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EDITOR: E. HALDEMAN-JULIUS
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Ignorance Breeds Injustice--But the Free Mind Recognizes Human Rights

By E. HALDEMAN-JULIUS

1. What Are Human Rights?

It is a large subject—that of human rights—and a sadly (needlessly?) confused subject, variously emphasized and questioned and disputed, not to be finally settled in a brief essay nor in this our time. Yet there are certain broad principles which may be stated with some confidence and which may be regarded as characteristic of the free man's attitude. To put it another way, there are certain prejudices and dogmas, contrary to the rights of man, which are indefensible in the light of modern thought and which any man, freely and fairly thinking for himself, must condemn with proper spirit.

As religious authority so called has declined it has been possible to have a clearer view of the rights of man. We are no longer bound, for example, by the superstition of divine right—the divine right of kings or priests or any ruling class—nor of a divine arrangement which has placed men in certain stations, high and low and middling, where they infallibly justly belong and in which they should remain content. In this democratic modern society, we have developed away (comparatively at least and in broad leading principle) from the notion of servility and submission as due from one class to another; true, we have class distinctions, and the snobbery and inequality thereupon attending, but we have not the medieval class spirit—indeed, within the space of a century our feeling about humanity has been wonderfully broadened and, let us say, humanized. One may question whether a just regard for humanity and a consideration of the rights of liberty could ever have been possible so long as the idea of God as a supernatural monarch had strong prevalent force. With doubt and criticism of the idea of a "heavenly kingdom," there grew doubt and criticism of earthly kings and their kingdoms, of all pretensions to infallible right and rule. Skepticism is the first breath of human emancipation.

When a man asks upon what authority certain claims and pretensions are founded, he asserts the first principle of liberty. Observe, too, that there is a necessary distinction between liberty and anarchy. Certain laws must be obeyed; but we want to know whether they are just laws, and certainly we should inquire as to their origin and meaning and ultimate, as well as immediate, results. Some men may well have authority and leadership; but we want to know critically the source of their authority and the direction of their leadership; we may concede a great deal to the superior man, but we rebel at making our genuflexions before the merely tyrannical and arrogant man; the authority of merit we may respect, but not the authority of injustice or accident; we are bound not blindly to submit to power, but to examine and understand it—to make it justify itself not simply in active assertion but in thoughtful deed.

Whether with regard to ideas or government or any human relations, the spirit of liberty demands critical question and proof. We are not to accept ideas because they are imposingly or arbitrarily presented to us—because they emanate from a source that is powerful or respectable—because certain eminent men announce such ideas or because they are popularly acceptable. A church, a party, a government cannot, by its mere declarations, compel us to believe this and so—our right of individual judgment is not to be denied. Once we dismiss the consideration of authority (in its aspect merely of power, not of knowledge) and emphasize the consideration of truth, we are applying the principle of intellectual liberty. Ideas should have a convincing, not a compulsory, power. It is the ideas which should convince us, not the social or traditional power back of the ideas which should compel us.

And we must make some decision. It may be intelligent, or it may be ignorant, but we must decide for ourselves, very consciously or with little thought or awareness. He who perhaps was the most rationally thoughtful of "the New England school"—Oliver Wendell Holmes—expressed it as follows: "We all have to assume a standard of judgment in our own minds, either of things or persons. A man who is willing to take another's opinion has to exercise his judgment in the choice of whom to follow, which is often as nice a matter as to judge of things for one's self. On the whole, I had rather judge men's minds by comparing their thoughts with my own, than judge of thoughts by knowing who utters them. I must do one or the other." It is far better, then, concerning questions of human right and reason to cultivate the habit of judging for one's self rather than to place dependence upon any other's opinion. Nothing is better than free individual thought, even though at times it may be mistaken; its mistakes will not be so many as those which follow upon blind, thoughtless trust in others.

To be sure, there are matters of fact concerning which scientific authority must be taken; a man cannot simply depend upon reasoning about astronomy, for example, but must take the word of men who have specially studied this science (unless, as few of us are able to do, he specially studies it for himself). More fairly stated, all our reasoning upon any subject must have an eye upon facts, and facts are more readily, commonly accessible in some departments of knowledge than in others. If a man is well-read and has observed life to some purpose—if he is intelligent and experienced but not necessarily a scholar—he is qualified to have ideas concerning human nature and government and morality and the relations most familiarly important and disputed among men; yet in biology or geology or chemistry he may be incompletely or inaccurately instructed—he may accept the statement of a scientist about the latter's speciality, but he will not regard the scientist as a perfect, unquestionably authoritative guide in all the relations of life. An Einstein, for instance, may have prejudiced and unconvincing ideas about government or morality; with such questions any intelligent man is familiar and is able to judge for himself—and should judge for himself, his worst mistakes being the result of taking uncritically the judgments of others. What is a star composed of? We must ask the scientist. What is man—or human nature—composed of? Here too we must learn a great deal from science, but even so our own experience has enabled us to judge somewhat of human nature, of human rights, of the just relations between men, of what constitutes a rational life.

Strictly speaking, all ideas should be scientific, which means that they should be based upon facts reasonably understood and applied (for one can be unreasonable about the significance of the place one gives to a fact). Some facts are familiar and easily discovered by any man for himself; others are ascertained with difficulty and by rare, extensive, scholarly investigation; and specialism makes a man scientific in one field while he is unscientific in another field. Undoubtedly Sir Oliver Lodge knows more about physics than you or I; yet we are quite able to detect the bunk in his spiritualistic belief. In a humbler way, a garage mechanic may be scientific in his knowledge of an automobile and its workings, yet reason very poorly about life. And a politician may be very clever at getting votes and playing one interest of expediency against another yet understand very little about the art or science of government. A preacher may be familiar with all the subtle points of doctrine appealing to his creed, yet be utterly unscientific and unconvincing as a thinker and, indeed, wrong about practically every question of life.

