

Twentieth-Century
Literary Criticism

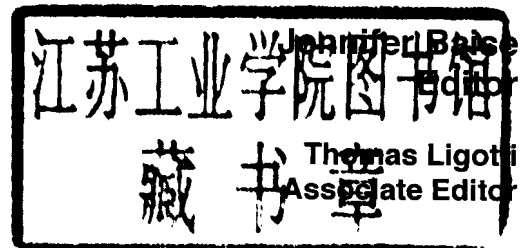
TCLC

88

Volume 88

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

**Criticism of the
Works of Novelists, Poets, Playwrights,
Short Story Writers, and Other Creative Writers
Who Lived between 1900 and 1960,
from the First Published Critical
Appraisals to Current Evaluations**



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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number 76-46132
ISBN 0-7876-2744-5
ISSN 0276-8178

Printed in the United States of America
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

Guide to Gale Literary Criticism Series

For criticism on	Consult these Gale series
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Authors who died between 1900 and 1959	<i>TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERARY CRITICISM (TCLC)</i>
Authors who died between 1800 and 1899	<i>NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE CRITICISM (NCLC)</i>
Authors who died between 1400 and 1799	<i>LITERATURE CRITICISM FROM 1400 TO 1800 (LC)</i> <i>SHAKESPEAREAN CRITICISM (SC)</i>
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Major authors from the Renaissance to the present	<i>WORLD LITERATURE CRITICISM, 1500 TO THE PRESENT (WLC)</i>

Preface

Since its inception more than fifteen years ago, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* has been purchased and used by nearly 10,000 school, public, and college or university libraries. *TCLC* has covered more than 500 authors, representing 58 nationalities, and over 25,000 titles. No other reference source has surveyed the critical response to twentieth-century authors and literature as thoroughly as *TCLC*. In the words of one reviewer, "there is nothing comparable available." *TCLC* "is a gold mine of information—dates, pseudonyms, biographical information, and criticism from books and periodicals—which many libraries would have difficulty assembling on their own."

Scope of the Series

TCLC is designed to serve as an introduction to authors who died between 1900 and 1960 and to the most significant interpretations of these author's works. The great poets, novelists, short story writers, playwrights, and philosophers of this period are frequently studied in high school and college literature courses. In organizing and reprinting the vast amount of critical material written on these authors, *TCLC* helps students develop valuable insight into literary history, promotes a better understanding of the texts, and sparks ideas for papers and assignments. Each entry in *TCLC* presents a comprehensive survey of an author's career or an individual work of literature and provides the user with a multiplicity of interpretations and assessments. Such variety allows students to pursue their own interests; furthermore, it fosters an awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Every fourth volume of *TCLC* is devoted to literary topics. These topic entries widen the focus of the series from individual authors to such broader subjects as literary movements, prominent themes in twentieth-century literature, literary reaction to political and historical events, significant eras in literary history, prominent literary anniversaries, and the literatures of cultures that are often overlooked by English-speaking readers.

TCLC is designed as a companion series to Gale's *Contemporary Literary Criticism*, which reprints commentary on authors now living or who have died since 1960. Because of the different periods under consideration, there is no duplication of material between *CLC* and *TCLC*. For additional information about *CLC* and Gale's other criticism titles, users should consult the Guide to Gale Literary Criticism Series preceding the title page in this volume.

Coverage

Each volume of *TCLC* is carefully compiled to present:

- criticism of authors, or literary topics, representing a variety of genres and nationalities
- both major and lesser-known writers and literary works of the period
- 6-12 authors or 3-6 topics per volume
- individual entries that survey critical response to each author's work or each topic in literary history, including early criticism to reflect initial reactions; later criticism to represent any rise or decline in reputation; and current retrospective analyses.

Organization of This Book

An author entry consists of the following elements: author heading, biographical and critical introduction, list of principal works, reprints of criticism (each preceded by an annotation and a bibliographic citation), and a bibliography of further reading.

- The **Author Heading** consists of the name under which the author most commonly wrote, followed by birth and death dates. If an author wrote consistently under a pseudonym, the pseudonym will be listed in the author heading and the real name given in parentheses on the first line of the biographical and critical introduction. Also located at the begin-

ning of the introduction to the author entry are any name variations under which an author wrote, including transliterated forms for authors whose languages use nonroman alphabets.

