

dragon's teeth have been sown, and the armed men have sprung up everywhere except in happy America. There, soldiers come forth only on Decoration Day; and if the Slave War still drags a huge pension after it, the nation no longer pays a tax of blood. Europeans cannot imagine a state of things so unlike their own; while Englishmen, fighting or ready to fight in defence of the gates, waterways, and telegraph lines of their big Empire, keep up a brisk cannonade to the tune of "Rule Britannia." Their "crowned Republic"—which is also an aristocracy—holds the sword as well as the scales of Justice, and being, to say the least, bleary-eyed, if not blind, is rather apt to mistake the weapon of offence for the balance of equity. Peace, without soldiers or a military budget, and embracing a continent in the folds of its banner, we retrograde and stupid Easterns cannot understand. But three years of America would do more to civilise Europe than all the efforts of well-meaning but barbarous chieftains, whether we call them Von Moltke or the Emperor William. The European is still the feudal, military, and even predatory system, in which a few chosen, but not always choice, families govern at their good pleasure, and the millions are governed to their grievous loss. For conscription is the outward and visible sign of a slavery but one degree removed from the state of perpetual war, in which it took its rise.

Conceive the difference when we have landed in New York—a city still encumbered with the heaps of living human rubbish shot out upon American shores by the Governments of Europe that can only misgovern. In spite of the Italian, Bohemian, and Jewish immigrants, it soon becomes clear that a more searching test than the McKinley tariff has flung back into the Atlantic a deal of ancient history. The traveller finds that his thoughts often turn to France, to the vivacious, good-tempered, and pleasant people who take their business and their amusements gaily; but England he is a little disposed to forget. At Washington he sees no Horse Guards; the name would sound ludicrous in American ears. Uniforms are out of date; stars and garters remind one of the "Seven against Thebes," or some other piece of masquerading knighthood; the judges have thrown off their absurd wigs; and a crippled negro, carrying a bundle, will walk into the White House and ask President Cleveland how he has enjoyed his fishing expedition. In Pennsylvania Avenue, the Papal Legate may be seen waiting among a crowd of workpeople—black, white, and all shades between—for the electric car which will take him any distance on payment of five cents, unless, as is likely, the directors have given him a free pass. Liberty, in ten thousand instances, has thus come to mean equality; and the notable thing is that everyone likes it. Where there is no military caste the divisions of society cannot be stereotyped; they are fluid, and melt into one another. The individual shapes his own course, takes for granted that he is as good as any man that ever won the prizes of public life, and sets out with a strong resolution to get to the top. He is member of a peaceful confederation which includes forty-four States, and speaks one language from Maine to Oregon. Wherever he goes he will feel at home. He is not a stranger at Seattle or Tacoma because he was "raised" in Tennessee. Passports, certificates of domicile, police registration? He can hardly understand how there should be such things even in Europe, for to him they have no meaning. He moves to and fro without hindrance; sets up his business where he pleases; has by law no governors in whose appointment he does not take a share; and, what is most remarkable, he supposes that this utter independence, this absence of kings and heaven-born rulers, comes by nature, and is the only Constitution which right reason has established. If he travels in Europe, it is with feelings of amazement as well as curiosity; and, though his wife may learn to be monarchical, he seldom does so. The genuine American, dazzled

sometimes by the glittering show of courts, field-days, and regimentals, would never find himself at ease in a military State, or think it other than uncivilised. It is the gorgeous, the barbaric East, picturesque, undeveloped, and behind the age. He knows that if ten millions of soldiers were required to keep the peace among five nations, between the Pacific and the Atlantic—where now the United States enjoy perpetual peace without any army at all—the world would have rolled back a hundred and twenty years. The conscription in France may be justified, in his Republican eyes, only because the European monarchies have a conscription of their own, and are ready to partition a Western Poland when the chance is given. The armed Democracy which is confronted by Metz cannot help itself. But America, not kept in alarm by the drums and trappings of a young Emperor, may afford to go unarmed, neither conquering nor to be conquered. To sum up in a sentence: across the Atlantic, the military type has gone out, the industrial has come in. The soldier is extinct, the merchant flourishes. A manifest advance, provided always that the manufacturing, trading, and commercial democracy has discovered, and is willing to obey, sound economic laws! It must not be the hell of the poor, even to secure a paradise for the rich.

