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PAMPHLETS

NEW EDITION

HELL: WHERE IS IT?

BEING

A LETTER TO THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK

BY

SALADIN



LONDON

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HELL: WHERE IS IT?

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,—May it please your Grace, you have not yet replied to my last letter to you on Agnosticism ; you have only alluded to it in a letter, and in that tried to raise a false issue in regard to it. I never expected that you *would* answer it—nay, more, I had my conviction from the outset as to whether you *could* answer it. May I assure your Grace that it is a matter of supreme indifference to me whether you answer it or not? I have met with no one who is sanguine enough to expect that your attempted answer to it would throw a single new ray of light upon a problem so difficult and momentous as the one you had the temerity to interfere with, and from which, when challenged to deal with it fairly, you have had the timidity to run away.

According to a report in the *Northern Echo*, your Grace abolished Heaven and Hell as localities, and made them mere mental conditions. You and yours allowed the report, which was no doubt correct, to pass unchallenged. It was not till an "Infidel" paper commented on your Grace's allegation, that Heaven and Hell were nowhere, that you saw fit to take exception to the *Northern Echo* report. One of your fellow clergymen pointed out to you, in pious horror, that you had suppressed Heaven's fearful menagerie of beasts, with horns on their hips and eyes in their elbows, and had played havoc with Hell's everlasting teeth-gnashing, and had cut the tail of that curious helminthological specimen, "the worm that never dies." *Then* you took alarm, and began to explain that you had not said what you had said.

I will give your Grace a present of your Heaven ; do what you like with it ; "make a kirk and a mill of it ;" no one but a beast with eyes in his elbows cares what you do with it. Burns and Shelley and a good many of

my friends, according to your doctrines, are in Hell; therefore, Hell interests me more, and it is upon that I would have a word with your Grace. In the letter to the Rev. Henry Macdougall you do not contradict the *Northern Echo* report. You simply act as a sort of clerical cuttlefish, and raise an obfuscation of words by means of which you attempt to escape from a dilemma. Your Grace knows as well as I do that, with all except the most devoutly ignorant, Hell, as a place, is now as extinct as Hades or Niflheim. In all the regions of interstellar space through which the vision of the telescope has ranged no vestige of Hell has been discovered. Where is Hell? Since it is so distant that it is beyond the range of the telescope, it matters not to us where it is; for, even if it did exist, and we were despatched to it, it would take us billions of years to reach it, even if we travelled without ceasing at the rate of a cannon-ball. Much must, necessarily, come and go in such a long journey. Talk of "Cœlebs in search of a wife:" what is that to a sinner in search of Hell?

So much for Hell, if it is a *place*. If it has geographical, or rather astronomical, position, which your Grace would seem to imply by challenging the report in which you were represented as submitting that it was only a mental *condition*, I am justified in dealing with it as if subject to the attributes of time and space. Your Grace is fully aware that your space-Hell is an utter absurdity, and that, even if it were not, its horrible torments are so revolting to the sense of modern civilised man that you dare not preach them for fear of bringing down the whole Christian fabric about your ears. Piteable is your plight. On the one hand you dare not preach the doctrine of eternal torment, and on the other hand you dare not repudiate it.

The cultured Christianity your Grace represents leans, in this its decrepit old age, on the staff of quibble and subterfuge. The most prominent doctrines of the New Testament are ignored as being out of harmony with modern æsthetics. The doctrines now insisted upon are not those upon which the Holy Ghost laid most stress, but those which Mr John Smith will pay to hear preached to him. John Smith has now got a step beyond

Hell, and so the parson finds that Hell will not pay: Mr. Charles Haddon Spurgeon was among the last man left who can make money out of Hell.

And yet, though you dare not preach it, your Grace well knows that, if there is a single unmistakable teaching in the New Testament, it is that there is a fiery, flaming Hell. Pontifical cowardice may desert, but pontifical ingenuity will never explain away, such passages as Matthew v. 22, 29, 30; x. 28; xxiii. 15-33; xi. 23; xviii. 8, 9; Mark ix. 43-47; Luke x. 15; xvi. 23. The unfortunate thing for your Grace's Church is that Christ himself has expressed himself so unequivocally as regards Hell. Of course, I commiserate a cautious and discreet man like your Grace upon having such a rash and injudicious Saviour, who gives you such incalculable trouble to tone down and explain away his utterances, so as to adapt them to modern acceptance. You complain of the Secularists that they are "vehement." No doubt you feel that Christ, too, erred grievously in this way. He, like the Secularists, was in earnest, and, like them, spoke with the directness that springs from singleness of purpose and the force that is born of conviction. Those who now pose as the ministers of this simple-minded and single-hearted teacher live by garble and quibble and fraud; for many of his teachings are exploded and obsolete, but they are still associated with rich emolument, and so persons in the position of your Grace dare neither preach them nor admit that they do not.

It is unfortunate for your Grace that that inconvenient Christ, in whose name you have your £10,000 a year, but whose doctrines you have to explain away, not only believed in a material Hell, but placed it at no great distance—in fact, alarmingly too near. *Γέννα του πυρος*, says Christ, in Matthew v. 22. *Γέννα* is the word of his which has been translated Hell; but once or twice he uses *Hades*, showing that he had not had the originality to construct a Hell of his own, but had knocked together a sort of mongrel one borrowed from Homer and Jeremiah. *Γέννα* is only a corruption of *γη*, land and *Hinnon*, the name of a person who once owned land in a valley near Jerusalem. This Valley of Hinnon, referred to in Jeremiah xix., and elsewhere throughout

the Old Testament, is, in Hebrew, called GEHENNA, גֵּהֶנּוֹם, the Christian Hell, as every scholar knows. In this *Gehenna*, or Valley of Hinnon, human beings were *burnt alive* to Moloch and Christ's father of the same age as himself, Jehovah.* *Tophet* was the particular spot in *Gehenna* where the furnaces were erected for the burning of human flesh. A huge brazen God stood in the fire to receive living human sacrifices into his brazen arms. "They lighted a great fire within the statue and another before it. They put upon its arms the child they intended to sacrifice, which soon fell into the fire at the foot of the statue, putting forth cries, as may easily be imagined. To stifle the noise of these cries and howlings, they made a great rattling of drums and other instruments, that the spectators might not be moved with compassion at the clamours of these miserable victims."†

That horrible *Gehenna*, your Grace, with a dash of the classical Hades added, is the frame-work of the Christian Hell, as no doubt you very well know. If it had been said to Christ, when in Galilee, "Go to Hell!" and he had obeyed the mandate, he would have given his bridle reins a shake and *Henglered* off to the Valley of *Gehenna*, "riding on an ass and a colt the foal of an ass"—a foot on the back of each. Your Grace can, any day, for a few pounds, purchase one of Cook's tourist tickets and go to Hell, as Christ understood the term; and perhaps the best thing you could do would be to go there and stay there. The children roasting on the fiery arms of brass was your Christ's basis for "the fire that never shall be quenched;" the worms wriggling in the stercorous and putrid remains of flesh the fire had not consumed were the parents of Christ's "worm that never dies."

I do not know whether Jesus ever seriously reasoned that all the wicked of all the world were to come to be eternally cremated in the small and obscure Valley of *Gehenna*. One with the limited mental and moral vision of a fanatical Jewish peasant could hardly be expected to devise a Hell large enough for all the damned. The

* See Isaiah xxx. 27-33.

† Cruden's "Concordance," under *Tophet*.

few fishermen, mechanics, Pharisees, and wastrels he had seen in a little obscure part of Syria were, to him, the world. The Valley of Gehenna was big enough for the burning of the whole of them—at least, the few of them who might not find room to be cremated could be provided for in his “father’s house,” in which there were many mansions, which, let us trust, have been duly papered, and have had gas and water laid on.

Last time, your Grace, I wrote with forbearance and deferential courtesy. The letter was a pertinent one. I am an Agnostic who, week by week, strives to drag men out of your Church, and, according to you, sends them straight to the Hell anent which you quibble. If you value these men’s “immortal souls,” cannot you show them the error of my teaching? You cannot urge that the issue involved is a trifling one: it is one in which, according to your teaching, the eternal destinies of the thousands who are deluded by me are involved. Up, your Grace, and arm yourself with the “sword of the spirit” and “the whole armour of righteousness.” “Let,” as Milton puts it, “Truth and Error grapple.” Why are you so reluctant to measure swords with me, seeing that you are so sure that Truth is on your side and Error on mine? Pardon me for assuring your Grace that by your conduct you show clearly enough that you know as well as I do where the Truth lies, and where the Error. My challenge to you to prove my Agnosticism erroneous is at your feet, and your exalted rank shall not stand between you and the earnestness of my pen, which is honest and unhired. Still, I must assure your Grace that I have as much respect for you as I have for any august imposture and well-paid poltroonery. I am no sycophant or flunkey, and, standing sturdily in front of you, I refuse to recognise the line that separates you from Norna of Fitful Head, who sold prosperous winds, and the latest old crone who was sent to prison for palmistically telling the fortunes of a servant-girl. You, outraging the spirit of the age, pray for rain, and that bullets may not hit our soldiers on the battle-field. I have more sympathy with the poor and vulgar than I have with the rich and aristocratic thaumaturgist. You know well that to be an archbishop you must also be an

archhumbug. I am, your Grace, whatever I may be, neither bishop nor humbug, but simply a thoughtful and thoroughly earnest man, whose pen gibes at your heaven and knocks the bottom out of your bottomless pit.

I ask you, and I want an answer—Where did you get Hell? Your Grace is a Protestant, and your doctrines must necessarily find their basis in the Scriptures. Then, where in the Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, do you find your *Christian Hell*? Point me out in the entire Scriptures, from Genesis to Revelation, any word which, when correctly translated, means a place of torment for the souls of the dead. The word שְׁאוֹל, often translated Hell in the English and Hades in the Greek version of the Old Testament, signifies only the *grave*, a *great depth*, or a *cavern* or *cave*, such as in which the dead were wont to be buried. The Saxon word *hellon*, to be concealed, from which came *hole* and *hollow*, corresponds pretty closely to the Hebrew *shaol*, or *sheol*. So where in Scripture does your Grace get your Christian Hell, or your Christian Heaven either, for that part of it? Come, your Grace; since I and those who follow my teachings are to be burnt in it, we should, naturally enough, like to know where you get it. We should like to be made aware of your authority for assuring us that somebody is to be at such expense for brimstone on our account; that our incisors and molars are so sound that they will stand an everlasting gnashing; and where you get the vermicular swirls of the red-hot worm that never dies. When you archbishops and your Church had the power, you could make such a Hell upon earth, and you made it, that your ignorant and intimidated dupes could easily enough believe there was also another Hell somewhere else. But alas! poor prelate, you have fallen upon times when I, the defiant and aggressive "Infidel," dare to extinguish your Hell with my ink-pot, and challenge you to show me where you get it before I will consent to go to it. From Scripture you do not get it—that you know as well as I do, although you dare not say so straight out as I do. Your Hell, your Grace, is stolen from Paganry, and your Heaven also, and made horrible with Christian vulgarity. Your Hell is a poor, unpoetic affair, compared with the awful regions through

which Æneas wandered after the soul of Anchises, not to mention the frozen terrors of the realm where Odin and Thor drank blood out of the skulls of the dead, their toast and revel and wassail illumed by the yellow flash of the hair of the Norse maidens and the blue gleam of the Norland steel. The poor, brutal faith of which your Grace is an archbishop, having neither art nor poetry, nor flight of dream nor range of vision, *spoilt Hell when it stole it*. Get a better Hell, your Grace, before you presume to think it is good enough abode for a thoughtful heretic.

Your Grace may reply that that which was good enough for your Jesus Christ is good enough for the like of me; but I claim the right of private judgment, and demur. Since you Christians have partly stolen and partly invented a Hell, you can, of course, put your Jesus into it if you like; it matters not to me. I know that, nowadays, you find it necessary to refine away the teaching that he was ever there. But this shilly-shallying comes too late. The most learned and devout of the Christian fathers have taught that Christ spent three days in the company of the never-dying worm. As you and yours, your Grace, are usually not so well versed in the records of your own Church as we Agnostics might expect, I will cite you my authorities, in case you might lay small account upon the mere *ipse dixit* of an avowed and aggressive heretic. "St Thomas, pp. 3, 9, 52, art. ii., teaches that Christ, by his real presence, descended but to *limbus patrum*, and in effect only to the other places of Hell. Secondly, St Thomas seems to say that it was some punishment to Christ to be in Hell, according to his soul. CAJETAN saith that the sorrows of Christ's death continued on him till his resurrection, in regard of three penalties, whereof the second is that THE SOUL REMAINED IN HELL, a place not convenient for it. But Bonaventure saith that Christ's soul, WHILE IT WAS IN HELL was in the place of punishment indeed, but without punishment; which seems to me more agreeable to the fathers."* Cardinal Cajetan and Thomas Aquinas—no mean pillars

* Bellarmine, "De Christo," lib. iv. cap. 16, pp. 396, 397.

in the Christian Church, your Grace—are on the side of Bonaventure in alleging that Christ went from Calvary to Hell.

I think I hear your Grace repudiate such authorities with the pious scorn with which Protestantism regards her venerable mother, the Scarlet Lady. Do you allege that, in support of Christ going to Hell, I have relied upon a Roman Catholic heresy which your reformed Church repudiates? Not so fast, your Grace. Hugh Latimer, your glorious Protestant martyr, taught the same doctrine, and not only roasted your Christ in plain brimstone, but also treated him to a "scalding house," where, in all seriousness, we may conclude that the second person of the Trinity had poured over him successive kettles of boiling water. I refer your Grace to Bishop Latimer's seventh Sermon, where you will find his own words as follows: "But now I will say a word; and here I protest, first of all, not arrogantly to determine and define it. I will contend with no man for it; but I offer it unto you to consider and weigh it. There be some great clerks that take my part; and I perceive not what evil can come of it, in saying that our Saviour, Christ, not only descended into Hell, *but also that he suffered in Hell such pains as the damned spirits did suffer there.* Surely, I believe, verily, for my part, that he suffered the pains of Hell proportionably as it corresponded and answered to the whole sin of the world. He would not suffer only bodily in the garden and upon the Cross, but also in his soul when it was from the body, which was a pain due for our sin.....Some write so, and I can believe it, that he suffered in the very place (and I cannot tell what it is: call it what you will—*even in the scalding house, in the ugsomeness of the place,* in the presence of the place) such pain as our capacity cannot attain unto. It is somewhat declared unto us when we utter it by these effects—viz., by *fire, by gnashing of teeth, by the worm that gnaweth on the conscience.*"

So, your Grace, the venerable Latimer, a luminary and master spirit of the Christian Church, and of your own section of it, not only introduces your Christ to the interesting companionship of the never-dying worm, but

to the delicate attentions of the ever-scalding kettle. This is the teaching of your Church, as you will see; and I have quoted the *ipsissima verba* of one of your greatest men—one who was concerned in the compilation of your Book of Common Prayer and the drawing up of your formularies. And yet you would seek in your Northallerton sermon to explain away this Hell altogether; and, even when challenged on the point, in your letter of extenuation you go crawling round the subject in a labyrinth of verbal mists as only a Churchman can; but you never once venture to assert that Hell, as an objective reality, exists. If your Lord had such a tough time of it for three days with the worm and the kettle, he will not thank your Grace for explaining the whole thing away. With him it will be just the one thing that cannot be explained away, even if he should forget Gethsemane and Judas Iscariot, and even your Grace.

I recognise your difficulty, my Lord Archbishop, and I sympathise with you. Some eighteen hundred years ago you had the misfortune to have a dead god—a god killed with a hammer and four tenpenny nails, and your Church has been in a terrible quandary as to where to put his “soul” during the three days he managed to get along without it in the Arimathean’s tomb. You could not send him to Heaven, because, to produce the proper effect, he had subsequently to fly from Olivet to that elevated region. So you had to send him to Hell; and now, since you explain away Hell, will you be good enough to say where he went to? As I have said, I really sympathise with your Grace in this, literally, *infernal* dilemma, and I hasten to relieve you from impalement on its horns. Explain away Christ as well as Hell, and then you will not be perplexed as to what to do with his “soul” during the three awkward days that he remained “in the heart of the earth,” even as Jonah had remained three days “in the whale’s belly,” that the Scripture might be fulfilled. I admit, your Grace, that I write with irreverence. I should have no reverence for the human race, no reverence for my own manhood, if I had reverence for a learned and sane man who, in the last quarter of this nineteenth century,

accepts of £10,000 per annum for the task of attempting to reconcile the fabulous rubbish of 2000 years ago with the light and reason of to-day.

There are Christians and Christians, your Grace ; and it would, perhaps, be as unfair to make you responsible for the wild theological teachings of Mr. Spurgeon as it would be to hold me responsible for the feculent sociological doctrines of Mr. Bradlaugh. According to the luminary of the Newington Tabernacle, the damned may devote thousands of years to examining the wounds which were inflicted on Christ at the crucifixion. From this I infer that Mr. Spurgeon believes not only that Christ went to Hell, but that he stayed there. If he is not in Hell, how can the denizens of that torrid realm examine his wounds ? Does he "sit at the right hand of God," but send his wounds down to Hell in a brown paper parcel that they may be inspected ? After having examined wounds for thousands of years, "the Lost" should have a considerable knowledge of morbid anatomy. Your Grace, a Protestant Archbishop, would explain away Hell altogether ; but another Protestant, Bishop Latimer, thinks it good enough for Christ, and puts him into the "scalding house ;" while yet another Protestant, Pastor Spurgeon, also deems it good enough for Christ, and makes him reside there permanently as a "subject" in a Hospital for Incurables. In me, an outsider, what profound respect is inspired for the three of you—for Latimer and Spurgeon's realistic crudities, and for your Grace's disingenuous shuffling !

By-the-bye, your Grace, the Bottomless Pit is not so deep after all. The word* is *αβυσσος*, *βυσσος*, *deep*, intensified by the prefix *a*. It is only the word Homer† uses to signify the bottom of the sea. In the Septuagint it answers generally to the Hebrew *תהום*, *deep waters*. It is, moreover, only the word used‡ to show where the pigs of the Gadarenes ran to. Accordingly, why, in "the Authorised Version," is it not stated that the pigs ran down a steep place into the *bottomless pit* and were choked ? Why is the same word in Revelation trans-

* Rev. xi. 15.

† "Iliad," bk. xxiv., line 80.

‡ Luke viii. 31.

lated the "bottomless pit," and in Luke "the sea"? Only one of the tricks of parson-craft, your Grace. The translators of 1611 apparently did not like the idea of the swine running down a steep place into Hell. So, accordingly, although they had the same word to deal with, they made it into a *bottomless pit* to put the dragon into, and a *sea* into which to put the pigs. From this sort of fact an Agnostic like myself infers that those who translate the works of their Maker require ingenuity, in the exercise of which they need not be over-scrupulous.

Again, if it does not trouble your Grace, I should like to know how the Devil is confined in a pit without a bottom. An angel "shut him up and set a seal upon him;" but was the angel a lunatic? If you put a cat into a bag without a bottom, you may tie up the neck of the bag, and even "set a seal on it;" but the cat will set small value upon all your precautions. Your Bottomless Pit, my Lord Archbishop, is worthy of your Bottomless Creed.

Your Grace will remember that many years ago it was decided by the Court of Arches that a disbelief in the Devil did not invalidate a man's right to be a communicant of the Church of England. Further, Lord Westbury, in the matter of "Essays and Reviews," in addressing the jury, uttered the pithy and memorable words: "Gentlemen, your verdict kills the Devil, and puts out Hell-fire." The verdict of the jury of the entire civilised and educated world is now dead against the existence of Satan and his flaming throne. This is a verdict that brings relief and delectation to all, except to that burglar the priest, who used the Devil and his fearful pyrotechnics as a jemmy with which to force open the doors, that he might pilfer the belongings of mankind.

One very plain question, your Grace: If there be no Hell, what use is there for you? Your sole business upon earth is to keep people out of Hell; but to what honest calling do you think of turning your attention now that there is no Hell to keep them out of? You have admitted there is no such place as Hell; but, when pushed into a corner, you, in a sort of obscure way, eat your own words. In short, your Grace, the exigencies of your office make it incumbent upon you to put out

Hell with the one hand and kindle it with the other. If there be no Hell, not only what is the use of you, but what is the use of your Christ ? It must be mortifying for him to discover that, after all his redeeming escapade, and the trouble the Ghost had in begetting him with a virgin, the human race he came to "redeem" were not in the slightest danger of Hell—in fact, that there was no Hell for them to go to. He surely must have been taught a salutary lesson. Surely, when he comes down from Heaven again, he will take more pains to discover why he is coming, and not go on such a mission as that which taxed his energies eighteen centuries ago.

Of course, your Grace's whole *raison d'être* is based upon the assumption that mankind are unthinking and credulous simpletons, and I am sorry to admit that this is almost the only warrantable assumption your Church has ever made. But, at last, after centuries of pious stupor, the world is rubbing its eyes and beginning to awake: you are beginning to be found out, my Lord Archbishop. How long do you calculate you will still be paid for blowing hot and cold—for putting out Hell with the one hand and kindling it with the other ? The wheels of Progress are like the proverbial mills of God—they move exceeding slow ; but on they move, from the darkness into the penumbra, from the penumbra into the light ; and those who drive her triumphal car through the shining fields of the world's to-morrow shall look back over the plains they have left behind, and, far away in the rear, see your Ecclesiasticism crushed to death under the wheels, disembowelled and rotten—the ugliest and slimiest of the snakes that had to be strangled before the Herakles of Humanity could rise from its cradle and realise the thought, the action, the glory, and the triumph which all lie in the arena of life for those who can win and wear them.

I am,

Your Grace's most Obedient Servant,

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A few years ago, I had the pleasure of an introduction to one who was then at any rate a conspicuous New Woman. For, had she not publicly announced that, to wrest the rights and privileges of her sex from the masculine-gendered tyrants, the women of England should have recourse to the bayonet! The utterance, at the time, came in for an ungallant share of newspaper persiflage and derision. Of fairly bellicose temperament myself, I yearned to behold this Semiramis of Cockayne. In the early and salad days of Saladin, the sex had frequently been the cause of his heart being deeply pierced with the arrows of Cupid; and, now, he was possessed of a half daring, half terrified, desire to behold a Janet who, for the rights he had withheld from her, was prepared to transfix his diaphragm with a bayonet.

Through a lady friend, I obtained an introduction to mine enemy. I had half expected to be introduced to some wizened, weird and stalwart Hecate with a raucous voice that dirdled the rafters, and with a handshake that would burst my finger-tips and stain with my detested masculine blood the blanch of her voluminous and majestic skirts. I was introduced, instead, to a young and fair-haired English gentlewoman, in appearance more suggestive of being a ministering angel when pain and anguish should rend the brow of us poor males than a bellicose hell-cat and flaming fury who was to stretch us stark on the battle-field with the cold earth drinking our unavenged gore and our death-glazing eye glaring up to the unpitying heaven. She indeed, O Virgil, suggested "arms and the man"; but the arms in which Hector enclasped Andromache, not the arms with which Patroclus vanquished Hector. I told the sweet, gentle and refined amazon something to this effect. Who knows, my words at random thrown may have borne seed in the heart of this young lady who scorned the needle and aspired to the bayonet. Who knows but I have saved my sex from overthrow, or even extermination? Be that as it may, since the date of my brief interview with her, the world has heard little or nothing of, and has ceased to tremble at, the name of the belle of the bayonet.

