

# The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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

Editor: DR. PAUL CARUS,  
Assistant Editor: T. J. McCORMACK.

Associates: { E. C. HEGLER.  
MARY CARUS.

---

---

VOL. XIII. (NO. 8)

AUGUST, 1899.

NO. 519

---

---

## CONTENTS:

<i>Frontispiece.</i>	MAINE DE BIRAN.	
<i>The Gospel on the Parisian Stage.</i>	Revival of the Mediæval Mysteries and Passion-Plays. DR. MONCURE D. CONWAY, London.	449
<i>Maine De Biran.</i>	(1766-1824.) One of the Founders of Modern Psychol- ogy. With Portrait of Victor Cousin (1792-1867). PROF. L. LÉVY- BRUHL, Maître de Conférences at the Sorbonne, Paris	458
<i>A Revelator of Science.</i>	An Appreciation of the Late Ludwig Büchner. DR. FELIX L. OSWALD	465
<i>The Cross of Golgotha.</i>	Historical and Archæological. With Illustrations. EDITOR.	472
<i>Italian Anarchism.</i>	A Study in European Social Problems. PROF. G. M. FIAMINGO, Rome, Italy	485
<i>Death and Resurrection.</i>	Evolution of the Notions of the Resurrection of the Body from the Earliest Periods to the Present Day. With Illustrations. EDITOR.	495
<i>The Philippine Imbroglia.</i>	EDITOR	504
<i>Book Reviews and Notes.</i>		505

---

---

CHICAGO

The Open Court Publishing Company

LONDON: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co.

Single copies, 10 cents (6d.). Annually, \$1.00. In the U. P. U., 5s. 6d.

# The Open Court Publishing Company

324 DEARBORN ST., CHICAGO, ILL.

## General Agencies:

Agencies for *Open Court* Publications in the United States and foreign countries are given below. Publications may be examined and orders filled at any of these places.

### In the United States:

CHICAGO:  
AT THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHERS, 324 Dearborn St.  
A. C. McCLURG & Co., Corner Wabash Ave. and Madison St.  
BRENTANO'S, 218 Wabash Ave.  
CHARLES McDONALD, 5 Monroe St.

NEW YORK:  
LEMCKE & BUECHNER, 812 Broadway.  
BRENTANO'S, 31 Union Square.  
BOSTON:  
DAMRELL & UPHAM, 283 Washington St.  
CAMBRIDGE, MASS.  
HARVARD CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY.

### Foreign Countries:

LONDON:  
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & Co., Paternoster House, Charing Cross Road.  
WATTS & Co., 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet St.

LEIPZIG:  
OTTO HARRASSOWITZ, 14 Querstrasse.

ROTTERDAM:  
H. A. KRAMERS & SON.

AMSTERDAM:  
KIRBERGER & KESPER, Rokin, 134.  
TURIN: }  
PALERMO: } LIBRERIA CARLO CLAUSSEN.  
MILANO:  
ULRICH HOEPLI, Librarian of the Real Casa.  
CALCUTTA:  
THE MAHA-BODHI SOCIETY, 2 Creek Row.

## The Monthly Open Court.

A FEW RECENT AND FORTHCOMING FEATURES:

**Biographical Sketches of Great Thinkers, Philosophers, and Scientists.**

WITH HANDSOME HALF-TONE PORTRAITS.

The following have appeared in the series:

PYTHAGORAS	ZOROASTER	LESSING	SCHILLER	GOETHE
DESCARTES	MALEBRANCHE	SCHOPENHAUER	LOBACHEVSKI	
GALILEO	EULER	LAPLACE	KEPLER	LAGRANGE
				MONGE

### Studies in Comparative Religion. (Mostly with rich illustrations.)

THE RELIGION OF THE ANCIENT PERSIANS. <i>Editor.</i>	DR. BRUCE ON BUDDHISM. Glasgow Gifford Lectures for 1898.
ESCHATOLOGY IN CHRISTIAN ART. <i>Editor.</i>	
THE RELIGION OF ISLAM. <i>Père Hyacinthe Loyson.</i>	NORSE MYTHOLOGY. <i>Editor.</i>
CATHOLICISM IN ITALY. <i>Prof. G. Fiamingo.</i>	THE TRINITY IDEA. <i>Editor</i>
DEATH IN RELIGIOUS ART. (A Series.)	ANIMAL WORSHIP. <i>Dr. Th. Achelis, Bremen</i>

