



THE CONSTITUTION IN THE MELTING POT. The three witches—"Double, Double, Toil and trouble."

Censored Sermons.

Few of the village priests are allowed the luxury of making and preaching their own sermons. It is regarded as an unsafe procedure. On one of my journeys I made the acquaintance of an old priest who had been in his charge over twenty-five years and never had a month's holiday. I asked him if he ever preached to his people. "Sometimes," he replied. "Do you find any difficulty in composing sermons?" I inquired. "Occasionally I have written sermons, and was naturally pleased with them, but I never preached them." "Why not?" "Ah," he replied, "they were censored. When I preach, the sermon is supplied to me by those learned men in authority whose duty it is to compose them." "That saves you a great deal of trouble," I added. "Yes," he replied, "and keeps the church pure and free from heresy." Poor man! he little thought how vile heresy is both in Russia and Siberia. He seemed perfectly happy, however, in his ignorance of the fact.

As I passed through the land and beheld their devotions I felt as the Apostle Paul must have felt when he visited Athens. Outwardly the people are far too religious. Everywhere the most sacred things force themselves on the public notice. By this means, in time, they lose their influence and become degraded. Representations of the Saviour on the cross, or icons, are to be seen on the railway stations, in trains, in restaurants, offices, workshops, berths of ships, and places of amusement of the most questionable character. Men maddened with vodka will do all manner of evil things, but one thing they will not do, unless they are helplessly drunk—that is, pass a shrine or a church without taking off their caps and crossing themselves. They go through these ceremonies by force of habit long after they have lost all respect for them. Still, they give the church some support. It may be expedient to do so, for the church in Siberia is not only imposing, but it is almost omnipotent. In the midst of the most miserable wooden houses the church throws up its bulb-shaped domes, over which blaze their gilded crosses. The rich—where there are such people—lavish their wealth most freely upon it, and the poor contribute often beyond their means for the maintenance of that building which rears itself like a guardian angel, keeping watch over their most wretched homes. However far they may go astray, they are still bound to the church by superstitious fears. The first thing Siberian peasants do when they wake in the morning is to stand before a crucifix or icon and cross themselves. That act is often the beginning and end of religion for a very large majority of them. Of course, there are exceptions among the true children of the church. Generally speaking, religion has no power to control their lives or to influence their conduct. Duplicity, peccation and immorality abound, religion acting only as a very mild deterrent.

Frederic C. Howe, writing in Scribner's Magazine, declares that no cities in the modern world compare with those which have arisen in Germany within twenty years, for largeness of vision and far-sighted outlook. Germany is building her cities as Bismarck perfected the army. They are thinking of to-morrow. The expenditures in cities like Frankfurt, Dusseldorf, Munich, and Cologne, will be astonishing to Americans. They have lavished money on the beauty of civic centres, docks, parks, and the result has been not a wasteful expenditure but a tremendous increase in social and industrial prosperity. The surest marksmen in the world are those who try to kill time.

Apples Cure Intemperance.

The forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden, which brought sin into the world, is now looked on as the means of driving sin out. No less an august body than the Iowa State Horticultural Society is standing sponsor for the movement to remove the stigma from the apple. When Eve, sorely tempted, partook of the luscious fruit, she all unwittingly cast a blight on the apple which centuries of cultivation have been unable to remove. It has remained for an apple-loving country doctor to discover that not only can the world be fed until it has secured the necessary calories of energy, but that the craving for liquor—conceded to be the greatest cause of misery and crime—can be eradicated from the human body by the apple. As a rule, the habitual user of alcoholic stimulants is rarely a lover or consumer of apples. There seems to be a peculiar combination in apples, in their acid, or peculiar chemical combinations, that allays the irritation, or so-called appetite, produced by liquor. The keen appetite for tobacco is also limited by the use of apples. If any lover of whiskey, when he thinks he must have a drink, will eat an apple, he will find that his appetite for the drink has been materially lessened, if not entirely abated for the time.

The Irreverence of Shows.

The production of religious plays has grown apace, with a result not altogether beneficial to the orthodox religion. Lately, at St. John, N.B., a play, "The Holy City," caused a furore and an injunction was threatened to prevent its performance. In Montreal a few weeks ago one of the "picture shows" advertised in flaring letters the "Passion of J. Christ." Playing fast and loose with the religious sentiment of individuals is a gross misuse of the liberty of the subject. Certainly nothing offensive or sacrilegious occurred at either performance, but it can hardly appeal to the deep thinker as an entertainment to witness a mimified production of a sacred tragedy. "The Sign of the Cross," "Ben Hur," and "The Sorrows of Satan" are plays sufficiently capable of stirring the souls and inspiring to higher morals, without bringing into the theatrical atmosphere such a sacred history as "The Story of a Life's Tragedy."

