

# The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the  
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

Founded by EDWARD C. HEGELER

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VOL. XXXII (No. 9)

SEPTEMBER, 1918

NO. 748

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## The Open Court Publishing Company

122 South Michigan Avenue

CHICAGO

Per copy, 10 cents (sixpence). Yearly, \$1.00 (in the U.P.U., 5s. 6d.).

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# THE GOSPEL OF BUDDHA

By

DR. PAUL CARUS

*Pocket Edition. Illustrated. Cloth, \$1.00; flexible leather, \$1.50*

This edition is a photographic reproduction of the *edition de luxe* which was printed in Leipsic in 1913 and ready for shipment in time to be caught by the embargo Great Britain put on all articles exported from Germany. Luckily two copies of the above edition escaped, and these were used to make the photographic reproduction of this latest edition. While the Buddhist Bible could not in any way be considered a contraband of war yet the publishers were forced to hold back many hundred orders for the book on account of orders in council of Great Britain.

When the book was first published His Majesty, the King of Siam, sent the following communication through his private secretary :

"Dear Sir : I am commanded by His Most Gracious Majesty, the King of Siam, to acknowledge, with many thanks, the receipt of your letter and the book, *The Gospel of Buddha*, which he esteems very much ; and he expresses his sincerest thanks for the very hard and difficult task of compilation you have considerately undertaken in the interest of our religion. I avail myself of this favorable opportunity to wish the book every success."

His Royal Highness, Prince Chandradat Chudhadharn, official delegate of Siamese Buddhism to the Chicago Parliament of Religions, writes :

"As regards the contents of the book, and as far as I could see, it is one of the best Buddhist Scriptures ever published. Those who wish to know the life of Buddha and the spirit of his Dharma may be recommended to read this work which is so ably edited that it comprises almost all knowledge of Buddhism itself."

The book has been introduced as a reader in private Buddhist schools of Ceylon. Mrs. Marie H. Higgins, Principal of the Musaeus School and Orphanage for Buddhist Girls, Cinnamon Gardens, Ceylon, writes as follows :

"It is the best work I have read on Buddhism. This opinion is endorsed by all who read it here. I propose to make it a text-book of study for my girls."

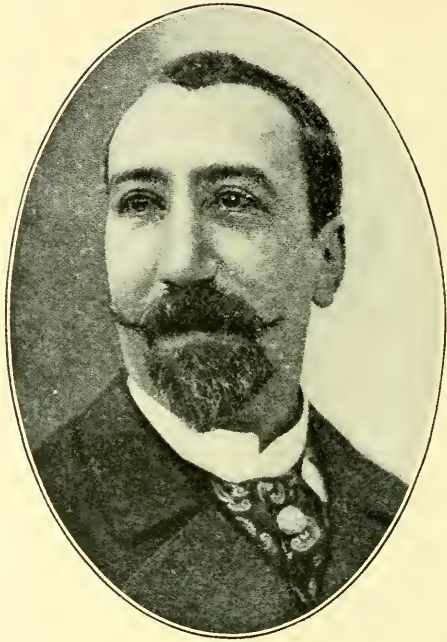
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ANATOLE FRANCE  
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## A CHAPTER ON ANATOLE FRANCE.

BY LEWIS PIAGET SHANKS.

[On the following pages we give the first chapter of a book that we intend to publish soon, discussing the art and philosophy of Anatole France, the great French writer who is still known far too little in this country. To allow an estimate of what may be expected to follow we prefix portions of the "Foreword." Mr. Shanks, professor of Romanic languages and literatures in the University of Pennsylvania, could not be introduced better than by his own style, a style truly suited to convey some of the exquisite and noble impression, intangible in its essence, that we experience when alone with Anatole France himself.—Ed.]

[FROM THE FOREWORD.]

AMONG the would-be volunteers of 1914 was the virtual Dean of French letters, a man of seventy years. We were surprised, not at his age but at his transformation; for nearly twenty years he had preached pacifism, and the brotherhood of man. We were surprised because he was Anatole France. Yet scarcely twenty-five years before, this Radical was known as a skeptic, an intellectual hedonist, a dilettante; in 1889, no one could foresee the future dreamer of reform in the nihilistic pages of *Thäis*. So his final heroic inconsistency is only a part of a greater problem, a single phase in a life's drama, whereby a skeptic and a pessimist developed into a man of action.

