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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY

# SKULLS.

*A LECTURE*

BY

COLONEL ROBERT G. INGERSOLL.

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MAN advances just in the proportion that he mingles his thoughts with his labor—just in the proportion that he takes advantage of the forces of nature ; just in proportion as he loses superstition and gains confidence in himself. Man advances as he ceases to fear the gods and learns to love his fellow men. It is all, in my judgment, a question of intellectual development. Tell me the religion of any man and I will tell you the degree he marks on the intellectual thermometer of the world. It is a simple question of brain. Those among us who are the nearest barbarian have a barbarian religion. Those who are nearest civilisation have the least superstition. It is, I say, a simple question of brain, and I want in the first place to lay the foundation to prove that assertion.

A little while ago I saw models of nearly everything that man has made. I saw models of all the water craft, from the rude dug-out in which floated a naked savage—one of our ancestors—a naked savage, with teeth twice as long as his forehead was high, with a spoonful of brains in the back of his orthodox head—I saw models of all the water craft of the world, from that dug-out up to a man-of-war, that carries a hundred guns and miles of canvas ; from that dug-out to the steamship that turns its brave prow from the port of New York, with a compass like a conscience, crossing three thousand miles of billows without missing a throb or beat of its mighty iron heart from shore to shore. And I saw at the same time the paintings of the world, from the rude daub of yellow mud to the landscapes that enrich palaces and adorn houses of what were once called the common people.

I saw also their sculpture, from the rude god with four legs, a half-dozen arms, several noses, and two or three rows of ears, and one little contemptible brainless head, up to the figures of to-day,—to the marbles that genius has clad in such a personality that it seems almost impudent to touch them without an introduction.

I saw their books—written upon the skins of wild beasts—upon shoulder-blades of sheep—books written upon leaves, upon bark, up to the splendid volumes that enrich the libraries of our day. When I speak of libraries, I think of the remark of Plato: "A house that has a library in it has a soul."

I saw at the same time the offensive weapons that man has made, from a club, such as was grasped by the same savage, when he crawled from his den in the ground and hunted a snake for his dinner, from that club to the boomerang, to the sword, to the cross-bow, to the blunderbuss, to the flint-lock, to the cap-lock, to the needle-gun, up to a cannon cast by Krupp, capable of hurling a ball weighing two thousand pounds through eighteen inches of solid steel.

I saw, too, the armor from the shell of a turtle that one of our brave ancestors lashed upon his breast when he went to fight for his country; the skin of a porcupine, dried with the quills on, which this same savage pulled over his orthodox head, up to the skirts of mail that were worn in the middle ages, that laughed at the edge of the sword and defied the point of the spear, up to a monitor clad in complete steel.

And I say orthodox not only in the matter of religion, but in everything. Whoever has quit growing, he is orthodox, whether in art, politics, religion, philosophy—no matter what. Whoever thinks he has found it all out, he is orthodox.

Orthodox is that which rots, and heresy is that which grows for ever. Orthodoxy is the night of the past, full of the darkness of superstition, and heresy is the eternal coming day, the light of which strikes the grand foreheads of the intellectual pioneers of the world. I saw their implements of agriculture, from the plough made of a crooked stick, attached to the horn of an ox by some twisted straw, with which our ancestors scraped the earth,



and from that to the agricultural implements of this generation, that make it possible for a man to cultivate the soil without being an ignoramus.

In the old time there was but one crop ; and when the rain did not come in answer to the prayer of hypocrites, a famine came and people fell upon their knees. At that time they were full of superstition. They were frightened all the time for fear that some god would be enraged at his poor, helpless, feeble and starving children. But now, instead of depending upon one crop, they have several, and if there is not rain enough for one there may be enough for another. And if the frost kill all, we have railroads and steamships enough to bring what we need from some other part of the world. Since man has found out something about agriculture, the gods have retired from the business of producing famines.

I saw at the same time their musical instruments, from the tom-tom—that is, a hoop with a couple of strings of raw-hide drawn across it—from that tom-tom, up to the instruments we have to-day, that makes the common air blossom with melody, and I said to myself there is a regular advancement.

I saw at the same time a row of human skulls, from the lowest skull that has been found—Neanderthal skulls—skulls from Central Africa, skulls from the bushmen of Australia, skulls from the farthest isles of the Pacific sea up to the best skulls of the last generation—and I noticed that there was the same difference between those skulls that there was between the products of those skulls, and I said to myself, “After all it is a simple question of intellectual development.” There was the same difference between those skulls, the lowest and highest skulls, that there was between the dug-out and the man-of-war and the steamship, between the club and the Krupp gun, between the yellow daub and the landscape, between the tom-tom and an opera by Verdi.

The first and lowest skull in this row was the den in which crawled the base and meaner instincts of mankind, and the last was a temple in which dwelt joy, liberty and love.

And I said to myself it is all a question of intellectual development. Man has advanced just as he has mingled

his thought with his labor. As he has grown he has taken advantages of the forces of nature—first of the moving wind, then falling water, and finally of steam. From one step to another he has obtained better houses, better clothes and better books, and he has done it by holding out every incentive to the ingenious to produce them. The world has said, give us better clubs and guns and cannons with which to kill our fellow Christians. And whoever will give us better weapons and better music, and better houses to live in, we will robe him in wealth, crown him in honor, and render his name deathless. Every incentive was held out to every human being to improve these things, and that is the reason we have advanced in all mechanical arts. But that gentleman in the dug-out not only had his ideas about politics, mechanics and agriculture, he had ideas also about religion. His idea about politics was “right makes might.” It will be thousands of years, maybe, before mankind will believe in the saying that “right makes might.”

He had his religion. That low skull was a devil factory. He believed in hell, and the belief was a consolation to him ; he could see the waves of God’s wrath dashing against the rocks of dark damnation. He could see tossing in the white caps the faces of women, and stretching above the crest the dimpled hands of children ; and he regarded these things as the justice and mercy of God. And all to-day who believe in the eternal punishment are the barbarians of the nineteenth century. That man believed in a devil, too, that had a long tail terminating with a fiery dart, that had wings like a bat—a devil that had a cheerful habit of breathing brimstone, that had a cloven foot, such as some orthodox clergymen seem to think I have. And there has not been a patentable improvement made upon the Devil in all the years since.