### The History of Religion.

HISTORY OF THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL. From the Beginning to the Destruction of Jerusalem. By *Dr. C. H. Cornill*, of the University of Königsberg. Written especially for *The Open Court*.  
HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE JEWS SINCE THEIR RETURN FROM BABYLON. With illustrations of Jewish customs and life. By the *Rev. B. Pick, Ph. D.*  
THE INQUISITION. *Editor.* Illustrated.  
THE CANONISATION OF SAINTS. By *Professor Fiamingo.* Illustrated.  
THE UNRECORDED SAYINGS OF JESUS CHRIST. Thoroughly compiled.

### Philosophical and Scientific.

LAMARCK AND NEO-LAMARCKIANISM. By *Prof. A. S. Packard.*  
ETHNOLOGICAL JURISPRUDENCE. By the late *Judge Post* of Bremen.  
ON THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF FLYING BULLETS. By *Prof. E. Mach, Vienna.*  
Popular articles by the *First Authorities* appear on all scientific and philosophical questions.

### Announcements.

SOLOMONIC LITERATURE. By <i>M. D. Conway.</i>	ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE. <i>Prof. Ernst Mach, Vienna.</i>
HISTORY OF THE CROSS. By <i>Dr. Paul Carus.</i>	ON THE EVOLUTION OF GENERAL IDEAS. <i>Prof. Th. Ribot, of the Collège de France, Paris.</i>
SURVIVALS OF PAGANISM IN MEXICO. Illustrated. By <i>Prof. Frederick Starr.</i>	ASSYRIA. <i>Prof. J. A. Craig.</i>
HISTORY OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY IN FRANCE. By <i>Professor Lévy-Bruhl, Paris.</i>	

Single copies, 10 cents. Annually, \$1.00. In the U. P. U., 5s. 6d.

THE OPEN COURT PUBLISHING CO., CHICAGO, 324 Dearborn St.



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2009 with funding from  
CARLI: Consortium of Academic and Research Libraries in Illinois



MAINE DE BIRAN.

FRENCH PSYCHOLOGIST.

(1766-1824.)

From a Physionotrace Engraving by Quenedey, Paris, 1811.

Courtesy of M. Naville, of Geneva.

*Frontispiece to the August, 1899, Open Court.*

# THE OPEN COURT

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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

VOL. XIII. (NO. 8.)

AUGUST, 1899.

NO. 519

Copyright by The Open Court Publishing Co., 1899.

## THE GOSPEL ON THE PARISIAN STAGE.

BY MONCURE D. CONWAY.

ABOUT thirty years ago there was a revival in Paris of the mediæval "Mystery." The "Deluge" in one theatre competed with "Paradise" in another, and there was a third, whose exact title I forget, though I remember Abraham kneeling before a luminous trinitarian triangle in the sky, and the descent of ballet angels who danced around him. In "Paradise" Abingdon gained much praise by the refinement of her Eve, and there was an accomplished Satan who, borrowing an item from Pandora's box, began his temptation of the first new woman by offering her a hand-mirror. Those spectacles had no religious purpose, and yet they did not admit of the comic and grotesque features found attractive in holiday times, and so the playwrights have since repaired, as in England, to the Old Testaments of pre-Christian religions, as represented in fairy tales. But of late there has been a revival of the Miracle Play, which it is now usual to call the Passion Play, and as it adheres to sacred seasons, beginning with Christmas time and ending with Easter, it may be supposed to appeal to pious sentiments. I was rather startled one day early in the year to see the walls about Montparnasse placarded with the name "Jesus." It announced a performance for the benefit of some charity (apparently Catholic), in a horticultural hall. It represented (1) The Nativity, (2) The Crucifixion, (3) The Resurrection. Another Passion Play, composed by Edmond Harancourt, was accompanied by Bach's music. At the *Nouveau Théâtre* I witnessed *La Passion*, of which the musical composer, Henri Giuletti, has also arranged the words, which follow the New Testament pretty closely. I was struck by the contrast between the conventionalism of Giuletti's

