THE MYSTERY OF AGASA.

MAGICIANS OF INDIA

THE FLOATING YOGI AND A DISAPPEARING PEBBLE.

Connection Between the Apparently Supernatural and Recognized Forces in Nature—Clever Tricks Aided by a Secret Knowledge of Some Agencies of Which Europeans Have Been Ignorant.

In a former paper I (Frederick Bancroft) have spoken of an Indian "brother in magic," who performed the mango trick for me, and whose thunder, I think, I proved with reasonable conclusiveness, at all events on paper, I have fairly appropriated. In time the old fellow, who, if memory is not at fault, has been dubbed by me Yogi, which he was not, instead of a first-class fakir, which he was, became very friendly chiefly in consequence, it would seem, of two things—one that he brought a man to act as interpreter between us who was a munshi (tutor) by profession, and occultist by predilection; the other—I told him straight that his mango trick no longer puzzled me, and, in proof, did it before him. If he was surprised, he avoided showing it, but seeming to admit me as a sort of brother in art, he introduced me to some native gentlemen who were veritable yogis. A fakir, it must be remembered, is an acolyte or novice of esotericism; a yogi is an expert of occult art, a priest of the cult.

From these gentlemen I heard many things and saw some things, which, at the risk of taxing the credulity of my readers, must be written.

This paper shall be devoted to a description of agasa, what it is, and what are some of the resultants of its miraculous aid.

Agasa, according to the Hindu and Arabian ecstatics, is another name for life fluid. The marvels that I shall presently describe, performed by these yogis in my presence were accomplished, they claimed, by the aid of the pitris or ancestral spirits, and the superabundant, super-potential agasa in their trained and macerated systems. Spirits, they insisted, used agasa as a conductor to matter, somewhat as the electric current uses a copper wire as a traveling medium. In proportion to the quantity and potency of agasa in the system, so is the power to work marvels by the aid of spirits. Magnetic fluid, with the assistance of which much may be done of medical value, is, most probably, only another name for this essence of life. Surgeons have of late performed many painless operations, using magnetism and hypnotism, instead of anesthetics.

One of these yogi gentlemen assured me that one could "mutilate the body, lop off the limbs, and, with a sufficient amount of agasa, you can instantaneously heal the wound. Agasa is the element which keeps the atoms of matter together; the knife or sword severs it, the fire expels it from its lodgment in those atoms; put the agasa back to the severed or burned parts before they have had time to fester or wither, and the parts must reunite and again become whole as before. It is by virtue of agasa that seed germinates in the ground and grows up to be a tree, with leaves, fruit and flowers. Pour streams of agasa on the seed and you quicken in a minute what would else, with less of life fluid, occupy a month to grow." (The implication here in connection with the mango-growing trick is evident. I used ants earth, which is pregnant with formic acid; so, undoubtedly, did my venerable friend, the fakir. The yogi implied that he could achieve the same result with agasa.)

"Charge stones or other inanimate objects, with agasa drawn from a human body, and spirits can make such objects move, fly, swim, or travel hither and thither at will; in short, it is through the power of agasa—by which I mean force, the life of things—that preternatural marvels could be wrought, provided always that pitris (spirits) assist in the operation; first, because their spiritual bodies were all agasa, and next, because they had a knowledge of this great living force and how to apply it, which they could not communicate to mortals.'

One of the gentlemen named Bahadur Dost Sauda assured me that initiation into these wonder working powers was "through asceticism, chastity, frequent ablutions, long fasts, seasons of profound abstraction, spirit exalted to the contemplation of creation, deity, heaven and heavenly things; a mind wholly sublimated from earth and earthly things.'

This particular conversation occurred at Bombay in the middle of the night in a little-known temple, opening out of the celebrated caves of Elephanta. Sauda Sahib had worked himself up into a state of what I, poor, ordinary mortal that I am, should describe as hysterical excitement, a condition that closely twins the fervor of some of our religious bodies. Suddenly his eyes began to distend. He stopped an agitated walk he had been indulging in, as he talked, and facing me, he cried out:

"Behold me! I am all agasa. This thin film of matter wherewith I am covered, these meshes of bone that form my framework of life, are they not fined away to the tenuity of the elements? They hinder not my flight through space, neither can they bind me to the earth. I am casting them off. See the roof; man wahan jane see darta nahin hun!" (I am not afraid to go there.)

