

as I walk alone over the vast abyss of wanton stones, that there is no consciousness, no purpose, nothing but a giant stress of things . . . (Excuse my imitating the love-letters of the Brownings, and Mr. H. G. Wells, in trying to express the complete works of Spinoza, Puddhaghosha, and myself, by a series of dots).

But in the final analysis it matters little; and one thing I beg, let no Dualist cock crow upon the dung-heaps of Darjeeling!

So far as I know, I am not a Sufi or a Taoist, but I must go to China and Persia, and find out for sure.

In the meanwhile, back to Darjeeling, which I am sorry to say has been only partially burnt down in my absence. It will be my tenaciously-gripped privilege, by the wonderful courtesy of its brilliant young manager "Count Alceste C. Rigo de Righi," my late comrade—the only fault I have to find with him is that he seems to think that he has the same sort of control over his guests that the governor of a prison has over his—for the absurdly inadequate remuneration of nine and fourpence a day to stay at Drum Druid Hotel, and feast, as I am sure Lucullus never feasted, upon the really ingenious substitutes for human food, which, figuring in the menu under French names, recall with a sweet anticipation too deep for tears the delights of Paillard's and of Leon's. (I gather from official criticism of my first article, in which a sentence, somewhat similar, though not so fine, appeared, that it should be held to apply only to the occasions when I dine out, because the food at Drum Druid is *actually* human food and *not* an ingenious substitute. How the mind broadens by travelling!)

But though I may grip tenaciously, I shall not grip for long. The little devil that with his accursed whisper "Go on! Go on!" makes me think at times that I must be the wandering Jew is already at my ear, and I have no whither in particular to go. Like Lord Curzon, I am out of a job.

ALEISTER CROWLEY.

TRIFLING TALES FOR THE TIMES.

OF A FOOLISH BOASTER.

IN the course of the history of the world there came a time when those who dwell on a certain part of the earth became afflicted by a strange malady, the which, in its peculiar effect, caused each one to push himself in front of his fellows, and to raise his voice above the voices of the multitude, so that he might be seen and heard by all, and thus become famous for a space.

And in this fashion the people raised a great clamour, whereof the greater part (the which had to do with themselves) was vain and worthless.

Now, one day a restive individual, growing impatient at the failure of others to accord to him that recognition which he considered his due, set himself before the million, and, claiming their attention in forceful manner, told them divers strange things.

"Behold me!" cried this one, the while he thumped his chest, "and gaze upon me with wonder, for I have a mind to talk with you concerning the marvellous virtues which are mine. Give ear. . . . Never have I uttered aught which ventured from the strict truth. . . . Vulgar expressions, such as seem to appeal to others, have I at all times disdained; and bad language has ever been an abomination to me.

"At no time has the purity of my lips been soiled by the contact of the hateful and obnoxious weed; and clear and crystal water is my sole refreshment.

"Whenever it is written that I should pass a female in the street, I modestly cast down my eyes, lest peradventure I should be tempted to gaze upon her.

"At eventide I quit my labours with sorrow, and right willingly and gladly withal do I hasten to them in the early morning.

"Am not I the best ever?"

But the multitude listened to his song of self-praise coldly, and when he had ended, they commended together, regarding him fearfully.

Thereafter, they appointed a commission to enquire into the state of the boastful person.

And the commission, being wise, speedily got to business, and straightway sat upon the excessively virtuous one.

So that when they arose, . . .

OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF A "MODERN."

The large young man, who danced as gracefully as an elephant, had succeeded in limiting his collusions in the

waltz to twelve, whereat he was greatly delighted. And having guided his bewildered and gasping partner to the place where sat her chaperon (all smiles, albeit longing within herself for a decent sleep), he betook himself to the buffet for self-congratulation and refreshment.

There he fell in with an elderly male, who felt rather out of it, and had sought all night for someone to converse with. And this one drove the young man into a corner, and placed himself opposite him that he might not escape.

The which having done, he endeavoured to hold conversation with his junior. And he spoke of politics; of art; of music; of literature; of the drama; and in general of things that count; but the young man gazed upon him with lack-lustre eye, seemingly devoid of understanding, and uttered not a word.

At last the elderly male grew desperate; and, making a final and heroic effort, he enquired of his hearer if he knew aught concerning the sport of football.

Then, in a trice, did the young man become animated; his eye brightened, and he beamed upon his questioner with a large smile.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, enthusiastically, "now you're talkin'!"

OF A BATTLE ROYAL, AND WHAT CAME OF IT.

Once on a time, when the people of a certain land were much given to fads of divers sorts, it happened that a number of misguided females became possessed of the utterly ridiculous idea that they were on the same level as men. And they acted accordingly, troubling not to conceal their views, but rather advertising them (as was the fashion at that time of those who discovered cause for wonder in the brilliance of their own thoughts; whose name was Legion).

And these, seeking the most effective means whereby they might attract attention to themselves, came forth on a sudden, in their numbers, and demanded in no uncertain manner that they should have somewhat to do with the appointment of certain males, who, passing their days with much argument, lauded themselves for that they were the guiders of the destiny of the common people.

Now, the law-makers, being impressed with a sense of their own importance, moved in all things with a grave and dignified leisure, and declined to be hurried. The which discovering, the importunate females set themselves to make matters unpleasant for the persons who sat in high places. . . . And they were fairly successful.

But, as the days passed, others among the women of the land grew envious of their clamorous sisters, whose fame had now reached the ears of all. And they, too, came into the open, and sought to gain a prominent position; crying aloud that they desired not that which the first disturbers of the peace made much ado about, and that they would not have it. . . . So that mere men grew sorely weary of the incessant commotion; and prayed for deliverance.

Now, ere long those females who had been first in the field came to regard the presence of their rivals with some anxiety; for they feared that less notice would be taken of their works (the multitude being unstable and fickle). Wherefore, they determined to bestir themselves and rid their cause of all danger.

So they sallied forth, seeking those who were against them; and when they had gone but a little way the others met them.

Then ensued a dreadful conflict. And the air was filled with shrieks and cries; and with hairpins, and false fronts, and combs, and wisps of hair; and with muffs and furs.

In this wise the conflict raged until all were exhausted. Then those among the combatants who were married moved wearily homeward, to weep upon the bosoms of their husbands; and those who were single hid them to their abodes, and there made moan for that they had not husbands to weep against.

And lo! when the morrow came, each one of the dames and damsels who had been engaged in the dreadful *mêlée* hastened to her mirror; the which having done, she declared herself, in tearful accents, to be a perfect sight; and vowed that wild horses would not cause her to again venture into the open till that time had arrived when her complexion should have recovered its normal state and her locks should have lost their scrappy appearance.

Thus it came about that a wonderful peace reigned for a season. . . . And men went their ways with glad smiles, and shook each one his neighbour's hand right heartily, with a tremor of the eyelid.

And the business done in refreshments was extraordinary.