

Brann The Iconoclast - Volume 1

William Cowper Brann

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by William Cowper Brann

June, 1996 [Etext #567]

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THE COMPLETE WORKS
OF
BRANN
THE ICONOCLAST

VOLUME I

In putting into permanent form the complete works of William Cowper Brann, twenty-one years after his death, the sole purpose of the present publishers is to preserve in its entirety the genius of a writer whose work, though produced under the stress of journalism, is destined to endure as literature.

Upon the issues discussed by Brann, the publishers take no

sides; they do not stand as sponsors for, nor do they desire to appear in the light of either approving or disapproving his opinions or methods. They were friends and neighbors of many years' standing of the men and institutions mentioned in Brann's writings, but were in no way involved in the bitter controversies and deplorable events which led to Brann's untimely and dramatic death.

The plan and arrangement of this twelve-volume set of Brann is simple. The first volume is composed of articles of various length gathered from miscellaneous sources, and includes some of the better known articles from *The ICONOCLAST*. Volume II to XI inclusive are the files of *The ICONOCLAST* (from February, 1895 to May, 1898, inclusive), with the matter arranged approximately as it appeared in the original publication. Volume XII contains the story of Brann's death and various biographical and critical articles from the press of the day, together with those of Brann's speeches and lectures which have been preserved. At the close of Volume XII you will find a complete index of subjects and of titled articles for the entire twelve volumes.

PREFACE BY MILO HASTINGS

As I read the proofs of the last of these volumes, wherein is told the story of Brann's death, my cup of the joy of love's labor is embittered with the gall of an impotent, futile rage against the Sower that flings with mocking hand the seed of genius and reckes not where it falls. The germ of such a life as Brann's we can but accept in worshipful, unquestioning gratitude, for the process of its spawning is too entangled to unravel. But of the environment of his life we cannot refrain from rebellious questioning, appreciative though we be of that which was, and of our heritage of the unquenchable spirit that is and shall be as long as our language shall last.

Genius he is, this only Brann we have; genius audacious, defiant, and sublime; whose stature, though his feet be on the flat of the Brazos bottom, towers effulgent over those effigies placed on pedestals by orthodox popularity, and sickly lighted by professorial praise.

Nor is my anger born of the fact that Brann, as warped by his environment of time and place, wasted thought on free silver economics, spent passion on prohibition and negro criminals, lavished wrath on provincial preachers and local politicians or alloyed his style by the so-called "vulgarities," which alone could shock into attention the muddle-headed who paid his printer's bill for the privilege of seeing barnyard phrases and dunghill words in type.

All this, I can conceive, may have been the particular combination of circumstances that were needed to

bring to flower a germ of genius that, had it been planted in last century's Boston, might have given us but another Harvard classic--or envired in this century's Greenwich Village only another free-versifier of souls a-jaunt amid psycho-analytics and parlor Bolshevism.

The slouch-hatted, gun-toting, beer-drinking, woman-worshiping, man-baiting Brann of Texas may have been the particular and only Brann to have developed the colossal courage and fighting fearlessness that gave his poet's soul the reach and stature, the strength and vigor to raise himself above the mere music of his words.

Brann as he was when he heard the shot that killed him, I can accept and proclaim as beyond the need and reach of apology or regret. But what of the Brann that would have written on throughout the twenty-one years that have since elapsed, and that we would have with us still at the prime age of sixty-four?

Had Brann lived! We should have had the product of eight times the period of his writing life that was; and an added quality born of riper experience, more momentous themes, more leisure for deliberate composition. We should have heard the man who against petty politicians and occasional pugilists, out-thundered Carlyle, turn his roaring guns against the blood-guilty heads that bade wholesale rape and gaunt hunger stalk rampant in a gory world.

It is as if Hugo had written "Hans of Iceland" and no "Les Miserables," as if Napoleon, the Lieutenant of Artillery, had but stopped the mobs in the streets of Paris, and Austerlitz and Waterloo had never been.

The world has not always profited by its martyrdoms. Samson, old and blind, toppled down the temple, and the Philistines that he slew at his death were more than they which he slew in his life. Not so Brann. His death was as tragic and pitiable as the charge of the Light Brigade, the sacrifice of men at the sunken road of Ohaine.

Waste, futile and planless, mere howling, empty, chaotic waste, for no purpose under heaven but to serve as food for idle fancies as to what might have been--such to me is the death of Brann, and my throat chokes with sorrow and my soul is sick with vain despair.

Brann's contribution to literature is the product of less than three years of writing time. There were previous years of yearning and dreaming while he fretted beneath the yoke of galling servitude to newspaper editors unworthy to loose the latchets of Brann's shoes. His own paper, The Iconoclast, in which he first found freedom for utterance, and from which ninety-eight per cent. of this present edition is derived, ran for just forty months, and for six or eight months of this period Brann was on lecture tours, during which time his paper was largely filled with outside contributions.

That a magazine could succeed at all in Waco is one of the seven wonders of the literary world. That a magazine so located and written by one man, having but a paltry advertising patronage, no illustrations, no covers, could in three years' time rival the circulation of any magazine then published is as much a miracle as the parting of the Red Sea waters or the bountiful persistence of the widow's oil.

It is on this three years' work that Brann's fame must rest. Barring a few poets, the literary colossi have seldom had less than the work of a score of years on which to base their claims for greatness. Goethe, Hugo, Tolstoi, Mark Twain each wrote for more than fifty years. But greater range of variety and distance as well as span of time contributed to their product. They traveled up and down the world of men, mingled with many races, sailed seas, climbed mountains, lived in metropolises, and dined with princes.

Brann's most notable personal acquaintances were country-town editors and provincial politicians, very like the ilk of a hundred other States and provinces in the raw corners of the world. He lived and died in that stale, flat, and literarily unprofitable expanse of prairie between Lake Michigan and the Rio Grande, where man's most pretentious achievement was the Eads' Bridge at St. Louis, Nature's most spectacular effort, the Ozark Mountains, and literature's most worthy resident representative, William Marion Reedy.

So environed, in a time when the bicycle marked the acme of progress and Bryan could be a hero, in a flat-roofed Texas town, whose intellectual glory was a Baptist college and whose answer to arguments, "ropes and revolvers," Brann wrote for only three years, and wrote as Shakespeare wrote, unmindful alike of critics, binders and bookworms. Only by the doubtful faith that men are made by their adversity can we reconcile our charge against the Sower who cast the seed of genius to fall on such barren ground, amid the stones of a sterile time and the briars of bullet-answering bigotry.

But vain are the might-have-beens; and fortunate are we to have as we have the stuff out of which far-ringing fame resounds unto generations when teeth are no longer set on edge--when men will have forgotten the taboos of a little day and the dust of our Mrs. Grundys will be weeds to choke the freedom of the grass.

The copies of *The Iconoclast*, read in their day till worn to tatters, were ill adapted to preservation. It were futile to look for them in libraries, for Brann was about as welcome in those formal repositories of the proper in literature as matches in a powder mill. So far as they are aware the file of *The Iconoclast* possessed by the present publishers, and from which this edition is reproduced, is the only complete file in existence.

For twenty years this priceless literary heritage has been waiting, precariously subjected to the vicissitudes of earthly circumstance. Like a lone great manuscript within the cloister of a mediaeval monk, Brann's work might have perished utterly soon after its creation, like a song of magic music held but fleetingly within the heart that heard it.

But the blood of ink now flows again through the multiplying presses and the flaming phrases of *The Iconoclast*, shot like shafts of gold from over the mountains of El d'Orado by the sun of genius, still live and will endure. Again the million words leap from the yellowed pages like tongues of fire and beauty; and ten thousand voices will cry and sing again before the hearths of those who once knew and loved the Waco *Iconoclast*, and will sing and cry in the homes of their children and their children's children who will read and acclaim Brann as a God whose name is writ forever in the stars.

These facts are here set down that they who read in days to come may marvel as I do now that two score issues of a provincial paper should consistently contain such a freight of imperishable literature, revealing a learning positively prodigious, a style that flows with a sonorous majesty and crashes with a vitriolic and destroying power, a lavish richness in figurative language, a beauty of Aeolian harps, of sapphire seas, of the flushed and ardent splendor of poetic nights.

Whence came the towering intellect, the wealth of knowledge, the mastery of words, the music of style, the diapason of feeling? It could only come from the sources that are available to any American who can read. The most formal aid that could have contributed is the free shelves of the St. Louis public library.

The miracle of Brann's growth and flowering is more marvelous than that of Poe, less explainable than that of Shakespeare. That Brann knew the literary classics of the world is obvious from his every line. But, unless we invent some theory of universal telepathy to have wafted inspiration to Waco from all the canonized dead from Homer to Carlyle, we can only conceive that Brann derived his knowledge and his power, without encouragement and without guidance, by poring over the printed page in lonely hours bitterly wrested from the wolf of poverty that for forty years held mortgage on his time.

What he possessed, however got, was a combination of all those recognized elements of literary greatness--except one thing; he heeded not the warning of cultured mediocrity that commands most writers what to leave unsaid. Brann left nothing unsaid, and because of that fact was locked out of colleges, libraries, encyclopaedias and halls of fame.

Where other writers waste half their energies in deciding what may be written, Brann gave his full energy to writing what he thought. Whereas in all things else he matched

and equaled others, in this one fact of absolute audacity and complete freedom from fear, he outmatched all and so closed the pedants' mouths of praise. Colossal, crude, terrible and sublime, Brann opened the ears of the people by the mighty power of his untamed language, by the smashing fury of his wrath of words.

From the point of disadvantage of the little country town lost in the immensity of the Texas prairie, Brann saw the world, and saw it with the blazing eye of righteous wrath. He saw the sins of high society in New York and London, the rottenness of autocracy in Russia, the world war boiling beneath the surface in the cauldron of Europe's misery. But he saw also, with mingled humor and anger, the trivial passing events of his own state and nation and the local affairs of his home town. Of all these things, great and small, he wrote with equal fervor, equal venom and equal power.

To-day the war is fought, the Czar is dead, free silver is forgotten and the local animosities that Brann brewed in his own State live only in the memories of a few old men.

With the roll of the years, the perspective of time, like a low swung sun, casts the mountain's shadow ever farther across the valley; and Brann the Waco journalist has become Brann the American genius. No matter how dead the issues, how local to time and place the characters of which he wrote, his writing is literature and the imperishable legacy of the world.

The Biblical story of Joseph would be equally great if his name had been Fu Chow, and Pharaoh had been the Emperor Wu Wong Wang. Hamlet would be immortal if his name were L. Percy Smith and his uncle a pork packer in Omaha. The prodigal son has no name, the swine he fed knew no country. Particular names, local places, and passing forms and institutions are not the essence of literature. For those who formerly read Brann in *The Iconoclast* he was a Texas journalist in the free silver days; but for those who shall read his work in these days after the world war, New York might as well be Babylon, Mark Hanna, Haman, and the files of *The Iconoclast*, clay tablets dug from the ruins of some long-buried Waco of the Euphrates Valley.

It is only the transcendent genius who can afford to be careless of the preservation of his product. Socrates merely talked to chance disciples in the Groves of Athens; other men wrote and preserved his words. Shakespeare wrote plays for his current theatrical business; others gathered and printed his manuscripts. While he lived, Brann's writing never saw the dignity of a clothbound book. They were not written for carefully edited, thrice-proofread, leather-bound volumes, but ground out for the unwashed hand of a Waco printer's devil, done into hastily set type and jammed between badly set beer ads and patent medicine testimonials, on a thin, little job-press sheet

that could be rolled up and stuck through a wedding ring.

Brann's range of literary form was limited by his single avenue of publication through the columns of a one-man paper, and varied from the ten-word epigrams of Salmagundi to the ten-thousand word article or published lecture. Within this range is evidenced at least three distinct types of literary composition.

First and foremost in volume and effect is the Philippic or iconoclastic article, mingling in varying proportions the resounding musical cadences of Ingersollian oratory and the pungent, audacious epigrammatic twists on which Hubbard, with cleverer salesmanship, built a more profitable, if not more noble, fame.

It was as the destroyer, the iconoclast, that Brann best saw himself, and to this role he devoted a great preponderance of his time and talent. But there is another Brann, unknown to many who have conceived him only as an idolmasher, an "apostle of the devil," an angry Christ driving out the defilers of the temple with a lash of scorpion's tails.

Brann, the poet, the lover of beauty, speaks even amidst the ruins of the houses of hypocrisy and shame which he has wrecked. There is scarce a page in all his writings in which sheer beauty does not stand out amid the ugliness of carnage and destruction--in which the strains of celestial music are not heard above the roar of earthly battle.

But more than this there are many articles that are wholly cut from a cloth of gold. Many of the finest of these gems of pure literature were omitted from the early and incomplete book-publication of Brann, for the compilers who made that hasty and inadequate selection were too close to the bitterness of his death to see this other Brann.

To cite from the first volume only:

Where have you heard a more beautiful sermon from a Christian pulpit than "Charity" or "Throwing Stones at Christ"?

Can you find in prose or poetry more melody of language than in "Life and Death"?

In all our countless volumes of fiction, have you ever read a more wondrous tale than "There Comes One After," or "A Story of the Sea"?

To read only such as these is to know a very different Brann from the author of "The Bradley-Martin Bal Masque" or "Garters and Amen Groans." The Brann who wrote "Life and Death," by that work alone, wins to undying fame as surely as does Grey by his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard." I have combed my memory in vain to match it from an American pen. A few paragraphs from Ingersoll,

a few pages from Poe, a few stanzas from Whitman--but make your own search and your own comparisons; and if, in your final ranking, Brann stands not among the Titans who number less than the fingers on God's hand, it will be because you cannot divorce the sublime beauty of "Life and Death" from the coyotes and the jackals that run rampant through the pages of Brann the shocker of the thin of skin.

Lastly, consider Brann the teller of stories--for laughter and for tears. Some of these tales are allegories as universal to the life of man as "Pilgrim's Progress." Elsewhere, as in the fictional essay on the "The Cow" and in the delightful lies that Brann in rollicking mischief attributed to his fellow Texas journalists, we find the humorous tale enriched with the bizarre and scintillating figure. Nor was Brann unconscious of his fictional gift, for he was working on a novel at the time of his death. That O. Henry's ambition to write may be accredited to the influence of Brann seems more than probable. Brann's first attempt to start The Iconoclast was made in Austin, Texas, but this first paper survived for only a few issues.

O. Henry, then a drug clerk in Austin, being filled with literary aspiration, bought the press and the name of The Iconoclast for \$250; but O. Henry's Iconoclast after two issues also ceased to flutter. Later, when Brann again accumulated the necessary funds to permit him to throw off the hireling's yoke, he asked for and received back from O. Henry the legal right to the title of his own paper.

I relate this incident not to cast discredit upon O. Henry's originality. His unique mastery of story structure was all his own, but that richness of figurative speech, particularly those exaggerated humorous metaphors which make his every paragraph so delightful, we may well believe to be an Elijah's mantle fallen from the shoulders of Brann, and worn over a new tunic.

Should any man create more than a rare few of the words he uses his speech would be as meaningless as a doctor of theology explaining the trinity. Likewise that subtle thing called "style," that revivifying of the dead ashes of dictionary words, though more peculiar to the man, is most potent when it borrows freely but wisely from all that has gone before.

Stevenson read, and confessed to deliberate practice work in imitation of, the masters that preceded him. So we know that Brann read, absorbed, transmuted, and transfigured the style of the classic writers, and added a daring measure of reckless originality. As Brann read his Homer and his Carlyle, his Shakespeare and his Ingersoll, so Hubbard and O. Henry read their Brann; and Hubbard specifically commends him to the would-be writer as Johnson commended Addison.

There is no ore that will assay more literary metal to the page than Brann. As a writer's writer no man of our time

surpasses him. His vocabulary is conceded, even by his most envious critics, to outrange that of any other American. His gift of figurative speech--that essential that distinguishes literature from mere correct writing--rivals that of any writer in any country, language or time. Brann's compass of words, idioms and phrases harks back to the archaic and reaches forward to the futuristic.

If you wish merely to learn to appreciate literature so that you may nod approval in polite society when an accredited writer's name is mentioned, go to college and listen to the lectures of literary Ph. D.'s. But if you want to learn to write, take your Bible, your Shakespeare and your Brann and hie you to your garret, there to read, reread, study, memorize, and imitate if you can. And God be praised if you can steal the best and to it add somewhat of your own.

Brann offends, shocks and outrages, is suppressed, damned, forcibly ignored and laboriously forgotten, because though the lark sings in his words, "the buzzard is on the wing." But Brann did not make the stench that offends the nostrils of the nice; he only stirred up the cesspools to let us know that they were there, and so enlist volunteers for their abatement. That riles the kept keepers of lesser fames because they have agreed that the fine art of letters should be to spray the attar of posies to counteract the noisome smells of that which is rotten in the state of the world, where the many reek and sweat in filth and poverty that the few may live in perfumed palaces.

Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin, shouted Brann and died shouting, while the well-fed and fatted sat on the lid to keep it down. But we who have lived to see the lid blown off Russia and feel the growl and grumble of the bowels of all the earth need not overstrain our ears to hear Brann laughing now in that good Baptist Hell to which a bullet in the back gave him the passport.

POTIPHAR'S WIFE. STORY OF JOSEPH REVISITED

For more than six-and-thirty centuries the brand of the courtesan has rested on the brow of Potiphar's wife. The religious world persists in regarding her as an abandoned woman who wickedly strove to lead an immaculate he-virgin astray. The crime of which she stands accused is so unspeakably awful that even after the lapse of ages we cannot refer to the miserable creature without a moan. Compared with her infamous conduct old Lot's dalliance with his young daughters and David's ravishment of Uriah's wife appear but venial faults, or even shine as spotless virtues.

The story of Mrs. Potiphar's unrequited passion may be strictly true; but if so the world has changed most wondrously. It transcends the probable and rests upon

such doubtful ex parte evidence that a modern court would give her a certificate of good character. It is not in accord with our criminal code to damn a woman on the unsupported deposition of a young dude whom she has had arrested for attempted ravishment. Had Joseph simply filed a general denial and proven previous good character we might suspect the madame of malicious prosecution; but he doth protest too much.

Mrs. Potiphar was doubtless a young and pretty woman. She was the wife of a wealthy and prominent official of Pharaoh's court, and those old fellows were a trifle exacting in their tastes. They sought out the handsomest women of the world to grace their homes, for sensuous love was then the supreme law of wedded life. Joseph was a young Hebrew slave belonging to Mrs. Potiphar's husband, who treated him with exceptional consideration because of his business ability. One day the lad found himself alone with the lady. The latter suddenly turned in a fire alarm, and Jacob's favorite son jogged along Josie in such hot haste that he left his garment behind. Mrs. Potiphar informed those who responded to her signal of distress that the slave had attempted a criminal assault. She is supposed to have repeated the story to her husband when he came home, and the chronicler adds, in a tone of pained surprise, that the old captain's "anger was kindled." Neither Mrs. Potiphar's husband nor her dearest female friends appear to have doubted her version of the affair, which argues that, for a woman who moved in the highest social circles, she enjoyed a reasonably good reputation.

But Joseph had a different tale to tell. He said that the poor lady became desperately enamored of his beauty and day by day assailed his continence, but that he was as deaf to her amorous entreaties as Adonis to the dear blandishments of Venus Pandemos. Finally she became so importunate that he was compelled to seek safety in flight. He saved his virtue but lost his vestments. It was a narrow escape, and the poor fellow must have been dreadfully frightened. Suppose that the she-Tarquin had accomplished her hellish design, and that her victim had died of shame? She would have changed the whole current of the world's history! Old Jacob and his other interesting if less virtuous sons, would have starved to death, and there would have been neither Miracles nor Mosaic Law, Ten Commandments nor Vicarious Atonement. Talmage and other industrious exploiters of intellectual tommyrot, now ladling out saving grace for fat salaries, might be as unctuously mouthing for Mumbo Jumbo, fanning the flies off some sacred bull or bowing the knee to Baal. The Potiphar-Joseph episode deserves the profoundest study. It was an awful crisis in the history of the human race! How thankful we, who live in these latter days, should be that the female rape fiend has passed into the unreturning erstwhile with the horned unicorn and dreadful hippogriff, the minotaur and other monsters that once affrighted the fearful souls of men--that sensuous sirens do not so assail us and rip our coat-tails off in a foul

attempt to wreck our virtue and fill our lives with fierce regret. True, the Rev. Parkhurst doth protest that he was hard beset by beer and beauty unadorned; but he seems to have been seeking the loaded "schooner" and listening for the siren's dizzy song. Had Joseph lived in Texas he could never have persuaded Judge Lynch that the lady and not he should be hanged. The youngster dreamed himself into slavery, and I opine that he dreamed himself into jail. With the internal evidence of the story for guide, I herewith present, on behalf of Mrs. Potiphar, a revised and reasonable version of the affaire d'amour.

Joseph was, the chronicler informs us, young "a goodly person and well favored." His Hebraic type of manly beauty and mercurial temperament must have contrasted strangely with Mrs. Potiphar's dark and stolid countrymen. Mistress and slave were much together, the master's duties requiring his presence near his prince. Time hung heavily on the lady's hands and, as an ennui antidote, she embarked in a desperate flirtation with the handsome fellow, for Egypt's dark-eyed daughters dearly love to play fast and loose with the hearts of men. Of course it was very wrong; but youth and beauty will not be strictly bound, the opportunity seemed made for mischief, and Mrs. Potiphar cared little for her lord--a grizzly old warrior who treated her as a pretty toy his wealth had purchased, to be petted or put aside at pleasure.

A neglected wife whose charms attract the admiring eyes of men may not depart one step from the straight and narrow path, but her husband's honor stands ever within the pale of danger. Let that husband whose courtship ceased at Hymen's shrine, who is a gallant abroad and a boor at home, keep watch and ward, for homage is sweet even to wedded women.

While Potiphar played the petty tyrant and exacted of his wife a blind obedience, Joseph sang to her songs she loved--plaintive tales of tender passion, of enchanted monarchs and maids of matchless beauty. He culled the fairest flowers from the great garden and wove them into garlands to deck her hair, dark as that lingering night which Moses laid upon the Valley of the Nile. He gave her a thousand little attentions so grateful to womankind, and worshiped her, not presumptuously, but with the sacred awe of a simple desert child turning his face to greet the rising sun. They were of the same age,--that age when the heart beats in passionate rebellion against cold precepts, the blood riots in the veins like molten rubies and all life seems made for love, for day dreams golden as the dawn, for sighs and sweet companionship. What wonder that she sometimes into the cool left her lord to his heavy slumbers and crept into the cool gardens with the handsome Hebrew boy; that they walked, hand clasped in hand, beneath the tall palms that nodded knowingly, and whispered sweet nothings while the mellow moonlight quivered on the Nile and sad Philomela poured forth her plaintive song like a flood of lover's tears? All day long they were alone

together,--those children of the world's youth, when life was strong and moral law was weak. When the summer sun rode high in heaven and sent his burnished shafts straight down into the white streets and swooning gardens; when the great house was closed to shut out the blinding glare and in the court cool fountains cast their grateful spray, what wonder that she bade him sit at her feet and sing the love songs of his native land, wild prototypes of those which Solomon poured from the depths of his sensuous soul to his sweet Rose of Sharon?

"Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou art fair;
Thou hast dove's eyes, thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
Thy breast like young roes that feed among the lilies.
Set me as a seal upon thy heart, a seal upon thy arm,
For love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave."

The song dies out and the languorous stillness is broken only by the splashing of the fountains in the great marble basins and the drowsy hum of a bee among the blossoms. The lad's head has sunk down upon the lady's knee and she is watching the tears trembling on his drooping lashes and wondering, with a little thrill of pain, if he has a sweetheart in his own land, of whom he is so sadly dreaming. She thanks him for the song in a voice low and sweet as the musical ripple of the sacred river among the reeds--she dazzles him with her great Egyptian eyes, those ebon orbs in which ever lurks the sensuous splendor of a summer night's high moon. Her hand strays carelessly among his curls as she punctuates with sighs and tears his oft-told tale of unkind brethren, the gloomy cave, the coat of many colors dipped in blood of the slaughtered kid, the cruel goad of godless Midianite, driving him on and on through burning sands and 'neath a blazing sun, far from his tearful mother and mourning sire. How cruel the fates to consign to slavery one born to be a king! His master is a hard man and covetous, but her pleadings shall yet purchase sweet liberty for old Jacob's son, that he may fulfill the high dreams of which he has told her--may answer the midnight messages of Israel's God and triumph over those wicked brethren. Perhaps--who knows?--in his own land he will become a mighty prince and treat with proud Pharaoh on equal terms. Will he remember her, his only friend in a land of foes? Will he think of her when Ammon is o'erthrown and proud Moab pays his tribute? Ah, no! When a crown of jewels blazes on his brow and the sack-cloth of the slave is exchanged for imperial purple, he'll think no more of the lonely little woman by Nilus bank, who prays that Isis will magnify his power, that Osiris will shield him when the Hebrew sword rings on the Hivite spear. He will take to wife some fair cousin of Esau's house, a maid more beautiful far than those who drink the sweet waters of the south. Old Abram's daughters are fair and have dove's eyes; their lips are as threads of scarlet and their breasts like young roes that feed among the lilies. Does not the song say so? But those of Egypt--oh, unhappy Egypt!

"Love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave."

She bends low and whispers the line upon his lips, while her fragrant breath, beating upon his cheek, sinks into his blood like the jasmynes' perfume,--more dangerous to the soul than Aphrodite's kisses or Anacreon's drunken song. By such arts did Cleopatra win the master spirit of the world and make the mailed warrior her doting slave, indifferent alike to honor and to duty, content but to live and love. What wonder that the callow shepherd lad, unskilled in woman's wile, believed that his mistress loved him?--that his heart went out to the handsome coquette in a wild, passionate throb in which all Heaven's angels sang and Hell's demons shrieked!

A beautiful woman! Not the beauty of Greece, on which we gaze as upon some wondrous flower wafted from Elysian Fields, and too ethereal for this gross world; nor that of Rome, with Pallas' snow-clad bosom and retrospective eye; but the sensuous beauty of the far south, that casts a Circean spell upon the souls of men. Her eyes are not dove's eyes that softly shine along the path to Heaven, but wandering fires that light the way to Hell. Her lips are not a thread of scarlet, chaste as childhood and dewy as the dawn, but the deep sullen red of a city swept with flames. Her breasts are not like young roes that feed among the lilies, but ivory hemispheres threaded with purple fire and tinged with sunset's tawny gold. Reverently as though touching divinity's robe, Joseph caresses the wanton curls that stream like an inky storm-cloud over the shapely shoulders--he puts the little hands, heavy with costly gems, back from the tearful face and holds them with a grasp so fierce that the massy rings of beaten gold bruise the tender flesh. Mrs. Potiphar starts up, alarmed by his unwonted boldness--she reads his face with a swift glance that tells her he is no longer a lad, a pretty boy to be trifled with for the amusement of an idle hour. The Cupid's bow had faded forever from his lip and childhood's innocence from his eye; he has crossed life's Rubicon, has passed at one stride from the Vale of Youth with its trifles and its idle tears, its ignorance of sex and stainless love, to Manhood's rugged mountains, where blazes Ambition's baleful star and the fires of passion ever beat, fiercer than those that sweep Gehenna's sulphurous hills.

Even while her cheek crimsons with anger and her heart flutters with fear, the woman glories in Joseph's guilty love, sweet incense to her vanity, evidence of her peerless beauty's infernal power. She retreats a step as from the brink of an abyss, but farther she cannot fly, for there is a charm in her companion's voice, potent as old Merlin's mystic chant--tones low and sweet as music in dreams by maids who sleep in Dian's bosom, yet wilder, fiercer than trumpets blown for war. As a sailor drawn to his doom by siren song, or a bird spellbound by some noxious serpent, she advances fearfully and slow until she is swept into his strong arms and held quivering there like a splotch of foam in a swift eddy of the upper Nile. The room

swims before her eyes and fills with mocking demons that welcome her to the realm of darkness; the fountains' ripple sounds like roaring thunder, in which she reads the angry warning of Egypt's gods, while beneath the accursed magic of the kisses that burn upon her lips, her blood becomes boiling wine and rushes hissing through a heart of ice. The mocking demons turn to angels with Joseph's handsome face and crown her with fragrant flowers: the threat'ning thunders to music sweet as Memmon's matin hymn or accepted lover's sighs, heard 'neath the harvest moon,--she is afloat upon a sapphire sea beneath a sunset sky, the West Wind's musky wing wafting her, whither she neither knows nor cares.

But the angels and the fragrant flowers, the music sweet as lover's sighs and the sapphire sea, the sunset sky and Zephyrus' musky wing are dreams; the blistered lips and poor bruised bosom, the womanly pride humbled in the dust and wifely honor wounded unto death--these alone are real! With an involuntary cry of rage and shame, a cry that is half a prayer and half a curse--a cry that rings and reverberates through the great sleepy house like a maniac's shriek heard at midnight among the tombs--she flings herself sobbing and moaning upon the marble floor.

The drowsy slave starts up as from a dream, quivering in every limb like a coward looking upon his death. He tries to raise the groveling victim of his unbridled lust, but she beats him back; he pleads for mercy, but she calls him ungrateful slave, base Hebrew dog and prays all Egypt's gods to curse her conqueror. There's a rush of feet along the hall, there's a clash of weapons in the court, and here and there and everywhere tearful maids are calling to their mistress, the Sweet One and Beautiful, dear Daughter of the Dawn, Lily of the Nile, while brawny eunuchs, barelimbed and black as Hell's own brood, are vowing dire vengeance even upon the King himself if he has dared to harm her. The culprit glances with haggard face and wildly pleading eyes at the woman, once so imperial in her pride, now cowering a thing accursed, clothed only with her shame and flood of ebon hair. The great sun, that hung in mid-heaven like a disk of burnished brass when she first forgot her duty, descends like a monstrous wheel of blood upon the western desert and through the casement pours a ruddy glow over the prostrate figure a marble Venus blushing rosy red. Joseph casts his coarse garment over his companion as one might clothe the beauteous dead, and turns away, the picture of Despair, the avatar of guilty Fear.

. . .

Love is a dangerous game to play, and oft begun in wanton mischief ends in woeful madness. In the first flush of shame and rage Mrs. Potiphar was eager to punish the slave's presumption, even though herself o'erwhelmed in his ruin; but hate, though fierce, is a fickle flame in the female heart, and seldom survives a single flood of tears. Already Joseph's handsome face is haunting her--already

she is dreaming o'er the happy hours by Nilus' bank, where first he praised her wondrous beauty--beneath the nodding palms when the fireflies blazed and the bulbul poured its song. The love that has lain latent within her bosom, or burned with friendship's unconsuming flame, awakes like smoldering embers fanned by desert winds and fed with camphor wood, enveloping all her world. She longs to leave the loveless life with her sullen lord; to cast from her as things accursed the gaudy robes and glittering gems; to fly with the shepherd lad to the deep cool forests of the far east and dream her life away in some black tent or vine-embowered cot--to take his hand in hers and wander on to the world's extreme verge, listening to the music of his voice. The great house, once her pride, has become a grewsome prison, the jailer a grizzly gorgon who conjured her with the baleful gleam of gold to cast her beauty on Mammon's brutish shrine. She hardens her heart against him and pities herself, as wives are wont to do who have dragged the dear honor of their husbands in the dust--she persuades herself that love has cast radiant glory about her guilt and sanctified her shame. Oh woman, what a paradox thou art! When the descending sun touched the horizon's rim Mrs. Potiphar could have plunged a poisoned dagger through the heart of her paramour and mocked his dying moan; the great globe of fire has not bid the world good night, yet she is weeping because of the bitter words with which she drove him forth.

"Love is strong as death."

She repeats the line again and again. Oh my Israel, is the grave the limit of thy love? Wert thou dead, fair boy, Egypt would inclose thy sacred ashes in a golden urn and wear it ever between her breasts--would make for thee a living sepulcher and thou shouldst sleep in the vale of Love, between the rosy mountains of Desire. Wert thou dead--

The slaves! They will tell their master the wild words she spoke against her love--against his life. She must seal their lips, must command their silence. Too late! Even as she lays her hand on the silver bell the heavy tread of her husband's brass-shod feet is heard in the long hall, ringing upon the bare stone floor in rapid, nervous rhythm, so different from the usual majestic tread of Pharaoh's chief slaughterman. The slaves have already spoken! A faintness as of death falls upon her; but she is a true daughter of false Egypt, and a wiser than Potiphar would find in her face no shadow of the fear that lies heavy on her heart. The game is called and she must play not for name and fame, but for love and life. Her husband confronts her, ferocity incarnate,--the great cord-like veins of the broad, low brow and massive neck knotted and black, his eyes blazing like the orbs of an angry lion seen by the flickering light of a shepherd's fire. He essays to speak, but his tongue is thick, his lips parched as one stricken with the plague, and instead of words there comes through his set teeth a hoarse, hissing sound as of the great rock serpent in its wrath. His glance falls upon

Joseph's garment, the gleaming sword leaps from its sheath and he turns to seek the slave. She lays her hand lightly upon his arm, great Egypt's shield, a pillar of living brass; she nestles in the grizzly beard like some bright flower in a weird forest; she kisses the bronzed cheek as Judas did that of our dear Lord and soothes him with pretty truths that are wholly lies.

Joseph is a good boy, but sometimes overbold. Poor child! Perhaps her beauty charmed away his senses and made him forget his duty. She bade him sing to beguile a tedious hour, and he sang of love and looked at her with such a world of worship in his eyes that she grew angry and upbraided him. Let it pass; for, by the mystic mark of Apis, she frightened the boy out of his foolish fever.

She laughs gleefully, and the gruff old soldier suffers her to take his sword, growling meanwhile that he likes not these alarms--that she has marshaled Egypt's powers to battle with a mirage. The game is won; but guilt will never rest content, and oft reveals itself by much concealment. It is passing strange, she tells him tearfully, that every male who looks upon her, whether gray-headed grand-sire or beardless boy, seems smitten with love's madness. She knows not why 'tis so. If there is in her conduct aught to challenge controversy she prays that he will tell her. The old captain's brow again grows black. He leads her where the fading light falls upon her face, and, looking down into her eyes as tho' searching out the secrets of her soul, bids her mark well his words. The wife who bears herself becomingly never hears the tempter's tone or knows aught of any love but that of her rightful lord. Pure womanhood is a wondrous shield, more potent far than swords. If she has been approached by lawless libertine, he bids her, for the honor of his house, to set a seal upon her lips, instead of bruited her shame abroad as women are wont to do whose vanity outruns their judgment.

. . .

Potiphar determines to watch his wife. It had never occurred to him that she could possibly go astray; but he has learned from her own confession that she is a flirt, and he knows full well that a married coquette is half a courtesan. Suspecting that Joseph's offense is graver than his wife set forth, he casts him into prison. The inexperienced youth, believing the full extent of his guilt has been blazoned to the world, and frightened beyond his wits by armed men and clank of chains, protests with tears and sighs that he is more sinned against than sinning. It is the old story of Adam improved upon--he not only damns the woman, but denies the apple.

Joseph's posterity, hating Egypt with their whole heart and intent on glorifying Israel and Israel's God, became the only historians of this original scandal in high life; and thus was a youth, probably neither better nor worse than his brethren, raised to the dignity of a demi-god, while a vain

young wife is condemned through all the ages to wear a wanton's name. The story probably contains a moral-- which wives may look for if they will.

. . . .

Of course this account of Mrs. Potiphar's seduction is a fancy sketch; but it is a true pen-picture of what too often happens in this fair land of ours, and may be perused with profit by many a Benedict. The number of unfaithful wives whose sin becomes the public shame is simply appalling; yet no criminal was ever so cautious, so adept in the art of concealment as the woman who values her reputation above her honor. There is no secret a man will guard with such vigilance as his amours, no copartner in iniquity he will shield with such fidelity as a paramour. The bandit may turn state's evidence, and the assassin confess beneath the noose; but the rascal will die protesting that his mistress is pure as the driven snow.

And yet woman is by nature as true to her rightful lord as the needle to the magnetic north,--as faithful to her marriage vows as the stars to their appointed courses. When a wife "goes astray" the chances are as one to infinity that the misstep is her husband's fault. Love is the very life of woman. She can no more exist without it than the vine can climb heavenward without support,--than it can blossom and bear fruit without the warm kiss of the summer sun. Woman's life is a flame that must find an altar upon which to blaze, a god to glorify; but that sacred fire will not forever burn 'mid fields of snow nor send up incense sweet to an unresponsive idol, even though it bears the name of husband. The man who courts the wife as assiduously as he did his sweetheart, makes the same sacrifice to serve her, shows the same appreciation of her efforts to please him, need never fear a rival. He is lord paramount of her heart, and, forsaking all others, she will cleave unto him thro' good and thro' evil, thro' weal and thro' woe, thro' life unto death. But the man who imagines his duty done when he provides food, shelter and fine raiment for the woman he has won; who treats her as if she were a slave who should feel honored in serving him; who vents upon her hapless head the ill-nature he would like to pour into the faces of his fellow-men, but dares not, were wise to heed the advice which Iago gave to the Moor.

Woman is more subtle than her ancient enemy, the serpent, and woe to the man who attempts to tread her beneath his feet! True it is that all women who find the hymeneal rites but an unreading of that enchanted spell in which they worshiped devils as demi-gods; between whose eager lips the golden apples of Hesperides prove but Dead Sea fruit; for whom the promised Elysium looms but a parched Sahara, do not seek in forbidden fields to feed their famished hearts; but it is well for the peace of mind of many a husband who neither dotes nor doubts, that black dishonor oft goes hand in hand with blissful ignorance.

The philosophic world rejects the story of Joseph, having long ago learned that he-Dians live only in childish legend and Della-Cruscan poetry. As an ideal it reverses the natural relation of the sexes; as an example it is worse than worthless, for instead of inspiring emulation the young Hebrew's heroic continence only provokes contempt. Men worship at the shrine of Solomon's wisdom, of Moses' perseverance, of David's dauntless courage, but crown the altar of Joseph with asses' ears. Such foolish Munchausenisms give to young girls a false idea of the opposite sex, relax their vigilance and imperil their virtue. From such ridiculous romances, solemnly approved by an owl-like priesthood, sprung that false code--so insulting to womankind--that a wife's honor is not committed to her own keeping, but to the tender care of every man with whom she comes in contact. When a wife goes wrong a hypocritical world rises in well-simulated wrath--which is too often envy--and hurls its anathema maranatha at the head of the "designing villain," as tho' his companion in crime were born without brains and reared without instruction! The "injured husband"--who probably drove his wife to the devil by studied neglect that starved her heart and wounded her vanity--is regarded with contempt if he does not "make a killing" for a crime against the social code which he would himself commit.

I paint man as I find him, not as I would have him. I did not create him, or did his Architect ask my advice; hence it is no fault of mine that his virtue's frail as ocean foam--not mine the blame that while half a god he's all a beast. Mentally and sexually man is a polygamist, and, whatever its moral value may be, monogamy does violence to the law of his being. It is a barrier against which he ever beats like some wild beast of prey against restraining bars. Give him Psyche to wife and Sappho for mistress and he were not content--would swim a river to make mad love to some freckled maid. It is likely that Leander had at home a wife he dearly loved when he lost his life trying to reach fair Hero's bower. That the Lord expects little even of the best of men when subjected to beauty's blandishments is proven by his partiality to various princes and patriarchs who, in matters of gallantry, may be regarded as pace-setters.

I am not the apologist of the godless rake, the defender of the roue; but I have small patience with those mawkish purists who persist in measuring men and women by the same standard of morals. We might as well apply the same code to the fierce Malay who runs amuck and to McAllister's fashionable pismires. We might as wisely bring to the same judgment bar Bengal's royal beast, crazed with lust for blood, and Jaques' wounded deer, weeping in the purling brook. Each sex and genus must be considered by itself, for each possesses its peculiar virtues and inherent vices. In all nature God intended the male to seek, the female to be sought. These he drives with passion's fiery scourge, those he gently leads by maternal longings, and thus is the Law of Life fulfilled--the living tide runs ever on from age to age, while divine Modesty preserves her name

and habitation in the earth. A man's crown of glory is his courage, a woman's her chastity . While these remain the incense rises ever from Earth's altar to Heaven's eternal throne; but it matters not how pure the man if he be a cringing coward, how brave the woman if she be a brazen bawd. Lucrece as Caesar were infamous, and Caesar as Lucrece were a howling farce.

* * *

CHARITY.

St. Paul SAYS: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And tho' I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

So it appears that chin-music without charity is not calculated to pay very large dividends in the interesting ultimate; that a man may be full of faith, and pregnant with prophecy, and chock-a-block with knowledge and redolent of religious mystery,--that he may leak sanctification in the musical accents of an angel and still be "nothing"--a pitiful hole in the atmosphere, a chimera circulating in a vacuum and foolishly imagining itself a man.

But what is charity? You people who have prayers and Bible readings before breakfast, while your hearts vibrate between holiness and hash--between Christ and the cook--should know; but it's dollars to doughnuts you don't. You probably imagine that when you present your out-of-fashion finery to your poor relations, then wait for a vote of thanks or a resolution of respect; that when you permit a tramp to fill a long-felt want with the cold victuals in your cupboard, which even your pug dog disdains, that the Recording Angel wipes the tears of joy from his eyes with his wing-feathers and gives you a page, while all Heaven gets gay because of your excessive goodness. That's because your religious education has been sadly neglected. If you would read the Bible--and the ICONOCLAST--with more care you couldn't make such mistakes. St. Paul says (and, as the country preacher remarked, I fully agree with him):

"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

In other words, a man can't draw on his bank account for the price of a corner lot in the New Jerusalem. He cannot acquire so much as a souphouse ticket in that city not made with hands by dying for the faith in the auto-da-fe. Almsgiving and charity may have no more affinity than the philosophy of Plato and the political conversation of a poll parrot! Had you ever made the acquaintance of that idea? If not, I advise you to exchange visiting cards with it before you forget its address. It is not a "Brannism," I beg to state! it is part of the Pauline theology--is strictly

orthodox. There's not a single heretical sign warning you to keep off the grass. Almsgiving, and even the martyr's fiery death, may be animated solely by hope of heavenly reward or terrestrial fame,--by unadulterated selfishness--may be regarded as a good investment. Too many people give to the poor only because it's "lending to the Lord"--and they expect Standard Oil stock dividends. They drop a plugged nickel in the slot expecting to pull out a priceless crown of gold,--they expect the Lord to present them with a full suit of heavenly raiment in exchange for a cold potato or a pair of frazzled pantaloons. I want no partnership with a man who tries to beat the God of the Jews in a trade.

Some of you wealthy men who, like Dives, fare sumptuously every day, may donate a hundred dollars to relieve the distress of the people of Starr county. I hope you will. If given unostentatiously--and not for advertising purposes or in hope of a heavenly reward--it will constitute an act of charity; but not of the highest, noblest type, for it will cost you no great sacrifice. It is just as well, however, to have a receipt for such a gift to show St. Peter. If it does not enable you to divide Abraham's bosom with Lazarus the beggar, it may save you from the post-mortem discomforts of Dives.

The two mites cast into the treasury by the poor widow o'erbalanced all the gifts of those who gave of their abundance; and a cup of cold water may carry with it more of true charity, more of the spirit of the Prince of Peace, than the largesse of the proudest plutocrat.

During the Civil War a grizzly old Yankee sergeant and a young Confederate soldier, both badly wounded, lay near each other between the lines, while above their prostrate forms the fierce flood of metal swept back and forth, a whistling, screaming hurricane of death. The sergeant had lain long unconscious, and he awoke racked with fever and perishing with thirst. Do any of you know the horror of that thirst which gunshot wounds, abetted by a blazing summer sun and the stifling fumes of powder-smoke, produce? It is the concentrated agony of hell. Thirst will break the courage of the bravest. Even great Caesar, upon whose imperial brow fear was afraid to sit, cried for drink "like a sick girl." The sergeant found his canteen almost empty,--just a few spoonfuls left,--drops more precious to him than all the gold of Ophir, than all the pearls of Ind. He was lifting the canteen to his parched lips when his neighbor begged to share it. He glanced at the gray uniform and hesitated. The Confederate was but a boy and in his breast there stood a broken bayonet. The sergeant crawled over to him amid the plunging shot and shell.

"'Tain't much, Johnny, an' I'm dry as a mackerel; but I'll whack up."

He divided the precious drops with rigid impartiality and gave the young Confederate his portion. Then he raised

the canteen to his own lips, but again he hesitated. The landscape swam before his eyes, the pounding of the great guns fell but faintly upon his ear, the Angel of Death had set his seal upon the bronzed brow. He handed the canteen to his companion untasted.

"Take the rest of it, Johnny; I kinder guess I won't miss it long."

Yet we imagine we are wonderfully charitable if we give a few dollars from our abundance to feed the starving, or send our cast clothing to the Relief Society! Charity is not a virtue you can measure in money. Its abiding place is not in the vest pocket. Its home is the heart, and not the little 2 X 4 dog-kennel heart either. It only takes up its abode where there is a mighty temple in which to circulate itself and make grand music that rolls and reverberates through all eternity--a temple flooded with God's own sunshine and peopled with beautiful thoughts and noble aspirations--a temple whose spires pierce the highest Heaven and whose foundations are broad and deep as humanity. Such is the home of Charity, queen of all the virtues. Hear St. Paul:

"Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." Now do you comprehend what charity really is? It is toleration, it is kindness, it is humanity, it is truth, it is the spirit of God made manifest in man. He that gives liberally to the poor, to the church, to education, to the campaign fund, yet says to his brother, "Thou fool," because he's followed off after a different political folly, or differs from him on the doctrine of transubstantiation, is not staggering about under a load of charity calculated to give him flat feet. The supreme test of a charitable mind is toleration for the opinions of others,--an admission that perchance we do not know it quite all. It is much easier to give a \$5 bill to a beggar than to forgive a brother who rides his pitiless logic over our prejudices. The religious world has contributed countless millions to feed the hungry and clothe the naked, but has never forgiven Tom Paine for brushing the Bible contemptuously aside and looking

"Through nature up to nature's God."

Perhaps some future age will do justice to the memory of the man to whose daring pen we are so largely indebted for those dearly-prized privileges of free government, to the ablest advocate of human liberty the world has known, and whose piety was deep and fervent as that of St. Paul himself. But that cannot be until the freedom for which he toiled and prayed extends to the mind as well as the body; until the shackles are stricken from the brain as well as the hand,--until the sun of Knowledge dispels the empoisoned mists of Ignorance and divine Charity dethrones unreasoning Hate. Then will the infidel freely concede that Servetus' murder was rather the fault of his

age than Calvin's crime, and the Christian will find in Paine, if not a guide, at least a learned philosopher and a loyal friend.

Charity assumes as many shapes as Prospero's busy sprite. I was once waiting for a train in a small Missouri town, where everybody turns out to "see the keers come in." A big, blustering fellow, well filled with booze, was making himself generally obnoxious, and the village constable approached him kindly and tried to quiet him. Instead of subsiding, the boozier whipped out a big six-shooter and began blazing away at the representative of the peace and dignity of the state. The constable threw his hand to his hip, but instead of pulling his gun sprang forward, disarmed the hoodlum, cracked him over the head with his own battery and sent him about his business. The officer looked as shamed after the melee as though he had stolen a sheep or scratched the Democratic ticket. I remarked that he'd taken unnecessary chances.

"What would you have done, mister?" he inquired. I replied that I would have filled that fellow's hide so full of holes that it couldn't be stuffed with straw.

"Well," said he slowly, "I kum purty nigh doin' it. But I jes' thought as how 'twan't Jim a shootin', but his jag, an' then I seemed ter see his kids a hangin' on th' gate a waitin' fer him t, come home, an' his wife a worritin' about him, an' I jis couldn,t do it. I took chances fer them."

Involuntarily I removed my hat. I felt that I was in the presence of a God-created king. "You're a philanthropist," I said.

"I dunno what them ar' maybe, mister," said he; "but I'm glad Jim's gone home alive,--d--d glad!"

That was charity of the broadest, deepest kind that ever held its godlike sway in the human soul,--a charity that will brave death itself rather than wring the heart of helpless woman or cloud the sunny face of childhood with the orphan's tears.

"Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies they shall fail; whether there be tongues they shall cease; whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away."

"Charity never faileth." The real article will stand the most crucial test,--is never weighed and found wanting. It never persecutes because of honest difference of opinion. It never back-caps or boycotts. It turns a deaf ear to the tongue of scandal and heals the hurts made by the poisoned arrows of hate. "Charity suffereth long and is kind." Its supreme example was given us from the cross: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." Prophecies fail; tongues are forgotten, and knowledge fades like the evening sunlight before the dusky wing of night; but Charity endureth forever. "And now abideth

Faith, Hope and Charity, and the greatest of these is Charity."

Faith is founded upon fallible human judgment. A man believes thus and so, not necessarily because it is so, but because his head is built on a particular pattern or has had a peculiar class of phenomena filtered through it. The average human head, like an egg, or a crock of clabber, absorbs the flavor of its surroundings. It is chiefly a question of environment whether we grow up Democrats or Republicans, Protestants or Catholics, Mormons or religious mugwumps. As a man's faith is inherited, or formed for him by circumstances, he deserves little more credit or blame therefor than for the color of his hair or the size of his ears.

Hope is Fancy's child; oft branded as an illegitimate, yet esteemed above and beyond all the royal progeny of the proudest intellect, enshrined in the sanctum sanctorum, the veritable holy-of-holies of the human heart. Hope is not a virtue; it is but a rainbow with which Fancy paints the black o'erhanging firmament, a golden shaft of sunlight with which she gilds Life's rugged mountain peaks,--a melody most divinely sweet with which she cheers the fainting soul of man.

But greater than Faith, grander than Knowledge, brighter than the star of Hope which gilds the cradle and illumines the grave, is Charity, for 'tis the incarnation of heavenly Law, the bright essence increate of eternal Love.

* * *

THE SEVEN VIALS OF WRATH.

A WORLD-WIDE WAR.

Unless all signs fail, the world is on the eve of a war such as was never known in all the mighty cycles of human history. Lucky indeed will it be if the twentieth century is not born amid the shock of universal battle.

Is our boasted civilization breaking down beneath its own ponderous weight--the rotting props and pillars unable to sustain the gilded roof? Are the prophecies of Scripture about to be fulfilled--the world rushing headlong to the final catastrophe?

A murderous mania hath everywhere seized upon the minds of men. The pulse of the race is beating the reveille; the soul of the world is sounding "boots and saddles." Savagery is reasserting itself--the Christian nations are further than ever before from that age of gold,

"When the war-drum throbs no longer,
And the battle-flags are furled
In the parliament of man,
The federation of the world."

Peace? "There is no peace war is inevitable." The ostrich

may avoid seeing the approach of the fierce simoon by hiding his head in the sand, but cannot stay its onward march. The craze for slaughter, the lust for blood, is abroad in the land. The stars are evil, and Ate, ranging hot from Hell, plants her burning feet on every brow.

For years the brute passions of man have had no outlet--a prolonged peace hath become that good custom which doth corrupt the world. A new generation hath arisen in Europe and America which knows naught of the horrors of war, but is intoxicated by its glory. Its superfluous energy must find expression, its pent-up passions are ready for explosion. It is all aware of these piping times of peace--wildly eager for the glorious pomp and circumstance of war--the bullet's mad hiss and the crash of steel. Civilized man is but an educated savage sooner or later his natural ferocity will demand its pound of flesh.

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I know not whether Deity or Devil be the author of war. All human advancement is born of strife. Only warlike nations march in the van of the world's progress--prolonged peace has ever meant putrefaction. The civilizations of Greece and Rome were brightest when their blades were keenest. When the sword was sheathed there followed social degradation and intellectual decay. When all Europe trembled at the haughty tread of her matchless infantry, Spain was empress in the realm of mind. The Elizabethan age in England was shaped by the sword. America's intellectual preeminence followed the long agony of the Revolution, and blazed like a banner of glory in the wake of the Civil War. The Reign of Terror gave forth flashes of true Promethean fire--the crash of steel in the Napoleonic war studded the heavens with stars. It required an eruption of warlike barbarians to awaken Italy from her lethargy, while Celt and Saxon struck sacred fire from the shields of the intrepid Caesars. The Israelites were humble and civilized slaves in Egypt, cowering beneath the lash and finding a sweet savor in the fleshpots of the Pharaohs. Thrust forth into the wilderness, they became the fiercest of all barbarians before giving us the Psalms of David and the Song of Solomon. They had to become conquering warriors--had to be heroized--before they could breed inspired poets.

The age of "blood offering" has not yet passed. Is it possible that these awful rites are necessary to foster that spirit of self-sacrifice which marks the highest reach of humanity? to feed the golden lamp of love? to inculcate the virtue of valor? Can heroes be forged only with the hammer of Thor? Is genius the child of blood and tears? Are wars the tidal waves in the mighty social sea, ordained by the Deity to prevent putrefaction? Was the Phoenix of the ancients but an old civilization, enervated by luxury and corrupted by peace, that could only be purified of its foul dross and infused with new energy by fire? Was that poet inspired who declared that, "Whatever is, is right?" I

do not know.

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The trend of events points to a war that will involve the world--will align the Old against the New. I will be told the idea that Europe will combine against America is sheer madness. Is it even so? Has the time arrived when young men dream idle dreams and old men see lying visions? Scan the European press for six months past, and you will find such an event foreshadowed by the ablest editors and most distinguished diplomats. The probable necessity of such a coalition has been seriously discussed by various European cabinets.

Great Britain is the pariah of nations, feared by most, detested by all. Continental Europe would gladly see her humbled in the very dust. Had war resulted from the Venezuelan complication, England would, in all probability, have been left without allies, albeit the president's ultimatum was not relished by other transatlantic powers. Realizing his inability to cope with the Giant of the Occident, the world's bully stopped blustering and began sniffing about his beloved cousin across the sea and the beatitude of arbitration. The American Congress passed resolutions of sympathy with the Cuban insurgents, and from so slight a spark the Spanish people took fire. Instead of acting as peace-makers, the official organs of most European governments proceeded to fan the flames--encouraged Spain to resent the fancied affront by assuring her that she would not lack powerful allies. There was no recognition by this government of Cuban independence; no recommendation that we wrest the island from the moribund nation that has so long misgoverned it; but a semi-official expression of concern for men striving to achieve their liberty afforded Europe a pretext to "get together" and work off on a distant people that war spirit, so long suppressed at home, lest it disturb the balance of power. The British journals, which had warbled so sweetly anent their American cousins and "the indissoluble bond of Anglo-Saxon brotherhood," when there was a fair prospect that John Bull would have to toe the scratch alone, at once forgot the blessed ties of consanguinity and assured the bombastic Spaniard that he would have "plenty of help should he decide to humble American impudence." The press of France and Germany discoursed in much the same manner, while the diplomats of those countries agreed that "Europe would yet find it necessary to materially modify the Monroe Doctrine." But the Spaniard, believing discretion to be the better part of valor, had apologized for the acts of his undiapered babes and the excesses of his hungry beggars before his neighbors could stiffen his backbone with their ostentatious insolence.

The Monroe Doctrine, literally interpreted, is simply a warning to transatlantic powers to keep off the American grass--an official notice that they will not be permitted to

overrun and parcel out this continent regardless of human rights as they have done in Asia and are doing in Africa. The "Doctrine" is ridiculous, in that it establishes a quasi-protectorate over a number of petty powers that have no valid excuse for existing; still it works no injury to any European government not bent on international buccaneering. Uncle Sam's promulgation of the Monroe Doctrine proves him a fool; Europe's frantic objection to it demonstrates that she is a knave.

The Spanish incident served to show that the war spirit is rife throughout Europe, and that her mighty armaments cannot much longer be kept inactive. It proved conclusively that Europe is feverishly eager to set limits to the growing power of this government while such limitation is yet possible--that she cannot view with composure the slightest inclination on the part of America to take a hand in the world's politics. With wealth aggregating seventy-five billions, and as many millions of warlike Americans back of it, the Monroe Doctrine becomes something more than an iridescent dream. When such a nation decides upon "a vigorous foreign policy," the balance of power problem cannot be long confined to the European continent--a fact which explains the pernicious activity of transatlantic governments during our late unpleasantness.

