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# Alessandro di Cagliostro:

## IMPOSTOR OR MARTYR?

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A PAPER READ BEFORE THE NEW YORK LIBERAL  
CLUB, FRIDAY, MAY 28, 1875, BY

CHARLES SOTHERAN, *lc*

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AUTHOR OF

AN ESSAY ON "AMERICAN GENEALOGY," AND "GENEALOGICAL MEMORANDA RELATING TO THE FAMILY OF SOTHERON AND TO THE SEPTS OF MAC MANUS," CO-EDITOR OF "THE AMERICAN BIBLIOPOLIST," AND EDITOR OF "THE MANCHESTER DIOCESAN CHURCH CALENDAR," 1873 AND 1874, 2 VOLS.  
MEMBER OF THE HARLEIAN SOCIETY,  
32 . MEMPHIS, 94 . MIZBAIM SOCI-  
ETATIS ROSÆ CRUCIS, K. B. ✱,  
K. KADOSH, M. M. 104 AND  
1052 ENG., ETC., ETC.

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[Reprinted, with a few additions, from the considerably  
abridged-report published in "The Truth Seeker."]

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1875.



## PROEM.

Having received numerous applications for copies of the erudite lecture on Count di Cagliostro, delivered by Mr. Charles Sotheran, I have consented to reprint, with a few additions, the report published in THE TRUTH SEEKER. In justice to the lecturer, I should state that my abridgment in that periodical, and even the present pamphlet, gives but a general idea of the actual merits of the paper, which took nearly two hours in delivery, was crowded with thesis and anti-thesis, with considerable information relating to the developments of Masonry, Spiritualism and Rosicrucianism, and with extracts from numerous contemporary writers and historical documents, and which, owing to space, I was, and am even now, obliged, much loath, to greatly condense and in certain instances to leave out altogether.

As Mr. Sotheran has only been resident in America a few months, and therefore may be unknown to many of my readers, I reproduce a leading article from the *Spiritual Scientist* of June 10th, 1875, which refers not only to the essayist's capabilities as a literary man, but also to the fact that the Spiritualists have accepted Cagliostro as a former martyr to their cause :

" We welcome to our columns a new and most acceptable writer—Mr. Charles Sotheran, an English author of repute, and now the editor of the *American Bibliopolist*. Mr. Sotheran is a gentleman of extensive reading and ripe culture, who is well known abroad as the author of several works upon the genealogies and antiquities of the English counties. He has also paid great attention to the literature of the occult sciences, and the article from his pen which appears in this week's *Scientist*, is a brief summary of a most valuable historical paper which he read before the New York Liberal Club, the week before last.

" The story of Cagliostro's life, as now given, affords us a glimpse at a personage whose deeds and learning were the wonder of his contemporaries—a man of pure life, active benevolence, and, especially, of the strangest psychological powers. He could not only read the lives of those with whom he came in contact, but prophesy their

future, heal their diseases, no matter how desperate they might seem, and call up at his pleasure the shades of whomsoever in the spirit-world any person desired to see.

"He was a philosopher of the highest rank, a friend of human progress, and a most determined enemy of the Papal establishment. It is not surprising that, having once put himself within the jurisdiction of such a merciless government as the latter, it should adopt the flimsiest pretext to arrest and condemn him to punishment; nor even that it should seek to blacken his memory by circulating falsehoods about him, which should make his name synonymous with charlatanism and dishonesty.

"Thanks to the labors of Mr. Sotheran, among the archives of the French government, the real character of this prodigy of the last century is now, apparently, displayed for our wonder and instruction."

Mr. Sotheran ranks very high as an historical critic. In evidence of this I should mention that, in addition to his published works, numerous articles from his trenchant pen have appeared in the pages of "The Antiquary," "Notes and Queries," Howard's "Miscellanea Genealogica et Heraldica," and other English magazines. He was also one of the principal contributors to the important historical work compiled by Mr. Joseph Foster, "Pedigrees of the Leading County Families of England and Wales," and traces of his handiwork are to be found in Cansick's "Collection of Curious and Interesting Epitaphs," Sheardown's "History of the Yorkshire Yeomanry Cavalry," and Bailey's "Life of Thomas Fuller," to which works, and others, he has given valuable assistance. As a poet he has also made some mark.

In conclusion, I hope my readers will be deeply interested in Mr. Sotheran's present valuable contribution to Biography, and I further wish that he will have that success he so justly merits in this country, his new and adopted home.

D. M. BENNETT

335 Broadway, New York.

June. 1875.



# ALESSANDRO DI CAGLIOSTRO:

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“To doubt and to be astonished is to recognize our ignorance. Hence it is, that the lover of wisdom, is in a certain sort, a lover of mythi; for the subject of mythi is the astonishing and marvellous.”—*Sir William Hamilton.*

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—  
The pages of history when perused by the light of searching and impartial investigation very frequently narrate an entirely different account to that popularly taught. Take for example the History of England: until late years Richard the Third was accredited in addition to the crime of murder with having been a man of most repulsive aspect—in body crook-backed, palsied, of horrid visage—a satyr. Queen Mary the First has been likewise, until recently, considered the worst and most bloodthirsty monarch who ever sat on the English throne; while her half sister, Queen Elizabeth, the most exemplary, and during whose reign little blood was spilt on behalf of religion. What are the facts? “Crookbacked Richard” was no hunchback, but as Walpole in his “*Historic Doubts*,” and Jesse in his “*Life of Richard the Third*,” both quoting

the old Countess of Desmond, and other authorities show was really a man of fair, stately and gentle presence, and very far from the monster painted by the glowing pen of Shakespeare, who, in acting the courtier for dynastic reasons, knowingly altered the circumstances that the enemy of the grandfather of his royal mistress, should be described in the most hideous terms to assist in excusing Henry Tudor in his usurpation—as if mere personal appearance must of necessity indicate crime. Similar reasons can be found for giving the title of “bloody” to Queen Mary, a woman of naturally kind and gentle character, who personally was not responsible for the persecutions of Protestants during her reign, and many of which, so styled, were founded on the political treason of the victims ; but it is far different with Elizabeth, “Good Queen Bess,” during whose tenure of the throne more persons were tortured, disembowelled and executed for the sake of religion than in any other reign. Those who doubt these statements should carefully study the works of Froude, Strickland, Lingard, Cobbett and other later historians, when they will readily comprehend the bloody legacy left to the British nation and continued by her successors, until the “black laws” were repealed in the reign of George the Fourth—while all the time Protestant parsons and historians have been zealously lying and concealing the truth in the interests of theology, and howling down their fellow-Christians, the Catholics. As in England, so in Europe, so the world over. No wonder, therefore, that in disgust, the late Charles Kingsley threw up his University Professorship of History and gave as his reason that “history was seven-eighths falsehood, with a residuum of garbled truth.”

As with many other historical characters, so with the subject of this evening's lecture, Cagliostro, the philanthropist, the republican, the man of science, the philosopher and whose misunderstood career was sealed with martyrdom by the thrice accursed Inquisition of Rome. To future generations when the Vatican archives are opened to public scrutiny, must the entire clearing of his character be left, and then, perhaps, gibes and lies started by false priests, jealous physicians and revengeful aristocrats will be heard no more re-echoed by ignorant rabble and lazy compilers taking their material second-hand without going to the foundation for information.

I speak thus confidently, having made the life of this man a study for some time back. During a residence in Paris where the most eventful portions of Cagliostro's life occurred, through the friendship of an auditor of State to the the late Emperor Napoleon, a son of Senator Amedee Thierry and nephew of Augustin Thierry, the historian of the Norman conquest, I had access to many manuscripts and historical documents not hitherto made public. I have also through my connection with various European secret societies of which Cagliostro was a member obtained other information.

