on the hypothesis that there exists an occult force, and, if it were not that we are familiar with them, they would seem quite as wonderful as anything which the late Professor Lombroso observed in his seances with the Neapolitan medium. Two persons will strike identically the same chords on a piano; one simply produces a noise; the other sends a tingling sensation through our whole being. One examiner asks a schoolboy a question, and the little fellow stands mute and wondering; another asks it, and the answer follows instantly. You are ill, your trusted physician calls, asks a few questions, assures you there is nothing much the matter with you and writes out a prescription, and forthwith you feel better. You look with displeasure at your dog, and he

crouches abjectly at your feet; you change your look to one of approval, and he frisks around you in joy. What is the power by which these things are done? Surely here is a force as real as that which makes the needle point to the Pole, and neither more nor less mysterious. We accept these manifestations of power as a part of the ordinary things of life; but they are as well worth investigating as an alleged appearance of a spirit, and quite as wonderful. For centuries than anyone can say with certainty, men saw the lightning's flash. A little while ago they began to investigate it, and the result is transmission of the human voice across hundreds of miles, and even of human countenances. A man speaks in Birmingham; his portrait is transmitted to London by the occult force hidden in the lightning, and the words he says as well, and both appear in the morning newspaper. And this is because men have investigated something that for generations they were warned against because it was one of the hidden mysteries of God's power. May it not be that one day the investigation of mental and spiritual forces will be begun on right lines and be crowned with results as marvellous and as unsuspected as those that have come from the study of electricity?

Not very long ago, scientific men felt compelled to postulate the existence of the ether, or, to express the idea in colloquial language, to assume that there is an all-pervading element by means of which light, electricity, and perhaps other manifestations of force are transmitted. No one knows what the ether is. It is not the air, but it is in the air, although absolutely distinct from it. It is in all solids. Wireless messages are transmitted against the most violent gales as readily as in a perfect calm. So far as any one knows, the ether does not move; it seems to be capable of vibration without being displaced. But this only by way of illustration and as a basis for the suggestion that it is quite thinkable that we may be surrounded with a medium by means of which mind operates upon mind, thoughts are transferred, hypnotism is produced, faith is exercised and communication may be established with the denizens of a spiritual world. It may, as investigation proceeds, be found necessary to postulate the existence of such a medium, and there would be nothing unscientific in so doing. There are already a sufficient number of things that are absolutely inexplicable except on the supposition that some known medium is capable of unsuspected possibilities, or that some unsuspected medium is capable of infinite possibilities. To make this rather abstract proposition more clear, let us apply it to ordinary things. We say that a man is capable of arousing enthusiasm, which another is not; we are conscious when in the presence of some men that they possess the power of a great personality. How is this enthusiasm, how is this sense of power imparted? Is it by means of some known medium of communication, such as that which transmits the vibrations of a telegraphic instrument, or some other and yet more subtle agency?

This is the point to which the consideration of force through this series of articles has brought us. We have come to the shore of a vast unknown ocean of speculation, and the most adventurous thought have as yet scarcely ventured upon it. Yet there is no reason why we should not advance fearlessly in our investigations, for there seems to be a wind blowing out of the far distance and borne on that wind is a Voice, which says: "It is I, be not afraid."

SEDAN

The most important battle since Waterloo, so far as European nations are concerned, and perhaps the most important when regarded from the standpoint of world interest, was that fought at Sedan on September 1, 1870. Sedan is a town in France, near the Belgian frontier, and here the Emperor Napoleon III., 39 years old, 230 staff officers, 2,600 officers and 83,000 men were made prisoners of war by the Germans. This led to the overthrow of the Second Empire of the French after an existence of 18 years. William I., King of Prussia, commanded the German forces, with Von Moltke as chief of staff. This battle did not end the war. Three days later the republic was proclaimed in Paris, with Thiers, Faure, Simon and Gambetta as the civil heads and Trochu as the military chief. The Germans advanced on Paris to which they laid siege on September 19, the siege continuing until January 30, 1871. Meanwhile William was crowned Emperor of Germany at the palace of Versailles, and the Pope was shown of his temporal power. Victor Emmanuel had only been restrained from entering Rome by the influence of Napoleon III., and when that was destroyed he speedily achieved his cherished ambition and made Rome the capital of United Italy. The events which led up to these important results call for consideration; but first reference must be made to Napoleon III., by whose folly the crisis was precipitated.