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I have referred to the art or science of government, although

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one may call it artifice and an arbitrary, not necessarily true or noble, science; but, with respect to government, there are some truths that should be clear to every intelligent man and that are not to be put out of the reckoning by any esoteric claim to knowledge. Government, of course, depends on power—and power may sustain an unjust rule. From this viewpoint (of power alone) every successful government is vindicated. Thus the worst despotism, if it is effective, has as much authority as the freest republic. But intelligently we ask, Why should one man rule over another? We use our critical sense, too, for the purpose of making any form of government justify itself in our own minds as good or bad—good, mind you, for the governed rather than for the governors. In the view of the free man, no government is justified merely by tradition or by a written framework of constitutional authority or by any "sacred" general principles which have not the force of intellectual, realistic conviction. Patriotism or loyalty, as commonly understood, is a poor substitute-name for slavery, meaning that a man surrenders his own convictions of right and wrong to a self-constituted or privileged council of governors. Government is still unjust today and challenges the criticism of intelligent men, although the principles of social and governmental authority are seen in a clearer light than formerly.

And as regards the broad principles of government, all intelligent men (granting that they are at the same time just and, relatively, unselfish) must be agreed—they must be agreed, for example, that all government "derives its just powers from the consent of the governed" and, furthermore (perhaps this is even more important) that social government must always be tempered by a due, even by a delicately fine, regard for the rights of the individual. It is a particularly vicious interpretation of democracy which would make a majority vote the deciding influence in the lives of all men. Here we see indeed the theory and the foundation of such a tyranny as has never, for potential evil, been equalled by any more individual, kindly, or class-dictated tyranny of the past. I say that this tyranny is as bad in essence as any other, although it is not so complete in extent nor so utterly regardless of human rights. It is, in a word, not easier to tolerate tyranny when it is practiced in the name of democracy.

And so with morality, which involves questions of government, social opinion, and a philosophy of life: the free man is critical of (by no means indifferent to) moral ideas, challenging any man's claim to dictate arbitrarily to his fellows what is right and wrong for them. All power, all so-called authority, is profane in a variety of abuses. We can trust no man nor group to exercise a moral guardianship over us, but must, in some sense, decide these things for ourselves. It is always our right to put the question: Why is this good and why is that bad? Intelligently, too, we are careful about making absolute distinctions of good and bad: what is bad for one (i. e., unsuited to his needs or perhaps misused by him) may be well enough for another; and, again, if a man feels that certain conduct is bad, although intrinsically it is not, it does not follow that his meticulous morality should be binding upon all others.

However, this is not the place to discuss morality but only to emphasize human rights in relation to morality. A moral dictatorship is impossible, just as moral censorship in art and literature and recreation is impertinent, generally frivolous (that is to say, false and trivial in its reasons and motives), and, with scarcely an exception, ignorant. It is a big enough job for any man to manage himself, without claiming the privilege of dictating to other people. And actually, every man has the right to do wrong, so long as he does not interfere with the rights (I do not say the feelings or prejudices) of someone else.

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It is also a particularly odious fact about the moral tendency, as it has been zealously manifested in certain groups and most conspicuously in certain periods, that it has been unjustly, unintelligently, and unnaturally oppressive: we find it setting up the most absurd taboos, trying to kill the joy of life, demanding that human nature deny itself somberly and fearfully. Puritanism, as it has been exhibited for instance in the United States, has plainly been an oppressive force which all men of free spirit, who believe in human rights (and who have more over a clear rational conception of human rights) must firmly oppose. It is true that this Puritanism has not been entirely successful: it is none the less an affront to the free personality and is incompatible with any sound conception of liberty; and in the category of human nuisances, a place at the top of the list belongs to the man who tries to impress forcibly or by unfair methods certain dogmas of virtue upon his fellows. For that matter, evangelism, even when it relies upon persuasion or moral threats rather than upon



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force, is a nuisance insofar as it is thrust upon persons who do not wish to hear it: here I refer to the type of man who is always going around, personally, trying to convert others: he is a bore and a nuisance, and he has that spirit of dogmatism—of fanaticism—which is naturally associated with tyranny.

You will understand now my perfectly simple and just conception of the rights of man—at least of the first principle that must be granted, namely the right of free inquiry, criticism, thought, and differentiation. It is, roughly, a contrast between the medieval and the modern attitude: between the principle of unquestioning belief, unquestioning obedience, unquestioning conformity and the principle of intelligent, self-respecting judgment. I know what is often said about the impossibility of complete liberty; but I am not talking about complete liberty—only about reasonable, possible, socially tolerable and work-

It is clear that no man should be forced to be a slave in his own mind to the ideas of another—that free thought is indeed the only kind of thought worth while.

It is again certain that, while social order and direction are indispensable, tyranny is wrong and all claims to authority must be examined in the light of reason: to say that we must have social order is not to say that you or I should be blindly, utterly subject to the will of another or of others—and while this extreme demand is not made in our time, it is still true that there are forms of social, economic, and political subjection which are not reasonably defensible. We seem to be in the way of the governed; there is a tendency to brand criticism as treasonable; and private judgment—the dignified use of mind and taste—is confounded with anarchy.

And finally, we can have no doubt about the right of men to be masters over their own minds, so long as they do not follow an intolerable anti-social line of conduct which robs others of their rights. It is, in short, the right of every man, when belief is asked of him or compliance demanded, to put the critical inquiry: What is the nature of this pretended authority and what reason have I for believing or complying? Does this mean anarchy? No, it means a choice between freedom and tyranny. It is the idea which, still imperfectly but clearly even so, has been asserted in modern society.

2. Friends and Foes of Freedom

I have stated general but clearly guiding principles, and the details of their application would fill volumes—have indeed gone to fill the many volumes which have been devoted to a discussion of liberty, social justice, and the rights of man. The important fact to bear in mind is that these principles still need proclaiming, as they are not perfectly understood nor admitted by men. We still have ideas thrust upon us with dogmatic claims—not, of course, with the actual power of medieval bigotry but with the insistence that it is our duty to believe certain things and that we have no right to exercise our own thinking powers upon them. There is still too much arbitrariness—unreasonable arbitrariness—in government, and men are forced to submit to tyrannies which, being

(Continued on page three)

Did a Comet Strike the Earth? Some Facts We Have Learned About 'Old Serpents of the Skies'

By Maynard Shipley

THE recent official report of the Russian Academy of Science, on the earth's collision, in one of the Siberian provinces, with a meteoric mass of unequaled destructiveness, recalls to mind that a swarm of meteors is, after all, nothing less than a diminutive comet—or at least the fragments of a disintegrated comet. Three meteoric—or cometary—craters are now known. These will be described and interpreted presently.