... The story of an intellectual Odyssey, this book was prompted by the same optimism as the modern traveler's log. In most books of travel the best things are the illustrations. So with quotations in biography or criticism—prudence no less than reverence requires them. Moreover, even the temptation of a ready camera is less than the desire to translate—to attempt a translation of Anatole France, a perpetual challenge despite the quality of one's results. To quote wherever possible, to condense and still quote, and to strive to set one's mosaic in a surface not absolutely disparate is of course a bit presumptuous; but how else could one present a writer

so personal, whose thoughts and impressions and memories are day by day woven into his work?

With such a literary Proteus, no stippled portrait is worth a series of sketches. One must tell the history of his ideas—the story of his mind's development. So, beginning with his heredity and early environment, we follow the poet and thinker through his first imaginative enthusiasm for science, until his belief in her dies away in skepticism and he returns to the world of poetry and art. After this conflict of youthful illusions, when a victorious intellect has rejected the faith and effort which its philosophy finds vain, comes the second phase: content now to enjoy his own talents without attempting to coordinate them to any principle but style, the erstwhile Darwinian develops his skepticism philosophically in order to range more freely in the galleries of the Past. This is Anatole France in his forties, dilettante and disciple of the later Renan. But he wearies in the Palace of Art, grows sick of self and eager for a stronger draught of reality. Hence the descent into the arena, provoked by the Dreyfus affair and the corruption of French politics: the idealist, the man of heart and imagination now dominates the *intellectuel*. Then comes the reaction, after less than a decade of contact with life—when the student realizes that man is not the reasonable creature he had imagined, but a selfish animal, bound by inertia and hostile to reform; and the genial irony of his forties turns to satire, ending in the sneer of a cynic who can only caricature humanity. Anatole France is then an idealist turned inside out by life, an inverted idealist like Swift in his last phase, distilling acid sarcasm until again he is swept from philosophy into action by the world-war. . . .

[THE FIRST CHAPTER.]

“The first idea which I got of the universe,” says Anatole France in *Pierre Nozière*, “came to me from my old pictorial Bible. It was a series of seventeenth-century woodcuts, with a Garden of Eden fresh and fertile as a Lowland landscape. . . . Every evening, under the lamp, I would turn its ancient leaves, until sleep, the delicious sleep of childhood, carried me off in its warm shadows, and the patriarchs, the apostles, and the lace-decked ladies lived on through my dreams their supernatural lives. My Bible had become for me the most vivid reality, and to it I strove to conform my universe.”

His universe at that time was the sleepy old Quai Malaquais. There, in the heart of Paris, Anatole France was born, the six-



teenth of April, 1844; and his baby eyes first opened on the Seine and the Louvre, the Cité and the carven towers of Notre Dame. But the universe grows with the growing legs of its children. At five, this little world extended from the Rue Bonaparte to the Ile Saint-Louis, and the "River of Glory," which he followed every day with his nurse, gave him back the Noah's Ark of his Bible in the floating baths of La Samaritaine. To the east, beyond the Pont d'Austerlitz, he saw in imagination the mysterious realms of the Scriptures, and the Jardin des Plantes was clearly the Garden of Eden, for hadn't his mother told him that Eden was a garden with trees and all the animals of the Creation?

So at least we read in *Pierre Nozière*. Here, in the exquisite *Livre de mon Ami*, and in *Le petit Pierre*, now publishing in the *Revue de Paris*, is set down a man's story of the boy that he was; and if sentiment in an ironist is an index of candor, these books contain as much truth as poetry. For theirs is no mere symbolic truth, transformed by time and the artistic temperament.<sup>1</sup> Real memories alone could yield pages so charming, so significant; not one but reveals the future poet, already living in his world of dreams.

"My cosmography," he says in *Pierre Nozière*, "my cosmography was immense. I held the Quai Malaquais, where my room was, to be the center of the world. The green bedroom, in which my mother put my little bed next her own, I looked upon as the point on which Heaven shed its rays and graces, as you may see in the pictures of the saints. And these four walls, so familiar to me, were filled with mystery none the less.

"At night in my cot-bed, I used to see strange faces, and all at once the warm and cozy bedroom, lit by the last dying gleams of the fireplace, would open wide to the invasion of the supernatural world.

"Legions of horned devils danced their rounds; then, slowly, a lady of black marble passed by, weeping, and it was only later that I found out that these hobgoblins were dancing in my brain. . . .