One of the greatest difficulties to the biographer of Count Alessandro di Cagliostro are the absurd and differing statements on the score of his birth. By a French Royalist newspaper, the *Courier de l'Europe* it was asserted he was the son of a coachman at Naples named Cicho, in the employ of Signor Christuplu, and that before commencing his career he was successively hair-dresser, valet-de-chambre and mountebank. A different account makes him out the

heir of a former monarch of Trebizond, who was dethroned and massacred by his subjects. Another report states, his father was one Balsamo, a man of humble position, a resident of Palermo in Sicily, where his son Joseph, the *soi disant* Cagliostro was born in 1743, that he was educated in a monastery till his fifteenth year when he became a chevalier d'industrie ; that after having several times been imprisoned at his stated place of nativity, his villainies culminated in the robbery under the most ridiculous circumstances of one Marano, a silversmith, on account of which he was obliged to leave Palermo forever. This rigmarole proceeded from the familiars of the Inquisition, and was only too greedily taken hold of by the before-named paper, which, after an attempt at blackmail, had previously set agog the former story, and in almost the same breath had given him credit for being a Sicilian and Neapolitan, as I have shown and elsewhere a Calabrian. In consequence of these untruthful statements, the birth and birth-place of Cagliostro have been shrouded in great obscurity. Of one thing, there can be little doubt ; he was brought up in Asia, and there is every reason, from established facts, to believe he was born in 1748, and was the offspring of Emanuel de Rohan, Sixty-eighth Grand Master of Malta, by a lady of Turkish extraction, who was captured by a Maltese galley.

The early years of the Count were passed under the name of Acharat, at the historical city of Medina in Arabia, and were spent in the palace of the Mufti Salahayn, chief of the Mahometans, under the care of his tutor, and second father, Althotas, an erudite Greek, learned in all Oriental lore and science, but especially in the hidden Eastern mysteries of Theurgic

Magic (magnetism and clairvoyance), Medicine and Chemistry (alchemy), who poured into the attentive ear of his willing pupil his stores of learning and knowledge of the Asiatic tongues. The semi-parental care of his tutor did not stop there, anxious to have his pupil well versed in metaphysics, he had him initiated into the doctrines of the Eastern Illuminati and other philosophical fraternities, spread all over Oriental countries, and which as Jarchas the Brachman in early times tells Apollonius of Tyana—"have always been famed for Magic and Secret Societies."

While a resident of Medina, he attended the exoteric services of the Mahometan faith, it being the aim of his instructor to instil into his mind the respect due to the form of worship and laws of every country in which he might happen to be resident; "and yet," says Cagliostro, in the *Memorials* of his life, published in 1786, "the true religion was imprinted on our hearts," a religion before whose shrines the Hindoo, Parsee, Jew, Trinitarian or Unitarian Christian, Mahometan or the member of any faith might worship without prejudice to their separate beliefs, and which inculcated the immortality of the soul and endless happiness to the good brother.

Upon the completion of his studies, and feeling desirous of seeing various parts of the world, he set out, accompanied by his tutor, to visit those places hallowed by the shades of the great departed and the ruins of those opulent cities, the only remnants left to ponder on of those mighty empires which in ancient days swayed the earth. At Mecca he remained three years, where he was introduced to the Scheriff or Sovereign, and between them a close friendship was perfected.

Up to the year 1766, Cagliostro visited all that remained of the principal ancient cities of Asia and Africa : Palmyra the melancholy and memorable ; Thebes, now Luxor, with its hundred palaces ; the ruins of Babylon ; Nineveh—whence Layard has since summoned her kings and people, after 3,000 years to give their testimony ; Baalbec and her temples ; Perseopolis the magnificent ; Tyre and Sidon, famed for their fabrics ; Memphis, where the white-robed priests taught a faith *not yet extinct*, and those other ruins where the philosopher can contemplate on the mutability and decay of tyrannies, religious and political, till the mind, bursting its tension, can rove fancy free amid the treasures of the past.

In Egypt he was permitted entrance to temples and palaces into which ordinary travelers had not then been allowed, and here he was initiated into that mysterious rite of which he afterwards was one of the principal disseminators in Europe. It may, perhaps, be well to state that the religion and mysteries of the ancient Egyptians have been greatly misinterpreted, owing to early Christian falsifications and the *pretended* excesses of those Greek followers who introduced the worship of Isis into Rome, and where the secret and philosophical teachings, like those of Ceres, Mithras and Eleusis were but known to the few ; their esoteric faith handed down to these times, like most of the early Monotheistic religions revel in lofty aspirations and their holy writings, equally with the Vedas, Zendavesta, Talmud and other sacred books breathe a spirit of the purest aspiration to the Preserver of all, whether worshiped as Osiris, the Egyptian Saviour, Creator or male generative Phallic principle, and elsewhere as the Sun or Baal, Ceres, Adonai, etc. To this

glorious Being, figuratively clothed in human shape, when life was over they departed on that mysterious voyage, "to that bourne from whence no traveller returns," and in him they hoped for final justification ; to attain to a sufficient knowledge of him was the ultimate end of all their mysteries, and a nearly abject purification, if anything can be abject performed in reference to the Most High, was obligated upon all seekers of the one great God, Kneph, Intelligence or efficient cause of the Universe. It is not to be wondered then, that with every Egyptian, even the most miserable, was buried a fragment of the Book of the Dead, or holy writings which were composed during the earliest ages of Egyptian history thousands of years ago. Those whose means allowed it, had it sculptured on their Sarcophagi before their departure, as it was termed, "into Amenti."

Upon the termination of his Asiatic and African travels, Cagliostro and his tutor, in 1766, repaired to the Isle of Malta, where the Knights of Malta then held supreme sway, until their dispersion with their sixty-ninth Grand Master, Ferdinand de Hompesch who handed his rights over to the Emperor Paul of Russia in 1798. The Templars, Knights of St John and other military and Gnostic fraternities had like the ancient religious associations and later fraternities of Illuminati the same peculiar system of ethics known but to duly sworn brethren. The first named, the Knights Templar, through their Grand Master Jacques de Molay, having refused certain concessions desired by the infamous Pope Clement the Fifth, who aided by Philip of France suborned witnesses, brought forward the most unfounded and damnable accusations respecting the Templar mysteries, where-

upon the Pope dissolved the Order and burnt their venerable Grand Master at the stake, the property of the Order in France being confiscated by the king. Notwithstanding, the members scattered, united with the Masonic and Rosicrucian brotherhoods with which legitimate branches of the Knights of Malta, Rhodes, and St. John of Jerusalem also amalgamated and have continued in unison till the present time, their ritual being incorporated in the higher degrees of Free Masonry, and thus perpetuated a direct succession with the ancient mysteries. I have thus gone out of my way to describe this, as much of the mystery of Cagliostro's life would otherwise be enveloped in obscurity.

Immediately on reaching Malta by way of Rhodes, Cagliostro and his tutor were hospitably furnished with rooms in the palace of Pinto da Fonsesca the then Grand Master and a famous Illuminati, and who treated Cagliostro with the greatest distinction and after a further acquaintance ennobled him with the title of Count, on receiving which, he assumed as usual in those cases the territorial affix "Di Cagliostro" in a similar way that plain Monsieur Arouet became M. Arouet de Voltaire on taking possession of his paternal estate of Voltaire, by which name he was afterwards only known.

Da Fonsesca being aware of the extraction of the Count always treated him with the greatest friendliness and together they essayed in the laboratory some of those astonishing alchemical experiments which were afterwards magnified to an incredible extent by the ignorant who are ever ready to affirm a supernatural origin to what passes their vulgar comprehension. Here Cagliostro had the misfortune to lose his tutor



and early friend. They had been so long and so warmly associated together that the loss was most keenly felt by the Count. Together had they prosecuted their studies and together brought out valuable discoveries in chemistry, one of which was an ingredient for improving the manufacture of flax, imparting to goods of that material a gloss and softness almost equal to silk, and by which they netted considerable profit in Alexandria and other towns they had visited. It was the venerable Althotas whose character is portrayed in such glowing colors by the late head of the Rosicrucian Order in England, Lord Lytton in that remarkable mystical work, *Zanoni*, under which pseudonym Cagliostro will be readily recognized. But it is not on fiction, but facts, that history must be written, and although Bulwer Lytton's "*Zanoni*," Schiller's "*Gers-tescker*," Goethe's "*Gross Kophta*," and some of Dumas' novels have presented the almost kaleidoscopic acts and history of Cagliostro with remarkable force, one must throw them aside as worthless, notwithstanding their extraordinary conceptions.

After the death of Althotas, the Count felt dispirited, and soon left Malta, and with the Chevalier d' Aquinio visited the islands of the Archipelago, and then crossing the Mediterranean to Naples, whence he alone proceeded to the city of Rome. His letters from Fonesca brought him into immediate acquaintance with leading citizens and dignitaries of the Church, among whom were several cardinals, one or two of whom afterwards became popes. The great cures of diseases performed here and his beneficence gave him a wide fame.