But has the earth ever collided with a great comet? And, if such an event ever occurred, when was it? And what were the effects? The flame-enveloped meteoric swarm which struck the earth in Siberia with such disastrous results helps us to gain some idea of what it would mean to humanity were the earth to be even closely approached by the actual head of a comet—for the head of the great comet of 1811 was at one time more than a million miles in diameter!

Forty-five years ago there appeared a remarkable book from the press of D. Appleton and Company, called "Ragnarok: The Age of Fire and Gravel." It was written by that versatile and unique American, Ignatius Donnelly. By 1887 the eleventh edition had been issued.

Nowadays, when we think of Ignatius Donnelly, we immediately begin to smile. Oh, yes, he was the man who believed that William Shakespeare was Francis Bacon!

But Donnelly was also the author of "Atlantis: The Antediluvian World." Here the knowing ones smile again. Poor Donnelly! He believed that there once existed a great Atlantic island, made known to Solon by the Egyptian priests, and immortalized by Plato's not very clear description of the land "situated in front of the straits which you call the Columns of Hercules."

And still Donnelly's "imagination" was not yet exhausted. He believed also, and expounded in "Ragnarok," that a great comet, or perhaps (as ancient myths seemed to indicate) three comets, traveling tandem, struck the earth toward the close of the Pliocene epoch, bringing on a terrible conflagration which nearly destroyed mankind, and was subsequently the indirect cause of the Great Ice Age.

There does not, on the face of it, appear to be any connection between a terrestrial collision with a comet and an ensuing "great conflagration," followed by an age of ice. Donnelly was quite well aware of this apparent paradox. But it would be a great mistake to assume in advance that no cogent reasoning or array of indubitable facts could be adduced in support of this theory.

"Ragnarok" is not wholly, or mainly, a figment of the imagination, a mere romance. It was, in its day, a fairly solid work of scholarship—even, in large part, a work of science. It was precisely upon the works of Lyell, Geikie, Dana, Cross, J. D. Whitney, Winchell, Dawkins, and various state geological surveys, that Donnelly based his arguments.

Besides the data obtained from the most authoritative astronomical and geological sources of his time, he searched diligently the mythology or legends of the various peoples of antiquity—Egyptian, Babylonian, Chaldean, Hebrew, Arabian, Persian, Hindu, Greek, Roman, Gaul, Gael. He was convinced that "the common belief of antiquity, as expressed in universal tradition, was much more likely to be true than the written opinions of a few prejudiced individuals."

In the recorded legends of a people, Donnelly contended, one finds embodied real history, while what was commonly regarded as "history" was, in fact, merely a record of "the passions of factions, the hates of sects, or the servility and venality of historians."

Donnelly believed, with the famous American historian H. H. Bancroft, that "no religious belief, however crude, nor any historical tradition, however absurd, can be held by the majority of a people for any considerable time as true, without having had in the beginning some foundation in fact." But, as he observed, "we cannot depend upon either the geography or the chronology of a myth."

THERE is a universal tendency to give the ancient legend a new habitat, hence "we have Ararat and Olympuses all over the world. In the same way the myth is always brought down and attached to more recent events." (The more ancient sun-gods, he might have added, become at last "Jesus of Nazareth.")

This is partly due, Donnelly explains, to the incapacity of the [primitive?] mind to invent an entirely new story not based upon are simply a recollection of the comet—the comet, or comets, that in the long ago crashed

upon the earth, bringing on "the great conflagration," are embodied in all the mythologies of antiquity, and reflected even in the writings of some of the greater Greek philosophers or physicists.

So, for Donnelly, it is utterly impossible that the races of the whole world, of all the continents and islands, could have preserved traditions from the most remote ages, of a comet's having struck the earth, of the "great heat," the "conflagration," followed by the widely-prevalent cave-life, the "age of darkness," and the return—resurrection—of the sun, unless these universally prevalent stories had a basis in actual human experience. "It is," he concludes, "not possible for the primitive mind to have imagined these things if they had never occurred."

In supporting his conviction that one or more comets struck the earth in very ancient times—possibly in the Pliocene, the geological epoch preceding the Age of Ice (Pleistocene)—Donnelly cites remarkable passages from the legends of many ancient peoples, all of which embody, he attempts to show, actual occurrences, the stories of which were handed down from age to age. In many of these legends mention is made of more than one "monster in the sky," of two or three at the same time.

There is nothing incredible in all this, from the viewpoint of modern astronomy. Biela's comet, on its return to our sun in 1845, was actually seen to split and form two separate objects. Ephoras, a Greek writer of the fourth century B. C., had, according to Seneca, recorded the observation of a comet that divided into two parts. On June 27, 416 A. D., two comets appeared in the constellation Hercules, "and pursued nearly the same path" (Kirkwood). The Chinese annals record the appearance of three comets—one large and two smaller ones—at the same time, in the year 896 A. D. "They traveled together for three days," says Kirkwood. The two smaller ones disappeared first and then the large one.

In 1882 there were two bright comets, one of them clearly visible in broad daylight. It was a comet of enormous proportions, with a head about 150,000 miles in diameter, and with a tail extending through space for a distance exceeding that of the sun from the earth. (But the tail of the comet of 1843 was at one time two hundred million miles in length!) As the 1882 comet receded from the sun, its head was seen to break up into several nuclear masses, each pursuing an independent path. Surrounding the nucleus, as it approached the sun, was a luminous envelope tens of thousands of miles in diameter; and at one time there extended from these gases (the so-called "coma") an enormous sheath (the dragon's fiery tongue of the myths) several million miles long, directed toward the sun.

Another comet seen to divide into several parts was Brooks' (1889). The comets of 1843, 1880, 1882, and 1887 traveled tandem, and, says Todd, "originally were probably one huge comet." In 1872 Kirkwood had already published a list of eight comets which had divided into two independent bodies. So we need not be skeptical when the ancient myths tell of two or more "fiery serpents" seen together; or of one or more "dragons," "breathing fire," which attempted to "devour the sun."

