

BOSTON CRANKS AND CULTS

Where the Person with "Views" May Argue to His Heart's Content Without Fear.

HARANGUES ON THE COMMON

Theology, Theosophy, Sociology, and
Spiritualism Find Crowds of Well-
Behaved Listeners—A Harvard
Graduate as the Leader of
the Brotherhood.

BOSTON, July 31.—No city in the country supports any doctrine, cult, or theory having to do with the mysterious, speculative, or fanatical as does the City of Boston. In none are the agitators and expounders of queer panaceas permitted by the civic authorities so freely and publicly to air their notions on sociology as at the Hub. All this is in direct contradiction to the cold, calm, supercilious intellectuality which is currently supposed to typify Boston, and upon which her citizens, when abroad, so proudly boast. It may be difficult to conceive how and why the "reformer" meets with such a welcome in the city of culture, yet the fact is that he does, and most agitators do not worry their souls with seeking the origin of favor to themselves, but are satisfied if allowed to jump right in and talk.

The hot weather has wrought the professional "delegate" and "organizer" up to the highest pitch, and a Sunday afternoon on Boston Common is well worth spending. Sundays the famed Common is handed over to the children and the "delegates." The children romp and tumble about the grass. The "delegates," wearing black alpaca or brown-striped seersucker coats, proceed to carry small packing boxes, in which tomato cans or the like have been once stored, into the open graveled area at the west end of the Common. Setting the boxes as nearly as possible in the shade of some convenient trees, the agitators mount their pedestals and sail in. "Fellow toilers, and all who believe in progress!" is usually about the way the speeches begin, no matter whether the speaker is an out-of-door preacher, a Socialist, or a Theosophist. The words always enlist the sympathy and attention of the knots of men gathered along by the fences or near the fountains, and the crowd gradually forms around the haranguers.

Eight Haranguers Going at Once.

Last Sunday afternoon along Charles Street, from Boylston to Beacon, there were eight speakers, using eight different boxes, and surrounded by eight distinct crowds. No two of the speakers seemed to be talking on the same subject, though all had the same aim in view, namely, "to uplift and ameliorate existing conditions." One group, that near Boylston and Charles Streets, was being addressed by a peripatetic minister, a venerable-looking and seemingly educated man he was, too. Holding up his Bible in his hand, he cried, at the top of his voice, "Here's your remedy that's just as effective a cure for present troubles as any advocated by my theosophical, labor union, or spiritualistic friends."

His rival in oratory, at a distance of fifty feet, was saying: "I tell you, gentlemen, the workingman has got to join a labor union if he would protect himself from the encroachment of organized capital!"

Beyond, a Theosophist was endeavoring to convince his hearers that "human brotherhood" was the chiefest comfort for "hard times." So all along the line each speaker had an individual notion of what would save the country. From 50 to 200 persons must have been gathered about each talker. Perfect order was maintained, and no lecturer in the most select of private residences could have had more respectful, apparently earnest, attention than that accorded these open-air meetings. There was no hooting or interrupting. If a man did not agree, he called his friend over to the fence and began an argument that would perhaps last until the "agitator" on the box had exhausted his voice or become worn out from heat, and then our man, who had dissented, would mount the wobbly stand to divulge his own theories. Despite the presence of this large crowd on the Common only two regular policemen were on detail, and most of the while these two stood on Charles Street talking with acquaintances.

How Different in Chicago.

How different all this spectacle than from what might have been expected in Chicago, for instance! Had such groups been gathered on the lake front or in Lincoln Park, beavies of police officials, both in uniform and plain clothes, would have watched crowds and speakers as hawks watch chicken coops, for Chicago since that terrible affair at Haymarket Square stands in deadly fear of the "agitator." Let a group of working men be assembled in a vacant lot there and some citizen will rush up to the City Hall and beg that a squad of police be sent to quell the riot. In Boston, however, Sunday afternoon is consigned to a real "agitation" jollification where the "crank," no matter what his cult may be, can howl himself husky in expatiating.

After standing on the Common for a few hours, one can have his choice of spending the evening at any one of twenty-five halls, where almost that many separate creeds are advocated. If he wishes to take his supper among "advanced" folks, he can go to a hall on Washington Street, not far from Hollis, where the "Brotherhood" meets. This organization depends upon "fraternal love" for its guiding principle, and has been in existence a couple of years. Among its members are Spiritualists, Christian Scientists, Theosophists, Socialists, Turks, Armenians, Cubans, and magazine writers. The principal spirit of this assemblage is perhaps the most remarkable man, in his way, in Boston, James F. Morton, Jr.

The Moving Spirit.

