

# HUMAN SACRIFICES

IN

# ENGLAND.

FOUR DISCOURSES

BY

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*(1) Women Lib.*

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## HUMAN SACRIFICES.

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I PASSED a morning of the last week in the St. Marylebone Police Court, having been summoned there as a witness. As I waited through the hours there passed by a dismal gaunt procession or chain-gang of the captives of the ignorance, the brutality, the shame, sorrow, despair, of this vast metropolis. There were young men arrested in one drunken brawl, and women arrested in another. A shop-girl of twenty-one, who had been sent by her humble parents from the country to earn her living, had stolen a little finery, perhaps for a babe that would soon be born. A young "gentleman," as he was described, who had run through an estate, was sentenced for assaulting a young woman, whose downcast eyes and deep blush of shame confessed to the judge what her lips could not utter. A woman of twenty-two, who might once have been comely, had been arrested for intoxication. During the night she had three times attempted

suicide, and was barely saved for a life of despair. It is terrible to look upon a face which tells only of a life in ruins, and to listen to sobs broken by no pleading or word indicating any interest, however faint, in what the next moment may bring. A little boy five or six years old, wretched and ragged—with hardly rags enough to cover him—charged with being “destitute.” Every eye that saw him could testify to the truth of that charge. The poor boy had been found asleep on the pavement, and said he had slept there for three weeks. The magistrate set himself to ferret out the facts, and little by little was revealed his story. He was one of six children who had been living with their father and mother, in utter poverty, all in one room. At length the mother left that miserable room to wander and live as she could. But this little boy had followed her, clung to her; she carried him about with her for one day, in some strange place he slept with her the same night; but in the morning she sent him back home. The father drove him out because he had gone off with his mother, and so he had found a London pavement the only pillow extended to his little head.

The magistrate was considerate; he did his best to do justice to all, but he must have known—it was plain—that in no case did he judge or sentence the real criminal. The visible offenders before him were

victims. Behind each stood the grim and awful shadow of some ghoul that had fastened upon him. As the wretched men, women, and children were led away in custody, free and unfettered beside them stalked their demons,—Ignorance, Strong Drink, Neglect, Injustice, Hereditary Taint, Malformation of Brain. These are the real criminals, and it is they that elude the grasp of the law which can only deal its penalties to the already punished, the utterly helpless creatures on whom the ghastly vampires of our time are battenning.

I am about to speak for a few Sundays of what seem to me the heaviest wrongs of the present time ; but I do not wish to point out wrongs for which there are no remedies. Indeed, we can only very dimly discover evils, we can not feel deeply concerning them, until the light of its remedy falls upon each wrong. The remedies may be, as yet, ideal ; but that is not their fault ; they are necessarily ideal until they are applied : it is the fault of those great Interests, embodying public Selfishness or Superstition, which reject the truth and the justice which threaten them. But I believe in the power of ideas. In the end they are stronger than armies. Waiting there at St. Marylebone—as it were in some weird whorl of Dante's Hell—till, to my eyes, all present seemed impersonal, types and shadows of remorseless forces which once

St. Mary-the-Good tried to conjure down with her tender image, and then departed, leaving only her name, made way for the police,—there came upon me by some association, a memory of early days passed in a land where the Black-tongued Plague was raging. Hundreds were struck down daily with swift death; mourning was heard along the streets of every town and village; cries were heard in many homes that had been happy. Every face was pallid; the strongest men and women moved about in the silence of fear. One night the thermometer fell a degree, and the Plague was dead.

Not swift and sudden, but just as certain is the invisible power of the air which works through ideas. "God is a spirit." There is an intellectual, a religious atmosphere, in which lurks the miasma of moral death, or through which breathes the spirit of life; and any least change in that ideal region will tell upon the earth as surely as on it is recorded in frost or flower the viewless march of the seasons.

## THE DAUGHTERS OF JEPHTHA.

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JEPHTHA, Judge of Israel, marching against the Ammonites, made a vow unto the Lord that, if victorious, he would offer up as a burnt-offering to Jehovah the first person that should come forth from his house to meet him. Wife or daughter it must have been : Jephtha had no other offspring but an only daughter, and who so naturally should hasten to welcome a father's return from war and danger as an only daughter? So went forth the happy maiden with timbrels and dances to meet her father, the Prince. The father was in distress, but it never occurred either to him or his daughter that the Lord might sympathise with their love and their reluctance rather than with the vow, and so the fair maid was slain and burnt on the Lord's altar. Some efforts have been made by casuists to show that Jephtha's daughter was not sacrificed literally, but only consecrated to the Lord by not marrying : but such attempts are unworthy of notice. Human sacrifices were a recognised part of the Jewish religion, and

careful provisions were made for the redemption of a man or woman vowed to the Lord by money,—except when devoted by anathema, in which case the man or woman the law declared (Lev. 27) “shall surely be put to death.” I do not wonder that theologians would like to escape the effect of the story, for it is said “the spirit of the Lord came upon Jephtha,” in the Old Testament, and in the New that king who sacrificed his daughter is enumerated among saints of whom the world was not worthy.

Well, the story drifted about the world and had its effect. Jephtha's daughter was caught up by the Greek imagination, and reappeared as Iphigenia (probably Jephthagenia), the daughter of Agamemnon, who was nearly sacrificed in obedience to a similar vow made by her father to Artemis. Human sacrifices were unknown to the ancient Aryan race until it came in contact with this dark and horrible Shemitic belief that the deity required blood—and especially the blood of some spotless being, as the dove, or the lamb, and finally the most beautiful virgin. This wild and guilty superstition may be tracked in blood wherever the Jewish religion passed, and when Humanity had by reaction revolted from it, the spirit of it was caught up and preserved in the Christian idea that the world was to be saved only by the sacrifice of the one most virginal unblemished Soul, the Lamb offered up on Calvary to soothe the wrath of God.



But even after that offering, though it was said to be a final satisfaction of Jehovah's universal claim and thirst for blood, the old superstition survived to the extent of teaching women that it was a holy thing to vow their virginity to the Lord, to seclude themselves from the world, and to count themselves especially happy if they lost their lives by ascetic devotion to their invisible Spouse. All the nuns of Christendom were, and are, Jephtha's daughters.

But that has been by no means the worst result. The ancient Hebrew idea that woman is the natural sacrifice to God coloured the whole relation of that religion and its civil laws towards the female sex. Woman became the law's normal victim. We never read of a Jewish Queen; we rarely read praises of a woman of that race, except as part of the estate of some man who was to her the representative of God. She is sold and bought with her dead lord's assets. It is deemed no blot on Abraham when he drives Hagar from his door. There is no law in the decalogue, or elsewhere in the Bible, that mitigates the masculine decree—"Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee."

All this was reflected in Christianity. It taught women to submit to their husbands as to the Lord himself; never to speak in public, or to appear there unveiled; to stay at home and obey their husbands,—

“as also saith the law,” adds Paul,—and understand that woman is made for man and not man for woman.

I need not pause here to discuss the origin of this view of the position of woman. We may admit that, far away in some hard wilderness, or amid certain primitive exigencies of society, such a theory of woman was inevitable as a phase of social evolution. To keep at home and obey might have been the only way of continuing to exist, or to escape capture. But when a particular phase of human evolution gets associated with divine sanction, it gains a permanence which fetters progress. Most gods have been the means of perpetuating the barbarism of the age which invented them.

The Christian system brought this idea of woman into Europe. Whatever relation it may have had to Arabia or Syria, whatever justification it might have had in savage periods, surely it was out of place and out of time when imported into Europe. And there is not a more cruel chapter in history than that which records the arrest by Christianity of the natural growth of European civilisation as regards woman. In Germany it found woman participating in the legislative assembly, and sharing the interests and counsels of man, and drove her out and away, leaving her to-day nothing of her ancient rights but a few honorary idle titles, titles that remain to mark her degradation

and ours, as they remind us that a peeress, a duchess, a baroness, a princess, a queen, are not the political equals of many an illiterate sot who calls himself a man. Even more fatal was the overthrow of woman's position in Rome. Read the terrible facts as stated by Gibbon, by Milman, and Sir Henry Maine, read and ponder them, and you will see the tremendous wrong that Christianity did to woman. All the laws by which women were protected in their individual existence were overthrown. The sum of money which Roman law demanded should be settled by her father on every married woman, the new Christian code caused to be paid to the husband instead of her, as a dowery, or consolation for taking her off her father's hands. The idea that the virgin belonged to God survived, and her espousal to a man could only be by payment of redemption-money, which is the marriage fee.

