

## The Project Gutenberg eBook of The Story of an Ostrich: An Allegory and Humorous Satire in Rhyme, by I. J. Potter

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Title: The Story of an Ostrich: An Allegory and Humorous Satire in Rhyme

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Release date: September 25, 2011 [EBook #37530]

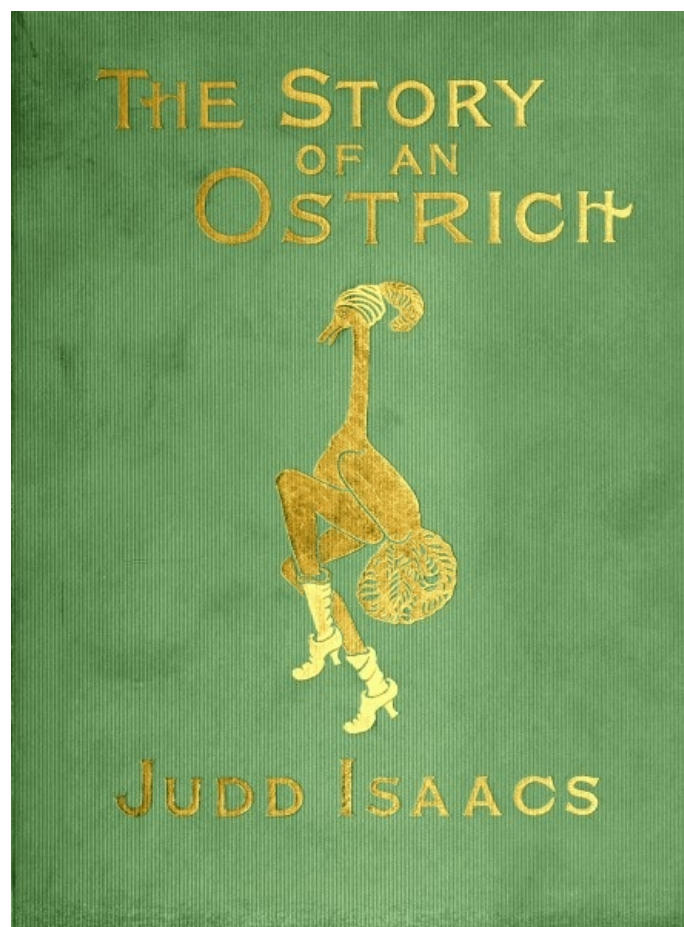
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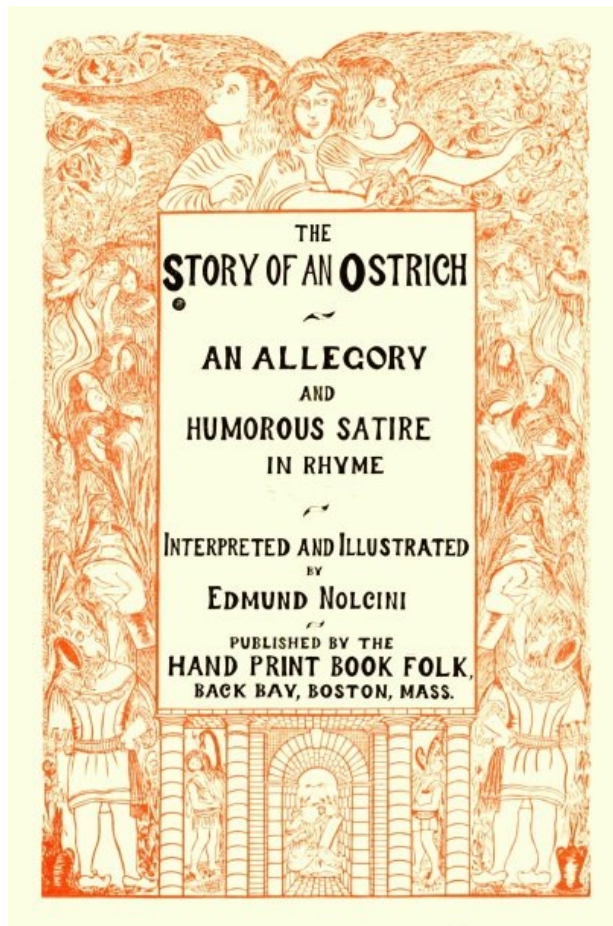
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\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE STORY OF AN OSTRICH: AN ALLEGORY AND HUMOROUS SATIRE IN RHYME \*\*\*

### Transcriber's note:

Where the text and images were intertwined I've provided an image of the original page followed by a text version.





# THE STORY OF AN OSTRICH

AN ALLEGORY  
AND  
HUMOROUS SATIRE  
IN RHYME

INTERPRETED AND ILLUSTRATED  
BY  
EDMUND NOLCINI

PUBLISHED BY THE  
HAND PRINT BOOK FOLK,  
BACK BAY, BOSTON, MASS.

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## PUBLISHER'S PREFACE



WHATEVER other merit may be discovered in this book, the publishers desire to call attention to the fact that, as a whole, it is a production altogether unique in a field of endeavor where something new is being constantly sought, but seldom found.

The poem is entirely hand-printed in large and legible letters, designedly kept free from ornate fancies and, therefore, particularly easy to read. The hand-printing accords with the adjoining

illustrations as angular and machine-made type never does, giving a pleasing and harmonious effect to the entire page, a result not to be obtained by the ordinary art of the printer.

Attention is also called to the illustrations of the volume. Their merely mechanical arrangement upon the page is in itself unusual, we might almost say unknown to the reading public, while the imaginative story that the artist has told in the illustrations that he has contributed, is not only of the real and material world, but also of powers behind the scenes, which offer the motives and even supply the cues of most, if not all of the actors, who perform upon the great stage of life. In this, too, the book is unusual, if not unique, and offers a fertile field to the imagination of a discerning public in connection with the delicious humor of the poem itself.

While, therefore, fully conscious of how far short the volume falls from what might be done in the direction in which it only points the way, the publishers offer it as one of a series now in preparation, of similar works which, it is believed, will be found worthy of more than a few moments of the amused attention of the reader.

THE HAND PRINT BOOK FOLK.

*Back Bay, Boston, Mass., October, 1903.*



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## Artist's Announcement



**I**F the reader will pardon an unconventional obtrusion upon his attention for a brief moment, he may be interested to follow somewhat the train of thought in the artist's mind prior to his beginning to illustrate this book.

When "The Story of an Ostrich" was put into his hands, his first impression was, "Here is a merely juvenile theme, to be treated with light, conventional and ornamental drawings, as an adornment to a fairy tale."

As he read it, he gradually perceived a deeper significance concealed beneath the laugh that must inevitably be aroused at the thought of the ridiculous figure of the foolish ostrich pecking away at his homely feet, under the delusion that they are not his own.