- The **Biographical and Critical Introduction** outlines the author's life and career, as well as the critical issues surrounding his or her work. References to past volumes of *TCLC* are provided at the beginning of the introduction. Additional sources of information in other biographical and critical reference series published by Gale, including *Short Story Criticism*, *Children's Literature Review*, *Contemporary Authors*, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, and *Something about the Author*, are listed in a box at the end of the entry.
- Some *TCLC* entries include **Portraits** of the author. Entries also may contain reproductions of materials pertinent to an author's career, including manuscript pages, title pages, dust jackets, letters, and drawings, as well as photographs of important people, places, and events in an author's life.
- The **List of Principal Works** is chronological by date of first book publication and identifies the genre of each work. In the case of foreign authors with both foreign-language publications and English translations, the title and date of the first English-language edition are given in brackets. Unless otherwise indicated, dramas are dated by first performance, not first publication.
- Critical essays are prefaced by **Annotations** providing the reader with information about both the critic and the criticism that follows. Included are the critic's reputation, individual approach to literary criticism, and particular expertise in an author's works. Also noted are the relative importance of a work of criticism, the scope of the essay, and the growth of critical controversy or changes in critical trends regarding an author. In some cases, these annotations cross-reference essays by critics who discuss each other's commentary.
- A complete **Bibliographic Citation** designed to facilitate location of the original essay or book precedes each piece of criticism.
- Criticism is arranged chronologically in each author entry to provide a perspective on changes in critical evaluation over the years. All titles of works by the author featured in the entry are printed in boldface type to enable the user to easily locate discussion of particular works. Also for purposes of easier identification, the critic's name and the publication date of the essay are given at the beginning of each piece of criticism. Unsigned criticism is preceded by the title of the journal in which it appeared. Some of the essays in *TCLC* also contain translated material. Unless otherwise noted, translations in brackets are by the editors; translations in parentheses or continuous with the text are by the critic. Publication information (such as footnotes or page and line references to specific editions of works) have been deleted at the editor's discretion to provide smoother reading of the text.
- An annotated list of **Further Reading** appearing at the end of each author entry suggests secondary sources on the author. In some cases it includes essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights.

Cumulative Indexes

- Each volume of *TCLC* contains a cumulative **Author Index** listing all authors who have appeared in Gale's Literary Criticism Series, along with cross references to such biographical series as *Contemporary Authors* and *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. For readers' convenience, a complete list of Gale titles included appears on the first page of the author index. Useful for locating authors within the various series, this index is particularly valuable for those authors who are identified by a certain period but who, because of their death dates, are placed in another, or for those authors whose careers span two periods. For example, F. Scott Fitzgerald is found in *TCLC*, yet a writer often associated with him, Ernest Hemingway, is found in *CLC*.

- Each *TCLC* volume includes a cumulative **Nationality Index** which lists all authors who have appeared in *TCLC* volumes, arranged alphabetically under their respective nationalities, as well as Topics volume entries devoted to particular national literatures.
- Each new volume in Gale's Literary Criticism Series includes a cumulative **Topic Index**, which lists all literary topics treated in *NCLC*, *TCLC*, *LC:1400-1800*, and the *CLC* yearbook.
- Each new volume of *TCLC*, with the exception of the Topics volumes, includes a **Title Index** listing the titles of all literary works discussed in the volume. In response to numerous suggestions from librarians, Gale has also produced a **Special Paperbound Edition** of the *TCLC* title index. This annual cumulation lists all titles discussed in the series since its inception and is issued with the first volume of *TCLC* published each year. Additional copies of the index are available on request. Librarians and patrons will welcome this separate index; it saves shelf space, is easy to use, and is recyclable upon receipt of the following year's cumulation. Titles discussed in the Topics volume entries are not included *TCLC* cumulative index.

Citing Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume in Gale's literary Criticism Series may use the following general forms to footnote reprinted criticism. The first example pertains to materials drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books.

¹William H. Slavick, "Going to School to DuBose Heyward," *The Harlem Renaissance Re-examined*, (AMS Press, 1987); reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Vol. 59, ed. Jennifer Garipey (Detroit: Gale Research, 1995), pp. 94-105.

²George Orwell, "Reflections on Gandhi," *Partisan Review*, 6 (Winter 1949), pp. 85-92; reprinted in *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Vol. 59, ed. Jennifer Garipey (Detroit: Gale Research, 1995), pp. 40-3.

Suggestions Are Welcome

In response to suggestions, several features have been added to *TCLC* since the series began, including annotations to critical essays, a cumulative index to authors in all Gale literary criticism series, entries devoted to criticism on a single work by a major author, more extensive illustrations, and a title index listing all literary works discussed in the series since its inception.

Readers who wish to suggest authors or topics to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to write the editors.

