

LEGENDS ABOUT BIRDS.

THEY WERE SUPPOSED TO BE FAVORITES WITH THE GODS.

From remote antiquity much mysterious lore has existed on the subject of birds, and ornithomancy, or the science of divination by birds, has still many credulous believers. The feathered denizens of the air were supposed to be favorites with the gods, having always some subtle connection with the shadowy region beyond, and, therefore, endowed with unusual prescience concerning the powers of nature.

The gods of heathendom were frequently transformed into birds, and classical authors abound in instances of ordinary mortals condemned to exist in bird shape for periods of greater or less duration. In Vedic lore, Agni often appeared as a falcon or eagle, Zeus or Jupiter became an eagle to seduce the young Ganymede, and a swan in order to make love to Leda. King Arthur, the early British hero, was, said popular tradition, transformed into a raven. In Irish lore, the children of Lir were transformed into swans, to wander for centuries.

Many of the ancient gods and goddesses have as attributes certain ones of the feathery tribe. The eagle was the bird of Jove; the peacock, the goose and the cuckoo belonged to Venus; the owl, symbol of meditation, to Athens; while Apollo also claimed the goose. To Mars was dedicated the woodpecker; to Venus the sparrow and dove. The woodpecker is Pegasus, a soothsayer, who failed to reciprocate Circe's love, and was metamorphosed in consequence. Much popular lore relates to this bird.

Savages had many legends about birds, usually in connection with meteorological phenomena. The Haidah Indians claim descent from the crow. Votan, the Maya hero, is represented as a swallow, and the owl is a cultured hero of the Tupaquas of California. The Pimas say the eagle caused the deluge.

It is a very old conception that the soul passes to heaven in the form of a bird, and some say these souls flutter about in bird shape. The Powhatan tribe would not touch wood birds, regarding them as the animated souls of their dead chiefs, and the Indians near St. Anthony's Falls, said the spirits of dead warriors hovered about in the shape of eagles.

The Hurons thought that turtle doves were the abodes of departed souls, and the Abilones claimed the same for the red-headed duck, regarding it as an omen of death to see it flying slowly overhead. Several South American tribes entertained similar ideas concerning many birds.

Thlinkets revered Yehr, the creator crow, and Delaware thought their guardian spirit, in eagle shape, hung over them, and that, if it pleased, corn would be plentiful, and the hunting successful, but if it were angry, thunder and lightning would attend its rage. The diver was sacred among the Hurons, embodying the souls of the dead. The Flatheads say the speckled duck is a metamorphosed weeping Indian wife. The Kailla Indians say the soul is carried to heaven by a bird; but a hawk that follows will catch it if it is impeded by its sins. The Ojibways call the bridge over which souls travel "the owl bridge." This conception of the bird as a soul is a common one, and in this shape the soul is frequently figured in medieval prints as escaping from the body.

Several birds are sacred in popular lore. The swallow is one of these. A Swedish tradition represents it as flying over the cross during the crucifixion of Christ, and crying "Svala! svala!" (comfort). Its presence about the house or barn is an auspicious omen in most countries, and it is unlucky to disturb its nest.

A tradition similar to that given above is related of the stork, a bird venerated all over Europe. Swedish legends say that it flew about the cross saying, "Styrka! styrka!" (strengthen). And it is therefore a bird of good omen.

There are three of the smaller birds common to many countries, which are also regarded as sacred. These are the robin, the wren and the cuckoo. In Scotland the robin is never molested, for it is said to have a drop of God's blood in it.

A Breton tradition alleges that the wren brought fire from heaven, but lost a part of its plumage. There is a popular legend that the little bird claimed the title of king of birds by a contest with the eagle as to which could mount the highest. Perched upon the back of the larger bird, the little wren soared beyond its competitor and won the title.

The cuckoo bears a character in popular lore much like that of the wren. It is more of a prophet, however.

The dove is a well-known emblem of fidelity and gentleness. As the sign of incarnation and of immortality it has always been sacred to Christians.

The eagle is the subject of much popular lore.

An old superstition declares that the king of birds ascends into the fiery regions about the sun once in ten years, and then plunges into the sea to renew its youth.

