

further removed from their spheres than the pursuits of those whom they call "laymen" are from their own; and, because they cannot see how these things can be done or explained, will give support by testimonials and affirma-

tions of mystery to every new, or renewal of an ancient, superstition. Thus astrology and divination were maintained, and so vast structures of deception at the present day are upheld.

J. M. Buckley.

THE EUROPEAN CRAZE FOR DECORATIONS.



ANY American travelers in Europe will have noticed in the principal thoroughfares of the largest capitals a number of small but elegant shops, the keepers of which earn their living, and in many instances accumulate considerable fortunes, by the vanity, not of women, but of the stronger sex. They are decoration merchants—the jewelers of men.

There are cheap and costly orders, modern and antique orders, and probably even a greater variety than there is in jewelry for ladies. The "man of society" in Europe requires orders just as his wife requires diamonds—not that it is the fashion to wear the glittering crosses and stars in their full blaze at every picnic or *soirée*, but at all such social occasions the Continental gentleman will, according to etiquette, wear in the shape of a *boutonnière* or colored button on his coat something to indicate his possession of such crosses. The more multicolored the button or rosette, the more crosses the wearer has, and the more respected and envied he will be in a certain set. Every American traveler on the Continent has probably noticed these *boutons* on at least one man out of ten, not counting the working-classes. These distinguished people are usually the object of some slight attention on the part of the railway conductor, hotel proprietor, or custom-house official. I know several Americans who, while in Europe, imitated this European custom by wearing rosettes in the American colors in their buttonholes, and thus enjoyed the slight advantages of a "*décoré*,"—at least with those whose knowledge of the orders of chivalry is somewhat limited.

Very few—probably not more than three—decorative institutions have retained their original organization and privileges through centuries down to the present time. Curiously enough the most ancient of these institutions, the order of the Holy Sepulcher, is still existing, although in a deteriorated state. Founded with the object of defending the holy grave at Jerusalem, it exercised its holy function for

many centuries under the auspices of the Patriarch of Jerusalem. But it dwindled down to a mere name when the object of its existence, the defense of the Holy Sepulcher, became unnecessary. To-day the Patriarch of Jerusalem still retains the right to confer the insignia of the order, a red enameled cross curiously shaped. Some years ago, when the "crown of thorns" and the alleged pieces of the "true cross" were exhibited at the Chapel of Notre-Dame in Paris, the knights of the order were permitted to exercise their ancient privilege of guarding the holy relics.

Probably the next most ancient order was that of the mysterious Knights of the Round Table, said to have been founded by King Arthur in 516, though it is doubtful if it ever existed in reality. The most powerful impulse for the foundation of knightly orders was the defense of Christianity against the Saracens in the Holy Land, and, later on, against the Moors in Spain. The holy cross was the ensign adopted by all, and their names and attire simply varied according to their nationality and their patron saint. To-day, the object and organization of those noble institutions is preserved by only one order—that of the Knights of St. John (or Knights of Malta). They are recognized as a sovereign body, and have their ambassadors at various courts, and in their ranks are representatives of many leading Catholic, sovereign, and aristocratic families of Austria, Germany, Italy, and Great Britain. They have retained their ancient picturesque dress and their time-honored ceremonies.

All the other orders conformed themselves to modern views and requirements, and little more remains of them than the outside insignia, the cross, conferred by the sovereign upon persons distinguished for virtue, merit, or fidelity. Among them may be counted the order of Christ (a meager offspring of the once powerful order of the Knights Templar), the Spanish orders of Alcantara, of Calatrava, and the still more ancient of St. Jacob of the Sword. Aside from these historical orders many other decorations have been founded during the past two centuries, with the object of promot-

ing all possible virtues and as a recompense for all possible merits and achievements. They are not orders in the ancient meaning of the word. Their knights have to abide by no special laws, have to render no special service—in fact, are united as a body only once a year, at a religious ceremony and a banquet. Excepting some orders, like the Marie Thérèse of Austria, whose knights receive handsome annual pensions, the only value in belonging to an order is limited to-day to the visible distinction. None but persons of great achievements in science, art, literature, or on the battle-field will, for instance, be admitted into the Prussian order of Merit or the Bavarian order of Maximilian. The number of their knights is very limited, and the knights themselves choose the persons to be proposed to the sovereign as worthy to fill vacancies.