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Sabine Baring-Gould

1834-1924

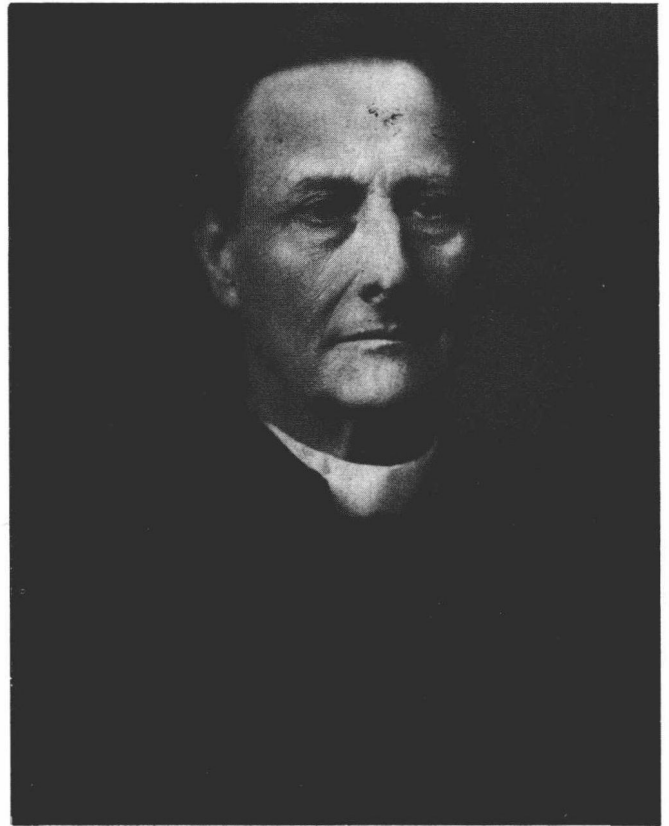
English novelist, short story writer, nonfiction writer, editor, biographer, hagiographer, folklorist, memoirist, lyricist, travel writer, theologian, translator, and writer of children's books.

INTRODUCTION

While Baring-Gould is best remembered by contemporary audiences as the lyricist of the hymn "Onward, Christian Soldiers," he was a prolific and successful writer in many different genres. Of the nearly three hundred books and articles written by Baring-Gould, his novels, short stories, and collections of hagiography and supernatural folklore went through many printings during his lifetime. Much of Baring-Gould's fiction is set in England's bucolic West Country, which has drawn comparisons to the work of novelists Emily Bronte and Thomas Hardy. Baring-Gould employs this setting to convey his belief that individual personality traits reflect that individual's immediate environment. Essex and Devonshire settings produce characters who are inextricably bound to their agricultural lifestyle, which is depicted as a harmonious blend of hard work, spirituality, and violence.

Biographical Information

Baring-Gould's childhood nurtured his wide-ranging and often eclectic interests. His father was a former cavalry officer who took his family on frequent trips abroad. As a result, Baring-Gould learned five languages before he was fifteen years old. In travels by carriage through France, Italy, Germany, and Switzerland, Baring-Gould began formulating his hypothesis that environment shapes character. Noting the differences between individuals living in Roman Catholic and Protestant areas, Baring-Gould surmised that Catholicism promoted a more engaged and colorful lifestyle, while Protestantism fostered a darker and more pessimistic view of life. At the age of sixteen, Baring-Gould organized and led an archeological dig for a Roman mosaic in the south of France. Three years later, when he was nineteen, Baring-Gould received his first formal education, studying at Clare Hall, Cambridge. He was ordained into the ministry in 1864 after a brief period of teaching and working with the poor in London's East End. During this period, Baring-Gould translated Icelandic sagas, which he published as *Iceland: Its Scenes and Sagas*, and began work on one of his most popular books, *The Book of Were-Wolves*. Several appointments in Yorkshire resulted in Baring-Gould meeting Grace Taylor, whom he married in 1868. After serving in



Essex, Baring-Gould returned to Devonshire in 1881, where he inherited his family's seventeenth-century estate, Lew Trenchard, and served as rector until his death in 1924.

Major Works

Baring-Gould followed the success of *The Book of Were-Wolves* with *Yorkshire Oddities, Incidents, and Strange Events*, in which he described himself as an "inveterate" collector of "all kinds of odd and out-of-the-way information concerning men and manners." Combining fictionalized renderings with re-told historical narratives of English superstitions, the volume marked Baring-Gould's first foray into fiction with the story "The Boggart of Wellen-Pot," in which he attempted to recreate the voice of rustic country people. Baring-Gould furthered his attempts to capture colloquial language in his series of novels set in the Devonshire and Essex countrysides. In these works, Baring-Gould depicted the harsh, bucolic landscapes as determinants of his protagonists's beliefs, peccadilloes, and

actions. In *Mehalah: A Story of the Salt Marshes*, for example, the title character's landlord and eventual husband, Elijah Rebow, is a cruel and manipulative individual who lives on his isolated family estate, which is surrounded by marshlands. Similarly, the homes of the protagonists in *Cheap Jack Zita* are slowly engulfed by the wetlands upon which they are built. Baring-Gould uses this motif to explain the bitterness of his characters that eventually leads to the 1816 riots at Ely. In many of Baring-Gould's novels gothic elements and superstition are key elements. In *Mehalah*, Elijah Rebow keeps his lunatic brother shackled in the basement; in *Red Spider* two farmers argue over possession of an arachnid thought to portend good fortune, and one employs a housekeeper thought to be a witch.

