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VAMPIRE LORE.

BY L. J. VANCE.

THERE are vampires in these days. We know that European peasants still claim to have seen them. And so, there should be no doubt whatever that there are such monsters. Else, why are Hungarians, Poles, Wallachians, and other Slavonic peoples so afraid of the blood-sucking and blood-thirsty dead? For, as every peasant in Transylvania knows, wicked men come back after death as vampires. According to Dr. Friedrich Krauss, the belief in vampires is universal among the Kroats and Slavonians.*

Now, what do you think the village people do in order to keep vampires away? Why, as soon as the suspected person is dead, they burn the straw upon which the body lay. Then, they lock up all the cats and dogs, for, if these animals stepped over the corpse, the person would come back as a vampire (Bukodlak) and would suck the blood of the village folk. There is no doubt about it.†

Another simple but barbarous plan is to drive a white-thorn stake through the dead body. That will render the vampire harmless (*macht man den Vampyr unschädlich*). To this day the peasants in Bukowina drive an ash stake through the breast of the corpses of suicides and vampires.‡ This brutal treatment of suicides was once common in England and Scotland. The Wallachians drive a long nail through the skull, and lay the thorny stem of a wild rosebush on the corpse.§ In very bad or obstinate cases, the Roumanian peasant cuts off the head and puts it back into the coffin with the mouth filled with garlic. Sometimes they take out the heart, burn it, and strew the ashes over the grave.||

All these and many other precautions are still taken by village folk in Europe to keep vampires away. And yet, no vampire has ever been caught in the act. No specimens are to be found in the Museum of Nat-

ural History. There are, of course, some people who will doubt their existence.

Not so, however, with the Roumanian peasant. He believes in the vampire, or *Nosferatu*, "as firmly as he does in heaven or hell." What do you think of that? The Roumanians have two kinds of vampires—living and dead. You will be interested in knowing what a "living vampire" is. Well, the living vampire is the illegitimate offspring of two illegitimate persons. But, as the writer on "Transylvanian Superstitions" in the *Nineteenth Century* remarks, "even a flawless pedigree will not ensure any one against the intrusion of a vampire into his family vault, since every person killed by a *Nosferatu* becomes likewise a vampire after death, and will continue to suck the blood of other innocent people." As to precautions taken for the purpose of exorcising or laying the vampire, we are told that "there are few Roumanian villages where such has not taken place within the memory of the inhabitants."

The question is often asked, What is a vampire? I am sure I don't know. An old eighteenth century authority, Horst, says that it is a "dead body which continues to live in the grave, which it leaves, however, by night for the purpose of sucking the blood of the living, whereby it is nourished and preserved in good condition, instead of becoming decomposed like other dead bodies."

What does a vampire look like? Does it take the form of a ghost or spirit, or does it assume the same appearance as a person in the material state? Yes and no. It comes at night by your bedside as a horrid Shape. It has a human figure and face; its eyes are glassy; its mouth is bloody; its flesh is livid.

Early in the eighteenth century (from 1727 to 1735) a sort of vampire fever or epidemic broke out in the Southeast of Europe, especially among the people of Hungary and Servia. These dreadful beings called vampires sucked the blood of the whole village; they not only nourished themselves, but they infected others, and so propagated vampirism. It was a terrible thing, for no one knew how or when he might be bitten by the awful monster. The probable state of mind and

* *Die Vereinigten Königreiche Kroatien und Slavonien*. Vienna. 1889, p. 122.

† Do., p. 119.

‡ *Am Ur-Quell*. 1891, p. 12.

§ Frazer in *Contemporary Review*. August. 1885.

|| Emily De Gerard in *Nineteenth Century*. September. 1885.

situation has been described by a modern writer in the following manner :

"You are lying in your bed at night, when you see, by the faint light, a Shape entering at the door and gliding toward you with a long sigh. The thing moves along the air as if by the mere act of volition. You lie still—like one under the influence of a nightmare—and the thing floats slowly over you. Presently you fall into a dead sleep or swoon, returning, up to the last moment of consciousness, the fixed and glassy stare of the phantom. When you awake in the morning you think it is all a dream, until you perceive a small, blue, deadly-looking spot on your chest near the heart; and the truth flashes on you. You say nothing to your friends; but you know you are a doomed man—and you know rightly. Every night comes the terrible Shape to your bedside, and sucks your life-blood in your sleep.

