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AN HOUR WITH THE EDITOR

SPIRITUAL FORCES.

Are there such things as spiritual forces? The reference is not to beings with or without wings, who float unseen around us; nor to the disembodied spirits of people, who have passed out of this life; but to forces playing a part in the invisible world similar to that played by the force of gravity, chemical affinity and the like in the visible world. If we take the opinion of mankind as a guide, there are such forces, for we cannot find a period, however remote in history, when the majority of men did not believe in their existence. They may have conceived of them under grotesque forms; they may have personified them; they may have utterly failed to understand their nature; but the records of the human race testify to a belief in them. It is no very great matter of surprise that they have been misunderstood. Apples have dropped from trees ever since Mother Eve made her fatal mistake, but it remained for Isaac Newton, as far as we know, to deduce from such an occurrence the theory of gravity. We do not know that by-gone philosophers did not work out the theory; but we do know that Greece and Rome, with all their achievements, did not do so. For twenty-five centuries, at least, the world, as we know it from our books, had not found out this great law. Hence the fact that laws, as subtle as those of the spiritual world must be, have not yet been reduced to formulae is not at all to be wondered at.

It is also true that the data from which we may infer such laws are imperfect. One of the first things with which one is confronted if he speaks of spiritual phenomena—again we remind readers that we do not mean spiritualistic phenomena, is that it is impossible to tell the true from the untrue. This must be conceded; but then it must also be conceded that it is not so very long ago that our ancestors learned how to distinguish between such simple things as the ores of different metals, and the vast majority of people do not know how to do it now. The domain of the spiritual is vastly more elusive than that of the material, yet every Tom, Dick and Harry claims to be a competent judge of the actualities and laws of the former, while they would have to go to a professional man to ascertain the simplest facts concerning the latter.

In order that the laws of anything may be properly investigated and determined, it is necessary to have a sufficient number of facts to show that a certain line of action may be relied upon as certain under similar conditions. That is why philosophers have agreed that the *law of gravity* exists. If fifty thousand *stones* were dropped from a height, every one of them would go towards the centre of the earth, unless something intervened to divert them from their course. Hence we infer that this is a law of nature. When this inferred law is applied to the phenomena of the visible universe, it is found to explain very many things otherwise inexplicable, and no instances have yet been found for which it does not afford a solution. Hence the law is assumed to be proved. If we could get fifty thousand, or five thousand men to approach the doing of some act under identical conditions and they would all do the same thing, we would be safe in assuming that they were all governed by a law, and it would be possible to determine its course of action in any set of circumstances. Proof of this nature is necessarily impossible. The influences affecting human action are too obscure to allow us to say of any single act, much less of thousands, that it is the result of certain influences and no others. At the same time the experience of mankind shows that spiritual forces exist. For nineteen hundred years the Christian Church has taught that the nature of men may be regenerated. The instances that can be cited in proof of the doctrine are innumerable. Only a very foolish person will deny their genuineness. Doubtless there are many instances of self-deception; doubtless many where deceit is deliberately practised; but after eliminating all these, there remains a residue of such vast numbers, and of such potent influence in the world, that to profess to believe, as some do, that it is all a cunningly devised fable is to put a strain on the intellect which it will at once throw off. The men who cast doubt upon the reality of the work of spiritual forces are generally of limited intellectual powers, although they are frequently superficially brilliant. Robert Ingersoll was one of them. He was perhaps the most picturesque phrase-maker of the Nineteenth Century. He could state a proposition so well that he seemed to prove it. For example: "The belief in immortality will last as long as Love kisses the lips of Death." The sentence seems like a convincing argument, but it is really only a beautifully expressed idea. Ingersoll said in one of his speeches that by the year 1890 the building of churches in America would cease. In his home life he was the personification of all that is delightful; he numbered among his friends the hundreds of people who lamented his attitude towards the Christian religion. He has been dead for several years; how many nearly every one has forgotten, and of his writings probably not a copy is sold in a twelvemonth. All through the centuries of the Christian Era men have arisen, who threatened by the force of their logic to overthrow the whole fabric built upon the life and death of Jesus. It would puzzle most Colonist readers to name six of them, and of the products of their pens no one thinks it worth while to buy a copy. Christianity never was able to answer these attacks by logic, for the reason that its assailants would not admit the truth of its premises. How, then, has it come about that Christianity is a greater power in the world than ever? It has, as we have said, not been through the force of logic; it has not been because it paid. Search as you will for the reason, you will find none that will meet the case except by assuming the existence of spiritual forces, or of one spiritual force manifesting itself in different ways, just as scientific men suggest that there is really only one force in nature, and that light, heat, electricity, gravity and so on are only different manifestations of it.