"According to my system, in which you must recognize that candor which gives to primitive cosmogonies their charm, the earth

<sup>1</sup> Confirmation of this may be found in a letter of Anatole France to a man of letters, reproduced in François Carez's *Auteurs Contemporains* (p. 82): "Je vous confie que tout ce qui, dans ce volume (*le Livre de mon Ami*), concerne le petit Nozière, forme un récit exact de mon enfance, sous cette réserve que mon père était non médecin mais libraire sur le quai Voltaire et que les choses domestiques étaient plus étroites et plus humbles chez nous qu'elles ne sont chez un petit médecin de quartier. Le caractère de mon père n'est pas moins conservé dans celui du docteur Nozière. Mon père est devenu un homme instruit, presque savant, à la fin de sa vie."

formed a large circle around my house. Every day I would meet, coming and going in the streets, people who seemed occupied with a strange and amusing game, the game of life. I decided that there were a great many of them, perhaps more than a hundred.

"I did not think that they were under absolutely fortunate influences, sheltered like myself from all anxiety. To tell the truth, I did not think that they were as real as I was; I was not absolutely sure that they were real people, and when from my window I saw them pass, very tiny, over the Pont des Arts, they seemed to me playthings rather than persons, so that I was almost as happy as the boy-giant in the fairy-tale, who sat on a mountain and played with trees and cabins, cows and sheep, shepherds and shepherd-girls."

Such in embryo is the creative vision, the artist's vision. It is certainly no ordinary stock which produced this dreamy, imaginative boy. An only son, born in his father's fortieth year, Jacques-Anatole Thibault owes to that father much more than the famous pseudonym. Noël Thibault too was a man of letters and a lover of the past. "France, libraire," for thus he signed his articles on bibliography, kept a book-shop at 9 Quai Malaquais, in the fine old building so long occupied by his successor Champion. A Royalist, devoutly Catholic, a Vendéen in origins and in every sympathy, he had served in the body-guard of Charles X, and he loved the *ancien régime* as he hated the Revolution.<sup>2</sup> Originally from Anjou, Noël Thibault had all the proverbial gentleness of the Angevin; he is depicted for us in Sylvestre Bonnard's memories of his father, ironical, indulgent, disillusioned: "il était fatigué, et il aimait sa fatigue."

The serenity of the Anjou country, with its placid rivers and its rolling hills—*la douceur angevine*—thus finds a reflection in the artist and his art. Yet if Anatole France shows this regional type in its amenity, he has no less the Angevin shrewdness and irony. Every lover of Taine's theory must rejoice in France's reminiscences of his grandmother, neither Royalist nor pious, but keen-witted, practical, and pagan, a very disciple of Voltaire. "She had no more piety than a bird," says her grandson: "she clearly belonged to the eighteenth century." Significant, too, is her prediction that the boy Anatole would be "a very different man from his father."

Grand'mère was right. The child had more than distinction of intellect, a much greater gift than his father's sterile scholarship. He had the creative vitality, the exuberance of fancy and imagina-

<sup>2</sup> Yet no one knew that period better, as his learned bibliography shows.

tion which alone makes the artist. Like the old Bible, this came to him from his mother, from the merry, active, beauty-loving mother whom we know so well in these books of her son. Naive, mystic, candidly religious, like the true daughter of Bruges that she was, she used to read to him the Lives of the Saints, and the charm of the old stories "filled the soul of the child with wonderment and love." A dreamer already, he felt profoundly the mystic poetry of religious legend; his first hope of military glory gave way to a dream of sainthood, and he lived out the sacred stories with all the seriousness of real experience. His refusal to eat, his distribution of coppers and toys to the poor, his attempt to make a hair shirt from the wiry cover of an old armchair, and the whipping he received from an inconsiderate maid, are related with inimitable grace and irony in the eighth chapter of *Le Livre de mon Ami*: finally, "the difficulty of practising sainthood in family life" made him resolve to seek a hermitage in the Jardin des Plantes. There, on the morrow, he would live alone with all the animals of the Creation; there he would see, like Saint Anthony, the faun and the centaur, and perhaps the angels would visit him beneath the Cedar of Lebanon, on the hill where, in imagination, he saw "God the Father with his white beard and his blue robe, with arms outstretched to bless him, beside the antelope and the gazelle." But when the future author of *Thaïs* confides this plan to his mother as she combs his hair, and she asks him why he wants to be a hermit, it becomes plain that his dream of glory is not the glory of the saints:—"I want to be famous," he replies, "and put on my visiting-cards 'Hermit and Saint of the Calendar,' just as papa puts on his: 'Laureate of the Academy of Medicine.'"