Christianity struck the fatal blow at the independence of woman by allowing her but two alternatives,—imprisonment in a nunnery or servitude in a husband's house; anything else was for generations accounted sin.

But am I speaking of the far past? Is it not true also this day that women are sacrificed to this old Jewish regime and its Lord? What woman needs to-day is to have her rights and her wrongs decided in accordance with the conditions and the needs of

Europe, not those of Judea ; what she requires is the unbiassed verdict of the sense and sentiment and science of the present day ; and yet her case is yielded up to the authority and law of an ignorant tribe, whose very Judge knew no better than to burn his daughter as an offering to his god. It is to that same Jehovah, to the laws he is supposed to have proclaimed, the Bible he is said to have written, and the religion in which his ferocity is still reflected through all later mitigations,—it is to him that womanhood is still sacrificed ; and so long as the name of Jehovah, the god of Jephtha, is bowed to with awe and fear, so long will the victim-daughters of Jephtha surround us.

But how are women sacrificed ?

First of all in education. The intelligence and common sense of Europe declare that there can be nothing more important, both for themselves and for man, than the right and thorough education of women. As the physical mothers of the race they have the utmost need to know the laws of life, the nature of their own frame, the principles of health. As the intellectual and moral guides of all human beings during the years when they are most susceptible of impressions and influences, women have need of the very best knowledge. Their need of scientific drill is, if anything, greater than that of men. Yet in

education they are thrown the mere crumbs that fall from the table of our male youths. It has been shown that over ninety per cent. of the provision for education in this country is devoted to boys and young men. It has been shown that in our universities there are large sums of money inadequately used,—wealth accumulated from ancient endowments, furnishing annual revenues to the extent of £500,000,—and yet amid all the discussions as to what shall be done with that money, hardly one voice is heard demanding that it shall be devoted to redressing the heavy wrongs which woman has suffered through ages, and now suffers as she sits famishing in sight of such abundance. And while the universities are thus barred against her, and the keys of knowledge denied her, she is compelled to bear the very weakness and ignorance so entailed quoted for her further disparagement. We are told, woman cannot reason; she is not logical; she acts by mere impulse and sentiment; she is superstitious. Well, why is it so? Who has so made her? The god of Jephtha, the deity who exacted the sacrifice of the fair virgins of Israel, and who by his Bible still demands that we hold English women mere appendages to man, against all the best light and conscience of our own time.

Again, women are morally and physically sacrificed by the denial to them of the right of freedom to enter

into all the avocations of life by which human beings may find support, livelihood and independence. In the laws made by the worshippers of Jephtha's god it was enacted that every woman should be sold to some man as wife or concubine. It was strictly obligatory. Even that miserable means of obtaining a livelihood is impossible in this country, where women are in excess of men by nearly a million; but still we find male prejudice and law providing that marriage shall be regarded as the only recognised profession, trade, or vocation by which women may obtain an honourable livelihood. Compelled by the over-powering exigencies of modern life we are tolerating them in a few other simple occupations, but without according social equality to such; and we make no adequate provision for their apprenticeship or training for occupations which would yield them that independence which our theology and conventionality most dread. The sacrificial results of such a state of things are so appalling that I can hardly name them. By shutting the usual lucrative professions and occupations to women, society is driving them by thousands to sell that which is alone left to them to sell, their own honour; that which not one woman in a hundred would part with, were not pauperism and starvation the dread alternative; and thereby society sacrifices to ancient superstition the health and the purity of both manhood and womanhood.

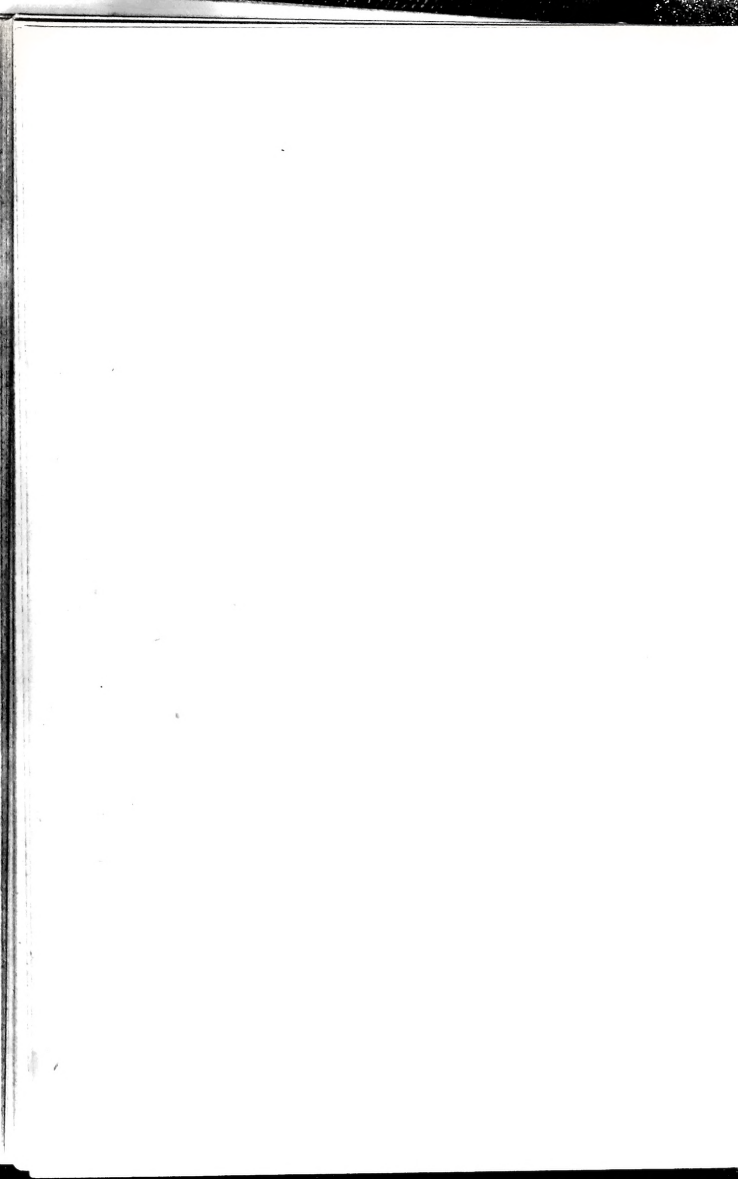
I have named but two out of the many forms in which women are bound hand and foot on the altar of Jephtha's god. Why need I repeat the long catalogue of her wrongs as a wife and a mother? Even after the battles and the appeals of generations have wrung from the reluctant hand of her master a link or two from the chain with which she was so long fettered, she is still liable to alienation of her children, and otherwise subject to the caprice and the cruelty of man.

And yet we are told that her interest and necessities may safely be entrusted to the care of a legislature in which she has no voice or representation; and that personally she is not equal to the task of political deliberation and voting. The ballot is not my idol. My desire to see woman enfranchised is not because of any abstract theory of human rights. I admit that because of the long thralldom that sex has undergone, and because of the long denial of education and all relation to the large affairs of the world, it would be better if men could be induced to relieve them of their oppressions—liberate them from the altar to which they are in large part bound by chains of their own superstition, and so prepare them for that share in political power which should be accorded only to intelligence and moral freedom. Women need the full advantages of education far more than they need votes. What they are perishing for is not a ballot,

but the opening of all the work and culture which make the equality and secure the liberties of man. But, with them, I despair of such practical results until they are admitted among the constituencies of Parliament. They have amply proved their case. They have clearly defined their wrong and its remedy. They have appealed for redress in vain. They are met by frivolous sneers, by sentimental evasions, not by reason and argument. Their sufferings have educated them sufficiently to know at least their own needs, and the unwillingness of men to respond to them. Their cry for enfranchisement is the cry of victims bleeding on the altar of established error; it is the cry of despair; and it can only increase in painful intensity and grief until it shall be redressed. Indeed, the very sentiment, no doubt sincere with the great majority of men, which dreads the departure of woman from the sacred sphere of domestic life, must ere long be enlisted on the side of her enfranchisement. It will become more and more clear that there can be no peace with injustice; that women in increasing numbers are, and will continue to be, excited to protest against the wrongs of their sex. They will appear on platforms; they will be public speakers; they will be stimulated to that very life of political agitation which so many fear, but are blindly engaged in promoting. For the sake of peace and quietness, if for no higher



motive, this justice must assuredly be done to woman, and my own apprehension is that it will not be done until society has suffered yet more serious disturbances through the obstinacy and folly of the opposition to a measure which, if adopted, could not cause anything more revolutionary than has been caused by the admission of woman to the municipal franchises they now possess. That which is to-day demanded in the name of justice, must to-morrow be conceded in the interest of social order. But this is a poor, mean way of securing any measure of justice. When wisdom prevails the right will be conceded to reason, not wrested by agitation. But however men may throw away experience, it still remains true that trouble tracks wrong like a shadow, and justice alone is crowned with peace.