To get rid of the Bourbons was an excellent thing. But the French Revolution halted half-way. It crowned the edifice by endowing the middle class; and it surrendered basely to Napoleon. The French have had to endure nearly a hundred years of confusion before laying the ghost of that modern Tamerlane, whose conquests are deservedly satirised as "Mongolian." How long will it take the Americans to understand that a Napoleon of Peace, though he call himself modestly Jay Gould or Vanderbilt, is just as much an embodied treason against their free institutions as the Napoleon of War was a treason against the principles of 1789? They have never seen a military despotism triumph. But an industrial despotism has grown up silently the methods and tactics of which are in deadly opposition to American progress. Not only so; if the system known as monopoly ever comes to have full sway, it will employ the forms of freedom to intrench itself behind the Constitution it is pulling down into ruin—much as the barbarians in Rome built their robber-castles with the stones of the temples and palaces for which they saw no other use. To escape from the old military régime was the first step on the path of freedom. To escape from the monopolist is the second. The power of the sword is no longer paramount in the United States, but the power of the purse increases every day. Upon the political revolution must follow the social revolution—there, as in all other countries of the civilised world, unless reaction, in its meanest form, is to triumph, and the course of history to be reversed. But America stands in the van. It has at once the more patent and the more definite problem, for riches cannot disguise themselves in the States under the robes of kings and nobles—and they are the more unlovely because so much the less adorned. The contest between Democracy and Plutocracy is the trial of America. In that arena the combatants stand, as Carlyle would have said, at death-grips. One of them must go to the ground. What are the circumstances and what the prospects of the struggle, it may be worth while to inquire on another occasion. B.

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#### SUPERSTITION UP TO DATE.

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IT is impossible not to notice the curiously rapid inroads which are being made in modern society by what, for want of a better name, we will call superstition. Your neighbour at dinner may be a lady whom you know to be both daring after hounds and

yet a person of brilliant humour and wit—a rare and healthy combination, which you find as enjoyable as ever until some chance word brings a strange topic, called Christian Science, on the *tapis*. Then the mocking face grows suddenly serious, and your delightful friend begins to expound the tenets of Christian Science with the faith of an apostle, and with a persistency which brings even her within measurable distance of becoming a bore. This is, perhaps, less astonishing than meeting a man, whose mind has been trained to test facts in the severe crucible of the scientific method, “psychometrising” watches and sleeve-links, and reading letters with the back of his head. The drawing-room clairvoyante and palmist have been with us now for some time, but more recently the observant must have been struck with the number of sisters and cousins and nieces who have discovered in themselves the possession of occult powers hitherto unsuspected. They can see your “aura,” this luminous different-coloured haze with which it appears we are all surrounded, and in which our characters and our destinies are plainly discernible. Give them hold of a toothpick that somebody had in his pocket at the battle of Waterloo, and they shut their eyes and see Shaw the Lifeguardsman laying Frenchmen low around him. A stone from the Weeping-Place of the Jews at Jerusalem fills them with an indescribable sense of desolation, and they begin to cry: a stone from the Coliseum enables them to live through a scene of eighteen hundred years ago—the amphitheatre tier on tier, the Emperor under his canopy, and the wild beasts howling and mangling the Christians in the arena—they describe it all as if they were looking at a picture by Gérôme. Here the ladies distinctly have the advantage over the inferior sex; for these appear to be mainly female gifts. The girl is now able to take the shine out of her brother in an emphatic manner with her skill at the magic mirror. Not that the male is entirely out of it. The amateur hypnotiser is usually one of that gender, and it is a man who generally proposes the “Ouija” board, which is now apparently one of the standing diversions of the country house. The Psychical Research Society has a good deal to answer for in this matter. Its jargon—its “subliminal self,” its “retro-cognition,” its “rapports” and “apports”—is in the mouths of all the practitioners, and its authority is their sanction. At its well-attended meetings in the Westminster Town Hall—at which women overwhelmingly predominate—under the auspices of a learned Cambridge don and an occasional ex-Cabinet Minister, it is no uncommon thing to see a young lady get on the platform and, with great aplomb, give her experiences in crystal-gazing, winding up by offering to form a crystal-gazing class after the meeting for the instruction of those who may wish to pursue this line of investigation. Leucæonæ, in fact, is no longer forbidden to consult Chaldean horoscopes, but—in spite of Deuteronomy and the pagan satirist—is actually incited to do so; and freely she responds.