Most readers are familiar with the story of the discovery of the planet Neptune. Certain movements of the planet Uranus could only be explained on the supposition that another planet revolved round the sun beyond the orbit of Uranus. Its position was calculated, and two astronomers, searching the heavens for it, found it almost simultaneously. With this instance before us of how the invisible may be inferred from the visible, it is quite in harmony with the spirit of scientific investigation to say that the marvelous way in which Christianity has been preserved in spite of such tremendous opposition from without and corruption within, in short not because of but in opposition to the most powerful human influences, proves that there must be somewhere a force of which it is the appreciable exponent. Those who have never felt the operation of this force sufficiently to be able to testify to its existence are incompetent witnesses. Why should the rules of evidence be relaxed in this matter and in no other field of human experience?

MODERN CAVE DWELLERS.

John Thomas Smith lives in a cunningly devised cave, about a hundred feet from the ground. Above it, below it and on either side of it are similar caves, and when he looks out of the window he sees long lines of other caves on the opposite side of the canyon upon which his home is situated. After he has eaten his breakfast, he gets in a sort of basket and is lowered by a rope to the level of the floor of the canyon. He scurries across this floor until he reaches a place by which he descends into the bowels of the earth, and when he gets there he enters a contrivance by which he is carried through several miles of an evil-smelling hole, out of which he emerges into another canyon. He darts into a hole in the side of this, enters another basket-like affair and is jerked up by a rope until he reaches another cave, into which he goes and slaves away at something or other until he knows that the sun has reached the meridian. Then he runs for the basket and is dropped to the bottom of the canyon again. He darts into a place where chunks of indigestible pastry, more or less smeared with fruit, and red hot coffee are served. With an adroitness, born of years of practice, he swallows some of this stuff, rushes back to the basket, and is jerked to his cave again. When nightfall comes, he is dropped to the floor of the canyon, descends into the evil-smelling hole in the ground, is carried back to the neighborhood of the cave where he sleeps, is whisked up to it in a basket, eats his dinner and thanks God that he lives in New York.

This is not a fancy picture; it is a simple statement of life in a great American city, as it will be unearthed one of these days from the ruins for the amazement of a wiser generation than our own. The odd part of the thing is that these unhappy people pity us, who have all God's universe to live in, who look out upon the clear or cloudy sky, as the case may be, when we awake, who feel the rush of the wind as it comes from the ocean, bringing health and vigor with it, who can roam at will over green fields, sprinkled with wild flowers, without any fear that some blue-coated policeman will tell us to get off the grass, who look upon the mountains and the stars as our neighbors and friends. Did business or pleasure happen to take you out of doors on, say, last Wednesday night? If so, did you see how the stars shone? Did you notice how a little touch of frost made everything sparkle? Did you observe how like some rare old wine the glorious air made you tingle with life? If you did not, you missed much. If you did, you experienced something unknown to the modern cave-dwellers.

Another curious thing is that these cave-dwellers, although they are only a small minority of mankind, have managed to get the idea that they are substantially the whole. They have got it into their heads that what they do not know is not worth knowing. The morning newspaper is their Bible; John D. Rockefeller is their god—at least he is the only being whom they really fear. Their morning prayer is that they may not miss the train. They think of money always. Their highest praise is to describe a man as a multi-millionaire. They are daily becoming more and more the slaves of their god and all the demi-gods of finance. Curiously enough, also, people who are not cave-dwellers are disposed to take what these unhappy people say as very near the consummation of wisdom. Their influence upon the thought of the country is out of all proportion to their numbers.

