

OMINOUS SELF HELP.

DR. F. L. OSWALD ON THE COURT OF JUDGE LYNCH.

Mob Justice as a Tribunal of Last Appeal. The Santa Hermandad—Vehmic Courts. Origin of the Mafia—Judge Lynch in the United States.

[Special Correspondence.] CINCINNATI, April 20.—The strange fallacy which Jeremy Bentham, defined as the "error of mistaking the symbol for the fact" has opposed numberless obstacles to the progress of natural freedom, but has only rarely confused the popular conceptions of natural justice.

In vital emergencies the worship of Themis and her stately insignia is always apt to yield to an elder instinct of the human mind, and the enforcement of grossly iniquitous laws has thus often been baffled by the acts of a tribunal that



REVIVAL OF VEHMIC COURT.

recognizes no higher court of appeal. Human beings, enjoying the use of their reason and the advantages of co-operation, will not put up with injustice so long as they can get justice by methods of their own. The only way to counteract that tendency to judicial self help is the plan adopted by the sultan of Morocco, who hunts political malcontents like wild beasts, and by obliging them to devote all their energies to the problem of survival leaves them no chance to interfere with his peculiar system of administration.

But the first breathing spell of such outlaws results in conspiracies, and neither the ingenuity of Egyptian priest kings nor the truculence of mediæval despots could prevent reaction against the abuse of this power. When the social order of Spain was subverted by the terror of the Moorish arms, robber castles sprang up like fungi on the hills of the peninsula, and the plunder stored behind their thick walls enabled their proprietors to revel in luxury, while industrious mechanics had to eat bread of sobras—the sweepings of the flour mills—and in many cases had to sell their half grown children to save their infants from starvation.

The ramparts of the robber strongholds defied the wrath of the king. A share of their booty purchased the connivance of the Moors and biased the decision of the courts. But the verdict of the vox populi could not be thus silenced, and in 1253 a troop of Aragon hidalgos, returning from a successful surprise of a merchant convoy, were in their turn surprised to see 24 of their colleagues dangling from a crossroad tree. A new power had appeared on the political stage of the peninsula. The Santa Hermandad, which for a twelvemonth had gathered and organized its forces in absolute secrecy, had celebrated its second birthday by a memorable assertion of its power, and henceforth highway robbery ceased to rank with what our life insurance companies term "medium safe employments."

The Vehmic courts of northern Germany, too, made feudal despots tremble in their strongholds, and about the middle of the fourteenth century had extended their influence all over central Europe till even princes hesitated to defy the summons of the Frie Graf, the dread grand master of the secret brotherhood.

For thoroughness of organization and success the Vehmic courts form a phenomenon unparalleled in the history of the human race unless we shall except the portent of the French revolution, when a whole nation upheaved its upper strata in a desperate appeal to the arbitrament of fundamental facts—

Those oracles that set the world aflame. Nor ceased to burn till kingdoms were no more, though the Sicilian Mafia at one period of its development is said to have attained a membership of 35,000 "regalars," with a large reserve force of novices and acceptable candidates. In its struggle against the representatives of the government that remarkable organization at last became identified with the principle of lawlessness, but owed its first success undoubtedly to its crusades against official tyrants and semifederal oppressors of the poor.

In our own country the name of "lynch law" has been applied to three widely different modes of deviation from the regular forms of justice. On the thinly settled frontiers mobs of indignant pioneers merely anticipated the establishment of less informal though not always more impartial courts. Their extemporaneous committees were bribe proof, as fear proof, and their abhorrence of pettifoggery chicanery was equalled only by their contempt of conventional forms, as during that memorable convention of the California Regulators (or "Vigilantes," as their Spanish-American colleagues called them) when two of the principal orators engaged in a friendly boxing match to settle the question of forensic precedence.

In the midst of the deliberations a foreign spectator noticed an individual standing a little apart from the center of attraction and utilizing his modicum of elbow room to twirl a cigarette. "Whom are they going to hang anyhow, sir?" asked the foreigner. "Got a match, partner?" inquired the man with the cigarette. "Thanks." And then, as if inci-

dentally reverting to the original question: "Whom are they going to choke, you say? Well, stranger, I ought to know. If I ain't much mistaken, it's myself."

