

cess of skin transplanting, whereby the hairy covering of some quadruped is made to replace the natural cutaneous integument of the individual, and that these do not appear in coast cities of late years because of wholesome dread of the vigilance of the authorities. In this procedure the child stealers flay their victims, bit by bit, a little at a time, with long intervals between operations, in each instance replacing the removed tissue with a corresponding section from some animal, usually a bear or a dog; for successful completion many years are required in order to render the hirsute covering continuous and uniform; even the ears, nose, lips, eyelids, &c., are not neglected in the transformation—in fact all the details are gone into so minutely as to constitute a veritable though grim and horrible work of art. Even a caudle appendage, it is averred, is sometimes engrafted by means of a resection operation whereby the lower portion of the spinal column (the coccyx) is wholly removed and replaced by like articulations from the animal!

Strange that general credence is given to such narrations, which are wide-spread and by no means confined to the lower or more vulgar walks of life, or even to Celestials. Even more strange is the quasi-endorsement given by the *Celestial Empire* newspaper and the *China Medical Missionary Journal*, by admitting them to their columns, without a suggestion of editorial comment or rebuke, and also that an Anglo-Saxon medical missionary figures as the author thereof, apparently accepting them as facts without the faintest suspicion of the customary "grain of salt."

It is not necessary that the writer should put on record an opinion regarding the transformation of infants into "wild men," yet it may be remarked that there is a manifest incongruity in all the reports. Such process would evidence a knowledge of physiological secrets and skin-

grafting procedures hitherto unsuspected, and so startling and remarkable as to transcend anything hitherto pertaining to modern science, since it is generally accepted that a graft, on transplanting, must either be thrown off as a foreign body, or else lose the individuality of its derivation, and be merged into that of its adoption—this is inevitable, whether applied to two members of the human race, or to a primate and quadruped, or any higher or lower organism. Bits of sponge have been successfully employed as grafts, but the scientist who could cause these to retain and perpetuate the characteristics of the zoophyte has yet to be discovered; and just so regarding grafts derived from rabbits, guinea pigs, and other like creatures, when removed to a different species. In other words, it is a definite physiological axiom that when a graft partakes of the nourishment of its surroundings it must speedily assimilate with the latter, or, failing this, lose vitality altogether and be cast off as a slough.

It may be opined, however, that there is a real measure of truth in the tales, from the fact that a child, if constantly exposed to the air, and especially to sunlight, will take on a heavy hirsute growth, heaviest where most exposed; and it is notable that such growth develops luxuriance in inverse ratio with the decrease or degeneracy of the mental faculties—special provisions of nature that have persisted since first man walked upon the earth and sought refuge from the elements in trees and caves. That the victims are really rendered dumb, or at least incapable of intelligible speech, possibly by operation but more likely through hypnotic influence, or by persistent disuse of the organs essential to the faculty, including the process of warping, contracting, or altogether obliterating mentality, can scarcely be doubted in the light afforded by the history of Kaspar Hauser, and the peculiar treatment to which he was subjected.