"MOSTLY FOOLS."

THE AMAZING AND FITIABLE STUPIDITY OF THE MASS OF MANKIND.

"A Clown with a Broken Heart"—An Address Delivered by Hugh O. Pentecost at New York, March 22, 1891

(From the Twe..eth Century.)

THE world is indebted to Oscar Wilde for the expression which forms the title to this address. It is to be found in the article entitled "The Soul of Man Under Socialism," wh ch appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* for February of this year. In that article, one of the best ever written on the social question, Mr. Wilde speaks of the people, the populace, the majority, as a clown with a broken heart.

It is possible that every one would not would not see the extraordinary felicity of this metaphor. Can you imagine a more pitiable object than a clown with a broken heart? Such is the multitude—a thing to laugh at and to weep over. What is more absurd, ridiculous, and amusing, and at the same time more pitiable and pathetic, than the public? A composite creature, so to speak, without brains, without judgment or wisdom, as cruel as a wild beast, and, at the same time excessively emotional, quite maudlin indeed, in its sentiments: a creature, like a drunken woman, which ne cannot respect, but at whom we cannot look without pity.

If one is disposed to be cynical, one laughs at the public, finding it a never ending source of amusement, finding it more mirth-provoking than the cleverest farce comedy. But if one is grave and sympathetic, one weeps over the multitude, finding any contemplation of it

PAINFUL BEYOND EXPRESSION.

Once every year the clown amuses itself by popping fire crackers, firing cannons, exploding fire-works, listening to speeches and brass bands, and marching—it dearly loves to march—and, of course, getting drunk What is all this racket and bang about? Why, there was a time when the people in this country were ruled by a set of ambitious and grasping men in England, and there came a time when they threw off that yoke and began to be ruled by a set of ambitious and grasping men in this country; there was a time when the king and his underlings took their money away from them, and there came a time when the President and his subordinates took it; and the clown thought it was such a fine thing to be ruled by and pay money to a new set of men, that it has been shot... roman candles and sending up sky rockets ever since. It never once occurs to the multitude that they are no better off now than they were before; or, rather, than they would be if there had been no revolution. When this occurs to the multitude, it will

people from knowing the truth, his one desire to be elected, his one pitiful cry: "Vote for me! Vote for me!"

And there is the audience, with jaws dropped and eyes staring, giggling at the speaker's campaign jokes, responsive to his appeals to the ignorance and prejudices, fitting subjects on whom he may work, for they are as unwilling to hear the truth as he is eager to be not, and as easy to be swayed by their passions as he to appeal to them.

What does the candidate want? The reign of justice? the good of the people? No. He wants to get into office, that his greed or ambition may be satisfied. What do his hearers want? Freedom, wealth, a better world to live in? No. If they wanted these they would stay away from political meetings and stop voting. All they want is to beat the other party. Welcome slavery to our superstitions if we can only

BEAT THE OTHER PARTY!

But it makes no difference which party wins, except to those who get into the offices The priest has his flesh pot, the millionaire his gold, and the workman his rags which ever party wins.

Was not he a genius who said the people are like a clown with a broken heart?

Look at what idols the people worship. Think of Queen Victoria. Do you know of anything wise she ever said or good she ever did? A heavy, coarse-featured, miserly woman, by no means the best of her sex in England, but to millions of people she is more than human. Men and women who are her superiors in nearly every thing would be proud as peacocks if she would look at them, and the common people would feel honored to the skies if she would wipe her feet on them. Not only in England, mark you, but in this country. If she were to come here the country would go mad with joy, the people to whom she would speak would grow taller, the porters who would carry her trunks to her room would be in the museums, with crowds of people to look at them, and the police would club everybody out of her way.

The other day John Burns, the trades-union leader of London, happened to remark in the city council chamber that it would be a good thing if the Prince of Wales had something to do to keep him out of mischief, and his fellow-members pounced on him as if he had committed a crime. The Prince of Wales is one of the people's idols. The Prince of Wales!

THINK OF THE PRIESTS.

Are they better or wiser than many others? And yet observe how the people worship them. They put them in the best house in the parish, they fatten them, they exempt them from soldier and jury duty, they call them reverend and holy fathers.

The Protestant preachers are not quite so fortunate The people, to some extent, have found them out. They are now more the paid agents of the rich than the idols of the poor, but even to them some rags of idolatry still cling.

