

renew devotion, and all will rejoice in its holy sanctions.—*The Lord Jesus Christ will have come again.*

G. T. KNIGHT.

TUFT'S COLLEGE, MASS., September, 1903.

THE ACROPOLIS.

Our frontispiece represents the restoration of the Acropolis of Athens, reproduced after a model such as is frequently found in museums. The reconstruction shows this historical spot as it appeared at the classical period of Greece, after the time of Pericles, and avoids the mistake commonly made of attributing the two square towers at the foot of the rock to the Periclean age.

For details see the article on the Acropolis in *The Open Court*, April, 1903, page 193.

ARTICLES ON MAGIC.

A belief in magic is a very significant period in the history of religion, and we know that in Babylon the Magi or priests attended to the spiritual needs of the people. Like modern mediums they called up the dead from their graves, and no religious man doubted their power of interpreting dreams, of foretelling the future in some mysterious manner (e. g., by the use of the Urim and Thumim among the Israelites), and generally calling in one way or another the help of the gods.

Among the Hindus, the belief in the omnipotence of prayer and austerities prevailed, implying a notion of the magic power of incantations and sacrifices, so that the priest and later on also the ascetic was supposed to acquire a command even over the gods.

Considering the fact that a hunger after the mysterious is still a notable feature in the minds of the present generation, that our modern religious views have by no means, as yet, overcome the superstitious elements of mysticism, and further that the disposition of man to look with awe upon that which to him is incomprehensible is natural to human nature, and in fostering a devotion to the mystical man learns to interpret correctly in his heart truths which his head cannot grasp (a fact that constitutes the noble feature of mysticism and justifies it within proper limits);—in a word, considering the significance of mysticism, we have devoted special attention to this much mooted topic and have published some articles on the old and new magic, some time ago in *The Open Court*.¹

For a further study of the significance of the mysterious, both in religion and in secular life, we have for a long time been looking out for an author familiar with the facts of both the history of mysticism and magic performances, that have played or are still playing an important part in the world, or are exciting public curiosity, and at last we have succeeded in finding an author especially adapted for the purpose and prepared for the task by his own inclinations, by special investigations and by rare opportunities in Mr. Henry Ridgely Evans of Washington, D. C. He is personally interested in the subject and commands a wide range of personal experience. He is a Freemason, having attained the thirty-second degree of the Scottish Rite, and is a well-known Masonic writer and authority on the symbolisms of the Craft. But Mr. Evans is at the same time a student of the occult, not a dupe of superstition; he is a scholar and investigator. He has scanned the musty volumes of forgotten lore, of Mediæval witchcraft. He has rumaged the second-hand book stores of both continents for magical treatises and stories. Having

¹ Compare also the editor's article in *The Open Court*, No. 529, pp. 333 ff.

access to the archives of the several Masonic libraries, he has traced the biographies of the great mystery mongers of the type of Cagliostro, and in spite of his admiration for this arch-charlatan and men of his ilk, Mr. Evans remains a critical historian and preserves his sound judgment and sobriety.

Besides his theoretical studies, Mr. Evans has himself practised the occult arts as a prestidigitateur, and we have ourselves seen him and admired him in his clever sleight-of-hand tricks which, though he does not claim to be a professional, are not excelled by Kellar or the late Hermann and his nephew.

We have no doubt that it would be difficult to find a better man adapted for the purpose of collecting and collating the facts of the mysteries, and we deem ourselves happy in having engaged his interest in writing for our periodicals. Mr. Evans's first contribution in this line of work appeared in the latest number of *The Monist*, being a comprehensive essay on the arch-enchanter Cagliostro, a typical personality of the modern imposter, half genius, half knave, admirable in his clever tricks and bold bluffs and at the same time contemptible when deceiving his gullible patrons and extracting from their purses the gold that he used for his own personal ends.

Mr. Evans's essay on Cagliostro is the best justification of his abilities in dealing with the topic of the mysterious, involving the study of many remote documents and inaccessible haunts, and we expect to publish several other articles in the same line and of the same method of treatment, both in *The Open Court* and *The Monist*.

In addition to his articles on Cagliostro and Pinetti, Mr. Evans promised to write on Eliphas Levi, Robert-Houdin, Madame Blavatsky, etc., etc. P. C.

MOUNT ATHOS.¹

The author records in this unpretentious pamphlet the impressions which he had during a sojourn of seven months on Mount Athos, that strange country where no woman is tolerated and monks have everything their own way. The booklet is divided (p. 59 ff.) into two parts, the first being a history of the place (pp. 5-59), the second (pp. 59-166) an account of the journey and personal experiences.

Our author is a German who sympathises with the Greek. He believes with Moltke that the Oriental question would best be solved by creating a Byzantine empire to take the place of the Turks, to the exclusion of the Russians. The Russians, however, have their finger in the pie everywhere on the whole peninsula, and are on the best way to take possession of Mount Athos. The number of Russian convents increases constantly, and Russian monks are now in the majority.

Mount Athos is a relic of Monkish Christianity, and the monks of Mount Athos cherish a conviction that they alone have preserved the original Christianity of Christ. Other Christians may shine like little lights in the heaven, but the monks, especially those of Mount Athos, shine like stars of first magnitude. They alone attain perfection of the Christian ideal. Mount Athos has been a refuge of Cenobites and recluses since the beginning of Christianity and was considered a holy place even in pagan times when the Greeks thought it had originated at the time of the giants' combat against Zeus, on which occasion a stone that had been thrown up against heaven, missed its aim and fell into the sea where it still stays, a monument of the battle of the Titans and the giants against the Father of gods and men.

¹*Das Klosterland des Athos.* By Alfred Schmidtke. T. C. Hinrichs'sche Buchhandlung, Leipzig.