It is a far cry from Cockayne to Prague, and from the

end of the 19th to the end of the 7th century ; but, over the gulf of historic reminiscence, I make that cry, and link this belle of the bayonet with Valasca, a valorous if ill-starred predecessor. The story of Valasca is told by no meaner chronicler than Æneas Sylvius, afterwards Pope Pius the Second, in his history of Bohemia. Valasca was one of the maids of honour in the court of Queen Libussa. Libussa, who had succeeded her father, Crocus, on the throne of Bohemia, ruled for some years with ability and acceptance ; but her strict administration of justice eventually gave deep umbrage to one of the most powerful of her nobles who deemed that his importance and influence should have been sufficient to have indemnified him against punishment for his malefactions. Burning with hatred and thirsting for revenge, he raised the standard of revolt against his queen, urged that a queen was an absurdity and worse in a nation of hardy and warlike men, and protested that, during her reign, Libussa had persistently favoured her own sex and as persistently suppressed and insulted the entire male population of Bohemia.

Libussa, quite recognizing the danger which menaced her throne, put her woman's wits astleep to discover how best to cope with the perilous emergency. She summoned a great assembly of her people, and addressed them in conciliatory fashion and with marked discretion and diplomacy. In her peroration, she assured the Bohemians that, if they really desired a king, rather than a queen, she had no desire to reign over an unwilling people. "If you really desire to have a king," said she, "take my milk-white palfrey, caparison him in his most costly trappings, and lead him out to the plain. There, throw his bridle-reins over his neck, and let him go wherever he will—to the north, south, east or west ; but, ye of the nobility, follow him, and note his conduct with the most scrupulous attention. Follow him till you see him halt before a man feeding upon a table of iron. Bring that man, whoever he may be, back with you to my palace, and he shall be your king and my husband."

This proposal pleased the Bohemians mightily. They richly caparisoned the palfrey, as Libussa had directed,

let him wander at his own sweet will, but observantly followed him. After the horse had proceeded ten miles he reached the bank of the river Biell, where, in a field, a hind named Primislaus was ploughing. Before this Primislaus he whisked his tail and reared and capered and winnied, apparently in a transport of equine delight. The embassy that had followed the horse now accosted the peasant and instructed him to mount into the saddle and accompany them back to the Bohemian Court to be their king and the husband of their queen, Libussa. "Delighted," replied Primislaus, "and a remarkably fine king for you, as well as a gallant husband for your queen ; but the distance to the court is considerable, and I have not yet broken my fast." And he laid bread and cheese on his iron ploughshare for a table, and ate heartily. The Bohemians remembered what Libussa had said anent a man eating off an iron table, and felt that a mysterious Providence had directed them to the man who was destined to sway their sceptre and wed their queen.

Primislaus was brought into the presence of Libussa. There was a merry marriage bell, and all went happily for some years ; then, there was a doleful funeral bell, for Libussa had died ; and Primislaus alone was left to rule over Bohemia. Then the difficulties of King Primislaus began. His wife dead, the women of Bohemia protested that he no longer ruled justly, equitably and considerately over those of their sex. Their mouth-piece, their real evangelist, was the young, gifted and beautiful Valasca who had been the private secretary and the closest and dearest friend of Queen Libussa. No common or garden Janet this Valasca, but as beautiful as an angel and as clever as the devil. Bohemia would again find itself under the rule of petticoats, or she would know why—and she was not particular to a shade or scrupulous to a line when she had the dazzling design before her of establishing a gynocracy on the hills and through the forests of Bohemia.

In the depth of the primeval forest, and, at the gloomy noon of night, the leading malcontent women of Bohemia assembled in solemn secret at the behest of Valasca. To forestall possible detection and male interference, the

fair malcontents came armed to the teeth. There rose through the gloom the suppressed hum of feminine voices, for, even in dread and dire conspiracy, Janet cannot quite constrain her tongue to silence. Gloom, suppressed whispers and rustling amongst the undergrowth of the forest. Then, of a sudden, a flambeau was lighted. Its alternately red and yellow light flashed and flared over as romantically grotesque a spectacle as ever forest depth or cavern recess has witnessed in the working out of the weird, mad drama of man's life on earth. The women of Bohemia were there in their thousands; for, apparently, few had desired to take no notice of Valasca's summons; and, possibly, certain who desired to, dared not disregard it, for Valasca, like the queen under whom she had served, was known to be a sorceress of the most esoteric and awful character, prophetically conversant with the designs of heaven and the decrees of hell.

A colossal female, with her vizor raised, disclosing insanely wild eyes and a coarse, voluptuous, but fierce and cruel mouth that no man born of woman would desire to kiss, held aloft the gigantic flambeau, mounted on a tall shaft of pine. In front of this dread amazon was a great boulder, grey with lichen and green with moss. With supreme grace and dexterity, a singularly lithe and symmetrical figure ascended to the summit of the boulder, right under the glare of the flambeau. The suppressed female whispering became excited and threatened, at all peril, to burst into a cheer, for the figure of almost more than earthly beauty that had mounted the boulder was that of Valasca.

The splendid young rebel undid her helmet and laid it on the green moss at her feet. The rippling wealth of her golden hair streamed down her steel-clad back, while certain light, vagrant curls fell carelessly over her polished gorget and flashing breast-plate. Her sword-hilt literally blazed with gems, amid which was a fateful opal she had had as a dying gift from Queen Libussa, which was reputed to carry with it, at the will of the possessor, the most baleful magic spell, and which was reported to have been gifted to a remote ancestress of Libussa by the Arch Enemy of Mankind.

Valasca was beautiful ; but, her beauty was of the dignified, statuesque, and severe order, unredeemed by aught of sweetness and amiability ; her eye had the lustre of cold steel, and her mouth, though exquisitely chiselled, had in its delicate curves a latent reserve of scorn and bitterness. She raised her steel-gauntleted hand deprecatingly to silence the comparative clamour her mounting the boulder had excited. Then, with clear, resonant, but, at the same time, prudently restrained voice, she addressed the treason-stained ladies who, with their swords, were prepared to hack to pieces the throne of King Primislaus.

“Women of Bohemia, sisters, women born under the rule of that foremost champion of her sex, Queen Libussa, our assembling here under present circumstances, is not unattended with peril ; consequently, I will not detain you long. I should not have brought you here, but no building in all Bohemia was large enough to accommodate those I secretly summoned ; and, it was necessary I should, face to face, address you all, so that no shadow of doubt may be left as to our plans, and the concerted methods for carrying them out. I fear not, not even on the part of the basest of you, treachery and betrayal ; for, as you know, I learnt from our late lamented Queen many secrets of divination and magic ; and, hell is blessedness to the eternal torture that I can, *and shall*, make sure, waits upon her who betrays, or upon her who falters in carrying out the instructions with which she shall be charged. That ploughman, Primislaus, shall rule over us no longer, neither shall any of his accursed sex. Man is the born enemy of woman, even as the hound is the born enemy of the hare. By your swords, ladies, you *can* rule, and you *will*. But the males outnumber us.

“We must reduce their number before we venture to meet them on the field of battle, foot to foot, and blade to blade. I have a powder which Libussa taught me to produce, and enjoined upon me that, in the proper emergency, I should use. No man who, at sunset, ever partook of even the most minute particle of it, was alive at sunrise. A small quantity of that powder is, while I speak, being, by girls to whom I have assigned the task,

handed to each woman present. Ye women who are wives, your task is easy ; and, eternally damned be she who does not wake to-morrow morning in the arms of a dead husband, in the cold, stiff arms of a dead enemy of your sex. And, ye sisters, who have brothers, and ye maidens who have lovers, ye mothers who have sons, see that to-morrow, before the sun has disentangled himself from the ruddy eastern horizon, ye have brothers, lovers, and sons no more. Swear it ! Swear it !”

And a dull and deadly murmur of “ We swear it !” “ We swear it !” in a low but massive chorus rose from under oak and beech and pine. In a moment the great flambeau was extinguished ; and, from the lurid contrast, darkness unutterable fell upon that conclave of women who groped their way homeward to sleep in the arms of dead men.

Janet will not readily consent to murder John, even to secure the emancipation and ascendancy of her sex. Valasca quite recognized this fact, but she met and counteracted it by administering charms and kataphilters to the women to nullify all aversion they might have to do to death their fathers, brothers, sons, lovers, and husbands. The women, so the record of Æneas Sylvius states, carried out their deadly and diabolical commission, and flew to arms to meet and vanquish such of the males as poison had not already laid low.

But, while this gynetic conspiracy was being hatched, King Primislaus had an ominous dream in which a virgin stepped forward and offered him a goblet of blood. His late queen had initiated him into many of the profound mysteries that everywhere touch faintly and dimly upon the warp and woof of man’s life and destiny. He recognized the dream to be symbolical and prophetic, and resolved that, to prevent his drinking a cup of blood handed to him by Janet, it would be absolutely necessary for him by force of arms and drastic and ungallant means, to bring the rebel ladies to their knees. This he well knew to be no easy task, for the women of Bohemia were, at this period, a race of amazons, from the cradle upward trained to arms and feats of hardihood. Unlike the male military, they were not enervated by vice and dissi-

pation. They were exceptionally graceful, lithe, and active, full of dash and spirit, accomplished equestriennes, fearless huntresses, dexterous with the sword, deadly with the javelin, and implacably hostile to the male section of the human race.

Warned by the dream of the cup of blood, Primislaus prepared for immediate action ; and, when Valasca marched her amazons to under the walls of Prague, to her astonishment and chagrin, she found that her design had been anticipated and that Primislaus, at the head of an army of male warriors, was already there to receive her. With the fire and fury of a torrent of burning lava, Valasca and her Janets of the sword dashed down upon the vanguard of the army of Johns. Horse and man staggered back from the wild impetuosity of the charge. And, thought Primislaus, this is the first sip from the virgin's cup of blood, and I like it not. He retreated to the fortress of Vissagrada with the victorious blood and dust-covered Janets hacking and hashing at the rear. Victorious in the field, Valasca yet found the walls of Vissagrada impregnable to such siege-machinery as she could bring to bear against them. She raised the siege ; and, withdrawing to an almost inaccessible mountain rock, she built thereon a castle which was called Dievize, *dievize* being, in that day, the Bohemian word for a virgin. The mountain upon which this castle stood is still known as "The Mountain of Virgins."

John ruefully recognized that, unless he bestirred himself now, petticoats would be over him forever and ever. The army clamoured for Primislaus to lead them on to Dievize. But Primislaus had had another dream of the goblet of blood order, and he implored the troops to restrain their impatience as he had had a distinct premonition that if they marched against the Janets at the present juncture, they would, inevitably, march to red ruin. Cowardly ploughman, thought the valorous knights of Bohemia, to Pluto with your dreams and divinations ; without you, in spite of you, we will march upon Dievize.

And, march they did. With toil and peril, they clambered up the rocks, to attack the amazons in their fortress of Dievize. Valasca was ready for them and

accorded them a welcome to her castle, which, writhing in gore, many forgot instantly, and which those who survived remembered to the end of their lives. Before springalds and catapults and rams, and the siege ordnance of the age could be fairly brought into operation upon the Castle of the Virgins, the virgins after, with deadly effect, hurling molten lead, boiling pitch, and great masses of rock upon the besiegers, with Valasca at their head, made a sudden sortie of a fiery and desperate character.

Valasca, conspicuous in the impetuous van, was superbly mounted, her wealth of yellow hair streaming down her back as far as her jewelled sword-belt, her eyes blazing with the fire of battle, her sword circling round her head like the flash of the winter lightning, she led the charge, her amazons pressing close behind. They dashed in upon the male warriors before, owing to the suddenness of the attack and the irregular character of the ground, they had had time to form to resist the onset. There was the fierce skirl of the feminine cheer, mingled with the hoarser roar of masculine curses and execrations, a wild swaying of swords, plunging of steeds and clashing of spears. But only for an instant. The besiegers were driven headlong down the rocks they had so laboriously scaled ; and, rich carnival was provided for the eagles of the Bohmer Wald and the vultures of the Moravian Hills.

History has handed us down the names of several of the valiant who, in the battle storm, pressing close behind the war-charger of Valasca, won bloody laurels for their maiden brows. Æneas Sylvius gives the names, which are now but little heard of, owing to the enormous muster-roll of the brave which intervenes between their day and ours. But, may it gratify their *manes*, I reproduce their names here, after the lapse of twelve hundred years, that the New Women of to-day may call their children after them. The names of the specially valiant on the day the Castle of the Virgins was stormed, were : Malada, Nodea, Sveta, Vorasta, Radgea, Zastana, and Tristana. Ye fair and brave who preferred swords to distaffs and slaying men to wedding them, come forward and let me pin over the nipples of your high, white

bosoms such Victoria Cross, "for valour," as it is in the power of the *A. J.* to confer.

By their repulse on the rocks of Dievize, the male warriors of Bohemia became discouraged and demoralized; and Valasca and her martial maidens carried fire and sword, almost to the gates of Vissagrada itself, the stronghold of King Primislaus. Years rolled by, and the ladies of the court and army of the victorious Valasca sank, one by one, into the grave, till the military strength of the virgins became perceptibly diminished. And none took the place of those whom death laid low. For no children were being born; and the ghastly truth dawned upon Valasca that, with every death, there being no corresponding birth, her kingdom was departing from her. This *must* be averted. But, How? Valasca's ingenuity was well nigh limitless, and her faculty as a sorceress penetrated the most awful arcana of being. But, how her ladies were to produce children outside the co-operation of the hated male sex transcended alike the limit of her inventiveness and the compass of her magic. No *Mars* as in the case of Rhea Sylvia, no ghost as in the case of Mary, was available. Spells and incantations, of an imaginable rather than a transcribable order, were resorted to by which the ladies lost their health and bade adieu to their beauty, but still remained as barren as the rock upon which their castle was built.

And the male warriors of Primislaus had their revenge. As death thinned out, birth recruited their martial ranks. For, denied their own Bohemian Janets, Janets from Bavaria, and from over the Carpathians, kindly obliged. And, more rapidly than the sexton clapped down the sod upon a grave, the midwife spread the blanket tenderly over a birth. And, maidens of Bavaria and Hungary who had hung matrimonial fire in their own country rejoiced exceedingly at the opportunity for their special talents and energies which had been opened up in Bavaria. And they set themselves with a will to producing subjects for King Primislaus.

Under the untoward circumstances, the queen and her retinue grimly resigned themselves to the inevitable. The hated male must be re-admitted to the chamber, but

never, never to the affections, of the ladies of the court and army of Valasca. Was ever such a sacrifice of personal feeling made for the public weal since the world began? A council was held to settle upon the terms with which the enemy should be approached. And it was hereby resolved

That, such of us as are equal to the performance, bear children to the subjects of King Primislaus.

That the male children which we may bear shall be delivered up to the government at Vissagrada.

That the female children which we may bear shall be retained by the government at Dievize, to wit, the Mountain of the Virgins.

That every male child, before being surrendered to the government at Vissagrada, shall have his right eye extracted, and the thumb of both the right and left hand amputated; so that it will not be possible for any male born in the dominions of Queen Valasca ever to wield sword or bow against his own mother and the ladies of the Mountain of the Virgins. As witness our seal and sign-manual to those presents, greeting.

After some diplomatic humming and hawing the proffered terms were accepted by the government at Vissagrada. And, under a flag of truce, a numerous embassy was despatched to Dievize to ratify them. Valasca, in a light, gauzy garment of sarcenet, open at the bosom, reaching to the knee, and resplendent with gems, mounted the steps of an extemporized throne which had been erected on the esplanade outside the castle, and with the cold dignity of the queen in conflict with the yielding tenderness of the woman, addressed the brilliant congress of male ambassadors: "Nobles, knights and gentlemen, I, in the name of the ladies of my kingdom bid you welcome to Dievize and to such hospitality as its halls afford. For this reception, however, I make free to advise you that you are not indebted to me and the ladies who aid and abet me in my councils, but to the edicts of an inexorable heaven. In this juncture, heaven has conquered for you, and the rewards of victory are yours. And——"

Months elapsed and the majority of the ladies were no longer lithe and athletic. They had abandoned their wonted indulgence in the fierce excitement of the gymnasium, the fencing-ring, the joust and the chase. They

had come to pass much of the day in sedentary employment and in listless reclining upon couches. The warlike ardour, and the capacity for physical exertion had, at least temporarily, departed. But it seemed that, from a propitious turn of fortune, they would not require, for the future, the martial elasticity and hardihood which had hitherto distinguished them. A despatch had reached them from Primislaus to the effect that, in favour of Valasca, he voluntarily surrendered all claim to the crown of Bohemia, being possessed of a desire to divest his brow of royalty's crown of thorns and return to the peace and quiet of the plough, which he regretted he had ever abandoned. "I received the crown from a woman, to a woman will I render it back," said the gallant and magnanimous King Primislaus. And, he requested that Valasca should despatch a battalion or two to Vissagrada to take formal possession of the fortress and the throne.

A detachment of lady cavaliers from Dievize were despatched in the terms of Primislaus' invitation. They were not the lissome and agile amazons who erst had been at once the delight and terror of their enemies. Each draped in a long, loose mantle that left her form indefinite, sat on her saddle like a sack of salt. The drawbridge was let down and the portcullis raised, and, amid the jangling of joybells, the blast of bugles, the thunder of drums, ringing cheers, and every ostentatious evidence of welcome, the cavalcade filed into the castle of Vissagrada.

In the evening the ladies from Dievize sat down to a magnificent banquet which had been spread in their honour. At the close of the repast, King Primislaus who had done the ladies the honour to take his seat at the head of the festive board, with his dagger-hilt, struck the table three times to indicate that he demanded silence. Silence secured, a heavy golden goblet in his hand, filled to the brim with the richest Burgundy, he rose to propose the toast of the evening, "The health of Valasca, from this night forward, sole and undisputed Sovereign of Bohemia." He had spoken for a few minutes when, of a sudden, with a wild, derisive laugh, he hurled the goblet and its contents to the roof of the banquetting hall. In a moment, the arras all round the vast apart-

ment lifted ; and, from behind it, rushed hundreds of armed men. In an instant, over a wild medley of overturned tables, broken benches, and scattered vessels and viands, swords flashed, axes swung, and daggers stabbed fast and fiercely. A quarter of an hour of wild cries and thudding blows ; and then, all was silent. Down on the rush-strewn floor amid the shattered furniture and trampled food, lay the guests in every distorted and horrible position into which ferocious massacre had flung them. Almost all were dead ; but a gurgling groan rose from several which gave evidence that they still breathed and were being drowned in the blood on the floor, in which the murderers and their king now stood to the ankles.

Little remains to be told. The power of Valasca was broken. Primislaus lost no time in hurling the military strength of his kingdom against the walls of Dievize. Riding a spear length in advance of her bravest, Valasca made a brilliant sortie in the attempt to cut her way through the ring of steel that cinctured her fortifications and cut off her supplies. Her whilom dash and spirit had no whit deserted her. The spirit was willing ; but, the flesh was weak. She had, during the last month, had to let out her sword-belt by several holes ; and the blade which had been the terror of Bohemia lacked its quondam lightning speed and lethal precision. In the thickest and deadliest of the fight she fell, covered with wounds, and the flower of her army, suffering under the same disability that had affected the energies of their queen, fell fighting, impotently, but devotedly, round the corpse of her they had known, adored, and loved. Primislaus ordered that his fallen enemy should have no burial, but be left to the beak of the raven and the fangs of the wolf. The males remorselessly butchered the enemy whom their own embraces had rendered comparatively impotent. On the night of that day of slaughter, the moonbeams fell, white and peaceful, on the folds of the royal standard of Primislaus as it streamed over the battlements of Dievize. And, one of the strangest, wildest, and least-known tragedies of the world had closed.

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THE Church that is better at argument must give way to the Church that is better at blows. Theology is not a dialectician with words—she debates with the *shillelagh*. The young plant of Christianity never grew till it was fenced round with a hedge of swords. “Proof,” say you? If such a statement be not true on the very face of it, history can produce proof in abundance. The Saxon axes hewed Christianity out of Britain; it had to be restored by the monks of St Augustine, and they managed to re-establish it, only because they managed to get the axes on its side. The Society of Jesus fairly planted Christian colonies in Japan; but, in spite of the sword of the spirit and the whole armour of righteousness, Christianity became utterly exterminated before a torrent of spears. If Christian cannon had only spoken louder, the sound of the “glad tidings of great joy” (save the mark!) might to-day have been ringing from the cathedral of Yeddo. If, instead of the sword of the spirit, there had been 20,000 British bayonets, the breezes of Nippon might at this hour have been musical with the psalms of David. Persecution paralysed the *heresy* of the Albigenses, and ran its stilleto through the heart of Protestantism in Spain. In France, Catholicism waded to power through the carnage of the St Bartholomew massacre, and set her heel on the neck of the Huguenots by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. In England the issue between Rome and the Reformation hung in the balance till the diplomatic ability of Elizabeth and her ministers flung the preponderance of bills and bows, pikes and spears, into the scale against the interests of her of the Seven Hills.

State religion is State persecution. It is privilege to one band of sectaries and disability to all others. "The opinions," says Lecky, * "of 99 persons out of every 100 are formed mainly by education, and a Government can decide in whose hands the national education is to be placed, what subjects it is to comprise, and what principles it is to convey. The opinions of the great majority of those who emancipate themselves from the prejudices of their education are the results, in a great measure, of reading and discussion, and a Government can prohibit all books, and can expel all teachers, that are adverse to the doctrines it holds. Indeed, the simple fact of annexing certain penalties to the profession of particular opinions, and rewards to the profession of opposite opinions, while it will, undoubtedly, make many hypocrites, will also make many converts. For any one who attentively observes the process that is pursued in the formation of opinions must be aware that, even when a train of argument has preceded their adoption, they are usually much less the result of pure reasoning than of the action of innumerable distorting influences which are continually deflecting our judgments. Among these one of the most powerful is self-interest." Thus the mere act of taking one sect of Christians under State protection is injustice and persecution to all other sects whatever.

But, in the past, Christian persecution has seldom stopped at the infliction of mere civil and social disabilities. When persecution is spoken of to Christian apologists, under the influence of modern humanitarianism, they reply that persecutions have, indeed, been carried on by professing Christians; but that, in so far as they indulged in them, they belied Christian principles and permitted their vindictive passions as men to overmaster the essentially tolerant and humane principles of their faith. This is false. Nay, the very opposite is the truth. The modern and cultured Christian is tolerant only in proportion as he is not a Christian, and in ratio as he has progressed in the path of enlightenment and benevolence and forsaken that of Paul and the Fathers. The

* "The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe," vol. ii. p. 3.

belief that you have the finality and fixity of truth from authority that cannot err is an inevitable source of intolerance towards those who cannot accept the truth which is, to you, a complete entelechy. Doubt in your own mind, as regards the tenets you hold, is the well-spring of toleration towards those whose tenets are different. Absolute faith inevitably means persecution; doubt is the *fons et origo* of toleration. "The only foundation for toleration," said Charles James Fox,* "is a degree of scepticism, and without it there can be none. For, if a man believes in the saving of souls, he must soon think about the means, and if, by cutting off one generation, he can save many future ones from hell-fire, it is his duty to do it." Not only, then, does Christianity, being a divine revelation, "the very word of very God," contain in it essentially the principle of persecution; but the Bible exemplifies the practice as well as supplies the theory. For his most horrible cruelties to the heretic the Churchman could always quote, "*Idolatra educebatur ad portas civitatis, et lapidibus obruebatur.*"†

Christianity itself whined and groaned under persecution on the scaffold or among the wild beasts of the arena; but, in conformity with its inherent principles, the moment it got the power to do as it had been done to it inaugurated persecution upon a scale tremendous and terrible, and to which the world had previously been a stranger. The early Christians were real; the modern Christians are a sham. If the Christians were real, they would before this have burnt to ashes the hand that pens these lines. Christianity would have done it unhesitatingly in the days before it degenerated into a conventional bogus that nobody can well attack, because nobody knows exactly where it stands. But in the old and true days, when it stood by the Scriptures and the Fathers, it acted in a way which, however deplorable, we must respect the actors for sincerity and consistency. To try to stamp out heresy it hesitated not to slaughter thousands and tens of thousands—nay, to exterminate a nation, or even to depopulate the world. "Give me the earth purged from heretics, and I

* Rogers' "Recollections," p. 49.