A popular idea, dating from antiquity, was that of the dying swan, whose sweet notes were heard only just before its dissolution.

The pelican was also the subject of a curious tradition. She was said to pierce her breast to feed her young; and it was also asserted that young pelicans were hatched dead, and the

cock revived them by a drop of blood from its breast.

Another equally ancient superstition was that concerning the kingfisher, which brought good weather (balcony days) while sitting on her eggs. Pliny, Virgil and many other ancient authors refer to this superstition.—*Globe-Democrat*.

A CURIOUS SHOWER.

THE HEAVENS OBSCURED BY FALLING APPLES.

Old mariners recall an apple shower near the Wells Street bridge that took place almost thirty years ago, and which, they say, obscured the sun's rays for an hour or more. The stated duration of this solar phenomenon is conjectural, as no record was kept of the matter, and an infirm memory only reverts to it for the reason that it suggests an exciting occurrence in the early history of the Chicago harbor.

A great many old Chicagoans will remember the explosion of the propeller *Globe*, and will dispute over the date of its happening. Over the circumstance that it accounted for the most astonishing appearance the river ever presented up to that time there will be no dispute whatever.

The *Globe*, a sound, sea-going vessel in the Michigan fruit trade, was being unloaded near Hale's dock, close to Wells Street bridge. It was in the forenoon of a pleasant day in the autumn of 1860. A crowd of curious people were looking on at convenient distances, for the propeller had the biggest cargo of apples that had been brought to Chicago for many a long day. She was all apples, hold and deck laden, piled in tier upon tier of barrels. Suddenly there was a rush of smoke, the sizzle of escaping steam, then a thundering detonation, as if all the noise and tumult and din of a dozen Fourth of July were concentrated into one mighty and ear-splitting confusion of sound. The *Globe's* boilers had exploded, and all that remained of the craft was her hull.

Even this wasn't seen at first. All over, everywhere, the air was filled with apples. They shot up, bushels of them together, and scattered right and left thousands of bushels, making a denser cloud than the smoke from the wreck. The air was black with apples, and what with the fruit ascending and descending by the cartoon, partial darkness reigned. Then the smoke cleared away, and it is safe to say that never since that time has there been seen so many apples floating in the Chicago river. The stream was literally choked up with the fruit, which was piled in thick layers, and for minutes afterwards down came a steady rainfall of more apples. The majority of them it would appear were hurled upward in a straight direction, the force of the explosion being so great that it was a long time before they commenced the downward trip. They were dropped bushels at a time and one of the biggest apple showers on record was witnessed.

For weeks after the small boy had a picnic apple-fishing in the river.

Considering everything the explosion wrought but little damage. A little girl named Nolan was killed, a son of Dick Owen Hale was rendered insane through terror, and a few sustained minor injuries and sore heads from the falling apples were plentiful enough. Among the first on the scene were Captains John and Redmond Prindiville. Curiously enough Captain John Prindiville was on board the first vessel that ever exploded in Chicago harbor—the tug *Union*—and he happened to be only a short distance away when the *Globe* exploded. On both occasions he escaped injury.—*Chicago News*.

RULES OF THE DEN.—New York World: Edward Davis, colored, was the proprietor of a gambling den at the corner of Jay and West streets up to yesterday, when Detectives Handy and Dunn broke up his business and captured Davis, 500 chips, 6 packages of cards, 2 roulette tables and the following set of rules for the government of the den:

1. No stranger will be admitted.
2. No spitting on the stove.
3. No money loaned from the till.
4. No man's hand will be shot more than three times and no man will be allowed to hold the game after he is broke. He must get his stakes before the pot can get to him.
5. Everything on the table goes. Sitting allowed. If you do not like the way a man shoots you need not feed him; he must continue to shoot the same way that he starts off.
6. When a man cannot get his money he must pass, and off he comes.
7. No gambling allowed in this room.
8. No obscene or profane language allowed.
9. No loading in this room; a man must get out and run around the block for two hours when he is broke.
10. Please do not ask for tobacco. This is mean. But ask your friend.

By order of EDWARD DAVIS, Manager.

Justice Smith held Davis in \$500 bail for trial.