Mr. Morton is now about twenty-six. He was graduated from Harvard, summa cum laude, at twenty-one. After his B. A. he was later made an A. M. by the university. It is recorded that at the time of his graduation the college deemed him so promising that it wished to place him in a professorship at a well-known educational institution in the South, but the young collegian refused this tender of \$1,500 a year, as he said he "meant to teach the truth in Boston if he had to starve in order to do it." He seems to have resolved at the start to follow out literally the Socratic mode of existence. He began to visit the various halls, the Common, and elsewhere for the purpose of lecturing. Many times did he deal out abstruse analyses of economic and philosophic subjects before auditors who were mentally incapable of comprehending one-tenth that he said. His talks were given without money or price. He put in two years at the Boston School of Expression and was graduated with honors there, yet he does not teach elocution or DeSarte. So far as his extended education serving as a money maker, he might as well have had a grammar-school training. His whole energy and life are expended in lecturing and giving out, to whoever may ask, what he knows. "Bimetallism," "Cuban Independence," "Theosophy," "Ethics," "Brownism," "Shelley," and "Walt Whitman" are subjects he has lectured upon time and again. Real lectures they are, too, filled with a profundity of research that is astonishing. "Liberal Religion" is another of his favorite themes. His days are spent in study at his room in a West End alley. He lives on apples, bananas, and bread, dresses in such manner that a stranger would think him likely to be anything rather than the man of knowledge he is.

There is perhaps not a scholar in Boston who can quote Browning or Shelley as Morton can. Thus he lives, delving among books and going abroad evenings to speak. He recently wrote a play to be used in public entertainments by the officials of the Cuban Junta of this city. He was offered a salary and expenses to direct the "troupe." He declined the salary, saying the payment of his expenses would be quite sufficient. Morton's parents are poor, and it is obvious that he is, yet he appears content to exist as a humble expounder and trust to fate. Despite his strange personality, Morton will impress one who but meets him in a passing conversation as a man of powerful mentality and equipped with an overwhelming array of information.

Organization of the Brotherhood.

It was due chiefly to Morton that the brotherhood was organized, and since its inception it has undoubtedly done much good. From 5:30 to 6:30 o'clock in the evenings, Sundays, supper is served at the hall, 15 cents entitling the caller to a really excellent meal. After supper-hour comes the "discussion," and everything is argued. Last Sunday two hours were spent in deciding as to the advisability of passing a set of resolutions on the Greek and Cuban

troubles. During the process of the speech-making, a Turk arose and made a violent diatribe. He finally declared that "Turkey had never broken a treaty, and that was more than any other nation could say." Nobody present seemed prepared to assail the statement, but the discussion waxed into a long-drawn-out imbroglia. Finally, one of the women present, a Spiritualist, who wanted to attend a séance that evening, jumped up and asked, "What does all this amount to? What effect would a mess of resolutions passed by the few here do in putting down the war in Cuba?"

This acted as a sort of damper for a moment, but soon the speakers were at it as furiously as ever. President Morton then announced that he would have to leave, as he had to lecture over in Lynn. Gradually, by twos and threes the throng filed out of the room, until but seven of the loudest debaters were remaining. They argued until midnight.

There was distributed there by one of the members of the "Brotherhood," a circular of the "Second Nationalist Club," which met in Arcade Hall, Park Square. Printed upon the sheet were the "demands" of the club. They were as follows:

"National banks must go!
"The establishment of Government postal savings banks!
"Government ownership of railroads, telegraphs, telephones, coal mines, and all trusts and monopolies that rob the people!
"Municipal coal yards!
"Money at cost!
"The land for the people!
"Our Government must issue greenbacks (a scientific money) to break the grasp of the gold gamblers, who now hold our Nation by the throat!
"Liberty and the right to labor must be re-established, or our Republic will perish from the earth!"

The correspondent of THE NEW YORK TIMES asked: "What do you mean by these terms, 'Money at cost' and 'The National bank must go'?" "Well," said the distributor of the circulars, "I don't know exactly, but you come around to the Second Nationalist Club and you will probably find out there."

Teed's "College of Life."

Cyrus Teed and "Koreshanism" first came into existence in Chicago. Teed used to run his "College of Life" down in an unsuspecting-looking apartment building at Thirty-third Street and Cottage Grove Avenue. For a time the "Heaven," modeled on the plan of Schweinfurth's, at Rockford, Ill., flourished. Then he and a lot of his "angels" were arrested. Finally, after repeated troubles with the police, the "Koreshanites" left Chicago and established their headquarters at Estero Island, off the Florida coast, but made Boston their principal recruiting station, though having a small one at Denver, Col.

Teed visited Boston, Haverhill, and other New England towns in person, and the long, lank "prophet" has done amazingly well. It is estimated that he has secured nearly 1,000 converts from this section. For some time the propagators of this strange creed have had meeting rooms on Dartmouth Street. Teed has gathered a great deal of money from these converts, just how much it is, of course, impossible to state.

Mrs. E. V. Parsons, a physician, living at 121 Dartmouth Street, gave Teed \$2,100, and is now regretting it. The beauty of Teed's doctrines, so far as his own interests are concerned, is that believers are required "to give up all to him, and follow as he directs."