It was at Rome in 1770, in the twenty-second year of his age, he became acquainted with the lovely

Seraphina Feliciana, daughter of one of the first Italian families, and one of the most beautiful and brilliant maidens of Rome, and who became his wife. Through changing fortunes, in evil and in good report she remained a true and faithful wife. His confidence in her was unbounded, and he shared with her his secrets in Alchemy and other Scientific Departments, and had her initiated into the adopted Rite of Masonry, the members of which consist of and are governed over by females.

By invitation soon after their marriage the Count and Countess visited the celebrated Count de St. Germain, the friend of Louis the Fifteenth and his Prime Minister the Duc de Choiseul, who both had faith in him. St. Germain was one of the most celebrated men of his age, and a distinguished visitor at the Court of France, a Rosicrucian, and a man who, like Cagliostro, was deep in the Secrets of the Illuminati, a power whose wondrous ramifications extended, and still extends, vein-like throughout the whole civilized world. St. Germain, at the time of the visit of the Cagliostros, was residing at Sleswig in the palace of the Prince of Hesse Cassel, whom he had known formerly in Germany, and who forced him to leave France and remain at his Court, where in 1784 he died, under the roof of his friend the Prince. St. Germain and the Prince of Hesse Cassel received Cagliostro in the most magnificent manner in the palace of the latter, and during a short residence, St. Germain having tested him thoroughly in those branches of the mystical orders to which they both belonged, had him initiated into the mysteries of the European Order of Illuminism at a secret temple some short distance out of Frankfort-on-the-Maine.

He was there introduced to Swedenborg, the Swedish philosopher and the representative of that nation, Lord Fairfax of America, Lavater of France and of the followers of Jean Jacques Rousseau, a brother, and other distinguished personages. He was instructed by these assembled delegates to assist in operating against the oppressive political tyrannies in Europe, and that funds for the prosecution of the work, (of which the order had large sums) were deposited in the banks of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Basle, Lyons, London, Venice, Philadelphia, &c. It was agreed by the secret leaders that the first blows should be struck in America, where the way had been prepared by the suicidal folly of George the Third and his followers, and in France where the mass of the people were in a state of semi-serfdom, ground down under the most fearful tyranny, and where the infamous Louis Quinze surrounded by his mistresses, his "Parc-des-cerfs," and ministerial advisers, was demoralizing the people still further, allowing neither freedom in Religion nor political rights, and making *la Belle France*, the fairest garden in Europe, a charnel house, a worse than Asiatic Despotism, to minister to the vices and follies of this Louis, falsely called *le Bien Aime*, the most execrable specimen of humanity, next to George the Fourth or Henry the Eighth, who ever disgraced a throne.

To Washington and Franklin, well-known brothers in Masonry was the secret task of organization confided by their friend Fairfax and to Cagliostro were the destinies of France confided, where the fall of French Monarchy was being hastened by internal reasons, and the writings of the Encyclopædists, Voltaire and others. It was this which caused the Count's visit to

Strasburg, in 1780, and the funds of the society placed at his disposal was the reason of the lavish expenditure suggested to other sources. The device Cagliostro assumed in this undertaking was "L. P. D.," signifying "*Lilia Pedibus Destrue*," "trample the lilies under foot." How well Washington and Franklin succeeded need not be mentioned, and the history of France shows how Cagliostro's task was performed—whether the Reign of Terror was preferable to the reign of Louis Capet and Marie Antoinette, the successor of Brunehaut and Fredegonde it is immaterial to discuss, both were attributable to the same source the ignorance of the people, and if France was deluged with an ocean of blood, what else could have been expected? It was the reaction—the lion turning on its betrayers and from which the French rescued from fourteen centuries of feudalism and religious despotism arose baptized, aye, St. Bartholomew like, in human blood, a nobler and freer people.

What happened in France in the Eighteenth century has occurred again to-day—the Carbonari or Illuminati fiat went forth and the petty Italian tyrannies are destroyed. Italy is free! Rome is liberated! and the renegade Pio Nono the perjured Masonic brother in answer to his futile excommunications, has his compliments returned with an expulsion from his Lodge and the Masonic body signed by Victor Emmanuel, Grand Master of the Orient in Italy, and countersigned by Guiseppa-Garibaldi, ex-Grand Master of the same.

Not only was Count Cagliostro admitted through the means of St. Germain to a brotherhood among the Illuminati, but became also a participator in the Rosicrucian mysteries. To give a full explanation of

Rosicrucianism in a paper of this character where brevity is necessary is impossible, nor even if I had the desire, dare I, a humble *Zelator* of the order, do so, but to those who, open-mouthed with ample digestion, might swallow all that may be set before them, I would say that the Fraternity uses as a rule parabolical and mystical language purposely to mislead, that having had its rise in pre-reformation times, and being hostile to the Roman Church it was obliged to use considerable caution in speaking on metaphysical subjects. Judged by this rule, the "Elixir of Life" might express the "immortality of the soul," the "Philosopher's Stone," may be as Thomas Vaughan, in his "Lumen Lumine," says, "the representative of the great world," and all that is good, pure and noble therein, and so on *ad infinitum*. Gabriel Rossetti, in his "Disquisitions on the anti-Papal Spirit which produced the Reformation," shows that the art of speaking and writing in a language which bears a double interpretation, is of very great antiquity, that it was in practice among the priests of Egypt, brought from thence by the Manichees, whence it passed to the Templars and Albigenses, spread over Europe and brought about the Reformation. One of the explanations of the brothers of the Rosie Cross and their secrets having been recently published, "The Rosicrucians," by Hargrove Jennings, I will refer to, particularly as a certain substratum of truth lies beneath the crust. [The lecturer here read passages from that work.] Such are the conclusions and *resume* of the labors of the author of the most noted work on the subject in this century. The symbol of the Rosicrucians is the Rosie Cross, "Rosy," as being in color like unto the emblem of discretion or secrecy, *i. e.*,

“sub-rosa” and Rosy again because even a bloody death shall not force the truth. The cross because—  
“The sign or symbol of the cross is a natural one. The ancient Romans had signs, flags and crosses gilded and beautified. When a man in the hour of overwhelming distress, prays his father to have mercy upon him, he extends his arms heavenwards and makes precisely the same figure. In Egypt the the illiterate gratitude of a superstitious people, while they adored the river on whose inundations their provinces depended, could not fail of attaching notions of sanctity and holiness to the crosses which were erected on the bank of the Nile. It was held in the earliest ages among the Egyptians, Arabians and Indians as the signification of the life to come—of eternal life.”

Leaving the Count de St. Germain, from whom they parted with the most grateful feelings, the Count and Countess di Cagliostro in their own equipage and with a large retinue of servants, travelled through Germany, then principally under the sway of the good and tolerant Frederick the Great, a Mason, philosopher and the friend of Voltaire. In Germany he appears to have been equally celebrated as at Rome, succouring the poor, discoursing with the rich and founding lodges of Egyptian Masonry. His stay here employed in future years the pens of Schiller and Goethe, who both composed works in which he is delineated in wonderful coloring. He also visited Spain and Portugal, and a list of the nobility with whom he became acquainted there will be found in his autobiography.

Possessed of an European reputation, in 1776 he visited England, bringing with him much wealth in

plate, Jewels and specie. In London he applied himself arduously to his favorite study of chemistry and in acquiring a knowledge of the English language. He had trouble in London with a *soi-disant* Lord Scot, one Vitellini and their accomplices who became incensed because he would not reveal to them the art of foretelling the drawing of lucky numbers and how to transmute base metals into gold. They forced an entrance into his apartments and stole his private manuscripts and considerable wealth. They were brought before a justice, but by perjury escaped. In revenge they brought false charges against Cagliostro and subjected him to heavy expense. About the same time the editor of a leading French paper, because he could not succeed in obtaining money by blackmail from the Count, put in circulation base calumnies concerning him, all of which, however, were proved to be untrue. Among others was one that he was constrained to throw off the uniform of a Spanish colonel at the Court of St. Petersburg and been obliged to leave Russia, which was too clearly proved false by the evidence of Baron de Corberon, charge d' affaires of France at St. Petersburg and Minister Plenipotentiary. The editor of this paper also doubted the Count's philanthropy and disinterestedness, to which answer was made to others in later times by Cagliostro:

“Let them declare whether I have ever been guilty of an action disgraceful to a man of honor; let them say whether I have at any time sued for a favor or courted the protection of those sovereigns who were desirous of seeing me; let them declare whether I have at any time, or in any place done more than cure the sick gratis and assist the indigent.”