But all the danger of an international complication does not come from across the sea. The war spirit is well-nigh as rife in this country as at Barcelona and Cadiz. The great mass of the American people would welcome a controversy with any country, with or without good cause. "The glory of the young man is in his strength," and Uncle Sam is young and strong. He longs to grapple with his contemporaries, to demonstrate his physical superiority. He has a cypress shingle on either shoulder and is trailing his star-spangled cutaway down the plank turnpike. While a few mugwumps, like Josef Phewlitzer and Apollyon Halicarnassus Below, and tearful Miss Nancys of the Anglo-maniacal school, are protesting that this country wants peace, Congress, that faithful mirror of public opinion, if not always the repository of wisdom, proves that it is eager for war. And just so sure as the Cleveland interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine is insisted upon, we are going to get it, and that before babes now nursing wear beards. And the "Doctrine," as applied by the administration, will not only be insisted upon, but public opinion will force the hands of our public servants and compel them to push it further. The fact that it is distasteful to our transatlantic brethren makes it ridiculously popular with a people determined to burn gunpowder. Aside from the epidemic of murder which seems to have girdled the globe, the spirit of petty jealousy and assumed superiority with which Americans are treated in many European countries, has imbued this people with the idea that the quickest way to win the respect of their supercilious neighbors is to slaughter them. Uncle Sam is in an ugly humor and will suffer no legitimate casus belli to be side-tracked by arbitration. He is "dead tired" of having the European ants get on him--of being harried by

petty powers whom he knows full well he could wipe from the map of the world. He is just a little inclined to do the Roman Empire act--to take charge of this planet and run it in accordance with his own good pleasure. Some of these days he's going to drive his box-toed boot under John Bull's coat-tails so far that the impudent old tub of tallow can taste leather all the rest of his life.

We may deplore this spirit of contention, but to deny its existence were to write one's self down an irremediable ass. It is in evidence everywhere, from the American senate to the country clown. To argue against the war spirit were like whistling in the teeth of a north wind. You cannot alter a psychological condition with a made-to-order editorial. It is urged that we should sing small, as we are "not prepared for war." We are always prepared. Hercules did not need a Krupp cannon--he was capable of doing terrible execution with a club. Samson did not wait to forge a Toledo blade--he waltzed into his enemies with an old bone and scattered their shields of iron and helmets of brass to the four winds of Heaven. The mighty armaments of Europe are costly trifles; whenever America has been called to fight she has revolutionized the science of destruction. It hath been said, "In time of peace prepare for war." Europe bankrupts herself to build steel cruisers and maintain gigantic standing armies; America prepares by strengthening her bank account and developing her natural resources. When the crisis comes she has "the sinews of war," and brains and industry quickly do the rest. It was not necessary for Gulliver to sleep in the land of the Lilliputs with a gun at his side.

Vast armies and costly fleets of battleships in time of peace are indication of conscious weakness. The Western Giant goes unarmed; but let the embattled world tread upon his coat-tails if it dares! The American does not have to be educated to soldiership--he's to the manner born. Those who can build are competent to destroy. Our Civil War was fought by volunteers; yet before nor since in all the struggles of mankind were such terrible engines of destruction launched upon land or sea. Never did so many bullets find their billets. Never did men set their breasts against the bayonet with such reckless abandon. Never were the seas incarnadined with such stubborn blood. The "Charge of the Six Hundred" was repeated a thousand times. The Pass of Thermopylae was emulated by plowboys. The Macedonian Phalanx was as nothing to the Rock of Chickamauga. The Bridge of Lodi was duplicated at every stream. The spirit of the Old Guard animated raw recruits. The Retreat of the Ten Thousand became but a holiday excursion. Sailors fought their guns below the water line and went down with flying colors and ringing cheers.

We have been more than once dangerously near a rupture with European powers because of the ridiculous Monroe Doctrine, which assumes for Uncle Sam a quasi-protectorate over a horde of Latin-American oligarchies

masquerading as Republics. We have now been fairly warned that should such a catastrophe occur, we would have to contend with more than one European power. We must either recede from the position we have assumed or prepare to do battle for the very existence of this government. Such a war would draw all nations of the earth into the bloody vortex. If Russia held aloof from the anti-American coalition, she would seize the opportunity to push her fortunes in the Orient, making a collision with the Moslem inevitable. At such a time the latter would be intent upon the extension of territory. Occupy Western Europe with an American war, and the Mohammedan would rise against their oppressors. Unfurl the sacred banner of the Prophet, and millions of murderous fanatics would erase the raids of Goth and Visigoth from the memory of mankind. Turkey, jeered at even by Spain, flouted even by Italy, yet potentially the most powerful nation for evil upon the earth, would spread as by magic over Roumania and Austro-Hungary, and pour through the Alpine passes like a torrent of fire upon Germany and France. Back of the much contemned "Sick Man of the East"--whom combined Christendom has failed to frighten--are nearly two hundred million people, scattered from the Pillars of Hercules to the Yellow Sea, all eager to conquer the earth for Islam. They are warriors to a man; their only fear is that they will not find death while battling with "the infidel dog" and be translated bodily to the realm of bliss. Within the memory of living men Christian nations have turned their eyes with fear and trembling to the Bosphorus. Islam is the political Vesuvius of Europe, and is once again casting its lurid light athwart the troubled sky. For years the Moslem has been robbed without mercy and persecuted without remorse. The bayonet has been held at his throat while strangers reviled his religion. It is no part of his creed to love his enemies and pray for those who despitefully use him. The Koran does not adjure him to turn the other cheek to the smiter. He has nursed his wrath to keep it warm, and prayed for an opportunity to wreak barbaric vengeance upon his oppressors. When Christian Europe marches forth to do battle with America she will need to wear armor upon her back as well as upon her breast, for while terror stalks before, Hell will lurk behind.

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A STORY OF THE SEA.

There have been mortals, favorites of the gods, to whom it was given to understand the language of the lower animals, and such I have ever envied, for

"Beast and bird have seen and heard
That which man knoweth not."

Never could I get beyond an imperfect knowledge of their alphabet, enabling me to spell out here and there a word of little meaning; but the great ocean's never-ceasing speech was ever plain to me, and many a midnight hour I have paced the cool sands that girt my island home, and listened

with reverential awe to the secrets it whispered to the sensuous southern breeze that kissed its bosom--strange stories of wreck and wraith, wild wars and desperate deeds, mingled with those of love and honor, shame and sacrifice, crowding upon each other like spectres in a dream.

One night when the new moon hung like a silver crescent pendent from Venus' flaming orb, in a summer sky thick inlaid with patines of pure gold, I heard the lazy waves breaking like slumb'rous thunder upon the long, low beach, and said, "The sea is calling me!" and I went. Far out upon the long pier, where the waves could dash their spray like a shower of cool pearls in my face, I lingered long and listened to a story, sad and strange as a sweet-voiced woman telling in a foreign tongue, and punctuating with tears and sighs, a tale of true love turned awry.

Upon the beach they walked in days that seem to man long, long ago. How brief and strange the little lives of men, and so beset with customs framed to cramp the heart and curse the soul before its time! To me,--here since Time began to build that bridge of sighs and tears that link the two eternities--it seems but yesternight that, hand in hand they wandered here, so wrapt in happiness born of equal love that they heeded not my glories spread forth to tempt their praise. I curled my snowy spray about their feet; flashed back the silver beams of harvest moon in one long, shimmering sheet of mellow light; rolled waves of brilliant phosphorescence, that seemed like silver billows, diamond-studded, breaking on a beach of gold, and sang the sweetest odes of the poets of ten thousand years; but they heard nor saw aught but the beating of their hearts in holy rhythm and the love-light flaming like fires celestial in each other's eyes.

Anon, bare-armed, bare-limbed, shamed yet happy, they sought the wave, and I cradled them on my bosom and heard them whisper of laws defied and cruel customs set at naught, and the higher law of love; but fearful she spoke and sighed, yet clung the closer to him, as though the earth and sea contained hut one perfect model of a man and that were he.

Hour by hour they hovered near me, and a thousand times she swore to him that their lives were so entwined that separation were death to her, and kissed his lips, his eyes, his hands, and wished she were his wife that they might blazon to the great round world the love they fain would hide from Heaven.

One little year went by and they came again, not walking hand in hand. He spoke to her and she answered with bitter scorn. He touched with trembling lips upon the old days when love was lord of their two lives, but she mocked at love and him and bade him leave her. Then he that was wont to rule first learned to sue, and vainly, for her heart was cold as the ashes of long-forgotten kings, cruel as wintry winds blown across icy northern seas. "It is a guilty

love," she said, and he looked at her as if doubting that he heard, then turned and went like one that dreamed; for thought of wrong to her had dwelt not with him; he had but worshiped her as devout Sabaeans might the sun and host of Heaven.

Again he came, but he was all alone. Long and lonely he paced the dreary beach beneath a wintry sky, until the cold mists seemed changed to mellow light, the stormy sky to one of summer, gemmed by myriad stars and queened by harvest moon; the cool wind sweeping o'er the barren waste to music and the merry laughter of men and maids; and she was by his side, her love-lit eyes making the blood dance through every vein. He put forth his hand to her, but the sky changed from gold to lead, the driftweed blew about his feet, the cold mist settled down upon him and crept with icy fingers into his heart, and he cursed the lying vision, the shrieking wind, the cold mist and the leaden sky; cursed the day that he first saw her, and said to the waves that tumbled at his feet: "I must be mad. The curse of my race hath fallen upon me; else why do I see that which is not, hear voices that are far away? Why do I cherish the image of a fickle woman, who, swept along by a gust of passion or sickly sentiment, thought for a day she loved me, but did not, nor ever loved aught in life but her own selfish self?"

And he called her name to the wind and waves but coupled with it a curse, deep and bitter, as those that burst in sulphur-breath from the parched lips of the damned; and a voice came back from out the gloom that seemed to mock him. Furious as a demon disturbed at some hellish rite, he turned and shrieked to the mocking voice and bade it come to him that he might wreak upon its owner such vengeance as would appall the world.

The far lights shone like pale ghosts of lights through the driving mist, and in them loomed two weird forms that seemed an hundred cubits high. Furious he rushed upon and smote them down upon the wet sand and trampled them, and strove with feet and hands to kill; but they cried out for mercy on their lives,--that they were honest fishermen who, hearing a cry but faintly above the roaring waves, had answered it, thinking some boatman might have met mishap and called for aid. The flood of anger spent in blows, he helped them up, wiped the blood and sand from their bronzed faces, gave them his scant purse, and bidding them drink a bumper that hell-fiends might drag him from the world before the morn sent them on their way.

The gray dawn found him sleeping with his face upon the wet sand, once trodden by the feet that now trampled on his heart. Then I sent waves, cool and sweet, to kiss his cheek, and he awoke, and waking, said:

"Kisses for me? They are cold, great Mother Ocean; but not so cold as love burned out, leaving but the bitter ashes of contemptuous pity. I dreamed that I was afloat upon thy

bosom with her I did so dearly love, and thou wast bearing us beneath a sunset sky to a fair island, fringed with palms and musical with songs of birds and rippling springs, where we two should live forever; that as we floated thus Love's goddess descended from a golden cloud and opening the white bosom of my bride, yet not my bride, took thence her heart and pressed from it a black drop that fell upon the molten sea, and taking form became a hideous monster that cried, 'My name is Selfishness,' and vanished in the wave. Then breathing upon the cold heart ethereal flame that made it throb like a hero's pulse when trumpets are blown for war, she replaced it, healed the snowy globe with a touch, and, smiling upon me, was caught into the golden cloud that seemed framed of music and the perfume of a thousand flowers. A round arm stole about my neck and we floated heart to heart on to the haven that was to be our Heaven.

"A curse upon your briny waters that seem a world of bitter tears, rank with dead men's bones and the rotting hulls of ships! They have called me back to thy dreary, ever-moaning verge to mock myself for loving one who scorns; for wasting my hot heart upon a block of frozen stone, hoping by foolish prayers and unmanly tears to move the gods to breathe into it the breath of human life,--to prevail, even as did that old Greek, who became enamored of a statue, less divinely formed, but with the self-same heart.

"'Tis madness leads me to this folly,--the old, old curse that hath hung about our house, like a baleful shadow, for thrice a hundred years, bursting at times into bloody feuds without apparent cause, and dreadful mutinies against the laws of man and will of God. 'Tis vain to further fight with fate! 'Twill drag me down, even as it did my great-grandsire, who climbed fame's dizzy heights and stood, poised in mid-Heaven, the master mind of Britain's mighty world; then, like a tall mountain pine blasted at the top by the writhen bolts of God, plunged, a falling star, to the depths of everlasting darkness, and died a decade before his death. Nor iron will descended through my sire from a score of barbarous kings; nor mother's prayerful amulets, woven like golden threads through every low, sweet lullaby that soothed my infancy, can avail me aught. I can but fight and fall. She might have helped me beat back the shadows; but would not--and 'tis well."

Then taking from a case a withered rose, he kissed it, cast it far out upon the wave, watched it dance there, and said with a bitter smile:

"The last link that binds me to other days, and it is broken. 'The wage of sin is death,' and I am dead these long months past and fathoms deep in Hell, yet walk the earth because nor land nor sea will yield a resting-place among its honored dead to one so ignobly slain."

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APOSTLE VS. PAGAN.

COL. R. G. INGERSOLL:

My Dear Colonel:--I have not picked up my pen for the express purpose of annihilating you at one fell swoop. Even were such the case, I do not flatter myself that your impending doom would cause you to miss meals or lose sleep, for you have become somewhat used to being knocked off the Christmas tree by theological disputants from the back districts. At least once each lunar month for long years past your quivering diaphragm has been slammed up against the shrinking face of nature by mental microbes, or walked on by ambitious doodle-bugs, who wondered next day to learn that you were absorbing your rations with clock-work regularity and doing business at the same old stand. I once saw an egotistical brindle-pup joyfully bestride the collar of an adult wild-cat, and the woeful result convinced me that Ambition and Judgment should blithely foot it hand in hand. That is why, my dear Colonel, I approach you by siege and parallel, instead of capering gayly down your right-o'-way like a youthful William goat seeking a head-end collision with a runaway freight train.

Without any view of paving the way for a future loan, I tell you frankly that I admire you very much. Your public record and private life prove you to be one of God's noblest--and rarest--works, an honest man. That you are the equal morally and the superior mentally of any man who has presumed to criticize you must be conceded. The prejudices of honesty are entitled to consideration and the judgment of genius to respect bordering on reverence; but in this age of almost universal inquiry we cannot accept any man, however wise, as infallible pope in the realm of intellect and declare that from his ipse dixit there shall be no appeal. That were intellectual slavery, the most degrading species of bondage, and it is your greatest glory that you have ever been the apostle of liberty--liberty of the hand and liberty of the brain. More than all other men of your generation you have fostered independence of thought and the search for new truth; hence you cannot complain if the fierce light which you have taught the world to turn full and fair upon cults and creeds, should be employed to discern the false logic of the great critic himself.

In your warfare upon hypocrisy and humbuggery I am with you heart and soul. I will set my foot as far as who goes farthest in the exposure of frauds and fakes of every class and kind, though hedged about with the superstitions of a thousand centuries and licensed by prescriptive right to perpetrate a brutal wrong; but it does not follow because some church communicants are hypocrites that all religion is a humbug; that because the Bible winks at incest and robbery, murder and slavery, the book is but a tissue of foolish falsehoods; that because Almighty God has not seen proper to reveal Himself in all His supernal splendor to Messrs. Hume and Voltaire, Paine and Ingersoll the world has no good reason for belief in His existence--that

because the dead do not come back to us with a diagram of the New Jerusalem it were folly to believe the soul of man immortal.

My dear Colonel, your mighty intellect has not yet comprehended the philosophy of religion. Oratorically you soar like the condor when its shadow falls upon the highest peaks of the Andes, but logically you grope among the pestilential shadows of an intellectual Dismal Swamp, ever mistaking shadow for substance. You are frittering away your mighty intellectual strength with the idiosyncrasies of creeds and the clumsy detail of cults, instead of considering the psychological phenomena of religion in its entirety. You descend from the realm of philosophy to assume the role of scholastic--to dispute with little men anent points of doctrine, to wrangle with dogmatists regarding their conception of the Deity.

An ignoramus believes the Bible because of the miracles, and because of the miracles an Ingersoll disbelieves it--and both are equally blind. A cult is simply an expression, more or less crude, of the religious sentiment of a people, the poor garment with which finite man clothes Infinity. Would you quarrel with Science because it is not yet made perfect? Would you condemn music because of an occasional discord? Would you reject history altogether because amid a world of truth there are preserved some fables such as tempted the satire of Cervantes? Would you banish the sun from Heaven because of its spots or declare Love a monster because born of Passion?

The real question at issue is not whether the miracles be fact or fable; Mahomet, the duly ordained prophet of Allah, or an ignorant adventurer; Jonah, a delegate of the Deity or the father of Populism--whether Christ was born of an earthly father or drew his vigor direct from the loins of omnipotent God. Let us leave these details to the dogmatists, these non-essentials to the sectarians. Let us consider the religion of the world in its entirety, with the full understanding that all sects are essentially the same.

The core of all religion is the worship of a Supreme Power, and the belief in man's immortality. That is the central idea, around which the imagination of man has woven many a complicated web, some beautiful as Arachne's robe, some barbaric and repulsive, but all of little worth. The wise man, the true philosopher, will not mistake the machinery of a religion for the religious idea, the garment which ignorance weaves for Omniscience, for God himself.

Even if we grant that the Creator never yet communicated directly with the creature; that man has not seen with mortal eyes beyond the veil that shrouds the two eternities, it does not follow that religious faith is but arrant folly, that God is non-existent and man but the pitiful creature of blind force. The dumb brute knows many things it was never taught, and might not man, the greatest of the animal creation, be gifted with a knowledge not based upon experience? So

far as observation goes, there is provision for the satisfaction of every passion, and the most powerful of all passions is the dread of annihilation--the longing for continual life. If death ends all then here is a violation of "natural law"--a miracle! And you, my dear Colonel, do not believe in miracles. If we discard Revelation and take Reason for our supreme guide, we must infallibly conclude that the devotional instinct implanted in the heart of the entire human race has its correlative that the longing for immortal life which burns in the breast of man was not a brutal mistake, else concede Nature a poor blunderer and all this prattle anent her "immutable laws" mere nonsense.

Before ridiculing Revelation and mocking at Inspiration were it not well to determine their true definition? What is genius but inspiration? and a new truth bodied forth to the world but a revelation? Were it not possible for a genius--an inspired man--to trace the finger of God in the sunset's splendor as easily as upon tables of stone? to hear the voice of Omnipotence in the murmur of the majestic sea as well as in the thunders of Sinai? to read a divine message of undying love in a mother's lullaby as readily as in the death and resurrection of a Deity? If God can teach the very insects wisdom and gift even the oyster with instinct, can He communicate with man only by word of mouth or the engraver's burin? Examine the most beautiful woman imaginable with a powerful microscope and you will turn from her with a disgust similar to that of Gulliver when the Brobdingnagian maid placed him astride the nipple of her bosom. Her skin, so fair to the natural eye and velvety to the touch, becomes beneath the microscope suggestive of the hide of a hairless Mexican dog. Religion is a beautiful, an enchanting thing if you do but look at it with the natural eye; but when you employ the adventitious aid of the skeptic's microscope you find flaws enough. It were doubtful if even our boasted American Government, of which you are so proud, could stand such an examination and retain your confidence.

No, my dear Colonel; you will never banish worship from the world by warring upon non-essentials. You may demonstrate that every recorded miracle is a myth--that the founders of the various cults were but mortal men and the writers of every sacred book but scheming priests. You may make it gross to sense that the Creator has never held direct communication with the creature, and you have but stripped religion of its tattered vestments--have not laid the weight of your hand upon the impregnable citadel, the universal Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man. You have never yet talked to the real question. You reject religion because Moses and Mahomet, Luther and Calvin entertained crude ideas of the plans and attributes of the Creator. You pose as an agnostic--a religious Know-nothing--because the Almighty has not taken you completely into his confidence. Because the blind have sometimes led the blind and both have fallen into the foul ditch of fanaticism and cruelty, you infer that not one gleam of supernal glory has pierced the dark vale of human life. While posing as the apostle of light, you will obscure the

scintillations of the stars because the sun is hid; while apotheosizing Happiness you would banish Hope, that mother of which it is born.

But your labors have borne good as well as evil fruit. While your siren eloquence has led some doubting Thomases into the barren desert of Atheism, you have driven others to seek a better reason for their religious faith than barbarous tradition and the vote of ecumenical councils. Bigotry has quailed beneath the ringing blows of your iconoclastic hammer, dogmatism become more humble and the priesthood well-nigh forgotten to prate of a hell of fire in which the souls of unbaptized babes forever burn. Without intending it, perhaps, you have done more to promote the cause of true religion, more to intellectualize and humanize man's conception of Almighty God, than any other reformer since the days of Christ.

THE COW.

For the enlightenment of city milkmen who never saw a cow, it may be well to state that this more or less useful animal does not resemble a pump in the slightest particular. A cow has four feet, but the subsequent one on the right side is her main reliance. With this foot she can strike a blow that no man or woman born can elude. It resembles a load of drunken chain-shot, and searches every cubic yard of atmosphere in a two-acre lot for a victim before it stops. She is also provided with a caudal appendage that ends in a patent fly-brush. This she uses to wrap around the neck of the milkmaid to prevent her getting away before she has a chance to kick her health corset off and upset the milk.

A cow will eat anything she can steal, from an ear of corn to a hickory shirt. She will leave a square meal especially ordered for her, and gotten up by an imported chef, to fill her measly hide full of straw from a boarding-house bedtick, if she can only steal it. She will work at a crack in a neighbor's barn for six mortal hours, and wear her tongue as thin as a political platform to get an old corn-cob, when she knows she can have a bushel of corn, all shelled, by going home for it. She is a born thief, a natural marauder. Any cow that has been given opportunities for gleaning knowledge can open a gate that fastens with a combination lock, get into a garden, do fifty dollars' worth of damage and be six blocks away before the infuriated owner can ram a charge of slugs into a muzzle-loading gun.

The man who has not lived in a small town, where one-half the inhabitants keep cows and expect them to forage their living off the other half, will never fully realize what he has missed unless he starts a daily paper or falls down stairs with the cook stove. When Mrs. B. and I first went into partnership we decided to raise our own garden truck. It is the usual mistake of youngsters. During the long winter evenings they sit by the fire and plan their garden. A 640-acre farm, covered a foot deep with patent fertilizers,

mortgages and other modern improvements, would not produce the amount of stuff two moonstruck young amateur gardeners confidently expect to yank from a patch of dirt but little bigger than a postage stamp. Thirty dollars for tools and seeds, ninety-seven dollars' worth of labor, and four times that amount of worry and vexation of spirit, results in some forty dollars' worth of "garden sass," which is promptly referred to the interior department of the neighbors' cows.

I soon learned that an ordinary gate catch was no bar to the educated cattle in my neighborhood, so I added a bolt. That puzzled them for a night or two, but they soon learned the combination and filled themselves so full of cabbage that cost me two dollars a head to raise, that they couldn't get out by way of the gate, and I had to knock down a panel of fence to get rid of them. That evening I brought home a double-barreled shot gun, a log-chain and a padlock that would have baffled a cracksman. I chained up the gate, gave the key to Mrs. B. to lose, loaded the gun halfway to the muzzle with tenpenny nails and resolved to hold the fort by main strength. It was a bright moonlight night, and I sat up with a corncob pipe and a robust determination to have fresh beef for breakfast if that padlock failed to do its duty.

About 9 o'clock an old brindle cow came browsing up to the front gate. She took a long survey of the house to see if we had all gone to bed. Having satisfied herself on that point, she inserted her horns between the bars of the front gate and gave it a gentle shake. She looked at the house again to see if the noise had aroused us. Finding all quiet, she went to work on the bolt, first with her horns and then with her tongue. In ten minutes she had it drawn, and started to come in. She was evidently surprised to find herself still on the outside. Two or three of her companions came up and they held a consultation.

Old Brindle worked at the chain awhile, but it was no use. They were puzzled. They took a long look at the gate, shook it viciously with their horns, then turned impatiently away, like a man who has run four blocks to a bank, only to find "closed" staring him in the face. Several more cows came up, and when they were shown the new jewelry they acted hurt and proceeded to hold an indignation meeting and pass a vote of censure, after which one old she-pirate broke a horn trying to lift the gate off its hinges. After this mishap they acted so discouraged that I concluded they had given it up; but they hadn't. Old Brindle returned to the attack. She spent half an hour "monkeying" with the gate, and then stopped short and began to study. She had more gall than a ward heeler, more tenacity than an office-seeker, more brains than a boodle alderman. In just ten minutes by the town clock she had the problem solved. With her horn she lifted the chain over the top of the gate-post and walked in, as proud as a boy with a sore toe. I felt like a homicide as I raised the double-barreled gun and pulled both triggers. I felt worse after I had crawled out of

the cistern, where the perfidious gun had kicked me, and learned that I had missed the whole drove and sent a hatful of slugs and nails into a neighbor's china closet. I broke the gun over Old Brindle's vertebrae and followed up the attack with the garden-fork. After I had chased the entire drove back and forth over the garden a dozen times, and seen what was left of my summer's work inextricably mixed with the sub-soil, fallen over the wheelbarrow and ruined a \$14 pair of trousers, a constable came and arrested me for discharging firearms inside the corporate limits. A young theological gosling, who has since died of excessive goodness, preferred a charge of cruelty to animals against me, and my neighbor sued for the price of his china and got judgment. Old Brindle died and the court decided that it was my duty to buy her. I found her meat too tough for eating and her hide too full of garden-fork holes to be available for sole-leather.

If the retail butchers are to be believed, the cow is a calf until there is no more room on her horn for rings. She seldom lives to be too old to be carved up with a buzz-saw and a cold-chisel and sold as veal.

After she has passed her time of usefulness in the dairy; when she has forgotten how to give four quarts of milk per diem and then kick it over the dewy-lipped maid who has carefully culled it from the maternal fount, the thrifty farmer drives her upon the railway track, wrecks a train with her, then sues the company for \$150 damages. Of course the company kicks worse than ever the cow did, but the farmer secures an intelligent jury of brother agriculturalists and the soulless corporation has to come to law.

Her consort is less brilliant and more impulsive. He has a surly, unsocial disposition and uncertain temper, but can be very polite when he chooses. He has been known to neglect his regular business to assist an embarrassed young man over a rail fence, or entertain a party of picnickers from the city. He has a natural antipathy for red flags, and will cross a forty-acre field to make a mop rag of one and rub its bearer's nose in the mud--an example that might be advantageously followed by the Chicago authorities.

The calf is one of the most interesting studies in the science of natural history. In its earliest youth it wears long wobbly legs and an expression of angelic innocence; but before it is a week old it knows more than some men who have been honored with high offices and expensive funerals. The calf will eat anything it can swallow, and what it can't get through its neck it will chew and suck the juice. Tablecloths, hickory shirts, store pants, lace curtains, socks, in fact the entire range of articles familiar to the laundry are tid-bits to the calf. A calf that has any ambition to distinguish himself will leave the maternal udder any time to chew one leg off a new pair of "boughten" pantaloons or absorb the flowing narrative of a "biled" shirt. The calf learns bad habits as readily as an Indian, and the man who did not have a youthful masculine bovine for partner in his

boyish deviltry looks back upon a barren and uneventful youth.

I remember one promising calf that I taught to "bunt" like a William goat. One day my eldest brother and my parent on my father's side were cleaning out an open well, while the calf and myself lingered near, waiting for a glorious opportunity to merit killing. The old gentleman superintended the work and pulled up in an iron kettle the mud which the son of his youth industriously scraped from the bottom of an eighteen-foot well with much labor and an old tin pan. While he was leaning over the mouth of the well, pulling up a kettle of slush, his suspender buttons groaning and his tailor-made pantaloons strained to the utmost tension, I called the calf's attention to him. The bovine grasped the situation, lowered his head, kicked up his heels, emitted a triumphant bellow, shot forward like a baseball reaching for the stomach of an amateur shortstop, and struck the rear elevation of the head of our distinguished house with the solid impact of an hydraulic ram toying with a stone fence. A moment later there was a sound from the bowels of the earth, but it was not a sound of revelry. It resembled an able-bodied cyclone ripping up four miles of plank road and driving it through the pulsating heart of a colored camp-meeting. The calf had forgotten to remember the well, and while my respected sire was chasing the kettle to the bottom, the calf was chasing him. Half a dozen robust neighbors armed with a windlass and a two-inch rope dragged the youthful ox and his unfortunate companions from the pit, and the volunteer fire brigade was sent for to turn the hose on them. I haven't forgotten the sequel to this little story; but it would not possess that lively interest for the great public that it did for me, so I will let it pass.

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CHRISTIAN ENGLAND IN INDIA.

HER TEARS ANENT TURKISH ATROCITIES

"Christian England" is agonizing over the pitiful condition of the Armenians under Moslem rule, but has nothing to say anent her own awful record in India. It were well for John Bull to get the beam out of his own eye before making frantic swipes at the mote in the optic of the Moslem. The oppression of the children of Israel by the Egyptian Pharaohs, the Babylonian king and Roman emperors were as nothing compared to that suffered by the patient Bengalese at the hands of Great Britain. The history of every barbarous prince of the Orient, in those dark days when might made right and plunder was the recognized prerogative of royalty; the annals of every potentate who has reigned by the grace of Allah and kneeled to kiss the robe of the prophet, may be searched in vain for a parallel in unbounded rapacity and calculating atrocity. England's despoilment of India constitutes the supreme crime of all the ages, the acknowledged acme of infamy- Europe never dreaded Alaric the Visigoth, nor hated Attila the Scourge of God, as India dreads and detests John Bull,

"the white beast from over the black water." He has not persecuted because of difference of religious dogma, as have the Mohammedan Sultans and the Christian Czars. That kind of enterprise doesn't pay, and John Bull never wastes on theological sentiment one ounce of energy that can be coined into cash.

A British trading company had leased land at Madras and Calcutta, for which it paid rent to the native powers. For the protection of its warehouses it was permitted to build forts and keep a few armed police, but was in no sense independent. Its position in India was analogous to that of British capitalists in America who are operating a mine or factory and have been authorized to police their property. The mighty house of Tamerlane had become a political nonentity, the empire of the Great Mogul was divided among nominal viceroys who were really independent sovereigns, gorgeous but indolent. The teeming millions of India were, for the most part, as unfitted by nature and occupation for the fatigues of war, as were the countless host which Xerxes led into Greece, or Darius hurled upon the steel-crested phalanxes of that bloody prototype of John Bull, Alexander the Macedonian marauder. The governments of India were showy rather than strong, and a condition of semi-anarchy had been engendered by the frequent incursions of fierce tribes of robbers, the jealousies and ambitions of rival nabobs and the mischievous schemes of a French adventurer named Dupleix. The company continued to augment its forces until strong enough not only to protect its own property, but to overawe the native governments. Then, on one dishonest pretext or another, it began the work of transforming India into a British province. Robert Clive succeeded in accomplishing in Asia what Dr. Jamieson attempted with far better excuse in South Africa. Rival powers applied to the company for assistance, and it mattered not with which it allied itself, both were in the end destroyed or enslaved, compelled to pour their wealth into the coffers of the British corporations. No crime was too horrible, no breach of faith too brazen if it promised to further the ambition and increase the gains of the company. Its policy was to unite with a weak government to plunder a strong one, then, by subjugating its ally, to make itself master of both. By treasons and stratagems, by forged treaties and bribes, by infamies planned in cold blood and executed with more than Kurdish barbarity, the garden spot of the earth, with its teeming millions and inestimable wealth, was made to pay tribute to British greed. Macaulay, the eulogist of both Lord Clive and Warren Hastings, thus describes India when Great Britain, without a shadow of excuse, laid her marauding paw upon it in the same manner and for the self-same purpose that Cortez invaded the halls of the Montezumas:

"The people of India when we subdued them, were ten times as numerous as the vanquished Americans (the Indian subjects of Montezuma), and were at the same time quite as highly civilized as the victorious Spaniards. They

had reared cities larger and fairer than Saragossa or Toledo, and buildings more beautiful and costly than the cathedrals of Seville. They could show bankers richer than the richest firms of Barcelona or Cadiz, Viceroy's whose splendors far surpassed that of Ferdinand the Catholic, myriads of cavalry and long trains of artillery which would have astonished the Great Captain. It might have been expected that every Englishman who takes any interest in any part of history would be curious to know how a handful of their countrymen, separated from their home by an immense ocean, subjugated, in the course of a few years, one of the greatest empires of the world. Yet, unless we greatly err, this subject is, to most readers, not only insipid, but positively distasteful." Good God! Is it any wonder that British readers should find the conquest of India "positively distasteful?" Is it not quite natural that Englishmen had rather read of Turkish atrocities in Armenia than of British atrocities in India? Lord Macaulay rehearses all the treacheries and cruelties and double-dealings by which "a handful of his countrymen subjugated one of the greatest empires of the world," then complains that British readers find such a catalogue of horrors positively distasteful! Did he expect even Englishmen to become enthusiastic over the hiring of British troops to the infamous Surajah Dowlah for the massacre of the brave Rohillas? Did he expect them to peruse with pleasurable pride the robbery of the Princesses of Oude, the brutal execution of Nuncomar, or the forged treaty by which Ormichund was entrapped? Having painted the atrocities and craven cowardice of Chief Justice Impey, could he reasonably expect them to be proud of this representative Englishman in India? Having told us that Lord Clive was a freebooter in his boyhood and a butcher in his prime, did he anticipate that even Englishmen would be proud of this countryman of theirs who founded the British Empire in India? Lord Macaulay gives us the following description of conditions in Bengal under British Domination, then wonders that his countrymen find its perusal "positively distasteful."

"They (the servants of the East India company) covered with their protection a set of native dependents, who ranged through the provinces, spreading desolation and terror wherever they appeared. Every servant of a British factor was armed with all the power of his master. And his master was armed with all the power of the company. Enormous fortunes were thus accumulated at Calcutta, while thirty millions of human beings were reduced to the last extremity of wretchedness. They had been accustomed to live under tyranny, but never tyranny like this. They found the little finger of the company thicker than the loins of the Surajah Dowlah. It resembled the government of evil genii rather than the government of human tyrants."

The people of India, it must be remembered, had experienced the tyranny of the Brahman and Buddhist, of Moslem and even the terrible Mahratta; they had groaned beneath the exactions of the Great Moguls, plundering

viceroys and robber chiefs; they had paid tribute to Aurungzebe and to Hyder Ali, but here we are told they never experienced such tyranny and pitiless despoliation as under the rule of Christian England, and this upon the testimony of an Englishman! Now that British preachers and pamphleteers are agonizing over Mohammedan atrocities in Armenia, let us see what the latter thought of Christian domination in India. "If," says the Mussulman historian of those unhappy times, "if to so many military qualifications, they (English) knew how to join the art of government--if they exerted as much ingenuity and solicitude in relieving the people of God, as they do in whatever concerns their military affairs, no nation in the world would be preferable to them, or worthier of command; but the people under their dominion groan everywhere, and are reduced to poverty and distress. Oh God! come to the assistance of thine afflicted servants, and deliver them from the oppressions they suffer."

Lord Clive, having acquired an immense fortune, concluded to round out his political career by inaugurating a reform that would in some manner atone for his past excesses, and did succeed in giving India more than a Roman peace and abating some of the worst abuses; but the reform was ephemeral. In his essay on Warren Hastings, Lord Macaulay--who wonders that the conquest of India is "distasteful" reading to Englishmen--gives us the following pen-picture of conditions under the administration of his ideal:

"The delay and the expense, grievous as they are, form the smallest part of the evil which English law, imported without modifications into India, could not fail to produce. The strongest feelings of our nation, honor, religion, female modesty, rose up against the innovation. Arrest on mesne process was the first step in most civil proceedings; and to a native of rank arrest was not merely a restraint, but a foul personal indignity. That the apartments of a woman of quality should be entered by strange men, or that her face should be seen by them, are in the East intolerable outrages--outrages which are more dreaded than death, and which can be expiated only by the shedding of blood. To these outrages the most distinguished families of Bengal, Bahar and Orissa were now exposed. A reign of terror began--a reign of terror heightened by mystery. No man knew what was next to be expected from this strange tribunal. It had collected round itself an army of the worst part of the native population--informers, and false witnesses, and common barrators, and agents of chicane; and above all, a banditti of bailiffs' followers compared with whom the retainers of the worst English spunging-houses, in the worst times, might be considered as upright and tender-hearted. There were instances in which men of the most venerable dignity, persecuted without cause by extortioners, died of rage and shame in the grip of the vile alguazils of Impey. The harems of noble Mohammedans--sanctuaries respected in the East by governments that respected nothing else--were burst open by gangs of

bailiffs. The Mussulmans, braver and less accustomed to submission than the Hindoos, sometimes stood on their defense and shed their blood in the doorway, while defending, sword in hand, the sacred apartments of their women. No Mahratta invasion had ever spread through the province such dismay as this inroad of English lawyers. All the injustice of former oppressions, Asiatic and European, appeared as a blessing when compared with the justice of the Supreme Court."

No wonder that "Christian England" is horrified by the atrocities of the Moslems in Armenia! She cannot understand persecution for the sake of religious opinion--having done her dirty work for the sake of the almighty dollar. It is true, that a Hastings, with his forged treaties and despoilment of ancient "bee-gums," is no longer governor-general of India; it is true that an Impey no longer deals out "Justice" in that unhappy land; but the industrial condition of the toiling millions is worse to-day than when they were being despoiled to erect the Peacock throne at Delhi, adorned with its "Mountain of Light." Sir David Wedderburn--who will be accepted as authority even by our Anglomaniacs--says: "Our civil courts are regarded as institutions for enabling the rich to grind the faces of the poor, and many are fain to seek a refuge from their jurisdiction in native territory." "We do not care for the people of India," writes Florence Nightingale; "the saddest sight to be seen in India--nay, probably in the world--is the peasant of our Eastern Empire." Miss Nightingale declares that the Indian famines, which every few years cost millions of lives, are due to British taxation, which deprives the ryots of the means of cultivation and reduces them to a condition far worse than the worst phases of American slavery. Mr. H. M. Hyndman, an English writer of repute, declares that in India men and women cannot get food, because they cannot save money to buy it, so terrible are the burdens laid by Christian England on that unhappy people. Just as Ireland exported food to England during her most devastating "famines," so does India send food to the "Mother Country" in the discharge of governmental burdens, while her own people are starving by millions. Henry George, who has never been suspected of anti-English tendencies, says: "The millions of India have bowed their necks beneath the yokes of many conquerors, but worst of all is the steady grinding weight of English domination--a weight which is literally crushing millions out of existence, and, as shown by English writers, is inevitably tending to a most frightful and widespread catastrophe."

"Christian England" wouldn't murder a Moslem because of his religion--she's too good for that; but she starves millions to death to fill her purse, then tries to square herself with God and man by singing psalms and pointing the finger of scorn at the barbarities of Islam.

MAN'S IMMORTALITY.

Is there a life beyond the grave?

Ten thousand thousand times this question hath been answered, yet answer there is none that satisfies the soul.

Never yet did man look into the cold face of one he loved and not feel, creeping like a thousand-fanged adder into his desolate heart, the awful fear that death's the end of all.

Never yet did mother stand by her first born's bier and say, "Thank God for Death that bringeth to my beloved eternal Life." Though Bibles were piled as high as Helicon and every son of Adam a white-stoled priest, proclaiming the grave the gate to glorious life, still would Doubt, twin brother of Despair, linger ever at that dread portal, and Love long to tear aside Futurity's awful veil--to see and know, as only those can know who see, that Death is but Life's messenger.

Oh Love! thou art at once the sweetest blossom that ever perfumed the bowers of Paradise, and the most poignant thorn that grows in the empoisoned shadows of everlasting Pain! But for thee, mad sorceress, every individual life were a microcosm, complete within itself. We would live but our own life, suffer our own pangs, and dying, descend without a sigh to ever dreamless sleep; but thy soft fingers do sweep the human harpsichord, the ego doth "pass in music out of sight"; the single note of life is blended with others in holy diapason, sweeter than fabled song of Israfil.

But alas! the penalty of this terrestrial Paradise, this blending of human hearts in heavenly harmony! The added pleasures bring redoubled pains; of symphonies so sweet is born the discord of Despair. Loving others more than our proper selves, their wounds are deeper far than our own hurts, and death to them is death and hell to us.

Of love was born the hope of immortality. We part to-night from those so near and dear that they seem our better selves, looking with longing eyes to the glad to-morrow when we shall meet again; but when comes the sleep of Death, and Reason, that pitiless monarch of the Mind, proclaims that all the to-morrows in Time's fecund womb will come and go and bring them never back to our fond embrace, the heart revolts and wars on Destiny.

Hope, dear daughter of the Gods, angel of Light, what seraphic visions thou dost weave for us in thy celestial loom! How beautiful and bright the star that blazes upon thy ethereal brow; yet alas! how oft obscured by the deadly vapors of Doubt and dark Despair.

Is thy enchanted world a world indeed, where Love is lord and Death is driven forth? or dost thou seek to soothe us with lying pictures of Paradise, such as the shipwrecked mariner in tropic seas beholds beneath the sultry brine? Is thy beacon in very truth a star; shining eternal in our

cimmerian sky, a guide infallible to life's worn voyager; or a wandering fire such as the foolish follow,--a lying flame that leads the trusting traveler to his loss?

Since man first placed his foot upon this earth he hath been listening with greedy ear to thy sweet song; since Death first did show his horrid front thou hast been whispering to the stricken heart that Love could never die,--that there is not, cannot be in nature a pang so cruel as Love's farewell forever. Thou hast been the world's comforter in all ages past; will faithful prove through the long ages yet to be.

Is there a life beyond the grave?

Aye, it must be so; but what that life will be it boots not to inquire. Even a land of sand and thorns, with grinding toil, yet everlasting life with those we love, were heaven and heaven enough.

Perhaps--who knows?--the sweet blending of our lives with other and dearer ones upon this earth is but an earnest of what will be in the great hereafter; that when every spark of that bright effulgence increate is released from its thrall of clay, all Life, and Light and Love will forever blend in One; that husband, wife and child, and each and all the human heart holds dear will be resolved into one perfect Life, and thus at once in God and self, emparadised in each other's souls in Heaven as in the loving arms of each on earth, let Eternity roll on!

* * *

EVOLUTION OR REVOLUTION.

THE PLUTOCRAT AND THE PAUPER

"For Christ's sake, Cap, give me the price of a sandwich!"

I stopped and surveyed the speaker, not because the request was unusual, but because the applicant for aid had not acquired the beggar's whine. He was a large, powerful man, evidently a mechanic, for every trade leaves its peculiar stamp upon its followers.

"Why should I give you a dime? You are far more able to work than I. A man with half your strength should be ashamed to beg."

"Work?" he retorted bitterly. "Give me a job--at anything--and see if I do not prove myself a man."

"But I have nothing for you to do."

"A dozen men have told me that to-day . You sneer at me because I do not earn the bread I eat, yet decline to give me an opportunity to do so."

I steered him against a lunch counter and watched him chisel desolation into a silver dollar, then listened to his

story--one that I had heard a hundred times within the year. Thrown out of employment by the business depression, he had tramped in search of work until he found himself penniless, starving in the streets of a strange city. He handed me a letter, dated St. Louis, written by his wife. Some of the words were misspelled and the bad chirography was blotted as if by falling tears, but it breathed the spirit of a Roman matron, of a Spartan mother. Both the children were ill. She had obtained a little sewing and provided food and some medicine, but two months' rent was due and the landlord would turn them out unless it was promptly paid. She would do the best she could, and knew that her husband would do the same. Then through the blinding tears came a flash of nether fire. Transformed into respectable English it read:

"Were I a man I would not tramp from city to city begging employment only to be refused. Were I a man I would not see my babies starve while people are piling up millions of money which they can never need. In this country there should be an opportunity for every man to make a living. Were I a man I would make an effort to release myself and my unhappy fellows from this brutal industrial bondage, this chronic pauperism--if it cost my life. I have two sons, whom God knows I do dearly love; but I would consecrate them to the holy cause of human liberty if I knew they would perish on the scaffold. I would rather see them die like dogs than live like slaves."

He sat a long time silent after returning the letter to his pocket, then said as though speaking to himself:

"I wonder if the rich people ever pause to reflect that there's a million brawny men in my condition to-night--a million men who only lack a leader? I wonder if they think we'll stand this kind o' thing forever? Don't talk to me about patriotism," he interrupted, fiercely. "No man can be a patriot on an empty stomach! Why should I care for the preservation of a government of, for and by the plutocrat? Let it go to the devil across lots! D--n a flag beneath which a competent and industrious mechanic cannot make a living. Anarchy? Is anarchy worse than starvation? When conditions become such that a workingman is half the time an ill-fed serf, and the other half a wretched vagabond, he's ready for a change of any kind--by any means. I am supposed to be entitled to 'Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.' I have Liberty--to starve--and I can pursue Happiness--or rainbows--to my heart's content. There's absolutely no law prohibiting my using the horns of the moon for a hatrack if I feel so disposed!"

. . .

The optimists who are depending upon the "conservatism" of the American people to maintain intact our political and industrial systems; who proclaim that the present too apparent spirit of unrest is but the ephemeral effect of a few

professional agitators, are of the same myopic brood as those French aristocrats who declared that all was well until the crust over the tartarean fires--steadily eaten away from beneath, steadily hammered upon from above--gave way with a crash like the crack of doom and that fair land was transformed as if by infernal magic into a high-flaming vortex of chaos, engulfing all forms and formulas, threatening the civilization of a world.

"After us the deluge!" cried those court parasites, who, with more understanding than their fellows, read aright the mene, mene, tekel upharsin traced upon the walls of royalty. But the deluge waited not upon their convenience. Like another avatar of Death gendered by Pride in the womb of Sin, it burst forth to appall the world. But the American multi-millionaires mock at the "deluge"--can in nowise understand how it were possible for the thin crust that holds in thrall the fierce Gehenna fires to give 'way beneath THEIR feet, dance they upon it never so hard.

The American nation is trembling on the verge of an industrial revolution--a revolution that is inevitable; that will come peaceably if it can, forcibly if it must. So ripe are the American workingmen for revolt against the existing order of things; so galled are they by the heavy yoke laid upon them; so desperate have they become that it but needs a strong man to organize and lead them, and our present industrial system--perhaps our political, also--would crumble like an eggshell in the grip of an angry Titan.

Nor is the dissatisfaction confined to the industrial class, the farmer, that Atlas upon whose broad shoulders the great world rests, is in full sympathy with every attack made upon the Cormorant by the Commune. While not ready for a revolution by force, he would not take up arms in defense of the prescriptive rights of the plutocrat from the assaults of the proletariat. Yet the American press proclaims that all is well! The "able editor" looks into his leather spectacles--free trade or high tariff brand--and with owl-like gravity announces that if the import tax on putty be increased somewhat, or fiddle-strings be placed on the free list, the American mechanic will have money to throw at the birds--that mortgages and mendicancy will pass like a hideous nightmare, and the farmer gayly bestride his sulky plow attired like unto Solomon in all his glory.

. . .

What is wrong? In God's name, what is right? Here we have the most fertile land upon the globe, the best supplied with all things necessary to a prosperous people. Our resources are not half developed; there is no dearth of capital; our working people are the most intelligent, energetic and capable upon which the sun ever shone.

Man for man the world never contained their equal. Their productive capability is the marvel even of this age of

industrial miracles. And yet, with every nerve strained to its utmost tension; toiling, saving--at very death-grips with destiny--they are sinking year by year deeper into the Slough of Despond--into that most frightful of all Gehennas, the hell of want!

Nor is this all. While those who toil are but fighting a losing battle wearing out hand and heart and brain for a crust that becomes ever scantier, ever more bitter--there are thousands and tens of thousands who cannot even obtain the poor privilege of tramping in this brutal treadmill, but must stand with folded arms and starve, else beg or steal. All this might be borne--would be endured with heroic fortitude--if such were the lot of all; but while the opportunity to wear out one's strength for a bare existence is becoming ever more a privilege to be grateful for, we are making millionaires by the hundreds. While the many battle desperately for life, the few are piling up fortunes beside which the famed wealth of ancient Lydia's kings were but a beggar's patrimony. The employer is becoming ever more an autocrat, the employee ever more dependent upon his good pleasure for the poor privilege of existing upon the earth.

. . .

To say that the "conservatism" of the American workingman will cause him to patiently endure all this is to brand him a spiritless slave, deserving not only slavery, but the shackles and the knout. He will not endure it much longer, and when his patience reaches its utmost limit--when he tires of filling his belly with the East wind supplied him in such plentitude by aspiring politicians and "able editors," look ye to see something break.

. . .

The problems for our statesmen to solve are, First, how to insure to every person able and willing to work an opportunity to earn an honest livelihood; Second, to effect a more suitable distribution of the wealth created among the factors engaged in its production. All other problems now engaging the attention of publicists sink into insignificance beside these. They are to practical statecraft what the immortality of the soul is to theology. They must be solved; at least, some progress must be made in that direction or force will ere long attempt it. The trouble with such convulsions is that they invariably produce temporary evil, but do not always compensate it with permanent good. They are a kind of social mania a potu, racking the whole organism, debilitating it--good chiefly as frightful examples of what evil customs lead to.

To diagnose the disease and prescribe a remedy were no easy task. There is infinitely more the matter than a maladjustment of the tariff, inflated railway stocks or a dearth of white dollars. It is a most difficult, a wonderfully intricate problem--one entirely without precedent. The rapid

development of America; the still more remarkable advancement in the science of mechanics, conjoined to a political organism not yet fully developed, but half understood, yet marking an epoch in man's social progress; commercial customs of by-gone days surviving in the midst of much that is new--really when you come to think of it you may well wonder that we have got thus far without more than one great convulsion! Clearly it is no place for catholicons.

That a comparatively small class of men are absorbing the wealth of the country as fast as it is produced, leasing to those who create it scarce a bare subsistence, is patent to all; that the vast body of the people, clothed with political power and imbued with the spirit of "equality," will not permit such conditions to long continue, any thoughtful man will concede. Even in European countries, where the working people have come to regard privileged classes as a matter of course, there are mutterings of a coming storm that will only gather fresh terrors by delay. In Europe the change will probably be wrought by revolution; in America it may be achieved by peaceful evolution if the moneyed aristocracy does not, with its checks and repressions--with its corrupted judiciary, purchased legislators and obsequious press--drive a people, already sorely vexed, to unreasoning madness.

. . .

What shall we do? We must avoid the two extremes--that of the radical reformer and the apostle of laissez faire. We will find a middle course safest and best--will need to proceed with caution, but by no means with cowardice. The politico-economic school that would at once change the existing order of things with as much sang-froid as a miller substitutes steam for water-power forgets that society is not a machine; that it was not made to order like a newspaper editorial, and that to attempt by a radical process to make it other than what it is--to change its genius arbitrarily--were as fatuous as trying to transform a wolf into a watchdog by a chemical process or surgical operation. But while the radical "reformer"--the man who would ignore the lessons of history and launch boldly out upon the tempestuous sea of experimentalism--is one dangerous extreme, we must remember that it is not the only one. In avoiding Scylla we must not forget Charybdis. If we are to look ever to the past, to make no experiments, to become the bondslaves of precedent, then progress is at an end and society must petrify, retrograde or consume itself in fierce fire whirlwinds.

When the American people emancipate themselves from party-slavery--than which there is none more debasing; when they cease to fight the battles of ambitious place-hunters and begin in true earnest to fight their own, then, and not till then, will the faults of our social organism be rapidly reduced to the minimum. When the common people of this country decline to be divided into two or more hostile

camps by "issues" carefully concocted by political harlequins, then will the combined wisdom, purified of partisan prejudice, evolve the best possible national polity.

How many of the hard-working people of this nation who are now assiduously assailing or defending the dogma of protection or free trade or any other of the many "issues" evolved from time to time by professional politicians as a kind of Pegasus upon which they fondly hope to ride into power--ever carefully considered the question in all its bearings; studied it from a national, sectional or even individual standpoint. Questions upon which Adam Smith and Auguste Comte, Jefferson and Hamilton disagreed, are settled by the dicta of a partisan convention--composed chiefly of political hacks and irresponsible hoodlums--with less trouble than a colored wench selects a calico gown.

The American people, as P. T. Barnum long ago pointed out, have a weakness for humbugs. They are the natural prey of the charlatan, and in nothing more so than in matters political. Despite their boasted intelligence, they will follow with a trust that partakes of the pathetic the mountebank who can perform the most sleight-of-hand tricks, the demagogue who can make the most noise. They think, but are too busy or indifferent to think deeply, to reason closely. They "jump at conclusions," assert their correctness stubbornly and prove the courage of their convictions by their ballots. They demonstrate their "independence" by choosing their political fetich, their confidence in the infallibility of their judgment by worshiping it blindly. Herein lies the chief danger--danger that the American workingman will follow this or that ignus fatuus, hoping thereby to find a shorter northwest passage to impossible spice islands, until poverty has degraded him from a self-respecting sovereign into a volcanic sans culotte; until he loses hope of bettering his condition by whereases, resolutions, trades-unions, acts of Congress, etc., and, like another blind and desperate Samson, lays his brawny hands upon the pillars of the temple and pulls it down about his ears.

* * *

THE WOMAN THOU GAVEST ME.

Now that the clarion voice of the reformer is heard in the land, demanding for woman all the rights and privileges enjoyed by the sterner sex, perhaps it would be well to ask the fair client to come into court and establish that "natural equality" so vigorously claimed for her, as well as the fact, if fact it be, that she is being "wronged" and "cruelly oppressed" by the tyrant man.

Is it possible that the dear creature has, for some thousands of years, been robbed of her birthright and relegated to an inferior position in matters mundane simply because her biceps are not so large as those of her big brother, and she has no warlike whiskers?

As her attorneys in the suit to try title to this world's wardship clamor for truth without trimmings, and rest their case upon "principles of justice" untainted by prescription or praemunire, suppose we grant their prayer and proceed to the consideration of their cause unhandicapped by chivalric sentiment.

That the greater intelligence should control the lesser must be conceded. To deny it would be to deny man's right to the life and labor of inferior animals, to question God's authority to govern man or beast. If the experience of several thousand years may be admitted in evidence the subserviency of the minor to the major intelligence is an immutable law of nature. Only equal minds can be accorded equal authority without doing violence to this law.

Is woman man's intellectual peer, entitled to share equally with him the wardship of this world? The simple fact that for thousands of years man has been able to hold her in that "state of subjection" of which her attorneys so bitterly complain, is sufficient answer to this question,--is proof positive that he is as much her superior mentally as physically. This sounds unchivalrous, but she will please remember that her attorneys insist that this cause be tried solely upon its merits. Brute force does not rule the world. If it did the lion or the elephant would be creation's lord, and the Ethiop and the red Indian drive the Caucasian into the waste places of the earth or reduce him to slavery. Knowledge is power; brain not brawn is master throughout the world. Had all Eve's fair daughters been blessed with more than masculine strength their position would have been practically the same. They would have sung lullabies to the little ones, adorned themselves, and dreamed of love and love's conquests while their brothers founded empires, subdued the forces of nature and measured the stars.

And both sexes would have been well content, as they have ever been, despite the protests of self-constituted "reformers" of the order established by the Infinite. Man is creation's lord de facto and de jure. The immutable laws of nature make his sovereignty both a privilege and a duty. The voice of prophecy proclaims him king; he wears his crown by Divine ordination and right of conquest. Woman was created to be "an help-meet unto man," not his co-ruler. It matters not whether Genesis be fact or fiction; that such was her destiny she has proven by fulfilling it.