Napoleon, called the Third because the Bonapartists claimed that Francois Charles Joseph son of Napoleon I. by Marie Louise, was emperor de jure though not de facto, was son of Louis Bonaparte, brother of the first Napoleon, by whom he was created King of Holland. His mother was Hortense Beauharnois, daughter of the Empress Josephine by her first husband. Louis Napoleon, which was the full name of the third Napoleon, was born in 1808. He lived in France until the family was banished after Waterloo. After varying fortunes he went to live in London, and at this time the future emperor was 23 years of age. His older brother having died in 1830, and the son of Marie Louise in 1832, Louis Napoleon was the presumptive head of the

Bonaparte family. In 1836 he engaged in an enterprise to overthrow Louis Philippe, King of the French, but it ended in disaster, and he was banished to America, where he remained a year, going to Switzerland in 1837 to wait on his mother who was dying, and after her death to England. In 1840 the body of Napoleon I. was brought to France from St. Helena, and Louis Napoleon sought to take advantage of the sentiment aroused thereby to make another attempt to dethrone Louis Philippe. It proved even a worse fiasco than his first attempt. He was arrested and sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. While in confinement he devoted himself to the study of economic questions and wrote freely upon them. After six years he effected his escape and took refuge in England, where in 1848 he served as a special constable during the Chartist disturbances. In that year Louis Philippe lost his throne and Louis Napoleon returned to France to participate in the formation of the new republic, of which he was elected president in December, 1848. Three years later he put an end to constitutional government and on the following November an election was held to decide if the imperial dignity should be restored and the vote stood 8,000,000 in favor and 250,000 against the proposal. He died in England in 1873.

The loss of prestige suffered by Austria in the Italian war encouraged the ambition of Prussia to oust that power from her place at the head of the Germanic federation, and Bismarck, who was the first minister of the Prussian King, saw that the time had come for action. It is to be remembered that Austria was a Roman Catholic power, and Prussia a Protestant. The feeling of which Bismarck was the personification was the old one of Protestant North Germany against Catholic South Germany. But there were difficulties in the way of the Prussian statesman. No reason existed for war against Austria. In 1863 the Schlesien-Holstein question became acute. The history of the famous diplomatic question is too involved to be given here. It is sufficient to say that after a very brief campaign Denmark was despoiled of these provinces, which Prussia and Austria took over in trust. Over these two provinces the two powers quarrelled, and war was the result. The German states took sides with the leaders. Hostilities only lasted seven weeks and there was very little fighting except at Koniggratz on July 3, 1866, where the Austrian army of 250,000 men was completely defeated by a superior Prussian force. The completeness of the victory was attributed to the "needle gun," the first breech-loader, with which the Prussians were armed. This battle is sometimes spoken of as Sadowa, from a near-by village. The victory left Austria powerless and made Prussia the premier state in Germany, and in due time Austria was excluded from the Germanic federation.

Napoleon thought that France ought to receive territorial concessions to balance to enhanced power of Prussia and he proposed to annex Belgium, Luxembourg and other adjacent territory. War became imminent, but there was no breach of the peace for three years, during which both Germany and France prepared for the struggle, which everyone saw was inevitable. All that was wanting was an excuse for fighting. This was easily found. Queen Isabella of Spain having been deposed, the crown was offered to a Prussian prince. France protested, and the offer was declined. Napoleon then demanded that the Hohenzollern prince should agree never to accept the Spanish crown, and that the Prussian King should apologize for ever entertaining such an idea. Prussia's reply to this was to dismiss the French ambassador. Both countries prepared to mobilize their forces. Napoleon had been led to think that Austria, Italy and Denmark would side with France, but they held aloof. On August 1, 1870, active operations began. One German success followed another and the remarkable campaign culminated at Sedan. Bazaine held out in Metz for eight weeks longer, when he surrendered with 180,000 men. On May 10, 1871, peace was negotiated. By the terms of the treaty France ceded the greater part of the provinces of Alsace and Lorraine to Germany and agreed to pay an indemnity of 5,000,000,000 francs—\$1,000,000,000. No other nation ever suffered so tremendous a defeat in so short a time. Nearly 400,000 men and more than 7,000 pieces of artillery were captured by the victors.

A Century of Fiction

VIII.

(N. de Bertrand Lugrin)

Honore de Balzac

"The nearer the artist comes to reproducing for us life in its totality the higher the rank we assign him among his fellows. Tried by this canon Balzac is supreme."

