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## MEN AND WOMEN, AS SOCIAL BEINGS.

BY IRENE A. SAFFORD.

Not the least among the dreams of a lost paradise is that which pictures the intercourse which must have existed between man and woman before the "lattice of conventional affectations" had woven its dark network about them.

It must be one of the direct evidences of the fall that men and women have lost somewhere that sweet innocence, simplicity, and naturalness of relationship which must originally have belonged to them as human souls sent out by a beneficent Being, with mutual ability to aid, enlighten, and uplift each other in that sphere of existence to which they were appointed. Unquestionably the existing state of things came in with a curse somehow; but whether it was a curse inflicted by heaven or devised by man, in his attempt to improve upon heaven's plan, is a matter not so clearly apparent. And, at any rate, as man has it so largely in his power to avert the curse, it is fair to hold him mainly responsible.

It is one of the difficult things in connection with the ancient story to understand how Adam and Eve fell so suddenly into that state of blushing self-consciousness and embarrassment which made them run and hide themselves in the garden. But if a whole line of ancestors, for centuries back, had been instilling into each preceding Adam and Eve ideas of self-concealment, artificiality, pride or coquetry of sex, and self-conceit, it would not seem so strange that they wanted that fig-leaf panoply to fling over themselves. When Christian fathers could pronounce woman in her relations to man "a natural temptation," "a domestic peril," "a deadly fascination," and "a painted ill," it is not strange that their unchristian followers lost somewhat their conception of any primeval sweetness or innocency of intercourse between man and woman, and entrenched themselves in the dark idea that somehow they were born to be a snare to each other.

How many Christian centuries will have to roll around before the enlightened mortal will be able to disabuse himself of this impression it is impossible for the uninspired mind to determine, but the significant

thing in the whole matter is that the mills of the gods have at last begun to work upon it. In all that social upheaval which the periodical agitation of the marriage question recently produced in England and other countries, one truth seems flashing like a golden grain through the upturned soil and rubbish, and that is, the need of a better understanding of one another on the part of men and women, and, by consequence a better, happier intercourse. Speaking for France, touching the question of marriage, M. Naquet declares: "One fact stands out beyond dispute—that our absurd and wicked custom of isolating young women from young men, so that bride and groom come to the marriage altar all but strangers to one another, is the most frightful cause of mischief and unhappiness in after married life." Speaking for all nations, touching questions wider even than those of marriage, Mona Caird asserts: "We shall never have a world really worth living in until men and women can show interest in one another without being driven either to marry or to forego altogether the pleasure and profit of frequent meeting,"—and it would almost seem that whatever heresies or extravagances this brilliant writer may have been guilty of elsewhere ought to be forgiven her for the frank enunciation of this vital truth. It is a humiliating fact that no sooner do two persons of opposite sex begin to "show interest" in each other, and find mutual profit and delight in each other's society, than a thousand flying shafts of criticism and innuendo proceed to darken the air about them, poison the pure springs of intellectual joy and fellowship and compel them to abandon all the inspiring influences of their intercourse, or submit it to what Carlyle would call "the terrible test of wedlock." Nor does it much matter how high or honorable the position and character of the friends in the case may be, so long as they are unmarried and dare to seek each other's society, the social world will be in threatening ebullition over them. And now, what occasions such a state of things among beings that were supposed to be made but "little lower than the angels?" Simply the sad fact that an unnatural form of society and education has come to regard boys and girls, men and women, as little more than surcharged batteries of love and matri-

mony, that are sure to flash sparks in some direction, right or wrong, if brought into any possible connection with each other. What makes the little twelve-year-old in short dresses and pinafores blush and look conscious when Tom offers to open the gate for her or help her over the brook? Don't say "it's nature." It is not nature. It's the French governess or the silly schoolmate, who tells her that she's "Tom's girl," or even the anxious mamma, who warns her that she is "too big to play with the boys now." Let nature alone for guarding a girl's play with a boy, and she can brighten his campus, or share his work-desk forever, if need be, without a passing danger to any of the fine trusts committed to her or him. Left to herself she would never force or violate the fixed and orderly voices of her soul, and if, perchance, some special Tom should waken a new consciousness in her heart, she'd know how to guard that too, be sure, and all the better because she had not been led to look for or imagine it in every boy who glanced at her. The education, indeed, which leaves her thoughts entirely free from any concern about a boy, as a being to be either sought or shunned, is the one that saves her and the unperverted mind that enables her to receive all the unfolding lessons of life as mighty truths or gracious laws in the eternal scheme of being, is one that can bring all needed knowledge into safe and orderly relation to her.