† Deuteronomy xvii.

will give you a heaven!" was the vehement cry of Nestorius to the Emperor. After the mission of Dominic the persecution of heretics in certain districts amounted to absolute extermination; and in 1568 a sentence of the Inquisition doomed *the entire population of the Netherlands to death as heretics*. "Three millions of people, men, women and children were sentenced to the scaffold in three lines."* So terribly in earnest was the Christian Church, preferring that the earth should be rendered a depopulated and howling wilderness rather than be peopled by heretics.

No sooner had the perfidious murderer, Constantine, declared in favour of Christianity than, armed with the civil power, it sprang from the dust in which it had been writhing and shrieking under the rod, and, wrenching that rod from the hands of the persecutors, it brought it down with remorseless cruelty upon the backs of all and sundry who failed to recognise deity incarnate in the wandering preacher of Galilee. First, with terrible hate, the Christian blade was stabbed into the Jewish heart, and persecution, such as they had never before experienced, fell upon the seed of Abraham, although they were of the same race as the man-god of this new faith in whose name they were called upon to suffer. The race-blood from which their Christ had sprung the Christians shed like water. Next, the Christian fury was directed against the Pagans, who, when in power, had been so tolerant to them, and who had never punished them for their monstrous creed, but only for their flagitious crimes. And, next, the Christian fury fell upon such Christians as differed from the majority on some nugatory and hair-breadth point of doctrine; and neither Jew nor Pagan was hounded to dungeon and death with more remorseless zeal than was Christian by brother Christian. "There are," exclaimed the heathen, "no wild beasts so ferocious as Christians who differ concerning their faith." A Jew who married a Christian incurred the penalty of death; a Christian who might select a Jewess for his mistress was liable to be burned alive; and a certain Christian

* Motley's "Rise of the Dutch Republic," vol. ii. p. 155.

Queen* passed a statute going into the details as to how Christians were to be entertained and accommodated in Christian brothels, but enacting that, if a Jew dared to enter the chamber of the holy harlots, he was to be flogged.

The Jew's own Scriptures furnished texts which the new sect read as his death warrant. Deity himself was cited as the first persecutor in that he expelled Adam from Eden for a breach of the divine law, and cursed his descendants. Elijah was referred to as having slain the prophets of Baal, and also Hezekiah, Josiah, and Nebuchadnezzar as noted persecutors of heretics under divine approval. Moreover, the master-spirit of the early Church, St Augustine, gave to persecution the impetus of his genius, learning and zeal. He cursed religious liberty in the memorable words: "*Quid est enim peior, mors animæ quam libertas erroris.*"† With him heresy was the most detestable of all crimes, immeasurably worse than ordinary murder, being the murder of the soul. Toleration was an absolute crime. The closest and the tenderest relations of life were to be utterly trampled on and disregarded in the interests of suppressing heresy. "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shalt thine eye pity him; neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him; but thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people; and thou shalt stone him with stones, that he die; because he hath sought to thrust thee away from the Lord thy God."‡ "He that believeth and is baptised

* Jeanne I., in 1347. *Vide* Sabatier, "Hist. de la Législation sur le Femme Publique," p. 103.

† Epist. clxvi.

‡ Deut. xiii. 6-10.

shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.”* “If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, nor bid him God speed.”† “If any man preach any other Gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.”§ “I would they were even cut off that trouble you.”‡ The whole Christian fabric was rested upon “Believe and be baptised.” Any hypocrite and liar could, when he found it suited his interests, say he believed, and generally there was an end of it. But, with baptism, it was different; there required to be the “outward and visible sign:” every human being that did not submit to being damped by a priest went inevitably to perdition. Practically, the Christian watchword was “Be damped or be damned.”

The Church took care that children who were likely to die before their mothers gave them birth should be, prenataly, baptised with a syringe. Christendom was baptism mad. Only the waters of baptism could render you so damp as to be unsuited for hell. The keenest intellects of the Middle Ages engaged in a subtle and acrimonious controversy in regard to a Jew who got converted to Christianity in an arid desert. The Jew was dying, no water could be found, and, instead of the cooling fluid, his brow was sprinkled with hot desert sand, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.|| The controversy hinged on the question as to whether baptism with sand was, or was not, effective in securing salvation. The Council of Trent settled the matter, and declared that baptism must be by water, and water only; and so it was discovered that, after all the bother, the converted Jew was damned. Every unbaptised infant was consigned to the same region as the sand-baptised Jew. Every child came into the world bearing the guilt of “Adam’s first sin,” and under the sentence of eternal torment; and learned works advocating this view have been written as late as in the memory of men still living, and by no less able theologians than Dr Jonathan

* Mark xvi. 16.

† 2 John i. 10.

‡ Gal. i. 9.

§ Gal. v. 12.

|| *Vide* Thiers’ “*Traité de Superstitions.*”

Edwards—so firmly based is Christian persecution upon the bed rock of infallible dogma.

Under Christian persecutions thousands of Jews took the precaution to get baptised with water to save their lives. Christianity thus made tens of thousands of hypocrites and liars, and she makes millions of them even at this hour—men and women who do not believe her dogmas, but who are too indolent to investigate and too cowardly to avow in vindication of conscience as against selfish interest. The converted Jews had more moral verve. Whenever there was a lull in the storm of persecution they returned to Judaism. No fewer than 17,000 converts that had been made by one man returned, as soon as they dared avow it, to the faith of Israel. This one man was St Vincent, a friar so pure that it is recorded of him that he always undressed in the dark lest his modesty might be shocked by seeing himself naked. The Christians have had numerous purists of this order: they had, in more recent times, the holy ones who inveighed against Linnæus as indecent because his system of botany taught the doctrine of the sexes of plants.

The Crusades alone are estimated to have cost the lives of two million Christians, who dashed their religious fury, almost as impotently as the wave dashes its foam on the rock, on the warriors of the turban and crescent. And even to this day the detested Mohammedan has his mosque on the site of the Holy Sepulchre. But the fury of Christian against Infidel was surpassed by the ferocious zeal with which Christian persecuted Christian, often for differences all but imperceptible, except to the faith-opened eyes of religious lunatics. As we have seen, a keen and rancorous dispute raged for years as to whether it was lawful to baptise with sand, instead of water; and to the learned and devout such problems were ever presenting themselves as the double procession of the Holy Ghost, the exact nature of the transfiguration light upon Mount Tabor, and the existence in Christ of two coincident, but perfectly independent, wills. Want of soundness on such insane subtleties was sufficient to have the unsound one burnt to a cinder.

Indeed, to a common-sense observer, who can divest

himself of the distorted and diseased spirit which animated the centuries when Christianity was yet strong, it would seem that the faith had entered into a solemn league with the powers of Evil to fill the world with horror and misery. When accused by the Inquisition you were not permitted to confront your accuser, nor even to know his name. You might be as orthodox as it was possible to be; but, if any one entertained a grudge against you, he could have you tortured to death by simply giving in your name to the nearest agent of the Holy Office. Then it was all over with you. The procedure was thus:—"The Inquisitor tried to mystify the accused by captious questions. He asked the presumed delinquent whether the new-born infant came from man or God. If the reply was, 'From man,' 'Then,' said the Inquisitor, 'you are a heretic; for only heretics deny the creation of man by God.' And if the accused happened to reply, 'From God,' he was equally convicted of heresy, as making God the paramour of a woman. They asked, too, whether the soul began with the embryo, or after it; whether all souls were made at one and the same moment, and where; whether the host consecrated by the priest was the whole deity, or only part of him. If he answered, 'The whole deity,' the examiner exclaimed: 'Suppose, then, that four priests consecrate the host at one time in the same church, how can the whole deity be contained in each consecration?' and, if the trembling respondent admitted, in his confusion, that such was the necessary inference, the Inquisitor triumphantly convicted him of asserting the existence of four gods at once. A Franciscan monk ventured to declare openly (1319) in Toulouse that Peter and Paul themselves would have been unable to prove their orthodoxy before the Inquisition, and was condemned to imprisonment for life for uttering this unpalatable truth." *

Among the first schismatics to suffer martyrdom were the Arians and the Donatists. Their churches were destroyed, their leaders banished, and their writings committed to the flames. Then there was a lull. The

* Mackay's "Rise and Progress of Christianity," pp. 301, 302.

tremendous power of the hierarchy had welded and pressed together the shattered fragments of the dismembered Roman Empire. The influence of the then Church and the condition of the then Western Europe were commensurate, and on the quiet of moral apathy and intellectual atrophy rested the pillars of the Age of Faith. But this age was, naturally, only a transition, not a permanency. The innate restlessness of human speculation and the Revival of Learning chafed against the iron ring with which the Vatican bounded the world. Under the blow of the crozier Europe lay stunned, but not slain. She arose, and, looking around in the dim sunrise which had succeeded a rayless night, she beheld Rome holding the crown and keys, and posing as the sole and only oracle to which the problems of existence and destiny could be carried and the vexed questions of secular life referred. The pretensions of the oracle were doubted. Scepticism arose spontaneously and blossomed into heresy—in the eyes of the Church the most execrable of all crimes.

Though heaven and earth should fall to pieces, this heresy must be put down. Rome arose in her majesty, strong as the north wind, cold and pitiless as the descending avalanche. Her attitude had been, and must be, unquestioned, unchallenged AUTHORITY; and that authority must be vindicated. The issues of man's everlasting destiny were in her hands, and she would rise equal to the charge confided to her. She had the whole truth, and outside her pale was inevitable perdition. The fate of souls was in her keeping, and those souls should be kept, at whatever cost to the body. Better that earth should shriek for a thousand years under the fellest tortures human ingenuity could devise than that a single soul should pass an eternity of fiery agony in hell. Her mind was made up, her Holy Scriptures explicit, and her duty clear. She set afoot her Inquisition, deepened her dungeons, sharpened her heading axe, got ready her torch and fagot and her machines of torture, and set about her duty as expressly indicated in her doctrines. Christianity was then strong and honest. She could see her duty and carry it forward for God's sake, even through consequences the

most terrible—through the annihilation of all that is essentially human and the substitution of all that is positively fiendish.

“Men, like fish, were devourers of each other ; there was no fear of God or man ; iniquity trod on the heels of iniquity ; adultery, sacrilege, and homicide abounded ; the strong oppressed the weak.”* This was the state of matters that obtained from 1208, when Pope Innocent III. established the Inquisition. For weary century after century the red spectre of persecution presided over the thud of the heading-axes and built up the fires that were fed with human flesh. On, from 1208, this spectre stalked down the ages till it was lost amid the blood-mists of the French Revolution. The ancient red spectre died in the grasp of the modern one ; the rack of Innocent gave way to the guillotine of Marat. But the Inquisition did not depart till it had piled its holocausts mountain high. According to Llorente, who had free access to the Inquisitorial archives, in Spain alone the Inquisition burnt 31,000 persons to death, and condemned 290,000 to punishments in many cases only nominally less extreme than the death penalty. These numbers do not include the victims who perished under branches of the Inquisition established in Mexico, Lima, Carthagená, the West Indies, Sicily, Sardinia, and Malta. In the Netherlands alone 50,000 suffered death for heresy in a single reign—that of Charles V.

Vivicremation—burning alive—was the stale and ordinary manner in which the Christian Tweedledum disposed of the equally Christian, but more unfortunate, Tweedledee. But the vivicremation had, in the interests of Jesus, to be conducted on a scale so extensive that the ordinary stake-and-fagot arrangement was found to be inadequate. Besides, the quantity of timber it took to roast him was too expensive to be consumed on such a worthless thing as a heretic. It accordingly came into fashion to make strong enclosures, like cattle-pens, into which the heretics were packed along with some cart-loads of straw and brushwood. Then the pen was closed and surrounded with troops, and the straw and

* Hallam's "Middle Ages," ii. 223.

brushwood set fire to. And there, amid flame and smoke, perished scores at a time, their cries of agony falling on the impervious ears of their brother Christians, and the stench of their burning flesh ascending as a sweet-smelling savour to the nostrils of Jehovah Elohim, in whose accursed interests man had so terribly turned his hand against his brother man. Then followed the wholesale and unconsecrated burial. Scores still alive, but blistered with burning straw and half-suffocated with smoke, had the cold earth of the grave-pit laid upon their scorched flesh, and were, in their tomb, left to die at their leisure. The Archbishop of Rheims and seventeen other prelates looked upon the conflagration in such a pen as I have referred to, when no fewer than 184 heretics were in it, at one and the same time, suffering death by fire.

In the face of the appalling numbers of those who died for real or suspected heresy in regard to often incomprehensibly subtle points in that most unscientific of all sciences, theology, dare you, O Christian apologist, contend that a faith that, in one way or other, has been guilty of the violent death of millions of the human race has brought "glad tidings of great joy"? Thousands, tens of thousands, were tortured for days with the fellest torture that human ingenuity could devise, and then borne out with dislocated joints, broken bones, and mangled limbs to, over *a slow fire*, writhe out the bitter dregs of life that yet remained. Hear their groans, their shrieks, their yells of anguish arise from the torture-chamber and the fagot's burning agony. These cries of mortal pain yet peal down the corridors of the ages, and proclaim your "peace and goodwill" a mockery and a lie. And to the fiery sufferings of dissolution was added all the poignancy of supernatural terrors. The Spanish heretic was burnt in a yellow blouse, upon which the flames of hell were painted to indicate that the few days or hours of torment on earth were to be succeeded by torment everlasting in the infernal world. The heretic's goods were confiscated, his children left to perish, and his wife, under social and ecclesiastical ban, to sink to prostitution and beggary; for the heretic's crime was so terrible that it blighted all that had been connected with

him like a canker and a curse. Thus was spread the suffering over an immeasurably wider area than the mere tens of thousands who perished at the stake. For every sufferer had some friend, some father, some mother, some child, and the bane of his martyrdom alighted upon all, and the fearful conviction that the one who had been so dear to them had gone only through a fiery prelude on earth to the everlasting burnings of hell. Thus the Christian faith blighted and embittered the lives of millions whom its malevolence only indirectly reached. Unsatiated with the burning of the living, the Romish Church tried for heresy the very dead man in his grave, and the coffin and the pall and corruption could not save him from the dread tribunal, more especially if his heirs were in possession of property which, finding him guilty, would confiscate to the Church. Death and suffering to millions and outrage to the very dead in the tomb are associated with the faith of the Galilean and his Gospel of sarcastic mockery: "*On earth peace and goodwill to men.*"

If any apologist for Christianity may venture to affirm that Catholicism had the monopoly for persecution, I am prepared to maintain that Protestantism, in proportion to its power, in the work of persecution, was no whit behind the Church of Rome.

"He that believeth not," etc., was a statement so explicit and on such inexpugnable authority that the extirpation of those who should tend to shake the belief of the orthodox became the foremost and most imperative of duties. Believe this statement, and the better man you are, the more merciless persecutor you will be. Buckle has corroborated the testimony of Llorente, that the most terrible of the persecutors, Torquemada included, were, in themselves, humane and kind-hearted men; but they believed in the doctrines of their Scriptures and Church, and consequently, when heresy was under judgment, deemed it their duty to God and man to steel their heart against every human emotion, and to become merciless as the she-wolf from whose dugs her young had been torn away. The crime lay not with the inquisitors and torturers; it lay with those who forged writings which they alleged to be of divine origin—it lay with the Church that, in

maintenance of her own dominancy, perpetuated and enforced the fiendish corollary of the written fraud.

Consequently, as I have said, Papist and Protestant alike persecuted in proportion to their respective influences. For the stake and rack were on both sides, at the disposal of strong and earnest men—souls capable of the direst renunciation and sacrifice, and prepared, at the call of what they felt certain was duty, to make earth an Aceldama of gore and groans, that heaven might be an Elysium of gold and glory. In England here we have been fed full of horrors on the recital of the persecutions by the Papists; and the ordinary Protestant in the street holds persecution to be a trait of the hated Romish Church, and is unaware that *his* Church ever persecuted at all. The prolonged and gallant struggle of the Scottish Covenanters was not against Papists but against their fellow Protestants. It was a Protestant hammer that drove the wedges down upon the splintered bones of Hugh MacKail; it was Protestant murder that, in front of his own doorstep, scattered the brains of John Brown of Priesthill. They were Protestant hands that tore the body of Alexander Peden from the grave. Those fierce blades at Bothwell are in Protestant hands, and, from point to hilt, they are red with Protestant blood. The mad and miserable hundreds in Greyfriars' churchyard are Protestants, and it is a hedge of Protestant muskets that keeps them there. The *Crown* that goes down into the churned fury of the deep, gored to ruin on the rock horns of the Orkneys, is filled with Protestants, shipped off by other Protestants to be sold in the Indies as slaves. Protestant voices sing that death-psalm till the sea closes and roars over the psalm and the singer.

The John Calvin was no Papist who, in order to prolong his agony, caused Michael Servetus to be slowly roasted to death. In Holland a man who had already been scorched, racked, and partly flayed is trailed across the floor of the dungeon out into the light, that other horrors may be perpetrated for the purpose of inducing him to take a certain view of certain doctrinal points—one more attempt to bring him properly to him who said, "He that believeth not shall be damned." The man, back downwards, was firmly secured to the floor. Then,

on his naked abdomen, was placed an inverted metal vessel containing under it a number of rats. On the bottom uppermost of this basin live coals were heaped till the rats underneath, to escape being roasted alive, tore their way through the man's flesh into the cavity of his body to find refuge among his intestines. The basin was removed, and fiery cinders were thrust into the holes in the flesh through which the rats had torn their way.*

* Adapted from "The Bottomless Pit" to which the reader is referred for further details of persecution by Protestants.

A VISIT TO THE GRAVE OF
THOMAS CARLYLE.

WITH ADDENDUM.

BY

Saladin.
==



SECOND

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A VISIT TO THE GRAVE

OF

THOMAS CARLYLE

BAREFOOTED lads and lasses, when I was some seventeen years of age, came skelping over the red heather and yellow broom of the moors from Carlyle's Craigenputtock to my school at Clenesslin, Dunscore. I well knew Mr. Cumming, the seven-feet-high child of Anak, who was then Carlyle's tenant farmer, and who showed me some of Carlyle's "business" letters to himself, and which, for the incipient soul which was then in my body of length without breadth, I could not decipher. "I should flog the smallest boy in my school for perpetrating a handwriting like that!" exclaimed I, with the full flavour of pedagogic strut. As far as I am aware, Carlyle never visited the Dunscore district without calling upon my venerable and highly-gifted friend, Thomas Aird; and dear old Aird of "The Devil's Dream" made up his mind that I, his raw and vehement young *protégé*, should take tea with Carlyle in the little upper room at Mountain Hall, near Dumfries, where the grand and quiet old poet had often told me tales of his earlier years to cheer me through the toil and blighted hope of mine. What tales he could tell, too, of his early associates in literature! of John Wilson, with his radiant genius and majestic manhood; of De Quincey, with his dreamings over the borderland of the world; of the lovable "*Delta*" of "Casa Wappy," and of Blackwood and of Lord Jeffrey; and of that marvellous shepherd of Ettrick, who fashioned the glamourie of "Kilmeny" out of the dim mists of his native hills.

Carlyle took tea exactly like any other uncouth mortal. I was young and blate and timid. By the grace of a Titan, I, a big schoolboy, with his legs too long for his breeches, was stuck between a titan and a Deity, and I shrank into nothingness under the fierce light that beat upon me. I was told that the butter was from the Barnkin (which was ever Aird's guarantee of that article's excellence), and I was recommended to try it with the soda-scone. Thus appealed to, I felt that it devolved upon me to immortalise myself. Now was the chance for me to come out of my shell and show Carlyle that Aird was correct in his predilection for me, and that I was no common country hobbledchoy. I would astonish Carlyle—and I daresay I did. I began a sentence, which I intended to be a long, eloquent, and elegant one. I would demonstrate that I could orally marshal more than monosyllables. I would prove that I was a scholar, and could wield the sesquipedalian thunders. But, O shade of Tully, in my blateness and trepidation, a word of tremendous length got inextricably and inappropriately jammed into the sentence, and all the wits I had left got jammed in along with it. I lost my meaning altogether. I abandoned the old sentence, and began a new one, less ambitious and perfectly commonplace and trite; but, before I had got half way through with it, I had forgotten what I had intended to say. I stuttered and blushed, let my knife fall upon the floor with a bang, the perspiration broke upon my brow, and I subsided into silence and despair. I dared not look up to observe the facial effect my discomfiture had produced; but I doubt not that, if Carlyle deigned to think of me at all, he set me down as a complete idiot, or the nearest to it that could well be conceived.

Much has come and gone since then. Now I am bolder, and my sentences are less ambitious. A raw youth, I broke down in the orgies of my hero-worship before the furrowed cheeks and the rugged brow of one of the most exceptional men that ever ate bread prepared from the cereals of our planet. In the morning of August 29th, 1884, I repeated weirdly: "Brief, brawling day, with its noisy phantoms, its poor paper crowns, tinsel gilt, is gone, and divine, everlasting night, with her star-diadems, with

her silences and her veracities, is come,"* and I determined, since I was only some fifteen miles from Ecclefechan, that I should go and see my old master's resting-place, and cull a few blades of grass from the clay of death which now fills up the wrinkles indented with the graving tool of a weary life. I reached Ecclefechan. There is a key to the plain iron gate of the sepulchre; but, as regards the cottage where the key is kept, there was no one within, and the door was locked. A substantial and ungainly wall of whin-stone and lime rose, some nine or ten feet high, between me and the Ecclefechan city of the dead. But, standing within a few feet of where Carlyle lay, was I to be turned aside by a wall of stone—aye, or a wall of fire? It was Carlyle who had first prompted me to be heroic enough to become a Free-thinker, and repudiate the moral suicide of attempting to force upon the credence that which is repulsive to the reason. I buttoned my coat, glanced critically at my boot-soles, and, repeating between my set teeth, "What is incredible to thee thou shalt not, at thy soul's peril, attempt to believe! Elsewhither for a refuge, or die here. Go to perdition if thou might, but not with a lie in thy mouth; by the Eternal Maker, no!"† rushed at the jagged, hard, and ungainly wall, scrambled up it like a cat, and leapt from its top like a deer.

A plain, spear-headed iron railing, set on a coping of stone, the spear-points reaching as high as your chin, encloses three headstones standing in line, to the left old James Carlyle, the stone-mason; to the right Thomas Carlyle, the baby; in the centre Thomas Carlyle, the God-knows-what, lying waiting for God-knows-what. "Yes, thy future fate, indeed? Thy future fate, while thou makest *it* the chief question, seems to me extremely questionable."‡ "Or, alas, perhaps at bottom *is* there no Great Day, no sure look-out of any life to come, but only this poor life; and what of taxes, felicities, Nell Gwynes, and entertainments we can manage to muster here?"§ Outside the rail, in a drizzling shower, I copied the inscriptions upon the three several grave-stones, for the benefit of him who may not care to visit

* "Past and Present."