"Day after day you grow paler and more languid; your face becomes livid, your eyes leaden, your cheeks hollow. Your friends advise you to seek medical aid, to take a change of air, but you are aware that it is all in vain. You therefore keep your fearful secret to yourself and pine, and droop, and languish, till you die. When you are dead, (if you will be so kind as to suppose yourself in that predicament,) the most horrible part of the business commences. You are then yourself forced to become a Vampire and to create fresh victims, who, as they die, add to the phantom stock."

Such was the terrible hallucination that seized people in the last century. The result was a genuine panic. Every one became badly scared, nervous, and afraid of being made a vampire against his will. Hundreds of people died under the belief that they had been bitten by these blood-sucking monsters. The emperor issued military commissions, and the graves of the alleged vampires were opened in the presence of medical men. Some of the bodies were found well preserved, with life-like complexions, and with fresh skin and nails growing.

There is little doubt (in my mind) that many persons were actually buried alive. The prominent fact, testified to by medical and military men, is that the bodies often presented a most natural and life-like appearance. The only explanation is that such persons were buried alive. Dr. Mayo quotes from an old German writer the following gruesome account of a vampire execution: "When they opened his grave, after he had been long buried, his face was found with a color, and his features made natural sorts of movements, as if the dead man smiled. He even opened his mouth as if he would inhale the fresh air. They held the crucifix before him, and called in a loud voice: 'See, this is Jesus Christ who redeemed your soul from hell and died for you.' After the sound had acted on his organs of hearing, and he had connected some ideas with it, tears began to flow from the dead man's eyes. Finally, when, after a short prayer for his poor soul, they proceeded to hack off his head, the corpse uttered a screech and turned and rolled as if it had been alive—and the grave was full of blood." Of

course, the wretched man was alive, just as surely as he was murdered.

The authority for the eighteenth century history of vampires is a work by M. Calmet, the celebrated author of the "History of the Bible." He has given an account of the epidemic in his "Dissertations on the Ghosts and Vampires of Hungary." The subject was treated by Voltaire in his "Philosophical Dictionary" in his usual bantering, semi-sneering style. He traces the idea of vampires back to the *modern* Greeks, who believed in dreadful beings called "Brucolacs." The connection is indisputable. The Slavonic vampire is the Greek vampire with some changes. "The ideas about vampires," says Mr. Ralston, "are identical among the Greeks and Slavonians, the name for a vampire being one of the very few words of Slavonic origin in Modern Greek."

Now, when a superstition is widely spread in Europe, as the belief in vampires certainly was in the eighteenth century, we naturally expect to find traces of it in ancient times and among uncivilised peoples. That is just what we do find in the classical authors and in the accounts of travellers. Indeed, we might show that the vampire superstition originated in certain ancient beliefs and observances touching the dead—seen in the various precautions taken to guard against the return of the ghosts of people, good and bad.

There are vampires in these days. But they are very different beings from those that worried the Greeks and scared the people of the last century.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF LEGERDEMAIN.

BY MAX DESSOIR.

II.

The artist in magic must be able to point to a very intricate table of ancestry. He must have descended on his mother's side in a direct line from the Witch of Endor, on his father's side from the magician Merlin; he must have had Zornebogk and Sykorax for his god-parents, and Faust's witch for his nurse. In other words, the juggler must be born to his profession.

Non cuivis hominum contingit adire Corinthum.

The modern magician must have an abundant measure of the same qualities as the physician. He must inspire confidence. The spectator must implicitly believe him when he says he holds an orange in his left hand, although the latter may have already gradually wandered over to the right hand. This ability to captivate the sympathies of the public from the first moment, so that those present, without exception, willingly follow the intention of the artist, is not a thing to be learned, and yet in just such a disposition of the audience consists the greatest help of the performer.

For the means by which he performs his wonders is not great speed of action. Strictly speaking, the word "prestidigitation" is not well chosen. It is true that the skilful actor awakens in the uninitiated the belief that all is taking place so quickly and adroitly that one cannot possibly see it, yet in reality he makes the necessary movements with the greatest composure and deliberation. Success lies in the *ars artem celandi*, the art of so influencing the observer that one can do everything before his nose without his noticing it. Also in this second important requirement of an adept, talent is necessary. I have seen many an amateur, who would have accomplished very neat results had he not been possessed of the deceitful delusion that he must make a show of his dexterity. The charm of this art consists not in the fact that the spectator is astonished at the wonderful swiftness employed, but rather in the fact that he accepts the explanations as conclusive, and goes home with the feeling of having spent an hour in a real wonder-world. Esthetically, the latter effect ranks incomparably higher than the former and lifts prestidigitation above the sphere of jugglery. This is the reason why men from the best circles of society take up sleight-of-hand performances without compunction, while the same ones would never think of performing equilibristic feats.