It is the half-truth, hissed into her ear by some coarse schoolmate, or mistaken guardian, perhaps, that poisons the spring and turns all the fair currents of her life awry. Nature itself is ever finer than any outside touch that can be put upon it. But, strange to say, good and wise men have so long ignored this simple fact and taken the opposite condition for granted, that they have largely induced the thing they deprecated. They have founded their schools and creeds upon the extraordinary principle that God has actually created a race of beings so bad that the two grand divisions of it must, to a large extent, be segregated from each other, warned against each other, steeped early in a thousand petty suspicions of evil, treachery, danger, and disaster attending the intercourse with each other, till, to reward their pains, men and women have widely achieved the thing expected of them, so that now all parties are more or less afraid of each other. The consciousness of sex hangs like a nightmare over all their approaches to one another. The suspicion of coquetry or courtship, or the fear of such suspicion, undermines every interchange of kindness or sympathy and a radical want of confidence in each other's motives, sincerity, and trustworthiness kills all power of mutual helpfulness and keeps the whole body of society in a continual ferment. And yet, years ago the historian Lloyd told mankind that the civilising,

stimulating, and sustaining influence which comes from friendly and sympathetic intercourse between the sexes is one of the fundamental needs of humanity. Many a man, he declares, can scarcely do his best work or fulfil his mission in the world without it. Many a woman is unconscious of half her powers till the keen attrition of some masculine mind reveals them to her. Now they are blest, of course, who find this stimulus and companionship in married life, but just why they are "doomed who don't," or forced to forego all such uplifting influences in their earthly pilgrimage, is not so easy to determine.

The grand touchstone which the present generation is to apply to the whole matter is the system of co-education. "I was afraid of it at first," said a genial professor in a large Western college, "because I thought the boys and girls would be everlastingly falling in love with each other, but I find that it is not so. Coming together in that way, they rather seemed to spur each other on along the line of ambitious study and achievement, than turn aside for any by-play of a sentimental nature. The attachments that are formed among them seem to be of a different character, and I am told that where those attachments do eventually lead on to marriage, such unions are nearly always happy ones." Could any neater testimony than that be given to the fallacy of the old ideas, or to the hope and promise contained in the new ones? Could any better prophecy be uttered concerning the glory to be expected when, in the outside schools of life and humanity, men and women may meet unrestrainedly on the basis of mutual effort, helpfulness, and improvement. The pity of it is, that any of us were born too soon for it, and the hope is that some of us who are not too far under the wheels of the social Juggernauts of the past may be able to do something to help it along.

#### THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LEGERDEMAIN.

BY MAX DESSOIR.

#### III.

For the mechanics of consciousness, the laws which control the mental reproduction of ideas form the most important basis. It is the universally accepted doctrine of modern psychology that if an image *B* has been presented to consciousness simultaneously with, or immediately following, another image *A*, at the second appearance of *A* there exists a tendency of *B*'s also presenting itself in consciousness. We are accustomed to say that the image *B* is *associated* with the image *A*. Thus the sight of a knife-handle at once calls up the idea of the blade always seen with it, and the sight of lightning awakens unconsciously the expectation of a thunder-clap.

The simplest form of deception consists in the non-

fulfilment, due to unusual external conditions, of certain well-grounded expectations. When with my crossed fingers I perceive two round objects, only the real sight of the object will convince me that it is one. The old experience that a double sensation means a double object produces in this case an illusion. It frequently happens on rising in the morning that one lifts the water pitcher with a suddenness that it almost flies to the ceiling. The simple explanation of this is that the waiting-maid has forgotten on the evening previous to fill the vessel with water. The weight of the vessel filled with water and the exertion needed to raise it are firmly associated. In short, a great many unintentional deceptions arise from this general law of mind, in accordance with which we apply usual and well-known rules to unusual and exceptional facts.\*

The reader has doubtless witnessed the startling trick, in which several borrowed rings are pounded to pieces, put into a pistol, fired out, and afterwards delivered intact from a small box concealed in three others. Without concerning ourselves about the explanation of the first part of this trick, let us briefly examine the last. The performer places upon the table a large box, which is unlocked. A smaller box is found within it, which is taken out, unlocked in the same manner, and its contents, a third, smaller box, revealed. After the artist has thus demonstrated that the second has come out of the first, and the third out of the second, he can very easily take from a shelf beneath the table, the last and smallest casket, which contains the rings, and push it forward as if it came out of the next largest box. The observer is so convinced, by the first two real steps, of the truth of the last also, that it never occurs to him to doubt that number four has been produced from number three. The foundation of the deception plainly consists in an ingenious use of the ordinary law of association. The producing of a box, and the producing of this particular box from another box, are two images between which the wisdom of the sly performer has established an intimate connection. The spectators were induced to draw the logical conclusion from the two premises, even in the third case, where the premises were not the same as before.