† "Life of Sterling."

‡ "Past and Present."

§ *Ibidem.*

Ecclefechan at all, and also for the benefit of him who may visit Ecclefechan, but who may not see his way to leaping over a ten-feet wall at the risk of breaking his neck :—

ERECTED TO THE
MEMORY OF JANNET CARLYLE,
SPOUSE OF JAMES CARLYLE, MAS
ON, IN ECCLEFECHAN, WHO DIED
THE 11TH SEP^{TR}, 1792, IN THE 25TH
YEAR OF HER AGE.

ALSO JANNET CARLYLE, DAUGHTER TO
JAMES CARLYLE AND MARGARET AIKEN,
DIED
SHE AT ECCLEFECHAN JAN^R 27TH, 1801,
AGED 17 MONTHS, ALSO MARGRET
THEIR DAUGHTER, SHE DIED JUNE 22ND, 1830,
AGED 27 YEARS. AND THE ABOVE
JAMES CARLYLE, BORN AT BROWN KNOWE
IN AUG^T 1758, DIED AT SCOTSBRIG ON THE
23^D JAN^{RY} 1832, AND NOW ALSO RESTS HERE
AND HERE NOW RESTS THE ABOVE
MARGARET AITKEN, HIS SECOND
WIFE, BORN AT WHITESTANE, KIRKMA-
HOE, IN SEPT^M 1771; DIED AT SCOTSBRIG,
ON CHRISTMAS DAY 1853. SHE BROUGHT
HIM NINE CHILDREN WHEREOF FOUR
SONS AND THREE DAUGHTERS SURVIVED
GRATEFULLY REVERENT OF SUCH
A FATHER AND SUCH A MOTHER.

HUMILITATE.

HERE RESTS THOMAS CARLYLE, WHO WAS BORN
AT ECCLEFECHAN, 4TH DECEMBER, 1795, AND DIED AT
24 CHEYNE ROW, CHELSEA, LONDON, ON SATURDAY
5TH FEBRUARY, 1881.

HERE ALSO RESTS JOHN AITKEN CARLYLE, M.D. LL.D.
WHO WAS BORN AT ECCLEFECHAN 7TH JULY 1801
AND DIED AT THE HILL, DUMFRIES ON MONDAY
15 SEPTEMBER 1879.

IN
MEMORY
OF
THOMAS CARLYLE
SON OF JAMES CARLYLE AND ISABELLA CALVERT
IN SCOTSBRIG WHO DIED 27 DEC. 1841
AGED 3 YEARS AND ONE MONTH.
ALSO THE ABOVE ISABELLA CALVERT, WHO
DIED AT SCOTSBRIG 1ST JUNE 1859,
AGED 46 YEARS.

The Thomas Carlyle on tombstone No. 3 was the son of James Carlyle, brother of Thomas the great. This brother James still vegetates in Ecclefechan, but was invisible. He was described to me as "wee and eccentric," and was, till lately, farmer in the Scotsbrig, of tombstone celebrity. I called at his house; but, although he did not pretend to be absent, he was more difficult of access than even his brother's grave, and I had to return to London without even a glimpse at Carlyle the undistinguished. I, however, saw his son, nephew of him whom Gilfillan dubbed "the cursing Polyphemus of Chelsea." He is a rough, broad-set, bucolic-looking person, with a wrinkled, bull-dog sort of face, but full of ingenuousness and sonsy integrity. In a quiet and stolid, but unostentatiously polite, manner he took me upstairs and pointed out to me several mementoes of his illustrious uncle. Among these was a framed oil painting of a person of about forty-five years of age, not a ladies' man by any means, but the possessor of a grim, hard face of heather and granite, under which the volcanic fires of genius might slumber, and which I had no difficulty in predicating to be the face of 'Thomas Carlyle. It is noteworthy that, from this oil painting, no impression whatever has yet been taken, as the nephew laconically assured me. In the room there is also a framed oil painting purporting to be the counterfeit presentment of Jane Welsh Carlyle. But the thing has a facc as long as your arm, and has, altogether, such features and expression as I cannot charge God Almighty with having bestowed upon any being I have yet seen. If the father of Teufelsdröckh had really a wife like that, the key is

furnished to the secret of his bearishness, dyspepsia, and misanthropy.

I next went to the house in which Thomas the Uncanny was born. It has a wide cart-arch running right through it to some unspeakable stables or lumber houses behind. In a little room upstairs, on December 4th, 1795, a baby came howling and wailing, as we have all done, out of Mystery into Mystery; and this baby, instead of an ordinary clodhopper, turned out to be—**THOMAS CARLYLE**. Scotland, although she has specially the knack of turning cuckoos—or, rather, eagles—out of sparrows' nests, had done nothing so tremendous in this line since the immortal twenty-fifth of January, 1759, when she parturited in an "auld clay biggin" near Alloway Kirk the infant that developed into that portentous jumble of dirt and deity known as **ROBERT BURNS**. In the little room there is a chair, brought from Chelsea, and which is interesting as being reputed to have often sustained the somatic foundations of the author of "Sartor Resartus." There is also, in a corner, a bracket, on which are arranged copies of the whole of the author's works—his own present to the room. The house, although a poor and plain, is a strong and substantial one, and was built with the undistinguished hands of a father whose son built up with distinguished hands, not a little whin-stone house in a little obscure village, but a fabric whose august and rugged masonry forms a fane in which millions worship, and in which succeeding millions will continue to worship when the present celebrants are wiped off the slate with the sponge of Death. The natal room is shown off by a smart and pretty young dressmaker, who exposes for sale some Carlyle nicnacks, one of which I brought away with me in the shape of a wooden pin-tray, with a portrait of Ecclefechan in the bottom thereof.

But, as to Ecclefechan itself, it is not worth going the length of your leg to see. Its principal feature is the red and rustic U.P. church, which overlooks Ecclefechan's sole attraction—its graveyard. I saw at least four public-houses, two or three of which had the cheek to dub themselves inns. All seemed dead as the graveyard, except these "inns," and one old man wheeling a

barrow, and one frail old woman carrying a back-load of sticks. Where did the money come from to purchase the "liquid Madness sold at tenpence a quatern, all the products of which are, and must be, like its origin, mad, miserable, ruinous, and that only"?* And yet, let the "inns" flourish; their "black, unluminous, unheeded *Inferno* and Prisonhouse of souls in pain"† of fiery whisky must surely be better than the waters of the Ecclefechan burn as it "wimples through the clachan." Even for Carlyle's sake, I did not taste the liquid of this burn that runs down the main—in fact, the only—street of the village, and quite close to the door of the tenement in which Ecclefechan's only man was born. The day was showery; watery clouds scudded athwart the autumn sky, and the tide of the unclassical burn had the appearance of dirty milk. This appearance was considerably enhanced the wrong way by the presence in the bed of the stream—which is now, however, partly covered over—of old boots, old sardine tins, scraps of old newspapers, the heads of herrings, the parings of potatoes, yellow cabbage leaves, and the mortal remains of unburied cats. I should think Ecclefechan should be a tolerably ready place to die in, never to speak of the privilege of being buried beside a man who has left an indelible mark upon his century. Off trudges the dirty burn to join Mein Water, which, in its turn, falls into the River Annan, and the miasma of dead cabbages and the malodour of the corpses of cats are lost in the tossing tides and saline winds of the Solway. Ecclefechan has a woollen factory (I took it for a gaol, or a madhouse), which, when business is brisk, employs forty hands; but it now employs only fourteen. Alas for the local Plugstone of Undershot! *Ichabod* is over every door. The glory has departed. There is no vitality in the woollen factory, in the dotard with the wheelbarrow, or in the beldame with the bundle of sticks. The village's only heirloom is decay; its only source of life—a grave! I looked beyond the wheelbarrow, the public-house, and the bundle of sticks, into the depths of the silent and mysterious sky, and murmured: "The

* "Chartism."

† *Ibidem.*

Past is a dim, indubitable fact ; the Future, too, is one, only dimmer—nay, properly, it is the *same* fact in new dress and development. For the Present holds in it both the whole Past and the whole Future : as the LIFE-TREE, ICDRASIL, wide-waving, many-toned, has its roots down deep in the Death-Kingdoms, among the oldest dead dust of men, and with its boughs reaches away beyond the stars, and in all times and places is one and the same Life-tree.”*

By the way, speaking of Scotsbrig, I had a chat with a hale and hearty old peasant, who had long been ploughman at that farm. He knew all the ins and outs of the Carlyles well, and had frequently, when a youth, “put the graith on the pony for baith Tammas and his brither John, the doctor. The doctor was a raal gentleman. I never pat on a saddle for him but he geid me half-a-croon ; but Tammas was a meescrable screw. I never got as muckle as a bawbee frae him.” So much for this aged yokel’s estimate of him of the Eternities and Immensities !

It will be observed that, on his monolith, James Carlyle is described mas—on. The ancient ploughman of Scotsbrig assured me that the gravestone was the handiwork of the mason who sleeps below. I am sorry for this, as there is something on the obverse side of the stone which offends me. At the top there is an angel with wonderfully chubby cheeks, and the rest of the space is carved and scrolled over with two heraldic beasts and two heraldic shields, showing that the modern stonemason prided himself upon being connected with some strutting sept of ancient cut-throats. The two heraldic beasts have each an open mouth, from which proceeds what has evidently been intended to represent a tongue with terrible forks ; but which, as they stand, would more readily suggest that each beast had swallowed a hen, all but one foot and leg, which still protruded from the open jaws, with all the toes spread. There are, furthermore, in sundry places on the stone, as many loose feathers carved here and there as would make a decent-sized pillow ; but whether they had belonged to the angel, or

* Proem to “Past and Present.”

the hen, or both, I could not determine. With its feathers and feet and detached nooks and corners and humbugs, the whole thing looks like a Kindergarten puzzle : " Given the pieces, put together the hen." So much for a peasant's heraldry.

Howbeit, in the village stonemason all this might be overlooked and forgiven; but the very two heraldic brutes that figure on the back of the tombstone of the father appear on the face of that of the son—he of the mongrel English and German kettle-drum with stick and calf's-skin thunder. Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon. One more cynical than I might pronounce the *soi-disant* scarifier of shams himself a sham, and sneer that, if Carlyle's burial in Westminster would have savoured of vain-glory, his interment in Ecclefechan is redolent of burlesque.

But if there be here, over thy tomb, Thomas Carlyle, room for cynicism, still that cynicism is not for me. I leave to burn, as the only funeral tapers over thy grave, the few heads of red clover I found blooming there among the sweet and ungrimed green grass over which trod the feet of thy childhood. I am fain to forget thy poor little make-believes of heraldry. Thou, and not the red-handed cattle-reiver of the bygone centuries, art the founder of the house of Carlyle. Thine are the gules, d'argent, and d'or that should make every dead man of thy lineage proud of thee, stand up in his grave, and utter a sepulchral hurrah. So much for thy lineage of the Past; and, as for thy lineage of the Future, did no "two-legged animals without feathers"* proceed from thy loins? Yet, thou hast ten thousand sons, no dwarfs and drowes either, but men with blood of fire and thews of steel—Atlases carrying the world on their shoulders. Over thy bed, with its clay sheets so cool, with its coverlet of green grass and white daisies, I lean, O my father, and ask thee for thy blessing. I am thy youngest and most unworthy son; but I have the honour to be consanguine with thee in Scottish peasant blood, in sour peat bogs, in porridge and penury. Your boyish arm, like mine, bore a shield that was battered shapeless in

* "Sartor Resartus."

the battle for bread ; and your right hand, like mine, bore a blade whose gladiatorial flashes of flame had rendered more terrible, but had not illumed, the invulnerable panoply of Ontology and Mystery.

THERE is a William Carlyle at Ecclefechan who does not believe in the best-known member of the Carlyle family. William is the beadle of the United Presbyterian Church in the village, and to a pilgrim who recently visited the grave of Thomas Carlyle the beadle said : "Heaps of people from foreign parts come to see the grave ; but, although I am a Carlyle myself, he is no prophet with me. I ken better. In fact, the folk here do not think meikle of him. His books are not read hereaway at all." The pilgrim was the Rev. J. H. Thomson, of Hightae Free Church.

When a Scotsman is common he is execrably common, and egregiously inflated with the most irritating kind of conceit. What struck us when we visited Ecclefechan was that such a cedar as Carlyle ever grew from such a midden as the nadir of the Scottish peasantry. In and about Ecclefechan we found some specimens of the most ignorant of all God's creatures. Hardly a soul we met seemed to have read a line of Carlyle. He had shot up completely from them and above them, like the terrible pyrotechnics of a volcano from the uninteresting expanse of a stercorous swamp. Not a man seemed proud of him, not a woman appeared to have the faintest idea why people from a distance made a fuss about him ; but they were all anxious enough to turn a penny over him if they could only know how.

To have been appreciated at Ecclefechan, Carlyle should have been a douce U.P. elder with a gig. And, if there had been a little quiet scandal that he liked his whisky and liked the lasses, he "wad hae been nane the waur." But a man of genius for Ecclefechan—O good God !*

ADDENDUM.

SINCE my hand last held the pen it has held the black cord that lowered my father's coffin into the grave. In Caerlaverock Churchyard the turf of my native land now lies over the wasted face, closed eyes, and white grave-clothes of as harmless and innocent a man as ever played an utterly unnoticed part on the stage of Life. Never were there father and son between whom there was less sympathy of brain and heart. From my earliest days he was not my model. Born under a happier star than ever beamed upon me, he was too easy and apathetic to crawl in under the shadow of the trellised wall and eat of the fruit of the vine. And I mention it, not by way of resentment, but simply as a memory, that his amiable apathy cost me years of poverty and worm-wood and gall. It is to him I owe it that, for a few ardent years that seemed an eternity, I dashed my brain and heart against the prison bars of Fate, while my yearnings to participate in the world's thought and the world's action burned within me like a consuming fire.

I have watched the solemn crows follow the winter plough. I have marked the swinging step of the sower as he cast the wheat into the furrowed and red-ribbed field. My eyes have followed the shadow of the clouds as they sailed far aloft over the sea of ripening corn; and my ear has listened to the swish of the scythe, behind which the yellow shocks of autumn lay in the sultry sun. These, to him who is now no more, were the sum-total of the world. For him the clarion blast in the struggle for success and fame died away in the chirruping of the sparrow under the thatch, and to him the green laurels of the poet or

the blood-stained bays of the conqueror were buried under the roses that twined around his door.

But the still small voice of the few chap-books that had fallen into my sunburnt hands had communicated that a world lay somewhere beyond the belt of frith and the ridge of Galloway hills; and, with fierce but indefinable longings, I yearned to leap from among the yellow corn and red heather into that world's arena, and, by dint of the sword or the lyre, win attention in the high places of the earth. It was not the fault of the indolent and innocent old man who the other day breathed his last that I was a hawk hatched in the nest of the dove; that, from the playful wrestle with rustics on the green, I aspired to the audacity of wrestling on a far other arena with the giants and hierophants of the Christian faith; that, from footing it with sunburnt nymphs at the wedding or the kirk, I should invite a superstition strong in the growth of well-nigh two thousand years to meet me foot to foot in a war relentless as hell. But every volcano must erupt according to the forces of which it is the visible exponent. Every man must dree his weird, and I am dreeing mine. And in this harsh world, with its dearth of human sympathies, it is some comfort for me to reflect that I never cost my father an hour of pain; that what I lacked in community of thought and sentiment I tried to make up in loving kindness, and that no grey hair that lies in that lowly grave grew prematurely grey for me.

The consciousness has often been forced upon me that life is only a dream; and who will assert that the sleep of death is not the mystic awakening amid the eternal verities? Is there no time, no place, where the Samson of the psychic shall no more require to *materialise*, and, with the locks of his glory shorn off, be compelled to grind in the somatic mill of the Philistines? The air that hursts from one bubble is liberated to fill another, and, under the proper conditions, again does so. Bursts the glittering bubble of the king and the dull bubble of the peasant; and, reckless of which was brilliant and which was not, the air disperses, to mingle with the ebbs and flows of the universe. But how vain are speculations on the agnostic awfulness that lies in the

tomb and on this side of it and beyond it! Credulous Hope may build Utopias and spread Elysiums beyond the carnival where the worms revel under the grass; but to the ear of Thought no voice comes from the darkness—to the eye of Reason no hand writes upon the dim wall of Nescience. We are pawns in the hands of a mysterious player playing an inscrutable game. The life of Joseph Ross was a sleep vitalised by only the faintest *souffçon* of a dream. Is he, at length, wide awake, or has he sunk into a sleep that is utterly dreamless? In the seventy-five years he lived he was never, like millions of others, even for a single hour awake to a consciousness of the fierce realities of Being. Philosophy never crushed him against the barriers of Mystery; Poetry never hurled him through the welkin and the scirrus; Hate never saw the lightning of his eye and the clench of his teeth; and from him the red-rose petals never wafted the kisses of hectic and impetuous Love. O God of Life, where are you? Is it your decree that men should utterly die before they have really lived? Thus I cry; but my cry is into the void, and only my own voice echoes back from the impenetrable and unanswering silence.

When I go to Scotland now there is one rough and honest hand that will grasp mine no more for ever. When, if ever, I return to the auld kirk yaird the grass will be growing green on an, at present, raw red grave. Every year, to me, the earth becomes more holy as it embraces in eternal rest one by one of those I loved, of those who loved me. Father, adieu. I will follow. Meanwhile, one more blast of desolation sweeps through the ruins of an already all too desolate heart.*

* *Secular Review*, September 12th, 1885.

EVERY THURSDAY.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE SECULAR REVIEW:

A JOURNAL OF

AGNOSTICISM AND NEO-SECULARISM.

EDITED BY

SALADIN.

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Vicarious Suffering.

OUR SANCTIONS FOR CRUELTY.

BY

SALADIN.

(Reprinted from the "Agnostic Journal.")

MAY 31st, 1902.



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Agnostic Journal

AND ECLECTIC REVIEW.

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VICARIOUS SUFFERING.

“MAN’S inhumanity to man” is the blight and canker and bane of human life. In recent decades human ingenuity has been, in part, directed to such benignant inventions as the steam-engine and the electric telegraph and telephone. But, anterior to those decades, for century upon century, man’s mechanical ingenuity was principally directed to the production of instruments of torture, to contrivances which applied to those mystic harp-strings, the human nerves, could evoke every note in the gamut of agony.

In the Ages of Faith, in the ages in which the Church which claimed, and still claims, to be of Christ was supreme, we had no telescope, no gas-light, no railway, no printing-press ; but we had the rack, the wheel, the boots, the thumb-screw, the witch’s bridle, the Iron Virgin, and other torture engines too numerous and devilish to be catalogued here. In our museums you can still behold preserved specimens of these mechanical horrors. The sight of them makes *me* shudder : then, what effect must their hellish spectacle of rust and horror have upon *you*, O Orthodoxist, when you remember that it was almost exclusively in the service of the Church that that rack tore human joints out of their sockets, that the boots there

held the leg of a human being till blood from the ruptured veins and marrow from the shattered bone splashed in the face of him who, with swinging hammer, drove home the merciless wedges? Here is heresy, some incomprehensibly subtle doctrinal distinction contemned: then, tighten the wedges, apply the hammer; as weighed against the crime of heresy how trifling are blood and marrow and anguish and agony!

Were grimly fanatical believers culpably inconsistent with their creed in thus mangling their fellow human beings? Did not the Lord, at the very outset of his career with man, shew that he preferred the red blood of the veins to the red flush of the rose? Did he not prefer the fat of Abel's veal to the fragrance of Cain's violets?

CAIN: Poor Abel! he was but a shepherd boy,
 Who offered up the firstlings of his flocks
 In order to appease Jehovah's wrath,
 Who revelled in the pangs and dying groans
 Of the poor beasts who never did him wrong.
 My heart revolted at the cruel sport. 'Twas I
 Refused to torture gentle innocents,
 But, taking fruit, I offered it to Him,
 Altho' 'twas mock'ry, seeing *all* was His.

SPIRIT: Fruit would not do. The Lord has ordered blood.

CAIN: My brother, as a shepherd, offered lambs,
 And I, as husbandman, did offer fruit.
 Methought the offering of one's toil is best acceptable.

SPIRIT: Blood, dying pangs, the torture of the innocent,
 Alone appeases the Almighty's wrath.

CAIN: Ay! to the shame of all created things,
 Thou speakest true—He loveth blood!*

Did not the entire wheel of the Christians' faith turn upon the pivot of blood and suffering? Was not the man-god in whom they believed nailed, hand and foot, to the bitter cross? Painters, poets, theologians and historians, have testified to the pain and ignomy of crucifixion. It was not

* Lady Florence Dixie, in "Abel Avenged," in Part II. of
 "The Songs of a Child."

mere execution, as we now understand the word ; it was studied torture. In being nailed, or lashed, to the cross, no vital organ of the victim was affected. Crucifixion was, with hellish ingenuity, designed to elicit and stimulate all the suffering of which the nerves of the culprit were capable, even to the last spasm and writhe of anguish and agony. A strong culprit has been known to hang on the cross for several days, before exposure to the sun, hunger, slow hæmorrhage and fiery thirst brought death in merciful relief.

And this is the revolting and horrible torture to which the Church deliberately and dogmatically subjected her man-deity. Lest the horror upon which her very existence rested should be overlooked or forgotten, crucifixes with a tortured and nude human figure nailed thereto were exhibited everywhere, in wood, in stone, on canvas. And, as if this were not enough of the cruel and the horrible, the twelve "Stations of the Cross," each more shudderingly revolting than the other, were invented and forced, in all their repellant gruesomeness, upon the wild and sanguinary imagination of an unlettered public. Blood ! Blood ! Blood everywhere ! "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission." "Except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, there is no life in you."

This horrible dithyramb with the refrain of "Blood" only too truculently commended itself to the fierce races in the fields of Christian mission. Blood, not brain. Brain was crude, credulous and inchoate, and applied its raw rapacity to blood and the merciless shedding thereof. Zealots, bigots, their god had been tortured, and they, not incoherently, took to inventing instruments "for His name's sake." Habituation to the idea of crucifixion—"and, being in agony, He prayed more earnestly, and the sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling

down to the ground"—hardened all the more gentle and tender humanitarian instincts, as daily contemplation of cruel and morbid topics inevitably will. And, here, in London, only a few years ago, we had, on exhibition, a collection of torture-engines by which, through dark and bloody ages, on the scaffold and in the dungeon, the Gospel had been protected in its purity against the taint of heresy.

Perdition to the church that required such engines to protect her against heresy ! Now, on every side, she is assailed by heresy—nay, by blank unbelief ; and this contumacious journal is, every week, hurled in her teeth in defiant scorn. Yet who will say that, in spite of this, the world is not better than it was at the time when this serial would have been in the flames and its editor on the rack ?