He looked upwards, the expression of his face became ecstatic; throwing up his hands he seemed to be pulling at the atmosphere above his head, and to my surprise, and, if it must be admitted, somewhat to my alarm, he began gently to ascend toward the roof of the temple, some 40 feet above us. As his hands reached through the space above him, his feet gently beat back the space below him. The action was not like a man walking into space, but rather that of one pulling himself with his hands and pushing himself with his feet into it; a motion not like that of a swimmer. He moved in this odd way right to the roof and circled slowly round and round, then floated down. As he neared me he commenced intoning the sentence:

"Main bhi bahar ja,' (I shall go out also—literally) over and over again. As he reached within a foot or so of the earth, he began to float slowly round me, chanting all the time. I kept turning on my own axis to face him. Soon I fancied he was less distinct, and as the minutes succeeded each other, I began to feel dizzy, and he continued to fade till at last he was quite invisible to my eyes, though my senses seemed cognizant that a something, a human essence was still circling round me and the murmured "Main bhi bahar ja,' though very faint, continued to reach my ears. Last, the intoning ceased, the dizziness dissipated itself. I put my hand in front of my closed eyes for a second or two as one does under such circumstances. Removing my hands and opening my eyes, there stood Sauda Sahib breathing hard and wiping the profuse perspiration from his face.

I am perfectly aware that the infinitely clever reader who calls everything his limited intelligence cannot understand a fraud and whose conceptive powers are nil, will guffaw hereabouts and consider me either deeply damned or assert that I was "hypnotized." Granting that my senses may have played me tricks so far as Sauda's temporary invisibility was concerned, I labored under so much possible disadvantage in connection with his aerial ascension that I could swear to in a court of law; is that not marvelous enough?

No less amazing to the layman as well as the magician, is another experiment claimed by my yogi friends as "a simple illustration of the powers of agasa on natural substances." The experiment was twice performed for my edification, once under circumstances where sleight of hand or trickery of some kind was very remotely possible; the second time, if agasa was not at work as they claim, it is impossible to indicate in the remotest degree what was operating.

The scene as before, was the temple hewn out of solid rock. Sauda and five of his friends officiated. The Munshi and old fakir sat near us, but took no part in the—ceremony is perhaps the best word to use, for whatever these gentlemen did had a reverential aspect, as if they were exercising strange powers by the benevolent and gracious permission of the highest of all powers.

Before he entered the temple I was asked to pick up a stone and carry it with us, one weighing three or four ounces would do. It was to be placed in my handkerchief, and I was to hold the four corners of the handkerchief so as to touch the stone as little as possible. Suffering them to precede me a few steps, I selected an ordinary pebble and fixed it in my handkerchief as requested. We entered the temple. The fakir lighted some torches, which sufficiently illuminated the section we were in. My handkerchief and the pebble were placed on the hard rock ground. Sauda's friends and myself sat round the handkerchief. Sauda himself sat down about four yards off and turned his back to us. Nowhere about the smooth rock was there a stone, pebble, or loose splinter or segment of stone.

One of the yogi took out of his pocket a small cake of common red water color paint and a camel's hair brush. Moistening the brush with his saliva, he filled the brush with moist color, and, handing it to me, asked me to mark the pebble in any way I liked. I illumined it with a "B" that covered all the available surface. While it was drying the yogis began murmuring and placing their flat hands in turn on one spot on the floor, just away from the handkerchief. As soon as the marking had dried I was asked to roll the pebble on this spot they had "charged with agasa," being careful not to touch it with my hands. The quintet all fixed their eyes on it, and at first pointed the dexter finger steadily toward the pebble, ceaselessly murmuring, intoning and singing in mezzo voce. This continued some time. Then in turn each man seemed to take something invisible out of the atmosphere and shake it over the stone, the others meanwhile continuing to chant. As they proceeded their intensity augmented. Soon the "B" I had marked in red began to fade, and at last disappeared altogether. The pebble, too, seemed smaller. It is impossible to determine how long I watched the pebble, but after a considerable interval of time the yogis' hands dropped and their droning song ceased; the pebble had disappeared!

It had grown small so gradually that its final disappearance I could only credit by passing my hand over the spot where it had lain continuously and without intermission under my eye. I asked for an explanation.

"Sahib," was the answer, "we have disintegrated the pebble by removing agasa from it. We have reduced it to primitive atoms and dispersed it.'

"Then as a pebble it no longer exists?" I asked.

For answer the old fakir plucked me by the sleeve and pointed to Sauda Sahib.

I rose and went to him. He was seated, cross-legged, on the rocky floor, one outstretched hand, palm upwards, on his knee, his head was sunk on his breast. Apparently he slept. The fakir held a torch near Sauda's hand. I looked and gasped. Laying in his palm was the pebble precisely as I had marked it.

I am able now positively to say that the disappearing pebble is at one and the same time a trick and a marvel. In other words, the conjurer can come very near reaching by trickery a result which would otherwise seem to require the occult adepts' application of the marvelous agasa, or life essence, of which I wrote at some length last week.

What happened on the occasion referred to was this:

A circle of yogis caused a pebble I had marked, which was placed on a solid rock floor, to disappear entirely, though I constantly watched it, and reappear on the hand of another yogi, who was seated some yards away.

