

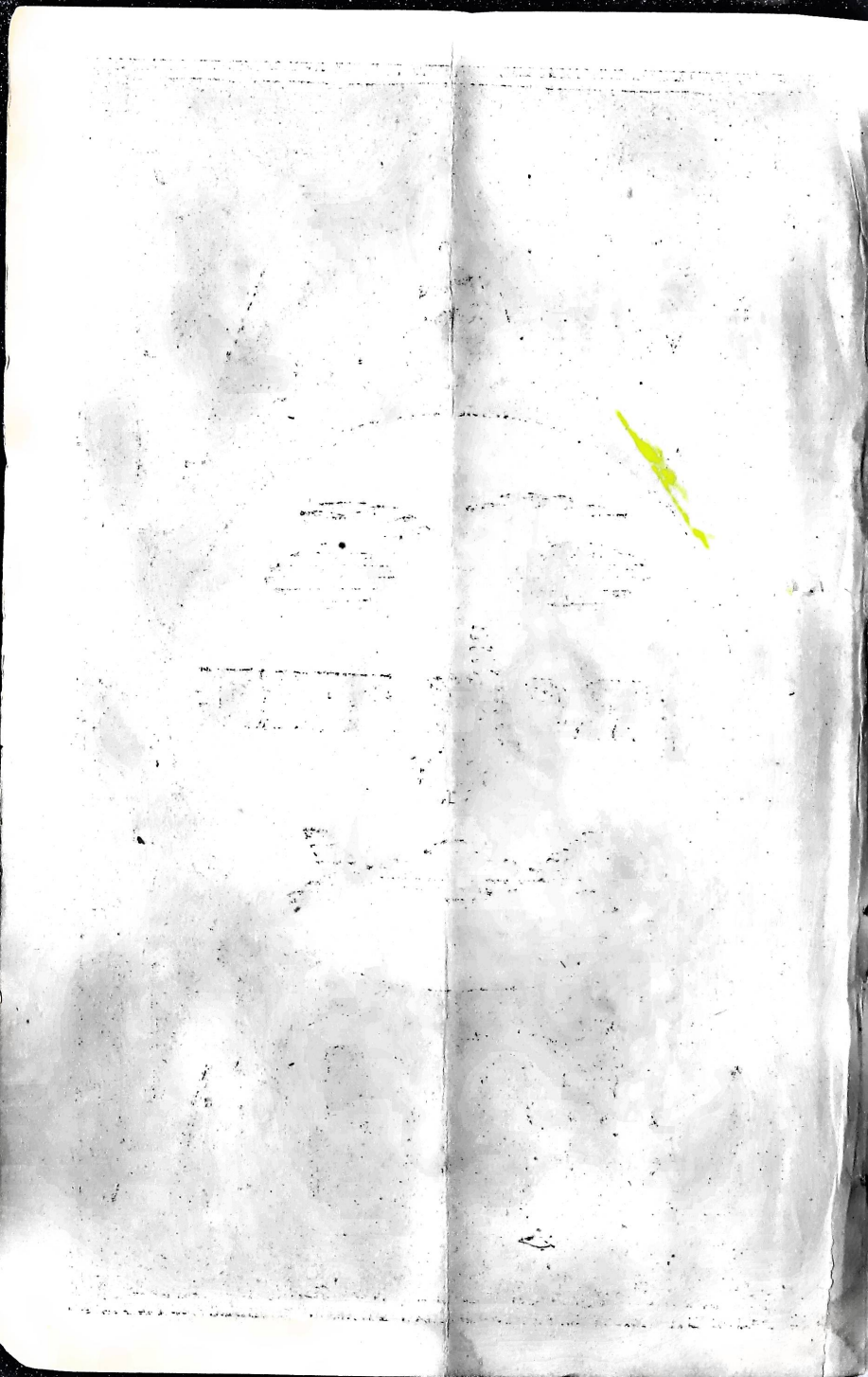
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MAN



FROM THE

MOON



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MAN

FROM THE

MOON.

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A Man from the Moon.

As I stood on the summit of Aconcagua, the loftiest peak of the Chilian Andes, looking down on Anluco, Descabezado, and Nevado de Chorolque, drinking in the beauties of the splendid mountain scenery, I diverted my gaze from the space, and suddenly became aware of the presence of an individual, apparently a human being of the male sex; although very much resembling an ordinary man, he differed entirely from any one I had ever seen; his face was naturally hairless, and although he gave me the impression of not being more than thirty years old, he looked as though he had attained that age many centuries ago.