I MYSELF witnessed in 1882, as a boy, a phenomenon which primitive men would have so described, when the brighter of the two comets of that year passed between the earth and the sun, in actual transit. Just before entering upon the disk, the intrinsic brightness of the nucleus rivaled that of the sun itself—a worthy foe, in the eyes of ancient man, of that redoubtable god!

Later, in the evolution of the tribe or state, the priests turned these legends to good account. The fiery serpents were sent by the gods to destroy the wicked—to wit, those unruly individuals who resented or ignored the ordinances and oppressions of priests and kings. Finally, statements from "the Word of God" were offered in proof of the supernatural nature of comets; and for seventeen centuries "beliefs were held which fostered the worst forms of fanaticism."

But did any comet (fiery dragon) ever actually attack the earth with disastrous results? Is it possible that some comet, at present unknown, will, any day or night, strike the earth and destroy vast numbers of "the wicked"?

According to the estimates made by mathematical astronomers, a head-on collision with a comet would not be likely to take place, on the average, more than once in every 15,000,000 years. But the "once" may, of course, have occurred during Pliocene times, or in the early

Pleistocene, and the "average" collision might occur within the present year!

Passage of the earth through the tail of a comet would be likely to occur much more frequently. It is well known that the earth plunged into the tail of a comet or June 30, 1861, and there are reliable records of one or two more such encounters. There can be no doubt that the earth has passed through comets' tails many times since the advent of man—and, so far as we know, with no baneful effects. Yet it is well known that the deadly poison, carbon monoxide gas, is a principal constituent of cometary tails.

Donnelly violated no principle of science in believing that he had presented, in "Ragnarok," not only mythological and traditional evidence but also convincing physical evidence of a disastrous collision of the earth with one or more comets in pre-glacial times.

As a matter of fact, we now have knowledge of three events which might indeed represent collision of the earth with the head of a small comet; or with a gigantic meteor; or possibly with a swarm of meteors. The first, and best known is the cup-shaped "meteor crater" in central Arizona, situated some miles east of Canyon Diablo. The crater was made in a flat, treeless plain, under which lie undisturbed horizontal sedimentary rocks. The hole is about four-fifths of a mile in diameter, and some 450 feet deep, not counting the height of the rim—which, says D. M. Barringer, Jr., rises on an average 120 feet above the plain. This gives a total depth of about 570 feet below the crater's rim. To quote the same good authority:

"Mixed with these fragments around the hole and on the plain a short distance from it there have been found a far greater number of iron meteorites than have been found on all the rest of the earth's surface put together" (Scientific American, July, 1927).

Dr. Elihu Thomson, director of the Thomson Laboratory of the General Electric Company, says: "There can be no question of the crater's being made by masses of meteoric iron, and that an enormous mass of such iron remains buried under the south wall of the crater." Many of the surface meteorites contain microscopic diamonds, which shows that they originated from a fused mass containing carbon which was slowly cooling under great pressure.

Following the lesson given by meteorites, Professor Henri Moissan was able to produce his artificial diamonds. (The falling of pre-

cious stones is mentioned in many of the ancient myths concerning the prehistoric comet and conflagration.) Moissan melted pure iron with sugar charcoal in an arc furnace, then plunged the molten mass into cold water. The pressure produced by the quick chilling of the outer crust was supposed to convert the carbon so that it would crystallize from the iron solution as diamond and not graphite. Tiny diamonds were thus produced.

Near the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea, there is an island (part of Estonia) called Oesel or Saaremaa. There, close to the town of Kaali or Salle, is a crater very much like that in Arizona, only smaller. It is not more than 300 feet in diameter, and the surrounding wall is only about eighteen feet above the level of the plain in which the depression occurs. In this instance it is not absolutely certain that the depression was caused by the impact of a meteor, but there are no signs of volcanic activity within hundreds of miles of the depression. The crater is about thirty feet in depth, but it may have been much deeper formerly. The rocks of the crater's rim are tilted up as if from the impact of a projectile, as is the case in the Arizona crater. Moreover, there are twelve or more smaller craters within a distance of half a mile from the largest depression. Some of these are a hundred feet in depth, though only about fifteen feet in diameter. No attempt to find the meteor which may lie at the bottom of the hole has as yet been made. But we may safely assume that this region also was struck by a small group of meteors—a miniature comet.

PASSING now to our third case, we approach a recent phenomenon that reminds us graphically of the catastrophe embodied in the ancient mythologies; while the events described as marvelous in the old chronicles of comparatively modern times are quite surpassed by this late occurrence. Had the encounter to be described occurred in, say, New York City instead of in the remote province of Yenisei, Siberia, that great metropolis would probably have been totally destroyed. A similar, or worse, encounter might, of course occur any day, anywhere.

Although the gigantic meteoric fall, or collision, which raised such havoc in one of the most inaccessible parts of central Siberia, occurred as long ago as June 30, 1908, it was only during the present year that an official report concerning the enormous celestial mis-

The Houdini-Spiritualist Hoax

E. W. Hutter, on the scene in New York, tells the inside story of the Houdini-Spiritualist Hoax, in the April Debunker. It was maintained that Houdini's "spirit" had communicated with living relatives—featured in the press not long ago. What could—that did this mean? Read about it in the sham-smashing magazine!

In the April 1929 Debunker

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... or missiles, was made. It was not very long before rumors of the meteoric fall began to reach Russian scientific circles; but for years nothing was done about it, owing to the known difficulties that would be experienced in reaching the region affected. Finally an exploration party was sent out by the Academy of Sciences of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, under the leadership of Professor L. A. Kulik. After all but insuperable difficulties, the site of the fall was discovered, and a merely preliminary investigation was made of what has justly been described as "one of the most spectacular events in the whole history of the world," or "the most astonishing phenomenon of its kind in scientific annals."

In his report to the Astronomical Society of the Pacific, Mr. N. T. Bobrovnikoff states that the ground where the meteor—or swarm of meteors, virtually a small comet—struck the earth is torn and furrowed over an area several miles in distance. Seismographs at Kirensk and Irkutsk, 300 and 800 miles, respectively, from the site of the encounter, registered the shocks. At Kirensk a barograph registered the accompanying air disturbance. At the nearest settlement, fifty miles distant, two farmers were knocked down by the terrific impact of the air-waves and scorched by the heat engendered by the terrible impact of the missiles. Mr. Bobrovnikoff reports that both the heat-wave and the air disturbance were felt at a railway station four hundred miles distant.