At the time this test experiment operted, I was entirely unable to account for the phenomena exhibited by any means accessible to the professional magician. Still, one has a right to question any wonder that can be duplicated by trickery. If, by any process whatever, I could disintegrate, or seem to disintegrate, a pebble, the genuineness of its dissipation by means of agasa was to be questioned. Again, it is not impossible to assume that the abnormal growths due to formic acid or a foreing-house heat—in other words, an added or multiplied natural energy—may not be reached by what seems to us an abnormal application of agasa or the essence of life.

After much study and numerous experiments I accomplished this:

Assembling my yogis in the same rock-floored temple, which had been the scene of their interesting exhibition, I offered them a choice of four differently marked pebbles. The one they chose I placed on the rocky floor in front of me. Producing a tumbler, a small flask of common water and a flagon of ordinary eau de cologne, the yogis were permitted to examine these articles and satisfy themselves that they severally redeemed my cataloguing. Placing the water in a tumbler, I added a few drops of eau de cologne, explaining that the perfume gave me strength. Professing that if permitted to charge the perfumed water with my magnetism and drip it on the stone I could dissolve it.

They skeptically agreed to let me try. I started in, acting concentratedness and intensity. In five minutes the pebble was so reduced the marking had disappeared. In less than half an hour the pebble was gone. Seeming to fall into a trance, I requested somebody to trace on the floor in chalk a map of a distant part of the temple as the vision came. This was done. I studied it carefully and then gave out that the stone pedestal which upheld a small statue Gunputty, a monkey god, was slightly hollowed at the base. If this was lifted the pebble, reintegrated, the marking restored, would be found beneath. Two of the yogis went in quest. They returned in a few minutes with the pebble restored and marked as it was before I had juggled it.

The reader who has perused the seeming marvels narrated in my paper on agasa will readily admit that I achieved a feat which fairly rivaled that of my yogi friends.

Here let me at once admit that what I did was pure trickery, and, that the reader may be convinced, the details of my trickery shall here and now be published that "he" (or she) "who reads may run"—and do likewise.

It will be obvious to the meanest capacity that to do this trick, as a trick, a pebble, as a pebble, would have to be got rid of in sight of the audience—pardon, I mean, yogis. No trap table would help me. I had to perform on a rock floor.

Knowing the effect of certain acids on stone, I started in to experimentalize. Considerable time was expended before I hit on a mixture that seemed to evaporate stone. That is by constantly wetting a stone with my mixture as it dried the substance of the stone was lessened. What the mixture was will not be made public, because being a professional conjurer I need some secrets to live by. The fact remains there is such a mixture, it looks like water, has no taste, and the addition of a few drops of eau de cologne does not interfere with its stone-obliterating powers. Anyway I successfully passed it off as water to the yogis. Any professional and most lay readers could now finish the detailed explanation of my trick on the yogis.

Before assembling the gentlemen at the temple I obtained eight pebbles sufficiently closely resembling each other—a task requiring, in those regions, nothing but patient search. Four of those pebbles I marked separately. The second four duplicated the first. The second four I hid in different parts of the temple, taking care to remember exactly where they were from a spot I determined on using for my display ground. The rest is simple. The yogis selected their pebble. I touched it up with my acid till it disappeared. Next I assumed the trance and the duplicate of the marked pebble was in due course discovered.

But my triumph was short-lived. The yogis were most courteous. They didn't question the genuineness of my experiment for a moment. They asked why I questioned their powers or discredited the existence and power of agasa, when I evidently understood its power and application perfectly. This was something of a poser. Was it possible these gentlemen were easy to impose upon where a fairly good piece of legerdemain was concerned because they themselves were possessed of such unusual powers that the accomplishment of strange feats by marvelous but legitimate means called for neither wonder nor cavil? I instantly determined to satisfy myself, and, suppressing all excitement, I asked the yogis if they could depend on agasa to separate the component parts of a stone under somewhat different circumstances to those which had obtained on the occasion of our first meeting. Their affirmative reply brings me to the conclusion of this paper, and forces me to admit that there are many things for a conjurer who distrusts even his own eyes, ears and senses to learn.

Here is the exact account of another vanishing pebble feat the yogis executed exactly as I directed. It would seem to establish the existence and action of agasa.

Mr. Sauda came to the hotel with the other yogis. I took him into my room. He undressed in my presence. I loaned him an under garment and dressing-gown of my own. He was then seated in an easy chair, and being informed what was expected of him, merely requested that my servant, who remained with him, should sit behind him so as not, in any way, to distract his attention, and it was arranged that the attendant, an old English soldier, very wide awake, should remain perfectly quiet and not address him in any way. This man of mine is a trusted, confidential servant, and knows all of the secrets of a conjurer's life. The windows were all bolted and I sealed them myself on the inside. The door was locked and bolted with a bolt I put on new myself, and sealed on the outside.