Whatever "rights and privileges" she enjoys must be man's free gift. Man asserts his position; woman can but ask to share the fruits of his victories. These he can divide with her; but he could not if he would, share with her his sovereignty, his power, because he cannot endow her with his judgment, his mental vigor, his courage and enterprise. Whether he wills it or not, man must perforce remain the master of the world, God's sole viceregent on this earth.

In very few civilized countries does man manifest much opposition to the enfranchisement of woman. Many favor it heartily, and those who object do so chiefly on the ground that woman does not want it. Let a majority of the women in any state of the American Union ask enfranchisement and it will be accorded them. Let them unite in demanding any particular legislation and it will be enacted. Let them ask any possible thing whatsoever of their husbands and brothers and it will not be denied them.

Woman does not demand the ballot, because her interest centers in her home rather than her country; because she shrinks from responsibility; because she knows that she may safely trust her destiny to those who would die for her.

Paradoxical as it may appear, woman is at once the subject and the sovereign of man, his inferior and superior, mentally and physically. His inferior in strength she is his superior in beauty. Woman is the paragon of physical perfection. It is small wonder that the simple people of bygone days believed that gods and angels became enamored of the daughters of men and left heaven to bask in their sunny smiles. The mental differences of the sexes correlate with the physical. Woman's mind is not so comprehensive, her intellect not so strong as that of man, but it is of finer texture. What it lacks in vigor it gains in subtlety. If the mind of man is a Corliss engine, throbbing with resistless strength and energy, that of woman is a Geneva watch, by which the mightier machine is regulated. Occasionally a woman enters the field of masculine endeavor and keeps pace with the strongest; but such cases are rare exceptions. The women who have really taken high rank in art or literature may be counted on the fingers of one hand, and those who have achieved anything remarkable in the field of invention, science or government, upon the fingers of the other.

"It is not good that man should be alone;" and it would not be did he, like Cadmus' soldiers, spring full grown from the earth. Man is the brain, woman the heart of the human race. She is the color and fragrance of the flower, the bright bow in the black o'erhanging firmament of life, the sweet chord that makes complete the human diapason.

If woman is kept in a "state of subjection," as those who are trying to drag her into court and force her to file a bill of grievances against her companion assert, she is certainly the proudest of earthly subjects. If she is a "slave" she is bound with chains of her own forging and wears them because she wills it. In obeying she rules, in serving she leads captive her captor. Really she is the autocrat of earth, the power behind the throne, the ruler of those who rule.

In all life's battles woman's love is man's chief incentive, his greatest guerdon of victory. For woman he bares his bosom to every peril, braves every danger. It is for her that

he subdues the elements and searches out the hidden treasures of earth; for her that he measures the stars and determines the procession of the planets, for her that he fills the world with art and luxury,--for her that he is a creative god, rather than a destructive demon.

Woman is with us but not of us. She is in very truth "but little lower than the angels," and we should not drag her down to our level under pretense of lifting her to greater heights. Give to her every possible advantage; open to her every calling and profession that she cares to enter; accord her all she asks, not grudgingly but cheerfully; but do not force upon her "rights" she does not want, duties she would shun, and which that beneficent God, who gave her to us to civilize and humanize us, destined for our own strong hands.

* * *

CHRIST COMES TO TEXAS.

AND CALLS ON THE ICONOCLAST.

The editor was reading a report of the regular meeting of the Dallas Pastors' Association, at which the Second Coming of Christ was learnedly considered. Dr. Seasholes declared that all good people will rise into the air, like so many larks, to meet the Lord and conduct him to earth--with flying banners and a brass-band, I suppose--where he will reign a thousand years. At the conclusion of this felicitous period Satan is to be loosed for a little season, and after he has pawed up the gravel with his long toe-nails and given us a preliminary touch of Purgatory, we are to have the genuine pyrotechnics. Some of the divines did not agree with the spectacular ceremonies arranged by Dr. Seasholes for the Second Coming; but he seems determined to carry out his program or enjoin the procession. The editor was musing on this remarkable controversy and wondering, in a vague, tired way, why the fool-killer did not take a pot-shot at the Dallas Pastors' Association, when there came a gentle rap at his door and a strange figure stood before him. It was that of a man of perhaps three-and-thirty years, barefoot, bareheaded and clothed in a single garment, much worn and sadly soiled.

"Peace to this house," he said, in a voice soft and sweet as that of a well-bred woman. "A cup of cold water, I pray you." "Water? Cert. Steer yourself against the cooler over there. You look above the Weary Willie business. Sit down until I find a jumping-off place in this article on 'The Monetary Situation,' and perhaps I can fish up a stray quarter that's dodged the foreign mission fund." He bowed his thanks and sank wearily into the proffered seat. In five minutes he was sleeping softly, and the editor made a careful study of his face. It was of the Jewish type, strong but tender. The beard was glistening black and had evidently never been to the barber's, while a shock of unkempt hair, burned by the sun, hung around his

shoulders like the mane of a lion.

"Hello," said the business manager, as he helped himself to the editor's plug tobacco; "another of your Bohemian friends? Some fellow who's tramping around the world on a wager of 'steen million dollars? Good face, but a bath wouldn't hurt him." The stranger roused himself and the B. M. continued: "Neighbor, we were just about to crack a bottle of beer. Have you any conscientious scruples about joining us?" He winked at the bookkeeper, and the stranger bowed his thanks, accepted the amber fluid, scrutinized it curiously and drank it off with evident relish.

"That is very refreshing," he commented as he wiped the foam from his black beard with his sleeve. "Will it intoxicate?"

He was informed that if taken on the allopathic plan it would make one drunk some, but not the wild-eyed, murderons mania peculiar to Prohibition booze. He declined a second glass, saying gently, "We should not abuse the good things of life." The bookkeeper was so startled that he missed his face with a pint cup, and the mailing clerk did up a package of hymn books for a dealer who wanted "Potiphar's Wife." But the stranger was evidently unconscious that he had forever queered himself with the Bohemian Club. He took a dry crust from a leathern wallet, and, blessing it, offered a portion to the editor.

"Jesus Christ! You don't eat that, do you?"

The visitor rose, a startled look on his face.

"You know me, then? Yes, it is I--Jesus of Nazareth. I have walked the earth an entire year, clad as I was eighteen centuries ago, living as I did then, mingling with those called by my name, conversing with those who profess to teach my doctrine, and none knew me. Nay more: They sometimes spurned me from their doors, and even delivered me to the minions of Caesar as a vagabond. You look incredulous. Behold the nail-prints in my hands and feet, the spear wound in my side, the scars made by the crown of thorns upon my brow."

"But I thought your second coming would be in power and glory, and all the righteous would rise up into the atmosphere to meet you and show you a soft spot to 'light. Dr. Seasholes says so, and if he doesn't know, who does?"

"I attended the discussion by the Dallas Pastors' Association," he said wearily. "They permitted me to sweep out the room and stand down in the hall. It may appear incredible; but there are just a few things that the Dallas Pastors' Association doesn't know. Of course you couldn't make those gentlemen believe it; but it is a lamentable fact. The world is young; it must run its course. Our Heavenly Father did not create it as the Chinese make

crackers--just to hear it pop. Not until its power to produce and nourish life is exhausted will the end be. Your poet, Campbell, was a true prophet. The sun itself must die, and not until that mighty source of light and heat becomes a flickering lamp, will those fateful words be spoken. 'Time was, but time shall be no more.' I am not come as yet to judge the world, but to mingle once again with the sons of men, and observe how they keep my laws."

An expression of unutterable sadness stole into his face and he sat a long time silent.

"I have suffered and sacrificed much for this people," he said at length, as though speaking to himself, "and it has borne so little fruit. The world misunderstood me. The church planted by toil and nurtured with my blood has split up into hundreds of warring factions, despite my warning that a house divided against itself cannot stand. Nor has it stood--the Temple of Zion is a ruin, the habitation of sanctified owls and theological bats. The army of Israel is striving in its camp, tribe against tribe, or wandering desolate in the desert while the legions of Lucifer overrun the land. Here and there, among the simple poor, I find traces of the truths I taught--here and there a heart that is a holy temple in which abide Faith, Hope and Charity; but the shepherds do not keep my sheep."

He leaned his head upon his hands and wept, while the editor shifted uneasily in his chair and strove in vain to think of something appropriate to say. During his reportorial career he had interviewed Satan and the arch-angel Gabriel. He had even inserted the journalistic pump into Gov. Culberson and Dr. Cranfill without being overwhelmed by their transcendent greatness; but this was different. The city hall clock chimed ten, the hour when the saloons set out the mock-turtle soup and potato salad, the bull-beef and sour beans as lagniappe to the heavy-laden schooner. The editor remembered that Christ first came eating and drinking, sat with publicans and sinners and was denounced therefore as a wine-bibber and a glutton by the Prohibitionists and other Miss Nancys of Palestine. Still he hesitated. He wanted to do the elegant, but was afraid of making a bad impression. A glance at the dry and moldy crust determined him. He tapped the visitor on the shoulder and said:

"Let's go and get some grub."

"I wouldn't worry about the world if I were you," I continued, as he led the way to the elevator. "It is really not worth while. If the devil wants it, I'd let him have it. I can think of no greater punishment you could inflict upon him than to make him a present of it. It were equivalent to England giving Canada to the United States for meddling in the Venezuelan matter. Perhaps you know your business best, but I have lived the longest. I used to think that perhaps the world would pay the salvage for saving it; but that was before I moved to Waco. I tell you frankly that if I

had your job in the New Jerusalem I'd nurse it and let Bob Ingersoll, Doc Talmage and the rest of the noisy blatherskites scrap it out here to suit themselves."

He did not reply, and the editor, remembering that his advice had not been asked, changed the subject.

"I'm not going to steer you against a first-class hotel. Jim I. Moore wouldn't let you into his dining-room with your shoes off, even though you brought a letter of credit from the Creator. Jim loves you dearly, but business is business. There's a place down here, however, run by a man who doesn't trot with the sanctified set, where you can waltz up to the feed trough in the same suit you wore when you preached the Sermon on the Mount, and that without giving the ultra-fashionables a case of the fantods."

"Ah, there we will doubtless meet with many of the good brethren who do not observe empty forms and foolish ceremonies."

"Rather. But perhaps I should tell you that the church does not approve of the place where we are going. They er--sell wine there you know; also that amber liquid with the--er--froth on it."

"And why not wine?"

"Damfino--I mean--Oh, you'll have to ask Brother Cranfill. I s'pose because old Noah jagged up on it."

"Noah who?"

"Why just Noah; that old stiff--I mean that good man who was saved for seed, when the overflow came, and who's the great gran'daddy of all the niggers."

"Is it possible that the church is retailing that wretched old myth which my Hebrew fathers borrowed of the barbarians. Noah? There was no such man. By the shifting of the earth's axis about 16,000 years ago a portion of the Asiatic continent was overflowed."

"But the Noah story is in the Bible."

"So is the story of Adam and Eve, and many other absurdities which really intelligent people would purge it of. O will men be mental children ever!"

He ate sparingly, but scanned the visitors closely. At the next table a quartette of Texas colonels were absorbing mint juleps through rye straws. The Nazarene nudged the editor and inquired what the beverage consisted of. The latter explained the mystery, and would have placed one before his guest, but the latter insisted that a little wine for the stomach's sake would suffice. Several entered into conversation with him and would have given him money, but he gently declined to accept it, saying that the good

Father would provide that he was seeking to do good, not to lay up treasures.

"Are these people sinners?"

He was informed that, according to the theology of the Prohibs, they would occupy the hottest corner of Perdition.

"But they give to the poor, speak kindly to the stranger, even though he be clothed in rags. I am sure they would not lie or steal or kill."

"But they will blaspheme a little sometimes. Just listen to those colonels. Didn't you hear them say 'damn' and 'Hell's fire' and 'Devil'? O, according to our theology there's no hope for 'em. A man may defraud a widow or swindle an orphan and make a landing; but when he talks about the Devil and Hell he's sure to be damned."

"Is Satan a sacred person, or Hell a place to be mentioned reverently? Blasphemy is speaking evil of God. The priesthood of every religious cult has manifested a propensity to magnify venial faults into cardinal sins and thereby bring worship into contempt by trifling. To Hell with those who make religion a trade and thrive thereby!"

We were on the street and it chanced that a well-fed, silk-hatted dominie, sporting a diamond stud, was dawdling by as the man of Galilee uttered this emphatic protest against gain-grabbing preachers. His face flushed with anger, and turning upon the ill-clad stranger, he said:

"Do you mean to insult me, fellow?"

The Nazarene faced his heated interlocutor and replied with quiet dignity: "Assuredly not. I did not suspect you of being a minister. You are not clad like one of the Apostles. Surely you are not one of those disputatious sectaries who wear purple and fine linen and fare sumptuously every day while countless thousands cry to their Father in Heaven, 'Give us to eat and to drink lest we die'?"

"I want no lectures from you, sir. I know my business," exclaimed the man of God, with rising color.

"Ah, I fear that 'business' is to coin the blood of Jesus of Nazareth into golden guineas."

The infinite pity in the speaker's voice cowed the pugnacious preacher, and he was about to pass on; but a brown, toil-stained hand--the hand of a carpenter--was laid upon his shoulder. "Wait, my brother. Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath. Him ye serve was even as I am--poor and friendless. He spake as I speak, the truth that welled up in his heart. Cruel things were said of him, but he resented it not. He was beaten with many stripes, and mocked, and crucified; but he freely forgave. Be thou humble as he was humble; be thou forgiving even as he

forgave. Love God and thy fellow-men. That is the whole law given by him ye serve. Words are but as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, but a good example endureth forever."

"Lord! Lord!" exclaimed the editor. "Why didn't you reveal yourself to him?"

"He would not have believed me. No; though I performed before him miracles more wonderful than those accredited to me in Palestine. I have resumed my earthly raiment and adopted my old mode of life as the best possible disguise. Believing me a vagabond, those pretending to worship with all their heart and all their soul, show unto me what they really are. Now as ever do men polish the outside of the cup while within is all uncleanliness."

"Have you interviewed many of the big preachers?"

"Many, almost all. I attended Sam Jones' recent services at Austin. He is simply a product of the evil times upon which the church has fallen. In religion, as in art and letters, decadence is marked by sensationalism. The trouble with Sam is that he mistakes himself for me--thinks he has been called to judge the world. I was pained to hear him consign about fifteen different classes of people to Perdition without sifting them to see if, perchance, there might not be one in the lot worthy of salvation. I presented him with a copy of my Sermon on the Mount. He took a fresh chew of tobacco and remarked that he was inclined to think he had read it before somewhere. Then he took up a collection. Sam represents the rebound from the old religious belly-ache. For years preachers had an idea that there was nothing of gladness in the worship of God--that it consisted simply of a chronic case of the snuffles. Jones has simply gone to the opposite extreme and transformed the Temple of the Deity into a variety dive. Nero fiddled while Rome burned; but Jones indulges in the levity of the buffoon while consigning millions of human beings to Hell. Alas, that so few preachers understand the pity which permeates all true religions."

"All true religions?"

"Even so. All are true and of God that make people better, nobler, more pitiful. The Father is all-wise. He tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. He gives to each people a religion commensurate with its mentality. I had hoped that the church established nearly nineteen centuries ago would suffice until the end of the world; that the simple theology I taught would grow with the world's mental growth and strengthen with its intellectual strength. It was a religion of Love. I bound its devotees to no specific forms and ceremonies--these were after-growths. I expected them. The child must have something to lean upon until it can walk; the barbaric worshiper must have symbols and ceremonies to aid his comprehension. These should have

passed ere this in Europe and America. A religious rite appropriate to semi-savages becomes, when injected into an age of civilization, that good custom which doth corrupt the world. The people, seeing these savage non-essentials insisted upon by the priesthood as something sacred and necessary unto Salvation, turn skeptic and reject religion altogether because it is encumbered by ridiculous rubbish. O, when will men understand that the whole world is a temple and all right living is worship!"

The editor was becoming really alarmed. He was fearful that his visitor was frightfully heterodox, hence he broke in with, "If you're not careful, Doc Talmage will denounce you as an infidel!"

"Brother Talmage is like unto the west wind--he bloweth whithersoever he listeth, and no man knoweth whence his blow cometh or whither it goeth. I tried to have a talk with him while in Washington, but he was too busy writing a syndicate sermon on the political situation, demonstrating that Dives had already done too much for Lazarus, and peddling hallelujahs at two dollars apiece. I had heard much of him and expected to find him toiling early and late among the poor and wretched, the suffering of the Capital city. When I called at his residence the servant told me that his master could not be disturbed--said there had been a dozen tramps there that morning. I asked him what salary his master received in a city filled with homeless vagabonds for preaching Christ and Him crucified, but he vouchsafed me no answer. I went to hear the great man preach, but the usher told me there was a mission church around the corner where my spiritual wants would be attended to. If I failed to find a seat there I could stand on the street-corner and hear the Salvation Army beat the bass drum and sing, 'Come to Jesus.' I lingered in the vestibule, however, and heard his sermon. I asked for bread and he gave me wind-pudding. I was sorry that I didn't attend the Salvation Army exercises. I prefer the bass drum to the doctor. It may be equally noisy, but hardly so empty. I saw men attired in fine cloth and women ablaze with jewels kneel on velvet cushions and pray to me. Then the choir sang,

" 'Oh, how I love Jesus, for Jesus died for me.'

"And Dr. Talmage exclaimed, 'Come, dear Lord, O come!' I came. I walked down the center aisle, expecting that a mighty shout of joy would shake the vaulted roof of Heaven and be echoed back by the angels. I supposed that Dr. Talmage would advance and embrace me. But no; the men stared their disapproval; the women drew back their perfumed skirts of glistening silk, and Dr. Talmage thundered, 'Sirrah! who are you?' I raised my hand and exclaimed in a loud voice:

" 'Jesus Christ!' "

The editor started up from his siesta and rubbed his eyes--

the foreman of the Baptist Standard had "pied a form."

BRADLEY-MARTIN BAL-MASQUE.

"APRES MOI LE DELUGE!"

Mrs. Bradley-Martin's sartorial kings and pseudo-queens, her dukes and DuBarrys, princes and Pompadours, have strutted their brief hour upon the mimic stage, disappearing at daybreak like foul night-birds or an unclean dream--have come and gone like the rank eructation of some crapulous Sodom, a malodor from the cloacae of ancient capitals, a breath blown from the festering lips of half-forgotten harlots, a stench from the sepulcher of centuries devoid of shame. Uncle Sam may now proceed to fumigate himself after his enforced association with royal bummers and brazen bawds; may comb the Bradley-Martin itch bacteria out of his beard, and consider, for the ten-thousandth time, the probable result of his strange commingling of royalty-worshiping millionaire and sansculottic mendicant--how best to put a ring in the nose of the golden calf ere it become a Phalaris bull and relegate him to its belly. Countless columns have been written, printed, possibly read, anent the Bradley-Martin ball--all the preachers and teachers, editors and other able idiots pouring forth voluminous opinions. A tidal wave of printer's ink has swept across the continent, churned to atrous foam by hurricanes of lawless gibberish and wild gusts of resounding gab. The empyrean has been ripped and the tympana of the too patient gods ravished with fulsome commendation and foolish curse, showers of Parthian arrows and wholesale consignments of soft-soap darkening the sun as they hurtled hither and yon through the shrinking atmosphere. A man dropping suddenly in from Mars with a Nicaraguan canal scheme for the consideration of Uncle Sam would have supposed this simian hubbub and anserine to-do meant nothing less than a new epocha for the universe, it being undecided whether it should be auriferous or argentiferous--an age of gold or a cycle of silver. Now that the costly "function" has funk'd itself into howling farce, an uncomfortable failure, and the infuscated revellers recovered somewhat from royal katzenjammer, we find that the majestic earth has not moved an inch out of its accustomed orbit, that the grass still grows and the cows yet calve that the law of gravitation remains unrepealed, and Omnipotence continues to bring forth Mazzaroth in his season and guide Arcturus with his sons. Perchance in time the American people may become ashamed of having been thrown into a panic by the painful effort of a pudgy parvenu to outdo even the Vanderbilts in ostentatious vulgarity. Rev. Billy Kersands Rainsford cannot save this country with his mouth, nor can Mrs. Bradley-Martin wreck it with her money. It is entirely too large to be permanently affected by the folly of any one fool. Preacher and parvenu were alike making a grandstand play. Now that the world has observed them, and not without interest, let us hope that they will subside for a little season.

This Dame DuBarry extravaganza was not without significance to those familiar with history and its penchant for repetition; but was by no means an epoch-maker. It was simply one more festering sore on the syphilitic body social--another unclean maggot industriously wriggling in the malodorous carcass of a canine. It was another evidence that civilization is in a continual flux, flowing now forward, now backward--a brutal confession that the new world aristocracy is oozing at present through the Armida-palace or Domdaniel of DuBarrydom. The Bradley-Martins are henceforth entitled to wear their ears interlaced with laurel leaves as a sign of superiority in their "set." They won the burro pennant honestly, if not easily, daylight being plainly visible between their foam-crested crupper and the panting nostrils of the Vanderbilts. They are now monarch of Rag-fair, chief gyasticuti of the boundless realm of Nescience and Noodledom. Mrs. Bradley-Martin has triumphed gloriously, raised herself by her own garters to the vulgar throne of Vanity, the dais of the almighty dollar. She is now Delphic oracle of doodle-bugs and hierophant of the hot stuff. Viva Regina! Likewise, rats! Like most of New York's aristocracy, she is of even nobler lineage than Lady Vere de Vere, daughter of a hundred earls, having been sired by a duly registered American sovereign early in the present century. His coat-of-arms was a cooper's adz rampant, a beer-barrel couchant and the motto, "Two heads are better than one." By wearing his neighbors' cast-off clothes and feeding his family on cornbread and "sow-belly," he was able to lay the foundation of that fortune which has made his daughter facile princeps of New York's patricians. John Jacob Astor, who acted as royal consort to the cooper's regal daughter in the quadrille d'honneur, is likewise descended from noble Knights (of Labor) and dames of high degree. He traces his lineage in unbroken line to that haughty Johann Jakob who came to America in the steerage, wearing a Limburger linsey-woolsey and a pair of wooden shoes. Beginning life in the new world as a rat-catcher, he soon acquired a gallon jug of Holland gin, a peck of Brummagem jewelry, and robbed the Aborigines right and left. He wore the same shirt the year 'round, slept with his dogs and invested his groschens in such Manhattan dirt as he could conveniently transport upon his person. Thus he enabled his aristocratic descendants to wax so fat on "unearned increment" that some of them must forswear their fealty to Uncle Sam and seek in Yewrup a society whose rough edges will not scratch the varnish off their culchah. Mrs. Bradley-Martin does not exactly "look every inch a queen," her horizontal having developed at the expense of her perpendicular, suggesting the rather robust physique of her father's beer barrels. Still, she is an attractive woman, having the ruddy complexion of an unlicked postage stamp and the go-as-you-please features of a Turkish carpet. Her eyes are a trifle too ferrety, but the osculatory power of her mouth in auld lang syne must have been such as to give Cupid spinal curvature. Her nose retreats somewhat precipitately from the chasm; but whether that be its original

pattern, or it has been gradually forced upwards by eager pilgrims to her shrine of adjustable pearls, is a secret hidden in her own heart. Like Willy Wally Astor, she finds the customs of this country too crass to harmonize with her supersensitive soul, and spends much time dangling about the titled slobs "on the other side." Some time ago she purchased the epicene young Earl of Craven as husband for her daughter, in the humble hope of mixing cooerage and coronets, and may yet be gran'ma to some little Lord Bunghole or fair Lady Firkin. As a "pusher" in society she can give points to Mrs. Potter Palmer or the wife of a millionaire pork-packer. Although she has "seen" the bluff of the notorious Smith-Vanderbilt-Belmont female and "raised" her out of her bunion repositories, she has probably not yet reached the summit of her social ambition. Bred to shabby gentility, Miss Alva Smith proceeded to "splurge" when she captured a Vanderbilt. She had probably never seen a hundred dollar bill until permitted to finger the fortune of the profane old ferryman who founded her husband's aristocratic family. She was a parvenu, a nouveau riche, and could not rest until she had proclaimed that fact by squandering half a million of the man's money whom she subsequently dishonored, on the ball which Mrs. Bradley-Martin set herself to beat. Having been divorced "for cause," she proceeded to crown her gaucheries by purchasing for her ligneous-faced daughter a disreputable duke who owes his title to a grand-aunt's infamy--is the descendant of a plebeian who rose to power by robbing dead soldiers and prostituting his sister to a prince. Mrs. Bradley-Martin has trumped two of her rival's cards--and a social game, like seven-up, "is never out till it's played out."

The denunciation of the ball by Dr. Rainsford proved him not only a notoriety-seeking preacher, but a selfish parasite who lacks sufficient sense to disguise his hypocrisy. It contained not one word of protest against the amassing of enormous fortunes by the few at the expense of the many, not a single plea for justice to a despoiled people, not one word of Christian pity for their woes. It was simply a warning--foolishly flung from the housetop instead of whispered in the closet--that such reckless waste would breed discontent in the home of want--would "make demagogues and agitators dangerous!" Dr. Rainsford would not alter, but conceal, existing conditions. His theory is that robbery is all right so long as the people do not rebel thereby imperiling the system by which they are despoiled. From his fashionable pulpit and sumptuous home he hurls forth his anathema-maranatha at those who would presume to abridge the prescriptive rights of the plutocracy--who doubt that grinding penury in a land bursting with fatness is pleasing to the All-Father! He would by no means curtail the wealth of Dives or better the condition of Lazarus; but thinks it good policy for the former to refrain from piling his plate so high in the presence of the hungry plebs, lest the latter cease crying for crumbs and swipe the tablecloth! Dr. Rainsford is a paid servant of Dives, his duly ordained Pandarus. His duty is to tickle his masters

jaded palate with spiritual treacle seasoned with Jamaica ginger, to cook up sensations as antidotes for ennui. If the "agitators" cause a seismic upheaval that will wreck the plutocracy, what is to become of the fashionable preachers? Dr. Rainsford would not abolish Belshazzar's feast--he would but close the door and draw the blinds, that God's eye may not look upon the iniquity, nor his finger trace upon the frescoed walls the fateful Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin! Save thy breath, good doctor, to cool thy dainty broth; for, mad with pride, thy master hears nor heeds the gabble of the goose beneath his walls, nor the watchdog's warning. Gnaw thy bone in peace, for the people, schooled to patience and amused with panaceas, will scarce resent the trampling of one more parvenu upon their necks, be she ever so broad of beam. If some years hence they should rise against the robbers, led on by "dangerous demagogues," repine not, for every dog, sacerdotal or otherwise, can but have his day.

Turgid Talmage must likewise unload; Talmage, who presumes to teach not only theology but political economy; who interlards his sermons with strange visions of Heaven, dreams of Hell, and still more wonderful hints on how to make a people terrestrially prosperous. He, like thousands of "able editors," apologizes for such vulgar extravagance by urging that it "puts money in circulation, makes business better, and helps the people by supplying employment!" Has the world passed into its dotage, or simply become an universal asylum for idiots? If wanton waste makes business better, then Uncle Sam has but to squander in bal-masques, or other debauchery, his seventy-five billions of wealth to inaugurate an industrial boom! To gratify their taste for the barbaric, to advertise themselves to all the earth as the eastern termini of west-bound equines, the Bradley-Martins wiped out of existence \$500,000 of the world's wealth, leaving just that much less available capital for productive enterprises. They might as well have burned a building or sunk a vessel of that value. It is urged that "labor was employed and paid." Quite true; but tell me, thou resounding ministerial vacuum, thou unreflecting editorial parrot, where is its product? What has society to show for the expenditure of this energy? A hole in its working capital--a hiatus in its larder caused by employing and sustaining labor, not to produce but to destroy. Prodigality on the part of the rich personally benefits a few parasites, just as the bursting of a molasses barrel fattens useless flies; but waste, by reducing the amount of wealth available for reproduction, breeds general want. A thousand editors have screamed in leaded type that it were "worse for the wealthy to hoard than waste." Thou lunatics, go learn the difference between a car and its load of cotton, a bolt of muslin and that wherewith it is measured, a nation's wealth and its exchange media. What does a man with the wealth he "hoards?" Does he not seek to make it earn an increment? Concentration of capital may be bad for the people, but destruction of capital takes the tools from their hands and the food from their lips. The court of Louis XV., which American snobs have just

expended half-a-million trying to imitate, likewise, "made business better" by wasting wealth--Madame DuBarry posing as "public benefactress," and receiving no end of encomiums from Paris shopkeepers, jewel merchants and mantua-makers. Much money was "put in circulation and labor employed" in furnishing forth the transient splendors of players and prostitutes; but somehow France did not prosper. Finally not even the pitiless screws of the tax-farmer could wring blood from the national turnip. The working capital of France was so far consumed that her people stood helpless, perishing of hunger. Finally Madame DuBarry was supplanted as "public benefactress" by one with an even sharper tang to her tongue, namely, la Belle Guillotine, who blithely led the quadrille d'honneur, with a Robespierre for consort, to music furnished gratis by the raucous throats of ragged sans-culottes. Instead of lords and ladies treading the stately minuet in Versailles saloons adorned with beauty roses, the bare feet of hungry men beat time to the fierce Carmagnole on Parisian pavements.

It is not a little suggestive that the participants in this foolish fandango should have turned for inspiration to the court of Louis XV., whose debauchery and depravity, the historian declares, had not been paralleled since the year of Tiberius and Commodus--that the Bradley-Martin "function" should have been copied from the extravaganzas of a harlot! What glorious exemplars for New York's Four Hundred!--a dissolute king, and a woman thus apostrophized by Thomas Carlyle: "Thou unclean thing, what a course was thine: from that first truckle-bed, where thy mother bore thee to an unnamed father; forward, through lowest subterranean depths, and over highest sunlit heights of harlotdom and rascaldom--to the guillotine-axe, which shears away thy vainly whimpering head!" Of the 350 male revelers more than 100 were costumed as Louis XV., while but three considered Washington worthy of imitation. Was this the result of admiration in New York's "hupper sukkles" for this wretched Roi Faineant, or King Donothing, whose palace was a brothel, and whose harlots stripped his subjects of their paltry earnings and left them to perish? Louis XV., who permitted his country to be winned, its revenues squandered, its provinces lost, and half-a-million men sent to an untimely death that a prostitute might be revenged for an epigram! Is that the kind of man our money lords admire? Louis lived until the fleur-de-lis of France was struck down in every land and dishonored on every sea, then died, deserted by his drabs, cursed by his country, and was consigned to the grave and the devil as unceremoniously as though he were a dead dog! And now more than one hundred men who have stripped the people to enhance the splendor of palaces, don the royal robes of this godless rake and do homage to bogus DuBarrys! Small wonder that Dr. Rainsford feared such colossal impudence might serve to remind Americans how France got rid of royalty; might evoke a hoarse growl from the many-headed monster; might cause some "dangerous demagogue" to stir--perchance a Danton! Fit patron saint

for our own plutocracy is this swinish king, once called Bien aime, the Well-beloved; but after some thirty years of Bradley-Martinism, named Ame de boue--A soul of mud! How much our super-select society resembles the Madame DuBarrys, the Duc d'Aiguillons and Abbe Terrays, who made the court of Louis a byword and a reproach, his reign a crime, himself a hissing and a shaking of the head of the nations!

Suggestive indeed that at the swellest of all swell affairs in the American metropolis there should appear, according to the press dispatches, "ten Mme. de Pompadours, eight Mme. de Maintenons, four Mme. de la Vallieres, and three Catherines of Russia." Good God! Has our "best society" come to such a pass that its proudest ladies delight to personate notorious prostitutes?" There was no Racine or Moliere, no Charlotte Corday or Mme. de Stael"--the men posed as profligate kings, the women as courtesans! Yet in that same city young Mr. Seeley is arrested for looking at a naked dancing-girl, and "Little Egypt" has to "cut it" when she hears the cops! And what is the difference, pray, between a Pompadour and a Five Points nymph du pave? Simply this: The one rustles in silks for diamonds, the other hustles in rags for bread, their occupation being identical. New York was Tory even in Revolutionary times. From its very foundation it has been at the feet of royalty and mouthing of "divine right." It is ever making itself an obtuse triangle before the god of its idolatry--its knees and nose on the earth, its tail-feathers in the air; but we had yet to learn that it considered "that divinity which doth behedge a king" capable of sanctifying a woman's shame, transforming a foul leman into an angel of light! Catherine of Russia was an able woman, but a notorious harlot, foul as Milton's portress of Hell; a woman who, as Byron informs us, loved all he-things except her husband. Is that why the masqueraders preferred the character of Empress Catherine to that of Martha Washington? Did they consider it more in keeping with the company? Strange that each Russian empress was not attended by a few of her favorite grenadiers, with "the fair-faced Lanskoï," her boy-lover, thrown in as lagniappe. More than one hundred Louis XVths and only ten Pompadours! What a pity! But we may presume that each Pompadour, like the frail original, was "in herself a host"! Eight Maintenons, four Vallieres, and only one Louis XIVth present to look after his personal property! How proud a genuine American gentleman--one untainted with royalist fever--would have felt to see his wife or daughter posing as the leman of Lanskoï, of Louis XVth, or le Grande Monarque--of whom Three-Eyed Billy of England once said that he selected young men for his ministers and corrupt old cats for his mistresses!

Half a million dollars gone up in frippery and flowers, and the bedizened gang didn't get half the fun out of it that a party of country yaps will extract from a candy-pulling or a husking-bee. The Pompadours and DuBarrys didn't know how. Louis XVth went around by himself in droves, stiff

and uncomfortable as a Presbyterian Sunday-school, wishing every time his rapier galled his kibes or tangled his royal legs that he had remained comfortably dead in that dog-hole at St. Denis. There was entirely too much formality for fun. The next time New York's toad-eaters give a bal-masque they should disguise themselves as American sovereigns and their consorts. Of course it will be a trifle difficult for them to play the part of respectable people; but they will find even awkward effort in that direction refreshing, and calculated to inspire them with respect for their country's flag.

* * *

A PILGRIMAGE TO PERDITION.

Sir Edwin Arnold is a profound optimist, and apparently not a little proud of it. He recently said to a reporter:

"The course of mankind is constantly towards perfection. I believe in humanity. I believe in the world's great future. The trend of human events emphasizes the truth of this statement; though we may be horrified to-day by reading of a brute who butchers his wife, these events should not shake our faith. If we look at the matter philosophically we will see that they are a diminishing series, and that the world is growing grander and nobler,"

Optimism is a delightful thing, but is too frequently the result of ignorance. Sir Edwin is a learned and talented man, but he is evidently a stranger to the great world which he discusses so complacently and approvingly. The savant reposing in a palace-car, which is rushing through the midnight storm at a rate of fifty miles an hour, regards his situation with composure; but the unlettered engineer, whose eye is on the track,--who notes every slippery curve, swollen stream and overhanging boulder,--who feels the motive power of that proud train swaying and plunging like a restless demon beneath his feet, is apt to be anxious enough.

Sir Edwin is a palace-car passenger on the great world-train, and knows little of the perils of the track. His coach rolls smooth, he takes his ease and indulges in optimistic moralizing, while those who serve him look death in the face so frequently that they learn to mock him,--to take desperate chances that may plunge them down to destruction and drag all else after. It has been my lot to look at life from the cab-windows, from the point of view of the man with the grimy hand and the soiled jacket. While Sir Edwin has been contemplating with dreamy interest the faraway purple hills, I have been compelled to scrutinize less giant objects closer at hand; hence it is not strange that my opinion of the world should differ somewhat from that entertained by the speculative author of "The Light of Asia." In brief Sir Edwin knows all about the beauty, wealth and success which make earth a Paradise for the few; I

something of that hideousness, poverty and despair that make it a Purgatory for the many. That world to which Sir Edwin belongs, and which he contemplates so approvingly, is but the gold-leaf on the graven image, the bright foam on the bosom of a bottomless sea, a verdant crust cast over a chaos of fierce despair,--which will some day rip it into a million ribbons, enact an all-embracing French Revolution that will sweep our boasted "Car of Progress" back a thousand years on the crimson crest of a wave of blood and fire! If Sir Edwin had explored the infernal vortex beneath his feet he would not talk so complacently of the "trend of human events." For the benefit of Sir Edwin and many other wealthy and cultured palace-car passengers who amuse themselves with theories; who infer that because human slavery is abolished in the Occident and the thrones of the Orient are beginning to totter before the might of democracy; because science is marching on to triumph after triumph, and no Spanish Inquisition or English Court of High Commission longer casts its upas-shadow athwart the hearts of men, the great world is "growing nobler and better," I hereby tender my services to pilot them through that Perdition which does not hover indeterminate in the inane limboes of dogmatic theology, but hath a well-defined latitude and longitude; is visual, tactual,--in which untold millions of mankind writhe and shriek from the cradle to the grave!

...

It is no long journey to the portals of the nether world. In many a costly church the worshipers may hear during the rests in the doxology the shrieks of the damned. A walk of a few blocks at most in any of our great, and many of our smaller American cities will enable us to enter that earthly Gehenna whose horrors the pen of Dante could scarce picture, which threatens to engulf the world. Even in Texas, a land so favored by the gods, so blest with brave men and noble women, we may enter the purlieus of the place of pain, across whose portal is inscribed the legend of dark despair; may commune with all Gehenna's grisly gorgons and witness the writhings of thousands of wretched creatures beneath the fierce fire-whips of the infernal furies.

Let us take a typical American city; not that here we are nearer the great red heart of Hell than are the people of other lands. What is true of one is true in greater or less degree of every city throughout the world. We will suppose the city we are to examine to contain a million inhabitants. We will pause to contemplate its miles of broad streets and magnificent buildings; its imposing schools and scores of costly churches that rear their symmetrical spires far into the empyrean and fill the great dome with their melodious chimes; its marble fountains and costly plants which ravish the senses with sweet perfumes; its wealth and wisdom, luxury and learning, its philanthropic people and happy homes where Peace reigns and Plenty ever smiles. That is one side of the shield,--the one upon which the Arnolds and

Talmages have looked so long that they forget there is any other,--that a golden veil may hide the face of a Fury or a Fiend.

The clock is proclaiming Night and Sin's high noon; follow me and I will show you why I do not believe in "humanity" quite so implicitly as does Sir Edwin; why even Dr. Talmage has failed to wean me from "the awful sin of pessimism." It is not necessary to linger long in the low concert halls and brothels where girls scarce in their teens are made the prey of the rum-inflamed passions of brutes old enough to be their grandsires; where old roués, many of whose names are a power "on 'change," bid against each other for half-developed maids whose virginity is certified to by a physician; where green gawks from the country are made drunk with cheap wines sold to them at fancy prices by courtesans, plucked and turned over to a subsidized police if they protest; where hundreds of pure girls are entrapped, drugged and ruined every day of the world. These social ulcers are so protrusive, have been written up so frequently by enterprising young reporters who naively supposed that to expose was to suppress, that even optimistic Dr. Talmage must at least be cognizant that such places exist,--even in Brooklyn, which enjoys the supernal blessing of his direct ministrations, and from which moral Mecca his sounding sentences are transmitted by the vicarious apostles of the press to all men,--who possess a penchant for light literature!

One glance into the low gambling dens, where haggard creatures, created in God's image, but long ago degraded below the brute level, nightly waste the few pence which they pick up Heaven alone knows how,--perhaps by selling the virtue of their daughters, robbing their wives of ill-got gains or plundering the pockets of drunken laborers. We may pass by the opium joints where women of all ages and classes lie for hours, stupid with filthy fumes, at the mercy of bestial orientals and drunken negroes; also those dives devoted to forms of debauchery so debased that many a blase man of the world does not believe their existence more than a demoniacal dream. These are vortices of vice too fearfully foul for eyes of aught but fiends; the air too putrid for lungs that inhale that of pure and happy homes. We must shun those plague spots, else bear false witness to the world, for any true pen-picture of their hell-born horrors would, like Medusa's awful face, turn all who gazed thereon to stone!

. . .

We must content ourselves with traveling the purlieu of Perdition, the sulphur-fumes of those profounder depths of degradation being too strong for lungs accustomed to chant optimistic lays; the glare of the burning marl too fierce for eyes used only to vernal meads and still waters; but even here, in the Purgatorium as it were, sights and sounds calculated to appall the stoutest heart are not wanting. Here stalks the demon Poverty. He is by no means

so hideous as some of his brethren in the infernal hierarchy, and perchance we may inspect his dominions without succumbing to moral hysteria.

Poverty? What do you know of it, my well-fed optimistic friends? You pay your taxes, give a few pence to the beggar at the street corner, perhaps contribute a few dollars to this or the other relief fund that does not relieve,-- and wonder that people do not go to work and earn their bread. "There is always work for those who really want it," one of you complacently informs me. Are you quite sure? In a city like this we are traversing I have seen fifty thousand men who "really wanted work," and could not find it. Fifty thousand unemployed, destitute and desperate people in one city. I was one of the number. Why didn't they scatter? you will ask. Whither should they go, and how? Take to the snow-clad country, be arrested as vags, and herded as criminals? For my part I did "scatter,"-- tramped one hundred miles in a northern winter without food, and found three days' employment,--loading ice into box cars! Many of those fifty thousand idle men had families to support. How did they do it? Now you are getting into Hell!

Come with me and I will show you thousands of families in this city alone who have not had in six months as good a meal as could be picked out of your garbage barrel; hundreds of families that sleep this winter night on the bare floor of filthy tenements or huddled like swine on an armful of foul rags and straw; delicate women and children dying for lack of proper warmth and nourishment; hundreds of men who regard it as a godsend to get arrested that they may have shelter from the piercing winds of the night and a bite to eat in the morning. Put your head into this 10-cent lodging house if you want to get some new ideas regarding the "trend of humanity." Glance into this low groggery--but one of several thousand in this great city--and "size up the gang" before being too sure that a "pessimist" is simply a person troubled with a superabundance of black bile. Of the million people who make up this great city, probably six hundred thousand are already plunged deep in the abyss where lurk Want and Crime, or trembling on its verge, and the number who thus "live from hand to mouth," who feel that they have "no stake in the country,"--that God and man are against them--is ever on the increase. That verdant, sunkissed crust upon which Arnolds complacently saunter and Talmages proudly strut, grows thinner year by year, while the fires below wax ever hotter, more turbulent, more explosive!

Would you know how thin this crust actually is; how fissured and honey-combed from beneath, until it can scarce sustain its own weight, and the sulphur fumes ever rise through it like steam through a sieve, inspect the city government and note how and what constitutes the controlling power. When you learn, as you will if you examine carefully, that those thousands of vile drinking dens dictate who shall be our public servants, and what laws we shall live under; that the

"madam" of the fashionable bagnio is more potent at police headquarters than any delegation of the Y.M.C.A.; that no whereas or resolution of philanthropists can withstand the fiat of the ward bosses; that everywhere there is collusion with criminals and jobbery, perhaps you will not be quite so certain of "the world's great future."

. . .

Do you turn to the church to make good the promise of the optimist? Let us explore the "amen corner" and see how many pious souls we shall there find whose incomes are chiefly drawn from buildings rented for immoral purposes. Even while I write I see an old white-haired man, whose power in prayer is the pride of his church, making his rounds, collecting his monthly stipend from the keepers of negro brothels and the lowest grade of drinking dens,--places where nightly assemble people of all ages, colors and sexes and enact scenes that might bring a blush to even the brazen front of Belial!

The church? What is it doing to extinguish the well-nigh shoreless Gehenna that threatens to engulf it? Drilling an augur-hole here and there in the thin crust and pouring in a few drops of water,--or oil, as the case may be; founding a few missions; distributing a little dole; sending a few Bibles to the heathen to offset the much bad whisky supplied them by "Christian countries"; perfecting its choir and sending its pastor to the Orient to hunt for "confirmation of Holy Scripture" amid the mummified cats of Egypt or the hoary trash of Palestine!

What is true of the city is true, though in lesser degree, of the country. If you think our agricultural brethren have no taste of Hell examine the list of mortgages! If you do not believe that Moloch is the presiding deity of commerce visit Trafalgar Square, the Place de la Concorde, or, worst of all, our own Wall Street. In old times men who despoiled others were called pirates and banditti; were execrated by honest men, anathematized by the church, a price set upon their heads by the State; yet they never pretended to be other than what they were; they did their devilish work openly, with the strong hand. Wall Street is a den of banditti who rob, not by open force, but by secret fraud. The tool of the seventeenth century freebooter was the flashing sword; that of his nineteenth century successor the cowardly and sneaking lie. The first pillaged a few ships, towns and castles; the latter plunders hundreds of thousands every year of the world, and then has the sublime audacity to come into court and plead that his business is both legitimate and necessary. And so rotten is society,--so prostrate does it cower before the golden calf--that the buccaneer, instead of being bastinadoed or beheaded, is crowned with bays! How can we harmonize these stubborn facts with Sir Edwin's view that "the course of mankind is constantly toward perfection?" Of course we should "look at the matter philosophically"; the trouble is that too many content themselves merely with

philosophizing and do not look at the matter at all, but only at some optimistic, far-fetched theory thereof.

It is very pleasant to close our eyes and believe--if we can--that the world is gradually working out its salvation; that it is steadily "growing grander and nobler"; to preach against "the sins of pessimism"; but unfortunately the stubborn fact is all too palpable that the shadow of the social world grows ever broader and deeper; that while the sunlight gilds the mountain tops the great valleys, wherein are congregated the millions of "poor people who have no work," are buried in cimmerian night. If Sir Edwin and Dr. Talmage will but listen they may hear shrieks of woe and wail--not unmingled with bitter curses--cleaving that inky pall; may hear voices proclaiming, Let there be light--though the world blaze for it!

. . .

Progress? We boast of progress? Progress whither? From the slavery of the auction-block and cat-o'-nine-tails to that of the great industrial system, where souls as well as bodies are bought and sold; where wealth is created as by the magic wand of a genie or the touch of gold-accursed King Midas, while thousands and tens of thousands beg in God's great name for the poor privilege of wearing out their wretched lives in the brutal treadmill,--to barter their blood for a scanty crust of black bread and beg in vain; then, finding the world against them, turn their hands against the world,--become recruits to the great army of crime. From the child-like simplicity, where man saw and adored the Deity in all his works, heard his laughter in the ripple of the stream, his voice in the thunder-storm and saw his anger in the writhen bolt, to the present age of skepticism, where he can see his Creator nowhere; and, blinder than his barbarian ancestors--knowing more of processes but less of principles--protests that Force is the only Demiurgus, dead matter the only Immortal.

Progress toward Greatness! Greatness of what? Certainly not of the individual, for the present conditions tend toward mediocrity. Greatness of the State? What does eternity know of States, that to promote their welfare immortal souls should be sacrificed? Why toil and travail, suffer and sin for toy balloons which destiny will whistle down the winds?

There are entirely too many self-commissioned watchmen, who, like Sir Edwin, sit at ease in their boxes and cry all's well,--meaning thereby that it is so with them; too many seers who look into their own cozy back parlors and imagine that they are standing on a Mirza's Hill and reading the riddle of human life; too many listening enchanted to their own sweet voices and mistaking the sound for a world-wide paeon of praise, or at least the drowsy hum of human content. Such are blind Neros who complacently fiddle while Rome is, if not actually burning, yet filled to overflowing with combustibles, ready to burst into flame!

THE PLATONIC FRIENDSHIP FAKE.

A charming little lady, the front elevation of whose name is Stella, takes pen in hand and gives the Icon. a red-hot "roast" for having intimated that Platonic Love, so-called, is a pretty good thing for respectable women to let alone. Judged by the amount of caloric she generates, Stella must be a star of the first magnitude, or even an entire constellation. She "believes in the pure, passionless love described by Plato as sometimes existing between the sexes--the affinities of mind as distinguished from the carnal lusts of matter," and opines that the Apostle "must be gross indeed not to comprehend this philosophic and highly satisfactory companionship."

"Twinkle, twinkle little star,
How I wonder what you are,
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky."

I plead guilty and cast myself upon the mercy of the court. I sorrowfully admit that my aestheticism is not eighteen karats fine, but mixed with considerable slag. When I should have been acquiring the higher culture, I was either playing hookey or planting hogs. Instead of being fed on the transcendental philosophy of Plato, I was stuffed with mealy Irish spuds and home-grown "punkin" pie. When I should have been learning to relish pate de foie gras and love my neighbor's wife in a purely passionless way, I was following one of McCormick's patents around a forty-acre field or arguing a point of ethics with a contumacious mule. That I am unable to appreciate that Platonic yearning of soul to soul, that deep calling unto deep on which Stella dotes, is my misfortune rather than my fault. It appears to me too much like voting the Prohibition ticket or playing poker with Confederate currency. When I love a woman I love her up one side and down t'other. I may be an uncultured and barbaric noodle, but I want to get hold of her and bite her neck. I want to cuddle her sunny curls on my heaving shirt-front when I talk to her about affinities. I believe with Tennyson in the spirits rushing together at the touching of the lips, and I just let 'em rush. Men may esteem women and enjoy their society with never a thought of sex. I have many female friends, some white-haired gran'dames, some mere girls in short dresses. But for their kindly interest and encouragement I would have cast aside the faber and fled to the desert long ago. The friendship of a noble woman is life's holiest perfume; but that is not the affinity of souls, the supernatural spooning, the Platonic yum-yum for which fair Stella pleads. Love, as I understand the term, is to friendship's non-consuming flame what the fierce glare of the noonday sun is to the mild radiance of the harvest moon. It is something which makes two people of opposite sexes absolutely necessary to each other. It is a glory in which the soul is bathed, an almost savage melody that beats within the blood. It is--O dammed; it's that which transforms a snub-nosed dairy maid into a Grecian

goddess, a bench-legged farmer boy into a living Apollo Belvedere. "Love is love forevermore"--differing in degree, but never in kind. The Uranian is but the nobler nature of the Pandemian Venus, not another entity. Love is not altogether of the earth earthy. It is born of the spirit as well as of the flesh, of the perfume as of the beauty of the great red rose. Few of those women who have led captive the souls of the intellectual Titans of the world could boast of wondrous beauty. The moment man passes the pale of savagery he demands something more than mere physical perfection in a companion. Purity, Gentleness, Dignity--such are the three graces of womanhood that oftentimes make Cupid forgive a shapeless bosom and adore a homely face. The love of a parent for a child is the purest affection of which we can conceive; yet is the child the fruition of a love that lies not ever in the clouds. Platonic affection, so-called, is but confluent smallpox masquerading as measles. Those who have it may not know what ails 'em; but they've got a simple case of "spoons" all the same. If Stella were "my dear heart's better part," and tried to convince me that she felt a purely Platonic affection for some other fellow, I'd apply for a writ of injunction or lay for my transcendental rival with a lignumvitae club loaded to scatter. Nobody could convince me that the country was secure. The Platonic racket is being sadly overworked in swell society. Like charity, it covers a multitude of sins. Married women go scouting around at all hours and in all kinds of places with Platonic lovers, until the "old man" feeds a few slugs into a muzzle-loading gun and lets the Platonism leak through artificial holes in the hide of some gay gallant. When madame must have her beaux, and maids receive attention from married men, there's something decayed in the moral Denmarks. Mrs. Tilton thought she felt a Platonic affection for Henry Ward Beecher--was simply worshiping at the shrine of his genius; but she made as bad a mess of it as though she had called her complaint concupiscence. Even here in Texas, where we do preserve a faint adumbration of the simplicity and virtue of ye olden time, it is no uncommon thing to see a chipper married female, who moves in the "best society," flitting about with some fellow who's recognized, as the servants say, as her "steady company." But as we have improved on the Pompeiian "house of joy," so have we added to the French fashion of married flirtation a new and interesting feature. The French allow maids but little liberty so far as male companionship is concerned; but we remove the bridle altogether, and while the matron flirts with the bachelor, the maid appropriates the lonesome benedict. All the old social laws have been laid on the shelf and life rendered a veritable go-as-you-please. In real life there is no "pure Platonic affection," whatever may betide in fiction. No man waits upon another's wife, provides her with carriages and cut flowers, opera tickets and wine suppers with never a suspicion of sex, and no maid who values her virtue will receive marked attentions from a married man. When a virgin finds an "affinity" she should steer it against a marriage contract at the earliest possible moment; when a

wife discovers one to whom she is not wedded she should employ a bread and water diet to subdue her "natural super-naturalism"-- and reinforce her religion with a season of penitence and prayer.

* * *

TIENS TA FOI.

Though thorny the pathway 'neath our feet,
Though nothing in life be left that's sweet;
Though friends prove faithless in trial's hours
And love a curst and poisonous flower;
Though Belial stalk in priestly gown
And virtue's reward is fortune's frown;
Though true hearts bleed and the coward slave
Tramples in dust the fallen brave;
Think not the unworthy acts of men
Will 'scape the recording angel's pen;
The sword of God, in ruin and wraith,
Will surely fall! Oh, cling to thy faith!

Though worldly wise say it cannot be
That there's a heaven for thee and me;
Though logic's banner they have unfurled
And by its cold light now view the world,
Calling High God to the courts of man
To be judged by human reason's span,
And failing to grasp the power divine
Will blindly assert: "It doth not shine";
Thy mother was wiser far than they
In twilight hour when she knelt to pray,
A radiant light on her sweet face
From Eternal God's high dwelling-place.

Lo here! lo here th' false prophets cry,
Pointing out new paths unto the sky,
Far pleasanter than our fathers trod
With bleeding feet in the fear of God;
While Atheists laugh our faith to scorn,
And say that no man of woman born
Ever pierced the evil or caught a gleam
Of the mystic land beyond life's stream;
That our fondest hopes, our prayers and sighs
For life eternal beyond the skies,
Are superstitions conceived in fear
And cherished by priest and lying seer.

The martyr's blood, the penitent's tears,
The inspired word of Judea's seers,
The name of God on the sacred mount,
The river that poured from rocky fount
In the burning sands beneath the rod,
Obedient to the will of God;
The prayers and sighs in Gethsemane,
The red tide gushing on Calvary,
The radiant smile when life is done
Of saint that tells that heaven is won--

Shall we say 'tis all a priestly lie
And like soulless beasts lie down to die?

Ah, better 'twould be to ride in mail
A weary quest for the Holy Grail;
Wield Saxon steel 'gainst Saracen sword
Around the sepulcher of our Lord;
See Cross and Crescent and mailed hand
All plashed with blood in that sacred land,
Than doubt that heaven e'er shed its light
Deep into this world's long troublous night;
That God hears our prayers, knows all our pains,
That earthly sorrows are heavenly gains,
That the grave's the gate to lasting life,
Unsullied by sorrow, pain and strife.

Oh, better worship at pagan shrine;
Or, prophet of Islam, e'en at thine;
To seek Nirvana in Buddhist lore,
Or pray to Isis on Afric's shore;
Better the dark, mysterious rites
Of Ceres on Elusian heights;
Better the Gueber's fierce God of fire--
Oh, better to wake the trembling lyre
To any Savior than to be hurled
Godless and hopeless out of the world;
To madly plunge in death's dark river,
Lost to life and heaven forever.
In dark seas where the whirlpool rages
Stands the eternal Rock of Ages;
Amid dangers dire, 'mid wreck and wraith
God plants the banner of Christian faith.
Unworthy the sailor whose heart doth fail
When the God of storms rides on the gale;
Coward the soldier who shuns the grave,
And thrice accursed the trembling slave
Who in life's battles, darkest hour
Renounces God and denies His power.
Then Tiens ta Foi through the bitter strife!
O cling to the cross--through death to life!

* * *

THOMAS CARLYLE.

Of a recent edition of Carlyle's "Heroes and Hero Worship," it is said that 100,000 copies are already sold. The work has been on the market many years, and this continued popularity is indeed encouraging. It argues that the taste for the legitimate, the sane in literature, has not yet been drowned in the septic sea of fin de siecle slop--that, despite the enervating influence of an all-pervasive sensationalism, or sybaritism, there be still minds capable of relishing the rugged, strong enough to digest the mental pabulum furnished by a really masculine writer. Carlyle ranges like an archangel through the universe of intellect, overturning mountains to see how they are made--now cleaving the empyrean with strong and steady wing,

now shearing clear down to the profoundest depths of Ymir's Well at the foundations of the world. That his followers continue to increase argues well for the age, for he is a man whom weaklings should avoid if they would not be sawed in twain by mountain chains, forever lost in pathless limboes or drowned in the unmeasured deep. Even the strongest must perforce part company with him at times, else follow with the eye of faith, for his path oft leads up into that far region where mortals can scarce breathe, over Walpurgis' peaks, through bottomless chasms and along the filmy edge of clouds.