We obtain from this a new principle of legerdemain. Namely, first actually do what the spectator is afterwards to believe that you have done. This rule is often followed in practice. The artist first really throws a few dollars into the hat, before he prevents the others, through enpalmage, from following their predecessors. He really lays one card upon the second pack before he lets the others slip into his sleeve. An equally classic illustration is that of the disappear-

ance of an orange in the air. The performer seats himself at the end of a table, throws an orange half a yard into the air, catches it on its return with one hand, and lets this hand sink a little below the top of the table; then, continuing the movement, he throws the orange again into the air with a stronger sweep, this time about a yard and a half high; and, finally, catching it again, he lets his hand sink with it beneath the table, and, leaving the orange in his lap, makes without losing a second's time, a third tremendous sweep, as if intending to hurl the orange to the ceiling. Nine-tenths of the audience then *see* the orange rise and disappear in the air. In this simple and instructive experiment all concealment, like that employed in the disappearance of the dollar, and all apparatus like that employed in the performance with the boxes, are wanting. All turns here on the subjective conditions of deception and not on external aids.

Psychological artifices explain many minor sleight-of-hand devices. Suppose that a silver dollar placed in the right hand has, in appearance, passed over to the left. If the performer should immediately open the left hand and show that it did not contain the dollar, the spectator would at once reach the true conclusion, namely, that the dollar had never been put into the left hand. If, however, the artist waits a moment or two before opening the hand, till the audience has become accustomed to the thought that the coin is in it, and before doing so gently strokes it a few times with the right, one not only attributes to the right hand a proper and subordinate employment, but the public is led to believe that its mysterious movements are in some way connected with the disappearance of the dollar. One must make this experience oneself to know how such small matters can mislead the judgment of clear and capable observers. The spectator knows very well, in the abstract, that the rubbing of the hand is not an adequate cause for the disappearance of the dollar, yet, since the disappearance is a matter of fact, the mind unconsciously accepts the explanation which is indirectly offered to it. Quite similar is that meaningless operation performed in card-tricks, where the cards are ruffled, or allowed to slip with a clattering noise through the middle fingers and thumb of one hand. Suppose one has unobservedly given a certain card the position in the pack necessary for the trick. If now, before he shows that the trick is successful, he ostentatiously ruffles the cards, most of the spectators will believe that the transposition is then effected, and will in this way probably understand less of the true nature of the trick than they otherwise would.

This last artifice also belongs in a category which may be fittingly designated as *diversion of the attention*. The artist, by awakening an interest in some unim-

\* Compare Jastrow, *The Psychology of Deception*, *Popular Science Monthly*, Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, New York, 1888.

portant detail, fastens the attention upon a false point, or, negatively expressed, diverts it from the main object; and as we all know, the senses of an inattentive person are somewhat obtuse. The pick-pocket has enough psychological insight to choose as his field of operation the theatre or exhibitions, because he is sure that in such places people give little thought to watches and purses. Just so the prestidigitateur carefully avoids pointing out too clearly the nature of the trick he is to perform, so that the observer does not know on what the attention is to be fixed.

The French magician Decremps has given a rule of this kind. If we count "One! two! three!" before the disappearance of an object, then the actual disappearance must take place before and not just at the "three"; for while the attention of the audience is fixed upon "three" anything taking place at "one" or "two" entirely escapes it. I myself, in my unpretentious exhibitions before friends, have often worked by this rule, and have been astonished again and again that men of science could be so blind to what takes place directly before their eyes. How much less, then, will the thought of the unpractised take the true course. They will not believe that tricks are accomplished by such simple means and with such audacity; they seek rather some intricate hypothesis, or refer everything to some favorite explanation, such as the disappearance of objects into the coat-sleeve, which, by the way, is very seldom practised. But, whatever they do, it is always possible to divert their attention for a moment, when the trick may be executed unnoticed.

One particularly effectual method of diversion is founded on the human impulse to imitate. We have an inclination to imitate all actions which we see, either entirely or partially. If we see some one yawn, we yawn with him; if we hear him laugh, the corners of our own mouth twitch; if we notice that he turns suddenly around, we feel the same desire; if he looks up, we also glance upwards.