To see these cave-dwellers play at politics is to witness a saddening spectacle. A long time ago, a man named Thomas Jefferson wrote something in which he declared that all men are born free and equal. The memory of this utterance, which never was true, although it ought to be, is cherished by them, in the same manner as an African chief once preserved a scrap of writing that had come into his hands, and which he worshipped as the white man's God. The cave-dwellers believe the statement is true. They tell their children that it is true. They tell them that people who live in any other country are not free and cannot be free. But they have about as little voice in the management of their public matters, or private affairs for that matter, as a slave on a South Carolina plantation, in the days "befo' de wah," had in determining the policy of a Democratic congress sitting at Washington. They are "bossed" by the janitor, who looks after the particular collection of caves in which they live; they are "bossed" by the boy who shoots them down or jerks them up in the basket; when they are in the canyon, they are "bossed" by policemen; when they are shot through the underground passages they are "bossed" by all sorts and conditions of people. They are taxed without knowing what for; the money is spent they know not how; they vote for candidates whom they do not want. They never have a free minute in their lives, unless by accident or design they get out of the man-made town into the God-made country, and then they hardly know what to do with their freedom. They chafe to get back to their old slavery. A story is told of a prisoner who was sentenced to life imprisonment. After many years he was released, and he wandered out into the fresh air and the sunshine. Everyone had forgotten all about him, and he was free to go where he liked and do as he liked, for no one could be prejudiced against him, because no one knew anything about him. After a day or two he came back to his prison and asked to be taken in again. He had grown to love his captivity. So it is with our modern cave-dwellers, except that it is not only a lifetime, but two or more generations that have made them unable to realize that the real world is beyond the walls of their canyons, the world where real thoughts are evolved, where real character is built up, where the reality of individual freedom is preserved. This is a day of missions, and it might be well if those who are so happily situated as to really live in the world, would organize a mission to preach the gospel of living to the modern cave-dwellers.

THE HUDSON BAY ROUTE.

Readers of Ballantyne's books upon life in the territories once ruled over by the Hudson's Bay Company will remember the part which Fort Churchill played in the affairs of that immense region during the first half of the last century. It was the entrepot of an area larger in extent than the continent of Europe, an area around which there seemed to be an impenetrable veil of mystery. Its vast plains, its immense lakes, its long rivers, its forest of unprecedented magnitude, its wandering tribes of Indians, its even more interesting Metis all combined to lend enchantment to it. For centuries it had been a domain towards which explorers had directed their gaze and many of them their steps. Across it some people believed there would be found the shortest way to the Orient, although it was expected to be a waterway, for in those days the idea of rail transportation had not been contemplated. A century ago geographers were by no means certain that Chesterfield Inlet, which as the maps show is a long arm of Hudson Bay extending westward from its northwestern corner, did not reach clear through to the Pacific Ocean. Capt. Meares was quite certain that this arm of the sea extended all the way to the beautiful sheet of water lying before the doors of the people of Victoria. Those were the days of Romance in the Northwest, when men like Sir George Simpson, Alexander Mackenzie and others gained imperishable fame and added to the world's knowledge. Those were the days when the flag of the H. B. C. was the symbol of sovereignty over more than half a continent—the days when that wonderful organization was more than a business concern, and its employees felt towards it something akin to the feelings, which inspired the followers of the old Crusaders, the days of the old Factors, of whom we believe our much esteemed friend the late James A. Grahame of Victoria and Lord Strathcona were the last. There never was anything quite like the Hudsons' Bay Company, either for the loyalty of its employees, the wisdom of its management, its control of native tribes and its influence upon the New World, as it was called when the original adventurers obtained their charter from King Charles II.

But this is by the way. The pertinent part of the history of this company in connection with this article is, that it adopted the Hudson Bay route to reach the great fur-producing region over which it exercised jurisdiction, and for fully two centuries it was considered the best route. History has a marvelous trick of repeating itself, and we find an instance of it in the prominence given to this avenue of commerce at present. The great region, of which the Bay forms one sea front, is very different from what it was when Ballantyne wrote. The Fort Garry of his tales is a splendid city, growing with unexampled rapidity, unless we go a thousand miles to the northwest to the site of Fort Edmonton. One transcontinental railway has crossed the plains, pierced the mountains and reached the Pacific Coast. Three others are headed in the same direction. Two of them will follow pretty nearly the route taken by Mackenzie in his memorable journey. The areas, only yesterday, as it were, trodden by millions of buffalo, are now either the pasture grounds of tens of thousands of cattle or fields which in the season are yellow with golden grain. The nomadic Indians have given place to farmers. Instead of tepees, schoolhouses and churches dot the landscape; instead of trails many railways gridiron the land. Where once there were fords only, now there are bridges; where once there was a great lone land, now there are thriving communities. This extraordinary change has come about in less than a quarter of a century, and it has brought the business world face to face with the transportation problem in all its aspects. Once more all eyes are turned to the track followed by the old fur traders.