## CHILDREN AND THEIR MOLOCH.

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FIVE years ago I clipped from a newspaper the following letter, addressed to the Editor from Shetland:—

“Lerwick, July, 7, 1871.

“SIR,—It may interest some of your readers to know that last night (being St. John’s Eve, old style) I observed within a mile or so of this town, seven bonfires blazing, in accordance with the immemorial custom of celebrating the Midsummer solstice. These fires were kindled on various heights around the ancient hamlet of Sound, and the children leaped over them, and ‘passed through the fire to Moloch,’ just as their ancestors would have done a thousand years ago on the same heights, and their still remoter progenitors in Eastern lands many thousand years ago. This persistent adherence to mystic rites in this scientific epoch seems to me worth taking note of.—A. L.”

In ancient times, however, the children had to leap into the bonfire—which is defined in Cooper’s “The-

sauros" as "Pyra, a bonfire, wherein men's bodies were burned,"—and not over it. I have often leaped over a bonfire myself, with little thought that my sport was the far away relic of the tragedies of human sacrifice. Our bonfires of Virginia had been lighted from those of Scotland, whence the first settlers of the neighbourhood had come; and there is some reason to believe that in some obscure nooks of Scotland the Midsummer fires are yet kindled, and some may still be found who believe that it is good for a child to pass over them.

The Reformers of Scotland made a tremendous effort to trample out these survivals of ancient superstition, and measurably succeeded in suppressing the outward manifestations of them. But they preserved the very atmosphere of superstition amid which such practices were bred originally, and there is reason to fear they made matters worse. The sacrifice of children to Moloch had become a pastime, but their subsequent sacrifice to Jehovah of Sabaoth was serious.

The Scottish Reformers also exterminated with fierce piety the superstitions of the Church of Rome. They particularly punished pilgrimages to the so-called holy wells which abounded in that region. On the 28th November, 1630, Margaret Davidson, a married woman, residing in Aberdeen, was adjudged in an "unlaw" of £5 by the Kirk Session "for directing

her nurse with her bairn to St. Fiack's Well, and washing her bairn therein for recovery of her health . . . and for leaving an offering in the well." The point of idolatry, as stated by the Kirk Session, was "in putting the well in God's room." After the fine Margaret, perhaps, put God in the well's room; but we may doubt whether the change was of any advantage to the bairn. Pure water has its sanative effects, and it is very likely that the wells became holy because they were healing. But St. Fiack—a Scottish saint—had to go, leaving only his name to a vehicle (*fiacre*), in which his French devotees travelled to his shrine, and instead of him was set up a Judaic deity whose providence was not associated with anything so rational as the use of pure water. Not one particle of superstition the less remained in Scotland when the fires of Moloch and the candles of Rome were put out. The only religious advantage one could have hoped from the revolution was not gained. It might have been hoped that when popular Superstition was divested of its picturesque features, its pilgrimages to holy wells and shrines, and bonfires and images, its grim and ugly visage would have been simply repulsive, and its further reign impossible. But, strange to say, the Scotch seemed to cling more to superstition the uglier it became. A Puritanism arose in which all the Molochs were summed up, and all human joys were

represented, in Shakspeare's phrase, as "the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire," the flowery path to hell. It is passing strange that this hideous system should have been able to desolate beyond recovery the "merrie England of the olden time," and to overshadow America for more than a hundred years. There is a singular society which met last week, called the Anglo-Israel Society, whose object is to persuade this people that they are the lost tribes of Israel, and the eagerness with which the majority of this nation has always laid hold upon everything Semitic, gives some plausibility to their notion; but one thing is certain, if we are the tribes that Israel lost, we have never lost Israel. We have hebraised for ages, made long prayers, sung psalms, named children Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and otherwise pertinaciously adhered to the Semitic idolatry.

When Jehovah was brought to Scotland, Moloch was nominally dethroned, his bonfires extinguished; but the change was only nominal; all that was dark and cruel in Moloch was superadded to all that was dark and cruel in Jehovah; and the result was a Scotch Jehovah more harsh and oppressive than the phantasm which haunted the Jews.

For the ancient Jews do not seem to have generally entered into the spirit of Moloch,—that old brass deity, whose head was that of a calf, and whose stomach

was a furnace in which children were consumed. The Jews generally were careful of their children, and those of them that worshipped Moloch and sacrificed their children were sternly denounced. That old idol which, according to Amos (v. 26) the Israelites bore with them from Egypt through the wilderness, would perhaps have faded away had it not been for Solomon. Solomon is odiously memorable for two things. He erected a temple for Moloch on the Mount of Olives, where children were burned to death, and he wrote the sentence—which might appropriately have been inscribed on that Temple—"Spare the rod and spoil the child." The man who wrote that sentence had, of course, no idea that any people would exist foolish enough to believe it the very word of God; but, nevertheless, in conjunction with human superstition, he has been the cause of more evil to the human race than any other one man that ever lived. The rod is a little thing, but it is full of deadly poison; it has fostered in the world more deceit, meanness, cowardice, servility, stupidity, and brutality than our race will outgrow for many generations. Mr. Edward Tylor recently exhibited at the Royal Institution the poisonous Calabar bean used as an ordeal in Africa, whose consecration enables the savage kings to put out of the way every man who proposes any change in their government; and he (Mr. Taylor) expressed

his belief that the continued savagery of Africa was in large part an effect of that little bean. And I believe that it can be shown that the rod has been the means of preserving the savage rule of physical force in the greatest nations of the world. The parent or teacher who strikes a child does so because his parent or teacher struck him; and the child that is struck catches the idea, transmitted all the way from Solomon, that the way to deal with people who don't do what you like is to strike them. That is, if you are stronger than they. If they are little and you large, that is a sign that the Lord has delivered them into your hand. You must make the child yield his will to yours, not by love and persuasion, but by brute force and pain; break his spirit, though that harms him far more than breaking his back-bone; make the child another you: so will your child do the like by his children, and they by theirs, and independence and individuality be beaten down by violence, genius crushed, character made characterless, as

“To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,”

and all our yesterdays light us on the highway of commonplace, though not, I hope, to the last syllable of recorded time.

Does it not strike you that a child consists of an individuality, a will, a spirit, a mind, and that its real



existence depends upon these ; and that if these are not trained, encouraged, cultivated, the child has no real existence at all? An animal existence it may have, but beyond that it were a mere appendix or sequel to somebody else, unless its peculiar powers are healthily carried forward to maturity. If these are sacrificed the child is sacrificed, and the man that is folded up in him. Will a gardener beat his rose-buds with a stick to make them grow? The growing of thoughts and emotions is more tender work than the culture of roses. But children will be naughty ; of course they will sometimes be naughty if they are healthy, and they will require restraint until they can restrain themselves : they must learn morals as they learn letters. But one might as well flog a child for not knowing Greek as to flog it for a deception or for selfishness. Every blow is an appeal to selfishness, and a lesson in deception. We pardon our parents and predecessors in this, for they knew not what they did. But it is a scandal that the rod should linger in the homes and schools of England, after Herbert Spencer and others have proved the evil of it. For many months now I have been trying to find a school in Kensington for a boy in his eleventh year, and in that great parish I cannot find one in which they do not insist on two things,—Beating and the Bible. I must leave the parish to find a school which will give me a conscience clause on these points.