It is interesting to mark the growth of this phenomenon, for growing it is. What it portends,—whether it be a sign, as philosophers like Herr Nordau say, that the world is going mad, or whether all this outbreak of credulity is to herald a new age of faith—we can hazard no opinion, but the symptom is certainly noteworthy. If we turn from the evidences of private life to the public field what we see is no less curious. Spiritualistic and psychical newspapers abound. Weeklies, monthlies, quarterlies, they now flourish in various languages here and on the Continent, and, of course, in America. *Borderland*—whose founder, a famous journalist, has his familiar like a mediæval astrologer, and talks about it as freely as one might about one’s dog—is itself a portent. The quarterly index of *Borderland* is an imposing testimony of the activity of the world’s psychical press. The advertisements in these publications are not their least suggestive feature.

There is clearly a brisk trade in mediums and fortune-tellers. The “Ouija,” or “Egyptian luck-board,” “universally acknowledged to be the readiest and best-known means of communicating with the Unseen,” is advertised with an illustration and the remark in big type, “Thousands selling.” “Solid Glass Globes for Crystal Vision—as supplied to the Society for Psychical Research,” are likewise announced; also “Hollow Spheres for Containing Water, and Mirrors (silvered) or Black (like the Bhatta Mirror).” Books with such titles as “Eulis: the Third Revelation of Soul and Sex—a work containing many secret and inner doctrines of the Rosierucians,” “Seership, Guide to Soul Sight,” “From Over the Tomb,” “The Hermetic Arcanum,” “Love, Woman, Marriage: a Work devoted to the study of Magnetic Attraction; a Mystery of Mysteries,” are advertised by the score. One notices the constant recurrence of publications dealing with sexual themes amongst these Kabbala, and perceives that the essential propensities of superstition have not, in this respect, altered with the ages. Here is the sub-title of a book advertised in Mr. Stead’s *Review*: “The book so unjustly anathematised by Mr. Justice Wills in the mysterious Pimlico case, with fifty engravings, sent under private cover.” The contents of one of these periodicals is an amazing farrago of the lore of the weird sisters and the records of Sludge the Medium, ranging over the whole gamut, from esoteric Buddhism to mystic bone-setting. In the last number of *Borderland* an astrologer prophesies the death of the Queen in 1895, which, it appears, is to be a particularly bad year for this realm and its rulers, for several Cabinet Ministers are to die as well. The following passage will indicate the quality of this piece of soothsaying: “Uranus has a radical significance of the nature of *terminus vite*, being on the cusp of the 8th House and in sesquiquadrate to Mercury, the ruler of the horoscope, who is situated in the 12th House. The death will be sudden and attended with singular events. We may expect this aspect of Uranus to have full force about October, 1895. Her Majesty would do well to avoid the public streets and to safeguard herself from accidents. We might say more,” adds the prophet, “*na, che sarà sarà*.” Truly when it has come to this with us, the Syrian Orontes may be said to be flowing into the Thames as once it flowed into the Tiber.

