

23. Meng Sung reaping bamboo shoots for his mother in winter.
 24. Hwang T'ing-Kien (a celebrated poet of the Sung dynasty), performs menial services in ministering to his parents. (No. 226, p. 73.)

Some of the stories seem silly to us: a pickax would have done better service in breaking the ice than the method of thawing it up with one's own body and catching cold; a mosquito-net would have proved more useful than feeding the insects with the blood of a devoted child, etc. Moreover the stolidity of parents in accepting sacrifices of children with equanimity and as a matter of course is to our sense of propriety nothing short of criminal. Still, it will be wise for us whose habits of life suffer from the opposite extreme, viz., irreverence for authority or tradition in any form, to recognise that all of them are pervaded with a noble spirit of respect for parents, which though exaggerated is none the less touching and ought to command our admiration. P. C.

THE SUPPOSED POEM OF ROBERT BURNS.

The *Universalist Leader* of Boston republished the poem "Words o' Cheer" attributed to Robert Burns, which appeared in the September *Open Court*, and one of its readers has supplied the following information as to its origin.

SIR:

I find on page 1366 of the *Leader* information called for in regard to the poem "Words o' Cheer." I am not really one of your Scotch friends, but I can tell you where I got it years ago. It is taken from Lizzie Doten's *Poems from the Inner Life*, published by the *Banner of Light* in 1871. It is an inspiration poem given while in trance, purporting to come from Robert Burns. The poem consists of thirteen verses. Whoever sent it to *The Open Court* broke right into the middle of it; had they copied the whole of it you would have known *how* it got here, and *where* it came from at that late date. I am in possession of the book and have heard the lady deliver her poems impromptu myself. The likeness of her poems to Shakespeare is equally good. The poem, as printed in the *Leader*, differs a word or two here and there. Probably the one who is passing the poem along wishes you or someone else to acknowledge its merits before giving the source from whence it sprung. The first half of the poem is a "dead give away."

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Mr. Andrew W. Cross, of Riverside, Cal., writes us to the same effect; adding, however, that the language is not that of Burns.

"SOME FACTORS IN THE RISING OF THE NEGRO."

A NEGRO'S VIEW OF THE QUESTION.

To the Editor of The Open Court.

Speculation as to the specific possibilities of an undeveloped person or race cannot be indulged in with any degree of impunity by those who expect to remain within the pale of common sense. Nobody pays much attention nowadays to the Jew's estimate of the Gentiles, or the Greek's and Roman's estimate of the capabilities of barbarians.

A little more than half a century ago it was generally believed in Europe and America that the black man was incapable of social improvement and that nature or God had produced him merely to serve the white man as a slave. Calhoun is said to have exclaimed: "Show me a Negro who can conjugate a Greek verb, and I will concede to him the right of human brotherhood!" And thus the divine right of the white man to the labor and liberty of the Negro seemed as divinely ordained and as securely established as the ancient and sacred right of man to rule over woman.

But the passion for absolute supremacy among individuals and groups of individuals, after causing countless millions to mourn from time immemorial, is slowly though surely being transmuted from a gross, brutal, and sanguinary impulse to a bridled and humane rivalry for intellectual, moral, and spiritual excellence.

It is a fact that—

"Dogma and Descent, potential twin,
Which erst could rein submissive millions in,
Are now spent forces on the eddying surge
Of thought enfranchised. Agencies emerge
Unhampered by the incubus of dread
Which cramped men's hearts and clogged their onward tread.
Dynasty, Prescription! spectral in these days
When Science points to Thought its surest ways,
And men who scorn obedience when not free
Demand the logic of Authority!
The day of manhood to the world is here,
And ancient homage waxes faint and drear.

"Vision of rapture! See Salvation's plan
'Tis serving God through ceaseless toil for man!"

And while it is true that here and there and now and then among civilised men the claim of "divine rights" is still set up by the arrogant and belated, nevertheless the sweep of social evolution has acquired such tremendous momentum consequent upon the development of a higher social consciousness nowadays, that no careful student of the times need be hoodwinked by such paltry eddies in the mighty and irresistible current of human progress. There never was so much tolerance and sympathy at any one time among mankind. Never in the history of the world, so far as we know, have there existed so many contemporaneous civilised nations of any magnitude and fighting power as to-day. In fact, international law as a result of international tolerance and sympathy seems not very far from evolving an international tribunal and the very much longed-for *international arbitration*. The Christian sects, though legion in number, do not persecute each other, and Mussulman missionary effort among Christians in England does not excite a Chinese-like Boxer rising in that country. Monarchy and Democracy and the myriad political creeds exist side by side. Science and Religion, like the rest, and with no less degree of aggressive ardor, are compelled to respect the rights of each other. And in the industrial world, feudalism and Negro slavery have passed away. That the institution of feudalism and Negro slavery had respectively outlived their social and economic utility does not detract from the validity of the fact that the human mind had become so possessed of the incubus of sympathy and liberty that the black man's freedom came to him not only as an economic necessity in the British dominions and as a military expedient in the United States, but as a moral necessity of Christendom all the world over.

No phenomenon is isolated. Every fact in the universe is in some way related

to every other fact. Surely, the spirit of the Reformation was incarnate in the American revolution, and also in the anti-slavery agitation of Great Britain and the United States. Is there naught in common between Martin Luther, Oliver Cromwell, and John Brown? And so we find that sympathy and tolerance for those who differed from us in opinion or belief, was extended to sympathy and tolerance for those who differed from us in race, color, or sex.