The admirers of Carlyle--may their tribe increase!--are indignant because one Edmund Gosse, in his introduction to the late edition of "Heroes and Hero Worship," alludes to the lion of modern literature as "an undignified human being, growling like an ill-bred collie dog." They take Mr. Gosse too seriously--dignify him with their displeasure. James Anthony Froude--a literary gun of much heavier caliber than Mr. Gosse appears to us from this passing glimpse--once wrote, if I remember aright, in a similar vein of the grizzled sage; but the unkind critique has been forgotten, and its author is fast following it into oblivion, while the shade of Carlyle looms ever larger, towering already above the Titans of his time, reaching even to the shoulder of Shakespeare! Gosse? Who is this presumptuous fellow who would take Carlyle in tutelage, foist himself upon the attention of the public by making a peep-show of the great essayist's faults? There is, or was, a pugilist named Gesse, or Goss; but as he did not deal foul blows to the dead, this must be a different breed of dogs. Sometime since there lived a little Englishman named William Edmund, or Edmund William Gosse, or Goss; but I had hitherto supposed that, becoming disgusted with himself, he crawled off and died. As I remember him, he was a kind of half-baked poetaster or he-bulbul, a Johannes Factotum in the province of dilettanteism, a universal Smart Alec who knew less about more things than any other animal in England. He was one of those persistently pestiferous insects tersely called by Carlyle "critic flies"--a descendant of that placed by Aesop in St. Paul's cupola. They presume to judge all things, great and small, by their "half-inch vision"--take the measure of cathedrals and interpret to the world the meaning of brainy men! Unfortunately, the "critic fly" is confined to no one nation--is what might be called, in vigorous Texanese, an all-pervading dam- nuisance. Mounted upon a mole, pimple or other cutaneous imperfection of an intellectual colossus, it complacently smooths its wings and explains, with a patronizing air, that the big 'un isn't half bad; but sagely adds that had it been consulted, his too visible imperfections would have been eradicated. We dislike to see an insect leave its periods and semi-colons on the immortal marble; but it were idle to grow angry with a Gosse. This must be the English literary exquisite whom Americans have hitherto incidentally heard bellowing before the tent of this or the other giant and taking tickets--I mean the prig, not the pug. He is

comparatively youthful yet, and can, on occasion, digest a good dinner. Perchance when he is well past four-score, worn with long years of labor compared with which the slavery of the bagné were a blessing, and half-dead with dyspepsia, he too, will "growl like a collie dog"; but never a copper will the great world care whether he grumbles or grins. Should he even get hydrophobia, that fact would scarce become historic. The public marks and magnifies a great man's foibles, but forgets both the little fellow and his faults. Jeanjean may hide from the battle in a hollow log, and none hear of it; but let a Demosthenes lose his shield and the world cackles over it for two-and-twenty centuries. To digress for a moment, I believe the story of Demosthenes' cowardice as damnable a lie as that relating to Col. Ingersoll's surrender. Even in his day human vermin sought to wreck with falsehood those they feared. The world--unwisely I think--interests itself in the personality of a genius, and somewhat impudently invades his privacy. A young man may muster up sufficient moral courage to lie to his callers, and thus preserve the proprieties; but an aged valetudinarian who wants to get into a quiet nook and nurse himself, may show scant courtesy--even brush the "critic fly" of the genus Gosse out of doors with a hickory broom.

Carlyle belonged to "the irritable race of poets," albeit he seldom imitated Pope's bad example and tortured his rugged ideas into oleaginous rhyme. There is a strange wild melody in all his work--what he would call "harmony in discord" suggesting that super-nervous temperament which is inseparable from the highest genius, and which degenerates so easily into acute neurosis--that "madness" to which wit is popularly supposed to be so "near allied." Such natures are aeolian harps acted upon, not by "the viewless air," but by a subtler, more impalpable power, which comes none know whence, and goes none know whither--one moment yielding soft melodies as of an angel's lute borne across sapphire seas, the next wailing like some lost soul or shrieking like Eumenides. The "self-poised," the "well-balanced" man, of whom you can safely predict what he will do under given conditions; the man who never bitterly disappoints you and makes you weep for very pity of his weakness, will never appall you by exhibitions of his strength. He may possess constructive talent, but never that creative power which we call genius because it suggests the genii. "No man is a hero to his valet," says the adage. Carlyle assumes this to be the fault of the latter--due to sawdust or other cheap filling in the head of the menial. Yet, may not the valet be wiser in this matter than the world? The hero, the greatest genius, is not always aflame with celestial fire, impelled by that mysterious power which comes from "beyond the clouds"--may be, for most part, the commonest kind of clay, a creature in nowise to be worshiped. The eagle, which soars so proudly at the sun, will return to its eyrie with drooping wing; the condor, whose shadow falls from afar on Chimborazo's alabaster brow, cannot live always in the empyrean, a thing ethereal, and back to earth is no better

than a carrion crow. To genius more than to aught else, perhaps, distance lends enchantment. While we see only the bold outline of the Titan, we are content to worship--nay, insist upon it; but having scrutinized him inch by inch with a microscope, we realize that familiarity breeds contempt. Well does Christ say that a prophet is not without honor save in his own country--which is the origin of the hero and valet adage. I cannot understand why the world insists upon seeing le Grand Monarque in his night-cap and Carlyle in his chimney corner. With the harem of Byron and the drunken orgies of Burns, the poaching of Shakespeare and the vanity of Voltaire it has nothing to do--should content itself with what they have freely given it, the intellectual heritage they have left to humanity, and not pry into those frailties which they fain would hide. If Goldsmith "wrote like an angel and talked like a fool," it was because when he wielded the pen there was only a wise man present, and all are affected more or less by the company they keep. We care not whether the gold in our coffers was mined by saint or sinner, so that it be standard coin; then what boots it what manner of men stole from heaven that Promethean fire which surges in the poet's song, leaps in lightning-flash from the orator's lips, or becomes "dark with excess of bright" in Carlyle's Natural-Supernaturalism? Judge ye the work, and let the workman "growl like a collie dog" if it ease his dyspepsia!

That Carlyle was "an undignified human being," I can well believe; for he was the wisest of his day, and dignity is the distinguishing characteristic of the dodo and the donkey. If Mr. Gosse esteems it so highly, he might procure a pot of glue and adorn his vermiform appendix with a few peacock feathers, else take lessons in posturing from the turkey-gobbler or editor of the Houston Post. Had Carlyle been born a long-eared ass, he might have been fully approved--if not altogether appreciated--by Gosse, Froude and other "critic flies." When Doctor Samuel Johnson was told that Boswell proposed to write his life, he threatened to prevent it by taking that of his would-be biographer. It were curious to consider what "crabbed old Carlyle" would have done had he suspected the danger of falling into the hands of a literary backstairs Mrs. Grundy like Edmund Gosse! In his "Heroes and Hero Worship" he treated his colossi far otherwise than he in turn has been treated by Gosse and Froude. He first recognized the fact that they were colossi, and no fit subject for the microscope. We hear nothing from him to remind us of Lemuel Gulliver's disgust with the yawning pores and unseemly blotches of the epidermis of that monster Brobdingnagian maid who set him astride her nipple. He revered them because they possessed more than the average of that intellectual strength which is not only of God, but is God; then considered their life-work as a whole, its efficient cause and ultimate consequence. He does not appear to have thought to inquire whether they had dyspepsia, and how it affected them, being engrossed in that more important question, viz., what ideas they were possessed withal, how wrought out, and what part these emanant volitions of the lords of intellect

played in the mighty drama of Human Life.

It is not my present purpose to review Carlyle's literary labors--that were like crowding the Bard of Avon into a magazine article. For 300 years the world has been studying the latter, and is not yet sure that it understands him; yet Shakespeare is to Carlyle what a graded turnpike is to a tortuous mountain path. The former deals chiefly with the visible; the latter with the intangible. The first tells us what men did; the last seeks to learn why they did it. Carlyle is the prince of critics. He is often lenient to a fault, but seldom deceived--"looks quite through the shows of things into the things themselves." Uriel, keenest of vision 'mid all the host of heaven, is his guardian angel. To follow him into the sanctuaries of great souls and become familiar with all their hopes and fears; to pass the portals of master minds and watch the gradual evolution of great ideas in these cyclopean workshops; to mount the hill of Mirza and from it view the Tide of Time rushing ever into the illimitable Sea of Eternity, and comprehend the meaning of that mighty farce-tragedy enacted on the Bridge of Life, were scarce so easy as listening to the buzzing of the "critic fly" or dawdling over a French novel on a summer's day.

Carlyle is frequently called a "mystic," and mystagogue he certainly is--a man who interprets mysteries. If the average reader urge that his interpretation is too oft an *obscurum per obscurius*, he might reply, in the language of that other woefully "undignified" and shockingly impolite human being, Dr. Johnson: "I am bound to find you in reasons, Sir, but not in brains." Carlyle was regarded by those writers of his day who clung to and revered the time-worn ruts, as chief of the "Spasmodic School," the members whereof were supposed to be distinguished by "a stained and unnatural style."

This "School," which was satirized by Aytoun while editor of Blackwood's Magazine, was thought to include Tennyson, Gilfillan and other popular authors of the time. I incline to the view that no writer of whom we have any knowledge exhibits less affectation in the matter of style than does the subject of this essay. It is rugged and massive; but so is his mind. It were impossible to imagine the author of "Sartor Resartus" and "The French Revolution" expressing himself in the carefully rounded periods of Macaulay, whose prose is half poetry, and whose poetry is all prose. Carlyle seems to care precious little what kind of vehicle he uses for the conveyance of ideas so long as it does not break down. All his labor "smells of the lamp"; but "the midnight oil"--of which our modern "ready writers" evidently use so little--was consumed in considering what to say rather than how to say it. Not even Shakespeare possesses so extensive a vocabulary. The technical terms of every profession and subdivision of science come trippingly to his tongue. But even the dictionary is not large enough for him, and he extends it this way and that, his daring neology creating consternation among the critic flies and other ephemera. He wrote as he thought, hence his style could not be other

than natural. That of Aytoun was formed in the schools, principally modeled by masters--made to fit a procrustean bed--and was, therefore, eminently artificial. If we apply the term "unnatural" to the matter instead of the manner of Carlyle and Tennyson, then away with genius, for intellectual originality is tabooed!--no man is privileged to think his own thoughts. That is the law nowadays nowhere except in the sanctum of the Gal-Dal News, where Col. Jenkins takes the editorial eyes and teaches it to soar in exact imitation of himself.

Whether by the "Spasmodic" method or otherwise, Carlyle dragged more true orients out of the depths than did any of his contemporaries; and that is saying much, for "there were giants in those days," and they were neither few nor far between. The intellectual glory of the first half of the present century was scarce eclipsed by the Elizabethan era. It was in very truth "a feast of reason and a flow of soul." Goethe and "Jean Paul" were putting the finishing touches to their work while Carlyle, then a young man, was striving to interpret these so strange appearances to the English-speaking world, to hammer some small appreciation of German literature into the autotheistic British head. Tom Moore, sweetest of mere singers, and Lord Byron, prince of poets, were but five and seven years respectively his seniors. He saw the beginning and the end of their literary labors, as of those of Macaulay and Mill, Darwin, Disraeli and Dickens. Much of his best work was done ere the death of Walter Scott, and he might have played as a school boy with the ill-fated Shelley. He had just begun his long life-labor when Longfellow and Tennyson, Hugo and Wagner came upon the scene, and together they wrought wisely and well in that mighty seed-field which is the world! What a galaxy of intellectual gods!--now all gone, returned home to High Olympus--the weird land left to the Alfred Austins, the William Dean Howells and the Ian McLarens! Gone, but not forgotten; yet the world will in time forget--even the amaranthine flowers must fade. Of them all we see but one star that blazes the brighter as the years run on, and that one long mistaken for a mere erratic comet--sans substance, or unformed nebulae hanging like a splotch of semi-luminous vapor in a great void. Year by year the voice of Carlyle rings clearer and clearer from the "Eternal Silence." And as we listen with rapt attention to the music of the spheres becoming audible, intelligible to our dull ear--the Waterloo and Lisbon earthquakes, the Revolutions and the Warring Religions, all the glory and shame, the wild loves and bitter hatreds of humanity--even Birth and Death--but minor notes in the Grand Symphony, the Harmony of Infinitude, the little man who has undertaken the management of the microphone, without suspecting its significance, distracts us with the unwished for and utterly useless information that the Voice coming from beyond Time and Space, out of the Everlasting Deep, once "growled like a collie dog!"

* * *

RESQUIESCAT IN PACE.

The mortal remains of Jefferson Davis, for four eventful years president of the Southern Confederacy, are now en route to their last resting place in Hollywood cemetery in the city of Richmond. New Orleans, the metropolis of the sunny south-land, surrenders, with sighs and tears, the dust of the distinguished dead to the keeping of the old capital of the Confederacy. There, where died the dream of a new nation; there, where the dashing Cavalier made his last desperate stand against the stubborn Puritan; there, where the cause was irretrievably lost,--where the stars and bars made obeisance to the stars and stripes and the "gray gigantic host" faded from the tragic stage of the world, will be laid the dust of our honored dead to await the judgment day.

Near the grave of Davis will spring a massive monument, which will forever remain a landmark in American history,--aye, in the mighty epic of the world! More imposing cenotaphs have risen, costlier mausoleums have charmed the eye, more gigantic monuments have aspired to kiss the clouds; but to the student of mankind none were more significant, to the historian none more interesting, to the poet none will appeal more powerfully through the long ages yet to be. It will be a new and grander Memnon in masonry, ever sounding celestial music for him that hath ears to hear, when smitten by the golden shafts of Justice's shining orb, when gilded with the celestial radiance of Love and Charity.

To-morrow the Southern people will, with tender hands and loving hearts, finally commit their dead chieftain to the care of the impartial historian. May another Plutarch arise to paint him as he was--nothing extenuating, naught set down in malice. May another Macaulay come forth from the fecund womb of the mighty future to add to the charm of history the music of his voice.

When the generation that knew and loved Davis shall have passed from earth; when those who idealized him shall have crossed the narrow boundaries of Time into Eternity's shoreless sea; when those brave souls who set their breasts against the bayonet shall one and all be gathered into the great hand of God; when those who saw in him the incarnation of a principle in whose defense they had pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor, shall be no longer with us to warp our better judgment, Jefferson Davis will sink to the ordinary level as a statesman and a soldier. It will be seen that his intellect was of the commonplace, his judgment oftentimes faulty,--that he can have no claim on the bays that lie ever green upon the brow of genius; but his dauntless courage, his devotion to his people, his purity of purpose--in a word, his American manhood--may well defy the crucial test of time and the analysis of the most exacting historian.

The honors which the South pays to the memory of Jefferson Davis are as unique as they are pathetic.

He stood for the division of the Union, and the South rejoices that we are one nation and one people. He stood for the perpetuation of human slavery, and the South rejoices that the foul curse hath been lifted from her forever. Intensely loyal to the Union to-day, she bedews with her tears and covers with her rarest flowers the bier of him who devoted his best energies to destroy it. The successful revolutionary leader is always lionized; the patriot who strives and fails, remains dear to the people so long as his cause awakes a responsive echo in their hearts; but where hitherto in the great world's history has chieftain been thus honored, when even those who bore the battle's brunt give thanks to God that his flag went down in defeat lo rise no more forever? It is the grandest tribute ever paid to American manhood.

* * *

CORONATION OF THE CZAR.

AMERICAN TOADYISM ON TAP.

With more barbaric mummery, flummery and vulgar waste of wealth than characterized even the late Marlborough-Vanderbilt wedding, Nicholas Two-Eyes was crowned Emperor of the rag-tag and bob-tail of creation, officially known as "all the Russias." Nick has a nice easy job at a salary considerably in excess of ye average country editor, and he gets it all in gold roubles instead of post-oak cord-wood and green watermelons, albeit his felicity is slightly marred by an ever-present fear that he may inadvertently swallow a few ounces of arsenic or sit down on an infernal machine.

Nick is emphatically an emperor who emps. He isn't bothered with do-nothing congresses or Populist politicians who want him impeached. When he saith to a man "come," he cometh p. d. q.; to another "go" he getteth a hustle on him that would shame a pneumatic tire. Nick is the greatest monarch "what they is." He is the divinely ordained Chief Gyasticutus of that motley aggregation of tallow-munchers and unwashed ignorami whose very existence is a menace to modern civilization. The Goths and Visigoths were models of cleanliness and avatars of intelligence compared with a majority of the seventy different breeds of bipedal brutes who acknowledge the rule of the Romanoffs. A Russian peasant smells like the Chicago river on a summer's day, or Tolstoi's "Kreutzer Sonata." He's more disagreeable to the olfactories than old John Jacob Astor's hide house, from whose effluvia sprung the master spirits of Gotham's Four Hundred. He will eat what would send a coyote howling out of the country. To him a jug of train-oil were as angel-food, a keg of stale soap-grease a ferial feast. During his entire life he enjoys but two baths--one when he is born, the other when he's buried. A religious fanatic, he obeys but one scriptural injunction--"Be fruitful and multiply." Even the Russian ladies wash only to suit the dresses they wear--high-necked or decollete. The average Slav is as stupidly

ignorant as any Agency Indian. He respects no law but that of blind force. His Magna Charta is the dynamite bomb. He is courageous with the bravery of the brute, which has no conception of life's sacredness. Doubtless the rule of the bayonet is the only government possible for such a barbarous people--and the Romanoffs have not allowed it to rust.

The Czar is the immediate ruler of nearly 130,000,000 semi-savages, his lightest word their supreme law, while the chiefs of the robber hordes of Central Asia acknowledge him their official head. Such tremendous power in the hands of a weak-minded, vacillating monarch like Nicholas II--descended from Catherine the Courtesan, and having in his veins the blood of cranks--may well cause western Europe to lie awake. Bonaparte declared that in a hundred years the continent would be all Russian or all Republican--by which he meant that unless this nation of savages in esse and Vandals in posse were stamped out it would imitate the example of Alaric and Attila and precipitate such another intellectual night as that known as the Dark Ages. In western Europe Republicanism is making but slight progress, while in the East the power of the Great White Khan is rapidly increasing. In a struggle between the semi-savagery of the East and the civilization of the West, China and Turkey would be the natural and inevitable allies of the Czar. Small wonder that the Great First Consul trudged home from Moscow with a heavy heart!

Some faint idea of the savage ignorance of Russia may be had from the history of the Siberian exiles and the fiendish persecutions of the Jewish people. Siberia is the Ice Hell of the old Norse mythologists, into which men, women and children have been indiscriminately cast on the bare suspicion of desiring to better the wretched condition of the Russian people. Its horrors, which have long been a hideous nightmare to civilized men, need no description here. The very name of Siberia causes humanity to shudder--it casts a shadow on the sun! The experience of the Jews in Russia was akin to that of the early settlers in America, who were exposed to the unbridled ferocity of the Aborigines; yet the so-called Christian nations dared do no more than petition the Czar that these savage atrocities should cease--futile prayers to the hog-headed god of the Ammonites!

The young man who has just been crowned at Moscow at an expense of some millions, and whose emblem of authority is ornamented with rubies as large as eggs and ablaze with 2,564 costly diamonds--while half his people are feeding on fetid offal--is a weak-faced pigmy who would probably be peddling Russia's favorite drunk promoter over a pine bar had he not chanced to be born in the purple. Having been spawned in a royal bed--perchance the same in which his great gran'dame Catherine was wont to receive her paramours--he becomes the most powerful of princes--haloed with "that divinity which doth behedge a king"--and

all the earth rejoices to do him honor.

For months past wealthy Americans have been hastening to Moscow to enjoy the barbaric fete and perchance pick up a greasy count or scorbutic duke for their daughters. They were not permitted to witness the coronation, but they could look at the Kremlin, stand in the street and watch the Czar and his wooden-faced wife sail by in their chariot of gold, and perhaps be cuffed out of the way by a court chamberlain. Surely that were felicity enough for fools! Our boasted Republican government, whose shibboleth has ever been the equality of all men--that the harvester of the lowly hoop-pole stands on a parity with a prince swinging a gilded scepter and robbing a poverty-stricken people--considered that its paid representatives in Russia would be unequal to the task of spilling sufficient slobber over the chief representative of "divine right," the great arch-enemy of human liberty, and sent special envoys to assist at the ceremony. These haughty American sovereigns were not permitted, however, to enter the sacred presence of the Czar attired in their regal robes--the dress of American gentlemen; but were required to dike out like English flunkeys at a fancy feed. "Evening coat with plain metal buttons, white vest, knee-breeches, black silk stockings, no ornaments"--such was the ukase issued to the envoys of Uncle Sam by the royal seneschal. They "obeyed with alacrity." Of course they did. Had they been ordered to appear in their shirt-tails, one flap dyed green and the other yellow, their legs painted like barber-poles and wearing asses' ears, they would have "obeyed with alacrity"--without ever a thought of advising the seneschal to go to Siberia. The rear admiral in command of the Mediterranean fleet was ordered to Kronstadt with his flagship; sent to attend the coronation "as the naval envoy of the United States"--a journey of some thousands of miles at a minimum expense of \$1,000 a day, to watch a young dude stick a million-dollar dog muzzle on his own foolish pate, while his female running mate cavorted around with a dozen dudines supporting her tail-feathers! And "Jones he pays the freight"--puts up for this egregious folly. It has cost the American tax-payers a quarter of a million dollars to have their mis-representatives prancing around the Kremlin in short-stop pants and silk stockings, bowing and scraping like a Pullman porter who has just received a dollar tip from some reckless Tezsan.

We have nothing in common with Russia. One government is the antithesis of the other. They are "on friendly terms" because they have practically no intercourse. Russia has no American possessions upon which we can pull the foolish manifesto of the erstwhile Monroe. There's no trade between the two countries--hasn't been since Russia unloaded her Alaskan glaciers upon us at a fancy price. It would have been eminently proper had Minister Breckinridge presented himself--toggled out in his best Arkansas jeans instead of being attired like a troubadour--to wish Nick exemption from the Nihilists and express the hope that the occasion wouldn't swell his head;

but there was absolutely no excuse for sending warships on an expensive cruise, and special envoys 5,000 miles to make unmitigated asses of themselves.

The unpalatable fact is that we are a nation of toad-eaters. President Cleveland is, in this respect at least, eminently representative of the American people. The axiom that "like takes to like" accounts for his popularity. It was that which enabled him to beat Jim Blaine. When the Grand Duke Alexis was in this country, upper-tendom slopped over him so persistently and offensively that the young man incontinently fled. The adulation he received from American belles made him such a misogynist that he never got married. The girl who got an introduction to the Duke was pointed out for years thereafter as an especial favorite of fortune. The obituary of a Louisville lady who died a short time ago contained the startling announcement that she had actually danced with the Duke. Every chappie who was permitted to pay for a mint julep absorbed by this subject of a crack-brained Czar secured a certificate to that effect and had it framed.

In 1892, when more than the usual number of Russians were going hungry to bed, America undertook to abrogate the law of the survival of the fittest by sending the starving wretches a ship-load of provisions. Dr. T. DeWitt Talmage, Dr. Louis Klopsch and other prominent Americans were sent over as commissioners to give out the grub. While in Russia they were permitted, as a special concession, to speak to the Caesarovitch, who afterwards succeeded to the crown. Of course these American Sovereigns were "overcome with such condescension," could "hardly get their breath"--even in short pants. They all wrote it up for the American press, and now Dr. Klopsch is rehearsing every detail of that important event--the crowning felicity of his life. He tells us how the commissioners "received full instructions as to dress"; what a "bountiful repast" they enjoyed with the crown prince's servants--while millions were starving to death; how they cooled their heels in the hall for an hour or two while their invisible host finished his cigar; how their "hearts fluttered" when the seneschal gave them their final instructions in court etiquette--not to expectorate on the carpet or scratch the furniture--then trotted them in; how the crown prince graciously permitted them to stand with uncovered heads for a few moments in his august presence, and then managed to get rid of them without actually kicking them down stairs! He "shook hands" with the party as a signal for them to pull their freight. And to this good day Drs. Talmage and Klopsch will not use toilet paper with the hand that has been pressed by royalty! But the charity commissioners wreaked a terrible revenge on the crown prince--whose starving people they were feeding--for thus insulting American manhood; they sent him a handsomely bound copy of Talmage's book! The fact that he has not broken off diplomatic relations with the United States may be accepted, however, as prima facie evidence that he has not yet read it. Perhaps he added insult to injury by

sending it to the Siberian exiles. The Czaritza, or Empress, is a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria. She is rather handsome, but her face, like that of all those born to the house of Hanover is expressionless as a clothing store dummy, hard as a blue-steel hatchet. Princess Alice, as she was known in England, was a very devout Protestant; but she promptly abjured the religion in which she was raised and changed her name to Alexandra Theodorovna for the blessed privilege of sharing an emperor's bed and board. Thrift is a characteristic of Queen Victoria's kids, and their religious scruples count for naught when weighed against a crown.

* * *

THROWING STONES AT CHRIST.

Are you throwing stones at Christ and the Christian Cause?

Pause, reflect before you answer. Not all the stones are thrown by the Atheist, the Agnostic, the Infidel. No, the most cruel stones, the ones that wound most deeply, are thrown from the pulpit itself.

The kiss of Judas strikes deeper than the spear of the Roman legionary; the denial of Peter is more cruel than the Crown of Thorns.

Are you Throwing Stones at Christ and the Christian Cause?

You in the Amen Corner stand forth and answer me. Drop that catechism! release that credo! take your lips from that crucifix! Now look me in the eye and speak the words of truth and soberness: Are you a property owner? Have you buildings rented to keepers of dives and bagnios? Do you come here on Sunday and pray the Lord to protect the young from temptation while you are the silent partner of criminals? Have you ever contributed to send missionaries to Madagascar money that was received from people whose business it is to debauch your neighbor's sons and, if possible, degrade his daughters? No? Thank God for that. Do you know of any member of this church who is so guilty? You suspect as much? Then why do you not go on your knees to him and beg him to turn from his evil ways? Do you not know that by keeping silent you tacitly endorse his infamy--that you bring the Christian cause into contempt; that you make it a byword and a reproach--that you are Throwing Stones at Christ?

No; do not sit down yet. What are your worldly possessions? How much did that diamond in your shirt-front cost? What was the expense of that costume worn by the woman who worships at your side? You surprise me! Worth fifty, a thousand dollars!--wearing diamonds, buying \$1,000 dresses--for what? To wear to church--in which to worship Him who had not where to lay his head! And a

thousand people in this one city alone in abject poverty--
"And the greatest of these is Charity." What a cruel stone
is Selfishness to Throw at Christ!

Is that your minister in immaculate broadcloth and shiny
boots, turning the leaves of his Bible with lily-fingers?
Pardon me that I did not recognize him. You see I have
been reading of John the Baptist with his raiment of camel's
hair,--of Christ with his single garment, tramping barefoot,
unshaven and unshorn over Judea's blazing hills.

Stand up, thou vicegerent of the Hebrew carpenter, and let
me question thee: You will not? I have no authority? Yet
publicans and sinners questioned thy Master, and He
answered freely and with all gentleness. Art thou greater
than He?

Are you Throwing Stones at Christ and the Christian Cause?

Be careful,--think well before you answer. In a minister of
God a mistake in this matter were little better than a crime.
Are you inculcating the spirit of Christ or Belial--of Love or
Hate? What do ye when mocked, reviled, your purposes
called in question? Do you go to the mocker, extend to him
a brother's hand and strive by moral suasion to lead him
out of the depths of everlasting darkness into the
bright effulgence of heavenly Day? Do you turn the other
cheek to the smiter and pray, "Father, forgive them, they
know not what they do"? Or do you mount the pulpit with a
splenetic heart and, with frantic gestures and a voice
hoarse with passion denounce the criticism as "infernal
rubbish"?

Are you seeking the salvation of souls or notoriety? Are
you striving to foment discord in your community or cast oil
upon the troubled waters? Are you striving to establish on
earth the universal brotherhood of Man and common
fatherhood of God, or Throwing Stones at Christ and the
Christian Cause from the cover of a canting hypocrisy?

Do you strive when criticised to transfer the criticism from
yourself to the Savior? Do you brand men who dare to
differ from you as blasphemers,--as though you were one
with God and that to question your superior wisdom and
goodness were equal to deny the Almighty? Do you, by
presumption where you should be meek, by belligerency
where you should act the peacemaker, by dogmatism
where you should humbly seek the light, by denunciation
where you should propitiate, call down the world's contempt
on the cause you profess to serve--Cast Stones at Christ?

It is Written, "Judge not lest ye be judged." Do you Always
heed the law?--carefully refrain from resolving yourself into
an inquisitorial court,--becoming both prosecutor and judge
and condemning those who chance to differ from you?

"Why so hot, little man?" The world rolled on, oh so many
weary years before the Fates kindly sent thee to set it right;

it will go on much in the same old way after both thee and thy work have been forgotten.

To the stones cast at Christ by professed unbelievers we need give but little heed. They rain harmless as Parthian shafts on the shield of Achilles. Never was atheistical book written, never was infidel argument penned that touched the core of any religion, Christian or Pagan. They but serve as driving sand of the desert to scour the eating rust from the Christian armor. Seldom indeed does the avowed infidel cast a stone at Christ,--he contents himself with holding up to the world's scorn the mummeries in which dogmatizers have invested the teachings of the grandest man that ever died for truth. God created nothing in vain. Even the atheist has his uses; nay, even the splenetic preacher may fill an important niche in the great world's economy--may be a real blessing in disguise.

Very remarkable is it that Christ's holy cause best prospered, was purest, most powerful for good when most persecuted, "The blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church." From the auto da fe arose the anthem that thrilled the Pagan heart. From prison cells poured forth paeans of praise that caused princes to kiss the cross. From the outlawed conventicle went forth a holy zeal that carried millions to the throne of grace,--from the gloomy midnight meeting there burst a light that illumed the world.

The stones cast by avowed enemies were the steps by which the Cause of Christ mounted from poverty and obscurity to thrones and wealth, to name and fame,--the wings with which it encircled the great round globe, the power that enabled it to break down the barriers of the most obdurate hearts.

It is the stones cast by professed friends--the stones of Selfishness and Pride, of Intolerance and Vain-glory,--of Hate and Discord masquerading in the garb of Love and Law--that cause the wounds on Calvary to bleed afresh, the tears in Gethsemane to flow anew, the Crown of Thorns to once more burn the throbbing brow, the scourge to fall across the naked shoulders of the Son of God.

Are you Throwing Stones at Christ and His Cause?

* * *

LOOKING BACKWARD.

When it comes to "Looking Backward," Bellamy isn't in it a little bit with Prof. Herman V. Hilprecht. The retrospective glance of the latter covers a period of at least 11,000 years; and what is of infinitely more importance, it is that of a learned paleologist instead of a sensation-mongering empiric. The Professor has succeeded in lifting a corner of that black veil which hangs between the prehistoric and the present, in affording us a fleeting glimpse of our fellow man

as he appeared long ages before the birth of Abraham. He has demonstrated that man has been a civilized animal much longer than is popularly supposed--that at least 5,000 years before the supposed advent of Adam he not only lived sociably in cities and had gods and kings, but was able to read and write! For eight years past the Professor and his co-laborers, under the patronage of the University of Pennsylvania, have been carrying on their explorations. The site of Nippur, the ancient capital of Kengi, later known as Babylonia, is the scene of their labors. Hitherto Nippur has been supposed to have been the world's oldest city; but the excavations made not only prove that it rose upon the ruins of others, but affords some knowledge of a long line of kings who lived so long ago that their very names were forgotten before the flight of the Israelites from Egypt, or even the building of the Tower of Babel.

"What is the story of this buried past?
Were all its doors flung wide,
For us to search its rooms?
And we to see the race, from first to last,
And how they lived and died."

Sargon is the most ancient Chaldean monarch mentioned in the Bible, and hitherto archaeologists have agreed that he was a fiction; but the Professor has not only proven that he had a habitation as well as a name, but has catalogued some thirty of his predecessors. Science has amply demonstrated the existence of man upon the earth long before the psychozoic era of the Biblical cosmogony; but Prof. Hilprecht is the first to demonstrate the high antiquity of his civilization. To the average man this will appear neither more interesting nor profitable than a two-headed calf or petrified corpse; but to the philosophic mind it affords much food for reflection. We have presumed that we could trace the history of man back to the time when he began to practice the art of writing, as distinguished from the transference of thought by crude pictorials--that our prehistoric progenitor was simply a savage. It now appears that people may build indestructible temples, and kings and priests write intelligently on imperishable material, and the nation be as utterly forgotten as though it had never existed. With these facts in mind, it were curious to speculate on what the world 11,000 years hence will know of our now famous men--such, for instance, as Cleveland and McKinley! What will the historian of that faraway time have to say of Mark Hanna? Printing has been called "the art preservative"; but is it? Suppose the priests of Bel--that deity who antedates by so many centuries the Jewish Jehovah--had committed the history of their temples to "cold type" instead of graving it upon sacred vases: Would Prof. Hilprecht and other Assyriologists be deciphering it to-day? Printing has substituted flimsy paper for parchment just as the pen substituted parchment for waxen tablets, as the stylus substituted the latter for the far more enduring leaflet of torrifed clay. Imagine the effect of 11,000 years upon a modern library! Where will the archaeologist of the year 12,896 turn for the history of our

time--where search for those "few immortal names that were not born to die"? Oral transmission of historic data, such as prevails among savages, such as prevailed among the Hellenes in the age of Homer, has been supplanted by the press. Long before Macaulay's New Zealander stands on a broken arch of London bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's, every book now extant will have perished. Will they be continuously reproduced, and thus, like the human race itself, run ever on? Eras of barbarism have overtaken civilizations as pretentious as our own--intellectual nights in which the patiently acquired learning of ages was lost. Petrification as in China, retrogression begotten of luxury as in Athens, submersion beneath an avalanche of human debris as in Rome, ignorance-breeding despoliation as in Ireland--these be the lions in the path of civilization. No race or nation of which we have any record has avoided a recrudescence of barbarism for an hundred generations. A few centuries of our wasting climate obliterates inscriptions on brass and wrecks the proudest monuments of marble. The recently imported Egyptian obelisk, which stood for ages on Nilus' plain, is already falling into ruins. We can scarce decipher the deep-cut epitaphs of the Pilgrim Fathers. The mansion of the sire is uninhabitable for the son. The history of McKinley's promised era of "Progress and Prosperity" will be written by the press reporter, that busy litterateur who has neither yesterday nor to-morrow. Some subsidized biographer may bind McKinley up in calf, and chance preserve a stray copy for some centuries--then good-by to all his greatness! The mighty Washington has not been dead a hundred years, yet has already become--as R. G. Ingersoll informs us--"merely a steel engraving." Adams and Hancock and Franklin are paling stars, despite our printing-presses, have become little more than idle words in the school-boy's lexicon. Our proud Republic, our boasted civilization will pass, for change is the order of the universe. What records will they leave behind? What is to prevent them being as utterly forgotten as were Sargon's predecessors? Here and there the delver of far years will find the fragment of a wall, perchance an inscription carved in stone and protected by chance from the gnawing tooth of time. And from these posterity will construct for us a history in which we will appear, perhaps, as the straggling vanguard of civilization instead of heirs of all the ages. They may dig up a petrified dude and figure out that we were a species of anthropoid ape--learnedly proclaim us as "the missing link!" Suppose that by some mischance a picture of the new woman in bloomers and bestride a bike should be preserved: Would posterity accept her as its progenitor, or class her as a *lusus naturae*--perchance an hermaphrodite? A few coins will doubtless be discovered--if the excavators avoid the Texas treasury--and triumphant Populism take it for granted that 'twas on these curious disks that our "infant industry" cut its teeth. The "In God We Trust" inscription may be regarded as a barbaric hoodoo to prevent infantile bellyache or the evil eye, but the dollar mark will be entirely unintelligible to a people so many thousand years removed from the savage

superstition of metallic money. Of course woman will have ruled the world so long that "tyrant man" will be regarded as a sun myth, and the Goddess of Liberty on our coins be mistaken for portraits of our female monarchs. Thus will Cleveland and McKinley, like Hippolyta and other amazons of old, be passed down to remote posterity in petticoats. If the electrotype from which the New York Journal prints its portraits of Mark Hanna should be found among the tumuli of Manhattan Island, it were well worth remaining alive until that time to hear the curious speculation of craniological cranks. Should the paleologists unearth the World building, they will find in the basement an imperishable object about the size of a bushel-basket, which will puzzle them not a little, but which his contemporaries could readily inform them was the gall-bag of Josef Phewlitzer's circulation liar. The discovery of Editor Dana's office cat nicely embalmed may get us accredited with the worship of felis domestica alias cream-canner, as a "judgment" for our persistent slander of the ancient Egyptians. But seriously, is it not a trifle startling to reflect of how little real importance all our feverish work and worry is, and how small a space it is ordained to occupy in the mighty epic of mankind! Here we have been fretting, fuming, and even fighting for months past to "save the country," only to learn that it will in nowise stay saved--is hastening rapidly on to the tomb of the world's history, will pass in turn through that gloomy sepulcher of countless nations into the great inane, the eternal void, the all-embracing night of utter nothingness! With all our patriotism and scannel-piping, our boasting and our battlefields, our solemn Declarations and labored Constitutions, we are but constructing a house of cards.

"The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

We devote our energies to the propagation of a religion which Reason, that pitiless monarch of the mind, tells us must as inevitably pass as did those of Isis and Bel and Cybele, leaving in the earth's all-absorbing bosom only a few shattered altars and broken fanes. We are striving to win and wear the immortelles, only to be told that mighty empires have passed from the memory of mankind, and proud kings who may have ruled the world, sunk into the far depths of Time and been forgotten. We divide into classes industrial and sets social and give Pride free rein to vaunt herself, knowing that the hour will surely come when not even a Hilprecht can distinguish between the prince's ashes and the pauper's dust--can e'en so much as say, "This cold dead earth, o'er which lizards crawl and from which springs the poisonous worm and noxious weed, once lived and loved." We busy ourselves about the style of a coat or the cut of a corsage; we dispute anent our faiths

and plan new follies; we struggle for wealth that we may flaunt a petty opulence in our fellows' faces and win the envy of fools--and the span of Life but three score and ten, while a thousand years are but as one tick of the horologe of Time! We quarrel about our political creeds and religious cults, as though it made any difference whether we wore white or yellow badges, sacrificed at the shrine of Jupiter or worshiped in the temples of Jehovah. Why so hot, little man? Look up! Thou seest that sun? 'Tis the same that shone on this debris when it was the throbbing metropolis of a world. The self-same moon that looks so peacefully down smiled on the midnight tryst in Nippur's scented groves or Babylon's hanging gardens; the same stars that now fret Heaven's black vault with astral fire winked and blinked 11,000 years ago while the sandaled feet of youth, on polished cedar floors, beat out the rhythmic passion of its blood. There too were the Heaven of requited love and the Hell of breaking hearts; there too were women beauteous as the dawn and ambitious men, grasping with eager hands at what they fondly thought the ever-fadeless bays; there too were crowned kings and fashion's sumptuous courts, chanting priests and tearful penitents--the same farce tragedy of Life and Death. And now an unsightly heap of rubbish marks this once bright theater in which prince and pauper each played his part--marks it, and nothing more. But the sun shines on, and the stars, and the silver moon still draws the restless wave around a rolling world. How small we are, how ephemeral, how helpless in God's great hand! Is it not strange that we do not cling, each to the others, like shipwrecked mariners riding the stormy waters on some frail raft and looking with dilating eyes into the black abyss?--that we waste our little lives in wild wars and civic strife?--that all our souls are concentrated in that one word, selfishness?--that we have time to hate? If History be Philosophy teaching by example, what lesson does Prof. Hilprecht bring us from the chronicles of those kings who died 5,000 years before that garden was planted "eastward in Eden!"

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ARE WOMEN DEVOID OF DESIRE?

Perhaps a religious periodical like the *ICONOCLAST* should avoid a question of such delicacy, should leave it to the medical magazines, which may speak as plainly as they please, even in the presence of the proverbial "young person"--now deep in the study of physiology and even essaying the practice of therapeutics. My quarrel, however, is with these same medical magazines, which delight in discovering mares' nests for no other apparent purpose than to make mankind uncomfortable. They will persist in disregarding the time-honored axiom that "everybody knows more than anybody," a truism which Dr. Spahr elaborated in his declaration that "the common observation of common people is more trustworthy than the statistical investigations of the most unprejudiced expert"--even though he be a distinguished M.D. I have before me

an essay by George Troup Maxwell, M.D., of Florida, read before the association of doctors and printed, with evident approval, by the Virginia Medical Semi-Monthly. Like most gentlemen of his profession, Dr. Maxwell discusses matters of the utmost delicacy with refreshing freedom, an example which I must follow to some extent if I would expose his fallacies; hence the "young person"--unless indeed she be studying to become a doctor or a writer of "realistic" fiction--is solemnly adjured to dive no deeper here. Dr. Maxwell makes several startling assertions from which I--albeit a doctor of divinity instead of medicine--must emphatically dissent. I make no apology for so doing, for it is the time-honored prerogative of preachers to speak ex cathedra on all questions, whether religious, scientific or political. The pulpit is to all other professions what philosophy is to the various schools of science--exercises supervisory power, and by a tap here and a prod there, makes them consentient with its own infallible scheme of things, so to speak. It is a very trying occupation, yet some complain that we parsons must have our summer vacation on full pay and nurse our precious health at swell hotels, while common people feed on potatoes--and plant and grow six-cent cotton for the benefit of the contribution plate. But from of old there have been morbose people ever ready to criticize the holy and put cockleburs in the back hair of the pure in heart. The salient features of Dr. Maxwell's essay may be summarized; as follows:

Sexually considered, civilized man is more bestial than the brutes. He does not respect the person of his gestant wife, and this disregard of natural law is the most potent failure in the curtailment of natural increase. Certain physiological facts indicate that woman is destitute of desire. Carpenter, the great English scientist, is quoted in support of this proposition, and a "female lecturer of distinction" (name not given) to establish the theory that the chief cause of marital unhappiness and the ill health of wives is the sexual inhumanity of husbands--such inhumanity being quite as common among the better as among the uncultured.

The foregoing is as delicately as I can state propositions of such far-reaching importance, and which neither Dr. Maxwell nor the "female lecturer of distinction" treat in a manner at all "mealy-mouthed." Even after exhausting my stock of euphemisms the recital appears risque enough to alarm more than one lady reader, and I am tempted to turn back; but courage, good soul! there's nobody looking, and if we must live it is important that we learn. "The proper study of mankind is man;" and we can obtain no true idea of the animal if we view him only in holiday attire. As despite all "progress of science," incubators and other labor-saving machinery, people still persist in entering the world in the primogenial way, the relation of the sexes is of quite immeasurable importance, and knowledge thereof should not be monopolized by the narrow circle who read medical magazines. It is well that we come occasionally out of the cloud-realm of sentiment and discuss the relations of man and woman from the

standpoint of practical common sense. I am aware that the views expressed by Dr. Maxwell are entertained by some very able medical men; but they violate the public understanding, and, as usual, the people are right and the specialists are wrong. We do not find desire, as here understood, in plants and the lowest development of animal life, it being particularly an attribute of the higher biogeny. As the more perfect the animal organism the more acute the sensations of pleasure and pain, it follows that in man, most complex of earthly creatures, is found the most powerful procreative passion. But while this is the necessary correlative of his superior nervo-muscular organization, his better attributes are likewise developed--or differentiated--by the same law of evolution. Desire, though accentuated, is refined and rendered subordinate to his reason, while the brute is the blind slave of instinct. With the desire of the man and the reason of the mollusk, the genus homo would be all that he is painted by Dr. Maxwell. Should man become for one day "more bestial than the brute" his boasted civilization would revert to subter-savagery. Under such conditions human progress, society itself, were impossible. It is by no means true, as Dr. Maxwell asserts, that children are born solely because men are animals possessing animalistic instincts. True, they could not well be born were men not animals; but the "sweet reasonableness" of things enters ever more and more into the advent of children upon this earth. Were man made altogether of mud, intent only on the indulgence of brute desire, there had been no sacred institution of marriage, and family names proudly handed down from sire to son through many centuries. The name of father had not been venerable, nor that of mother a synonym of sanctity. To the civilized man marriage does not mean, as Dr. Maxwell seems to imagine, simply license for obscene riot, but a solemn covenant that he and the object of his adoration have forsaken all else to cleave each unto the other through weal and through woe, through life unto death. Desire may be the basic principle of the union, but only as the earth is the basic principle of the rose's beauty and the jasmine's perfume. Since earliest biblical days women have sought to bear children that their husbands might love them better; indicating that indulgence is not man's sole concern, even though he be a barbarian; that one reason he seeks the opposite sex is his desire for fair daughters and brave sons--a love in which there is no taint of lust. Hugo, to whom the human heart was as a printed page, has given us an admirable portrait of "the way of a man with a maid" in the courtship of Marius and Cosette. Youth and ardor and opportunity, yet no thought of evil--all the dross in human nature transformed into the spirituelle by the pure white light of love. True, all men are not Mariuses or Romeos. There be Lovelaces and Cagliostros and Calibans; but prithee, good sir, let us judge our kind by the nobler instead of the baser standards. Josephs and St. Anthonys are not plentiful I grant you; but neither are such brutish husbands as those you denounce. Love and poetry and chivalry still have an abiding-place in the heart of man, and the mother and matriarch of this triune is woman. Prof.

Carpenter, Dr. Maxwell and the "female lecturer of distinction" to the contrary notwithstanding, it is doubtful if the sexes differ much in the intensity of desire. True, I have written somewhere that "God made the male to seek, the female to be sought"; but it does not follow therefore that every woman is a Daphne who would be transformed into a laurel tree to escape an importunate lover. There may have been women so bloodless that their love left frost on the window-panes of their boudoirs; but never did their sons become world compellers. Despite the pretty theory of Dr. Maxwell, the same fiery cross is laid upon the daughters as upon the sons of men, and thousands falter and fall beneath it and are swept downwards to their doom. Were it otherwise, were women the passionless creatures some doctors delight to paint them, all our encomiums of female virtue were idle mockery. It is because we realize that in the veins of the vestal virgin runs the same fierce tide which Egypt's Queen nor Russia's Empress could control, and which flamed in battle-splendor in the ten years' war of Troy, that with uncovered heads we render her the tribute of our respect. Women admit all this in demanding the "single standard of morals." It is doubtless true that many women are less amorous than their lords--are to some extent the victims of the latter; but before assuming that this defect is congenital it were well to inquire if there be not an efficient post-natal cause. It is no compliment to woman to urge that she contributes unwillingly to the world, would fain ignore the God-given law to "be fruitful and multiply." Regardless of the affected horror of anaemic prudes and ancient wall-flowers, the woman of to-day insists upon being recognized as a vital force--is even beginning to comprehend that, refine it as you will, differentiate it as you may, it is the same vital force which fills the cradle that sways the scepter. As she aspires to share with man the regency of this world, she will scarce thank Carpenter and Maxwell for a premise from which the conclusion must be inevitably drawn that, as a world-power, she must ever rank with eunuchs--that she is here solely by man's volition and despite her implied protest. We must understand woman before presuming to measure her passions or estimate her powers; and it is well to remember that after some sixty centuries of interested scrutiny she remains very much a mystery--to eminent physicians as well as others. Her mind seems to bewilder the psychologists no less than her body puzzles the physiologists--both find the factual impossible and the self-evident absurd. Dr. Maxwell has discovered, however, that comparatively few women marry men whom they would select were they free to inspect the entire human penfold and make a choice of a mate. Now if he will conjoin that fact to this other, equally self-evident, that with the average woman desire is the fruitage of which love is the flower, perchance he will find a valid explanation of what Carpenter calls her sexual passivity. Man is a born polygamist, but woman is not naturally polyandrous. This statement--which I have made hitherto to the consternation of the godly and at imminent danger of being prosecuted for heresy--is substantiated by the fact that with man desire usually

precedes love, while the latter is not its necessary sequence; but with the normal woman love must act as pilot for passion--so much is she our moral superior. Every woman is a day-dreamer and a worshiper. During girlhood she pictures to herself some perfect man--some impossible demigod--who is to drift within the little circle of her life and make her the proudest of women, the happiest of wives. In grace or beauty, in genius or bravery--or all these attributes--he is to be the paragon, to tower like Saul above his brethren. Her husband is to be a man of whom she will be intensely proud, herself the envy of her sex. If this be not correct let some old mother in Israel answer. Happy for the daydreamer if her fairy prince, or somewhat her fond imaginings can accept as such, lays heart and fortune at her feet; sorrowful indeed if he come not, worse if he materialize and have eyes only for others. If she be so fortunate as to wed the one man in all the world whom she would have chosen had such choice been vouchsafed her by kind Heaven, o'ermastering love will sweep her through all the heavens a sensuous fancy ever feigned; but the chances are that her idol lives only in the ghostly realm of dreams, else goes elsewhere to wive, and she marries not whom she would but whom she must--wedlock, thanks to her mistaken training, being the end and aim of her existence. Instead of an idol to adore, she secures some foolish eidolon whom she can scarce respect, and through days of disgust and nights of agony strives to "do her duty," to conceal from the world her disappointment. Thus is blood that might have been a sirocco to stir the soul of an anchorite, transformed into an icy mist--the Paphian Venus lies crushed, degraded, cold, amid the reeds of Pan. But this mesalliance, this mating with Davus the detested instead of with Oedipus the adored, is not the only cause of indifference. The health of American wives, their muliebrity or womanly power, is sapped in various ways. Millions of them are overworked, all the virility ground out of them in the brutal treadmill of existence; and it not infrequently happens that they are the wives of men in easy circumstances, who are too fat-headed to realize that those womanly attributes which so charm the sterner sex cannot long withstand continual drudgery. One is tempted to believe that such men married to save the expense of hiring a housekeeper, that they hoped by sleeping with their laundress to avoid wash bills. Take the great middle class of America (which is the social and moral cream of the country) and you will find that, as a rule, the men have abundant leisure in which to recuperate from the exhaustion of labor, and are robust as Jove's Phoenician bull, while their wives slave from early morn till dewy eve and present the faded, "washed-out" appearance that bespeaks the work which is never done and the worry which ends only with death. If you will look closely you will detect traces of tight corsets and other sartorial enginery with which Dame Fashion attempts to eliminate the little life which continual cooking, washing and pot-walloping has left--for woman, though her heart be broken, her spirit crushed and her viscera a chaos, still clings to her vanity, will "follow the fashions" though they lead to a

funeral. Such is your Italian Aphrodite ten years after marriage, when to her matured charms the beauty of her girlhood should be as moonlight unto sunlight and as water unto wine. And this wan, suffering creature, with a drug-shop on her pantry shelves and more "female complaints" than were known to the father of medicine, is expected to comfort the couch of Caesar! Nor is this all. As the struggle for existence grows harder (as it has been doing in America for some decades) and the necessity for "keeping up appearances" more imperative, ever greater precautions are taken to prevent family increase. So widespread is this evil that you can scarce pick up a paper without finding some abortion nostrum advertised. Scan the next paper that comes into your home and see if the virtues of some tansy, penny-royal or other foeticidal compound be not therein set forth. Were these crime promoters not extensively sold the murderous scoundrels who manufacture them could not annually expend vast sums of money without "public educators" for their exploitation. These advertisements frequently suggest the crime; that is their intent; hence publishers who insert them are the co-partners of abortionists and share both the iniquity and the cash. But even this costly advertising does not indicate the extent of the evil, for by far the greater part of those married women who desire to avoid maternity are their own practitioners--paying the penalty with premature age, impotency and pain. As a rule the mother of a large family is a healthy woman with vigor unimpaired, while others of her age having few children or none are the semi-invalids who denounce their husbands to the doctor. The practice of avoiding marital responsibility is frequently condemned by the medical press, even by the pulpit; but while M.D.'s and D.D.'s make a specialty of both gynecology and gyneolatry, neither seem to understand the spirit in which these sins against hygienics are committed. Doubtless a few fashionable butterflies avoid motherhood for selfish reasons; but these are unimportant exceptions to the rule. If a woman does not love her husband she may not care to bear him children; but maternal instinct usually dominates this desire. If she does love him, and his financial resources be limited, she hesitates to increase his responsibilities. The social standing of a family in this artificial age is measured chiefly by the faithfulness with which it follows fashion's decrees; and as every child, by enhancing expense makes service of this modern Moloch more difficult, the unborn innocents are slain. She considers the educational and other advantages that will accrue to the children already born, and unselfishly--if sinfully--sacrifices herself. It is an evil that will scarce be eliminated by the dehortations of homilists who see no deeper than the surface. Dr. Maxwell and his lady lecturer are certainly mistaken in the assumption that American husbands do not consider the welfare of their wives when in a delicate condition, and it is a mistake that must be classed either as criminal negligence or calumny. I opine that the lady lecturer aforesaid is a sour old maid--that if she ever becomes a wife and mother she will learn somewhat of the caprices of her sex subsequent to

conception that will materially modify her complaint. Reasoning by analogy from the inferior order of animals to man hagled more than one enthusiastic physiologist into serious error. The medical profession is continually alarming the country. It has been but a little while since men were assured that they were poisoning their babies by kissing them, and now they are flatly told that their wives regard the nuptial couch with aversion. Havana cigars give a fellow the "tobacco heart," plug exhausts the saliva necessary to digestion, and bourbon whiskey burns his stomach full of blowholes. Beer makes him bilious, tea and coffee knock out his nerves, while plum-pudding gives him dyspepsia, grape pie appendicitis and hot biscuits undermine his general health. Emotional preaching afflicts him with "jerks," golf has a tendency to paresis, the round dance infects him with philogyny and bicycling deforms his face. We might just as well be dead and with Lucifer as believe these doctors, for life wouldn't be half worth the living if we heeded their laws. My brethren of the loaded capsule and sociable stethoscope are evidently off their equipoise. Babies flourish much better on the kiss micrococcus than on the slipper bacillus, few women will live with impotent husbands, and nearly every centenarian is a collocation of bad habits that, by all the laws of Hippocrates, should have buried him at the halfway house. It may seem unchivalrous to say so, but it is a stubborn fact nevertheless, and merits the consideration of Dr. Maxwell, that more men are misled by lustful women than maids betrayed by designing men. In fact, no man--at least no civilized man--makes improper advances to a woman unless he receives some encouragement, being deterred both by chivalrous sentiment and respect for the persuasive shotgun. Despite the picture drawn by the lady lecturer and others of the horrors of married life, I opine that the woman who captures a sure-enough man who isn't negotiating simply for a cook and chambermaid, and who can be depended upon to play Romeo to her Juliet for sixty years or so, should be in no unseemly haste to break into that heaven where Hymen is given the marble heart, and the matron who breaks into the game with seven obedient husbands to her credit has no advantage over the old maid who never swallowed a pillow while watching a man clad only in a single garment and a cerulean halo of profanity, making frantic swipes under the bureau for a missing collar-button.

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HYPNOTIC POWER OF HER.

I have received a letter from Tyler, Texas, propounding the following fateful conundrum: "Can Woman Hypnotize Man?" My correspondent adds that "by answering, the ICONOCLAST will confer a favor on the people of Tyler, decide a bet and settle a vexatious question."