The sleight-of-hand performer uses this inclination in many cases. He always looks in the direction in which he desires to direct the attention of the audience, and goes through the actions he wishes them to make. If he lifts his eyes thoughtfully to the ceiling, all the faces of the beholders are upturned with an audible jerk, and it is inexpressibly comical to note how the fingers then quietly change cards or perform other manipulations unnoticed below. If the trick is to be performed with the left hand, the artist turns with a quick movement toward some person at his right, correctly supposing that the spectators will perform the same movement, and will not notice what the left hand does. In a large number of tricks the point is to bring on top of the pack by an upward toss a card which had been hidden in the middle. It would be quite

wrong to perform the trick immediately on receiving the cards, for even the quickest and most adroit movement would be noticed by the public. The prestidigitateur holds the pack quietly, and after a pause asks of the one who fixed the position of the card, "You are quite sure, then, that you will recognise your card again?" As soon as he begins to speak a natural impulse fixes all eyes on his face, and allows him to accomplish the trick with the utmost unconcern. It is the inevitable result of every quick, short utterance, and is due to the above-mentioned law of imitation, that the eyes of the audience are turned for a brief moment at least from the hands to the lips.

Aside from these main points there are a great number of lesser artifices, which performers employ, but which cannot be described in detail here. We shall give but one or two examples.

The performer allows a person to draw out a card from a pack, look at it, and put it in again in any place. He then lifts the pack, shows the lowermost card, and asks whether that is the one chosen. When told no, he draws it out and places it face downwards on the table. Then he raises the pack again, shows the lowermost card, asks whether it is the right one, and places this on the table by the first one. The same act is repeated a third time. Then the player requests the person to choose any one of the three cards on the table. The person takes one up, and finds to his astonishment that the card is the one he has chosen.

The esoteric history of this trick is as follows. The performer does not suffer the card to be placed in the pack at random, but only at the point where he has placed the little finger of his left hand. Then he pauses and asks what was the color of the card drawn, partly to suggest some theory of solution and to thus draw the attention to a false point, and partly to obtain time for a peculiar displacement by which the card chosen is thrown to a position next that lowest in the pack. He now *shows* the lowest card, but draws out, not this one, but the one lying next to it, that is, the card originally shown, and lays it on the table. The other two cards taken at random he places respectively on the right and left of this. Now ten chances to one, the person drawing will select the middle card, and to insure the still greater possibility of this, the artist, in the movement that invites the person to choose, allows his hand to rest directly in front of the desired card. If this is drawn, the trick is a success, if not, then the card chosen is cast aside and the person asked to draw again. This excites no suspicion because the person drawing does not know at what point the trick is to be achieved.

I have chosen this illustration because it could be described in few words. A veritable jewel of psychological finesse is the "transformation of cards in the

hand"; but a description of it would require several pages. In fact, a limit is soon set to written expositions of these subjects, by the infinite number and variation of the artifices employed. Personal experience alone can render us familiar with the changing applications of these two fundamental laws.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

#### IDOLATRY.

IDOLATRY, or the worship of images, is attributing divine honors to the symbols that represent God or which are thought to represent God.

The most primitive kind of idolatry is fetishism, as practiced among savages; the most modern kind substitutes ideas in the place of stone or wood figures. These modern ideas, however, are sometimes incomparably more disjointed than the carved idols of the African savage; where the latter are ill shaped and ugly, the former are ill-conceived and erroneous. Both are alike products of poorest workmanship; both are treated with a ridiculous awe; both are made the recipients of divine honors which are paid with the more scrupulous attention, to the fetish-images the more rotten and hideous they are, to the fetish-ideas the more errors they contain.

We look upon the bigoted dogmatist who places his particular man-shaped creed above God's universal revelation in nature, as a man deeply entangled in paganism. Christianity has become a fetish to him; he finds it easier to worship Christ than to follow him and he must be regarded as much an idolator as many pagans before him.

The dogmatist's idolatry is mainly due to indolence, and finds its explanation in the conservatism and the *vis inertiae* of tradition. The dogmatist's fault is lack of courage. He does not feel independent enough to advance on the road of progress. He adopts the letter of Christianity and forgets its spirit. He is of interest to the student as a living fossil, representing a certain historical stage in the religious evolution of mankind. He is a religious Dodo—a survival destined to speedy extinction on the approach of civilisation.

The case is somewhat different with other idea worshippers, whose idolatry, however, is no less excusable, except it be on the ground of weakmindedness. There are men sufficiently bold to break the spell of traditional authority; they call themselves *esprits forts* or free-thinkers, but relapse after all into the most abject idolatry. They make themselves images woven of the delicate threads of thought. Such idea-worshippers are idolaters not from lack of courage but from lack of understanding. They are not afraid to break with traditional beliefs. Their deficiency is that they lack insight.