Baring-Gould's most critically successful novel is *Mehalah*. The passionate relationship of Elijah and Mehalah has elicited comparisons to Heathcliff and Catherine in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. Mehalah's defiant resistance of Elijah's attempts to control her life has caused many critics to note that she is among the strongest female characters in nineteenth-century British fiction. While Baring-Gould continued to include strong female characters in his subsequent novels, including Joyce Cobblestick in *John Herring*; the title character of *Kitty Alone*; Kainie in *Cheap Jack Zita*; and Honor Luxmore in *The Red Spider*, they are often considered less-realized copies of Mehalah. Similarly, some critics fault Baring-Gould's fiction for condescending to his rural characters.

PRINCIPAL WORKS

- Iceland: Its Scenes and Sagas* (travel essays and folklore) 1863
- The Book of Were-Wolves* (folklore) 1865
- The Lives of the Saints* (hagiography) 17 vols., 1872-89; revised edition, 16 vols., 1897-98
- Yorkshire Oddities, Incidents, and Strange Events* (folklore) 1874
- Mehalah: A Story of the Salt Marshes* (novel) 1880
- John Herring* (novel) 1883
- Red Spider* (novel) 1887
- The Gaverocks* (novel) 1887
- Eve* (novel) 1888
- The Pennycomequicks* (novel) 1889
- Urith* (novel) 1891
- Cheap Jack Zita* (novel) 1893
- Kitty Alone* (novel) 1894
- The Life of Napoleon Bonaparte* (biography) 1897
- A Study of St. Paul* (hagiography) 1897
- Lives of the British Saints* (hagiography) 1907
- Cornish Characters and Strange Events* (folklore) 1909
- Early Reminiscences 1834-64* (autobiography) 1923
- Further Reminiscences 1864-94* (autobiography) 1925

CRITICISM

The Quarterly Review (essay date 1867)

SOURCE: "Curious Myths of the Middle Ages," in *The Quarterly Review*, Vol. 122, No. 244, April, 1867, pp. 429-50.

[In the following essay, the critic determines that the stories collected in *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* are arbitrarily selected.]

Mr. Grote, in the highly instructive chapter in his *History of Greece* on the "Ancient and Modern Mythical Vein," has pointed out the multiplication of mythic fables in mediæval Europe, arising from the twofold channel into which its mythopœic tendencies were diverted, according as the 'saintly ideal' found form and substance in legends of the Catholic saints, or the 'chivalrous ideal' in the romances of chivalry. Each type appealed to an uncritical audience; neither type laid a heavy tax upon the faith of hearers, whose historical instincts were as yet dormant, and whose reasoning powers had not been quickened into life. The fertility with which both types of legend fructified, under such conditions, may be judged of by collections like the *Lives of the Cambro-British Saints* on the one part, and the *Romances of Arthur and his Knights*, the *Cycle of Charlemagne*, the *Anglo-Danish Cycle*, or, comprehensively, *Geoffrey of Monmouth's 'Historia Britonum,'* on the other. Readers following Giraldu Cambrensis on his tour with Archbishop Baldwin through Wales, or attending, in fancy, and by the aid of the valuable edition of Professor Brewer, in the *Chronicles and Memorials*, the same ecclesiastic's archidiaconal visitations, will stumble on grave recitals of marvels, such as recall the *Tanhäuser* legend, discussed by Mr. Baring-Gould in his chapter on the *Hill of Venus*; and on tales of miracles that would find endless parallel in all *Acta Sanctorum*. The yearnings of an easy faith for fresh supernatural food could only be satisfied by ever-fresh supplies; and a kindred thirst demanded to be sated in the countless legends of chivalry, which passed for and professed to be veritable history. How perilous, even at a later date, was the enterprise of ignoring these venerable beliefs, appears in the timidity shown by well-informed and intelligent chroniclers and historians as regards omitting the long-accustomed tracing-up of our 'origines' to Trojan Brut, who colonized us forty years after Troy's fall. Such fables have long ago been discarded from our histories; yet though they have rightly ceased to retain the prestige of reality and truth, they must ever command a large amount of interest, on the score of the field which some of them offer for comparative philologists, of the illustrations which others supply of the period when they passed for truth, and of the scope afforded by one and all to the fosterage of the imaginative faculty. For these ends a really good compendium of them would be a welcome accession to our English literature. Those who look for a work of this

character in Mr. Baring-Gould's *Curious Myths of the Middle Ages* may make up their minds for disappointment. Not, indeed, that the matters treated of in his volume belie the promise of his title, but that he has shielded himself under the shelter of that epithet 'curious,' and availed himself of it as a justification for over-looking such myths as do not strike him as curious when compared with others. Of his twelve subjects, each one is decidedly curious, and all but one answer to the description of a myth. That one, the Fatality of numbers, strikes us as out of place in this collection, or at all events is an evidence that Mr. Baring-Gould does not claim for his work a strict or exhaustive character, but contents himself to purvey amusement for the reading world by a series of lively archæological essays, if indeed the word 'series' can apply where there seems no principle of classification. Taken as they are, these essays will be found to have something to satisfy most classes of readers; the lovers of legends proper, the curious in popular delusions, the initiated in Darwinian and Monboddoo-an theories: and if, in the chapters on Tell and Gellert, we are a little struck with the close following of Dasent's track, in his preface to the Norse tales, it must be owned that there are chapters—e.g., those on the Divining Rod, the Man in the Moon, and the Seven Sleepers—which present new matter, and deserve the praise of independent research.