True or apocryphal, this ended his ascetic projects—less successful even than the boyish prank of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who actually put a similar plan into execution. After all there were other things to interest him, prisoned as he was in the solitary visionary life of an only child. "It was not large, that life of mine," he tells us, "but it was a life, that is, the center of things, the middle of the world." The very opening of his mother's closets, piled high with mysterious forbidden boxes, filled him with poetic curiosity. He had his playthings—and the playthings of his dreams. He wondered at "the number of lines and faces that could be got out of a pencil." He felt, too, the charm of flowers, of perfumes, the delights of food and dress. But what he loved most, he confesses, more than any of these things, was everything together, the house, the air, the light, the life of his very downy nest. After all, the

practice of asceticism might have been hard for this young Epicurean.

Not a desert cave, but a desk and a library, is the proper stage for a poet's seclusion. And to such things the future writer turned instinctively. "I lived with my books," he tells us, "my pictures, my paste-pot, my color boxes, and all the belongings of a bright yet delicate boy, already sedentary, naively initiating himself by his toys into that feeling for form and color, the source of so much pain and so much joy. Already I had a bent toward desk work, a love of pictures cut out patiently by the evening lamp, a profound feeling for things pictorial. I have never needed, even in my early years, to possess things in order to enjoy them." This is the future biographer of Sylvestre Bonnard and the Maid of France.

Given such a nature, a boy needs only a hero to shape a definite ideal. The hero appeared in the person of a collector, a hero of the desk and the card-catalogue. Clad in flowered dressing-gown and nightcap, this old scholar, immortalized under the name of Monsieur Le Beau, passed his days cataloguing books and medals in a house packed to the roof with curiosities. So Anatole, at ten, "thought it finer to make card-catalogues than to win battles. He would catalogue, and I, with eyes wide open and bated breath, would admire him. I did not imagine that there could be any finer business to give one's life to. But I was mistaken. A printer was found to print the catalogue of old Le Beau, and then I saw my friend correcting the proofs. He would put mysterious signs on the margins of the leaves. Then I understood that this was the finest occupation in the world, and I promised myself that I too would some day have my proof-sheets to revise."

The famous dressing-gown of the disciple is of gray frieze, his cap of red velvet, and the proof-sheets have come, so numerous that all the first delight—a veritable justification of the universe—has long since passed away. And it is not hard to see how the old antiquary, in his house piled with all the flotsam of time, set the example of intellectual curiosity and patient scholarship that even a poet needs to see clearly into the labyrinth of the Past. To such an example, possibly, is due the Life of Joan of Arc; but the reader wonders in vain who was this Monsieur le Beau, the collector who lives in art by his kindness to a lonely child.

Was he his father, the booklover and bibliographer of the Quai Malaquais? After all a father is a boy's first hero, and a father's trade his first dream of his own. Or was he one of his father's patrons, "le bibliophile Jacob" or the collector Marmier, met in the

quiet old shop where the boy "played with dumpy duodecimos as with dolls"? In any case one must not forget the bookstore—a second nursery in which he grew up, surrounded by the motley ranks of an ever-changing library. Here it was that he got his first notions of history and society, from books and from the conversations of his father and his father's friends—a memory which he used later in picturing the book-shop of Paillot; and as the patrons of this old Royalist were mostly Royalists too, *ci-devant* aristocrats and conservatives, their remarks on the Revolution could not fail to influence the future author of *Les Dieux ont Soif*. It is easy to imagine them—some of the older ones, perhaps, wearing the high neck-cloths and tight trousers Daumier loved to draw, wholly unmindful of the shy little lad reading in the corner; but it was for him that they talked, after all. Disciples of Voltaire, they were the first to show him, in their endless arguments, the multiplicity of Truth.

Thus the old bookstore by the Seine became the nursery of a genius. In ludicrous contrast, we have the picture of his first school, a "highly recommended" establishment of the Faubourg Saint-Germain. There, in a room full of mischief-loving youngsters presided over by an absent-minded spinster, he made acquaintance with the world of human society, discovered the practical life and found his first friend in a boy who taught him to raise silkworms in his desk. There, too, the charms of poetry were revealed to him, when the melancholy schoolmistress read to the class her melancholy ballad "Pauvre Jeanne." The tears which he shed on that occasion brought him not the cross of honor, but the vision of that beauty which rhyme and rhythm give.

Practical education, however, was not to be gained here. After copying for six weeks the same line of poetry, the boy was withdrawn from the *pension* by his dissatisfied parents. Although not rich, they now chose for him the Collège Stanislas, an expensive and aristocratic school directed by Jesuits. At Stanislas, "un vieux collègue un peu monacal," he came under the instruction of ecclesiastics, learned the poetry that legend and ritual inspire. Esthetically the priesthood may well have had its moment of attraction for him. He may have lived in sympathy the episode of young Piedagnel in *L'Orme du Mail*. At all events the Church gave him her best for his intellectual training; like Jules Lemaitre, he enjoyed the discipline which perfected the mind of Renan. "In the Temple," said the good Abbé Jérôme Coignard, "were forged the hammers which destroyed the Temple."