Because it is absurd to worship any clear and sound ideas that serve real practical purposes, idea-wor-

shippers employ such thoughts only as are unfit to be used otherwise. The most absurd and self-contradictory ideas, such as the absolute, the unknowable, the infinite, etc., are the fittest objects of idolatry. Ideas which people do not understand make their heads swim. So they sink down upon their knees, and being in this position, they have simply to follow the old inherited habit of worshipping.

Idolatry begins where rational thought ends. Thus as soon as a man is hopelessly entangled in a problem which he is too weak-minded to solve, he declares, "This is a holy ground, take off your shoes and worship that which you cannot understand."

It is the peculiarity of idolaters to worship that which they do not understand *because* they do not understand it.

The worship in spirit and in truth, of which Christ spoke, is the doing of the will of God, i. e., obedience to the moral law of nature. However, the worship that consists in genuflection and "Lord, Lord" saying, is pure adoration; a worship of self-humiliation, of fawning and cringing debases us and shows how human the God is whom we revere.

The religion of adoration is idolatry; it is an inferior kind of religion which substitutes prayers for actions and recommends flattery as the means of gaining the favor of God. But the will of God cannot be changed by adulation.

The will of God is written in the unalterable laws of nature, especially in the moral laws through which alone human society can exist. These laws contain blessings and curses; and God's will is that we ourselves shall work out the blessings of his laws. To pray that God should not do his will, that he should alter the laws of the universe, make exceptions in our favor, or that he should accomplish what it is our duty to accomplish is to reverse the prayer of Christ, which teaches us to say, "Thy will be done."

To look upon prayer in any other light than as a self-discipline, is to share the superstition of the medicine-man who still believes in the spells by which he thinks he is able to change the course of nature; and the worship of adoration is as idolatrous, as the belief that God is a big human being who is pleased to witness our abject and self-humiliating adulation is pagan. Adoration can be tolerated only as an educational method of attuning by a kind of dramatic symbolism the souls of the immature to the harmony of the moral world-order. It is a substitute only for those who do not as yet understand the worth of the moral laws of life which can be revealed in their full glory and sanctity only in the religion of science.

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A comparison between the old dogmatism, the idolatry of traditional symbols, and modern agnosticism,

the idolatry of the Unknowable (both being idolatries of a different kind) shows the great superiority of the former. The God of the dogmatist is anthropomorphic; but after all, this image of God contains some excellent features of true divinity. The decalogue is rational and practical in the best sense of the words. There is no nonsense about it, no confusion of thought, no absurdity—if but the allegorical nature of religious symbols is kept in mind. The God who is regarded as the authority of the moral law is not worshipped because he is unknowable, but because his commandments, which are obviously knowable, are true, because those who neglect his commandments will bring down upon themselves and others the curses of the moral laws of nature, while those who obey them will change the curses into blessings. There is substance in the old religions. But there is no substance in agnosticism.

We grant that the dogmatist's conception who takes the allegorical part of the parables in the literal sense and often regards it as their most important truth, is a miserable superstition and real paganism. But the worship of actually erroneous ideas is worse still. The idea-fetishes are too shadowy, too vague, too misty to receive any other attention than the critic's, under whose analysis they will have to give up the ghost.

Briefly: the idolatry of the dogmatists is an anachronism, the idolatry of the idea-worshipper is a degeneration, and you, my dear reader, if you find it necessary to avoid the Scylla of the former, do not fall into the Charybdis of the latter.

P. C.

#### CURRENT TOPICS.

ONE of the most useful missionaries ever sent across the sea to offer heathens the bread of life is Col. C. J. Murphy, more familiarly known as "Corn Bread" Murphy, a gentleman who has devoted himself to the beneficent work of persuading the people of Europe to eat corn bread. In corn bread there is a great deal of saving grace, and Colonel Murphy's mission deserves religious consecration. The prejudice that prevails in Europe against corn bread is greatly to be deplored, and if Colonel Murphy can do anything to remove that prejudice he will be entitled to high rank among the benefactors of his race. It is a melancholy thought that millions of people in Europe endure much needless hunger because they know not the food value of Indian corn, and I cheerfully second the wish expressed in the *Chicago Herald* of this morning, that the new Secretary of Agriculture "may give cordial and effective support to C. J. Murphy in his efforts to make the people of Europe appreciate the value of Indian corn as human food." I heard a gentleman once remark when boasting of his large crop of potatoes that they made a very good substitute for food; and this has been the weak tribute we have given to Indian corn; we have treated it as a substitute, instead of doing it full justice as one of the most wholesome, nutritious, and palatable of all the foods made from grain. It is all in the cooking; and if Colonel Murphy will impress that religious and moral sentiment upon the people of Europe, and show them how to make and how to bake corn bread his missionary labors may be crowned with success, otherwise not. And will he kindly hurry home as soon as his work over there is done, and preach the gospel of corn bread to the American people,

for they need it nearly as much as the English, the Irish, the Germans, or the Swedes.