Unquestionably Balzac's genius ranks with that of the greatest of the world's literati. In deed, many of his admirers class him with Shakespeare in his wonderful power of delineating character and his remarkable versatility. He was an exponent of modern realism in that realism's best form, for he never lost sight of his ideals, nor spoil the beauty of a picture by too great length of detail in its description, that is, unnecessary detail, for he was not one to curb his pen in trying to make the picture true. He has produced an enormous number of works, the greatest among which, and that which brought him an undying renown being the "Comedie Humaine," in

which he weaves through a number of volumes, a tale that deals with a long series of events and characters, each distinct and yet interdependent one upon another; the events and characters in fact that had figured in his stories for five years, one story being brought to bear upon another, and one character showing its relation to another. Only a master mind could have undertaken such a gigantic work successfully. His idea was to show the evolution of social and political problems, and the evolution of personalities by a "store house of documents on human nature," and he succeeds in doing more than this. He places before us in this work a world of living men and women, whose sorrows for the time being are our sorrows, whose joys are our joys.

Balzac had the advantage of intimacy with many of the most gifted writers of his time. Victor Hugo was always a friend, and the author's relations with Theophile Gautier and Georges Sand were very cordial. The person who exercised the greatest influence over his life with the exception of his sister Laure, whose loving sympathy acted as a stimulus and an inspiration always, was the woman he afterward married, Madame Eveline de Hanska.

Balzac was born at Tours, May 16, 1799. His parents were in no way distinguished, and Balzac, as a child, betrayed no especial talent. In fact, he displayed no ability at school, although he read enormously, and undermined his health by his close application to books. He was an extremely sensitive child, and had his masters made an effort to understand him, his love of reading might have been early turned to good practical account. As it was, receiving little or no encouragement, his first books were far from successful, being something in the nature of "pot-boilers," which the author in later years wished to refuse to acknowledge. Though his mind teemed with themes and ideas, it was always a very difficult matter for Balzac to write, and the first years of his manhood were so beset by debts and poverty that it is small wonder he could not forget his troubles in flights of rhetoric. But the germs of genius are to be found even in these early productions, and the work entailed in their production served the author as a needful stepping-stone to higher and nobler effort. The very hardships he endured taught him essential lessons, and gave him a broader, fairer outlook upon life in all its various aspects. He learned from necessity to become a keen student of human nature, and the knowledge thus gained proved of inestimable benefit.

It was in the year 1830, when he was 31 years old, that he began the greatest work of his life, the "Comedie Humaine," and it was in this year also that he produced seventy-one stories, long and short, articles and dramas. The next year literature was the richer by seventy-six additions, but he could not keep up this stupendous amount of work longer than two years, after that time devoting himself to lengthy novels almost entirely. He was always the despair of his printers, for he practically re-wrote his stories on his proof sheets, thus entailing enormous extra labor and expense. Composition never became an easy matter to him with all his practice.

He was not married until he was past fifty. The marriage was the consummation of a long friendship and love-affair. He met Madame de Hanska first when he was about thirty-three just after his eyes had been opened to the mistake of his intimacy with the Duchess de Castre, whose influence over him had always been unfortunate. The beautiful young Polish woman gained her first knowledge of Balzac through reading his books, and becoming interested wrote to him, a meeting following a short correspondence. Madame de Hanska was then the wife of a rich Russian and she had one daughter. Her friendship with Balzac was purely platonic, and her husband had no objection whatever to the intimacy. Balzac himself, however, as the friendship ripened, realized that with him it was growing into something deeper, and began to hold himself aloof from the lady, who, not understanding his changed manner, grieved deeply. When her husband died Balzac returned to her, and confessed his love. She, loving him in return, would not marry him until her daughter had settled in life. Time passed, and Balzac eagerly impatient became absorbed in the passion of his love, and when at last happiness came to him it was almost too late, for he died the same year in which he married.

"Eugenie Grandet" is one of the stories belonging to the great cycle of fiction "The Comedie Humaine." The heroine is a young and lovely country girl whose father, a rich miser, allows his child no luxuries and begrudges her even the vital necessities. The plot hinges on the girl's devotion to her gallant cousin with whom she is in love and whom she contrives to serve in spite of her lack of money. When he goes to the West Indies they are engaged to be married, and the girl forgets all her deprivations in the fullness of her joy. In time the father dies and Eugenie is left a rich heiress, but Charles, the cousin, has not heard the news when he writes asking to be released from his engagement as he finds he must do without love and marry money, having had the opportunity. Eugenie does not enlighten him as to the true state of affairs, but sends him a letter setting him free, though it breaks her heart to do so. Then she contrives without his knowledge to pay his debts and settle a comfortable income upon him, thus clearing his name which had become dishonored. She herself marries a man who loves her, but her heart is always faithful to her cousin, and she spends her life in a career of self-sacrifice.