The moment you drive the Devil out of theology, there is nothing left worth speaking of. The moment they drop the Devil, away goes atonement. The moment they kill the Devil, their whole scheme of salvation has lost its interest for mankind. You must keep the Devil and you must keep hell. You must keep the Devil, because with

no Devil no priest is necessary. Now, all I ask is, that the same privilege, to improve upon his religion as upon his dug-out, and that is what I am going to do, the best I can. No matter what church you belong to, or what church belongs to us. Let us be honor bright and fair.

I want to ask you. Suppose the king, if there be one, and the priest, if there was one at that time, had told these gentlemen in the dug-out, "That dug-out is the best boat that can ever be built by man; the pattern of that came from on high, from the great God of storm and flood; and any man who says that he can improve it by putting a stick in the middle of it and a rag on the stick, is an infidel, and shall be burned at the stake," what in your judgment—honor bright—would have been the effect upon the circumnavigation of the globe?

Suppose the king, if there was one, and the priest, if there was one—and I presume there was a priest, because it was a very ignorant age—suppose this king and priest had said, "That tom-tom is the most beautiful instrument which any man can conceive; that is the kind of music they have in heaven; an angel sitting upon the edge of a glorified cloud, golden in the setting sun, playing upon the tom-tom, became so enraptured, so entranced with her own music, that in a kind of ecstasy she dropped it—that is how we obtained it and any man who says it can be improved by putting a back and front to it, and four strings, and a bridge, and getting a bow of hair with resin, is a blaspheming wretch, and shall die the death,"—I ask you what effect that would have had upon music? If the course had been pursued, would the human ears, in your judgment, ever have been enriched with the divine symphonies of Beethoven?

Suppose the king, if there was one, and the priest, had said, "That a crooked stick is the best plough that can be invented; the pattern of that plough was given to a pious farmer in an exceedingly holy dream, and that twisted straw is the *ne plus ultra* of all twisted things, and any man who says he can make an improvement upon that plough is an atheist"; what in your judgment would have been the effect upon the science of agriculture?



Now, all I ask is the same privilege to improve upon his religion as upon his mechanical arts. Why don't we go back to that period to get the telegraph? Because they were barbarians. And shall we go to barbarians to get our religion? What is religion? Religion simply embraces the duty of man to man. Religion is simply the science of human duty and the duty of man to man—that is what it is. It is the highest science of all. And all other sciences are as nothing, except as they contribute to the happiness of man. The science of religion is the highest of all, embracing all others. And shall we go to the barbarians to learn the science of sciences? The nineteenth century knows more about religion than all the centuries dead. There is more real charity in the world to-day than ever before; there is more thought to-day than ever before. Woman is glorified to-day as she never was before in the history of the world. There are more happy families now than ever before; more children treated as though they were tender blossoms than as though they were brutes than in any other time or nation.

Religion is simply a duty a man owes to man; and when you fall upon your knees and pray for something you know not of, you neither benefit the one you pray for nor yourself. One ounce of restitution is worth a million of repentances anywhere, and a man will get along faster by helping himself a minute than by praying ten years for somebody to help him. Suppose you were coming along the street, and found a party of men and women on their knees praying to a bank, and you asked them, "Have any of you borrowed money of this bank?" "No, but our fathers, they, too, prayed to this bank." "Did they ever get any?" "No, not that we heard of." I would tell them to get up. It is easier to earn it and far more manly.

Now, in the old times of which I have spoken, they said, "We can make all men think alike." All the mechanical ingenuity of this earth cannot make two clocks run alike, and how are we going to make millions of people of different quantities and qualities and amount of brain, clad in this living robe of passionate flesh, how are you going to make millions of them think alike? If

the infinite God, if there is one, who made us, wished us to think alike, why did he give a spoonful of brains to one man and a bushel to another? Why is it that we have all degrees of humanity, from the idiot to the genius, if it was intended that all should think alike? I say our fathers concluded they would do this by force; and I used to read in books how they persecuted mankind, and, do you know, I never appreciated it. I did not. I read it, but it did not burn itself, as it were, into my very soul. What infamies had been committed in the name of religion! And I never fully appreciated it until, a little while ago, I saw the iron arguments our fathers used to use. I tell you the reason we are through that is because we have better brains than our fathers had. Since that day we have become intellectually developed, and there is more real brain and more real good sense in the world to-day than in other periods of its history. And that is the reason we have more liberty; that is the reason we have more kindness.

But I say I saw these iron arguments our fathers used to use. I saw there the thumbscrew—two innocent-looking pieces of iron, armed on the inner surface with protuberances to prevent their slipping—and when some men denied the efficacy of baptism, or maybe, said, "I do not believe that the whale ever swallowed a man to keep him from drowning," then they put these little pieces of iron upon his thumbs, and there was a screw at each end, and then in the name of love and forgiveness they began screwing these pieces of iron together. A great many men, when they commenced, would say, "I recant." I expect I would have been one of them. I would have said, "Now you just stop that; I will admit anything on earth that you want, I will admit there is one God or a million, one hell or a billion; suit yourselves, but stop that." But I want to say, the thumbscrew having got out of the way, I am going to have my say.

There was now and then some man who wouldn't turn Judas Iscariot to his own soul; there was now and then a man willing to die for his conviction, and if it were not for such men we would be savages to-night. Had it not been for a few brave and heroic souls in every age

we would have been naked savages this moment, with pictures of wild beasts tottoood upon our naked breasts, dancing around a dried snake fetich. And I to-night thank every good and noble man who stood up in the face of opposition and hatred and death for what he believed to be right. And then they screwed this thumb-screw down as far as they could and threw him into some dungeon, where, in throbbing misery and the darkness of night, he dreams of the damned. And that was done in the name of universal love. I saw there at the same time, what they called the "collar of torture." Imagine a circle of iron, and on the inside of that more than a hundred points as sharp as needles. This being fastened upon the throat, the sufferer could not sit down, he could not walk, he could not stir without being punctured by these needles, and in a little while the throat would begin to swell, and finally suffocation would end the agonies of that man, when maybe the only crime he had committed was to say, with tears upon his sublime cheeks, "I do not believe that God, the Father of us all, will damn to eternal punishment any of the children of men." Think of it! And I saw there, at the same time, another instrument, called the "scavenger's daughter," of which you have all read.