There is also another reason why haste and confusion should be avoided. The public needs time to see and understand the import of the movements, and if, for instance, the second phase of a transformation is given before the first has been sufficiently displayed, if, in changing an orange into an apple, no one has noticed that the original object was an orange, naturally the whole trick is a failure. Therefore, the skilful player needs extraordinary composure, and this, likewise, is not the gift of every one. Further, besides a confidence-inspiring presence and impressive calmness, he must possess the ability to create about him a mysterious atmosphere, in which the spectator, on the one hand, will regard anything, even the incredible, as possible, and, on the other hand, will regard all things, even the simple, as wonderful. In this direction lies the psychological significance of many little devices, which the expert is wont to use. Instead of providing the needed dollar, he charms it from the nose of a strange man. He does not put his gloves into his pocket like ordinary men, but rolls them out of sight in his hands, and so forth, until finally the observer no longer sees how he can escape from such a labyrinth of witchcraft and falls into a humor which materially promotes the task of the performer.

Still the chief secret of all prestidigitation consists in leading the thoughts of the audience in such paths that the development of the trick appears for the moment as the natural result of the artfully presented

causes. The audience must say to itself: "This card has been transformed *by a simple breath*"; thus completing the line of thought which has been suggested by the performer by every possible means. But now reason comes in and exclaims: "It is impossible that the ace of hearts should be transformed into the knave of spades by a breath," and from this illogical concurrence of two self-contradictory ideas rises the agreeable consciousness of illusion.

As the subjective condition of the above-mentioned psychological foundation of all magic arts, must be mentioned faith in one's self. The actor, from the moment he takes the cards in his hand, must be imbued with the conviction that he can now actually command them at his pleasure; every sentence must come from his lips as a real magic formula, and his own false assertions must appear to him almost as true. Conviction is only produced by conviction. Much depends, further, upon the skilful grouping of tricks, by which means a comparatively simple artifice fulfils a convenient office as a pedagogical preparation for a greater wonder, and mental associations are formed which are extremely favorable to the outcome of the experiment. Most important, however, remains the art of execution as regards speech and gesture. On this point no general rules can be laid down; perhaps an illustration may serve to make clear the meaning.

The well known disappearance of a dollar presents itself as an example. The directions run as follows: Hold the dollar between the thumb and middle finger of the left hand, then seize it apparently with the right hand, close the right hand and show the latter to the audience contrary to their expectations, as empty. The whole trick consists in the fact that at the moment when the right hand grasps at the dollar, the latter is let go by the fingers that hold it, and slips down into the left palm and remains hidden there. And now see how this very simple trick is performed by a first-class artist like Hermann. Hermann first takes the dollar and throws it several times upon the wooden surface of the table, in order, as he says, to show that he is dealing with a real, hard dollar. In reality, however, he thereby awakens in every one the unconscious notion that a thing that makes so much noise cannot possibly disappear noiselessly, which considerably heightens the effect of the trick, and, besides, the clear resounding tone deafens and confuses the spectators to such a degree that they follow the rest of the performance in a half-hypnotic condition. Then Hermann takes the dollar in his left hand, looks with a searching glance at the right as if it were to become the principal actor, and grasps at the coin. This grasp has in it something so convincing that one could swear that the right hand has seized the dollar and holds it fast; even the position of the fingers is appropriately adapted to the

supposed fact. The moment the grasp is made, the right hand passes to one side, and the accompaniment of the entire body, the bending of the head slightly forward, the glance of the eye, compel the spectators to follow this hand. In the meantime the left hand turns towards the body and points with the two first fingers at the right hand while the other two fingers tightly hold the dollar so as to be concealed from above by the thumb. When by such suggestions, and especially by the remarks of the voluble performer, the entire attention of the audience has been concentrated on the right hand, and each one makes up his mind to watch exactly how the dollar is going to disappear, Hermann makes slight convulsive movements with his fingers, thus constantly drawing them further away from the thumb, and says, appearing himself to be most intensely interested in this remarkable phenomenon: "Now see, ladies and gentlemen, how the dollar grows smaller, smaller, and ever smaller, and now look you, it has entirely disappeared!" Then he opens his fingers widely, his figure, which before seemed absorbed in the consideration of the magic hand, straightens itself, and his glittering eyes seem to say, "It was certainly a very strange affair about that dollar."

