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ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

A Memoir

BY THE
REV. JOHN LAMOND, D.D.

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ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

W. Ransford.

[Frontispiece]

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

A Memoir

BY THE REV. JOHN LAMOND, D.D.

WITH AN EPILOGUE
BY LADY CONAN DOYLE

LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET, W.

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DEDICATED
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN
THE WORLD OVER WHO
KNEW AND LOVED
ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

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P R E F A C E

It never occurred to me that I was to write the life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. The request reached me in a somewhat unexpected way through the Rev. Arthur Ford. I was startled by it. But when I submitted the request to Lady Conan Doyle, she graciously wrote :

“ We feel convinced that you are the man that we would choose for the task, and I think that is why you have been left on the earthplane, to do this last work for the man I know you so greatly loved. I do hope you will see your way to do the work.” Mr. Denis Doyle, Sir Arthur’s elder son, who is now carrying on his father’s propagandist activities, wrote in similar terms. Thus encouraged I proceeded with my studies, which certainly have been rich in interest.

Doubtless many other books will be written regarding a life that has so many aspects. There were at least half a dozen different entities embodied in Arthur Conan Doyle—the keen sportsman, the man of daring adventure, the literary artist and the orator that in his later years made him the greatest propagandist the Spiritual Movement has produced.

It may be contended that I have unduly stressed this latter aspect of his career. That was not the

view he himself maintained. He regarded alike his agnostic period and his thirty years of literary activity as being the preparation for the mission to which he was called. It was on this last phase that he laid the emphasis.

What has surprised me, as it has surprised so many others who are at all conversant with his writings, is his amazing versatility. For the majority of his readers he is only known as the author of the Sherlock Holmes detective stories. He is a novelist of acknowledged eminence, each of his novels containing some character study of enduring interest. As an historian his writings alike of the Boer War and the Great War (1914-18) still await their full measure of appreciation. As a poet his modest volume (from which I have freely quoted) has greater merit than he himself ever claimed for it.

I have asked Lady Conan Doyle to write of his home-life and of his innumerable benefactions. He was in his home-life one of the happiest of men, and one of the most brotherly and kind-hearted of men it has ever been my privilege to meet. It is an aspect of his character that needs to be more widely known.

I have to express my obligations to Mr. J. W. Herries for the report of Sir Arthur's lecture in Edinburgh that appeared in *The Scotsman*, and likewise to the editors of *The Times* and *The Sunday Express* for the extracts from these newspapers.

JOHN LAMOND.


BOOK I

Not as adventitious therefore will the wise man regard the faith which is in him. The highest truth he sees he will fearlessly utter, knowing that, let come what may of it, he is thus playing his right part in the world—knowing that if he can effect the change he aims at—well ; if not, well also ; though not so well.

HERBERT SPENCER.

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CHAPTER 1

HIS EARLY LIFE

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE was born on the 22nd May, 1859, in Picardy Place, Edinburgh. His father was Charles Doyle, youngest son of John Doyle. This John Doyle came from Dublin in 1815 and settled in London under the *nom de crayon* "H. B." He became famous as a caricaturist. All his sons were artists of recognised eminence. His eldest son was likewise an author of important works. His second son Henry became the manager of the National Gallery, Dublin. That gallery owes much alike to his judgment and foresight. The third son Richard was the "Dicky Doyle" of *Punch*. The frontispiece of *Punch*, that is familiar to every reader, was his creation. Charles Doyle, the father of Arthur, was an artist that never got his due. His genius was altogether remarkable. Several of his pictures can be seen at Windlesham. They are more weird than anything that Blake ever produced. At an early age he received an appointment in the Government Office of Works, Edinburgh, and whilst still comparatively young he married Miss Mary Foley, whose uncle Sir Denis Pack had led the Scottish Brigade at the Battle of Waterloo. The Doyles, according to the family tree still preserved at

Windlesham, traced their ancestry to some famous chieftain of the name of D'Oil in Ireland. Mary Foley, who was keenly interested in genealogy, traced her ancestors to the Plantagenets.

Charles Doyle in Edinburgh became the father of a considerable family, two sons, Arthur Conan Doyle and Innes Doyle, and five daughters. The Conan in Arthur's name was due to his uncle and godfather being a Michael Conan who had married his father's sister and who ultimately settled in Paris. Charles Doyle, the Government official in the Office of Works in Edinburgh, had a salary of £240 per annum, which he supplemented to some extent by the sales of his pictures, but this combined income only amounted to some £300 odd per year. The mother had a severe struggle to secure a good education for her children, but this she was determined each one of them should have, regarding it as the best legacy she could leave any one of them. Arthur was at first sent to a local school. The master, he declares, might have "stepped out of the pages of Dickens." He was afterwards sent to Hodder and Stonyhurst, and there he remained until he was sixteen years of age. His father was a strict Catholic, and Arthur's early education was under Catholic supervision. An offer had been made to his mother that no fees would be exacted if her son was given over to the Roman Catholic Church, but whilst it would have made a difference of £50 a year to her (a tempting offer in her straitened circumstances) she refused it. In after

years her gifted son blessed her for that sacrifice on his behalf.

From his boyhood Arthur was an omnivorous reader, his favourite book as a boy being *The Scalp Hunters* by Mayne Reid. It is significant that in these youthful days he had produced a book in manuscript with illustrations drawn by himself. He might have become an artist in colour. He was fated to become an artist in the use of words. If there is any truth in heredity, he inherited his artistic tendencies from the Doyles, whilst his fighting instincts can be traced to his mother's ancestry. His father, Charles Doyle, had little ambition, and was content to the end of his life with his modest position in Edinburgh. The Packs, on the other hand, from whom his mother was descended, were ever in the battlefield.

His training under his Catholic tutors was Spartan in its severity. He never made much headway in the classics, the time spent by him on mathematics he regarded as being wasted, but at Stonyhurst he obtained distinction for a poem written on the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites, whilst at the same period he was Editor of the College Magazine. The praise bestowed upon his poem called the attention of the authorities to him. He regarded this incident as a "sign-post" in his life. In other respects he was rather an enigma to his teachers. He certainly did not appear at that period to have the makings of a Catholic saint in him. Among his school mates at Stonyhurst

were Bernard Partridge, so well known in these later years by his cartoons in *Punch*, and Father Thurston, between whom and Sir Arthur several polemical thrusts were exchanged. An older scholar who attracted him was Father Vaughan, but they never became intimate to any extent.

He left Stonyhurst at sixteen years of age. It had been determined in the family circle that he should become a doctor. The Doyle family in Edinburgh were rather sceptical about art and its financial results. It was thought well that, before beginning his professional studies, he should spend a year at Feld Kirch in Austria, so that he might learn German. At Feld Kirch he found the discipline to be less rigid than at Stonyhurst. He regarded this year spent on the Continent as being one of the happiest in his life experience up to that period. However, it would appear that he was not too affluent as regards cash. On his return he resolved to visit his godfather and uncle Michael Conan in Paris, and arrived in the Champs Elysées with twopence in his pocket. For several years afterwards twopence had for him a distinct financial value.

His studies in Edinburgh University began in the winter of 1875. The university even at that period had a world-wide reputation as a centre of medical training. As at Stonyhurst, Arthur Conan Doyle never seems to have asserted himself during his university career. Like Stevenson, he may have been biding his time. He was never a slacker, but he writes himself down as a 60 per cent. student.

He was busy studying men as well as medicine. There were two men among the Professors who exercised a marked influence over him—Dr. Joseph Bell and Professor Rutherford. Dr. Joseph Bell, as is well known, became the prototype of Sherlock Holmes, and Professor Rutherford figures as Professor Challenger in *The Lost World*, and appears later as the challenging critic in *The Land of Mist*.

During the latter part of his curriculum there was the greater part of a session spent as medical officer in the whaling steamer *Hope*, under the command of Captain John Gray. He received two pound ten shillings per month as salary and three shillings per ton of what was called "oil money." This was wealth for a student who had to count his pennies ; besides, this whaling expedition appealed to his robust manhood that at this period revelled in adventure. More than once he played at hide-and-seek with Death alike in this voyage, and at a later period, when he had completed his curriculum, in a voyage to the West Coast of Africa. These experiences are fully recorded in his *Memories and Adventures*.

But his university career is memorable owing to the fact that it was during this period he broke for ever with the Roman Catholic Church. In Edinburgh, as well as in other Scottish universities, there was an intellectual ferment that pervaded them for at least ten years from 1875 to 1885. Charles Darwin had published two books, *The Origin of Species* (1859)

and *The Descent of Man* (1871), which were not only published, but read and studied. Darwin was not a propagandist. He lived the life of a quiet country gentleman, noting several facts and making deductions from them. But Thomas Huxley was an eager propagandist, and being a doctor he appealed directly to the members of the medical profession. He had espoused the teaching of Darwin that mankind in some way had an animal ancestry. Medical students, from their researches in anatomy and their knowledge of embryology, were more conversant with the facts than divinity students, although even among the latter there were the discerning few who recognised in this fact of man's animal ancestry the real foundation for the doctrine of Original Sin. There were constant arguments in the class-rooms on these subjects, resulting in a wave of unbelief sweeping over the medical section of the university. This continued until the advent of Professor Henry Drummond about 1885, when the tide was turned. C. T. Studd, the famous cricketer, and Stanley Smith, the stroke of the Cambridge Eight, came to Edinburgh, and a religious revival began, not among the divinity students, but among the medical students, which resulted in new religious activities and various missionary enterprises. But at the period of which we are writing many a minister's son made shipwreck of his faith, and abandoned for ever the beliefs of his fathers. Arthur Conan Doyle's experience was much the same. This crisis was so important in his life that

it is better to record the successive steps of this transition in his own words :

"Nothing can exceed the uncompromising bigotry of the Jesuit theology or their apparent ignorance of how it shocks the modern conscience. I remember that when as a grown lad I heard Father Murphy, a great fierce Irish priest, declare that there was sure damnation for everyone outside the Church, I looked upon him with horror, and to that moment I trace the first rift which has grown into such a chasm between me and those who were my guides " (*Memories and Adventures*, p. 20).

And again at a later period, writing of his intellectual outlook as a student (see *Memories and Adventures*, p. 31), he writes :

" This brings me to my own spiritual unfolding, if such it may be called, during those years of constant struggle. I have already in my account of the Jesuits shown how, even as a boy, all that was sanest and most generous in my nature rose up against a narrow theology and an uncharitable outlook upon the other great religions of the world. In the Catholic Church to doubt anything is to doubt everything, for since it is a vital axiom that doubt is mortal sin when once it has, unbidden and unappeasable, come upon you, everything is loosened, and you look upon the whole wonderful interdependent scheme with other and with critical eyes. Thus viewed there was much to attract—its traditions, its unbroken and solemn ritual, the beauty and truth of many of its observances, its poetical

appeal to the emotions, the sensual charm of music, light and incense, its power as an instrument of law and order. For the guidance of an unthinking and uneducated world it could in many ways hardly be surpassed, as has been shown in Paraguay, and in the former Ireland where, outside agrarian trouble, crime was hardly known. All this I could clearly see, but if I can claim any outstanding characteristic in my life, it is that I have never paltered or compromised with religious matters, that I have always weighed them very seriously and that there was something in me which made it absolutely impossible, even when my most immediate interests were concerned, to say anything about them save that which I, in the depths of my being, really believed to be true. Judging it thus by all the new knowledge which came to me both from my reading and from my studies, I found that the foundations not only of Roman Catholicism, but of the whole Christian faith, as presented to me in the nineteenth-century theology, were so weak that my mind could not build upon them. It is to be remembered that these were the years when Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Herbert Spencer and John Stuart Mill were our chief philosophers, and that even the man in the street felt the strong sweeping current of their thought, while to the young student, eager and impressionable, it was overwhelming. I know now that their negative attitude was even more mistaken and very much more dangerous than the positive positions which they attacked with such destructive criticism. A gap had opened between our fathers and ourselves so suddenly and completely that when a Gladstone wrote to uphold the Gadarene swine or the six days of creation, the youngest student rightly

tittered over his arguments and it did not need a Huxley to demolish them."

He adds :

"This negative position was so firm that it seemed to me to be a terminus ; whereas, it proved only a junction on the road of life where I was destined to change from the old well-worn line on to a new one."

This agnostic position he maintained during many years afterwards. His views are more fully detailed in the *Stark Munro Letters*, written in 1895, although at that period he already had a glimmering that there might be an after life for the soul. He was never an atheist. He held strongly that there was a guiding Power in the universe, that controlled the destinies of men. Nor did he ever for a moment doubt the existence of Jesus Christ. He wrote of Jesus Christ as the most beautiful and bravest soul that has ever sojourned on this planet. He may be regarded at this period of his life as a deist who had discarded all theological formulas.

The reasons for this break with the formulas of the Church are not far to seek. Until the middle of the Victorian period the general belief regarding the age of the world was that it had existed in space some six thousand years. Byron incorporated this belief in his famous stanza :

I only mean to say what Johnson said
That in the course of some six thousand years
All nations have believed that from the dead
A visitant at intervals appears ;

And what is strangest on this strange head
Is, that whatever bar the reason rears
'Gainst such belief, there's something stronger still
On its behalf, let those deny who will.

Carlyle writes of the rocks around the home of his boyhood as being six thousand years old ! Tennyson saw much deeper. He was familiar with the latest findings of geology. It was only a seer who could have penned the lines :

There rolls the deep where grew the tree ;
O Earth, what changes hast thou seen !
There where the long street roars hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

And as to the origin of man, how pregnant the lines written long before *The Origin of Species* appeared :

Arise and fly
The reeling Fawn, the sensual feast ;
Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die.

But notwithstanding the advancing tide of knowledge, the Church held fast to the ancient traditions. Darwin and his associates were anathematised, and as late as 1875 many Bibles were printed giving, in the introduction to Genesis, the date of creation as being the 1st September, 4004 B.C. The students laughed and declared that the Bible chronologists ought to have been more precise and given the exact hour at which the work began. I write from

personal knowledge, as I keenly remember the arguments that took place in many a class-room. For the divinity students of these days Professor Flint was a great and steady influence with his liberal outlook and inner knowledge of the current controversies of the time.

Conan Doyle always regarded his break with the Church and current theology as a blessing in disguise. He never regretted it. He was accustomed to say that the mental part of his being was so completely cleared of all ecclesiastical traditions that when he found authenticated facts he could the more easily build up a new and more satisfying theological psychic structure.

His visit to the Arctic regions produced an impression on his mind that was never forgotten. He writes that—

“the peculiar other-world feeling of the Arctic regions—a feeling so singular that if you have once been there the thought of it haunts you all your life—is due largely to the perpetual daylight. Night seems more orange-tinted and subdued than day, but there is no great difference. . . . After a month or two the eyes grow weary of the eternal light, and you appreciate what a soothing thing our darkness is. I can remember, as we came abreast of Iceland on our return, catching our first glimpse of a star and being unable to take my eyes from it, it seemed such a dainty little twinkling thing. Half the beauties of Nature are lost through our familiarity.”

“To appreciate a woman,” [he declares] “one

has to be out of sight of one for six months. I can well remember that as we rounded the north of Scotland on our return we dipped our flag to the lighthouse, being only some hundreds of yards from the shore. A figure emerged to answer our salute, and the excited whisper ran through the ship, 'It's a wumman!' The captain was on the bridge with his telescope. I had the binoculars in the bows. Everyone was staring. She was well over fifty, short skirts and sea boots—but she was a 'wumman.' 'Anything in a mutch!' the sailors used to say, and I was of the same way of thinking."

This whaling expedition awakened in his mind that spirit of adventure that possessed him all his life. The loneliness of the Arctic sea, the haunting sense of ever "pushing nor'ard," the rough but brave men who were his companions gave him a glimpse into the inner realities of Existence. He encountered many dangers during these seven months, but he ever coquetted with danger, rather welcoming than eluding its subtle fascination.

No sooner was he licensed to practise medicine than he embarked on the *Mayumba*, a steamer of 4,000 tons, and made the voyage to the West African coast which brought him a series of entirely new experiences in sharp contrast to the rigours of the Greenland shore. Whilst recognising the pleasure of the *wander-jahre*, his good sense revealed to him that a second *wander-jahre* would be fatal to his prospects as a medical practitioner—to use his own words, "might mean damnation"—and

hence the prospect of all future voyages as a ship's surgeon was abandoned. His father had died about this period, and Arthur, being the elder son, found himself practically the head of the family. He must needs begin actual life somewhere and in some way. But to understand his complex personality it is necessary to keep in mind this adventurous Conan Doyle ready to face death at any risk, and rather unwilling to settle down to the hum-drum duties of ordinary civilian life. More than once he had been tempted to take the Queen's shilling and enter the Army, thus ending all temporary struggles, but there was a mother to be considered, a mother who had faced serious sacrifices on his behalf, and it was this and other considerations that constrained him to turn alike from the career of a soldier or ship's surgeon.

He was at this period the embodiment of healthy manhood. He had developed a keen love of sport in all its forms. He had won his spurs at cricket and he could prove himself a formidable figure in the football field. He was not averse to a bout with the gloves, and more than once in after years his special knowledge of the prize ring was of service to him. According to his agnostic judgment there was only one life to live and he was determined to make the most of it. The world was before him—he had to open his oyster the best way he could. His family had made considerable sacrifices that he might attain a qualified position as a doctor. The fruits of his father's genius had been given to the world. The

financial results for the family circle had been meagre. Arthur, as the elder son, recognised his responsibilities. Often as a boy he had said to his mother: "Wait till I am a man, Mammie, and you will wear a velvet dress and have a gold spectacles, and sit at your own fireside in comfort." He had now the opportunity of redeeming that promise. The pathway at first did not seem to be promising, but that promise in the end was nobly fulfilled.

CHAPTER II

HIS MEDICAL CAREER

DURING his curriculum in the Edinburgh University Conan Doyle met a student to whom he has given the fictitious name of "Cullingworth." This student attracted him on account of his somewhat wild and adventurous disposition. "Cullingworth" as a student suddenly married a ward in Chancery, and brought his bride with him to "Auld Reekie," where they lived in somewhat Bohemian fashion. Conan Doyle was an occasional visitor at their house. "Cullingworth's" father, who was deceased, had been a prominent physician in Bristol, and to this city "Cullingworth" himself went, when he was licensed, in the hope of regaining part of his father's practice. He had furnished a house somewhat extravagantly in order to create a good impression as to his position, but the patients failing to appear he was confronted with bankruptcy. He summoned his creditors, detailed his early struggles with so much pathos that these business men actually allowed him to depart with his specious promise that given time every one of them would be paid in full. He next appeared in Plymouth. He was full of ideas regarding all kinds of inventions, and his idea at Plymouth was to advertise,

“Consultations free, medicine only to be paid for.” This was an outrage on professional etiquette, but so remarkable was the man that quickly crowds of patients were attracted, and owing to his inherent ability many were actually cured. The members of the medical profession were indignant, but what cared “Cullingworth,” when every evening he “walked back to his great residential house upon the Hoe, bearing his bag of silver, his coat tails flying, his hat on the back of his head, and his great fangs grinning up at every doctor whose disgusted face showed at a window.”

This was the man who offered young Conan Doyle £300 per annum if he would come south and help him with his practice. Three hundred pounds per year was not to be too lightly ignored. At that period Conan Doyle was still under the magnetic influence of this man, from whom he emphatically differed as to his method of attracting patients, but whose originality and daring he could not deny. He has left us a full-length portrait of him in *The Stark Munro Letters*, in which the fertility of “Cullingworth’s” ideas is set forth and the charlatan that was in the man revealed.

Conan Doyle, as the surgeon in this practice, came to be associated for a time with “Cullingworth.” But his mother never favoured this alliance. Her Plantagenet blood boiled within her, and she protested emphatically in several letters that if ever the family fortunes were to be retrieved by her son, it was not to be through his association with this

type of man. One of these letters had fallen aside, and had been read by "Cullingworth" or his wife, with the result that young Doyle was told to quit. "Cullingworth" advised him to begin practice on his own account and promised him a pound per week for a time. The difficulty was that Arthur Conan Doyle had practically no money, and it was a somewhat dismal prospect to put up a brass plate upon his door and wait for patients. Many a young doctor has found that patients do not spring out of the ground at the sight of a brass plate, and that years of weary waiting often break the stoutest heart. After some local enquiries he fixed upon Portsmouth as being a town where the conditions are somewhat analogous to the conditions that are to be found in Plymouth; and thither he went with his capital of ten pounds to begin his professional career. He rented a house, Bush Villa, in Southsea, at £40 per year. He was already the owner of a brass plate, and with his few pounds he was able to give some kind of appearance to the consulting-room in the house he had rented. As for the other rooms, empty packing-cases had to serve as chairs. He had no maid, the housework being done by himself. But "a stout heart to a stey brae" as they say in the north. He was a qualified doctor, and was determined to find a footing for himself on this somewhat remarkable planet. His pecuniary position in these early years can best be estimated by a letter that his young brother Innes, who had come to stay with him, wrote home regarding their circum-

stances. This younger brother became in after years Brigadier-General Innes Doyle. He died shortly after the Great War. There was plenty of room in the house for this younger brother, and a school in the neighbourhood was easily found. The letter is dated 16th August, 1882. He writes in his straggling schoolboy script:

“The patients are crowding in. We have made three bob this week. We have vaxenated a baby and got hold of a man with consumption and today a gipsy’s cart came to the door selling baskets and chairs so we determined to let the man ring as long as he liked. After he had rong two or three times Arthur yelled out at the pitch of his voice, Go away, but the man rang again so I went down to the door and pulled open the letter-box and cried out, Go away. The man began to swere at me and said he wanted to see Arthur. All this time Arthur thought that the door was open and was yelling Shut the door. Then I came upstairs and told Arthur what the man had said so Arthur went down and we found out that the gipsy’s child had measles. . . . After all we got sixpence out of them.”

Arthur’s comment on this boyish epistle is that it was the other way about with regard to the sixpence—the sixpence was given and not received.

The early years at Southsea were undoubtedly years of severe discipline. He did his own cooking, swept his own doorstep and cleaned his own brass plate. “Cullingworth” had promised Dr. Doyle one pound per week until he was firmly established

in his new practice. No sooner, however, was Dr. Doyle settled in Southsea and responsible for £40 of rent for Bush Villa (the house he had taken) than the one pound was promptly suspended. Doubtless it was better in the end that he should be in no wise indebted to a man of the type of "Cullingworth," but it was a serious handicap at the time, and necessitated on the young doctor's part the most rigid economy. At all hazards and costs the £40 rental had to be met, or his medical career in Southsea would have come to an untimely end. Hence we find this illuminating passage in *The Stark Munro Letters* :

"The next comer was a real bona-fide patient, albeit a very modest one. She was a little anæmic old maid, a chronic hypochondriac I should judge, who had probably worked her way round every doctor in the town, and was anxious to sample this novelty. I don't know whether I gave her satisfaction. She said that she would come again on Wednesday, but her eyes shifted as she said it. One and sixpence was as much as she could pay, but it was very welcome. I can live three days on one and sixpence.

"I think I have brought economy down to its finest point. No doubt for a short spell I could manage to live on a couple of pence per day ; but what I am doing now is not a mere sport, but my regular mode of life for many a month to come. My tea and sugar and milk (Swiss) come collectively to one penny a day. The loaf is at twopence three farthings, and I consume one a day. My dinner

consists in rotation of one-third of a pound of bacon cooked over the gas (twopence halfpenny) or two saveloys (twopence) or two pieces of fried fish (twopence) or a quarter of an eightpenny tin of Chicago beef (twopence). Any one of these, with a due allowance of bread and water, makes a most substantial meal. Butter I have discarded for the present. My actual board therefore comes well under sixpence a day, but I am a patron of literature to the extent of a halfpenny a day, which I expend upon an evening paper."

He adds, "Perhaps you will picture me as bloodless and pulled down on this diet! I am thin, it is true, but I never felt more fit in my life."

When the patients failed to appear he consoled himself by reading books, and in the evenings, when all hope of earning a fee was gone, he betook himself to writing, and thereby earned an occasional ten-pound note. His father, Charles Doyle, had supplemented the family income by his paintings, and why should the son, in the absence of these much-longed-for patients, not supplement his slender means by his literary efforts? His superabounding energy required some fitting outlet. The actual state of his financial affairs is revealed by the Inland Revenue enquiries. The young doctor received the annual schedule that many of us know so well, and was requisitioned to state his actual income, which had amounted to £154. Deducting expenses he showed that he was not liable. The schedule was returned to him and marked :

“Not satisfactory.”

Arthur at once wrote under the words :

“I cordially agree. A. C. D.,”
and sent it back. This led to his being summoned before the assessors, but armed with his ledgers he proved to them that he was not liable for assessment.

The second year, however, was much better, and the practice gradually became worth about £300 per annum, but never exceeded that sum. That he built up a considerable practice in Southsea was a creditable achievement considering that he had no backing whatever beyond his brass plate. It has to be stated that at this time he received the promise of the support of the Roman Catholic section of the community in Southsea if he would publicly avow himself to be a Roman Catholic, but even under the stress of dire poverty he refused to palter with his conscience. Had he become a popular doctor we never would have had Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, so that even at this period of his life we can discern the guiding hand of Destiny. He might have become a Dr. Joseph Bell, for he had a great part of Joseph Bell in him ; he might even have become a Professor Rutherford, for in his more iconoclastic moods it was easy to see the gleam of Professor Rutherford's eyes. But it was not in medicine that he was to achieve fame, and the beginnings of the path that were to lead in that direction can be traced to his six years' experience in Southsea.

It was in the year 1885 that he married Miss

Hawkins, the daughter of a widowed lady, Mrs. Hawkins, who, with her son and daughter, had come to reside in the town. This son was an invalid suffering from cerebral meningitis. Dr. Doyle took him under his own roof for a time. The Hawkins family were living in lodgings, and this act of kindness on the doctor's part greatly touched them. This son's sudden death brought him into more intimate and sympathetic relations with the widow and her daughter and resulted in his marriage with the daughter on the 6th August of that year. He was singularly fortunate in each of his marriages, for it can be stated with historical truth that on each occasion there was a marked expansion in his experience of literary activity and of widening interests. Of this marriage there were born Mary Conan Doyle and Kingsley Doyle. Miss Doyle for several years took charge of the Psychic Book Shop and shares her father's psychic interests. She has also a special gift for music. Kingsley became an officer in the 1st Hampshires during the Great War. He was wounded in the war and died shortly after the Armistice was signed.

By the year 1885 Sir Arthur's position at Southsea was so far assured that it was not a life of penury to which he invited his young wife. By means of his practice and the accession to his income from his literary efforts they were able to live in tolerable comfort.

Such was the position from 1885 to 1888, and during these years he made great progress with his

literary studies. There is never an advantage, but there is a disadvantage, and the reverse is equally true with regard to the handicaps of life. If the patients did not flock to Bush Villa, the time was fully occupied in reading and writing. He was already fairly successful as a short story writer, but he had sat as a boy on Thackeray's knee in Edinburgh, and he desired to produce some notable work that might at least stand near to the masterpieces of that great author. It was during this period that one of his stories was accepted by James Payne, who edited the *Cornhill Magazine*, for which he received £30, but what gave him greater satisfaction was the fact that he had become an acknowledged contributor to this famous monthly. Blackwood's and other magazines opened their pages to him. His first long book was entitled *The Firm of Girdlestone*. He sent the MS. to various publishing houses, but to use his own expression, it returned with the "precision of a homing pigeon." Several other works were written, and it was during this period that Sherlock Holmes first came into existence.

Sherlock Holmes derived his name from some cricketers of the period, for Dr. Doyle was at that time and ever afterwards a keen sportsman. Various names were tried, and finally the immortal name was fixed upon. It has to be remembered that Arthur Conan Doyle was a man of deep perception. He saw into the inner core of any subject. I was often struck with this in talking with him in his later years. It was theology, of all subjects in the world, that

we discussed; and I was humbled more than once to find that he knew a good deal more of certain aspects of theology than I did. He was not the first by any means to write detective stories. Such contributions had appeared in many magazines, for there is a romance about some forms of crime that often invests it with a mysterious fascination. Edgar Allen Poe had written such stories, and it is not easy either in prose or verse to better Poe. His tale *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, in which Dupuin, the amateur detective, appears, and which was supplemented by *The Mystery of Marie Roget*, reveal a mastery of analysis. Poe was the creator of the amateur detective. Doyle's admiration for him is expressed in his book, *Our American Adventure*, pp. 168-9. He writes:

"He [Poe] had every quality save humour, and of that there is not a trace. But he was surely the greatest originator of various story types that ever lived. He was so sure of himself that he never troubled to work out a reef, but he just picked a nugget or two, and then turned away to prospect elsewhere. . . . If every man who owed his inspiration to Poe were to contribute a tithe of his profits therefrom, he would have a monument greater than the pyramids, and I for one would be among the builders."

Gaboriau in France had specialised in detective stories. It had been for many years a well-worked theme. If, therefore, Doyle was to secure recognition as a writer of detective stories it was necessary



THE WRITING OF AN EARLY SHERLOCK HOLMES STORY.

that there should be some original method of treatment. This he secured by making the stolid Dr. Watson the foil of Sherlock Holmes. Watson was the reporter of the various incidents. His lack of imagination formed the background on which the genius of Sherlock sparkled and shone. How they were first brought together and how they finally settled in Baker Street is told in *A Study in Scarlet*, which appeared in *Beeton's Annual* in 1886, so that he was a living creation before he made his bow in *The Strand* in 1891.

There was, however, another feature in these stories that gives them a special interest of their own. Whilst studying under Dr. Joseph Bell in Edinburgh, and acting as his out-patient clerk, young Doyle was often startled by the extraordinary deductions made by that celebrated surgeon from some simple attitude or movement on the part of the patient which had entirely escaped Conan Doyle's own observation and the observation of his fellow-students. He reports one special case in which these deductions were correct. A civilian patient had been brought in.

"Well, my man," said Dr. Bell, "you've served in the army."

"Aye, sir."

"Not long discharged?"

"Aye, sir."

"A Highland regiment?"

"Aye, sir."

"A non-com. officer?"

"Aye, sir.

"Stationed at Barbados?"

"Aye, sir."

"You see, gentlemen," he would explain, "the man was a respectful man, but did not remove his hat. They do not in the army, but he would have learned civilian ways had he been long discharged. He has an air of authority and is obviously Scottish. As to Barbados his complaint is elephantiasis, which is West Indian and not British."

It was this rapid deduction from some simple circumstance as applied to the detection of crime that Conan Doyle developed on the part of Sherlock Holmes, and which has led to the formation of several schools of detectives founded on this method.

At this period there was a new departure in the publication alike of newspapers and magazines. Many of the older magazines disappeared, to be replaced by *The Strand*, the *Review of Reviews*, *The London* and other publications. These new magazines were richly illustrated and were intended to appeal in a measure to the enormous travelling public that had been created by our railway system. A story of absorbing interest that would occupy the traveller during his journey was in request. Doyle knew he could supply such stories, and Sherlock Holmes was the result. In a serial story, if several chapters are omitted the interest of the reader is dissipated, but in the Sherlock Holmes stories each story was complete in itself—Sherlock Holmes was

merely the connecting link. This was what Conan Doyle saw so clearly.

It has to be remembered, however, that there was not only the method, but the manner of telling the story in which the literary art that was inherent within him became manifest. There had been several generations of DoYLES all richly endowed with the imaginative faculty, and it was this inborn sense of art in literary form that endows the stories of Sherlock Holmes with an abiding interest. Art is ever Protean in its manifestations. But for several years Sherlock Holmes was kept in abeyance. The author was engaged on more serious work.

He had met James Payne, the Editor of *The Cornhill Magazine*, and Oscar Wilde and other celebrities. He had no idea at this period of authorship becoming his means of livelihood. He was still desirous of attaining a position among his contemporaries as a medical practitioner. He made a hurried journey to Berlin to interview Dr. Koch, who declared that he had discovered the cure for consumption; and it was through meeting Malcolm Morris during this journey that he was advised to pull up his stakes at Southsea and become an eye specialist. He went through a course of study at Vienna and finally settled in Montague Place, with a consulting-room and waiting-room at 2 Devonshire Place. For these rooms he paid £120 per year. But the patients failed to appear. He was punctually in his consulting-room at ten o'clock

each forenoon and waited eagerly for the bell to ring, but the bell never once rang. He was accustomed to say in after years that in addition to a consulting-room he had a waiting-room, but that it was he who did the "waiting"! However, as at Southsea, if the patients did not monopolise his energies, he found ample scope for his literary activity in writing the articles that were now in demand. In the quiet calm of 2 Devonshire Place he produced his daily sheaf of leaves which could be transmuted into gold. So that the absence of patients became a blessing in disguise. If the London people did not wish to profit by his ophthalmic skill, he knew he could reach them through another channel. The experiment at 2 Devonshire Place was speedily given up. Hitherto, he had regarded his literary efforts as being a mere crutch. He burned his boats so far as medicine was concerned and turned to literature as the real means by which he was to earn his bread.

At that period an epidemic of influenza swept over the nation, claiming thousands of victims, one of these being his own sister, Annette. Dr. Doyle himself had a severe attack, but he gradually recovered. It was during his convalescence that he saw so clearly the futility of any further striving on his part to become an eye specialist, whilst there were many avenues leading to literary fame opening out before him. He tells us that it was whilst in bed during his convalescence he took the decision of abandoning medicine and casting himself

entirely on the labours of his pen. He was conscious of such an exulting joy that he tossed his handkerchief to the ceiling. He was as a man walking on clouds with the mountain tops far beneath him. No sooner was the decision made than he proceeded to act. The rooms in Devonshire Place were abandoned and he settled with his wife in 12 Tennison Road, South Norwood. There was a current jest that not one of his patients had ever been seen *alive*. One, at least, has been subsequently discovered in Southsea with an undischarged medical bill in his pocket! On his own showing he had no eye patients in London. But he did have patients in Southsea, and one of them, at least, as will be recorded in the next chapter, exercised a far reaching influence upon his life.

CHAPTER III

HIS EARLY PSYCHIC STUDIES

BEFORE we take final leave of Southsea there is one aspect of Dr. Doyle's experiences that requires close attention. There is a belief widely prevalent in the public mind that the interest of Sir Oliver Lodge in the subject of Spiritualism was awakened by the death of his son Raymond in the Great War, and that Sir Arthur was attracted to the subject through the loss of his son Kingsley at a later period. The actual facts bear out a different view altogether. Sir Oliver was keenly interested in the subject long before the death of his son Raymond, as proved by his own writings, and in the case of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, his interest was first stirred somewhat unwillingly on his part at Southsea. It was at this date that he became a member of the Society for Psychical Research, so that at the time of his last illness he had become one of the oldest members of that organisation. Agnosticism, to which he had fully committed himself, does not offer to its adherents any wide outlook beyond this material world. If success can satisfy the human soul, then certainly Dr. Doyle had his own share of it. But amidst his various literary enterprises there arose within him those deeper questionings that can never be wholly

silenced. He was conversant with the literature of the Rationalistic Society, and had accepted the teaching of his Masters that the mind with its higher spiritual aspirations was a mere effluence of the brain, and that when the brain ceased to function, mind and soul alike disappeared. But it is better to quote his own words upon this subject. He is writing of the years before his marriage :

“ I cannot look back upon these years with any spiritual satisfaction, for I was still in the valley of darkness. I had ceased to butt my head incessantly against what seemed to be an impenetrable wall, and I had resigned myself to ignorance upon that which is the most momentous question in life—for a voyage is bleak indeed if one has no conception to what port one is bound. I had laid aside the old charts as useless, and had quite despaired of ever finding a new one which would enable me to steer an intelligible course, save towards that mist which was all that my pilots, Huxley, Mill, Spencer and others could see ahead of us ” (*Memories and Adventures*, p. 71).

And again :

“ As I have shown, my own position was that of a respectful materialist who entirely admitted a great central intelligent cause, without being able to distinguish what that cause was, or why it should work in so mysterious and terrible a way in bringing its designs to fulfilment.

“ From my point of view the mind (and so far as I could see the soul, which was the total effect of all

the hereditary or personal functionings of the mind) was an emanation from the brain and entirely physical in its nature. I saw, as a medical man, how a spicule of bone or a tumour pressing on the brain would cause what seemed an alteration in the soul. I saw also how drugs or alcohol would turn on fleeting phases of virtue or vice. The physical argument seemed an overpowering one. It had never struck me that the current of events might really flow in the opposite direction, and that the higher faculties could only manifest themselves imperfectly through an imperfect instrument. The broken fiddle is silent and yet the musician is the same as ever" (*Memories and Adventures*, p. 83).

In these passages his mental position is clearly stated.

It so happened that at this period (1885-8) one of his patients, a General Grayson, was carrying out investigations into spiritualistic phenomena. There was then, as there is now to a greater extent, a silent enquiry going on beneath the surface into the deeper facts of the spiritual life. No thinking man or woman can be permanently satisfied with the platitudes that are offered from many of our pulpits; and hence it is that in every town and nearly in every village there are a few eager souls who meet, and who in various directions are seeking for what will afford them spiritual guidance and satisfaction. In some cases the quest may be along the lines of Theosophy, in others it may be in the direction of Christian Science, whilst in many instances the extraordinary phenomena associated with Spiritual-

ism become the subject of research. In the case of General Grayson it was spiritualism that attracted him. He had been a teacher in the Greenwich Naval College, and had reached certain conclusions regarding the movements of the earth that were at variance with recognised scientific traditions. He was what might be termed a scientific heretic. Whether his views will ever find acceptance time alone can decide. The late Major Marriott was an enthusiastic follower, and Admiral de Hornsby, with many others, regard the discovery as being of epoch-making importance. If his views are accepted, it is claimed that the recurrence of the ice age can be definitely ascertained and that other perplexing scientific phenomena can be explained.

Be that as it may, General Grayson and his family circle held séances, experimenting with a dining-room table which sometimes conveyed messages in a somewhat clumsy way. The young Dr. Doyle was invited to take part in these séances, and whilst at first he was inclined to treat the whole matter with distrust and even with a measure of repugnance, he gradually became interested, more especially as through the mediumship of a railway signalman's wife *apports* were produced. These *apports* may be flowers or eggs, or sleeve-links or some other piece of jewellery. I have in my possession a set of sleeve-links that were produced at a séance in Glasgow, and so far as I could discern at the time they came out of empty space. The medium is a Mr. Lynn,

who lives near Newcastle. In the rooms of Mr. Hannen Swaffer these *apports* have been frequently produced. I have seen a box of them. They have been obtained, Mr. Swaffer tells us, at a gathering of friends, so that a paid medium does not come upon the scene. The question to be settled is, Where do the *apports* come from? It was these *apports* that puzzled the young doctor. He had carried on a series of experiments in telepathy with a Mr. Ball in Southsea and satisfied himself that telepathy is a fact. He found that although separated they could both visualise the same object. He was too poor at that period to employ expensive mediums, but he did discover a man who gave him some convincing messages. Still, he was so immersed in his materialistic philosophy that he was not prepared suddenly to abandon his former position. He wrote a letter to *Light*, the organ of the London Spiritualistic Alliance, in which this experience was recorded. He recognised that if these facts were true they cut right across several of his assumed positions. He had given up all belief in a future life. But if these inexplicable phenomena were the work of spirits, then the dead survived. He had given up all belief in a future world. But if the dead survived, there must be a world in which they could dwell. This General Grayson was a scholar, a keen mathematician, one who had seen a great part of the world, and his views on any subject were not to be lightly set aside.

Conan Doyle began to read the literature

of spiritualism. Of all the misleading statements regarding this movement which have been so eagerly circulated, one is to the effect that nothing of importance has ever reached us from the other side, nothing beyond a few trivialities which no intelligent person would ever seriously consider. It makes strange reading in Tacitus, the foremost of Roman historians, to find that in the persecution of the Christians, instigated by Nero in the year A.D. 64 on a suspicion that they had set fire to the city, they were "convicted not so much of arson as of hatred to the human race." If the Roman people of that period were willing to believe such an assertion, why should their historian not write it down? And if the people of this twentieth century wish to believe that during well-nigh eighty-three years nothing beyond "trivialities" has reached us from the unseen world, why should they not accept what has become with many a recognised axiom? *Populus vult decipi et decipietur!* In 1887 there were many books of recognised intellectual and spiritual value (there are certainly many more to-day) dealing with this momentous subject. Amongst these books was the volume by Sir William Crookes (who was at that period a rising chemist), *Researches into Modern Spiritualism*. Crookes never went back on the conclusions he has recorded in that book. Even as President of the British Association he declared to his fellow-scientists that he had nothing to retract, and it is within the writer's personal knowledge that he remained a convinced spiritualist

to the close of his earthly life. Alfred Russel Wallace was the co-discoverer with Darwin of the *Theory of Natural Selection*. His scientific eminence is beyond all question. His book, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, was published in 1874—one of the ablest books ever published on the subject. These are only two books out of what at that period had already become a considerable library. But these books were written by men of acknowledged scientific attainments.

Side by side with such volumes there was another library composed of treatises emanating, it is claimed, from supernormal sources. Two of these volumes may be mentioned: *Nature's Divine Revelations: a Voice to Mankind*, by Andrew Jackson Davis, and *The Arcana of Nature*, by Hudson Tuttle. It was this mass of literature that Conan Doyle now attacked, to find that his views on evolution were not only confirmed, but the whole subject treated from a new standpoint. The scheme of evolution which he had witnessed in the phenomena around him was carried by sheer logic into an interior world—a world so vast and real that he was well-nigh bewildered by its progressive splendours. It is only fair to add that during these forty-three years of psychic study he gathered around him a collection of psychic books such as I had never seen in any private library. It is therefore the wildest of all surmises to imagine that Arthur Conan Doyle, as the result of some sudden or erratic impulse, embraced the tenets of spiritualism.