Access to the room by ordinary means without my knowledge was impossible. Mr. Sauda's clothes I brought away with me and locked away in another room. The other yogis, the fakir and interpreter I transported to the temple in a carriage, and, selecting a new locale, I and the eastern gentlemen seated ourselves, as before, in a circle. I produced a pebble, in appearance similar to that used in the first trial. In reality there was this difference. The Y it was marked with was cut into the pebble to a depth of about a thirty-second of an inch, and the incision painted over with thick red paint. Thus marked it had been soaked in a composition which thickly and freely coated the whole of its outer surface and rendered it impervious to the action of the acid composition by means of which I had dissolved the pebble I used in tricking the yogis. This stone I held on my own palm this time. The yogis never touched it at all. The only stipulation they made when I proposed this condition was that when the seance began I should steadily will that "the pebble disperse." My will would thus not be in antagonism to theirs. It must be borne in mind that they gave me credit for being able to "compel nature" with the use of agasa, as they did. Their combined wills, while exceeding my unit strength, might be retarded very considerably by my opposition.

There lay the doctored pebble that they did not know was doctored, that they had seen but never touched in my own palm, and the moaning and intoning commenced. To come to Hecuba, after an interval, it began to diminish, and in time disappeared. Still we sat still. Each yogi's head dropped on his breast. They remained quite motionless, not even seeming to breathe. The silence lengthened out, and, after what seemed an interminable time, during which, as promised, I did not move, they revived, and one said: "Us ko hai." (Sauda Sahib has it.)

We all left the temple and re-entered the carriage. I felt nervous, uneasy as one does when approaching a mysterious, unaccountable fact. We reached the hotel. The seals on the door of my room were intact. There in the chair sat Sauda Sahib, his eyes closed, his hand outstretched, and on the palm the pebble. It was absolutely the one I had held in my hand in the temple, distant from the hotel several miles. The dis and reintegration were absolutely perfect to the ingrained marking, and the coat of acid-defying substance.—Washington Post.

A PAT FLUSH WAS LOW.

Full House and Four Sevens No Good, Either, in This Game.

New York Press.

That was a great game of poker played at Middletown a few nights ago. The sports haven't recovered from the shock yet. Four phenomenal hands came out and the dealer had the best hand of all. It was, however, a fair game, and though the dealer was the heaviest loser, one man insisted on fighting him.

The players were one drummer, one barroom keeper, one professional gambler and one young sport who was just cutting his eye teeth in a dollar limit game. The young sport was the dealer of this particular hand, soon after midnight, when the "cub" had lost about all of his money.

It was a jack pot, and each of the players had pushed a quarter into the pot. The drummer sat next to the dealer, and he opened it at once. The barroom keeper saw his dollar and raised it another, and the gambler came in. The cub looked at his hand and saw that he had three aces. He put up the necessary two dollars and called out, "Cards!"

The drummer took one card, the barroom keeper stood "pat," the gambler took one card and the dealer took two cards.

The drummer bet a dollar and was raised. The gambler looked at his hand a long time, and finally put in $3, thus raising both the others. The dealer was already shaking and trembling with excitement, for his two cards proved to be an ace and a deuce. Four aces!

He put in the $3 necessary to call and added $1 for a raise. These tactics went around the table several times. There was at least $50 on the table when the saloon-keeper dropped out. He had a flush "pat," but he knew his companions well enough to be sure that he could not hope to win.

There was apparently no danger of the drummer or the "cub" ceasing to raise, and after the gambler had called several times he laid down a full house—fours and trays.

"Dollar up!" first from the drummer, then from the "cub," was all that broke the awful stillness of the room. The "cub" put his cards on the table, for he was trembling violently. The other players were fidgeting in their seats.

"My last dollar," said the drummer in a voice his mother would not have recognized. "I'll call you."

The boy turned his cards face up in front of him and reached for the "pot," which amounted to exactly $87.

The drummer grabbed his arm and commanded him to wait. Then he looked at the four aces carefully, examined the deck thoroughly and then turned up his own hand. He had held four sevens throughout. The drummer jumped to his feet and declared that he had been cheated, and that the money should not leave the room. The others finally quieted him, however, and he agreed to let the winner alone.

Four aces, four sevens, fours full of trays and a "pat" flush are not found combatting each other in one game often.

Noiseless Pavements.

The city of London has now about 23 miles of carriage ways laid with noiseless materials, out of which, roughly speaking, asphalt counts for three-fourths and wood for one-fourth. In the noiseless footways, which are calculated to amount to about 15½ miles, asphalt has the field entirely to itself.

Thomas Lloyd, editor of the London Statist, is visiting this country, with a view to studying its campaign features.

EFFECT ON MORTGAGES.

GOLD AT A PREMIUM.

WHY FARMERS SHOULD DREAD FREE COINAGE.

Debts Now Hard to Pay Would Be Harder With Free Silver—It Does Not Advance the Prices of Farm Products in Mexico—The Gold Clause in Mortgages.

Washington City, Oct. 12.—The numerous letters of commendation with which the farmers of the United States have rewarded my efforts to show them that the fall in farm prices is due to other causes than governmental action relative to silver have led me to make some further investigation as to the probable effect upon them of an attempt by this nation to restore the free coinage of silver without the co-operation of the great nations with which we have our chief business relations.