I saw at the same time the rack. This was a box like the bed of a waggon, with a windlass at each end and ratchets to prevent slipping. Over each windlass went chains, and when some men had, for instance, denied the doctrine of the Trinity—a doctrine it is necessary to believe before you get to heaven, but, thank the Lord, you don't have to understand it—this man merely denied that three times one was one, or maybe he denied that there was ever any son in the world exactly as old as his father, or that there was a boy eternally older than his mother—then they put that man on the rack. Nobody has ever been persecuted for calling God bad—it has always been for calling him good. When I stand here to say that if there is a hell, God is a fiend, they say that is very bad. They say I am trying to fear down the institutions of public virtue. But let me tell you one thing. There is no reformation in fear. You can scare a man so that he won't do it sometimes, but I will swear



you can't scare him so bad that he won't want to do it.

Then they put this man on the rack, and priests began turning these levers, and kept turning until the ankles, the hips, the shoulders, the elbows, the wrists, and all the joints of the victim were dislocated, and he was wet with agony, and standing by was a physician to feel his pulse. What for! To save his life? Yes. In mercy? No. But in order that they might have the pleasure of racking him once more. And this was the Christian spirit. This was done in the name of civilisation, in the name of religion, and all the wretches who did it died in peace. There is not an orthodox preacher in the city that has not a respect for every one of them. As, for instance, for John Calvin, who was a murderer, and nothing but a murderer—who would have disgraced an ordinary gallows by being hanged upon it. These men when they came to die were not frightened. God did not send any devils into their death rooms to make mouths at them. He reserved them for Voltaire, who brought religious liberty to France. He reserved them for Thomas Paine, who did more for liberty than all the churches. But all the inquisitors died with the white hands of peace folded over the breast of piety. And when they died the room was filled with the rustle of the wings of angels, waiting to bear the wretches to heaven.

For two hundred years the Christians of the United States deliberately turned the cross of Christ into a whipping-post. Christians bred hounds to catch other Christians. Let me show you what the Bible has done for mankind. "Servants, be obedient to your masters." The only word coming from the sweet heaven was, "Servants, obey your masters." Frederick Douglas told me he had lectured upon the subject of freedom twenty years before he was permitted to set his foot in a church. I tell you the world has not been fit to live in for twenty-five years. Then all the people used to cringe and crawl to preachers. Mr. Buckle, in his history of civilisation, shows that men were even struck dead for speaking impolitely to a priest. God would not stand it. See how they used to crawl before cardinals, bishops and popes. It is not so now. Before wealth they bowed to the

very earth, and in the presence of titles they became abject.

All this is slowly but surely changing. We no longer bow to men simply because they are rich. Our fathers worshipped the golden calf. The worst you say of an American now is he worships the gold of the calf. Even the calf is beginning to see this distinction. The time will come when, no matter how much money a man has, he will not be respected unless he is using it for the benefit of his fellow men. It will soon be here. It no longer satisfies the ambition of a great man to be king or emperor. The last Napoleon was not satisfied with being the Emperor of the French. He was not satisfied with having a circlet of gold about his head. He wanted some evidence that he had something of value within his head. So he wrote Julius Cæsar, that he might become a member of the French Academy. The emperors, the kings, the popes, no longer tower above their fellows. Compare, for instance, King William and Helmholtz. The king is one of the anointed of the Most High, as they say—one upon whose head has been poured the divine petroleum of authority. Compare this king with Helmholtz, who towers an intellectual Colossus above the crowned mediocrity. Compare George Eliot with Queen Victoria. The Queen is clothed in garments given her by blind fortune and unreasoning chance, while George Eliot wears robes of glory woven in the looms of her own genius.

And so it is the world over. The time is coming when a man will be rated at his real worth, and that by his brain and heart. We care nothing now about an officer unless he fills his place. No matter if he is president; if he rattles in the place nobody cares anything about him. I might give you instances in point, but I won't. The world is getting better and grander and nobler every day.

I believe in marriage. If there is any heaven upon earth, it is in the family by the fireside, and the family is a unit of government. Without the family relation is tender, pure and true, civilisation is impossible. Ladies, the ornaments you wear upon your persons to-night are but the souvenirs of your mother's bondage. The chains

around your necks, and the bracelet clasped upon your white arm by the thrilled hand of love, have been changed by the wand of civilisation from iron into shining, glittering gold.

Nearly every civilisation in this world accounts for the devilment in it by the crimes of woman. They say woman brought all the trouble into the world. I don't care if she did. I would rather live in a world full of trouble with the woman I love, than to live in heaven with nobody but men. I read in a book an account of the creation of the world. That book I have taken pains to say was not written by any God. And why do I say so? Because I can write a far better book myself. Because it is full of barbarisms. Several ministers in this city have undertaken to answer me—notably those who don't believe the Bible themselves. I want to ask these men one thing. I want them to be fair. Every minister in the city of Chicago that answers me, and those who have answered me, had better answer me again—I want them to say, and without any sort of evasion—without resorting to any pious tricks—I want them to say whether they believe that the Eternal God of this universe ever upheld the crime of polygamy. Say it square and fair. Don't begin to talk about that being a peculiar time, and that God was easy on the prejudices of those old fellows. I want them to answer that question, and to answer it squarely, which they haven't done. Did this God, which you pretend to worship, ever sanction the institution of human slavery? Now answer fair. Don't slide around it. Don't begin and answer what a bad man I am, nor what a good man Moses was. Stick to the text. Do you believe in a God that allowed a man to be sold from his children? Do you worship such an infinite monster? And if you do, tell your congregation whether you are not ashamed to admit it. Let every minister who answers me again tell whether he believes God commanded his general to kill the little dimpled babe in the cradle. Let him answer it. Don't say that those were very bad times. Tell whether he did it or not, and then your people will know whether to hate that God or not. Be honest. Tell them whether that God in war captured young maidens and turned them



over to the soldiers; and then ask the wives and the sweet girls of your congregation to get down on their knees and worship the infinite fiend that did that thing. Answer! It is your God I am talking about, and if that is what God did, please tell your congregation what, under the same circumstances, the Devil would have done. Don't tell your people that is a poem. Don't tell your people that is pictorial. That won't do. Tell your people whether it is true or false. That is what I want you to do.