How long will it be, we wonder, until society will deem it necessary to protect itself against the fair crystal-gazers and Ouija-manipulators? From a Bhatta mirror and a psychometrist in Pimlico to love philtres and churchyard witches, and the alchemist with his poisons, is but a step. For love is inseparable from superstition and so is malice. The Ouija board has already been getting into trouble, as we find from a truly diverting history in a recent file of American newspapers. The incident is thus announced in the “scare” headings: “A Naughty Ouija.—It told some awful things about Miss Eva Hollowell of Rockville, Ind.—And the Dotys, who own the machine, have been sued for slander.” In a word, this Ouija has managed to wreck the peace of an idyllic Indiana village, a quaint and rural community numbering not more than a hundred families. It was brought into the village in all innocence by the Doty family, and the neighbours used to assemble after church on an evening and amuse themselves by asking it questions. It uttered some remarkable prophecies, and gave the rustics some sage advice about their private affairs, in which they had faith, notwithstanding that it set them all one day digging up the village green in search of a buried treasure. The girls of course made great use of it, and at last one night it said some very wicked things about Miss Eva Hollowell, a village belle and a rival of the Doty girls in church-work and other accomplishments. This came to the ears of Miss Hollowell’s father, a choleric man, and there was a row. The Dotys said

they believed the Ouija, and Mr Hollowell summoned them all to court, including the Ouija. The latter being produced as a witness, we are told, gave some samples of its work; but the verdict went for the plaintiff, and the Doty girls were fined five dollars apiece and costs. Mr. Hollowell, however, is too angry to be satisfied with this slight vengeance, and he is bringing the case to a higher court, where the Ouija will again appear in the witness-box. "The country hereabouts," says the report, "is intensely agitated over the matter." Patrons of the Ouija in English country houses would do well to make a note of this case. The "naughty" instrument might take to saying indiscreet things about the company there, and though, of course, it would not have so much material to go upon in a house full of English ladies and gentlemen as in a degenerate Indiana village, yet it is evidently both unscrupulous and ingenious, and the consequences might be awkward.

#### THE LONDON GONDOLIER.

THOUGH unversed in economic subjects, and always bewildered by strikes—which incarnate themselves, to my fancy, in monumental busybodies who spout from waggons to banner-waving myriads, gladly cheering the articulation of discontent, however vague—I confess to a very lively sympathy with Cabby. I have been looking at him from the club window and graciously acknowledging his greeting. As a rule, the spectator at the club window hears no good of himself from processions of strikers on their way to the Park. There is Jones, for instance, who despises the proletariat, and is wont to remark on such occasions: "Look at these idle loafers, pretending they want work!" and then the passing crowd, guessing Jones's sentiments by intuition, with the aid of his expressive features and a gleam of professional insolence from his glasses, bursts into a howl. But today this animosity gives place to good fellowship. Cabby catches sight of me, and calls for three cheers, as if he knew me to be a generous patron, tolerant of occasionally ill-smelling vehicles and tottering quadrupeds, and apt to stretch a shilling fare into eightpence. Now, to a retiring man this kind of popularity is undeniably gratifying. I cannot take it with the nonchalance of the golden youth on the club steps opposite, who snuffs up the incense with an Olympian air, as of a prosperous deity accustomed to drive daily through the firmament in a celestial hansom. But it is pleasing to note that by some strikers, at all events, the denizens of Clubland are not marked down for destruction when the Social Revolution comes by its own. I feel a glow of subdued enthusiasm, as if I, too, were a tribune, who by a magical glance from a club window had inspired the people with new faith in the brotherhood of man. Under the influence of this idea I perform a sacrificial act. For years I have cherished ill-will against the cabby who, receiving a sovereign from me one night in lieu of a shilling, took advantage of that rapt condition in which a man's mind is astrally uplifted by the festival of kindred souls. By the prosaic light of the morrow's sun I discovered the deed, and thenceforward I was a prey to suspicion of the whole race of cabmen. But the acclamation which greeted me at the club window expelled that poison from my mind, and in the ardour of this new-born trust I had almost hailed a "growler," and bidden the weather-beaten veteran on the box to drive me just where he pleased for any fare he chose to name.

