

tends to lay deep and sure the basis for the Universal Brotherhood of man. We cannot despise, for mere outward differences of rank and wealth and culture, the brother souls that started with us on the long pilgrimage, that have lived with us, worked with us, suffered with us, through countless æons. We have all been poor and rich so many times, so often lofty and so often low in social rank, so often learned and ignorant, so often wise and foolish—how should we despise each other in any one brief stage of our long pilgrimage? Brotherhood becomes so patent as a fact in nature that it inevitably works itself into our lives as a living truth, and further study of minuter truths only makes more definite and more complete our recognition of this sublime and potent verity.

In a brief article such as this nothing more can be done than give barest outlines of great teachings—poor presentment of richest store. But those who study shall find satisfaction; those who patiently seek the light shall behold it; and that great Science of the Soul, which is the trunk whence the religions of the elder world have sprung, shall serve once more as stem wherefrom shall branch out the more glorious religions of the centuries that lie before humanity.<sup>1</sup>



## Chestnutting Time

By Richard Burton

I live on the edge of a forest of oak and maple, hickory, beech, and chestnut trees. Just now it is mid-October, and who shall say how beautiful and mournfully splendid the look of the forest is? The elms are a somber yellow, harmonic with the sunset; the oaks show here and there a fine purple coronal, while the maples have flushed all conceivable gradations of crimson and orange. The mottled boles of the beeches gleam all the whiter beneath their crown of dark winy foliage. And then what a superb carpet the fast down-falling brown-red leaves make, through which you rustle as a boat plows through resilient seas, your ruthless feet revealing the wide-mouth burrs spilled of their treasure of rich, glossy brown nuts, and the acorns wondrous-hooded and of a color that gives a never-ceasing delight to the perceptive eye. These chestnuts and acorns lying under this wealth of autumn leaves seem a part of my buried youth; a careless thrust with a maple-branch, and I know not what of old-time sweetness and freshness is open to the sight, to the reminiscent imagination.

Boys haunt this wood as crows a corn-field. Almost with the light they come, and in the dusk of evening I still can see their shadowy forms flitting in and out among the reverend gray boles, as once the Indians, fain for fiercer plunder. They bring baskets, pails, and capacious white bags, and, stick in hand, they beat about beneath the trees or heave rocks up into the topmost boughs. The sound of their probing wands, the scurry of their light feet when there has been a big windfall under some pregnant monarch of the wood, the vibrant treble of their voices, float in to my study window where I sit and pleasure me in their joy, whence I catch a dozen vistas down the forest, each more ravishing than the other, all luring me to have done with formal pen and paper and to be a boy again under the tree-tents, with the rest of the blithesome company. With every wind-puff how the leafage flutters and falls, now in struggling bands, now in bewildering cohorts of red and bronze, somber brown and keen vermilion dyes! And how soon, how over-soon, they will assume the universal tan-tint of the shed leaves, forming another warp in the great low-toned, quiet, wonder-woven rug of Nature! Who could to this prefer the product of the looms of Bokhara or Daghestan?

Warmly as I welcome the lads and lassies (for there be little winsome girls among them too) whose quarry is the sleek, silver-touched brown nuts, it likes me not that they have frightened off those more wonted denizens of the woods, the squirrels. Unmolested by shot or stone for fifty years

on end, it is their habit to sport here as in a large playground dedicate to them and their uses forever. Gray or brown, big or diminutive, they perch upon branches, and, with pretty, graceful tails curled deftly up their backs, nibble vigorously at the delectable forest-fruit, or run with wondrous skill and agility from limb to limb, from tree to tree, stopping anon to chatter fiercely in some airy quarrel or on some weighty question of brute etiquette that seeks solution; or, again, they fleet lissomely along the earth, scared not a whit by the nearness of a human being six feet off, having learned by immemorial custom that they will enjoy immunity from molestation. Verily, *experientia docet*, among beastkind even as with men. But now, I say, never a squirrel is to be seen: the barbaric invasion of the boys—like Goths come down upon a sort of meek sylvan Romans—has had the result of scattering them as if by magic. Are they in their holes, I wonder, or, after the manner of the birds, have they betaken them to other haunts where savage beings with sticks and stones and strident cries are not, and where, with only the sough of the wind, the distant call of the crow, and the *pat-pat* of dropping chestnuts, they may resume their innocent duties and pleasures? It is my hope and belief that their hegira is but for the nonce; that some November morning, when the chestnuts are all gone and the children with them, I shall hear their welcome squeak outside my window, and the echo-sound of their feet whisking among the trees.