The very opposite was the case. He felt too assured of his agnostic position, and too pugnacious in maintaining it, to surrender at once to facts however inexplicable these facts might appear to be. He waited, availing himself of any psychic experience that came his way. He continued to read and study. One book in later years made a profound impression on his mind, *Human Personality*, by F. H. W. Myers. Myers was one of the finest classical scholars of his day, and a poet of considerable eminence. Conan Doyle regards this book as being one of the "Root books" that have been written. He classes it with the *Novum Organum* and *The Origin of Species*. These studies were continued for upwards of thirty years before he took the final step that was to determine his destiny. It was therefore pardonable on his part that in after years he spoke with some measure of bitterness of those who considered themselves competent to denounce spiritualism, and who had never given a serious half-hour to the investigation of the subject.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOUTH NORWOOD PERIOD, 1890-93

WITH that handkerchief tossed to the ceiling went all Conan Doyle's expectations of earning a livelihood from the practice of medicine. Sir Walter Besant was ever chary of young authors abandoning too rashly a sure means of income for literature with its somewhat uncertain rewards. However, in Conan Doyle's case there was no income from his eye patients, and a rent of £120 each year had to be met. This doubtless made the break easier. At various periods of his career we find these breaks in which he seemed to rise on the "stepping stones" of a dead past to a higher realisation of life and its possibilities.

Southsea was now far behind him. He was thirty-one years of age. He had read widely and systematically, and was conscious of a sudden expansion of literary power. He had already produced many short stories, bringing in the welcome cheques for £10 or £20, but he longed to see his more elaborate volumes in a published form. One of these books, *Micah Clarke*, had gone the round of the publishing houses, returning periodically to Southsea for a "breath of country air." Finally, it passed into the hands of Andrew Lang—

"Andrew of the brindled hair," as Stevenson called him—who discovered its merits. It was published in 1889. It shows the breadth of Conan Doyle's mind that this book is devoted mainly to a vindication of the Puritan rising that took place in the West of England in 1685. He recognised that Puritanism had been a powerful factor in moulding our national destiny. As a piece of descriptive writing the battle of Sedgemoor can hardly be surpassed, and in Micah Clarke we have revealed the same chivalrous spirit that makes our author's heroes so attractive. There is one of the characters, "Ironside Joe," who brooded over approaching disasters, and whose monologues are reported. When I reminded Sir Arthur of this character whose forebodings had to a large extent anticipated his own, he laughed and said :

"When I wrote these words I little dreamed that one day they would approach so near to my own convictions. But Time brings its own revenges."

The Refugees, which was written at this period, is one of his most remarkable productions. Like *Micah Clarke*, in which he champions the Puritans in England, in *The Refugees* he champions the Huguenots, who were the Puritans of France. One of the most vivid representations of the court of Louis XIV is to be found in Part I of *The Refugees*. The fall of Madame de Montespan is powerfully depicted, and the rise of her rival, Madame de Maintenon, who became the wife of Louis XIV, and through whose influence the final expulsion of

the Huguenots from France took place, is graphically told. Indeed, the interest of the reader is so centred in the court at Versailles that the complete transition in the second part of the book to the forts and woods of Canada, whilst it forms the acme of contrast, is rather a disillusionment. But the real meaning of the book is to show that the violent measures adopted by the Catholic Church to penalise all who questioned the authority of the Church was to drive hundreds of thousands of the best citizens of France from beyond her borders. In this book, as in *Micah Clarke*, two of his earliest productions, Conan Doyle is revealed as the champion of the weak against the strong. The men and women who followed the Duke of Monmouth in the abortive rising in the West of England, and who became in after-years the victims of Judge Jeffreys, were the counterpart in thought and action of the Huguenots who sought refuge in England and other countries.

The White Company was accepted by James Payne as the serial story for *The Cornhill Magazine*. He read during a whole year the books relating to the period of Edward III—a period in English history which he regarded as the real beginning of the English nation. This was the period above all others that he loved to depict. The archer, with his dare-devil love of adventure, and Sir Nigel Loring, who was always hankering after “a small feat of arms,” with Hordle John and others, give ample scope for his descriptive powers. The story opens at Beaulieu Abbey in the New Forest, and is speedily

transferred to France, where in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the ardent spirits alike of England and Scotland sought fame and fortune. It was at this period the Hundred Years' War began, and the heroic du Guesclin appears in the narrative. Du Guesclin anticipated to some extent the extraordinary martial feats accomplished later by Joan of Arc. This tale has always been a favourite and is now in its fiftieth edition.

Micah Clarke and *The White Company* always retained a foremost place in Sir Arthur's affections. They were the first-fruits of his early literary activity and laid the foundations of his fame. How diligent a worker he proved himself to be is borne out by the fact that at his death he left to posterity upwards of fifty books, many of them being large volumes.

Sherlock Holmes first appeared in *The Strand Magazine* in the July number of 1891. The story was entitled *A Scandal in Bohemia*, which the author ever regarded as being one of his best efforts. The Editor of *The Strand*, Mr. Greenhough Smith, of whom Sir Arthur ever spoke in terms of gratitude and affection, at once recognised the merits of the story. To quote the Editor's own words :

"*The Strand Magazine* was in its infancy in those days : good story writers were scarce, and here, to an editor jaded with wading through reams of impossible stuff, comes a gift from Heaven, a god-send in the shape of a story that brought a gleam of happiness into the despairing life of this weary editor. Here was a new and gifted story-writer :

there was no mistaking the ingenuity of the plot, the limpid clearness of the style, the perfect art of telling a story."

Thus began the association of Conan Doyle with *The Strand*, which continued until he himself passed beyond the limits of this material sphere. No more gracious tribute was paid to his memory than by the Editor of *The Strand*. The Editor was so pleased with this first contribution that he suggested a series, and the series continued with results known to everyone. *The Strand* and Sherlock Holmes became synonymous; and the monthly publication of the magazine became an event that was awaited by the reading public with impatience. When the magazine did appear, Sherlock Holmes would have a new story for his readers, a new problem to solve, and as in all chess problems the clue is carefully concealed, so in all the various plots with which Sherlock was confronted the reader is sent off on a false track and the *dénouement* becomes a surprise. Sherlock made railway journeys a delight, and his fame speedily went forth into all the world. The names of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson have become household words; and such an achievement might well have satisfied the ambition of any author. But strange to say, Conan Doyle became tired of Sherlock and resolved to bury him even if at the same time "he buried his bank book with him." He always maintained that had he never touched detective stories he would have occupied a higher

place in the literary world. This may be true, but on this strange planet "bank books" are often useful, and the rewards of the higher literature, as John Milton experienced, and as Conan Doyle himself was to experience, are not always immediately apparent. It cannot be overlooked that Sherlock Holmes owed a good deal to the late Sidney Paget, who drew his likeness for *The Strand*. The powerful forehead and scrutinising gaze of the amateur detective are familiar to everyone. What Phiz had done for Pickwick, Sidney Paget did for Sherlock Holmes.

In later years one of his Sherlock Holmes stories, *The Speckled Band*, was dramatised, William Gillette being entrusted with the leading part. This proved a complete success alike in this country and in the United States.

Among many friendships he formed at this period, there was none that he cherished more deeply than the friendship with James M. Barrie. In *Margaret Ogilvy* Sir James tells us how his mother in Kirriemuir was often concerned lest her son in London might be sleeping o' nights on the iron chairs of Hyde Park, but in 1892 all such anxieties were at an end. Not only had Barrie become an author of acknowledged eminence, but as a dramatist he was well on the highway to fame. Conan Doyle always held that Barrie's success as a dramatist has deprived the modern world of some of the finest books in our language. He never ceased to admire the clarity and beauty of Barrie's style and the contagious

humour that is his abiding charm. Besides, their common interest in cricket brought them together in many ways.

Barrie had undertaken to write the libretto for a comic opera *Jane Annie*. But running short of rhymes, he appealed to his friend Doyle, as having the rhyming faculty fairly well developed, to come to his aid. Between them the libretto was finished and the opera was staged. The public took no interest in this comic opera. It was ruinous for everyone concerned. Conan Doyle was not so much distressed on his own account as for those who were engaged in the performance, and those who were responsible for the production. It was while in this despondent mood that he received the following communication, inscribed in one of his volumes, from the imperturbable Barrie :

"THE ADVENTURE OF TWO COLLABORATORS

"In bringing to a close the adventures of my friend Sherlock Holmes, I am perforce reminded that he never, save on the occasion which, as you will now hear, brought his singular career to an end, consented to act in any mystery which was concerned with persons who made their livelihood by their pen. 'I am not particular about the people I mix among for business purposes,' he would say, 'but at literary characters I draw the line.'

"We were in our rooms in Baker Street one evening. I was (I remember) by the centre of the

table writing out '*The Adventures of the Man without a Cork Leg*' (which had so puzzled the Royal Society and all the other scientific bodies of Europe), and Holmes was amusing himself with a little revolver practice. It was his custom of a summer evening to fire round my head, just shaving my face, until he had made a photograph of me on the opposite wall, and it is a slight proof of his skill that many of these portraits in pistol shots are considered admirable likenesses.

"I happened to look out of the window, and perceiving two gentlemen advancing rapidly along Baker Street, asked him who they were. He immediately lit his pipe, and twisting himself on a chair into the figure 8 replied :

" 'They are two collaborators in comic opera, and their play has not been a triumph.'

"I sprang up from my chair to the ceiling in amazement, and he then explained :

" 'My dear Watson, they are obviously men who follow some low calling, that much you should be able to read in their faces. Those little pieces of blue paper which they fling angrily from them are Durrant's Press Notices. Of these they have obviously hundreds about their person (see how their pockets bulge). They would not dance on them if they were pleasant reading.'

"I again sprang to the ceiling (which is much dented), and shouted : 'Amazing ! but they may be mere authors.'

" 'No,' said Holmes, 'for mere authors only get

one press notice a week. Only criminals, dramatists and actors get them by the hundred.'

" 'Then they may be actors.'

" 'No ; actors would come in a carriage.'

" 'Can you tell me anything else about them ?'

" 'A great deal. From the mud on the boots of the tall one I perceive that he comes from South Norwood. The other is obviously a Scotch author.'

" 'How can you tell that ?'

" 'He is carrying in his pocket a book called (I clearly see "Auld Licht Something"). Would anyone but an author be likely to carry a book with such a title ?'

"I had to confess that this was improbable. It was now evident that the two men (if such they can be called) were seeking our lodgings. I have said (often) that my friend Holmes seldom gave way to emotion of any kind, but he now turned livid with passion. Presently this gave place to a strange look of triumph.

" 'Watson,' he said, 'that big fellow has for years taken the credit for my most remarkable doings, but at last I have him—at last.'

"Up I went to the ceiling, and when I returned the strangers were in the room.

" 'I perceive, gentlemen,' said Mr. Sherlock Holmes, 'that you are at present afflicted with an extraordinary novelty.'

"The handsomer of our visitors asked in amazement how he knew this, but the big one scowled.

“ ‘ You forget that you wear a ring on your fourth finger,’ replied Holmes calmly.

“ ‘ I was about to jump to the ceiling when the big brute interposed.

“ ‘ That Tommy-rot is all very well for the public, Holmes,’ said he, ‘ but you can drop it before me. And, Watson, if you go up to the ceiling again I shall make you stay there.’

“ ‘ Here I observed a curious phenomenon. My friend Sherlock Holmes *sbrank*. He became small before my eyes. I looked longingly at the ceiling, but dared not.

“ ‘ Let us cut out the first four pages,’ said the big man, and proceed to business. ‘ I want to know why——’

“ ‘ Allow me,’ said Mr. Holmes, with some of his old courage. ‘ You want to know why the public does not go to your opera.’

“ ‘ Exactly,’ said the other ironically, ‘ as you can perceive by my shirt stud.’ He added more gravely, ‘ And as you can only find out in one way, I must insist on your witnessing an entire programme of the piece.’

“ ‘ It was an anxious moment for me. I shuddered, for I knew that if Holmes went, I should have to go with him. But my friend had a heart of gold. ‘ Never,’ he cried fiercely ; ‘ I will do anything for you save that.’

“ ‘ Your continued existence depends on it,’ said the big man menacingly.

“ ‘ I would rather melt into air,’ replied Holmes,

proudly taking another chair. 'But I can tell you why the public don't go to your piece without sitting the thing out myself.'

" 'Why?'

" 'Because,' replied Holmes calmly, 'they prefer to stay away.'

"A dead silence followed that extraordinary remark. For a moment the two intruders gazed with awe upon the man who had unravelled their mystery so wonderfully. Then, drawing their knives——

"Holmes grew less and less, until nothing more was left save a ring of smoke which slowly circled to the ceiling.

"The last words of great men are often noteworthy. These were the last words of Sherlock Holmes: 'Fool, fool! I have kept you in luxury for years. By my help you have ridden extensively in cabs, where no author was ever seen before. *Henceforth you will ride in buses!*'

"The brute sank into his chair aghast.

"The other author did not turn a hair.

"To A. Conan Doyle,

"From his friend,

"J. M. BARRIE."

In his address as Rector to the students of St. Andrews, Barrie took Courage for his subject. Certainly he, of all authors, has seldom had cause to mourn over literary failures, and this parody on Sherlock Holmes reveals the spirit with which he

regarded the disaster that had overtaken his *Jane Annie*.

At South Norwood Conan Doyle made a careful study of the Battle of Waterloo, and embodied it in his Scottish idyll of *The Great Shadow*, a book that he himself regards as one of his best efforts. Out of the materials he had gathered regarding that battle he developed a sketch for the stage, a one-act play entitled *A Straggler of '15*, in which Corporal Gregory Brewster narrates his experiences. He sent this sketch to Sir Henry Irving, who at once accepted it and sent the author a cheque for £100. The sketch became one of Irving's most popular pieces, and it is characteristic of Irving's magnanimity that for every representation of the piece he sent the author a guinea.

It was at this period that he met Mr. A. P. Watt, whom he ever regarded as the king of literary agents. He made over to Mr. Watt the management of his literary and dramatic ventures, and this saved the author all unnecessary haggling about prices, and prevented him selling valuable manuscripts for a mere song. His indebtedness to Mr. Watt he ever acknowledged in generous terms.

During the last three years that were spent at Southsea and the three years spent at South Norwood the foundations of his fame were laid. The Arthur Conan Doyle known to the reading public throughout the world was developed during that period. *The Strand* and Sherlock Holmes had become a national institution. Wherever Irving

appeared with his Corporal from Waterloo the name of Conan Doyle was carried to an ever-widening public. He certainly did far more solid work in after years; it may be questioned if he ever did more brilliant work. Dickens never produced a second *Pickwick*. *Pickwick* was the creation of his early manhood. The same is true of Conan Doyle. There is a freshness, a definiteness of touch in these early writings that he never bettered, although in *The Lost World* and other books he broke entirely new ground.

As a consequence of his ever-widening reputation he was a welcome guest in the literary circles of London. His correspondence at this period includes letters from his contemporary authors—Sir Walter Besant, Hall Caine, Barrie, Rider Haggard, George Meredith, Jerome K. Jerome, George Bernard Shaw, Anthony Hope and many others. How in the midst of his multifarious engagements he was able to maintain so wide a correspondence is difficult to explain, more difficult is it to account for the proficiency he attained in so many different forms of sport. He was always a keen cricketer, and alike in cricket and in billiards, he reached so high a standard that in later years he held a place in the foremost ranks.

One other great joy his literary success brought him. He was now able, in some measure, to compensate his mother for the many sacrifices she had made on behalf of his education. He was really the head of the family. His mother left Edinburgh

to be nearer her gifted son. She lived at East Grinstead, and died in 1920. His sisters and his younger brother became his especial care. Connie lived under his roof at South Norwood, and married E. W. Hornung, a rising author. Lottie afterwards accompanied him in his continental travels, and Innes, who, as a boy, shared his privations at Southsea, likewise shared in a measure the joys of his days of affluence and comfort.

It was in this gay and happy period that the blow fell which led to the complete break up of his home in South Norwood. His wife became ill, and it was discovered she was suffering from tuberculosis in its most threatening form. It became imperative that she should leave the damp and fogs of England and seek refuge in a climate more favourable to her constitution. And thus began three years of wandering in her search for health on which so great a part of our earthly happiness depends. The home at South Norwood was abandoned, and the wanderers sought refuge in Switzerland.

CHAPTER V

THE WANDERINGS THAT LED TO A "CONSIDERABLE MANSION"

It was at Davos that Dr. Conan Doyle and his wife settled with their children and other members of his family circle. His sister Lottie was with him for a time.

He had been busy, since the first appearance of Sherlock Holmes in *The Strand*, in devising fresh plots for him. He foresaw, however, that for a time he could not always provide the necessary plots, and resolved to give Sherlock a rest. It was in Switzerland that he came on the falls of Reichenbach, spanned by a bridge, and in the depths of the chasm formed by the falls he thought that a fitting resting-place could be found for Sherlock during several years. In the desperate combat with Professor Moriarty at the end of the walk Sherlock was believed to have disappeared into the chasm. The general assumption on the part of the reading public was that Sherlock was dead. In reality he was only laid on the shelf. A series of abusive letters reached the author from various members of his reading public, who were enraged at the loss of their favourite. Some of these were from ladies who had contemplated a possible marriage with

Sherlock, and even Dr. Watson in this respect did not escape their attentions. We will learn later that Sherlock came back to life when his presence was again required.

At Davos Conan Doyle was attracted by the ordinary sports of the place. It is somewhat remarkable that he was the man who introduced ski-ing into Switzerland. He had read of Nansen crossing Greenland on skis. If ski-ing was possible in Greenland, it appeared to him to be equally possible in Switzerland. And hence through his instrumentality this sport became an institution in the land where he had found shelter.

In 1894 he was induced to undertake a lecturing tour in the United States with Major Pond as his impresario. It was during this tour that he had his first glimpse of the States, which he was to know so much better in later years. The tour was quite successful, but the financial results did not quite equal what he could have earned by his pen—more especially as he was induced to deposit £1,000 of his earnings with a Mr. McClure, the proprietor of *McClure's Magazine*. He took shares in the magazine to this amount, and this turned out well enough in the end and was a distinct financial help to Mr. McClure at the time. But he returned to Switzerland not much richer than when he went away, and the experiment was not repeated.

It was at Davos, amidst the snow and ice, that he began his series of Brigadier Gerard's stories, founded upon the "Memoirs of General Marbot."

It would be difficult to say what is Conan Doyle's best literary effort. The general verdict would be his Sherlock Holmes stories. But it can be stated with assurance that no one knows his versatility in narrative or his deep insight into the conditions that prevailed during the Napoleonic wars who has not read these exploits of the Brigadier, so different in their treatment, and so informative as regards the national conditions that prevailed throughout Europe during that long and trying period. The pardonable egotism of the Brigadier with his undoubted heroism are faithfully depicted; and whilst the majority of the stories deal with incidents of a blood-curdling character, there are occasional incidents in which humour is the predominant feature. This is especially true of *How the Brigadier killed the Fox*—his unpardonable sin in the eyes of the English huntsmen. It is in this respect that Conan Doyle differs so essentially from Edgar Allan Poe. It is admitted by all competent authorities that Edgar Allan Poe was one of the great story-tellers of the world. That may be so. Poe had no admirer more devoted to his memory than Arthur Conan Doyle, but there was one serious defect on the part of Poe. He had no humour, not a trace of it. With his power of analysis and marvellous delineation of character he can hold the attention of the reader, but he lacks the lighter touch which arises out of the humorous perception of the realities of life. It is this humorous perception that we find in the tales of the

Brigadier that invests them with a fascination of their own, and which is more fully unfolded in the author's extended writings.

In one of his brief journeys to England from Davos he met Mr. Grant Allen, who assured him that at Hindhead, in Surrey, it was possible for one with a tendency to consumption to live in comfort. This knowledge was greatly prized by him, for his wife's health had become greatly improved, and he longed to be back in his own country. He gave instructions to Mr. Ball, the architect in Southsea with whom he had carried on his first telepathic experiments, to prepare for him the plan of a "considerable mansion" at Hindhead. It was this house that was being built during the latter part of 1895 and continued throughout 1896. This "considerable mansion" indicates a distinct change in his financial position as compared with the early years in Southsea, when he swept his own doorstep, for he was never the man to live beyond his income, or, like Scott at Abbotsford, to build himself outside his own residence.

In Switzerland he found his wife so much better that they were able to journey southwards through Italy, arriving in Egypt towards the end of 1895. The hospitable doors of the English people in Cairo were immediately thrown open to them on their arrival. For several months they lived in the Mena Hotel under the shadow of the Pyramids. The Pyramids do not appear to have impressed him greatly. It was the desert that attracted him, that

endless desert that stretches out on every side of Cairo, and which awakens in the mind the conception of infinity and desolation. He made frequent incursions into the desert, courting adventure and not always escaping scathless. More than once his life was in imminent danger, and on one occasion he was thrown from his horse, with the result that the horse trod on his head, and the wound when dressed required four stitches. The wound might easily have been much more serious.

At this period life in Cairo was rich in interest. Lord Cromer was the British representative and Kitchener was preparing to reach Khartoum. There were frequent outbreaks on the part of the Mahdi and his followers. Many distinguished soldiers were drifting up and down the Nile. It was a period of frenzied anxiety, no one knowing exactly what was to happen. Conan Doyle had been away on a long journey to some out-of-the-way monastery, for he loved to camp beneath the stars, and to meet those extraordinary beings that are the product of the desert. When he returned to Cairo it was to learn that war had been declared and that our army was advancing on Dongola. He at once took steps to become attached to some newspaper as war correspondent. Many of the London newspapers had their correspondents already on the spot, but he was fortunate enough to secure a position as the representative of the *Westminster Gazette*. This brought him into immediate contact with the war correspondents from London. One

of them, Herbert Gwynne, became in after years the Editor of the *Morning Post*. It was this "rubbing shoulders" with these men and sharing their dangers on the banks of the Nile that rendered them more accessible to him in after years, when he became the eager propagandist of Spiritualism. No one has done more personally to break down the antagonism of the press towards all forms of psychic investigation than Arthur Conan Doyle, and this was due not only to his eminence as an author, but to the fact that in Egypt and later in the Boer War he met personally the leading pressmen of his day and shared their common dangers.

As the spring advanced the heat became more intense, and the health of his wife at Cairo called for his immediate return. His experience as war correspondent suddenly terminated. He was assured by Kitchener himself that there was no immediate prospect of any battle. He returned with his wife to England, and after a brief interval they settled in their new home of Undershaw, Hindhead, and here for some years he continued his literary labours, taking full advantage of the country sports that were within his reach. He was always a full-blooded man for whom life had ever a rich zest and to whom the open air and the far-spreading fields were an abiding joy. It was the super-abounding energy with which he was endowed that had to find some fitting outlet. In the memorial notice of him that appeared in *The Strand* the Editor depicts this aspect of his character :

"He lived and enjoyed life to the full. In his younger days he had some reputation as a cricketer, a boxer, a golfer, and he was a great lover of outdoor life. Just to illustrate this last point, I remember once, when I was spending a few days with him at his house in Hindhead, as the party was sitting round the hall after dinner, the wild wind suddenly drove a thick spatter of rain against the window. 'Hullo!' exclaimed our host, 'rain! I should like to go for a stroll in this.' I thought he was joking; nothing could to me have been less tempting than a tramp across the downs in such a tempest. But no, not at all. Recruiting a younger member of the party, out they started, in caps and water-proofs, across the stormy hills. An hour or so afterwards they reappeared, rosy, laughing and dripping at every angle, like Neptune rising from the sea. When they had rid themselves of these 'dank weeds' we proceeded to the billiard room, where his opponent (myself, alas!), having scored a couple of points by the assistance of a fluke, he proceeded to run out with a break of a hundred. Truly such versatility has an annoying side to it sometimes."

It was this "versatility" that surprised his many friends who knew and loved him best. In one sense he had very much "arrived." His reputation was widening every year, his income from his various writings steadily increasing, he was the owner of a "considerable mansion," his wife's health had improved, his son and daughter were growing up beside him, his friends were ever multiplying, and his love of outdoor exercise and of

field sports had abundant gratification. The endless beautiful roads deviating from Hindhead invited him to indulge in horseback exercise, and he was near enough London to take his place at Lord's in cricket when the occasion served. His place in the cricket world is indicated by the records¹ of the games in which he took part, one of which is

¹ The position of Sir Arthur as a cricketer can best be indicated by a reference to one of the matches between the M.C.C. v. Hampstead, played on 6th June, 1907, at Lord's Ground :

HAMPSTEAD

1. F. R. D. Monro, b. King	.	.	.	.	0
2. J. Armitage, c. & b. Coleman	.	.	.	.	4
3. C. G. Dumbleton, c. Smith, b. Coleman	.	.	.	.	5
4. G. S. A. Hickson, c. Russell, b. King	.	.	.	.	7
5. B. S. Foster, c. King, b. Coleman	.	.	.	.	35
6. G. Crosdale, b. Coleman	.	.	.	.	9
7. F. W. Orr, b. King	.	.	.	.	14
8. E. L. Marsden, b. Coleman	.	.	.	.	1
9. Dr. Ingram, b. King	.	.	.	.	1
10. R. Spilsbury, not out	.	.	.	.	1
11. S. S. Pawling, c. Doyle, b. Coleman	.	.	.	.	1
					<hr/>
					84

M.C.C.

1. Captain E. G. Wynward, c. Ingram, b. Foster	.	.	.	.	32
5. Hon. R. S. Beresford, b. Marsden	.	.	.	.	26
8. E. H. Crake, b. Foster	.	.	.	.	3
7. Arthur Butcher, b. Pawling	.	.	.	.	26
4. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, b. Foster	.	.	.	.	35
10. King, l.b.w., b. Marsden	.	.	.	.	3
6. A. E. Wood, b. Pawling	.	.	.	.	4
2. Captain Colin Macrae, b. Spilsbury	.	.	.	.	1
3. L. Dudley Smith, b. Spilsbury	.	.	.	.	9
11. Coleman, b. Hickson	.	.	.	.	12
9. Russell, not out	.	.	.	.	21
					<hr/>
Total					180

B. 13, l.b. 8 w.

herewith subjoined, whilst in billiards he was the runner-up in the amateur billiard championship. Truly his "versatility" in these years was a cause for wonder, and if he had been anyone else than Conan Doyle there is no reason why he should not have grown old with the years, and been content, like so many other men, with a steadily increasing bank balance. But a very different future was reserved for him, a future of which at that period he had only the faintest glimpses.

Meanwhile, he completed a book that had been suggested by an experience on the banks of the Nile, *The Tragedy of Korosko*, which many readers regard as the high-water mark of his literary productivity. In this book his aim was to defend the position of Great Britain in Egypt. At that period French opinion was extremely sensitive on the subject. The book is in his best vein. He reproduces the atmosphere of the desert, and the conditions of travel under which his little company of tourists met with disaster. His main purpose was to prove the need of some strong hand in Egypt to repress the deeds of violence that were too common. His minor purpose was to show that it is good for people accustomed to four meals per day to be at times shaken out of themselves, and made to face the stern realities of life. This book was afterwards adapted for the stage under the title of *The Fires of Fate*.

Among other books that appeared at this time was *Rodney Stone*, which was written as a serial for



IN THE BILLIARD-ROOM AT WINDLESHAM.

Wheeler, Fisk-Moore Ltd.

The Strand. George Newnes was rather surprised when he learned that the hero was to be a prize-fighter. However, the circulation of *The Strand* did not suffer. It was the fighting instinct in Conan Doyle that constrained him to write this book. It was the same fighting instinct that constrained him in later years to fight a very different class of opponents.

To this period belongs the production of *Uncle Bernac* and *The Duet*. *Uncle Bernac* contains a love story which is rather thin. Why the book was ever called *Uncle Bernac* does not clearly appear, for Uncle Bernac had very little to do with it. But the book is valuable because it contains a character study of Napoleon at the period when he was meditating an invasion of Britain and had assembled an army near Boulogne. It is said of some paintings that the character seems ready to step out from the canvas. It can be said that the living Napoleon seems to walk out from the pages of this book. I ventured to congratulate Sir Arthur on that piece of writing.

"These chapters on Napoleon," he answered quietly, "contain the essence of twenty volumes I read on the subject," bearing out what has already been stated, that every one of his books was written with some special object in view, and that with regard to the main purpose of the book he took infinite pains. *The Duet* is a domestic study revealing a knowledge of millinery and household cookery that is rather surprising. It forms a

striking contrast to many of his other volumes by its quiet simplicity and in the delineation of the difficulties which many newly married couples must necessarily encounter. It was in these years that Carlyle and Emerson were his teachers, and when the negative attitude of the agnostics was beginning to pall upon him. He regarded Carlyle and Emerson as being as truly inspired as the ancient prophets, and hence one of the chapters describes a visit to the seer's home in Chelsea. This book occasioned a sharp controversy between himself and Robertson Nicol, who took exception to the teaching in some sections. The love letters with which the book opens might serve as models for young people who contemplate matrimony. His maxims on marriage might be profitably pondered, and are certainly valuable as being the teaching of one who was so happy in his domestic relationships. But the years were gliding past, and were bringing for Conan Doyle very different subjects for study than the more recent adaptations of chiffon and crêpe de Chine for ladies' costumes and the more recent recipes for various dishes that had been discovered by the wonderful Mrs. Beeton.

Through all these years he retained his interest in psychic studies. He visited a haunted house with Podmore, seeking to unravel the mystery. At the same time he was a diligent student of Rationalistic literature. He declares that there were periods in his life when he would have willingly accepted some form of religious faith, but to use his own words,

"he could no more get into the old religious formulas than a man could get into a boy's suit." And so the struggle went on. If his psychic researches indicated that there was a spiritual world and that spiritual intelligences could influence in some measure the men and women living in this outward material world, then the Rationalists were completely wrong in ignoring what to him was a fundamental fact.

In the midst of these enquiries and speculations the Boer War took place. That which seemed so important at the time sinks into insignificance when compared with the war of 1914-18. But the opening of the Boer War brought with it dark weeks for Britain, and grave anxiety as to the future. There was even considerable hesitation on the part of eminent men as to the justice of the war, and among these Lloyd George and W. T. Stead found a place. The issue may be briefly stated. The Boers of Dutch descent had migrated from Cape Colony to the Transvaal in order to avoid further friction with the English settlers in Cape Colony. Following the wagons in that long trek was a little boy named Paul Krüger, who in his manhood became the chief ruling authority in the Transvaal. He never forgot the sufferings of his parents or of himself in these early years. But in the Transvaal they were beyond the reach of the hated British administration. In the seventies the mines of Johannesburg became the greatest gold-mining centre in the world. Thousands of English and

American settlers hastened to Johannesburg. Friction again arose in various ways, and was accentuated by the fact that, whilst paying taxes and contributing a considerable revenue to the Transvaal exchequer, these Outlanders, as they were called, had no votes and consequently no voice in the Government. It was a case of taxation without representation. This led to the abortive Jameson raid that focussed attention upon the Transvaal.

There had been battles on a diminutive scale at Laing's Nek and Majuba Hill, in which the Boers were victorious. Mr. Gladstone at the time refused to take up the gauntlet against what was thought to be a few Boer farmers in a distant and outlying colony. His magnanimity was misunderstood, and gradually a sentiment was fostered to oust Great Britain from the whole of South Africa. A Dr. Leyds was the outstanding propagandist of this policy. Attempts were made by Sir Alfred Milner to bring President Krüger and his colleagues to reason, but Krüger remained inflexible. The cartoons in *Punch* of that period vividly depict the situation. To the astonishment of everybody, in the midst of these deliberations the Boer Government declared war, and it became evident from subsequent events that the Boers had been preparing for war during many years under the able guidance of German officers. What surprised our generals and the people at home was the fact that the Boers were in possession of powerful guns that far outdistanced our own available artillery. Many brave

men fell in the early weeks of the war—General Penn Symons at the battle of Talana Hill, Lord Roberts's only son at Colenso, General Wauchope at Magersfontein, until the lists of killed and wounded became alarming. It was practically at the end of the war that Lord Airlie fell at Diamond Hill. There can now be no doubt that what was decided by the Boer War was the position of Great Britain in South Africa.

Conan Doyle was ever a patriot. He stood by his country. He saw a good many things alike in politics and in the religious activities of the nation that he keenly desired to change, but when it was his country that was in danger he was promptly at his post. Mr. A. Langman had organised a hospital at Bloemfontein, and Conan Doyle joined this group as Honorary Senior Physician, where he proved himself to be the friend and helper of every soldier within his reach. The Orange Free State had joined the Transvaal in the war, which not only increased the difficulties of the British Army fighting at so great a distance from their base, but prolonged the duration of the war.

It was on the battlefields of the Free State and the Transvaal that he again met the representatives of the London Press that he had encountered four years before on the banks of the Nile. His work at Bloemfontein resulted in the book *The Great Boer War* to distinguish it from the lesser wars of the eighties. In this book his descriptive powers have free play, and the reader, within a comparatively

small compass, has a complete view of the various operations from the beginning of the war at Talana Hill until the triumphant entry of Roberts into Pretoria. We regard this book as one of his finest efforts as an historian, and it has the advantage that the descriptions of many of the battles depicted in its pages were the results of interviews with eye-witnesses.

There was another side to the question that interested him profoundly. The antagonism towards Britain's action in the war was not only fomented by eminent publicists at home, but by the foreign press. In Germany especially the feeling was strong that Great Britain, with her vast resources, had taken advantage of a group of small struggling farmers for the sake of the gold mines at Johannesburg. The Kaiser's telegram to President Krüger on the occasion of the Jameson raid is still remembered. It was some meeting of protest held on the Rhine that directed Conan Doyle's attention to this world-wide misunderstanding. He at once wrote a pamphlet, *The South African War*, setting forth the case for Great Britain. With the help of some friends this pamphlet was widely distributed. Three hundred thousand copies were circulated in the home country, 50,000 in Canada and the United States, whilst well-nigh 100,000 copies were distributed throughout the various countries of Europe. The difficulties attendant on the translation of the pamphlet into the various European languages involved him in a vast labour. At that

period he was working sixteen hours each day. The letters poured in upon him from every quarter, rising in one instance to 129 letters for one day's mail. But finally this gratuitous work was accomplished. He did not receive one penny for his efforts. Any profits arising from the sale of the pamphlet went into the Distribution Fund. He was really a loser in the transaction. But the labour involved was its own reward. "I have simply done what I conceived to be my duty," he said. "I have fought for what I believe to be the cause of justice and truth, and I am well paid when I find that I have convinced many opponents that the cause of England is a just one. If so many brave men have given their blood for their country, it is a small thing that I should give a little ink."

CHAPTER VI

HE ENTERS THE POLITICAL ARENA

ONE would have thought that the writing of his book, *The Great Boer War* (my copy bears the date 1900), his labours in the hospital at Bloemfontein, and his wanderings over the Transvaal would have been sufficient to exhaust his energies. He had scarcely arrived in London at the end of 1900 when he came forward as a candidate in the Liberal-Unionist interest for South Edinburgh. This was his first entry into politics. He felt keenly about the war, and he was determined to uphold the faith that was in him. "Bob Cranston," as he was called, who afterwards became Sir Robert Cranston, was the chairman of his Committee. He was supported by his old teacher, Dr. Joseph Bell (the prototype of Sherlock Holmes), and other eminent citizens. A Mr. Brown, a member of the Nelson firm of publishers, who had large public works in the district, was his opponent. He made a brave fight and was on the verge of winning, when the Rev. Jacob Primmer (the Kensit of Scotland), on the night before the polling day, plastered the whole constituency with bills announcing that Conan Doyle was born a Roman Catholic, that he had been educated by the Jesuits, etc., and that in returning

him to Parliament the electors would probably be returning a man endowed with Jesuitical tendencies. It was cruel, but not one of the affirmations could be denied. It was Primmer's inferences that were wholly wrong. Primmer's attack turned the scale and he lost the election by a few hundred votes. He had, amidst all his writing, a "hankering" after a public life, feeling that he had some utterance to make on behalf of mankind. What that utterance was to be he did not at that period clearly discern.

He made one other effort to enter Parliament. He was a Tariff Reformer. The absurdity of our present fiscal system was clearly discerned by him. The Border Burghs (Hawick, Galashiels and Selkirk) had suffered severely by foreign competition. He thought there might be a chance during the depressed trade of the Burghs that the electors would reconsider the situation. The Hawick people made him, at the peril of his neck, take part in the "common riding." This is an equine Border festival which consists in riding the marches of the town. He had to address endless meetings and submit to hours of "heckling." In Scotland this heckling process has become a fine art. Some innocent-looking question is put forward, but it may prove a veritable pitfall for the unwary candidate. A man needs to be "all out" if he is to solicit the suffrages of a Scottish political constituency. Some incident may occur to convulse the audience, and then the candidate must be ready

to turn the incident to his own profit. His opponent at Hawick was "Tommy Shaw," as he was called, who afterwards became Lord Shaw. "Tommy Shaw" only put in *one* appearance at this election, so confident was he of retaining the seat. Conan Doyle lost the seat, not because his arguments were unsound, but because the Scottish people, if once they adopt a certain policy, will adhere to it to the bitter end. He might easily have stood as a candidate for some sure seat in Parliament, but such was the character of the man that he would not enter St. Stephen's unless after a hard-won contest, and having scored some notable victory for his party. He had a presentiment that it was not in the political field he was eventually to express himself. It was because he felt keenly about South Africa that he stood for South Edinburgh. It was because he saw that industry was unfairly handicapped by our Free Trade system that he stood as a Tariff Reformer for the Hawick Burghs. This second defeat seemed to quench his political aspirations. The Hawick Burghs returned him to the "bosom of his family," and there he continued to remain. But the Hawick Burghs contest was memorable for him in giving him experience in handling a hostile audience. A speaker who can survive an hour's "heckling" in a Border town could face an audience of the Furies even if they were headed by "Auld Nick himsel'."

His brother Innes, who was in the army, had come to lend a helping hand. He was so impressed

by Arthur's political addresses that he ventured to express the belief that his brother would find his true place in the political arena. "No," replied Arthur, "it will not be in politics."

"In what sphere will it be then?" asked Innes in surprise.

"It will be as a religious teacher," was the answer, so that even at that early date he had a glimpse, at least, of the years when his whole energy would be given to establish two vital propositions of far greater importance as regards the welfare of mankind than those controversies which occupy so large a space in the public press, and which are frequently as ephemeral as they are unimportant. A good long way, however, had still to be travelled before his definite calling became clear to his own mind. It is significant, however, that in the early years of the present century there was on his part the firm conviction that he had been sent into this world for a greater task than writing the *Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*.

It was shortly after the Boer War that he was knighted, alike for the high position he had attained in literature and for the eminent services he had rendered to his country. It so happened that in waiting to be admitted to the King's presence, the various recipients of the honours that had been decreed for them were cooped up in what he himself terms "funny little pens." It was in one of these pens that he first met Sir Oliver Lodge, who was being knighted the same morning (1902).

They at once entered on a discussion of psychic facts, and Sir Arthur (as we may now call him) discovered that Sir Oliver was more convinced than he was himself as to the real origin of the extraordinary phenomena they had both witnessed. It is well known that Professor Richet, the great French physiologist, has examined the phenomena and certified their reality in a large volume entitled, in the English translation by Stanley de Brath, *Thirty Years of Psychical Research*, but he still hesitates to accept the spiritual explanation, holding on to the possibility of some hidden powers of the human mind that have not been sufficiently investigated. This was practically the position of Sir Arthur in 1902. He was satisfied as to the reality of the phenomena, but he could only with a struggle abandon his previous position that death ended all. That there should exist a spiritual world all around us, and that we should in any way be influenced by the forces from that spiritual world, seemed to his mind to be asking too much—at least, before committing himself he would wait further proof.

It was in 1905 that the University of Edinburgh conferred upon him the degree of LL.D. ; and it may be stated in this connection that he was the means of instituting in that University a Bursary on behalf of the South African students—British and Boer alike. This arose out of a surplus that remained in his hands in connection with the sale of his South African War pamphlet, and the gifts

that had been made towards its distribution ; and he thought he could not better dispose of this surplus than by founding this Bursary at a cost of £1,000, which yielded £40 per annum. He always spoke of his *Alma Mater* in terms of affection. That *Alma Mater* left her own impress in many ways on the life of Arthur Conan Doyle.

He continued his writing, producing at that period what he regards as his best work, *Sir Nigel*. In this book he returned to the period of Edward III, and the doings of *The White Company*. Strange, the book produced little effect upon the public mind. Mark Twain supplied America for many years with humour, but when he gave his readers *Joan of Arc* (certainly not devoid of humour), his readers made a wry face. Many a man bought every book that Mark Twain had written except *Joan of Arc*. What in the world had Joan of Arc to do with humour ? Tragedy, true, but there was a long distance between *The Jumping Frog* and *Joan of Arc*. And yet Joan has had few better friends than Mark Twain. He it was who, above all others, introduced her to the American public. It was the same with Sir Arthur. He was duly labelled in the public mind as a master of the short story, as the writer of detective stories he had no equal, but as a serious historian, or as the author of a sustained novel, the public were unwilling to accept him. "Give us Sherlock Holmes !" they roared. And hence it was that Sherlock Holmes, after his supposed tragic

fall over the bridge at Reichenbach, had in some way to be resuscitated.