Think of the policeman. Are they

want." "That is true, but I am glad of that, for if I had more I might forget God. By and by I shall be in a world where I shall have all I want." "When you are dead?" "I shall never die; I shall live forever in heaven." "Then it does not make much difference to you how you live in this world?" "No, sir." "But this man who employs you—he is very poor." "Oh, no. God has blessed him with the gift of making money." "Did it ever occur to you that you make the goods and he makes the money, and that it is a little queer that a man who makes the goods doesn't make the money?" "No, sir. I never thought of that, but it must be all right, for God is good; and besides I have blessings that he knows nothing of. He has only two children, while I have five. He lives in a mansion and I live in a tenement house, and you know what is said about love in a cottage." And then I go away and laugh and weep at his folly, and I know that if I should tell him the truth he would call me an Infidel, and regard me as

AN EMISSARY OF THE DEVIL.

What can we expect of people who, when they hear lies believe them to their own hurt, and when they hear the truth reject it as poison. Is it any wonder that when the people will have lies stump speakers and editors and preachers give them lies? Every politician knows that if he should tell the truth he could not get through his first speech, so say nothing of being elected to the smallest office and not to speak of the shock to his own system. Every clergyman knows that if he should tell the truth he would lose his living and position in a fortnight, to say nothing of experiencing strange and startling sensations. Every editor knows that if he should tell the truth he would ruin the business of his paper, not to speak of making himself conspicuous as a great living curiosity.

The only ray of light in all this gloom is that slowly and surely the public grows wise and sane. It is always wrong on living questions, but one by one questions get themselves settled by the public ceasing to be a clown and getting a little healing in its heart Nearer and nearer comes the day when the present popular idols will be smashed, when God will have no houses and the people will have better ones, when the State will give place to society without rulers and without slaves, when guns shall be beaten into table-knives and swords into paper-cutters, and when policemen's clubs shall be whittled into jackstraws.

One of the few deep joys of the present life is to dream of and work for that good day.

A PROPHETIC SKETCH.

In the "Literary Papers of William Austin," recently published, it appears that this sharpsighted American visited England in 1803 and recorded his impressions. His patriotism made a picture a contrast with

be

NO LONGER A CLOWN.

All this parading, flag-flying, and gun-shooting is at once amusing and pathetic to an enlightened mind, but if one should interrupt the clown while he is in one of these fits of imbecility, and attempt to explain the folly and the pity of it all, he would be promptly mobbed.

The multitude in this country have a saying that Government is established by the consent of the governed: that our Government is of the people, by the people, and for the people. These sayings are admirably adapted to the purposes of the politicians, the professional rulers, for they sound so fair, and the rulers know that the public will be long in grasping the simple truth that no one ever yet gave his consent to be governed, and that a government of the people, by the people, and for the people is impossible. People consent to the government of others, and submit to their own government because they cannot help themselves, but they never consent to be governed. What you call the government of the people, by the people, and for the people, is really the government of nearly eleven twelfths of the people by the politicians who beg, buy, or steal the votes of a few more than one-twelfth of the people. If there are sixty million people in this country, twelve million are voters, and the politicians who can control the votes of six million and one voters rule the country. But all this is so true and so easy to understand that the rulers know it will take the clown a long time to discover it and comprehend what it means. They know that the multitude easily believe what is not true and passionately defend that they cannot understand. What is the result? Why this:

At stated periods the politicians go forth and harangue the people. They appeal to their prejudices, their passions, and

THEIR PARTY SPIRIT.

They know that if they can arouse these, the pitiable people will vote the shoes off their children's feet. They hire brass bands, and burn fireworks, and induce the people to dress themselves up in uniforms, and carry torches, flags and banners, and march—what would the politicians do if they could not get the people to march?—they flatter their vanity, they please them with rattles, they stupify them with whiskey, they buy their votes, they keep them worked up to a tremendous pitch of excitement until the election is over, and then they drop them hard.

And this is what the people like

Can anything be more laughable and more pathetic than a political mass meeting? There on the platform is the poor, pitiable office seeker, his self-respect all pawned away in exchange for a nomination, small ambition, and the hope of spoils fermenting in his little brain, and he sawing the air with his arms, filing it with his voice, and moistening it with his perspiration. His one aim is to keep the

purer, gentler and kinder than some others? And yet observe how the people love them. They get all the nice things they want to eat and drink without having to pay for them. Their word goes farther in a court than any one's else. If one of them is killed the crime is regarded as more heinous than if committed on a common mortal.