The myth of the Wandering Jew quite answers to Mr. Baring-Gould's description of it, as 'the most thrilling of all mediæval legends,' but when he adds 'if it be a myth' and proceeds to build a frail prop for its truth on the texts from St. Matthew xvi. 28, and St. Mark ix. 1, we doubt the cogency of his argument that our Lord's declaration, 'that some which stood by should not taste of death until they saw the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom,' cannot apply to the destruction of Jerusalem. Theophylact and a large consensus of later authorities so interpret that declaration, and if we couple with the texts in question the words of Jesus to Peter in reference to St. John (St. John xxi. 21-3), 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?' it is difficult to see to what other event they can refer. But suppose these texts do apply, as Mr. Baring-Gould would argue, to the Second Advent. Around our Lord in the one case were His chosen and faithful followers. In the other, he, about whom the hypothetical remark—for, as commentators observe, it was only an 'if,' after all—to St. Peter was made, was the beloved disciple. In neither case is it to be gathered that the prolongation of life was to be a mark of punishment, but perhaps rather of favour: nor can we deem it at all consonant with Almighty mercy 'to keep anger for ever,' by singling out for an undying existence of endless wandering over the face of the earth, seeking rest and finding none, one individual out of the thousands who in judicial blindness concurred in crucifying the Lord of Life. It is of course another question whether the texts thus misinterpreted might not form a fair and congenial basis for a myth; and a myth there arose from an early period. In the Chronicles of the Abbey of St. Albans, copied and

continued by Matthew Paris, there is the following entry, the first extant notice of the 'errant Jew,' under the year 1228 A.D., 'Eodem tempore floruit fama longe lateque dispersa de Josepho Cartaphila, quem Ananias baptizavit, et qui vidit Christum crucifixum,' and the same chronicler records at length the visit to the Abbey, of an Armenian Archbishop, who by his interpreter communicated to the monks minute particulars respecting this Wandering Jew, derived from personal knowledge.

'When the Jews were dragging Jesus forth from Pilate's judgment-hall, and had reached the door, Cartaphilus, a porter in Pilate's service, as Jesus was going out of the door, impiously struck him on the back, and said, in mockery, "Go quicker, Jesus, go quicker! Why do you loiter?" And Jesus, looking back on him with a severe countenance, said to him, "I am going, and you shall wait till I return." And accordingly, as our Lord said, this Cartaphilus is still awaiting his return. At the time of our Lord's suffering he was thirty years old, and when he attains the age of a hundred and thirty, he always returns to the same age as he was when our Lord suffered. After Christ's death, when the Catholic faith gained ground, this Cartaphilus was baptized by Ananias, who also baptized Saint Paul, and was called Joseph.'

Of this Joseph the Armenian Bishop went on to say that he dwelt in Armenia and the East, greatly affected the society of Bishops and prelates, was circumspect, silent, and charitable, and did not speak except when spoken to, and then only to tell of Christ's death, suffering, and resurrection. He was very tenacious as to the character and rank of his questioners, and very indifferent in the matter of gifts, food, and raiment. Of this Jew, or his double, Mr. Baring-Gould collects many and various accounts from the Netherlands, from Bohemia, and from Arabia, where he seems to have passed for Elijah, but none of these present any considerable discrepancy from the account of the Armenian Bishop, until we come to the testimony of Paul Von Eitzen, Doctor of the Holy Scriptures and Bishop of Schleswig, who declared that when he was young, in the winter of 1547 A.D.,

'on Sunday, in church, he observed a tall man, with his hair hanging over his shoulders, standing barefoot during the sermon, over against the pulpit, listening with deepest attention to the discourse; and whenever the name of Jesus was mentioned, bowing himself profoundly and humbly, with sighs and beating of the breast. He had no other clothing in the bitter cold of winter except a pair of hose which were in tatters about his feet, and a coat with a girdle which reached to his feet; and his general appearance was that of a man of fifty years.'

After church, the Doctor obtained an interview with the stranger, and elicited information, which, though more circumstantial than the Armenian Bishop's story, differed from it materially. The Jew gave his name as Ahasuerus, and professed that he had been an unbelieving cobbler, at the time of the crucifixion. Gazing from

his door-step at the sad procession to Calvary, he had tried to curry favour with the Jews, by hurrying Jesus forward, when he fain would have rested a moment from his heavy burden. Jesus looking upon him, rebuked him in the words, 'I shall stand and rest, but thou shalt go to the last day.'

