

July, 1940.

Vol. 1. No. 8.

The Abinger Chronicle

Contents:

<i>Einstein's Advent</i>	-	<i>Oliver W. F. Lodge</i>
<i>Max Beerbohm</i>	-	<i>William Rothenstein</i>
<i>William Rothenstein</i>	-	<i>Max Beerbohm</i>
<i>To Gordon Bottomley</i>	-	<i>R. C. Trevelyan</i>
<i>War Sky 1940</i>	-	<i>I. I.</i>
<i>Childhood Memories (4)</i>	-	<i>Sarah Shorey Gill</i>
<i>To Seville</i>	-	<i>Carla. Lanyon. Lanyon</i>

Price Sixpence.

The Abinger Chronicle

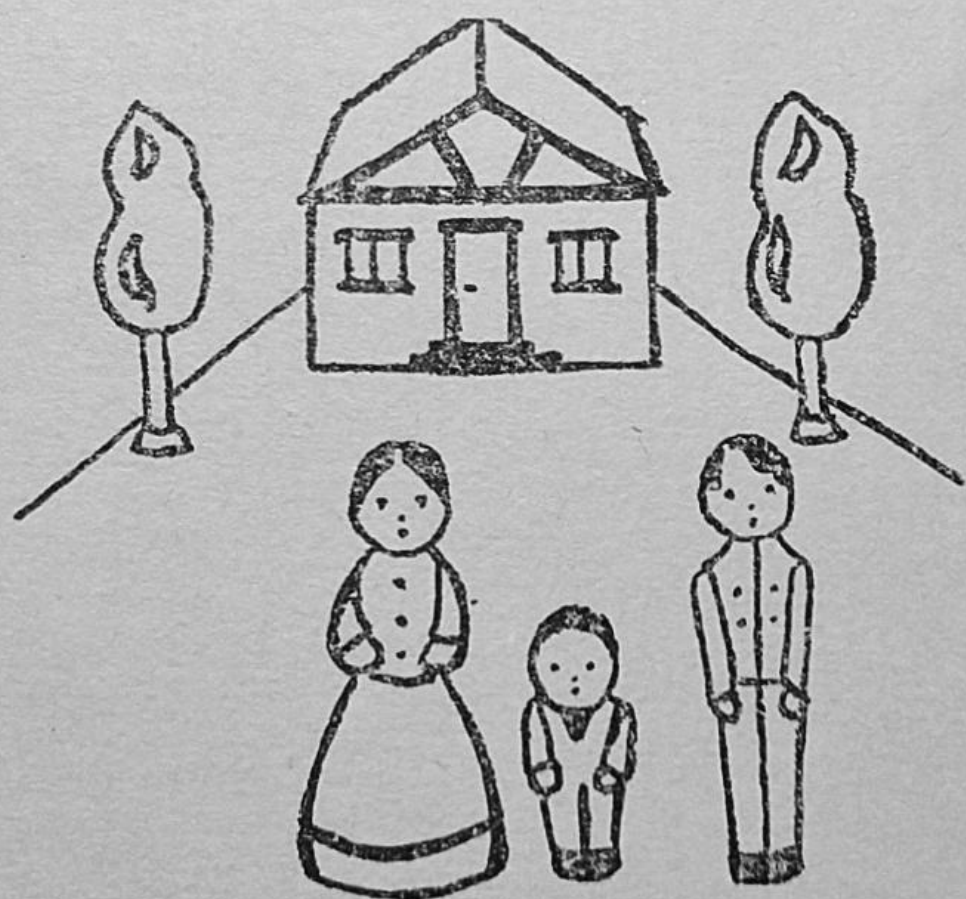
appears monthly. The chief contributors are Max Beerbohm, E. M. Forster, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Robert Trevelyan, Oliver W. F. Lodge, Desmond MacCarthy.

The annual subscription is 6/- a year (post free) or 3/- for six months (post free).

Subscriptions or manuscripts should be sent to
CHERRY COTTAGE
ABINGER COMMON
DORKING
SURREY

(Cheques, if used, should be made out to
Sylvia Sprigge. No stamps please)

All previous numbers, except for a few copies of
No. 7 are sold out.



COTTAGE SET

A solid wooden toy for
4 years and over.

1/9 (post 2½d.)

Separately :

Figure, each 3d.

House „ 8d.

Tree „ 3d.

Any small wooden Toy individually made to order.

**IRENE LANDRY,
Ross Cottage, South Holmwood, Dorking, Surrey.**

The Abinger Chronicle

Vol. 1. No. 8.