The affirmative scoops the stakes--wins dead easy, and world without end. The man who puts his doubloons on the

negative either never saw a woman until after she was dead, or didn't know what ailed him when under her hypnotic influence. Perhaps he imagined that he had a chronic case of yellow jaundice, was threatened with paresis or had been inadvertently struck by lightning. Perhaps he's under the mystic spell of some "wily Vivien" even now, and laying foolish wagers in his mesmeric sleep. "Can woman hypnotize man? "Well, I should snigger. She can hypnotize anything that wears pants, from the prince at his gilded poker game, to the peasant scattering worm poison in the lowly cotton patch and revolving in his think tank the tenets of Populism; and I'm not sure but the clothing store dummies and their brother dudes are simply the physical wrecks and mental ruins of her hypnotic medicine. She hypnotizes because she can't help it. She's built that way. The Tyler savants are 'way behind the times. They are plunging into the shoreless realm of psychology in search of information that was trite in antediluvian times. They are trying to determine whether man is a free moral agent in matters matrimonial, when the sire of Solomon had made answer, and Lillian Russell's multitudinous husbands settled the "vexatious question" forever and for aye. But perhaps Tyler has been too busy raising politicians to keep pace with the psychological procession. Eve hypnotized Adam and made him cast away the empire of the earth for a scrubby apple, and ever since her fair daughters have been making men imitate their remote forefather's folly.

Woman does not "operate" as do the professional he-hypnotists. Instead of giving you a bright button or brand-new dime to look at, she puts her dimples in evidence--maelstroms of love in a sea of beauty. She dazzles you for a moment with the dreamy splendor of her eyes, then studies the toe of a boot that would raise a Kansas corn-crop for Trilby or supply Cinderella with bunions. She looks down to blush and she looks up to sigh--catches you "a-comin' an' goin' "--and you're gone! You realize that the linchpin is slipping out of your logic, but you let 'er slip. You suspect that your judgment has taken unto itself wings, and that you couldn't tell whether you're a red-licker Democrat or a hard-cider Prohibitionist; but you don't care. You simply bid farewell to every fear and give the "operator" your undivided attention. She plays with a skilled hand on all your senses, until the last one of them "passes in music out of sight" and leaves you a mental bankrupt. She makes you drunken with the music of her voice and maddens you with the low, sweet melody of her skirts. She permits you, quite accidentally, of course, to catch a glimpse of an ankle turned for an angel, and, as she bends forward to chastise you with her fan, your vagrant gaze rests for a fleeting moment on alabaster hemispheres rising in a billowy sea of lace, like Aphrodite cradled in old ocean's foam. You are now far advanced in the hypnotic trance, and very fond of it as far as you've got. Her every posture is a living picture, her slightest movement a sensuous symphony, her breath upon your cheek a perfumed air to waft you to the dreamy but

dangerous land of the lotus-eaters. You drift nearer, and ever nearer, like a moth revolving in narrowing circles around an incandescent light, until you find yourself alone with her in some cozy nook, the world forgetting if not by your creditors forgot. Being naturally industrious, you seek employment, and she gives you her hand to hold. Of course, she could hold it herself, but the occupation pleases you, and she doesn't mind. Besides, you make more rapid progress into the realm of irresponsibility by taking care of it for her occasionally. You conceive that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well, and freeze to that little fragment of pulsing snow like a farmer to his Waterbury in a camp-meeting crowd. She rewards your devotion to duty by a gentle pressure, and a magnetic thrill starts at your finger tips and goes through your system like an applejack toddy, until it makes your toes tingle, then starts on its return trip, gathering volume as it travels, until it becomes a tidal wave that envelops all your world. You are now uncertain whether you have hit the lottery for the capital prize or been nominated for justice of the peace. You have lost your identity, and should you chance to meet yourself in the middle of the road would need an introduction. The larger the supply of brains you sat into the game with, the less you have left. You begin to talk incoherently, and lay the premise for a breach of promise case. You sip the hand-made nectar from the rosy slot in her face, harrow the Parisian peach bloom on her cheek with your scrubbing-brush mustache, reduce the circumference of her health-corset with your manly arm, and your hypnotism is complete. Right there the last faint adumbration of responsibility ends and complete mental aberration begins. You sigh like a furnace and write sonnets to your mistress' eyebrow--you cut fantastic capers before high Heaven for the divertisement of those who don't yet know how it is themselves. The "operator" may break the spell by marrying you, in which case you will return by easy stages to the normal and again become a sane man and useful member of society; but if she lets you down with the "sister" racket, your nervous system is pretty apt to sour. When a woman loses her hypnotic power she either straddles a bike, becomes a religious crank or seeks surcease for her sorrow among the female suffragists.

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VICTOR HUGO'S IMMORTALITY.

Philadelphia's school board has barred Victor Hugo's "Les Miserables" from the list of books to be used in the high school in the teaching of French, as a book not fit for girls. What would not one give for a diagram of the heads of these educators? It must be a nasty mind which can find anything immoral in that book as a whole. One may take a chapter out here and there, and show it to be broad and coarse, divorced from the context, but the whole effect of the book is moral. The mind of the man who can say that "Les Miserables" will not tend as a whole to make a girl more womanly, a boy more manly, must be poisoned by

the miasma from a filthy heart. What and who in it are immoral? Not Valjean! Not Fantine even, nor Cosette! Not Marius! Not Javert, the detective! Is the chapter on Cambronne's surrender the offending fragment of the great literary masterpiece? That chapter is the sublimity of disgust! There never was anyone hurt spiritually or morally by the great French masterpiece of fiction. The man who can say the book is defiling, would draw defilement from the fount of Castaly. The Philadelphia school board has declared itself an aggregation of asses. "Les Miserables" is the greatest poem of divine humanity that this world has known since Shakespeare wrote "Lear." But I suppose "Lear," too, is immoral. I suppose everything is immoral, from "Oedipus, the Tyrant," to Hall Caine's "Christian," that teaches that men are born of woman, and that love will have its way, even unto all bitterness. It is eminently fitting that "Les Miserables" should be condemned as immoral in the most immoral city in the United States. A Philadelphian may be depended upon to see immorality in one of Raphael's Madonnas.--St. Louis Mirror.

My esteemed contemporary should bottle up its indignation, there is absolutely nothing to be gained by lambasting idiots, by criticizing cretins. Editor Reedy is but casting his pearls before swine--is talking to people who, having eyes see not, having ears hear not, and whose cerebra are filled with sawdust. They are like unto a lot of sheep that follow the master ram, not because they comprehend or care whither he is going, but because they smell him, and point their proboscidi in his direction as naturally as the needle lines the pole. It was Jean Paul--was it not?--who discovered that if a cane be held horizontally before the lead ram of a flock, compelling him to saltate, then removed, the thousandth ewe lamb will jump at that point just as did the pioneer. So it is with a pietistical and puristical people--they will follow some stupid old bellwether because utterly incapable of independent thought, of individual ratiocination. When "Les Miserables" first appeared some literary Columbus made the remarkable discovery that it was a French book, that it was shot full of "slang," the expressive patois of the race, that it was liberally spiced with argot, the vernacular of vagabonds. Hugo's immortal masterpiece has not yet recovered from this discovery--the thousandth ewe lamb is still blithely saltating over the blackthorn. It is as useless to contend against the purist fad as against the holiness fake. Like a plague of army worms or epidemic of epizootic, it must run its course. Preternicety of expression, an affectation of euphemism, has in every age and clime evidenced moral degeneration and mental decay. When people emasculate their minds, they redouble their corporeal devotion at the shrine of Priapus, for nature preserves the equipoise. Every writer of virility is now voted obscene, every man who strikes sledge-hammer blows at brutal wrong entrenched in prescriptive right is denounced as immoral. "Les Miserables" not fit for young ladies' reading!--and this the epocha of the New Woman, of the single standard of mind and morals. While woman is

insisting that she is every way man's equal, entitled to share with him the wardship of this world, Detroit is putting bloomers on the statues of Dian, Boston refusing the Bacchante, Waco draping the marble figure of a child exhibited at her cotton palace, Anthony Comstock having cataleptic convulsions, "Les Miserables" excluded from Philadelphia high schools and the ICONOCLAST denounced by certain bewhiskered old he-virgins as obscene! And so it goes. This world is becoming so awfully nice that it's infernally nawsty. It sees evil in everything because its point of view is that of the pimp. Its mind is a foul sewer whose exhalations coat even the Rose of Sharon with slime. A writer may no longer call a spade a spade; he must cautiously refer to it as an agricultural implement lest he shock the supersensitiveness of hedonists and call down upon his head the Anathema Maranatha of men infinitely worse than Oscar Wilde. What the Mirror means by "Cambronne's surrender" I cannot imagine, unless Editor Reedy was indulging in grim irony. I present extracts from the account of Cambronne, which he suspects may have given the pietistical Quakers a pain. It is the finale of Hugo's matchless word-painting of the Battle of Waterloo:

"A few squares of the guard, standing motionless in the swash of the rout, like rocks in running water, held out till night. They awaited the double shadow of night and death, and let them surround them. Each regiment, isolated from the others, and no longer connected with the army, which was broken on all sides, died where it stood. The gloomy squares, deserted, conquered and terrible, struggled formidably with death, for Ulm, Wagram, Jena and Friedland were dying in it. When twilight set in at nine in the evening, one square still remained at the foot of the plateau of Mont St. Jean. In this mournful valley, at the foot of the slope scaled by the cuirassiers, now inundated by the English masses, beneath the converging fire of the hostile and victorious artillery, under a fearful hailstorm of projectiles, this square still resisted. It was commanded by an obscure officer by the name of Cambronne. At each volley the square still diminished, but continued to reply to the canister with musketry fire, and each moment contracted its four walls. Fugitives in the distance, stopping at moments to draw breath, listened in the darkness to this gloomy diminishing thunder. When this legion had become only a handful, when their colors were but a rag, when their ammunition was exhausted, and muskets were clubbed, and when the pile of corpses was greater than the living group, the victors felt a species of sacred awe, and the English artillery ceased firing. It was a sort of respite; these combatants had around them an army of specters, outlines of mounted men, the black profile of guns, and the white sky visible through the wheels; the colossal death's head which heroes ever glimpse in the smoke of battle, advanced and looked at them. They could hear in the twilight gloom that the guns were being loaded; the lighted matches, resembling the eyes of a tiger in the night, formed a circle round their heads. The linstocks of the English

batteries approached the guns, and at this moment an English general, Colville according to some, Maitland according to others, holding the supreme moment suspended over the heads of these men, shouted to them, 'Brave Frenchmen, surrender!' Cambronne answered, 'Merde.' To Cambronne's exclamation, an English voice replied, 'Fire!' The batteries flashed, the hillside trembled, from all these throats of brass came a last eruption of grape, a vast cloud of smoke vaguely whitened by the rising moon rolled up, and when the smoke had been dissipated, there was nothing. The dreaded remnant was annihilated, the guard was dead. The four walls of the living redoubt lay low, with here and there a scarcely perceptible quiver among the corpses. Thus the French legions, grander than those of Rome, expired on Mont St. Jean, on the earth sodden with rain and blood."

Hugo quite needlessly apologized for quoting the Frenchman's laconic reply to the summons to surrender. He was writing history, and no milk-and-water euphemism could have expressed Cambronne's defiance and contempt. Of course John Bull pitilessly shot to death that heroic fragment of the Old Guard, which forgot in its supreme hour that while foolhardiness may be magnificent, it is not war. I would have put a cordon of soldiers about that pathetic remnant of Napoleon's greatness and held it there to this good day rather than have plowed it down as a farmer plows jimson weeds into a pile of compost; but John Bull is not built that way--is impregnated with the chivalry of Baylor. Cambronne's reply is the only objectionable word in the entire work, and certain it might be pardoned in a scrap of history by people whose press and pulpit have apotheosized "Trilby," Du Maurier's supposititious prostitute. I presume that the Philadelphia school board is about on an intellectual and moral parity with the trustees of Baylor--haven't the remotest idea whether merde means maggots or moonshine. Victor Hugo was a lord in the aristocracy of intellect; his masterpiece is nature's faithful mirror. Ame de boue should be branded with a hot iron on the hickory-nut head of every creature whom its perusal does not benefit. His description of the Battle of Waterloo is to "Ben-Hur's" chariot race what Mount Aetna in eruption is to a glow worm. It transcends the loftiest flights of Shakespeare. Before it even "The Wondrous Tales of Troy" pales its ineffectual fires. It casts the shadow of its genius upon Bulwer's "Pompeii" as the wing of the condor shades the crow. Byron's "sound of revelry by night" is the throbbing of a snare drum drowned in Hugo's thunders of Mont St. Jean. Danton's rage sinks to an inaudible whisper, and even Aeschylus shrivels before that cataclysm of Promethean fire; that celestial monsoon. It stirs the heart like the rustle of a silken gonfalon dipped in gore, like the whistle of rifle-balls, like the rhythmic dissonance of a battery slinging shrapnel from the heights of Gettysburg into the ragged legions of General Lee. I have counseled my contemporary to be calm; but by Heaven! it does stir my soul into mutiny to see a lot of intellectual pismires, who have secured positions of trust

because of their political pull in the Tenderloin, hurling their petty scorn at Victor Hugo. It were like Carlyle's "critic fly" complacently rubbing its hinder legs and giving its opinion of the Parthenon, like Aesop's vindictive snail besliming the masterpiece of Phidias, like a Baylor professor lecturing on the poetry of Lord Byron. Every writer of eminence since the days of Moses has had to run the gauntlet of these slight people's impotent wrath. While slandering the prophets of progress and religion they have vented their foul rheum on all the gods of literature. Kansas, I am told, put a man in the penitentiary for sending through the mails biblical texts printed on postal cards. Speaking of Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," Carlyle says:

" 'Meister,' it appears is a vulgar work; no gentleman, we hear in certain circles, could have written it; few real gentlemen, it is insinuated, can like to read it; no real lady, unless possessed of considerable courage should profess having read it at all!"

And yet "Wilhelm Meister" changed the whole current of European literature--the work was practically committed to memory by the noblest men and women of the world. We hear the venerated Queen of Prussia repeating from it in her cruel exile,

"Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,
Wer nicht die Kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,
Der Kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte."

Let the Philadelphia school board and the Baylorian managers construe it if they can.

"Udi vura udorini udiri cicova cilti mora
Udorini talti hollna u ede caimoni mora"

What? I guess "nit." The idea of keeping "Les Miserables" away from the ladies!--just as though there could be found in the whole country a sixteen-year-old maid with any pretensions to intelligence who hasn't wept over little Cosette, been in love with Enjolras and "doted on" Gavroche and Jean Valjean! So ultra nice has the world become that we must skip the Canticles. Shakespeare's plays must now be clapper-clawed to make them palatable. Alexander Pope's philosophic rhyme must be deleted with dashes. Walt Whitman's poetry is too strong for the average stomach. But we continue to fire into the bosoms of our families the daily press with its specialization of Hogan's Alley and the Yellow Kid, reeking with its burden of ads. of abortion recipes and syphilitic nostrums--even take our wives and daughters to the Tabernacle to be told by Sam Jones that if they don't think he has backbone he'll "pull up his shirt-tail and show 'em!" Byron was vigorously denounced by the vindictive Miss Nancys of his day, but scornfully replied:

"I have not loved the world, nor the world me;

I have not flatter'd its rank breath nor bow'd
To its idolatries a patient knee."

There seems to be nothing left that we may safely read except Watts' Hymns, Talmage's sermons and the pathetic story of Mary's Little Lamb--a promising diet truly, upon which to rear intellectual titans. The remarkable thing about this purist fad is that all the Podsnaps wear pants--the ladies are not on tenter-hooks all the time lest something be said or written that will "bring a blush to the cheek of a young person." It is the he-virgins, the bearded women who are ever on the watch lest young femininity become impregnated with an idea. This country's got a bad case of malus pudor--and needs an heroic dose of double-action liver pills.

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THE SCIENCE OF KISSING.

I note that a Britisher named Prof. Bridger has been infringing my copyright by proclaiming, as an original discovery, that kissing is an excellent tonic and will cure dyspepsia. When the o'erbusy bacteriologists first announced that osculation was a dangerous pastime, that divers and sundry varieties of bacteria hopped blithely back and forth engendering disease and death, I undertook a series of experiments solely in the interest of science. Being a Baptist Preacher and making camp-meetings my specialty, I had unusual opportunity for investigation, for those of our faith are strict constructionists of the biblical law to "greet one another with a kiss." I succeeded in demonstrating before the end of the tenting season that osculation, when practiced with reasonable discretion and unfaltering industry, is an infallible antidote for at least half the ills that human flesh is heir to. The reason the doctors arrived at different conclusions is that they kissed indiscriminately and reasoned inductively. They found on casting up the account that bad breath and face powder, the sour milk-bottle of youth and the chilling frost of age, comprised six-sevenths of the sum total. Under such conditions there was nothing to do but establish a quarantine. I pointed out, as Prof. Bridger has since done, that a health microbe as well as a disease bacillus nidificates on the osculatory apparatus, and added that failure to absorb a sufficient quantity of these hygiologic germs into the system causes old maids to look jaundiced and bachelors to die sooner than benedicts. Kisses, when selected with due care and taken on the installment plan, will not only restore a misplaced appetite, but are especially beneficial in cases of hay fever, as they banish that tired feeling, tone up the liver, invigorate the heart, and make the blood to sing through the system like a giant jewsharp. I found by patient experiment that the health microbe becomes active at fifteen, reaches maturity at twenty, begins to lose its vigor at forty, and is quite useless as a tonic when, as someone has tersely expressed it, a woman's kisses begin to "taste of her teeth." Thin bluish

lips produce very few health germs, and those scarce worth the harvesting; but a full red mouth with Cupid curves at the corners, will yield enormously if the crop be properly cultivated. I did not discover whether the blonde or brunette variety is entitled to precedence in medical science, but incline to the opinion that a judicious admixture is most advisable from a therapeutical standpoint. Great care should be taken when collecting the germs not to crush them by violent collision or blow them away with a loud explosion that sounds like hitting an empty sugar hogshead with a green hide. The practice still prevailing in many parts of this country of chasing a young woman over the furniture and around the barn like an amateur cowboy trying to rope a maverick, rounding her up in the presence of a dozen people, unscrewing her neck and planting almost any place a kiss that sounds like a muley cow pulling her hind foot out of a black-waxy mud hole, and which jars the putty off the window panes, possesses no more curative powers than hitting a flitch of bacon with the back of your hand. I prithee, avoid it; when a girl runs from a kiss you may take it for granted either that the germ crop is not ripe or you are poaching on somebody else's preserves. The best results can be obtained about the midnight hour, when the dew is on the rose, the jasmine bud drunken with its own perfume and the mock-bird trilling a last good night to his drowsy mate. You entice your best girl into the garden to watch Venus' flaming orb hanging like the Kohinoor pendant from the crescent moon. You pause beneath the great gnarled live oak, its myriad leaves rustling softly as the wings of seraphs. Don't be in a hurry, and for God's sake, don't gab--in such a night silence is the acme of eloquence. "In such a night Troilus mounted the Trojan walls and sighed his soul toward the Grecian tents where Cressid lay." She watches the fireflies respiring in phosphorescent flame amid the clover blooms, while you watch her and twine a spray of honeysuckle in her hair. Your clumsy fingers unloose the guards and her fragrant tresses, caught up by the cool night wind, float about your face. Somehow her hand gets tangled up with yours, and after a spasmodic flutter there remains a willing prisoner. The fireflies have failed to interest her and she is studying the stars. You move your shoulder forward to give her head a rest and get hold of her other hand. Be patient; when she wants you to kiss her she'll find means to make it manifest, and a maid worth kissing despises a forward man. She looks very beautiful with her face upturned in the moonlight; but don't say a word about it, for there's a little of the poseur about all the daughters of Eve. She withdraws her eyes from the stars, slowly turns them dreamily upon yours, and you note that they are filled with astral fire. They roam idly over the shadowy garden, then close as beneath a weight of weariness. Her head rests more heavily against your shoulder and her bosom trembles with a half-audible sigh. There is now really no occasion for further delay. Do not swoop down upon the health germs like a hungry hen-hawk on a green gosling, but incline your head gently until your carefully deodorized breath is upon her lips--there pause, for the essence

of enjoyment is in anticipation. The man who gulps down a glass of old wine without first inhaling its oenanthic and feasting his eyes upon its ruddy splendors, is simply a sot. Wait until you have noted the dark lashes lying upon the cheek of sun-flushed snow, "the charm of married brows," the throat of alabaster, the dimple in her chin, the wine-tint of her half-parted lips with their glint of pearl--wait until her eyes half-open, look inquiringly into yours, and close again, then cincture her gently but firmly with one arm, support her chin with the other hand, and give the health germs ample time to change their home. A kiss to have any scientific value, should last one minute and seven seconds by Shrewsbury clock, and be repeated seven times, not in swift succession, but with the usual interval between wine at a symposiac. Byron did these things differently, but the author of "Don Juan" is not a safe example for young folks to follow. He pictures Mars lying with his head in the lap of Venus,

"Feeding on thy sweet cheek, while thy lips are
With lava-kisses melting while they burn,
Shower'd on his eyelids, brow and mouth as from an urn."

That may be eminently satisfactory to Mars, but scarce proper for Venus. It is exciting, but not scientific. It suggests charity children gorging themselves with plum-pudding, rather than poetic natures drunken with beauty; and fragrance, swooning 'neath the sweetness of a duet sung by their own chaste souls. The dyspeptic who cannot recover by following my prescription deserves to die. The pessimist whom it doesn't make look at life through rose-tinted glasses, should be excluded from human society. The hypochondriac whom it doesn't help ought to be hanged. There is not a human ill--unless it be hypocrisy--for which nature does not provide a remedy, and I recommend the health germ which builds its nest on lovely woman's lips as worth more than the whole materia medica. I don't know whether it will raise the dead, but I've always doubted the story that Egypt kissed the cold lips of her Roman Antony--have suspected it would have brought me back to life and love had I been dead a month. The unscientific catch-as-catch-can kiss has no more beneficial effect than slapping yourself in the face with a raw beef-steak. It is but a slight improvement on the civilization of Ashantee, where a man proposes marriage by knocking his Dulcina down with a club and dragging her through the backwoods' pasture by the hair of her head; but kisses properly taken--beneath the stars and among the roses--are the perennial fount of youth for which Ponce de Leon sailed far seas in a vain search for the blessed Bimini.

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THE NEW SOUTH.

One of the cardinal faults of the American character is a propensity to brag. Brother Jonathan's egotism long since passed into a proverb. In no section of this land of the

alleged free and home of the ism does the blowhard blow longer and louder than in the South. We are the people, the nonpareil; there are none like us beneath the sun! From the empyrean we look down upon common humanity, talk turgid and swell up with the vain glory of a young turkey-cock with his first tail feathers! It were well for us to cease our foolish boasting and con well the stern lessons taught at the cannon's mouth. The first and greatest of these is that only by honest labor, by earnest endeavor, can a people become truly great. The war swept away the curse that was our weakness, negro slavery. It broke in upon our old exclusiveness, shattered the foolish caste that held us in iron thrall, made labor respectable and progress possible. It brought energetic Northern people among us to teach us that the way to greatness lies through the workshop,--to incite us to shake of our indolence and enter the race for preferment. Grant's red-throated batteries did more than break the shackles from the wrists of the blacks; they tore the cursed fetters of caste and custom from the minds of the whites,--a nobler emancipation. They set the heart of southern chivalry to beating with a truer, a stronger life. In the mad tempest of battle the New South was born; the crash of arms was the groans of maternity, the deluge of blood her baptismal rite. From the ashes of desolate homes and ruined cities she sprang phoenix-like, and is now mounting the empyrean with strong and steady wing. The emancipation proclamation was a bow of promise that never again while the world stands and the heavens endure will North and South meet in battle shock; that the greatness of the one shall become the proud heritage of the other; that the grandest section of the American Union shall yet, with God's blessing, produce the greatest people that ever adorned the earth.

The war is long past. We fought and lost. Our triumphant foe extended to us a brother's hand, accorded us the honor due a brave and spirited people. That we should suffer reconstruction pains was to have been expected. That they were unnecessarily severe was due chiefly to the greed of a clique of politicians; partly also to the fact that the North misunderstood us and our black wards, even as we persist in misunderstanding the "Yankee." But no gibbet rose in that storm-swept waste; our very leaders now occupy positions of honor and trust under the flag they defied. Let us not requite the generosity of our erstwhile foes by an attempt to tarnish their well-earned laurels. Rather let us praise and emulate them--strive with them in a nobler field than that of war. When the North and South blend in one homogeneous people, as blend they must, when the blood of the stern Puritan mingles with that of the dashing Cavalier, then indeed will be a nation and a people at which the world will stand agaze; for Northern vigor wedded to Southern blood will

"Strike within the pulses like a god's,
To push us forward through a life of shocks,
Dangers and deeds, until endurance grows

Sinew'd with action, and the full grown will,
Circl'd through all experience, pure law,
Commeasure perfect freedom."

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DOGMATISM THE MOTHER OF DOUBT.

A WORSHIP FOR THE WORLD.

"Church Unification" has long been the dream of many earnest souls, who regret to see the various denominations wasting energy warring upon each other that should be brought to bear on the legions of Lucifer; but even the most sanguine must admit there is little prospect of their dreams becoming more tangible--at least for some ages yet. The bloody chasm which Luther and his co-laborers opened will not be bridged during the lifetime of the present generation, and human wisdom is not competent to formulate a "creed," to devise a "doctrine," upon which the Protestant world will consent to unite. The present tendency is not toward church unification, but greater and more sharply defined division. Instead of dogmatic controversy dying away it is becoming more general; "heterodoxy" is being hunted with a keener zest than for years, and doctrinal disputation has become well-nigh as virulent as the polemics of partisan politics.

In the meantime a majority of mankind in highly civilized countries remain away from church--take no thought of the future or seek truth in science rather than revelation. Dogmatism is the fruitful mother of Doubt. By assuming to know too much of God's great plan; by demanding too abject obedience to his fiats; by attempting to stifle honest inquiry and seal the lips of living scholars with the dicta of dead scholastics, by standing ever ready to brand as blasphemers all who presume to question or dare to differ, the church has driven millions of Godfearing men into passive indifference or overt opposition, and the number is rapidly increasing. The church does not realize how stupendous this army really is. Not every man who regards the church as but a pretender proclaims that fact on the housetops. It is not "good policy," and policy is the distinguishing characteristic of this day and age. Church people are very sensitive to criticism of their creed (perhaps the mother of a malformed or vicious child could tell why), and most men have loved ones or patrons who are trying to find a little comfort among the husks of an iron-bound orthodoxy. If any devout dogmatizer really desires to learn how general is this attitude of nonreceptivity of the orthodox religion, let him assume the role of a scoffer; then he will hear the truth from men's lips; for while the doubter may yield passive assent to the prevalent orthodoxy, the earnest believer is not apt to enact the role of Peter without compulsion. Instead of conquering the world, the church is rapidly losing what it has hitherto gained. True, it still retains a semblance of vigor and prosperity; but, like many a great political structure, its brilliancy is born of

decay. It is no longer the dominating factor in social life, the heart and soul of civilization, but an annex--increasing in magnificence as wealth increases and mankind can afford to expend more for ostentation and fashionable diversion.

It is noticeable that the less attention the minister pays to creeds, the less dogmatism he indulges in, the more popular he becomes with the people, the more eagerly they flock to hear him. The world does not care to listen to prosy lectures on foreordination and the terrors of Tartarus, because its reason rejects such cruel creeds; it takes little interest in the question whether Christ was dipped or sprinkled by the gentleman in the camel's-hair cutaway, because it cannot, for the life of it, see that it makes any difference; it does not want to be worried with jejune speculations anent the Trinity, because it considers one God quite sufficient if it can but find him; does not want to hear much about the miracles, because it considers it a matter of absolute indifference whether they are true or not. But just the same, the great world is heart-hungry for real knowledge of the All-Father, eager to embrace any faith that does no violence to its reason, to grasp at any tangible thread of hope of a happy life with loved ones beyond the tomb's dark portals.

Prof. James T. Bixby, in a powerful plea for truth-seekers, quoted approvingly the words of an eminent ecclesiastic of the church of England who characterized the present age as "preeminently the age of doubt." Another writer says that Europe is turning in despair toward Nirvana. The almost unprecedented success of Hartman's "Philosophy of the Unconscious"--which is little more or less than Buddhism--gives a strong color of truth to the startling assertion. While Europe is sending missionaries to the Ganges, India is planting the black pessimism of Gautama on the Rhine and the Seine! Nineteen centuries of dogmatizing, to end in an "age of doubt" and a cry for the oblivion of Nirvana! Clearly there is something wrong, for doubt and a desire for annihilation is not the normal condition of the human mind. A belief in God, that the universe is the result of design, is inherent in man. It is not a belief that must be implanted and tenderly nursed; it is one that manifests itself in the lowest form of savage life of which we have cognizance--one that is well-nigh impossible to crush out--and complementing this belief, in most instances, is the hope of immortality. No cataclysm of crime into which man can plunge is able to eradicate his belief that he is the creature of a supernatural power and intelligence. The tendency of scientific research is to strengthen it by making more manifest the wondrous works of God. It is doubtful if the belief in man's divine origin was ever entirely obliterated from any human mind--if there ever was or will be an "atheist." Many men believe themselves such; but if they will carefully examine their position, they will usually find that they have been carried to this extreme by a powerful revulsion from incredible dogmatism, and that they can only maintain it by a continual and unnatural

effort--by a persistent outrage upon that very intelligence of which they boast. The moment they cease to act on the defensive they begin to drift back under the divine spell; to pay homage, conscious or unconscious, to the All-Father.

Those who deny the inspiration of the Bible are, for the most part, but doubting Thomases who ask to see the nail-prints in the hands of their risen Lord; who are disposed to question him, not because they are irreligious, but because they want the Truth, and they know for a verity that it is the truth.

Is it not possible to found a church in which may be gathered the millions who cannot swallow the miracles, the incarnation, the plenary inspiration of the Bible, and other non-essential husks that enshroud the Christian cultus; where that religion which exists, conscious or unconscious, in their nature, may find room for expansion; where honest inquiry may be prosecuted, doubts freely and fairly discussed and perhaps dispelled; where all Truth, whether found in the Bible or the Koran, the Law of Mana or the Zend-Avesta, science or philosophy, may be eagerly seized and carefully treasured? If it were possible to thus bring together and utilize the vast amount of religious energy which lies without the pale of all present churches, unrecognized by the most, warred upon by the many; if it were possible to gather all believers in God together where they may strengthen their faith by communion and worship; extend their knowledge by research in every field, spiritual and material, secular and religious, what a mighty recruit would thus be added to those powers that are working for the world's salvation!

Let me briefly sketch such a church as I would like to be a member of--such as I imagine millions of others who are not, will never be members of existent communions, would worship in with pleasure. Its chief "essential" should be belief in God--not the God of the Jews, Mohammedans or Christians, but the God of everything, animate and inanimate in the whole broad universe; the God of Justice and Wisdom, Truth and Love; the God seen in the face of every noble woman and honest man, heard in every truth, felt in every holy aspiration. Everyone believing in the existence of such a God--and I doubt if any do not--should be eligible for membership, no matter what their theories regarding his personality, plans and powers. Truth should be sought assiduously, and welcomed wherever found. We should not attempt to make it fit a preconceived theory, but to make the theory conform to it. Science should be the handmaid of the church, philosophy its helpful brother; but its ecumenical council, its court of last resort, should be the religious instinct inherent in man--that perception so fine, so subtle, that all attempts to weave it into words to clothe it so that the eye may perceive and the reason handle it, have signally failed; which logic has hammered at with all her ballistae and battering-rams for thirty centuries or more in vain; which, above all things else, binds the human race in one great brotherhood, has

supplied the missing links in every cult, bridged its laches, surmounted its incongruities, comprised its inexpugnable fortress upon which the high flood-tide of worldly wisdom beats in vain.

Its body doctrine should be Love of God, Charity for man, Truth, Honor, Purity. In these are comprised "the whole Hebrew Decalogue, with Solon's and Lycurgus' Constitutions, Justinian's Pandects, the Code Napoleon and all codes, catechisms, divinities, moralities whatsoever, that man has hitherto devised (and enforced with altar-fire and gallows-ropes) for his social guidance." They embrace all that is blessed and beautiful, gracious and great in every sect, science and philosophy known to man. These are "points of doctrine" upon which there can be no dissension; Buddhist and Mohammedan, Jew and Gentile, Catholic and Calvinist, philosopher and "free-thinker," will all approve.

Regarding what provision the Lord will make for us hereafter, the plenary or partial inspiration of the Bible, the evidential value of the miracles, the divinity of Christ, and kindred subjects, every communicant may properly be left free to exercise his individual judgment. To formulate a cast-iron article of faith upon any or all these questions would be to enter the realm of dogmatics, to add one more voice to the ecclesiastical wrangle that is filling the earth and heaven and hades with its unprofitable din--to found a sect instead of a world-embracing church devoted to the simple worship of God and the inculcation of morals. To many a religion without a future-life annex may appear as unfinished as a building without a roof; as ephemeral, as unstable as one put together without nails or mortar; but such forget that future reward and punishment was no part of the early Hebrew cult--that the doctrine of man's immortality is but a late and apparently a Gentile graft; that the Buddhist religion, which has held the souls of countless millions in thrall, teaches complete extinction of the ego as the greatest good. Man does not embrace religion "for what there is in it"; does not worship because God possesses the power to reward and punish, any more than he stands entranced by the glory of the sunrise because the rays of the Day-god will ripen his cotton and corn. He pays involuntary homage to the Higher Power, as he does to men of genius who benefit him but indirectly, to women of great beauty whom he never hopes to possess.

We may safely trust our future to the same great Power to whom we owe the present. It is of far more importance that we make the most possible of this life than that we have fixed convictions anent the next. It is safe to assume that had the great God intended we should know for a surety what awaits us beyond Death's dark river, He would have made it so manifest that diversity of opinion would be impossible; that had he intended we should each and all accept Christ as a divinity, He would have driven stronger pegs upon which the doubting Thomases of this late day could hang their faith; that had He intended the Bible should stand for all time as His infallible word, it would not

have been intrusted for so many centuries to the care of fallible men; that had He intended we should each and all believe the miracles, He would have made better provision for their authentication--or built our heads on a different plan. Belief in immortality is a very comforting doctrine--for such as hope to dodge hell-pains--and is so general, so prone to manifest itself, where the mind of man has not been persistently trained in an opposite direction, that we may almost call it a religious instinct, which is but a vulgarism for a divine and direct revelation of God; therefore, it should not be discouraged in our new world-church, but given every opportunity for expansion. No one should be excluded, however, if he fail to find evidence, within or without, to sustain the theory.

Such a church would embrace all others as the ocean-stream of the ancients encompassed and fed every sea. It would be the tie that would bind all in unity. It should welcome to its pulpit all ministers of whatsoever denomination who desire to treat the worship of God from a nonsectarian standpoint or read a homily calculated to strengthen the morals of mankind. Its hymns should be songs of praise to that God who made us the greatest in His visible creation; its prayers should be thanks for past mercies and petitions that He will make our brightest dreams of life eternal beyond the skies a blessed reality--that having brought us so near His bright effulgence in-create for Time, He will gather us to His loving bosom for all Eternity.

Such is the church in which I hope one day to see the whole world gathered--a church whose paeans of praise to the great God would drown dogmatic dialectics as the swelling notes of an organ drown the fretful complaining of a child.

AN UNPROFITABLE CONTROVERSY.

Mr. Gladstone and Prof. Huxley have been warmly debating the story of the swine, the devil and the deep sea. What an occupation for two of the master spirits of the age! Is it any wonder that young men, contemplating such polemics, should turn away from revealed religion altogether?

Fortunately the religious world is no longer convulsed from center to circumference by such disputations. The day has gone by when the whole fabric of the Christian religion could be shaken to its foundation by the discovery of an error in biblical chronology, or the impossibility of a large whale swallowing a small prophet. Gradually the worship of the Creator is grounding itself on general principles and Christian apologetics is slowly but surely mounting above the particularists, spreading & broader opinion, leaving to the antiquary and the zoilist the inaccuracies and inconsistencies of tradition.

All friends of the Faith should hasten this movement. Really, it matters not whether the Gadarenes, whose swine were drowned, were Jews or Gentiles; whether Christ did or did not east out devils, raise the dead or cause the blind to see. It matters not whether Joseph or the Holy Spirit was his immediate father. Are we not all sons of the Most High God, and is not the advent of each and all as much a mystery as though we were begotten without an earthly father, spoken into existence, or sprang like Minerva from the brow of Jove? Why should the world stand agaze for nineteen centuries at one miracle, when sixty, full as great, as incomprehensible, are happening every minute? If God is the author of us all, is it more wonderful that He should create us in one way than in another? Was it necessary that the All-Father should change the order of generation to prove His existence, or that Christ should enter the world in an uncommon manner to establish His claim to preeminence among the sons of God?

It is altogether immaterial how Christ came into the world. Sufficient it is for us to know that he came and brought with him hope for sorrowing millions. That He was of God it required no preternatural birth, no wondrous miracles to establish. It was not the healing He brought to the flesh, but the comfort he administered to the spirit that stamped him Divine.

Is it possible that in this world of sorrow, sin and death, where millions are stretching out their hands to Heaven and praying for a sign that the loved ones who have crossed the dark river are safe in the bosom of the Great All-Father; where millions more are going down to death in an agony of doubt and fear, that Prof. Huxley and Mr. Gladstone--science and religion--can find no grander work to do than dispute about the ownership of a herd of swine drowned nineteen centuries ago? When churchmen decline to engage in acrimonious disputation regarding non-essentials, either with non-churchmen or each other; when the churches no longer insist that this or that dogma must be observed or accepted as a prerequisite to salvation; when they study the spirit of revelation more and the letter less; when they admit that all religions that have brought comfort to humanity were Divine, and seek light wherever it is to be found, whether in the Bible or the Vedas, ethnic philosophy or science the occupation of the Paines and Ingersolls will be forever gone and religion command the respect of all mankind.

In union there is strength, in disunion weakness. If this world is ever to be "christianized" the different denominations must learn that they are not natural enemies, but allies,--differently organized corps, differently uniformed divisions of one great army. Instead of wasting their strength warring upon each other, in repelling atheistical assaults upon outworks that are a source of weakness and should be abandoned, they must swing into line, shoulder to shoulder, each with its own particular oriflamme and shibboleth, if it will, and present a

solid front to the common enemy, which is not the doubter of particular dogmas, but that Evil of which is born sorrow, shame and death. When the different divisions of the church which acknowledges Christ as its head, become mutually supporting and its officers distinguish the real battle from the hasty firing of frightened pickets, then and not till then will the banner of Christianity float triumphant over a world redeemed; then will the fatherhood of God and brotherhood of Man be known upon the earth.

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GARTERS AND AMEN GROANS.

On one page of the Houston Post for Sunday, December 12, I find several columns devoted to "Our Boys and Girls," on the next the following advertisement prominently displayed by a Houston haberdasher:

"Our Ladies' Garter Department: We can give you an All-Silk Garter for 50c. with nice buckles with such reading on them as 'Private Grounds,' 'Stop, Mamma is Coming,' 'Look Quick,' 'Good Night, Call Again,' 'I Am a Warm Baby,' 'Take Off Your Things,' etc."

The paper contains the usual Sunday morning quota of church notices, religious news and editorial moralizing--constituting a delectable olla-podrida calculated to turn the stomach of a self-respecting yaller dog. Doubtless many purveyors of garters keep in stock those peculiarly adapted to the trade of the "tenderloin"; but this is the first time that I have seen such truck advertised in any paper permitted to pass through the mails or enter the homes of respectable people. Imagine a Houston parson rising from family prayers on Sunday morning and placing in the hands of his young daughter a "great moral daily" which sets forth in display type that, for the small sum of fifty cents, she can secure a pair of silken garters that warn the great he-world that she's "a warm baby," and bid it "look quick" at her shapely legs! Think of a modest old mother in Israel watching the face of her youthful son as he learns for the first time of garters that invite him to "take off your things"! Fine Sabbath morning reading that for the so-called Christian people of Harris county! Such an "ad." would forever damn even the Nashville Banner, or show in the feculent columns of the Kansas City Star like a splotch of soot on the marble face of Raphael's Madonna. The Police Gazette and Sunday Sun are debarred from the mails, yet neither ever contained aught one-half so horrible. We keep the "Decameron" and Daudet's eroticisms under lock and key; yet they are only "suggestive," while this is frankly feculent, a brazen bid for bawdry. Should the ICONOCLAST publish such a thing it would be promptly denounced from ten thousand pulpits as a pander to pruriency; yet against the iniquity of the Daily Chippie Chaser, alias the Houston Post, not one preacher has raised his voice in protest! Why? Because the dirty rag does not attack their religious dogma--does not

strike at their bread and butter! The shortest route to the heart of the average parson is through his pocket--hit him there and you raise a howl that startles high Heaven. Print his church notices, report his foolish little sermons, kneel with him in prayer, slander agnostics and atheists, serve the ICONOCLAST as the foul yahoos did Gulliver, flip a plugged nickel into the contribution box, and you may safely flaunt the patois of the nymph du pave in the fair face of every honest girl between Cape Cod and the Golden Gate. And as it is with the average preacher so it is with the bulk of his parishioners. The Post introduces the language of the prostitute into the parlors of its patrons. It boasts a boys' and girls' club--"The Happyhammers"--of more than six-hundred members, and to these children it carries the first knowledge of sexual perversity, gives them their initial lesson in social sin. Were this the paper's first offense we might attribute it to the carelessness or stupidity of a clerk in its counting-room and the incompetence of its business manager; but it is an old, a shameless, a persistent sinner against all life's decencies and proprieties. Its "personal column" was for years the most revolting thing known to yaller journalism. Its counting-room was an assignation post-office. The paper was the recognized organ of "Happy Hollow," the Hell's Half Acre of Houston. It was a pander to all the worst passions that run riot in the "tenderloin," a procurer of young girls to glut the lust of godless libertines. Its sign was the ligniyoni, its ideal the almighty dollar. Through its feculent columns Muckle-mouthed Meg and Doll Tearsheet made assignations with forks-of-the-creeks fools, while bleary-eyed bummers and rotten-livered rounders requested respectable women to meet them at unfrequented places and wear camp-meeting lingerie. The ICONOCLAST compelled its unrespected contemporary to purify its "personal column"--and this service to society has never been forgiven by the bench-legged hydrocephalous grand panjandrum of that paper. The Post next proceeded to publish a directory of Houston's red-light district, giving names and addresses of the "madames," the number of their "boarders" and the condition of the merchandise thrown upon the market. All that was necessary to make the Post's Bawdy-house Guide complete was the addition of rate-cards. On that little bit of journalistic "enterprise" the ICONOCLAST put a kibosh also, much to the satisfaction of every decent family in Harris county. Now the fecular sheet has found a new road to infamy--is advertising garters fit only to adorn the crummy underpinning of negro prostitutes. It does seem that the Post will do anything for a dollar--except be decent. Owing to the mental perversity of its management, respectability is for it impossible. It is a social leper, a journalistic pariah. It is devoid of political principle as a thieving tomcat of conscience. It has no more stability than a bad smell in a simoon. It has deified and damned every statesman by turn. It has been on every possible side of every public question, and wept bitter tears of regret because further change of policy were impossible. It is a perfect maelstrom of misinformation, the avatar of impudence, the incarnation of infamy--a social

cesspool whose malodor spreads contagion like the rank breath of the gila-monster or the shade of a upas tree. Yet its editor, I am told, aspires to the lieutenant-governorship of Texas. Verily, he's "got his gall." He will indeed be "a warm baby" if elevated to that inconsiderable office and permitted to monkey with the scepter while the governor is doing the elegant elsewhere. Texas may certainly consider herself fortunate if he does not pawn the fasces of power and blow in the proceeds of the erstwhile John Bell's variety joint. Should he do so, he will probably be permitted to "take off his things." The Post "ad." is worse than that of holy John Wanamaker, who once announced in the Philadelphia papers that "Parisian thoughts are sewn in our underwear." With such lingerie I should imagine that "call again" garters would be the proper caper. Such a combination would suggest the patent medicine certificate of the happy husband who joyfully testified that "My wife was so nervous that I could not sleep with her, but after taking two bottles of your remarkable, etc., she has so far recovered that anybody can sleep with her." Just what effect the "Parisian thought" underwear of holy John Wanamaker had upon the preeminently respectable people of Philadelphia I shall not assume to say, but I should consider such goods contraband of war when found on a Sunday-school bargain counter. Imagine the result of introducing "Parisian thoughts" into the unbleached muslin lingerie of a lot of single-standard-of-morals old maids! There's really no telling for what Harrison's professional Sunday school superintendent is responsible. He's a rank conspirator against the Seventh Commandment. The Post should be abated as an incorrigible nuisance--it is a standing menace to the morality of the community. It has never been a legitimate journal. Its chief sources of revenue have been fake voting contests and unclean "ads." that range in sphacelation from abortion pills to garters for prostitutes. What this country seems to need is a press censorship. The second-rate newspapers are mistaking liberty for license. The dogma that public opinion can be depended upon to correct the evil is an "iridescent dream"--the public will stand almost anything so long as its religious theses and political confessions of faith are let alone. Men claiming to be quasi-decent, if not altogether respectable, will carry home day after day and suffer to be read by their young daughters such a paper as the Houston Post--with its "w. y. o. d.," and "take off your things" advertisements, its puffs of abortion pills and syphilitic panaceas--who would have a conniption fit and fall in it should a copy of Bob Ingersoll's eloquent lecture on Abraham Lincoln creep into their library. The stench of such a paper creeps abroad like the malodor of a cloaca, beslimes the senses like the noxious exhalations of an open sewer. How in God's name men can be found so debased as to work on such a sheet is beyond my comprehension. I once undertook to hold down its editorial page; but soon "got sore at myself," cursed everything connected therewith, from the pink-haired president of the company to the peewee business manager, got out, purified myself and have been sick at the stomach ever since.

Should a man lay a copy of the foul sheet on my parlor table, I'd blow his head off with a shotgun. All that I now see of the paper is the clippings sent me by disgusted Houstonians, and I take those out behind the barn to read--then bury them lest they poison the hogs. I regard my temporary connection with the sheet much as Jean Valjean must his tramp through the Parisian sewers. It is a ten-legged nightmare, an infamy that I can never outlive. I strove manfully to make the foul thing respectable, but the Augean stables proved too much for my pitchfork. I managed to occasionally inject into the sphacelated sheet a quasi-intelligent idea, to disguise its feculence with a breath of sentiment that by contrast seemed an air from Araby the blest; but the stupid ignorance and dollar-worshipping of the management soon dragged it back into the noisome depths of hopeless nescience and subter-brutish degradation. Poor old Houston! A morning newspaper should be a city's crown of glory, an intellectual Aurora ushering in the new-born day; but in Houston's case her chief newspaper is a sorrow's crown of sorrow, her inexpungeable badge of shame.

LIFE AND DEATH.

In a city beyond far seas there dwelt a Youth who claimed not land nor gold, yet wealthier was than sceptered sovereign, richer far than fancy ever feigned. The great round earth, the sun, the moon and all the stars that flame like fireflies in the silken web of night were his, because garnered in the salvatory of his soul. And the beaded dew upon the morning-glories, the crimson tints of dawn, Iris' bended bow and all the cloth-of-gold and robes of purple that mark the royal pathway of the descending sun; the perfume of all the flowers, the bulbul's sensuous song, and every flowing line that marks woman's perfect form he hoarded in his heart and gloated over as a miser does his gain. And the Youth was in love with Life and held her to his heart as God's most gracious gift. Ah, beautiful was she, with her trustful eyes of blue, and hair of tangled sunbeams blown about a brow of alabaster, arms of ivory and bust whose rounded loveliness were a pulsing pillow where ever dreamed Desire--beautiful beyond compare, and sweet as odors blown across the brine from the island-valley of Avalon, mad'ning as Lydian music, in which swoons the soul of youth while all the passion in the blood beats time in delirious ecstasy. And Youth and Life built fair castles in the air, with turrets of sapphire and gates of beaten gold, wherein they dreamed the days away on a bed of thornless roses, drained the chalice of the honeysuckle, ate the lotus-bud and thought of naught in all the world but love. Of this soft dalliance was born a son, and Life cried with falling tears, "Now I am shamed!" "Nay," said the Youth, "for I will hide our child within my heart and none shall know." And Life laughed and kissed the boy, and called him Ambition, and hid him in the secret recesses of her lover's heart, and gayly went and came as though her fair breasts had never burgeoned

with a wealth of liquid pearl. But the child was restless within its prison house and beat against the walls, and grew day by day, and fought with teeth and nails, until the Youth cried out in agony. And Life said mockingly: "Hast not room enough within thy heart for one poor child to range--that heart which holds the earth, the sun and stars? Cast forth the foolish rubbish--the rainbow and the flowers, the incense and the summer sea. Make room, make room for thine and mine--though naught else doth remain." He cast them forth with fond regret, and Ambition grew and filled his heart and strove with all his strength. The Youth looked no more upon the fair field flowers, but thought only of the victor's wreath; he heard no melody but fame's shrill trumpet rising ever louder on the blast, and saw no beauty but in Minerva's laureled brow; the cool sylvan path became a blinding mountain trail, his hours of dalliance days of toil and nights of agony. The hidden son had become master of the sire, and all the host of Heaven melted into a single star which poured its baleful fire into his face the treacherous star of Hope. And so he strove with augmenting strength, his goal the highest, his guerdon the immortelles. But oft he fell, and cursed his folly for having left the flowery vale to beat against the barren mountain rocks; but Life upbraided him, and with her soft breath fanned the paling star to brighter flame--the star behind which lay the throne. And Death followed them, shadowy, indistinct, like a spirit wrapt in mist. And Life mocked at Death, crying: "Behold the envious strumpet doth follow, to despoil me of mine own! Faugh! How uncanny and how cold! What lover would hang upon those ashen lips? Her bosom is marble, and in her stony heart there flames no fire. With her Ambition perishes and the Star of Hope forever fades. Her house is a ghastly tomb, her bed the granite rock, her lover childless, for her womb is barren." And the Youth, glancing with a shudder at the figure in the mist, drew close to Life and echoed her words with trembling lip, "How uncanny and how cold!" Thus fared he on through many a toilsome year, to where no shadow falls to East or West--to manhood's glorious noon. He looked at the towering heights before him with undaunted eye, measuring his strength against the walls of stone. He glanced back, and a chill swept over him, for he was standing far up on the mountainside, he was in a barren desert whose level waste stretched back to the pathetic tomb where Love was left to starve and sweet Content lay festering in her shroud. "Fool," cried Life, "why looked ye back like wife of ancient Lot? Now are ye indeed undone!" The voice was harsh and shrill, and starting as from an uneasy dream, he looked on Life with wide-open eyes and soul that understood. He found her far less fair than in the heyday of his youth, when he reveled in her voluptuous charms and loved her well. Her face was hard and stern as that of some hag from Hell; the sunlight had faded from her hair, the cestus of red roses become a poisonous serpent, her fragrant breath a consuming flame, her robe of glory, a sackcloth suit, begrimed with ashes, torn by thorns and stained with blood. "Thou hast changed, O Life!" he cried in horror. "Not so," she said; "the change is thine.

In youth you saw me not, but only dreamed you saw. She you loved was a creature of your vain imaginings; I am Life, mother of that scurvy brat, Ambition." She pointed upward, saying: "Behold, thy star is gone, and the shining goal hangs pathless in the heavens. When the sun hath reached the zenith it must descend. Henceforth your path leads downward, for every hour will sap your lusty strength, and every step be weaker than the last, until you sink into senility. Come, my love, you do not know me yet; behold me as I am!" She cast aside her soiled and ragged robe and stood revealed in all her hideousness--a thing of horror. Her breasts distilled a poisonous dew, around her gaunt limbs aspics crawled, her eyes were fierce and hollow, and in one bony hand she held a scroll on which was writ the record of her frauds and follies, her sin and shame. "Come," she cried mockingly, "let us on together. You may caress me as in the days of old, and I will answer with a curse. Hold me to your heart and I will wither it with my breath of flame. Praise me, and I will requite you with dishonor and crown you with the grewsome chaplets of grief. Fool! Thou hast striven for a prismatic bubble bursting on the crest of a receding wave. Why scorned you gold and lands to grasp at castles in the air? Why dreamed of the Dimiurgus when desiring harlots beckoned thee? Why dealt with open hand and unsuspecting heart when thrown 'mid a world of thieves? Hadst thou been content and not aspired to rise above the grossness, the falsehood and the folly which is Life, I would have loved thee well and deceived thee with a painted beauty to the end--my foul breasts would have been to thee ever a fragrant bed of flowers. You have invaded Life's mysteries, the penalty whereof is pain. You have looked upon the past; behold the future!" He looked, and saw a tortuous path winding downward through bogs and poisonous fens and bitter pools. In the far distance an old man, tottering beneath his weight of years, stood leaning on a staff, reading a riddle propounded by a sullen sphinx, and striving with failing intellect to understand--"Cui Bono?" Near by was an open grave, beside which an angel of mercy stood and beckoned him. "Thou hast tarried long, my lover," she said in a low sweet voice that was the distant note of aeolian harp, or summer zephyr sighing through the pines. With a cry of gladness he cast himself into her cool arms; she touched his tired eyes with her soft white hands, she pressed a kiss upon his lips that drained his breath in an expiring gasp of pleasure all passionless, and, cradled upon her bosom like a weary child, he fell asleep. The burden and its bearer, hallowed by a pale glory as of St. Elmo's fire sank into the open grave, yet the sphinx sat stolidly holding the painted riddle in his stony hand--"Cui Bono?" But there was none to answer; the path faded like the phosphorescent track of a ship in midnight waters, and all was dark. He turned fiercely to Life, a question on his lip, but ere he could utter it she had answered, with a bitter shrug: "The angel with the pitying eyes; the beauteous one?" My rival, Death--so uncanny and so cold! All who love me leave me for this sorceress, and she holds them 'neath the magic of her spell

forevermore. But what care I? I do take the grain and give to her the husk; I drink the wine and leave the lees. Mine the bursting bud, hers the withered flower. Go to her and thou wilt. I have slain Ambition and blotted thy foolish ignis fatuus from the firmament. For thee the very sun henceforth is cold, the moon a monstrous wheel of blood, the stars but aged eyes winking back their tears as they look upon thy broken altars and ruined fanes, the grass grown green above the ashes of thy dead. Go; I want thee not, for thou hast seen me as I am. I am for the red wine and wild revel, where 'in Folly's cup still laughs the bubble Joy'--for the idle day-dream and the sensuous dance, the fond kiss of foolish Love and the velvet couch of Lust." Then Death came and stood near him, beautiful with a beauty all spirituelle, a world of pity in her eyes. But he shrank from her with a shudder, seeing which she said: "Am I indeed so cold--I, who warm the universe? Is the bosom of Mercy to be feared and the breath of peace despised? What is Life that she should mock me?--this hideous harlot whose kisses poison and whose words betray? Is she not the mother of all ills? Behold her demoniac brood: Hate and Horror, Discord and Disease, Pride and Pain! she is the creature of Time, the slave of Space. She is the bastard spawn of Heat and Moisture--was engendered 'mid the unclean ooze of miasmatic swamps, in the womb of noisome fens. And I? I am empress of all that is, or was, or can ever be. Come dwell with me, and all the earth shall be thy home, thy period eternity. Would'st live again? Then will I make of thy clustering locks grasses to wave in the cool meadows green, of thine eyes fair daisies that nod in the dewy dawn, of thy heart a great blush rose worn between the breasts of beauty, of thy body an oak to defy the elements, of thy blood a wave breaking in slumbrous thunder upon a beach of gold, of thy breath the jasmine's perfume, of thy restless spirit the levin brand that crashes in thunder peal above the storm. Why press the cruel thorn into thy heart, the iron into thy soul? Thus do I clasp thee to a bosom ever true, and shield thee from the slings and arrows of the world. Thy hot heart beats faint and ever fainter 'gainst its pulseless pillow, until it ceases with a sigh, and thou art mine and eternal peace is thine."

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THE GARDEN OF THE GODS.