The longer he studied and pondered over it, the more was he impressed with the conviction that underneath the simple phraseology of the poem, the author had conveyed a lesson that humanity might well pause and heed.... In these days of "making many books," how welcome should be that one whose story aims to raise the burden that weighs down the surcharged heart, or seeks to still the fever coursing through the blood of men and women struggling with the complicated problems of life!

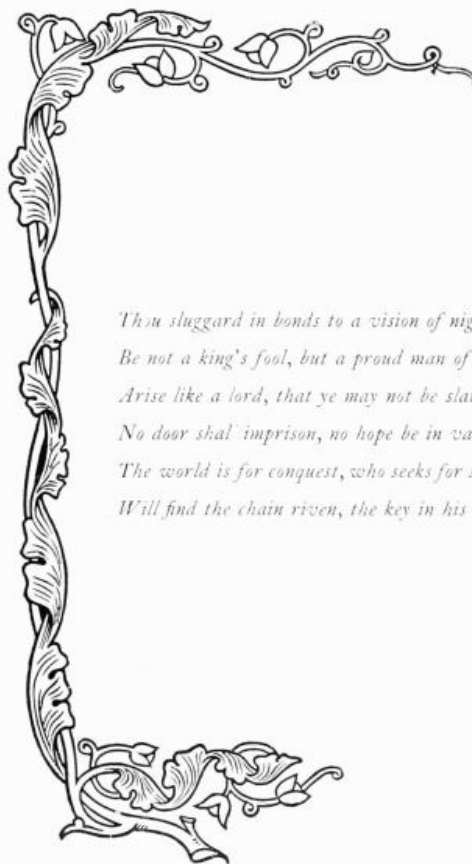
"The Story of an Ostrich" is so simple in its form that children may read it with pleasure and profit, thereby drawing the simpler moral from the tale; while there is also suggested a possible

condition of society that shall be attuned to the perfect chord of divine law, through the subordination of individualism in such manner as to produce complete harmony in all human affairs.

In the pride and dominance of the head over the rest of the body, in its scorn of the feet, equally indispensable with the head to the welfare of the whole, the poem has struck at the discordant note of all our human disaffection and rebellion.

When the artist had thus searched and found between the lines the real motive of the poem, it at once became pregnant with allusions and references that suggested artistic elaboration, or pen analysis, of the large area of social life, which the allegory, in its semi-humorous, satirical vein, assumes to cover.

If his pencil seems at times to wander far afield, either in elaboration or disregard of the canon principles of art, his plea must be that the interpretation he has given is according to his carefully studied conception of what the author must have had in mind when writing "The Story of an Ostrich."



*Thou sluggard in bonds to a vision of night,  
Be not a king's fool, but a proud man of might :  
Arise like a lord, that ye may not be slain,  
No door shal' imprison, no hope be in vain ;  
The world is for conquest, who seeks for such goal,  
Will find the chain riven, the key in his soul !*

*Thou sluggard in bonds to a vision of night,  
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---

*The unknown spake out of the firmament, saying, —*

*"Choose ye one instrument first, and then attune another one to it. This accomplished, attune then a third instrument to them; after that a fourth, and so on; and ye shall be all attuned alike."*

*Thereupon, the musicians set to work, but could not agree as to whose should be the first instrument.*

*A pillar of fire descended from Heaven and stood in the midst of the musicians; and in the centre of the pillar of fire there appeared an instrument called the All Perfect. The instrument gave forth one note and all the musicians attuned to it. The Voice said, "I have given the keynote, find ye the rest!"*

*The pillar of fire departed. The instruments thus attuned in harmony played rapturously.*

*This I perceive,—to make the man and wife one, to make the village one, to make the state one, to make the empire one,—all in harmony as one instrument, cannot be done without a Central Son, a Creator to attune to. When a man is attuned to Him, and a woman is attuned to Him, they will themselves be as one. When the family and the village are attuned to Him, it is easy. Without Him harmony cannot be.*

*He, the Creator, then, must be first in all things, first in all places. He must be the nearest of all things, the nearest of all places. In our rites and ceremonies, He must be the All Ideal Perfection, the embodiment of a Perfect Person.—Book of Saphah.*

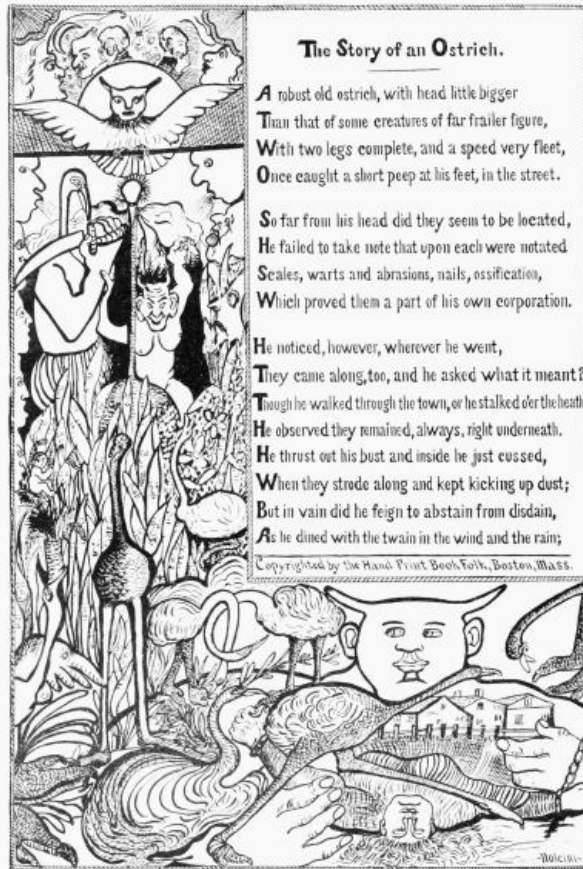
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## **The Story of an Ostrich**



BY

**JUDD ISAACS**, FORMERLY EDITOR OF THE YANKEE BLADE, NEW ENGLAND MAGAZINE, NICKELL  
MAGAZINE.



### The Story of an Ostrich.

A robust old ostrich, with head little bigger  
Than that of some creatures of far frailer figure,  
With two legs complete, and a speed very fleet,  
Once caught a short peep at his feet, in the street.

So far from his head did they seem to be located,  
He failed to take note that upon each were notated  
Scales, warts and abrasions, nails, ossification,  
Which proved them a part of his own corporation.

