

MAY, 1925

up now - write - buy stamps &
SUN. handkerchiefs - dinner -
10 write till down - retire

1925-2025

UN AN AVEC HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT

#128 | 10 MAI 1925

Two Volumes on the Youth of Renan



"Ernest Renan."

From "Anders Zorn" in the Series of "Modern Masters of Etching." Published by The Studio, London.

M. PIERRE LAZAREFF, whose two newly published volumes on "The Youth of Ernest Renan," have attracted much notice, is a university man with a degree in philosophy and a doctor's degree in literature, and today the head lecturer in the Faculty of Fine Arts, Paris. He has made a name for himself with various critical works on art, and is a well-known figure in Paris. But it is as one of our most militant Marxists that he must be known. His books against religion and anti-clericalism, the former being distinctly political. Politically a monarchist and a traditionalist in literature, he has long represented the spirit of a certain party. Still, he has always remained a progressive, a fighter in philosophy and religious matters, as he showed many years ago by his fine *Dieu et Nihilisme*. After leaving the university and even his alma mater, he returned to the higher education of the State, where he was promoted to professor. Before the war he gave a series of lectures on Renan, which were published in the *Revue Hebdomadaire*, and in 1919 he published a memoirs toward the famous author of "The Origin of Christianity," who was a member of the same party of revolutionaries. But M. Pierre Lazareff's point of view has changed profoundly since those momentous revolutions for the sake of progress; he has become a fervent admirer of the great writer.

The little green booklet, "Renan and We," was intended as only a preface to a larger work, but M. Pierre Lazareff was working on the latter when, by reason of this sample, was assisted immediately. The author of the book, however, has not definitely given up this great project, he has found his subject too interesting to leave. The volume is to follow in a few months. When we read these books we see how M. Pierre Lazareff has himself changed. For he does not consider Renan only as an individual—which would be a great fault—but he tries to understand the man in the context of the whole intellectual movement. And to him these volumes give this solution of the enigma of Renan.

SINCE then he has developed more and more. "Renan," he remembers almost all the necessary distinctions between the abominable Pantheistic imperialism and the purity of the real scientists and thinkers from across the Rhine, who never "enamored such horrors and who would have blushed at them."

M. Pierre Lazareff's first volume, "Pensees Tertium et Raisins sulphure," is

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the only one as far as that is biographical; there are quite charming portraits of the scholars of his time and his native Brittany, on his years of study at the little seminary of Saint-Nicolas du Chardonnet, and, later, at the University of Paris, and the University of Saint-Jude. We know all this from Renan's own delightful "Memories of My Childhood and Youth," and M. Pierre Lazareff has succeeded in reviving and completing this story with charming pictures and ingenious points of view.

THIS second volume, devoted to "The Drama of Christian Metaphysics," would have been published separately; only a thread connects it with Renan. True, it is a preface to a larger work, "Renan and Lazarus," but without results. When he left there he was still determined to become a priest, and was only after two years of theological studies at Saint-Sulpice itself, after he had acquired a thorough knowledge of the Gospels, that he left his Catholic faith, gave up the priesthood and became a layman again. In this he has changed very definitely (the truth of his statement being borne out by the letters he wrote about this time, which were published after his death) that no a priori philosophy shook his faith, but that he was moved by the results of his criticisms and the critical examination of the texts. But taken by itself, this volume is a masterpiece, more in literary manner; none could explain more lucidly or more clearly how Christian metaphysics, based on the cosmopolitan philosophy of Plato and Aristotle, modified by the Alexandrians (Philo the Jew and Plotinus), and then again by the Christians themselves, came into conflict with that of Descartes and modern science.

Part II

[1925, dimanche 10 mai]

Up noon — write — buy stamps & handkerchiefs — dinner — write — read
— write till dawn — retire.

*Levé à midi. Écrit. Acheté des timbres et des mouchoirs. Dîné. Écrit. Lu.
Écrit jusqu'à l'aube. Couché.*