Nor must we forget, in his education, the inestimable influence of Paris. To such a boy, responsive to the pictorial, to the charm of the past, the chance of living in the City of Light was a veritable godsend. "It does not seem to me possible," he modestly affirms, "for a man to have an absolutely commonplace turn of mind, if he has been brought up on the quays of Paris, opposite the Louvre and the Tuileries, and facing the glorious Seine, which runs amidst the belfries and towers and spires of Old Paris. . . . There, the book-stalls, the curiosity shops and the old print stores display the most beautiful products of art and the most interesting tokens of the Past. Every shop-window is an attraction for the eyes and the intellect: the passer-by who knows how to see always carries away some thought, as the bird flies off with a bit of straw for its nest."

When Anatole France was a boy, this quarter was even richer in atmosphere than it is to-day. Old prints, old paintings, old books, old furniture—every foot of the quays was full of them. Carved credence-tables, flowered Japanese vases, bits of enamel, faïence, brocaded stuffs, and figured tapestries served to illustrate the old books lying so invitingly open: the famous curiosity shop described in Balzac's *Peau de Chagrin* shows what these places used to be. This larger school Anatole France knew before he ceased to wear short trousers and embroidered collars; "when we went to the Tuileries Gardens on holidays, we used to pass along this learned Quai Voltaire, and as we walked, hoop in hand and ball in pocket, we used to look into the shop-windows just like the old gentlemen, and form our own ideas on all these strange things which had come down from the Past, from the mysterious Past."

Add to these his daily journeys, first along the quays, then down that fascinating Rue Bonaparte which takes one past an endless row of curio-shops to the Luxembourg gardens and the Collège Stanislas situated in the Rue Notre-Dame des Champs. Every day he saw the shop-windows, greeted the white statues of the gardens gleaming against their fernlike background of trees, felt all the multifarious life of Old Paris. So the streets gave him his first understanding of the world. Here he saw the milkwomen, the water-carriers, the coal-heavers at their tasks, and learned the law of cheerful labor which Paris teaches in every shop and alley. Like Coppée, he loved this humble Paris, only he loved it still as a spectator. It was all a part of his vision of the universe, a poet's vision, destined to be engraven in pages expressive as a Whistler etching, pages discreetly evocative of the Paris that we love.

He learned, in fine, that busy idling which separates the artist

from the scholar. And even in school he retained the same discursive spirit: he was constantly reprimanded for his devotion to interests "extraneous to the class." Yet he was a good student, particularly in the Humanities. "You may call me an aristocrat or a mandarin, but I believe that six or seven years of literary culture give to the mind prepared to receive it a nobility, a force and beauty which is not to be obtained by other means."

At Stanislas Anatole France received this literary training. And he was prepared for it. Already Livy set him to dreaming. When his old Jesuit Latin master read the sentence "The remnants of the Roman army reached Canusium through the favor of the night," he would see "passing silently in the moonlight, over the naked plain and the long road flanked with tombs, livid faces, foul with blood and dust, battered helmets, wrenched and tarnished breast-plates, broken swords." And by that vision we may know that Anatole France was already old enough to feel the grandeur that was Rome.

"Then it was Virgil, and then Homer. I saw Thetis rising like a white cloud from the sea, I saw Nausicaa and her companions, and the palm-tree of Delos, and the sky and the earth of the sea, and the tearful smile of Andromache. . . . And I understood it, I felt it. For six months I could not leave the Odyssey. . . . I was with Ulysses on the wine-dark sea. Then I discovered the tragic poets. Sophocles, Euripides, opened to me the enchanted world of heroes, initiated me into the poetry of woe. At each tragedy that I read, there were new joys, tears, and thrills unknown till then.

"Alcestis and Antigone gave me the noblest dreams that ever boy did dream. Bent over my dictionary, above my ink-bespattered desk, I would see divine figures, arms of ivory drooping over white tunics, and hear voices sweeter than the sweetest music, lamenting in harmony."

So Anatole France found in a Jesuit college the Greek beauty, the Vision of Life which he gives back to us, still dominant in the many-textured web of a world-old culture. That beauty, that ideal, he never ceased to cultivate, to worship: his favorite poets are still the poets of the pagan world. No lover of his well-nigh perfect prose, candid and full of charms as only a Grecian could create, but will exclaim, as he does in one of his early novels: "O Athens, city ever to be revered, if thou hadst never existed, the world would not yet know what beauty is!"