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In a time of public anxiety and fervent political passion, when the safety of a great city like Chicago depends upon the election of our own favorite candidate for mayor, and when the success of the rival ticket must inevitably bring the city to ignominious ruin, how pleasant it is to turn from the coarse personalities of the stump orators and the press to the elegant parables and figures of speech by which the clergy in the pulpit advocate the election of one candidate while ironically sprinkling a few drops of perfumed vitriol on the other! By acts of inference and allusion, the preachers, without resorting to the clumsy rudeness of referring to either man by name, gracefully personify one candidate as a model statesman, and the other as an awful warning. The identification is made, not by names, but by qualities, and the qualities are those ascribed or imputed to the candidates by the newspapers for campaign purposes. Those qualities may be false, as they very often are, but for purposes of identification they are as effectual as if true. Some very neat election work was done last Sunday in the pulpit by the various ministers of the gospel, but it was done in a refined way, without any naming of names, and "without dragging the pulpit into the mire of politics." For instance, the pastor of a church to which one of the candidates belongs, after advising the congregation to vote for municipal reform, announced that on the evening of election day there would be a festival in the church parlors, when he hoped he should be able to proclaim that "morality, decency, and purity were triumphant over political trickery, vice, and immorality." What necessity for names when such a gentle hint will do? Every man in the congregation saw that their brother member stood for purity, while his opponent represented political trickery and vice.

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The election sermon preached at Grace Methodist Church last Sunday was the most ingenious of all. It was an excellent example of the way to reach a direct object by an oblique march, a skilful bit of work whereby in the form of imaginary persons the two candidates were made as visible to the mind as if they were living men with names. "We should have men for mayor," said the preacher, "who have known what it is to be poor. They should also know what it is to be rich." By a rare coincidence, one of the candidates is a very rich man, who once was poor, so the inference fitted him well, while judged by the same remarkable test his opponent was disqualified altogether, because, though rich, he never was poor. Also, the preacher wanted a candidate who had a wife and family, "Let us have a man for mayor," he said, "with family relations, a man who has a family"; and by another coincidence this was the happy situation of the rich candidate who once was poor. This qualification does not appear very strong in itself, but it was made so by a contrast in reserve; the opposing candidate was wicked enough to be a widower. This is rather a misfortune than a fault, but it will serve as an accusation at election time. As Mr. Tony Weller warned Sam to beware of widows, so this insinuating divine warned his congregation to beware of widowers, and he said, "Let us not have a bachelor or a much married widower for mayor"; and for a third coincidence it happens that one of the candidates is a "much married widower," having been unlucky enough to lose two wives, an offense obviously more heinous than if he had lost but one. Lest the identification of the wicked candidate might not yet be sufficiently complete the preacher said, "We ought not to have a candidate for mayor who spells God with a small 'g' and himself with a big 'I'." Then everybody knew who the bad candidate was.

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Once upon a time in a bar-room dispute at Leggett's on the Boone, a fussy little fellow was flourishing a contemptible pocket-

pistol which it would hurt any man's dignity to be shot with in those days. Annoyed by the performance, the Hercules of the settlement, at whom the weapon was principally aimed, gave the little man this caution, "See here, Shorty, if ever you shoot me with that pistol, and I find it out, I'll break you right in two." A similar performance was enacted in the United States Senate a week ago when Senator Hoar of Massachusetts presented at Senator Roach of North Dakota a little pocket-pistol in the shape of a resolution calling for an investigation of some venerable charges of embezzlement and financial irregularity which have been made against that honorable Senator. Mr. Roach was writing at his desk in the Senate, when his attention was diverted for a moment by hearing the resolution read. The account goes on to say that, "As the reading proceeded Mr. Roach felt in his vest pocket and took out a plug of tobacco from which he cut off a piece and nonchalantly put it in his mouth." Mr. Hoar's pistol was not big enough to draw from Mr. Roach any tribute higher than a fresh ration of tobacco, and a grim smile at the impending fun; for, say the dispatches, "Senator Roach will not only present an answer to the charges, but will make things very unpleasant for several of his senatorial accusers by bringing up events in their past private life." The "financial irregularities" of which Mr. Roach is accused were committed fourteen years ago, and they ought to be within the moral Statute of Limitations, as they are within the legal statute. He atoned for them as well as he could by devoting himself to a career of usefulness that won the respect of his fellowmen, and they appointed him to represent them in the United States Senate. The fairest measure of any man is the new life he lives now, and not the old one forsaken long ago. The right to reform and the duty to reform go together, and that right is interfered with when the buried sins of a man are dug up and flung across his pathway by severely righteous resurrection men. As the "financial irregularities" complained of had no relation whatever to Mr. Roach's election, they are outside the jurisdiction of the Senate.