Despite these annoyances, during his stay in England, he had been treated in the warmest manner by those members of the aristocracy to whom he had been introduced, was cordially received by the followers of Swedenborg and the poverty-stricken wretches on whom his benevolent eye rested.

After leaving England he travelled on the continent, stopping for some time at Courland where he made many acquaintances, delivered lectures and established lodges of masonry. He afterwards visited St. Petersburg and had interviews with the celebrated Empress Catherine. Having a difficulty with her Scotch physician who was jealous of him and who took occasion to poison the mind of the Empress against the Count, he did not remain long in St. Petersburg, thence he went to Warsaw where his beneficent efforts and learning were highly appreciated by all, but particularly by the upper classes.

In furtherance of the Illumination policy, he started for France, and reached Strasburg on Sept. 13th, 1780; shortly after his arrival a reunion of the French Illuminati was held, at which were present the Duc d'Orleans, Grand Master of Masons in France, Mirabeau, Lafayette, the Abbe Perigord, afterwards better known as Prince Talleyrand, Cagliostro, Sieyes, Pethion Duval, of the Lodge of *Amis Reunis* at Paris and other noted members to determine the future management of the body and overthrow of the French monarchy; resolutions were duly agreed on, and Cagliostro was located in consequence at Strasburg. The whole tenor of his life here, and where the fame of himself and wife had preceded them, appears to have been devoted to philanthropy and one continued scene of benevolence. A magnificent hotel having been taken,



at which the principal residents of the town were invited to an open table, to supply which pecuniary means were apparently without end, and other receptions held by them were on the same basis. The Count, aided by his wife, assisted the indigent with one continued flow of money, and to the prisoners for debt they gave freedom ; to the necessitous sick—particularly invalid soldiers—did they wait on them at their humble homes, affording physical relief without fee or reward, sternly rebuking rich and poor alike who dared to offer money for their services, the astonishing cures performed and the temporary hospitals used were all of such a character that the regular practitioners found “Othello’s occupation gone,” and the city of Strasburg in consequence was very soon filled with strangers who came from curiosity to see Cagliostro or find remedies for their ailments. The dwellings of the richest citizens of Strasburg were thrown open to him, and “without seeking the great, but rather seemed to avoid them, he constantly found himself in their company. Among this class he had many proselytes, and who practically worshipped him as a being something more than human.” In the list of his friends at this time in this city will be found the names of Marshal del Contades, Marquis de la Salle, Barons Fraxilande, Del’ Or, Vorminster, Diederick, likewise the Princess Christiana. His knowledge of alchemy brought him numerous acquaintances, his intimacy with the principles of Mesmer then becoming gradually known in Europe, and which had been practiced in the East for centuries, with that of Natural Magic, Spiritualism and Magnetism, and his allegorical language taken literally by the ignorant unlettered greatly added to the wonderment. In his

Memorial, afterwards published, he says of his conduct in Strasburg :

“I appeal to the principal men ; to the magistrates ; to the public at large ; let them declare whether in all my transactions a single deed of mine could be reprobated as contrary to the laws, to morality or to religion. If, since my arrival in France, I have offended any one, let the injured speak and rise up in judgment against me.”

The learned Prof. Meiners, of Gottingen, came across Cagliostro during his stay in Strasburg, from his “*Briefe uber die Schiwez.*” I learn that according to this erudite savant.

“For his own labor he (Cagliostro) takes neither payment nor present ; when presents are made him of such a sort as cannot without offence be refused, he forthwith returns some counter-present of equal or still higher value. Nay, he not only takes nothing from his patients, but frequently admits them months long to his house and his table, and *will not consent to the smallest recompense.* With all this disinterestedness (conspicuous enough, as you suppose), he lives in an expensive way, so that, according to the very lowest estimate, he must require at least 20,000 livres a year. The darkness which Cagliostro has on purpose spread over the sources of his income and outlay contributes even more than his munificence and *miraculous cures* to the notion that he is a divine, extraordinary man, who has watched nature in her deepest operations, and among other secrets stolen that of gold-making from her. . . . With a mixture of sorrow and indignation over our age, I have to record that this man *has found acceptance*, not only among the great, who from old have been easily bewitched

by such, *but also with many of the learned, and even physicians and naturalists.*"

The Count de Beugnot, in his "Memoires," hands us down a description of Cagliostro. It appears that this French nobleman did not primarily have much belief in his remarkable cures and learning, and yet he says: "The man impressed me in spite of myself;" further, that—"the subjects of his discourse were the heavens, the stars, the grand Arcanum, Memphis, transcendental chemistry, giants and the extinct monsters of the animal kingdom."

After giving an account of the various engraved portraits of Cagliostro, the lecturer exhibited one or two, among which was one, by the celebrated Bartolozzi of the Count, entitled, "The Contemplating Philosopher," beneath which were the following lines:

"Behold this wondrous man, whose talents sublime  
His skill each day doth eager death disarm,  
His noble soul, sordid int'rest doth decline,  
Humanity alone his breast doth warm."

At this period Louis Rene Edouard de Rohan, Cardinal of the Holy Roman Church, Prince of Hildesheim, Landgrave of Alsace, Grand Almoner of France, Master of the Sorbonne, member of the French Academy and a near relative of Cagliostro's father, Emmanuel de Rohan, was Bishop and Prince of Strasburg. At the time of Cagliostro's stay in Strasburg, the Cardinal was resident at his Episcopal palace of Saverne, and hearing of the extraordinary cures effected by the Count, experienced a great desire to have an interview with "so remarkable a personage," but he found much difficulty in being admitted, for Cagliostro, learning his wish, said: "If Monseigneur, the Cardinal, is sick, let him come to me, and I

will cure him. If he is well, he has no business with me nor I with him." This, far from offending, only whetted the appetite of De Rohan more, who finally used interest and assuming to have an asthma, gained his desire. The effect produced at this meeting is described by the Cardinal's Vicar-General, M. l' Abbe Georgel who, in his "Memoires," observes :

"The Cardinal fancied he saw impressed on the countenance of this mysterious and taciturn individual a dignity so imposing that he felt himself penetrated with an almost religious awe, and the very first words he uttered were inspired by reverence. The interview, which was but brief, excited more strongly than ever in the mind of the Cardinal the desire of a more intimate acquaintance."

Before long the Count, although not desiring it, obtained Prince De Rohan's confidence to such an extent that he was guided entirely by him and insisted on Cagliostro making the palace of Saverne his home, which he occupied for the two following years. It was while here the friends amused themselves with alchemical experiments in a laboratory which had been specially prepared in a secluded portion of the building. During the Cardinal's absences, the Count was assisted by his Excellency's, Equerry and confidant, the Baron de Planta.

The extraordinary, and easily to be explained fascination the Count acquired over the Cardinal de Rohan, are exhibited in several episodes narrated in the writings of the Baroness d' Oberkirche, from which the lecturer freely quoted. Learning the dangerous illness of his relative, the Prince de Soubise, the Cardinal de Rohan persuaded Cagliostro to accompany him to Paris for the cure of the latter, but who, on their ar-

rival, was declared out of danger. Before leaving the French capital, where he remained over a fortnight, he made some remarkable cures, in regard to which he afterwards observed :

“I appeal to those who had occasion to apply to me ; if there is found a single person who can, with truth, say I was ever prevailed upon to accept of any gratuity, either in money or presents, I consent to be deemed unworthy of confidence.”

He was called about this time to attend D' Aquinio, then lying very sick at Naples, whither he hastened, but where he arrived only in time to receive the last farewell of his expiring breath. He next repaired to Bordeaux, France, in November, 1783, where he caused as great a sensation as in Strasburg by the extraordinary services he performed. The rich were amazed at his charity and benevolence, and the poor and suffering made happy by the wonderful cures he performed. These, together with the number of aspirants desirous for admission to a knowledge of the Masonic system, and the learned anxious to hear his enunciations, were so large that the jurats of the city granted a military guard to be placed outside his house night and day. It is stated that, “all day long the street opposite his magnificent hotel was crowded by the populace ; the halt and the blind, women with sick babes in their arms, and persons suffering under every species of human infirmity, flocked to this wonderful doctor. The rich were struck with admiration of his charity and benevolence, and impressed with a full conviction of his marvellous powers.”