text and that arranged by the priests at Oberammergau. The great impression produced by the latter, which I have repeatedly witnessed, is largely due to the purely human motives emphasised. The opposition to Jesus originates in his attack on the merchants who have secured from the municipality licenses to sell at the temple articles needed for individual offerings. They bring their complaint to the Council where a momentous discussion takes place, in which Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea counsel moderation. At Oberammergau the miracles of Jesus are omitted. But at the *Nouveau Théâtre* the scenic display was by no means servile to the scriptures. For instance in the scene of the Resurrection Christ is seen in the air just above his sepulchre, a crowd of his followers are present, and are ranged on either side, the centre of the stage being reserved for the Mother, who kneels alone, her arms stretched out as if on a cross, adoring her son. In the scene of the Supper the movements were unpleasantly automatic, but perhaps I am not able to judge this tableau from a merely artistic standpoint. Just as I was thinking how much more striking it would be if those ladies who probably paid for the supper (Luke viii. 3) were at the table,—just then was heard from behind the scene a woman's voice, very sweet and touching, singing of the greatness and compassionateness of incarnate love. From time to time this thrilling voice broke out again, with pathos or with triumph, and formal masculinity, its functional hardness, was relieved. Jesus seemed to be surrounded by the faces of the women who "ministered to him of their substance," and who never "forsook him and fled," as his disciples did.

But it was clear to me that the audience, mainly well-to-do people, were not really moved by the representation of the Passion. There was no sign of emotion. A history can only acquire super-human conventionalisation by parting with its human accents. Is it not a merely perfunctory sorrow this, of mourning over the few minutes' pain by which a man once passed to the throne of the universe? The French priests who drape their churches on Good Friday, and portray so vehemently the sufferings of Jesus, have generally shown indifference if not satisfaction at the four-and-a-half years' agony of another Jew entombed on Devil's Island. What were the momentary sufferings of Jesus as he passed to Paradise compared with the sufferings of Dreyfus?

It has for some time been a problem with cultured Christians, eloquent divines, artists, how to portray a Jesus not too far, yet not too near,—not beyond human sympathies, not within the sphere

of ordinary human sufferings. The most important artistic attempt of this kind has been made by the young French dramatist, Edmond Rostand, whose play *Cyrano de Bergerac* has placed him at the head of all living playwrights. This is the second year in which his religious drama has come amid the Fairs,—“Ham Fair,” “Bread and Spice Fair,”—and the merry festivities which have long preoccupied Easter time, and breathed some divinely human sentiment into the sacred season. His play is entitled *La Samaritaine: Évangile en trois tableaux*.

This play was, I believe, the first serious work of Rostand, and it bears some marks of youth. For example: it is one of the most striking things about the narrative of the Samaritan woman (John iv.) that Jesus does not utter or even hint the slightest reproach to her for having had five husbands, and for then living with one not her husband. In this play Jesus does utter a reproach, and even suggests that all of her “marriages” were sinful. Although it was necessary for the plot of the play that this Samaritan woman should have been of that character, it would have been more artistic to preserve the calm words of Jesus as reported, and let the reproaches come from the woman herself when her conscience is awakened. The necessity just alluded to arises from the fact that the legend of Mary Magdalene’s having been a courtesan, not supported by anything in the Bible, has gradually become the cherished romance of Christendom, and a dramatist could have little hope of charming an audience without introducing any “woman with a past.” Such is Photine, the luminous name here given the Samaritan woman. Saint Mary Magdalene is a Venus baptised and penitent; Photine is a Magdalene turned prophetess. No character could be more perfectly adapted to the genius of Sarah Bernhardt, who surpasses herself in it. A critic in *L’Orchestra* pronounces Bremont “an ideal Christ,” but that depends on the individual ideal. Having one of my own I have never found it realised either here or at Oberammergau: the actors are afraid to venture an any spontaneity, and interpret Jesus as an automaton. Bremont was no doubt ideal for those who regard Jesus as one going through certain prearranged functions, without any human or personal freedom at all. Only two of the other figures are conventionalised: Peter has the usual fierce look, and John the feminine, though in the New Testament John is the fierce one, who wished to call down fire on the Samaritans, and whose intolerance Jesus twice had to rebuke. However the acting generally was almost faultless, and no learning or outlay was spared to give the large

number of performers rich and correct costumes, and to make every tableau a work of art unusual even in the Sarah Bernhardt Theatre.