In 1906 his wife died after her long illness, which began in 1893. For thirteen years she had suffered more or less, but always with the buoyant optimism that characterises consumptive patients. Her physicians at one period had given her only a few months to live, but by care and in seeking the resorts favourable to her constitution she had lived to see her husband become one of the leading authors of his day, and to share the honours that were being bestowed upon him. He writes of her as being ever a loving and understanding companion. She had not hesitated to share his life as a struggling young doctor in Southsea, and it was under her inspiration that his first literary successes were achieved. During twenty-one years she had proved herself to be a loving helpmeet, and when the final outward separation came, the world for a time was empty for him.

It was during this dark period that he came forward to champion a young lawyer that he regarded as having been wrongly condemned by the Law Courts. This was the case of George Edalji, the son of a Parsee, Rev. S. Edalji, Vicar of Great Wyrley, in Staffordshire. How this Rev. S. Edalji, who was originally a Parsee, became vicar of an English parish is difficult to explain. The appointment caused considerable disaffection. A series of horse-maiming atrocities in the district

had taken place, and the Edalji family, who were disliked, became the object of anonymous and scurrilous letters. Finally, suspicion centred upon George Edalji, the son, as being the perpetrator of the atrocities. He was condemned at the Quarter Sessions to seven years' penal servitude. Three years of this sentence had expired before Sir Arthur's attention was called to the merits of the case. But when he had examined it he was satisfied that there had been a grave miscarriage of justice. This George Edalji was in the service of a legal firm in Birmingham. He had taken a high place in his various classes as a law student, he had received a certificate of excellent character from the legal firm that had employed him, there was no charge of any kind that had ever been lodged against him; and it seemed highly improbable to Sir Arthur that this man should have been guilty of maiming horses. This was the impression produced on his mind in reading a statement written by Edalji himself in a newspaper called *The Umpire*. This impression was deepened when he visited personally the scene of the atrocities, and interviewed the father and mother. He at once proceeded to write up the case in the columns of the *Daily Telegraph*, until a national interest was reawakened in the subject. Sir Arthur did not receive much encouragement on the part of the Government authorities, but he did succeed in getting the case reopened, with the result that the sentence was quashed. No compensation could be obtained for Edalji on account of the three

years' penal servitude he had innocently endured. However, a fund was started by the *Daily Telegraph*, and the sum of £300 was raised. This sum Edalji at once paid over to an aunt who had advanced the money for his defence.

As the result of his success in the Edalji case Sir Arthur was speedily involved in another that occupied his attention during eighteen years. This was the case of Oscar Slater, who was apprehended and charged with the murder of a Miss Gilchrist in her flat in Glasgow on the 21st December, 1908. This Miss Gilchrist had been fond of jewellery, and was reputed to have a good deal of jewellery in her possession. She had one maid, Helen Lambie, who had gone out for a newspaper in the evening, and during Helen Lambie's absence of ten minutes a man entered the flat and murdered Miss Gilchrist in a brutal manner, using some instrument similar to a hammer in the terrible deed. Miss Gilchrist had always a dread of burglars, and had arranged with her neighbour (a Mr. Adams), who lived immediately below her, that when she knocked loudly three times he was to come to her assistance. The three knocks were heard, and Mr. Adams, who was short-sighted, rushed upstairs without his glasses. Helen Lambie the maid returned at the same time, and when they rang for admittance and the door was opened, a man walked past them, but not knowing what had happened, it did not occur to either of them to examine the man too closely. When Mr. Adams and Helen Lambie entered the flat, it

was to discover Miss Gilchrist lying murdered on the floor, her head battered in by some blunt instrument similar to a hammer. A box containing documents had been opened and the contents scattered about. It was believed that a diamond brooch was missing. Beyond that there was no evidence that robbery had been the motive. The case caused great excitement throughout Scotland. That a peaceable living woman should be murdered in her flat in this brutal manner aroused a feeling of general indignation. Someone had to be apprehended, and justice meted out to him. A man had been seen leaving the flat immediately after the murder was committed. Who was that man? He had to be traced and brought to trial. Such was the public demand.

Oscar Slater at this period was living in Glasgow. He was a man known to the police as one who lived by his wits. It came to the knowledge of the police that he had pawned a diamond brooch, and for some special reason of his own he left Glasgow for Liverpool, where he embarked on a steamer for New York under an assumed name. The arrangements, however, for this voyage had been made weeks before the murder. His leaving Glasgow took place a few days after the murder of Miss Gilchrist. Suspicion was at once fixed upon him. He had pawned a diamond brooch, and this accentuated the suspicion. But it was subsequently discovered that this diamond brooch had been pawned in the month of September, three months

before the murder of Miss Gilchrist, so that the diamond brooch could not by any possibility have belonged to Miss Gilchrist. Oscar Slater's own statement was to the effect that the diamond brooch was his own property, and that he had pawned it in order to raise the money to pay for his passage to New York, that he had not left Glasgow in haste, that all his arrangements had been made for the voyage before the murder had been heard of, and that it was a mere coincidence that his departure for the States took place at that time. The reason he gave for taking an assumed name on the voyage was that he had lived under different names. He desired to begin a new life in the States, and to get quit of certain matrimonial obligations. The pawning of the diamond brooch in September was fatal to the case of the police, but, nevertheless, Slater was apprehended in New York on the arrival of the steamer in which he had sailed. He might have sheltered himself for a time under the laws of the United States, but so conscious was he of his innocence of any murder that he at once consented to return to Scotland. True, he was singled out from a body of men in New York by witnesses taken from Scotland—Helen Lambie, and a girl fourteen years of age of the name of Barrowman, who received £100 of the reward money, and who had been coached fifteen times as regards her evidence by the Procurator-Fiscal. But as the photograph of Slater had been circulated in the newspapers the evidence of Helen Lambie and this girl had little

value. Oscar Slater was brought to Calton prison in Edinburgh for his trial before the High Court.

I was at that period minister of Greenside Parish Church, Edinburgh, and held from 1908 to 1913 the chaplaincy in the Calton prison. Lord Balfour of Burleigh had introduced the system of some city minister holding the appointment for five years, and as the Calton prison was in Greenside parish, I applied for the position and was successful in obtaining it. The idea behind this system was that ministers of some experience should have the opportunity of dealing with the prisoners, and that they should only hold the appointment for a brief period in the belief that the "new broom sweeps clean." As the result of these five years in the Calton prison, Edinburgh, I received an insight into the darker phases of human life that was not only valuable to me as a clergyman, but was sufficient to convince me that some form of religion is absolutely imperative if the masses of our population are ever to be raised above the plane of animal desire.

It was through holding this prison chaplaincy that I was brought into immediate contact with Oscar Slater. He was at that period a young man of gentlemanly appearance. He had been well known in Edinburgh. He was, it was stated (during his residence in the city), frequently seen in Princes Street accompanied by two great dogs, and it was the difficulty of maintaining the position and bearing of a gentleman that brought him more than once into

trouble. This was the current gossip, whether true or false I cannot assert. But he had never been charged with any criminal offence. What I do remember, at a distance of more than twenty years, was my surprise in meeting this man and finding him, as I have stated, apparently a man of delicate tastes, and with a bearing that failed to harmonise with my conception of a murderer. Turning to me one day he said with great earnestness: "I have not been a good man, but as to this murder with which I am charged I know absolutely nothing about it. I did not even know the woman. I never heard of Miss Gilchrist in my life."

At last the trial took place. Lord Guthrie, whom I knew well, was the judge. He had great interest in the welfare of the prisoners, and on one occasion he visited the various wards with myself. I think it was Lord Mackenzie that accompanied him on that occasion. Mr. Ure, the Advocate-General, was prosecutor for the Crown. I did not attend the trial during the days that the evidence was being led, but moved by some strange impulse I did go to the Court during the afternoon when the Advocate-General, Mr. Ure, made the final speech for the prosecution. The speech of Mr. Ure (who afterwards became Lord Strathclyde) is for ever written on my mind. It was a masterpiece of eloquence. I had heard him once before in the General Assembly pleading in a Church case. The Hon. Charles Pearson, the Procurator for the Church, presented the view adopted by the Church

leaders, Mr. Ure followed with a speech on behalf of the appellants. Strange is the power of eloquence. I knew when he had sat down that he had won his case, as he did by a margin of a few votes. It was the same in the Slater case. Whether Mr. Ure believed that Oscar Slater committed the murder cannot now be known. He certainly spoke as if he did. He marshalled fact upon fact that he thought would impress the jury, with dramatic gestures he depicted the criminal rushing from the house with a hammer concealed under his coat—a hammer that had figured prominently in the trial. As I write I can see him now. He reserved his strength for the concluding charge, and when he sat down I felt instinctively that Slater would be condemned. There followed the speech in defence of Slater, and whilst the weak links in the evidence were emphasised, there was lacking the glowing periods and dramatic intensity that Mr. Ure had so readily at his command.

I listened with interest to the summing up by Lord Guthrie. It was due to some defects in this summing up of the case on Lord Guthrie's part that Oscar Slater's sentence was subsequently quashed. Lord Guthrie, at least, tried to be fair. I can remember one passage in his address. Turning to the jury he said, "Gentlemen, if you or I had gone to America under an assumed name, that would have been a suspicious circumstance. But that may have an entirely different meaning in the life of this man, Oscar Slater. We do not know who that man is.

We know that he is not Oscar Slater, and he may have had his own special reasons for going to America under an assumed name." The result of the trial was that Slater was condemned by a majority of the jury (nine being for guilty, five non-proven and one not guilty). In England that would have meant a new trial for Slater. In Scotland the verdict of the majority of a jury holds good.

The effect on Slater was overwhelming. In a long life I have witnessed many scenes of deep distress, but never have I seen anyone so completely convulsed with agony as Oscar Slater in his cell after the trial with the sentence of death resting over him. It was terrible. It is right that it should be known how great were the sufferings of this unhappy man, since it is now generally believed that he was innocent as regards the murder of Miss Gilchrist. I had always a dread whilst I was prison chaplain of having to be present at any execution. Even if Slater had been hanged, it would have been the Jewish Rabbi who would have officiated, for Slater is a Jew. But two days before the execution a reprieve reached the Governor, and Slater was sentenced to penal servitude for life. He passed from the Calton, which is meanwhile being demolished (1930), to the Peterhead prison, where he spent the next eighteen years.

Meanwhile, a voice came booming up from the south that we had all got hold of the wrong man! Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had produced a pamphlet dealing with the case (one of the many pamphlets

he wrote on various subjects), and in that pamphlet he shattered the evidence on which Slater had been so nearly hanged and was now serving a life-sentence in Peterhead. I happened to meet Lord Guthrie, the judge in the case, some days afterwards, and I ventured to express to him the doubts that were beginning to arise in my own mind. His reply, so far as I can remember, was to the effect that Slater's somewhat shady life was the most powerful argument against him. There was a Scottish judge who, in a case similar to that of Slater's, had said regarding the prisoner at the bar whose guilt could not be entirely proved: "He'll be nane the waur o' the hangin'." And that, strange to say, was the general belief entertained at the time regarding the unfortunate Slater. There was a demand in the public mind that someone should suffer for the murder of Miss Gilchrist. This in some measure may account for the indifference that was maintained during so many years towards the whole subject.

But Slater was not without friends in Scotland. Lieutenant Trench, of the Glasgow police staff, was early convinced of Slater's innocence, and he risked his position and his future in his efforts to secure Slater's acquittal. This involved him in serious trouble with the authorities, and his early death can be attributed, in some measure, to the worries and disappointments his action involved. Many years passed. Fresh evidence was available. William Park wrote a book in which the case for

Slater was vigorously stated. Helen Lambie had confessed to her prevarications at the trial. Sir Arthur wrote a preface for this book. The editors of several newspapers read the book, and opened their columns for the discussion of the case. Among these papers may be mentioned the *Daily Express* and the *Daily News*. Meanwhile, Slater had been eating out his heart in Peterhead during eighteen weary years, but as the result of this second agitation he was granted his freedom.

Sir Arthur at once pressed for a new enquiry into the whole case, and as the result of this enquiry held in Edinburgh, owing to some defects in Lord Guthrie's summing up, the sentence pronounced on Slater was quashed, and a sum of £6,000 was paid to him as compensation for the years of suffering he had endured. Sir Arthur made himself responsible for the necessary legal expenditure, and whilst a great part of the money was subscribed by the public, he was in reality a considerable loser by his efforts to secure the acquittal of Oscar Slater. But this was typical of his chivalrous disposition in his efforts to secure justice for those persons whom he regarded as being wrongfully condemned.

My main reason for dwelling on this case is the fact that it sheds considerable light on Sir Arthur's character. He was the man who never lost hope, and who through long weary years kept to his purpose and had at last the joy of seeing Oscar Slater's name cleared of the terrible charge that had been lodged against him. His studies in con-

nection with Sherlock Holmes had made him familiar with the weak links in any chain of evidence, and the patchwork of evidence formulated against Slater was torn in shreds by his vigorous mind. Doubtless, at the termination of twenty-one years, Slater would have been set at liberty, but it would have been with the murderer's brand resting upon him, and destitute of any means for earning a livelihood.

It has been often asked that, if it can be possible to hold communication with the dead, why is not the positive information obtained from them that is necessary to establish the guilt or the innocence of any prisoner? The answer to such a query is simple enough. Several of our detectives do avail themselves of this means, though they may not always proclaim the fact. In the case of the Bournemouth murder, it was from information supplied in this supernatural way that the murderer was traced. It is now public knowledge that "Jack the Ripper" was apprehended and lodged in a mental institution through the clairvoyance of the late Mr. R. J. Lees—a case that completely baffled the authorities of Scotland Yard, even when the leading detectives of Europe were called in, and a munificent reward had been offered. It was only when Mr. Lees applied himself to the case that the murderer, a leading West-End physician, could be traced and arrested. After that arrest the murders that had paralysed the East End of London suddenly ceased.

As regards the murder of Miss Gilchrist, there was a message, given at a circle held in Falkirk, that Oscar Slater was innocent. This was subsequent to the trial. It was stated in the message that it was not a hammer, but an instrument with a clawed end, and used as a box opener, that the murderer had with him. This would account for the divided wounds which puzzled the doctors at the time, and led them to surmise that a hammer had been used. It was evident that the purpose of the murderer was not to obtain money, but rather the possession of some document; and hence the box opener with which he came armed. It is not to be assumed that it was because of this message at Falkirk that Sir Arthur acted. This took place at a later date than when he had examined the evidence. In 1909 he was in no way committed to the Spiritualistic movement. He was at that period merely a student of the phenomena and an enquirer.

Of the various actors in this drama, the great majority have passed into the Unseen World. Lord Guthrie, Lord Strathclyde, and now Sir Arthur himself, the detective Trench, to whom he all honour paid; Helen Lambie, the maid; Cook, Miller and others have all crossed the border-line between the two worlds. Oscar Slater survives a free man, freed from the terrible charge for which he was imprisoned for eighteen years! and free from the terror of penury if he is wise. One other, who was a witness, at least, of these proceedings, survives—the clergyman who pens these lines, and

whose time of crossing has long been overdue. It may be that his testimony may serve some useful purpose. If it is necessary on the one hand that the criminal should be tracked down, far more imperative is it on the part of our legal authorities that the innocent should not be condemned to suffer for the guilty, and to suffer in so terrible a manner as has been the fate of Oscar Slater. Only a Victor Hugo could do justice to his experience.

I find among Sir Arthur's papers his final appeal on behalf of Oscar Slater, and as it contains his analysis of the evidence, I have inserted it here. Those who desire fuller information will find it in the book published by William Park, *The Truth about Oscar Slater*, The Psychic Press, 2 Victoria Street, 3s. 6d. cloth.

THE OSCAR SLATER CASE

"Although Slater has been released, this has by no means eased the scandal as regards his wrongful conviction. In order to understand some of the questions which are involved, some short account of the case is needed.

"Miss Gilchrist, an elderly maiden lady, was murdered in her flat in Glasgow on the evening of 21st December, 1908.

"The murderer was seen emerging from the flat by two people. One of these was the servant girl, Helen Lambie, who was returning from an errand. The other was a neighbour, Mr. Adams.

"Mr. Adams was short-sighted, and from first to last refused to identify anyone. Helen Lambie

identified Slater as the man, after many quibbles and prevarications. She has now confessed to a reporter (*vide Empire News*, 23rd October, 1927), that she did recognise the man, that it was not Slater, and that she had been persuaded by the police to make this false statement. Since her present statement is against her own interests, it may be taken as a true one. She received £40 as her portion of the reward.

"There was a third witness to identify—a little girl of fourteen, named Barrowman. She gave two contradictory statements on oath, as to how she chanced to be in the street, but declared that a man ran out of the flat entry, and that at the glance she had at him under lamplight she at first said he was like, but later declared she was sure it was, Slater. Her account of clothing and appearance was different from that given by the former witnesses, and she added personal details, such as the shape of his nose, which imply an impossible faculty for observation. This woman, Barrowman, has now admitted that she was never sure of Slater, and that her statement was prompted by the officials, she having been coached fifteen times by the Procurator-Fiscal. She received £100 as her share of the reward.

"There was said to be a diamond brooch missing from Miss Gilchrist's flat. A German Jew, Oscar Slater, who had been some months in Glasgow, and was leaving for America, according to arrangements long before made, had pawned a similar brooch in order to provide capital for his voyage and new start in life. He chanced to leave Glasgow upon Christmas Day. On reaching Liverpool he entered his own name at the London and North-Western Hotel. There was no attempt at concealment. He

behaved as no fugitive from justice would dream of doing.

"The police had followed up the brooch clue, and they found as early as 26th December that the brooch was Slater's own. Since this was, at that time, the only clue, it would seem reasonable that this discovery was the end of the case, since it would mean, if Slater were indeed the right man, that they had found the right man by a wrong clue—an inconceivable idea.

The police, however, persevered. They applied for extradition. In their application to the Foreign Office they dragged in an allusion to the brooch clue in so ambiguous a way that the reader might think that matter still open. This suspicion had been disposed of upon 26th December, and the cabled message to arrest was on 29th December. On arrival at New York, Slater was searched for a diamond-brooch pawn-ticket, showing that deception was carried on all along the line.

"In New York, Lambie, Barrowman and Adams (with strong reserves) identified Slater, after admitting that they had seen photographs of him. The veracity of Lambie and Barrowman may be judged by the fact that they swore that, though they had come over in the same cabin, they had never once discussed the object of their journey. In the midst of the extradition proceedings, Slater announced that he was perfectly willing to return to Scotland for trial.

"He was tried in Edinburgh in May 1909. I have already spoken of the witnesses to identify. A tin-tack hammer from a half-crown card of tools was produced as the weapon of the murderer. No stains were found, either on it or on the prisoner's

various suits. No evidence was given to show that Slater ever knew such a person as Miss Gilchrist existed. The trial was chiefly remarkable for an impassioned speech by the Lord Advocate for the prosecution, which was, unfortunately, full of deadly inaccuracies uncorrected by the Bench. He stated, for example, that Slater fled out of Glasgow because his name was mentioned as a suspect by the press; whereas, as a fact, he left Glasgow on the 25th, and his name first appeared on 28th December. Prosecuting Counsel also described his departure as that of 'a fugitive from justice,' a point which has already been dealt with. The defence made the capital error against Slater's own wish that they did not put him in the box. The excuse is said to have been that his imperfect knowledge of English put him at a disadvantage, and that his moral life was not beyond criticism. One witness, McBrayne, whose testimony would have disproved the police theory of the murder, and favoured an alibi, was suppressed by them, and the Defence was not notified of the man's proffered testimony.

"The final result was that the Jury decided against him—nine being for guilty, five for non-proven, and one for not guilty. He was condemned to death.

"Many people were of opinion that the evidence against him was very slight, and an agitation for a reprieve was started, which only saved him at the very edge of the scaffold.

"In 1912 I wrote a small book to show that the man was innocent. My contention was strengthened by the opinions of Sir Herbert Stephens, who said that there was not a *prima facie* case against him; and also by Sir E. Marshall Hall, who had no doubt

upon the point. There followed an agitation which ended in the appointment of a Commission in 1914, which confirmed the original sentence.

"This Commission, in my opinion, opens up a scandal as great as that of Slater, and I trust that any enquiry which deals with one will include the other. The Commissioner, the Sheriff of Lanarkshire, sat alone, with no press present, and no oath was administered to witnesses. Practically anyone could say what they liked. The most rising Glasgow detective, Lieutenant Trench, a King's gold-medallist, had come to the conclusion that Slater was innocent, and had reason to know that Lambie, on the night of the murder, had mentioned the name of someone else as the criminal. This has now been confirmed by Lambie's own confession. Trench was bullied by the Commissioner, his story was scouted, he was himself turned out of the police force and his pension taken away, although he always contended that he had been guaranteed immunity by the Secretary for Scotland of that day. He was then arrested upon a vamped-up criminal charge, which was laughed out of court. This persecution broke him, and he died, it is said, from the effects of it. The net effect of the Commission was that on the top of all the very doubtful evidence of the trial we had the declaration from the intelligent Glasgow detective, who risked and—as it proved—ruined his career by his fidelity to truth, that Slater was an innocent man. It should be added that Barrowman, the most deadly witness, has now deposed that her evidence at this commission was ready and written by the authorities before she entered the room, and that she merely signed it. 'It was just in and out again,' she said.

“Slater has now been released, three years later than is usual in such sentences. But the scandal of his conviction remains, and we ask the all-powerful help of the House of Commons in obtaining by pressure what should have been voluntarily granted, namely, a public and impartial enquiry into the conduct of all connected with the trial of Slater and with the subsequent ‘Enquiry’ of 1914. It is a glorious chance of showing how in Great Britain even the humblest man may, in the long run, obtain full justice.”

I am a clergyman, and I trust not entirely destitute of benevolent feelings. I certainly visited Oscar Slater. I sat and talked with him, saw him prostrate under his awful sentence, saw him, poor man, writhing in his agony. But it never occurred to me, even when my attention had been called to the possibility of a miscarriage of justice, to investigate the evidence, or to lift my little finger on behalf of this unhappy man. Nor did I ever learn of any other clergyman who made Oscar Slater's case his own. Strange that it should have been left to Arthur Conan Doyle to champion this man's cause, and to gain for him in the end, after an agitation extending over eighteen years, not only that his unjust sentence should be quashed, but that some fitting compensation should be paid to him for his unmerited sufferings. Conan Doyle at least fulfilled one of the conditions on which our future happiness is guaranteed.

Taken in connection with the Edalji case, the

case of Oscar Slater shows what were the governing motives in Conan Doyle's life. He was out to champion the innocent victims, whether of the law or of any other institution. Wherever wrong was done, he regarded it as his mission to have the wrong put right. Had he lived in the days of Edward III, that period he loved to portray in *The White Company* and *Sir Nigel*, who can doubt that he would have proved himself to be "a very gentle perfect knight"?

CHAPTER VII

THE QUIET YEARS

It was in September 1907 that Sir Arthur married Miss Jean Leckie, daughter of Mr. James B. Leckie, of Blackheath. His mother and sisters had been intimate with Miss Leckie, so that she was well known in the family circle. Mr. Leckie removed from Blackheath to Crowborough. Sir Arthur thereupon purchased Windlesham, at that period a house with extensive grounds on the outskirts of Crowborough, so that Lady Conan Doyle might be near her father, who still happily survives. Windlesham has been enlarged in many ways since these early days. The ample rose garden with its pergolas is one of the features. Near by is the golf-course. The view stretching far to the south and west commands the rolling downs of Sussex. The Ashdown forest with its leafy glades is distant only a few miles. In addition to this country residence, in later years he rented a flat in 15 Buckingham Palace Mansions, London, where he lived when he was in town.

Of this marriage three children were born, Denis, Adrian and Lena Jean, better known as "Billy." The happy home-life of the children spent at Windlesham is depicted in a small volume,



LADY CONAN DOYLE IN HER PRESENTATION DRESS.

Three of Them, written in 1924. In Sir Arthur's subsequent wanderings Lady Conan Doyle and the boys with their sister ever accompanied him. It was a true love bond that united the members of that family circle.

During the seven years that followed this second marriage Sir Arthur continued his literary activities, combined with the inevitable controversies which, in one form or another, engaged his attention. In wading through the vast correspondence he maintained, one is struck by the fact that whilst in the South Norwood period it is letters of rising authors that are most numerous; in the 1907-14 period, letters from the high and mighty begin to appear. He had access to the foremost circles in society, and there were few men of outstanding eminence that he did not know personally. He played golf with Mr. Asquith, was the intimate friend of Theodore Roosevelt and the guest of Lord Balfour at Whittinghame. In his visit to Whittinghame he obtained a glimpse of Scottish piety that rather impressed him. We quote his own words :

“ Every night—or at least on the Sunday night—the whole staff of the large rambling establishment, maids and grooms, some twenty in all, came in for prayers, which were read by the head of the house. It was fine to hear groom and statesman praying humbly together that they be forgiven the sins of the day, and merging all earthly distinctions in the presence of that which is above all.”

But whilst he appreciated Lord Balfour's hospitality extended to him at a period when his own life had been clouded by bereavement, he always felt a trifle sore in after years when engaged in his propaganda work that Lord Balfour did not more boldly come into the open. Lord Balfour was as keenly interested in psychic research as Sir Arthur himself. This was equally true with regard to Mr. Gerald Balfour, and other members of the Balfour family. Sir Arthur wrote to Lord Balfour in after years begging for his personal support in the cause he was advocating, but the only reply he received was in these terms: "Surely my opinions upon this subject are already sufficiently well known," which did not greatly aid the propagandist in his efforts.

Of his manifold activities and controversies throughout these years of calm, when the nation was imperceptibly gliding towards Niagara, little need be stated in these pages. In former times no Scottish laird was ever completely happy unless he had "a guid gangin' law-plea in the Court of Session," and of Conan Doyle it can be as truly said that he was never completely himself unless he was up to the neck in some special controversy. No sooner was he settled down after his return from South Africa than he conceived the idea that every peaceful citizen who had been formerly content to cultivate his kitchen garden should become a proved marksman at a local shooting range. It was the deadly accuracy of the Boer shooting at long

range, and which cost the country so many valuable lives, that inspired him with this idea. He started local rifle clubs, and worried the War Office with his conceptions of the efficient organisation of these clubs. Unfortunately, the Great War of 1914-18 was not a war in which long-range shooting had a prominent place. It was rather close-range shooting that was most in evidence, so that even the hand grenade was revived, and not without effect. But for some years these rifle clubs occupied his attention, and at least gave him the required practice to become a fair rifle shot himself. This with following the hounds and his cricket and football and billiards kept him in form as an all-round sportsman.

Of his other controversies during these years, two, at least, may be mentioned. He was stirred by the Congo atrocities. This brought him into immediate contact with the Congo Association. He wrote a book on the subject, and with a Mr. Morel he lectured throughout the country. By means of the agitation that was engendered the Association was able to bring sufficient pressure to bear on the Belgian authorities so as to ensure that the sufferings of the natives in the Congo region would be to a large extent mitigated.

It may seem strange that one who was so happy in his marital relations should have been interested in Divorce reform. But so keen was his interest in this subject that during a period of ten years he was President of the Divorce Reform Association, in which position he was succeeded by Lord Birken-

head. It was the injustice of the marriage laws in several distinct cases that constrained him to take office. Many a woman was chained for life to a husband who might be in a lunatic asylum, or to one who had become an habitual drunkard. There were other cases where the conditions were even more degrading, and in which he could not regard the marriage tie as being binding. With regard to this somewhat thorny subject his own words may be quoted :

“I am quite alive to all the arguments of our opponents, and quite understand that laxity in the marriage tie is an evil, but I cannot understand why England should lag behind every other Protestant country in the world, and even behind Scotland, so that unions which are obviously disgusting and degrading are maintained in this country while they can be dissolved abroad. As to morality, I fear I cannot admit that our morality here is in the least better than in Scandinavia, Holland or Germany, where they have more rational laws. I think that in some states in America they have pushed divorce to an extreme, but even in America I should say that married happiness and morality generally are quite as high as with us.”¹

In 1914 he took Lady Conan Doyle for a trip to Canada. They crossed the great lakes, visited the leading towns in Canada, traversed the great prairies of the West, eventually reaching the Rocky Mountains, where they spent a delightful time in

¹ *Memories and Adventures*, p. 238.

Jasper Park, one of the great national playgrounds and health resorts of the Canadian Government, spending part of the time in camping out. The town of Jasper itself in 1914 was what he calls a "raw Canadian town." Two churches were being built at the time of his visit, and he was asked to lay the foundation-stone of one of these churches. In the building of each the pastor was head mason and carpenter. One church was to be used by several Nonconformist bodies, whilst the Anglican vicar came and blessed the proceedings. "The whole function," he writes . . . "carried out by a group of ill-clad men standing bare-headed in a drizzle of rain, seemed to me to have in it the essence of religion. As I ventured to remark to them, Kikuyu and Jasper can give lessons to London."

With Lady Conan Doyle he returned to England at the outbreak of the War. Like so many of his countrymen, he had long been incredulous about the War. He knew that there was no desire in this country for war with Germany, and he could not see how Germany was to make war upon us. Had he travelled as widely in Germany at that period as he had done in other countries, he would have known that Germany was busy building her fleet in order to deal with England, and that there was a widespread belief among the German people that when war did come, as they knew it would come, *England would have to pay for it*. During many years Germany had been diligently preparing for war, more especially after the Agadir incident of 1911.

It was during the Prince Henry International Motor Race of 1912 that Sir Arthur first realised the possibility of war with Germany. He was a competitor in this race, which started from Homburg, near Frankfort-on-Maine, and crossing Germany reached Hamburg, to be transported to Edinburgh, from whence the race was continued to London. On both sides the competitors were accompanied by officers—the English competitors by German officers and the German competitors by British officers. Various views were expressed regarding this race, some holding that it was an organised attempt on the part of Germany for a considerable body of her officers to see the actual outlines of a great part of Scotland and England, whilst others maintained that the race was simply an effort to promote the *entente cordiale* between the sportsmen of the two nations.

Sir Arthur began to realise that war was much nearer than he had imagined it to be. One of these German officers had declared that when the Kiel Canal was completed there would be war. As a fact in history, the Kiel Canal was finished in June 1914. Europe was in the throes of war within a few weeks after that. The impression produced upon his mind by this motor race was deepened by General Bernhardi's book, *Germany and the Next War*. He at once saw the significance of this portent, and taking up his pen he wrote articles alike for the *Fortnightly Review* and *The Strand*. This war which he had regarded as improbable became the most tragic fact in history.

CHAPTER VIII

THE WAR, 1914-18

WAR was declared on 4th August, 1914, and during the next four years Sir Arthur's energies were concentrated on that subject, firstly, to do his share in the fighting if need should arise, and secondly, his intellectual energies were given to writing the History of the War (*British Campaigns in Europe, 1914-18*), which occupies six large volumes. He at once organised a local volunteer force called the Civilian Reserve.¹

His idea was that in every town and village a similar local force should be established, and this idea took wings, and the Civilian Reserve became a force of 200,000 men. The War Office interfered. The Civilian Reserves were dissolved to be incor-

¹ On the very day war was declared a bill worded as under was circulated in Crowborough and the district around it.

IMPORTANT

A Meeting

will be held

To-night, August 4,

in the

Oddfellows' Hall

To discuss the feasibility of forming a Local Company or Companies for purposes of Drill and Efficiency, that we may be of service to our Country in this crisis.

Sir A. Conan Doyle, D.L.,
will take the Chair at 8.30.

porated in a new Volunteer Force, of which the Crowborough Company became the Crowborough Company of the 6th Royal Sussex Volunteer Regiment. A special prize was awarded them for being the first body on the list. During four years Sir Arthur served as a private in this company (except during the periods when he was sent to the front on some special mission). Their training at times was strenuous. They had to march frequently from Crowborough to Frant, a distance of fourteen miles, drill for an hour in a marshy field and march back again, "singing all the way." In this company he was asked to be Commandant, a position that he refused, feeling that by remaining a private he was showing a better example of true readiness to fill any position, however humble, that would tend to strengthen the nation. He writes: "In that long period I shared every phase of my companions' lives. I have stood in the queue with my pannikin to get a welcome drink of beer, and I have slept in a bell tent on a summer night with a Sussex yokel blissfully snoring upon each of my shoulders."

Sometimes amusing incidents occurred. Once the company was being reviewed by a new adjutant. When he came opposite Sir Arthur, and observed the South African medal on his breast, he condescendingly observed, "You have seen service, my man." "Yes, sir," was the answer. When he reached the end of the line the adjutant turned to the C.O., St. Quentin, and asked, "Who is that big

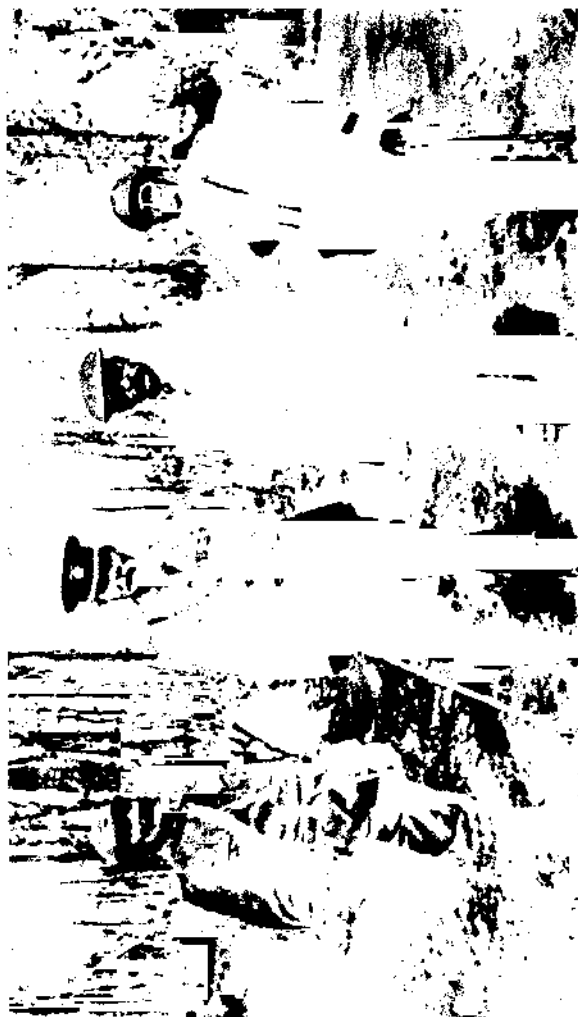
burly fellow on the right hand of the rear rank ? ”
“ That’s Sherlock Holmes,” the C.O. replied.
“ Heavens,” said the adjutant, “ I hope he does not mind ‘ my manning ’ him ! ” “ He just loves it,” said St. Quentin.

He was sent on a mission by the Government to the Italian front, but before undertaking this mission he pointed out that it was important he should know something of our fighting in France and Flanders. This led to his being first sent to France, where he met Sir Douglas Haig and other celebrated generals. He met his brother Innes, who at that period had become Adjutant-General. But what interested him more than all was to get a glimpse of his own son, Kingsley, at Mailly. In Paris he met Clemenceau and other notables. At Ypres he gazed with saddened feelings on the fields around him, where several of his nephews and others of his own kith and kin had fallen bravely fighting for the motherland. From France he went to the Italian front with a message of hope and cheer for the combatants there. He was cordially received by the Italian Commander-in-Chief, and the position of the contending armies was explained to him. He saw a good deal of the actual fighting. Against the wishes of the authorities, who desired to protect their visitor from unnecessary danger, he adventured on his own account to go to Montfalcone, which had been captured by the Italians from the Austrians, and where there were large ship-building dockyards. In this attempt the motor-car in which

he and his companions travelled became the special mark for the Austrian gunners, and three shells burst immediately above them. It was the great speed at which their car was moving that saved the lives of Conan Doyle and his friends. He had so often coquetted with Death that the marvel is not that he died in his seventy-second year, but that he had ever been permitted to reach it. This mission to the Italian front was regarded as being opportune by the War Office, and he was warmly thanked for his efforts.

One curious feature in connection with this mission was that he had one of those psychic experiences which in after years were so largely to determine his destiny. It shows that the spiritual forces were beginning to operate within him. We quote from *Memories and Adventures*, pp. 367-8 :

"I have one other association with the Italian front which I may include here. It is embalmed in the annals of the Psychic Research Society. I have several times in my life awakened from sleep with some strong impression of knowledge gained still lingering in my brain. In one case, for example, I got the strange name Nalderu so vividly that I wrote it down between two stretches of insensibility, and found it on the outside of my cheque book next morning. A month later I started for Australia in the s.s. *Naldera*, of which I had then never heard. In this particular Italian instance I got the word Piave absolutely ringing in my head. I knew it was a river some seventy miles to the rear of the Italian front, and quite unconnected with the war. None



Cyrano.

A.C.D.

Mr. Robert Donald.

General Henneque.

ON THE WESTERN FRONT DURING THE GREAT WAR.

the less, the impression was so strong that I wrote the incident down, and had it signed by two witnesses. Months passed, and the Italian battle line was rolled back to the Piave, which became a familiar word. Some said it would go back farther. I was sure it would not. I argued that if the abnormal forces, whatever they may be, had taken such pains to impress the matter upon me, it must needs be good news they were conveying, since I needed cheering up at the time. Therefore I felt sure that some great victory and the turning-point of war would come on the Piave. So sure was I that I wrote to my friend Mr. Lacon Watson, who was on the Italian front, and the incident got into the Italian press. It could have nothing but a good effect on their *morale*. Finally, it is a matter of history how completely my impression was justified, and how the most shattering victory of the whole war was gained on that very spot.

"There is the fact amply proved by documents and beyond all possible coincidence. As to the explanation, some may say that our own subconscious self has power of foresight. If so, it is a singularly dead instinct, set down or never used. Others may say that our "dead" can see farther than we, and try, when we are asleep and in spiritual touch with us, to give us knowledge and consolation. The latter is my own solution of the mystery."

He was permitted to have one other glimpse of the War on the Western front in one of its most decisive phases. He accompanied Sir Joseph Cook, of Australia, to the Australian Division in the memorable retreat of the German Armies from

Amiens. He was in time to see the Hindenburg line broken up, and this practically finished the War. It was believed by the Germans that the Hindenburg line was impregnable, and when that line was carried, all further hope of victory was abandoned by them. It became simply a question of negotiation for an armistice.

It was from these personal experiences of actual warfare, alike on the battlefields of France, Flanders and on the Italian front, that Conan Doyle returned to write his *History of the War (British Campaigns in Europe, 1914-18)*. This task in itself would have been an achievement for any ordinary man. It was only a trifling detail in his busy life. In this *History* he wisely confined himself to the British battles in Europe. As in all his works, he kept throughout these volumes his eye upon the reader. Personally, I tried several histories, and got lost in some of them under a mass of detail that did not seem to lead anywhere. Other histories became a mere record of succeeding events which gradually became devoid of interest in their monotonous repetition, but with Conan Doyle as my companion on a railway journey from London to Edinburgh I read the first volume of his *History of the War*, and was more fascinated by it than I could have been by any novel.

As an historian he took minute pains to get his facts correct, and then with his acquired material it became his main object to make his narrative interesting. This he certainly did. And yet these

volumes on which he had laid such stress became his greatest literary disappointment. He took me more than once to contemplate them. "My friends ask me," he said, "when I am to finish my History of the War? Shades of my fathers—these volumes were finished five years ago, and seem to be ignored by the general public. But Time," he added, "will yet justify my efforts and my own opinion as to the value of this contribution to the better understanding of the War." Whether this prophecy will be realised the years alone can determine. These massive volumes will remain at least as a testimony on behalf of his tireless industry, and as a proof of his determination to uphold the honour of Great Britain in the world conflict.

With the completion of this History he entered on a new phase of his career. He had publicly announced his belief in the psychic facts of Spiritualism in 1916. Whether this public avowal had affected the sale of his volumes on the War cannot be ascertained. It may be presumed that this avowal did not help the sale, as there was a general outcry that, "Another good man had gone wrong!" But in any case, after the Armistice his energies became directed into an entirely new channel that stands out in striking contrast to his earlier activities.

It is impossible, within the compass of a brief treatise, to do justice to his manifold writings, but before we take leave of this period of his life there are at least two books that require some consideration.

CHAPTER IX

"THE LOST WORLD" AND HIS "COLLECTED POEMS"

WHAT very perceptibly affected the financial position of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was the success of his various theatrical ventures and the advent of the cinema. Sherlock Holmes in various plays continued to hold his place upon the stage, and in the productions of the cinema *The Lost World* became one of the most popular pieces. The first cinematic representation took place in London in 1896. Since that period there has been a steady advance in the popularity of this form of entertainment, until in these recent years the "Talkies" have seriously threatened the attractiveness of the theatre.

The Lost World is an example of Sir Arthur's creative genius in a field that until his time had not been explored. Swift, in his *Gulliver's Travels*, certainly discovered countries that existed only in his imagination and created characters and situations that had an ironical resemblance to the political conditions of his time, and which therefore gave to his tales a lively interest for his contemporaries which escapes the modern reader. Still, even by the modern reader, Gulliver's adventures are followed with zest. In *The Lost World* there is no effort to

parallel existing political conditions. It is an attempt to reconstruct the world of prehistoric times, when the dinosaur and the pterodactyl were the dominant animals, and when man, if he lived at all, must have occupied a very subordinate position. "The Lost World" existed somewhere in South America on an elevated plateau at a considerable distance from one of the affluents of the Amazon, and certainly remote from the ordinary routes of the modern traveller.