The salons of his wife were filled with the wealthy to whom she “gave the most magnificent parties in Bordeaux.” In less than eleven months Jesuitism and

intrigue were directed against him, and in answer to his calumniators he afterwards replied :

“ It was at this city that I had the honor of being introduced to the Marshal de Mouchi, the Count de Fumel, Viscount du Hamel and other persons of credit, who will, if required, bear testimony to the manner in which I conducted myself during my stay in Bordeaux.”

He found both in Strasburg and Bordeaux that the regular practitioners of those places, jealous of his great popularity and the favor accorded him by the Cardinal Prince of Strasburg, had spread among the superstitious populace many absurd libels. One was that he was “ Antichrist ;” another “ the Wandering Jew,” and others equally false, and which in their internal stupidity destroyed themselves. To an audience like this before me I am not going to argue for or against these *terrible* imputations, thinking it would be futile to demolish an Antichrist for the satisfaction of a body of thinkers not recognizing the theory of the divinity of Jesus Christ; also that of the Wandering Jew, who has of late been relegated to the domains of Fiction, where I trust another *gentleman* who does not trouble us with his presence in these days will also be consigned ere long by believers ; I mean his Satanic Majesty, who, if he exist, seems only in these parts apparently to have his good friends and admirers, the “ ministers of the gospel,” under his especial charge, for I need not remind you that both in Brooklyn and New Jersey they have “ the Devil to pay.” Those amiable animals, roaring and wandering lions, we ordinarily confine in Central Parks. with their friends the serpents, who now-a-days have most curiously lost the power of speech.

The Jesuit fathers are usually attributed with the sinister *mot*: "Do evil, that good may come." In the case of these Doctors it undoubtedly seems to have had that effect, for if it had not been for their meddlesome interference and attempts to damage Cagliostro, we should not have had three letters preserved to us, in which we find the King of France himself and his Government coming forward to set the seal of veracity upon the acts of the subject of this paper. 1, Count de Vergennes, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from Versailles, 13th March, 1783, to Monsieur Gerrard, Præter of Strasburg; 2. The Marquis de Miromenil on the day following to the same; and 3, the Marquis de Segur, by command of his master Louis XVI., to the Marquis de la Salle, commander at Strasburg. [The essayist here gave a translation of these three letters.]

Verily, a curious impostor! It had been his intention, through this opposition, to leave Strasburg forever, as the Illumine policy was gradually nearing accomplishment, but these ministerial letters made him relinquish the design for a time. *A propos* of these warm recommendations later on Cagliostro wrote:

"It was on the faith of those letters, which me thought so fully demonstrated the monarch's disposition towards me, that I fondly considered France as the last stage of my travels, how could I then imagine that two years after it would be my fate to claim—but alas! to claim in vain for myself and my unfortunate wife, those sacred rights of humanity so solemnly acknowledged, so nobly expressed in his Majesty's name!"

Departing from Bordeaux, Cagliostro in October, 1784, arrived at Lyons, where, resting about three

months, he again made his way to the French capital. The domicile where he resided, the Hotel de Savigny in the Rue Saint Claude I saw some years ago. Louis Blanc, in his "Histoire de la Revolution Francaise," observes :

"The house which he (Cagliostro) occupied, and which was afterwards the residence of Barras, was one of the most elegant of the quarter. In the *salon* decorated with an Oriental luxury, and bathed in a kind of semi-daylight. . . . There one saw the bust of Hippocrates, and in a black frame, inscribed in letters of gold, a literal translation of Pope's Universal Prayer."

Here, through the kindness of his friend, Cardinal de Rohan, he was at once introduced into the most distinguished society, even holding frequent interviews with the King and Queen. It is hardly possible to take up any volume relating to this period in the History of France, but we find numerous characteristic anecdotes of Cagliostro, one of the most remarkable, and which has been worked up by the Elder Dumas in one of his valuable historic works, I briefly narrate, as although embodied in Fiction, it is corroborated by the most satisfactory evidence. On a certain occasion, when dining with many prominent characters, among whom were Richelieu, the King of Sweden, Count de Launay, the Countess Dubarry, Marquis de Condorcet, M. de La Perouse the navigator, Marquis de Fauvras and others, he is said to have foretold the destiny of all present, and given a clear account of the taking of the Bastille and the execution of Louis XVI. Not stopping to say how he was able to do this, I will only affirm this was written before the events occurred, and



is, in this respect, unlike some of the Biblical prophecies which were not written until after the events had transpired. Prince Talleyrand was also in the habit of narrating equally extraordinary incidents which he knew of in connection with Cagliostro. Similar noteworthy accounts may be learnt in the letters of Mirabeau, dated 1786, in which he also names Lavater, another disciple of Cagliostro.

The celebrated "Affair of the Diamond Necklace" took place about this time ; it is impossible in a paper of this character to enter into this fully and as particularly, others better informed than myself have thoroughly probed it to the core, I will, therefore, only give the principal facts connected with Cagliostro's place therein.

Marie Antoinette, Queen of France, a woman of bizarre character, and of whom it has been stated incest was not the least of her crimes, acknowledged as her particular friend the Countess Valois de la Motte, a lineal descendant of King Henry the Second of France. This female, a confidante also of the Cardinal de Rohan, acted as intermediary in an intrigue between him and the Queen, and by means of the position she thus occupied, had managed to get into her possession a diamond necklace worth about \$400,000. This necklace had been offered to the Queen in the presence of Madame de la Motte by the eminent French jewellers Bohmer and Bassange, who afterwards finding themselves unable to obtain either their money or have their property returned, laid the whole matter before the French law courts, when it was discovered that this scion of royalty, the Countess de la Motte, had appropriated it to her own use, and that her hus-

band, formerly a private of Gendarmerie, had decamped with it to England.

Unfortunately for Cagliostro, owing to his friendship with De Rohan, he had visited the house of the Countess de la Motte, "where he was received with an amount of respect verging on reverence," and had, by desire of the Cardinal, essayed in her presence some experiments in Mesmerism and Spiritualism, but before doing so had said :

"It is true, madame, that being a physician, I am an adept in the science of nature, nor am I without some knowledge of the properties contained in animal magnetism." etc., etc.

For their *supposed* complicity in this regal robbery, at which it is certain Marie Antoinette connived, the Cardinal Prince de Rohan, Count and Countess di Cagliostro, Madame de la Motte and others were arrested on the 23rd of August, 1785, and consigned to the Bastille. The residence of the Cagliostros was pillaged by Commissary Chenon and others making the arrests. Among the goods thus stolen and never recovered may be mentioned :

"The considerable sum of 100,000 francs, a green pocket-book containing forty-seven bank notes of 1,000 francs each, besides which gold and silver coin double louis, sequins and Spanish quadruples, plate, jewels, diamonds, etc."

A fine specimen of French administrative Tweedism !

On the first examination, Cagliostro stated his former history ; that he was a professor of medicine and an occultist of noble birth, and related his experiences as a traveller in Asia, Africa and Europe. He strongly denied any knowledge whatever of the Necklace. He

further spoke of his intimate acquaintance with the Cardinal Prince de Rohan, and that since his second visit to Paris, he had as a rule seen him three or four times a week, and that the Cardinal and his friends had also occasionally dined with him at his residence in the Rue Saint Claude. He endeavored likewise to "overthrow the cold calculations of political animosity and dissolve those dreams of private vengeance of which the Prince de Rohan was the object."

It appears that the Count was not aware of the arrest of his wife, for in the autograph report of the Marquis de Launay in the collection of M. Feuillet de Couches it is there stated :

"Cagliostro, it may be observed, was greatly excited on hearing of the arrest of his wife, and on afterwards learning that she was ill, became frantic. He pretended to believe that she was dead, or at her last extremity, and threatened to kill himself if he was not permitted to see her, or she were not set at liberty."

After six months' imprisonment in the Bastille, during the whole of which time France was convulsed with differences of opinion as to the guilt or innocence of the parties accused, the trial was commenced. At his examination, Cagliostro appeared before the Parliament of Paris "dressed in a green velvet coat, embroidered over with green lace, his hair plaited from the top of his head, fell in small curls over his shoulders, which gave him a singular appearance." "Who are you? whence do you come?" was asked of him. "I am a noble traveller," he replied. At these words the countenances of the judges brightened up, and observing that they seemed well disposed towards him, Cagliostro entered boldly upon his de-

fence, a defence acknowledged a singularly able one, and in which he cleared himself and aided justice by a statement which gained great credit.