He noticed, however, wherever he went,  
They came along, too, and he asked what it meant?  
Though he walked through the town, or he stalked o'er the heath  
He observed they remained, always, right underneath.  
He thrust out his bust and inside he just cussed,  
When they strode along and kept kicking up dust;  
But in vain did he feign to abstain from disdain,  
As he dined with the twain in the wind and the rain;

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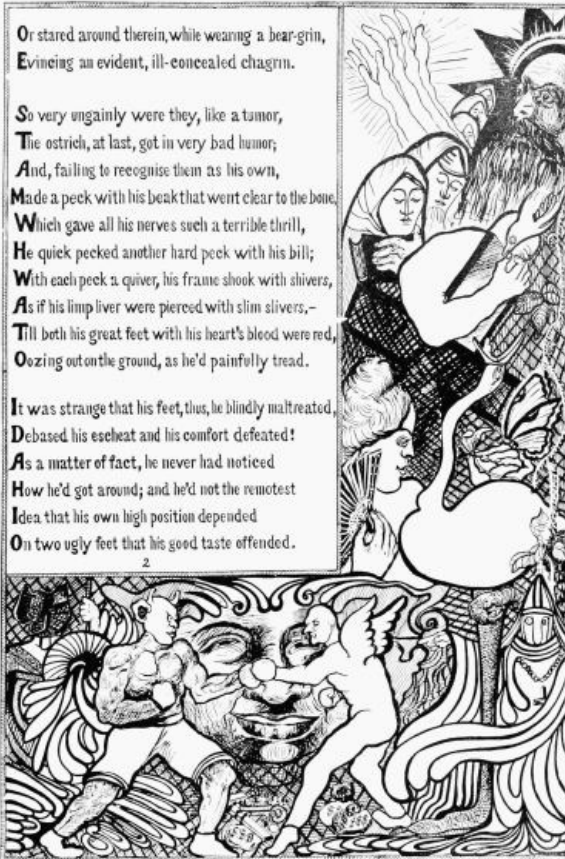
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Or stared around therein, while wearing a bear-grin,  
 Evincing an evident, ill-concealed chagrin.

So very ungainly were they, like a tumor,  
 The ostrich, at last, got in very bad humor;  
 And, failing to recognise them as his own,  
 Made a peck with his beak that went clear to the bone,  
 Which gave all his nerves such a terrible thrill,  
 He quick pecked another hard peck with his bill;  
 With each peck a quiver, his frame shook with shivers,  
 As if his limp liver were pierced with slim slivers,—  
 Till both his great feet with his heart's blood were red,  
 Oozing out on the ground, as he'd painfully tread.

It was strange that his feet, thus, he blindly maltreated,  
 Debased his escheat and his comfort defeated!  
 As a matter of fact, he never had noticed  
 How he'd got around; and he'd not the remotest  
 Idea that his own high position depended  
 On two ugly feet that his good taste offended.

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## The Undertone



### I.

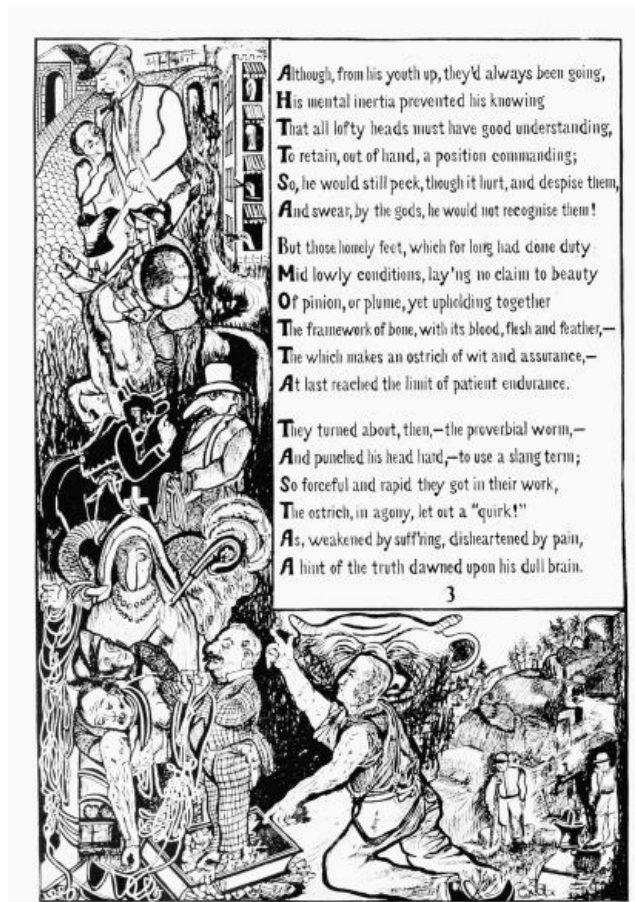


he thoughtful student of modern, social, and economic conditions, who reads the accompanying rhymed satire, "The Story of an Ostrich," will discover in it much more than the mere words would ordinarily convey, and will read into it such measure of philosophy as his own experience and critical study of the problem of human existence may have prepared him for.

When, ten thousand years ago, the owl sat in the light of the moon and unknown deities spat wisdom into the philosophies of Hermes and Zoroaster and their more or less erudite predecessors, the earliest gods, with their bird-like heads and male bodies, were yet vehicles of

truth, elevating the frail stock of humanity over which they threw their benign influences.

Since recorded history began, the world has had many gods, and many books concerning them have been written, determining by much labor of the head which should be worshiped, rather than impressing the heart with sincere desire to travel in divinely appointed ways. As "the mere grasses," priests and kings have trampled upon the masses—have been at once their masters, their deities and interpreters of deity. Their rank materialism has always complacently overrated itself, while the world, which labors and runs, has ever been chained to and crushed beneath it. Man knew not the power of God within himself.



Although, from his youth up, they'd always been going,  
His mental inertia prevented his knowing  
That all lofty heads must have good understanding,  
To retain, out of hand, a position commanding;  
So, he would still peck, though it hurt, and despise them,  
And swear, by the gods, he would not recognise them!

But those homely feet, which for long had done duty:  
Mid lowly conditions, lay'ng no claim to beauty  
Of pinion, or plume, yet upholding together  
The framework of bone, with its blood, flesh and feather,—  
The which makes an ostrich of wit and assurance,—  
At last reached the limit of patient endurance.

They turned about, then,—the proverbial worm,—  
And punched his head hard,—to use a slang term;  
So forceful and rapid they got in their work,  
The ostrich, in agony, let out a "quirk!"  
As, weakened by suff'ring, disheartened by pain,  
A hint of the truth dawned upon his dull brain.



Self-centred, astounded, indignant, demented,  
 The ostrich, not yet half acquainted, resented  
 The silent upheaval, he'd felt, of the masses,  
 He'd, heretofore, held to be as the mere grasses;  
 They having objected, he'd make no contention,  
 Though he wondered how he'd interpose intervention  
 Enough to protect him from any more kicking  
 Like that, which was, now, in his mem'ry still sticking.

Overwhelmed with emotion he could not command,  
 The hurt ostrich buried his head in the sand,—  
 Away from his sight shut his two mangled feet out,  
 Lest they his own ostrich fool brains should quite beat out,—  
 Thus hiding himself, as he thought, in his shame,  
 From the world, though he still stood revealed, just the same.

'Twas then a near neighbor, who'd watched with close scrutiny,  
 The clumsy feet operate during the mutiny,  
 Interfered to propose they adopt arbitration,  
 And settle their difference with more moderation.



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## II.