Now, I may ask any person of intelligence, not hopelessly blinded by superstition, is the Bible a fit book to put into the hands of a child? I do not believe that a child as it advances to boyhood and girlhood should, with prudish jealousy, be kept in ignorance as to the follies and vices of the world in which it lives. But our children do not live in ancient Judea. The Bible, moreover, is not limited to any years. It is believed by bibliolaters to be so holy that it can do no harm even to a child of tenderest years, who so soon as he or she can read is permitted to receive the unnatural stimulant of perusing narratives obscene, shocking and cruel. What would be a glass of gin in the child's throat, compared with its first familiarisation with the grossest vices of semi-barbarous tribes; vices many of which are even unfit for more advanced youth to read about, for they are not those which they will now find in the world around them, or require to be guarded against. The very memory of some of the primitive brutalities of mankind is kept alive only by the Bible. With its pages are broadcast narratives which the law does not permit to be printed in any other book. And when these crimes and vices are laid before a child as the word of God; when it reads in that book that many of the worst of them were instigated by Jehovah,—that he hardened Pharaoh's heart, and ordered persons

to be stoned to death, and children to be put to the sword, and so on,—why it is enough to slay their reverence on the spot, and strike them with moral idiocy. This is, indeed, the way in which, morally speaking, the sins of the father are visited on the children, to much more than the third and fourth generation. The Bible is an invaluable book, but it is not a book for children: there are many forms in which the incidents and chapters suitable for them can be separately procured; and for the rest, the volume may be safely left on the shelf to be searched out when it is wanted.

The Rod, and the Bible which consecrates the Rod, along with many other barbarities, make up principally the Moloch of children in the present time. The sacrifice of the young among us is mainly moral and intellectual. Physically a great deal is done for the average of them. There are indeed terrible regions where children are caught up in the great engine of commerce and labour, and crushed. There are mines, and fens, and factories where the struggle for existence means a joyless existence—hunger and pain, and premature death to many a child; and yet, because it is a struggle for existence we can only look upon it with sympathy and with resolution that no man shall add to the anguish of it. But when we follow even such apparently inevitable evils as these to their causes, we dis-

cover that they could not continue but for the radical error of English Christianity—the principle of sacrificing man to God. We can never hope thoroughly to master the evils of society while the great religious organisations of the country, and their vast endowments, are directed to divine service instead of human service, and the poor are taught that their chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him for ever. When the wealth and the religious earnestness of this nation are devoted to the benefit of humanity, instead of to the childish notion of personally pleasing and satisfying the deity, there cannot long remain an unhappy home in it.

But until that Gospel of Pure Reason is heard round the world, bringing its glad tidings, the weak and ignorant must still bleed as victims on the altar of an imaginary being who may be called God, but is much nearer the ideal of a Demon.

Dogma, too, has still its altar in England upon which the child is sacrificed. It is true that among the educated the old doctrine that every child is at birth a child of the devil, and human nature totally depraved, has ceased to exist; and even among the illiterate parental affection has been too strong to admit of its practical realisation. But still it is taught by vulgar sects to many millions, and avails to misdirect many fathers and mothers, and teachers, in their

dealing with the natural instincts and needs of childhood. The mirth, the love of beauty, the longing for amusement, in the young, so indispensable for a healthy and happy growth, are forbidden, the dance is held to be sinful, the theatre immoral, and thus many thousands of children never have any real joy, and pass on to a youth of precocious anxiety, and a manhood or womanhood of hard, morose alienation from nature.

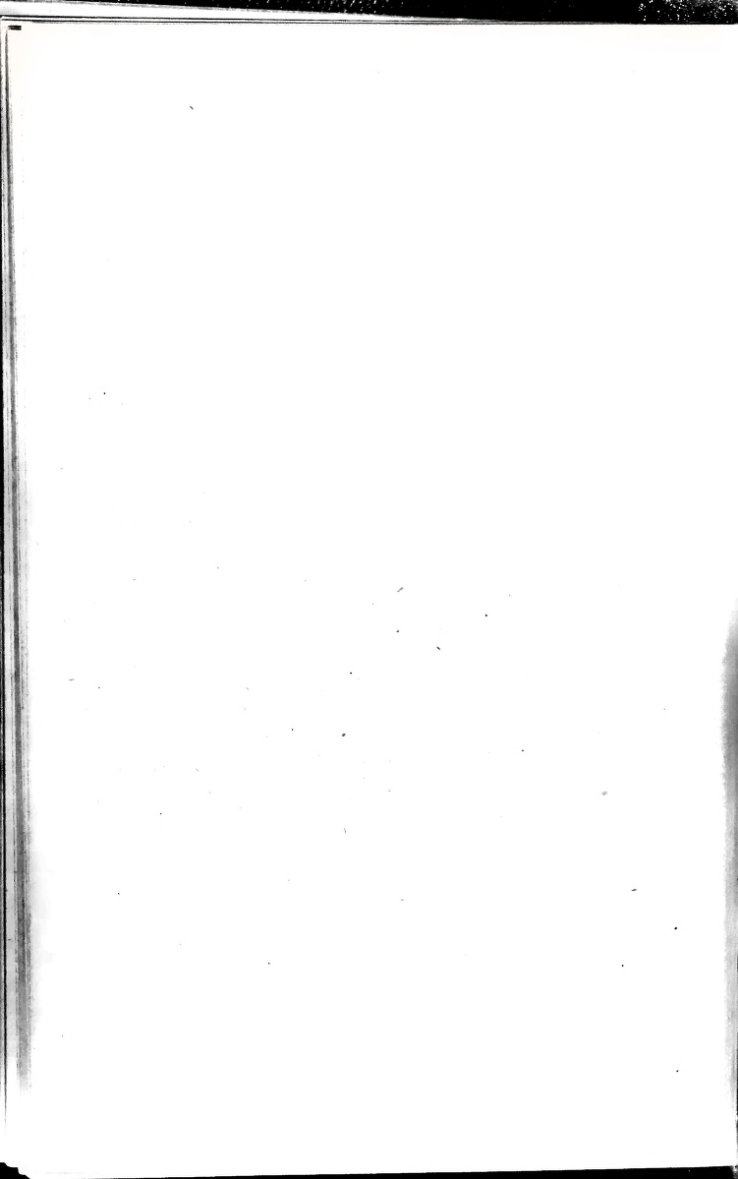
The only relief to the gloom of this unnatural religion, which casts its shadow over so many young lives, is that dogmatic preaching has become so inharmonious with the enlightenment of civilised society, that it tends more and more to sink into the hands of pulpit mediocrities, who rehearse it in such a dull, perfunctory way that it loses all impressiveness, and can now hardly keep congregations awake. Sermonising is almost another name for boring.

In an admirable story just published, called "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, by Mark Twain," the author presents a picture of an average congregational assembly on Sunday, among whom his little hero was a sufferer. After the lugubrious hymn came the long, long prayer. "The boy," says the author, "did not enjoy the prayer, he only endured it—if he even did that much. He was restive all through it; he kept tally of the details of the prayer, unconsciously—for he was not listening, but he knew the ground of

old, and the clergyman's regular route over it—and where a little trifle of new matter was introduced, his ear detected it, and his whole nature resented it; he considered additions unfair and scoundrelly. In the midst of the prayer a fly had lit on the pew in front of him”—but I will pass over the fate of that fly. The sermon came on. “The minister,” writes our author, “gave out his text and droned along monotonously through an argument that was so prosy that by and by many a head began to nod, and yet it was an argument that dealt in limitless fire and brimstone, and thinned the predestined elect down to a company so small as to be hardly worth the saving. The boy counted the pages of the sermon; after church he always knew how many pages there had been, but he seldom knew anything else about the discourse.” Once, indeed, he became interested for a moment. It was when the preacher, instead of his own dreary thoughts, drew from an ancient poet the picture of the hosts of the world gathering at the millennium, when the lion and the lamb should lie down together, and a little child should lead them. The boy said to himself that he would like to be that child, if it was a tame lion.

I suppose there are many poor little sufferers like this lad, dragged this day into the chapels and churches of the world, but we may console ourselves partially

with the reflection that in their sufferings many a falsehood is smothered. The deadly dogma is happily also dull, and sinks through the vacant mind into the gulf of oblivion. And yet that boy is passing through the years which should be sown with the seeds of truth, and the germs of thought and purpose. His faculties need encouragement: they say briars and thorns are non-encouraged buds. So long as those sweet, susceptible years are passed amid such errors that apathy to them all is the child's best hope, we must still confess that in this age of light innumerable children are still passing through the fire to Moloch.





## THE SABBATH-JUGERNATH.

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On the sands at Pûri, in India, stands the famous temple of Jugernath. It is nearly seven centuries old, and the building of it cost as much as a half million sterling. It is six hundred and fifty feet square, and its sanctity consecrates the soil for twenty miles around it,—that land being held rent-free on condition of the tenants performing certain sacred rites in honour of Jugernath. There are twelve great festivals held every year at this shrine, and the alleged performances at these festivals have been the never-ending theme of mission meetings ever since we can remember. You must have been fortunate children if you have no memories of Sunday School days when your childish heart was harrowed by accounts of poor Hindoos crushed under the wheels of Jugernath, and a tithe of all you possessed annually sent away to convert that hard god into a Christian, and stop that terrible car. Some old missionary once estimated the immense amount of money and labour devoted to the care, the

ablutions, and other affairs of this temple, and he said the same amount of wealth and toil usefully bestowed might make every barren spot of India into a garden ; and that missionary might have added that the amount of money which has been evoked from Christian pockets by that one idol might have made an equal number of gardens there, or here,—whereas it has all been spent, and the car rolls on just as grandly as ever.

