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## PTAH-HOTEP.

THE RADICAL OF ANCIENT EGYPT.\*

BY HIRAM H. BICE.

THE "oldest manuscript in the world," or at least the one to which the undisputed treasure of such a title thus far belongs, is preserved among the possessions of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. It is written on papyrus, its surface exhibiting the friction of thousands of years against the world around it, its hieratic text of the usual cramped and more or less square-elbowed variety, and its general appearance of such a crusty and crabbed nature, as would give one no idea of the mine of golden thoughts and precious information which is wrapped up in it. Little did Ptah-hotep, the author of these curious old precepts imagine, when he put them on papyrus so long, long ago, that they would be as earnestly studied and as highly valued by men of an unborn nation far away towards the setting sun, as they ever were by any pious and well-educated Egyptian.

The manuscript as we have it, dates only from the XIIth Dynasty, but is a copy of an older original which was written in the Vth Dynasty. If we adopt Brugsch's chronology the approximate date which may be assigned to the composition of the work will be 3366 B. C. The author expressly states that the book was written during the reign of King Assa, who was one of the later monarchs of this Dynasty.

Ptah-hotep, if we may believe his own statements, was a most fortunate individual. At the very outset, put in the preface, so that if we do not finish the perusal of his work, we shall at least see this, he calls himself the "noble lord, the divine father, beloved of God, the son of the king, the first-born of his race." Lest this should not sufficiently impress his readers he ends with these words: "It (obedience) has caused me on earth to obtain 110 years of life, with the gift of the favor of the king among the first." These words, however, must not be taken literally. The old Egyptian sometimes, quite often, allowed his adulation to run away with him. As some bestow so generously, and, alas, so promiscuously, the titles of Professor and Colonel at the present time, so grandiloquent

terms were then the common legal-tender of politeness. All these high-sounding names probably mean nothing more than "prince of the king's family," the rather disappointing remnant of this punctured pomposity.

That Ptah-hotep was high in the king's confidence is, however, certain. He calls himself a "prefect" and the duties of that office are sufficiently clearly defined from other and later sources. He administered justice, heard petitions, upheld the civil rights over a large territory, and was responsible for the storing up and safe keeping of great quantities of corn, wine, and other provisions. To this end he had a strongly built and carefully guarded storehouse, to which his seal alone gave entrance and over which his vigilance was never relaxed. Throughout the book which he wrote allusions to his position and the proper performance of its duties are constantly appearing. Thus he impresses upon those who guard the *larit* or storehouse, the necessity of unwearied activity to maintain it inviolate. They must stand or sit at their post, must keep an eye upon every one who approaches and learn his business at once. From this the importance of his position is manifest and also the conditions under which his work was carried out.

Ptah-hotep's book is of a curiously conglomerated character. It is a source of a constant crescendo of surprises to the reader. Its contents are of a moral nature: it is simply a collection of precepts or apothegms made up as a guide-book, a sort of *vade mecum*, for every Egyptian who desired to live a life successful among men and acceptable to the gods. As we pass from chapter to chapter, following this old-time worthy as he discusses, now the education of children, now the duties of the rich, again moralising on the effect of activity in one's life, then laying down the law on table manners, we are struck with amazement at the wealth of information which the side-lights from Ptah-hotep's maxims reveal as to the nature of many phases of ancient Egyptian life.

Before giving individual mention to some of the more important statements made, it may be said that Ptah-hotep's work, old as it is, and upon the basis of the most radical chronology it must be four thousand

\* From *Biblia*.

years old, is, if we may believe the author, to a large extent a compilation of truths which had been current long before his time, of customs which had been followed by those who were *ancients* to him. These sayings of his prove this :

"Who will cause me to have authority to speak that I may declare to him the words of those who have heard the counsels of former days? Instruct him in the sayings of former days. Let none innovate upon the precepts of his father; let the same form his lessons to his children. Take not away a word, nor add one. Put not one thing in place of another, but teach according to the words of the wise."

In order to maintain this precious wisdom unweakened for succeeding generations Ptah-hotep arranged the precepts in rhythmical form and says in conclusion,

"All their words will now be carried unaltered over the earth eternally."

In considering then the information derived from this papyrus, it must be remembered that it is all true, not only of the time when it was written, but of we know not how long an antecedent period.

