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Published by
DeVORSS & CO.
843 South Grand Ave., Los Angeles

The Temple of Silence
(from The Books of the Flaming Heart)
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Muscaphobia
By Nicholas Roerich

ON SALE AT LEADING NEWS STANDS
My beloved, why be satisfied with less than all that I would give you? Why be satisfied with a life of less than fullness or joyous completeness? You withhold yourself from me. Come now, let Me rule the day before you. Acknowledge the Life that lives in you, the Power that sustains you. See how all your paths shall be filled with light and the guidance of Spirit.

Don't put too fine a point to your wit for fear it should get blunted.

—Cervantes

Wit is the salt of conversation, not the food.

—Hazlitt.

Ev'n wit's a burthen, when it talks too long.

—Dryden

You beat your pate, and fancy wit will come; Knock as you please, there's nobody at home.

—Pope

Great men may jest with saints; 'tis wit in them; But, in the less, foul profanation.

—Shakespeare

Wit consists in knowing the resemblance of things which differ, and the difference of things which are alike.

—Madame de Stael

Wit does not take the place of knowledge.

—Vauvenargues

Our dog Nokhor is sick. In English the canine plague is called distemper, that is, disorder or derangement. The definition is entirely correct. Indeed, there takes place in the dog complete disorganization, both physical and psychic. Besides a queerness in eating, walking, and in relationship to his surroundings, all kinds of fears have been displayed. To all these varieties of fear has been added still another curious manifestation. We have noticed that Nokhor suddenly turns himself around impetuously as if some invisible thing jumps up, and, tucking his tail between his legs, flees into some corner. Knowing that dogs often see things invisible to us, we attributed these inexplicable movements of terror to something not understood by us. The explanation proved to be a very prosaic one. In the springtime, there appeared the first tiny flies and it turned out that precisely these were the cause of this fright.

Certainly in a normal condition the large dog would pay no attention to these first tiny flies. But the disorder of distemper obviously made out of these small insects some imagined monsters. Anything may be expected from a sick dog. All of us merely regretted that the disorder could inspire absurd ideas to such an extent. Of course the most unimaginable considerations are manifested to people during insanity. Moreover the preciseness and concreteness of these imaginings are always striking. Whoever has heard how sincerely a sick man describes something as if seen by him, is amazed at that inexpressible conviction which permeates all the details of the description. Even when you yourself distinctly know there was not and could not be anything like it, nevertheless you experience an unpleasant sensation at the heaping up as of actual details. Recalling all the tales about fear which agitate people who
are considered normal, you are involuntarily reminded about the muscaphobia of the dog. Indeed, our time is full of all kinds of confusions. Indeed, in such tense times the imagination is in an especially painful mood. But for all that, when you encounter obvious muscaphobia, you are always sincerely sorry for such people, these biped rational beings who so shamefully doom themselves to illusory terrors.

Among these terrors the egotistical surmise is conspicuous: "What do they think about me?" Moreover it is completely lost sight of about whom precisely the suppositions are being made. Is it what the fly thinks or the pig, or the wolf, the dog? Is it what the lowest rascal or the worthiest man thinks? The consideration is completely lost, that one cannot occupy one's attention equally with either the opinion of the lowest rascal or with the thought of the worthiest man.

In moments of illusory terror people completely forget that the thinking of the lowest criminal scoundrel does not coincide with the judgement of the worthiest cultured thinker. On the contrary, it would be unnatural if low mean thinking could go along the same paths as the thoughts of the loftiest being.

In illusory terror people forget that either they would wish to be considered from the viewpoint of the criminal dregs or else they wish to base themselves upon the judgments of pure and lofty minds. Of course both do not coincide by any means.

One has had occasion to see people deeply distressed by the fact that some base, evil person spoke abuse of them. When asked: "Would you then rejoice at words of praise from the mouth of this scoundrel?" they immediately reply with a shudder that that would be still worse than the abuse. In fact by such praise they would be classed with him who did the praising.