Much has been written of Texas by immigration boomers, "able editors" and others, with an eye single to the almighty dollar. Its healthfulness, delightful climate, undeveloped resources, churches, schools, etc., have been expatiated upon times without number, but little has been said of its transcendent beauty. The average "able editor" is not a very aesthetic animal. He has an eye for the beautiful, 'tis true; but his tastes are of the earth earthy.

A half-page display ad. with wood-cut portrait of a chamber-set occupying the foreground and the clare-obscure worked

up with various sizes and styles of black type, possesses far more charm for him than does the deep blue of our Southern sky, whose mighty concave seems to reach to Infinity's uttermost verge; a two-story brick livery stable or laundry is to him far more interesting than the splendors of the Day-god rising from the ocean's blue; an eighty-cent dollar with its lying legend more beautiful in his eyes than even Austin's violet crown bathed in the radiance of the morning or arched with twilight's dome of fretted gold. The "able editor" cares naught for purple hills, unless they contain mineral; for broad champaigns unless the soil be good; for flashing brooks unless they can be made to turn a millwheel or water a cow.

The "able editor" takes it for granted that everybody is as grossly materialistic as himself,--care not whether the sky above their heads is blue or black so long as the soil beneath their feet is fertile; whether the landscape be pleasant or forbidding so long as it will yield them creature comforts. Perhaps he is very nearly right. The fact that millions will make their homes beneath leaden skies, amid scenes of desolation, while there is room and to spare in our sunny Southland, is not without its significance,--indicates plainly that man has not yet progressed far into that spiritual kingdom where the soul must be fed as well as the stomach; where sunlight is more necessary than sauer-kraut, where beauty furnishes forth more delights than beer.

Still there must be a few people in this gain-grabbing world not altogether indifferent to the beauties of nature; to whom the gold of the evening sky is more precious than that wrung with infinite toil from the bowels of the earth; to whom the purple of the hills is more pleasing than the crustacean dyes of ancient Tyre; the flashing of clear waters more delightful than the gleam of diamonds; the autumn's rainbow tints more inspiring than the dull red heart of the ruby. To have such a home in Texas were like a sojourn in that pleasant paradise where our primal parents first tasted terrestrial delights. No Alps or Apennines burst from Texas' broad bosom and rear their cold, dead peaks mile above mile into heaven's mighty vault; no Vesuvius belches his lurid, angry flame at the stars like a colossal cannon worked by Titans at war with the Heavenly Hierarchy; no Niagara churns its green waters into rainbow-tinted foam. The grandeur of Texas is not that of destruction and desolation; its beauties are not those which thrill the heart with awe, but fill it with adoration and sweet content. Not dark and dreary mountains riven by the bolts of angry Jove; not gloomy Walpurgis gorges where devils dance and witches shriek; not the savage thunder of the avalanche, but the sun-kissed valley of Cashmere, the purple hills of the lotus eaters' land, the pastoral beauties of Tempe's delightful vale. Here is repeated a thousand times that suburban home which Horace sang; here the coast where Odysseus, "the much-enduring man," cast anchor and declared he would no longer roam; here the Elysian fields "far beyond the sunset"; here the valley of Avilion lies

"Deep-meadowed, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea,"

where Queens nurse the wounded hero back to life;
here the lost Atlantis, new-found; the land where it is
always summer; where airs softer than those of Araby the
Blest are ever blowing; skies bluer than ever arched famed
Tuscany bid earthworms look heavenward; sunsets whose
gleaming gold might ransom a universe!

What care I who owns this broad expanse of emerald mead
and purple hills? who pays the taxes and digs and delves
therein for gain? It is all mine, and the sky above it is mine
to the horizon's uttermost verge; the flashing waters, the
cool mists creeping down the hills, the soft breeze stealing
up from Neptune's watery world with healing on its wings,
still fragrant with spices of the Spanish main--all, all mine; a
priceless heritage which no man toiled for, which no
spendthrift can east away.

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WOMAN'S WICKEDNESS.

CHASTITY GOING OUT OF FASHION.

By the "social evil" is commonly understood illicit
intercourse of the sexes, a violation of law or custom
intended to regulate the procreative passion.

The "evil" is probably as old as society, coeval with
mankind. History--tradition itself--goes not back to a time
when statutes, confessedly human, or professedly divine,
were capable of controlling the fierce fires that blaze within
the blood--when all-consuming Love was cold Reason's
humble slave and Passion yielded blind obedience unto
Precept. Although the heavens have been ever peopled
with threatening gods and the great inane filled with gaping
hells; although kings and courts have thundered their
inhibitions forth, and society turned upon illicit love
Medusa's awful frown, the Paphian Venus has flourished in
every age and clime, and still flaunts her scarlet flag in the
face of Heaven.

The history of humanity--its poetry, its romance, its very
religion--is little more than a Joseph's coat, woven of Love's
celestial warp and Passion's infernal woof in the loom of
Time. For sensuous Cleopatra's smiles Mark Antony
thought the world well lost; for false Helen's favors proud
Iliion's temples blazed, and the world is strewn with broken
altars and ruined fanes, with empty crowns and crumbling
thrones blasted by the selfsame curse.

In many cities of every land abandoned women are so
numerous, despite all these centuries of law-making and
moralizing, that they find it impossible to earn a livelihood
by their nefarious trade--are driven by sheer necessity to
seek more respectable employment. The supply of public

prostitutes is apparently limited only by the demand, while the number of "kept women" is constantly increasing, and society becoming day by day more lenient to those favorites of fortune who have indulged in little escapades not in strict accord with the Seventh Commandment. It is now a common occurrence for a female member of the "Four Hundred" who has confessedly gone astray, to be received back on an equality with her most virtuous sisters. In ancient Sparta theft was considered proper, but getting caught a crime. Modern society has improved upon that peculiar moral code. Adultery--if the debauchee have wealth--is but a venial fault, and to be found out a trifling misfortune, calling for condolence rather than condemnation. It is not so much the number of professed prostitutes that alarms the student of sociology, as the brutal indifference to even the semblance of sexual purity which is taking possession of our social aristocracy, and which poison, percolating through the underlying strata, threatens to eliminate womanly continence from the world.

If, despite all our safeguards of law and the restraining force of religion, society becomes more hopelessly corrupt; if, with our advancing civilization, courtesans increase in number; if, with our boasted progress in education and the arts, women of alleged respectability grow less chary of their charms--if the necessities of poverty and the luxury of wealth alike breed brazen bawds and multiply cuckolds--it is a fair inference that there is something radically wrong with our social system.

It might be well, perhaps, for priests and publicists to cease launching foolish anathemas and useless statutes at prostitution long enough to inquire what is driving so many bright young women into dens of infamy,--for those good souls who are assiduously striving to drag their fallen sisters out of the depths, to study the causes of the disease before attempting a cure. I say disease, for I cannot agree with those utilitarians who profess to regard prostitution as a "necessary evil"; who protest that the brute passions of man must be sated,--that but for the Scarlet Woman he would debauch the Vestal Virgin. I do not believe that Almighty God decreed that one-half the women of this world should be sacrificed upon the unclean altar of Lust that the others might be saved. It is an infamous, a revolting doctrine, a damning libel of the Deity. All the courtesans beneath Heaven's blue concave never caused a single son of Adam's misery to refrain from tempting, so far as he possessed the power, one virtuous woman. Never.

Governor Fishback, of Arkansas, recently declared that "houses of ill-fame are necessary to city life," and added: "If you close these sewers of men's animal passions you overflow the home and spread disaster."

This theory has been adopted by many municipalities, courtesans duly licensed, their business legitimized and accorded the protection of the law. If houses of ill-fame be

"necessary to city life"; if they prevent the overflow of the home of bestial lust and the spread of disaster, it follows as a natural sequence that the prostitute is a public benefactor, to be encouraged rather than condemned, deserving of civic honor rather than social infamy. Will Governor Fishback and his fellow utilitarians be kind enough to make a careful examination of the quasi-respectable element of society and inform us how large an army of courtesans will be necessary to enable it to pass a baking powder purity test?

Governor Fishback does not appear to have profited by Pope's suggestion that "The proper study of mankind is man," or he would know full well that the presence in a city of prostitutes but serves to accentuate the dangers that environ pure womanhood. He would know that they add fuel to Lust's unholy fires, that thousands of them are procuresses as well as prostitutes, and that one bad woman can do more to corrupt her sex than can any libertine since the days of Sir Launcelot. He would likewise know that so perverse is the nature of man that he would leave a harem filled with desirous houris more beautiful than ever danced through Mohammedan dream of Paradise, to dig pitfalls for the unwary feet of some misshapen country wench who was striving to lead an honest life. As a muley cow will turn from a manger filled with new-mown hay, and wear out her thievish tongue trying to coax a wisp of rotten straw through a crack in a neighbor's barn, so will man turn from consenting Venus' matchless charms to solicit scornful Dian.

What is it that is railroading so large a portion of the young women to Hell? What causes so many to forsake the "straight and narrow path" that is supposed to lead to everlasting life, and seek the irremediable way of eternal death? What mad phantasy is it that leads so many wives to sacrifice the honor of their husbands and shame their children? Is it evil inherent in the daughters of Eve themselves? Is it lawless lust or force of circumstances that adds legion after legion to the cohorts of shame? Or has our boasted progress brought with it a suspicion that female chastity is, after all, an overprized bauble--that what is no crime against nature should be tolerated by this eminently practical age? We have cast behind us the myths and miracles, proven the absurdity of our ancestors' most cherished traditions and brought their idols beneath the iconoclastic hammer. In this general social and intellectual house-cleaning have we consigned virtue to the rubbish heap--or at best relegated it to the garret with the spinning-wheel, hand-loom and other out-of-date trumpery? Time was when a woman branded as a bawd hid her face for shame, or consorted only with her kind; now, if she can but become sufficiently notorious she goes upon the stage, and men take their wives and daughters to see her play "Camille" and kindred characters. This may signify much; among other things that the courtesan is creeping into social favor--even that a new code of morals is now abuilding, in which she will be the grand exemplar. As

change is the order of the day, and what one age damns its successor oftentimes deifies, who knows but an up-to-date religion may yet be evolved with Bacchic revels for sacred rites and a favorite prostitute for high priestess?

Were I called upon to diagnose the social disease; did any duly ordained committee--from the numerous "Reform" societies, Ministerial Association, secular legislatures or other bodies that are taking unto themselves great credit for assiduously making a bad matter worse--call upon me for advice anent the proper method of restoring to healthy life the world's moribund morality, I would probably shock the souls out of them by stating a few plain facts without troubling myself to provide polite trimmings.

You cannot reform society from the bottom; you must begin at the top.

Man, physically considered, is merely an animal, and the law of his life is identical with that of the brute creation. Continence in man or woman is a violation of nature's edicts, a sacrifice made by the individual to the necessities of civilization.

Like the beast of the field, man formerly took unto himself a mate, and with his rude strength defended her from the advances of other males. Such, reduced to the last analysis, is the basis of marriage, of female chastity and family honor. Rape and adultery were prohibited under pains and penalties, and behind the sword of the criminal law grew up the moral code. As wealth increased man multiplied his wives and added concubines; but woman was taught that while polygamy was pleasing to the gods polyandry was the reverse--that while the husband was privileged to seek sexual pleasure in a foreign bed, the wife who looked with desiring eyes upon other than her rightful lord merited the scorn of earth and provoked the wrath of Heaven.

For long ages woman was but the creature of man's caprice, the drudge or ornament of his home, mistress of neither her body nor her mind. But as the world advanced and matter was made more subject unto mind--as divine Reason wrested the scepter from brute Force--woman began to assume her proper place in the world's economy. She is stepping forth into the garish light of freedom, is realizing for the first time in the history of the human race that she is a moral entity--that even she, and not another, is the arbiter of her fate. And, as ever before, new-found freedom is manifesting itself in criminal folly--liberty has become a synonym for license.

The "progressive" woman--the woman who is not only well "up-to-date," but skirmishing with the future--is asking her brother: "If thou, why not I? If man is forgiven a score of mistresses must woman, blessed with like reason and cursed with kindred passions, be damned for one lover?"

And while the question grates upon her ear, the answer comes not trippingly to the tongue. I do not mean that all women who imagine themselves progressive are eager to assume the same easy morals that from time immemorial have characterized the sterner sex; but this line of argument, peculiar to their class, while not likely to make men better, is well calculated to make foolish women worse. The sooner they realize that he-Dians are as scarce in the country as brains in the head of a chrysanthemum dude; that such sexual purity as the world is to be blessed withal must be furnished by the softer sex, the better for all concerned. That they will eventually cease their altogether useless clamor that bearded men become as modest as blushing maids, and agree with the poet that "Whatever is, is right," the lessons of history bid us hope. When the French people threw off the yoke of the royalist and aristocrat they likewise loudly clamored for equality, fraternity and other apparently reasonable but utterly impossible things, until the bitter school of experience taught them better. The progressive women have not yet set up la Belle Guillotine--in Washington or elsewhere--for the decapitation of male incorrigibles; which significant fact confirms our old faith that the ladies rather like a man who would not deliberately overdo the part of Joseph.

But the female "reformer," with her social board of equalization theories, is but a small factor in that mighty force which is filling the land with unfaithful wives and the potter's field with degraded prostitutes.

When the people of a nation are almost universally poor, sexual purity is the general rule. Simple living and severe toil keep in check the passions and make it possible to mold the mind with moral precepts. But when a nation becomes divided into the very rich and the extremely poor; when wilful Waste and woeful Want go hand in hand; when luxury renders abnormal the passions of the one; and cupidity, born of envy, blunts the moral perceptions of the other, then indeed is that nation delivered over to the world, the flesh and the devil. When all alike are poor, contentment reigns. The son grows up a useful, self-reliant man, the daughter an industrious, virtuous woman. From this class comes nearly every benefactor of mankind. It has ever been the great repository of morality, the balance-wheel of society, the brain and brawn of the majestic world. Divided into millionaires and mendicants, the poor man's son becomes feverish to make a showy fortune by fair means or by foul, while his daughter looks with envious eye upon m'lady, follows her fashions and too often apes her morals. The real life is supplanted by the artificial, and people are judged, not by what they are, but by what they have. The "true-love match" becomes but a reminiscence--the blind god's bow is manipulated by brutish Mammon. Men and women make "marriages of convenience," consult their fortunes rather than their affections--seek first a lawful companion with a well-filled purse, and then a congenial paramour.

The working girl soon learns that beyond a few stale platitudes--fired of much as a hungry man says grace--she gets no more credit for wearing honest rags than flaunting dishonest silks; that good name, however precious it may be to her, is really going out of fashion--that when the world pretends to prize it above rubies it is lying--is indulging in the luxury of hypocrisy. She likewise learns that the young men really worth marrying, knowing that a family means a continual striving to be fully as fashionable and artificial as those better able to play the fool, seek mistresses rather than wives. She becomes discouraged, desperate, and drifts into the vortex.

Much is said by self-constituted reformers of the lachrymose school anent trusting maids "betrayed" by base-hearted scoundrels and loving wives led astray by designing villains; but I could never work my sympathies up to the slopping over stage for these pathetic victims of man's perfidy. It may be that my tear-glands lack a hair-trigger attachment, and my sob-machine is not of the most approved pattern. Perchance woman is fully as big a fool as these reformers paint her--that she has no better sense than a blind horse that has been taught to yield a ready obedience to any master--to submit itself without question to the guidance of any hand. Will the "progressive" woman--who is just now busy boycotting Col. Breckinridge and spilling her salt tears over his discarded drab--kindly take a day of and tell us what is to become of this glorious country when such incorrigible she-idiots get control of it? It is well enough to protect the honor of children with severe laws and a double-shotted gun; but the average young woman is amply able to guard her virtue if she really values it, while the married woman who becomes so intimate with a male friend that he dares assail her continence, deserves no sympathy. She is the tempter, not the victim. True it is that maids, and matrons too, as pure as the white rose that blooms above the green glacier, have been swept too far by the fierce whirlwind of love and passion; but of these the world doth seldom hear. The woman whose sin is sanctified by love--who staked her name and fame upon a cowardly lie masquerading in the garb of eternal truth--never yet rushed into court with her tale of woe or aired her grievance in the public prints. The world thenceforth can give but one thing she wants, and that's an unmarked grave. May God in his mercy shield all such from the parrot criticisms and brutal insults of the fish-blooded, pharisaical female, whose heart never thrilled to love's wild melody, yet who marries for money--puts her frozen charms up at auction for the highest bidder, and having obtained a fair price by false pretenses, imagines herself preeminently respectable! In the name of all the gods at once, which is the fouler crime, the greater "social evil": For a woman to deliberately barter her person for gold and lands, for gew-gaws, social position and a preferred pew in a fashionable church--even though the sale be in accordance with law, have the benediction of a stupid priest and the sanction of a corrupt and canting world--or, in defiance of custom and forgetful of cold precept, to cast the priceless jewel of a

woman's honor upon the altar of illicit love?

Give the latter woman a chance, forget her fault, and she will become a blessing to society, an ornament to Heaven; the former is fit inhabitant only for a Hell of ice. She has deliberately dishonored herself, her sex and the man whose name she bears, and Custom can no more absolve her than the pope can pardon sin. She is the most dreadful product of the "Social Evil," of unhallowed sexual commerce--is the child of Mammon and Medusa, the blue-ribbon abortion of this monster-bearing age.

TALMAGE THE TURGID.

That man who first coined the phrase, "Nothing succeeds like success," had a great head. Talmage is emphatically a success,--viewed from a worldly point of view. He attracts the largest audiences of any American preacher; his sermons are more extensively printed, more eagerly read than those of any other divine. He is regarded by the public as the greatest of modern preachers, and he evidently thinks this verdict a righteous one. Why this is so, I am at a loss to determine. I have read his sermons and writings with unusual care, hoping thereby to discover in what particular he towers like Saul above his brethren,--wherein he is greater than the thousands of obscure pulpit-pounders who do battle with the devil for a few dollars and a destructive donation party per year; but so far I have signally failed. I have yet to see in print a single sermon by the so-called "great Talmage" remarkable for wit, wisdom or eloquence; or a single scrap from his pen that might not have been written by a sophomore or a young reporter.

I have before me, while I write, one of his latest oratorical efforts, entitled "Bricks Without Straw." It was delivered to one of the largest audiences that ever crowded into the great tabernacle, is considerably above the Talmagian average, was evidently regarded as one of his "ablest efforts," for the great daily in which I find it prefaces it with a "three-story head," a short biographical sketch and a portrait of the speaker making an evident effort to look wise. Yet such a sermon delivered before a Texas congregation by a fledgling D.D. seeking a "call" would provoke supercilious smiles on the part of those people who considered it their painful duty to remain awake. At the close of the services the good deacons would probably feel called upon to take the young man out behind the church and give him a little fatherly advice, the burthen of which would be to become an auctioneer or seek a situation as "spouter" for a snake side-show.

Had "Bricks Without Straw" been written as a "Sunday special" by a horse-editor of any daily paper in Texas, the managing editor would have chucked it into the waste-basket and advised the young man that journalism was not his forte. It is a rambling fragmentary piece of mental hodge-podge, in which scraps of school book Egyptology,

garbled Bible stories, false political economy and fragments of misapplied history tumble over each other like specters in a delirium. It is just such a discourse as one might expect from the lips of a female lieutenant in the Salvation Army who possessed a vivid imagination, a smattering of learning and a voluble tongue, but little judgment. The only original information I can find in the discourse is to the effect that when Joseph was a bare-legged little Hebrew, making mud-pies in the land of his forefathers, his daddy called him "Joe"; that the Bible refers to Egypt and Egyptians just "two hundred and eighty-nine times," and that "Egypt is our great-grandmother."

He goes out of his way to denounce as "lunatics" those who would place the American railways and telegraphs under governmental control. He is quite sure that the logical effect of such a proceeding would be the revival in free America of the old Egyptian tyranny. The analogy between a tyrant enslaving his subjects by means of a monopoly of the food supply, and a free people managing a great property for their own advantage, could only be traced by a Talmagian head.

During the few months that Mr. Talmage was pottering about in the land of the erstwhile Pharaohs, examining mummified cats and drawing a fat salary for unrendered services, he evidently forgot that in his own, his native land, the people "rule the roost"; that the government is but their creature and has to dance to music of their making. If the distinguished gentleman had spent his vacation in the hayloft in close communion with a copy of the constitution of the United States and a primary work on political economy, instead of gadding from the pyramids to the Acropolis hunting for small pegs upon which to hang large theories, perhaps he would be able to occasionally say something sensible.

Of course, in sloshing around over so wide a field, Mr. Talmage gave his hearers his truly valuable opinion of Mohammedanism. He admitted that it is a religion of cleanliness, sobriety and devotion; but the fact that its founder had four wives caused him to sweat in agony. Polygamy, according to Mr. Talmage, "blights everything it touches." Those who practice it are, he is quite sure, the enemies of womankind. Is it not a trifle strange that from so foul a root should spring such a celestial plant as the Christian religion? that from the loins of a polygamous people should come an immaculate Christ? How can we mention Abraham, Isaac and Jacob without a curse, or think of a God whose teachings they followed, without horror--unless indeed we take issue with the public and vote Mr. Talmage an ass of the longest-eared variety.

Mr. Talmage is quite sure that God was on the side of the allies at the Battle of Waterloo; that he was on the side of the Russians during the French invasion. Mr. Talmage does not take it upon himself to explain, however, how the Deity chanced to be on the other side at Marengo and

Austerlitz! No wonder that war is a risky business, if the God of battle changes his allegiance so erratically and without apparent provocation! Mr. Talmage should advise the government to cease expending money for ironclads and coast fortifications. In case of a foreign complication it were "all day with us" if the Autocrat of the Universe were swinging a battle-ax against us; while if we chanced to have him with us, we could send Baby McKee out with the jawbone of a hen, and put the armies of the world to shame!

Mr. Talmage should retire to some secluded spot and make a careful analysis of his sermons before firing them out to the press. They may sound all right in the big tabernacle, where a great volume of noise is the chief desideratum; but they make very poor reading. Like a flapjack, they may tickle the palate when served hot and with plenty of "sop"; but when allowed to grow cold are stale, flat and unprofitable.

Mr. Talmage is troubled with a diarrhoea of words and should take something for it. Perhaps the best possible prescription would be a long rest,--of a couple of centuries or so. How in God's name the American people ever became afflicted with the idea that he is a great man, is a riddle which might make Oedipus cudgel his wits in vain. He is not even a skillful pretender, shining like the moon, by borrowed light,--for he does not shine at all. His sentences are neither picturesque, dramatic nor wise. His so-called "sermons" are but fragmentary and usually ignorant allusions to things in general. He seldom or never encroaches upon the realms of science and philosophy, although he frequently attempts it, and evidently imagines that he is succeeding admirably, when he is but sloshing around, like a drunken comet that is chiefly tail, in inane limboes.

I can find no other explanation of Mr. Talmage's distinction than that, like Elliott F. Shepard, he can be more kinds of a fool in a given time than any other man in his profession. That were indeed distinction enough for one man, well calculated to cause the world to stand agaze! Notoriety and fame have, in this age, become synonymous if not exactly the same. The world gauges greatness by the volume of sound which the aspirant for immortal honors succeeds in setting afloat, little caring whether it be such celestial harp-music as caused Thebe's walls to rise, or the discordant bray of the ram's horn which made Jericho's to fall, and Mr. Talmage is emphatically a noise-producer. From the lecherous, but learned and logical Beecher to the gabbling inanity now doing the drum-major act, is a long stride.

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NUDE ART AT CHICAGO.

Now the very Old Nick is to pay at the World's Fair, and

an exasperating stringency in the money market. The great "uncultured West" is flocking to Chicago to see the show, and is seeing more than it bargained for. Its modest cheek has been set aflame by the exuberant display of the nude in art. And the West is kicking, kicking with both feet, kicking like a bay steer who has a kick coming and knows how to recalcitrate. The culchawed East and blase Yewrup look on with mild astonishment and wondah what ails the bawbarians, doncher know.

We learn from our Chicago correspondent that the great buildings are liberally adorned with "figures of nude men of heroic size, not a detail of which has escaped the loving care of the fin de siecle sculptors. Elsewhere the examples of the nude represent both sexes." Yet the East wonders that the West is shocked,--cannot understand why "wives drag their husbands away and young ladies leave the building with faces ablaze with indignation!" Our correspondent volunteers the information that "a much severer test of the patience of the Western people will come when the art palace is opened"; also that "the treatment the Western people are getting is drastic and cruel, but it will work wonders in cultivating and refining them."

We beg leave to dissent from the conclusion. We hardly think that any of our readers will accuse us of prudery. We are willing to concede special privileges to art. Its province is to portray the beautiful, and the most beautiful thing on all God's earth is a perfect female form. The painter or sculptor who loves his art may be permitted to reproduce in modest pose a naked female figure; but he should not be allowed to force it upon the attention of a mixed multitude. Let him place it where it will only be seen by those who seek it. A man may take his mother, wife,--even his sweetheart to look upon such work of art, and they may be better, purer, nobler for having worshiped at the shrine of beauty; but to compel them to stand before it with a mixed multitude to most of whom it suggests but grossest sensuality, is a brutal crime against modesty. So much for the female nude.

What man would take a woman near and dear to him to look upon a nude male statue or painting,--"not a detail of which has escaped the loving care" of the artist? Certainly few Western or Southern men would do so! Worship of the beautiful may pardon the nude female figure, but the nude male figure never. Hercules nude is but an animal, and Apollo a nightmare. To place nude male figures indiscriminately about the great Fair buildings, where they must be seen by modest maids, whether they will or no, and that while insolent strangers enjoy their confusion, is the very apotheosis of brutality.

The idea that such an outrage upon divine modesty will "cultivate and refine" people sounds like one of Satan's satires. We honor the "uncultured West" for making a heroic kick, and trust that it will keep on

recalcitrating until every unclean statue forced upon its attention in the name of art is forever disfigured. The protest of the West proves that its mind is still pure,--that it has not yet reached that plane of "culture" where modesty perishes in the frosts of formalism.

The liberty accorded art has degenerated into license. The beautiful is no longer sought, but the bizarre. It is not the massy shoulders of Hercules, the rounded arm of Juno, the beautiful bust of Hebe, the godlike pose of Apollo or the shapely limb of Aphrodite that painter and sculptor seek to reproduce; it is an "effect" similar to that of Boccaccio or a fragrant French novel. It is not against the true in art that the West is rebelling, but against the vulgar.

* * *

"THERE'S ONE COMES AFTER."

A SKETCH.

None so poor but they may build fairy castles in the air;
none so wretched but they may fondly gaze upon the fickle
star of Hope, flaming ever in that Heaven we see by Faith.

A man, worn with suffering and sorrow and sin, was toiling homeward in the night from a far hunter's camp, whither he had been banished by a doctor's edict, "Rest from labor lest ye die." "That indeed is a misfortune," he had said, and redoubled his vigils at the desk. Then they brought his little son, the last gem in the sacred circle of the home whose breaking up broke his heart, and placed the child upon his knee. He looked at its fair face and said, "I will go." A man for whom the shadows should still be falling toward the west, but old before his time, deep scarred by angry storms, battered and bruised like some presumptuous mortal who had seized his puny spear and plunged into such wars as the Titans were wont to wage upon the Grecian Gods. The jaded steed stumbled along the dark and dangerous way, while its rider dreamed with wide open eyes and sometimes muttered to himself in that dreary solitude.

"There's one comes after--in dying I do not die, in losing I simply pass the sword from sire to son. I may but fill a ditch for a better to mount upon and win the mural crown. What, then, if that other be----"

The owl hooted as he passed, and from the thicket came the angry snarl of wolves. "How human!" he bitterly exclaimed. "Hoots and hungry howls, all along life's path-- a weird pilgrimage in the dark."

He nodded, his head bowing almost to the saddle-bow, then awoke humming, he knew not why,

"As long as the heart knows passion.
As long as life, as long."

His dog, a powerful mastiff, bristled and uttered an angry growl as a great gray wolf slunk along in the dry grass but a few yards distant. "The brutes follow the wounded," he muttered, "and I am stricken deep." He unslung his heavy fowling-piece and fired. The eyes of the brute glowed like green globes of phosphorescence in the light of the gun, then sank down with a howl that drew its comrades about it, not to succor and to save, but to tear and rend. He watched them a moment, muttering again, "How human!" and turning to an aged oak that spread its branches wide, built a fire of brush and bivouacked. But he could not sleep--the blue devils were playing at hide-and-seek within his heart, and phantoms that once were flesh came trooping from out the gloom and hovered round him. He put out his hands to them, he cried to them to speak to him, but they receded into the darkness from whence they came--the grave had given up its dead only to mock him, to emphasize his utter desolation. He embraced the sturdy oak as though he would draw strength from its stubborn heart which had defied the storms of a thousand years, then sank prostrate at its base and, with only dumb animals to note his weakness, wept as only strong men weep when shivered by the bolts of Destiny.

"One left--but one of those I loved; my strength is broken, my labors are in vain--I can but die; yet must I live, lest the one in whom is centered all my hopes, doth fall in evil ways and also come to naught."

He dreamed of the days that were dead, and of those rushing upon him from the mystic future, "each bearing its burden of sorrow." He trod again life's thorny path, from the cradle to manhood's somber noon, a path strewn with wreck and wraith and wet with blood and tears. Again the well-known forms came from beyond the firelight and, winding their shadowy arms about his neck, wept for his loneliness. He tried to embrace them, to gather them to his heart as in the old days when they welcomed his homecoming with glad acclaim, but clutched only air--his kisses fell on vacancy. As they receded into the gloom he followed crying, "Stay! Stay!" and wandered here and there through bogs and briers and over the rough rocks, calling them each by name with many an endearing term, until he fell exhausted, and, putting forth his hand to break his fall, encircled the neck of his faithful dog and lay there bruised and bleeding. Then other phantoms came, two women, one old, one young, bearing a ghastly burden, around which little children wailed. They laid it down at his feet, a horrid thing with wide-scaring eyes and gaping wounds all wet with gore. And the elder bowed herself upon it and kissed the rigid hands, the lips and hair and moaned that she was left childless in her age, but the younger stood erect, imperious, the frightened children clinging to her skirts and, calling him by a name that froze his blood, bade him look upon her widowhood.

"It was self-defense," he doggedly replied, as he met the

glance of her scornful eyes.

"O egotist!" she cried; "must a man die that a dog may live? Must a mother's gray hairs be brought in sorrow to the grave; must the heart of a wife be crushed within a bloody hand and children never know a father's loving care, that such a thing as thou may'st yet encumber this fair earth? Precious indeed must be that life, purchased at such a price!"

But again the forms that had fled returned, and one, a frail, sweet-faced woman with a world of pity in her eyes, stood between him and his accuser. She took the scornful woman's hand and gently said: "Sister, 'twas thee or me, 'twas thine or mine;" and in the music of her voice the ghastly object vanished.

The hoot of the owl and the howl of the wolf grew faint and far away; he fell into an uneasy slumber and saw himself, aged and gray, trying to keep pace with a fair youth, who mounted with free and graceful step a mountain whose summit was crowned with the light of everlasting day. Steeper and steeper grew the path, yet he strove with failing strength. The youth reached out a strong hand to him and said, "Lean on me;" but he put it back, crying fiercely: "No! no! climb thou alone farther I cannot go. On! On to the summit, where breaks the great white light, and there is no death!"

The youth struggled with the steeps and overcame them one by one, and mounted higher and ever higher, until he stood where never man had stood, the glory of the gods upon his face, the immortelles upon his brow. And people wondered and said to him, "Who is it that stands upon the mountain top where only tread the gods?" And he answered, "It is I--it is my other self." And they said, "The poor old man is mad; let be, let be."

The dog crept closer to its master and laid its head upon his breast. The vision changed, and he sat by a seacoal fire in chambers that once had echoed the glad voices of those whose graves were 'mid the sougning pines. He held his one treasure to his heart and sang to it the old ditties that its mother was wont to sing when soothing her babe to slumber, until the golden head drooped low upon his breast. He wove about it fond dreams of what should be in the years to come, when, grown to manhood, it entered the arena of the world. A bony hand stole over his shoulder and seized the child, and looking up he beheld Death standing by his chair. He clasped his treasure close and struggled with the grisly specter, but it only mocked him, and tearing the child from him, fled into the outer void. He struggled to his feet and from his parched lips there burst a cry that echoed and reechoed through the dark woods and was hurled back from the distant hills.

At dawn the rustics found him, lying cold as his rocky bed, the beaded dew upon his grizzled beard, his horse with

head low hanging over him, his dog keeping watch and ward.

* * *

POOR OLD TEXAS.

'Twas said in days of old that misfortune never comes singly. The fates are turning upon Texas an unkindly eye. She is o'erwhelmed quite, sunk in the Serbonian bogs of dark despair. First our mighty Democratic majority slipped up on the Hoggeian banana peel and drove its vertebrae through the crown of its convention plug, while unfeeling Populists and Republicans jeered and flouted us. Then our blessed railway kermishen lost its linchpin and the soulless corporations heaped coals of fire upon our heads by reducing rates, thereby making our boasted wisdom a byword and a reproach. The cyclone swooped down upon us from Kansas and swiped our crops, making our boasts that here was an Elysium beyond the storm-belt sound as hollow as Adam's dream of Eden after he was lifted over the garden wall. Still we bore up and presented a bold, if not an unbroken front to a carping world. But the vials of wrath were not yet exhausted. Pandora's box had not yet emptied itself of all its plagues. Our sorrow's crown of sorrow was yet to come. It is here; our humiliation is accomplished, our agony is complete. A lone highwayman has held up and robbed a populous passenger train in Texas--in West Texas, the rendezvous of the sure-enough bad man, who catches catamounts and clips their claws,-- who defies whole barrels o' Jersey lightning and uses the bucking-broncho for his laughter, yea, his sport! Shades o' Ben Thompson and Luke Short, has it come to this,--that a rank stranger can lasso a Texas train, drive the passengers under the seats, plunder them at his pleasure, with no one to molest or make him afraid! Half a hundred Texans trembling at sight of one gun were a sight worth seeing,-- and they did not even know it was loaded! Gone is our ancient glory--our rep. is irretrievably in the tureen. Henceforth when a pilgrim from the pathless Southwest registers at an Eastern hotel the bell-boys will not fall over each other to do him honor as a dime-novel hero, nor the gilded clerk insure his life before politely requesting him to pay in advance. The last lingering shadow of our greatness hath departed. The tenderfoot will trample upon us, and the visiting capitalist neglect to ask us up to the bar. The fair ladies of other lands will no longer worship us as the picturesque knights of a reckless but romantic chivalry. They will remember that in a whole trainload of Texans there was not one who would fight even on compulsion,-- will sweep by with frigid hauteur, leaving us to weep for the days that are no more. Alas, poor Texas!

* * *

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

A correspondent wants to know what I think of "the Single Standard of Morals, which assumes that tampering

with the Seventh Commandment is as demoralizing to men as to women."

The single standard of morals, like the single standard of money, would be a magnificent thing were there at least double the present amount of raw material for it to measure. I hope to see the day when the libertine will be relegated to the social level of the prostitute where he logically belongs; but we are not dealing now with theories, but with actual conditions. I trust that I may speak plainly on this delicate subject without offending the unco' guid or giving the priorient pulpiteers a pain. I believe the sexes should be equally pure--when I make a world all my women shall be paragons of virtue, and all my men he-virgins. I'll construct no Messalinas nor Cleopatras, no Lovelaces or Sir Launcelots. I'll people the world with St. Anthonys and Penelopes, Josephs and Rebecca Merlindy Johnsings. I'll apply the soft pedal to the fierce scream of passion and pull all the barbs from the arrows that whiz from the Love God's bow. Life will not then be quite so exhilarating, but it will be much better worth the living. Meantime a little spraining of the Seventh Commandment is by no means so demoralizing to man as to woman, despite the frantic protests of those who would drag the millennium in by the ears by forcing upon society, willy nilly, the single standard of morals. Man is the grosser animal, has not so far to fall; the shock to his sensibilities is not so serious--he is not so amenable to shame. A coat of black paint ruins a marble Diana, but has little appreciable effect on an iron Hercules. Illicit intercourse is not so demoralizing to man as to woman, for the further reason that it is not considered so great a crime. An act is demoralizing or degrading in proportion as the perpetrator thereof considers it criminal, as it lowers his self-respect; and men regard their crinolinic peccancy as a venial fault, while women consider such lapses on the part of their sex as grievous sin; hence the lightning of lust scarce blackens the pillar while it shatters the vase. The moral effect of an act is determined by the prevailing standard of ethics. Were polyandry the general practice, a woman could have a multiplicity of husbands and be considered pure; where polygamy is the rule, a man may have a multitude of wives and be regarded as moral. Ethical codes ever adapt themselves to conditions. Solomon was one of the most honorable men of his age, but were he alive to-day he would be branded as a shameless lecher, a contumacious criminal. There have been religions, existing through long ages and extending over vast empires, in which the organs of generation were considered as sacred symbols and prostitution in the purlieu of the temple regarded as pleasing to the gods. It is easy enough for bigoted ignorance to brand those people as barbarians; but in many provinces of art and science they have ever remained our masters. "The tents of the maidens" were simply places where fair religious enthusiasts sold themselves to the first stranger who offered them a piece of silver, and laid their gains upon the altar of the gods. The robber barons of old-time Germany, the diplomatic liars of medieval Italy, the thieves of ancient

Lacedaemon and the polygamists of biblical Palestine considered themselves as respectable people, and as they were so regarded by their compatriots, they were not morally degraded by their deeds. But the robber and the liar, the thief and the polygamist of this age are cattle of quite another color--there has been a radical change in the moral code, the peccadillos of the past have become the crimes of the present. The cross, once an obscene pagan symbol, has been transformed from an emblem of reproduction into one of destruction; the "tents of the maidens" are struck; Corinth no longer implores the gods to increase the number and enhance the beauty of its courtesans; Venus Pandemos has given place to Our Lady of Pain, and the obscene Dionysius fled before a crucified Christ. No more does the fair religious postulant play the bacchante in flower-strewn palaces while naked Cupids crown the brimming cup and sandaled feet beat time on polished cedar floors to music that is the cry of brute passion in the blood--kneeling in the cold gray dawn upon the stones she clasps a marble cross. The wanton worship of the flesh has passed with the world's youth; but though much of man's crassness has been purged away in Time's great crucible, he is still of the earth earthy and clings tenaciously to his ancient prerogative of polygamy. When he marries, society does not really expect him to respect his oath to "forsake all others"--regards it as a formal bow to the convenances, a promise with a mental reservation annex; but it considers a woman's vow as sacred and the breaking thereof as rankest blasphemy. He is allowed but one wife, but he may have a score of mistresses and society will placidly wink the other eye--until some tearful maiden requires him to share the shame she can no longer conceal or an "injured husband" goes a-gunning. This should not be so, but so it is. There be fools, both male and female, who will rise up to exclaim that this is false; but that it is Gospel truth is proven every day in the year in every community on the American continent. Men with reputations for licentiousness that would shame old Silenus are cordially received in the most exclusive society. They are found at every high-falutin' "function," bending over the white hands of the most accomplished ladies in the land; on every ballroom floor, encircling the waists of debutantes; in the parlors of our best people, paying court to their young daughters. The noblest women in this world become their wives--fondly undertake their "reformation" while indignantly drawing their skirts aside lest they come in contact with the tawdry finery of females whom these lawless satyrs have debauched. Of course when a woman learns that her reformatory work has proven a failure, drear and dismal, she complains bitterly, may even demand a divorce; yet she could count upon the fingers of one hand the hubbies whom she would trust behind a sheet of paper with a wayward daughter. She doesn't believe a little bit in the virtue of the genus male, yet insists that her own husband be a saint--assumes that her own charms should cause him to regard all other women with indifference, and when she learns of his polygamous practices suffers all the pangs of wounded

pride.

If a woman be homely as a bois d'arc hedge she may suppose the world supercharged with St. Anthonys, for she has not been much sought; but if she be beautiful and has mingled much with men she realizes all too well that the story of Joseph is a foolish romance or that Mrs. Potiphar was quite passe. And though she be pure as a vestal virgin of Rome's best days she secretly despises the man with whom she does not have to stand just a little bit on the defensive. Of course she demands that her male acquaintances shall be gentlemen and treat her with due courtesy and respect; but it nettles her not a little to learn that her charms are altogether ignored. She likes to feel her power, to know that she is good in the eyes of men, something desired--that her virtue is a priceless jewel over which she must ever keep close guard; hence she likes best the male she is compelled to watch, while a man has absolutely no use for wife or mistress upon whose fealty he would not lay his life. The result is that when a woman commits one sexual sin she puts hope behind her, her feet take hold on Hell, she sinks lower and lower until she becomes the shameless associate of bummers and bawds. She is made to feel that she has murdered her womanhood, that the red cross of Cain blazes upon her brow. Realizing that she is a social outcast, a moral pariah, she becomes reckless, defiant, and finally glories in betraying the fool who trusts her. No matter how fair the mountain upon which she has leave to feed, she will batten on the moor. Love was her excuse when first she went astray, and she hugs the delusion to her heart that Cupid can sanctify a crime; but where honor spreads not its wings of snow love perishes in the fierce simoon of lust. The man with whom she enters the primrose path feels that he is as good as his fellows. He may watch with a sigh her descent to the noisome regions of the damned; but comforts himself with the reflection that she would have found her way to hades without his help--that

"Virtue as it never will be moved,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,
So lust, though to a radiant angel linked,
Will sate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage"--

that had he played the prude she would have found another and perhaps a baser paramour. He knows that the stain of lechery is on his soul but draws comfort from the fact that such is the common heritage of his sex, forgets his victim and struggles toward the stars. He is financially honest, generous, and guards the honor of wife and daughters as God's best gift. His amorous dalliance with others instead of weaning him from his wife, causes him to regard her with greater veneration, to contrast her purity with his own pollution, her virtue with another's vice. Paradoxical as it may appear, there are no men in this world who so reverence good women as those who are notorious for their illicit amours. I am not, of course,

speaking of the consorts of common courtesans, of human hogs; but of the men who people the red-light district with their cast-off mistresses.

Pitiful as it may appear, it hurts a man more to trifle with the Eighth Commandment once than to break the Seventh a thousand times--he is worse demoralized by stealing a mangy mule than by ruining a maid. The male lecher may be in all things else a lord; the thief is considered altogether and irremediably corrupt. Society will tolerate the one if his offense be not too flagrant, but to the other it refuses even the shadow of forgiveness. For three centuries the world has been trying to explain away Shakespeare's poaching, but has not thought it worth while to even apologize for his sexual perversity. Washington caught his death while keeping an assignation with a neighbor's wife; but there's little said about it--he's still the "father of his country," including seventy million people of all classes and colors. Had the "slight exposure which brought on a fatal sickness," been the result of prowling in his neighbor's barn instead of his boudoir his name would be anathema forevermore. The world forgives him for debauching another man's wife, but would never have forgiven him had he raided the same man's henroost. It does not mean by this that a scrawny pullet is of more importance than family honor; it simply means that the man who steals a pullet is a cowardly thief, while the one who ignores the advances of a pretty woman is an incorrigible idiot. Ben Franklin could have mistresses scattered all over the City of Brotherly Love, and Dan Webster consort with all the light women of Washington, and still be men of genius beneath whose imperial feet Columbia was proud to lay her shining hair; but had either been caught sneaking from a neighbor's woodpile with a two-cent bundle of fagots, the world would have rung with his infamy. The complaint against Demosthenes is not that he was a libertine--a man before whose honeyed eloquence maiden modesty and wifely virtue were as wax; but that he threw away sword and shield and fled like a mule-eared rabbit before the spears of Macedon. I digress long enough to say that I have patiently investigated the story of the great orator's flight, and am fully convinced that it was a foul political falsehood, just as the current story of Col. Ingersoll's cowardice and capture is a religious lie.

Of course society has to make an occasional example and its moral maleficence, like death, loved a shining mark. It damned Breckinridge for getting tangled up with a desiring maid in a closed carriage, and relegated him to the political wilderness, yet twice elevated to the presidency the most disreputable old Falstaff that ever vibrated between cheap beer joints and ham-fatted old washerwomen who smelled of stale soap-suds and undeodorized diapers. Cleveland "told the truth"--when he had to--and was made a little tin Jesus of by the moral jabberwocks; Breckinridge, an infinitely better and brainier man, 'fessed up--and couldn't go to Congress from the studhorse district of Kentucky. When society goes hunting for scapegoats it

usually manages to get a gnat lodged in its esophagus while relegating a mangy dromedary to its internal economy.

Such are the conditions which prevail to-day; but I am far from agreeing with the dictum of Pope that "whatever is, is right." Had the world ever proceeded on that principle we would still be honoring robbers and liars, thieves and polygamists. The wider license accorded man harmonizes neither with divine law, decency nor the canons of common sense. We place womanly virtue on a pedestal and worship it while tacitly encouraging men to destroy it. We overlook the fact that a man cannot fracture the Seventh Commandment without considerable assistance. We should adopt a loftier standard of morality, nobler ideals for men. Because he is more earthly than woman it does not follow that he should be made altogether of muck. He has made some little progress since the days of Judah and Tamar, David and Bathsheba. He no longer consorts with courtesans on the public highway, nor pens up half a hundred wives in a harem, then goes broke buying concubines. He has learned that there is such a thing as shame, assumes a virtue though he has it not, seeks to conceal his concupiscence. What in one age society drives to a semblance of concealment in the next it brands as criminal, hence we may hope that at no distant day the single standard of morals will become more than an iridescent dream--that Josephs will not be confined altogether to gum-chewing members of the Y.M.C.A. We may eventually reach that moral plain where the male debauchee will be considered a moral outcast; but the time is not yet, and until its advent illicit commerce will continue to be more demoralizing to women than to men.

Of course there are exceptions to the rule--there are women who rise superior to the social law. George Eliot, Queen Elizabeth, Sarah Bernhardt and others have trampled the social edict beneath their feet and refused to consider themselves sinners--have laughed an outraged world to scorn and stood defiant, sufficient unto themselves. Those women were intellectual amazons whom naught but the writhen bolts of God could humble, whose genius flamed with a white light even through the dun clouds of lechery; but we cannot measure the workaday woman by the few "whose minds might, like the elements, furnish forth creation." A Bernhardt is great, not because of her social sin, but despite thereof. With her art is the all-in-all, sex but an incident. She is strong enough to mount the empyrean despite the lernean serpent-coil which drags others to perdition--to compel the world to tolerate if not forgive the black stain in her heart because of the divine radiance which encircles her head. Occasionally there is a woman who can sacrifice her purity without sinking to the slums through loss of self-respect--can still maintain the fierce battle for fame, can be grand after she has ceased to be good. Mrs. Grundy can rave, and every orthodox goose stretch forth its rubberneck to express its disapproval; but instead of bending beneath the weight of scorn, instead of

sinking into the mire of the slough upon which she has set her feet she seems like old Antaeus, to gather fresh strength from the earth with which to write her name among the immortals. Queen Elizabeth is to this good day the pride of orthodox England--she had more brains than all its other monarchs combined; yet by solemn act of parliament it was decreed that the first bastard born to the "Virgin Queen" should ascend the throne of Britain. Thus was the highest possible premium placed upon female lechery, and it was placed there after due deliberation by a "God-fearing," Catholic-hating Episcopalian parliament! Fortunately for Mrs. Wettin, the present governmental figure-head, jolly old Liz either availed herself of some of the "preventatives" so extensively advertised in "great family newspapers," or neglected to own her illegitimate offspring. I cannot help but think that a love-child by Elizabeth and the courtly Raleigh would have been a great improvement on any of the soggy-headed things spawned by the House of Hanover. I do not apologize for nor condone the sexual frailties of distinguished females; the noblest career to which any woman can aspire is that of honest wifehood, and if she attains to that she is, though of mediocre mind, infinitely superior to the most famous wanton.

It is worthy of remark that most distinguished women since the days of Sappho and Semiramis have been impure, while not a few great men have been remarkable for their continency. Woman has been called "the weaker vessel," and certain it is that men stand the glamor of greatness, the temptations that come with riches, the white light that beats upon a throne, much better than do Eve's fair daughters. As a man becomes great, he respects more and more the cumulative wisdom of the world, becomes obedient; as a woman becomes great she grows disdainful and rebellious. Thus it is that while in the common walks of life woman is infinitely purer than man, as we ascend into the higher realms, whether in art, letters or statecraft, we discover a tendency to reverse this law until we often find great men anchorites and great women trampling on the moral code.

There be some who explain man's larger sexual liberty on physiological grounds, excuse it on the hypothesis of necessity. Physicians of the ultra-progressive school have even gone so far as to assert that continence in man is the chief cause of impotency--have pointed out that it is usually the wives of good men who go wrong, and insisted that to the former hypothesis must be attributed the latter fact. I am unable to find any reason in physiology why such a rule should not work both ways. I have said somewhere that man is naturally polygamous, and I might have added with equal truth that woman is naturally polyandrous. The difference is that woman's sexual education began earlier and she has progressed somewhat further from "a state of nature" wherein free love is the law. Man early began to defend his prerogatives, to strengthen the moral concept of his mate with a club, to frame laws for the protection of his female property. The infraction of

established custom soon came to be considered a social crime, an offense of which even the gods took cognizance. Woman's polyandrous instinct yielded somewhat to education--she was compelled to make this sacrifice upon the altar of society. Thus was female continence not a thing decreed by Heaven or "natural law," but was begotten of brute force. We see a survival of the old animalistic instinct in prostitution and the all too frequent illicit intercourse prevailing in the higher walks of life. Unquestionably the Seventh Commandment is violative of natural law as applied to either sex; but most natural laws must be amended somewhat ere we can have even a semblance of civilization; hence we cannot excuse man's peccadillos on that broad plea that it's "the nature of the brute." Joseph and St. Anthony, Gautama and Sir Galahad are ideals toward which man must ever strive with all his strength if he would purge the subsoil out of his system--would mount above the gutter where wallow the dumb beasts and take his place among the gods. The custom of thousands of years to the contrary notwithstanding, it is damnable that a wife should be compelled to share a husband's caresses with lewd women. Tennyson assures us that "as the husband is the wife is." Fortunately for society this is false; still there are thorns in the bed and rebellion in the heart of the woman who must play wife to a Lovelace or a Launcelot. It is not true that it is the wives of good men who go astray; it is the wives who are naturally corrupt or morally weak. A talented lady contributor to the ICONOCLAST once asserted that 'tis not for good women that men have done great deeds. Perchance this is true, for men who do great deeds are goaded thereto, not by the swish of crinoline, but by the immortal gods. Such acts are bred in the bone, are born in the blood and brain. It certainly is not for bad women that men soar at the sun, for every man worth the killing despises corruption in womankind. He worships on bended knee and with uncovered head at the shrines of Minerva and Dian, and but amuses himself by stealth at that of the Pandemian Venus. When Antony deserted his Roman wife for Egypt's sensuous queen, he quickly became an enervated ass and his name thenceforth was Ichabod. Great Caesar dallied with the same dusky wanton, but ever in his intrepid heart ruled that "woman above reproach." Alexander of Macedon refrained from making the wife of Persia's conquered king his mistress. Napoleon found time even among the thunders of war to write daily to his wife, and when he finally turned from her it was not to seek a fairer flame but to place a son upon the throne of France. Grant stood forth in an era of unbridled license unsullied as a god. Great men have been unfaithful to their marital vows, but it has been those of mediocre minds and india-rubber morals who have cowered at the feet of mistresses--who have thrown their world away for reechy kisses shared by others. While it is true that the world's intellectual titans have seldom been he-virgins or feathered saints, they did not draw godlike inspiration from their own dishonor.

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OPTIMISM VS. PESSIMISM.

THE PREACHED AND THE "APOSTLE."

I am in receipt of a long letter from a Missouri minister, in which, to my surprise, he says: "I regret to note that you are a Pessimist. Permit me to express the hope that so powerful a journal as the *ICONOCLAST* will yet espouse the sunny philosophy of Optimism, which teaches that all that is accords with the Plan of the Creator, and works together for the ultimate good."

"God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

I had not hitherto suspected that I was inoculated with the awful microbes of Pessimism, but if my reverend friend is a professor in the sunny school of Optimism, I certainly do not belong to that sect. If "all that is accords with the Plan of the Creator," did not Christ deserve to be crucified for bringing about new conditions, and Galileo to go to jail for interfering with the stupid ignorance of certain Catholic cardinals? Can even the Missouri minister be held guiltless when he attempts to turn my thinking apparatus around and make it operate from the other end? Surely he should not interfere in even so slight a particular with the "Plan of the Creator," who may have been moving "in a mysterious way his wonders to perform" when he gave the supposedly pessimistic bend to my mind. Nay, if my Christian friend do but have the rheumatism, should he not refrain from poulticing himself, lest he throw the celestial machinery out of gear? If changes wrought in religion, science, government, etc., constitute a portion of the "Plan," we must concede it to have originally been a very faulty affair--quite upsetting the optimistic theory that "Whatever is is right."

The terms Pessimism and Optimism are handled very loosely in these latter days. In the modern acceptance of the terms, the first may be defined as a chronic intellectual bellyache, the latter as an incurable case of mossbackism. The thorough Pessimist believes the world is going in hot haste to the demnition bowwows, and that nothing short of a miracle can head it off; the full-fledged Optimist carries concealed about his person an abiding faith that "God ordereth all things well"--that he not only designed the mighty universe, but is giving his personal attention to the details of its management. Really, I do not believe I am Pessimist to hurt, or that my reverend critic is so dangerously ill of the Optimistic disease as he imagines. Perhaps he has been living too high for great intellectual effort. Were he in the condition of some millions of his fellow creatures, the cuticle of whose abdomens is flapping against their vertebrae like a wet dish-rag wrapping itself around a wire clothesline, perhaps there would not be quite so much sunshine in his philosophy. The man with whom the world goes well is apt to prattle of the "ultimate good"

when considering the woes of other people.

The basis of Optimism is foreordination, the foolish faith that before God created the majestic universe and sent the planets whirling about the blazing sun; that before the first star gleamed in the black, overhanging firmament or a single mountain peak rose from the watery waste, he calmly sat him down and mapped out every act of moral man--decreed every war and pestilence, the rise and fall of every nation, and fixed the date of every birth and death. That may be excellent "orthodoxy," but it is not good sense. I reject the theory that all the happenings here below "accord with the Plan of the Creator--work together for the ultimate good." Hence, I am not an Optimist. I dare not accuse my Creator of being responsible for all the sin and sorrow, suffering and shame that since the dawn of history has bedewed the world with blood and tears.

I do not believe the "Plan of the Creator" contemplated that millions of people should perish miserably by war, and famine and pestilence. I do not believe the black buck who ravishes and murders a white babe is one of the great moral agents of the Almighty, nor that the infamous act has any possible tendency to promote "the ultimate good." And did I so believe, I would keep my shotgun loaded just the same. I do not believe that the blessed God intended there should ever be a liar or a thief, a prostitute or a murderer in this beautiful world. I do not believe that the Creator entered into a compact with the devil or a covenant with the cholera. And if not, then all that is does not "accord with the Plan of the Creator." If that be Pessimism, make the most of it.

That there is a Divine Plan I do not doubt; but I believe it to be broader, deeper, more worthy of the great Demiurgus than that which pictures him telling a priest how to carve his pantaloons or sacrifice a pair of pigeons, than standing idly by with his hands under his coat-tails, while some drunken duffer beats the head of his better half with a bootjack, or a bronze brute rips the scalp from a smiling babe. If that's the kind of a hairpin who occupies the throne of Heaven, I don't blame Lucifer for raising a revolution. I would have taken a fall out of him myself, even had I known that my viscera would be strewn across the face of the shrinking universe.

God gave us life, and this grand old globe for habitat. He stored it with everything necessary to the health and happiness of the human race--poured his treasures forth with a hand so bounteous that though its population were doubled, trebled, it might go on forever and no mortal son of Adam need suffer for life's necessities. The gaunt specters of Want and Pestilence are not of his creation; they were born of Greed and Ignorance. God sent no devil with hoofs and horns to torment or tempt us; he gave to us passions necessary to the perpetuation and progress of the race and divine Reason wherewith to rule them--then left us

to work out our own salvation, aided by those silent forces that are pressing all animate and inanimate life onward to perfection. Reason needs no celestial guide, no heavenly monitor, for it is the grandest attribute of God himself. Where Reason sits enthroned God reigns!