Among the subjects treated of, one of the most interesting is the position of the wife in the home. Ptah-hotep's words show that in the earliest eras of Egyptian history woman had an exalted station and was regarded with such respect as was shown in almost no other ancient nation. Here is what he says :

"If thou art wise, look after thy house; love thy wife without alloy. Fill her stomach, clothe her back, these are the cares to be bestowed on her person. Caress her, be attentive to her wishes during her life; such kindness does honor to its possessor. If thou takest a wife, let her be more contented than any of her fellow citizens. Do not repel her; grant that which pleases her; when contented she appreciates thy words."

Must we not conclude with Ebers from such a liberality and high standard that ancient peoples, or at least some of them, did feel the pure sentiment of romantic love? Khonshotpu, a sage of a later period, speaks in the same strain to his son. He says :

"It is God himself who gave thy mother to thee. From the beginning she has borne a heavy burden with thee, in which I have been unable to help her. During three years she nursed thee and as thy size increased her heart never once allowed her to say: 'Why should I do this?' She went with thee to school every day. Now that thou hast grown up and hast a wife and house in thy turn, remember always thine helpless infancy and the care which thy mother bestowed upon thee."

We are too apt to think of all ancient nations except the Greeks and Romans as more or less barbarians, to consider them rude, unpolished, unacquainted with the amenities of refinement. Ptah-hotep holds up to us the Egyptian as he was, a man as we are men, attentive to the cares of others, endowed with a good share of the gentleness which refinement brings, and possessing a charity and liberality which we have not very greatly improved upon in essence in all the

intervening centuries. Some of his sayings startle us, they are so modern. Here they are :

"Be not of an irritable temper to thy neighbors; better is a compliment to that which displeases than rudeness.

"Repeat no extravagance of language; do not listen to it; it is a thing which has escaped from a hasty mouth. If it is repeated, look without hearing it towards the earth; say nothing in regard to it.

"If thou art a leader of peace, listen to the discourse of the petitioner. Say not to him: 'Thou hast already told this.' Indulgence will help him to accomplish his object. As for being abrupt with him because he describes what passed when the injury was done, instead of complaining of the injury itself, let it not be.

"If thou art among the persons seated at meat in the house of a greater man than thyself, take that which he gives, bowing to the ground. Regard that which is placed before thee, but *point not at it*; regard it not *frequently*: he is a blameworthy person who departs from this rule.

"If thou aimest at *polished manners*, call not him whom thou accostest. Converse with him in such a way as not to *annoy him*. Enter on a discussion with him only after he has had time to familiarise himself with the subject of the conversation. If he lets his ignorance display itself and gives thee an opportunity to disgrace him, treat him with courtesy rather. Do not drive him into a corner nor worry him.

"Disturb not a great man. Weaken not the attention of him who is occupied."

Is there not a surprising breadth of politeness and thoughtfulness in these five-thousand year-old rules of etiquette?

Ptah-hotep speaks of a great many subjects. He urges parents to bring up their children to be obedient, to reverence their father, and to conform their conduct to God's rules. He speaks of the duties which a great man owes to those below him. He declares the need of self-control in all one's doings, and impresses the necessity of openness and frankness in one's words. He says :

"Deal with the ignorant as with the learned, for the gates of knowledge should never be closed, no man having perfection in any one line.

"He who departs from truth to be agreeable is detestable.

"Treat thy dependents well; it is the duty of those whom God has favored.

"The gentle man overcomes all obstacles.

"Know those who are faithful to thee when thou art in low estate."

In these precepts we see that same fundamental wisdom which is found in the apothegms of all nations, but Ptah-hotep is distinguished from other sages to some extent by the practical character of his philosophy. There is nothing profound about it. It is the simple reasoning of one who puts all duties upon the basis of obedience to God. It is the every-day philosophy of ordinary people, dealing with domestic occupations and the commonplace intercourse of men, and as a compilation shows clearly the artless nature of the ancient Egyptian.

## COMMON SCHOOLS ONCE MORE.

BY E. P. POWELL.

Ptah-hotep was a radical in that he lends emphasis throughout his entire work to the idea of a monotheistic belief. You are to do this because God desires it, you must not do the other because it is contrary to the divine will. Everywhere this notion is apparent of one divinity whose sanction man must have in all his acts. We must conclude then that though the religious belief of the masses of the common people was saturated with polytheistic ideas, instilled and maintained and plastered over with formalism by the priests, there were some bold, outspoken spirits who refused to be thus trammelled, but in their search for truth reached the fountain head of monotheism.

With many Biblical sayings there is a close parallel in Ptah-hotep's maxims, but only such a parallel as is found in the precepts and proverbs of many nations.

## THUS WE READ IN PROVERBS :

"Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old, he will not depart from it.—xxii. : 6.

"Rejoice not when thine enemy falleth, and let not thy heart be glad when he stumbleth.—xxiv. : 17.

