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EDITORIAL

THE JACOBS AND SHEEP OF TO-DAY.

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BOOKSELLER, NEWSDEALER AND STATIONER of October 1 gives the itemized figures spent by a certain publisher for advertising a certain novel. The total amount is \$77,150, of which \$55,300 went to magazines, monthlies and dailies, in several instances for full-page splurs; the rest of the sum was spent on posters and other eye-catchers.

Eternal vigilance is once more shown to be a condition precedent for liberty—mental as well as physical liberty.

Often one hears the statement—as corroborative of some report or other—“I have seen it in all the papers.” The report emanated from ONE source, and was repeated, the same as advertisements, by all the papers paid, and liberally paid, to publish it. An error does not become a truth by multiple repetition. Most people know by this time the necessity of being on their guard against advertisements of patent medicines. Like patent medicines, books are now being treated.

It was Ferdinand Lassalle who somewhere pointed to the despotism that the press of the Ruling Class sought to exercise upon the popular mind by their unanimous howl against a person, or thing, that did not suit their crew; and he warned the militants to be on their guard against the imposition. The psychology upon which the Ruling Class’s press—at which Lassalle pointed his warning finger—works is the same psychology upon which the sellers of goods play. That psychology is not to the credit of those operated upon. It is the psychology of Laban’s sheep, to judge by the Bible story thus narrated by Shakespeare:

Mark what Jacob did.
When Laban and himself were
compromis’d
That all the eanlings which were
streaked and pied

Should fall as Jacob's hire, the ewes
being rank,
In end of autumn turned to the rams;
And when the work of generation was
Between these woolly breeders in the act
The skilfull shepherd peel'd me certain
wands,
And, in the doing of the deed of kind,
He stuck them up before the fulsome
ewes,
Who, then conceiving, did in eaning time
Fall party-coloured lambs, and those
were Jacob's.¹

Puffs, paid for with \$77,150, and the many more costly articles to puff men and things, are in the nature of the wands with which Jacob medicaled his uncle Laban's sheep.

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¹ [Merchant of Venice.]