The official report, translated by Dr. A. Vyssotsky, of the Observatory Staff of the University of Virginia, for Dr. Charles P. Olivier, astronomer of that institution, gives an account of the fall as witnessed by a peasant, S. B. Seminov, who was on that date at the station Vanovara. Dr. Olivier quotes as follows, in his authentic discussion of the event (Scientific American, July, 1928):

"About eight o'clock in the morning, I had been sitting on the porch with my face to the north, and at this moment in the north-west direction appeared a kind of fire which produced such a heat that I could not stand it. . . . And this overheated miracle I guess had a size of at least half a mile. But the fire did not last long. I had only time to lift up my eyes and it disappeared. Then it became dark, and then followed an explosion which threw me down from the porch about six feet or more . . . but I heard a sound as if all houses would tremble and move away. Many windows were broken, a large strip of ground was torn

away, and at the warehouse the iron bolt was broken."

We have no record, says Professor Kulik in his report, of the fall of any other meteoric mass which brought along with it a vast envelope of hot gases, and which did damage over a large area. But if a mere meteoric fall, covering a small region, could do such havoc, what would happen if a large comet struck the earth head on?

THE ancient legends, Donnelly contends, do tell us, with certain variations, just what did happen in an age long before any written documents known to us were produced. The memory of that dire event was never allowed to become obscure among the ancients. Hesiod, in his "Theogony," Donnelly believed, wrote only a genuine historical account when he described the catastrophic assault of the terrible sky serpent who, with Typhaon (Typhaeus) begot the monster Chimera, "that breathes resistless fire, fierce, huge, swift." But Typhaon, associated with both these dragons (comets), is the most dreadful (largest) monster of all, "with dusky tongues and fire gleaming; sending forth dreadful noises and devastating winds, causing the earth to groan beneath the feet of vast Olympus"; while the boiling sea caused Pluto, monarch over the dead beneath, to tremble with fear. But the all-powerful Zeus, in high wrath, "leaped up" (to the comet in the sky) and smote him with his invincible thunderbolts. And when at length the god "had quelled it, after having smitten it with many blows, the monster fell down (collided with the earth) lamed, and huge Earth groaned. But the flame from the lightning-blasted monster flashed forth in the mountain hollows, . . . when he was stricken, and much was the vast Earth burnt and melted by the boundless vapor."

On a small scale, the meteoric fall of 1908, in the upper basin of the river Podkamennaja Tunguska, a sparsely settled region, wrought a catastrophe similar havoc. But, so far as we know, no human beings were injured: there were none there to suffer the consequences of the scorching vapors and falling missiles. Unfortunately, a herd of 1,500 tame reindeer was pastured near the site of the fall. Around this central area—fifteen or twenty miles in diameter—in a circle scores of miles in diameter, millions of trees were stripped of their branches and bark and thrown prostrate, every tree

pointing outward from the center, "like a vast forest of fallen nine-pins." The whole region for an area of several square miles is now desolate. "All the vegetation," says Dr. Olivier, "shows the effects of a uniform and continuous scorching, which does not in the least resemble the consequences of a great fire. The scorching is visible also on the moss and bushes, as well as the trees, and some signs of it appear as far out as six to ten miles from the center."

In the Elder Vedda (Scandinavian), there is a graphic account of what happened when "Surt flings fire over the earth, and burns all the world"—an allusion, according to Donnelly, to one of two or three simultaneously-appearing comets which brought, all but complete destruction to this planet. Thor achieves great renown by slaying "the Midgard-serpent"—one of the comets. But alas! (unlike Typhaon in the Greek version) the Norse god "retreats only nine paces when he falls to the earth dead, poisoned by the venom [vapors?] that the serpent blows upon him."

What happens when the earth encounters the Midgard-serpent (comet) is that:

Heroes go the way of Hel [the goddess of death].

Ignorance Breeds Injustice—But the Free Mind Recognizes Human Rights

Continued from page two

tyrannies, are not founded in true social need or just policy. There is still too much of a disposition prevalent and obnoxious to make us yield to moral rules, whether or not those rules have the sanction of our own taste and thought.

To put it shortly, not all men have come to believe in liberty; or, if they profess such a belief, it is evident that not all men know the meaning of liberty—nor do I refer to a precise meaning but to a free, broad, reasonable meaning. (Let me suggest here that disputes about the meaning of liberty are generally, if not entirely, disputes between those who believe and those who do not believe in liberty. Granted clearly and soundly the principle of freedom, and it is not so difficult for men to reach an agreement. But as a rule when a man attempts to define liberty, his real object is to deny liberty. To make use of an old saying in an expanded form, the will to be free and to let others be free will usually find a way.)

We may as well—indeed it is important that we should—recognize that there are certain forces yet operative in modern society which are hostile to the primary, fundamental principle of liberty. There are, for example, individuals, institutions, organizations which assert the absolute, unquestionable sacredness and supreme authority of certain beliefs, denying that men are rightfully and virtuously free to reject such beliefs. The old power to compel or punish terribly is gone. The penalty of the stake no more looms menacingly for the heretic. But if they have not the same actual power, these haters of intellectual liberty have the same pretensions. By every device and threat at their command, they seek to enslave, terrify and bludgeon minds. If they genuinely believe in freedom, they would base their appeal entirely upon reason and they would admit the fair and logical right of difference. But instead they are hopelessly committed to dogmatism. They offer us, so arrogantly (and, with the growth of the modern spirit, so, unimpressively and ineffectively) the choice of belief or damnation.

In matters of government, we find a similar spirit of opposition to liberty. Here the opponents of liberty have the apparent advantage that some social order and control is necessary—that government, even though it be called an evil, is an indispensable evil. Starting from the commonly undisputed assumption that we must have law and organization, these anti-libertarians place every obstacle they can in the way of the free judgment and impulse of the individual. They seem at times to fly to the opposite extreme, and to assert that no man can be in any way or significance a law unto himself.