But how, the reader will ask, can one train himself to become such a master in magic? First of all, of course, it is necessary to practice, and practice, and always practice. One advances from the simpler to the more difficult steps, by always practicing the trick first in its constituent parts, then as a whole. Beyond this, however, no instructions would be becoming to me as an amateur; even this small part of the information obtainable from teachers and books, contains only a few important psychological elements. As soon as the technical side of a trick has been faultlessly mastered, the learner must turn his attention to the dramatic side, which, in the matter of execution, is of the greatest importance. In order to obtain in each process the greatest possible appearance of naturalness, it is recommended always to work before a mirror. In this practice the student must actually do what he later *pretends* to do in the performances, viz., he must closely watch the positions and movements of his hands, and copy them with painful exactness, to remove all distinctions between the reality and the illusion. Above all things, he must accustom himself to follow with his eyes the hand that seems to contain the object, as this is the surest means of directing the eyes and attention of the audience in the same direction.

It has already been said that the most important senses for the practice of our art are touch and sight. Their methodic education remains the chief task of the would-be prestidigitateur. It is recommendable, therefore, to pass some time in a jugglers' training school, to acquire the power of accommodating one's

muscles. In the investigation of the so-called muscular sense I have personally had frequent dealings with jugglers, and I must admit that the delicate sensitiveness of these people for the slightest variations of equilibrium, and the adaptability of their movements borders upon the incredible. As an illustration a Japanese, in my presence, kept four balls of different weights in the air, while at the same time he read aloud from an English book; he was able, therefore, accurately to measure the lines of throw and guide the movements of the hands to correspond with them, although eyes and attention were busy in another direction. The French prestidigitateur Cazeneuve possesses a similarly astonishing sensibility of the sense of touch. Cazeneuve can pick up at one grasp from any pack of cards, any number of cards desired. If one wishes six cards his hand reaches down and picks up exactly six; if one wishes twenty, the same performance; if one calls for thirteen, thirty, twenty-four, the same result follows, with few exceptions. What a marvellous sensitiveness to the slight variations of thickness is necessary to do this, one can best understand by trying it for himself.

On the education of the sense of sight some excellent hints are given by Robert-Houdin. Robert had always admired the power of the pianist to comprehend a large number of black characters at a single glance, and to translate them first into ideas, and then into movements. He saw that this appreciative perception was capable of a peculiar development as soon as it should be applied to intelligence and memory. He therefore began a series of experiments, to the explanation of which I must devote a few words. It is well known that the ordinary man can assign at a glance the sum of a small number of objects, the limit of which is about five. He can tell without hesitation whether two or three or four or five pieces of money are lying together. But as soon as the number is increased a short deliberation is necessary and only exceptionally gifted individuals are able to guess correctly a larger number at sight. Robert now undertook, in company with his young son Emil, to cultivate their originally mediocre gift of perception so as to be able to recognise the number of domino blocks thrown out at random. After weeks of effort the maximum limit was extended to twelve. Then Robert changed the experiment employing different objects instead of similar ones. For this purpose he daily traversed the streets with his son. As soon as they came to a show-window filled with all kinds of wares, they cast a comprehensive glance into it, stepped a few paces away and noted the objects which they had seen in that short time. At first they could get sight of at most only four or five, but after a few months they raised the number to thirty, the boy indeed often seeing as many as forty. With the aid of this abnormally developed gift of perception Robert-

Houdin accomplished some of his most brilliant tricks, to which belonged the experiment of second sight. We can now also readily explain his so-called "clairvoyance" which excited the attention of the whole world in the fourth and fifth decades. The father gathered upon a platter a number of objects, we may suppose twenty, and turned for a half minute so that the boy could see them.* Then the boy could readily tell the number of objects and perhaps describe them. Whatever he lacked was imparted to him by an ingenious signal-code. This code was specially employed when the objects were wrapped up. In that case Robert engaged the giver in a short conversation, and employed the time thus gained to bore a small opening into the covering with the carefully pointed nail of his right thumb, thus detecting with the eagle eye of a former mechanic, its contents. It is astonishing to learn what miraculous feats were performed in this manner.

Our author also tells us that these studies were helpful to him in another direction, viz., they acquired for him the ability to follow, to a certain extent, two lines of thought at the same time: to think, not only of what he was doing, but also of what he was saying,—two very different things in the case of a sleight-of-hand artist. In fact, it is a principal task of the performer to operate with his hands entirely independently of the activity of the rest of his body, and to execute the necessary tricks without the slightest reference to those portions of the body not needed. The fingers must form a mechanism acting with absolute independence. Only when this is the case can the performer observe with sufficient care the countenances of the audience, and guard against the dangers threatening on every hand. Thus armed, he is practically unassailable. The skilled artist never on any account fails in a trick.