"He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.—x. : 4.

"A soft answer turneth away wrath : but grievous words stir up anger."—xv. : 1.

## PTAH-HOTEP SAYS :

"An obedient son is like a follower of Horus; he is happy after being obedient. He gives the same lesson to his children.

"Be not angry with a disputant when he is wrong; he fights against himself. Amuse thyself not with the spectacle; it is despicable so to do.

"Activity bringeth riches but riches endure not when it slackens.

"Thou hast the advantage over an adversary if thou keepest silence while he is uttering evil words."

The thought which strikes one in reading Ptah-hotep and comparing him with the Jewish proverbs is that he is groping after the light which is clear and bright in the Biblical statements. The idea is there but it is not crystallised; the thought is apparent but the imagery, the power of the imagination in the setting, is lacking. It is the material striving for a spiritual power which it cannot find. It seems clear that Moses owed practically nothing to Egyptian literature in the composition of the Pentateuch, as far as their system of morals is concerned, for in the true sense they had none, so far as we know, no organic body of truth to which we might apply the term moral philosophy.\*

These are a few of the interesting features of these precepts, which are well worthy of study to-day, for they are ripples on the stream of the true wisdom of the ages and are as true now as they were when Ptah-hotep collected them.

THE article of Professor Thomas on common schools makes it necessary for me to return to the topic which I presented in *The Open Court* some time since. Replying to my positions then taken that the ordinary curriculum is outgrown and no longer adapted to the large majority of children; that furthermore the age demands a knowledge of elementary sciences especially on the part of agriculturists, the Professor replies that the case should be considered from a scientific standpoint—a stand which he conceives I either overlooked or considered out of my desired path. This scientific view I suppose he intends to embrace in the question "Would the teaching of botany, zoölogy, geology, and chemistry in our common schools have a tendency to check the influx of young people from the farm to the city? I think not."

This of course does not constitute science; but it propounds a question. I readily divide the reply offered us into two points. (1) The Agricultural Colleges have been a failure in the way of making farmers. (2) Only a smattering of sciences could be secured by the proposed change, if adopted; and it is absurd to suppose any such extremely small modicum of geology, etc., could influence young people to be more willing to dig the soil. I shall stop long enough before considering these objections, to protest against the assumption that farm work is inherently more obnoxious and disagreeable than any other work. This is quite a mistake; on the contrary, both in the nature of the subjects concerned, and in the associations involved, no labor is more delightful than educated soil-tillage. I should be glad to make for him a long list of men, from Lawes and my namesake George Powell to Washington and Jefferson, whose enthusiasm for personal tillage is well known—or point to our admirable and extended list of workers in horticulture, such as Grant and Campbell, and Hooker and Downing, and Wilder and Ricketts and Rogers, men more honorable by their gifts to us than politicians of the highest order. But I should be met with the answer, Ah! These men were educated experimenters. They were scientists, and got their pleasure from the fact that they could comprehend nature. Exactly, my dear Professor, that is the key to the situation. Now all we ask for is such a bias of common school education that all who are fit to be farmers, may be such on a high and enjoyable plane. The assumption that there is something essentially about farm life so peculiarly disagreeable is pure assumption. But if you can picture anything more meagre than life and labor all your days in the dirt, and not know the constituents of the dirt, the history, the economy, the cunning of the soil; or have any comprehension of things overhead, or underfoot, em-

\* *The Open Court* disagrees on this point with the author of the article.



braced in geology and chemistry; or to wait on cows all your days without a smattering even of biology; and have three-fourths of your crops snipped away yearly by bugs, and not have a smattering of entomology;—indeed to have flowers only posies, because you have not a door opened to mental joy by botany;—if you can conceive anything more prison like than this let us hear. The fable of Tantalus, touching water with his lips, but never able to drink a drop, is a partial illustration. But Mr. Thomas is willing to continue “reading, writing, and arithmetic”—(I only wish these, so far as possible, taught at home; as they easily may be in most cases)—then he would grant a “little history” and “a modicum of geography.” “A little drawing is also desirable.” This I must suppose to be the curriculum insisted on by my opponent. Whether this is more than a smattering I must leave others to judge. With my own boys,—and they are farm boys,—I began with drawing at the outset at seven years of age and they will never get too much of it; both for the inherent power it gives them, and the deeper insight into things, and their relations; and for the hand education it gives. As for history it also is a science; and should be taught from the laboratory method. I will stop one moment also to consider the everlasting dictum that our schools are compelled to use up all a boy’s years on learning to read, write, and cipher. I truly believe that if every common school in America were abolished it would make but little difference in the ratio of children able to read and spell. This age that pours out 4000 new books a year in our land, and as many more in England; with newspapers in every hovel, and sold at a cent apiece, does not leave it optional with a child whether he shall be illiterate or not. It is not any longer the essential burden of our schools to teach reading. Nearly every child of seven is ready for something beyond. As for writing, the typewriter is steadily displacing the pens. The principle of wise educators is I believe to push ahead somewhat, and expect the pupil to involuntarily become a reader while studying that which interests him. But, as I have urged, most of our mothers and fathers can and do get their children over the simplest elements of “the three R’s” at home. What we want of common schools is something more.