The White Cap outrages had an entirely different origin. They were variously ascribed to a reaction against failures of justice and to the intrigues of nativists ("Know Nothings"), but a young fellow of Shelby county, Ind., let the true cut out of the bag when he confessed, that "hunting and fishing are rather near played out hereabouts; no circus been round here these last two years, so the boys couldn't stand it no longer, and we managed to get up a little fun of our own after dark."

The raids of the masked night riders were a reaction against a failure not of justice, but of moral jurisprudence, in providing some suitable substitute for the rural sports of primitive Hoosierdom when the woods abounded with coons and deer and the streams with fish. A handful of spiders imprisoned without a supply of flies will soon tackle each other, and the sport furnished descendants of Daniel Boone yielded to the temptation of hunting their fellow men.

A much more ominous phase of judicial self help has now and then alarmed the conservative citizens of our southern border states. Events like the auto de fe of Paris, Tex., and the subsequent race riots of southern Mississippi and Georgia reveal the existence of latent passions which "a mere spark may kindle into devouring flames, and which in their revolt against resistance may at any moment shake the foundations of our social system," to use the words of a representative southern politician.

No change in the bylaws of ethics will indeed ever obviate the assertion of that portentous power, and no plea against extremes of individual suffering has ever prevailed against the disposition to enforce the vindication of principles supposed to involve the welfare of the community. The Roman republic at the very time when it protected the small communities of the upper Alps in the enjoyment of their municipal freedom sanctioned the utter demolition of the only city whose prestige could endanger that of its conquerors, and Charlemagne, the champion of civilization, ordered the execution of 4,000 Saxon noblemen whose heroism had imperiled the success of his mission of culture. Dread and the sense of public duty rather than the wanton love of cruelty steered the arm of the Spartan patriot against the rebellious Helot and the heart of the inquisitor against the appeals of his victims.

The scene of the Texas auto de fe is a town rather conspicuous for its efforts in behalf of temperance, charity and humane education, but the victim of its wrath represented the most odious type of a race whose possible usurpation of power the creoles have come to associate with the ruin of Caucasian civilization. Besides, his crime was one that has never been condoned even in communities that permit political orators and rival lovers to spice their controversies with pistol balls. The frequency of that crime, moreover, has too clearly demonstrated the inadequacy of legislative safeguards. Its perpetrators have too often contrived to take refuge behind legal quibbles, and



REGULATORS AT WORK.

in some of its phases the explosion of popular fury indicated the Titanic force of the primitive vendetta instinct in its revolt against peonage masquerading in the guise of justice. F. L. OSWALD.

Good News From South Dakota.

[Special Correspondence.] ABERDEEN, S. D., April 20.—I have spent some little time in traveling through North and South Dakota recently, and I am strongly impressed with the changes that have taken place since 1885. At that time the Dakotas were beginning to feel the depression following the years of "boom" and inflation incident to the completion of the Northern Pacific road in the north and the rapid immigration in the south. There was no cash and little distress, but the influx of population to a country suited to agriculture, but with scarcely the scratch of a plan on hundreds of square miles of its broad level lands, demanded capital, and the many young men who had come west with little but brain, muscle and energy were forced to look elsewhere for employment.

The South Dakota of today is on a much more substantial footing than in the days of glistening promises and wild eyed booms. Irrigation in some parts and the certainty of more regular crops will make her a healthy state. The newly opened lands of the Sioux reservation beyond the Missouri river make room for a large population, but South Dakota is by no means putting forward the temptations of former years to induce immigration. She wants capital and offers safe investment and fair returns for it. The Dakota of the early eighties was an uncultivated plain, the paradise of the real estate speculator and the boom shark. Two things work the difference in the Dakota of the early nineties—viz, the disappearance of the 2 per cent a month "investment companies" and the enormous increase in the acreage of wheat. CHARLES HANSCOM GRAY.

BUT DEAD SEA FRUIT.

OFFICEHOLDING IS LIKE THE FAMED APPLES OF SODOM.

Walter Wellman Shows How It Brings Loss of Money and Place as Well as the Dry Rot Which Forbids Recuperation. Not an Imaginary Picture.