In this book I have read about God's making the world and one man. That is all he intended to make. The making of woman was a second thought, though I am willing to admit that, as a rule, second thoughts are best. This God made a man and put him into a public park. In a little while he noticed that the man got lonesome; then he found he had made a mistake, and that he would have to make somebody to keep him company. But having used up all the nothing he originally used in making the world and one man, he had to take part of a man to start a woman with. So he caused a deep sleep to fall on this man. Now, understand me, I do not say this story is true. After the sleep had fallen on this man the Supreme Being took a rib, or, as the French would call it, a cutlet, out of him, and from that he made a woman; and I am willing to swear, taking into account the amount and quality of the raw material used, this was the most magnificent job ever accomplished in this world.

Well, after he got the woman done she was brought to the man, not to see how she liked him, but to see how he liked her. He liked her and they started housekeeping, and they were told of certain things they might do, and of one thing they could not do—and of course they did it. I would have done it in fifteen minutes, and I know it. There wouldn't have been an apple on that tree half an hour from date, and the limbs could have been full of clubs. And then they were turned out of the park and extra policemen were put on to keep them from getting back. And then trouble commenced, and we have been at it ever since. Nearly all of the religions in this world account for the existence of

evil by such a story as that! Well, I read in another book what appeared to be an account of the same transaction. It was written about four thousand years before the other. All commentators agree that the one that was written last was the original, and that the one that was written first was copied from the one that was written last. But I would advise you all not to allow your creed to be disturbed by a little matter of four or five thousand years. It is a great deal better to be mistaken in dates than to go to the Devil.

In the other account the Supreme Brahma made up his mind to make the world and a man and a woman. He made the world, and he made the man and then the woman, and put them on the island of Ceylon. According to the account it was the most beautiful island of which man can conceive. Such birds, such songs, such flowers and such verdure! And the branches of the trees were so arranged that when the wind swept through from every tree was a thousand *Æolian* harps. Brahma, when he put them there, said: "Let them have a period of courtship, for it is my desire and will that true love should for ever precede marriage." When I read that, it was so much more beautiful and lofty than the other, that I said to myself: "If either one of these stories ever turns out to be true, I hope it will be this one." Then they had their courtship, with the nightingale singing and the stars shining and flowers blooming, and they fell in love. Imagine that courtship! No prospective fathers or mothers-in-law; no prying and gossiping neighbors; nobody to say: "Young man, how do you expect to support her?" Nothing of that kind—nothing but the nightingale singing its song of joy and pain, as though the thorn already touched its heart. They were married by the Supreme Brahma, and he said to them, "Remain here; you must never leave this island." Well, after a little while the man—and his name was Adami, and the woman's name was Heva—said to Heva, "I believe I'll look about a little." He wanted to go west. He went to the western extremity of the island, where there was a little narrow neck of land connecting it with the mainland, and the Devil, who is always playing pranks with us, produced a mirage, and when he looked over to the

mainland, such hills and vales, such dells and dales, such mountains crowned with snow, such cataracts clad in bows of glory did he see there, that he went back and told Heva : " The country over there is a thousand times better than this ; let us emigrate." She, like every other woman that ever lived, said : " Let well enough alone ; we have all we want ; let us stay here." But he said : " No, let us go." So she followed him, and when they came to this narrow neck of land, he took her on his back like a gentleman, and carried her over. But the moment they got over they heard a crash, and looking back, discovered that this narrow neck of land had fallen into the sea. The mirage had disappeared and there were naught but rocks and sand, and then, the Supreme Brahma cursed them both to the lowest hell. Then it was that the man spoke—and I have liked him ever since for it—" Curse me, but curse not her ; it was not her fault, it was mine." That's the kind of man to start a world with. The Supreme Brahma said : " I will save her, but not thee." And then she spoke out of her fulness of love, out of a heart in which there was love enough to make all her daughters rich in holy affection, and said : " If thou wilt not spare him, spare neither me ; I do not wish to live without him. I love him." Then the Supreme Brahma said—and I have liked him ever since I read it—" I will spare you both and watch over you and your children for ever." Honor bright, is that not the better and grander story ? And in that same book I find this : " Man is strength, woman is beauty ; man is courage, woman is love. When the one man loves the one woman, and the woman loves the one man, the very angels leave heaven and come and sit in that house and sing for joy." In the same book this : " Blessed is that man and beloved of all the gods who is afraid of no man and of whom no man is afraid." Magnificent character ! A missionary certainly ought to talk to that man. And I find this : " Never will I accept private individual salvation, but rather will I stay and work and strive and suffer until every soul from every star has been brought home to God." Compare that with the Christian that expects to go to heaven while the world is rolling over Niagara to an eternal and unending hell. So I say that religion lays all the crime and troubles of



this world at the beautiful feet of women. And then the Church has the impudence to say that it has exalted woman.

I believe that marriage is a perfect partnership; that woman has every right that man has—and one more—the right to be protected. Above all men in the world I hate a stingy man—a man that will make his wife beg for money. “What did you do with the dollar I gave you last week? And what are you going to do with this?” It is vile. No gentleman will ever be satisfied with the love of a beggar and a slave—no gentleman will ever be satisfied except with the love of an equal. What kind of children does a man expect to have with a beggar for their mother?