In accordance with French law he was confronted with the Countess de la Motte, she styled him—"one of those extravagant members of the Rosy Cross who profess to raise the dead and make them converse with the living, masters of all the sciences, skilled in the transformation of baser metals into gold, beneficent spirits who attend the poor for nothing and give immortality to the rich."

She went on further: "A sumptuous hotel elegant furniture, a well supplied table, servants in all sorts of liveries, and the court of his hotel always noisy with carriages, announcing in the midst of an intelligent nation visionaries of every rank. In a word, Cagliostro, without inheriting anything, without purchasing anything, without selling anything, without acquiring anything is possessed of all. Such is this man."

She also called him a low alchemist, a false prophet and a profaner of the true religion, to which remarks the Count simply replied :

"Not always a false prophet, for had the Prince de Rohan taken my advice he would have seen through the artifices of the Countess, and neither of us been where we are. To her numerous calumnies I will content myself with making a laconic reply, the same that was made by Pascal under parallel circumstances, a reply which politeness forbids me to make in the vulgar tongue, but which Madame's Counsel will translate for her, *Mentiris Impudentissime.*"

The Prince de Rohan made an equally able answer to the charges urged, and referred to Cagliostro as

“that great, that extraordinary man,” and it may be added that one of the accused an accomplice of the De la Mottes, one Vilette, “expressed his firm belief that Cagliostro was entirely innocent of any complicity in the affair.”

The result of the trial was that Madame de la Motte, the descendant of the royal Capets and the worthy bosom friend of the Queen of France, was proven to be guilty and sentenced to have her head shaved, to be publicly whipped, branded between the shoulders with a hot iron and imprisoned for life. The Cardinal de Rohan and the Count and Countess Cagliostro were declared innocent of even the slightest *scintilla* of guilt and acquitted, the *arret du Parlement*, the technical finding orders:—

“Discharges Alexandre de Cagliostro and Louis Rene Edouard de Rohan from the complaint and accusation brought against them at the request of the *Procureur-General* of the King.

“Orders that the Memorials printed for Jeanne de Saint Remi de Valois de la Motte shall be and shall continue to be suppressed, as containing *false statements injurious and calumnious* alike against the said Cardinal de Rohan and the said De Cagliostro.

“Upon the remainder of the request of the said De Cagliostro, alike against Commissary Chenon and De Launay, Governor of the Bastile, puts it out of court, without prejudice to his appeal when and how he may be advised ; upon the rest of his demands, requests and conclusions of the parties puts these out of court.

“Gives permission to said Cardinal de Rohan and the said De Cagliostro to cause the present judgment to be printed and posted up wheresoever it may seem good to them.”

The verdict was received by the people of Paris with loud acclamations of joy. The Count, together with the Cardinal, clothed in the royal purple, were taken in triumph through the streets back to the Bastille, the good Parisians rushing forward kissed the hands and garments of both, and—"ran beside the carriage which conveyed them, shouting their congratulations." At this remarkable public greeting contemporary accounts remark no less than ten thousand persons were assembled in the courts and passages of the Palais de Justice and the neighbourhood. A crowd gathered from all quarters of Paris, and representing in its ranks men of letters, financiers, abbés, avocats, police agents, soldiers, ouvriers and others.

Although exonerated from all charges, yet Cagliostro was not as fortunate as De Rohan in his release, for having made charges of robbery against the agents of the Governor of the Bastille, he was detained a week or two longer.

After nine months' captivity, the count found himself again free, and his feelings were vividly expressed in the accompanying observation :

"Were I left to choose between an ignominious death and six months in the Bastille, I would, without hesitation, say, lead me to the scaffold."

The ovation attending his discharge was participated by thousands, and his return to his home was more like the triumphant march of a Roman Emperor than the release of one charged with crime. In describing the event, he says : "My doors were forced open—the yard, the staircase, apartments—every place was full, and I was carried into the very arms of my wife."

Notwithstanding the groundless charges brought

against Cagliostro had utterly broken down, and public manifestations had been extended to him, yet the agents of the police, fearing for good order in Paris, and perhaps alarmed at the charges made against some of their own body, did not relish his presence in the city, particularly as his connection with the Secret Societies had been discovered. At all events, within twelve hours from the time of his release from the Bastille, an official appeared before him, and, in the name of the King, ordered him to leave Paris within twenty-four hours and the kingdom within three weeks, and forbade his return. On the 3d of June he left Paris. Crowds of his friends met him on the road, and expressed their great grief at his departure, unmistakably indicating that they regarded the Count's private misfortunes to be really a public calamity.

On leaving Paris, he temporarily took up his quarters at the Parisian suburb of Passy; on the 16th of the same month he embarked from Boulogne for England, and describing the manner of his leaving France, he writes :

“The shores that I quitted were lined by a crowd of citizens of all classes, who blessed and thanked me for the good I had done their brethren, addressing to me the most touching farewells. The winds carried me away from them, but I saw them again on their knees, with their hands raised towards heaven, and it was my turn to bless them, and to cry out and repeat as though they could hear me, “Adieu, Frenchmen ! adieu my children ! adieu my country !”

Immediately on reaching England he took up his quarters in London, and speedily gathered around him a coterie of influential friends : his acquirements

as a physician and general benevolence were again made manifest.

While in London he published a letter reflecting on the state of French law, the French Ministers of State, and the Queen of France, to whom he attributed many of the sufferings he had undergone. On the 20th of August, 1786, an attempt was made by the Secretary of the French Embassy in London to entrap him back to France. He was informed that the Ambassador had received instructions to acquaint the Count he might return to France at pleasure, and desired him to call at the Embassy. It appears that at this interview his personal friends, the Count Bergeret de Frouville and Lord George Gordon, happened to be present on a visit, and, as treachery was feared, insisted upon accompanying him the next day to the Embassy, which they did to the great astonishment of M. de Barthelemy, who then had charge of French interests in Great Britain. The Ambassador blankly refused to discuss matters in the presence of strangers, and as Lord George Gordon was extremely insulted by this conduct to a man of his rank, he published in *The Gazette* a very powerfully worded letter, in which he stigmatized Marie Antoinette with complicity in the theft of the Diamond necklace and also with improper criminality with the Cardinal de Rohan. For this warm espousal of the Count's cause, Lord George Gordon was prosecuted by desire of the French Government, was found guilty of libel, and suffered a heavy fine and long imprisonment in Newgate. During the remainder of Cagliostro's stay in London, nothing further of special importance occurred. He continued his systematized benevolent efforts in dispensing gratuitously his medical services and other charities by



which he earned the gratitude of large numbers of the British people.

I have now traced the life of Cagliostro to 1787. His public career of usefulness was rapidly drawing to a close. His hatred of religious and political tyranny had made him a marked character—the meshes of the secret societies were gradually ravelling. Europe from end to end was convulsed in throes of impending internal agony, and in France the days of monarchy were almost closing, for the down trodden and starving people had lifted up its head and asserted its rights—the conflict between royalty and the *sovereign* people had begun. The harvest was ripe and the sickle ready for the work! Despotism became alarmed at even shadows, Cagliostro flying, petrel like where the storm of revolution was about to break appeared an object of terror to European governments. He visits Roveredo, and the Kaiser Joseph banishes him Austria. He journies to Turin and the king of Sardinia is afraid of his presence. He passes through Germany, Switzerland and Savoy with like results—all fear him. In May 1789, boldly planting himself in the very patrimony of St. Peter he defies the papal chair and the hierarch or pantarch of religious and political despotism, as did in later days the intrepid Mazzini. His martyrdom—his crucifixion was about to commence! With the certainty of death before his eyes, not fearing, but looking *Mors Pallida* straight in the face, he has the temerity to hold masonic meetings. The infallible “representative of omnipotence,” poor good old man is sadly frightened. The revolutionary party in France are using its claws. Omniscience has been caught napping, and Cagliostro denounced as chief of a society of Illuminati. On

the 29th of December the Papal government discover him founding a lodge of Egyptian Freemasonry; he is arrested and thrown by the holy Inquisition into the castle of St. Angelo. For eighteen long weary months he and his beautiful wife are incarcerated there. The Inquisition clamors *Ad Leones!* and his Infallible Holiness, the Ambassador of the Prince of Peace, who sent not peace but a sword, the successor of Alexander Borgia and Pope Joan, in his justice, in his mercy, in his charity, condemns an innocent man to death! For what? For the crime of being, sad to say, a sorcerer, worse—a heretic, and wickedness of all—a Freemason. Yes, the apostle of freemasonry is condemned to die, and his wife, for the crime of being a wife, to a life of religious seclusion in the convent of St. Apolline, where ere long she is hounded to death by the pious patterers of *Ave Marias* and *Pater Nosters*. But theology has forgotten her prayers, “Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us”—it is wrong to take life—“Thou shalt do no murder,” so terrible irony, Cagliostro’s sentence is commuted to imprisonment for life. The torture, the rack, are brought into requisition, for has not the criminal appealed to the French Constituent Assembly? but all in vain. Starvation and manacling must be called into play, and one eventful morning in 1795 his murderers find in a dark and loathsome cell in his Holiness’ castle of St. Leon, in the Duchy of Urbino the stiff and stark body of Alessandro di Cagliostro—another martyr to Christianity.