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I have often wondered why sensible men like us look and listen with such radiant pleasure when we have the good luck to get a ticket for the theatre, and see a comic opera acted on the stage. The nonsense is altogether beneath our dignity, and yet we enjoy it as we did when we were boys. I used to think that our pleasure lay in the exaggerated burlesque, wherein we saw human actions twisted out of reality into distortion so grotesque that we must either laugh or die; but I think otherwise now. I think we laugh because we see our nature set to music acting in a clown's disguise the living manners of the time. Sometimes, more truly than the lawful drama does our comic opera "hold the mirror up to nature"; and therein, with its music and its pictures, lies its charm. Here, for instance, is an actual bit of life that needs only a little music and a stage dressing to make it comic opera equal to the "Mikado." I borrow it from the newspapers:

"Secretary Gresham received a communication from Portugal the other day announcing the arrival of Minister 'Gil' Pierce at his new station at Lisbon. The notice of arrival was accompanied by Mr. Pierce's resignation. The Minister left New York on February 4th and made short stops at Gibraltar, Genoa, Naples, Rome, Florence, Milan, and Monte Carlo. He is now ready to start back, taking in other points of interest along the return trip."

In order that no flavor of that fine comedy be lost, we must look at all the details of the play. It seems that "Gil," having deserved well of his country by valiant service for the Republican party in the late campaign, President Harrison sent him as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of Portugal, a ponderous dignity that sounds very much like a title borrowed from the "Mikado"; and when it appears that he sent him there "for his health," the resemblance is more striking still.

Of course, it was understood that "Gil" would have nothing to do at Portugal, because before he could get there, the new administration would be in power, demanding his resignation; but as every minister to a foreign country receives as soon as he is appointed several thousand dollars for an "outfit," Mr. Pierce found the appointment very desirable "for his health," which was further improved by salary administered in large doses at the same time. Some persons perceive the humor in all this as they see it in the comic opera, while others do not, and the Washington correspondent moralises on it thus: "By some, Mr. Pierce's action is regarded as quite a joke, while others say that his course is due to a desire to recuperate his health. There are a few, however, who feel that such jokes and health-trips at the expense of the government are not particularly funny." I cannot agree to that; these health-trips may not be honest, they may not be dignified, they may in fact be rather contemptible, but the man who can see no fun in them is a dull man.

\* \* \*

Some humorous banter has been exchanged of late between the railroads and the World's Fair, each intimating that the other was in business not for pleasure, but for perquisites, and for the philanthropic object of coining the great educational enterprise into money, by charging visitors "all that the traffic will bear." It was said on behalf of the World's Fair that the railroad prices would be so avaricious that the victims would be left without money enough to buy a bag of pop-corn at the Exposition; and the retort of the railroads was that after the visitors got into the World's Fair it would cost them so much to get out again that they would not be able to pay their passage home. It is gratifying to see that the railroads have raised a flag of truce and promise to sell round-trip excursion tickets at the rate of a cent a mile. "This cheap fare," says the Western Traffic Association, "is intended to benefit the workingmen and their families." Whether that is the intention or not, the policy is a liberal one, and sound for business reasons. It ought to benefit not only the workingmen but the railroads, too. It forces to the front this question, Will the managers of the World's Fair meet the railroads half way, and issue admission tickets at low rates for one day in the week "to benefit the workingmen and their families"? In considering this question, it ought to be borne in mind that the stockholders have put their own money into the enterprise, and any honorable methods they may adopt to save themselves from loss ought to be approved. The most of them have "families," just like the workingmen; and it is very easy for us, who have nothing invested and nothing to lose, to tell the directors how to manage the Exposition in a sentimental way, but would there be any loss that would not be compensated by the gain? The "shilling" days at the London Exposition were profitable days, and on that subject I quote some comments which I find in the *Illustrated London News* for August 30, 1851. After noticing the success of the "shilling" days, it says:

"*A propos* of that same shilling. Would not the present be a very excellent opportunity to open the Exhibition at a low fee? Say, two days per week at sixpence. There are thousands in this great metropolis who have never seen this great display of industry and skill, to whom the sight would be a great treat, and more than that, may be of great value, too."