It was a Professor Challenger who maintained against all opponents that this "Lost World" existed, and it was to prove the existence of this world that an expedition was undertaken in which various characters took part, and who again figure in one of Conan Doyle's later psychic books, *The Land of Mist*. This Professor Challenger was one of his favourite characters, and in his private conversation he often alluded to him. The simple truth is that there was a good part of Professor Challenger in Conan Doyle himself when in one of his iconoclastic moods. Not that he ever gave way to the extravagances that are depicted on the part of his hero, but rather it was the masterful personality of Challenger that was reflected in himself when Challenger was ready to face the world in defence of truth, and when he would brook no opposition to the promulgation of his beliefs. The description of the land of the pterodactyl is a *tour de force* on the part of the author, in which his creative imagination had full scope, and becomes so realistic that the

reader for the time being is actually living in that extraordinary country with its ceaseless adventures and hair-breadth escapes. The book is an example of Conan Doyle's masterful handling of an entirely new subject, and an indication of what he might have continued to produce in literary form had not other interests monopolised his energies.

Of his various books of poems, now issued in a collected form, we have another example of his versatility. The strange fact is that very few people have ever known that Conan Doyle wrote poetry. In any company of ten persons it would be news to eight of them that Sir Arthur wrote verses, and very effective verses indeed, when he felt called upon to produce them. The overwhelming majority of his readers know him only as the author of Sherlock Holmes. Beyond that they are unconscious of his gifts, or of his diligence in so many different fields of literature.

Reference has been made in these pages to the fact that he was not averse in his younger days to a bout with the gloves. The following piece is a fair illustration of his narrative poetry, and shows that all through his life he retained an interest in the men that had figured in the contests of the "Ring."

BENDY'S SERMON

(Bendigo, the well-known Nottingham prize-fighter, became converted to religion, and preached at revival meetings throughout the country.)

You didn't know of Bendigo! Well, that knocks me out!
Who's your board school teacher? What's he been about?

Chock-a-block with fairy-tales—full of useless cram,
And never heard o' Bendigo, the pride of Nottingham!

Bendy's short for Bendigo. You should see him peel!
Half of him was whalebone, half of him was steel;
Fightin' weight eleven-ten, five foot nine in height,
Always ready to oblige if you want a fight.

I could talk of Bendigo from here to kingdom come,
I guess before I ended you would wish your dad was dumb;
I'd tell you how he fought Ben Caunt, and how the deaf 'un
fell,
But the game is done, and the men are gone—and maybe it's
as well.

Bendy he turned Methodist—he said he felt a call,
He stumped the country preachin', and you bet he filled the
hall;
If you seed him in the pulpit, a bleatin' like a lamb,
You'd never know bold Bendigo, the pride of Nottingham.

His hat was like a funeral, he'd got a waiter's coat,
With a hallelujah collar and a choker round his throat;
His pals would laugh and say in chaff, that Bendigo was right
In takin' on the devil, since he'd no one else to fight.

But he was very earnest, improvin' day by day,
A-workin' and a-preachin' just as his duty lay;
But the devil he was waitin', and in the final bout
He hit him hard below his guard and knocked poor Bendy
out.

Now I'll tell you how it happened. He was preachin' down
at Brum,
He was billed just like a circus, you should see the people
come;

The chapel it was crowded, and in the foremost row
There was half a dozen bruisers who'd a grudge at Bendigo.

There was Tommy Platt of Bradford, Solly Jones of Perry
Bar,
Long Connor from the Bull Ring, the same wot drew with
Carr,
Jack Ball the fightin' gunsmith, Joe Murphy from the Mews,
And Iky Moss, the bettin' boss, the Champion of the Jews.

A very pretty handful a-sittin' in a string,
Full of beer and impudence, ripe for anything,
Sittin' in a string there, right under Bendy's nose,
If his message was for sinners, he could make a start on those.

Soon he heard them chaffin' : " Hi, Bendy ! Here's a go ! "
" How much are you coppin' by this Jump to Glory show ? "
" Stow it, Bendy ! Left the ring ! Mighty spry of you !
Didn't everybody know the ring was leavin' you ? "

Bendy fairly sweated as he stood above and prayed,
" Look down, O Lord, and grip me with a strangle-hold ! "
he said.
" Fix me with a strangle-hold ! Put a stop on me !
I'm slippin', Lord, I'm slippin', and I'm clinging' hard to
Thee ! "

But the roughs they kept on chaffin' and the uproar it was
such
That the preacher in the pulpit might be talkin' double Dutch,
Till a workin' man he shouted out, a-jumpin' to his feet,
" Give us a lead, your reverence, and heave 'em in the
street."

Then Bendy said, " Good Lord, since first I left my sinful
ways,
Thou knowest that to Thee alone I've given up my days,

But now, dear Lord"—and here he laid his Bible on the shelf—

"I'll take with your permission, just five minutes for myself."

He vaulted from the pulpit like a tiger from a den,
They say it was a lovely sight to see him floor his men ;
Right and left, and left and right, straight and true and hard,
Till the Ebenezer Chapel looked more like a knacker's yard.

Platt was standin' on his back and lookin' at his toes,
Solly Jones of Perry Bar was feelin' for his nose,
Connor of the Bull Ring had all that he could do
Rakin' for his ivories that lay about the pew.

Jack Ball the fightin' gunsmith was in a peaceful sleep,
Joe Murphy lay across him, all tied up in a heap ;
Five of them was twisted in a tangle on the floor,
And Iky Moss, the bettin' boss, had sprinted for the door.

Five repentant fightin' men, sitting in a row,
Listenin' to words of grace from Mister Bendigo,
Listenin' to his reverence—all as good as gold,
Pretty little baa-lambs, gathered to the fold.

So that's the way that Bendy ran his mission in the slum,
And preached the Holy Gospel to the fightin' men of Brum,
"The Lord," said he, "has given me His message from on high,
And if you interrupt Him, I will know the reason why."

But to think of all your schoolin', clean wasted, thrown away,
Darned if I can make out what you're learnin' all the day,
Grubbin' up old fairy-tales, fillin' up with cram,
And didn't know of Bendigo, the pride of Nottingham !

This is vigorous enough and true to fact, for Bendigo did figure at revival services along with Richard Weaver and other preachers. But there was at this period a Rudyard Kipling who could write narrative poetry, and who claimed a freedom of expression that Conan Doyle never ventured. And hence everyone is familiar with Kipling's verses, whilst Conan Doyle's *Collected Poems* still await the verdict of a wider public.

There is one introspective poem that might well be studied called *The Inner Room*, in which he analyses the different characters wrapped up within himself :

THE INNER ROOM

It is mine—the little chamber,
 Mine alone.
 I had it from my forbears
 Years ago.
 Yet within its walls I see
 A most motley company,
 And they one and all claim me
 As their own,

There's one who is a soldier
 Bluff and keen ;
 Single-minded, heavy-fisted,
 Rude of mien.
 He would gain a purse or stake it,
 He would win a heart or break it,
 He would give a life or take it,
 Conscience-clean.

And near him is a priest
Still schism-whole ;
He loves the censer-reek
And organ-roll.
He has leanings to the mystic,
Sacramental, eucharistic ;
And dim yearnings altruistic
Thrill his soul.

There's another who with doubts
Is overcast ;
I think him younger brother .
To the last,
Walking wary stride by stride,
Peering forwards anxious-eyed,
Since he learned to doubt his guide
In the past.

And 'mid them all, alert,
But somewhat cowed,
There sits a stark-faced fellow,
Beetle-browed,
Whose black soul shrinks away,
From a lawyer-ridden day,
And has thoughts he dare not say
Half avowed.

There are others who are sitting,
Grim as doom,
In the dim ill-boding shadow
Of my room.
Darkling figures, stern or quaint,
Now a savage, now a saint,
Showing fitfully and faint
Through the gloom.

And those shadows are so dense,
 There may be
 Many—very many—more
 Than I see.
 They are sitting day and night,
 Soldier, rogue and anchorite ;
 And they wrangle and they fight
 Over me.

If the stark-faced fellow win,
 All is o'er !
 If the priest should gain his will,
 I doubt no more !
 But if each shall have his day,
 I shall swing and I shall sway
 In the same old weary way
 As before.

In this poem he comes nearer Edgar Allan Poe than in any of the others. What he regarded as his highest flight among the mounds around the foot of Parnassus was in his *Victrix* :

How was it then with England ?
 Her faith was true to her plighted word,
 Her strong hand closed on her blunted sword,
 Her heart rose high to the foeman's hate,
 She walked with God on the hills of Fate—
 And all was well with England.

How was it then with England ?
 Her soul was wrung with loss and pain,
 Her face was grey with her heart's-blood drain,
 But her falcon eyes were hard and bright,
 Austere and cold as an ice-cave's light—
 And all was well with England.

How was it then with England ?

Little she said to foe or friend,
True, heart true, to the uttermost end,
Her passion cry was the scathe she wrought,
In flame and steel she voiced her thought—
And all was well with England.

How was it then with England ?

With drooping sword and bended head,
She turned apart and mourned her dead,
Sad sky above, sad earth beneath,
She walked with God in the Vale of Death—
Ah, woe the day for England !

How is it now with England ?

She sees upon her mist-girt path
Dim drifting shapes of fear and wrath.
Hold high the heart ! Bend low the knee !
She has been guided, and will be—
And all is well with England.

We add one spirited little piece :

HAIG IS MOVING

Haig is moving !

Three plain words are all that matter,
'Mid the gossip and the chatter,
Hopes in speeches, fears in papers,
Pessimistic froth and vapours—
Haig is moving !

Haig is moving !

We can turn from German scheming,
From humanitarian dreaming,
From assertions, contradictions,
Twisted facts and solemn fictions—
Haig is moving !

Haig is moving !
 All the weary idle phrases,
 Empty blamings, empty praises,
 Here's an end to their recital,
 There is only one thing vital—
 Haig is moving !

Haig is moving !
 He is moving, he is gaining,
 And the whole hushed world is straining,
 Straining, yearning, for the vision
 Of the doom and the decision—
 Haig is moving !

We add :

A HYMN OF EMPIRE

(CORONATION YEAR, 1911)

God save England, blessed by Fate,
 So old, yet ever young :
 The acorn isle from which the great
 Imperial oak has sprung !
 And God guard Scotland's kindly soil,
 The land of stream and glen,
 The granite mother that has bred
 A breed of granite men !

God save Wales, from Snowdon's vales
 To Severn's silver strand !
 For all the grace of that old race
 Still haunts the Celtic land,
 And, dear old Ireland, God save you,
 And heal the wounds of old,
 For every grief you ever knew
 May joy come fifty-fold !

Set Thy guard over us,
May Thy shield cover us,
Enfold and uphold us,
On land and on sea !
From the palm to the pine,
From the snow to the line,
Brothers together,
And children of Thee.

Thy blessing, Lord, on Canada,
Young giant of the West,
Still upward lay her broadening way,
And may her feet be blessed !
And Africa, whose hero breeds
Are blending into one,
Grant that she tread the path which leads
To holy unison.

May God protect Australia
Set in her Southern Sea !
Though far thou art, it cannot part
Thy brother folks from thee.
And you, the Land of Maori,
The island-sisters fair,
Ocean hemmed and lake begemmed,
God hold you in His care !

Set Thy guard over us,
May Thy shield cover us,
Enfold and uphold us
On land and on sea !
From the palm to the pine,
From the snow to the line,
Brothers together
And children of Thee.

God guard our Indian brothers,
 The Children of the Sun,
 Guide us and walk beside us
 Until Thy will be done.
 To all be equal measure
 Whate'er his blood or birth,
 Till we shall build as Thou hast willed
 O'er all Thy fruitful Earth.

May we maintain the story
 Of honest, fearless right !
 Not ours, not ours the Glory !
 What are we in Thy sight ?
 Thy servants, and no other,
 Thy servants may we be,
 To help our weaker brother
 As we crave for help from Thee !

Set thy guard over us,
 May Thy shield cover us,
 Enfold and uphold us
 On land and on sea !
 From the palm to the pine,
 From the snow to the line,
 Brothers together
 And children of Thee.

Of his more tender side the poems are too few.
 It is Tartyæus rather than Catullus that speaks in his
 Muse. But he had the tender touch as well, which
 is fully borne out in his—

DECEMBER'S SNOW

The bloom is on the may once more,
 The chestnut buds have burst anew ;
 But, darling, all our springs are o'er,
 'Tis winter still for me and you.

We plucked Life's blossoms long ago,
What's left is but December's snow.

But winter has its joys as fair,
The gentler joys, aloof, apart ;
The snow may lie upon our hair,
But never, darling, in our heart,
Sweet were the springs of long ago,
But sweeter still December's snow.

Yes, long ago, and yet to me
It seems a thing of yesterday,
The shade beneath the willow tree,
The word you looked but feared to say.
Ah ! when I learned to love you so
What recked we of December's snow ?

But swift the ruthless seasons sped;
And swifter still they speed away ;
What though they bow the dainty head
And fleck the raven hair with grey ?
The boy and girl of long ago
Are laughing through the veil of snow.

It was religion and not poetry that henceforward was to become the absorbing theme on which he was to write and speak. His poetical efforts are merely an indication of what he might have done in that direction had he so cared. It was this many-sided and gifted personality that his readers lost when he became the world ambassador on behalf of psychic research. He never rated his poems too highly. If his *Collected Poems* did not sell like *Sherlock Holmes* it brought no disappointment to

the author. His own attitude towards them is expressed in the lines :

If it were not for the hillocks
 You'd think little of the hills ;
 The rivers would seem tiny
 If it were not for the rills ;
 If you never saw the brushwood
 You would underrate the trees,
 And so you see the purpose
 Of such little rhymes as these.

This is too modest an estimate. Had he addressed himself to the writing of poetry with the same persistent energy that he applied to other subjects, there can be little doubt that he would have climbed a long way beyond the mounds around the foot of Parnassus. But the waters of the Castalian spring ceased to attract him. It was rather on the isles of the Hesperides that his eyes were fixed. To pierce the mists that enshroud them became the main object of his life.

A brief record of his business adventures may be given. How, in the midst of his many-sided activities, he found the time to attend to business in any form is a mystery ! But he did have extensive business interests beyond the mere disposal of his literary productions, which were in the hands of Messrs. A. P. Watt & Son. He was a director in the firm of Messrs. Raphael Tuck & Sons during a period of thirty years. His fellow-directors in that firm speak and write of him in terms of gratitude alike for his business acumen and his

brotherly companionship. He always regarded that business connection with pleasure, and frequently spoke of it in terms of satisfaction. But to his adventurous spirit a solid and safe 5 per cent. did not always appeal. He became interested in Kent coal that still remains somewhere in the depths of the earth, and in gold mines that were as innocent of gold as an ordinary slate quarry. He became responsible for an invention that was to revolutionise industry and endow the directors of the Company with fabulous wealth, but of all these undertakings he writes : " If I had buried my money in a hole in my garden I would have been a richer man at the end of my days." He was not alone in that respect. Sir Walter Scott, Mark Twain and many other literary men have all been imbued with the idea that in the world of finance they could wield the magician's wand as successfully as they had done it in the field of literature. But if Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had his losses in this respect, he was too shrewd a man and too capable a business man to involve himself in any serious financial disaster. From the period that he had lived on sixpence per day in Southsea he was for many years conscious of a steady and increasing income. And this he attributed in no small measure to the wise administration of his literary interests by Mr. A. P. Watt and his sons.

Of his methods of work I have been able to learn little. The mystery of his literary productiveness seems inexplicable. When I have been his guest,

what I have witnessed each day was a postman unburdening himself of a huge bundle of letters that had to be promptly answered. In his early manhood it is apparent that a very considerable section of his time must have been given to cricket, otherwise he could never have made the appearances he did at the matches at Lord's, and another large section of his time must have been given to billiards before he could have been the runner-up in the Amateur Billiard Championship. If we take the years of the War, 1914-18, and remember his drill and his marchings to Frant and return marchings to Crowborough, his visits to Flanders and to the Italian front, one marvels how he was able, out of the spare time at his disposal, to produce his six massive volumes on the War. In his later years he golfed in the forenoon, and in the afternoon and when he came in from golf he simply sat down to write. Occasionally he was at his desk at eight o'clock in the morning, but for a man under seventy this was not an abnormal hour. He was, however, extremely methodical. All his literary material was carefully docketed and arranged so that he could write at once on any subject in which he was more immediately interested. He was never the dreamy recluse or literary *poseur*. At times he reminded one of an overgrown school-boy, so simple was he in his tastes and so accessible in his bearing. But behind this simplicity and *bonhomie* there were moments when his masterful personality was asserted and the real Arthur Conan Doyle revealed.

He was at that period fifty-nine years of age. Happy in his home life at Windlesham with Lady Conan Doyle as his companion and his children growing up around him, there was no reason why he should not have grown old with the years and reaped in an increasing degree the fruits of his intellectual labour. The War had ended victoriously for Great Britain, and during a brief period a wave of prosperity passed over the nation, to be followed by a long depression the end of which is not yet in sight. But this depression in no way affected him. His books had been translated into many languages, and various agencies were rendering his name familiar to an ever-widening public. He could have—had he so desired—rested in his arm-chair and contemplated an ever-widening fame. But it was at this period a new Call came into his life that completely transformed alike his intellectual and spiritual outlook, and which opened up a new channel altogether in which his superabounding energy was to flow.

BOOK II

The subject of psychical research is one upon which I have thought more about, and about which I have been slower to form my opinion than upon any other subject whatever.

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

CHAPTER I

THE INEVITABILITY OF CHANGE

THE current of human affairs is constantly being disturbed, and often diverted into a new channel by some simple occurrence which, at the time of its happening, does not call forth any marked comment. A child may be born as other children are born, but that one child may change the destiny of a nation or, what is far more important, may inaugurate a new religion.

Or it may be some discovery is made that transforms existing social conditions. James Watt became interested in a steam engine, and so changed that engine as to revolutionise our methods of modern industry. No man has done more to depopulate wide country districts and to crowd our cities with superfluous populations than James Watt. George Stephenson pondered over the problem of transportation, and our vast world-wide railway system is the result. These transitions, which are often rapid in the material sphere, can be retarded for considerable periods in the intellectual and spiritual spheres by existing prejudices or vested interests.

There is no belief more widely entertained in every age than that we are living in the best of all

possible worlds, and that the limit alike of human knowledge and of human felicity has been reached. That sums up the attitude of many worthy people alike as regards politics, science and religion. They feel no need for any change whatever, and as for progress, so long as they are themselves comfortable, why should anyone trouble about it? But change, nevertheless, is taking place every day, simply because this planet turns on its axis, and continues to speed on its journey round the sun. The Roman Empire was apparently one of the most authentic facts in history, yet the Roman Empire has ceased to exist, giving place to the various nations that have arisen where, at one period, the Roman eagle was all powerful. Even the Eternal City has changed greatly since the days when Cicero thundered in the *Comitia*. The streets of modern Rome are elevated twenty-six feet above the ancient forum. In Jerusalem the mosque of Omar with its glittering crescent occupies the site where once the temple of Solomon witnessed the daily sacrifice. It may be an uncomfortable belief, but what is Unreal passes with the years, whereas the Real gradually takes its place. This universe is so constituted that what is unreal cannot permanently survive. The simulacrum sooner or later must give place to reality. This is the teaching that many wise men have endorsed : it is the teaching that the ages continue to verify. The genuine fact abides. It may be ignored for a season, but often through unobtrusive means it makes its presence known, or

it may be announced with the voice of the tempest or the crash of the earthquake.

There was a period when the civilisation of ancient Greece was controlled by the voices from the temples of Delos and of Delphi, but these voices have long been silent and the temples themselves are shattered ruins. It was the consciousness of impending change that caused Socrates to drink his hemlock. Had he, prudent man, accepted the existing order, there is no reason whatever why he should not have ended his days in quiet obscurity. But when he proposed certain modifications in the general outlook, and more especially when he addressed himself to the task of convincing his fellow-citizens that they were not so wise as they thought themselves to be, then the hemlock became a necessity. It was stated by the Pythian oracle that he was the wisest man in Athens. No one was more surprised at this announcement than Socrates himself. It may have been due to the fact that the sage knew, at least, that the realm of thought is wider than many of us imagine it to be, and that the conceptions of mankind can never be entirely condensed into any creed or formula. Whilst reverent towards the existing religion he saw a little way beyond the current theogonies.

It would have surprised Paul's hearers on Mars Hill considerably had they been able to realise that this dust-laden stranger was the herald of a new dispensation that was destined to abolish the beliefs they so deeply cherished, or that one thousand eight

hundred years afterwards the statue with the inscription *To the Unknown God* which Paul had taken for his text was to become the watchword of a powerful cult. "What has been will continue to be" is a comfortable doctrine, but the whole of human history, from the days when the Sumerian shepherds first began to observe the movements of the planets until the present hour, bears witness that change is inevitable, that dynasty succeeds dynasty, that empire succeeds empire, that even creeds and formulas grow old and are superseded, that the very essence of religion may change and clothe itself in a new garment.

Unless this simple but incontrovertible fact is recognised and admitted the following pages will have no meaning for the ordinary reader. These pages will record some startling incidents; and an attempt will be made to explain why Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the author and patriot, became the apostle of those special beliefs held by Spiritualists throughout the world. He regarded these beliefs as being so important that he gave upwards of twelve years of his life to their persistent advocacy, and in a sense it can be affirmed that so eager was he in this respect that in defiance of all medical injunctions he at last surrendered life itself.

That there is a spiritual world as well as this outward material world is a very ancient conception. In the tombs of Egypt and in the tombs alike of kings and queens belonging to civilisations antedating even the remote civilisation of Egypt, there

is evidence of the somewhat crude beliefs that were entertained regarding a future state. In the literature of Greece and Rome we read of the realms of Tartarus and the Elysian fields, of Charon ferrying the departed shades across the river Styx, and of those happy Immortals who dwell in the gardens of the Hesperides. Socrates, four hundred years before Christ, discourses in the *Phædo* very ingeniously regarding a future life, and congratulates himself that if he is wrong in the opinions he had formed, he would be no worse off than the doubters and unbelievers. Cicero at a later period in his *de Senectute* has many a glowing passage in which he dwells on the blessings that attend the departed souls, and one of the greatest consolations of age, he maintains, is the fact that the man who has crossed the "allotted span" and who has lived for the higher ends of life is nearer at least to his complete emancipation than his younger contemporaries.

Since the inauguration of the Christian faith well-nigh nineteen hundred years ago, the survival of the soul after death has been regarded as a fundamental tenet. One of the Saxon kings welcomed the Christian missionaries within his borders for the simple reason that they proclaimed a knowledge of the life beyond the grave of which he with his limited vision had no knowledge. Throughout the succeeding centuries the resurrection of Jesus Christ has been regarded as the key-stone of the Christian arch. In the Mohammedan religion

the belief in a future state is expressed in even more emphatic terms. The joys of Paradise and the terrors of the underworld are fully set forth in the Koran. This belief in the survival of the soul after death can therefore be traced to a remote period, and is at the present time the fundamental tenet in that religion which is dominant throughout our Western hemisphere.

Whilst this is true, it is equally true that in every age there have been men of outstanding eminence who have questioned the possibility of a future life. The statements of Socrates were by no means accepted as final. The critics of Cicero held his cherished beliefs in derision. The Sadducees, who were the contemporaries of Jesus, were doubtful as regards any future life, and they succeeded in getting Jesus removed. It would be easy to mention many men belonging to our own age who enjoy a wide reputation either in the scientific or literary world and who frankly deny the possibility of survival. Death in their estimation terminates all possibility of future individual activity. It is FINIS.

The problem, therefore, of survival cannot be regarded as being definitely settled, whatever may be the place assigned to it in our religious systems. There is one serious difficulty that arises in connection with Christian theology. It is assumed that all the necessary information regarding a future life and a future world has already been given to mankind, and that it is alike irreverent and presumptuous on the part of any enquirer to seek for more. Not a

single detail of any kind is to be added to the information contained in the authorised Scriptures. Learned theologians have summed up that information, basing their statements on selected texts. Any further communications on such subjects are regarded with suspicion ; and more especially if these communications should in any degree conflict with accepted theological dogmas they are at once denounced as being anathema.

A good deal has been learned of this outward material world during the last four hundred years. America has been discovered, the world has been circumnavigated, Australia and other vast islands find a place on our maps. The solar system has been studied, and three planets have been added to the planets known by the ancients. The stellar universe is being explored. The forces of electricity have been controlled, and we are to-day on the threshold of the electrical age, which will be as different from the iron age as was the iron age from the bronze period. The knowledge of mankind regarding the material world on which they dwell has been enormously increased. But as regards the spiritual world, towards which we are all so steadily journeying, the Church authorities assure us that there is nothing more to be learned. All that need be learned has already been vouchsafed. Every avenue that might lead to a fuller knowledge is peremptorily closed. Such in general terms is the attitude assumed by the Protestant Church. It is rather a remarkable attitude to maintain in an age

when even the man in the street is ready to exclaim that after "wireless" anything may be possible.

It is on these momentous subjects that what is termed Spiritualism professes to give men information, and if that information does to some extent collide with the framework of existing theological systems, is the information on that account to be suppressed? When George Stephenson introduced his railways there were loud outcries of protest on the part of landed proprietors and more especially on the part of stage-coach owners. The landed proprietors gradually discovered that George Stephenson was their greatest friend, and even the venerated stage-coach in its modern form has come into its own again. We are not to judge of this proffered information on spiritual verities merely from the standpoint of how it is to affect vested interests—we are to judge it in relation to truth. Is this information true? Can proofs be given that this information, now continued for upwards of eighty years, is true? That is the main point, and if the information is true, then the vested interests can be left out of the reckoning, in the belief that in the end what is true will find its own place in the scheme of human thought, and will be attended with the beneficent results that have marked the progress of Truth in every age. In this respect the fears of the Church are groundless. Theologians may gradually discover that what at first they regarded as an enemy may prove to be their best friend.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUALISM

IN order to understand the action of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle during the last twelve years of his life, it is necessary to give some account of the origin and progress of the Spiritualistic movement up to the year 1916, when he proclaimed his belief in its main tenets. It has been made clear that he was interested in the subject ever since he collaborated with General Grayson at Southsea in psychic investigation. He was always ready to welcome any new psychic experience. In 1902, when he first met Sir Oliver Lodge, he had not arrived at any definite conclusion regarding the real cause that lay behind the phenomena he had witnessed, but in 1916 he held that he was in possession of positive knowledge which was of vital importance to mankind.

What is termed Spiritualism had its origin in an occurrence that took place in a house in the village of Hydesville, situated a few miles from Rochester, in the county of New York, U.S.A. This village was a small collection of wooden houses, one of which was regarded as being haunted. Continuous rappings had constrained the occupants to vacate it, and they were succeeded as tenants by a Mr. David

and Mrs. Fox, with their two daughters—Margaret Fox, aged fifteen years, and Kate Fox, aged twelve years. The rappings did not in any way alarm David Fox, for he was convinced that he would be able to pluck the heart out of the mystery, which he certainly did in the end, but in a manner very different from what he had anticipated. He proceeded to examine and nail up the windows, believing that the rappings were caused by the windows in some way. But the rappings went on. He then concluded that the rappings were due to a shoemaker who worked near-by. But the rappings continued when the shoemaker was not working, and that hypothesis had to be put aside. The extraordinary fact was that from the time the Fox family entered the house the rappings, instead of being occasional, as was the case in the experience of the former occupants, became regular and at times violent.

On the 31st March, 1848, an evening memorable in the history of humanity, Kate Fox, who in after years became a celebrated medium, said playfully to what, child-like, she supposed was a spirit, "Here you, do as I do." And she clapped her hands several times. To her surprise she heard a number of knocks equal to the number of times she had clapped her hands. She cried out, "Mother, the spirit can see as well as hear." The mother became interested. We now quote from her own statement, made on the 11th April, following the 31st March, 1848.

"I then thought I would put a test that no one

in the place could answer. I asked the noise to tap my different children's ages successively. Instantly each of my children's ages was given correctly, pausing between them sufficiently long to individualise them until the seventh, at which a longer pause was made, and then three more emphatic raps were given corresponding to the age of the little one that died, which was my youngest child. I then asked, 'Is this a human being that answers my questions so correctly?' There was no rap. I asked, 'Is it a spirit? If it is, make two raps.' Two sounds were given as soon as the request was made. I then said: 'If it is an injured spirit, make two raps,' which were instantly made, causing the house to tremble. Further questions were asked, and the correct answers given." (See *The History of Modern Spiritualism* (Doyle), p. 63.)

On that memorable evening Modern Spiritualism was born.

The neighbours were called in and further questions were asked and answered. An Isaac Post, who was a Quaker, suggested that the alphabet should be used and the letters called over, and that when the right letter was reached approval could be given by a number of raps. In this way long messages were gradually decoded. It was ascertained that a wandering merchant, Charles B. Rosma by name, aged thirty-one years, had been murdered in the house, that he had been robbed of his money and his box of merchandise, and that his body had been buried in the cellar. The cellar

was dug, and whilst traces of human hair and quicklime were found, no positive evidence was discovered that any human body had been buried there. This was the one unsatisfactory feature in the case that puzzled David Fox to the end of his days.

A great hubbub arose throughout the neighbourhood, some few people believing in the manifestations, the majority regarding the statements of the Fox family as being a tissue of falsehoods. The excitement and the persecution became so great that the Fox family had to leave Hydesville, and seek refuge in Rochester, where their trials, instead of being ended, only began.

There was one sequel to this story that deserves attention. In the year 1904, when the various actors in this drama had all passed into the Unseen World, some children were playing in the cellar of the house where these manifestations had taken place. Suddenly one of the walls fell down. It was found that this was not the real wall of the cellar, but a temporary wall that had been built up at a later date than the original building of the cellar, leaving a space of three or four feet between this temporary wall and the actual wall. When this space was dug up a skeleton of a human body was found and a box similar to that box of the wandering merchant. This statement was published in the *Boston Journal* (a non-spiritualistic newspaper) of the 23rd November, 1904.

The two figures that emerge out of this historical occurrence with the greatest credit are Mr. J.

David and Mrs. Fox. At the period of the rappings Kate Fox was only twelve years of age, and her sister Margaret was fifteen years of age. These young girls could have done little to stem the tide of popular resentment that the supernormal phenomena had called forth. It was David (as he was called) and Mrs. Fox who had to breast the storm, and this they bravely did until the end. It was in their house in Hydesville that the first spiritual telegraph was established. It was through the manifestations they had witnessed that the modern investigation began into the conditions necessary to establish a measure of intelligent communication between the two worlds—the material planet on which we dwell and the spiritual world with which according to ancient and modern beliefs this planet is encompassed.

We have been at some pains to record the details connected with this discovery. Its importance will be more fully recognised as the years are multiplied. It would have been much more gratifying to many people if this means of communication between the two worlds had been discovered as the outcome of some Lambeth Conference or as the result of the proceedings of some General Assembly, but in this world, as a rule, discoveries are not made in that way. That a murdered travelling merchant should have returned to earth to make known the circumstances under which the crime took place may seem strange at first and even sordid, but murder, we are assured by one who knew better than most of us

the workings of the human heart, will "speak with most miraculous organ." This discovery was made by a group of villagers living in Hydesville, and became the spark that lighted a flame which is already blazing across the continents. How true the words of old, *Exaltavit humiles*!

There were, however, several contributory causes that rendered the incidents at Hydesville noteworthy. The real founder of Spiritualism is Emmanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772), one of the greatest souls that ever trod this planet. Much of the teaching that is claimed by modern Spiritualism regarding Time and Space and the conditions prevailing in the spiritual spheres can be found in the writings of Swedenborg. Far more truly than the Church founded in his name, the Spiritualists are carrying his teaching to the ends of the earth. Spiritualists as a body have never been partial to theology in any form, and they may omit a considerable part of Swedenborg's theology, but his inner and deeper teaching they do appreciate; and it is that teaching which in the meantime is being emphasised and corroborated by the Intelligences that are able to reach us from the other side.

The name of Mesmer must be added, for he, too, was the precursor of this modern movement—a man who was held up to scorn during his lifetime, and yet one who has proved himself to be one of the benefactors of mankind. For it was Mesmer who revealed the power of sympathy between certain individuals, and how under definite conditions the

subject in the hands of the hypnotist or mesmeriser can be imbued with new ideas and even faculties, and under the inspiration of his prompter can speak or act in a manner that in his normal condition would be for him an utter impossibility. This is a domain which has still to be explored, and which is believed by many will yield remarkable results for the good of mankind, although it has to be admitted that, like many forms of enquiry, it is attended with a measure of danger. But one fact was clearly seen from the outset by the early pioneers. When mere schoolgirls began to discourse in eloquent and learned terms on profound philosophical themes, it was recognised at once that it was not the schoolgirl who was speaking, but some enlightened intelligence, and that the schoolgirl was being used as a medium. The remarkable discourses being delivered by Mrs. Meurig Morris at the Fortune Theatre, London, and throughout the land are an example of this gift (1931). Mr. Laurence Cowen discovered Mrs. Meurig Morris, and he has been instrumental in a large measure in bringing her before the public.

This close connection between Mesmerism and Spiritualism is illustrated in the life of Andrew Jackson Davis. He was a penniless uneducated youth in Poughkeepsie, who became in after years the philosopher and seer of Spiritualism. Many regard him as the greatest seer of modern times. As a youth he gave himself up as the subject of a local practitioner of mesmerism in Poughkeepsie, and for

some years he was used to diagnose medical diseases. At the age of nineteen he was taken to New York, and under the direction of a Dr. Lyon he delivered a series of lectures, which were reported by a William Fish (a Swedenborgian), and finally published under the title, *Nature's Divine Revelations, a Voice to Mankind*. This large volume has passed through forty editions, and is still regarded as being one of the classics on the subject. The philosophy of ultimates developed in the first part is altogether remarkable as being the philosophy of a youth of nineteen years of age, his description of the development of the solar system equally remarkable as revealing a knowledge not only of the nebular hypothesis first propounded by Swedenborg, and of the latest results of geological research at that period, but it is no less remarkable as forecasting events that would take place in the future which to a considerable extent have been realised. He prophesied the discovery of Neptune eight years before the mathematical calculations of Leverrier and Adams led to the discovery of that planet. This book was published in the year 1847. In later years he dispensed entirely with the intervention of any outward operator, and became the author of some thirty or forty volumes.

Another writer of that period scarcely less worthy was Hudson Tuttle, a lonely farmer who produced *The Arcana of Nature*, a book when it was written he knew not how to get published. The means of publishing, like so many of the activities

of Spiritualism, were provided in a supernatural way. In that book Hudson Tuttle anticipates the conclusions of Darwin. He afterwards wrote on the antiquity of man and other cognate subjects. These are only two out of the immense army of writers who suddenly sprang into existence with a message for their contemporaries.

One other outstanding name must be mentioned with reverence—the name of a man of whom this world proved itself to be unworthy. Daniel Dunglas Home was born in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh in the year 1833 and was brought up as a boy in Portobello. The name Home in Scotland is pronounced as if it were spelled Hume. He was, in a somewhat indirect way, connected with the celebrated Border family of that name. At eight years of age he was taken to the United States by an aunt, where he developed certain psychic gifts to such a degree that he became a wonder to all who personally knew him. He was of a deeply religious and artistic temperament. He reached London about 1855, and from that date until about 1875 the history of Spiritualism in Great Britain is mainly centred around him. Among his converts were Robert Chambers, the eminent Edinburgh publisher, S. C. Hall, the Editor of *The Art Journal*, Lord Dunraven and his son the late Lord Dunraven. The late Lord Dunraven before his death sent the volume, privately printed by his father, to *The Society for Psychical Research*, that it might be published. It is now accessible to any reader.

Home may be regarded as the greatest of all modern physical mediums. His claims were investigated by Sir William Crookes, and the results of these investigations were published in his book, *Researches into Modern Spiritualism*, now reprinted by the *Two Worlds*, Manchester, and which can be purchased for 1s. Crookes began this investigation with the object of disproving the claims of the Spiritualists, only to become their scientific champion. In his presidential address to the British Association in after years he declared that he had nothing to withdraw from these early statements. Crookes wrote his book under the impression that he would be able to carry with him the approval of the members of the Royal Society! He had to learn that if theologians are chary in their admissions as regards these alleged spiritualistic manifestations, they are meek and docile as compared with the adamant opposition of many scientists towards phenomena that savour of a supernormal character. The scientists only reflected the sentiment of the period, and when Thackeray in the *Cornhill Magazine* published an article "Stranger than Fiction," by Mr. B. Bell, recording some experiences with D. D. Home, the circulation of the magazine went down by fifty per cent. Mrs. Grundy was not prepared in these days to listen to any account of Home's doings. And little wonder. The account of the phenomena produced in connection with Home's mediumship can still tax the belief of many of us well seasoned in the reading of psychic

records. Home regarded himself as being entrusted with a special mission for mankind, and lived and died in that conviction.

Few men have been treated more unworthily by their generation than D. D. Home. He never accepted money as a fee for the manifestation of his gifts. On one occasion he was offered £2,000 if he would give a séance, and he refused the sum. His whole life was a life of abnegation. If it can be called a failing, he accepted the large sum of money pressed upon him by Mrs. Lyon, some twenty thousand pounds and afterwards increased to thirty thousand pounds. Alike he and his friends remonstrated with her at this lavish generosity. Who in his place would have refused it? He only accepted the gift after consulting with his friends in London. They unanimously advised acceptance, as the possession of such a sum would relieve his mind from the anxieties of poverty. When that capricious woman demanded back the money, alleging fraudulent practices on his part in his methods of obtaining it, he again consulted his friends, and they advised resistance to the unjust claims founded on the assertion of fraudulent practices on his part. The case was taken to court. Had he been a self-seeking man he could easily have gone to America and invested the money, thus putting himself beyond the reach of British law. At that period no Spiritualist had any standing in a British court of law. When it was stated in court that Home had been levitated, the judge asked what

that meant. He was informed that Home had been visibly raised from the floor of a room until his head touched the ceiling, and that he had made a cross with a pencil on the ceiling to prove that it was an actual fact and not a mere hallucination. That was enough! The learned and worthy judge had doubtless read in his New Testament of Philip the Evangelist being transported through the air a considerable distance until he was found at Damotus, and of Paul's experiences how he had been caught up into the third heaven, but that any man in these prosaic modern times could be levitated so that his head touched the ceiling of a room was too much. Home lost his case, and far from being relieved from the stress of poverty, he found himself after that experience more needy than ever. But this man, who numbered among his friends the monarchs and princes of Europe, was not left homeless. His later years were cheered by the companionship of a loving and devoted wife, who tended him in his period of failing health, and who has given to the world a record of his marvellous gifts. If there is an after life and an after reckoning, the British Press owe a deep apology to Daniel Dunglas Home. He died a martyr to his faith at the age of fifty-three, and was buried at St. Germain.

Daniel Dunglas Home was not the only medium of his day. Mediums sprang up in nearly every town and village. In London the Rev. Stainton Moses had many followers, who in after years became the founders of the London Spiritualist

Alliance. In Scotland David Duguid formed a small society in Glasgow which has developed into the Glasgow Spiritualists' Association. In the various countries of Europe similar manifestations took place, and this was equally true of Australia and New Zealand, and South America. In an incredibly short space of time the movement became world-wide. In Russia Madame Blavatsky appeared, who subsequently became the leader of the Theosophical movement. The interest in the United States was so widespread that, according to Mark Twain, Spiritualism narrowly escaped becoming a new religion. But the disruptive forces were already at work. There has been from the outset no real cohesion on the part of Spiritualists. It is their boast that they have no creed and no leaders.

At the present time there is the intellectual section who regard the phenomena from a scientific point of view. They record the actual occurrences, the conditions under which these occurrences take place, and the inferences to be drawn from the tabulated facts. These investigators do not necessarily commit themselves to a belief either in an after life or an after world. Several of them seek an explanation in the exteriorisation of some human faculty that has not been sufficiently examined. The religious section again is divided into two parties: (*a*) those who would give to Jesus Christ a subordinate place in the movement, and (*b*) those who claim to be Christian Spiritualists. These latter regard Spiritualism as being in no way antagonistic to the

fundamental positions of the Church. They welcome the phenomena as constituting a new and valuable body of evidence confirming in many ways the supernatural manifestations recorded in the New Testament writings.

It is this lack of cohesion on the part of Spiritualists that has been a source of weakness in the past. On the other hand, it may be claimed that every Spiritualist being an independent observer, and bound by no creed in any form, the interests of truth can be best served in this way. Be that as it may, whilst Spiritualism has spread throughout the world with phenomenal rapidity, it cannot be claimed that it has laid hold of the mass of the people to the same extent that many minor organisations have done. This has been due, in the first place, to the hostility of the Church. From the beginning of the movement there have always been several prominent clergymen identified with it. Even in the Hydesville rappings a Methodist clergyman, the Rev. A. H. Jervis, took the part of the Fox family, and defended them from the attacks made upon them. Alike in the Church of Rome and the Church of England, prominent clergymen have stepped to the front and declared publicly that the phenomena were genuine. At the present time Spiritualism has no more worthy representative than the Rev. G. Vale Owen,¹ who surrendered his living at Orford in

¹ The Rev. George Vale Owen, formerly Vicar of Orford, Lancashire, passed to the higher life on the 7th March, 1931. He was a brave, noble man, the writer of the automatic Script that bears his name, and the author of many notable books.

order to devote his entire energy to its advocacy. The Rev. Charles Tweedale in the Church of England has written one of the ablest books upon the subject, *Man's Survival after Death*, and has proved himself to be a devoted worker in the cause. The Rev. Drayton Thomas among the Nonconformist clergy has rendered years of valiant service in this respect. Both Mr. Vale Owen and Mr. Drayton Thomas are authors of many volumes on the subject, and have a wide reading public behind them. The Rev. J. W. Potter has his own following. He is a man who has been severely criticised, and at the same time one of those men for whom the word impossible does not exist.