The ease of execution is perhaps the only thing that depends upon the public. The uneducated person is far more difficult to deceive than the cultivated; for the former sees at every turn an avowed mistrust of his intelligence, an attempt to dupe him, against which he contends with all his strength, while the latter surrenders himself without resistance to the illusion, for he has come for the sole purpose of being deceived. One can hardly believe what artlessness is occasionally displayed by the most cultured people. I have heard a professor, in the well-known ring game, declare that he had tested all of the eight rings, when in reality he had received only two in his hand; and I myself have often ventured to count a number of cards in the reverse order from that agreed upon, without any one making objection. The ex-

* The eyes of the boy were indeed blinded. Still there always remained a little slit below for peeping through as long as wadding or sticking-plaster were not used; and that of course was not done in public performances.

planation of this lies in two primary functions of our psychic organism—association and imitation. The following chapter will discuss their relations to the art of illusion.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE ASSOCIATION PHILOSOPHY.

ASSOCIATION (from the Latin *ad*, "to," and *socius*, "an ally") originally denotes the act of becoming, or the state of being, a confederate, and is generally used in the sense of a connection of persons, things, or ideas.

The association of ideas plays an important part in psychology. Ideas which are somehow related possess the quality of involuntarily calling one another into consciousness. Our mind is full of associations, and our brain is filled with commissural fibres which may fairly be regarded as the paths of association.

Psychologists have taken much pains to formulate the laws of association, and have come to the conclusion that there are different kinds of associations, among which have to be mentioned those by contiguity, similarity, and contrast.

If two impressions have been made simultaneously, the one will recall the other. This is called the association of contiguity, and this contiguity may be one of time or one of space: it may be simultaneity or a coincidence of events in one and the same place, or both.

Further, suppose a child has seen an elephant for the first time in a menagerie, and now sees another in a Barnum street-parade, he will think of the first elephant and also of the surroundings in which he saw him. The present image of the street-parade elephant is said to be associated with and awakens the memory-image of the menagerie elephant (this is called association by similarity), and at the same time calls to mind the contiguous impressions with which it is incidentally connected. (This latter being association by contiguity.)

Now imagine a philosopher, who has devoted his life to a study of the schoolmen and their quarrels. As soon as he hears the word "nominalist," he thinks of their opponents, the "realists." These names are closely connected in his brain, and this connection is called association by "contrast."

The explanation of these facts appears simple enough. Two impressions are made at the same time, and it is natural that their traces should be as closely connected as were their original ideas. Moreover, that ideas will revive those memory-images to which they bear a strong resemblance is easily explained by the theory that every nervous shock must naturally travel on the path of least resistance.

The fact that ideas are actually associated among

each other, together with the obvious simplicity with which this fact can be explained, induced a great number of psychologists to believe that the theory of association affords a key to all the problems of the soul. The psychology of association is represented by Hobbes, Hume, Hartley, the two Mills, Herbert Spencer, Höfding, and others, and it may be said to be in full bloom to-day.

The association of ideas is a very important factor in soul-life, but it does not explain those problems which have caused the greatest difficulties to our philosophers. The association of ideas does not explain the origin of concepts, of generalisations, of abstracts; it does not explain the origin of reason; it does not explain the origin of the idea of necessary connection which we attribute to certain relations.

The association philosophy is an error, because it applies one special thing (the association of ideas) to the whole realm of psychical life, and thus makes of it a fundamental principle in philosophy. The association philosopher resolves all the more complex psychical facts into associations of single sense-impressions; he regards the idea of causation as a mere association of a frequently repeated sequence; thus making reason a mere incidental and purely subjective habit of association, and depriving it of stringent authority, objectivity, and necessity.

Let us first consider the psychological mistakes of the association philosophy. Generic images do not originate by association, but by fusion. Many images are superimposed like composite photographs and form a composite image, in which all the common features are strongly marked, while the incongruent features appear blurred. The association of ideas is quite another and, indeed, a very different process from the blending of images. The former preserves the single pictures distinct, the latter welds all particular impressions into a higher and more general unity.

He who fails to distinguish these two processes, association and fusion, and tries to conceive of a generic image as the product of association, will be perplexed in many ways, and indeed, almost all the attempts that have been made to explain association by similarity from that by contiguity, or *vice versa*, bear evidence of the sad confusion that prevails among the association philosophers. Some of them despair of reducing the various associations to unity, and either ask us to look upon it as an evidence of dualism or declare that the mystery is too deep for our comprehension.