It then directs attention to the fact that the cost of admission to the workingman includes not only the price of a ticket, but the loss of a day's wages. It may prove to be economically true that a "half-price" day can be established without causing any loss to the stockholders, while conferring great benefit upon the workingmen, and adding immensely to the popularity of the Fair.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

## IS KNOWLEDGE A PRODUCT OF CEREBRAL ACTIVITIES?

To the Editor of *The Open Court* :

In your article having reference to "Knowledge," in the last issue of *The Open Court*, I find the following :

"Facts are pictured in sensations, and these pictures represent the facts."

Do I understand you to mean that facts produce sensations and that sensation in turn enables a sentient being to take cognizance of facts ?

Is not knowledge, however limited or extended, of natural phenomena (I know of no other kind) based upon mental percepts which result from the brain's activities ?

The purpose of my inquiries is to obtain a clearer comprehension of your most interesting definition of knowledge.

Bear with me a little further: Is the soul, which you frequently refer to, the sum-total of the brain activities of the individual ?

Very truly yours,

E. S. MOSER.

[We trust that we have not been misunderstood, and add as an additional explanation the following remarks :

We assume that reality possesses as an intrinsic quality the faculty of becoming sentient, and under special conditions it actually develops sentiency. The surrounding facts produce impacts of various kinds upon a sentient being, and these impacts are felt. Impacts of the same kind produce and revive the same feelings and come to indicate the presence of the same causes. They become representative of things, events, or relations among things or events.

The functions of sentient substance are differentiated in the nervous system, which develops under the constant influence of the surrounding world. The reaction of sentiency upon ether-waves develops the eye, upon air-waves the ear, upon touch and temperature the skin and Vater's corpuscles.

Thus the various nerves develop, which by constant practice and heredity are so differentiated in their action, that they soon become unfit to react in any other way. Any irritation of the optic nerve will produce light; any irritation of the acoustic nerve will produce sounds. In this sense we can say that the various sensations are the product of their special nerves, but the special nerves are the product of their function; they are the accumulated result of the reaction of sentiency upon special kinds of stimuli.

Similarly, in a natural way, the higher mental faculties are developed, and having developed, they are essential factors of knowledge. A rational insight into some principle, or a comprehension of natural laws, is not possible without research. Rational insight is impossible to brutes. Thus the degree of knowledge a creature is capable of depends upon the degree of the rational faculty already acquired. Facts are pictured in the reason-endowed intellect of man with greater clearness than in the brains of brutes. A mirror is indispensable for things to be mirrored, and the quality of the picture depends not only upon the appearance of things, but also upon the mirror. When we intend to press the importance of the latter, we say that the picture is a product of the mirror.

Every act of cognition is conditioned by the stock of knowledge on hand and also the degree of intelligence acquired.

The soul, I should say, is not only "the sum-total of the brain's activities"; it is more. It consists of all of the various forms of meaning-endowed feelings that take place while the brain is in action. To speak of the soul as "a sum" of activities is in so far misleading as the soul is an organic whole; it is a more or

less systematically arranged society of ideas, of impulses and ideals. Indeed, the arrangement is of great importance, being an essential condition for the formation of the unity, that by a coalescence of many and often of heterogeneous elements is brought about. Every soul possesses an idiosyncrasy of its own, and this idiosyncrasy characterises more than anything else the individuality of a soul. P. c.]

## NOTES.

The Hon. J. B. Stallo (the late United States Minister to Italy, now residing at Florence) whose name shines brightly in the political history of our country, and is equally well known to serious students of philosophy as the author of "Concepts of Modern Physics," one of the keenest investigations we have into the fundamental terms of the natural sciences, has published in German, at E. Steiger's, New York, a collection of his lectures, essays, and letters. The volume is dedicated to his friend, Ex-Governor Koerner, as a worthy representative of German education, German honesty, and German character in the new world. The contents of the book form the topics, which, since 1855, were prompted by the successive issues of the history of our country. Some of the lectures are beautiful records of memorable events of the past; others, for instance on "The School Question," "Tariff Reform," and "Woman Emancipation," are as timely to-day as they ever were. They contain good lessons for the present generation. The philosophical essays on "Materialism" and "Natural Science and Its Foundations" are remarkably well written, easily read even by the untrained, and also deserving the philosopher's special attention. The book will be welcome to the author's numerous friends.

## THE OPEN COURT.

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