Starting slightly, at what seemed almost like an apparition, I said "Good gracious! how long have you been here?"

In the coolest possible manner he replied, "I've been on your little planet just three days and a half according to your reckoning."

Merely intending to ask him how long he had been on the mountain beside me, I was surprised at his reply, and falteringly enquired "Do I understand you to say that you are not an inhabitant of this earth?"

"Exactly," he replied, "when I'm at home I live on the moon."

The moon!! I said in astonishment, as I looked searchingly at him; besides his old young look, I could detect nothing extraordinary, except that he had none of the fresh color usual in a

man of his apparent age, his entire face and neck being of a bronzy, pink, blotting paper hue.

Smiling blandly at my look of surprise, he said, "Yes we don't often visit you, you're so much behind us in everything."

I felt that I could have kicked him for his cool impudence, but I let it pass, merely remarking, "I don't quite see how you could overcome the attraction of gravity."

"No, I dare say not," he replied condescendingly, "we got over that little difficulty a very long time ago."

"Do you mean to say that you can move off this earth, when you like?"

"Certainly, nothing is easier," replied the lunar excursionist; springing lightly into the air and ascending to the height of about twelve feet, he stood there looking down benignly.

He descended at my request without the least shock; and I said, "It must have taken you a long time to come all the way?"

LUNAR EXCURSIONIST. No, only a fortnight.

WRITER. But how about food?

L. E. Well you see we're not nearly so gross as you are; I could carry almost enough for that short time; besides we have certain methods of extracting a limited amount of sustenance from the air.

W. Did any one see you arrive?

L. E. No I always manage to alight during the night.

W. Why?

L. E. Because you see one might be used as a target for rifle practice.

W. Yes, that would be unpleasant, but did I understand you to say that you lived on the air during your journey?

L. E. Yes partially; not that I mean to say it's good living, but one can make shift with it for a short time; it's not so difficult for us, because we do'nt feed in the same heavy way that you do.

W. Indeed, how's that?

L. E. Well, we don't eat flesh, our animals are never slaughtered,

W. But don't you ever require animal food ?

L. E. Yes, sometimes, and then we make it chemically.

W. That seems a great waste of time.

L. E. One must have some employment, but if we choose, we can always find some of the less learned who don't understand the process, to do the mechanical work.

W. But have you no other employment than procuring your food ?

L. E. I never yet knew any one, either on your planet or ours, to whom that was'nt the principal employment ; you work in order that you may earn money to buy food, we've long since progressed beyond all that barbarism ; we have no money.

W. No money, then how do you buy food and necessaries ?

L. E. We don't buy them ; there are various things which nature sends ready made ; anything else that we may require we make chemically, this is very much better than your method ; if you want tea or coffee you first build a ship, then you pay sailors to navigate her, after that you send out money to the grower, then you bring it home and roast it, &c., &c., whereas we never take the trouble to send a long way for anything, we have the elements always handy, and we make all that we require.

W. But if you make no use of money, it seems to me that you are not far removed from a savage state.

L. E. On the contrary, we have long since passed through the money using stage of existence, when every one knew how to make money as well as his neighbour, it became of no value ; people were tired of the unceasing round of work ; life had become so fast, that it was really too much trouble to live, and the weaker individuals solved the difficulty by dying voluntary, " committing suicide " as you roughly term it, but for a long time there had been growing up a large body who pitied and despised the money grubbers ; this section of the people calling themselves " scientists " promulgated the doctrine that the money grubbers mode of life

was, in point of fact slow suicide ; by a long series of experiments, extending over two or three hundred years, they proved that man could live vastly longer and more comfortably, than he had been in the habit of doing, if he would take the trouble to observe certain rules of diet and exercise, and eschew the feverish excitement, of money getting. Children were raised from birth on scientific principles, and it was found that at the end of 200 years they had more vitality than an ordinary man of forty.

W. Impossible !!

L. E. Not at all, you must remember that these scientists were better chemists than you will be for many centuries ; they learnt, by countless experiments, the exact sort and amount of food which best repaired the normal waste of material, and the quantity of exercise necessary for the dispersion of that food ; the brain was just sufficiently exercised in a gentle pursuit after knowledge, to keep it from stagnation, so that the only two constituents of animal existence, brain and stomach, act and re-act on each other in a reciprocally healthy manner.