Many unthinking as well as vicious men, in both ancient and modern times, who have by accident of birth and condition been set in authority over their fellows, or, who have by their own efforts been raised to positions of power and responsibility in the state and among the great captains of industry, have thought to ignore their dependence upon the lower orders of society for the very altitude they have enjoyed—the head refusing, as it were, to consider the feet as a part of the body corporate and entitled to no more than the pleasure of mere existence. Such heads apply no healing balms to weak and wounded extremities, but proffer, instead, the scourge, *i.e.*, starvation, long days of poorly remunerated toil, squalid surroundings,—in ancient times the guillotine, the gallows and the rack; in modern days, ostracism, the prison and the electric chair. The blood of Christ's divinity flowed that love and mercy might be exemplified, but it cannot sprinkle the world with saving grace, so long as its own herald, the church, continues to say, "Amen!" to the master, and "Peace, be still!" to the slave.

When there crept into the world the first dull, unreasoning sense of injury,—when the underlings of humanity first began to assimilate from the common vein of intelligence that made them one with the body, a sensible desire for recognition on the ground of equality, they were promptly denied any part whatsoever in the material and spiritual accretions of generations of labor; and then was inaugurated the revolt that has been prolific through all past time, of war and misery, of violence, pillage and murder.

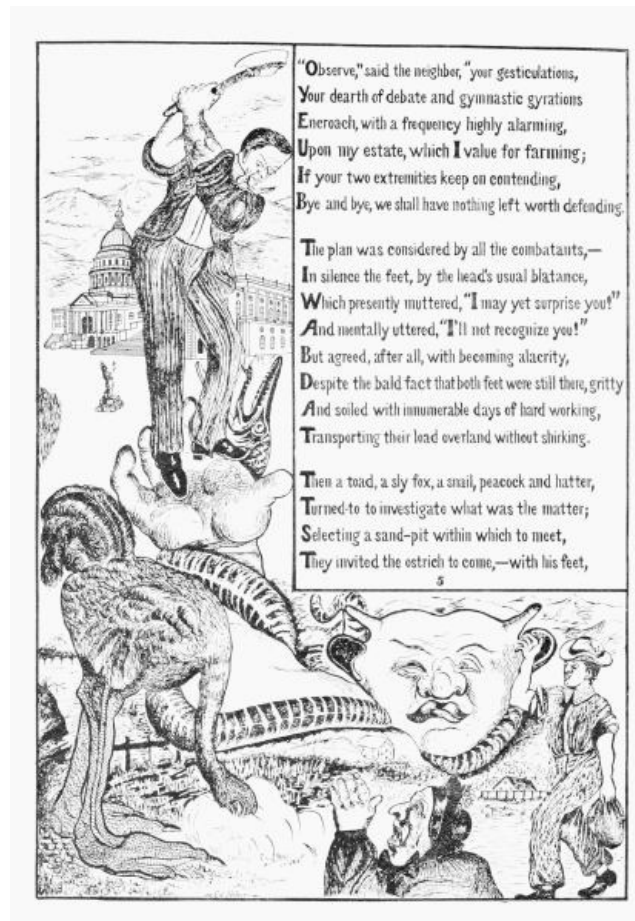
### III.

In the light of experience the heads of humanity have seldom profited by the tutelage of whips and blood and torture. Without respect for rights and demands when opposed to their selfish material interests, they have held not their Bibles in their hands, where the light might illumine its pages, but have placed the sacred book under their feet while making prayers to stocks and bonds.

But the knights-errant are in the saddle, and with the true spirit of knighthood they may be found in the thick of the politic battle, where they are making clear the path for greater powers that shall follow with purging force to cleanse the great body and through a long and cruel strife establish the contentious parts in truth and unity.

### IV.

Mighty powers of the state are asleep at the post of duty, when, lo! an issue arises,—the mice are in the government meal-bag,—the spirits of fire and distraction are abroad; wealth and power are being attacked from beneath! The great hand of the law reaches forth to seize upon the offender and to snuff out his little, palpitating human life, that, far from being the cause, is only a symptom of the real malady. The cause still exists, the cancer of the state still invites new vermin to feed upon its sore. The knight prophesies and expostulates in the public ear, but Uncle Sam still sleeps, though perchance with uneasy dreams. The great forces which evolve the tramp and the ignorant emigrant are still at work, while the devil holds the match to the combustible elements of soulless greed. Bye and bye there will be a great hue and cry of fire, with much ringing of bells.

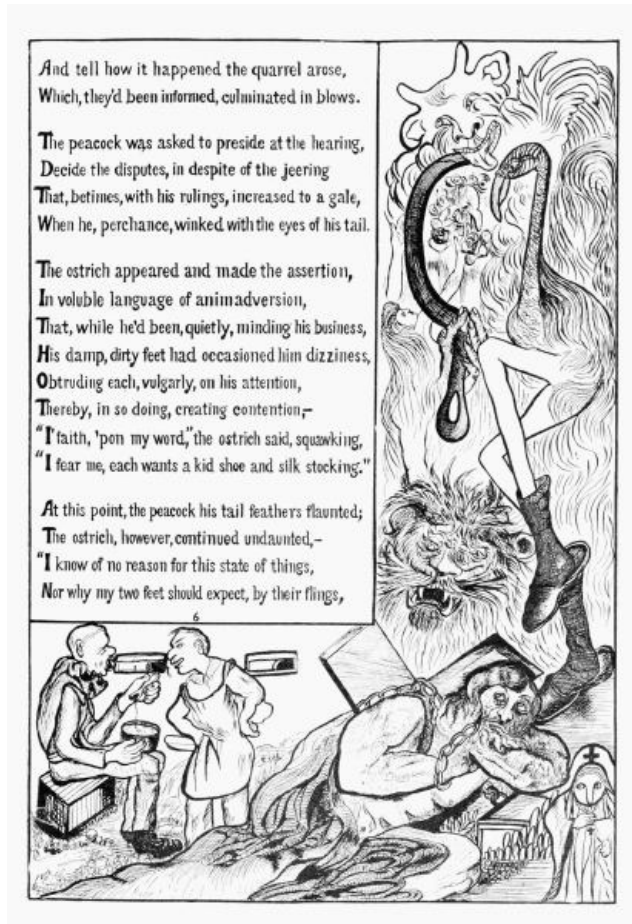


"Observe," said the neighbor, "your gesticulations,  
Your dearth of debate and gymnastic gyrations  
Encroach, with a frequency highly alarming,  
Upon my estate, which I value for farming;  
If your two extremities keep on contending,  
Bye and bye, we shall have nothing left worth defending."

The plan was considered by all the combatants,—  
In silence the feet, by the head's usual blatance,  
Which presently muttered, "I may yet surprise you!"  
And mentally uttered, "I'll not recognize you!"  
But agreed, after all, with becoming alacrity,  
Despite the bald fact that both feet were still there, gritty  
And soiled with innumerable days of hard working,  
Transporting their load overland without shirking.