It is not by any means generally known that the shortest route to Liverpool from all points in America north and west of and including Omaha is by way of Fort Churchill and Hudson Bay; but when a brief table of distance is given it will appear clear enough. Thus:

	Miles.
New York to Liverpool	3040
Montreal to Liverpool	3000
Churchill to Liverpool	2960

Now Churchill is very nearly in the longitude of Omaha, therefore in sailing from Liverpool to that point a traveler is at the end of his voyage as far west as if he had sailed 3090 miles to New York and then gone west overland across twenty degrees of longitude. The same thing holds good, with some changes as to distance, in the case of a traveler via Montreal. As points west and north of Omaha are considered the advantage in favor of Churchill becomes greater, and especially so the more northerly the points are, because degrees of longitude grow shorter as they approach the north.

Hudson Bay is itself navigable at all seasons of the year, but the Strait connecting it with the Ocean is not. It is impeded by ice coming down from the north. During the last twenty years the Canadian government has sent three expeditions to examine the conditions existing there, and the result has been that the Strait may be considered as safely navigable for from four to six months every year, and with specially constructed vessels there is little doubt but that it could be reckoned upon for fully six months annually. This is quite as good as can be claimed of the Baltic Sea, on the shores of which are great cities. The entrance to this sea is not obstructed by ice, nor is the sea itself but the approach to the great harbors are, which, though a reversal of the conditions existing in Hudson Bay, comes in the end to the same thing. It may be interesting to add that Churchill lies in a more southerly latitude than either St. Petersburg or Stockholm.

Lawrence J. Burpee thus describes the ice conditions in a recent issue of "Canada":

"The evidence goes to show that, generally speaking, no serious difficulty is experienced with ice. Ice is met with in three forms in the strait; in the shape of bergs, of the Arctic icefloes, and of local field ice. The bergs have never given any trouble, even to sailing vessels, as they are always scattered and generally hug the shore. The Arctic floes present a more serious problem. They come down into the Strait from the far north through Fox Channel. They are larger, thicker, and much harder than the local ice. On the other hand, they are only present in the Strait for a limited time, and, according to the theory of Dr. Robert Bell, who is probably more familiar with the question than any other man living, they only appear for a period of about five years, and then are not encountered for something like twenty years. The field ice is an almost negligible quantity, especially for steam vessels. It is generally broken into small sheets or pans, with open water everywhere visible between the pans, and during the summer months is driven inshore by the currents, leaving a clear passage, thirty to thirty-five miles wide, through the Strait."

The need of a new route to the ocean is growing every year. It is impossible to handle the crop of the prairie region by way of Lake Superior, and although the National Transcontinental Railway to Quebec will relieve the pressure to some extent, it is very clear that some other avenue must be opened. Eighty-five million bushels of wheat are now about the annual capacity of existing lines. Let us suppose that by double-tracking this can be increased to 120,000,000 bushels, and let us add 30,000,000 for the new railway from Winnipeg to Quebec. This will not begin to take care of the product of the prairies, which long before it has been fully developed will exceed 300,000,000 and may before very many years reach a total nearer 1,000,000,000 bushels.

There is a demand for a new route, and we may feel every confidence that it will be along the lines followed by the gentlemen adventurers of years ago.

ANYTHING TO WIN.

From the New York Tribune.

"The average man," remarked one disciple of Blackstone, "seems only too ready to assume we are all liars—a very unjust position, it seems to me. Do we not sometimes tell the truth?" he asked of his neighbor, a well known criminal lawyer.

"Certainly," promptly responded the latter. "We will do anything sometimes to win a case."

LITERARY NOTES

"The White House" by Miss M. E. Braddon. Miss Braddon is too well known as a writer of interesting stories to require any introduction. "The White House" is in a somewhat different style from the rest of her novels, but is interesting throughout. She is not specially happy in the selection of her plot, not that it is not sufficiently dramatic in conception, but because it has rather a morbid tone. George Bell & Sons, York House, Portugal street, London, E. C., publishers.