The doom presently began to work. He was constrained to go forth into foreign lands, and on revisiting Jerusalem after the lapse of years, found not one stone left standing on another. In this account, as in the others, great stress is laid on the Jew's never smiling; and in Von Eitzen's narrative, he is made to interpret the purpose of God in this judgment upon him, and to confirm the truth of his tale of many wanderings by submitting to have his knowledge of eastern geography and history tested by the Rector of the Hamburg University. Another new feature is his strong indignation at profane use of Christ's name.

This was in 1547. He is spoken to at Madrid and Vienna in the same century, but, as the world waxes older, writers evince a care to say little of him on their personal testimony. Bulenger, in his History of his own Time, takes especial pains to guard himself against the suspicion of belief in this story. In 1640 two burghers of Brussels fall in with this ubiquitous Jew, or one who answers his description, and (it does not exactly appear why) conclude that their companion is 'Isaac Laquedom, the Jew who would not let Christ rest on his door-step' (p. 21). He turns up in London at the beginning of the 18th century, and seems to have won the ear of the ignorant, but only the ridicule of the wealthy. The curious however would appear to have questioned him pretty rigidly over a range of history extending from the Crucifixion to the Crusades. He did not think much of Arabic history, he professed acquaintance with Mahomet and his father, and said he was sojourning in Rome, when Nero set it on fire.

Mr. Baring-Gould's account of the appearances of this mythic personage in England may be supplemented by an account to be found in Peck's "*History of Stamford*," contributed to *Notes and Queries* by Mr. Sternberg. By this it appears that he visited that town on Whit-Sunday, 1658, and there wrought a miraculous cure upon one Samuel Wallis in return for a cup of small beer! The patient deposed that the stranger's coat was purple, and buttoned down to the waist, and 'his britches of the same colour all flew to see to.' Though the day was rainy, he had not a speck of dirt on his clothes. Contributors to the *Athenaeum* give second-hand evidence as to the appearance of one answering the Wandering Jew's description in 1818, 1824, 1830. Brand, under the head of vulgar errors, notes having seen in Newcastle one of these impostors, who went about muttering, 'Poor John alone! alone! Poor John alone!'

The result of our author's speculations touching the origin of this myth is to refer it to the question, 'What is Life? is it necessarily limited to fourscore years, or

can it be extended indefinitely?' and he quotes a string of legends in point (p. 26). It may be so, though we question the need of an interpretation so recondite. As far as we can see, the birthplace of the myth was a monastery, its tutors and guardians mostly monkish chroniclers. May it not be a myth of the saintly ideal, designed to bring home to unlettered consciences as by a living witness's mouth the peril of them 'that crucifye

'Their Saviour Christe againe?
If you had seene his death, saith he,
As these mine eyes have done,
Ten thousand thousand times would yee
His torments think upon;
And suffer for his sake all paine
Of torments, and all woes.
These are his wordes and eke his life,
When as he comes or goes.'

Mr. Baring-Gould makes a likelier guess at the root of the 'Prester John' myth, when he discovers it in the wonderful successes of Nestorianism in the East. Three early writers between 1135 and 1200 A.D. speak of the existence of a mighty priest-king in the far East, of strong Christian sympathies, and of might enough to make those sympathies felt in the struggle between Cross and Crescent. Their geographical data, as might be expected, will not bear inspection, but this was not discovered until after Pope Alexander III. had sent his physician Philip with a letter to Prester John in 1177, for the purpose of effecting a union with his 'exaltedness.' It is not clear whether the Pope sent this embassy in reply to a letter, addressed to him and other European potentates by this mysterious personage, which is found in the Chronicle of Albericus Trium Fontium. For a choice sample of brag and rhodomontade, perhaps for an early instance of an elaborate hoax, this letter can have few rivals. Numbers, natural history, mineralogy, theology, history, politics, geography, tread each on the other's heels in this memorable epistle—not the slightest marvel in connection with which is the evidence it affords that credulity could be found, capable of swallowing the fable of a mighty nation having its abode amidst beasts and monsters, which must speedily have obliterated the memorials of it.

'Our home,' runs this notable epistle, 'is the home of elephants, dromedaries, camels, crocodiles, meta-collinarum, cametennus, tensevetes, wild asses, white and red lions, white bears, white merules, crickets, griffins, tigers, lamias, hyenas, wild horses, wild oxen, and wild men, men with horns, one-eyed, men with eyes before and behind, centaurs, fauns, satyrs, pigmies, forty-ell-high giants, cyclopes, and similar women. It is the home too of the phoenix, and of nearly all living animals. We have some people subject to us who feed on the flesh of men, and of prematurely-born animals, and who never fear death. When any of these people die, their friends and relations eat them ravenously, for they regard it as a main duty to munch human flesh. Their names are Gog and Magog, Anie, Agit, Azenath, Fommeperi, Befari, Conei-Samante, Agrimandri, Vintefolei, Casbei, Alanei.'