But the Church as a whole regards the movement with distrust. Spiritualism deals with facts that the Church regards as its own exclusive property, and any enlightenment from Spiritualists is treated with disdain. Roman Catholics are far more aware of what Spiritualism stands for than the ordinary Protestant, for the simple reason that in the Roman Catholic Church psychic gifts are more or less cultivated. The idea of a "miracle" is not strange to the Roman Catholic mind. Spiritualists believe in miracles, but they regard these manifestations as being due to the operation of some psychic law which as yet may be only partially understood. The "miracles" alike at Lourdes and in connection with Saint Thérèse de Lisieux are of quite modern date. And it has to be remembered that there are wise heads in the higher circles of Catholic administra-

tion, and that in these higher circles psychic gifts are cultivated. It was for that reason that D. Dunglas Home, who was originally a Methodist, became a Roman Catholic, and died as a member of the Greek Church. But the general body of the clergy in all the Churches maintain either an open or latent hostility to every form of psychic investigation. Many of them are indignant at the thought that they have anything new to learn either as regards the destiny of the departed, or as regards the conditions under which the departed may live. Dean Inge, an eminent ecclesiastical publicist, has expressed himself on this subject in vigorous terms. We quote his words from the *Church of England Newspaper*.

“ If these stories (psychic records) were true, they would add a new terror to death. But as they are not true, but the residue of barbarous thought habits that were old before Christianity was young, why cannot our bishops say bluntly that the Church of England can have nothing to do with this nonsense? For the clergy to pander to primitive superstitions which surge up powerfully enough sometimes from the unconscious is to court a success which is worse than failure.”

Dean Inge in expressing these sentiments represents a large section of the clergy in all the Churches. On the other hand, there is a minority of the clergy in every Church who see much deeper than the worthy Dean, only they dare not speak in his somewhat strident tones, but must needs content themselves with a “ whispered humbleness.”

This hostility is equally shared as a rule by men of science. It is a remarkable fact, however, that from its inception Spiritualism has always been championed by some eminent scientific authority. In America Professor Hare, of the University of Philadelphia, was so incensed at the rapid spread of what he regarded as a popular delusion that he began a serious investigation of the subject. He was convinced in the end that the phenomena were real. He had to his credit many valuable inventions, and was an acknowledged authority on his own subject of chemistry, but when he publicly avowed his belief in the facts of Spiritualism, it was to be practically ostracised by his faculty, which led him to exclaim: "Whilst they revile me, *I know*." In our own country first Sir William Crookes investigated the subject, with the result to which reference has already been made, to be followed by Alfred Russel Wallace, whose place in science cannot be challenged. His book, *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, contains the ablest reply to David Hume that I have ever read. Sir William Barrett, who at one period was the assistant of Professor Tyndall and afterwards Professor of Physics in the Dublin University, was one of the founders of the Society for Psychical Research. Need we mention that lonely figure—lonely in his imperial grasp of the more important problems in science, and of human life—Sir Oliver Lodge. He has never rashly committed himself to any position. There are aspects of Spiritualism to which he will give no

countenance. But the essential facts he does admit, and with calm and balanced judgment he has appealed to this generation and to succeeding generations that they may give to these facts an impartial consideration. This list might be easily extended. What can be stated regarding the spread of astronomical beliefs fifty years after the time of Galileo can be said with equal truth regarding Spiritualism. It was only an astronomer here and there in Europe in 1700 who avowed his belief in Galileo's hypothesis, and the same can be said of psychic investigation to-day. Some of the ablest thinkers on the Continent are now engaged on the problem. We can await their verdict with confidence.

Whilst this is true, our scientific teachers as a body will not admit the facts. "Am I to change my outlook upon the Universe," exclaimed one only the other day, "simply because you have asked me to witness a phenomenon that may prove on further examination to be merely a clever piece of jugglery." In this answer there is much that is justifiable. No man is warranted, simply on witnessing some unusual manifestation, to change his whole outlook on life, but he would be warranted in continuing his investigations in order to ascertain whether or not in such manifestations there was a basis of reality. It is the indifference of scientists towards this momentous fact that causes amazement. "Supposing the phenomena to be genuine, they do not interest me," said Professor Huxley. He spoke for

a large section of his colleagues.¹ When Sir David Brewster took part in several of the séances given by Daniel Dunglas Home he was visibly impressed, but in the controversy that afterwards arose he declared : " Spirit is the last thing I will give in to," and at a later date, when the venerated Lord Kelvin was approached by W. T. Stead on the subject of psychic research, Lord Kelvin wrote that what was claimed for these manifestations rested on " fraud and bad observation "—a pronouncement that will be remembered.

As regards the Press, no newspaper of acknowledged standing gave any countenance to the movement. The leading newspapers avoided the subject as far as possible. Among the less reputable journals when times were dull there was a common

¹ The attitude of the literary dictators during the Victorian period was equally pronounced. J. A. Froude writes :

" At this moment we are beset with reports of conversations with spirits, of tables miraculously lifted, of hands projected out of the world of shadows into this mortal life. An unusually able accomplished person accustomed to deal with common-sense facts, a celebrated political economist, and notorious for business-like habits assured this writer that a certain mesmerist, who was my informants' intimate friend, had raised a dead girl to life. We should believe the people who tell us these things in any ordinary matter ; they would be admitted in a court of justice as good witnesses in a criminal case, and a jury would hang a man on their word. The person just now alluded to is incapable of telling a wilful lie ; yet our experience of the regularity of nature on one side is so uniform, and our experience of the capacities of human folly on the other is so large that when they tell us these wonderful stories, most of us are contented to smile : *we do not care so much as to turn out of our way to examine them.*" [Italics ours—J. L.]

This passage is the more remarkable, as it occurs in Mr. Froude's Essay on *A Plea for Free Discussion* ! The discussion of psychic phenomena was taboo so far as Mr. Froude was concerned.

saying, "Let us have a go at the mediums," and the usual clap-trap was served up to a gullible public. But notwithstanding this combined opposition the various psychic agencies continued to exist. In 1916 the London Spiritualist Alliance was housed in St. Martin's Lane, struggling hard to keep their organ *Light* in existence. The Marylebone Association had not emerged from obscurity. In Manchester and throughout the North of England vigorous local societies had come into being. In America first Madame Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott went off on a new track in which they became the exponents of Buddhist philosophy. Mrs. Eddy, who in her early years had been associated with the movement, founded Christian Science. Spiritualism in America suffered severely by means of these defections. But the "Old Stalwarts" held their ground, and in the summer season great camp meetings were held at Lilydale and other centres.

Neither in America nor in this country during the early part of the twentieth century did Spiritualism occupy a commanding position. It existed. It was a convenient butt for the jests of superficial minds. It was at the same time a subject for earnest enquiry on the part of those who had outgrown the myths and fables of their childhood. They found in this neglected and obscure region a possible clue that would guide them towards the solution of mysteries that otherwise would have remained inexplicable. Such was practically the position until about the year 1914. And then something happened!

CHAPTER III

THE GREAT WAR AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

THE war of 1914-18 can still be remembered by many of us as a kind of nightmare that oppressed the nation during a period of four years. The retreat from Mons was a shock to our susceptibilities, and during the successive battles the young and brave of the land began to fall like the leaves in autumn, first in hundreds, then in thousands, until the death roll reached near to a million of lives. The death messenger entered first one home and then another, until at the end there were few parents, with youthful sons, who were not called upon to surrender one or all of them as if to an insatiable monster. Fathers grew suddenly grey, and many a mother with her deep tenderness of heart began to ask, Where is the boy I nursed on my knee and whose boyish glee brought sunshine into my life? The whole question of Survival became invested with a new meaning. Were all these brave lads dead! who had gone forth so buoyantly to fight for their country? If they lived, where were they, and what were they doing? These were the questions that many a mother pondered in her heart. It was at that period the somewhat contradictory statements of the Church upon the subject were found to be unin-

telligible. It was really the bereaved mothers of Great Britain that lifted Spiritualism out of the dust, and who have made London the greatest centre in the world for Spiritualism and spiritualistic activity. If the Church had no definite answer to the enquiries of these mothers, they began to enquire for themselves. If the Church could not give them the information they desired, they were resolved to find that information elsewhere, if the information could be found at all.

The Protestant attitude on this subject is somewhat unsatisfactory. The Burial Service in the Church of England needs revision. The Rev. Charles Tweedale has appealed to the Bishops and his fellow-clergy on this subject, and has had only the deaf ear turned towards him. We once listened to the Rev. G. Vale Owen conducting a funeral service, and his teaching was based on the words of the New Testament. It was beautiful and comforting to a degree. Why insist on the resurrection of the material body when that material body confessedly moulders back into dust? Paul declares that it is the spiritual body that rises again, and in order to make his meaning more clear he adds, "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God." If the Bishops and their fellow-clergy were really interested in these subjects they would see to it that the articles and teaching of the Church were brought into accordance with ascertained psychic facts.

Sir Oliver Lodge lost his son Raymond in the

War, and with a true heroism he gave to the nation an account of his son's activities in the Unseen World, and the various proofs he had received that Raymond was alive and not dead! Whilst his message was welcomed by those who understood, and whilst it brought comfort and hope to many a bereaved father, there was the usual derision on the part of the scoffers. One passage in the book was seized upon and magnified unduly—the whisky-and-soda incident. Even some of the clergy chuckled over this, and held up their hands in holy horror. They forgot entirely the statement of their Master regarding the wine: "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the Vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my father's kingdom" (Mark xiv. 25). If the one statement is true, why should it have been thought that the other statement is improbable, more especially on the part of young officers who suddenly found themselves amidst completely new surroundings? Do we cease to speak and think when we enter the Unseen World? It is this utter lack of imagination and common sense that is displayed when men and women begin to discuss the possibilities of a future life that has left the masses of the people in perplexity and doubt. What we are here in *reality* we will be on the other side; and it is that simple fact that has to be recognised. Others followed the example of Sir Oliver Lodge, and gave to the world the proofs they had received that their dear ones were still alive and active in their respective spheres.

In the midst of the clamour that was aroused there was one who knew his facts, and who was ready to step forward into the arena. That man was Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He had reached conviction on the subject of Spiritualism. He had been deeply impressed by Myers's book on *Human Personality*—a "root book" he calls it. He had sat with Cecil Husk and many other mediums. From the extreme agnostic position he had arrived at certitude as regards not only the possibility but the actuality of a future life and of a future world. This conviction produced an extraordinary effect upon his mind. To the ordinary Christian man the central facts of Spiritualism merely confirm him in his essential beliefs. That the soul survives death is no new conception to him, that there is a blessed Hereafter is a truth with which he has been familiar from childhood. What Spiritualism does for the Christian man who knows the inner meaning of his faith is to confirm what he already believes, and not only to confirm his beliefs, but to afford him a measure of definite information regarding the future world. The experience of the agnostic is entirely different. The agnostic assumes an attitude of doubt towards all such subjects, and shelters himself behind his nescience. But when, instead of nescience, he is confronted with spiritual facts that are indisputable, then the horizon of his thoughts suddenly becomes expanded. He sees that this present life is simply an experience—a preparation for something vaster in the Great Beyond, and the

conception of the eternal progression of the human soul becomes to him a compelling motive towards new endeavour and heroic sacrifice. Hence Spiritualism has been called the religion of the agnostics—in the sense that the agnostics far more than the clergy have become leaders in the movement.

Conan Doyle produced two books, *The New Revelation* and *The Vital Message*, that contain his essential teaching on the subject. In these books he formulates the main beliefs that have found acceptance with Spiritualists, but it was a gain to have these beliefs clearly and succinctly stated.

There was one consideration, the possible loss of prestige, that has kept back many a man from becoming identified in any public manner with the cause of Spiritualism. He then stood, so to speak, on the summit of his fame as an author. He knew well that Judge Edmonds in America, who was recognised as one of the greatest judges and lawyers of his time, had suffered severely alike financially and in reputation by the public avowal of his belief in the psychic facts that had taken place in his own family circle. He knew of many others who when they touched the subject bade a long farewell to all hopes of preferment or recognition. We read in ancient story of a great chasm that opened in the streets of Rome, and which could only be closed by the most precious treasure in the city being cast into its depths. A knight, fully arrayed, appeared on horseback and declared that courage was the greatest wealth that Rome possessed. In presence of the

assembled citizens he leaped into the chasm, whereat, we read, the chasm, as had been prophesied by the soothsayers, gradually closed. Alas! in the chasm of misrepresentation and vituperation that has arisen in connection with Spiritualism it is not the life of one knight, but the lives of many that are being demanded before any hope can be entertained that the chasm will close. Sir Arthur was not afraid of it. He was fifty-eight years of age. He had at least twelve good years before him. He consulted Lady Conan Doyle, and together they resolved that come what might his testimony would be given to the world. The chasm has not even yet closed, but there are, at least, signs that it is closing. A man is no longer deemed on his way to the asylum simply because he has announced that the facts of Spiritualism interest him. One can now speak of the subject in drawing-rooms without the dread of immediate ostracism. Even Mrs. Grundy has begun to consider which side of the hedge is the safer for her.

As for the Spiritualists of that period they welcomed the accession of Sir Arthur to their ranks with joy. It was a repetition of Cinderella and her Prince. Cinderella had been sitting among the ashes, and her proud step-sisters eyed her with disdain. But it was this forgotten Cinderella that won the heart of Sir Arthur. It was this Cinderella he led forth as his partner on his journey to the Antipodes and to the rose-covered valleys of the Pacific slope. Had he been able to associate himself with any of the Churches there would have been wide-



SIR ARTHUR AND LADY CONAN DOYLE IN MELBOURNE, 1920.

spread rejoicing. The Church of Rome would have killed the fatted calf over the return of her long-lost son, and even the stern Presbyterians would have relaxed their rigour could he have found a resting-place within their fold. His lengthened sojourn in the valley of agnosticism, however, completely unfitted him on the intellectual side for the acceptance of Church creeds or Church formulas in any form. He found a clearer atmosphere in spiritualistic circles, for the ardent Spiritualist claims that with his knowledge of psychic facts and psychic laws he is as competent to pronounce on the deeper mysteries of religion as any Church Father who lived in the third or fourth century of our era. In reality Spiritualism is the half-way house between religion and science, or to change the metaphor, Spiritualists are busy building the bridge that will one day unite religion and science.

We are not alone in holding this view. An authority whose words have weight expressed himself to the same effect in the columns of the *Sunday Express*, 28th December, 1930. Sir Oliver Lodge, in dealing with the subject *The Gulf between Religion and Science*, after enlarging on the views of Dean Inge and Professor Alexander, proceeds :

“Science in fact has become reverent and is really seeking for the ‘bridge’ which Dean Inge said was necessary between the realm of facts and the realm of values. It is conducting the search rather blindly, feeling instinctively that it must be there, but it has not yet discovered the truth.

"I hold that the discovery of the necessary bridge lies in a region not yet entered by either scientist or theologian. This region is one both of fact and of values. It demonstrates the reality of the spiritual world by direct experience and by the methods of science ; yet it leads also to the values of religion.

"At present most scientists deny that the facts are facts, or that they have any value. As soon as humanity has progressed far enough it will realise that there are in this obscure region a number of facts, excluded from consideration hitherto, which will throw a different complexion on the whole problem.

"I say no more on this subject at present. I have said a good deal in books and other publications which has hitherto mainly been ignored. But before the outstanding controversy between religion and science can be settled, before the architecture can be completed, and the Universe even begun to be properly understood, these facts will have to be taken into account. The existence and co-operation of a spiritual world will have to be recognised, not as a matter of faith, *but as a branch of the organised system of knowledge that we call science.*" [*Italics ours.*]

Little doubt can be entertained as to what Sir Oliver Lodge hints at in this passage. For many years he has stood as a witness for the reality of spiritualistic phenomena which official science will not recognise in any shape or form. But he has tested the phenomena in many ways, and there are several aspects of it which he regards as being sufficiently guaranteed. His place in science cannot be questioned, nor is he indifferent to the organised

forms of religion. He is a churchwarden in his own parish. It is in order to reconcile the conflicting claims of science and religion that he has given a considerable part of his life energy. Wise would the Spiritualists be if they would listen to his guidance, wise would the Church leaders be if they would give heed to one who has ever recognised the service that the Church has rendered to the cause of civilisation and to the uplifting of mankind. The mere parrot-cries of the past cannot for evermore be repeated. Let all reverence be given to the thinkers of the past, but the dead hand of the past cannot for ever retard human progress, either as regards theology or any other science. Professor Flint was accustomed to speak of theology as being the Queen of all the sciences. True, but if theology is to retain that eminence, then some attention must be given to the issues of the hour. The ostrich, we are told, in times of stress and danger hides her head in the sand. If the Queen of all the sciences is to retain her queenly position she must adopt a different attitude.

If Sir Arthur found the various theological systems unsatisfactory (he was in reality a keen theologian), he did find in the literature of Spiritualism much that was akin to his own mode of thought. He found that Davis and Tuttle had anticipated the conclusions that Darwin had slowly reached. He found a system of evolution applied not only to the various phases of animal life that function on this material globe, he found that evolutionary process

applied to the spiritual life of mankind, and carried within the veil to the unimagined heights of splendour that such a belief involves. He did not find in the literature any hint that this material globe had only existed some six thousand years, or that it was in any sense the centre of the Universe. He learned that this world, whilst of transcendent interest in many ways, is only as a speck in the universcœlum. It was this evolutionary idea to which he had become wedded that he found embedded in Spiritualism, and which not only awakened his interest, but gradually led him to adopt the philosophy for which Spiritualism stands as a witness. This had taken place quietly in his own mind. He might have written his New Revelation and taken his place modestly in the ranks of the Spiritualists, giving his main attention to his literary studies.

The advent of the War, however, changed the position entirely. In the course of four years hundreds of thousands of young and brave men had entered the Unseen World, and in our own country there was left a multitude of bereaved fathers and mothers. He himself had lost his son, Kingsley, as the result of the War. His younger brother, General Innes Doyle, had died about the same time. He had many nephews and other personal friends who had fallen in the trenches around Ypres. And he had this knowledge locked up in his heart, a knowledge that he was convinced was in accordance with fact, and which he knew

would be a source of comfort and enlightenment to the thousands who were sitting in darkness. He knew, on the other hand, the wall of prejudice and ignorance that would confront him, the amazement and half-concealed derision on the part of his literary friends that his action would awaken, the open hostility of the scientists and the frowns of the Church that he would encounter. He knew all that. But he had ever fought for truth and justice, and he would fight for truth and justice to the end. The author of *Rodney Stone* was a fighter, and here was an arena in which his fighting instincts would have full scope. His latent faculty of speech had been dormant during many years. He had dreamed of Parliament, and had contested alike South Edinburgh and the Hawick Burghs in vain. He knew he could speak. He knew that the same clarity of statement and incisive phrasing which had characterised his articles in the magazines would appear in his speeches. But behind all this there was the mysterious Call that comes from beyond ourselves, which the world can never understand, but which underlies every form of religion. For Spiritualism to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a religion. He was interested in its scientific aspect, deeply interested in its phenomenal aspect, but it was as an explanation of the deeper life of man, and as giving to every man and woman a definite proof not only of survival after death, but of the inevitable consequences alike of selfish and sinful living and of the joy and happiness that await all who, having risen above their

lower selves, surrender the ego in order to realise a God-given ideal—it was this conception in its many-sidedness that constrained him to leave the comforts of his easy chair and make the world his parish.

It may be interjected at this point, Why did he not enter the Church if he was conscious of this religious impulse? It was his love of justice or “fair play” that prevented him from identifying himself with any Church. He found the Church outlook too narrow for him. Are we to believe that a loving God sends all the Jews and Mohammedans and Buddhists to Gehenna because they do not utter our shibboleths? Surely, more tolerant conceptions will one day sway the human mind. It is not to be understood that the writer of these pages under-values either the importance of doctrine or methods of worship. But to insist that everyone must think or worship in the same hard-and-fast manner is to outrage alike the dictates of common sense, and of the ever-expanding possibilities of the human soul.

Such transitions in actual life are not unknown. Swedenborg, until his fifty-sixth year, was the scientist and philosopher—after fifty-six he became the seer. Augustine was a brilliant rhetorician before he came under the influence of Ambrose, but it is Augustine as the disciple of Ambrose who still holds captive the minds of men. Need we refer to Paul, the bigoted Pharisee. How different his attitude when he became the Apostle of the Gentiles!

In no sense was Conan Doyle a "plaster saint." He never made any such profession. Piety in its genuine forms, when he met with it, he ever respected. But as regards reverence, sincerity of purpose, devotion to the ideal he had set before him as well as in the discharge of the ordinary courtesies and duties of life he has an unblemished record. It has been my privilege, during a life far extended beyond the normal limit, to meet with many gifted men alike in the service of the Church and State. Many of these men were of outstanding intellectual gifts, and whose one and only aim was to serve the best interests of their Church or country. I have seen these men in their homes, discussed with them the special objects they had in view, and recognised the personal sacrifices they were ready to face in order that their beliefs might find a lodgment in the hearts of their fellow-men. But never have I met anyone to whom his life purpose was so real as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He believed that we were living in a new age. He saw the ghost-like phantoms that have so long dominated our intellectual outlook departing amidst the shadows. He beheld the New Jerusalem arising not only in England, but in every land. He longed that the realisation of that spiritual world which he himself had discovered might become the common heritage of mankind, and that the terror of death, which is a nightmare for so many people, might be replaced by the knowledge that death is merely a transition—a gateway to a realm where magnanimity and heroism

will be fully recognised, and where cruelty and insincerity will find their just retribution. Such was the gospel he preached which comes much nearer in its essence to the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount than many people will allow. It was action and not phrases that he emphasised.

There was one enormous advantage he possessed over similar workers. He was not the first who had traversed the globe to proclaim the truths of Spiritualism. Dr. Peebles, Emma Hardinge Britten and many others had visited Australia, and their voices had been heard on both sides of the Atlantic. But so great was the interest that had been aroused regarding the author of Sherlock Holmes that, wherever he went, apart altogether from advertisement or other fictitious methods, he was assured of a crowded audience. A simple announcement in the newspapers of the town where he was to speak brought the people to his feet. They might be indifferent as regards the problems he was anxious to discuss with them, they were eager to see and hear "Sherlock Holmes."

Such was the position when in 1918 Sir Arthur began his mission. There was first his own country—alike England and Scotland—to be considered. It was no easy task to visit every leading town in Great Britain. But this was the first task that engaged his attention. There was a map of Great Britain that hung in his study. When he had visited any town, with his methodical accuracy he afterwards affixed a wafer to the name of that town

on his map. I often saw that map. It was sprinkled with wafers from the shores of Kent and Cornwall as far north as Aberdeen. The names of several towns had not only one wafer, but two or three wafers attached to them. Wherever there was an opening in any centre he was there. The long journeys this entailed, the expenditure of nerve energy that was inevitable in addressing so many assemblies, had their own wearing effect upon his constitution. But these local journeys were comparatively easy when compared with the interminable journeys he had to undertake in later years. This constant travelling had to be reckoned with as the years began to multiply, and more especially when the "allotted span" was crossed. It was not merely his journey across South Africa at that period of his life that has to be considered; it was the years of wearing labour that preceded it. He was in 1918 a man of superabounding energy. He could still hold his own in the cricket field, astonish some opponent at billiards with a break of a hundred, prove himself an expert marksman at some local rifle range, and if in golf he never reached the first rank, he could at least enjoy the game and sit down afterwards and cover many pages with valuable manuscript. There seemed to be no limit to his literary output. But whilst at fifty-eight it is possible to burn the candle at both ends, on the other side of seventy it is different. This was the fact he completely overlooked. In the early years of his campaign there were neither signs of fatigue

nor of lessening effort. There was the *joie de vivre* in his new calling. He loved to speak. He knew how to control an audience, and whilst the scoffers were not absent and sometimes former literary friends looked on askance, he felt, as Columbus felt in the shrouds of the *Pinta*, that he had discovered a new world.

CHAPTER IV

THE TASK

SEVERAL references have been made in these pages to Sir Arthur's difficulties with the accepted theology of the Church of Rome and the theology of the various Protestant Churches. He was not alone in this respect. Many of the acutest thinkers of the nineteenth century were in the same position. Herbert Spencer endeavoured to fit himself into the current thought of his age, and finally gave up the attempt in despair. "George Eliot" found herself in the same group, and hence the rapid spread of agnosticism. To examine the whole subject of theology in its relation to modern science is a task beyond our powers, and far beyond the limits of this book. But as regards the question at issue—the survival of the soul after death and the existence of a spiritual world, and what happens to the soul after death and how far any possible communication exists between the two worlds—these points can be briefly considered, as they bear immediately upon the task to which Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was now committed.

On the part of the Roman Catholic Church from the earliest times there has been a belief in the resurrection of the material body. Many of the

Church Fathers expressed themselves emphatically on this point. Confronted with the difficulty that the outward material body moulders back into dust, and that this dust may in some cases be scattered to the ends of the earth, these Fathers bravely asserted that God was able on the Judgment Day to gather up all these particles together and reconstitute the body. Several of the Popes vigorously supported these views.

In the Presbyterian theological system it is stated : " The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and their bodies being still united to Christ do rest in their graves until the Resurrection." This is the statement contained in the Shorter Catechism, which is amplified in the Longer Catechism and in the Confession of Faith to mean that the souls of believers at death are made perfect in holiness (a point which might be questioned), and that the bodies will be raised up apparently from the graves and re-united to the soul or spiritual part of our body ; and that after this union takes place there will be the general judgment. In the reunion of soul and body the complete happiness of the individual will be realised. This is simply the old Egyptian belief that, after five or six thousand years, the dead body and the surviving soul were to be re-united. Hence the infinite pains the Egyptians took in the embalming of the body and in the erection of the Pyramids. The *raison d'être* of these Pyramids can be better understood if we regard them as a means of preserving the outward

physical body from desecration. Once a pyramid was erected human ambition began to operate. Each succeeding king desired to have a pyramid larger than that of his predecessor. Not but that other motives of a far more complex character lay behind the building of the Great Pyramid.

It was in Alexandria that a considerable part of the scheme of Christian theology was formulated, and what we find enshrined in our Church standards are the old Egyptian beliefs clothed anew in a Christian garb. This is especially true of our eschatological beliefs. The idea of the soul being separated from the body for a period of time is mainly Egyptian. Hence a series of hymns have come into use which indicate that during a lengthened season the souls of the departed ones are all asleep, and this impression is deepened by the epitaphs that one can read in many a churchyard. This is confusing to lay minds.

The whole teaching of modern Spiritualism controverts these ideas, and it is only fair to state that many clergymen alike in their beliefs and in their preaching have completely ignored them.

So far as recent investigation has gone, we are informed that there may be a brief period of rest for tired souls, and that many in passing into the future world do not even know that they are dead ! It is only after a prolonged sojourn in the Inner World that they are able to realise their changed condition. But in the great majority of cases there is an almost immediate awakening ; and for those who have

had their spiritual faculties trained and developed a true perception of what has taken place is almost immediately realised. As for the outward material body it is cast aside for ever like a worn-out garment, and the spirit, to use the language of the apostle, is "clothed upon" with a spiritual body adapted to a spiritual world, in which a material body of "flesh and blood" would be of no use whatever. Such is the essential position of Spiritualists based upon actual communication with their friends who have preceded them into the Higher Spheres. However much Spiritualists may differ on many points—and they do differ and argue a good deal, like other people—they are all agreed that the outward material body at death is cast aside, and that the spiritual part of our being not only continues to exist, but that after a brief period so far from being asleep or floating about like some impalpable mist, we are engaged in those activities in a future world for which we are best adapted.

It is stated that this future world is a reasonable world, beautiful to a degree for the worthy and just man; and that on the other hand there are spheres of darkness which are terrible to contemplate and to which for a period the souls of wicked and cruel persons are consigned.

With regard to the possibility of holding communication with the departed ones such an idea was new to the modern world. Indeed, the conception was not allowed. It was denounced as necromancy by many clergymen. Necromancy is an oppro-

brious epithet, and is entirely out of place when applied to this subject. Its literal meaning is prophesying by means of communication with the dead, from the Greek *nekros*, dead, and *manteia*, divination. We have an example in the Old Testament when Saul went to the woman of Endor in order that he might consult Samuel about the approaching battle. We read of Ulysses consulting the shade of Tircæus in the same way. More literally still necromancy may be applied to the rites connected with Black Magic, in which the dead bodies of animals are used to prepare certain decoctions that are believed to be invested with magical potencies. *Spiritualism has no connection with either the one form of necromancy or the other.*

The whole history of the subject, from the days when the rappings at Hydesville began to attract attention until the present, has been to the effect that so far from men and women seeking to come into contact with the dead, *it has been the other way about.* It is those who are *alive* in the interior world who seek by rappings or in some other way to attract the attention of sensitive persons on this side of time, and to convince them that death does not end all, but is merely a transition to a wider sphere of influence. It is the inhabitants of this spiritual world around us who are pressing in wherever they have an opportunity, and seeking to link the two worlds together in closer bonds than has ever been experienced in former days. For clergymen, as is the case on the part of many (Dean Inge, for example) to

hold up their hands in holy horror at Spiritualism as if it were necromancy is to take refuge under an unwarrantable assumption. In the experience of many of the keenest workers in the movement to-day it was not *they* who sought to contact a spiritual world. It was the loved ones in that spiritual world who were able to reach these workers in such a manner as to place all doubt on the subject beyond question. The result has been in the experience of many people that the veil for them has not only been rent in twain, but a conviction as to the reality of spiritual facts has been reached that operates as a controlling motive in their individual lives.

To hold communication with the dead has been denounced by the Church. It is not safe ; it is not lawful are some of the cries. How can clergymen endowed with any vision commit themselves to such utterances when in their own sacred books we read of Jesus holding communication with Moses and Elias, and that Jesus Himself came back and talked with two of His disciples on the way to Emmaus, and later with the Apostles in the upper room ? If such experiences were possible eighteen hundred years ago, why should they be impossible to-day ? It is this obscurantism, for which the Church has been largely responsible, that is driving many of the keenest intellects beyond her pale, and which rendered it impossible for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and many like him, to accept the teaching of the Church as being either authoritative or final.

The very questions which should more immedi-

ately interest our archbishops and bishops are the subjects which are ignored by them. The wearing of a chasuble and the wafting of incense are regarded as subjects of paramount importance; the question as to whether the soul of man survives the crisis of death, and the question as to what happens after death are subjects that do not admit of discussion. It is regarded as presumptuous for the lay mind to enter a province that belongs exclusively to the clergy. We must content ourselves with the verdict given by the Fathers, and with the formulated beliefs that have been embodied in the ecclesiastical standards.

This reverence for the past may have a certain merit, but it can be overdone. The wheels of progress do not cease to revolve, even when a bishop or an archbishop has spoken. "The thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns." The "dead hand of the Past" is not for ever to restrain human enquiry. The Church of Rome silenced Galileo. His conceptions at that period were new, and rather upset some theological formulas. But the silencing of Galileo did not keep back the truth. Gladly to-day would that page of ecclesiastical history be blotted out. In the same manner, when the geologists began to claim millions of years to account for the gradual formation of our planet, an alarm was raised that the six-thousand years' theory of Archbishop Usher was endangered. There are few thinking men to-day who believe that six thousand years can account for the various changes through which our planet has

passed. It is a sorry task for the professed Church of Jesus Christ, who was Himself the great pioneer of Truth, to keep back from the people the knowledge they are eager to learn, as can be witnessed at the various meetings held in London and elsewhere every week. Obscurantism may be convenient for a time. It brings its own inevitable retribution in the end. Facts cannot be displaced by ignoring them. The facts remain.

Wise would it be for the Church leaders to fall back alike upon the teaching and testimony of the Founder of the Christian faith. He rose from the dead the third day after His crucifixion. He made Himself known to Mary Magdalene. He appeared to Paul at a later period. He above all others has brought "life and immortality to light"; and it was this knowledge, as can be clearly seen in their epistles, that was the constraining motive in the life of Paul and the other Apostles. In this world they could only expect persecution and probably martyrdom, but for them there was the Beyond.

It is the withholding of this positive knowledge by the Church and the scientific world from the people that aroused Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's indignation. He was determined that, so far as in him lay, that knowledge should be proclaimed to the ends of the earth. He did not pause to count the cost. To this task he was definitely called, and he threw himself into the conflict with the eagerness of youth, and with results which only future generations can adequately estimate.

CHAPTER V

THE MAN AND HIS TASK

ONE reason why Sir Arthur took the platform on behalf of Spiritualism was due to his conviction that the case for Spiritualism had never been adequately presented to the British public, and that there was a deep misunderstanding that had to be removed. The Press had too often seized on some minor incident, and exaggerated its importance to the disparagement of the movement. When a distinguished scientist commits suicide, no one ever dreams of blaming science for that unhappy circumstance, or when a member of the clerical profession sometimes strays from the narrow path, no one declares that the Christian faith is a series of impostures. But this was exactly what happened with regard to Spiritualism in those early days. The solid incontrovertible proofs were disregarded, and some minor incident was seized upon and magnified until a general impression was produced that the whole fabric of Spiritualism was founded on imposture, and that mediums as a body were a group of charlatans. This attitude is not wholly absent on the part of the Press even at the present time, but a vast change has taken place since Sir Arthur Conan Doyle went through the land, not only proclaiming

his own faith, but witnessing to the comfort and happiness these beliefs have brought to thousands. It gradually dawned on the public mind that, if a man like Sir Oliver Lodge, whose position in science cannot be questioned, certified the facts, and that if a man like Sir Arthur was so convinced of their importance as to become their interpreter and exponent, then there must be a great deal more in Spiritualism than the vituperous cleric or the reporter out for copy would admit.

The man in the street as a rule is not greatly concerned about a future world. It is this present world with its eternal "bread-and-butter" question that mainly occupies his thoughts. But even the man in the street was led to ask, "In these days of 'wireless' are we to assume that the last word regarding the future world has been spoken? Is there nothing more for any one of us to learn? Is it not possible that Sir Oliver Lodge or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle may be able to tell us what our bishops and our archbishops have failed to discern?"

There was certainly little "kudos" for Sir Arthur in embracing the tenets of this despised cult, but that was not his object. It was truth, truth at all costs. "Truth though it crush me," was his motto. This has to be recognised if we are to understand his missionary activities during the last twelve years of his life. He may have been right or wrong in his judgment. Time alone can determine that, and many of his followers are prepared with confidence to leave the verdict with Time.

But having reached the conviction that psychic facts are real, and that Spiritualism had never been adequately understood by the Press, he threw his whole energy into the work of propaganda to an extent that was only understood by his nearest friends.

Let anyone try to realise what these journeys and meetings meant for a busy man, the loss of energy that every speech involved, the enormous correspondence that the various meetings entailed, the letters of appeal from bereaved persons imploring counsel, the constant interviews with representatives of the Press alike in the homeland and, more especially, in foreign countries—let all this be taken into account, and there will be less wonder that the bodily machine began to creak, and finally broke down when he had passed his seventieth year. It is not too much to say that upon him came the “care of all the churches.” Had it been a question of pounds, shillings and pence, far wiser would he have been to have continued his literary studies. By those conversant with his financial affairs it is estimated that he lost well over £200,000 in espousing the cause of Spiritualism—a fairly hefty sum to sacrifice for one's principles.

Having evangelised Great Britain, he visited Australia in 1920-21, landing at Perth, W.A., and continuing his addresses at Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and other towns. In Sydney he met the Rev. S. Harris and other well-known mediums. He crossed to New Zealand, and continued his missionary campaign in the north and south islands.

In Australia and New Zealand he met with a great welcome. Lady Conan Doyle and her two sons with their sister "Billy" accompanied him on all his travels. After paying his travelling expenses he devoted the balance of the receipts to sending Mr. Horace Leaf and Mrs. Leaf to Australia on a tour of propaganda work.

Early in 1922 he visited the leading towns in the Eastern States in America. For several years in America Spiritualism had been rather on the decline, owing to some extent to the commercial methods that had been adopted by many who were identified with it, in other instances to some exposures that had been made, and above all to the defection of Madame Blavatsky, Mrs. Eddy and others. In these recent years many Theosophists have become more reasonable as regards Survival. Mrs. Besant herself is a member of the Survival League. But in the early days of the Theosophical movement there was considerable bitterness between the Theosophical leaders and the Spiritualists. Madame Blavatsky never minced her words. She attacked the Spiritualists, on whose behalf at one time she declared she was ready to spend her "bottom dollar." The Christian Science movement, which is especially strong in the States, diverted attention. Mrs. Eddy, whatever may have been her antecedents, warned her followers against Spiritualism.

Sir Oliver Lodge had visited New York, and had re-awakened an interest in the subject, and his visit, followed up by the appearance of Sir Arthur,



SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE IN AMERICA, 1923.

gave a new stimulus to the various existing organisations. Sir Arthur received a very generous welcome in New York. He appeared some nine nights in succession, to be cheered by enthusiastic audiences. He spoke to me more than once about this reception.

"It was to see and hear you, Sir Arthur," I drily remarked.

"No," he eagerly answered, "it was not to see and hear me. My final audience was as numerous and as enthusiastic as the first."

"You forget," I answered, "that there are more than six millions of people in New York."

But whether it was to see and hear Sir Arthur or from an underlying interest in the American mind regarding the phenomena which at one period had so deeply stirred their nation, there was ever an eager audience in every town he visited to welcome him. He was borne along on a wave of increasing interest. He had at the same time an opportunity of meeting the better-known mediums in America, among these being Miss Bessinet at Toledo. At the sitting with Miss Bessinet he had a remarkable psychic experience. His mother appeared to him, and other proofs were given him of the reality of Survival.

He did not attempt to penetrate the West, reserving that section of the States for another visit. He was by no means a stranger to America. As has been stated, in the early nineties under Major Pond, as his impresario, he had lectured in several of the towns on literary subjects. But an interval of nearly thirty years had taken place, and this renewed visit

had almost the attraction of novelty. He was so pleased with the reception that had been accorded him that in the year 1923 he returned to California.

On his way to Los Angeles at Altadena he met Mr. and Mrs. Jonson, who are mediums for materialisations—that extraordinary type of phenomena when actual beings in human form appear for a brief period. My own experience of this type of phenomena is limited, but I have seen and talked with “Sister Amy” as she is called. At the séance with the Jonsons Sir Arthur and Lady Conan Doyle witnessed many of these materialisations, and finally, according to his own account, his mother appeared to him. We quote his own words :

“I could not doubt that the general outline of head and shoulders was that of my mother. I looked hard at the features in the dim red light, and they seemed to be fluid, and forming themselves before my eyes, but I could not swear to this. The general effect was beyond all doubt. I said, ‘Is it you, mother?’ She threw up her hands and danced up and down in an ecstasy of delight. Then she vanished, and I returned to my seat.”

He continues :

“I now had a very interesting experience. During the War I had been brought into contact with a young officer, Captain Cubitt, to whom I taught these truths. They consoled him greatly. He was killed in action. I had often wondered why he had not come back to see me to confirm all I had told

him. Now a figure emerged from the cabinet. I was asked to advance. I was naturally thinking of my own son and brother, and could not recognise the man in front of me. Then the face grew clearer and I cried, 'Is it Cubitt?' He nodded, and seemed pleased. At first he could not speak, but presently he said in a whisper that he had tried to come back but had failed. I asked him if he had found things as I taught him. He nodded very emphatically.

"Several other figures materialised, making fourteen in all, of both sexes, from the one small cabinet while the medium was visible outside. There were more than twenty witnesses."

Sir Arthur was quite frank in recounting these special experiences that were vouchsafed him.

The ordinary reader cannot quite comprehend that phantasms of the dead do appear, and for a brief period speak and act like human beings. Sir William Crookes has given a full account of his experiences with Katie King, in his *Researches into Modern Spiritualism*. At Cardiff in the year 1875 special sittings were held with Mr. George Spriggs. Those who took part in these séances had to pray and fast for a considerable period before the séance, and other severe restrictions were imposed upon them. What is reported as having followed would scarcely be credited, but the facts were duly attested at the time. The late Baron Shrenck-Notzing, of Munich, made a life-study of this aspect of the subject. Those really interested will find a full account of his investigations in his book, *Phenomena of Materialisation*,

Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., London (translated by Dr. E. E. Fournier d'Albe). If the facts pertaining to materialisation are admitted, then we have overwhelming proof that death is merely a transition and not the end. But this old world will have to turn on its axis more than once before the Press and the public admit the validity of these facts, which are as fully attested as many recognised scientific facts. The difficulty is that, like eclipses of the sun and other scientific facts, these manifestations cannot always be produced to order.

At Altadena he was within fifteen miles of Los Angeles, where he met with a great reception. His various meetings were crowded to a degree. He visited the studios of the film-producing companies and met Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford. He lectured in several of the neighbouring towns. One rather pleasant feature of his visit to this city was the promise on the part of one of the oil magnates that if a certain oil-bearing property yielded good results a proportion of the revenue would be set apart and devoted to spiritualistic propaganda. Let us hope that this oil-bearing land will eventually yield results exceeding all anticipations, for up to this date nothing further has been heard of it.