Yet, if we reflect, we must realize that no social order would be possible at all if men were not, to a considerable extent, their own lawgivers. After all, the integrity and safety of the social organization—the workableness of laws and the power of government—depends greatly upon the sensible, willing recognition of men. Suppose we were all anarchists at heart; suppose we were all unreasonable, unfair, indifferent to decency and right and efficiency—a poor social order we should have. Really, as individuals we furnish the power of the laws which we

And heaven is rent in twain.
All men abandon their homesteads
When the warden of Midgard
In wrath slays the serpent.
The sun grows dark,
The earth sinks into the sea,
The bright stars
From heaven vanish;
Fire blazes,
And high flames play
'Gainst heaven itself.

Without passing judgment at this time on Donnelly's theory that this intense heat, meeting the cold air of the upper atmosphere, caused an enormous precipitation of snow and the formation of gigantic ice-sheets, we see that we have very good evidence of the possibility—even the probability—of a collision between a comet and the earth such as he contended occurred in the Pliocene. We find that throughout all past ages rulers and priests have used this ancient tradition of fire and flood to scare their subjects into submission and docility—"law and order." There was always the threat that "that old Serpent," the comet, breathing fire and destruction, would visit on them a righteous punishment for their various sins and iniquities!

is perfectly capable of thinking for himself and therein lies his intellectual safety. He is certainly amenable to the just, essential demands of social order yet does not by that token surrender his identity and integrity as an individual. He has a code of morals, and he is indeed morally self-conscious and self-governing, but it does not follow that he agrees with the professional moralists: in fact, his very conscientious and scrupulous individualism places him above and beyond these crude representatives of biography.

But, as I have said, in discussing liberty we cannot confine our attention to the free-minded persons. If they were alone to be considered or if they were in the majority, the issue would be simple enough. Between free-minded persons no very serious quarrel is conceivable. Certainly, no such quarrel is probable where men agree upon the fundamental, guiding principles of liberty. Our trouble all comes from those men who suspect, fear, or hate liberty. Tyrants and bigots—they are our natural enemies.

There is another view in which this subject of the rights of man must be regarded. It is not entirely a question of formal, acknowledged government. It is not utterly a question of command and power. Aside from the great governmental and social compulsions, there remains the issue of individual judgment. Each man, in a word, may be an enemy or a preserver of liberty. It depends upon the fairness of each man's judgment. We are, in fact, tested every day, in our simplest dealings with our neighbors, concerning our belief in liberty and our willingness to concede (or our ability to understand) the rights of man.

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There is a great deal of justice which is not enforced by government. It is not clearly finally written in the social compact. It is, arbitrarily and unfairly, visited by one man upon another as a matter of individual intolerance. We must in our daily relations have a certain attitude toward our fellows; we must grant or deny them certain rights; we must judge them generously or narrowly; we must, in a broad way, let them live their own lives or we must try to make them live our lives. Necessarily, in all our contacts we are placed in the position of judges of human rights. We must decide what is due to our neighbor, either positively or negatively—either in our cooperation with him or in our letting him alone. We must have some standard of opinion, fair or unfair, by which we are guided.

It does not, from our present point of view, make any difference whether our standards can be enforced or not: the essential question is whether they are enlightened and defined by a due sense of human rights. Consider, for example, the attitude of toleration. It is a just attitude and will be sensitively, generously operating in the mind of any one who genuinely respects the rights of others. We have, reasonably speaking, no right to hate others or to damn them to or persecute them for holding different opinions. It is very well to use persuasion with them, provided they are willing to listen; it is all very well to believe that they are misinformed or prejudiced or bound to untrue notions; but it is not our business to withhold from them fair dealing on account of their contrary beliefs.

Yet how common is this form of injustice! It can even be said (and sadly, shamefully, be it said) that the average man unjustly denies the very human right of anyone's differing from his opinion. He is a stickler, without reason or generosity, for common-place conformity. Of course, with his average neighbor he has no serious quarrel about ideas, for they are agreed in their average notions. But let a curious or contradictory idea be expressed and at once the whole community signifies its intense objection, its persecution, its denial of intellectual liberty.

And we are not more just in our attitude toward governmental demands. For instance, in the war with Germany the average man would make no allowance for the conscientious or reasonable objections of anyone who opposed that war. The demand was for absolute loyalty, without regard to intellectual or human or moral considerations. If any man thought that war was a folly or a crime, still it was demanded that he give it his support, his money, and even his life. International crime—international rapine and murder—was in that instance glorified falsely, insidiously,

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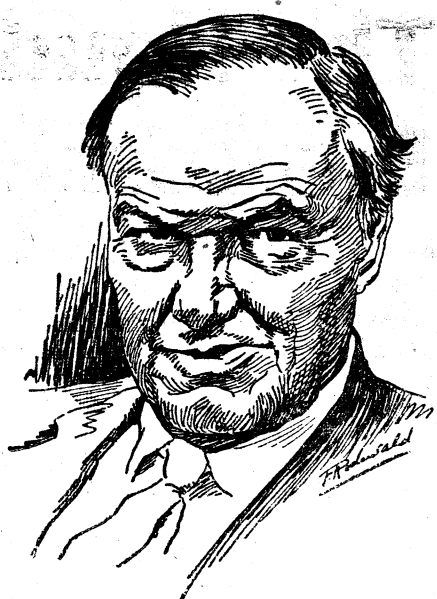
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and viciously with the flag name of patriotism.

But it still is true that if you follow your neighbor, if you follow the crowd, if you follow your leader, unthinkingly and inhumanly, you are surrendering your own right to intelligent and moral judgment.

There is a similar handicap and an equal injustice in applying rigid moral criteria to the behavior of men. What you think or say about the conduct of your neighbors, who certainly should have equal rights with yourself, will depend upon your willingness to grant justice. If you think that you have a right to dictate to your neighbors what their behavior shall be, that will carry with it one very evil and dangerous attitude. But if you respect your neighbors' rights, their difference in ideas and tastes, that will just as surely guard you against intolerance. The average man is inclined to judge others harshly and narrowly—that is, if he judges them at all. (Let me say that there are many persons who are not particularly cultured nor intelligent who have at least this virtue that they let others go their own way without criticism—they are far more to be admired than the evangelical zealots who are always trying to convert somebody.)

