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Marginal Notes

A Hero Of Melodrama

“The company of *rurales* commanded by Col. Emilio Kosterlitzky is under arms at Cananes and ready to take the field.” To be sure it is ! “The company of *rurales* commanded by Col. Emilio Kosterlitzky” has been ready to take the field, day or night, weekday or Sunday, summer or winter, for 25 years, and on many an exciting day it has had opportunity to prove its readiness. Since the middle '80s, in fact, Kosterlitzky has been the viceroy and captain-general of Diaz in the wildest part of Mexico—that mountainous region in the northwest corner, just south of Arizona, with its turbulent population of Yaqui Indians and Yankee claim-jumpers, bandits, and revolutionists, cattle thieves and filibusters. He has ruled with a rod of iron, dispensing justice without the slightest admixture of mercy, but it must be said for him that, whatever his barbarities, he has at least managed to establish civilization in his domain. Life and property are now almost as safe in the state of Sonora as in the City of Mexico itself.

Kosterlitzky himself is a fantastic and unearthly figure, a blend of soldier of fortune and man of business, of policeman and politician. Born somewhere in Eastern Europe, he enlisted, as a boy, in the Austrian navy and made several voyages around the world. Growing tired of the sea, he boldly deserted, and after various adventures in the American Southwest crossed the border into Mexico and entered the Mexican Army. Diaz, who was then hard at work suppressing political rivals, found the young man an able lieutenant, and quickly advanced him to a colonelcy. A simple colonel of cavalry he has remained ever since, but in his time he has done the work of a brigadier and even of a general of division.

When Kosterlitzky was sent into Sonora, that rich and enormous state—it is ten times as large as Maryland—was given over to bloodthirsty Indians and fugitives from American justice. The bad men from Arizona, New Mexico and Texas, crossing the border, found it a happy home. In the mountains the Yaquis preyed upon prospectors and settlers. There were tempting gold and silver mines on every hand, but the dangers of working them were so great that they seemed doomed to go unworked. Kosterlitzky changed all that. He pursued the Yaquis to their remote strongholds, tracking them down one by one. The young men he killed out of hand. The old men and the women and children he rounded up in herds and sent down, under guard, to the City of Mexico, and from there they were transported to the swamps of Yucatan, 1,500 miles away. And at the same time he warred upon the bad men. He was policeman, judge and executioner. A prisoner captured at noon was commonly hanged at 12.45.

As a result of all this salutary butchery, Sonora began to grow peaceful and American miners began to come in. Today fully 200 American mining companies are working claims in the mountains and fully \$100,000,000 of American money is invested in mines, railroads and other enterprises. Kosterlitzky himself has not hesitated to profit by his good work. He owns stock in a

dozen rich mines; he has married a Mexican woman and settled down; he has a fine home at Magdalena. But, meanwhile, he keeps his old command—that faithful corps of *rurales* which represents the law in his immense domain. Higher military dignitaries are now over him, but everyone knows that Kosterlitzky and Diaz understand each other, and that the ex-sailor is to be permitted to rule the border as he sees fit.

At the moment he is preparing to put down the rash young men who propose to oust Diaz from the presidency. One may be pretty sure that in Sonora, at any rate, the movement will not amount to much. When Kosterlitzky takes to the field the revolutionists will take to the hills.

Fair Flowers of the New Thought

Books upon psychotherapy, that grotesque child of credulous faith and incredible denial, continue to pour from the presses. The public appetite for such flapdoodle is apparently insatiable. New “discoveries” in occult healing are announced almost as frequently as fresh communications from the world of spirits, and new professors of the pseudo art bob up daily.

All of this balderdash radiates from the so-called New Thought propaganda. On the one side is the Emmanuel Movement, with its revival of mediaeval magic, and on the other side is theosophy, that delight of the half-educated. A dozen or more quack medical schemes, such as chiropractic, naphropractic and “rhythmic breathing” (whatever that may be) hang upon the edges. The New Thought is the father and mother of all of them. Once inoculate a man with its absurdities and he is ripe for all the other crazes, from anti-vaccination to crystal gazing, and from Hindoo “philosophy” (in reality there is no such thing) to psychical research.

That there is a logical basis for psychotherapy—that the body is, in some slight degree, at least, influenced by the mind—no sane man would venture to deny. It is indeed, a commonplace of human experience that this is true. But the professors of psychotherapy, as it is actually practiced in the United States, wander far from this safe premise. Beginning with the fact that many diseases are purely imaginary, they soon begin to assume, either openly or tacitly, that all diseases are imaginary. And after that they pile fallacy upon fallacy. The result is frankly a system of magic, a farrago of gratuitous assumptions and empty asseverations.

One of the latest of the current textbooks of psychotherapy is a thin, blue volume called “Self Help and Self Cure,” by Elizabeth Wilder and Edith Mendall Taylor, a pair of fair scientists whose medical knowledge seems to be a great deal more astonishing than Dr. Osler’s. Their book, indeed, is a quite typical mixture of platitude and empty rhetoric, of the obvious and the impossible. On one page they set forth, with a grave air of learning, certain elementary facts of physiology, and on the next they begin quoting Browning and discoursing muddily about the Spirit.

An example of their scientific manner is to be found on page 129, in a chapter devoted to the principles and practice of occult medicine. There are, they say, two methods of healing the sick: first, by prayer, and, secondly, “by making assertions.” This is how “assertions” are to be made:

Affirm that those whom you would wish to help will fight, will conquer, will be will in body mind and spirit, will rise to spiritual uplifts. Night is the special time to accomplish this when you have reason to believe that the sufferers in question are asleep or about to go to sleep. At that time the thought sent out makes a deeper impression for permanent effects. In the case of young children, stand by them as they are dropping off to sleep, assert that they will grow in

spiritual grace, affirm that certain known evil tendencies will disappear and that more and more they will be led by the Spirit. The result is sure if the practice is persisted in.

Imagine such nonsense as this being preached in a civilized country in the year of grace 1910! And yet there are thousands of folk who buy such books and devour them greedily, and no doubt thousands of poor children who get the doses of “assertion” when their real need is for paregoric.

Who gets the credit when the child gets well? The physician with his paregoric and castor oil or the toreador of psychotherapy, with her ludicrous “assertions” and “affirmations”? Let the hard worked and long-suffering physician answer!

The theology of the psychotherapists is almost as unearthly as their therapeutics. Here is a sample:

In the morning on rising repeat the Lord’s Prayer slowly; before you go into family life say, “I am led by the Spirit. In any trial or perplexity during the day repeat that phrase over and over. It will bind you directly to God and enable Him to help you, for God cannot and His own children unless they will that He shall.

In other words, the Creator Himself like the human physician is a mere servant or satellite of the psychortherapist: Unless the proper “affirmations” have been made even the heavenly powers are helpless!

(Source: Iowa State University, Parks Library Media Center, microfilm collection)