Blood ! Blood ! "There is a fountain filled with blood." Well, disinfect the abhorrent nuisance and fill it up with rubble : scatter over it a layer of rich and generous mould ; there let the wholesome green grass wave round the rathe roses of Reason and the white lilies of Peace. Can it be wondered at that this habituation to the conception of the sanguinary and horrible has rendered Christianity the bloodiest agency that has ever cursed the earth with its presence ? I fearlessly appeal to history in corroboration of my averment. "I come not to bring peace, but a sword," is a dictum put into the mouth of the clumsily-invented myth from whom the faith of the vulgar takes its name. Yes, and, by Heaven, the sword came, and came to stay ; and with it came ignorance and superstition and bigotry, and cruelty and rancour and hate. "The Lamb of the Great Sacrifice" was hoisted on the back of The Ass of the Great Credulity, and the Dark Ages was the result, and the darkness of the Dark Ages flings its penumbra upon the vaunted illumination of to-day to a degree that he who looks upon Society conventionally little suspects.

Not only did the "glad tidings of great joy"—O mordant irony!—tend to the reckless and merciless waste of life; but, by a far hotter and more real hell than any previous faith had known, it lent new terrors to death. Never, before Christianity was devised, was it discovered that there was any sting in death worth speaking of. Ask the death-bed memories of certain sincere Christians of the type of John Bunyan and William Cowper, in their raving terror, how Christianity takes away the sting from death; and, if I, like them, were a Christian, I feel certain that my death-bed would be as shudderingly terrible as was theirs. There are, I know, many Christians who feel quite sure that they will "fall asleep in Jesus," and who console themselves by repeating maudlin, nauseous, and meaningless Gospel tags. They know that the vast majority of human kind go to perdition, but they have the despicable self-conceit to believe that *they* have been selected from that overwhelming majority, that *they* are members of that select few, that mere handful, the elect, that *they* have "found Jesus," that *they* have been "washed in the blood of the Lamb," and much else of canting commonplace. And, in their selfish meanness, they feel idiotically happy—although, practically, the whole of the rest of the world is to be lost. And only by this intensely selfish and self-conceited imbecility does Christianity "take away the sting from death." Plato knew how to die, ignorant of this sting-extracting process; and so did Socrates, so did Cato, so did Epaminondas, so did Cocles, so did Cæsar, so did Julian.

He who mercilessly drowned a multitude of swine, after, in his superstitious ignorance, he deemed he had put devils into them, cannot be cited as a zoophilist. Buddha and Mahomet alike insisted upon kindness to the "lower" animals; but where did Jesus utter one word that can be quoted enjoining upon us kindly treatment

of our poor non-human fellow-mortals? We find attributed to him a number of fatuous utterances like, "I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven"; "I and my father are one"; and "The father is greater than I." But he never once said: "Be merciful to the ass"; "Be kind to the dog"; or "Liberate the slave." And, consistently enough, till this hour, the countries professing the faith that bears his name are by far the cruellest and zoomistic in the world.

Even while I write, in Spain, the most Christian country in Europe, a bull-fight* on a more than ordinarily colossal scale is being arranged, and which will involve reeking slaughters and horrors in which the Mahometan could never participate, and which the Buddhist would rather die than sanction. By far the best organized and numerically strongest section of the Church that bears Christ's name formulates thus, in brutal candour, in "The Catholic Dictionary," published under the imprimatur of Cardinal Vaughan: "The brutes are made for man, who has the same right over them that he has over plants and stones. He may, according to the express permission of God, given to Noe, kill them for his food, and this without strict necessity; it must also be lawful to put them to death or to inflict pain on them for any good or reasonable end, such as the promotion of man's knowledge, health, etc., or even for the purposes of recreation."

There are, however, humanitarians among the Papists, as among the Protestants, men and women nobler than, and unconsciously in revolt against, their creed. For instance, the Christian pietist, Frances Power Cobbe, denounces Vivisection as "to the last degree un-Christian"; and then, by a *tour de force* of the glaring inconsistency to which Christian apologists are driven, she admits:

* See p. 13.

"This abominable sentiment, and all the cruelty to man and brute of which it has been the promoter, remains after twenty centuries of Christianity almost unnoticed by the churches of Christ. No moralist—so far as my small knowledge extends, whether Catholic or Protestant—no father, no schoolman, no casuist of later times, no Protestant preachers, have denounced Cruelty and the Pleasure in Pain with anything approaching to the nature of its moral delinquency."

Again: "If we really accepted the precept of Love to all and under all conditions as the supreme Divine Law, should we not regard the sin of positively torturing and taking pleasure in the sight of torture as the very last and worst of offences? Should not the early Christian teachers, when they mapped out the Seven Deadly Sins, have placed Cruelty the very first on the list? What were they doing, and what has the Church of Rome been doing ever since, to tell us that Sloth, Covetousness, Lust, Anger, Envy, Pride, and even Gluttony are mortal sins, and say not one word about Cruelty to man or beast?"

Again: "Even our own English minds (through whole regions of which the old Roman theology and morals still unconsciously dribble) rarely take in the idea that the supreme Vice is Cruelty, that while all other vices degrade man to the level of the beast, Cruelty sinks him to that of the fiend. When we speak of Vice commonly, we think of sexual vice or intemperance. We do not think of that Vice of which—so it seems to me—we must, if guilty, repent through all the cycles of our immortality."* Yes, Miss Cobbe, and to this Vice of all the vices that "most holy religion" of yours is not appreciably opposed, in either theory or practice!

That truculent Romish dictum I have quoted gives full warranty, not only to hunting our fellow-mortals to

death for "sport," but gives sanction to the hideous horrors exposed in a brochure* which I have glanced at and closed with a shudder. Jesus was crucified to secure our spiritual, and now, consistently enough with that immoral and revolting proposition, dogs and cats and rabbits and guinea-pigs are being vivisected to secure our physical well-being. In the name of Mercy, who and what are we that both god and dog should suffer and die for us? I who, till recently, was endowed with far above the normal strength and agility, and could leap a five-bar gate, was wont to feel more proud of the feat than that of writing an "At Random"; but I have now, through a nerve-malady, to move cautiously, and not over steadily, along by the aid of a staff. Yet, even were the torture of the mouse, exhibited in figure 447, to disclose the neurotic secret that would again make me a swift-footed Achilles, I should, unscathed, set the "wee bit creepin', timorous beastie" free. What right have I to make his impotency my potency, to make his woe my weal?

In Figure 503*b*, these Christian vivisectionists have actually stuck up a rabbit with a nail through each foot and in an attitude grimly suggestive of their man-god upon the cross. The brutal burlesque is theirs, not mine. But in the figures on page 158, the cat, my favourite among all the animals, is exposed in three attitudes of vivisectional agony. I finish this at "the wee short hour ayont the twal," and go to bed to pass a sleepless night. Visions of my lost friend, the "Prodigal

* Catalogue of apparatus and appliances for experiments with animals, issued by F. and M. Lautenschlager, Berlin. Translated into English by Paul Grünfeld, who was nominated at the request of the National Anti-Vivisection Society, by the librarian of the British Museum. The illustrations, which have been reproduced by photographic zinc-etching, are fac-similes of the originals, and have been placed beside the letterpress as they appear in the original catalogue. Second Edition.—Twentieth Thousand. Printed for The National Anti-Vivisection Society, 92, Victoria Street, London.

Son," will pass before me, between my closed but sleepless eyes and heaven's dome filled with the awful stars. His remains lie affectionately interred in the small plot of garden behind my home in London, and a giant Scots thistle from Galloway keeps vigil over his grave.

My ever tenderly remembered "Prodigal Son," who was young and happy, and to whom life was dear, yet died like a philosopher. I feel convinced that he knew he was dying; but he died like a hero. He knew he was dying; but he knew nothing about the sting having been taken from death by the reputed sacrifice of an old-time carpenter; he did not know that death had ever had any special sting. As I nursed him, he only looked up with a deep and tender mournfulness into my tearful eyes. I have among "my puir earth-born companions and fellow mortals," had pet pigs, pet bullocks, pet horses, pet rats, pet sheep, pet crows and pet owls. I never had the self-conceit to feel myself so superior to any of them that I presumed to regard them as subordinates; I regarded them as friends, and (I wish I could say the same of the human animal) not one of them ever betrayed me.

I read inexpressible volumes of pathos in the countenance of my expiring feline friend. His teeth, which he had often used upon me playfully, were visible between his parted lips, as he panted for laborious breath. And, as he cast upon me his last look, there was an eloquence therein which can never be expressed in any weak words of mine. It meant: "Dearest friend, Saladin, my poor green eyes, of which you were the delight, are closing. I am in pain. It is growing dark. My one regret is, I shall see you no more."

I am aware that what I here express is only the emotionalism of an intense zoophilist who sometimes feels inclined to doubt that "the lower animals" are the lower animals at all, it being difficult to get lower than the

average J. Smith, and impossible to get lower than the lowest J. Smith.

If, in the awful arcanum of inexorable Fate, I cannot have my soul saved without a tortured Christ, or my body cured without a vivisected Cat, let soul and body perish. I am not without egoistic self-esteem ; but I have also moral self-respect, and this latter revolts at my accepting of weal at the cost of another's woe. Barbaric conception of pristine savages ! If my soul cannot be saved without another's blood and agony—Let it be lost. Doom, I face thee and whatever thou mayest have in reserve for me ; and I decline to escape my weird through the anguish of a Christ on the Cross, or, through its natural sequence, the agony of a Cat on the "Operation Board." GOD, whom I cannot formulate in thought, but whom I meet in ecstatic vision, THOU wilt not permit me to be lost because I decline to accept of a cruel coward's method of being saved.

A CHRISTIAN HOLIDAY.*

THE hold the ring has on Spain is enormous. There are four weekly journals in Madrid devoted solely to the interests and literature of the bull-ring. There are dozens of books written on the subject, and on every day of a fight Madrid is simply painted green with copies of the "Programa de Espectaculos," a four-page sheet sold for a penny by hundreds, perhaps thousands, of hawkers.

This gives pictures of the bulls to be slaughtered on the day in question, their pedigrees and owners and short histories of the animals, together with the names of all the performers in the day's spectacle. About an hour before the time for the show to begin the picadores, dressed in their clumsy but picturesque costume, set out from their hotel in the Puerta del Sol for the Plaza de Toros, about a mile away.

These gentry are mounted on fine horses, not the sorry hacks they use in the ring, and are followed by immense crowds of admiring men, women, and children, who consider it an honour to be near the heroes.

At this time of the year the spectacle begins at about four, earlier or later, according to the number of animals to be killed. The scene for a couple of hours before this time beggars description. A sense of furious struggle, wild desire, fierce eagerness hangs over the city—comes pouring down with the rays of the hot sun, rises with the dust from the suffocating streets, gets into the blood of every Madrilenos, and compels him or her—for women go to bull-fights in their thousands—to make a mad rush for the place of slaughter.

Even if he cannot afford to enter the show—and it is an old saying that a Spaniard will sell his shirt to go

* *Daily Express*, May 21st, 1902.

to a bull-fight—to be near the ring is something. Perhaps he may hear a wounded bull bellow with rage or a dying horse scream in his agony, and he is certain to see the chief actors come or go.

Private carriages, with well-dressed men and daintily-clad women, electric trams succeeding each other with amazing rapidity, each laden to the full with sweltering humanity (or inhumanity), horse and mule trams that use no rails, but clatter madly over the cobbles, extra omnibuses, and open cars drawn by five, six, or eight red-tasselled mules, all dash at full gallop for the Plaza de Toros to turn out their loads and tear back for more.

As the time grows short they come only part of the way back and turn at the half-way mark to hurry on belated stragglers. It is not gay, it is feverish, exciting, bewildering. Men's faces are set and keen. There is no badinage or merriment, even if it were possible, while thundering over the ill-paved streets. The one idea is to get to the fight quickly. Anger is swift to the surface, drivers are urged and sworn at, and woe be to the wretched horse or mule that stumbles. He is greeted with a shower of curses from roof and window of the vehicle and flogged unmercifully by his driver.

If anyone is of opinion that bull-fighting does not brutalize these people, let him watch the crowd that goes to the Plaza de Toros any Sunday in Madrid. He need not go inside the amphitheatre—he will see enough outside to change his mind.

We are having fights nearly every day just at present. I went to Thursday's contest, and saw six bulls and fifteen horses slaughtered. I was disgusted and bored, and came away simply worn out, not with excitement, but with a sinking stomach and fluttering heart. My first feeling was that of anger at the men in the ring for brutally sacrificing the poor horse, who, with his bandaged eye on to the side towards the bull, was made to receive broadside the cruel horns of the maddened and worried brute. The result was sickening. The horse was ripped open, and amidst screams of pain he was forced to stand again with his entrails dragging on the sand of the arena. Every step he took he trod on

his entrails, but was not allowed to lie down and die until he could no longer bear the burden of the picador, who urged him forward as long as possible with spurs while his servant slashed the dying brute over the head with a stick.

I do not intend to describe the fight; you would probably not publish the revolting details if I did. I merely give one instance which was multiplied over a dozen time with variations more loathing and gory as the insistent crowd's lust for blood grew with what it fed upon. Finally, the bull, his fore part a crimson flood, spirit exhausted, an easy victim for the cowards who were torturing him, was put out of his misery by the matador. For three hours this went on until the six bulls had been dragged out dead by mules.

Bull-fighting is a cruel, soul-debasing sight. Men, women, and children must become brutalised—made callous to suffering and pain. It must and does stamp the character of the people who love it, and degrade them. Many Spaniards will tell you that they do not care for it, and never go. They wish to have the "sport" stopped, but they are few compared to the millions here who would cause civil war rather than their favourite pastime should be abolished. In some parts of the United States the law does not permit a butcher to sit on a jury trying a prisoner for capital crime, because he is supposed to be accustomed to the sight of blood. If such a law were in force here it would be hard to obtain a jury in Madrid, where nearly everyone is a butcher, by proxy at least.

After witnessing a bull-fight it is easy to understand Spanish cruelty in Cuba and elsewhere, and to realise that it was in this Spain that the Inquisition originated. You may see to-day in Madrid the square, Plaza Mayor, where thousands of persons were tortured and burned to death to the great delight of the spectators crowding the balconies about the four sides of the square. It has changed but little in appearance, except that the instruments of torture have been removed a little further away to the Plaza de Toros.

There are many laws in Spain regulating bull-fighting, mostly in favour of the institution. As an example of its

legality, I may merely point out that should all the horses available be killed at a corrida the law allows the managers of the rings to go into the public streets and commandeer the first horses at hand, paying for them, of course. There are more than two hundred and fifty bull-rings in Spain, About five hundred fights are held every year, in which one thousand five hundred bulls and six thousand horses are killed. These are average figures. It is impossible to get any reliable figures of the expense of this national institution, but it must be very large. Matadors of first rank make sometimes from £10,000 to £15,000 a year, and everybody finds money for the bull-fight, though schools suffer in this country, where about fifty per cent. of the people are illiterate.



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“*The Beauty of Holiness.*”

“BIBLE Extracts and Assertions in Proof of its Origin” is the title of a brochure which I have received by post. Like all works which feel their position before the law rather shaky, no printer’s or publisher’s address is given ; and thus, to escape the possibility of prosecution, by doubtful means this work has leapt into the greater evil of making successful prosecution certain, should any one feel it to be his mission to set the law in motion. The compiler’s name is not given ; but the author from whom the compilation is made is well known ; he is none other than the Christian deity, and, as he is the author of one literary production only, and every babe in this country knows the name of his book, and as my *forte* is not supererogation, I need not name it here.

When I was a boy I read a work entitled “Dodd’s Beauties of Shakespeare,” this anonymous brochure should be entitled “Somebody’s Beauties of Deity.” I confess I do not know much of Deity ; but, from the extracts from his writings which are before me, he must be a very plain-spoken sort of person, who certainly calls a spade a spade, and that with a vengeance too. Judging from modern standards of etiquette, he must evidently have spent a good deal of his life among costermongers and the rest of it as bully in a *maison-de-jote*. Should any of his own well-paid priests resent this as an aspersion upon the culture and gentlemanly bearing of “the Lord,” I have the pleasure to refer them to what “Rabshakeh said unto them,”* and to the pleasing little anecdote anent Judah and his daughter-in-law.† “The

* 2 Kings xviii. 27.

† Genesis xxxviii., *passim*.

Lord," judging from the extracts from his book, may be a decent enough body in his way; but he can hardly be described as a cultured writer, and he would certainly be very questionable company at a young lady's tea-party. He has not had the advantage of having James Boswell for a biographer; but he has got along remarkably well without him; and I make bold to say that Dr Johnson and Jehovah-jireth are the most minutely-biographed persons in the temple of Fame, and Jehovah has the advantage of Johnson in this—he himself is the recorder of his own life and achievements. It must be admitted that these achievements evince a remarkable versatility of talent. In his autobiography I find that he "created the heavens and the earth," but that all that he did subsequently was not on so magnificent a scale. After creating the heavens and the earth he did not "live up to it," for I read that, condescendingly, he spued and sent scabs and winked, and chatted with the devil, and was troubled with his bowels, and took no pleasure in men's legs—neither do gentlemen who go to the Alhambra to see the *ballet*; *they* have no pleasure in *men's* legs, and in this they resemble "the Lord."

I should be inclined to think that talents that range from world-making to spueing and winking are of an order to which the Admirable Crichton could not have held a candle. The compiler of the "Bible Extracts" has arranged, with loving care, a list of the feats of the "Almighty Maker of heaven and earth." With a pious hand, I transcribe them here for the refutation and discomfiture of such as allege that of Deity nothing can be known. I transcribe chapter and verse, which proves to demonstration that a great deal can be known about him:—

- God walks—Gen. iii. 8.
- God talks—Deut. v. 24.
- God smells—Gen. viii. 21.
- God works—Gen. ii. 2.
- God rests—Gen. ii. 2.
- God repents—Gen. vi. 6.
- God flies—2 Sam. xxii. xi.
- God sits—Psalm xcix. 1.

- God stands on a wall with a plumb-line—Amos vii. 7.
 God spues—Rev. iii. 16.
 God laughs—Psalm xxxvii. 13.
 God runs like a giant—Job xvi. 14.
 God roars like a lion—Hosca xi. 10.
 God curses—Gen. viii. 21.
 God changes his mind—Exodus xxxii. 14.
 God sends lice—Exodus viii. 16.
 God sends scabs—Deut. xxviii. 27.
 God wrestles with Jacob—Gen. xxxii. 24, 26, 30.
 God a tailor and clothier—Gen. iii. 21.
 God writes on stone—Deut. iv. 13.
 God afraid of man—Gen. iii. 22, 23.
 God is a husband—Isa. liv. 5.
 God shows his back parts—Exodus xxxiii. 23.
 God shaves with a razor that is hired—Isa. vii. 20.
 God winks—Acts xvii. 30.
 God chats with the devil—Job. i. 7, 8.
 God hardens men's hearts—Exodus xiv. 4.
 God takes no pleasure in men's legs—Psalm cxlvii. 10.
 God argues—Job xxiii. 4.
 God graves on his palms—Isa. xlix. 16.
 God delivers men into the devil's power—Job ii. 6.
 God charges his angels with folly—Job iv. 18.
 God distrusts his saints—Job xv. 15.
 God causes adultery—2 Sam. xii. xi.
 God causes suicide—Jer. viii. 3.
 God causes cannibalism—Jer. xix. 9.
 God causes desecration of the dead—Jer. viii. 1, 2.
 God causes indecency—Isa. xx. 4.
 God orders the slaughter of men, women, and children—1 Sam. xv. 3.
 God causes lying—1 Sam. xvi. 1, 2.
 God punishes the guiltless—1 Sam. xv. 3.
 God uses low language—Jer. xxv. 27.
 God is said to possess foolishness—1 Cor. i. 25.
 God makes Moses a god—Exodus vii. 1.
 God sanctions borrowing without repaying—Exodus xi. 2; xii. 36.
 God creates evil—Isa. xlv. 7.
 God is a merchant—Hosea xii. 7.
 God loves to oppress—Hosca xii. 7.

- God is troubled in his bowels—Jer. iv. 19.
 God smites his hands together—Ezek. xxi. 17.
 God speaks to fishes—Jonah ii. 10.
 God breathes—Gen. ii. 7.
 God's breath causes frost—Job xxxvii. 10.
 God asks questions—Gen. iii. 9.
 God is a baker—Exodus xvi. 4.
 God works with his fingers—Psalm viii. 3.
 God swears—Deut. xxxiv. 4.
 God bares his arm—Isa. lii. 10.
 God is in hell—Psalm cxxxix. 8.
 God considers some men as a smoke in his nose—
 Isa. lxxv. 5.
 God gives bad laws—Ezek. xx. 25.
 God finds rest refreshing—Exodus xxxi. 17.
 God rewards transgressors—Prov. xxvi. 10.
 God creates the wicked for the day of evil—Prov.
 xvi. 4.
 God is a man—Exodus xv. 3.
 God rewards fools—Prov. xxvi. 10.
 God is a consuming fire—Deut. iv. 24.
 God orders men to drink, be drunken, and spue—
 Jer. xxv. 27.
 God blasts through his nostrils—Exodus xv. 8.
 God requests Moses to "let him alone"—Exodus
 xxxii. 9, 10.
 God came down to earth in form of a bird—Luke
 iii. 22.
 God is like soap—Mal. iii. 2.
 God takes away nose jewels, etc.—Isa. iii. 21.
 God hisses—Zechariah x. 8.
 God visits the earth to inspect buildings—Gen. xi. 5.
 God was horn—Colos. i. 15.
 God is weary with repenting—Jer. xv. 1.
 God spreads dung on men's faces—Mal. ii. 3.

And His Son

- Jesus orders us to hate our parents and all belongings
 —Luke xiv. 26.
 Jesus ordered swords—Luke xxii. 36.
 Jesus tells us to be improvident—Luke xii. 21.
 Jesus sent devils into pigs—Mark v. 13.

Jesus says he came to cause war, not peace—Matt. x. 34.

Jesus rode upon two animals at once—Matt. xxi. 7.

Jesus supped after resurrection on broiled fish and honeycomb—Luke xxiv. 42.

Jesus says all who disbelieve him shall be damned—Mark xvi. 16.

Jesus says all who ever came before him were as thieves and robbers—John x. 8.

If the work before us had been a chemical, instead of a literary, production, it might have been put into a phial and labelled "Pure Essence of Dunghills." Only a stern sense of duty could have induced the compiler to engage in such a labour of disgust. I have gone through the Greek and Roman classics, Boccacio, and "The Merry Muses," as well as the pages of "Thomas Little," and Tobias Smollett; but "the Lord" beats all of them at writing clean dirt.

The worst of "the Lord" is, he has few traits to redeem his coarseness. We find in Psalm xxxvii. 13 that he laughs; but it certainly cannot be at his own jokes. Wit will redeem much; but pure coarseness is irredeemable. However, let me say it to his credit (I have always tried to give the very devil his due), he never seems, to me, to indulge in a libidinous tale just for the mere love of the thing. At a moment's notice he will go off from his dirt into a rigmarole about breeches and candlesticks and fringes, which shows that he does not deal in dirt for dirt's dear sake, but that he is such an unsophisticated old innocent that he does not know dirt when he sees it. In this age and country we have come to be æsthetic and fastidious; and, as for "the Lord," "his ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts," and, for this same fact, those who glance at the "Bible Extracts" will be devoutly thankful.

Again, in the interests of "the Lord," I willingly admit that there is no absolutely fixed standard of taste, more than there is an absolutely fixed standard of morals. The England that accepted the English Bible of 1611 was leagues away from the England of to-day. Its English is that of the Shakspearian era, and, upon the whole,

Shakspeare is just about as indecent as "his maker." The tastes of England and Heaven were, at that time, about on a par; and, with the then standard of taste, the Bible did not strike any one as indecent. The Blackfriar's theatre, in which Shakspeare himself had a share, has been described, and, from the description, we can gauge the state of public taste and morals. There was no *chalet* to which the playgoers could retire; but, as substitute, a big tub stood on the floor, serving an exceedingly useful, if not over-ornamental, purpose. Plain old Jah, in 1 Kings xvi. 11, and elsewhere, refers to a "wall," and the English playgoers, who used their tub and cracked their now unspeakable jokes, did not see anything improper in Jehovah-jireth and his "wall." So much for the manners of England about the time when the country was first made acquainted with the manners of Heaven.