She—How can you sit there smoking, Henry, when the garden is in such a wretched condition? He—My dear, that is the silliest question you have asked this summer. My intense devotion to the weed should explain the matter to you.

THE WORSHIP OF JOSS.

INTERIOR OF A CHINESE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY.

There are two houses of worship here in New York. They are called Joss houses, though what gave rise to the word Joss is not known. It is not a Chinese word and is probably a birth of the pigeon English dialect. The word meaning God in Chinese is Quong Hee Say Gong. In the two Joss houses as in every other one all over the world, he is pictured as the central point of attraction, hanging, as the picture does behind the altar. It is painted with more or less magnificence and represents a man of ideal beauty, according to Chinese standards, in the prime of life. On either side of this picture, in all Joss houses, hang portraits of the great powers of the universe, one as the destructive, represented by a hideous soldier armed to the teeth. The other is the ideal productive woman, bearing in her arms a sack of gold and quantities of flour and grain. In the two Joss houses in New York the central pictures are about six feet by four in dimension and artistically executed.

HOW THEY ARE MAINTAINED.

To the maintenance of these Joss houses all the wealthy Chinese and many of the poorer subscribe with more or less liberality. Every one will take a dyer in fan tan or a lottery and pocket his gains or losses without scruple, and no one is bound by Occidental notions of chastity. They are very pious and devoted men, according to the tenets of their creed. They officiate at the simple ceremonies which obtain in these two temples without pay unless the worshiper protracts his devotions. High Priest Ah Moy said the other day: "A man can say all the prayers he needs to say in a minute. If he prolongs the matter he is simply what you would call in English a Pharissee and a hypocrite. For luxuries of this kind we make a charge, and so if a man remains before the altar more than a minute he must pay for the privilege. One minute costs him nothing, the second costs him twenty-five cents, the third fifty cents, and the fourth \$1, the fifth \$2, and so on in regular ratio."

What the worshiper does is interesting, although it is so brief. Entering the Joss house he distributes a quantity of Joss sticks which he has purchased outside. There are six little bowls of sand in which he sticks them; four are in front of the altar, one is under a table in the corner, and the sixth is on a table or stone in another corner. In each he puts six sticks, or a multiple of six according to the fervency of his religious notions. Six is a sacred number among this people. The first bowl represents devotion; the second the past of the worshiper, the third his future; the fourth the present for him and his relatives and friends. The one under the table goes for luck, and the last for his domestic relations. Having placed and ignited these sticks he kneels upon the prayer cloth, which is spread before the altar, and there makes twelve genuflections.

A PRAYER TRANSLATED.

All this is done quickly, as has been stated; but the ostentations will remain exciting prayers from the books of the Chinese classics, bumping their foreheads on the ground and acting the pharisee's part. The short prayer that is said may be freely translated as follows: "Make me better; make me more courteous; make me kinder; bless my parents and my grandparents; bless my children and my wife; bless my cousins, my uncles, my ancestors, my country, my servants and my friends; keep away from them any disease and give them all prosperity. Amen."

The house itself or room deserves description, and yet it would be hard to give one that would carry the picture to the reader's eye. Tinsel ornaments abound; ornamentation is profuse, but little or nothing of real value is to be seen. The room is used not exactly as a club house, but as a pleasant place of resort. Conversation, smoking, games at cards and dominoes, something for stakes, go on without a question, and the general air of the small crowd that may be found at any hour of the day or night within the walls is that of jollity and social enjoyment rather than that of what we western people call religion.

High Priest Ah Moy said to a pretty actress who visited his temple while studying New York: "You think that this is all irreverent, and that we should not pray and laugh and sing in the house of our God. Do you not believe in children enjoy themselves wherever they are? You should not send them away from home to play in a bar room. We think the same. We are all the children of our God, and we enjoy ourselves in his house rather than go away."

Perhaps the most curious institution in the Joss house or temple is the luck book, so called. There are standing in front of the altar two vases, in each of which are two or three bamboo leaves. On each of these is inscribed the number of a page and verse in the sacred book that lies on a table nearby. The worshiper, after paying a small fee, will either shake the vase himself or get the priest to do it until one of these leaves is shaken up on top. This is picked out and the verse looked up, as it indicates the fortunes of the devotee.