It is true that in Europe the Jew has few rights which the Christian thinks himself bound to respect, and that the Negro in the Southern States of America has few, if any, rights which the white man feels himself bound to respect; yet men have ceased to cry out very vehemently against the competition of women in the industrial and intellectual walks of life, and are rather seeking to cooperate with them; the American laborer is forced to say *comrade* to his competitor of foreign birth and alien tongue if the dignity of labor is to be upheld; the rich and cultured are waking up to their duty to the mass of ignorant and poor people; the virtuous are lifting the fallen; and the best and fullest education is no longer the monopoly of the rich or privileged classes.

When we consider that even in war the sick and helpless are cared for by the strong and healthy; that the foreign missionary enterprise of Christendom constitutes a firm and enormous ladder reaching from the depths of barbarism to the heights of civilisation; that our systems of railroads and steamboats, of telegraph and newspapers, of free libraries and free education, are the heralds of the ultimate comparative annihilation of distance and ignorance;—when we consider these facts it is easy to see that the present status of humanity is the most tolerant, the most integrated, and the most sympathetic known to history. With the growth of social self consciousness has come the revelation of man's relations to man in spite of differences in the abstract or the concrete, in the subjective or the objective. In fact, the transcendental cosmic consciousness of Krishna, the Buddha, the Christ, Spinoza, and Walt Whitman, is to-day the gospel of science or Monism, and is consequently permeating the masses and destined to imbue them with the sweet spirit of the Masters, leading on to universal harmony and universal good.

In this whirligig of things social, man is learning that his neighbor is part of himself, that the black man and the white man are neighbors and consequently parts of each other; that man is part of the universe and the universe is part of man; and that in virtue of such facts it is to man's highest interest that he be in harmony with all his relations and thus avoid hurting himself. The relation of the slum to the mansion is the relation of barbarism to civilisation. Neither wealth nor civilisation is safe while the majority of men are poverty-stricken and barbarous.

There is a spirit abroad that looks grudgingly upon the higher education of the poor, and of the Negro especially. It was claimed that the poor child ought to be taught to work; but the wave of industrial education or the gospel of labor has engulfed the children of the rich also. Men are learning the dignity and pedagogic value of manual work. But some say that because it took the Anglo-Saxon a thousand years to acquire culture and refinement, the Negro ought to be made to travel at the same slow pace, or his progress will not be real. Such people do not ask themselves *why* the Anglo-Saxon was forced to move so slowly, and whether the *conditions* for human development have changed any since the granting of Magna Charta or not. While the Negro was toiling for the material advancement of the white man, the white man was toiling for the intellectual advancement of the Negro. How compensatory it all is!

But there are still others who contend that the race problem should not be interfered with ; that things will come right of themselves without our trying to force matters ; that the force of social evolution will eventually right the wrongs ; that the *vis medicatrix nature* will cure the lesion. Yet the science of surgery and therapeutics disproves such a contention. A man may die for lack of proper aid, and a man may recover from a malady rapidly if his treatment is scientifically correct, or slowly or not at all if the treatment is antagonistic to the operation of the *vis medicatrix nature*. We may coöperate with the trend of the evolutionary forces, or we may oppose them. It should not be forgotten that evolution may proceed in spite of us and in virtue of us. In the main, humanity has bleedingly struggled up to its present status through the conflict of its passions, and appetites, and desires. Humanity as an evolving unit may truly sing :

"By the light of burning martyr fires
Christ's bleeding feet I track,
Toiling up new Calvaries ever
With the cross that turns not back."

It is for us of the present age of knowledge wittingly to harmonise our lives and the lives of our children with the mighty forces which are compelling us onward. The white man and the black man must learn respectively that one cannot hurt or neglect the other with impunity. This higher consciousness brings a knowledge of more relations and consequently of more responsibilities. We cannot escape if we neglect to ennoble ourselves by ennobling our neighbors. In the light of our higher consciousness and wider vision may the guilt of strangling a soul because of difference in color, birth, or sex, be the least of our sins!

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BOOK REVIEWS.

An instructive work on the industrial and commercial changes which have distinguished the last ten years of the world's progress is Brooks Adams's book *The New Empire*. Mr. Adams's point of view is economic. His subject is "markets"; the territory tributary to a market, when considerable, being called a State, and when vast, an Empire. The market is an outgrowth of trade and spreads along the lines of converging trade routes. He has presented us, therefore, with a history of the changing fortunes of the trade routes of the world, from the earliest times to the fall of Pekin. The goal of history, in Mr. Adams's view, is the economic supremacy of the United States. The book is pleasantly and vigorously written, and contains several maps illustrating commercial development, which will be welcome to the student. (New York: The Macmillan Company. London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. 1902. Pages, xxxvii, 243. Price, \$1.50 net.)

The most important phases of the social workings of our large cities has been treated in Charles Zueblin's book *American Municipal Progress*. The sub-title describes the work as "Chapters in Municipal Sociology," which is defined as the investigation of "the means of satisfying communal wants through public activities." Purely administrative progress has been excluded, viz., the police and judicial departments, as well also as charities, churches, and institutions of vice. The subjects considered are: Transportation; Public Works; Sanitation; Public Schools; Public Libraries; Public Buildings; Parks and Boulevards; Public