

Worshipping from afar, it struck Baas that a minute vest-pocket compendium of the subject might prove of utility to those who prefer to read while they run. In humble guise, therefore, and not as an original genius, so much as a fervent admirer of the vast accomplishments of his predecessors, Baas put forth, in due time, his trifling synopsis or epitome of the subject, which, in the abridged translation, has been so compressed as to only fill twelve hundred pages of close diamond type in a little imperial octave volume. This chaotic work, though in no sense of the word a history, is crammed with the material out of which histories are made, and is admittedly the most satisfactory literary effort of the sort at present available; and like all labors of love should, perhaps, pass unscathed by criticism.

Analogies are often helpful to a bewildered person, and I accordingly consulted with my respected Semitic friend, Mr. Isaac B——, who follows the rag and bone business, for an apt analogy. Isaac very courteously enlightened me upon many points which bear upon the scope and methods of the rag and bone business.

It would seem in the first place, from what Isaac says, that everything that is palpable to the senses has some value, sometimes not very much value, but always, if properly exploited, capable of definite profit. A broken teacup, a dead alligator or a pile of ashes—all are sacred. But Isaac has the Midas touch by which he transmutes all things whatsoever into—much-soiled bank notes. All cannot do this. I cannot do it. The reader cannot do it. But Isaac and Sprengel held the mystic secret.

That the pen is mightier than the sword is an assertion frequently made by those who have shown moderate facility in the use of the former. But Sprengel's armamentarium was a shovel. He worked, as has been shown, with a will. And into this history of his, the honest, vigorous fellow conscientiously shovelled every possible object from the lanes and alleys of literature that had, to his somewhat perverted olfactory sense, the remotest smell of medicine. Biographical old clothes, the dried offal of obsolete disputes, the ghosts of ten thousand fools, the mildew of occult superstitions, the cadaver of forgotten greatness, the broken umbrella that once shaded the head of pomposity, the pots and pans of academic pretentiousness the rags and tatters of all time. In the dismantled mausoleum of Herodotus a stolid scavenger with his donkey cart has stored the arkana miscellanea of his devious pilgrimages.

And to repeat the words of Isaac, whom I admire, "The rag and bone business is the independentest and also the happiest occupation which one can follow among men." No ideals are necessary—it is simply a question of keeping occupied all the time. "Sprengel developed a perfectly marvellous activity."

Thomas A. Wise was another true believer. Dr. Wise believed in the ancientness and the authenticity of the medical writings of the Ayur-Veda as preserved in fragments scattered through the