A group of leading Samaritans gathered around Jacob's well,—their city Sychar in the distance,—converse in troubled and resentful tones concerning the insults they receive from the Jews, and some propose a resort to arms. This is opposed by young Azriel, who is taunted with being the sixth lover of Photine, the Samaritan beauty. When the Samaritans have gone Jesus appears with his disciples, who fall to denouncing the Samaritans, which elicits from him the parable of the good Samaritan. He then sends them into Sychar to buy food, and while he is alone, waiting, Photine's voice is heard,—though she is not yet seen. She is singing snatches from the Song of Solomon, beginning with "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vines." The verses are not given consecutively as in the Bible, but daintily selected, and slightly modified. It is not so much singing as a high recitative, which, accompanied by perfect violins, is thrilling. Then she appears on a path among the trees, the amphora on her shoulder, beautifully and simply draped, and approaches the well, still singing. She does not notice Jesus at all, but having let down her amphora, raised it, gazed into the water as a mirror, and placed it on her shoulder, turns to leave. "Such," says Jesus to himself, "is poor humanity, which grazes happiness and passes it!" She is about to disappear, when he calls "Woman!" Photine turns and looks at him with an insolent air, and he says, "I thirst; for the rays of the sun are intense; will you give me some water?" Photine answers wrathfully, describing the hatred and contempt heaped by his people on hers, and telling him ironically that the water though so limpid is from a Samaritan well, consequently impure. Though his disgust may be diminished by thirst not a drop shall he have.

When Jesus has revealed himself, and Photine, amazed at his knowledge of her life, approaches him as a prophet, she speaks of the controversy between Jews and Samaritans about the sanctity of their respective mountains, and adds that "We, the simple ones, are only troubled between these rival mountains. We ascend neither the one nor the other, but remain below in the vale between them; and the vale has flowers that make us forget God." In reply to this Jesus utters his sublime universalism. "The hour cometh, it is come, simple heart, when neither in Gerizim nor in Jerusalem shall men worship the Father," etc. The dramatist has

had the critical insight to omit the spurious fling at the Samaritans (John iv. 22), which contradicts all the catholicity of the utterance. I was also struck by the fact that though this dramatised Jesus is a Messiah he is portrayed as sufficiently human to do a little acting, for when Photine offers him water he says, "I have not thirsted except for thy rescue." This thirst was not caused by the sun's heat.

Photine has poured out all her heart to him, how she had thirsted for beauty, for the satisfaction of heart and life, and found each fountain delusive, her spirit still famished. "Thy words touch me less than the tears in thy eyes," says Jesus. "She says, my words are without value, my eyes without charms." He answers, "To me the most beautiful eyes are eyes filled with tears." Then reclining at his feet she listens, and he enters on his instructions, her refrain being "I listen." So ends the first tableau.

We are next in the Samaritan city, Sychar, the street a bazaar alive with merry crowds in bright colors, who give the disciples an unpleasant reception, and charge them double for food. Peter remarks that the good Samaritans are only in parables, and they go off.

Young Azriel, her lover, knocks at Photine's door and learns that she is still at Jacob's well. Some women observe the handsome youth and talk together angrily of Photine. Life is all honey to that free-lover, they say; while honest women knit and bake bread, her lover is comparing her to a lily of the valley. They are informed to their delight that the authorities mean to banish Photine. Just then the disturbing beauty enters the city gate. Her lover rushes to meet her, and is amazed to find her without her cruse, her veil gone, her face excited.