"Running Horse Inn," by Alfred Tressider Sheppard. Lovers of the grewsome in literature will find their fancy glutted by the perusal of this powerfully written story. It is issued by the MacMillan Company, of Canada, Limited, Toronto.

Moffat, Gard & Co., 31 East Seventeenth street, New York are issuing a beautiful series of Picture Publications. Their autumn list of books is very attractive.

From its gay Santa Claus cover to its last bit of nonsense verse, the December St. Nicholas is full of delights for young readers. There is a charming frontispiece in color by that favorite artist, Reginald Birch; there are four pages of "Christmas Joys" by Emilie Benson Knipe; there are the first chapters of a sunshiny story of a little American lad in Japan by Mrs. Alice Hegan Rice, and the beginning of a rattling new short serial by Ralph Henry Barbour, "The New Boy at Hillton." There is a Christmas story, "A Cousin-Hunt," by E. Vinton Blake, who wrote "A Mislaid Uncle" for the Christmas St. Nicholas of last year; and the same fine John James Aston plays the chief part. There are new experiences of little Abbie Ann, who gives promise of being as great a favorite as George Madden Martin's earlier creation, Emmy Lou. There is another Pinkey Perkins story, "How the Coasting Party Ended"; and a jolly "Dolly Dialogue" by Carolyn Wells.

Best of all is the first half of a new and altogether fascinating fairy tale by Frances Hodgson Burnett, in which Queen Silver-Bell tells all about "Racketty-Packetty House."

A book beautiful is the Christmas Century, the publishers feel, a number to set a new standard of artistic beauty and literary richness in the magazine world; without, the Bibelots group in blue, gold and black; within, four pages in color and several in photogravure and tint, and many sorts of seasonable articles. The frontispiece is a reproduction of Mr. Sigismond de Ivanowski's portrait of Maude Adams as Peter Pan, which has caught the charm and joyousness of the character. Other pages in color show Horatio Walker's "Ave Maria," Anna Whelan Betts' "The Belle of the Christmas Ball," and J. S. Levendecker's interpretation of William Vaughn Moody's imaginative poem, "The Death of Eve."

The fiction is unusual. Pretty, pathetic, appealing little Rosalie, with her barren title of Lady Anstruthers; Betty Vanderpoel, with her rare, young, strong charm—the magic of Mrs. Burnett's pen is making these American girls very much alive to readers of "The Shuttle." From the very first chapters the love and suffering and joys of these heroines, and of the other men and women of the story, are very real. In the December chapters there develops an appealing dramatic situation with a cleverly handled background of humor and pathos. Readers of A. E. W. Mason's "Running Water" will find themselves more and more caught in the fascination of its plot and the rare character delineation. Charles G. D. Roberts has written a vivid tale in "A Stranger to the Wild," and there are short stories by Irving Bacheller, Henry M. Hyde, Harry Stillwell Edwards, Oscar King Davis and John Corbin.

The number is rich in substantial papers on current topics. Secretary Taft writes authoritatively of the Panama Canal in general, and in particular of the reasons why a lock canal was preferred to the sea-level system; James J. Hill, president of the Great Northern railway, makes a plea for a model farm in every agricultural county of the United States; and the author of "Letters From a Chinese Official," G. Lowes Dickinson, in a paper entitled "Eastern and Western Ideals," makes reply to W. J. Bryan's criticism of his book "Letters to a Chinese Official."

The December chapters of Mr. Oberholtzer's "Jay Cooke, and the Financing of the Civil War," deal with days and events of stirring and sensational interest; and Otto H. Bacher's intimate recollections of "Whistler in Venice" are given added flavor by numerous reproductions of etchings by Mr. Bacher of scenes associated with Whistler.

Mr. Harry Graham contributes to "In Lighter Vein" a side-splitting bit of fun, entitled "Conversational Reform," a good-natured satire on simplified spelling, a subject editorially treated in the same number.

THE STORY TELLER

ONE ADVANTAGE.

City Man (carping)—Whew, but it's hot! I am told that the mercury frequently stands at 110 degrees in the shade here.

Farmer Summerboard (cheerfully)—Well, you don't hafter stay in the shade, ye know.—Comic Paper.

ABSENT-MINDED.