Then a toad, a sly fox, a snail, peacock and hatter,

Turned-to to investigate what was the matter;  
 Selecting a sand-pit within which to meet,  
 They invited the ostrich to come,—with his feet,



And tell how it happened the quarrel arose,  
 Which, they'd been informed, culminated in blows.

The peacock was asked to preside at the hearing,  
 Decide the disputes, in despite of the jeering  
 That, betimes, with his rulings, increased to a gale,  
 When he, perchance, winked with the eyes of his tail.

The ostrich appeared and made the assertion,  
 In voluble language of animadversion,  
 That, while he'd been, quietly, minding his business,  
 His damp, dirty feet had occasioned him dizziness,  
 Obtruding each, vulgarly, on his attention,  
 Thereby, in so doing, creating contention—  
 "I' faith, 'pon my word," the ostrich said, squawking,  
 "I fear me, each wants a kid shoe and silk stocking."

At this point, the peacock his tail feathers flaunted;  
 The ostrich, however, continued undaunted,—  
 "I know of no reason for this state of things,  
 Nor why my two feet should expect, by their flings,

## V.

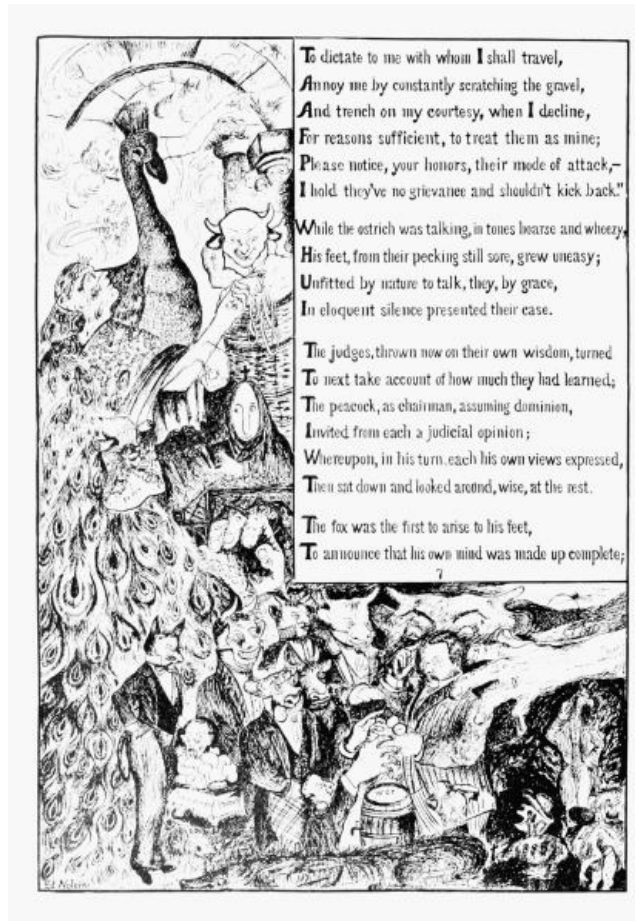
Uncle Sam is now awake and doing in earnest. The rankness of materialism breeding from the earth, a thing of great and dreaded power, of craft and slime, recoils upon the land of which it has been begotten and now boldly erects its head to encompass the state in its death-constricting coils.

Even the old lady, who is wont to knit her stockings in peace by a hardwood fire, or by the glowing coals of an open grate, in city or town, alike, peaceful and content, and without consideration of the vexing problems of supply and demand, awakens suddenly to the fact that even a comfortable competence is no surety against want and cold, when the serpent has dragged himself into the garden and garner house of God.

The farmer is aroused and indignant, but when he makes his protest, the serpent flies pursuit, and with a changing policy under the guise of a great, foolish bird and a well assumed air of innocence, buries its small and crafty head for a season in the sand.

## VI.

Really, it seems ridiculous that this incessant warfare of man against man should go on,—the head casting aspersions upon the feet, and the feet kicking against their own head, to the mutual affliction of themselves and the great body that holds them together in the firm compact of common life.... This is not God's law, but man's supreme selfishness,—his disobedience and his curse. After all, kid shoes and silk stockings are not elective privileges; and poorer humanity, turning under its cross and chains, appeals to Heaven, not in vain, if we read aright the signs of the times. The air resounds with optimistic teachings and words of love and cheer that, as yet, have no guarantee in actual deeds. In contra-distinction to the Christian creed, "we must look out for ourselves," is the rasping gospel of our latter-day faith. But there are those who work as well as preach, and to such may yet be recorded the service of universal peace.

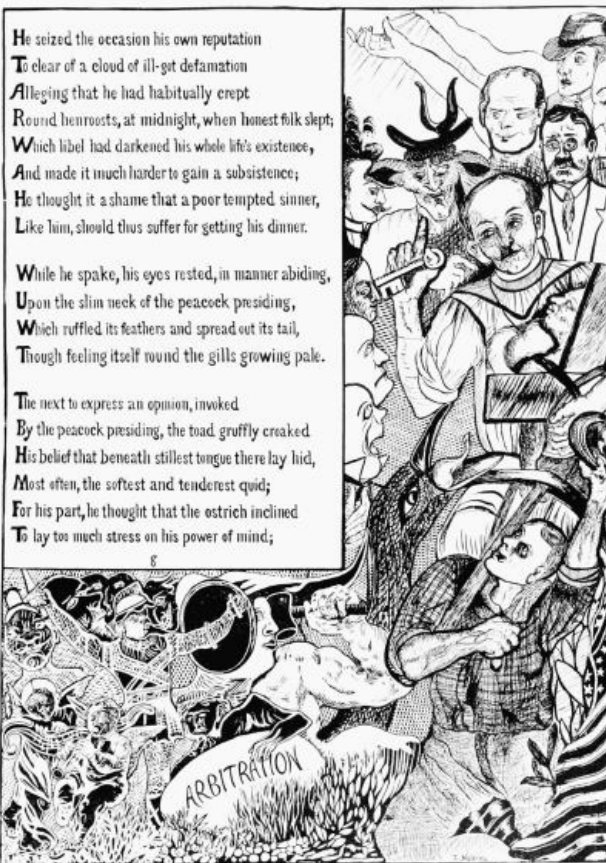


To dictate to me with whom I shall travel,  
Annoy me by constantly scratching the gravel,  
And trench on my courtesy, when I decline,  
For reasons sufficient, to treat them as mine;  
Please notice, your honors, their mode of attack,—  
I hold they've no grievance and shouldn't kick back!"

While the ostrich was talking, in tones hoarse and wheezy,  
His feet, from their pecking still sore, grew uneasy;  
Unfitted by nature to talk, they, by grace,  
In eloquent silence presented their case.

The judges, thrown now on their own wisdom, turned  
To next take account of how much they had learned;  
The peacock, as chairman, assuming dominion,  
Invited from each a judicial opinion;  
Whereupon, in his turn, each his own views expressed,  
Then sat down and looked around, wise, at the rest.