It hardly seems necessary to recall my former statement concerning the drift of what little enlightenment is permitted the pupil under the existing schedule of education. Geography, for instance, does not deal to any extent with things at hand; but its burden is the glorious results on the face of the earth wrought by man. It excites the starved pupil to a desire to go from his meagre home;—and go he will, if that is all you give him. Enough on this point. Give the children geography, that is the earth abroad; not a “mod-

icum,” but a full measure of it,—when you have first taught them the earth under foot, and at hand.

Let me turn now to the two points fairly to be eliminated from the article of Dr. Thomas. (1) The Agricultural Colleges have failed to accomplish the end for which they were created. This I believe is not verifiable by statistics. A very much larger number of graduates of these institutions are engaged in direct agricultural work than has been sometimes reported. But if this were not so let us understand that a reform cannot be begun at the top. You cannot take a class of young men already chafing with the limitations education has created for farm life, and by a course in experimental land tillage away from home prepare them to be content to be home keepers. What we can expect of our Agricultural Colleges is to create a spirit of comparative or higher agriculture and horticulture. We feel the influence of such institutions through the press. The more intelligent farmers are thus aided in getting rid of antiquated methods. We do not want these boys to go back to the plow; but we need them to teach; to reach out through the press, and thus elevate the general methods of land tillage. If any one needs to be cured of pessimism as to the value of Agricultural Colleges, let him hear from these young men at our Farmers’ Institutes and Fairs.

(2) The second point made by Professor Thomas may be stated as feasibility. There is a suppressed hint that teachers qualified to teach the sciences I have specified cannot be obtained. I need hardly reiterate what I have already allowed that it will be no more difficult for any one to prepare to teach geology than geography, the contents than the surface of the earth. But the chief harm that can come from the article to which I reply is the assumption reiterated, but in no wise demonstrated, that the pupil could not in his school years get “anything more than a useless smattering—any character-building, scientific knowledge, such as would sustain him in following the plow or tend to repress his cityward yearnings.” The writer thinks as he says that the great mass of intelligent teachers would reply that “in three cases out of five” the instruction would produce no appreciable effect on mind and character—that “one of the other two would be blighted by tasks too heavy for him.” This leaves one out of five, two out of ten, whom we are supposed to really get out of the ruts, and actually create into a man of scientific mind and character. I am touched with the pathos involved in the crushed youth; and am inclined to believe the Professor has never seen an experiment tried. These chaps are quite elastic. I began my own boys with several years of investigation,—only taught them to observe. The oldest at seven I handed that ideal book, Shaler’s “Elements of Geology.” We read it together, and talked it over;

going into the fields and glens, and getting a clear fundamental conception of that very simple science,—far simpler than valuable geography. It did not crush him. He may be the one out of the five. But the plan worked as well with Phil (No. 2). Yet the older one is a born mechanic, and the second a born book-worm. Then came number three, Master Herbert, and he, while detesting books, is an enthusiast in geology, botany, and other departments of biology. I hardly know however what to make of the argument I am answering, for in the very next sentence Professor Thomas shifts ground, and allowing that a love for science may be secured by farm children, yet insists that that does not imply “that the child will also have a love for digging his living out of the ground.” I would shift ground too with him, only I have already reverted to the error, by implication even, that farm work is inherently more uninteresting and tedious than any other work. I may, however, press down a moment on this, as the main point, that such work is disliked chiefly because education by the common method robs it of all enlightenment. The factory boy knows that his work is more wearing than farm work; but he endures it because after work hours he is near some forms of relaxation—unfortunately as a rule of a very cheap, if not vicious sort. The farm boy and farm girl, with such knowledge as I suggest, is also near,—all day is dealing with,—matters of intense interest. I will not go on to discuss the Professor’s interpretation of the German “World-Thirst,” which in his opinion is an instinct drawing boys and girls away from the farm. If such an instinct be in humanity it has been created like all instincts, and should be counterbalanced and corrected by education. We have many other drifts of like nature, such as the migratory instinct, which antagonises home-building. We know what to do with these things. Wise educators do not say “it is an instinct; let it be.” But Professor Thomas allows “Doubtless it would be *better* for him in most cases to remain on the farm; but he does not know that, until *experience* has taught him.” I answer: It is criminal neglect to allow our children to tide on in this mistaken course; and finally, after life’s chances are wasted, find by bitter “experience” that they have been allowed to blunder—fatally. What is education for? Is it not to save our boys and girls from instincts, and teach them wisdom? But I confess that I am astounded that my friend, the Professor, should rush forward to a final conclusion so exactly what my previous article undertook to demonstrate, and this article to defend—namely that “the more knowledge you give him that tells of an outside world, in which men are doing, studying, finding out all sorts of interesting things, the more you add fuel to the flame” that drives him city ward. We surely shall get somewhere to