In such a spirit who would not be willing to consider Cabby as a special kind of mortal, a minister to our needs, who must not be judged like common men—light porters, man-servants, or what not—a Mercury new-lighted on the perch of a hansom, taking toll of us without strict regard to the statutory charges for hackney carriages? When you think of it, there is something in his calling which

raises him above the vulgar lot. I had a disagreeable shock when I saw him plodding in the procession. There was an indignity in the harsh necessity which, for the nonce, compelled him to walk; his very badge seemed to have suffered eclipse; and the bit of ribbon which he wore in sportive defiance of insensate cab-proprietors gave a touch of mockery to his fallen estate. To divorce a cabman from his cab, and sacrifice him to those despotic twins Supply and Demand—the Gog and Magog of economics—seems to me, in my present mood of exaltation, a most unnatural act. I read that Cabby is being gradually forced out of the social system by the competition of omnibuses and trams; but who can imagine a cabless London—London stuffed into vans like so much furniture, "six on each side"—London rolling stolidly to its business or pleasure, bunched like candles? Have the economists ever considered the moving drama of the hansom, the multitude of affairs which transact themselves between two wheels, revolving silently through the night, the tragi-comedy of life which finds no scope save in the flying moments of a shilling fare? What of the journeys which begin in lovers' meetings go on to quarrel, reunion, distraction, triumph, and defeat, all under the small roof over which sits Cabby, impartial as fate, though sometimes moved to the satisfaction of Asmodean curiosity through the trap? What of the joy of threading the whirl and turmoil of the streets, glancing through rain-lashed panes at the phantasmagoria of glittering lamps and swiftly-scudding shapes, the lurid shreds and snatches from the Witches' Sabbath of the great city? Imagine London robbed of all this, and weltering in the straw of the omnibus or the noisome publicity of the tram! Is it any wonder that the picture stimulates my enthusiasm for Cabby to the point of a resolution never to sink so low as his legal payment? How can you class him with the successful swain in "Polly Perkins"—heavens! what grizzling years have passed over my head since that song was new!—I mean the "bow-legged conductor of a twopenny 'bus'"? Who would give that minion a drachma more than his due? Pray, what sentiment or common privacy is there in the moving sarcophagus which lurches down Regent Street, exhaling mortuary odours, and dropping bodies which stagger about for awhile before they recover life and animation? I could continue these interrogatories for ever; but they are already sufficient to establish the conviction in my mind that Cabby is a superior being, unaccountable to ordinary laws, indispensable to the subtlest sensations of our lives. His very manners show the rare distinction of his birthright. His gifts of argument and repartee stamp him as a man apart. Listen to his altercations with the omnibus-driver, whose inferior clay is always resentfully vociferous. What shaft of sarcasm has ever rankled in your withers like that of Cabby, when you have dropped into the palm extended to you from a majestic altitude the lonely and trumpery shilling? You may have listened to the barbed irony of a political opponent in the House without a tremor; but what were your feelings when the door opened, and, for the benefit of the footman, the Parthian of the cab launched his arrow of disdain into the small of your back? Did you wonder whether this part of you was visibly smaller?

I have no doubt that a certain dread of Cabby mingles with the generosity which habitually overpays him. He contrives in an indefinable manner to make you think that he drives a cab for his own pleasure, that he is a free-lance of the highway, that he condescends to stand on a rank, or take his meals in a "shelter," but that he is something between a Roman charioteer and a Bedouin of the desert. When you see him chafing under the restraining gesture of the policeman at the crossing, you half expect him to dash fearlessly through the block and make for the wilds of Wimbledon Common. Personally, I have always looked up to him with a sort of