

PLUCK OF A MAGICIAN

Houdin's Experience Among the Marabouts of Algeria.

AN ARAB TRAP THAT FAILED.

The Great French Conjuror stood the Test and Then by Another Trick Cowed His Infuriated Antagonists. The Story of Palmer's Curse.

There are some points of resemblance between the story of the great French conjuror, Robert Houdin, and the marabouts and the story of Palmer's curse. The first named tale is, strictly speaking, incredible only when regarded from the oriental point of view.

In the fifties the administrators of the French African empire were seriously hampered by the fanatical marabouts, who by their tricks of juggling persuaded their followers of their own supernatural powers and used this belief to fan the spirit of insurrection. Houdin was sent officially on a French warship to Algeria to confound them. While his task proved easy, the trip was not without its dangers.

In Algiers he had allowed himself to be shot at with pistols loaded by the marabouts. But once in the interior, when he was absolutely without the tools of his profession, he was forced to repeat the experiment. He was frightened, but he did not allow his fears to be perceived. He persuaded his audience to postpone the test until next morning in order that he might pass the night in prayer, as he was without the talisman that he needed if the feat was to be performed immediately.

The night he devoted not to prayer, but to insuring his invulnerability, and the next day before a great horde of Arabs he submitted to the test. The French conjuror insisted that in the sight of every one the pistols should be loaded by his enemies themselves. Then he calmly took his place and gave the signal. The sound of the pistol had not died away when Houdin opened his lips, showing the bullet held firmly between his teeth.

His infuriated adversary reached for the other pistol, but the conjuror was too quick. "You could not harm me," he said, "but now see how much greater my powers are than yours. Behold the wall." He fired, and out on the whitewash at the exact spot of his aim there crept slowly a great splotch of blood. The marabouts, in terror, covered before the prowess of the European magician.

Less fortunate in his fate than Houdin was the English orientalist E. H. Palmer. He fell a victim to fanaticism, but the story of his terrible curse will long be repeated and cause slanders to run round Bedouin camps. Only upon the theory of metempsychosis can be explained his extraordinary powers of assimilating the languages and ideas of the east.

He was brought up in the conventional atmosphere of England, but when he turned his attention to oriental subjects he did not merely learn; he simply absorbed. Not only was Persian, Hindoostanee and Arabic perfectly familiar to him, but he knew every obscenity of the slang of the camel drivers, and during his long voyages in the east his European origin was never suspected. Just as Houdin had been officially employed by the French government, so Palmer was by the English, but in a more intimate capacity.

Before the exploit that proved fatal he had many dangerous adventures. Once he was led away by a treacherous guide and betrayed to an Arab gang who meant to rob and kill him. He guessed their intentions, and when they began to inflict upon him petty annoyances he pretended not to notice them. Finally, however, the abuse became too obvious to be longer ignored. He sprang to his feet and drew out a letter that he had received from an English lady. "This to me! Down on your knees, you dogs, and kiss the handwriting of the sultan!" Down on their knees, cowed and groveling, fell his 500 captors.

In 1882 Palmer was sent on a secret service mission among the Bedouin tribes to persuade them against joining the rebellion of Arabi Pasha. He was betrayed and shot. But just as his death he laid upon his assassin the weight of his terrible curse. In the east a curse is something to be regarded lightly, and Palmer was one of particular awfulness.

It was his last means of defense, while it did not save him. It blasted the hearing and destroyed the lives of those upon whom it fell. They took away from one another in horror. Some of them confessed their sins and were executed; all of them in a few months came to violent deaths. Palmer's curse is still remembered with terror in the east.—Book

Got More Than the Cigar. He was dining at a restaurant in the neighborhood of Leicester square, and he was sipping his black coffee during 500 glances to the minute at a girl in a buff pink and white dress who was granger gracefully commended her overcoat. He had just reached the door when the owner tapped him on the shoulder.