Born and reared upon a farm, growing to manhood behind the plow in the state which has given the presidential candidate to the Populist-Democratic party, I resent the assumption that the farmer desires to bring about a change in the currency system for the purpose of paying his obligations in a depreciated currency, and feel that it is only necessary to discuss the probable effects of free coinage upon him in the prices he would get and the opportunity it would give him to honesty pay the debts he has honestly incurred.

All the nations which have attempted to maintain unlimited coinage of silver since the great fall in its value have lost their gold coinage and have now only a silver, or depreciated paper. These nations constitute one-half of the world's population. They number much more than 700,000,000 of people, while the United States numbers but 70,000,000, or 10 per cent. of that grand total of silver-using people.

If the unlimited coinage of silver by over 700,000,000 people has not been sufficient to prevent its falling to one-half its former value, does it seem reasonable to assume that the mere addition of 10 per cent. of that number, the population of the United States, would bring it back to its former relation with gold?

It is perfectly apparent that not only would this action fail to restore silver to its former parity with gold at the ratio of 16 to 1, but that free coinage would, on the other hand, result in the disappearance of all the gold money of the United States, or in its advance to a high premium. This is so apparent from the present condition of other countries which have already free coinage of silver and from the experience of all nations for generations, that the man who denies it shows himself deceived or desiring to deceive others.

Farm Mortgages Payable in Gold.

When it became apparent that the adoption of free coinage would drive gold to a premium, the first thought which presented itself was as to its effect upon men who had agreed to pay their obligations in gold. To say that it would be disastrous to them tells it but faintly. Those who know how difficult it is to get money to pay debts dollar for dollar would realize the difficulty, yes, the hopeless task, of getting for that purpose a class of currency which is at a high premium. In Mexico, South America, and, indeed, all free silver countries, gold is at a premium of practically 100 per cent., and it is reasonable to assume that the same result would follow in this country.

What would then be the condition of the man who had to pay his obligations in a class of money at 100 per cent. premium? If he is unable to pay them with all the money at par, how would he do it if the money which he must use should be at this enormous premium?

It was with this in mind that I, some weeks ago, set about investigating as to whether any considerable share of the obligations of the farmers are payable in gold. I knew that in cities it had been the fashion to make mortgages and other obligations payable in gold. I knew that Gov. Altgeld of Illinois makes the leases of all his tenants in the palatial buildings of his wealthy corporation payable in gold; that Senator Jones and Senator Stewart make no denial that the obligations which they exact are payable in gold; that Mr. Sewall, the Democratic candidate for vice president, makes his contracts payable in the yellow metal which he denounces in his political sphere. I knew that practically all obligations by towns and cities and states are now made payable in gold; but I did not know how far this habit had been followed by the farmers.

It was with some anxiety, therefore, that I set about this investigation. And it is with an increased anxiety as to the effect of free coinage upon the farmer that I contemplate the result of this investigation, which indicates that more than one-half, or perhaps two-thirds, of the farm mortgages of the United States are today payable in gold, and that none are now being renewed without the gold clause.

Letters from Farmers.

This astounding discovery is the result of much careful investigation. Letters and telegrams were sent to farmers, county seats, and to business men who are familiar with the methods of their section. The replies, of course, vary in their estimates, but the summarization of them leads to the absolute and unavoidable conclusion that a very large proportion of the farm mortgages today are payable in gold, and that practically every one now being renewed, or that will be renewed, if free coinage is adopted, will be made payable in that metal.

This statement will doubtless be a surprise to many people, and, in some cases, to farmers themselves. While many farmers have quietly accepted these requirements, when they were compelled to renew their mortgages, they have not discussed what was to them an unpleasant subject, and it is not improbable that some have failed to note this feature of the obligations which they have signed. Long legal documents, which cover pages of printed forms, are not always read line by line and word by word, and not a few of the keen business men of Chicago, who had agreed to pay their leases to Gov. Altgeld in gold, were not aware of that fact until their attention was called to the wording of their leases, since there was no necessity for enforcing the demand for gold coin so long as all the currency is kept at par with that metal. At any rate, whether farmers realize or do not realize the fact that a large proportion of their mortgages are payable in gold, there can be no doubt but that this is the case. In order to show that this assertion is correct, I quote from a few of the letters and telegrams which I have received from various sections of the country:

"Grand Island, Neb., Aug. 20, 1896.—The gold clause is being usually demanded in farm mortgages now. Delinquents are being crowded. G. B. BELL."

"Minneapolis, Minn., Aug. 20, 1896.—Twenty-five per cent. of the farm mortgages in this section are payable in gold. Since the silver agitation began investors want gold notes with their mortgages.

"L. E. KELLY."

"Minneapolis, Minn., Aug. 20, 1896.—I believe there has been a marked change in the method of making farm mortgages of late, and that the gold clause is more frequently inserted than heretofore.