For more than half a million years man has been toiling upwards, impelled by that mysterious law that causes the pine to spring towards the sun. Sometimes the advance is by leaps and bounds, as when some giant intellect--some Son of God, especially gifted with the attributes of his Sire--brushes aside the obstructions at which lesser men toil in vain; sometimes the Car of Progress stands still for a thousand years, else rolls slowly back toward brutishness, there being none of sufficient strength to advance the standards further up the rugged mountainside--nearer the Celestial City. Thus, ever in ebb and flow, gaining and losing, only to regain; nations rising and falling but to serve as stepping-stones whereon mount a nobler race, a grander people, the irrepressible conflict of the Godlike with the Beastlike in man goes bravely on.

In half a million years we have come far--won many a fair field from the dominion of Darkness. We no longer dwell in caves and hollow trees, fighting naked with the wild beasts of the forest for our prey. We have erected temples to that God who dwells, not only in the heavens, but here on earth--in the brain and heart of the human race. We have made matter so far subject unto mind that nature's mighty forces have become our obedient bondslaves. We have built societies, nations, weighed the world and measured the stars. We have acquired not only knowledge and power, but love and modesty. The procreative passion no longer crawls, a hideous thing, but soars aloft, a winged Psyche. Thus, one by one, through the long ages, have we built up within ourselves the attributes of the Most High, toward whom our feet are tending. Life is no longer mere animalism, content to gorge itself with roots and raw meat and sit in the sun. The ear craves melody, the eye beauty, the brain dominion, while the soul mounts to the very stars!

Thus far have we come out of the Valley of Darkness, led on, not by those who believe that "all that is accords with the Plan of the Creator," but by those whose battle-cry has ever been,

"Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin forever
Down the ringing grooves of change."

Every reformation yet wrought in religion, science or politics, was the work of men who declined to accept the doctrines enunciated by the Missouri divine. If I am a Pessimist I am in such excellent company as Confucius and Christ, General Washington and Mr. Gladstone, Prof. Morse and Dr. Pasteur, while my critic is training with the gang that poisoned Socrates, bribed Iscariot and crucified the Savior. And the world persists in judging a man by the

company he keeps!

ADAM AND EVE.

After God had expended five days creating this little dog-kennel of a world, and one in manufacturing the remainder of the majestic universe out of a job-lot of political boom material, he "planted a garden eastward in Eden, and there he put the man he had formed." Adam was at that time a bachelor, therefore, his own boss. He was monarch of all he surveyed and his right there was none yet to dispute. He could stay out and play poker all night in perfect confidence that when he fell over the picket fence at 5 A.M. he would find no vinegar-faced old female nursing a curtain lecture to keep it warm, setting her tear-jugs in order and working up a choice assortment of snuffles. There were no lightning-rod agents to inveigle him into putting \$100 worth of pot metal corkscrews on a \$15 barn. He didn't care a rap about the "law of rent," nor who paid the "tariff tax," and no political Buzfuz bankrupted his patience trying to explain the silver problem. He didn't have to anchor his smokehouse to the center of gravity with a log chain, set a double-barreled bear trap in the donjon-keep of his hennerly nor tie a brace of pessimistic bull-dogs in his melon patch, for the nigger preacher had not yet arrived with his adjustable morals and omnivorous mouth. No female committees of uncertain age invaded his place of business and buncoed him out of a double saw-buck for the benefit of a pastor who would expend it seeing what Parkhurst saw and feeling what Parkhurst felt. Collectors for dry-goods emporiums and millinery parlors did not haunt him like an accusing conscience, and the pestiferous candidate was still happily hidden in the womb of time with the picnic pismire and the partisan newspaper. Adam could express an honest opinion without colliding with the platform of his party or being persecuted by the professional heresy-hunters. He could shoot out the lights and yoop without getting into a controversy with the chicken-court and being fined one dollar for the benefit of the state and fleeced out of forty for the behoof of thieving officials. He had no collar-buttons to lose, no upper vest pockets to spill his pencils and his patience, and his breeches never bagged at the knees. There were no tailors to torment him with scraps of ancient history, no almond-eyed he-washer-woman to starch the tail of his Sunday shirt as stiff as a checkerboard.

Adam was more than 100 years old when he lost a rib and gained a wife. Genesis does not say so in exact words, but I can make nothing else of the argument. Our first parents received special instructions to "be fruitful and multiply." They were given distinctly to understand that was what they were here for. They were brimming with health and strength, for disease and death had not yet come into the world. Their blood was pure and thrilled with the passion that is the music of physical perfection--yet Adam was 130 years old when his third child was born. If Adam and Eve

were of equal age a marriage in American "high life"--the mating of a scorbutic dude with a milliner's sign--could scarce make so poor a record. After the birth of Seth the first of men "begat sons and daughters"--seems to have become imbued with an ambition to found a family. As the first years of a marriage are usually the most fruitful, we may fairly conclude that our common mother was an old man's darling. Woman does not appear to have been included in the original plan of creation. She was altogether unnecessary, for if God could create one man out of the dust of the earth without her assistance he could make a million more--could keep on manufacturing them as long as his dust lasted. But multiplication of "masterpieces" was no part of the Creator's plan. Adam was to rule the earth even as Jehovah rules the heavens. As there is but one Lord of Heaven, there should be but one lord of earth--one only Man, who should live forever, the good genius of a globe created, not for a race of marauders and murderers but for that infinitely happier life which we denominate the lower animals. This beautiful world was not built for politicians and preachers, kings and cuckolds; but for the beasts and birds, the forests and the flowers, and over all of life, animate and inanimate, the earthly image of Almighty God was made the absolute but loving lord. The lion should serve him and the wild deer come at his call. The bald eagle, whose bold wings seem to fan the noonday sun to fiercer flame, should bend from the empyrean at his bidding, and the roc bear him over land and sea on its broad pinions. As his great Archetype rules the Cherubim and Seraphim, so should Man, a god in miniature, reign over the earth-born, the inhabitants of a lesser heaven. As no queen shares God's eternal throne, so none should divide the majesty of earth's diadem. There is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, we are told, among the angels. They rise above sex, into the realm of the purely spiritual, scorning the sensual joys that are the heritage of bird and beast, for intellectual pleasures that never pall; and why should Man, the especial object of God's providence, be grosser than his ministers?

Were I a poet I would ask no grander theme than Adam's first century upon the earth--that age of gold when Man was sufficient unto himself. A century undisputed master of the world! A century of familiar converse in Eden's consecrated groves with the great First Cause--the omnipresent and omnipotent God. Picture one day of such existence! Ambition and Avarice, Jealousy and Passion, those demons that have deluged the world with blood and tears, have no place in Adam's peaceful bosom. He is not in the Grove of Daphne, where lust is law, but in the Garden of God where love is life. His subjects, not dumb as now, or speaking a language strange to our dull ears, greet him as he comes forth at break of day from his aromatic bower. A thousand feathered songsters drown his soul in melody divine, while every bud and blossom, a living censer, sways in the balmy breath of morn and pours forth its grateful perfume. The forest monarch lays his massy head on Adam's knee, the spotted leopard purrs about him and the fawn nestles

between his feet. High above the Caucasian peaks a condor poises motionless in mid-heaven, the unrisen sun gilding him as with beaten gold. Now the sawlike summits, cloud-kissing and crowned with eternal snow, burst into the brilliant sea and gleam like the brow of God, while the purple mists are drawn up from the deep valleys as though the giants fain would hide from earth their splendors, reserving them alone for Heaven. Higher and higher wheels the great sun, driving the river mist before it and sending down through the softly whispering foliage a thousand shafts of burnished gold that seek out the violet, drain the nectareous dewdrop from its chalice and kiss the grape until its youthful sap changes to empurpled blood beneath the passionate caress. In the cool shadows by the great spring--a magic mirror in whose pellucid depths are reflected heaven's imperial concave and Eden's virgin splendors--God walks familiar with Adam as with a younger brother, explains to him the use and beauty of all that is, and spreads before his wondering eyes Creation's mighty plan.

And yet God suspects that Adam is not content, for we hear him soliloquizing: "It is not good that the man should be alone." The clay of which the first of men is formed is beginning to assert itself. He watches the panther fondling his playful cubs, the eagle's solicitude for his imperial brood perched on the beetling crag, and the paternal instinct awakes within him. He hears the mockingbird trilling to his mate, the dove pitying the loneliness of Creation's mystic lord, and a fierce longing for a companionship dearer than he has yet known takes possession of him. To the swarming life about him his high thoughts are incomprehensible; in God's presence his soul swoons beneath an intellectual glory to which he cannot rise, encumbered as he is by earthly clay. He sends his swift-winged messenger forth to summon before his throne every fowl of the air and every beast of the field. Down through the gates of the garden they come, countless thousands, and pass before their king. "But for Adam there was not found a helpmeet for him." Sick at heart he turns away. The sunset has lost its glory, the spheres their music, life its sweetness. The beams of the moon chill his blood and Arcturus leads forth his shining sons but to mock his barrenness. The flowers that wreath his couch stifle him with their sensuous perfume and he flies from the nightingale's passionate song as the slave flees the scourge. Through the dark paths and over the moss-grown boulders he stumbles on, across the fields where the fireflies glow like showers of flame, beneath the tall cedars whose every sigh seems drawn from the depths of an accepted lover's soul. Exhausted, he sinks down where the waters burst from the foundations of the earth and, dividing into four, seem to reiterate in ceaseless monotone, "Behold my mighty sons." A feeling of utter loneliness, of hopeless desolation falls upon him, such as hammers at the heart when Death has despoiled us of all that Life held dear. He pillows his head upon the sleeping lion and shields himself from the sharp night air with the tawny mane. A

cub, already hunting in dreams, comes whining and nestles down over his heart, while Love's brilliant star pours its splendors full upon his face. The long black lashes, burdened with unshed tears, drop low, a drowsiness falls upon him and Adam sleeps. The heavens are rolled together like a scroll and God descends in the midst of a legion of Angels, brightest of whom is Lucifer, Son of the Morning, not yet forever fallen. "It is not good that the man should be alone." The fitful slumber deepens; the winds are hushed; the song of the nightingale sinks lower and lower, then ceases with an awe-struck sigh; the lynx and the jackal, the horned owl and the scaly serpent slink away into the deepest wood, while Love's emblem glows like a globe of molten gold. Then comes a burst of melody divine, beneath which the earth trembles like a young maid's heart when, half in ecstasy, half in fear, she first feels burning upon her own the bearded lips of her life's dear lord. It is the Morning Stars singing together! There is a perfumed air on Adam's cheek, sweeter than ever swooned in the rose garden of Cashmere or the jasmine bowers of Araby the Blest; there is a touch upon his forehead softer than the white dove's fluttering bosom; there is a voice in his ear more musical than Israfil's marshaling the Faithful in fields of asphodel, crying, "Awake, my lord!" and the first of men is looking with enraptured soul upon the last, best work of an all-wise God, a beautiful woman.

* * *

WORKING FASHION'S FOOLS.

Miss Sallie H--s is one of the very few society women who, aided by nothing but their beauty, wit and talent, lift themselves into national prominence and attain something like fame. Miss H--s has been for several seasons the acknowledged belle of New York, and her position has not been disputed. She is a dark beauty, her features of classical purity, her profile very delicate and her figure superb. She is a brilliant talker, and her talents are many and varied. Presumably she has been the object of many masculine attentions and the subject of many masculine quarrels; but she has kept her head and hand to herself. At least she has done so until a few weeks ago. Then the announcement of her engagement to Mr. Duncan E--t was made public. She is to be married at Newport, September 15, and the wedding is to be as quiet an affair as possible. Mr. E--t is a young New York business man, good looking and talented. He goes in for athletics.-- Chicago News.

The above slug of "taffy" was accompanied by a woodcut portrait of Miss H--s which made her resemble a half-naked Indian squaw suffering with an acute attack of mulligrubs, superinduced by an overfeed of baked dog. If Miss H--s' face does not hurt her for very homeliness, any male jury in the country would award her damages against the News in the sum of a million dollars, and help her collect it with a shotgun.

But those guileless innocents who imagine Miss H--s entitled to sympathy are sadly mistaken. She, her fool friends or relatives paid a good round price for that "puff," and fully expected that the "artist," as well as the penny-a-liner, would indulge in a little fulsome flattery instead of turning state's evidence and convicting his co-laborer of perjury.

Nearly every metropolitan daily is now engaged in this nauseous puffery business, and the infection is rapidly spreading to the illustrated weeklies and magazines. No wonder that foreigners have much to say about our bad manners, worse taste, lack of refinement and offensive "loudness," when the "leading society ladies" of the land will pay big prices to have themselves written up like variety actresses or prize cattle, when they will pay to have their portraits paraded in the public prints and their personal charms proclaimed much as auctioneers in antebellum days expatiated upon the physical perfection of slaves put upon the block; when they will beg the attention of the world and pour into its unwilling ear an exaggerated tale of their love affairs,--not omitting the suggestion that certain silly masculine inanities have fought for their favors!

The present nauseating puffery of "society belles" has grown out of the unpardonable bad taste--not to say presumptuous insolence--which the American press has ever displayed in dealing with the fair sex. First it was "the accomplished" or "the vivacious" Miss So-and-so. That "caught." Every woman likes to be thought accomplished or interesting, just as every man delights to see himself paraded in the papers as a "public-spirited citizen." Then the press grew bolder and introduced the adjectives "charming," "fascinating," "beautiful," etc. That "took" still better. The next step was the "write up" in extenso; next the portrait. Thus, in a ratio of geometrical progression, the bad habit has grown from the daring but courtly compliment to its present disguising proportions, and the vanity and folly of the fair followers of fashion have grown with it.

What will be its ultimate development? Where will the rivalry of "enterprising journals," their determination to outdo each other in fulsome flattery of female fools who have money to pay for it, finally land them? Already they are freely commenting upon the form and features of the fair sex. What can they do next but go into particulars and inform us how much their patron measures around the bust (they have already told us of the snowy whiteness of her bosom); the actual size of the "tiny little foot" as sworn to by the bootmaker, and how many inches of elastic it requires to make her garter? When this becomes commonplace, perhaps it will be necessary, in order to command attention, to publish portraits of their patrons posing as Venuses, Eves, Hebes, etc., in puris naturalibus!

Is it not strange that a man will pay newspapers to say publicly about his wife or daughter things that he would

knock his best friend down for saying to him privately; that he will deliberately set every scurrilous tongue wagging about the woman he loves and professes to honor; cause her form and features to be discussed in every dive? Should one of our American women overhear a male acquaintance commenting on the whiteness of her bosom, the size of her foot, the shape of her waist and the "latent passion in her dark eyes," she would want him horsewhipped or shot; yet she will pay a rank stranger a dollar a line to say these things in the public prints. Verily 'tis a strange world--and sadly in need of a few more industrious fool killers!

* * *

THE PUBLIC PEDAGOGUE.

MAKING WISE MEN BY MACHINERY.

If I might presume to tender a few words of advice to so high and mighty a personage as the president of the University of Texas, I should recommend that he carefully study the Solomonian proverb: "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding." In other words, never pull your trigger until sure you're loaded; for while a fizzle causes the unskillful to laugh, it cannot but "make the judicious grieve." Every man capable of tracing effects to their efficient causes, who chanced to hear or read President George T. Winston's address before the Association of Superintendents and Principals of Public Schools, must have sighed in bitterness of soul, "Poor Old Texas!" These gentlemen, assembled for the ostensible purpose of enhancing their proficiency by the interchange of ideas, had a right to expect valuable instruction from the lips of a man who occupies the post of honor in the chief educational institute of the State; but were regaled with a cataclysm of misinformation, precipitated from an amorphous mind, which seemed to be a compromise between Milton's unimaginable chaos and that "land of darkness, as darkness itself, and where the light was as darkness." That such an address could proceed from the president of a State University is most remarkable; that it should be received as an oracle by the men at whose feet sit the youth of Texas is simply astounding. I read the address in no unfriendly or hypercritical spirit, for none rejoice more than I in whatsoever contributes, even a little, to the luster of the Lone Star. Every laurel won by Texas in the forum or the field is worn by all her citizens; her every failure in the arena of the world is shame to all her sons. President Winston evidently appreciated the importance of the occasion but was unable to rise to it. Instead of an address at once philosophic and practical, conveying to his auditors a clear concept of duty and the best method of discharging it, he indulged in a rambling country lyceum discourse, wherein worthless conclusions were drawn by main strength and awkwardness from false premises, interlarded with glaring misstatements and seasoned

with Anglomanical slop. It is not pleasant to think of hundreds of bright young minds being molded by a man who is a living vindication of Sheridan, long accused of libeling nature in his character of Mrs. Malaprop. "What," says Pope, "must be the priest when the monkey is a god?" And what, the taxpayers of Texas well may ask, must be the day-drudges of an educational system wherein a Winston occupies the post of honor? Where Texas found the party whom she has made president of her boasted university, I cannot imagine, but he talks like an Anglicized Yankee--one of those fellows who try to conceal the cerulean hue of their equators by wearing the British flag for a belly-band. It is but mournful consolation to reflect that the chiefs of pretentious educational institutes elsewhere have proven by their parroting that they have as little conception of the social contract and true position of the pedagogue in "the scheme of things," as has our own 'varsity president. Texas' educational system is probably up to the average, and President Winston as wise as many other pompous "gerund-grinders" who look into leather spectacles and see nothing, yet imagine that, like the adventurer in the Arabian tale, they are gazing upon all the wealth of the world; but that is no reason why we should continue to waste the public revenue on Lagado professors who would extract sunbeams from cucumbers and calcine ice into gunpowder. While nothing short of a perusal of the complete text of the oration in question can give an adequate idea of how much folly a 'varsity president can pump through his face in a given period, its salient features can be summed up in a brief paragraph:

"The schoolmaster represents the two greatest factors in modern progress--education and organization. These two factors are really one, for education is a means to organization. Power unorganized is no longer power. Organization means strength and progress; individualism means weakness and decay. The English people have risen by organized effort to the mastery of the globe. They have created the cheapest and most efficient government, combining in the highest degree individual liberty and national power. They have created the greatest store of things contributing to the welfare, happiness and refinement of humanity, and in education, literature, science and art have lifted humanity upon the highest plane of civilization. The Irish race is deficient in the faculty of organization, and will be crushed out with the Indian and Negro, by the more highly organized races. Football requires better organization than do other games, a higher order of intellect, hence its popularity with the people. The best universities may be expected to furnish the best football teams. The superior organization of the North enabled it to surpass the South in peace and crush it in war. The public schoolteacher, being the chief factor in organization, to him must be given the credit for the quick recovery of the South from the ravages of civil war. He is the chief power in things material as well as in matters intellectual. He alone can introduce new systems of thought and action in any province of human endeavor."

Having thus seined President Winston's rhetorical sea, let us examine our catch and determine what is valuable food and what mere jelly-fish. That the schoolmaster is a very important factor in the social system there can be no question. Let him have all the honor to which he is entitled; but let him not seek to appropriate that which belongs to others. The pedagogue is not the fount of wisdom: he is but the pipe--of large or small caliber as the case may be--through which the wisdom of others flows to fertilize the intellectual fields. How much, prithee, have all the public pedagogues of America--including the president of the Texas 'varsity--added to the world's stock of wisdom during the last decade? Does it begin to dawn upon President Winston that there is another very important factor in the world's progress, viz., the Newtons, Bacons, Koperniks, Watts, Edisons, Shakespeares, Burkes, Keplers, Platos, Jeffersons and others who, by patient research or the outpourings of super-gifted minds have furnished forth the pedagogue's stock-in-trade? Science and Art, Philosophy and Religion--all that contributes to man's welfare, material or spiritual, originated in obscure closets and caves, in the open fields, beneath the star-domed vault of night, and during all these ages have received chief furtherance from individual genius or application, the schools but recording the progress made, spreading abroad more or less skillfully, the sacred fire wrested from Heaven by intellectual Titans. Still the pedagogue may well be proud of his profession, for it is a privilege to think--or even think at--the thoughts of men of genius, to officiate as their messengers to mankind. Let these royal heralds flourish their birchrods in every bypath, cry "The King!" and thereby get much honor. Winston says that education and organization are really the same, because one is a means to the other. How that may be I know not. An avowal of love is usually a means to a baby; still it were a work of supererogation to put diapers on a proposal of marriage. Organization is ever education of a certain sort; but education is not always organization. Many of the world's wisest have stood, like Byron, AMONG men, but not OF them--"In a shroud of thoughts which were not their thoughts."

Oxen organized in teams may accomplish more than working single; but you cannot yoke Pegasus and a plow-horse--Bellerophon's winged mount peremptorily refuses to be "organized" and turn rectilinear furrows, but plunges through Time and Space in an orbit of its own making--often mistaken by the patient organizers for a lawless comet, its appearance a dire portent. You cannot drive Shakespeare and Charles Hoyt in double harness, nor make the mock-bird and night-hawk sing in harmony.

The public pedagogue does not go out every morning before breakfast and, with ferula for Archimedean lever and Three R's for fulcrum, prize open the gates of day. The organization of infants of every conceivable degree of intellectuality into classes, and their formal elevation

through successive "grades" by means of cunningly devised educational jack-screws or block-and-tackle, does not constitute the complete dynamics of the universe, President Winston to the contrary, notwithstanding. Knowledge must exist somewhere before there be any pedagogue to impart it; and though, under the name of Truth, it hide in Ymir's Well, those whose souls are athirst therefore will assuredly find it, though denied all mechanical furtherance. Education is simply the acquirement of useful information, it matters not how nor where nor when. Deprive any man--even a 'varsity president--of all knowledge but that obtained in the schools and he were helpless as an infant abandoned in mid-ocean. He could not so much as distinguish between peas and beans, between dogs and wolves, by the descriptions furnished by naturalists. That man who has lived to learn wisely and well has reached the Ultima Thule of terrestrial knowledge, the ne plus ultra of human understanding. More can no college professor or 'varsity president impart. If he know not this he is uneducated, though he be graduate of every university from Salamanca to the Sorbonne, and from Oxford to Austin.

Organization connotes mutual interdependence of the component parts, limitation of individualism, the circumscription of personal liberty. To a certain extent this is advantageous to man--without it civilization, human progress, were impossible; but to draw a line between wise use and abuse were a task of some difficulty. President Winston assures us that the British Government is the best in the world, yet it is a chaos compared to the organization of the Russian autocracy. Because we find beneficial that organization which makes cooperation possible, would he carry it to the extent of communism? Because concentration of capital reduces cost of production, does he approve of that organization which enables trusts to juggle prices? When organization has reached that point where one-third of our wealth-producers must stand idle because denied the privilege of producing the wherewithal to feed and clothe and house themselves, it might be well for 'varsity presidents to apply the soft pedal to their paeon of praise and inquire diligently whether it be possible to get entirely too much of a good thing. Too many accept St. Paul's concession of a little wine for the stomach's sake for license to become sots.

Thomas Carlyle, who could see almost as far into a millstone as the average 'varsity president, was of the opinion that the tendency to ever more compact organization was transforming both education and religion into farces, blighting the spiritual and intellectual life of man and precipitating in the world of industry the most important and complex question with which political economists had ever been called upon to deal. That was nearly seventy years ago, when vast organization of capital had just begun--when the age of machinery, both for the grinding of corn and the inculcation of knowledge, was but nascent. Hear him growl:

"Though mechanism, wisely contrived, has done much for man, we cannot be persuaded that it has ever been the chief source of his worth or happiness. . . . We have machines for education. Instruction, that mysterious communing of Wisdom and Ignorance, is no longer an indefinable, tentative process, requiring a study of individual aptitude, and a perpetual variation of means and methods to attain the same end; but a secure, universal, straightforward business to be conducted in the gross, by proper mechanism, with such intellect as comes to hand. . . . Philosophy, Science, Art, Literature, all depend on machinery. No Newton, by silent meditation, now discovers the system of the world by the falling of an apple; but some quite other than Newton stands in his Museum, his Scientific Institution, and behind whole batteries of retorts, digesters and galvanic piles imperatively 'interrogates nature'--who, however, shows no haste to answer. In defect of Raphaels, and Angelos, and Mozarts, we have Royal Academies of Painting, Sculpture, Music; whereby the languishing spirit of Art may be strengthened by the more generous diet of a Public Kitchen. . . . Hence the Royal and Imperial Societies, the Bibliothèques, Glyphtothèques, Technothèques, which front us in all capital cities, like so many well-finished hives, to which it is expected the stray agencies of Wisdom will swarm of their own accord, and hive and make honey! . . . Men have grown mechanical in head and heart as well as in hand. They have lost faith in individual endeavor and in natural force of any kind. Not for internal perfection, but for external combination and arrangement, for institutions, constitutions--for Mechanism of one sort or another, do they hope and struggle. . . . Science and Art have derived only partial help from the culture or manuring of institutions--often have suffered damage."

Of course Carlyle may have been mistaken; still the fact that since he uttered his warning the world has not produced one man of genius except in the department of mechanics--that intellectually the last half of the present century is to the first half as "moonlight unto sunlight and as water unto wine"; that religion is becoming even more materialistic, patriotism passing and poetry dying or already dead; that millionaires are multiplying while the legion of idle labor grows larger, suggests that important inferences may be drawn from this ever-increasing organization of powers spiritual and material; and, like Quintus Fixlien, I "invite the reader to draw them."

If "the English race" be indeed "rising to the mastery of the globe," there is no cause for immediate alarm, for, at his present rate of progress, it will be some ages yet before John Bull succeeds in stealing it all. Nations, like individuals, have their youth, their lusty manhood and their decline; and there is every indication that Britain has passed the meridian of her power, while Russia and America, her equals in the arena of the world, still find their shadows falling toward the west. Persia, Assyria, Rome

and Spain have aspired to the lordship of the world; and each in turn has been brought low by that insidious power that for a century has been draining the iron from the blood of England--the love of luxury, the subjection of Glory to Greed. If history be "philosophy teaching by example," the lion of Britain is senescent, if not already dead and stuffed with sawdust; but let the world look well to that savage brute known as the Russian bear. No: England is not "master of the globe," nor can she ever be; for her home territory is trifling and distant provinces are a source of weakness in war.

It were idle to discuss with a confirmed Anglomaniac the respective merits of the British and American governments. It may be that the former is "cheapest," despite the maintenance of an established church, a great army and navy and a sovereign who, with her worthless spawn, costs the taxpayers \$3,145,000 per annum, while our president requires less than one-sixtieth of that sum. England does not pension the adult orphan children of men who sprained their moral character in an effort to dodge the draft, nor does Queen Victoria sell government bonds to banker syndicates on private bids; hence I will have no controversy with the learned Theban on the question of economy. The British subject may enjoy greater "individual liberty" than does the American sovereign, for aught I am prepared to prove. True, he is taxed to support a church founded by that eminent Christian Apostles Henry VIII, and whose next fidei defensor will be the present worshipful Prince of Wales; is represented in but one branch of Parliament and has no voice in the selection of his chief executive officer. If the sovereign and hereditary house of lords refuse to do his bidding, he must grin and bear it, while we can "turn the rascals out"--even if we turn a more disreputable crew of chronic gab-traps and industrial cut-throats in. He enjoys one privilege which is denied us, much to the dissatisfaction of our Anglomaniacs, that of purchasing titles of nobility; but we can acquire a life tenure of the title of Judge by arbitrating a horse-trade or officiating one term as justice of the peace, while by assiduous bootlicking we may, like Rienzi Miltiades Johnsing, obtain a lieutenant-colonelcy--or even a gigadier-brindleship--on the gilded staff of some 2 x 4 governor, and disport in all the glorious pomp and circumstance of war at inaugural balls or on mimic battlefields; hence honors are easy.

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That the Irish race is deficient in the organizing faculty is a great discovery, and I would advise President Winston to apply for a patent. John Bull will prove himself ungrateful indeed if he neglects to pension him for having demonstrated that those Irish organizations which, for half a century have kept his public servants looking under their beds o' nights for things neither ornamental nor useful, were mere Fata Morganas, Brocken specters or disease of the imagination. Winston has evidently been misled by a mere than Boeotian ignorance blithely footing it hand-in-

hand with a vivid anti-Celtic imagination. He does not know that Ireland was the seat of learning and the expounder of law, both human and divine, when the rest of Europe was a wide-weltering chaos in which shrieked the demons Ignorance and Disorder. He was oblivious of the fact that the American people--the master organizers of the age--are far more Irish than English. You can scarce scratch an American babe of the third generation without drawing Celtic blood. Strange that the only Federal regiment which did not go to pieces at the Battle of Bull Run, though occupying the hottest part of the field--was composed of these very Irishmen who are incapable of organization! McClellan, the greatest military organizer of modern times--though by no means the ablest commander--was of Celtic extraction, as was the Duke of Wellington, as are the men at the head of the British and American armies to-day.

Were President Winston better informed he would not talk so glibly of what the "English race" has done for literature. No Englishman of pure Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Saxon-Norman lineage has ever reached the front rank in the great Republic of Letters. In Art and Science, in Oratory and Music--even in War and Commerce--they have had to content themselves with walking well to the rear of the band-wagon. Shakespeare was of Welsh descent, but whether of Celtic or Cimbric stock it were difficult to determine. The Cimbri and Celts are both very ancient races. A remnant of the former is found in Wales, while the survivors of the latter are the Irish and Scotch Highlanders. Northern France and Wales have strong Celtic contingents. Byron, "Rare" Ben Jonson, Christopher North, Oliver Goldsmith, Dean Swift, Lawrence Sterne and Louis Stevenson were Celts by blood. Scott, Burns, Carlyle and Macaulay were Scots of Celtic extraction. Tom Moore, Brinsley Sheridan and Edmund Burke were Irishmen, as are Balfe and Sullivan, the musical composers. Disraeli was a Jew. The genealogy of Pope and Tennyson remain to be traced. That the original Duke of Marlborough was an Englishman by birth and breeding "goes without saying." He acted like one. No Celtic commander could have robbed his dead soldiers. In the province of belles-lettres John Bull can at least claim Alfred Austin, his present poet-laureate, and Oscar Wilde, the dramatic decadent. Dr. Jameson is England's military lion and President George T. Winston of the Texas 'varsity her representative of learning! The English proper are but "a nation of shopkeepers," and the greatest shops are not conducted by Anglo-Saxons. England's great manufacturers are Scots, her merchant princes are Irishmen, her leading bankers are Jews and her reigning family an indifferent breed of Low Dutch. The Romans overran England, but unable to subjugate either Scotland or Ireland, abandoned "perfidious Albion," as a worthless conquest. Everybody took a turn at robbing it whenever it had anything worth carrying off, until the Norman buccaneers appropriated it bodily and reduced the Saxons to serfdom. By amalgamation with the inferior race they produced the Tudors, who gave them 'An'some 'Arry and a Virgin (?) Queen. Then the Scotch Stuarts took a

turn at ruling and robbing England, and were followed by the religious bigots and witch-burners. The French ruled it awhile through their puppets and were succeeded by the Dutch, who held it in such contempt that they would not permit its language to be spoken at court. They are still milking it for more than three millions per annum, with an extra pull at the udder whenever one of the seventy-odd descendants of the Sovereign concludes to found a family. The Scotch, the Welsh and Dutch enabled England to enslave and plunder Ireland, and upon this meat John Bull, the J. Caesar of pawnbrokers, is growing great.

I much fear that President Winston studied sports under the tuition of Referee Earp, else he could have scarce given a decision to the favorite of the college campus. Football requires neither the intellect nor the perfect organization which is a sine qua non to success in our great "national game." Its chief requisites are long hair, leathery lungs and abnormally developed legs. The game owes its popularity to the average boy's predilection for the brutal, his inherent animalism. Football has for ages been a favorite game with savages, while baseball is a product of civilization. I am not decrying football--I incline to the view that an occasional rough-and-tumble scrapping match in which there is imminent danger of black eyes, and even of broken bones, is good for a boy I simply point out that as an intellectual game it not only ranks far below chess, billiards and baseball, but does not rise to a parity with pugilism. It is a mistake to assume that an intellectual divertimento must be popular with an intellectual people. The highest culture is but a film cast over a fathomless sea of savagery. The most learned of the Greeks, the most cultured of the Romans gloried in brutal games, and to-day a dog fight, a slugging match or even a college football game is relished by the Titan of intellect as keenly as by the Bowery tough.

I cannot imagine where President Winston absorbed the idea that lack of organization has been the curse of the South. It may surprise him to be told that in ante-bellum days it was not only the chief repository of culture, but possessed a fair proportion of the nation's wealth. The South has ever been chiefly an agricultural country, and will so remain despite the frantic efforts of enthusiasts to subvert natural laws. Not until the resources of our soil are in great measure exhausted, or increase of population forces people from the fields, can the South become a great manufacturing country. Such is the lesson of history, which we can only ignore to our loss. Wealth accumulates at large manufacturing and trade centers as it cannot elsewhere, and naturally seeks to further its interest by organization. The concentration of forces, intellectual and industrial, on that stupendous scale which has won President Winston's admiration, is a post-bellum development both North and South. The greatest of American organizers have been Southern men. Washington and Jefferson were types of the individualism which is supposed to have been our bane; yet one organized the Continental Army which won our

independence, the other organized the Federal Government. It is not true that the Southern Confederacy was crushed by superior organization. Better disciplined troops than the veterans of Lee and Jackson never faced a battery. "Hardee's Tactics," one of the most highly esteemed of military manuals, was the work of a Confederate general. The assault on the heights of Gettysburg has become historic as much because of the wonderful organization displayed by the Confederate troops as because it marked the supreme hour of a nation's agony. It was the only time in the history of this world when an assaulting column was greeted with cheers of admiration by the soldiers who stood to receive the shock. That fact alone should suffice to make an American college president proud of his country--should purge him of every atribilarious taint of Anglomanicam. Only once have the sons of men in any age or clime displayed a grander heroism than did those who hurled themselves against the heights of Gettysburg, and that when the Federals silenced their guns to cheer the dauntless courage of their foe. It is not my present purpose to refight the Civil War, and trace every effect to its efficient cause; I have simply undertaken to make good my original proposition--that President Winston is, as Thersites says of Patroclus, "a fool positive," and should, therefore, hold his peace.

The schoolteacher has doubtless played no unimportant part in the rehabilitation of the South; but he should not set up as Autocrat of the Universe on a salary of \$40 a month, and burden the Asses' Bridge with the idea that he "maketh all things, and without him was nothing made that is made." His ferula may be an Aaron's rod which buds and blossoms; but it does not bear sufficient fruit to furnish a hungry world with necessary aliment. We still crave manna from Heaven and grapes from Hebron. The public pedagogue does not make the laws of trade. His province is to interpret them; and proud may he be of his labor if his proteges do not find it necessary to forget, at the very gateway of a commercial career, that he ever had a name and habitation on the earth. Nor does he frequently alarm the plodding natives by the "introduction of new systems of thought and action." Such "systems" do not spring completely panoplied from the cerebrum of our educational Jove, and stand about on one foot like a lost goose, or country lad, awaiting an introduction. New systems of thought and action are usually the growth of ages, the seed often sown by men we hear not of. When of such sudden development that they require a formal introduction, they are apt to be received with the scant courtesy of a poor relation, the introducer reviled as a crank or condemned as a heretic and crucified. Generally speaking, the professional educator confines himself pretty closely to his birch and his textbooks, being quite content to propagate, as best he may, the ideas of others. Neither the birch nor the text-book, it may be well to remark, constitutes the world's stock of wisdom, but only an incidental furtherance thereto--the key, as it were, by which the treasure is more readily come at. When the schoolmaster

has put his pupil in possession of the open sesame he considers his duty done--that he has earned his provender. And perhaps he has. In this day and age it is all that is expected of him, all that he is paid for. He is not required to inculcate wisdom, which is well; for that can no man do. He is not even expected to impart much knowledge; but to put his pupil through a course of mental calisthenics, miscalled education. But even this is by no means to be despised. With mind strengthened by exercise, even in a desert, and lungs developed by football, the youth may be able to delve the harder for knowledge when happily released from the "gerund-grinder," to pray the more lustily to the immortal gods for understanding, which transmutes what were else base metal into ingots of fine gold. There was a time when more was expected of a teacher; but that was before the application of labor-saving machinery to spiritual matters; before colleges became known as places "where coals are brightened and diamonds are dimmed"--before it became customary to cast potential Homers and Hannibals, Topsyies and Blind Toms into the same educational hopper, and hire some gabby-Holofernes from God knows where to manipulate the mill. It was a time when men considered qualified to teach declined to waste effort on numskulls, no matter whose brats they might be. It was a time when the fame of a great, the honor of a good and the infamy of a bad man were shared by their preceptors. Those were the days of individualism which President Winston so much deplores--the era which fashioned those men whom the world for twenty centuries has been proud to hail as masters. As the doctors have decided that all human frailties are but diseases, I do not despair of our 'varsity president. Some Theodorus may yet arise to "purge him canonically with Anticryan hellebore," and thus clear out the perverse habit of his brain and make him a man of as goodly sense as the rejuvenated Gargantua.

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PUFFERY OF THE PRESS.

The "able editor" is perhaps the only quack doctor extant who greedily swallows his own medicine and foolishly imagines that it does him good.

Puffery is the "able editor's" invariable prescription, no matter whether the patient be a moss-grown town, a broken-down political roue--the victim of early indiscretions--or a Cheap-John merchant suffering the first paroxysms of financial dissolution. Although he knows how his medicine is made,--knows that it is a nauseous compound of rank hypocrisy and brazen mendacity--he actually believes that, if taken in liberal doses, it is potent to cure commercial paralysis or put new life into a political corpse. When the first experiment fails to prove satisfactory, instead of changing the treatment he doubles the dose.

One would suppose that, like most Cagliostros who pick up

a precarious livelihood by pumping the bellies of their betters full of the east wind, the "able editor" would laugh in his sleeve at his dupes; but not so. He is more in earnest than the Lagado doctor, described by Gulliver, who had discovered a short-cut for the cure of colic,--as little discouraged when a patient bursts under the somewhat peculiar treatment. So greedy is he for his own medicine, so fond of working the bellows for the expansion of his own bowels, that he can scarce find time to attend to his patients. Pick up any newspaper, big or little, "great daily," with fake voting contest annex, or country weekly shot full of ads. of city swindling concerns and note what the "able editor" thinks of himself; how he twists and turns to find some pretext for parading his own transcendent greatness! See how he greedily seizes upon every little chunk of "taffy" and rolls it as a sweet morsel under his tongue; how he places in his cap every foolish feather which the idle wind of puffery wafts within his clutch, and then struts in the face of Heaven, a sight to provoke the contempt of men, the pity of the gods! Let the Boomerville Broadaxe but intimate that the Bungtown Boomer knows a thing or two, and forthwith the latter transfers the saccharine slug to its own columns, and perchance, "points to it with pride,"--bids the Bungtown world behold what the world of Boomerville thinks of it! Then the Bungtown Boomer intimates that the Boomerville Broadaxe likewise knows a thing or two, and the latter, which has been eagerly watching for this Roland for its Oliver, swoops hungrily down upon this delectable morsel and cries ha! ha! It has obtained value received, has tickled and been tickled in return! Then the editors of these two great "public educators" begin a cross-fire of sugar-plums, much to the edification of the world and their own mutual satisfaction!

What would we think of that lawyer, doctor or merchant who went about assiduously proclaiming with sound of trumpet what his fellows said about him? Would we not vote him a fool? at best a conceited prig, lacking in taste and good manners?

Commendation is sweet to all; but it is just as permissible for a belle to boast her conquests in the ballroom; the lawyer to inform judge and jury what his fellow-disciples of Blackstone think of him; the scholar to parade his erudition or the merchant his integrity, as for an editor to reproduce in his own paper fulsome compliments paid him for no other purpose under Heaven than to get a puff in return.

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THE BIKE BACILLUS.

The Women's Rescue League met recently at Washington and launched a double-shotted anathema at the female bike fiend. The Leaguers attribute to the bicycle craze "the alarming increase" in the number of courtesans, and call upon ministers and respectable women everywhere to

denounce cycling by the sex as "vulgar and indecent." Nor do they stop there. The bike, in their opinion, is irremediably bad. While destroying the morals of the maid, it wrecks the prospective motherhood of the matron. It is provocative of diseases peculiar to women, and calculated to transform the sex into a grand army of invalids. These are a few of the reasons why the Women's Rescue League is scattering tacks in the pathway of the pneumatic tire. There are others.

Those whose specialty is the conservation of virtue should carefully study the causation of vice. In dealing with the red-light district, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. To remove the causes which produce courtesans were a nobler work than to drag debased womanhood out of the depths. Doubtless the Rescuers imagine they have made a new discovery of inestimable benefit to society--have laid the ax to the root of that evil of which the bawdy-house is the flower and Hell the fruitage. After patient research in the science of sexual criminology, they have determined that the bicycle is naughty without being nice. It is perversity personified. It is the incarnation of cussedness, the avatar of evil. Turn it which way you will, it rolls into the primrose path of dalliance, whose objective point is the aceldama. No more do woman's feet "take hold on Hell": she goes scorching over the brink with her tootsies on the handle-bar. So say the ladies of the Rescue League.

What are we going to do about it? Clearly it were useless to denounce a "craze," sheer folly to argue against a "fad." We had better save our breath to cool our broth. The ministers cannot be depended on to lend their moral support to this new movement against the Magdalen maker--they have bought bikes and are chasing the girl in bloomers. One-half the great she-world's on wheels--the other wondering how it feels to ride clothespin fashion. Clearly the Women's Rescue League cannot stem the tide--not even with the help of the ICONOCLAST and ex-Governor Hogg; it must either straddle a bike and join in the stampede, climb a fence or get run over. Hevings! is there no help for us--no halting-place this side of hetairism? Are we all pedaling at breakneck pace to the Grove of Daphne, where lust is law? Is the bike transforming this staid old world into one wild bacchic orgy or phallic revel? Have we toiled afoot thus far up the social mountainside, only to go bowling down on a pneumatic tire--"as low as to the fiends?" Head us, somebody! Police!

Just why the bicycle affects woman so unfavorably, the Leaguers do not inform us. We are left to surmise why tramping a bike should make her more reckless than treading a sewing-machine; why exercise in the open air should be more deleterious to health and morals than the round dance in a heated ball-room, or even the delightfully dangerous back-parlor hug; why segregation on the cycle should be more potent to evoke those passions which make for perdition than the narrow-seated buggy, with its

surreptitious pressure of limb to limb and the moral euthanasia which the man of the world knows so well how to distill into the ear of womanhood. Why the bike should be more dangerous to morals than the French fiddle mentioned by Shakespeare appears to be a question solely within the province of the pathologist. As pantagruelism is proceeding almost exclusively on micrological lines, we may expect that, sooner or later, some "eminent physician" will startle the world by discovering the bicycle bacillus. All our ills appear to be caused by minute insects that get inside of us, demoralize our system of government and inaugurate a reign of anarchy. Everything, from mugwumpery to the meddler's itch, from corns to crime, is now traced to the pernicious activity of some microbian. Even our currency system is blasted by goldbugs, and Prohibition milk-sickness is being treated with vermifuge. A Kansas M.D. has succeeded in hiving the old-age microbe, and is now treating the ballet girls whom Weis & Greenwall and Rigsby & Walker will bring South next winter, while a New York empiric has discovered the insanity insect and is fumigating the brain of the Rev. Mr. Parkhurst. Thus does medical science go marching from conquest to conquest, reforming and rejuvenating this wicked and suffering world. Clearly the Rescue League should have cried for aid to the doctors of medicine instead of to the doctors of divinity. If the bicycle bacillus can be caught and killed, the red-light district will disappear and the Rescuers turn their wonderful energies in new directions. Once the existence of this nymphomania-micrococcus--as we philomaths would call it--is established, the rest will be dead easy. Whether patients will be treated externally or internally depends, of course, upon the habits of the infinitesimal vulture that is feeding on our social vitals. We do not know as yet whether it is a moral microbe or a physical phylloxera. If the former, the mind will have to be taken out, sand-papered, carefully rinsed in a strong aseptic solution and treated with soothing antaphrodisiacs after each meet of the bicycle brigade; if the latter, the evil can easily be obviated by providing the softer sex with medicated cycling suits, or half-soling their bloomers with asbestos. If the Rescuers really have the good of their frail sisters at heart they should cooperate with the physician--should provide themselves with compound microscopes and search assiduously for baccili, instead of appealing to preachers who may themselves be veritable breeding grounds for the most destructive of all bacteria. It may be necessary, in order to compel success, for the Rescuers to sacrifice themselves upon the altar of science, to become martyrs to the cause. In striving to save others from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, they may be themselves destroyed; but the true reformer draws back from no danger. Let them take their lives in their hands, if need be, boldly seize the bicycle bacillus by the ears and bump his head.

The crisis is indeed acute; still we may rely on science to save us. It is possible that the first step in that direction has been already taken, for is not the insanity germ

discovered by the New York doctor responsible for the "bicycle craze" as well as the reform frenzy? And if a "free-silver lunatic" or "goldbug crank" can be permanently cured by the simple expedient of boring a hole in his lumbar region and drawing off the cerebro-spinal fluid, and in it the microbes that build wheels in his head, is there not hope that the bicycle habit may be altogether abolished by the return of the "fiends" to mental normality? Now that Dr. Babcock has learned to cast out devils, will not the world be redeemed? Cert! Let the Women's Rescue League take courage, and bask in the sunny optimism of the ICONOCLAST. We'll soon have all the various brands of bacteria in the bouillon; then there'll be nobody to rescue, nothing to reform, and the Leaguers and the public can take a much needed rest.

In all seriousness, I opine that the bike is a harmless instrument when properly handled. The trouble is not so much with the evasive machine as with the woman who straddles it. It will carry its rider to church as rapidly as to the Reservation. Doubtless many women employ it to seek opportunities for evil--as a means of attracting the attention of libidinous men; but had the bike never been built, they would find some other way into the path of sin--would get there just the same. There were courtesans before it came; there will be demimondaines ages after its departure. Mary Magdalen either walked or rode a mule. Aspasia was a "scorcher," but she couldn't "coast." Helen of Troy never saw a pneumatic tire. Semiramis preferred a side-saddle. Cleopatra didn't attract Col Antony's attention by mounting a machine in the market place. The bike is no more an incentive to bawdry than is a wheelbarrow. It doesn't make a woman depraved; it only renders her ridiculous.

EVIDENCES OF MAN'S IMMORTALITY.

Unless you accept the testimony of the Bible as conclusive, what evidence have you of God's existence and man's immortality?--GLADSTONE.

The same evidence that we would have of the existence of the ocean were one drop of water withdrawn, of the life of a forest, were a single leaf to fall. The Bible did not create man's belief in God's existence and his own immortality, but of this belief, old as Zoroaster, antedating Babylon, was the Bible born. It is simply an outward evidence of man's inward grace. I do accept the testimony of the Bible, but only as one of a cloud of witnesses. In questions of such grave import, we cannot have too much evidence; hence it is strange indeed that anyone should make the Bible the sole foundation of his faith, should take his stand upon an infinitesimal portion of what the world knew in ages past. The Bible is but one of many sacred books in which man has borne witness that he is the favored creature of an Almighty Being, but one voice in a multitude singing hosannas to the Most High, a single note in the mighty

diapason of the universe.

A hundred men are shipwrecked upon an island in the Arctic Ocean. By day and night they dream of absent friends, of mother, wife and child, the pleasant meadows or the sunny hills of their distant homes. Hourly they scan the horizon with eager eyes. Daily they ask each other, "Is there hope?" All former animosities are forgotten, for they are brothers in misfortune. One declares that the island lies in the pathway of a regular line of steamers, and that they must soon be rescued. This view is approved by many, and their hearts beat high with hope. Their sufferings are borne with cheerfulness, their hardships appear trivial, for their probation is soon to pass and they will be at home. Another avers that they are too far north to be reached by the ocean liners, but that a whaler will soon be due in that vicinity, and all will be well. This view is approved by some, and thus there are two parties confidently expecting succor, but from different sources. A third studies the map, notes the advanced season, inspects the food supply and shakes his head. "We shall be lost," he says; "desire has misled your judgment; you do but dream." Do the two parties that entertain hope strive, each to disprove the theory of the other, and unite in persecuting the dissenter? No; they reason together, each anxious to ascertain the truth, knowing that it will profit him nothing to believe a lie. Suddenly a cry is heard, "A sail!" Do those who put their trust in the whaler turn their backs to the sea and say, "Oh, H--! that's only one of those regular steamship heretics! no rag of canvas will he discover!" Do those who were destitute of hope decline to look? No; all rush to the shore, and strain their eyes to penetrate the mist, little caring whether it be whaler or steamer, so they do but see a ship. When one makes out the vessel, he is not content until the eyes of others confirm his vision, and all look, not with the jealous hope that he may be wrong, but with an earnest prayer that he may be right. That island is this little earth, its shipwrecked mariners all sons of men; yet how different we set about determining whether, from out the everlasting sea that encircles us, there comes indeed a Ship of Zion to succor and to save!

What one man believes or disbelieves is a matter of little moment; for belief will not put gods on High Olympus, nor unbelief extinguish the fires of Hell. Man can neither create nor uncreate the actual by a mental emanation. If Deity exists, he would continue to exist did a universe deny him; if he exists not, then all the faith and prayers and sacrifices of a thousand centuries will not evolve him from the night of nothingness. There is or there is not a life beyond the grave, regardless of the denial of every atheist and the affirmation of every prophet. Then what boots it whether we believe or disbelieve in God's existence or man's immortality? Nothing, in so far as it concerns the factual; much, in that upon our hopes and fears is based our terrestrial bane or blessing. Banish all belief in God, eliminate the idea of man's responsibility to a higher power,

make him the sole lord of his life and earthly good his greatest guerdon, and you destroy the dynamics of progress, the genius of civilization. Man has a tendency to become what he believes himself to be. Consciously or unconsciously, he strives with less or greater strength toward his ideal; hence it is all-important that he consider himself an immortal rather than the pitiful sport of Time and Space; a child of Omniscience, rather than the ephemeral emanation of unclean ooze. Had man always considered himself simply an animal, his tendencies would have been ever earthward; believing himself half divine, he has striven to mount above the stars. True, many great men have been Atheists; but they were formed by ancestry and environment permeated by worship of Divine power. Without a belief in his own semi-divinity to lead the race onward and upward, the conditions which produce a Voltaire or Ingersoll were impossible. Civilization is further advanced than ever before, and Atheism more general; but those who employ this fact as argument against religious faith forget that a body thrown upward will continue to ascend for a time after it has parted from the propelling power. Atheism is in nowise responsible for human progress, for Atheism is nothing--a mere negation--and "out of nothing nothing comes." A belief in God affords man a basis upon which to build; it is an acknowledgment of authority, the chief prerequisite of order; but in Atheism there is no constructive element. While it may be no more immoral to deny the existence of Deity than to question the Wondrous Tale of Troy, history teaches us that, considered from a purely utilitarian standpoint, the most absurd faith is better for a nation than none; that the civic virtues do not long survive the sacrifice; that when a people desert their altars their glories soon decay. The civilization of the world has been time and again imperiled by the spirit of Denial. When Rome began to mock her gods, she found the barbarians thundering at her gates. When France insulted her priesthood and crowned a courtesan as Goddess of Reason in Notre Dame, Paris was a maelstrom and the nation a chaos in which Murder raged and Discord shrieked. To-day we are boasting of our progress, but 'tis the onward march of Jaganath, beneath whose iron wheels patriotism, honesty, purity and the manly spirit of independence are crushed into the mire. We have drifted into an Atheistical age, and its concomitants are selfishness, sensationalism and sham. The old heartiness and healthiness have gone out of life, have been supplanted by the artificial. Everything is now show and seeming--"leather and prunella"--the body social become merely a galvanic machine or electric motor. In our gran'sire's day "the great man helped the poor, and the poor man loved the great"; now the great man systematically despoils the poor and the poor man regards the great with a feeling of envy and hatred akin to that of which the French Revolution was born. Character no longer counts for aught unless reinforced by a bank account. Men who have despoiled the widow of her mite and the orphan of his patrimony are hailed with the acclaim due to conquering heroes. Our most successful books and

periodicals would pollute a Parisian sewer or disgrace a Portuguese bagnio. The suffrages of the people are bought and sold like sheep. The national policy is dictated by Dives. Men are sent to Congress whom God intended for the gallows, while those he ticketed for the penitentiary spout inanities in fashionable pulpits. The merchant who pays his debts in full when he might settle for ten cents on the dollar is considered deficient in common sense. The grandsons of Revolutionary soldiers, who considered themselves the equal of kings and the superior of wear the livery of lackeys to obtain an easy living. Presidents save seven-figure fortunes on five-figure salaries and are applauded by people who profess to be respectable. Governors waste the public revenues in suppressing pugilistic enterprises, begotten of their own encouragement, only to be reelected by fools and slobbered over by pharisees. Bradley-Martin balls are given while half a million better people go hungry to bed. Friendship has become a farce, the preface of fraud. Revolting crimes increase and sexuality is tinged with the infamy of the Orient. Men who were too proud to borrow leave sons who are not ashamed to beg. In man great riches are preferable to a good name, and in woman a silken gown covers a multitude of sins. The homely virtues of the old mothers in Israel are mocked, while strumpets fouler than Sycorax are received in society boasting itself select. Why is this? It is because the old religious spirit is dormant if not dead; it is because when people consider themselves but as the beasts that perish, they can make no spiritual progress, but imitate their supposed ancestors. Religion is becoming little more than a luxury, the temple a sumptuous palace wherein people ennuied with themselves may parade their costly clothes, have their jaded passions soothed by sensuous music, their greed for the bizarre satiated by sensational sermons.