He spent some days with his family in Catalia Island, thirty miles off the coast. There he enjoyed a little comparative rest, and spent his time in fishing and seeing the sights of the island, including a trip in one of the glass-bottomed boats.

He also made a long motor drive with Lady Doyle and a friend to San Diego, near the Mexican border, where he gave a most successful lecture.

Sir Arthur and Lady Doyle had a very interesting sitting with Dr. and Mrs. Wickland, during which they witnessed demonstrations of Mrs. Wickland's remarkable psychic powers. They saw her controlled by four or five spirit entities of both sexes. Dr. Wickland has made a life study of this special branch of spiritual rescue work among lost souls. A full account of his labours is given in his volume *Thirty Years among the Dead*.

At San Francisco the newspapers were antagonistic in their attitude, but on that account the meetings were highly successful. It was in San Francisco he met Dr. Abrams, who had discovered a new method of diagnosis for diseases. The Abrams method in this country has been sponsored by Sir James Barr. Many well-known physicians, such as Dr. Lathbury, have adopted the Abrams methods. The system is still on trial, but not a few physicians of high standing regard the discovery as being one of the first importance. It was in San Francisco he met Dr. and Mrs. Curtiss. Mrs. Curtiss combines eminent psychic gifts with a knowledge of the deeper aspects of Theosophical teaching. Sir Arthur always regarded the separation of Theosophy from Spiritualism as a misfortune. The intellectual gifts of the Theosophists he considered might have been more effectively used in connection with spiritualistic activities. It may be that in these

later days both sections will draw nearer to each other, for in reality at the base both movements have much in common.

At Seattle he found a large city of some 350,000 inhabitants, the growth of fifty years. The surroundings of Seattle are beautiful to a degree. It is in reality one of the most beautiful cities in the world. One vivid recollection I retain of my own visit to Seattle whilst travelling in the States. They have a large cemetery in the town, but there is no encompassing wall. I asked my host the reason of this. He replied: "Those who are buried inside cannot get out, and those who are outside do not wish to go in, so what is the use of a wall?" At Seattle Sir Arthur met many people endowed with remarkable psychic gifts, which was his usual experience in the various towns where he lectured. Leaving Seattle he reached Vancouver, and then worked his way homeward across Canada.

It was not until the autumn of 1928 that he embarked for South Africa. The African continent had always a mysterious attraction for him. He had lived for months under the shadow of the Pyramids at the Mena Hotel. He had adventured with Kitchener in the attack on Dongola in 1896, he had slept beneath the stars in the loneliness of the desert, and he had taken his own share of the medical work in the Langman Hospital during the South African War. Previous to his departure a large and representative assembly of friends gathered in the Holborn Restaurant for lunch, to wish him God-

speed. Mr. Oaten, of Manchester, to whom he was warmly attached, was in the Chair. Mr. Oaten expressed the gratitude of his fellow-labourers in the field for the magnificent services he had rendered to the cause of Spiritualism, and voiced the devout wish that his visit to South Africa might give a new stimulus to the activities of the various psychic organisations in that part of the world. The meeting was enthusiastic, but it came rather as a shock to many of his hearers that he had passed his sixty-ninth birthday. That Sir Arthur could grow old seemed to many of us a physical impossibility. It was difficult to associate the conception of years with his vigorous personality.

On arriving in South Africa he began his missionary labours at Cape Town, and gradually extended his activities to the chief towns in Cape Colony and the Transvaal. At Bloemfontein he got into trouble owing to some expression he had used, for he was always ready to vindicate the claims of Great Britain. There was a threat that he should be tarred and feathered, and this was duly reported in the Press of the home country, but scarcely a line appeared regarding the triumphant progress he made from town to town on his way north through Rhodesia. Reaching Buluwayo he visited Matoppo Hills, where Cecil Rhodes lies buried, and there a séance was held. He gazed on the wonderful prospect that fascinated Rhodes. Rhodes was so impressed with the view that he was led to express the wish that when he died he might be buried there.

Still continuing his journey he arrived at Kenya. He spent some time in voyaging around Lake Tanganyika, that great inland sea, and finally reached Nairobi, where he gave his final address. It was here that, in exhibiting his psychic photographs, a man stood up in the audience to interrupt him. This man stated that he himself had personated the ghost represented in one of the pictures, but admitted afterwards that there was a real ghost at the country house where the photograph had been taken. The photograph depicted an incident that had taken place in 1906, and which on further enquiry was reported to be genuine. This man spoke concerning some incident that had taken place in 1909—an entirely different matter. Again, this incident, throwing discredit on Sir Arthur's statements, was fully reported in the British Press. Scarcely a word appeared so far as I know to show that this man was a huckster only craving a temporary publicity.

Having traversed South Africa from the western to the eastern coast, he took ship for London once more. In all these South African travels he was accompanied by Lady Conan Doyle and the members of his family circle. Mr. and Mrs. Ashton Jonson also accompanied him, and rendered special help with his correspondence and in other ways. They were among his most devoted friends. His book, *Our African Winter*, is dedicated to them. But the long railway journeys and the hotel life, with at times the intense heat of the tropics, told

upon his robust frame. He did not return as an invalid, for he appeared to be hearty and strong at the reception given to him in London. Still, it would appear that his extraordinary energy was to some extent strained by these South African experiences. If he could have rested when he returned all might have been well, but alas! for him rest was impossible.

It was on his return from South Africa that Mr. James Douglas, Editor of the *Sunday Express*, wrote:

“What a Tornado you are! Even a Tornado grows tired, but you are tireless. I am glad to hear that you are all safely back from your six months’ tour in Africa; and I beg you to give my good greetings to your good wife, who takes care of you all. . . . Well, you know, I don’t accept as established your interpretation of phenomena, but I am wholly with you in censuring the refusal of science to investigate them as she investigates electrons and protons—there may be a relation between them!”

His book, *Our African Winter*, was speedily published. In this book he not only records his experiences on the spiritualistic platform, he adds his own observations on the administration of South Africa, and on the enormous possibilities of development for the settlers in that country. This was his last long voyage and his last missionary tour, extending over many thousands of miles. Truly of all others he might have said, “My parish is the world, and to do good is my religion.”

The various books of travel recording his successive missionary journeys (*The Wanderings of a Spiritualist*, *Our American Adventure*, *Our Second American Adventure*, *Our African Winter*) are graphically written and rich in incident. They will become a mine of information for future readers, regarding the conditions and progress of the spiritualistic movement throughout the English-speaking world during the years 1920-30. Wherever he went, either in Great Britain and her colonies or in the United States, men and women were convinced by his arguments, and a new stimulus was given to the local societies. His agent in Australia, who had handled everyone of consequence during forty years, stated that Sir Arthur had broken all records for crowds, and the same can be asserted regarding his audiences in New York and throughout the States. Many a veteran worker who had toiled for years in silence and obscurity buckled on his armour anew, conscious of a fresh courage in fighting behind the shield of this new Achilles.

CHAPTER VI

SIR ARTHUR AS AN ORATOR

WE have already dealt with Sir Arthur's versatility as an author, his Sherlock Holmes and other stories, his novels, poems and war books. To his many gifts has to be added his readiness and effectiveness in public speaking. Seldom, indeed, are so many gifts bestowed upon one man. We often find that the master of phrases is dumb in a public assembly, that the keen controversialist in writing is helpless before his antagonist on the platform. It was different with Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. It was on the platform that the real man was revealed. He had the ready command of language with which his many years of authorship had inherently endowed him, a voice that bespoke his Scottish education with a wistful tenderness at times that carried the mind back to his Irish origin, whilst his masterful personality for the time being dominated his audience. It was a man—a real man—that confronted his hearers; and in any public address, whatever may be its merits, it is always of the first importance that there should be a man behind it.

It was in Edinburgh, in the spring of 1922, that I first heard Sir Arthur. He spoke in the Usher Hall, the largest and most beautiful hall in that city.

The various ministers had been invited to a place on the platform, and being at that time a Spiritualist I regarded it as a privilege to stand beside him. We were a very select group of clergymen—only four or five of us ventured on that platform. Sir Arthur at once proceeded with his address, which lasted fully an hour. Its leading characteristics were the earnestness and “downrightness” of the man. It was not a philosophical disquisition at all. It was a message of one who was convinced that he had discovered a great truth, and that the truth was one of overwhelming importance as regards the well-being of his fellow-men. As in all his writings so in all his speeches there were the biting phrases that linger in the mind. Speaking of the many clever people who fail to see anything of importance in these psychic facts which to the ordinary man are so convincing, he declared that these clever ones “tripped over their own brains.” In dealing with Bible texts he instanced the Bradford man who quoted the text, “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,” but who had overlooked entirely the command in Deuteronomy xxii. 11, “Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together,” which would have been a trifle awkward for Bradford; and then gathering up his energy he pictured for us the future life of the soul in the case of everyone who had risen above the paltry considerations of the world, and who had striven after the higher things. When the audience broke up it was with the conviction that if a man like

Sir Arthur was prepared to take the platform and speak in such terms, then there are "more things in heaven and earth" than can be adequately accounted for in our current philosophy. As an admirable account of this meeting appeared in the columns of the *Scotsman* the following day we reproduce it here. The report is not verbatim, but it gives the substance of Sir Arthur's Address :

"SECRETS OF THE BEYOND

"SIR A. CONAN DOYLE'S EVIDENCE

"Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, LL.D., lectured in the Usher Hall, Edinburgh, last night on 'Life After Death and Recent Psychic Research,' which he described at the outset as the most important subject in the world. Either, he said, this was the greatest delusion that had ever been put before the human race, or else it was the greatest advance that the human race had ever made. They claimed that the barrier of death had been broken through. He recalled how the phenomena came into evidence, and how they started among common folk. Messages, crude enough, came through, and these showed that the disembodied on the other side were endeavouring to connect up with us. It was not the knock at the door that was important. It was the friend on the other side. The human race had centred its attention upon what was only the signal, and had not thought of the force behind which made the signal, and what its objects were.

"The lecturer proceeded to quote the testimony of well-known scientists. Alfred Russel Wallace, he stated, had said: 'The Phenomena do not

require further confirmation. They are proved as well as any facts are proved in other sciences.' Sir Oliver Lodge said : ' Certain dear friends of mine exist, because I have talked with them.' Evidence from Lombroso and others was also cited. Either these men were mad, he said, or they were lying, which was inconceivable, or they were mistaken, which was also inconceivable in view of years of experiment, or else their statements were true (applause). He had been studying the matter for thirty-six years ; and he admitted that he was only on the edge of an enormous ocean which contained mysteries which neither he nor any other living man could solve. There was not a country which did not produce phenomena or messages. They came in all sorts of ways. It did not matter whether they received them in Scotland, Iceland, Japan or America, the messages were practically the same. They might differ on little points, because on the other side they retained personality, and also the other side was not like a little Dutch garden where everything was simple and all was the same. It was an exceedingly complex society, sphere upon sphere, people of different grades. One message might come from one sphere, another from a higher one. There was agreement among these messages which was beyond all power of coincidence. He had read as many of these messages as any man. Family records in many cases had been available to him. He believed that these messages, depicting what the world was like on the other side, represented the truth (applause).

" Sir Arthur Conan Doyle then narrated some personal experiences of his own. On one occasion, when a well-known American medium, who was a

vigorous, practical woman, visited his house, they had a séance in the day nursery. Whilst they were singing 'Onward, Christian Soldiers,' a glorious rich baritone voice broke out above their heads, and joined in the singing. If that was not the voice of a spirit, whose was it? A year after the death of his son, which occurred after the Armistice, he was in Southsea, and there he met a medium, who was a coal checker at a Welsh pit. The medium was keen to have a séance, and he insisted upon being tied up. They trussed him up so well that they actually had to cut him loose afterwards. The medium was in a corner, and the light was turned down. There were people who were sceptical about the turning down of the lights, but he would explain that ectoplasm, which was the physical basis of all psychic phenomena, was injured by light. At this particular séance he heard a voice in front of him, and from the tone and intensity of it he knew that it was the voice of his son. His son spoke a few words to him, and they were absolutely evidential. The medium had no more possibility of knowing him than the child unborn. He asked his son if he was happy, and the reply was, 'Quite happy now.' He felt his head drawn over, and his son's lips on his forehead. 'I have no more doubt,' declared the lecturer, 'that I spoke to my boy that night than when I spoke to him when he was alive.' If a man had that evidence before him, he would be less than a man if he had not the moral courage to tell other people what he knew (applause).

"High messages were being received describing how the dead were living in the other world. 'If earth mothers,' ran one of these, 'only knew how happy their little ones are, there would be less

grief'; and another said, 'If mankind only knew the truth about death, how many tears would be dried.' He proceeded to describe the conditions on the other side as conveyed in messages. Everything there tended to the normal. The old became normal, and went back to about twenty-five years of age. The young grew up to about that age. There were different spheres, like rungs on a ladder, and the spirit tried ever to get higher. According to one's earthly life one's spirit found its proper sphere in the beyond.

"In conclusion the lecturer showed by limelight views a number of remarkable spirit photographs, one, on a plate which he said no other human hand than his had touched, containing a signed personal message to himself from the late Archdeacon Colley. Another interesting picture was from a photograph, taken by a lady at midday in the ordinary way, of a corridor in a 600-year-old inn in Norwich. When it was developed, he pointed out, it clearly showed the ghost of a woman upon it."

It was therefore not merely to his audience in the Usher Hall that he spoke, but to the thousands of readers of the *Scotsman* throughout the Scottish land and beyond it.

In these missionary expeditions he sought, as far as possible, the aid of the Press. He especially desired that the Press might adopt a saner attitude towards facts and truths that had become in his estimation indisputable. What was true of Edinburgh was equally true of the other cities and

towns he visited; and when one considers the number of these meetings and the correspondence which they involved, it will be admitted that this aspect of his work might have monopolised his entire energy.

It is eagerly to be desired that a volume of his reported speeches should be given to the public. If the living voice can no longer be heard, then many who appreciate his teaching could at least read the spoken words. But happily, some weeks before his passing, he did consent to leave a spoken message to the world. It is one of the H.M.V. records, and gives the following message :

“ PSYCHIC RECORD

“ There are two questions which my friends constantly ask me. One is, How I came to write Sherlock Holmes, and the other is, Why I became a Spiritualist and about Spiritualism generally. With regard to Sherlock Holmes I was, when I wrote it, a young doctor, and had been educated in a very severe and critical medical school of thought, especially coming under the influence of Dr. Bell, of Edinburgh, who had most remarkable powers of observation. He prided himself that, when he looked at a patient, he could tell not only his disease but very often his occupation and place of residence. Reading some detective stories I was struck by the fact that their results were obtained in nearly every case by chance—I except, of course, Edgar Allan Poe’s splendid stories, which, though only three in number, are a model for all

time. I thought I would try my hand at writing a story where the hero would treat crime as Dr. Bell treated disease, and where science would take the place of chance. The result was Sherlock Holmes, and I confess that result has somewhat surprised me, for I learn that many schools of detectives working in France, in Egypt, in China and elsewhere have admittedly founded their systems upon that of Holmes. To many he seems to be a real person; and I have had numerous letters from time to time addressed to him from all parts of the world, and the most quaint requests, including what was virtually an offer of marriage. His autograph also is much in demand.

"Now as to the more serious subject. The result of my medical education in the day of Huxley and Haeckel was to make me agnostic in matters of religion, and certainly I had no belief that we survive death. I have always of course kept my mind open to new ideas, for the day a man's mind shuts is the day of his mental death.

"In 1887 some curious psychic experiences came my way, and especially I was impressed by the fact of telepathy, which I proved for myself by experiments with a friend. The question then arose, if two incarnate minds could communicate, is it possible for a discarnate one to communicate with one who is still in the body? For more than twenty years I examined the evidence, and came finally to the conclusion beyond all doubt that such communication was possible. I could give hundreds of illustrations to prove my point, but I can only refer you to the literature on the subject. I took my proofs from actual personal experiments as well as from the works of such great men as Sir

William Crookes, Myers, Dr. Russel Wallace and others.

"The full importance of the matter did not come home to me until the War, when all the world was asking, Where are our dead boys? and getting such unsatisfactory answers both from the Church and from science; it was then my wife and I felt that our knowledge of the subject was of supreme importance, and that we could answer this universal question.

"Twelve years of our lives have now been spent in trying to impart our knowledge to others, in the course of which we have travelled 75,000 miles, and we have addressed a quarter of a million of people. The work has now been too much for me. It has weakened my heart, and I am temporarily disabled, but perhaps by this record I could say a word to a new and world-wide audience.

"That word is, that there is nothing in this new knowledge to destroy the foundations of your present belief, but on the contrary it adds a knowledge and a feeling of security such as no other system of philosophy has been able to give. The basis of all religions is that we live after death, and the proving of the truth of this basis is to my mind the most essential work in this age of perplexity and materialism, when good and earnest men honestly doubt whether death is not the end.

"People ask, What do you get from Spiritualism? The first thing you get is that it absolutely removes all fear of death. Secondly, it bridges death for those dear ones whom we may love. We need have no fear that we are calling them back, for all that we do is to make such conditions as experience has taught us will enable them to

come if they wish, and the initiative lies always with them. They have many times told us that they could not come back if it were not God's will, and that it makes them intensely happy to be able to help and comfort us, to tell us about their happy life in that world to which we are in our turn destined to come.

"People say that only trivialities come through. In effecting recognition this has some truth. If, for example, some dear one were to return to me, he could not prove his identity to me by discussing high matters, but he could do so by reminding me of past private experiences known only to himself and to me. But in contact with higher spirit people we do get lofty religious teaching and most inspiring knowledge.

"The Press unfortunately usually only notices Spiritualism when fraud or folly is in question. Fraud and folly do exist as in everything, but the Press does not mention as a rule the thousands of cases where consolation and proof have been brought to suffering hearts.

"We bring important facts, new facts which will revolutionise the whole thought of the human race both in religion and in science. It is the great question of the future, and it will end by making religion a real living thing, so that all doubt of God's goodness or of the destiny of mankind will be for ever banished, since we will each be in actual touch with what is higher than ourselves and the communion of saints will at last be an established fact."

This spoken message will, in the far-off years, make known to his followers the resonance of that

voice that, during his period of life-activity, was heard in so many lands.

Father Thurston had attacked him in a pamphlet, *Modern Spiritualism*, to which he replied in another booklet, *The Roman Catholic Church*, issued in the autumn of 1929. This booklet has a special interest as defining his attitude towards the Church of Rome, and as being among his latest published writings. He often declared that if he ever returned to any Church it would be the Church of Rome that would shelter him. He loved the cathedrals that are the embodiment of Catholic devotion, and he was not insensible to the æsthetic beauty of the services of his mother church, but the dogmas of Roman Catholicism he would not accept at any price. It is the abiding joy of Spiritualists that they not only believe—THEY KNOW! It was this knowledge that was his sheet anchor, and which radiated throughout his whole being. It was the intolerance of the Church of Rome that aroused his indignation. Intolerance in any form he could not abide, whether on the part of a Roman Catholic dignitary or an Evangelical zealot. "We are all God's children," he would exclaim; "I am the brother of the Jew and the Parsee and the Mohammedan and the Buddhist. We must have a religion that will take in all mankind."

The psychic facts which are grouped under the term Spiritualism are certainly universal. Spiritualists hold that they are natural occurrences, that is to

say, that they may take place in the life experience of any man or woman, be that man or woman Jew or Gentile, Christian or Mohammedan. It was this universality of appeal that made the spiritualistic platform dear to Sir Arthur. Any system or creed that limited God's love or mercy to a certain section of the race he could not abide. Survival to him was a fact in the natural scheme of things as true of mankind three thousand years ago as it will be of men and women five thousand years hence. That men and women could hold communication with the Unseen World was as true of Abraham and Moses as of Jesus and Paul, and equally true of the multitudes who in these modern days have tested and proved this vital experience.

There are many in our midst eminent alike in literature and science who know these facts as intimately as did Sir Arthur, but for various reasons they prefer to keep the knowledge to themselves. Nicodemus has still many representatives in our midst. When an atmosphere has been created more favourable to psychic research, and these timid ones are able to declare themselves, Spiritualism will speedily occupy an entirely different position from what it does at the present time. Sir Arthur was cast in a different mould. When he found what he regarded as truth, and was sure of his position, he went forth with his message to the world. It was his fighting tenacity, so characteristic of the British race, that explains alike his courage in proclaiming his belief, and his determination

that this knowledge should be embedded in the consciousness of mankind.

It was in the early winter of 1923 that I first came into immediate connection with him. He had started in London a series of meetings in the Queen's Hall on Sabbath forenoons. His aim was to reach the intelligentsia of the West End. Had he held these meetings on the Sabbath evenings the Queen's Hall would have been filled. It is a well-known experience that in London a forenoon meeting on behalf of almost any subject is feebly attended. But he hesitated to compete in any way with the existing spiritualistic agencies, and hence he held his meetings on the Sabbath forenoon. Even then the area and the first gallery of the Hall were well filled. He had asked me to preside at one of the meetings, which I did. He himself was the speaker, and a very effective message he delivered. That same evening he invited me to be present at a séance with Mr. Evan Powell at Miss Stead's Bureau. Before the séance began we were talking of the day of Pentecost, and of the tongues of fire that had appeared, and other gifts that were vouchsafed to the first disciples. No sooner had Mr. Evan Powell gone into trance than a glowing tongue, supported on several twigs taken from a vase on the mantelpiece, continued for a time to float around the room. As Evan Powell was bound hand and foot (he himself insists upon this binding process) trickery was out of the question. It was a remarkable

manifestation, and caused me a good deal of thought.

From that day, alike by correspondence and through my occasional visits to Windlesham and Bignell Wood, I had the opportunity of studying at close quarters this remarkable man. He was in 1923 in the full tide of his missionary propaganda work. To some extent he had broken with many of his former literary friends. Whilst they always remembered him as a loyal and lovable companion, and whilst many had good cause to bless him as a generous benefactor, they were not prepared to follow him to the housetops in his new crusade. Indeed, he had become an enigma to many of them. This isolation had its own effect upon his mind, and although on some points he and I were almost at the opposite poles of thought, yet he welcomed my presence at his fireside, and was generous enough to assure me more than once that my companionship was a source of strength to him. He had approached the investigation of psychic facts from the extreme agnostic position. I had approached them from the extreme evangelical position, and as he could not entirely divest himself of the agnostic views he had once entertained, no more could I divest myself of that inner conception of the Christian life which I know to be a fact, and which is the true secret of the abiding influence of the Christian Church. What I saw clearly enough, and have seen for many years, is that Christian theology in several directions has to be formulated

on a new basis. For the adequate comprehension of the sacred writings a psychic training is necessary. That department of theology (eschatology) which deals with the after-life of the soul must needs be rewritten. The Church standards on that subject are hopelessly out of date. The practical denial of the Church that any further communication can be received from the interior world must be given up. The assumption that miracles took place eighteen hundred years ago but have ceased in an age of railways is groundless. Protestant theologians have no adequate defence to Hume's attack. The real answer to David Hume is that what was possible in the time of the Apostles is possible to-day, and that psychic gifts are not limited to any age or people. It was our common interest in these psychic facts that brought Sir Arthur and me together.

It was about that period he became convinced that some cataclysm was to take place in the history of mankind. Alike in his own psychic investigations, and in the communications he received from all parts of the world, some terrible catastrophe was predicted. With his methodical accuracy all these communications were duly tabulated, and as the result of this combined testimony he summoned his more immediate friends together and took them into his confidence. In discussing these subjects with him I could never quite agree with his conclusions. No one can tell what the next eight years may bring about, but as a rule these cata-

clysms, as they are termed, require considerable periods of time to bring about their fulfilment. The prophecies which reach us from the other side are almost invariably wrong when dates are given. Time in the Unseen World does not exist, and what seems near to our friends in the world beyond may be for us far distant.

It may be asked, Why did a man like Sir Arthur, who was endowed with a piercing discernment into the reality of truth, ever commit himself to that position? I think that in a measure this can be explained. Anyone reading the New Testament carefully can easily discover that the writers of that book regarded the world as being of temporary duration. The world was to pass away. It was to be consumed in flames. Many of the arguments of the Apostle Paul are based on this conception :

But this I say, brethren, the time is short : it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none ; And they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it : for the fashion of this world passeth away (1 Cor. vii. 29-31).

In the Epistle of Peter we read (2 Pet. iii. 11) : " Seeing then that all these things (the earth and the heavens) shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be ? " These writers lived in an age when Christianity was a new religion, and to

them the outward material world was of little consequence. They lived apart from it, and in all their minds there was the deep conviction that the existing order could not permanently endure. As a matter of history the Roman Empire did not endure. It passed away in order to give place to the new kingdoms that were to arise within its borders.

It needed the Great War to arouse even a temporary interest in Spiritualism ; and to Sir Arthur's mind a general cataclysm was needed to awaken mankind to a due sense of the realities of the spiritual life. He had given himself wholeheartedly to the task of reaching the conscience of the nation, and whilst he ever had enthusiastic audiences to welcome him, yet the outer defences of materialism remained apparently intact, whilst the dignitaries of the Church looked on in silence. It was inevitable for him that he should seek some explanation of this studied indifference, and that he should be driven to the conclusion that only through the interposition of supernormal forces would mankind ever discard the old formulas, and that the new conceptions of which he and others were the advocates would have a chance of being considered.

In this he was entirely right. God works slowly. Mr. Stead used to complain that he was in a hurry and God was not. He could not get God to work fast enough. The same was true of Sir Arthur. He was impatient with the slow and seemingly unprogressive methods of many of our societies. He was impatient with the aloofness of many of our

newspapers. He was impatient with the silent and wellnigh contemptuous attitude of the Church. Nothing short of a cataclysm would satisfy him. The cataclysm will arrive in due time, unless different aims and ideals take possession of men's minds.

It has to be remembered, however, that a change of mind is always possible. Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah, much to Jonah's disappointment, for Jonah, having announced his message, expected that it should be fulfilled to the letter. But, indeed, in these modern days what need have we of further cataclysms? We have in our midst upwards of two million of men and women on the dole, with doubtless fully another million of dependents. Do we still crave further proof that our nation needs readjustment? If further proof were needed of an approaching cataclysm, would it not be found in the fact that during the twelve years that have elapsed since the signing of the Armistice each successive Government has endeavoured to outstrip its predecessors in a spendthrift policy, whilst we have a debt overhanging our nation sufficient to paralyse industry in every form. Unless some wise and strong man is raised up to guide and govern this land the cataclysm will arrive as swift as Time and as sure as Destiny. Whilst it is true that volcanoes and earthquakes belong to every period of human history, yet the seismic activity of recent years has become remarkable, and the alarming earthquakes at

Napier, New Zealand, and in Nicaragua (1931) have brought this fact before our eyes. Or take the condition of Russia. It is, indeed, a cataclysm that has taken place in that vast country.

What is happening around us can be easily explained. We are at the end of an age, an epoch. The world is forging ahead into a new era, when knowledge alike of psychic facts as of every other science will become the prerogative of man. If man survives the crisis called death, it is his right to know what will be the conditions of the life that awaits him, and what measure of preparation on his part is essential to meet these changed conditions. This knowledge the people are demanding. This knowledge can no longer be withheld.

One of his many schemes for attracting public attention towards psychic study was the Psychic Bookshop which he established in Victoria Street, wellnigh under the shadow of Westminster Abbey. He desired that there should be some central emporium for the distribution of psychic literature. A good many agencies of this kind were in existence, but, as a rule, they were attached to some spiritualistic society. A few booksellers like Mr. Watkins had made a speciality of selling theosophical and spiritualistic literature, but Sir Arthur desired a shop in some public centre in which the literature of the movement would be the main feature. Associated with the Bookshop he formed a library and a museum. The museum contained objects of historical interest collected by himself, and articles

contributed by personal friends. This shop for several years was under the personal management of Miss Mary Conan Doyle, his elder daughter. It was a bold venture, and in later years caused the founder considerable anxiety. In the future it is intended that it will form part of the memorial to be erected to commemorate Sir Arthur's labours. It was one of the many proofs of his desire that psychic literature should be made accessible to the public.

I can recall him in many scenes—on the platform, at some crowded meeting, in the chair at some business gathering, at his own fireside on a Christmas Eve, in the glades of the New Forest at Bignell Wood, or amid the ruins of Beaulieu Abbey when the Abbey bells seemed to sound him a welcome—but there is one unforgettable vision of him in the Psychic Bookshop that is stamped for ever on my memory. I had gone in to purchase some recently published volume, and found Sir Arthur with his coat off and a great bundle of books between his arms. That a man whose time was so precious should be engaged in that manual task of carrying about bundles of books seemed to me to be the decisive proof of his interest in the enterprise. I came out of that Bookshop a humbled man. If the readers of this volume could realise how much he valued the Bookshop, and how great was the joy he felt in seeing the parcels of books going forth to the ends of the earth, they would, as a token of gratitude to this great patriot and missionary, see that the

Bookshop is re-established on a sound commercial basis.

He was at this period President of the London Spiritualist Alliance, of the British College of Psychic Science and of the Spiritualist Community.

The Marylebone Spiritualist Association has been the more enterprising of the spiritualistic societies, and that association ever found in Sir Arthur a warm friend. It was the Marylebone Association that took the risk of holding weekly Sabbath evening meetings in the Æolian Hall, which gradually became so well attended that crowds often gathered at the doors before the time of opening. When the Æolian Hall was sold these meetings were transferred to the Queen's Hall, where the attendance has been well-nigh quadrupled. It was a bold stroke for the Marylebone Association to engage the Albert Hall, holding ten thousand people, for the Armistice Sabbath forenoon service. The hopes of the promoters were fully justified. The Hall each year has been filled by the increasing numbers of Spiritualists in London who regard Survival after death as being an attested fact. This Albert Hall service had its own special effect upon the life of Sir Arthur, and will be dealt with later.

One other organisation came into existence at this period in which he was warmly interested—the Spiritualist Community. In this organisation Mrs. St. Clair Stobart is the leading figure, and it is largely owing to her literary endowments and gift of organisation that this Society is now securely

established. The meetings were held at first in the County Hall, but were speedily transferred to the Grosvenor Hall in Wigmore Street, where not only on the Sabbath Day but throughout the week largely attended meetings are held. Sir Arthur was elected President and occasionally addressed the evening service. It can be seen that these local claims were sufficient to absorb the energies of any ordinary man, more especially when it is remembered that during these years he wrote twelve books dealing more immediately with the subject of Spiritualism, and in addition to this numerous controversial pamphlets. It occurred to some of us that even his superabundant energy could not always sustain this constant pressure. But at that period and for some years afterwards he seemed endowed with the buoyancy of youth. These labours that were constantly confronting him were cheerfully undertaken, until the burden on the camel's back became so great that only the last straw was needed to produce the collapse.

He ever maintained an unfaltering optimism regarding the final vindication of his beliefs. The difficulties he had to meet, however, constrained him to reflect on the deeper issues that underlie every religion; and on the inevitable misunderstanding and misrepresentation that accompany the formulisation of every new truth. It appeared to me that as the years passed by he got nearer to the Great Teacher of us all. When he found that men of distinguished literary reputation turned the blind

eye on what to him were facts of transcendent importance he would quote with deep feeling the words of Jesus : " I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." If ever there was a touch of bitterness in his words, and that was seldom, it was when he had cause to speak of " the wise and prudent ones." To his adventurous spirit this wise and prudent policy on which the world lays such stress was the antithesis of all that makes for true manhood.

CHAPTER VII

SIR ARTHUR AT HIS OWN FIRESIDE

IN one respect Sir Arthur can be regarded as one of the most fortunate of men. The domestic relations of any man will influence to a marked degree his outward influence upon the world. Lady Conan Doyle may be said to have been his "twin soul." Right nobly did she stand by him when he took the step that was largely to determine his future career. In all his wanderings she was his companion, and in his home activities she was ever by his side. This devoted support has been shared by every member of the family circle. His elder son, Mr. Denis Doyle, foregoing any other career, is now carrying on his father's propaganda work.

When I was resident at Tunbridge Wells Sir Arthur invited me to spend the Christmas at Windlesham. With some diffidence I accepted the invitation, for I had almost a dread of this man, who I instinctively felt would be able to read me through and through. It was a merry group I found at Windlesham. All the members of the family circle were there. Mary the elder daughter was present from London. The boys (for they were boys at that time) had returned from college, "Billy," as she was called, the younger sister (Lena

Jean) had her Christmas holidays. It was then for the first time I was able to examine the pictures painted by Sir Arthur's father, Charles Doyle, and which are as fantastic as they are wonderful. There is a weird genius revealed in each one of them. One of these pictures that hangs in the library at Windlesham is so remarkable as at once to arrest the eye of the observer. I spoke to Sir Arthur about it, and he remarked, "Yes, you are not alone in your admiration of that picture. Several of my friends, who are connoisseurs in art, have spoken of it in unqualified terms. I have a desire, one day, to gather my father's pictures that are scattered around Edinburgh and hold an exhibition of them in London. He was a man who never got his due. In this special line he was unique. I do not think that Blake ever painted anything so suggestive and far-reaching as that picture."

The Christmas dinner at Windlesham was a happy function. Sir Arthur, at the head of his table, with Lady Conan Doyle opposite and the members of their family circle gathered round them, was a memorable scene. Lady Conan Doyle's father, Mr. James Blyth Leckie, was there, and her brother Stewart and aunts and others who made up the happy group. After the dinner there was dancing in the music-room. The older people suddenly grew young again. The joy of that Christmas Day caused the years to vanish. The traditional cheer of "Dingley Dell" was equalled if

not surpassed by the Christmas cheer of Windlesham. Alas! as I pen these lines, the memory of the vanished faces from that circle in 1925 reminds me of the transitoriness of human relationships. Lady Conan Doyle's father, Mr. James Blyth Leckie (still happily spared to us), I soon learned was familiar with the Borders. His grandfather had been one of the ministers in Peebles. The Leckie Church in that town commemorates this minister's faithful labours.

Sir Arthur rejoiced in these family reunions. If on the one side of his character he was the daring adventurer ready to face the dangers of the Arctic Seas or the terrors of the battlefield, yet in the home circle he was the man who delighted in simple things. His surroundings in this respect were ideal. From his wanderings in far-off lands or from his heated debates with rationalists and materialists, he could always return to "Windlesham," with its loving atmosphere and domestic peace.

During this visit I can recall two memorable conversations with him. The first was about the fairies. He had written two articles for *The Strand Magazine*, which he afterwards developed into a book, *The Coming of the Fairies*, published in 1922. It was this book I found on his shelves and which I was reading. I learned from it that two girls in Yorkshire when they were together could see and photograph the fairies. These girls lived near a dell, in which there were a stream and a cascade, and it was in this dell near to the cascade that they saw

the fairies. The photographs caused some slight local interest, but it was a Mr. Gardner, who delivered lectures under the auspices of the local Theosophical Societies, who recognised the importance of the photographs. He was deeply interested, as, according to his view, these photographs proved the existence of actual fairies, who were regarded by him as a subhuman race, but on a different grade of evolution from ourselves. It was through this Mr. E. L. Gardner that Sir Arthur became interested in the subject, and Mr. Gardner became his willing colleague in carrying out the necessary investigations. The photographs were examined by experts, who certified that they were not "faked." Besides, there was no motive to fake the photographs. There was no money in the question, and as for publicity, the girls declared that they were "fed up" with it; they wanted no more of it, and for a time their actual names were withheld. It would appear from concurrent testimony that this special district in Yorkshire is beloved by the fairies, several clairvoyant persons having seen them.

When Sir Arthur entered the room where I was reading I said: "You are interested in the fairies, I perceive."

He at once brightened up, and said with great earnestness: "Yes, I am intensely interested. I wrote that book to prove that there may be in this material world grades of beings that are not discernible by the ordinary vision. I have no reason

to doubt the veracity of the girls. Why should we be so cocksure that we are the only inhabitants on this material plane. More especially in these days of 'wireless,' is it not time that our vision was extended to include the existence of beings nearer it may be to the heart of Nature than we are ourselves."

"The subject of fairies," I answered, "might well interest every Scotsman, for Scotland is pre-eminently the land of the fairies. James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, wrote the finest fairy poetry in the world. You have doubtless read his *Bonny Kilmeny*?"

"Yes," he answered, "Hogg was a remarkable man, a kind of second Burns in his way. His ballads almost equal those of Sir Walter."

"Sir Walter," I replied, "had always a profound interest in the supernormal. In his Introduction to the ballad of *Tamlane* he goes fully into the subject of fairy lore. The ballad of *Tamlane* gives a vivid glimpse of those changes of personality that were attributed to the fairies. The capturing of children by the 'wee fouk' was widely believed in Scotland. You will remember that Barrie works out the same idea in *Mary Rose*."

"Barrie," he exclaimed, "knows the secret. He himself is the child of the fairies. Think of the phenomenal success that has attended alike his literary and dramatic efforts. There is no position in literature to which he may not attain. As to Sir Walter, what has struck me in all his writings is the

fact that behind alike his poetry and prose there is in almost every volume the recognition of the supernatural. You remember that in *Guy Mannering*, with its sub-title, *The Astrologer*, the whole story hinges on the predictions of the astrologer, and in *The Monastery* the White Lady is so prominent that his critics remonstrated against the too obvious introduction of this supernatural factor. The same is true of Shakespeare and Goethe. The ghost in *Hamlet*, the fairies in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, the dissolving pageants in *The Tempest*—indeed, throughout the writings of Shakespeare there is the recognition of an inner mysterious world that transcends ordinary observation. I do not need to remind you of Mephistopheles in *Faust*. The same is true of Dante. All our great creative minds are at one in this respect, confirming the Jewish scriptures that there may be grades of being beyond our recognition, and worlds beyond worlds and within worlds which we can only dimly sense. The truth is, that in this materialistic age we have been looking into the mud so long that our sensitive faculties have become dulled and inoperative. We are like the fish in the Kentucky caves that have eyes and see not."

"I cannot quite understand Sir Walter," I answered. "The other week I read his *Demonology*, a book that is little known. It consists of a series of letters to Lockhart. He begins by putting himself right with the Kirk, which at that period frowned on all such investigations; and then he piles record

upon record, all tending to disclose a hidden secret power that operates behind ordinary human action. If he did not believe in that power, why in the name of common sense did he, a busy man, take so much trouble to publish these letters ? ”

“ Sir Walter,” he replied, “ was justly called ‘ The Wizard of the North.’ If there is any truth in reincarnation, he may have been a re-embodiment of Michael Scott. All the ideas of Border chivalry and romance seem to have been gathered up and centred in him. His work on *Demonology* I have not read, but it is interesting to learn that he worked in that mine. Beneath your Scottish Calvinism there is a layer of psychic faculty that stands out prominently alike in your Border tales and Highland legends. I have heard that not only in the past but even in the present there are men and women in the Highlands endowed with the gift of ‘ second sight.’ That is simply what is known in these modern days as clairvoyance. It is our clairvoyants who see the fairies. Several of our mediums have told me that they have seen them many times.”

“ My grandfather,” I answered, “ was a man of veracity. He maintained that he had seen the little people among some green hillocks in one of our lonely glens. As a boy I often tried to see them, but I could see nothing beyond what can be discerned by our ordinary senses. In our Scottish glens we have fairy hillocks and fairy wells and fairy stones in abundance. All that is beautiful and pleasing in our Scottish scenery is more or less

associated with the fairies. Some beautiful glade is the 'Fairy Dene,' some well with its glistening waters and mossy banks is the 'Fairy Well.' Whatever is gruesome or terrible, on the other hand, is associated with the devil. There is 'The Devil's Punch Bowl,' and 'Hell's Lum,' and other terms equally suggestive of his Satanic majesty. It is a curious feature of our Scottish life."

"Your grandfather," said Sir Arthur, "saw the fairies. It is not everyone who sees them. It is only a man or woman in ten thousand that has ever had such an experience. These girls saw the fairies, and having got possession of a camera, the fairies that they claimed to have seen appeared upon the plate. Believe me," he added, "the camera will yet prove to be one of our most powerful weapons in fighting this spiritual battle. Our psychic photographs when they are accepted will be unanswerable. Science has not as yet accepted them, but science cannot always ignore existing facts. That is why I was so interested in these fairy pictures. In these matters, however, it is sometimes necessary to become a Sherlock Holmes. I have had my own experience of faked photographs. It is easy to detect the *supercherie*. But the real thing, the genuine psychic photograph, whether it be of fairies or of some departed friend, is of abiding value. These genuine psychic photographs, when they are sufficiently multiplied, will have their own effect in convincing an unbelieving world. But we have talked long enough," he added; "let us go

out and see the Sussex Downs." We sallied forth together in the crisp December air, I, for the time being, wondering if there was a fairy lurking among the withered bracken or peeping out at us from among the copses that we passed. But it may be that fairies sleep in the winter season. We generally associate them with the sunshine and the flowers.