In her first ecstasy on finding her prophet, Photine had burst out with one of the love songs she had sung on approaching the well—"In thy breath all perfumes, in thy words all honeys, in thy clear eyes all skies, etc."—but arrested herself, "Great God, what have I done! the same, O sacrilege, the same song for Him that served me for—" Before she says Azriel Jesus reassures her: "I am always a little in all words of love." The amorous songs were the only hymns Photine knew, and the devoutest psalm could hardly indicate so well how wholly her heart had gone to her prophet. Azriel, who now meets her, will hear no more such songs. She gently untwines his arms. "I come to restore what I have served only to make thee forget. The great hopes thou hast cast away, I bring them back."

Then she cries, "People!" And now Photine has to encounter every variety of obstacle which new ideas have to surmount in every age and region. Of the marvel of his telling her how many husbands she had had but little is made. One can for a franc witness in Paris much more astonishing divinations than that concerning a woman whose many marriages must have made her notorious in all her region. (Williamy de Torre is astounding all savants by announcing at a distance any name and address you select in the Paris Directory while you are holding the book close to your eyes, and shouting aloud a sentence you have written and folded away in a bit of paper.) The burden of Photine in Sychar is the choice anthology of all the teachings and parables of Jesus. There where she reclined at his feet beside Jacob's well we are to suppose that after the curtain fell he rehearsed to her all that he had uttered to disciples or crowds. We now behold an inspired prophetess uttering again the most beautiful teachings and parables, and summoning the city to repair with her to the Messiah of their long hopes and visions. Her ecstasy electrifies them: The tradesmen try to silence her; she is drawing attention away from their bazaars. The priest is alarmed; she is calling the people to new doctrines. The priest moves the woman by saying to Photine, "How could the great pure soul of a Christ converse with such an one as you? Go and perfume your door, and sit at the threshold, and prepare for the evening the crafts of your eye." "You treat me only as I deserve," answers Photine, and kneeling in the market-place she cries, "I confess my life and smite my breast, and I desire to entreat forgiveness of all." Then the previously resentful women come to her side. Followed by a crowd she passes to other streets and we hear her voice, fainter, nearer, until when she again appears she is surrounded with a multitude prepared to follow her.

The chief priest and the merchants then raise the cry of sedition, and send for the Roman guard. They come, and Photine is arrested, her hands tied; but a centurion appears, and after hearing what the excitement is about orders Photine's release. "It is all about that handsome carpenter with the blonde head. He will never trouble the world."

Some then begin to oppose because the Roman is inclined to befriend Jesus, but Photine explains that the new movement is related to matters far above the empires of the world. A general curiosity among the religiously indifferent, and a deeper feeling among others, incline them to Photine, and the conquest is com-

pleted when a priest says, "Well, I will go too! This man may found a new cult, and make me Chief Priest." The humor is too deep for laughter.

In the third and final tableau we are again at Jacob's well, on the edge of which Jesus is still seated. He appears as if in reverie, while his disciples seated or lying on the ground at a little distance are with difficulty appeasing their hunger with the wretched viands which the Samaritans had picked out to sell them. To their ill humor has been added the scandal of finding Jesus conversing with a woman whose reputation they seem to know. "I would not dare to blame him," says Peter, "but sometimes, it must be confessed, he is of singular imprudence." Presently Jesus makes a remark on what one says, and they lower their voices; at length they are silent but Jesus answers an unspoken thought of Peter. Then they become very thirsty. The water in the well is inaccessible, but Photine has left her pitcher full of water. They declare they will perish rather than taste the accursed water drawn by a Samaritan woman in a Samaritan pitcher, but presently John tastes this water and calls out with surprise and delight. Nathaniel, Andrew, James, follow, and declare that it is nectar. The sweetness of all sweet things is in it, and when all have been refreshed they ask Jesus what the woman left in her cruse when she departed. He tells them that she left there her pride, her sins, her frivolity, but that the sweet savour is "what I found among the faults of a life which they are coming to forget at my feet."