This being true, the question of evidence of God's existence and man's immortality becomes the most important ever propounded. The devout worshiper points to his Sacred Book; but we have had Sacred Books in abundance so far back as we can trace human history, yet the wave of Atheism, of Unbelief, rises ever higher and higher-- threatens to engulf the world. After nearly nineteen centuries of earnest proselyting less than a third of the world has accepted Christianity, and in those countries professedly Christian, Atheism flourishes as it does nowhere else. Of more than seventy million Americans, less than twenty-four million are church communicants, and it is doubtful if half of these really believe the Bible. Beecher criticized it almost as freely as does Ingersoll, while a number of prominent preachers of the Briggs-Abbott brand are even now explaining, in the pulpit and the press, that it is little more than a collection of myths. The people are drifting ever further from the Book of Books, and the pulpit appears ambitious to lead the procession. It is idle to urge that man should believe the Bible; for man should believe nothing, man can believe nothing but what receives the sanction of his reason. He is no more responsible for

what he believes or disbelieves than for the color of his eyes or the place of birth. He may deceive the world with a false profession of faith, but can deceive neither God nor himself. The mind of even the worst of men is a court in which every cause is tried with rigid impartiality, with absolute honesty. A fool may mislead it, a child may convince it, but not even its possessor can coerce it; hence to command one to "believe," without first providing him with a satisfactory basis for his faith, were an idle waste of breath. A man is no more blamable for doubting the existence of Deity than for doubting aught else that may seem to him absurd. He doubts because the evidence submitted is unsatisfactory, or his mind is incapable of properly analyzing it. Probably none of the Sacred Books ever yet convinced an intelligent human being that there is aught in the universe greater than himself. I do not mean by this that the Bible and the Koran, the Zend-Avesta and the Vedas are all false, but that there is lack of sufficient evidence that they are true. Those who accept them do so because they harmonize with their own half-conscious religious conceptions, because their truth is established by esoteric rather than by exoteric evidence. All attempts to supplant Buddhism and Mohammedanism by Christianity have proven futile, and that because the former do while Christianity does not voice the religious sentiment of the Orient, a sentiment which exists regardless of their Sacred Books, and of which the latter are but indications. You can no more demonstrate the truth of the Bible to a Hindu than you can demonstrate the truth of the Vedas to a Christian, for in either case outward evidence is wanting and the subject is not en rapport with the new doctrine. It is not infrequently urged that evidence sufficient to convince Mr. Gladstone should likewise convince Col. Ingersoll. And so it doubtless would in a court of law; but in matters spiritual what may appear "confirmation strong as proofs of Holy Writ" to the one may seem an absurdity absolute to the other. Neither had the pleasure of Moses' acquaintance. All witnesses of his miracles have been dead so long that their very graves are forgotten. There is nothing in the accounts, however, violative of Mr. Gladstone's conception of Deity, hence he finds no difficulty in accepting them. To Col. Ingersoll, however, there is something ridiculous in the idea of the Creator of the Cosmos become a bonfire and holding a private confab with the stuttering Hebrew. He demands undisputable evidence, it is not forthcoming, and he brands the story as a fraud. For the same reason that Mr. Gladstone accepts the miracles of Moses he accepts Christ as the Savior; for the same reason that he denies the burning bush, Col. Ingersoll denies Christ's divinity. The story of a suffering Savior appeals directly to Mr. Gladstone's heart, but it gets no further than Col. Ingersoll's head. The one tries it by his sympathies, the other by the rules of evidence that obtain in a court of law. In summing up, Col. Ingersoll might say: It has not been demonstrated to the satisfaction of this court that Jesus ever claimed to be "the only begotten Son of God." The testimony to the effect that he raised the dead, walked upon the waves, came forth from

the grave and ascended bodily into Heaven, appears to be all hearsay, and by witnesses of unknown credibility. If we consider the impression made upon his contemporaries, we find that his miracles and resurrection failed to convince those best qualified to analyze evidence. He seems to have been regarded as nothing more than a popular religious reformer or schismatic. From the New Testament we learn that he did not found a new faith, but lived and died in that of his fathers--that it is impossible to follow the instruction of Jesus without becoming in religion a Jew. As he was the sixteenth savior the world has crucified, his tragic death does not prove him divine. As immaculate conceptions were quite common among the Greeks and Romans, with whom both he and his immediate following came much in contact, I incline to the view that he entered the world in the good old way.

Granting the correctness of such a conclusion, it does not necessarily follow that Jesus was not heaven-sent, or that he was in any way unworthy the love and veneration of the world. The proposition of the eloquent Father Brannan that Jesus was either in very truth the only begotten Son of the Father, or an impious fraud deserving execration, is only tenable on the supposition that the language attributed to him by New Testament writers is properly authenticated. When we remember that the art of printing had not then been invented; that Christ wrote nothing himself; that the record of his life was probably not composed until he had been long dead; that the besetting sin of the East is exaggeration; that it was the custom of the Greeks, in whose language the New Testament was first written, to assign a heavenly origin to popular heroes, we must concede that there is some reason for doubt whether Jesus ever claimed to be other than the son of Joseph the carpenter. Granting that his life and language are correctly reported, that he was indeed Divinity: The fact remains that a vast majority of mankind decline to accept him as such; that while the church is striving with so little success to raise his standard in Paynim lands, Atheism is striking its roots ever deeper into our own. The church should recognize the fact that no man is an Atheist from choice. Deep in the heart of every human being is implanted a horror of annihilation. A man may become reconciled to the idea, just as he may become resigned to the necessity of being hanged; but he strives as desperately to escape the one as he does to avoid the other. Does the church owe any duty to the honest doubter, further than the reiteration of a dogma which his reason rejects? When he asks for evidence of God's existence, Judaism points him to the miracles of Moses, Christianity to those of Jesus, Mohammedanism to the revelations of its prophet; and if he find these beyond his comprehension or violative of his reason, they dismiss him with a gentle reminder that "the fool hath said in his heart there is no God." He retorts by accusing his critics either of superstitious ignorance or rank dishonesty, so honors are easy. He is told that if he doesn't perform the impossible--work a miracle by altering the construction of his own mind--he will be damned, and is

touched up semi-occasionally by the pulpiteers as an emissary of the devil. Being thus put on the defensive, he undertakes to demonstrate that all revealed religions are a fraud deliberately perpetrated by the various priesthoods. He searches through their Sacred Books for contradictions and absurdities, and not without success; proves that their God knew little about astronomy and less about geography; then sits him down "over against" the church, like Jonah squatting under his miraculous gourd-vine in the suburbs of Nineveh, and confidently expects to see it collapse. He imagines that in pointing out a number of evident errors and inconsistencies in "revealed religion" he has hit Theism in its stronghold; but he hasn't. He has but torn and trampled the ragged vestments of religion, struck at non-essentials, called attention to the clumsy manner in which finite man has bodied forth his idea of Infinity--has made the unskillful laugh and the judicious grieve. In an ignorant age the supernatural appeals most powerfully to the people; hence it is not strange that revealed religion, so-called, should have been grounded upon the miraculous; but the passage of the Red Sea, the raising of Lazarus and kindred wonders are not readily accepted in an enlightened era, and are utilized by scoffers to bring all religion into contempt. We can scarce conceive of God being reduced to the necessity of violating his own laws to demonstrate his presence and power. While it were presumption to ask any church to abate one jot or tittle of its dogma, it seems to me that all would gain by relying less upon the "evidential value of the miracles"; that a broader, nobler basis can be found for religious faith, one more in accord with the wisdom and dignity of the great All-Father than tradition of signs and wonders in a foreign land in the long ago. Had God desired to personally manifest himself unto man, to deliver a code of laws, to establish a particular form of worship, it is reasonable to suppose that he would have done so in a manner that would have left no doubt in the mind of any man, of any age or clime, anent either his divinity or his desires. That he has not done this, argues that all "revealed religions" are but the voices of the godlike within man, rather than direct revelations from without. All religions are fundamentally the same, and each is the highest spiritual concept of its devotees. Whence came the gods of the ancient Greek and Egyptian, of the Mede and Persian? If they were made known by direct revelation, how came they to be false gods? If they were the result of a spirit of worship inherent in all men, who implanted that spirit? If God, he must have done so for a purpose, and what purpose other than to enable man to work out his own salvation? Would we not expect him to operate through this spirit for universal guidance, rather than leave the world in darkness while he retired to an obscure corner thereof and practiced legerdemain for the edification of a few half-civilized people? If we adopt the internal instead of the external view of the origin of Judaism and Christianity, all the other Sacred Books range themselves about the Bible and with it bear witness that man is the creature of Design and not a freak of Chance. We bring to confirm the teachings of Moses and Christ and the wise Zoroaster, the

loving Gautama, the patient Mahomet, the priests and prophets of every clime, the altars of every age, the countless millions, who, since man's advent on the earth, have worshiped the All-in-All. If this be not basis broad enough for man's belief, add thereto the story of God's wisdom written in the stars and the never-ceasing anthem of the sea; the history of every consecrated man who has died for man, whether his name be Christ or Damien; the song of every bird and the gleam of every beauty; the eternal truth that shines in a mother's eyes, the laughter of little children and the leonine courage of creation's lord; every burning tear that has fallen on the face of the dead, and every cry of anguish that has gone up from the open grave to the throne of the Living God. Were not this "revelation" enough? Yet 'tis but the binding of humanity's Sacred Book, of that Universal Bible in which God speaks from the age and from hour to hour to all who have ears to hear.

The fact that man desires immortality is proof enough that he was not born to perish. 'Tis a "direct revelation" to the individual, if he will but heed it--will get out of the grime of the man-created city, with its artificialities, into the God-created country, where he may hear the "still small voice" speaking to that subtler sense, which in animals is instinct, in man is inspiration. There is no error in the ordering of the universe. It was not jumbled together by self-created "force," operating in accordance with "laws" self-evolved from chaos, on matter which, like Mrs. Stowe's juvenile nigger, "jis growed." It is the work of a Master who "ordereth all things well." Beauty might be born of Chance, but only Omniscience could have decreed the adoration it inspires. Hate might spring from the womb of Chaos, but Love must be the child of Order. Pain might be begotten of monsters, but only Infinite wisdom could have invented Sorrow. Nature does not put feathers on fishes, fins on birds, nor give aught that lives an impossible desire or an objectless instinct. Then why should man desire immortality, why should he fear annihilation more than the fires of Hell? During a third of his life he is unconscious, and annihilation is but an ever-dreamless sleep. Whether he sleeps the sleep of health or that of death, an hour and an eternity are the same to him; yet he desires the one and dreads the other. If man's fierce longing for immortal life is not to be gratified, then is the whole universe a cruel lie; its wonderful arrangement from star to flower, its careful adaptation of means to ends, the provision for the satisfaction of every sense, an arrant fraud, a colossal falsehood. If there be no God, then is creation a calamity; if there be a God and no immortality for man, then it is a crime.

God does not reveal himself to beasts, nor to men of brutish minds. How can those who have no ear for music, no eye for beauty, hear the melody of the universe or comprehend the symmetry of the All? What need have those for immortality to whom love is only lust, charity a pander to pride, a full stomach the greatest good and gold

a god? It is these who become "motive grinders," dig genius out of the earth like spuds and goobers, and achieve perpetual motion by making the universe a self-operative machine needing neither key nor steam generator to "make it go." They pride themselves, sometimes justly, on their reasoning powers; but the product of their logic-mill is like artificial flowers, as unprofitable as the icy kiss of the Venus de Medici. Of that knowledge gleaned in the Vale of Sorrow they know nothing; of that wisdom which cannot be demonstrated by the laws of logic they have no more conception than has a mole of the glories of the morning. They are of the earth earthy. To make them understand a message God would have to typewrite it, add the seal of a notary public and deliver it in person. They hear not the silver tones of Memnon, heed not the wondrous messages that come from the dumb lips of the dead. They search through musty tomes and explore long-forgotten languages to prove the rhapsodies of some old prophet false, while the grave of the babe that was buried yesterday is more than a prophecy--is an Ark of the Covenant.

* * *

THE PROFESSIONAL REFORMER.

This is preeminently the era of the reformer, and there are few things, great or small, upon which he has not tried his Archimedean lever with more or less effect.

Progress should ever be the shibboleth of man, but progress and improvement are not always synonyms. When a man becomes possessed of an idea that differs materially from the ideas of mankind in general; when he takes issue with the emulative wisdom of a world he knows not how many ages old, simple modesty would suggest that, before arrogating to himself superior discernment, he inquire diligently whether he is really a philosopher or a fool. When a man takes issue with the world the chances are as one to infinity that he is wrong. Since man's appearance upon the earth a great many sages have graced it, and the present generation is "heir of all the ages." Its judgment is grounded upon the net result of thousands of years of careful study and costly experiment, and it is much safer to trust to it than to new-born theories.

Occasionally a man appears who can add to the general stock of wisdom; but such men are seldom conscious of the fact that they are wiser than the world they live in,--seldom consider that they have a special call to embark in a "radical reform" crusade. They know that society is an organism, not a machine, and that it cannot be violently transformed, any more than a man can be changed into a demigod, or a monkey into a mastodon. They realize that the "old order changeth, yielding place to new"; but they also realize that the change must be slow in order to be healthy. Nearly every change that the world has witnessed has been slowly, almost imperceptibly wrought.

Even all governments that have stood the test of time were the work of time. The present government of England has been built up almost imperceptibly, and the Constitution of the United States is but a differentiation of Magna Charta, not a new and violent birth. It is much safer to change the old order of human thought and action by evolutionary than by revolutionary methods.

...

It has been the custom of society for many ages to make woman the custodian of her own virtue; but in this age of reformers it has been discovered that this is a grievous mistake. According to the new school of morals, woman is not competent to distinguish between right and wrong, and even wives of mature years are sometimes "led astray" by "fell destroyers," whom the "injured husband" feels in duty bound to chase around the world, if need be, with a Gatling gun. Instances where "designing villains" have "invaded the sanctity of the home" are multiplying, and while the world is not ready to forgive the erring woman it is daily asked to anathematize her paramour and stand between her husband and the penitentiary should his marksmanship prove successful. In other words, the world is asked to regard every man that a woman may chance to meet as her guardian angel,--to place her honor in his keeping instead of her own; to crucify him should he not prove as indifferent as Adonis, as chaste as Joseph. Truly this is very complimentary to man, but quite the reverse to woman. It would substitute male for female virtue and place the sanctity of the home at the mercy of strangers. Unquestionably all men should be pure; but they are not. In fact the pure man is the exception and not the rule. Every man who takes unto himself a wife must know this. He knows that he places his honor in the keeping of the woman, not in the keeping of his fellow men. He knows that she can live as pure as Diana if she elects to do so; that if she does not so choose she will have no difficulty in finding companions in crime. He does know--as does the world--that no man will attempt to "lead her astray" so long as her deportment is such as becomes a true wife; that no "wolf in sheep's clothing" will ever find his way into the fold without her assistance.

It will not do. Every sane woman who has arrived at the age of discretion is the guardian of her own honor. To relieve her of this responsibility is to insult her intelligence.

To divide the responsibility with men of the world is to place her on the same moral plane with the roue and the courtesan, ready to err should opportunity offer.

It is a trifle strange that those good people who value female purity so highly that they would reform every roue in Christendom to secure it, have little or nothing to say about the chief cause of hymeneal infidelity,--loveless marriages. No woman who really loves her husband can be untrue to him. Duty and inclination point

the same way. But if a woman does not love her husband she will, in nearly every instance, love someone else. She may never manifest this illicit affection by word or look--she may not admit it even to her own heart; but no matter how strongly armed she be in honesty, she stands within the pale of danger. From the questionable act of bartering, according to due forms of law and with priestly blessing, an attractive person for wealth or social position, is a comparatively easy step to practices no more reprehensible, but wanting the sanction of society. Is it at all strange that an impulsive young woman, whose parents have persuaded her to marry a man she cordially detests, and who is perhaps four times her age, should conclude that moral codes are chiefly fashionable cant and that a pretense of observing them is all that is really necessary?

. . .

While the reformers are busy saving the world it is strange that they do not devise some method of checking the decided misogynistic tendency of the young men of to-day. Marriages are becoming decidedly unpopular with them, and the result is that thousands of young men, who should be model husbands, are living lives of but quasi-respectability; thousands of young women who should be honored wives and happy mothers are thrown upon their own resources,--forced to choose between virtue and rags and silks and shame. The latter soon learn that honest poverty brings almost as complete social ostracism, almost as much contumely, as dishonest finery, and, despairing of ever becoming true men's wives, too many of them become false men's mistresses.

Here is work in abundance for the reformer. To it, oh, ye saviors of the world. Teach the young men of the land that marriage is a thing to be desired, even though they be not millionaires and no heiress smiles upon them.

. . .

The true reformer will not wait for some grand "mission," some mighty crusade to call him to action. The world is full of wrong which needs no preternatural prescience to discover--fraud which bears its name boldly upon its very face. The true reformer will denounce fraud and falsehood wherever found--will assail the wrong no matter how strongly entrenched it be in prescriptive right. But he will make haste slowly to change the fundamental principles upon which society is founded. He will proceed cautiously, modestly, until he does know, so far as aught is given to human wisdom to know, that it is a "condition and not a theory" with which he is dealing; that he earl point the world to new truths whose recognition and adoption will make better the condition of his species; then, if he be a true man, he will speak, not in humble whispers, lest he offend potentates and powers; not ambiguously, that he may escape "the oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely," but in clarion tones, like another Peter-the-

Hermit, who, bearing all, swerving neither to the right nor to the left, preached the crusade of the Holy Sepulcher till at last his words of fire burned through dull understandings, into cold hearts, and steel-clad Europe quivered like a million globules of quicksilver, then massed beneath his ragged standard.

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TRILBY AND THE TRILBYITES.

APOTHEOSIZING THE PROSTITUTE.

The Trilby craze has overrun the land like the "grip" bacillus or the seven-year locust. Here in America it has become almost as disgusting as the plague of lice sent upon Egypt to eat the chilled steel veneering off the heart of Pharaoh the fickle. Everything is Trilby. We have Trilby bonnets and bonbons, poses and plays, dresses and drinks. Trilby sermons have been preached from prominent pulpits, and the periodicals, from penny-post to pretentious magazine, have Trilbyism and have it bad. One would think that the world had just found Salvation, so loud and unctuous is its hosannah--that Trilby was some new Caaba-stone or greater Palladium floated down from Heaven on the wings of Du Maurier's transcendent genius; that after waiting and watching for six thousand--or million--years, a perfect exemplar had been bequeathed to the world.

I have read Du Maurier's foolish little book--as a disagreeable duty. The lot of the critic is an unenviable one. He must read everything, even such insufferable rot as "Coin's Financial School," and those literary nightmares turned loose in rejoinder--veritable Rozinantes, each bearing a chop-logic Don Quixote with pasteboard helmet and windmill spear. I knew by the press comments--I had already surmised from its popularity with upper-tendom--that "Trilby" was simply a highly spiced story of female frailty; hence I approached it with "long teeth"--like a politician eating crow, or a country boy absorbing his first glass of lager beer. I had received a surfeit of the Camillean style of literature in my youth before I learned with Ecclesiastes the Preacher--or even with Parkhurst--that "all is vanity."

So far as my experience goes the only story of a fallen woman that was worth the writing--and the reading--is that of Mary Magdalen; and it is not French. Her affaires d'amour appear to have ended with her repentance. She did not try to marry a duke, elevate the stage or break into swell society. After closing her maison de joie she ceased to be "bonne camarade et bonne fille" in the tough de tough quarter of the Judean metropolis. There were no more strolls on the Battery by moonlight alone love after exchanging her silken robe de chambre for an old-fashioned nightgown with never a ruffle. When she applied the soft pedal the Bacchic revel became a silent prayer. So

far as we can gather, the cultured gentlemen of Judea did not fall over each other in a frantic effort to ensnare her with Hymen's noose. If the Apostles recommended her life to the ladies of their congregations as worthy emulation the stenographer must have been nodding worse than Homer. If the elite of Jerusalem named their daughters for her and made her the subject of public discussion, that fact has been forgotten. And yet it is reasonably certain that she was beautiful--even more beautiful than Trilby, the bones of whose face were so attractive, the pink of whose tootsie-wootsies so irresistible. The Magdalen of St. Luke appears to have been in many respects the superior of the Magdalen of Du Maurier. She does not appear to have been an ignorant and coarse-grained she-gamin who frequented the students' quarter of the sacred city, posing to strolling artists for "the altogether," being, in the crowded atelier like Mother Eve in Eden "naked and not ashamed." We may suppose that the sensuous blood of the Orient ran riot in her veins--that she was swept into the fierce maelstrom by love and passion and would have perished there but for the infinite pity of our Lord, who cast out the seven devils that lurked within her heart like harpies in a Grecian temple, and stilled the storm that beat like sulphurous waves of fire within her snowy breast.

"And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet and anointed them with ointment."

How stale, flat and unprofitable the modern stories of semi-repentant prostitutes beside that pathetic passage, which shears down into the very soul--penetrates to the profoundest depths of the sacred Lake of Tears! And yet this ultra-orthodox age--which would suppress the ICONOCLAST if it could for poking fun at Poll Parrot preachers--has not become crazed over Mary Magdalen--has not so much as named a canal-boat or a cocktail for her.

Du Maurier says of his heroine: "With her it was lightly come and lightly go and never come back again. . . . Sheer gayety of heart and genial good fellowship, the difficulty of saying nay to earnest pleading . . . so little did she know of love's heartaches and raptures and torments and clingings and jealousies," etc. A woman who had never been in love, yet confessed to criminal intimacy with three men--and was not yet at the end of her string! Not even the pride of dress, the scourge of need, the fire-whips of passion to urge her on, she sinned, as the Yankees would say, simply "to be a-doin' "--broke the Seventh Commandment "more in a frolicsome spirit of camaraderie than anything else." That's the way we used to kill people in Texas. Still I opine that when a young woman gets so awfully jolly that she distributes her favors around promiscuously just to put people in a good humor, she's a shaky piece of furniture to make a fad of--a doubtful

example to be commended from the pulpit to America's young daughters. The French enthusiasts once crowned a courtesan in Notre Dame as Goddess of Reason and worshiped her; but I was hardly prepared to see the American people enthrone another as Goddess of Respectability and become hysterical in their devotion. I am no he-prude. I have probably said as many kindly things of fallen womanhood as Du Maurier himself, but I dislike to see a rotten drab deified. I dislike to see a great publishing house like that of Harper & Bros. so indifferent to decency, so careless of moral consequences, that, for the sake of gain, it will turn loose upon this land the foul liaisons of the French capital. I dislike to see the mothers of the next generation of Americans trying to "make up" to resemble the counterfeit presentment of a brazen bawd. It indicates that our entire social system is sadly in need of fumigation--such as Sodom and Gomorrah received.

Trilby, the child of a bummy preacher and a bastard bar-maid, was born and bred in the slum of the wickedest city in the world. Little was to be expected of such birth and breeding. We are not surprised that she regards fornication as but a venial fault--like cigarette smoking--and sins "capriciously, desultorily, more in a frolicsome spirit of camaraderie than anything else." Girls so reared are apt to be a trifle frolicsome. We are not shocked to see her stripped stark naked in Carrel's atelier in the presence of half a hundred hoodlums of the Latin quarter--seeming as unconcerned as a society belle at opera or ball with half her back exposed, her bust ready to spill itself out of her corsage if she chance to stoop. We even feel that it is in perfect accord with the eternal fitness of things when these wild sprouts of Bohemia, "with kindly solicitude, help her on with her clothes." We can even pause to admire the experienced skill with which they put each garment in its proper place--and deftly button it. That she should have the ribald slang of the free-and-easy neighborhood at her tongue's end and be destitute of delicacy as a young cow might be expected; but we are hardly prepared to see one grown up among such surroundings so unutterably stupid as not to know when her companions are "guying" her. Trilby croaking "Ben Bolt" for the edification of les trois Angliches were a sight worthy of a lunatic asylum. It was even more ridiculous than the social performance of that other half-wit, Little Billee, in Carrel's atelier. Stupidity covers even more sins than charity, hence we should not judge Du Maurier's heroine too harshly. As weak intellects yield readily to hypnotic power, Svengali had an easy victim. I have no word of criticism for the poor creature. I do not blame Du Maurier for drawing her as he found--or imagined--her, nor can I blame popular preachers, "able editors" and half-wit women for worshiping the freckled and faulty grisette as a goddess; for does not Carlyle truly tell us that "what we see, and can not see over, is good as Infinity?" Still I cannot entertain an exalted opinion of either the intelligence or morals of a people who will place such a character on a pedestal and prostrate themselves before it.

I confess my surprise at the phenomenal popularity of the book among people familiar with Dickens, Scott and Thackeray, triune transcendent of fiction. I had hoped when "Ben Hur" made its great hit that the golden age of flash fiction was past--that it could henceforth count among its patrons only stable boys and scullions; but the same nation that received "Ben Hur" with tears of thankfulness--thankfulness for a priceless jewel of spotless purity ablaze with the immortal fire of genius--has gone mad with joy over a dirty tale of bawdry that might have been better told by a cheap reporter bordering on the jimjams. Has the American nation suddenly declined into intellectual dotage--reached the bald-head and dizzy soubrette finale in the mighty drama of life?

I can account for the success of Du Maurier's book only on the hypothesis that "like takes to like"--that the world is full of frail Trilbys and half-baked duffers like Little Billee, who, Narcissuslike, worship their own image. They don't mind the contradictions and absurdities with which the book abounds; in fact, those who read up-to-date French novels are seldom gifted with sufficient continuity of thought to detect contradictions if they appear two pages apart. The book is ultra-bizarre, a thin intellectual soup served in grotesque, even impossible dishes and highly flavored with vulgar animalism--just the mental pabulum craved by those whose culture is artificial, mentality weak and morals mere matter of form. The plot was evidently loaded to scatter. It is about as probable as Jack and the Beanstalk, and is worked out with the skill of a country editor trying to "cover" a national convention. The story affords about as much food for thought as one of Talmage's plate-matter sermons--is fully as "fillin' " as drinking the froth out of a pop-bottle, and equally as exhilarating. Like other sots, the more the literary bacchanal drinks the more he thirsts--appetite increased by what it feeds upon. We can forgive Byron and Boccaccio the lax morals of their productions because of their literary excellence, just as we wink at the little social lapses of Sarah Bernhardt because of her unapproachable genius; but Du Maurier's book is wholly bad. It could only have been made worse by being made bigger. It is a moral crime, a literary abortion. The style is faulty and the narrative marred--if a bad egg can be spoiled--by slang lugged in from the slums of two continents with evident labor. Employed naturally, slang may serve--in a pinch--for Attic salt; but slang for its own sake is smut on the nose instead of a "beauty-spot" on the cheek of Venus--sure evidence of a paucity of ideas. A trite proverb, a non-translatable phrase from a foreign tongue may be permissible; but the writer who jumbles two languages together indiscriminately is but a pedantic prig. It were bad enough if Du Maurier mixed good English with better French; but he employs in his bilingual book the very worst of both--obsolete American provincialisms and the patois of the quartier latin side by side. To the cultured American who knows only the English of Lindley Murray and scholastic French, the book is about as

intelligible as Greek to Casca or the "dog-latin" of the American schoolboy to Julius Caesar.

His characters resemble the distorted freaks of nature in a dime museum. They may all be possible, but not one of them probable. Taffy and Gecko are the best of the lot. The first is a big, good-natured Englishman who wants to see his sweetheart married to his friend, weds another and supports her quite handsomely by painting pictures he cannot sell; the latter a Pole with an Italian's temperament, yet who sees the woman he loves in the power of a demon--by whom she is presumably debauched--and makes no effort to rescue her, is not even jealous. Svengali is the greatest musician in the world, yet cannot make a living in Paris, the modern home of art. He is altogether and irretrievably bad--despite the harmony in which his soul is steeped! Think of a hawk outwarbling a nightingale--of a demon flooding the world with melody most divine! We may now expect Mephistopheles to warble "Nearer My God to Thee" between the acts! Trilby can sing no more than a burro. Like the useful animal, she has plenty of voice, and, like him, she can knock the horns off the moon with it or send it on a hot chase after the receding ghost of Hamlet's sire; but she is "tone-deaf"--can't tell Ophelia's plaint from the performance of Thomas' orchestra. Svengali hypnotizes her, and, beneath his magic spell she becomes the greatest cantatrice in Europe. Hypnotism is a power but little understood; so we must permit Du Maurier to make such Jules Verne's excursions into that unknown realm as may please him. Had Svengali made a contortionist of the stiff old Devonshire vicar we could not cry "impossible." The Laird of Cockpen is a good-natured fellow to whom Trilby tells her troubles instead of pouring them into the capacious ear of a policeman. He is a kind of bewhiskered Sir Galahad who goes in quest of Trilby instead of the Holy Grail, and having found her, sits down on her bed and cheers her up while she kisses and caresses him. As she is in love with his friend, the performance is eminently proper, quite platonic. The Laird advises Trilby to give up sitting for "the altogether"; yet Du Maurier assures us that "nothing is so chaste as nudity"--that "Venus herself, as she drops her garments and steps on to the model-throne, leaves behind her on the floor every weapon by which she can pierce to the grosser passions of men."

Then he informs us that a naked woman is such a fright "that Don Juan himself were fain to hide his eyes in sorrow and disenchantment and fly to other climes." How thankful Cupid must be that he was born blind! Still the most of us are willing to risk one eye on the average "altogether" model. Du Maurier--who is a somewhat better artist than author--illustrates his own book. He gives us several portraits of Trilby, all open-mouthed, with a vacant stare. Strange that he did not draw his heroine nude as she sat on the bed hugging and kissing the Laird--that he did not hang up "on the floor every weapon" by which Venus herself "can pierce to the grosser passions of men." But

perchance he was afraid the Laird would "hide his eyes in sorrow and disenchantment and fly to other climes." He could not be spared just yet. Despite his plea for the nude, I think he exercised excellent judgment in leaving Trilby "clothed and in her right mind"--such as it was--while the Laird roosted on her couch in that attic bedroom and was--to us a Tennysonianism--mouthed and mumbled. Even New York's "four hundred" might have felt a little squeamish at seeing this pair of platonic turtle doves hid away in an obscure corner of naughty Paris in puris naturalibus even if "there is nothing so chaste as nudity."

Du Maurier says that Trilby never sat to him for "the altogether," and adds: "I would as soon have asked the Queen of Spain to let me paint her legs." If nudity be so chaste, and Trilby didn't mind the exposure even a little bit, why should he hesitate? And why should he not paint the legs of the Queen of Spain--or even the underpinning of the Queen of Hawaii--as well as her arms? But if we pause to point out all the absurd contradictions in this flake of ultra-French froth we shall wear out more than one pencil.

Little Billee is a very nice young man who has been kept too close to his mother's apron-strings for his own good--a girlish, hysterical kind of boy, who should be given spoon-victuals and put to bed early. Of course he wants to marry Trilby, for he is of that age when the swish of a petticoat makes us seasick. She is perfectly willing to become his mistress--although she had "repented" of her sins and been "forgiven" but a few days before. She has sense enough--despite Du Maurier's portraits of her--to know that she is unworthy to become a gentleman's wife, to be mated with a he-virgin like Little Billee. But she is overpersuaded--as usual--and consents. Then the young calf's mother comes on the scene and asks her to spare her little pansy blossom--not to blight his life with the frost of her follies. And of course she consents again. She's the great consentor--always in the hands of friends, like an American politician. "The difficulty of saying nay to earnest pleading" prevents a mesalliance. Trilby skips the trala and Little Billee--who has no chance to secure a reconsideration cries himself sick, but recovers,--comes up smiling like a cotton-patch after a spring shower. He is taken to England, but fails to find that "absence makes the heart grow fonder." He gets wedded to his art quite prettily, and even thinks of turning Mormon and taking the vicar's daughter for a second bride, but slips up on an atheistical orange peel, something has gone wrong with his head. Where his bump of amativeness should stick out like a walnut there is a discouraging depression which alarms him greatly, and worries the reader not a little. But finally he sees Trilby again, and, the wheel in his head, which has stuck fast for five years, begins to whizz around like the internal economy of an alarm clock--or a sky terrier with a clothespin on his tail.

Of course there is now nothing for Trilby to do but to die.

They could be paired off in a kind of morganatic marriage; but it is customary in novels where the heroine has been too frolicsome, for her to get comfortably buried instead of happily married,--and perhaps it is just as well. Even a French novelist must make some little mock concession to the orthodox belief that the wage of sin is death. So Trilby sinks into the grave with a song like the dying swan, and Little Billee follows suit--upsets the entire Christian religion by dying very peaceably as an Atheist, without so much as a shudder on the brink of that outer darkness where there's supposed to be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Svengali has also fallen by the wayside, a number of characters have been very happily forgotten, so the story drags along to the close on three not very attractive legs, Taffy, the Laird and Gecko. It is a bad drama worse staged, with an ignorant bawd for heroine, a weak little thing for leading man, an impossible Caliban for heavy villain and Atheism for moral. Such is the wonderful work that has given this alleged land of intelligence a case of literary mania a potu, set it to singing the praises of a grimy grisette more melodiously than she warbled, "mironton, mirontaine" at the bidding of the villainous Svengali. Such is this new lion of literature who has set American maids and matrons to paddling about home barefoot and posing in public with open mouths--flattering themselves that they resemble a female whom they would scald if she ventured into their back yard.

BALAAM'S ASS.

AND OTHER BURROS.

"Force first made conquest, and that conquest, law;
Till Superstition taught the tyrant awe,
Then shared the tyranny, then lent it aid,
And gods of conquerors, slaves of subjects made.
She, from the rending earth and bursting skies,
Saw gods descend and fiends infernal rise;
Here fixed the dreadful, there the blest abodes;
Fear made her devils and weak hope her gods;
Gods partial, changeful, passionate, unjust,
Whose attributes were rage, revenge and lust;
Such as the souls of cowards might conceive,
And, formed like tyrants, tyrants would believe.
Zeal then, not charity, became the guide;
And hell was built on spite, and heaven on pride."

--POPE.

Kind reader, have a care! For aught I know this article may be the rankest blasphemy, and reading it may wreck your immortal soul--granting of course, that you are in possession of such perishable property. I submitted it to several of my brother ministers and sought their opinion as to the propriety of publishing it; but while some assured me that it was calculated to purify the moral atmosphere somewhat and foster respect for true religion, others were equally certain that Satan had inspired it--that it was, in

fact, a choice bit of immigration literature for the lower regions. Finding even the elders unable to decide what should be done with Balaam's Ass--whether it should be turned loose upon the land like another evangelist, or consigned to the flames as a hopeless heretic--I determined to give it the benefit of the doubt. The animal may break into the preserves of some unctuous hypocrites and trample a few choice flowers of sacerdotal folly; but I opine that no honest man of average intellect will find herein occasion for complaint. I would not wantonly wound the sensibilities of those earnest but ignorant souls who believe the very chapter headings of the Bible to have been inspired; who interpret literally every foolish fable preserved therein--"like flies in amber"; but the Car of Progress cannot roll forward without crushing an occasional pismire. We cannot bid it stand forever in the same old rut, like an abandoned road-cart or "Jeffersonian Democrat," because across its shining pathway lie the honest prejudices of zealous stupidity.

The Bible is a great gold-mine, in which inexhaustible store of yellow metal is mixed with much worthless rubbish that must be purged away by honest criticism before the book becomes really profitable even fit for general circulation. I would rather place in the hands of an innocent girl a copy of the Police Gazette or Sunday Sun than an unexpurgated Bible. It is a book I value much, yet keep under lock and key with "Don Juan" and the "Decameron." It contains both the grandest morality and most degrading obscenity ever conceived in the brain of mortal man. There are passages whose beauty and power might cause the heart of an angel to leap in ecstasy, others that would call a blush of shame to the brassy front of the foulest fiend that ever howled and shrieked through the sulphurous valleys of Hell.

The man who rejects the Bible altogether because it is honey-combed with barbarous traditions, rank with revolting stories and darkened by the shadow of a savage superstition, is cousin-german to him that casts aside a priceless pearl because it is coated with ocean slime. He that accepts it in its entirety--gulps it down like an anaconda absorbing an unwashed goat; who makes no attempt to separate the essential from the accidental--the utterance of inspiration from the garrulity of hopeless nescience; who forgets that it is half an epic poem filled with the gorgeous imagery of the Orient, may, like the ass which Balaam rode, open its mouth and speak; but he never saw the Angel of the Lord; he utters the words of emptiness and ignorance.

Had the Bible been taught intelligently and truthfully the entire world would have accepted it centuries ago. Its very worst enemies are those who insist upon its inerrancy--who strive by some esoteric alchemy of logic to transmute its every fragment of base metal into bars of yellow gold, the folly of the creature into the wisdom of the Creator. During the Dark Ages hide-bound orthodoxy prevailed and

practically every man was a church communicant; it is paramount to-day only in those countries that have failed to keep pace with the Car of Progress. It is a sad commentary upon all religious faiths that they flourish best where ignorance prevails--that Atheism is rapidly becoming the recognized correlative of education. By presuming to know too much of God's great plan; by decrying intelligent criticism and attempting to seal the lips of living students with the dicta of dead scholastics; by standing ever ready to brand as blasphemers those who presume to question or dare to differ, the dogmatists are driving millions of God-fearing men into passive indifference or overt opposition.

Ignorance is not a crime per se; but it is the mother of Superstition and Intolerance, those twin demons that have time and again deluged the world with blood and tears; that for forty centuries have stood like ravenous wolves in the path of human progress; that with their empoisoned fangs have torn a thousand times the snowy breast of Liberty--that have done more to inspire Doubt and foster Infidelity than all the French philosophes that ever wielded pen. The logical, well-informed man who to-day becomes a church communicant does not so because of the doctrine promulgated by the average pulpiter, but despite of it.

The long night of intellectual slavery has not altogether passed, but on the higher hills already flame the harbingers of Reason's glorious morn. Gone is the Inquisition with its sacred infamies--the Christian rack is broken and the thumb-screw rusted in twain. The persuasive wheel no longer whisks the non-conformist into full communion, the Iron Virgin has ceased to press the writhing heretic to her orthodox heart. The faggot has fallen from the hand of the saintly fanatic and the branding iron from the loving grasp of the benevolent bigot, while Superstition, that once did rule the world with autocratic sway, can only shriek her impotent curses forth and flourish her foolish boycott at Reason's growing flame.

If I can but enable sectarians to understand that all so-called sacred books are essentially the same--that Brahma and Baal, Jupiter and Jehovah are really identical; if I can but make them cognizant of the crime they commit in decrying honest criticism; if I can but convince them that the man who is

"Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks through nature up to nature's God,"

is not necessarily an active emissary of evil whom it is their duty to denounce; if I can but create a suspicion in the minds of the clergy that perhaps they know no more of the Omnipotent than do other men--are possibly mistaking bile for benevolence, gall for godliness and chronic laziness for "a call to preach"--I will feel that these few hours expended grooming Balaam's burro have not been cast away.

. . .

Our information concerning the Rev. Mr. Balaam and his burro is very limited. Although the latter was endowed with the gift of gab it appears to have spoken but once and then at the especial bidding of an angel, which fact leads us to suspect that the voluble jackasses now extant have deteriorated at both ends since the days of their distinguished ancestor--have parted with all their brain as well as with half their legs. Brother Balaam does not appear to have "syndicated" his sermons or made any special bid for notoriety. If he ever hired half-starved courtesans a la Parkhurst--to dance the can-can, then hastened into court to file complaint against the very bawds he had filled with booze and dandled naked on his knee; if he called the ladies of his congregation "old sows" after the manner of Sam Jones; if he got himself tried on a charge of heresy or became entangled with some half-wit sister whose religious fervor led her to mistake Levite for the Lord, no record of the shameful circumstance has been preserved. He appears to have attended pretty strictly to the prophet business, and we may presume, from such stray bits of his biography as have come down to us, that he prospered.

The Israelites, who had gotten out of Egypt between two days with considerable of the portable property of other people concealed about their persons, had gone into the Bill Dalton business under the direct guidance--as they claimed--of their Deity, and were for some time eminently successful. Wholesale murder and robbery became their only industry, arson and oppression their recognized amusement. They had swiped up several cities--"leaving not a soul alive"--and were now grinding the snickersnee for Moab and Midian. The people of the petty nations of Palestine--whom God's anointed received an imperative command to "utterly destroy"--had builded them happy homes and accumulated considerable property by patient industry. They appear to have been peacefully disposed and devout worshipers of those deities from whom the better attributes of Jehovah were subsequently borrowed. The Israelites had not struck a lick of honest labor for forty years. They had drifted about like Cosey's "Commonwealers" and developed into the most fiendish mob of God-fearing guerrillas and marauding cut-throats of which history makes mention. Compared with Joshua's murderous Jews, the Huns who followed Attila were avatars of mercy and the Sioux of Sitting Bull were Good Samaritans. A careful comparison of the crimes committed by the Kurds in Armenia with those perpetrated by "God's chosen people" in Palestine will prove that the followers of Allah are but amateurs in the art of outrage. Doubtless any other people, brutalized by centuries of bondage, then turned loose without king or country, with only ignorant prophets for guides and avaricious priests for law-givers, would have become equally cruel--would have adopted a divinity devoid of mercy and a stranger to justice. The god

of a people is, and must of necessity ever be a reflection of themselves, an idealization of their own virtues and vices--a magic mirror in which, Narcissuslike, man worships his own image.

The Jews are one of the grandest people that ever dwelt upon the earth. A more intellectual and progressive race is unknown to human history; but, like all others, it had its age of savagery and its epoch of barbarism before it reached the golden era of civilization. I am not criticizing the Jews for their treatment of the Canaanites during that century when crass ignorance made them credulous and bondage rendered them brutal; but to assume that the excesses of semi-savages were Heaven-inspired were a damning libel of the Deity. I rather enjoy being lied about by malicious lollipops; but did I sit secure in some celestial citadel, holding the thunderbolts of Heaven within my hand, it were hardly safe to assert that I instigated such unparalleled atrocities as were perpetrated by the emancipated Israelites in Palestine. I would certainly be tempted to take a potshot at an occasional preacher who persisted in defaming me with his foolish dogmatism.

Balak, the king of Moab and Midian, saw that he was not strong enough to withstand the sacred marauders, and well knew that surrender meant a wholesale massacre--that those who had dared to defend their homes would be placed under harrows of iron--that the silvery head of the aged grandsire would sink beneath a sword wielded in the name of God; that unborn babes would be ripped from the wombs of Moabite women and the maidens of Midian coerced into concubinage by their heaven-led captors. In this dire extremity Balak bethought him of Brother Balaam, who was not "a prophet of God," as popularly supposed, but a priest of Baal, the deity devoutly worshiped in Moab and Midian. It were ridiculous to suppose that the king, princes and elders of Moab and Midian would appeal for aid to the God of their enemies instead of to their own divinity, for in those days the principal business of a deity was to wage war in behalf of his worshipers. Balaam was a Midianite, and Balak sent messengers to him "with the reward of divination in their hand," and begged that he would kindly come over and knock the Israelites off the Christmas tree with one of his smooth-bore, muzzle-loading maledictions; "for," said he, with a pious fervor that proves he was addressing a priest of his own faith, "I wot that he whom thou blesseth is blessed, and whom thou curseth is cursed." He evidently believed that Balaam carried the celestial thunderbolts concealed about his person--that when he turned them loose those on whom they alighted frizzled up like a fat angleworm on a sea-coal fire. The good man said he would see what could be done to help Balak out of the hole.

"And God came unto Balaam and said,
"What men are these with thee?" "

As Balaam was evidently expecting the visit we may conclude that the caller was Baal, as Jehovah was not at that time on visiting terms with the Gentile priests--was busily engaged pulling down their altars and putting them to the sword. Balaam gratified the very natural curiosity of his celestial visitor, and the latter, after learning all the particulars, cautioned his diviner or priest not to make any bad breaks. Balaam sent the ambassadors back with word that Baal was a trifle shy of curses at that particular time. Balak evidently understood the situation, for he sent other agents with larger offerings. Balaam still insisted that he had received no permission to wipe up the Plain of Moab with the ex-brick builders, but saddled his ass and went along, promising to do the best he could for his bleeding country. He evidently desired to size up the situation and be quite sure that none of his curses would come home to roost. Doubtless he also desired to see if Balak was bidding all he could afford for celestial aid, for we have no reason to believe that Brother Balaam was in the prophet business for his health or peddling curses for recreation. While en route his companions probably informed him that the Jews were as frequent as jugs in a Prohibition precinct--that they had slaughtered the people of Ai, driven Og into the earth, overcome Ammon and were making the rest of the Canaanitish nations hard to catch, for the good man was seized with a sudden desire to take the back track. His burro balked and Balaam told his fellow travelers that an angel was interfering with his transportation facilities. Perhaps the princes of Moab made ribald remarks anent the celestial obstruction--even hinted that Balaam had best get a Maud S. move on him or he might contract a vigorous case of unavailing regret. Then the burro began to blab. Like many of the old pagan priests, Balaam was doubtless an adept in the art of ventriloquism. That may have convinced the ambassadors and bulled the price of curses; for then, as now, it was no uncommon thing for the utterance of an ass to be mistaken for that of an oracle. Or some Doubting Thomas may have twisted the burro's tail. For some reason not set forth by the sacred chronicler, the angel withdrew his objections and the prophet proceeded on his way, but still protesting that no permit had been accorded him to put a kibosh on Joshua's free-booters.

Balaam was entirely too smart to pray for rain when the wind was in the wrong quarter--altogether too smooth to launch his anathemas at an army he knew could take Moab by the back-hair and rub her nose in the sawdust. He counted the campfires of Israel and concluded that Balak's promises of high honors were worth no more than a camp-meeting certificate of conversion--that he would soon be hoofing it over the hills with his coat-tails full of arrows; so, after working his patrons for all the spare cash in sight, he made a sneak, leaving his sovereign to wage war without the aid of supernatural weapons. Like many of his sacerdotal successors, Balaam took precious good care to get on the winning side.

. . .

Ever since the days of Brother Balaam there has been considerable trading of curses for cold cash. The industry has been patiently built up from humble beginnings to a magnificent business. From an itinerant curse peddler, trotting about on a spavined burro and resorting to the methods of the mountebank to create a market for his merchandise, it has become a vast commercial concern with costly establishments in every country. The first curses, as might have been expected, were very crude affairs--little more than hoodoos, intended to promote the material welfare of the purchaser at the expense of other people. A king of ye olden times bought a curse and turned it loose upon his enemies--"played the god an engine on his foe"--much as a modern prince might a gatling-gun; but it seems to have slowly dawned upon the royal ignorami that the Lord is usually on the side of the heaviest battalions--a fact which Napoleon emphasized. The practice of fencing in a nation with a few wild-eyed prophets, or sending a single soldier forth with a hair-trigger hoodoo and the jawbone of a defunct jackass to drive great armies into the earth, gradually fell into disuse--curses and blessings became a drug in the market.

About this time the Jewish priesthood began to take kindly to the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. This theological thesis--promulgated before the age of Abraham--had influenced to some extent the religious thought of the entire eastern hemisphere. That the Jews were among the last to admit the immortality of the soul was doubtless due to the fact that, because of their long enslavement, they did not emerge from semi-savagery so soon as did the other divisions of the great semitic family. Furthermore, for a long period after their emancipation the Jews seem to have received the rewards of their peculiar virtues here on earth and were little inclined to defer their happiness to the hereafter--were amply able to punish their enemies and had no occasion to delegate that pleasant duty to a Superior Power. Finally, however, the fortunes of war began to go against them. They were no longer able to make on earth a heaven for themselves and a hell for other people. Instead of despoiling others they discovered an occasional hiatus in their own smoke-house. Instead of burning the cities of their inoffensive neighbors their own began to blaze. The priests and prophets insisted that these evils befell them because they had neglected their Deity; but the more devout they became--the more fat kids, fine meal and first fruits they referred to the Levite larder as "offerings to the Lord"--the more deplorable became their condition. The people began to drift to the more reasonable religion of their neighbors and even the wisest of their kings could not be held to the faith of their fathers. The Jewish priesthood gradually adopted the old Parsi doctrine of Heaven and Hell--a doctrine unrecognized by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and having no place in the theology of Moses.

The Jews eventually discovered that robbery was wrong and assassination a crime--that the practice of ripping open pregnant women and putting prisoners of war under harrows of iron was displeasing to the Lord. It was a forcible illustration of the ancient axiom that it makes a great difference whose ox is gored. Instead of founding a mighty nation as predicted by their prophets, the Jews were conquered, scattered, enslaved.

Palestine was filled with foreigners; had become a religious Babel, a theological chaos. The time was ripe for a religious revolution such as had been inaugurated in India six centuries before. It was accomplished and, as might have been expected, the result was a curious composition; a religious olla-podrida in which the profound wisdom of Zoroaster and the childish superstition of western barbarians, grand morality and monumental absurdity elbow each other like specters in a delirium--in which is heard both "the still small voice" of Omnipotent God and the megalophanous bray of Balaam's Ass.

Jehovah, the national God of the Jews, supplanted Jove and Baal, Ashtaroth and Oromasdes, and with their thrones took many of their attributes. The doctrine of future rewards and punishments became the cornerstone of the new theology, while further concessions were made to ethnic creeds in various stages of decay by the adoption of the Trinity, Incarnation and Resurrection. The Jewish prophets were accepted by the composite cult--which Christ may have originated, but certainly did not develop--but their every utterance was given a new interpretation of which the Hebrew hierarchy had never dreamed. The great kingdom which they had predicted was to be spiritual instead of temporal; the Jerusalem predestined to become the capitol of a powerful prince, to whom all nations should acknowledge allegiance--and pay tribute--was not the leprosy-eaten old town among the Judean hills, but a city not made with hands, existing eternal in the heavens. Christianity does not contain a single original idea. It borrowed liberally on every hand, but chiefly of Parseeism in which faith, as taught by Zoroaster--Aristotle says six thousand years before Plato--may be found its most important features. It owes absolutely nothing to Judaism but the name of its God and an idle string of misinterpreted prophecies--is, from first to last, essentially a "Gentile" faith. There never was a religion instituted upon the earth that the priesthood failed to transform into arrant folly, to debase until it finally fell into disrepute. Such was the fate of that established by Zoroaster, and upon the ruins of the grandest theology this world has known, Siddartha Gautama erected the Buddhist credo, which is really a revolt to first principles--a search for happiness here on earth, the attainment of Nirvana. So, too, the priesthood has corrupted the teachings of Christ until the logical mind revolts from the jumble of self-evident absurdities, rejects Revelations as a nursery tale and seeks by the dim light of science to find the cause of all Existence.

The new cult was not regarded kindly by the old priesthoods, and the methods adopted for its suppression were almost as rigorous as those it in turn employed some centuries later for the discouragement of other "blasphemers" and "heretics"; hence it is not surprising that the old Hebrew doctrine that whom the Lord loves he makes mighty, gives wealth in plenty and concubines galore, power over his enemies and privilege to despoil his neighbors, should have been early transformed into "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." The doctrine of temporal rewards and punishments revived somewhat as Christianity became powerful, but has remained a subordinate feature. As not a sparrow falls to the earth without a special permit from the Almighty, it follows, as a natural sequence, that every brutal crime is gracefully permitted--if not ordained--by that dear Lord whose protection we daily pray, and whose apostles we support. If we inquire why this is so we are cautioned not to commit blasphemy--some worthy brother of Balaam's Ass bids us beware the Angel of the Lord.

...

The claim of the ancient priesthoods to support was based on the presumption that they promoted the national welfare of the people by keeping the national deity in good humor. Whenever he contracted a case of the sulks the smell of fresh blood would usually bring him around all right. Sometimes the butchery of a few innocent birds and beasts would do the business; but it not infrequently became necessary to commit a number of homicides to get him actually gay. When even the sweet incense of blazing cities and roasting babes failed to restore his hilarity the prophets sounded the alarm much as the weather bureau gives warning of approaching cyclones and other atmospheric disturbances. In case the dire predictions failed to materialize the Lord had listened to their protestations that he was not doing the proper thing and "repented him"--the Immutable had changed his mind! The prophets were supposed to make a man prosperous as a Tammany politician by blessing, or poor as a Houston Post editorial by laying a curse upon him. As civilization advanced the people able to pay "the rewards of divination" became too intelligent to be taken in by the transparent tricks of Brother Balaam, hence the new priesthood devoted itself chiefly to the spiritual welfare of the people--made a specialty of the hereafter business. For obvious reasons, it is the safer enterprise.

Man was now told to believe thus-and-so and he would be blessed eternally, but if he believed not he would be cursed everlastingly. The rewards promised by the early priesthoods had, by centuries of evolution, developed from good crops and fat cattle, fruitful vines and successful villainy, into mansions in Heaven; the punishments from a protracted drought or descent of the Assyrians, a bad case of buck ague or boils into a Hell of fire where the souls of

aged unbelievers and unbaptized babes forever burn. This was the old argumentum ad hominem in a new Mother Hubbard; but the masses were still ignorant, and those who could not be bribed with the fruits of Heaven were bluffed with the fires of Hell. The old priesthods were crushed and kings became the sworn defenders of the new faith, even propagated it with the sword--dispensed saving grace with gallows' ropes and with the bludgeon drove heaven-inspired precepts into the heads of unbelievers. Wisdom could not withstand such logic--the philosopher yielded to the unanswerable argument of the Inquisition. As no one could disprove the comforting doctrine of eternal damnation, and there is a strong vein of superstition in even the best of men, the ignorant populace cowered in terror most pitiful at the feet of a presumptuous priesthood. And to this good day men who have managed in some mysterious manner to dodge the madhouse, believe that priests or preachers are the special deputies of the Deity, that a criticism of the clergy is an insult to the Almighty--that if you dare dissent from the foolish opinions of some wooden-headed dominus anent the Divine Plan you might as well "curse God and die."

Once this old ethnic cult in a new dress became well established--and the source of considerable revenue to the latter day Levites--its most glaring absurdities were able to withstand for a time even the invention of the printing press and the general dissemination of knowledge; for "that monster custom, of habits devil," is very potent in shaping the minds of men and retarding human progress. Thus we find, in this so-called enlightened age, millions of men defending the rights of certain scorbutic families of indifferent minds and muddy morals, to sway the sovereign's scepter. Mental colossi--men who tower up like Titans in the world of intellect--are proud to acknowledge themselves the "dutiful subjects" of some brainless fop or beery old female who chanced to be born in a royal bed while their betters were ushered in as the brats of beggars. So, too, we find men possessing clear judicial minds defending with all the fervor of fifteenth century fanatics, not the Christian faith per se, but some special interpretation thereof; not the philosophy of religion, but the inconsequential theorems of some sacerdotal "reformer" who has added to the world's discord by founding a new "faith." These various religious divisions have become little more than rival commercial establishments, each peddling its own peculiar brand of saving grace--warranted the only genuine--and dealing damnation round on all dissenters.

Dogmatism begat Doubt, and men began to study the Bible, not to search out its wisdom and its truth, but its folly and its falsehood. They represent the recoil from one extreme to the other--from blind belief to unreasoning skepticism, from intellectual slavery to liberty degenerated into license. Instead of judging the Bible by God they judge God by the Bible, and finding by this ridiculous formula that he is little better than a brutal maniac, they reject him

altogether and try to account for the creature without the Creator, to explain an effect without an efficient cause. If we could but muzzle the dogmatists Infidelity would quickly die.

...

The essentials of the Christian religion do not depend upon the inerrancy of the Scriptures. They do not depend upon direct Revelation or the Miracle, the Incarnation or the Resurrection of Jesus from the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. In fact, these very "Evidences" adduced in behalf of the "True Faith," produce all the Doubt with which it is called to contend. Let us grant that Moses was not called to Sinai's flaming crest to receive laws promulgated centuries before Joseph was carried a captive into Egypt; that the Bible is but the history of a barbarous people--a compendium of their poetry, religion and philosophy; that the Incarnation and Resurrection are but myths borrowed from decaying ethnic cults, and what have we lost? Simply indefensible non-essentials--the tawdry garment with which Ignorance has bedecked her poor idea of the Infinite. What matters it whether we call our Creator Jehovah or Jupiter, Brahma or Buddha? Who knoweth the name by which the Seraphim address him? Why should we care whether Christ came into the world with or without the intervention of an earthly father? Are we not all sons of the Most High God--"bright sparkles of the Infinite?" Suppose that the story of the Incarnation (older than Jerusalem itself) be literally true--that the Almighty was the immediate father of Mary's child: Is not the birth of each and all of us as much a mystery, as great a "miracle," as though we sprang full-grown from the brow of Olympian Jove? Is it necessary that the Creator should violate his own laws to convince us that he does exist? Is it more wonderful that the sun should stand still upon Gibeon and the moon in the Valley of Ajalon than that the great world should spin forever, bringing the night and the morning, the seed-time and the harvest? Is not a "miracle"--an interruption of nature's harmony--rather calculated to make a man of logical mind suspect that he is the sport of chance than believe himself the especial care of an Omniscient Power that "Ordereth all things well?" When this great globe hangs motionless in space and the rotting dead arise in their cerements; when great multitudes are fed with a few small fishes and virgins are found with child, then, and not till then, will I relinquish faith in an intelligent Architect and acknowledge lawless Force the only Deity.

Man is but a microbe lost in immensity. He peers about him and, by the uncertain light of his small intelligence, reads here a word, there a line in the great Book of Nature, and putting together these scattered fragments, makes a "Faith" which he defends with fanatical fervor. Dare to call in question its most inconsequential thesis and you are branded as an heretic; deny it in toto and you are denounced as an enemy of the Almighty! The curses of Brother Balaam no longer kill the body, but they are

expected to play sad havoc with the soul! When the priest of Baal was en route to Moab's capital for cursing purposes an angel tried to withhold him, and even his burro rebuked him, but neither angels nor asses are exempt from the law of evolution. Now when a priest or preacher lets slip a curse at those who presume to question the supernal wisdom of his creed, the angels are supposed to flap their wings until Heaven is filled with flying feathers, while every blatant jackass who takes his spiritual fodder at that particular rick unbraids his ears and brays approvingly.

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