Only a few Americans and Englishmen are possessors of decorations; which, of course, does not imply that they are devoid of either merit or vanity. The English government is at all events not guilty of any wholesale distribution of decorations, and although England possesses a number of orders, they are in most instances conferred only upon persons of high rank or of real merit, military or diplomatic, and very rarely for scientific or literary achievements.

The highest English order—and indeed ranking in the same line with the Golden Fleece of Austria or the Black Eagle of Prussia—is the well-known Garter, only conferred upon princes and persons of the highest nobility. Lord Palmerston once said, "What I like about the Garter is, that it does not require any particular merit to get it."*

I have seen the Prince of Wales attired in the full paraphernalia of a K. G. (the usual abbreviation for Knight of the Garter), consisting of black costume and knee-breeches of the time of George III., the famous garter, a blue velvet ribbon lined with leather, under the left knee. The well-known inscription on it, *Honi soit qui mal y pense*, is set in diamonds. The decoration belonging to the garter consists of an oblong gold medal worn on a blue ribbon around the neck, and showing St. George with the dragon, surrounded by the same inscription as on the garter; and, in addition, a brilliant star on the left breast, and a blue ribbon from the right shoulder to the left hip with another image of St. George suspended.

Among other English decorations the order of the Bath, mostly for civil services, and the Victoria Cross, for military valor, are the most distinguished; indeed, the letters G. C. B.,

K. C. B., C. B. (standing for "Grand Cross Bath," "Knight Commander Bath," and "Companion Bath" respectively), form a valuable addition to the long list of initials which is apt to form a sort of peacock's tail to the names of distinguished Englishmen. It is a sort of ribbon worn in the buttonhole of their signature. There are about half a dozen other decorations conferred in Great Britain, among them the order of the Thistle for the Scotch, and the Shamrock (or St. Patrick) for the Irish nobility. Foreigners rarely receive English distinctions of this sort.

There can be no doubt that many decorations in several large empires are conferred upon soldiers or statesmen for real merit only, especially when a council of well-known men is appointed to decide upon or recommend the investiture with this or that respected order. The Russian order of St. George, the Austrian order of Marie Thérèse, and the Prussian order of the Iron Cross, all three military distinctions, are conferred in this manner. Neither the Garter, nor the Austrian Golden Fleece, nor the Italian order of St. Annunziata can be compared with the little black iron cross, for the former are the ordinary attributes of every royal prince and every sovereign. Many of the latter receive these decorations on the day of their birth. Spanish royal babies wear the big yellow or blue ribbons on the day of their presentation to the court and state dignitaries, when but a few days old. The Iron Cross or the Cross of St. George, however, must be won on the battle-field.

Other decorations are given for universally acknowledged political or scientific achievements—in fact, for real merit in every branch of life, like the Belgian order of Leopold, and the Austrian order of St. Stephen and Leopold. Perhaps a dozen others are of equally high rank and respectability, like the Prussian Red Eagle, the Prussian order of the Crown, and others. The rulers of the central European empires and their responsible state ministers do not permit any abuse of them. It is mostly on account of the undisputed respectability of two or three different decorations in every state that speculation and abuse have found their way into the institution, and that an endless number of new decorations have been established of late. Each of the larger governments of Europe disposes of from ten to twelve different decorations, one or two for ladies of rank; while each of the minor states, down to the petty Republic of San Marino, may confer one, two, or more

*According to recent researches, the well-known story of the origin of the Garter is devoid of foundation. It was indeed King Edward III. who established the or-

der after having used his own garter as a sign of rally at the battle of Crécy. The famous device is simply an allusion to his pretensions to the throne of France.

orders. There are but three governments in Europe which so far have been preserved from this institution — Switzerland, the principality of Liechtenstein, a patch of land fifty square miles in extent and inhabited by about 7000 people, and the nominally independent republic of Andorra.

The great scenes, however, of the decoration farce are the western and southern states of Europe, especially Turkey and Spain. In Latin countries this old European institution forms one of the secrets of the power and influence still exercised by kings and princes.

The governments of Europe dispose of about two hundred and fifty different decorations, most of them subdivided into four or five different grades — Grand Cross, Grand Officer, Commander, Officer, and Knight. Consequently, not less than about one thousand different crosses are at the disposal of the European governments, to recompense merit, reward favors, and foster the vanity of European society.

