

## "SPRING CLEAN."

DEAR MR. EDITOR,—I know you take an interest in all kinds of studies, and am therefore led to communicate to you my latest discovery of an occult form of worship which goes on in all English households about this season of the year. There are lesser forms of the worship at other periods, but the great festival is usually held in April and May. The deity is known under the name of "Spring-clean," and, although it seems a homely title, his power and influence are really wonderful. He is able to move even the largest pieces of furniture right out of their places! I myself saw a huge wardrobe standing in the middle of a room where it never used to be; looking-glasses are invariably turned upside down, and, as I suppose, the rites need a great deal of space, the smaller pieces of furniture generally overflow into the passages exactly where people are most likely to fall over them!

It is always interesting in the history of nations to observe the forms of their worship, and as regards this particular "cult" I had been much exercised, it seemed difficult to arrive at exact particulars on this point. However, early this morning I obtained some light upon the question. Creeping with bated breath into a room where the "orgies" had

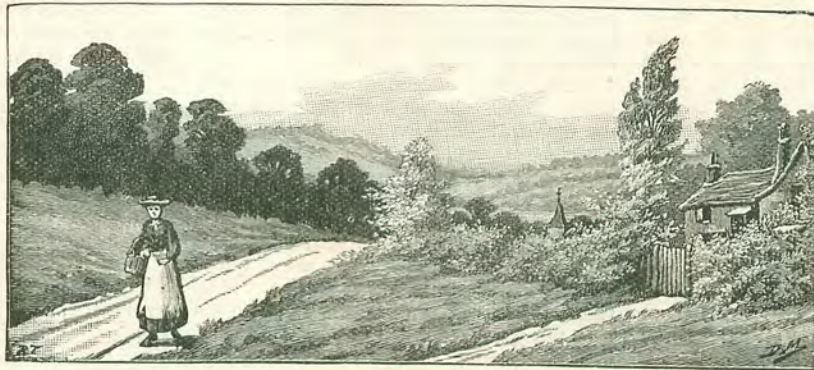
been held the previous day, I gazed around. Everything was shrouded in white wrappings, giving a most solemn effect, all was weird and unearthly. I felt a cold shiver pass through my frame, but I rallied my powers and determined to unravel the mystery to the end. In Eastern countries worshippers are not admitted into the temples unless they remove their shoes. So here I found an approach to the same thing, the carpet was removed! I was much struck with this curious variation in the form of reverence. But what was actually done by the worshippers? That was what I resolved to find out.

Although one is not allowed to be present, it is possible to judge a little by the things used in the cult, and to my delight I found the evidence I was seeking. In one corner was a large basin full of tea-leaves, evidently they were scattered about as an offering. I believe they are supposed to have a quieting effect upon the nerves of "Spring-clean," a grosser kind of incense sprinkled before his shrine. That, at any rate, was one point established, I made a note of it.

The next discovery was a saucer full of silver sand with a kind of damp flannel on the surface. I have been told that the worshippers

are required to bring the sand in contact with metals of various kinds, and to use a great deal of bodily exertion to prove the earnestness of their vocation. There was something that looked to be of the nature of soft soap, and at a certain stage of the proceedings this material is applied to woodwork, the poor slaves of the idol being compelled to do this mainly on their knees, slowly traversing the length of the room, and only *leaving off* when quite exhausted. I noticed some small bottles containing various liquids, but into these mysteries I did not like to intrude. One remarkable thing I have found out is this: that the male part of the population never seem to believe in "Spring-clean," they are for ever scoffing at him in a most irreverent way. In some cases they view him with such abhorrence that when the season comes round for his worship, they go away either abroad or to some pleasant watering-place, and in their absence the rites are carried on with tremendous vigour. Probably some of your readers will be in a position to confirm what I have now stated on this subject.

I remain, dear Mr. Editor,  
Yours truly,  
VERAX.



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## QUESTIONS.

181. How many kings of Judah reigned after the division of the kingdom? From whom were they all descended? and what promise was thus fulfilled?

182. Enumerate the prayers recorded in the Second Book of Chronicles.

183. Give the names of three prophets who lived during the reign of Asa, and state what is recorded of their words and deeds.

184. By whom and against what nation were the two battles of "the Salt Valley" fought?

185. For what endeavours to promote national piety were the reigns of Asa and Jehoshaphat severally remarkable? What marriage was it that brought trouble on the nation in Jehoshaphat's reign?

186. Who was Jehoshabeath? and for what act of devotion was she celebrated?

187. In the reigns of what kings of Judah did the several captivities of the children of Israel occur? When were the three captivities of Judah?

188. What transgression of a pious king led to the captivity of Judah being foretold?

189. Who was the best and most exemplary king of Judah? What prophetess lived in his reign? and what priest discovered "the Book of the Law," given by God to Moses?

190. What kings of Judah were not found worthy to be buried with their fathers in "the City of David"? Who was the last king buried in the royal sepulchre?