The fox was the first to arise to his feet,  
To announce that his own mind was made up complete;



He seized the occasion his own reputation  
 To clear of a cloud of ill-got defamation  
 Alleging that he had habitually crept  
 Round henroosts, at midnight, when honest folk slept;  
 Which libel had darkened his whole life's existence,  
 And made it much harder to gain a subsistence;  
 He thought it a shame that a poor tempted sinner,  
 Like him, should thus suffer for getting his dinner.

While he spake, his eyes rested, in manner abiding,  
 Upon the slim neck of the peacock presiding,  
 Which ruffled its feathers and spread out its tail,  
 Though feeling itself round the gills growing pale.

The next to express an opinion, invoked  
 By the peacock presiding, the toad gruffly croaked  
 His belief that beneath stillest tongue there lay hid,  
 Most often, the softest and tenderest quid;  
 For his part, he thought that the ostrich inclined  
 To lay too much stress on his power of mind;

### VII.

In solemn convocation met, stand the mighty men of our realm, with the policy of the bull, of the bear, of the wolf and of the fox, each animal, according to the nature of its disposition, awaiting the opportunity of power and spoliation, by which he may grasp and hold to himself, as his own personal increment, all that can be wrested from the state and humanity at large. The state, itself, in principle wise, majestic and supreme, petitions peace of the leering devil, who constantly juggles with the tape of human selfishness, as waiting angels record the devious courses that nations and individuals take.

Behold, how pressed on all sides is the man of the hour in the grasp of the huge, overbrooding, material powers of self-interest.

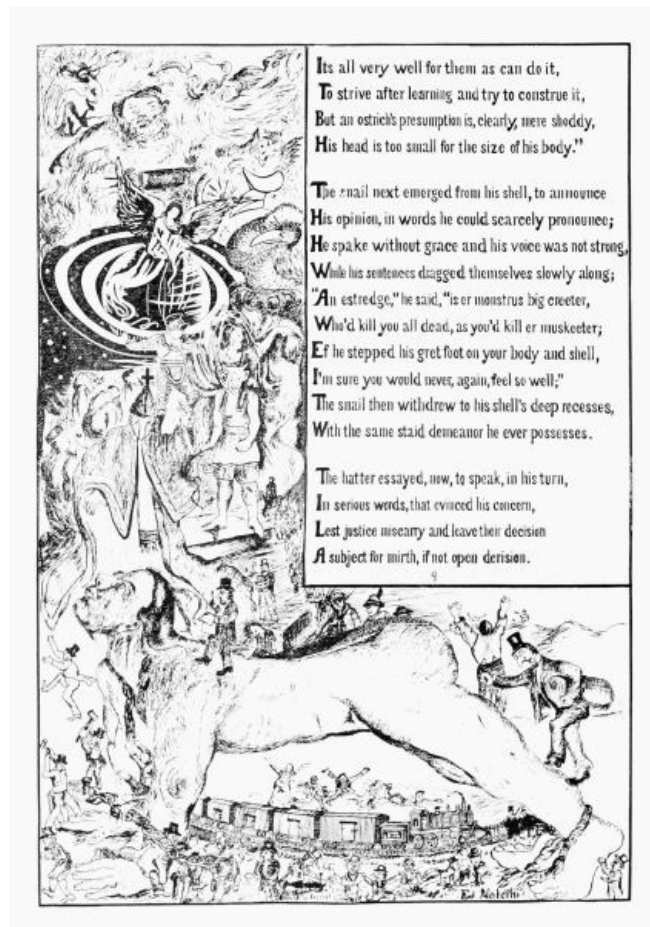
### VIII.

Confusion still reigns, but labor has risen from the cross and comes to legislation. He dreams of conquests that are chimerical, where the shadowy knight of honor contests the field with the disgruntled spirit of melancholy, who pessimistically broods the unhatched egg of arbitration. Agitators and agitations still hold sway, while Satan in their midst dominates the human idea of progress and reform with the accursed principle of Self, that is in itself Self-destroying.

## IX.

When, now, the monster spirit of protest begins to show its gigantic figure, high, low, and middle classes are alarmed. Prices fluctuate, business goes down, work and bread are scarce. Behold, in the heavens appear the gruesome phantoms of war. But so far, in every crisis, messengers from worlds beyond have sanctified the impending woe to the world's welfare.

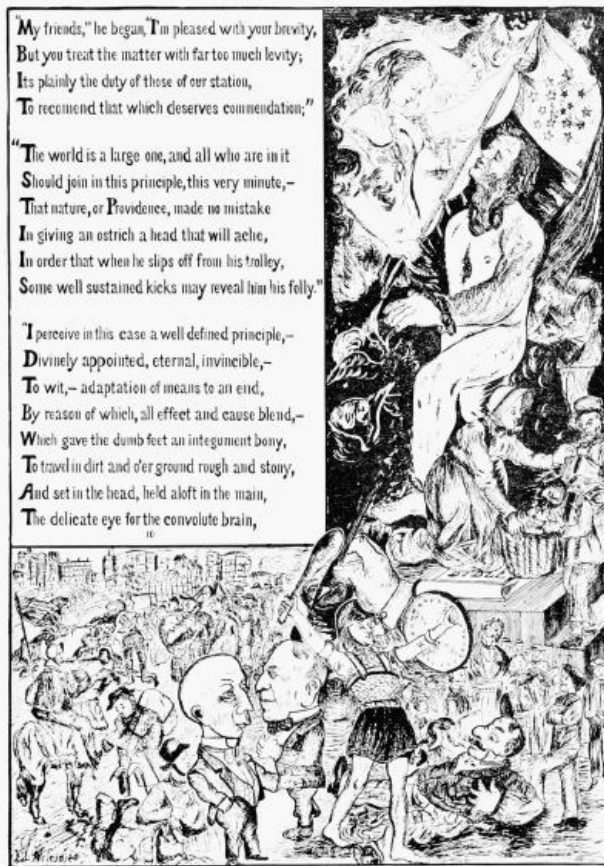
The tides of progress are in the hands of the Infinite, who measures from cycle to cycle their ebb and flow; while the ever rising tide-mark signifies the ultimate inundation of the millenium. How great is God! How small is man in his own councils!



Its all very well for them as can do it,  
To strive after learning and try to construe it,  
But an ostrich's presumption is, clearly, mere shoddy,  
His head is too small for the size of his body."

The snail next emerged from his shell, to announce  
His opinion, in words he could scarcely pronounce;  
He spake without grace and his voice was not strong,  
While his sentences dragged themselves slowly along;  
"An estredge," he said, "is er monstros big creeter,  
Who'd kill you all dead, as you'd kill er muskeeter;  
Ef he stepped his gret foot on your body and shell,  
I'm sure you would never, again, feel so well;"  
The snail then withdrew to his shell's deep recesses,  
With the same staid demeanor he ever possesses.