The process of causation has, in the conception of the association philosophy, ceased to be a necessary event and has become a mere sequence, which is at best an invariable sequence. Thus the bond of union that holds the world together as one inseparable

whole is lost, and all events become isolated particulars, single happenings without any intrinsic and necessary interconnection. The universe, which to us is a systematic and consistent cosmos, is, from the standpoint of the association philosophy, comparable to a bag of innumerable peas; many events happen to follow the one upon the other, but there is no true necessity, no real causation, no intrinsic order or harmony.

The association philosophy stands upon the principle that all knowledge is derived from experience. So far, good! But the association philosophers, having inherited all the errors of sensationalism, take the idea "experience" in the limited sense of the word. They see isolated phenomena only and are not aware of the bond of union which permeates the whole realm of existence, giving rise to the uniformities which science formulates into natural laws. The possibility of formulating a law of nature appears, from their standpoint, as an insoluble mystery.

The association philosophy fails to satisfy the demands that must be made of a philosophy. It leaves the most important problems unexplained, and in addition, involves us on the ground of its assumption and hypotheses into such intricacies that we are ultimately landed either in scepticism, or agnosticism, or mysticism; and something must be wrong in a system of explanations, a philosophy, or a science, which comes to the conclusion that we cannot explain things, that they are unknowable or utterly mysterious.

The association philosophy forms a contrast to Kant's apriorism. The philosophy which we propose avoids the fallacies of Kantian apriorism on the one hand and of the association philosophy on the other hand. Our view does not end in agnosticism or mysticism, but affords a satisfactory explanation of why we attribute to the formal sciences necessity and universality. It explains how mind originates, how general ideas are formed, how knowledge (and not only mere opinion) is possible, and teaches us the usage of the proper methods of scientific inquiry.

P. C.

CURRENT TOPICS.

THE religious discord at the penitentiary still continues, and the convicts are in spiritual revolt against the chaplain. Last Sunday more than one-third of the prisoners refused to go to chapel, for the reason that the pastor had inflicted upon them unnecessary mental torture, and the way he did it was by preaching at them three sermons, one after the other, on the Prodigal Son. The prisoners complain of this as a violation of the constitution, which declares that "cruel or unusual punishments shall not be inflicted"; and they assert that preaching three sermons at them from the parable of the Prodigal is an act of unconstitutional severity. To convicts the story is uncomfortably personal, and pulpit courtesy requires that it be not mentioned in good penitentiary society. Although few of them have any future, every convict has a past, and every one of them remembers a father who would gladly welcome him home and celebrate repentance with a feast. To a man

whose life has been unlucky and whose character has been warped by accidents that look like evil spirits, the fable of the Prodigal Son contains a personal reproach, harder to bear when it comes from the pulpit than from anywhere else, because the preacher always leaves out of it the lesson of human mercy and forgiveness. He offers divine reconciliation and a spiritual fatted calf, but of human charity, nothing. Wearing on his very soul, as on his clothes, the stripes of human vengeance, the outcast felon feels that the parable is a mockery of his despair. It may do very well for the mahogany pews, where it applies to nobody in particular, but for the penitentiary it is too personal altogether. In refusing to be lectured and tantalised three consecutive Sundays as a congregation of prodigal sons for whom the "welfare of society" requires that no fatted calf shall ever be provided in this world, the convicts displayed a praiseworthy moral spirit that entitles them to sympathy. When the sanguinary Draconian code prevailed in England, a judge having sentenced a man to be hanged for "counterfeiting the coins," imposed upon him also this pious benediction, "and may you find in the next world that mercy which a due regard for a sound currency forbids you to expect in this."

* * *

I think it was William Shakespeare who said that we might find "sermons in stones"; to which I desire to offer the following amendment, "and in stone buildings, too," such, for instance, as the massive and magnificent Auditorium in Chicago. No doubt, we might find a geological sermon in every stone of that imposing edifice, but I refer now to sociological sermons, two of which have come to me from that building within ten days. Last Monday week, the Apollo Club gave at the Auditorium its first rendition of the splendid oratorio "Elijah," but it was given on "Wage-workers' night," one of the nights when "wage-workers" are admitted to the Auditorium concerts at prices within their means. The very next night, at the same place, the Apollos gave the same performance, without the variation of a note, and this was the opportunity of Snobdom to divide the people into high-caste and low-caste clans. The second performance was given on "Subscribers' night," when the fashionable people patronise the music, and this was a chance for the press to wriggle at the feet of the "higher classes"; a chance ingeniously improved by abolishing the "wage-workers" altogether from the face of the earth, or ignoring their existence, which, in spirit, amounts to the same thing. So on Wednesday morning some of the papers calmly annihilated the first concert and the wage-workers, too, by reporting that "last night the Apollo Club gave its *first* performance of "Elijah" at the Auditorium." They knew it was the *second* performance, but "Wage-workers' night," being base and plebeian, it was stricken out of our genteel chronology, as if it had never been.