Windlesham, when it was first purchased, was a comparatively small house situated in ample grounds. It was subsequently enlarged in many ways, so that what was a modest house became a "considerable mansion." The grounds were transformed into rose gardens and shrubberies, whilst part of the ample space on the right was reserved as the kitchen garden. There is a wooden hut near-by in which Sir Arthur often sat and meditated. This wooden hut has an interest of its own which will be dealt with later. Windlesham is on the outskirts of Crowborough, far removed from the main public roads, so that in his wooden hut the silence was almost complete. Windlesham itself is really one great library. The books are in every room. There is no lack of mental food for the visitor. But where were the psychic books? These were on the shelves of the inner *sanctum*, the study, that few of us dared to enter unless by special invitation. The walls of the study were lined with psychic books of every description, and this long before the Psychic Bookshop came into existence. Never have I seen any private psychic library to

equal it. The late Mr. Leslie Curnow had gathered a wonderful collection of psychic books, but I question if it could have equalled the library at "Windlesham." The owner was proud of it. With reverence he would take down some volume I had never heard of, and holding it in his hand he would declare that it was worth more than its weight in gold. He was especially partial to the writings of the early pioneers, the men and women who had stood wellnigh alone as the heralds of a brighter day. It was in this study that he asked me to state my views as to the future of the spiritualistic movement.

"I love the Movement," he said. "I live for it, and it would be my greatest joy to see it gripping the public conscience and finding a wider acceptance than is the case at the present time. We found Spiritualistic Churches. I am personally interested in many of them. But they do not appear to me to make that headway which is desirable."

"The movement of Spiritualism," I replied, "at the present time is composed of so many divergent elements that it is not easy to reach that inner unity which is so essential to true progress. The central fact of survival acts like a magnet to draw the Christian and the Jew and the Agnostic together. Indeed, it is those who were sceptics or what are termed free-thinkers, who in the early years gave the needed impetus to what was a struggling society. The difficulty is to find a common basis on which we can all operate."

"But you have that common basis in the seven principles of Spiritualism," he said with emphasis.

"True," I replied, "the seven principles are all right. No one seeks to dispute them. But we are living in a Christian land. It seems to me that in the advocacy of our central truths more regard might be shown to that Great Teacher who has so definitely influenced the whole of our Western civilisation. Spiritualism appeals to the Jew or Mohammedan or a Buddhist quite as much as to the Christian, and there are Jews who are as eager in their advocacy of our teaching as any Christian. That is at once granted. But if in presenting this subject to a Christian community you give them the choice as between Spiritualism on the one hand and Jesus Christ on the other, I know what the response will be. If I had to make such a choice, my answer would be prompt and decisive."

"What would be your answer?" said Sir Arthur.

"I have been a Christian all my life," I answered. "Why should I, at seventy years of age, abandon my beliefs, or why should I be enthusiastic over a society in which Jesus Christ, who is more to me than words can express, is treated with scant recognition?"

"I have always regarded Him," he answered, "as the sweetest soul that ever trod this planet and endowed with a courage that could even face a shameful death in the cause of truth. His ethical teaching, when reduced to practice, will certainly make our world more fit for heroes to live in."

"There is another consideration," I added, "that weighs deeply with me. I have stated that, if the choice before me was Christ or Spiritualism, I would hold to my faith. I see no reason to abandon it. But Spiritualism for me is precious, because it substantiates the teaching of the New Testament in the presence of a mocking world. I can better understand the appearances of Jesus to Mary Magdalene and His disciples when my daughter Kathleen has appeared to me. I can better understand the experience of Paul on his way to Damascus when I have seen a darkened room suddenly illumined with a great light for which there was no outward explanation. I can better understand the miracles of Jesus which are reported side by side with His teaching in the gospels when I find that miracles of healing are taking place in these modern days. I can better understand the narratives contained in the Book of Daniel when Mrs. Champion de Crespigny declares that she has carried a red-hot burning log scathless in her bare hand. It is the illumination that Spiritualism sheds upon the ancient scriptures that makes our psychic facts so dear to me. Not that I undervalue the inherent worth of these psychic facts or their application to other forms of religion."

"But the spiritualistic platform is so broad," Sir Arthur said, "that we take in all the world. For my own part I am done with dogma. I revolted from it in my early years. Never again am I to enter into such bondage."

"It is not a question of dogma at all," I answered, "it is a question of historic fact. If the mission of Modern Spiritualism is to 'smash Christianity' and to reduce Jesus Christ to the place of a mere myth of the imagination, then the Spiritualists will have before them a fairly 'stiff furrow to hoe.' As to dogma, who has protested more vigorously against certain dogmas held by his Church than the Rev. Charles Tweedale? He has written one of the classics of Spiritualism—*Man's Survival after Death*; and year by year he struggles manfully for the revision of his creed. There is Vale Owen. He has given his life on behalf of the movement as truly as any one of us. Drayton Thomas has borne a noble testimony, and his books have an enduring value. There is Potter. You never know what he will do, but in a week he will have reached his goal when other people would be talking about it for a twelve month. You must have a basis that will take us all in. What is the use of blaming our archbishops and bishops and clergy for standing aloof from this movement when, on the one hand, you offer them Spiritualism, and on the other would take from them that Being who founded the faith for which they witness?"

He sat thoughtfully for a time. "I will think it over," he said, "and we will see what can be done."

I knew his own attitude on the subject, for he was ever on the side of tolerance. In his personal estrangement from the Church he could hardly see

what was due to the Church as a whole as the guardian of the national religion. But whether it was owing to that conversation in his library or far more probably owing to other causes, he proposed an eighth principle to be added to the seven principles of Spiritualism. In that eighth principle the person of Jesus Christ was recognised. Jesus was to be accepted as our leader in the sphere of ethics. A meeting was subsequently held in London, when the subject of the eighth principle was discussed. Considerable diversity of opinion was expressed at this meeting. The eighth principle was referred back to the Committee of the National Spiritualists' Union, who promptly turned it down. He was disappointed at the decision. "What is the use of calling me their leader," he said to me afterwards, "when they refuse to follow? I know Lodge's views on this subject, and I tried to mediate between the various parties. However, there is a Providence over all."

Amongst others with whom he took counsel were Mr. Ernest Oaten, Editor of *The Two Worlds*, Mr. David Gow, Editor of *Light*, Mr. John Lewis, Editor of the *International Psychic Gazette*, Mr. Ernest Hunt and others. We were as so many minnows around our Triton. He listened to us patiently when we had anything to say, and dismissed us graciously when he had more important work to do.

With regard to the eighth principle, which he held ought to have been added to the seven principles of

Spiritualism, there is inserted in *Our African Winter* his considered judgment on this subject. He had been sitting on the deck of the *Windsor Castle* one evening, the outgoing steamer to Africa. He was partial to the loneliness of the sea for his meditations.

"The best time," he writes, "I find is just after sunset, when on the upper deck you can find some lonely corner and look out at a dark semi-circle of ocean which shades away into grey drifting clouds with peeps of melon-and-salmon drifting sky showing through the rifts. Even as a passenger in a crowded ship such a night is overpowering. . . ."

Then follows the result of this meditation :

"At such times I naturally think much of my own religious position and question my own soul as to its essential soundness. Of that I can have no possible doubt—I have tested it too often and too thoroughly. Far from weakening, it grows upon me, and I see more clearly that this revelation is the most important that mankind has ever had, and that we who are spreading it are doing the most vital work that is done in the world to-day. But is it entirely on the right lines? Of that I have my doubts. I feel a sympathy for those who desire that the movement should be kept quite unconnected with any special creed. It is a broad, noble ideal. But it is not practical, and it blocks the way and hinders our advance. If all religions are to be drawn together by this new knowledge, there should be two stages, not one, in the process. The first

stage should be that each great religion should separately within its own ranks learn and admit the new revelation. Then the second stage should be that all religions finding that they have this definite knowledge in common should draw closer to each other. But the first stage is essential, and that is what our leaders have not seen. In a Christian civilisation it is necessary that the personality and ethics of the Christ should be proclaimed in connection with our psychic knowledge, and that the two should be joined together. We cannot object to the Jew adding it to his Mosaic teaching, or the Mohammedan to the teaching of the prophet, but in every case the old should not be abandoned too readily in order to substitute the new. I do not of course in our case advocate dogma or fixed ritual. Theology has always been the enemy of real religion. But I do wish to see, on the part of Spiritualists of Christian countries, some broad public acknowledgement of the work of that great teacher who, twenty centuries ago, said words and did deeds which even now have not been fully understood, but which certainly have had a wonderful influence upon the world. A European Spiritualist should in a broad sense be a Christian, and we shall never sweep through the nations until this is understood" (*Our African Winter*, pp. 14-16).

Such is his considered judgment on a subject which is all important for those who are interested in the furtherance of the spiritualistic movement.

Besides Windlesham there was one other home that he greatly prized. It has been already stated

that Hampshire was a county he dearly loved, and in Hampshire there is the New Forest. It was a dream on the part of Lady Conan Doyle to own a cottage in the New Forest. She desired that this cottage should be thatched, and that a stream should flow near-by. All these conditions were fulfilled in an old-world residence known as Bignell Wood that had been built in the time of George I. Thatched cottages are doubtless warm in winter and certainly picturesque, but they have certain drawbacks. One is that a thatched roof is liable to be ignited by the sparks flying out from a powerful kitchen-range ; and this is exactly what happened to Bignell Wood in the late autumn of 1929. The thatched part of the cottage took fire, and a great part of the building was burned to the ground. It has been rebuilt, but was never to be occupied by Sir Arthur in its new form.

Some of his happiest days were spent at this retreat. He gave it as a present to Lady Conan Doyle, and her nimble hands soon transformed it into a fairy bower. A beautiful stream runs past the house, forming a tiny cascade on its way. The lawns were laid out anew with greens for clock-golf and other games. The real charm of the house lies in the fact that access to the New Forest can be had through the gate in the garden hedge. In the Forest one can wander at will amidst the oak trees that have witnessed the passing of the centuries, or meditate beside the stream that gurgles through the glade. Mr. and Mrs. Ashton Jonson, Sir



IN HIS NEW FOREST GARDEN, 1929.

Arthur's devoted friends who had accompanied him during a great part of the African tour, were present on the occasion of my last visit to Bignell Wood. We sometimes all went together into the New Forest during the afternoon, but on passing through the hedge around the garden we separated. Each one of the group would choose his own path : it might be to witness the fairies circling in the dells or to meditate on the flight of time since Rufus met his death in the neighbouring valley. There is a sense of mystery awakened in the mind in every forest, and more especially is this true when a stream is murmuring near-by. Such was the retreat to which Sir Arthur betook himself when he desired to be apart from the world.

But even at Bignell Wood there was a task that confronted him every day. To be a popular author is doubtless a pleasant enough experience ; to tackle a popular author's mail is a laborious task. Day by day I saw the forenoon mail arrive, and day by day I saw him bending over that pile of letters, and personally dealing with them. If some of the answers were necessarily brief, what wonder ? But he had always the encouraging word for the willing worker, and the word of comfort for bereaved and anxious hearts.

It was only in the afternoon he could claim an hour of leisure, and then we would all be off to Beaulieu Abbey or to visit Tom Charman, who not only believes in fairies but who lives with them. Tom Charman has, perhaps, the most wonderful

cipient at this period. We reproduce the document verbatim, as it has a direct bearing upon subsequent events :

" SIR,— " VENERABLE LEADER,

" We—the Spiritualists of ancient Hungary—gathered with great satisfaction from *Light* of April 20, page 185, that you are homeward bound from your big South African tour, which we hope you have thoroughly enjoyed! You did splendid spiritual work, and therefore we congratulate you most heartily.

" A far greater event, your seventieth birthday,¹ on the 22nd inst., gives us the joyful opportunity of submitting to you our best, sincerest and respectful well-wishes. May the Almighty reward and further guard and help you and our GREAT GOOD CAUSE.

" Knowing that you always aided the innocently persecuted and oppressed, we beg you to interest yourself kindly for our inexpressibly sad and disastrous National tragedy caused by the cruel treaty of Trianon, the main details of which you may infer from the enclosed little map.

" With best compliments—in the name of your devoted Hungarian spiritualistic adherents and admirers (every child here knows your name), we have the honour to remain,

" Your very obedient servants,

" CHARLES RÖTLI,

ODON NÉPER (*aged till now 78*),

HENRY P. ENESY (*Major-General*),

DR. CHENGERY PAP ELENER.

" BUDAPEST, HUNGARY,

" May 8, 1929."

¹ It was really his seventy-first birthday.

This is only one of many similar messages that were reaching him from the European capitals. Europe was calling. It will be observed that these Hungarian Spiritualists desired his intervention in their national affairs, so that, had he been able to visit Budapest, he might soon have had his hands fairly well filled.

It was in celebrating his seventy-first birthday that he issued a personal appeal to his fellow-men regarding their future well-being. "We are all about to die," it began, and this rather startled his friends of the Press. They could not quite comprehend the author of Sherlock Holmes in the character of an evangelist. Religion was all very well, suitable for respectable people in cathedrals and churches and for the more abandoned classes at Salvation Army gatherings, but Editors at their desks had no special desire to be reminded, even by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, that they were about to die! They sat down and worried over the message as best they could, some recognising the earnest mind that lay behind this tract, and others making light of it. However, it received a fair measure of publicity in various newspapers. If Sir Arthur had gone to South Africa and America and Australia to proclaim his message, why should he be silent as regards his own countrymen?

This tract raises a question which cannot fully be discussed in these pages, but which will grow in interest with the years. Sir William Barrett maintained that Spiritualism is not a religion. It is a

purely scientific question. Such I presume is the attitude of Richet and others who are mainly interested in the phenomena. They claim that the phenomena exist—that tables can be seen to rise without a hand or foot or any human agency being applied to them (*telekinesis*), that men and women of ordinary intelligence can under certain conditions discourse in a learned manner on profound philosophical subjects (*cryptesthesia*), and that materialisations do take place such as have been recorded by the Baron von Schrenck-Notzing. But many of these scientists do not postulate the spiritual hypothesis as in any way explaining the phenomena. They confine themselves to the observation and documentation of what they regard as ascertained facts under conditions that exclude all possibility of fraud or trickery. If they have any theory at all it is that of animism in the sense of the exteriorisation of certain faculties contacting what is termed the “subliminal consciousness,” or some form of telepathy by means of which the subject in trance can tap a reservoir of universal intelligence. In so far then as these observations are confined to the tabulation of psychic facts and the discussion of their probable causes, or of the conditions under which they may be produced, Psychic Research is a science and nothing more.

Far otherwise is it with the man who believes that, through his own personal experiences, he has discovered the proof that his ego or individuality survives the crisis termed death, and that a measure of intelligent communication can be maintained

between the inhabitants of this outward material world and the spiritual world. When he has reached that conviction, Spiritualism becomes to him a form of religion.

This is precisely what happened in the life-history of Arthur Conan Doyle. Through his repudiation of all ecclesiastical dogmas his mind was open to receive the proofs afforded by psychic facts. Over a long period of years (from 1887 to 1918) he had been quietly investigating, and when he had reached conviction he was not the man to hide his light under a bushel. To him, as an Agnostic with no hope of a life beyond the grave, the discovery that life could be endless and progressive was as the "pearl of great price." To him, riveted to the belief that this was the only planet he might inhabit, it was a discovery of momentous importance that there are endless worlds alike material and immaterial reaching out towards infinitude. Without further delay he crossed the Rubicon, determined to carry his message to the ends of the earth. The author of Sherlock Holmes, the keen cricketer and sportsman becomes convinced that death does not end all, and that there is another world as real to the inhabitants of that world as this world is to ourselves, and he goes forth as the protagonist of these beliefs. Why should this have caused surprise when the true manhood that was embodied within him is considered? It may be argued he ought to have kept his knowledge to himself! He was not the man to do that. Or, it may be said, he should

have returned to the Church of his early years. The Church of his early years, however great it may be, upholds dogmas that intellectually he could not accept. The only open path for him was the platform. Why should not Truth have its heralds in the twentieth century as well as in the dawn of time?

It may be asked, What were the effects of his belief upon his personal character? One who knew him best, who followed him in all his wanderings and who closed his eyes in death, can bear special testimony on that point (see Lady Conan Doyle's *Tribute*). His sons declare of him that he was the best "pal" they have ever known, so companionable was he and so sympathetic and understanding. His daughters hold him in the same regard. Even within the brief compass of years that I knew him personally he seemed ever to grow more mellow and more generous in his criticism of his fellow-men. He was a fighter to the end. He would never palter with what he regarded as truth, and he never hesitated to condemn slackness or inertia in a cause that was dear to him. But holding, as he firmly held, that as we sow in this world so shall we reap in the Great Beyond, his life gradually became a great living act of sacrifice alike in the smaller as well as in greater things. Many a poor wanderer on the highway had cause to thank him; many a struggling author had cause to bless him; many a group of spiritualistic workers confronted with some impossible task have good reason to cherish his memory; for his ear was ever open to

their appeal, and his hand ever stretched out in generous help. Many of his literary confrères confessed that, whilst they could not follow him in his new crusade, if they were in trouble there was no man whose counsel they would seek more readily than the counsel of Conan Doyle. It was his love of humanity that was the great constraining motive of his life. He was ever at the grindstone of work, and day by day adding to his benefactions.

In the late autumn of 1929 he set out on his mission to Europe, visiting The Hague and Copenhagen on his way to Stockholm and Oslo. It was at Stockholm he received one of the warmest welcomes he had ever experienced. The newspapers of Sweden opened their columns to him. A distinguished English author was in their midst, and although he was the advocate of strange ideas, they could not forget that he was in the land of Swedenborg, their own distinguished son. They went a step farther. Their broadcasting studio was placed at his disposal, and he was permitted to speak to the whole of Sweden. This was an extremely gratifying feature of his visit. From Sweden in the north he intended to proceed from capital to capital until even Rome and Athens and Constantinople would be reached. Like another Moses, he looked down on the Promised Land of his future activities, but had to leave it to others to complete the conquest. After Stockholm he visited Oslo.

There is in London one service in which he was deeply interested—the Armistice Memorial Service

held in the Albert Hall. It had been accounted that he would be present at this service in the forenoon, and also that he would speak at the service in the Queen's Hall in the evening. Alas! the energy that had sustained him through so many conflicts was now exhausted. When he arrived in London he had to be carried to his flat in Buckingham Palace Mansions. His physicians were summoned, and they at once enjoined absolute rest. There were the meetings at which he had been advertised to be present on the following Sabbath. The doctors were imperative. All speaking for the time being had to be abandoned. But they did not know their patient. When the Sabbath dawned Sir Arthur struggled to the Albert Hall, where he spoke with apparent difficulty, and again in the evening he spoke in the Queen's Hall. His words were in reality the words of a dying man. He had, in his determined eagerness to vindicate the cause to which he had given twelve years of his life, signed his own death-warrant.

Of his literary productions during these twelve years of missionary enterprise a brief summary may be given. At the outset he published two books in which his position was defined, *The New Revelation* and *The Vital Message*. These books contained a clear statement of the essential teachings of Spiritualism: (a) that death does not end all, (b) that there is another world as real to the inhabitants of that world as this outward material world is to ourselves, and (c) that a measure of intelligent communication can be maintained between the two

worlds. He next translated the book on Joan of Arc produced by Léon Denis in France under the English title, *The Mystery of Joan of Arc*. He edited the life of Daniel Dunglas Home, written by Mrs. Home, and defended the character of that gifted medium from the charges that had been levelled against him. His volume *Memories and Adventures* was issued in 1924. This is an autobiography giving in richer detail the incidents recorded in these pages, and with that power of racy narrative to which the author of these pages lays no claim. But in that volume his psychic studies and missionary efforts are only incidentally mentioned. *The Case for Psychic Photography* was another book produced at this period.

The History of Modern Spiritualism, in two large volumes, occupied him during several years. This is a monumental work dedicated to Sir Oliver Lodge. In these volumes he recognises Swedenborg and Mesmer as being the true pioneers of the movement, records the phenomena that took place among the Shakers in America, and, beginning with the Fox family at Hydesville, he traces the subsequent developments with a masterly hand. It is the most complete work on the subject since the time of Mrs. Hardinge Britten, necessitating on his part an immense amount of research; written with a frankness and honesty that recognised not only the heroism of the early pioneers, but the weakness of character on the part of certain mediums that had brought discredit on the movement.

We give one brief extract :

"Man had lost touch with the vast forces which lie around him, and his knowledge and aspirations had become bounded by the pitiful vibrations which make up his spectrum and the trivial octaves which limit his range of hearing. Spiritualism, the greatest movement for 2,000 years, rescues him from this condition, bursts the thick mists that have enshrouded him, and shows him new powers and unlimited vistas which lie beyond and around him."

At the same time he was producing *The Land of Mist*, a novel that appeared in serial form in the pages of *The Strand Magazine*, and in which Prof. Rutherford of Edinburgh, under the guise of Prof. Challenger of *The Lost World*, again appears as the arch-critic, whilst Miss Felicia Scatcherd and other local workers can be recognised behind the different characters in the novel. An occasional Sherlock Holmes story appeared in *The Strand*. The four volumes dealing with his missionary activities have already been mentioned.

A smaller book, *Phineas Speaks*, was published in 1926. This volume records the séances held in his own home, and in which Lady Conan Doyle was the medium. Phineas is an Arab philosopher who claimed to be Sir Arthur's guide. It was this Phineas who foretold the calamities that were to descend upon the world.

The last book from his pen, entitled *The Edge of the Unknown*, was published in 1930. It is in reality a collection of the essays he had written from time to time dealing with such subjects as Houdini (who

was opposed to Spiritualism), Thomas Lake Harris (who so directly influenced the life of Laurence Oliphant), D. D. Home and other cognate subjects. It is a singularly interesting volume. He was permitted to see this volume published before his passing.

The Coming of the Fairies does not directly bear upon the subject of Spiritualism, but is one of the many subordinate studies included in the wide realm of Psychic Research. This book was produced in 1922.

This record does not include the numerous letters he wrote to the Press, but it is sufficient to prove how diligent must have been his pen during his years of missionary labour. The marvel is not that he passed at the age of seventy-one. Had he not been a Hercules as regards work he could never have borne up against his task so long. It was the ease and rapidity with which he wrote, and his methodical accuracy in arranging his material, that enabled him to leave behind him a library of books which in number and bulk equal the productions of many of our greatest writers. On one point he differed essentially from his contemporaries. They appreciated and loved Arthur Conan Doyle, the author of *Sherlock Holmes* and *The White Company*. They deprecated the fact that he ever espoused the cause of Spiritualism. The writings of the last twelve years of his life they would willingly ignore. Sir Arthur himself regarded these later writings as being of enduring value, and which could wait for that day in which their merits will be more justly estimated.

CHAPTER IX

HIS PASSING

WHILST there was widespread anxiety on the part of his immediate followers and his many friends throughout the land when his physical energy collapsed at the Albert Hall, yet no immediate apprehension of his passing was entertained. It was believed that with rest and care his health would soon be re-established. He was taken to his beloved Windlesham; and when Christmas drew near Lady Conan Doyle was good enough to invite me to be present. I joined the family group the day before Christmas, and saw Sir Arthur personally. He was singularly cheerful. No complaint of any kind ever escaped his lips. But his weakness was apparent. The day before my arrival he had fallen in the passage in an effort to reach the dining-room. How often have I listened to him mimicking Prof. Rutherford (the Prof. Challenger of *The Lost World*). Prof. Rutherford was accustomed to mutter part of his lecture on the way along the passage towards his desk in the lecture-room. His voice would be heard: "The valves of the heart," etc., and then the great man would appear in bodily form. Alas! it was the valves of the heart in Sir Arthur's case that had

ceased to function with accuracy. That delicate and vital organ had been overstrained.

On Christmas Eve there was the usual Christmas dinner, but he was not allowed to partake of it to any extent. He contented himself with eating a few grapes. Yet afterwards he brightened up, and joined in the measure of mirth that was possible. Sir James M. Barrie had been in possession of Stanway Court during the autumn of 1929, a large mansion given him to occupy by Lady Cynthia Asquith. Yet in this ample mansion it was possible to be lonely, and Sir James had invited Sir Arthur, his friend of former years, to visit him at Stanway Court. Sir James had become an adept in projecting moistened postage stamps fastened on a coin and held between the forefinger and the thumb to the ceiling of one of the rooms, until the ceiling was fairly well sprinkled with them. He initiated Sir Arthur into the mysteries of this pastime. The recollection of this experience served as a subject of discourse on that Christmas Eve. He turned the idea round and round until it became more amusing than any of the adventures of Brigadier Gerard. The postage stamps projected by Sir James did not always reach their objective, but occasionally they did ascend in the perpendicular and adhered to the roof, whereas, in most cases, the stamps projected by his adversary described a graceful parabola and fluttered gently to the floor. The recreations of distinguished authors are not without interest; and it might be worthy of some artist's skill to

depict these two authors, the one who had passed, and the other who was on the border-land of seventy, in this contest to adorn the ceiling of the Stanway Court library with postage stamps. In any case, Sir Arthur's description of this experience tended to lighten the burden that lay somewhat heavily upon our hearts. His mind then went back to other contests, to the days when he found the wicket of W. G. Grace, and when he had been runner-up in some billiard tournament. Barrie could never quite understand the position that his friend had taken up, but he never forgot the intimacies of their early years.

During my residence in Edinburgh a railway accident took place at Burntisland, which resulted in several deaths among the passengers, whilst the locomotive express engine was hurled into the adjoining field. Moved by some strange impulse I went over to Burntisland to see that engine. I found it covered with a cloth lying on its side among the green grass, that engine absolutely helpless, which could so easily whilst pulling its enormous load leave forty miles behind it every hour. When I saw Sir Arthur in his weakened condition I always thought of that engine. It seemed so strange to him to have nothing to do. And yet, even struggling against his growing weakness, he was busy writing letters for the Press, and, as in former years, involved in various controversies. If he was not on the public platform, his last book, *The Edge of the Unknown*, was published during this illness.

Did he ever in these days of limitation ponder over his life and wonder if his energies had been wisely spent? There is evidence of such mental questioning in the brief preface to *The Edge of the Unknown*, in which he states :

"There is a passage in that charming book, *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, which runs as follows :

"'She was one of those persons who have allowed their lives to be gnawed away because they have fallen in love with an idea several centuries before its appointed appearance in the history of civilisation. She hurled herself against the obstinacy of her time.' We who believe in the psychic revelation, and who appreciate that a perception of these things is of the utmost importance, certainly have hurled ourselves against the obstinacy of our time. Possibly we have allowed some of our lives to be gnawed away in what for the moment seemed a vain and thankless quest. Only the future can show whether the sacrifice was worth it. Personally, I think it was."

As he penned these words (among the last he ever wrote), it is clear he was fully conscious that his own life had been "gnawed away" in hurling himself against the "obstinacy of his time"? If so, he never regretted it, and died in the firm conviction that his teaching would be vindicated throughout the coming years.

Once again I saw Sir Arthur. I went down to Windlesham to enquire for his health. It was not easy to break through the guards that watched the portals, for he was kept as quiet as possible, but

I found him with his cheery smile and hopeful of returning health. Some weeks afterwards he produced a picture of himself in the various stages of his career, entitled *The Old Horse*. This horse was represented as drawing an enormous load. The message, however, was one of assurance. The old horse, it was stated, with a few months of rest, would be at his task again. It was this picture that disarmed my own mind and the minds of his friends of further anxiety, for in a few weeks he was in open revolt against the Society for Psychical Research. This Society during many years has done excellent work, and has had among its members three distinguished men who have rendered yeoman service to the cause of Psychic Research—Sir Oliver Lodge, still happily spared to us, Frederick W. H. Myers, one of the finest classical scholars of his day and the author of *Human Personality*, and Sir William Barrett, the author of *On the Threshold of the Unseen*, who was one of the founders of the Society. In the published *Proceedings* there is a mass of evidence that will be valuable for the coming generations. But in recent years there seems to have been in the minds of the leaders of this Society a settled conviction that all mediums are frauds, with the inevitable result that many mediums of undoubted probity keep the officers of this Society at arms' length. A book was published, *Modern Psychic Mysteries*, which gives an account of some extraordinary psychic phenomena that had taken place at Millesimo Castle, near to Genoa. This book had

A detailed black and white illustration of a horse-drawn wagon carrying a large, multi-tiered book. The book's pages are labeled with various subjects like 'ARCTIC', 'LITERATURE', 'HISTORY', 'SCIENCE', 'ART', 'LITERATURE', 'HISTORY', 'SCIENCE', 'ART', 'LITERATURE', 'HISTORY', 'SCIENCE', 'ART'. The wagon is pulled by a horse, and two men in top hats stand behind it. The background shows a landscape with trees and a small building.

CONSULTATION OF VETS WEBB-JOHNSON, PARKINSON AND MACHINTOSH THE IND HORSE HAS PULLED A HEAVY LOAD A LONG WAY. BUT HE IS WELL CARED FOR AND WITH 3-4 WEEKS STAGE AND 3-6 MONTHS GRESS HE WILL BE ON THE ROAD, NOT NEAR

been translated by Mrs. G. P. Hack, and published by Rider & Co. In his review of this volume by Mr. Theodore Besterman, the Editor of the *Journal of the S.P.R.*, some adverse comments had been made on the reported phenomena. Prof. Bozzano had been present at the séances in Millesimo Castle, and Sir Arthur felt that Prof. Bozzano's honour was being impugned. He had in former years strongly resented the action of the Society in the Hope case. This review by Mr. Besterman, on *Modern Psychic Mysteries*, was the last straw. He resigned his membership, and issued a document deprecating in strong terms the attitude of this Society towards psychic investigation.

One other subject interested him deeply. According to some ancient law enacted in the reign of James I, who had a special aversion towards witches, any medium or any person sitting with a medium can be haled before a magistrate and put in prison. And further, legacies left to spiritualistic societies have been diverted into other channels owing to the fact that these societies have no real standing before the law. It is all very absurd. And yet so recently as 1928 the Cantlon case was heard in court. Mrs. Cantlon was a medium employed by the London Spiritualist Alliance. Two women policemen in ordinary dress had a séance with her, and the result was that Mrs. Cantlon was dragged before the magistrate, and Miss Phillimore, the Secretary of the Alliance, was likewise indicted as aiding and abetting her. Mrs. Cantlon's defence was briefly that

as she was in trance she was quite unconscious of the messages that may have been given through her lips. The defence of the London Spiritualist Alliance was that in giving Mrs. Cantlon a place at their Headquarters they believed they were employing a trustworthy medium. What complicated the issue was that for some reason Mrs. Cantlon was dismissed. The verdict went against the Alliance, but no fine was imposed. The costs amounted to some seven or eight hundred pounds. With regard to this case Sir Arthur held that the women police had no right to become the *agents provocateurs*, and that if they went to Mrs. Cantlon under an assumed name, and under the pretence of bereaved widows, then by certain psychic laws they could only expect to receive false messages.

In the case of the Alliance a legacy of £3,000 had been bequeathed to them by a friend in America, but on some technical point the legacy was claimed by the relatives of the deceased, and was diverted from the purpose of the testator.

How keenly Sir Arthur felt about this Cantlon case can be seen from the letter which appeared in *The Times* when the decision was announced :

“ THE PERSECUTION OF SPIRITUALISTS

“ *Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Contentions*

“ To the Editor of *The Times*.

“ Sir,—

“ I would ask your permission to make a few comments upon the case against a medium and

against the society which employed her, which has just been decided in the Westminster Police Court. The verdict, as I understand it, is: 'We won't punish you this time, but you are warned for the future.'

"Without arguing the rights or wrongs of our cult, it is an undeniable fact that we are numerous and earnest, and that we believe that mediums are essential both for study and for the conduct of our Churches. Many believe that they are those 'Angels of the Church' to whom St. Paul alludes, and who were obviously human beings. This being so, any legal action which forbids or restricts them is to that extent religious persecution. That the police should be employed on such a matter is deplorable, especially as their activities take the hateful shape of *agents provocateurs*. Still more deplorable is the difficulty of ascertaining what is the hidden power which induces the resuscitation of an obsolete law, and causes strong suspicion that sectarian bigotry may be at work.

"In the case of Mrs. Cantlon, she had given hundreds of sittings at our rooms, and no sitter has ever complained. Now, it is surely clear that, had it been her habit to serve up the grotesque nonsense quoted by the police, there would have been remonstrances. It is strange, indeed, that only the three police witnesses have had so deplorable an experience. When I say this, I do not impugn the truth of the witnesses, but it is a fact that harmony is essential in a séance room. It surely would be a disproof of all our views if higher forces descended in order to carry conviction to police spies. There seems to me to be an element of derision in the absurd messages which they receive.

“More serious is the case of Miss Phillimore. She is the secretary of a society numbering more than a thousand people, most of whom regard this subject from a religious angle. She is now responsible legally for all that any medium may do or say, or may be represented to have done or said, upon the premises. This puts her in an impossible position. We are a law-abiding people, but we also have a conscience, and it is ill to place us in such a position as that our conscience must compel us to break the law. If I may take a personal instance, I have a bookshop which is instituted to give psychic information. Many people in distress come there asking for advice. We usually send them on to such mediums as we have found to be most helpful in such a case, and the results are gratifying. But by this extension or interpretation of the law I am liable to prosecution if that medium should not give satisfaction, or should confuse the future with the past. I would cheerfully face such a prosecution, but it is not a healthy state of affairs. From our point of view, it is the very central core of all religion, the proof of Survival, which the police are attacking.

“Our demands are moderate and reasonable. What we wish as a minimum is that all registered spiritualistic churches and all serious societies for the study of psychic matters should be exempt from police persecution. We hold no brief for the mere fortune-teller, whose work has no religious significance and no guarantee of sincerity. But we are very earnest to get what we need. The Home Secretary has informed me officially that there is no hope of a change in the law. This is not a wise resolution. We are a solid body, numbering some

hundreds of thousand voters. We are of all parties, but we are united against those who refuse us justice, and impose upon us a religious persecution.

"Yours faithfully,

"ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE,

"President of the London Spiritualist Alliance."

"25th July, 1928."

This letter is only one out of many letters he sent to the Press from time to time. Some of these letters appeared in print after his death. But the strong position he took up in the Cantlon case can explain his desire to have the law remedied.

During the spring months of 1930 it seemed to many that the time had come when some effort should be made to have this antiquated law repealed, and some measure of protection bestowed on mediums. The spiritualistic body, it may be stated, is as eager as the enemies of Spiritualism, that all spurious phenomena should be stamped out, and that those in any way guilty of practising fraud should be severely dealt with. But that honest mediums should be at the mercy of some woman policeman imperils their activities and renders them liable to a measure of needless anxiety.

In 1930 Sir Arthur wrote to Mr. Clynes, the Home Secretary, on the subject, and it was arranged that a deputation should wait upon him. This meeting was fixed for the 1st July, 1930. Sir Arthur not only formed one of the deputation, but in a

brief speech indicated the objects they had in view. Mr. Oaten, in an extremely able statement, presented the case for the Spiritualists. The Rev. Drayton Thomas, Mrs. Champion de Crespigny, and Mr. Hannen Swaffer likewise supported Mr. Oaten's contentions. Mr. Clynes in his reply suggested that the amendments to the existing law that the Spiritualists desired should be embodied in a Bill and introduced to Parliament by some private member.

This was Sir Arthur's first public appearance after his long illness, and his last public effort on behalf of the cause he loved so well. The effort was really beyond his strength, and combined with the worries it entailed became the turning-point of the attack to which he had succumbed in the previous November. All that love could do was willingly done on his return to Windlesham. But nursing and watching were no longer of any avail. The tide began to go out rapidly. In this effort to procure legal protection for the men and women he so highly esteemed and championed during twelve years he completed his life record. Gradually he became weaker. No medical expedients could restore him. Looking up to Lady Conan Doyle, who had so bravely followed him in all his wanderings, and who had stood by him in all his times of storm and stress, he said, 'You are wonderful,' and passed into a state of unconsciousness which could have only one ending. On the 7th July, 1930—six days after the meeting with the

Home Secretary—Sir Arthur Conan Doyle arose to a wider sphere of influence than he had ever known on this side of Time. The man who had braved the dangers of the Arctic seas and the terrors of the Egyptian desert, who had rejected the dogmas of the orthodox faith and faced the frowns of an unbelieving generation, passed within the "world of causes," from which his influence will continue to radiate.

It was on the 11th July that his mortal remains were laid in the garden grave at Windlesham. The sun shone brightly, and from every point in the compass his many friends came to pay their tribute of respect to his memory. The service was held on the lawn of the rose garden, and was conducted by the Rev. Drayton Thomas and the Rev. Charles Cyril Angell, while Mr. Ernest Oaten delivered the oration at the grave. There were few signs of mourning. It was rather a scene of congratulation that this brave fighter had ended his warfare so nobly. Well might it have been said: "Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail, or knock the breast, nothing but well and fair and what may quiet us in a death so noble." "There is no death" is the watchword of Spiritualists, and Lady Conan Doyle and the members of her family circle acted in accordance with this teaching. It was with leaden footsteps, however, that many of us followed in the procession on the way to the garden grave, for whilst we all knew he was with us as a living presence in our midst, yet in the absence of the

outward physical form a great gap had opened somewhere in the world. The worn-out body rests beside the hut that so often sheltered this world missionary in his meditations. The solitary pilgrim has already found his way to that garden grave where many, throughout the coming years, will bow in reverent gratitude to God for the life and testimony of Arthur Conan Doyle.

The Memorial Service, organised by the Marylebone Spiritualist Association, was held in the Albert Hall on the Sabbath evening immediately following. The vast Hall was completely filled, and thousands were turned away. Mr. George Craze occupied the Chair. The speakers were the Rev. G. Vale Owen, Rev. C. Drayton Thomas, Mr. Ernest Hunt, Mr. Ernest Oaten and Mr. Hannen Swaffer. Mrs. Roberts, clairvoyante, at this service gave several remarkable messages as proofs of Survival.

In all the leading newspapers his literary gifts and his services to the nation were acknowledged, and his testimony on behalf of Spiritualism recognised. Of the many private tributes paid to his memory several of the letters have been added to this volume.

The life of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle ended at the beginning of his seventy-second year, whereas many had anticipated for him a life of many more years. True, he had reached the "allotted span." Beyond that he was not permitted to travel far.

When he passed from this world a large section of the reading public felt they had lost a personal friend, whilst the Spiritualists mourned over a leader withdrawn from their outward sight, but whom they knew would still be with them alike to guide and to sustain them in their efforts.

His life in many ways forms a study of absorbing interest, alike for the literary aspirant and the student of religious psychology. During the early years of his professional practice at Southsea he had poverty for a bride. It was no Circean cup that was pressed to his lips. He had perforce to live on sixpence per day, a discipline that carries with it valuable lessons.

In his literary efforts he met with the same repulses that are common to all aspirants towards literary fame, and only after repeated discouragements did he at last emerge as one of the foremost writers of his day. During wellnigh thirty years he was on intimate terms with our leading authors, enjoying their comradeship, and rejoicing in their success. As a dramatist he had his own place upon the stage. He had written for Sir Henry Irving and others, so that through various channels his name gradually became a household word. Alike in the Boer War and during the Great War he had proved himself to be a patriot. When the honour of Great Britain was at stake he was promptly in the lists.

The Great War had its own special message for mankind, and the Great War had its own special message for Sir Arthur. It was then that the re-

ligious faculty which had been dormant within him for years was awakened—that faculty which scientists, as a rule, completely fail to comprehend, but which in its ever-varying manifestations has influenced so definitely the destinies of mankind. Sir Arthur Keith, in a singularly frank document communicated to the *Sunday Express*, has told us how he drifted at an early age from his Free Church training in the North, and how he gradually gave up the Bible as an infallible record. This was due to his studies in the University of Aberdeen. As the years were multiplied in his experience he abandoned all hope of a future life or of a future world. Such conceptions many have come to regard as mere figments of the imagination, and the desire of Survival as the proof of a selfish egoism. He has made the human brain a life-study, and when the brain ceases to operate life is ended. Such is his contention.

Mr. H. G. Wells followed Sir Arthur Keith with a statement equally remarkable, in which he holds that whilst the Individual may be said to perish Mankind survives, enriched by the lives and labours of the various members.

The position of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at one period of his early life was similar to the position now occupied by Sir Arthur Keith, although in 1895 he had come to the conclusion that survival after death might be possible. He had absorbed the teaching of Darwin, Spencer and Huxley, and his scorn of popular theologies was freely expressed. During thirty years, however, he had encountered

psychic facts which puzzled him, and which led him to investigate further. As his investigations were continued, the proofs accumulated that there are intelligences that can operate from the apparently invisible world until at length doubt in his mind gave place to conviction. He knew definitely enough what his public profession of Spiritualism would involve—the estrangement from many friends, the probable loss of income, the sneers of an unbelieving world. But to one constituted as he was, these disadvantages only served to whet his zeal. He had a message for mankind, and that message he was determined to deliver. What steps he took to make known his beliefs have been recorded in these pages, and much more fully in his own writings. If, on the one hand, he refused to consider either Roman Catholic or Protestant theology, he was in reality labouring every day to establish the foundation on which any theology may be said to rest. For if, according to Sir Arthur Keith, there is no future life and no future world, then the New Testament becomes a tissue of fables and theology an airy dream.

I occasionally met at his table men renowned in science who had personally no interest whatever in psychic research, but as the years advanced ever more and more he sought the fellowship of those who were at one with him in the main objects he had in view. Hence it was that men, like myself, who were as the Lilliputians around their Gulliver, found an entrance into his home life. And what a

home life that was ! He loved greatly and was greatly loved.