Yet in order to be able to reflect clearly about this choice, one needs first of all to cure oneself of fear. In this cure one needs to render a full account as to precisely where the powerful monster is and where are those flies of which the miserable sick dog is so afraid. When a man is fearful, when he has allowed terrors to take possession of his very essence, then everything surrounding him begins as it were to cry out about all his fears. In the course of time, in another frame of mind, under other conditions, the man sees that the monsters which frightened him were tiny flies, already stuck in a sugared fly-trap. The formerly terrifying flies have themselves rushed at the sugar which betrays them, and will be thrown out with the other rubbish.

The plague of fear prevents a man advancing freely. In the fear of things, the man prefers to rot in the cellar rather than to look up at the divine light. When someone tells these frightened ones about strong people who, though only as cabin-boys, yet saw the world, such a courageous decision appears to the frightened one as insanity. Indeed fear prevents them even thinking about movement. And here our Nokhor, miserable, has buried his nose in a dark corner and probably fears the tiny flies more than anything in the world.

It is related that certain travelers in central Africa, among tribes of cannibals, have seen a cage in which were being fattened some captives from a neighboring tribe for the table of the local chief. Naturally, the travelers wished to help these doomed ones and bought their freedom. But the captives had no desire to leave their cage because they were afraid they would not be fed so well and would have to move somewhere. Either they were devoured or they were not — this should have remained for them the only question, yet ready food for every day was more important to them than any other considerations. About the future they probably did not, in general, even know how to think. But the smell of food enchained them more strongly than any shackles.

We are reminded of another story, this one from the Middle Ages. A certain great lord received evidence of treachery on the part of his chaplain.
There were no limits to the amazement of his retainers who knew about the offense of the chaplain, when they found out that not only was he neither cast out nor executed, but even received especially savoury food. When finally they asked the lord what this meant, he said: "One should not kill a priest. You see how fat he is. If we add to him still more succulent viands, this will deprive him of all mobility and activity." And calling to his chief cook, the lord said to him: "See that the chaplain does not grow thin, and if he doubles in weight you will receive a handful of gold from me."

This means that the fetters of today, the shackles of luxuries, prove to be very powerful. Nevertheless, in the base, will lie an animal fear for the belly and self-gratification.

If on the one side we confront the immobility of self-enjoyment and on the other remember the example of terror at the flies, then it becomes perfectly clear that by some sort of admonishments people need first of all to be freed from fear.

Poor sick dog. He fears the flies. And all of us regret seeing such senselessness. But surely people are not distempered dogs, and it would seem they should be able to render themselves account as to where precisely are the flies and where an actual danger, in the full significance of this word.

Muscophobia is not worthy of people.

Whenever we encounter hatred, or even mild dislike, we should remind ourselves of this fact. There are many antagonisms which can, should be, and must be quietly ignored. We make a sorry blunder if we permit them to wreck our peace of mind or interrupt the work we are trying to do.

—James Gordon Gilkey

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The "Good" of Money
By E. Leslie-Hoot

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits.
—Psalms 103:2

O ne'er may our forgetful hearts
O'erlook Thy bounteous care;
But what our Father's hand imparts
Still own in praise and prayer.

Only a small number of people, compared to the vast masses, have enough money to buy all of the material comforts which they desire. Why? Because the great majority have forgotten the source of money. They look upon it merely as a material substance with which to purchase things. If, when children, we had been told that all things were formed out of a primordial or spiritual substance, the underlying principle of which we call God, it is likely we should have a different attitude toward money and not seem to have such a need for it.

Money is any substance that by agreement serves as a common medium of exchange and a measure of value in trade.

Tin, lead, iron and platinum have been used, while among primitive peoples, furs, skins, leather, sheep, tobacco, tea, etc., were mediums of exchange. Barter and exchange have been greatly facilitated by the use of money standards. But out of these changing standards, man has built a god Mammon who has usurped the place of proper worship.

"The silver and gold are mine," said the Lord to the Israelites. Scientists declare that silver and gold are so many molecules, atoms, protons and electrons, moving at certain rates of vibrations. But back of all is the universal law of creative force which we know as God, who is our Supply,