What I wish to emphasize is that our application of justice is not entirely, nor even largely, a question of governmental laws nor distinct and absolute power. It is largely a question of fair and humane opinion. In this modern time, loose or informal social influences have taken the place of what, in old times, was the force of absolute law. Ostracism is nowadays a more important force than legal persecution. The popular sentiment of injustice is more effective than any formal, governmental decree of injustice. It is all the more important, therefore, that we should individually correct our ideas of human relations and—if we do not perhaps agree in every least detail—unite on certain principles of right and liberty. We confront every day not simply a government of laws but of human opinion—and it is our duty to make that opinion more humane, more just, and more intelligent. We must recognize always the fundamental rights of man.

3. The Sense of Justice

I am sure that sentimentality is among the worst enemies of clear thinking. If you say to me that a certain man has an abundance of good will and susceptible emotions and easily excited nerves, I shall not place much dependence upon the judgments of that man. Far better in my view is the man who is cold and unemotional yet who has, intellectually, a sense of justice. Fair thoughts and actions are far better than fair feelings. Mere emotion leads many men astray. Just criticism is always safer.

For when it is a question of the rights of man, thought is much more dependable than feeling. Our emotions may be enlisted in behalf of the worst injustice—witness the occasions in history when men have bravely, passionately stood in defense of the most outrageous course. Slavery was defended by men who could derive no possible benefit from it. Religious bigotry was defended on principle by its very victims, by men who could not possibly have been more happy or more powerful by the victory of the leading bigots. Monarchy was defended by men who were the slaves of that false, ridiculous system of government. Always, unjust things have had the support of men who were emotionally susceptible but not reasonably critical.

If we were to judge by emotions alone, they have been, for the greater part of man's history, on the side of injustice. It is true that the rights of man have had an emotional inspiration, but far more important has been the just intellectual declaration of human rights. Justice is essentially not a question of feeling but of thought.

There is one way indeed in which justice is essentially dependent upon true thought and a clear recognition of facts: What has this man done that he should be praised or condemned? What is there about this idea that it should be accepted or rejected? What is there concerning this policy that it should be approved or disapproved? Obviously, only facts can determine our viewpoint—or should determine our viewpoint. We may easily be misled by our sympathies; and we may be even more treacherously misled by our antipathies. What we feel about any such issue is not so important as what we think about it; indeed, and what we think about it should depend upon what we know about it. Here it is that so many persons fail absolutely: they have no knowledge whatever about issues which, nevertheless, they presume to judge.

I have (as any man can) quite simply tried the merits of justice and sentiment. Dealing with persons who had a true sense of justice, I have not only been wanting in occasion to complain but I have consistently known what I could expect. But dealing with persons who were ruled by mere sentimentality, I have been very unfortunate and have never been sure what might be the issue. It is known that people can do the worst things with the best will. It is also known that a bit of sentiment may obstruct the course of justice and turn one aside from the path of wisdom. It is fine to acknowledge the supremacy of truth—but no one can do that sentimentally. We find truth by thinking, not by feeling, and our attitude is wise or foolish according to the intellectual perception that we have.

You will say that scholars may be wrong; and that is true, when they let themselves be influenced by emotion rather than by that thought or knowledge which should appertain to their scholarship. It is all the more likely, however, that the average man, without any balance or guidance of scholarship, may be wrong. He has, indeed, only his feelings and his prejudices and the common sentiment around him for materials of judgments—and these materials, I repeat, are very poor indeed. Justice, intellectually speaking, is more accurate. Take away ego-

ism, tradition, dogmatism, circumstantial interest, an emotionally personal or desirous mode of thought—and you are more likely to have a true understanding of any situation. After all, the just man is simply the man who thinks correctly. The rights of man are recognized (though they may not be admitted) by every clear, unprejudiced, justly functioning mind. Injustice, when all is said, has its roots in prejudice and ignorance and, inseparable mainly from these two qualities, selfishness.

IN THE WORLD OF BOOKS

BY ISAAC GOLDBERG

This Tyranny of Bunk

"The New Yorker," I understand, is the most sophisticated weekly in the country. I read it often with pleasure. (That free "ad" ought to be worth a complimentary subscription.) Its cartoons are as a pin that prick the bubbles of our contemporary foibles. Every page, so to speak, is a puncture. And yet, in the issue of February 16, the prize must go, not to the "New Yorker" staff, but to an advertisement (not a free one) on page 66. It is, in some ways, the best joke that the smart organ has printed this year—perhaps a joke on rather than in the paper. Here it is, with the address omitted. (I can't give free "ads" to haruspices):

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Query: Do "New Yorkers" believe in horoscopes? If so, what price sophistication?

A Japanese Lady

Sei Shonagan has been dead these thousand years, almost; but her soul goes marching on. Like so many other ladies she kept a diary; unlike so many other ladies, she really wrote down many of the things she did, and thought, and wished. And now comes Arthur Waley, translator-in-chief from the Japanese, to rescue from what would otherwise be for most of us oblivion, the most exciting portions of a document that is distinctive for more reasons than one. His translation is issued by Houghton Mifflin, of Boston, at \$2.50. It begins with a deceptive dullness, for very shortly we are plunged into the gay career of a court lady who is as delicate, at times, as a Japanese fan, but as truth-telling as a dictograph.

The diary of Sei Shonagan is called, after the idiom of the period, a Pillow Book, which is Japanese for what we would call a note-book. Pillows, however, figure largely, if only by implication, in the lady's narrative. She had a keen eye for the men, and to do the men justice, they returned the compliment. She had even a deeper appreciation of her- self, did this Sei Shonagan. "There is nothing in the world so painful," she sets down with delicious candor, "as feeling that one is not liked. It always seems to me that people who hate me must be suffering from some strange form of lunacy." Most women—most men, for that matter—feel just that way about it. But who would write it down?

Women are not many in Japanese letters; it is a notable coincidence that the era of Sei Shonagan should have produced also Lady Murasaki, author of "The Tale of Genji," which is a fictional match for the fact of her contemporary. Lady Murasaki had little affection to bestow upon Sei Shonagan; perhaps they were literary rivals, for certainly our diarist was fond of herself as a poet.