agree after awhile—which will be useful. We shall both insist on showing the boy a world at *home* full of interest, of beauty, of thought, of study, of doing.

I cannot, certainly not now, enter into the final opinion of the learned Professor that the only hope for the farmer is to improve his economic status, and “elevate his plane of life.” What really have I been aiming at but proposing a definite fundamental common school method for elevating the plane of life for every farmer? Possibly at some future time I will, in *The Open Court*, present, what I believe to be the best-established fact of modern science and scientific method, that it is ethical and character building; that in fact the grandest consequence of widened knowledge of nature and life is to bring the mind into nearness with the All-Life, and construct in the pupil convictions of responsibility, and admiration for honor. And when I do so, it will be in response to the statement that “What little the schools can do must be by ethical rather than by scientific instruction”;—a divorce of ethics and science worthy of Dean Burgen.

You will bear in mind that I have also carefully avoided being led into any discussion of the superiority of the elementary sciences as intellectual trainers and stimulants which however I strongly believe; but have adhered closely to the simple proposition that the normal training of a farmer’s child is to give him knowledge of what a farmer ought to know. Already young Herbert Spencer, nine years of age, has three times interrupted me since I began this article; once he dashed in to show me flowers of two exquisite hybrid thorns, colors unknown to culture, but found by him on the banks of a neighboring glen; once to report the result of the boys’ midday fight with the plum-curculios; and once to ask my opinion concerning an invention his older brother has devised in their workshop, for making work on the typewriter more convenient. He will be crushed if I do not spare him time to go with him after the new-found bushes. I do not fear that he will be drawn away from land and home by either some “instinct” or by any possible attractions of city life. He will never talk of or think of farm life as Professor Thomas describes it as “a narrow, monotonous life of hard work, small pay, and meagre opportunity for action, enjoyment, or improvement.” Why not? Simply because he has become, with his brothers and his sister, a practical demonstration of a better education. He has escaped the common school as it is for the school as it ought to be.

#### CHARITY.

THE school house stands on the public square in the midst of a grove, and at recess the children enjoy themselves under the shadowy branches while the birds are singing in the trees.

After a stormy night one of the nests had been blown down and its inmates, some five or six half-fledged robins, were hopping around in the grass. There was great excitement among the children, and to their honor be it said, there was no cruel boy among them, no mischievous young savage, who wanted to hurt the little creatures. Every one of the young folks was anxious to extend his charity to the helpless little birds. At last one of the urchins succeeded in gaining the confidence of the little robins, and he fed them.

At the next recess the same scene was repeated, and this time the birds were no longer timid. By and by they grew so tame toward the children of the school that on every morning they greeted them with twittering voices, anxiously waiting for their breakfast. At every recess one of the scholars fed the little birds.

One of the teachers observed the children's dealings with the birds, and he praised their spirit of love and charity toward these helpless beings. But he forgot that not every well intended action has good results. The sympathetic sentiment is very laudable, but how very irrational are often the methods of charity.

Vacation time came, and the school was deserted. Some of the children played at home in their gardens; some went away with their parents on excursions; some had left the town to stay with relatives in the country; and the little birds waited in vain for their breakfast. These poor robins had never learned to earn their own living. They were so accustomed to the crumbs and other tidbits of their little benefactors, that, left to themselves, they were now unable to rely upon their own strength; and in the midst of a harvest plenteous for other birds, they perished miserably, from lack of ability to gain a living.

There is a lesson in this little story. Charity is a good thing, and the spirit of charity shows a generous and noble disposition. Charity toward those who cannot help themselves, toward orphans or the infirm and aged, is not charity, but duty. In other cases the continued administration of charity is an evil in itself and productive of other evils. It pampers a pauper class accustomed to rely on charity.