Florida promises to become a large producer of opium.

DESTRUCTIVE TO HEALTH.

VARIOUS INDUSTRIAL PURSUITS WHICH INJURE THE HEALTH OF WORKING WOMEN.

In considering the effects of industrial life upon the health of women, it would seem at first glance, as though they would be more advantageous than those which result from a life of pleasure, or of professional labor, but I fear that facts will hardly bear out such a conclusion. In the first place we cannot exclude from the grand aggregation of such pursuits those employments which are of themselves dangerous of character and necessarily more or less destructive—such as bleachers and straw hat manufacturers, where powerful acids are used and fumes inhaled. Women are quite extensively employed in these industries and suffer keenly from irritation of the bronchial mucous membrane; later from lung diseases, which are destined to become fatal. Large numbers of women (and children as well) are employed in tobacco manufactories and suffer much from the absorption of nicotine, a dangerous poison when continuously inhaled.

Women suffer keenly from the effects of mercury, lead and phosphorous material used in the manufacture of many articles with which they have to do. In the match factories, where women and children are largely employed, the danger is said to be somewhat lessened through the substitution of red for white phosphorus. Women who work where lead is employed suffer more proportionately than men, in that their absorptive powers are greater and their powers of resistance less than those of men. Artificial flower workers are much affected by arsenical and other poisonous coloring materials, and come to be affected by a species of paralysis. If work is continued after the early symptoms become pronounced, there is little hope of recovery. Makers of feather decorations become very seriously affected, the eyes weaken, more or less general weakness prevails, and the lungs are soon seriously affected. About three years is the full extent that this class of workers can follow their calling, because of the inhalation of a peculiar dust which handling sets free and from absorption of the poisonous materials used in curling the feathers.

Women engaged in porcelain and pottery manufactories are afflicted with asthma and a constantly recurring cough or influenza. They become pale, weak, flabby, and, when mothers, their offspring are sickly and scrofulous, and early fall victims to scrofulous affections; at times dying off in large numbers in the course of a few months. What of the saleswoman and the shop girl? We all realize to the full, the effect upon health through standing behind the counter. It is needless to dilate upon it. And the shop girl? We scarcely need inquire. Long hours of unhealthful employment in unhealthful localities, uncommensurable and uncongenial hours, all tell upon her physically and mentally. Exposures, unsuitable food, insufficient and unhealthful dressing and a general disregard for anything connected with the preservation of health, are, we must remember, the usual conditions entering into the life of this class of workers.—*Anna D. French, M. D., in Woman*.

SPIRIT COMMUNICATION.

A COMPACT THAT FAILED TO AFFORD A SATISFACTORY TEST.

NEW YORK, July 29. — Courtlandt Palmer and Stephen Pearl Andrews had an agreement that the one who died first was, if possible, to communicate from the spirit land with the survivor. A year was to be allowed for the phenomenon to take place, and in case it did not the conclusion was to be that the theory of spiritualistic intercourse was false. Andrews was a spiritualist. Palmer was an unbelieving investigator. He and Andrews, who was commonly called "The Pantarch," together founded the Colloquium, a society of philosophers of diverse views, to meet for discussions. That was the original of the nineteenth century club of which Palmer was president and chief financial sustainer. The two men were anxious to settle the matter while at least one lived whether the spirits of the dead communicated with the living. So they made the agreement described. Each memorized a sentence and this was, if feasible, to be sent by the one who died to the one who yet lived, through some medium hundreds of miles away. Nobody else was to know the words. Andrews died last autumn and Palmer, although without faith, waited for the promised message. It did not come. The Pantarch was frequently represented as speaking through various mediums here and there, but he did not mention Palmer or the compact. Not long before Courtlandt Palmer's death he talked with several friends about the unkept promise by Stephen Pearl Andrews and declared that if the expiration of the year did not bring the proof to the contrary he should set down spiritualism as a sure delusion. As he died before the end of the year and without, so far as known, disclosing the test sentence to anybody, this attempt by two of the Nineteenth Century club men to ascertain the truth as to spiritualism comes to nothing satisfactory.—*Rocky Mountain News*.