"F. R. CLEMENT."

"No. 34 Nassau Street, New York, N. Y., Aug. 21, 1896.—The loans of this company are all placed in the West, chiefly in Missouri and Iowa. Perhaps one-third of the mortgages we have placed are payable in gold. There is certainly a decided tendency on the part of investors since the silver agitation started to require gold contracts, but it may be said that generally investors are refusing to make any loans even with the gold contracts added. The idea appears to be that borrowers would not be able to pay in gold, even thought they had promised to do so.

"W. F. BARTLETT."

"St. Paul, Minn., Aug. 20, 1896.—The majority of the real estate mortgages given in this section have the gold clause, and ours always had. There is no change in the custom since the silver agitation started, so far as we know, but nearly all companies have shut down and are waiting the outcome of the November election.

"KNUPPE & HARTINSEK."

"Dallas, Texas, Aug. 20, 1896.—Probably three-fourths of the mortgages of this section are payable in gold. The change to gold was made from the passage of the so-called Sherman (silver coinage) act in 1890.

"THE SECURITY AND MORTGAGE TRUST COMPANY."

"St. Paul, Minn., Aug. 7, 1896.—Nearly all of our farm mortgages are payable in gold.

"H. C. GILBERT."

"Nashville, Tenn., Sept. 2, 1896.—There is no doubt but that 50 per cent. of the mortgages and other obligations of the farmer are past due and will fall due between the date of election and the inauguration, or before Mr. Bryan, if elected, could convene congress. This being the fact, in case of Mr. Bryan's election, no man could tell the misery and woe that would be inflicted upon the farmers of the country during the coming winter. C. M. JOSEPH."

"Chicago, Ill., Aug. 24.—Several years ago we loaned very heavily in Kansas; in fact, we invested $4,000,000 or $5,000,000 in that state, and for the past five years we have practically given up making any new investments there, and it has been caused by their having 'too much politics' in Kansas and too much Populism. They have gradually driven their best citizens and capital out of the state.

"M. W. HARRIS."

"St. Paul, Minn., Aug. 18.—During the last eight years perhaps 75 or 80 per cent. of the loans that we have made are payable in gold. Our investment today on farm loans is about $8,000,000.

"S. B. SHOTWELL."

"St. Paul, Minn., Aug. 20.—In my judgment fully 90 per cent. of the farm mortgages made in this section are made payable in gold, and I have taken the trouble to inquire of several of my friends in this city, with the result that my judgment has been confirmed in each instance. In some cases I found that there has been this change since the silver agitation started; that wherein, in the past, the gold clause was customary, but in connection with really choice securities was not always insisted upon; now it would be difficult to make a loan except upon a gold basis. In other particulars, the silver agitation has affected business very materially and there is very little money offering now for farm mortgages, and will not be until it is certain that the silver party will be defeated.

"JOHN W. ROBINSON."

The assertion has been made by the silver advocates that if even their proposed system should drive gold to a premium they would "legislate the premium out of gold" or annul by law the gold contracts already existing. It should be remembered, however, that this second proposition would be in direct violation of the constitution, and that the proposition to "legislate the premium out of gold" by reducing the weight or fineness of the coins, or by any other process, would not have any effect upon existing gold contracts. These obligations call for payment in "gold coin of the United States of the present standard of weight and fineness." No 50-cent silver dollar, although made a legal tender by law, and no gold coin of reduced weight or fineness could be made to apply to these contracts. Men who have obligations payable in gold may rest assured that no matter how high premium may go as the result of silver legislation, there will be no escape from payment in the coin which they agreed to pay.

Prices Under Free Silver.

Another subject of equal importance to the farmer is the price which he would get for his products if the free and unlimited coinage of silver should be adopted. The assertion is constantly made that it would double his prices.

I have made an equally careful investigation of this subject by an elaborate inquiry as to the prices which the farmers of that free silver country lying alongside our own, Mexico, receive for the same class of articles produced by the farmers of the United States. Mexico is constantly pointed out by the free silver advocates as the most prosperous free silver country in the world. It is an especially important object lesson for the people of this country, because it lies just alongside our own, separated only by a stream of water, and producing many of the same articles of farm growth that are produced in the United States.

If the free coinage of silver really does give better prices for farm products, it is easy to find it out by comparing the prices which the farmers of Mexico receive for the class of products which our farmers produce. This, of course, only relates to such articles as they raise in sufficient quantities to supply the home market. It would not be fair to compare the price of wheat or flour in Mexico with that of the United States, because not enough wheat is grown there to meet local demand, and prices are governed by the price in the United States, plus the price of transportation and tariff rates on that imported from this country. But in the case of those articles which are common to both countries, and of which there is an abundant supply in Mexico, it is fair to compare prices.

I have therefore written to a number of United States consular officers and others in Mexico, and to the custom house officers on the Rio Grande, asking the prices of articles of this class. Their views are valuable because in many cases they are called upon to determine the price of invoices of these articles intended for importation to the United States.