There is but one charity which is commendable. It is that which gives men in need, the opportunity either to help themselves or to learn how to help themselves. All the help that man offers to man should tend to enhance his manhood, to make him stronger, freer, and more independent.

P. C.

#### CURRENT TOPICS.

THE people of Queensland, over there in the South Seas, are carefully imitating the American colonists, by sowing thistle seeds, for a prickly crop that their posterity must reap in pain. Queensland is a large plantation; three times as large as France, in fact, and as the soil is rich, and the climate hot, the planters propose to import black laborers from the South Sea Islands to work "mong

de cotton an' de cane." They are carefully laying the foundations of a "negro problem," and a "slavery problem," and a "secession problem," and some other kindred problems that will strain the patriotism and the statesmanship of their children; Gordian knots which may have to be untied as ours were, by the sword of civil war. They call this new slave trade by the playful and innocent name "blackbirding," but the blackbirds will grow as ours did into civil dangers threatening the political existence of the future Queensland. Before the men of Queensland begin "blackbirding," they ought to haul down the British flag, and hoist a banner of their own. Or, will the flag of England still wave over Queensland as it did over America, and allow "blackbirding" to be done?

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It is a rare coincidence, and suggestive of comparisons, that Presidential campaigns are being carried on in England and America at the same time. I say "Presidential" in both cases, for the Prime Minister is actually President of Great Britain and Ireland. In the old country the campaign will be literally "short, sharp, and decisive"; in America it will be long, sharp, and indecisive. In the United States there is no policy at stake, nothing but the offices; in England, the reverse of that inspires the rival combatants; there, only public policies are at stake; the offices are not. In England the office holders are free and their offices are not in peril. There, the result of the election instantly places the whole government and all its policies in the hands and under the responsibility of the winning party, but in the United States, as the whole senate is not involved in the election, the established policy is not endangered by the result; because, even if Mr. Cleveland should be elected, and a House of Representatives in political harmony with him, the Senate could veto any measures of public policy that they might recommend. Remotely, of course, public policies are involved, but immediately, there is nothing at stake but the offices. The result of this election will show, that whatever may be its faults of form, the British government is in practice the most democratic in the world. In England the whole administration changes instantly in obedience to the will of the voters expressed at the polls. In the United States, the Senate, or the President, may baffle that will for years. And it is extra anomalous that in the United States, because of our eccentric voting machinery the election may go both ways, Democratic for Congress and Republican for President. The people of the United States may at the same election, and by the same ballot, elect a Legislature to make certain laws and a President to veto them, a contradiction very likely to be enacted next November.

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In a late number of the *Nineteenth Century* is an article by the Chaplain of Wandsworth Jail in which he tries to show that crime and civilisation increase together; and in proof of it he says, "Police statistics are a striking confirmation of prison statistics, and the statistics of trials; and all of them point with singular unanimity to the conclusion that crime during the last thirty years, has not decreased in gravity, and has steadily been developing in magnitude." The statement is a moral contradiction; and the conclusion drawn from the premises contained in it is false. No matter how splendid in a material sense it may appear to be, the progress which is branded by an increase of crime is not civilisation but a departure from it. Intellectual achievements with a moral blight upon them are not civilisation. The World's Fair cannot exhibit wealth enough in art and science to atone for spiritual decay. If there is an increase of crime, which I doubt, it may be due to an increase of riches, luxury, and self-indulgence on the one hand, and a corresponding increase of poverty and privation on the other; and neither extreme is a sign of civilisation. Besides, there is a distinction between crime and crimes. Crime is absolute, and always contains within it the quality of moral turpitude, but crimes are sometimes merely relative to surrounding



conditions. Some deeds are crimes in one country that are lawful and even praiseworthy in another. Some crimes are purely local, and actions unlawful in a city may be perfectly innocent in the country. Crimes are increasing, because new crimes are made by statute every winter. "Police statistics" are open to suspicion, for they often show that while crimes are fastened upon certain unlucky citizens, the crime itself is in the law, and in the administration of the law. Legislative restraints upon liberty are multiplying crimes; and no man can tell what innocent pursuits may be crimes next year. The legislature will meet next winter, and will certainly manufacture some new and awful crimes to pad the statistics of the police courts and the prisons. Crime does not increase with civilisation, and whatever there is of it is made by the morally uncivilised of all classes; rich, and poor.