A professor, noted for his absent-mindedness, fell downstairs, and when at the bottom said, thoughtfully: "I wonder why I came downstairs. I cannot remember at all."—Il Mondo Umoristico.

JUDGING BY ANALOGY.

"Do you think she will ever love me?"

"Sure! She's loved me and she's loved Jack, and she's loved several others. Of course she will."—Houston Post.

NOT TO BE A FATHER TO HIM.

"So you are anxious to become my son-in-law?"

"No, sir, you misjudge me: I am anxious to marry your daughter; if it were possible to do that without becoming your son-in-law I would gladly have it that way."—Houston Post.

A FOOTBALL ENTHUSIAST.

From the Rochester Herald.

A Pennsylvania guard coming to at the end of a football game, whispered to the physician bending over him:

"Did we win, doctor?"

"Yes; hands down," the physician answered.

The guard flushed with joy.

"Never mind that fractured thigh, then, doc," he said. "Just take these broken teeth out of my mouth so's I can holler."

ANSWERING A BOY'S QUESTION.

From the Somerville Journal.

Lawson—"What do you do when your little boy asks you questions you can't answer?"

Dawson—"Send him to bed and get out the encyclopedia."

PERHAPS.

The Green Bag.

A California man tells a story of Thomas Logan, an old-time lawyer in Oregon and an inveterate joker at all times.

One day Logan was arguing a case before Chief Justice Greene, of the supreme court of what was then the Territory of Washington. Opposed to Logan was a backwoods sawyer named Browne. Logan continually referred to the counsel on the other side as if his name was spelled Browny, to the great annoyance of that gentleman. At last his honor interfered, observing:

"Mr. Logan, this gentleman's name is spelled B-r-o-w-n-e, and is pronounced Brown, not Browny. Now, by name is spelled G-r-e-e-n-e, but you would not pronounce it Greeny!"

A twinkle came into the eye of Logan. "That," was his audacious response to the judge, "depends entirely on how your honor decides this case."

TOO NEAR THE STOVE.

Boston Herald.

Dr. C. A. Lamson of New London, while at school at Andover, N.H., with several other boys, attended a camp-fire o fthe G. A.R. at Wilmot. It was several degrees below zero, and the stove was red hot when a veteran named Chase came in. He was a large man, and very bow-legged. As he stood by the fire "Doc," as he was always called, stepped up and slapped him on the back, saying, "Please excuse me, but I fear you are standing too near the stove."

The veteran looked at the stove, then at his clothes, and said, "Did you think, young fellow, that my clothes were burning?"

"No, sir, but I saw that your legs were warping," was the reply.

A NUISANCE ABATED.

Toronto Saturday Night.

For once at least the theatre pest who sits behind you and tells a friend what is going to happen next as well as keeping up a running commentary upon the events of the performance as they pass, received a satisfactory setback. It was the presentation of "Mary of Magdala" by Mrs. Fiske some years ago, and the play had reached the place where the rabble is rebuked by the baffling dicta, "Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone." The multitude was drawing back with savage reluctance, looking with eyes of hate upon the prostrate Magdalen, when the Pest broke out:

"Isn't that perfectly lovely? They dare not touch her. You see, they are all going out."

"To look for stones," added a well-known Toronto barrister who was sitting in the seat immediately in front of the Pest. It was enough. The talkative one collapsed into a shocked silence which mercifully lasted to the end of the piece.

JUST MOVED IN.

The Old Man, in The Cranbrook (B.C.) Herald, tells a story of a little boy whom he says belongs to the Sunday school class in the Methodist church there. That little boy has been springing the witticism in question so long and has moved to so many different towns, that he surely must be in long trousers by this time. All the same, the story is a good one. The lad, we are told, did not know the other scholars and appeared nervous, half scared, and ready to cry at any second. The teacher, however, treated him kindly, and the lessons proceeded without any outburst. After a short reading of the Bible the teacher began to question the pupils on their last lessons, and asked "Who led the children of Israel into Canada?" As no one answered, she looked from boy to boy. At last her gaze rested on the new boy. He started guilty and said, between sobs; "It wasn't me, honest, teacher. I just moved here last week from Fernie."

CUMULATIVE SENTENCES.

The Green Bag.