"ardon me, sir," he said meekly, "would you allow me to get an cigar from my coat pocket and I do not meet you again?"

Keep alive in your breast that little spark of celestial fire called conscience.—Washington.

A POISON EPISODE.

When a Famous Chemist Was Silenced in Court by a Judge.

There was a famous poisoning case in England many years ago in which the strong point of the defense was to show that the accused, who was an expert chemist, would not have used a poison which could be so easily found after it had been taken into the human system. Sir Robert Christeson, professor in Edinburgh university, a famous expert on toxicology, whose works are still standard on that subject, was put on the stand to prove this point. When he declared that a chemist would certainly use some poison which would leave no trace, the prosecuting attorney asked him if he meant to say that there were such poisons.

Sir Robert replied in the affirmative. The prosecutor asked, "Name them?" "No," shouted the judge. "I forbid you to answer that question!"

In spite of the protests of the prosecutor the judge would not allow the expert publicly to give the name of a poison which would leave no trace, and the question remained unanswered.

Now comes the curious part of the story. During the next two years Sir Robert received more than 4,000 letters from all parts of the world asking, begging, offering to buy, the name of the untraceable poison alluded to in his testimony. Many of these he kept as curiosities, showing them to his friends as evidence of the depravity of human nature. Some of the excuses for wanting the name of the poison were very ingenious. One man was writing a novel based on a poison plot and wanted to make use of the untraceable poison idea. He did not want to give the name of the poison in his book, but just wanted to have it by him in case any scientific critic should deny the possibility of such poisons, when he could send him the name in a private letter and quote the "distinguished authority" from whom it came, etc. Several persons professed to be studying chemistry and asked for the information on the ground of professional courtesy. To all such Sir Robert would send the advice to pursue their studies and they would soon know as much about it as he did. Many offered large sums of money for the secret, usually pretending they had bet still larger amounts that they could find it out in a given time and were willing to share their profits liberally with Sir Robert.

The thing which most impressed Sir Robert was the number of persons all over the world who seemed desirous of possessing the secret of an agent that would kill, but leave no trace, and the amazing falsehoods to which they would subscribe their names in order to obtain the information. It is said that whatever poison Sir Robert had in mind at the trial he never mentioned it, not even to his classes, so strongly was he impressed with the danger of letting such a thing become matter of public knowledge.

Washington's Spring.

The first thing that greets the eyes of a stranger alighting from the train at Cold Spring, a village resting snugly in the highlands of the Hudson, is Washington's spring, inclosed by three bowlders in the rough, which, as one approaches, are seen to contain a tiny pool of spouting water. An inscription in relief upon the bronze plate announces that "General George Washington, in frequent visits to the American troops encamped near by during the war of the Revolution, drank of this spring and gave it its name, Cold Spring."

The encampments referred to were principally upon the famous Constitution island, just below, to which was attached one end of the great chain which was stretched across the river to West Point and checked navigation by the British warships during the Revolution.

Nietzsche and the Invalid.

An invalid lady who often met Nietzsche found him the gentlest, kindest and most sympathetic of men. He "implored her with tears in his eyes not to read his books." Such was his knowledge of women that he was thunderstruck to find shortly afterward that the lady at once proceeded to read them all. He was further stupefied by the discovery that, having read them, she was utterly unmoved by the philosopher's unanswerable demonstrations that feeble persons like herself had no right to live and that women were distinguished by this, that and the other objectionable attribute. It must have been a blow to him.—London News.

Her Awful Sin.

A little girl of six once went in great distress to her mother, saying that she had committed a sin which could never be forgiven and which was too bad to be repeated. By dint of a little coaxing she was induced to make a full confession, which was in this wise: "I felt so sorry for poor Satan and wanted to give him a little comfort. So I got a glass of cold water and poured it down a little hole in the kitchen floor."

Discourteous.

At a game of "definitions" a discourteous wag gave just offense once by defining woman as "a creature that was made after man and has been after him ever since!"

Her Exact Age.

