

## MISCELLANEOUS.

## THE MITTAG-LEFFLER TESTAMENT AND INSTITUTE.

Three years ago, Dr. Gustaf Mittag-Leffler, the eminent Swedish mathematician who was Weierstrass's most brilliant pupil at Berlin, celebrated his seventieth birthday at Stockholm on March 16, 1916. On this occasion the testament of Dr. Mittag-Leffler and his wife was published; and an extract from it is translated in the *Bulletin of the American Mathematical Society* for October, 1916, by Dr. Caroline E. Seely. Dr. Mittag-Leffler and his wife bequeath after their deaths all their possessions to a foundation bearing the name "Mittag-Leffler Institute," which is to help to maintain and develop the study of pure mathematics in the four Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Norway. Professor Mittag-Leffler's library is to be preserved and enriched in the large villa now belonging to him at Djursholm near Stockholm, which has been built and arranged with the purpose in view; fellowships for study of pure mathematics at home or abroad are to be granted to young people of both sexes; and medals are to be granted for important work in pure mathematics. All this is of direct benefit to Scandinavians alone; but at least once every six years a further prize for a really important discovery in pure mathematics is to be awarded without regard to the nationality of the author. This prize is to consist of a large gold medal, a diploma, and as complete a set as possible of the *Acta Mathematica*; and the person to whom the prize is awarded is to be invited to appear himself at Djursholm to receive it, a suitable appropriation for his traveling expenses being made.

The portrait of Professor Mittag-Leffler which forms the frontispiece of this number of *The Open Court* is from a drawing by C. W. Maud after a photograph which appeared some years ago in the *American Journal of Mathematics*.

This is the first institute in which the claims of pure mathematics in particular as an important part of the work of civilization has been recognized. Thus all pure mathematicians—and, we may add, all cultivators of the science of form—will be encouraged by the noble example of Professor Mittag-Leffler, who himself has already done so much to increase the power of pure mathematics.

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## BOOK REVIEWS.

GOETHE. By *Calvin Thomas*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1917. Pp. xii, 368. Price, \$2.00 net.

Calvin Thomas, professor of German in Columbia University, has written an attractive book of over 368 pages on Goethe. It consists of sixteen chapters, eight of which are devoted to a critical study of the poet's life, while

seven others discuss Goethe as a philosopher, evolutionist, believer, poet, dramatist, novelist, and critic; the last chapter deals with *Faust* exclusively.

In order to characterize the book, we may single out some passages as specimens of Professor Thomas's thought. Regarding his attitude toward Goethe, the man and the lover, it may be sufficient to see what he thinks of the Sesenheim affair. He says (pp. 38f):

"A peculiar charm invests that portion of 'Poetry and Truth' in which Goethe tells of his brief summer romance with Friederike Brion. There, where the tale is told with exquisite art by one who knew it as no one else can possibly know it, is the place to read it; the modern biographer should stay his hand. Suffice it to say that Goethe found the village maid very bewitching in her country home, loved her, won her love, and spent much time with her in the early summer of 1771. With quite too little thought of the inevitable parting he gave himself up to the delicious idyl, and then, when the time came for him to go home, bade farewell to the sorrowing maid and took himself out of her life.

"For this act of unromantic perfidy his conscience tormented him. What he did at last, after drifting too long with the current of passion, was the right thing to do; for a marriage would have been an act of sentimental folly, for her as well as for him. They were not well mated for the prose of life. But while the common sense of mankind makes little of such a fault, and nothing at all when it is the woman who retreats, Goethe himself felt that he had played a shabby part. He says as much in his autobiography, and letters written at the time betray a remorseful state of mind, which, however, did not last very long. He expiated artistically. For several years to come his scheme of a tragic situation regularly included a girl deserted by her lover. Thus the village maid became the muse of the new-born poet."

It is important to remember that Goethe visited the family of Friederike. In a foot-note to the same chapter Professor Thomas says (p. 39):

"Certain writers appear to make a virtue of believing that the relation of Goethe and Friederike was much less idyllic than the famous tenth book of 'Poetry and Truth' would lead one to suppose; in short, that it was very like the relation of Faust and Gretchen. But the evidence adduced is too vague and untrustworthy to compel such a conclusion. It is largely a question of what one *wishes* to believe. An outstanding fact of great moment is that in 1779 Goethe revisited Sesenheim and was received with delight by the entire Brion family."