The subdivision of decorations into different degrees has its origin in the ancient knightly orders, as, for instance, the Knights of Malta, who were commanded by officers, commanders, grand officers, and grand commanders, somewhat similar to our armies. It was thought expedient to keep up these different degrees in the more modern institution of decorations, and to confer grand crosses only upon generals in command, state ministers, high court dignitaries, and ambassadors; the second degree, that of Grand Officer, is usually given to distinguished generals, princes, chiefs of departments, provincial governors; the degree of Commander is conferred upon staff officers, majors, and dignitaries of similar rank; the fourth and fifth degrees, those of Officer and Knight, are given to persons of less celebrity, however great their achievements. The different decorations have also their different symbols: thus the decoration of a Knight consists of a silver cross of the order, with a small ribbon suspended from the top; the decoration of an Officer is in a similar way, but the cross is larger; the Commander wears a larger cross with a wider ribbon around his neck; the Grand Officer consists in a larger cross placed on a silver or gold ribbon, and worn on the right side of the breast; the Grand Cross or Grand Officer wears the same star on the left side of the breast. In addition, he wears a large cross suspended on a large ribbon from the right shoulder to the left. On special occasions, grand crosses are also worn suspended on

heavy gold chains around the neck. Sovereigns usually wear the stars of their own orders, of which they are the Grand Masters, while their royal consorts are Grand Masters of the female orders. The Emperor William is generally seen wearing the iron cross and the star of the most distinguished order of the Black Eagle. Emperor Francis Joseph invariably wears the decoration of the order of the Golden Fleece, it being one of the regulations of the order that every knight belonging to it must wear it at all times, in state or private. A similar regulation compels the knights of the Russian order of St. George to wear the cross at all times, and they would incur penalties if seen without it.

The ordinary decoration, including the ribbon, is about four inches long by three inches wide. To be able to wear all their decorations, Prince Bismarck or Count Moltke, for instance, would require a breast thirty feet in breadth. A man of merit in Europe should, however, not only be of large proportions, but also of superior strength; for the average weight of one gold grand cross is about half a pound. The aforesaid dignitaries would therefore have to carry about forty pounds, in addition to their heavy gold-embroidered uniform. Civilians are permitted to wear diminutive reductions of their orders, suspended on narrow gold chains; the stars of a Grand Officer or a Grand Cross, however, are worn in their original size.

It would be difficult to say who is the most decorated man of Europe. Each of the three emperors and the royal sovereigns of Europe average fifty grand crosses, with their respective appendages. Aside from the sovereigns and princes, I should think the most decorated man must be either Count Andrassy, the former Chancellor of Austria, or the station-master of —, a well-known watering-place. The latter receives an average of three minor crosses annually, depending mainly on the number of sovereigns and princes visiting the place; station-masters, physicians, police commissioners, and others are in many instances remunerated for their services with crosses very much as the gate-keeper of the Castle of Chillon receives a shilling from every visiting Englishman.

Prince Gortschakoff was one of the most decorated men of his time, and I once saw at his house a large *étagère* full of the most varied crosses and stars, an exhibition similar to those at the Palais Royal. "I never wore them together," he told me, "and I suppose the first and last time will be at my funeral." (It is customary in Europe to carry all the decorations of a deceased dignitary on pillows behind the hearse.)

It is not usual for statesmen to receive foreign decorations set in diamonds or precious stones, unless there is a special object in it. About thirty years ago, for instance, the Shah of Persia began the new era of European civilization in his provinces by establishing glittering decorations. Now persons receiving a foreign decoration are not permitted to wear it, unless by special authorization of their sovereign. The newly established Oriental decorations were consequently of no value so long as the European governments withheld this authorization. In order to put the ruling men in a better disposition, the Oriental rulers tried a characteristic way of doing business by conferring upon them the grand crosses of the new decoration set in diamonds of great value. It was, however, of not much avail with many of the recipients.

Aside from the decorations at the disposal of sovereigns and governments in power, there are a number of others not officially recognized, but tolerated. Thus some benevolent societies, Italian cities, and formerly reigning families retain the right to confer titles and crosses. For instance, the royal house of Lusignan, which many centuries ago reigned over Jerusalem and Cyprus, disposes of an order; and, strangely enough, the crosses of these little princes are usually the handsomest and of the most elaborate design.

The innumerable number of crosses in existence, and the rage to obtain as large a collection of them as possible, of course causes many abuses of this ancient institution. Indeed, it is well known that quite a number of decorations can be bought for cash by persons of a certain outside respectability. Even as high a decoration as the *Légion d'honneur* has somewhat degenerated under the present republic, as has been shown by recent events. There is a proverb in France to the effect that nobody can escape death and the "Legion of Honor."