July, 1940

EINSTEIN'S ADVENT.

It was not at the Birmingham meeting of the British Association of 1913 that I first heard of Professor Einstein. My father had often spoken of his views before that. Indeed, while I was still at school, in 1893 or 4, he had explained *graphs* to me, and the return of the hyperbola seemed, even then, to predict that space was curved and finite; though to have drawn such a conclusion, at a Public School, in those days, would have savoured of insanity. I certainly did not draw it. I merely thought it rather queer.

But in 1913 the great Dutch physicist, Lorentz of Leyden, stayed with us for the British Association Meeting. He had recently visited Einstein, and spoke of him and his work with enthusiasm. My father, Sir J. J. Thompson, Professor Lorentz, and Lord Rayleigh (who together made up our house party), had many discussions over the breakfast-table, at which, naturally, I was an interested listener. When the sectional meetings began, Section A. (Physics and Pure Mathematics) became my home. I attended all its meetings, and at the end of one of them, where Relativity had been ably presented, in the discussion that followed, Lord Rayleigh exclaimed from the platform: "It feels to me like the end of the world." It certainly felt like the end of 19th century physics. Which indeed, it has turned out to be.

Very often, in the addresses in this section, the name of a Danish physicist was mentioned, in connection with the new views of Planck on the structure of the atom—Professor Bohr.

One felt a great respect for Professor Bohr. His hypotheses were brilliant. One pictured a majestic bearded figure, bowed with the weight of years and labours—a Leonardo, or Galileo. Then one day, during a meeting of Section A., the Chairman said, (to our intense excitement) “I see that Professor Bohr is present, perhaps he would like to say a few words.” Everyone turned round and gazed up the slope of the great theatre. (It was the large theatre of Mason College, Birmingham.) From one of the upper benches rose a tall dark undergraduate (apparently) and when the applause of respect had ceased, he began to speak. At least we saw his lips moving, his mouth opening and shutting, and indeed he made all the gestures belonging to speech. But not a word could anyone hear. Not a sound.

After this dumb show had continued for some minutes, the Chairman rose and asked if Professor Bohr would care to come down to the platform and speak from there? He acceded at once, and standing slightly turned to the Chairman's left ear, he continued his discourse from the platform. The Chairman may have heard it. It may have been whispered in his ear. But as far as we, the audience were concerned, it was “as the seaman's whistle in the ear of death, unheard.”

But now he stopped for a moment, and evidently asked for something, and a bustle began. He had, it appeared, asked for a piece of chalk. There was none to be found in the theatre, and an assistant was dispatched to fetch a piece from one of the lecture rooms. He waited patiently, as did we all, and after a while the assistant returned. He had been successful, and a stick of chalk was handed to the Professor. With this in hand he crossed over to the large blackboard and inscribed on it an x . Simply that and nothing more. He then returned to his position at the Chairman's ear, and continued his inaudible discourse, to its inaudible conclusion, and sat down.

I didn't *hear* the lecture, nor did anyone else, except possibly the Chairman; but I loved the chalk episode. There the x remained, in solitary candour in the corner of the blackboard after the applause (of respect) had died

down, a joy, not perhaps for ever, but till some iconoclast should dust it out. Perhaps it occurred to some of us that we might just have been able to visualise an x without its actual physical presence there. I don't know. But it *made* that lecture—which otherwise might have been found somewhat unsatisfying!

It will be remembered that during the Great War, the Royal Society sent out from England a fully equipped expedition to the South Seas, in order to test Professor Einstein's theories by direct observation of a total solar eclipse, from a Pacific island.

It sailed, carried through its observations, and eventually returned, in May 1919, to still suffering Europe. A meeting of the Royal Society was announced at which the report was to be presented, and Fellows gathered from all parts of the kingdom to hear it. My father came up from Birmingham. Before the meeting he was sitting in the long drawing-room of the Athenaeum Club, when Professor Schuster of Manchester came in. In the report which was to be read that afternoon, three different results were possible. The old orthodox Newtonian view, which was the smallest; Professor Einstein's extraordinary theory, which was the largest; and, what some scientists hoped for, a result between the two, a middle term.

My father was sitting at the end of the great pillared room, near the bust of Alexander Pope; Professor Schuster, who had been across to Burlington House, and had seen some members of the expedition, came over to him. "Well?" asked my father, "What is the result?" "The largest," said Schuster, "Time we were all dead."