An important phase in Goethe's thought was his conception of immortality. Certain it is that Goethe believed in immortality, and Professor Thomas's treatment of this subject is characterized in the following quotation (pp. 233ff):

"With respect to his belief in immortality Goethe often expressed himself in his old age. It is certain that he clung to the belief tenaciously and regarded it as indispensable; but whether he believed in a real survival of personality after death, or only in the reabsorption of the particular drop into the divine ocean of life from which it sprang, is not so easy to decide. His utterances can be taken either way. Certain it is, however, that he was not content to rest his belief solely on a faith that transcends reason. He thought

he could justify it by proofs; but, as is nearly always the case when men attempt to argue this question, his proofs have little weight for a mind in need of argument. He once said to Chancellor Müller:

“In all his earthly life man feels deeply and clearly in himself that he is a citizen of that spiritual kingdom the belief in which we can neither reject nor give up. In this belief, which we can not get rid of, lies the mystery of an eternal pushing on toward an unknown goal.”

“And again to Countess Egloffstein:

“The power to ennoble all things sensuous and to animate the deadest material by wedding it to a spiritual idea is the surest guaranty of our supermundane origin. However we may be attracted and held fast by a thousand and one phenomena of this earth, we are forced by an inward longing ever and again to lift up our eyes to heaven, because a deep inexplicable feeling gives us the conviction that we are citizens of those worlds that shine above us so mysteriously and to which we shall one day return.”

“This conception of man as a citizen of two worlds, that is, as partaking by his thought in a kind of mind-stuff which is indestructible and cannot be imagined away, underlies many a saying, for example:

“It is absolutely impossible for a thinking man to imagine non-existence, a cessation of thinking and living. To that extent every one carries in himself the proof of immortality.

“The thought of death leaves me perfectly calm, for I have the firm conviction that our mind is an absolutely indestructible form of being, something that works on from eternity to eternity. It is like the sun, which merely seems to our earthly eyes to set, while it really never sets but shines continually.

“I should not at all like to do without the happiness of believing in an eternal existence; yes, I could say with Lorenzo dei Medici that all those who hope for no other life are dead for this life. . . . He who believes in a continued life should be happy in a quiet way, but he has no reason to plume himself on the belief.”

“Sometimes, in his efforts to conceive the inconceivable, he thought of the endless life as an impersonal, undifferentiated mode of existence, again as a hierarchy of souls graded somehow according to merit previously acquired. Thus he makes one of the characters in the ‘*Elective Affinities*’ say that the ‘pure feeling of a final, universal equality, at least after death, seems to me more soothing than the obstinate, stolid projection of our personalities, attachments, and relations.’ On the other hand, Eckermann records him as saying in 1829: ‘I do not doubt of our continued existence, for nature cannot do without the entelechy. [See below.] But we are not all immortal in the same way; and in order to manifest oneself as a great entelechy hereafter it is necessary to be one here.’

“But enough of these citations. I have only wished to make clear from the authentic testimony of his own words—so far as we can trust the records—how the aging Goethe spoke inconsistently, according to the mood of the hour, on questions of religion, and how he was wont to argue the case for his own belief in immortality. It is clear that he believed the human mind to

be a part of the indestructible energy that pervades and actuates the All. He accordingly believed that the spiritual *elements* of personality, or at least some of them, were by their very nature imperishable. But whether he believed that the *form* of personality, that is, the particular grouping of the imperishable elements in connection with a perishable body—whether he believed that this too would survive and resist dispersion after the cataclysm of physical death, remains uncertain."

*Entelechy* is an Aristotelian term which in contrast to mere potentiality means the actualization of a purpose and is applied to the center of the soul. For the common reader the translation "soul" would be enough. (For further details see Dr. Paul Carus's book on *Goethe*, p. 230.)