W. Very good, all very well in it's way, but these "scientists" must be quite isolated from the rest of society.

L. E. Of course they were at first, but now everyone is, or aspires to be a scientist ; we have no society as you understand the term ; that mean desire to do exactly as your neighbours do, has long since ceased among us ; we desire only our own approbation.

W. That's all very fine, but really I don't see how you can go on, if you have no money you can have no House of Commons, no judges, no police, no order.

L. E. We keep ourselves in order, there are no incentives to disorder, money is your great cause of crime ; we have abolished money, therefore we require no police to protect property, no judges to try criminals—there are none ; there is only one description of property on our planet, viz. :—public libraries, and everyone is interested in preserving them and adding to them.

W. But there's another cause of crime, how do you manage about love ?

L. E. Yes, we had some trouble with it at first ; priests having been improved out of existence, no ceremony was performed at marriage, and people sometimes left their husbands or wives, as you can do here, if you choose to take the consequences ; but this sort of thing soon remedied itself, all ill-regulated passions being deleterious to life, no one who desires to live indulges in them ; if a man deserts his wife, he is looked down upon in the same way as a drunkard is with you ; he has given way to an irregular and debasing passion, he probably gives way to others, such as excessive feeding or drinking, he rapidly deteriorates and dies, as you call it, or as we say " he becomes inanimate matter ; " the woman has lost nothing, if she has continued to keep her passions under proper control, she has become no older, and in course of time she finds another husband.

W. But do the women keep their passions under the same control as the men ?

L. E. Almost, they are still slightly inferior to men in all respects, but vastly superior to your women, intellectually I mean.

W. You can't argue with them, I suppose ?

L. E. Yes you can.

W. Nonsense, you're joking ?

L. E. No I'm not, but then you see we have no subjects of any importance left to argue with them.

W. They bear children, of course ?

L. E. Only the comparatively ignorant.

W. But the population must decrease.

L. E. Exactly.

W. In time it must die out altogether.

L. E. Just so.

W. What a dreadful thing !

L. E. Why would it be more dreadful for man to die out than for the megatherium to become extinct ?

W. It's a different thing altogether.

L. E. Yes, only the difference doesn't just now occur to you; if women ever become sufficiently strong of intellect, they will refuse to be at the inconvenience of peopling the earth. On our planet they are becoming more and more unwilling to have children, and in ten or twenty thousand years, perhaps, the moon will be without human inhabitants.

W. What, in spite of your achievement of a sort of limited immortality?

L. E. I didn't say it was limited, what I say is that we can live just as long as we like; but after a time it becomes so troublesome and monotonous to obey the necessary rules, that very few care to live more than 500 years; we have a few who have reached 1500, but they are very tired of it, and continue to exist purely on public grounds.

W. Just to show what they can do?

L. E. Exactly.

W. But your 1500 year olders don't beat Methusalah by much.

L. E. The inhabitants of this earth never lived longer than they do now.

W. But the Bible says so.

L. E. It's either a pure invention, or, perhaps, the word months has been altered into years.

W. It's quite impossible that the word of God should be altered.

L. E. You Christians, with the finest code of morality, have the most ridiculous religion on the earth; you call a history of the Jews, written by themselves, the "Word of God;" on to this you tack a legend, with which the Jews will have nothing to do, and this mixture you try to thrust down the throats of other people as the "only true religion;" if they laugh at it, you call them blasphemers. I should like to know whether you wouldn't laugh if any one mixed up some negro religion with a fancy of their

own, and called it the only true religion? I am not surprised that it should have happened when it did, but that it should be believed up to the present time doesn't say much for—however I mustn't be too hard, for we were a long time getting rid of our numerous religions.

W. You're very kind, but you speak of the Jews as if they were an ordinary people.

L. E. I think them a very ordinary people, if any Eastern race had adopted the same exclusive method for the same number of years, they would present precisely similar features.

W. I suppose you allude to the nose?

L. E. No no, I meant general features, but it certainly is to be feared that the nose may develop into a small trunk, if they remain a separate race for about ten thousand years longer; however, there's no fear of that, another two or three centuries will amalgamate them.

W. You may depend they will always be a "peculiar people," and remain separate to the end of the world, when they will all be converted to Christianity.

L. E. You forget that the period they have passed through has been one of intense ignorance, and that every year it becomes more difficult for them to indulge in their Oriental superstitions; as for their being converted to Christianity, when the world comes to an end, I'll back the world to last a great deal longer than Christianity.