A man cannot be so poor but that he can be generous, and if you have only one dollar in the world and you have got to spend it, spend it like a lord—spend it as though it was a dry leaf, and you the owner of unbounded forests—spend it as though you had a wilderness of your own. That's the way to spend it. I had rather be a beggar and spend my last dollar like a king, than be a king and spend my money like a beggar. If it has to go let it go. And this is my advice to the poor. For you can never be so poor that what you do you can't do in a grand and manly way. I hate a cross man. What right has a man to assassinate the joy of life? When you go home you ought to go like a ray of light—so that it will, even in the night, burst out of the doors and windows and illuminate the darkness. Some men think their mighty brains have been in a turmoil; they have been thinking about who will be alderman from the fifth ward; they have been thinking about politics; great and mighty questions have been engaging their minds; they have bought calico at five cents or six, and want to sell it for seven.

Think of the intellectual strain that must have been upon that man, and when he gets home everybody else in the house must look out for his comfort. A woman who has only taken care of five or six children and one or two of them sick, has been nursing them and singing to them and trying to make one yard of cloth do the work of two, she, of course, is fresh and fine and ready

to wait upon this gentleman—the head of the family—the boss.

I was reading the other day of an apparatus invented for the ejection of gentlemen who subsist upon free lunches. It is so arranged that when the fellow gets both hands into the victuals, a large hand descends upon him, jams his hat over his eyes—he is seized, turned towards the door, and just in the nick of time an immense boot comes from the other side, kicks him in italics, sends him out over the side-walk and sends him rolling in the gutter. I never hear of such a man—a boss—that I don't feel as though that machine ought to be brought into requisition for his benefit.

Love is the only thing that will pay ten per cent. of interest on the outlay. Love is the only thing in which the height of extravagance is the last degree of economy. It is the only thing, I tell you. Joy is wealth. Love is the legal tender of the soul, and you need not be rich to be happy. We have all been raised on success in this country—always been talked with about being successful, and have never thought ourselves very rich unless we were the possessors of some magnificent mansion, and unless our names have been between the putrid lips of rumor we could not be happy. Every boy is striving to be this and be that. I tell you the happy man is the successful man. The man that has been the emperor of one good heart, and that heart embrace all his, has been a success. If another has been the emperor of the round world, and has never loved and been loved, his life is a failure.

It won't do. Let us teach our children the other way, that the happy man is the successful man, and he who is a happy man is the one who always tries to make someone else happy.

It is not necessary to be rich in order to be happy. It is only necessary to be in love. Thousands of men go to college and get a certificate that they have an education, and that certificate is in Latin, and they stop studying, and in two years to save their lives they couldn't read the certificate they got.

It is mostly so in marrying. They stop courting when they get married. They think we have won her and that

is enough. Ah ! the difference before and after ! How well they looked ! How bright their eyes ! How light their steps, and how full they were of generosity and laughter !

I tell you a man should consider himself in good luck if a woman loves him when he is doing his level best. Good luck ! Good luck ! And then, do you know, I like to think that love is eternal ; that if you really love the woman for her sake you will love her no matter what she may do ; that if she really loves you for your sake, the same ; that love does not look at alterations ; through the wrinkles of time, through the mask of years, if you really loved her, you will always see the face you loved and won. And I like to think of it. If a man loves a woman she does not even grow old to him, and the woman who loves a man does not see that he grows old. He is not decrepit to her ; he is not tremulous ; he is not old ; he is not bowed. She always sees the same gallant fellow that won her hand and heart. I like to think of it in that way, and as Shakespeare says, " Let time reach with his sickle as far as ever he can ; although he can reach ruddy cheeks and ripe lips and flashing eyes, he cannot quite reach love." I like to think of it. We will go down the hill of life together and enter the shadow one with the other, and as we go down we may hear the ripple of the laughter of our grandchildren, and the birds, and spring, and youth and love will sing once more upon the leafless branches of the tree of age. I love to think of it in that way—absolute equals, happy, happy and free all our own.

When your child confesses to you that it has committed a fault, take that child in your arms, and let it feel your heart beat against its heart, and raise your children in the sunlight of love, and they will be sunbeams to you along the pathway of life. Abolish the club and the whip from the house, because, if the civilised use a whip, the ignorant and brutal will use a club, and they will use it because you use a whip. When I was a boy there was one day in each week too good for a child to be happy in. In these good old times Sunday commenced when the sun went down on Saturday night, and closed when the sun went down on the Sunday night. We commenced



Saturday to get a good ready. And when the sun went down on Saturday night there was a gloom deeper than midnight that fell upon the house. You could not crack hickory nuts then. And if you were caught chewing gum it was only another evidence of the total depravity of the human heart. Well, after a while we got to bed, sadly and sorrowfully, after having heard heaven thanked that we were not all in hell. And I sometimes used to wonder how the mercy of God lasted as long as it did—because I recollected that on several occasions I had not been at school when I was supposed to be there. Why I was not burnt to a crisp was a mystery to me. The next morning we got up and we got ready for church—all solemn.

And when we got there the minister was up in the pulpit about twenty feet high—and he commenced at Genesis about the fall of man, and he went on to about twenty-thirdly; then he struck the second application. And when he struck the application I knew he was about half way through. And then he went on to show the scheme how the Lord was satisfied with punishing the wrong man. Nobody but a god would have thought of that ingenious way. Well, when we got through that, then came the catechism—the chief end of man. Then my turn came, and we sat along in a little bench where our feet did not come within fifteen inches of the floor, and the dear old minister used to ask us, “Boys, do you know that you all ought to be in hell?” And we answered up as cheerfully as we could under circumstances, “Yes, sir.” “Well, boys, do you know that you would go to hell if you died in your sins?” And we said, “Yes, sir.”