Au sommaire du supplément littéraire du *New York Times*, deux volumes sur la jeunesse d'Ernest Renan, 185 paroles de chansons collectées dans le Sud, William Blake, les rêves et les fantômes, un nouveau livre du professeur Phelps sur la Bible, « une journée dans Londres, *Mme Dalloway* élargit les usages et les fonctions de la fiction, une note sur cette école de nouveaux écrivains » à propos de Virginia Woolf, la parution des pièces de théâtre laissées par Joseph Conrad, mort l'année précédente, « l'art cristallin » de poésie de Richard Aldington et W H Davies, des compte rendus d'une biographie du prince de Galles et une comparaison des généraux Robert E Lee et Wellington, et l'autobiographie médicale du Dr McLaurin, *D'abord mortels*, paraît juste quand il meurt. Mais pendant ce temps-là, ce dimanche matin, Lovecraft s'achète des timbres et des mouchoirs, puis s'en va lire et écrire jusqu'à l'aube. Les mouchoirs faisaient partie du trousseau. On les brodait à ses initiales, on les pliait et repassait au carré. Les mouchoirs duraient longtemps, aussi longtemps que vous. Avec le développement de l'industrie du coton ils prennent sans doute des couleurs et des motifs : Lovecraft ne précise pas comment il les choisit. Ni combien il en achète, et on peut supposer que c'est en solde ou sur une braderie de coin de rue. Dans les dix-huit occurrences du mot *mouchoir* dans *À la recherche du temps perdu*, on les achète aussi « faire emplette de quelque mouchoir »), on les voit parfois en dentelle (« une bourse en or d'où pendaient des fils de grenats, et un mouchoir en dentelle »), on les utilise par politesse (« s'étouffaient de rire dans un mouchoir »), et ils sont les signes de l'amour ou de la jalouse (« je rentrais un instant dans ma chambre regarder si mon amie n'aurait pas par bonheur oublié un mouchoir, un sac, quelque chose dont j'aurais pu paraître avoir peur que cela lui manquât ») — le mouchoir américain sera plus rude et, pour Lovecraft, seulement utilitaire.

New York Times, 10 mai 1925. De Washington, le 9 mai. Grâce à la subvention de 3 millions de dollars attribuée par le Congrès, la Navy projette de développer de nouveaux types d'avions bombardiers pour être déployés sur les nouveaux porte-avions en cours de construction, le *Saratoga* et le *Lexington*. Des appels à projet ont été lancés pour un avion monoplace construit autour du moteur Packard « 2500 ». Les détails de cet avion

sont maintenus confidentiels. Si le marché est attribué, l'avion sera construit dans l'usine aéronavale de Philadelphie. Des appels à projets seront suivis d'un autre concernant un appareil bi-moteur construit autour du moteur « Cyclone » à refroidissement par air de Wright, et déjà testé sur un vol de Patterson, New Jersey, jusqu'à Washington. On espère que les expériences menées avec ces deux avions permettront de progresser dans la conception des appareils embarqués sur les porte-avions, et la décision de les déployer en quantité ne sera prise qu'à ce moment-là.

MUSSOLINI THANKS NEW YORK CHILDREN

**Four Hundred Boys and Girls
Ask Him Not to Put Motors
in Venice Gondolas.**

EAST SIDE GIRL TAKES LEAD

**Premier Sends Thanks Through
The Times, With Assurance
That Gondolas Are Safe.**

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By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

ROME, May 9.—Premier Mussolini asked THE NEW YORK TIMES today to convey his thanks to some 400 Americans, mostly school boys and girls and college students, who signed an appeal just received here asking him to exert his influence to prevent motor engines being put in all the gondolas of Venice, "which would destroy the peace and quiet which forms one of the chief charms of this wonderful city."

The Premier's especial thanks go to a schoolgirl, Maria Pia Cafagna, 148 East Fifty-fourth Street, New York, who conceived and carried out the idea of the appeal. In a handwritten letter, both in English and Italian, which accompanied the appeal, Maria Pia Cafagna states that during a class in her school in the history of painting the teacher said the characteristic Venetian gondolas would soon be a thing of the past, as Premier Mussolini was having engines fitted to all the gondolas.

This statement so impressed the girl that she set about obtaining the signatures for an appeal to Premier Mussolini to prevent such a desecration. Her initiative had a remarkable success, the appeal receiving the support of American citizens in all parts of the United States. Residents of New York and students of Harvard School of Engineering figure prominently among the signers.

Premier Mussolini said today: "This appeal, which shows the interest taken in our artistic treasures in a country so many thousands of miles away, has pleased me more than I can adequately express. I should like THE NEW YORK TIMES to convey an expression of my heartfelt gratitude to the hundreds of citizens of the great American Republic who signed the appeal and especially to little Maria Pia Cafagna, whose name after this will remain dear not only to me but to all Italians."

"Happily, I am in a position to reassure them completely about Venice. No such order as they mention has been given. No such order will be given. As the appeal justly says, there are some things so holy that no material gain can justify their sacrifice."

THE NEW YORK TIMES, SUNDAY, MAY 12, 1928

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