I have endeavored in this humble essay to narrate the principal facts in the life of Cagliostro; my task has not been done as I altogether would wish, for if I

had used all the materials I have at my command, I could easily fill a large volume. Having taken a different view from the ordinarily accepted biographies I expect and court a considerable share of criticism : whatever may be urged to the contrary, I trust it will not be founded on the works of second-hand compilers. As to the various contemporary biographies, even Thomas Carlyle who wrote a rather hostile one over thirty years ago for *Fraser's Magazine*, after throwing aside as worthless the five or six at his disposal, he observes in regard to the one which he accepts as most reliable, that officially published by the Inquisition to do penance for practicing "Killing, no Murder : " "It is on this *Vie de Joseph Balsamo connu sous le nom de comte Cagliostro* that our main dependence must be placed. Of which work, meanwhile, whether it is wholly or half genuine the reader may judge by one fact, that it comes to us through the medium of the Roman Inquisition, and the proofs to substantiate it (?) lie in the holy office there. Alas, this reporting familiar of the Inquisition was probably something of a liar !"

I should remark that the Balsamo theory on which much of the opposition is based, is in my view untenable. It had its rise in the mendacity of a Jesuitical writer whose aim was to extenuate the Church. In the name of goodness if Cagliostro had been guilty of the various crimes and not least the robbery imputed to him at Palermo, why was he not handed over to the Sicilian civil authorities who would probably have meted out a just reward on proof of his rascality ? It is an utterly unreliable theory, and simply on a par with the other impostures of Christianity. To aid the theory of the Divinity of Jesus Christ a forged

passage is interpolated into the writings of Josephus. To prove a supposed early belief in certain untenable doctrines "the Infallibility of the Pontiff," the "Immaculate Conception," and I could go on *ad infinitum* decretals, catacomb inscriptions and the like are manufactured.

Cagliostro is charged with Charlatanism, quackery, imposture and the use of jargon. Are these charges proven? What was alchemy? The mother of chemistry, or the chemical science of medieval and later ages? Nobody can dispute that if it had not been for their scientific, or if you will, alchemical studies, that searching for the "philosophers' stone," Roger Bacon discovered gun powder, and Van Helmont the properties of gas. Nor is this all we owe, alchemy conserved for the scientists of to-day all the bases of knowledge possessed for the pursuit of further discoveries and inventions. Alchemy still exists in the East, and when frequently brought in contact with modern science the exponents of the latter are powerless to explain, results easily practicable to oriental chemists.

How are you certain that the "transmutation of metals" and the Rosicrucian search for the *Elixir Vitæ* are myths? But a few days ago I read that a European chemist had discovered the secret of the manufacture of diamonds, yet this appears by witnesses to have been known to Cagliostro. Science to-day is only in her swaddling clothes—it is true a *rather* big baby, and who can tell that she will not have to alter her front on main principles as Lyell and Murchison had to do that of geology? The jargon of the Rosicrucians and alchemists is perfectly explicable to their disciples of to-day. I have no

doubt that if you were to bring together a modern Greek and an Irishman from the wilds of Connemara, both would fancy the other was talking jargon, and yet Celtic and Greek we know are nothing of the kind. Is not the astronomy of to-day based on the astrology of the past? Is astrology too, all untrue? It would seem not; for a short time back in the action brought by Lieut. Morrison, R. N. "Zadkiel," against Admiral Sir Edward Belcher, numbers of English noblemen, scientists and men of letters came forward, and in the broad daylight of the Nineteenth Century swore in open court to an unswerving belief in astrology.

Are the Spiritualists, Magnetists and Mesmerists too, all charlatans, impostors and quacks? If I had the temerity to make such a statement in this Club, you would, I doubt not, hear men of science throwing back the assertion in my teeth with as great fervency as Cagliostro himself would have done. How is it your Dialectical societies and Colonel Olcotts are confounded and obliged to confess an utter incapacity to solve the problems by aid of the knowledge they have of the wondrous ramifications of nature and science?

Next Wednesday\* we shall have a phalanx of some 20,000 citizens all actuated with the divine instincts of brotherly love, relief and truth, marching in solemn procession through the streets of this city, avowedly to open a structure for their use, but actually to testify their conviction in the rights and equality of man, the immortality of the soul and a belief in the Deity. Clad in Mephistophelian livery, blood red, so em-

\* June the second, 1875.

blematic of his faith, I doubt not a certain high personage gazing perchance from a lofty *eminence* and actuated with Torquemada sentiment would joyfully sacrifice each of those masonic brothers as his predecessors did Cagliostro. Aye, and if he did not fear reprisals perhaps give the order to his Irish myrmidons to re-enact a second St. Bartholomew in the streets and avenues of New York city. The tiger's claws are clipped now, as Pernambuco testifies, and so masonic imposters, pah! are only excommunicated and treated to curses which come duly home like chickens to roost.

The philanthropy of Cagliostro should entitle him to a pedestal beside John Howard or Wilberforce ; this man whose benevolence filled hospitals of his own creation, where his great medical knowledge was given without stint to those who needed it, and who, when cured, were sent away not empty handed. His acquaintance with geology and the learned and abstruse sciences should place him in the ranks of the Eighteenth Century pioneers of Nineteenth Century discoveries, notwithstanding the fact that his disciples in their unhesitating reverence, yet ignorance attributed miraculous cures and effects, to-day quite explicable, but then exaggerated to lengths as absurd as the miracles we read of in Buddhist and Christian hagiologies. The assistance he gave to free-thought and his aid towards political regeneration, his hatred of the two co-eval evil principles, kingcraft and priestcraft, testified in the dissemination of the principles of "Liberte Egalite Fraternite," should receive our gratitude equally with those other patriots to whom the people of America and Europe owe the blessings enjoyed to-day.

If we have as his inventive calumniators a blackmailing editor and a Jesuit biographer, have we not on his record with others in his favor the names of Lavater, Cardinal de Rohan, Mirabeau, Lord George Gordon, Talleyrand, Lord Lytton, Swedenborg, Lafayette, the jurats of Bordeaux, the masonic brotherhood, and last but not least, Louis XVI, the government of France and the Parliament of Paris ?

The life and death of Cagliostro is but another example of the long continued fight—a fight almost as old as the hills—the battle of the Church *contra* free-thought—theology *versus* science. It was the spirit of sacerdotalism which forced Socrates to take the fatal hemlock and which offered him up as a victim for endeavoring to teach a purer and nobler morality than evolved by Greek priests. It was that spirit which actuated the Jewish Priests to crucify Jesus Christ, I refer to the Christ of history, the disciple of Philo, the Essenes and Platonists, not the Christ of theology. Was it not this spirit which made Shelley cry out in his agony, and, be it said, to his regret in after years ?

“ There is no God !

Nature confirms the faith his death groan sealed,  
 Let heaven and earth, let man's revolving race,  
 His ceaseless generations tell their tale ;  
 Let every part depending on the chain  
 That links it to the whole, point to the hand  
 That grasps its term ! Let every seed that falls  
 In silent eloquence unfold its store  
 Of arguments. Infinity within,  
 Infinity without, belie creation ;  
 The exterminable spirit it contains  
 Is nature's only God ; but human pride  
 Is skilful to invent most serious names  
 To hide its ignorance.

The name of God

Has fenced about all crime with holiness ;  
 Himself the creature of his worshippers ;  
 Whose names and attributes and passions change—  
 Seeva, Budha, Foh, Jehovah, God or Lord."