They walked across together to the Royal Society's rooms in Piccadilly. Sir J. J. Thompson (now Master of Trinity) presided. The report of the Expedition was read. The President then rose, and he expressed his sense of the upheaval, of the wreck and foundering of 19th century Science, and his desire for *something* to cling to in the catastrophe, by saying: "Well, I suppose a straight line is still the shortest distance between two points?" "Yes," said Sir Arthur Eddington, "that is, it's the longest." His straw had gone down under him.

A year or so later our friend Professor Charles Richet of the University of Paris, was staying at my father's house on Salisbury Plain. After luncheon we went to the Morning-room for coffee. Professor Richet was standing by the fireplace, and, referring to the talk at luncheon, he said to my father: "Then all the physics we learned 60 years ago is dead." "A kind of addendum," suggested my father. "An addendum which deletes the book," answered Richet.

And so it is. But since the book was a depressing one—all the best minds of the latter half of the 19th century, Tennyson, Arnold, Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne, Meredith, and Hardy, were all, in various degrees, injured by the philosophy of that time, a philosophy whose obvious destination was the detailed explanation of life and mind as the chance products of matter and motion—its deletion by Einstein and Planck's "addendum" need cause no tears. Owing to its disappearance the mind has reasserted its rightful dominion. Poetry—the product of the mind as a whole, with all its faculties of intellect, imagination, and conscience—is seen to be deeper and truer than the science which springs from the use of the separated intellect alone.

It was an apple—Newton's apple—that lost us Paradise.

"Philosophy will clip an Angel's wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—
Unweave a rainbow, as it erewhile made
The tender-person'd Lamia melt into a shade."

Now it is the turn of Apollonius to wither, and the Rainbow shines again; whether it will lead us home, it is too early to speculate, but the road looks less barred. Already such figures as Blake and Wordsworth are seen clearer, "teasing us out of thought" to that high eagle's watch, where

"... with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things."

OLIVER W. F. LODGE.



Max Beerbohm (circa 1911)

by William Rothenstein



Will H. Hinsley
circa 1941
max

William Rothenstein

by Max Beerbohm

TO GORDON BOTTOMLEY.

'What then is Beauty, saith my sufferings?' passionate
Tamberlaine cried.

'What is Truth?' muttered Pilate; but no answer was
vouchsafed.

Yet many and subtle, in ancient and in modern books
enrolled,

Have been the answers of the wise, so various and opposed
In meaning, and oft so obscure, that a plain man grows
distraught,

Till what to think he knows not, nor which theory to
choose.

Must then "divine Philosophy" fail here and own defeat?
Small hope for the poor poet where sage doctors disagree.
To them such questions let me leave. A humbler task is
mine,

And a more pleasant; for to you, dear Gordon, I would
write,

Not of what Beauty and Truth may *mean*, but, what
concerns us more,

How, knowing what they *are*, we best for our own ends
may use them.

For, without Truth and Beauty, worthless would be our art,
Mere pedantry, a pitiful superannuated toy!

.

Thus far to you had I written, when the storm broke, that
in darkness

Dark as the shadow of death's wings has whelmed us and
our hopes:

And none knows who among us may live through to see
once more

The light return, or whether indeed it ever shall return?

Yet for us it were shameful to despair; since are not we

The servants and interpreters of the hearts and minds of
men?

Then in this hour of fear and gloom let not our faith
now fail

In what alone can give some worth and meaning to the
brief

To Gordon Bottomley

Sad twilight of our days. Yet now I have no heart, dear
friend,
Nor calm of mind to write as I had purposed of our art,
Endeavouring truthfully to set forth the unchanging laws
that govern
Its ever-changing forms, whose freedom neither theory,
Nor fashion, nor authority may harness and confine.
And so, in lieu of that still-born Horatian discourse,
This bundle of old incongruous Menippean odds and ends
I send and dedicate to you, a poet though you be.
Nay for that cause you best should know how a servant
of the Muses,
Wearying of their stern discipline, might long to escape
awhile
To the ease and freedom of that "other harmony of prose,"
That so he may in lowlier style give voice to a thousand
thoughts
That else, for verse unworthy, would have perished
unexpressed.
Meanwhile may health and strength be yours, and courage
to defy
These evil days. Noble has been the vintage you have
poured
For our delight; but, like a generous master of the feast,
May it yet be found that you have kept your best wine
till the last.

R. C. TREVELYAN.

WAR SKY 1940

This night of June, how looks the English sky?
A thousand thousand jewels sparkle there
amid slow-wandering shafts of searchlights' glare,
switched on when some faint hum of engine high
has warned the countryside that foes are nigh.
Then up our fighter 'planes, to leap and dare,
to climb the night into the azure there
where they may chance on quarry, racing by,

Man has put on his giant metal wings—
dear Man, before whose heart all engines fade.
Man dares all this and calls it sport of kings—
dear Man, whose mind far higher flights has made.
For this there's grief, a sorrow unforeseen,
to crown this darkest Age of the Machine.