Gadzooks and marry-come-up, Jehovah could get along well with Queen Elizabeth; but he is out of all harmony with Queen Victoria. Elizabeth could have read these "Bible Extracts," and had a good guffaw over them with Cecil or Raleigh; but the sight of the very first page would drive Victoria into the hands of Sir William Gull. The truth is, modern intellect has not done so much as modern sentiment to knock a hole in the drum of Holy Writ. The flames of hell still roar and sputter away at Spurgeon's Tabernacle, and at one or two Bethels of the vulgarian order; but nowhere that cultivated nineteenth-century men and women do congregate is the doctrine of hell now preached. Hell has not been reasoned out of the Christian creed; it has simply been rejected because it is revolting to the moral sentiment of modern times. When you reason Hell away, you will reason away Heaven also; for, in theology, they are correlated, and stand or fall together. Heaven still stands, not because it is more reasonable than Hell, but simply because it is not so repugnant to the moral sentiment of this latter quarter of the nineteenth century. Æstheticism has not reached a very high level even yet. It can stand wing-flapping and "holy, holy!" but it draws the line at chain-clanking and yelling and brimstone.

The "Bible Extracts" is far from commendable reading; but the disagreeable task of noticing it, and what must have been the still more disagreeable task of compiling it, will be served if it, to some extent, help to rend away the veil of pseudo-sanctity which hangs around the book which is the Protestant fetish. It cannot be urged that it is a small matter that the Bible offends against the canons of taste; for, had I space, I could show that this is only another way of saying that it offends against the canons of morals. True, the standard of morals differs in different ages; but the standard of morals which obtains in any particular epoch is, practically, fixed and immutable for that epoch, and to attempt to roughly and hastily upset that standard is more than a venial offence against Mrs Grundy and Mrs Gamp—it is treason against the best interests of mankind. Such treason Holy Writ is perpetrating in Europe to-day wherever it is read; but the saving clause is, it is *not* read by one in a thousand even of those who pretend to regard it as infallible and associated with the highest solemnities of their career in life, and their destiny when life is over. The principal part of the Bible with the ordinary Protestant John Smith is the fly leaf in front of it, on which are inscribed the date of his marriage with Janet, and the dates of the births of all the young Smiths which were the result of the union of John and Janet. If the book be big enough and gilt enough, it is also useful for laying on the window-sill with a small anti-macassar over it, the whole surmounted with a little vase of flowers. The ordinary chapel-goer is as ignorant of the Bible as he is of the Koran or the Zend-Avesta. And it is through this very ignorance of it that it has been possible for him to rise to an elevation of purity and delicacy of word and deed which leaves "the Lord" and his crude and plain-spoken book far behind—a landmark nearly out of sight, away back in the wilderness through which the human race has marched to the comparatively green pastures and relatively still waters that are now theirs to enjoy.

The Harp of Hell.

ROBERT BURNS wished, in the interest of the deil himself, as well as in the interest of others concerned, that he (the deil) might—

“Aiblins tak’ a thocht and men’.”

The deil has certainly followed the suggestion. He is not the malefic fiend he once was ; and, as I have said, he is the most interesting character in the Christian drama, and he has the most “go” in him. His personal friend, Burns, wrote an address to him, distinguished by great candour, and John Lapraik responded on behalf of the deil ; but I should say the deil had not authorised him to do so, as the “answer” is but poor, and has nothing devilish in the ring of it.

As I am more of a heretic than “blithe Lapraik” was, and, in consequence, presumably more of a personal friend of the deil, I will take the liberty of replying to Burns on the deil’s behalf. My reply is based upon an anonymous and fugitive performance which fell into my hands some years ago.

THE DEIL’S ADDRESS TO ROBERT BURNS.

OH, wae’s me, Rab ! hae ye gane gyte ?
What is’t that gar’s ye tak’ delight
To jeer at me, and ban, and flyte,
In Scottish rhyme,
And falsely gie me a’ the wyte
O’ ilka crime ?

“Auld Hangie’s” no a bonnie name,
 But just the warst word in your wame,
 But I forgie ye a’ the same ;
 I’ll let ye see
 Quite plain what’s what, when ye come hame,
 And live wi’ me.

An’, Rab, fu’ frankly let me tell,
 Ilk ane o’ mettle like yoursel’
 Had far, far better mop and mell
 Wi’ rattlin’ chiels
 Sic as ye’ll fin’ down deep in hell
 Amang the deils

Than ye had lie in Abram’s lap,
 Or hingin’ on by Sara’s pap,
 Giein’ yer wings an extra flap,
 A heevenly hen,
 And leavin’ aff the milky drap
 To scraich “*Amen!*”

O’ auld nicknames ye hae a fouth,
 O’ sharp, sarcastic rhymes a routh,
 And as you’re bent to gie them scouth,
 ’Twere just as weel
 For ye to tell the honest truth,
 Just like the deil.

Rab, far mair lees are tauld in kirk
 By every bletherin’, preachin’ stirk
 Wi’ whinin’ theologic quirk
 Than deils daur tell
 Down in the blackest brumstane mirk
 O’ lowest hell.

I dinna mean to note the whole
 O’ your unfounded rigmarole ;
 I’d rather haud my tongue, and thole
 Your clishmaclavers,
 Than try to plod through sic a scroll
 O’ senseless havers.

O’ warlocks and o’ witches a’,
 O’ spunkies, kelpies, great or sma’,
 There isna’ ony truth ava’
 In what you say ;
 For siccan frichts I never saw,
 Up to this day.

The truth is, Rab, that wicked men,
 When caught in crimes that are their ain,
 To find a help, are unco' fain
 To share the shame ;
 And so they shout, wi' micht and main,
 The deil's to blame.

Thus I am blamed for Adam's fa' ;
 You say that I maist ruined a' ;
 I'll tell you ae thing, that's no twa,
 It's just a lee ;
 I fasht nae wi' the pair ava',
 But loot them be.

I'd nae mair haun in that transgression,
 Ye deem the source o' a' oppression,
 And wae, and daith, and man's damnation,
 Than you yoursel' ;
 I filled a decent situation
 When Adam fell.

I was a god o' the first water,
 An' wad tae Heeven's auldest daughter ;
 But, by my sooth, the dad that gat her
 Trode on my taes—
 I took my sword an' tae the slaughter,
 Amang his faes.

For I could neither thole nor dree
 Or god or deil to tramp on me ;
 An', Rab, in this I'm like to thee,
 Fu' croose and bauld,
 Wha car'd na no a single flea
 For Daddy Auld.

Nae doot I hae o' sins enoo,
 But lecs, an' neither sma' nor few,
 A tail like dragon, foot like coo,
 Hae gien to me,
 As, Rabbin, mony an evil mou'
 Has spak' o' thee.

And, Rab, gin ye'll just read your Bible
 Instead o' blin' Jock Milton's fable,
 I'll plank a croon on ony table
 Against a groat,
 Tae fin' my name ye'll no be able
 In a' the plot.

Your mither, Eve, I kent her brawly ;
 A dainty quean she was, and wally,
 But destitute o' prudence haly,
 The witeless hissie ;
 Aye bent on fun, and whiles on folly
 And mischief busy.

But, by my saul, she was a limmer
 At ever kittled heart o' kimmer ;
 Nane were bonnier, some were primmer,
 For, gif ye please,
 She jinked about, through a' the simmer,
 Without chemise.

The loesome lassie wadna bin',
 Just whaur forbidden she wad rin,
 A' Natur' sought her smile to win,
 An' deil may care,
 Up tae her bonnie waist in sin,
 She jumpit fair.

An', Rantin Rab, I tell ye true
 There's much o' mither Eve in you ;
 So rein ye up, or ye sall rue,
 I rede ye weel,
 An' tak' a word o' warnin' noo,
 Though frae the deil.

Eve had a leg like Bonnie Jean ;
 She was a wily, winsome quean,
 Wi' rosy mou' an' pawky een,
 Airms warm an' saft,
 She needit only to be seen
 To drive ane daft.

Had Jah himsel' been in that yaird
 An' tae that witchin' lassie pair'd,
 As sure as daith he'd kissed the swaird
 E'en Jah himsel' ;
 E'en *he* wad no hae better fared
 Whaur Adam fell.

An', Rab, my birkie, gie's yer haun',
 Now whether ye be deil or man,
 If *she* says *Na* ye winna stan'
 Her wiles ava,
 But like a tree by wind up-blawn
 Ye feckless fa'.

As for that famous serpent story,
 Tae lee' I'd baith be shamed and sorry ;
 It's just a clever allegory,
 An' weel writ doon ;
 The wark o' an Egyptian Tory—
 I ken't the loon.

Your tale o' Job, the man o' Uz,
 Wi' reekit claes, and reested guiz,
 My hornie hooves and brocket phiz,
 Wi' ither clatter,
 Is maistly, after a' the bizz,
 A moonshine matter.

Auld Job, I ken't the carl richt weel ;
 An honest, decent, kintra chiel,
 Wi' heid to plan and heart to feel
 And haun tae gie—
 He wadna wrang'd the verra deil,
 A broon bawbee.

The man was gey and weel tae do,
 Had horse, and kye, and ousen too,
 And sheep, and stots, and stirks enoo,
 Tae fill a byre ;
 O' meat and claes, a' maistly new,
 His heart's desire.

Foreby, he had within his dwellins
 Three winsome queans, and five braw callans,
 Ye wadna, in the hale braid Lallans,
 Hae fund their marrow,
 Were ye to search frae auld Tantallans
 Tae Braes o' Yarrow.

It happened that three breeckless bands
 O' caterans cam frae distant lands,
 And took what fell amang their hands,
 O' sheep and duddies,
 Just like your reivin' Hielan' clans,
 Or Border bodies.

I tell thee, Rab, I had nae share
 In a' the tulzie, here or there ;
 I lookit on, I do declare,
 A mere spectator,
 Nor said, nor acted, less or mair
 About the matter.

Job had a minstrel o' his ain,
A genius rare, and somewhat vain
O' rhyme and leir ; but then, again,
 Just like yersel',
O' drink and lasses unco fain,
 The ne'er-do-well.

So wi' intention fully bent,
My doin' to misrepresent,
That book o' Job he did invent,
 And then his rhymes
Got published in Arabic prent,
 Tae suit the times.

You poets, Rab, are a' the same,
O' ilka kintra, age and name ;
Nae matter what may be your aim,
 Or your intentions,
Maist o' your characters o' fame
 Are pure inventions.

Your dogs are baith debaters, rare,
Wi' sense galore and some to spare,
While e'en the verra brigs o' Ayr
 Ye gar them quarrel—
Tak' Coila ben tae deck your hair
 Wi' Scottlsh laurel.

Haith ! Michael ne'er laid haun's on me ;
Your tale, Jock Milton's, a' a lee,
Tak' tent, puir crater though ye be,
 Puir Roundhead loon,
Had ye had but had een to see,
 I'd crack ye're croon.

I like Rab's deevil mair than Jock's,
A hamely deil for hamely folks ;
He swirls his tail, his bonnet cocks,
 An' aff he goes
To sup among the preachers' "flocks,"
 His Scottish brose.

Yet, Rabin, lad, for a' your spite,
And taunts, and jeers, and wrangfu' wyte,
I find, before you end your flyte,
 And win your pirn
Ye're nae sae cankered in the bite
 As in the girn.

For when ye think he's doomed to dwell
The lang for ever mair in hell,
Ye come and bid a kind farewell,
 And guid be here,
E'en for the verra deil himsel'
 Let fa' a tear.

I own it, Rab I like it weel
To be auld Scotlan's ain auld deil,
An' I'll stan' by her staunch and leal,
 Whate'er may be,
An' ne'er a son o' hers sall "squeal"
 That comes to me.

An' I hae brimstone for their yeuk,
An' down in hell I'll hae your buik,
An' *agua vite* in the neuk
 In kegs galore,
An' never parson, plague, or spook
 Shall vex them more.

When e'er I hear the Scottish tongue
I'll frae the barrel knock the bung,
Sing "Scots Wha Hae" wi' lusty lung,
 An' by the urns
O' a' the great wha Scotlan' sung
 The deil an' Burns

Sall stan' the rough burr thistle by,
An' haud the drinking quaich on high
Wi' heather wreathed frae Ayr or Skye,
 Frac Clyde or Dec.—
"Lo, Dogma perish, Priestcraft die ;
 Scotlan' !—Tae thee !"



REVISED EDITION.

MY VISIT
TO
MR SPURGEON'S TABERNACLE.

BY

Saladin.



C. H. Spurgeon

LONDON :

W. STEWART & CO., 41 FARRINGTON STREET, E.C.

MY VISIT TO MR SPURGEON'S TABERNACLE.

I LEARNT, on the evening of Thursday, Feb. 25th, 1886, that it was one of Pastor Spurgeon's dipping nights ; so I, for the nonce full of holy zeal and fervour, strode off to the house of the Lord. The house of the Lord in Newington is not like the houses that the Lord usually lives in. It has no steeple, towering up impudently and uselessly into heaven. It is a big square clump, which, it would seem, originally thought it would be a prison, but which afterwards changed its mind and tried to become a madhouse. It is of the dumpy, gouty order of architecture, in which Mr Spurgeon himself has been designed and constructed.

And in those days the sons of God went up to present themselves before him, and I, Satan, went up amongst them. I entered by the door to the extreme left, facing the street, and, ascending a flight of stairs, found myself in the first gallery, and in the front seat thereof. There was plenty of room for more saints than had assembled, so I had little difficulty in edging myself up till I had an excellent view of the platform and the sanctified duck-pond in front of it. The platform is a spacious one, with a good deal of sitting room on it and behind it. And on

it and behind it sat some dozens of what I took to be Mr Spurgeon's principal fogle-men and bottlewashers in this Newington corner of the Lord's vineyard.

The only person *standing* upon the platform was a squat, rubicund little man, who was pawing away at the railing and talking platitudes. It was a good many years since I had heard that squat little personage before ; but the pleasing and musical, albeit full and resonant, voice, the dictional glibness of gab, and the unaffected but singularly accurate pronunciation told me at once that I had before me the world-renowned Charles Haddon Spurgeon. His subject was *faith*, and the assurance of Christ to his disciples that the reason they could not 'cast out devils' was 'because of their unbelief.'

The preacher had no more attentive hearer than I was. Acquainted as I was with Mr Spurgeon's atavisms of thought, I confess that I was yet absolutely dumb-founded to hear the crudities and puerilities of the Dark Ages discussed as though the light of the subsequent centuries had never cast a single ray upon them, and as though the babblings round the world's cradle were good enough to be uttered in the arena in which the world now wrestles in the might of its manhood. Spurgeon's devil is simply the devil without a *souppçon* of subjectivity or metaphysical explaining away. He is no Ahriman, or Siva, or Lok, or Evil Principle. He is simply the old, crude, objective devil that can now frighten only children and the handful of adult children who hang on to the coat-tails of Mr Spurgeon, and let the world go round without carrying them with it.

This crude and objective old devil can be 'cast out.' It is one of the evidences of divine goodness that the devil is permitted to get inside us. It gives us the opportunity to 'chuck him out,' and thereby show God how strong we are. The Omniscient, of course, does not know how strong we are till he learns it from marking the

measure of our success or non-success in chucking out devils. But Mr Spurgeon does not see even thus far before his nose. He is, perhaps, the most single-minded man in Europe. With him there is just a light and no cross light, far less the interminable interweaving of cross lights of every prismatic tint and hue that, in suggestion springing from suggestion, and thought vaulting from thought, strains and bewilders and agonises the whole being of men of mental grasp and intellectual subtlety.

Mr Spurgeon believes in demoniacal possession, just as his prototype did in Galilee nearly two thousand years ago. He tries to thrust on Newington the *cultus* of Capernaum, and he, to an appreciable extent, succeeds. For the non-thinker is always the non-thinker; he has always been with us, and ever will be with us. His mental (by courtesy) qualities are negative, and are all stereotyped. What Peter or John would have believed at the beginning of our era, Spurgeon would believe to-day. He referred to the disciples beholding 'Satan as lightning fall from heaven,' just as if that phenomenon were as widely recognised and as validly established as, say, the event of the first Reform Bill. No subtleties, no embellishments, no explanations that explain away; simply the devil was seen as lightning to fall from heaven! Mr Spurgeon takes his time from a clock in Jerusalem, which eighteen centuries ago stopped and has never gone since. His brain has no convolutions. What he wishes to believe he succeeds in believing; for where there is just one thought there can be no counter thought. Persons of this type seem to have been very numerous in primitive and unlettered times. But evolutionary processes have given more momentum to the fly-wheel and more complexity to the machinery of cerebration; and few specimens of the type are found now outside our asylums for imbeciles. When they are found and are deemed sufficiently sane to look after themselves,

and not to be dangerous to their fellows, they form the soil to support the only plant of true and unadulterated Christianity that now remains in the world. I make bold to say that, on the old-fashioned and neglected Jesus and Paul lines, Mr Spurgeon is the most genuine Christian now in Europe.

The divine duck-pond in front of the platform is the peculiar feature of Mr Spurgeon's hell-and-thunder shop. There it yawns like the abyss in the forum into which Curtius leapt; and there are plenty of Curtiuses waiting to leap into it, not to save Rome, or England, or anything stupendous, but simply to save their own microscopic souls. After a few bouts at praying, and other devout tomfoolery, Mr Spurgeon disappears from the rostrum. In passing, I wish to put it on record that Mr Spurgeon prays to his maker in a loud voice, as if his maker were deaf. He assures everybody that his maker is quite near, and yet he continues to bawl at him as if he were a quarter of a mile away. He dogmatically insists that his maker is *inside of him*. Inside of him, in the abdominal cavity, there is certainly room for a good-sized maker; but he might surely select more desirable accommodation. To this said maker, inside of him, to whom Mr Spurgeon bawls—knowing best the acoustics of his own interior—he is familiar, if not, indeed, impertinent. If I were God, I should snub Mr Spurgeon for his irreverent familiarity. He prays for a great deal, likely for much more than he ever expects to get. He apparently keeps in mind the proverbial maid-servant who prayed for a silk gown, which she never got, but she got one of the sleeves.

The preaching and praying prelude is as dull as it is silly. It is certainly among the ill-informed that Charles Haddon Spurgeon can pass as an orator. His diction is as trite as his thinking, and his conception as commonplace as his face and figure. Whatever God intended

him to be, he never intended him to be an orator. He has nothing, or next to nothing, of—

‘Wit and words and worth,
Action and utterance and the power of speech
To stir men’s blood.’

He is a glib speaker. So are all who have only two or three ideas, and who are not burdened with an extensive vocabulary. Mr Spurgeon makes use of no word that is not in the vocabulary of a dustman, and, apparently, for the best of all reasons. He evolves no thought which transcends a dustman’s comprehension. God’s purpose in creating Mr Spurgeon appears to have been to make sure that a good many dustmen should reach the kingdom of heaven, and I will not be presumptuous enough to say that they are not needed there.

It is when the preaching and praying prelude is over that the real comedy begins. Mr Spurgeon disappears, and his brother in the flesh and in the Lord, James Spurgeon, steps out from behind some red curtains in front of the platform, and, arrayed in fishing boots and a holy waterproof, wades as deep as the pelvis into the pond for gospel goslings.

On the right, emerging from behind the red curtains, came seven silly females, dressed in white from head to foot, and sloping up conically from the floor to the crown of the head. One of the silly females was a quondam maid-servant of mine; but there stood the seven in a row by the side of the tank—motionless, glistening, and conical, like seven huge sugar-loaves. From the height of Sugar-loaf No. 3, I conjectured that it was my quondam Abigail.

At a given signal, Sugar-loaf No. 1 stepped down into the vat, up to the waist in water. There she took her stand by the pork-butcher-looking person with the fishing-boots and the holy waterproof. And there stood the

she-noodle in white, with only one half of her visible above the water. The saint in the fishing-boots, ungallantly keeping himself dry while she was being soaked, insinuated his right hand beneath her tippet from behind, and laid his left hand affectionately upon her breast, just under the chin. Then says he, in the voice which saints assume when they mean to be supremely solemn: 'My dear sister in Christ, as an outward and visible testimony that you enter into communion with our Holy Church, by your own desire, I baptise you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' The word 'ghost' is pronounced with a jerk, for the saint in oil-skin and over the haunches in water simultaneously pushes with the hand on the chest and pulls with the hand on the waist, and, in an instant, throws the 'dear sister of Christ' off her feet, and she falls back into the water with a splash, and it closes over her upturned face.

The waterproof saint, however, fishes her out and hands her to a person who stands on the margin of the holy pond in a sort of marble horse-trough. Another person stands opposite him, in an exactly similar marble horse-trough. This person of the second horse-trough throws a long white cloak over the drenched and dripping sister. This is necessary, as the thin and clinging wet garments would reveal to us the exact form and symmetry of the 'dear sister in Christ' in a manner that would demand the attention of the Lord Chamberlain. The two saints in the two horse-troughs have, altogether, the style and bearing suggestive of their having served their apprenticeship as barmen and chuckers-out in the Elephant and Castle tavern hard by. Each 'dear sister in Christ' is taken in turn, till the whole seven are drenched in the name of an unproven God, a fabulous Christ, and an incomprehensible Ghost.

One of the sacred sugar-loaves, as she was being im-

mersed, uttered two lusty squeals, that rang through the Tabernacle. Whether she feared she was going to be drowned outright, or whether she screamed under the influence of an excessive influx of the Holy Ghost, it is not for the like of me to determine. I did not hear any voice from heaven, and I saw no dove descending—indeed, if any fowl were represented there, it was not the dove, but the goose. The shrieking saint was hustled in behind the omnivorous red curtains, through the openings of which I had seraphic visions of bustling slippers and hands and petticoats, suggestive to me of the mysteries that were being enacted behind the veil.

Formerly each she-saint had to provide her own divine toggery; but this led to a want of uniformity in she-tailoring which was offensive to the eyes of the Lord and his elect. So, to obviate this, Mr Spurgeon now keeps a sort of divine haberdashery establishment, and lets out the sort of garments that the Lord loves at 2s. a-piece, and has them duly stiffened with Glenfield starch for each baptismal occasion. The 2s. includes a cup of coffee and a cooky in the name of the Lord, which the shivering one devours behind the curtains of crimson. The chat over the coffee, I am told, turns upon who stood 'it' (that is, the ducking) well, and who stood 'it' ill; and, as Mr Spurgeon's *clientèle* are more distinguished for piety than refinement, the baptismal badinage, if divine, is hardly parliamentary. I should not be surprised if the female who squealed twice under the influence of the Holy Spirit was not rallied upon the fact that she might have resisted the said Holy Spirit, and thereby have behaved more decorously, if she had only taken 'a quart'n o' gin 'ot.'

Then came the turn of the 'dear brothers in Christ,' who, dressed like convicts, minus the broad arrows, were standing in a row on the other side of the tank. The saint in waterproof stood up to his holy hurdies in water, and made quite a little speech over the first 'dear brother

in Christ.' This brother, we were advised, had 'found Jesus' in the centre of Persia (who would have thought of finding him there?), and had come all the way thence for the privilege of getting knocked heels over head into the sacred (but not over clean) water into which seven holy hoydens had been soused. After his ducking he was to go back to Persia 'to preach the blessed Gospel of Christ to the poor heathen of that benighted land.'