The following are summaries of the statements of these United States officials in Mexico and at the custom houses on the Texas border, in which they indicate the value of the class of farm products common to Mexico and the United States. It is to be borne constantly in mind that these prices are in Mexican money, which is worth just one-half of our own money:

Hon. Louis M. Buford, United States consul at Paso del Norte, Mexico, quotes the following prices in Mexican money: One-year-old steers, $12; 2-year-old, $16; 3-year-old, $20; cows, $14; horses, $12 to $18; mules, $18 to $25; sheep, $1.50—all in Mexican money.

Hon. John Maguire, United States consul, Tampico: Two-year-old beef cattle, $10; horses, $25 to $40; mules, $30 to $50; burros, $4 to $8; hides, 15 cents per pound; beans, 5 to 7 cents per pound—all in Mexican money. Mr. Maguire adds: "Farm hands in this district cannot get work more than one-third of the time. They accept 18 to 25 cents per day, and find themselves."

Hon. S. M. Simmons, United States vice consul at Piedras Negras, Mexico: Beef cattle, $19 to $30; horses, $8; mules, $19; sheep, $2 to $3; wool, per pound, 16 cents; tobacco, 18 cents; beans, 5 cents—all in Mexican money.

Hon. Charles Gehren, United States consular agent at Zacatecas, Mexico: Fat steers, 2 years old, $15 to $15; cows, $20 to $25; oxen, $35 to $40; horses, $15 to $30; mules, $30 to $50; beans, 4 cents per pound.

Mr. Frank B. Earnest, collector of customs, Laredo, Texas: Appraised value of animals imported to the United States: Two-year-old steers, $9.57; 3-year-old, $12.61; 4-year-old, $15.42; cows, $11.44; beans, 4 cents per pound; horses, $10 per head; dry hides, 10 cents per pound—all in Mexican money. Mr. Earnest closes his letter by saying: "The Mexican farmer receives less than our farmer does for all he sells."

J. Arce & Co., City of Mexico: Horses, $30 to $40; cows, $15 to $25; sheep, $1 to $1.50; farm hands, per month, $8 to $15; teamsters, 25 cents to $1 per day; laborers, $8 to $30 per month.

Hon. Charles Schaefer, United States consul, Vera Cruz: Beef steers, $25 to $30; cows, $20 to $40; hides, 10 cents per pound; beans, 5 to 8 cents—all in Mexican money.

D. O. McCray, of Topeka, Kan., who recently made a careful tour of Mexico, gathering information for the benefit of the farmers of this country upon this subject, reports: "In favorable crop seasons corn sells for 50 cents per bushel in Mexican money, though this being a short crop year the prices are higher; beef cattle, as fine as any on the American ranches, are sold on the Mexican plantations at from $25 to $35 per head, Mexican money, while ranch cattle bring $15 to $16 per head. Ranch horses can be bought for $12 per head, while mules are quoted at from $20 to $50 per head—all in Mexican money. The average daily wage in farm districts is 26 cents per day, in the same depreciated money."

It will be seen from the above quotations that the free coinage system in the country which is pointed out as the most prosperous silver-using nation of the globe has not resulted in high prices for the farmer. They get for the class of articles common to Mexico and the United States lower prices than the American farmers now get, and these prices are paid in money worth just one-half that received by the American farmer for his products. The farmers of the great Mississippi valley who are now being urged to vote for the establishment of the Mexican financial system in this country should be interested in these reports. It will be seen that their Mexican brothers in agriculture are forced to sell at prices unheard of in this country, and probably the $30 to $40 which our farmers get for their beef cattle; the $25 to $35 which their milch cows are worth; the $35 to $75 which their horses and mules bring, and the $2.50 to $3.50 which sheep will sell for, would as much surprise them as do their prices surprise us. In comparing prices in the two countries, always bear in mind that our dollars exchange for twice as much of any product in the market as do those of Mexico, in which the Mexican prices given are quoted.

Conclusion.

It seems to me, therefore, that the farmers of the United States ought to think seriously, very seriously, of these facts before they vote for the free and unlimited coinage of silver. If this system is likely to reduce largely the value which they receive for the articles which they have to sell, and at the same time drive to a high premium the metal with which they are, many of them, now obliged to pay their debts, will they not, under free coinage, be far worse off than at present?—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

How Bryan Reasons.

Chicago Times-Herald.

One of the tremolo passages in Bryan's speech to the convention reads thus:

"Those hardy pioneers who braved all the dangers of the wilderness, who have made the desert to blossom as the rose—those pioneers away out there, rearing their children near to nature's heart, where they can mingle their voices with the voices of the birds—out there where they have erected schoolhouses for the education of their young, and churches where they praise their Creator, and cemeteries where sleep the ashes of their dead—are as deserving of the consideration of this party as any people in this country."

Query: Are those men any more deserving of consideration than other people? If so, why?