One of my keenest visual pleasures nowadays is the sight of the mellow haze that hangs in the wood and over the open, due to the ubiquitous bonfires of this fall season. Everywhere, in fields, in private grounds, in the city thoroughfares themselves, one beholds men plying the rake and gathering into huge piles the recusant autumn leaves, in order to the making of innumerable funeral-fires to the dead summer. The incense-smoke from these pyres rises, drifts, and disseminates itself far and wide, until it is hard to say if it be not the Indian-summer haze one looks upon. But no; in these brown heaps, so sensitive to the passing whiff of air, is to be found the sole cause of this widespread, vague, vast, suggestive gray creature of the lower air. Nor is it pleasure visual alone that is thus born; a good half of it comes of the pungent, odorous smell of this innocent, benefic burning. It is a subtle fragrance, strong yet delicate, all-pervasive yet unobtrusive. It is full of memories and of dreams, felt as part of the general autumnal atmosphere rather than as a super-added and distinct phenomenon. It is to the nostrils what the yellow of the trees, the brown of the herbage, the mist-mantles of the hills, are to the eye; merged together and become corporate in the memory and imagination, all these external marks and mood-signs of October become a blend of beauty and a joy that is more of the soul than of the senses. Nowhere is the smoke-sprite so mystically elusive and suggestive as under the forest-trees. Like Druid priests do the stately gray trunks rise, and one looks here and there for the sacrificial stone and the fire of immolation to explain this soft, diaphanous haze-veil blown slantwise from the burning piles of leaves.

There is a single great silent pine-tree in the midst of its brighter brethren, reminding, with its hardy annual blotch of green, of the summer gone and the winter yet to be. Tall, stately, it rises, with spreading branches, with its tint of the sea-under-sunlight; while below, its brown needles mix with the leaves harmoniously and make a softer footing to one who walks beneath. What a fine contrast, the pine, with the cheerfulest-mooded trees! To my fancy this somber growth has always been a Norse chief brooding on the fells and fiords of his native land, or perhaps recalling some viking raid or hall revel when the beer is plenty and above the bass of warrior voices is uplift the clear treble of the harper's song. The lighter-leaved forest-trees are like warmer-blooded and more volatile Romance folk, changing with the changing season and impressionable from tip-top branch to very root. The vocal tones given forth by the pine are other than those of the summer-blooming trees. Is it imagination that there is a deeper, solemn sough in the sound of the wind as it wanders through these closer-growing branches than in the airy

<sup>1</sup> All information touching the Theosophical Society may be obtained from William R. Judge, the General Secretary, 144 Madison Avenue, New York City.

rustle and crinkle or soft susurru which the breeze draws from maple, poplar, or elm as it moves sportively among their topmost foliations? I am not sure, but I know that my noble pine, with its aloofness and its faithful green, strikes a rich and strongly personal note in this symphony of forest leaves and limbs.

Very soon—ah, too soon!—chestnut-time, with all its sights, memories, and charms, will have passed into the bleaker, barer November. Last night was almost winter-bitter, and this morning, although never a puff of air is abroad, but all is clear and still and keen with cold, the leaves are falling by twos and threes and twenties, with a distinct, almost metallic sound, and the branches will be stripped ere we are aware. There was a white frost overnight, and to-day the silvery gleam on the underlying red-brown mass of leaves is enchanting, seen in the fresh-pouring sunlight from the east. It blends in with the green of the grass, too, in an exquisite, ineffable agreement of tint and tone. Pick up one of the curled fronds, crisp with frostiness, and you shall find it a wonder of beauty, a bit of silver-tipped, diamond-pointed brown velvet. And look! the nasturtiums in the garden droop their heads; for the first time they are notified of the coming of a grimmer time and tide. A writ of eviction has been served on them, and on all the several flowers high-hearted enough to hold their own so late into the year.

As I walk to-day in the wood, and draw the sparkling winy air deep down into my lungs, and watch the clear-cut lines of the hills, now plainlier viewed because of the thinning forest verdure, I hardly regret this transition to the wailing winds and sere scenes of the later autumn. I know that, after all, each season is good in its kind, if only it be studied in sympathy and met with love, courage, and a pure and trusting spirit.