Why were four workingmen hanged in Chicago under the forms of law and eleven Italians slaughtered in a pen in New Orleans without the forms of law? Because in each case they were charged with killing policemen. If the persons whom they were charged with killing had been useful working people, there would have been no popular uprising against the accused But when an idol is shattered the populace becomes furious.

And since I have referred to these two cases, allow me to inquire where you can find two sadder instances of popular action? In the Chicago affair the men were hanged according to the forms of law, but they were exactly as much the victims of the mob as those who were slaughtered in New Orleans. In the one instance the court did the will of the mob, in the other the mob did its own work because the court would not.

What is to be expected of people who will not and apparently cannot see things as they are?

HERE IS A SOLDIER

marching off to war. I stop him. "Where are you going, my good man, with that gun and bayonet?" "To a war." "Has anybody injured you, that you should wish to kill him?" "No; I am going to fight for my country." "Is somebody going to carry off your country?" "No, but somebody is trying to conquer it." "Well, what then? Will it make any difference to you who plucks you?" "You do not understand, I am a patriot." Then he beats his breast. Then I say: "Tell me, friend, what is this thing you call a country? Is it a city, or the people, or the houses? How long, how broad, how high, how dense is it? Is it not, after all, only an idea which the priest and the politician have put into your head, to get you to kill somebody?" But at that moment a drum beats and a flag waves, and seeing the flag of his country, which some woman sewed on for a whole day for fifty cents, and kissed it with her hungry lips as she sewed, my soldier falls into the fatal error of thinking that I both laugh and weep at his folly, and would not understand if he did know.

Here is a man

WHO WORKS IN A SHOP.

He has a wife and five children. He gets ten dollars a week. "Are you content?" I ask him. "Content and thankful," he says. "But you are poor." "It is God's will." "Would you not be better off if you had no children?" "Oh, don't say that, sir. If God sends the children I am sure I should be thankful." "But you have to do without many things you

the conditions in his own country. Let his readers after the lapse of 87 years say whether the condition in America has not practically changed this contrast into a prophecy of the fate of competition. He writes:

Commerce has the head of a serpent, the arms of a tyrant and the feet of a slave. It soon beggars a part of society and flourishes in their ruin, while this miserable portion is reduced to the necessity of administering to their own depression; for the more wealthy and powerful a few individuals become, the more weak and miserable are their neighbors. The English merchant, like the spider, literally spins his web from the bowels of his fellow-subjects. England is the first or among the first, manufacturing countries of Europe; consequently among the most miserable. Every nation is miserable in proportion to her manufactories. Commerce operates indirectly, but manufactories directly, against equality. There are the stone of Sisyphus and the wheel of Ixion The labor of thousands goes to enrich an individual. The daily bread of the workmen is precarious; if those employments to which they are educated fail, they are reduced to the condition of your common sort of gentlemen who have dissipated their property—they are fit for nothing. A manufactory cannot flourish unless the laborers sacrifice themselves to their employers; for the employers are as much interested to retain the laborers in indigence as are the landlords to impoverish their tenants. Nor is this all; the bodies of the workmen are not less distorted than are their souls contracted. Their children are a lampoon upon God's image and carry through life the distortions of their parents

MR. H. MATTHEWS recently reminded the British House of Commons that "gambling was not confined to card-playing and horse-racing. Corners in iron and salt, and transactions on the Stock Exchange were essentially of the same character, and inflicted equal misery. For a Conservative Home Secretary of Mr. Matthews' type that is not so bad.

"[illegible] been went for a drive through some [illegible] principal thoroughfares of the West [illegible] yesterday morning.—*Society Paper.*" [illegible] would be interesting to know whether [illegible] will extend the parade to some of the [illegible] highfares to the East End, where she [illegible] the misery in which a [illegible] miserable portion of her "subjects" exist.

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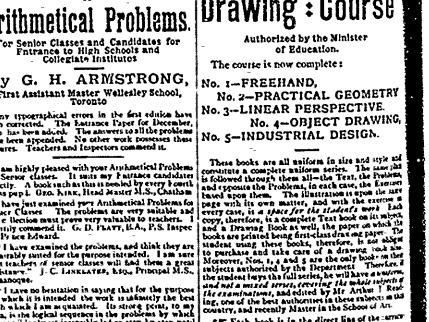

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