I have often wondered how much of real crime is due to the presence of statutes, judges, police, and prisons. How much does the dread paraphernalia of punishment inflame the spirit of resistance? Is a prison a magnet drawing some souls to it as a snake fascinates its prey? I concede that those agencies prevent crime, although some persons deny that, but I also think that in some natures they inspire it. If the warning given in the garden of Eden had not been accompanied by a penal threat, would Adam have disobeyed it? I do not know; but I believe that the caution itself was based on the psychological reason that the knowledge of evil is a temptation to sin; and I think that if Adam and Eve had remained perfect, and all their posterity for a thousand years, or until there were ten million souls in Eden, and somebody had then built a jail there, candidates for cells would have appeared at once. I was the first lawyer that settled in Marblotown, and I was at the head of the bar there for about a year, or until another lawyer came. Before I went there the settlement was quiet, friendly, and harmonious; and utterly free from crime, crimes, or quarrels; but as soon as I arrived and opened my office, the inhabitants began to think that as there was a lawyer in town it was their duty to go to law with one another; and they did. Many a time, when the village was in the throes of a lawsuit over a stray pig, or a dead horse, or a borrowed plough, or something; and the inhabitants were all divided into hateful factions on the question, have I heard old Mike Marquand say, "We was all peaceable, wasn't we until we got a lawyer here. We never had no furse with one another did we until he come to town"; pointing his finger at me, overwhelming me with conscious guilt, and proving the metaphysical knowledge of Shakespeare when he said "How oft the sight of means to do ill deeds makes ill deeds done." And I think that the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil was well forbidden, for the knowledge of evil is evil.

A prize fight opened with prayer is to be the coming novelty; and such a burlesque will be scarcely any more extravagant than the prayers preliminary to that "Wild West" gladiatorial show known as a national convention. The prayers made at the June conventions were crafty little stump speeches addressed to "the throne of grace" in behalf of the Republican ticket at Minneapolis, and of the Democratic ticket at Chicago; and the ingenious manner in which the party doctrines were impressed upon the deity was worthy of high praise. At Minneapolis the "applications" were argumentative in support of the Republican "idea"; and at Chicago, they insinuated that the Democratic enterprise was more worthy of divine patronage than was the rival combination. The most daring invocation of all was that of the Rev. Mr. Henry, at the Chicago gathering. After explaining to the Almighty that the Democratic convention represented "every section and every interest of this national commonwealth," he said, "Be thou its presiding officer!" Considering the architectural beauties of the wigwam, and the discordant howlings of the crowd inside of it,

this was asking a great deal, and certainly more than was granted. The smoke of Mr. Henry's offering in behalf of the platform builders appeared also to fall upon the ground instead of ascending. "Guide thou the framers of the party platform," prayed Mr. Henry, but that guidance was withheld, for the party platform reported by the "framers," was broken into splinters by the convention, and the "framers" were discharged as faithless, bungling workmen. If Mr. Henry's prayers that victory may fall upon "the nominees of this convention" find no more favor than the others, it will be bad for those "nominees."

On the following day another minister prayed in the wigwam. This was the Rev. Mr. Green, who prayed in such a perplexing way that his hearers wondered whether he was praying for the convention, or like poor old Mrs. Cruncher, "agin it." He reminded me of my fine old friend, the Rev. Richard Swarington,—still hale and hearty, I am happy to say,—who was Methodist minister at Marblotown. He was of more value than twenty policemen, for he had a habit of praying for delinquents in such a way as made him literally, and without any slang in it, "a holy terror." Whenever any of us was guilty of any rascality or meanness such as gambling, drinking, loafing, cheating, squirrel hunting when we ought to be at work, or anything, he would meet us on the street and say in a lovely menacing way, "Now if I hear any more of this, I will pray for you right out in meeting"; and he had such a definite and specific way of doing it that the very fear of it kept us out of mischief. Well, some parts of Mr. Green's prayers for the convention reminded me of Mr. Swarington's, especially when he brought in that minority platform which the convention had never heard of, "the broad platform of the carpenter of Nazareth"; and this he had the audacity to advocate right there in the classic wigwam, and in the very presence of the Tammany braves. He even went so far as to pray, right out in meeting, that the broad platform of the Nazareth carpenter "might be triumphant and prevail." Not only that, but he even went farther, and prayed that "righteousness might be everywhere established." Mr. Green escaped from a dubious position, and got back into the favor of the convention by referring the throne of grace to "Our motto, Public office is a public trust," which lofty sentiment being a party battle cry, was rewarded with "loud cheers," amid which the prayer was finished.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

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## CORRESPONDENCE.

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### ONE DANGER OF NATIONALISM.