Goethe's significance as an ethical force is summed up by Professor Thomas in the following (pp. 194f):

"The Goethean virtue of poise or equilibrium is the eighteenth-century phase of the old Greek doctrine of 'nothing in excess.' It is the ideal constantly preached by Wieland, whose thinking was much influenced by Shaftesbury's conception of the perfectly balanced 'virtuoso.' Sometimes Goethe used the term 'gracioso' for his ideal exemplar of equilibrium through self-control and the avoidance of excess. This is what he meant by 'beautiful humanity,' of which he had so much to say. This is what he meant by the famous lines of the poem 'General Confession,' where men are bidden to 'wean themselves from the half and live resolutely in the whole, the beautiful, the good.'

"Beyond a doubt this idea of the perfection of the individual through the symmetrical culture of all his higher human aptitudes and the maintenance of a due equipoise between centripetal or selfish impulse on the one hand and centrifugal or altruistic tendencies on the other,—beyond a doubt this is Goethe's last and highest word in ethics. The doctrine lends itself readily to misconstruction and indeed has often been misconstrued as meaning simply, in the last analysis, a sort of sublimated selfishness. But the sage of Weimar knew very well, and in his later years was much given to urging, that the perfection of the individual was something realizable only in the give-and-take of social effort. After all, self-surrender, in the sense of devotion to large ideas that make for the good of humankind, was the overruling law of self-realization.

"His doctrine of duty does not differ from that of Kant or Fichte by its less strenuous demand or its more hedonistic tinge, but by its underlying assumption that the categorical imperative itself was made for man and is to be viewed relatively to human perfection. A man does not do his duty because God commands it, but because he chooses to do it in the interest of his own highest welfare. Bondage to duty, he would have said, is no better than any other bondage, and the only duty consists in 'loving that which one enjoins on oneself.' Naturally, therefore, he would have rejected the transcendental state with its imperious claim to blind service and blind self-sacrifice. According to his way of thinking the state exists for man, not man for the state. Nowhere does he admit any higher criterion than the perfection of man, who must seek his highest good in the sweat of his brow, by toil and toil, amid a never-ending conflict of antagonistic forces."

In conclusion it may be mentioned that all quotations are given in English,

including those in verse, so that the book is available also for people who no longer study the original.

An Appendix, containing chiefly bibliographical references and notes, will be welcomed by the university student. The Index, and especially the Table of Contents, enable the reader to find his way easily to any subject discussed.

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THE VANDAL OF EUROPE. By *Wilhelm Mühlton*. New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1918. Pp. xvi, 335. Price, cloth, \$1.50 net.

It is still worth while to read Dr. Mühlton's diary, or rather, to reread it, looking at it from a new point of view. The interest originally attaching to it of course is vanishing. That interest is sufficiently characterized by the title under which these notes were published last year in book form. At that time the war was still in progress and "fixing the blame" a tremendous asset in the direction of winning it. The conclusion of the armistice leads us to an appreciation of some features of the book which seem to endorse the peace policies of the United States as strongly as others endorsed our war policies.

An enormous amount of critical pronouncements on the Germans and German institutions is found between these two covers, and this has been assimilated by every newspaper reader. In addition, however, there is contained in these pages a wealth of constructive thought whose independence, considering the time when the entries were made, appears almost morbid. Take, for instance, the author's indictment of the modern idea of the state, of August 31, 1914, not *quite* antiquated as yet (pp. 182ff) :

"As long as the aims and ends of politics are not at one with the plain fundamentals of general human morals, so long will statesmanship remain a criminal trade. . . . The state idea in its present-day form separates men artificially from one another and creates all sorts of hateful distinctions between them. The modern state wishes its subjects to be, in relation to other men, brutal, covetous, envious, obtuse, and bigoted. Moreover, the morals of the state naturally color the morals of all those who count themselves among its supporters. Thus all industrial magnates believe that in the interest of the work which they are carrying on, they may employ any means to reap the fullest fruits of their labors. They say, even as the state does, that they do not act thus out of selfishness, but from a sense of responsibility for their great enterprises, from solicitude for the welfare of the part of humanity for which they are trustees. Their dependents must have a good and pious conception of life. They must be soft as wax as servants, hard as iron as workers, even as the state wants its subjects to be. . . . If we want to restore to mankind its most essential basis—which is mutual confidence—we must, above all things, combat the idea that there may be a different morality for different individuals or for different human institutions. Equality in this respect must be the rule. If states lose thereby in sharpness and individuality of outline, it will be all the better for the world."