And then came the great test. “Boys”—I can't get the tone, you know. And do you know this is how the preachers get the bronchitis. You never heard of an auctioneer getting the bronchitis, nor a second mate on a steamboat—never. What gives it to the ministers is talking solemnly when they don't feel that way, and it has the same influence on the organs of speech that it would have upon the cords of the calves of your legs to walk on your tiptoes—and so I call bronchitis “parsonitis.” And if the ministers would all tell exactly what they

think they would all get well, but keeping back a part of the truth is what gives them bronchitis. Well, the old man—the dear old minister—used to try and show us how long we would be in hell if we should locate there. But to finish the other. The grand test question was :

“Boys, if it was God’s will that you should go to hell would you be willing to go?”

And every little liar said, “Yes, sir.” Then in order to tell how long we would stay there, he used to say : “Suppose once in a billion ages a bird should come from a far distant clime and carry off in its bill one little grain of sand, the time would finally come when the last grain of sand would be carried away. Do you understand?” “Yes, sir.” “Boys, by that time it would not be sun-up in hell.”

Where did that doctrine of hell come from? I will tell you, from that fellow in the dug-out. Where did he get it? It was a souvenir from the wild beasts. Yes, I tell you he got it from the wild beasts, from the glittering eye of the serpent, from the coiling, twisting snakes, with their fanged mouths; and it came from the bark, growl and howl of wild beasts; it was born of a laugh of the hyena, and begot from the depraved chatter of malicious apes. And I despise it with every drop of my blood and defy it. If there is any God in this universe who will damn his children for an expression of an honest thought I wish to go to hell. I would rather go there than go to heaven and keep the company of God that would thus damn his children. Oh, is it not an infamous doctrine to teach that to little children, to put a shadow in the heart of a child, to fill the insane asylums with that miserable, infamous lie. I see now and then a little girl—a dear little darling, with a face like the light, and eyes of joy, a human blossom, and I think, “is it possible that that little girl will ever grow up to be a Presbyterian?” Is it possible, my goodness, that that flower will finally believe in the five points of Calvinism or in the eternal damnation of man? Is it possible that that little fairy will finally believe that she could be happy in heaven

with her baby in hell? Think of it. Think of it. And that is the Christian religion.

We cry out against the Indian mother that throws the child into the Ganges to be devoured by the alligator or crocodile, but that is joy in comparison with the Christian mother's hope, that she may be in salvation while her brave boy is in hell. I tell you I want to kick the doctrine about hell—I want to kick it out every time I go by it. I want to get Americans in this country placed so they will be ashamed to preach it. I want to get the congregations so that they won't listen to it. We cannot divide the world off into saints and sinners in that way.

There is a little girl, fair as a flower, and she grows up until she is 12, 13 or 14 years old. Are you going to damn her in the 15th, 16th or 17th year, when the arrow from Cupid's bow touches her heart and she is glorified—are you going to damn her now? She marries and loves, and holds in her arms a beautiful child. Are you going to damn her now? When are you going to damn her? Because she has listened to some Methodist minister, and after all that flood of light failed to believe? Are you going to damn her then? I tell you God cannot afford to damn such a woman. A woman in the State of Indiana, forty or fifty years ago, who carded the wool and made rolls and spun them, and made the cloth and cut out the clothes for the children, and nursed them, and sat up with them nights, and gave them medicine, and held them in her arms and wept over them—cried for joy, wept for fear, and finally raised ten or eleven good men and women with the ruddy glow of health upon their cheeks, and would have died for any one of them any moment of her life, and finally she, bowed with age, and bent with care and labor, dies, and at the moment the magical touch of death is upon her face, she looks as if she never had had a care, and her children burying her, cover her face with tears. Do you tell me God can afford to damn that kind of a woman? If there is any God, sitting above him, in infinite serenity, we have the figure of justice. Even a God must do justice; and any form of superstition that destroys justice is infamous.



Just think of teaching that doctrine to little children ! A little child would go into the garden, and there would be a little tree laden with blossoms, and the little fellow would lean against it, and there would be a bird on one of the boughs, singing and swinging, and thinking about four little speckled eyes warmed by the breast of its mate—singing and swinging, and the music in happy waves rippling out of the tiny throat, and the flowers blossoming, the air filled with perfume, and the great white clouds floating in the sky, and the little boy would lean up against that tree and think about hell and the worm that never dies. Oh, the idea there can be any day too good for a child to be happy in !

Well, after we got over the Catechism, then came the sermon in the afternoon, and it was exactly like the one in the forenoon, except the other end to. Then we started for home—a solemn march, “not a soldier discharged his farewell shot”—and when we got home, if we had been real good boys, we used to be taken up to the cemetery to cheer us up, and it always did cheer me those sunken graves, those leaning stones, those gloomy epitaphs covered with the moss of years, always cheered me. When I looked at them I said : “Well, this kind of thing can’t last always.” Then we came back home, and we had books to read, which were very eloquent and amusing. We had *Josephus*, and the *History of the Waldenses*, and Fox’s *Book of Martyrs*, Baxter’s *Saint’s Rest*, and *Jenkyn on the Atonement*. I used to read *Jenkyn* with a good deal of pleasure, and I often thought that the Atonement would have to be very broad in its provisions to cover the case of a man that would write such a book for the boys. Then I would look to see how the sun was getting on, and sometimes I thought it had struck from pure cussedness. Then I would go back and try *Jenkyn* again. Well, but it had to go down, and when the last rim of light sank below the horizon, off would go out hats, and we would give three cheers for liberty once again.

I tell you don’t make slaves of your children on Sunday. The idea that there is any God who hates to hear a child laugh ! Let your children play games on Sunday. Here is a poor man that hasn’t money enough to go to a big

church, and he has too much independence to go to a little church that the big church built for charity. He don't want to slide into heaven that way. I tell you don't come to church, but go to the woods and take your family and a lunch with you, and sit down upon the old log, and let the children gather flowers and hear the leaves whispering poems like memories of long ago, and when the sun is about going down kissing the summits of far hills, go home with your hearts filled with throbs of joy. There is more recreation and joy in that than going to a dry goods box with a steeple on it, and hearing a man tell you that your chances are about ninety-nine to one for being eternally damned. Let us make this Sunday a day of splendid pleasure, not to excess, but to everything that makes a man purer and grander and nobler.