According to an eminent lawyer who practices before the Supreme Court of the United States, there is a custom in French jurisprudence that sanctions the consultation by a judge, in provincial courts, with colleagues on the bench, called "assessors," when sentence is to be passed upon certain classes of malefactors.

"What ought we to give this rascal, brother?" a judge in the Department of the Loire once asked the assessor on his right.

"I should say three years."

"What is your opinion, brother?" This to the assessor on the left.

"I should give him four years."

Whereupon the judge, assuming an air of great benevolence, said:

"Prisoner, not desiring to impose upon you a long and severe term of imprisonment, as I should have done if left to myself, I have consulted my learned brethren and shall take their advice. Seven years."

NOT ENOUGH CIPHERS.

Philadelphia Post.

When Timothy L. Woodruff of Brooklyn was first nominated for Lieutenant-Governor of New York he was informed that it was customary for candidates for such high office to give money to the State committee funds for carrying on the campaign.

"How much?" asked Woodruff.

"Well," said a friend, "you are pretty rich, having a million or two, and they probably expect a good-sized sum from you or else," continued the friend, candidly, "they wouldn't have nominated you. I'd give them a good round sum."

Woodruff considered. He is very rich, but he is also a good judge of money and aware of its value. After two or three days of counsel, he wrote a cheque for $2,500 and sent it to Senator Platt, the Republican leader in New York.

Platt received it, but returned the cheque by the same messenger, and with it sent this note:

"Dear Tim: I am sending back this cheque for correction. You forgot to put enough cyphers on. It needs one more to make it the right size. Please rectify this trifling error and return at once."

MISTAKEN IDENTITY.

Saco, Me., News.

Ex-Gov. Cleaves of Portland recently told the following story about the late John Pottle, a well-known barrister in Kennebec county for many years, who defended nearly all of the criminals in that county years ago.

One day an evangelist on the Holy Roller type struck Augusta, and in consequence of some minor offence he committed was arrested. He refused to engage a lawyer to defend him at the trial, saying the Lord would defend him. His friends thought differently, and engaged Pottle.

When the case came up in court the evangelist and several other prisoners were brought into court to plead. Pottle was busy with papers and did not realize what was going on. The evangelist, who entered a plea of not guilty, told Judge Libby who was presiding, that he had engaged counsel, and said: "Your honor, I have secured the services of able counsel; the Lord Jesus Christ will look after me."

About this time another lawyer kicked Pottle, who was busy with his papers, and, realizing that his client had entered a plea, for he was standing before the judge, the lawyer, without a moment's hesitation, said: "Yes, your honor, I appear for him."

A PRETTY STORY.

Boston Herald.

A little girl was building pyramids in the sand on the beach one day, when an elderly gentleman interrupted her play to converse with her. His charm of personality won her completely, as it had the world before her, and when he proposed that they walk as they talked she quickly rose and gladly slipped her hand into his. After a happy promenade the gentleman observed that it was time for the little girl to return to her mother.

"When mother asks you where you've been," he continued, "tell her you've been walking on the beach with Oliver Wendell Holmes."

The great name was absolutely unknown to the child, but she recognized a courtesy in the words of her stranger-friend, and was not to be outdone. His pleasant bow and smile acquired a quaint gravity as imitated by the child. She replied:

"And when you go home, and they ask you where you've been, tell them you were walking on the beach with Mary Susanna Brown."

CURRENT VERSE

A CHANT OF LAST YEAR'S OVERCOAT.

The chill, winds blow, the leaves have gone,
The skies are grey and overcast,
A touch of snow is in the air,
I fear old winter's come at last.
I delve within a musty trunk
And scarce can I repress a tear
As I exhume with rev'rent hands
The overcoat of yesteryear.

Ah, me! 'Twas once a gallant wrap,
With belted back and shoulders square,
With skirt that swung with easy grace
And velvet collar passing fair.
The flowing skirts are dragging now,
The collar's frayed, the buttons sere,
In fact, it's really quite passe—
The overcoat of yesteryear.

But I have sung all summer long,
As did the grasshopper of old,
Nor laid away the coin to buy
A coat to keep me from the cold.
So come along, old friend of mine,
Tho' men may scoff and women sneer,
You'll have to do one season more,
O, overcoat of yesteryear!

THOUGHTS ON THE COMMANDMENTS.