W. But Christianity will never die out.

L. E. Exactly, every religion in its turn has been believed to be everlasting; unluckily they can't all be right.

W. Ah! but ours is the only one with a truly divine origin.

L. E. I can point you out half a dozen whose origins are equally divine.

W. They have no immaculate conception.

L. E. No, but they could have had, it's not more difficult to manage than any other miracle.

W. Oblige me by dropping the subject, I can't tolerate such rank blasphemy.

L. E. Oh certainly, I had no wish to hurt your feelings; you see we've got rid of all those old prejudices, so I hope you'll excuse me.

W. Well I ca'nt see that you gain much by your longevity, it does'nt seem worth the trouble as you have to live after death.

L. E. Live after death! ah! yes, I suppose it will take you a good many centuries to reason out of that semi-barbarous notion.

W. Belief in a future life, a semi-barbarous notion!! good!! - - -

L. E. Why yes, does'nt it carry absurdity on the face of it? it's a mere fancy, you have never had a shadow of proof.

W. But we're told so.

L. E. Told so! do you believe everything you're told?

W. No, but that's a thing on which there's never been the slightest doubt.

L. E. Just so, it's purely the result of self-conceit, you see dogs, horses, and elephants die, without a thought about there future state, but because you're superior to them by a mere accident, you say that you're going to have another life, I should have thought that common justice would make you consider that you already have a sufficient advantage over them.

W. I do'nt think that has anything to do with it, but what's the mere accident you allude to?

L. E. Speech; if any of the large apes acquired the power of languages—as they probably will do sooner or later—they would progress as far as you have done in the same time.

W. Then you say that man is no better than the other animals?

L. E. On the contrary I say that he is far superior to all the other animals, but still he is only an animal, and is not more likely to have two lives than any other beast.

W. Then what becomes of man after death?

L. E. I'll answer your question by asking another, "What becomes of other animals after death?"

W. But we've always been taught that man is quite different from the other animals.

L. E. Yes, but you'd have known better, by this time if you had ever troubled to reason to a conclusion.

W. But it is a part of our religion.

L. E. Yes, that accounts for it, religion is answerable for a great deal of ignorance, your Anglican priest retards the advancement of thought less than the Roman Catholic priest, still, without any special desire to do so, he does retard it; such is the natural tendency of his business, for if every one made a proper use of his reason the priestly office could not exist.

W. What, do you mean to say that we could do without priests altogether?

L. E. Certainly, I don't mean that you could very well dispense with them to-morrow, but in course of time you'll do without them, as we have done; they've held you in subjection for a very long time, but their influence is becoming less every day, even poor Roman Catholics are beginning to see through their priests.

W. Well, I agree with you so far, the influence of the clergy has certainly decreased, even in my time; some people will always believe in them, but the proportion of those who care nothing about either the church or the priesthood is certainly larger.

L. E. Naturally, why even among the Jews the better educated laugh at their religious observances, but they know that without them their nationality must cease.

W. The Jewesses are very devout?

L. E. Of course, women are always more so than men; religious fervour is generally in inverse proportion to intellect.

W. If I understand your system, the exercise of the intellect is a universal panacea?

L. E. Certainly, by that means we have gradually done away with all you most complain of. If we suffer disease it is purely our own fault, if we - - -

W. You have no wars, of course?

L. E. Wars! no, we've nothing to fight for, everyone is complete and self-supporting, ages ago we used to have wars just as you do, but when one looks back at them they do seem so utterly ludicrous and childish, that it's difficult to imagine how they could have taken place, progress is intensely slow, it's taken you untold ages even to see the absurdity of the duel between individuals; having abolished that, it ought not to take you very long to do away with duelling between nations.

W. I suppose you didn't manage these things in a day or two?

L. E. Oh no, but it's such a long time since we were like you, that it seems quite funny it's something like you're paying a visit to some aboriginal tribe, only you're much further behind us than any of your aborigines are behind you.

W. You're not bored with "the working man" I suppose?

L. E. No, we're all working men, everyone works for himself; the worst of your typical working man, is that they all want to be masters, not that anyone wishes to prevent them, but they seem to fancy that their masters should voluntarily change places with them.

W. I expect they'd soon find their level again.

L. E. Of course they would, they're modified Communists, their vice proceeds mainly from ignorance, and although with us some are more ignorant than others, none are dangerous. I think you clearly understand that it's impossible they should be so.