I would like to see now something like this:— Instead of so many churches, a vast cathedral that would hold twenty or thirty thousands of people, and I would like to see an opera produced in it that would make the souls of men have higher, and grander and nobler aims. I would like to see the walls covered with pictures and niches rich with statuary; I would like to see something put there that you could see in this world now, and I do not believe in sacrificing the present to the future; I do not believe in drinking skimmed milk here with the promise of butter beyond the clouds. Space or time cannot be holy any more than a vacuum can be pious. Not a bit, not a bit; and no day can be so holy but what the laugh of a child will make it holier still.

Strike with hands of fire, oh weird musician, thy harp, strung with Apollo's golden hair! Fill the vast cathedral aisles with symphonies sweet and dim, deft toucher of the organ's keys; blow, bugler, blow, until thy silver notes do touch and kiss the moonlight waves, and charm the lovers wandering 'mid the vineclad hills. But know, your sweetest strains are discords all compared with childhood's happy laugh—the laugh that fills the eyes with light and every heart with joy! O, rippling river of laughter, thou art the blessed boundary line between the beasts and men, and every wayward wave of thine doth drown some fretful fiend of care. O, laughter, rose-

lipped daughter of Joy, there are dimples enough in thy cheeks to catch and hold and glorify all the tears of grief.

Don't plant your children in long, straight rows like posts. Let them have light and air, and let them grow beautiful as palms. When I was a little boy, children went to bed when they were not sleepy, and always got up when they were. I would like to see that changed, but they say we are too poor, some of us, to do it. Well, all right. It is as easy to wake a child with a kiss as with a blow; with kindness as with a curse. And another thing—let the children eat what they want to. Let them commence at whichever end of the dinner they desire. That is my doctrine. They know what they want much better than you do. Nature is a great deal smarter than you ever were. All the advance that has been made in the science of medicine has been made by the recklessness of patients. I can recollect when they wouldn't give a man water to a fever—not a drop. Now and then some fellow would get so thirsty he would say, "Well, I'll die anyway, so I'll drink it"; and thereupon he would drink a gallon of water, and thereupon he would burst into a generous perspiration, and get well—and the next morning when the doctor would come to see him they would tell him about the man drinking the water, and he would say, "How much?" "Well, he swallowed two pitchers full." "Is he alive?" "Yes." So they would go into the room and the doctor would feel his pulse and ask him: "Did you drink two pitchers of water?" "Yes." "My God! what a constitution you have got."

I tell you there is something splendid in man that will not always mind. Why, if we had done as the kings told us five hundred years ago we would all have been slaves. If we had done as the priests told us we would all have been idiots. If we had done as the doctors told us we would have been dead. We have been saved by disobedience. We are saved by that splendid thing called Independence, and I want to see more of it day after day, and I want to see children raised so they will have it. That is my doctrine. Give the children a chance. Be perfectly honor bright with them, and they will be your



friends when you are old. Don't try to teach them something they can never learn. Don't insist upon their pursuing some calling they have no sort of faculty for. Don't make that poor girl play ten years on a piano when she has no ear for music, and when she has practised until she can play "Bonaparte crossing the Alps," and you can't tell after she has played it whether he ever got across or not. Men are oaks, women are vines, children are flowers, and if there is any heaven in this world it is the family. It is where the wife loves the husband and the husband loves the wife, and where the dimpled arms of children are about the neck of both. That is heaven if there is any; and I do not want any better heaven in another world than that, and if in another world I cannot live with the ones I loved here then I would rather not be there. I would rather resign.

Well, my friends, I have some excuses to make for the race to which I belong. In the first place, this world is not very well adapted to raising good men and women. It is three times better adapted to the cultivation of fish than of people. There is one little narrow belt running zigzag around the world in which men and women of genius can be raised, and that is all. It is with man as it is with vegetation. In the valley you find the oak and the elm tossing their branches defiantly to the storm, and as you advance up the mountain side the hemlock, the pine, the birch, the spruce, the fir, and finally you come to little dwarfed trees, that look like other trees seen through a telescope reversed—every limb twisted as though through pain—getting a scanty subsistence from the miserly crevices of the rocks. You go on and on, until at last the highest crag is freckled with a kind of moss, and vegetation ends. You might as well try to raise oaks and elms where the mosses grow as to raise great men and women where their surroundings are unfavorable. You must have the proper climate and soil.

There never has been a man or woman of genius from the southern hemisphere, because the Lord didn't allow the right climate to fall upon the land. It falls upon the water. There never was such civilisation except where there has been snow, and an ordinary decent winter. You can't have civilisation without it. Where man needs

no bedclothes but clouds, revolution is the normal condition of such a people. It is the winter that gives us the home, it is the winter that gives us the fireside and the family relation and all the beautiful flowers of love that adorn that relation. Civilisation, liberty, justice, charity and intellectual advancement are all flowers that bloom in the drifted snow. You can't have them anywhere else, and that is the reason we of the north are civilised, and that is the reason that civilisation has always been with winter. That is the reason that philosophy has been here, and, in spite of all our superstitions, we have advanced beyond some of the other races, because we have had this assistance of nature, that drove us into the family relation, that made us prudent: that made us lay up at one time for another season of the year. So there is one excuse for my race. I have got another. I think we came up from the lower animals. I am not dead sure of it, but I think so. When I first read about it, I didn't like it. My heart was filled with sympathy for those people who have nothing to be proud of except ancestors. I thought how terrible this will be upon the nobility of the whole world. Think of their being forced to trace their ancestry back to the Duke Ourang-Outang or to the Princess Chimpanzee. After thinking it all over I came to the conclusion that I liked that doctrine. I became convinced in spite of myself. I read about rudimentary bones and muscles. I was told that everybody had rudimentary muscles extending from the ear into the cheek. I asked: "What are they?" I was told: "They are the remains of muscles; that they become rudimentary from lack of use." They went into bankruptcy. They are the muscles with which your ancestors used to flap their ears. Well, at first I was greatly astonished, and afterwards I was more astonished to find that they had become rudimentary.