A Philanthropist Who Works.

Here's a man trying to help solve the humanity problem by turning over the profits of his business to charity organizations. Allen Dale, the original cafeteria man in Seattle, Wash., isn't endowing colleges nor founding libraries, neither is he awarding medals. He personally gets down on "commission row," buys the best things, hires an expert chef to cook 'em, puts the prices down to "help yourself prices," and turns the profits over to the Anti-Tuberculosis League. In December the profits were over \$2,500. But that's not all. This man says, "I've got all the money I want. I'll donate my restaurant, my time and experience in running it, if the people will support the project and turn over the profits for public benefit."

The Priests in Town and Country.

Worship in Siberia is conducted regularly with the utmost reverence and decorum. Even the great Roman Catholic Church cannot surpass it in the pomp and splendor of its ritual. The Church is a branch of the Russian or Greek communion, and is subject to the same government and under the jurisdiction of the same general synod. Beautiful ecclesiastical edifices are to be found there—for instance, the cathedrals of Omsk, Tomsk and Irkutsk.

Great Fortune Dissipated.

The collapse of the plans of the late Chas. T. Yerkes for a great benevolence is a surprise and disappointment to the people. After his start as a young man in business in Philadelphia he gained possession of the Chicago street railway system, and selling out his interest there in 1900, he went to London, where he gathered up old subway and built new ones. He amassed a fortune estimated at fifteen millions, dollars, and in his will laid ambitious plans for benevolences, including a great hospital in the Bronx, New York City, to cost \$8,000,000, and a fine art gallery to cost \$5,000,000. The Yerkes art gallery building on Fifth Avenue was sold in foreclosure proceedings a year ago, and now, five years after his death, comes an order of the court to auction off all the art collections. Quarrels, receiverships, foreclosures and persistent claims have wasted the fortune, so that there will not be a penny's worth left for the poor or the suffering, much less to the city he proposed to bless. Though a man of generous impulses, there was no love in his palatial residence—his pieces of art were as cold as the marble of a Grecian statue—and he had not quite ballast enough to give reality to his dreams of lasting good to his fellow-men. There was one permanent benefaction, however, of his, the Yerkes Observatory telescope at Lake Geneva, Wis., costing \$400,000. The mistake he made was in not building great institutions and bestowing more gifts while he had strength and opportunity. The wasting of the fortune is but another bursting of an earthly bubble, in planning to have done after death that which was a privilege and duty to do during the life.

The Bird Sentinel an Alarmist.

The blue jay is a terror to other birds, and does not receive any credit for the good he does. One of the worst things charged up against him is that he robs other birds' nests and eats the eggs. He is a loud-mouthed, arrogant bird that wants everybody in the woods to know exactly where he is. And right there is where he does something for the other birds and for animals. When the jay discovers a snake or a hawk or a crow, or anything that might do harm to the other things that live in the woods, he screams and carries on at a great rate. The other birds have learned, when they hear the jay fussing, that they had better get out of the way. A man may be sneaking through the woods softly, to get within range of a squirrel, when a jay discovers him. Then the bird begins squalling at the top of his voice, and the squirrel runs and hides. It is possible that is why nature gave the jay a disposition to quarrel and to make a to-do over everything and everybody. He is a beauty in coloring, and as he stays with us all the winter, he adds cheerfulness to the landscape when everything looks dead and dreary.

Frankish Will, Musical Funeral.

The Vicomtesse de Vauguet, who died recently at the age of seventy-seven, left about \$10,000 to the town of Riom, in France, on curious conditions, which were nearly all complied with. She insisted on an entirely "white" funeral, with white trappings, white flowers and white horses. No white horses were available, but in other respects her wishes were obeyed. The Vicomtesse seems to have been particularly musical, for she bequeathed \$200 to the local band on condition it played Chopin's "Funeral March" continually during the obsequies, from the house to the church, and from the church to the graveyard, sixteen miles. The result was that the band played the march fifty-seven times, and then retired almost inappreciated to a village inn. There a portion of the \$200 was consumed in refreshments.

GOSSIP OF THE PARISH.

Things That Provoke Amusement Among the Readers.