The theme of reconciliation is developed in the following, *à propos* atrocities, dated November 10 (pp. 316ff) :

"I have read a poem by Verhaeren even, which seems to me scandalous. It is true that terrible excesses have been committed. It is true that the moral status of one people is lower than that of another. But no thinking man ought



on that account to conduct himself as though he could no longer make any distinctions among enemies, as though he could no longer discover any ray of reconciliation, rapprochement, or hope. Whoever sees in an entire people only wild beasts which must be exterminated; whoever collects only a one-sided record of the crimes of the enemy, but excludes everything which excuses the enemy or is at all in his favor, himself commits a crime which is greater than those excesses, because he poisons for years to come millions of human beings with his own rabid hate. . . . It is also no excuse for either of the parties to say that the enemy does not do differently or better—that he is guilty of the same exaggerations and false generalizations. To preserve reason, judgment, and moderation in these things is at present the first and almost sole indication of higher intellect and of that genuine superiority, which must conquer, and which the conquered will not deny but rather try to imitate.”

Regarding a final settlement the following entry is found under as early a date as August 29, 1914 (pp. 158ff) :

“But what qualities must such a victor and ruler have to be able to unite Europe! He must have absolute power. . . . At the same time he must be of such a character as to want nothing for himself, to apportion everything according to the best judgment of his enlightened intellect, to create perfect justice through kindness, to diminish injustice by abolishing all privileges and class distinctions, in so far as our time is ripe for it.

“If France were conquered by such a ruler she would be lifted up again through generous love, and would regain her independence and her lost brethren besides. She would retain all her greatness and spiritual importance; she would breathe freer and more proudly, depressed by no threat of danger, weighted down by no political mortgages.

“It would be the same with other countries. The tariff barriers would be removed and compulsory military service abolished, as well as everything else which separates and estranges peoples. The peoples of Europe would gladly place themselves under an autocrat who, with might, goodness, and wisdom, denied himself in order to give justice to others. They would know that he would yield his prerogatives as soon as they became unessential and would not persist in fighting with his own limited strength for the salvation of the state, instead of accepting that salvation from the superior strength of the people.”

The author himself calls this a Utopian picture, and in a way of course it is. Yet it is in visions like these that future generations may find the lasting value of the humble volume before us—unless the Peace Conference fails.

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SKETCHES OF SOME HISTORIC CHURCHES OF GREATER BOSTON. [By *Katharine Gibbs Allen* and others.] Boston: The Beacon Press, 1918. Pp. 307. Price, cloth, \$1.50 net.

This is a volume which will interest Bostonians in the first line, but every student of America's early church history may read it with profit. It presents, besides an introduction on “The Beginnings of Unitarianism in New England,” a history of twelve churches of the Boston country which have played, or are playing, a more or less important part in the development of Unitarianism in the United States.

Most of the papers compiled in this volume were read in the churches about which they were written, and some of them at other gatherings besides. More than a dozen writers, prominent in New England Unitarianism, have collaborated on this work, and it is gratifying to see what an harmonious whole has come out of their efforts. With few exceptions the authors have limited themselves strictly to a presentation of the facts in which the external history of the various churches is reflected—the history of the meeting-house, decrease and increase in the number of members, secessions, influence of war (especially the Revolutionary War) upon the congregations, and, of course, a portrait gallery of the successive ministers in each parish. We mention only the sympathetic sketches of John Eliot, the "Apostle to the Indians," of the three Mathers, Cotton Mather in particular, of Thomas Starr King, of Edward Everett Hale, of Theodore Parker, etc., etc.