And is it not this spirit which unable either to crush or answer Paine, Voltaire, Rousseau and the Encyclopædists make the priests of Christianity, Sunday after Sunday with closed platform attack with scurrilous abuse the dead lions and charge their antagonists with leading immoral lives, having fearful deaths, and, forsooth, with Atheism the very authors in whose writings are to be found the most beautiful and admirable arguments in favor of the existence of God which the brain of genius ever conceived ?

For ourselves, this spirit would, had it the power, close our Science Congresses and our Liberal Clubs ; force on bended knees our geologists, chemists and scientists, as the theologians did of old Galileo ; burn or murder our Huxleys, Tyndalls, and Darwins, as they did Giordano Bruno—

"The dark-robed priests were met around the pile ;  
 The multitude was gazing silently ;  
 And, as the culprit passed with dauntless mien,  
 Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye.  
 Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly forth :  
 The thirsty fire crept round his manly limbs ;  
 His resolute eyes were scorched to blindness soon ;  
 His death prayer rent my heart ! The insensate mob  
 Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept."

But the avengers are nigh, Strauss and Colenso, Renan and Seeley, "Iconoclast" Bradlaugh the republican and his Grace of Somerset the aristocrat, and from repeated blows Christianity, staggering and reeling like a drunken man is about "going"—"going to go,"—and shortly—"gone" to find a place only in the mythological dictionaries of the future.



In conclusion, can I not analogise the eloquent remarks of the patriot Mazzini on Rousseau and Byron to Cagliostro—"Such is the life of Genius. Envy and persecution but on one side of the tomb, it matters little which, assured triumph. You may burn the works of Rousseau in the public market place, the Spirit of Rousseau will survive; it will appear to you years afterward in the French Constitution. You may misinterpret the spirit, and blacken at your leisure the memory of Byron—you may exile his statue from Westminster Abbey, but the people who recognize in him the victim of one epoch and the prophet of another, will read and adopt him as their own in spite of you, and posterity will end by placing his prescribed statue above the tomb where will lie forever interred the principle of aristocracy."

To your acumen and to your spirit of "fair play," members of the Liberal Club do I look for a verdict.

Am I mistaken in confidently believing that in your inmost heart of hearts, you respond "*Cagliostro was a martyr and no impostor*"?

*"Finis Coronat Opus."*

The paper, which took nearly two hours in reading, was one of the most learned and eloquent the members of the club have ever had the pleasure of listening to. The lecturer was warmly applauded during its progress, and at the conclusion he received long and continued applause.

A discussion took place. After thanking Mr. SOTHERAN for his remarkable lecture, the chairman, Mr. ORMSBY, said that there was one thing he was still in doubt of, and that was the reason of the extraordinary wealth of Cagliostro.

MR. HENRY EVANS followed with a remark of a similar nature, and that he doubted Cagliostro's hatred of aristocracy, for he appeared to have as his friends only noblemen and the like. The same speaker greatly ridiculed many of the practices of Masonry, although eulogistic of the theory; he also complimented MR. SOTHERAN very highly on his paper.

A CHRISTIAN GENTLEMAN then took the platform. He objected to the lecturer's assertion about Biblical prophecies; he discoursed freely of Daniel, who, he said, saw in one of his dreams a beast cut up in four quarters, all of which marched about after separation, and he also stated the book of Daniel was translated into Greek, and was well known, previous to the fulfilment of this prophecy.

MR. STEPHEN PEARL ANDREWS followed with one of his usual eloquent addresses. After congratulating the Club on hearing so erudite a lecture, and complimenting MR. SOTHERAN on its delivery, he said that he thanked the lecturer for his charity, his very broad charity, especially in the matter of Spiritualism. If five years ago, in that club, he had dared to make some of the statements the lecturer had, he would have been hissed down. He was sorry, however, that the lecturer was antagonistic to Christianity, and said that credit should be given to that religion for the *good* it had done.

DR. ATKINSON avowed himself a Mason, and defended Masonry from the attack of MR. EVANS in a forcible speech. He spoke very strongly against the Pope, who, he said, having broken his obligation to the Masonic craft, deserved all the punishment he had stated on his oath he was merited to receive in the event of breaking the same.

In closing the discussion, the lecturer, MR. SOTHERAN, expressed the gratitude he felt for the warm encomiums passed upon his efforts by the various speakers, and observed that if there was one thing more than another he admired in the Liberal Club, it was its open platform, so unlike the pulpits of the various denominations, and which gave an opportunity for the ventilation of antagonistic opinions; one great excellence in connection with this was, that no false statement could be made, or inferred, and pass unheeded. He stated that he did not come forward as the apologist of Cagliostro; it had been his wish simply to narrate facts, and their unavoidable conclusions. Touching the question of the wealth of Cagliostro, he had distinctly stated that the great secret of his incomprehensible expenditure was, that the funds of the secret societies were placed at his disposal. It should also not be forgotten that he was a member, on his father's side, of one of the wealthiest houses in Europe. As to his friendship with the nobility being incompatible with his republicanism, he would remark that the great Revolutionary characters, Mirabeau, Talleyrand, Lafayette, D'Orleans, and, in this century, Shelley, Byron, Lord John Russell, Swinburne, and many of the other leading reformers, were men of aristocratic birth.

MR. SOTHERAN coincided with DR. ATKINSON in the matter of Masonry, and acknowledged himself to be a high grade member of the Masonic Brotherhood and of the Fraternity of the Rosie Cross. He observed that the lower degrees of Masonry could in the United States and Great Britain be rid of their secret character, for the principles of the craft were in those countries now a portion of the constitution, but it was

different in Europe, Asia and South America where theological superstition and political tyranny were as rampant as ever. As to Spiritualism, he considered that if the recent developments narrated by Col. Olcott and Prof. Crookes could be substantiated, it would be one of the greatest blessings of the human race, would effectually rid us of Atheism and its attendant gloominess, and would satisfactorily dispose of Materialistic objections to the immortality of the soul. On the topic of prophecy the lecturer recommended his Christian friend to apply to a fellow-believer in the Old Testament—some pious Rabbi, who would, doubtless, be able to explain the Jewish prophecies to his comprehension : as to his wonderful beast, he thought that if such a miraculous animal could be obtained by his friend it would be a great attraction at Barnum's hippodrome, and might be put beside the lion's den. The gentleman's assertion about the four quarters of the beast smacked somewhat of the slaughter-house, and the idea seemed to be there was something bestial about Christianity. MR. SOTHERAN said he had never heard of the Daniel manuscript referred to—it was probably burnt in the Library of Alexandria, which that pious adulterer and murderer, the Emperor Theodosius, in his Christian fanaticism, ordered to be destroyed. Here affirmed his statement that the pretended Biblical prophecies in many instances were probably written after the occurrences took place ; he said, further, that some had reference to persons then living, and quoted Isaiah and Jeremiah to show that the context of many passages supposed to refer to Christ proved they did nothing of the kind, and also that many of these prophecies were never realized, although long

overdue, in support of which he quoted Christ's statement that he would come to judge the world in the time of those he was speaking to, and which, as it had never taken place in their generation, *probably* never would.

In answer to MR. ANDREWS' criticism the lecturer stated that his belief, so far as Christ was concerned, was, if anything, Unitarian ; as to the good Christianity had done, he could not but acknowledge that even to-day Christianity was an accessory to civilization. For instance : take a Central African village in its primitive state, with its fetish worship, its debasing and disgusting ceremonies, its bloodshed and barbarism, with its inhabitants nearer the apé rather than the Caucasian—take that village, say, one hundred years after the Christian or Mohammedan missionary had been there, on the gold coast on the west or the Zanzibar coast on the east, and we find all this fearful debasement has disappeared and civilization in its place. It is thus these theologies do good, not through their religious teachings at all, but through the civilization coming down from Egyptian, Greek and Roman times possessed by the superior Europeans or Asiatics, and which in its developments and progress was, if anything, antagonistic to those beliefs. But if we acknowledge the good, what of the evil ? The early persecution of the Heathen, the Arian bloodshed, the sanguinary Crusades, the massacres of Huguenots, Waldenses and Albigenses, the Protestant persecution of Catholics, and the religious wars—all evolved out of Christianity, which, after all, is but a resuscitation of the old faiths, of the Socratic and Egyptian doctrine of the immortality of the soul, the Confucian, "Do unto others as you

would be done by," etc. Christ himself, that man of blameless and spotless life, has been misrepresented by men calling themselves his priests, distorted for their pecuniary gain into a god, instead of being placed, as he merited, into a position with Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, Socrates, Plato, Mahomet, and the other religious reformers.



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