No wonder that Philip, the physician, never returned from his embassy; more especially if we suppose him to have seen this letter before setting out. It makes no secret of its writer's unfriendliness to Papal pretensions, or of Prester John's intention to send his tributary nations to overrun all the abodes of the saints, as well as the great city, Rome, 'which, by the way,' he adds, 'we are prepared to give to our son, who will be born, along with all Italy, Germany, the two Gauls, Britain, and Scotland. We shall also give him Spain and all the land as far as to the icy Sea.'

When a more accurate geographical knowledge arose out of the communications of the missionaries of Pope Innocent IV. with the Mongol hordes, the result failed to dispel the popular superstition about a vast Christian empire in far-off regions, but simply changed its locale to Abyssinia. Marco Polo, however, maintained its eastern localisation, and concurred with Rubruquis the Franciscan (1253), and the Jacobite patriarch, Gregory Bar-Hebraeus in his Syriac Chronicle, which is nearly contemporaneous, in identifying Prester-John with Unk-Khan, a real Nestorian shepherd-ruler.

A suggestion has been made that the origin of this myth is to be sought in the forms and institution of Buddhism, so akin in many respects to those of Romanism: but it will be agreed, after a perusal of Mr. Baring-Gould's succinct sketch of the rise and spread of the heretical Nestorian sect, that his claim to have traced it home to Nestorianism is exceedingly plausible.

'It is probable that the foundation of the whole Prester-John myth lay in the report which reached Europe of the wonderful successes of Nestorianism in the East; and there seems reason to believe that the famous letter given above was a Nestorian fabrication. It certainly looks un-European; the gorgeous imagery is throughout Eastern, and the disparaging tone in which Rome is spoken of could hardly have been the expression of Western feelings. The letter has the object in view of exalting the East to an undue eminence in arts and religion at the expense of the West, and it manifests some ignorance of European geography when it speaks of the land extending from Spain to the Polar Sea. Moreover, the sites of the patriarchates, and the dignity conferred on that of S. Thomas, are indications of a Nestorian bias.'

So much for the myth of Prester-John. We turn to another class of myths more in the nature of vulgar errors, and find how amusingly Mr. Baring-Gould can gossip about the 'Divining Rod,' and discourse of the 'Man in the Moon.' His chapter on the first of these will perplex the sober-minded not a little, though Wiltshire men, as he tells us, have long been cognizant of this resource in the discovery of water-springs; and though readers of De Quincey may recall his respectful mention of the Somersetshire 'Jowers,' in treating the subject of 'rbdomancy,' which he localizes in and around Wrington.

Like many of its fellows this myth springs from a perversion of the facts of Scripture. Aaron's rod that budded was used to divine God's will; and this use had been turned to abuse before the days of the prophet Hosea, who in his prophecy (iv. 12) says, 'My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them.' The divining rod is alluded to by Cicero in his 'Offices' as a mode of divination generally, and also, it would seem, in his 'De Divinatione.' Tacitus indicates its existence among the Germans, and Ammianus Marcellinus traces it among the Alains.

In the middle ages it seems to have found full development not only as regards springs of water, but as a means of discovering hid treasure and precious metals; and even of denouncing, as by the finger of God, the murderer and the thief. Benedictine Monks and Jesuit writers from the fifteenth century downwards are cited by our author as having discussed the virtues of the 'Virgula divinatoria,' a disagreement between the doctors being the not infrequent result. The preponderance of testimony is in favour of ascribing to the rod some power of indicating subterranean springs, a power of which we shall bring together some striking instances over and above those cited by Mr. Baring-Gould, as avouched by respectable testimony in these latter days. But the famous case of Jacques Aymar and the Lyons murder, in 1692, has been fixed upon by the author of 'Curious Myths' as the grand field on which to try this superstition on its merits. We have striven to condense the narrative given in the text. On the night of July 5th, 1692, a wine-seller and his wife were robbed and murdered in a cellar at Lyons. No clue could be found to the murderers in the bottle wrapped in straw or the bloody hedging-bill found on the morrow beside the corpses. The authorities were urged to send for Aymar, who four years before had, it would seem, so far succeeded in the use of his divining rod (aided, perhaps, by the terrors of a guilty conscience in one of the accused) as to denounce the perpetrators of a theft. With his rod, too, he had discovered a murder when he was looking for a water-spring, and by the same indicator had saddled it, rightly or wrongly, on the murdered woman's husband. He was sent for to Lyons, and led by the authorities to the wine-shop which had been the scene of the murder. The rod in his hand remained perfectly stationary till he reached the spot where each corpse had lain, but then it became violently agitated, as was also Aymar's pulse. Catching the scent, as it were, he commenced his trail from the cellar to the shop, from the shop to the street, across the court of the Episcopal Palace, down to the gate of the Rhone. Night came on. There was a temporary check. Next morning with three officers he passed the gate, and descended the river's right bank, till the rod, which had indicated that there were three murderers, enabled him to pause in quest of two at a gardener's cottage. Here he persisted, in spite of the owner's denials, that the fugitives had rested and drunk out of a bottle, and he so far obtained a success that on the rod declaring two children of nine and ten to have been in contact with the murderers, they

admitted having let in two men against their father's orders, and in his absence, on Sunday morning. The men, they said, had certainly drunk out of the bottle indicated. Some experiments followed, which we give in the author's own words:—

