

SOME NOTED FAKES

The Millions in Jewels Said to Have Been Stolen at the Centennial of 1876—A Rare Scientific Hoax

By GEORGE NOX McCAIN J. M. WOOD, of the Pennsylvania Hall, had called my attention to an unusual story that had to do with our Centennial of '76.

Mr. Wood was a bit of a boy then, but the thrill of it still lingers in my memory as though it were but months instead of years in the past.

"Publicity was given the story in one of the Sunday papers of Philadelphia in the fall of 1876. The startling headlines and the elaborate detail of the narrative awakened profound interest and later great amusement.

According to Mr. Wood's recollection, what is now Parkside avenue was, in those days, called Elm avenue.

They were temporary structures intended to serve the purpose of food and shelter to thousands and then disappear like the lath and plaster palaces of our first great exposition.

It was in one of these Jerry-built caverns that the plot had its inception. THOSE who recall the Centennial Exposition will remember that its main building was for the time being the repository of some of the world's greatest treasures.

Priceless jewels, the finest specimens of the gold and silver smiths' art, wonderful carvings and engraved gems were housed beneath its vast roof.

Tiffany & Co., if I recall, had on exhibition the then largest sapphire in the world. These rare, beautiful and, above all, portable treasures formed the crux of the narrative recalled by Mr. Wood.

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In the case of Ulysses Simpson Grant, born one hundred years ago today in a two-roomed cottage in the hamlet of Mount Pleasant, on the banks of the Ohio, even the attempt is hopeless. The anomaly, to put it bluntly, is not in Grant, but in the present rather widely prevalent misconceptions of the fiber of authentic moral nobility and ethical heroism. Centenaries of the great are significant opportunities for repairing defective apprehensions and unthinking judgments.

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Moreover, it should be easier today than ever before to grasp the psychology of this extraordinary military leader, who, hated and loved, who, ardently hated, while a soldier at West Point, that institution would be abolished by an act of Congress then pending, who was at once one of the sincerest pacifists and magnificently obstinate fighters the world has ever known.

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This is a general statement, taking no account of certain vital and enduring achievements of Grant as President, such as recognition of the arbitration principle through the treaty of Washington and the adjudication of the Alabama claims, the appeal for civil service reform, the determined protection of national credit and the inauguration of a humane policy toward the Indians.

Nevertheless, the political ingenueness of Grant, born of an unimpeachable simplicity of soul, is familiarly regarded as regrettable. But the mistakes and blunders—better, perhaps, the unaffected loyalties— which so perplexed the politicians exhibited no new phase of character.

The miracle of Grant's career is the utter consistency of ethical attributes amid the most amazing shift of circumstances, now humdrum, now epic, now romantic, now pitiful.

It was the outward scene which changed; Grant, the incarnation of will in a crisis, resolute, forward, modest, reserved American, never.

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