W. Yes, I think I do; if none of you have any property, there can be no inducement for anyone to be dangerous; but stay, the thought has just struck me, that the evil-disposed might make slaves of the others.

L. E. No, everyone thoroughly understands that such a course could not possibly result in any good; we have a few dangerous animals, and - - -

W. Which you kill, of course?

L. E. Oh no, we simply avoid their haunts, there's plenty of room; you use animals very badly, you ought to treat them quite as well as you treat niggers, your daily slaughter of sheep and bullocks, is as immoral as killing a similar number of men, in fact as they are slightly your inferiors, you ought to be all the more forbearing towards them.

W. But what are we to do for animal food?

L. E. Why, do without it, there are plenty of substitutes, we don't kill animals, either for food or sport.

W. But I don't believe we could exist without animal food.

L. E. Nonsense, it might not suit so well for a generation or two; but use is everything; even tigers could be taught to live without flesh diet.

W. Perhaps, but I don't quite see how all the animals would be disposed of; if we didn't kill them, they would become too numerous.

L. E. You might as well say that man would become too numerous, because he is not eaten as food; there are plenty of animals that you don't kill to any appreciable extent, and yet they don't cause any inconvenience.

W. But we've always been taught that animals were specially created for man's use.

L. E. Ah, that's to be accounted for by the barbarous origin of your religion; to me it seems ridiculous, that a civilised people should retain such a word as "create" in their language.

W. But the world was created?

L. E. Such an idea might be excusable in Moses, but surely you ought by this time, to have discarded that silly fable; doesn't it carry absurdity on the face of it, you see things develop and alter year by year, and yet you say that they were "created" a few thousand years ago only a little different from what you now see them, and since that they have been allowed to take their chance, or to be tampered with by man for profit or caprice.

W. I don't quite understand you.

L. E. Well I mean that by careful selection you can effect very marked changes in any animal or plant, even in a few years.

W. Yes, I know it.

L. E. Does'nt that suggest to you that everything must have always been in a state of development ?

W. Well, I suppose it does, but the missing link between man and the monkey has never been discovered.

L. E. I could never see that any link was missing ; you might as well ask for the missing link between the big apes and the little apes, you might as reasonably expect to find fossils extending over millions of years, showing the origin of man when he was not only lower in an organization than monkeys, but inferior to the jelly fish ; man is an ape, so I don't know where the missing link is to come from.

W. If man is only an ape why don't the apes do as he does ?

L. E. They probably will in a reasonable time after they have acquired speech, not that I intend to prophecy anything ; they may never acquire speech—although never is a very long day—but look at the most intelligent ape as he now is, and ask yourself whether, if circumstances proved favourable, it would require many millions of years to develop him into as good a man as the lowest form of savage, especially when you remember that even now the skulls of man and the more advanced apes, differ less than the highest and lowest apes.

W. Yes but when you talk of millions of years - - -

L. E. Exactly, it's an interval you can't appreciate, simply because you've got bogged in the notion that the universe has only been " created " about ten thousand years.

W. But the oldest fossil men hardly differ from man of to-day.

L. E. Which convinces me that it must have occupied many millions of years to develop him up to the position which he held ten thousand years ago ; if it convinces you that he was conjured

into existence at about that period, you're quite welcome to your opinion, I can't disprove it, that is to say I've no eye witness to produce.

W. Therefore I shall rest satisfied with what the Bible tells me.

L. E. A mournful example of the state of intellectual blindness induced by any given religion. Why should you believe a man who tells you that a short time ago, all the animals and things you see were created almost in their present form?

W. But everything is possible with God.

L. E. That's merely another way of saying, everything is possible to the imagination. You must admit that, if some Deity created everything a few years ago, he's been wonderfully inactive ever since; you can't point out a solitary instance of "creation," although everything keeps on developing.

W. But isn't it all the same? God is the prime mover of everything.

L. E. How can you say that, when you know that you can alter trees and animals, and do almost what you like with them. There are certain forces of nature which you do understand, and others of which you know little or nothing, in time you may understand them all, and be able to control them; meanwhile it would be much more reasonable to call every force in nature a God, than to ascribe everything to one God.

W. Well it amounts to the same thing.

L. E. Excuse me if I say you're very shallow, I was merely making a *reductio ad absurdum*; to illustrate my meaning, take steam, you evoke it, I might almost say, you create it, and you have it under perfect control; if natural force is the same thing as God, you ought to worship steam—a thing which you make your slave.