About ten or fifteen years ago the five-armed Cross of the Legion was a much-coveted decoration. The scarlet ribbon belonging to it was considered a sign of the wearer's authority or at least respectability, and the vast hordes of decoration-hunters therefore looked for another outlandish order having the same ribbon as the Legion. Several such were discovered, and the authorities of the respective states, finding their orders so much in demand, established secretly quite a tariff for the sale of the different degrees of the orders, and for years these crosses remained a source of considerable revenue to somebody.

The French authorities, noticing with surprise the sudden increase of red-lined boutonnières among the inhabitants of Paris, and dis-

covering the real cause of this buttonhole inundation, compelled all persons possessing foreign decorations with ribbons similar to that belonging to the Legion of Honor to attach to the ribbon a diminutive cross of the same decoration, to distinguish it from the French cross. But this did not terminate the "*guerre aux boutonnières*," for instantly the decoration-hunters directed their attention to such easily obtainable foreign decorations whose ribbons contained, among other colors, at least a faint streak of red. The most welcome of these decorations was the Tunisian order of Merit, conferred with equal liberality on all respectable and deserving persons who pay hard cash for it. Its ribbons are green, with red borders. By making these borders very broad and leaving the faintest streak of green in the center, the boutonnière was made to resemble closely the Legion ribbon.

Aside from these minor decorations there are quite a number of other formerly much respected orders of knighthood accessible to the dollar, and a regular underhand traffic with them seems to have been established,—as certain European governments annually require enormous funds secretly to influence elections and the opposition press. This traffic, according to late revelations, appears to be in practice in certain powerful empires of Europe. Thus, until quite recently, a high decoration was sold to many otherwise respectable persons who paid considerable sums for it, amounting to twenty or thirty thousand dollars. The knights of this order were entitled to hereditary knighthood in their families, the commanders to a baronetcy, and the ruler of the empire in question, to the social danger connected with the practice of ennobling, put a stop to it.

Enormous amounts of money paid for these glittering stars and quite frequently advertisements in the most fashionable style are to be found in Europe, especially in those of famous resorting places:

Any honorable person may obtain a recognized decoration, the ribbon of which is worn in the buttonhole. Charges, moderate. —, — Street, London.

African and Asiatic monarchs have not been slow in recognizing the value of the glistening gold and silver stars and crosses. India, Persia, Egypt, Tunis, Siam, Japan, and the East have their decorations, and the fashion of the cross being somewhat out of vogue, the form of a star is universal in the Orient.

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The innumerable number of crosses in existence, and the rage to obtain as large a collection of them as possible, of course causes many abuses of this ancient institution. Indeed, it is well known that quite a number of decorations can be bought for cash by persons of a certain outside respectability. Even as high a decoration as the *Légion d'honneur* has somewhat degenerated under the present republic, as has been shown by recent events. There is a proverb in France to the effect that nobody can escape death and the "Legion of Honor."

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covering the real cause of this buttonhole inundation, compelled all persons possessing foreign decorations with ribbons similar to that belonging to the Legion of Honor to attach to the ribbon a diminutive cross of the same decoration, to distinguish it from the French cross. But this did not terminate the "*guerre aux boutonnières*," for instantly the decoration-hunters directed their attention to such easily obtainable foreign decorations whose ribbons contained, among other colors, at least a faint streak of red. The most welcome of these decorations was the Tunisian order of Merit, conferred with equal liberality on all respectable and deserving persons who pay hard cash for it. Its ribbons are green, with red borders. By making these borders very broad and leaving the faintest streak of green in the center, the boutonnière was made to resemble closely the Legion ribbon.

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Enormous amounts of money are annually paid for these glittering stars and crosses, and quite frequently advertisements of the following style are to be found in European papers, especially in those of famous resorts or watering places:

Any honorable person may obtain an officially recognized decoration, the ribbon of which can be worn in the buttonhole. Charges, moderate. Apply to Mr. —, — Street, London.

African and Asiatic monarchs, so much given to Oriental splendor and display, were not slow in recognizing the beauty of these glistening gold and silver stars. Turkey, Persia, Egypt, Tunis, Siam, Japan, China, etc., have their decorations, and the usual form of a cross being somewhat out of place with them, the form of a star is universally adopted in the Orient.