## European Parliaments

By Edmund Kimball Alden

Every two years a new Congress meets in Washington; a Speaker is chosen; committees are selected; and the work of legislation goes on during regular sessions, and occasionally through an extra session, until the stroke of noon of March 4th in each uneven year rings down that Congress's good deeds and iniquities; and in due time its successor, already elected, recommences the familiar round. And whether the President is of the same or of the opposite political party, Congress pursues its own course. And whether public sentiment on some great question has changed or not since the Congressional election, the House lives its allotted life. Earthquakes, foreign wars, cataclysms of any conceivable kind, cannot stop our executive and legislative machinery when it is once started. But abroad all is different. If the ever-watchful Russian bear should pounce upon Herat, and if the Gladstone Cabinet should hesitate to take extremely virile steps, and if twenty disaffected Liberals should vote with the Conservatives—and all these ifs are possible at any moment—then we should see a new party and policy in authority, both in the ministry and in legislation, or else a general election, with "our colonial empire" defended on every platform from Shetland to Cornwall. Now, publicists have agreed to designate our system of government as the Congressional, and the British system as the Parliamentary; convenient terms, although all civilized administrations cannot always be labeled by one or the other appellation. While it would be impossible in this space to form even a bird's-eye view of all the European parliaments, we can glance at a few of the more impressive and typical bodies.

Wedge in a room which can hardly contain comfortably three-fourths of their number, sit, with their hats on, the six hundred and seventy members of the House of Commons. Should we take no thought of the vast interests which may hang on an evening's session, interests reaching out perhaps beyond the Channel to the ends of the earth, affecting possibly the world's commerce or finance, we must at least stand in awe of the antiquity of

this august assemblage. It was already old when gunpowder and printing were coming into vogue; it was a hoary-headed veteran when Plymouth and New Amsterdam were settled. And the modern representatives of Montfort, Hampden, Pitt, and Burke conduct themselves, on the whole, not unworthily of their House's great past; though, alas! as the "Saturday Review" and "Times" would express it, "American methods" are entering with the growth of democracy, and a few weeks ago the business of the realm was suspended while a series of sparring-matches was held on the floor. Large landowners are in abundance; so are the sons of noblemen; there are, as with us, many merchants, manufacturers, bankers, lawyers, some editors and professional men; while labor reformers and devotees of a "fad" contribute to the variety. The leading debater for the Government is an authority on jurisprudence; his chief antagonist is a specialist on metaphysics and golf-playing; a prominent member of the Ministry and conspicuous figure in debate is a scholarly writer on history and biography; one of his colleagues has achieved world-wide distinction by his works on politics and mediæval history; another, a free lance, is probably the ablest living civilian critic on military matters; and the venerable Premier has, as the university professors say, the whole course of British legislation for his major subject, with Greek literature and theological science for his minor courses.

These champions are arrayed in two great masses—the supporters of the Government and the Opposition. There is no need to point out here the significance of the term "The Government," the interdependence of the delicate machinery of the two branches, executive and legislative. These facts are well known—how the finance Minister prepares his budget and explains it to hundreds of critics; how a Foreign, Home, or Colonial Secretary conducts his department in Downing Street and defends his proceeding in the evening session. Of intrigues for the Speakership, such as our Congressmen enjoy, there is no trace; of solid work in committee there is a great deal; running debates, set speeches, and bores exist as on this side of the Atlantic.

Allowing for racial and historic differences, we may make our description of the House of Commons serve as an outline for a sketch of most of the second houses on the Continent; though compared with it these are but of yesterday. They have grown up since the stirring days of the French Revolution. But in many essentials the Chamber of Deputies at Paris, Madrid, Brussels, or Rome, the Folkething at Copenhagen, or the Second Chamber at Stockholm or the Hague, will remind one of the powerful assembly by the Thames. National peculiarities of course appear in this as in other fields; the hot-blooded Gaul or Roman does not always preserve an impassive demeanor in the debates by the Seine or on Monte Citorio. But a Floquet, Crispien, or Canovas del Castillo must be sensitive to the changes in the temper of the house; if squalls occur, he must be prepared to shorten sail with as great celerity as the Queen's Prime Minister himself. It is this second or lower chamber, be it noted, which almost invariably controls the purse-strings of the nation. Its neighbor at the other end of the hall parades a more imposing array of titles, and often serves to check its plebeian and humbler brother. But when a vital question arises, what cares the historical student or the general reader for the proceedings of the French or Italian Senate, the Austrian Herrenhaus, or the British House of Lords?—the political doctor is concerned with the "pulse of the lower house." And to ourselves, who follow with equal attention the operations in both halls of Congress, this relative importance of the European chambers is striking.

The upper houses are, however, by no means deficient in attractions. They are generally smaller than their associates, and are much more exclusive in composition; for either the hereditary principle prevails, or nominees of the Crown fill the ranks, or membership is restricted by high property qualifications; or sometimes the various methods are united in forming the assemblage of "potent, grave, and reverend signiors," and we see such heterogeneous collections as the Hungarian House of Magnates, with heredi-