This ninny from glorious Iran of the olden ages was a tall, bald-headed holy one, his long, meaningless face and bald crown being of the colour of mahogany. He was tripped up like the women who had preceded him. Back went the mahogany head—the wood came in contact with the water—and the countryman of Xerxes sank with a plunge which sent the splashes into the eyes of those who sat too near this tomfoolery in the name of God. As he scrambled out to take refuge behind the red curtains he ran with his doubled backbone stuck up through his dark, dripping and clinging clothes. He looked ridiculously like a huge tom-cat that had escaped drowning by tearing its way through the sack in which it had been sunk along with a couple of big stones. No mantle of modesty was thrown over *his* retreating figure. God has made the male of the human race so uninteresting that nobody cares a straw anything about it.

Several things with starched collars and weak faces, of the mamma's-good-little-boy order, followed Xerxes into the goose-dub. The sight was too melancholy. For my race I drew a long sigh of pity and despair. I walked home to Brixton in the commingled light of the gas and the moon, and, to drown the feeling of humiliation that oppressed me, I buried myself among my books.

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REALITY.

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How was it that, for centuries before the first Crusade, under the polite permission of the caliphs of Bagdad, Christian pilgrims to the Holy Sepulchre had visited Jerusalem with impunity? How was it, if the Moham-medans were such perfidious and detested monsters, that the renowned Haroun al Raschid, with all the delicacy of oriental courtesy, sent the keys of Jerusalem as a friendly present to the Christian Charlemagne?

It was not till the incursions from the madhouses and

* The Crusades were carried on from the end of the eleventh till the end of the thirteenth century.

piggeries of Europe became intolerable, that caliph Hakem felt induced to put a curb upon the fanatical nuisance. If a polite and tolerant Mohammedan had still been caliph, the pilgrims might still have gone unscathed ; but they had now to do with one of their own persecuting and intolerant breed. Caliph Hakem was *the son of a Christian woman*. Besides, the pilgrim nuisance had never been so abominable as now. The Rev. xx. 2-3 *canard* respecting the fast-approaching end of the world,* had poured into Europe a religious rabblement without precedent in the previous ages. Numbers of devout wastrels managed to return from their pious peddling Jerusalemward, and to represent how they had been snubbed and kicked by the subjects of the Fatamite caliphs. Nobody seemed to mind whether the pilgrims had been snubbed and kicked or not—perhaps thinking that, even if they had been, they had got only their deserts—till a clapper-tongued religious lunatic, Monk Peter of Amiens, known as Peter the Hermit, magnified his kicking into an outrage upon Christendom, and thereby unscrewed the sluices which poured forth rivers of human blood, heaped Asia Minor with human skeletons, and made history march for two hundred years up and down a hideous Golgotha.

"Is," bawled Peter, "the land which was trodden by the feet of the blessed Redeemer to be soiled and insulted by the sandals of the followers of the Camel-Driver of Islam? Is it possible that over Tabor, the scene of the Transfiguration—over Olivet, from which the Saviour ascended into heaven—the Crescent banner of an alien faith shall be permitted to wave? Shall the Infidel be allowed to perform his revolting rites over the site of the manger at Bethlehem? Shall a race that knows not the Lord jabber its pagan litanies in the Garden of Gethsemane, and by the Pool of Siloam? Shall the muezzin sound where sounded the voice of Jesus? Shall the spot be blasted with desecration whence the cross flung its shadow down the brow of Calvary, and shall heathen scimitars guard the Holy Grave where the body of the Lord was laid, the spices and the myrrh

* See Saladin's "The Divine Interpretation of Scripture: A Reply to Cardinal Manning."

of his entombment mingling with the blood from his hands and feet and wounded side and thorn-pierced brow—the blood of God himself, designed to redeem a lost world from the eternal torments of the damned? Is this, and the insult and murder of the pilgrims to the tomb of God, to be endured? By the arm of Omnipotence, No! Are there no hearts in Europe, no swords in Christendom—is there no blood in France that is ready to be shed to avenge the sacrilege to the blood that darkened the rough bark of the tree at Calvary at the hour when Death and Hell were conquered; when the sun grew dark in the heavens, when the veil of the Temple was rent and the graves of Salem gave up their dead? For the blood of the Son of God are ye prepared to give the blood of the sons of Men? In this case, he who would save his life shall lose it. May torment unutterable be his who would for a moment think of his safety or his life, when the God who gave them demands that they be laid down in his cause! Horse and stirrup, sword and lance, the spear, the gipon, and the shirt of mail! Rush on their battalia like a boiling torrent, and hurl the Infidel to Death and Hell, or may Tophet and agony eternal wait upon you and yours, even to the end of the world! To Jerusalem! to Jerusalem! Rescue the Holy Sepulchre! Hear in my voice the voice of Doom, and see in the heavens the arm of the Almighty waving you on to the East to rescue the tomb where his Son was laid!”

The response was a roar of voices and a clash of swords. “*Deus vult*,” quoth the monks; and the laity murmured, “It is the will of God.” So much for the oratory of Peter, puny, ragged, and dirty, bareheaded, barefooted, riding on an ass, and driven crazy by the naggings of a vixenish wife much older than himself.

Thus, or somehow thus, were the orations of the Hermit, and accompanied by forceful and vehement gesticulations, and hissed and thundered and gasped with all the intensity and fury of fanatical rhetoric; and their effect may easily be imagined upon an age that was romantic or nothing, and a people strongly disposed to religious emotion and martial enterprise. The oratory of the Hermit set France on fire. The land seethed and

boiled and reeled under the lava and detonations of an oratorical volcano. Wild dreams usurped the place of sober, waking life. A mad medley rushed to Peter to offer their services to him or to whoever would lead them to Judea to rescue the Holy Sepulchre.

Provisions and modes of transport were overlooked. All classes and conditions of men flew to arms and insisted upon being led at once to Jerusalem. The sick rose from the bed of disease or death ; the lame and crippled came with their staves and crutches ; the noble brought his riches, and the beggar his wallet. Women left their spindles and their cows, their embroidery and their tapestry, to don helmet and gauntlets and carry sword and flame into the Holy Land. And, rapidly, helter-skelter, from all quarters, came the miscreant and the scoundrel, the liar, the thief, the ravisher, and the murderer, for had not Pope Urban II. and his priests promised absolution from all sin to whomsoever should take up arms to win back to Christendom the Tomb of Jesus? Christendom put weapons in the hands of all its scoundrelism and harness on the backs of all its villainy, and hounded them on frantically to slaughter in the name of him who has been called the Prince of Peace ! A Goose and a Goat were borne in front of the excited rabblement, the one well symbolising its folly and the other its lechery. Its horrible cruelty was above symbolisation ; it was written with sword and torch in a long trail of over 600 miles, proceeding from the centre of France till lost in the wilds of Syria.

The great multitude which no man could number surged about in its hundreds of thousands, leaving all to God, but somehow breaking itself up into three huge armies, the first led by Gaultier Habenichts, known in France as "Sans Avoir," and in England as "Walter the Penniless." The second army was under the command of Peter the Hermit, in person ; and the third was led by Gottschalk, a monk, raving mad with religious fanaticism.

Away rolled these armies Palestineward, a surging, muddy, and boiling river of the social scum and refuse of Europe. The very sort of rabble that the Roman historians tell us first embraced the Christian faith now,

eleven centuries later, laid on the Christian shrine the offering of their filthy hearts and dirty swords. And now, some six centuries later still, the scum of England lays its rowdy hymn and horrid tambourine on the shrine of the same faith—ever the same rabid rabble through all the centuries, whether it follow General Booth or Walter the Penniless! I mourn the fact, and, with all the valour of despair, set myself to the task of Sisyphus.

"Is that Jerusalem?" was the cry of the ignorant host whenever on their march a town came in sight. If the leaders, many of whom were nearly as ignorant as their followers, had led their hosts to Rome, Paris, or London, and cried, "There is Jerusalem!" these European capitals would have been razed to the ground, and the first stone pig-sty discovered in any of them would probably have been hailed as the Holy Sepulchre, and any hog's bristles collected therein would likely have been adored as the hairs of Jesus. On, dying by hundreds and thousands, the motley multitude pursued its way, and the wolf followed for the carnival of human flesh, and great coveys of ravens and vultures darkened the sky overhead. On, in front, went the Goat and the Goose, and on, behind, followed every fool (and worse) with the sign of the cross upon his shoulder, symbolical of the two transverse sticks to which his deity was alleged to have been nailed. But carpenter or tom-cat, god or cockroach, would have served equally well as a peg upon which to hang the antics of ignorant fanaticism.

Slaughter, rapine, and ravishment were the order of the day wherever the hosts of the Crusaders rolled. Having made no provisions for their march, leaving that to "Providence," they ate up and devoured everything that lay within reach. Those who resisted their rapine were run through the body with spears, or cleft to the chin with axes, as enemies of God, and their wives and daughters were violated, and then butchered by the soldiers of Jesus on their march to thrust back the Infidel from the stone sepulchre that had belonged to Joseph of Arimathea. The Crusading camp itself—containing thousands of she-fanatics from Christendom—was a saturnalia of barbarous licentiousness. Loose rein was given to almost unheard-of and unprecedented iniquities,

for had not the Church impressed upon the mob the assurance that taking up arms against the Infidel was an atonement for every possible transgression, and that all who now set out for the Old Jerusalem on earth had thereby secured an incontestible right to enter the New Jerusalem in heaven?

What disease and debauchery and famine had left of the holy rabble trailed along through Hungary. The Hungarians hailed them as brother Christians bound upon a sacred errand, and wished them God-speed. But they soon discovered that the pious Crusaders were only a horde of impious fiends, who repaid hospitality with cruelty, rapine, and lust. This was too much for the Hungarians. Stung to retaliation by deeds of wrong, outrage and base ingratitude, they flew to arms, and falling upon the disordered rear of the Crusaders, saved some thousands of them the trouble of proceeding any further towards the Holy Land by leaving their corpses to rot on the plains of Hungary. On the still numerous remnant swarmed into Bulgaria. The Bulgarians flew to arms to guard the mountain passes against the murdering and ravishing demons of the Red Cross; and hundreds and thousands, instead of being privileged to set foot on the Holy Land or cross swords with the Infidel, under the weapons of brother Christians, left their bodies to feed the eagles of the Thracian hills.

At last, about one-third of the horde that left France, footsore and worn, haggard and gaunt, hungry, ragged, and naked, malodorous from putrid wounds, wild with hardship, mad with fanaticism, and festering with vermin, staggered into Constantinople, the unquenchable fire of theological frenzy still blazing within them, and urging them on to Jerusalem and the tomb, where their carpenter and world-maker was alleged to have lain.

The experiences of the multitude under the Hermit were much the same as those of the multitude that followed Walter the Penniless. Of them too, a miserable remnant reached Constantinople. The third army, under Gottschalk, never got so far. It was treacherously fallen upon by the Hungarians and put to the sword, no man or woman being allowed to escape to tell the tale. And yet their fate was, perhaps, less tragic than that of their

brethren, who, by dint of strong constitution and indomitable hardihood, had reached Constantinople. They crossed over into Syria, only to be mowed down like grass under the sharp and crooked scimitars of the very Infidel Turks they, under the auspices of their deity, had set out so confidently to vanquish. And all this in thy blessed memory, O Jesus! Here were ravages of fire and sword, to which the destruction of the army of Xerxes is almost insignificant, and the retreat of Napoleon from blazing Moscow to

“Berescina’s icy flood,
Riven with shot and thawed with blood.”

Still mad with priestcraft, indomitable and undaunted, Christendom poured out her treasure and her life to drive the Infidel from the Holy Land. But all in vain. The votaries of the Camel-Driver had still the best of it against the followers of the Carpenter. The excesses and crimes of the Christians had been such that, at length, it occurred to them that their non-success might be heaven’s retaliation upon them for their wickedness. Damascus, they became convinced, could not be taken by the guilty; so they determined to try the effect of a siege by the innocent. Accordingly, *an army of children* was the craze of the year 1212. A contemporary monkish chronicler writes: “There came together, from different countries, I know not how, so many children that they made a formidable army. These little ones had standards carried before them, setting forth that they were going to cross the sea, and that the Holy Land had been assigned to them as an inheritance, as it had been to the children of Israel. In whatever town they arrived, the inhabitants received them in the name of God.”

This army of child Crusaders was led by a boy named Nicolas, a native of Cologne. Two ship-loads of Crusading children were embarked at Genoa; but they never reached Palestine. The boys were sold as slaves and the girls to the oriental harems of the Infidel. The children had been taught to expect that the Mediterranean would divide, as the Red Sea had done before the Israelites, and let them pass over to

Syria on dry land. But when the poor little dupes found that the Mediterranean would not oblige in the manner they had been led to expect it would, as many as could find room were crowded into the two ships, and of the thousands left behind, the greater number died of starvation, and all for the traditional grave of this priest-invented Jew !

More than one army of children took the cross and were equipped for the Holy Land ; but only to the advantage of the slave-owner and the master of the harem. And the Christian chroniclers are compelled to admit that certain monks and traders were active in getting up child crusades in order that they might enrich themselves by shipping off the boys to be sold for slavery, and the girls for prostitution. And all this in thy name and for thy glory, O Jesus ; and here, nearly nineteen centuries after thy alleged crucifixion, I am called an "Infidel," because I yearn to waken Man from the nightmare of Priestcraft, and lead him forth into the bracing morning of a more rational and a happier world !

The Christians teach that man was made in the image of God, and that his body is "the temple of the Holy Ghost ;" and yet they voraciously ate "the temple of the Holy Ghost"—roast infant, and occasionally roast adult, appeared on the tables or turned on the spits of the Crusaders. Moreover, in the plain of Nice alone, the Infidel piled up a mountain* of Christian bones ; and at a subsequent siege the crusaders themselves made use of cartloads of human corpses to construct a military rampart. So much for the use to which they put the ruins of certain temples of the Holy Ghost !

"Not fair to visit all this upon the Church—only the barbarism of the times," urges the Christian apologist. "You, sir, distort and travesty history to suit your purposes as a special pleader." Not so, Stiggins of Bethel, as regards the barbarous excesses of the Christians and their thirst for retaliation, blood and savagery. We go to the "Infidel" for magnanimity and mercy, and to the "Faithful" for pusillanimity and cruelty. We have room for one contrast only between the followers of him who

* Anna Comnena describes the pile as *οστων κολονος* and as *ύψηλον και βαθος και πλατος αξιολογωτατον*.

drove a camel and the votaries of him who rode upon an ass.

When, in 637, Jerusalem surrendered at discretion after a four months' siege, Ali, the general of the Arabian forces, sent, in accordance with one of the terms of capitulation, to request that the caliph should come in person to ratify the articles and take possession. The master of Persia and Syria rode, in the most simple and unostentatious manner, from Medina to Jerusalem on a red camel, carrying a bag of corn and one of dates, a wooden dish, and a leathern water-bottle. On his arrival he issued the following proclamation :—

IN THE NAME OF THE MOST MERCIFUL GOD.

From Omar Ebno'l Alchitâb to the inhabitants of Œlia. They shall be protected and secured, both in their lives and their fortunes, and their churches shall neither be pulled down nor made use of by any but themselves.

The caliph rode into the city by the side of Sophronius the patriarch, conversing on the antiquities of the place. When the hour of prayer struck they were in the Church of the Resurrection. The patriarch bade the caliph pray where he was (that was in a Christian church); but he would not. He then took him into the Church of Constantine (another Christian church), and laid a mat for him to pray there; but he still refused. At last, he went out alone, and knelt on the steps outside. He afterwards told the patriarch that he had refused to pray in any Christian church because, had he done so, his followers might have seized it, and thereby broken his promise to the Christians to respect their places of religious worship. He further enjoined that even on the steps they should pray only singly, nor should they meet there to go to prayers, nor should the muezzin stand there to call the people to prayer, lest thereby the Moslems might annoy the conquered Christians. This knightly faith and magnanimous toleration was natural to a cultivated and learned race, among whom were ever circulating such maxims as: "The ink of the doctor is equally valuable with the blood of the martyr;" "Paradise is as much for him who has rightly used the pen as for him who has fallen by the sword;" "The world is

sustained by four things only—the learning of the wise, the justice of the great, the prayers of the good, and the valour of the brave.”

We have seen the Infidel picture of the capture of Jerusalem ; now let us see the Christian one. When, at last, the ramparts and towers of the Holy City yielded to the battering-engines of Godfrey, the Christian victory was signalled not by courteous and magnanimous restraint, but by sanguinary and relentless massacre. Three mortal days the Crusaders gave up to the work of carnage. Far from their, like Omar, respecting the religious convictions of the vanquished, they burned the Jews to death in their synagogues, and mixed with the ruins of the captured city the bodies of 70,000 Moslems whom they had slain with the sword. Down blazed the sun upon fire-blackened and siege-shattered masonry, upon stones, and rafters, and mud caked deep with gore, and the stench grew insupportable. A plague ensued, and many of the Christian victors mingled their plague-stricken corpses with those of the 70,000 Moslems who had escaped the fever that followed by having previously perished by the sword.

Drenched with the blood of 70,000 of the defenceless vanquished, the Christians ascended the hill of Calvary with all the paraphernalia of monks and crucifixes, candles, banners, incense, and anthems, and performed their incantations on the mount upon which their baleful Galilean was said to have perished. They kissed the stone (or some stone or other) which had covered the mouth of his grave, and perpetrated religious antics in honour of the “redeemer” who has blighted the world.

True, certain of the later of the Seven Crusades were better managed than the first ; but they were all alike mad and detestable and bloody. The most romantic of them all was the third, in which that big, steel-shirted swashbuckler and adulterer, and something else unspeakable, Richard Cœur de Lion, bore such a prominent part. “*Help us the Holy Grave, O God!*” was the battle-cry under which he and his Knights Templar and Hospitallers rushed, in heavy Teuton lustihood, among the slim and comparatively unarmed felaheen, and mowed them down like grass before the scythe. When before Ascalon it

was his boast, that every day he brought back to his tent ten, twelve, or twenty heads of Infidels he had slain—slain for the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, the difference between the Camel-Driver of Mecca and the Carpenter of Bethlehem.

Killing an Infidel was to him much the same as shooting a partridge is to a modern sportsman. There had been abundance shed for Jesus during the preceding centuries; but now every drop of blood said to have reddened the cross at Calvary demanded a river of human gore. He who said, "I came not to bring peace, but a sword," redeemed his promise, and the land of his birth was drunk with massacre. On the surrender of Acre to his followers, they bargained that a piece of the true cross which had been captured from them should be restored, and that the sum of 200,000 talents should be paid to them. For the payment of this sum Cœur de Lion held the prisoners taken at Acre as hostages. Saladin, the one glorious name connected with the Crusades, failed to raise the money from his financially-exhausted people, and Richard deliberately led 2,700 hostages outside the city walls and gave his soldiers holiday sport in beheading them. The pastime was intensely enjoyed, and participated in with joke and jest, and laughter and oath, 2,700 heads lay there in ghastly heaps, and 2,700 headless corpses reeked in the hot Syrian sun. The followers of the son of Mary had stripped to their work. Their blades were red from point to hilt; their faces were bespattered with, and their clothes were soaked with blood. They stood in blood to the ankles, and stumbled and reeled over corpses, bandying their slang and chanting their songs of bawd and revel. Glorious amusement! they had butchered the defenceless prisoners in the name of the Nazarene! The sun went down upon that Aceldama, and in the groves and vineyards of Palestine died away the Crusader's vespers cry: "*Help us the Holy Grave, O God!*"

ROMANCE.

AT Ascalon, Richard I. was seized with fever. But even severe illness could not abate the warlike ardour of his temperament ; and when he could no longer stand upon his feet, he ordered that he should be carried in front of the walls on a litter, that he might superintend operations, and incite the Christians to a vigorous prosecution of the siege.

Ha ! ha ! my veins are raging hot,
My hectic senses reel !
Pshaw, fever ! Bring my harness, squire,
My morion of steel.
I cannot live supine like this,
And die like coward slave ;
Ho, reeling front of battle be
The death-bed of the brave !

No, no, my Berengaria !
Take that bandage from my head ;
And bring me, gentle wife of mine,
The iron helm instead :
And put thy snow-white favour
In my plume, so dark and high ;
Steel harness be my winding-sheet,
A soldier let me die !

Know, in this sainted Palestine,
The Saviour died for me ;
And my good sword and strong right arm,
Shall strike for Him, and thee.

And ne'er shall heathen sandals tread,
 And heathen banners wave ;
 O'er the garden of His agony,
 The glory of His grave !

No ! o'er the Moslem turban,
 And the flashing scimitar ;
 We'll pour the hosts of England,
 In the thunder-crash of war.
 On, warriors of the high crusade,
 Bended bow and swinging sword ;
 And wave o'er pagan Ascalon
 The banner of the Lord !

Gird on my heavy armour,
 Bring my war-horse from the stall ;
 Sound the trumpet, shout Jehovah !
 Forward, onward to the wall !
 Come, gentle Berengaria,
 Through the vizor bars a kiss ;
 And I'll leave to weak old women,
 A dying bed like this.

Let Leopold of Austria
 Die thus, when die he may ;
 Let craven Philip breathe his last,
 Far from the battle fray.
 The couch of Richard Lion-heart,
 Must be the crimson sod,
 Where, 'neath the bannered cross, he fought
 For glory and for God.

See, holy Carmel's dark with shame,
 Red blushes Jordan's tide ;
 That Saladin should hold a day,
 The land where Jesus died.
 Ho ! where the dead lie thickest,
 Upon earth's groaning breast,
 At eve, search for King Richard,
 And lay him to his rest !

And not in dear old England,
 Lay you your leader dead ;
 But deep within this holy land,
 Lay you his helmèd head.
 Not English oak, but Syrian palm,
 Shall guard his soldier's grave ;
 In the sainted land he lived to love,
 The land he died to save !

Oh, Salem, for thy Holy Tomb,
 Oh, England for thy throne,
 King Death shall find King Richard,
 With his armour girded on :
 He'll greet thee, King of Terrors,
 O'er Jordan's mortal flood,
 With a forehead wreathed in laurel,
 And a hand imbrued in blood !

Come, laggard knights, I charge you,
 Haste, ere the sun go down ;
 And bear me on your shoulders,
 To the ramparts of the town !
 Plunge him amid the battle shock,
 The grapple, yell, and groan ;
 That Death may find King Richard,
 With his armour girded on !

THE
FLAGELLANTS

AND

THE
COVENANTERS

(New Edition)

BY

SALADIN.

Author of "God and His Book," etc.



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THE FLAGELLANTS.

FROM the era of its half-mythical Galilean downwards, Christianity has laid incontestable claims to be considered the Religion of Misery. A radical doctrine of the faith is that this world is only a Babelmandeb, or Gate of Tears to the "glory that shall yet be revealed." The teachings recorded of Christ have all the jaundiced acerbity of the Essenes. The son of Mary was an ascetic, or nothing. According to him, the end of the world was close at hand. Its concerns and aims were despicable, and the best that could be done was to regard its pleasures as pernicious seductions and lay up "treasures in heaven," as it would avail a man nothing should he "gain the whole world and lose his own soul."