To the Editor of *The Open Court* :

In criticising my views, a lady asks, in *The Open Court* for June 2, the following questions: "Can any philosopher specify what particular right or price of Liberty he now enjoys which nationalism must necessarily wrest from him? Suppose the nation should assume control of telegraphs, as Mr. Wanamaker recommends, and messages be sent at cost, what would happen to our Liberty?"

We have just seen a President, who was very far from being the most popular man in his party, renominated by delegates whose votes he had secured by giving places to them and their friends. Whether he is elected will depend largely on how hard his office-holders work for him. If nationalism should give the next President command over all the telegraph-operators and railroad-men, his power to get himself renominated and re-elected would be three or four times as great as at present. He could have another term, with little opposition, or sell the succession on his own terms. This is no time to increase the number of office-holders.

Allow me to add that I deeply honor all "whose sympathies are so deep that they cannot rest in ease while others suffer injus-

tice and needless misery." I am doing what I can to help these noble men and women work in the direction where they have the best chance of success; but I do not object as much as my critic does to having "men strive mentally, physically, and morally."

F. M. HOLLAND.

#### A FRAGMENT.

BY LOUIS BELROSE, JR.

The sun has set; the twilight like a veil  
Drops from the night and star by star come forth  
The signals of celestial argosies.

O silent sea, O silent shoreless sea,  
How many times upon the fretful wave,  
When all the world was young, did I look up  
And feel your influence! How many times!  
But not as now; the world and I are grown  
Older, the birds sing other songs, the flowers  
Fade sooner, and the light upon the hills,  
Glory of things beyond, has passed away;  
Gone with the vision of eternal Love,  
Dark in the shadow of mortality.

Unfathomable depth, our search is vain;  
But where we lose we find. No Spirit now,  
"Dove-like, sits brooding on the vast abyss,"  
But we have learned the language of the stars  
Proclaiming universal fellowship,  
And breathed a savor in the healing wind  
That sweeps the billows of Immensity.

#### BOOK REVIEWS.

TENNYSON'S LIFE AND POETRY; AND MISTAKES CONCERNING TENNYSON. By *Eugene Parsons*, Chicago: 1892.

The first essay in this little work is intended to supply students and lovers of the English poet laureate with full and exact information on the chief events of his life. In the course of its preparation the author consulted many works, among them various periodicals and works of reference. These he found to be very faulty, and even the sketches in recent compilations and journals are full of misleading and conflicting statements. The second essay is devoted to the exposure and correction of these errors, and that it is the result of much labor is evident from the great number of books to which the author refers, which indeed seems to comprise everything belonging to Tennyson literature, including even translations of the poet's works into foreign languages.

Although the biographical sketch extends over only ten pages, it contains a large mass of interesting information which it is gratifying to know can be relied on; which, as we have seen, is more than can be said of many other notices of Tennyson. The author remarks that "the brief accounts of his life given in Appleton's, the Americanised Britannica, and other cyclopedias fairly bristle with blunders and objectionable features. As they stand, most of these articles are utterly untrustworthy. Their assertions are often misleading, or so vague as to be practically valueless." Even such works as Welsh's "English Literature" and Allibone's "Dictionary of Authors" are shown to be incorrect. As examples of the repetition of inaccuracies, the author quotes a sentence containing several misstatements from Lippincott's "Biographical Dictionary," which becomes three sentences with the same errors in the "Americanised Britannica." He adds that there are similar passages in Appleton's and Johnson's cyclopedias, remarking "it is perfectly plain that there was not much independent investigation in these unscholarly performances." One of the most surprising blunders that various cyclopedias and dictionaries make is the statement that Tennyson when raised to the peerage was

created Baron d'Eyncourt. As the author states, he is Baron of Aldworth and of Farringford. In referring to the poet's asserted residence at Petersfield in Hampshire, the author, who thinks it is a myth, says he is puzzled to account for it. We would suggest that it arose out of the purchase by Tennyson of an estate on the top of Blackdown. This appears to be situated near Petersfield, and the fact of the purchase may have led to the inference that he resided for a time at Petersfield itself.

Mr. Parsons may be congratulated on his labor of love, which will be highly valued by all admirers of the poet. It leaves little to find fault with, but we may suggest that the newspaper correspondent quoted at page 17 must have fallen into some error, when he speaks of Tennyson as donning "his frowzy cap" and his frowzier slouch hat." He would hardly wear both at once, and either the word "or" should take the place of "and," or for "cap" we must read "cape." In note 1 on page 16 Charles Turner should be Charles Tennyson Turner, the two surnames being used together, as indeed appears elsewhere in the pamphlet. Ω

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