No attempt is made to give a systematic list of the sources from which the authors have drawn their material. It would have been welcome. Only from occasional references in the text we learn, e. g., to what extent the records of the various churches and similar papers have been utilized. The sole regret we have in this respect is that not more has been quoted from them. Wherever this is done the *mentality* of an age long past is revealed as though by a flashlight—something which is not accomplished by supplying the reader with the mere data of a parson's life and the growth of his flock. Thus we find the following reflections written by John Eliot himself, a timely reminder, they may seem, to all recent victims of the "Spanish influenza" (p. 141):

"This year the Lord did lay upon us a great sickness epidemical so that the great part of the town were sick at once, whole families, young and old. The manner of sickness is a deep cold with some tincture of fever and much malignity, and very dangerous if not well regarded by keeping a low diet and the body warm and sweating. God's rods are teaching us. Our epidemical sickness of colds doth rightly by divine hand, tell us what our epidemical spiritual disease is. Lord help us to see it. This visitation of God was exceedingly strange, as if He sent an angel forth, not with sword to kill, but with rod to chastise." But he sorrowfully adds: "Yet for all this, it is the frequent complaint of many wise and godly among us that little reformation is to be seen of our chief wrath provoking sins, such as pride, covetousness, animosities, personal neglect of gospelizing the young, etc. Drinking-houses are multiplied, not lessened, and Quakers, openly tolerated!"

This takes us back to the middle of the seventeenth century. But how does it strike us when we find some prayers quoted by which the orthodox party tried to silence Theodore Parker hardly less than sixty years ago (pp. 190ff):

"Lord, we know that we cannot argue him down, and the more we say against him the more the people flock after him and the more they will love and revere him. O Lord what shall be done for Boston if thou dost not take this and some other matters in hand."

"Oh Lord, send confusion and distraction into his study this afternoon and prevent his finishing his preparations for his labors to-morrow."

Of such illustrations of the change of times we wish more had been given, even if they have been made accessible elsewhere before.

Unfortunately, this book, containing ample references to a score or two of the best-known men and women in American history, is not provided with an index. This is the more to be regretted since most of the chapters naturally cover identical ground so that collateral reading would be very profitable. The Table of Contents does not even give page numbers.

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STUDIES IN THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION. By *Albert J. Edmunds*. Philadelphia: Innes and Sons, 1915-1918, large quarto, pp. 31.

These somewhat irregular essays are arranged in order of subject, regardless of dates of publication. No. 1 is: "The One-Name Form of the Final Commission in Matthew: the references of Conybeare verified and translated." Readers of *Buddhist and Christian Gospels* will remember that in that work, as printed at Tokyo in 1905, the author quoted Rendel Harris's endorsement of Conybeare's recovery of the lost text of Matthew as used by Eusebius, in which the Final Commission appears without the Baptismal Charge or the Trinitarian formula:

*Go ye and make disciples of all the nations in my name, teaching them etc.*

The date is sufficient indication that neither Edmunds nor Harris is dealing with Conybeare's political opinions. Edmunds has translated, for the first time, the quotations of Matthew xxviii. 19 by Eusebius, and has thus made accessible to the American reader a recondite study of 1901 from Greek and Latin.

Study No. 2 in the series is a concise statement, with English text, of the Resurrection in Mark. The author has printed the red colophon at Mark xvi. 8, exactly as found in the oldest Greek, Syriac, and Armenian manuscripts:

*They said nothing to any one, for they were afraid of.....*

*Here endeth the Gospel of Mark.*

Accompanying No. 2 there is inserted a single leaf, dated June, 1918, being Study No. 6: "The End of Mark in the Old Armenian Version." The same red colophon appears herein, taken straight from Armenian Gospel manuscripts in Philadelphia, and it is pointed out for the first time that the Bible Society is systematically corrupting the text of that noble old version by inserting Aristion's Appendix ("Mark" xvi. 9-20) which the Armenians were the very last Christians to adopt. A study of their manuscripts reveals the interesting fact that they were still hesitating over copying these spurious verses a full thousand years after the other churches, Greek, Roman, and the rest, had given them canonicity.

The remainder of these Studies deals with modern psychic phenomena: "Hoag's Vision of 1803," and "The Return of Myers," as well as a summary of an article which is about to appear in *The Open Court*: "The Book of Tobit and the Hindu-Christian Marriage Ideal."

At the end is appended the author's Literary Will, which has been drawn up at the age of sixty out of despair of accomplishing his scholastic plans, owing to the war.