The Pillow Book gives a fleeting glimpse into the court life of an age as distant from our time in mood and outlook as in chronology. Waley's commentary is helpful without becoming too scholarly and intrusive. The translation, like all of his other versions from the Japanese, is admirable.

Are Jews Like That?

The Chosen People. By Jerome and Jean Tharaud. Decorations by Charles Naef. Translated by Frances Wilson Huard. Longmans, Green and Company. New York. \$2.

The brothers Tharaud have won a reputation for their genre pictures of life in Central Europe. They are attracted to the Jew especially, and, although themselves Gentiles, have often in their various works shown a penetrative sympathy for a people that is easily misunderstood. I have said, and say now again, that it is easy, even for a Jew removed from the source, to mistranslate Israel. Here especially, as everywhere else

in general, one must be certain to translate the spirit as well as the flesh.

The Tharauds are old hands, then; in such books as "Next Year in Jerusalem," "The Rose of Sharon," and "In the Shadow of the Cross," they reveal the fruits of study, experience on the terrain, and a certain critical sympathy. "The Rose of Sharon," which I read about a year ago in a French magazine, is done with especial delicacy and understanding. Of course, in all such reporting the reporter who exercises his own judgment runs the risk of being called an anti-Semite. The Tharauds have been called by the just this name. I do not believe that they are so narrow, even if, at times, I discover a certain latent hostility.

"The Chosen People," however, is blameworthy not only for such a latent hostility; with much of the adverse criticism I agree. After all, what people on earth is impeccable? It is, for a product of the gifted brothers, a rather sketchy document, and—by my great regret—is weak in just those respects wherein it might have been strong. The book betrays wide gaps, which might lead less lenient critics than I to suspect crimes of omission. Historical events are presented in the guise of the chief personages involved; a sort of progress is traced from the Ghetto to the vision of a Palestine Regained. And all of a sudden, out of nowhere—and also into nothing—appears the figure of Charlie Chaplin to serve as symbol of Jewish adaptive cunning.

Hooy, Pfooy and Blooie. "Vos is doe far a mishugas?" ask I. Or, translating from the Yiddish, "What nuttiness is this?" Truth to tell, the book is inferior to the rest of the Tharauds' investigations into Jewish life. It is supercilious at times, and, at others, misleadingly superficial. It is, moreover, unoriginal. The Tharauds are widely traveled; but in order to write this book, no half-gifted sophomore need have wandered two feet from his armchair. Just far enough to reach his library shelf—a Graetz's "History of the Jews," a highly imperfect history of Yiddish literature, by Pines, in French, and glibly referred to as "excellent" by these brethren twain; perhaps a Jewish Encyclopedia.

On a par with the book itself is the translation. Hebrew plurals in "im" are presented also with an "s"; cherubs (or cherubim) thus become cherubims, and Khassidim become Khassidims. The movement for Enlightenment is consistently referred to as Haskata instead of Haskalah; the secret Jews are called "Marranes" instead of "Marranos"; for no reason at all, when speaking of the custom of maintaining the son-in-law, the French word for that relation is retained ("gendre"); Abramovich becomes Abranovich. This, of course, like the printing of "Lavant" for "Levant"—may be set down to bad proof-reading; it occurs too often, however. There are ridiculous errors in transposing names, and the French "ch," which may approximate the sound of our "sh," is retained in English, deceiving many a reader into pronouncing it as in "church."

We had a right to expect better—oh, so much better—from the brothers Tharaud. And they had a right to expect better of the translator. The book, more is the pity, is an elementary presentation intended chiefly for Gentiles. I am afraid that, with the best intentions in the world, and without being anti-Semitic, it will work in the opposite direction.

On the jacket-cover is an illustration representing a Jew in the traditional skull-cap and prayer-shawl, palm on forehead and beard brushing the pages of a sacred tome. I know why his hand is on his forehead. The knowledge of the text that the jacket encloses has given him a terrible headache.

MAKING MONEY

Probably this is the most interesting subject on earth—making money, or its equivalent. Most of us are occupied more with making money or making a living and getting ahead, than with any other subject in this old world.

I have been called lucky, and a "lucky dog" and a "lucky fellow" and a "fool for luck" a thousand times, just because I have made money, when in fact, I don't remember ever to have had a stroke of luck in my whole life, with one exception, and this was just recently. I have had enough bad luck to cause many a man to commit suicide. But I have always overcome bad luck and I have succeeded by hard work, determination, hard study and careful planning.

There is no secret about making money and there is no secret about saving money and investing it profitably. The first point in making money is to study carefully what you can do best, and then do that thing or engage in that business or occupation and work hard, study hard, and save, and then invest your savings, always with successful men.

I never could understand why people will invest or speculate, nine times out of ten, with men who never made a success of anything in their lives, except making a big noise. People will throw their money away on fake and near-fake mining and oil investments and speculations time after time, because some loud-mouthed fool guarantees to make them rich in sixty to ninety days, when, in fact, the faker or well-meaning adventurer who bids for their money to put into his oil well or mine or other scheme never made a real permanent success of anything in his life.

If you want to win eight or nine times out of ten, back winners.

If you invest or speculate in mines or oil, pick out the winners, and then line up with them. Pick out good solid men who are backing their judgment with twenty-five to one hundred thousand dollars or more of their own money, and whom you know are bound to succeed. Such men have a reputation worth more to them than all the money in the world, and dare not fail.

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With this combination, you can't lose. Some great misfortunes may cause such men to lose temporarily, but they are never completely knocked out, and they fight on and on against every obstacle until success finally crowns their efforts. Associated with such men, you must and will win.

YOU SHOULD KNOW

Friends, winners or losers in former or present oil and mining "investments"—there are some things you should know before "investing"—and whether you invest or not, you should know that the poorly informed are still losing, and wondering why. Winners are still winning, and they have no more brains than you have.

If you have any questions, after reading and re-reading and studying our "literature," ask them and we will frankly answer them. We cannot afford to mislead anyone for a few hundred dollars, because our high financial standing and our high standing in every way is too great to be bartered away for a "mess of pottage."

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