[Special Correspondence.] WASHINGTON, April 20.—Just now many thousands of people throughout the country are eagerly seeking government places in Washington. It is a thankless task to give advice, but as an experienced observer of social and official life in this city I feel it my duty to warn my friends who may read this letter against making the mistake of their lives. It is a mistake to seek office in Washington, a greater mistake to succeed and to come here to hold office. Since I came to this city I have seen two changes of administration, each change throwing out of public position a large number of men. Many of these have been personally known to me, and almost without exception they have said, with every evidence of candor, that their coming here was a blunder which they would not repeat should another opportunity present itself. Their verdict is that the four years spent in Washington have virtually been four years wasted, except that they have gained experience as to what to avoid in the future.

Considered purely from the financial standpoint or that of progress in one's profession or business, officeholding, particularly officeholding that takes one away from home, is a misfortune. The salaries paid government officials here look large and inviting on paper. At a distance they are quite enchanting. I can see how one living in a country town might envy the man who comes to Washington to take a government post at a salary of \$3,000, \$4,000 or \$4,500 a year. There are very few places here which pay more than this. Members of congress get only \$5,000 a year and are able to spend one-half their time at home attending to private business. They do not find it absolutely necessary to transfer their domestic establishments to this city. But even members of congress generally find officeholding a poor investment. Not one in a dozen of them saves money, and the majority spend more than they earn.

Much less favorable is the position of the man who takes an executive position at some such salary as that which I have spoken of. What seemed so large to him back in the states dwindles into a mere pittance when he comes here to earn, to draw and to spend it. Take as a convenient example the case of a man who is lucky enough, as he thinks, to get a \$4,000 place. He is indeed lucky to get so good a place, if a place he must take, for these are the prizes of officeholding, and those who start out for them generally accept \$2,000, \$2,500 or \$3,000 posts in the end. Accustomed to the cheaper living expenses which are sufficient at his home, the new official imagines he must and may easily live in good style at Washington. He has come down here to be a part of the great government. He has been honored by the appointment, and having become a man of importance he wants to live in style befitting his station. This is a laudable ambition and an entirely natural one under the circumstances.

Accordingly the new official and his wife start house hunting. They have their snug little home in the country and do not care to furnish up another abode. So they conclude they will rent a furnished house. The first one they enter suits them exactly. It is elegant, roomy, prettily situated, comfortable. They practically decide to take it, but the price takes their breath away when they hear it—\$250 a month. "We don't want to buy your house, only to rent it," exclaims the official to the agent. Then they look at some more modest houses. The prices range from \$200 a month down to \$150. Those which rent at the latter price are not very desirable. But even one of these takes for rent alone more than one-third of the salary.

The wife being of a practical turn of mind concludes that furnished houses are not economical; that too much is being paid for furniture, and that it would be better to rent a house and furnish it themselves. One is finally found at a rental of \$80 a month, and this is far from the elegant and fashionable structure they had desired. The wife had planned to do a good deal of entertaining—for the glitter of Washington society had caught her imagination—and therefore a house with spacious parlors was on her programme. The \$80 house is only tolerable, but they take it as a matter of necessity, though with great reluctance. Now it must be furnished. Here again their exalted ideas have to be modified. It chances they have had an opportunity to set foot within some of the fine houses of the city, and as they are to be in society they naturally desire to live amid elegant and creditable surroundings.

Before signing the lease for the house they go to the furniture store and get an estimate on the furnishings. After having eliminated Turkish rugs, expensive hangings and all that sort of thing, they find that \$2,800 is the best they can do, and many articles—the wife alone perceives how many—are still lacking. With this condition before them—this condition instead of the theory on which they had started out—they find there is but one thing to do, and this is to abandon the house idea altogether and board. It will never do, they conclude, to give up for rent and furniture alone all their salary for a year, for they know too well that when through with the furniture they can never sell it for more than a third of its cost.