"Love your neighbor as yourself,'
So the parson preaches;
That's one-half the Decalogue,
So the prayer-book teaches.
Half my duty I can do
With but little labor,
For with all my heart and soul
I do love my neighbor.

Mighty little credit that
To my self-denial;
Not to love her, though, might be
Something of a trial.
Why, the rosy light that peeps
Through the glass above her
Lingers round her lips—you see
E'en the sunbeams love her.

And I've preached the word I know
For it was my duty
To convert the stubborn breast
Of the little beauty.
Once again success has crowned
Missionary labor,
For her sweet eyes own that she
Also loves her neighbor.

—George Augustus Baker.

REFORMED OLD FAVORITES.

Tra(idi tra I no not wut tha mene,
Tra from the depth uv sum divin despar
Riz in the hart and gather to the l'ps
In luking on the harpi ortm feeldz
And thinking uv th daz that r no mor.

Tu be or not to b; that is the kwestyun;
Whether tiz nobir in the mind to sufr
The slings and aroz of outrajus forchun,
Or to take rmz agenst a c uv trublz,
An bi opposng un them.

Sum vliage Hamdn, that with dorntles brest
The lilti tirnt uv his feeldz withstud,
Sum mut, inglorious Milto heeer ma rest,
Sum Cromwl gilties us his countri's blud

Tel me not in mornfi numbrz,
"Life is but a mti dreme!"
For the sole iz ded that slumbers,
And things r not wut tha seme.

—Brandr Mathu.

THE PINES.

These are the whispering pines,
And the selfeame song so low,
Where under the lash of God
I walked one years ago.
O aisles of murmuring shade,
When it seemed that hope had died,
And the black night filled the world,
How low to me then you sighed!

Today, how the earth o'errunn
With rapture and joy and spring!
How golden the sunlight falls
Where the dark pines sigh and swing!
But thanks to the grief that wanes,
And the hope that wakes again,
My soul is as light as a bird's—
But the black pines sigh with pain!

—Arthur Stringer, in December Smart Set.

THE WEAPONED MAN.*

By Cymric Ap Einion.

("The freeman....was the 'weaponed man,' who alone bore sword and shield."—Green's History.)

When oak woods grew where barley waves
And bare downs faced the sky,
Untrodden save by winter wolves,
Where now great cities lie,
The fathers of our Saxon folk
(Sires of our blood and bone)
Set up their thorpes and homesteads,
Self-centered and alone.

They were not over-masterful
Nor braggart in their pride,
But the freeman's badge was the spear in hand
And the war-sword at his side;
And when the arrow-splinter came
To muster great and small,
The man who stood unarmed that day
Was weakling, priest, or thrall.

When we waged the War of a Hundred years
Or marched to Flodden fray,
Small need was there for time or toil
To marshal our array.
Each yeoman's chimney held its bow;
Each manor, jack and spear;
And every churl could handle steel
To guard his goods and gear.

Now cities gather them goods and gold
With ships on every sea,
And the Guilds of Craft wax fat and proud
And every hind is free;
And no man bears a weaponed belt
Save he whose trade is war,
Yet—weaponless men are thralls at heart
As it was in the days of yore.

* Respectfully dedicated to all who hold that universal military training is an invasion of the freedom of the subject.—From The Spectator (London.)

MOTHERHOOD.

By Edith Brownell.

Gray gloomed the hillside. Through the solemn hush
Of dole, the third dark hour—reluctant, shamed—
Slow yielded to its close.

Below the dross
The Holy Mother knelt in quivering calm,
Her waiting arms in anguish upward reached
To take again her Son, her little boy—
Her baby!—while, pale through the mystic dusk,
Her lifted face in adoration dwelt
Upon her Lord!

Then, near at hand, there broke
A woman's sobbing, low and wrenched and fierce,
The cry of one whose hurt is worse than death:
And Mary, bending sweet within her veil,
Laid her high grief aside, to pray, "Dear God!
Ah, comfort Thou the mother of the thief!"

—From the Independent.

A doctor was called to give evidence in an action at Morpeth County Court, in which a miner claimed £25 damages against a barber for a "foul" shave. The medical man took the Scotch oath, and the Judge thereupon asked, "Which, in your opinion, doctor, is the more dangerous—the Court Testament or the public razor?' The Doctor—"The Court Testament.'