And not only this, but we have now learned on the best authority that all those pictures of Hindoos casting themselves beneath the Jugernath car to be crushed were purely imaginary. When the car is drawn, with the sacred image of Vishnu set up in it, the crowd of the curious and the devotees is enormous, and no doubt many accidents have happened. It may be, because some from a distance are ignorant of the danger, or that enthusiastic devotees put themselves unintentionally in danger by going too near the image they believe holiest on earth, or try to draw the car with hundreds of others when they are too weak or aged to do so. But there are no intentional sacrifices under the car of Jugernath, nor could there ever have been at any period. For Jugernath, or rather Jaganath, means simply “the Lord of Life;” it is a title of Vishnu, and the temple is purely sacred to Vishnu. Nothing is more rigidly forbidden than to slay anything that has life in

the neighbourhood of the Lord of Life. The Hindoos declare that the holy pages of the Vedas themselves sprang from drops of blood lost by their Saviour while protecting Agni in form of a dove from Indra in form of a hawk ; and to Vishnu they offer only things that are fresh and beautiful, like flowers, and even the flowers must not be in the least faded. So it is impossible that there could have been human sacrifices to Jugernath except by accident. The accidents were probably very frequent at one time,—at least it is charitable to missionary reporters to think so,—the vast increase of popularity in the festivals having made the crowd unwieldy. But in recent years British authority has insisted upon carefulness—threatened to stop the car if men and women were injured—and there is now far less destruction of life by the car of Jugernath than by the London cab.

Happy Hindoos ! who have at hand an enlightened authority willing to respect their religious customs so long as they are harmless, but ready to put Vishnu himself under arrest if he injures humanity. I would match an Englishman against any man living for good sound sense in dealing with such superstitions, provided they are not his own. But when that clear-headed English authority which has put out the fires that burned widows in India comes to deal with laws that torture women here, it gets confused among

Scripture texts and precedents. When it is needed to curb a fanaticism here which deliberately sacrifices human life—that, for instance, of the Peculiar People, who, because of a text in the New Testament, refuse to call medical aid for their sick, letting them die in numbers every year, even helpless children—why then all that common sense seems to vanish. When it is called upon to regulate our Sabbath-Jugernath, beside which the car at Pûri is an innocent toy, beneath whose wheels millions of hearts and brains are crushed in this kingdom, why then the intelligence of the nation grows timid, and its arm is paralysed.

The celebrations of Jugernath, the Lord of Life, bring to the poor twelve festivals in the year. The celebrations of the Sabbath, Lord of Lifelessness, bring to our poor fifty-two funereal vacancies in their existence. They ought to be fifty-two festivals of Reason, of Beauty, of Happiness, but to the poor they are days of unreason, of ugliness, of torpor and drunkenness; days hateful to children and hurtful to all. Now it is not merely fanciful to bring together the Jugernath and the Sabbath superstitions. Even in origin their consecration came from the same source. Our theology has arbitrarily transferred the sanctity of the Jewish Sabbath, the Seventh Day of the week, to the Sun-day, the day consecrated to sun-worship, our first day of the week. I say arbitrarily, for there is not a word in the

New Testament consecrating Sunday, but there are strong sentences declaring one day as holy as another. The early Christians when they went among so-called "pagan" races met for worship on the first day of the week because it was a holiday, and they could only then get at the people. For the same reason we meet to-day, because it is the day when people are liberated from business. But the Primitive Christians had as little thought of consecrating the "pagan" Sun's day as the Jewish Sabbath, just as most of us would abhor the notion that any day is less sacred than another. But Vishnu also was to his provincial worshippers the quickening sun, and his chariot is the car of Jugernath. So the two institutions are linked together archæologically. But in a more important sense they are related by the fact that they are both idolatries. The Sabbath is one of the only two visible idols which pronounced Protestantism has left standing for a race of kindred origin to the Hindoos, and like them naturally loving outward symbols and images. We all belong to the Great Aryan race, from which proceeded all the bright gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome, and Germany, and all their variegated symbolism. Through certain historic combinations our Aryan race as it migrated westward, became invested with a Shemitic religion, one which had no arts and pictures itself, and regarded them as impious

in others. In obedience to this alien religion, our race now wrote on its temples, "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven images, or pictures of anything in heaven, earth or sea." But it was one thing to say this, another to practise. The Eastern Church evaded the law by putting up certain holy pictures with frames in relief, which are something like sculpture. The Roman Church boldly disregarded the law in its lordly way of requiring the Bible to accommodate itself to the Pope. In this country all the sacred visible images were swept away by Puritanism from its own and many other churches—leaving all the more graven images in the mind; but that race-instinct, that love of outward symbols and objects of worship with which the Eastern Church compromised, and to which the Romish Church succumbed—that instinct and sentiment remained in our people, and in the empty niche of the Madonna, on the altar from which god and goddess and crucifix had been successively swept, there were now set up the only two visible images of determined Protestantism—the Bible and the Sabbath. There are some branches of the Church of England which approximate to the Catholic Church enough to preserve other symbols—exalting the sacrament, magnifying the cross, or the liturgy—and such care less to make overmuch of the Sabbath, and respect saintly tradition as much as the Bible. But when you find

an out-and-out Evangelical, or a Calvinist, or a member of a sect which has nothing symbolical about it, you find one who will fight for the literal Bible and the literal Sabbath, exactly as a barbarian fights for his idol. They are his idols. They are to him precisely what the Jugernath is to the devotee in India. The Bible and the Sabbath are all he has left; and if you were to really take from the average sectarian his idolatry of those two visible objects, he would feel as if he had nothing to lean upon at all. For this average religionist has not a vivid interior life, he has not the mystical sense cognisant of pure ideals, most visible when the outward eye is closed. He needs to have something he can see and handle, and feel physically, or realise by physical effects.

There is not the least use in trying to argue with an idolator. Nothing can be influenced by reasoning which was not reached by any effort of reason. Real thinkers, even in the sects themselves, have tried their strength against this miserable Sabbath superstition,—Luther and Calvin, and George Fox, as well as the most learned men of the English Church. But the Sabbath stands like the Hindoo Temple described in the curse of Keháma :—

“And on the sandy shore, beside the verge  
Of ocean, here and there a rock-cut fane  
Resisted in its strength the surf and surge  
That on their deep foundation beat in vain.”

Even so, deep-cut in the plutonic rock of human ignorance, is this idol shrine, against which all our protests, appeals, facts, and arguments will beat in vain, until the ignorance itself shall be undermined and crumble away.

There is no advantage, therefore, in pleading with Sabbatarians. The more we groan the better they feel, for it shows them that Jehovah is having his will by crushing ours. But there is great reason that we should appeal to the constituted rulers of England, in the name of our religious liberty, against the claim of Sabbatarians to oppress consciences that are not Sabbatarian. The right of any individual to be himself a simpleton seems inalienable. We do not deny, though we may deplore, the claim of Sabbatarians to pass their "holy time" in any depth of sanctimonious stupor they like. But they have no right to bind on the altar of their ugly idol the life of other people. That they are still able to do so is not due to any Sabbatarianism in those who make our laws. There is not one member of our Government or Parliament who does not violate the Judaic Sabbath law every week of his life. Nearly fifty years ago, William Lovett, and several thousand working men with him, drew up a petition to Parliament, declaring their conviction that much of the drunkenness and crime in London is due to the absence of proper resources for instruction and



amusement on Sunday. Honest Joseph Hume presented their petition and appealed to Parliament for the opening of such resources. Since then the appeal has been repeated by Sir Joshua Walmsley, Peter Taylor and others, but steadily refused, even while the principle has been conceded by the opening of museums in Ireland, where Puritanism is not strong.