THE OBNOXIOUS FLEA.

CURIOUS FACTS ABOUT THE LITTLE TORMENT.

Let us put our flea under the microscope. It seems to be clothed in a sort of armor formed of brown, overlapping plates that are so exceedingly tough as to be almost indestructible. Its head is small and very thin, and it has a single eye upon each side. The eye is black, and the rays of light scintillate within it like sparks of fire. Pudget managed to look through one of these eyes and found that it diminished objects in size while it multiplied them in number, a man appearing in it an army of fairies and the flame of a candle becoming a thousand tiny stars. From the shape of its head and for other reasons the flea is supposed to use only one eye at a time. The offensive weapon of the flea is composed of two piercers and a tongue. When it feeds it stands erect, thrusting its sucker into the flesh, and it will eat without intermission until disturbed, for it voids as fast as it swallows its food. It is interesting to put several in a glass, and giving them a piece of raw meat, see them all standing on their hind legs to suck up its juices.

Their manner of breathing is still undetermined, but it is thought most probable that they receive air into their bodies through small holes at the end of the palpi.

The legs of a flea are marvels of strength and elasticity. They are joined to the body by long tendons that act like wire springs. In making its leap, which, it is said, can cover 200 times its own length, the flea draws the leg up close to the body, and then throws it out with great force; but the impulse proceeds from the first joint alone, the others only increasing it by their stretch while the leap is being made.

Fleas are possessed of great strength. Mouffett tells of a mechanic who made a gold chain as long as his finger that a flea dragged after him, and a golden chariot, which he drew also. Bingley writes of a watchmaker in the Strand who had an ivory, four-wheeled chaise, with a coachman on its box, drawn by a flea. The same man afterward made a carriage with six horses, a coachman, four persons inside, two footmen behind, and a postilion on one of the horses, all of which was drawn by a single flea. Latriella, mentions a flea which dragged a silver cannon of twenty-four times its own weight, mounted on wheels, and showed no fear when it was charged with gunpowder and fired off. Heene says that he saw three fleas drawing a tiny omnibus; that a pair drew a chariot, and that a brass cannon was drawn by a single one.

Fleas are quarrelsome and great fighters. When several are confined in a glass they will stand on their hind legs, striking at their opponents with the others, and roll over and over each other, losing legs and antennae, and at last giving up their lives in the fight. There is a record of a flea which lived ten days after such an encounter with no antennae, three plates of his side broken in, one eye gone, and with only four legs, and these cut off to the first joints.

Fleas are supposed to feel a great antipathy to wormwood and other bitter herbs; and in England the country people have a habit of placing these about their cottages for the purpose of banishing the lively little pests.

COULDN'T STARTLE HIM.

City newspapers have more trouble in training country correspondents not to send in trivial news than in urging them to send in more than they do. One of the newspapers of this town, however, has a correspondent whom nothing startles. The managing editor tells the following about him: There came a ring at the telephone which the editor answered. It was the correspondent at Bumpville.

"Hello! Is that the — office?"

"Yes."

"Well, say Jones is dead. Good-by."

"Hold on! Who was Jones? What did he die of?"

"Killed himself. Good-by."

"Hold on; hold on. What did he kill himself for?"

"Murdered his wife and three children. Good-by."

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CRITICS OF THE PRESS.

Reporter—Would you be willing to let me have the full text of your graduation essay on "American Journalism?"

Sweet Girl Graduate—I will give it to you gladly. I want you to be sure and print all I say about the pettiness, weakness, absolute idiocy of the press in devoting so much valuable space to mere social events and wearisome, silly long drawn out descriptions of ladies' toilets.

"I will print it all. By the way I wish you would write me out a description of your graduation dress, as I want to print it."

"Oh, with pleasure; and please don't forget to send me fifty copies of your paper."—*Omaha World*.

"Say," said Alpha, "my son is learning to play the violin. Come around this evening and hear him practice." "What is he employed at during the day?" asked Omega. "He works in a saw filing factory." "Well, I have another engagement for this evening, but I will call around at the factory tomorrow and remain a few minutes."