S.S.

These, Polly, are some of my childhood memories
which I have strung together for you:

4. SUNDAY.

The great event of the week was going to Chapel on Sunday. I remember well the hurry and bustle of Sunday morning, getting into our best clothes, and, as the Church bell warned us of the passing time, the final rite of the sprinkling of lavender water on our handkerchiefs. It will be noticed that while we used the Parish Church bell for our Time we went to Chapel for our Religion.

I can still recall the musty earthy smell of the ugly little Chapel, called Bethel; and the interminable and very learned sermon of the Rev. Ebenezer Ladbroke.

As I didn't listen to the discourse, I had plenty of time to look around: I was not rebuked for this so long as I didn't turn my head to glance behind—the Aunts would have thought this “unseemly”.

I looked ahead at the Minister and gave him a long and careful scrutiny with thoughts not so reverent as my attitude suggested. He was a middle-aged man, short necked, short bodied and, to me, somewhat bear-like in appearance in consequence of the masses of black hair on his head and all round his face. He peered with short-sighted eyes at his congregation through large round glasses. I decided I didn't like him.

His voice droned on

With a sense of relief my eyes rested next on the young woman seated at the harmonium. She was quietly beautiful; her fair hair, neatly parted, was drawn into a coil at the nape of the neck. I knew her well, Marion Russell, the daughter of the village tailor. I regarded her with unmixed pleasure as she sat there without a cloud upon her brow.

Towards the close of the sermon I began to get fidgety, and Aunt Betsy would produce some peppermint drops from her reticule. These would sustain me until the last hymn was sung with cheerful gusto (however sombre the theme), and then with a rustling of skirts the congregation poured out into the sunlight, while the harmonium pumped out a wheezy Voluntary.

In the afternoon after dinner the Aunts in their stiff silks, and I in my white muslin frock, blue silk sash and coral necklace (all strictly reserved for Sundays) sat in the parlour over nuts-and-wine; the nuts, small hazel ones, were steeped in the wine so that I got a large percentage of nuts to a very small quantity of "sack". Of course, I wasn't allowed to do anything on Sundays, so I made my one glass of nuts-and-wine last as long as I could.

The Aunts' favourite topic of conversation on Sunday afternoons was of the conflict between Church and Chapel, which was very pronounced in the village. Aunt Betsy had vague, but very strong, nonconformist ideas. The Vicar at this time was almost hated for his interference with the dissenters of his Parish over burials; and also for his High Church practices, designated by Aunt Betsy as "Roman". In this matter she got very heated, and talked about "The Scarlet Woman" which I understood to refer to the Pope in Rome. But I never knew for certain. Aunt Betsy would sometimes sarcastically tell of a sporting parson in the neighbourhood who, interrupted in his fox-hunting by a weekday service, would throw a cassock over his hunting kit and, thus partially disguised, mount the pulpit.

By far the most enjoyable event of Sunday was the walk after Evening Chapel. "It was a lover and his lass" that we young ones always followed through the honey-scented

lanes, or through the cornfields. They made as satisfying a picture of young love in a beautiful setting as heart could wish.

The picture emerges—still we follow the happy pair, while the honeysuckle stretches out long arms to us from the hedges, and the glow-worm sheds its quiet light at our feet.

“Forever will he love, and she be fair.”

SARAH SHOREY GILL.

TO SEVILLE.

Siesta.

Quieten your beggars and your bells;
Sleep in your great vibrating heat.
An aggravating castanet
Clacks on its fellow; noonday peals
Twelve hard notes where the street narrows,
Lead-hot notes in the narrow street.

Beautiful city of so many sorrows,
I have been most marvellously at peace
In your decrepit loveliness;
From arch and path, from pool and lawn,
From all your shabby beauty drawn
A vital joy that shall not cease,
And happiness, and happiness.

Quieten the last note of your bell,
The noonday slips to afternoon;
Columbus sleeps and Becquer sleeps,
Pedro the sensual and cruel—
All sleep in age-long summer swoon.

Across the wall a shadow creeps,
A shadow creeps across the wall.

CARLA LANYON LANYON.

Estimates Free

Personal Supervision

A. A. TANNER & SON

for PRINTING

of every description

80 SOUTH ST., DORKING

Telephone 2131

DIE STAMPING. COPPER PLATE PRINTING

