GOBLINS AND PAGODAS

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649530021

Goblins and Pagodas by John Gould Fletcher

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BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

Che Mittersibe Press Cambridge

1916

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Published April 1916

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THANKS are due to the editor of The Egoist, London, for permission to reprint The Ghosts of an Old House and the Orange Symphony; to the editor of Poetry, Chicago, for permission to reprint the Blue Symphony; and to the editor of The Little Review for permission to reprint the Green Symphony.



PREFACE

I

THE second half of the nineteenth and the first fifteen years of the twentieth century have been a period of research, of experiment, of unrest and questioning. In science and philosophy we have witnessed an attempt to destroy the mechanistic theory of the universe as developed by Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer. The unknowable has been questioned: hypotheses have been shaken: vitalism and idealism have been proclaimed. In the arts, the tendency has been to strip each art of its inessentials and to disclose the underlying basis of pure form. In life, the principles of nationality, of racial culture, of individualism, of social development, of Christian ethics, have been discussed, debated, and examined from top to bottom, until at last, in the early years of the twentieth century we find all Europe, from the leaders of thought down to the lowest peasantry, engaged in a mutually destructive war of which few can trace the beginnings and none can foresee the end. The fundamental tenets of thought, art, life itself, have been shaken: and either civilization is destined to some new birth, or mankind will revert to the conditions of life, thought, and social intercourse that prevailed in the Stone Age.