Strictly compatible with the teachings of Christ were the doctrines of Cardinal Damiani, when he wrote a panegyric upon the efficacy of self-inflicted suffering, and those of the celebrated Dominic, when he introduced penitential hymns, to be chanted to a tune to which the self-inflicted lash kept time. Hair shirts, protracted periods of fasting, and the like, had long been in vogue as means to propitiate an angry heaven; but Dominic affirmed that twenty recitations of the Psalms, accompanied by self-inflicted scourging, was equal to a hundred years of ordinary penitence.

Dominic flourished towards the middle of the eleventh century; but it was not till about two centuries later (1260) that the seed of asceticism he had sown sprang up to be a great and popular tree of self-torture. It was in an age of gloom and suffering and wickedness that, at Perugia, in Italy, a monk named Regnier, with wild and bitter eloquence, preached Flagellation as the antidote that would restore an afflicted people to the

favour of an angry God. Like Peter the Hermit in the first Crusade, like Luther at the Reformation, or Bernhardt of the Millenarian insanity, this Regnier had rightly interpreted the spirit of the times. He put in his sickle, and the corn was already ripe for the harvest. The wars of Guelph and Ghibelline, famine, pestilence, rapine, murder, and misery had, after a thousand years of Christianity, made Italy and the most of Europe feel that life was, indeed, not worth living, but only a horrid and mysterious burden, which was taken up involuntarily, and which left those who bore it such cravens that they had not the courage to lay it down.

And so another violent epidemic of *Lose your Reason to Save your Soul* fell upon Christendom like a rinderpest. The memory and inspiration of the Man of Sorrows was again to lay the load of a great sorrow upon the shoulders of the world. Once more, as, under the preaching of Bernhardt and Peter the Hermit, rowdy and rascal, swash-buckler and sword-player, blackguard and blackleg, worked themselves into a frenzy concerning one Jesus, whose name has always been a spell-word with miscreants from the time of the Christian cut-throats mentioned by Tacitus down to Booth's latest prize, the "blood-washed soul" of 'Arry Juggins the burglar.

Two by two the holy ones of the whip-lash marched through the gaping multitudes on the crowded streets. Their heads were covered with sackcloth; their remaining article of attire was a bandage round the loins, which rendered them a little decent for God's sake. Their backs and breasts were entirely nude. The back bore a huge cross, daubed upon the skin with red paint; and another cross was smeared upon the naked breast. On through the town, and through the wilderness, in long and narrow file, like the march of the ducks from the dub to the dung-hill, marched those nasty saints of God. The hand of each sacred fanatic bore a heavy and horrible whip, the thongs tipped with iron; and, with this whip, every pious madman lashed his own bare back till the thongs were clotted and gory, and long lines of blood running down

from the scapula to the pelvis defaced the red cross which had been painted on the skin.

To what shall we liken the men of that generation? To a crazy dog, refusing its food and chewing off its own hind legs to please its master. But the analogy is imperfect, and the man flogging his own back to please his Jesus is more irrational than the dog chewing off his own hind legs to please his master; for the dog is positively sure he has a master; but the ablest Christian that has ever written has not been able to establish that his Jesus really ever existed. The only record of him is in four so-called "Gospels," written by nobody knows who, nobody knows where, and nobody knows when, and the statements of which are contradicted by each other and are utterly unsupported by history. A pretty source, indeed, from which to derive a Jesus in whose honour you can flog your back! But backs always will be flogged, and noses ever will be held close to the grindstone, till he with the back and he with the nose takes the trouble to cultivate his brain, and dares to confront, eagle-eyed, the authorities that would make him a chattel and a poor mad cats-paw in the hands of priest and tyrant.

Jehovah has ever liked singing and dancing and capers to his glory and honour. David, the "man according to God's own heart," danced naked before deity and certain young girls; and another worthy sang to God's glory with acceptance because Jael had hammered a nail into her guest's head while he slept. So the Flagellants, besides tickling their own backs with whips, deemed it would be well to tickle Jehovah's ears with music. Accordingly they sang while they flogged. If you think flogging your back is conducive to making you rival the efforts of Sims Reeves, just try the experiment. Flog your back while you sing, and you will find that many a quaver flies off into a scream, and that many a crotchet is dead-born. But the Lord had just to content himself with such music as was obtainable under the circumstances. Certain fragments of the hymns which the Flagellants sang have been preserved. Here are brief specimens:—

“Through love of man the Saviour came,
Through love of man he died ;
He suffered want, reproach, and shame,
Was scourged and crucified.
Oh, think, then, on thy Saviour’s pain,
And lash the sinner, lash again !” *

The following are a few lines from the metrical rendering into English of “The Ancient Song of the Flagellants” :—

“Tears from our sorrowing eyes we weep,
Therefore so firm our faith we keep
With all our hearts, with all our senses :
Christ bore his cross for our offences.
Ply well the scourge, for Jesu’s sake,
And God, through Christ, your sin will take.
For love of God abandon sin—
To mend your vicious lives begin ;
So shall we his mercy win.” †

Thirty-three days and a-half was the shortest term in which a Flagellant must macerate and lacerate himself ; and these thirty-three and a-half days were meant to be mystically symbolical of the thirty-three years and a-half which the third part of God, and yet equal to the whole of God, had lived on earth “saving souls” and making three-legged stools. The devotees fell down on their dirty knees in the dirty streets, and, setting up their naked, putrid, and horrible backs, prayed to Jah and Jesus and Mary to have mercy on their souls, before having taken the trouble to find out whether they had souls or not. Jah and Jesus and Mary had, however, something else to do than attend to kneeling lunatics with voices like cross-cut saws and backs like half-cooked beef-steaks. But the cities, then as now, had plenty of fools, and certain of them rushed out at their doors or leapt from their windows for God’s sake to join the ranks of those who lashed their hurdies with thongs and prayed with their knees in the gutter. When all Christendom had managed to lash its back to its own satisfaction, it threw down the whip, got up from its knees, and took to swearing and sinning in the usual way.

But, some fifty years afterwards, Christendom again took it into its head that its back would be

* Preserved by L’Evesque : quoted by Lingard.

† Dr. Hecker.

all the better for a flogging. So, in 1296, the saints, particularly those of Strasburg, Spires, and Frankfort, took unto themselves whips, and began business in earnest. The Jews had good broad backs, which they were impious enough never to whip, and this mightily offended the Christian Flagellants. The Jews did not see their way to whip their own backs, so, in the most obliging manner, the Christians offered to whip them for them. The Jews preferred to look after their commercial enterprises to tearing away with a scourge at their own dorsal rafters; and, for this deadly sin, they were foully massacred. The wretches who did not scourge their backs had scourged the third of deity and crucified him. Down with them to Tophet! One Jew, goaded to desperation by Christian persecution and outrage, set fire to the Town Hall and the Cathedral of Frankfort, and they were reduced to ashes. Down with the seed of Iscariot and Barabbas! The holy ones flung away their whips, and, seizing sword, hatchet, and knife, devoted some hours of horror to the slaughter of man, woman, and child of the seed of Israel. The God of Jacob looked on; but, apparently, did not see his way to interfere. In Frankfort, of all the sons and daughters of Salem whose ancestors had sung to the Lord by the streams of Babel, none remained alive, except a small remnant that, bursting through the carnage, had escaped into Bohemia. Christ had "redeemed" these Christians (they were well worth it) by a bloody sacrifice upon Calvary, and, out of compliment—like Catherine Medici in her sanguinous bath—they set him in blood to the chin. Every tree must be judged by its fruit. I hereby defy the history of all the other faiths to produce a tree like the Christian one, which, from the deepest root to the topmost twig, is dyed with human gore.

After the Frankfort tragedy of 1296, Flagellantism did not rear its head conspicuously till the year 1348. To students of history the mention of this date recalls the deepest and widest grave that was ever dug to receive the slag and refuse of morality. The "BLACK DEATH" took into her hands the besom of destruction, and swept into the sepulchre twenty-five millions of human beings! Europe fell upon

her knees, and from Dirt appealed to Deity. But the appeal was in vain. In every Christian city there was a plethora of disgusting sewage and unspeakable stench. Cleanliness is, proverbially, next to godliness ; but the citizens of mediæval Europe were so godly that they forgot to be cleanly. Outside Mohammedan Constantinople there was not a bath on the entire European continent, from the Straits of Behring to the Straits of Messina. Pious Ignorance and theological Intolerance sat to the eyes in filth, which it would give my readers the jaundice to describe ; and mankind perished as do clouds of locusts when overtaken by a gale at sea, or as perish at the end of autumn tens of thousands of hives of bees, when imprisoned amid the fumes of burning brimstone.

"God in heaven, Mary and all the Saints, what is the matter now?" gasped Christendom, as, with pale lips and phrenzied eye, she, in whole cityfuls, staggered into the grave. Nothing practical, as connected with this wretched "Vale of Tears," suggested itself to the follower of Jesus. He was beyond and above attending to the carnal conditions of this despicable earth, and from the midst of his priests and relics and shrines and miracles his whole hope was in heaven, and his only court of appeal his "Maker and Redcemer." But neither Maker nor Redeemer could be induced to interfere ; and graves were dug till there were none left to dig them, and corpses were borne out of the streets and houses till there were none left to bear them. There were only the voice of prayer, the cry of pain, and the rattle of the death-cart ; and in certain districts even these sounds died away. In the houses the dead were left with the dead. There lay a disused cart and a skeleton horse. Grass and weeds flourished in the streets where a busy traffic had rolled its tides, and there the wind waved ghastly shreds of human apparel, still adhering to more ghastly relics of human beings. There was high carnival for maggot and fly, and dogs and swine tugged and snarled among the entrails of those who had trusted in Jesus and neglected their dust-bins.

The New Testament was looked to as the antidote to the bane ; and, whatever may be its merits,

it is a poor manual of hygiene. Scrubbing is never mentioned, and there is no reference to washing, except to the washing of "souls," whatever they may be, in blood. There is, moreover, allusion to the washing of a certain party's feet with tears, and then drying them with maiden's hair; but this is a sentimental and not an efficacious lavation. It is not on record that Mary or Tabitha, or anyone else, ever washed the shirt or tunica which was worn under the seamless garment of Jesus, and I question if it was ever washed or changed from the day on which he left the carpenter's bench till the day that, with his life, he expiated his sedition and folly. Through all the horrors of the Black Death we hear of no wholesome and honest washing with water; but there certainly was a washing of the streets with blood. It was surmised that this visitation of the wrath of Heaven was instigated by the sinfulness of the Christians in allowing the Jews to live; for it was the Jews who had crucified the Lord; and yet, according to the Christian theory, if the Lord had not been crucified, the world would inevitably have been lost. The Black Death was accompanied with another merciless massacre of the Jews. It was also accompanied by another pitiless flogging of backs. So fanatically wild did this self-inflicted back-flogging become that many held that the rite of Flagellation should, in the Christian Church, supersede the rite of Baptism. Many literally flogged away the flesh off their bones, and yet the plague did not abate; and the sky and the earth were pregnant with supernatural terrors. A pillar of fire hung over the pope's palace at Avignon; a red ball of fire in the heavens blazed over Paris, and Greece and Italy were shaken with an earthquake. And the Christians flogged and prayed, and prayed and flogged, and sang and slew, and slew and sang, and still the plague went on.

Flagellantism was not without its serio-comic aspect. I cannot say whether it copied from the game of Leap-the-Frog, or whether Leap-the-Frog has copied from it. In Leap-the-Frog each boy vaults over his neighbour's bended back, and then bends his own, and so on the process goes till each has vaulted over the back of all. The Flagellants lay

in rows, and one ran along the row scourging furiously as he went with a leathern scourge tipped with iron, and then he lay down; and so on and so on, till each had flogged the naked backs of all. In lying in the rows to be flogged, however, those who wished to do penance for certain crimes had to observe certain recognized postures indicative of these crimes. If the crime was perjury, till it was his turn to get up and flog, the penitent lay on his side, holding up three fingers; if it was adultery, he lay flat with his face on the ground; and so on, different postures of the body were fixed upon to indicate different crimes. The Flagellants, too, were not without their grotesque impostures in the shape of pious forgeries. At one of their assemblies they actually read a letter which had been sent to them direct from heaven, and in which Jesus Christ was good enough to give them his favourable opinion of the efficacy of flagellation. The "Blessed Virgin" had, with maternal affection, given her son some assistance in the composition of this celestial missive.

Unlike the Millenarian mania, the Flagellant craze extended even to England. In 1351 a deputation of 120 continental Flagellants visited London; but insular stolidity did not see its way to carry its piety to the extent of lacerating its own flesh with scourges. Even on the continent the frenzy began to exhaust itself. The leaders betook themselves to desperate resources to buttress up a falling cause. They set themselves to the task of restoring life to a dead child, and performed the "miracle" so clumsily that the performance hastened their dissolution instead of giving them a new lease of influence. In the hey-day of their fanaticism neither king nor pontiff saw it prudent to interfere with the Flagellants; but when the tide turned against them, king and pontiff turned against them too. A bitter persecution set in, and Flagellantism, like most other isms, was called upon to furnish its roll of martyrs, and it heroically enough responded to the call. Its dying spasm—and it was a vigorous and terrible one—was in 1414, and some time later it finally expired in the dungeons and amid the fagots of the Holy Inquisition. Mankind, in the mass, continue to be fools; but, in the last four-

centuries, there has been some small advance towards sanity, and it is now somewhat difficult to get anyone to flog his own back for the love of God.

W. S. R.

THE COVENANTERS.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27th, 1884.

The House met at four o'clock.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

Answering Mr. Buchanan, the Marquis of Hartington said he had communicated with Lord Wolseley as to the employment of a greater number of Presbyterian chaplains with the Scottish regiments under his charge, adding that one at present at Alexandria would be available, if his services were required.

ALAS, that the world has not yet dispensed with the services of Presbyterian Beetles of god and gun! I myself ran such a narrow escape of being a Scotch Beetle that this project of employing the *Scarabæus Scutorum* in Egypt brings up to my memory sundry of the bloodthirsty insects' previous ravages scrolled over history's panoramic canvas, and that in pigments of blackness and fire.

There, with high cheek-bones and scowling brows, with black gowns and Geneva bands, file past the *dour* and grim fanatics who barred the path of Charles I., and of Laud, Juxon, and Wren. There go they who, for twenty-eight years, through steel and blood and heather, set their backs against the wall of Fate, and practically swore to lead Scotland to Hell, rather than to Rome.

History has a pretty feasible hint that the shower of clasp-Bibles that, on July 23rd, 1637, rained so murderously round the head of Dean Hanna, in St. Giles's Church, were flung by Scottish ministers, dressed in female gowns and mutes, and that their pulpit-trained voices initiated the popular yell of "Anti-Christ! Anti-Christ! A Pope! A Pope! A Belly-god! Stone him!" It was the fanatical and hard-headed Presbyterian Beetles who, by their wild biblically-phrased warnings, roused the Scottish

peers to a vivid apprehension that, if Charles and Laud succeeded, the estates which had been confiscated from the Church at the Reformation would be wrenched from the nobles and restored to Rome. This was a potent argument ; for, whatever might be the territorial lord's desire for a place in the kingdom of heaven, he would fight and sing psalms for twenty years rather than lose a single acre of his lands in the kingdom of Scotland. And thus there was almost instantly arrayed against the Government a black phalanx of ninety Beetles, walled round by John, Earl of Rothes ; John, Earl of Cassilis ; Alexander, Earl of Eglington ; James, Earl of Home ; William, Earl of Lothian ; John, Earl of Wemyss ; and John, Earl of Loudon ; Lord Lindesay, Lord Yester, Lord Balmerino, Lord Cranston, and large numbers of the gentry and lesser nobility. These, of course, led with them the psalm-singing yokels of their estates, primed up by the Beetles to a perfect phrenzy of religious fanaticism, which could not fail to be exceedingly profitable to their lords and masters. There is no patriotism in denying that Scotland's desperate struggle in the seventeenth century was carried out by the immoral instrumentality of Beetle and noble-primed bumbkins, howling from Jeremiah and canting from Ezekiel, grimly frantic with suffering and fanaticism, who, singing psalms, mutilated the slain, and dashed their texts and swords at the same time through the bodies of the dragoons of the Government. Scotland did all this drunk with divinity, and I should respect her quite as much if she had done it all drunk with whisky. And yet I should like to see the land in the whole world that can afford to scoff at her. Man, up to this time, has been a small and nasty animal at the best, and what are magniloquently called his noblest motives will not bear anything like rigid analysis. You are kinder to mankind when you expect too little of them, than when you expect too much. And it will puzzle your ingenuity to expect less than you will get.

The passage in Genesis, anent God's making all things very good, would have stood better on its legs if it had read, " God made all things very good."

save man, and him he made mad." It is teleology alone that makes man madder than his "earth-born companions and fellow-mortals." Well might Burns apostrophise the mouse:—

"Still thou art blest, compared wi' me :
The Present only toucheth thee ;
But, ah ! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear ;
And, forward though I canna see,
I guess and fear,"

It is all very well for writers of the school of Dr. Lewins to abjure teleology absolutely. It rises superior to abjuration. The speculatively religious instinct is strong in normal man, and I, for one, rejoice rather than lament that it is so. It is not the religious instinct that has stultified and cursed the race, but the diversion of that instinct into baleful channels by interested sacerdotal and civil chicane. Man has too little religion, rather than too much ; but he has certainly too much theology, rather than too little.

But, back to the Black-Beetles of the Presbyterian corner of the vineyard of the Lord. So well did the interested leaven of religious sedition work, that in June, 1638, the High Commissioner swaggered up to Holyrood escorted by 20,000 men, most of them mounted. There were present, moreover, 700 Beetles, the most sour and grim kind that ever banged a bible for the love of God. Many of them had buff coats under their Geneva cloaks, and, according to Burnet, many wore in their belts swords, pistols, and daggers, that, for the love of heaven, they might redden the earth with blood. Madly Beetle-bitten, the peasantry flew to arms ; every Beetle-box in the country breathed of fire and slaughter ; the crackle of musketry was in every sermon, the roar of cannon in every prayer ; the sword-blade was sharpened on the pulpit, and the kirk became a recruiting-ground for the battlefield. "We have now cast down the walls of Jericho ; let him who rebuildeth them beware of the curse of Hiel and Bethelite," was the refrain of a Tyrtæan sermon by Henderson, of Leuchars. Beetles Mushet, Row, Cant, Dickson, and a mighty host of murderous piety, took up the cry. It was thundered from hundreds of pulpits. The heather was, indeed,

on fire. The Beetle struck the Bible with his fist in the emphasis of bloodthirsty rhetoric, and his voice found a terrible echo in the ring of the armourer's anvil, as the hammer clashed and clanged upon the red-hot iron that was being fashioned into bit and stirrup, helmet and sword-blade.

The Lords of the Covenant prepared for war. Wheresoever the carcase of prey is, there shall the eagles of militarism be gathered together. Heretofore Scotland had proved too stale and pacific to be a fitting arena for the restless energies of her gentlemen of the sword and swashbuckling fire-eaters, and they had accordingly poured in thousands from the banks of the Forth, the Dee, and the Clyde to the banks of the Elbe, the Oder, and the Danube, to follow Gustavus Adolphus for gold and glory, and write their names imperishably in their blood in the annals of the Thirty Years' War, in which the stubborn valour of the Scottish Legion filled all Europe with their renown. The Beetles had now wrung the coin out of the pockets of their frugal countrymen at home, and their fighting countrymen abroad rushed back to offer their steel blades and their blood for the merks of the peasant and the burgher. The world had no better soldiers than the Scoto-Swedish officers of Gustavus, among the most distinguished of whom were Sir Alexander Leslie, Sir Alexander Hamilton, Sir James Livingstone, Monroe, Baillie, and other heroes of Prague and Fleura, and numerous battlefields in Polish Prussia, Brandenburg, Westphalia, and Silesia. The Beetle, the ancestor of him now wanted in Egypt, had done it with a vengeance. Every *fourth* man in Scotland was to consider himself a soldier. The sword of the Lord and of Gideon! The land was as busy as a beehive declaiming sermons, whining prayers, drawling psalms, and getting ready arms and munitions—body armour for the cavalry, buff-coats and morions for pikemen, and muskets with rests for the musketeers. A cannon foundry was, moreover, established at the Potter Row, Edinburgh, under the direction of Sir Alexander Hamilton, formerly master of the cannon foundries of Gustavus-Adolphus at Urbowe, in Sweden. And all Beetledom was up on end, and raving to Jehovah to hurl

down the curse of Meroz upon those who failed to gird up their loins and go forth to help the Lord against the mighty.

The old legend-book of Judah was clasped to the very heart of Scotland. Its bloodiest and most terrible texts were interwoven with the common parlance of mundane affairs, and preached from with a wild and volcanic vehemence. "And I will feed them that oppress thee with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine: and all flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob." "The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozrah, and a great slaughter in the land of Idumea." "Cursed be he who keepeth back his sword from blood." "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel: Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out, from gate to gate, throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbour." These were the sort of bases of Beetle-spun harangues that scared the pee-wheet and the plover of the hills and moors. "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass. And Saul gathered the people together, and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand men of Judah. And the Lord sent thee on a journey, and said: Go and utterly destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, and fight against them until they be consumed," was the fearful text from which a certain Beetle of Hell preached, and incited the Covenanters to, after the Battle of Philiphaugh, enclose the defeated musketeers of Montrose in the courtyard of Newark Castle, and pour in volley after volley of shot upon the defenceless and unresisting mass, till not a man remained standing; and the gunpowder smoke cleared away and left the court covered with blood and brains like the floor of a slaughter-house, and the air rent with the shrieks of those to whom Death had not yet come in mercy to end their agony. After this holy massacre, 1,000 corpses were interred in a spot which to this day bears the shuddering name of

The Slain Man's Leu. And so much did the Presbyterian Beetles insist upon the curses that would overtake those who spared the Amalekites, the enemies of God, and so terribly did they emphasise "*man and woman, infant and suckling,*" that the swords of the Covenant ripped open the bodies of the women with child, and transfixed the unborn babe with the blade reeking with the blood of its mangled mother,* that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

So much for the antecedents of the Presbyterian Beetles Mr. Buchanan inquires about so kindly, and in regard to whom the Marquis of Hartington replies that there is a spare one to be had at Alexandria. Even now, it would seem, Scottish soldiers do not feel they can slaughter properly for the Lord unless they are under the beetlefications of an Ephraim MacBriar or a Gabriel Kettledrummle!

How long, O Lord, how long, will it be accounted glorious to drill a bayonet through a diaphragm, and valorous to lodge a leaden pellet in the medulla oblongata? No religion whatever can be true whose God is the God of Battles, and whose priests officiate in the sanctification of slaughter. O that there were a righteous heaven, and that man's objective Paradise was correlative with man's subjective desire! Then would I call to this heaven to witness that the torn banners and emblazoned rags of war are hung up as trophies in the Christian churches and cathedrals—the relics and memorials of wounds and misery and hate and death in the temples of "the Prince of Peace"! I have sat in a certain cathedral and listened to the Gospel of goodwill to all mankind, although, at the entrance, I had to pass dusty, torn, and ghastly relics of some of the bloodiest engagements in India and the Peninsula. I yearn for the religion that will account State murder and private murder alike unhallowed, and which will find no room in its fanes for bannered rags in memorial of burning towns, slaughtered men, shrieking widows, and breadless orphans, more than for the gory knives which were wielded by the miscreants and murderers whose infamy is perpetuated in the Chamber of Horrors at Madame Tussaud's.

W. S. R.

* Gordon of Ruthven.

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