* * *

Fortunately for us, an antidote to class-proscription lies in the levelling power of the ballot, as will appear in the second sermon that I spoke of, and of which the following clipping is the text and argument. An exciting campaign being just now "booming" between rival candidates for the office of mayor, the "business principles" candidate, a very rich and conspicuous member of the higher classes, held at that same Auditorium last night a mighty meeting, which is thus dramatically described by the press in a comical jargon of humility and pride, of puffery and patronage:

"The character of the audience was impressive in itself. It was an inspiring reflex of true democracy. The richly carved and curtained boxes have been occupied often by men and women whose homes are palaces. Such men and women were in these boxes last night, too, but they sat side by side with those whose lives are a constant struggle and who are strangers to the trappings of wealth. There were no reserved seats, and from box and sweeping gallery the millionaire and mechanic joined in the cry for the vindication of Chicago and the saving of the honor of its name."

Only a week ago the presence of the "mechanic" at the Auditorium was not allowed mention in the papers, but suddenly, when

his vote is needed, he is not only welcomed there, but his presence is gratefully acknowledged as an act of magnanimity and condescension. The "richly carved and curtained boxes" are hardly good enough for him, and even his wife, "strange to the trappings of wealth," sits among women whose "homes are palaces." The ballot-box may be an imitation of Pandora's, and evil spirits may have come out of it, but there is hope at the bottom of it after all. It levels up the lowly, and it levels down the proud; and liberty is never safe except where there are plenty of elections. A vote is not only the symbol, but also the expression of equality; and it is the substance, too.

* * *

Besides the good-natured caricatures in books that give so much amusement are those living caricatures of manners who walk about and do such entertaining and fantastic things. Take, for example, that reverend gentleman who is always ready to "ask the divine blessing" on any coming incident or accident, from an earthquake or a battle, down to a democratic ticket or dinner or a play. Last Saturday there was cast at a foundry in Chicago a silver statue of Miss Ada Rehan, an actress famous for her stately form and rounded symmetry. The image is eight feet high, and the silver it contains if minted into coins would make one hundred thousand dollars. It will form a part of the exhibit contributed by the State of Montana to the World's Fair, and it will symbolise with dazzling splendor the mineral riches of that state. A sword in the right hand and a pair of scales in the left make Miss Rehan classic, and she becomes idealised as "Justice." The old pocket-handkerchief by which Justice is usually blindfolded is omitted in this case, probably because the lady did not care to hide her beauty for the sake of mere mythological truth. However that may be, the statue was cast last Saturday, and when the precious metal was at the boiling point, and everything was ready to pour it into the mold, the ubiquitous reverend gentleman appeared on the scene to "ask the divine blessing," but whether on the actress, or the statue, or the State of Montana, or on the pagan goddess we shall never know, for just as he had given thanks for "the treasure placed in the bowels of the earth," and the metal was just done to a turn, the "diminutive Frenchman"—I quote from the newspaper account—the diminutive Frenchman who "had charge of the cast," fearing that the "divine blessing" might impair the work by allowing the silver to cool even for an instant "cut the prayer short," pulled the lever, and turned the hot silver into the mold. Yesterday twenty-three young gentlemen graduated at the college of dentistry, and sure enough, right at the beginning of the ceremonies appeared that very same reverend gentleman to "ask the divine blessing" on the forceps and the nippers and the other implements of torture used in the tooth-pulling trade.

* * *

On the 5th of last November sentence of reversal was passed by the American people against some laws and policies which had been enacted by the Republican party then in power, and the Democratic party was put in control of the Presidency and both houses of Congress to carry the sentence into effect as soon as possible. The heavy burden laid by those laws and policies upon the toilers and the poor, and upon all industry and business had been for five months the campaign fuel of the Democratic party, firing the popular heart and dissolving the Republican administration in the "boiling indignation" of a tax-ridden people. The key-note pitched by the Chicago platform resounded like a "bugle blast" across the continent, and the battle song of "reform" blazed on the banners of the marching clubs. As soon as the election was over we discovered that all the patriotic tumult was theatrical bugle and blaze, mere "sound and fury signifying nothing." Some harmless innocents with consistent minds thought that as the leaders of the Democratic party were suffering so much mental and spiritual distress because of the people's woes, Congress would be