The hatter essayed, now, to speak, in his turn,  
In serious words, that evinced his concern,  
Lest justice miscarry and leave their decision  
A subject for mirth, if not open derision.



"My friends," he began, "I'm pleased with your brevity,  
 But you treat the matter with far too much levity;  
 Its plainly the duty of those of our station,  
 To recomend that which deserves commendation;"

"The world is a large one, and all who are in it  
 Should join in this principle, this very minute,—  
 That nature, or Providence, made no mistake  
 In giving an ostrich a head that will ache,  
 In order that when he slips off from his trolley,  
 Some well sustained kicks may reveal him his folly."

"I perceive in this case a well defined principle,—  
 Divinely appointed, eternal, invincible,—  
 To wit,—adaptation of means to an end,  
 By reason of which, all effect and cause blend,—  
 Which gave the dumb feet an integument bony,  
 To travel in dirt and o'er ground rough and stony,  
 And set in the head, held aloft in the main,  
 The delicate eye for the convolute brain,

## X.

By the loss of men and money mighty men are upset, and the wise among them are made to look grave. In the day of judgment, in the overturning of the kingdom and principles of the world they inhabit, no one knows what to think. Apprehension and gloom are on all the faces that meet in the populous thoroughfares of trade; but the public school, the pen, and the power of the press have so raised the standard of common intelligence, that there is a steady advance and progress, animated by its inspiring, though still shackled Spirit of Protest. It has entered of its own volition into the service which makes for the unity of powers working jointly in Heaven and upon the earth, and our beautiful flag shows only the transfigured light of the stars.

## XI.

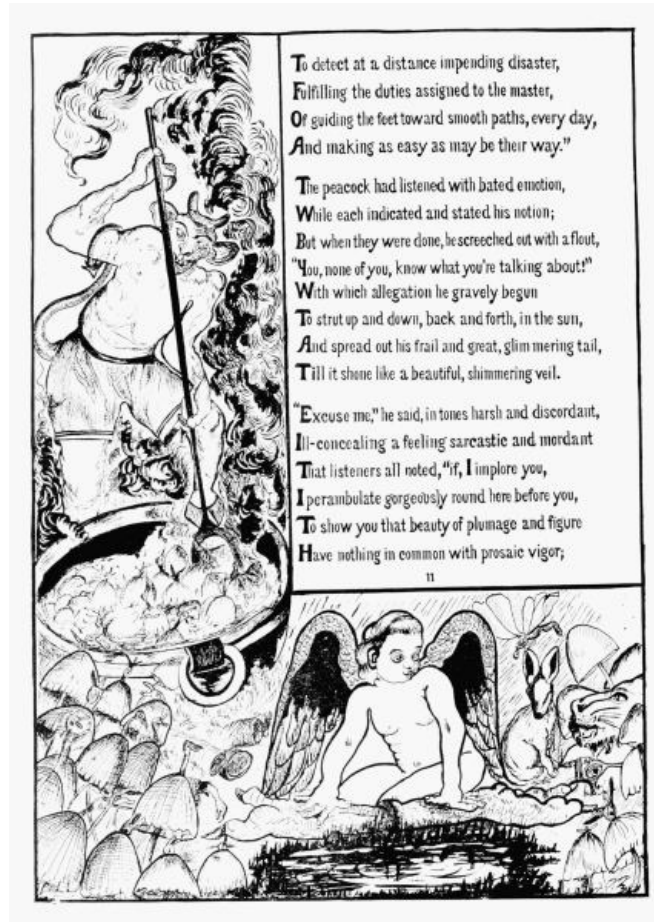
To separate the head from the feet, labor from capital, or to inaugurate war between them, brings about such confusion and distress as can only be likened to the great body of humanity being continually brewed by Satan in an enormous caldron kept hot by the fires of revolution. All evil being ultimate good, the process, though one of renovation and purification, is bitterly painful to the innocent as well as to the guilty. In the determined revolt of the feet of humanity against the head, it has always been discovered that the head was too small for the size of the body; and that the bulky feet carry with them, when aroused to action along the lines of self-defence, a tremendous barbaric force and cruelty. Witness the fearful revolts of society that have

brought the issue to a test. In the cosmical alembic of human jurisprudence, there must be mixed with lofty and divine sentiments a recognition of our mutual dependence and accountability, not of man to man, only, but to something higher than his humanity, a perfect and divine law to which that humanity may be harmoniously attuned. God, dominant in love that is not calculating, but universal and free as the air we breathe and without taint of prejudice, can alone amalgamate the differences of these varying tones,—wielding them together into a perfectly melodious theme.

He is, indeed, the tuning fork that shall put the instruments into perfect tune.

## XII.

The age has reached a point of reason so far as councils may serve to settle the differences between the head and the feet; and the waiting world stands with attentive ear to hear the judgment of such councils of mankind; great and small are its representatives, and progress will be made only so far as the religious idea proclaimed in Judea shall be allowed to influence the pride and passions of men.



To detect at a distance impending disaster,  
Fulfilling the duties assigned to the master,  
Of guiding the feet toward smooth paths, every day,  
And making as easy as may be their way."

The peacock had listened with bated emotion,  
While each indicated and stated his notion;  
But when they were done, he screeched out with a flout,  
"You, none of you, know what you're talking about!"  
With which allegation he gravely begun  
To strut up and down, back and forth, in the sun,  
And spread out his frail and great, glimmering tail,  
Till it shone like a beautiful, shimmering veil.

"Excuse me," he said, in tones harsh and discordant,  
Ill-concealing a feeling sarcastic and mordant  
That listeners all noted, "if, I implore you,  
I perambulate gorgeously round here before you,  
To show you that beauty of plumage and figure  
Have nothing in common with prosaic vigor;



Creation, which wisely decreed that the feet  
 Were made to be used in the dust of the street,  
 Has, also, ordained that they shall sustain  
 Superior cellular tissue and brain  
 Above and away from the gross things of earth,—  
 Evincing, thereby, a superlative birth;  
 And why should I be, then, so terribly blamed,  
 If I, of my feet, am a good deal ashamed;"

As he ended, the floor of the sand-pit he spurned,  
 And abruptly announced arbitration adjourned.  
 Although no agreement was reached, as a whole,  
 Discussion is generally good for the soul;  
 The ostrich, ere adjudication was through,  
 Unconsciously passing his acts in review,  
 Had arrived, independently, at the decision,  
 That he'd been a fool; and he laughed in derision,  
 To think he'd permitted his weak self-conceit,  
 To lead him to pecking his own faithful feet.