It was his sense of justice and his love of justice that made him espouse the cause of Spiritualism to the extent he did. The man who could see the injustice suffered by an Edalji or an Oscar Slater could in a moment see the injustice that had been meted out to the countless men and women scattered over the world, who in their adherence to psychic facts had bravely faced the scorn of their age. More especially was his indignation aroused when some medium was attacked by a newspaper or dragged before a magistrate on some charge of which the poor woman in her trance condition was helplessly ignorant. The Deans case and the Cantlon case are examples. No knight of ancient chivalry ever rode more swiftly to the rescue of some enchained maiden than did Sir Arthur hasten to the defence of a medium who in his judgment was being unfairly punished. Hence it is that in all the world to-day his name is not only revered but loved by the people called Spiritualists.

As for Spiritualism, the indications are steadily multiplying that it is growing and extending with the years, and this by means of the most unexpected developments. Sir Arthur had hoped that, as the evolutionary conceptions of Darwin had triumphed in a large measure among educated people in the space of two generations, so the views he held would find acceptance with the thinking portion of the community in a comparatively brief period. In

this, to some extent, he may have been mistaken. It may take several generations before the facts of Psychic Science are securely established in the public consciousness. But when the prejudices of the present age, and the diffidence that many enquirers experience in being confronted with new truths, have been overcome, when it has been sufficiently recognised that the one great mediator between religion on the one hand and science on the other is to be found in psychic research, when it is more clearly understood that Survival after death is a simple fact of Nature quite apart from all religious conceptions that may be entertained regarding it, then it will be possible in some measure to estimate the value of this man's service to humanity, *but not till then*. He became an enigma to his contemporaries. They could not understand how one, who in a sense had the world at his feet, should choose Spiritualism as the one great subject on which he was to speak and write. They overlooked the example of Bassanio in the play, who refused to choose the golden casket which contained the Death's Head or the silver casket with its Fool's Head, but who wisely opened the leaden casket that contained the treasure. If there is one lesson more than another that can be learned from the teaching of the New Testament, it is that we are not to judge by outward appearances, but by the inward and essential fact.

In order to understand this final step which so completely changed his life, it is necessary to consider the fundamental truth that underlies every form

of religion. For our modern materialists any form of religion is a useless superstition. They cannot dispute the universality of the religious sentiment, and they endeavour to trace its origin to dreams and phantasms of the mind. A more accurate knowledge of the psychology of man would lead them to very different conclusions. Every form of religion of any lasting importance has arisen through the direct contact of the individual with the invisible world. This was true of Moses at the Burning Bush. It was certainly true of Jesus at His baptism. It was equally true of Paul on his way to Damascus. We find the same fact illustrated in the experience of Mohammed, when he talked with the Angel Gabriel in the cave. We do not analyse these experiences. We simply refer to them as proofs of our statement that every form of religion has arisen out of this direct communion with Intelligences dwelling in an invisible sphere. If there is no invisible world, and if memory and intelligence do not survive death, then all such experiences as Moses and Jesus and others passed through are mere delusions of the brain. But if the materialistic outlook is too contracted, and if it can be definitely proved that there is a spiritual as well as a material world, and that a measure of intelligent communication can be maintained between the two worlds, then the origin of every form of religion can be understood. It was this definite knowledge that Conan Doyle obtained in a realm of thought that the literary dictators of the period declared to be taboo,

and the eminent thinkers regarded with scorn. But Columbus was not more certain that he had found land in the Western Ocean than was Sir Arthur that he had found a rock bed of truth as the result of his investigations into Spiritualism. There is a future life which can be proved independently of all priestly formulas ! There is another world as real to the inhabitants of that world as this outward material world is to ourselves ! And further, a measure of intelligent communication can be maintained between these two worlds. This in essence was the discovery which he had made. During the last twelve years of his life he endeavoured, alike by his voice and by his pen, to emphasise the importance of this discovery.

There is a certain similarity of experience between that of Swedenborg and that of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle which may be mentioned. Swedenborg is so great that it will require another five hundred years before humanity will be able to take his measure. He was the Edison and Herbert Spencer of his day, distinguished alike for his scientific inventions and philosophical acumen. Many of our recent medical discoveries were known to him. He was the first to propound the nebular hypothesis which was borrowed from him by Kant and merely mentioned in a footnote by Laplace. He wrote in Latin for the savants of Europe. It was in the full enjoyment of a European reputation as a scholar and a thinker that in his fifty-sixth year he experienced what he termed the " opening of an

inner sense." And from that period he became the seer who writes for the ages. The possibility of communication between the two worlds—the world of matter and the world of spirit—is fully endorsed by him. The massive volumes he produced during the interval between his fifty-sixth year and his death in London at eighty-four is his legacy to mankind. As the centuries succeed each other there will be ample time for the discerning few to profit by his teaching.

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at fifty-seven years of age reached the same conclusions that Swedenborg had affirmed, but, unlike Swedenborg, he had no theological system to maintain. Swedenborg had to adapt his theology as best he could to his new experiences. Sir Arthur's mind was open ground as far as theology was concerned. He had parted with theology many years before. He had not even the remnants of a ruin to remove. Nor was he conscious like Swedenborg of the opening of "any interior sense." He had in a measure the gift of healing. His presence was an inspiration to any patient. He had a literary gift that drew the thousands to his feet. Above all, he could *discern the value of evidence*. Many an intellectual puzzle he had constructed for his readers, based alike on the balance of probabilities and the value of evidence. And when as the result of the War he had to ask himself whether there is a future world or not, or whether there is a future life or not, this discernment as to the value of evidence was for him an

enormous asset. He could distinguish between pretence and reality. And hence it was that this Admirable Crichton in the realm of letters and sport threw himself into the conflict. He was no ascetic or "plaster-saint." He enjoyed life to the full. He could jest with death, knowing that death had no power over him. But from his fifty-seventh year until the end his great aim was to establish in the consciousness of mankind the truths which had become alike an inspiration and a comfort to himself—that death does not end all, and that for each one of us there is the possibility of progression within the Inner Spheres until the individual life will be merged in the glory of the Eternal. As regards reincarnation he ever kept an open mind, neither on the one hand unduly committing himself nor on the other excluding the possibility in certain cases of individual return.

There were not a few—Howard Thurston and others—who regarded him as being among the great religious teachers of his age. He had little use for ceremonies. Doctrinal distinctions he put aside. But on the fundamental problems that have exercised the minds of men, and which in the end control to a large extent the destiny of individuals and of nations—on all such problems he held his own views, nor did he hesitate to make them known. Far from limiting himself to what are termed the "trivialities of Spiritualism," he saw the deeper meaning of these "trivialities." As if anything can be trivial in a world where the fall of an

apple can change our outlook upon the universe ! It was the deeper spiritual truths that lay behind the " trivialities " that aroused his interest, and he became their apostle to the world's end. If, to a large extent, he ignored the formulas of the Church, he exhibited a missionary zeal worthy of a Xavier or a Livingstone.

It has been said, *Magna servita est magna fortuna*. If a life of unremitting service is the test of good fortune, then he may be regarded as having been among the most fortunate of men. During twelve years he laboured in season and out of season to make the truths so precious to himself known to his fellow-men, and in his final effort to vindicate these truths in our courts of justice he sacrificed life itself. It may be premature for anyone to pronounce judgment on the value of this life. We are much too near him to do that. But those who knew him best and who loved this man because of his leonine courage and tender heart can leave with confidence the final arbitrament to that age towards which the years are so steadily bearing us. It will then be more clearly seen how unselfish were the motives that marked this latter phase of his career ; and it will then be recognised that among the great pioneers and benefactors of mankind Arthur Conan Doyle will occupy a leading place.

LADY CONAN DOYLE'S TRIBUTE

THE writing of this last part of Dr. Lamond's "Impressions" of my husband is a very difficult thing for me to do—for this reason. I don't know where to begin—whether to begin with the stories told to me by his mother of his childhood days, or at what stage in his life to start, and when I have to stop writing about him that will be most difficult of all, for I could write and write and write about his wonderful character. His great tender soul—who can depict it? the hundred facets that made the man—the son—the brother—the husband—the father—the friend—the enemy. No! he was never an enemy to anyone, although like all humans he had met with unbelievable ingratitude, and many have bitten the hand that fed them, Spiritualists among them, sad to say! He had a mind so sweet and forgiving that, instead of vindictiveness, only a deep pity for them remained in his heart—pity that a human soul should sink so low.

A wife knows more of the true character of a man than anyone else on earth. It is the little daily things which speak—the straws which float by, showing the current—the heart, mind and soul of that life.

I think that the great force behind a man who has

risen spiritually or mentally, or in any worldly way above his fellow-men, is to be found as a rule in the mother. My husband's mother was a very remarkable and highly cultured woman. She had a dominant personality, wrapped up in the most charming womanly exterior. She had a great heart, and was full of sympathy for the troubles of all with whom she came in contact. Rich and poor alike went to her with their difficulties, and she was always pulling strings in all directions for the help of those whose lives were difficult or sad. She was the means of bringing sunlight into many a clouded life. Such was my very dear mother-in-law, whom I loved greatly, and whom I am glad to say loved me as a daughter and not as an "in law"! She was immensely proud of her first-born—my beloved husband; she loved him with a great love, and he deserved that love to the full, for never had a mother a better son.

My husband came of fine old blue-blooded stock. His parents had a wonderful ancestry behind them, but they had not much in the way of a worldly fortune. When he was about a year old a friend of his mother's went to call upon her, but she was out. She asked to see the baby, and when the nurse brought him the friend said, "No, I mean I want to see the baby!" He was so huge she could not believe it was the latest arrival! My mother-in-law told me that as a little fellow he showed early signs of that chivalry and protection for the weak or down-trodden which was so conspicuous in his life.

There was a lonely old lady who lived near them whom other boys used to make fun of, etc., and the young Arthur fought several of them for doing so, and as he was a very hefty fighter they soon found their unkind fun cost them too much in bruises, so they left the old lady alone. That was a little indication showing the development of his tender heart—his championing of the weak.

My husband was an evidential example for reincarnation. I have always so disliked the idea of reincarnation—to be re-dipped and re-dipped into this old earth atmosphere! What a prospect! And yet the earth plane, one feels, is the school into which all humanity must remain until they have learnt the lessons of life, until they have developed the various facets of their characters. All who knew my husband felt the same thing—that he had a most highly developed soul. One of the outstanding features of his character was the deep humility of his beautiful nature. Not one grain of conceit or petty pride was there in his mind or soul. He also was devoid of every kind of jealousy. No one gave praise more heartily to any fellow-author, or dramatist or spiritualist leader than he did. He loved to see the success of others. He had, too, such a tremendous tenderness of heart for all humanity and for every living thing. He hated even to see an insect hurt. He was so kind, so understanding, so full of all that is beautiful and untouched by the slime of the earth. He was generous beyond words, giving, giving, giving, from one year's end

to another, of his worldly goods, of his great mental gifts, of his time and strength.

People of all classes wrote or came to him with their troubles. I do not mean the endless procession of those wanting financial aid, but those in sorrow, or in difficulties, and his far-seeing wisdom showed them what to do, and his gentle kindly sympathy always sent them away with a new courage, and above all comforted. Invalids' sufferings were eased by his kindly generous help, friends' families helped and sustained when misfortune had rendered them penniless; and all done in so quiet a way that nobody but I would know anything about it.

In all the twenty-three years we were married, I never heard an ignoble or unkind word pass his lips. His soul and mind were incapable of it. The only people he had a contempt for were moral cowards—liars—self-seekers and those who were cruel in any way to man, beast or bird. Of those he would not hesitate to express his opinion in public or anywhere else.

He was a most devoted brother—in fact, more like a father to all his sisters and brother—at their side helping them through all their troubles and worries which came to them through life—their great helper and comforter. One of his sisters, a brilliantly clever woman, writing to someone of him after he passed over, said :

“ He was the best, the kindest, the most generous

of men, and there was that in his personality that put strength and courage into one—and his intellectual grasp of any subject in which he took even a fleeting interest was amazing. He always swept me right off my feet in an argument, even on a subject on which I had a very definite opinion of my own."

His dealings with social inferiors were always so worthy of him. All in his employment loved him—he was so considerate and kind to them—he always tried to save people trouble on his behalf. Never a harsh word to them crossed his lips. They felt it was a joy and privilege to do anything for him.

His personality was so dear that the home-life was made radiant by his presence—everyone alike under the roof felt it. If only all men were like him in the homes, women's lives would be a very different thing. I never heard a petty grumble from him in all our married life. He was very simple in his tastes—liking the plainest fare far the best—it made housekeeping so easy for me! He was most appreciative too of everything that was done, noticing all the little things which mean so much to a woman who loves her home. The loving praise makes that side of home-life sweet.

He was like a boy in the house, so full of fun always—the central battery of happiness. Then he was truly interested in the interests of those around him, so that one and all would go at once to him with what their minds were full of, and he would always be so understanding. His advice was invariably sound and good and wise. If anyone was

upset or irritable, he would handle them very gently, so that somehow a balm seemed to come to the troubled one in a few minutes. His great tender heart seemed to understand the inner vibrations of another's mind, and that gentle sympathy touched the tired soul.

His conversation at home was very entertaining and wide-sweeping in interest. He never talked down to us, but he gave us of his best in a perfectly natural way, with no mental superiority note ever in it.

His brain equalled his soul. He absorbed knowledge daily as a man's human body absorbs food. He was always studying some subject—geology—astronomy, etc., etc. On the few occasions I have known him to have a holiday he at once began to study something fresh! For instance, when we were in Constantinople for a short while, he studied Turkish history, and I am sure knew more than the average Turk about it, and could have passed a stiff examination upon the subject. In Cornwall, when we went for a fortnight's holiday, as he had been unwell, he at once began studying the old Cornish language! He had the most wonderfully retentive memory I have ever known. If a book was mentioned that he had not read for twenty years he would remember the names of all the characters, etc. The same with everything which went into that great storehouse of knowledge. What went in remained in for all time.

When he wrote his *British Campaigns in Europe*, 1914-18, he was so soaked in his knowledge of every movement and action of the troops that if a man said years after that he had been wounded in the spring of such and such a year, he would at once say, "Oh, that was at such a place, and were you in the — Regiment?" to the utter amazement of the man; and I never knew him to be wrong.

His History of the Great War is a monument of work. As he could not get to the Front to fight in any way, owing to his age, although he left no stone unturned to do so, he determined to write and let the world know all that our glorious Army had done. He had that rare gift of creating a mind picture in a few vivid words. There was never a redundant word in anything he wrote, and that gift was invaluable in writing the History. With his vivid style and love of truth he produced a perfect record of what the British Army did in the Great War, and told it all in such a human readable way. In the years to come that History will be the one to which all will turn when they want to have an accurate account of just what happened at each turn to each regiment.

"My husband came of a very artistic family, and he had the artistic side highly developed, and a fine touch and eye for colour in things. When his play, *The Brigadier Gerard*, was being done, he much disliked the spotless, smart-looking uniform of the soldiers, who, according to the play, should have been looking in a pretty shabby condition after all that

they were supposed to have been through. So he had the uniforms slashed and stained to get the true effect. The critics credited Irving with the fine little by-play in my husband's play *Waterloo*. They were all my husband's suggestions—the realistic artistic side in him coming out.

My husband truly had a Sherlock Holmes brain himself. He showed it in his indefatigable defence of two innocent men and his self-sacrificing work on their behalf, entailing the giving-up of a great deal of his time—and in the expenditure of a good deal of his money in order to prove their innocence. I refer to the Edalji and the Oscar Slater cases. But the public never heard of the other mysteries and problems which he solved.

He had many requests from the relatives of people who had disappeared under suspicious circumstances—not only in England, but also on the Continent. In their despair—the police failing to trace the missing persons—the relatives wrote to my husband begging his aid. My husband never gave up a case which intrigued him and challenged his powers—and never did he fail to find the solution to the mystery.

On one occasion, when a man had disappeared under dramatic circumstances, the police officials, failing to find the missing man, or to find any solution to the mystery, the relatives then, in their distraction, wrote to my husband. His great kind heart being touched by their terrible anxiety, he took the case up. I may say he never touched a

penny for his work in this way. Within a few days he wrote to the relatives and said, "Your son will be found alive and well, either in W. or in T. in three days' time, naming two towns close together, hundreds of miles from the city it was thought that he had been murdered in. The missing man turned up in the town of W. on the third day! My husband solved that mystery—just as he did others without leaving his study in the country—simply by using his own most remarkable powers of deduction. Like all truly great men, my husband was so innately modest that he never gave another thought to his brilliant work in tracking down to the roots those problems, once they were solved.

That is the man of whom, after over forty years of research and investigation into the subject of Spiritualism, analysing and weighing the evidence so carefully at every step, the ignorant prejudiced critic airily says, "Oh, he was gulled," etc., etc. Easier far to gull the foolish "know-all" critic's brain than one corner of my husband's keenly penetrating and marvellously balanced one.

The marvel is that he did not suffer from continual writer's cramp, as his hand must have travelled hundreds of miles on paper. He wrote all his books, stories, etc., in his own hand—besides seventy-five per cent. of an enormously heavy correspondence.

My husband had no fixed hours for work. Sometimes he would go early into the study to write before anyone was up, or he would come in

from a round of golf and go straight to his desk and write and write. He had the remarkable power of being able to detach his thoughts from what was going on around him. I have known him write a Sherlock Holmes story in a room full of people talking. He would write in a train or anywhere—when the precious flow of inspiration was in his brain. I will never forget one dear picture of him that is in my heart's memory. We had just taken our flat in London, and there was not a stick of furniture in the place. I was busy measuring for curtains, etc., and my husband was sitting on an upturned box writing a book on his knee—perfectly happy and contented!

Everyone must surely agree that in all the many books and short stories he wrote never was there the tiniest yellow streak, nothing to leave a smudge in the mind or soul of the reader. On the other hand, by the fine manly spirit of his heroes and the ideals running through his books, they brought oxygen of thought to the readers' brains. The sap of England runs through the spirit of his *The White Company*, *Sir Nigel*, *Rodney Stone*, etc.

My husband was a great worker. He did the work of about six men. He worked very quickly, and in everything he was a fine sieve—getting the corn from the husks so rapidly. One of his characteristics was his thoroughness in his work. Before writing *The White Company* he read sixty books on everything relating to that period—on armour, heraldry, etc., and soaked his brain in the

atmosphere of that time so that he was able to get the living spirit, as it were, of those days into his book.

As a traveller my husband was delightful. He hated people to grumble at little things. Therefore he never did it himself. He just smiled and made a joke if things were not quite comfortable. He was utterly devoid of conceit and false pride. I have seen him made so much of abroad that most men would have become very swollen-headed. I remember on one occasion in America, when we entered a restaurant at Coney Island, holding hundreds of people, they all sprang to their feet and "God Save the King" was played. Three times that evening it was played at different centres when my husband appeared, and the great crowds all stood to attention. It was the affection and respect of the people for him that prompted that kindly attention. But everything like that was forgotten in a moment by him, leaving in his heart only just warm gratitude—but not one spark of conceit. He would not have crossed the road for any worldly glorification—his mind was on greater things—more lasting things.

His championing Spiritualism showed how little he cared for the world's opinion. His name was famous in every country in the world; and because he knew the truths of Spiritualism, and what comfort and hope the knowledge would bring to the hearts of mankind, finding that the subject was scoffed at and misrepresented—with his usual

chivalry for the down-trodden—he travelled the world over to get face to face with the people in order to tell them the facts of the great knowledge. He thereby sacrificed yearly an income of thousands of pounds. His writings, etc., before taking up the fight for Spiritualism brought him in a very handsome income ; and that he then sacrificed for the rest of his life, as, devoting nearly all his time, energy and strength to the Cause, he was unable to do his own literary work.

My husband was devoid of all fear—physically as well as morally. He was a man among men at the age of seventy ! He was always the first to go in my son's latest racing car, telling him to let it out at its fastest when they came to a lonely stretch of road ! That was typical of his keen sporting spirit ! His great regret was that he had not time to take up flying. He was a very fine billiard player up to his last days, and to the very end kept up his keen interest in all the cricket and sporting events. Even when he was so ill, I remember he insisted upon hearing on the wireless in the middle of the night the result of a big boxing contest. He loved golf, and was so happy when he thought he had improved his game.

He had a tremendous sense of humour and such an infectious laugh ! One point of his character was that he was such a fine listener. Everyone who talked to him felt that. He was interested in listening to other people's opinions, and gave them always a most sympathetic attention.

When his great heart was stirred at all he heard first-hand of the ghastly sufferings of the poor helpless natives of the Congo he determined to take up their cause, and so ventilate what was going on there, that public opinion would force the stoppage of it. My husband therefore obtained all the authenticated proofs of the terrible conditions under which they existed, and read all the accounts of it for a week, never once taking his slippers off to go out until he had written his booklet depicting the brutalities which were inflicted upon the natives. He felt physically ill at the horror of all the vile cruelty perpetrated upon them—at the reading of their terrible sufferings resulting in the death of thousands and thousands of them—his heart was just torn at the thought of what they were going through. He lectured with Mr. Morel in the country, and broadcasted his booklet in all directions. In some countries he waived the copy-right in order to have the facts widely circulated. The results were that the public became so incensed at the thought of the horrible atrocities being carried on by a European country that the whole matter was taken up in Belgium, and the cruelty to a large extent stopped.

Another little case showing the innate kindness and sympathy of my dear husband. We loved nothing better than to go off and have a glorious afternoon or evening by ourselves—the hours spent together seemed like minutes. On one occasion I remember we determined to throw work to the

winds, and go off in the car alone to have a cosy tea in some dear old village inn. We passed an elderly tramp-woman sitting by the roadside. We thought she looked very pale and tired, and stopped, and found she had recently been ill, and was making for a sister's house sixteen miles away. My husband at once said he would drive her there. I put her in front with him, as I thought it was advisable for her to be on the leather seat, not knowing quite whether we might be driving not only her, but additions ! !— I shall never forget the faces of the passers-by when they saw the poor tramp-woman with her bundle on her knees sitting by my big husband ! That was characteristic of him, to give up the little outing he had looked forward to, for the poor tramp-woman. Many poor people I have seen him give lifts to. One day, upon returning from golfing, he found a beggar at the front door, who asked if he had a pair of old shoes he could give him, as his own were in holes. My husband there and then took off his own good shoes and gave them to him.

Now, I have said so much of my husband—have shown what a glorious and high soul he was—that some may say it is impossible for a human to be like that. To my mind he was like a rare and wonderful jewel, with every facet so finely cut that at each turn radiance emanated. As I said previously, he must have evolved very, very high before he ever came into this last earth life, and I and very many others feel, and have been told by those on the "other side," that he was sent to aid in bringing the Divine

knowledge of Spiritualism to the world, to help Humanity when they are in dire need of it—to light the path of men with a torch from God. Surely the stars must have danced with joy when my husband's great and gentle presence entered the dark earth—to leave behind it the memory of a man, so truly great in what is *real* greatness. Simplicity and nobility of soul, and a heart that was so tender, so all-understanding to those in trouble, so manly in what is real manliness, with a brain that was so deep and wide that there was no subject that he was not interested in—such were the leading traits of his character.

His life was crowned by giving to Humanity the world over the great and blessed truths of Spiritualism, by which he brought to countless numbers of mourners a great comfort—a new hope in life. From others he removed all fear of the awful spectre of death. To others, thinking life ends all, he showed the light of Immortality, and in the giving of all that to Humanity, he gave his life—and for me the sunlight of life went with him.

In these days young people hardly believe in love. They see so much dross called “love” that their ideals are naturally not high. They hardly believe in the possibility of love keeping the glamour, the glorious radiance, year in, year out. Therefore it is good for them to know that it *is* to be found.

If love is closely attuning two souls—the music of life is exquisite and marvellous in its harmony. After twenty-three years of married life, whenever

I heard my husband's dear voice in the distance, or he came into the room, a something radiant seemed to enter and permeate the atmosphere. Truly in each other's heart we found the most wonderful possession Life has to offer to Humanity—the Holy Grail of a perfect love—a love, thank God, which will continue through all eternity. Because of that glorious love in the heart of one for the other, I will endeavour to work and fight for the Great Cause for which he gave his life, so long as there is breath in my body. So that when, in God's own time, my call comes to go to that wonderful other world, I can look into my Beloved's dear face, when he meets me at the Gateway of Death, and say, "I have tried to keep your Banner flying"—and we will part no more.

LETTERS

LADY CONAN DOYLE has asked me, out of the mass of letters she received in connection with Sir Arthur's passing, to select a few for reproduction. I have been guided by two principles in choosing these letters—those letters that in any way throw light on his public career, and those letters that showed how widespread was his influence in other lands. Generous as were the Press tributes to his memory alike in *The Times* and the other newspapers of our own country, the tributes of the American Press and of European countries were not less remarkable. In America one correspondent assures Lady Conan Doyle that the passing of Sir Arthur was the main subject of discussion in the newspapers for two days.

On behalf of John Murray, the publishers of many of Sir Arthur's books, Lord Gorell wrote :

" 50, ALDERMARLE STREET, LONDON, W.1,
" July 8, 1930.

" DEAR LADY DOYLE,—

" It was with an inexpressible shock that I saw the very sad news yesterday. I had hoped, from Sir Arthur's last letter to me, only a very short while ago, that his health was improving. I am glad, at any rate, that *The Edge of the Unknown* was ready in time for him to see it. I have so many

memories of his kindness—as indeed all have who ever were brought into contact with him—and, though I know well how greatly sustaining was his faith and is yours, still his passing from this earth leaves a very great gap.

“My partners ask me to convey to you their deep sympathy, and I am the poorer by the absence of a friend.

“I beg you not to think of answering this, but I felt I must express, however inadequately, what thousands feel.

“With all sympathy,

“Yours most sincerely,

“GORELL.”

“I write also as Chairman of the Society of Authors, who also have lost a staunch ally, but it is of him as a man, even above all his triumphs of the pen, that we feel his going most.”

Mr. R. Percy Hodder Williams, on behalf of Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, Ltd., wrote :

“DEAR LADY CONAN DOYLE,—

“May we offer you our deepest sympathy in the passing of your most distinguished husband, with whose literary works we were honoured to be associated as publishers on many occasions.

“Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s fame as a novelist is indeed secure, and he will be remembered not less gratefully for his zeal as a reformer, and as a defender of the defenceless.

“May we again express our respectful sympathy with you and your family in your great loss.

“R. PERCY HODDER WILLIAMS.”

On behalf of *The Strand*, Sir Frank Newnes wrote :

"DEAR LADY CONAN DOYLE,—

"I feel I must write and express to you my deep sympathy in the death of your husband. His passing on will create a great gap, and literature will lose a great figure.

"My memory naturally goes back to the time some forty years ago when my father started *The Strand*, and in one of the earliest numbers your husband's work appeared. It is a gratifying thought to realise that ever since that time Sir Arthur's work has always been in *The Strand*, an association between an author and a publisher that must be unique. It is a matter of considerable pride to all concerned with *The Strand* that it has been the means of bringing your husband's genius to an appreciative world.

"I am coming down on Friday to pay my last tribute to a great man and an old friend.

"Yours sympathetically,

"FRANK NEWNES."

Reference has been made in these pages to his meeting with the war correspondents on the Nile in 1896. The following letter from Mr. H. E. Gwynne, Editor of *The Morning Post*, shows that the friendships formed in these early years became permanent :

"MY DEAR LADY DOYLE,—

"I must write and tell you how much I sympathise with you all in the death of your dear husband and of my old and valued friend. I know that you all view the event as merely a translation

to another sphere of action, and I do most honestly hope that your desires may be fulfilled, and that, though absent, he may still be with you.

"I was very fond of him. We have been friends for over thirty years, and I admired him as one of the most fearless and honest men I ever knew. Besides all that, his friendship was a precious jewel, and I shall miss his genial laugh, his simplicity of mind and his great honesty of endeavour.

"Whatever you may know of the future, the cut in your life must be a pang and a grief, and it may perhaps be some comfort to know that others are grieving with you and among them,

"Yours ever sincerely,

"H. E. GWYNNE."

In a letter published in the Press at the time of Sir Arthur's passing Mr. Gustave Tuck, Managing Director of Messrs. Raphael Tuck & Sons, Ltd., wrote:

"For thirty years Sir Arthur Conan Doyle was a director of this company. During that long period his sound common sense and business acumen were a source of inestimable value to our company. His presence at our monthly meetings revealed him as a man with a quickness of grasp, and an easy familiarity with the many aspects of our company's work. It was not alone his knowledge of books, but his business sagacity which made him an invaluable ally. I look back on the thirty years of unbroken friendship with him as one of the greatest sources of happiness in my life."

Mr. A. S. Watt, of Messrs. A. P. Watt & Son, wrote:

"DEAR LADY DOYLE,—

"Although I cannot say that it was altogether unexpected, I was none the less deeply grieved to see in last night's paper that Sir Arthur—my old and very good friend—had passed away. Those who had the privilege of knowing him are to-day mourning the loss of a great gentleman who was always more than willing to help a friend and to champion the cause of anyone, whether a friend or not, who he thought had been unfairly treated. With those who knew him, and with countless thousands of others, his name will live as the author of many of the most interesting stories written in our time. My personal friendship with him—unclothed for so many years—will always be to me a precious memory, and I need not add how deeply I sympathise with you and your family in the great loss which you have sustained.

"Yours very sincerely,

"A. S. WATT."

Sir James M. Barrie's letters, as a rule, are brief, but his tribute to his old friend is definite enough :

"DEAR LADY DOYLE,—

"I should like to send you an affectionate message about A. C. D. I have always thought him one of the best men I have known, there can never have been a straighter nor a more honourable. I am very glad we had that day together last summer.

"With my kindest regards to yourself,

"Yours very sincerely,

"J. M. BARRIE."

Sir Gilbert Parker wrote :

"DEAR LADY DOYLE,—

" . . . I was greatly touched by the service, and I know that he gave his life for the cause he loved. He could have lived much longer, but he spent himself for what he now sees and shares and helps in a big way to advance. He was in essence a great man, and had *no* foes in all the world. Love to all was his watchword, and he lived up to it. He is not *dead*—he is still alive. He has only changed his habitat.

"Yours ever sincerely,

"GILBERT PARKER."

Mr. Horace A. Vachell wrote :

"DEAR LADY DOYLE,—

" . . . I am so grieved at the loss of an old friend whom I regarded as a king amongst men and—quite apart from his great fame—a tremendous personality for good with an almost uncanny power of perceiving good in others. During my many talks with him I cannot recall his speaking unkindly of any man.

"I have been thinking so much of him and you ever since the sad news reached me. I can imagine how terribly you and the children will miss him, although he is still with you in spirit. I shall never see his like again. To me his most striking quality was his modesty. He did so much in so many fields of human endeavour, and yet he seemed to be more concerned with the small doings of others. I believe that even '*over-drafts*' on his sympathy were honoured. Truly a Great Gentleman. . . .

"Yours affectionately,

"HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL."

AMERICA

The following letter takes the mind back to the days of the Boer War, when Sir Arthur served as senior Honorary Physician in the Langman Hospital at Bloemfontein.

ON BOARD S.S. "OLYMPIC."

"DEAR LADY CONAN DOYLE,—

"I need not tell you with what sorrow I read the tragic news in the New York papers. I was on the point of writing to you about your other great sorrow, when this announcement literally almost filled the papers there for two days. I was quite unprepared for it, knowing only that Arthur had not been well, but having no idea of its seriousness.

"Our ways have lain apart for so long that I dare say you hardly realise that I have always been devoted to him, and I feel that something big has gone out of my life. No friend had a greater admiration and affection for him, and I valued his friendship as a great privilege.

"I know what your feelings must be, and that your one consolation must be the knowledge of all you were to him, apart of course from the beliefs you shared. Please accept my most sincere and heartfelt sympathy.

"The notices in the New York papers were wonderful. I haven't seen any London ones, but do not think they could have been fuller or more appreciative of his great qualities, both his work and life.

"I have just written to Lottie, and am sending

one to her, for her to pass on to you if she thinks you would like to see it. You know the great sorrow I had not so long ago, and that it enables me to feel something of what you are feeling. I like to think they have met, for surely they were on the same plane of goodness.

“Yours sincerely,

“ARCHIE LANGMAN.

“P.S.—I am just returning from a visit to Canada.”

A letter from one of his co-workers in New York :

“MY DEAR LADY DOYLE,—

“You may recall the pleasant autumn day I spent with you and Sir Arthur and the children in 1917. It was a happy day for me. I met Dr. Doyle almost forty years ago. We were lunching together at the Reform Club. What a stalwart, masterful, red-cheeked, clear-eyed young man he was ! For years after that I placed his work in America, and saw him when he came here. A stronger, nobler type of man I have never known. He was full of human kindness. His letter to me after he had read a book of mine is one of my treasures, for whose approval could make me prouder than his ? Especially was I delighted with the assurance that the children often spoke of me and hoped that I would come again. I do remember well how his face and heart were shadowed by the distressing background of the Great War those days.

“I would not fail to put you in mind of my sympathy for you and the family at this time and of

my own deep sense of loss. I do hope that some cheering and convincing messages may come through to you and to the millions who loved him for the man he was and the things he had done.

"Yours sincerely,

"IRVING BACHELLER."

John O'Neill, artist, wrote from New York :

"DEAR LADY DOYLE,—

"So 'Greatheart' has gone! Leaving many sad at losing—seemingly—a champion of their Cause, but, I imagine, only seemingly; rather to take part in the greater work on the 'other side.'

"And what a glorious welcome must await him. What a consoling and proud thought must be yours that a knight without fear and without reproach, one of Nature's gentlemen, has gone to his reward.

"My heart goes out to you in your separation from your loved one, for as you know, I too but recently lost my beloved one—my daughter; and while we may know that the separation is but a seeming, the heart longs for the physical presence—as I know to my sorrow.

"My gratitude for his help when I needed it will keep his memory green until I, too, pass over to, I hope, meet him again face to face.

"If, as St. Paul said, and as I believe, that 'As we sow so shall we reap,' Sir Arthur's harvest will be such as to dry your tears and fill your heart with joy; for the seeds of love and kindness he has planted in the hearts of his fellow-humans will blossom forth as a monument to one of God's own noblemen.

"I thank the Gods that I had the honour of his acquaintance.

"I am,

"Yours,

"JOHN O'NEILL."

AUSTRALIA

The voice of Australia. Mr. Cowan wrote from Perth, W.A. :

"TO LADY CONAN DOYLE.

"DEAR MADAM,—

"I would like to convey my deepest sympathy to you on your recent bereavement. To me, who knew Sir Arthur only through his writings, the loss is as that of a personal friend. To you, despite the deep consolation afforded by your religious beliefs, the personal loss must be great indeed. To the world, the gap caused by his departure has not yet been made evident.

"And yet I predict a time when the name of Arthur Conan Doyle shall rank with the world's greatest ; when it shall be recognised as a synonym for courage and sincerity ; and when the quiet grave, in your old-world garden, shall draw pilgrims from the furthestmost parts of the world.

"Yours sincerely,

"C. E. COWAN."

SOUTH AFRICA

Mr. T. A. R. Purchas writes from the Rand Club, Johannesburg, as follows :

"DEAR LADY DOYLE,—

"The cabled news of Sir Arthur's sudden passing came as a great shock to many of us yester-

day afternoon. Even in the very short time that has elapsed since the announcement was made in the four o'clock edition of *The Star*, many proofs have been given to me personally of the deep impression left upon Johannesburg by the visit of your husband eighteen months ago. The feeling of personal interest in the man and his great work, created by his presence amongst us, is apparent to me in many directions, where one would hardly have looked for it.

"Speaking for myself, I can say with the most profound sincerity that I regard it as one of the great privileges of my life to have had the opportunity given me of knowing him in the flesh, and establishing with him that personal relation, the memory of which will be an abiding gratification. I had certainly allowed myself to hope that, as he had gone safely through the critical period, reaching from last November until comparatively recent times, and having shown what seemed to be unmistakable signs of returning health and strength, he would be spared to continue for years, in physical life, the splendid work he had so unselfishly and so successfully carried on for such a long while, to the detriment of his health, and at the sacrifice of so many things in earth life that are never given up by the ordinary man.

"However, the Spirit world has claimed him, and the personal loss will be very deeply felt by the world we are still inhabiting. . . .

"Sincerely yours,

"T. A. R. PURCHAS."

The letter of this Russian, Mr. P. Kovaloff, written from Johannesburg, reveals how far-reaching was Sir Arthur's influence :

"DEAR LADY DOYLE,—

"My wife and I desire to express our very earnest sympathy with you and the members of your family in your bereavement.

"Sir Arthur, during his earthly career, and which he has now exchanged for an enlarged sphere of activity in the community of which all of us sooner or later will be the members—was always a great influence for good, and beautiful amongst millions of people quite unknown to him, in every part of the world.

"I remember (it was in Russia in the late 'eighties, and I was a college boy) first reading a Russian translation of one of his works. I was so impressed that I continued since then to be a constant reader of all he wrote. At a much later date the views he expressed on Spiritualism were instrumental in my becoming what I now am—a firm adherent to those views, and the tenets he sets forth. It was a real 'New Revelation' to me, and for this change of my outlook my gratitude to Sir Arthur can hardly be expressed in words.

"When I had the pleasure of meeting him during your South African tour, my keen admiration for him was greatly increased, as I thus came to know him as a charming and powerful personality, forgetting and setting aside his own comfort in the interest of the cause, and, in the face of sometimes venomous opposition, boldly proclaiming what he believed to be true. And that was also the impression which Sir Arthur left amongst all those of the South African community whose opinion is worth considering.

"My case is only one of many, and his loss will

be keenly felt as a universal one. But the balance of Nature is always maintained, and what is a loss from our human point of view is often a great gain on the other side of our existence.

“With deep sympathy,

“Yours sincerely,

“P. KOVALOFF.”

GERMANY

This letter, from Rear-Admiral Titus Türk, r. r. Imp. German Navy, shows how widespread was the interest in Germany when the news of Sir Arthur's death reached that land. The letter is interesting in recalling the “Prince Henry Tour of 1912.”

“MY LADY!—

“Our German papers are bringing the sad news of the death of Sir Conan, and do him all honour which human mind and human language may say of a great and brave man of his renown.

“Whenever I read Sir Conan Doyle's name I was remembering My lady Jeane's name too; it was you, who told me then—long, long years ago at the ‘Prince Henry Tour in 1912’!—when we both of us were speaking of your husband once: ‘I love him, because he is so noble and so good.’

“I never forgot those words, and told them ever so often to friends and acquaintance when we were speaking of your now—halas!—late husband; he is and will ever be a most known writer in this country, and millions of Germans know his works. But I always was especially proud as knowing My lady and Sir Conan well in being introduced to you and motoring with you for several fine and most

interesting weeks ; and in knowing you and him also as private people. . . .

"My lady—it is me, who knows by your own words better than thousands of other people, what you have lost, and I beg to ask you, to allow me this word of deepest mourn and sincere feeling on behalf of the death of Sir Conan, who died far too early for all those he leaves behind him. May God in Heaven help you on in these days of sorrow and distress.

"Believe me, my lady,

"Your obedient servant,

"TITUS TÜRK.

"Rear-Admiral r. i. Imp. German Navy, then car 18 with Mr. Philip Noble ; often used as interpreter by the late Sir Conan Doyle. My rank was post-captain then."

The voice of Portugal :

"DEAR LADY CONAN DOYLE,—

"I heard with profound regret and sorrow of the death of your husband. Please accept my sincerest sympathy and condolence at the irreparable loss you, your family and the world have sustained.

"I may add that I am correct in saying that his passing away was received in the whole of Portugal with the deepest sorrow and grief.

"Believe me,

"With all sincerity,

"ALFRED GOLDBERG."

Out of the remaining pile of letters it is difficult to choose, but the patience of the reader and the limits of this book have to be considered. We have added two letters, one typical of many that express gratitude

for Sir Arthur's literary encouragement, the other from an artist who had illustrated Sir Arthur's writings and whose work Sir Arthur had appreciated :

Letter from Lieut.-Colonel Graham Seton Hutchison, D.S.O., M.C. :

"DEAR LADY CONAN DOYLE,—

"Please let me, unknown to you, express to you my sympathy in your loss of one who has passed on. He was most generous and kind to me, and as I know also to a great many others. But as I share his belief in the future spiritual life, I am grieved only that his kindness cannot longer be felt so intimately in this life.

"I regard his work upon the History of the Great War as his greatest literary achievement, though since my childhood I have been fed upon the matchless stories of Brigadier Gerard, Rodney Stone, and the others.

"But I shall remember him best as one who in his eminence greatly helped me and encouraged me to write stories when my country no longer needed my services, and as one who put my foot well up the ladder to success.

"Please allow me to thank you, and him, again, and to say that I shall treasure his friendship as a very real thing. I admired him as one who might have been content to sit back in his success, but who fearlessly went forward as a crusader, never forgetting to busy himself in the interests of others—the perfect pattern of a gentleman.

"Thank you,

"Very sincerely yours,

"GRAHAM SETON HUTCHISON."

"DEAR LADY CONAN DOYLE,—

"I cannot forbear to add my little tribute to the pile. After revelling in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories from boyhood, it was a great day in my life when I was asked by *The Strand* to illustrate a serial for him. It was a greater day when I received from him a short note of the most charming appreciation of my drawings. This led to a few meetings and a little correspondence. . . .

"I have revelled in his books, and have been deeply interested and a good deal influenced by his faith. But the recollection I cherish is of the impression of courteous strength and the tremendous loyalty that made him the pattern of modern knight-errantry. He was indeed a very gentle knight, and it is a pride to have been commended by him.

"I feel his passing like a personal blow, and cannot express the sympathy I feel for you and yours. . . .

"Believe me,

"Yours very truly,

"FRANCIS E. HILEY."

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