Now they go to look for a place to board. They have children, and of course the children are to come on. The eldest daughter is to have a glimpse of Washington society. The mother is intensely ambitious for her. A pretty son has been spent on her education, musical and otherwise, and there are such great possibilities in Washington society for a pretty and accomplished girl that she simply must have a chance. Therefore

it is decided the family must board at a fashionable place. On inquiry they decide that the Argos or some such hotel is the place. Yes, the landlord can take elegant care of them. He has just the suite they want. Plenty of room, good light, elegantly furnished, bath of course and all the comforts. The price? "Let me see. Three adults, two large children, one child, a maid. You want a suite of four rooms, with board. Six hundred dollars a month." "That seems very reasonable," says the new official, "and we'll think about it. We want to look a little further." As a parting shot the landlord offers to come down to \$550, but this doesn't tempt into an immediate acceptance. When he gets outside, the official heaves a sigh and says to his wife: "Does he take me for a millionaire? Our salary is only \$3,000 a month. They might leave us a dollar or two for car fare."

Less pretensions and cheaper places are sought. Prices range from \$500 a month down to \$400. Even this will not do for obvious reasons, and finally the new official and his wife take rooms in what is known as a common boarding house—a good and comfortable enough place, but not stylish or fashionable at all and almost a deathblow to the social ambitions of its occupants—and pay therefor \$200 a month. Neither the rooms nor the fare is what they wanted. The family miss many of the comforts of life to which they had been accustomed in their own home. They are thrown into the society of people they don't care to meet, but must be polite in order to avoid trouble. The children have no yard to play in. The parlors are stuffy and frequented by flirty, ill-mannered persons of both sexes, and the father and mother chafe amid such surroundings for their eldest daughter and the other children.

The dream of social conquest in Washington, even of social enjoyment, is rudely dispelled. Faded are the visions of a fine establishment, a carriage and pair, a pony for the children, of handsome gowns and many admirers for the eldest daughter. When the comforts of life are hard to get, it is time to stop talking about the luxuries. Finch and scrape and manage as they will, the official and his wife find it impossible to make both ends meet. The hundred and odd dollars per month left out of the salary affords little latitude for dress, doctor's bills, amusements and the thousand and one expenses of a family. A carriage ride would mean bankruptcy for the week. Mother and father wear out all their old clothes. The new official gives up smoking and very rarely takes a drink. He declines invitations to join a club or two and avoids the society of the very men whose acquaintance he had expected to cultivate, because he realizes he cannot go at their pace financially.

After a few months of this sort of life, in which they run behind week after week and find it necessary to draw on the little income they have from their property or business at home, the family bundles up and goes back to the little country town to make as good a face of it as they can before the inquisitive neighbors. They are in love with Washington, of course, and have had a perfectly lovely time and enjoyed the society so much, with emphasis on the "so," but the children need the school at home, and the climate did not agree with Arabella. They will go back in the fall when Washington is lively again. When fall comes, Arabella goes back to stay for a time with her father, but the other members of the family remain at home and economize in order to give Arabella a show.

And how does the husband and father, the new official, fare all this time? Not very well. It is hard to be cut off from the society of his family. He has never tried that before and doesn't like it. He wants the boys, and the baby, and the mother by his side. Besides, the work is anything but fascinating. Not too hard, it is humdrum and routine. It calls for no enthusiasm; it presents no stimulus for energy or ambition. He soon realizes he is a mere part, and a small part at that, of a great machine. In the town whence he came he is looked up to as a man of some importance, and the folks at home take genuine satisfaction in the envy of their neighbors—and this is a little consolation—but in Washington the new official quickly perceives he is very small potatoes and not many to the hill, and this hurts his pride.

He has not saved a cent out of what at first seemed to be such a splendid salary. On the contrary, he has incurred a large debt. To tide over he sold the house or other property at home and must now face the world practically where he faced it when he was a young man. He must begin life over again. He has lost his law practice or his business at home. In many ways he has lost status. Competition is keen in this world, and the man who steps aside from a given field even for four years need not expect to return at the end of that time and find his place unoccupied. But this is not half so serious as the change that has come to the man himself. He has deteriorated in strength, spirit and energy. He is no longer fit for conquest. The odds are that he will never again be the man he was.

This is not an imaginary picture. If I chose to do so, I could describe not one but a score of such cases, giving names and other particulars. Of course there are exceptions, cases in which officeholding leads to valuable connections, business or professional. But these are rare. The rule is that officeholding brings immediate loss of money and place and the worse dry rot that forbids recuperation. WALTER WELLMAN.