Jesus already hears them coming,—those Samaritans whom his disciples have just been execrating. Presently the others hear, we all hear, at first faint in the distance a sound as of lutes and timbrels, chants of psalmody. All Sychar has followed Photine: they bring flowers and garlands, and when the crowd has met his look there is an eager pressing forward, a stretching forth of hands in homage. The flowers are strewn before him, but after the flowers are the woes of the world. To the blind he says "See!"; to the lame "Walk!" to the dumb "Speak," and for the drunkard, for the courtisans, he has words of forgiveness. The priest is scandalised. "Can he be Christ who invites the courtisan and the drunkard to follow him?" For once the anger of Jesus is kindled and he says to the priest, "I will answer you, accursed man!" But just then he hears Peter say, "Take away these children!" The children had been singing a childish round, and Jesus calls them to him, strokes their hair, and asks them to sing him their song. They sing, "When we piped for you merry airs you have

not danced, when we piped sad airs you have not wept." Turning to the priest Jesus says, "Their little song furnishes my answer to you." The priest who rejected the Baptist, severe and ascetic, as a madman, now rejected the eating, drinking, smiling, quickly pardoning Jesus as a Sybarite!

This little outbreak of mingled anger and humor against the priest gave Bremont a little more freedom; his tenderness to the children, his gentleness to the courtesans,—one of whom had hidden,—brought forward by Photine, was very fine. But the acting of Sarah Bernhardt in all this was really great. I have often recognised little mannerisms in her, but now they had all vanished: her simplicity, humility, self-forgetfulness, her thinking only of the others—the poor, the little ones, the sufferers,—that they should be healed, cheered, were exquisite suggestions of her new birth. Gazing on the new Photine her lover radiant cries, "I know then what to make of my life." When finally these people gather around Jesus to entreat him to remain with them, offering their abodes, their all—the courtesans, their jewels laid aside—kneeling before him,—there becomes visible that which for ages has moved the heart of mankind. The applause was not such as hands or voices could give; it was given in breathless stillness, bent heads, and flowing tears.

Had *La Samaritaine* been written in unrhymed Greek in the second century it would now be in the New Testament, and what sermons would be preached from sentences quoted from Christ! "Heaven is where all love." "All loves are beautiful save love of self." While listening to the charming play I was not at all surprised at the occasional posings of Jesus, as where he pretends that the hot sun has made him thirsty. It is all legitimate in a drama. And I remember when once witnessing a play of "The Nativity" that the posings and elaborate intonings of carols and prophetic hymns by Mary and others were all in place behind foot-lights. The "asides" and attitudinising of Jesus before the resurrection of Lazarus, his affectation of vehement grief, after telling his disciples secretly he was glad Lazarus was dead that he might display his power, etc., led Renan to suspect that Jesus and Lazarus and the sisters had got up a little deception; but it is much better explained if we suppose it all a pious drama made up out of the parable of Dives and Lazarus and performed in rural districts (in the second century) where the people had been accustomed to the sacred Greek plays. It is the belief of many learned men that the Oberammergau play succeeded a sacred pagan play

in the same village. There is little doubt that many of the apocryphal gospels are relics of pious performances by which alone the humble masses could be impressed, when there was as yet no printing and little painting, and it is not improbable that various narratives in the New Testament, among them the resurrection of Jesus, were to some extent shaped by dramatic exigencies, and are now as unfairly accepted, or criticised, as literal history as it would be to so treat the dramatic representations of Robespierre and Napoleon now drawing crowds in Paris and London. All of this may be justly pronounced theoretical, but it appears to me more probable than the alternative hypothesis of mere fraud in the composition of certain marvellous narratives which criticism is finding unhistorical and mythical. Of course this would not affect the fact of such dramas being founded on vague popular beliefs, but only account for the definiteness and completeness of their historic shapes in the New Testament. It would also explain the fact that the tremendous miracles are not alluded to by any historian of that era,—not even Josephus. In all dramas there is an element of supernaturalism, though in the modern world it is in the guise of improbability. At least there are few novelists, romancers, or playwrights able to frame a plot which does not at some vital point rest on an improbability. The Greek stage was a nursery of mythology. How is it that we find the Gospels written in or on the eve of the second century so full of Christ's miracles whereas not one is alluded to in the first century writings,—the Epistles? Possibly for the same reason that we find in Rostand's *La Samaritaine* some wonders ("thought-transference") not in the Bible, but well adapted to certain alleged phenomena of our own time. As legends of præternatural events now grow, so grew they of old, and so it appears they will grow until the intellectual soil is too highly cultivated for their nourishment.