'As already stated, a hedging-bill had been discovered on the scene of the murder, smeared with blood, and unquestionably the weapon with which the crime had been committed. Three bills from the same maker, and of precisely the same description, were obtained, and the four were taken into a garden and secretly buried at intervals. Aymar was then brought, staff in hand, into the garden, and conducted over the spots where lay the bills. The rod began to vibrate as his feet stood upon the place where was concealed the bill which had been used by the assassins, but was motionless elsewhere. Still unsatisfied, the four bills were exhumed and concealed anew. The comptroller of the province himself bandaged the sorcerer's eyes, and led him by the hand from place to place. The divining-rod shewed no signs of movement till it approached the blood-stained weapon, when it began to oscillate.'

The magistrates now resolved to authorise a further pursuit, and Aymar was accompanied by a company of archers. On foot at first, then by boat, with frequent landings wherever his rod denoted a tarrying-place of the fugitives, he followed the trail to the military camp of Sablon, where he dared not use his rod without special authority, though the violent beating of his pulse gave indications of a 'find.' Back went he to Lyons, and ere he could again reach Sablon time had sped, and the murderers, he asserted, had got off. He now descended the Rhone in pursuit as far as Beaucaire. His rod told him that one of the three fugitives was there, and checked him at the town prison, within which it singled one prisoner, a hunchback, out of fifteen, as the individual after whom the search was instituted. This hunchback had just been committed for a theft in the fair then going on. He was led back to Lyons, in which he persisted he had never set foot, by the exact route along which Aymar's rod had tracked his flight. At every resting-place he was recognised. At Bagnols, where he and his comrades had slept, the tavern-keeper and his wife swore to his identity, and gave the same description of his companions as had been given by the gardener's children. Hereupon the hunchback admitted his participation in the murder, which he said had been committed by two Provençals, whose servant he was. His answers at his first interrogation strongly confirmed the sagacity of the divining rod. The bill-hook and the hour tallied. There might be nothing in this. But his confession detailed the movements of the murderers, from the cellar, where the deed was done, to the shop, which was presently rifled, and thence through the street to the large "court-yard in which the night was passed. Next day they left Lyons, tarrying—there is a little discrepancy here—for a moment at a gardener's cottage. The use of the boat—the sojourn at the military camp—almost everything, corresponded up to the capture at Beaucaire.

To cut a long story short, Aymar was not so successful in his search for the two principals. At the prison, where he fancied he had run one to ground, he met with a balk. He mistook his man. But, eventually, he traced both to the frontier, where the chase had to be discontinued.

Mr. Baring-Gould enters at some length into the unimpeachableness of the veracity of the authorities for this strange story, and it must be owned that it is difficult to assail. He also establishes the general candour of Aymar's replies while under examination. But the most interesting part of the account is that which shews how Aymar's powers deserted him when he came up to Paris. There

'The Prince de Condé submitted him to various tests, and he broke down under every one. Five holes were dug in the garden. In one was secreted gold, in another silver, in a third silver and gold, in the fourth copper, and in the fifth stones. The rod made no signs in presence of the metals, and at last actually began to move over the buried pebbles. He was sent to Chantilly, to discover the perpetrators of a theft of trout made in the ponds of the park. He went round the water, rod in hand, and it turned at spots where he said the fish had been drawn out. Then, following the track of the thief, it led him to the cottage of one of the keepers, but did not move over any of the individuals then in the house. The keeper himself was absent, but arrived late at night; and on hearing what was said, he roused Aymar from his bed, insisting on having his innocence vindicated. The divining-rod, however, pronounced him guilty, and the poor fellow took to his heels, much upon the principle recommended by Montesquieu a while after. Said he, "If you are accused of having stolen the towers of Notre-Dame, bolt at once." A peasant, taken haphazard from the street, was brought to the sorcerer as one suspected. The rod turned slightly, and Aymar declared that the man did not steal the fish, but ate of them. A boy was then introduced, said to be the keeper's son. The rod rotated violently at once. This was the finishing stroke; and Aymar was sent away by the Prince in disgrace. It now transpired that the theft of fish had taken place seven years before, and that the lad was no relation of the keeper, but a country boy who had only been in Chantilly eight or ten months. M. Goyonnot, Recorder of the King's Council, broke a window in his house, and sent for the diviner, to whom he related a story of his having been robbed of valuables during the night. Aymar indicated the broken window as the means whereby the thief had entered, and pointed out the window by which he had left with his booty. As no such robbery had been committed, Aymar was turned out of the house as an impostor.'

Our author goes on to discuss the question 'Was Aymar an impostor from first to last, or did his powers fail him at Paris?' Paris was, owing to its artificial soil, and other disturbing causes, unfavourable to their testing. Besides, as appeared in other instances, concentrated