The last-named valiant member of Parliament has now for some years moved that body to admit the poor drudges of this metropolis to gain some knowledge, to catch some gleam of light and beauty, on the one day when they are released from toil, in our grand national collections which they help to support but never see—institutions which represent the secrets of nature and ideality of poets and artists, the history of man in his steady mastery of the earth by skill and genius, the sacred story of heroes, saints, saviours of humanity. But at last that member has declined to renew his appeal, because, as he has stated to me, he has ample evidence that while the majority of the House are quite convinced that his motion is right, and have no respect for Sabbatarianism, they yet vote for it. The Puritan Sabbath can always roll up a majority even in a House that applauds arguments against it. The member referred to is naturally not willing to go on convincing men already convinced.

But why then do these politicians vote against the

relief of suffering non-Sabbatarians? Why, because they do not wish to be also victims of the Sabbath. To the average Member of Parliament his seat there is the immediate jewel of his soul. He would, no doubt, like to have right on his side, but he must have his borough. He knows perfectly well that if he votes for opening museums and picture galleries to the people, on the very next Sunday his constituency will be listening to awful burdens against him from all the reverend Chadbands and Stigginses and Mawworms and Cantwells and Pecksniffs, whose combined power can defeat any man in England, as their like defeated the great man in Jerusalem who broke the Sabbath, and declared it subject to man, not man to it. Nevertheless, we must not proceed upon the opinion that the average Member of Parliament is so much afraid of this power behind him, or so tenacious of his seat, that he will carry it to the extent of supporting what he felt to be a very serious oppression. All the honour and courage have not entirely gone out of this nationality. Men will be found ready to risk their seats when they have fully apprehended the nature and extent of the wrong that is suffered. Parliament consists mainly of wealthy gentlemen, whose every earthly need is so completely answered that they can only with difficulty realise the wants of the poor. On Sunday they have

their carriages to drive in, their right to visit botanical and zoological gardens, their libraries, pictures, clubs and billiard-rooms. *Their* Sunday is free enough. They turn it to repose or recreation as they may need, In all their lives they have never had one day of serious want, not one day of confinement in a miserable lodging with no alternatives but the chill street or the gin-shop. In some way it must be brought before these gentlemen, and kept before them—like the widow's plea in the parable before the judge, who was wearied out at last—that the lot of the masses whose labour makes so much of their comfort is a mean and miserable lot. They must be made to know that there are millions who from the cradle to the grave, toil—and toil—and toil, year in and year out, and whose life is one long want. It must be impressed upon them that a large part of the sorrow and heaviness of the poor man's and poor woman's fate is the presence in them of mental and moral faculties and possibilities which are a perpetual hunger without any supply, which never rise to be real intellects and tastes because they are kept by drudgery as seeds under the sod, unquickened by any beam of light shining from all the knowledge around them, unsunned by any ray of beauty. Then they will comprehend that a fearful system of human sacrifice is going on around them, and they will not find their parliamentary seats easy

if retained by any connivance with those sacrifices. There is an Eastern fable of a throne luxuriously soft to any monarch who sat upon it, until a wrong had risen somewhere in his realm ; then the throne became so hard that no sovereign could sit upon it, until the wrong was sought out and redressed ; and there is conscience enough among our commoners to change many a legislative seat to flint, when its holder shall know that he maintains it only as a coward, through the servility that dare not grapple with serious injustice because it is in the majority.

Those are the men who must ultimately listen to our cause and decide it rightfully. And our cause is that the brain and heart, and even the work of the poor, is suffering grievously because of the restrictions placed by superstition upon that day of the week which represents their all of opportunity for any high enjoyment or improvement. The Sundays of life represent one-seventh of every man's time ; but for the drudges of the world it represents the whole of their time. All the rest of life is not their time ; it belongs to their employer ; it is mortgaged by physical toil. What life is at their own disposal is counted by Sundays. If those free days are unimproved or unhappy the whole life goes sunless to the grave.

What provision does this nation make, and what does it permit to be made, for the elevation, instruc-

tion, and happiness of those whose other days, as George Herbert said, "trail on the ground," on the one day susceptible to nobler impressions?

First it provides sermons. Twenty thousand churches are open this day for the people, and in them are places for a limited number of the poor. Well, let us forget how many dull sermons are preached, how many gloomy, false, repulsive dogmas, how many threadbare superstitions, and how few working people have any disposition to enter these assemblies, or such dress as would let them feel comfortable when there. Let us pass over all that. Admitting that one hour and a half or two hours of the poor man's only leisure day may be so passed, what provision is made for the remainder?

Why, there are the parks in which he may walk. But that is a very inadequate reply. Our English weather renders the park attractive for but a small part of the year. Much of the labour done is too wearisome to render mere walking on Sunday any delight to the workers. Nor is there anything in that merely physical exercise which answers the real demand, a demand not of the feet but of the head.

Well, there is the great provision that comes next to the church, the public house. This great nation has been appealed to by some of its noblest scholars for permission to accompany the poor on Sunday

afternoons, when churches are closed, through the national collections of art and science, to explain to them the objects of interest, to interpret for them the wonders of nature and unfold the splendours of art. But thus far our rulers have replied, "No, we will deliver you to the publican, but never to Dr. Carpenter; Ruskin shall not teach you the glory of Raphael's cartoons, but you may gaze at pleasure on the interior decorations of the gin-palace; you must not see the grandeurs of art, nor the fine traceries of skill, nor the antiquities of humanity, nor the wondrous forms and crystals of Nature, but do not complain: do we not allow you limitless supplies of whiskey and beer?"

And just here, by the way, I remark a little sign of hope. The Sabbatarians begin to perceive the scandal that the beer-house should be kept open while the museum is closed, and they begin to demand the closing of the public-house also. They have carried a measure of that kind for Ireland, and I sincerely hope they will manage to carry one for England. For the day that sees the beer-house close will see the door of the museum start. The great ally of the Sabbatarian has been the publican, and when that alliance is broken our success will draw near. The parson drugs the people's brains with superstition, and the publican drugs with beer those whom the parson cannot reach; and the streams from church and tap-room blending

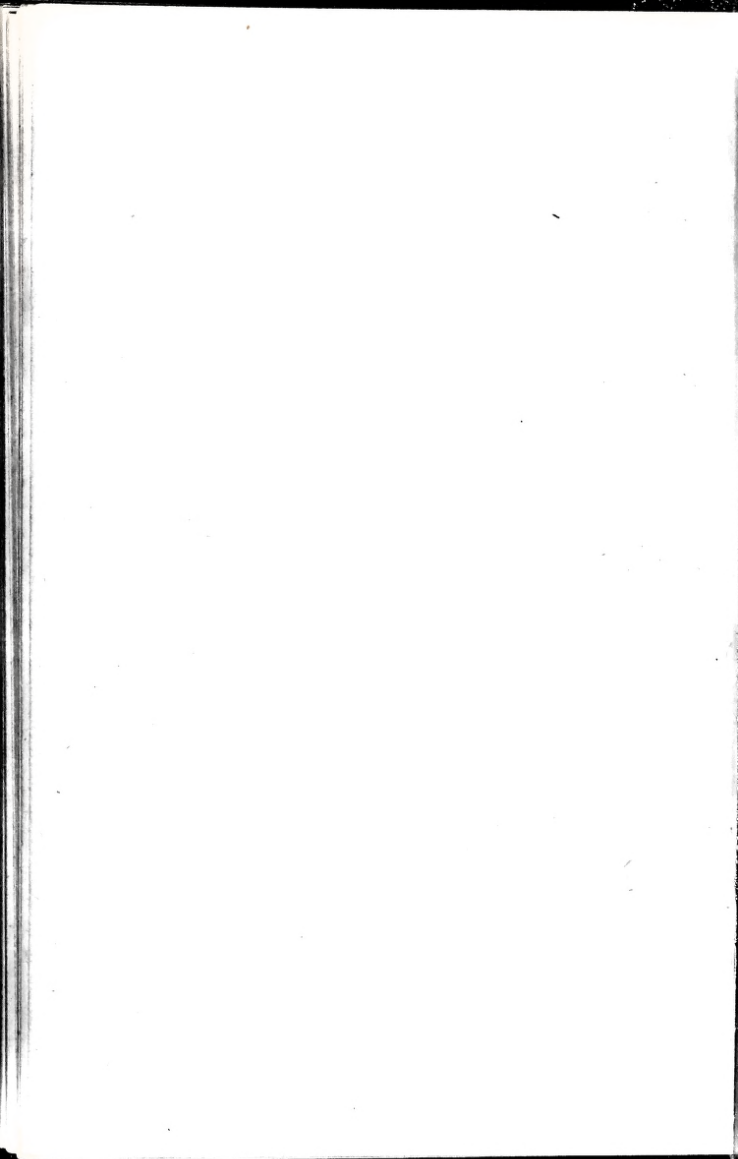
together reinforce the Lord's-day people, so that they can always outnumber us. If the Sabbath were not an idol it would long ago have recoiled from all this part of its work. It would have said, "Open a thousand museums rather than drive the poor to find their only Sunday amusement, and spend the means for which their wives and children suffer, in drink!" But an idol may always be recognised by just this fact: *it demands human sacrifices*. It may not always demand the cutting-up or burning of its victims; but, if not that, it will demand the sacrifice of his intellect or his affections, his happiness or his welfare; in some way a human body, or heart, or brain will be found bound wherever an idol stands. And though I cannot, in such brief space, enter into all the details of the holocaust of human benefits offered up to the Sabbath, I will affirm for myself that the more I have considered the needs of this people, and the lost opportunities of meeting them, the more have I felt that there is now no cause worthier of a good man's zeal than the overthrow of this Sabbath oppression. It is a wrong for which I have no toleration at all. I can tolerate any man's religious conviction about the Sabbath or anything else; but I cannot tolerate him when he insists on binding his dogma upon others. I will not tolerate his intolerance. This is no issue of abstract opinion for theological fencing. It is no