European republicanism does not appear to be incompatible with personal distinctions of

this sort, for not only did the French republic preserve the Legion of Honor, but two more decorations were recently established in that country—one for literary and artistic pursuits, to be conferred by the Secretary of Public Instruction; and another for agricultural merit, whose supreme chief is the Secretary of Agriculture. Several of the American republics have established similar decorations, as Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.

Aside from the decorations mentioned in the official "Almanac de Gotha," that old-established *vade mecum* of royalty and nobility in Europe, each government gives a number of other crosses and medals for civil and military merit, for art and science. Writers, poets, singers, and actors of reputation, and of either sex, are usually favored with a number of them; and many instances could be quoted where salaries have been paid in medals instead of hard cash. Extraordinary occasions, as the visit of a foreign monarch, the opening of a new theater, and jubilees of festival performances, are the occasions for such showers of medals, although some states confer them parsimoniously. I remember an amusing incident of this kind at the opening of a large new theater in Germany. The director of the theater was known to be an exceedingly vain man, whose gaping buttonhole was wide open, like a young sparrow's beak longing for food. He was expected to receive a little cross or medal on this occasion. After the first act of the festive opening performance, a chamber-

lain of the king entered the box of the director, and ceremoniously informed the latter that the king wished to confer upon him a mark of his esteem and a recognition of his services, and that he was sent to present to him the royal thanks. With this he handed to the director an elegant, small, leather case, and left. We congratulated him warmly, for at last his long-looked-for ribbon was in his hands! Was it the Crown? was it the Red Eagle? At last the case was opened with trembling hands, and the contents were found to be—a silver snuff-box! I shall never forget the manager's face at this solemn moment. Disgusted and disappointed, he left the theater and was not to be seen for several days. In the papers, however, it was jokingly reported that he had received the "Royal Snuff-box for Art and Science."

From the contents of this paper it will be gleaned that, aside from the knightly institutions of England, Germany, Austria, and some other countries, the system of decorations has deteriorated in no small degree, and in many instances is little more than a farce, unworthy the giver as well as the receiver. A few years ago, an envoy of a certain kingdom in a European capital used to pay his bills in decorations. Thus, his shoemaker, tailor, and butcher became knights, his landlord commander, of a certain order. Fortunately, "society" in Europe is well acquainted with the value of this or that distinction, and the sale of certain crosses has become a harmless sport.

Ernst von Hesse-Wartegg.

TOPICS OF THE TIME.

The Real Nature of Politics.

Stranger. And that common science which is over them all, and guards the laws, and all things that are in the State, and truly weaves them all into one, if we would describe under a name characteristic of this common nature, most truly we may call Politics. . . . This, then, according to our view, is the perfection of the web of political action. There is a direct intertexture of the brave and temperate natures, when the kingly science has drawn the two sorts of lives into communion. . . .; and, having completed the noblest and best of all webs of which a common life admits, and enveloping therein all other inhabitants of cities, binds them in one fabric, and governs and presides over them, omitting no element of a city's happiness.

Young Socrates. You have completed, Stranger, a very perfect image of the Statesman. — PLATO, *Politicus* (Jowett's translation).

Jailer. "What is your trade, Mr. Tweed?" *Tweed.* "Well, you may put me down as a Statesman."

THE degradation which has come upon the words "politics" and "politician," in their American use, their degeneration from the high estate to which the precedents of two thousand years have entitled them, mark a degeneration in political methods which deserves the attention of every lover of his country. "Politics" has become simply the work of managing a party for its own advantage, or that of its leaders;

and the term "politician" is applied only to the campaign director, the local committee-man, the appointment-broker—in short, to the men who manage parties and distribute the public offices. If we wish a great public question—such as the labor question, the tariff question, the currency question, and others of the class—to be treated with ordinary common sense, we must "take it out of politics"; while if any party perpetrates a particularly mean act for mere partisan advantage, we are told that it was done for "political purposes." So evident has been the tendency that an effort has been made to differentiate terms, and, while leaving "politician" in its degradation, to use "statesman" as a designation for a real master of the art of government. But so sure are the laws which have been working in the case, that the only result has been a corresponding degradation in the new term also, and the only differentiation is this: the "politician" is still one who is "in politics" for the sake of what he can make there; while the "statesman" is now a *bouffe* politician—a politician with an element of conscious humbug about him.