W. But the very essence of our religion is, that God created everything.

L. E. Exactly, you're over-ridden by that silly eastern tale, about the creation, if you could only manage to abolish Moses it - - -

W. But Moses is the founder of our religion.

L. E. Never mind your religion, if it fetters your reason; people tell you that there's no such thing as development, because your oldest fossil men, whose age is about ten thousand years, are like man of the present day; they can't see that this merely shows how long a time must have been occupied in developing up to the lowest form of man. I was asked, yesterday, how can you say man has developed, when we find the figures on the Egyptian monuments exactly the same as man of to-day; I replied, "the figure on the top of the Nelson Column is very much like the men of the present day," which is quite as strong an argument against the doctrine of development; people look on two or three thousand years ago as such a very long time. Then they go on to say, but where do you stop? Practically you don't stop anywhere. People think it so conclusive to say, "out of nothing, nothing comes," but the establishment of spontaneous generation almost upsets this sweeping aphorism, because there is nothing left to account for except the air, which would naturally produce everything you see, in course of time; but not in a little flea-bite of time like 10,000 years, or even 10,000,000. Why not rest satisfied with our theory, that everything has developed itself out of space? Spontaneous generation has been proved to a certainty, space must have always existed, in this way you can account for the universe more rationally than by your creation theory.

W. But that would do away with the necessity for belief in the existence of a God.

L. E. Yes, the abolition of any old theory or practice must cause pain or damage to some one; fancy the grief of the ancient Roman mothers when they heard their sons ridicule the respectable old system of Pantheism, which had been all sufficient for so many years; or the horror of the stage coach proprietors, when they found railways spreading all over the country.

W. I can't see how anyone can have any doubt as to the existence of a God, how can you account for everything we see around us ?

L. E. I've just told you.

W. Oh ! I thought you merely put it as a theory.

L. E. It's all theory of course, the only question is, which recommends itself most to the reason ?

W. Why, if your ideas were correct, thieves and murderers would have no fear of future punishment.

L. E. Every whit as much as they have now, virtue is its own and only reward, and vice is its own punishment, or receives present punishment, anything else you must own to be at the best, a pure speculation, let me ask you whether you yourself or any one you know really has any fear of future punishment, in a vague sort of way they fancy they have been brought upon the idea ; but careful self analysis will show that every action, whether good or bad, is done solely with a view to the consequences in this world ; in fact I think your are all beginning to understand that you will never see any other.

W. Are we like the beasts that perish then ?

L. E. We are the beasts that perish.

W. Those holding such a creed must be of all things the most miserable.

L. E. Implicit belief in the tenets of your religion must necessarily make you much more miserable.

W. How so ?

L. E. Because no one can be certain whether he's just good enough to go to glory ; there are no rules laid down by which a man may know exactly how much or how little will obtain for him the desired position after death.

W. No, he must have faith.

L. E. Which means that he must refrain from using his reason ; I think I am justified in saying that a belief in death bringing a total cessation of all joys and pleasures is more comfortable than

the miserable uncertainty of your creed, but as no one seems to have the least fear of punishment in another world, I am led to conclude either that you are all very conceited or that you have no real belief in your dogmas.

W. Well you certainly have some excuse for your view of the matter; but I firmly believe that the soul of man will live again.

L. E. You might as well talk of the soul of the rose in your button-hole; not a particle of it will be lost or destroyed but it will never exist again as a rose.

W. You say nothing is lost or destroyed, where then does the life of man go, if you object to call it the soul?

L. E. You might as well ask me where the steam goes which has dragged you from London to Brighton; your life carries you about for a number of years, and when, like the steam, it's used up you ask me where it goes to. I really can't tell you; be contented to believe only in what you see; rest assured that there is nothing supernatural and that nothing has more power over nature than man.

I turned round towards the speaker to protest against this subversive doctrine, but he had left me, and I sat for some time thinking of all he had said.

It seemed that he totally differed from the Communists and other idiots who have endeavoured to suddenly force their schemes—good, bad, or indifferent—down their neighbours' throats, either at the point of the bayonet, or by the expenditure of large sums; he had merely given me the outline of the state of things on his own planet, and he had specially pointed out that any radical change, can only be very gradually produced.

His Theology—or rather the want of it—was certainly most startling, but many of his ideas seemed to have the merit of common sense.

According to established precedent, I ought to say, "and I woke, and found it was a dream;" but I had'nt been asleep.

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