When they braved the dangers of the wilderness they did it in order to make money. The desire of gain and not patriotism urged them on. What is there so exceptional in that that the currency should be watered to oblige them?

Many of these pioneers have taken up land, improved it, with borrowed money, and grown wheat, corn, cabbage and potatoes. On the Platte that may be called "making the wilderness blossom like the rose." In more prosaic sections they call it "raising crops." But what is there so very praiseworthy about "making the desert blossom like the rose"—purely as a business affair—that those who do it should be empowered to cheat those who loaned them the money with which to make the rose gardens?

It has not been understood hitherto that persons who rear their children where they can mingle their voices with the song of the birds have any special prerogatives, and are exempt from the law of meum and tuum. City parents, whose children's voices blend with those of sparrows, do not claim to repudiate their debts. Why should men who live where robins or bluebirds sing?

The pioneers of and for whom Bryan speaks have built schoolhouses and churches, and have laid out burial grounds. Mr. Bryan seems to think that noteworthy, but the residents of other parts of the United States have done likewise, only at a somewhat earlier day.

But how does the fact that the pioneers have built churches and schoolhouses justify them in demanding that the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," which is supposed to be taught in those buildings shall be abrogated for their special benefit?

It has been contended sometimes that great geniuses—poets and musicians—were outside the ordinary code of morals. But this is the first time a similar claim has been made on behalf of men who are not geniuses and who are doing nothing to distinguish themselves from the mass of the community.

They build churches and schoolhouses. Therefore they have a right to swindle. They hear "the swallow twittering from the straw-built shed," therefore they should be relieved of half their debts. They "rear their children near nature's heart"—that is, out in the country. Therefore they should be enabled to pay off in 50-cent dollars the persons who loaned them the money with which to settle down near nature's heart.

This may strike the ordinary man as strange reasoning, but it is Bryan's. It is the best argument he can make in defense of dishonest dollars.

Campaign Songs.

It was in the campaign which resulted in Lincoln's election (1860) that electioneering made special use of music. Indeed, since "Tippecanoe and Tyler, Too," no election had produced so many songs. The quadruple character of the contest, including, as it did, two Democratic tickets, Douglas (regular) and Breckinridge (secession), with Bell and Everett on neutral ground, no doubt contributed to that result, though the tremendous issue which developed as the campaign continued stirred the patriotic impulses of every one according to their knowledge and prejudices. Bell and Everett had two songs, neither of which gained popular favor. The Breckinridge wing of the Democratic party had one song to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne," while the Douglas shouters aroused the enthusiasm singing the song "Douglas and His Men" to the air "Dinna ye Hear the Slogan;" the other song used by them was entitled "Lincoln's Picture," and was intended to be funny. Of the many Lincoln songs the least meritorious was the most generally sung. It was entitled "The Lincoln Hoss and Stephen A.," sung to the tune of "Du-da;" The following verse will indicate the literary quality of the song:

There's an old plow "Hoss" whose name is "Dug,"
Du da, du da.
He's short and thick—a regular "Plug,"
Du da, du da.
Chorus—
We're bound to work all night,
We're bound to work all day;
I'll bet my money on the "Lincoln Hoss,"
Who bets on Stephen A.?

The lively air, so simple that a child could sing it and easy to march by, rendered this very popular, especially in the West. When Lincoln was re-elected in 1864 there were few campaign songs in the proper sense of the term. But the war song, "Battle Cry of Freedom," and the enlistment song, "We Are Coming, Father Abraham," were made to do loyal service. The opposition were inspired with a sickly effort entitled "Lincoln's Dodge," set to "Yankee Doodle," a satire on "We Are Coming, Father Abraham," and "The Hour and the Man," set to the air of "Bonny Dundee." The one single song of the electioneering type for Lincoln was a marching song entitled "Then Go for Old Abe and Be Marching Along."

Odd Effect of a Sermon.

When Mr. Hemphill was canvassing Cashel he found that a party of electors, known as "commoners" numbering some thirteen or fourteen were notoriously corrupt and always sold their vote to the highest bidder. Their usual price was £20 per vote. Hemphill requested the priest to preach on the sin of trafficking on the franchise and the priest complied and denounced corrupt trafficking in votes as a moral sin. The next day Hemphill met one of the commoners and anxious to learn what effect the sermon had produced on these venal gentlemen he asked the man whether he had been at mass on the previous day.

"I was, your honor."

"Was not that sermon on bribery excellent?"

"It was an excellent sermon, your honor."

"Will it do good, do you think?"

"I think it will make the election run very close, your honor."

"How so?"

"Why, we always got £20 for a vote before we knew it was a sin; but as his reverence says we'll be d——d for selling our votes, we can't for the future take less than £40."

AT A CHILD'S GRAVE.

It is not dew that gleams so bright
On these frail flowers 'neath which she sleeps,
But tears shed by the mourner Night
Who ever lingers here and weeps.
—Herbert Bashford, in Chautauqua.

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