"How old is Belle?" "Twenty-four her last six birthdays."—Boston Transcript.

Benevolent feeling excuses the most trifling actions.—Thackeray.

Synopsis of the annual statement of the FARMERS' FIRE RELIEF ASSOCIATION, OF BUTTEVILLE, OREGON, a Mutual Fire Insurance Association, of Butteville, in the State of Oregon, on the 31st day of December, 1908, made to the Insurance Commissioner of the State of Oregon pursuant to law:

ASSETS.	
Stocks and bonds owned . . .	None.
Value of real estate and mortgages	769.25
Loans on bonds and mortgages	None.
Cash on hand and in banks	95.56
Premiums in course of collection and transmission	None.
Amount of all other assets	None.
Total admitted assets	\$ 864.81
LIABILITIES.	
Gross amount of losses reported and unpaid	2,000.00
Amount of unearned premiums on outstanding risks	None.
Amount of all other liabilities	1,700.00
Total liabilities	\$ 3,700.00

INCOME.	
Amount of cash received with applications for insurance during the year	1,018.02
Amount of cash received from assessments levied	3,071.88
Amount of cash received from all other sources	1,802.24
Total income	\$ 5,892.14

EXPENDITURES.	
Amount paid for losses during the year	6,081.70
Amount paid officers, directors and office help	1,026.34
Amount of all other expenditures	666.72
Total expenditures	\$ 7,774.76

BUSINESS IN OREGON FOR THE YEAR.

Amount of property at risk December 31st, 1907	\$2,465,991.00
Amount of risks added during the year	982,151.00
Amount of risks cancelled withdrawn or terminated during the year	553,000.00
Net amount of risk carried by the Association December 31st, 1908	2,895,052.00
Largest amount of insurance carried on any one risk	2,000.00

The Farmers' Fire Relief Association, of Butteville, Oregon.
(Signed), JOHN MURRAY, President.
(Signed), C. A. BAREINGER, Secretary.

A Church Without a Preacher.

[TO THE EDITOR TILLAMOOK HEADLIGHT.]
The Independent Church is dedicated to the one proposition. The light and liberty of conscience.

On the notable day of Pentecost there was no preacher, no rights, or ceremonies.

The impulse within due to the inspiration of the Spirit characterized the whole scene. No preacher with a lingo, no creed, or formula, no more perception than the wind that blows, yet the greatest event that ever transpired in the history of the world.

No man ever came to himself until he was left absolutely to himself, and the moment a man subscribes to the dictates or conscience he is forever free from the law of sin and death, and beyond the preacher's jurisdiction.

It is natural for a man to break restraint. If you want a cow to eat up a straw pile, set the dog on her and drive her away until she thinks she ought not have it, and then let her alone, and she will lick up the last straw. There are many men who are addicted to strong drink, and other vicious habits, against their own good judgment, prompted by the desire to break restraint.

The prodigal son had no restraint. There was no preacher or policeman to look after his morals, he was left to himself, with nothing but his own horse sense to prompt him.

The Independent church is for men. We do not claim that women and children should be left to themselves, or that they are capable of self-government.
J. C. GOVE.

Rev. I. W. Williamson's Letter.
Rev. I. W. Williamson, Huntington, W. Va., writes: "This is to certify that I used Foley's Kidney Remedy for nervous exhaustion and kidney trouble and am free to say that it will do all that you claim for it." Foley's Kidney Remedy has restored health and strength to thousands of weak, run down people. Contains no harmful drugs and is pleasant to take.—J. S. Lamar, Tillamook, Hawk & Miller, Bay City.

Do It Now.

Now is the time to get rid of your rheumatism. You can do so by applying Chamberlain's Liniment. Nine cases out of ten are simply muscular rheumatism due to cold or damp, or chronic rheumatism, and yield to the vigorous application of this liniment. Try it. You are certain to be delighted with the quick relief which it affords. Sold by Lamar's drug store.

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