convened in special session immediately after the 4th of March to "undo the heavy burdens and let the oppressed go free"; and even down to yesterday there were people actually at large who believed that an extra session would be called. They do not think so now, for this morning's news from Washington settles the question thus: "Mr. Holman of Indiana, who called at the White House to-day, is authority for the statement that there will not be an extra session of Congress unless some condition not now existing arises." So the promise of reform vanishes from this practical solid earth into the ideal sky. Only politicians who have held office, as I have, know how its honors and rewards help a man to look with resignation and even with complacency upon the hardships of the people.

* * *

Within twenty days of the election, when the democratic papers, flushed with victory, were exulting in the prospect of an extra session of Congress, I had the presumption to announce in *The Open Court* that there would not be an extra session, unless to avert national insolvency, and I gave as my authority the very genius of regal power testifying on every page of history that rulers never convoke parliaments to help the people, but always to relieve the government. It matters not by what official name the chief magistrate is known. President, Emperor, or King, he is always jealous of the legislature. The luxury of dominion, the ambition to excel in kingcraft, and the freedom from parliamentary control tempt him to be absolute as long as he can, and the temptation is not easy to be resisted. There is nothing abnormal or criminal in this; it is elemental in our natures, consistent with human pride, and it was always so. Nearly three hundred years ago Ben Jonson, in one of his plays, moralised thus: "In sovereignty it is a most happy thing not to be compelled; but so it is the most miserable thing not to be counselled." That proposition is philosophically true, and as applicable to presidential sovereignty as to any other. During the first nine months of his reign the President feels that "it is a most happy thing not to be compelled" by Congress; and he is not likely to be miserable for want of counsel, for his cabinet advisers will give him plenty of that, and of the most flattering and agreeable kind. The pronouncement is that "there will be no extra session of Congress, unless some condition not now existing arises"; and as the present condition is the very same condition that prevailed last year, what was all the election turmoil for? We have now the same conditions that the winning party so pathetically deplored last year, and which their victory was to cure. Reform is always in order; and evil cannot cease too soon.

M. M. TRUMBULL.

LONGING FOR FREEDOM.

BY MARY MORGAN (GOWAN LEA).

Waft me on thy wings, O wind,
Where the white clouds lie
Sleeping, or, with quiet grace,
Wandering o'er the sky!

Sing celestial lullabies,
To my soul oppressed,—
Ah! as freely as the clouds
Let me roam or rest!

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ABSOLUTE.

To the Editor of *The Open Court*:

Your article in *The Open Court*, No. 290, entitled "The Absolute," commands my assent, except in three things—Truth, Time, and Space. These, to my mind, are infinite, eternal, independent, unrelated, unconditioned, absolute entities. They are not attributes, but absolutes.

Truth is what is, as it is; and if there were nothing, the truth would be that there was nothing, as it now is that there is a creation.

Time is a moving now, and eternity is the now continued forever. If there were nothing, the eternal now would exist the same as it does in the creation.

Space is what cannot be excluded; and whether there be nothing, or a creation, space will still be there.

In short, whether there be a creation or not, or a Creator or not, truth, time, and space were, are, and must be.

For my own part, in my own mind, I cannot disconceive these concepts as verities—self-existent, uncreated, unrelated, unconditioned, infinite, eternal entities, which cannot be annihilated nor changed; and without which nothing could be. There could not be a creation without truth being there; nor without time being there; nor without space being there—for these are forever everywhere, in infinity and eternity; and they are indispensably essential to the existence of the minutest molecule. With due respect, I am,

Yours truly,

HORACE P. BIDDLE.

[Time is eternal, Space is infinite, Truth is irrefragable. If we understand "absolute" to mean the eternal, the infinite, and that which cannot be twisted or altered, which is rigidly determinable and irrefragable, time, space, and truth are to be called absolute. It is true that their existence is "indispensably essential to the existence of the minutest molecule"; but are they for that reason "self-existent, unrelated, or unconditioned"? Time is the measure of motion, Space is the possibility of motion. What sense would there be in the ideas time and space if there were no motions? Try to think of absolute time or absolute space. Suppose there were no object in the world and not even points in motion. The truth is that we cannot think time and space without motion. The same holds good of truth. Truth is the correct representation of facts. The idea of truth would have no application if nothing existed. Yet this lack of absoluteness does not make time less eternal, nor space less infinite, nor truth less holy. P. C.]

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