A Pocket Life Line. Lieutenant Brunel of Dieppe in 1874 introduced a pocket life saving apparatus, of which over 3,500 are now in use in France, where they save on an average 285 lives annually. The apparatus consists of a small wooden float with 100 feet of stout cord wound about it. One end of the cord is attached to a small but efficient grapnel armed with four small hooks. The whole thing weighs only five ounces and can be sold at a profit for half a dollar.

WOULDN'T STAY.

When He Heard the Facts in the Case He Paid His Bill.

"Put down room 52 to be called in time for the 4:30 train in the morning," he said as he leaned gracefully over toward the night clerk of an Arizona hotel. "Case of life and death?" inquired the clerk. "Why, no, but I want to go to Denver before noon." "Hain't you better wait for the 9:30 train?" "What is it to you?" "Nothing but the excitement and fuss, and I shall probably have to testify at the coroner's inquest." "I—I don't exactly catch on." "Come up stairs, please."

When they had ascended to the first sleeping floor, the clerk continued: "This is room 28, as you see. There are five bullet holes in the door. Man in here last week wanted to be called for that early train. Room 38 has seven bullet holes, but those stand for two men. This new piece in the carpet here is where a man fell and bled to death. Down here!" "But who kills off the guests?" asked the traveler. "Oh, the other guests. As soon as the bigger comes and knocks and hawls out Colonel Shaw, who has 32, reaches for his shotgun. Over in 29 Judge Heavens ships out with his revolver. Major Brooks, who is in 33, always comes in a good third with a derringer, and the rest of the fellows along the hall are always more or less well heeled."

"Did I say call me for the 4:30 train?" queried the traveler. "I believe so."

"Well, never mind. I'll pay my bill and scoot out inside of three minutes." And he did.—Texas Siftings.



Too Much Parrot.

"Walk right in, Mr. Johnson. Am all ready to do game."



"Yo' don't seem to have de right kyards de right time, does yer?" Parrot—Get on ter de mirror behind yer.



"Fo' de Lawd's sake! Ef dat ain't seem' lous!"



Parrot—Honesty am de best policy. See?—Truth.

At Last. Suffering Customer—Have you anything that will cure neuralgia? Druggist—No, sir. Customer (with fervor)—Give me your hand! It's some compensation for 17 years of misery that I've found one honest man at last!—Chicago Tribune.

A Question of Diet. "I can always tell what a man eats by looking at him," said Jarley. "Well, what do I eat?" said Hawkins. "Judging from your seedy appearance I should say seeds," said Jarley.—Harper's Bazar.

Must Be Done. "Oh, don't!" and "You mustn't!" she cried as her cheek flushed rosily red. "It's a matter" (his arm gripped her side) "of pressing importance," he said.—Chicago Record.

Pleased Him. He—Don't you admire Miss Ripp's complexion? She—Oh, immensely. I'm a great lover of art, you know.—Club.

Sudden Death. There was a man named Peter Puke whose taste was very bad. He bought a gorgeous necktie once which made his friends all sad. He wore this necktie out one day along a country road. There was a bull, whose presence there no good to him did bode. Now when that bull beheld that tie did he rush unawares, and did he toss poor Peter Puke right up into the air?

Oh, no. When he saw Peter Puke, he lifted up his head, and when he caught a glimpse of that tie he simply dropped down to die. From Glasgow to Glee.

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"In 1879 I had an eruption appear on my left leg and arm. Sometimes it would ulcerate and on account of it I was unable to work a great deal of the time. I had seven doctors examine and treat me without success. Some called it psoriasis, some eczema, some salt rheum and one knowing one called it psoriasis. All the doctors in the county had a trial but none did me a particle of good. I spent all my spare money trying to get relief. Finally I was persuaded to try Hood's Sarsaparilla. After using one and a half bottles I saw the benefit. I have now used the third bottle and am completely cured."

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I received more benefit from three dollars' worth of Hood's Sarsaparilla than from the hundreds of dollars paid for advice and other medicine. Any one suffering from skin trouble will surely get relief in Hood's Sarsaparilla. N. J. McCoun, Kingsley, Iowa.

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