12



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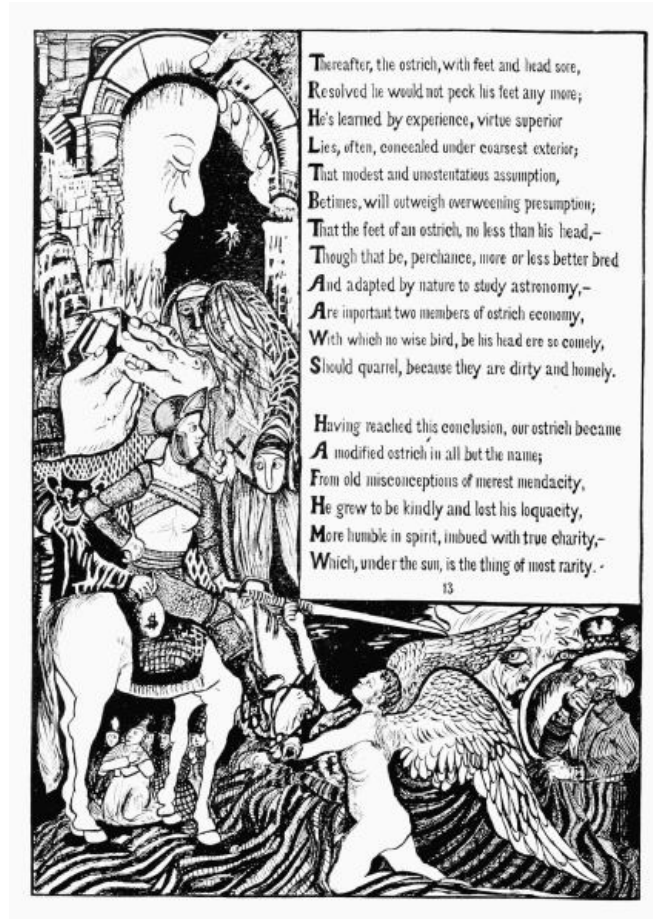
### *XIII.*

The waiting knight, emblem of the new manhood just entering upon its estate of resolution and responsibility, is the type of a generation now setting forth in quest of high and honorable adventure. Satan is at his back, thrusting forward a bag of gold and counselling the pursuit of wealth; "Put money in thy purse!" saith the devil; "all else counts but little,—put money in thy purse!" At his left hand stands the priest in his splendid robes of office, proffering the symbol of suffering and self-renunciation. The knight sees the frozen church with ascetic and veiled superstition as its hand-maidens; the star of Bethlehem still shines out of the dark upon a mighty hand reaching out of the clouds to shake to its foundations the edifice of Christ, emblazoned with the letter and the creed, but supported by the pomp and pride of a purely material world. "The zeal of his house hath eaten him up," and in the majestic temple sits the money changer, absorbed in his trade and his material enterprises. Before him kneels the imploring angel of Freedom, raising the flag of the great republic, with all its portents and promises, symbolically arrayed in its stripes and stars. Uncle Sam is but a puzzled and quizzical spectator of future events.

### *XIV.*

The battle between the head and the feet results, at last, in the fall of Satan, that is, Self, under the God-principle of self-renunciation, working in all human creeds and canticles, foreshadowing the unity of the race in the power of the religious idea that has, at last, become dominant in the

head. The cross, no longer an emblem of suffering but of power, unites with the crown in a final union of church and state. Here behold the wedded bliss of the long divorced pair, presaging a new and glorified race of man. Then, indeed, the baptismal story of man's hoary and ancient glory in Eden shall usher in that gracious day, when the lamb and the lion shall gambol together, and there shall be in all the earth neither murder, nor theft, nor plunder, nor war.

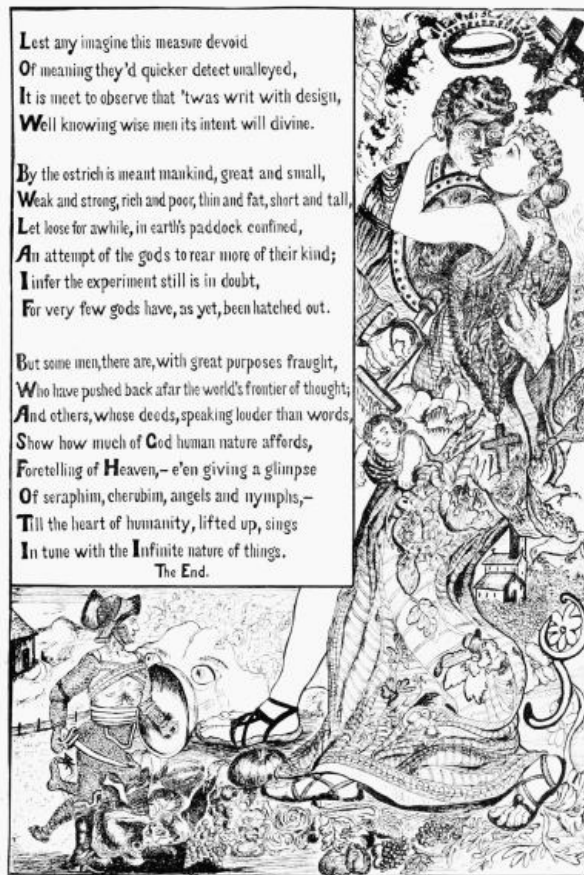


Thereafter, the ostrich, with feet and head sore,  
 Resolved he would not peck his feet any more;  
 He's learned by experience, virtue superior  
 Lies, often, concealed under coarsest exterior;  
 That modest and unostentatious assumption,  
 Betimes, will outweigh overweening presumption;  
 That the feet of an ostrich, no less than his head,—  
 Though that be, perchance, more or less better bred  
 And adapted by nature to study astronomy,—  
 Are important two members of ostrich economy,  
 With which no wise bird, be his head ere so comely,  
 Should quarrel, because they are dirty and homely.

Having reached this conclusion, our ostrich became  
 A modified ostrich in all but the name;  
 From old misconceptions of merest mendacity,  
 He grew to be kindly and lost his loquacity,  
 More humble in spirit, imbued with true charity,—  
 Which, under the sun, is the thing of most rarity. -

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Lest any imagine this measure devoid  
 Of meaning they'd quicker detect unalloyed,  
 It is meet to observe that 'twas writ with design,  
 Well knowing wise men its intent will divine.

By the ostrich is meant mankind, great and small,  
 Weak and strong, rich and poor, thin and fat, short and tall,  
 Let loose for awhile, in earth's paddock confined,  
 An attempt of the gods to rear more of their kind;  
 I infer the experiment still is in doubt,  
 For very few gods have, as yet, been hatched out.

But some men, there are, with great purposes fraught,  
 Who have pushed back afar the world's frontier of thought,  
 And others, whose deeds, speaking louder than words,  
 Show how much of God human nature affords,  
 Foretelling of Heaven,—e'en giving a glimpse  
 Of seraphim, cherubim, angels and nymphs,—  
 Till the heart of humanity, lifted up, sings  
 In tune with the Infinite nature of things.

The End.

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The End.

**Transcriber's note:**

"wifh all its portents and promises" has been corrected to "with all its portents and promises".

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK THE STORY OF AN OSTRICH: AN ALLEGORY AND HUMOROUS SATIRE IN RHYME \*\*\*

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