

ADDENDA TO *THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF THE MAGIC LANTERN*

Mantle, Reverend J. Gregory (b. 1852; d. 1925). British clergyman, lantern and cinematograph user. Mantle was the son of a local preacher. In his turn he too became a Methodist preacher; by the 1890s he was in Bristol, moving to Brighton around 1896. He seems to have been a go-ahead and dynamic character, a prolific author and magazine editor, and he employed the most up-to-date visual methods to reinforce his religious message. At first this meant using lantern slides as part of sermons or lectures, but by early in the new century Mantle had been attracted to the cinematograph, at first, apparently as an amateur cameraman.

He was in India at the end of 1902 filming the festivities of the Delhi Durbar for Charles Urban, while also visiting foreign missions for his church. The following year he became superintendent of the Deptford and Greenwich mission in south-east London, and in around 1907 he was again in the East visiting missions, this time in China, where he filmed scenes which later appeared in Cricks and Martin's film catalogue. His mission in Deptford was by this time well equipped with both lanterns and film projectors, and the attractive shows that the mission mounted must have contributed to rising congregations. But in 1912 it all went wrong for Mantle when an apparent flirtation with one of his female congregation led to his dismissal. Mantle and his family left for America, where he started a new life as a preacher, first in Kentucky and then in New York State, and also continued to write religious books. He died in 1925. Mantle exemplifies many of the pioneers of the early cinema, who came from a wide variety of backgrounds and for whom the cinema was but a tool to promote their main calling. *SB*

Ref: Ine van Dooren, 'Cataloguing and Researching Slide Collections: an Archive's Experience', *NMLJ* 9.1 (Winter 2001), pp. 9–10.

Help: a Journal of Social Service. British periodical, published 1891–2. *Help* was a monthly spin-off from W.T. Stead's *Review of Reviews*, launched in February 1891 as the organ of his 'Association of Helpers', which aimed to bring together 'all those who want to help their fellow-men' and co-ordinate their good works. Its content reflected Stead's personal agenda: social reform, liberal politics, religious unity and general philanthropy. Use of the lantern for propaganda and education featured very heavily in its approach, leading to the setting up by mid-1891 of the Lantern Mission and the National Society of Lanternists, which appear to have been two different names for essentially the same organisation. The September 1891 issue was devoted entirely to the Lantern Mission, and throughout its short run the pages of *Help* featured regular updates on the Society's development, including membership lists and lists of slides available for loan. The lists include notes of members' interests, which show a clear bias towards the religious and educational (as many as a quarter of the 400 or so NSL members appear to have been clergymen). *Help* also carried accounts of lantern activities around Britain and occasional items on the lantern trade, such as an interview with one of the Riley Brothers in August 1891. Towards the end of 1892, for reasons which are not clear, the Mission and *Help* parted company. The NSL set up independently in Shaftesbury Avenue, London, to be run 'in a more business-like manner', with its own fortnightly publication *Hand Camera and Lantern Review*. Shortly afterwards *Help* was (nominally) reabsorbed into *Review of Reviews*, apparently because of its low circulation. *RC*

Ref: Hecht, *Pre-Cinema History* (1993), items 350 and 358.