How do you account for John Calvin unless we came up from the lower animals? How can you account for a man that would use the extremes of torture unless that you admit that there is in man the elements of a snake, of a vulture, a hyena and a jackal? How can you account for religious creeds of to-day?

How can you account for that infamous doctrine of hell, except with an animal origin? How can you account for your conception of a God that would sell women and babes into slavery?

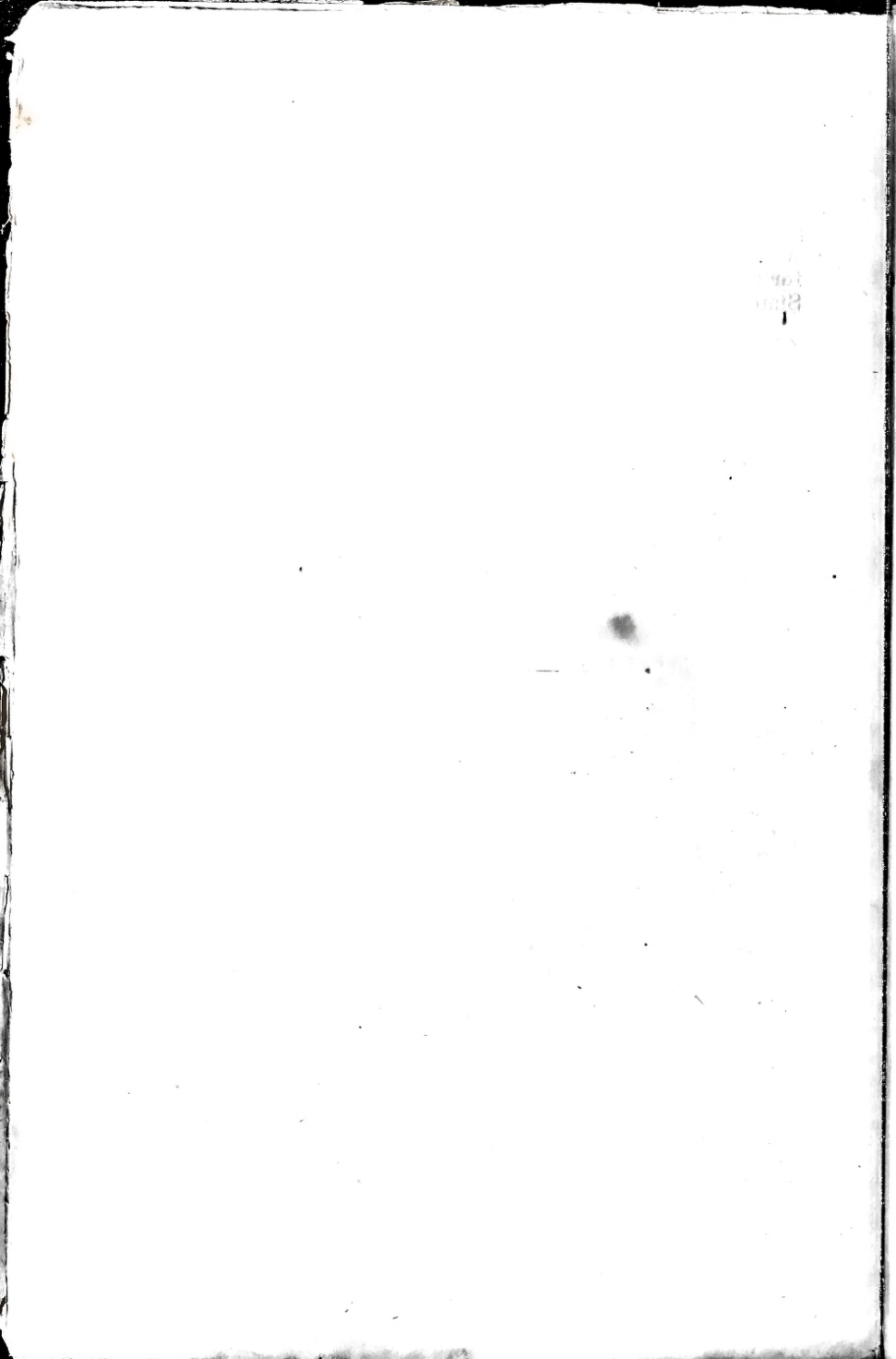
Well, I thought that thing over and I began to like it after a while, and I said: "It is not so much difference who my father was or who his son is." And I finally said I would rather belong to a race that commenced with the skull-less vertebrates in the dim Laurentian seas, that wriggled without knowing why they wriggled, swimming without knowing where they were going, that come along up by degrees through millions of ages through all that crawls, and swims, and floats, and runs, and growls, and barks, and howls, until it struck this fellow in the dug-out. And then that fellow in the dug-out getting a little grander and each one below calling everyone above him a heretic, calling everyone who had made a little advance an Infidel or Atheist, and finally the heads getting a little higher and coming up a little grander and more splendidly, and finally produced Shakespeare, who harvested all the fields of dramatic thought and from whose day until now there have been none but gleaners of chaff and straw. Shakespeare was an intellectual ocean whose waves touched all the shores of human thought, within which were all tides and currents and pulses, upon which lay all the lights and shadows, and over which brooded all the calms and swept all the storms and tempest of which the human soul is capable. I would rather belong to that race that commenced with that skull-less vertebrate; that produced Shakespeare, a race that has before it an infinite future, with the angels of progress leaning from the far horizon, beckoning men forward and upward for ever. I would rather belong to that race than to have descended from a perfect pair upon which the Lord has lost money every moment from that day to this.

Now, my crime has been this: I have insisted that the Bible is not the word of God. I have insisted that we should not whip our children. I have insisted that we should treat our wives as loving equals. I have denied that God—if there is any God—ever upheld polygamy and slavery. I have denied that God ever told his



generals to kill innocent babes and tear and rip open women with the sword of war. I have denied that, and for that I have been assailed by the clergy of the United States.

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