It is still the custom in certain parts of New England, after a marriage ceremony, for the bridegroom to address the company. On one such occasion, when a Vermont widower had been married to his second choice, he thus formulated his observations: "Friends and neighbors, you all know that our good friend here, who has done me the honor to share my joys and sorrows, is something of a stranger to our town. Being a mere man, I feel I need your help to make her feet at home amongst us; so I'm going to depend upon you women folks to make her feel perfectly at home here. I know you will do this, just as my first wife would do if she were here to-day. I miss her considerably at times, but more than usual on an occasion like this."

When the late Bishop Hare was presiding over a Methodist Episcopal church in New York, a reception was given in his honor, to which a brother of his, a lawyer, who closely resembled the bishop, was invited. A member of the conference who had never met the bishop's brother, shaking him warmly by the hand, said: Good evening, Bishop. I greatly enjoyed the sermon you gave us to-day. It is just what this church needs. "You are mistaken in the person," said the brother, smiling, as he pointed to the bishop on the opposite side of the room, "that is the man who preaches. I practice."

An old Norfolk (England) lady, famous for her strain of turkeys, sold one to a neighbor named Brown. But it proved tough at the Christmas dinner, and as Brown had paid a stiff price for the bird he bled to the vendor. "What do you mean by imposing such a turkey upon me—one of your neighbors?" he inquired.

"Why, was there anything wrong about it?" "Wrong, madam? It wasn't good at all." "Well, it ought to have been, then," rejoined the dame, "for it won the first prize at the Norwich Poultry Show for eleven years in succession!"

The late Bishop Gallier, was once asked to baptize a negro baby boy. "Name this child," he said, addressing Mrs. Jackson, the mother. "Hallud."

"That's a strange name, Mrs. Jackson," remarked the bishop, hesitatingly. "Scripture name," rejoined the happy mother, with a confident grin.

"I never saw it in the Bible." "Why, bishop, how kin yuh stan' up dar kiddin' a ole ignorant niggab lak I is? Yuh says date name whenever yuh say de Lawd's Prayer—"Hallud be Thy name?"

Peddler (selling preparation for removing stains from clothing)—I have got here—Servant (who responds to the ring)—Excuse me, please, but we are in great trouble here to-day. The gentleman of the house has been blown up in an explosion.

Peddler—Ha! Hurt much? Servant—Blown to atoms. Only a grease spot left of him.

Peddler—Ah! Only a grease spot, you say? Well, here's a bottle of my champion eradicator, which will remove that grease spot in two minutes.

"Waiting in a draughty railway station in East Fife one bitter day," writes a correspondent, "I said to the porter who was a Liberal, 'I'm sure you are proud of your member, the Prime Minister!' 'Yes,' he replied heartily; 'we are that.' Then, with self-complacency, he added, 'Ay, we've done well by Maister Asquith; he would never have been heard tell o' only for us!'"

They were discussing astronomy. "Adams' discovery," said the Mere Man, "was that the planet Uranus was being pulled by some unknown object. So he worked out a calculation which showed just where a new planet must be. Then they looked through a telescope and discovered Neptune." She surprised: "But surely, Adam didn't have a telescope!"

The schoolmaster was having a bad time with the worst boy in the class. "What is your father?" he asked. "Dead, sir," was the lad's reply. "No, I mean, what was he?" "Buried." "Well, what was he before that?" "Alive, sir." And the schoolmaster gave up the task.

"I wonder if men have always complained about the food their wives prepared for them," said one woman.

"I guess so," replied the other. "Adam started it."

"The English people say we don't use good English. Ain't them English a funny lot?" "Ain't they?"

Gospel of Health Preached.

Sunday, April 24th, is to be observed as a national tuberculosis Sunday in the United States. Every minister of every denomination in the country has been asked to preach on the "Gospel of Health." The National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis has sent literature dealing with the war on consumption to all churches on distribution. Large inter-denominational bodies, such as the Y.M.C.A., Kings' Daughters, etc., will also hold special health services.

Engineers are engaged in the Sacramento Valley on the largest of all the schemes ever planned by the United States government. Its ultimate object is to control the flow from a watershed of over 4,000 square miles and to improve the two great rivers of California. Over 600,000 acres of rich land, at present dry and sunbaked during eight months of the year, will be brought under irrigation, and large areas of bottom land, subject to annual overflow and great destruction by floods will be reclaimed.

The great grain fields of the Sandborn ranch in Shasta country, California, are protected at night as well as day from the vast flocks of wild geese and other fowl that do immense damage to crops. Skyrockets and Roman candles are bought in quantities, and men are stationed at various points. Whenever a flock is heard "honking" in the distance, several skyrockets or a shower of colored balls are sent upward, and the birds give the ranch a wide berth.

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