sentimental grievance. The hunger of a million famished souls is in it. It is a great heart-breaking wrong, crushing lower and lower one class of society at a time when other classes are rising higher daily. And that the poor do not feel it to be so, are in boozy contentment with their beer or their prayers and demand nothing better, is only a proof of how fully the oppression has done its miserable work.

Yet they use this as an argument against us ! They cry, "The workmen do not want it ; behold our majority." I answer, the majority is always wrong. The majority crucified Christ and poisoned Socrates. Part of the masses you have deceived by the contemptible fiction that their day of release from toil will be endangered by that which would make it more attractive and therefore more precious ; and a larger part you have so besotted with beer and ignorance that they are pauperised in soul as well as body, and hug their own chains. Theirs is not the real voice of the people. A true statesman will take the only suffrage they are competent to cast from their degraded foreheads and their brutalised forms and faces. The gardener will not follow the will of the weeds, though they report the soil he works in. At any rate a rational man's duty is clear. The authority of the Sabbath rests upon what every intelligent mind knows to be fiction ; upon a deity who is said to have created the



universe in six days and rested on the seventh, and then ordered that anyone working on the seventh should be stoned to death. That is a fiction. There is no deity who did anything of that kind. We are told this is the Lord's day. We know that if that Lord be other than a phantom every day is his day. Jesus said, "My Father works on the Sabbath and so will I." Rest is not stupor. It is well to change our occupation occasionally, but never well to be idle. There is no ground whatever for this superstition. The day of rest originated no doubt in a human want, afterwards invested with sanctity: but the sanctity must be entirely removed if the day is to be changed from a curse to a human benefit.



## THE MARTYRDOM OF REASON.

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REASON is that supreme faculty of man by which he is cognisant of principles apart from their applications, of laws as distinct from particulars, of ideas as separate from relations. It differs from the understanding, which is concerned with those special applications and relations, as a code of laws differs from the various decisions of courts and judgments made under that code. A man may reason rightly when his understanding is in error. A Hindoo walking out saw a large and dangerous cobra, as he supposed, across his path, preparing to dart upon him ; it so overcame his nerves that he fainted ; the object proved to be a piece of rope. The man had reasoned correctly ; he knew the nature of the cobra, and rightly inferred the danger, but his judgment was in error. Now judgment is at the point of distinction between reason and understanding. By origin it is an organ of reason, by result it is the agent of the understanding.

When we consider our human faculties in this abstract way, we find them perfectly harmonious. They move in their appointed orbits, in constant relation and interaction, but without collision or jar, their very differences completing the harmony. Abstractedly no mortal can conceive of a special judgment with no general principles to guide it, and none can think of ideas and laws as things inapplicable to the particulars of nature and life.

And yet we find in all races and ages a wide-spread suspicion of reason. Even at this day, and in nations which are daily reaping and enjoying the fruits of reason, we find vast numbers of people who have an impression like that which Shakspeare puts into the mouth of Cæsar, "He thinks too much; such men are dangerous." Still more general is the notion that the man of ideas must be unpractical. It is easy to perceive the origin of that notion; it is suggested in the common saying, "That is well enough in theory, but it won't do in practice." Of course the phrase is a mistake; it should be, "That is wrong in theory, for it won't do in practice;" but it discloses the fact that there has been so much false reasoning in the world that many have come to distrust reason itself.

And just here arises a misunderstanding and a quarrel between the theorist and the practical man. One says the error is in the theory, the other that it is

in the application of it. Among educated people the matter would be tested by experiment. Science, for instance, has long affirmed that when salt water freezes it loses its saltness; but the Arctic explorers melting the sea-ice found it so briny that they could not drink it. The result is, of course, a revision of theory by experiments which will probably show that the salt does not remain strictly in the ice, but between its crystals, that the theory is not wrong but requires more careful statement to include the practical fact. In this way the old feud between theory and practice has entirely ceased from the domain of science.

· But it is in religion that we find the distrust of reason most intense and familiar. On that distrust Christianity is founded. Christ appealed to reason; but Christianity has very little to do with him; it relapses into barbaric ages and finds its corner-stone in a fable that the first effort of intellect led to the corruption of the whole human race. It said that when God made man and woman he put them into a paradise for enjoyments sensual and sensuous. The one thing he was opposed to was knowledge. So resolute was the Creator on that point, that he did not hesitate to accompany his prohibition of that one fruit with a deception. He told them that on the very day they should eat of the tree of Knowledge they would die. The serpent persuaded the woman that this was a

fiction, as it proved to be. The truthful serpent also said, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil," and no sooner was the fruit eaten than Jehovah, making no mention of what he had said about their dying, acknowledged the veracity of the serpent. "Behold," he said, "the man is become as one of us (gods) to know good and evil." Then, lest the gods should have no advantage at all, and man should eat of another fruit and become immortal, the first pair were expelled from Paradise. This fable, which represents the first priestly scream against education, shows us a deity cursing knowledge and a demon encouraging it; it shows a deity trying to delude man to remain in ignorance, while the demon speaks the truth, and secures the birth of intelligence for man and woman, where Jehovah meant them to live only the life of the senses. On that fable the whole Plan of Salvation is founded. The knowledge gained that day brought on mankind the curse of total depravity, and doom of eternal torture. To avert that the Son of God became incarnate on earth and suffered in a few years all the agonies which the whole human race would have suffered if every man, woman and child that ever lived were damned to all eternity. All of this is meaningless, and the whole theology of Christendom mere chaff, except to avert the wrath and undo the curse which fell from a deity jealous of the attain-

ments of his own creature, upon man, because of his first endeavour to gain knowledge.

Fortunately, while that is the theology it is not the religion, and still less the morality of this country. It is a sublime example of the kind of theory which does not do in practice. Nevertheless we must not under-rate the results of the long pressure of instructions like these upon every human being through a period of sixteen hundred years. Even now, in the most enlightened nations, the money devoted to teach that theology is counted by millions where the money devoted to pure knowledge is counted by tens. And we need not wonder that the spirit of that old curse on knowledge still survives to haunt every seeker of it for its own sake. It is still strong enough to cast a certain odium on the tasks of reason. To the popular mind there is something uncanny about the rationalist, which means a reasoner, and the sceptic—literally, he who considers a thing—has still an evil name. Thousands who shout for every other kind of freedom will cry down freethought. They will mourn over an enslaved African thousands of miles away, but have no tears to shed for fettered minds at their own door.