Boston is the recognized headquarters in America for the Spiritualists, and one meets them everywhere. Go along Washington Street, between Beach and Oak, of a Sunday evening, and you will find dozens of placards at stairways, announcing that "Mme. Somebody-or-other, Trance Medium, will give a Free Test" in the hall above. Believers in this faith have a church here, which is the finest, so far as interior decorations are concerned, of any in Boston. An evening at one of the "manifestations" in this church will repay the employing. Christian Science faith healing has rapidly appeared in the last few years to attain nearly as firm a ground in the Hub as has Spiritualism. Christian Science physicians enjoy an immense practice. Wealthy and supposedly intelligent families withdraw from their old doctor to take up the "science."

Theosophy permeates all classes. You hear it on street cars and in drawing rooms. There are many clubs devoted to its study and extension.

Taking the above into consideration and also the innumerable organizations, both public and private, designed for the discussion of "conditions" the person of "views" can feel much at home in Boston.

WHY COLD MAKES US SHIVER.

Dr. E. C. Spitzka Explains the Cause of the Phenomenon and Its Mode of Action.

A communication signed "W. H. N. J." was received at the office of THE NEW YORK TIMES the other day, asking the reason why persons are affected with shivering by the cold, and what animal mechanism produces the unpleasant phenomenon. Dr. Edward C. Spitzka, the neurologist, consented to give his explanation of the matter, which is as follows: "A chill is due to the sudden contraction of the blood vessels of the skin, and when it is of a very high degree, the muscular fibres of the skin themselves contract, causing that prominence of the papillae which is familiarly known as goose flesh, or, in Germany and France, goose skin."

"The nerves which control these muscles are themselves under the control of nerve centres in the brain axis—that is, near the base of the brain, and this accounts for the fact that the appearance of a chill can be produced both by external causes, like a sudden lowering of the temperature, and internal causes, acting directly on the brain, such as emotions, known as nervous chills; medicine, circulating in the blood of the brain, like antipyrin, and blood poisons, such as malaria and other fevers."

"In limited diseases of the crura and upper part of the pons varolii, exquisite chills have been observed by me, so similar to the typical chills occurring in 'catching cold,' or initial to an attack of intermittent fever, and in some cases so closely followed by an apparent fever, that a mistake in diagnosis had been made more than once. It is in and near the same region that the sweat centre is located, and it overlaps the so-called 'convulsive' centre. The theory of a chill, occurring at the outbreak of a disease, is this: That in the nerve centres an irritation causes a contraction of the blood vessels of the skin, and since the blood is the heat carrier, an insufficient volume of heat is sent to the skin. Hence, the subjective feeling of cold, and the real coldness of the skin to the touch of the bystander. At the same time, the deeper heat of the body may be far above the normal. Usually this spasm of the blood vessels is followed by a relaxation, and a large amount of blood is sent to the skin, and if larger than normal, the skin becomes hotter than normal."

"Now what is the cause of a chill? I do not agree with those that think every phenomenon of animal life marks a definite purpose, but I do believe that a chill is like sneezing, a reflex act, and notifying the nerve centres of the need of more blood to be sent to the skin. It is an exaggeration of the same process by which, unconsciously to ourselves, our surface temperature is regulated by the thermal centre in the brain, in response to the requirements of our environment. This centre allows a large amount of blood to flow to the skin when the external temperature is cold."

"The enormous range of temperature difference which this ceaselessly active centre controls can be inferred from the fact that the same individual has been able to endure the extreme arctic temperatures, when the air was dry, with comparative comfort, and that of tropical regions. But the range must not be too sudden. The law of relativity governs this mechanism. Nansen endured a temperature of minus 59 degrees centigrade, about 76 degrees Fahrenheit below zero, in furs, without great discomfort; but when, returning from the trip, they reached a temperature of zero, centigrade, or one or two degrees below it, his party were compelled to throw off all their clothing. They had become so accommodated to the warmer temperature."

"Now if, instead of this gradual change of temperature, (no matter how extreme, so long as it is gradual,) a great fall occurs in so short a period of time as to be practically sudden, the outposts of the heat regulating centre, situated in the skin itself, are surprised, and the centre, in what may be called the shock of self-defense, is overstimulated. A sudden contraction of the blood vessels results, and all the appearances of the chill which are familiar. If it reaches a very high degree, the muscles under the control of the will, or 'voluntary' muscles, are affected, and then we have the chattering of the teeth and the shivering of the body."

"When the elastic fibres which surround the blood-vessels are over-contracted, for a time, as in the case I have mentioned, reaction occurs, somewhat on the plan of the rubber band which has been over-stretched and which, being let go, overshoots the mark. So we get the opposite extreme, or a distention of the blood vessels beyond the normal, and this is readily remedial if it occurs promptly enough. Otherwise we have congestion of the internal organs and the ordinary results of a cold."