

GS440

PHASES OF HUMAN RIGHTS.

BY JOHN T. SARGENT.

THE old anti-slavery enterprise in its inception, purpose, and prosecution had, of course, as its main motive, the great radical idea of human rights. Though organized primarily on behalf of the colored race, yet the great underlying principle of the whole movement was the dignity and worth of human nature, the equal claim of all human beings to the same social and civil privileges. It insisted on the unity, eternity, and singleness of this claim for all classes of humanity, however degraded, whether black or white, male or female. As dependents on the same overruling providence, children of the same heavenly Father, heirs of the same inheritance, it could see no distinction between them; and, though it worked and pleaded mainly for freedom to the black man, it could see in him, and through him, as it were, only the type of humanity's rights and humanity's wrongs. With this view, then, of its breadth of motive and philosophy, it can hardly rest or be remitted, even now, but in the fuller consummation of those great interests everywhere, and the assurance of those rights to every mortal man and woman. In every right construction of its motive-purpose it is still, in a certain sense, pressing for the recognition of these rights, the admission of these claims, whether for the colored man, not yet socially recognized; or the poor white laborer, not yet invested with industrial rights; the long-suffering

Indians, so cruelly down-trodden and crowded from their homesteads by a murderous treachery; the meek Chinese, those poor victims of commercial fraud; or for woman, everywhere a compeer and claimant with us in social influence, authority, position, and suffrage. And here let me say how I hope that in its advocacy of these great interests this monthly periodical, *THE STANDARD*, which is, after all, but the old *Anti-Slavery Standard* transfigured by the needs of the time, will listen to no compromise and allow of no prevarication! True to its antecedents, its habits, and its pledge, we hope and believe it will be satisfied with nothing short of the recognition and maintenance of human rights, *all* human rights, here, now, and everywhere. It were surely a great mistake to suppose that the whole philosophy of the anti-slavery enterprise were exhausted, and the whole aim of that great reform had culminated merely by the abolition of the chattel system of the South, or the taking off the iron fetters from the limbs of the poor Southern slaves when President LINCOLN issued his Emancipation edict; as if the Southern tyrants, who had, all their lives long, been treating the poor slaves so like brutes and ridiculing their claim to humanity, were, all at once, to become sublimated saints, and cordially concede without a question the rights and equality of a race they had so long brutalized and de-

graded! Oh! no, such a social millennium as that we certainly have not, as yet, realized. Hardly dare we say, in the strength of our faith, we have it fully in prospect. Just look at it. What is our actual social status, and what the condition of the colored man even *here* at the NORTH? Socially ostracized, shunned, excluded from our churches, avoided as if he were a nuisance or an offense, debarred from the commonest privileges, shut out from all familiar assemblings, forbidden even a lodgment in our public-houses, while at the South he is still more signalized by scorn and shamefully maltreated. What does such freedom as that amount to? Of what use were it, and how much better than a mere tantalizing mockery and pretense, to give to the black man a nominal freedom by merely taking off from his wrists and ankles the chains of a chattel servitude, if you still leave him only the more rigidly overborne by social prejudice, and manacled by the worse fetters of a social exclusion and outlawry. Of what use and how much better than bitterness to say to him, "*There, now, go where you will, you are free!*" if, at the same time, you have closed against him every avenue to advancement, every path to social progress? What an inexpressibly potent insult to talk thus of the *liberty* you have given him, if, at the same time, you *deny* him the commonest rights of a man—the rights of a citizen and of social recognition—which alone constitute a genuine liberty, forcing him thus to bite the very dust of social degradation, and to feed on the dire ignominy of a caste exclusion! In what sense can

freedom be his except as the unquestioned equal and peer of other men in social relations, their rival even, and competitor, if need be, for the very offices and distinctions in society, so that, instead of *one* Senator REVELS, we might have a score of such complexions foreshadowing our duty? Look, too, at the shameful treatment of colored people in our churches! How invidious and disreputable their marked separation from the rest of the congregation in most of our so-called *Christian* assemblies. O shame, shame on such a Christianity as that! reënacting the odious exclusiveness of the Scribes and Pharisees, and with a social rancor even worse than the Jews of old had toward the Samaritans. Again, look at the condition of but too many of what I am constrained to call a servile class among ourselves—our white domestics. How much better than serfdom, think you, is the position of many of the young women in our fashionable, wealthy, and aristocratic families? What know they, and what are they allowed to know, of opportunities for self-culture, intellectual discipline, or moral progress? How much is there even of intelligent sympathetic converse between them and their employers? What chances have they for the indulgence of a taste for reading, or any other form of æsthetic and mental recreation? And how slight the concern, generally, for their welfare and improvement on the part of the more favored class! So, of all classes of our operatives, and of either sex, much the same might be said of their need of our better sympathy. Woe be unto us, as a people, if we

fail seasonably to heed and to answer their appeals. What a beneficent work might we accomplish for the elevation and welfare of humanity were we but unanimous on this one great principle—the recognition of all human rights, and to all classes. We need, above all else, to have this radical element of humanity and its claims so inherent in our social ethics, so installed in our daily intercourse that we shall recognize in every laboring man and woman

an equal, and, as it were, a brother and a sister, having constant claim on our good-will. "He who loveth not his brother, whom he *hath* seen, how can he love GOD, whom he hath *not* seen?" Here, surely, is a direct recognition of a true philanthropy as the only genuine indication and definition of true piety and religion. Let us see to it that we have such a religion by the fulfillment of its conditions.

G.S. 441

CHRISTIANITY AND REFORM.

BY MRS. JULIA WARD HOWE.

ADDRESS IN APOLLO HALL, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE NEW-YORK REFORM LEAGUE.

I HAVE gone to church in the streets to-day, and whereas I came here to New-York to preach, New-York has preached to me. Not that what I have seen has caused me to dismiss a single conviction; but that, standing and looking at the multi-form current of life that rushes by, I have been compelled to acknowledge the insufficiency of foregone conclusions to deal with an element so uncertain, so difficult of government. The material distance between New-York and New-England is but about eight hours by railroad, but the moral distance has the whole breadth of the Atlantic in it. Europe is visibly here. The power with which your city draws to itself this vast arterial current of life illustrates to me the two-fold character of human nature.

Rascality hovers here like the moth about the candle. Villainy is nowhere more desperate, more unscrupulous. On the other hand, thoughtful souls also must come to you. Hidden under your rank and florid prosperity are elements so precious, sympathies so sincere, that the household of faith itself would be incomplete without the New-York relations. So we who hear accounts of disorder and misrule, who read Mr. PARTON'S record of the City Hall, and Mr. ADAMS'S account of Erie, know that you have better things than these with which to meet and stem the tide of un-republican tendency which ever threatens you. Woe to you and to us if you had not! The time that each of us can occupy this evening is necessarily so short, and the subject given to us to