Nay, even among those liberated from the old theology, how much suspicion of reason do we encounter! How often do we hear such speak of science as cold, and of the intellect as inferior to something

they call faith or intuition ! They who have no doubts about reason are still comparatively few. And yet our age is full of the grandest facts and illustrations, proving that it is among the devotees of reason and science that the divinest life and fire of our age is manifest. I have just been reading a history, written by the leading rationalist minister in America, of what is called "the transcendental movement" in that country.\* And it is well called a "movement;" for the chief impressiveness of it lies in the fact that what had been mainly a speculative philosophy in Europe, there, among one of the most shrewd and practical nations of the world, blazed out into a movement, a noble enthusiasm for humanity, a passionate religion which kindled the hearts of young men and women, and made them Reformers, Apostles, Martyrs, who gave up all their goods for the poor, who brought glad tidings to woman and lifted the heaviest burthens of her life, and who broke off the bonds of the slave. There was not an orthodox man or woman among them. They were rationalists. The Bible they studied was Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason," Goethe's Works, Carlyle's Essays, Cousin's Philosophy: the ideas of Europe became ideals in America, rose up like pillars of flame; they became a

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\* Transcendentalism in New England. A History. By Octavius Brooks Frothingham. New York: E. P. Putman & Sons, 1876.



gospel in the genius of Emerson, the mind of Parker, and the heart of Margaret Fuller, and under its charm humble people formed themselves in communities, ceasing to care for worldly wealth and honours. There is no type of character that is beautiful in the past which did not reappear. St. Francis d'Assisi, Fenelon, Madame Guion, Berkeley, Sydney, they all had true counterparts in the piety, devotion, virtue, and genius which characterised that movement. This is the hundredth birth-year of America as a nation; they who established its independence in the name of humanity were free-thinkers—Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, Thomas Paine—and they broke for ever the power of a priesthood in the State. And now remark, in that country where conscience is free, a hundred years has witnessed but one great religious movement—but one which corresponds with the movements under George Fox, and Wesley and Whitfield in this country—but one which exhibited power to command the passions, conquer selfishness, and trace itself in practical reforms and a new Church—and that one was a movement born of pure reason.

Such has ever been the work of reason where it has been set free. And yet there are eloquent men, like Père Hyacinthe, who are going about imploring the priests and prelates of Europe to make a holy alliance of Anglican, Greek, and Gallican Churches against

this terrible monster—Rationalism. I rejoice to hear they think there is need of a new league. It is a valuable testimony to the stream of tendency that makes for truth. But we must not allow the good father's confession, that many people are not only, like himself, denying that two and two make five, but even running into the excess of denying that two and two make three—a radicalism he so much deprecates—we must not allow that to make us over-confident. We must still face the fact that Reason is a sacrifice and a martyr amid the great institutions around us.

What is the history of nearly every child born in this country? The few who are brought up by rational methods, and taught to cultivate and obey reason as their highest guide, are hardly noticeable as to numbers. A large proportion are neglected, so far as Christian fables are concerned, but they are victims of popular superstitions, believe in ghosts and goblins, fortune-telling and the evil eye, their minds overgrown with rank weeds. The average Christian child is taught superstition above everything else! Other and true things may be taught, but they spring up only amid those briars which choke each other growth before it can bear its fruit. Cardinal, and bishop, and cabinet, alike agree that no seed of wheat shall be sown in any mind without a tare of fable or dogma beside it. Of what use is

geology if one believes that Jehovah created the universe in six days? What is the use of any science to a mind which believes that the laws of nature are arbitrary, have often been suspended, and may be changed and altered by the breath of a mortal's petition? There can be no reason cultivated where the law of cause and effect is disregarded. To believe in the connection of things that have no connection—for instance, that a man's word can raise the dead to life—is to strangle reason. To believe in an effect without adequate cause—for instance, that the world stopped revolving that a captain might have more daylight to fight by—vastates the mind. To believe in anything whatever for which there is no evidence, or insufficient evidence, is superstition; and the essence of superstition is that reason is dethroned and a mere compulsion of habit, fear, or self-interest set up in its place to direct the life.

Well, the ordinary studies of the average Christian child having thus been prevented from developing his reasoning powers in the direction of religion, he is completely subjected to the powerful stimulants of those preternatural fears and hopes which make the ordinary sanctions of what is called religion, but really is selfishness. He is warned to avoid certain things, and do others, because he will go to hell if he doesn't comply, but will enjoy eternal bliss if he

does,—motives of calculating self-interest, which it is the very mission of Reason to restrain and to remand for the work of mere physical self-preservation. While we despise the man who loves and serves a wife or a friend from such base calculations of interest, children are taught to love God and serve him for fear of punishment and hope of reward.

But let us follow the growth of the child thus instructed. The time comes when he must enter into life. Physical cares, business, the healthy work of the world claim him. Amid them he is pretty sure to discover that the theology he has been taught is not confirmed by experience. Then, haply, he may be able to assert the rights of his own reason. But, supposing he does not, one of several other results will follow. 1. He may believe that the doctrines he has been taught must have a formal homage as divine mysteries which he is not expected to understand, but only blindly to obey. 2. He may become a hypocrite. 3. He may become utterly indifferent to the whole thing, and utterly reckless. In either case his sacred reason has been sacrificed.

But do we fully appreciate the tragedy which has thus happened? Do we fully realise that even when men and women do not become either hypocrites or reckless, they are almost certain, as things now stand, to reach some day the appalling discovery that they

have wasted the best years of their life on a sham and a fraud?

In the twenty-five years during which I have been in a position to receive the confidences of those who were struggling amid doubts, and in the pangs of transition, the chief agonies I have witnessed have been those whose awakening came too late for opportunities to be recovered. Youth is gone, enthusiasm has gone, the time for study and devotion for ever passed away, and the collective force of all the light around them enters at last only to bring the bitter consciousness that the glory of life has been cast away upon the barren deserts of delusion.

These are the martyrs whom every devotee of reason should see around him. There is no sorrow equal to theirs. No doubt rationalism may bring with it many trials so far as the world is concerned. There may be separations, friendships clouded, affections wounded; for superstition can turn hearts to stone even against their own blood where its authority is denied. There may be intellectual doubts, too, not to be satisfied, some loved legends vanishing, and some pretty dreams made dim along with the nightmares escaped. But amid all these there is nothing half so terrible as the fate of those who have no alternatives but either to slay their reason altogether, or to admit its testimony only to find that the whole life has been a gigantic mistake.

Therefore it is the high duty of every human being to maintain openly and valiantly the verdict of his own faculties. Unfortunately the guardians of the young are so eager to teach them how to say prayers, and keep sanctimonious on Sunday, and to refrain from kneeling down to graven images, that few have ears to hear the great decalogue announced in their own time. The first of the new commandments is this,—Seek truth! and the second is like unto it, Live the Truth in thought, word, and deed! So little has the virtue of self-truthfulness been taught, that we often meet people who actually make a merit of concealing their convictions, especially if they think they are thereby saving somebody's feelings. There is a great deal of selfishness, as well as sentiment, sheltered under Paul's dangerous maxim about being all things to all men, and a great deal of Jesuitism hides itself under Christ's admonition against casting pearls before swine, which is true only if read by the light of his own martyrdom for speaking the truth. As a rule the men and women you meet are not swine, and you need not fear to offer them—it is cruel to refuse them—your pearls of truth and sincerity. Many of them, indeed, are going about silently seeking those very pearls. No doubt there are times for reserve, no doubt there are rocks of prejudice and ignorance which have to be slowly pulverised into a soil before any seed can

be sown in them. But no one will ever lack wisdom for all occasions who is animated purely by that love which is not seeking his own, nor vaunting himself, but seeking only to advance Truth. Reason supplies an instinct adequate to all emergencies. Remember again what reason is, and the ground of its supremacy ! Remember now and always, that its very soul is disinterestedness. It is the clear vision of the mind as it rises above all the considerations of self-interest, prejudice, conventionality, passion, which would lower and discolour its pure light. Reason is to see things as they are, and not as majorities or institutions say they are, or wish them to be. And it is just as much as a mind can do to keep that holy lamp burning steadily through life in a world where the most powerful threats and bribes are continually used to sway and pervert the judgment. In legal affairs no judge is allowed to decide a case involving his own interest ; a heavy punishment follows any attempt to bribe judge or jurymen. So we can get just verdicts. But how are we to get just verdicts on religious questions, when untold millions and all social advantages are set apart by Church and State to influence every mind in favour of creeds and dogmas, as against pure reason ? We can hope for a true verdict only from those who have ascended above such considerations, and surrender themselves wholly to the guidance of reason and right.

When the poet Heine was in Paris, poor, sick, wretched, he renounced his rationalism. His friends in Germany heaped scorn upon him. Heine then wrote:—"They say Heine has changed and become a reactionist. Ah, well, lately I went to the Louvre, and knelt before our lady of Milo. Many tears did I shed as I gazed upon her beautiful form and face, but I rose and left her, for she had no arms. She had no arms, and I was poor and needy." So he turned to our lady of the Church, for she had arms and hands, all full of rich gifts to reward any poet for singing her praises.

We cannot help feeling compassion for those who yield to rich and powerful superstition the homage which is due to reason alone: but the standard cannot be lowered, whoever may go away sorrowful. He alone is a true man who stands firm to the mandate of the Sinai within him, and sees that whatever may bend or break, it shall not be his fidelity to truth.



